

# OSTRICH CYCLES.

CARL ANTONOWICZ







A woman came into my office today for her yearly check-up. She's been having issues with her insurance company. When I asked her what the problem was, she told me that she's missed her last eight monthly payments. And she doesn't understand why she has no copy on her prescriptions.

She was wearing a huge, ridiculous, obscene amount of Chanel No. 5. I could smell her when she walked in the front door, and I started choking on the thick, cloyingly sweet odor that completely overpowered everything around. My eyes watered as I approached the room where this thirty-something soccermom was waiting to be examined. I THOUGHT I WAS TO VOMIT WHEN I OPENED THE DOOR, THE SMELL WAS SO INTENSE, ABSOLUTELY ~~PUTRID~~. I performed her physical as best I could, considering her perfume made me gag every five or six seconds.

Every day it becomes clearer and clearer to me that I need to get out of this place. I wasn't made for this city, this state, this country, anything. The air isn't right, or maybe the light's wrong, or maybe it's the people or the architecture. I don't feel any connection to this place anymore. Something needs to change or I'm not going to be able to force myself to care about these selfish, ugly, blind, beautiful creatures anymore. I'm so CLOSE to giving up entirely, so close to just abandoning the clinic and retiring. God knows I've earned it. Something keeps forcing me out of bed everyday, something forces me to hold on to this idea that, yes, maybe I CAN save these people, that maybe I HAVE TO because nobody else will.

Her perfume lingered in the clinic until we closed. Rose and Lisa couldn't smell it, but maybe that's because their cigarettes have deadened their senses enough that they can't smell anything anymore. CHANEL NO. 5 Embedded in the carpet, the wallpaper, and they can't smell it.

The woman had an enlarged cyst in her left breast. I sent her over to doctor Pickering at General. I just wanted her gone.

I watched a young man on the sidewalk listening to his walkman today. I don't know why I watched him above the hundreds of other pedestrians, maybe his shiny headphones or the fact that he walked to the beat of the rap music that must have been deafening him. I could hear it from five feet away as I watched him.

He just strolled along, immersed in his music completely oblivious to everyone around him. How nice that must be, to be able to completely immerse oneself in something else, something metered and meaningless, something easy.

I want that escape. I want to just completely surrender to something and let it fill me, let it devour me completely and leave nothing behind, I WANT THE WORLD AND ALL ITS SICKNESS, ALL ITS CONTRADICTION AND STUPIDITY TO JUST FALL AWAY

So I don't have to worry about anybody who won't return the favor or who doesn't want to be helped. Or anybody who's just too stupid to take care of themselves.

I saw a bum wearing a watch today. I caught myself wondering, "What's next, a hobo with a cell phone?" Maybe those old men were wrong when they decided all men were created equal. Or maybe it's just a partial truth. Maybe all men are CREATED equal, but are arbitrarily BROKEN throughout their lives. And some become doctors, some become derelicts with ROLEXES, some become DRUG DEALERS OR LAWYERS.

Maybe some turn into bitter old men who've seen too much ugliness.

The clinic was busy today. A man came in to get his prostate examined. It was his fortieth birthday. I wished him many happy returns and shoved my fingers in his rectum. I don't exactly relish my work anymore—it's been forty years, after all. Maybe my career needs a finger up its ass, too. There are days when I quite sincerely wish my patients everlasting life, and then there are days I'd like them all to explode, it seems the latter are becoming more and more prevalent, maybe I'm just getting old.

01-06

I rode the subway into the clinic today. There was something gorgeous in the way the other passengers flowed in and out at each stop that made me almost cry every time the doors opened. I would have stayed in the train car all day if it weren't for the fact that I had patients to attend to.

A pregnant woman came in today. She's just starting to show, and she smokes a pack of Camels a day. I told her when she came for her initial consultation a month ago that she needed to quit, or at least to cut back significantly while she was carrying the child (whose name, she has decided, will be Ashley regardless of sex) but I could smell that she didn't heed my warnings.

Her child will be deformed and she will more likely than not blame little Ashley for his or her extra toes.

At least the stink of her cigarettes was almost enough to mask the lingering odor of CHANEL NO. 5 that seems to have been permanently embedded in the carpets. I'm calling a steamcleaning service on Monday.

HER IRRESPONSIBILITY INFURIATES ME. as usual, she was too stupid to realize that her actions extend beyond HER and will adversely effect the life of her UNBORN CHILD

She smoked two of her assisted suicide sticks outside THE WAITING ROOM AND LEFT THE BUTTS ON THE PAVEMENT.

This woman shall not have been allowed to breed.

THE WORLD  
IS NOISY.  
GRANDPA SAYS.



IT'S HARD  
TO TELL WHO'S  
SAYING WHAT.



IT'S EASY TO  
SEE HOW  
PEOPLE CAN GET  
SO CONFUSED.

