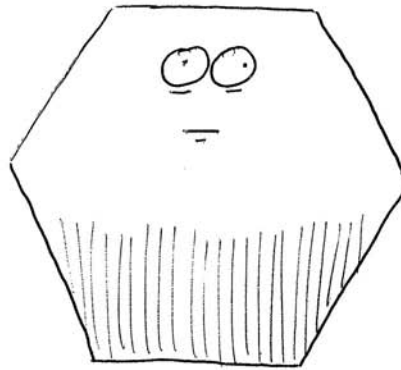


# POLIO:

## A VIRUS' STRUGGLE

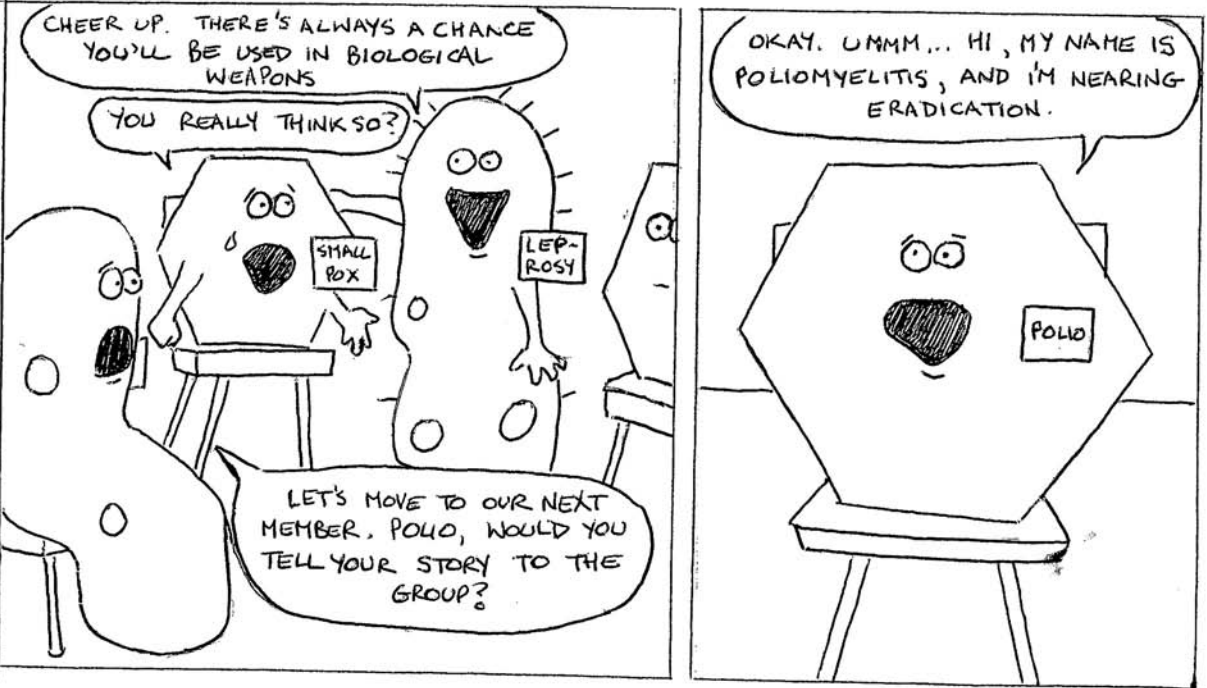
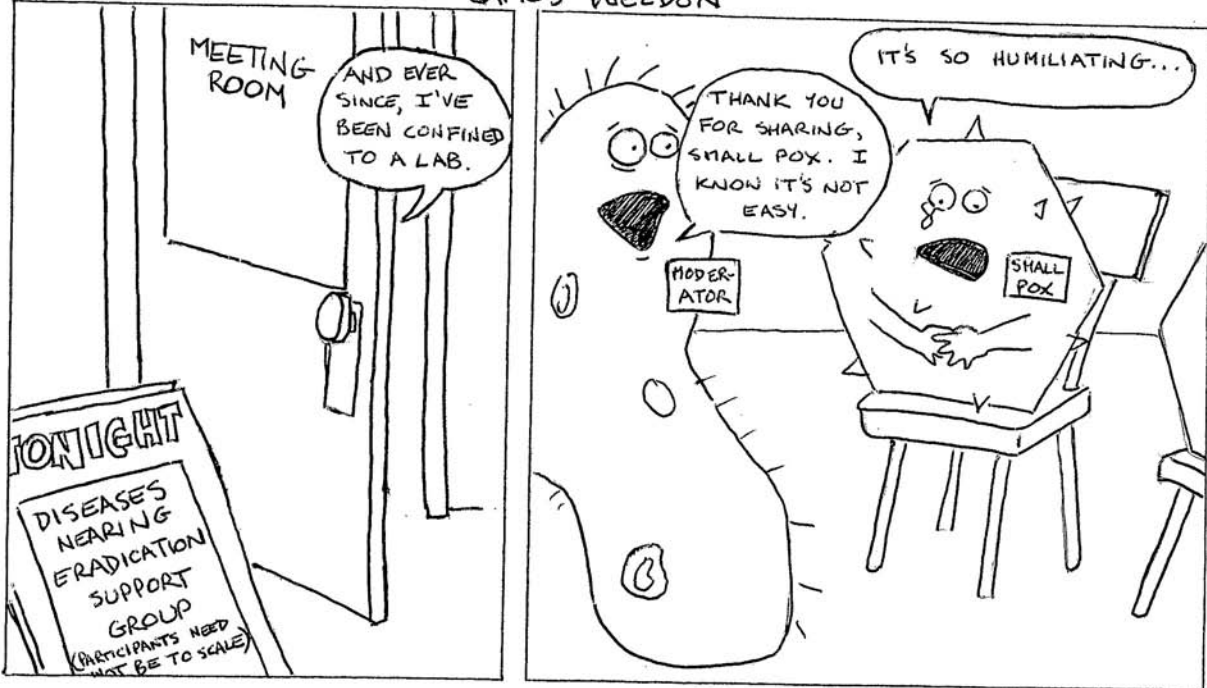


