Taxes are definitely too high. I'm sick of paying taxes for this and paying taxes for that and with hardly a fare thee well.

Federal taxes are bad enough. As a matter of fact, they're the worst.

Then there's a state tax. This tax is a burn no matter which way you look at it. I know for a fact that they're in collusion with the federal people, and have been for years.

You think they'd let us off the hook? Forget it. There's still the city tax. Another typical long-winded, pretentious, unintelligible printed form demanding money.

Sometimes I sit around thinking about the manhours I've put in for Uncle Sam, and it just gets my goat.

My dad remembers when there wasn't any tax. I can't forget when there wasn't any. I keep thinking about it, wishing there wasn't any now.

Sales tax for buying food. Gasoline tax for getting to work. Liquor tax for trying to forget the tax man.

It's enough to get a good man down.

---

America's Favorite Homemade Magazine

This is WITZEND #7, Spring, 1970 issue, produced and distributed as often as possible by the Wonderful Publishing Company, Box 882, Ansonia Station, New York City, 10023. Bill Pearson, Editor and Publisher. Phil Selting, Associate Publisher. Wallace Wood, Esteemed Founder. Audrey Meyers, Secretary.

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In the late afternoon, a light breeze comes down over the high mountains and endless canyons. The breeze hisses the sand over great, wind-eroded rocks and dumps it like frail dreams and sad whispers over ages-old tired formations of stone. It is a quite, deathless, timeless world. It is our future.

You know, we speculate. We try to outguess the unpredictable whims of nature and we are seldom right. But, we can guess with unerring accuracy the future of homosapiens. That creature made in the image of God himself! Man is the great destroyer, the insatiable taker. Man will blow himself up and leave a world sterilized by his genius.

But, man, or what the radiation and the constant hot rains and high roentgen dust storms make him, will still cling tenaciously to his questionable right to survive. . . . his inalienable right to continue stripping his raped world.

In the late afternoon, when the light breeze blows the hissing sand, a form, a creature, an ugly version of a once-man, pads across the warm sand. He is a mutation belonging, like an animal, to the radios; a remnant of long past civilizations. He is a looper, a radio-controlled looper, scouting ahead of a radio transport.
BOOM

SLACK

ARGH!

KRUP

O00000H...

HUH? COUGH... NO!
NOT KILL THIS ONE!
NO KILL!!

PUNCH

CLICK CLACK
THE LOPER IS LEFT TO LAY AND ROT QUIETLY IN THE COZY CREEK BED... HE IS OF NO CONSEQUENCE NOW, HE WILL ROTT OR BE EATIN' BY SOME STARVING MUTATION... IT DOESN'T MATTER... WE FOLLOW HIS KILLER, A SLIGHTLY BUILT MAN-LIKE CREATURE WHO WEARS THE NOT UNCOMMON WHITE CLOTH TO HIDE HIS UGLY DEFORMITY... HE CLIMBS UP THE CRUMBLING HILL FEELING A DEEPNESS, A HEAVINESS OF PURPOSE THAT OVERSHADOWS THE RIGHT OR WRONG OF MURDER... HIS RIDING ANIMAL, A GRASSER, MUNCHES ON DUST WEED. IT WATCHES THE LITTLE MASTER WITH UNCONCERN... THE MAN-CREATURE PULLS THE GRASSER TO ITS KNEES AND MOUNTS THE CREEKY LEATHER SADDLE... HE SHOES HIS WOLF CARBINE INTO THE SADDLE SCABBARD, DRAWS HARD WITH THE REINS, KICKING THE DUMB BEAST UP ON ITS FEET... THE GRASSER MOVES OFF WITH A SLOW, DELIBERATE STRIDE, ROCKING OR WADDLING ALONG NARROW PATHS HIGH ABOVE THE CANYON FLOOR............... THIS BEGINS IT, THIS STARTS THE PROPHECY OF THE FUTURE, THE HISSING SAND, AND THE LONELY FIGURE HIGH ATOP A PLAINS BEAST... THIS IS WHERE I BEGIN THE UNIQUE STORY OF THE LITTLE MAN-creature WHO IS KNOWN TO A FEW MUTATIONS, TO A FEW ANIMALS, TO A FEW FLYING THINGS AS:

COBALT 60

ALRIGHT, YOU BE EASY NOW, BIG ANIMAL... I SEE...... WHAT I AM LOOKING FOR...

...THE RADIO TRANSPORT IS COMING...

© COPYRIGHT 1968 BY VAUGHN F. BODE
RADIO BORDER STATION, WE CALL YOU... WE CALL YOU...
POP... POP... CRACK... YES...
PACK... PIC... POP... SPEAK NOW...

WE HAVE HEARD HEAVY RIFLE SHOTS FAR UP THE CANYON... IT DID NOT SOUND LIKE A RADIO 'PUNCHER.' DO YOUR LOPERS PATROL THERE?

