

1712540  
Creative Fusion  
Wallace & Gromit Comic

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# Recap of Deliverable 1

# John Romita Jr. and Nick Park



**John Romita Jr.**

Son of John Romita Sr.  
**Will Eisner Hall of Fame**<sup>1</sup>  
member  
Co-Creator of *The Punisher*  
(Marvel)

Comic Book Artist

Best known for his **Marvel Comics**<sup>2</sup>  
art and original characters.  
*Iron Man* (Marvel)  
*Spiderman* (Marvel)  
*Daredevil* (Marvel)  
*Kick-Ass* (original)  
*Hit-Girl* (original)



**Nick Park**

Stop-motion director, animator,  
writer, producer for Aardman<sup>3</sup>  
*Wallace and Gromit*  
*Chicken Run*  
*Shaun the Sheep*

10 Awards<sup>4</sup>  
5 BAFTAS  
4 Oscars  
1 Animafest

6 Nominations  
3 BAFTAS  
2 Oscars  
1 Emmy

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.comic-con.org/awards/hall-fame-awards>

<sup>2</sup> <http://marvel.com/comics>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.aardman.com/>

<sup>4</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nick\\_Park#Awards\\_and\\_nominations](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nick_Park#Awards_and_nominations)

# Proposal

Create a MARVEL/John Romita Jr. style comic with Nick Park's Characters



Although the cover shows "The Were-Rabbit" my comic will be original and not take from an already existing Wallace and Gromit story.

# Process

# Techniques & Tools

The majority of the work will be done via pen and pencil because it is easier to draw by hand physically than digitally.

For the cover page, I will draw it physically; scan it; digitise it using Adobe Illustrator and create the final cover in Adobe Photoshop.

The comics will go through a similar process, however they will not be as detailed or given as much colour. This is because Romita's comics tend to have very detailed covers and less detailed comic slides with simple colour palettes or no colour at all. This is most likely due to MARVEL's budget in terms of mass printing comics as well as time reasons. MARVEL released an average of 3 full comics a month from 1980-1990.

The final comic will be put together using Indesign and exported as a pdf.



