

DILBERT 2.0

THE DOT-COM BUBBLE

1998-2000





20 Years of Dilbert

Scott Adams

Andrews McMeel
Publishing, LLC
Kansas City

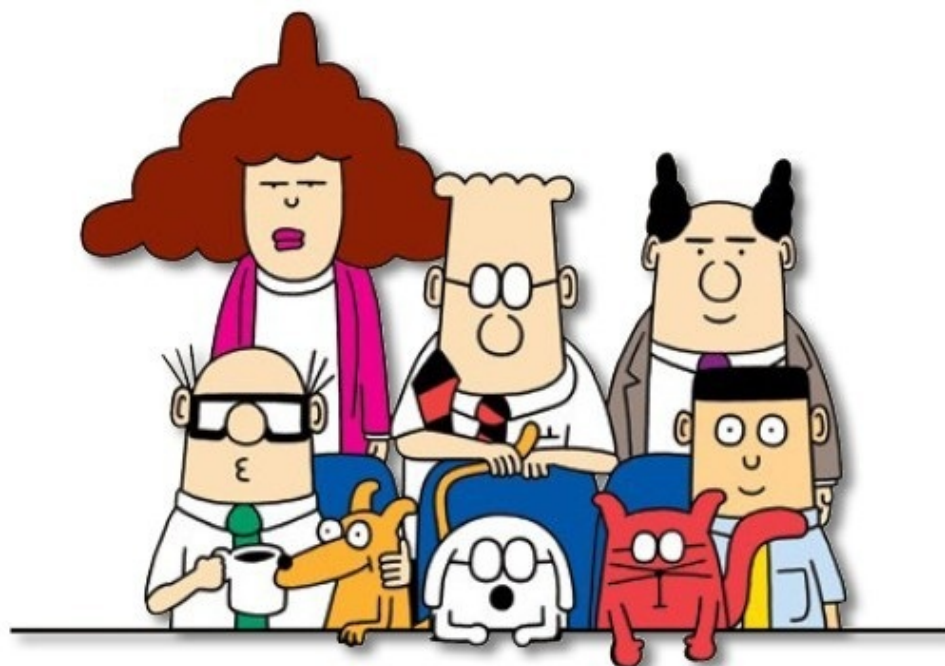
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Introduction

by Scott Adams

Dilbert appears in 2,000 newspapers and is translated into 23 languages in 70 countries. There are over 20 million *Dilbert* books and calendars in print.

When I sat down to organize this twentieth-anniversary book, I wondered how best to tell the tale. I knew I could do it in a variety of ways. But I thought the most interesting way would be to explain the unlikely combination of events that put me, and then *Dilbert*, in the right places at the right times. Let's start at the beginning.

1957—Born

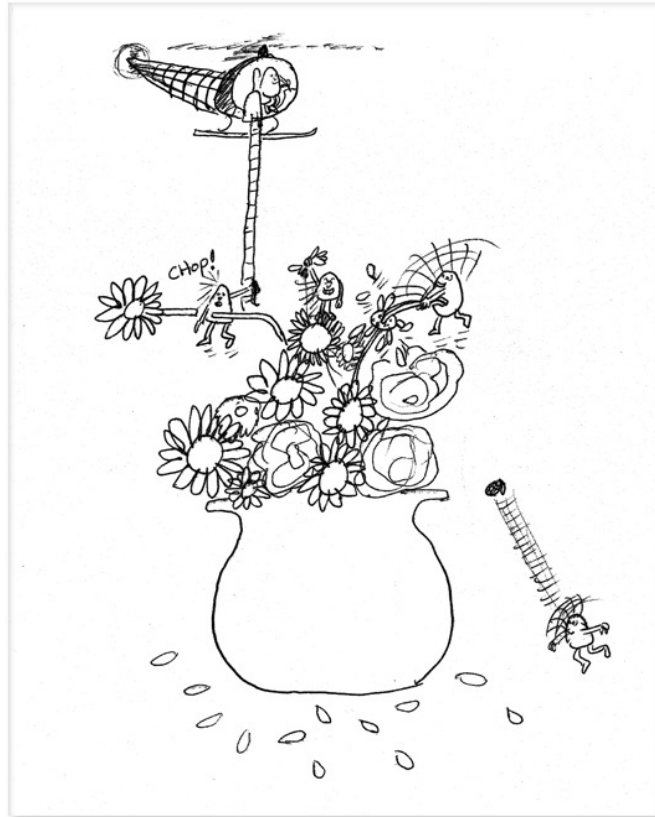
You can never be sure how much of what you become is due to nature versus nurture. My mother was a successful landscape artist in her spare time, so I probably inherited some of her artistic DNA, evidently mutated. I also have my dad's sense of humor and his economical way with words. The building blocks for *Dilbert* were in place early.

I probably got my stubbornness from both sides of the family, which I prefer to call persistence. My parents' work ethic was also baked into me at a young age. I come from a long line of hard workers who believe that having only one full-time job per day is the same as slacking.

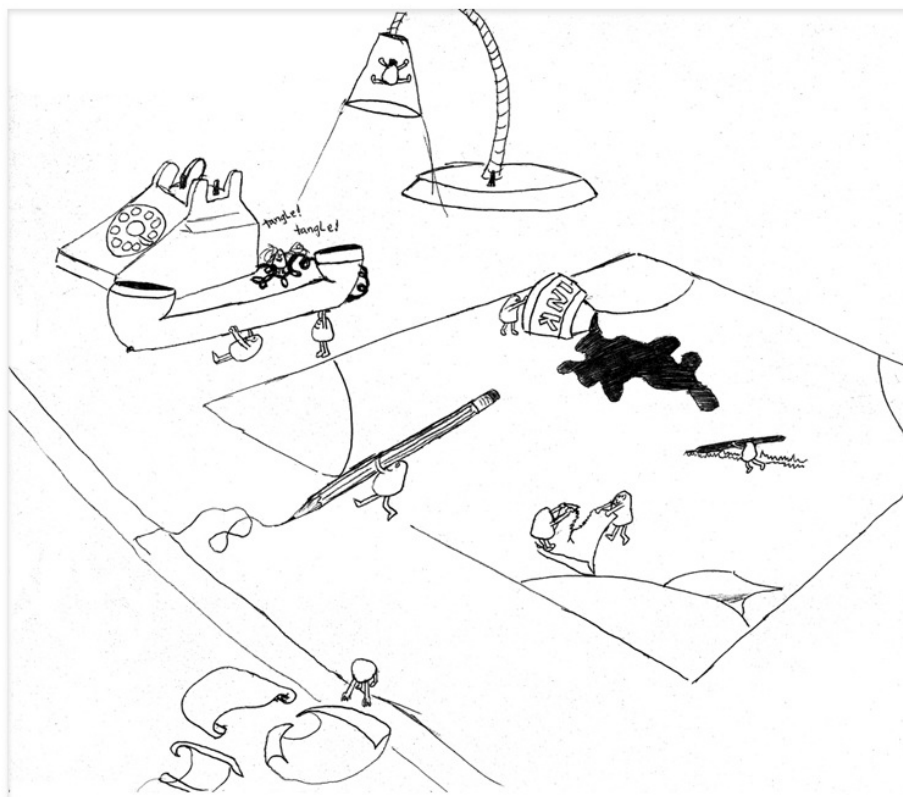
1963—*Peanuts* Books

My uncle owned a farm just up the road. When we visited, I would head straight for his collection of *Peanuts* paperback books. I became obsessed with them, even before I could read or understand them. They had the x-factor. There was just something about them that was special and amazing. I was hooked for life.

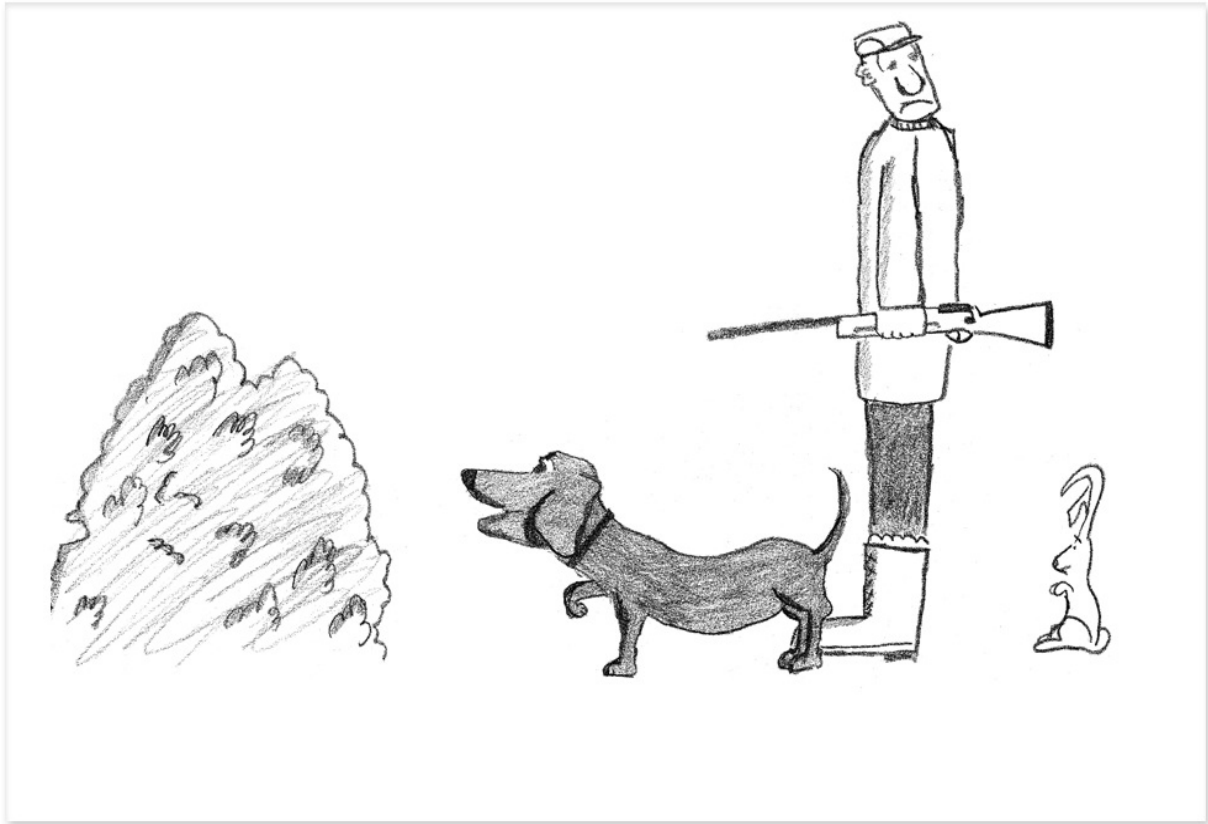
My parents always told me I could grow up to be anything I wanted to be. I decided to grow up to be Charles Schulz. Surely the world had room for two of him. And after all, how hard could it be? You draw pictures, you write some words—it seemed like easy work to me. And from what I heard, the pay was good. I decided to start right in on my new profession.



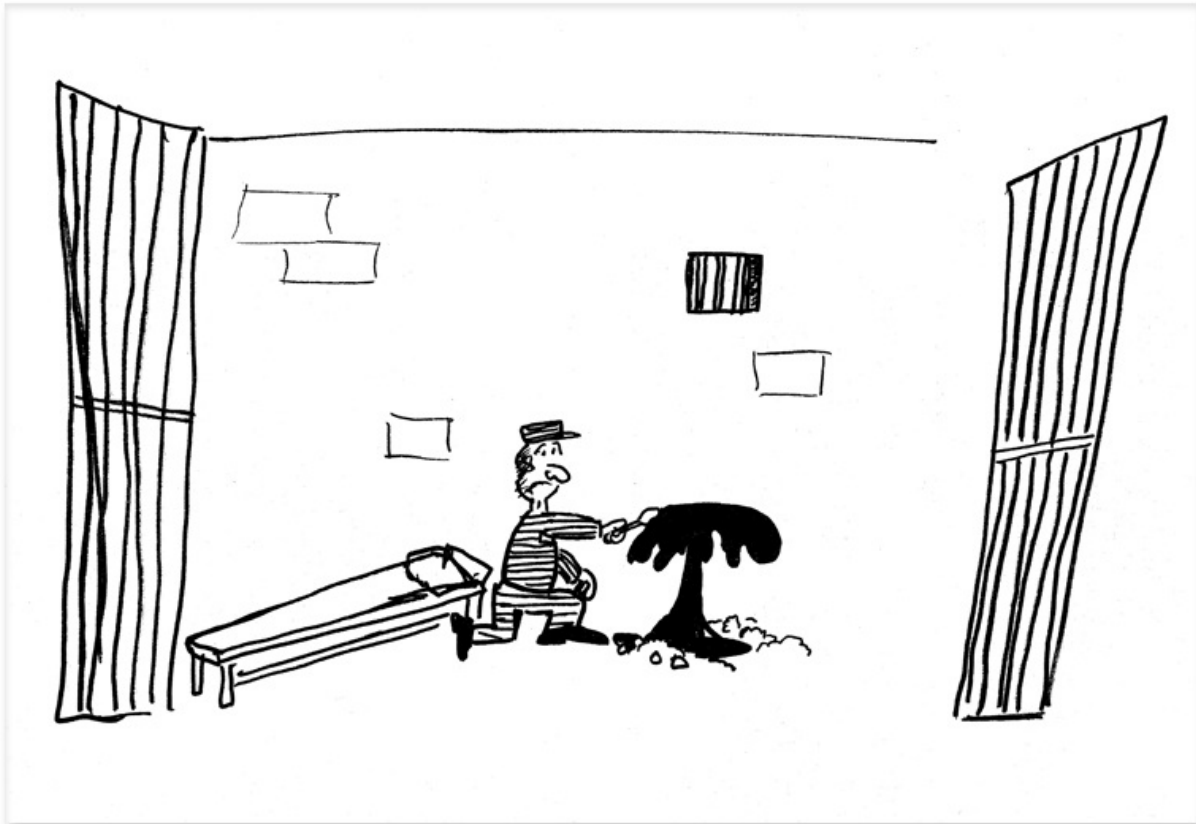
Between the ages of six and nine, I drew a comic featuring creatures I named Little Grabbers, which was the phrase my dad often used to describe children. I imagined my characters as the tiny gremlins who were responsible for all the things that went wrong in the house and had no other explanation. My mother saved my early drawings from that period.



Here, we see the Little Grabbers leaving the phone off the hook, spilling ink, and causing trouble. In the masterpiece on the previous page, the Little Grabbers are accelerating the decomposition of a flower arrangement. Luckily they have their own helicopter for this sort of work.



By about the age of eleven, I was influenced primarily by *MAD* magazine, and by the single-panel comics in other magazines. Drawing single-panel comics didn't look that hard, so I tried making some of my own. In this hilarious work, a hunting dog fails to notice a rabbit.



In this knee-slapper, a prisoner tries to tunnel to freedom with a spoon, and hits oil. It's sort of a good news-bad news situation. I was not yet a master of perspective.

Around this time I acquired a book on cartooning. I spent countless hours with it, often practicing the drawing of human hands, which are especially hard to get right. That's part of the reason *Dilbert* characters have five digits on each hand while most comics characters have only four. Once I learned how to draw hands, I didn't want to squander that ability on four-digit mutants.



I can trace Dogbert's origin back to my own family dog, Lucy, who was mostly beagle. Lucy never once came when called. And she was indifferent to everyone in the family except my mom, who fed her. In the drawing on the left, they are enjoying some quality time. It is no coincidence that later I developed a dog character with floppy ears that disdains humans.

1967 – Cereal Box Contest Winner

One day I noticed a contest on the back of a cereal box: draw a picture of the geyser Old Faithful, and you could win a TV. There were also a number of runners-up prizes, including some cool-looking cameras. I entered the contest, confident I would win some sort of prize. My mother noticed my misplaced optimism and cautioned against getting my hopes up, explaining that thousands of kids would enter the contest, and only a few would win prizes. I remained confident despite the warnings, in a way that only people with no life experience can be.

I won a camera. The camera was made entirely of plastic, but it worked. I was

thrilled. I started to suspect that beating long odds wasn't as hard as it seemed. This became a pattern that repeated itself throughout my life.

1968—The Golden Egg

Our small town held an annual Easter egg contest. Eggs labeled with various monetary amounts were hidden in a large field. The grand prize was the Golden Egg, worth ten dollars, which was big money for an eleven-year-old in those days. I boldly predicted that I would be first among the hordes to find that Golden Egg.

By pure luck, I found myself in the right place at the right time. I walked to a particular spot in the field, on a hunch, looked down, and there it was: the Golden Egg. The local newspaper published a picture of me posing with the Golden Egg. I tasted fame for the first time, and liked it. Again, beating long odds seemed easier than everyone kept saying. It was time to raise my sights, to try something bigger.

1968—Famous Artists Course for Talented Young People

I applied for the Famous Artists Course for Talented Young People. It was a correspondence course for wannabe artists. My mother saved my application in the attic all these years. Here it is, so you can judge how much talent I had (or didn't have) at a young age.

Tell us about yourself

Date Dec. 3, 1968

Name Scott Adams
Street _____ City Windham State N.Y. Zip 12496
Phone No. _____ Age 11

Please answer all the questions below. Your answers will help us greatly in judging your talent and possibilities in the field of art.

1. What school do you attend? Windham Ashland, Jewett, Central School Grade 6
2. How long have you been interested in art? about 4 years
3. Do you study art in school? yes How much time per week? 45 minutes
- Do you take any other art classes? no Where? _____

4. Check the types of art which interest you most:

Still life ☐ Story illustration ☐ Landscapes ☐ Magazine covers ☐ Greeting cards ☐ Flowers ☐
Design and layout ☐ Political cartoons ☐ Animal drawing ☒ Sports cartoons ☒ Advertising illustration ☐
Human figures ☐ Fashion drawing ☐ Marine subjects ☐ Calendar art ☐ Portraits ☐ Posters ☐
Advertising cartoons ☐ Cartoon strips ☒ Magazine cartoons ☐ Television art ☐

Others _____

5. Check what mediums interest you most: Oil painting ☐ Watercolor ☐ Pen and ink ☒ Pencil ☒

Others _____

6. Who are your favorite artists? Al Capp,

7. Are you willing and able to study at home and work by yourself? yes

8. Can you accept sincere criticism of your work? yes

9. Why would you like to become an artist? It could be a good job when I get older. I like to draw.

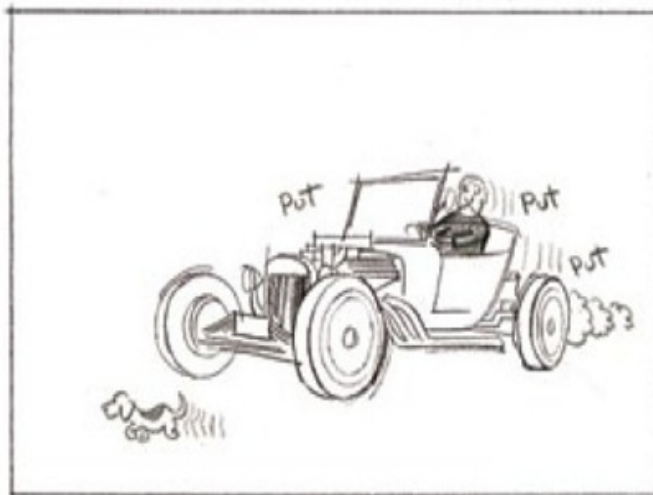
3 Your ability to observe

Complete the outline sketch alongside the original, using a soft pencil. Before you begin, study the pencil lines and shading in the original drawing. Notice which areas are darkest and which are lightest. Also note the character of the pencil work.



B-

Grade _____



4 Your imagination in developing a picture idea

Complete this sketch by adding whatever figures or objects you think will help to make an interesting picture. Draw them with lines similar to those in the hot rod. You might show some boys repairing the car, or pushing it home after a breakdown. You could show Grandma being given her first exciting ride in a hot rod. Some boys and girls going on a surfing date is another idea. Let your imagination have free rein.

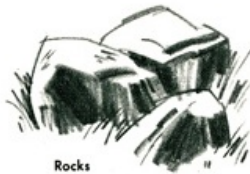
B

Grade _____

Good picture details, Scott!



Grass



Rocks



Tree



Foliage

5 Drawing textures and surfaces

Complete this landscape picture by adding textures. Below the picture we show you the textures of some of the objects in it — grass, rocks, the tree trunk, and foliage — and how to draw them to complete an effect of realism. You may draw the textures of other things, such as the rutted and pebbly surface of the road. A soft pencil can give you all the textural effects you desire. Don't make all of your textures equally light or dark. For example, a plain white sky would help to bring out the dark rough bark of the tree.

retain the sense of form underneath his fur, as well as his gay, animated spirit.

Grade B-

Grade _____



Nice form, tone, and feeling of animation!

6 Animal drawing — animation

Complete the outlined drawing of the dog by giving him his full coat of hair, as in the smaller drawing. Use a soft pencil for shading. Try to draw the puppy in full tone and retain the sense of form underneath his fur, as well as his gay, animated spirit.

B+

Grade _____



NORMAL



ANGRY



SURPRISED



AMUSED

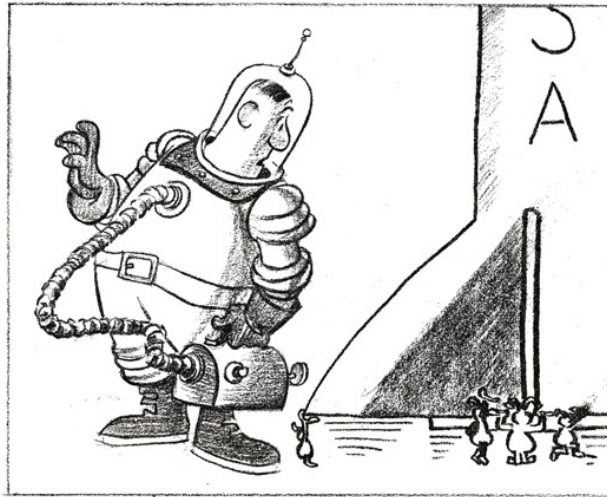
7 Your ability to create expression

Above you see four cartoon faces. The first one is an example of a normal expression. Draw on the other three faces your own version of the expression printed under each one. Don't try to draw detailed features. The idea is to create expressions with a few simple lines, as in the example.

A-

Grade _____

Excellent expressions!



8 Your humor and imagination

Complete the cartoon by adding whatever other features or objects you think are necessary to create a funny situation. Let your imagination have free rein. Don't worry about imitating the style of the original drawing. This is not a test of drawing, but of your imagination and sense of humor.

Very well drawn!
B+

Grade _____



9 Creating characters

Above you see a number of different characters in various poses and actions. In the space below, create three or four of your own characters. Feel free to exaggerate the features of the head, the body, or the action to make your drawings interesting or funny.



10 Your creative talent

Make an original drawing or picture of any subject you wish in the space above — *not on a separate sheet of paper*. It can be a figure, landscape, a still life, an animal, a cartoon, or anything else you choose. Use pencil or pen and ink or watercolor. Your drawing will indicate your imagination and originality. Don't be concerned if your drawing doesn't have a "professional look" — just have fun doing it.

Grade_____ **B**

Mail your talent test

without delay to: Famous Artists School
Westport, Connecticut 06880

Your Overall
Talent Test Grade is

Very Good

On the basis of the evidence submitted
in this talent test, the Instruction Staff
wishes to advise you that you ~~do not~~
qualify for admission as a student to the
Famous Artists School.

By... **N. Vincelle He**

From the office of the Director

FAMOUS ARTISTS SCHOOL

Westport, Connecticut 06880



Thank you for completing this Talent Test and sending it to us for our comments. For a person of your age you did well with it. However, the Famous Artists Course for Talented Young People is for students older than you.

All of our courses in the Famous Artists Schools are carefully designed so that they can be clearly understood by the students who enroll in them. We do not feel that it would be fair to you to ask you to study a course which has been created for older boys and girls. We want everyone who takes our course to learn as much as he (or she) can from it. For this reason you should wait until you are twelve years old before you enroll.

In the meantime, you can improve your ability by drawing and painting whenever you have the opportunity.

Alex Domonkos

AD:cg

I got an okay grade on the application, but I was rejected by the school because I was too young. Above is the rejection letter that broke the news to me. It was the day I learned you can't always find the Golden Egg just because you want to.

I soon abandoned my dreams of becoming a famous cartoonist. And I started to learn that unlikely things are indeed unlikely. I adjusted my goals to something that seemed more attainable. I looked around my town and learned that exactly two people had high incomes. One was the only doctor in town, and the other was the only lawyer. I didn't like touching other people's guts and tendons and whatnot, so I set my sights on a career in law.

