

PROTOPLASM PRESS™

4



AMOEBA

\$1.50

ADVENTURES™

STARRING THE **ALL-SPONGY**
SQUADRON

HAVE NO FEAR, FELLOW DEFENDERS OF
LIFE, LIBERTY, AND HAPPINESS,

RAOUL THE BOY
COCKROACH... IS HERE!!

YOU'VE GOT TO BE
PULLING MY LEG.



THE SLIMEBALL SPEAKS:

Extra-short editorial this time...the story came to life and just started crowding everything else out of this issue...the onery little bugger even had the nerve to take over the back cover!

This issue is my personal fave so far...I think I've managed to balance on that fine line between comedy and drama nicely. Needless to say, I find such concepts as "character development" and "plot" more interesting than having Captain Steroid punch someone through a wall every 1.5 pages.


Shameless plug time: coming before AA #5 from Protoplasm Press is a special environmental benefit anthology called *PROMETHEUS SAVES THE EARTH?* Some of the biggest names in small press are contributing tales to this zine, including Matt Feazell (*Cynicalman*) and Quinton Hoover (*Squint*). If those names alone aren't enough reason to check *PSTE* out, consider the fact that there'll also be an all-new 8-page tale of the All-Spongy Squadron included. Look for *PROMETHEUS SAVES THE EARTH?* in October.

Just about out of space here...the letters column was crowded out this time, but it'll be back in #5. And let me close with a quick plea to all those reading this issue to drop me a line and let me know what you thought. It's a fact that small-pressers don't earn beans from their work, so letters of critique are just about the biggest perk we get.

Peace,

NIK DIRSA

The Story So Far:



The All-Spongy Squadron has just survived their greatest battle--a war for the fate of mankind itself against the dimension travelling sorcerer Agnus Dei. Dei was defeated, but at a cost: the life of Manslaughter, the heroic warrior who had also been Dei's son.

Now, it's a time to recover and time for decisions, decisions which will ultimately change the Squadron forever. Meanwhile, dark forces are gathering against Prometheus, and a cold wind begins to blow...

NIKOMMENDATIONS: other sp books well work a look around. Some of my personal faves include:

HUMAN UNIT 12- this is one beautiful mini, about a pacific android on the run from his past. A buck should get you a sample issue from Erik Kaye, 1444 West 11th Ave, Eugene, OR 97402.

ALL-STEVE COMICS- Steve's soapbox to bitch about whatever aspect of modern society is ticking him off this week, and it's hilariously cynical fun. 50 cents from Steve Leach, 639 Colonial Ave, York, PA 17403-3403.

THE DEATH OF ANTISOCIALMAN is by Matt Feazell, who I mentioned earlier as one of the contributors to *PSTE*, and a legend in small press for his minimalist stick figure art. This is one of the best minis around, period...you can't help but laugh at some of the gags in it. #5 is out now for 50 cents and a stamp from Not Available Comics, 3867 Bristow, Detroit, MI 48212.



Rambunny



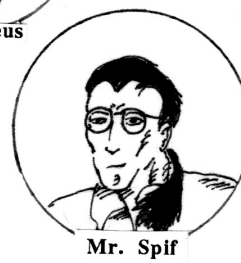
Karate Kactus



Prometheus



Ninja Ant



Mr. Spif

NEXT: It's "Prime Time" and our heroes hit the big time as they go on "Late Night With David Letterman," but a certain old enemy of the Squadron is out to ruin the show. With some hot licks from Paul Schaffer and the World's Most Dangerous Band, and a shock ending to blow your mind--all in **AMOEBA ADVENTURES #5**, coming in December to a mailbox near you.

AMOEBA ADVENTURES #4 August, 1991. Published every three months or so by Protoplasm Press, PO Box 2230, University, MS 38677. AMOEBA ADVENTURES, Prometheus the Protoplasm, and all characters within are C 1991 Nik Dirsa. Use without permission and God will smite ye where ye stand.

SPONGOPOLIS INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT.

Trying To



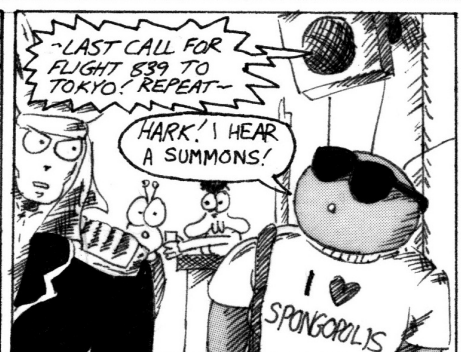
Trying To Lead A

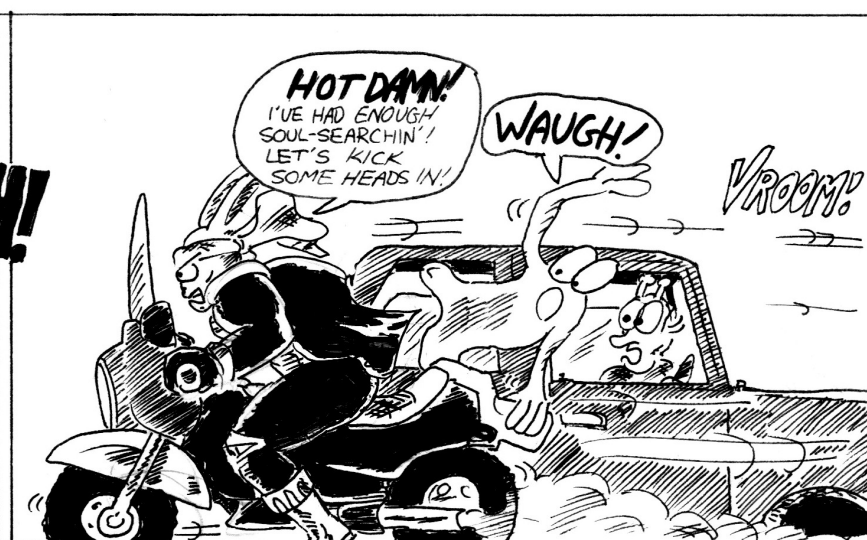
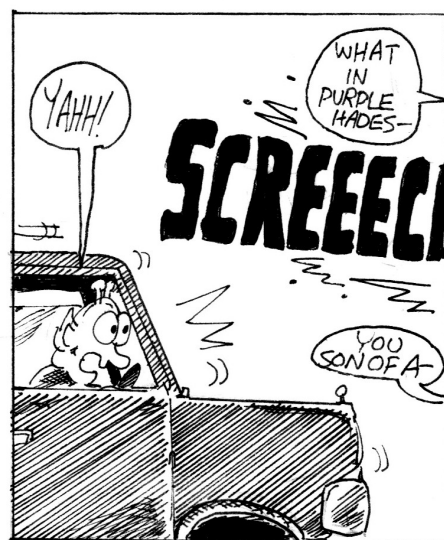
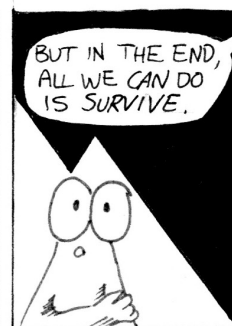
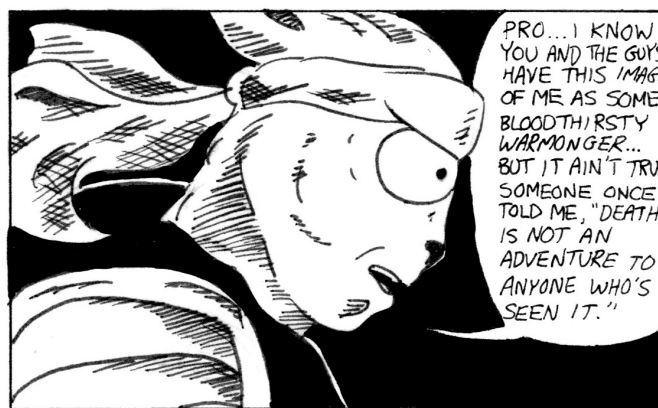


