

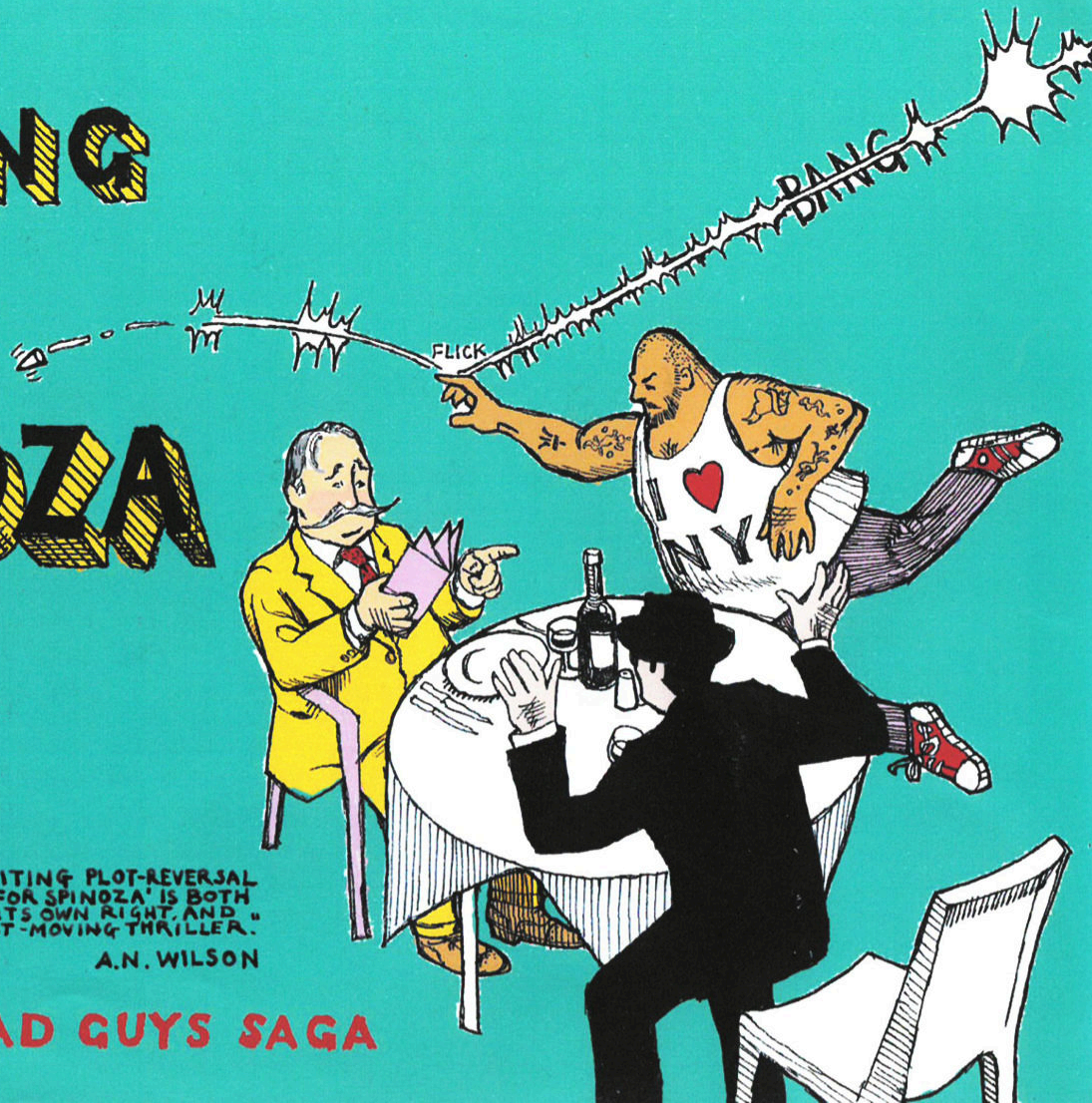
LOOKING FOR SPINOZA

BY
FRANCO
FALCONETTO
2011

"SUSPENSEFUL, AND WITH A NAIL-BITING PLOT-REVERSAL ON ALMOST EVERY PAGE, 'LOOKING FOR SPINOZA' IS BOTH AN EXCITING GRAPHIC NOVEL IN ITS OWN RIGHT, AND AN AMUSING PARODY OF THE FAST-MOVING THRILLER."

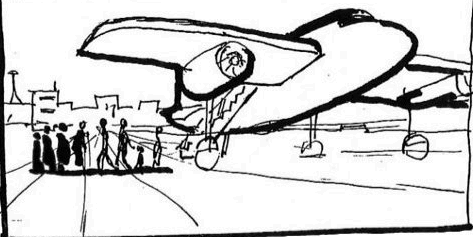
A.N. WILSON

A SHOOTING BAD GUYS SAGA



I ALWAYS LOVE THAT FEELING WHEN YOU GET OFF AN AEROPLANE AND ARE HIT BY THE HEAT, UNLIKELY SMELLS AND THE PROMISE OF ADVENTURE. AS I WALK DOWN THE STEPS, I CAN'T HELP WAVING TO AN IMAGINARY CROWD LIKE THOSE GRAINY FILM CLIPS OF THE BEATLES OR THE KENNEDYS DISEMBARKING THEIR CHARTERED JETS

DID I EVER TELL YOU ABOUT MY TRIP TO MILAN, WHEN I WENT TO SEE UNCLE MARIO?



I TOOK A CAB FROM THE AIRPORT TO TAKE ME TO SUBIARTO



FRA POCO SIAMO IN SUBIARTO

NON FUMER

SUBIARTO IS A SUBURB OF MILAN. I'D NEVER BEEN THERE BEFORE IN FACT I HARDLY KNEW MY UNCLE MARIO EITHER.....

KEEP THE CHANGE

I WALKED UP TO THE HOUSE

HELLO YOU MUST BE FRANK, I AM EMILIA THE HOUSE KEEPER

HELLO I AM PLEASUED TO MEET YOU

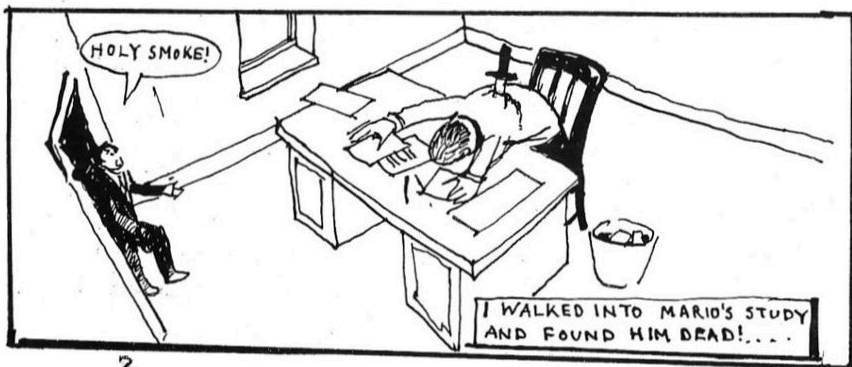
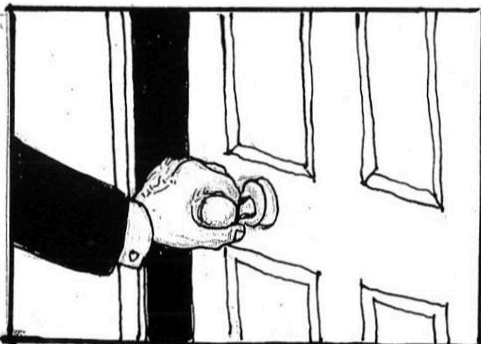
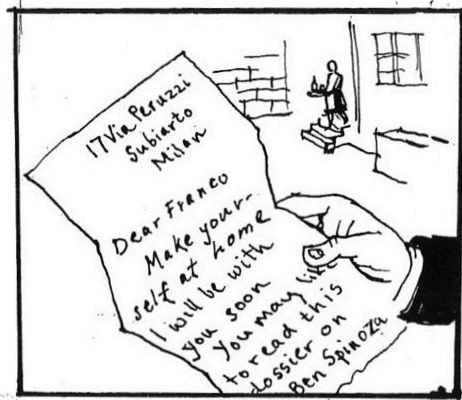
EMILIA SHOWED ME IN TO THE HOUSE

SIT HERE MARIO WILL BE WITH YOU SHORTLY

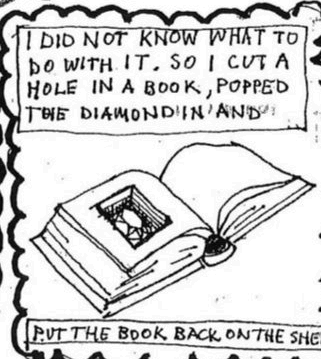
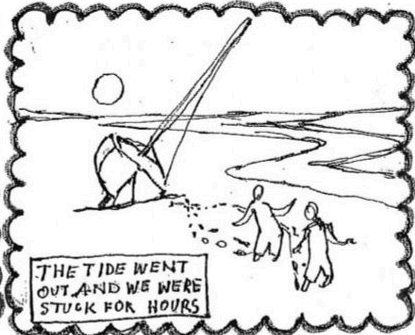
CAN I GET YOU ANY THING TO DRINK? WHISKY, FRUIT JUICE, WATER?

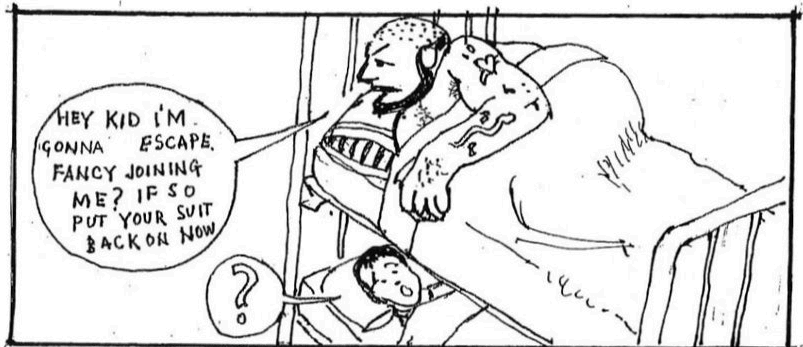
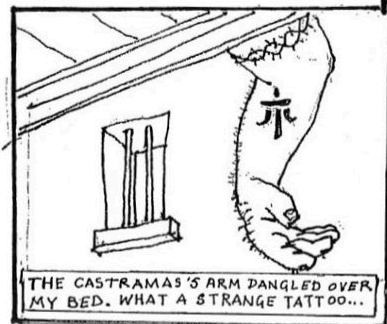
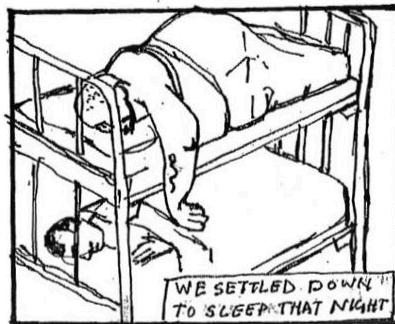
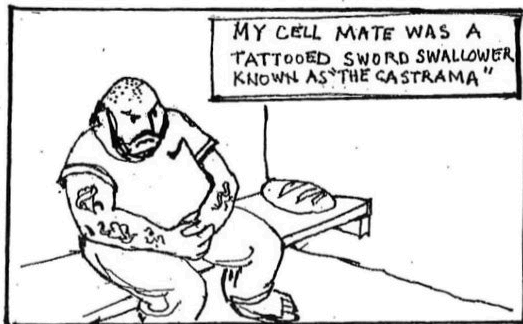
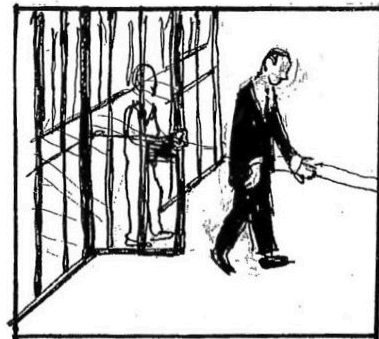
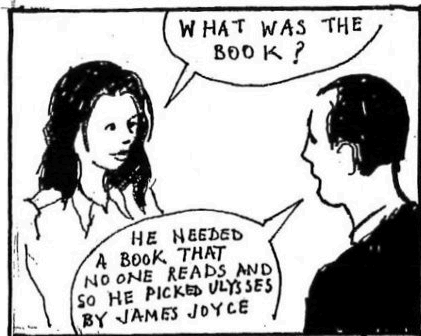
I'LL HAVE A BEER

I SAT AT THE COFFEE TABLE. ON TOP OF THE COPIES OF SOCIETY MAGAZINES I FOUND A LETTER ADDRESSED TO ME. THIS MUST BE MY ORDERS.....

