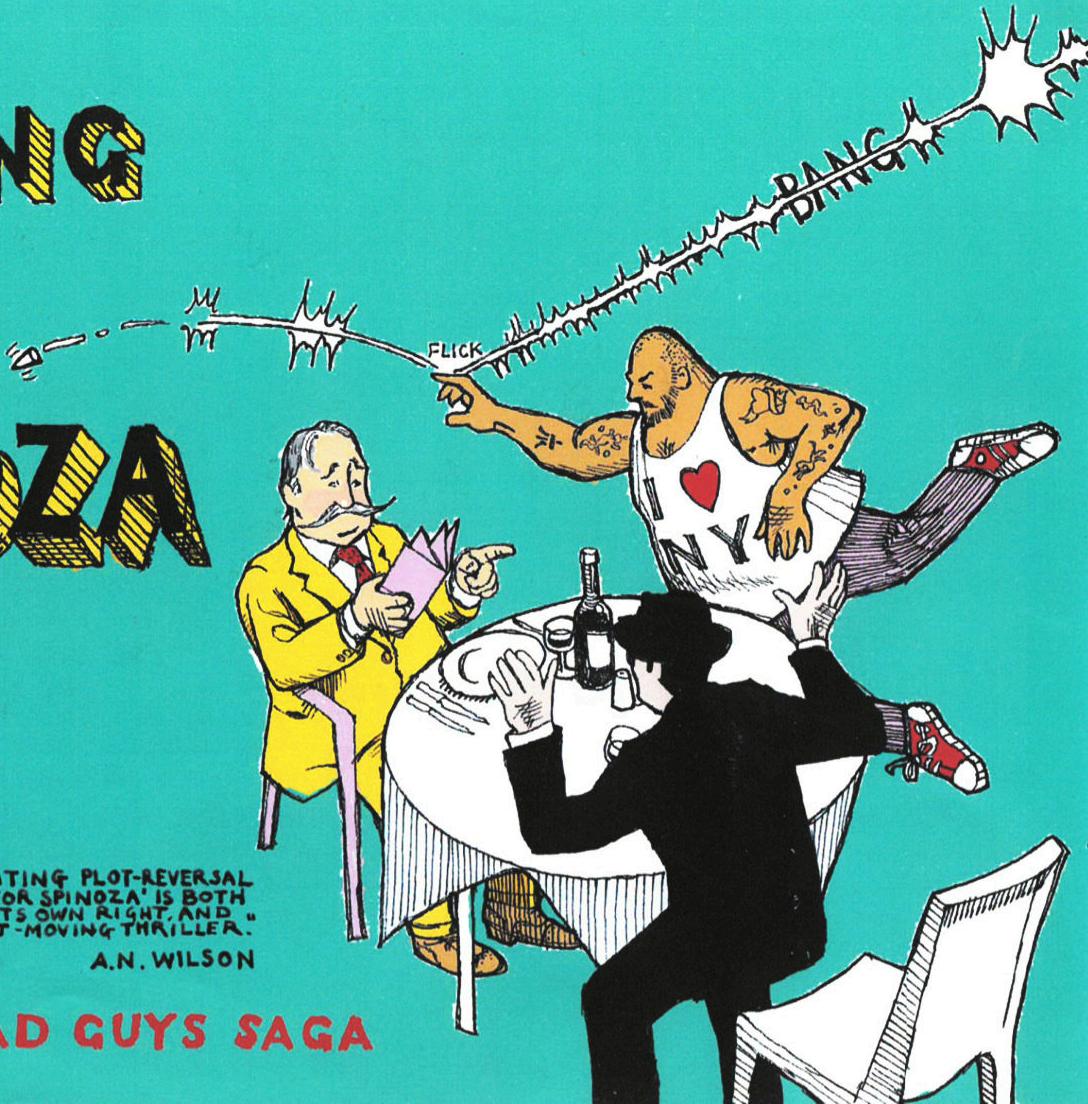


LOOKING FOR SPINOZA

BY
**FRANCO
FALCONETTO**
2011

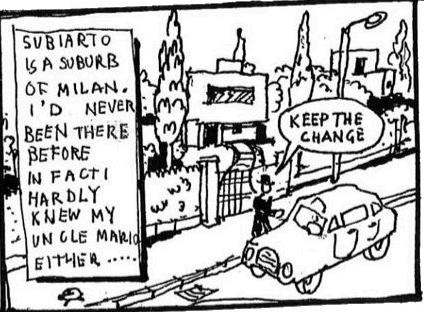
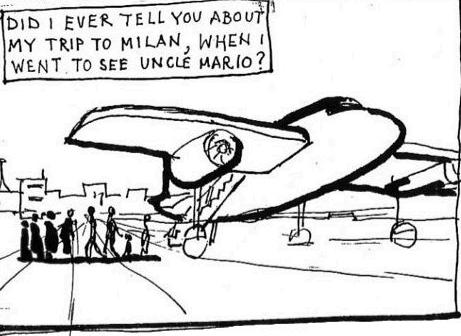
SUSPENSEFUL, AND WITH A NAIL-BITING PLOT-REVERSAL
ON ALMOST EVERY PAGE, 'LOOKING FOR SPINOZA' IS BOTH
AN EXCITING GRAPHIC NOVEL IN ITS OWN RIGHT, AND
AN AMUSING PARODY OF THE FAST-MOVING THRILLER.

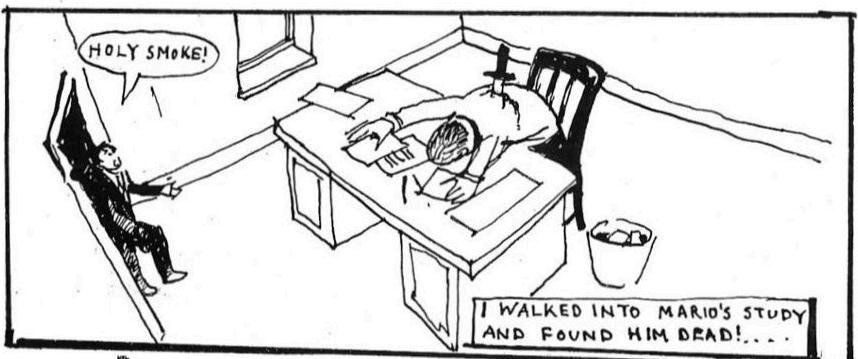
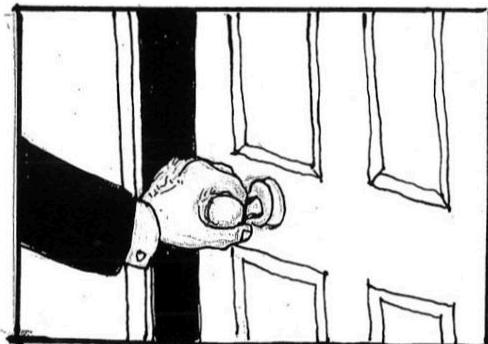
A.N. WILSON

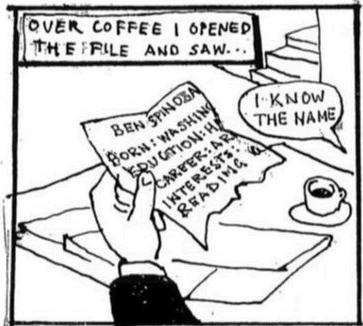
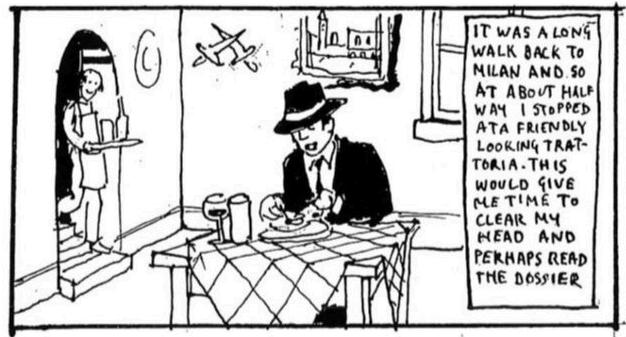


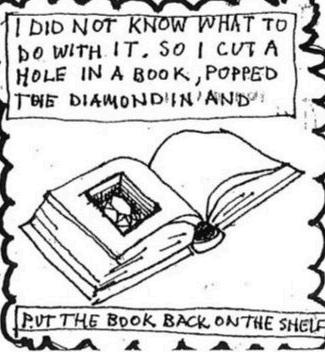
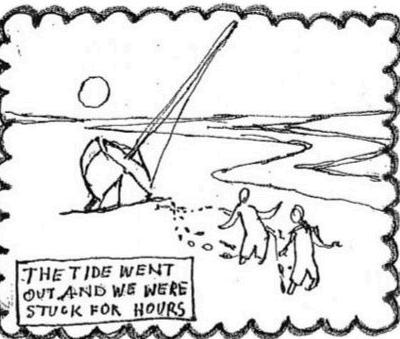
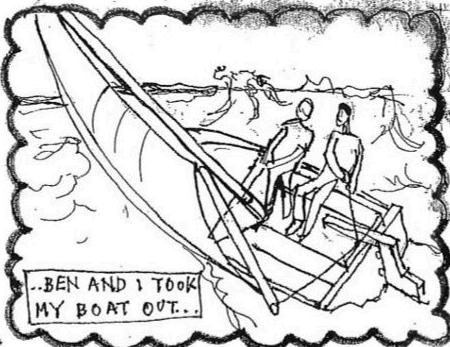
A SHOOTING BAD GUYS SAGA