Lead A Normal Life

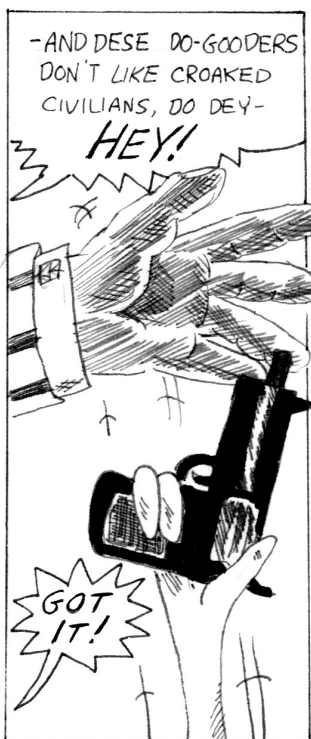
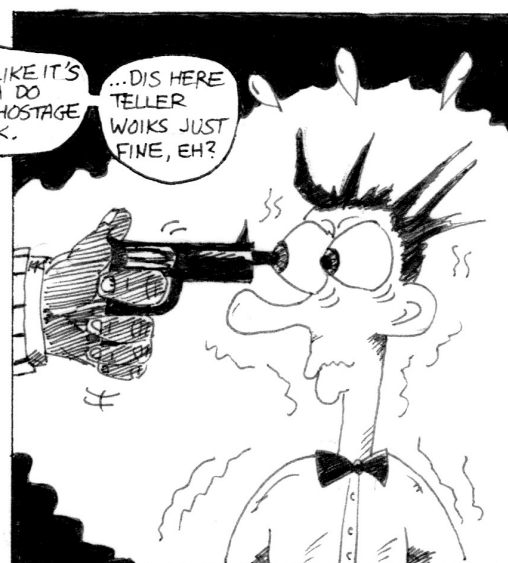
WRITTEN AND
DRAWN BY
NIK DIRGA

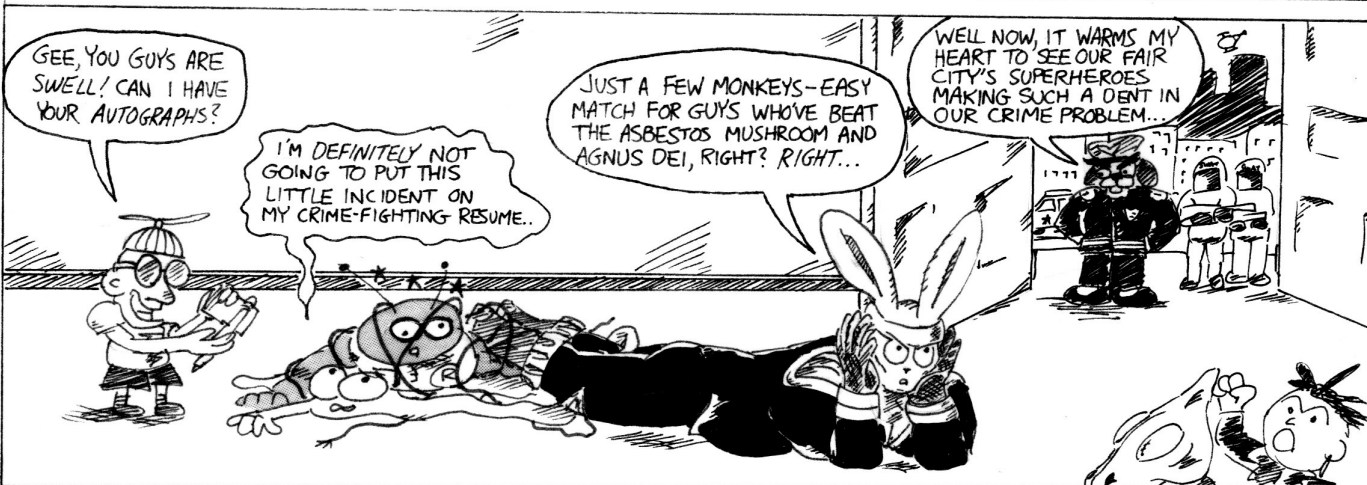
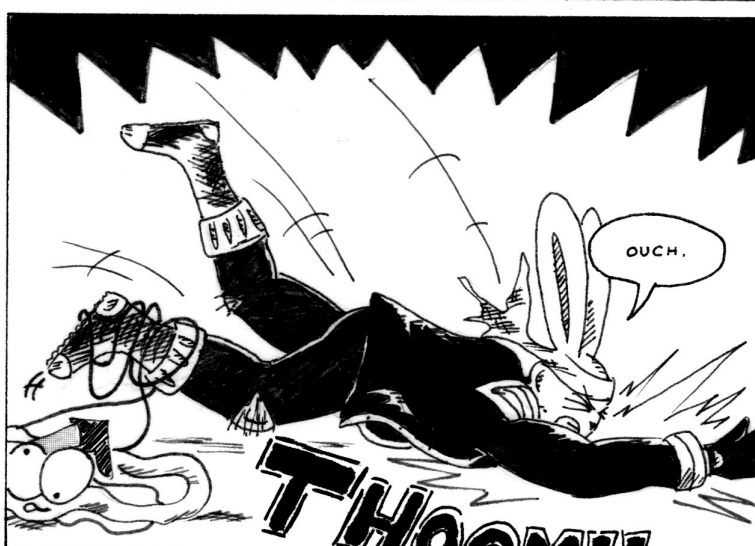
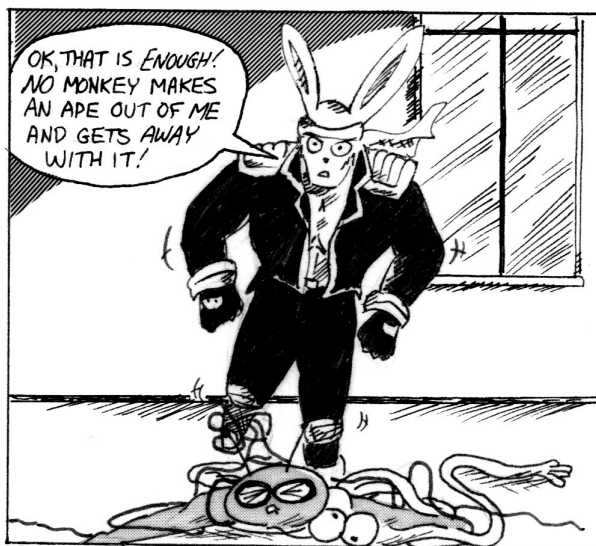












ELSEWHEN:

THERE IS A MAN
WHO LIVES IN
THE VOID
BETWEEN WORDS.

YES, WORDS.
HE MAKES HIS
HOME IN A
REALM OF
CONCEPTS AND
IDEAS THAT
WE, IN OUR
EVOLUTIONARY
INFANCY, CAN'T
QUITE EXPRESS

EUREGGH...

HIS HOUSE IS A
WANDERING
LABYRINTH
BUILT FROM THE
ASHES OF
FADING ROMANCES
AND FORGOTTEN
LOVE SONGS.

IN HIS HOUSE THERE
IS AN UNENDING
GALLERY, FILLED
WITH AN INFINITE
ASSORTMENT OF
BROKEN CLOCKS.

THERE IS A
CLOCK THAT
DONES'T RING,
IT SCREAMS.

THERE IS A
CLOCK THAT
RUNS ON
THE TEARS
OF A LIAR.

THERE IS A
CLOCK THAT
ONLY CHIMES
ON THURSDAYS
AT 1:32 PM.

THERE IS A
CLOCK THAT
USES THE BONES
OF A DEAD RAT
FOR HANDS.

...AND SO MANY
MORE THAT IF
A CLOCKMAKER
WERE TO ENTER
THIS HALL, SAY
A KINDLY OLD
SWISS GENTLEMAN,

...HE COULD SPEND
ALL ETERNITY FIXING
WHAT WAS WRONG
AND STILL NOT
MAKE A DENT.

IT TOLLS
FOR THEE!!

SHOULD I ANSWER AND RISK MY
VERY SOUL IN THE UNDERTAKING?
BUT WAIT - I HAVE NO SOUL TO LOSE!
WELL, THEN... LET THE GAMES
BEGIN, SPIN THAT WHEEL, PAT, AND
LET'S SEE WHAT YOU'VE WON.
"ASK NOT FOR WHOM THE BELL
TOLLS," LITTLE AMOEBA...

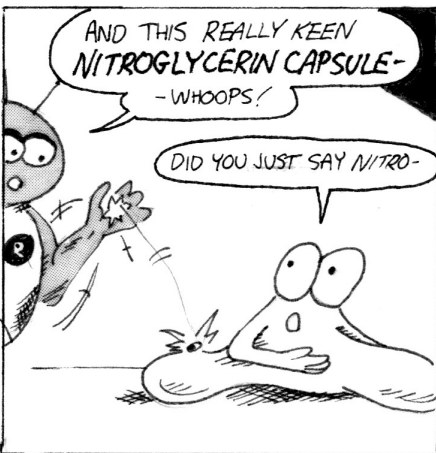
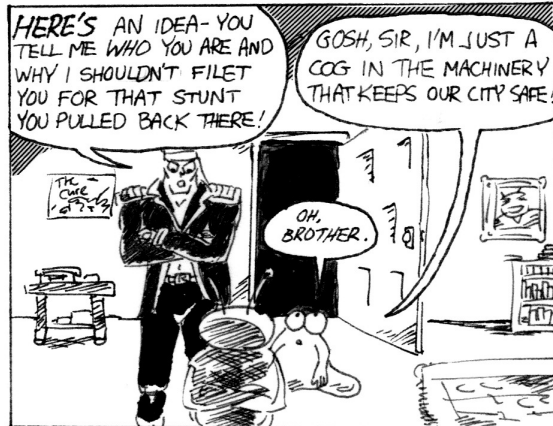
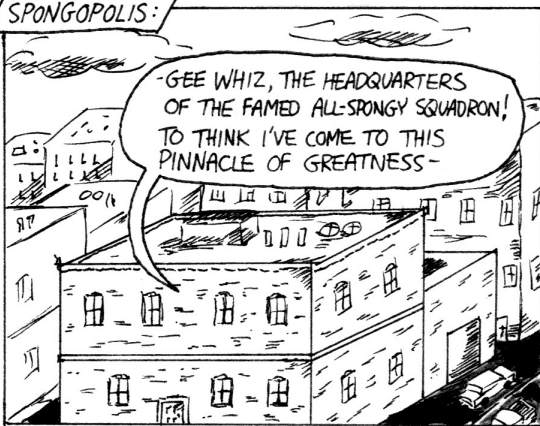
HURG: Y-YES... YES, I
HEAR YOU, MY DARLINGS,
I HEAR YOU ALL... WITH
YOUR EPILEPTIC SIREN-
SONG THAT BRINGS ME
IMAGES OF DEATH AND
PAIN AND OLD "GOMER
PYLE" RERUNS...

