

# TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA®

CREATED BY KEVIN EASTMAN & PETER LAIRD

# ANDREW MODEEN

**WRITER** 

# **ARSENIY DUBAKOV**

PENCILLER • INKER

### FRANK FOSCO

PENCILLER (PAGE 3) • COVER ART

DAVID SELTZER
TONES

GARY CARLSON NOTES

ADAM O. PRUETT LETTERS

ROSS MAY ADDITIONAL PLOT • EDITS

A. C. FARLEY
BACK COVER ART

**COURTLAND BRUGGER**FRONT & BACK COVER COLORS

### TALES OF THE TMNT

"PRACTICAL JOKES"

WILL TUPPER WRITER

**DONNA G. OMO**PENCILS • INKS

"CONFLICT RESOLUTION"

WILL TUPPER WRITER

**DENNIS KENNEDY**PENCILS • INKS • TONES

"TMNT VS. SPAWN"

FRANK FOSCO
WRITER • PENCILS • INKS

COURTLAND BRUGGER
COLORS

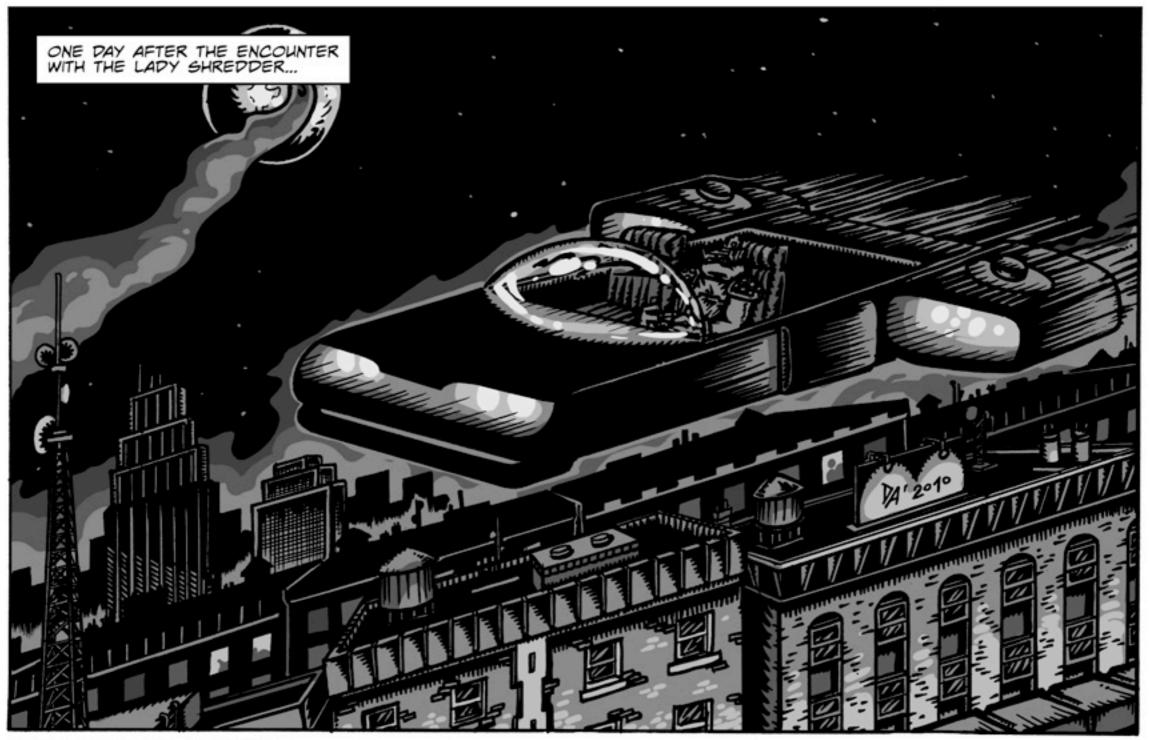
PIN-UPS

JIM LAWSON

### ERIK LARSEN

& The Sharp Brothers

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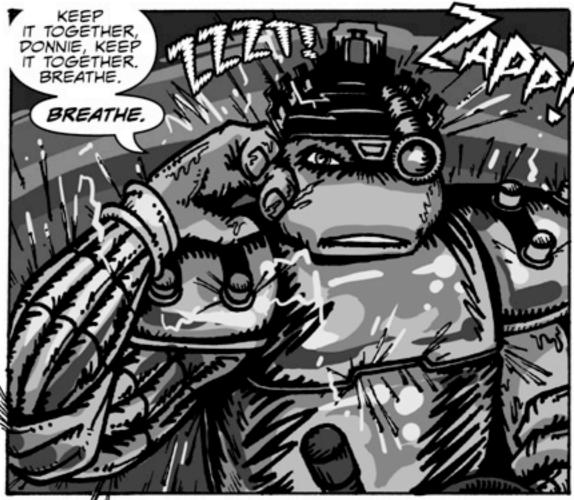






