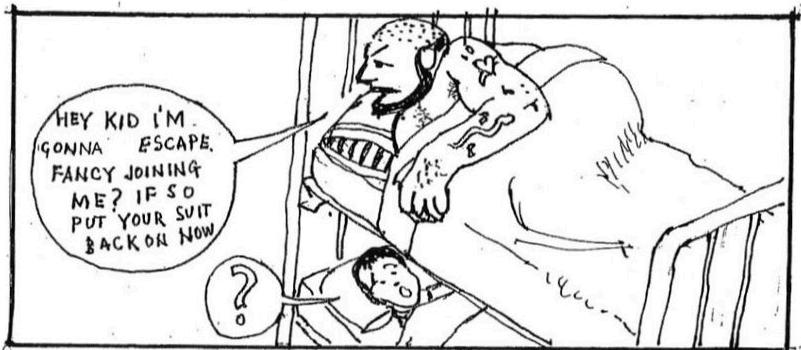
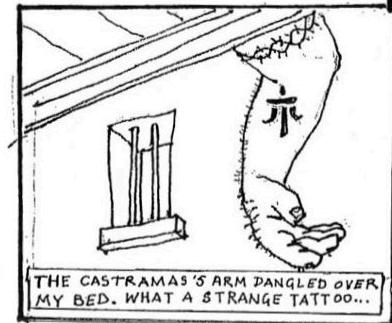
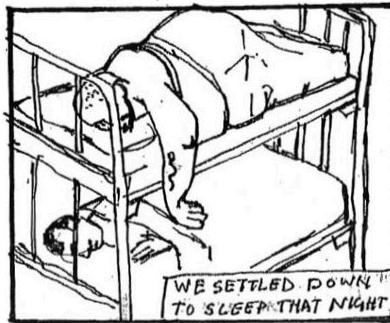
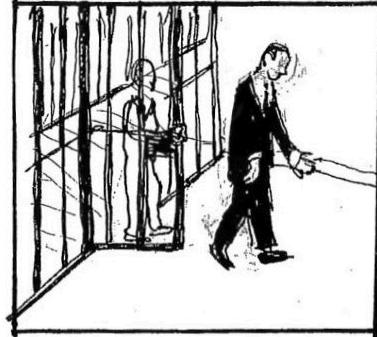
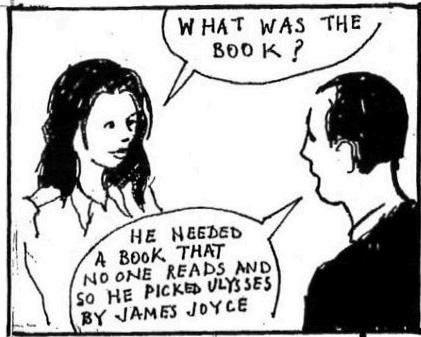
I ALWAYS LOVE THAT FEELING WHEN YOU GET OFF AN AEROPLANE AND ARE HIT BY THE HEAT, UNLIKELY SMELLS AND THE PROMISE OF ADVENTURE. AS I WALK DOWN THE STEPS, I CAN'T HELP WAVING TO AN IMAGINARY CROWD LIKE THOSE GRAINY FILM CLIPS OF THE BEATLES OR THE KENNEDYS DISEMBARKING THEIR CHARTERED JETS



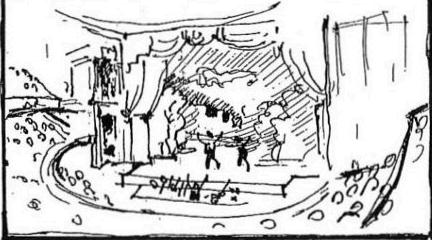








MEAN WHILE MARIA PISANI WAS ENJOYING A NIGHT AT THE OPERA WITH HER BOYFRIEND THE CHIEF OF POLICE - ALBERTO VALMARRANDO



BUT MARIA COULD NOT CONCENTRATE SHE KEPT ON TURNING OVER THE EVENTS OF THE DAY IN HER MIND



THEY WENT FOR A DRINK IN THE INTERVAL



EXCUSE ME.
DO YOU KNOW
BEN SPINOSA?

WITH THAT THE STRANGER RAN OFF



MARIA AND ALBERTO RAN AFTER HIM

WE ARE THE POLICE
STOP, STOP!!!



No!

DIE PUNK!

Mr Mr Mr Mr

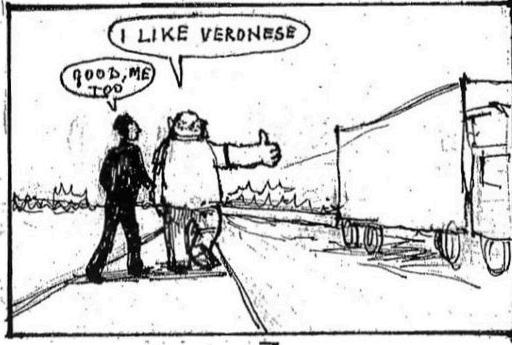
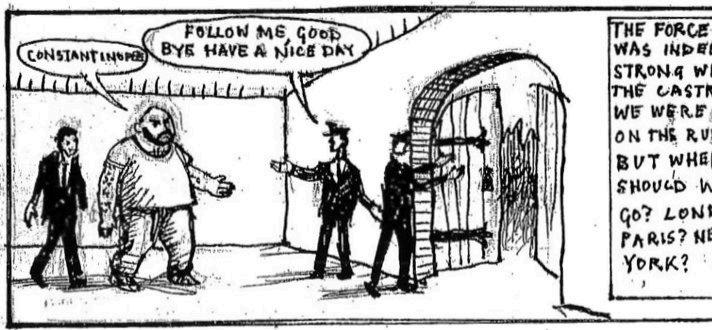
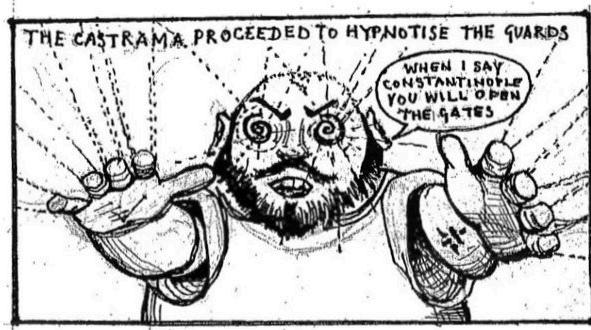
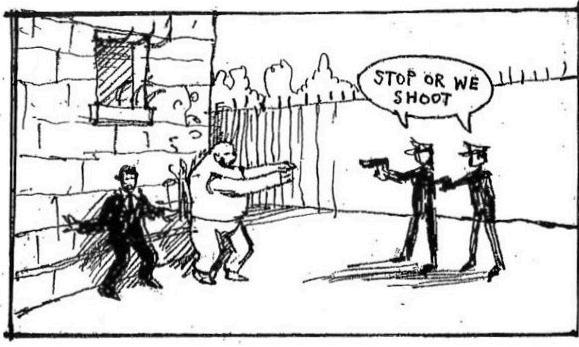


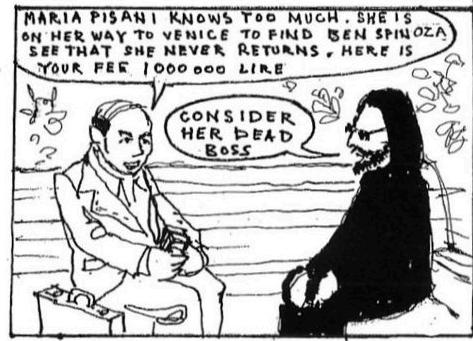
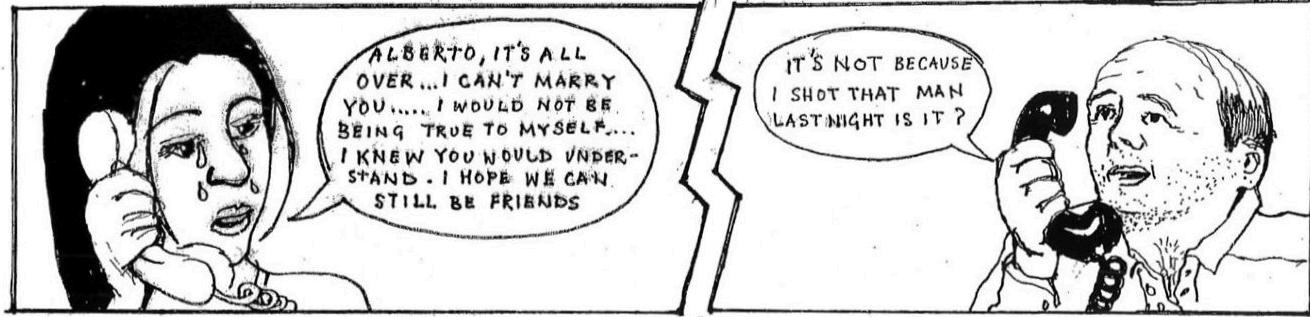
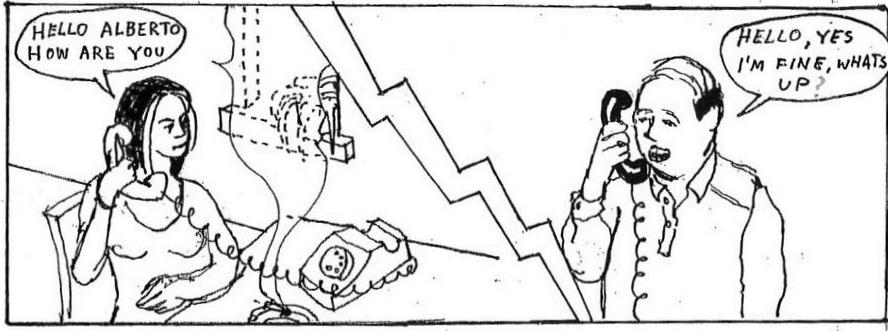
YOU KILLED
HIM YOU IDIOT

WHOOPSEE

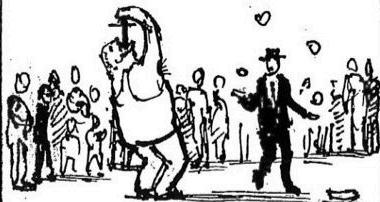
FIND BEN
SPINOSA, HE
IS STAYING IN VENICE
AT THE...







WE NEEDED SOME DOUGH SO THE CASTRANA AND I STARTED BUSKING IN ST MARK'S SQUARE. WE DREW QUITE A CROWD



IN A HOTEL NOT FAR FROM ST MARKS, MARIA PISANI CHECKED IN.



FEELING PREOCCUPIED MARIA WALKED ROUND ST MARK'S SQUARE



MARIA JOINS THE CROWD AND AS LUCK WOULD HAVE IT, SHE STANDS RIGHT NEXT TO THE RED FOX



I REMEMBER NOW I ARRESTED HIM ON THE MARIO FALCONETTO CASE. HE IS THE ONE WHO HAD THE DOSSIER ON BEN SPINOZA. I MUST TALK TO HIM. THEY WILL LEAD ME TO SPINOZA. I WILL FOLLOW THEM. AFTER THE SHOW



LATER WITH CAP FULLS OF SPARE CHANGE THE PERFORMERS CELEBRATE

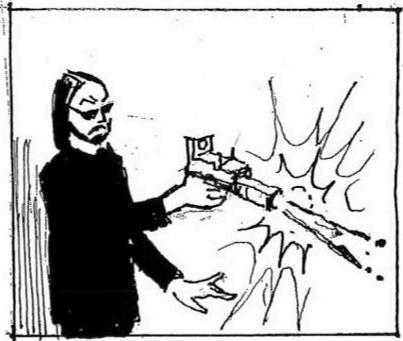


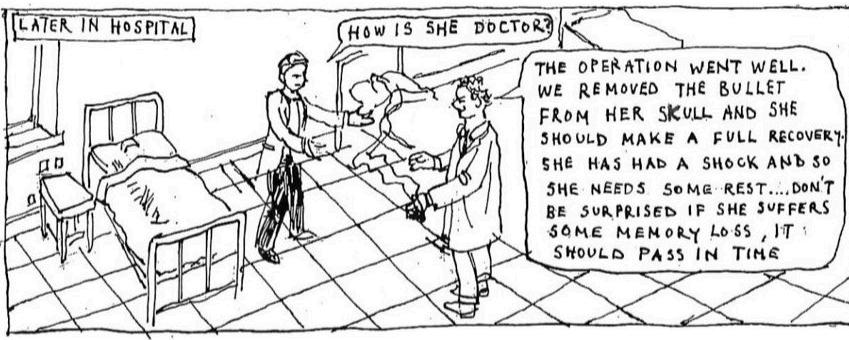
IT'S THE POLICE WOMAN! LETS GET OUT OF HERE!