A GRAPHIC NOVELLA  
BY  
JAMES WELDON

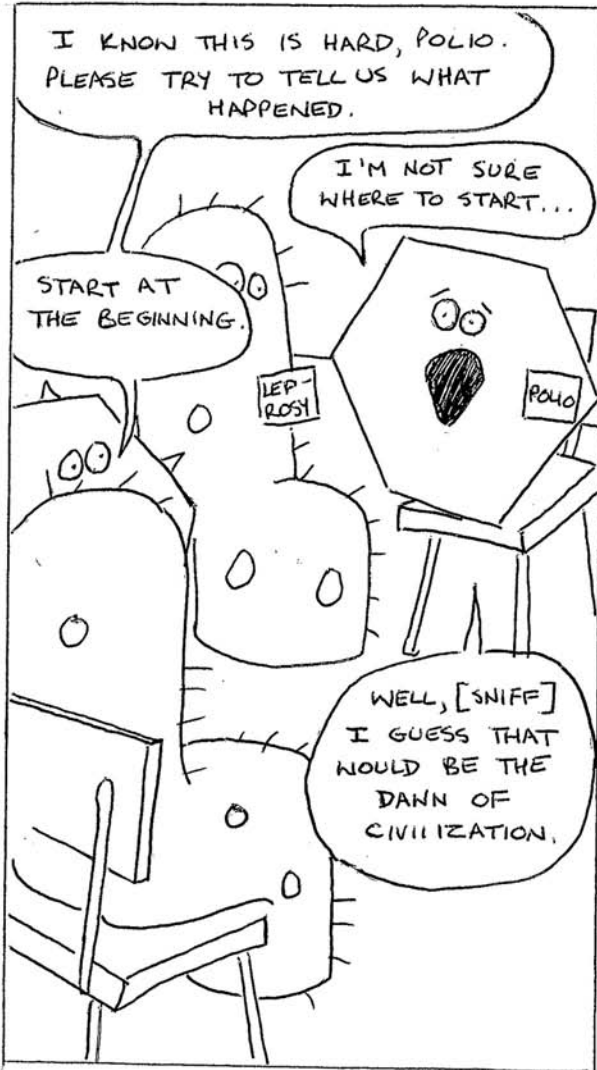
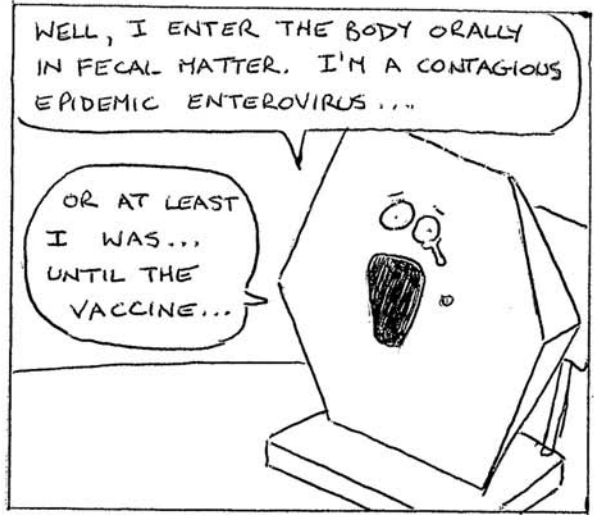
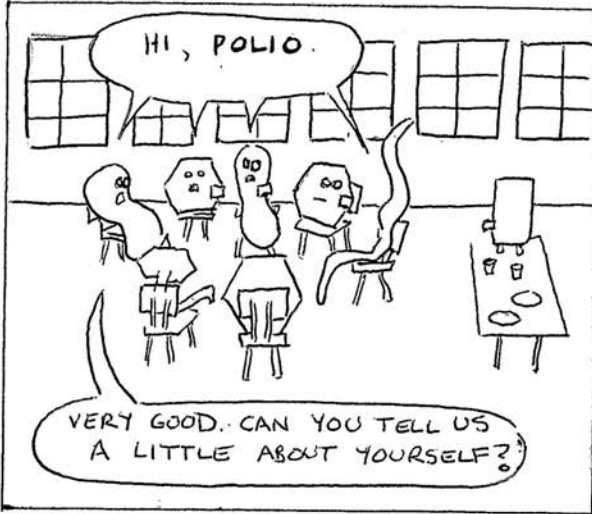
01

# POLIO: ITS STORY...

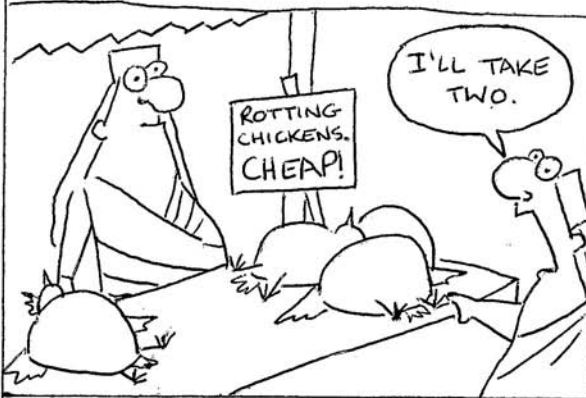
JAMES WELDON



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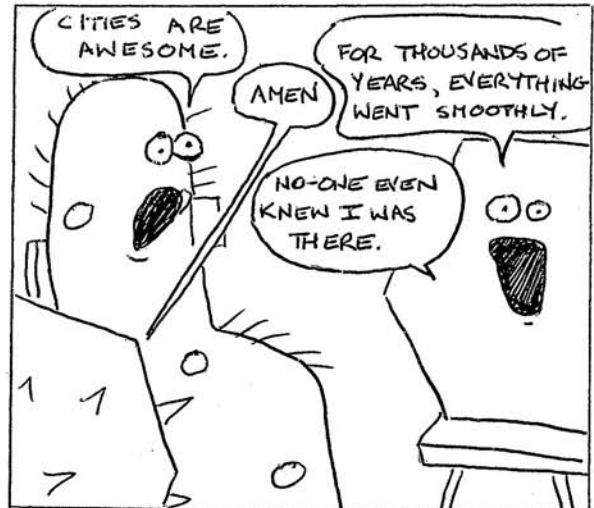
THOSE WERE GOOD DAYS, CITIES WERE CROWDED. SANITATION WAS TERRIBLE.