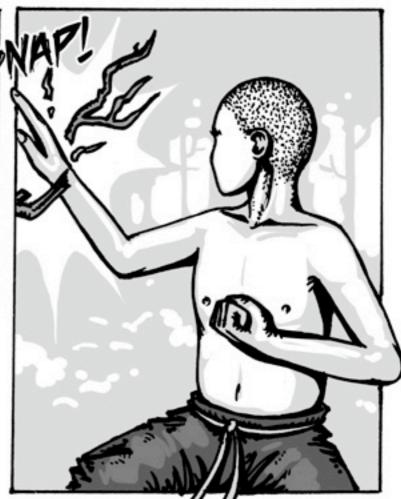










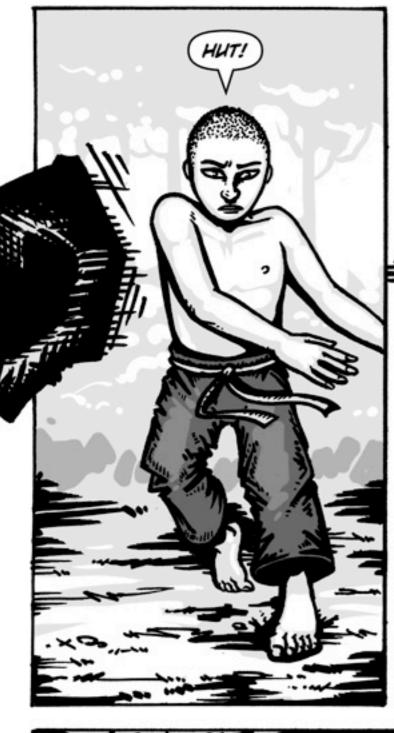






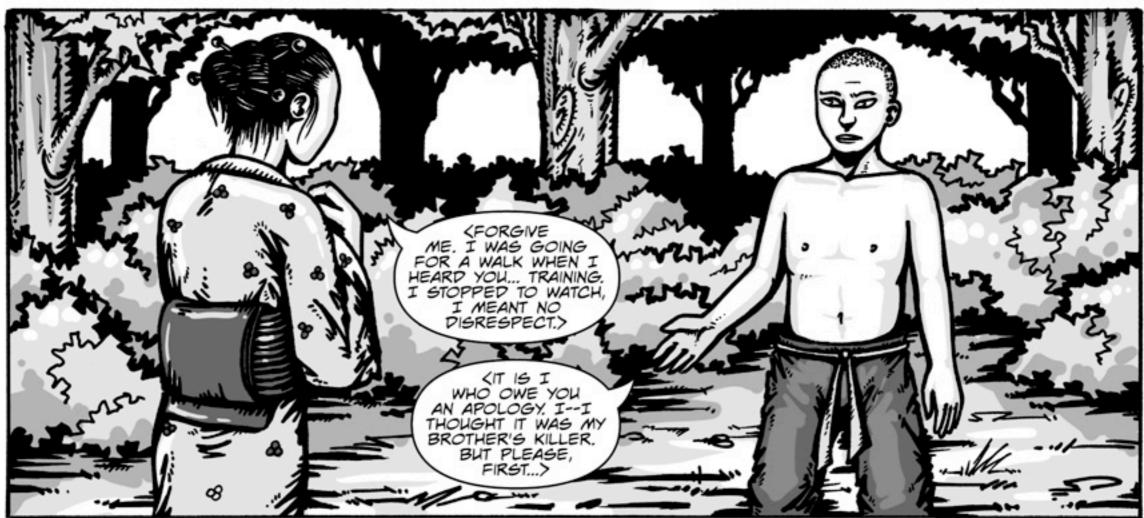


















I KNEW I HAD SOMEHOW STRUCK A NERVE.

I EXPLAINED THAT I WAS THE SISTER OF TANG SHEN.

EVEN AS HE SPOKE HIS NAME I DID NOT REALIZE THAT HE WAS THE YOUNGER BROTHER OF **OROKU NAGI,** THE LOVER OF MY SISTER.



















DAMNED IT WOULD
BE, THE FOOT
MYSTIC MASHIMA
CONVINCED THE
NEW YORK FOOT
THAT HE COULD
BRING BACK SAKI
WITH A BATCH
OF SPECIALLY
GROWN...





I WOULD HAVE NO PART IN THE ABOMINATION THEY WERE UNDERTAKING. IT WOULD NOT BE SAKI THEY MADE. IT WOULD NOT CONTAIN HIS SOUL.



























