1975—Graduated High School

There were only about forty people in my graduating class, and I had known most of them since kindergarten. My world was small, so it wasn't hard to be in the top ten at any particular activity. The guy who jumped center on our basketball team my senior year was 5'6". The small-town experience made success seem attainable. If you wanted to be the best in town at one thing or another, your chances were excellent because it was unlikely anyone else was even trying hard.

I was one of the top students in my tiny class, but opted to not take chemistry or physics in high school for reasons that make a fascinating story, but don't fit with this one. Skipping upper-level science classes was an unwise move for someone planning to go to college. But in a strange twist of fate, it turned out to be the luckiest unwise move of my life.

The only other course offered during the period when chemistry was taught was typing. At the time, typing was thought to be a skill reserved for future secretaries. The typing class was a lot easier than chemistry, and I got an A. The people who took chemistry didn't do so well. No one got an A in that class. That tiny difference allowed me to graduate as class valedictorian. I won a few scholarships and applied for colleges that weren't too far from home.

I don't recommend that anyone follow my example. But it needs to be said that as an adult, I rarely use chemistry. However, I have authored several books, while simultaneously writing and typing at about ninety words per minute. Sometimes doing the wrong thing works out.

1975—Hartwick College, Oneonta, New York

In college, I majored in economics, partly because someone told me it was good preparation for law school, and partly because I wanted to understand how money worked. It seemed as though it would come in handy no matter what I did. And it did.

I took one art class in college, primarily because I thought it would be easy. It wasn't. I got the lowest grade in the class, and deserved it. The other students were talented artists who could draw a bunch of fruit on a table so well it made you hungry. My drawings looked like something you see on prison walls.

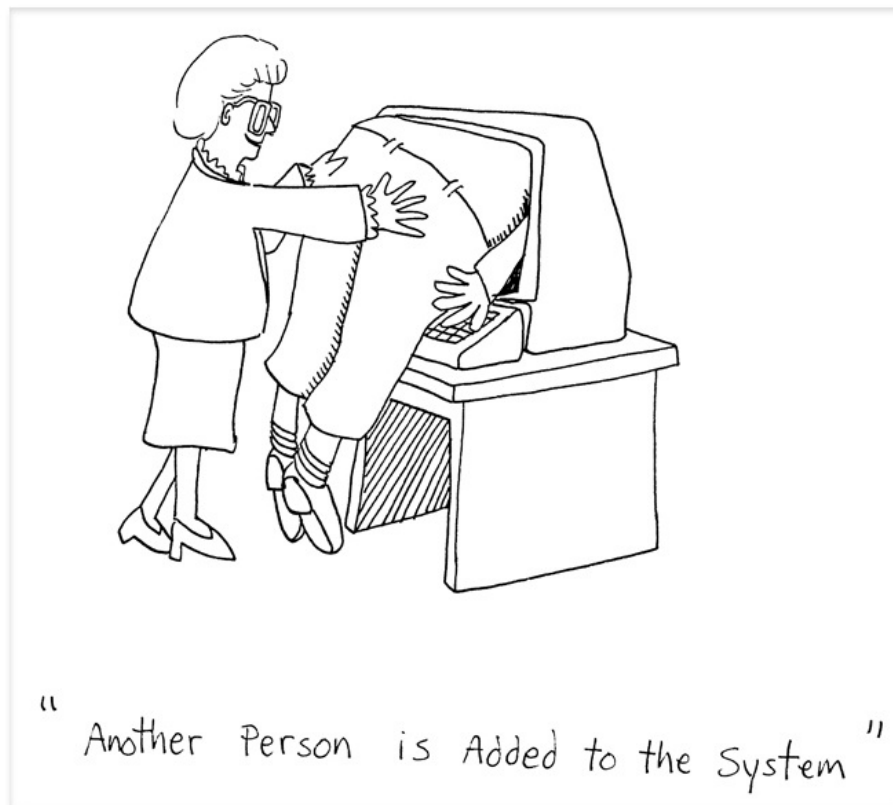
In my senior year of college, I went to a job interview in Syracuse for an internship at an accounting firm. The interviewer dismissed me without talking to me because I wasn't wearing a suit. I was so naïve that I thought my casual clothes were just fine for an interview at an accounting firm.

On my way home, as I was driving along a new highway with virtually no other traffic, the engine on my beat-up Datsun 510 quit. It was February, at night, and snowing, and I hadn't brought a coat because I figured I would be sprinting from car to building and back. I managed to pack a whole lot of stupid into that one day.

There was no civilization in sight, no streetlights, and no traffic. I knew I couldn't go back the way I came, because I would freeze to death, literally, before reaching civilization. I hoped there were homes along the road ahead of me, near enough for me to reach on foot. It was my best shot, so I decided to run in that direction.

As I ran, my extremities started freezing. My feet felt like blocks of ice pounding the frozen road. I thought I had a good chance of dying that night. I ran as far as I could, then stopped, froze some more, and ran again. As I approached exhaustion, I promised myself that if I lived, I would sell my car for a one-way ticket to California and never see another (expletive deleted) snowflake as long as I lived.

After an hour of running and freezing, headlights appeared over the horizon. I flagged down a station wagon. A shoe salesman saved me and gave me a ride back to campus. Upon graduation, a few months later, I traded my car to my sister for a one-way ticket to California. I haven't been in snow since.



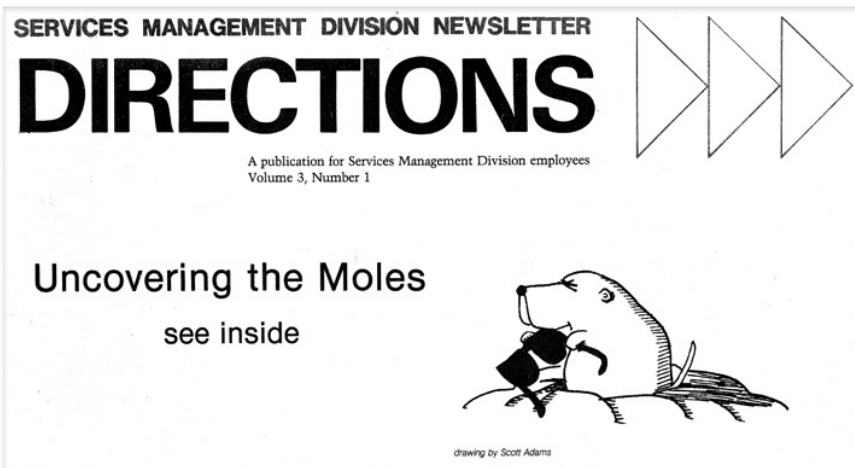
1979—My First Job

In California, I stayed with my brother and looked for a job where my degree in economics had some value. Crocker National Bank, in San Francisco, hired me as a teller. I was robbed twice at gunpoint in a four-month period, and realized that management was a safer place to be.

I got into a management training program after I sent some suggestions for improving profits to the senior vice president. The suggestions were naïve and impractical, as he informed me with a grin, but he liked the way I made my case. I had included some wry humor in the write-up, and my sense of humor reminded him of someone he loved: himself. He took a chance and put me in the management training program.



Over the course of the next six years, I was a management trainee, computer programmer, budget analyst, commercial lender, product manager, and finally a supervisor of a small group of analysts who negotiated contracts, wrote business cases, and tracked budgets. I can say with all appropriate modesty that I was incompetent at all of those jobs, primarily because I never stayed in one position long enough to develop any skill. At least that's my excuse.

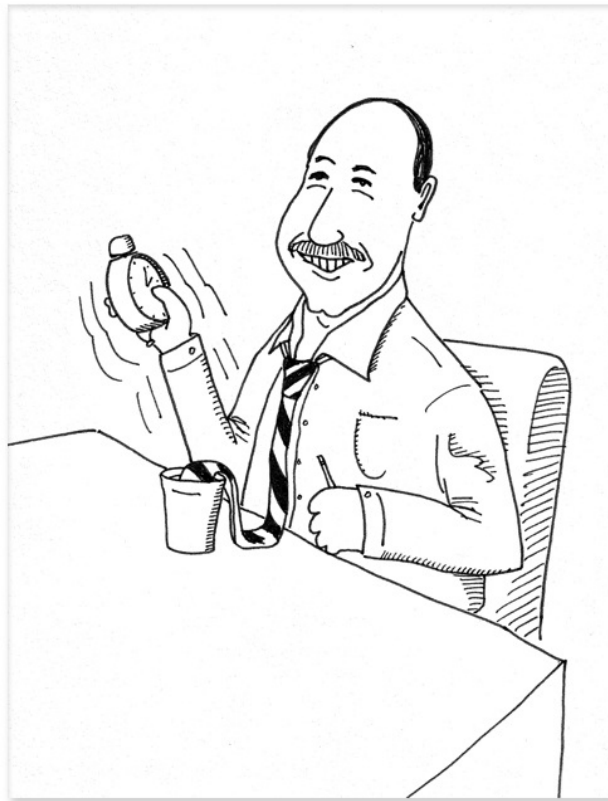


Several of my jobs at the bank involved making presentations to upper management. I seasoned my presentations with comics to keep the audience awake, and to have a business reason for sitting around drawing comics at work. My comics weren't funny in the ha-ha sense, but they reminded people of their jobs, and that seemed to be enough. I believe my first published comic was the mole I drew for the cover of the company newsletter.



At about this time, I started drawing two characters more than others. One was a guy with glasses who would later become Dilbert. The other was a dog that was loosely based on my old family dog, Lucy.

In my early drawings, the character who would become Dilbert had no necktie. But other characters did. I came across the old drawing below from pre-Dilbert days showing perhaps the first upturned necktie I ever drew. I have no memory of why or when I first drew Dilbert with the upturned tie, but the next comic foreshadowed it.



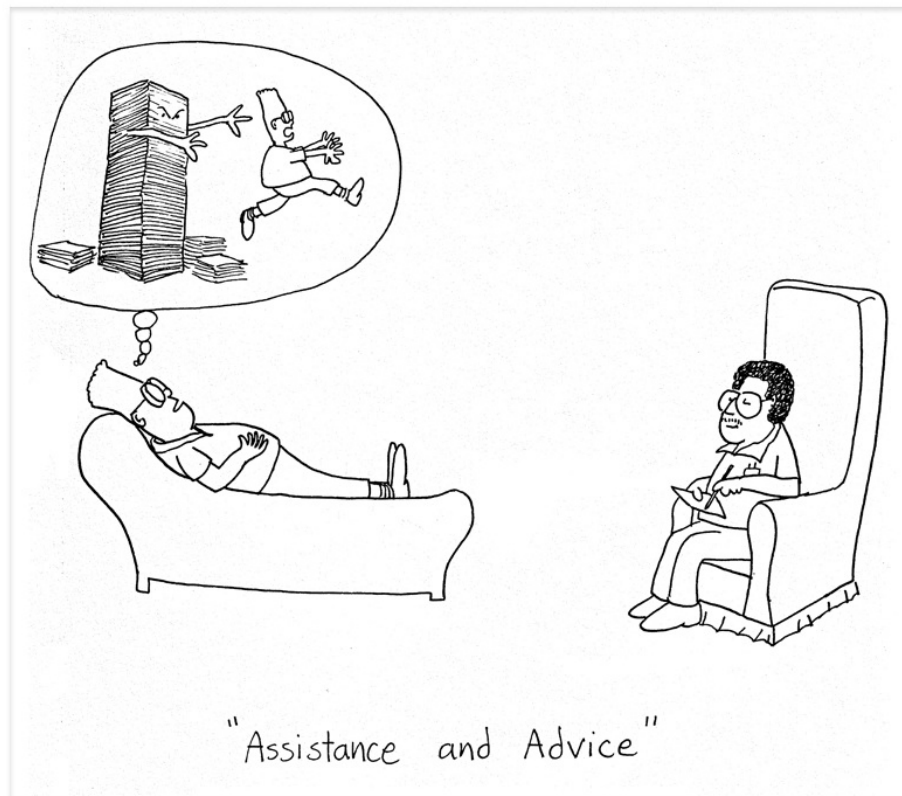
1983—MBA

I had ambitions to reach upper management at the bank, but to do that I needed an MBA from a good school. I set my sights on the University of California at Berkeley, which had an evening program the bank was willing to pay for. As it turns out, “free” was the exact price I could afford, so that plan suited me.

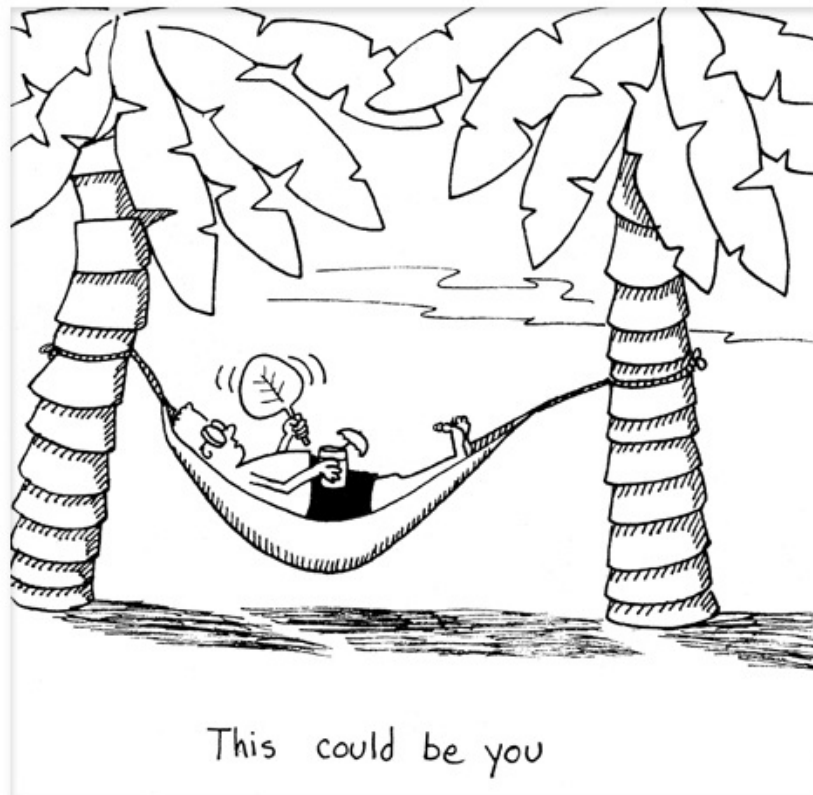
The only problem was that a few years earlier I had taken the required aptitude test for a master’s degree in business (called the GMAT), and only scored in the top seventy-seventh percentile. That was nowhere near the level I needed to get into Berkeley. I needed to be somewhere above the ninetieth percentile, I figured.

At about this time I was experimenting with something called affirmations. The idea (admittedly whacko sounding) is that you can manifest your destiny by writing down your specific goals fifteen times a day. I had tried it a few times that year, on some personal goals, and was shocked at the coincidences

that seemed to pile together to make the goal happen.



I should digress at this point to note that I am among the most skeptical people you could ever meet. I don't believe in ghosts, magic, ESP, Santa Claus, UFOs, horoscopes, or religion. My best guess as to why affirmations *appear* to work is that they help you focus, and perhaps that makes you think sharper, or try harder, or notice opportunities more easily than you would have otherwise.



Or perhaps selective memory is at work, and I somehow forgot the times that affirmations *didn't* work. I was alert to the illusion of selective memory while trying affirmations, but I still can't rule it out. I want to be perfectly clear that I am not claiming affirmations have magic powers, or even that they work. I'm simply describing my story. And part of that story involves experimenting with writing my goals every day.

I ended up making a foolish bet with a co-worker who was taking a class to prepare for the GMAT in a few months. She had scored somewhere in the upper eightieth percentile the first time she tried and hoped to improve on that. I made a bet with her that I could beat her next (presumably improved) score by doing nothing but study the practice books and take the test again. This was an unwise bet, because the experts agreed that practice wasn't likely to improve my score as much as I needed mine to improve.

So I picked a specific goal that seemed high enough—the ninety-fourth percentile—and I did my affirmations daily: "I 'Scott' Adams will score in the ninety-fourth percentile on my GMATs." I visualized seeing the 94 on the test results. I also studied the practice tests, and consistently scored about the

same as on my original test. Things weren't looking good. But I took the GMAT again and hoped for the best.

Some weeks later, I received a letter containing my test results. I opened it, and looked for the box I had visualized with a 94. And there it was. Exactly 94.

I reiterate that I don't think magic was involved. I'm simply describing the events as they happened. It is relevant in the story of *Dilbert's* origins because it changed forever my view of what was likely and what was not.

I applied to the University of California at Berkeley's evening MBA program and was accepted. For the next three years, I worked days, took classes at night, and did homework during all the cracks in my schedule. It was the hardest three years of my life, but also, as you will see, a key to *Dilbert's* success.

As I neared the completion of my MBA program, I expected greater opportunities for promotion. This time I was in the wrong place at the wrong time. The media had recently discovered that my employer had virtually no diversity in management. When an assistant vice president position opened up, and I was an obvious candidate for the spot, my boss called me into her office. I was the most qualified candidate for the position, she explained, but because of pressure to be more diverse, there was no hope for another generic white male to get promoted any time soon.

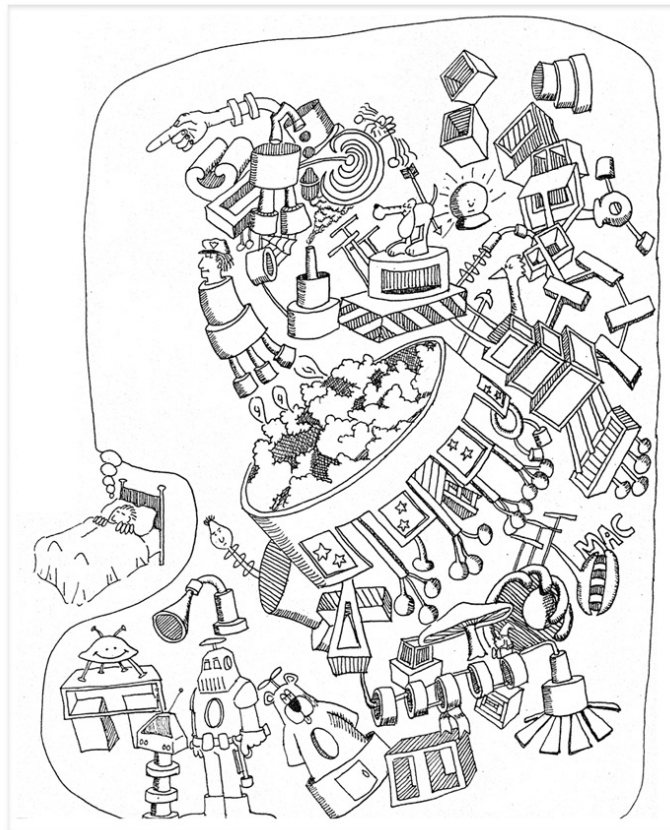
I updated my resume, hoping to find a company that would value me for my abilities. The only offer I got was from the local phone company, Pacific Bell. The money they offered was good, the commute was reasonable, and I took the job. Within a few months, every person in my old group at the bank had been downsized.

1986—Career Turning Point

At Pacific Bell, I completed my MBA and did my best to act and talk like an up-and-coming senior manager. Apparently my act was convincing, and I was soon added to what they called "the binder" of people who were ready for promotion. One day my boss called me into his office and informed me that

while I was indeed management material, the company had been getting a lot of bad press lately about their lack of diversity in management. He noted that promoting me would only make things worse.

You might think this was a bad day for me. But you would be wrong. Because the day you realize that your efforts and your rewards are not related, it really frees up your calendar. Suddenly I didn't see the need to come to work so early, or to stay late, or to work hard. I had time for hobbies. I worked on my tennis game, and I started drawing comics for my own amusement. The doodle on the left came from that era.



One day I decided to see if I could get my comics published. I didn't care what publication printed them. I just wanted to get paid for cartooning, and to feel as if I was doing something that had upside potential, unlike my job. But how do you become a cartoonist? I had no idea. So I started my affirmations again, this time focusing on becoming a cartoonist.

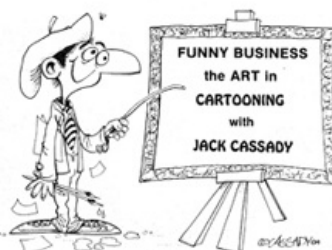
In pre-Internet days, figuring out how to do something out of the ordinary was a challenge. In a strange twist of fate, I came home from work one day, and found myself in the right place at the right time. I started flipping through

the channels on TV and noticed the tail end of a show about cartooning. As the closing credits rolled by, I grabbed a pen and paper, and wrote down the name of the host: Jack Cassady.

I wrote a letter to Jack Cassady, asking a number of questions about starting a career in cartooning. I asked about materials, and where and how to submit comics. He responded with a two-and-a-half-page handwritten letter that was packed with tips.

WDCN

11 FEB 86



DEAR SCOTT,
THANKS FOR WATCHING "FUNNY BUSINESS..." AND
TAKING TIME TO WRITE - SINCE YOU DIDN'T INCLUDE A
S.A.S.E (SELF-ADDRESSED STAMPED ENVELOPE) I ASSUME IT'S
OK TO KEEP YOUR DRAWINGS - IF YOU WANT THEM BACK
JUST LET ME KNOW. I ENJOYED THEM & GOT A GOOD
LAUGH OUT OF SEVERAL. I DON'T KNOW HOW LONG YOU'VE BEEN
CARTOONING, BUT I'D SAY YOU DEFINITELY HAVE THE 'RIGHT
STUFF. SO KEEP ON DRAWING - NOW TO YOUR QUESTIONS -
FIRST - MONET GERBERG WROTE A GREAT BOOK RECENTLY
CALLED "THE ARBOR HOUSE BOOK OF CARTOONING". IT'S LOADED
WITH GREAT TIPS, TECHNICAL AND OTHERWISE. IT WOULD BE
A GOOD INVESTMENT FOR YOU. A BOOK LOADED WITH
INFO ABOUT CARTOON/ART MARKETS ALSO A MUST BUY IS
THE 86 ARTIST'S MARKET BY UNIVERSE'S DIGEST. MOST BOOKSTORES
HAVE THESE, OR CAN ORDER THEM FOR YOU. THE A.M. TELLS
YOU ADDRESSES, NEEDS, RATES, ETC. TWO OTHER HELPFUL
PERIODICALS ARE GAG-RECAP & TRADE JOURNAL RECAP.
IF YOU'RE JUST STARTING OUT - IT'S GOOD TO GO TO THE TJ
MARKETS FIRST - BUILD SALES, GET YOUR STUFF SEEN,
THEN GO FOR THE BIGGIES ONCE YOU'VE STARTED TO
(over)

②

ESTABLISH A REP WITHIN THE FIELD. REMEMBER IT'S VERY COMPETITIVE AND EXPECT TO GET LOTS OF REJECT (RJ) SLIPS. DON'T TAKE IT PERSONALLY - YOUR STUFF IS GOOD AND BECAUSE OF THAT SOMEONE WILL BE BRIGHT ENOUGH TO BUY IT EVENTUALLY - HECK, IF I WAS AN EDITOR I WOULD'VE TAKEN 5 OR 10 OF THE ONES YOU SENT ME TO LOOK AT - UNFORTUNATELY, THERE ARE TOO FEW EDITORS WITH REAL LIFE TOUGH RAMBO FREE-LANCE BACKGROUNDS - HA HA.

YOUR CARTOONS CAN BE DRAWN ON A GOOD QUALITY TYPING PAPER $8\frac{1}{2} \times 11$ - 25% RAG CONTENT, AT LEAST 20lb or HIGHER WEIGHT & FLUORESCENT or VERY WHITE - YOU CAN USE ABOUT ANYTHING THAT MAKES A GOOD REPRODUCIBLE LINE. CAPTIONS CAN BE NEATLY HAND LETTERED OR TYPED AT THE BASE OF YOUR DRAWINGS - BORDERS ARE GENERALLY NOT NECESSARY - PAYMENT VARIES FROM PUBLICATION TO PUBLICATION & IS A RESULT OF THE VALUE THEY ATTACH TO GRAPHIC HUMOR, CIRCULATION, AD REVENUE AND MOON PHASE. AM USUALLY LIFT'S RATES.