PIC... CRACK... PIC... PATROL...
KREEE... AND BE WATCHFUL...

STARDUST, TELL THEM OUR LOPER SCOUT IS OUT TOO LONG....

MORE CAUSE FOR SUSPICION... THERE CAN BE MUTATIONS UP THERE....

SONG, YOU WILL PREPARE THE MECHANICAL GUN....

HAHA, THE SOUND OF GUNFIRE WAS A BLUE CRACKER AT ITS WORK, EH?... YOU WORRY TOO EASY, HONORED ONE....
...OH HOLY GOD....
STARDUST, GET TO THE MECHANICAL GUN QUICKLY!!

SEE YOUR BEAST GET TO ACTION!!
I SEE THA' BASTARD!!

BUMP THUMP

YARGH!

DA, DAMN YA, YOU!!

SOOKNCH!

CLICK!

CLICK CLICK CLICK PUNT PUNT PUNT KAK COUGH!

OOOOOH GEESSS KAK COUGH!
MAKE US COVER!...SHOOT DOWN THE GREAT GRASSER!!

BUNT PING PING PING PING BUNT

SNIFF DAMN THEM!...SNIFF...I WILL CIRCLE TO KILL THEM NOW...COUGH!

HONORED ONE, DID...DID WE HIT HIM?...ALL IS QUIET......BE STILL...WE WAIT...

DEAD MEN!

OUCH CUCK CUCK CUCK CUCK CUCK CUCK CUCK

Krack PLEEEE AHOX SPIAT
WHAT? JESUS, THA' LOPER!!

RARRGH! KOOOFEE!

GASP CAN'T GET... YARRRRGHH!

NO! SQUIRM AWAY LIKE WORM FISH! PA-TOOY! YOU BREAK LOPER'S TOOTH...

YOU SCARED TO FIGHT BIG LOPER....

I...SMASH LITTLE SKULL, WORM-MAN!

HEY! YOU DIRTY...

NO, LISTEN! IT'S OVER! I WANTED THE RADIOS... WE CAN STOP... LISTEN!!! I...COUGH COUGH...

HEHEHE...
You are the murderers, you are the monsters. The radio are trying to exterminate all mutant races. GENOCIDE!

Click

PLOP

...I...AM...A

In the early evening, the wind dies and the hissing sand is still and a cool quiet hangs over the empty sterile places... Cobalt 60 rides slowly away on his plains animal... off into the great old mountains...

THE END OF THE FIRST ONE.
Letters

I, and a million others, would like to know why you can’t reprint WITZEND #1. Everybody would like to have a copy, but they are nowhere to be found, I would gladly pay 5 bucks for it, but nobody will sell it. It’s fine for you guys, since you’ve seen, read, and probably hawked it about, but what about us? You could have a second printing, and charge more than twice as much as any other issue, and they’d sell out right away.

Jim Gray

Sure, Jim, we just toss out those thousands of Reprint #1 petitions which pour in daily here at the penthouse offices of the Witzend building. Sure, we could use those millions. We wouldn’t be terribly insulted with half a million. But then of course, we’d be rich—and all those rotten poor people would burn down our printing plant. An article that big is too much for us. We’re keeping our fingers crossed.

To get an answer, you must include a stamped, self-addressed envelope. And don’t lay down the law. The editors above you are already being delayed, regretfully, because we just don’t have enough TIME.

I am writing to inquire about the delay of my copy of WITZEND #6. A friend of mine has had Witzend #6 for 2 weeks and he didn’t even remember sending it, but I have a subscription up to #8 and I can’t seem to get one. It seems that every one always gets what they send for about 2 or 3 weeks before I do and then I usually have to write asking about it.

I’m beginning to believe that my name is some kind of jinx. Whenever anyone gets an order from me, they immediately see the name George Detrow and right away decide to delay what I ordered about 2 or 3 weeks. I think there’s only 2 or 3 people that I deal with that I can get what I order without having to write asking about it.

Please see what you can do about getting my copy of WITZEND #6 to me, will you? Thank you very much.

George T. Detrow

The number on your address label is our packing code only. This is a good spot to warn ALL subscribers that we do NOT send subscription renewal notices of any kind. It’s up to YOU to keep a record of when your subscription expires.

I just want to thank you for putting Jim Steranko in your mag. His artwork is just too good for human eyes.

Tod Miles

By decree of the power vested in me by the Holy Order of Itinerant Cartoonists, I do hereby appoint Jim Steranko to the post of honorary angel artist and sign painter, and if he ever draws another picture for human eyes, so much for HIS divinity.

Congratulations! I’ve never written a completely foul, deriding, abusive letter before, but you’ve moved me to action. Ditko’s atrocious in #6 was just unbelievable in its small-minded, arrogant ignorance. Sure, comics are right-wing—it’s an old tradition. But this kind of agit-prop has no place in a mag supposedly devoted to comic “ART.”