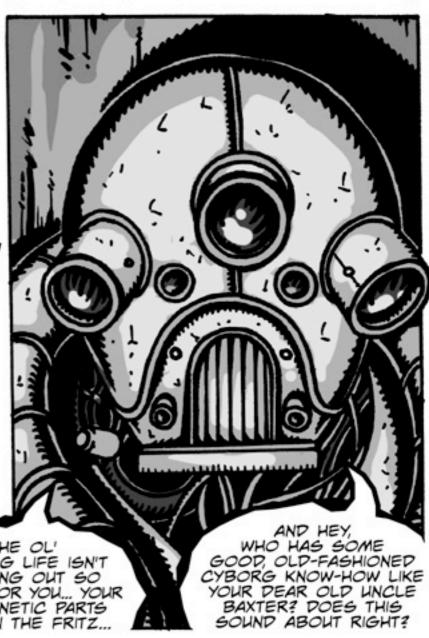








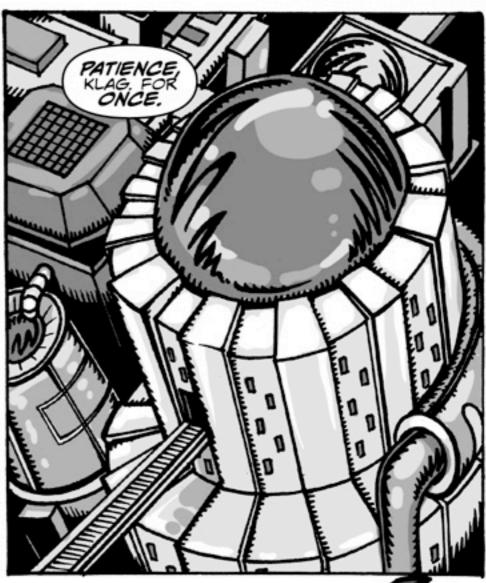


























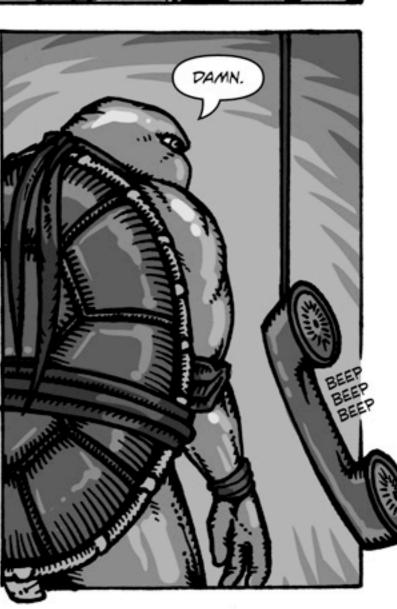


















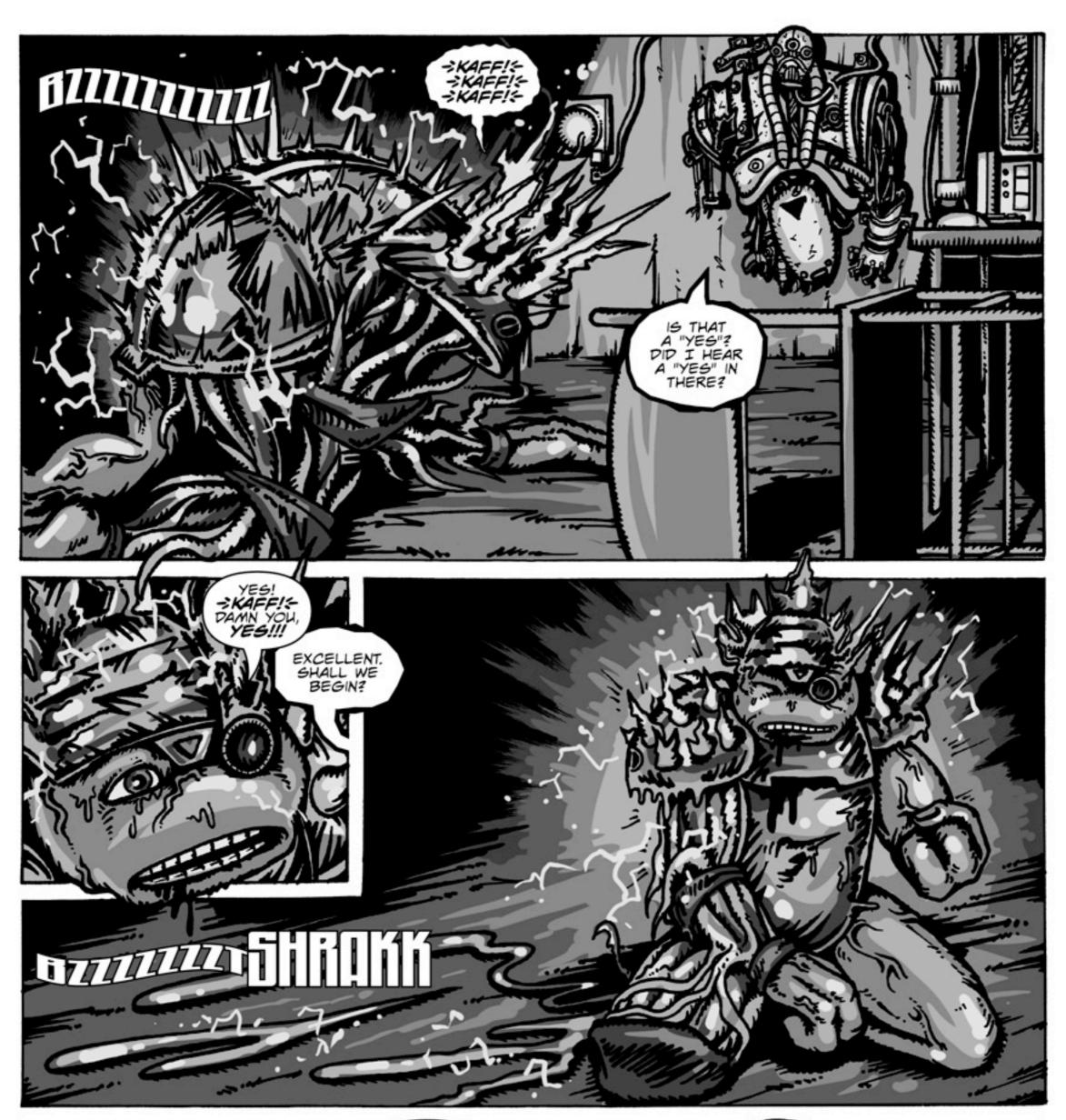


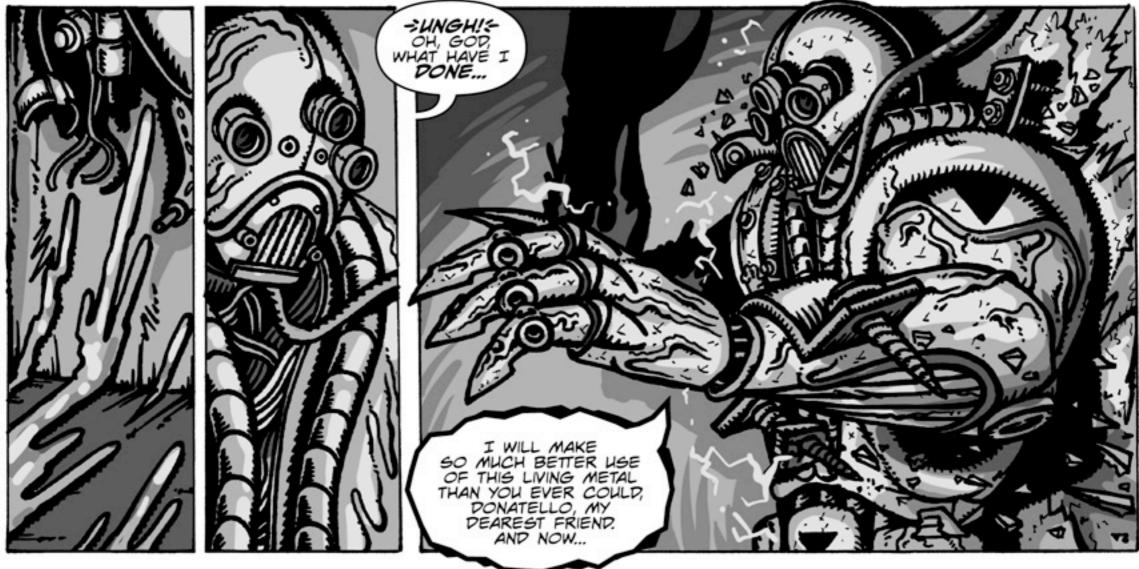














# SHELL SHIPS AFE

In 1996, the consensus was that the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles phenomenon was pretty much over and that Leo, Raph, Mike and Don were anything but cool to most people over 8 years of age. The TV cartoon series and three live action movies had firmly established the TMNT as a little kiddie franchise to help sell a mountain of bedspreads, toys and action figures.

That original TV audience had grown up and moved on to newer things. The television series was cancelled after a nine year run, Mirage had stopped publication of their original TMNT comic book the year before and the Archie Comics series based on the TV show was also ending.

I don't know what Mirage had in mind when they asked Erik Larsen if he wanted to publish a Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles series at Image Comics in 1995. If they were hoping for a typical glitzy Image book, they would've been better off with Jim Lee or Rob Liefeld's studios. I do know that Leo, Raph, Mike and Don had guest-starred a couple of times in Erik's Savage Dragon a year or two earlier and it had been a lot of fun. More than that, the TMNT were cool in it.

Erik agreed to publish the title, but had no desire or time to write and/or draw it. I was writing a number of projects with and for Erik at Image, but I was still a little surprised to be asked to write the new TMNT book. Frank Fosco had already agreed to pencil the title and I never turn down the opportunity to work with him. Erik, Frank and I all broke into comics at the same time with my MEGATON comic book in 1981.