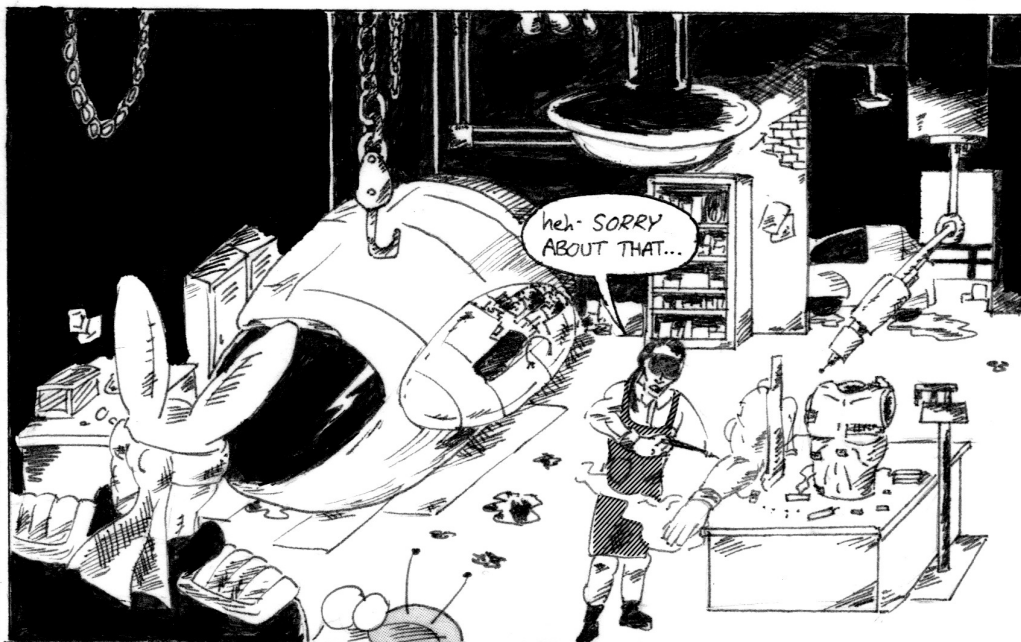
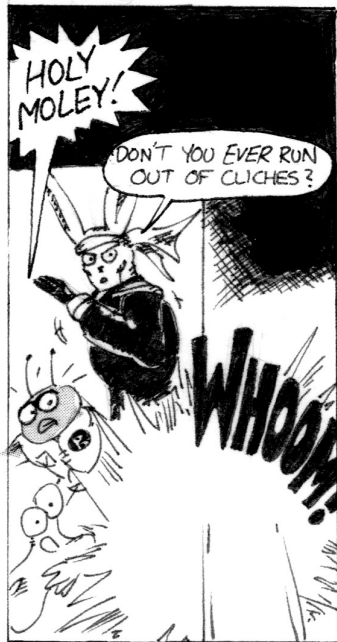
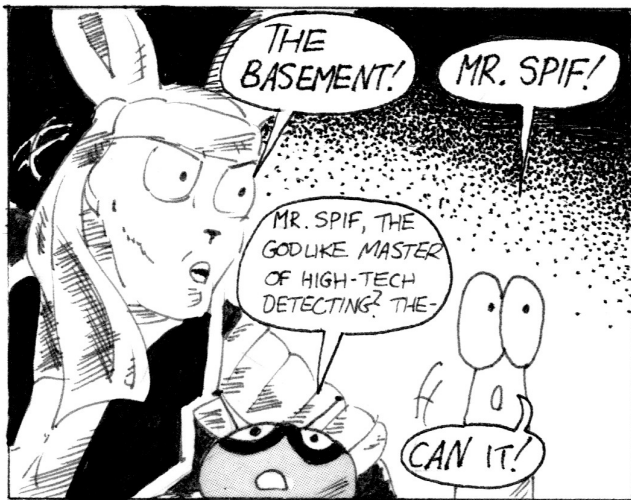
CLANG!

DOWN!
PING!

XII

SPONGOPOLIS:







JOIN THE- WOW, YOU GUYS DIDN'T EVEN LET ISUZU AND MITSU'S CORPSES GROW COLD, EH?

I KNOW VERY SOON NOW I WILL WAKE UP AND FIND MYSELF IN CHARGE AGAIN.



SO, HERE'S MY ROUGH DESIGN PLAN-

OO! A CYCLING JET-STREAM ION PARTICLE CON-FIBULATOR! NEAT!

I DON'T GET IT, PRO. WE DON'T KNOW WHO HE IS, WHAT HE DOES OR ANYTHING, AND HE JUST VOTED HIMSELF ONTO THE TEAM!

SO DO SOMETHING!



HAVE YOU THOUGHT ABOUT- URK!



OK, "RAOUL," OPEN YOUR EARS AND SHUT YOUR MOUTH.

YOU CAN JOIN US ON PROBATION... I'LL TRAIN YOU AND YOU FOLLOW MY RULES... OR ELSE YOU'RE OUT.

WHAT'S HIS PROBLEM?

OH, HE'S JUST ANXIOUS TO HAVE RAOUL JOIN US!

OH, THANK YOU, YOUR RABBINESS-

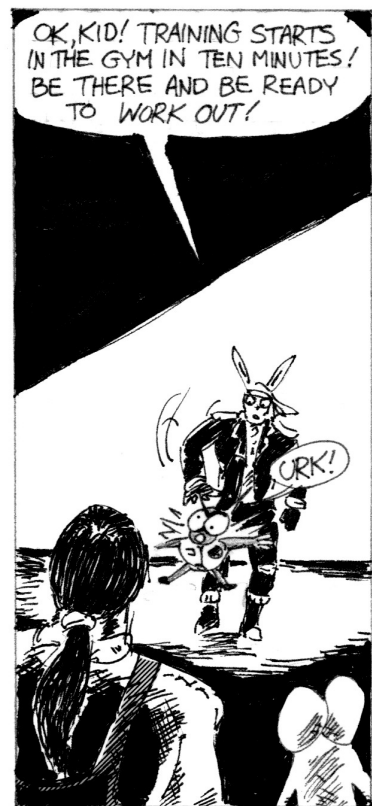
AND NO MORE HUBS!



SO WHEN I SAY JUMP-

HOW HIGH, SIR?

AH... NEW INITIATION RITES?



OK, KID! TRAINING STARTS IN THE GYM IN TEN MINUTES! BE THERE AND BE READY TO WORK OUT!



HUT! HUT! HUT!

OUCH! THANK YOU FOR SNAPPING MY SPINE, SIR...



I, uh, HEARD ABOUT YOUR MEETING WITH THE GORILLA GANG ON THE RADIO...

I DON'T WANNA TALK ABOUT IT.

WELL, JUST KEEP IN MIND THAT WE AS A TEAM ARE A BIT OF A MESS RIGHT NOW... WE NEED SOME TIME TO GET IT TOGETHER.



YOU HEARD ME, 500 JUMPING JACKS!

BUT SIR...

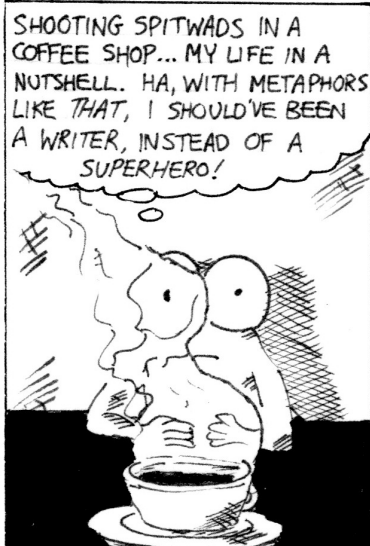
OK, A THOUSAND!

...SOME OF US MORE THAN OTHERS...

YEAH...HEY, SPIF, WANT TO GO OUT FOR SOME COFFEE?

