



AMERICAN
SPLENDOR:
ON THE JOB

\$2.95 US
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NEO-REALISM

HARVEY PEKAR • FRANK STACK • JOE SACCO • JOE ZABEL • GARY DUMM

AMERICAN SPLENDOR™

DAMMIT, WHEN THEY
GONNA FIX THE
GODDAMNED ELEVATOR?
IT'S BEEN BUSTED
FOR A WEEK.

OUT
OF
ORDER



MEDICAL RECC

MEDICAL
BLOCK
00 24

PEKAR / Frank
Stack

ON THE JOB

DIRECT SALES



AMERICAN SPLENDOR™

ON THE JOB

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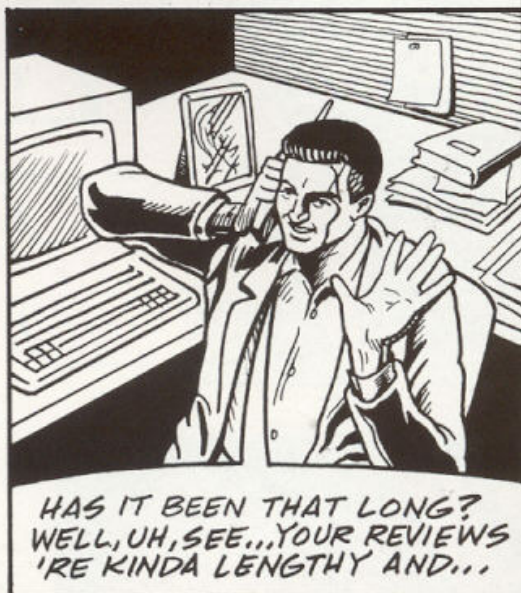
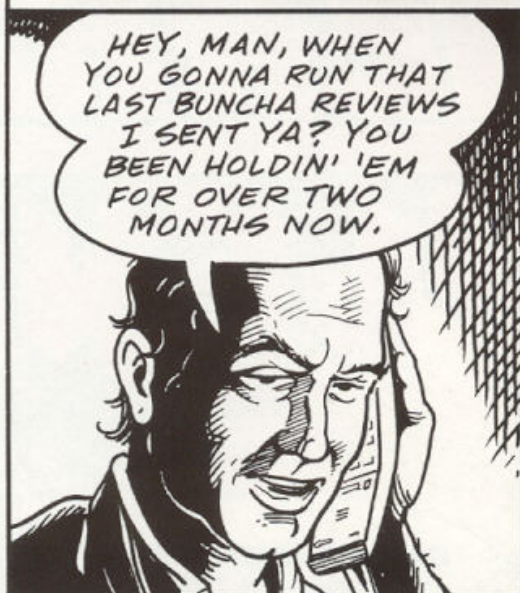
Mike Richardson

publisher

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LEVELING

STORY BY
HARVEY PEKAR
ART BY
GARY DUMM



-END

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I'M HARVEY PEKAR. I WAS BORN IN 1939 AND HAVE SUPPORTED MYSELF AS A CLEVELAND V.A. HOSPITAL FILE CLERK SINCE 1966. FROM 1972 ON I'VE WRITTEN AMERICAN SPLENDOR, AN AUTO BIOGRAPHICAL COMIC-BOOK SERIES.



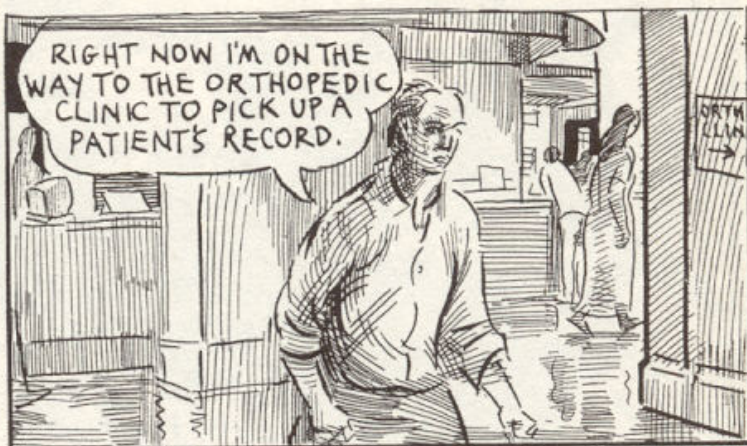
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STORY BY HARVEY PEKAR

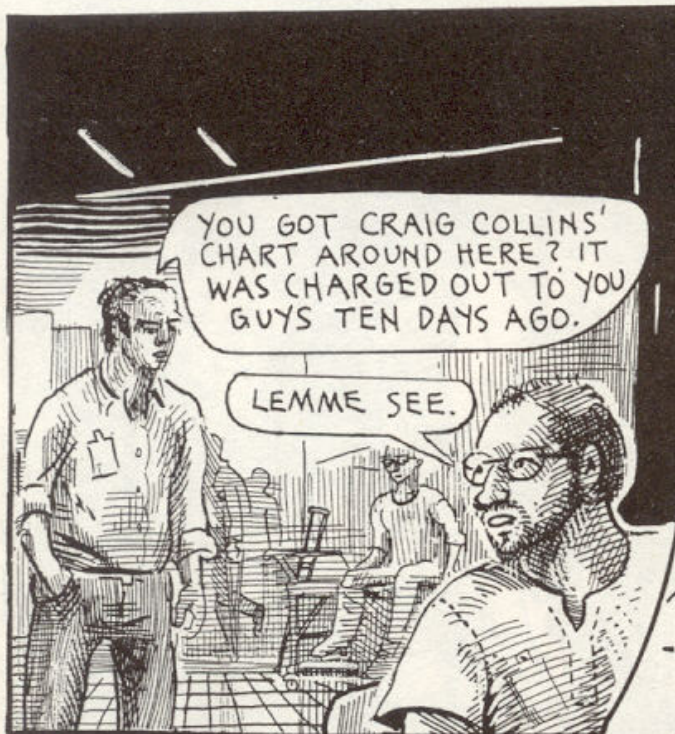
ART BY FRANK STACK

RIGHT NOW I'M ON THE WAY TO THE ORTHOPEDIC CLINIC TO PICK UP A PATIENT'S RECORD.



YOU GOT CRAIG COLLINS' CHART AROUND HERE? IT WAS CHARGED OUT TO YOU GUYS TEN DAYS AGO.

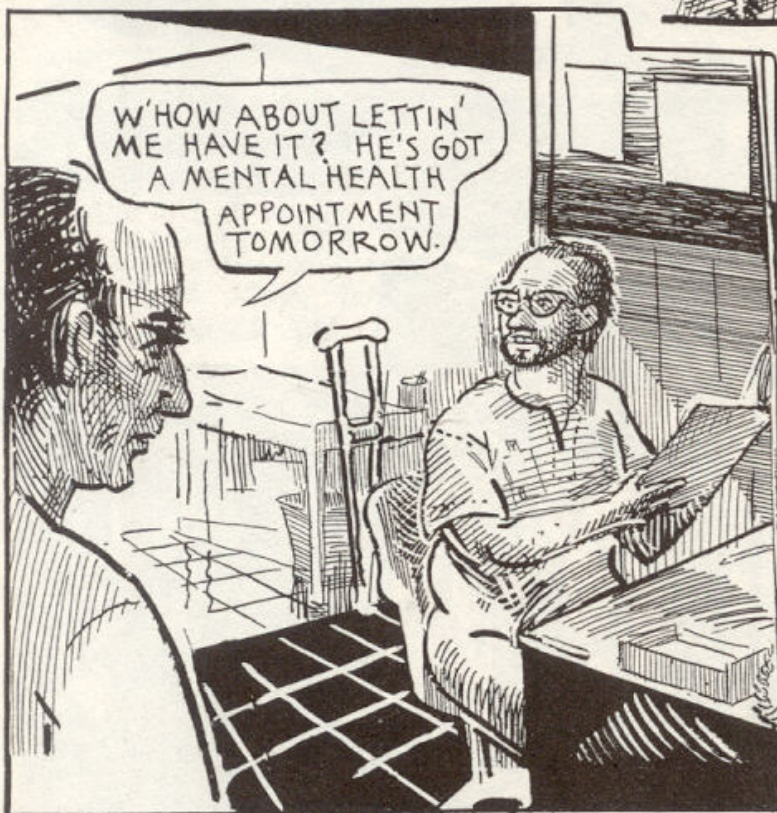
LEMME SEE.



YEAH, HERE IT IS.