Megaton was one of the first black and white independent comic books on the newly developing direct comic book market in the early 1980s, where independent distributors were selling comic books directly to comic book stores. Cerebus, ElfQuest and a few others were already on the shelves, but Megaton was an attempt to introduce a line of super hero titles. Savage Dragon and Rob Liefeld's Youngblood were two of the strips to debut in its pages, and part of the reason I was writing at Image ten years later.

As much as I had enjoyed Erik's take on the Turtles, and as much as I wanted to work with Frank, I had my reservations. My son had been part of that first generation of fans of the TV show and movies, but he was long bored with the series. Likewise, I had never been anything but a casual fan of the original comic book series, a gritty parody of Frank Miller's Daredevil and Ronin comics. I knew many comics fans that were angry at creators Eastman & Laird for "selling out".

But Erik had no intention of publishing a glossy 4-color TMNT book and wanted to take the series back to its violent black & white roots. We were hoping to lure back some of fans of the original B&W series, and attract the attention of the generation that now thought of the TMNT as kid stuff. I tracked down copies of just about every TMNT title that Mirage had published and was excited with the variety of concepts and characters, and agreed to join the team. I dug out my Frank Miller Daredevils, Ronins and his Wolverine mini-series and got to work.

Mirage suggested that we might want to start out with a bang and kill Splinter, but I declined. I thought he was an important part of the mix, and also didn't want to irritate those faithful fans that had stuck with the franchise.

There were surprisingly few rules for the new series.

Mirage said there were to be no female Turtles! Erik requested that something be done to differentiate between the four Turtles besides their choice of weapon. The color-coded masks were part of the TV mythos and we were going back to all four wearing red masks.

