

Protoplasm
Press

31
JUNE 22

AMOEBA ADVENTURES



Amoebamail

email: dirganik@gmail.com • amoebaadventures.com • facebook.com/amoebaadventures

Thanks for joining me for another issue of Amoeba Adventures!
Here's some of your very kind comments on #30:

They say you can't go home again, but Nik Dirga has stepped back into his 1990s quasi-superhero comic *Amoeba Adventures* like slipping on a comfortable old pair of shoes, and it's as if no time had passed. This new issue in particular features some intense action and suspense, as well as a lot of heart. Highly recommended.

J Kevin Carrier, Ohio

What an awesome issue Nik, love seeing Rambunny. Your art has improved so much, and have excellent storytelling ability, which is very important in comic work. A+ all the way, a must have book.

Tony Lorenz, Florida

A really enjoyable story. It definitely took my mind off my problems.
Byron Black, Indiana

I read the latest *Amoeba Adventures* this morning! It's really good! I always like the done-in-ones more, and if you are going to have some melancholic musings on the nature of ageing, you might as well do it while literally holding the weight of a ruined building on your shoulders.

Robert Smith, Auckland, New Zealand

I've finally had a chance to sit down and read the stack of comics you sent me and it was sheer delight. There is nothing quite like sitting on the couch and reading a small press epic. It took me back to when I first discovered small press as a kid in the '90s; small press adventures ignited my imagination in a way that mainstream comics (which I also love) couldn't match. I think it's probably because the stories are genuinely surprising, because the creator has all the control of the story so it really can go in any direction it wants.

... I now feel so invested in Pro and Dawn and Rambunny and the gang after having spent so much time with them lately. And I feel I know you better, too, since one of the great things about small press is these little publications give us a direct line into the creator's soul.

One of my rules these days is that any comic coming into the house has to go back out as a gift to someone. For marital bliss purposes. So I'm extremely excited to gift these to my nephew for his next birthday because he's going to love them and get a real understanding of the magic of small press.

I'll stop rambling now, but just wanted to drop you a line to thank you for sharing your amazing talent with the world and I look forward to the next chapter in the life of the All-Spongy gang.

Jason DeGroot, Texas

Comics recycling! I support this movement, Jason! As always, thanks very much for everyone who took a moment to let me know what they thought, and hey, I'd dig hearing your comments on this issue right here, through whatever technological and letter-writing means you might wish to use! Contact details above! - Nik



Our Cast



The Asbestos Mushroom is the greatest supervillain of our time.



Prometheus is an amoeba who the Asbestos Mushroom really hates.

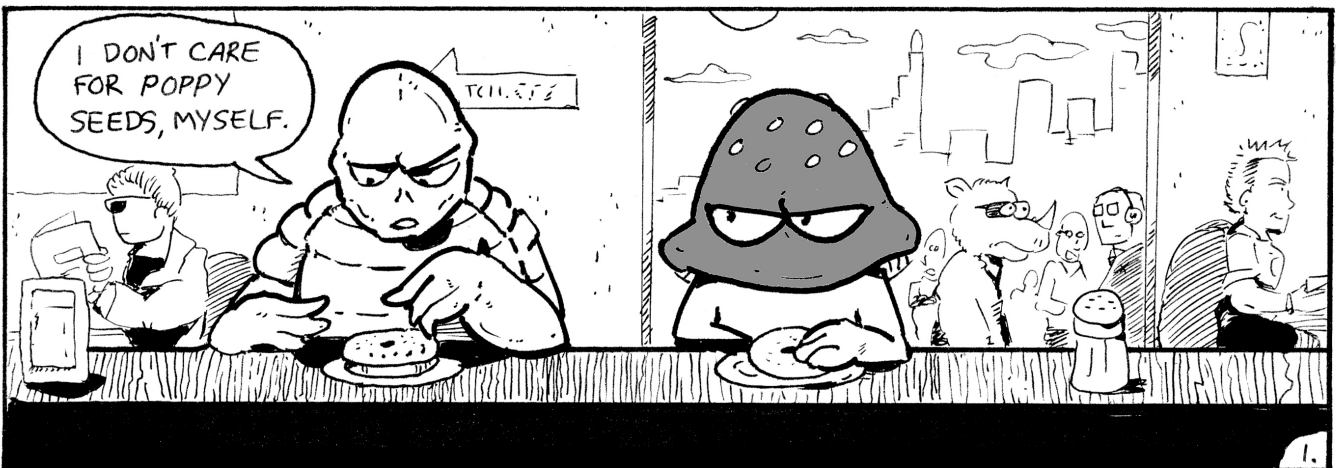
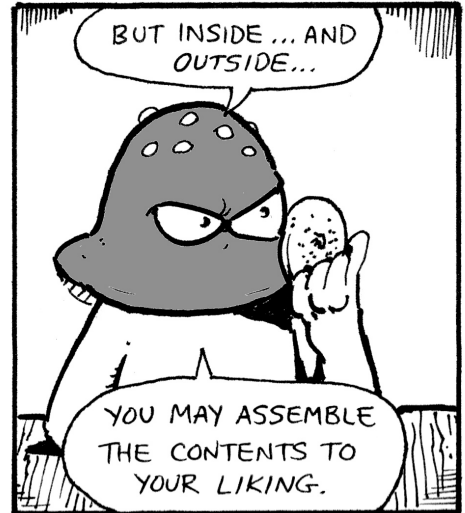
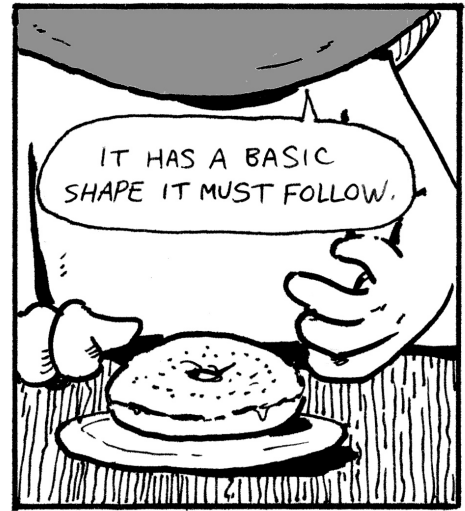


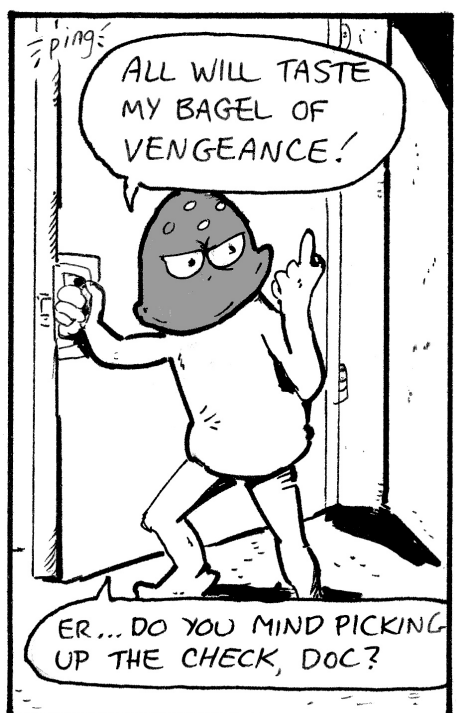
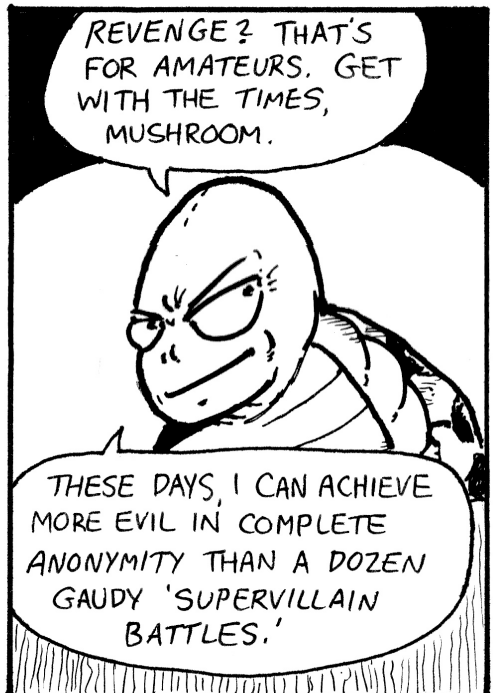
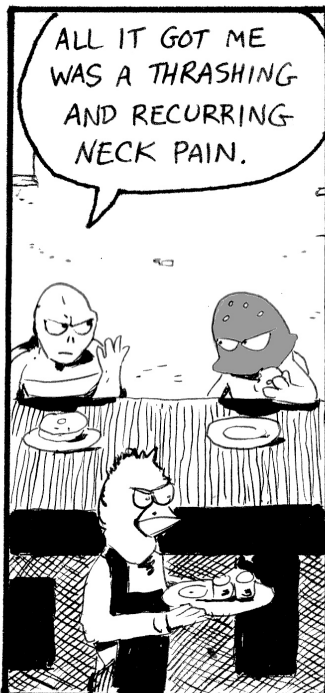
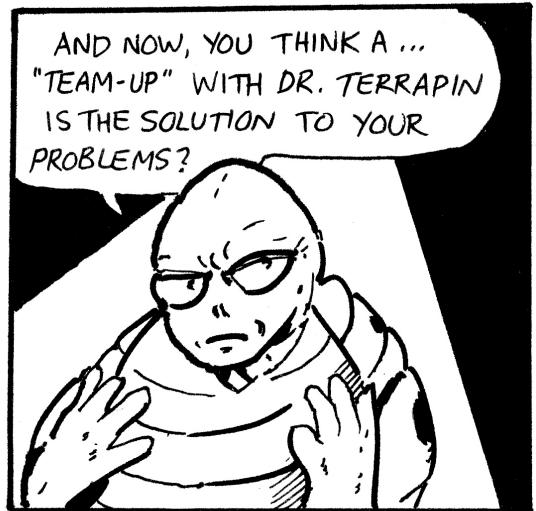
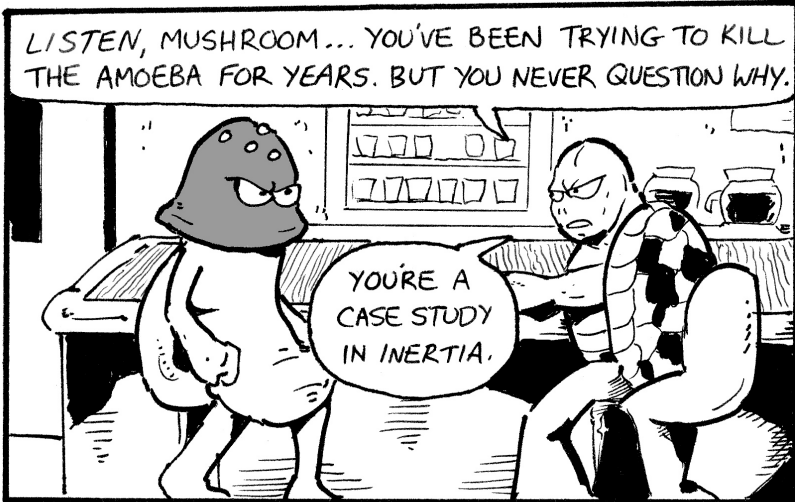
Spif is a former doctor, former superhero, currently a scientist and a teacher.