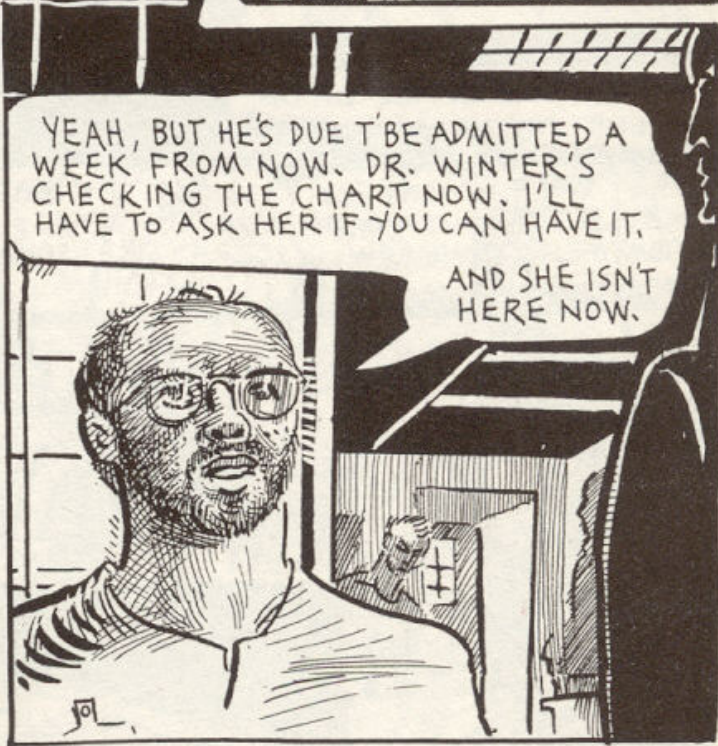


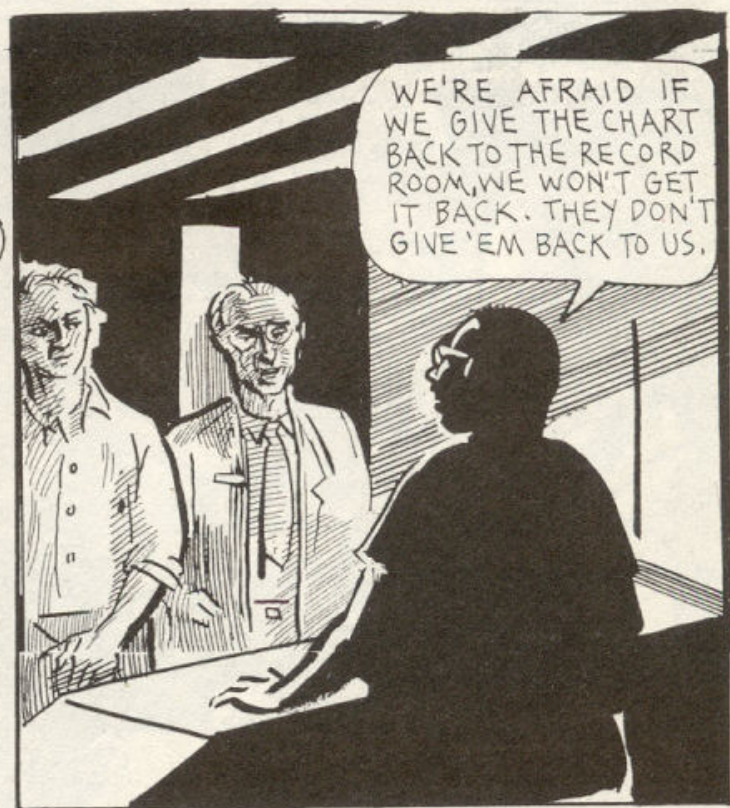
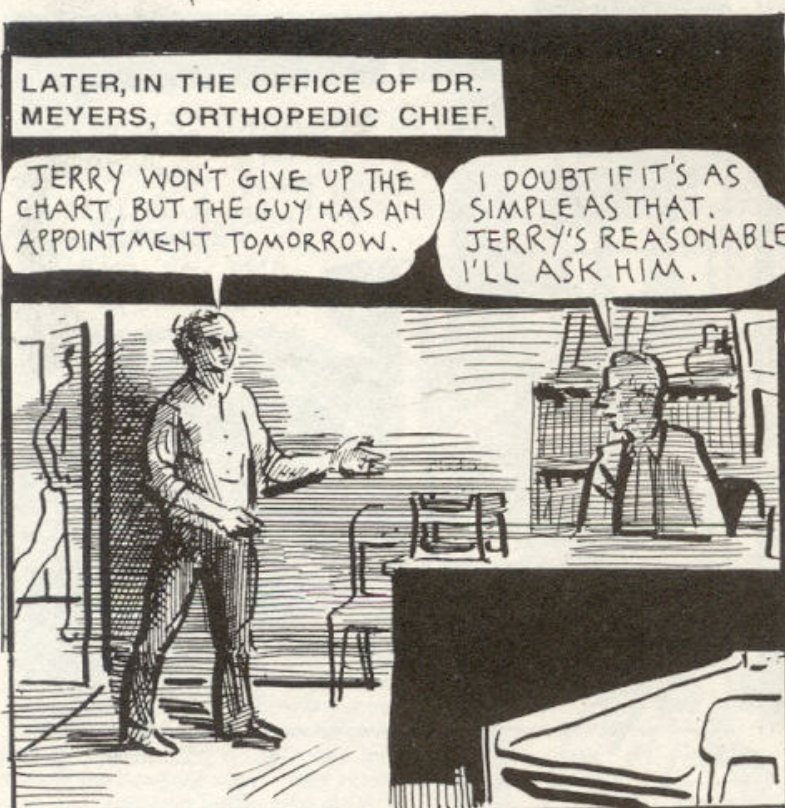
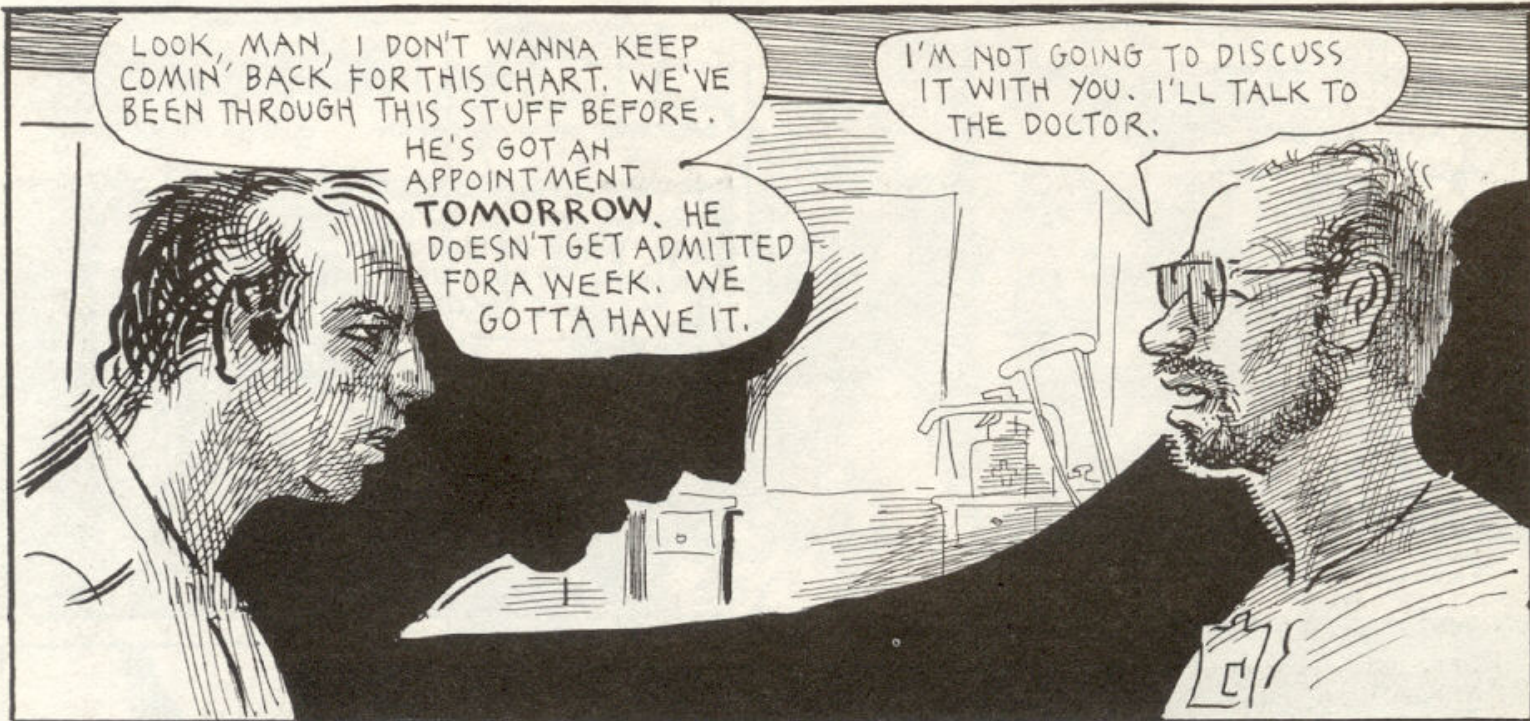
W'HOW ABOUT LETTIN' ME HAVE IT? HE'S GOT A MENTAL HEALTH APPOINTMENT TOMORROW.

