

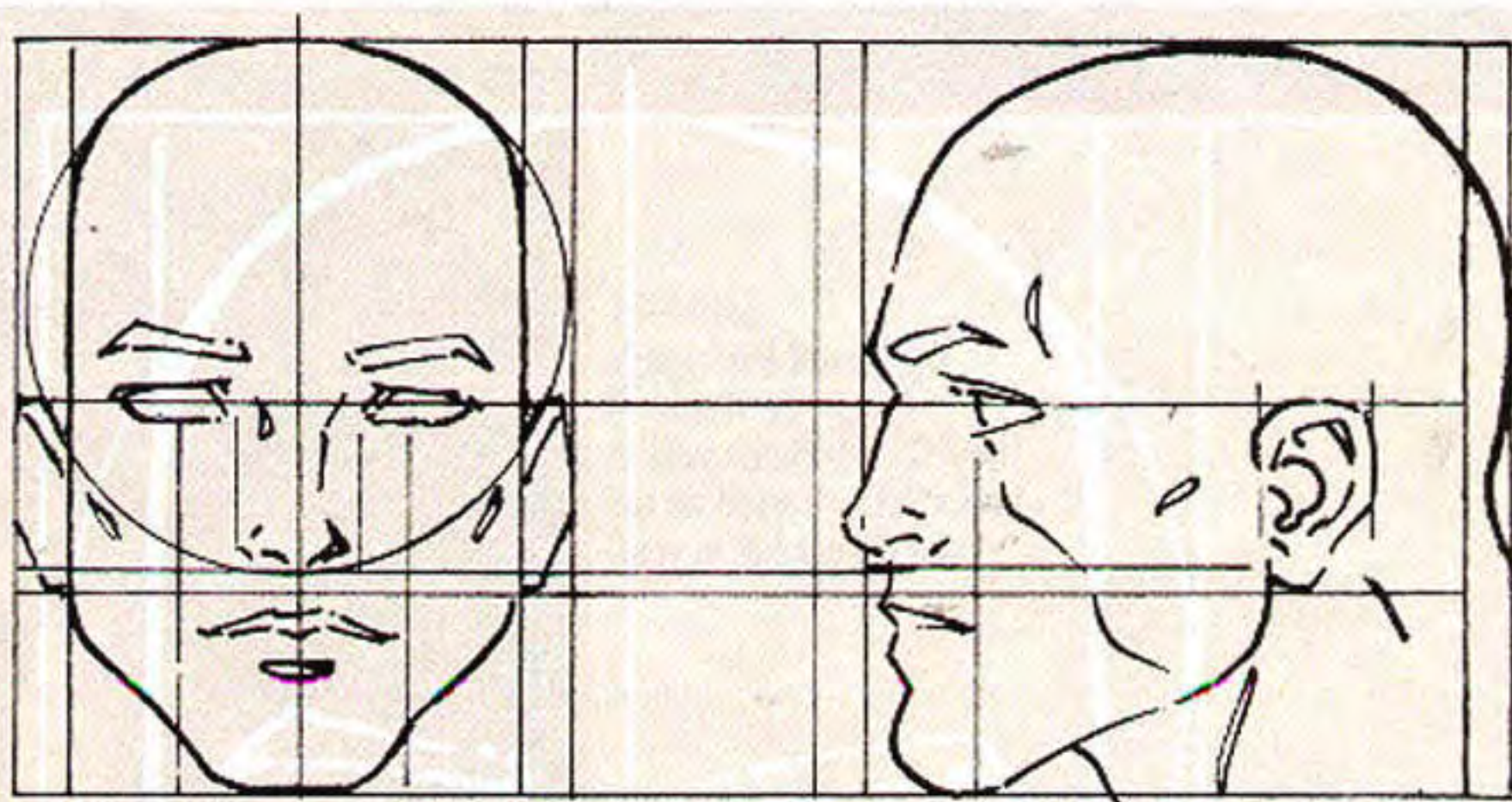
'Krash Course'

by: Greg Capullo & Todd McFarlane

Welcome to Krash Course, all you future comic gods. My name is Greg Capullo, one-half of the dynamic duo—namely Todd McFarlane and myself—who comprise the *Spawn* art team. I have designed this course to give you all the weapons you'll need in order to draw your own bombastic comic books.

To do that we must start with the basics. Repeat after me: 'Basics. The better ya know 'em, the better you'll be.' The best way to learn the basics is to get your sketch pads out and start drawing from life and/or photos. Now I know there are a lot of hotshots out there who say, 'I don't need to learn the basics or draw from life because I draw from imagination and have a stylized approach.' That's capital B.S.! It's just a cop-out the lightweights use who ain't got what it takes to get 'em down. So all you hotshots, pay attention and watch closely 'cause I'm gonna make your drawings more powerful no matter what your drawing style is.

For the first lesson, I chose to discuss the human head and its features, being that it's the first thing you see when you look at a person. Now, I don't want to bore you with rules and regulations because drawing should always be fun.

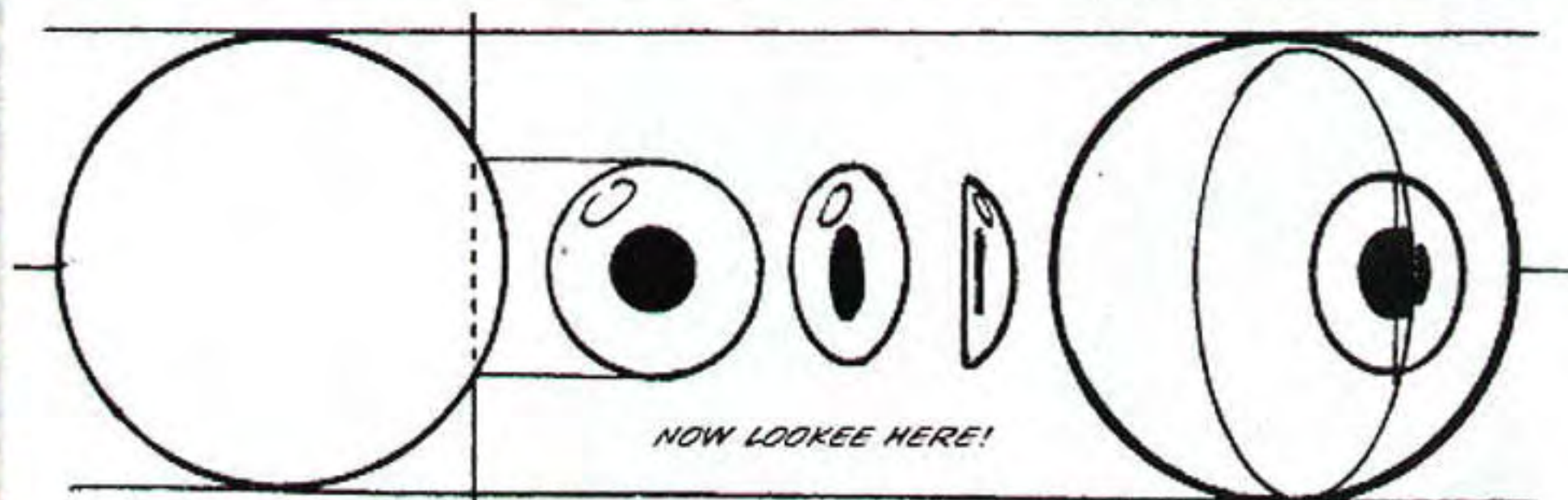


1. the ideal head

So, let's look at our first illustration. This is an ideally constructed head. I've used a set of guide lines to show you how to set up a head of your own. Notice in the frontal view, if you divide the head in half horizontally you've found the eye line. Five eye lengths is the width of the head. Take a close look at the eyes—between them is the length of one eye, and the distance from each eye to the edge of each ear is also one eye length. Now, if we divide the space from the eyes to the chin in half, slightly above that line would be the base

of the nose. Dividing the space from the bottom of the nose to the chin in thirds will show you where the mouth goes. Place it at the base line on the first third from the nose.

Note the front view of the vertical lines that I've drawn. They demonstrate how the features relate to each other. The side view of the head fits roughly within a square. Notice how the vertical line I dropped from the inside corner of the eye is equal to the horizontal line that runs from the outside corner of the eye to the back of the ear. Use this guideline to properly place the ear.



NOW LOOKEE HERE!

2 eyeballs aren't round

Now let's take a look at the individual features beginning with the eye. I'll bet you think the eyeball is perfectly round, right? WRONG! Let's try an experiment. Close your eyes and place a finger on each of your lids. You'll be able to feel a slightly raised spot if you move your eyes

around. What you're feeling is the eye lens. See how I cut away a section of the eyeball indicated by the broken line? This is the flat spot where you plop the lens. The pupil (the black dot of your eye) is located on that flat area. That's why the pupil appears as an ellipse when viewing the eye from any angle other than straight on.



3. pac-man

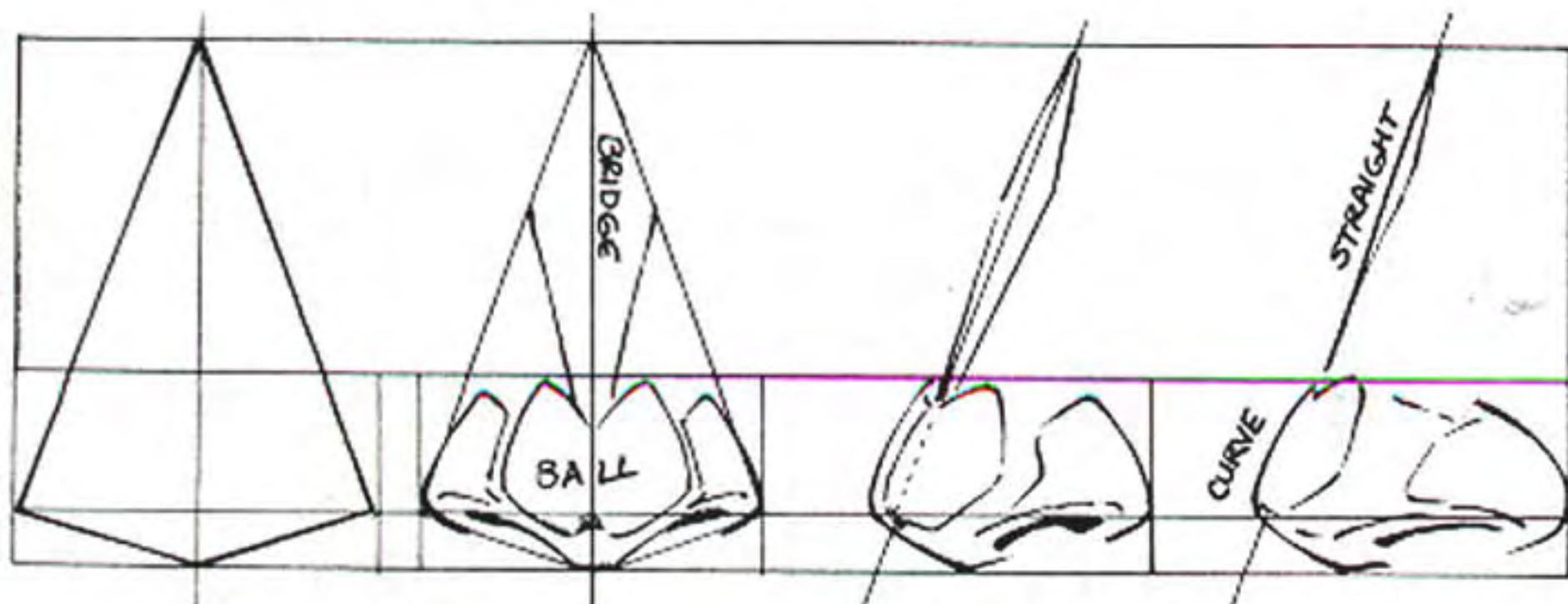
The easiest way to understand the eyelid is to imagine a Pac-Man (remember that video game?) gobbling up an eyeball. Though the eyelid is shaped a bit differently, the idea is the same. So study the contours of the lid and remember to give the lid thickness and you'll be all set.

"WAKA
WAKA
WAKA
WAKA
WAKA"



4. the nose is a piece of cake

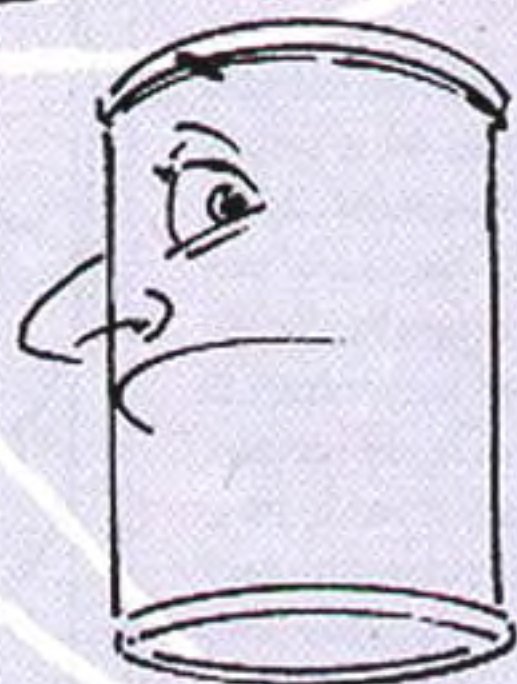
The nose is a piece of cake. If you can draw a triangle, you can draw a nose. Try to keep the bridge of the nose fairly straight and note how it interlocks with the ball of the nose. As you can see, even in the up-shot, the triangle remains the dominant form. Simple or what?



NOSTRILS
ARE
KIDNEY
SHAPED

5. can it!

Now for the curvy thing called the mouth. There are two things to remember when drawing the mouth. First, make sure that the top lip doesn't protrude too far past the lower lip. If you do this, your character will look geeky. The second thing to remember is that the mouth itself is built on a curve. Remember that the face, unlike the top of your kid sister's head, is not flat. The cartoon cans should help you understand what I mean.

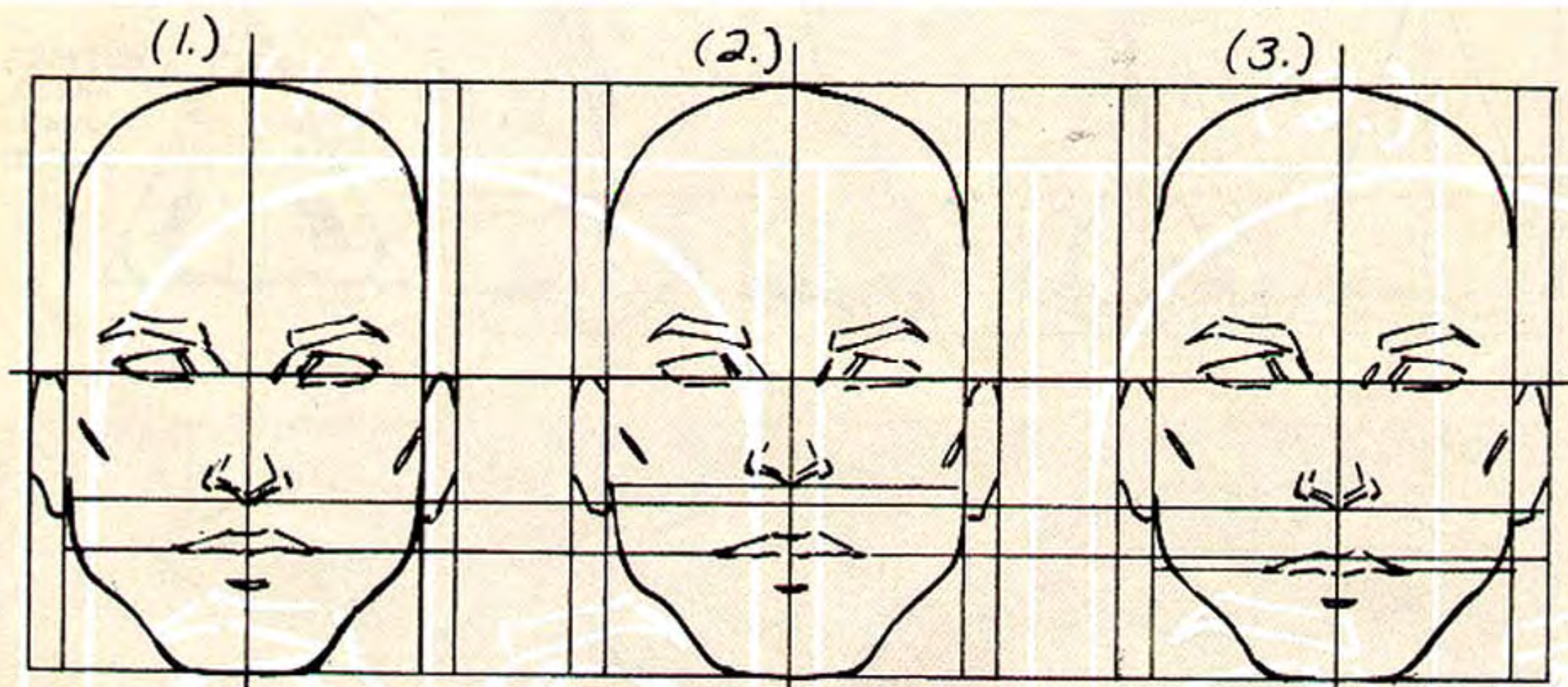
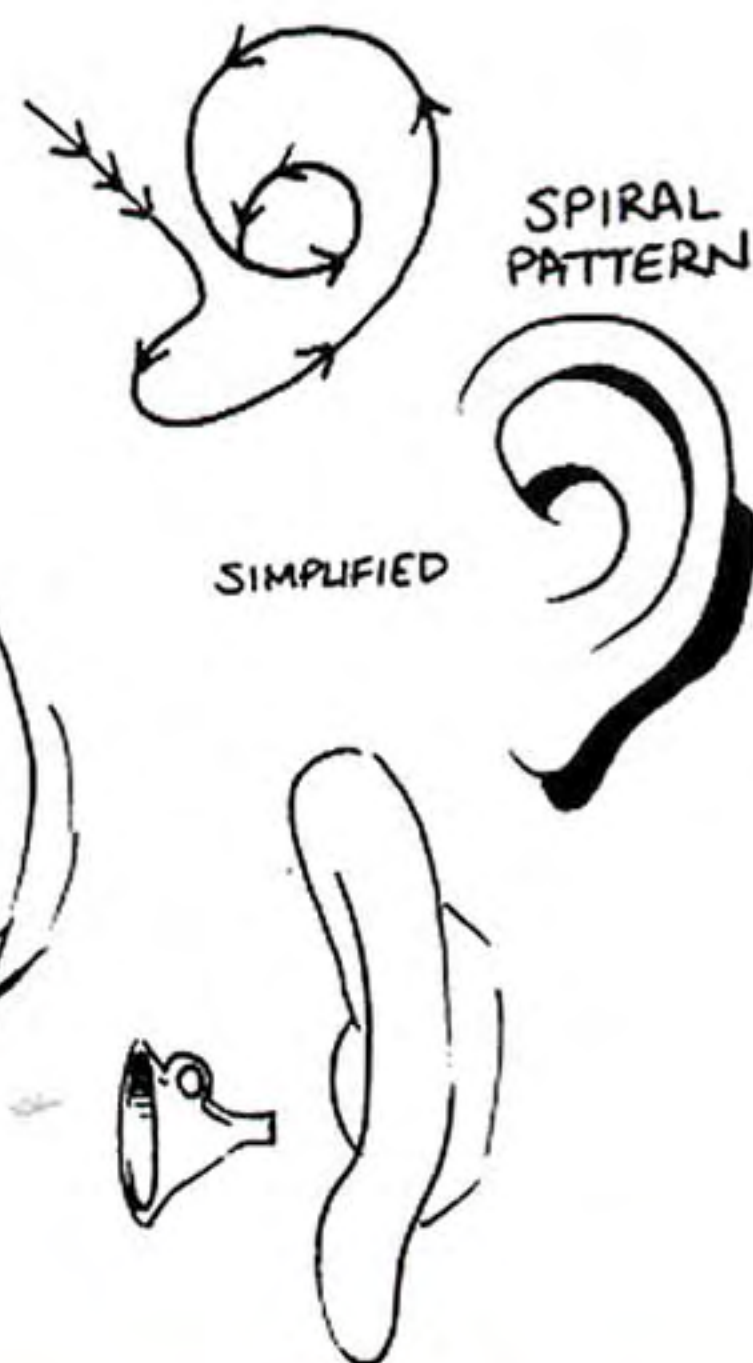


KISS ME,
YOU
CRAZY
FOOL!