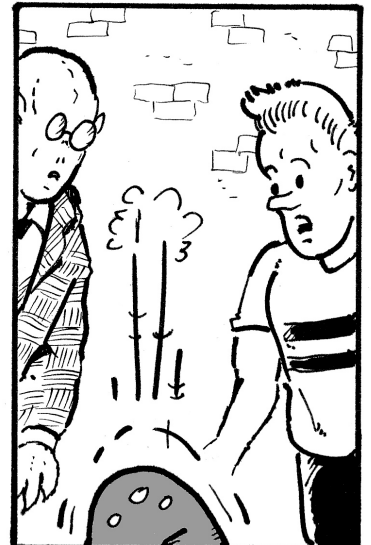
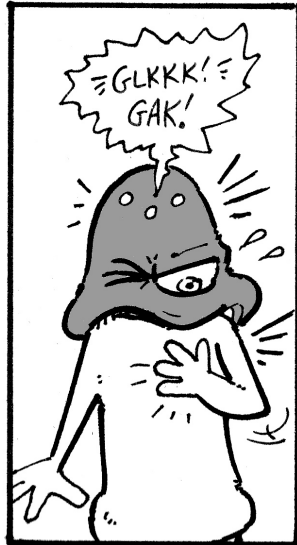
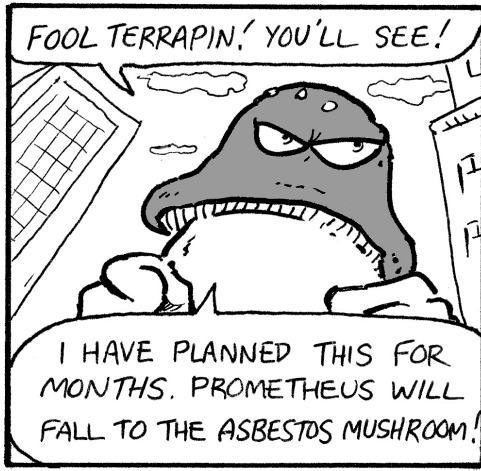


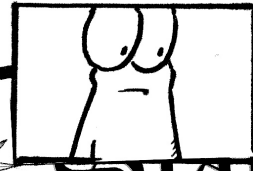
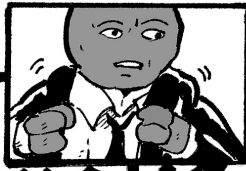
Ninja Ant is the life of the party.

Amoeba Adventures #31, June 2022. Published maybe twice a year by Protoplasm Press, 262 Konini Road, Titirangi, Auckland New Zealand 0604. Additional print copies of this issue available for \$7.50 postpaid. Visit amoebaadventures.com and look for the links to download all 30 previous issues and much more for FREE, and give us a "like" on [Facebook.com/amoebaadventures](https://facebook.com/amoebaadventures) where occasionally I'll remember to post rare art and coming attractions. Amoeba Adventures, Prometheus the Protoplasm and all other characters are (C) 2022 Nik Dirga. All rights reserved.









Spongopolis



Star

SERVING THE GREATER SPONGOPOLIS REGION SINCE 1986

DEATH OF A MUSHROOM

FUNGOID FIEND FOUND DEAD ON SIDEWALK

THREE DAYS LATER:

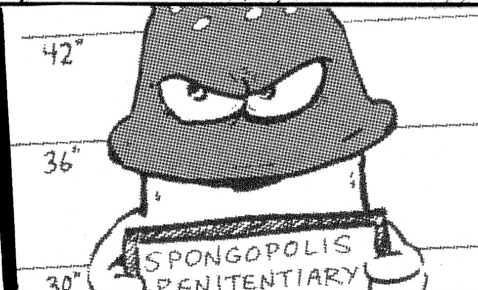


downtown Spongopolis intersection of apparent cardiac arrest. The Mushroom was one of Spongopolis' most infamous supervillains, known for his elaborate death traps and impossibly convoluted schemes.

His fellow supervillains took to social media to mourn their comrade.

"He was truly a giant amongst us," wrote The Obliterator, who said he would paint his death-armor black in memory of the Mushroom for the next 30 days.

The Spongopolis Mushroom Society



Full report

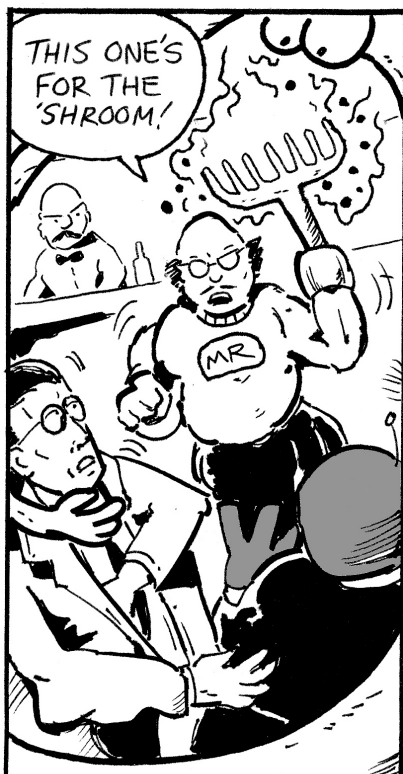
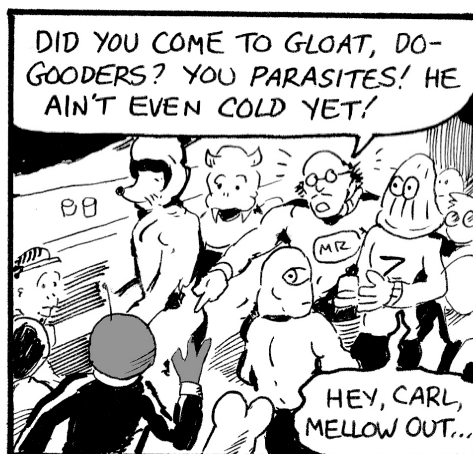
- Prometheus - 'No comment' - P. 7
- Rumours of 'villain wake' to be held - P. 5
- Was he really so bad? Vox pop - P. 11
- 'I had the Mushroom's secret baby!' - P. 13



An Amoeba Adventures Exclusive Written and drawn by Nik Dirga

Murph's Take - Page 5
Spongo Lotto - Page 12







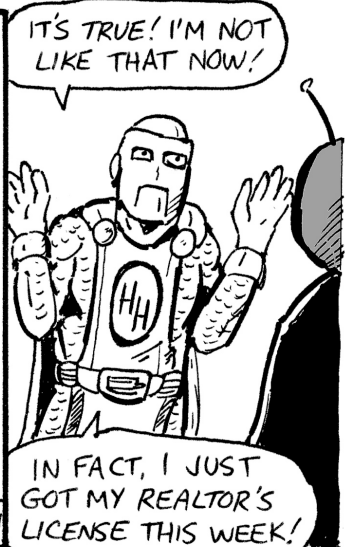
HEY! GUYS, IT'S ME!

HERR HEINOUS?!



WAIT!

GUYS, HANG ON! LAST TIME I SAW HEINOUS, HE WAS TURNING OVER A NEW LEAF.*



IT'S TRUE! I'M NOT LIKE THAT NOW!

IN FACT, I JUST GOT MY REALTOR'S LICENSE THIS WEEK!



IT'S SO COOL YOU COULD COME. BYGONES AND ALL THAT...

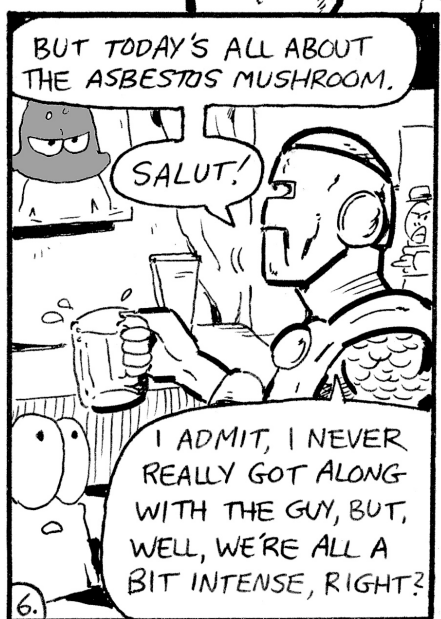
COME ON, I ALREADY GOT US A GREAT TABLE!