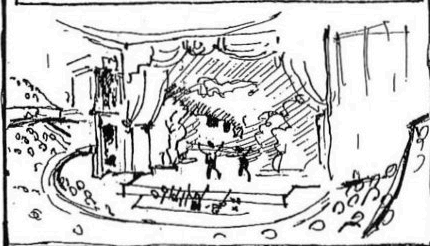








MEAN WHILE MARIA PISANI WAS ENJOYING A NIGHT AT THE OPERA WITH HER BOYFRIEND THE CHIEF OF POLICE - ALBERTO VALMARRANO



BUT MARIA COULD NOT CONCENTRATE SHE KEPT ON TURNING OVER THE EVENTS OF THE DAY IN HER MIND



THEY WENT FOR A DRINK IN THE INTERVAL



EXCUSE ME. DO YOU KNOW BEN SPINOSA?

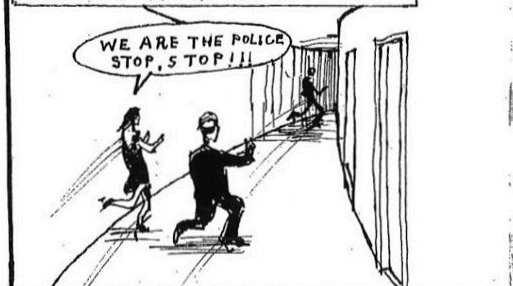


WITH THAT THE STRANGER RAN OFF



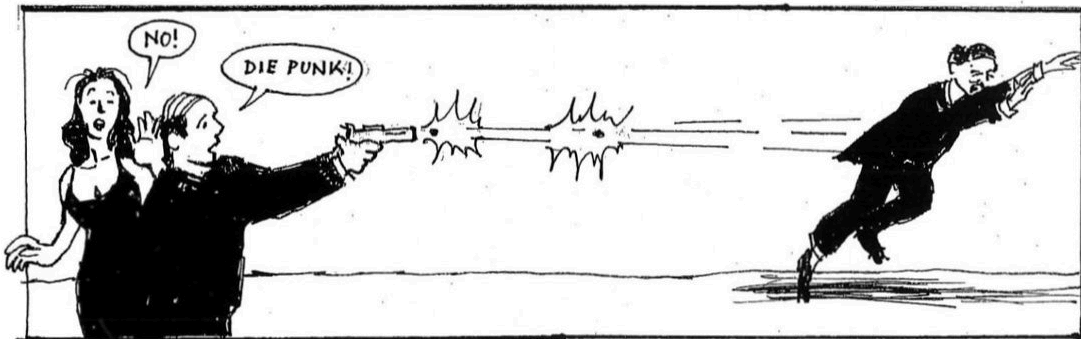
MARIA AND ALBERTO RAN AFTER HIM

WE ARE THE POLICE STOP, STOP!!!



NO!

DIE PUNK!

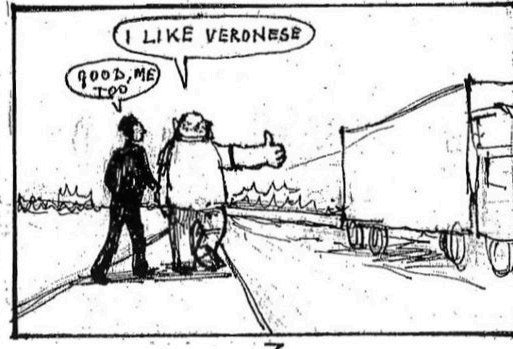
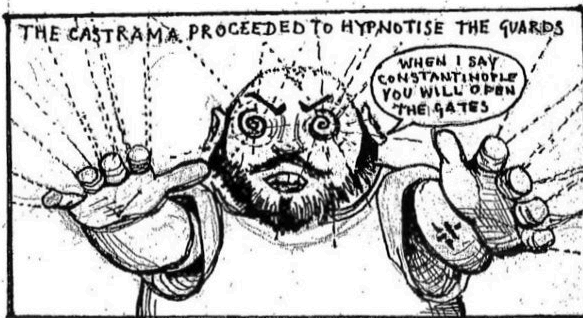
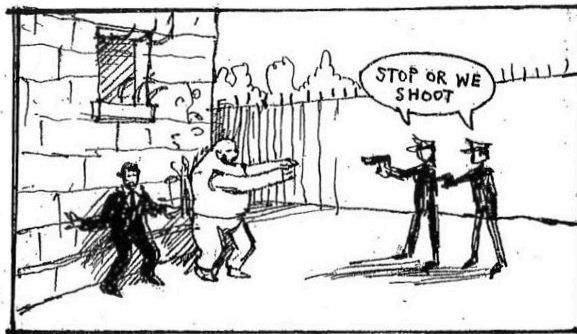
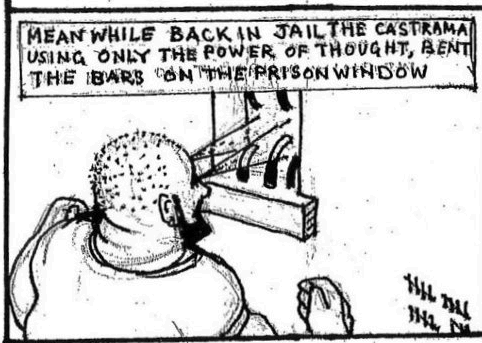


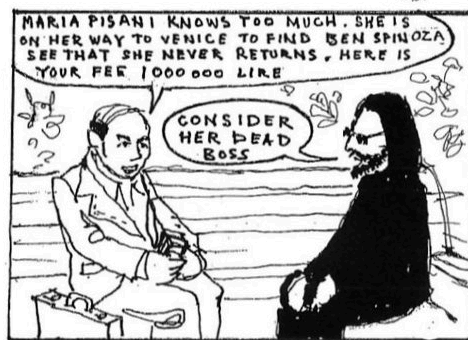
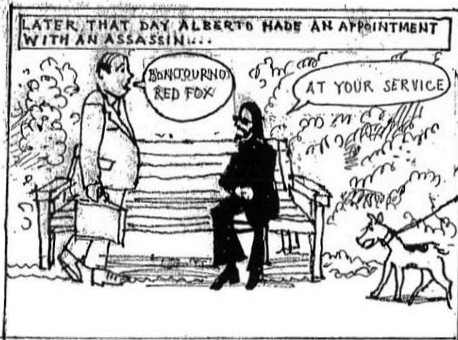
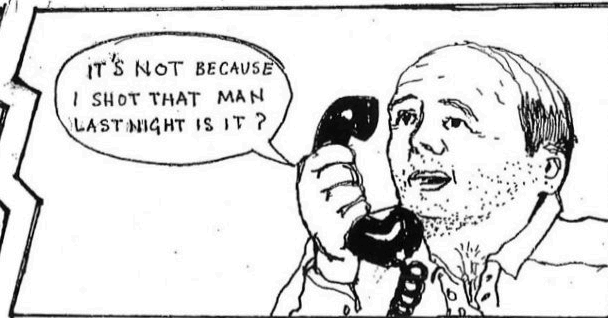
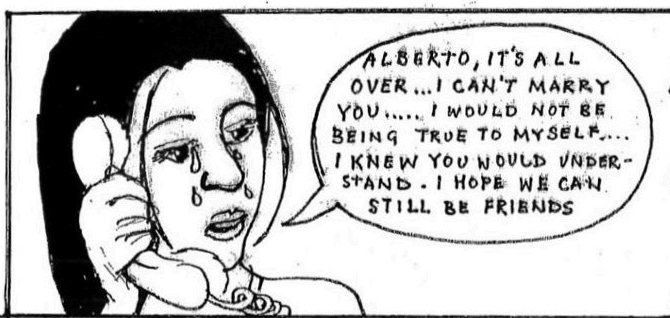
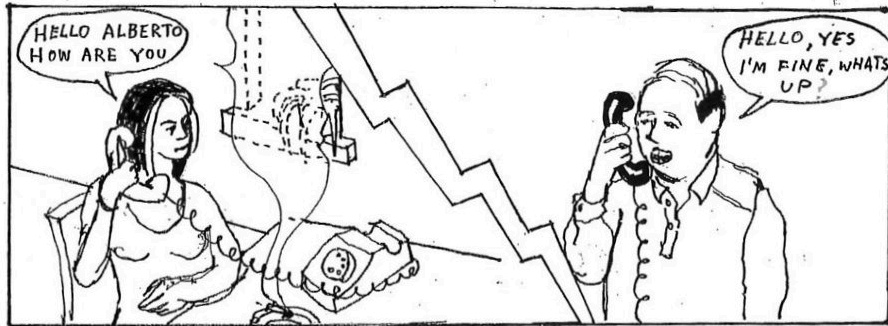
YOU KILLED HIM YOU IDIOT

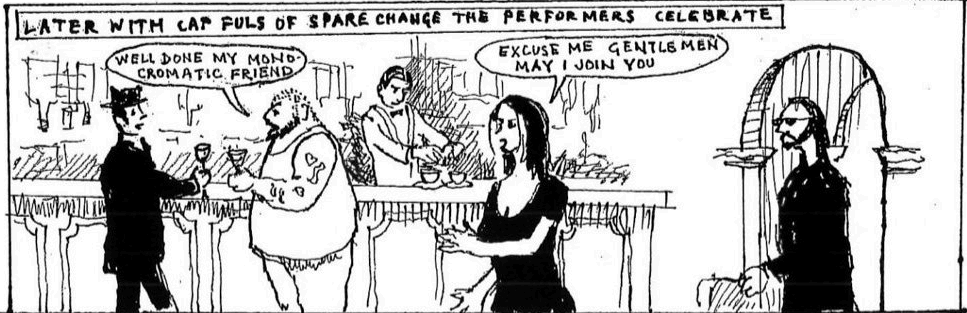
WHOOPEE

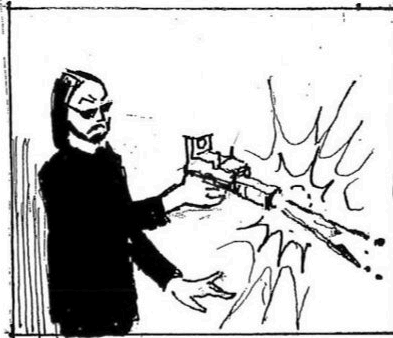
...FIND BEN SPINOSA, HE IS STAYING IN VENICE AT THE...









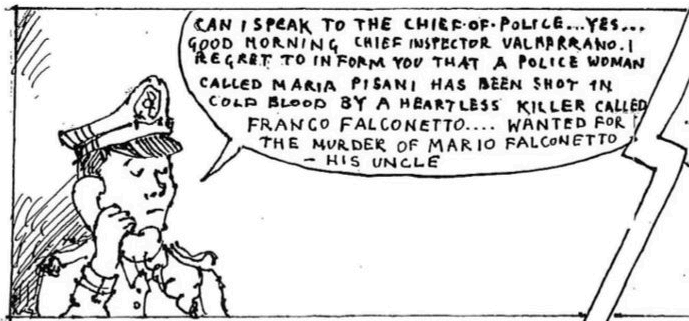


MARIA LAY DEAD AT THE BAR AND THE RED FOX RAN OUT



I TURNED ROUND AND THE CASTRAMA HAD GONE... AND THEN THE POLICE ARRIVED

FRANCO FALCONETTO, YOU ARE UNDER ARREST FOR THE MURDER OF MARIA PISANI AND YOUR UNCLE MARIO FALCONETTO



CAN I SPEAK TO THE CHIEF-OF-POLICE... YES... GOOD MORNING CHIEF INSPECTOR VALARRANO. I REGRET TO INFORM YOU THAT A POLICE WOMAN CALLED MARIA PISANI HAS BEEN SHOT IN COLD BLOOD BY A HEARTLESS KILLER CALLED FRANCO FALCONETTO... WANTED FOR THE MURDER OF MARIO FALCONETTO - HIS UNCLE



OH HOW TERRIBLE, SHE WAS NOT ONLY A FINE OFFICER BUT ALSO THE LOVE OF MY LIFE. SHOOT THIS CALLOUS MURDERER NOW, AND MAKE SURE HE IS DEAD. THAT IS AN ORDER!

GOOD THIS IS ALL GOING VERY WELL



RUN FRANCIS, RUN!

IS THAT YOU BEN?

SUDDENLY THE BAR MAN PULLED OUT A GUN AND SHOT THE POLICE MAN IN THE BACK HE THEN TOLD ME TO RUN BEFORE MORE POLICE CAME. HE CALLED ME FRANCIS, NO ONE HAS DONE THAT SINCE I WAS A BOY, DID HE KNOW ME?



THE NEXT DAY ALBERTO VALARRANO GETS A LETTER DELIVERED TO HIS HOUSE!

