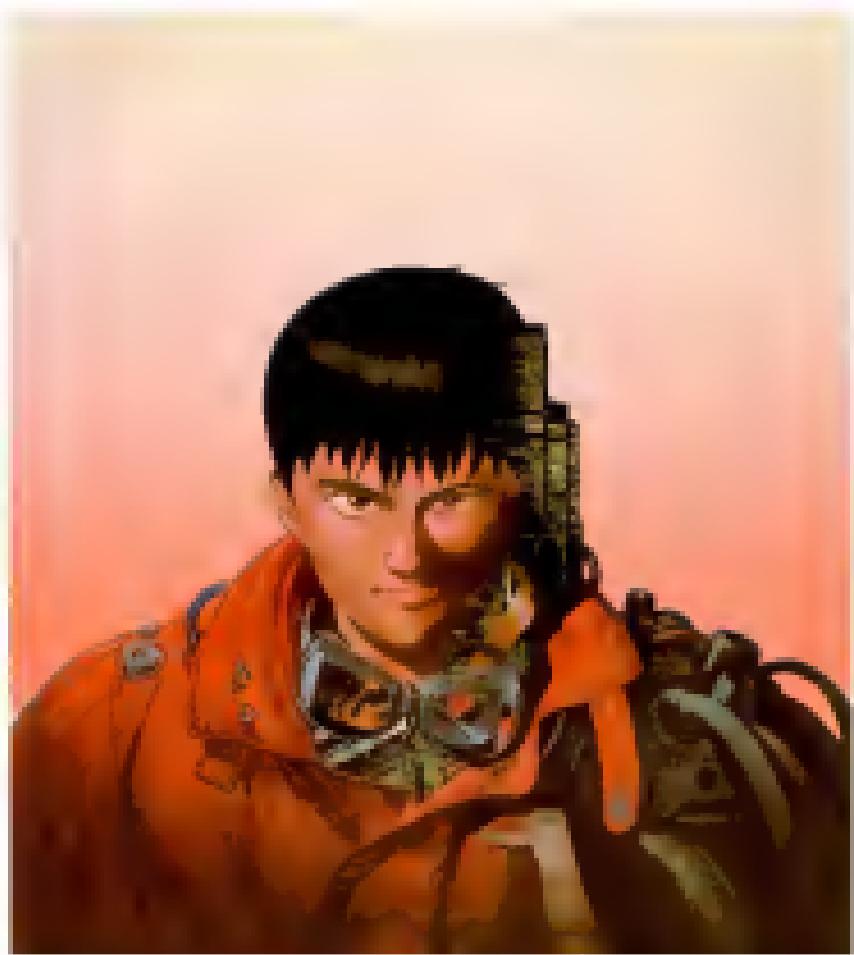


AKIRA

BY KATSUHIRO OTOMO

BOOK ONE



This is number 17471 of one thousand five hundred
in the limited leather-bound edition of
KATHARINO OTTOBO'S ALBA, BOOK ONE



AKIRA & OTOMO

In 1970, Japan's comic magazine industry was divided roughly into two types of publications. One was for juvenile readers, from children up to middle teens. The other was for an adult audience consisting mainly of young salaried women. Kadokawa, Ltd., one of the country's largest publishers, felt that there was an intermediate group being missed: high school and college students. A readership sensitive to new trends developing in film, music, fashion and forms of the arts and entertainment.

Young Magazine, a 300 page bimonthly, was designed for this potential audience. But finding exactly the right material to capture the imagination of a new readership proved difficult. For two years **Young Magazine** struggled. During this time it attracted the attention of artist writer Katsuhiro Otomo.

Since the publication of his first work in 1973—adapted the short novel **Mausu Fukusen by Fyodor Dostoevsky**—Otomo's reputation has steadily grown based on a number of unique and intense comic short stories (20 to 30 pages in length rather than the hundreds, sometimes thousands, that an ongoing saga can run in Japanese comic). Some of these dealt

with fantasy and science-fiction themes, many with slices of life contemporary themes, all had a visual spirit and rhythm that reflected Otomo's feelings for new media generated medium jazz.

With the publication of **Bessei** in 1983, Otomo enjoyed his greatest success. This 250 page comic—which centers upon a conflict between two dwellers in a modern day high-rise apartment complex, an old man and young girl each possessing deadly psychic powers—became a best seller and went on to win Japan's science fiction Grand Prix, for story of the year (previously this prize had only been awarded to novels).

The success of **Bessei** and readers to an earlier work—the still to be completed comic **Persepolis**—dealing with a human versus mega-computer theme, led Otomo to consider doing an even larger scale science-fiction story.

The story was **Akira**. And because he had the new direction it was taking, **Young Magazine** was where Otomo chose to present this major work which when complete would be in six volume graphic novel!

Reader reaction to the first 25 page segment of the series to appear in **Young Magazine** was overwhelming. The material broke with tradition and touched a nerve. Circulation began to rise. The new audience had been found. Today there are about half a dozen titles like **Young Magazine**. **Young Magazine** and two others have a circulation of over one million. Traditionally in Japan, a

comes series first appears in installments in a weekly or biweekly magazine. When sufficient material has been published, the series is then collected into a book edition usually this would be about 240 pages and in a format the 18 x 11 inches larger but still similar in size to an American paper-back book. Here too, *Akira* begins with reception.

The first Japanese book edition was in a format closer in dimension to the magazine and (about the height and width of one of our comic books) and contained 260 pages. The title and author's name appeared on the cover in English, no Japanese lettering was used. The format and style grew out of Otomo's own concept of making the book edition similar in feeling to American comics. Book designer Akira Saito worked closely with Otomo to achieve the goal. Initial fears from Kadokawa's Sales Division over the wisdom of the design and packaging of the book faded as advance orders began to pour in. What was originally slated to be a 30,000 print run eventually shot up to nearly 300,000 copies. The first book edition of *Akira* became a runaway chart breaker.

That was in September of 1984. Three other volumes have come out each year since then. All have had the same sort of phenomenal reception. The fifth volume is complete, and will shortly see print. With print runs now at about half a million copies each, the complicated saga of *Akira* will have a total of two and a half million copies in print.

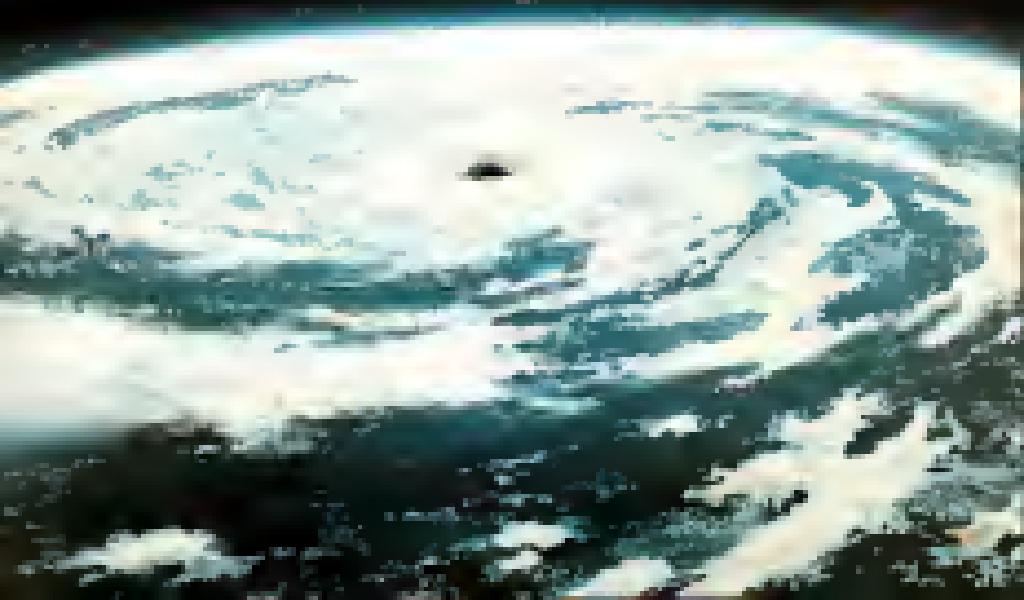
And that is not really the end.

Otomo, in addition to his comic work, is a designer of TV commercials for clients such as Sunstar, Canon, and Honda, and acted as director, screenwriter, designer, and illustrator on an animated film of *Akira* that has been playing the United States this year.

Otomo has also been very involved in the production of the English language version of *Akira* since this is the first time that his work has appeared in the United States in translation and also the first time it has appeared completely in color. His own studio, **MASH ROOM Co., Ltd.**, prepares the original artwork from which we reproduce Japanese comics are originally done to read from right to left and their dialogue balloons and sound effects are designed for lettering that reads vertically! Through Kadokawa's offices in New York and Tokyo with whom we work, Otomo sees the material at each stage of development, providing notes on the script adaptation by Jim O'Byrne and furnishing color guides to Steve Dill, who was his personal choice for colorist on the project.

The concern for all phases in the production of his work is certainly one of the factors in making *Akira* the phenomenon that it was for Japanese readers. The other factors are surely the artistry and imagination that is brought to the telling of the story. Now, thanks to Kadokawa Otomo and Kadokawa, Ltd., American readers can at long last share in that phenomenon.

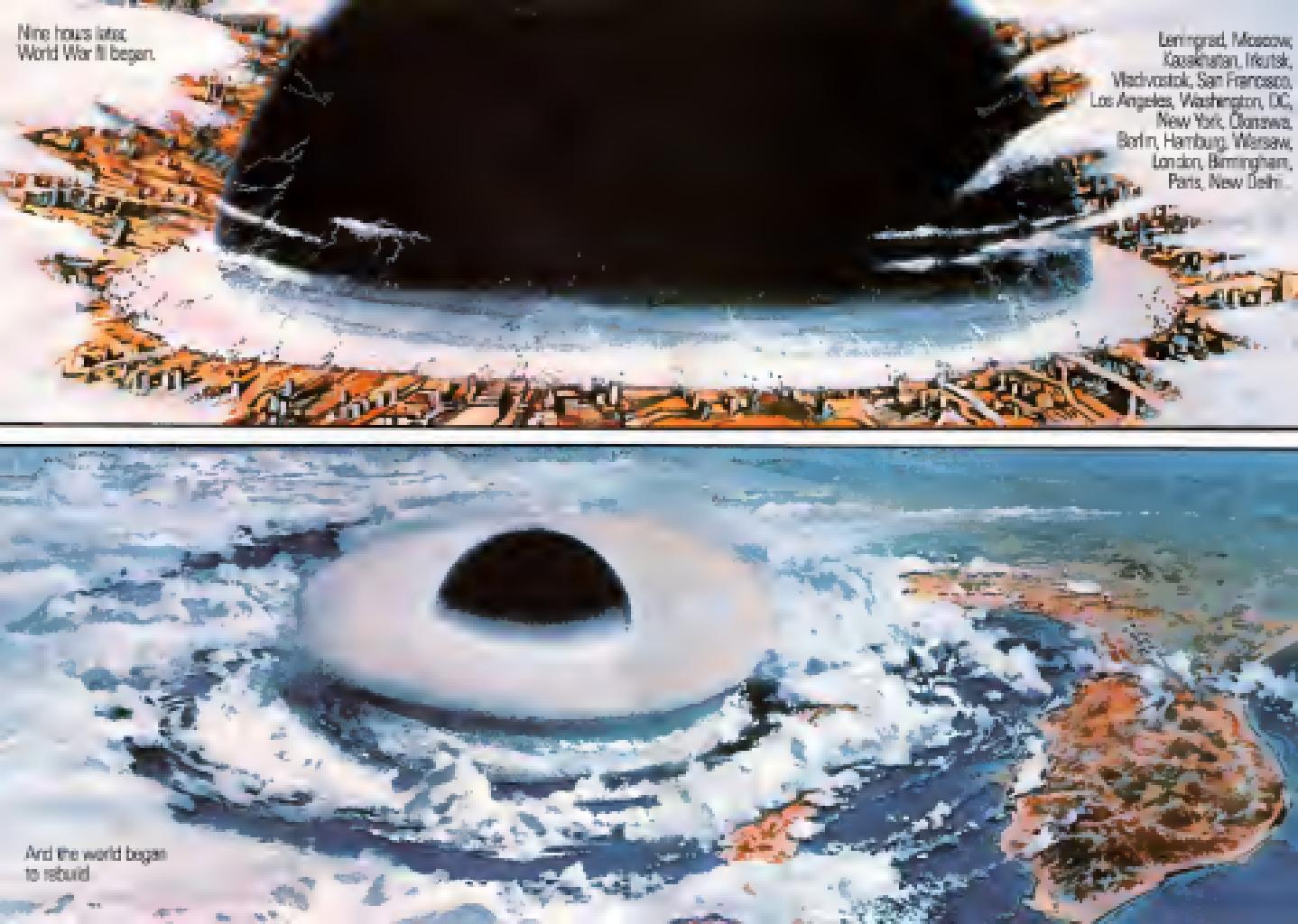
At 2:17 P.M.
on December 8th,
1932,
a new type
of bomb
exploded
over the
metropolitan
area of
Japan