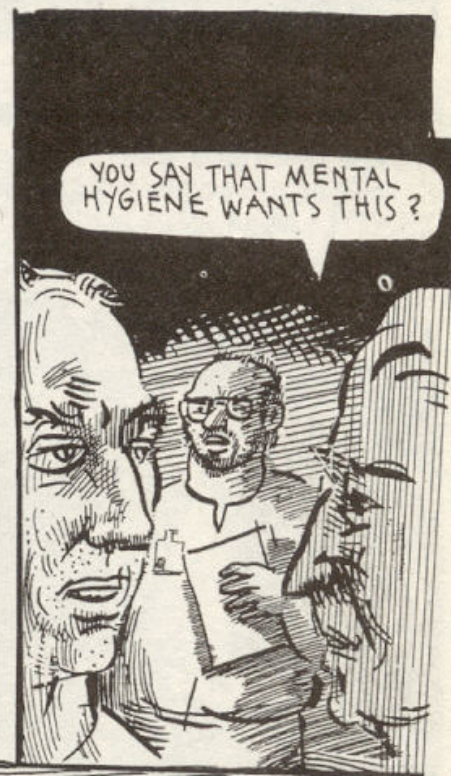
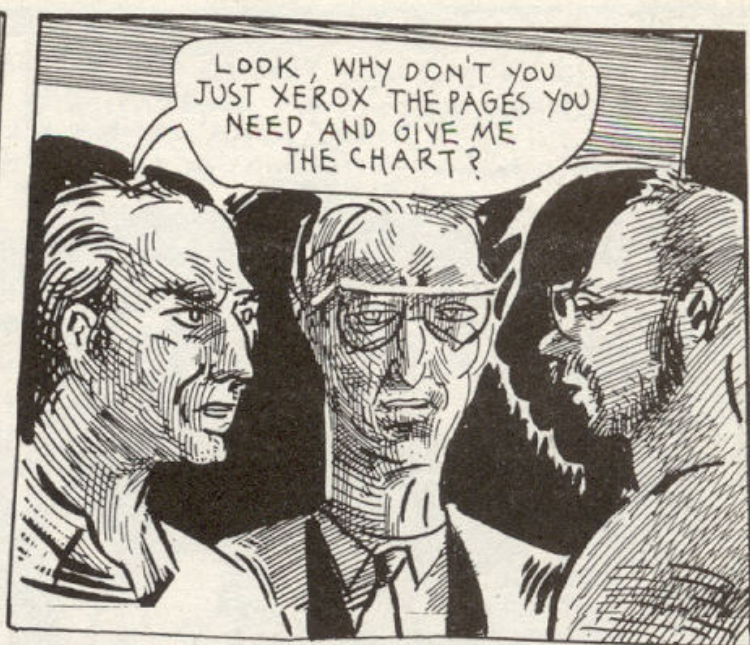
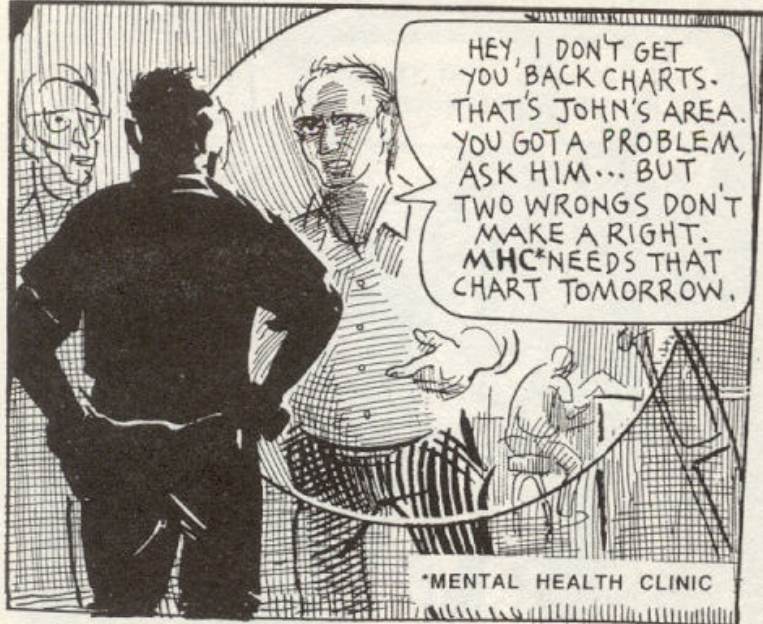


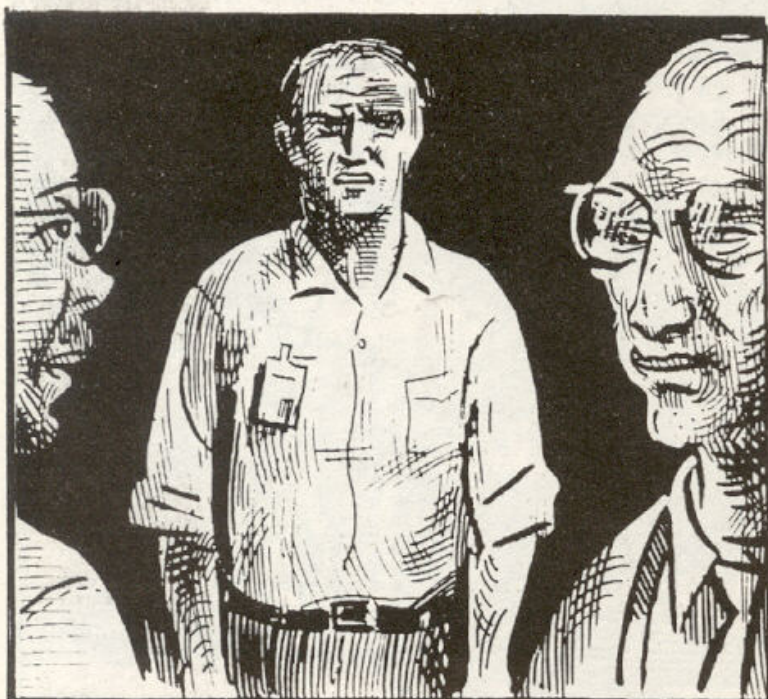
YEAH, BUT HE'S DUE T'BE ADMITTED A WEEK FROM NOW. DR. WINTER'S CHECKING THE CHART NOW. I'LL HAVE TO ASK HER IF YOU CAN HAVE IT.

AND SHE ISN'T HERE NOW.





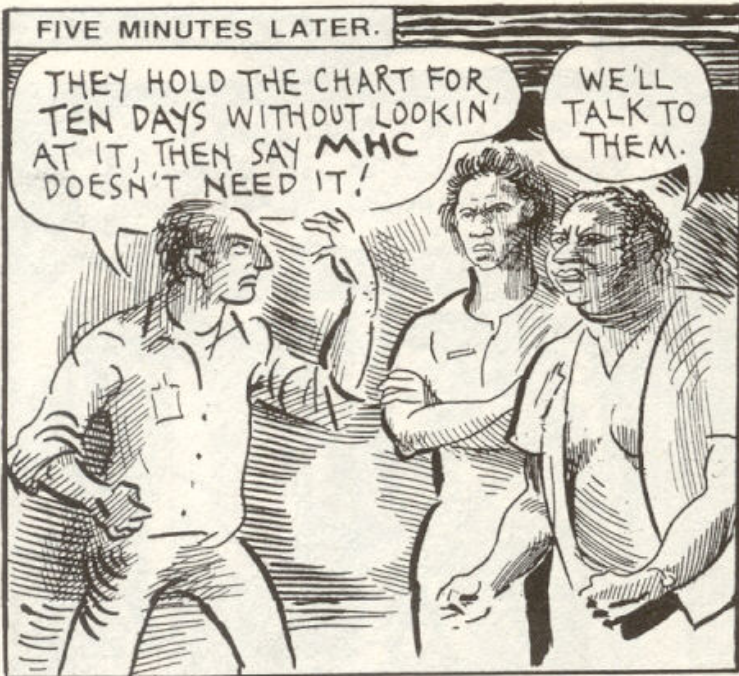




FIVE MINUTES LATER.

THEY HOLD THE CHART FOR TEN DAYS WITHOUT LOOKIN' AT IT, THEN SAY MHC DOESN'T NEED IT!

WE'LL TALK TO THEM.



THEY SAID MHC DIDN'T NEED IT. THEY MUST THINK PSYCHIATRY IS A VOOODOO SCIENCE... I'M GONNA TELL THE MHC PEOPLE WHAT ORTHO THINKS OF 'EM.



DON'T DO THAT. DON'T ESCALATE. WE'LL TAKE IT THROUGH THE CHAIN OF COMMAND.

CHAIN OF COMMAND? WE'VE BEEN TAKING IT UP THE CHAIN OF COMMAND. EVENTUALLY WE GET THE CHARTS 'CAUSE WE'RE RIGHT! BUT, THE NEXT TIME, ORTHO WON'T LET US HAVE THE CHART AGAIN, AN' WE GOTTA DO THE WHOLE THING OVER.

I'M TIRED OF SCREWIN' AROUND WITH THESE ORTHO PEOPLE... THEY WON'T LET THE MHC DOCTOR HAVE THE CHART. IF THE SITUATION WAS REVERSED, THEY'D BE SCREAMIN' BLOODY MURDER.



I AIN'T BEEN HERE THIRTY YEARS FOR NOTHIN'. I GOT FRIENDS IN HIGH PLACES.



THE MEDICAL DIRECTOR'S OFFICE.

WE GOT TO STRAIGHTEN THOSE ORTHO PEOPLE OUT.

HMM.



MR. EDWARDS, ORTHOPEDIC SERVICE IS SEQUESTERING A CHART THAT MR. PEKAR NEEDS FOR CLINIC TOMORROW. GET IT FOR HIM, WILL YOU PLEASE?



NOW, HARVEY, DON'T COME IN. JUST STAY OUTSIDE. I'LL DO ALL THE TALKING. YOU MIGHT INFLAME THINGS.



WHEW! I GOT THE CHART, BUT IT COST ME A LOT. WE'VE GOT TO GET IT BACK TO JERRY RIGHT AFTER HE'S SEEN IN MHC TOMORROW, AND I'VE GOT TO XEROX SOME PAGES FOR HIM NOW.

