

Rear View: September 2021

Monthly spotlight on an item from the HIV/AIDS Graphic Communication Archive

6. Strip AIDS

Publication: London Lighthouse, 1987. A4, 56pp + 4pp cover. Cover 4 colour, inside mono. Conceived & organised by Don Melia. Layout & design: Lionel Gracey-Whitman. Cover: Barry Kamen. Also an exhibition at Young Unknowns Gallery. (Selected pages shown in this PDF).



Strip AIDS (edit)

PDF document

PADLET DRIVE

Strip AIDS Chosen by Roger Sabin:

“Strip AIDS, a 1987 anthology comic of 80-plus strips and cartoons by different cartoonists, was put together to draw attention to the AIDS crisis and raise funds for London Lighthouse, but also to protest bigotry in mainstream press cartoons. Today, we are used to ‘ambient homophobia’ in some sectors of the press, but back then it was of a different order of viciousness. References to a ‘gay plague’ were routine, and some cartoonists seemed to revel in depicting suffering.

The architect of Strip AIDS was Don Melia. He was a sometime cartoonist, and had co-created Matt Black, ‘the world’s first gay superhero’. But the reason he could contemplate such a mad project as Strip AIDS was that he had a Rolodex of contacts, both among cartoonists and journalists, due to his job as a publicist and as co-editor of the anthology comic Heartbreak Hotel. And, yes, it was a Rolodex – these were pre-Internet days. So Don set himself two tasks: a) to gather contributors for Strip AIDS, and b) to drum-up reviews and publicity. The latter was extremely important – if a comic didn’t get ‘seen’, it sank – and it was how I got to know Don via my job as a freelance hack.

Like all anthologies, Strip AIDS is a mixed bag. Most contributors went down the comedy route; but some did not. Most produced new AIDS-specific strips or cartoons, and some simply contributed work from their bottom drawer (e.g. Frank Dickens’ ‘Bristow’). Some were famous (Alan Moore, Kevin O’Neill, Posy Simmonds, Steve Bell) and many were not. Some were luminaries of LGBTQ cartooning (Kate Charlesworth, Groc, David Shenton, etc.) and some were mainstream Marvel/DC comics folk – and it is mildly jarring in retrospect to see superhero strips being included.

But in its ziney, chaotic, DIY, immediate, angry, way, Strip AIDS is magnificent. It was a success, in the end, and went on to spawn Strip AIDS USA in 1988. Don Melia died of the syndrome in 1992.”

Sexual Health + AIDS: for Mature Readers Chosen by Ian Horton

“One striking aspect of the work in the HIV/AIDS Graphic Communication Archive is the range of comic book styles employed, from pastiches of *Young Romance* comics to the cartooning usually associated with children’s humour comics. I was intrigued by the graphic sequences used specifically to communicate information, in this case two examples demonstrating How to Use a Condom. The first of these, created for university students, is plainly matter-of-fact in its realistic illustration style, the task is broken down into a sequence of seven panels with quite extensive supporting texts in each panel. In contrast the second example, simply designated as being for mature readers, has no explanatory text and it is drawn in a more simplified cartoon style again across seven panels. It does however have the important addition of an anthropomorphised flesh-coloured condom character with a cheeky smile who directly addresses and engages with the reader.

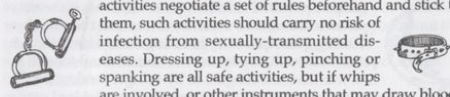
To fully understand the affect these cartoon strips might have on the reader we need to consider the other images that surround them and what comic book artist and theorist Will Eisner describes as attitudinal change. In his book *Comics and Sequential Art* (1985) Eisner divides comics into two groups, those to entertain and those that are instructional, he further divides instructional comics into ones that are merely technical and others that promote attitudinal change. To return to our examples, the first does contain other more humorous cartoons and spot-illustrations that might be considered entertaining but unlikely to really encourage the viewer to engage in S&M, fantasies or sexual massages. The second example, contrasts the technical cartoon of How to Use a Condom with another comic strip of a woman and man about to have unprotected sex. In thought balloons they remember the times they have previously had unprotected sex with other partners, these memories in turn remember the times they have had unprotected sex with other partners, a sequence that could potentially continue exponentially into the past. This reversal of the usual top to bottom reading order of a comics page might make the reader pause and think about their own actions in the past, reconsider the choices they might make in the future, and thereby potentially create lasting attitudinal change.”

7. Sexual Health: Information for Students in Brighton


Booklet: AIDS Education Research Project, University of Sussex, September 1994. A5, 36pp, 2 colour cover, b/w inside. Illustrations: Jane Druce. (one spread shown).

• **S & M** - provided that people participating in sadomasochistic activities negotiate a set of rules beforehand and stick to them, such activities should carry no risk of infection from sexually-transmitted diseases. Dressing up, tying up, pinching or spanking are all safe activities, but if whips are involved, or other instruments that may draw blood, then this becomes a risky activity and care should be taken.

• **Fantasies** - many people use fantasy and dressing up to bring variety to their sex lives and doing so is completely safe as long as the usual safer sex guidelines are still applied.



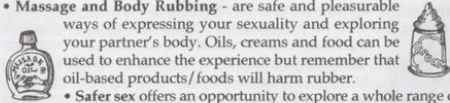
“No NO NO KEVIN!
I said Mel Gibson,
not Gibbon!!!”



DRESSING-UP CAN BE FUN...


• **Massage and Body Rubbing** - are safe and pleasurable ways of expressing your sexuality and exploring your partner's body. Oils, creams and food can be used to enhance the experience but remember that oil-based products/ foods will harm rubber.

• **Safer sex** offers an opportunity to explore a whole range of possibilities and discover erogenous zones and sensations that you never knew you had! All that is required is a little imagination!




Condoms
There are many different kinds of condoms available on the market: smooth, ribbed, coloured, flavoured and even luminous! What you choose is a matter of individual taste but some things to consider are:

- ease of opening the packet
- taste and smell
- how easy it is to put on
- whether it causes irritation
- texture and appearance
- cost




It is essential to check for a kitemark which shows that the product has been manufactured to British Standard 3704, and the expiry date.

When used properly condoms offer protection against pregnancy, cervical cancer, syphilis, gonorrhoea, herpes and HIV infection. Getting used to using condoms may take a little practise which you can easily do with a carrot or on your own before trying with a partner.



HOW TO USE A CONDOM...



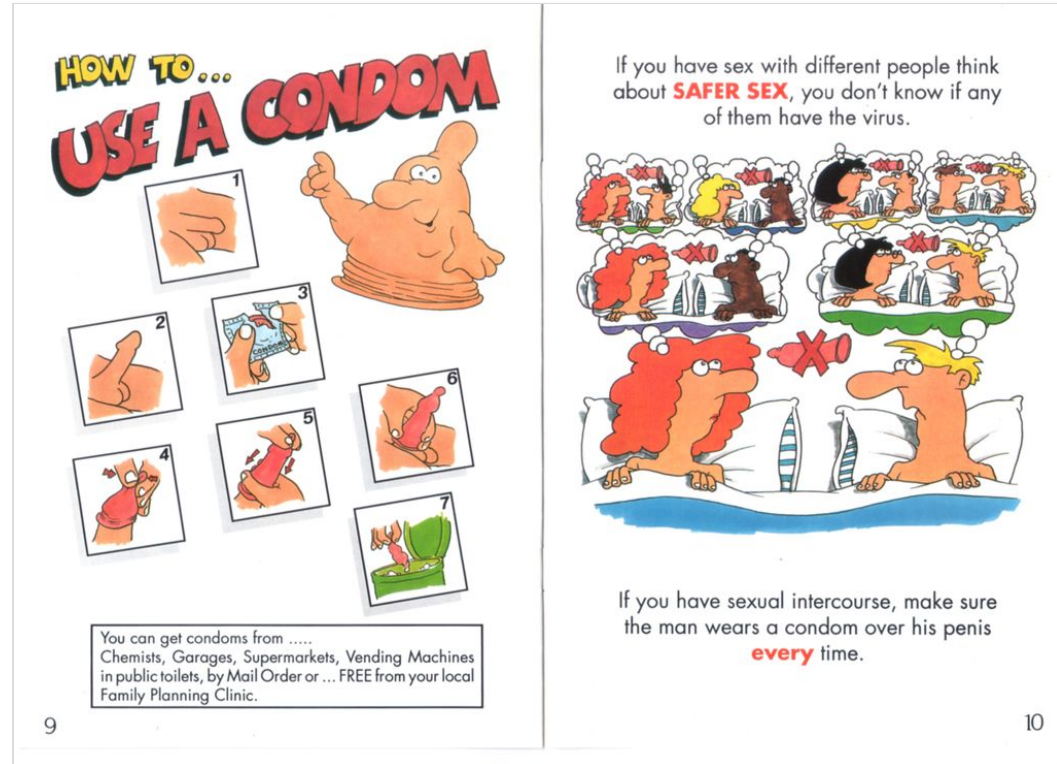
CUT-OUT & KEEP!