I hate to dignify his article by arguing on his terms. If you want to run stuff promoting police actions at a time when cops are shooting unarmed demonstrators in the back with buckshot (you do read the papers, right?), it’s your conscience. But to apply this simplistic individualism to entire nations is too much. India, for instance, well into famine of crisis proportions—lazy? Not willing to help herself? It’s hard to help yourself when you’re sick and dying.

And Ditko! He says he’s going to show us “types” of people that cause misery. O.K. Good premise. What types? The aortic and the agitator. TOO: It’s good to know that the world’s problems are so easily reducible—the person who does nothing and the person who tries to do something. The point is, this piece is a total failure in its blind hatred.

Even the crankiest of artists—Wood or Al Capp, for instance—can at least see the flaws in ALL sides of the argument.

Gary Aspenberg

Witzend welcomes contributions of material on all sides of the subject the artist is concerned with. It can’t be denied that Steve Ditko has a point of view, and the talent necessary to express it well. Jim Steranko’s portfolio of drawings was well received, but this publication will not be overbalanced as a showcase for virtuous feathers, personal excoriations, or even Naked Girls. The only thing it will be overbalanced with is pictures.

Three months ago I sent you a dollar for the current issue of Witzend. Well, I didn’t get it. Either send me your magazine or return my dollar.

Paul Pooper

Here is a prime example of that old favorite, the ‘Where-in-hell’ letter. Many of you have embellished the above straightforward demand into diatribes of astounding proportions. Sure you’re mad! We understand. Why, if TV GUIDE showed up late, the whole week would be out of

For the immediate future, TV would seem to be the best suited instrument of media for buckshot advertising, entertainment, and propaganda. There are enough people now to sponsor special interest magazines on anything from playing smoker to collecting barbed wire. Even comic books. Ain’t life grand?

What’s going on here? Slowly, inch by inch, Wally Wood got ’pushed’ out of his head position as both editor and publisher. Now, in issue #6, he is listed only as ‘illustrious founder.’ Does he still have anything to do with the actual inner workings of Witzend anymore?

ALIENT was definitely one of the greatest books you have ever printed. It’s the only story I’ve seen with such a minimum of dialogue that could work out with so great a result. And Jeff’s artwork was really superb. Try to get more from him, if you can.

SPAWN OF VENUS was your second second best story this issue (by about 0.0002). I44444. Wally, this one of those E.C. 3-D science-fiction stories which Wally said he was going to have in #4?

The cover was very interesting and mystique. But what’s wrong—don’t you have enough money on hand to pay for a full color cover? It would improve the looks of your magazine a great deal.

By the way, how do I get an answer back when I write you guys?

Vincent Perkins

I am utterly delighted with Witzend; my copies have become much in demand among other publishers, and manuscripts. Most of us here are around 30 and were your avid followers in the MAD and ASTOUNDING SCIENCE FICTION days. Not only is Witzend nostalgic; it is fresh and forward looking as well, not least in its very concept. Perhaps this sort of independent publishing venture, outside the arbitrary boundaries of the corporate mass media, is the wave of the future. Let’s hope so.

R.E. Boyd

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I would very much like to purchase future issues of your publication, however, I'm afraid that Witzend would have to undergo some changes before I could do so, which would probably not meet with your approval or that of some of your readers. But, seeing as I am a potential subscriber (that sounds better, doesn't it?), if only one, I thought that I would take advantage of the opportunity to write to you and comment.

The changes I mentioned would take the form of less nudity, less suggestiveness and profanity, and less violence (Mr. A.). Would it be tactless of me to say that if all these things that I find objectionable were to be eliminated from the copy that I have (#4), it would be almost non-existent? Yes?

You have some really great artists represented in your magazine, and I genuinely hate to see these great talents wasted or misused. I like good science fiction and fantasy, but seem hard pressed to find any that isn't crude or vulgar. It seems to me that good, clean science fiction would be a lot of fun to write and illustrate, if that doesn't sound too square.

If you ever get tired of being controversial, let me know.

Glenn Palmer

This is a thoughtful letter and deserves an answer. Being "square" has nothing to do with being "conservative." The erratic pendulum of evolution has put the socially conservative on the defensive for the moment, but you are not alone, as you well know, and I'm sure you can find much excellent material elsewhere more suited to your taste.

Everyone's sensibility to the stimuli you list is different and in fact subjective.