I'M SORRY PRO, BUT I'VE GOT SO MUCH WORK TO DO HERE- MAYBE SOME OTHER TIME...

LATER...

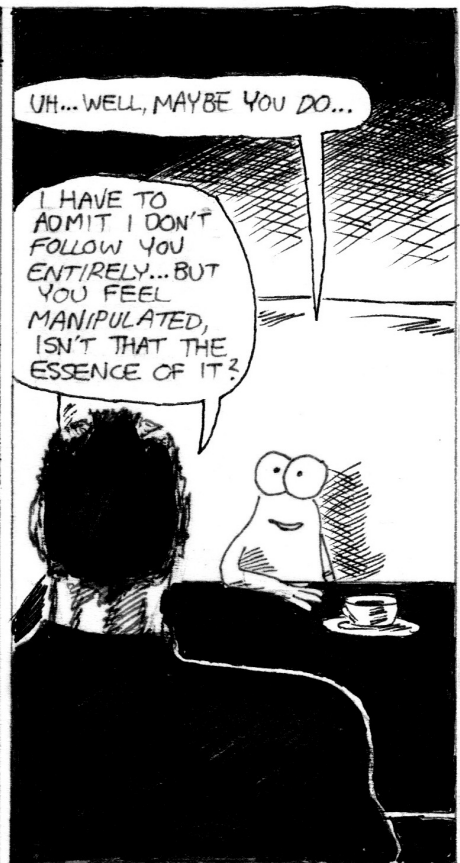
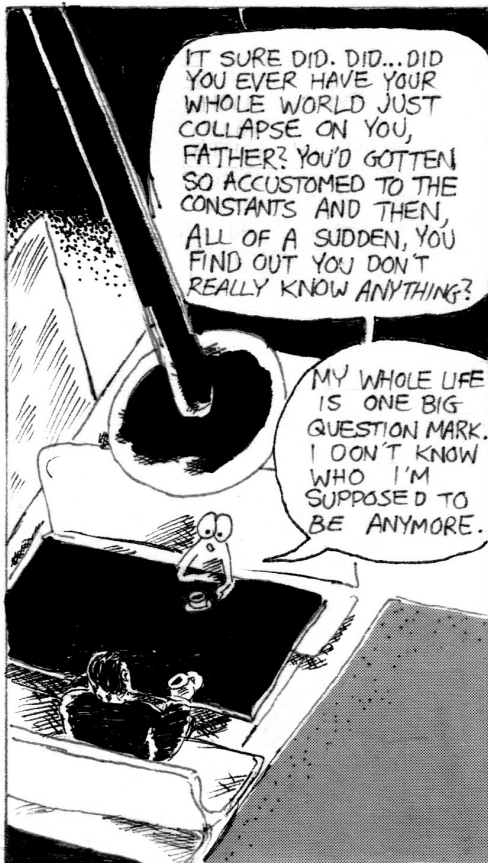
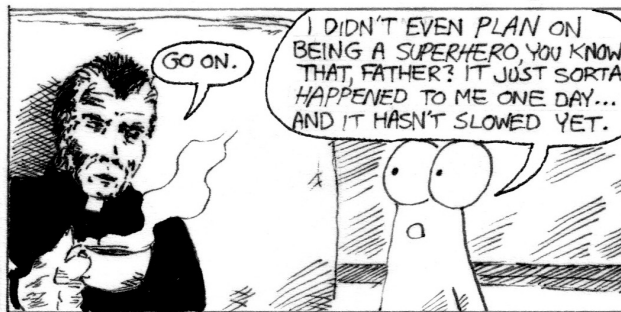
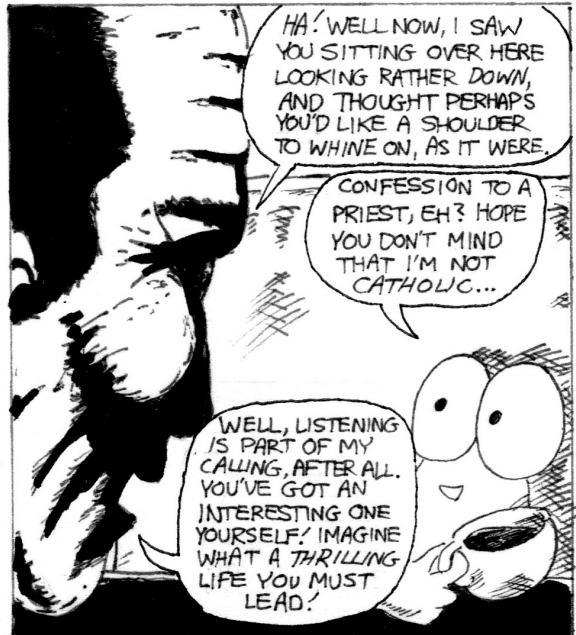
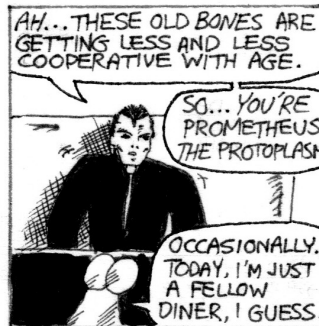
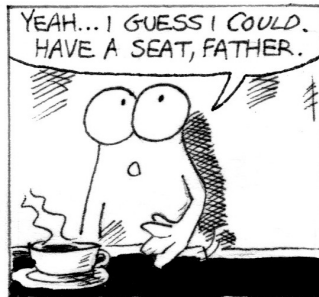


"THE MINDLESS LUMP OF PROTOPLASM I ONCE WAS, MILLIONS OF YEARS AGO, BEFORE IT COLLIDED WITH A STAR AND OUT CAME..."

"PROMETHEUS, THE COCKY CRIMEFIGHTER I WAS WHEN I FIRST CAME HERE, BEFORE I DIED AND CAME BACK AS"

"THE PROMETHEAN, THE SUPERHUMAN BODY I HAD FOR A WHILE UNTIL I WAS RETURNED TO NORMAL BY..."

* All in PROMETHEUS #1-6-N.





I'M SO IN THE DARK ABOUT IT ALL NOW... WHERE DO I STAND? WHO DO I BELIEVE?



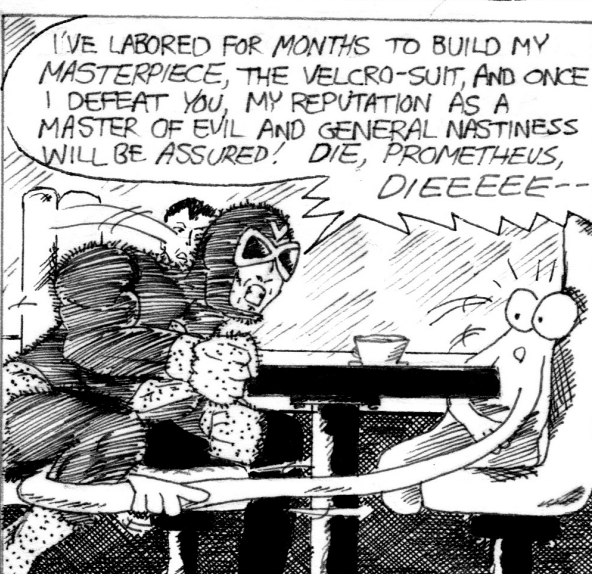
UMMHUMM...MAYBE THE BEST THING FOR YOU TO TRY TO DO IS--

HALT, AMOEBA!!



PREPARE YOURSELF, PROTOPLASM, FOR YOUR DESTRUCTION AT THE HANDS OF... VELCRO-MAN!!

NOT ANOTHER ONE...



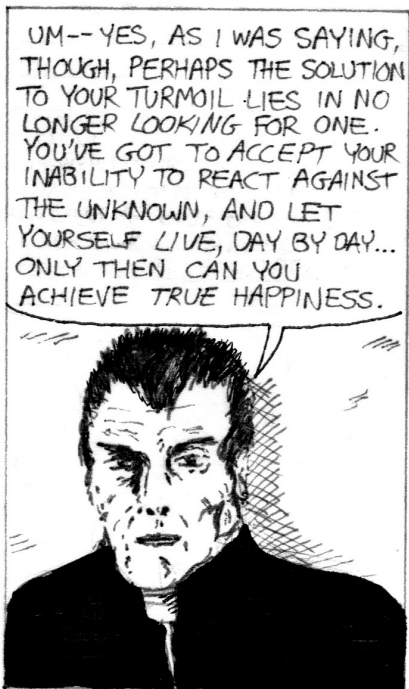
I'VE LABORED FOR MONTHS TO BUILD MY MASTERPIECE, THE VELCRO-SUIT, AND ONCE I DEFEAT YOU, MY REPUTATION AS A MASTER OF EVIL AND GENERAL NASTINESS WILL BE ASSURED! DIE, PROMETHEUS, DIEEEEE--

KA-BOOM!!!