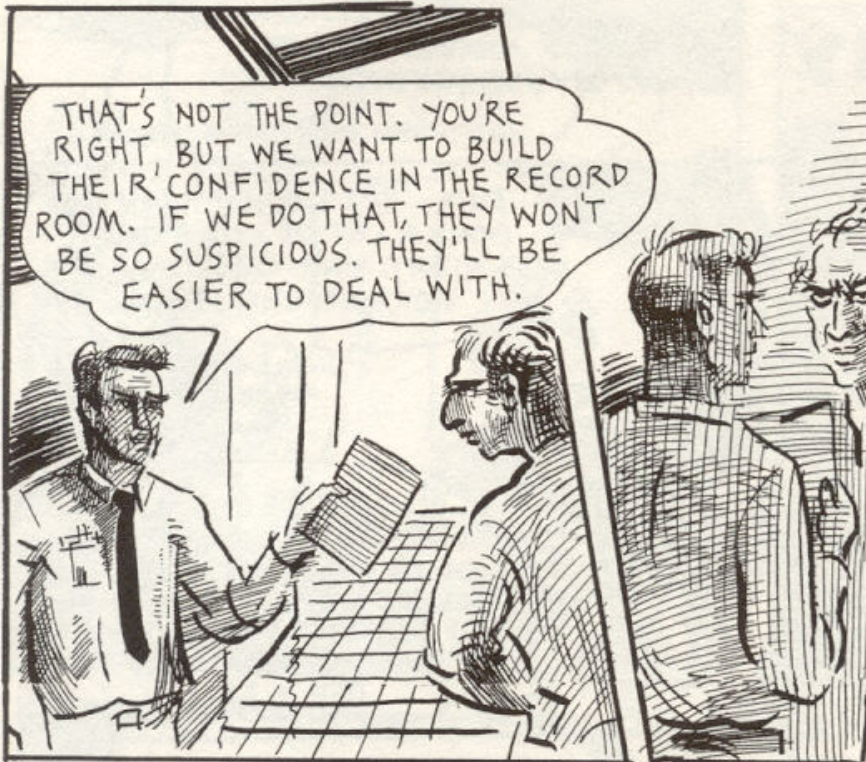


WHAAT! WHY ARE YOU MAKING DEALS WITH THAT GUY? HE HAD NO RIGHT TO HOLD ONTO A CHART OF A PATIENT THAT IS COMING IN TOMORROW. HE HAS NO BUSINESS HOLDING OUT ANY CHART THAT'S UNDER OUR JURISDICTION.



PLUS, I OFFERED T'MAKE COPIES OF THE GUY'S NOTES, AND THEY TURNED IT DOWN. THEY JUST WANNA GIVE EVERYONE A HARD TIME. PLENTY A' OTHER PEOPLE IN THE RECORD ROOM HAVE HAD TROUBLE WITH THEM. THEY WANT A TURF WAR.





THAT'S NOT THE POINT. YOU'RE RIGHT, BUT WE WANT TO BUILD THEIR CONFIDENCE IN THE RECORD ROOM. IF WE DO THAT, THEY WON'T BE SO SUSPICIOUS. THEY'LL BE EASIER TO DEAL WITH.

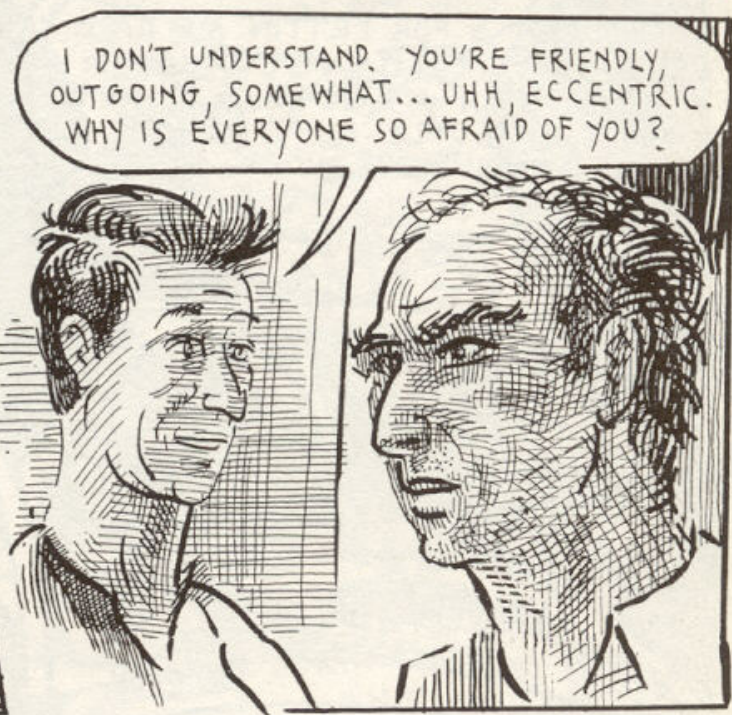


OH, YEAH! WELL I'M COMIN' WITH YOU WHILE YOU XEROX THAT CHART. AND I WANT IT FROM YOU RIGHT AFTER YOU'RE DONE.

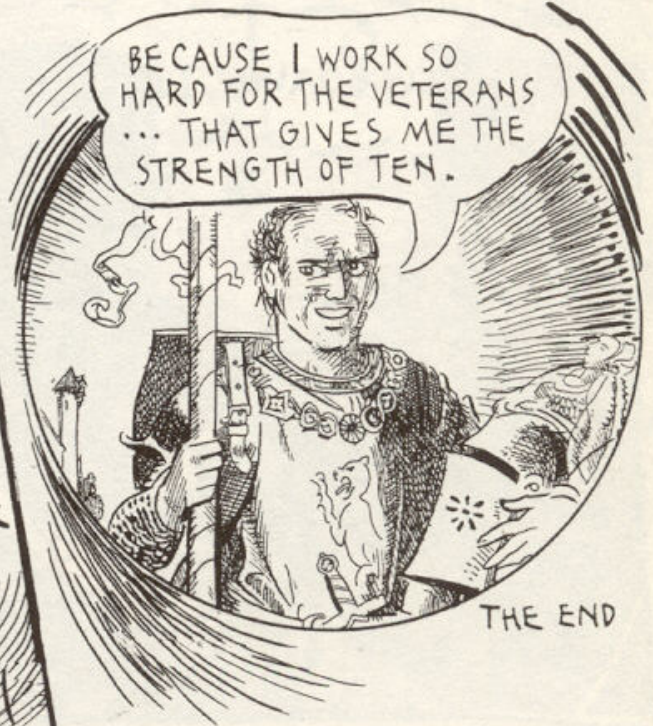
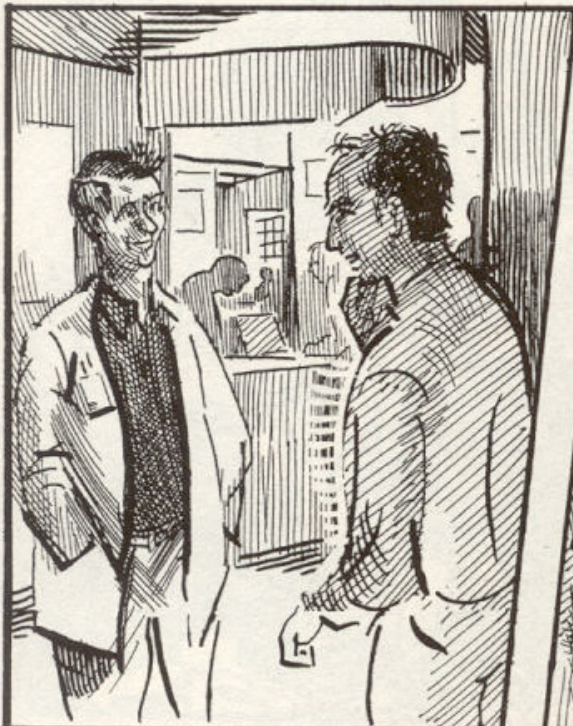


THE NEXT MORNING.

HEY, HARVEY, I HEARD ABOUT THAT TUFF YOU GOT INTO WITH ORTHO.



I DON'T UNDERSTAND. YOU'RE FRIENDLY, OUTGOING, SOMEWHAT... UHH, ECCENTRIC. WHY IS EVERYONE SO AFRAID OF YOU?



BECAUSE I WORK SO HARD FOR THE VETERANS ... THAT GIVES ME THE STRENGTH OF TEN.

THE END

WHY DON'T THEY LET US OUT?

STORY BY HARVEY PEKAR
ART BY FRANK STACK

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YOU TAKE THE CAR TODAY, HARVEY. YOU'LL PROBABLY GET OUT EARLY, SO IF YOU DO, YOU CAN COME RIGHT HOME AND START CLEANING WITH ME.

FINE. BUT I DON'T THINK THEY'RE GONNA LET US OUT, B'CAUSE T'NIGHT AIN'T CHRISTMAS EVE. T'MORRA'S CHRISTMAS EVE.