AKIRA

BY KATSUHIRO OTOMO



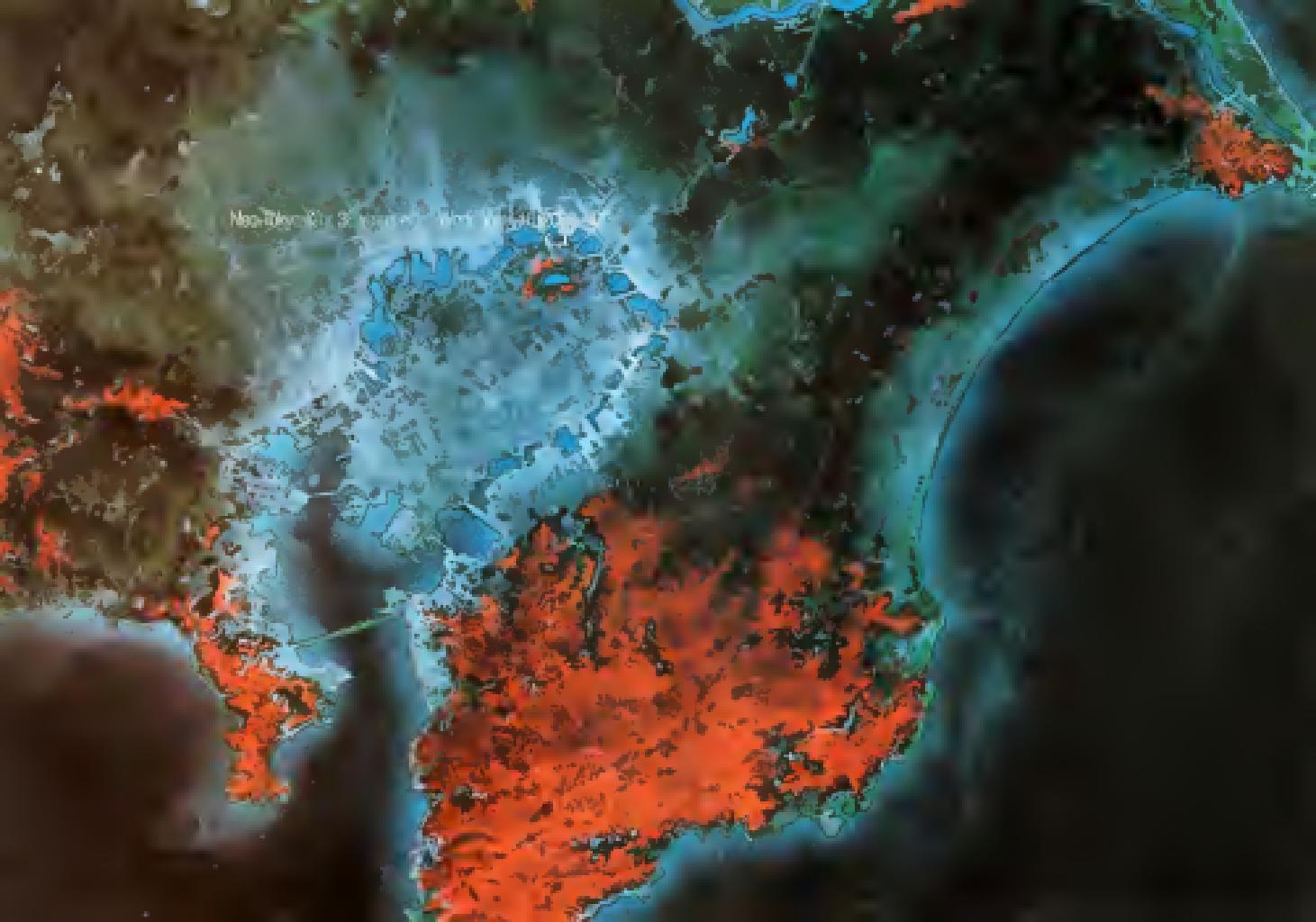


Nine hours later,
World War II began.

Leningrad, Moscow,
Kazakhstan, Irkutsk,
Vladivostok, San Francisco,
Los Angeles, Washington, DC,
New York, Okinawa,
Berlin, Hamburg, Warsaw,
London, Birmingham,
Paris, New Delhi...

And the world began
to rebuild.

Neo-Tokyo 3D Map - West Yotsuya

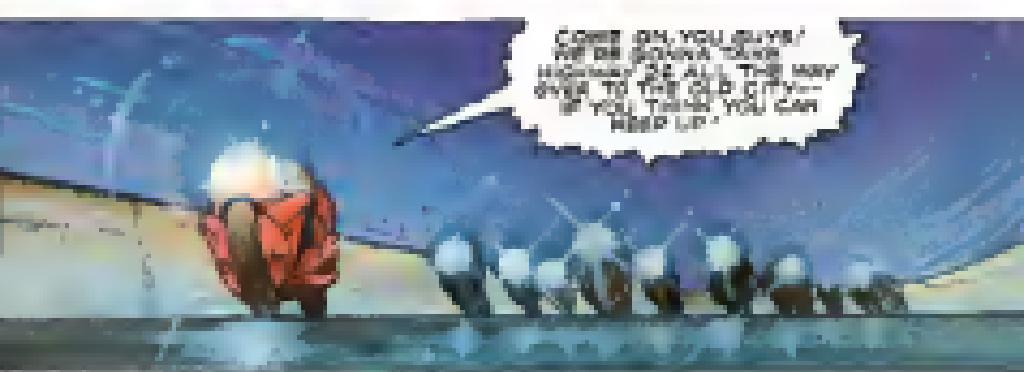


STUDENTS AT THE HOLLOW WOODSCHOOL, TEACHING SCHOOL, SAWED DOWN SO MUCH
TOO LITTLE TO SELL. THESE LITTLE ADAMAS AND THE FORESTED FOLIAGE THAT WOULD
PROTEC THE COTTAGE FROM STOPPED THEM...

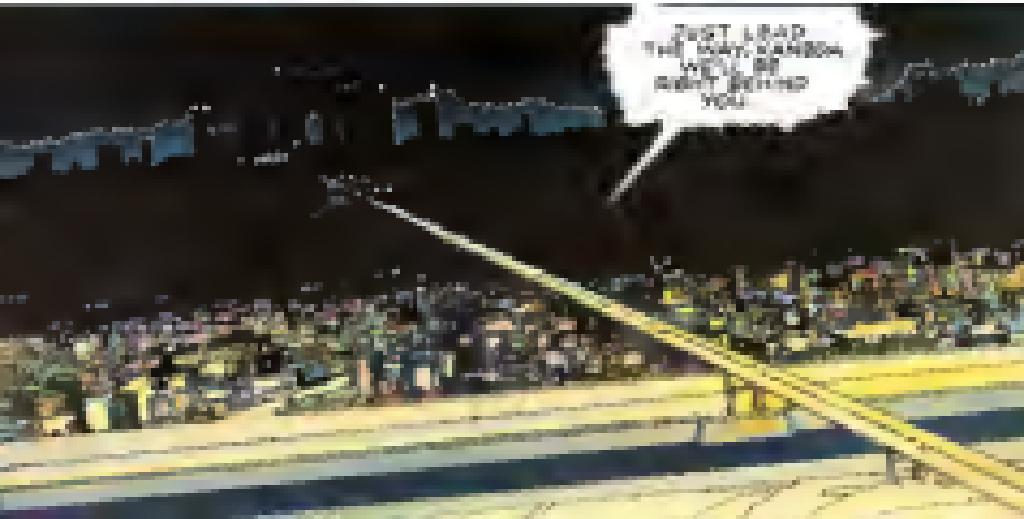




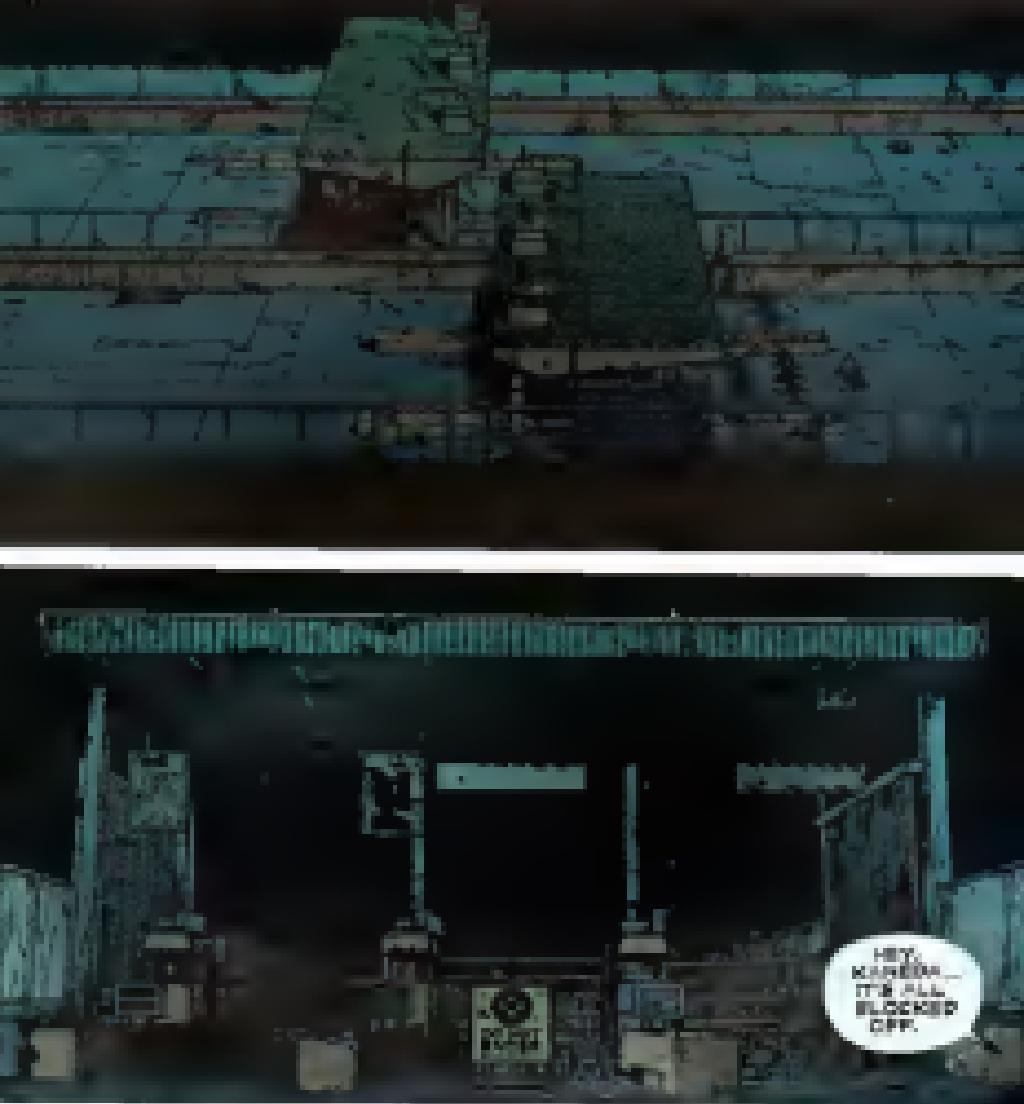
COME ON, YOU GUYS!
WE'RE GOING TO GET
HOME, OR AT LEAST
OVER TO THE OLD CITY.
IF YOU THINK YOU CAN
HEED ME.



JUST LEAP
THE ROOF, KAREN.
WE'LL BE
RIGHT BEHIND YOU.



TO A SECRET OF ULTRA-DISSOLUTION THAT THIS ONE'S GOTTA HAVE.



HEY,
KAREN—
IT'S ALL
BLOCKED
OFF.



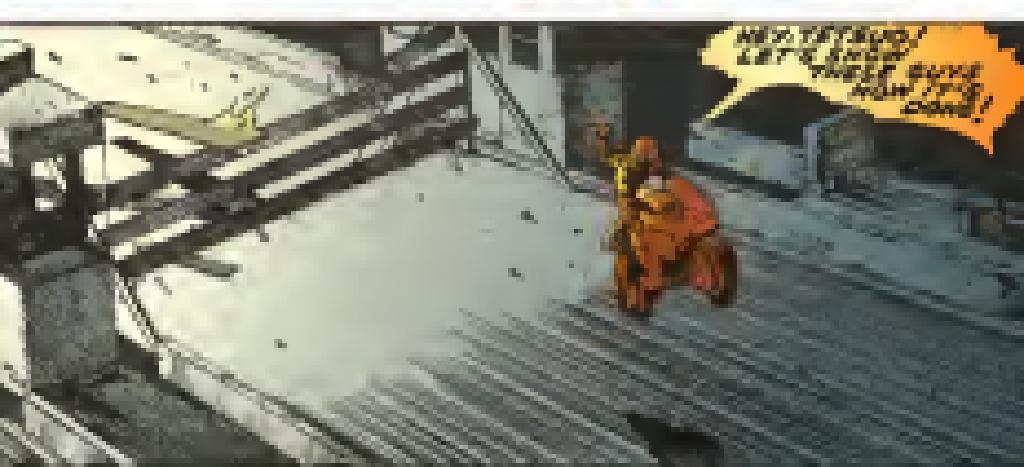
WE
DON'T
HAVE
TIME
FOR
THIS IN
A few
seconds.