EACH BATCH OF 8 TO 10 CARTOONS SHOULD BE PROTECTED BY SOME KIND OF STIFFENER (ie CUT DOWN FILE FOLDER) AND INCLUDE A S.A.S.E. THIS IS IMPORTANT, SINCE EDITORS ARE BUSY FOLKS AND WON'T USUALLY RETURN YOUR WORK UNLESS YOU INCLUDE A SASE. A NOTE IN THE BATCH IS USUALLY NOT NECESSARY BUT DO EITHER WRITE OR RUBBER STAMP YOUR NAME & ADDRESS & MAYBE PHONE NR ON THE BACK OF EACH DRAWING - SEND ORIGINAL ART UNLESS THEY (EDITORS) REQUEST OTHERWISE - MASS MAKINGS OF THE SAME DRAWINGS ARE

NOT GOOD BUSINESS PRACTICES DUE TO COPYRIGHTS ETC.
(SEE TAO CRAWFORD'S) THE LAW & THE VISUAL ARTIST

I HOPE I'VE POINTED OUT A HELPFUL DIRECTION &
WISH YOU THE BEST OF LUCK.

I'M HOPING TO WIN APPROVAL FOR A CONTINUATION OF
13 MORE "FUNNY BUSINESS ... " SHOWS FOR 86 - YOU CAN
HELP BY GETTING EVERYONE IN S.F. TO WRITE WORDS
DEMANDING MORE SHOWS - HAHHA -

GOOD LUCK SAVING THE INK!

JACK



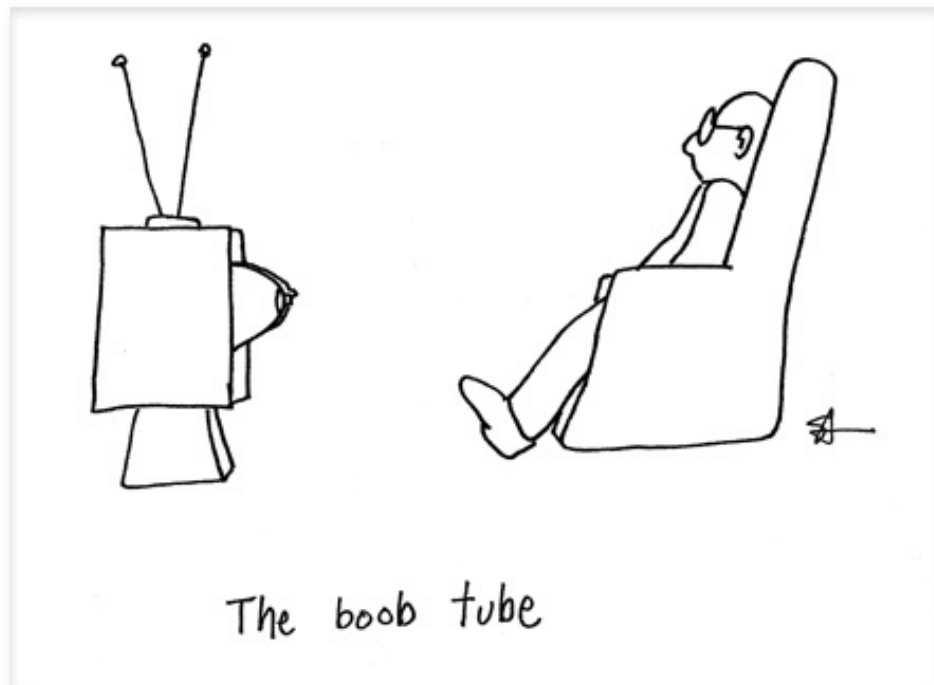
Child prodigy born in the wrong era

Armed with this advice, I bought the 1986 *Artist's Market* book, which told me how and where to submit comics, and I started drawing. I soon learned that the *New Yorker* magazine and *Playboy* paid the most for comics. So I focused on

drawing off-the-wall comics for the *New Yorker*, and naughty comics for *Playboy*. See if you can tell which are which.

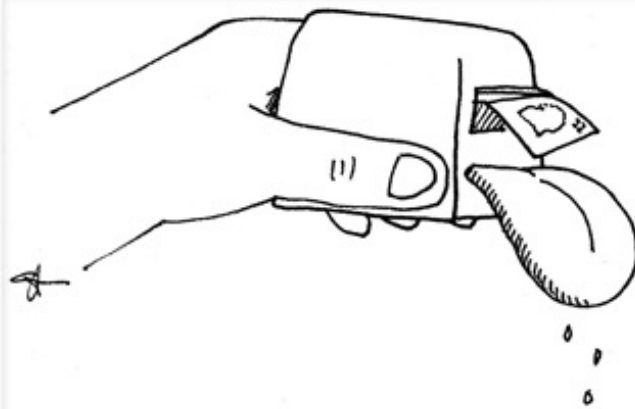


Playboy rejected my comics with a form letter. They made the right decision. The comics I submitted were dreadful. (Years later, when *Dilbert* hit its peak, I was the subject of a *Playboy* interview, and got on the party invitation list for the Playboy Mansion. But I never attended because I couldn't imagine myself hanging out with Playmates and sweating through my pajamas.)

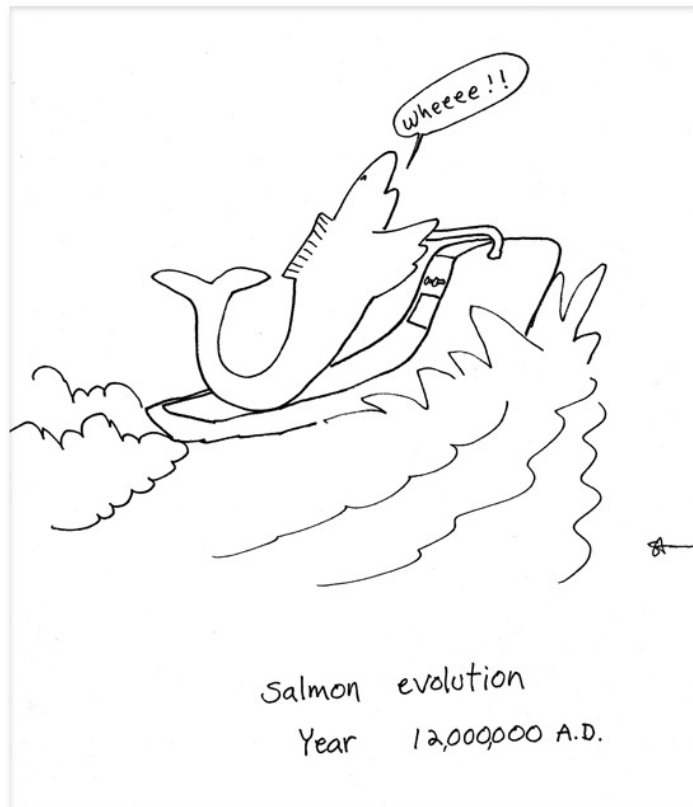




This year, Ernie is determined
to be known as the office rebel



The self-licking stamp
dispenser -- not available
in some southern states



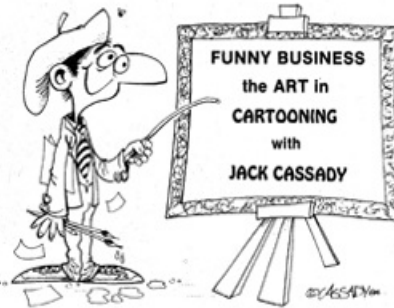
Salmon evolution
Year 12,000,000 A.D.



The *New Yorker* magazine rejected me too. I think we all know they made the right decision.

WIDEN

JUNE 4, 1987



SCOTT ADAMS
1143 LAKE ST.
SAN FRANCISCO, CA. 94118

DEAR SCOTT,

I WAS REVIEWING MY "FUNNY BUSINESS..." MAIL FILE WHEN I AGAIN RAN ACROSS YOUR LETTER AND COPIES OF YOUR CARTOONS. I REMEMBERED ANSWERING YOUR LETTER.

THE REASON I'M DROPPING YOU THIS NOTE IS TO AGAIN ENCOURAGE YOU TO SUBMIT YOUR IDEAS TO VARIOUS PUBLICATIONS. I HOPE YOU HAVE ALREADY DONE SO AND ARE ON THE ROAD TO MAKING A FEW BUCKS AND HAVING SOME FUN TOO.

SOMETIMES ENCOURAGEMENT IN THE FUNNY BUSINESS OF GRAPHIC HUMOR IS HARD TO COME BY. THAT'S WHY I AM ENCOURAGING YOU TO HANG IN THERE AND KEEP DRAWING.

I WISH YOU LOTS OF LUCK, SALES AND GOOD DRAWING.

SINCERELY,

JACK

So I gathered up my art supplies and put them in a closet. I felt okay about my effort. I tried as hard as I knew how. I didn't expect everything to work out the way I wanted. I decided to move on. I figured affirmations didn't work every time.

A year later, out of the blue, I got a second letter from Jack Cassady. This was especially odd because I hadn't even thanked him for his original advice. Why would he write a second letter after so much time had passed? Here's why.

Somehow he knew I needed the encouragement. He saw something in my work that *Playboy* and the *New Yorker* didn't see. In fact, I didn't see it myself. I think you will agree that my talent was well hidden in that period. But Jack saw it. His letter accomplished exactly what he intended. I got out my art supplies and started drawing again.

During this period I was drawing pre-Dilbert and pre-Dogbert comics on the whiteboard in my cubicle, complete with witty captions about workplace happenings. Cartoons naturally draw attention, and soon my co-workers were asking the names of my two regular characters. I didn't have names for them, so I held a "Name the Nerd" contest on my whiteboard. My co-workers would trickle in during the day and write their ideas for names. The suggestions were traditional nerd-sounding names. None of them stood out. Until one day, my ex-boss, Mike Goodwin, walked in, picked up a dry erase marker, and wrote "Dilbert."

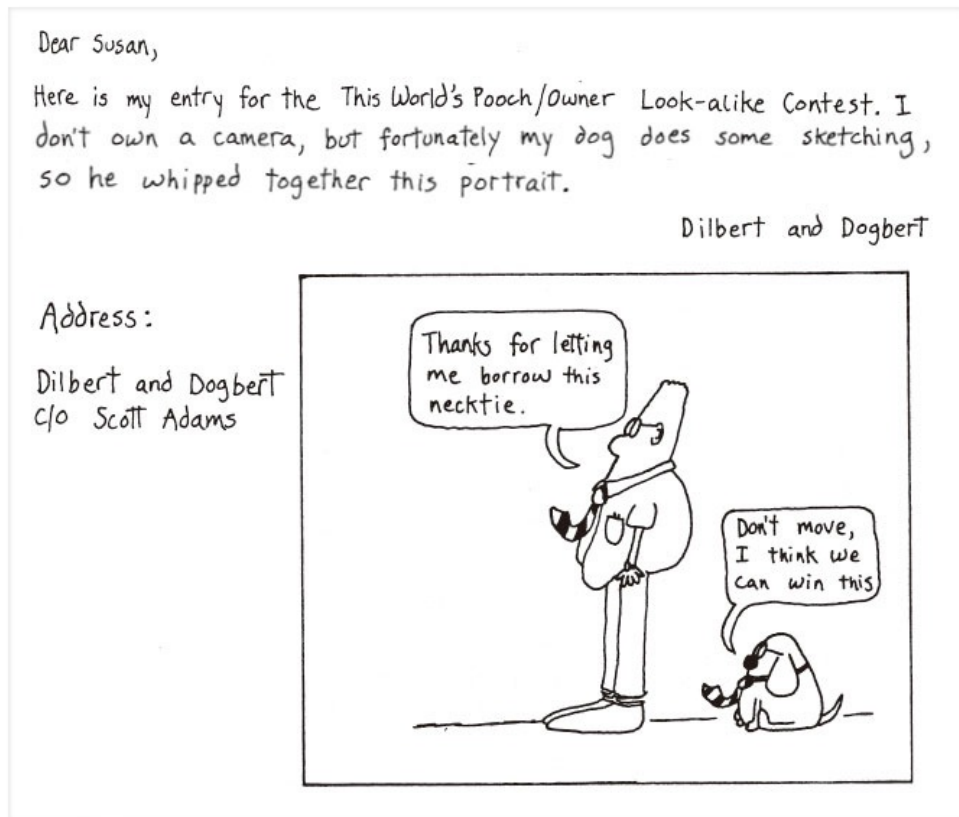
This was one of those moments when you feel as if you can see the future. I ended the contest immediately. It felt as though I was learning this character's name, not naming him. The name Dilbert fit him so perfectly, I literally got a chill. I have a vivid memory of that moment, because it felt as if something special had just happened.

Later, I named Dilbert's dog on my own. I wanted the dog's name to have some connection to Dilbert's name. So naturally, I named him Dildog. (Yes, really.)

At about this time, my friend Josh Libresco noticed in the local paper, the *San Francisco Examiner*, a contest for people who looked like their dogs. Readers were encouraged to send in photos posing with their dogs, and the best ones would get some sort of prize. Josh suggested that I send in a drawing of

Dilbert and Dildog. After all, they looked sort of similar.

In retrospect, this was a ridiculous idea, since the contest was specifically for photos. For some reason, that didn't stop me. But I knew I had to change Dildog's name to something more newspaper-friendly. That's when Dildog became Dogbert. This is my letter and entry.

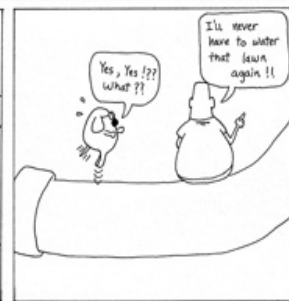
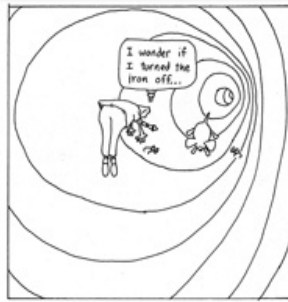
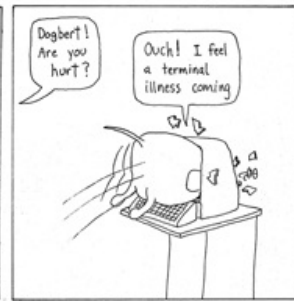


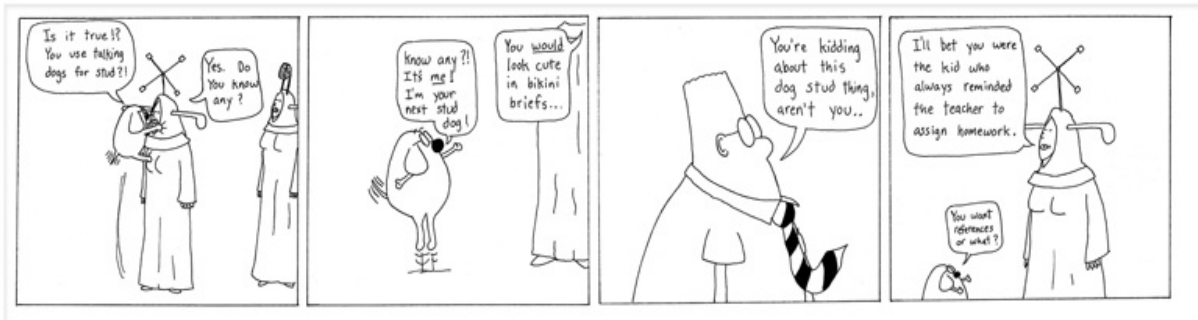
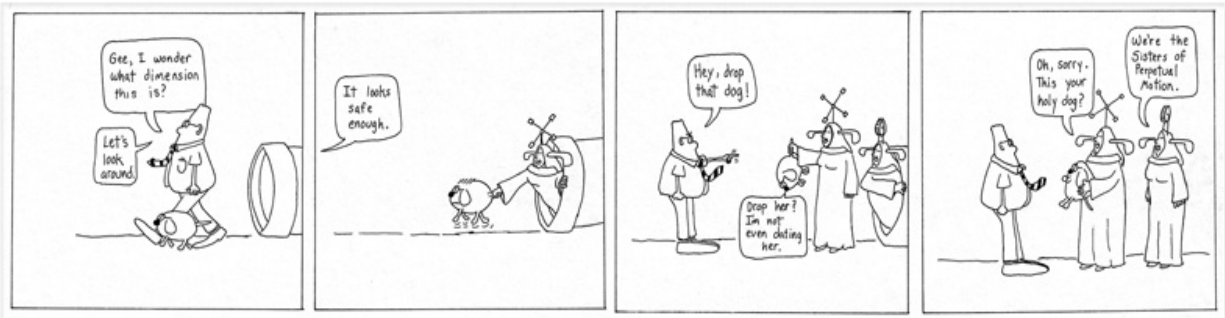
For some reason, my drawing was selected for publication among a page of photos of people who looked like their dogs. In retrospect, they probably thought I was a twelve-year-old kid, based on the artwork, and figured it was cute. But the reasons didn't matter to me.

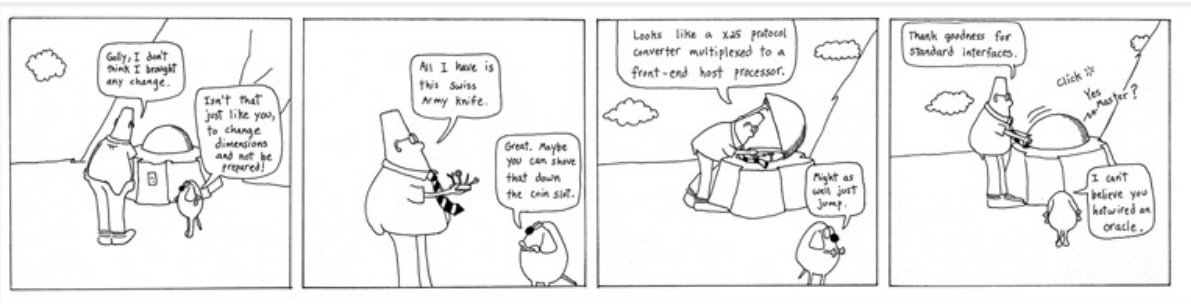
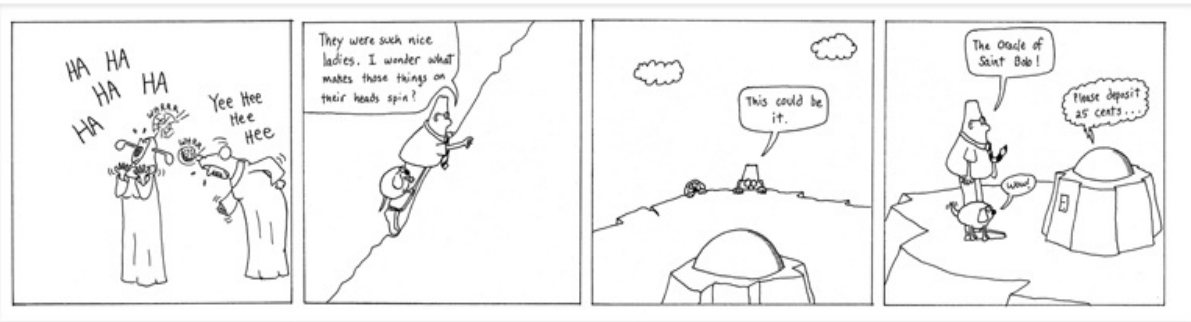
My comic was published in a newspaper. My co-workers congratulated me. I liked the feeling. And I wanted more.

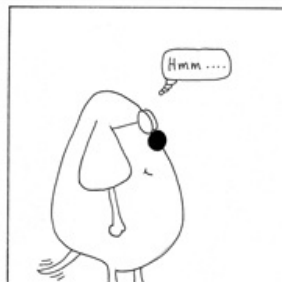
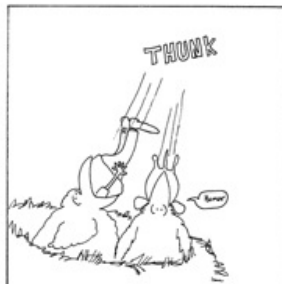
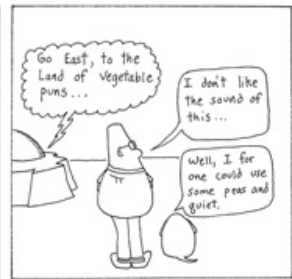
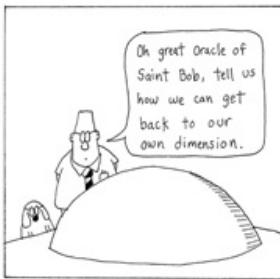
I knew that practice was essential. You don't get good at something by sitting around hoping. So I started waking up every morning at 4 A.M. to work on a series of comic panels, in something of a comic book form, that featured Dilbert and Dogbert. I spent two hours every morning developing my drawing and writing skills before heading to my day job. Here is the very first

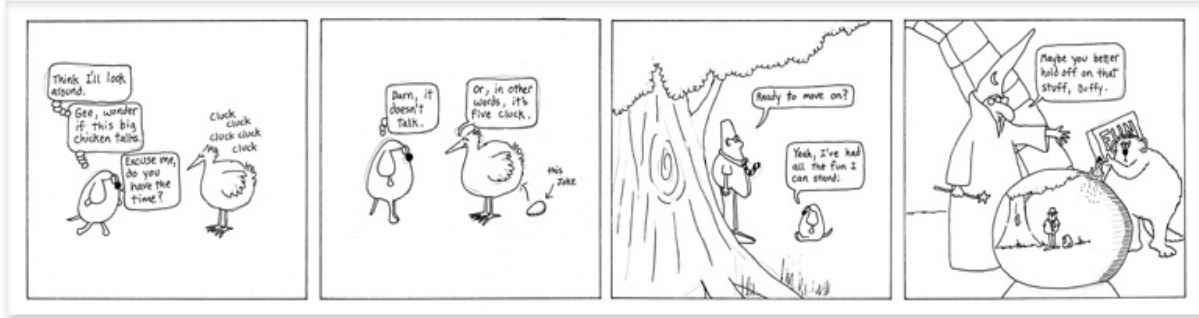
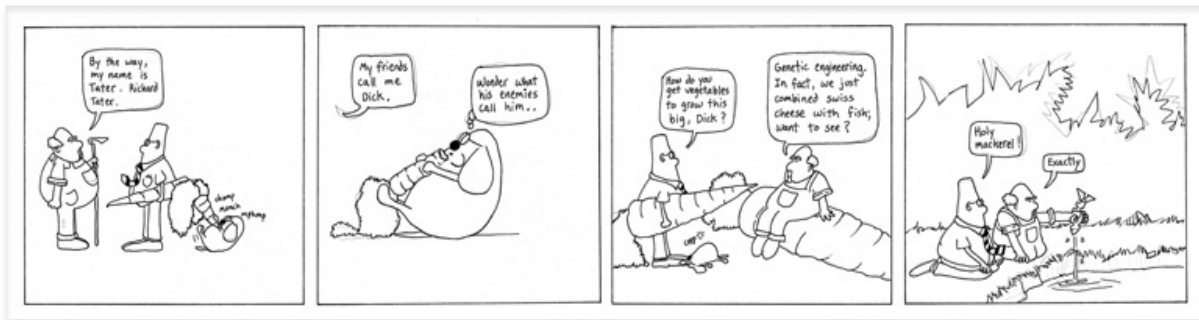
comic form of Dilbert and Dogbert. At the time, I believed puns were the highest form of humor. Please forgive me.