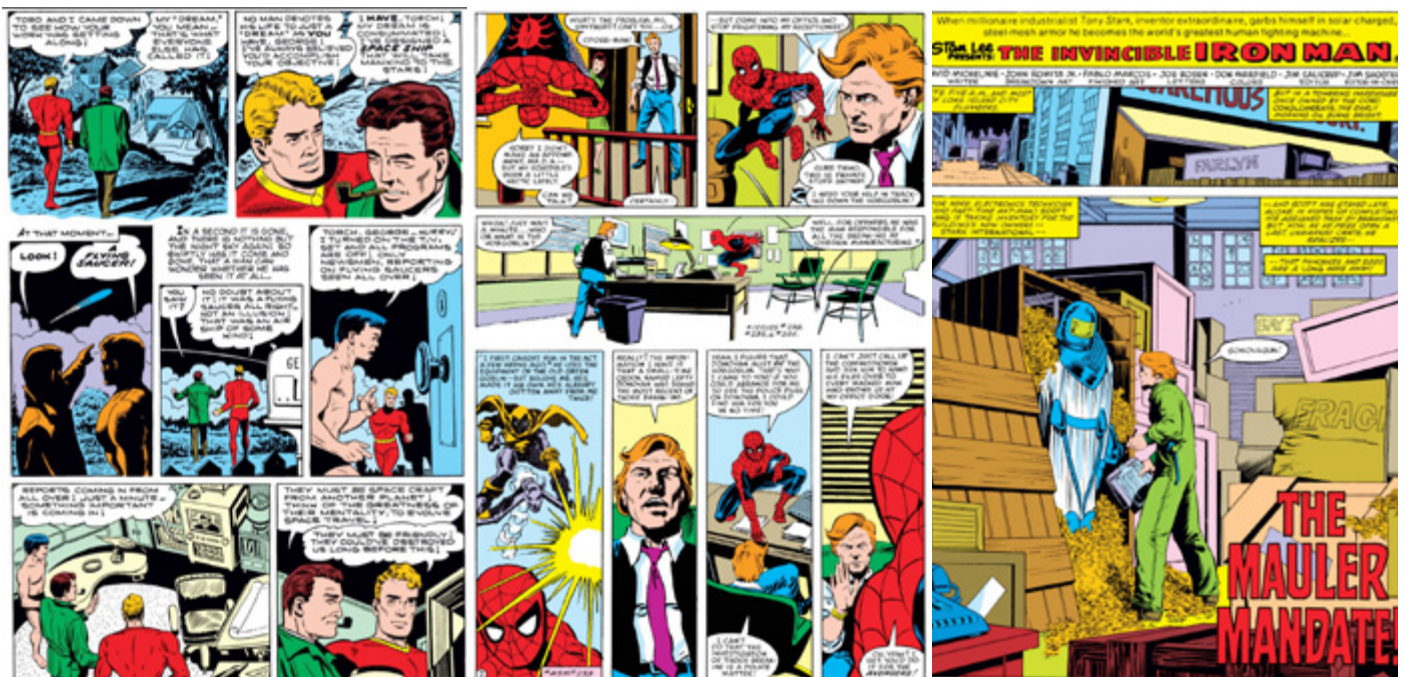
# Research

## John Romita Jr.'s Comic Covers



The majority of his comics<sup>7</sup> showcase the hero of the comic in centre view looking at the reader or just past them. The title is also often in the centre top and each cover features extra text that either advertises the comic or provides extra commentary on what the reader is seeing.

His slides are less detailed and have a more simple colour palette. A common theme in his slides is detailing the elements in focus. E.g. the background will be almost monochromatic and simple, but the objects in focus (i.e. the characters) would have more attention.





## Nick Park's Characters

When researching Nick Park's characters to focus on in the comic, I decided to go with the Wallace and Gromit<sup>8</sup> characters. This is because they are (in my opinion) the most recognisable of his characters and almost everyone has seen one of their movies.

There is also already a lot of material and lore to take inspiration from.

Wallace and Gromit have a fixation on cheese, and in research I discovered that almost all of their storylines are either based on cheese or have a small story arc related to cheese. Therefore, I decided to base my comic around cheese.



Wallace and Gromit almost always star side by side. My comic proposal showed only Gromit as the lead character, to keep true to Nick Park's side of the fusion I the comic will show both characters on the front cover and feature a story line that involves both as the lead characters.

## Comic Book Script Writing

The most useful source on how to write a script for a comic book was an article on a writers' community called Lit Reactor titled [Don't Write Comics: How To Write Comics](https://litreactor.com/columns/dont-write-comics-how-to-write-comics-part-2)<sup>9</sup> (specifically part 2). In short, I followed this example: (however, the entire page was very useful).

I learned that comics need minimal dialogue on each panel and minimal panels. This is to make it easier to read and less cluttered. This would be my biggest challenge, to create something that tells a story visually.

Visual story telling is something that both Wallace & Gromit and John Romita Jr.'s comics have in common.

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9 <https://litreactor.com/columns/dont-write-comics-how-to-write-comics-part-2> (Kelly Thompson, 2012)

### PAGE THREE (6 Panels)

Panel 1. Emma, exhausted, injured, and ready to pass out, sees the ax in the wall panel.

Panel 2. Emma throws her elbow through the panel, breaking it open.

SFX:  
SMASH!

Panel 3. Emma takes out the ax.

EMMA CAPTION:  
There's an explanation for all of this.

Panel 4. Emma turns and swings the ax wildly, blindly, desperately.

Panel 5. On Emma's face, eyes opened, shocked. It has connected off-panel.

SFX:  
Thunk.

Panel 6. Cut to Emma's POV, Larry standing there, dead-eyed, with the ax stuck and sticking out of his neck – wedged between his shoulder and his head. You can make this less gruesome if you prefer, I'm fine for some of the violence to be off panel, to use silhouette, etc.

EMMA CAPTION:  
There always is, right?

### PAGE FOUR (6 Panels)

Panel 1. Emma has released the ax and Larry is down on his knees.

Panel 2. Larry falls on his side, the ax still sticking out of his neck.

Panel 3. On Emma's horrified bloody face.