MR FALCONETTO I NEED TO TALK TO YOU ABOUT BEN SPINOZA. IT IS....

ONE BULLET SHOULD BE ENOUGH

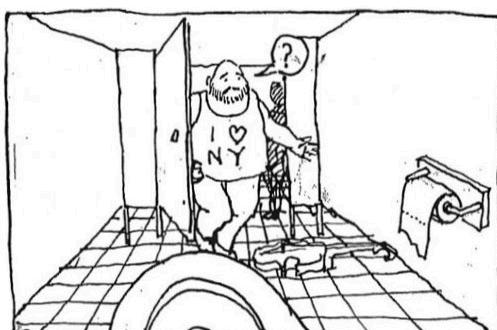
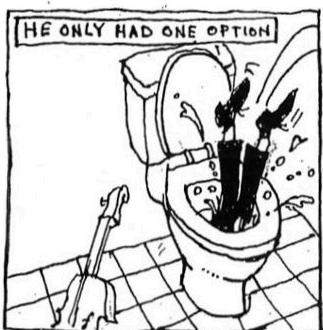
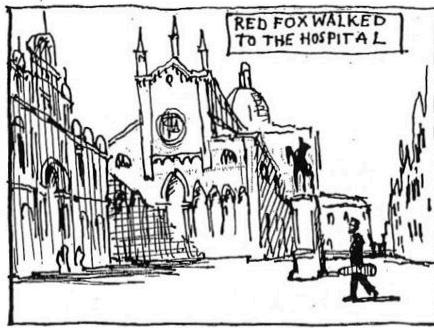


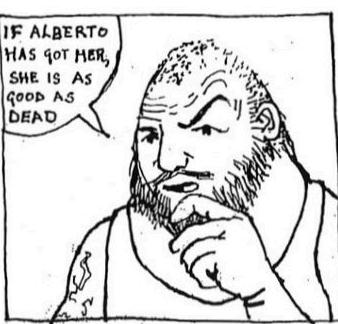
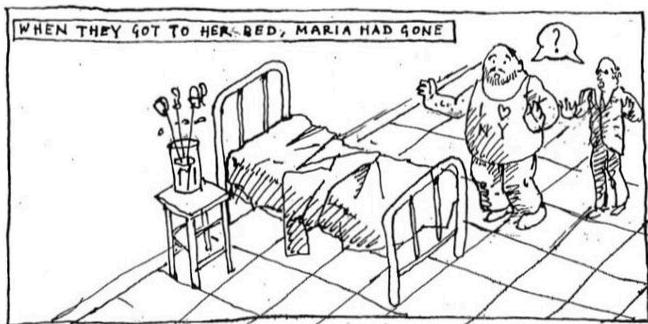
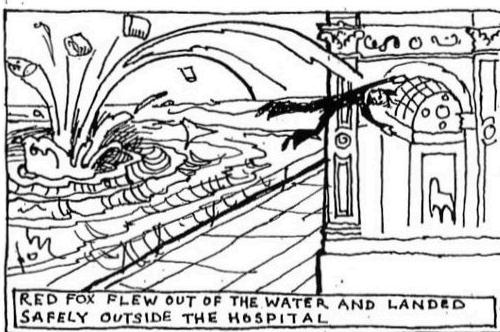
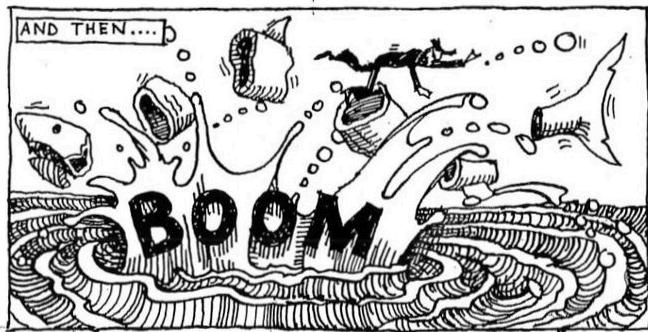
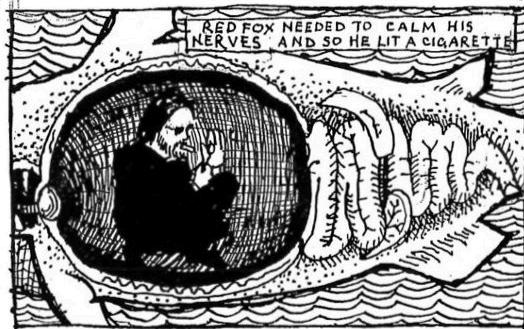
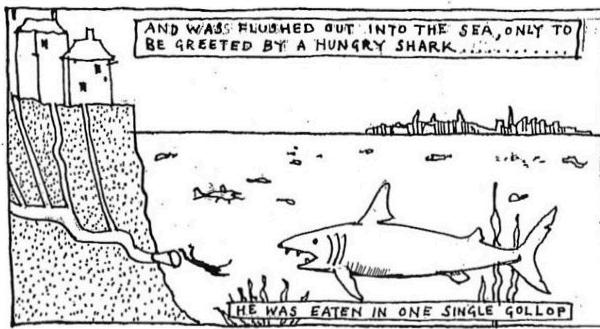
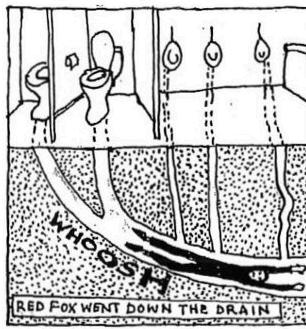


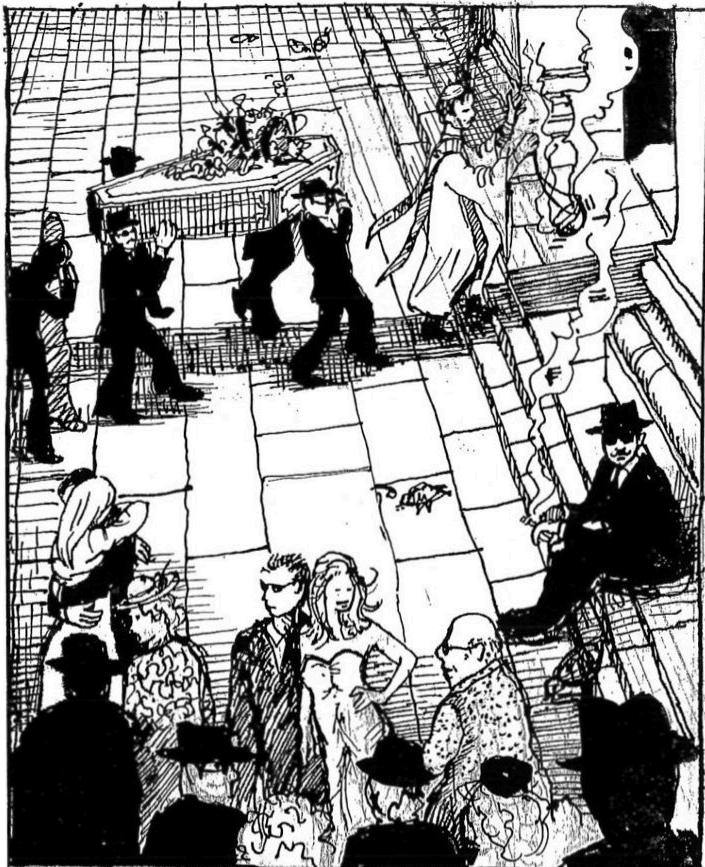






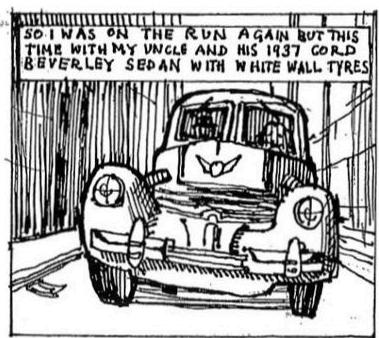
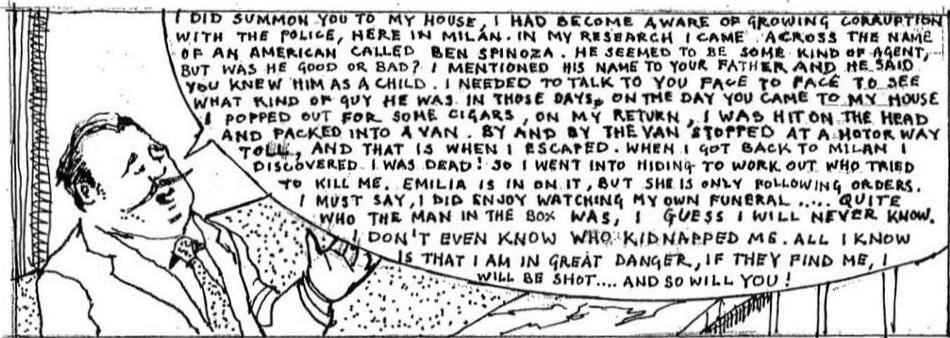
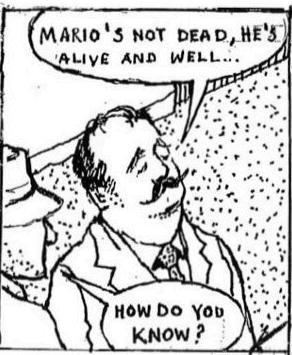