6. now hear this

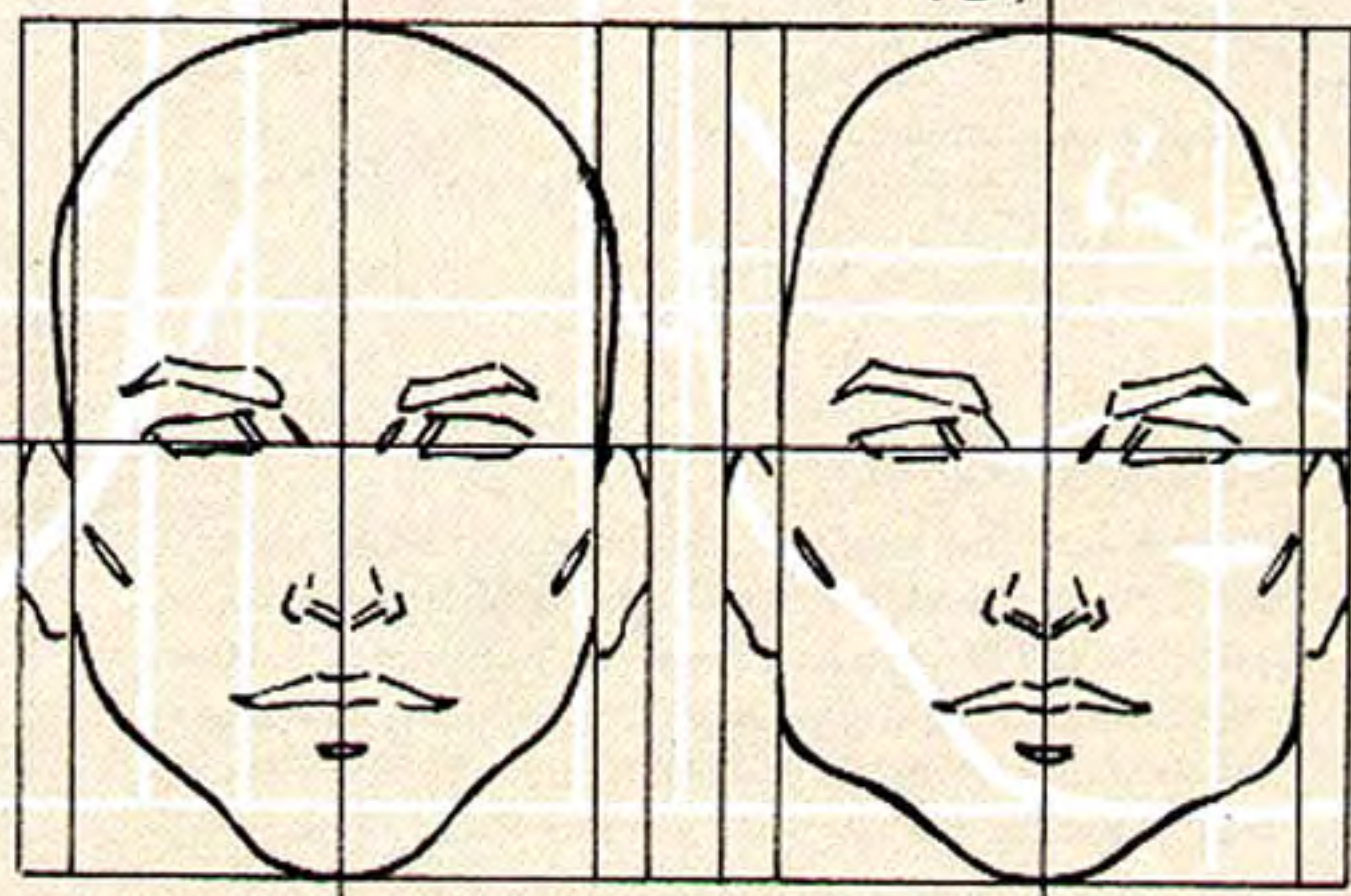
The ear is a bit trickier. It's made of bits of cartilage that interlock with each other, some pieces even hide behind others. The basic overall shape is that of a kidney. To help you understand the complexity of the ear (it ain't so tough once ya get the hang of it) try taking your finger while looking at

my drawing and locating on your own ear what you're looking at. (CAUTION!!! Be careful not to wander too deeply in your ear because you wouldn't want to get sticky brown ear wax all over your brand new Wizard.) That concludes our look at the features. Hopefully, all you lightweights managed to hang in there with the tough guys.



(A.)

(B.)



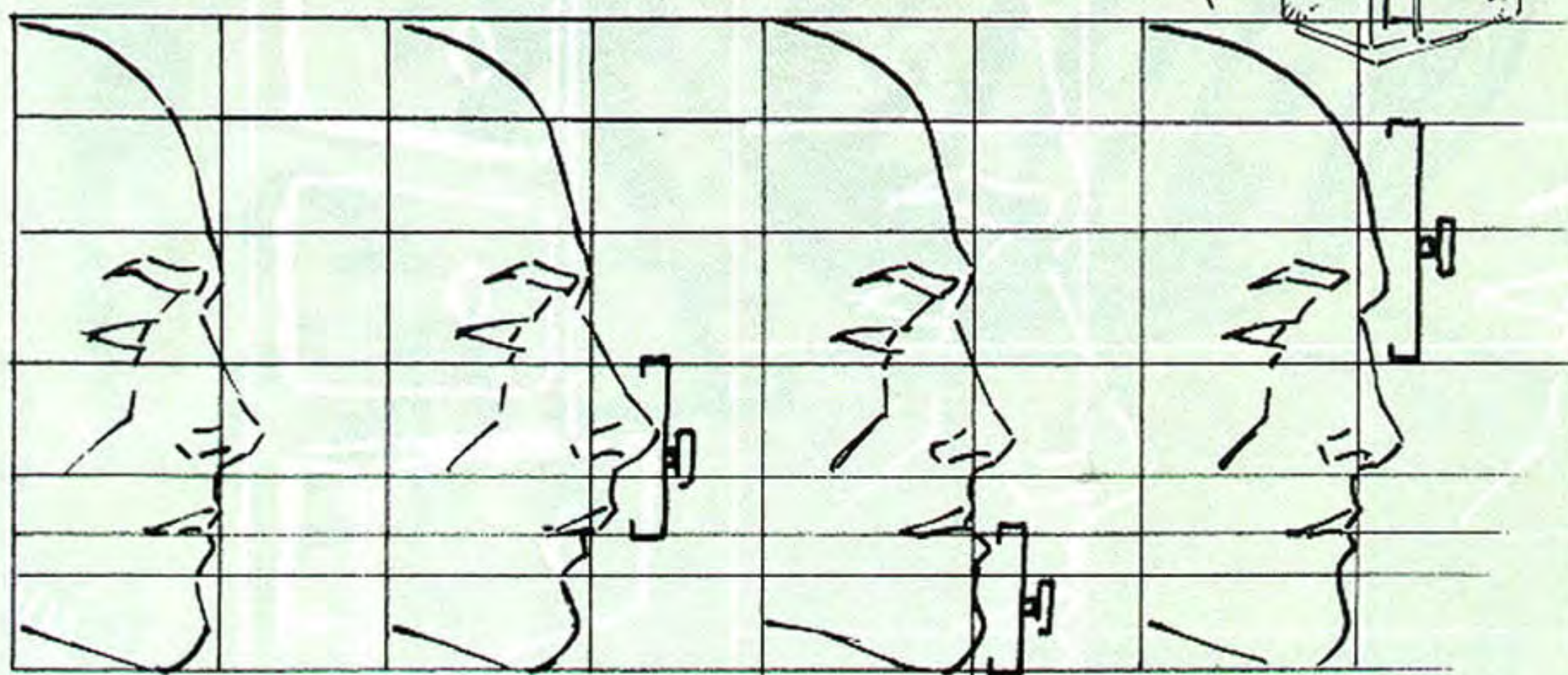
7. changing features

Now let's play a little game. We'll start with an ideal head and move the features around to see what happens. Head #1 is proportioned correctly. With Head #2, the nose has been raised slightly. On Head #3 the mouth was lowered slightly. Notice how very different all three faces look with only slight changes being made. You can also move the eyes closer together or farther apart, as well as up or down. In fact, move the features in any combination and direction that you like. In illustrations A and B, I proportioned the features correctly, but altered the shape of the head. See again how differently the heads look? Just imagine how many different characters you can get by altering head shapes and feature placements together!

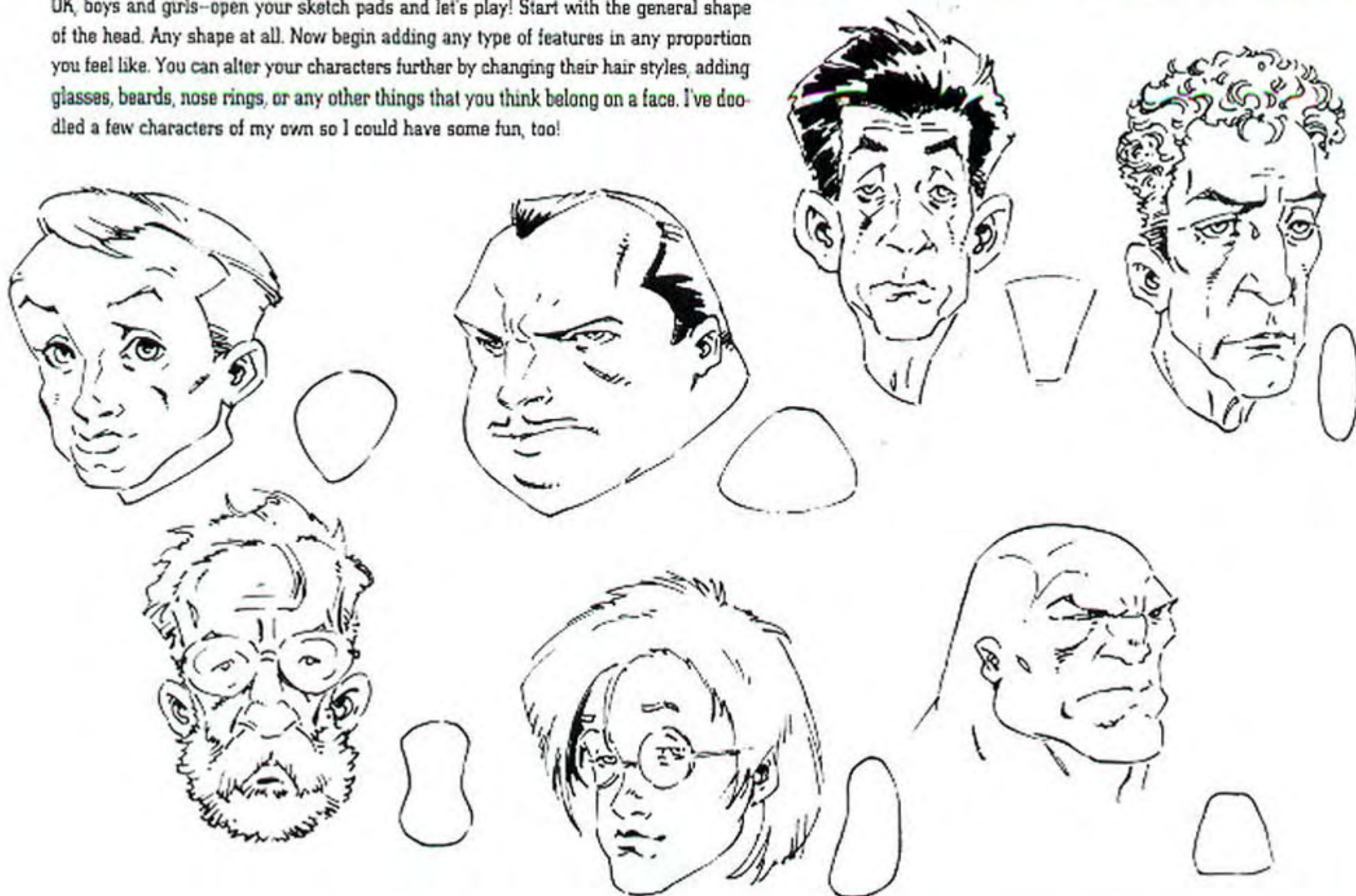
8. stretch your skull

Here's another neat trick for altering a face (I feel like Dr. Frankenstein!):

Draw a profile of a face as I have done. Imagine that the front of the face has drawers on it and that on the front of these drawers are the features. Notice how radically different the faces look just by pulling out the drawers! Here's where the real fun begins! Up till now, we've been dealing with the ideal head with standard features. Having that down, we're now ready to draw from our imagination.



OK, boys and girls—open your sketch pads and let's play! Start with the general shape of the head. Any shape at all. Now begin adding any type of features in any proportion you feel like. You can alter your characters further by changing their hair styles, adding glasses, beards, nose rings, or any other things that you think belong on a face. I've doodled a few characters of my own so I could have some fun, too!



This concludes the first Krash Course. I hope I've begun to prove that a strong foundation in the basics will enhance your drawings, making them much more powerful and convincing. Understand that structure must be both understood and present no matter what your style is. Next month's column will be 'Vicious Anatomy.' Till then, keep the lead burning, tough guys. ☆

VICIOUS ANATOMY!



Welcome back to Krash Course, kiddies! As promised, we'll be dealing with a topic I know you'll find exciting! How would I know what you'd find exciting, you ask? Because you're just like me, you love comics and you want to draw them. Well, that's just what I happen to do for a living.

Let's face facts: One of the coolest things about drawing comics is that you get to draw massive, ripped, muscle-laden superheroes! Bursting at the seams, those bulging biceps seem to sing to us whether they're helping to punch a hole right through someone's body or attempting to control the mule-like kick of some gigantic techno-gun as it pumps out unreal amounts of bullets filling its victims full of lead and reducing their bodies to broken, smoking heaps of lifeless blood and gore!!! So, without the use of diagrams or flip charts, I'm going to show you how to push your heroes from passive to massive!

1. nice pipes

There are three things you can do to push your finger over the top, regardless of muscle size. Those things are: separation, striation and veination. (Hey, Moe! I just made up a word!) Before I demonstrate these things, I'll assume that all you tough guys out there already have a solid foundation in basic anatomy. If not, you'll need to go out and get yourself an anatomy book for artists. I've got the *Atlas of Human Anatomy for the Artist*, by Stephen Peck, but there are plenty of other good ones out there, as well.

FIG. 1



"NO LIT-TLE
GERLIE AHMS
AH-LOUWED!"

Let's begin by getting our terminology down by use of pictures. Figure 1 shows a muscular arm that would be capable of hurting you pretty bad if it were to hit you. But let's push things a little further till that same arm looks like one punch would kill you!

2. separation

Figure 2 shows separation. Notice how all the individual muscle groups are more clearly defined. Each one stands out by itself instead of being in a grouped mass as in Figure 1.

FIG. 2



FIG. 3



3. striation

Figure 3 shows striation. This is where the actual fibers that compose muscle can also be seen. Now you're able to give the appearance of having even more muscle than before! Muscle fibers run in various directions depending on the particular muscle you're drawing. So refer to your anatomy book (if need be) till you've memorized them.

4. veination

Now for the *coup de grâce*: veination! (Hey, I like this new word!) Figure 4 shows how to use veins to push your anatomy into the realm of vicious! Now you've got it all. Bone, muscle, muscle on top of muscle and blood-pumping veins strapped together to forge the lethal appendages your hero will need to kick some mondo bootie!