Panel 4. Emma sinks against the wall to the floor, exhausted and horrified. She's covered in blood and torn up/disheveled.

Panel 5. Emma still against the wall, staring at Larry. Larry is in the foreground, perhaps just as a shape/silhouette, the ax still wedged in him.

EMMA CAPTION:  
What have I done?

# Development

## Script

### THE RAT-BURGLER

1

#### Page 1 (3 Panels)

Panel 1: Gromit, night, watching TV, tired

TV CAPTION: Try new Insta-Cheese! The pressurised can allows for -

Panel 2: Remote control changes channel

SFX: Click

TV CAPTION: Welcome to the nightly news -

Panel 3: Gromit heading to fridge, TV illuminating it

TV CAPTION: - bringing you the news, just when you need it!

GROMIT THOUGHT: Insta-Cheese... Disgusting.

#### Page 2 (4 Panels)

Panel 1: Fridge, open, empty

Panel 2: Gromit's eyes, surprised

Panel 3: Gromit's mouth, angry

GROMIT THOUGHT: The fridge was full an hour ago... and Wallace went to bed before that.

TV CAPTION: The infamous Rat-Burgler has escaped his prison. All residents are advised to lock their doors tonight.

Panel 4: Reaching for baseball bat next to fridge

GROMIT THOUGHT: Just to be sure...

#### Page 3 (3 Panels)

Panel 1: Rat-Burgler hiding behind door

Panel 2: Gromit looking right

GROMIT THOUGHT: Gotcha!

Panel 3: Baseball bat through door, hitting Rat-Burgler

SFW: CRASH!

RAT-BURGLER CAPTION: Arrgh!?

#### Page 4 (3 Panels)

Panel 1: Rat-Burgler jumping at Gromit's POV

Panel 2: Gromit hit in the face

Panel 3: Rat-Burgler has knife to Gromit's throat

#### Page 5 (4 Panels)

Panel 1: Rat-Burgler's lower half of face, speaking, laughing

## THE RAT-BURGLER

2

RAT-BURGLER CAPTION: Now that you saw my face-

Panel 2: Gromit's face, mouth open, doomed look

RAT-BURGLER CAPTION: -I can't leave witnesses

Panel 3: Barrel of handgun, muzzleflash

SFX: BANG!

Panel 4: Rat-Burgler's eyes, bloodshot, surprised

Page 6 (3 Panels)

Panel 1: Wallace holding smoking gun, Gromit in front, kneeling

WALLACE CAPTION: Are you ok?! That isn't...

SFX: Gasp!