To that end, we started off by scarring up Raphael's face, giving him a reason to wear one of Casey Jone's old hockey masks. We were ramping up Raph's aggressive nature and that Jason Voorhees look is pretty creepy and scary. Plus, Casey wasn't present in the first batch of issues. Donatello fell out of a helicopter and smashed his shell. Luckily, the cyborg he was fighting at the time died in the crash and its nano-tech armor grafted itself onto Donnie, making him mobile and a walking armory. The armor kept expanding and he got larger and larger over time, turning into a walking tank.

Leonardo lost a hand somewhere along the line and struggled to keep the team concept alive. Michelangelo came through the series intact, his worst injuries coming from the sharp spikes that covered the body of his lizardlike girlfriend Horridus.

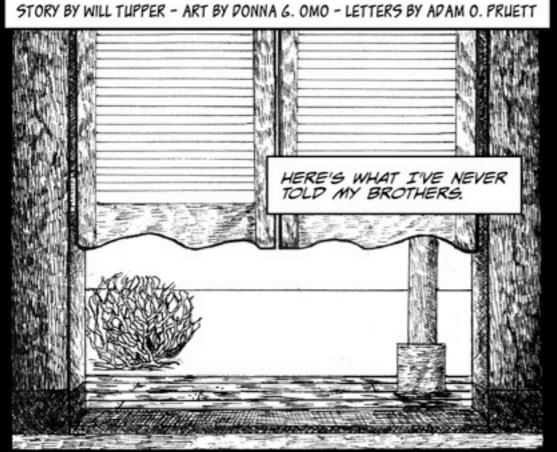
We had a lot of fun on the series, utilizing concepts from the earlier TMNT series and using characters from Erik Larsen's corner of the Image universe, hoping to draw new readers to our series. I'm not sure how many new readers we captured (or recaptured), because our core readers seemed to be mainly the dedicated TMNT fanbase that we inherited. They were great and very supportive and made the whole project a great experience.

Sales never did level off or climb, aside from the occasional spike when Dragon appeared. There just seemed to be antipathy for the project as a whole. I remember telling people that I was writing the book and a number of people said "Oh, I'm sorry". Even my close friends dragged their feet reading the issues I gave them. Years later one of them confessed that he'd finally read them and loved them, likening the continuity of storylines to classic Marvel books of the 1960s and '70s.

My favorite part of the whole process was seeing Erik Larsen's inks over Frank's cover pencils. I just wish there could have been a few more. The good folks at Mirage and Image were a pleasure to work with, and kept the book going for as long as they could. I remain proud of the work we did, and enjoyed every minute of the experience.

