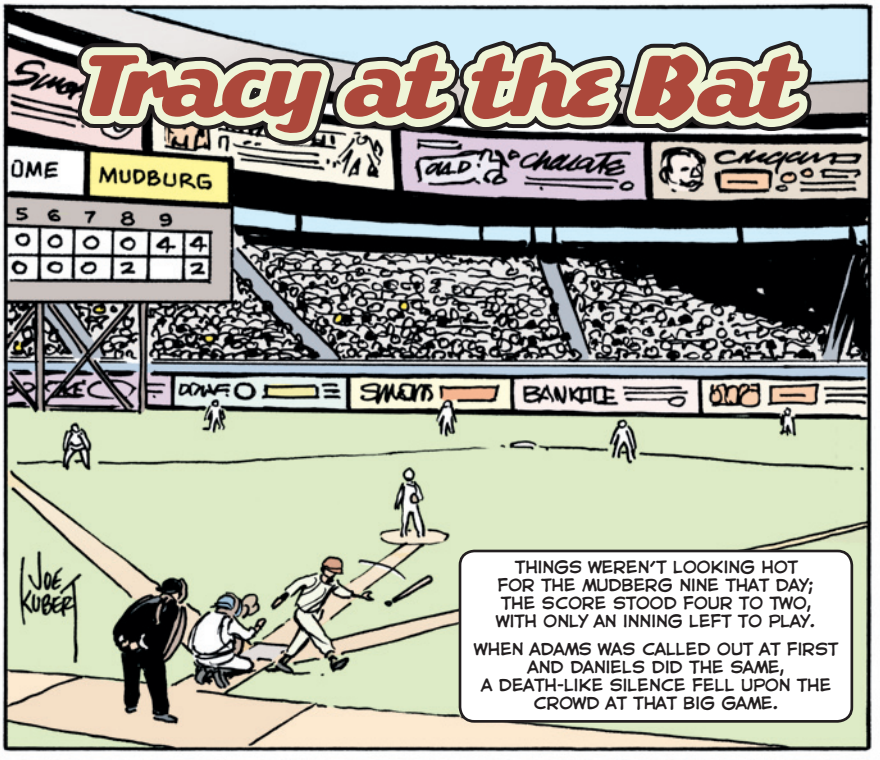
Tracy at the Bat

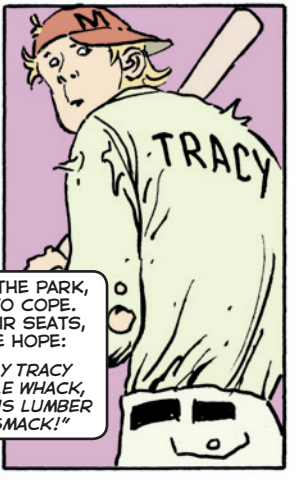


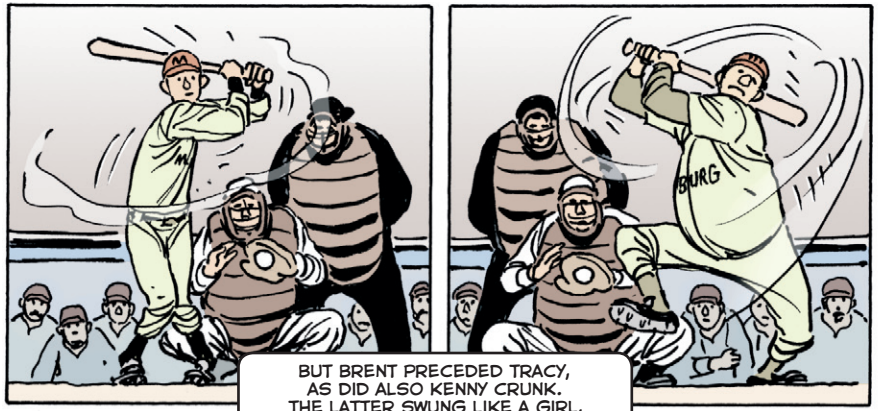
THINGS WEREN'T LOOKING HOT FOR THE MUDBERG NINE THAT DAY; THE SCORE STOOD FOUR TO TWO, WITH ONLY AN INNING LEFT TO PLAY.

