



THOUGHTS & IMAGES

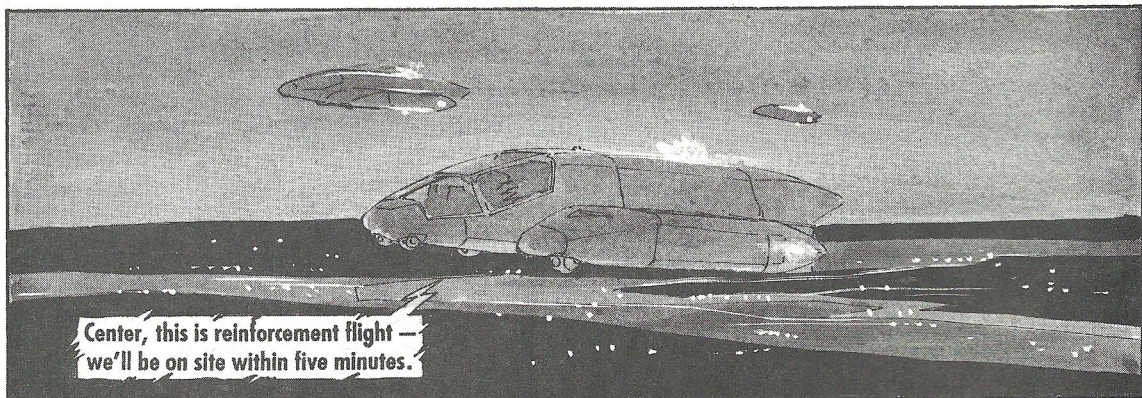
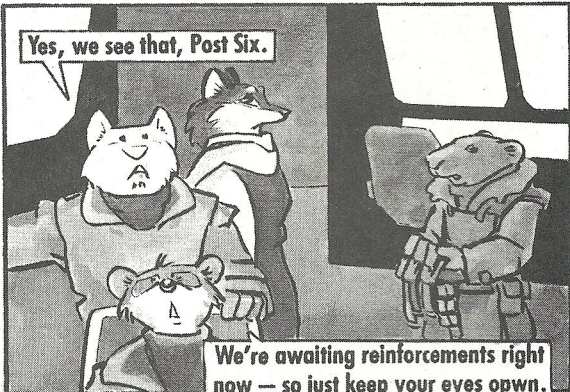
ALBEDO

NR. 8

\$2.00

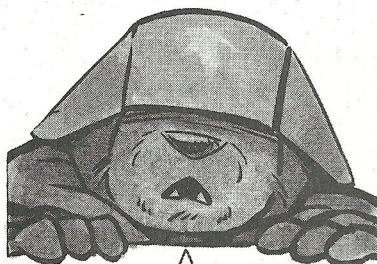
ANTHROPOMORPHICS



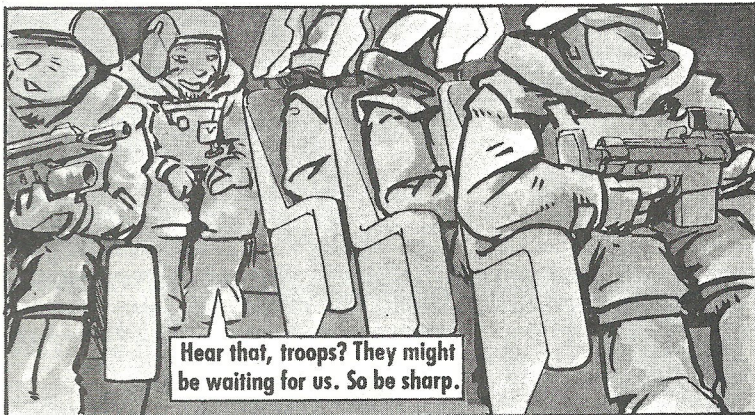


Hey — it looks like it's gonna work.
They can hear the aeros coming.

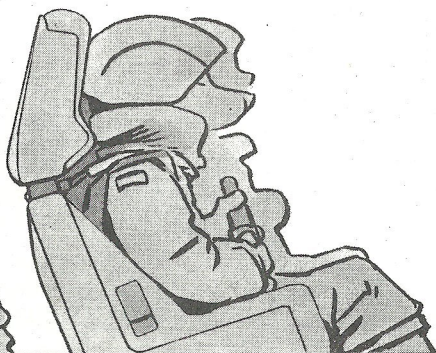
I dunno — They're not going away.



More like they're just getting cover.
Aero units. Be advised. The crowd
has left the fence, appears to be lying
back among the perimeter buildings.



Hear that, troops? They might
be waiting for us. So be sharp.

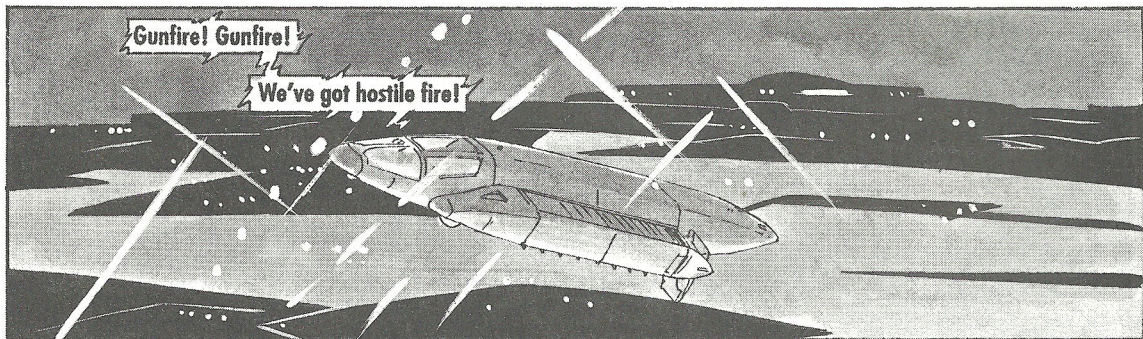


Remember, these are our fellow citizens, exercising their right to political dissent — we're not trying to prevent
that — protecting lives and property from mob violence is our mission here. And restraint of force is our operative.

Unit one, coming
in for fast drop.

Everything's cool so far.





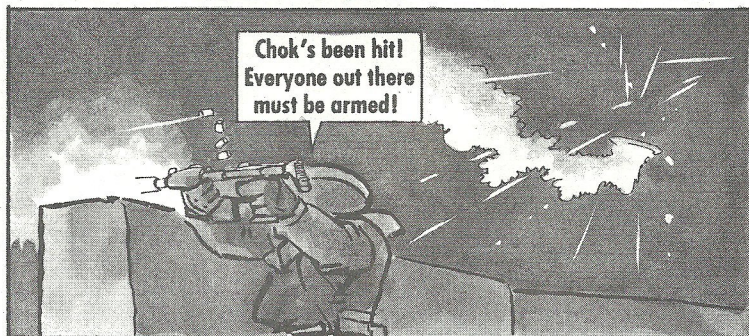
Gunfire! Gunfire!

We've got hostile fire!

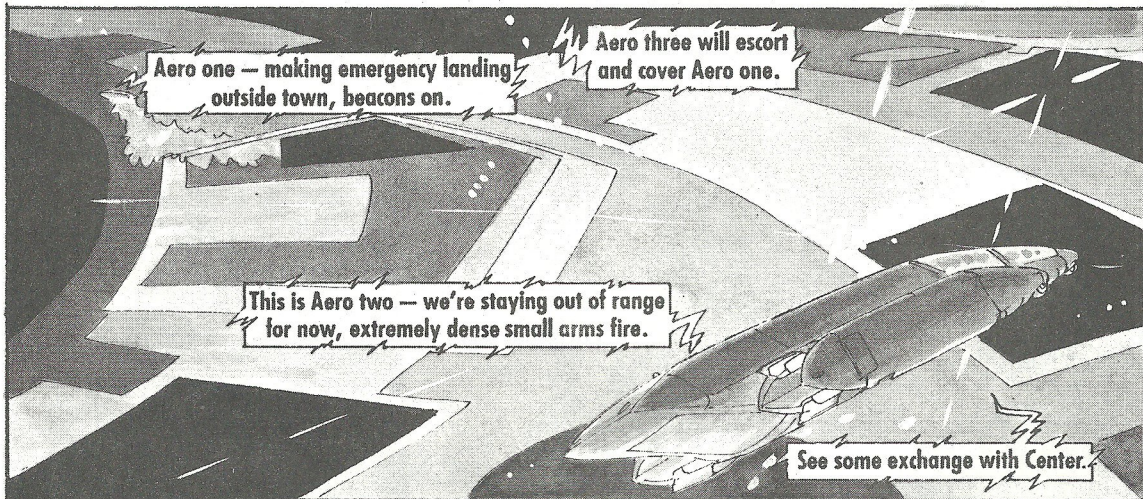


Khai!

Kio!
Lots of
guns!



Chok's been hit!
Everyone out there
must be armed!



Aero one — making emergency landing
outside town, beacons on.

Aero three will escort
and cover Aero one.

This is Aero two — we're staying out of range
for now, extremely dense small arms fire.

See some exchange with Center.

This is Center. Perimeter is secure.
Three dead, six injured. We can
hold things here, provided they
don't come up with anything more.

Aero one — we're on the ground.
No casualties, relift impossible.

Port detachment,
all clear,
please advise.

Aero two — sighted
armed individuals
moving towards
mid-town.
Will monitor.

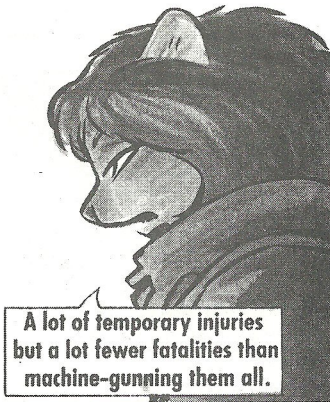
Hospital detachment —
all clear, please advise —

Station Ek-Yo —
automatic distress code three,
automatic distress code three.

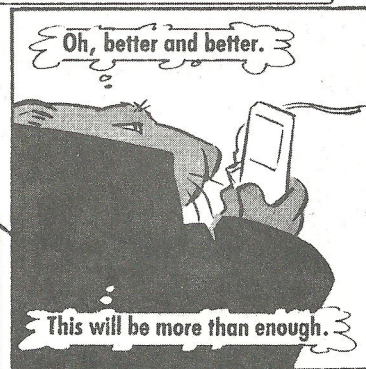
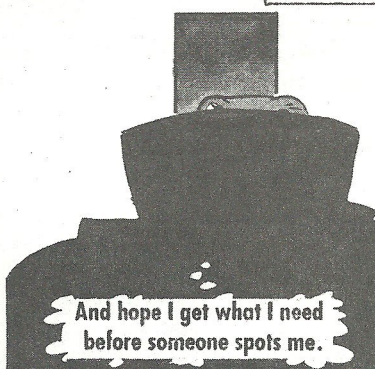
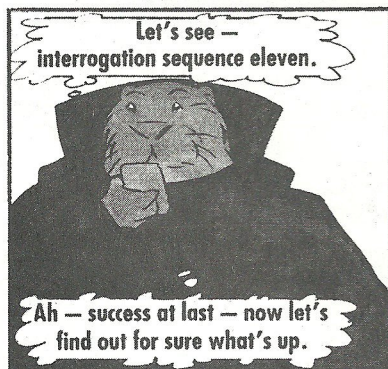
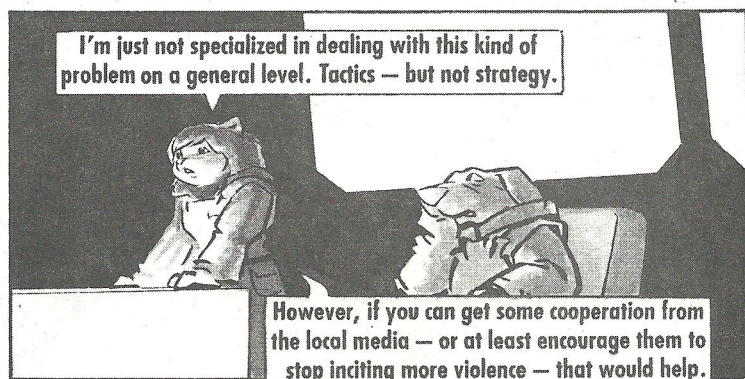
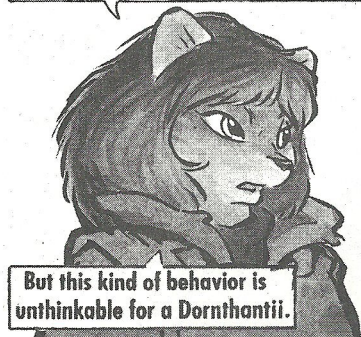
Traffic monitor — unusually quiet.
No vehicle movement to space port,
very light residential traffic.

Tuko City detachment —
we've got big crowds —
no trouble yet.

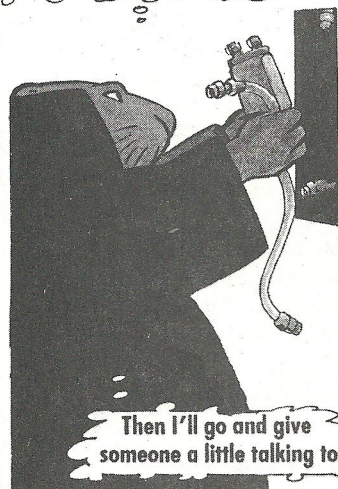
Zenee station —
detachment H.Q. destroyed in
bomb blast — heavy casualties.
Request immediate assistance.