MOM AND DAD  
GOT CONFUSED,  
TOO.

THEY DIDN'T  
LOVE ME,  
THEY LOVED  
THEIR JOBS  
MORE.

THEY DIDN'T  
HAVE TIME FOR  
ME, SO GRANDPA  
TOOK ME AWAY.

GRANDPA SAYS  
HE WON'T EVER  
LET HIMSELF  
DO THAT.

HE'S BEEN  
AROUND A LOT  
LONGER THAN  
THEY HAVE,  
AND HE KNOWS  
BETTER.

PEOPLE  
ARE MUCH MORE  
IMPORTANT.



GRANDPA SAYS PEOPLE CAN SEE WHEN THEY'RE BABIES, BUT THEIR HEADS GET SHOVED IN THE DIRT WHEN THEY GET OLD ENOUGH TO WANT THINGS.

AND THEN THEY BECOME JUST LIKE EVERYBODY ELSE.

WHICH ONE?

YOU CHOOSE.

EXCUSE ME,  
MA'AM?

I CAN'T FIND  
MY GRANDPA!

06-06

I changed my regimen this morning. Instead of the usual one hundred pushups and one hundred sit-ups, I decided to double that and push for two hundred of each. Ha! If the other boys on the high school football team saw me now, they'd probably eat their hats.

Come to think of it, they're probably all dead by now. God! When did I become an old man? It's such a strange situation. I wake up one morning and suddenly I have aches in my joints, an approaching retirement, and probably an enlarged prostate. Maybe I should go and get that checked—though maybe I should wait till my birthday to go to Paul Brabek's. I could have him wish me a happy retirement and shove his cigars in my ass. Then maybe he could go home and put the used gloves on his mantle as a reminder of how he became the leading practitioner in the town.

I am going to visit James and Emily tomorrow. It's been far too long since I've seen ~~Bonnie~~ ~~Emily~~. She remains one of sweetest, brightest little girls I have ever met. It's a shame that her amazing awareness skipped a generation—even at six years old, ~~she~~ is far more aware of the world around her than James could ever hope to be. Emily is a complete wash.

I don't mean to dismiss them completely. James is a wonderful, if slightly absent father, and Emily is a possible human being. I just worry that ~~Bonnie~~ she doesn't get the attention from them that she deserves—her parents might be too busy trying to build a future for themselves. I'd

like to be able to see them more often, but...

Well, all the excuses I can come up with are utterly meaningless. I need to spend more time out there.

USED

06/08

James asked me when I was going to retire yesterday. I told him it was none of his business, that I'd quit the clinic when I was GOOD & READY. I'd hoped that Sarah and I had raised him a little better than to ask his father when he A BIT MORE TACT than to ask his father when he was going to LAY DOWN AND DIE.

I'm supposed to go gracefully, to age with some kind of realistic dignity, to just give up at some point. I'm NOT READY to BE TUCKED AWAY IN SOME FILING CABINET. NURSING HOME FILLED WITH THE SAME PISS-STINKING SENILE, DEFENSELESS GERIATRICS that I used to pity in Med School. I'm not about to bow down to History so that my son the attorney can rest his pampered head a little easier on his Indian silk pillow. I've GOT MORE TO GIVE. I'm still the best general practitioner in the City, and the fact that my Seventy-fifth birthday is in two weeks has no effect whatsoever on that. It's not as though I'm doing BRAIN TRANSPLANT either - I'm a GENERAL PRACTITIONER, FOR CRISAKES! People come to me with SORE THROATS and WARTS, for PHYSICALS. Sure, periodically somebody will come in for an exam, and I'll discover a tumor and refer them to BLAINE PICKERING, BUT I'M NOT OPERATING ON THEM.

What kind of world am I living in where my own son can ask me when I'm going to SURRENDER to the inevitable? Is IT SO HARD TO BE CONSIDERATE OF THE ONES WHO TAUGHT YOU EVERYTHING? Is he too busy trying to build a future trying to get ahead that everyone else BECOMES AN OBJECT, a commodity to be dispensed with?

Now, I wonder - when she decides it's time for James to RETIRE, will she ask him to move into a STERILE ENVIRONMENT so she doesn't have to worry about him or think about her own mortality?

06/10

James called me today and apologised. I don't think he really meant it - Most likely Emily pressured him IN TO IT. funny that her rapidity concealed a greater sensitivity than James' intelligence and law degree. She reminds me a little of Sarah from ~~Time~~ to time in her unfailing humanity.