I MEAN, I'M OUT OF THE EVIL DICTATOR BUSINESS AND ALL, BUT YOU'VE GOT TO BE IMPRESSED AT ITS RESPECT FOR TRADITION.

A SUPERVILLAIN PASSES ON, AND EVERYONE GATHERS TO SEND THEM ON THEIR WAY.

IT'S NEUTRAL TERRITORY, TOO - NO FIGHTS, ALTHOUGH SOMETIMES YOU GET ONES LIKE THAT GUY...



BUT TODAY'S ALL ABOUT THE ASBESTOS MUSHROOM.

SALUT!

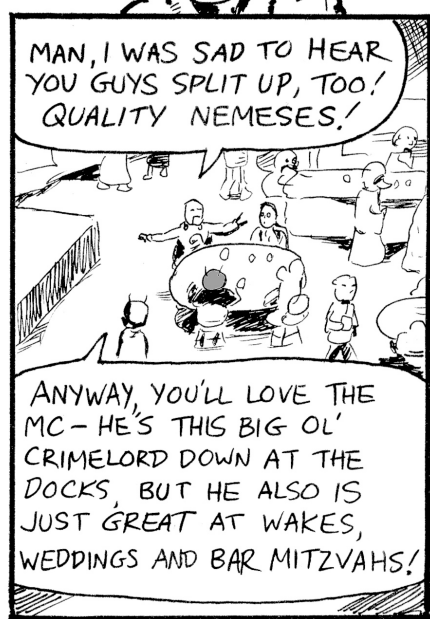
I ADMIT, I NEVER REALLY GOT ALONG WITH THE GUY, BUT, WELL, WE'RE ALL A BIT INTENSE, RIGHT?



OK... SO, HERR HEINOUS... CALL ME GARY, SPIF!

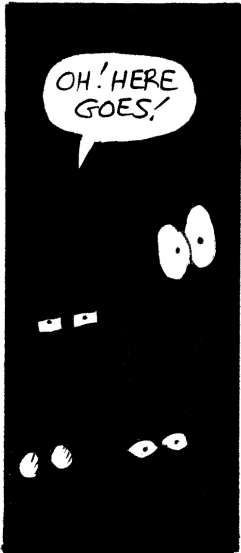
GARY..HEINOUS?

UM... YEAH. WE'RE JUST HERE TO PAY OUR RESPECTS. LIKE HIM OR NOT, THE 'SHROOM WAS A BIG PART IN THE ALL-SPONGY SQUADRON HISTORY.



MAN, I WAS SAD TO HEAR YOU GUYS SPLIT UP, TOO! QUALITY NEMESSES!

ANYWAY, YOU'LL LOVE THE MC - HE'S THIS BIG OL' CRIMELORD DOWN AT THE DOCKS, BUT HE ALSO IS JUST GREAT AT WAKES, WEDDINGS AND BAR MITZVAHS!



OH! HERE GOES!



CIK!

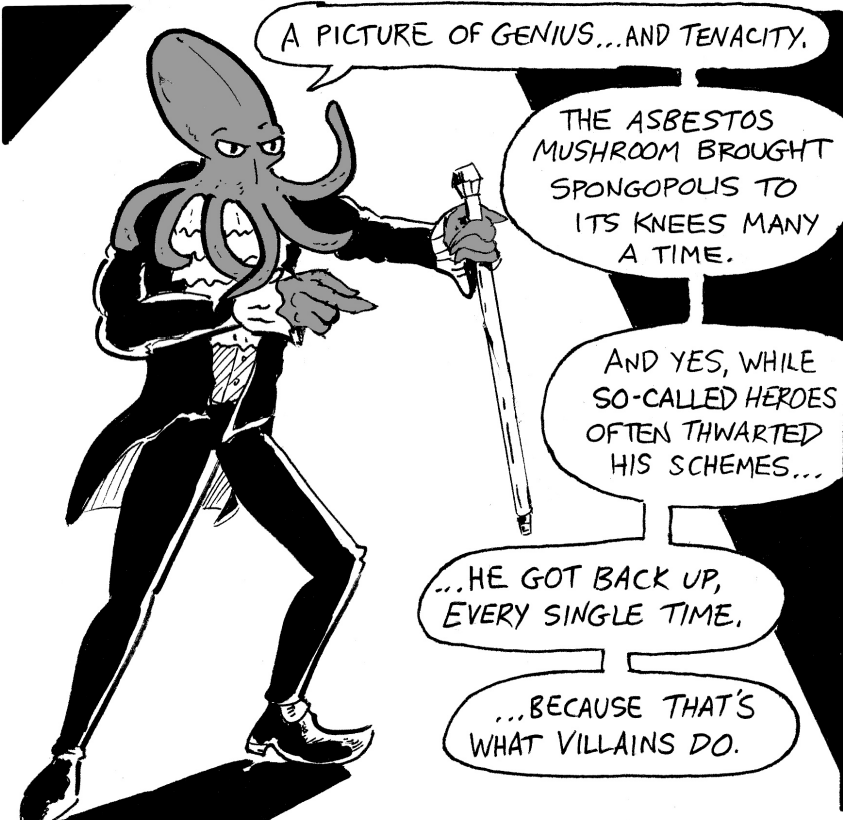
SHH!



DIG IF YOU WILL...



...A PICTURE.



A PICTURE OF GENIUS...AND TENACITY.

THE ASBESTOS MUSHROOM BROUGHT SPONGOPOLIS TO ITS KNEES MANY A TIME.

AND YES, WHILE SO-CALLED HEROES OFTEN THWARTED HIS SCHEMES...

...HE GOT BACK UP, EVERY SINGLE TIME.

...BECAUSE THAT'S WHAT VILLAINS DO.



WE SALUTE OUR FALLEN BROTHER!

I AM YOUR HOST, THE OCTOPOID, AND TONIGHT...

...LET US NOT FORGET THE FUNGUS WHO WALKED AMONG US!



IF BEING BAD IS BAD...

THEN WHY DOES IT FEEL SO DARN GOOD?

YES! PREACH! AYE!



WITHOUT FURTHER ADO, LET'S GET TO OUR FIRST SPEAKER.

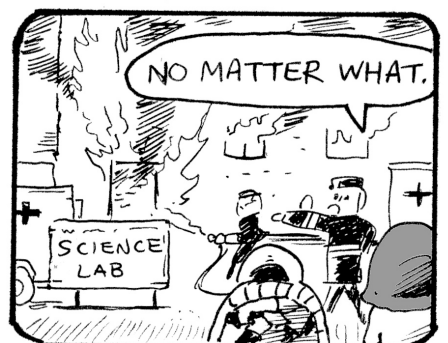
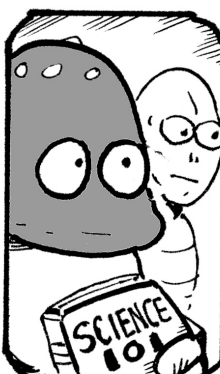
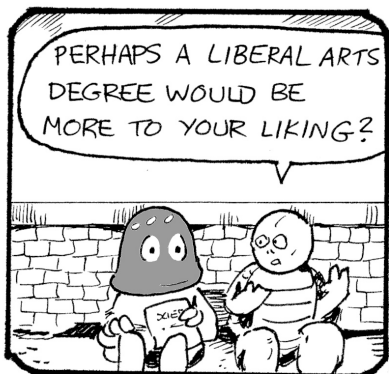
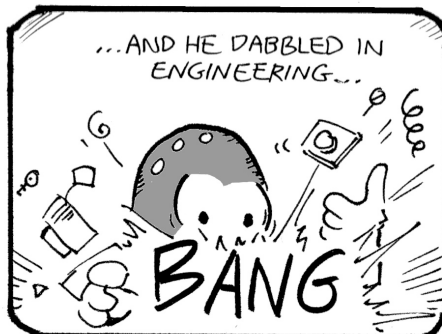
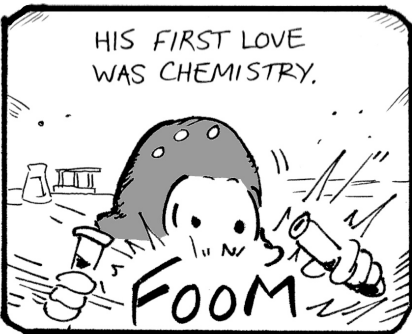
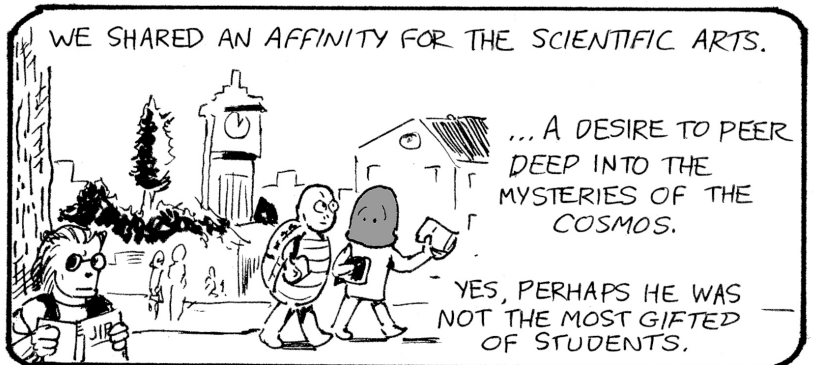
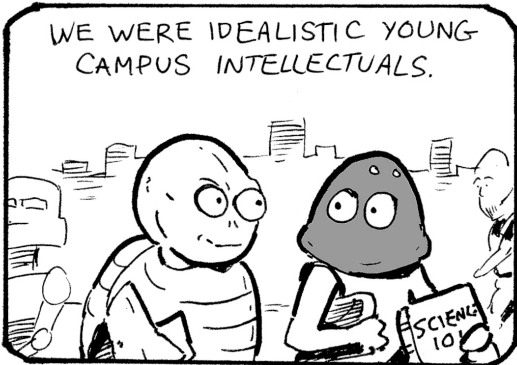
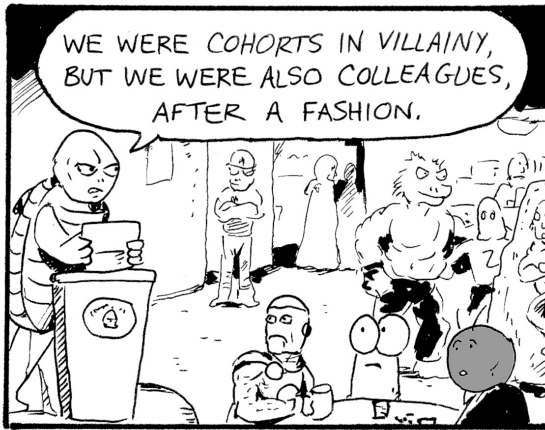
THE TURTLE THREAT.

