

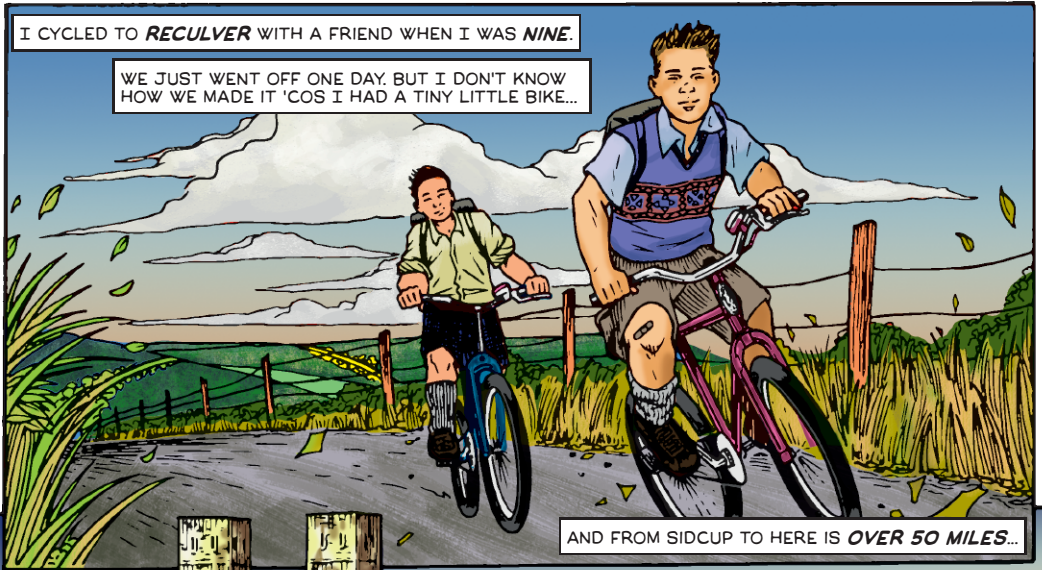
Arcade Tales

THE RECVLVER POSSE
AND THE PINBALL KID



I CYCLED TO **RECVLVER** WITH A FRIEND WHEN I WAS **NINE**.

WE JUST WENT OFF ONE DAY, BUT I DON'T KNOW HOW WE MADE IT 'COS I HAD A TINY LITTLE BIKE...



AND FROM SIDCUP TO HERE IS **OVER 50 MILES**...

**RECVLVER
TOWERS!**

IT WAS AN ADVENTURE...

BUT WE HAD NO MONEY,
JUST A MAKESHIFT TENT,
AND A TIN OF CONDENSED
MILK BETWEEN US...

WE ATE THAT IN THE
MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT,

IT WAS CRUNCHY,
AND THERE WERE
WOOD LICE IN IT.

WHEN I *FINALLY* RANG MY FATHER FROM A PHONE BOX IN RECVLVER HE WENT *BALLISTIC*.

ELWYN!

MY PARENTS HAD BEEN WORRIED SICK AND I ENDED UP IN *LOADS OF TROUBLE*.

I SUPPOSE THAT IT'S FUNNY THAT AFTER ALL THE TROUBLE MY CHILDHOOD TRIP CAUSED...

AND AFTER ALL THOSE YEARS...

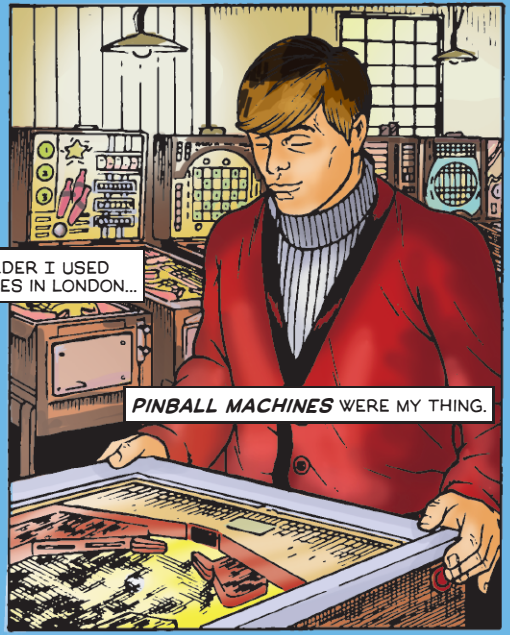
I ENDED UP COMING BACK TO RECVLVER, SETTLING DOWN, AND RUNNING A CAFE AND *AN ARCADE* RIGHT HERE!



I REMEMBER AS A CHILD COMING DOWN THE COAST FROM LONDON TO VISIT THE ARCADES...



BUT AS I GOT OLDER I USED TO GO TO ARCADES IN LONDON...



PINBALL MACHINES WERE MY THING.

WHEN I WAS SEVENTEEN I BOUGHT A '57 CHEVY BEL AIR FROM MY UNCLE'S FRIEND IN A POOR STATE OF REPAIR...