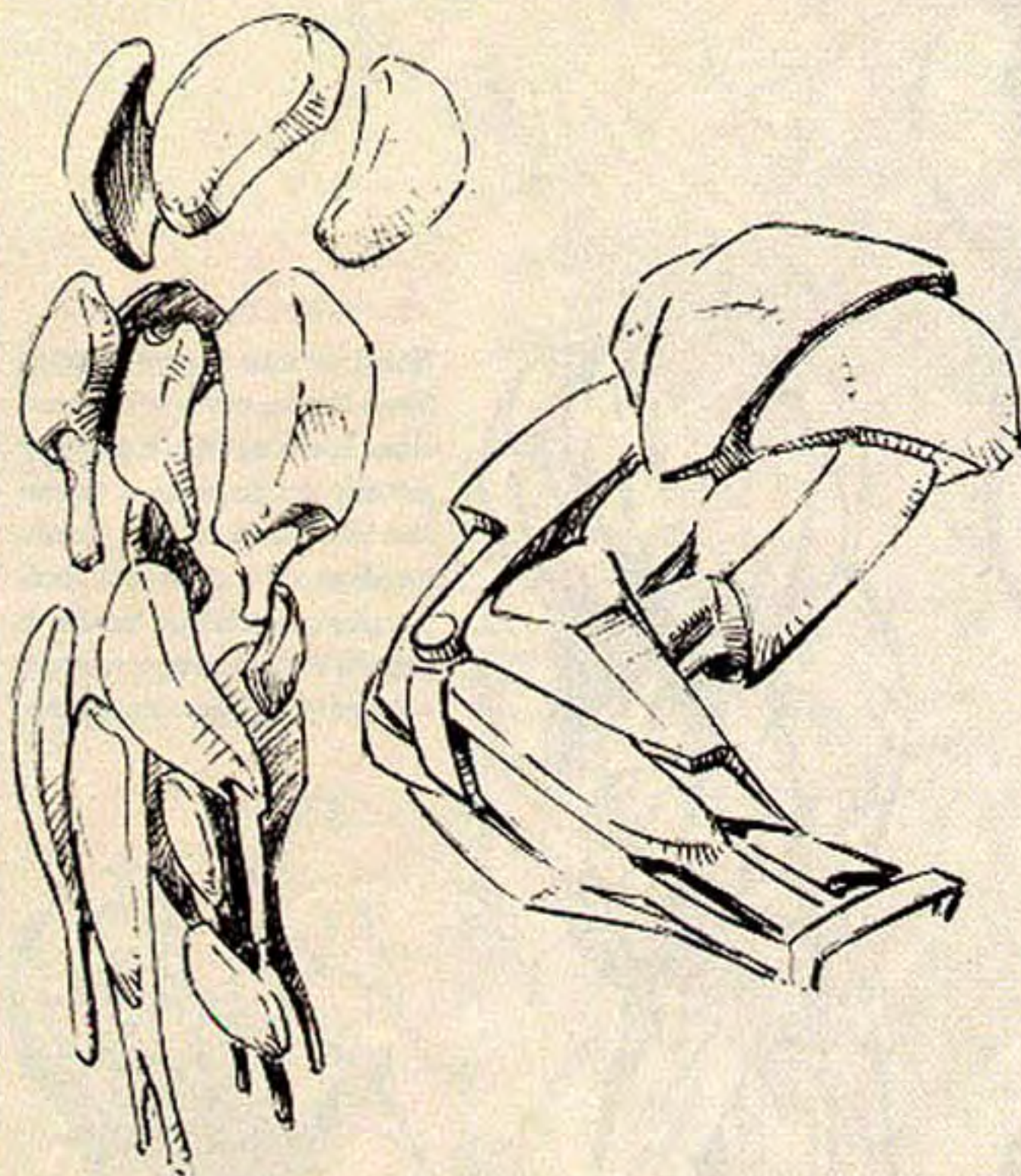
FIG. 4



KEEP
PUMPING, HANZ
AND FRANZ!

5. puzzled by muscles?

To get good separation you must achieve the appearance of interlocking. Pieces of muscle fit together like some sort of jigsaw puzzle. Think of the muscles of the body as blocks of wood or whatever. This will help give them a feeling of dimension and solidity. It helps to think of the pieces as geometrical forms when trying to get that interlocking feel. And even though I've used the arm once again here, this method could be used on any area of your hero's body.



6. hammer time!

Striation is basically chiseling grooves into the muscles. The degree to which you do this is all up to you. You can go for deep or barely visible striation. As long as they're going in the right direction, rock 'n' roll!

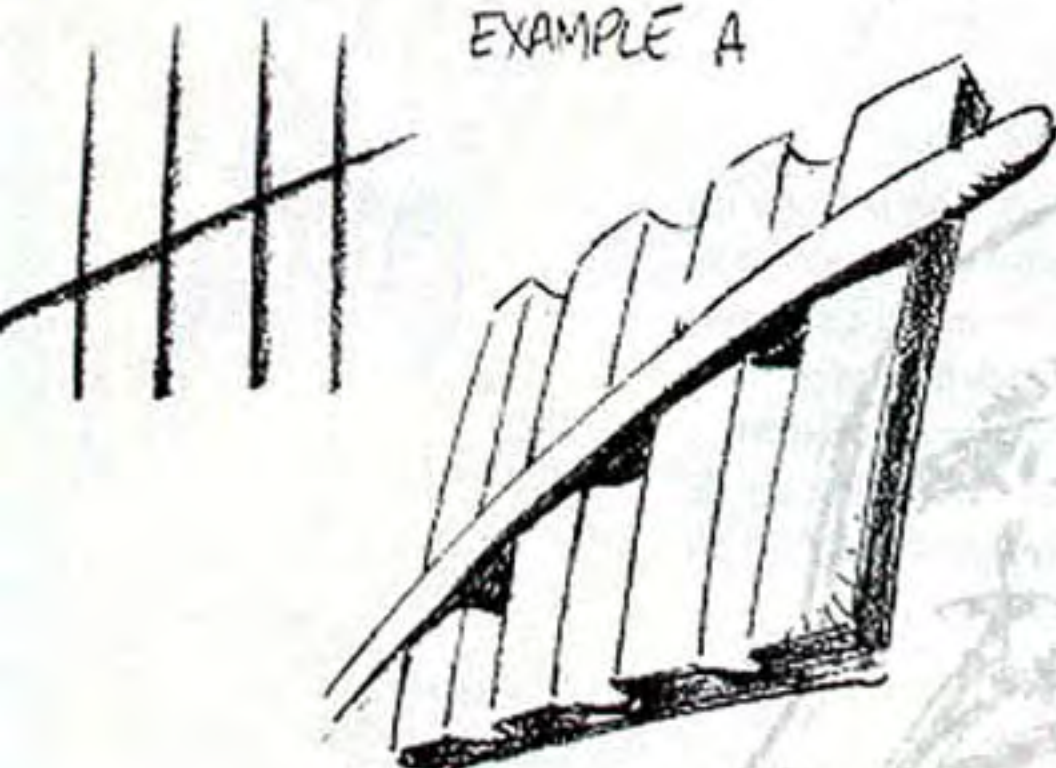


7. shadows and lighting

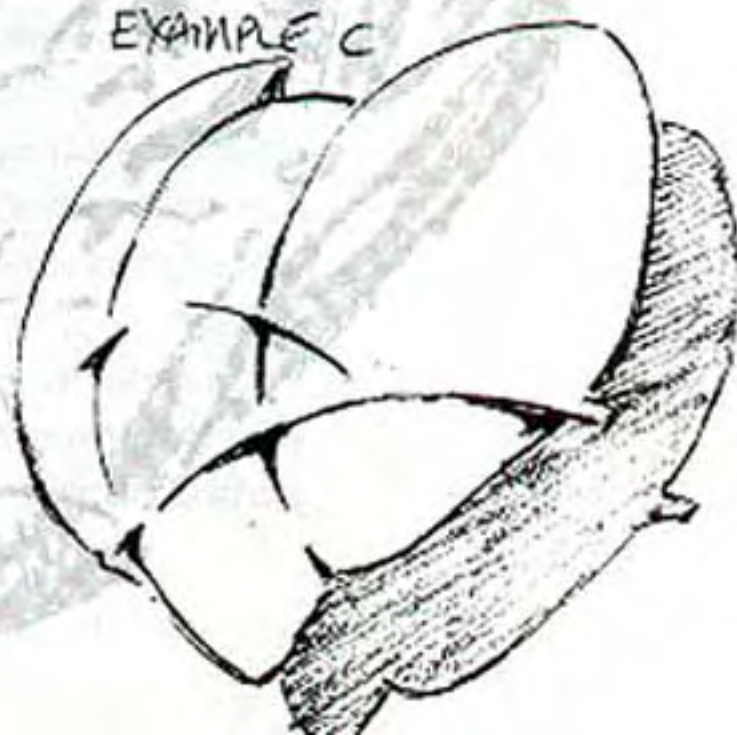
In order to have good veination you have to cross the line. A vein wouldn't really stand out too much if it ran parallel with the lines of your muscle, would it? Nope. Instead, you have to contrast your muscle lines by running the veins across them. By doing this, they would cast a shadow within the grooves of the muscle (see example A), giving it its own solidity.

Now watch this little mind game. Look at the tiny house (example B), and notice that most of the edges are not drawn. Yet your mind sees them as being there because of the lines that meet where the edges should be. (Neat, huh?) This is the trick to successfully drawing veins. You don't need to draw the top of the vein, only the bottom line or side of the vein that faces away from the light source (example C).

EXAMPLE A




EXAMPLE C



EXAMPLE B






So now that some of the mystery is gone, you, too, can load your hero chock full of all those cool lines you used to look at and go, "Aw, man! How did they do that? Mine *never* looks right!"

Plenty of kids have asked me how to get that veiny, muscular look on the hero's neck. Same principles.

8. mr. volcano head

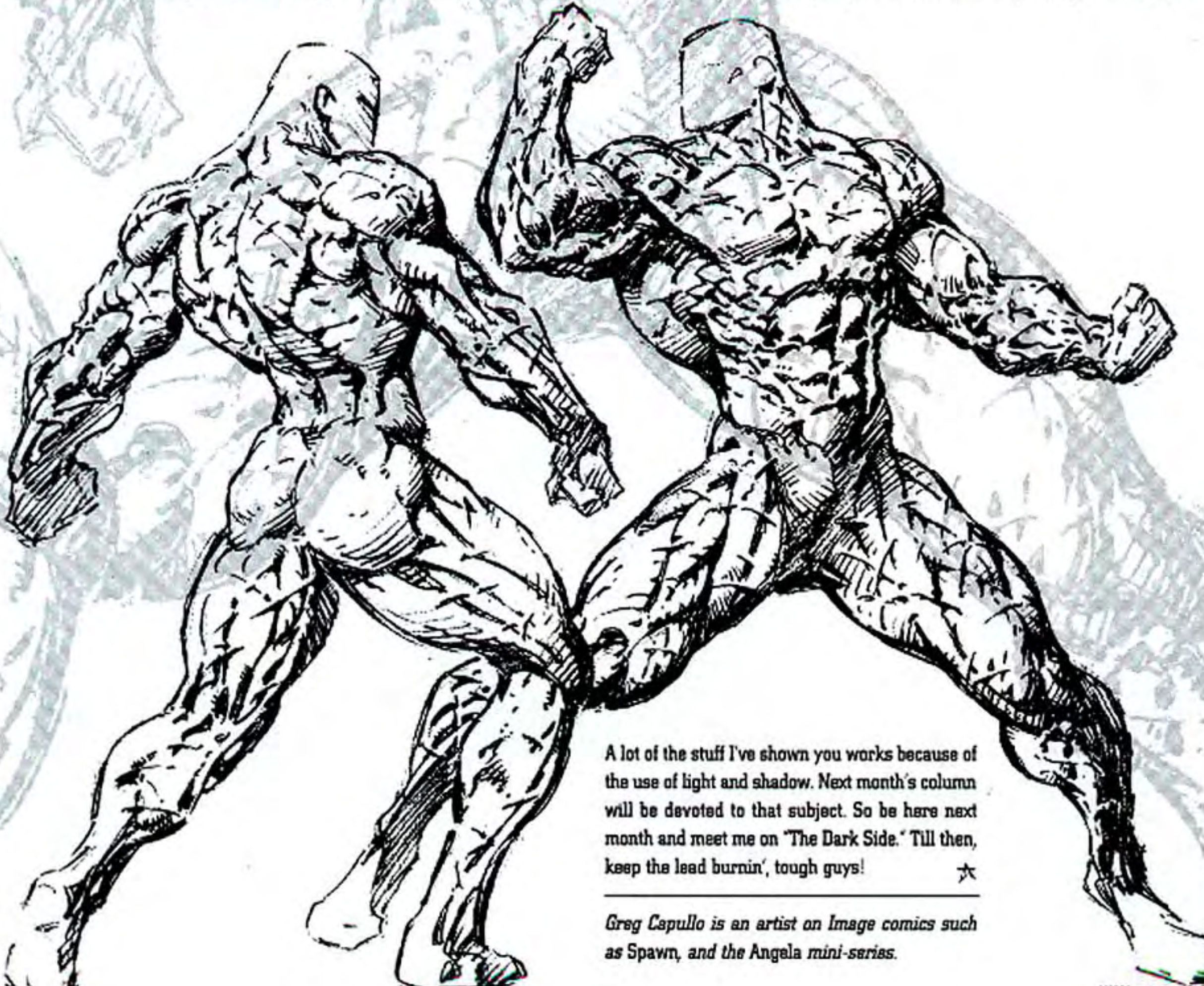


Check out Mr. Volcano Head (see illustrations). I've exaggerated here to get the point across. These principles apply to all the parts of the anatomy. Don't get uptight about drawing veins. As long as you know the muscle groups cold, I say fear not. You can do a lot of faking when drawing blood vessels. I suggest that you at least learn the really outstanding landmark veins like the one that runs down the front of an arm's biceps muscle, etc. Other than that, do as I do...free-wheel burn! Do whatever turns you on. Mind you, every character shouldn't be handled to this extreme. But knowing these techniques will make it possible for you to succeed, should you need to push it or modify it to any degree that'll suit your needs.

HENRY
ROLLINS?

9. do it right

Well, you just know I had to draw a couple of figures of my own. After all, I can't let you guys have all the fun. Now that you know how to put a little window dressing on your figures, don't be fooled into believing that if you put enough of it on a poorly drawn figure no one will notice. You might fool the people with untrained eyes, but the tough guys out there will go, "Look at the jalopy with the fancy paint job." But if you put that paint job on a Ferrari...then you've got something!



A lot of the stuff I've shown you works because of the use of light and shadow. Next month's column will be devoted to that subject. So be here next month and meet me on "The Dark Side." Till then, keep the lead burnin', tough guys! ☆

Greg Capullo is an artist on Image comics such as *Spawn*, and the *Angela* mini-series.

THE DARK SIDE!

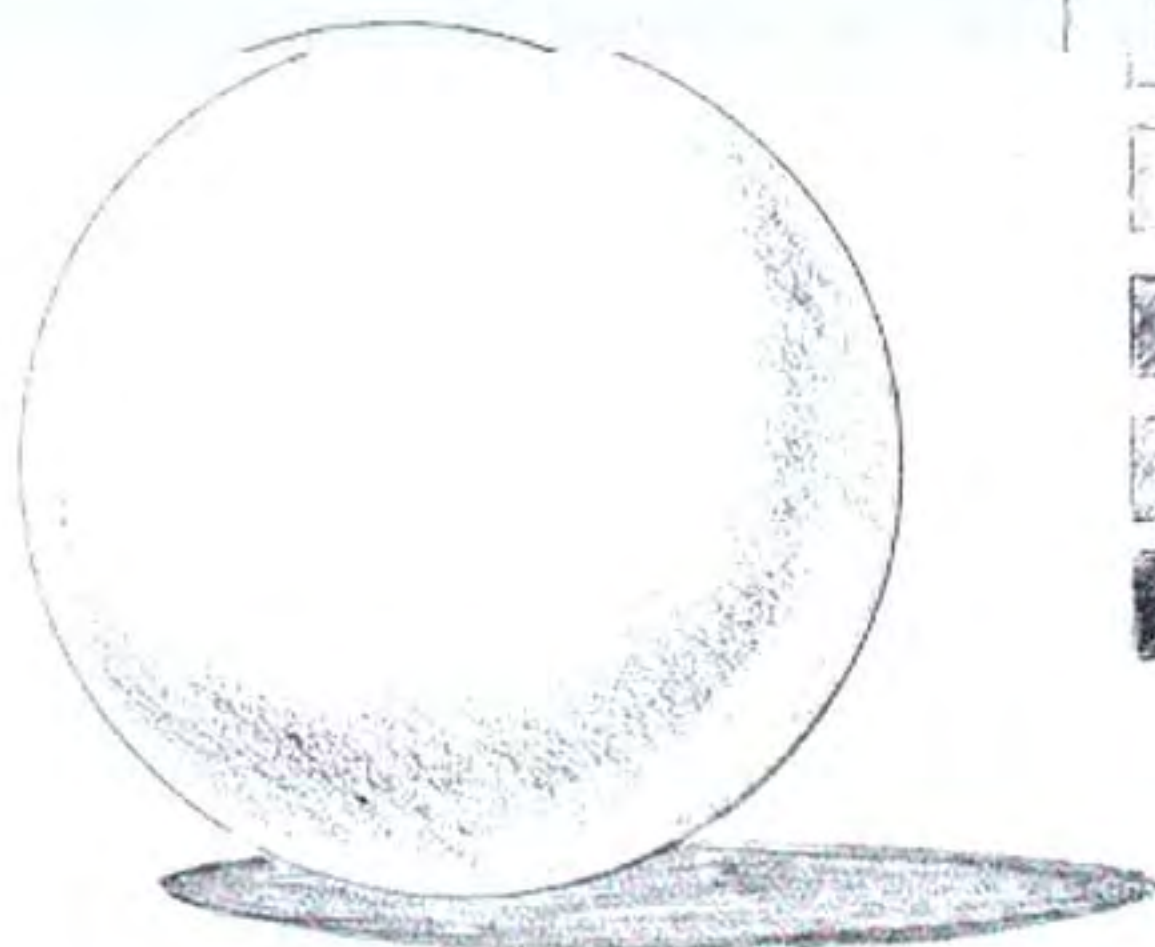
Now there's a tough title to frighten your parents with! Not to worry, though. You can assure your folks that we won't be sacrificing any goats or reciting any unholy incantations...this month. Instead, this month's Krash Course will be dealing with the use of light and shadow and how they both can be used to give solidity and dimension to your drawings!