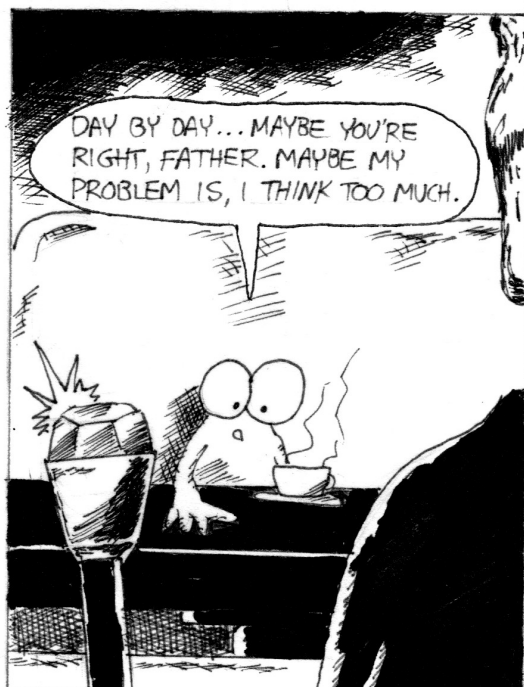


SEE WHAT I HAVE TO DEAL WITH IN THIS BUSINESS?

URGH-UMPHH!! HUMBLER BY A SHAG CARPET, WHAT AN IGNOMINIOUS END FOR A CRIMINAL MASTERMIND...

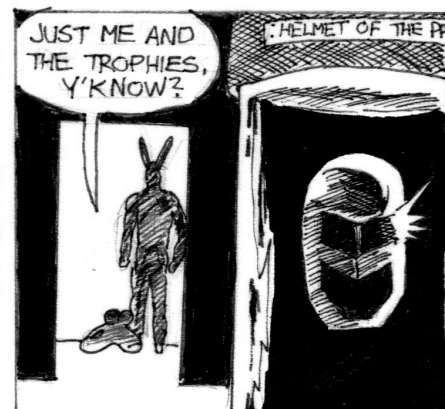
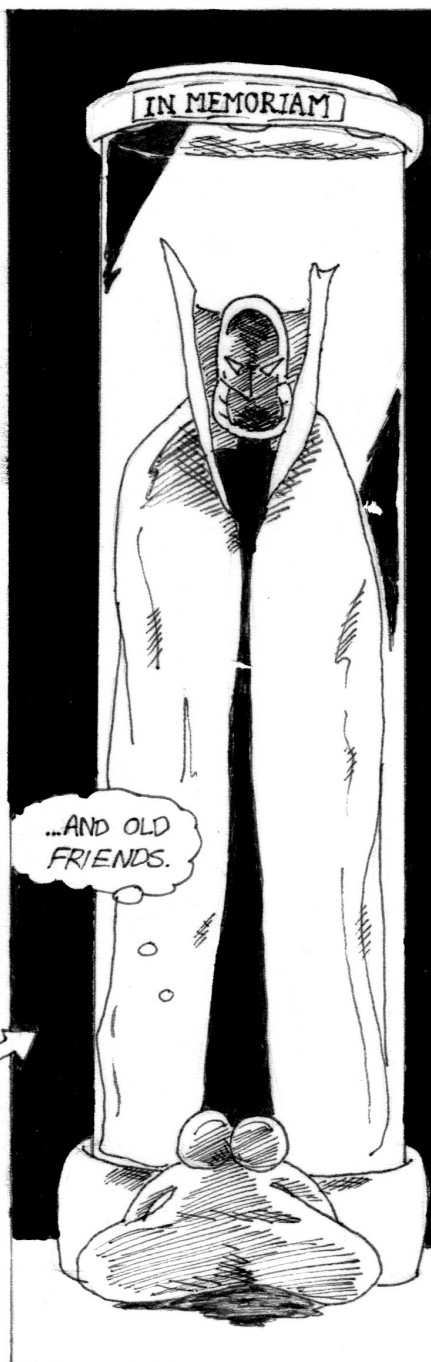
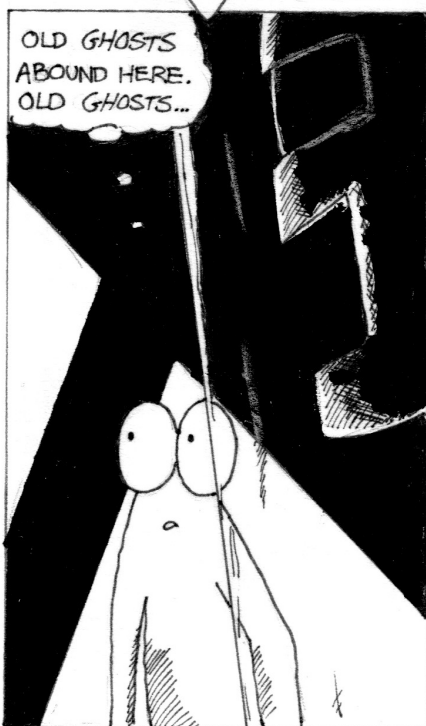
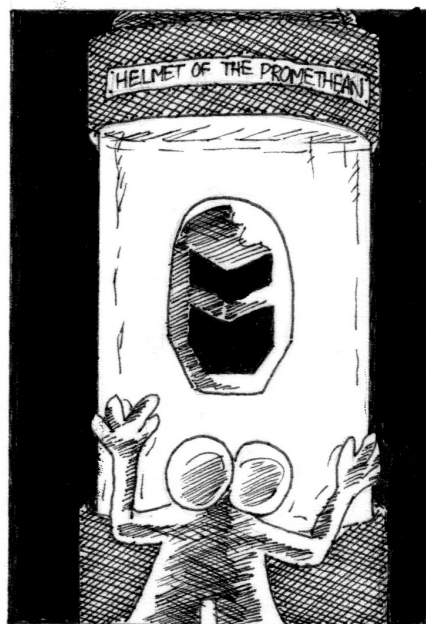


UM-- YES, AS I WAS SAYING, THOUGH, PERHAPS THE SOLUTION TO YOUR TURMOIL LIES IN NO LONGER LOOKING FOR ONE. YOU'VE GOT TO ACCEPT YOUR INABILITY TO REACT AGAINST THE UNKNOWN, AND LET YOURSELF LIVE, DAY BY DAY... ONLY THEN CAN YOU ACHIEVE TRUE HAPPINESS.

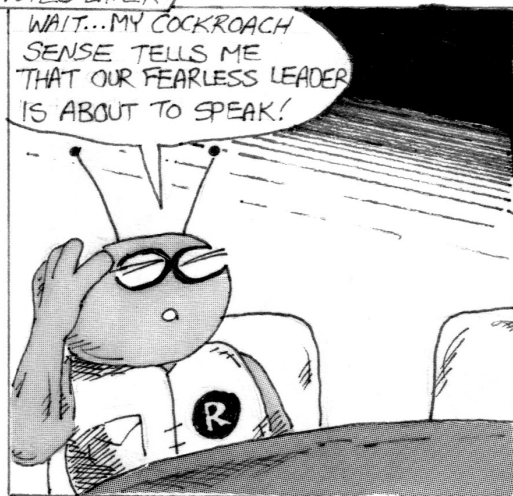


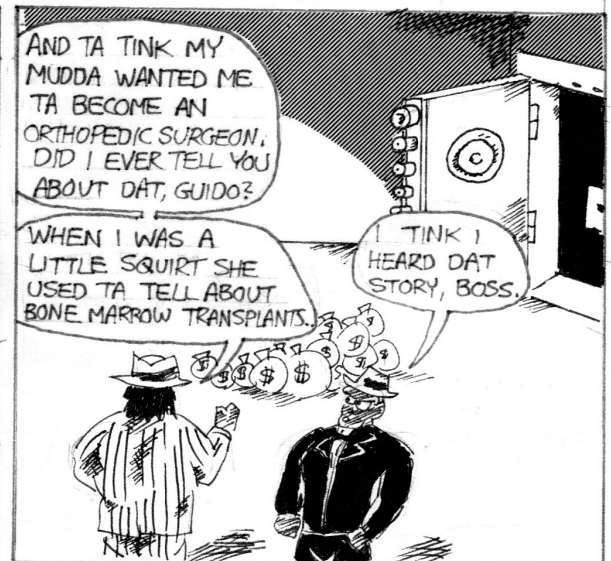
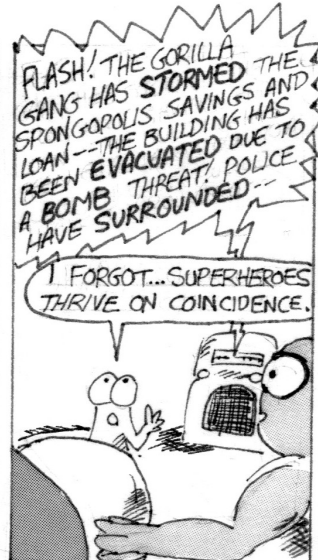
DAY BY DAY... MAYBE YOU'RE RIGHT, FATHER. MAYBE MY PROBLEM IS, I THINK TOO MUCH.