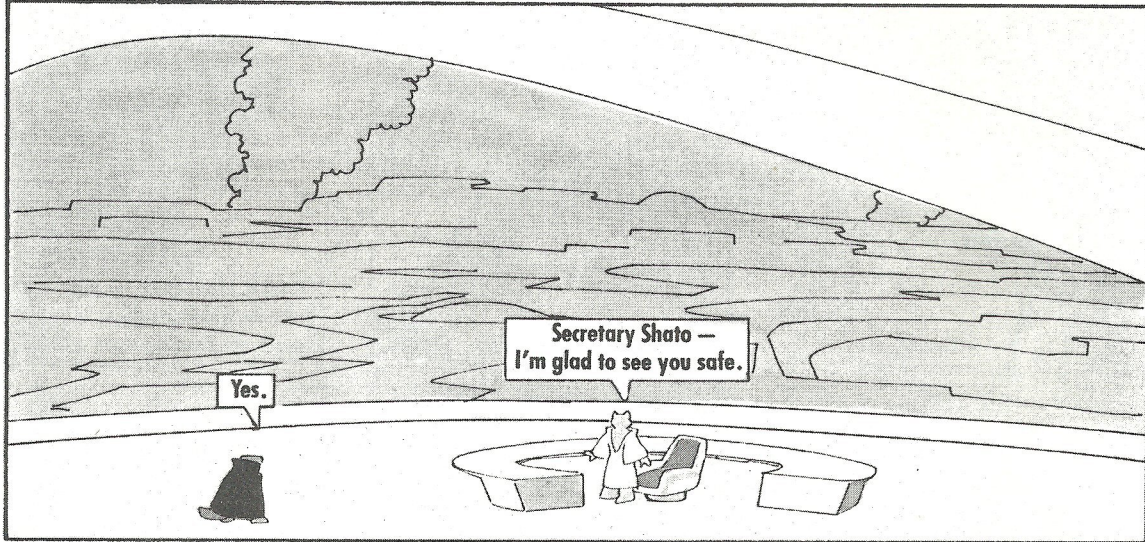


I'm sorry — that's not a good answer.



But first add a little something.



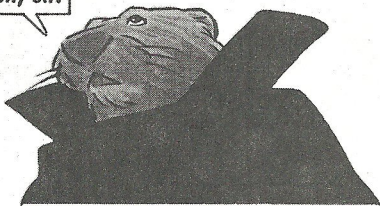


Secretary Shato —
I'm glad to see you safe.

Yes.

Quite a show you've put on, eh?

You flatter me, hon. Secretary,
but even I couldn't do all that.



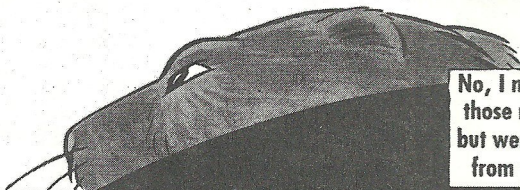
Besides, why would I want to?
What could I hope to gain?

Or fear to lose.

Six of the people you had killed had strayed
away from your anti-centralist movement.



If you mean Ichi and his — .



No, I mean Arkoona, Auhard, Zako —
those members who claimed support,
but were secretly divesting themselves
from your covert business activities.

An interesting bit of fiction.

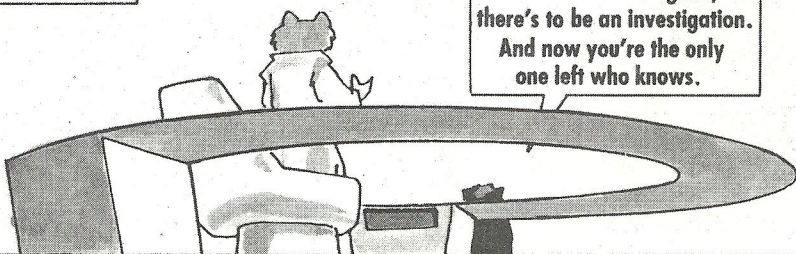
While the "defection" of those
unfortunates was not entirely secret,
their demise can only be coincidental.

As for covert business — .

Chishata.

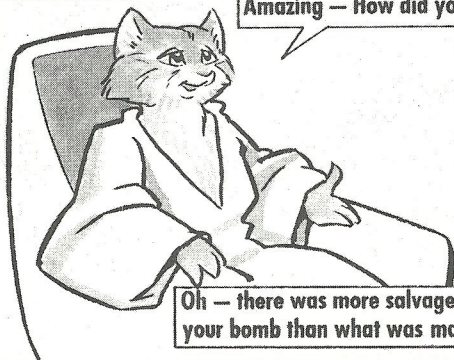
You put a lot of other people's money
into the refining complexes there.
And kept the connections very quiet.

Now that it's all gone,
there's to be an investigation.
And now you're the only
one left who knows.



Very good —

That is, in fact, what I did —
Amazing — How did you figure?



Oh — there was more salvageable from
your bomb than what was made public.

And some discrete data
base interrogation.

Did you know there's
an automatic log of
ALL your data traffic?

Or that your personal files —
I mean YOUR personal files —
are now accessible on the
public nets?

But — a question. Why the rabble-rousing?
Especially this new, destructive effort?

Are you familiar with the Lisaka revolt?

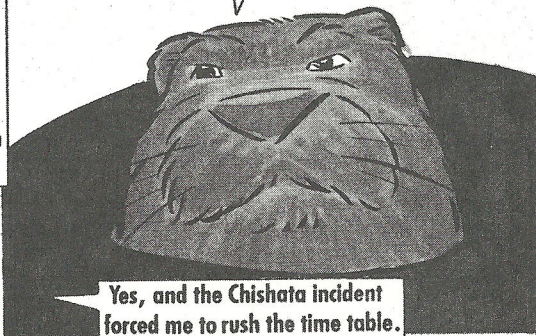
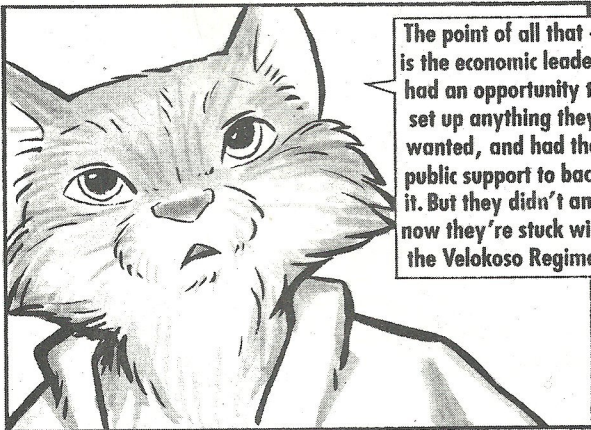
Not enough to see a connection.

Well then — . A popular liberal faction was able to
topple the government there — Obviously.
The local economy was in a shambles — and
the business community was too disorganized —
dumbfounded by it all — to reorganize and
get a recovery going. Things got so desperate —
not even basic services had been re-established —
that it took a counter-revolution which nationalized
all the free-ent activities to get things going again.



The point of all that —
is the economic leaders
had an opportunity to
set up anything they
wanted, and had the
public support to back
it. But they didn't and
now they're stuck with
the Velokoso Regime.

So — you created a crisis — just so you could pick
up the pieces and put them together your way.

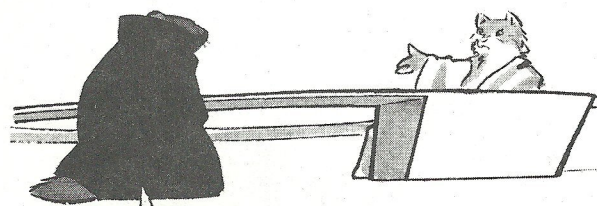


Yes, and the Chishata incident
forced me to rush the time table.

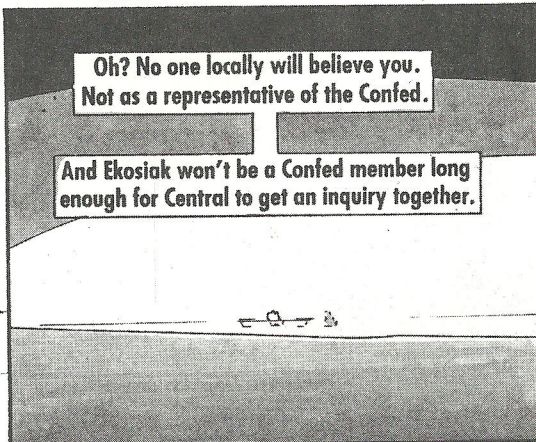
However imperfect it might be —
it's certainly working.

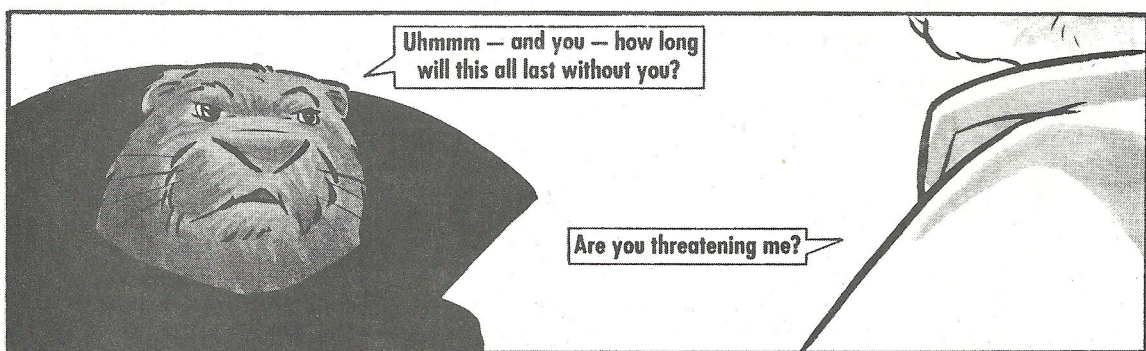
Oh? No one locally will believe you.
Not as a representative of the Confed.

And Ekosiak won't be a Confed member long
enough for Central to get an inquiry together.



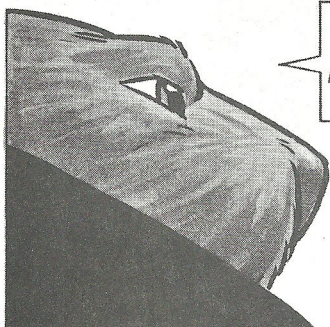
You will not, of course, be able to get away with it.





Uhhmm — and you — how long will this all last without you?

Are you threatening me?



No — just wondering. What would happen if you fell victim to one of those nameless assassins? And just about the same time, all the incriminating data showed up on the public net?

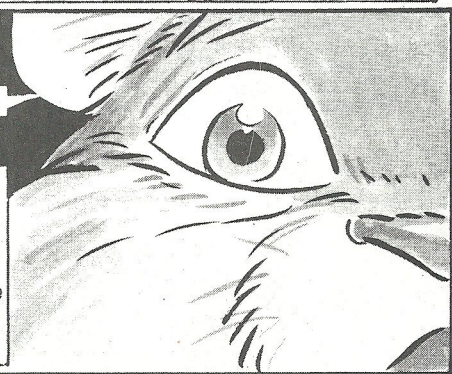
That, of course, can't happen. I dumped everything when you showed up.



Oh? Did you?

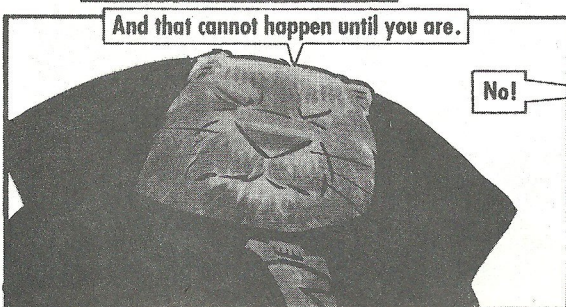
You couldn't — .

As long as you live, and even a fraction of your corporate structure remains, you'd threaten peace and encourage authoritarian rule.



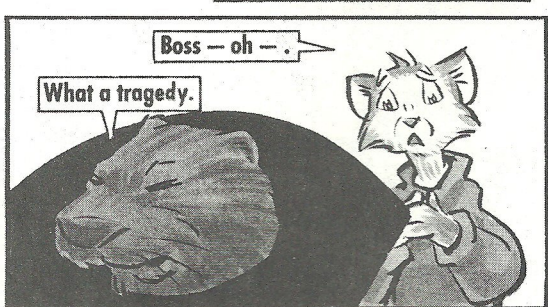
You're bluffing! What is it you want? A piece of this? A Confed inside angle?

No — it has to be ended.



And that cannot happen until you are.