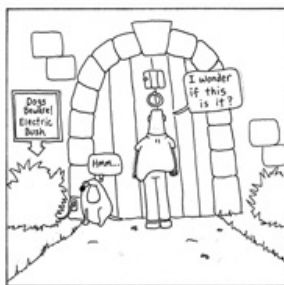
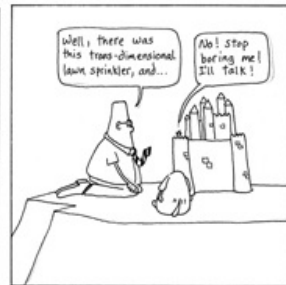
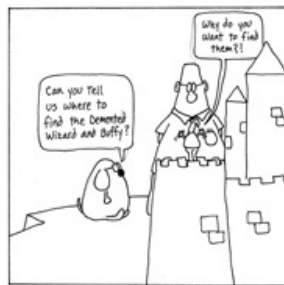


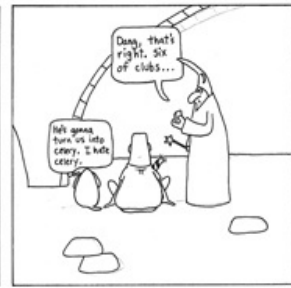
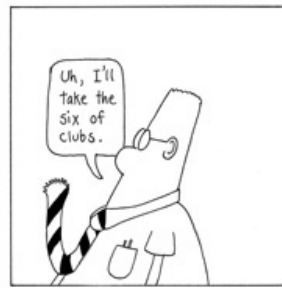
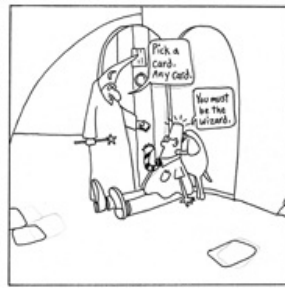
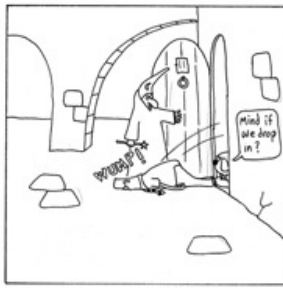






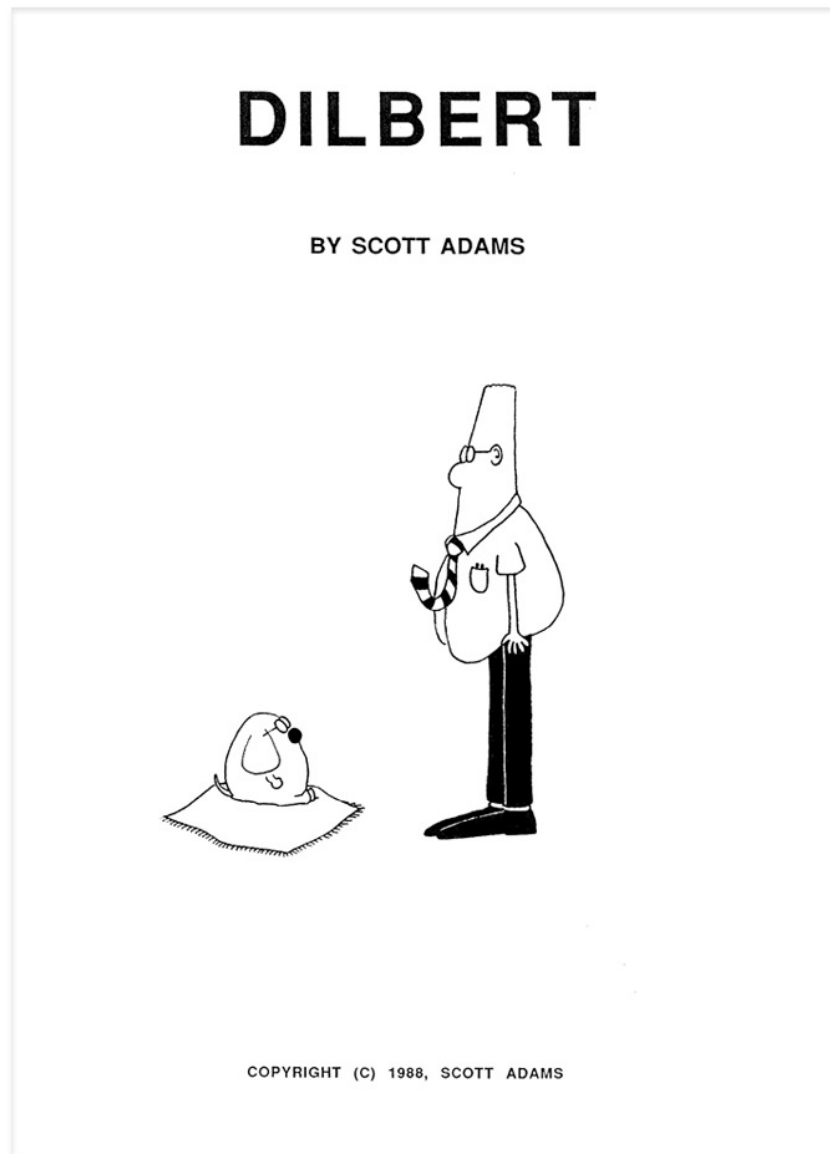






1988— Submitting to Syndicates

I liked these two characters, Dilbert and Dogbert. Inspired by Jack Cassady's letter of encouragement, I decided to set my sights high and submit my comics for syndication in newspapers. It didn't cost much to try, except some paper and ink and postage. I put together about fifty comics based on Dilbert and Dogbert, and sent them by mail to the addresses in the *1986 Artist's Market* book. Below is a portion of my original *Dilbert* submission package.



ABOUT THE COMIC STRIP

NAME OF STRIP:

Dilbert

SYNOPSIS:

Dilbert is an engineer. He is about thirty, and works at an undisclosed high-tech company in Northern California. He lives with his dog, Dogbert, who bears a striking resemblance to Dilbert (including glasses and the ability to speak).

Dilbert is very intelligent and kind-hearted, which makes him particularly ill-suited for life on this planet.

Dogbert is also intelligent, but with a cynical edge. In contrast to his master, Dogbert has such a simple, yet keen understanding of human nature that his perceptions seem ridiculous to Dilbert.

MARKET RESEARCH:

The enclosed sample cartoons have been reviewed with dozens of people, many of whom are not personally known by the artist. Most of the interviewees were baby boomers, with a few more women than men.

Without exception, the response has been positive. All people interviewed thought that Dilbert was of syndication quality.

Interestingly, there was a tremendous diversity of feeling about specific cartoons. Each cartoon made at least one person's "best" list, but was equally likely to be in another person's "I don't get it" list.

The "Devil series", for example, evoked especially strong feelings, in opposite directions.

Based on interview responses, only two strips were discarded from the original fifty drawings because they did not get a good enough response. (And one of them was on several people's "best" list).

The only noticeable common denominator of people's reactions was that the strips which include Dogbert are more likely to be appreciated.

Scott R. Adams

OBJECTIVE

Syndicated cartoonist for daily newspapers.

PUBLICATIONS

Dilbert cartoon character first appeared in the This World section of the Sunday San Francisco Examiner, 9/27/87, as a surprise winner of the Pooch/owner Look-alike Contest.

Princeton Club of Northern California Newsletter, November 1987 and December 1987.

Crocker Bank Directions newsletter, September 1985, and June 1985.

EXPERIENCE

6/79 - 4/86, Crocker National Bank

Worked in a variety of positions, including: Branch Operations, Commercial Lending, Product Management, Computer Programming, Budgeting, Finance, Contracts, and New Technology Acquisitions. Made no loans to South America.

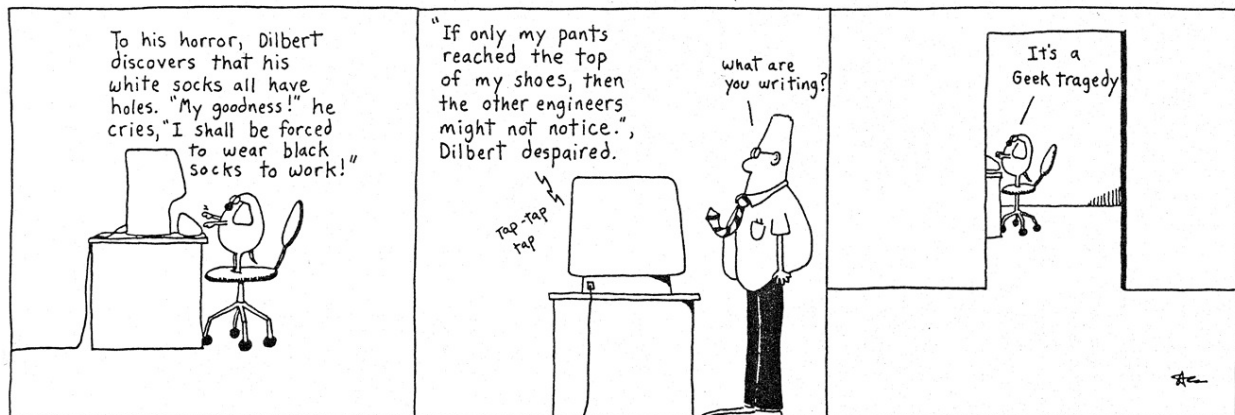
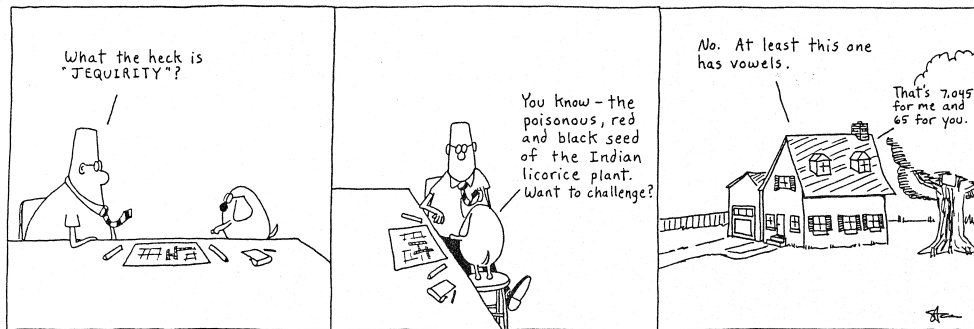
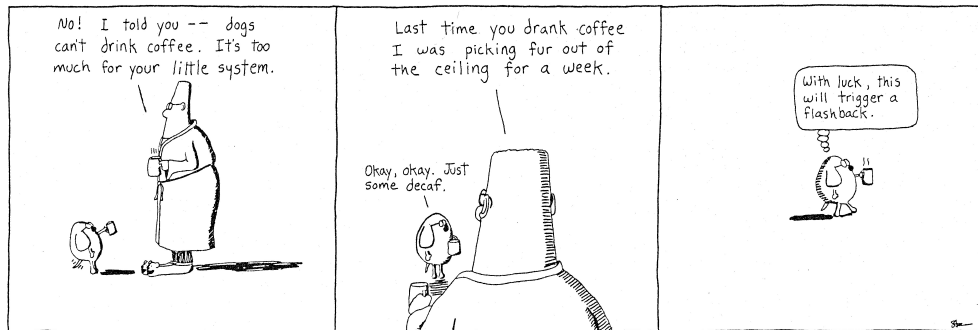
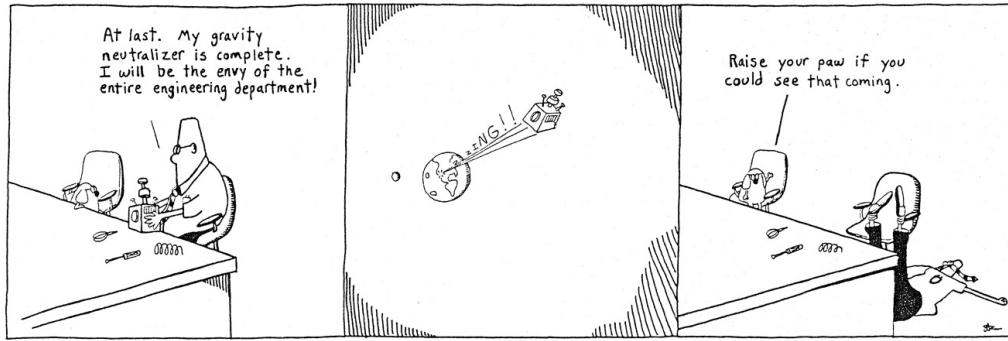
5/86 - Present, Pacific Bell

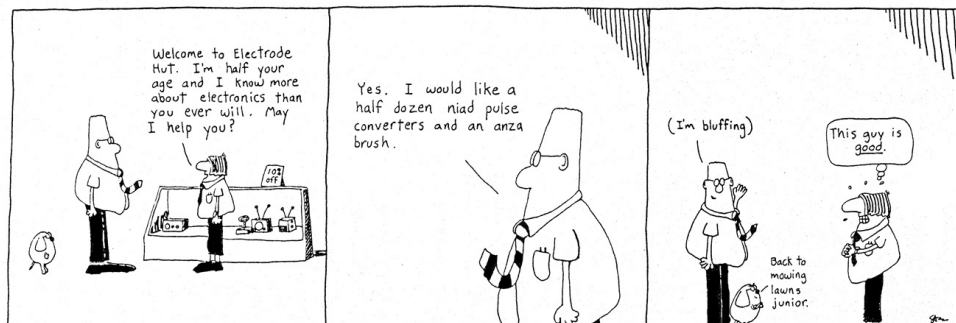
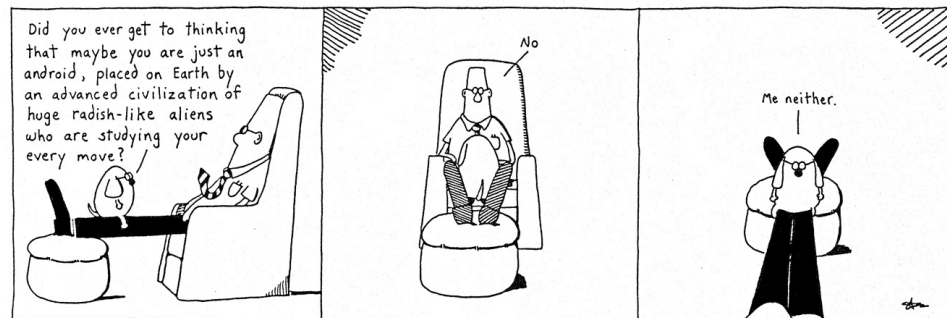
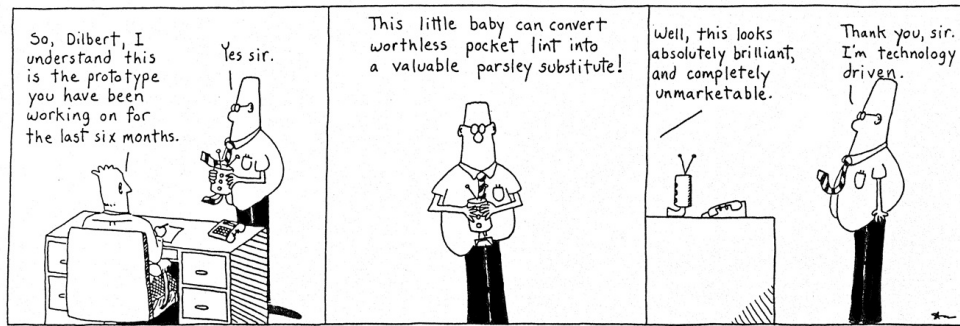
Engineer and financial guy for the Research and Development wing of the company. Act as interpreter for the engineers, so management can understand them.

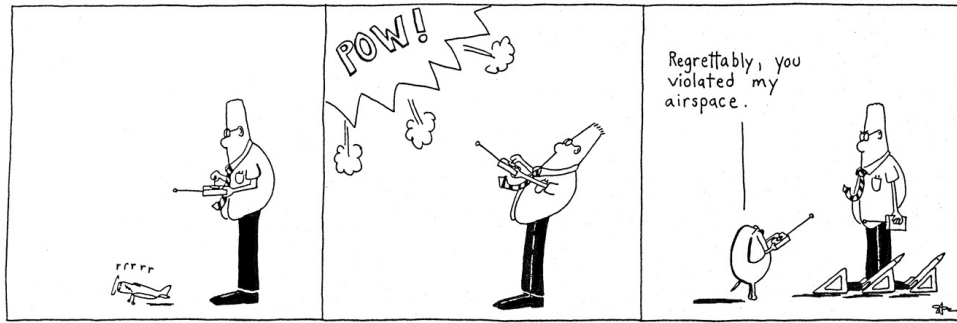
EDUCATION

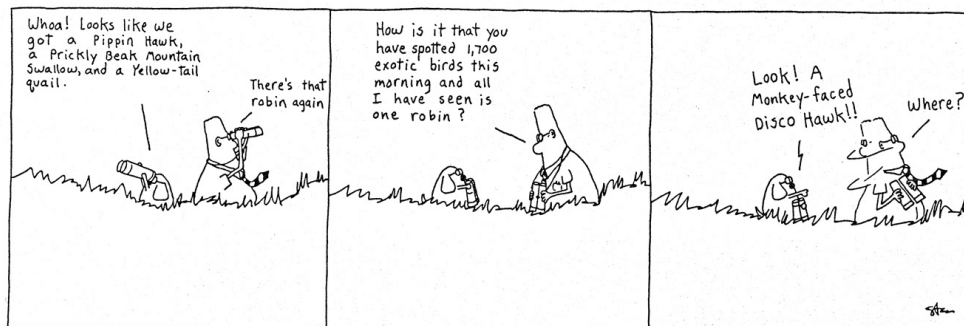
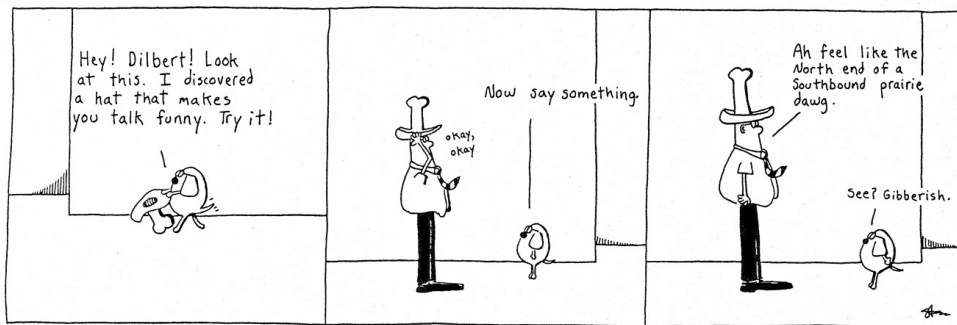
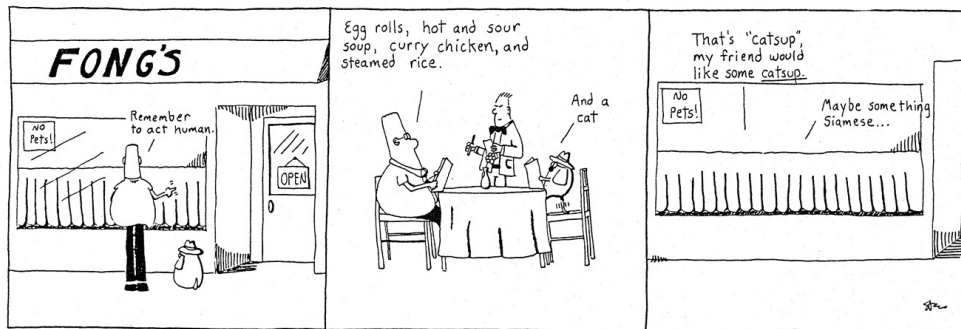
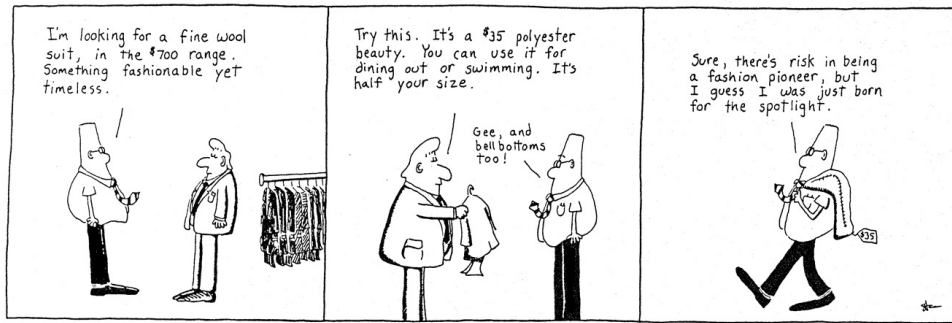
BA in Economics, Hartwick College, Oneonta New York, 1979.

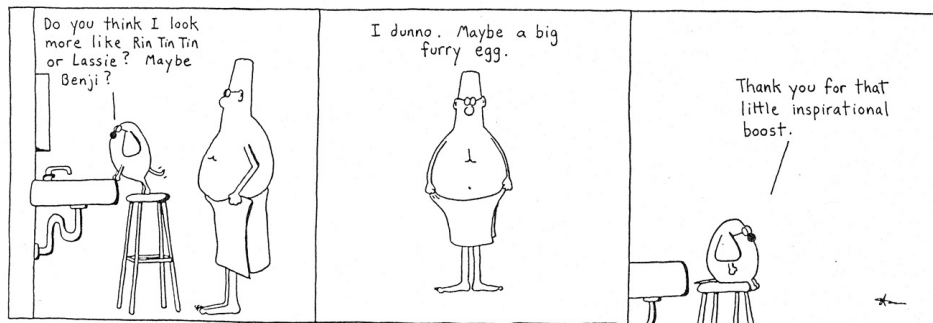
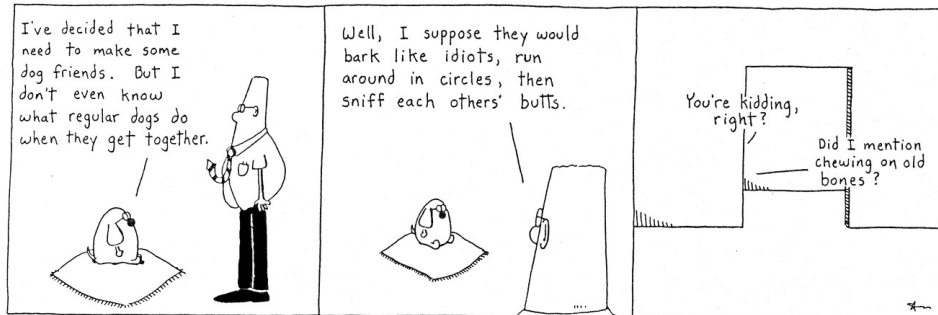
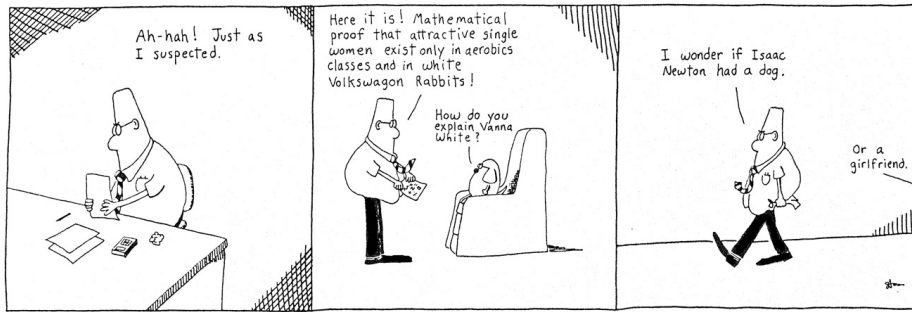
MBA with emphasis in Finance, University of California, Berkeley, 1986. Evening program.