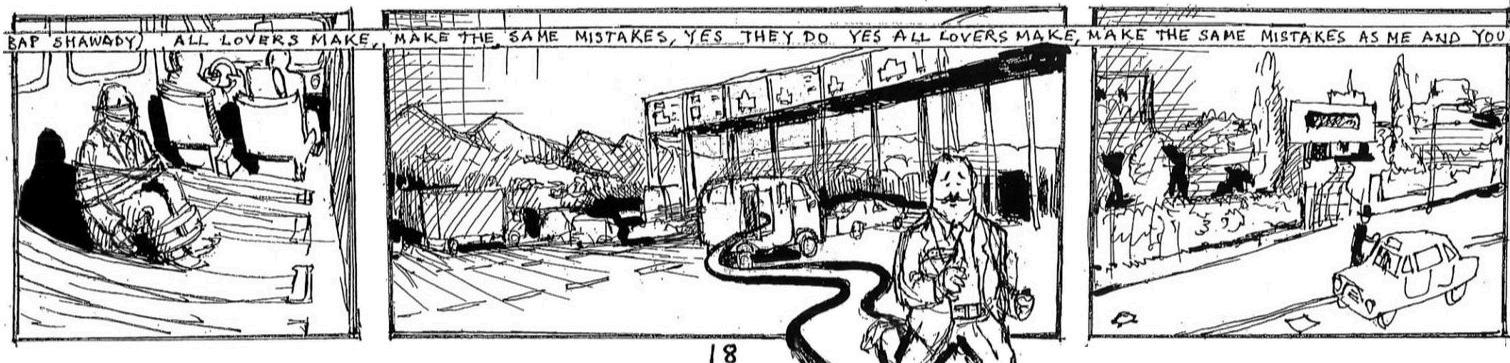
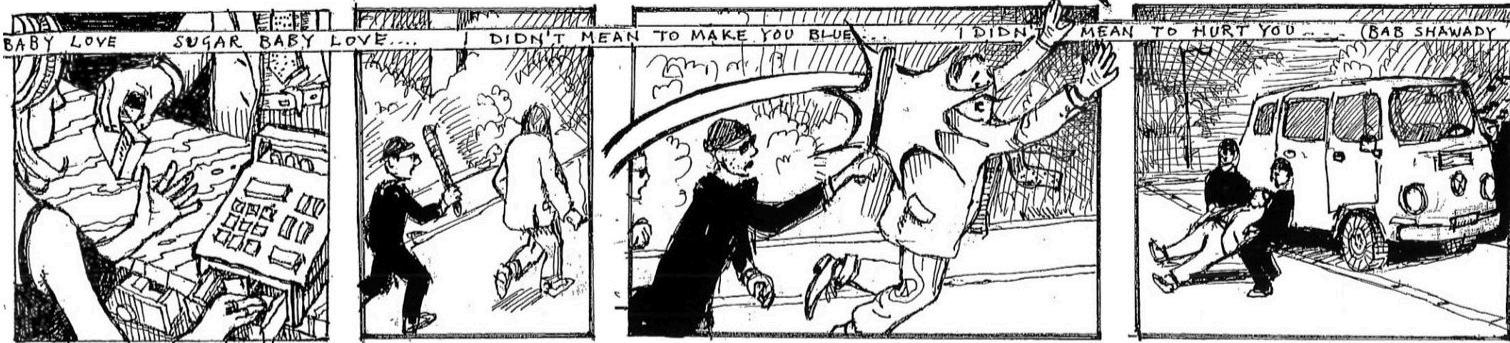
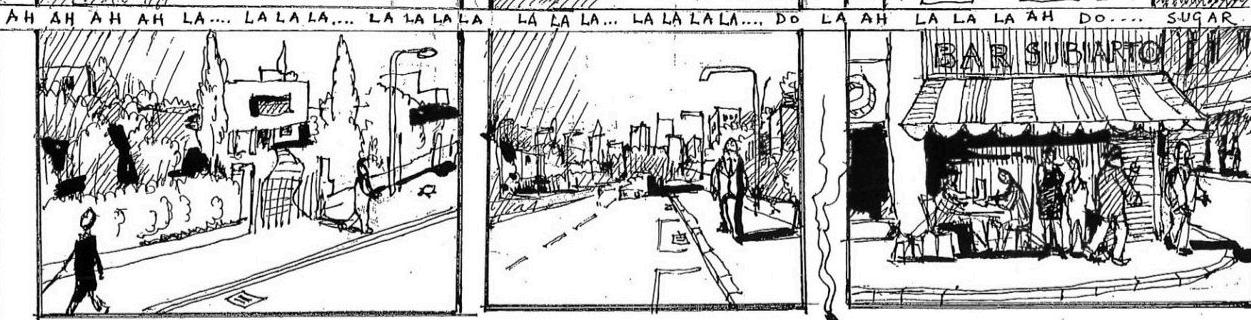
WHILE ALL THIS RED FOX SHENANIGANS WAS GOING ON, I HAD RETURNED TO MILAN TO FIND OUT WHO KILLED MARIO. TO DISGUISE MYSELF I BOUGHT A FALSE MOUSTACHE! - THE POLICE WOULD NOT RECOGNISE ME NOW... ONE HOT DAY, I WAS SITTING ON THE STEPS OF A CHURCH AND AS MY CIGARETTE SMOKE HINGLED WITH THE INCENSE, I SAW A COFFIN BEING CARRIED BY MY COUSINS... IT MUST BE MARIO'S FUNERAL... WHAT LUCK!!!!



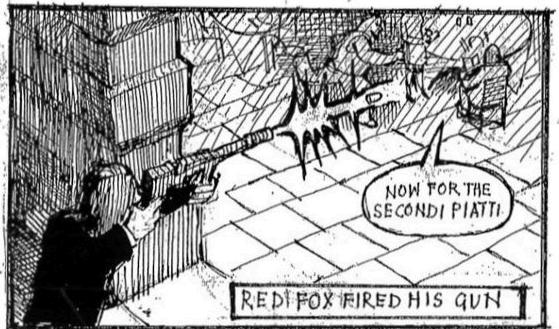


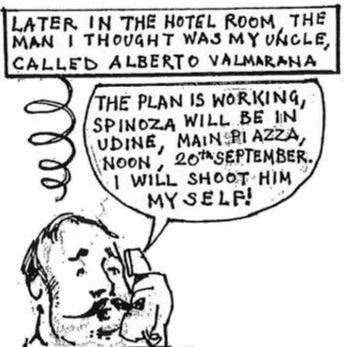
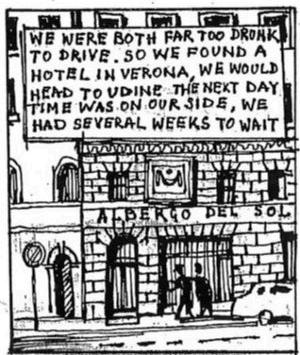
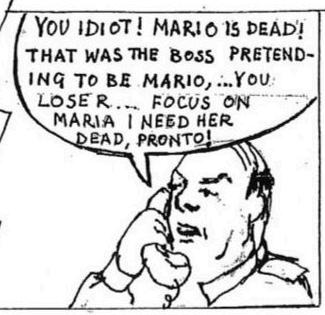
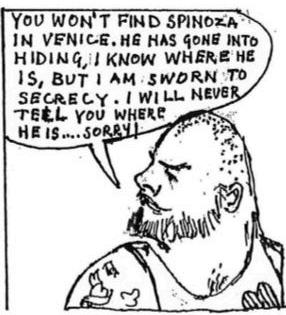
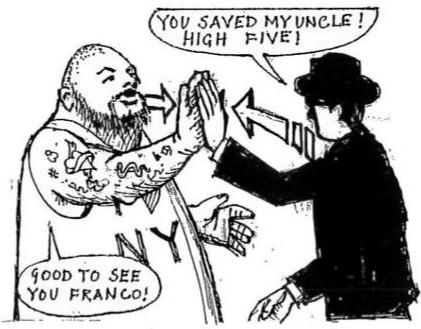
DID YOU GET ALL THAT?
OR WOULD YOU RATHER IT
IN PICTURES? I THOUGHT
SO, OKAY JUST FOR YOU
I HAVE DRAWN IT OUT.
I HAVE ALSO TURNED OFF
THE SOUND AND REPLACED
IT WITH THE 1970'S POP
CLASSIC "SUGAR BABY
LOVE" BY THE RUBETTES.

SIT BACK AND ENJOY
MARIO'S STORY...

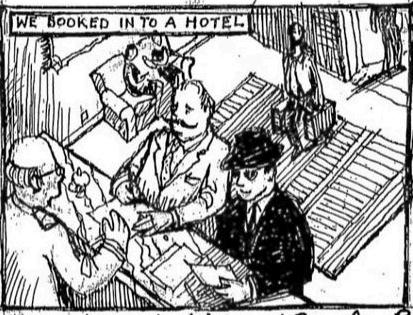
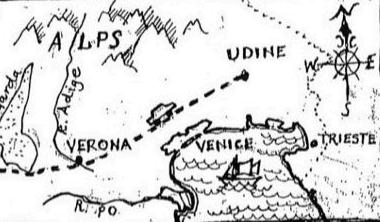


MARIO FELT THAT OUR ONLY HOPE WAS TO FIND SPINOZA, SO WE HEADED TO VENICE. ON THE WAY WE STOPPED OFF IN VERONA FOR A BITE TO EAT.

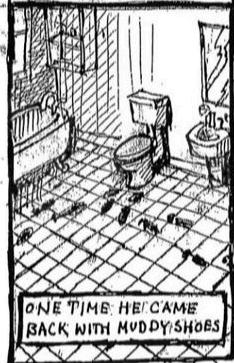
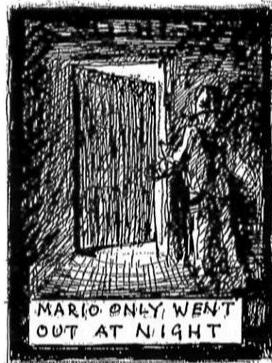
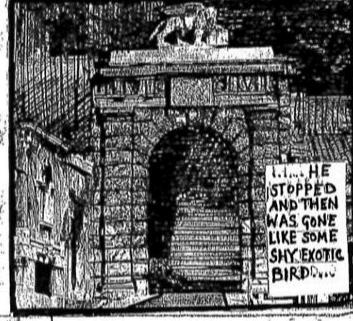




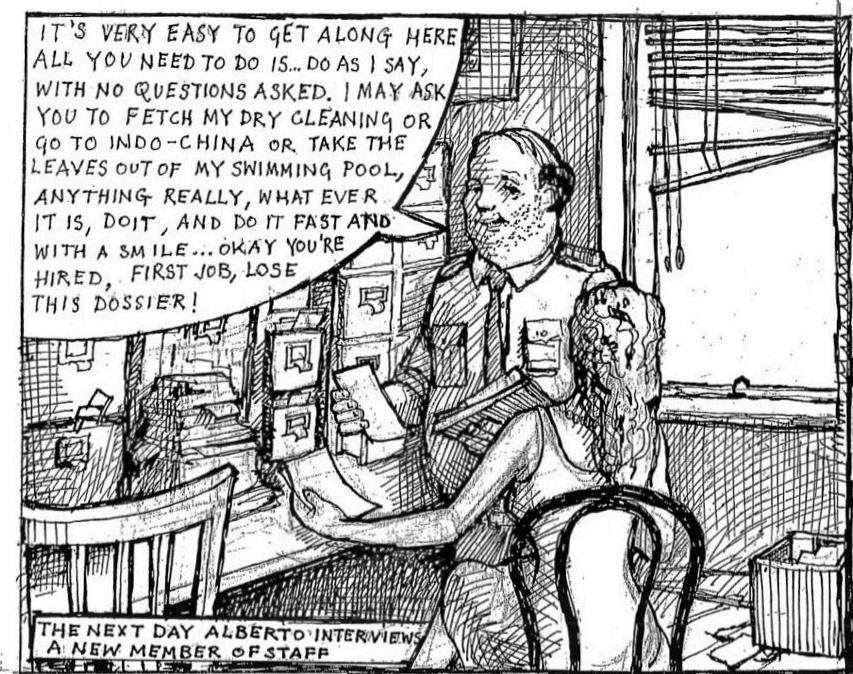
WE DROVE ON TO UDINE AND ARRIVED THE NEXT DAY. MARIO'S JUST GREAT! BLOOD IS INDEED THICKER THAN WATER!



For the scenes below, play Variation 19 of Bach's Goldberg Variations.