19 Information for Students in Brighton

Information for Students in Brighton 20

8. AIDS: for Mature Readers

Booklet: AIDS Ahead, 1991. A5, 12pp, 4 colour. Design & Illustration: David Peet. (one spread shown).



September Guest Curators: Comics Research Hub (CoRH!!) at University of the Arts London.

Roger Sabin is Professor of Popular Culture at UAL and a member of the Comics Research Hub (CoRH!!) <http://comicsresearch.arts.ac.uk/>

Ian Horton is Reader in Graphic Communication at London College of Communication. In 2014, along with Lydia Wysocki and John Swogger he founded the Applied Comics Network and a founder member of the Comics Research Hub (CoRH) at the University of the Arts London. His book *Hard Werken: One for All (Graphic Art & Design 1979–1994)* [co-authored with Bettina Furnee] is the first academic study of this influential avant-garde Dutch graphic design studio and was published by Valiz in 2018. He is currently working with Dr Maggie Gray (Kingston University) on two books exploring the relationship between art history and comics studies to be published by Palgrave in 2022.

Twitter: @appcommnet

UK £2.50/US\$3.95

STRIP AIDS®



A Charity Project for London Lighthouse

STRIP AIDS — THE REASON

It started with a cheap-shot AIDS cartoon in one of the major national newspapers. As a cartoonist and illustrator, I found the use of a cartoon to perpetuate ignorance, fear and prejudice and to undo the good work done by others to be an abuse of the power of the cartoonist. And I decided to do something about it. ■ The original idea was to get a few cartoonists to do some cartoons reflecting a positive attitude towards AIDS. Maybe enough to print a twenty-page comic book and raise a few hundred pounds for an AIDS charity. To say that *STRIP AIDS* grew beyond my wildest expectations is an understatement. ■ It's not just the number of contributors, it's the enthusiasm with which they embraced the project. It's the quality of the work, the care and the thought that went into it. It's the letters of encouragement that were sent with the drawings. I cannot thank the artists enough. Without them, there would be no *STRIP AIDS*. ■ All of the profits from *STRIP AIDS* will go to London Lighthouse, England's first residential and day-care centre for people affected by AIDS. This means caring for more than those with HIV infection or full-blown AIDS. Fathers, mothers, sisters, brothers, husbands, wives, friends, lovers — sooner or later, one way or another, we are all affected. In the five weeks it took to compile this book, several of the contributors had friends who were either hospitalised with or died of AIDS. It couldn't have hit the message home harder. ■ The spirit of *STRIP AIDS* is non-political, non-sexist, non-racist and, most importantly, non-judgmental. AIDS transcends all these barriers. Everyone involved in this book — from the artists through to you, the readers — has also transcended these barriers. ■ Before I finish, I would like to add a personal thank-you to Lionel, without whose hard work, encouragement and support I would never have completed this book. ■ As they said in that summer of love twenty years ago, "I get by with a little help from my friends". Thank you all for being friends. □ Don Melia, London, 1987.

STRIP AIDS — THE ARTISTS

Tony Allen	Caroline della Porta	Cath Jackson	Kevin O'Neil
Steven Appleby	Frank Dickens	JAK	Linda Parker
Saffie Ashtiany	Phil Elliott	Litza Jansz	Dominic Poelsma
Bambos	Hunt Emerson	Tom Johnston	Mimi Potworowska
Hope Barrett	Derrick Erasmus	Gray Jolliffe	Viv Quillin
Monte Beauchamp	John Erasmus	Barry Kamen	Paul Raymonde
Bill Belcher	Nick Garland	Nick Kamen	Jamie Reid
Steve Bell	Melinda Gebbie	Mick Kidd	Pete Rigg
Neil Bennett	Dave Gibbons	Larry	Tom Robinson
Paul Birch	Charles Griffin	David Leach	David Roper
Richard Brookes	Sophie Grillet	Richard Lloyd	David Shenton
Mark Buckingham	GROC	Peter Lydon	Bill Sienkiewicz
Mel Calman	Myra Hancock	Bob Lynch	James Sillavan
Michael Cashman	Max Handley	Jay Lynch	Posy Simmonds
Kate Charlesworth	Merrily Harpur	MAC	Ricky Slaughter
Margi Clarke	Steve Harrison	Larry Marder	Spitting Image
Dan Clowes	Michael Heath	Brendan McCarthy	Richard Starkings
Richard Coles	David Hine	Helen McCookerybook	Geoff Thompson
Chris Constantine	Floyd Hughes	Angus McGill	Russ Tudor
Alan Davis	Rian Hughes	Don Melia	WEEF (David A Smith)
Glenn Deakin	Tony Husband	Pete Milligan	Kipper Williams
Kim Deitch	Iskander Islam	Alan Moore	Skip Williamson

STRIP AIDS — THE PRODUCERS

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Specialist distribution by: Titan Distributors Ltd, PO Box 250, London E3 4RT, (01) 980 6167
US distribution by: Capital City Distribution Inc, 2827 Perry Street, Madison, WI 53713, (608) 274 8987
Book launch by: Braganza, 56 Frith Street, London, W1V 5TA (with special thanks to the staff who donated their time and service)
Exhibition launch by: Young Unknowns Gallery, 82 The Cut, London SE1
Special thanks to: Mimi Potworowska, Bambos, GROC, Birch & Erasmus, Barry Kamen, Speakeasy, Brian Kennedy, Rose Collis, Michael Griffiths, Chris Stocks, Lisa P'Anson, Fionnuala Halligan, Paul Horsley, Chris Constantine, Tabloid Fotoset, Frame Up Ltd, The Chesham Press, Yannick Defós, Terry Jones, the Noel Gay Organisation, David Hockney and Poor Margaret for doing such a wonderful job with the tea and coffee.

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Thanks to Noel Gay Artists, Me and My Girl (Adelphi Theatre) and High Society (Victoria Palace) for financial contributions.



BERNSTEIN



Bob Geldof

...THE GOVERNMENT TODAY SET THE DATE FOR THE MAJOR FLOATATION OF SHARES IN BRITISH CONDOM. IF YOU SEE SID, TELL HIM. AND FINALLY, CRICKET...



BIFF PRODUCTS



Reprinted by kind permission of the Daily Mirror

"Aw, come on boss, that goal wasn't our fault! It's these suits we have to wear."



COSMICMAN!

STORY & PICTURES ALAN DAVIS WORDS RICHARD STARKINGS

HE IS EARTH'S GREATEST CHAMPION. FOR YEARS NOW HE HAS DEVOTED HIS LIFE TO THE DEFENCE OF MANKIND.

A FEW SHORT MONTHS AGO HE SINGLE-HANDEDLY DESTROYED THE VILLIAN INVASION FORCE.

A LITTLE MORE RECENTLY HE TOOK ON THE ALLIANCE OF EVIL - AND WON!