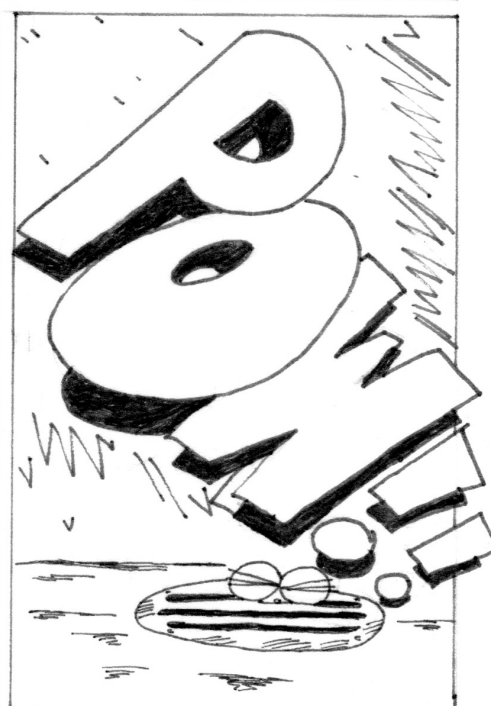
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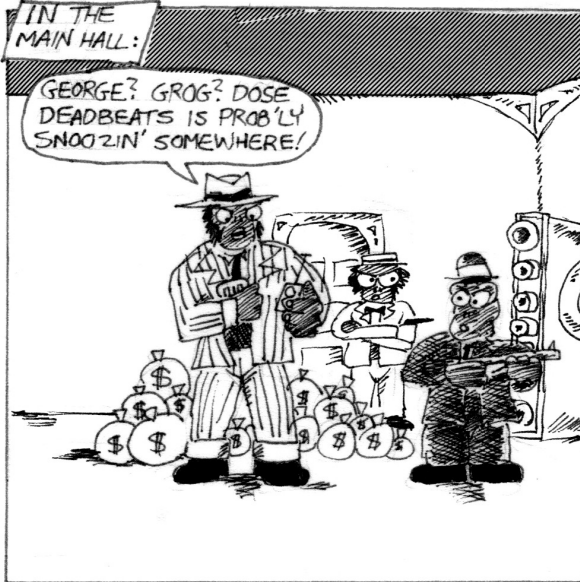
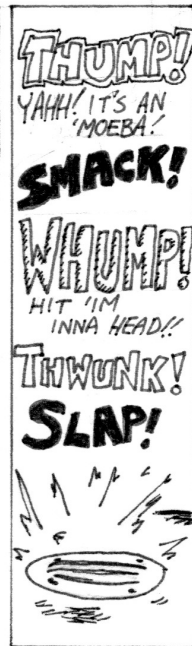


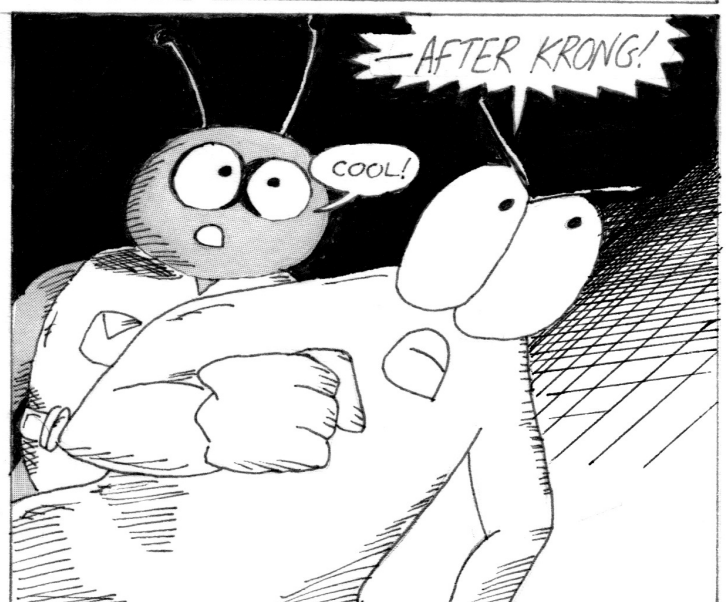
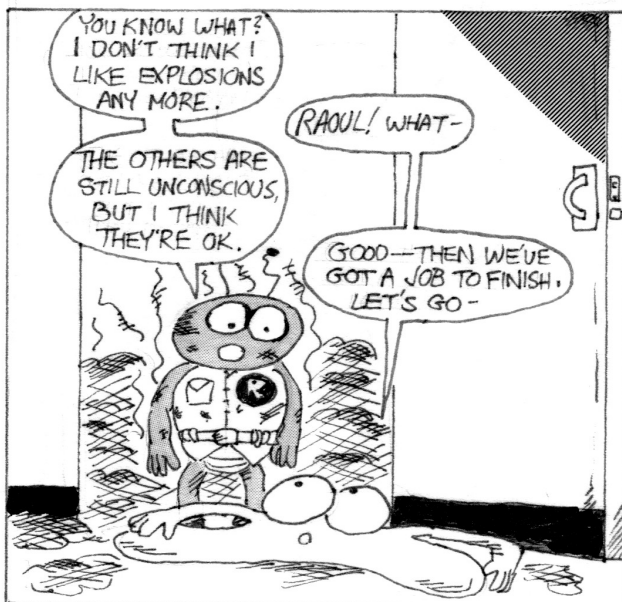
MINUTES LATER:

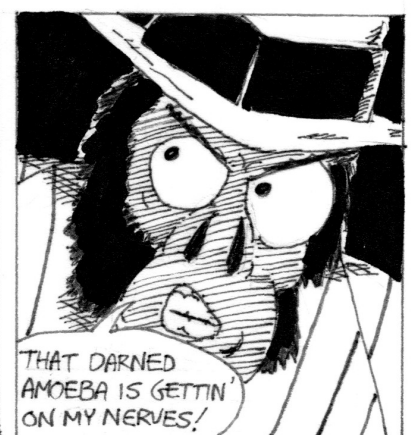
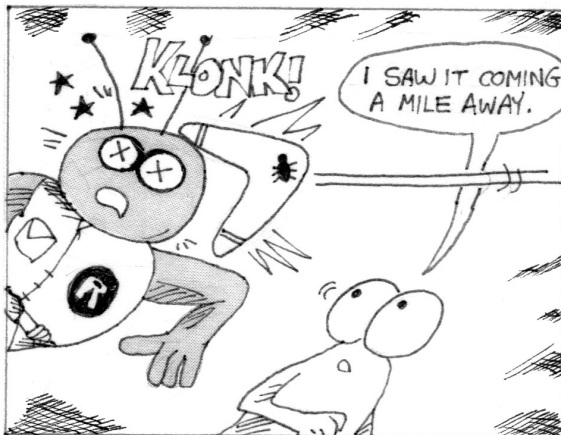
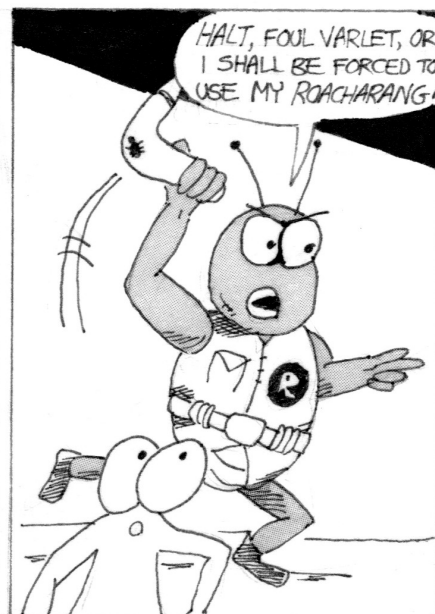
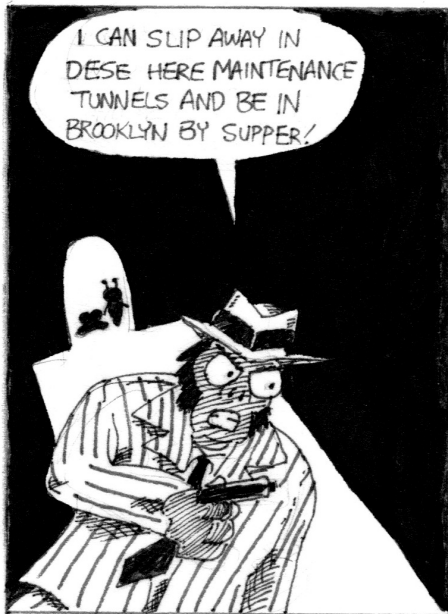