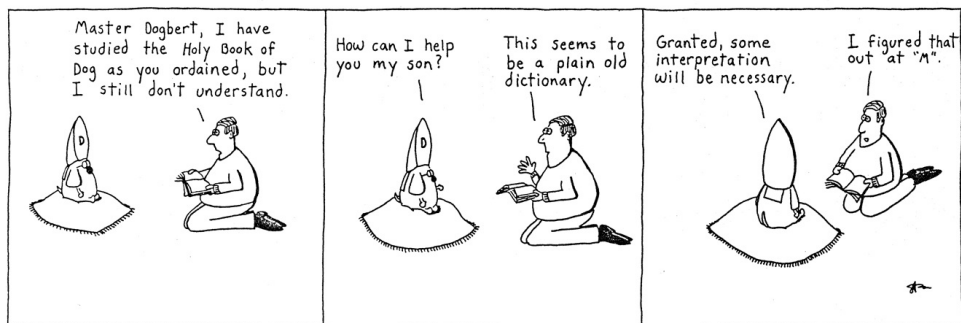
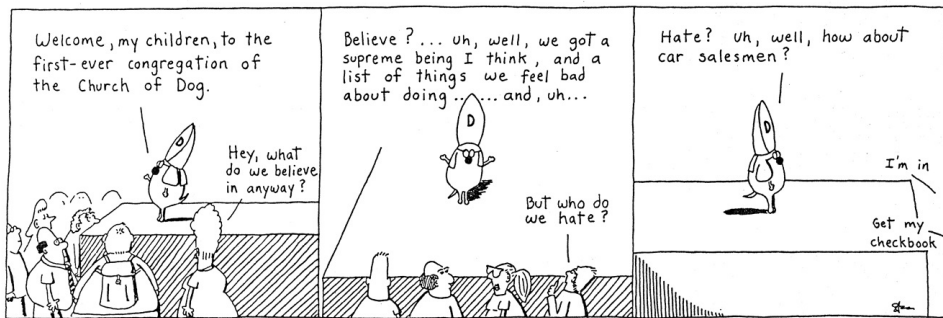
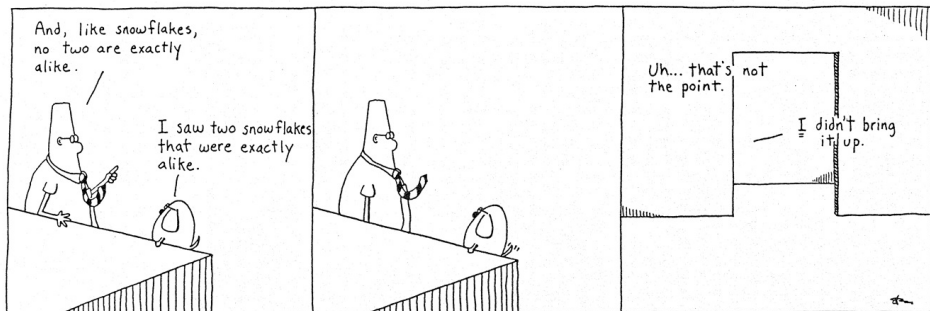


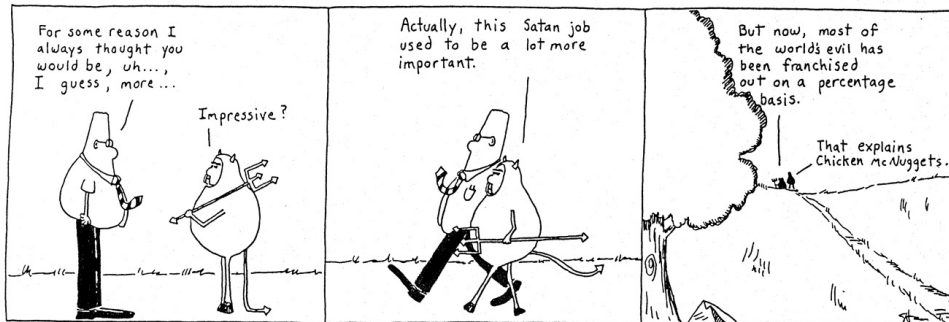
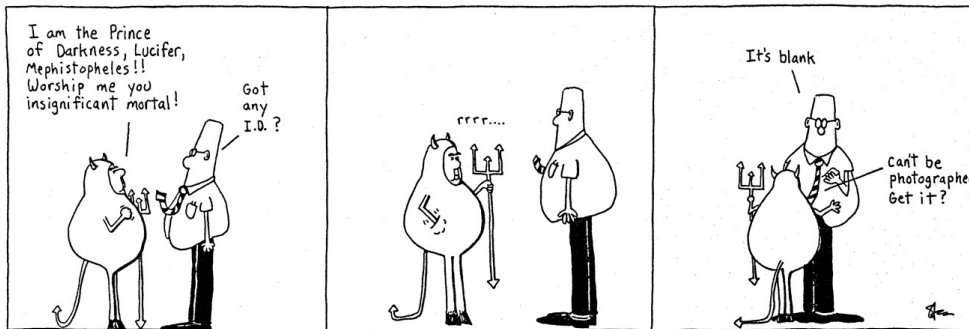
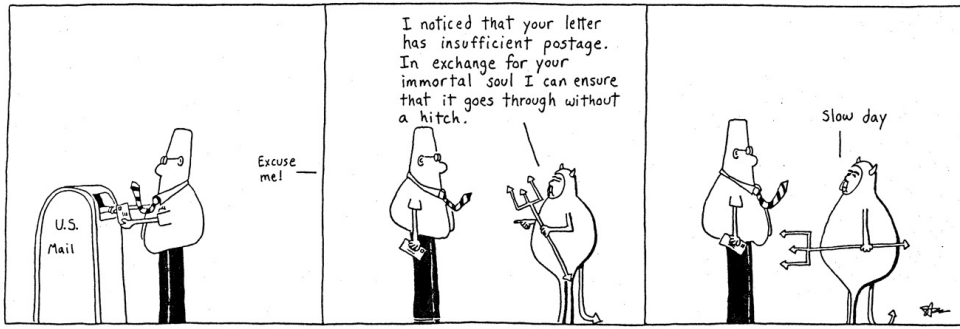


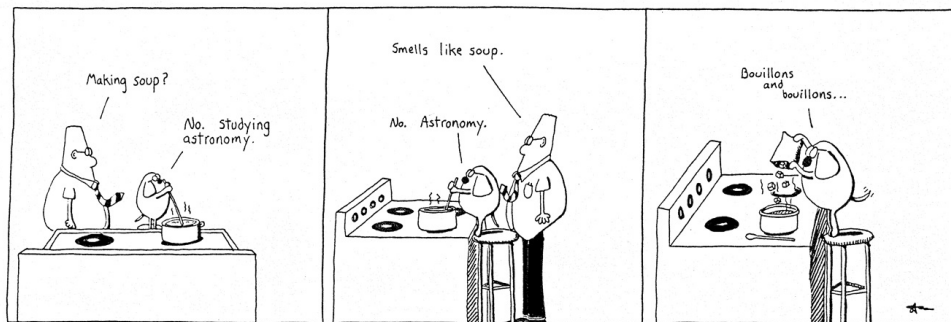
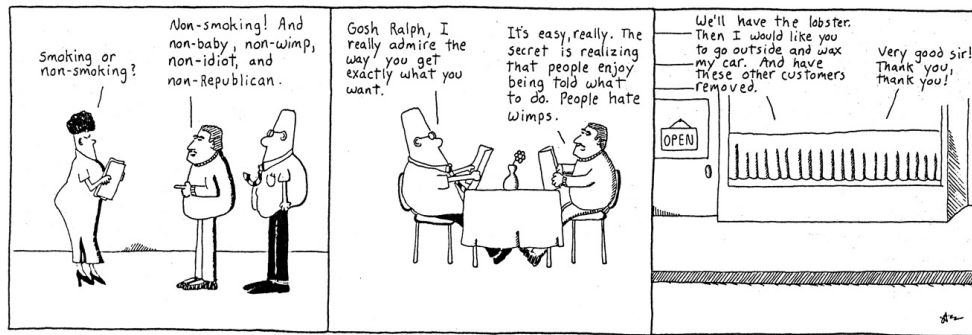
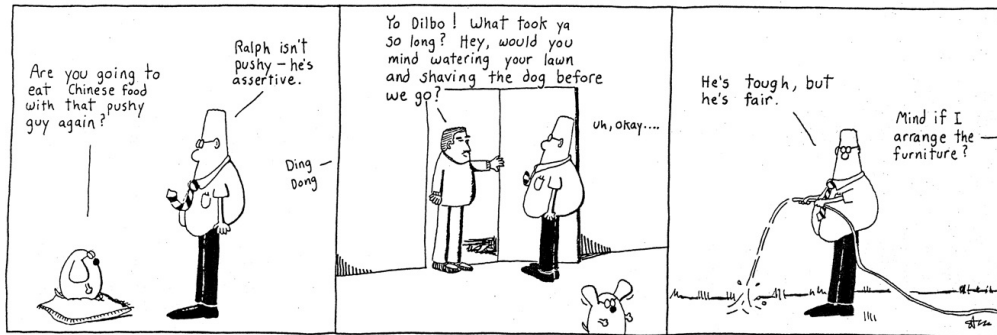
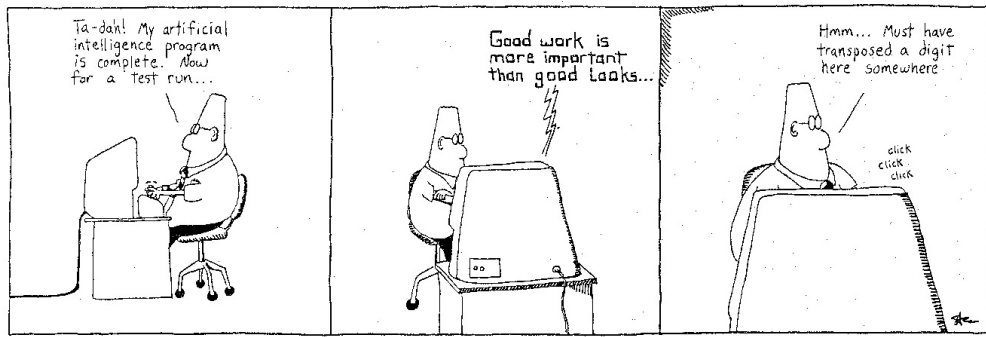












Then the rejections started trickling in. I have included a couple, so you get the general idea.

**UNIVERSAL
PRESS
SYNDICATE**

4900 Main Street • Kansas City, Missouri 64112 • 816/932-6600

Dear Contributor:


I regret that it is necessary for us to respond to your submission with an impersonal letter. However, the volume of materials being submitted exceeds our ability to write personal responses quickly.

I want to assure you that we have reviewed your feature submission carefully. This rejection does not necessarily reflect on the editorial value of your work, but may be motivated by matters of scheduling and marketing.

Thank you for allowing Universal Press Syndicate to review your work. Again my apologies for the necessity of responding in this impersonal manner.

Best regards.

Sincerely,


Jake Morrissey
Associate Editor

JM:bt

ups

Time & Life Building • Suite 3717 • 1271 Avenue of the Americas
New York, N.Y. 10020 • 212/582-0650



JAY KENNEDY
DEPUTY COMICS EDITOR

July 6, 1988

Mr. Scott Adams
Suite 610
3145 Geary Blvd
San Francisco, CA 94118

Dear Mr. Adams:

I apologize for the lengthy delay in responding to your submission. "Dilbert" arrived at about the same time as I began work at King Features. I liked "Dilbert" enough that I placed it in a small stack of submissions that I wanted to reply to personally. Unfortunately, it has taken me this long to settle into my job enough to have the time to respond to the better submissions we receive.

We are not going to syndicate "Dilbert," but I did want to write to encourage you in your career as a cartoonist. I am most impressed by the writing and sense of humor in "Dilbert." The art needs to be developed to an equal level. Your lettering should be larger and try using all capital letters. The characters are well designed, but the finished art needs to be more polished.

Look at existing cartoon work that you like and experiment with different techniques and materials. Just drawing cartoons frequently is the best way to improve.

Again, sorry for the delay in getting back to you and please continue with your cartooning.

Sincerely,


Jay Kennedy

JK:pr

Enclosure

After a few months, when I thought all the rejections had come in, I gathered up my art supplies and put them back in the closet. I had given it my best shot. I felt okay with my effort. It was time to move on.

One day, the phone rang. A woman identified herself as Sarah Gillespie, an editor for a company I had never heard of called United Media. At that point I didn't know United Media was the parent company of United Feature Syndicate, Inc., to whom I had sent my submission, and I assumed had thrown it in the trash. Sarah said she liked *Dilbert*, and wanted to offer me a development contract.

Having never heard of this United Media outfit, I was flattered but a bit wary. I didn't know how this company even got a copy of my comics. I decided to play my cards close to the vest. I told Sarah I was interested in discussing the offer, but I would feel better if she had some references. I asked if there were any comics her company had ever successfully syndicated. I made it clear I wasn't going to take a chance on some start-up.

There was a long pause.

Sarah replied, "Um, yes. We handle *Peanuts*. And *Garfield*. And *Marmaduke*, and . . ."

It was at that moment I realized my negotiating position had been compromised. After scraping myself off the ceiling, I said yes. And so began my twenty-year association with United Media.

It was time to thank Jack Cassady.

April 12, 1988

Dear Jack:

In early 1986 I wrote to you after watching your Funny Business special. I asked a bunch of questions about how to submit cartoons for publication. Some of my cartoons were included with the letter.

You were kind enough to write back, with about three pages of encouragement and helpful information. I was very grateful for your generous reply, and used your suggestions to put together some cartoon submissions.

Unfortunately, as you predicted, the "RJs" came and I got discouraged. I stopped cartooning. About a year later, out of the blue, you wrote again to tell me not to be discouraged by the RJs, and that you thought my work was good. You said you came across my original letter in your files and it prompted you to write.

I needed that second letter from you. You must have ESP. My artistic ego was at bottom. Your letter got me started again; this time with a new determination.

I put together a bunch of three-panel strips and sent them to eight of the big syndicates. I decided to go for the whole enchilada: a daily strip in newspapers.

One company, the LA Times Syndicate, called me. My ego reinflated. The cartoon editor said he liked my work, but maybe I should take art classes and learn to draw. Or maybe I should work with somebody who already knows how to draw. Goodbye ego.

Then, amazingly, I got a call from United Media (i.e. Garfield, Peanuts, etc.), and they said they liked my work. I started to apologize for my poor drawing skills and mentioned that I already knew I needed to learn to draw. But they liked my drawing. And my writing.

They mailed me a development contract, with two five year extensions if it works out. I was numb. I still can't believe it. My attorney is working the contract over now.

I don't know how the syndication thing will go; obviously, it's still a long shot. But I don't believe the odds anymore. Somehow, I'm going to make it work. It feels right.

The reason I'm writing this letter is to express my deepest thanks to you, for taking the time, for caring, and for knowing exactly what I needed and when. It was the difference.

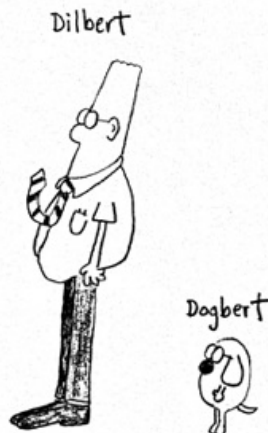
You know, in this world it's hard enough to get help from your friends when you need it. It's really a special thing to get help from somebody who doesn't even know you, and won't be there to see the expression on your face. Yours was the kind of gift that makes me think that maybe the world is a pretty good place after all.

I hope this letter finds you with all the health, happiness, and good fortune that I know you deserve. Again, my sincerest appreciation and thanks.

Warmest Regards,



Scott Adams



Coming Soon To A Newspaper
Near You!
(with any luck)

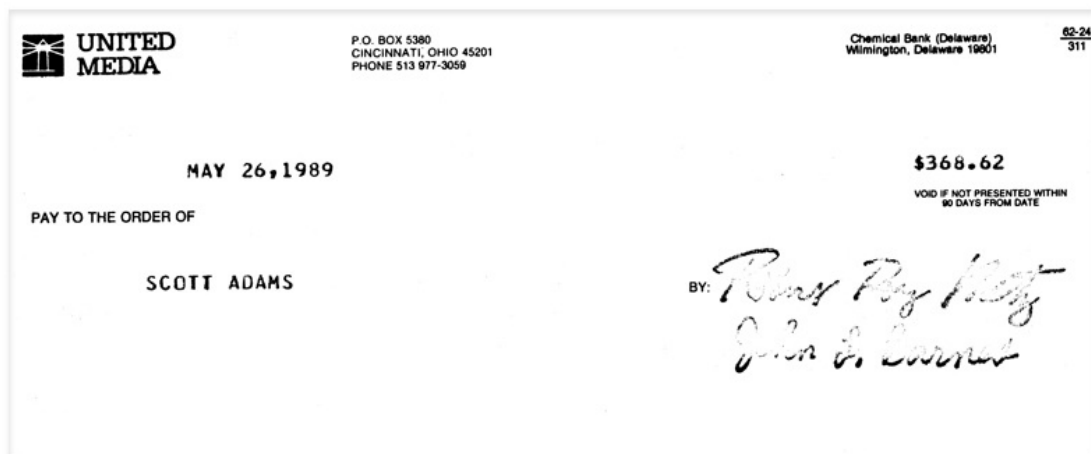
1988—Developing *Dilbert*

A syndication development contract is a six-month agreement where a cartoonist works with a syndication company editor to refine the strip and make it newspaper-worthy. There was no guarantee *Dilbert* would ever be offered to newspapers if the development phase didn't work out. But within a few months of the contract getting signed, United Media liked what they saw, and decided to launch *Dilbert* in April of 1989.

The launch was modestly successful, and *Dilbert* was picked up by a few dozen small newspapers. Most papers probably didn't run the strip in the beginning, preferring to hold the rights and watch what other papers did first.

After a year of hard work as a cartoonist, my efforts were about to be rewarded. My first monthly royalty check from United Media: \$368.62.

It soon became clear that I wasn't going to be quitting my day job anytime soon. The royalties grew each month, but *Dilbert* was not setting the world on fire; it didn't even run in my local papers. Cartooning was a lonely job. I drew pictures all alone, mailed them away, and rarely heard any feedback from anyone who read them. The strip grew slowly, with what seemed like two cancellations for every three sales. Some readers hated it. Some loved it. Few people were neutral.



By 1990 *Dilbert* was in fifty newspapers. By 1991 it hit a milestone of one hundred papers. That's often considered the point where a comic strip has a

chance of lasting. But it was a tenuous grip. By 1992 it was in one hundred and fifty newspapers, and growth was slowing. The sales people naturally moved their attention to the newer comics in their stable.

The biggest comic strips of the day were in over two thousand newspapers. It seemed that *Dilbert* had hit its peak potential, and while I had a nice side job, it seemed I would never be able to quit my day job. Still, I tried my affirmations, focusing on the seemingly unrealistic goal of making *Dilbert* one of the top comic strips in the world.

The Internet and e-mail were still in the toddler phase. But because of my day job I was surrounded by the vendors and engineers who were bringing those technologies to the market. One day, my business training kicked in and I noticed an opportunity that no syndicated cartoonist had yet explored.

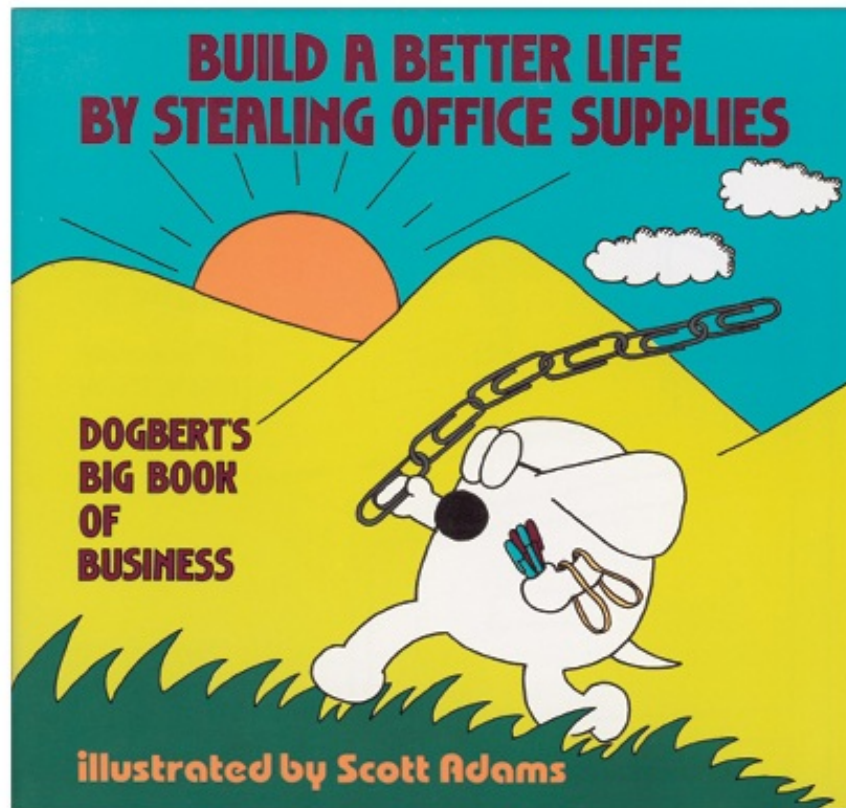
The problem with cartooning in those years was that you normally got no direct feedback from readers. Your friends and your family aren't a reliable gauge for how well you are doing. They lie. I was navigating without reference points. And I noticed that every successful business had solved this customer feedback problem in one way or another. I realized e-mail could be the solution for me.

I started including my AOL e-mail address in the strip every day. The response was huge. I started getting thousands of messages daily, and readers were all too happy to give their opinions. A clear pattern emerged: readers wanted more of *Dilbert* in the office.

Up to that point, *Dilbert* wasn't a workplace strip. *Dilbert* was usually shown at his home or about town. But as someone smarter than me once said, "Your customers tell you what business you are in." I changed the strip to more of a workplace theme, and it took off. I credit my business training for providing me the discipline to give readers what they wanted. For an artist (of sorts), that is deceptively difficult to do.

At about the same time, my editor suspected there might be more *Dilbert* lovers than the newspaper editors who were rejecting the strip believed. She suggested I write a book of *Dilbert*-themed comics. If it sold well, it would be a powerful message to newspapers that hadn't yet picked up the strip. I agreed to give it a try.

Now I had three full-time jobs: my day job, the comic strip, and writing a book. I call that period my “running years.” If I was moving from one room in my home to another, I literally ran. When I went to the mailbox, I ran. I didn’t have time for walking. I was on a mission.



In 1994, my first book of cartoons, *Build a Better Life by Stealing Office Supplies*, hit the bookstores. It was a small but solid success. And it confirmed the market for workplace humor. It was also a great sales tool for selling into newspapers.

By the end of 1994, *Dilbert* was in four hundred newspapers.

1995—Dot-com Era

At about 1995, the dot-com era began, and all hell broke loose. Dilbert was the right character at the right time. Technology workers embraced Dilbert as one of their own. The media embraced *Dilbert* as a symbol of the downsizing era, which overlapped with the first part of the dot-com build-up. *Dilbert* became shorthand for bad management, oppressed cubicle workers, and high-

tech life. Readers imbued *Dilbert* with their own meaning, beyond anything I intended for it.

I was an early user of the Internet because of my day job, which involved showing customers how Pacific Bell's high-speed data services could help them. The demonstrations took a familiar pattern. First we would demonstrate some useful business features involving control of the telephone, and the customers would yawn. At the end, we showed them something totally useless, known at the time as the World Wide Web.

In 1993, there were only a handful of Web sites you could access, such as the Smithsonian's exhibit of gems. Those pages were slow to load and crashed as often as they worked. But something interesting happened every time we demonstrated this technology. The customers would get out of their chairs, their eyes like saucers, and they would approach the keyboard. They had to touch it themselves. There was something about the Internet that was like catnip. At the end of every meeting, the only thing our customers wanted to know was how they could get access to this magic land of Web pages that had no practical use whatsoever.

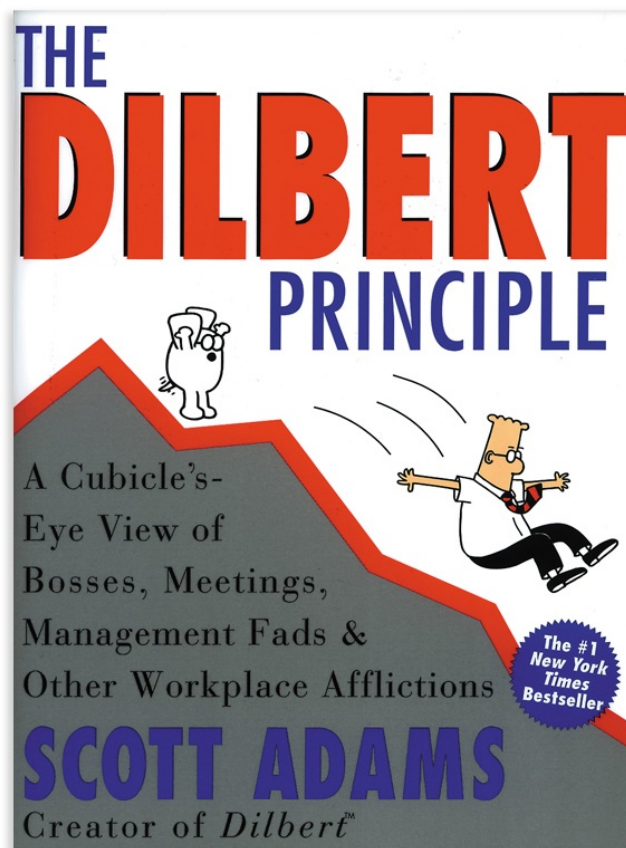
That experience clued me in early that the Internet was the future. United Media was reaching the same conclusion at about the same time. Once again, by luck, I found myself in the right place at the right time. In 1995, *Dilbert* became the first syndicated comic strip to be offered for free on the Internet. The response was huge. From that point on, when a sales person from United Media went into a meeting with a newspaper editor, the editor often said, "My readers keep asking for this one. They saw it online." Sales started to come easy.

At about the same time, Bill Watterson decided to retire from creating *Calvin and Hobbes*. That left a huge number of newspapers with openings, just when *Dilbert* was considered the hot new comic. By the end of 1995, *Dilbert* was in eight hundred newspapers, and I left my day job at Pacific Bell.

People often ask if I quit or was fired. It was a little of both. In the final few years of my day job, *Dilbert* had turned me into a minor celebrity among technology workers. My co-workers found my fame useful in attracting customers to the lab to see Pacific Bell's latest offerings. By then, *Dilbert* was consuming too much of my time for me to be effective in my day job. It was

clear I would soon need to quit or be fired. That's when my co-worker Anita Freeman, who was the prototype for the Alice character, suggested a deal. With our boss's consent, she and my other co-workers in the lab offered to pick up my slack any time I needed to leave work for *Dilbert* reasons. In return, I agreed to schmooze customers who were *Dilbert* fans. As part of that understanding, I told my boss that any time the arrangement didn't work for him, and he needed the budget for a better purpose, I would be happy to leave. Eventually he took me up on the offer.