HEARTBREAKING NEWS!
Inflation strikes WITZEND! see next page

GLAD TIDINGS!
Next issue features

- the concluding chapter of the WIZARD KING by Wallace Wood
- A beautiful portfolio of drawings by Dan Adkins
- 9 pages of the most exciting Frank Frazetta artwork we've ever presented

PLUS whatever else we can manage to squeeze in

So DON'T MISS IT!
Important Notice

From the first issue, Witzend has just managed to support itself at one dollar per copy. The printing and production costs for a limited circulation magazine do NOT allow a profit. It has come to the point where we're falling behind. As indicated in the letter column, we were intending to use a cheaper printer for this issue, but none could meet the quality standards we demand. We returned to the reliable printer who produced our last issue, and who very kindly agreed to the same terms as before. It took several months AFTER the issue was produced to make the final payments.

It has taken several MORE months to get together the capital to produce this issue. Obviously, this policy cannot continue.

With regret, we must raise our price to $1.50 per copy, including our rapidly disappearing back issues.

All outstanding subscriptions and orders received PRIOR to April 15th, 1970, will be honored at the old rate, but please limit your orders to one copy per issue.

Effective immediately: Dealers' rates will remain at a 40% discount, or 90c per copy. (25%, Foreign) Payment must accompany orders, as we are not equipped to handle billing.

NOTES NOT COVERED ELSEWHERE:
Witzend #1 will NEVER be reprinted. The original plates were destroyed, the artwork has been returned to the owners, and we prefer expending our efforts on NEW projects. SOME of the material from that issue MIGHT be reprinted someday, but assuming that at least half of the 3000 copies produced have been destroyed by now, that issue IS becoming quite a collector's item. Try to understand that we are NOT just being perverse—soon enough every issue will be out of print, and there's nothing we can do about it.

These issues of

* PIPSQEAK PAPERS by Wallace Wood
* ERB Portfolio by Reed Crandall
* MR. A by Steve Ditko
* LAST CHANCE by Frank Frazetta

#3 MORE!

* THE REJECTS by Wallace Wood
* MR. A by Steve Ditko
* WIZARD KING by Wallace Wood
* VIRTUE EVER TRiumphant by Roger Brand

#4

* WIZARD KING by Wallace Wood
* THE JUNKWAFEL by Vaughn Bode
* TALON by Jim Steranko
* JAF by jaf

#5

* ALIEN by Jeff Jones
* Interview with WILL EISNER
* SPAWN OF VENUS by Wallace Wood

#6

* PIPSQEAK PAPERS by Wallace Wood

...MORE!

You may subscribe through issue #8, to reserve your collector's editions hot off the presses.

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And don't forget to contact convention chairman, Phil Seuling, for more details about the...

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YOU MUST CHOOSE BETWEEN
GOOD AND EVIL ...LIFE AND
DEATH!
COMPROMISE:

1. A settlement in which each side gives up some demands or makes concessions.
2. An adjustment of opposing principles, systems, etc. in which part of each is given up. Something midway between different things. Webster's New World Dictionary.

In any compromise between good and evil—it is only the evil who can win. It is bad enough when practised by fools, but when enforced by laws—who in the world can escape from being penalized for being in the right? It is like people being forced to accept disease for their health!

Where does one choose to compromise between.....
MAN'S COMPROMISE IN LIFE...
GIVING UP THE GOOD FOR THE EVIL

GOOD RATIONALITY
REASON
TRUTH

EVIL RATIONALITY
FAITH
LIES

OH, NO! IT IS INHUMAN TO CLAIM IT'S EITHER ONE OR THE OTHER! A MAN IS NOT A ROBOT!
HE HAS TO SATISFY HIS EMOTIONS TO DO WHATEVER HE FEELS LIKE DOING! HE DOESN'T NEED ANY REASON!

BESIDES, WHY GO TO EXTREMES OR TAKE ANYTHING TOO SERIOUSLY? IT CAN'T HURT TO COMpromise!
A GUY GETS ALONG BETTER THAT WAY! IT MAKES HIM MORE HUMAN!

FEAR, BELIEVE
Doubt, Accept

ARBITRARY...
CONFUSION...

I FEEL SO CONFUSED... SO HELPLESS... THERE IS NO WAY TO KNOW... TO BE SURE OF ANYTHING... NOTHING MAKES SENSE... IT IS ALL SO MEANINGLESS... AND FRIGHTENING....

FAITH, LOGIC
UP
DOWN
A IS B

DISTORTION...
STANDARD OF UNCERTAINTY

THEY'RE RIGHT! TO EXIST IS TO BE DOOMED TO MISERY! MAN IS JUST A HELPLESS, INSIGNIFICANT SPECK OF FLESH ON AN EVIL WORLD IN AN UNKNOWABLE UNIVERSE! WHO... WHERE CAN A MAN TURN TO FOR COMFORT, PROTECTION, PITY...

WHO CAN SAVE ME FROM MYSELF?
WHY? WHY CAN'T I UNDERSTAND LIFE? BE ABLE TO ENJOY IT... AND MYSELF? I WISH I COULD... I PRAY I COULD. BUT IT'S NO USE... OH WHY DOES LIFE HAVE TO BE SO MEANINGLESS AND MISERABLE? WHY?