OK, class, repeat after me: "Shadow defines form." But Gregggy, what does it mean? Well, picture, if you can, what things would look like if everything you saw was completely bathed in light from every possible angle all at once.

If you can't picture it, you're doing great! Because you wouldn't be able to see anything. The reason you're *able* to see objects as being solid and three dimensional is because of the relationship between light and the absence of light. Ta da! "Shadow defines form." With that having been said...let's rock!



WELCOME TO,
THE 'DARK SIDE'!



1. shadows are good

There are five effects that light produces when meeting an object. They are "highlight," "half-tone," "shadow," "reflect" and "cast shadow." The highlight is the area receiving the most light from the light source, therefore making it the brightest area. As we move away from the light source we have the half-tone which is the transitional effect between light and shadow. This area would be darker than the highlight but not as dark as the shadow effect. Shadow now blends into light's next effect known as reflected light. Reflected areas would be lighter than shadowed areas, yet darker than half-tone areas. If you were thinking the shadow area is the darkest, you were wrong. Light's interplay with objects can have one more effect that's darker still...the cast shadow.

2. de planes, de planes!

To teach you how to apply this information to your drawings, I must first warn you of one of the biggest mistakes young comic studs (or students) make. That mistake is forgetting that the objects they're drawing are three-dimensional forms. Because they are drawing on a flat piece of paper, artists tend to treat their subjects as if they were flat, too. Remember that the forms you draw are solid objects and treat them as such! I can hear you saying, "But...but, Gregggy...how...?" Don't freak yet. First let me explain exactly how light is able to produce its magical effects.

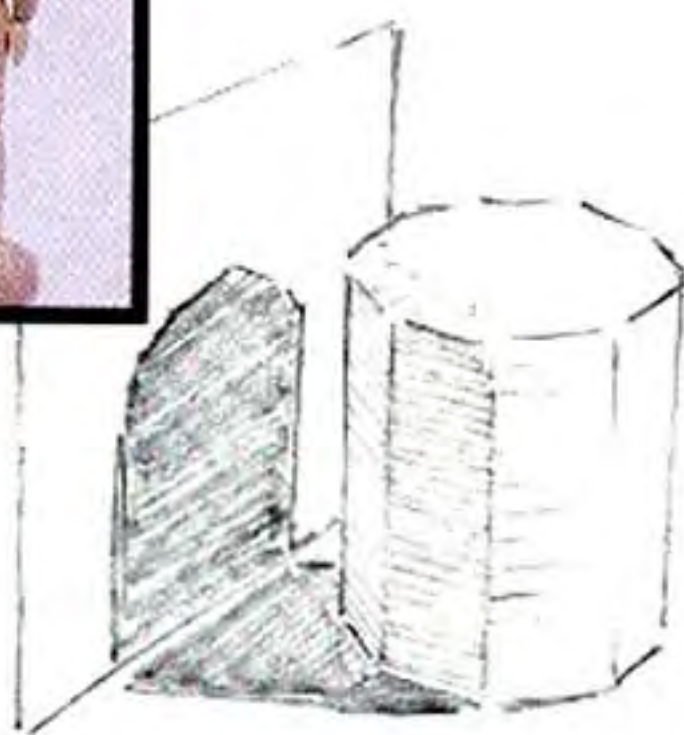
All objects are composed of planes. Planes are flat areas, either actually existing or imposed upon rounded forms. A plane at right angles to the light source would receive the highlight. The next set of planes form the half-tone. And lastly, the shadow planes, because of their angle, can't receive direct light from the source. However, some of those planes, called reflective planes, may receive subdued light from the surrounding lighted areas. "OK. But..." Relax, people. I'm sure you tough guys out there have already been breaking down the figure (or objects) into block shapes. So the next step of adding planes will only be slightly more difficult.



3. more planes

How square you can make the round will determine your ultimate success. I was going to give you full front and back shots showing how I would plane the figure, but I decided to just give a few examples instead. After all, there is no single correct way to do this. Each artist, as he or she studies the human figure, will undoubtedly interpret things a little differently. I may as well start you off now developing your own style. Follow my examples, but come up with many of your own! Once you've laid in your planes, pick the direction of your light source and it's off to the races! Using the principles I've given you, try to figure out which planes fall into which categories and shade them appropriately. For the tough guys out there who really want to get this, I'm gonna give you a couple of tips to assure you a place at the front of the pack.

Number one. Get a wooden mannequin for the artist and, using a lamp to set up various light sources, start sketching. You won't be able to get the intricacies of light and shadow, but you'll certainly become an expert on where to place the shadowy masses! Number two. To fine-tune the planes, use muscle and fitness magazines. Use only photos with a single dominant light source. Otherwise, you'll receive some confusing information.



4. practical use of shadow

One quick note I'd like to make concerns rendering. A lot of guys show me pencil drawings with all these "rubbed" shading techniques (which is blending one tone to another, using your finger or the side of the pencil). Don't do that! Don't get me wrong, these techniques look great, but they're impractical for comic book artwork. Unless your drawing is going to be reproduced in that blended pencil technique, you're A) wasting your time or B) leaving way too much open for interpretation by the inker (i.e., the person who goes over your pencils in ink).



DON'T

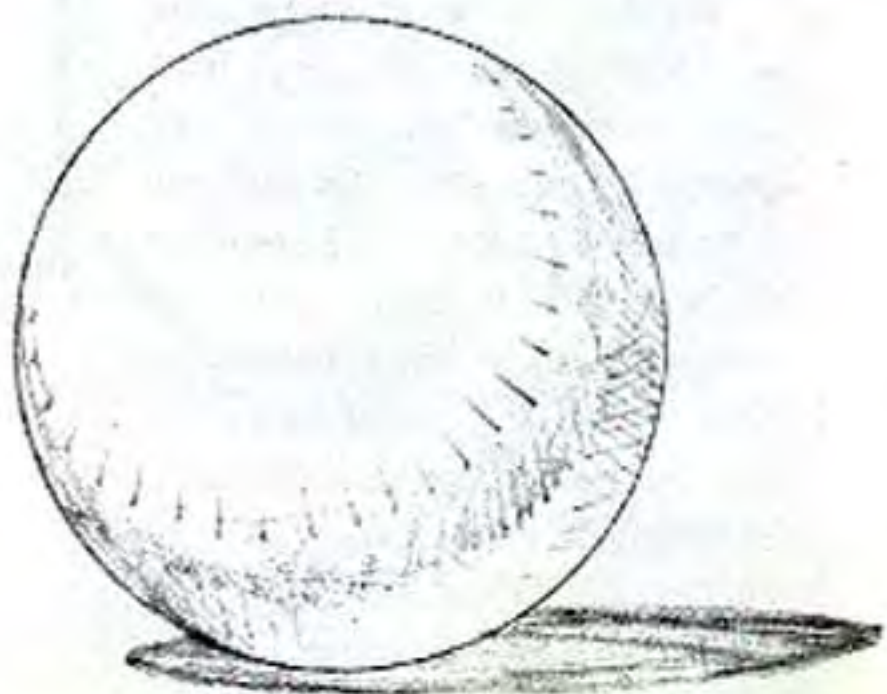


DO



ONLY THE SHADOW KNOWS...

Instead, you must think more graphically, using techniques like hatching and so on. A good axiom would be: Don't pencil what you can't ink. Compare the rendering of the ball below compared to the one on the first page. Get the idea? Cool.



Once you've mastered the art of adding shadow to forms, you'll be able to use it in many different ways. All of which will give your comic an exciting and professional look! Here's a generic comic-type pinup for you to study. See if you can identify the five effects of light!

Till next month...keep the lead burnin', tough guys!



*Greg Capullo is an artist on Image Comics' **Spawn**, as well as going solo on Image's **Angela** mini-series.*



MY, WHAT BIG CLAWS
YOU HAVE..

WOMEN AREN'T MEN IN DRAG!



Welcome back, people. Before you go running off to ask your folks what the title of this month's article means, I'll just tell you. 'Drag' is a term used when a guy dresses up like a woman. (Between last month's title and this month's, your parents are going to be severely misled as to what I'm actually teaching you!) Unfortunately, most aspiring comic studs draw their women like men in drag!

My own mother would tell me the women I drew sucked! As a young pup, I would draw naked ladies on occasion and show 'em to my friends. I recall this one drawing I was particularly proud of. My best dirty drawing yet! She had it all. Long hair, tons of eyelashes with eyeliner, dark lipstick and huge...you know. So I showed it to some college kid who lived next door at the time. I held it up proudly to him, anxiously awaiting his drool to splash on the ground! He said, 'Her shoulders are wider than mine!!!' That was it?! That's your comment?! No 'Whoa, mama!?!' I just didn't get what was wrong with my women. I had all the ingredients.

Here's what happens. You want to draw comics, right? So you draw tons of muscle guys, 'cause that's your main attraction for drawing comics. In a way, it's all you even see, because you're so zoned in. So what ends up happening is you get pretty good at drawing muscle guys and little else. Then when you do go to draw your prototypical superhero woman, you take what you know about women (all their differences) and try to make them work on a male frame, 'cause that's what you know!



1. beauty begins at the bone

They say beauty is only skin deep—not true. Drawing-wise, beauty begins at the bone. And women begin to differ from men starting there. A female skull has a much less developed jaw than a male, and this, of course, affects her appearance. In this drawing of a female's head (above left), I've divided it in half to show you what I mean.

First, cover the right side of the picture. Initially, you may think, 'Not bad.' Now cover the left and notice the improvement. The left side was off 'cause it contains a male skull. To save space, I've included a couple of feature fine prints, also. Notice on the right side of the face: the thinner eyebrow; an upswept, almond shaped eye; and the nose is placed slightly lower and is slightly more up-turned.

In the profile (above right), notice how the bridge of the nose is drawn with a concave line and is slightly upturned. The eye and corner of the mouth both sweep upward, and again, the jaw is less developed. These tips should really help you to draw a prettier face.



2. a woman is not a man

Now let's blast through some differences between the male and female figure! Of course, the most noticeable is the shape of a woman's breasts and the lack of steroid-popping muscles. But it goes farther than that. Without getting technical, we'll run down these differences from top to bottom. 1) Women appear to have longer, more slender necks. The length of the neck is an illusion caused by smaller trapezius muscles. 2) The clavicle bones are evident at the point of the shoulder. 3) A woman's shoulder-to-shoulder length should span about 2 and 1/2 heads wide. 4) A woman's nipples are lower than a man's. 5) The waist is as wide as her head. 6) The navel is placed below the waistline (a male's is even with or slightly above

it). 7) A gap is present between the legs at the crotch. 8) The crotch is slightly raised. (In reality, a woman's crotch is further down than in men. However, raising the crotch will give the appearance of long legs.) 9) The pelvis is wider. 10) Heels are added to add length to the leg and height, to equal male proportions.

Boom! That's it! You're on your way to drawing more believably already. A word of advice on the use of line. When you draw males, it's best to use blocky structure with slightly angular lines. It's the opposite with women! They require softer, rounded forms and curved, sweeping lines. This will help you get a soft, graceful look! As far as the amount of detail lines used, "Less is more." Keep it simple!

3. is bigger better?

Now for some common dos & don'ts. First off, don't draw the breasts too large. Super-size breasts will ruin your figure's symmetry and cause her to look clumsy. Do draw adequate-sized breasts and place them high enough to suggest firmness. This will give the character a more athletic look.

DON'T



DO



DON'T



DO



4. a rounder butt

Don't draw butts too big. Again, you want your figure to appear agile. Also, be careful not to make the butt sag. Do draw a round butt, making sure that the crease under the cheeks sweeps upward instead of downward. This will avoid the sagging posterior look!

5. give her a hand

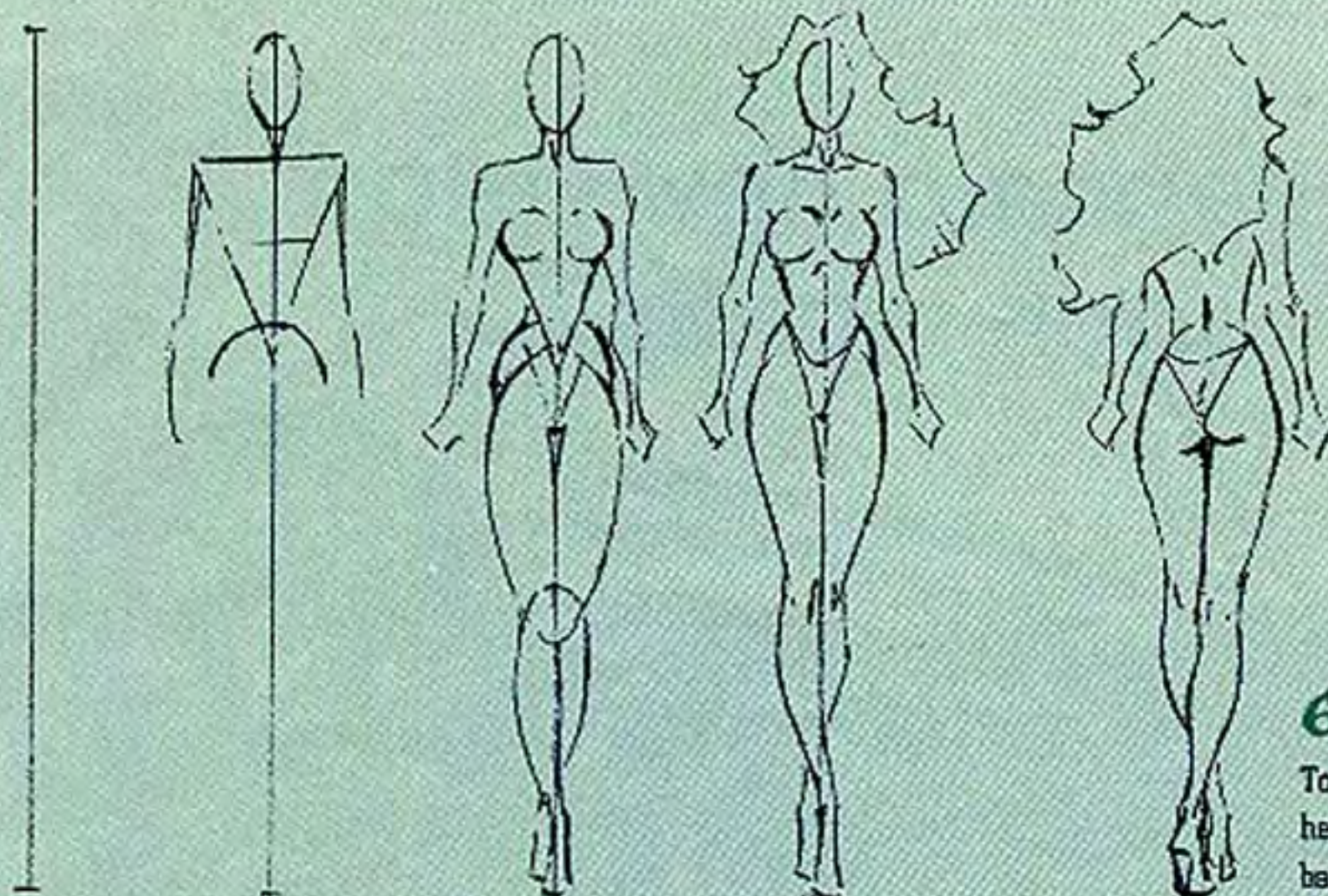
Don't draw a woman's hands as you would a man's. Avoid large knuckles and bones. Draw the hands much more slender and with a lot less lines. Draw subtle suggestions for the knuckles, or they'll look like a witch's hands! Women's hands are more slender, smaller in size and a lot less muscular than men's.

DON'T



DO





6. the hourglass

To get you started with all the stuff you've just learned, here's a quick set-up for you to practice. Notice the basic 'hourglass' shape for the female figure.



7. sex appeal

Now, I'll teach you how to give your babes' grace and sex appeal. It's the easiest formula in the world, and soon you will have it! Ready?

Number one rule is arch the back! Even at times when it doesn't seem to make sense, as in the example of the figure drawn bending forward. Men can look kinda cool sometimes slumping forward, but women end up looking dumpy when they're drawn that way. A sweeping arch will add grace and fluidity, and will echo the other sweeping lines used on other areas of the figure.

Number two rule is oppose the angles of the shoulders with the hips. In other words, if her left shoulder is down, draw her left hip up, and vice versa.

Number three rule is if you don't draw heels on your figure, keep her toes pointed whenever possible. This will add length and grace to the legs. (Also, make the feet small. Your women look clumsy if drawn with big flappers.)

There it is! This should get you started drawing the sexiest, most mouth-watering, bodacious superbabes yet! By the way, my mother now tells me my women are beautiful. Till next month...keep the lead burnin', tough guys! ☆

Greg Capullo can be seen every month doing his fair share of the art on *Spawn*, published by Image Comics.



PERSPECTIVE IS CAKE!

(at least after you read this)



Hey, guys! Been drawin' any half-naked ladies lately? (Last month's lesson, for those of you just joining us.)

Y'know, it scares me to see the number of punks out there (present company excluded) wearing the tag 'professional' who don't even understand the most basic principles of perspective. There's just no excuse for it! However, this month's column is not for them. We won't be discussing one-, two- or even three-point perspective. Nor vanishing points or converging lines. 'Cause let's face it, if you're above the age of 10 and haven't gotten to that stuff by now...to be nice, let's just say you're way behind. (But to be fair, if you've never even heard of perspective, you should pick up *How to Draw Comics the Marvel Way* by Stan Lee and John Buscema or *Perspective* by J.M. Parramon. They'll have everything you need to know about perspective.)

Instead, this month's column is devoted to all you tough guys out there. The future comic gods who will one day rise up and kick the asses of the punks that are here now.

OK. You've gotten the basics down, but there's still some confusion in your head. Not to worry! Uncle Gregg's gonna turn on the light for you. I promise.