I spoke with [REDACTED] as well. She asked when I was going to come visit again. Before James and I fought on Saturday, I took her to the zoo, where we spent an hour or more watching the ostriches. They're stupid, ugly birds, but [REDACTED] just adores them. As a matter of fact, another's birthday presents of those plastic manikins - we call BARBIES (I read somewhere that if Barbie were a real living person, she'd be over seven feet tall with a three-inch waist and D-Cup breasts - sickening) and an assortment of goodies to accompany her (plastic house complete with plastic boyfriend AND A PLASTIC MEALS FOR HER PLASTIC BOYFRIEND AND A PLASTIC PINK CONVERTABLE SO THEY CAN DRIVE UP TO LOVER'S LANE AND MASH THEIR PLASTIC FACES AND GRIT IT ALL TOGETHER - JUST LIKE REAL LIFE) HAVE BEEN MOSTLY IGNORED IN FAVOR of the plush ostrich I gave her. I'm glad she's MANAGED NOT TO GIVE IN to the BUY/SELL role model that her unthinking father has provided for her. Perhaps I'll go back out there this weekend, maybe take [REDACTED] to the library. I'm fairly certain that the library WOULD NEVER OCCUR to James OR Emily as an option. It's not clear whether [REDACTED] enjoys

feeling yet or not. Here's hoping that James' naivete and complacency hasn't spoiled his daughter's interest in the world around her to the extent that printed words hold no interest or content aside from the transmission of information. Intentional information, anyway.

GRANDPA SAYS THERE'S  
A HUM EVERYWHERE.  
I CAN'T HEAR IT  
BECAUSE I'M TOO YOUNG.

BUT THE GROWNUPS  
CAN HEAR IT.



GRANDPA WAS  
TOO SMART  
FOR THEM  
THOUGH, AND  
HE GOT AWAY.



WHICH IS  
GOOD, BECAUSE  
I LOVE MY  
GRANDPA.

GRANDPA SAYS  
PEOPLE COME HERE  
BECAUSE THE HUM  
HAS MESSAGES  
IN IT.

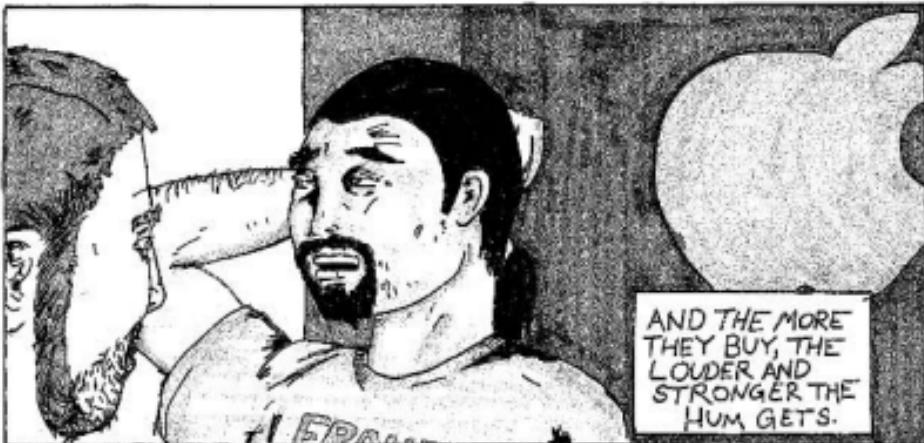


THE HUM TELLS  
THEM TO GO  
AND BUY THINGS  
THEY DON'T NEED.