-Gary Carlson





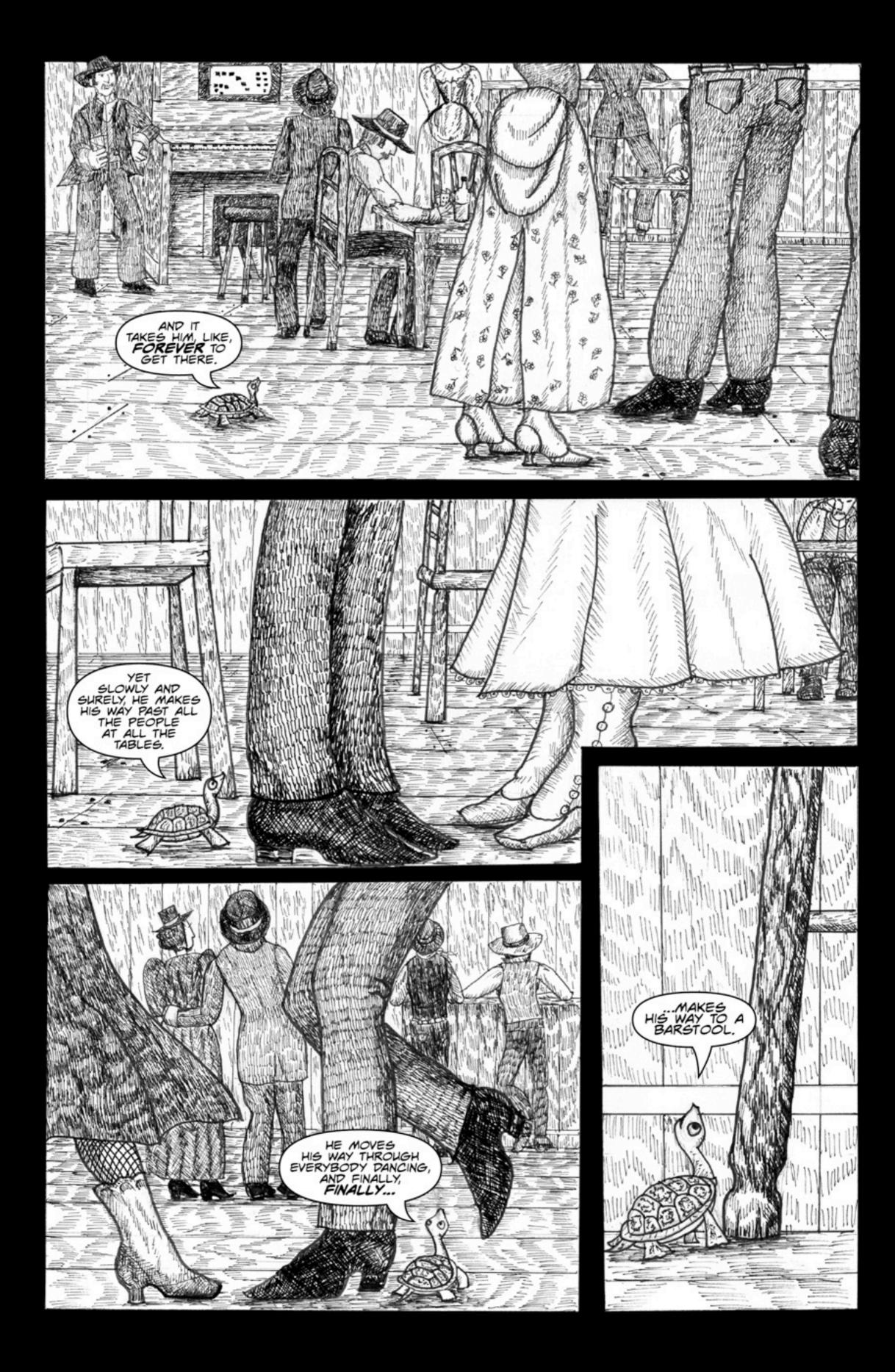






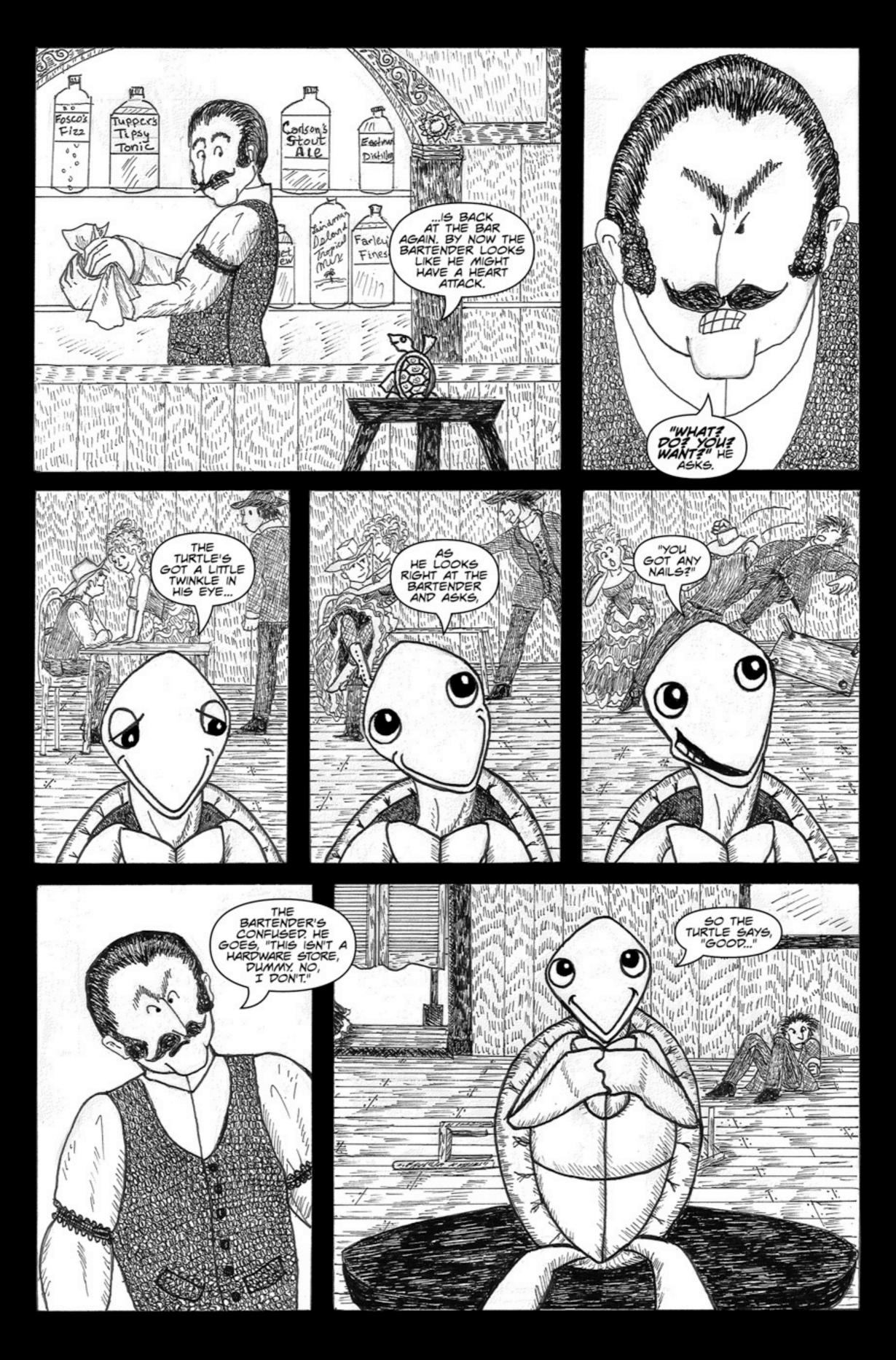


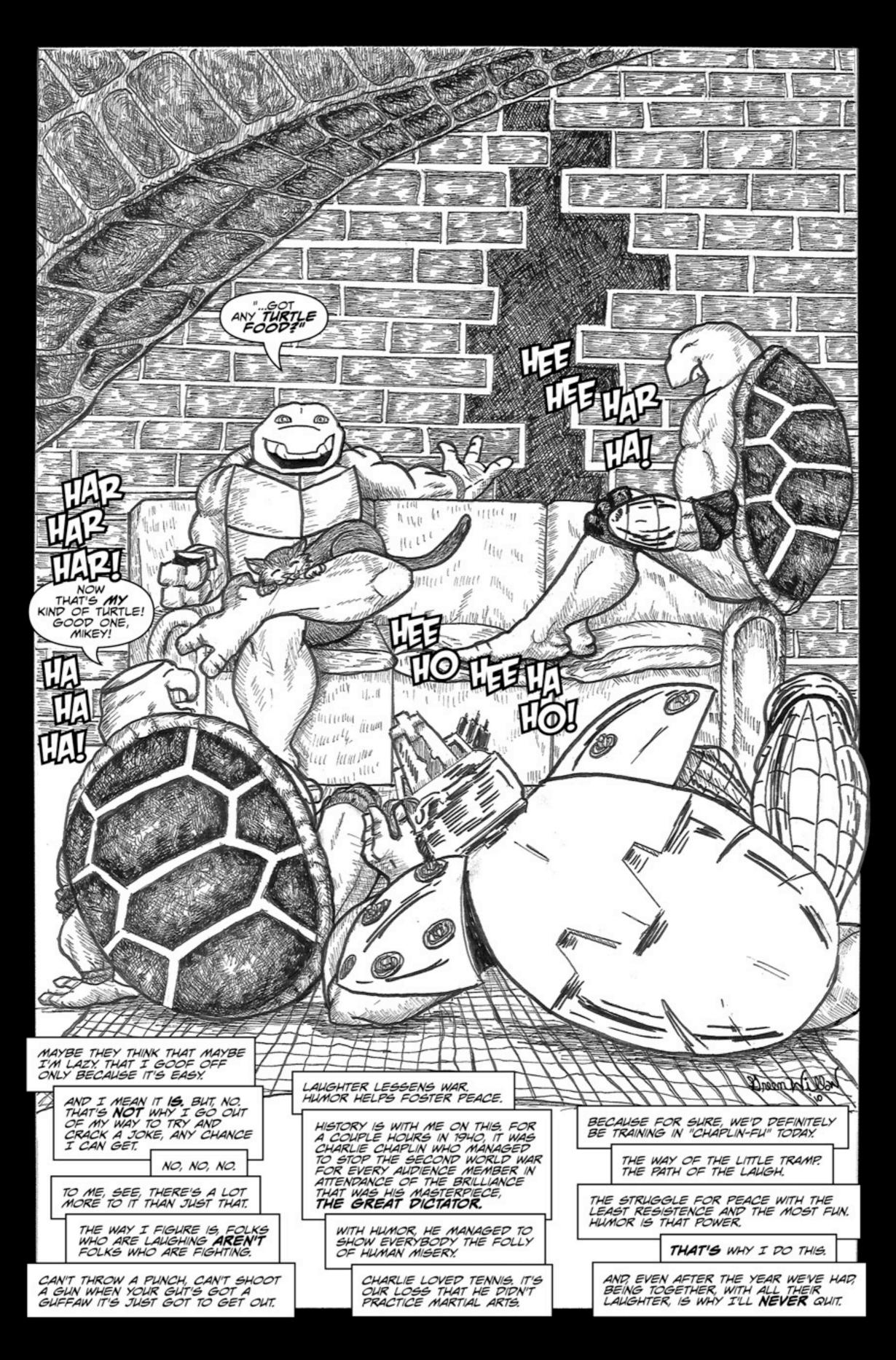