Venice
Valmarrano
I know your game, and I will catch you soon.
Ben Spinoza





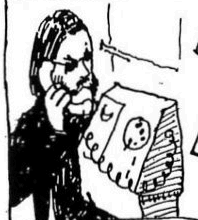
THE LEONI ARE AN ANCIENT SECRET BROTHERHOOD, WHO BACK IN THE DARK AGES CARRIED THE MIRACULOUS BODY OF ST MARK FROM THE HOLY LANDS TO VENICE. THE NAME LEONI COMES FROM THE ST MARK'S ATTRIBUTE OF A LION WITH WINGS. FOR HUNDREDS OF YEARS THE



LEONI HAVE MET IN A SECRET VAULT UNDER ST MARK'S SQUARE, NEAR THE BODY OF ST MARK, ALL THE BROTHERHOOD ARE TATTOOED WITH A STRANGE SYMBOL REPRESENTING THE LION OF ST MARK



LATER THAT DAY



HI ALBERTO, IT'S RED FOX, THE LE ONI...

...HAVE PLANNED TO SAVE MARIA

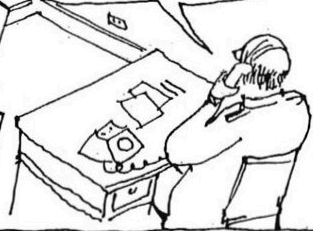


HOW DO YOU KNOW?

I WAS AT THEIR MEETING EARLIER. I HAD TO KILL A MAN AND GET A TATTOO IN ORDER TO GO IN. BUT IT WAS WORTH IT... I THINK!



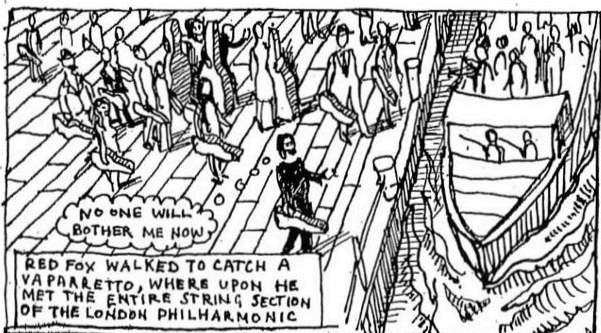
MAKE SURE YOU GET HER FIRST, DON'T MISS THIS DAME LIKE YOU DID LAST TIME



RED FOX WENT BACK TO HIS HOTEL TO FIND HIS BEST GUN



HE PUT IT IN A VIOLIN CASE



NO ONE WILL BOTHER ME NOW!

RED FOX WALKED TO CATCH A VAPARETTO, WHERE UPON HE MET THE ENTIRE STRING SECTION OF THE LONDON PHILHARMONIC

THEY ALL GOT ON THE BOAT

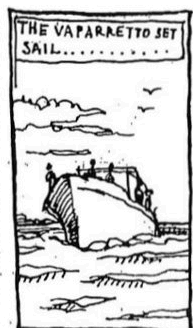


ALL MUSICIANS PLACE YOUR INSTRUMENTS IN THE LUGGAGE RACK



LET ME PUT IT WITH ALL THE REST SIR

HANDLE IT WITH CARE IT'S A STRADIVARIUS

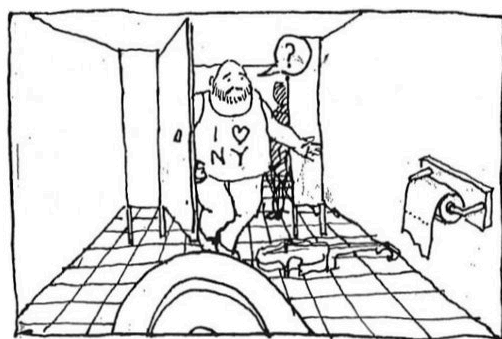
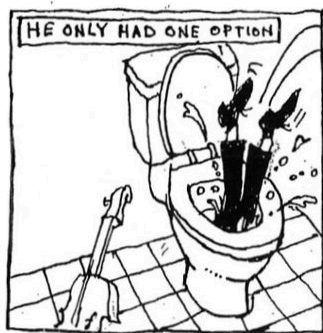
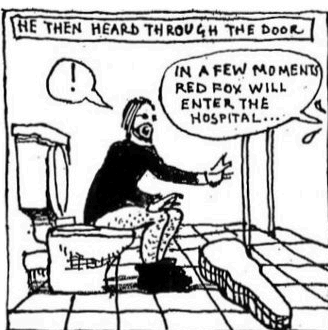


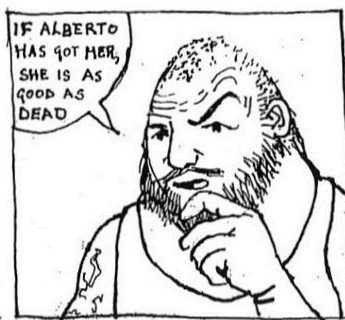
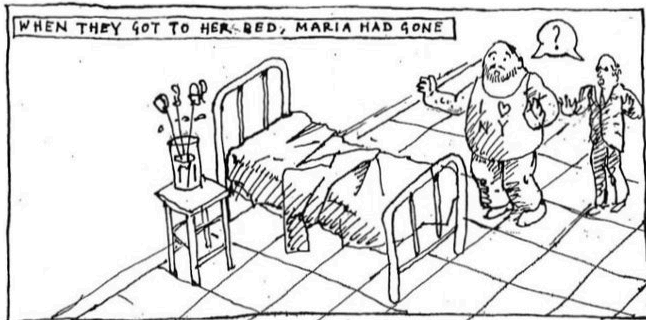
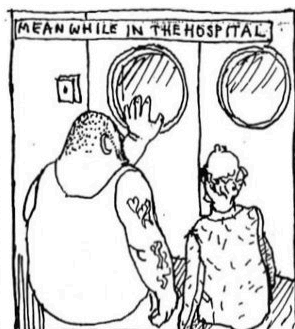
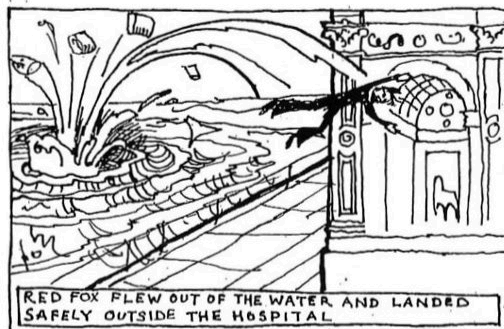
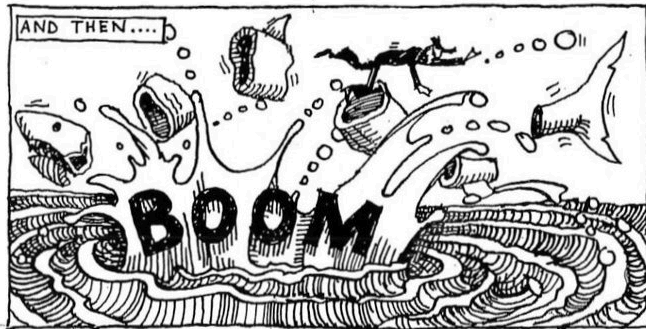
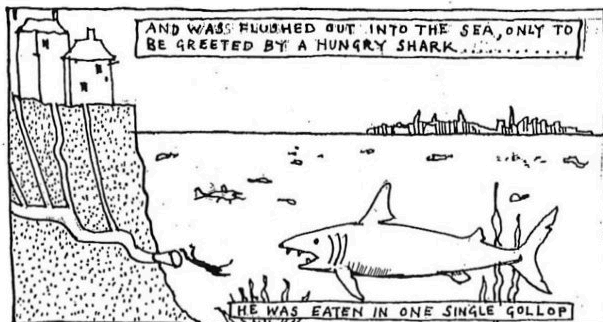
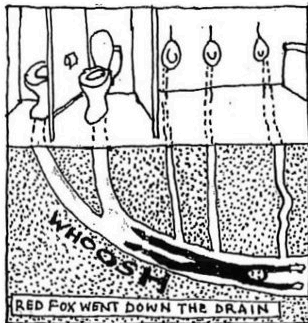
THE VAPARETTO SET SAIL.....

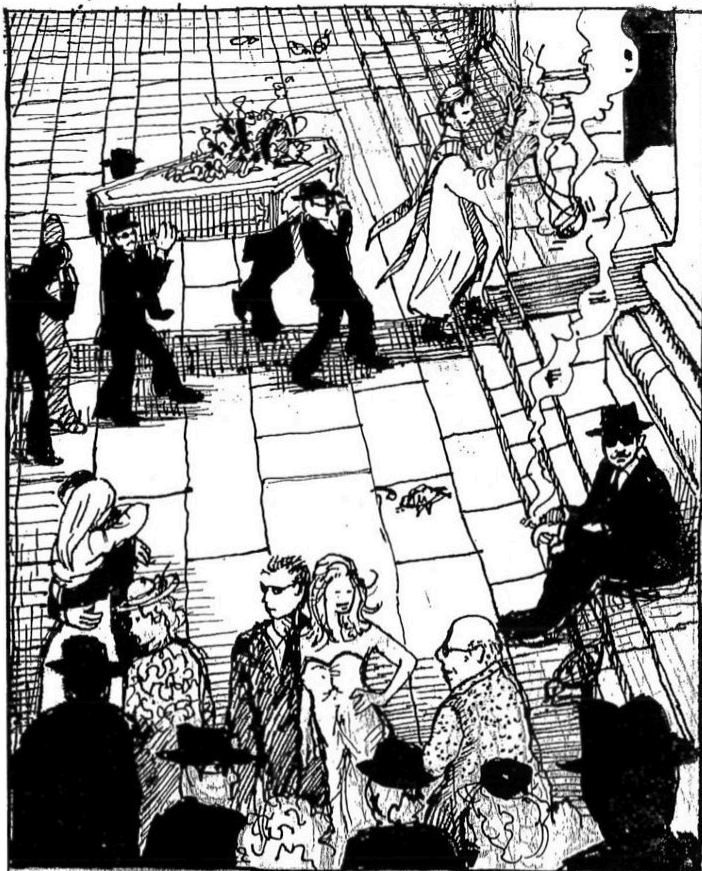


A FEW MOMENTS LATER RED FOX WENT TO GET HIS GUN

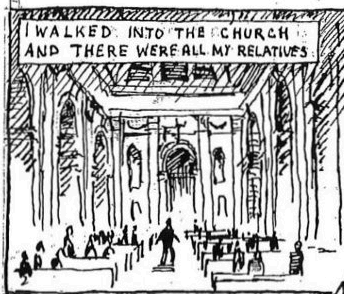
WHICH ONE WAS IT? THEY ALL LOOK THE SAME



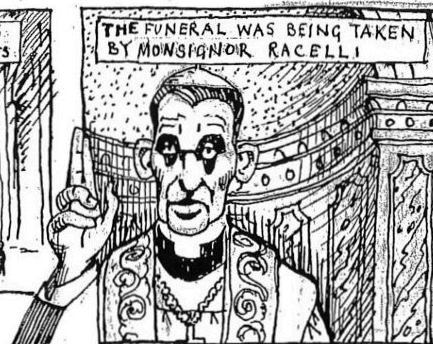




WHILE ALL THIS RED FOX SHENANIGANS WAS GOING ON, I HAD RETURNED TO MILAN TO FIND OUT WHO KILLED MARIO. TO DISGUISE MYSELF I BOUGHT A FALSE MOUSTACHE! - THE POLICE WOULD NOT RECOGNISE ME NOW... ONE HOT DAY, I WAS SITTING ON THE STEPS OF A CHURCH AND AS MY CIGARETTE SMOKE MINGLED WITH THE INCENSE, I SAW A COFFIN BEING CARRIED BY MY COUSINS ... IT MUST BE MARIO'S FUNERAL ... WHAT LUCK!!!!