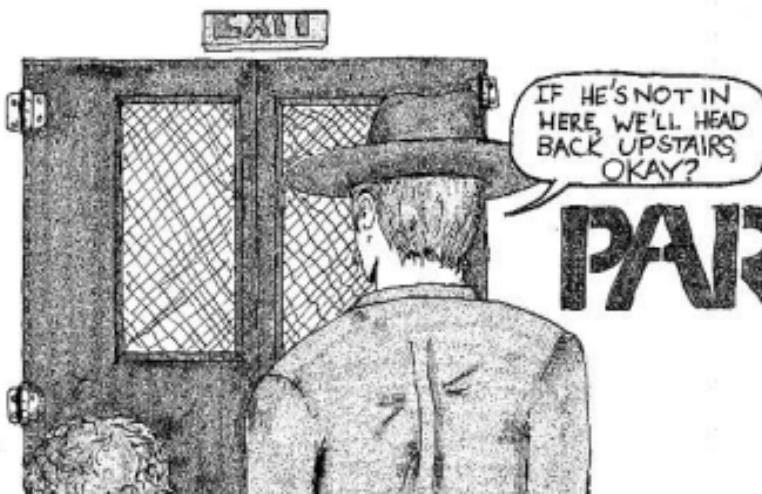


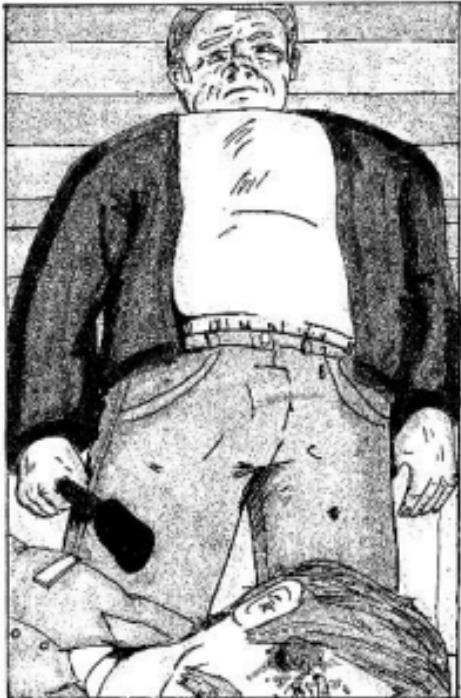
## EN PROVENANCE

Faster, sleeker  
goats.