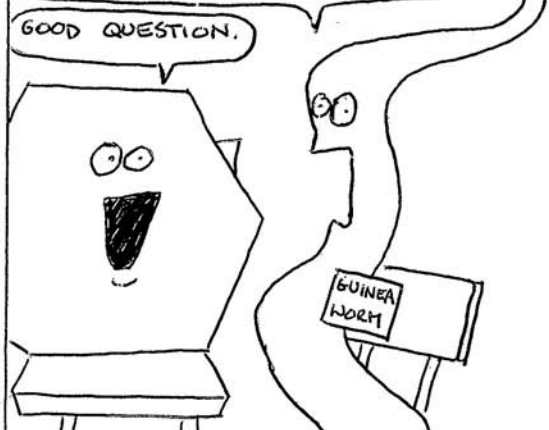
I WAS ENDEMIC TO JUST ABOUT EVERY POPULATION ON EARTH. I INFECTED ALMOST EVERYONE WITHIN A FEW WEEKS OF BIRTH. DOCTORS WERE CLUELESS.



AND MEDICINE WAS MOSTLY GUESS WORK.



WAIT. I DON'T UNDERSTAND. IF YOU WERE EVERYWHERE, HOW COME NO-ONE KNEW?



WHEN I INFECT PEOPLE, MOST OF THE TIME, I JUST HANG OUT IN THE DIGESTIVE TRACT CAUSING MILD SWELLING, BUT NO OUTWARDLY OBVIOUS SIGN. I'M GONE WITHIN A FEW DAYS. 96% OF CASES ARE ASYMPTOMATIC

MY ALIMENTARY TRACT IS MILDLY INFLAMED, BUT I FEEL GREAT.

I'M GONNA GO HANG OUT DOWN TOWN.

15

SUBCLINICAL? THAT'S LAME.

MAYBE YOUR MOM'S SUBCLINICAL!

GENTLEMEN, PLEASE. LET POLIO FINISH.

AT LEAST I CAN REPRODUCE INDEPENDENTLY!

SMALL POX

16

I'M NOT ALWAYS SUBCLINICAL. SOMETIMES I CAUSE HEADACHE, STIFFNESS, VOMITTING - EVEN SORE THROAT...

WHO DOESN'T?

GUINEA, THIS IS POLIO'S TIME.

POLIO

17

NO. THE WORM'S RIGHT. BUT FLU-LIKE SYMPTOMS AREN'T THE ONLY THING I DO. IN ABOUT 1 IN 25 CASES I GET INTO THE BRAIN AND SPINALCORD, WHERE I CAUSE LESIONS. THE RESULT IS A TOTAL LOSS OF MOTILITY, ESPECIALLY IN THE LOWER LIMBS.

18

BUT BECAUSE JUST ABOUT EVERYONE IN A POPULACE WAS IMMUNE, I WENT UNNOTICED. INCIDENTS OF PARALYSIS WERE SPORADIC, AND I WAS BASICALLY OVERSHADOWED BY OTHER DISEASES.

CRAP! HYGIENE BURIAL SERVICES

DELIVERY FOR MAXIMUS

PUT 'EM WITH THE OTHERS.

19

SORRY. MY BAD.

DON'T SWEAT IT.

SMALL POX

LEP-ROSY

POL

20

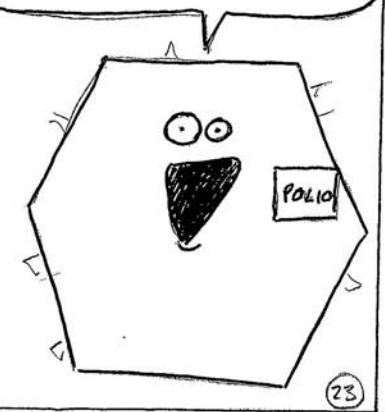
I MAY HAVE HAD NO RECOGNITION, BUT I COULD COME AND GO AS I PLEASED.



I SHOW UP OCCASIONALLY IN MEDICAL TEXTS FROM ANCIENT TIMES, BUT NO-ONE EVER SUSPECTED THE WORK OF A SPECIFIC DISEASE.



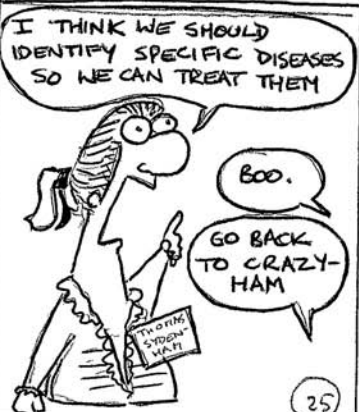
I WENT UN-DIAGNOSED RIGHT UP TO THE END OF THE 18th CENTURY.



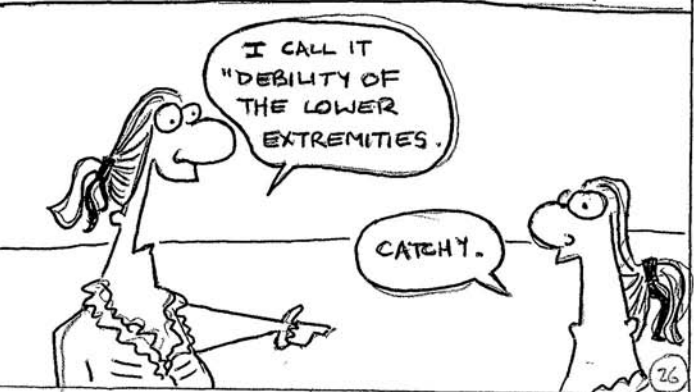
PHYSICIANS THOUGHT IDENTIFYING SPECIFIC DISEASES WAS A WASTE OF TIME. INSTEAD THEY DESCRIBED + TREATED GENERAL SYMPTOMS.