KRUK

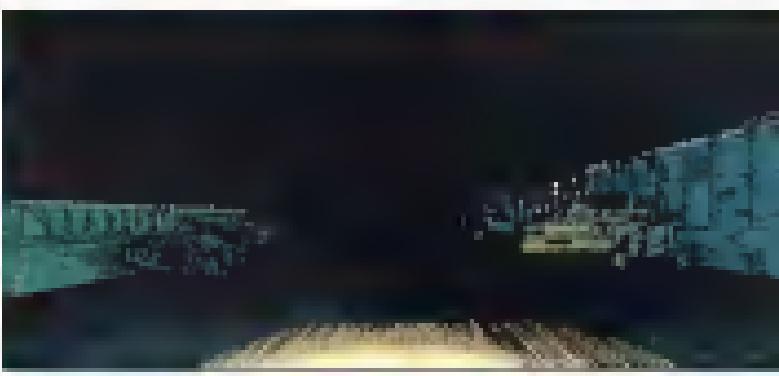


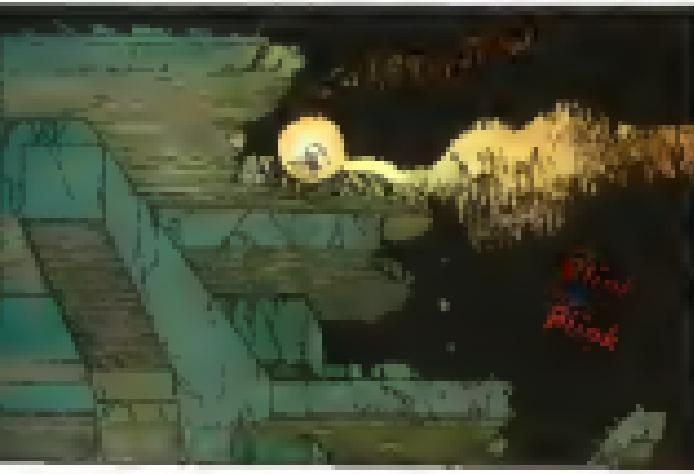


VRR RRRNNNN







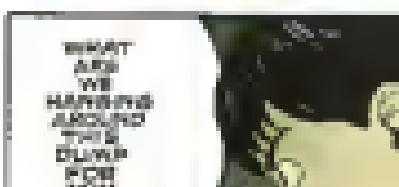
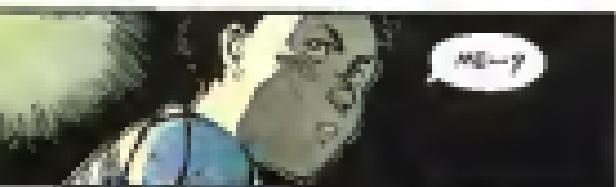
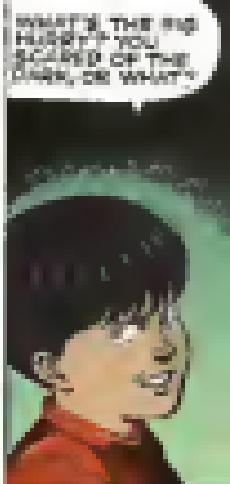




HEY,
WE WERE
GIVEN
AND WE
WHO
DO
STOP?

CALM
A HEAD
DOWN
AND
I CAN
FEAR
DEAD

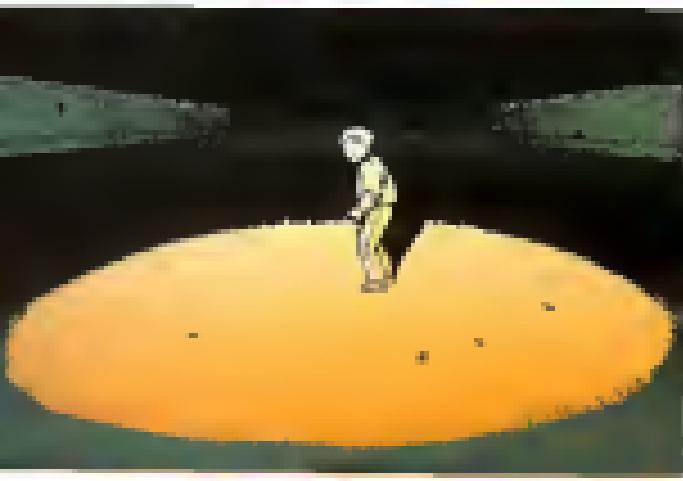
THIS
IS THE
HEART
OF ALL THE
DESTRUCTION
WHICH
BUT AT
THE AGE
WHICH THE
WORLD
HILL



COME
ON,
WE'RE
OUTTA
HERE!







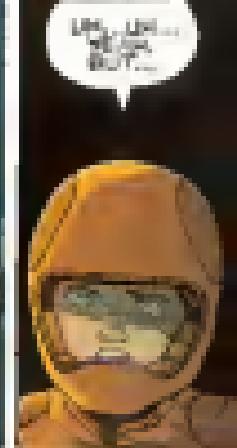


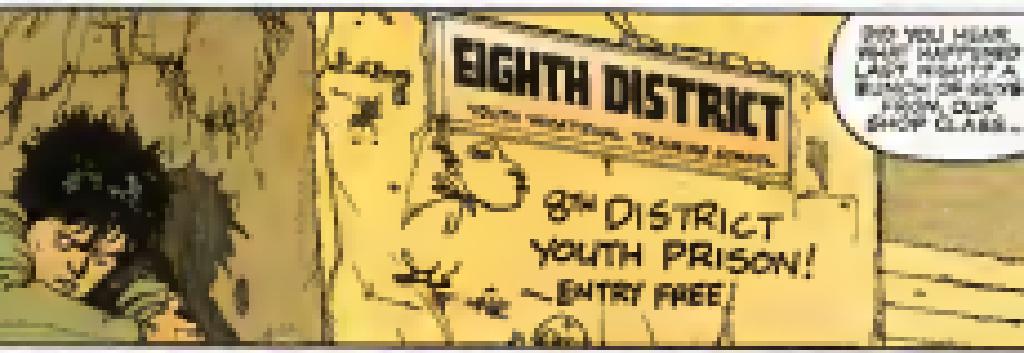












YOU YOUNG MAN
ARE OF COURSE ONLY
FIFTEEN YEARS OLD,
BUT YOU CAN STILL BE
TRIED IN A NORMAL
ADULT COURT...



IF YOU ARE
THOUGHT GUILTY
BY THE JUDGE
WHICH OFFENSES YOU
WILL BE SENT
HERE...

BECAUSE
YOU ARE RAISING
YOUTHFUL
UPON WHICH
WE CAN RELY

TO PUT AN
EDUCATIONAL
STUDENTS IN
A HARMLESS
ENVIRONMENT



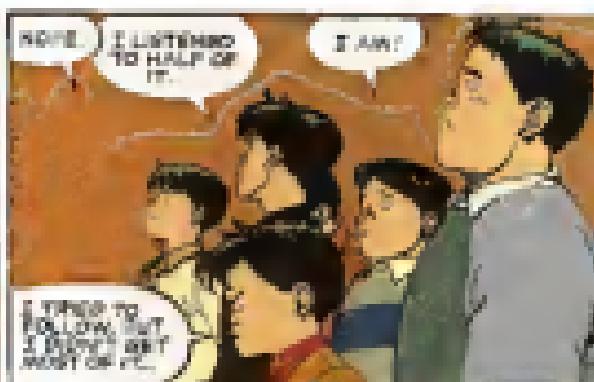
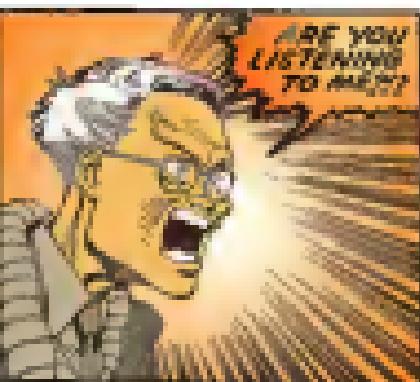
YOU ARE HERE
TO LEARN A TRADE,
BECOME
INDEPENDENTLY,
TO
LEARN TO BECOME
USEFUL MEMBERS
OF SOCIETY.

THIS PLACE IS
THE LAST CHANCE
YOU'LL HAVE!



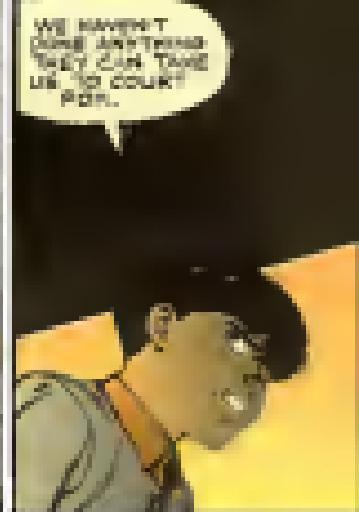
DON'T YOU
SEE EVEN
ROBERT
THAT?

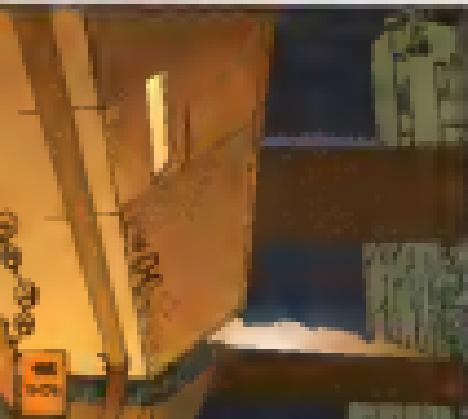


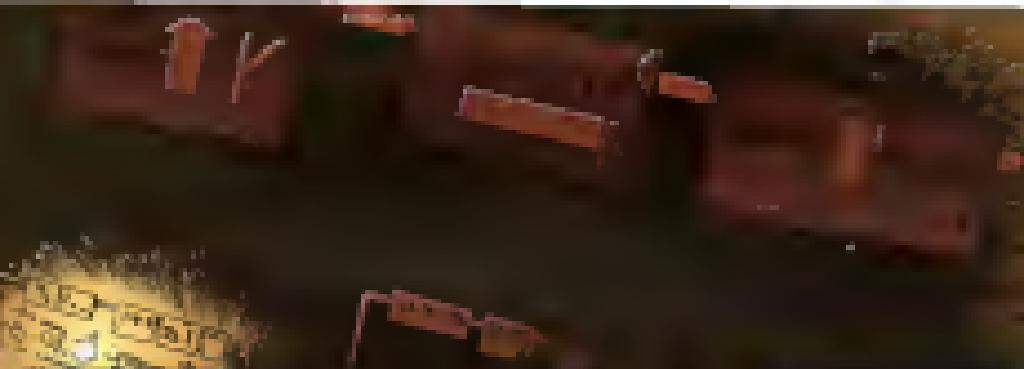




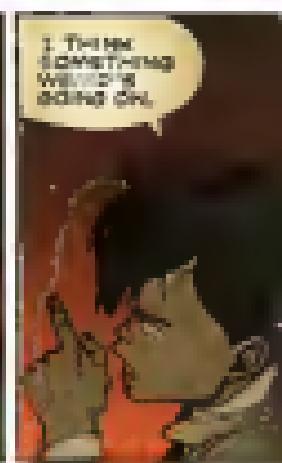


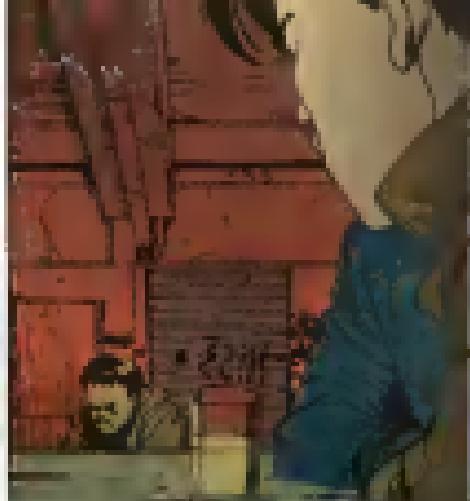


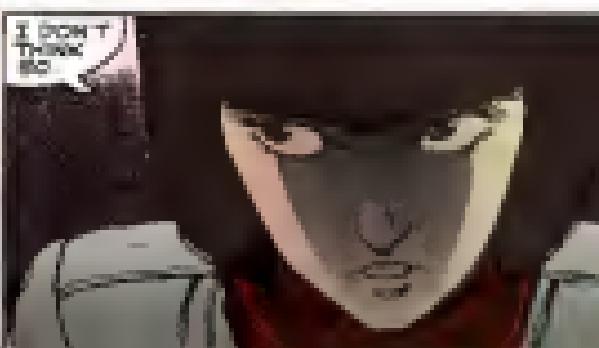
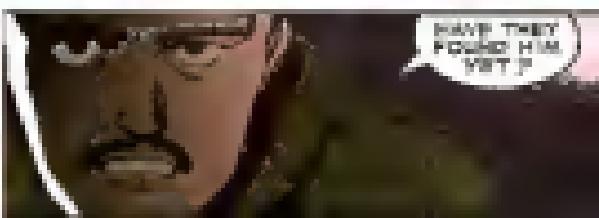






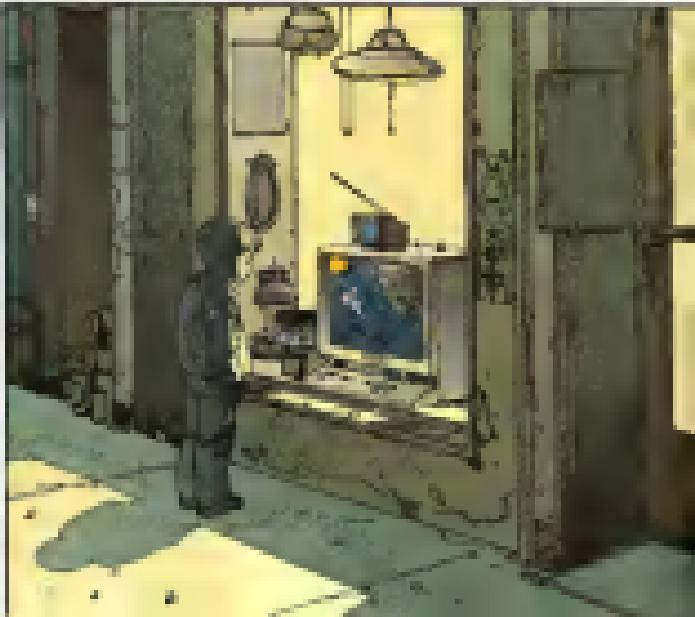
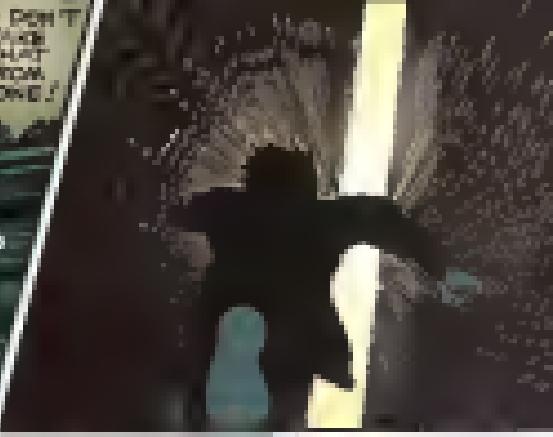