HORIZON LINE =
EYE LEVEL

GOOPY
EYEBALL



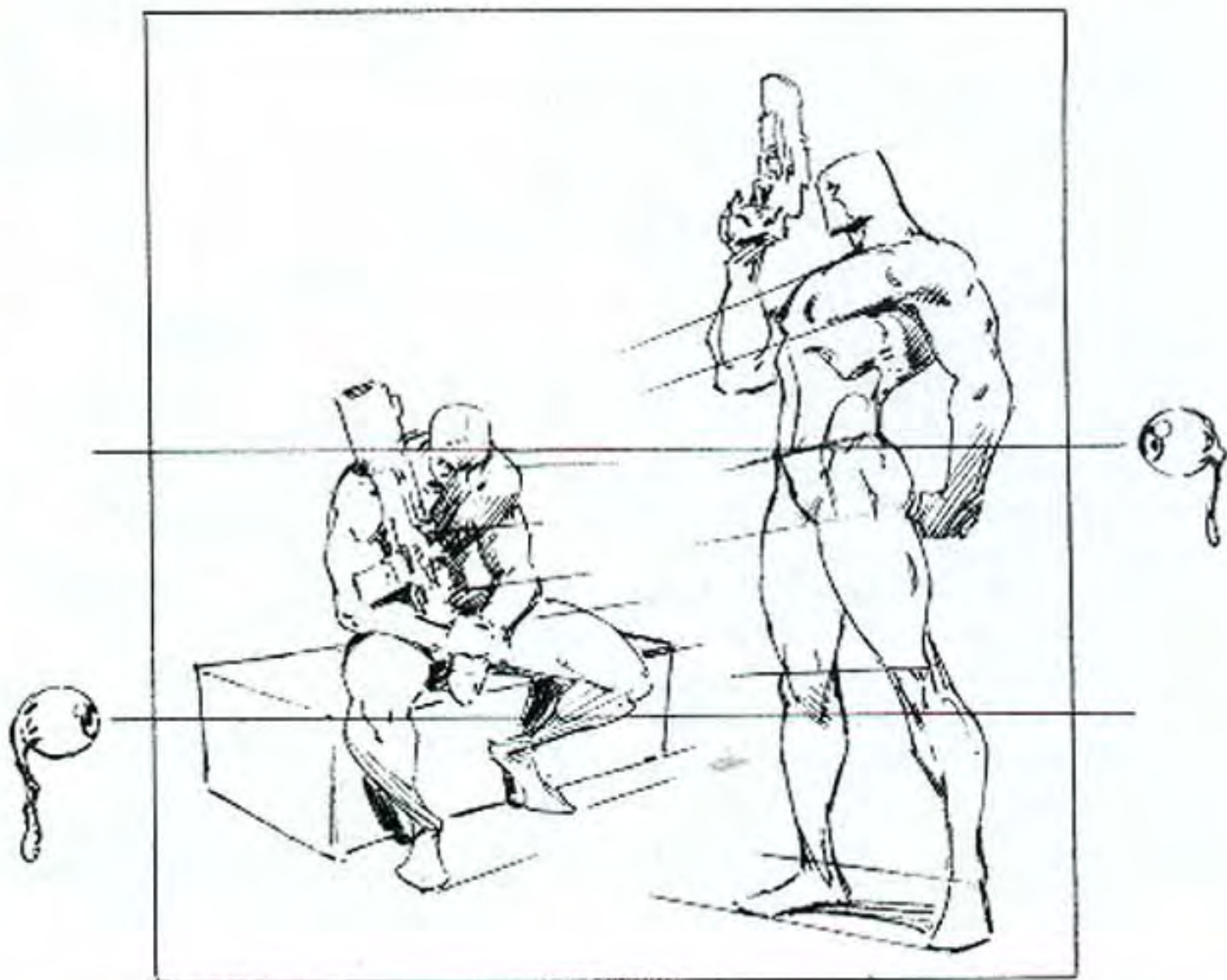
1. on the horizon

Don't let all the vanishing points and converging lines intimidate you. The main thing you *always* need to be aware of is the horizon line, which simply means where your eye level is. In fact, from now on we'll refer to the horizon line as your ELL (your Eye Level Line).

"But, Gregggy," you say, "what do you mean by 'eye level'?" Let's assume you're crouched down so that your eyeballs are even with my knees. This is your eye level. So you draw a horizontal line across the picture frame that intersects with my knees! Now, since you're not gonna move your eyeballs, and I can't magically change how tall I am, no matter where you place me in the picture, my knees are gonna be even with the ELL! Piece o' cake, right?

2. ¡No es bueno!

Problems arise when you try to include two (or more) different eye levels within the same picture frame. Your drawing will be all cockeyed! Your eyeballs can't be in two places at once (Peter Falk excluded), unless you plan on ripping one of 'em outta your head with a fork and placing it somewhere else! Therefore, there can't be two different ELLs in one panel. This illustration is an example of incorrect perspective; each individual figure may be OK perspective-wise, but they're definitely out of perspective with each other. So to avoid having problems like "floating" or "tipping" figures, or figures that appear disproportionately large or small, make sure you leave the fork on the table, and both eyes in your head and in one place within the picture frame!

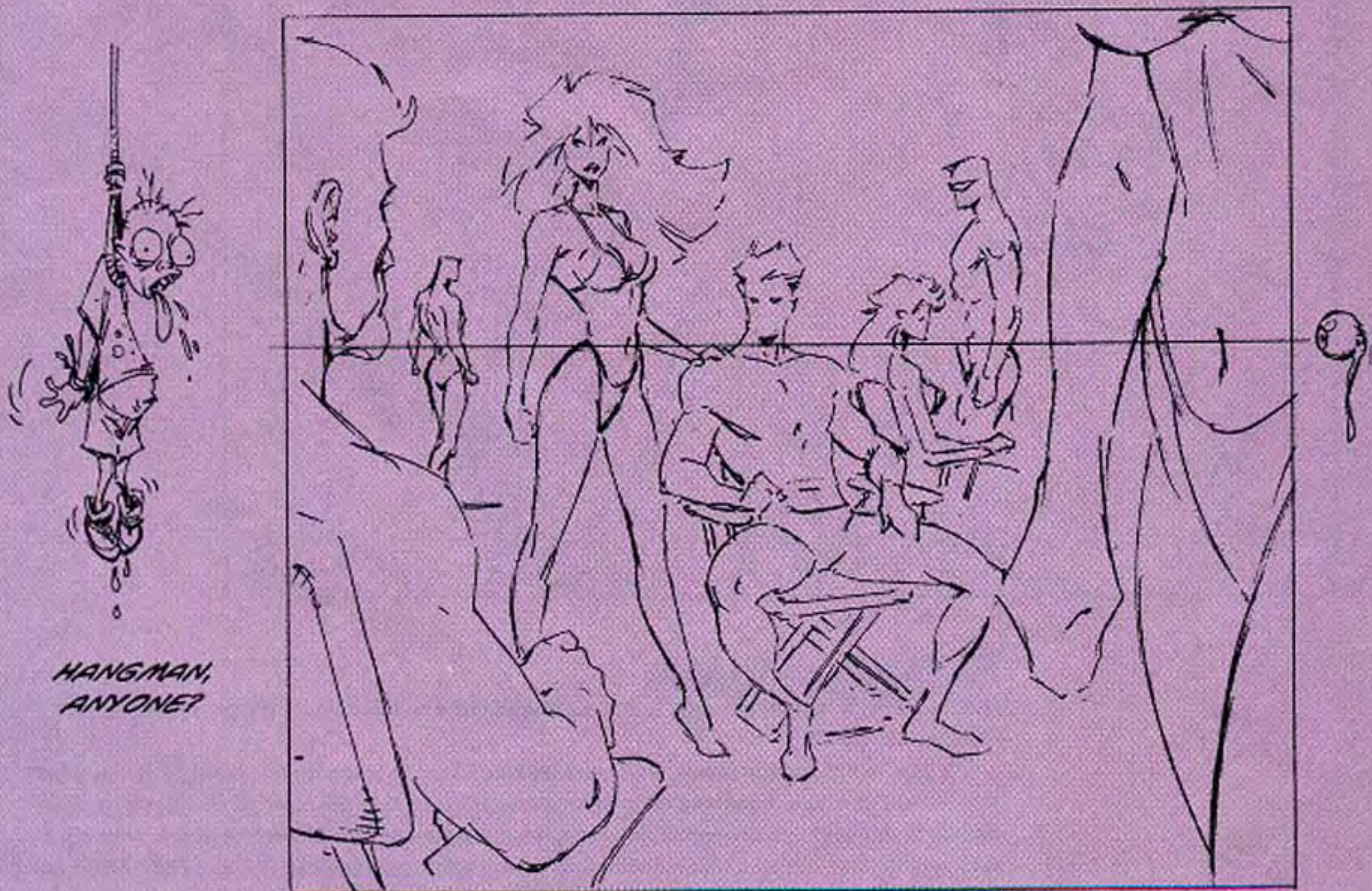


3. ¡Es muy bueno!

'Hanging' perspective is a li'l trick Gregg's gonna show you that'll really help you understand this stuff.

Any object or figure in your picture that's even with your eye level will remain so throughout. In the example below, your eye level is even with the chins of those who are seated. Notice that the chins are resting on the ELL. Now obviously if someone is standing, their chin wouldn't rest on the ELL, as noted in this panel. Instead, whatever part of their

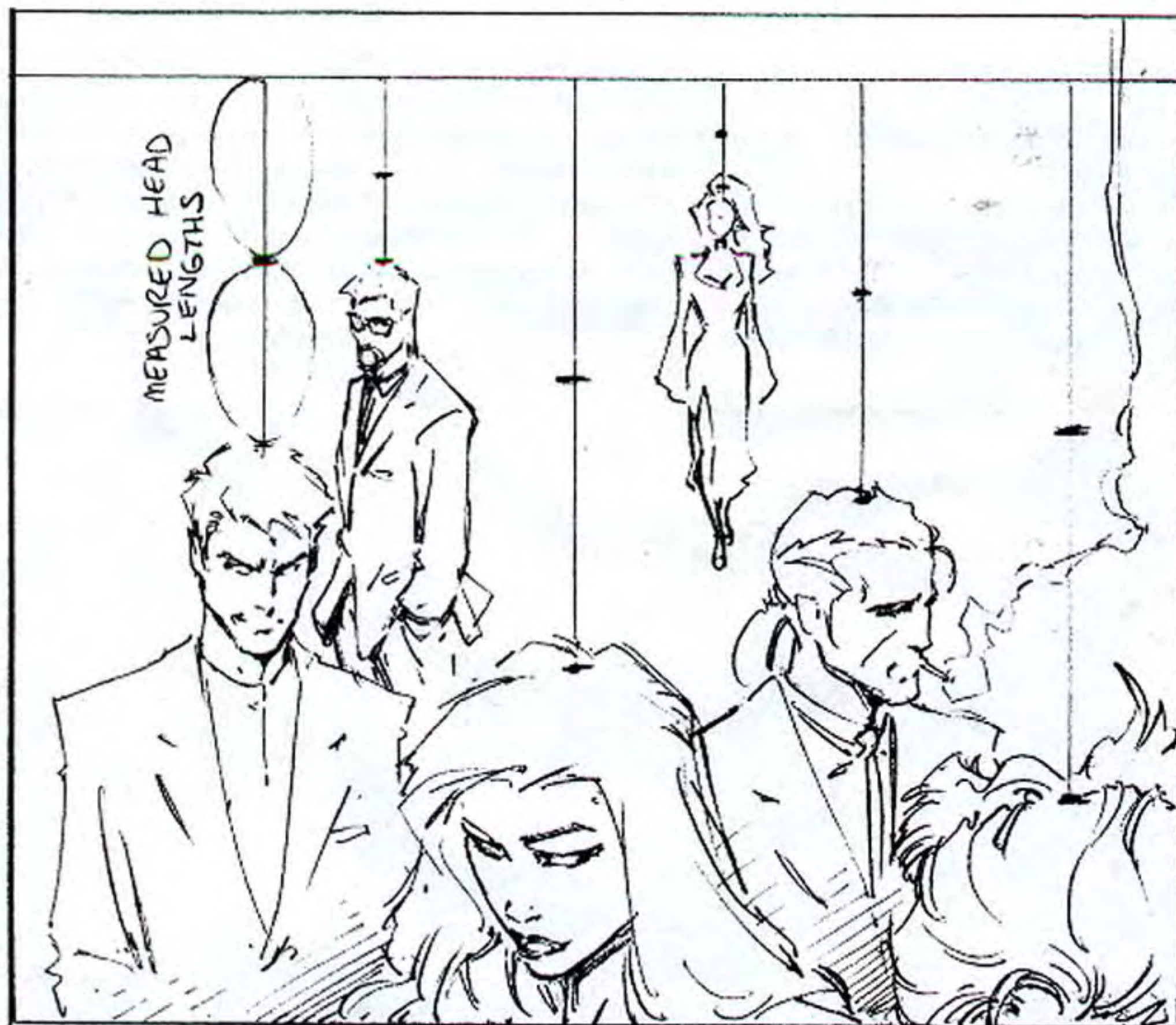
body is even with your eye level would be on that line. In this case, their waist. (See next issue for my explanation of size differences, which enabled me to decide upon the waist as the eye level here.) So given that all the standing figures are equal in height—and likewise the seated figures—no matter where you place them within the picture frame, their chins and waists will be on that line. Can you feel your power growing? I knew that you could. Just a few more examples, and you'll be ready!



4. the tip o' yer nose

In this example, your ELL is even with the bottom of the nose of each guy in the picture. Notice that no matter how close or far away you place your figures, the nose rests on the ELL. This again assumes that all the figures are of the same height.

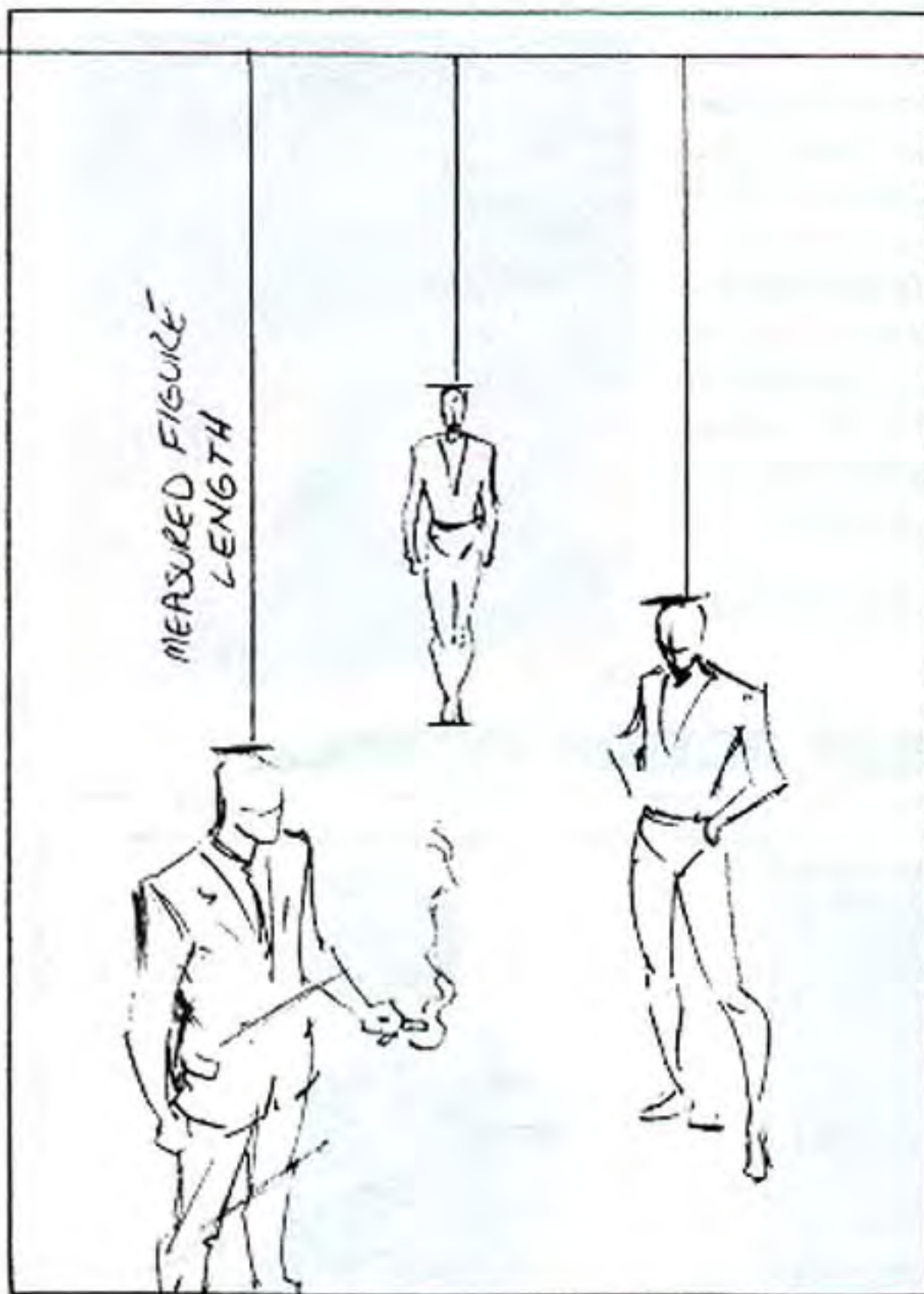
"But Gregggy, what if you wanted different-sized people in the picture too?" you ask. No problem! Let's say one of the guys has a girlfriend who's shorter than he is, maybe if they stood face to face, her eyes would only come up to his nose. Well, seeing as how the ELL is at his nose level, if she was to be drawn into the panel, then her eyes would also be on that line, no matter where you place her in the picture! If you do that, all the figures will be in true relation to each other.



5. figure this...

"But...but, Gregggy, what if you want to do a downwards shot or somethin' where you can't draw part of the figure on the ELL?" Still cake!

To keep things brutally simple, we'll again assume all the figures are equal in height. In this down shot, I used head units (head lengths) to measure the distance from the ELL that the figures would be placed. In this case, the distance is two head lengths below the ELL. No matter where you want to place your figures, simply measure two of their head lengths down from the ELL, and BAM! All the figures will relate to each other in proper perspective!