ONLY YESTERDAY HE THREW DOCTOR DEMON INTO LIMBO BEFORE HE COULD ACTIVATE HIS NULL-LIFE BOMB.

AND THOUGH HE RARELY FINDS TIME TO SPEND ON HIMSELF...

LOOK - UP IN THE SKY!

IT'S A BIRD!

IT'S A PLANE!

NO! IT'S--

HE'S SEEN US!

YAY!

FLIGHT, SUPER-SPEED, LASER VISION, ULTRA-SONIC HEARING - HIS FANS WOULD SAY THAT THERE IS NOTHING HE CANNOT DO.

... HE STILL HAS TIME FOR THE PEOPLE.

YUM! WHATTA HUNK!

WHAT A NICE MAN.

HIS POWERS AMAZE THEM.

BUT THEY WOULD BE WRONG. HE IS NOT INVULNERABLE. HE CAN BE HURT, INJURED, MADE SICK.

AND HE HASN'T GOT A POWER THAT CAN COMBAT BIGOTRY AND PREJUDICE.

INFECTED.

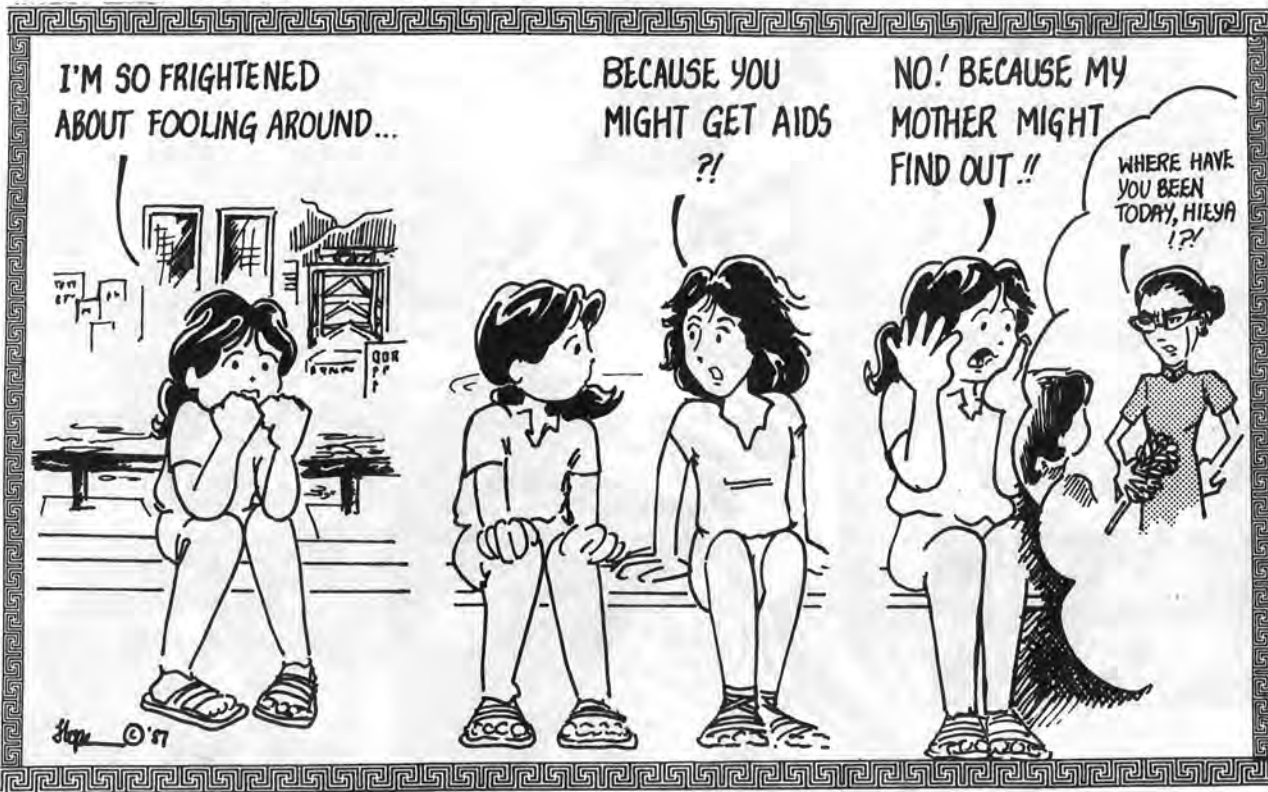
OUR HERO!

MMM... LEAVE HIM AN' ME ALONE AN' -

HE CAN'T SAVE THEM FROM THEIR FEAR OF THE UNKNOWN.

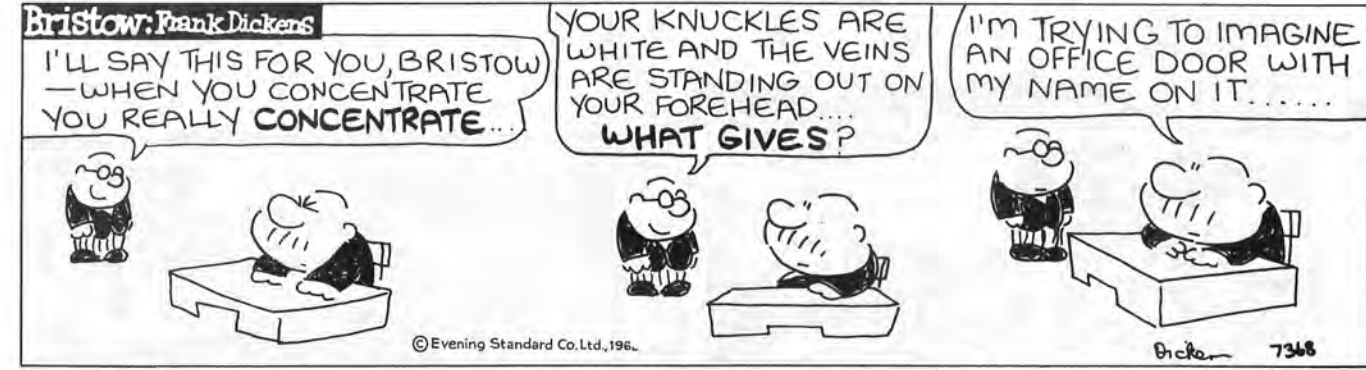
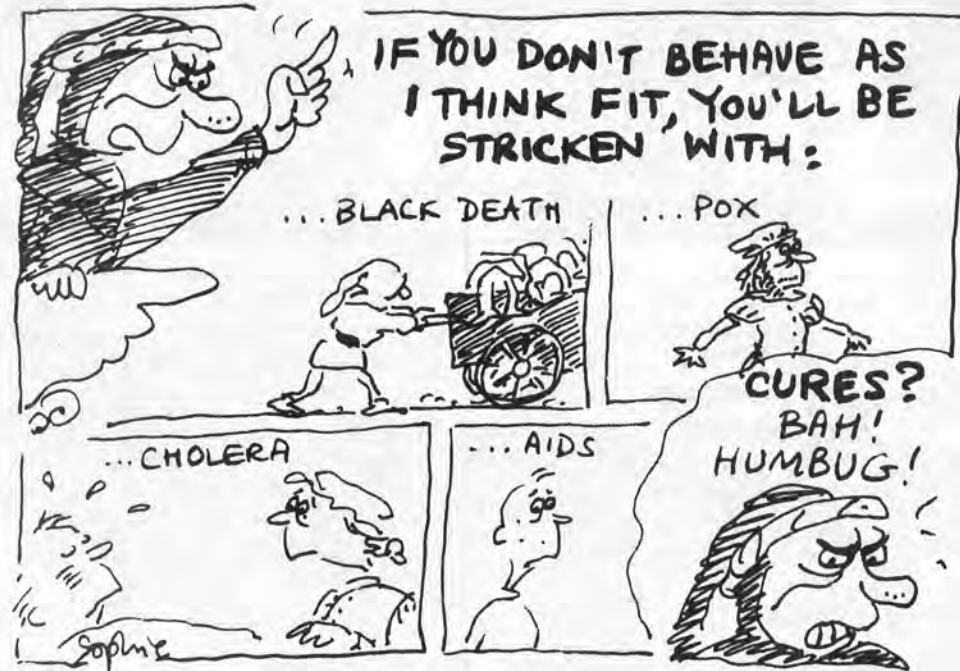
ARE YOU KIDDING? HAVEN'T YOU HEARD?