I WALKED INTO THE CHURCH AND THERE WERE ALL MY RELATIVES



THE FUNERAL WAS BEING TAKEN BY MONSIGNOR RACELLI



I LOOKED FOR A PEW



AND SAT NEXT TO AN OLD LADY



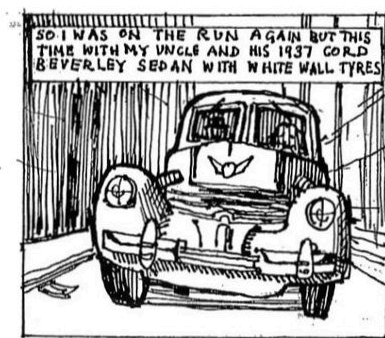
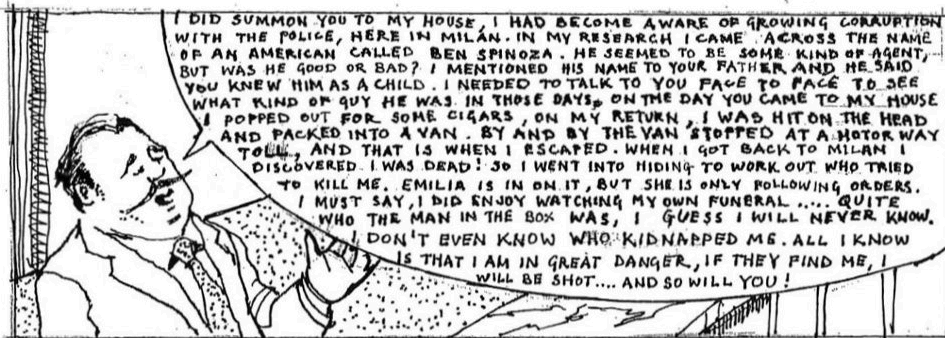
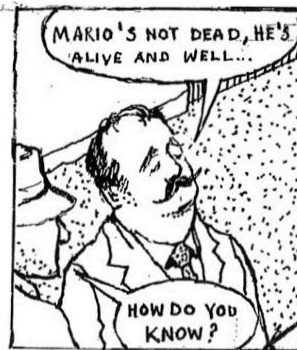
OH NO...IT'S EMILIA, MARIO'S HOUSE KEEPER

EXCUSE ME, AIN'T YOU THE AMERICAN MANIC WHO KILLED MARIO?



I DID NOT KILL HIM

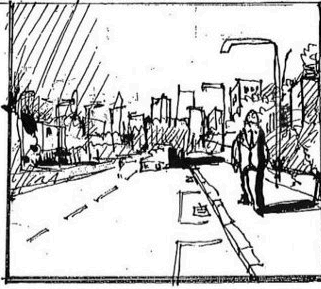
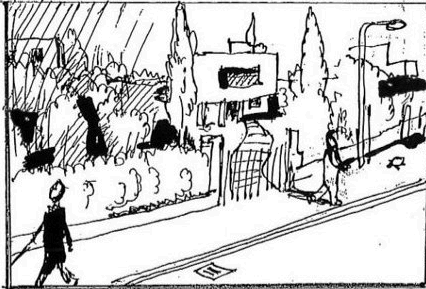
MURDERER CATCH HIM



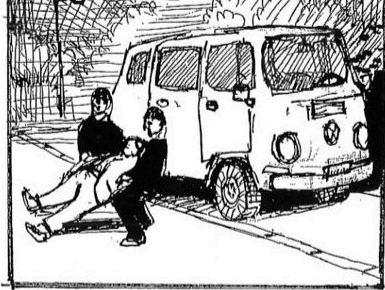
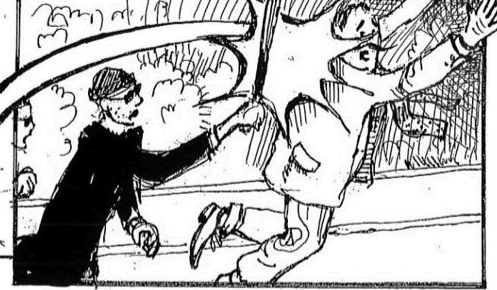
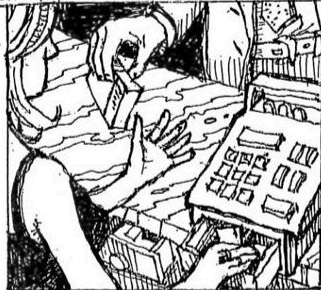
AH AH AH AH LA... LA LA LA... LA LA LA LA... LA LA LA... LA LA LA LA... DO LA AH LA LA LA AH DO... SUGAR

DID YOU GET ALL THAT?
OR WOULD YOU RATHER IT
IN PICTURES? I THOUGHT
SO. OKAY JUST FOR YOU
I HAVE DRAWN IT OUT.
I HAVE ALSO TURNED OFF
THE SOUND AND REPLACED
IT WITH THE 1970'S POP
CLASSIC "SUGAR BABY
LOVE" BY THE ROUBETTES.

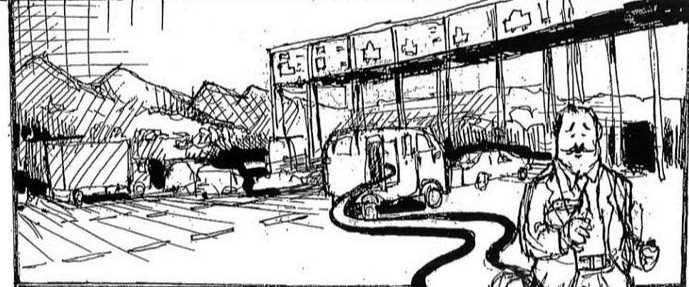
SIT BACK AND ENJOY
MARIO'S STORY...



BABY LOVE SUGAR BABY LOVE... DIDN'T MEAN TO MAKE YOU BLUE... I DIDN'T MEAN TO HURT YOU... (BAB SHAWADY



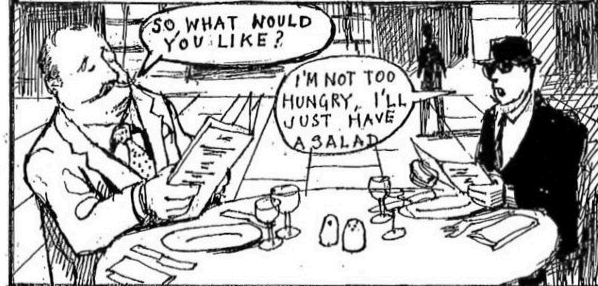
BAB SHAWADY ALL LOVERS MAKE, MAKE THE SAME MISTAKES, YES THEY DO YES ALL LOVERS MAKE, MAKE THE SAME MISTAKES AS ME AND YOU...



MARIO FELT THAT OUR ONLY HOPE WAS TO FIND SPINOZA, SO WE HEADED TO VENICE. ON THE WAY WE STOPPED OFF IN VERONA FOR A BITE TO EAT

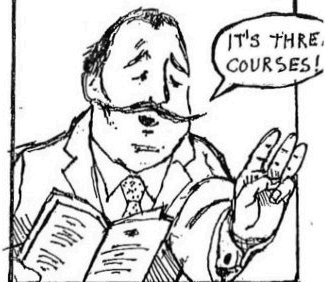


WE FOUND A RESTAURANT IN PIAZZA ERBE



SO WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE?

I'M NOT TOO HUNGRY, I'LL JUST HAVE A SALAD



IT'S THREE COURSES!



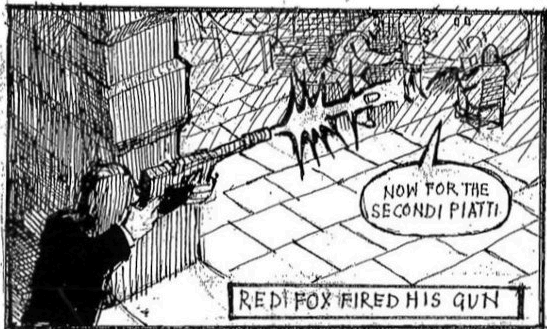
YES WE ARE READY TO ORDER... TO START WITH FRANCO, YOUNG MAN, YOU SHOULD HAVE IL RISOTTO AI FRUTTI DI MARE

OKAY SOUNDS GOOD



YES, YOU'LL ENJOY THAT! I'LL HAVE CANNELLONI ALLA ROMANA

UNKNOWN TO MARIO, HE WAS IN THE SIGHTS OF RED FOX!



NOW FOR THE SECONDI PIATTI

RED FOX FIRED HIS GUN



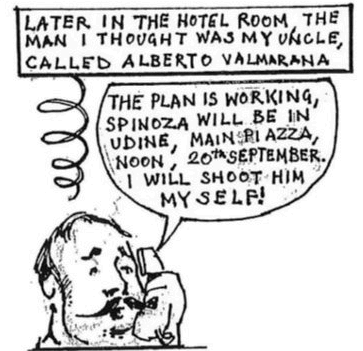
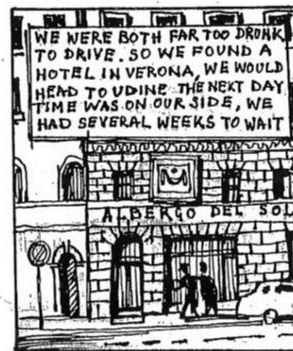
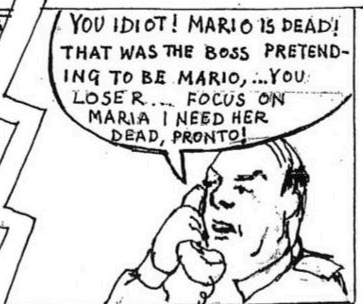
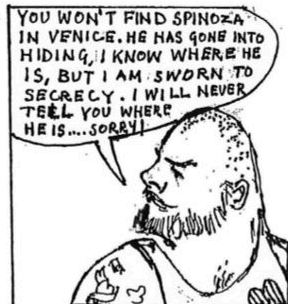
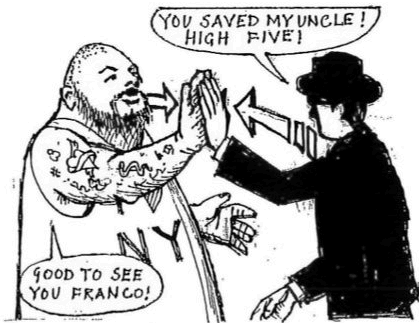
WELL HOW ABOUT VITTELLO ALLA MILANESE, THAT WOULD BE NICE

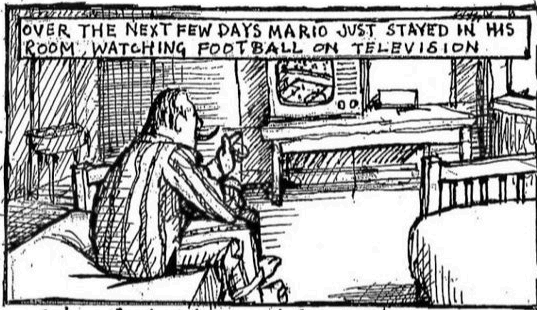
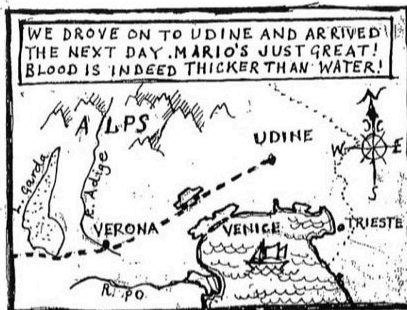
CASTRAMA!

SUDDENLY THE CASTRAMA APPEARED FROM NOWHERE AND FLICKED THE BULLET AWAY

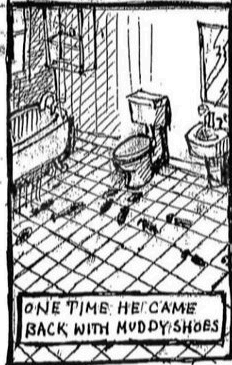
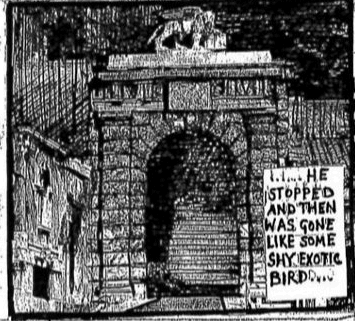
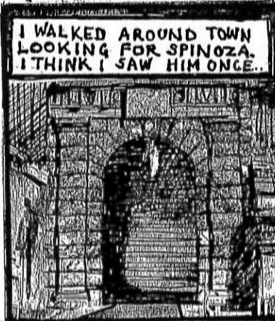


WATCH OUT KIDDO. SOMEONE IS TRYING TO KILL YOUR UNCLE TAKE CARE, MY FRIEND





For the scenes below, play variation 19 of Bach's Goldberg Variations

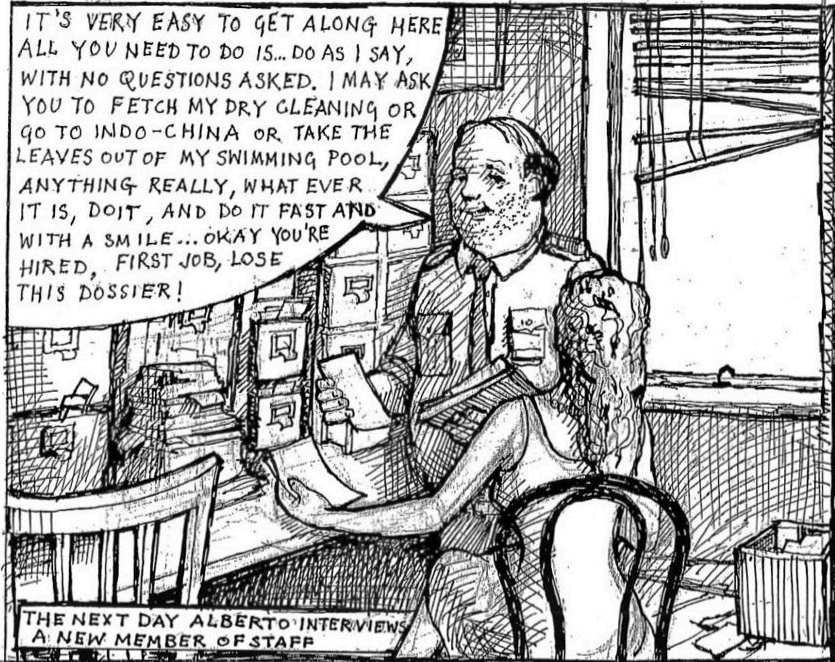




HAVING RECOVERED FROM HER COMA MARIA INVITES HER FRIENDS ROUND FOR A GIRLS NIGHT IN.....