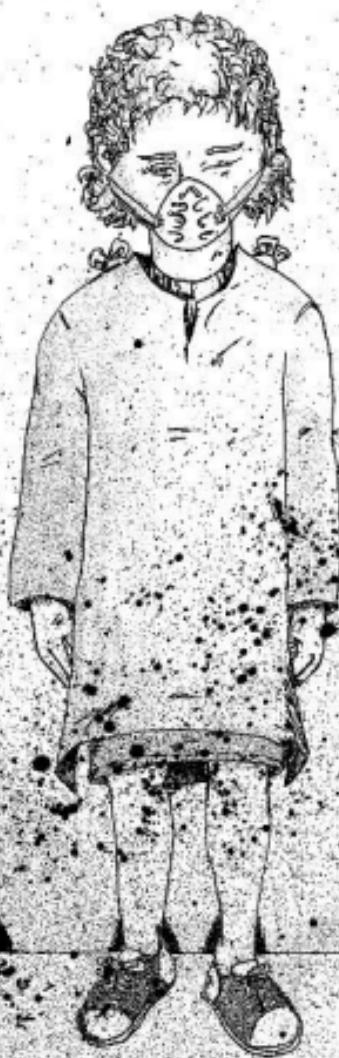


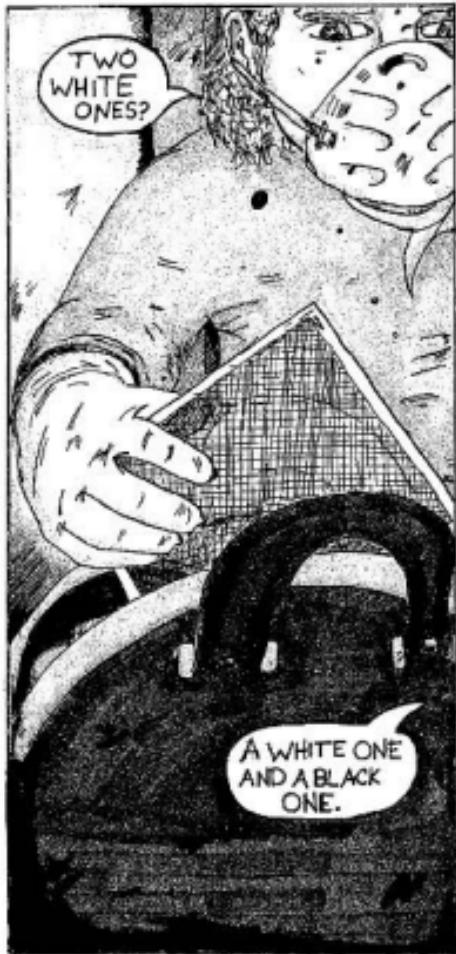


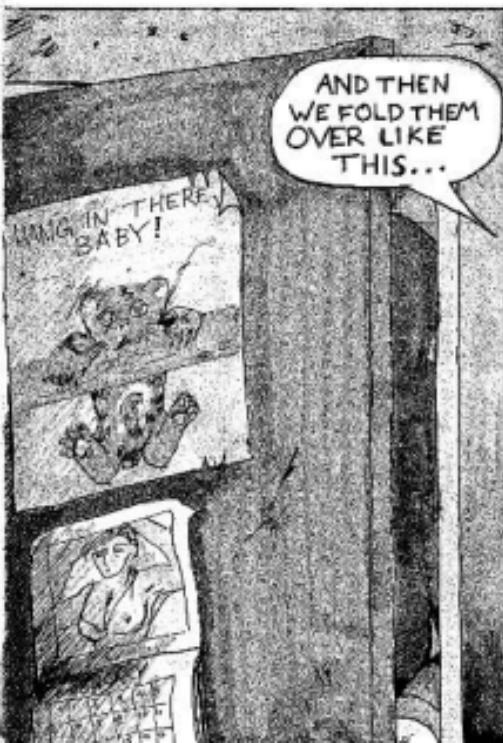


INCE











I TOOK ~~B~~ TO THE LIBRARY TODAY WHILE  
OFF IN THE CHILDREN'S SECTION BROWNSTEIN. I WENT  
ND DISREGARDING THE ASSORTED KIDS' SCIENCE  
ZEN THRILLERS I WAS PAGING THROUGH SOME  
WORK OF POLITICAL THEORY - I THINK IT WAS  
MANUFACTURING CONSENT BY CHOMSKY BUT IT  
COULD HAVE BEEN ANYTHING ELSE. CORPORATOCRACY. AND  
HUM breached my ears but I paid it no mind. I WENT  
TO THE XEROX MACHINE TO MAKE SOME COPIES OF  
AN INTERESTING PAGE - A BOY WAS AT THE NEARBY  
COKE MACHINE BUYING A SPRITE OR SOME OTHER  
MANI FACURED TOOTHROT, AND THE HUM I NOTICED  
GOT LOUDER AS I APPROACHED, SOUNDING  
SOMEWHERE BETWEEN A MECHANICAL DREW A BREATH  
AND A CENTRAL HEATING SYSTEM. THE BOY GOT  
HIS SUGAR WATER AND WALKED OFF CARRYING  
THE HUM WITH HIM. I FOLLOWED AFTER A FEW  
MINUTES ONLY TO DISCOVER THAT IT WAS HE WHO  
AS EMITTING THIS NOISE. HE EVENTUALLY  
NOTICED ME, BUT THE HUMMING DID NOT CEASE. I ASKED  
HIM DIRECTLY TO STOP HUMMING, BUT HE SAID  
HE WASN'T.  
Well, things escalated into a shouting match - he called  
ME A STUPID OLD ASSHOLE, AND EVENTUALLY SOME LIBRARY  
EMPLOYEES CAME AND ASKED ME TO LEAVE. I WANTS  
TO TRY TO COMPLY WITH THEIR WISHES WHEN I NOTICED THEY  
WERE HUMMING TOO - ENTIRELY THEY MADE  
ME LEAVE, BUT I FEEL

I YES DISCOVERED SOMETHING  
SOMETHING TELLING  
ABOUT THE APPARATUS THAT  
SURROUNDS US, THAT WE'VE  
CREATED TO HOLD OUR HANDS THROUGH  
LIFE, THAT HIDES BEHIND THE  
WALLS AND IN THE WIRES.

75/38?

IT ALL HAPPENED  
OR A REASON—  
THE CIGARETTES, THE  
PERFUME, THE BIRTHDAY,  
PROSTATE EXAM, THE  
PRESSURE TO RETIRE

AND FINALLY, THE HUM IN THE  
HEART—it's become  
CLEAR to me now. IT'S  
THE DEATHKNOCK OF THE APPARATUS.  
IT'S CALLING OUT TO ME TO  
FEASE ITS WAY INTO THE NEXT  
LIFE. ODD THAT IT WOULD  
HAVE CHOSEN A SIMPLE COUNTRY  
DOCTOR like myself, but  
WHO BETTER? I DON'T RELY  
ON THESE GEARS, ON THE HUM,  
ON THE WIRES IN THE WALLS—I  
DON'T ON THE PEOPLE, LOATHSOME  
THOUGH THEY MAY BE, FOR MY  
DEATH. THE APPARATUS CHOSE  
ME TO BE ITS EXECUTIONER.  
THE QUESTION REMAINS, HOWEVER,  
CAN THIS BE ACHIEVED? WHAT  
AM I TO DO THAT HAS NOT BEEN  
TRIED, TESTED, AND FOUND  
WANTING? AND WILL I LIVE  
LONG ENOUGH TO TOPPLE  
THIS HORRENDOUS, CANCEROUS,  
WHEEZING, LEVIATHAN  
BEFORE MY OLD BODY  
SHUTS DOWN ON ME?

IS THERE  
• TIME OR LIFE  
• ENOUGH IN  
THESE OLD BONES  
TO FINISH  
WHAT I KNOW  
MAY BE  
DONE?

Now that I'm AWAKE - FULLY COGNIZANT

of the world around me  
the effect of my actions.  
on it I've decided to erase  
myself as fully as I possibly  
can. I've closed my bank  
accounts and destroyed  
all my forms of identification.  
10% of my possessions have  
been sold, and I've moved out of  
my house and into a two room  
apartment above a pawn shop.  
The last few months nothing of mine  
but TIME I have  
avoided the  
one true  
the deepest



now  
what appears  
might do  
perhaps when the Apparatus finally does  
crumble, language and the written word  
will fall with it leaving this world as it was before  
the fall of Babel - IDYLIC, UNIFIED, full of well-  
BEING. HISTORY AT AN END AT LAST. Capital "H" mind  
you. H as in HITLER, H as in H-bomb, H as in Hatred.  
AN END TO ALL IN EQUITY, AN END TO ALL PAIN,  
AN END TO ALL SUFFERING. THE Apparatus  
is the reason, and through the systematic  
reprogramming of the populace, a REPROGRAMMING  
that will BLOCK the base elements of HUMAN  
NATURE instead of trying to PROFIT FROM THEM,  
NOT forbidding them, merely SCREENING THEM  
OUT AND ELIMINATING THEM from our NORMAL  
processes. No More billboards advertising  
MIXED DATING GIRLS to old businessmen  
AGED ENOUGH to be their fathers.  
No more CHILDREN IGNORED  
FOR THE SAKE OF PROGRESS.