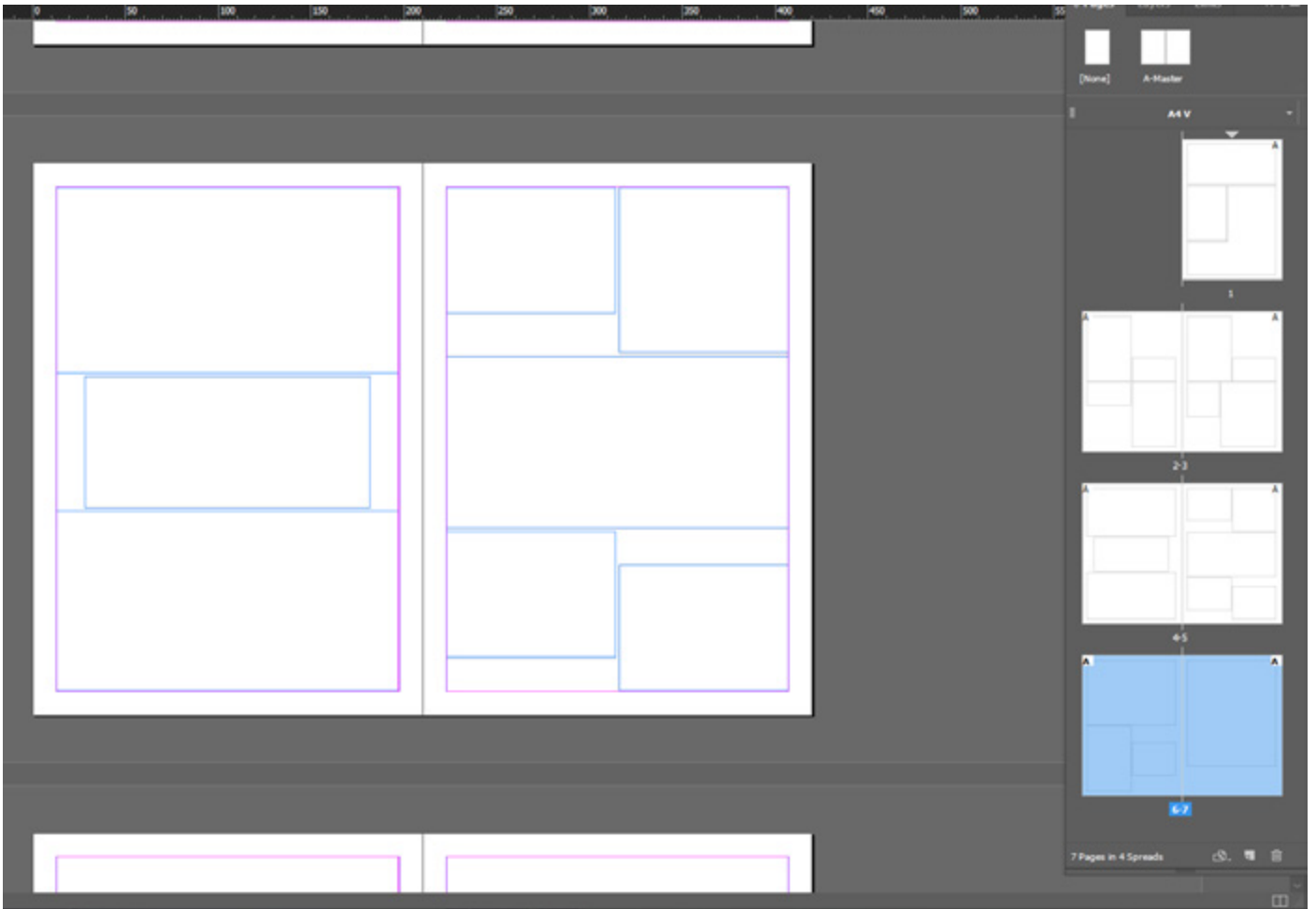
Panel 2: Wallace's hand over his mouth

WALLACE CAPTION: The Rat-Burgler?...

Panel 3: Police cars racing down the road, bird's eye view of the street

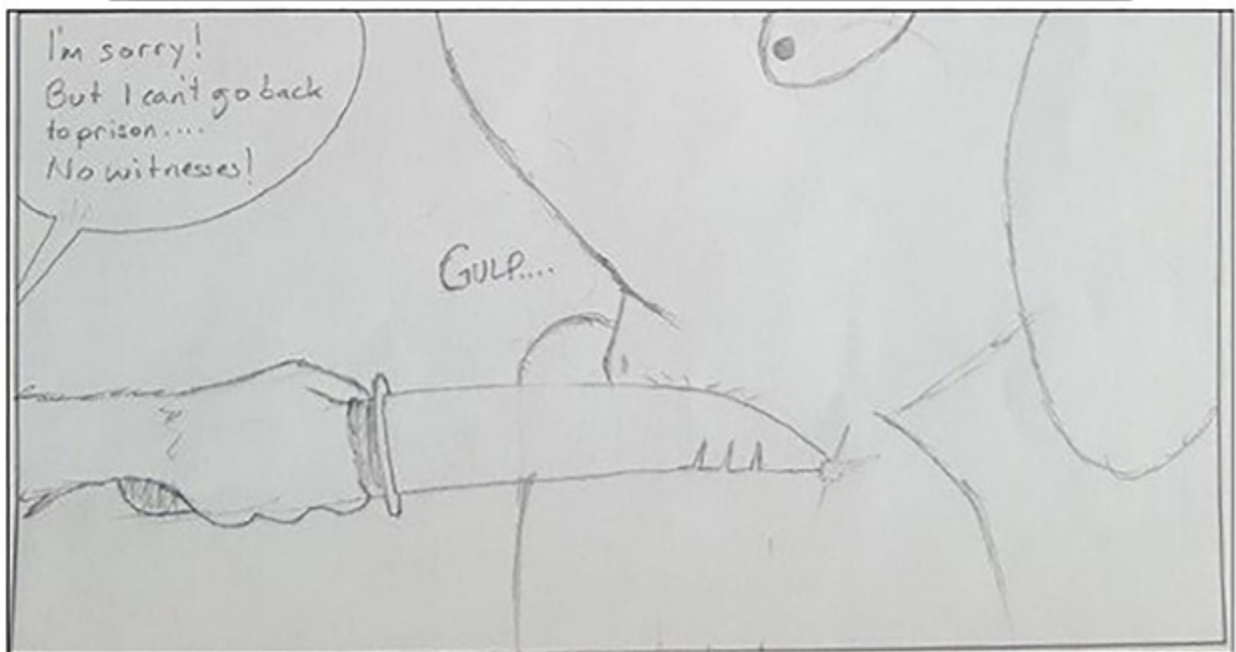
WALLACE CAPTION: Oh Gromit... How are we going to explain this...