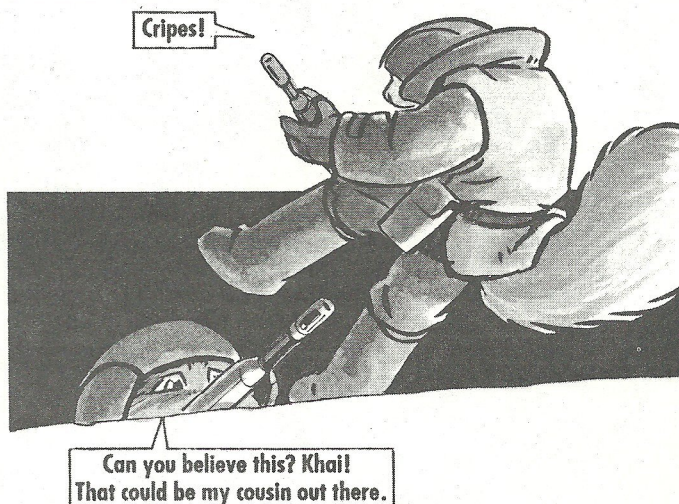
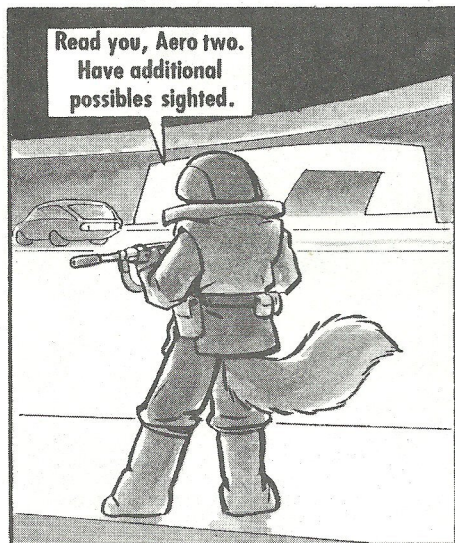
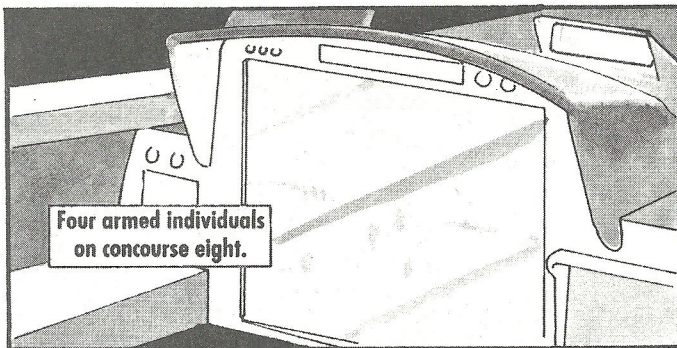
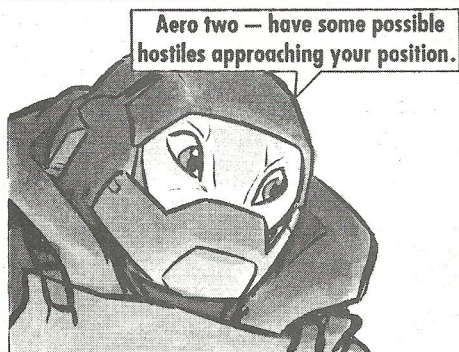
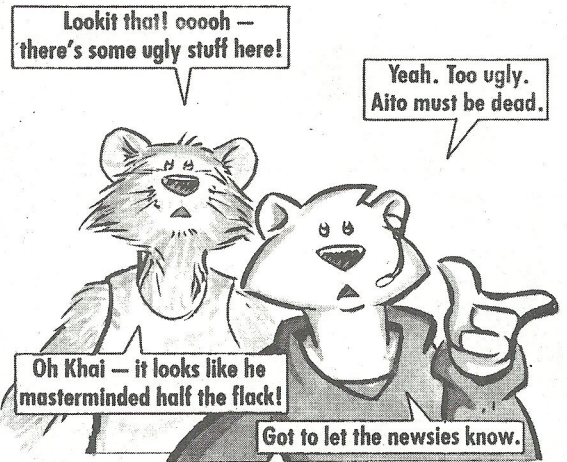
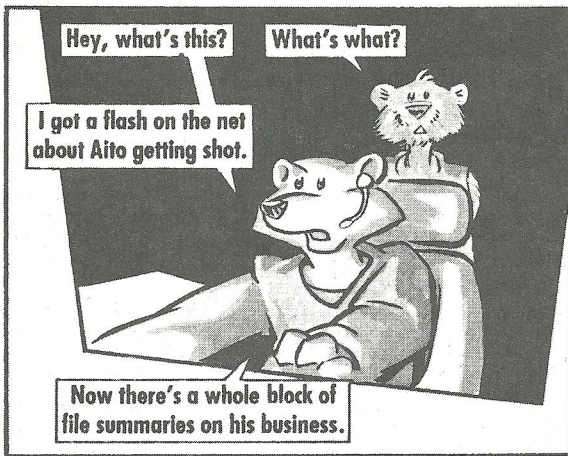
No!



Boss — oh — .

What a tragedy.





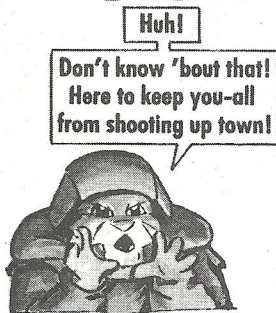
Matter of fact,
that is Newt!



Hey! Newt!
That you?

Tzeop?

Why you helping
centrist expansion?



Huh!

Don't know 'bout that!
Here to keep you-all
from shooting up town!



— oh —

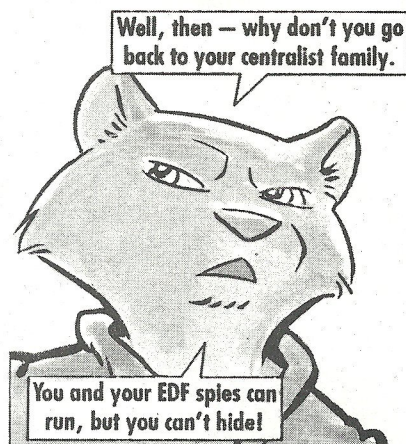
Liar! We're liberating it from
exploiting Confed interests.



Now hold on. Tzeop's not one
to go 'round causin' trouble.

Are you symping out, Newt?

Yeah! Come on, let's take
care of those guards!

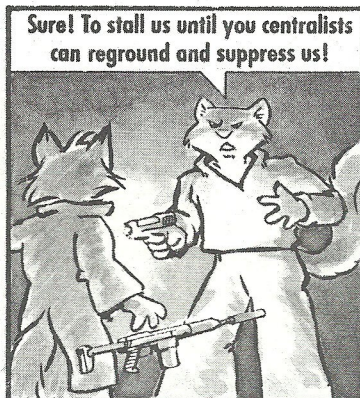


Well, then — why don't you go
back to your centralist family.

You and your EDF spies can
run, but you can't hide!



Now wait a sec! I'm no Confed!
All I'm saying is we gotta make
sure who we're really fighting.

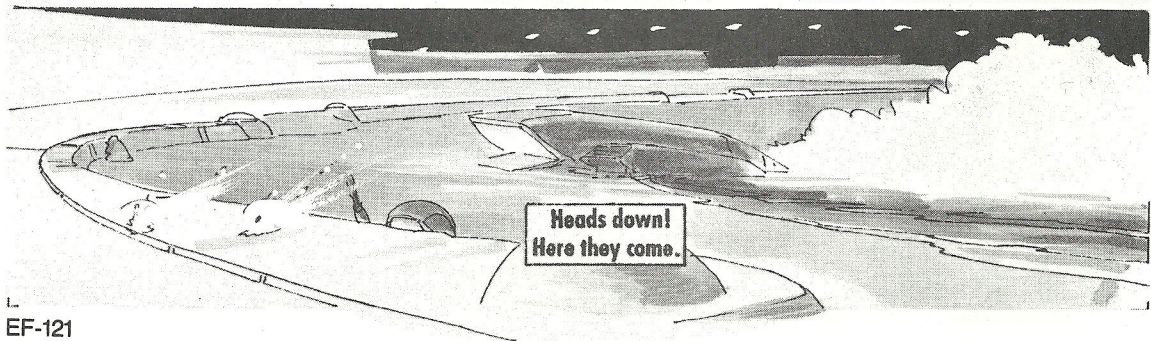


Sure! To stall us until you centralists
can regroup and suppress us!

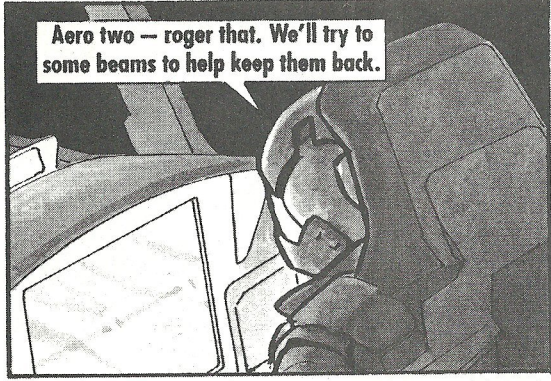


Remember! Anyone who challenges us
is undoubtedly a sympie — and doesn't
deserve any better treatment!


Damn straight!
Now let's get
those guards.



Heads down!
Here they come.

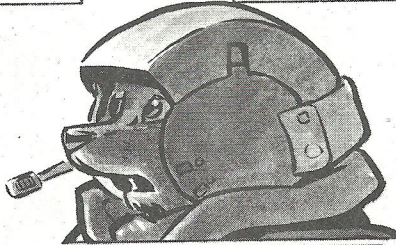


Aero two — roger that. We'll try to
some beams to help keep them back.

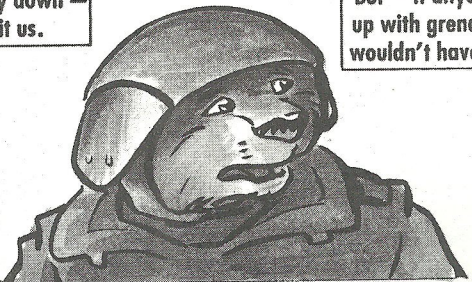


Aero two — Aero one.
What happened?!

Aero one — stray round probably
lit off the fuel. No casualties.



We're pretty much
pinned down here.



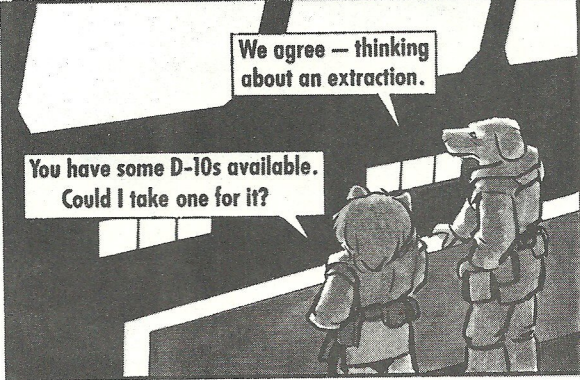
As long as we stay down —
they can't hit us.

But — if anyone shows
up with grenades — we
wouldn't have a chance.



If we sit tight, they might get tired and go away —

or get enough people together to try and overrun us.



We agree — thinking
about an extraction.

You have some D-10s available.
Could I take one for it?

Busy, busy, busy. So you like the flashy covers, eh? And the stories aren't so bad? And you heard about a new title coming out, ZELL, SWORDDANCER? And an early Erma reprint? Yeap. That's it. Thoughts & Images is finally making a go at it. Not a big go, but something almost worth the aggravation and all the long hours and neezly recognition that comes with the job. (Gosh, what a whiner.) It's not so bad, overall. Nr7 has the distinction of selling out even faster than nr6. I might not have any copies left even now. Especially since "even now" is probably a month late already. I'm finding the business of publishing takes a lot of time away from the art. So I end up late and find myself wondering if I should get out of the publishing end. Finding someone else to do such shouldn't be hard. But that's a to be seen kind of thing.

A nasty thought. I sent out flyers for the current releases (though said they'd be out in June) but neglected to notate which issue number it was. Well, since nr7 was supposed to be out in March, and the schedule was supposed to be bimonthly, a lot of people figured that the flyer pertained to nr9. I, of course, reassured everyone that I was just late, again. However, at the same time, I had a wicked idea. The Erma scenario, though I show a ten-digit numeric system, is actually base eight. So, in keeping with that, this issue, in that system, would actually be nr10. Sober heads prevailed and a collector's nightmare was averted.

On to other subjects. After listening to the news and readers' LOCs, I can't help but comment on the disappointing fallout from the Challenger disaster. While NASA is getting a long-overdue re-organization and America's future in space is being reassessed, the majority of the far-reaching decisions being made seem penny wise and pound foolish. Building a replacement shuttle or two is a good idea. Even as inadequate as the design is, it's still a proven design that can be on line in just a few years and last long enough for a next generation system to be developed to take its place.

Not proceeding with an unmanned heavy lift booster using shuttle technology is a bad idea. While a re-usable system is trickier and an expendable one more expensive, it would still provide up to several times the weight to orbit as the shuttle and wouldn't take any longer to develop than building a replacement. Ideally, they would do both.

Then, the X-31 is exciting, but will it ever be built? Who knows? Maybe we'll all be pleasantly surprised. Maybe not. For myself, I fear the decisions made will be too short-sighted and self-serving to really satisfy the objective long term goals for our future in space.

Matt Howarth reminded me that I haven't been translating the titles for his Konny and Czu episodes. Very important in that each reflects on the contents. The first was "Harvest," the second, "De Generation of de Harvest," and now the third, "Locust Warning." Also that I've been sloppy at noting who's responsible for what and other important details. Okay, so I'm dog meat. Especially for neglecting Mike Kister as the significant co-producer of Konny and Czu. There were a lot of other little beefs too, most I've either forgotten or already taken care of. These guys are doing some wonderful stuff, and not to give them their due is a considerable disservice that I'm now groveling for forgiveness over.

I'd also like to mention that the Post Brothers are still extant and Savage Henry will be having, at least, a mini-series. Vortex Comics is doing them and notice the **correct** address, 92 Sumach St., Toronto, Ontario M5A 3J9, Canada. Then there's PARTICLE DREAMS, being put out by Fantagraphics. Now, did I get all that straight?

As for mail and such, I like hearing from everyone, but I can't always answer the social mail. If you do have specific questions to be answered, I'll try. And including an SASE certainly helps. SASEs aren't necessary for orders or comments, again, unless you need some kind of response. Unsolicited manuscripts or art I'll gladly look at, but, unless you provide full return postage, I can't afford to mail anything back. I thank you and my postal budget thanks you.

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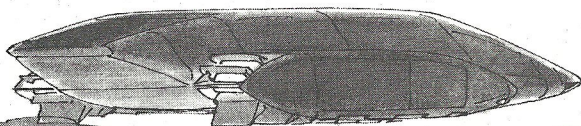
You really want to go?

Major, what do you think?

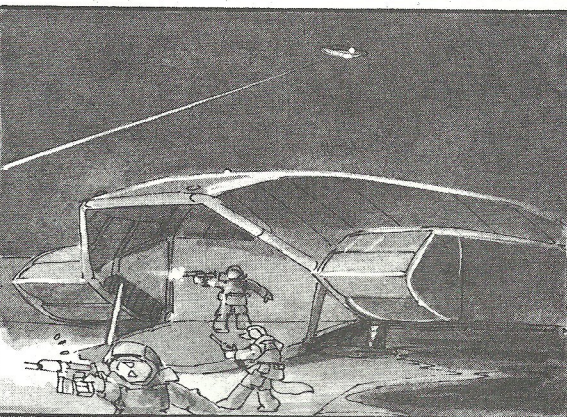
Command — Aero one — expect an extraction in about forty minutes.

Extract one, Aero one, coming on your position from the sea side.

Aero two and Aero three — be prepared to cover me when I hit the beach.



Coming on it!



Extract one — Aeros — heading for security center.

It seems like most of the crowds have dispersed pretty much. Try a hot landing, just in case.

Hey! Ya hear Aito's dead!
And there's a data base linking
him to some dirty business.