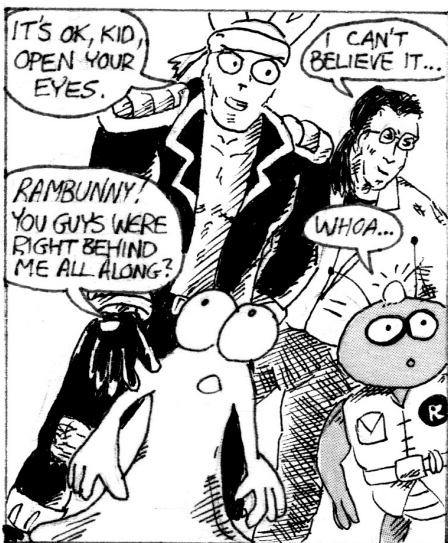
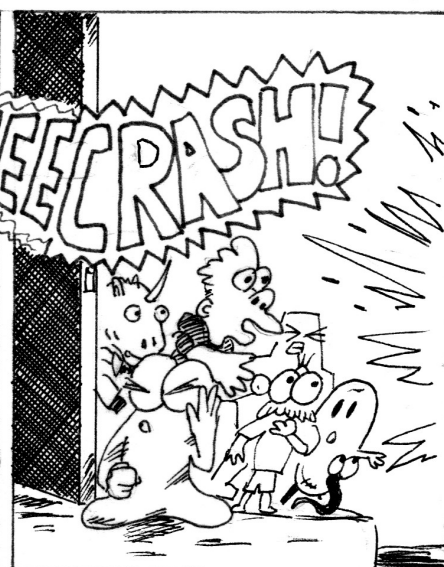




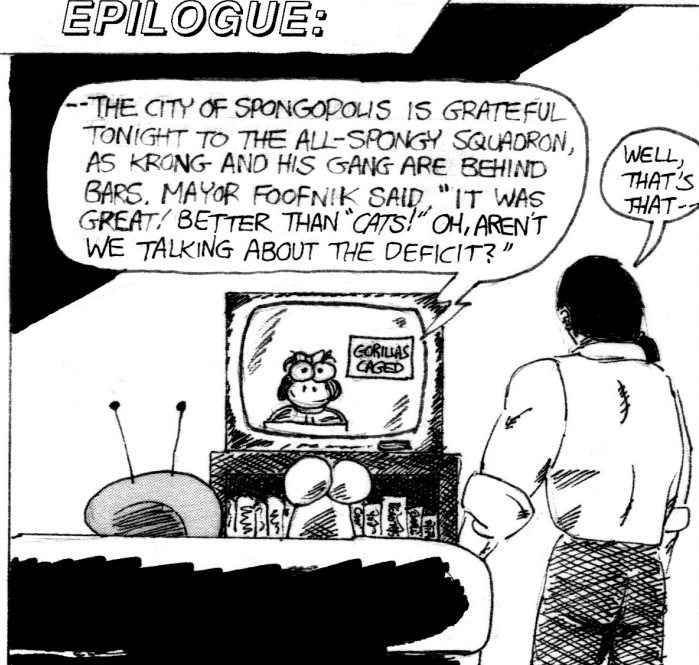








EPILOGUE:



I CAN'T DO ANYTHING ABOUT THE INNER GODS-- I CAN'T HUNT THEM DOWN AND FIND OUT ALL THE ANSWERS. EVEN IF I DID, I BET I'D JUST HAVE MORE QUESTIONS IN THE END.

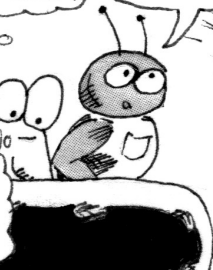
I HAVE TO BELIEVE IN ME... I AM PROMETHEUS THE PROTOPLASM, AND THAT'S ALL THAT MATTERS.



IF WE DON'T END UP FIGHTING A GIANT KITCHEN UTENSIL OR SOMETHING TOMORROW,

WHERE'S RAMBUNNY? I'M SUPPOSED TO POLISH HIS BOOTS!

...MAYBE I'LL STOP BY AL'S FOR A BIT... HAVE A TALK WITH THE PREACHER AGAIN.



HE SAID HE HAD SOME PERSONAL BUSINESS TO DO... AND HE'D BE BACK LATER. YOU KNOW HOW HE GETS.

MEANWHILE:



THIS IS THE GUN IT ALL BEGAN WITH. SO MANY YEARS AGO, WHEN I WAS A GRUNT.

I'VE LEARNED SO MUCH SINCE THEN... BUT I STILL CAN'T KEEP THE BLOOD OFF MY HANDS.



YOU'RE ALL AROUND ME, SPONGOPOLIS. I TRY TO KEEP YOU CLEAN...

...BUT IT HASN'T BEEN EASY. I'VE SPENT MY LIFE DEALING OUT PAIN IN AN EFFORT TO END IT... AND IN THE PROCESS, BECOME SOMEONE ELSE. SOMEONE HARD. THE YOUNG NAIVE POET WHO WENT TO WAR IS DEAD.



NO, IT'S NOT ME I WORRY ABOUT... BUT THE OTHERS. WE'VE LOST ONE MAN SO FAR.

AND LET ME BE NEXT BEFORE ANY OF THE OTHERS.



PRO, NINJA ANT, SPF, AND NOW RAOUL... EVEN ISUZU, WHO'S NOT AS WISE AS HE THINKS...

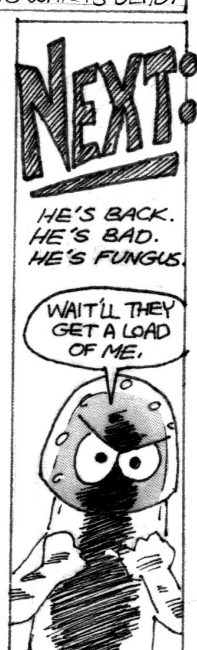
WE'RE THE ALL-SPONGY SQUAD. GOD, WHAT A LOUSY NAME... AND WE'RE AT THE THRESHOLD OF BEING SOMETHING GREAT...

IF ONLY WE DON'T BLOW IT FIRST.



GOODBYE, MANSLAUGHTER!

IT WASN'T IN VAIN.



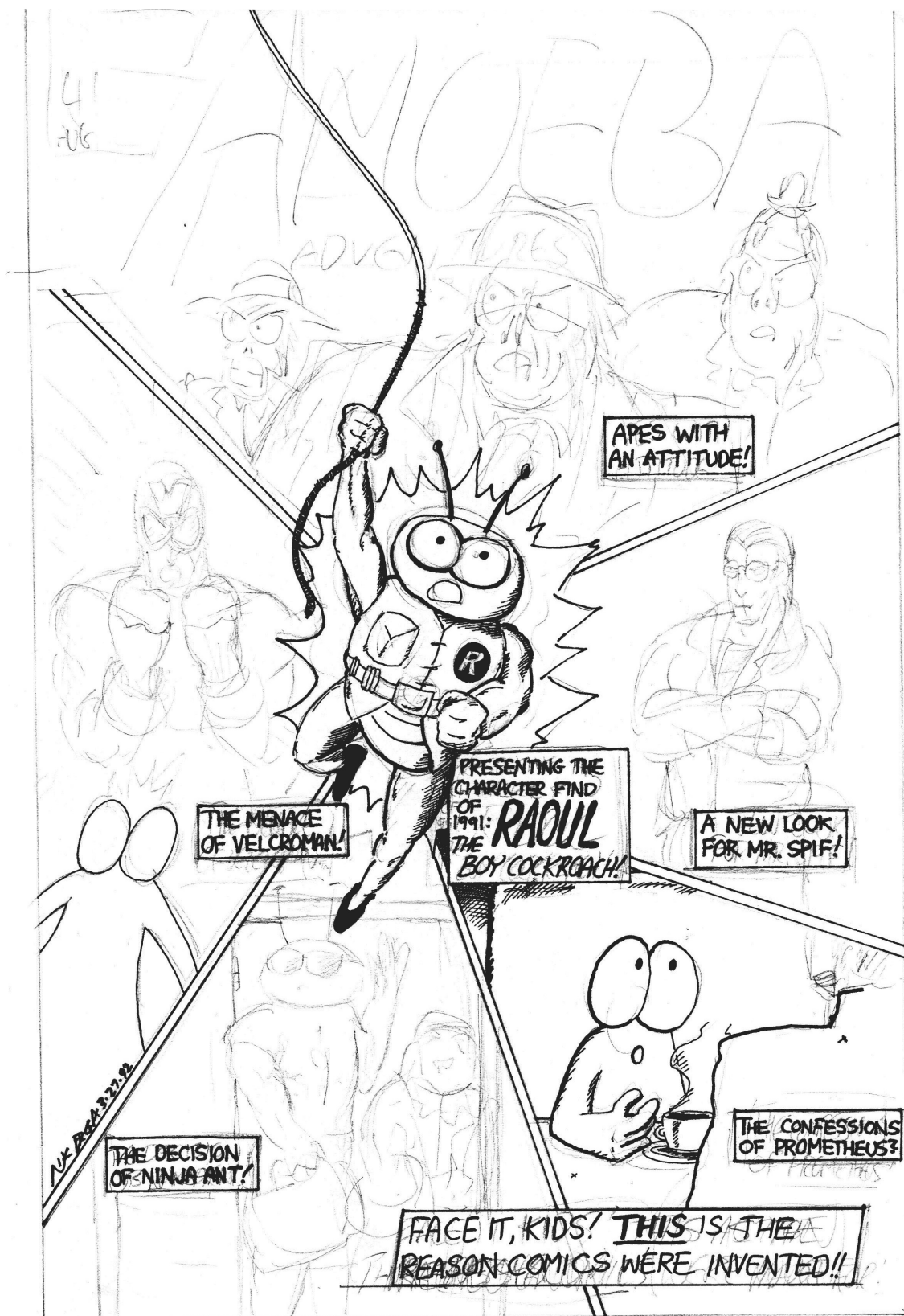
NEXT!