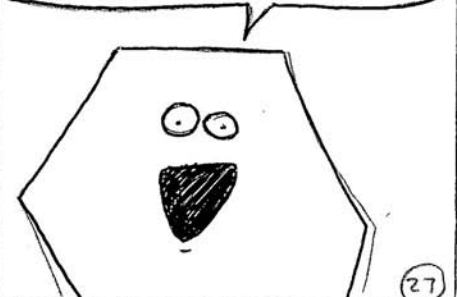
ANYONE WHO SUGGESTED OTHERWISE WAS JUST SHOUTED DOWN.



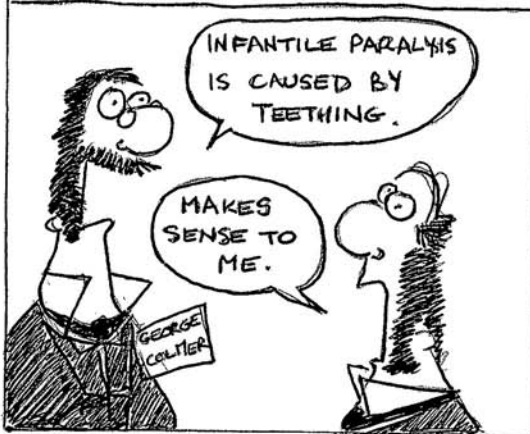
I WAS FINALLY DIAGNOSED AS A SPECIFIC DISEASE IN 1789, WHEN MICHAEL UNDERWOOD LINKED THE FEVER TO PARALYSIS, AND GAVE ME A NAME. I WAS STILL JUST A CURIOSITY, THOUGH



SCIENTISTS STARTED TO TAKE MORE OF AN INTEREST AS I STARTED TO RISE IN PROFILE IN THE 19th CENTURY. I CAUSED OUTBREAKS OF PARALYSIS IN ENGLAND, ST. HELENA, AND LOUISIANA.



STILL NO-ONE KNEW SUBCLINICAL CASES WERE EVERYWHERE, OR EVEN THAT I WAS CONTAGIOUS



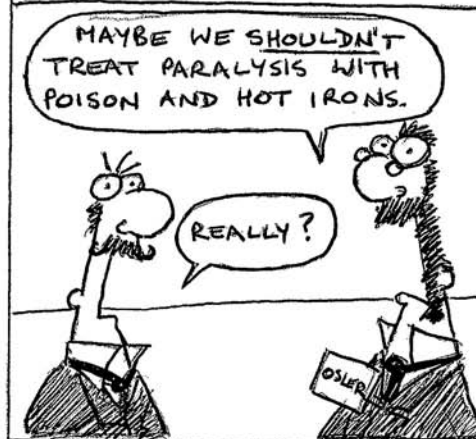
THE FIRST SIGNS OF TROUBLE SHOWED UP IN THE LATE 19th CENTURY, WITH THE RISE OF MICROBIOLOGY.



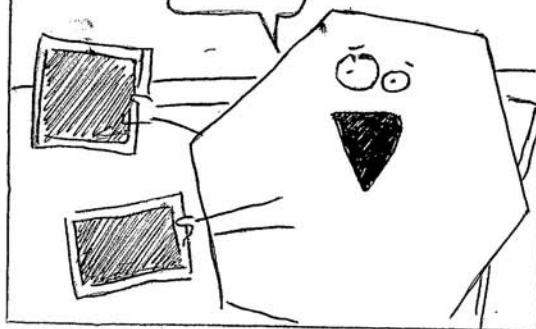
NEW IDEAS ABOUT DISCRETE AGENTS CAUSING SPECIFIC DISEASES SOON CAUGHT ON. IT WAS BAD NEWS. LUCKILY, IDEAS ABOUT HOW TO TREAT ME WERE STILL FOGGY.



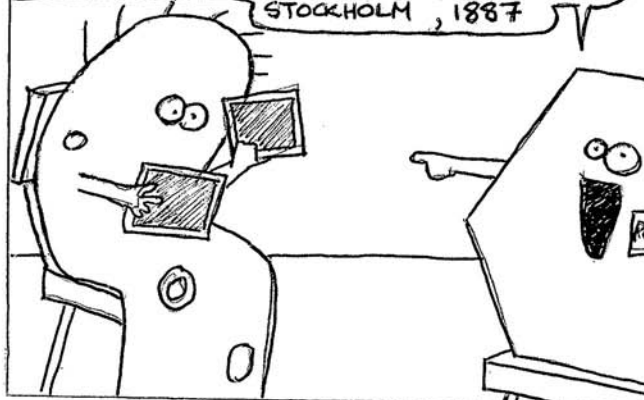
UNFORTUNATELY, UNDERSTANDING WAS IMPROVING.