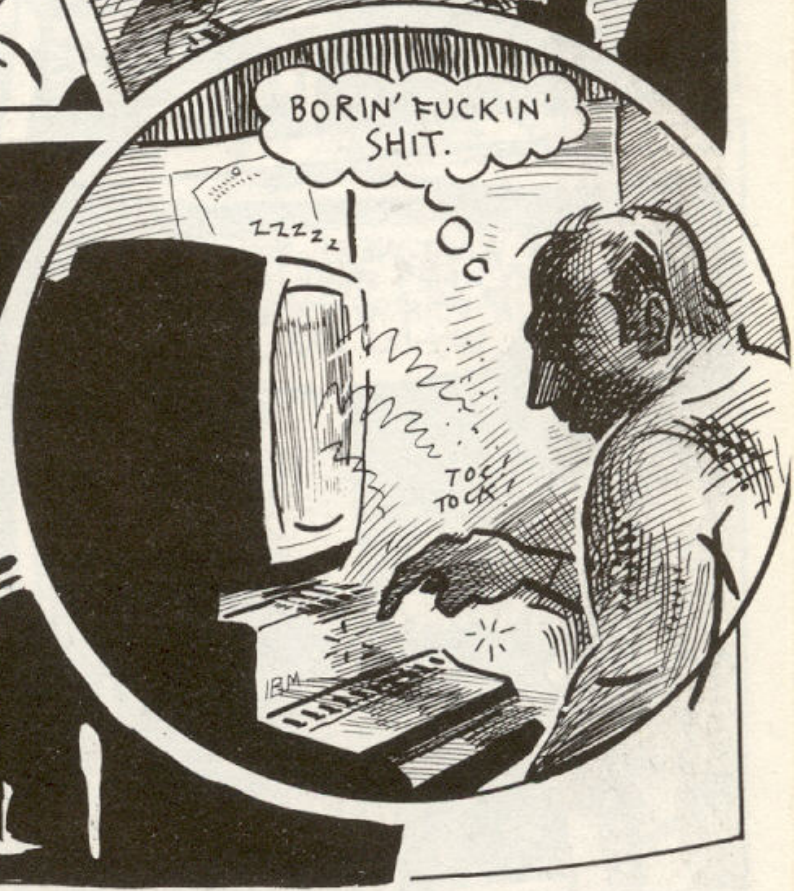
PLUS, TH' FEDERAL GOVER'MINT'S TIGHTENIN' UP. CLINTON DON'T WANT THE REPUBLICANS ACCUSIN' HIM OF WASTIN' MONEY BY LETTIN' FEDERAL WORKERS OFF EARLY.

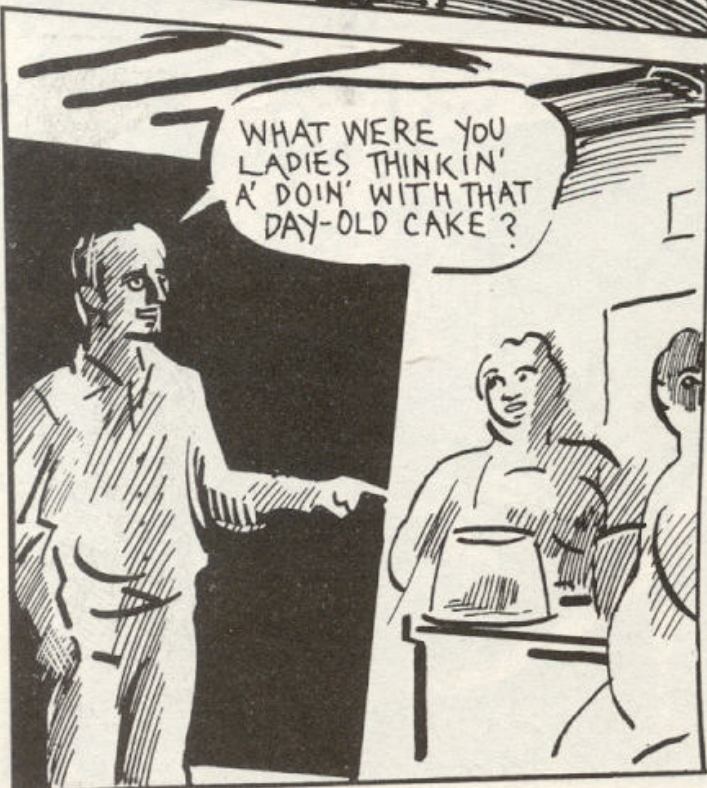
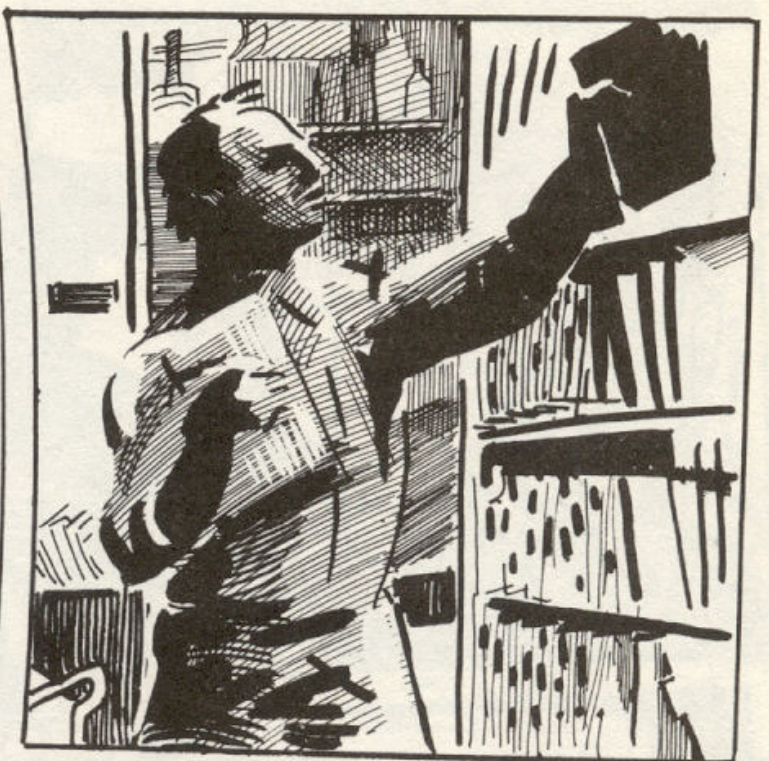
BUT THANKS FOR LETTIN' ME HAVE THE CAR. IT REALLY WOULD'VE BEEN HARD HUSTLIN' A RIDE HOME T'NIGHT. HALF THE PEOPLE AIN'T GONNA SHOW UP FOR WORK.

GOOD. MOST OF THE CLINICS FOR THE 27TH ARE CANCELED. AN EASY DAY FOR ME.

PROBABLY BORING, BUT EASY.

WELL, TH' 27TH'S FINISHED.





NOTHIN', HARVEY.
GITCHEW A PIECE.

MMMM. I'M
FULL... THERE WAS
A LOTTA STUFF
LEFT OVER.

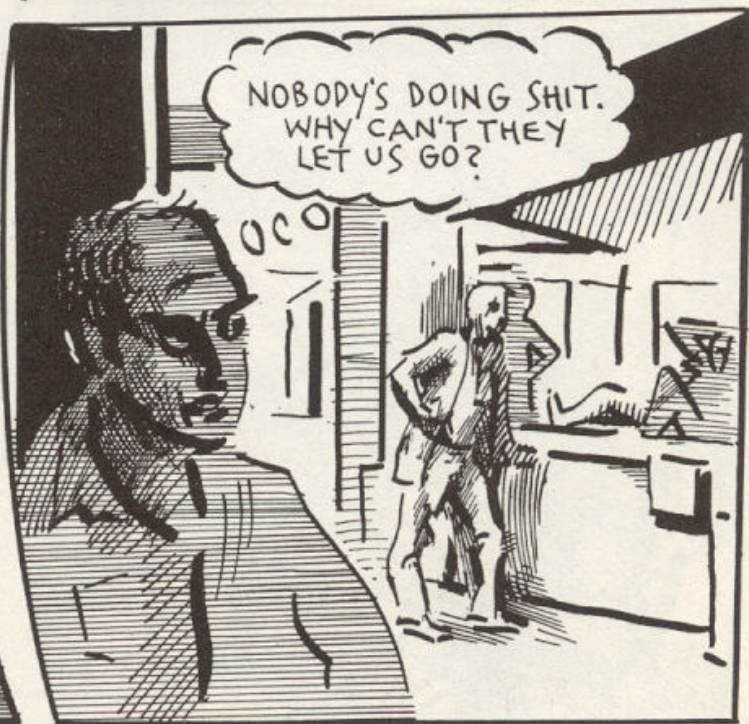
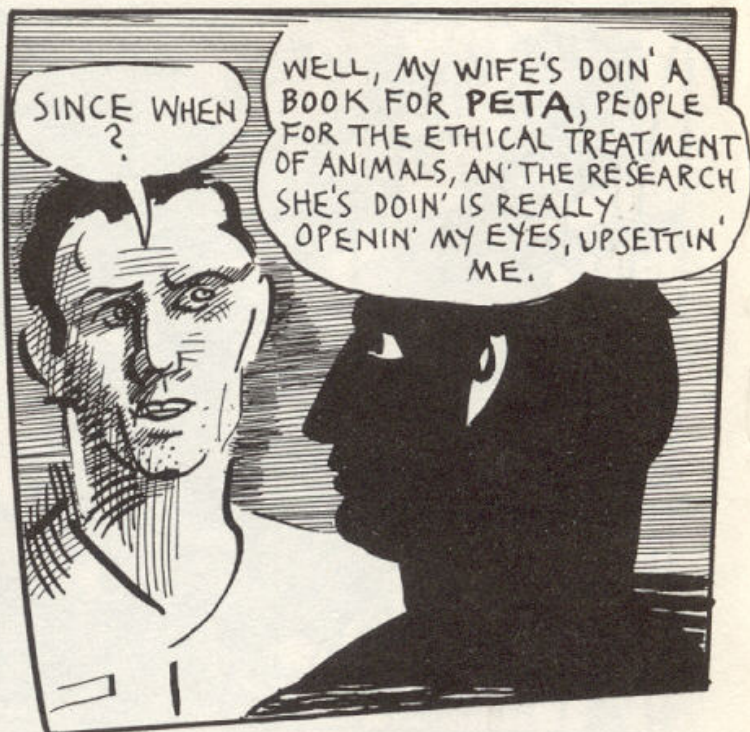
WHAT NOW?