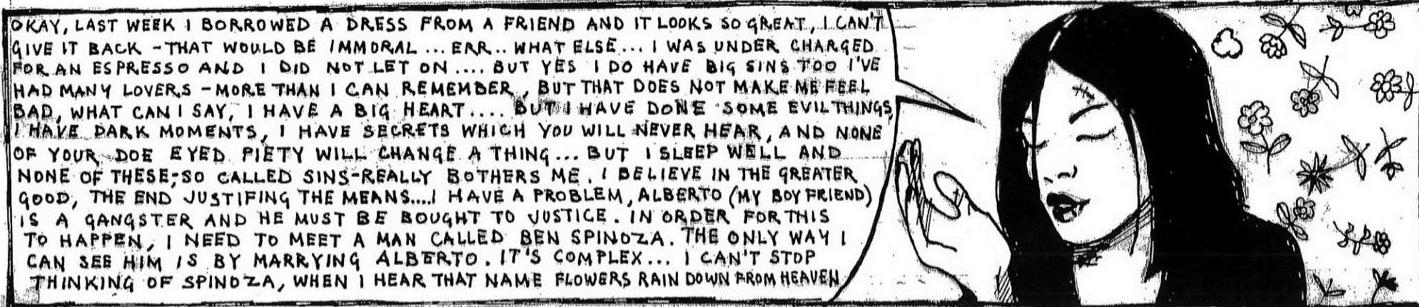






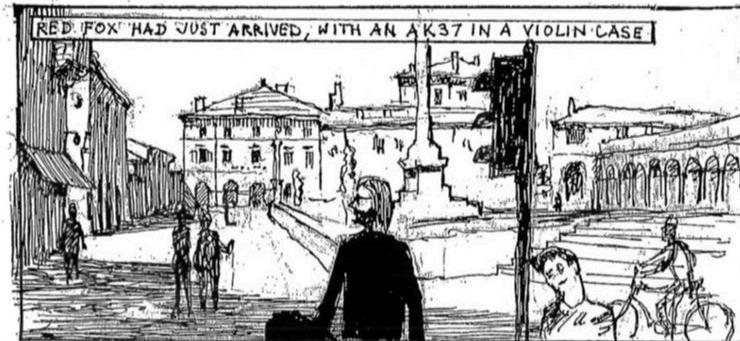
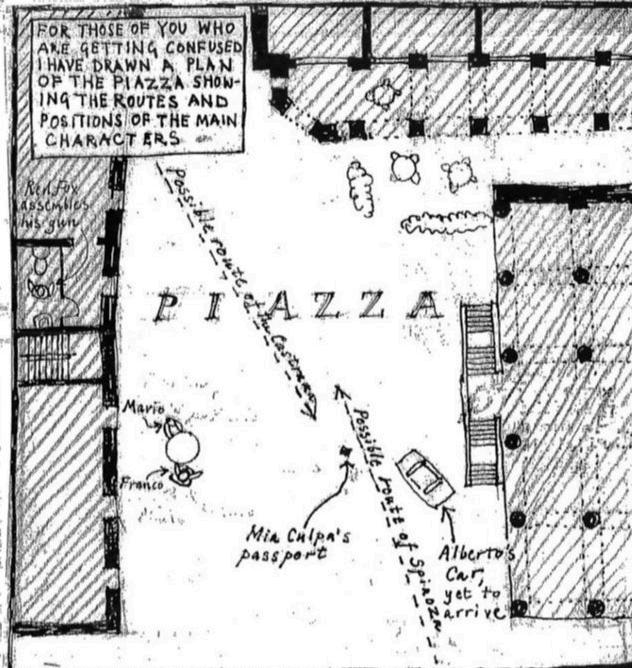
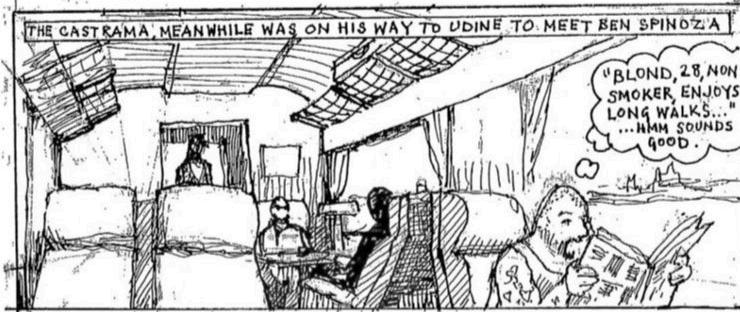
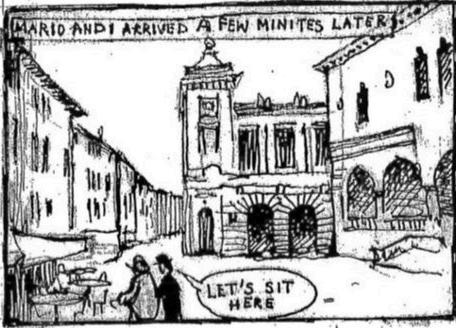
NOTHING BETWEEN SPINUTTO
AND SPINARTI... THAT MEANS WE
HAVE NO FILE ON SPINOZA... WHICH IS
ODD, IF WE HAVE NO FILE, HOW
COME ALBERTO KNOWS HE'S A
DANGEROUS MAN. THIS IS ALL
VERY FISHY, I WONDER WHAT
THAT RAT BAG IS UP TO.
I'LL GO AND ASK.





ST PAUL'S CATHEDRAL, LONDON...THE UNRIVALED MASTERPIECE OF ENGLISH ARCHITECTURE. IN THIS REMARKABLE EDIFICE IS A LIBRARY AND HERE MIA CULPA IS RESEARCHING FOR HER PHD ON TIE POLO'S FRESCOS. IN PALAZZO PAPALIARE (NOW THE ARCHIEPISCOPAL PALACE) IN... AS I AM SURE YOU KNOW... UDINE.

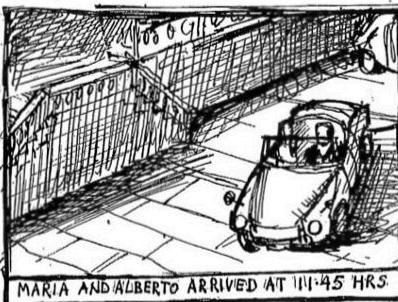




ALBERTO AND MARIA WERE MARRIED PRIVATELY ON 20th SEPTEMBER, IN SE MARIA DELLA GRAZIE IN MILAN. NOT THE BIG AFFAIR MARIA HAD HOPED FOR, BUT THE INTIMACY CREATED AN UNEXPECTED AIR OF JOY AND ROMANCE WHICH WAS BOTH SURPRISING AND INTOXICATING PERHAPS SHE DID LOVE ALBERTO AFTER ALL.....(MUSIC FOR THIS SECTION IS DIANA ROSS'S 'REMEMBER ME')-POIGNANT...NO?



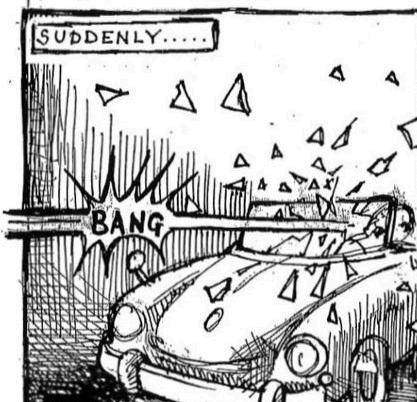
THEY HOPPED INTO ALBERTOS CAR
AND DROVE STRAIGHT TO UDINE



MARIA AND ALBERTO ARRIVED AT 111-45 HRS



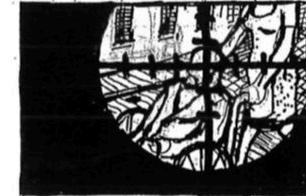
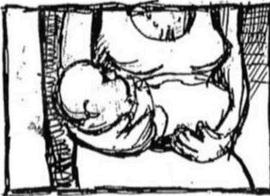
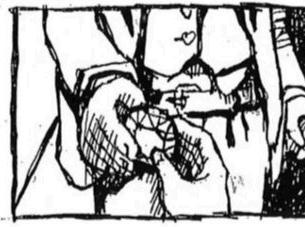
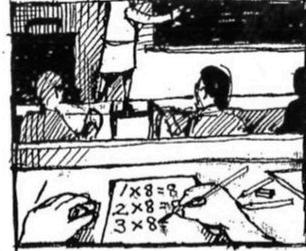
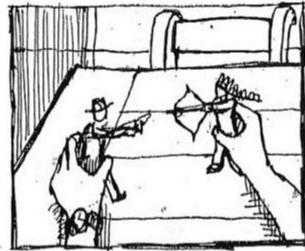
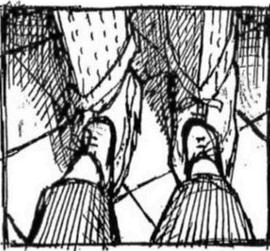
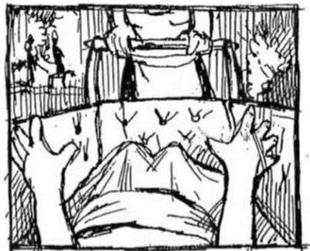
MEANWHILE RED FOX ASSEMBLES HIS GUN



SUDDENLY.....

...ALBERTO WAS DEAD!

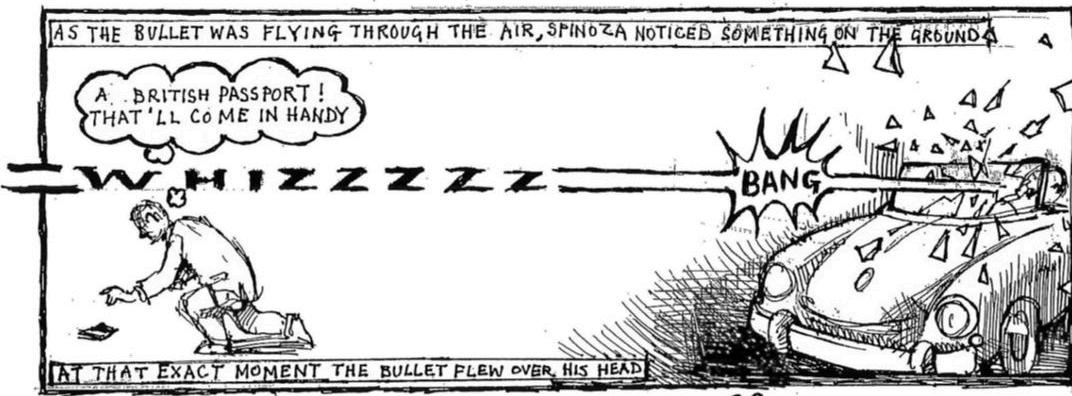
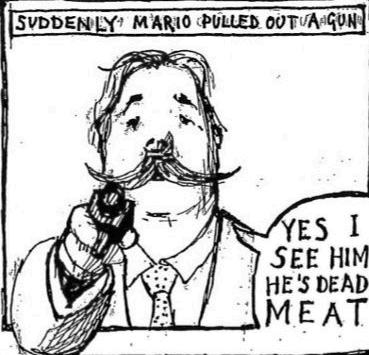