## Panels



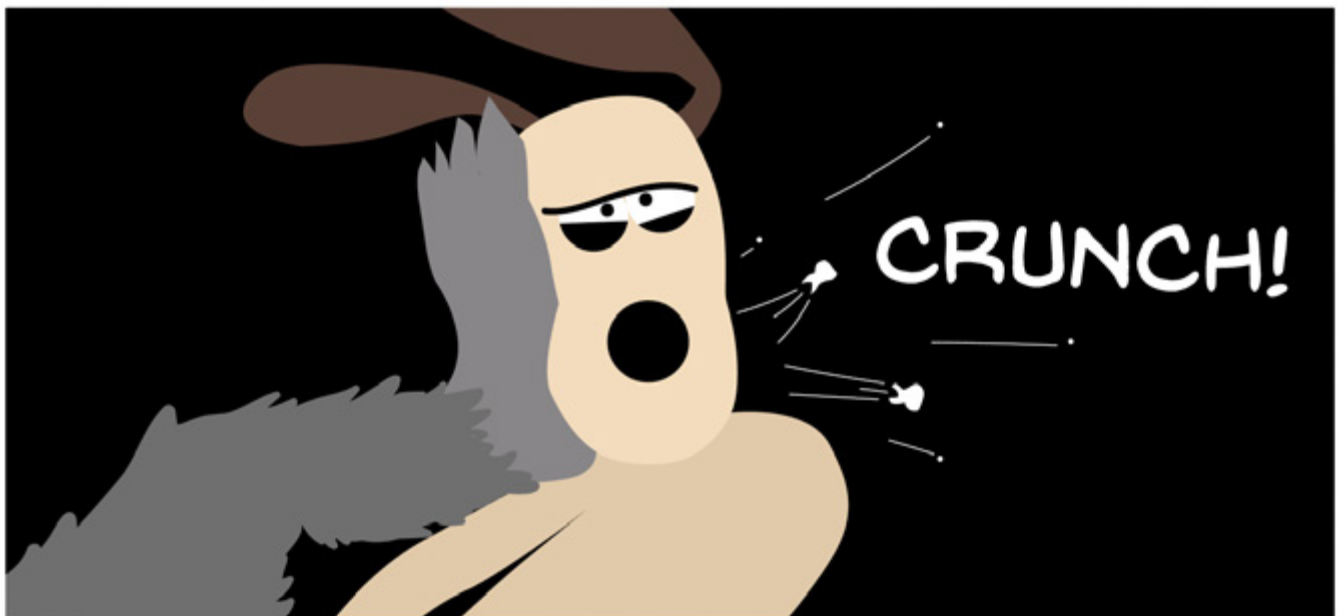
Using InDesign, I created blank panels. The number of panels on each page was already lined out in my script.

I printed out the panels, filled them in with pencil sketches, scanned them and used Photoshop to put the scanned pages into the digital panels.





The digital art is then created in Illustrator by tracing the sketch, shading it in and then adding in any extra details such as text.