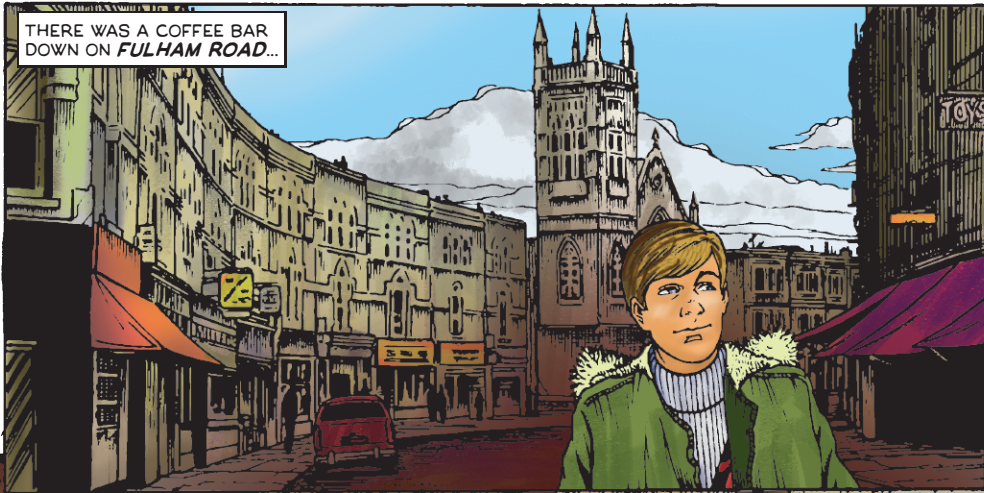


I LOVED THE PLASTIC AND THE STARS AND THE SHAPES, AND I STARTED TO LOOK FOR AMERICAN MACHINES, AND I GUESS THAT THE PINBALLS BECAME PART OF THAT...

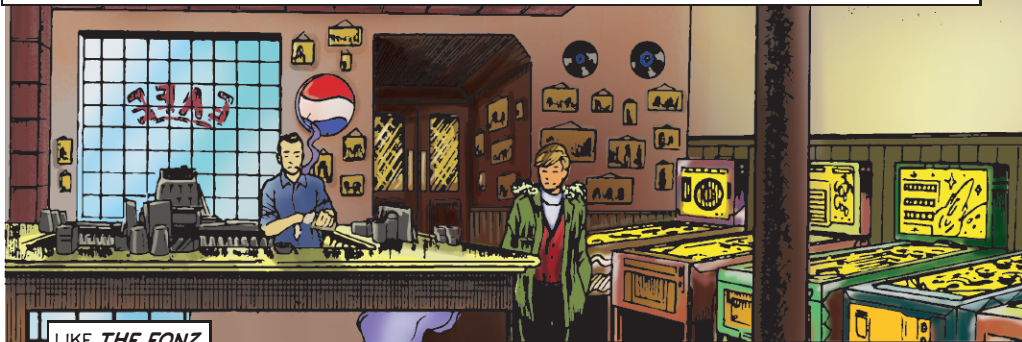
I LIKE THE AMERICANISM OF IT ALL.



THERE WAS A COFFEE BAR
DOWN ON *FULHAM ROAD*...



HE HAD ABOUT *TEN* OF THESE PINBALL MACHINES IN THERE AND HE WAS *VERY MUCH AMERICANISED*...



LIKE *THE FONZ*.



YOU DIDN'T HAVE COFFEE BARS THEN,
YOU HAD *GREASY SPOON CAFES*,
WORKING MENS CLUBS...

COFFEE BARS? PINBALLS?

WHAT SORT OF PERSON ARE
YOU? GOING TO COFFEE BARS...



I DON'T THINK MY DAD GOT IT.



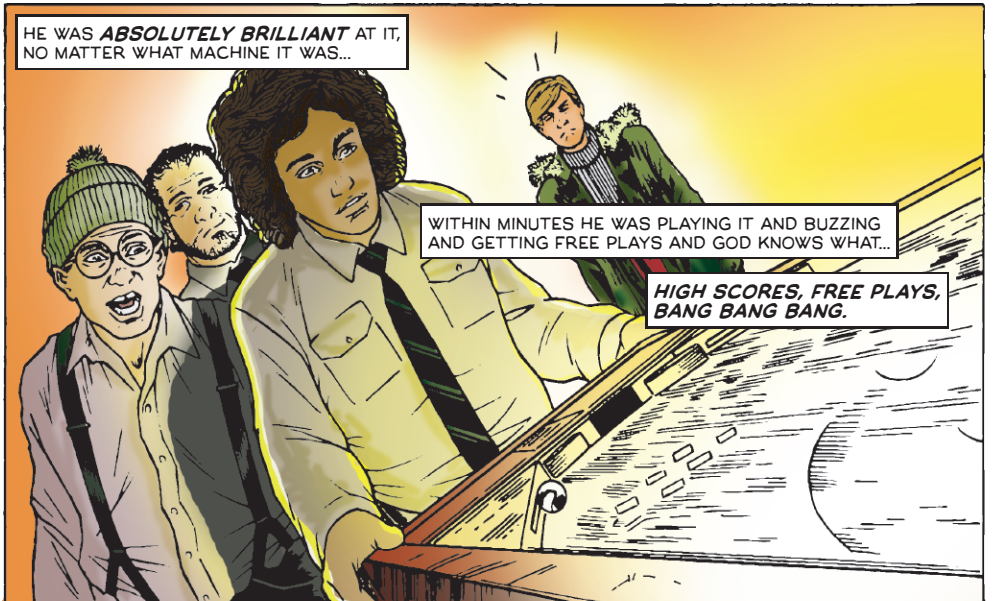
THERE WAS ABOUT SEVEN OF US WHO USED TO KNOCK ABOUT AS TEENAGERS...