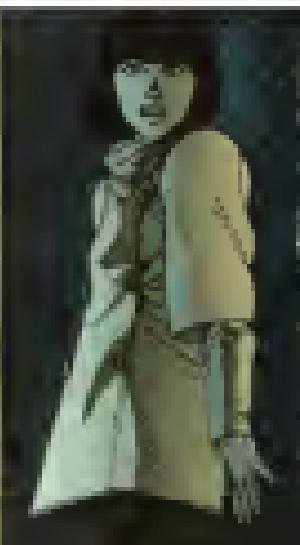














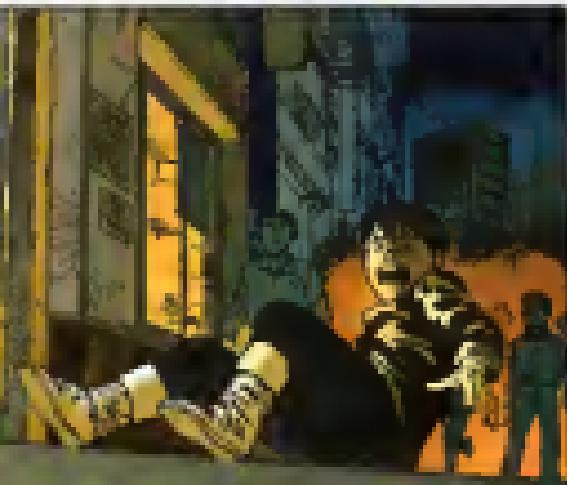












LOOK!
THAT'S A
GHOST!



HOME LIKE IT IS
IN THE SEVENTEENTH
DISTRICT.

EMERGENCY!
EMERGENCY?

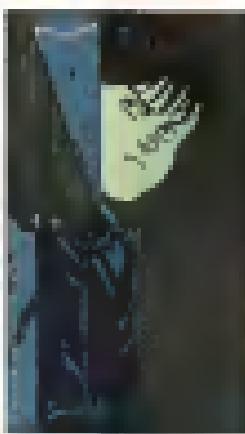


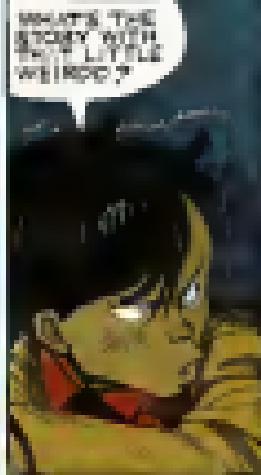
This is...
WE'RE GOING
TO DIE IN THE
SEVENTEENTH
DISTRICT!

WE'RE
CAUSED BY AN
EXPLOSION











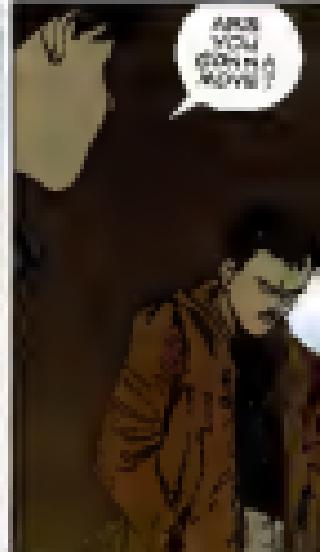
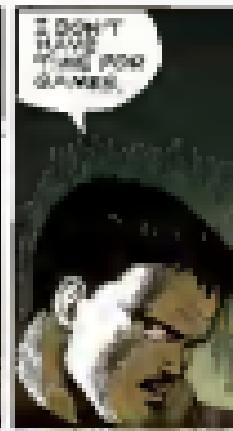
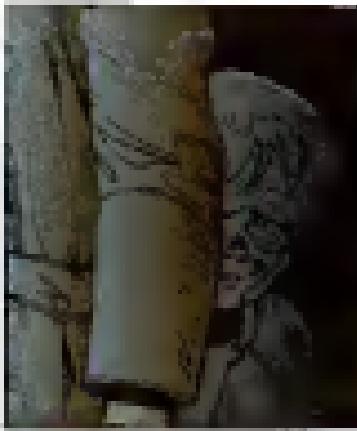
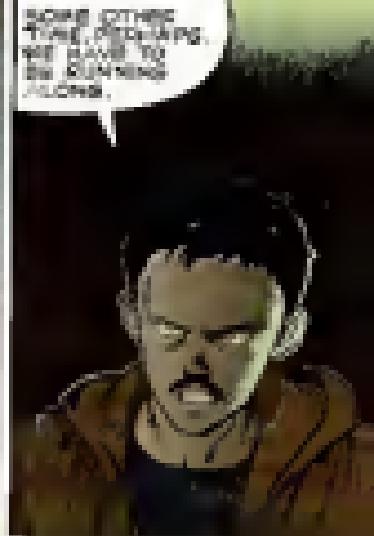




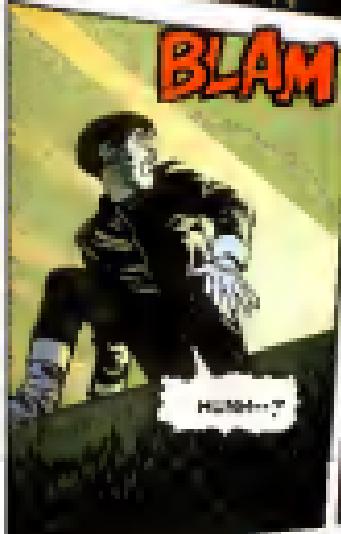


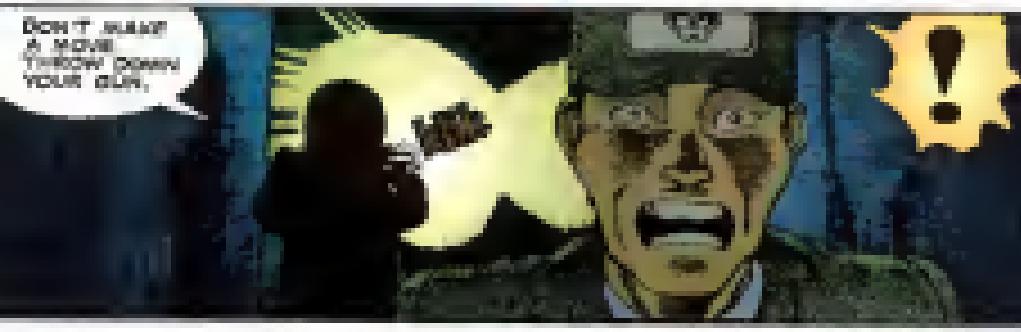


















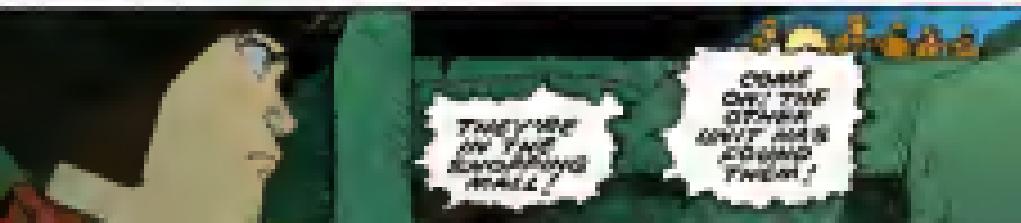
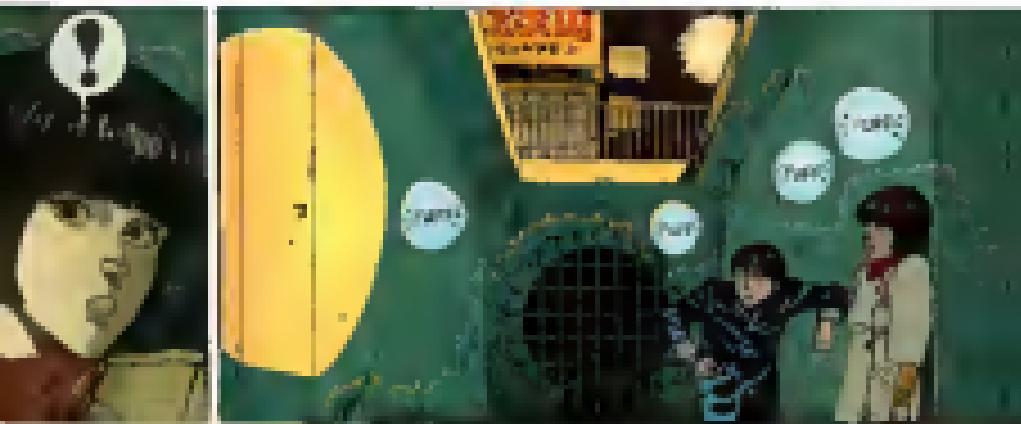
WE'LL
CONTACT LABO.
TELL HIM
WE'LL BE
RESCUING
MAGOG.

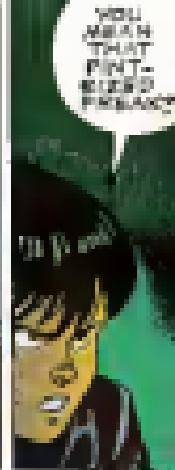


MAGOG
SUCCEDED WHERE
ONE HUNDRED
ARMED MEN HAVE
FAILED ME.

END OF PART
ONE
TYPE AND
COPY HERE

MAGOG







HALT

**NO VEHICLES
PERMITTED PAST
THIS POINT**

WARNING

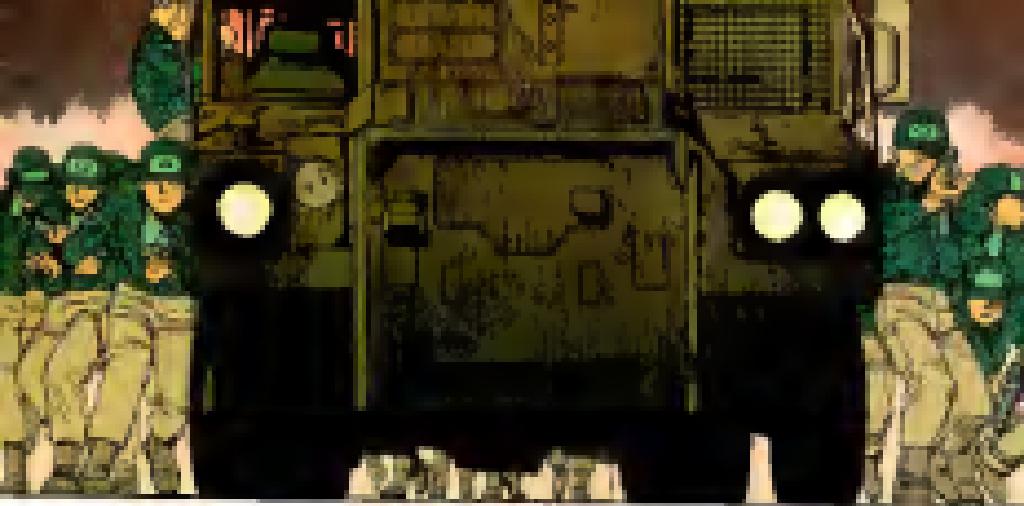
BUDDABL  **DABUDDA**





WE'VE RECEIVED
WORD WE'VE PARKED
DOWN BY THE
CANAL IN THE
EIGHT-EIGHTH
DISTRICT, SIR.