# References

#### Page 4

- 1 <https://www.comic-con.org/awards/hall-fame-awards>
- 2 <http://marvel.com/comics>
- 3 <https://www.aardman.com/>
- 4 [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nick\\_Park#Awards\\_and\\_nominations](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nick_Park#Awards_and_nominations)

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- 5 <http://comicbook.com/blog/2014/06/24/10-greatest-john-romita-jr-creative-runs/>
- 6 <http://www.comicartstore.com/product/punisher-war-zone-vol-1-3-double-splash-page-john-romita-jr/>

#### Page 8

- 7 [http://marvel.com/comics/creators/214/john\\_romita\\_jr](http://marvel.com/comics/creators/214/john_romita_jr)

#### Page 9

- 8 <https://www.wallaceandgromit.com/>

#### Page 10

- 9 <https://litreactor.com/columns/dont-write-comics-how-to-write-comics-part-2> (Kelly Thompson, 2012)

1712540  
Creative Fusion  
Essay

This essay reflects upon the multimedia artefact that combines elements from John Romita Jr.'s work and Nick Park's work. John Romita Jr. (J.Romita) is one of the most famous living comic artists who has done extensive work for Marvel Comics<sup>1</sup> since the 70's. Nick Park (N.Park) who has done extensive work with Aardman Animations<sup>2</sup>, while similar in the aspect that he also creates fictional characters focuses more on clay animation with notable works including *Wallace & Gromit*, *Shaun the Sheep* and most recently *Early Man*.



**Figure 1**



**Figure 2**

The multimedia artefact that I proposed was a John Romita Jr. (Marvel) style comic with a story based around Gromit. At the time I proposed to convert some scenes from the movie *Wallace & Gromit and the Curse of the Were-Rabbit* into comic strip form. This is shown by the example covert art I created (**Figure 1**). However, it was suggested that I should create an original story to make it more of an original artefact. I also thought this was a good idea.

In research for the proposal, I went through a large selection of J.Romita's early work for Marvel and due to the large number of black and white images (**Figure 2**) I concluded that mine would also be black and white. However, when I proposed this it was suggested that I double check whether it truly was black or white or not. Upon revaluation and deeper research on the Marvel website<sup>3</sup> I noticed that almost all the examples I had seen were the initial designs (therefore, not coloured) for the comic strips. In my final artefact I used full colour. When it came to researching N.Park's work, I was already very familiar with *Wallace & Gromit* from my childhood, so

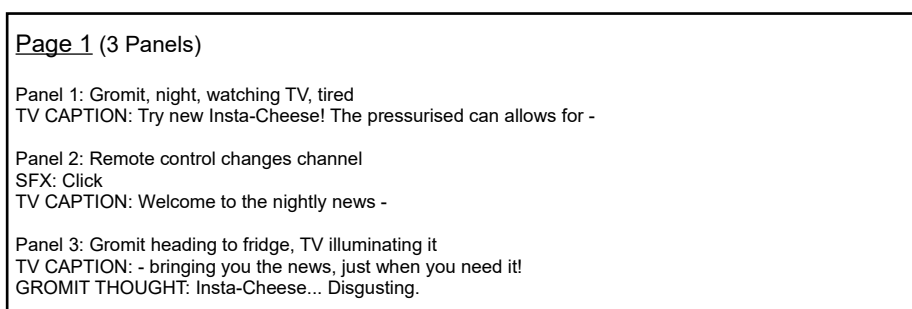
1 <http://marvel.com/comics>

2 <https://www.aardman.com/>

3 [http://marvel.com/comics/creators/214/john\\_romita\\_jr](http://marvel.com/comics/creators/214/john_romita_jr)

I had already decided to do something based on this. *The Curse of the Were-Rabbit* struck me particularly because it was the darkest movie of the franchise and went well with the often dark tones that J.Romita uses. My idea was to make the comic as dark as J.Romita's later work (e.g. Kick-Ass) and contrast this with the family friendly atmosphere of Wallace & Gromit. I believed that apart from fusing the two artists together, it would also create a oxymoronic effect to anyone who knows Wallace & Gromit well.