WHEN ADAMS WAS CALLED OUT AT FIRST AND DANIELS DID THE SAME, A DEATH-LIKE SILENCE FELL UPON THE CROWD AT THAT BIG GAME.

A FEW GOT UP TO LEAVE THE PARK, THEIR HEARTS UNABLE TO COPE. THE REST STAYED IN THEIR SEATS, STILL CLINGING TO ONE HOPE:

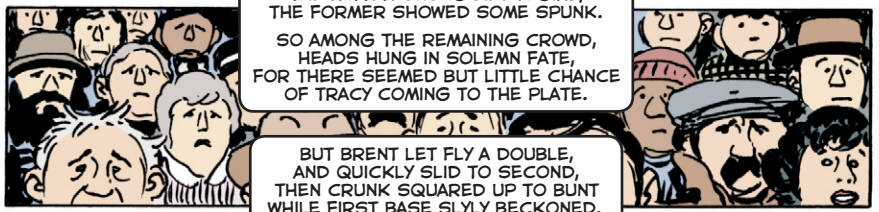
THEY THOUGHT, *"IF ONLY TRACY COULD BUT TAKE A SINGLE WHACK, WE'RE SURE HE'D TAKE HIS LUMBER AND GIVE THAT BALL A SMACK!"*



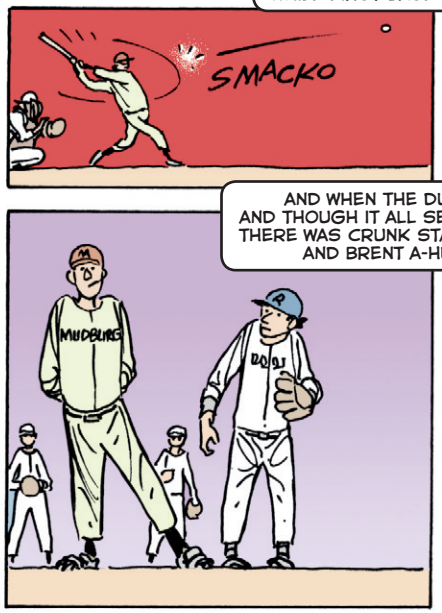


BUT BRENT PRECEDED TRACY,
AS DID ALSO KENNY CRUNK.
THE LATTER SWUNG LIKE A GIRL,
THE FORMER SHOWED SOME SPUNK.

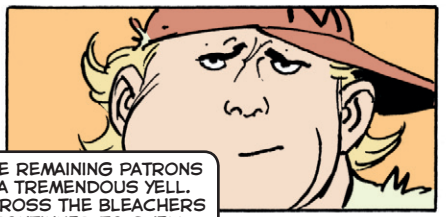
SO AMONG THE REMAINING CROWD,
HEADS HUNG IN SOLEMN FATE,
FOR THERE SEEMED BUT LITTLE CHANCE
OF TRACY COMING TO THE PLATE.



BUT BRENT LET FLY A DOUBLE,
AND QUICKLY SLID TO SECOND,
THEN CRUNK SQUARED UP TO BUNT
WHILE FIRST BASE SLYLY BECKONED.

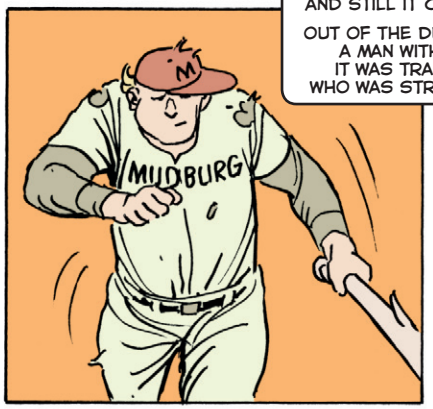


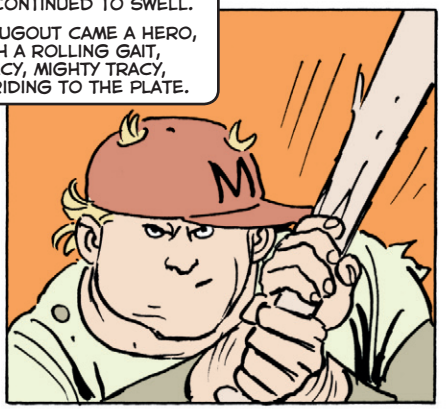
AND WHEN THE DUST HAD SETTLED
AND THOUGH IT ALL SEEMED QUITE ABSURD,
THERE WAS CRUNK STANDING SAFE AT FIRST
AND BRENT A-HUGGING THIRD.