IT DOESN'T HAVE TO BE THAT WAY! EVERY MAN MUST BE THE PROTECTOR OF HIS OWN RATIONALITY! A MAN'S LIFE WILL BE DETERMINED BY THE WAY HE USES OR REFUSES TO USE HIS MIND!

THE COMPROMISED IN MIND AND SPIRIT REJECTED THE RESPONSIBILITY OF KNOWING HOW TO PROPERLY LIVE THEIR OWN LIFE! THEIR NOW TORTURED EXISTENCE IS SELF-MADE! AND THEY ARE EASY PREY FOR THE MANY WHO ARE EAGER TO OFFER SALVATION!

I RENOUNCE MYSELF. I'LL BE WHATEVER YOU WANT ME TO BE... I AM NOTHING WITHOUT YOU!

OUR CAUSE CAN SAVE YOU JUST ACCEPT, BELIEVE... FOLLOW... I'M YOURS...JUST DON'T LEAVE ME ON MY OWN!

WE ARE YOUR SAVIOR! WE KNOW HAVE FAITH AND OBEY US!
WE'RE THE MASTERS!
WE MUST ENSLAVE PEOPLE FOR THEIR OWN GOOD!
WE'RE THE WAVE OF THE FUTURE!

EARTH IS EVIL MAN IS SINFUL HAPPINESS LIES IN THE HERE-AFTER!

IT'S RULE OR BE RULED!

OUR RACE OUR GANG OUR "RIGHTS"

TAKE WHAT YOU WANT

COME ON! GET YOUR SHARE OF WHAT SOMEONE ELSE EARS

OUR BRAND THIS VARIATION
Behind the cause of every disastrous headline that adds to the "world's mess," you will find a man who first made a mess of his mind by corrupting rationality with irrationality, which means corrupting good with evil. The "mess" is the result of forcing that contamination onto others. No man can build a meaningful, lasting structure by corrupting the foundation of his effort. Irrationality is decay, death-serving. Rationality is growth, life-serving. As it is with man - it will be with his world.
FOOLS WILL TELL YOU THAT IT IS INHUMAN TO LIVE BY BLACK AND WHITE PRINCIPLES BUT HUMAN TO ACCEPT AND PRACTICE GREY PRINCIPLES. THAT IT IS "HUMAN" TO BE CORRUPT, TO ACCEPT AND PRACTICE INJUSTICES AND TO HOLD EVIL AS SOME KIND OF "GOOD". THERE IS NO MIDDLE OF THE ROAD BETWEEN GOOD AND EVIL. THEY ARE NOT TWO ROADS GOING IN THE SAME DIRECTION BUT OPPOSITE ROADS TO DIFFERENT GOALS. YOUR CHOICE OF ACTIONS WILL DETERMINE IN WHICH DIRECTION YOU WILL LEAD YOURSELF. YOU WHO CLAIM TO BELIEVE IN THE GOOD AND WILLINGLY COMMIT EVIL ARE TRYING TO WALK A LINE BETWEEN THEM. BUT BY YOUR ACTIONS YOU CONFESSION THAT YOU DO NOT CONSIDER YOURSELF FIT TO GAIN ANYTHING EXCEPT THROUGH EVIL MEANS. BY DISHONESTY, INJUSTICE, IRRATIONALITY, YOU CHOOSE YOUR ROAD, NO ONE CAN DO IT FOR YOU AND IT IS EITHER ONE OR THE OTHER.
WHERE IVE CAME FROM, MAN, NO ONE WAS EVER QUITE CERTAIN, BUT ONE THING SEEMED SURE: HE WAS MOST LIKELY FROM OUT OF TOWN. ALL US TOWNFOLK WERE MIGHTY FOND OF YOUNG IVE. COURSE HIS WAYS WERE NEW-FANGED: WE DIDN'T TAKE AT FIRST TO WHAT HE CALLED "MUSIC," AND WE WE DONT KNOW WHAT A "MUSICIAN" WAS AND WHEN HE SAID HE'S ONE WE NEVER RUN HIM OUT OF TOWN LIKE WE DID THAT FELLER A COUPLE YEARS BACK WHO CALLED HIMSELF A "DOCTOR," BUT WE CAUGHT ON TO "MUSIC" SOON ENOUGH...

OH, IVE COME AMBLIN' INTO TOWN ONE DAY (WITH HIS SPoon, NATURAL) AND RIGHT OFF WE'S CURIOUS: WE SAW THAT STRANGE SPoon... THE ALIEN, OUT-OF-TOWN LOOK AND WE ALL WONDERS: "IS YOU A BOY OR A GIRL?" PLus WHO WAS HE: HE CLIMB UP ON THE MAYOR'S SPEECHIN' PLATFORM AND ANSWERED:

HI! I'M IVE AND I LEFT SWEET BETHY FROM PINE BACK IN PINE! BECAUSE SHE DIDN'T GO FOR IVE'Spoon SO MUCH.