I SAW MYSELF ON TV TODAY. I POINTED AND TRIED TO TELL GRANDPA, BUT HE TOLD ME TO BE QUIET.

I DIDN'T LIKE THAT MUCH, BUT GRANDPAS BEEN REALLY TIRED.

HE SAYS WE NEED TO STAY QUIET FOR A WHILE SO THE THOUGHT POLICE WILL STOP LOOKING FOR US.

HE SAYS NOBODY UNDERSTANDS WE'RE TRYING TO SAVE THEM FROM THEMSELVES.

EVERYBODY THINKS WE'RE DOING SOMETHING WRONG.

I DIDN'T THINK PEOPLE WERE SO STUPID.

IF THE THOUGHT POLICE  
CATCH US, THEY'LL TAKE  
ME AWAY FROM GRANDPA.  
AND THEY'LL PUT GRANDPA  
AWAY SOMEWHERE TO  
REPROGRAM HIM.

THEY'LL SEND ME BACK  
TO MY MOM AND DAD,  
WHO DON'T LOVE ME  
ANYMORE. THEY JUST  
LOVE THINGS.

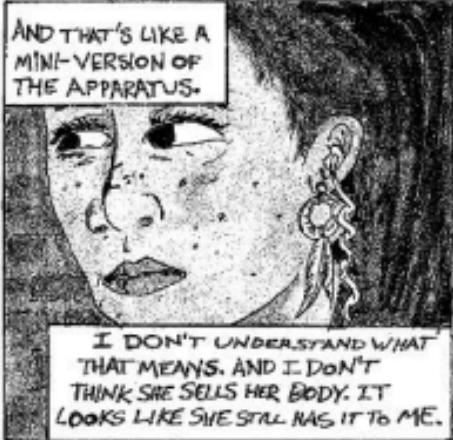


WHICH WOULD BE BAD,  
BECAUSE I LOVE MY  
GRANDPA, I DO.



THERE ARE WOMEN LIKE  
THIS EVERYWHERE.  
GRANDPA SAYS THEY  
SELL THEIR BODIES SO  
THEY CAN GET MONEY  
TO BUY MORE THINGS.

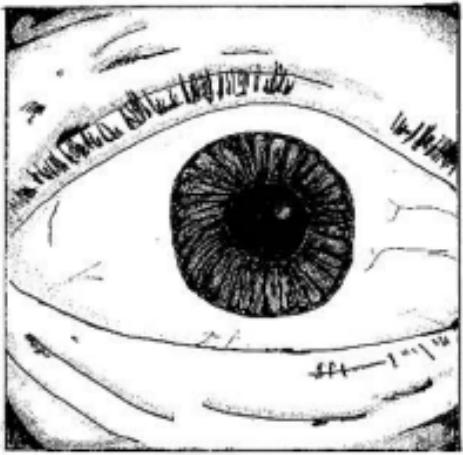
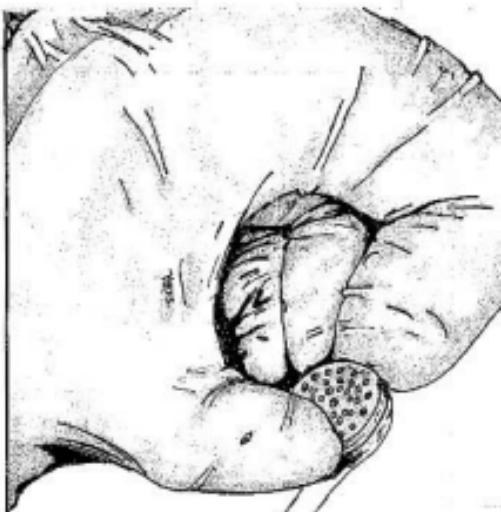
AND THAT'S LIKE A  
MINI-VERSION OF  
THE APPARATUS.



I DON'T UNDERSTAND WHAT  
THAT MEANS. AND I DON'T  
THINK SHE SELLS HER BODY. IT  
LOOKS LIKE SHE STILL HAS IT TO ME.







WE NEED  
TO GO.  
NOW!

BUT  
GRANDPA—

A wavy line connects two speech bubbles. The first bubble contains the text "WE NEED TO GO. NOW!". The second bubble contains the text "BUT GRANDPA—".