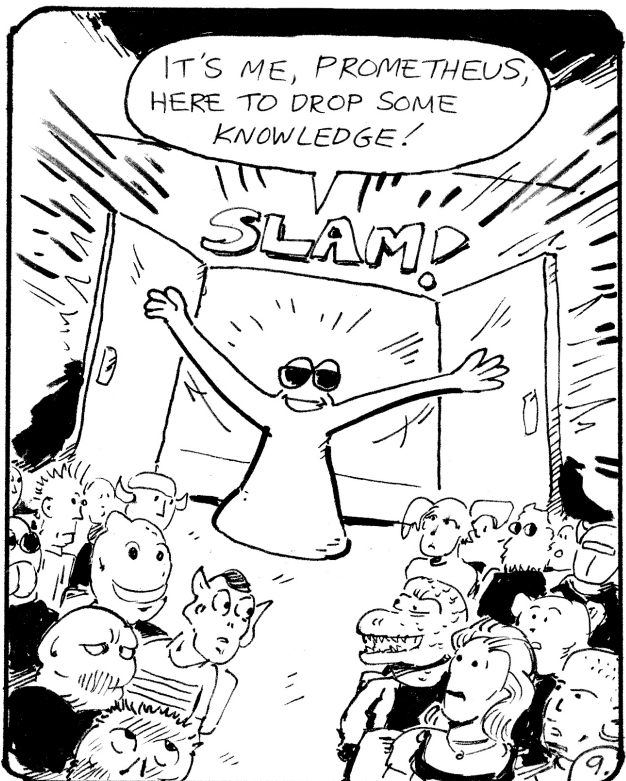
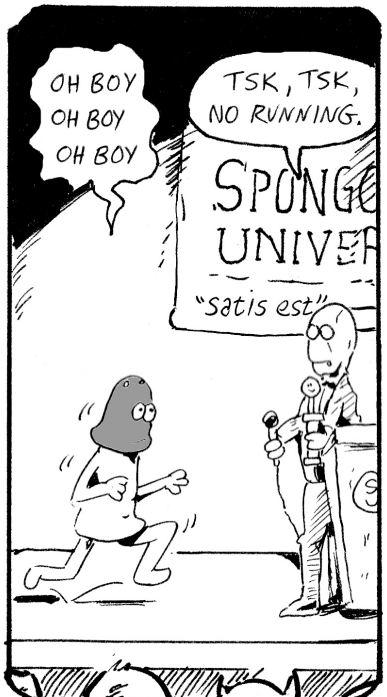
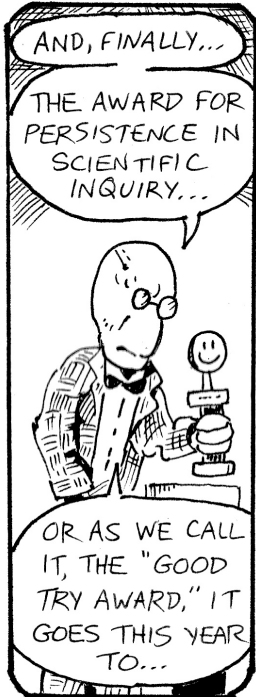
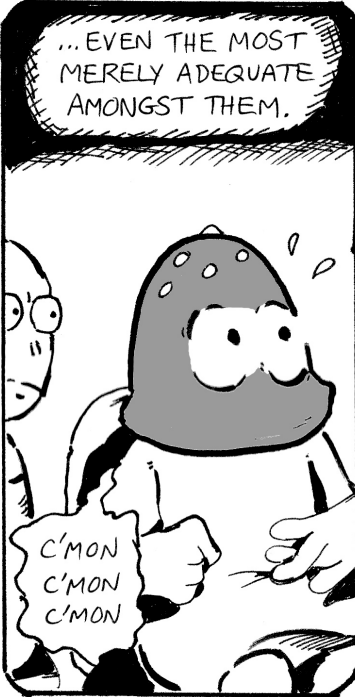
THE TORTOISE OF TERROR.

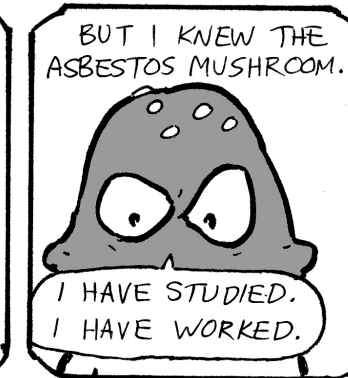
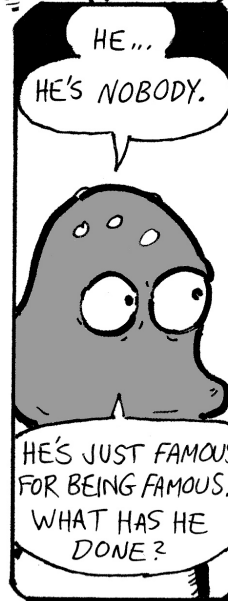
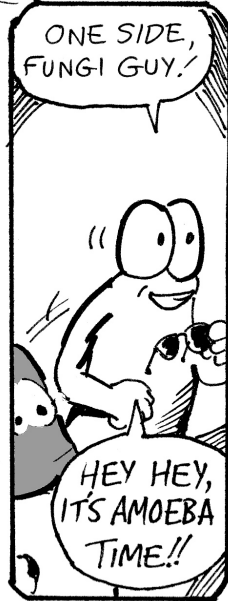
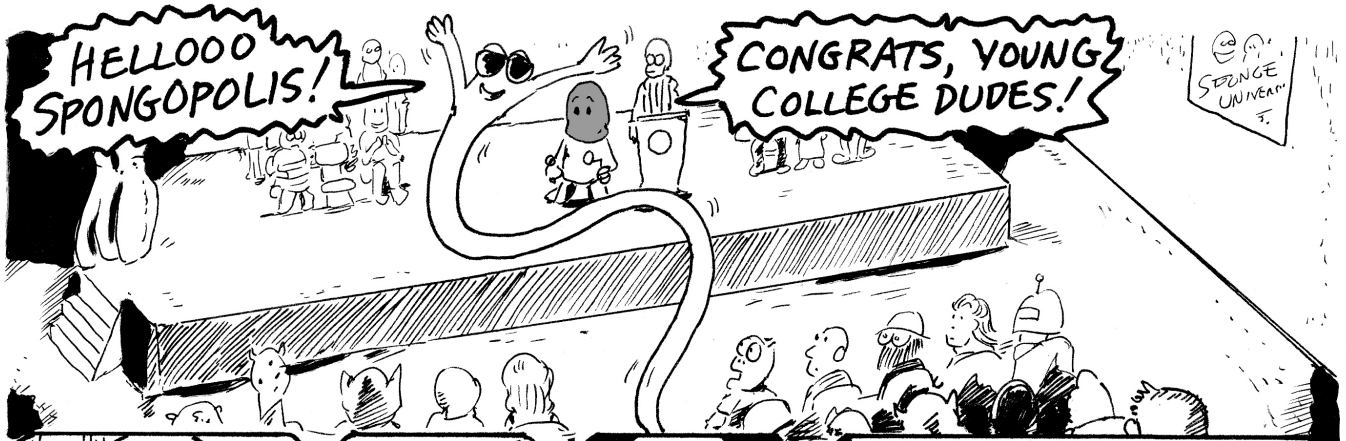