See how the woman in the background on page 60 is two of *her* heads away from the ELL, while the guy on the far left is two of *his* heads below it? Any unit of measurement can be used—an entire figure length, or even more. (Check out the panel to the left. It's all up to you and what you need. Do you want your ELL to be only slightly above the figures or 50 feet above them? Your call. But above all, call it cake!

6. a test

Allllrightee, then! Let's give you a little test to see how much you've learned.

Below is a comic panel with some major problems (which I did on purpose, of course) going on. I'll give you all a clue as to where the ELL is. After that, it's up to you to find the mistakes. I'll give you the answers next month and you'll be able to grade yourself to see how you did. And now for the clue. Ready? Here goes...

The man in the foreground is standing, and he is of the exact same height as the man standing in the background.

Till next month...keep the lead burnin', tough guys!

W

Greg Capullo can be seen every month doing his fair share of the art on *Spawn*, published by Image Comics.



UP WITH THE ESTABLISHMENT!

Hello again, everybody. I hope you've all been practicing like good little boys and girls. Later, we'll be grading you on last month's perspective test. I can hardly wait to see who our future comic gods will be! But before that, we're going to cover another very important element in comics...the establishing shot.

Some of you might ask, "What exactly is an establishing shot, Unca

Greggy?" Basically, it's a "set-up" panel used to convey important story information to the reader. It establishes the scene or setting the artist is drawing. For me, there are three categories of establishing shots. There's the *general exterior establishing shot*, the *specific exterior establishing shot* and the *interior establishing shot*, which is specific by nature.

1. general exterior shots

A story can take place anywhere. Other countries, outer space, big cities, in the suburbs, etc. You can use a "general exterior shot" to convey those facts. A shot of the Great Pyramids, for instance, would tell the reader your story takes place in Egypt. Just as a shot of the Statue of Liberty says you're in New York City. Draw whatever it is that's closely related to your story's location. It's just like playing word association. City: skyscrapers. Suburbs: family homes. Countryside: farms. Get the idea?



2. specific exterior shots

Let's move on to the "specific exterior shot." This type of shot is used to show the reader exactly where the events are unfolding. If your character is on an airplane, show the plane to the reader. Perhaps a specific building is in order, or are your characters in a barn or hospital? Show the readers where the story's taking place by supplying them with a shot of the outside first. Doing this is a very important element in storytelling, especially when changing locations during the story. A new establishing shot is needed in order to say to the reader, "Hey! We're over here now!"

A good thing to note is that exterior shots also allow the reader to breathe once in a while, by bringing him outdoors. It's a nice change of pace after being cramped indoors for a long while.



3. interior shots

Lastly, there's the "interior establishing shot." I have the most fun with this one. You know the game where you pick out the things that don't belong in a picture? Well, this is the opposite. Use as many props as you can think of to make your setting appear convincing to the reader. If your character is in an office, show the types of things that would typically be found there, like filing cabinets, computers, desks and the like. How about a hospital room? You could use monitors, hospital beds, visitors' chairs, etc.



You can also say something about what kind of people your characters are by the props you use. A person who's deeply devoted to religion may have bibles, rosary beads, candles, crosses and statues filling the room. Every picture should tell a story. All of your key elements should be present in the establishing shot. Notice the bulletin board with all the Spawn clippings on it in the example to the left. This is a key element in the story.



4. dirty dishes are key

In another example, we see a family kitchen scene (above) where everything is in disarray. Dirty dishes fill the sink, the cabinets are filthy, food is left out. Now notice some finer points I included in this picture. Like the bottle of booze on the counter behind the abusive father. Also, his gun carelessly left on the kitchen chair, within reach of the kids. Both the booze and the gun were integral parts of the story. Sometimes these key elements need to be included in exterior shots as well.

5. sewers are stinky but fun

...as with this scene, which establishes a sewer drain in example A. It was important to include it in the first picture, in order for the following panel to be understood. Or the tenement building window in example B, with a man in silhouette holding a phone. This was used as set-up for the following page, where the setting was made clear as we cut to the interior establishing shot. Remember, without a sense of place your story will seem flat, or worse, confusing. Also remember that a great deal of interest can be created through clever use of props.

So don't be among the punks who try to sneak by without using solid establishing shots. "Guys with no background" is what I call 'em. Anyway, I hope I've given you inspiration to make your comics better than the other guys. All of this is important stuff you're learning here in "Krash Course." Remember, there's more to drawing comic books than just musclemen in tights smashin' each others' mugs in! Now...on to the scoring!





6. didja pass or fail?

If you followed last month's clue, you would've found the ELL (Eye Level Line) to be just under the noses of the standing figures, and this would allow you to uncover the multitude of perspective errors in the drawing.

If you said the buildings were wrong, give yourself 1 point. If you said the filing cabinets and books were out of perspective, give yourself 1 point. If you said the desk, deduct 1 point. If you said the seated man, deduct 1 point. If you said the ashtray and shot glass, give yourself 3 points. If you noticed the filing cabinets were extremely out of proportion (not just perspective), give yourself 5 bonus points. Tally up your scores to see how well you did.

Score/Ranking

0	total hack
1-2	budding stud
3-5	tough guy
6-9	McFarlane, move over
10	future comic god

I hope you all did well. But if someone scored zero, don't give up hope yet. Unfortunately, I've seen stuff like this see print. Not that that's something to be proud of. By the way, those of you who won the bonus points will have a head start on the others when I address proportion and scale next time! Till then... keep the lead burnin', tough guys!

W

Greg Capullo can be seen doing his fair share of the art on *Spawn*, published by Image Comics.

DRAWING OUT THE MONSTER WITHIN

Happy Halloween, kiddies! It's trick-or-treat time once again. This lesson's treat will be learning the trick to creating your very own ghastly images that this time of year seems to inspire. Together we will embrace our fears, delight in our revulsion, and revel in the utter stench of our own putrid demons come to life within us! We will draw the things that make us sick (or at least *look cool*!!!!) This won't be as much a drawing lesson as it will be a guideline to aid you in creating.

First off, let's think of some things that make our skin crawl. Things that we fear. These are the things we shall gather into our cauldron and stir together to form our monsters. Every classic monster you care to name was created this way. Dracula, Frankenstein, The Mummy, The Fly and The Wolfman. You will find that man's fears and aversions were called together to form each of them.



BOO! GUESS WHO?

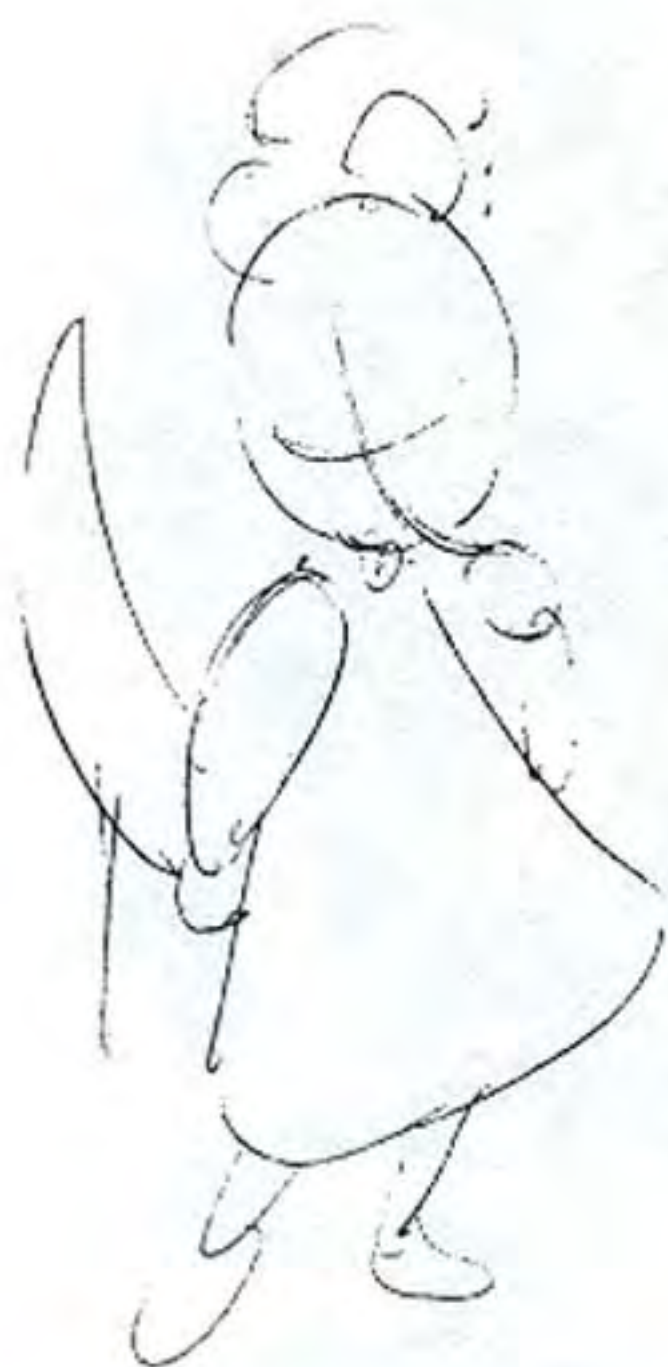


1. yuck

In my first little creature, I combined insect-like appendages with a form that's almost human and some other icky elements ladled in for effect. Sharp spiny things that could pierce your flesh protrude from the monster along with coarse hair just like those found on a fly or spider's body. Rows of shark-like teeth adorn the saliva-filled jaws ready to chomp off a limb. Large claws with multiple hooks and spikes present the danger of ripping and tearing away at your flesh. Hinged animal-like legs were given to provide the creature with speed in which to capture you for the kill. And warts were thrown in to provide grotesque texture to the beast's skin. Perhaps being filled with thick, sticky puss (the tasty kind).

Try drawing the following examples if you like. I've shown the basic construction used for each. However, draw many of your own. That's where the real fun is.





2. eww

In my next creation, I combined a symbol of adorable innocence (a little girl) and corrupted her with evil and symbols of danger. Glowing eyes, ratty hair and a row of dangerous teeth illustrate the evil that has possessed the little girl's body. The huge, blood-dripping knife held behind her back alludes to the fiendish act she now tries to conceal from us as her expression seems to say, "Did I do that?" The torn, blood-stained dress adds nicely to the scene.



3. ugh

Next we have the walking dead! What Halloween would be complete without zombies? A corpse is a wonderfully gruesome site to behold. Especially if it's still capable of locomotion! Everything you learned in "Krash Course" from *Wizard* #48 titled "The Dark Side" will really be helpful in rendering something like this (or any of these really).

Decay is the name of the game here. Stringy flesh clinging to the skeleton beneath, sunken vacant eyes and long wispy hair are the prerequisite for any good zombie. But entrails—! Now we're adding some charm. Swollen intestines cascading from the creature's belly were a joy to draw. (They also served quite nicely in concealing his naughty bits!)

For final touches, I added flies buzzing around to suggest the foul odor present and the untied boots to add to the clumsy motion the thing probably has.





4. eek

Next we have some sort of wild dog-like creature. I made sure to make its face very dark around its beady eyes to give a glowing type effect. Next I gave it huge ears shaped like devil horns to suggest evil. The jaws open extremely wide exposing huge, spiky teeth within its saliva-drenched mouth as it rushes forward to take a bite from its victim. Unlike a dog, it has man-like hands capable of holding you while ripping the jugular vein from your throat. I added the collar and manacles with broken chain to show that this thing is dangerous and, beyond that, it has escaped.



5. gross

Finally, a recent portrait of Kurt Cobain. (Relax Nirvana fans. Just kidding.) I know I just got done drawing a corpse, but I couldn't resist a close-up detail of a rotting head. To me, this is the scariest because it's real! Not the drawing, but the fact that someday we will *all* look like this. Death is real. Death is inescapable. Death is coming to get you. And when it does, we too can look forward to our flesh rotting off our skull and revealing the horrible smile that will remain even as the worms and maggots feast on our brains. .BOO!!!

Happy Halloween, everybody. Now get busy drawing your own monsters to adorn your refrigerator with.

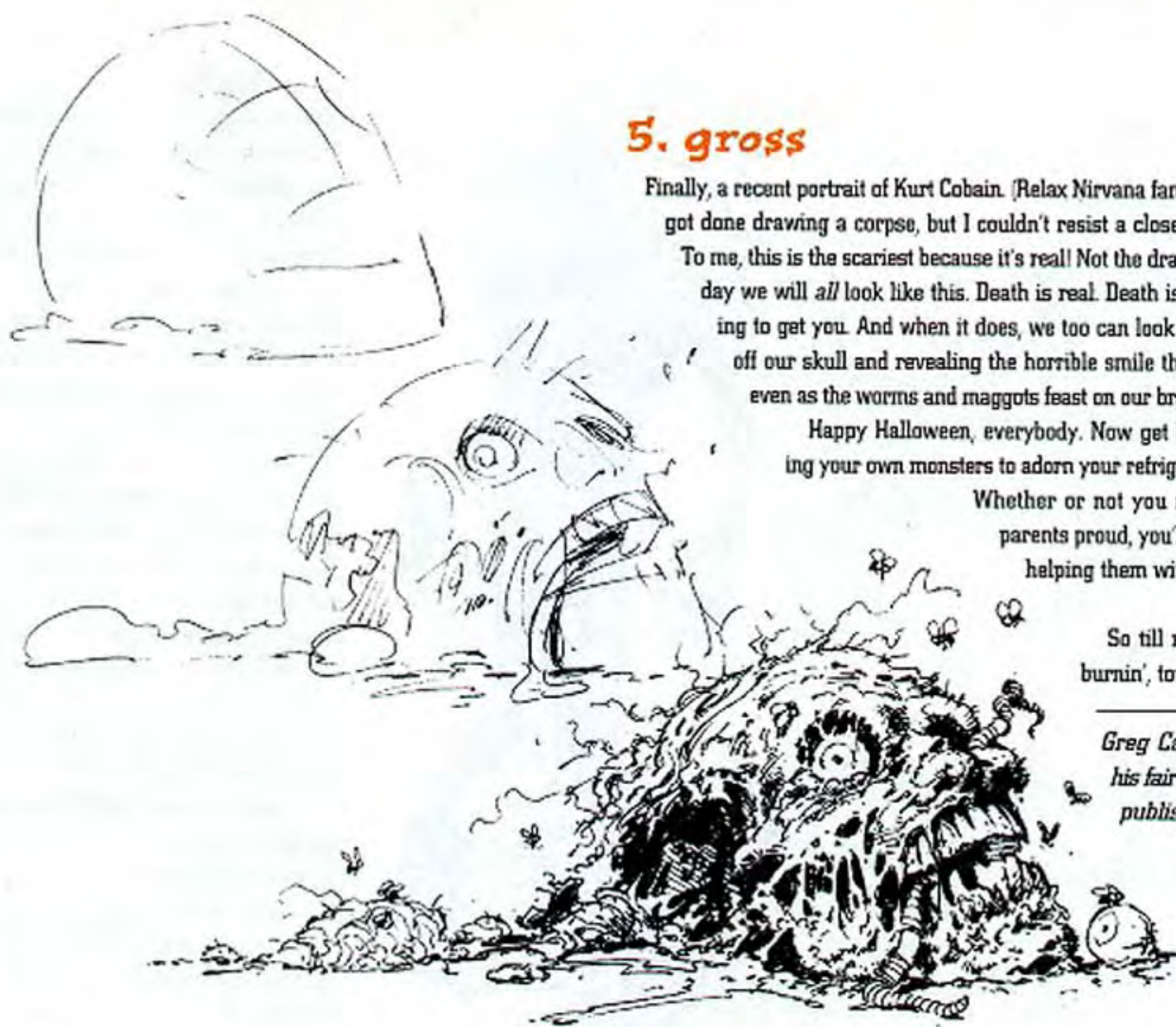
Whether or not you make your parents proud, you'll at least be helping them with their diet!



So till next month. .Keep the lead burnin', tough guys!

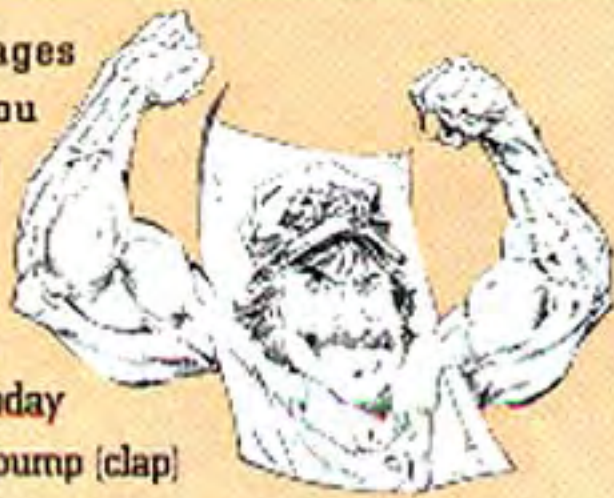
W

Greg Capullo can be seen doing his fair share of the art on Spawn, published by Image Comics.



POWERFUL PAGES FAST

Are your pages puny? Are you tired of having eraser dust kicked in your face? If so, don't worry! Today we're going to pump (clap) you up!



When you first start out drawing comics, it's sometimes hard to make your pages appear interesting. Sure it's a bit easier when there are guys ripping each other's faces off panel after panel, but when the quiet scenes come that's when terror sets in! "How do I make it look cool?" you ask with a tremble in your voice. Fear not, future comic gods! Uncle Greggory is gonna show you the way.

1. shock value

One of the main problems is that there's too much "sameness" in amateur pages. So what we'll do is give you some recipes for variety. First off we'll talk about the close-up. Although it's not possible 100 percent of the time, it's a good rule to include a close-up on every page. It's one of the simplest things you can do to instantly add some dynamics to your page. For instance, a close-up that follows a far shot will shock the reader by suddenly bringing them in close. You can use varying degrees in your close-ups such as a minimal head-and-shoulders close-up as shown in examples 1 and 2 or one that's so tight in you must use either preceding or proceeding panels to explain exactly what you're showing in that close-up like example 3. Close-ups can be used with people or things, depending on whether you're trying to convey a particular emotion or focus the reader in on a specific action or object shown in examples 4 and 5. One thing is for sure, you'll have begun creating a more powerful page!