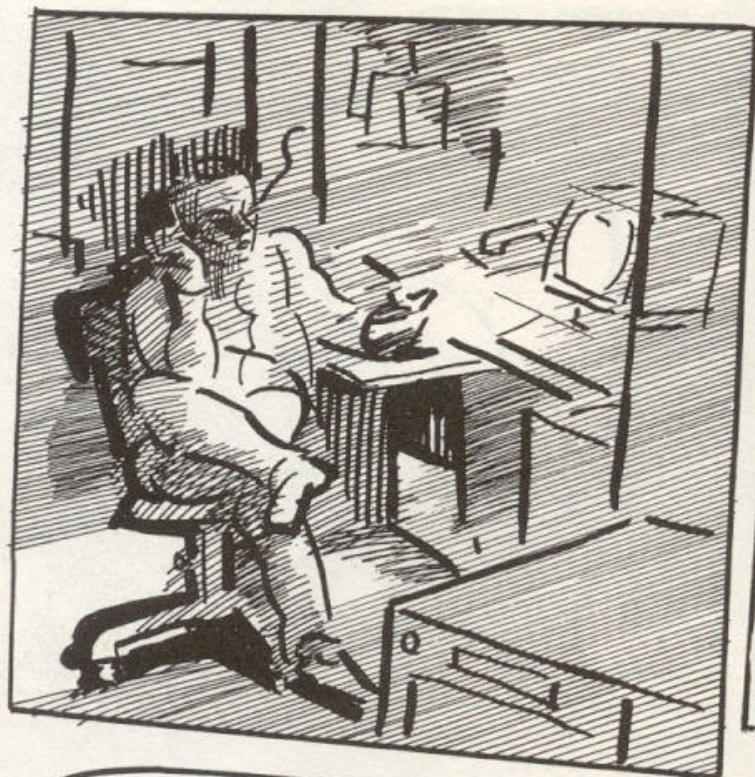
HEY, HARVEY, WANT SOME
LASAGNA LEFT OVER FROM OUR
PARTY? WE REFRIGERATED IT...
'S STILL GOOD.

NAW. THANKS, BUT
I BEEN EATIN'
ALL DAY.

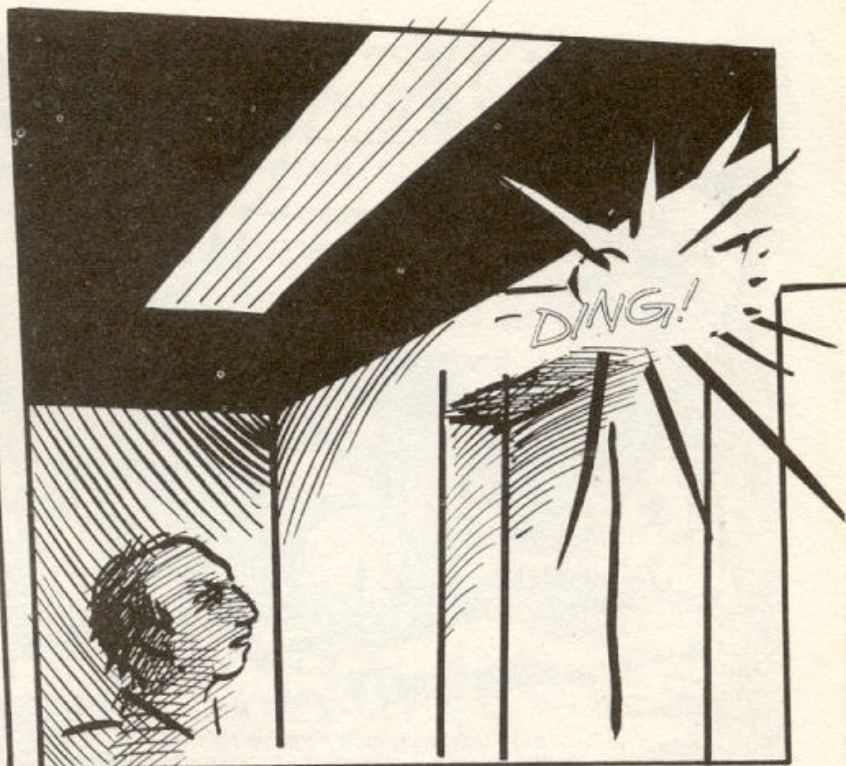
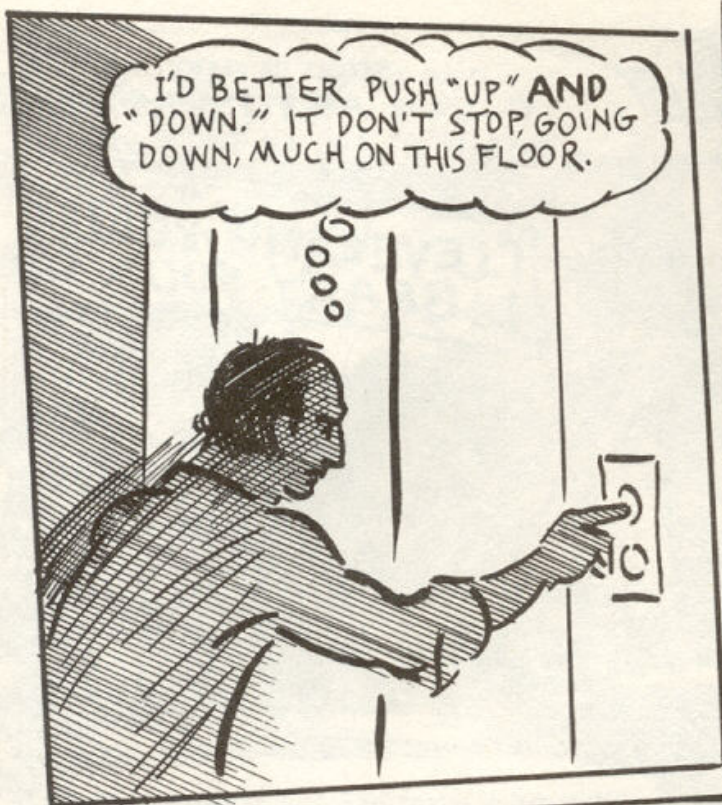
HMMM... LASAGNA.

HEY, ERNIE, DOES THAT
LASAGNA GOT MEAT IN IT?