THOK



DRRRRRRN



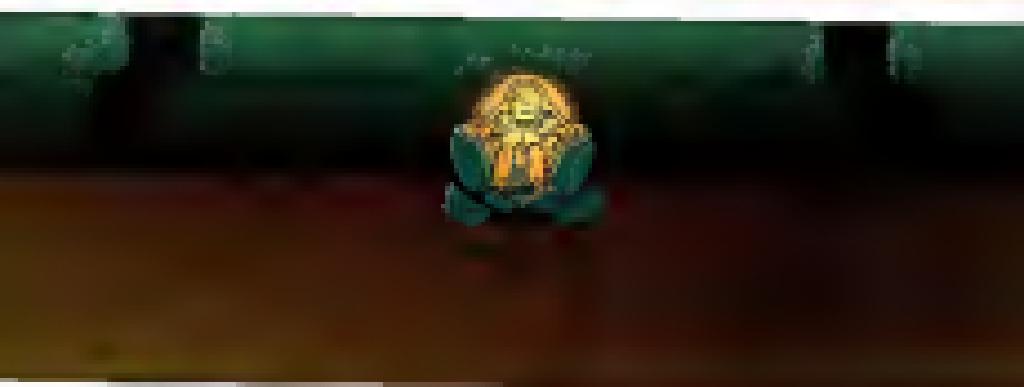




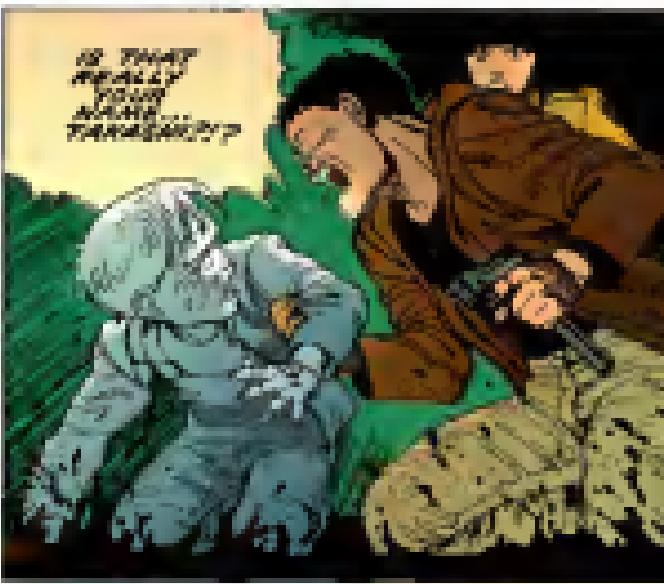






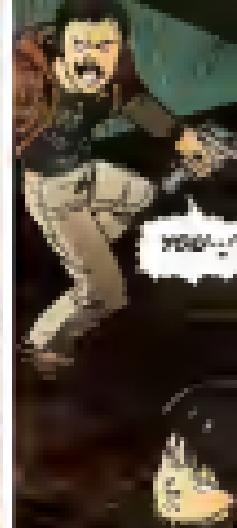


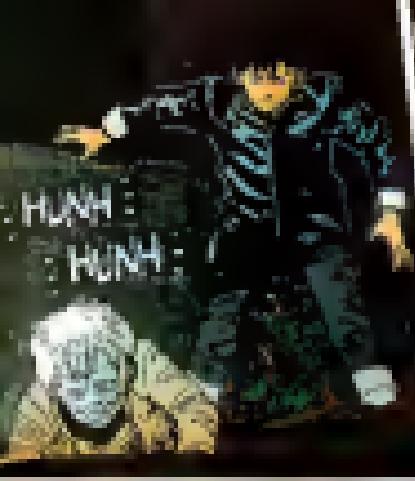




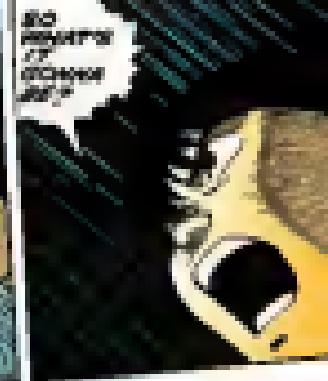










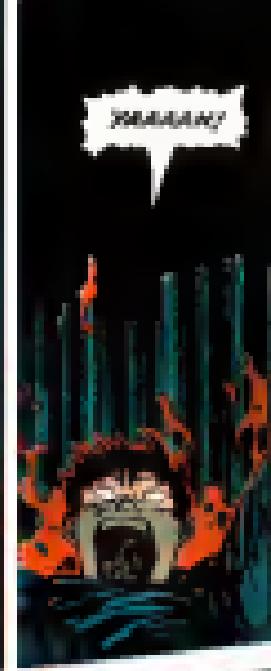


MASAMI.







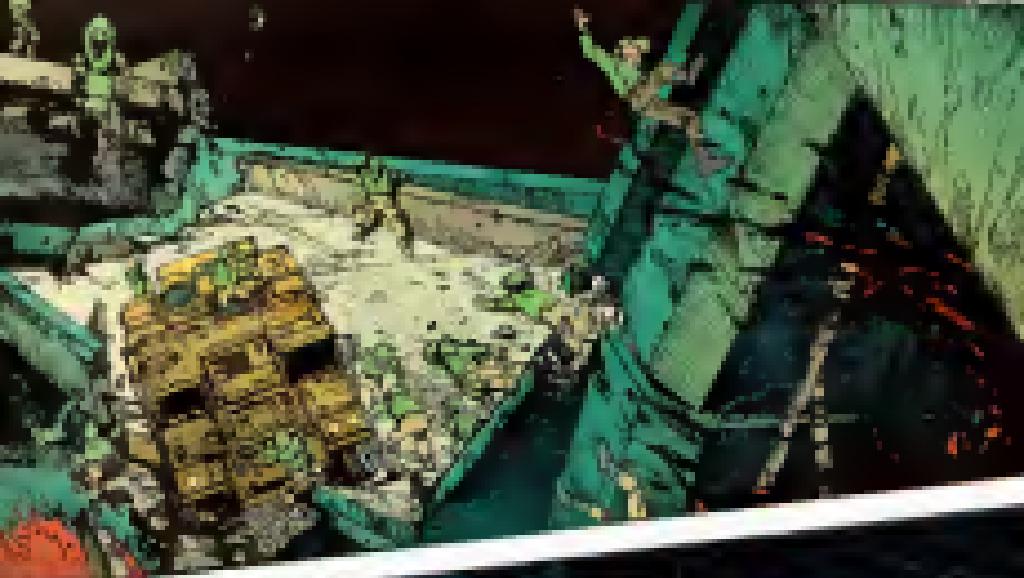


KROOM









THAT BOY,
KAMON,
DID HE LIE?

HUE
HUE
HUE

!

PRE-CHARTED
ROUTE OF
AIRCRAFT
ASSET LOCATIONS

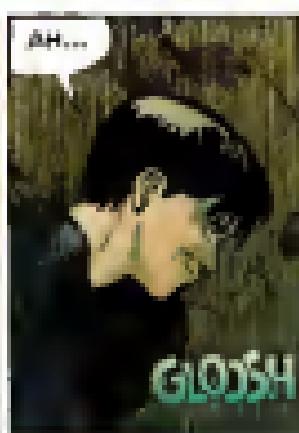


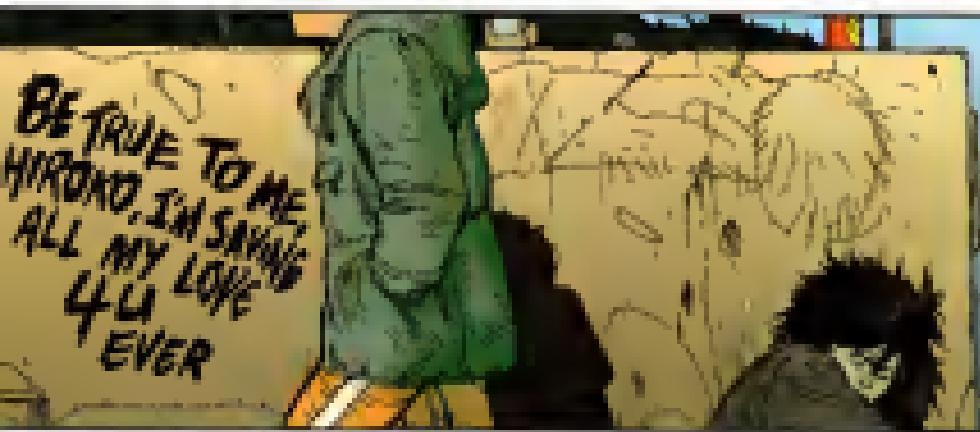


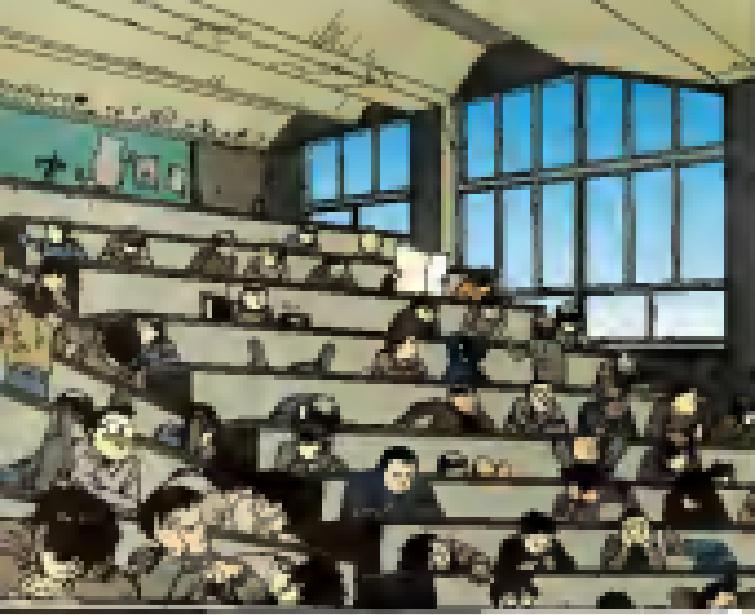
BUDDA BUDDA BUDDA BUDDA





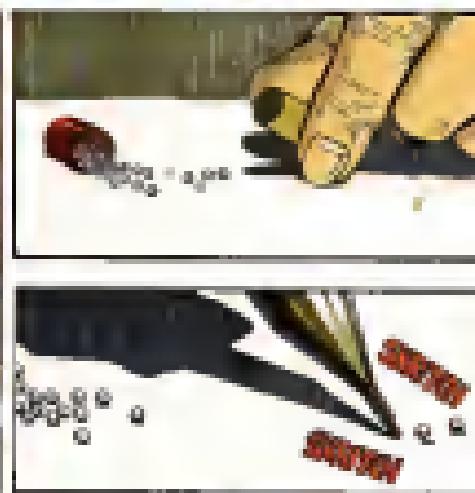






NATIONAL NEWS
A WEEK
AFTER
EIGHTEENTH
DISTRICT
DISASTER,
CANAL
REPAIRS
STILL
DELAYED



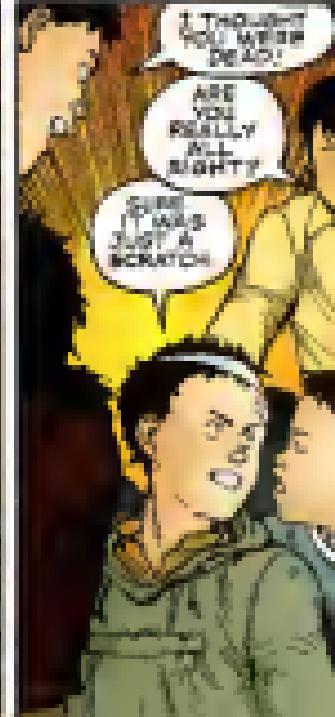
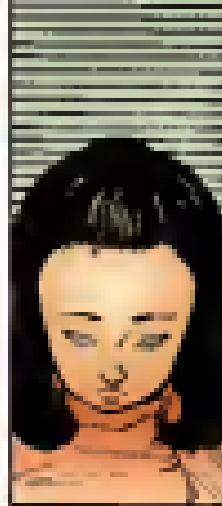