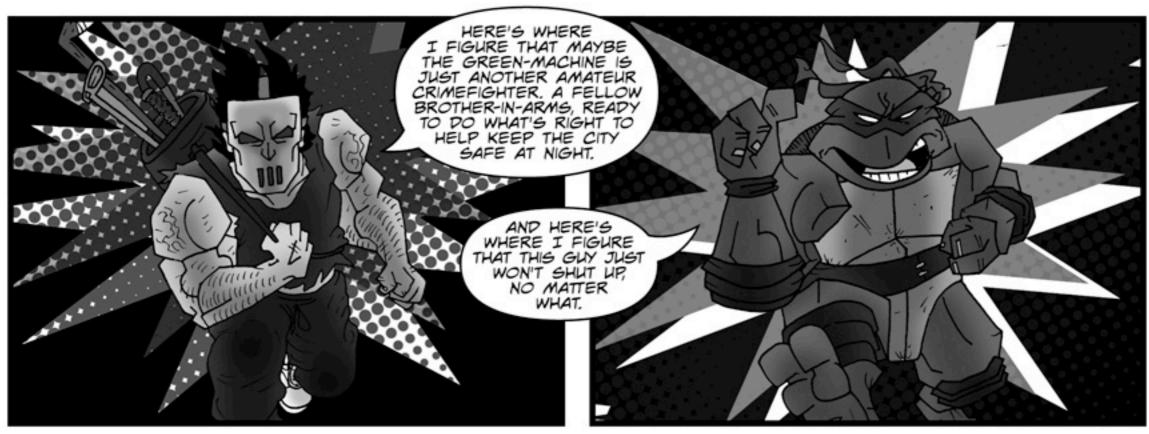


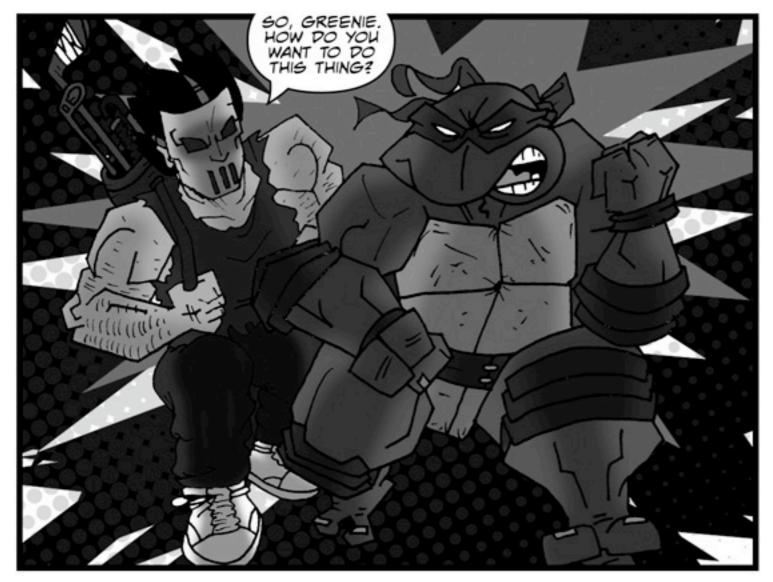




















































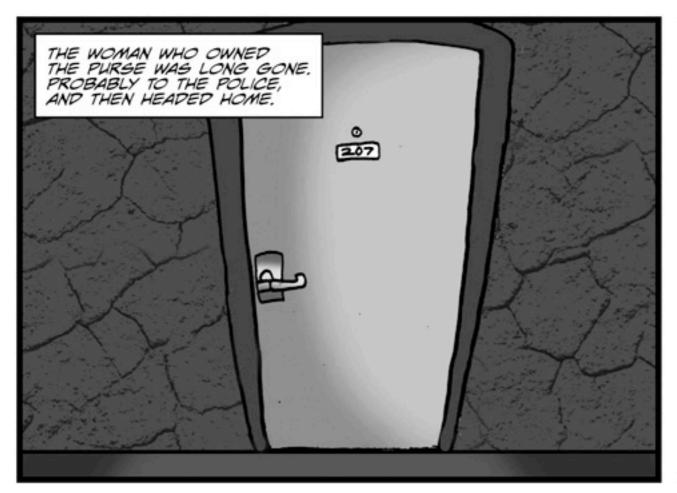