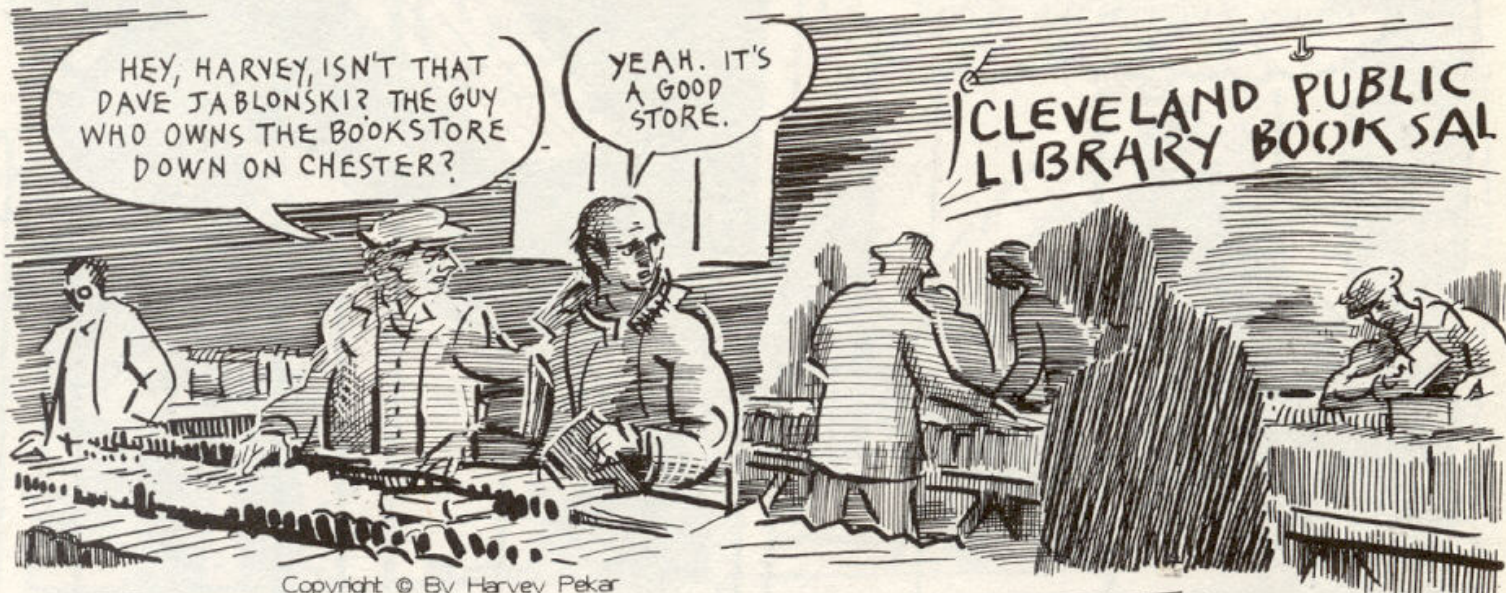




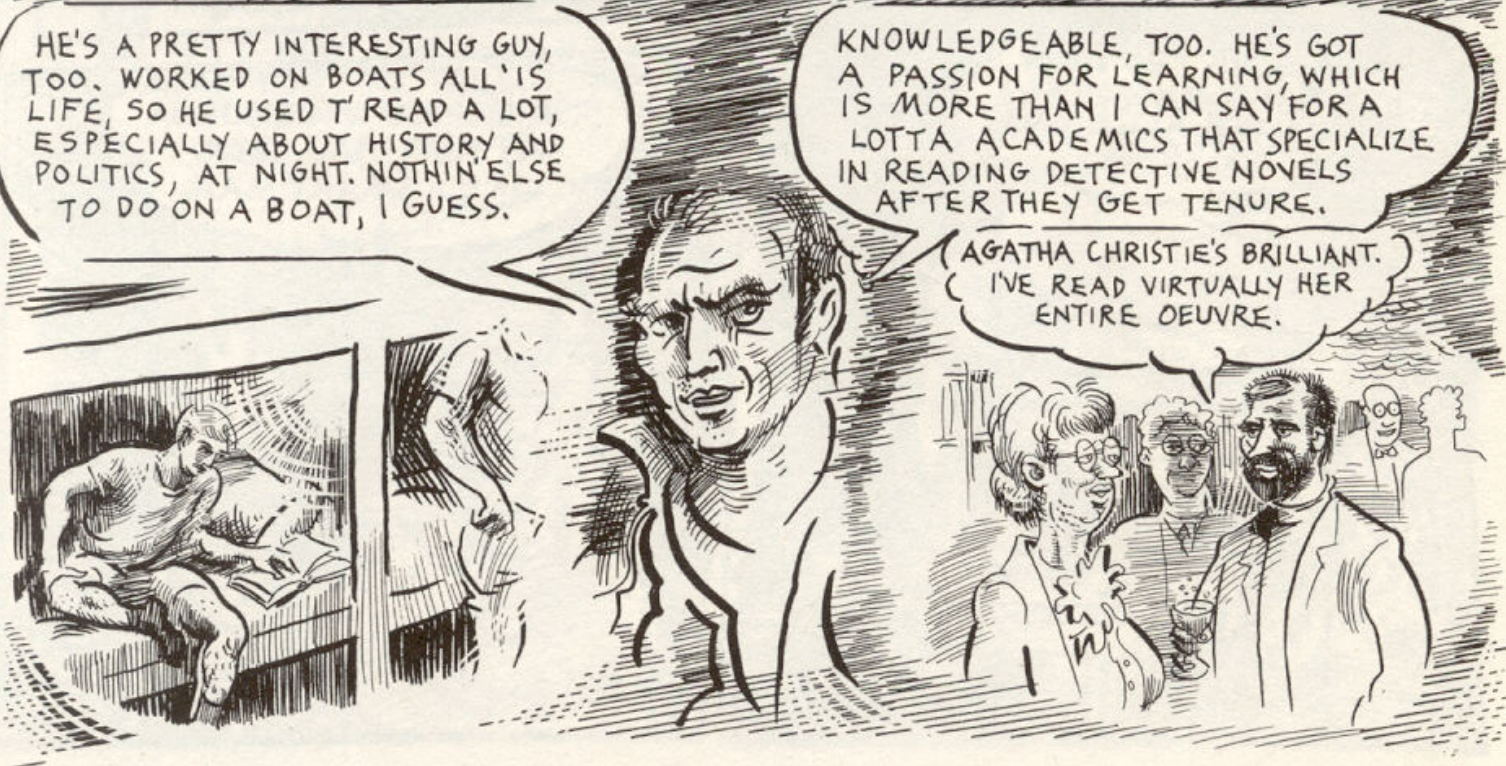


BOOK SALE

STORY BY HARVEY PEKAR
ART BY FRANK STACK



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SO OVER THE YEARS DAVE COLLECTED A TON A' BOOKS. AT SOME POINT HE GOT TO THINKIN' HE'D OPEN A STORE AFTER HE RETIRED AN' GOT HIS PENSION AN' THAT'S JUST WHAT HE DID.

OH, YEAH? I HAD A FRIEND WHO WENT IN THERE ONCE. HE SAID JABLONSKI WAS ANTI-SEMITIC.

HE DON'T MAKE MUCH MONEY AT IT, LIVES IN THE STORE, BUT HE'S GOT A PASSION FOR BOOKS, AND I REALLY RESPECT HIM FOR THAT.

ANTI-SEMITIC? I SERIOUSLY DOUBT THAT... I MEAN, LIKE SOME GUYS HIS AGE HE LIKES TO GENERALIZE TOO MUCH ABOUT ETHNIC GROUPS. AN' SOMETIMES HE C'N BE BRUSQUE. MAYBE THAT TURNED YOUR FRIEND OFF. BUT HE'S NOT A BIGOT.

FRIDAY. SIX MONTHS LATER. ANOTHER BOOK SALE.

WELL, IF IT ISN'T HARVEY PEKAR. WHY AREN'T YOU WORKING?

OH, HEY, HOWYA DOIN'?

I HAD A ONE O'CLOCK DENTAL APPOINTMENT, SO I TOOK THE AFTERNOON OFF. I WAS LOOKIN' IN THE CLASSIFIED SECTION FOR HOUSE SALES AFTER I GOT MY CAVITIES FILLED, AND I SEE THIS LIBRARY SALE ADVERTISED. I'D COMPLETELY FORGOTTEN ABOUT IT.

LOOKIN' AT BOOKS IS A GREAT WAY TO END THE WEEK AND GET INTO THE WEEKEND, HUH? I ASKED THE DENTIST T'HURRY UP SO I'D HAVE TIME T'CHECK OUT EVERYTHING.

YOU FINDIN' ANYTHING?

YEAH, SURPRISINGLY, I GOT ABOUT SEVEN BOXES A' STUFF.

FIFTEEN MINUTES LATER.

HEY, HARVEY,
WHAT'RE YOU
DOIN' AFTER YOU
LEAVE HERE?

NUTHIN'.

I DON'T HAVE A CAR, AND
THIS GUY I WAS COUNTIN'
ON FOR A RIDE IS BUSY.
COULD YOU GIVE ME A LIFT
TO MY STORE? I'LL PAY YA.

SURE. Y' DON'T HAFTA PAY ME,
THOUGH. MY WIFE'S CLEANIN',
AN' SHE DON'T WANT ME
HOME EARLY ANYWAY.



WELL, LET ME PAY FOR
YOUR BOOKS ANYWAY.

I AW REDDY
PAID FOR 'EM.



DAVE TALKS OF HIS YOUTH.

THEN, WHEN I WAS AROUND
FIVE OR SIX, I WAS IN
THE ORPHANAGE.



I GREW UP AROUND 55TH AND BROADWAY, Y'KNOW. THE POLISH AREA.

ACTUALLY, MY FATHER WAS GERMAN, CAME FROM GERMANY. HE WAS A SEAMAN. I FOUND OUT HE NEVER DID MARRY MY MOTHER.

MY MOTHER WAS POLISH, THOUGH, SO I WAS RAISED WITH A BUNCHA POLACKS... HEH-HEH. THOSE ARE SOME HARDHEADED PEOPLE,

'COURSE, YOU'RE SLAVIC YOURSELF, SO YOU KNOW WHAT I'M TALKIN' ABOUT.

HE DOESN'T KNOW I'M JEWISH. HE THINKS I'M SLAVIC 'CAUSE I GOT A SLAVIC NAME.*

*PEKAR MEANS "BAKER" IN SEVERAL SLAVIC LANGUAGES.

NOW THAT YOU'RE INTA TALKIN' ABOUT ETHNIC GROUPS, DAVE, DON'T MAKE SOME DUMB-ASS REMARK ABOUT THE JEWS. DON'T LEMME DOWN.

RIGHT AFTER THE WAR I WAS IN GERMANY, AND I WAS ABLE TO FIND OUT SOME STUFF ABOUT MY FATHER.

IT TURNS OUT HE WAS JEWISH... FROM OLD IMPERIAL STOCK.

IF HITLER'DA GOTTA HOLD OF HIM, HE'DA BEEN A GONER.



A LOT OF PEOPLE OVER IN GERMANY AND CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE HATE THE JEWS. THEY WERE JEALOUS, AND THEY FELT THREATENED BY 'EM. THE JEWS WERE A VERY PROGRESSIVE PEOPLE.



THE DISCUSSION TURNS TO DOMESTIC ISSUES.

THERE'S ALL THIS DOWNSIZING GOING ON. PRETTY SOON THERE WON'T BE MORE'N A FEW CORPORATIONS, AND THEY'LL HAVE EVERYTHING SEWED UP.



KARL MARX WAS RIGHT ABOUT CAPITALISM!



BACK TO PERSONAL REMINISCENCES.

I USED TO DELIVER CIGARS FOR THE DE ARANGO CIGAR COMPANY AND WINE FOR THE GUY NEXT DOOR WITH THE WINE SHOP.



DE ARANGO? THAT MUSTA BEEN THE FATHER OF BILL DE ARANGO, THE GREAT JAZZ GUITARIST.



WHAT WAS THE OLD MAN LIKE?
Y' KNOW HE WAS A CUBAN. BILL
TOLD ME HE SPIED FOR THE
UNITED STATES DURING THE
SPANISH-AMERICAN WAR.

PROP THE DOOR OPEN, AND
I'LL BRING THE BOOKS IN.

LEMME GIVE YA SOME MONEY
T' FILL UP YOUR TANK.

NAH. C'MON, I
DIDN'T USE UP
MUCH GAS.

WHY DON'CHA PICK OUT
SOME BOOKS ON JAZZ
FOR YOURSELF THEN?

SHORTLY.

WELL, I'LL TELL YA,
Y' GOT ANY OLD
JAZZ MAGAZINES?

YEAH, DOWN IN THE
BASEMENT. SOME OLD
DOWN BEATS. WAIT
THERE. I'LL GET 'EM.

HERE Y'ARE.

WOW. THESE ARE FROM
1946 AND 1947. AND
THEY'RE IN FINE SHAPE.