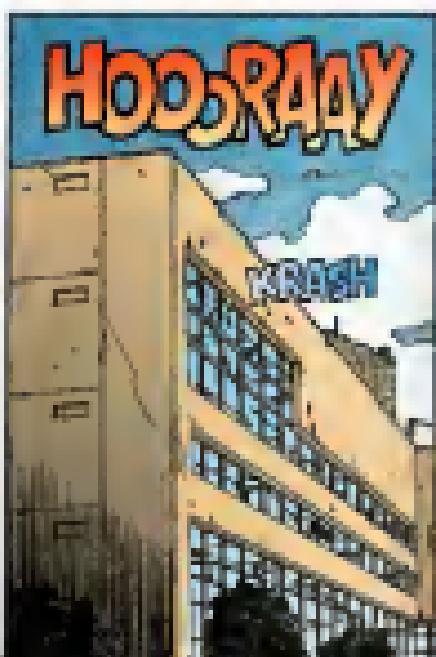








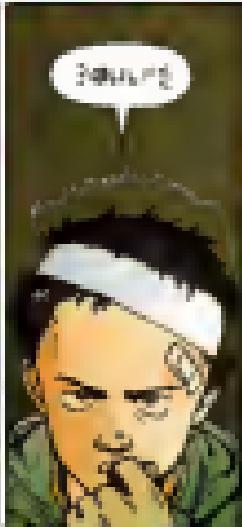


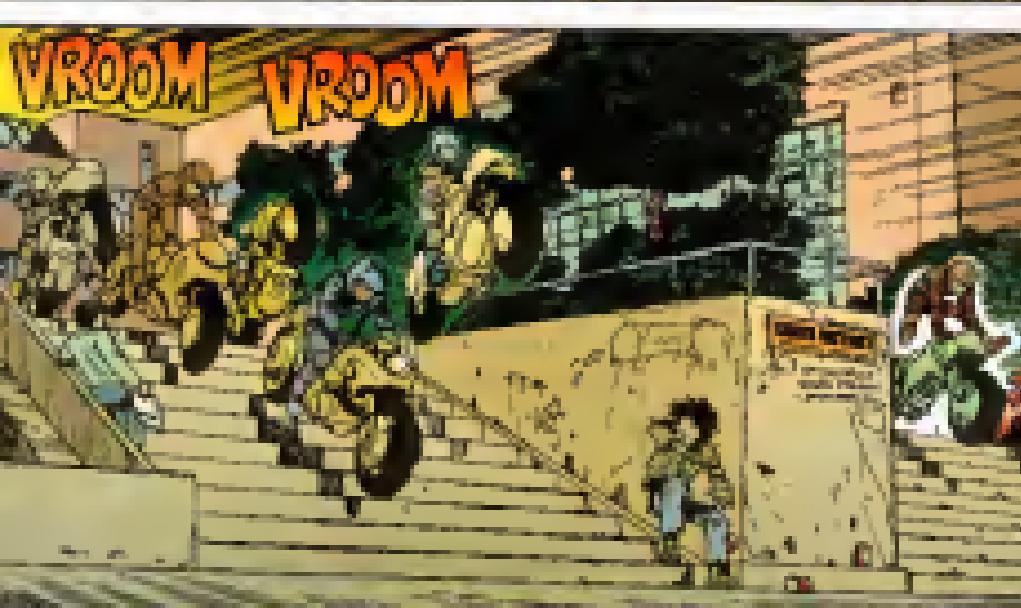


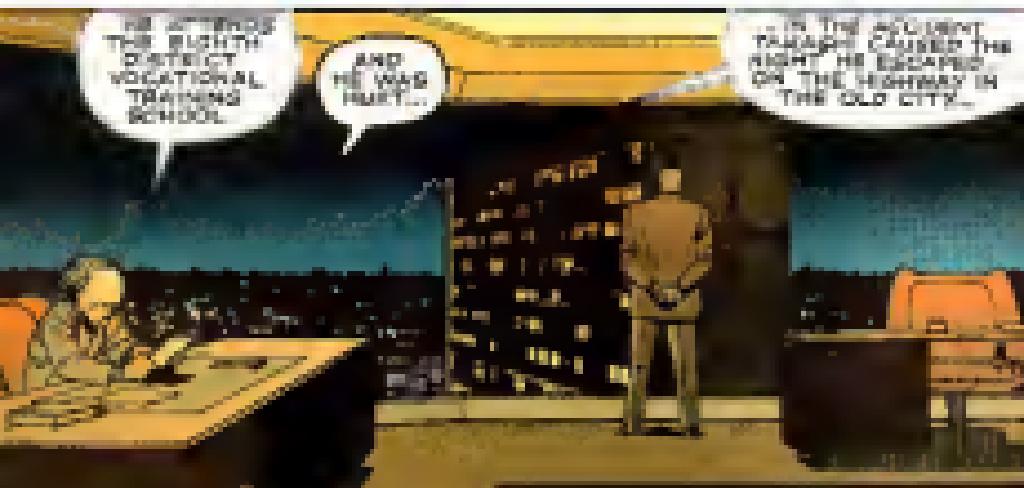












BECUASE IT OCCURRED
THREE, WE
HAD HER
BROUGHT
HERE.



WE CHECKED AND
DISCOVERED IT THERE'S
A PARTIAL RECORD
SHE NEVER TALKED
ABOUT ENCOUNTERING
BENSON.



THEN I SUGGEST
YOU CONTACT YOUR
WATCHMAN.

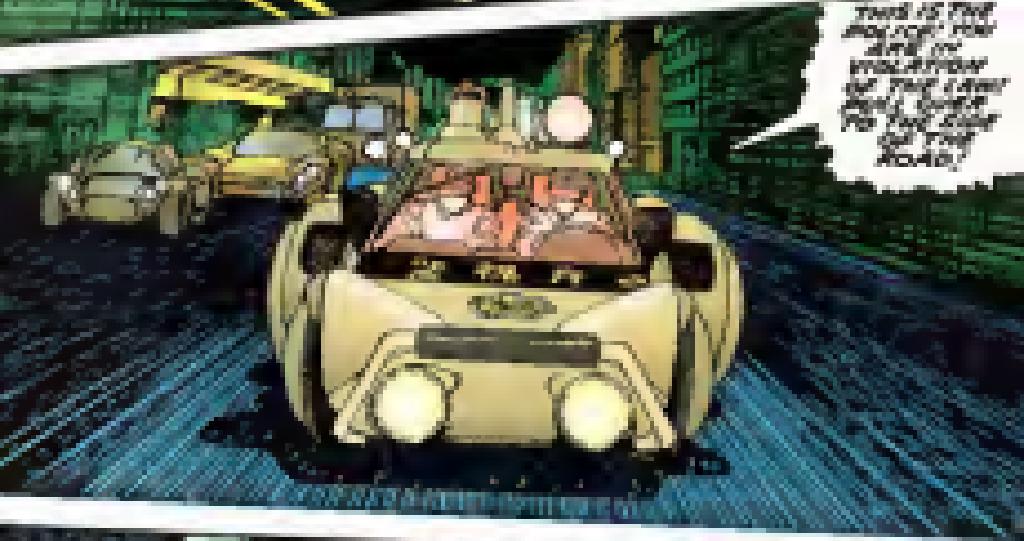
THE POLICE
THAT NIGHT







RAAARROOoo...



Ward 1000



THESE ARE THE WORDS
A SONG OF MARY
PROFOUNDLY CONVICTED
BY GOD'S HOLY SPIRIT
AS A SOUL IN NEED OF
REDICTION AND REST.
SHE SINGED THEM WITH
HER WHOLE HEART AND SOUL,
AND HER MOUTH SPREAD THEM
OVER THE EARTH, SO THAT
MANY WERE DRAWN
TO HER BY THE POWER
OF GOD'S HOLY SPIRIT.



DRRRRRRN



VRRRRRR



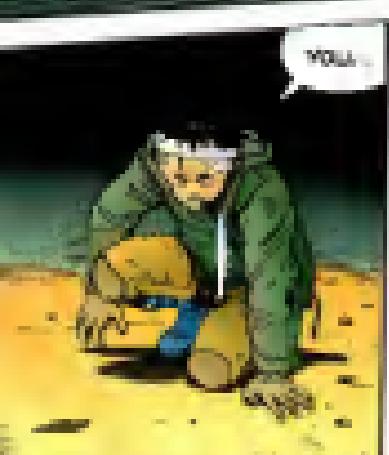
WHAT IS THAT?? KID, DIDN'T ANYBODY EVER TELL YOU IT'S BAD MANNERS TO DO THAT ON SOMEONE ELSE'S TURF?



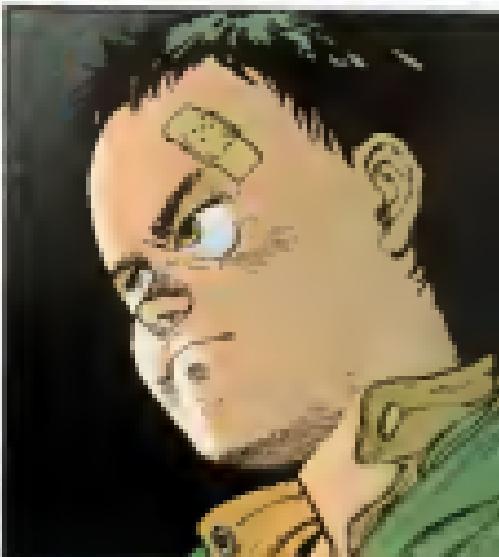


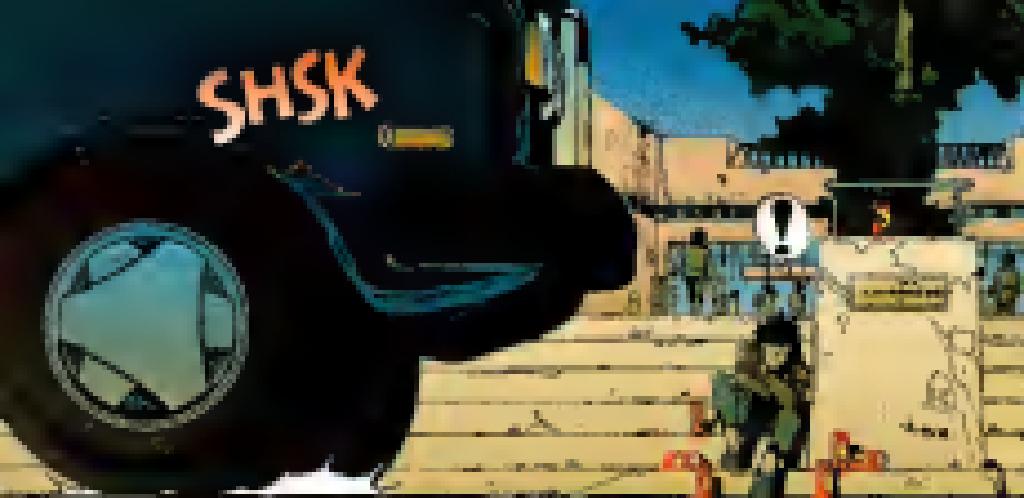


WARRRN

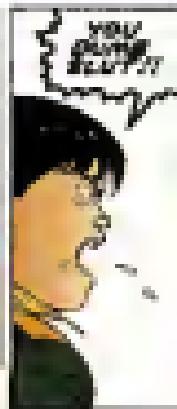








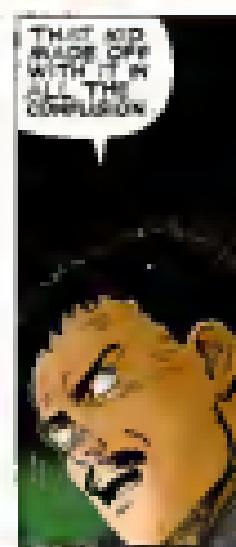












CONSTRUCTION
IS ALREADY
UNCONTROLLABLE.

DAD
WHAT HAVE
YOU HEARD
ABOUT THE
NEW OLYMPIC
STADIUM?
THEY'RE
BUILDING IN
THE OLD
CITY HALL?

MY SOURCE
THINKS THAT CITY
WILL BECOME A SECRET
MILITARY INSTALLATION
AFTER THE GAMES...

YES, WE'VE ALREADY
GIVEN THE CIVIL
AUTHORITIES ENOUGH
PROOF THAT ALL WE NEED
NOW IS SOMETHING TO
START THE PUBLIC
OUTCRY.

YOU MEAN AN
INCIDENT, MEANIE?

YES, A MAJOR
INCIDENT!

RRRRRR

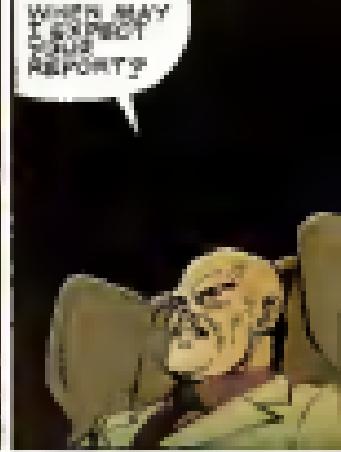


SITE OF THE 2031 TOKYO
OLYMPICS NO UNAUTHORIZED
VEHICLES ALLOWED

HMM?







WHUUUUUUUUU

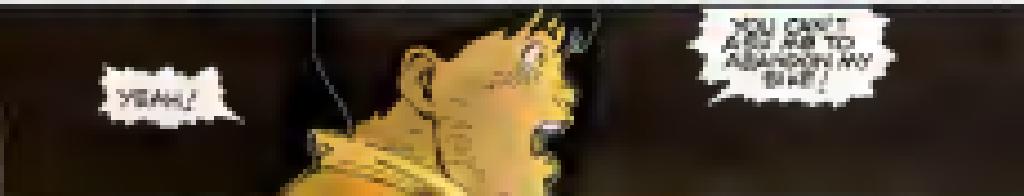
AAAAA!!

GO TO GET
DADDY

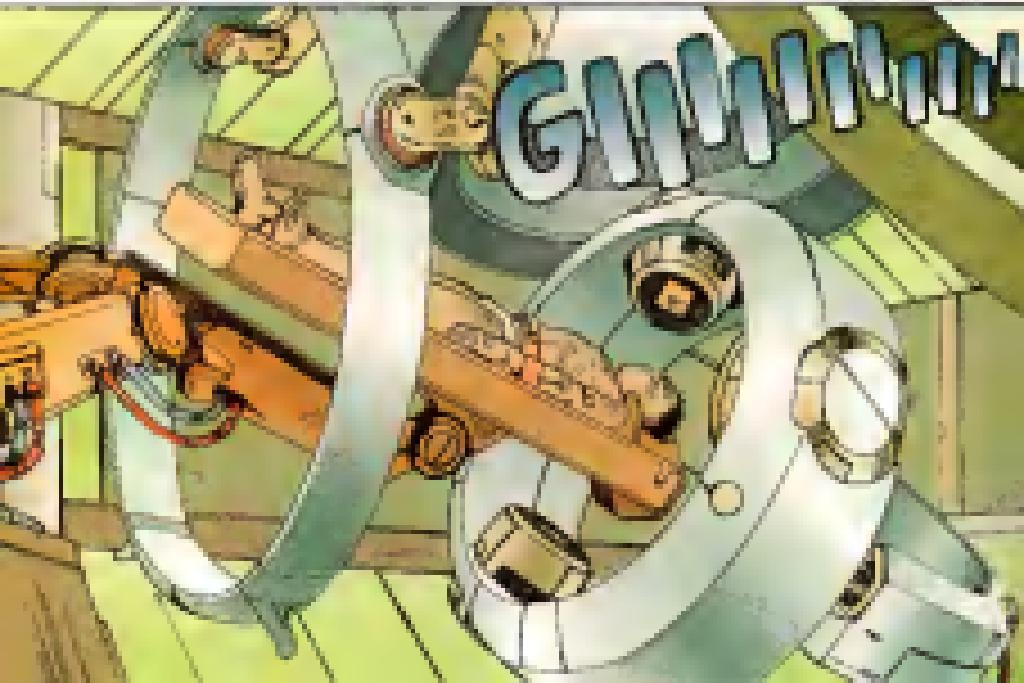
DADDY







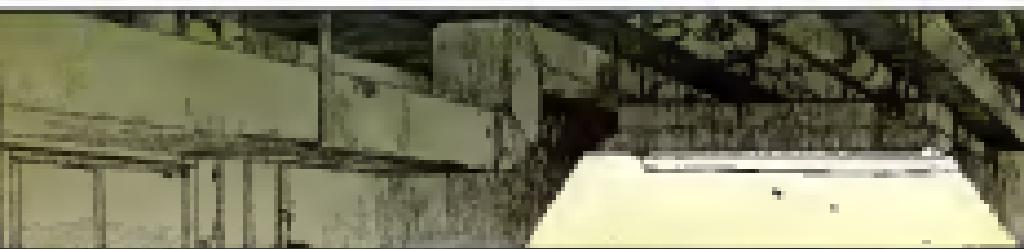
KLAK







— IS THAT THIS IS THE
FIRST SUCH CASE YOU
BROUGHT UP, AND I'M
ON A LOSS AS TO HOW
TO PROCEED.