Hah! Confed fabrications!

See, with original cross-codes.
Looks like he was
masterminding a lot of stuff.

No — I've got it too.

Ah! It's just a stall!

I dunno — .

What do you think?

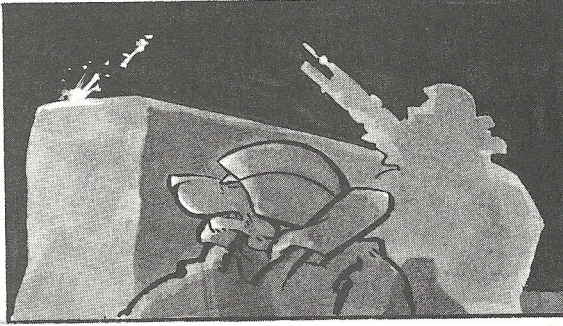
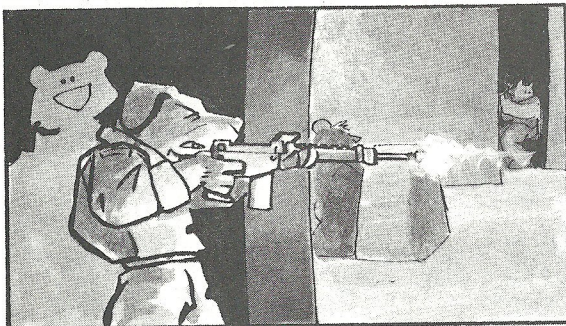
Where'd Naiko go?

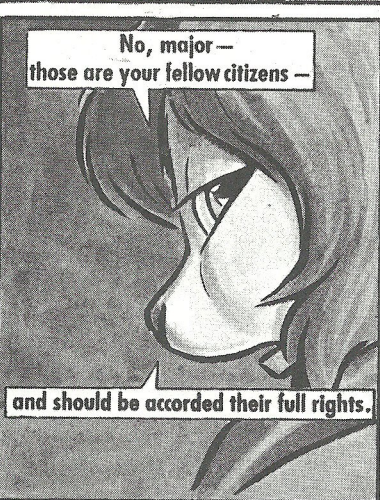
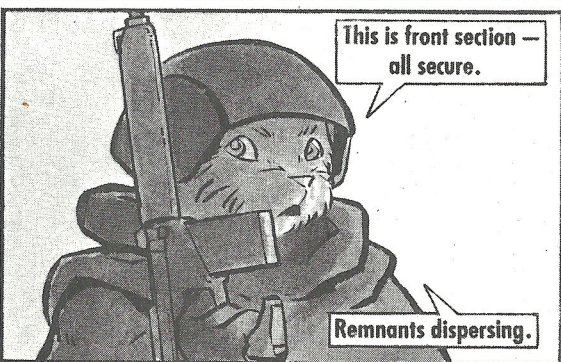
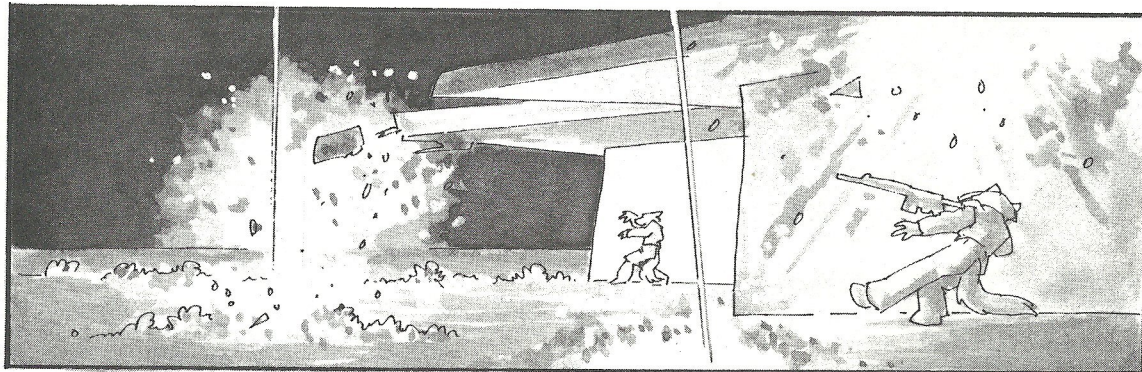
It's getting late.

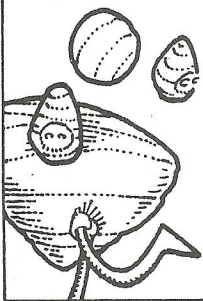
What about them?

Ah! We don't need 'em.

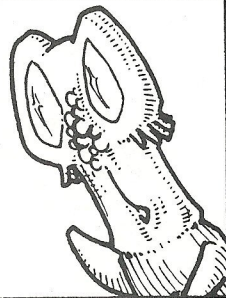
Or maybe we do.







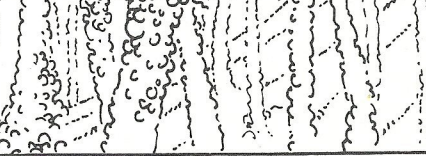
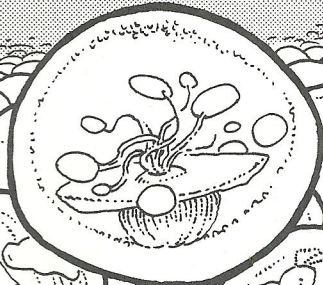
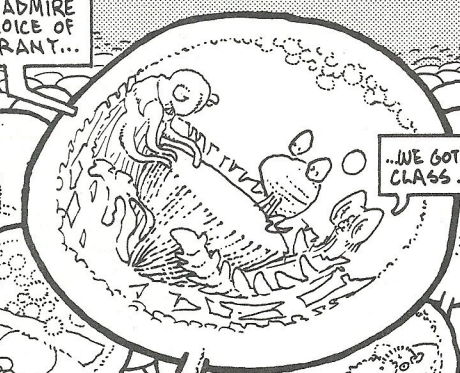
konny and ezu



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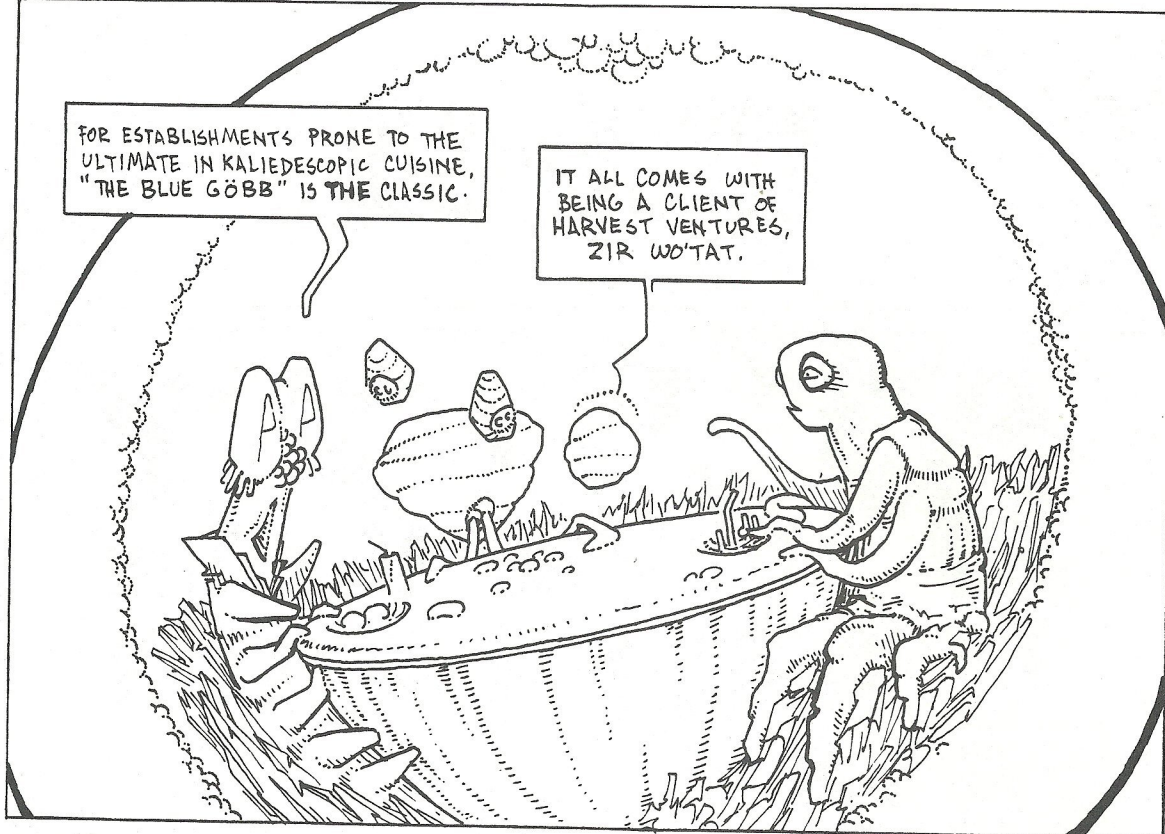
I MUST ADMIRE
YOUR CHOICE OF
RESTAURANT...

...WE GOT
CLASS.



FOR ESTABLISHMENTS PRONE TO THE
ULTIMATE IN KALIEDESCOPIC CUISINE,
"THE BLUE GÖBB" IS THE CLASSIC.

IT ALL COMES WITH
BEING A CLIENT OF
HARVEST VENTURES,
ZIR WO'TAT.



COMFORTABLE IT IS, TO
KNOW THAT YOUR COMPANY
IS DOING WELL. INDEED,
I AM WISHING TO
DISCUSS BUSINESS...

THESE REMARKABLE
FREEZE-DRIED ISOTOPE
THAT YOU SELL—THEY
ARE REVOLUTIONARY!



YASE, THEY ARE
AMAZING, AREN'T
THEY? ... AND
HARVEST VENTURES
GUARANTEES THAT
WHAT YOU PURCHASE
FROM US WILL WAIT
TO START ITS
HALF-LIFE UNTIL
YOU ARE READY
TO USE IT, ZIR.

YOU MISINTERPRET MY INTENT, ZIR
CZU. MY INQUIRIES DO NOT CONCERN
ANY F-D ISOTOPE PURCHASE...
MY INTEREST IS IN BUYING
HARVEST VENTURES ITSELF.



НАНАНАНАНАНОНОНННННАШНАНАНАНОНА
ОННАНАНОНАНАНАНАНАНАНАНАНАШНАШНО
НАНАНАНАНОНОНАНОНАНОНОНОННННННННН
АНАНАНАНАНАНАНАНАНАНАНАНАНАНАНА
НАНАНОНОНАНОННННАНАНАНАНАНАНАНА-

...IT WAS A
SERIOUS OFFER.

I'M SURE IT WAS, ZIR WO'TAT.
I'M SORRY MY PARTNER'S USED
SO TACTLESS A MEANS OF
DECLINING YOUR OFFER...

HAHAHOHEE
CHORTLE
GUFFAW-

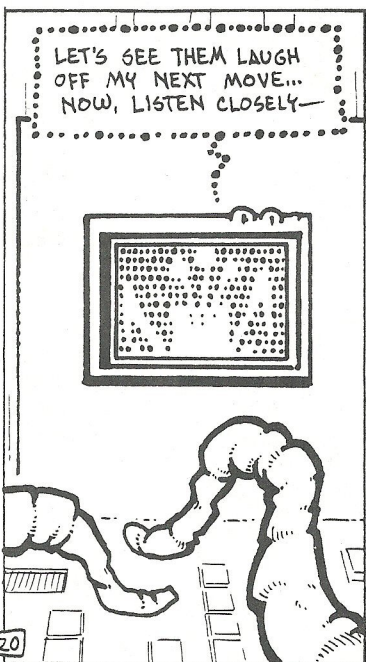
DO YOU BELIEVE
THAT (GUY)?



...EXTENSION 3017, OPERATOR.
'ALLO, BOSS? -I TRIED
-BUT THEY WON'T SELL-



JUST AS I EXPECTED...
ALL GOES ACCORDING
TO SCHEDULE...

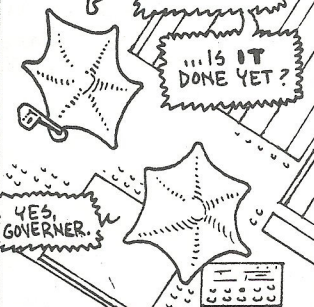


LET'S SEE THEM LAUGH
OFF MY NEXT MOVE...
NOW, LISTEN CLOSELY-

QUICK

INSIDE THE
NEUTRONIAN'S
COLONY STAR...

WE MUST ASSURE THAT THE
RULE OF THE OLD GODS NEVER
RETURNS!



...IS IT
DONE YET?

YES,
GOVERNOR.



AND HAVE ALL THE TECHNICIANS
BEEN EXECUTED...?

YESSIR. NOW
NO ONE KNOWS
ABOUT OUR
DOOMSDAY
PROTECTION
DEVICE...

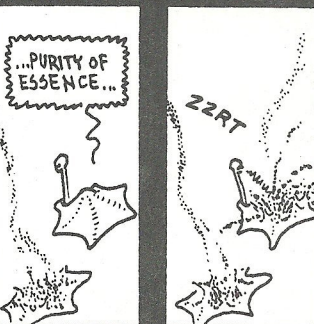
NO ONE
BUT US.

ZZRT



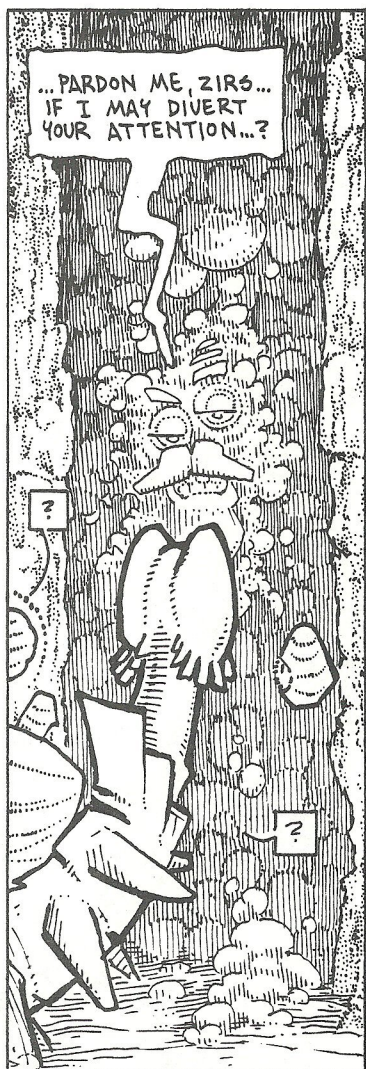
...PURITY OF
ESSENCE...