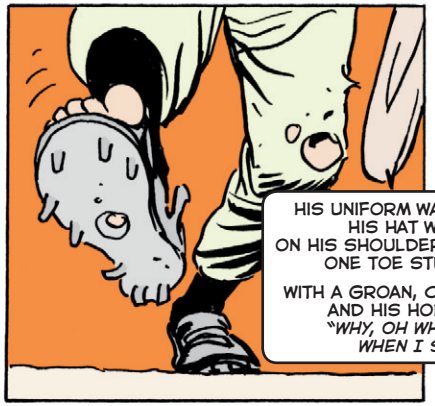


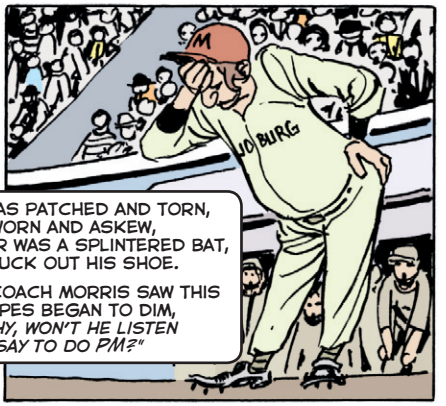
THEN FROM THE REMAINING PATRONS
THERE CAME A TREMENDOUS YELL.
IT RUMBLED ACROSS THE BLEACHERS
AND STILL IT CONTINUED TO SWELL.

OUT OF THE DUGOUT CAME A HERO,
A MAN WITH A ROLLING GAIT,
IT WAS TRACY, MIGHTY TRACY,
WHO WAS STRIDING TO THE PLATE.







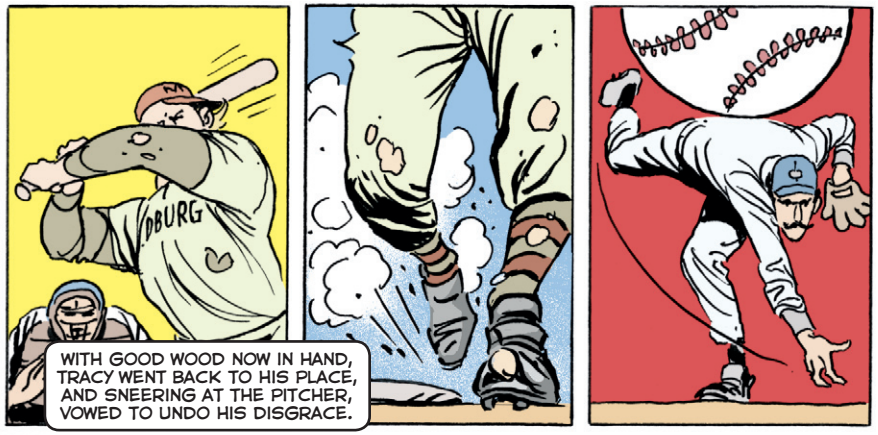


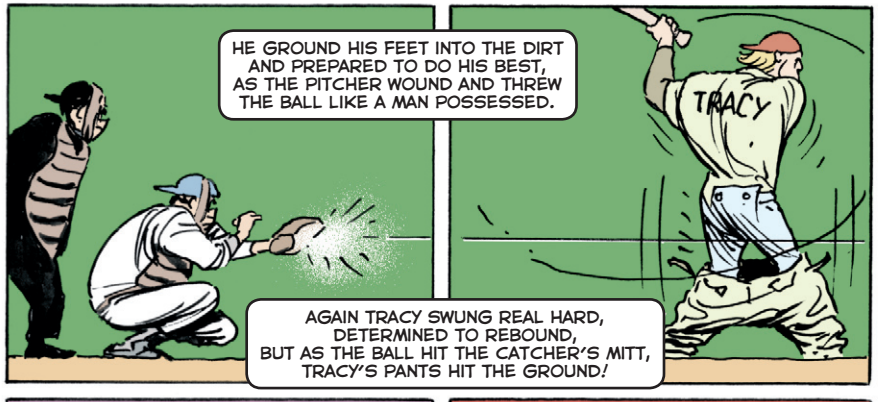
HIS UNIFORM WAS PATCHED AND TORN,
HIS HAT WORN AND ASKEW,
ON HIS SHOULDER WAS A SPLINTERED BAT,
ONE TOE STUCK OUT HIS SHOE.