Initially I planed to do all the artwork in Photoshop, however, I later decided to use Illustrator because it handles vector artwork much better and has

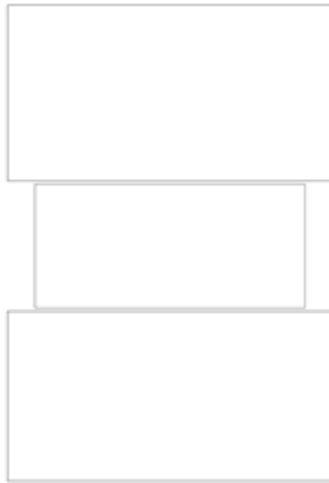


**Figure 3**

more in-depth tools for hand art. The majority of the artwork was made in Illustrator with the exception of the cover page, where the title text was added in Photoshop. I put the comic together using InDesign and exported it as a PDF. I found that staying within the Adobe sphere made it very easy to switch between different programs.

The design process started with writing the script (**Figure 3**) and planning how many panels there would be on each page and how big each one would be. I found the article *Don't Write Comics: How To Write Comics Part 2* (Kelly Thompson, 2012)<sup>4</sup> on the writers' community LitReactor extremely useful in this regard. I learned that comics need minimal dialogue on each panel and minimal panels. This is to make it easier to read and less cluttered. This would be my biggest challenge, to create something that tells a story visually. Visual story telling is something that both Wallace & Gromit and John Romita Jr.'s comics have in common. Wallace and Gromit have a fixation on cheese, and in research I discovered at almost all of their storylines are either based on cheese or have a small story arc related to cheese. Therefore, I decided to base my comic around cheese.

The panels were then created in InDesign (**Figure 4.1**, next page) and



**Figure 4.1**



**Figure 4.2**



**Figure 4.3**



**Figure 5.1**



**Figure 5.2**



**Figure 6**

exported to PDF where I would later print and sketch into them. The finished panels were then scanned(**Figure 4.2**) and put into Illustrator where I would convert them into digital art (**Figure 4.3**). The art-style was hard to figure out initially because I wasn't sure how to merge the clay style of N.Park with J.Romita's classic comic style. In the end I settled for a flat style, that I believe fits in between the comic style and the clay style.



My process when creating **Figure 4.3** was to create a flat base outline of each object, colour it appropriately and use shadows/lighting to give it more substance (**Figures 5.1-5.2**). The example cover image from the proposal used 3D



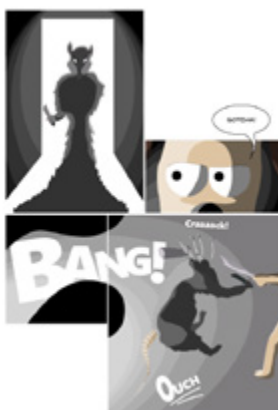
**Figure 7.1**



**Figure 7.2**

lighting whereas the artefact used 2D. This is because I did not feel as if it was true to J.Romita's style and the only aspect of the proposal that promoted him was the idea of the comic. Therefore, I changed it to more of a cartoon style to stay truer to his half of the fusion.

The cover page (**Figure 6**, previous page) was also made in Illustrator however, once it was also imported into Photoshop in order to create the title, subtitle and extra baubles such as the MARVEL collaboration label and price. The title style was inspired by the style that J.Romita normally uses on his cover pages.





The title of the comic is simply the name of the main character (**Figure 7.1**) and the sub-title relates to the main theme or villain of the comic (**Figure 7.2**). In this case The Rat-Burgler. Another common theme is that the majority of his comics showcase the hero of the comic in centre view looking at the reader or just past them. An exception to this that I found was when there was some kind of action depicted, for example in **Figures 7.1-7.2** Iron Man and Doctor Doom are fighting each other and facing sideways.

Once every page was completed and exported, I put the comic together using InDesign and saved it as a PDF ("1712540 Artefact.pdf").

In conclusion, I believe I have fulfilled what I proposed to achieved within the time constraints given. I would have liked to create a longer story and comic, mine was just 6 pages long whereas the average is 20 (without advertisements). I most likely would have been able to achieve this if I dedicated all the allocated time to drawing the comic (as this is the lengthiest stage) however, I had to factor in the time for learning how to write a comic, writing the comic, designing the panels etc. Overall I believe I used the time efficiently. The resource that helped me the most was the LitReactor article *Don't Write Comics: How To Write Comics Part 2* (Kelly Thompson, 2012)<sup>5</sup>. This article stressed the importance of planning everything before putting pen to paper, as a result I had no need to waste time drawing panels that would not make it into the piece.