AS ALBERTO'S LIFE EBBED AWAY, HIS CONSCIOUSNESS REDUCING WITH EVERY BEAT OF HIS HEART, HIS WHOLE LIFE FLASHED BEFORE HIM...IMPORTANT, IRRELEVANT AND PRECIOUS MEMORIES SEEMED TO FLOOD BACK INTO HIS MIND LIKE AN OVER CROWDED STAGE

ALWAYS END WITH FLOWERS. OPERA AND LIFE - HOW SIMILAR THEY ARE - THOUGHT ALBERTO, YOU PAY THROUGH THE NOSE FOR SOMETHING YOU SHOULD ENJOY BUT SOMEHOW CAN'T - BUT - CARDS ON THE TABLE - HOW FUN IS IT WATCHING A FAT BIRD SHRIEKING HER GUTS OUT - IF I WANTED THAT I WOULD HAVE STAYED AT HOME IN ANCONA AND LISTENED TO MY MAMA

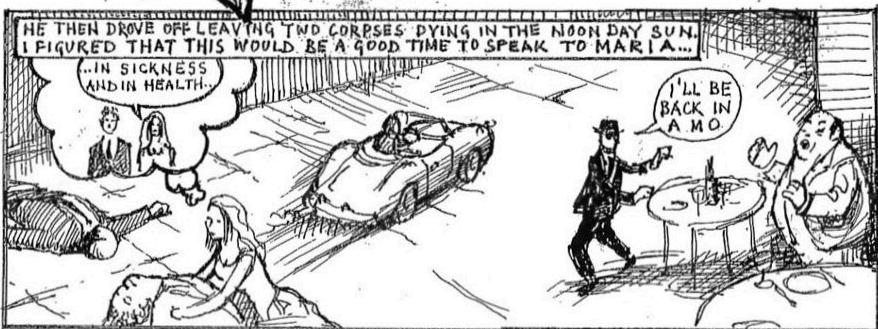
EH? HOW DID THAT HAPPEN? RED FOX HASN'T YET FIRED HIS GUN! THIS IS JUST SO OUT OF WHACK!.... HOW VERY CONFUSING! ALBERTO'S DEAD, BUT WHO SHOT HIM.... LET'S PUT THE CLOCK BACK AND ROLL THE SCENE AGAIN.... OKAY GUYS, SORRY, ONE MORE TIME, GET IN YOUR POSITIONS, DRIVE THE CAR OUT, IT SHOULD BE THE LAST TIME. COSTUME PEOPLE, ALBERTO NEEDS A NEW SHIRT.. GOOD. OKAY, LET'S START, FRANCO AND MARIO IN THE RESTAURANT ACTION!



UNCLE MARIO, OR SHOULD I SAY "THE SHADOW'S" BLOOD WAS UP HE WANTED SPINOZA DEAD! HE STARTED SHOOTING AGAIN - WHAT A MANIAC! THE SECOND SHOT KNOCKED HIM OUT CLEAN.... BUT HANG ON, WHO'S THE GIRL IN THE WEDDING DRESS, I RECOGNISE HER! SHE'S THAT POLICE WOMAN. IMET IN MILAN, WHO GOT SHOT IN VENICE. COME TO THINK OF IT, SHE DID ASK ME ABOUT SPINOZA - I MUST GET TO THE BOTTOM OF THIS!



LEAVING HER HUSBAND TO DIE!! SHE THEN STARTED TO ATTEND ON SPINOZA. SHE SEEMED LISTLESS, WAS THIS ONE OF THOSE LOVE AT FIRST SIGHT SCENARIOS I HAD READ ABOUT IN DINE STORE NOVELS?



IN DEED IT DID!!! WITH THOSE TWO WORDS MARIA REMEMBERED EVERYTHING, THE MURDER OF MARIO, THE SPINOZA BOSSIER ALBERTO'S TRIGGER HAPPY ANTICS AT THE OPERA, IT ALL WAS CLEAR. BETWEEN THEM THEY COULD GET TO THE BOTTOM OF THIS MYSTERY.

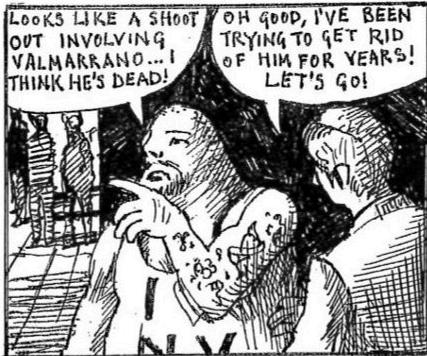


MARIA AND I WENT TO GET HELP LEAVING TWO DEAD BODIES AND A BRITISH PASSPORT ON THE SCENE OF THE CRIME DA DA - DA!





THE CASTRAMA WAS WRONG, THERE WERE TWO BARS IN THE PIAZZA, AND IT WAS AT THE SECOND ONE THAT HE GREETED HIS OLD FRIEND AND BROTHER LEONI BEN SPINOZA. WHO? I SAW HIM SHOT WITH MY OWN EYES! I HEAR YOU SAY... WELL DID YOU? READ ON, ALL WILL BE REVEALED!



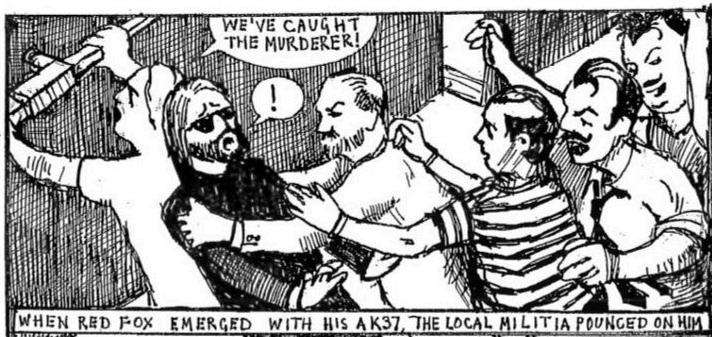
LOOKS LIKE A SHOT OUT INVOLVING VALMARRANO... I TRYING TO GET RID OF HIM FOR YEARS! LET'S GO!



SHOUT IF YOU SEE A PHARMACY, I NEED TO PICK UP SOME HAND CREAM

SORRY CHUM! WE AIN'T GOT THE TIME, I'VE ARRANGED TO MEET FALCONETTO IN A FEW MINUTES.

THEY HEAD OFF TO SEE THE TIEPOLOS



MEANWHILE



I DON'T THINK HE'LL COME... DO YOU LIKE TIEPOLO?

DESPITE NOT BEING A FAN OF THE ROCOCO, I LOVE TIEPOLO, SUCH JOY, SUCH ÉLAN AND ABOVE ALL A LOVE OF LIFE

IN PALAZZO PARTIARCALE A FEW TOURISTS ADMIRE THE TIEPOLOS



PLEASE! PUT A SOCK IN IT BEFORE I THROW- UP!

WHAT AN AMAZING STORY! I ALWAYS HAD MY SUSPICIONS ABOUT ALBERTO!

NOT FAR AWAY



CONFUSION, BEWILDERMENT AND PERPLEXITY REIGNED IN UDINE POLICE STATION.

AND SPINOZA DEAD! I WAS SUPPOSED TO MEET HIM LATER TODAY!

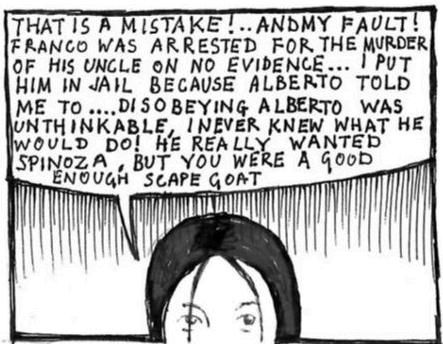
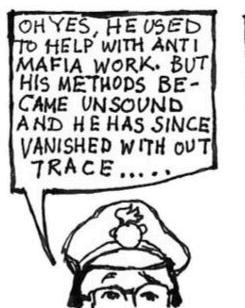
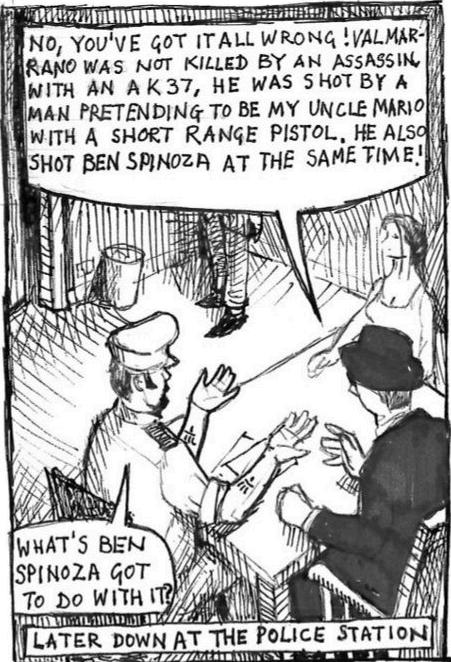
THIS WAS A TRICKY ONE!...

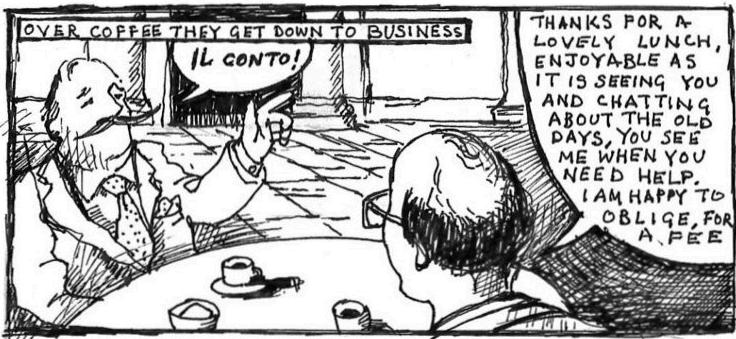
THIS DOES NOT MAKE ANY SENSE!

TWO MEN SHOT IN COLD BLOOD.

THE BULLETS DON'T MATCH THE WEAPONS

AND WHO IS THIS MIA CULPA?! ALL VERY STRANGE!