THEY HAVE TO DO THAT FOR THEMSELVES.



Getting things straight · Kate Charlesworth

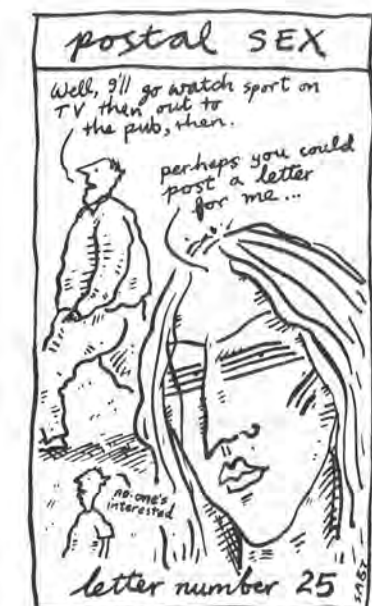
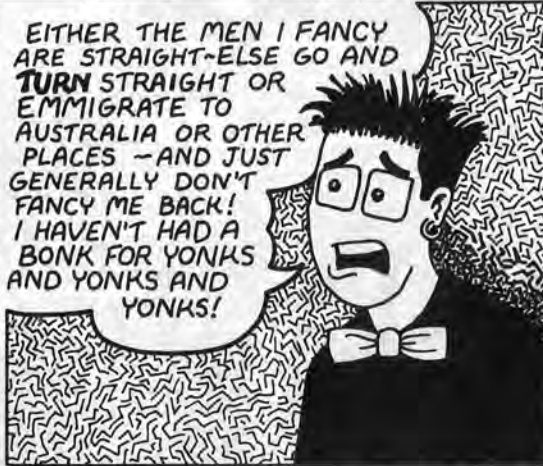






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"Now there's something novel: a Jimmy Sommerville condom!"



"Baz, I don't think haircut intercourse is a serious answer to AIDS."



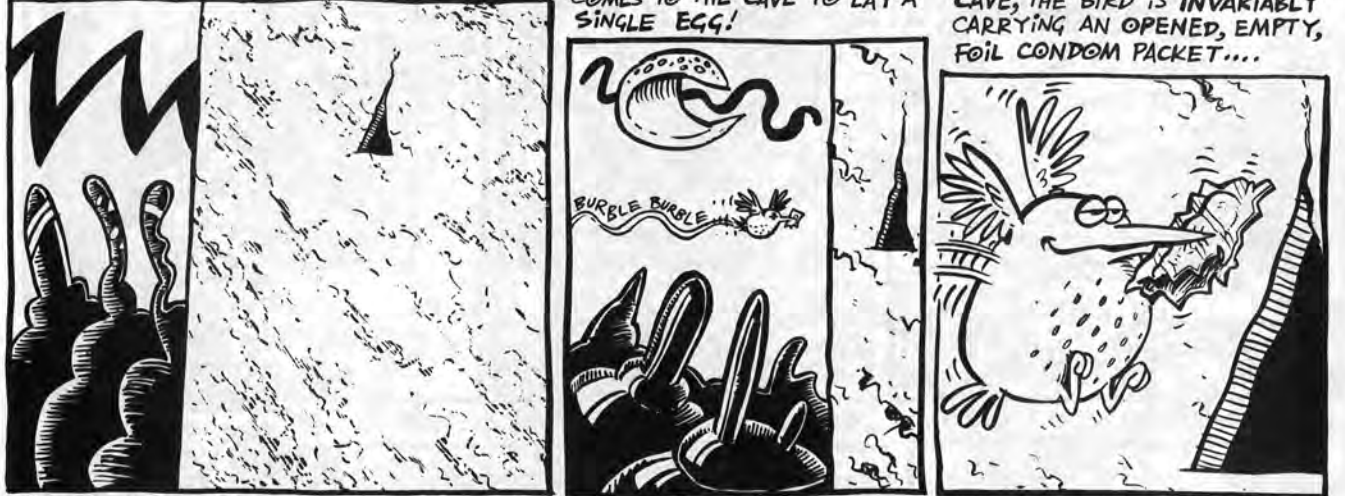
"Don't you think you're taking this safe sex thing a bit too far?"

COLIN CONDOM in WHERE DO CONDOMS COME FROM?

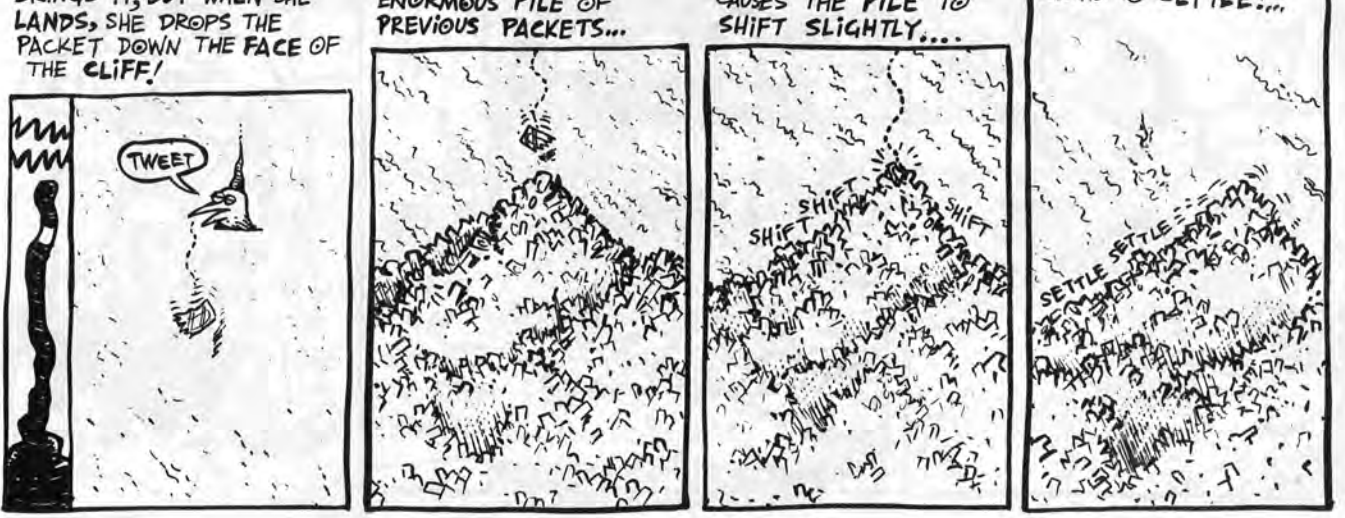
HUNT EMERSON



...THERE IS A TINY CAVE ON A MARBLE CLIFF! ONCE EACH YEAR, A TINY BIRD COMES TO THE CAVE TO LAY A SINGLE EGG! WHEN SHE ARRIVES AT THE CAVE, THE BIRD IS INVARIABLY CARRYING AN OPENED, EMPTY, FOIL CONDOM PACKET...



NO-ONE KNOWS WHY SHE BRINGS IT, BUT WHEN SHE LANDS, SHE DROPS THE PACKET DOWN THE FACE OF THE CLIFF! IT FALLS ONTO AN ENORMOUS PILE OF PREVIOUS PACKETS... ...AND ITS ADDED WEIGHT CAUSES THE PILE TO SHIFT SLIGHTLY... ...AND TO SETTLE!...