My research into J.Romita was much more in depth than my research into N.Park because I was already familiar with N.Park's work and had decided to focus on Wallace & Gromit. Before this assignment I didn't know much about Marvel Comics, J.Romita's comics and I believe I managed



**Figure 8**

to capture his style portraided in his non-Marvel works (Grey Quarter, Kick-Ass) which had more of a darker tone than his Marvel work.

In terms of art, I believe there is mixed quality of work with some panels looking very good, and others not so much. This is most likely because I would work on them for long periods of time, and after a while I got tired and more sloppy. In the future I will improve my work ethic to include shorter bursts of work and more break in order to maintain a good energy level to create a piece of work that is very high quality all the way through. In retrospect, the shadowing on the Rat-Burgler should have been less smooth and his fur should also have cast shadows on his face, leg etc. This would have created a more believable furry coat as opposed to the quite flat look he has (**Figure 8**). This being said I believe I translated Gromit quite well onto comic form.

Overall, I believe I fused aspect of John Romita Jr.'s work and Nick Park's work in an original way. In the first presentation (before the official proposal) Paul Butler made the distinction that making a book is quite common for this assignment but a comic is different enough to be considered new. I do believe that most people would have made a comic had they had my options, however, at the same time I believe that a comic is the most interesting way to fuse the two. My comic could have been longer if I was more skilled in digital art (this was new for me) but I believe it fuses the two artists well.

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RAT-BURGLER**

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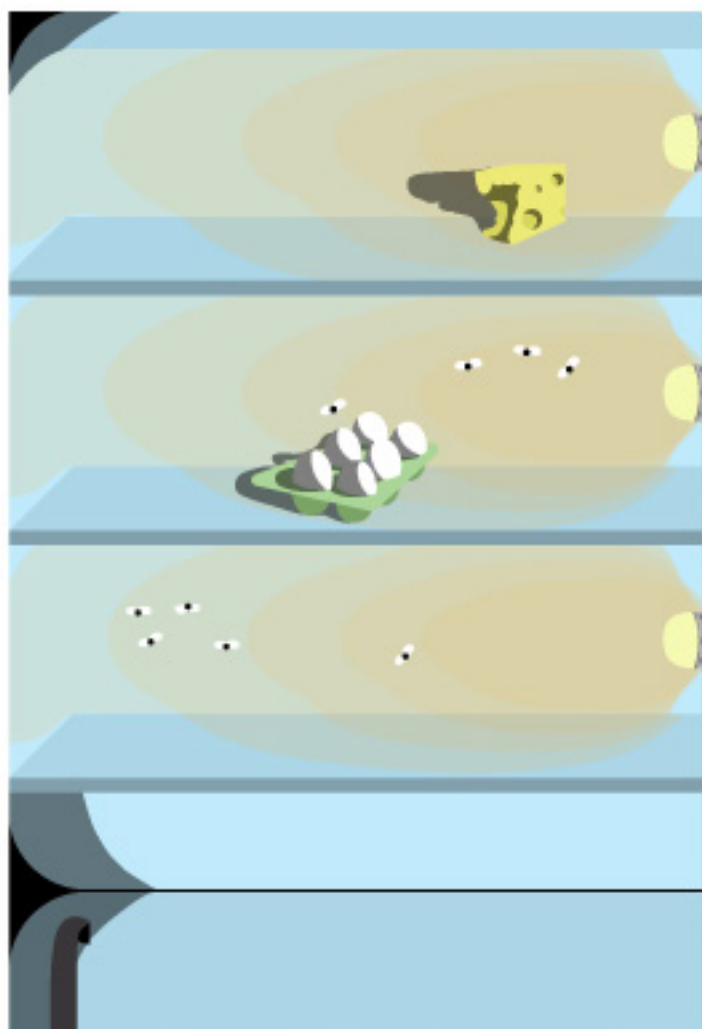
INSTA-CHEESE!

INSTA-CHEESE....  
DISGUSTING

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