WE'D SEARCH OUT CAFES TO FIND OUT IF THERE WERE PINBALLS.



WHEN WE FOUND THEM THOUGH THERE WAS ONE GUY THAT REALLY USED TO PISS ME OFF...

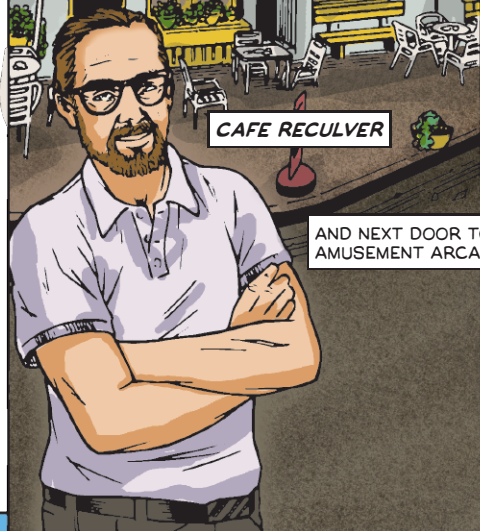


HE WAS **ABSOLUTELY BRILLIANT** AT IT, NO MATTER WHAT MACHINE IT WAS...

WITHIN MINUTES HE WAS PLAYING IT AND BUZZING AND GETTING FREE PLAYS AND GOD KNOWS WHAT...

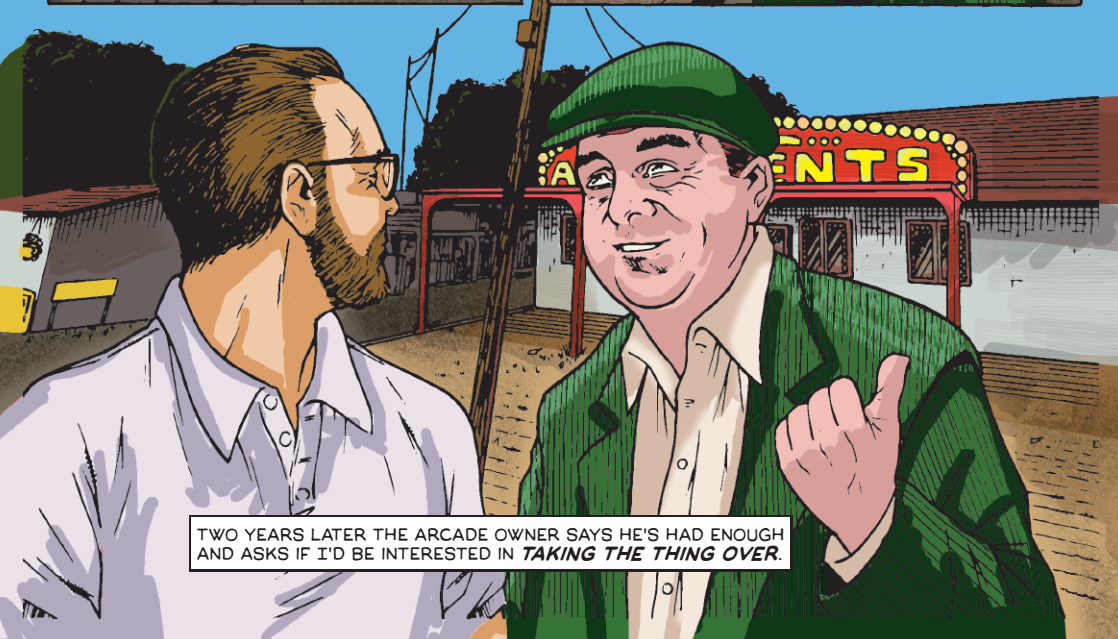
HIGH SCORES, FREE PLAYS, BANG BANG BANG.

BACK IN ABOUT 2000 I BOUGHT THIS CAFE...



CAFE RECLYVER

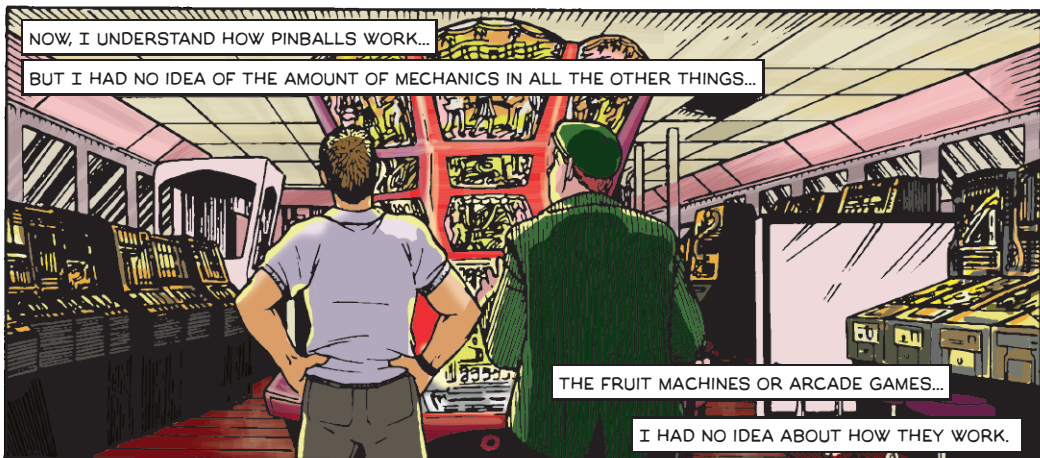
AND NEXT DOOR TO THE CAFE WAS THIS AMUSEMENT ARCADE RUN BY AN *OLD GUY*.