That year, the *Wall Street Journal* asked me to write a guest editorial. Someone at the *Journal* was apparently a *Dilbert* fan. So I wrote a piece introducing what I called The Dilbert Principle, in which I explained in witty prose how the most incompetent workers are often promoted to management.



An editor at HarperCollins noticed my editorial in the *Wall Street Journal* and asked if I could expand it into a book. By then, hundreds of *Dilbert* readers had asked me to write a business book, and even suggested the form. They wanted a book that included both *Dilbert* comics on business themes and some extra witty text on those topics. I pitched that idea, and my publisher liked it.

In 1996, my first “real” book, *The Dilbert Principle*, came out. It became a #1 *New York Times* best-seller, and stayed there for eleven weeks.

Based on that success, I quickly followed it with *Dogbert’s Top Secret Management Handbook*. It joined *The Dilbert Principle* at the top of the best-seller list, ranking #1 and #2 for a brief period. (My affirmation at the time was to become a #1 best-selling author.)

By then, *Dilbert* was in over one thousand papers and growing. It was approaching icon status. The phrase “getting Dilberted” entered the language, along with “pointy-haired boss,” and Elbonians. My life was a tornado of TV, radio, and print interviews. I thought I knew what media attention felt like when the comic strip was rising in popularity, but nothing prepared me for having a #1 best-selling book. It was insane.

As *Dilbert’s* popularity soared, no one seemed to mind so much that my artwork looked as if it had been drawn by an inebriated monkey. In 1997 I won both the National Cartoonist Society’s Reuben Award for Outstanding Cartoonist of the Year, and Best Newspaper Comic Strip of 1997. For cartoonists, these awards are the equivalent of getting the Oscars for best actor and best picture.

My life during that period was moving at a scorching pace. I was lucky to get four hours of sleep a night, and always worked weekends, evenings, and holidays. I was also doing regular speaking engagements for corporate events, writing more books, and starting both a vegetarian food company and a local restaurant with partners.

In 1998 I started working on what would become the *Dilbert* TV show that ran on UPN during 1999 and 2000. We had a tiny operating budget, so I found myself doing more of the writing than I had expected. The show started out well, but in the second season the network made a strategic decision to focus on shows with African-American actors. *Dilbert* lost its time slot, and cancellation followed.

The dot-com era was well underway by then. This was the hardest time to write *Dilbert* comics. There were so many people getting rich with Internet businesses, optimism was the dominant feeling among workers. If you weren’t getting rich, you figured it must be your own fault, because apparently anyone

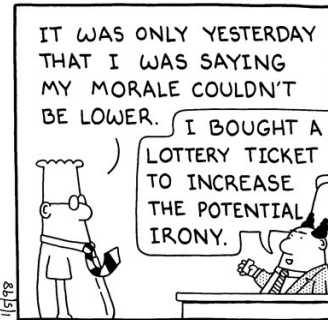
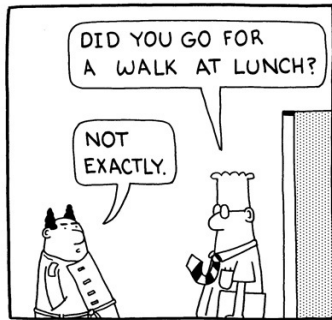
could start a company and become a billionaire. I couldn't find anyone to complain about work, least of all the technology workers who were in high demand. Still, *Dilbert* grew. By year 2000, *Dilbert* was in two thousand newspapers, in fifty-seven countries, and nineteen languages. There were over ten million books and calendars in print. Then the dot-com bubble burst.

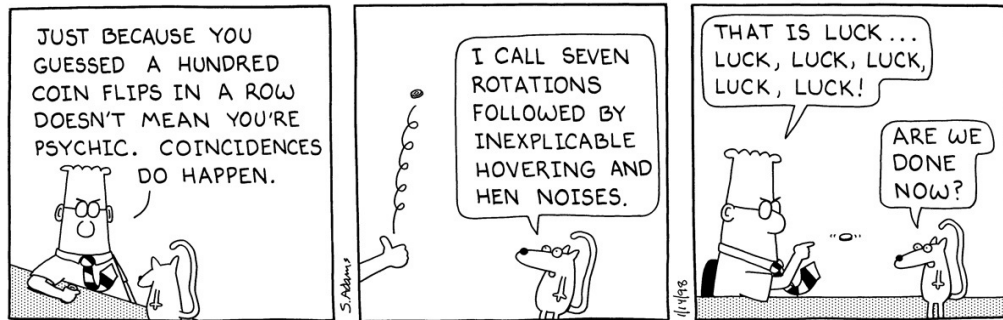
In the past several years, which might someday be remembered as the Outsourcing Era, employee attitudes reverted to healthy levels of pessimism. Suddenly it became much easier to write *Dilbert*, thanks to a steady stream of new employee complaints.

Best of all, I got married to my wonderful wife Shelly, and she has embarked on a mission to show me how to work less and enjoy life more. I hope she knows what she's getting herself into.

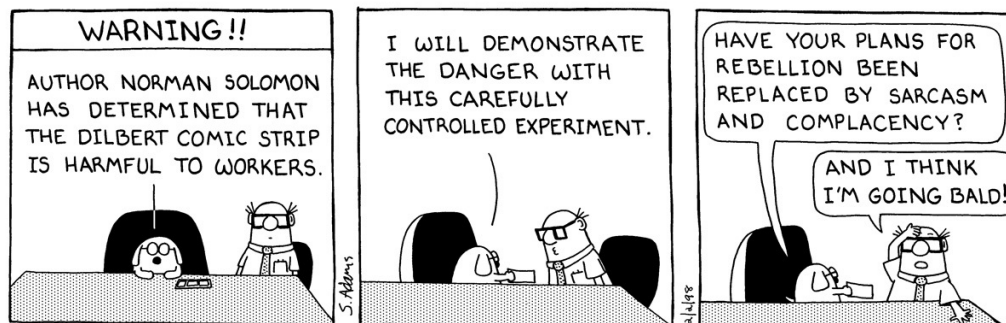
That brings us to now, and this twentieth-anniversary book. I hope you enjoy it as much as I enjoyed creating it.

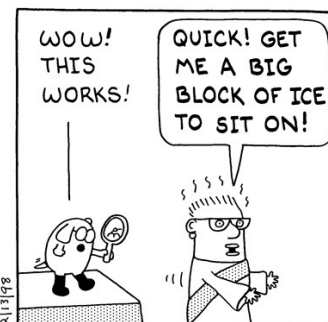
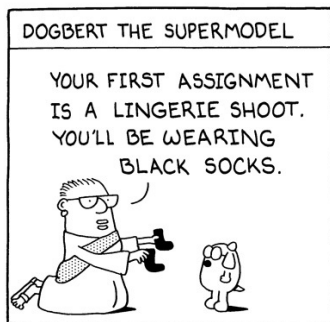
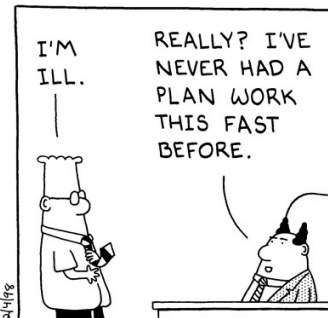
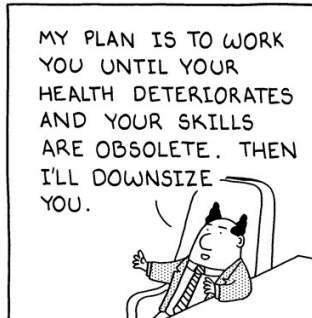
—Scott Adams, 2008

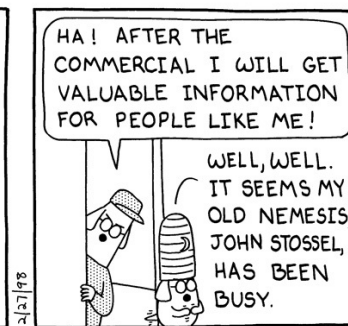
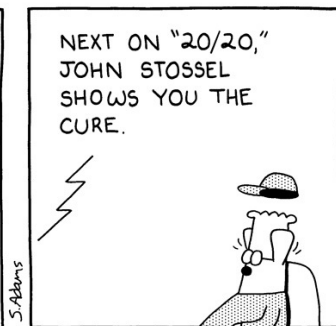


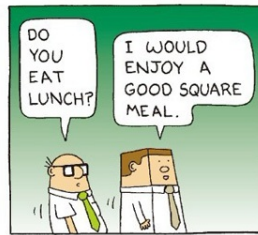
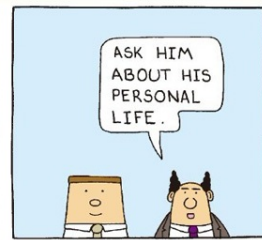
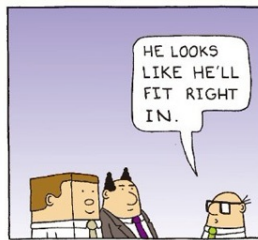


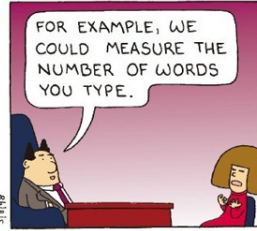
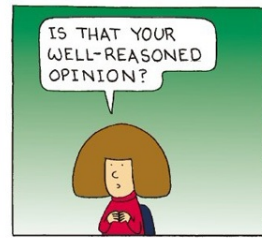
An author named Norman Solomon wrote a book called The Trouble with Dilbert. He got a lot of press. His main idea was that management tolerated Dilbert comics because they gave employees a harmless form of rebellion, and reduced the odds of a real one. Therefore, Solomon argued, Dilbert was really a tool of corporate overlords and not a champion of the working class as people assumed.







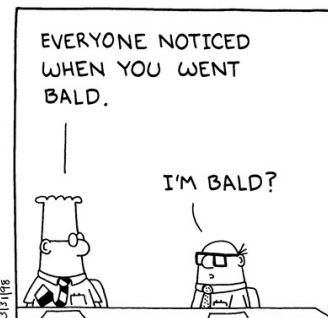
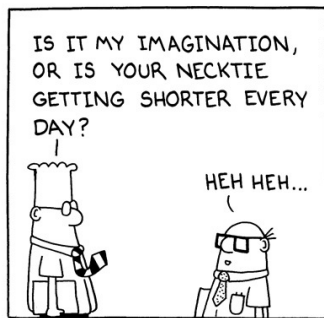
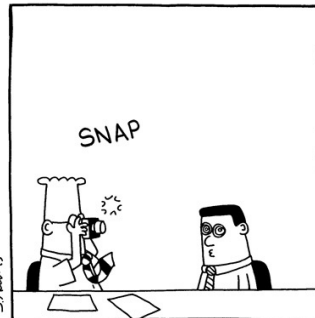
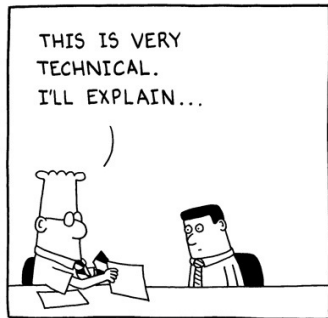


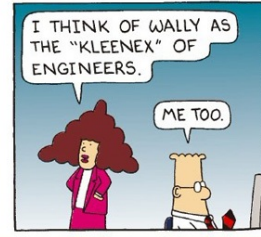
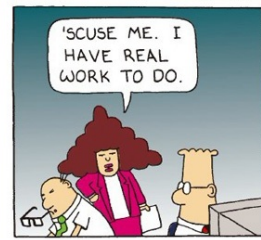
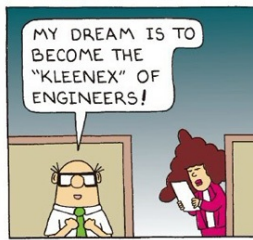




By 1998, the dot-com era was in full force, and it was difficult to write comics about hideous workplace events. I literally couldn't find people willing to complain. The suggestions for Dilbert started to take a far less angry tone, and it made my job substantially harder.

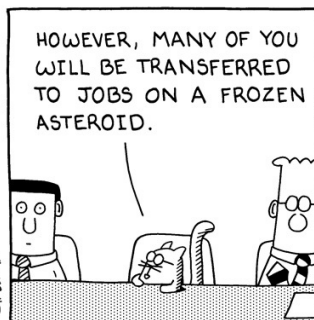
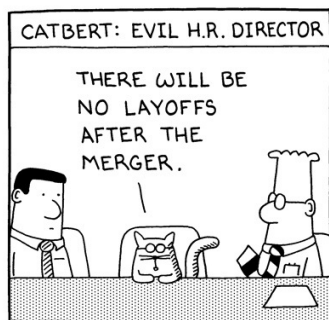
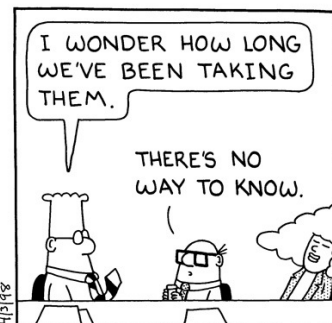
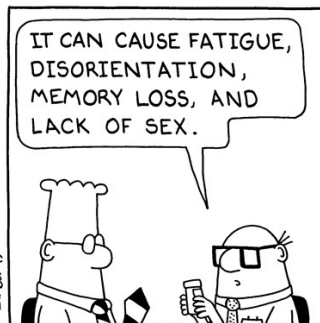
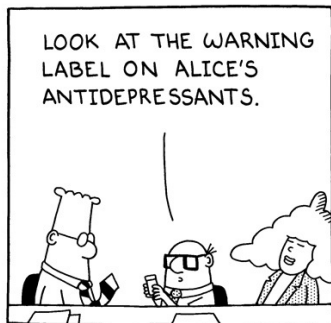


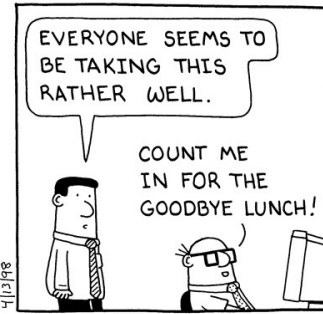
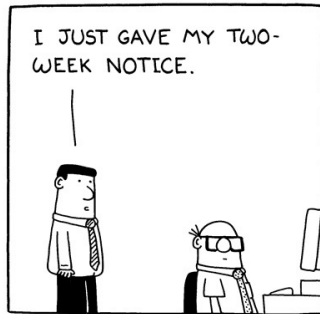




I hoped “porcelain cruise” would enter the vocabulary. I just checked the online Urban Dictionary and there it is. But I can’t be sure Wally was the source.

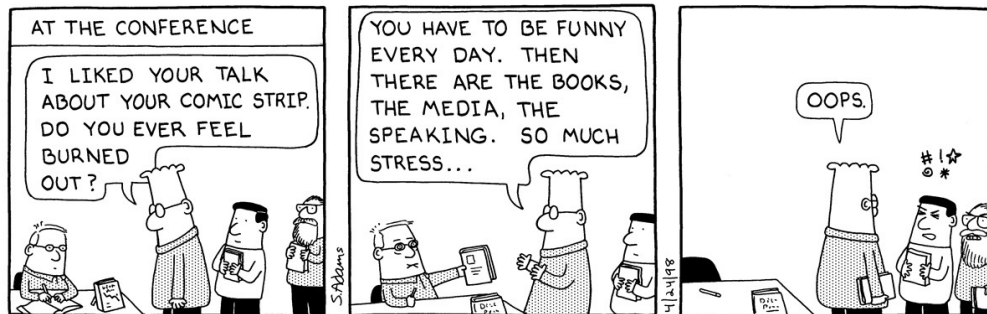




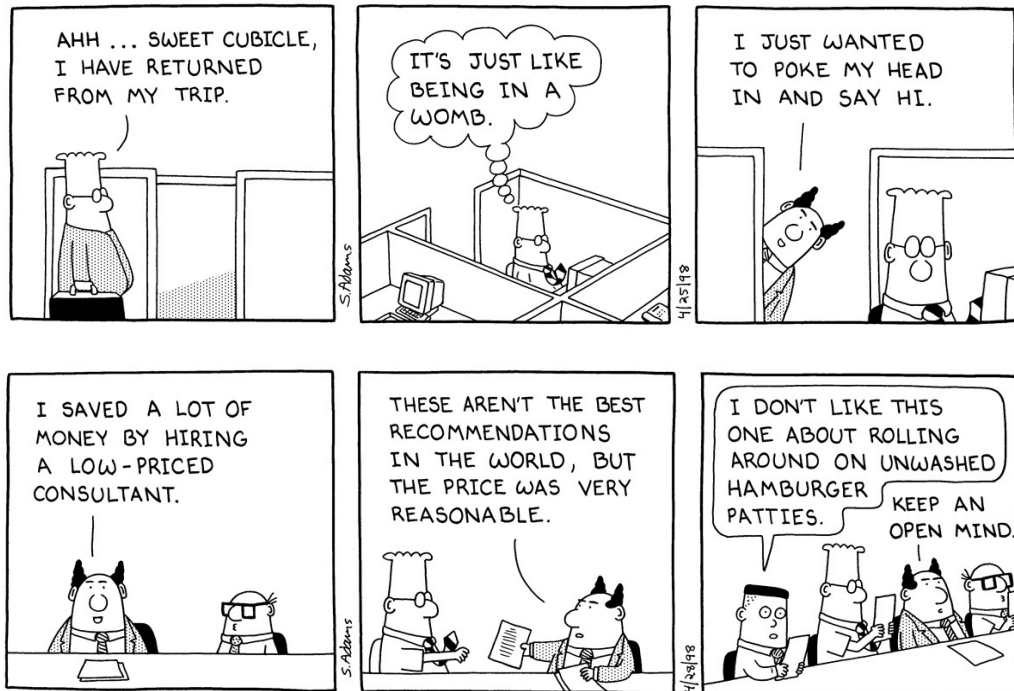




I've drawn myself into the strip a few times. During this period, I was working about eighty hours a week.

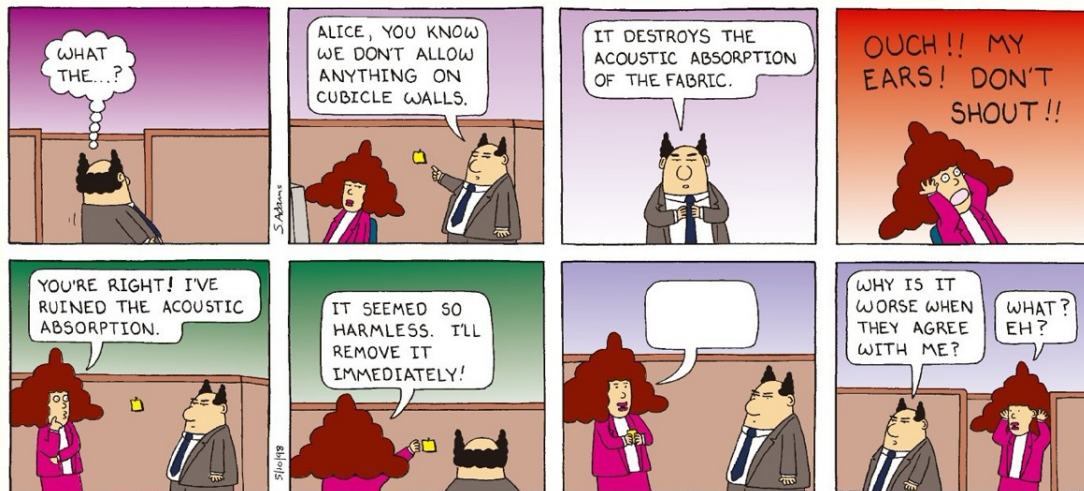


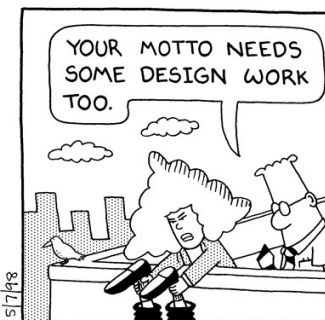
*The strip below is arguably the naughtiest comic I've ever drawn.
But it was subtle enough to fly through the editorial filters.*

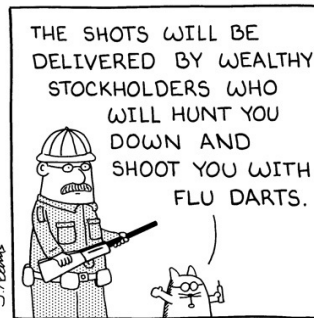
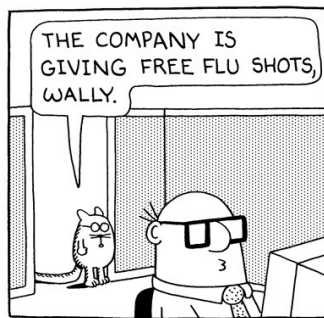
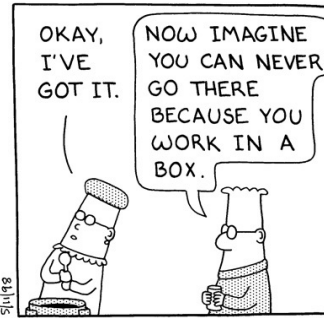
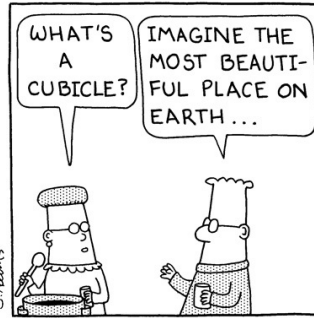
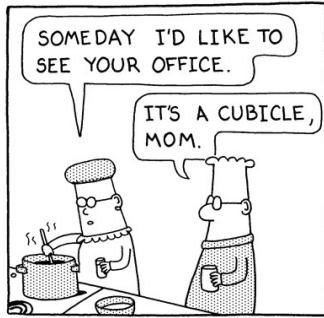




Amazingly, this comic was based on real events. Apparently the acoustic integrity of cubicles is an issue in some companies.





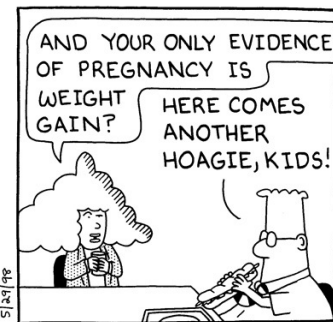
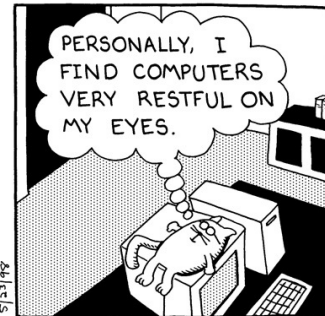


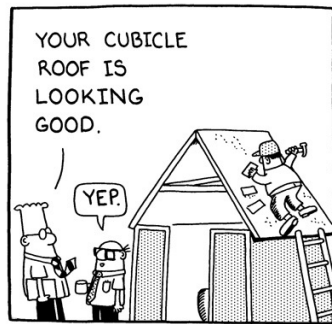


At this point in my career, I was getting flack from cartoonists who objected to my crass commercialism and minimal artistic talent. Bill Griffith, who does Zippy the Pinhead wrote an article about my lack of artistic integrity. This comic was my reply.