SHE WAS MORE A FOLK-Y GAL... SANG STERLING FOLK-SONGS.

WHY SHORE... HAPPENS I WAS BORN WITH IT IN MY NOSE... OBVIOUS WHEN YOU THINK ON IT HAR HAR... INSEPARABLE WITHOUT SOME KLEENEX, I AM MY SPoon IS A TEAM LIKE UNTO AL CAPONE AND HIS GUN; OR BATMAN AND ROBIN.

I'VE HERE TO MAKE MY FORTUNE: I WANNA MAKE A FILE: I EXPECT TO HIT IT BIG THIS TIME GONE CASH FAT JUICY CHECKS... FIND MY POT O' GOLD HERE IN THE BIG CITY.

WHOLE TOWN ONLY GOT ABOUT 100 PEOPLE... OH, YES? IN WHAT ENDOR? PRAY?

I'M GONNA REPAIR THE TOWN'S SICKISH MUSIC CONDITION DO YOU REEEEALIZE THERE AINT NO LEFT-HOURED SPOON PLAYERS PERFORMING PROFESSIONALLY ANYWHERE?

WHHEH-HH-WH!
IKE Brought an assistant with him named "Maybe". "Maybe" was honest and loyal and so of course he wasn't long on brains.

Hey "Maybe"... When you mail this letter take out the garbage too.

It's a cinch, boss!

Tonight's the first concert obey.

...Hey "Maybe", did you mail that letter and take out the garbage?

It was easy, boss!

It wasn't no problem for a big guy like myself to pick all of it up an' I took it all out. An' now it's all dumped.

[Panel showing a town hall with a sign saying "Town Hall - Capacity: 1100 Seats"]