ZZRT

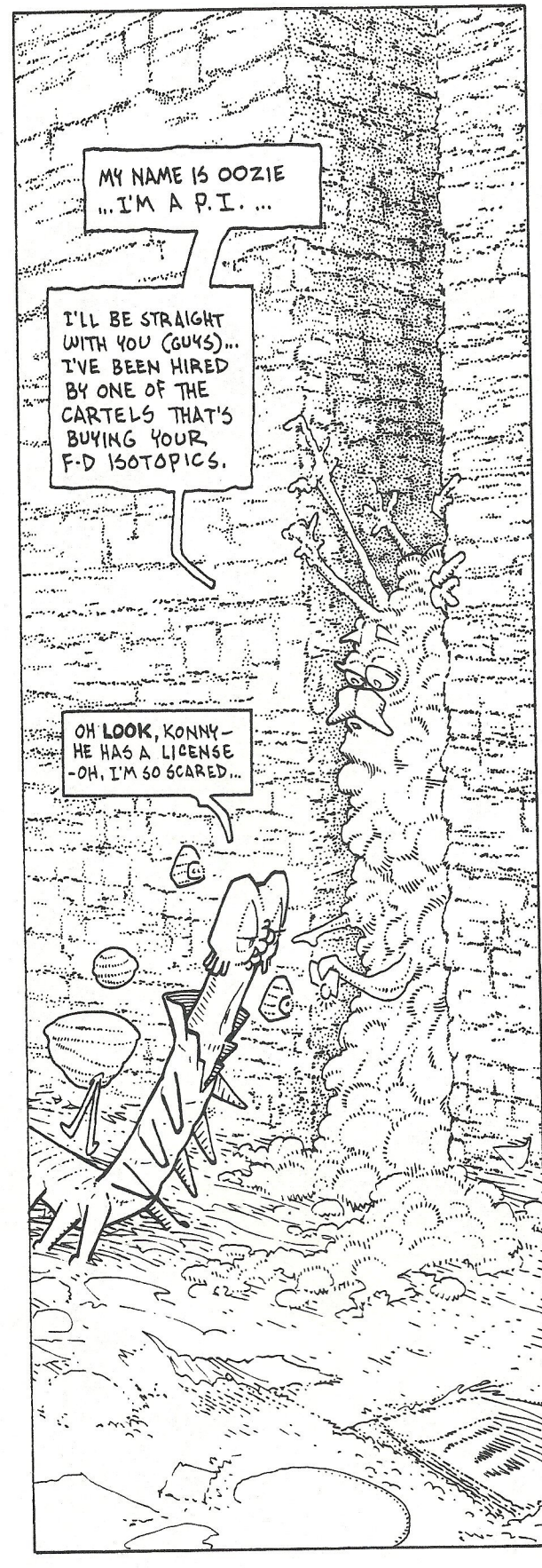


...THINKING
WE WOULD
SELL SUCH A
SURE THING.

REALLY...
WHAT A
TUBA...




...PARDON ME, ZIR3...
IF I MAY DIVERT
YOUR ATTENTION...?



MY NAME IS OOZIE
...I'M A P.I. ...

I'LL BE STRAIGHT
WITH YOU (GUYS)...
I'VE BEEN HIRED
BY ONE OF THE
CARTELS THAT'S
BUYING YOUR
F-D ISOTOPICS.

OH LOOK, KONNY -
HE HAS A LICENSE
-OH, I'M SO SCARED...



(C'MON, GUYS, GIMME SOME SLACK-
HUN? I'VE HAD A TERRIBLE
WEEK, AN' MY DOGS ARE BEAT.)
I JUST WANT TO ASK YOU
A FEW QUESTIONS

YOU HAVE SOMETHING TO ASK
US? CALL OUR OFFICES AND
MAKE AN APPOINTMENT...

THE BIG GALACTIC CARTELS PAY **NO** ATTENTION TO MEDIA-HYPE — AS FAR AS MY EMPLOYERS ARE CONCERNED YOU (GUYS) CAME OUT OF NO-WHERE WITH AN INDUSTRIAL MIRACLE-CURE THAT THEY'RE PAYING PREMIUM FOR... DID YOU HONESTLY THINK THAT THEY WOULDN'T HIRE SOMEBODY TO CHECK YOU TWO OUT...?

I REALLY DO THINK YOU'D RATHER I ASK MY QUESTIONS OUTSIDE YOUR OFFICE.

WHAT WOULD I DO WITH A BRIDGE?

AN' LEMME TELL YA — YOUR COMMERCIAL FREE-LANCE CAREERS ARE THE UGLIEST FILES I'VE EVER ACCESSED. YOU TWO SEEM TO BE

THE UNCHALLENGED MASTERS OF THE AGGRESSIVELY INEFFICIENT OVERT BUSINESS SCAM. YOU MUST BE LOOPY

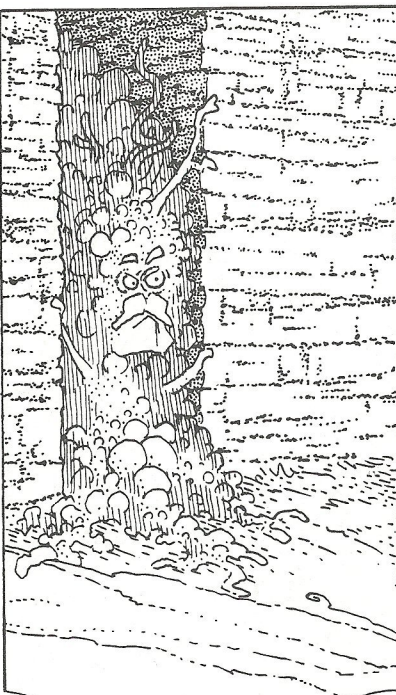
NO NO — DON'T TRY AN' DENY IT. I'VE GOT HARDCOPY PROOF... LIKE THE TIME YOU TWO PULLED THAT "ORGANIC PULSAR" HOAX OUT IN THE HOOBI YAPS FRONTIER. YOU BARELY BROKE-EVEN WITH THAT STUNT... BUT IT WAS STILL CERTIFIABLY SHADY.

TO TRY AND HAVE DEALINGS WITH ANY OF THE CARTELS WITH SUCH AN OBVIOUS HISTORY. I MEAN, AT LEAST YOU MIGHT'VE CHANGED YOUR I'DENTS IF YOU WERE GOING TO SQUAT ON THE BIG-BOYS EYE-BALLS.

THEN THERE WAS ZAPHENE 16... YOU INTRODUCED A MICRO-ORGANISM INTO THEIR BIO-SPHERE, MARKETING AS A SHELL-POLISH FOR THE INHABITANTS. NOW THE PLACE IS 82 SCOOS DEEP IN LIVING BUG-POLISH. THE PLANET HAS ONE OF THE HIGHEST ALBEDOS KNOWN.

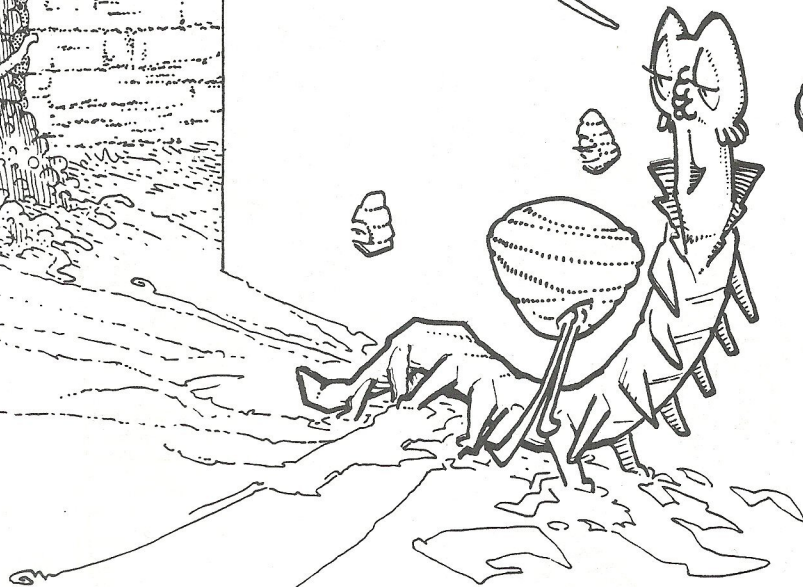
THEY NEVER **WERE** ABLE TO PIN THAT ON YOU (GUYS).

AND YET... EVERYTHING I CAN FIND OUT ABOUT YOUR LATEST SCHEME, "HARVEST VENTURES," INDICATES IT'S ON THE LEVEL. SO... WHERE'S THE STING?



THE STING'S ON YOU, HARD-LUMP -
BECAUSE (REGARDLESS OF HOW LEGIT
OR NOT WE USED TO BE), THIS
TIME WE'RE CLEAN!

-AND I HOPE YOU (CHOKE) ON IT!!



LET'S GO,
CZU...
WE CAN
TAKE THE
L-VATOR
UP TO OUR
OFFICE'S
LEVEL...

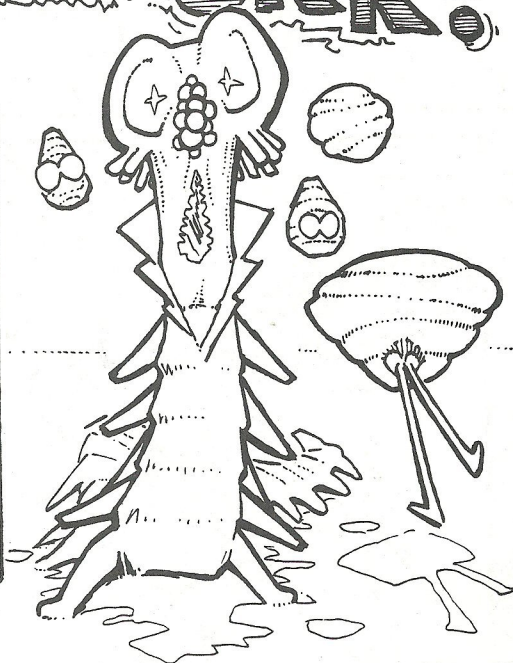
...AT LEAST HE DIDN'T
KNOW ABOUT OUR
SECRET PIPE-LINE WITH
THE NEUTRONIANS.

HALLOWED BE OUR
CAVERNS FOR SMALL FAVORRR

URK!

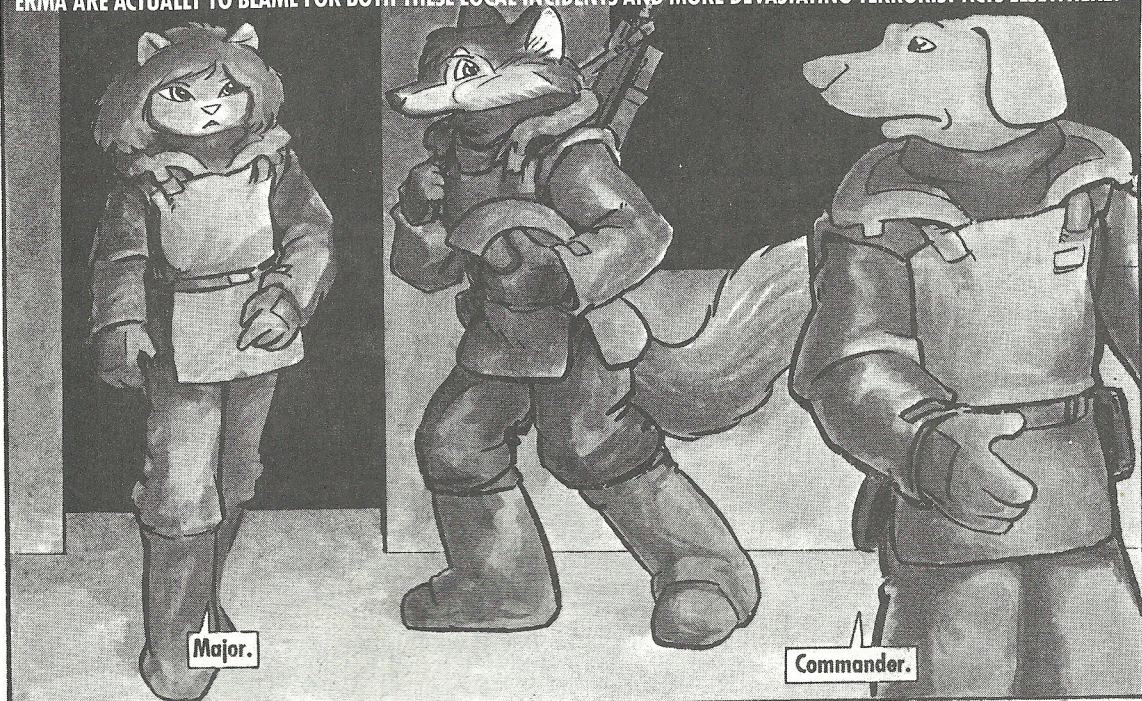
QUICK

THESE ARCHIVAL RECORDS OF OUR FIRST
ENCOUNTERS WITH THE OLD GODS
CONFIRM MY UNMUTUAL SUSPICIONS
THAT THE ANCIENT PRIESTS CREATED
AN ELITE CLASS FOR THEMSELVES BY
ENFORCING SERVITUDE TO THE GODS
IN PAYMENT FOR OUR COLONY-STAR.