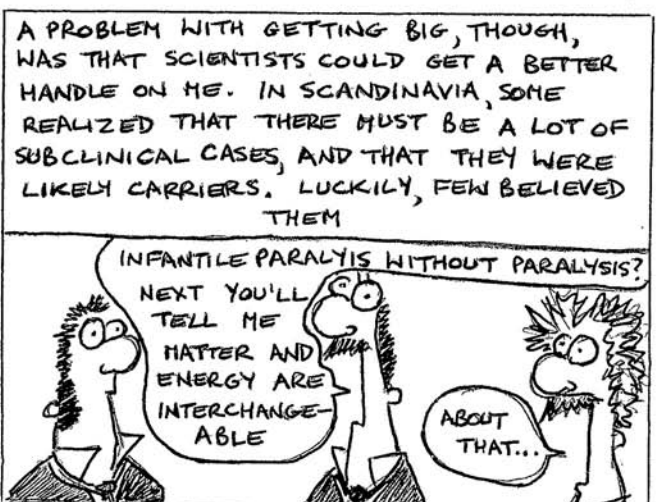
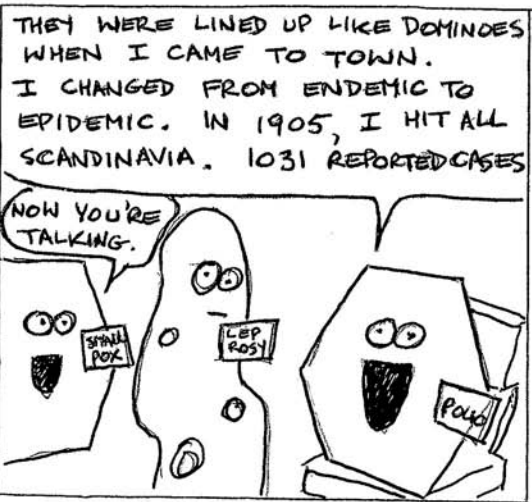
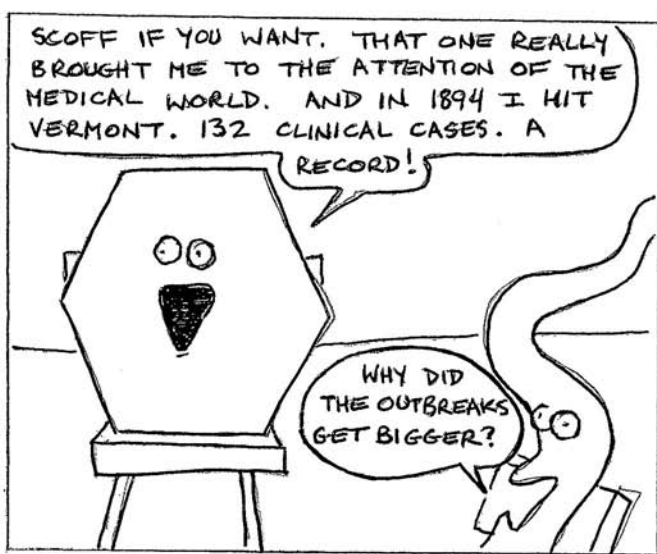
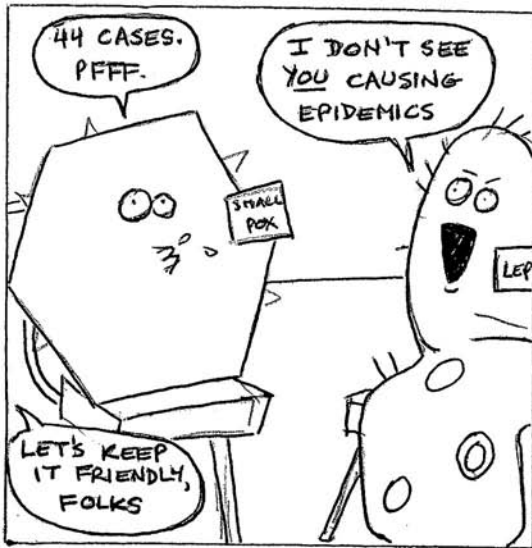
AS THEIR UNDERSTANDING IMPROVED, THOUGH, I WAS MAKING PROGRESS MYSELF. EPIDEMICS GOT BIGGER. VICTIMS GOT OLDER



HERE I AM IN NORWAY. AND THAT'S A VILLAGE IN FRANCE IN THE 1880'S. I ALSO CAUSED 44 CLINICAL CASES IN STOCKHOLM, 1887



07

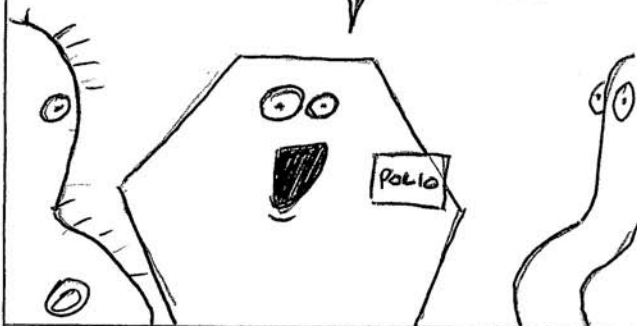




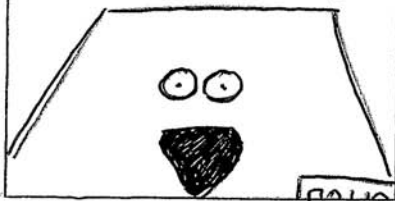
IN 1908, THINGS TOOK A DARK TURN WITH THE DISCOVERY THAT I WAS A VIRUS, THROUGH THE INFECTION OF A MONKEY WITH A PATIENT'S SPINAL FLUID.



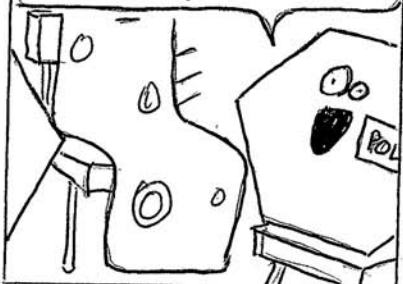
AROUND THIS TIME, THEY ALSO FOUND ME IN TISSUES THROUGHOUT THE BODY, AND DISCOVERED I COULD BE KILLED WITH ANTIBODIES. NOT GOOD.



ON THE UPSIDE, MY FAME WAS RISING. OUTBREAKS IN THE STATES KEPT GROWING BEFORE WORLD WAR I. I WAS BEGINNING TO BE SEEN AS A NATIONAL PROBLEM. I WAS ALSO A REAL CELEB IN SWEDEN.



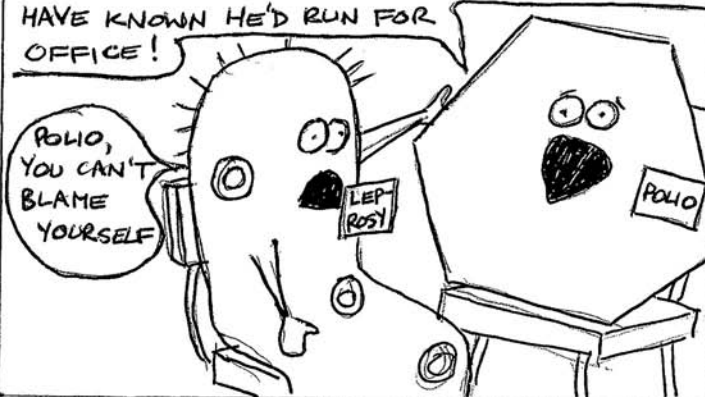
SCIENCE STARTED TO GET BOGGED DOWN. WWI HIT, AND IN 1916, I HIT THE BIG TIME. THERE WERE 27,000 CONFIRMED CLINICAL CASES ALL OVER THE NORTH-EAST USA.