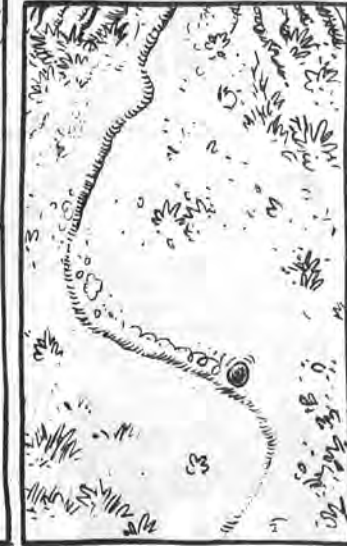
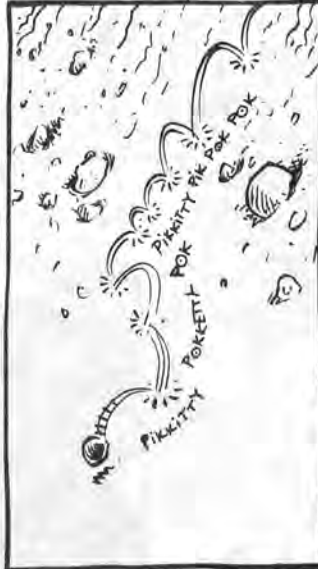


AT THE EDGE OF THE PILE, THE SLIGHT MOVEMENT IS TRANSLATED INTO AN OUTWARD PUSH, AND ONE OR TWO SMALL PEBBLES ARE DISLODGED...

A PEBBLE TUMBLES DOWNHILL...

...FOLLOWING A GROOVE WORN BY PREVIOUS PEBBLES FROM PREVIOUS PACKETS...

...THE GROOVE BECOMES A RUT WITH THE PASSAGE OF PAST DEBRIS...



...THE RUT WEARS SMOOTH AND BECOMES A TRACK...

...THE TRACK TURNS INTO A PATH...

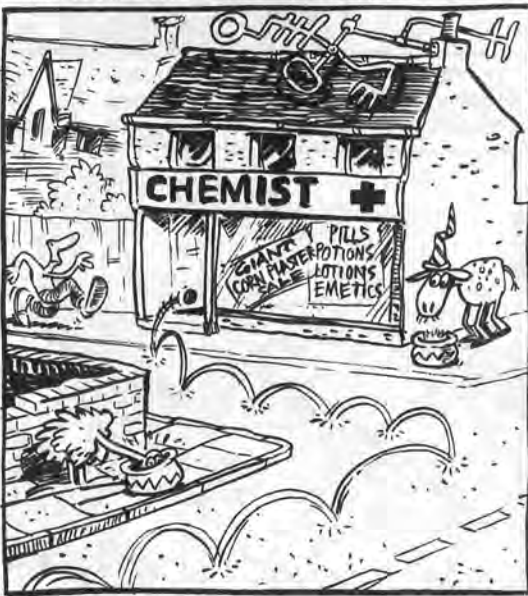
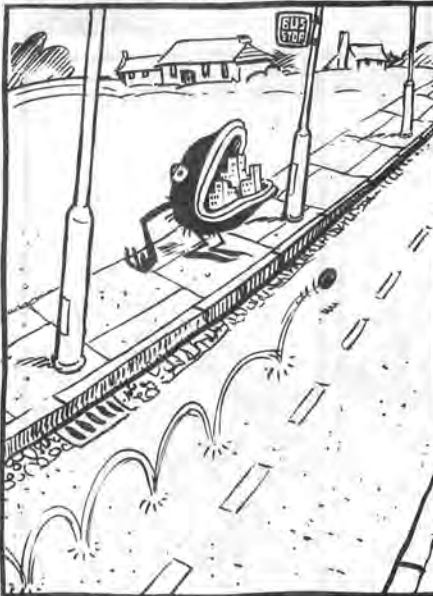
...THE PATH TURNS INTO A LANE...



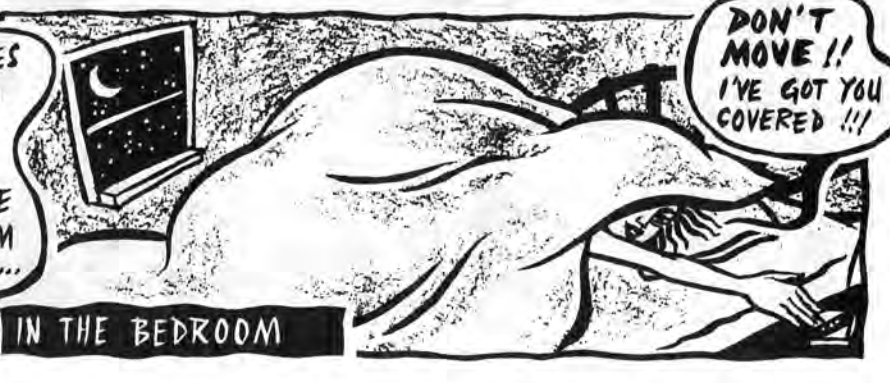
...THE LANE TURNS INTO A ROAD...

...THE ROAD TURNS INTO A CHEMISTS SHOP...

...AND THAT'S WHERE CONDOMS COME FROM!



MORE WOMEN THAN MEN INSIST ON USING CONDOMS





Quint Contantaine.



WEEF



WEEF

Will I get Aids if I don't use a rubber when I draw?

Will I get Aids if I don't use a rubber when I draw?



Miami 87

MISS MARCH



OUT OF THE WOODWORK REVEALED AT LAST

A TENDENCY HIDDEN IN THE YOUR ESCAPES COME IN PAST

MANY SHADES - BUT IT'S NEVER BEEN MORE OBVIOUS THAN YOUR REACTION TO AIDS



SOME PEOPLE REACH FOR THE BOTTLE



...SOME PEOPLE GO FOR THE CAKE



SOME PEOPLE PRETEND IT ISN'T THERE AT ALL OR IT'LL BE GONE WHEN THEY AWAKE....



OUT COMES PARANOIA A REFUSAL TO THINK

AND A MORTAL FEAR OF ALL THINGS PINK

KICK BACK AT YOUR ESCAPE ROUTE FACE AIDS TODAY THIS PROBLEM WON'T JUST GO AWAY

MAYBE SHE'S GOT IT MAYBE HE'S GOT IT! AARGH! AARGH! WHAT IF SHE THINKS I'VE GOT IT? WHAT IF HE THINKS I'VE GOT IT!!



AND FOR FRIENDS, LOVERS, FAMILY SPARE A THOUGHT

IT'S GODS PUNISHMENT OF COURSE I MEAN... WHAT DO THEY EXPECT I MEAN... IT ISN'T NORMAL IS IT? BLAH BLAH BLAH... WHATS THAT? IT'S NOT A HOMOSEXUAL DISEASE??!! YOU MEANT... COULD OH GOD...

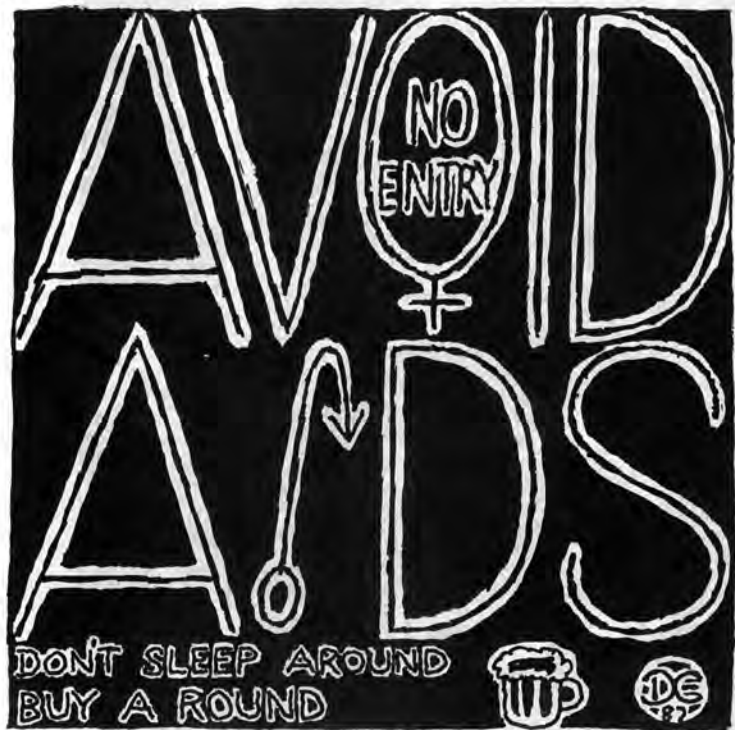


LAIDS IS A BATTLE THAT NEEDS YOUR SUPPORT!!