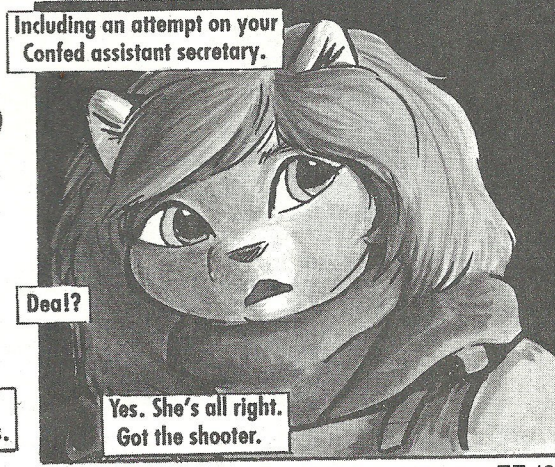
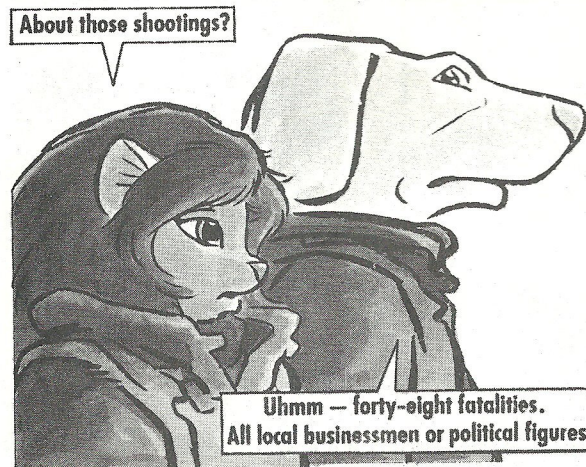


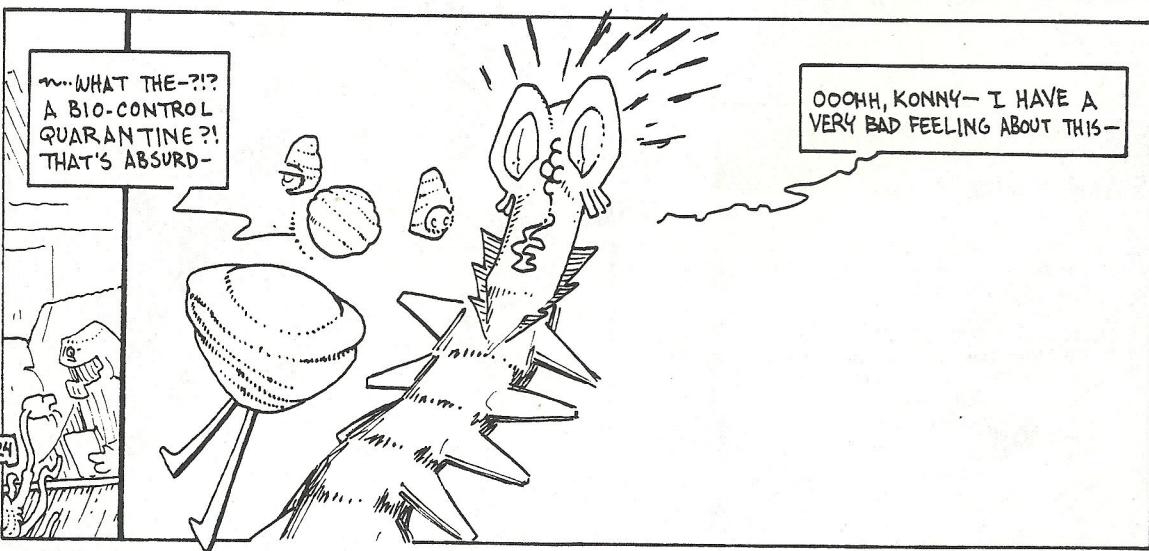
ERMA FELNA, EDF

FLIGHT COMMANDER ERMA FELNA, ASSIGNED OSTENSIBLY AS A COMBAT TRAINING LIAISON WITH THE HOME GUARD ON EKOSIAK, HAS FOUND HERSELF THE FOCUS OF FACTIONALISTIC POLITICAL FORCES. AS AN E.D.F. OFFICER, SHE REPRESENTS INTRUSIVE CENTRALIST AUTHORITY TO MANY ON THAT FAR-FLUNG COLONY WORLD. AFTER A NUCLEAR TERRORISM ATTEMPT, THE HOME GUARD COMMANDER IS WOUNDED DURING A DEMONSTRATION AGAINST THE MILITARY PRESENCE THAT MANY BLAME FOR HAVING ATTRACTED THE TERRORISTS. WHILE ERMA IS LOOKED UPON FOR LEADERSHIP BY THE HOME GUARD TROOPS IN THE COMMANDER'S ABSENCE, AGENTS PROVOCATEURS ARE SUGGESTING THAT THE E.D.F. AND ERMA ARE ACTUALLY TO BLAME FOR BOTH THESE LOCAL INCIDENTS AND MORE DEVASTATING TERRORIST ACTS ELSEWHERE.



Apparently, the announcement of the Chishata incident has been used as a catalyst.





Hokay, Steve,

Here's my contrib (for what it's worth) — plot synopses for the upcoming six (that's right. *Six!*) episodes should be forthcoming as soon as Carspecken and I nail down *exactly* what happens in which episode. Hang in there, Steve, I realize that it's a rough roller coaster ride (for both of us) but me and the team will come through, you'll see.

DEAL

P.S. — November's my birthday (the big 3-0!). Seeing as I only made it this far thanks to bi-weekly blood transfusions, the best gift I could receive is if you and Bev could go to your local Red Cross and donate blood . . . they don't call it the gift of life for nothing. DW

Geosynch Confidential by Deal Whitley

Humor. Romance. Intrigue.

All this and more was supposed to be yours in the pages of High Orbit. That's right . . . was. But, as I was hammering my way through Episode Three of the present story line, I became aware of certain problems with the series. Problems with pacing, problems with keeping the plot on an even keel, and, of course, the series could always use a few more laughs. (In all honesty, these problems were there from the beginning, but they had become truly evident by the third episode.)

What to do? I'd been beating my head on the drawing board trying to get the third episode of Orbit finished — and not getting anywhere. Production on issue eight had even been slowed down to give me time to complete the episode. Finally I stopped, took a deep breath, stood back, and re-evaluated the strip. The decision — I would take a short hiatus, acquire assistance with the scripting, slightly redesign a couple of the characters, and generally renovate the strip.

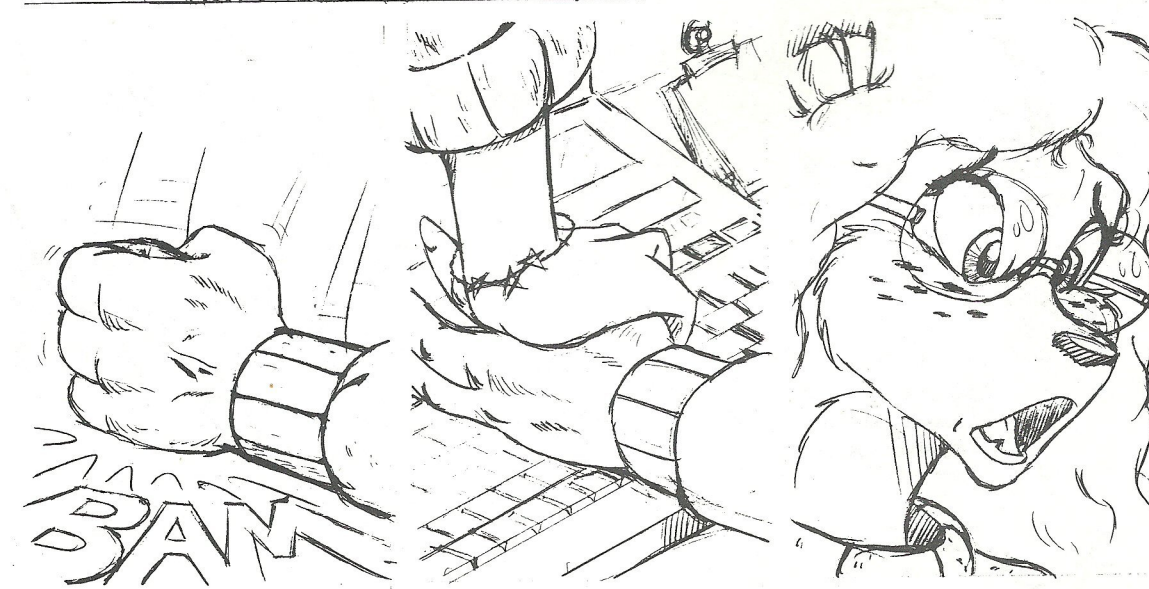
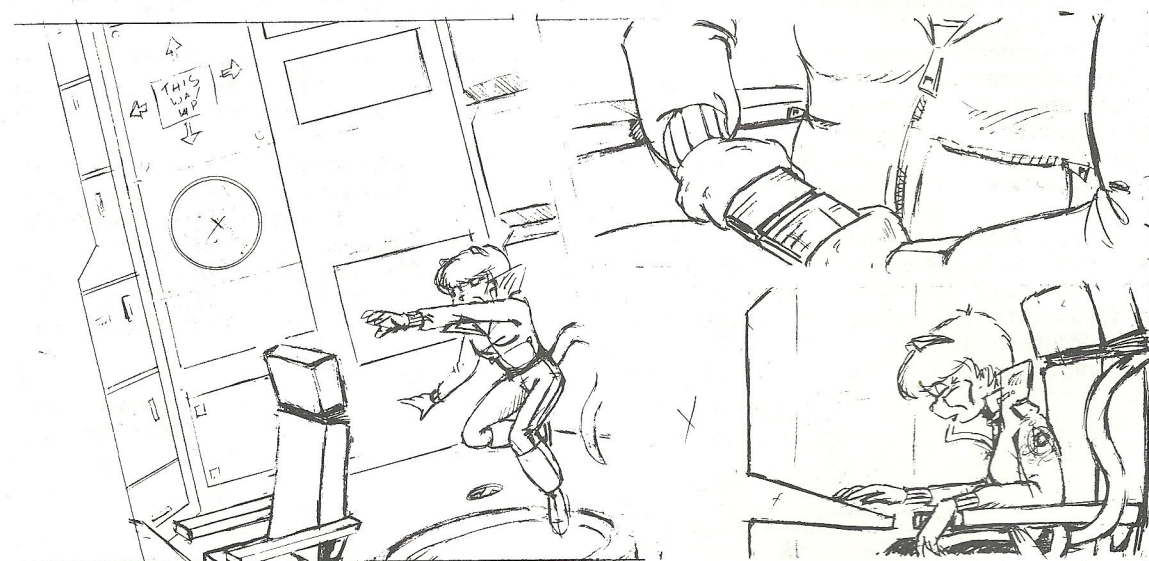
So, dear readers, I beg your kind indulgence as we take a one-issue breather in order to return to these pages with a new, improved, better-than-ever High Orbit. Next time — a new name added to the credits, a faster paced episode, and all that humor, romance, and intrigue I mentioned at the start of this page. Hang in there, folks; I'll make it good for you, I promise.

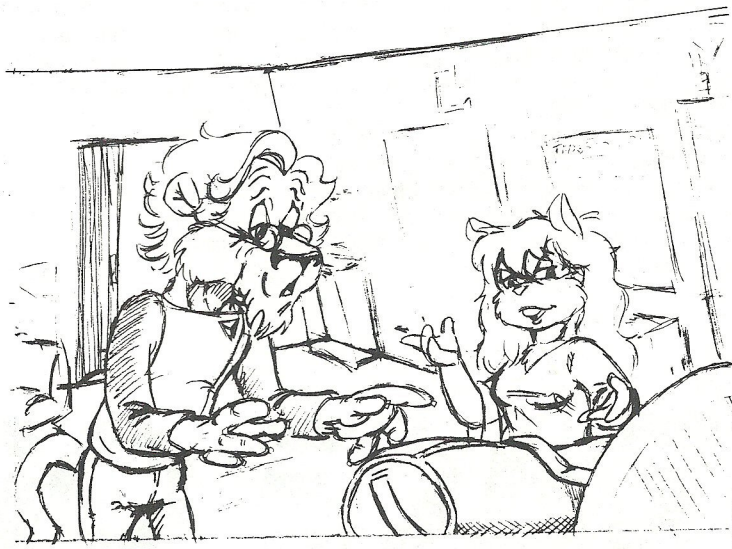
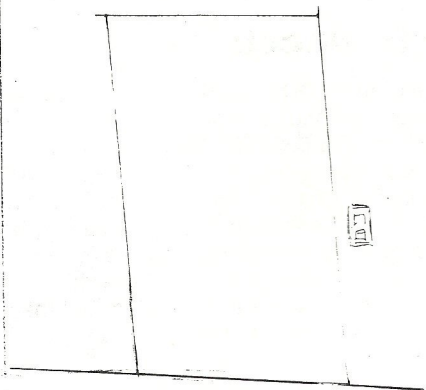
Some last minute dedications: High Orbit and all that goes with it is dedicated with love and respect to: Jim Groat, Mike Kelly, Robert "the aforementioned new name" Carspecken, Ken Sample, Tracy Horton, Edd Vick, Marc Schirmeister, and Robert Hayne for being such good sports, and the rest of the Rowbrazzle menagerie for the good sports they will be (especially Mark "The Mole" Ashworth, who asked for it); to Louis Scarborough, Jr., Rick Sternbach, and Matt Howarth for inspiration of various sorts — to Stan Sakai, Mike Kazaleh, and Donald Simpson for their kind words and even kinder indulgences — to the members of the unofficial High Orbit National Fan Club with branches in Kirkland, WA, Westminster, CA, Doraville, GA, New Haven, CT, and that mysterious branch in Linden, NJ known only as "The Omni Force."

My final dedication is to you, the readers of Albedo, for without you, I am nothing.

Remain in Light
DEAL WHITLEY







Well, this isn't exactly what I had in mind. When I started working on nr. 8, nr. 7 had just come out, and it seemed as though much of the technical and managerial snags had been ironed out. Also, the six episodes of *Birthright* for Fantagraphics' CRITTERS had given me some more art experience. So, it seemed that nr. 8 would be better than ever.