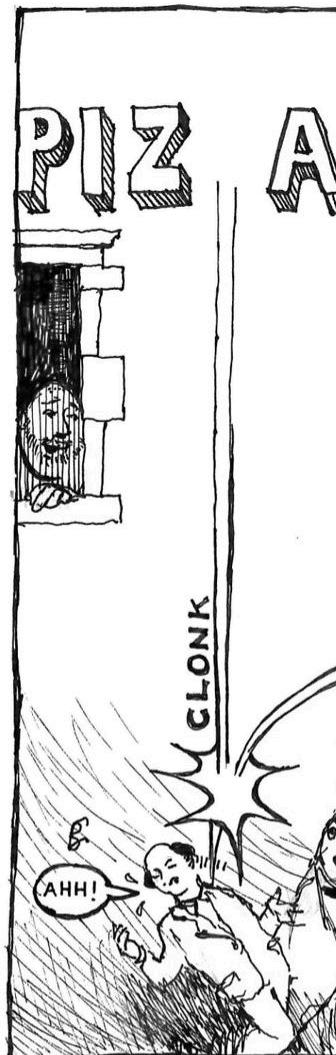
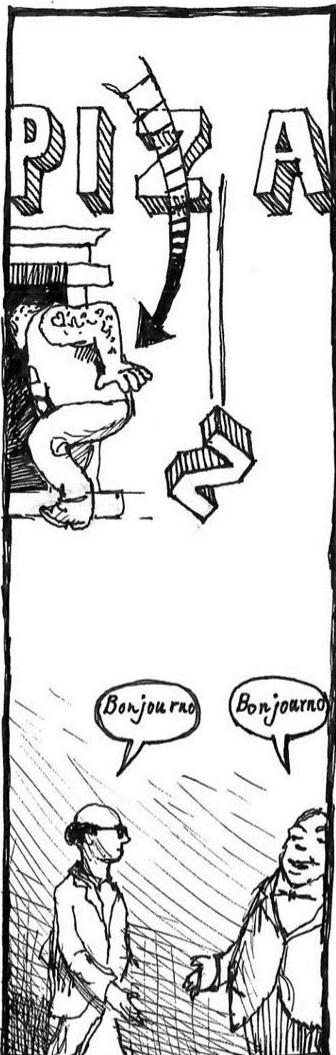
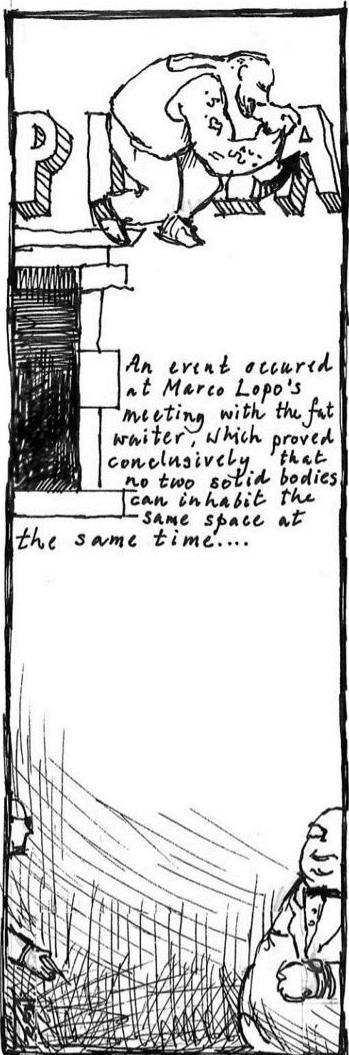
THANKS FOR A
LOVELY LUNCH,
ENJOYABLE AS
IT IS SEEING YOU
AND CHATTING
ABOUT THE OLD
DAYS, YOU SEE
ME WHEN YOU
NEED HELP.
I AM HAPPY TO
OBLIGE, FOR
A FEE



THE FAT WAITER,
AT THE RESTAU-
RANT, GIVE
HIM AN OFFER
HE CAN'T
REFUSE!



I'M SORRY
YOU'LL NEED
TO SPEAK UP SIR!



MONSIGNOR RACELLI
MAKES A PRIVATE CALL
TO THE JUDGE....



RED FOX
MUST NOT BE
CONVICTED!
HE COULD
SINK
US!

Capisco!

IN A COURT ROOM NOT
FAR AWAY DERRICK,
HAPPY (AKA RED FOX)
IS TRIED FOR MURDER



WERE YOU IN SOUND
MIND AT THE TIME?

YES... I SAW HIM AS
CLEARLY AS I SEE
YOU NOW!



I DON'T BELIEVE A WORD OF IT.
THE MOUSTACHED MAN IS
A FIGMENT OF YOUR
IMAGINATION



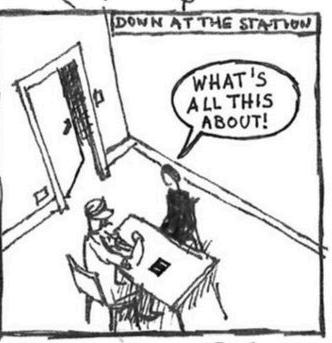
RED FOX WALKED
OUT OF THE COURT ROOM
OUT AS AN INNOCENT
MAN. THE...



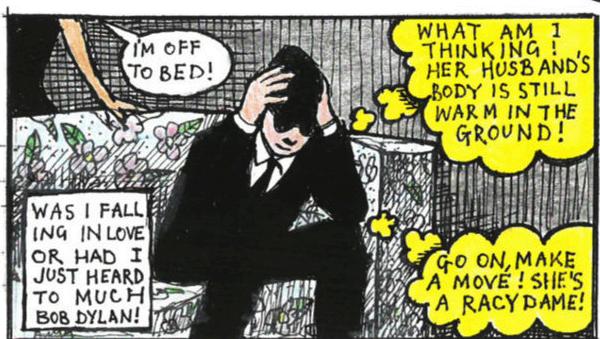
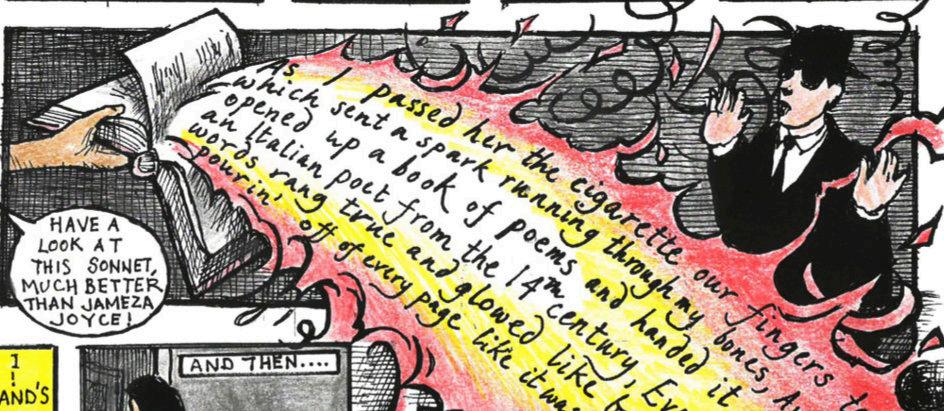


'IS THAT ENOUGH OF THE TRUFFLE RITUAL? GOOD! I GUESS THESE OVERPRICED HUNKS OF SHIT NEED CAREFUL MARKETING! HERE'S THE DEAL, YOUR MAN NEVER MET THE WITNESS, UNFORTUNATELY HE DIED FROM A COLLISION WITH A DESCENDING 'Z', A FEW MINUTES PRIOR TO THEIR RENDEZ VOUS'. AN UNUSUAL CAUSE OF DEATH, WHICH I AM SURE TICKLED THE CORONER AS HE FILLED IN THE FORMS, I DIGRESS... FORTUNATELY THE POLICE SEEM TO THINK YOU ARE A FIGMENT OF MARIA PISANI'S IMAGINATION AND THE BLAME HAS BEEN PUT ON MIA CULPA - AN ENGLISH TOURIST WHO DROPPED HER PASSPORT AT THE SCENE OF THE CRIME... ONLY FALCONETTO, PISANI AND A FAT WAITER KNOW YOU DID IT!





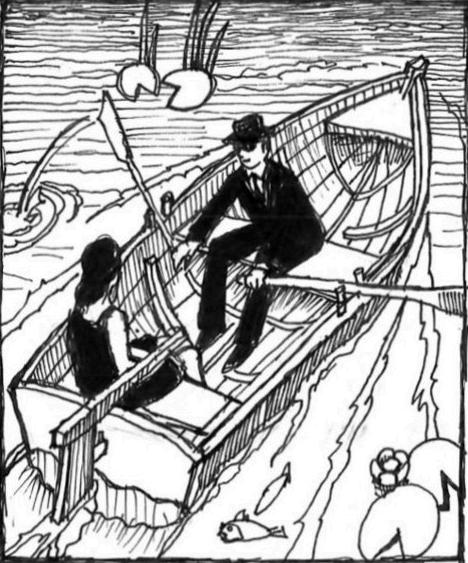
I HAD NOWHERE TO STAY, SO MARIA SAID I COULD SLEEP ON HER SOFA. LOOKING BACK ON IT, I THINK SHE WAS LONELY. WHAT WITH ALBERTO'S DEATH 'N' ALL.....

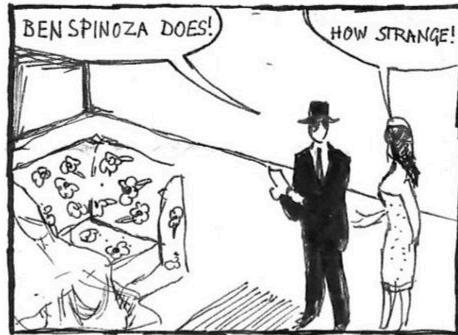
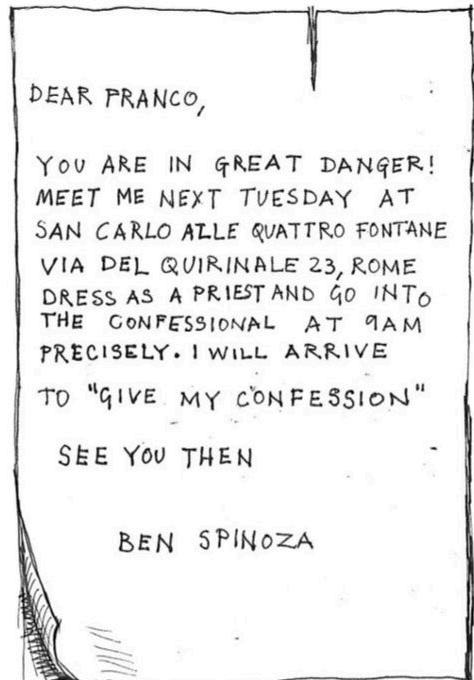


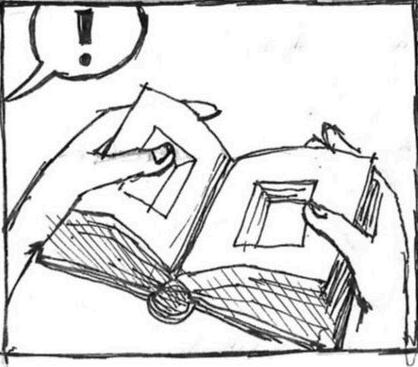
MY HEART WAS GOING BOOM BAD-DA BOOM BAD-DA BOOM BAD-DA BOOM - BAD-DA... (FADE OUT BAD-DA BOOM, FADE IN "THE CARPENTERS")



"...WHY DO BIRDS SUDDENLY APPEAR, EVERY TIME YOU ARE NEAR, THAT'S WHY WE LONG TO BE, CLOSE TO YOU....ON THE DAY THAT YOU WERE BORN THE ANGELS GOT TOGETHER AND DECIDED TO MAKE A DREAM COME TRUE, SO THEY SPRINKLED MOON DUST IN YOUR HAIR.....