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TOWN HALL
```

Soon, however, the youth of the town, specially the girls, began to pay attention to Ike. He had some indefinable somethin' they yearned for.

Git 'em while they're hot! Oney ten minutes left of the concert! Oney 100 tickets left! Free!

"Purdy soon the "Ike mystique" (some o' the sarcastic replyers called it the "Ike mistake" harhar chuckle !) -mmph - had took hold. Ike was playin'! To audiences that threatened to fill town hall! And before long he had people comin' in from other towns!

TODAY - TONIGHT - ALL YEAR TOWN HALL

IKE CONCERT FREE TICKETS

IKE CONCERT FREE BUS RIDE
HEY "MAYBE, DID YOU GET THOSE "IKE FAN CLUB" BUTTONS PRINTED?

FIRST THING YOU KNOW, THERE'S A "IKE FAN CLUB"...
I DONE GOODEN' THAT, BOSS!

ALL US BIN WAITING PATIENTLY

SOMEBODY MUST OF KNOWN YOU WIZ COMIN', 'CAUSE IN A OL' WAREHOUSE HERE'S A WHOLE BAG OF "IKE" BUTTONS THAT MUST OF BIN PRINTED AWAYS BACK, SOMETHAT RUSTY BUT OTHERWISE GOOD AS NEW.

NOW...WHO WANTS A BUTTON?

HERE, HONEY...GO DOWN TO THE BUTTON SHOP AN' HAVE 500 "IKE FAN CLUB" BUTTONS PRINTED.

KLINK- BLANK- BLANK-

THANKS!

M'NEX' SONG CALLED "THE POOR PEOPLE OF PARIS." MET SOME OF 'EM IN FRANCE...NICE PEOPLE.

HEEY ONE O'YEU DUDES GOT A CIGARETTE?

THANKS.

NAAW HONEY, DON' YEU SEE IT WOULDN' WORK? WE DON' EVEN KNOW EACH OTHER YEU JES' AN' GOIN' 'BOUT LOVE THE RIGHT WAY.

NAW, HONEY, DON' YEU SEE IT WOULDN' WORK? HOW OLD ARE YEU, ANYWAY?

HOW OLD ARE YEU HONEY?

I GUESS I'M JES' A OL'-FASHION DUDE, HONEY, WAITIN' FOR A GIRL WITH THE VIRTUOUS VALUES.

SURE, HONEY, SURE I LIKE YEU, BUT...MARRIAGE? THAT WHAT YEU TALKIN' 'BOUT? HO! I GUESS I'M JES' A OL'-FASHION DUDE, HONEY, WAITIN' FOR A GIRL WITH THE VIRTUOUS VALUES.

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HOW OLD ARE YEU HONEY?
Darby was done! All right, too! What with modeling assignments, acting, and recordings on her own (natural with material. Why by Ike?). By this time they had to form a corporation.

I'm busy now. You'll have to talk to my secretary in the front office.

Course now Ike was more wrapped up in his art than ever. He was composing an 'recordin', etc., practically.

Honey-Baby, I love you with an unbounded passion. But I gotta work! Fright now? Okay?

Y'aint made are?

The date was set for a month later. June 14th. All the wild excitement regarding Ike was reaching a peak 179th fever pitch. It were almost as if some sort of climax was being rushed toward. Ike's life was now a whirlwind of frenzied activity.

Articles to write, interviews—oh!—now if only Ike would show up and get it. That's Ike! Ha ha ha! I guess we're all a little tired.

And then... Come the big day! Ike and Darby was on their way to the church... but at that moment...

Today's the day! Oh, boy! I'm happy! Ain't you, Darby?

Ain't y'? Y'awright, Aren'tcha, Darby?

Darby?

Something wrong, Darby?

I can't, Ike! I can't! I just can't marry you!
"I CAN'T! I CAN'T—DON'T YOU SEE? YOU'RE SO DEEP IN YOUR MUSIC... YOU DON'T NEED ME. I'D BE ONLY HOLD YOU BACK. YOU CAN'T GET MARRIED NOW. I CAN'T MARRY YOU—"

"CAN'T YOU SEE? IT HAVEN'T BEEN RIGHT, IT NEVER HAS. WE WERE ONLY DRAWN TO EACH OTHER... BECAUSE WE WERE SO MYSTERIOUS TO EACH OTHER... BUT IT HAVEN'T BEEN REAL... WHAT WILL HAPPEN WHEN THE NOVELTY WEARS OFF?"—OH, LIE. BELIEVE ME. I WISH I DIDN'T HAVE TO DO THIS..."

"I'VE GOT TO GO NOW. TRY TO UNDERSTAND... YOU'LL GET OVER ME—IN TIME... AND I'LL GET OVER YOU..."

"OH... I'M SORRY... GOODBYE..."

"WE WAS THUNDERSTRUCK. WE WENT BACK HOME ANYWAY. "MAYBE" THE WEDDING'S OFF. "MAYBE" THEY TRIED TO CHEER ME UP, BUT WEREN'T NO USE..."

"YOU CAN HAVE MY GIRL-FRIEND, BOSS..."

"GOOD OL' "MAYBE"... THANKS, OL' FRIEND. BUT YOU KEEP YER GIRL-FRIEND..."

"SBOE..."

"MAYBE... I WANT TO TAKE THIS SPOON OUT AN' MELT IT DOWN FOR SILVER..."

"HE SORTA WENT INTO HIDIN' FOR A LITTLE WHILE AFTER THAT. BUT 'YOU CAN'T KEEP A GOOD MAN DOWN!' AN' OL' HES AS GOOD AS THEY COME. Weren't long before he came out an' made a WELCOME ANNOUNCEMENT:"

"FOLKS, YOU PROBABLY WONDER WHAT ABOUT HITCHED—Y'ALL THINK MY WEDDIN' T'DAIREY... WHAT THAT MEANS?"

"YAYOOO! IT MEANS WE'VE GOT A CHANCE!!"

"RIGHT! EACH N' EVERY ONE O' Y'ALL... BELIEF T' SEE SOME OTHER GIRLS BEHINDS DARBY..."

"NOW N' NEW SONGS CALLED "PARABOLAS IN INFINITY"..."

"WHAT'S THAT MEAN?"

"YOU SEE... HE LEARNED THE MOST IMPORTANT LESSON FROM DARBY: A WEALTHY GREAT ARTIST HAS NOTHING TO FEAR EXCEPT BANKRUPTCY ITSELF..."

"AN' NOW I'M LIVIN' HAPPILY EVER AFTER. SINCE I QUIT WORRYIN' 'BOUT SILLY THINGS LIKE VALUES OR PEOPLE..."

"I DONE FOUN' MY PLACE IN THE COSMOS..."

"... ANOTHER MINI-COFT, HUH? PURITY! Y'ALL SO SWEET I'LL GET Y'A A DOZEN!"

"NO... GOODBYE... ONE QUESTION... DO YOU... LOVE ME?"

"END"
I CAN'T SEE WHY YOU'RE DISTRAUGHT. YOU'VE GOT A BEAUTIFUL FOREST, A FINE SWAMP, AND PLENTY OF FRESH MEAT...

IT'S NOT REALLY A QUESTION OF BEING WELL-CARED FOR. THERE ARE SOME NEGATIVE SIDES TO THE STORY, TOO.