Then what happened?

Miscellaneous details. Lots and lots of little fussy bits. Individually, nothing critical. But things that ought to have been done, and they all took time. That, and catching the summer conventions started a schedule slip. Even having a friend, Scott Scidmore, answering my mail for me wasn't helping enough. Then, this fall, deadlines for *Birthright II* and *The Soulstar Commission* took priority and ZELL, SWORDDANCER nr. 1 came out with complications which took time away as well.

Then, to be honest, I simply wasn't getting things done as efficiently as I should.

But now, with a whole gaggle of projects demanding attention, and tens of thousands of dollars in bills, and nearly as many irate fans, I've got to get the situation straightened up. And, in fact, I've been able to do that. Jeff Kilian, an old Air Force buddy and comic/collectable fan (he's putting out a film collectable 'zine L'AFFICHE) is going to manage the business. He'll be taking care of production, distribution, and promotions (wholesalers/retailers note) and will help develop projects and help with fan club kinds of things. He'll also help answer mail and do conventions with me.

Another person who'll get in on the act is Monika Livingstone. She's going to help ink Erma for me, as well as *Birthright*. She's an artist/cartoonist down in Portland, Oregon, who will, with a little luck, become another exciting, gosh, wow big-time published pro in her own right.

With all this help, getting issues out on a regular schedule seems assured. That is, of course, if there's still a market for them. The first signs of the end of the big independent publishing explosion are showing, and this year could get quite lean. Right now it's too soon to say, and I'm hoping that there's enough of a loyal following to keep up economic press runs.

As for run schedules, ALBEDO nr. 9 should be released in February, just before ZELL nr. 2. The plan is to release each title on alternate months. And for what's happening now, ALBEDO nr. 0, the prototype issue, in a special fourth printing, is now available. It has additional, not previously published material, filling it out to 16 pages and a \$1 cover. COMMAND REVIEW is still available for the original \$4 cover price, and ZELL nr. 1 is also on hand.

The letters page has suffered this time around. There were some excellent inputs that I was going to comment on — but — oh well. Next time I'll have some in-depth discussions and answers.

Steve Gallacci:

The cover of **ALBEDO** issue 5 was enough for me to buy it off the shelf and become hooked not only on your publication, but **CRITTERS** as well. Since my current trade is typesetting (CCI 400 system, 8400 phototypesetter/processor, I hack all night) I admire your use of hard type (although the hand-lettering in 1 and 2 was somewhat -ah- correct) with the artwork. I like your style and approach to the artwork, and would like to see it in color in the future (but then, that's why you buy pencils and an extra issue, which is the best complement for the great repro paper I bet you've heard). Yips for running Howarth's insane drawings, wotta move. Buy the Resident's album just to get the book. Looking forward to seeing **Sworddancer** (does that "dd" disturb you, too?). Did you ever try drawing the whites of your deep space scenes and have negatives shot of them? It works well. Howcome your type is usually ragged center and not justified in the boxes? I have yet to see any political coverage of the ILR, just the effects of their aggression and terrorism on the ConFed. I would like to see who is running the ILR. I would also like to see musicians in **Erma Felna EDF**, perhaps a nightclub scene (*sans* a terrorist bombing, unless it were absolutely necessary). What would their instruments look like? Yes, this letter bounces from subject to subject. The music would probably be similar to modern Next Wave, slightly atonal organic electronics? Why not slip a VW Bug into a scene as a joke? Why not slip on a banana as a joke? **Why not change the typeface? Twice?** It's late at night and the terminal screen is swimming. When the **Erma Felna EDF** film comes out, will you appear on Letterman with some high-tech assault weaponry and drawing demonstrations? Will the film be done by Martin Scorsese? Will Tangerine Dream do the soundtrack? The future shone brightly for a second there, didn't it? Heh. I'd still recommend **ALBEDO** to Laurie Anderson any day.

Work harder and get it out every month. Eat more raw vegetables and cheesesteaks. Thanks for all the work you've done so far. It's done my leisure time a world of good.

John Serdy
Phoenixville, Pa

I just had to run this one as is.

TAKE

OFF

A MINI-PLUG FOR "FUSION"



Back again! We are continuing to enjoy BIRTHRIGHT and ALBEDO, and are looking forward to ZELL. Erma certainly surprised me by firing at that suspicious character, seems a little extreme. But I guess that nuclear terrorism and mob violence could make anybody jump. Art and reproduction on Erma continue to be good — we particularly admired the angry/scared (?) fox on 7-10.

"Konny and Czu" is delightfully strange — I hope you have read the book "Dragon's Egg" by Dr. Forward which first explored the idea of creatures living on a neutron star. "High Orbit" is lots of fun — soap opera in outer space, plus character development.

Lots of new "funny animal" titles coming to my attention these days — in addition to those you have mentioned, "Tales From the Aniverse," published by Arrow Comics, is worthwhile.

William B. Brogden
(& family)
Leander, TX

Hi! (Nice family, the Brogdens.) About shooting at suspects. Just briefly, 'cause I'm covering it better elsewhere, Erma comes from a very law-and-order background where suspects simply don't disobey commands. And if, ever so rarely one might, use of subduing deadly force is authorized. Notice Erma was aiming at his legs. Also, there's the matter of accountability on the part of the apprehending officer. While rights regarding "probable cause" and unwarranted search and seizure are much less in evidence, false or erroneous arrest are major, even capital, offenses, and Erma would have been in serious trouble, had the suspect not been a snooper.

Just thought I'd drop you a line and let you know that your stuff makes Leonardo da Vinci look like a pregnant grape. Well, not quite that good, more like a pregnant eggplant actually. Anyway, I got myself hooked on your neat little techno-soap and figured that you needed one more sloppy over gushing of praise to make them long nights at the drafting table go faster.

One question; don't your characters ever have any fun? I mean from what I can tell it's basically one long socio-political tactical drag. If I were one of your bunny rabbits I'd be on strike and pronto. No wonder the population's in revolt, if these guys were really smart they'd get someone to introduce some bowling alleys and professional wrestling. And take poor Erma, sure, she gets to strip for the shower scene, big deal! Heck, she doesn't even have lace underwear, has to use mil-spec, right?

Okay, so take my advice and let's get Erma laid. Alright, alright, at least send her to Disneyland or something. She's a game little character and deserves to have some fun. Bye for now and good luck with all future endeavors!

E.T. Bryan
Irvine, CA

Erma having fun? I suppose it's possible, but she's awfully busy right now, and too visible to do anything that might prejudice her situation. A point, however, that I've covered elsewhere in the column, these societies don't have much

history, and with such, haven't had much time to develop many art and entertainment forms. Among EDF types, martial arts practices, simulator and role play gaming, or earnest discussions of the thoughts for the day are awfully popular. More intimate activities are possible, but remember that their social/sexual behavior is a bit non-human.

After seeing recommendations in SPACE ARK and TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA TURTLES for ALBEDO I decided to buy a copy and see what it's about. Unfortunately, I could only find #3 and you have done seven so I am hopelessly lost as to the story. But what I saw in that one issue impressed me enough to write you and let you know what I thought about ALBEDO.

The artwork is excellent! You really put some effort into this one. My only suggestion is that you watch some old films from the '30s and '40s to pick up some ideas for effects (one that comes to mind is Orson Welles' "The Third Man"). Keep up the masterful work.

On "Erma Felna" I have three comments: one, never since Nelvana Animation's feature-length rock-musical ROCK & RULE have I seen the idea of humanoid animals carried off so well. To me that means a lot, they acted very human. Two, you show war in space (or anywhere for that matter) like it is. Prisoners are shot and people get torn apart all the time. Studying current events paid off. Three, about Erma herself: that was a great job! It's about time someone put a real woman in comics. Not only is she independent and free-thinking, but she doesn't lose her individualism in a group (like THUNDERCATS' Cheetara) or sacrifice femininity for power (like Kyoko in SHURIKEN). You have done well with Erma, give yourself the rest of the day off.

I feel a little nervous writing this because all the letters in ALBEDO #3 seem to come from intelligent people with successful lives. I'm just a recent high-school graduate with dreams of becoming a cartoon/comic/fantasy writer when I finish college. Then I figured that if I liked ALBEDO as much as they did nothing should restrain me from writing to you.

I read in a comics preview that you like to find new talent. I would like to know if you are looking for a writer or ideas. I have some ideas for "Erma Felna" I've been kicking around such as a possible relationship (if fans object, they can break up, or her boyfriend can move or be killed), a job handling mail (which she can object to. I mentioned it because my brother in the Air Force is a postmaster in Saudi Arabia), or have her go on some real dangerous missions.

Sincerely,
Noel John Tominack
Indian Head, MD

Well, yes, I have mentioned an interest in seeing what other people are up to. Mostly in the manner of their own creations. The Erma scenario is pretty much pre-determined. The action is constrained by the realities that have already been worked out, so the dramatic shoot 'em ups or space pirate sneak attacks or giant robots are yet a bit premature. But, again, about original material submissions, I'd be happy to look at expendable copies or stuff with plenty of return postage.

Instead of a full blown hype page this time, I'll just mention that OMAHA, THE CAT DANCER nr2 is finally coming out. Steeldragon Press, Box 7253, Powderhorn Station, Minneapolis, MN 55407. As for my material, ZELL, SWORDDANCER nr1 is out, \$2, and COMMAND REVIEW, reprinting Erma from issues 1 through 4 is also available for \$4. Then there's the Ken Macklin poster from the cover of nr6 for \$7. The Erma Felna and ALBEDO, More Than Just Funny Animals t-shirts are still available on light gray and light blue for \$8. Remember to mention both size and color.

All these prices include postage and handling and subscriptions are just however many issues at the appropriate price per copy. Please note which issues too!

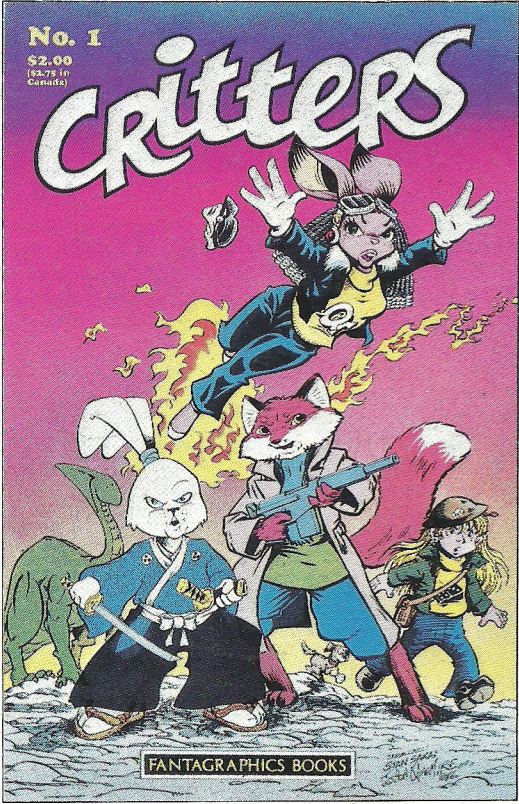
Pages of the original tone-art from ERMA FELNA, EDF are still available from issues 2 through 8 for \$50. Each is in a 9x12 matt under polyester. Remember to list alternates. And, of course, address everything to P.O. Box 19419, Seattle, WA 98109 and me, Steven A. Gallacci.

Thanks again.

SO WHO WANTS TO READ ONLY COMIC BOOKS ABOUT PEOPLE?



© 1986 Mike Kazaleh



© 1986 Gallacci, Quagmire, Sakai

Sure, comic books about humans can be fun...for a while. But eventually, people start to look pretty much the same. You know? They've all got two arms and two legs, and big muscles. Very few of them have big, floppy ears, and only a couple of them are furry.

Well, if you're as tired as we are of all those hairless, pink mercenaries/super-heroes/crimefighters/barbarians... we think we might have something for you.

Take **Captain Jack**. He's a cat. His crew-mates are all dogs—a big, strapping one (who's actually an android), and a little, goofy one, who is bedeviled by a tiny demon sidekick. Together they roam across the universe, raising hell and getting drunk and otherwise enjoying themselves. Now how many humans do you know who can boast that?

Or take our anthology title, **Critters**. We have a samurai strip starring a rabbit; a space opera starring a fox; a suburban comedy/drama starring a family of dragons; a film-noir detective series starring a cat; and the occasional hare, lizard, and rhino dropping in from time to time.

Now, human beings are okay once in a while. If you want two "heroes" dumb enough to wallop each other with skyscrapers for 10 pages at a time, they'll always serve.

But if you're looking for the kind of entertainment that'll give you a little bit more, we'd like to suggest the animal alternative.

Every month in **Critters**; every other month in **Captain Jack**. Thirty pages of high-flying fun. And no damn people. We promise.

Subscribe today! You won't regret it!

Send to:
FANTAGRAPHICS BOOKS
4359 Cornell Road
Agoura, CA 91301

☐ Send me the next six issues of **Captain Jack**. I've enclosed \$9.00 (Canada: \$11.00)

☐ Send me the next six issues of **Critters**. I've enclosed \$9.00 (Canada: \$11.00)

NAME

ADDRESS

CITY

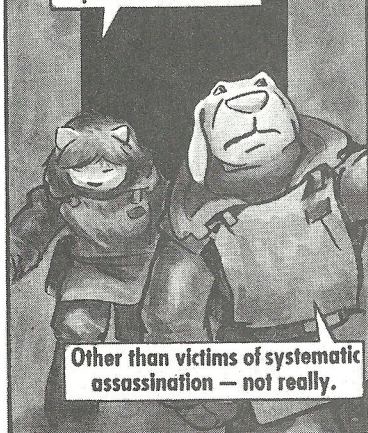
STATE

ZIP

We've got her safe at downtown security. The shooter is still an unknown, but we're working on it. The secretary is missing, though, and it seems he may have been gone for several days. But so far there's no sign of foul play.