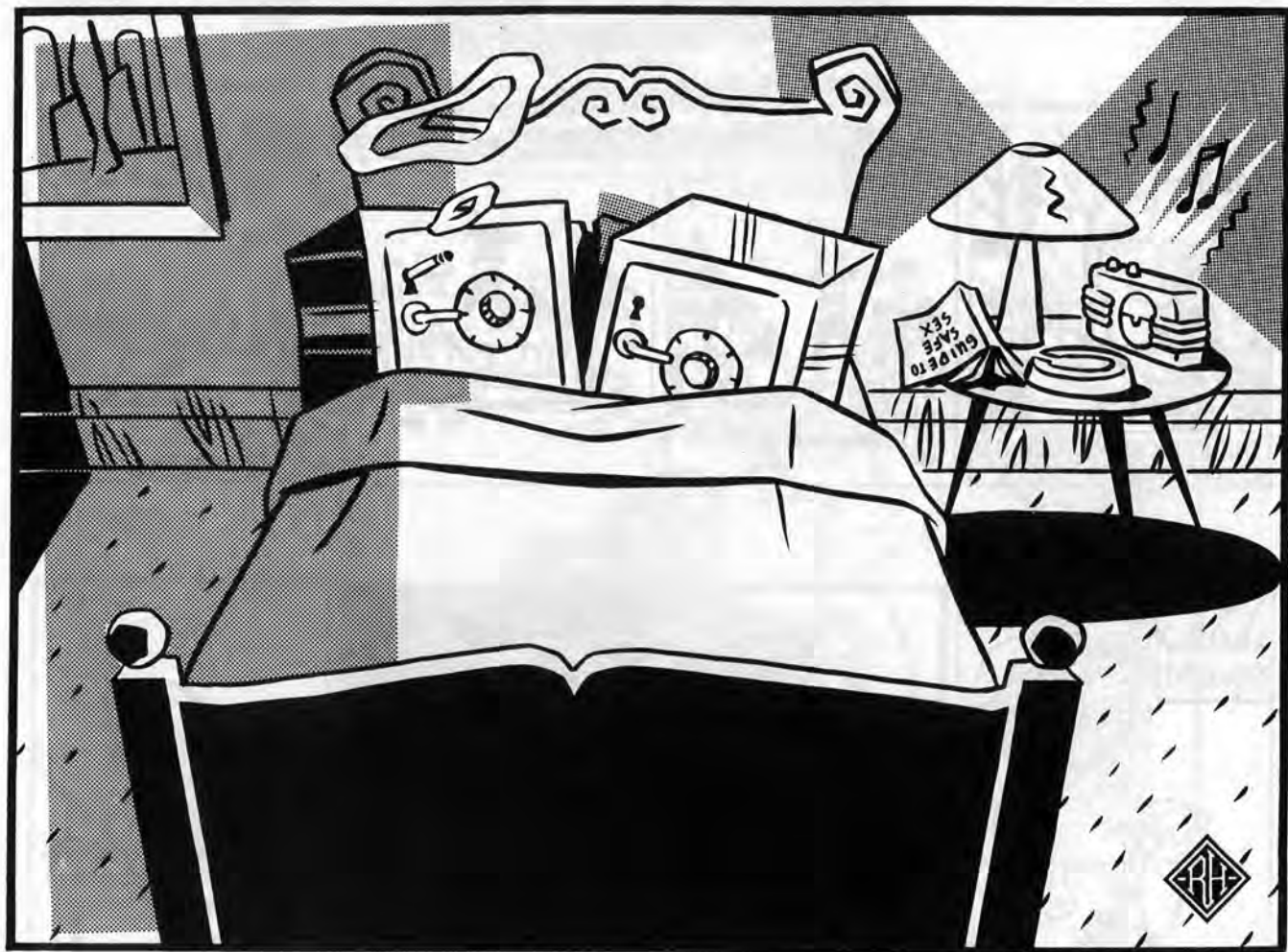
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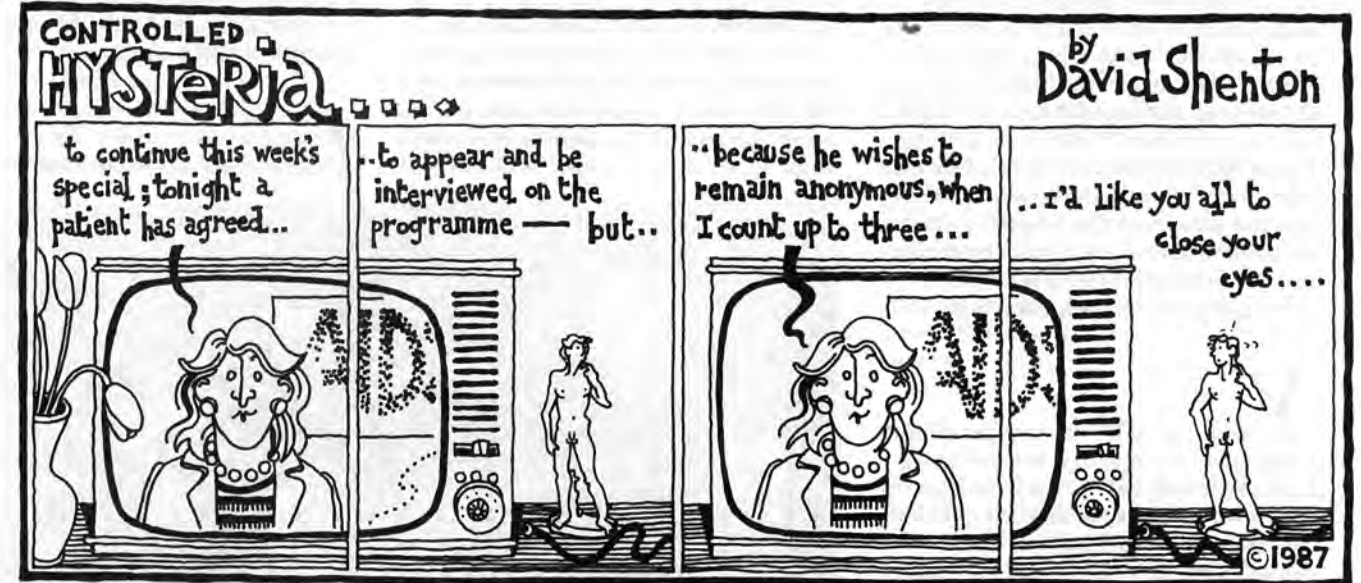
Soho Square appears by kind permission of the London Daily News