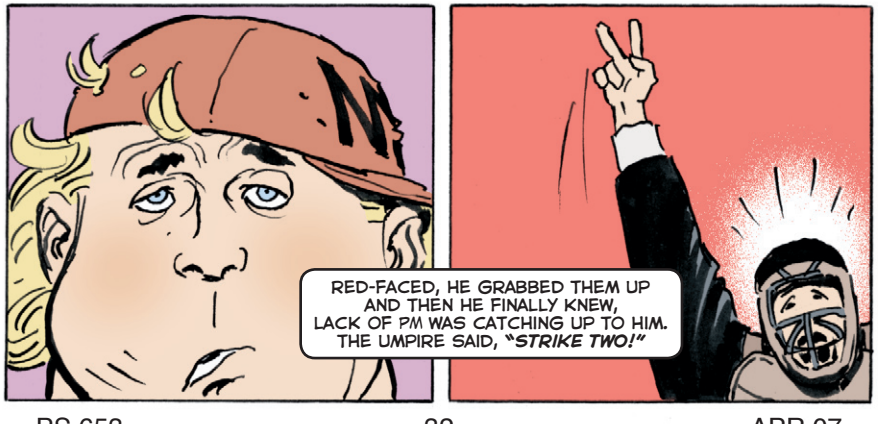
WITH A GROAN, COACH MORRIS SAW THIS
AND HIS HOPES BEGAN TO DIM,
*"WHY, OH WHY, WON'T HE LISTEN
WHEN I SAY TO DO PM?"*

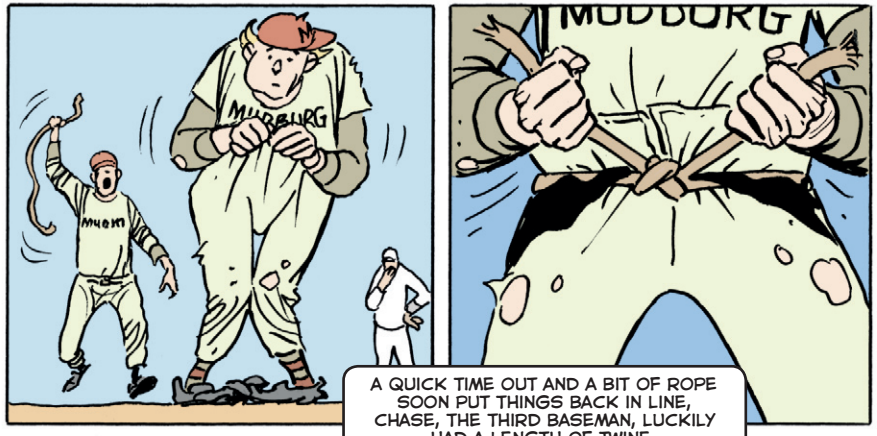
THERE WAS A SMILE ON TRACY'S FACE AS HE STEPPED INTO THE BOX. HE FLEXED HIS MIGHTY MUSCLES AND BRUSHED BACK HIS GOLDEN LOCKS.
THERE WAS PRIDE IN TRACY'S BEARING AS HE WAVED UP TO THE CROWD. THEY SAID, "TRACY, MIGHTY TRACY! IT'S TIME TO MAKE US PROUD!"
TRACY
PTUEY
THE CROWD'S EYES WERE UPON HIM AS HE SPAT INTO THE DIRT, THEN STEPPING INTO THE BATTER'S BOX, HE BECAME MUCH MORE ALERT.
HIS VISION NARROWED ON THE BALL AS THE PITCHER PREPARED TO THROW. TEETH GRINDING, SHOULDERS HUNCHED... TIME SEEMED TO SLOW.