TWO YEARS LATER THE ARCADE OWNER SAYS HE'S HAD ENOUGH AND ASKS IF I'D BE INTERESTED IN *TAKING THE THING OVER*.

NOW, I UNDERSTAND HOW PINBALLS WORK...

BUT I HAD NO IDEA OF THE AMOUNT OF MECHANICS IN ALL THE OTHER THINGS...

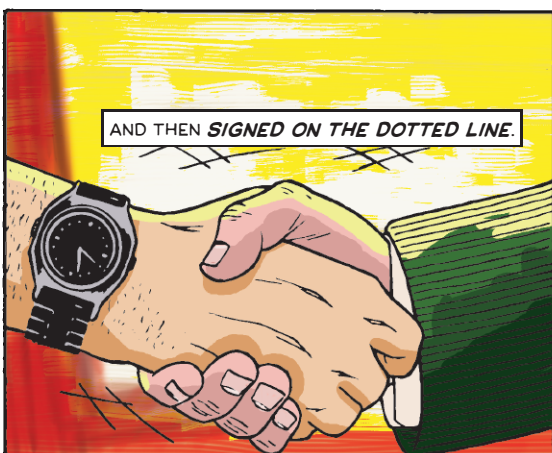


THE FRUIT MACHINES OR ARCADE GAMES...

I HAD NO IDEA ABOUT HOW THEY WORK.



SO I GAVE IT **A DAYS** THOUGHT...



AND THEN **SIGNED ON THE DOTTED LINE.**



TWO DAYS LATER HE BRINGS ME INTO THE ARCADE, GIVES ME THE **BIGGEST BUNCH OF KEYS** YOU EVER SEEN, AND **WALKS AWAY.**

SO I'M NOW IN CHARGE OF LOADS OF MACHINES...

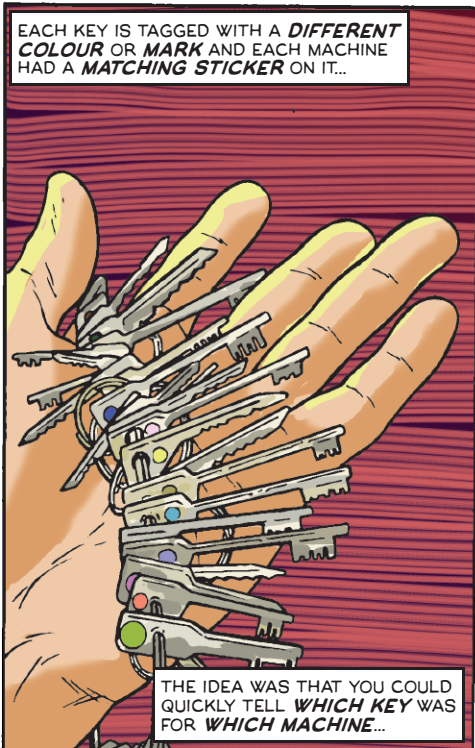
THERE WERE **FIFTY OR SIXTY MACHINES** IN HERE AND ANOTHER TEN OR TWENTY BEING REPAIRED IN THE BACK.



AND I'VE GOT THIS **BIG BUNCH OF KEYS**...



EACH KEY IS TAGGED WITH A **DIFFERENT COLOUR** OR **MARK** AND EACH MACHINE HAD A **MATCHING STICKER** ON IT...



THE IDEA WAS THAT YOU COULD QUICKLY TELL **WHICH KEY** WAS FOR **WHICH MACHINE**...

BUT IN ALL THE CONFUSION I FORGOT TO TELL HIM I WAS **COLOUR BLIND**.