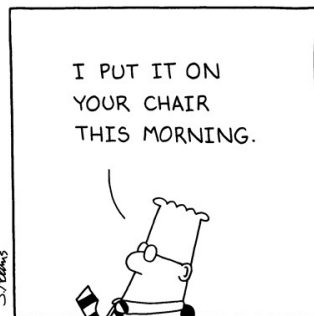


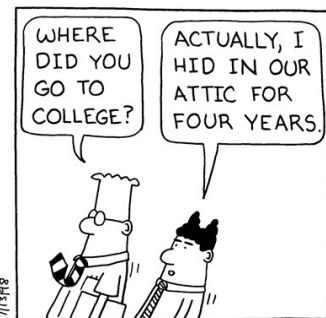
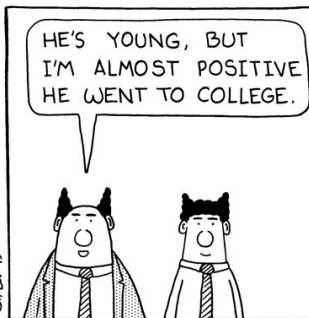
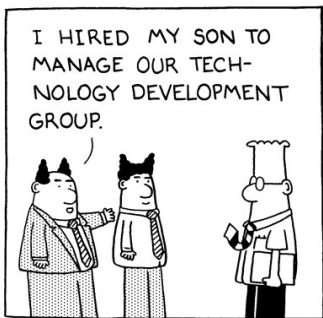
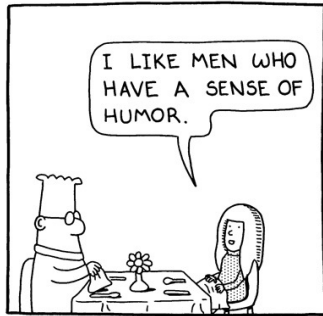


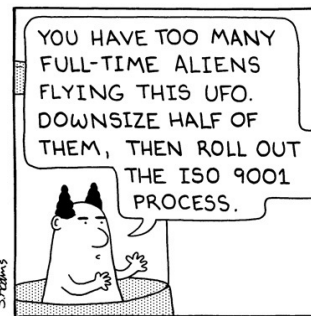
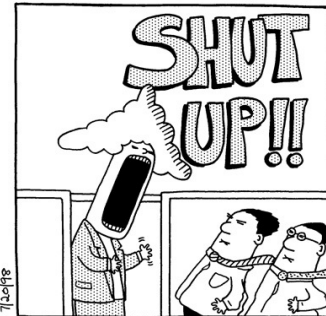
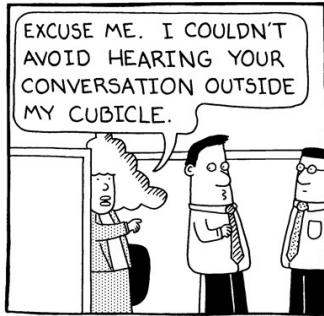


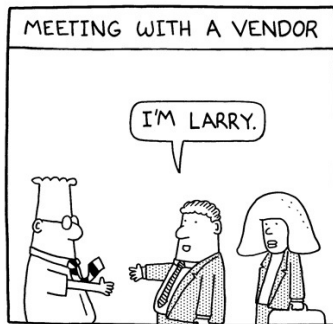
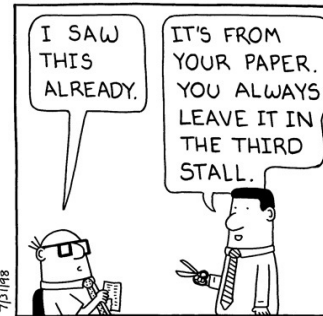








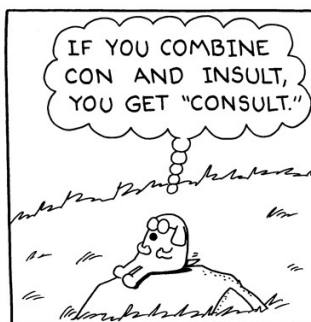
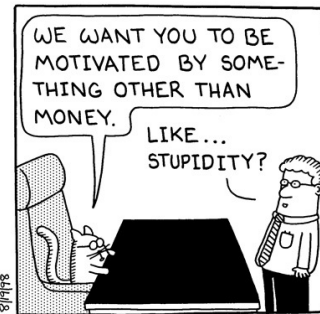


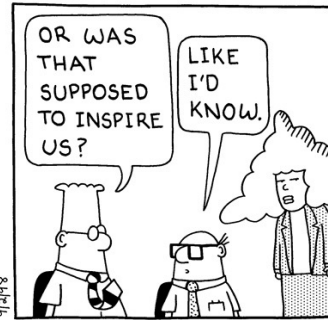


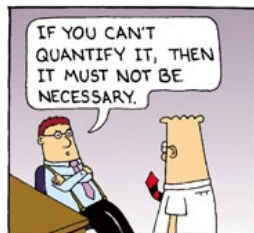
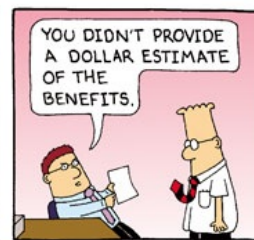


I added this "based on a true story" to the third panel because the strip is only funny if you realize this actually happened to someone. It did.

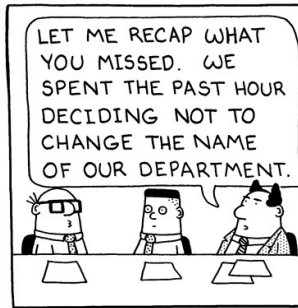


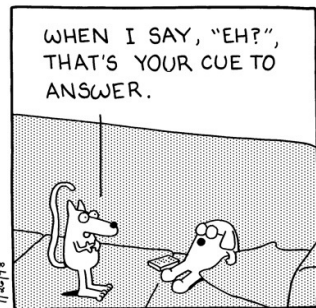
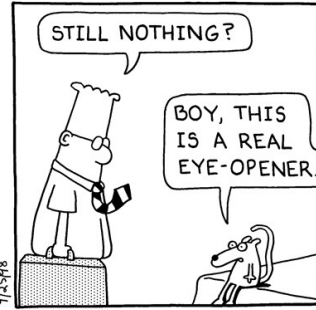
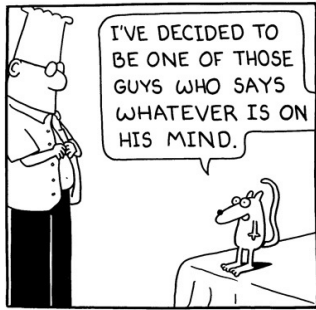


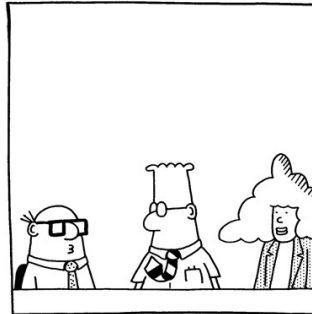


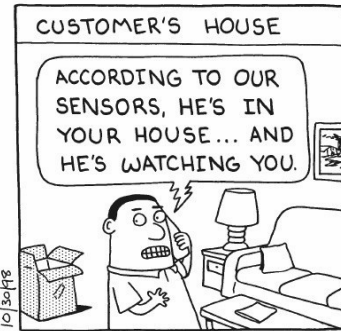




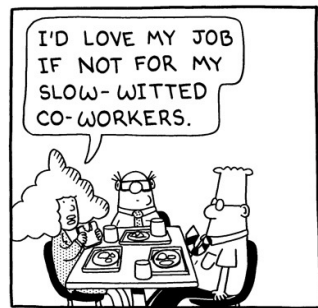
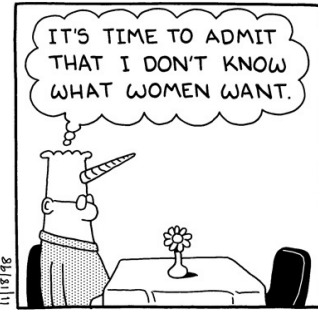
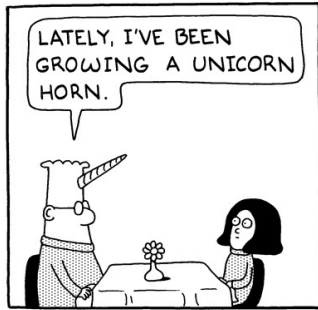


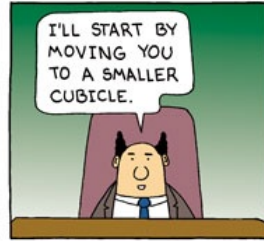




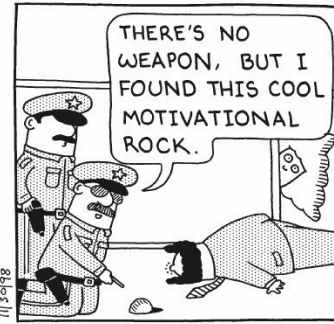


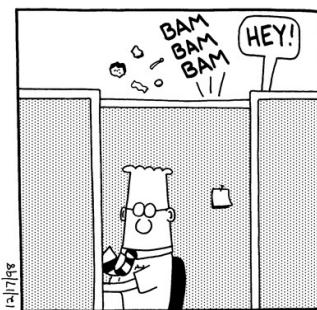
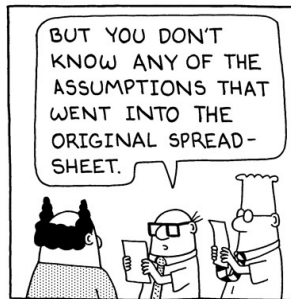


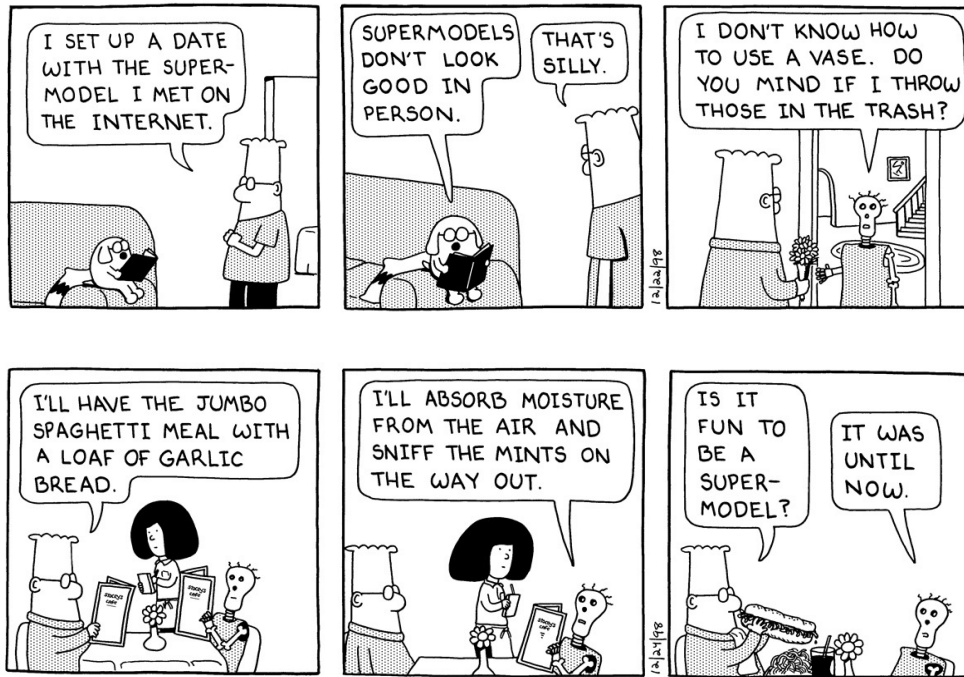




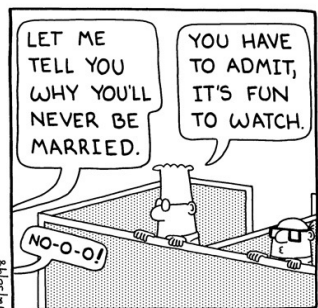
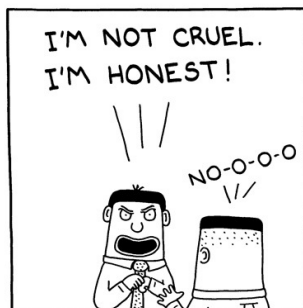
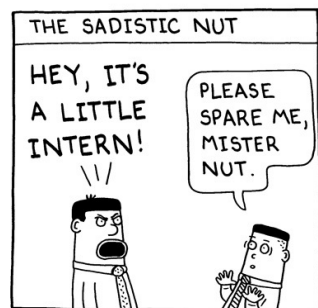
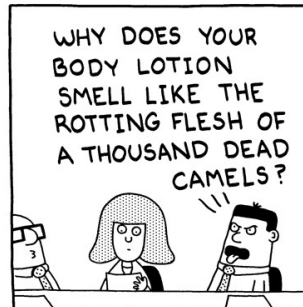


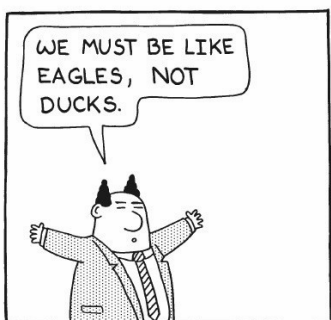


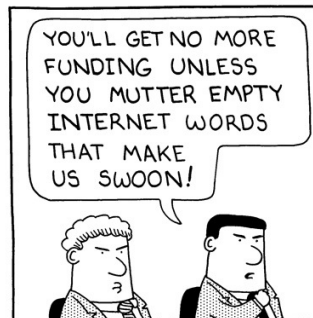


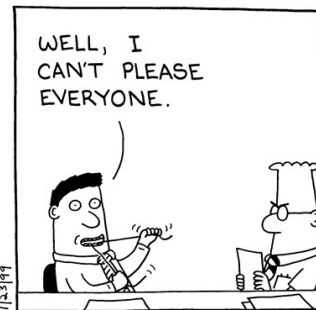
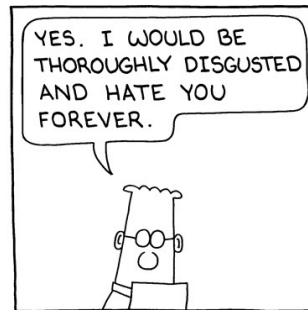
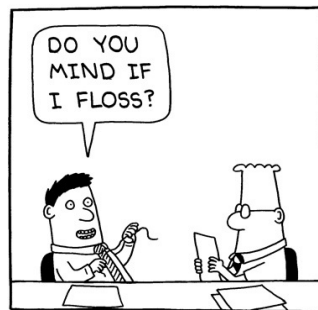
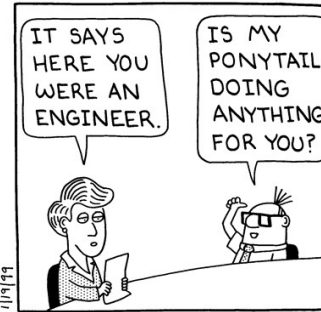
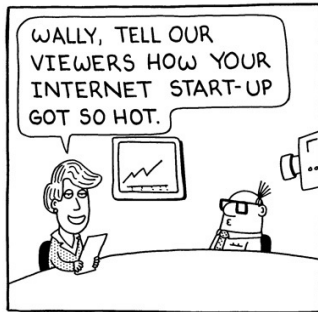


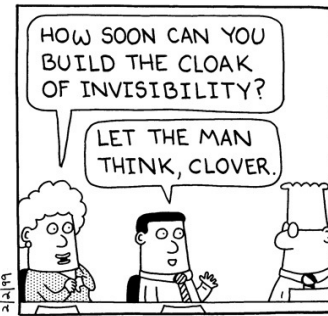
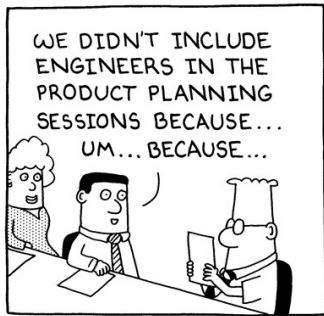
I felt the strip above was hilarious. I might have been the only one.

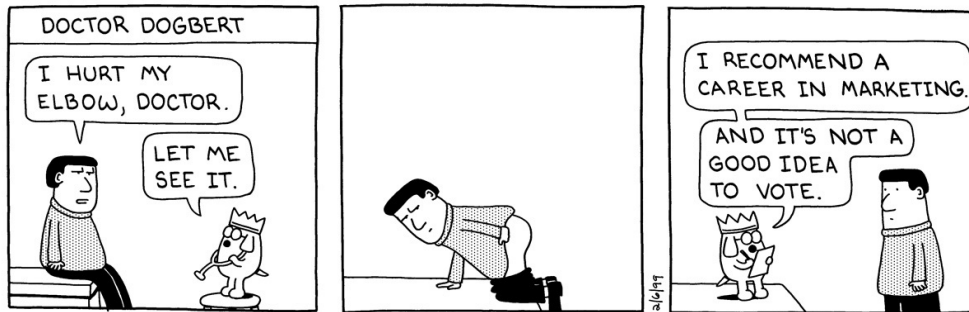




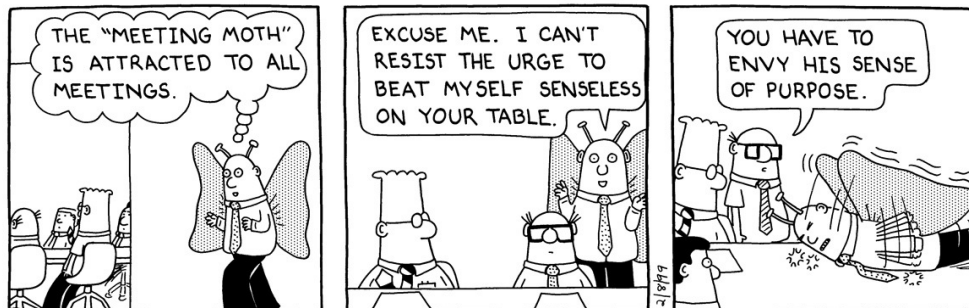


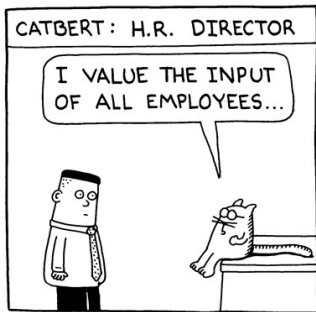
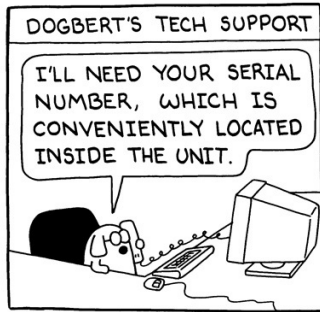


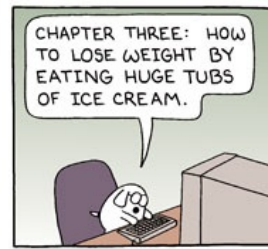
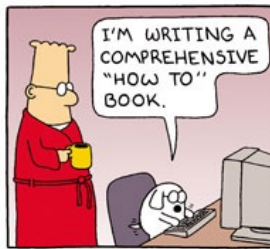




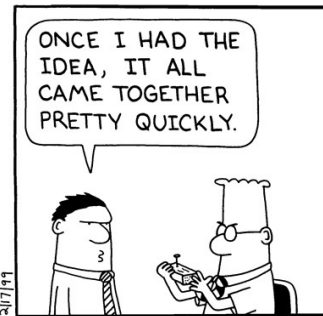
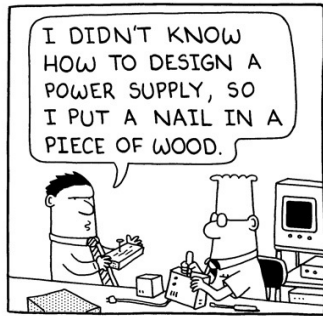
I don't know how this comic got published. It probably helped that the view is from the side. And maybe having a dog as the doctor helped too.

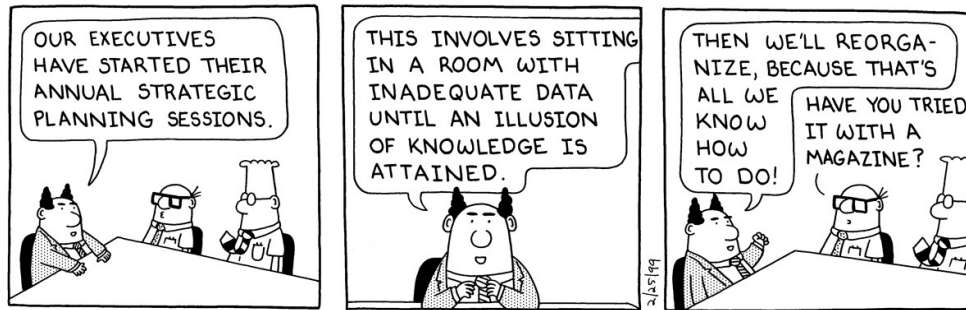




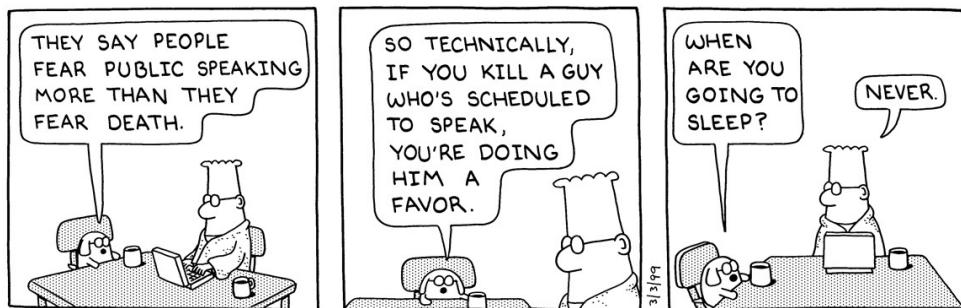


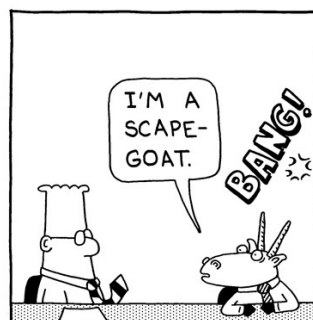
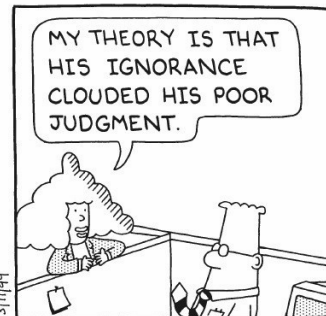


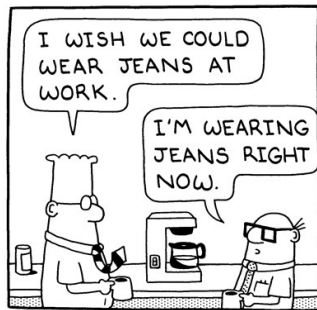
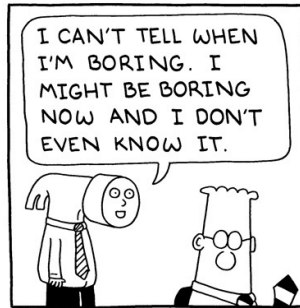
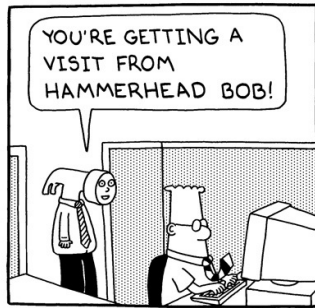


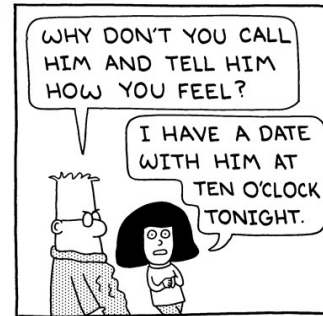


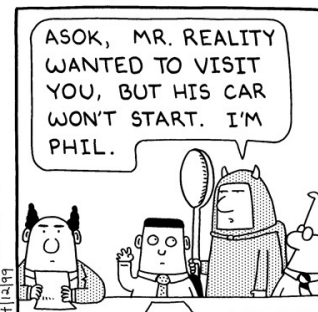
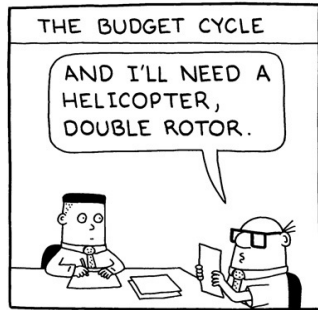
I learned that with a little bit of ambiguity, you can get away with anything.