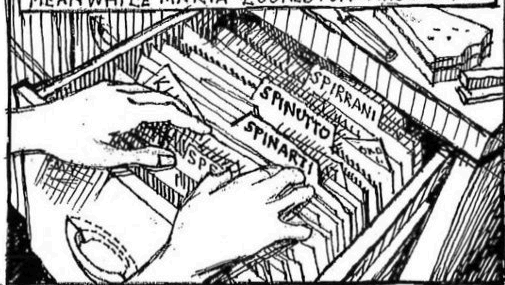


IT'S VERY EASY TO GET ALONG HERE ALL YOU NEED TO DO IS... DO AS I SAY, WITH NO QUESTIONS ASKED. I MAY ASK YOU TO FETCH MY DRY CLEANING OR GO TO INDO-CHINA OR TAKE THE LEAVES OUT OF MY SWIMMING POOL, ANYTHING REALLY, WHAT EVER IT IS, DO IT, AND DO IT FAST AND WITH A SMILE... OKAY YOU'RE HIRED, FIRST JOB, LOSE THIS DOSSIER!



THE NEXT DAY ALBERTO INTERVIEWS A NEW MEMBER OF STAFF

MEANWHILE MARTA LOOKED FOR SPINOZA'S FILE



NOTHING BETWEEN SPINOTTO AND SPINARTI... THAT MEANS WE HAVE NO FILE ON SPINOZA... WHICH IS ODD, IF WE HAVE NO FILE, HOW COME ALBERTO KNOWS HE'S A DANGEROUS MAN. THIS IS ALL VERY FISHY, I WONDER WHAT THAT RAT BAQ IS UP TO. I'LL GO AND ASK.



LATER IN ALBERTO'S OFFICE



ALBERTO, CAN I HAVE A WORD IN PRIVATE?

SURE, OFF YOU GO NEW GIRL!

ALBERTO, I'M CONFUSED. HOW COME YOU KNOW BEN SPINOZA IS A DANGER, WHEN WE HAVE NO FILE ON HIM?



HOW DO I CHANGE THE SUBJECT?

TATA-TATA-TATA
WILL YOU MARRY ME?



ERR... IF YOU LIKE... BUT ONE CONDITION YOU TAKE ME TO SPINOZA

DEAL! ARE YOU FREE ON THE 20th SEPTEMBER



RED FOX SHOULD HAVE GOT HER BY THEN

THE NEXT DAY MARIA MEETS MONSIGNOR RACELLI

.... I KNOW I HAVEN'T BEEN TO MASS FOR A WHILE BUT, BELIEVE ME, I DO PRAY - A BIT.... LET'S CUT TO THE CHASE, I NEED TO GET MARRIED IN S. MARIA DELLA GRAZIE

NO PROBLEM I'LL NEED CASH!

MONEY'S NOT A PROBLEM. DO YOU WANT TO HEAR MY CONFESSION

PLEASE IN YOUR OWN TIME

OKAY, LAST WEEK I BORROWED A DRESS FROM A FRIEND AND IT LOOKS SO GREAT, I CAN'T GIVE IT BACK - THAT WOULD BE IMMORAL ... EAR.. WHAT ELSE ... I WAS UNDER CHARGED FOR AN ESPRESSO AND I DID NOT LET ON ... BUT YES I DO HAVE BIG SINS TOO I'VE HAD MANY LOVERS - MORE THAN I CAN REMEMBER, BUT THAT DOES NOT MAKE ME FEEL BAD, WHAT CAN I SAY, I HAVE A BIG HEART ... BUT I HAVE DONE SOME EVIL THINGS I HAVE DARK MOMENTS, I HAVE SECRETS WHICH YOU WILL NEVER HEAR, AND NONE OF YOUR DOE EYED PIETY WILL CHANGE A THING... BUT I SLEEP WELL AND NONE OF THESE SO CALLED SINS- REALLY BOTHERS ME, I BELIEVE IN THE GREATER GOOD, THE END JUSTIFYING THE MEANS... I HAVE A PROBLEM, ALBERTO (MY BOYFRIEND) IS A GANGSTER AND HE MUST BE BROUGHT TO JUSTICE. IN ORDER FOR THIS TO HAPPEN, I NEED TO MEET A MAN CALLED BEN SPINOZZA. THE ONLY WAY I CAN SEE HIM IS BY MARRYING ALBERTO. IT'S COMPLEX... I CAN'T STOP THINKING OF SPINOZZA, WHEN I HEAR THAT NAME FLOWERS RAIN DOWN FROM HEAVEN



LATER MONSIGNOR RACELLI MEETS ALBERTO

MARIA IS ON TO YOU!

I KNOW!

MARIA WILL BE IN UDINE, MAIN PIAZZA AT NOON. ON 20th SEPTEMBER MAKE HER DEAD! OK

AND ALBERTO MEETS RED FOX

ST PAUL'S CATHEDRAL, LONDON...THE UNRIVALED MASTERPIECE OF ENGLISH ARCHITECTURE. IN THIS REMARKABLE EDIFICE IS A LIBRARY AND HERE MIA CULPA IS RESEARCHING FOR HER PH.D ON TIEPOLO'S FRESCOS. IN PALAZZO PARTIARCALE (NOW THE ARCHIEPISCOPAL PALACE) IN...AS I AM SURE YOU KNOW... UDINE.

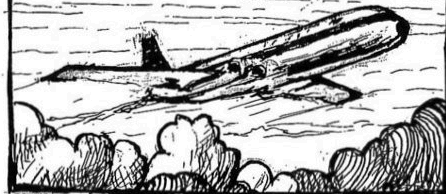


AS SHE WROTE THE FINAL PULL STOP, A WAVE OF INSECURITY CAME OVER HER.

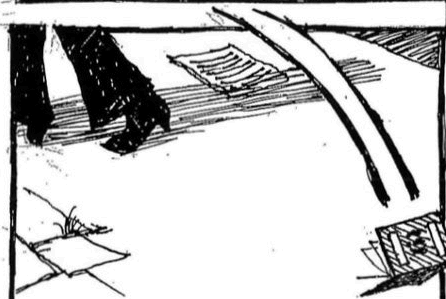


THE ICONOGRAPHY IS JUST SO BAFFLING, IT JUST DOES NOT MAKE ANY SENSE. THERE'S ONLY ONE THING FOR IT. I MUST GO TO UDINE AND SEE THE FRESCOS FOR MYSELF.

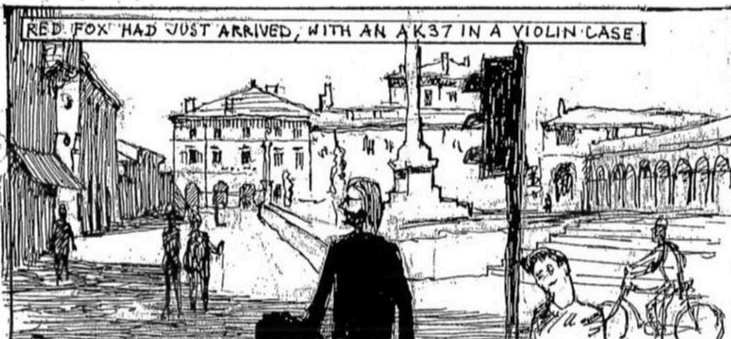
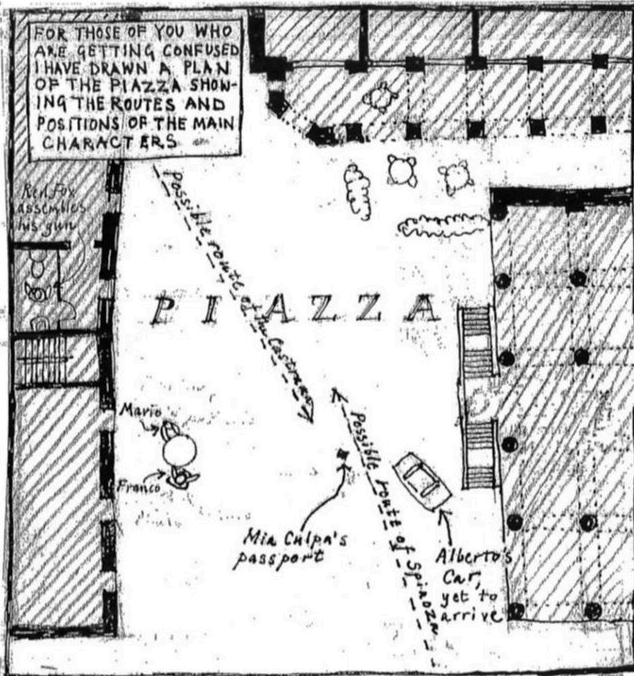
SO MIA PACKED HER BAGS, WATERED THE PLANTS, AND CAUGHT THE NEXT FLIGHT TO ITALY.



ON ARRIVING IN UDINE...



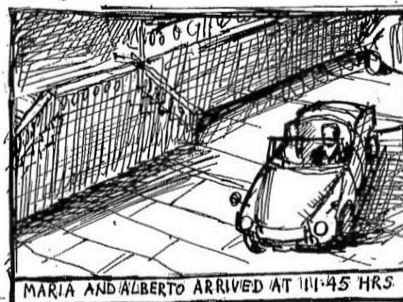
SHE WALKED THROUGH THE MAIN PIAZZA AS SHE WENT, SHE ACCIDENTALLY DROPPED HER PASSPORT, WITHOUT NOTICING.



ALBERTO AND MARIA WERE MARRIED PRIVATELY ON 20th SEPTEMBER IN SÈ MARIA DELLA GRAZIE IN MILAN NOT THE BIG AFFAIR MARIA HAD HOPED FOR, BUT THE INTIMACY CREATED AN UNEXPECTED AIR OF JOY AND ROMANCE WHICH WAS BOTH SURPRISING AND INTOXICATING PERHAPS SHE DID LOVE ALBERTO AFTER ALL (MUSIC FOR THIS SECTION IS DIANA ROSS'S 'REMEMBER ME') - POIGNANT...NO?