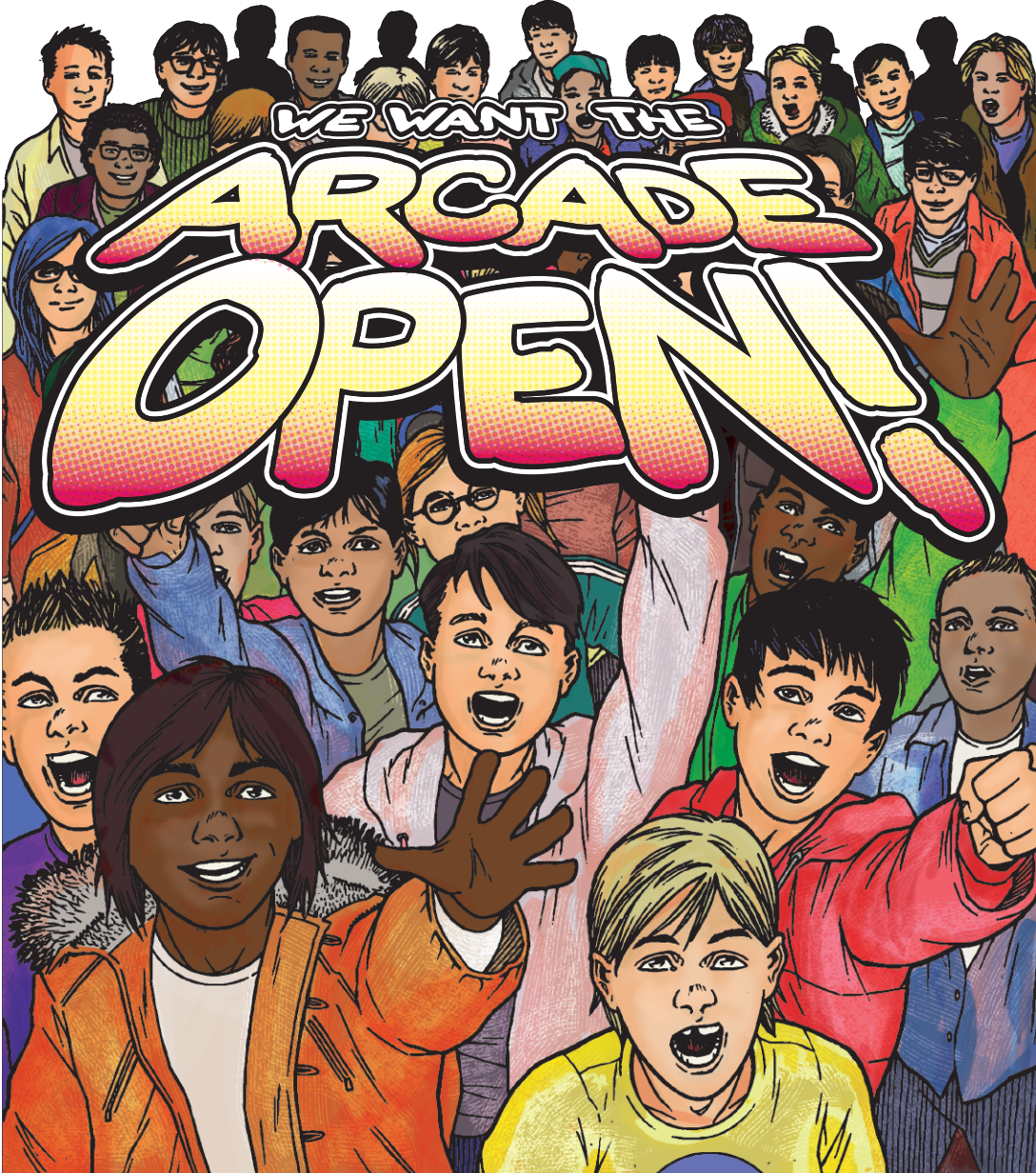


SO THAT WAS IT, GREAT. IT JUST DIDN'T SINK IN. I'M NORMALLY QUITE QUICK AT THINGS, BUT THIS TIME **IT JUST DIDN'T SINK IN**...



SO YEAH, THE FOLLOWING DAY IT WAS **MY TURN** TO OPEN **MY ARCADE...**

I DECIDED TO OPEN AT TWELVE O'CLOCK AND WHEN I DID THERE WAS **A GANG** OF ABOUT **FORTY KIDS** WAITING OUTSIDE. THEY WERE **SCREAMING AND SHOUTING...**



WE WANT THE
ARCADE
OPEN!

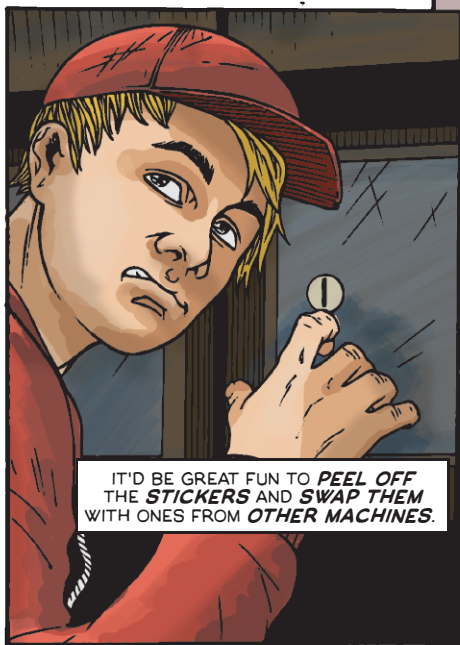
SO WHEN I HAD MY FIRST MACHINE MALFUNCTION AND REALISED THE KEYS WERE CODED I WAS...

IN TROUBLE...



THANKFULLY MY WIFE LISA CAME TO THE RESCUE...

BUT ONCE THE KIDS *FOUND OUT* THEY THOUGHT...



IT'D BE GREAT FUN TO *PEEL OFF* THE *STICKERS* AND *SWAP THEM* WITH ONES FROM *OTHER MACHINES*.



SO THERE I AM, I'VE GOT A GUY *SCREAMING* 'COS HIS MONEY WON'T COME OUT, I'M TRYING TO GET THE KEY IN AND NOW SAYING TO LISA...

YOU'VE PUT THE WRONG KEY ON THE WRONG FOB!