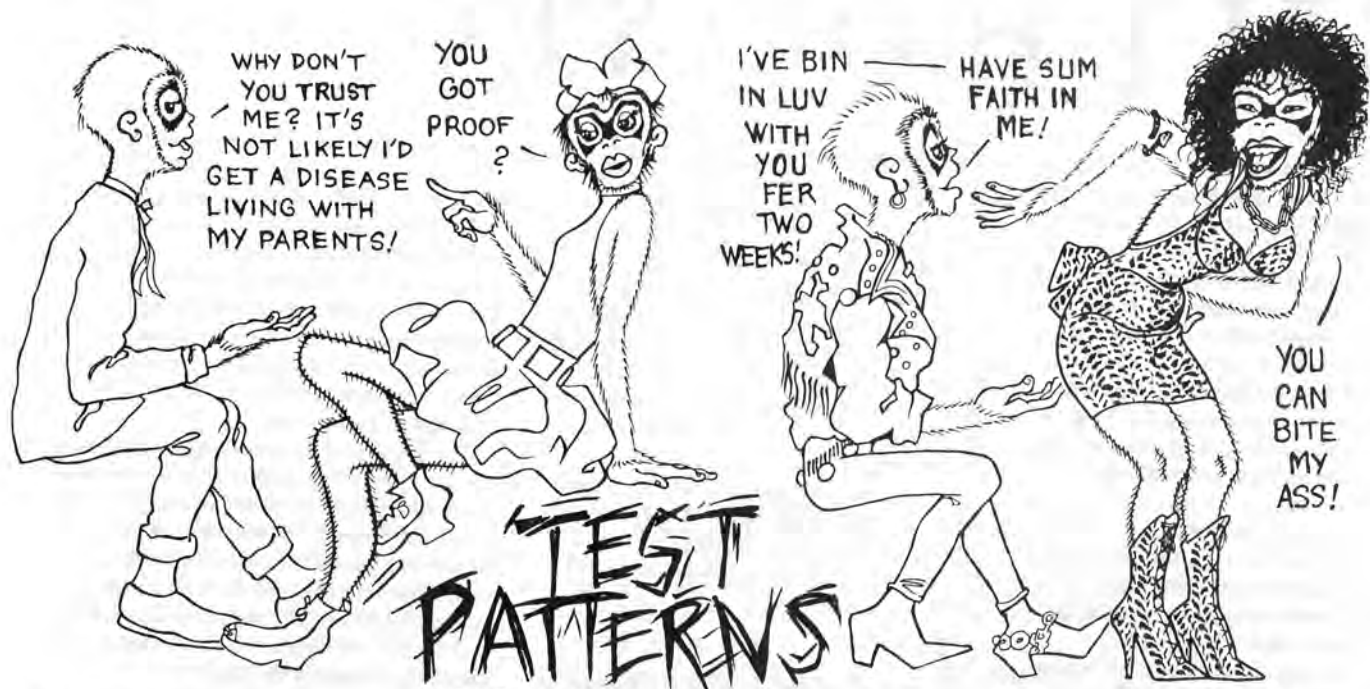


Calvin



Vera the Visible Lesbian appears weekly in City Limits





TEST PATTERNS



MELINDA GEBBIE © 1987

IT'LL FEEL JUST LIKE PUTTING ON MY WELLIES. ONLY I'LL BE PUTTING ON A WILLY WELLIE IN FRONT OF YOU! YOU'LL LAFF AT ME. IT'LL GET CAUGHT AND HURT. AND YOU'LL LAFF SOME MORE....

BOB

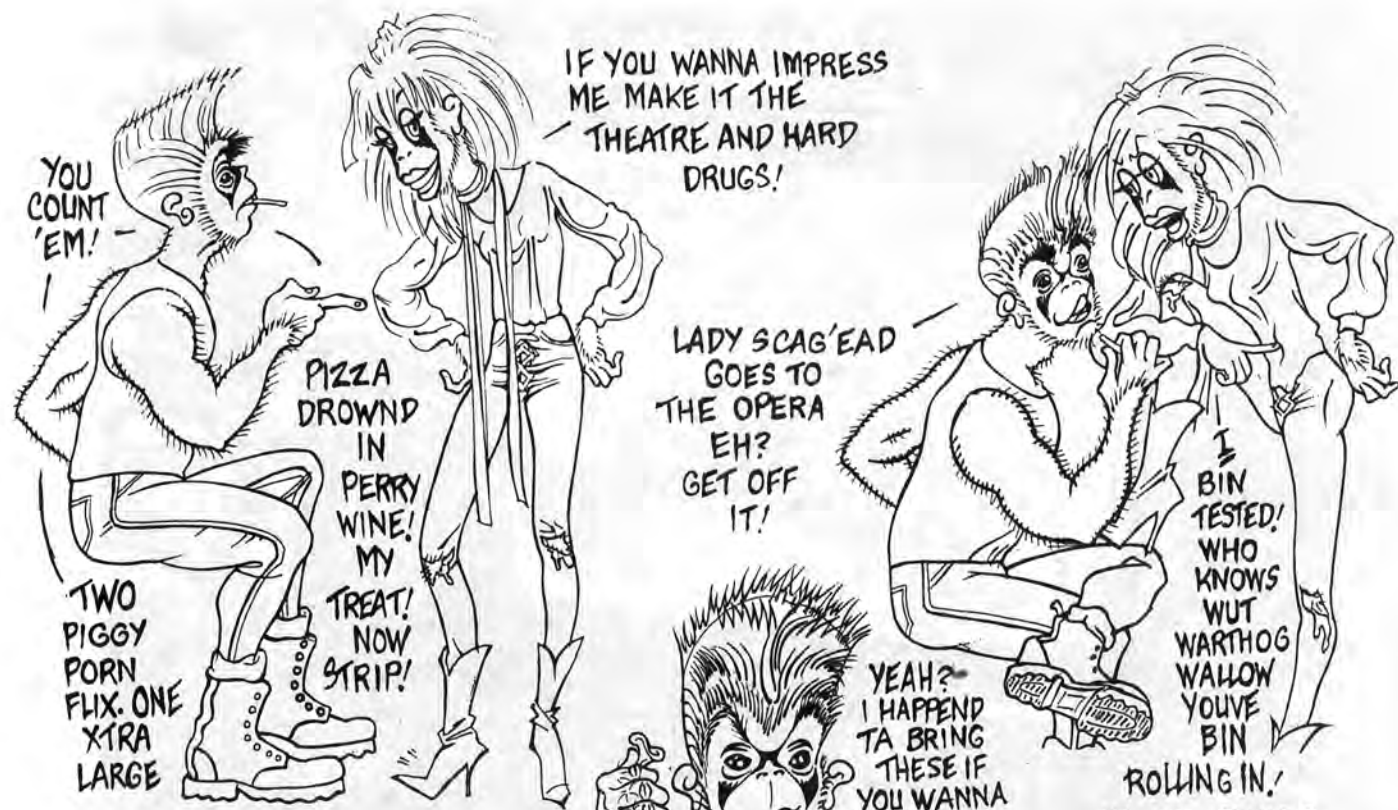


CAN I TAKE ONE HOME TO PRACTICE WITH?

WHAT DO YOU TAKE ME FOR? I WOULDN'T GIVE YOU BABIES UNLESS YOU ASKED FOR THEM!



YOU KNOW I'M IN CONTROL OF MY BODY AT ALL TIMES!



NO NO. ITS WUTZ BENEATH THE PURPLE FEM SHADOWS THATS FATALLY INTRIGUING! PAPPALINI'S SCOUTING FOR A NEW ESMERELDA AND AS YOU PROBABLY KNOW, I HAVE GREAT INFLUENCE.