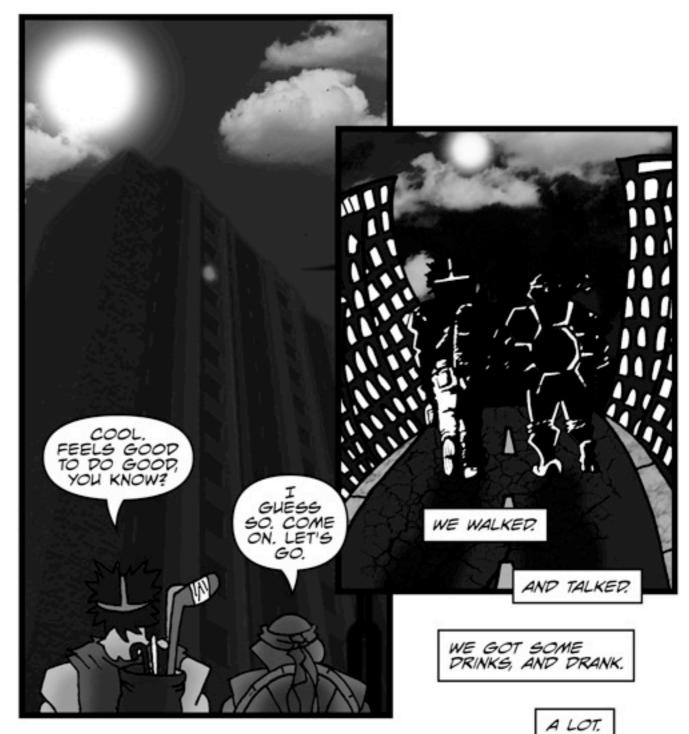




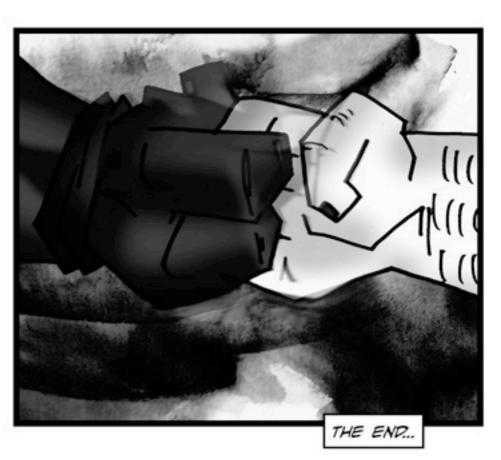














BY JIM LAWSON

