NEW YORK WAS PUT UNDER QUARANTINE, AND THERE WAS A TRAVEL BAN PUT IN EFFECT. I WAS ALL OVER THE NEWS, AND ALL THEIR MEASURES WERE USELESS!




EVERYTHING WAS GOING WELL, UNTIL I INFECTED SOMEONE FAMOUS... IN 1921, I WAS CONTRACTED BY FRANKLIN DELANO ROOSEVELT. I WAS SUCH A FOOL! I SHOULD HAVE KNOWN HE'D RUN FOR OFFICE!



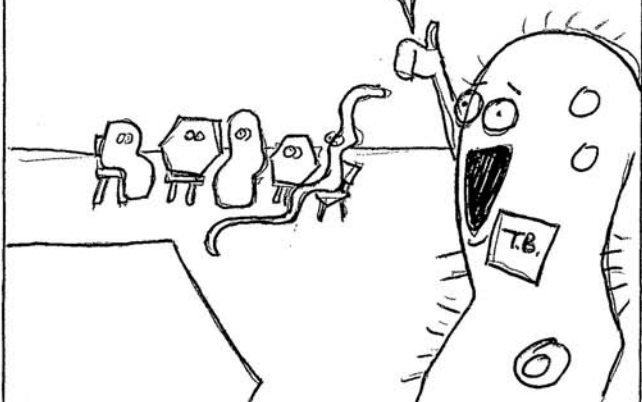
IN TIME, HE WOULD START THE NATIONAL FOUNDATION FOR INFANTILE PARALYSIS. IT BECAME ONE OF THE BIGGEST CHARITIES IN HISTORY, AND ULTIMATELY FUNDED MY DEMISE.




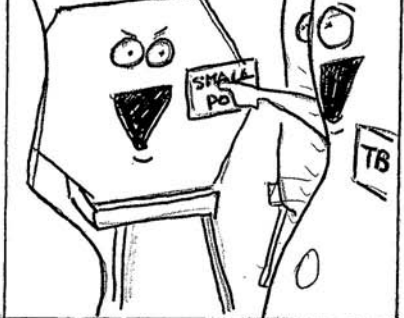
LITTLE DID I KNOW AT THE TIME. I WAS HAVING A BLAST. I PANICKED L.A. IN 1935. AND ALL THE TIME, THEY WERE TRYING TO CONTAIN ME THE WRONG WAY, ISOLATING THE CLINICAL CASES AND IGNORING THE ASYMPTOMATIC CARRIERS. THEY WERE TREATING ME LIKE TB!




HEY, I HEARD MY NAME! WHAT'S EVERYONE DOING HERE?




HEY, SMALL POX! I HEARD YOU WERE WIPED OUT!  
CONFINED TO A LAB, THANK YOU.




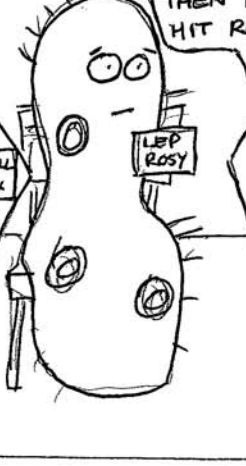
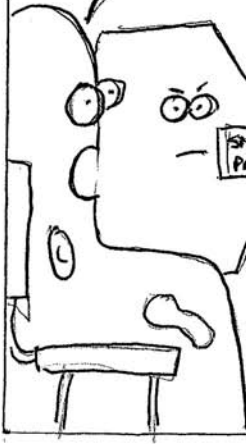
A LAB! HA HA!  
HEY, YOU'RE NEXT BUDDY. LAUGH WHILE YOU CAN!



WHATEVER. SEE YOU LOSERS LATER.  
COME ON, INFLUENZA LET'S GO.




SORRY, POLIO. PLEASE GO ON.  
WELL, THAT YEAR, THERE WERE A COUPLE OF FAILED VACCINES. THEN IN 1937, I HIT REAL TROUBLE.



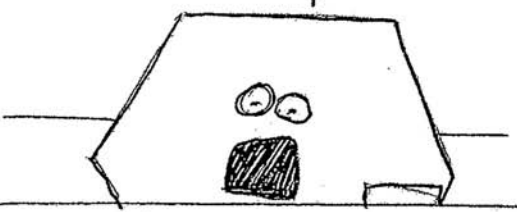
THEY TRICKED ME INTO INFECTING MICE. THEY WERE CHEAPER + EASIER THAN MONKEYS AND ALLOWED LARGE SCALE EXPERIMENTS

YOU'RE FIRED.  
WOO-HOO!



D10

THE MICE EXPERIMENTS LET THEM BETTER UNDERSTAND HOW IMMUNITY AND ASYMPTOMATIC CASES WORKED. AND BY ALLOWING ME TO ADAPT TO RODENTS, THEY CREATED A STRAIN HARMLESS TO HUMANS - A STEP TOWARD A VACCINE.



LUCKILY, SCIENCE WAS STILL HEADING DOWN DEAD ENDS, DRIVEN BY PUBLIC PANIC OVER OUTBREAKS. IN 1941, SUSPICION FELL ON FECES-EATING FLIES AS A CARRIER.



IN 1945, SCIENTISTS SPRAYED 4 SQUARE MILES OF SAVANNAH, GEORGIA WITH DDT DURING AN OUTBREAK.



LATER THAT YEAR, THEY DID IT TO ROCKFORD, ILLINOIS.



IT DIDN'T WORK. BY THIS TIME MY FAME HAD REACHED AN UNPRECEDENTED SCALE. THE NFIP WAS RAISING MONEY LIKE CRAZY...



EPIDEMICS REGULARLY REACHED 10,000. THE PUBLIC FOLLOWED EVERY SCIENTIFIC DEVELOPMENT IN THE NEWS.