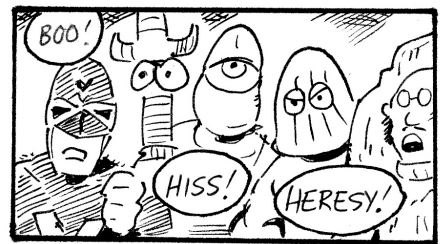
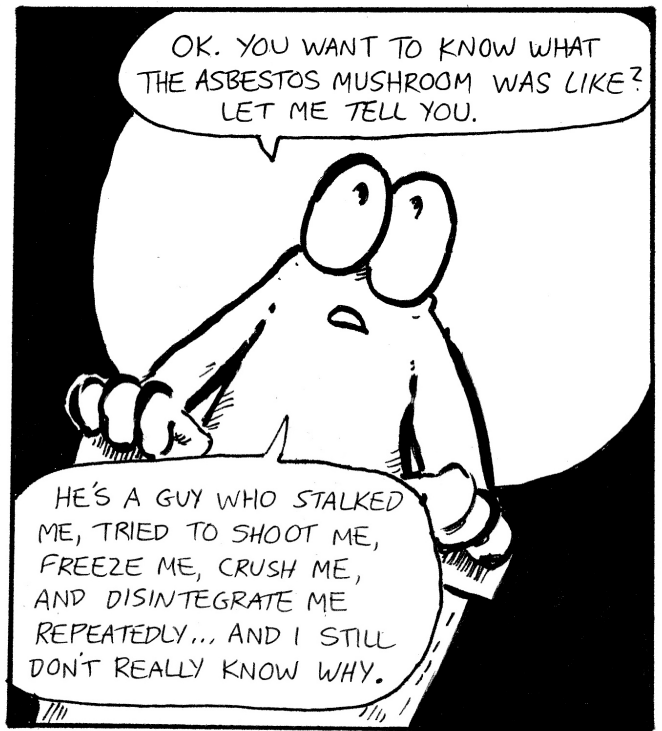
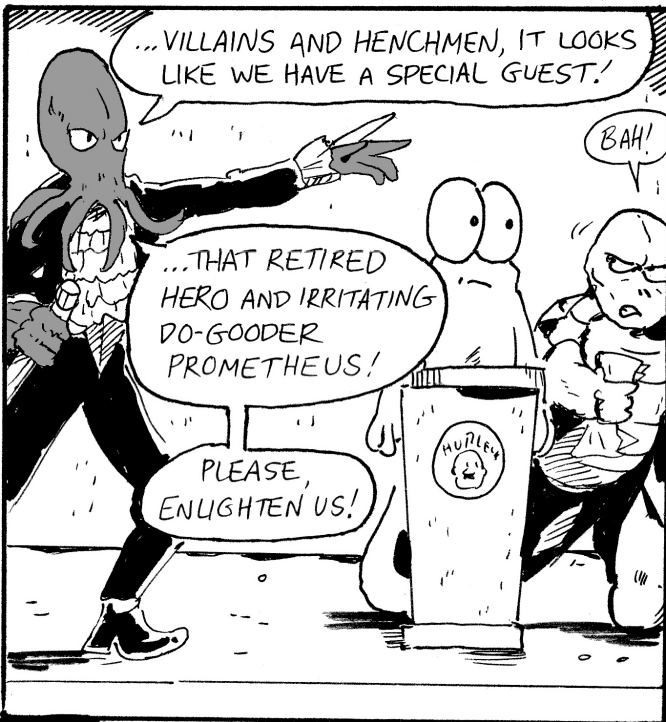
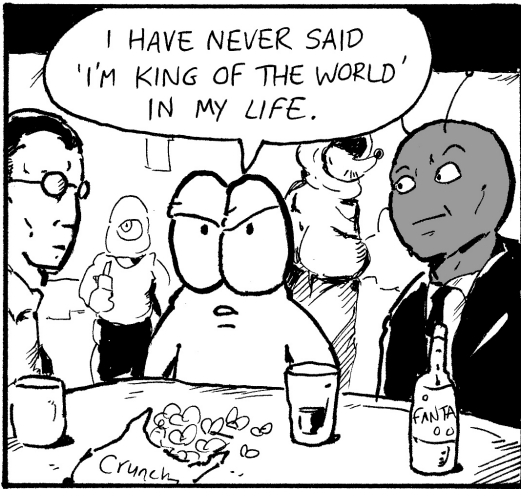
DOCTORRR TERRRAPIN!

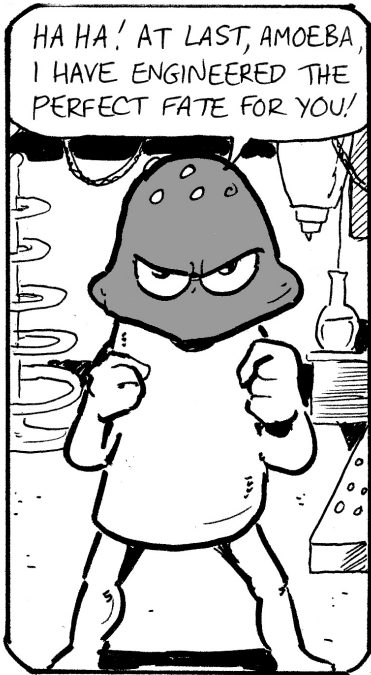
DON'T TOUCH THE SHELL, CEPHALOPOD.



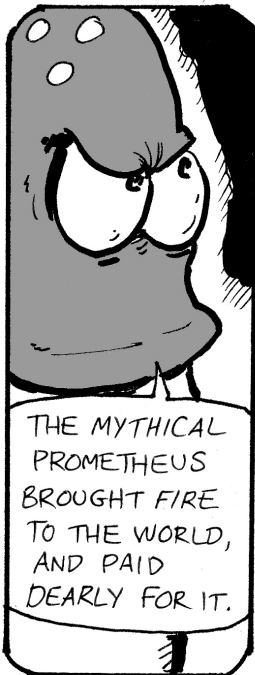




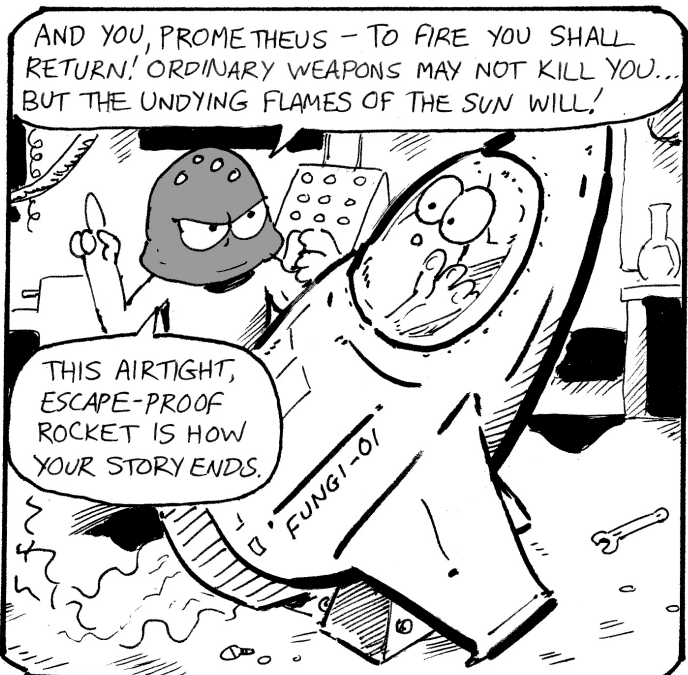




HA HA! AT LAST, AMOEBA, I HAVE ENGINEERED THE PERFECT FATE FOR YOU!



THE MYTHICAL PROMETHEUS BROUGHT FIRE TO THE WORLD, AND PAID DEARLY FOR IT.



AND YOU, PROMETHEUS - TO FIRE YOU SHALL RETURN! ORDINARY WEAPONS MAY NOT KILL YOU... BUT THE UNDYING FLAMES OF THE SUN WILL!

THIS AIRTIGHT, ESCAPE-PROOF ROCKET IS HOW YOUR STORY ENDS.



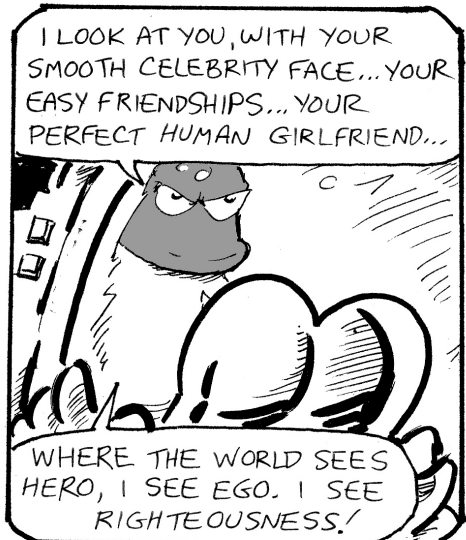
MUSHROOM, WE'VE DONE THIS DANCE AGAIN AND AGAIN.

AND I WIN EVERY TIME... WHY ME? WHY AM I YOUR NEMESIS?



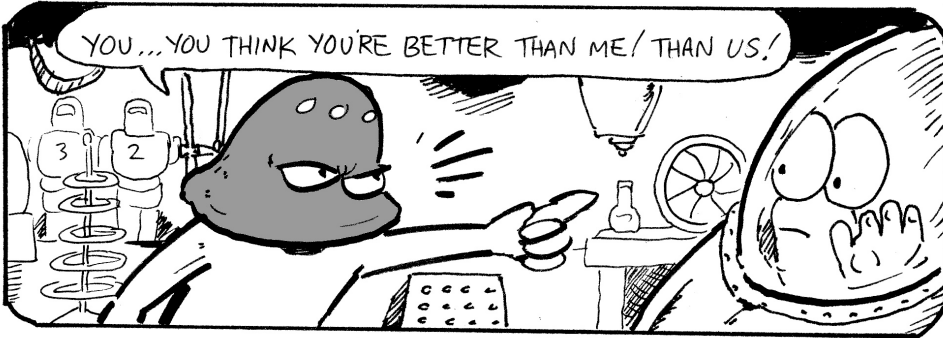
NEMESIS? A SHALLOW LABEL. YOU CAME HERE FROM THE STARS, AND IMMEDIATELY SHOWED HOW INADEQUATE WE WERE TO YOU.