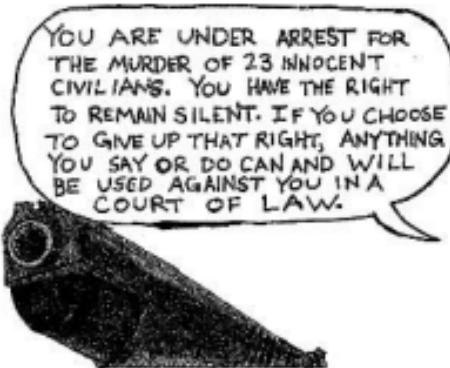
PUT YOUR HANDS WHERE I CAN SEE THEM!

Run when I count to three.



DON'T MOVE OR WE'LL SHOOT!

One.



YOU ARE UNDER ARREST FOR THE MURDER OF 23 INNOCENT CIVILIANS. YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO REMAIN SILENT. IF YOU CHOOSE TO GIVE UP THAT RIGHT, ANYTHING YOU SAY OR DO CAN AND WILL BE USED AGAINST YOU IN A COURT OF LAW.

(Two.)



YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO SPEAK TO AN ATTORNEY, AND TO HAVE AN ATTORNEY PRESENT DURING ANY QUESTIONING. IF YOU CANNOT AFFORD AN ATTORNEY, ONE WILL BE PROVIDED FOR YOU AT GOVERNMENT EXPENSE.

THREE!



They came for me today as I  
knew they would.

At about 3:00PM on the fifth shift

of surveillance on my old house, two  
blue and white police cars pulled up in front  
of my house. They discharged their instruments  
of societal control, who proceeded to break down  
my front door and examine the interior of my  
now vacant domicile. I finished moving my  
possessions from the house yesterday night knowing

that after three weeks of zero communication  
the outside, the Apparatus the

Immune System would send its antibodies to the  
Sake of my own physical comfort.

After four hours and thirty five minutes  
and questioning the neighbors (who I made  
nothing by doing all my moving in the  
morning—not that the HUM would have allowed them  
loose) I was forced to wonder what the crazy people next  
door were doing, or even to tear themselves away from  
the steady advertising drip forced optically into their  
neural patterns, the lead, syrupy flavor of invento-  
ry (continuously injected by every means into  
their thought processes) the eight police aben-  
tured their search and file their reports,  
having failed to locate the anomaly. It's  
so you is real and unrealistic of the human race to  
simply assume that everyone functioning within  
the apparatus will operate in perfect accordance  
with the format prescribed to us—You there, you  
are to be an arm, you are to be a palm, you  
are to be an index finger and any derivation  
from or dereliction of your preassigned duties  
will result in your termination.

The first batch of screens are  
complete. Their effects I am  
certain, will be as desired.

There will be a period of time  
2-3 days after the devices are placed

while the subject's brain formats the  
program into a new  
not to last any longer than 12 hours  
and one night a few maxima-

FROM JAMES  
HAVE GONE AND RESCUED  
AND HIS EMPTY WIFE  
KNEW THEY WONT  
THE APPARATUS HAS  
EVER UN  
AT LEAST NOT UN  
HUMMED ITS LAST PI  
AMBITION TO POISON  
THIS KIND OF BEHAVIOR  
IN OUR GUTS OR D  
GORGED SOUS DTA  
ENED AND KILLED  
D INNOCEN

COMMIT THEM.  
GENERAL TESTS, THIS GENERATION  
IS 95% EFFECTIVE, BUT  
95% IS TRUTH  
SELECTS FOR  
SUBJECTS FOR  
A NEW DOSE OF  
SELECTING AND  
TESTS, A new dose of  
some  
L No. 5  
ARETIES  
MONTHS  
515, I  
IMAGINE  
COMPREHEND  
WITH I IMAGINE  
WITH HAIRLESS  
AWFUL STUPID

PEANUTS - The More You Eat  
AND THE MORE YOU EAT  
becomes that I can't eat  
clear