BY THIS TIME, THE GANG HAD GROWN, WE USED TO CALL 'EM **THE RECULVER POSSE**

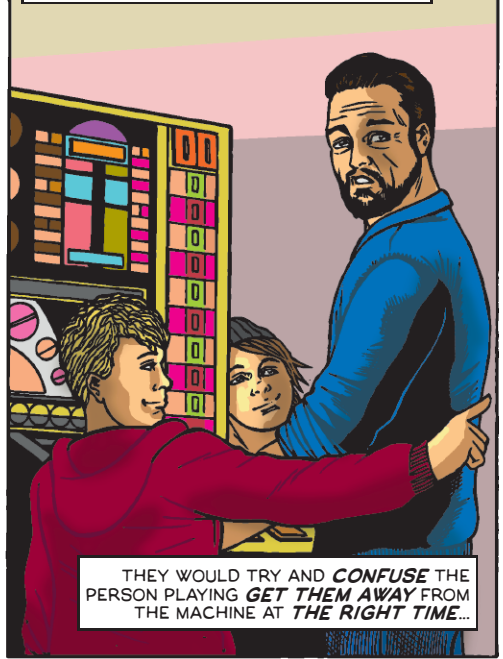


THE GANG HAD GROWN BECAUSE THEY KNEW I WAS **VULNERABLE!**

WE HAD THE KIDS FROM THE LOCAL CARAVAN SITE **AND OTHERS** FROM THE LOCAL TOWNS...

I PUT SOME KIDS RIDES AND MACHINES OUTSIDE, AND I WATCHED THE POSSE **FOLLOW PEOPLE...**

THEY WERE SUCH A **CLEVER** LITTLE GANG,



THEY WOULD TRY AND **CONFUSE** THE PERSON PLAYING **GET THEM AWAY** FROM THE MACHINE AT **THE RIGHT TIME...**



AND THEN THEY'D, PUT A TEN PENCE IN, AND **WALLOP**, THEY'D DROP THE **BIG WIN**.

...AND SIX MONTHS IN I WAS **LOSING MONEY HAND OVER FIST.**



I DIDN'T KNOW BEFORE BUT EACH MACHINE HAS THESE LITTLE 'TELLS' WHEN THEY'RE READY TO PAY OUT

...A **FLASH** OR A **BLEEP** OR SOME OTHER SEQUENCE...



AND THE POSSE HAD LEARNED THESE OVER THE YEARS, SPENDING SO MUCH TIME IN HERE.



MUMS AND DADS USED TO LEAVE THEIR CHILDREN IN THE ARCADE, AND SAY...

WE'RE JUST GOING FOR A PINT, I'VE GIVEN HIM A FIVER, SEE YOU LATER!

AT HALF PAST TWO IN THE AFTERNOON...



AND THEY'D BE THERE UNTIL TEN, ELEVEN O'CLOCK AT NIGHT.



...AND ALL OF A SUDDEN I HAD **THIRTY KIDS** TO LOOK AFTER AS WELL AS THE ARCADE.



AND THESE KIDS WERE AMAZING,
THEY **KNEW ALL THE MACHINES.**

THEY KNEW HOW TO PLAY THE PINBALLS
TO GET THE MAXIMUM **FREE PLAYS.**



AND THEY'D WATCHED PEOPLE THAT MIGHT
HAVE LEFT MACHINES **CLOSE TO PAYOUT**

...WHERE THEY
COULD GO,
**BANG, BANG,
BANG, BANG.**



AND DO IT.

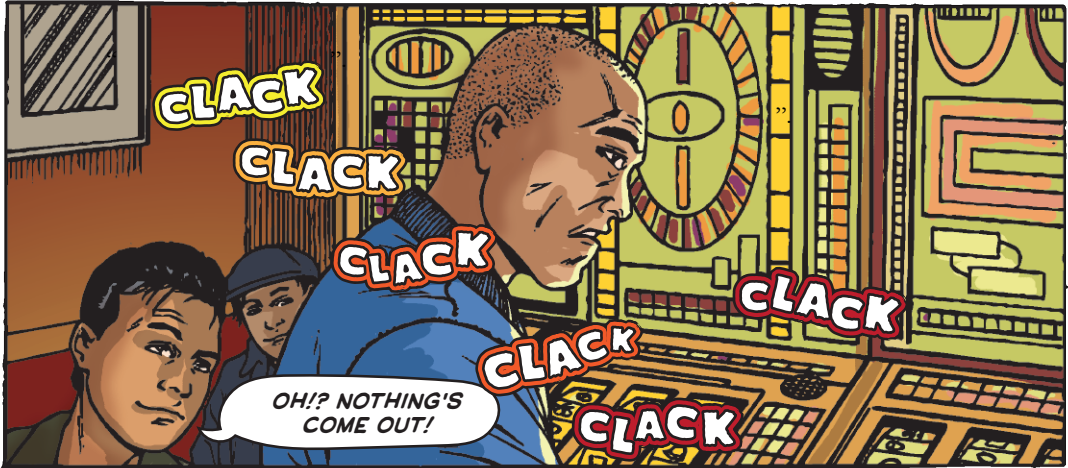
EVERY SINGLE MACHINE WAS
FAIR GAME TO THEM.