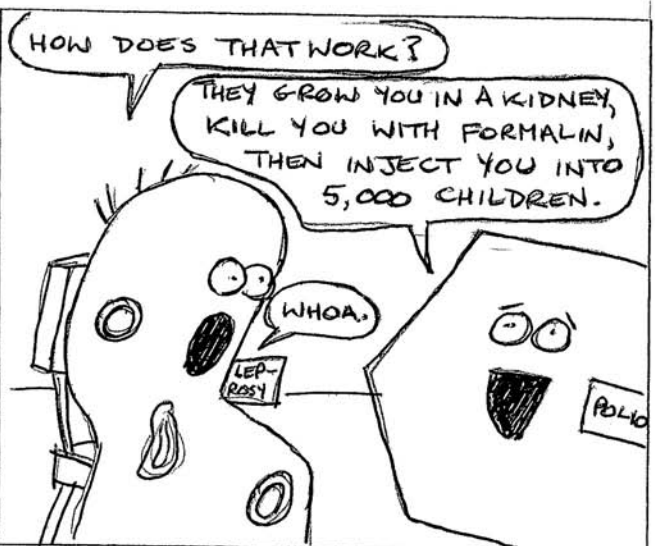
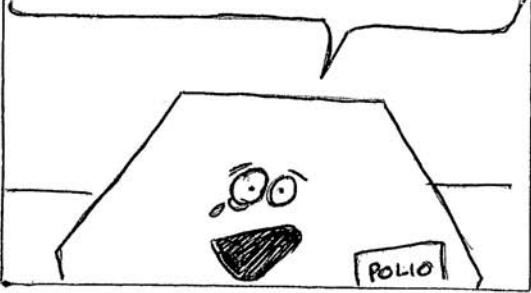


IN THE 40'S, JOHN ENDERS GREW ME IN TISSUE CULTURES AND THE LAST OBSTACLE TO A VACCINE WAS REMOVED.

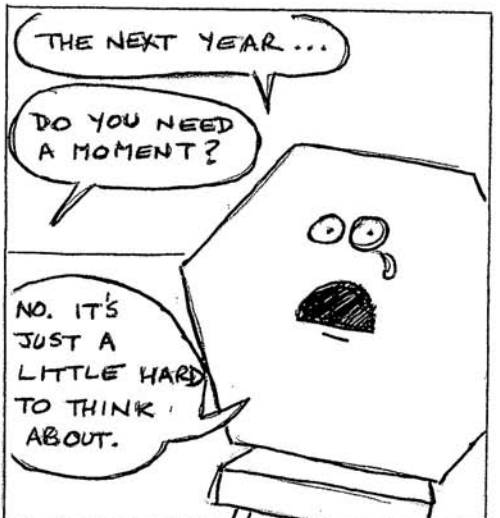
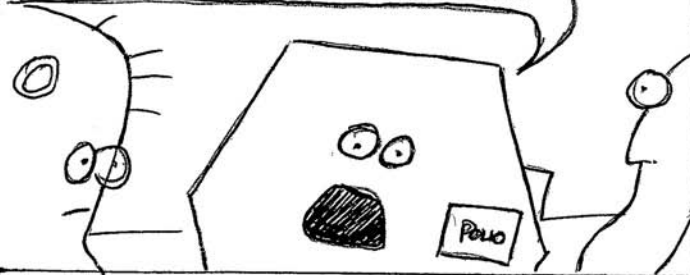


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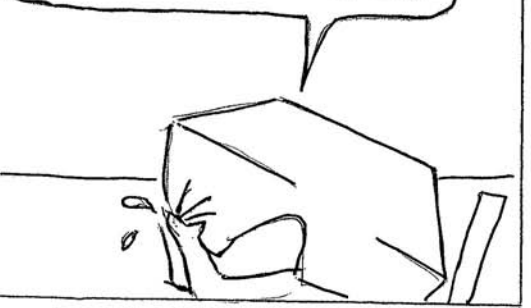
IN THE 50'S, THINGS HAPPENED FAST. IN 1951, THE NFIP CREATED THE COMMITTEE ON IMMUNIZATION. SEVERAL VACCINES WERE TRIED, AND IN 1953, THEY GREEN-LIGHTED JONAS SALK'S INACTIVATED POLIO VIRUS VACCINE FOR TESTING.



THAT YEAR, I WENT GLOBAL. THE W.H.O. EXPERT COMMITTEE ON POLIOMYELITIS MET IN ROME FOR THE FIRST TIME. THE LITTLE DISEASE NO-ONE HAD RECOGNIZED WAS FINALLY A WORLDWIDE PROBLEM. IRONIC THAT AT THE TOP OF MY GAME, EVERYTHING SHOULD COME CRASHING DOWN.



THE NEXT YEAR, THE VAC APPROVED A MASSIVE VACCINATION TRIAL. 1.8 MILLION CHILDREN WERE INVOLVED IN THE US. ... IT WAS SUCCESSFUL!

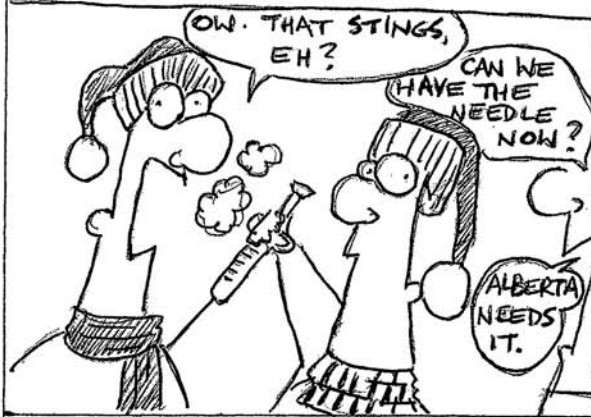


OVER 200,000 CHILDREN WERE IMMUNIZED AGAINST ME, THANKS TO THAT PARASITIC WORM, JONAS SALK!