2. larger than life

Another common technique is 'shooting' past a large object in the foreground. When you do this, you immediately create visual interest through dynamic range. (Basically, the object in the foreground,

though known to be actually smaller, appears larger than the larger object in the background.) Your focal point (what you want the reader to look at) can be either in the foreground or the background. It's your call as to how you want to play it or what you feel tells your story best. Ooh! I think I feel your muscles growing already!



3. the frame-up

Let's keep going. Next we have what's called the frame (not to be confused with the infamous O.J. Simpson defense). This is where the foreground funnels the eye directly to your focal point by means of surrounding it. Your foreground framing device can either be inconsequential or a secondary focal point. You can also use the frame to invoke emotions like feelings of being trapped, imprisoned, claustrophobic, etc. I'm sure you could evoke some nicer emotions as well, depending on what you use as your frame.



4. who turned out the lights?

Another close relative to the large object in the foreground is the dark object in the foreground. When you use this technique you now have two types of contrast going on simultaneously. Very powerful! Once again you can add some sort of emotional impact to the panel depending on what you use as your foreground object. Or you can simply use the object for visual diversity. The object or objects can be partially lit or totally silhouetted. Your call. But either way, call it powerful!

5. 'two silhouettes on the shade...'

Speaking of silhouettes, when used judiciously they can help pump up an otherwise flat page. You can use the silhouette to create mood, obscure graphic violence, etc. One thing is sure, though. It has to be easy to read. There can be absolutely no question as to what the objects are or what action is taking place. If slivers of highlight are needed, so be it. Otherwise make sure the outlines are distinct and recognizable to all.





4. heads up...er...down!

Lastly, (for now) the downshot! If you ask me, along with the close up you should also try to include a downshot on every page. Like the close-up, there are varying degrees of the downshot. You can use a slight overhead shot or an extreme downshot where you view your subject from directly overhead! Sometimes an overview will help convey necessary story information better than some other shot would. Other times, it may be used to add a bizarre feeling to your story. Either way, the dynamic value is there because we mostly see things from normal eye level. When you suddenly take the reader up above, he gets to see things from an angle that he's less accustomed to. That adds interest and interest adds power!



Try adding cast shadows in your downshot also. In fact, be creative! Combine the techniques I've shown you here to create hybrids. There aren't any restrictions! Explore, don't bore!

Vell, dat concludes zis month's 'Krash Course.' I hope you got a vantastic pump! Next month I'll give you some more steroids to inject your pages with. No more vill you be smudged around and forced to eat pencil shavings after I'm done with you. Till next month. .keep the lead burnin', tough guys!

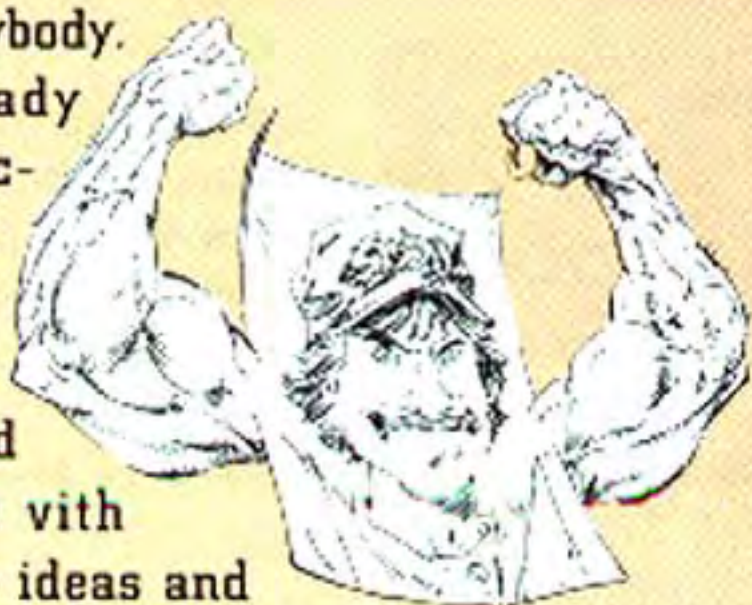
Greg Capullo can be seen every month penciling *Spawn*, published by Image Comics.

POWERFUL PAGES FAST

PART 2

Hello, everybody.

Are we ready for the second half of our workout? Today we'll pound our pages with some more ideas and force them to grow! No girly-men here!



1. the shadows know

For our first set, we'll use shadows to help us. This is a creative way of passing along information to the reader without showing him all the goods. Shadows can be used to show impending danger, superiority above others (i.e. the shadows dwarf the onlookers), or simply to keep someone's identity a mystery.





2. mirror, mirror

Reflections can create a lot of interest, whether they're in a pool of water, an actual mirror or what have you. They can show someone "reflecting" on their own thoughts or, as in this example, can show the reader what a character is seeing. Explore for yourself other cool ways of conveying info with reflections. It's sometimes tricky but always fun!

3. come together

Heads in profile with no background is another common exercise. This type of juxtapositioning can effectively convey either a coming together of individuals or a collision between them. That will depend on the emotions conveyed on their mugs.



4. down and out

Last month we talked about the downshot. Now it's time for the upshot. This type of shot adds drama, babe! When you use an upshot you place the reader's eyes low so that he has to look upward at what you're showing him. This has psychological implications. Things that are bigger than you can cause you to feel afraid, weaker, in awe of, dominated over. .you get the picture.



5. on the level

As long as we've got our sights set low, I'll talk about the ground level shot. As I said before, placing the reader's eye level where it's not accustomed will create interest. So unless he's really, really, really, really short, this shot will work. You can either show some ground or crop everybody's feet a bit as though you're actually below ground level. Though I've seen people do it, I've heard strong reasoning why you shouldn't use the bottom of the panel as the ground plane. If you have people actually standing on the panel border it sort of disrupts the illusion that the panel is actually a window into another reality (i.e. the story). Decide for yourself.



YOU SEE, ALL THIS TROUBLE DIDN'T START WITH YOU, WHAT WE GO THROUGH HAS BEEN THIS WAY FOR A LONG TIME. THE PSYCHOS, CRAZY AND VIOLENT. NOW, OF THAT'S GOING TO CHANGE.

WELL, YOU GET BEHIND ME, I'VE GOT MYSELF FIGHTING TWO GUYS, I'M NOT WANTING THE GOOD GUYS TO GET US KIDNAPED THE FORTRESS SIDE.

WELL, GIVING MEANS TIME.

YET MANGE
AND WAGGERS
THE SPANISH HAVE
BROUGHT WITH THEM
ONE DAY, WITH THEM
AND THE SPANISH,
ALL THAT ARE
GONE.

The opposite of this would be the open panel. No borders. Just an imaginary ground plane and your people and/or objects. Cast

shadows can be used to reinforce the ground plane and add interest. Again, cutting out the background focuses your attention on a particular character or object, giving it importance.



Lastly, we have breaking panels. A couple of ways to do this is having the closest and most important character jut out of the panel while still being contained, or to actually be standing outside of the panel as if walking off the page. It gives sort of a 3-D effect which is cool if you don't overplay it.

There! That was the last set. You made it through your workout. Now don't lose your pump! Keep working out with the exercises I've shown you. That way even the quietest pages of your story will have power. Till next month. .keep the lead burnin', tough guys!

Greg Capullo can be seen every month penciling Spawn, published by Image Comics.



CONTROLLING YOUR EMOTIONS!



I know what you're all thinking: "An *Italian* is gonna teach me how to control emotions? Yeah, right!" True, if this were therapy, I'd be the last guy to preach. Being of Italian descent, I am *very* emotional. In fact, I'm such a neurotic loon, I can go from laughing to crying to shoving my fist down your throat before you can say "pizza"! However, when it comes to controlling the emotions of comic characters, I can say (without modesty) that I'm damn good at it!

Being able to portray emotion in your char-

acters is vital. It's what brings them to life and makes them seem real enough so that we can relate to them on an emotional level. We all experience a host of emotions on a daily basis. Whether it's the unbridled joy you get from your little sister screaming bloody murder 'cause you just plucked a hair from her head when she wasn't looking, or the horror and pain you feel as she rips up your very favorite comic book in deserved retaliation for your egregious act—that's emotion! You feel it, I feel it, we all feel it and can relate to it. When we experience emotion, our whole body reflects what we feel inside. You can often tell what someone else is feeling because of this fact. So this month, Uncle Greggory is gonna give you some pointers on breathing emotional life into your characters. Soon, you too will be yelling like Doc Frankenstein, "It's alive! It's alive!"

1. face facts

Let's start with the face. Your face is filled with many muscles that can contort your mug into a million different expressions. (If you're Jim Carrey...two million, easily.) Eyebrows, eyelids, nostrils and the mouth. They can either work together or independently of each other to properly portray our innermost feelings.



ALOOF



SURPRISE



SORROW



CONTEMPLATIVE



OUTRAGE

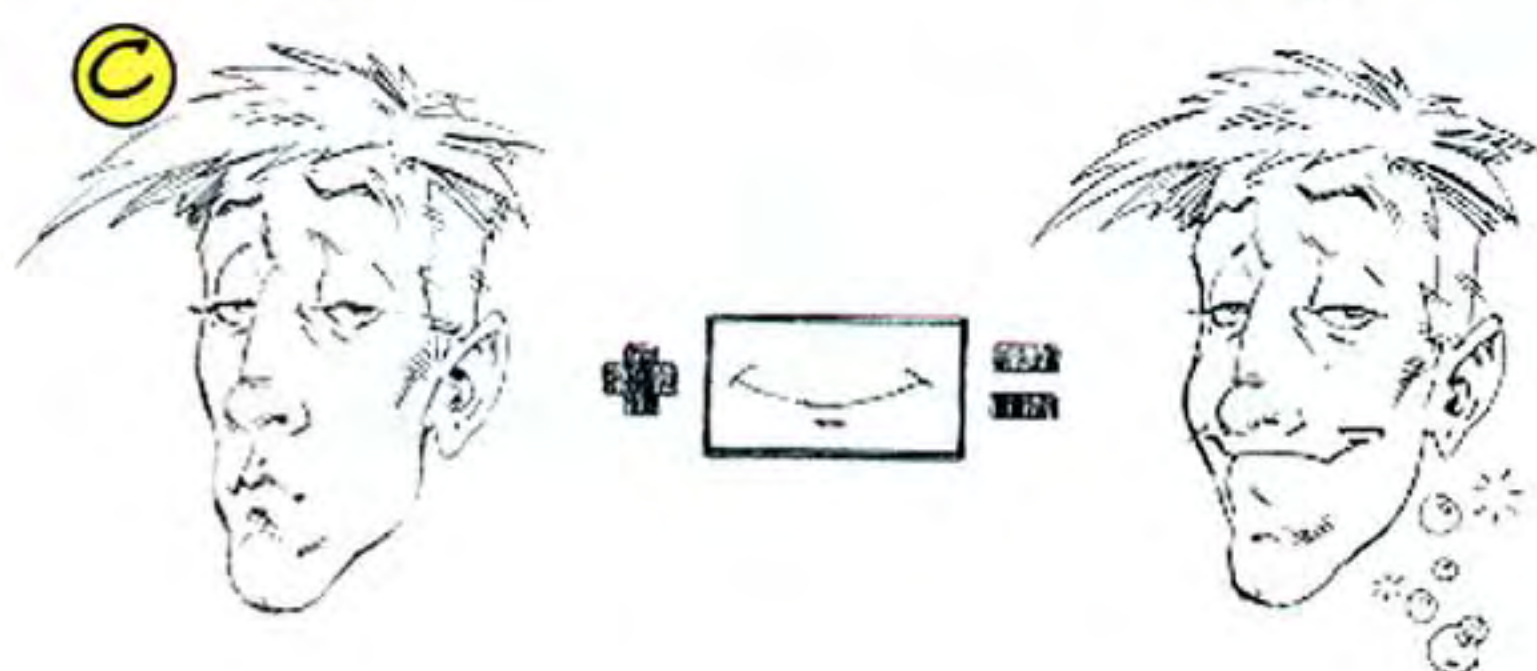
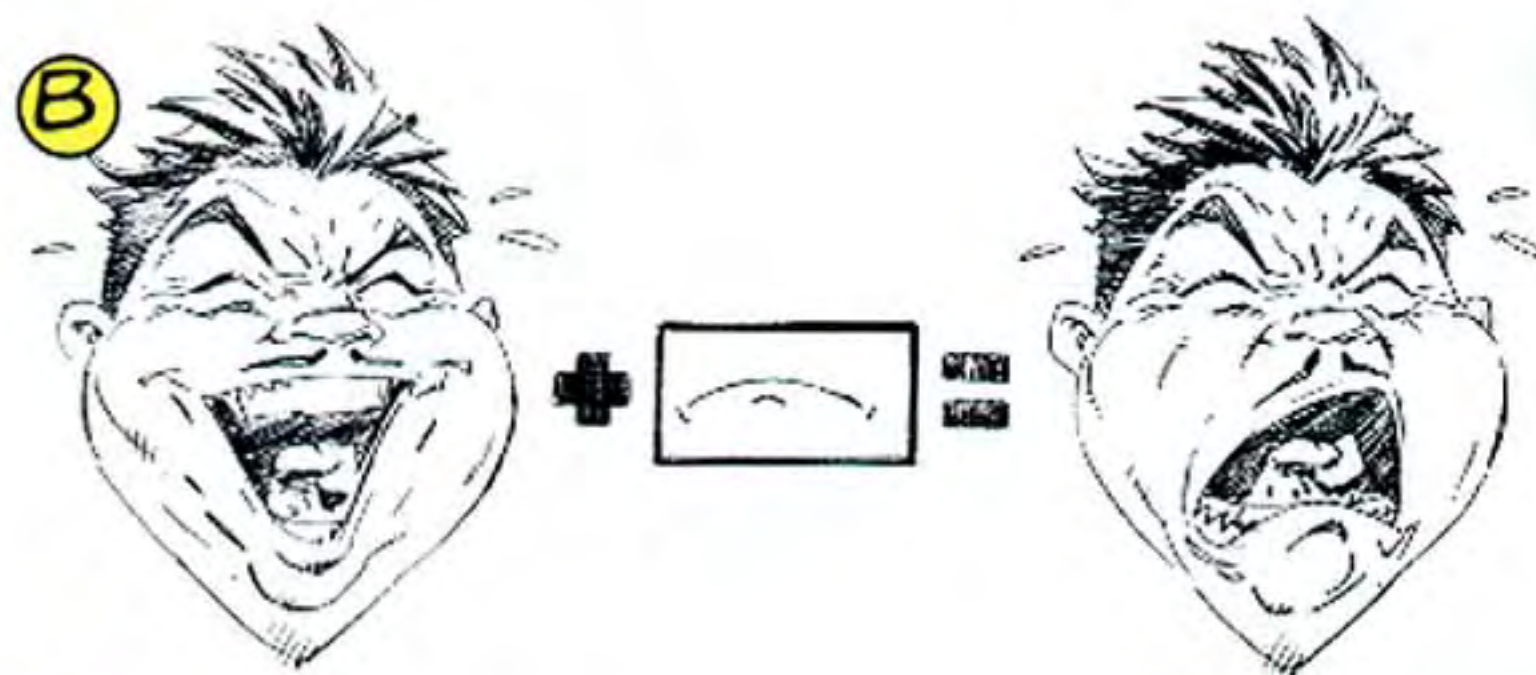
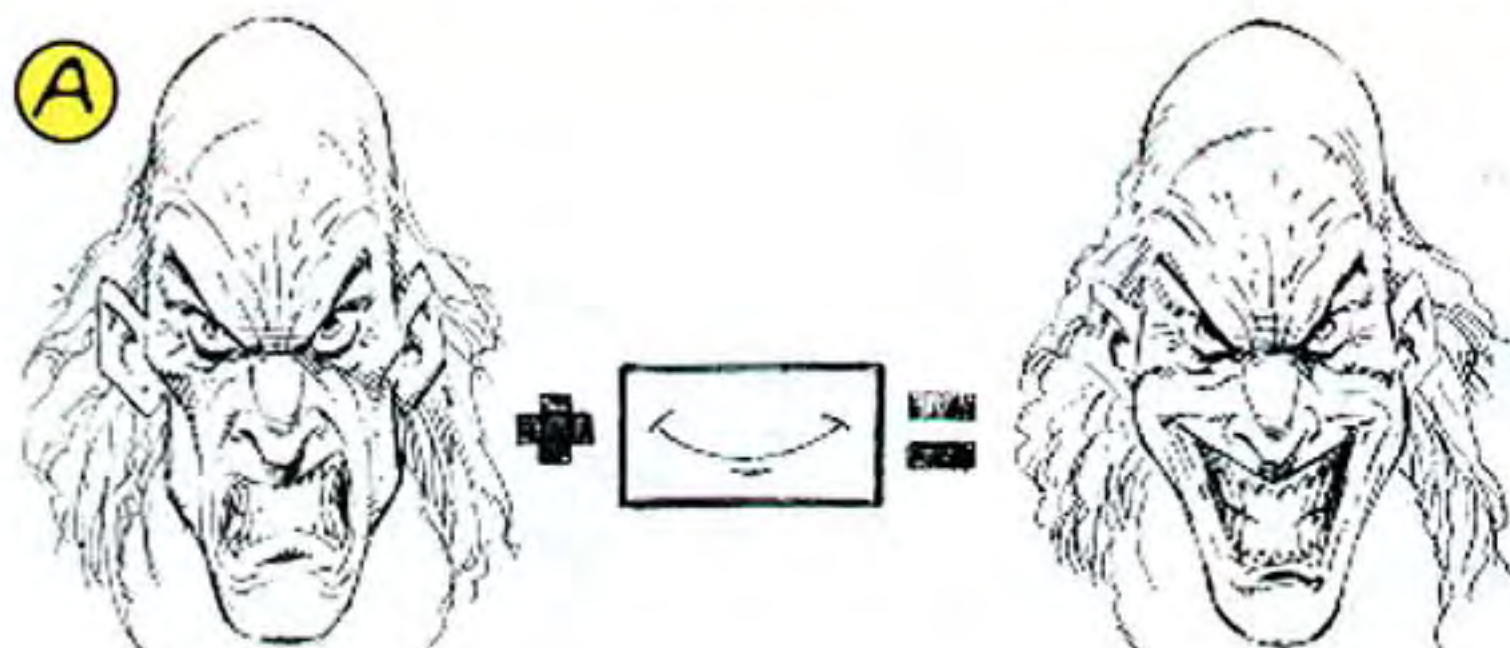


CONFUSION

2. 'eye ain't got no body'

To me, the eyes are particularly expressive. They alone can reveal a lot about what we feel. However, the eyes can be deceiving if viewed apart from the rest of the face. For example, take a pair of sorrowful eyes. If you were to stick them in a microwave, they could

pop within seconds, spreading all this cool goop around inside that's really tough to clean off! (Just kidding, parents!) Viewed alone, a pair of sorrowful eyes would of course indicate sorrow. However, if you were to combine those eyes with a very slight smile, you would be changing the expression to one of sympathy or compassion. Let me demonstrate.