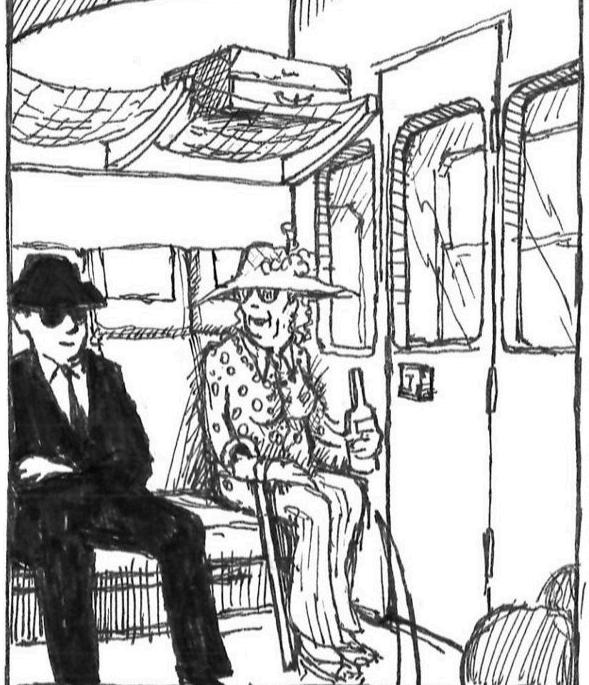




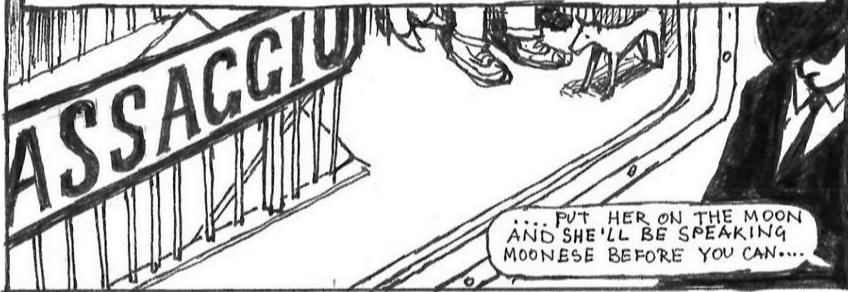


I GOT AN EXPRESS TRAIN TO ROME.
UNFORTUNATELY I SAT NEXT TO THE CHAMPION
CHATTER BOX OF THE NEW ENGLAND STATES
SO I JUST PLACED MY THOUGHTS ELSEWHERE
AND NODDED AND SMILED FROM TIME TO TIME

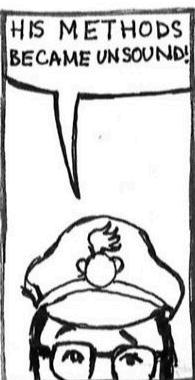
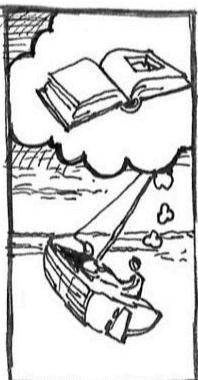
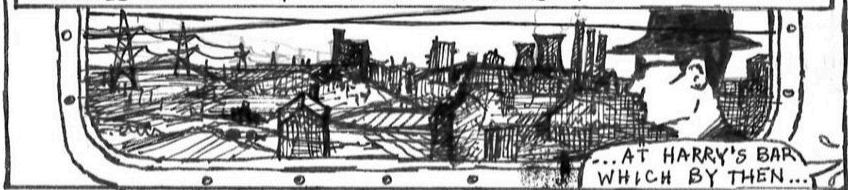
I FELL ASLEEP AT A TOWN CALLED SOTTOPASSAGGIO. AN HOUR LATER,
I WOKE UP ONLY TO FIND WE WERE STILL AT SOTTOPASSAGGIO, IT'S
SUPPOSED TO BE AN EXPRESS TRAIN! BUT "IN ITALIA ESPRESSO È SOLO CAFÉ!"

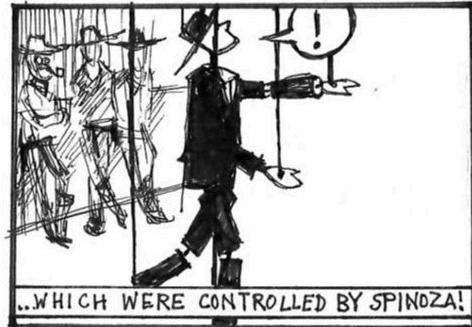
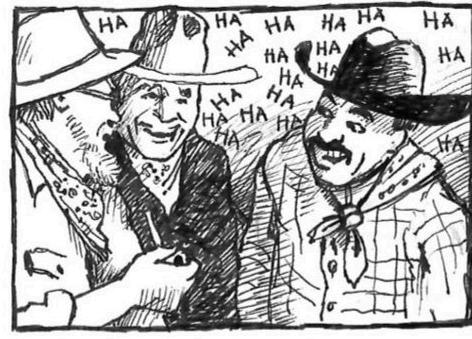
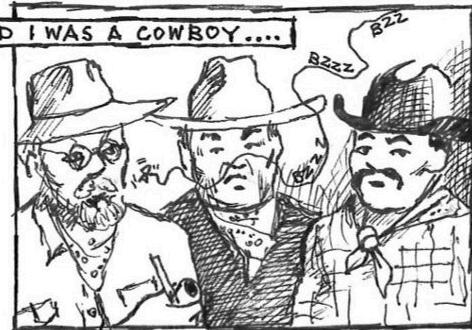


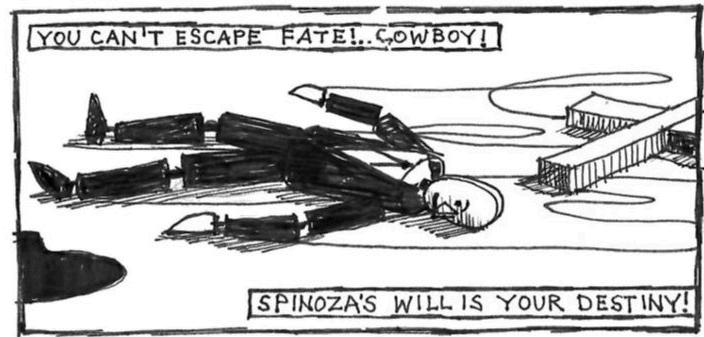
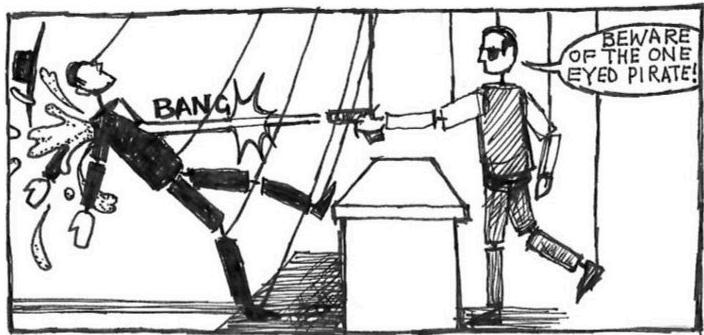
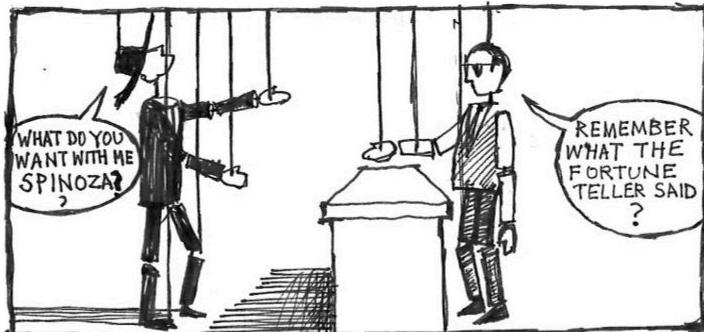
"...AND HE CAME BACK LATER THAT AFTERNOON
AND SAID "I'VE NAMED HIM "CASPER SALADIN"
"CASPER SALADIN", I SAID "PLEASE TELL ME
YOU ARE JOKING!" AND SO I LEAPED OUT OF
MY HOSPITAL BED, RAN DOWN TO THE MAIRIE
AND RENAMED HIM "NICOLI" WHICH IF
NOTHING ELSE IS AN INTERNATIONAL NAME..."



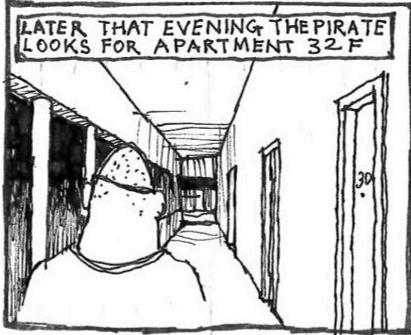
AS THE FOOT HILLS OF THE ALPS GAVE WAY TO THE GOLDEN LANDSCAPES OF TUSCANY
I STARTED TO PIECE TOGETHER ALL I KNEW ABOUT BEN SPINOZA...



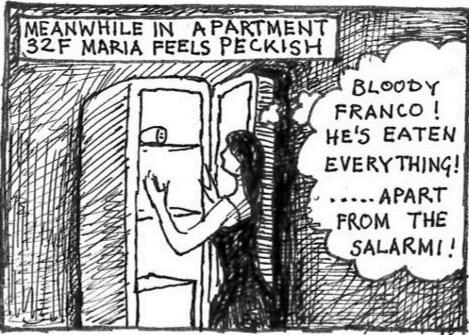




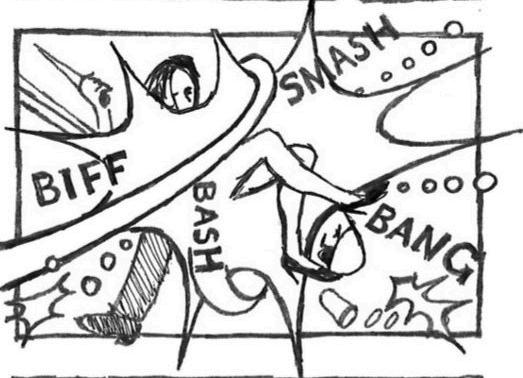
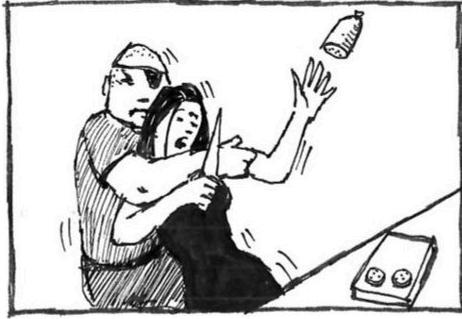
LATER THAT EVENING THE PIRATE LOOKS FOR APARTMENT 32 F



MEANWHILE IN APARTMENT 32F MARIA FEELS PECKISH



AS SHE SLICES, HER MIND DRIFTS BACK TO WHAT THE FORTUNE TELLER SAID "BEWARE THE ONE EYED PIRATE"



That's all folks
(for now)

best wishes
Franco Falconetto