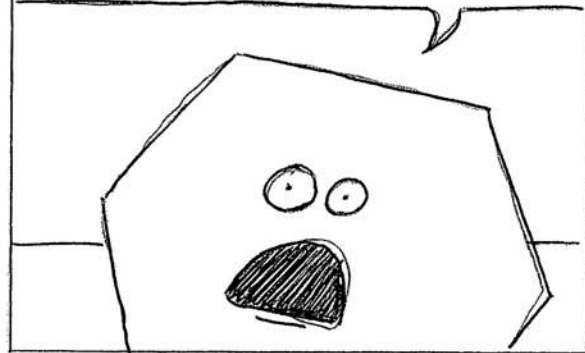


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IN 1955, SUCCESSFUL TRIALS WERE CONDUCTED IN DENMARK AND CANADA.



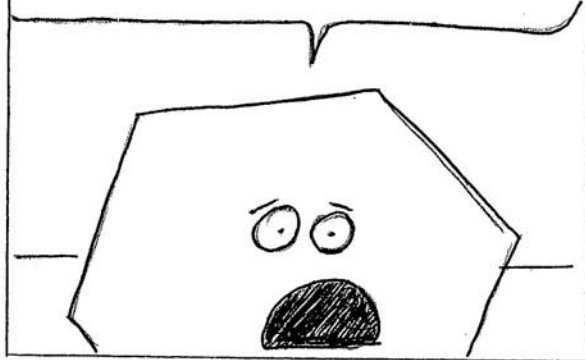
THE VACCINE WAS MASS PRODUCED, AND BY 1960 WAS BEING USED ALL OVER THE WORLD. INCIDENTS OF POLIO PLUMMETED.



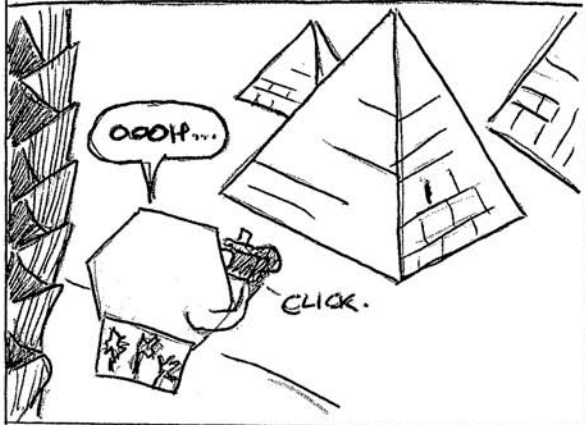
FOR A WHILE, I THOUGHT THERE MIGHT BE HOPE. THE DEVELOPING WORLD WAS JUST STARTING TO CLEAN ITSELF UP.



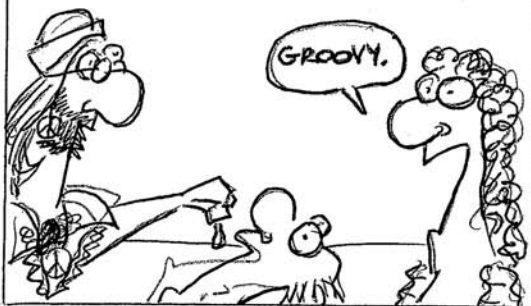
IMMUNITY IN LESS DEVELOPED AREAS STARTED TO FALL, AND THE INJECTABLE SALK VIRUS WAS DIFFICULT TO ADMINISTER THERE.



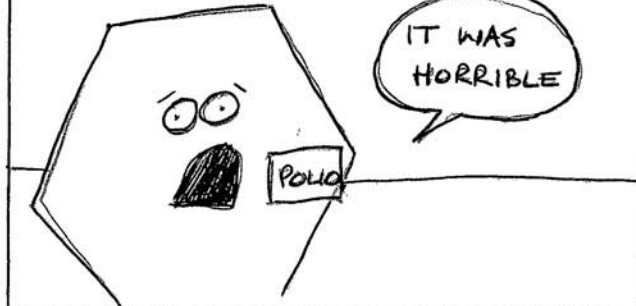
I WAS FINALLY GETTING A CHANCE TO START SOME EPIDEMICS OVERSEAS.



BUT THEN IN 1962, LIVE VACCINES WERE APPROVED. NO NEEDLES NEEDED, IMMUNITY RESULTED IN DAYS, AND THEY COULD STOP OUTBREAKS IN THEIR TRACKS.



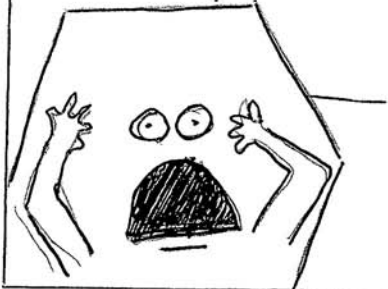
IN THE USA ALONE, CASES OF PARALYSIS DROPPED FROM 20,000 IN 1955 TO 100 ANNUALLY BY THE MID-60'S.



IT GETS WORSE. IN 1988, THE W.H.O. RESOLVED TO ERADICATE ME BY 2000.



THEY ENGAGED IN MASS IMMUNIZATION. SOMETIMES AS MANY AS 134 MILLION CHILDREN IN 1 DAY!



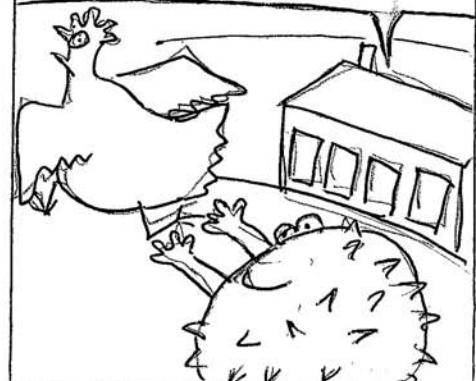
THEY MISSED THEIR TARGET, BUT TODAY I'M ONLY FOUND IN 6 COUNTRIES ON EARTH. ONLY 1263 CASES GLOBALLY SINCE 2004!



WITH THE GENEVA DECLARATION ON POLIO ERADICATION SIGNED LAST YEAR, WHAT AM I GOING TO DO? IT'S HOPELESS!



I JUST HOPE SOMEDAY, SOMEONE ELSE TAKES UP THE FIGHT. IT'S STILL A QUESTION OF WHO...



P14