OH, I C'N USE THESE FOR,
UH... RESEARCH. LIKE WHEN
I'M WRITIN' JAZZ ARTICLES.

OR I
C'N DEAL
'EM TO
COLLECTORS.

YEAH, THEY'RE WORTH
\$5.00 OR \$10.00 EACH.
I THINK I ONLY PAID A
NICKEL APIECE FOR 'EM
DURING THE 1950s THOUGH.

WHY DON'CHA TAKE A
COUPLA JAZZ BOOKS, TOO?

NAH, NAH. THIS IS
PLENTY, BELIEVE ME.

SAY, I GOTTA GET GOIN' NOW,
BUT THANKS FOR THESE
DOWNBEATS. THEY'RE REALLY
GONNA COME IN HANDY.

WOW! WHAT A TERRIFIC GUY!
WITH THE WHOLE COUNTRY GOING
TO THE RIGHT, IT GIVES ME A
GREAT FEELING TO RUN ACROSS
AN UNAPOLOGETIC SOCIALIST.

'N' THESE MAGAZINES!
I BET I C'N SWAP 'EM
FOR A FEW REALLY
TOP OUTTA-PRINT LPs.

END

Efficiency

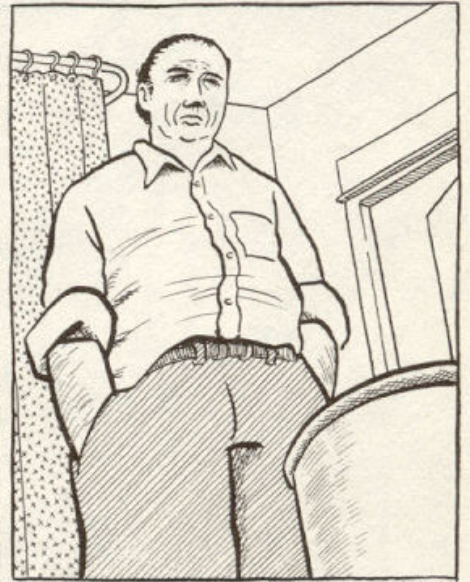
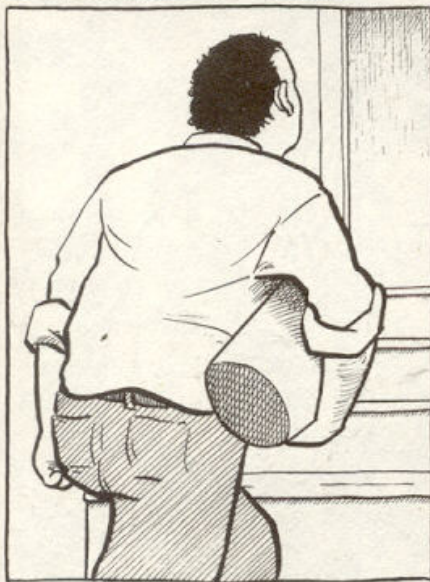
I GOTTA TAKE THIS WASTEBASKET I JUST EMPTIED BACK UPSTAIRS.

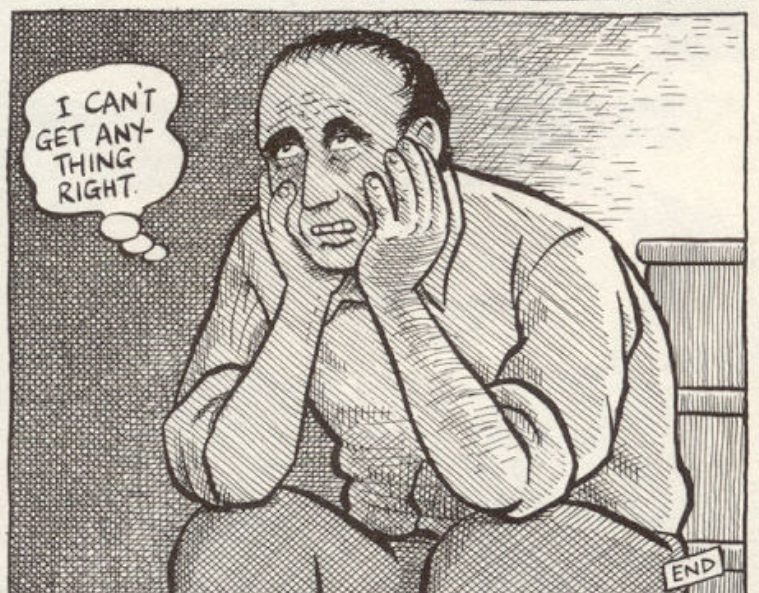
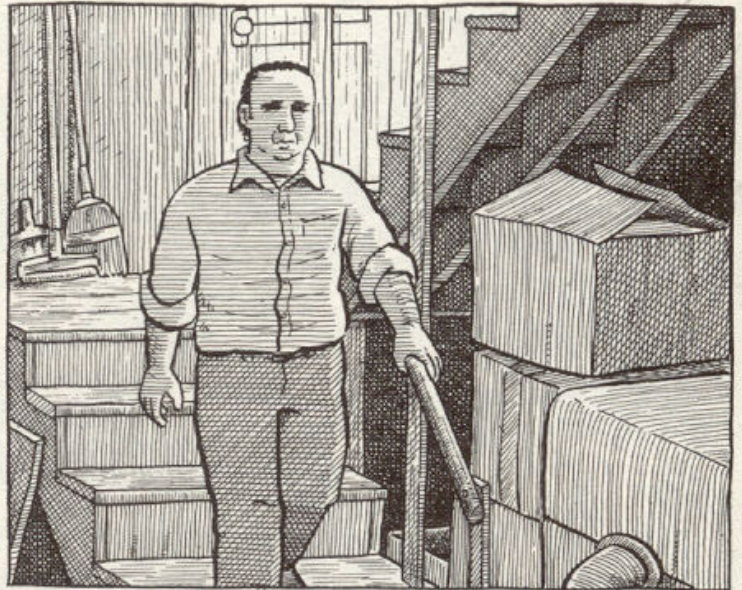
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ART BY JOE SACCO
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IF I DO THAT, THOUGH, I MIGHT AS WELL PICK UP THE EMMANUEL BOVE BOOK I'M REVIEWING AND BRING IT BACK DOWNSTAIRS WITH ME, 'CAUSE THAT'S WHERE MY DRAFT OF THE REVIEW IS.

EVERY TIME I MOVE, I GOTTA GET THE MAXIMUM AMOUNT OF POSITIVES OUT OF IT. LIKE IF I GO UPSTAIRS TO REPLACE THE WASTEBASKET AND REMEMBER TO BRING THE BOOK BACK ON THE WAY DOWN, INSTEAD OF MAKING A SEPARATE TRIP UP FOR IT, I'LL BE SAVING TIME.

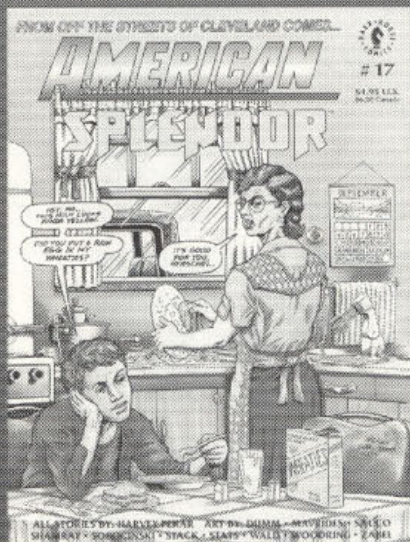
IN A WAY, I'LL BE LENGTHENING MY LIFE.



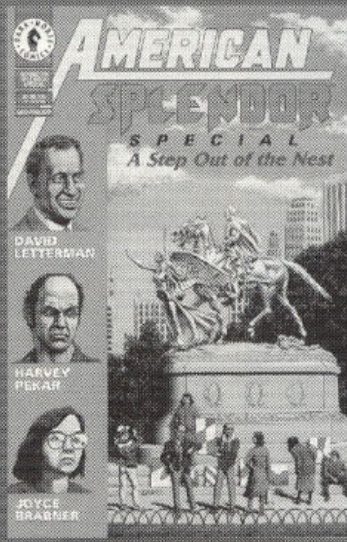


LOOKING FOR MORE AMERICAN SPLENDOR™

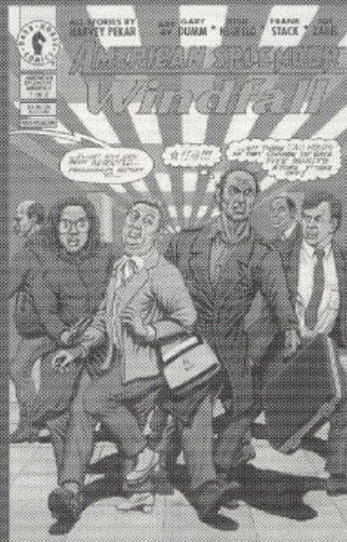
LOOK NO FURTHER!



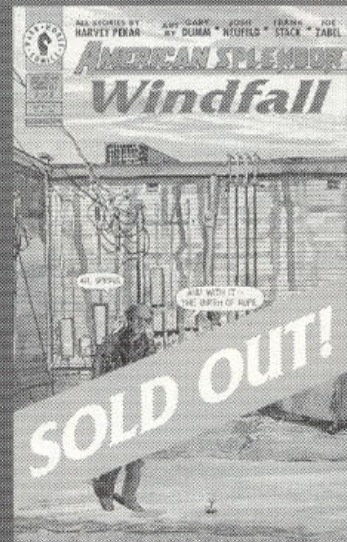
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Folk Poetry