TINY (YECHH!) FURRY THINGS... MAMMALS, THEY CALL THEMSELVES... STEALING OUR EGGS AND DROPPING OUR YOUNG (UGH! DISGUSTING). ANNOYING LITTLE CRITTERS... COULD BE DOWN RIGHT DANGEROUS IF WE LET THEM GET OUT OF HAND...

BUT, THEY'LL PASS ON... NOT SUITED TO THE CLIMATE, YOU KNOW... JUST CONTEMPORARY PESTS. THIS WORLD WAS MADE FOR REPTILES, YOU KNOW...

SO, YOU HOPE TO PROSPER AND EVENTUALLY RULE THE WORLD?

AND WE WILL BE HERE LONG AFTER THOSE TINY WARM-BLOODED MONSTERS ARE GONE! YES, WE DINOSAURS WILL CONTINUE TO EVOLVE AND GROW UNTIL WE BECOME MASTERS OF THE UNIVERSE. IT'S INEVITABLE.

IT SOUNDS PROMISING... GOOD LUCK...

I SEE.

FACT IS WE DO. WE'VE RULED THROUGH EONS PAST AND WE RULE SUPREME AND UNCHALLENGED NOW...

SEE THAT SWAMP OUT THERE? TEEMING WITH LIFE... MAGNIFICENT REPTILIAN CREATURES... A VARIETY NUMBERING IN THE THOUSANDS... BUT, WE HAVE OUR PROBLEMS...
...that in his everyday identity, Mr. E is Moe Birch, mild-mannered second grade school teacher...

-- but Mr. Birch = Christ for save the thieves on God's love...

I promised weasel ingrained, underworld stoolie, a cool five bucks for the name of the mysterious Mr. Big behind all the crime and corruption here in Ditko City...

Came to think of it, why should I pay for what I, a good man, have a right to know? Men like weasel have their uses, but it's damned hard to deal with them on their own terms, for they're black and evil, having crossed the path of crime! Besides, five bucks is five bucks...

Several persuasive minutes later...

Okay -- jingle, I'll talk! (choke). The kingpin is (sub purr) Prettypants, off. Arrr...

Of course! The eccentric millionaire who expounds that absurd 'something for nothing' philosophy... fantasies of an indolent utopia for the unwashed poor...

Charity -- haa! What an insidiously clever front! Nobody ever gave me a dime, I've earned my place in society and it's my duty to make sure everyone else pays the same dues...

One side, minnow -- I'm after the big fish...

Can we help you, sir? Money? A bowl of soup? Dancing lessons? Wiped out by a rival gang? Run over by a red cross truck! His only relative has taken up the reins...

You're too late... (sob) he's dead...
Crown my colleague, will ya?

Hey boys! It's a free for all!!

I fix you good... oops...

HEY!

CRACK!

What for you sluggin' m'dorter?

BTANG!

Ya shouldn't of hit me brudder!

Buy a girl a drink?

Strong 'n silent, eh?

Mmmm! I like that...

Whadaya say? Your place or mine?

'Ey! You takin' advantage o'muh girl? I don't tink I like at!
Through the abyss the witch floated, peacefully content.

"To what strange world have they sent me," she mused. "In all my wanderings, never have I seen this land before. And yet..."

She cast her memory back to that last moment; once again she viewed the flames and, beyond, the mortal faces, bestial with bloodlust......
"What pleasure the sounds of my pain must have given them."

Little silver bells of laughter bubbled in her throat.

How frightened she might have been if not for Mila's council. "You must not protest, child, for they only send you on a journey. A journey to an age of safety where you may learn and grow in peace."
“Will I really be the greatest witch of all, Mila?”

“For you, all things are possible. Of us all, only you have the gift of eternal self-awareness. But beware of pride, a mortal failing that can bring you harm.”

“Jealous! The greatest prophet of the Elders, jealous of me! But what a strange mode of travel is the stake. Could Mila have been wrong?”
Drifting through countless eons, the witch grew impatient. Suspicion chewed her thoughts. How like a lamb she had gone to the slaughter, and only because Mila had counseled it! Afraid to destroy her, fearful of the punishment of the Elders, had Mila sent the young witch here, forever out of reach? “I can destroy Mila. But how might the Elders repay that crime?” The witch brooded. “What could be worse than this vacuum in eternity?”

Willing her mind into one small malignant sphere she hurled it through the barriers, searching relentlessly through the crevices and fields of earth and on to the mountaintops. “Mila!”
"Foolish child! You will destroy everything!"
"Only you, Mila!"

She thrilled to the hideous cry, covering the earth, sending mortals quaking to their islands of imagined safety.

But with her last breath, Mila laughed. "And still shall you know eternity. I have forseen it!"
Peace. She had done the undoable and her vacuous existence remained unchanged. On and on she drifted, feeling neither hunger, pain nor fear, secure in her self-contained universe.
Violence pushed at her; were the Elders come at last? In panic she tried to resist and was torn brutally from her limbo, into a madhouse of unendurable sound and vicious light. She screamed out an agony of fear.
Throughout the sterile room the infant's wail resounded pitiously.

"How could a thing like this happen?"

"Who knows? A twisted gene, a hormone gone wild."
"Imagine, once, a thing like this would have been allowed to live."
"My dear, the world would have insisted upon it!"

With a deft stroke he drove the needle home.

Through the abyss the witch floated...