HE'S BACK. HE'S BAD. HE'S FUNGUS.

WAIT'LL THEY GET A LOAD OF ME.

SPECIAL 2020 BONUS SECTION

An unfinished design for #4's cover. I actually like this idea more than the finished design and can't remember why I abandoned it. Those "look at all the cool stuff inside this comic" covers were always one of my favourites.





Raoul the Boy
Cockroach was a very,
very silly character, and
indeed he was written
out by #13 because he
was a little TOO silly,
but he was a lot of fun
to write.



He's very obviously inspired by Dave Sim's
"Roach" character from Cerebus, right and above,
who appeared a lot throughout that series in
different satirical guises.
(Cerebus (C) Dave Sim)



Unfinished Christmas card design.

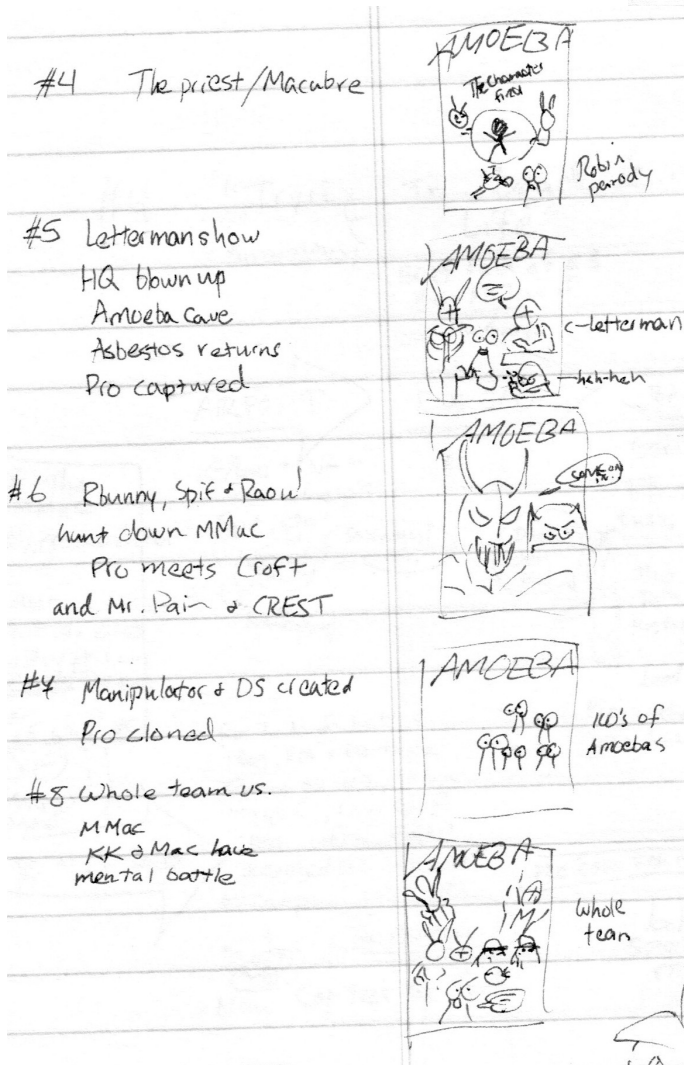
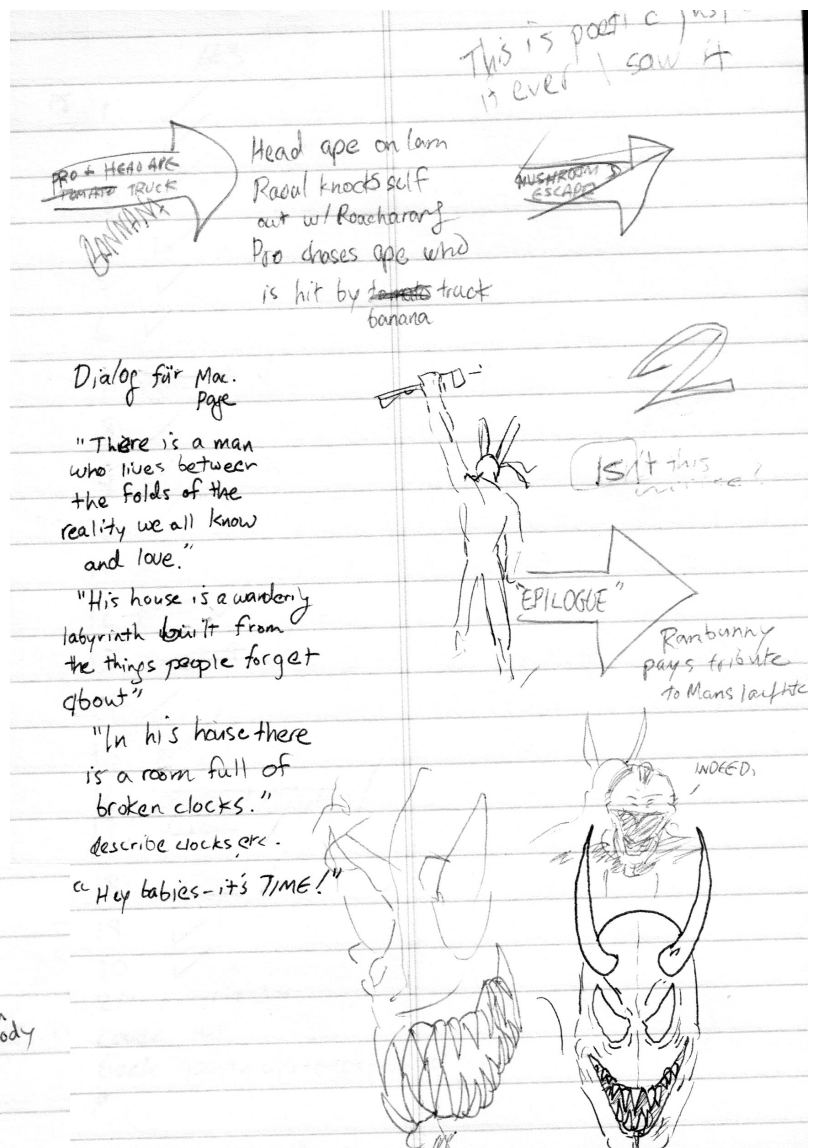


I think Amoeba Adventures #4 is the issue where it started becoming the comic I imagined in my head. I started leaving behind the more superheroey stuff from #1-3 and while my art would never be great, it improved a bit and I had a lot of fun doing different page designs and ideas like the "scrolling credits" on Page 1.

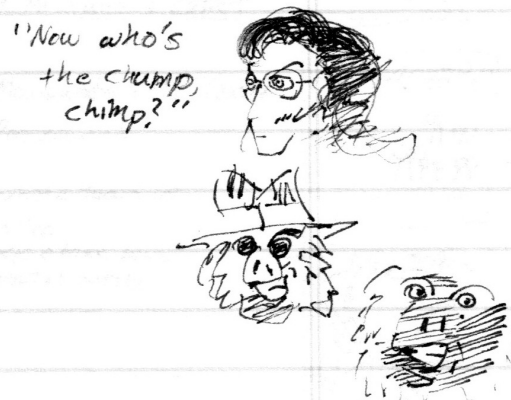


Amoeba Adventures #4 is a time capsule of 1991 and has plenty of "Easter eggs" of my influences that I shamelessly ripped off. I owed a big debt to Grant Morrison's Doom Patrol, where the style of the Macabre dialogue on page 7 clearly comes from, and Rambunny's new leather jacket was a direct homage to Robotman. Macabre himself looks a lot like Spider-Man villain Venom.

Other Easter eggs included the mysterious priest, who I copied from a rather perverted priest in Alan Moore and David Lloyd's "V For Vendetta."



At left, I mapped out "Details of Design" and future Amoeba Adventures issues. At this point I still imagined Details of Design would run three parts instead of five.



Still finding my way in notes. The "battle armor" that Spif was designing this issue (sketch below left) was a rather horrible idea that didn't stick around for very long. I didn't realise he could just be a normal guy who's kinda smart and still work.