AND NOW THE WHITE-STITCHED BALL CAME SPEEDING THROUGH THE AIR. TRACY GAVE A MIGHTY SWING THAT GAVE THE PITCHER QUITE A SCARE.
CRACK
A LOUD CRACK SOUNDED. THE CROWD SEARCHED FOR THE HOME RUN, BUT IT WAS JUST A BROKEN BAT. THE UMPIRE YELLED, "STRIKE ONE!"
PEERING AT THE BROKEN WOOD, TRACY SQUEEZED IT IN HIS FIST, "IF MY BAT HAD NOT BROKEN, I NEVER WOULD HAVE MISSED!"
THE ON-DECK BATTER, NICKERSON, YELLED, "EVERYTHING IS FINE!" AND TOSSING HIS BAT THROUGH THE AIR, SAID TO TRACY, "HERE, TAKE MINE!"

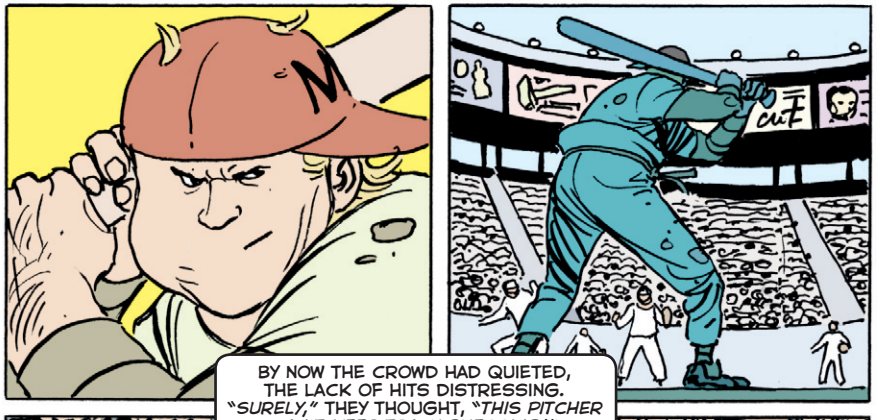

WITH GOOD WOOD NOW IN HAND, TRACY WENT BACK TO HIS PLACE, AND SNEERING AT THE PITCHER, VOWED TO UNDO HIS DISGRACE.

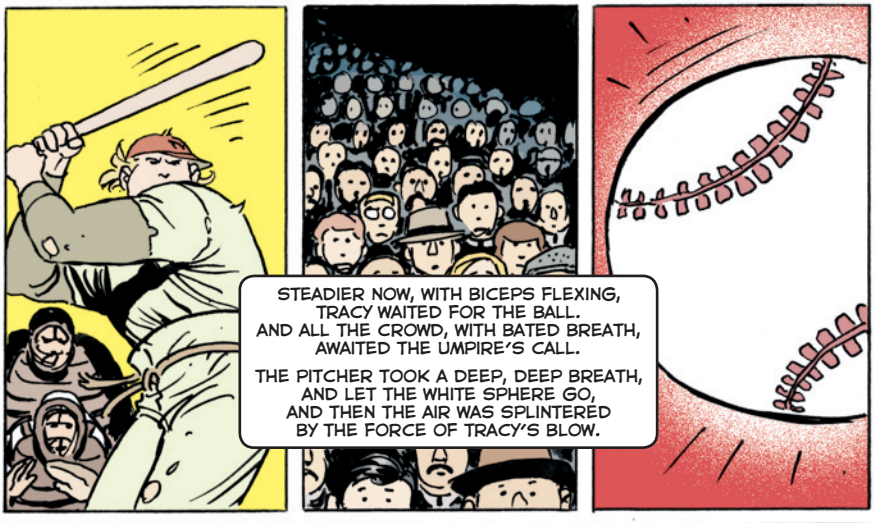

HE GROUND HIS FEET INTO THE DIRT AND PREPARED TO DO HIS BEST, AS THE PITCHER WOUND AND THREW THE BALL LIKE A MAN POSSESSED.
TRACY
AGAIN TRACY SWUNG REAL HARD, DETERMINED TO REBOUND, BUT AS THE BALL HIT THE CATCHER'S MITT, TRACY'S PANTS HIT THE GROUND!