EVERYTHING YOU WANTED FELL IN YOUR LAP. STARDOM. A TEAM OF ALLIES.

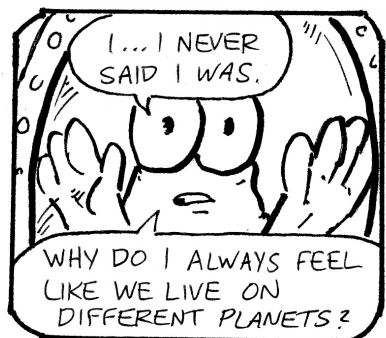


I LOOK AT YOU, WITH YOUR SMOOTH CELEBRITY FACE... YOUR EASY FRIENDSHIPS... YOUR PERFECT HUMAN GIRLFRIEND...

WHERE THE WORLD SEES HERO, I SEE EGO. I SEE RIGHTEOUSNESS!



YOU... YOU THINK YOU'RE BETTER THAN ME! THAN US!



I... I NEVER SAID I WAS.

WHY DO I ALWAYS FEEL LIKE WE LIVE ON DIFFERENT PLANETS?



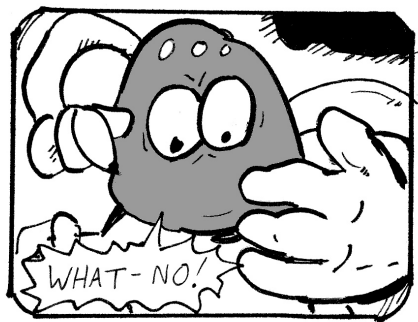
ENOUGH CHATTER! ANY FINAL THOUGHTS, NEMESIS?



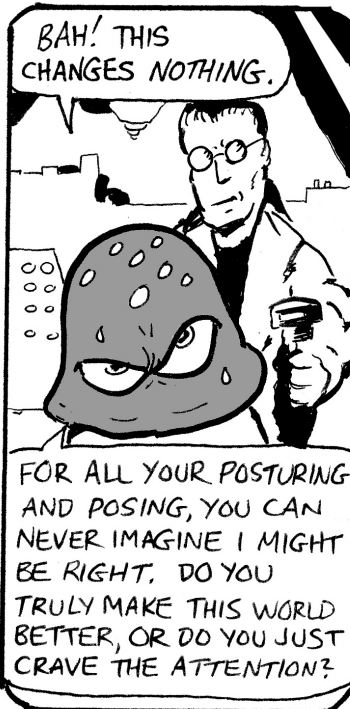
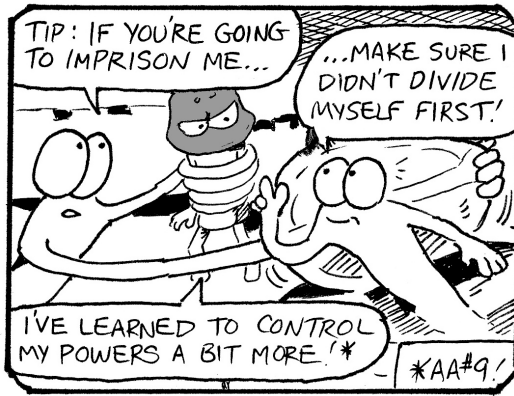
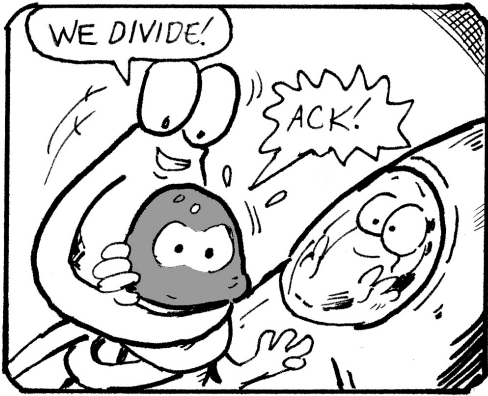
JUST ONE, REALLY.

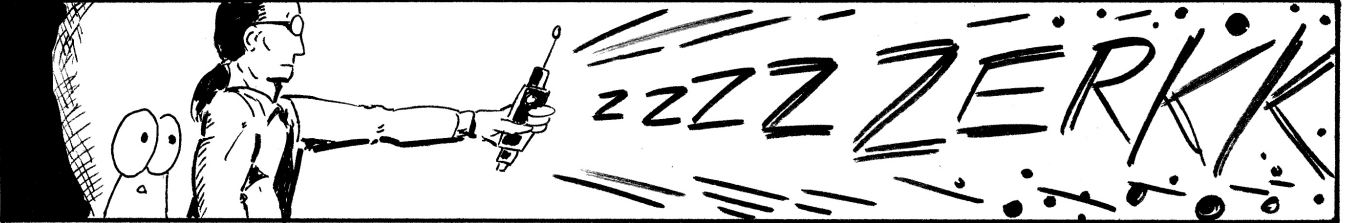
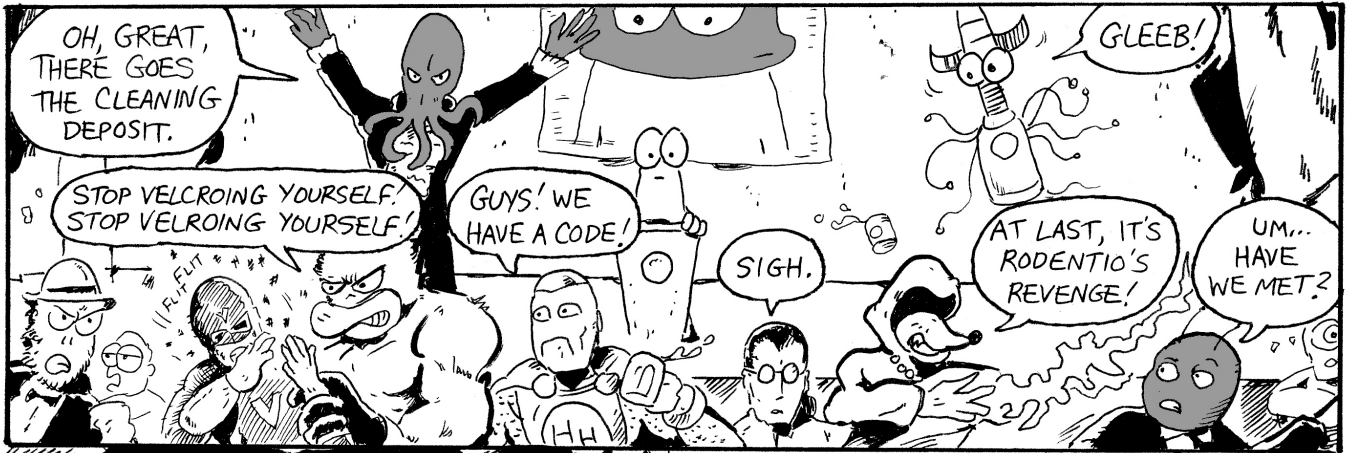


WHAT DO AMOEBAS DO BEST?



WHAT-NO!







I GUESS WE'RE SUPPOSED TO BE TELLING PEOPLE ABOUT WHAT KIND OF PERSON THE ASBESTOS MUSHROOM WAS.

THE VERY FIRST TIME I MET HIM, HE WAS GOING TO KILL ME.

I WAS A FIRST-YEAR RESIDENT DOCTOR WHO WAS ALREADY KIND OF BORED WITH THE JOB.



I WORE SPIKED HAIR, MADE GADGETS AND WENT TO PUNK SHOWS. I WAS YOUNG AND I WANTED TO MAKE MY MARK.



IN ONE OF PROMETHEUS' FIRST ENCOUNTERS WITH THE 'SHROOM, HE WAS SENT TO MY HOSPITAL.

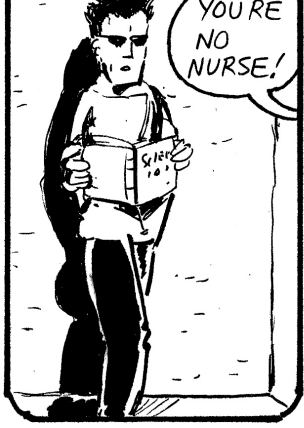


IT WAS THE MOST EXCITEMENT IN WEEKS. HE HAD A BODYGUARD AND EVERYTHING. I WANTED TO BE A PART OF THE ACTION.

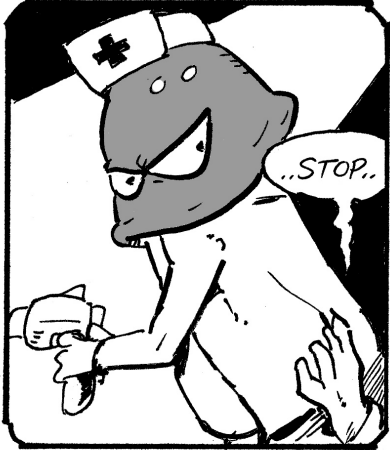
MOSTLY, THAT MEANT STANDING AROUND IN A STAIRWELL TRYING TO LOOK BUSY.