THEY'D WALK UP TO PEOPLE PLAYING A PARTICULAR MACHINE FOR A LONG TIME THAT WAS GOING TO **PAYOUT SOON**,

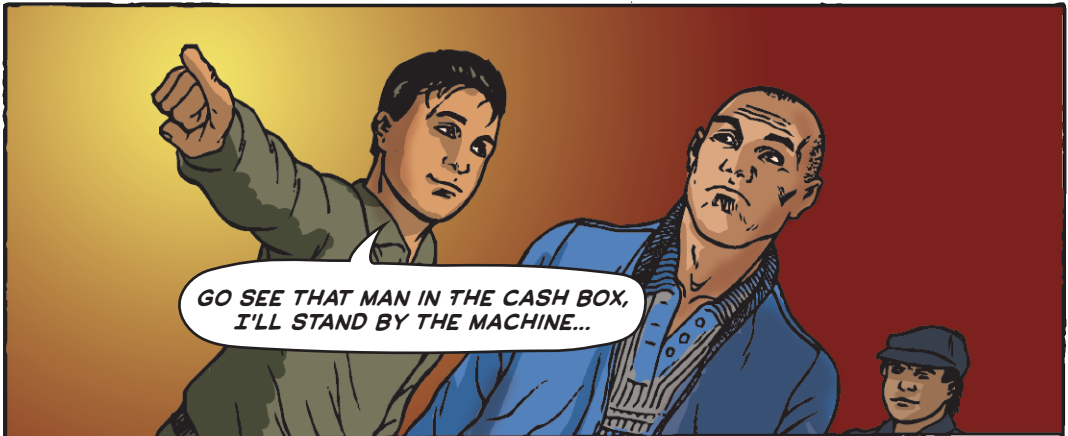
AND **DELIBERATELY** DISTRACT THEM...



...AND BANG A CLOTH **UP INSIDE THE PAYOUT CHUTE**. AS SOON AS IT WENT TO PAY OUT IT GOES,



OH!?! NOTHING'S COME OUT!



GO SEE THAT MAN IN THE CASH BOX, I'LL STAND BY THE MACHINE...



THE MINUTE THEY WALKED AWAY THEY'D
PUT THEIR HAND UP, **REMOVE THE RAG.**

**COLLECT THE MONEY,
AND WALK AWAY.**

NOT ONLY DID THEY **ROB ME.**

THEY WENT AFTER PEOPLE THAT CAME IN THE ARCADE
THAT THEY **DIDN'T RECOGNISE** AND **DUPED THEM.**



AND THEY DID **OTHER THINGS...**

THEY'D JAM STUFF IN THE SLOTS
SO I'D **OPEN THE MACHINE.**



AND THEN GANG ROUND ME,
DISTRACTING ME FROM
WHAT ELSE WAS GOING ON.