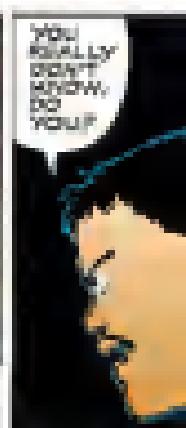


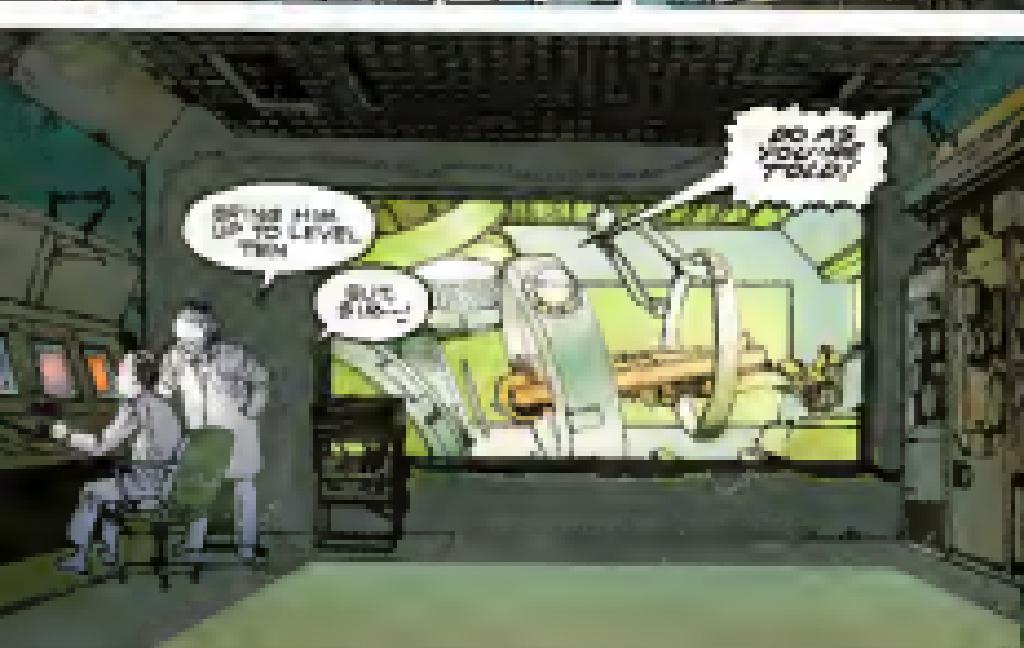
Look, I'm sorry I put it into my pocket, but there's hell to pay time capital.

SPLASH! PLUNGE!

I DON'T BELIEVE YOU.

THE WAY THAT KILLED SAKAICHI
KEPT SIGHT ON ABOUT IT. I HAD TO
INTERFERE FROM HIM.

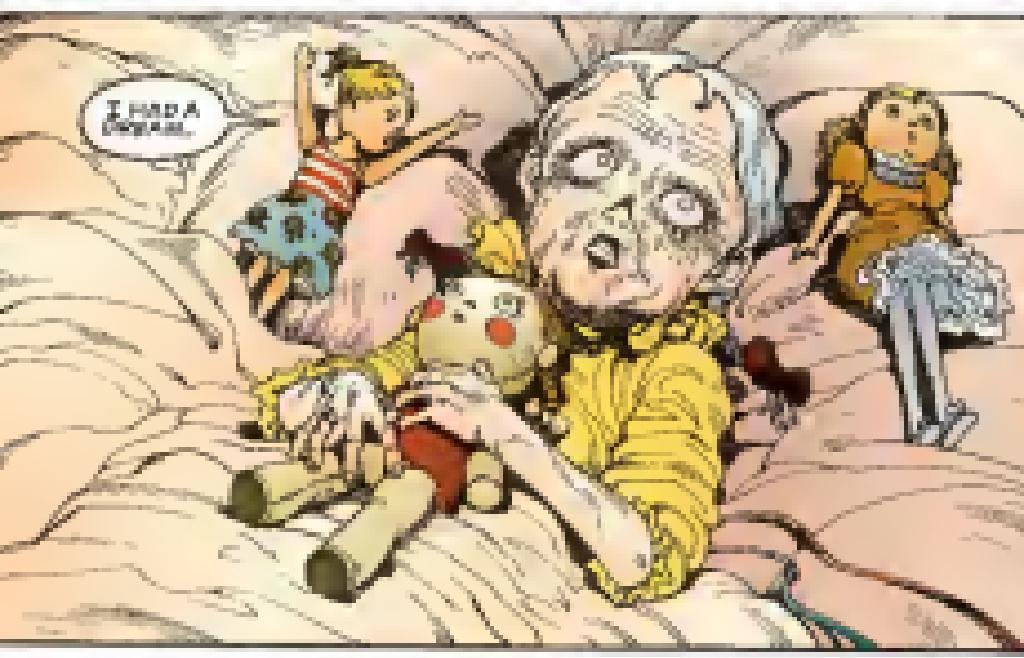








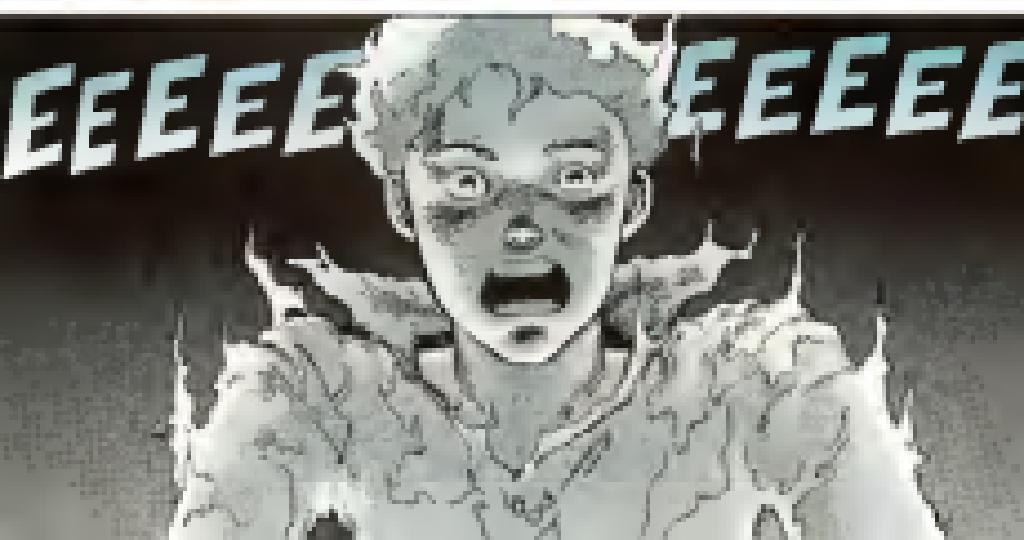


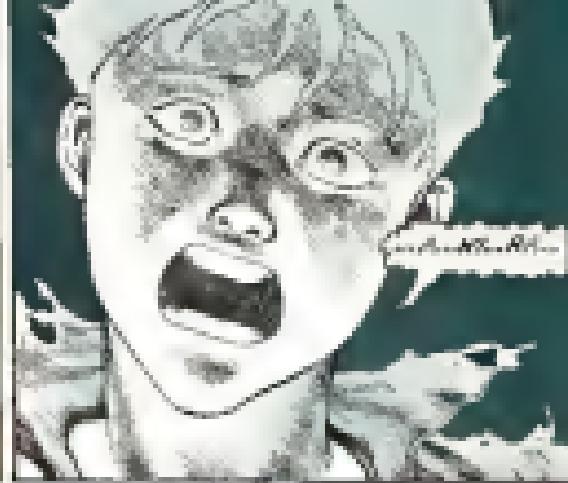


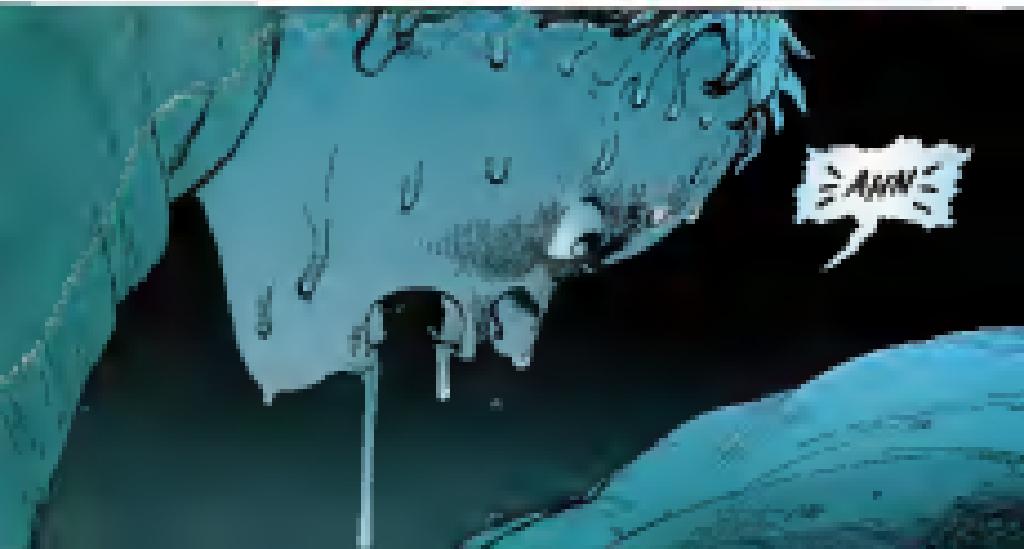
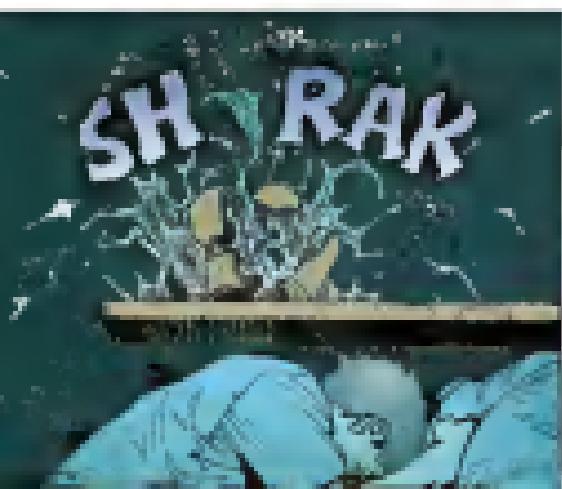