BLAB-INGLY YOURS:
Monte Beauchamp

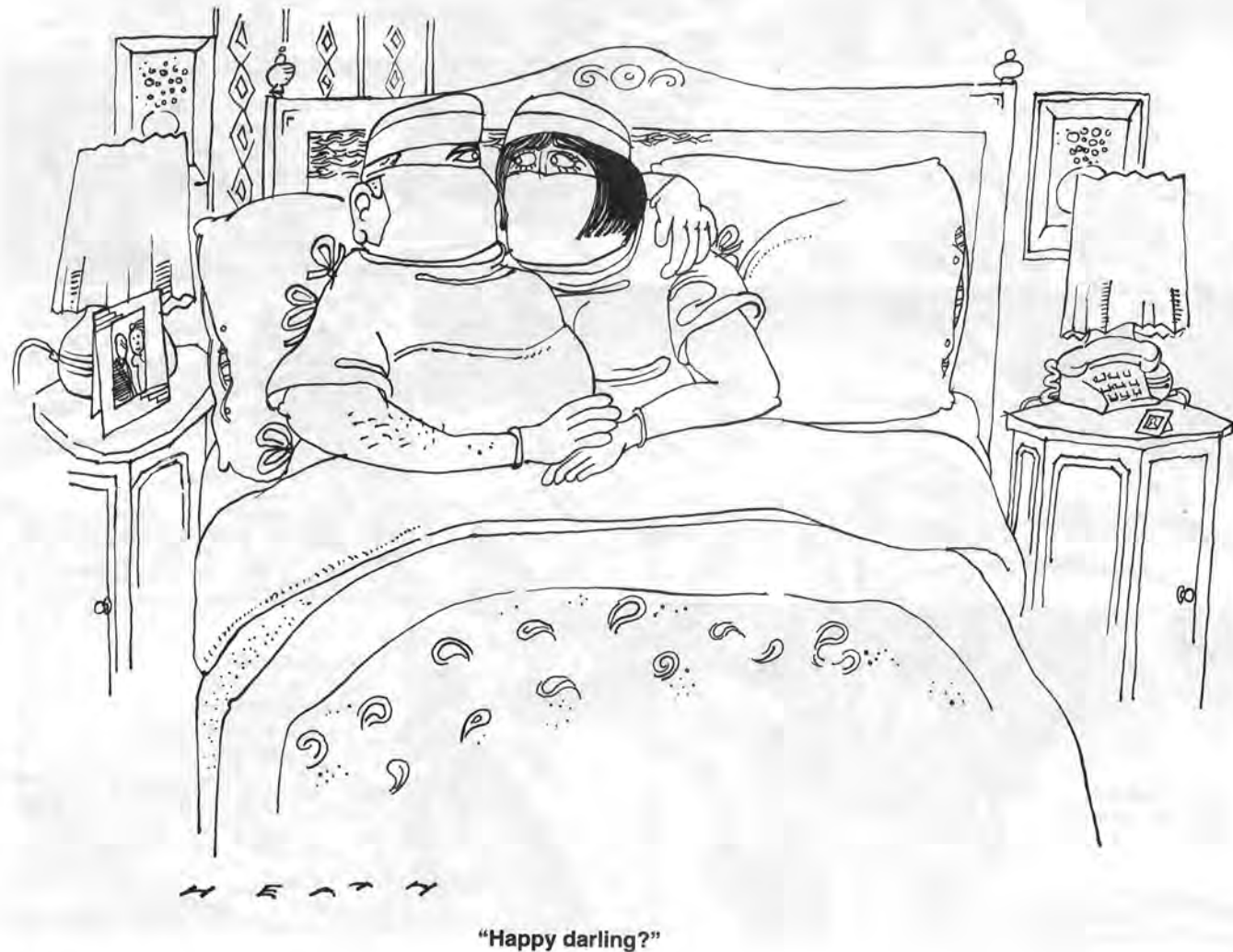
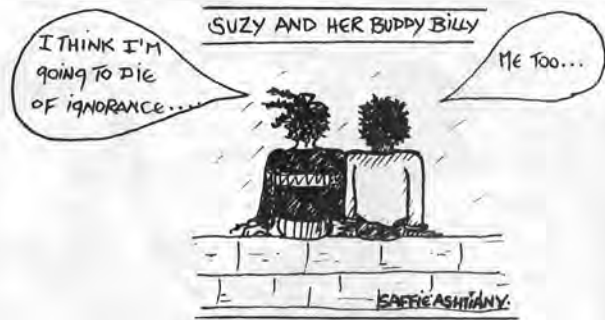
SKIP WILLIAMSON

Larry Marder Kim Deitch

JAY LYNCH Dan Clow



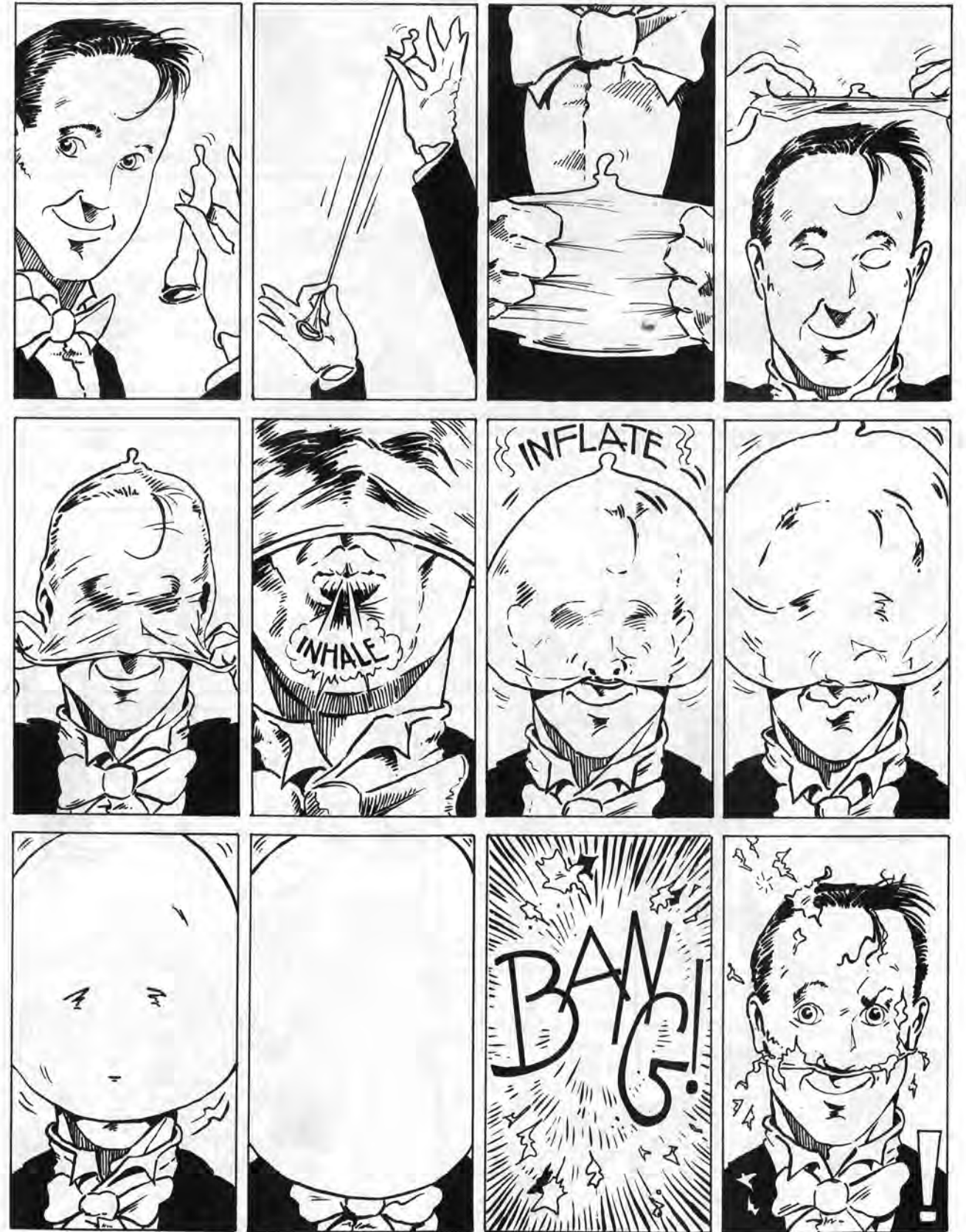
Trousers appears weekly in City Limits





THE PARTY TRICK

by Mark Buckingham.





The **LADY** and The **WIMP**



The **LADY** and The **WIMP**



The Lady and the Wimp appears by kind permission of Time Out

LOVERS LANE



by Steve Harrison