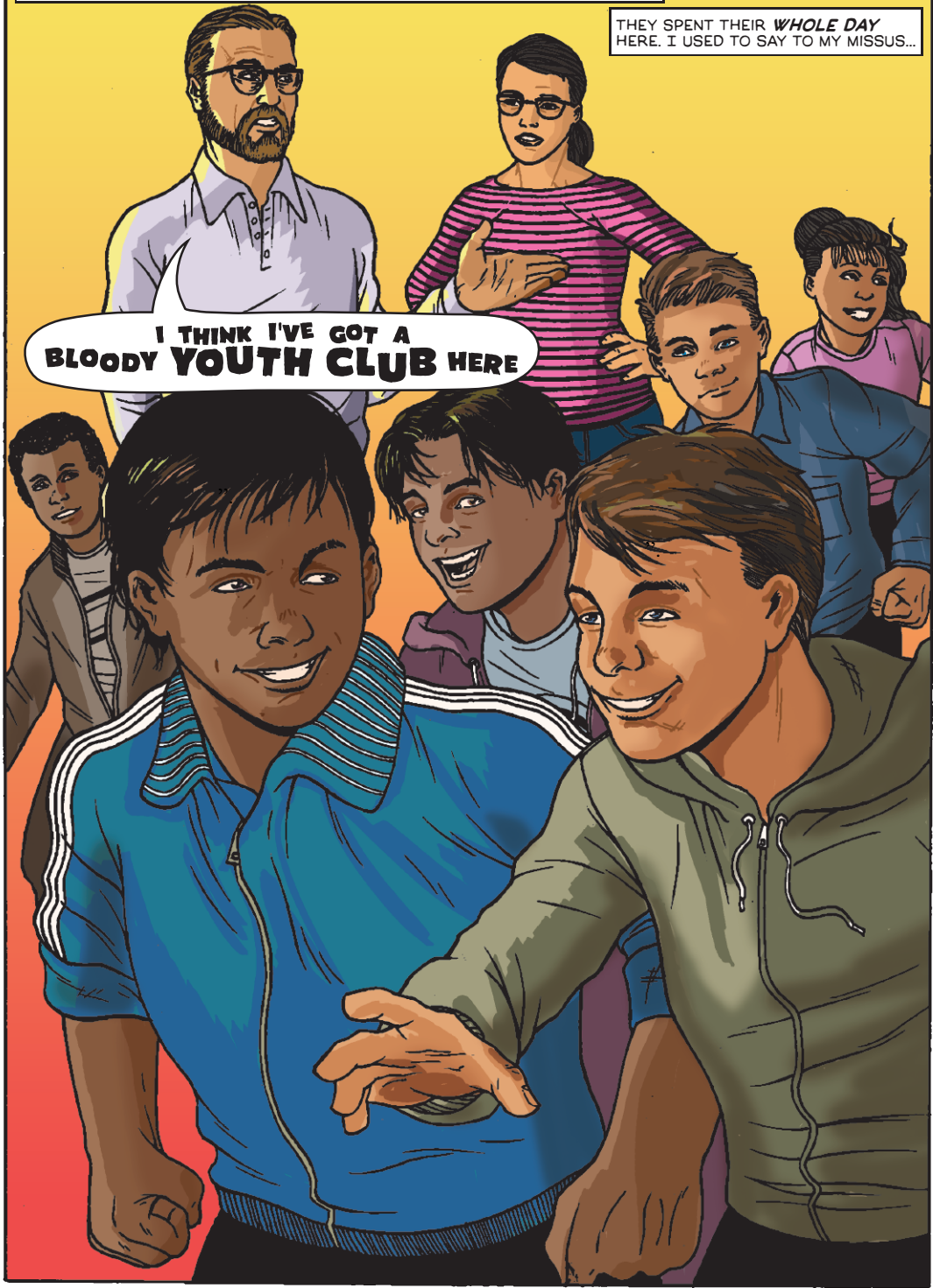


I MADE **MASSIVE** LOSSES.

I KNOW THAT THE GUYS THAT CAME HERE **ABSOLUTELY LOVED** THE ARCADE.

THEY SPENT THEIR **WHOLE DAY** HERE. I USED TO SAY TO MY MISSUS...

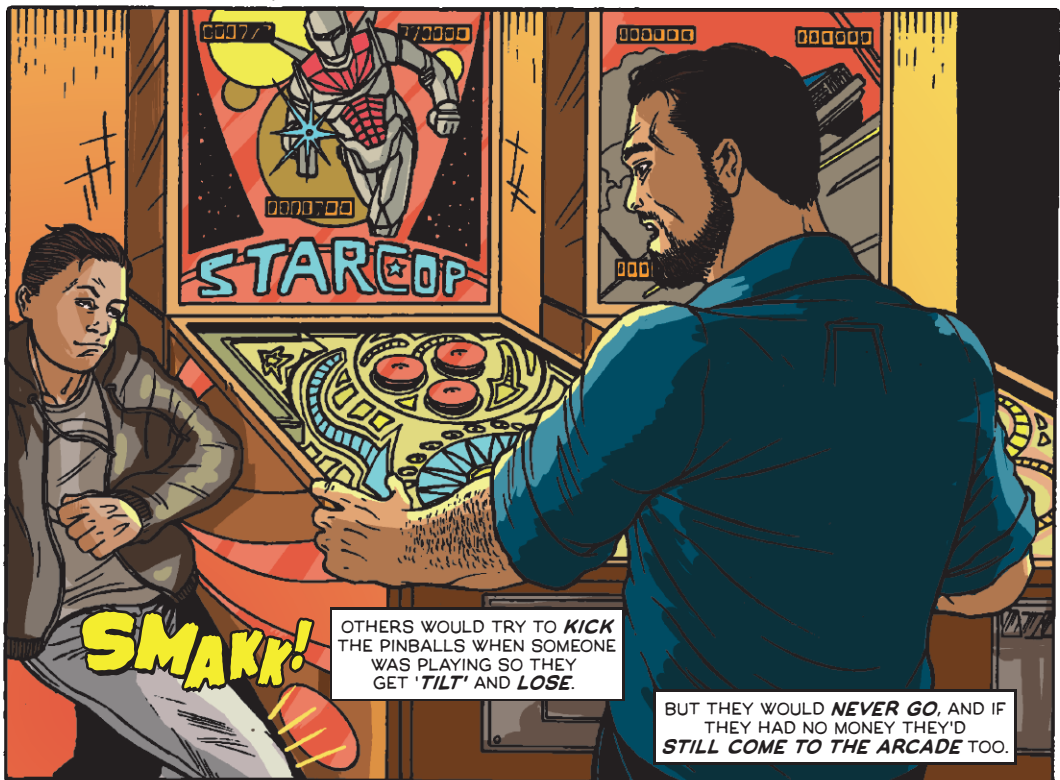
I THINK I'VE GOT A **BLOODY YOUTH CLUB** HERE





THEY'D GO INTO THAT ARCADE ALL DAY LONG, WALKING **ROUND AND ROUND**. SOME WOULD TRY TO **NUDGE THE PUSHERS** TO SEE IF ANY **MONEY WOULD DROP**...

BUMP



SMACK!

OTHERS WOULD TRY TO **KICK** THE PINBALLS WHEN SOMEONE WAS PLAYING SO THEY GET '**TILT**' AND **LOSE**.

BUT THEY WOULD **NEVER GO**, AND IF THEY HAD NO MONEY THEY'D **STILL COME TO THE ARCADE TOO**.

BUT YOU'VE GOT TO REMEMBER...
THERE WAS **NOTHING** FOR THE YOUNG PEOPLE TO DO
AND NOWHERE FOR THEM TO GO **APART FROM THE ARCADE.**

THEY'RE **NOT OLD ENOUGH** TO GO
TO THE **PUB**, SO THEY COME HERE.

AMUSEMENTS

AS NEW FAMILIES CAME TO THE PARK,
I SAW DIFFERENT KIDS JOIN THE POSSE
AND **THE POSSE GOT BIGGER.**

BY THE TIME I DECIDED
TO **SHUT THE ARCADE**
THE POSSE MUST HAVE
BEEN ALMOST **ONE
HUNDRED STRONG.**



TO BE CONTINUED...

JUST SUPERHEROES CONTINUED SPACE LABEL DRAGON'S LAIR CROSSBOW ROBOTRON TRON SEVEN STAR TOP ZAX



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