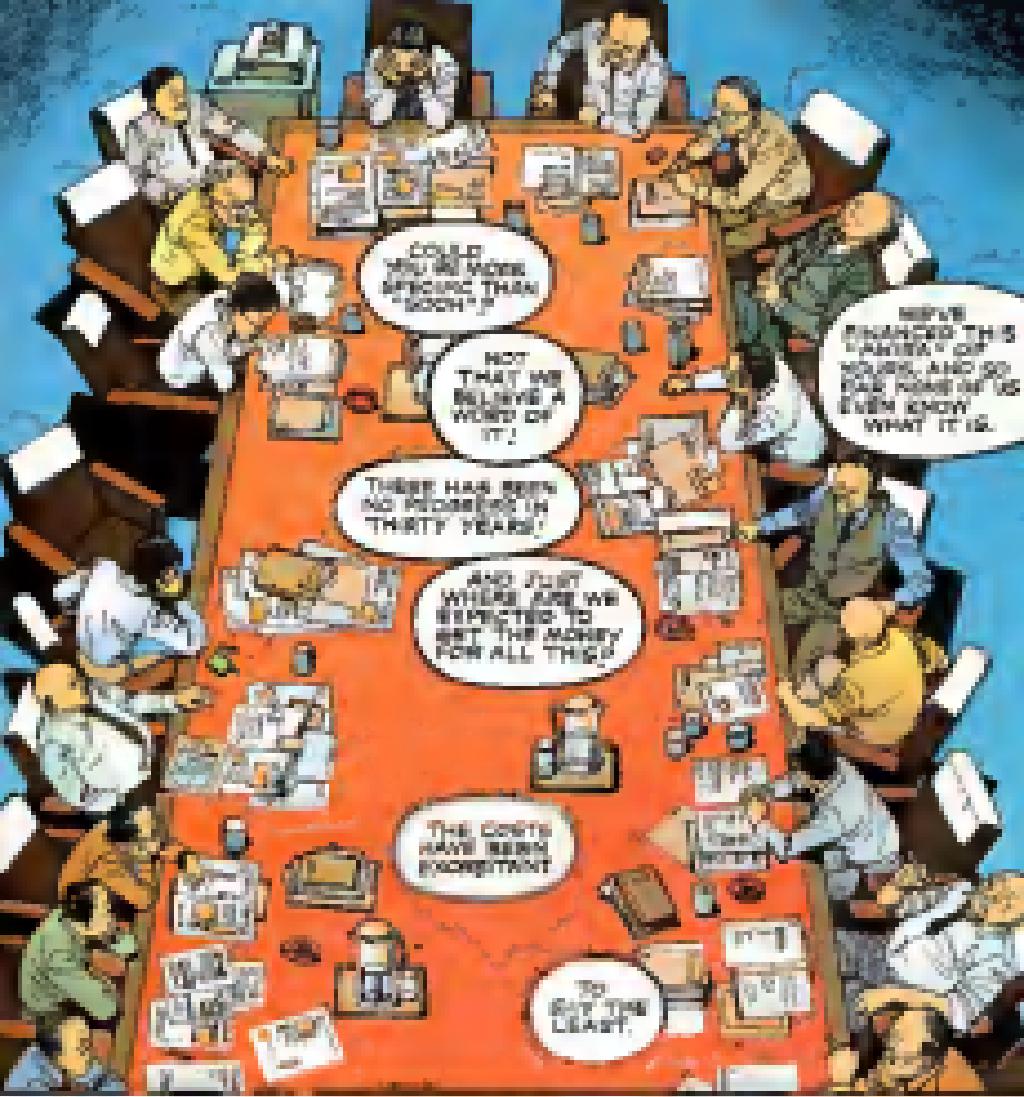


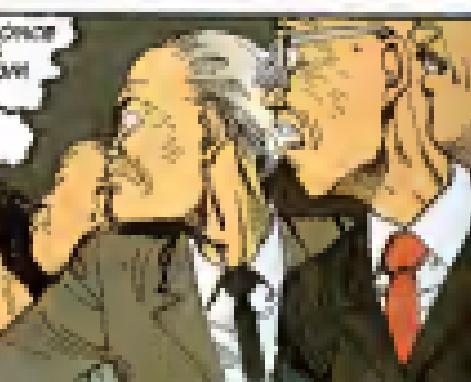
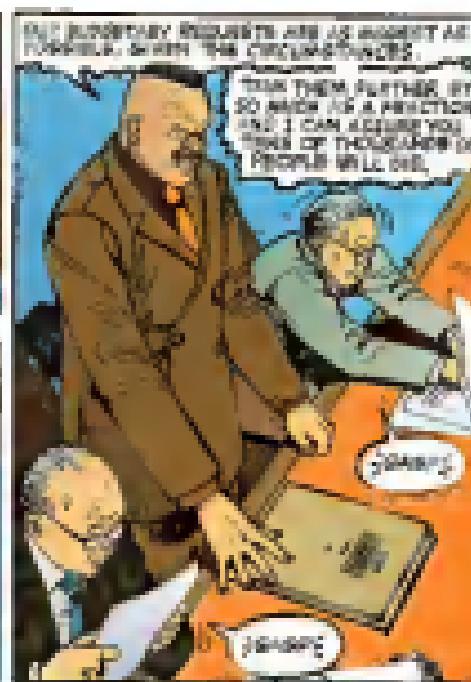
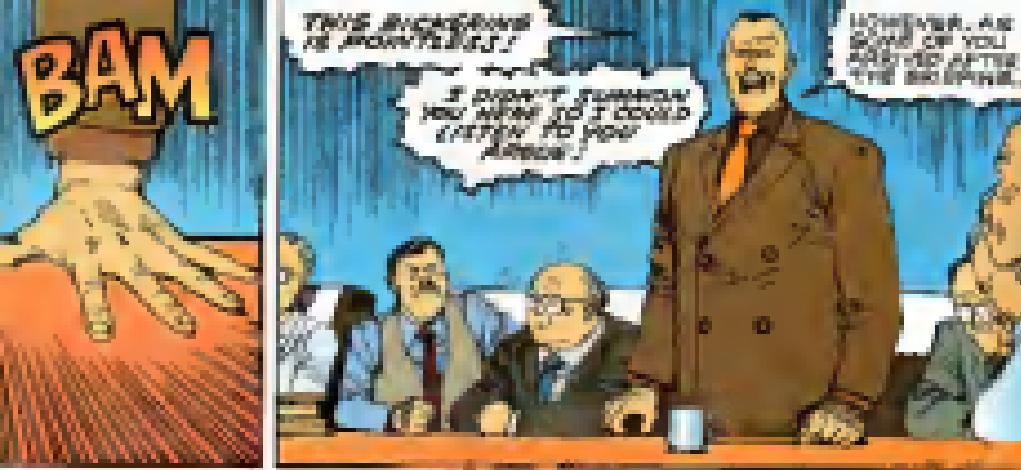


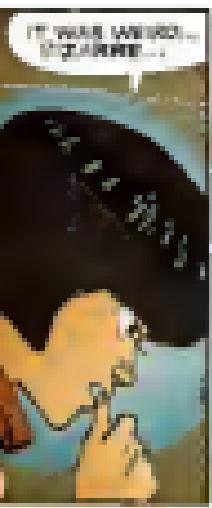


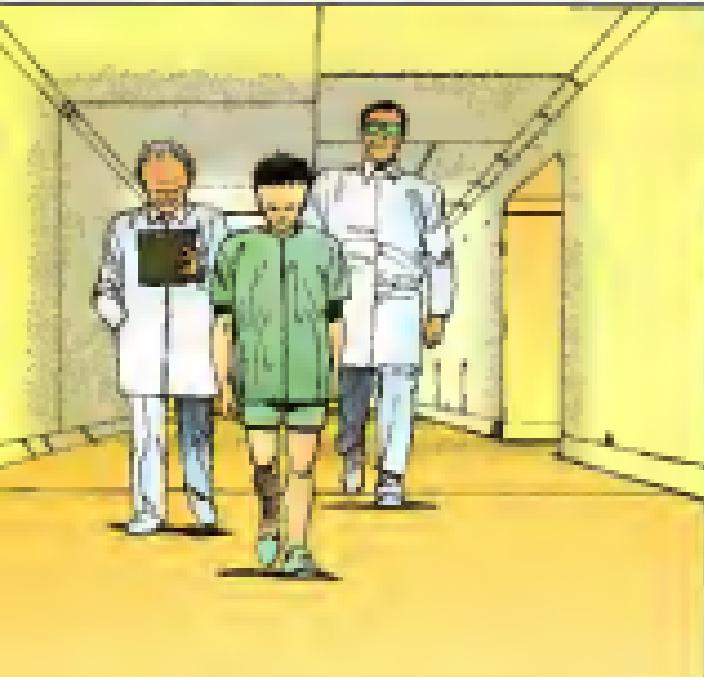


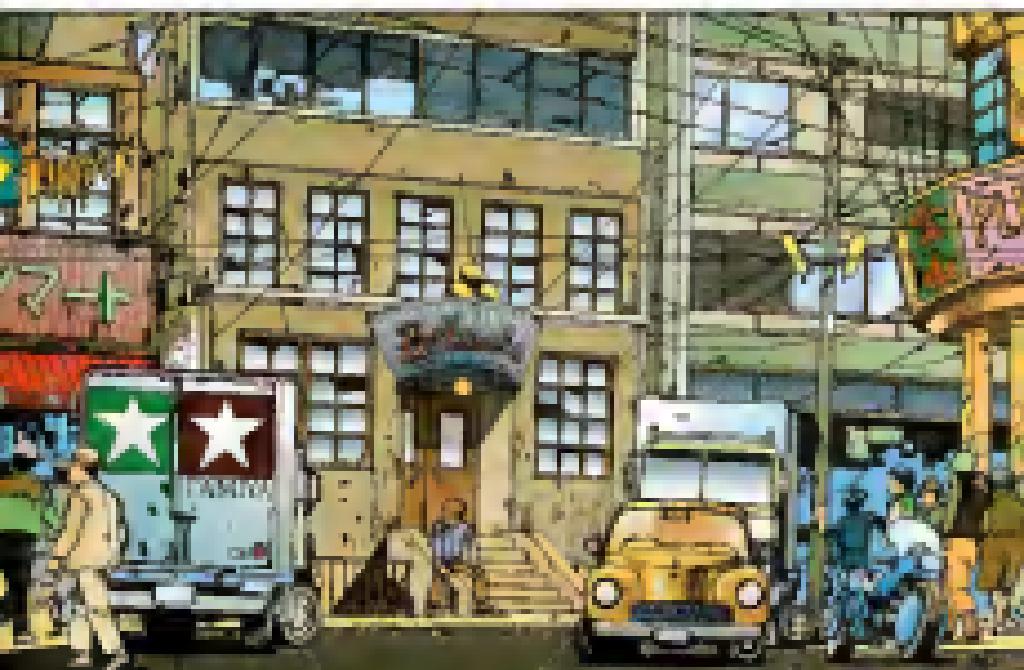


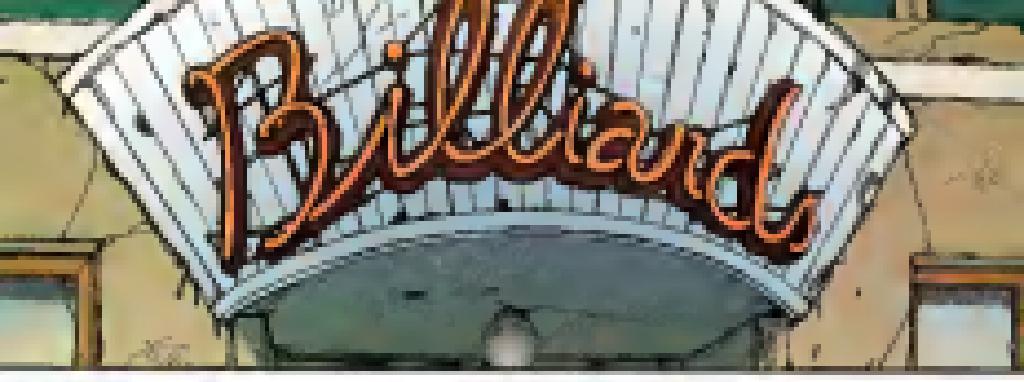


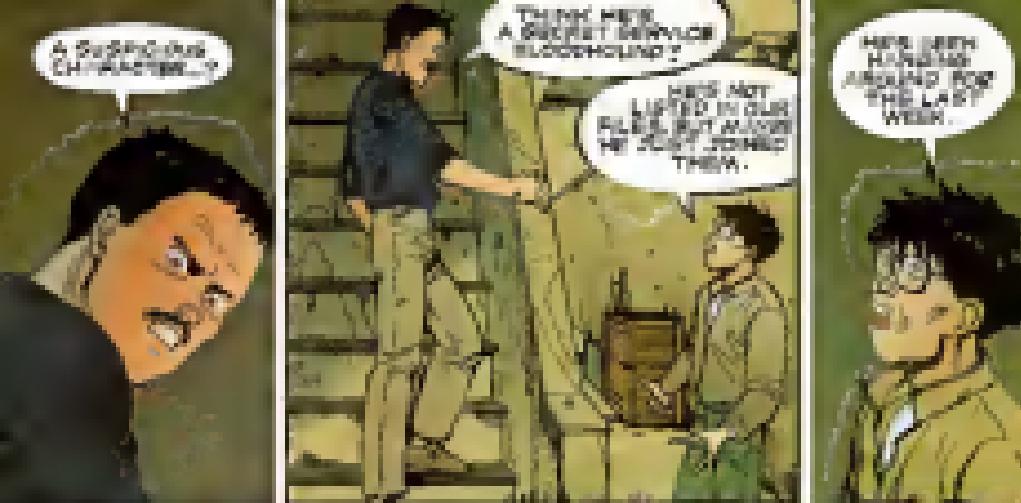




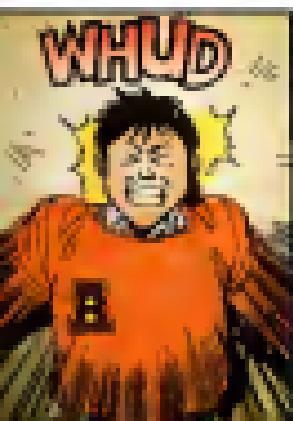


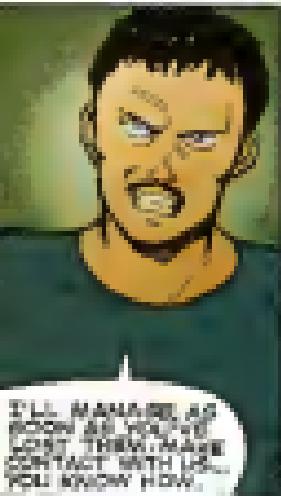


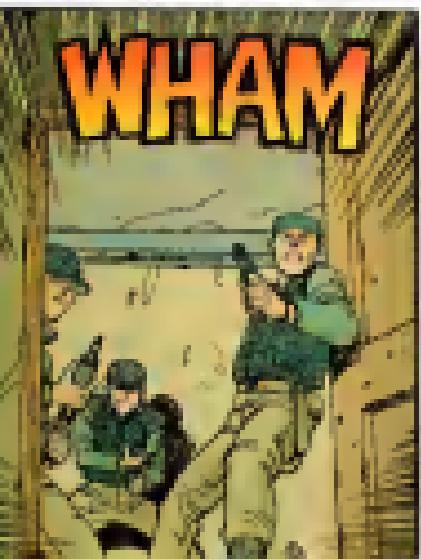
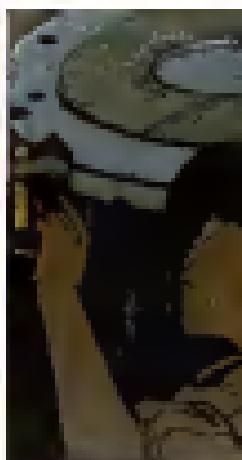














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BY

KATSUHIRO
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