CASE  
SECURE

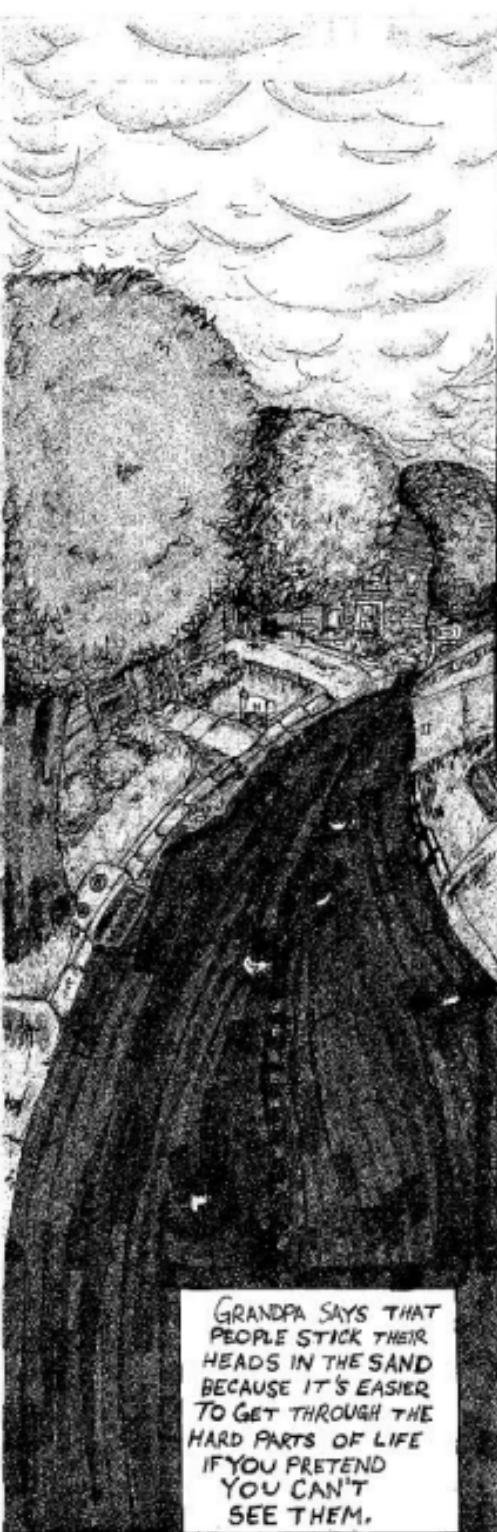
TRUTH

UB

US



AM 515



GRANDPA SAYS THAT  
PEOPLE STICK THEIR  
HEADS IN THE SAND  
BECAUSE IT'S EASIER  
TO GET THROUGH THE  
HARD PARTS OF LIFE  
IF YOU PRETEND  
YOU CAN'T  
SEE THEM.



HE SAYS THAT IF  
YOU CAN'T SEE IT,  
IT'LL PROBABLY HURT  
YOU EVEN MORE, LIKE  
THE HUM.



I SAW AN OSTRICH  
AT THE ZOO ONCE.  
THEY'RE PRETTY  
UGLY.



DADDY SAYS THEY  
PUT THEIR HEADS IN  
THE GROUND BE-  
CAUSE THEY'RE JUST  
DUMB ANIMALS AND  
THEY'RE SCARED OF  
US. THEY'RE TOO  
STUPID TO REALIZE  
WE'RE STILL THERE.

OSTRICHES LIVE IN AFRICA,  
BUT THEY'RE FARMED ALL  
OVER THE WORLD FOR  
THEIR EGGS AND THEIR  
MEAT AND THEIR FEATHERS.



I READ THE  
SIGN BY THE  
OSTRICHES AT  
THE ZOO.



IT SAID THEY AREN'T  
ACTUALLY PUTTING  
THEIR HEADS IN THE  
GROUND.

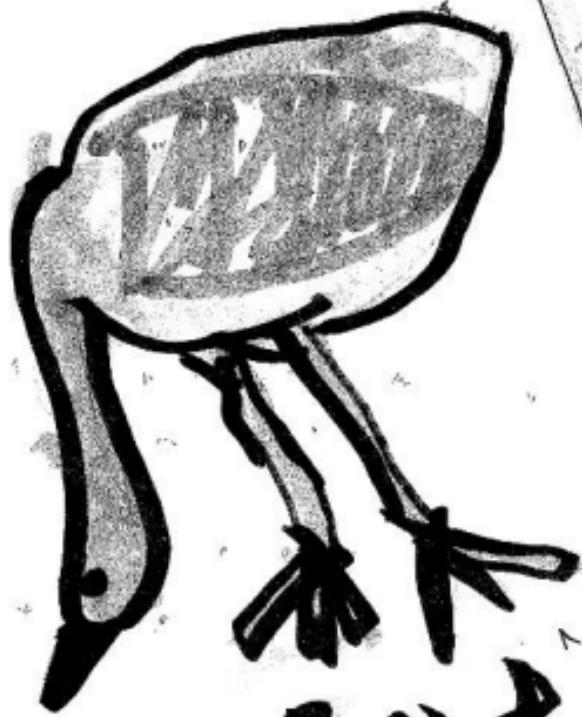


THEY'RE SWALLO-  
ING ROCKS TO HELP  
DIGEST THEIR FOOD.

I ASKED DADDY  
IF HE'D BUY ME  
AN OSTRICH. HE  
SAID THEY'RE UGLY  
AND DANGEROUS.



I DON'T CARE THAT THEY'RE  
UGLY. I THINK THEY'RE  
NICE.



OSTRICH