3. facelift

In example A on the left, we have a mean, angry face. Now, without changing any features other than his mouth, we get a fiendish, somewhat diabolical-looking face. Incidentally, if we then gave him floating irises, we would have a maniacal or psychotic expression. But I digress. In example B, our man is laughing uproariously. But just change his mouth, and he's crying as if he's just been banned from the all-you-can-eat buffet table! (Oh, the power! I am drunk with power!) Example C has our boy looking a bit aloof-indifferent and uninterested in the events around him. Change just his mouth and he begins to exhibit the look of pleasant satisfaction from having just farted in the bathtub! As you can see, how you make the facial features relate to each other is very important. Combinations are endless. Each slight modification brings out new expressions. Have some fun by experimenting this way. Draw as many combinations as you can come up with and many secrets will be unlocked for you.

4. show of hands

Being Italian, I talk with my hands a lot. The hands possess a lot of personality and can help convey several emotions quite nicely. They can work together to accentuate the emotion being portrayed. Even the positioning of the hand matters! Notice how the same hand held in a different position changes what that hand—or person—is saying! Kinda neat when you think about it.



LISTEN TO ME
YOU #@*%!!!



BING!
I HAVE AN IDEA!



I'M GONNA KICK
YOUR @\$ \$!!!



YAHOO!
WAY TA GO!



5. bodies in motion

As I said earlier, the whole body reflects our emotions. Take a look at this collection of gestural studies and see if you can recognize the emotions being portrayed. In conveying emotion, it's important that you be able to reduce—to its simplest form—the movement of the body. The posture needs to be as easily recognizable as any facial expression you may use. A terrified person, for instance, wouldn't be leaning toward the perceived danger; he would be leaning away from it. A proud or arrogant person wouldn't be slumping forward when talking with someone; he'd be standing very erect. (Look at how I placed some arrows by the figures to help you out with this.) Try to use the types of lines that best describe the particular emotion you're trying to convey.

6. mirror, mirror on the wall...

When you're first starting out without much experience under your belt, the task of portraying emotion can be very difficult. Don't be ashamed to recruit the aid of a mirror and pose for yourself. Grab a sketch pad and do quick gestural drawings while watching movies. Draw from real life and photographs too. I used to wear a pair of sunglasses so people didn't know I was watching them. Then I'd head downtown with a sketch pad in hand to render my unsuspecting models. Above all, try to feel what your character would be feeling. What would your face look like? I still catch myself wearing expressions that I'm giving my characters as I draw them; you can try this as well. In fact, you can probably catch many artists with this habit.

When it comes to comic books, remember this axiom: "It's better to have your character overact than underact."

And now, a message for the punks out there: Portraying emotion is more than just drawing faces with teeth clenched in anger! For the rest of you, keep the lead burnin', tough guys!

W

*Greg Capullo can be seen every month penciling **Spawn**, published by Image Comics.*



STORYTELLING AND PACING, PART 1

This month, we're gonna tackle one of the most important elements in drawing comic books. .telling a story with the use of pictures. "But, Uncle Gregg," you say. "What do you mean, *one* of the most important elements? Aren't storytelling and pacing *two* elements?" I'm so glad you asked!

The reason I said *one* instead of *two* is because I see them as inseparable. However, I'm going to attempt to separate them as best I can for you, so you'll fully understand the whole idea clearly. (First, let me

apologize to Frank Miller for my having the audacity to instruct a class on storytelling when a master like Frank is out there. But, due to the fact that Frank doesn't give lessons, it's up to me to show you the ropes! End of Frank Miller butt-smooching segment.)

Let's begin our lesson by defining storytelling and pacing. Storytelling gives the reader visual information that, when strung together, tells a tale. (Even though we'll cover pacing next month, I'll tell you now that it is the rate of speed at which you give them that information!)

1. place your order

For the first part of this lesson, we'll deal only with storytelling. First on the list is the order of the information given. You can tell the same story many different ways by the order in which you string together the information. Each way will have a different feel, so it's up to you to decide which approach will best serve the tale being told. Base that decision on how you want your reader to feel.

For instance, you may begin a scene with a long shot allowing the reader to familiarize himself with the surroundings, then bring him in closer in a comfortable manner, or you can do just the opposite. By starting in close, you create some mystery because the reader doesn't have much information at that point. This can be a great set-up for some big shocker when you finally do pull back and show whatever you wish.



2. back and forth

Another method you might try is intercutting action. Here you introduce two separate pieces of action simultaneously to the reader before

showing him how they relate to each other. You can really build some drama with this technique.



3. less is more

You may also take a minimalist approach to conveying the info to the reader; this too can be quite dramatic. For example, if you show the reader a gun, then show him a spent shell casing, with just a minimum of information you've told him that the gun was fired. Be careful when using minimal information that you make sure it is clear and universally understandable. In other words, use a symbol that everybody knows!

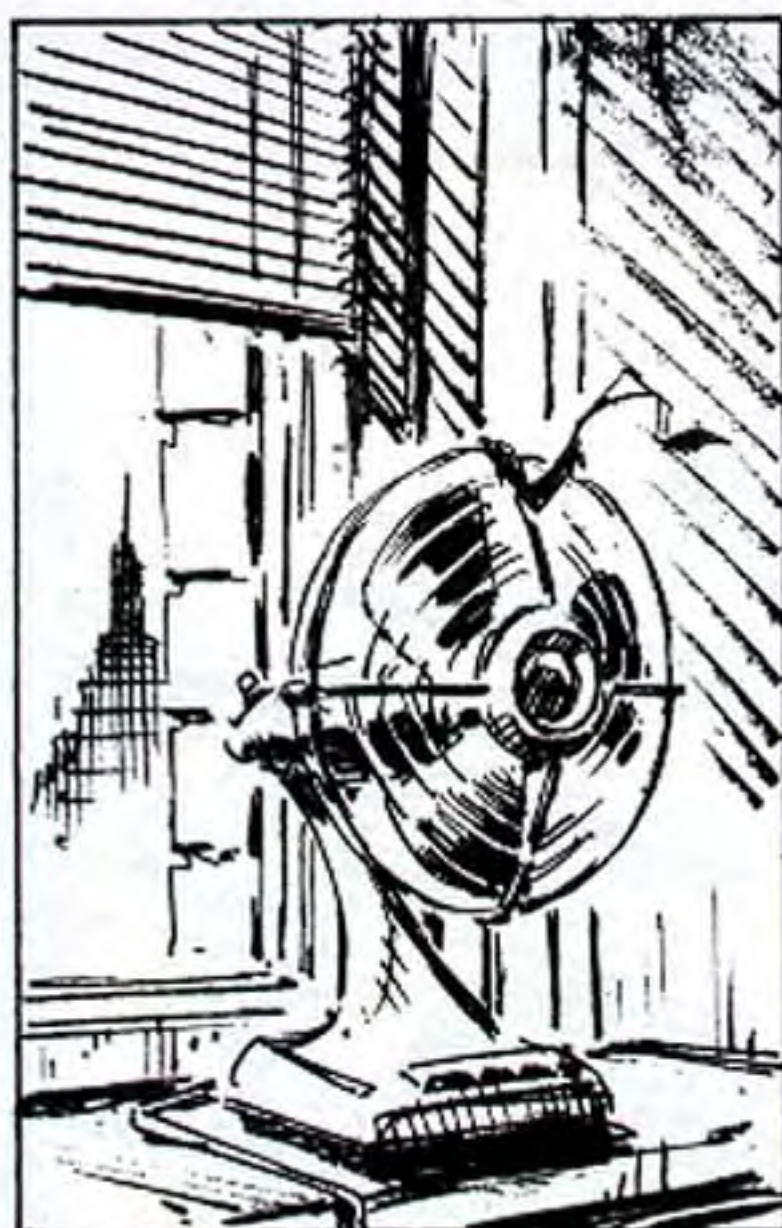


4. even flow

Sequential panels can be fun to use sometimes. This is where you would set up multiple panels all the same size and follow the action with

out changing the reader's viewing position. Make sure the action is smooth-flowing. If it's too choppy, the effect will be ruined. The reader should be made to *feel* the action as well as see it!





5. fan out

If you're looking for a way to offer a transition from one scene to another, you might want to think of creative ways to segue (pronounced "seg-way"). This is where you would draw (quite literally) a parallel between two separate scenes. You do this by beginning the next scene with something (whatever you'd like) that bears a

resemblance to the last picture of the previous scene. Take this fan-to-propeller sequence, for instance; with three panels, I've switched from one setting to another, but I've connected the two in an interesting way. For a transition between two scenes featuring people, you can use anything from coffee mugs to patterns on a person's shirt, or even show the two people in different locations watching the same TV program.



6. good shape

Format is something else at your disposal. Unlike a movie or TV screen, where you're limited by its unchanging dimensions, comic panels can be modified to suit your needs. Therefore, you can use a panel's shape to accentuate the feeling you're trying to put across to the reader.

7. the objective method

Storytelling is about making the reader feel a certain way, so it is important how you wish to portray a given scene. There are three ways: objective, subjective and P.O.V.

With the objective approach, the reader is kind of sitting off on the sidelines watching things. Whether it's a shot including people, places or objects, the reader isn't placed within the scene. Hence, he can view the scene objectively.



8. the subjective way

If you take the next example, the shot would become subjective, because the big guy is now looking directly at the reader. You can do this sparingly for a jarring effect or, like a 'Friday the 13th' movie, you can show much of the story as if seen through the eyes of the character. To sum up the subjective shot, when you establish character-to-reader eye contact, you're subjecting the reader by placing him directly in the scene.



9. P.O.V.

Lastly, we have the P.O.V. (point of view) approach. The P.O.V. shot is as close to subjective as you can get while remaining objective. You can make a landscape (or whatever) subjective by first showing a close-up of the character looking at something. The reader will understand this to be his P.O.V. Likewise, when you stand the reader close to one of the characters in the scene, he becomes more involved. He zooms up close and personal. So, when you cut to your next shot of the other character's close-up, it becomes a P.O.V. shot. Just make sure the character doesn't look directly at the reader.

These are some of the basic approaches to storytelling. The mixing and matching of these techniques, and when you decide to use each type of particular approach will become your very own storytelling style. Next month, when I discuss pacing, you'll have even more possibilities to play around with. It's as endless as your imagination! So look forward to next month, and till then. .keep the lead burnin', tough guys!

W

Greg Capullo can be seen every month penciling Spawn, published by Image Comics.



STORYTELLING AND PACING, PART 2

All right! Everybody ready for part two of our lesson? Super. If you recall last month's lesson, I explained **pacing** as being the rate of speed at which you give the reader visual information. You may also recall how different **storytelling** approaches can be used to make the reader "feel" a certain way. **Pacing** also has this ability. I've drawn up a few examples as a demonstration we can talk about. So let's get started!

1. mmm...cookies

This first example is extremely fast-paced. Almost immediately following the set-up shot (Granny with the cookie jar), we get the climax of ol' Corey getting capped. No indication was given that Granny would pull a gun instead of a cookie. So without any tension building, the payoff (Corey's mechanical head getting blown off) has a jarring effect on the reader. The reader was unable to prepare himself, so he gets shocked! The exact opposite approach is used in the following example.

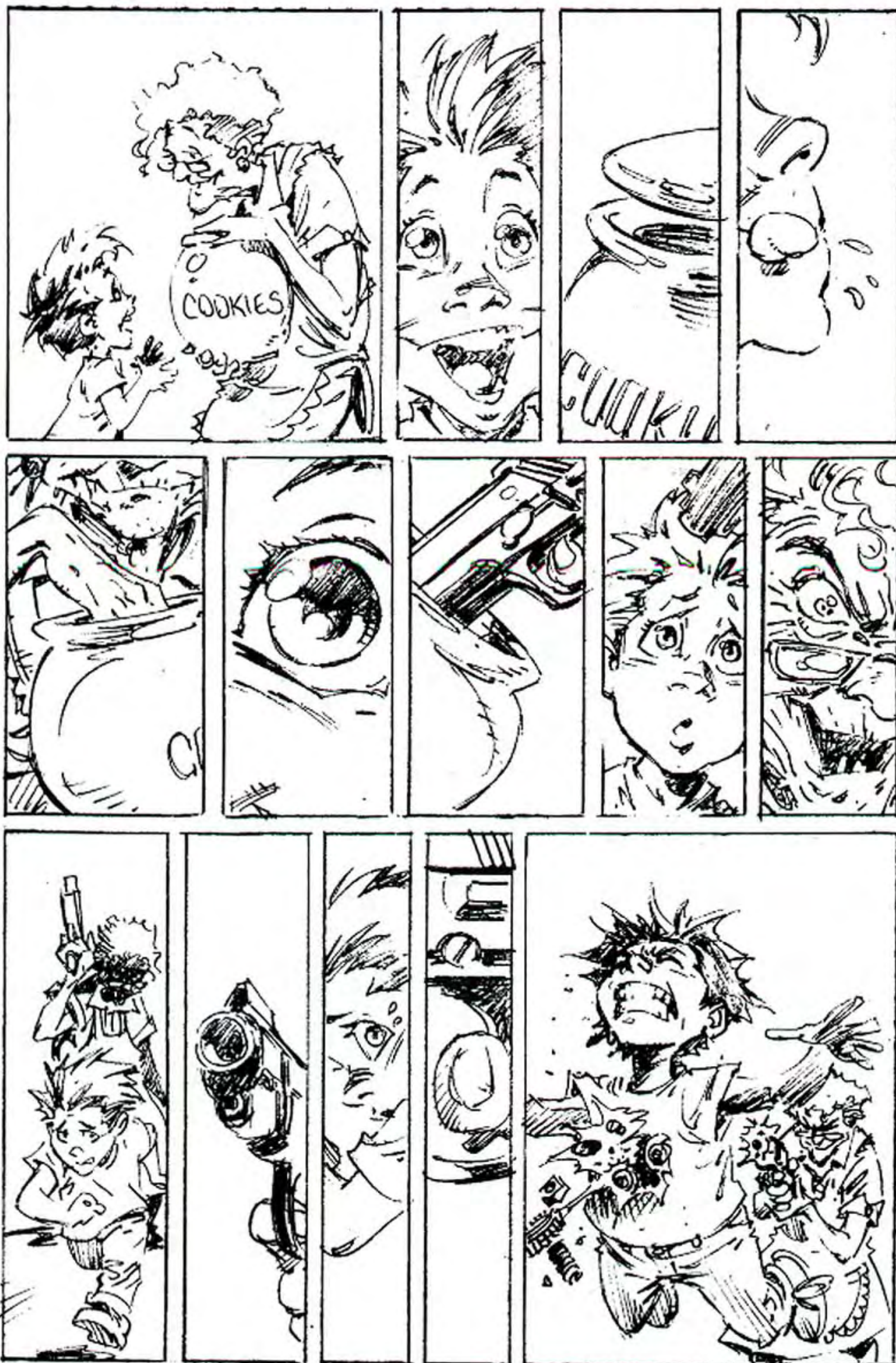


2. you want one?

Here, a much slower pace is used to reach the payoff. Taking our time, we build tension our reader will feel. First, we spend some time demonstrating Corey's growing anticipation of getting his cookie. Midway through the page we introduce the gun and begin showing Corey's growing anticipation change to mounting fear. By intercutting Corey's fearful reaction with the danger of Granny's gun, we manage to make our reader nervous. Why? Because this time, the reader knows exactly what is about to happen and

is powerless to stop it. A quick side note: Notice how even the panels seem to tense up as the climax approaches. They become skinnier and skinnier, like a rubberband being pulled taut, until...twang! We then open it up for the payoff. Once again, panel format (i.e., its shape and presentation, which we covered last month) has worked for you to convey a certain feeling.

This example is a bit extreme in its pacing, while the next example is more middle-of-the-road.



3. can't run from granny

We still have some build-up, but the payoff comes a little quicker. It's totally up to your discretion. Some themes would be totally ridiculous with a slow build-up, while others couldn't work without it. You'll be the guy in control of it. So your style and flair for storytelling and pacing will be unique to you. Sometimes you may want to pace something in such a way that the reader doesn't guess the payoff till he turns the page. (It's kinda pointless to do it this way if the reader already suspects what the outcome will be, as in our previous examples.) But let's continue our little story with Corey, as I demonstrate what I mean.



4. who is this chick?

As the scene continues, we see Granny's motivation for killing little Corey. (Justifiable homicide, if you ask me!) The page ends with a shot that is a little puzzling to us. This sets us up for the turn-the-page payoff shot. .



5. the killer revealed!

Ta-da! By pacing it out this way, we again spring a surprise on the reader. As you can see, there's not much mystery involved here.

You now have some solid, basic guidelines concerning storytelling and pacing. Now through practice and experimentation, your own style will emerge. Your ideas of how to present any given scene will make you special. You can give the same story idea to a hundred different people and get a hundred different approaches to that idea. So trust your instincts, and use both your imagination and your style. And one day you won't become the next whoever, but you'll be the first you! Keep the lead burnin', tough guys!

P.S. I don't advocate real-life violence on any level. The part of Corey was actually played by a synthetic robot known as a FLUDD (Fully-Lifelike-Ultra-Destructible-Droid). **W**

Greg Capullo can be seen every month penciling Spawn, published by Image Comics, and baking tasty cookies.