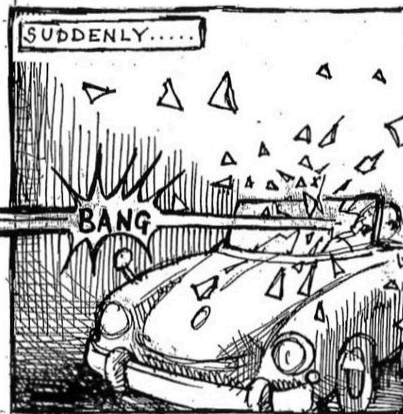
THEY HOPPED INTO ALBERTOS CAR AND DROVE STRAIGHT TO UDINE



MARIA AND ALBERTO ARRIVED AT 11:45 HRS



MEANWHILE RED FOX ASSEMBLES HIS GUN

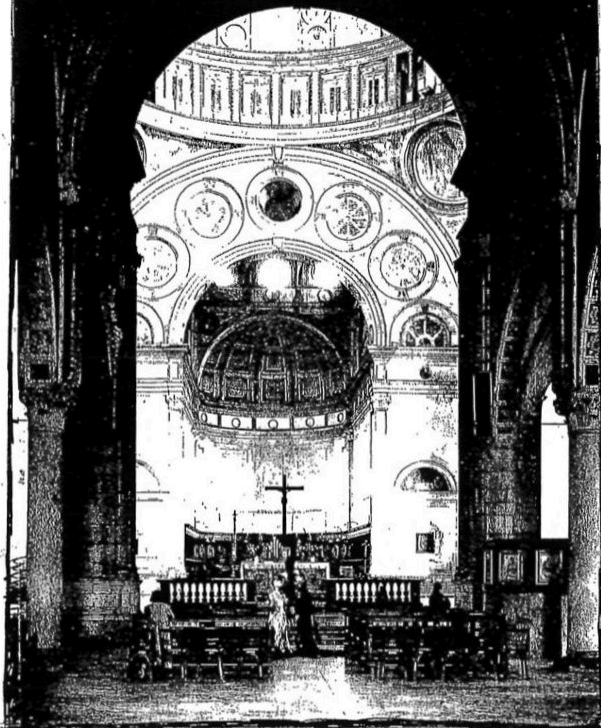


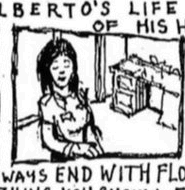
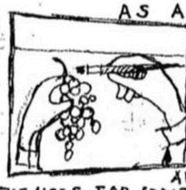
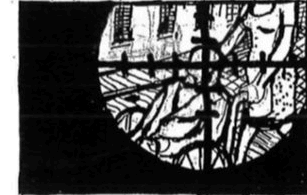
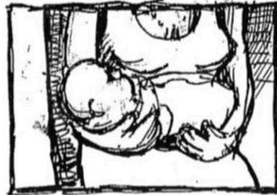
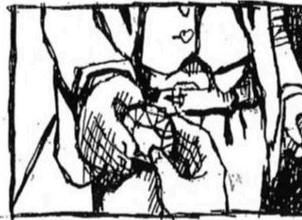
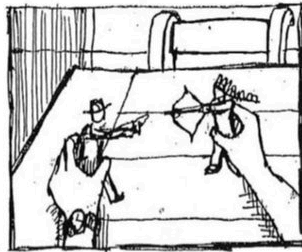
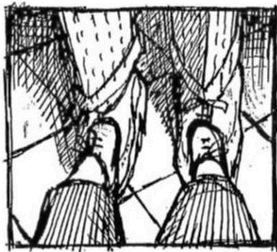
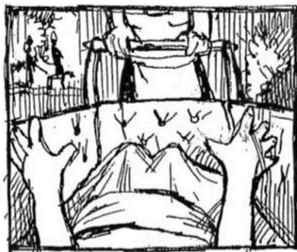
SUDDENLY.....

BANG



...ALBERTO WAS DEAD!

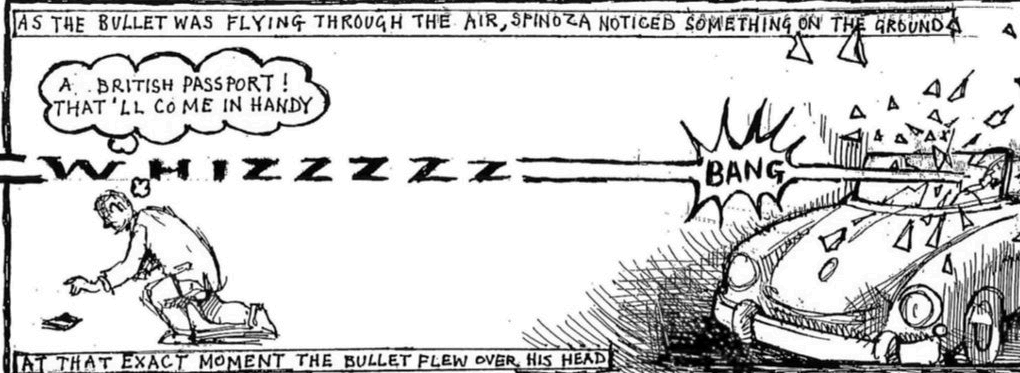
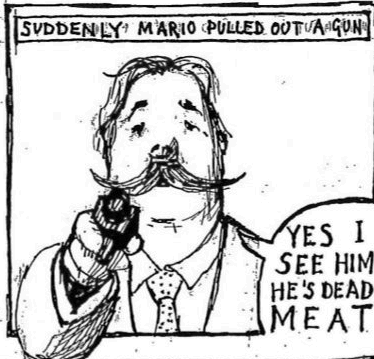




AS ALBERTO'S LIFE EBBED AWAY, HIS CONSCIOUSNESS REDUCING WITH EVERY BEAT OF HIS HEART, HIS WHOLE LIFE FLASHED BEFORE HIM...IMPORTANT, IRRELEVANT AND PRECIOUS MEMORIES SEEMED TO FLOOD BACK INTO HIS MIND LIKE AN OVERCROWDED STAGE

AT THE END OF AN OPERA WHEN THEY ALL COME OUT TO BOW AND HAVE FLOWERS THROWN AT THEM... THINGS ALWAYS END WITH FLOWERS. OPERA AND LIFE - HOW SIMILAR THEY ARE - THOUGHT ALBERTO, YOU PAY THROUGH THE NOSE FOR SOMETHING YOU SHOULD ENJOY BUT SOME HOW CAN'T - BUT - CARDS ON THE TABLE - HOW FUN IS IT WATCHING A FAT BIRD SHRIEKING HER GUTS OUT - IF I WANTED THAT I WOULD HAVE STAYED AT HOME IN ANCONA AND LISTENED TO MY MAMA

EH? HOW DID THAT HAPPEN? RED FOX HASN'T YET FIRED HIS GUN! THIS IS JUST SO OUT OF WHACK!..... HOW VERY CONFUSING! ALBERTO'S DEAD, BUT WHO SHOT HIM..... LET'S PUT THE CLOCK BACK AND ROLL THE SCENE AGAIN..... OKAY GUYS, SORRY, ONE MORE TIME, GET IN YOUR POSITIONS, DRIVE THE CAR OUT, IT SHOULD BE THE LAST TIME. COSTUME PEOPLE, ALBERTO NEEDS A NEW SHIRT.. GOOD. OKAY, LET'S START, FRANCO AND MARIO IN THE RESTAURANT..... ACTION!

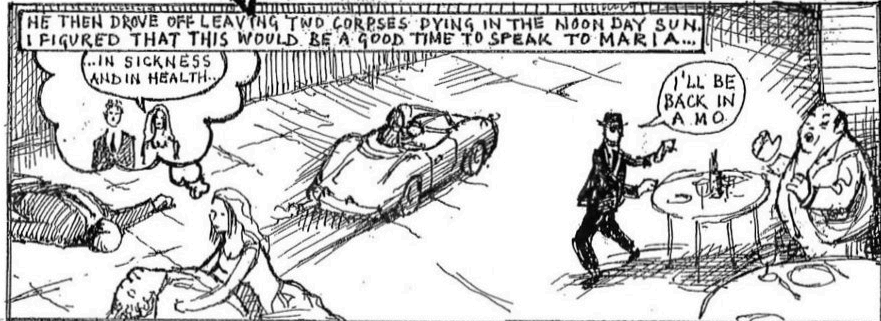
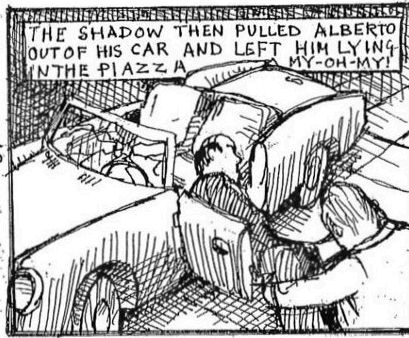


UNCLE MARIO, OR SHOULD I SAY "THE SHADOW"?'S BLOOD WAS UP HE WANTED SPINOZA DEAD! HE STARTED SHOOTING AGAIN - WHAT A MANIAC! THE SECOND SHOT KNOCKED HIM OUT CLEAN.... BUT HANG ON, WHO'S THE GIRL IN THE WEDDING DRESS, I RECOGNISE HER! SHE'S THAT POLICE WOMAN I MET IN MILAN, WHO GOT SHOT IN VENICE. COME TO THINK OF IT, SHE DID ASK ME ABOUT SPINOZA - I MUST GET TO THE BOTTOM OF THIS!

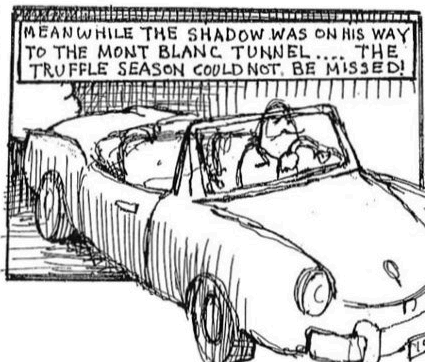


SHE THEN LEAPT OUT OF HER CAR

LEAVING HER HUSBAND TO DIE!! SHE THEN STARTED TO ATTEND ON SPINOZA. SHE SEEMED LISTLESS, WAS THIS ONE OF THOSE LOVE AT FIRST SIGHT SCENES - ARIOS I HAD READ ABOUT IN DINE STORE NOVELS?



INDEED IT DID!!! WITH THOSE TWO WORDS MARIA REMEMBERED EVERY THING; THE MURDER OF MARIO, THE SPINOZA DOSSIER, ALBERTO'S TRIGGER HAPPY ANTICS AT THE OPERA, IT ALL WAS CLEAR. BETWEEN THEM THEY COULD GET TO THE BOTTOM OF THIS MYSTERY,





THE CASTRAMA WAS WRONG, THERE WERE TWO BARS IN THE PIAZZA, AND IT WAS AT THE SECOND ONE THAT HE GREETED HIS OLD FRIEND AND BROTHER LEONI BEN SPINOZA. WHO? I SAW HIM SHOT WITH MY OWN EYES! I HEAR YOU SAY... WELL DID YOU? READ ON, ALL WILL BE REVEALED!

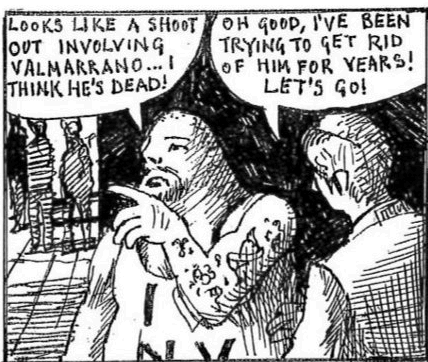


I DON'T THINK HE'LL COME... DO YOU LIKE TIEPOLO?

DESPITE NOT BEING A FAN OF THE ROCOCO, I LOVE TIEPOLO, SUCH JOY, SUCH ELAN AND ABOVE ALL A LOVE OF LIFE

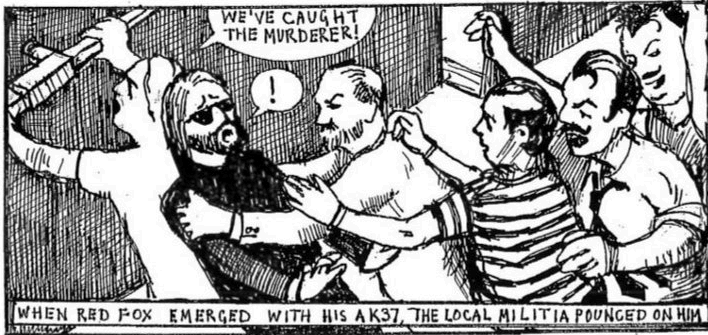
PLEASE! PUT A SOCK IN IT BEFORE I THROW-UP!

IN PALAZZO PARTIARCALE A FEW TOURISTS ADMIRE THE TIEPOLOS



LOOKS LIKE A SHOOT OUT INVOLVING VALMARRANO... I THINK HE'S DEAD!

OH GOOD, I'VE BEEN TRYING TO GET RID OF HIM FOR YEARS! LET'S GO!



WE'VE CAUGHT THE MURDERER!

WHEN RED FOX EMERGED WITH HIS AK37, THE LOCAL MILITIA POUNGED ON HIM



SHOOT IF YOU SEE A PHARMACY, I NEED TO PICK UP SOME HAND CREAM

SORRY CHUM, WE AIN'T GOT THE TIME, I'VE ARRANGED TO MEET FALCONETTO IN A FEW MINUTES

THEY HEAD OFF TO SEE THE TIEPOLOS



OH NO! IT'S MARCO, THE LOCAL PLAYBOY!

MEANWHILE



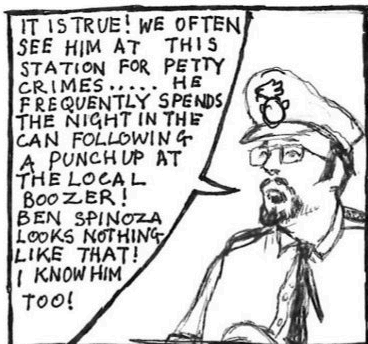
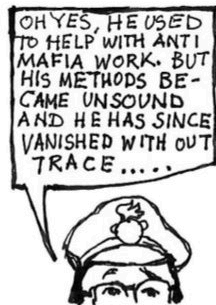
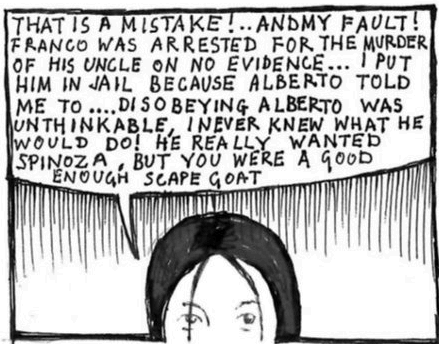
WHAT AN AMAZING STORY! I ALWAYS HAD MY SUSPICIONS ABOUT ALBERTO!