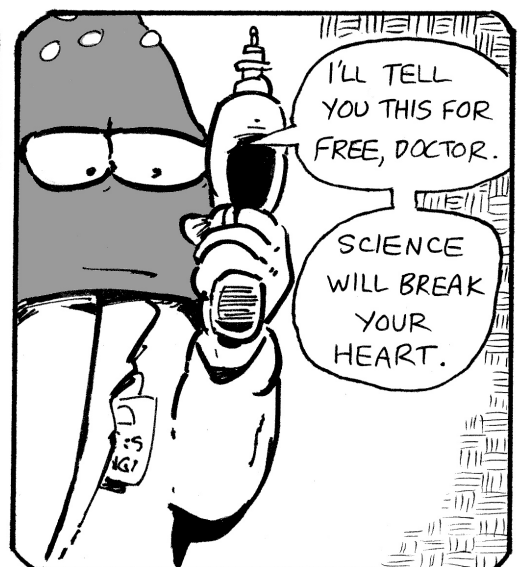
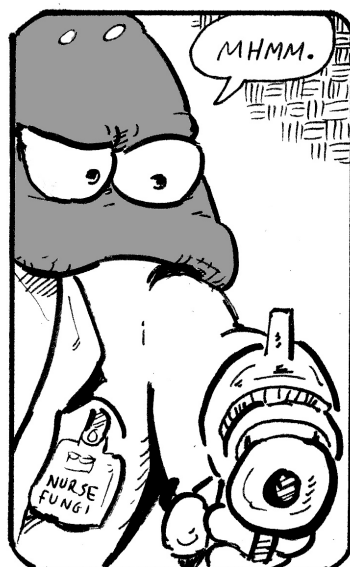
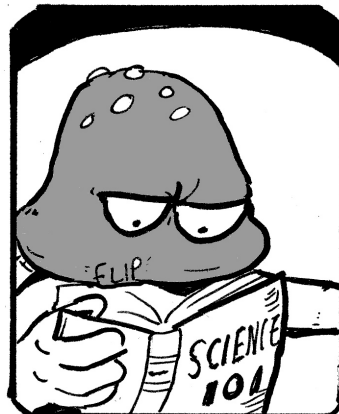
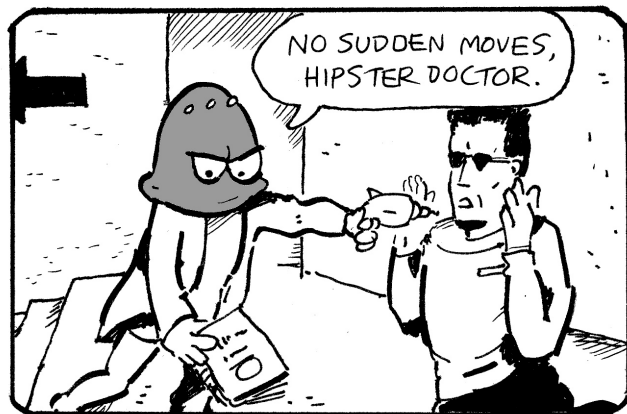


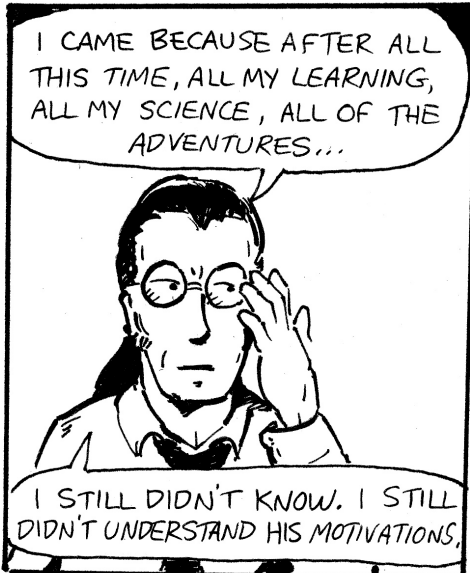
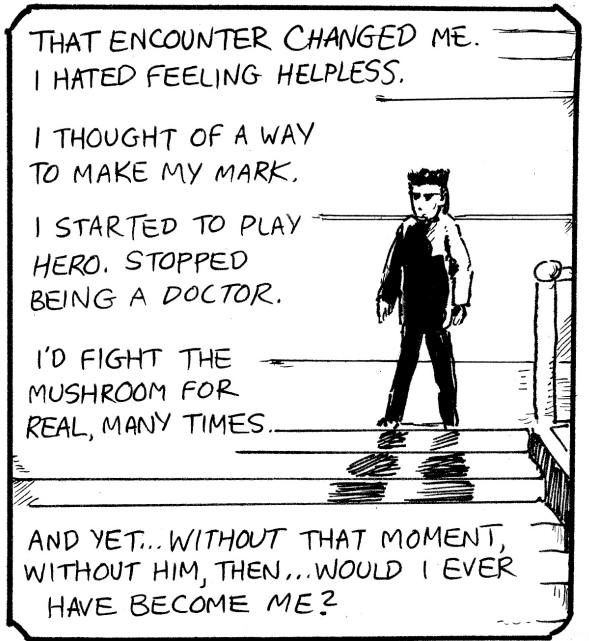
HEY!

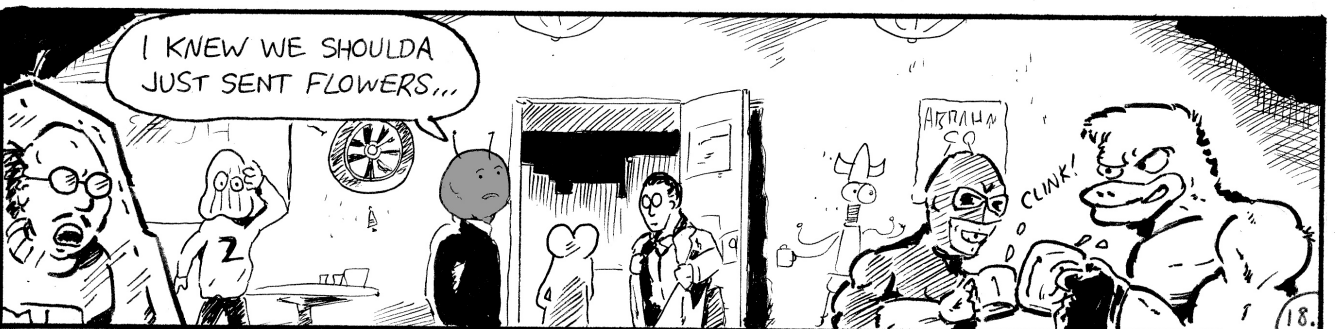
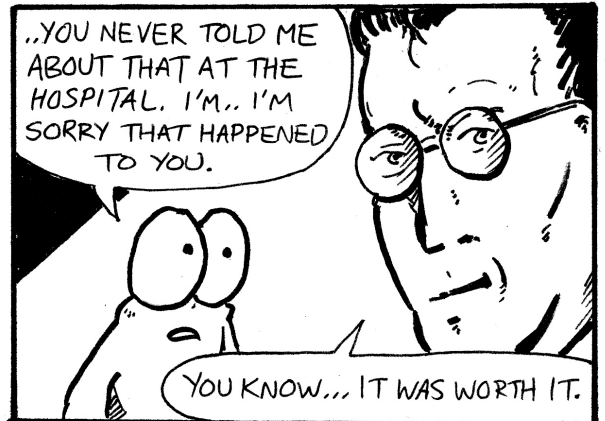
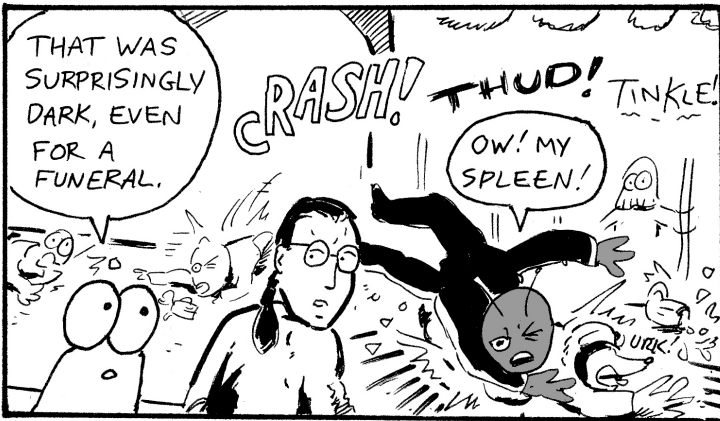
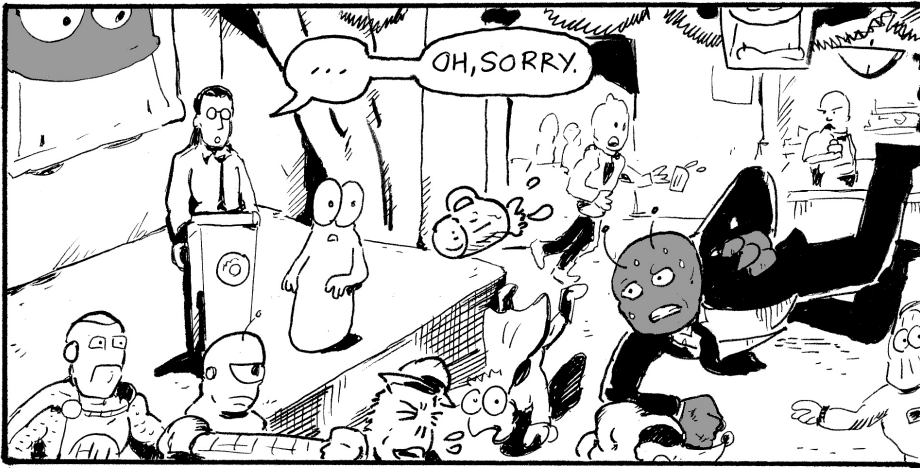