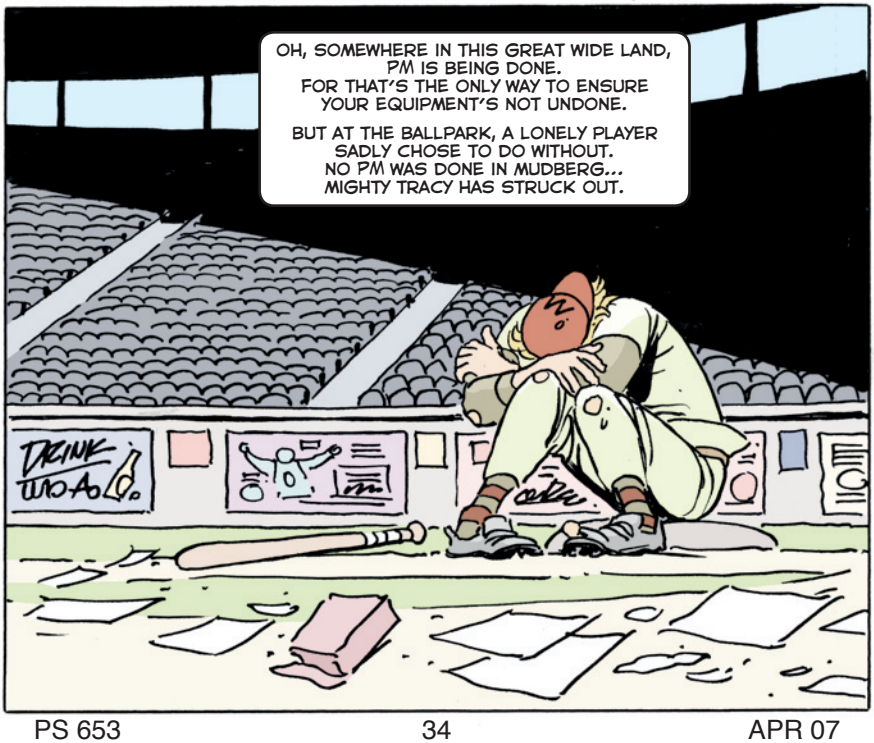

RED-FACED, HE GRABBED THEM UP AND THEN HE FINALLY KNEW, LACK OF PM WAS CATCHING UP TO HIM. THE UMPIRE SAID, "STRIKE TWO!"


MUDBURG

A QUICK TIME OUT AND A BIT OF ROPE SOON PUT THINGS BACK IN LINE, CHASE, THE THIRD BASEMAN, LUCKILY HAD A LENGTH OF TWINE.
SO TRACY STALKED BACK TO THE PLATE, HIS SELF-ESTEEM IN DOUBT. "...I NEVER KNEW THAT NO PM COULD CAUSE A HITTING DROUGHT!"


BY NOW THE CROWD HAD QUIETED, THE LACK OF HITS DISTRESSING. "SURELY," THEY THOUGHT, "THIS PITCHER CAN'T KEEP TRACY GUESSING!"
THEY SAW HIS FACE GO DARK WITH IRE, AND START TO SHOW SOME STRAIN. THEY HOPED AND PRAYED THAT TRACY WOULDN'T MISS THE BALL AGAIN.


STEADIER NOW, WITH BICEPS FLEXING,
TRACY WAITED FOR THE BALL.
AND ALL THE CROWD, WITH BATED BREATH,
AWAITED THE UMPIRE'S CALL.
THE PITCHER TOOK A DEEP, DEEP BREATH,
AND LET THE WHITE SPHERE GO,
AND THEN THE AIR WAS SPLINTERED
BY THE FORCE OF TRACY'S BLOW.


OH, SOMEWHERE IN THIS GREAT WIDE LAND,
PM IS BEING DONE.
FOR THAT'S THE ONLY WAY TO ENSURE
YOUR EQUIPMENT'S NOT UNDONE.
BUT AT THE BALLPARK, A LONELY PLAYER
SADLY CHOSE TO DO WITHOUT.
NO PM WAS DONE IN MUDBERG...
MIGHTY TRACY HAS STRUCK OUT.
DRINK