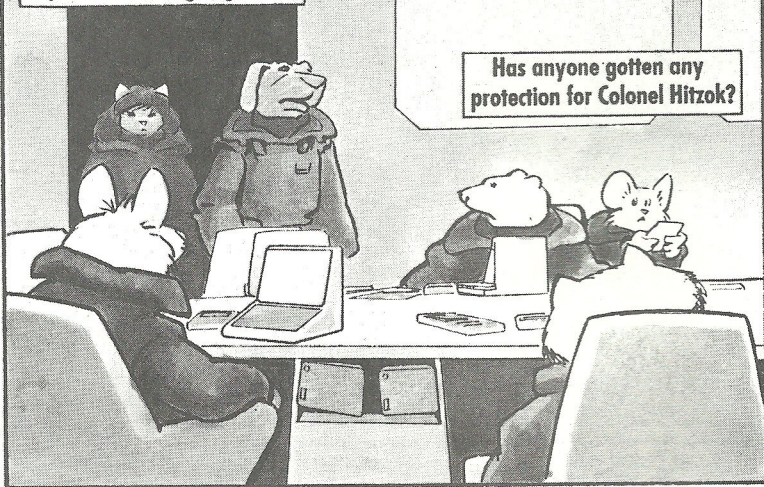


Are there any trends or patterns to all this?



Other than victims of systematic assassination — not really.

So, what are we going to do?

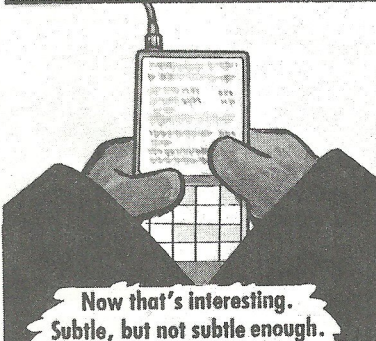


Has anyone gotten any protection for Colonel Hitzok?

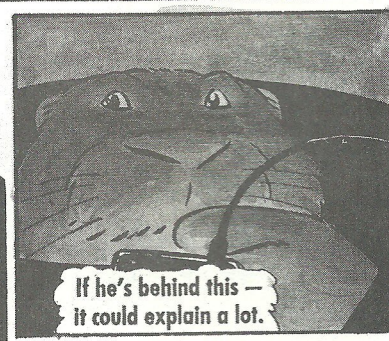
Now, let's see what we can find.



Now that's interesting. Subtle, but not subtle enough.



If he's behind this — it could explain a lot.

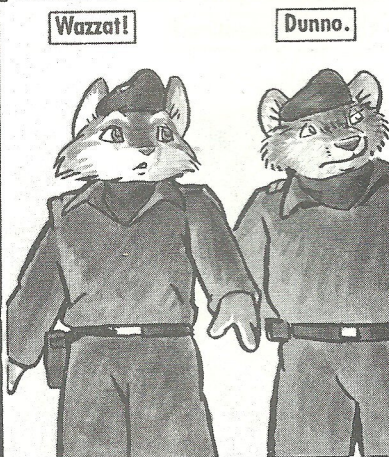


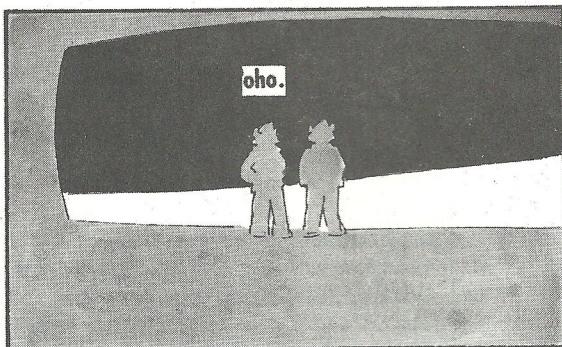
Except for why. And I know we're to find that out.



Wazzat!

Dunno.

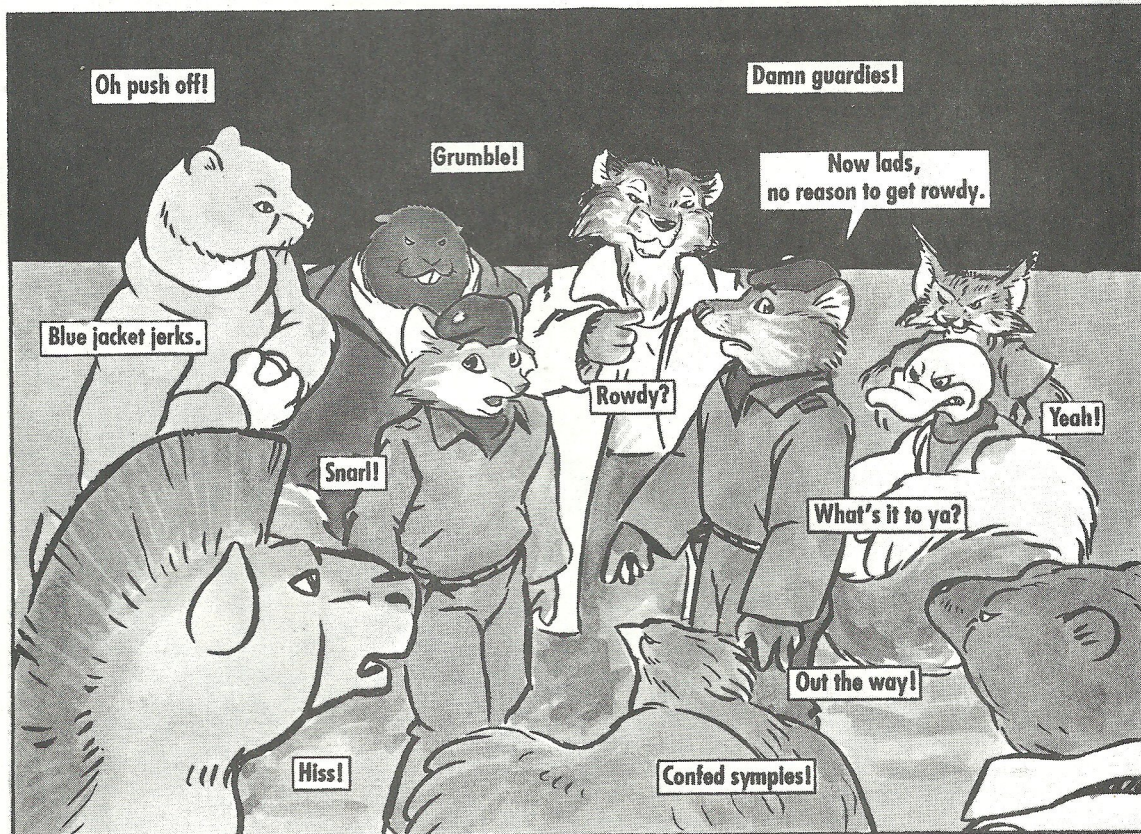




oho.



G'd evenin'.
havin' ah party?



Oh push off!

Damn guardies!

Grumble!

Now lads,
no reason to get rowdy.

Blue jacket jerks.

Rowdy?

Yeah!

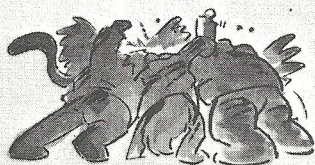
Snarl!

What's it to ya?

Out the way!

Hiss!

Confed symples!



Rumors of criminal behavior by our righteous citizens against exploitive foreign interests are circulating across the system — in the wake of the orgy of assassinations which slaughtered many of our prominent citizens.



Many helpless victims were critics of confederalism and were known supporters of citizens' rights movements. While attempts were made against a few pro-Confed resident aliens, the appearance of an organized attack against Ekosiaki independence cannot be ignored.

Well? You got your angle yet?

Ah — cool off, boss. All the rest of these downs are just spouting rabble-rousing political slant.

Humph! You're a high-rate big mouth!

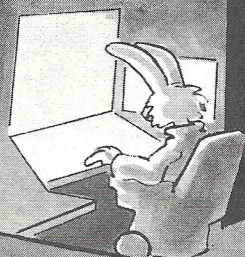
And we need a story to run in twenty minutes.

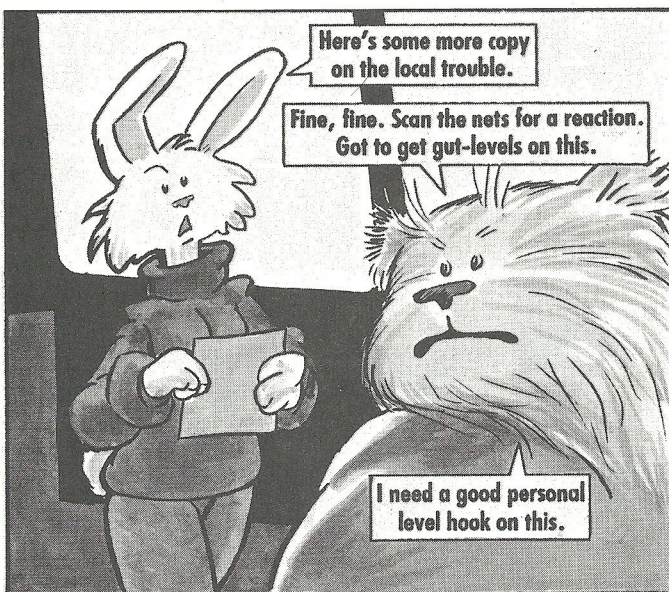
I'm a people journalist.

There have been reports of Home Guard forces confronting citizens on the streets. Civilian deaths or injuries at the hands of security troops have yet to be confirmed.



And still these authorities insist that all free citizens should stay off the streets, out of public areas, until the situation is, in their words, "aggressively secured." Is there something going on? And if so, by whom? And why would they want us out of the way when they do it?





Here's some more copy
on the local trouble.

Fine, fine. Scan the nets for a reaction.
Got to get gut-levels on this.

I need a good personal
level hook on this.



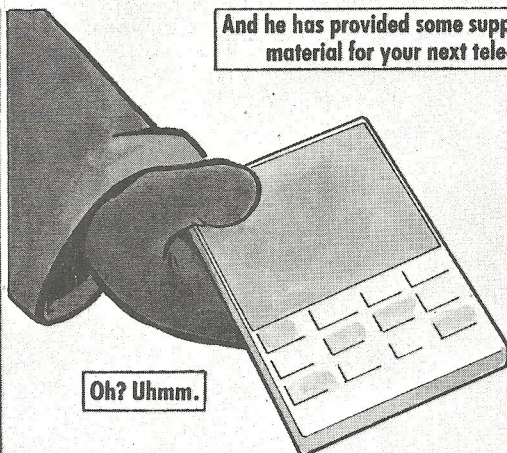
Greetings, Hon. Kosak.
You have a private moment?

Uh, yeah, sure.



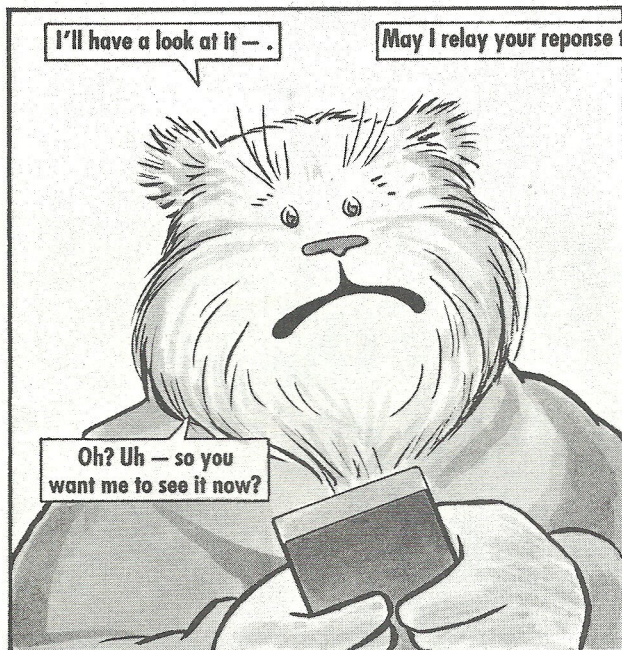
Our mutual acquaintance wishes to relay his
continued support of your enlightened coverage.

Oh — sure — thanks.



And he has provided some supplemental
material for your next telecast.

Oh? Uhmm.



I'll have a look at it — .

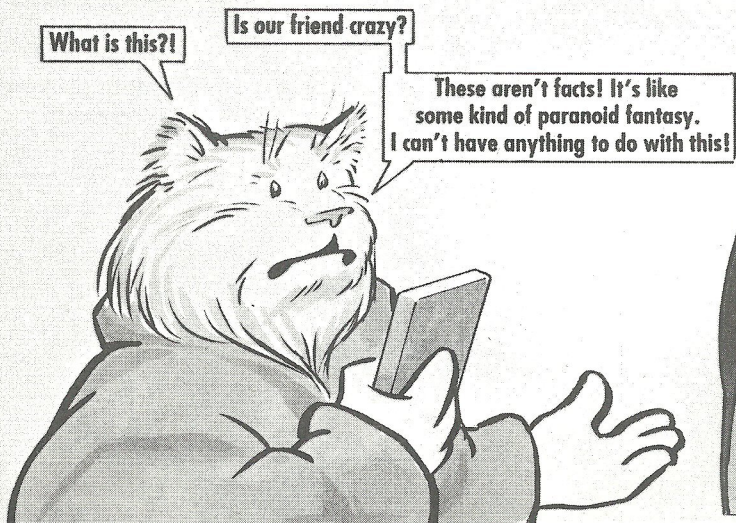
May I relay your reponse to this material?

Oh? Uh — so you
want me to see it now?



Yes, it is important to
our mutual acquaintance.

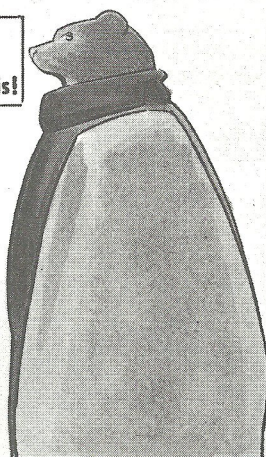
Oh — okay.



What is this?!

Is our friend crazy?

These aren't facts! It's like
some kind of paranoid fantasy.
I can't have anything to do with this!



It is most unfortunate
that you feel that way.



Help! Kosak has been shot!
An EDF agent just shot Laslow Kosak!