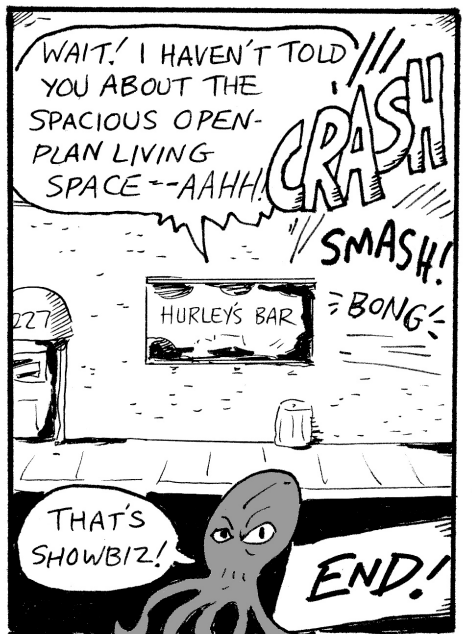
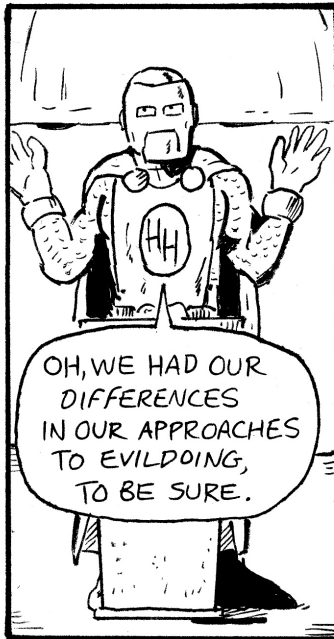
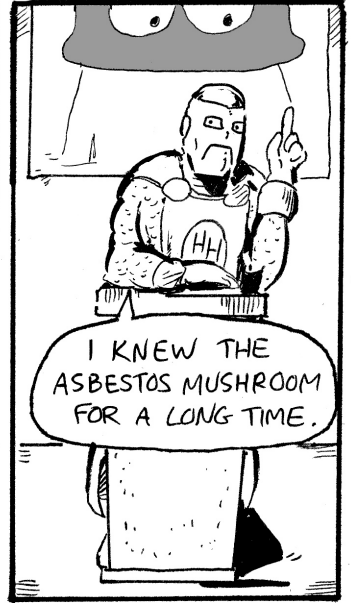
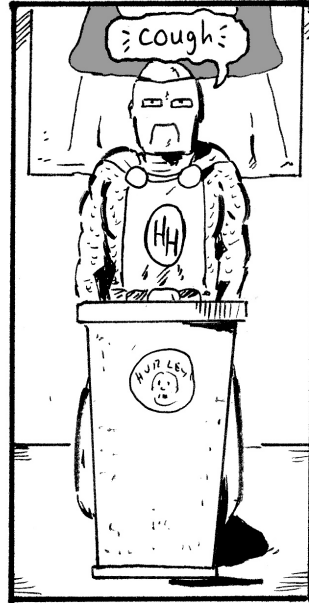
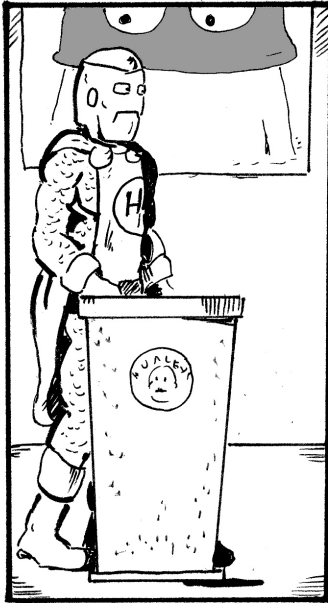
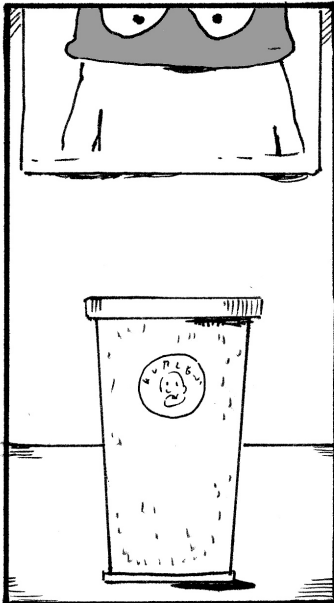
..RAZZIN' FRAZZIN'..











The Slimeball Speaks

email: dirganik@gmail.com • amoebaadventures.com • facebook.com/amoebaadventures

This issue: Someone DIES.

The **Asbestos Mushroom** has been here pretty much from the beginning (see Behind The Story below), and it's a bit sad to have him ride off into the sunset this issue. Still, even if this is his final appearance in *Amoeba Adventures*, at least he goes out with a fittingly fungi bit of flair!

I started drawing this issue in a strange place - a New Zealand government Managed Isolation Quarantine hotel in Christchurch, where I had to stay for 10 days alone in late January after returning home from my first trip back to America in two years. While I got occasionally poked and prodded and tested for Covid-19 (all negative, praise be), I sketched out the first third or so of this issue and mapped out the rest. When you're alone in a hotel room, what better use of your time than drawing comics, really?

The tumult of the last year or two - not just global, but also on a personal scale in many ways - probably leaked into the writing of this issue a bit again. The last couple of years have certainly made all of our lives seem a little more fragile. I wondered what makes a person, and what shapes who they're perceived to be. As the story you've (hopefully) just read shows, there's no easy answer to that question.

I also need to give special thanks to **Rick Bradford's Poopsheet zine**, which had very kind things to say about #30, and small press legends **Steve Keeter** and **Larned Justin**, who featured last issue on their YouTube small press review show late last year - you can check out that episode online at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ed9CG3ZAVpM>. Thanks, gents! See you around December for #32!

Behind the story

Who doesn't love a villain? The bizarre villains of the *Amoeba Adventures* world have always been some of my favourite characters, from the bumbling Herr Heinous to the genuinely scary Dark One.

The **Asbestos Mushroom** has always been my favourite *Amoeba* villain to write, and perhaps the strangest. He first appeared way, way back in the *Amoeba Adventures* precursor 1986's *Prometheus* #2, which I wrote and drew in between boring lectures in high school classes.

His name came from some sort of twisted homage to / parody of Bob Burden's fantastic surreal independent comics character, the **Flaming Carrot**, who I was hugely inspired by in creating my own 'toons.

(It's hard to say years and years later, but I guess I thought if there's a Flaming Carrot, there must be an Asbestos Mushroom out there somewhere in the multiverse to counterbalance him?)

The raving, looney evil Mushroom was a regular nemesis to *Prometheus* and friends all through the 1990-1998 run of *Amoeba Adventures*, popping up in #5 to



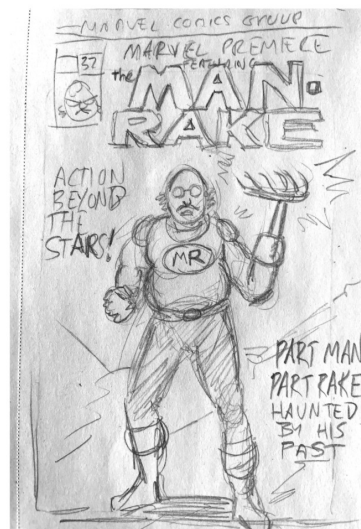
Clockwise from top, *Amoeba Adventures* #5, *Prometheus* #2, *Amoeba Adventures* #18.

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attack them on the David Letterman show (!) and to attack them again in #18-19 with a bunch of miniature mushroombots and a convoluted plot involving action figures stuffed with heroin (!!).



He was always colorfully one-note and great fun to write rage-filled monologues for, and it seemed appropriate to bring him back for one last hurrah in the "new" *Amoeba Adventures*, and maybe, just this once, dig a little deeper into who he was and what made him tick. Vale, Asbestos Mushroom - you might've been a bad guy, but you were good fun to write and draw.



Oh, and for the perverse reader who always asks - no, he wasn't designed intentionally as a phallic symbol. He's a mushroom, darn it. They just look that way.

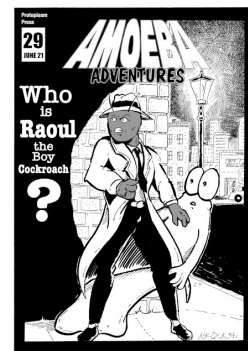
There's a few other deep-dives among the villains in this issue. Herr Heinous, of course, has been around since the beginning, popping up in #1-3, #12, #13, #20 and #27 as my neurotic answer to Doctor Doom, and my second-favourite foe to write.

Velcroman made his extremely brief and ineffective debut back in *Amoeba Adventures* #4, while Doctor Terrapin appeared for all of one page in his original form back in 1987's *Prometheus* #4, and more than three decades later, I thought it'd be fun to resurrect this malevolent turtle. Every one of these goofy old comics of mine are available for FREE download over on amoebaadventures.com!

Clockwise from top left, Herr Heinous, *Amoeba Adventures* #2; Velcroman, *Amoeba Adventures* #4; The Man-Rake's great lost solo adventure, from sketchbook; Doctor Terrapin, from 1987's *Prometheus* #4.

The Man-Rake, The Mallard and most of the other villains who pop up this issue are all new. I think the Man-Rake deserves a comic all of his own at some point, to be honest.

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All of the 1990s issues of *Amoeba Adventures* have been uploaded to the cybersphere as FREE PDF downloads. Check out the complete stories of *Prometheus*, *Rambunny* and the gang. All 31 issues of *Amoeba Adventures*, special issues and solo tales and much more! Most issues also feature bonus rare art, notes and more from back in the day.