AND SPINOZA DEAD! I WAS SUPPOSED TO MEET HIM NOT FAR AWAY LATER TODAY!

CONFUSION, BEMUDERMENT AND PERPLEXITY REIGNED IN UDINE POLICE STATION... THIS WAS A TRICKY ONE!...



THIS DOES NOT MAKE ANY SENSE! TWO MEN SHOT IN COLD BLOOD THE BULLETS DON'T MATCH THE WEAPONS AND WHO IS THIS MIA CULPA?! ALL VERY STRANGE!





ON HIS WAY NORTH,
THE SHADOW STOPPED
AT THE BORDER TOWN
OF SAN RAIMONDI
TO MEET HIS OLD
FRIEND AND PARTNER
IN CRIME, MARCO LOPO



OVER COFFEE THEY GET DOWN TO BUSINESS

IL CONTO!

THANKS FOR A
LOVELY LUNCH,
ENJOYABLE AS
IT IS SEEING YOU
AND CHATTING
ABOUT THE OLD
DAYS, YOU SEE
ME WHEN YOU
NEED HELP.
I AM HAPPY TO
OBLIGE, FOR
A FEE

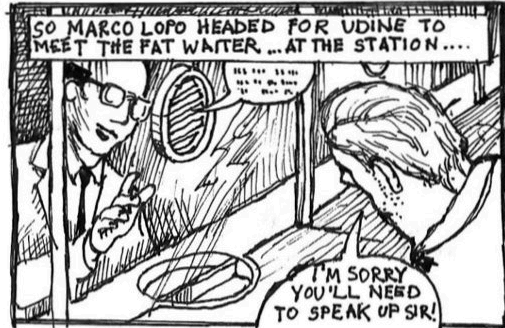


I'M IN A SPOT OF TROUBLE, WHICH I'D
LIKE YOU TO SORT OUT ... I WITNESSED
A SHOOT OUT IN UDINE. AN AMERICAN
MANIAC SHOT TWO MEN AND PROMPTLY
DISAPPEARED FROM THE SCENE
OF THE CRIME. HE IS NOW WORKING
HARD TO PUT THE BLAME ON
ME. THE CASE WILL GO TO
COURT IN A FEW WEEKS
TIME. SEE THAT THIS
MURDERER IS BOUGHT TO
JUSTICE AND I
AM VINDICTED



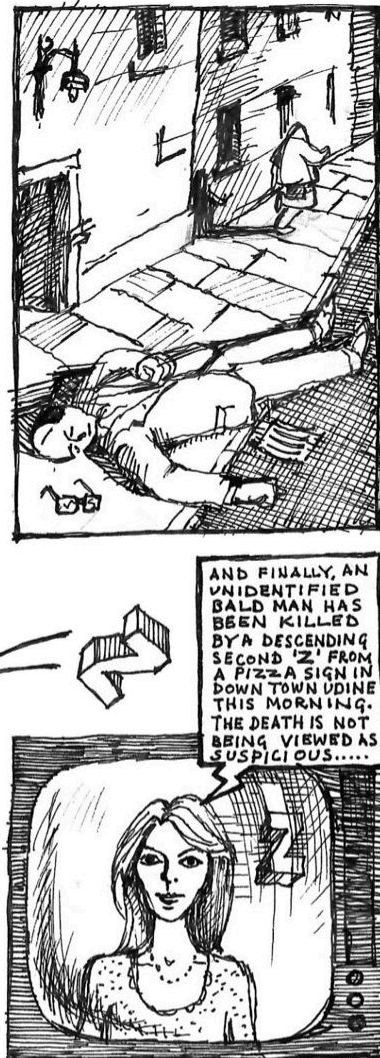
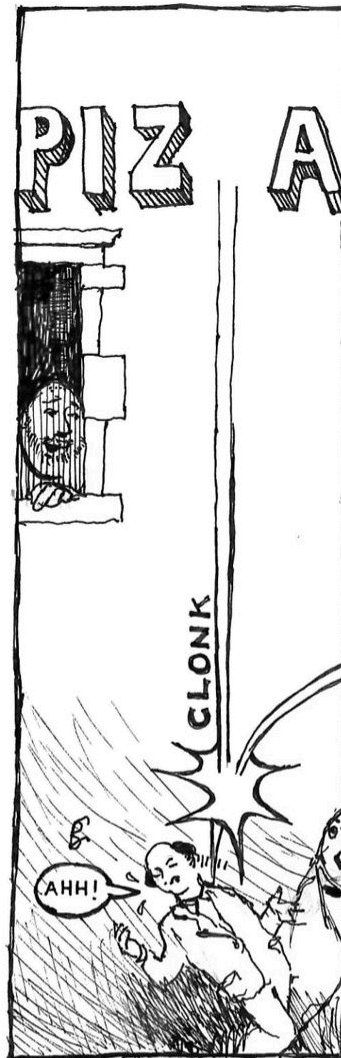
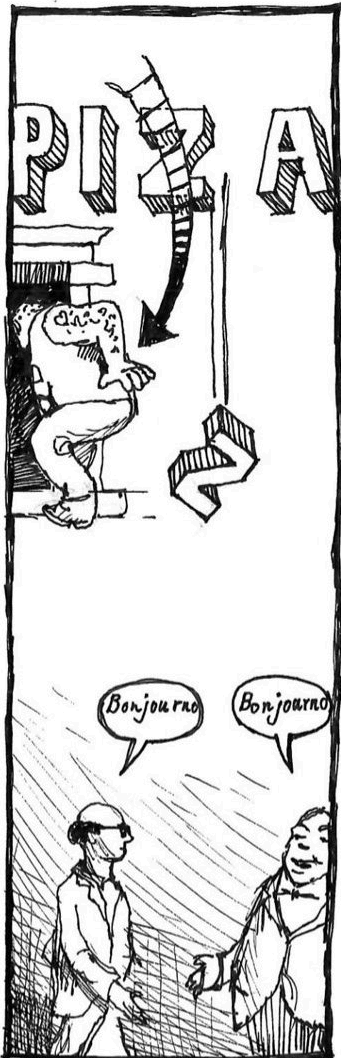
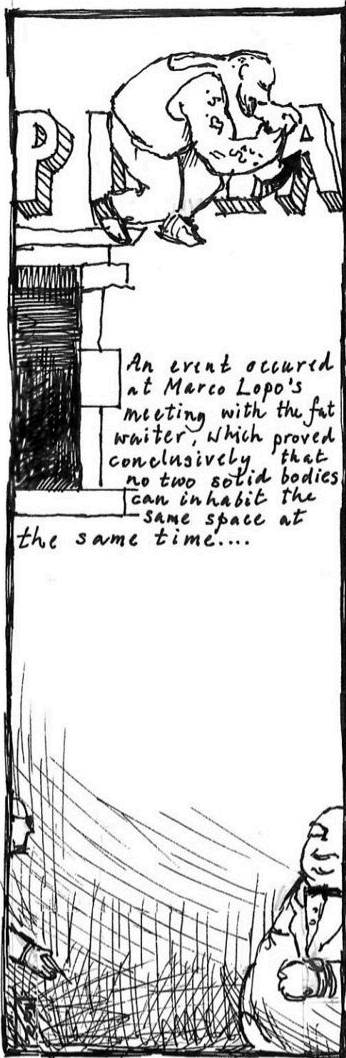
OKAY BOSS, I NEED TO
TALK TO A KEY WITNESS
WHO DO YOU SUGGEST?

THE FAT WAITER
AT THE RESTAU-
RANT. GIVE
HIM AN OFFER
HE CAN'T REFUSE!



SO MARCO LOPO HEADED FOR UDINE TO
MEET THE FAT WAITER ... AT THE STATION ...

I'M SORRY
YOU'LL NEED
TO SPEAK UP SIR!



MONSIGNOR RACELLI
MAKES A PRIVATE CALL
TO THE JUDGE....

RED FOX
MUST NOT BE
CONVICTED!
HE COULD
SINK
US!

Capisco.

IN A COURT ROOM NOT
FAR AWAY DERRICK
HAPPY (A.K.A RED FOX)
IS TRIED FOR MURDER

NO, MY HUSBAND WAS
SHOT BY A MOUSTACHED
MANIAC, WHO THEN SHOT
MARCO GRITTI AND
STOLE OUR CAR!

DID THE
ACCUSED CARRY
OUT THE MURDER

WERE YOU IN SOUND
MIND AT THE TIME?

YES... I SAW HIM AS
CLEARLY AS I SEE
YOU NOW!

I DON'T BELIEVE A WORD OF
IT. THE MOUSTACHED MAN IS
A FIGMENT OF YOUR
IMAGINATION.

RED FOX WALKED
OUT OF THE COURT ROOM
AS AN INNOCENT
MAN. THE...

LATER....

THE SHADOW MUST
NOT BE BLAMED,
FOR THIS CRIME!

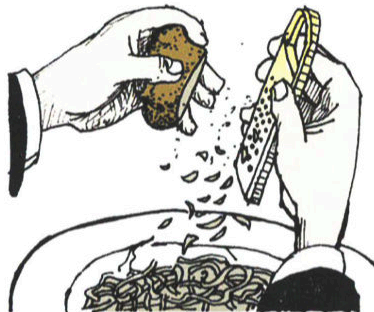
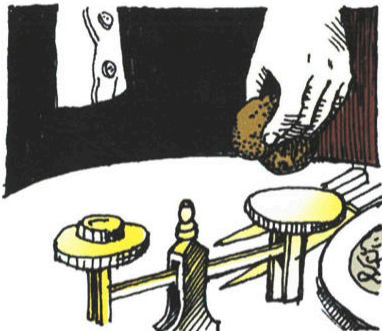
DON'T
WORRY, WE
HAVE ANOTHER
SUSPECT!

WANTED
DEAD OR ALIVE

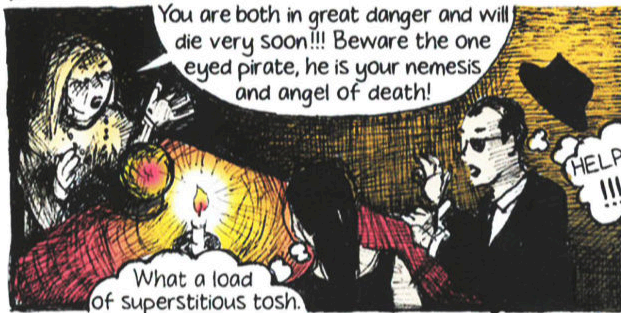


MIA CULPA
for murder

DE-DE DE-DE-DEE
WHAR WHAR WHAR



'IS THAT ENOUGH OF THE TRUFFLE RITUAL? GOOD! I GUESS THESE OVERPRICED HUNKS OF SHIT NEED CAREFUL MARKETING! HERE'S THE DEAL, YOUR MAN NEVER MET THE WITNESS, UNFORTUNATELY HE DIED FROM A COLLISION WITH A DESCENDING 'Z', A FEW MINUTES PRIOR TO THEIR RENDEZ VOUS'. AN UNUSUAL CAUSE OF DEATH, WHICH I AM SURE TICKLED THE CORONER AS HE FILLED IN THE FORMS, I DIGRESS... FORTUNATELY THE POLICE SEEM TO THINK YOU ARE A FIGMENT OF MARIA PISANI'S IMAGINATION AND THE BLAME HAS BEEN PUT ON MIA CULPA - AN ENGLISH TOURIST WHO DROPPED HER PASSPORT AT THE SCENE OF THE CRIME... ONLY FALCONETTO, PISANO AND A FAT WAITER KNOW YOU DID IT!





CENSORED



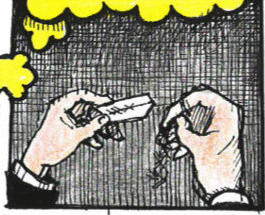
I HAD NO WHERE TO STAY, SO MARIA SAID I COULD SLEEP ON HER SOFA. LOOKING BACK ON IT, I THINK SHE WAS LONELY, WHAT WITH ALBERTO'S DEATH 'N' ALL.....



HAVE YOU EVER READ ANY PETRARCH?

NO! I'M MORE OF A JAMES JOYCE KIND OF GUY

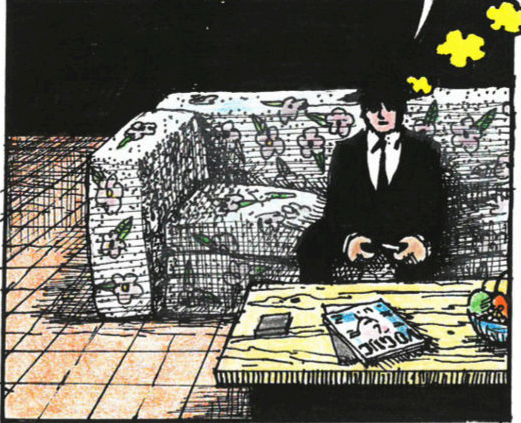
WHO AM I KIDDING! I'VE NEVER READ A WORD OF POETRY AND SHE KNOWS IT! SHE'S A DETECTIVE! THEY'RE TAUGHT THESE THINGS!



FANCY ROLLING ME ONE THOSE COW BOY?

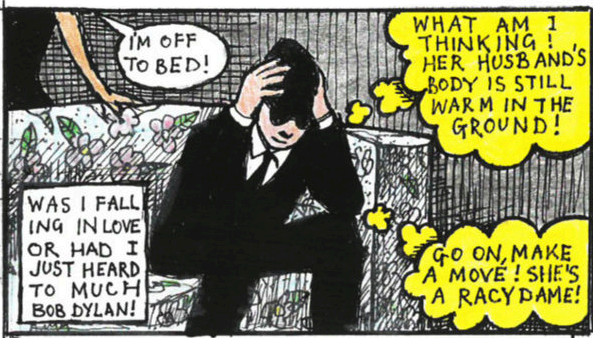


YOU CAN HAVE THIS ONE IF YOU LIKE!



As I passed her the cigarette our fingers touched and then she opened a book of poems and handed it to me, written by an Italian poet from the 14th century, Every one of those words rang true and glowed like burnin' coal from me to her...
pourin' off of every page like it was written in my soul

HAVE A LOOK AT THIS SONNET, MUCH BETTER THAN JAMEZA JOYCE!



I'M OFF TO BED!

WHAT AM I THINKING! HER HUSBAND'S BODY IS STILL WARM IN THE GROUND!

WAS I FALLING IN LOVE OR HAD I JUST HEARD TO MUCH BOB DYLAN!

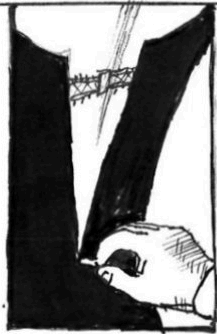
GO ON, MAKE A MOVE! SHE'S A RACY DAME!



AND THEN....

CAN YOU HELP ME WITH MY DRESS? THE ZIP IS STUCK!

MY HEART WAS GOING BOOM BAD-DA BOOM BAD-DA BOOM BAD-DA BOOM-BAD-DA... (FADE OUT BAD-DA BOOM, FADE IN "THE CARPENTERS")



GOOD NIGHT MY LITTLE FRANCO-NINO!



DOES SHE LIKE ME? SHE'S SO HARD TO READ!

THAT NIGHT WHEN I SETTLED DOWN TO SLEEP ON THE SOFA - I HAD SOME VIVID DREAMS

WHY DO BIRDS SUDDENLY APPEAR, EVERY TIME YOU ARE NEAR, THAT'S WHY WE LONG TO BE, CLOSE TO YOU.....ON THE DAY THAT YOU WERE BORN THE ANGELS GOT TOGETHER AND DECIDED TO MAKE A DREAM COME TRUE, SO THEY SPRINKLED MOON DUST IN YOUR HAIR.....



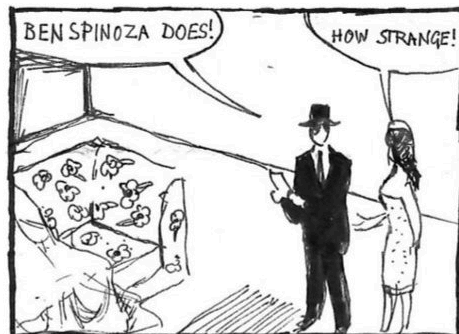


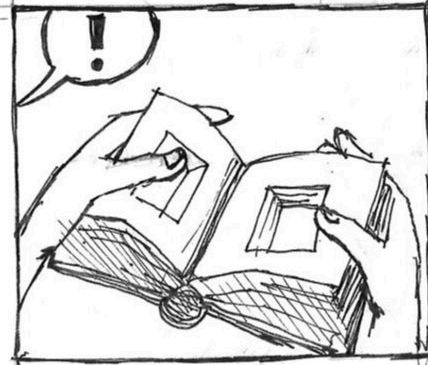
DEAR FRANCO,

YOU ARE IN GREAT DANGER!
MEET ME NEXT TUESDAY AT
SAN CARLO ALLE QUATTRO FONTANE
VIA DEL QUIRINALE 23, ROME
DRESS AS A PRIEST AND GO INTO
THE CONFESSIONAL AT 9AM
PRECISELY. I WILL ARRIVE
TO "GIVE MY CONFESSION"

SEE YOU THEN

BEN SPINOZA



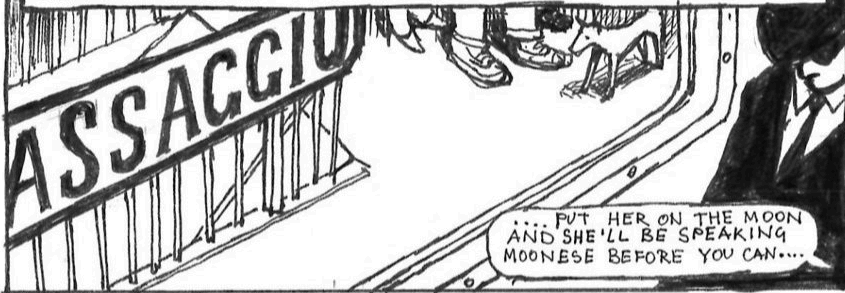


I GOT AN EXPRESS TRAIN TO ROME UNFORTUNATELY I SAT NEXT TO THE CHAMPION CHATTER BOX OF THE NEW ENGLAND STATES SO I JUST PLACED MY THOUGHTS ELSEWHERE AND NODDED AND SMILED FROM TIME TO TIME



"...AND HE CAME BACK LATER THAT AFTERNOON AND SAID 'I'VE NAMED HIM 'CASPER SALADIN' 'CASPER SALADIN'. I SAID 'PLEASE TELL ME YOU ARE JOKING!' AND SO I LEAPT OUT OF MY HOSPITAL BED, RAN DOWN TO THE MAIRIE AND RENAMED HIM 'NICOLI' WHICH IF NOTHING ELSE, IS AN INTERNATIONAL NAME..."

I FELL ASLEEP AT A TOWN CALLED SOTTOPASSAGGIO. AN HOUR LATER, I WOKE UP ONLY TO FIND WE WERE STILL AT SOTTOPASSAGGIO, IT'S SUPPOSED TO BE AN EXPRESS TRAIN! BUT "IN ITALIA ESPRESSO È SOLO CAFE!"

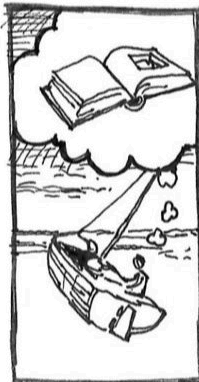


.... PUT HER ON THE MOON AND SHE'LL BE SPEAKING MOONESE BEFORE YOU CAN....

AS THE FOOT HILLS OF THE ALPS GAVE WAY TO THE GOLDEN LANDSCAPES OF TUSCANY I STARTED TO PIECE TOGETHER ALL I KNEW ABOUT BEN SPINDOZA...

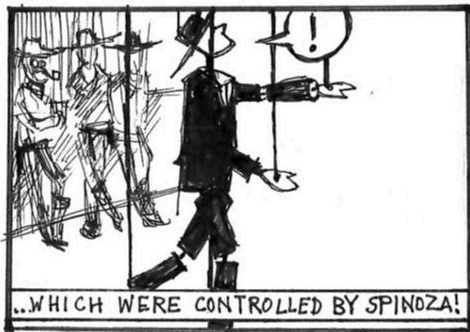
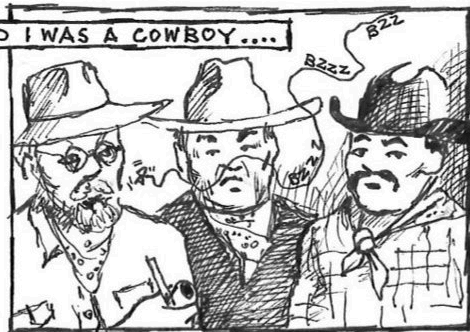


...AT HARRY'S BAR WHICH BY THEN...



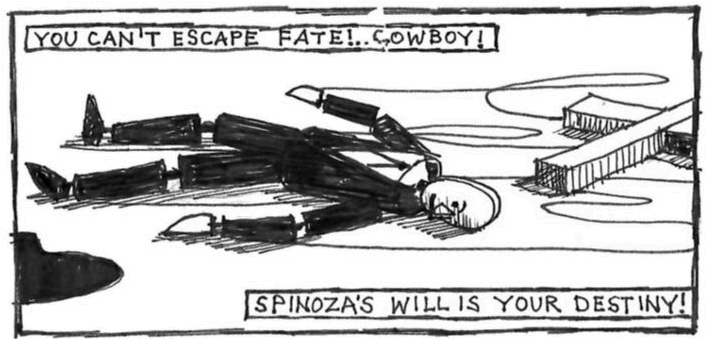
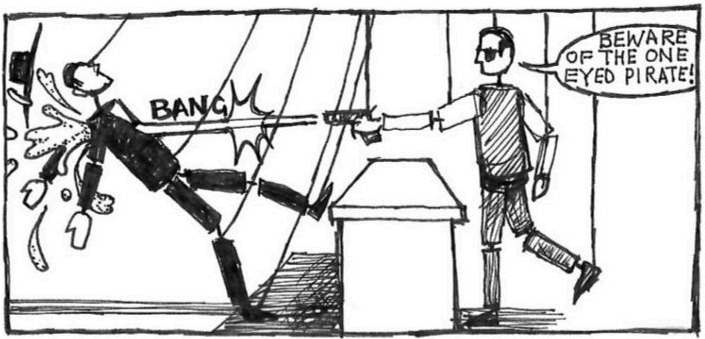
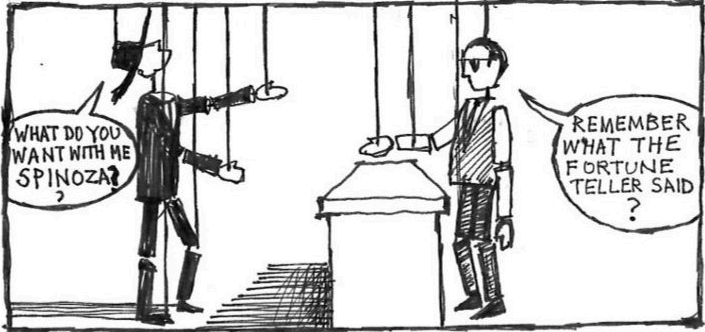
RUN FRANCIS, RUN!

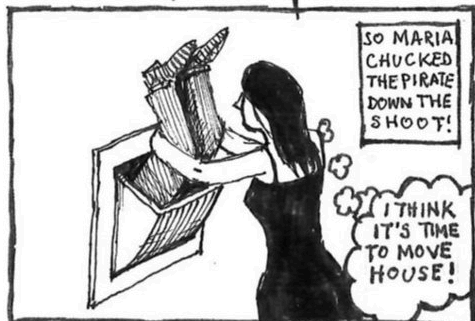
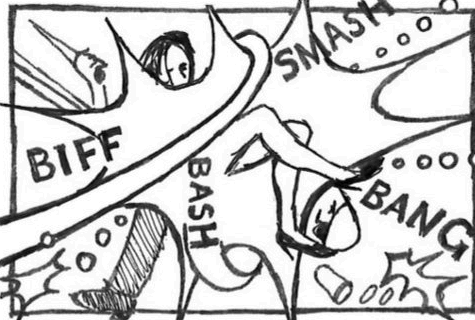
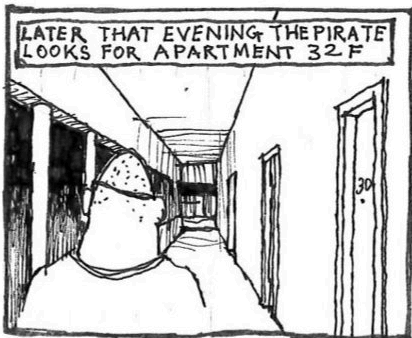
HIS METHODS BECAME UNSOUND!





I LOOKED UP
AND THERE
HE WAS !!!
DICTATING
MY EVERY
MOVE LIKE
HE HAD BEEN
DOING EVER
SINCE I HAD
ARRIVED IN
ITALY...





That's all folks
(for now)

best wishes
Franco Falconetto