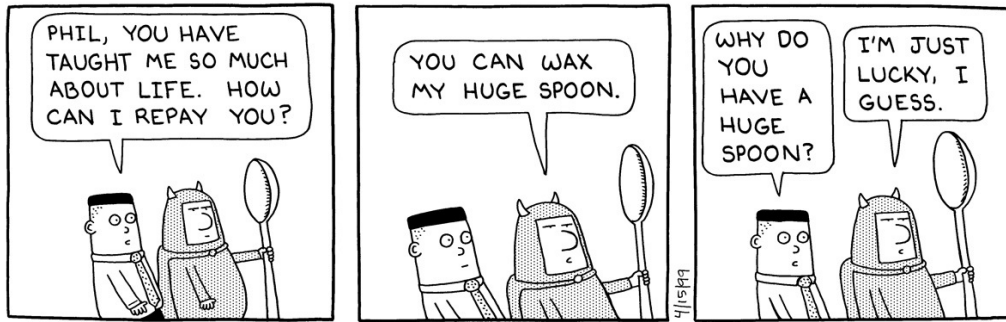




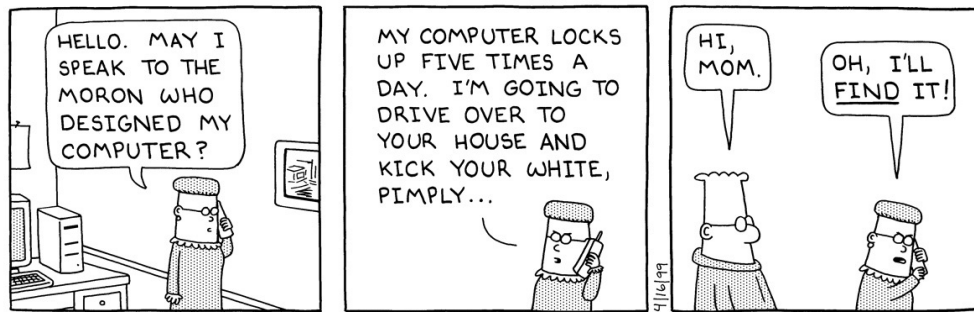






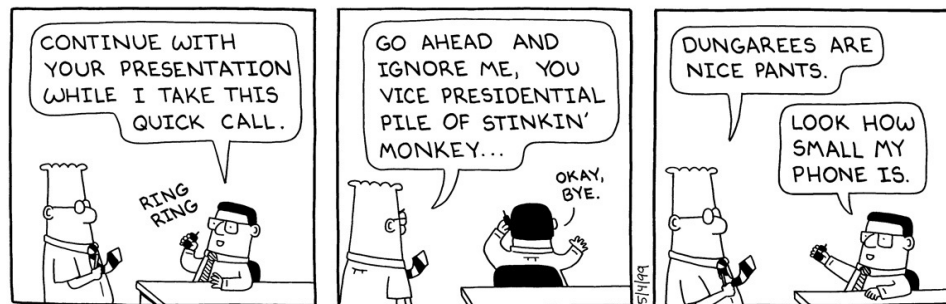


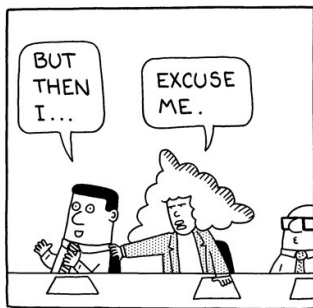
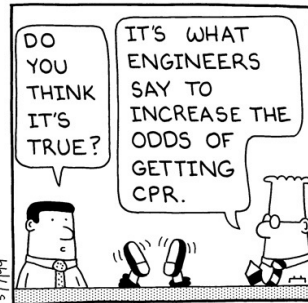
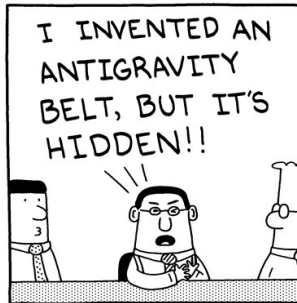
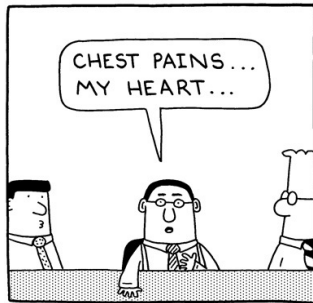
The strip above came out naughtier than I intended.

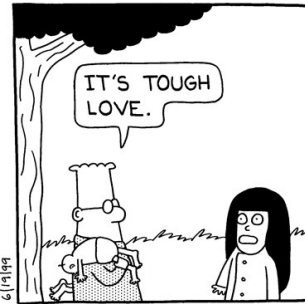
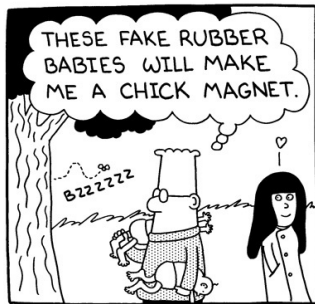
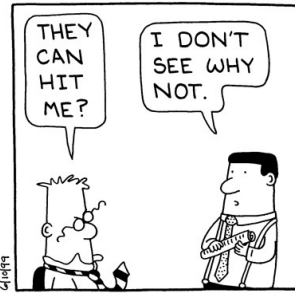
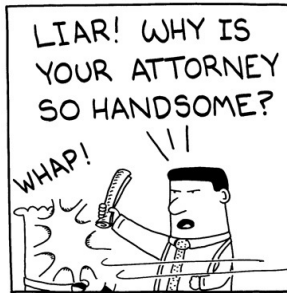


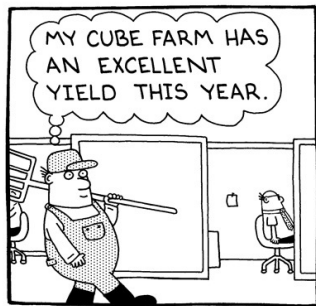
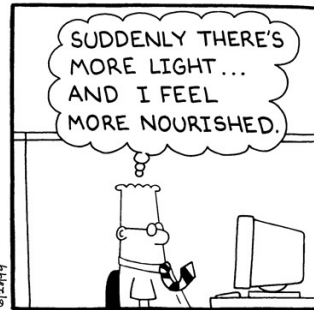
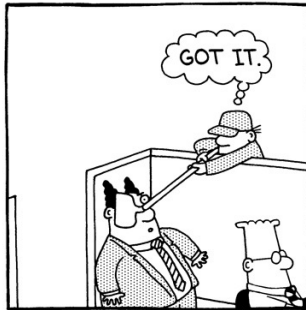
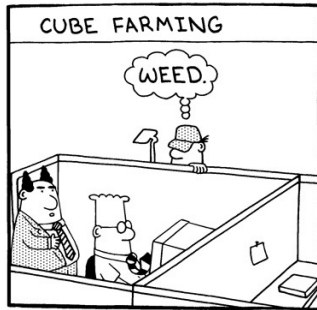


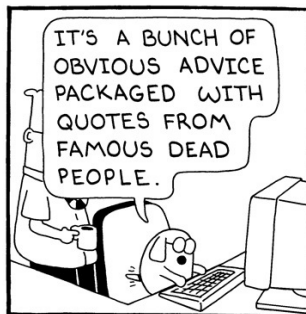
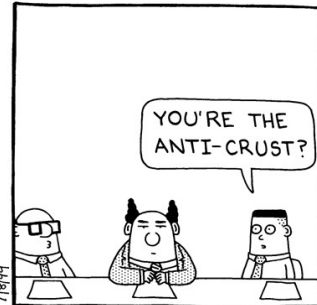
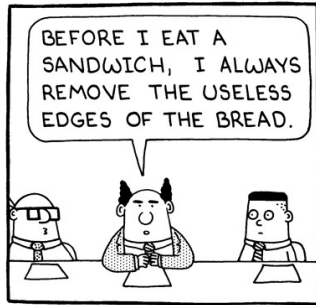
I was in search of the holy grail of newspaper comic writing: Using the forbidden word “crap” and getting away with it.

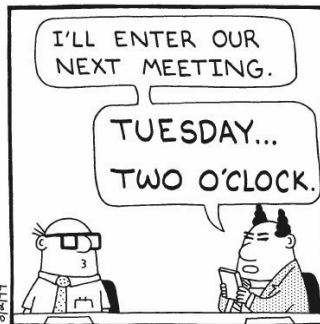
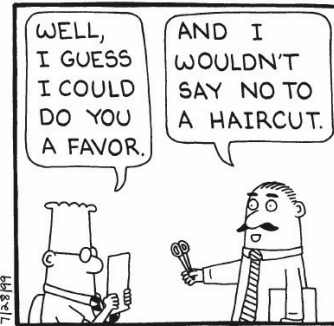
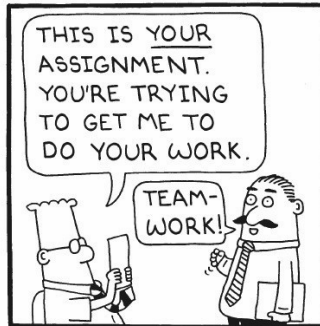


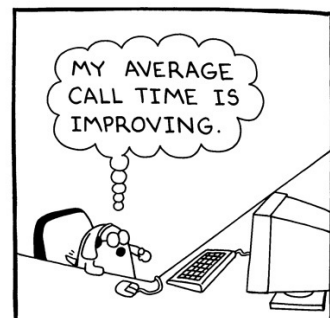
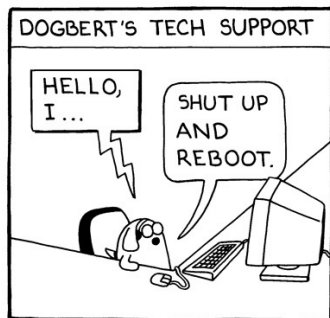


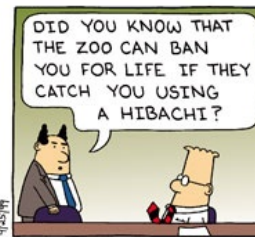
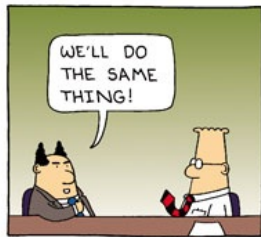










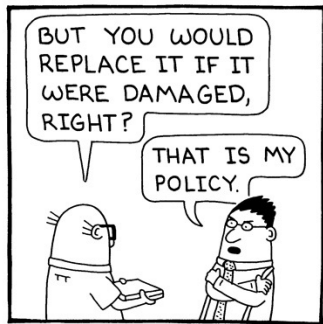
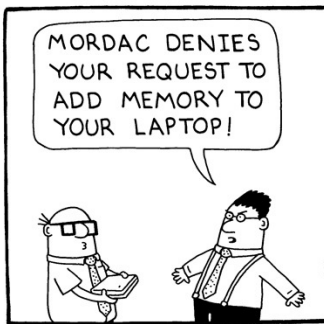
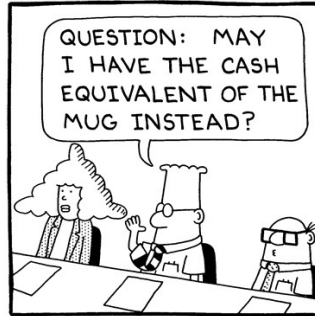


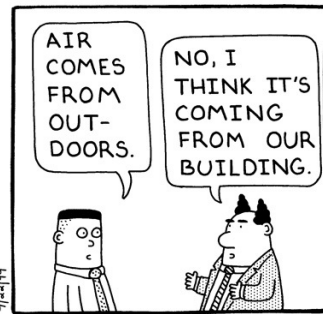
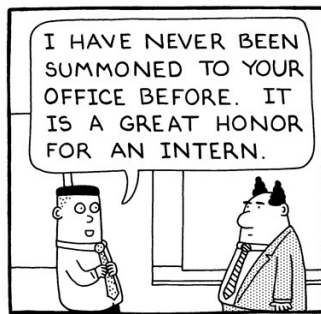
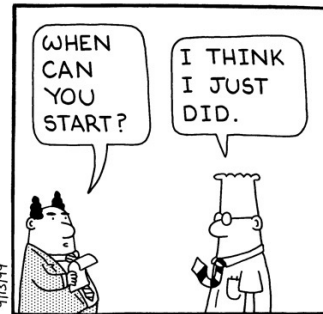




"Crappus" is Latin for a word I wasn't allowed to put in comics.



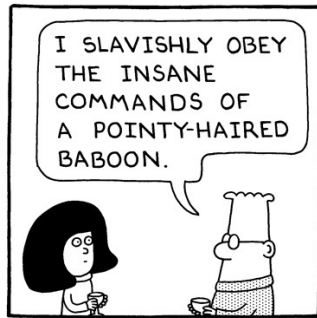


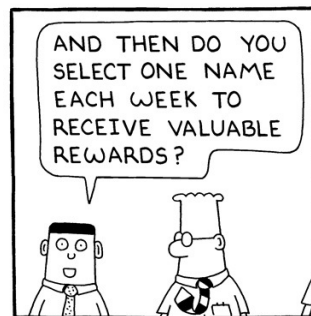
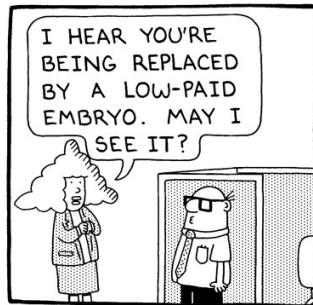


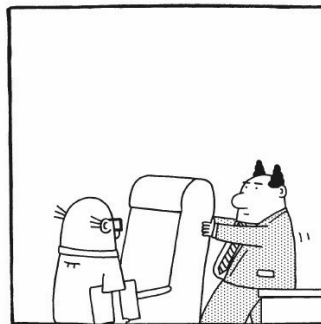
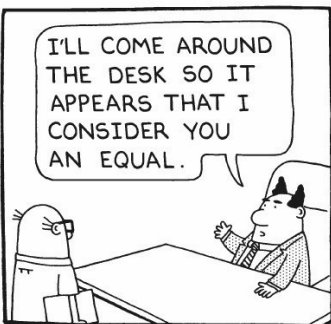


The comic above is based on a real event. It isn't nearly as funny if you don't know that.





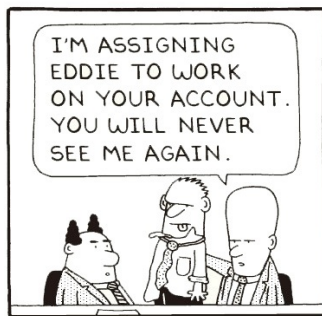
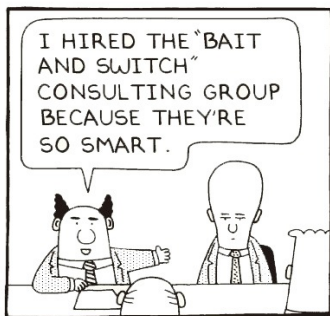
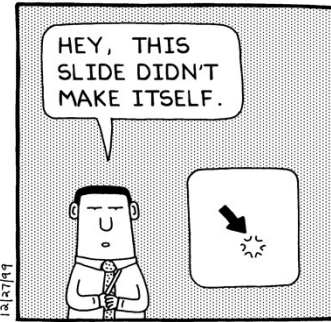
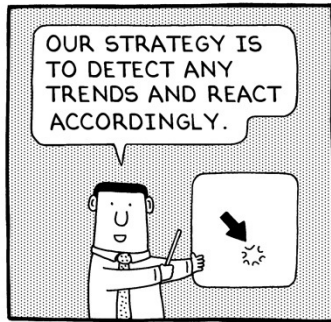






Sometime around this period, I stopped employing an artist to ink the letters, and started doing it myself on the computer. I didn't have that process worked out yet, and you can see that the space between lines of text is irregular.

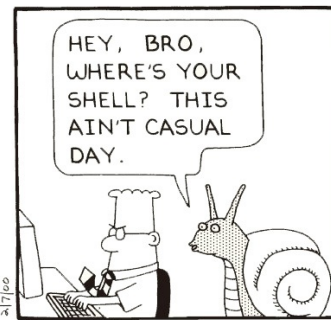
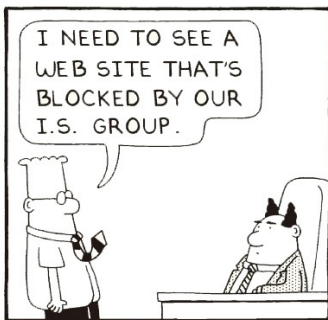
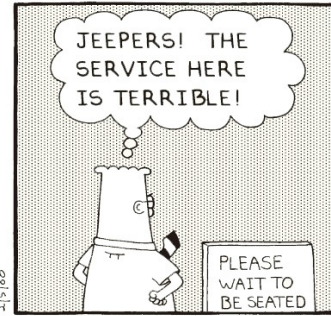






As I reviewed the archives to put this book together, I realized I have done some version of this joke at least three times.

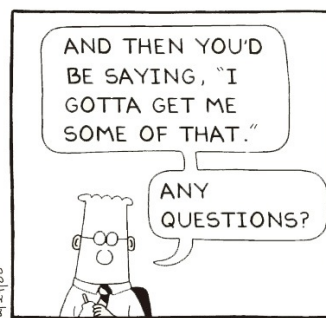
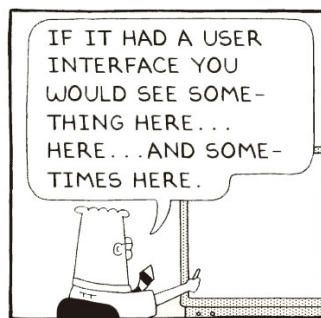
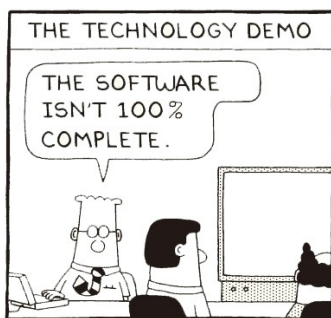
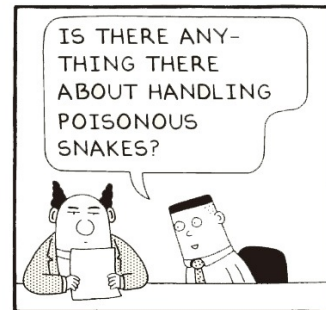


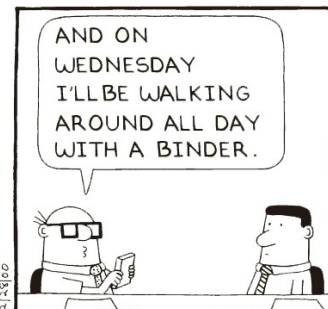
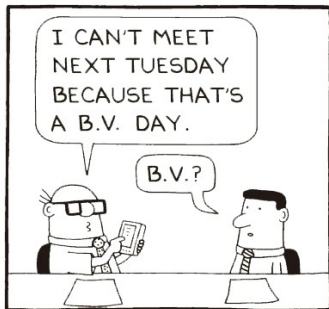


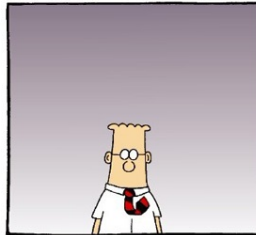
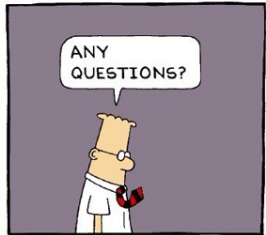
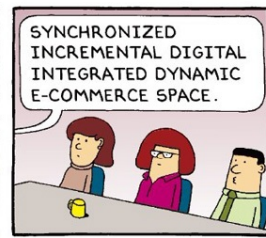
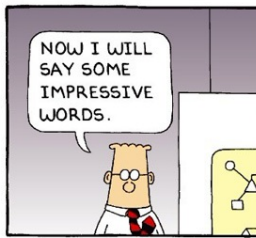
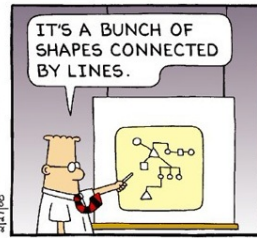
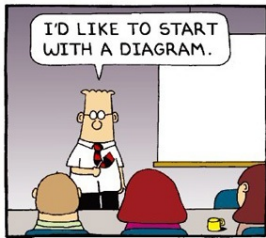


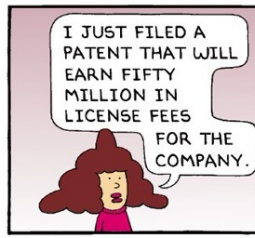
The strip above ran in newspapers, but it isn't how I originally drew it. The original was deemed too naughty. The one that follows below is my original version. It's punchier, don't you think?

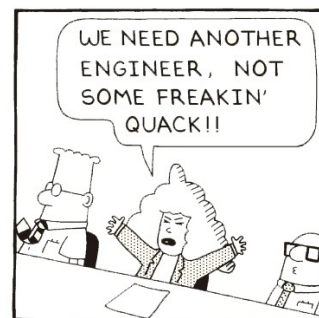
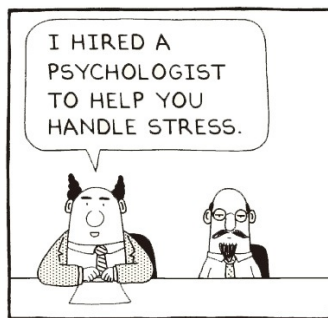
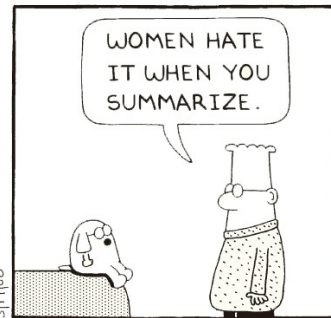
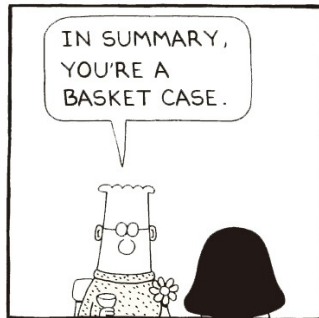


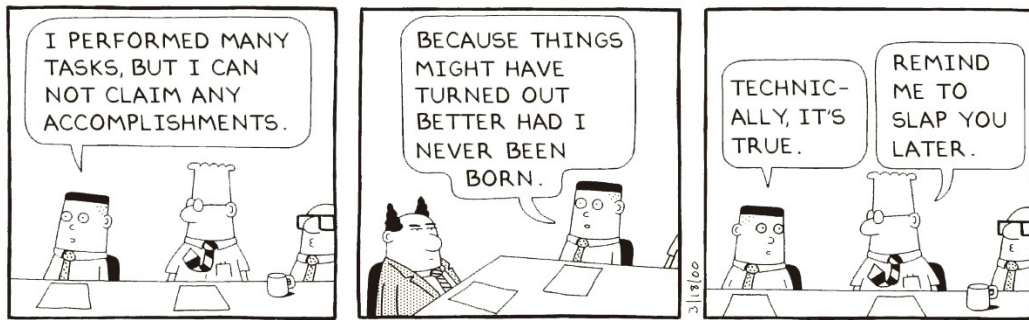




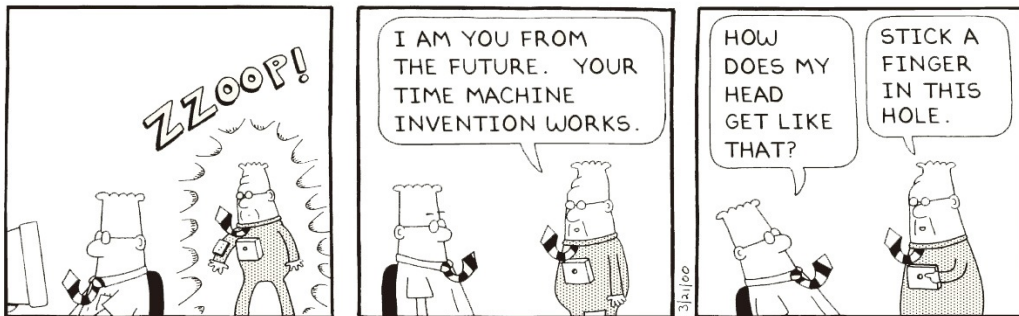


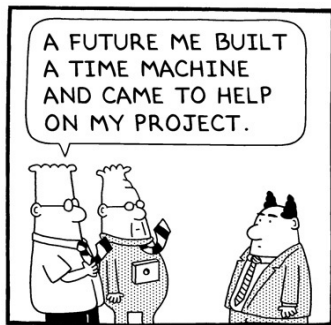


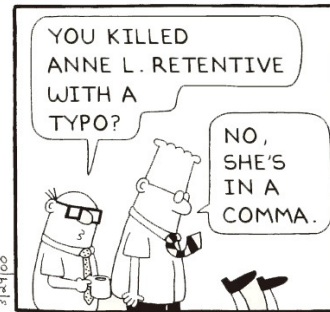
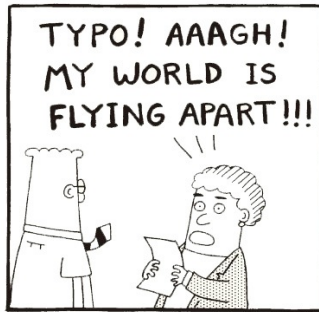




A surprising number of people asked me to explain the strip below. I guess it is too recursive.

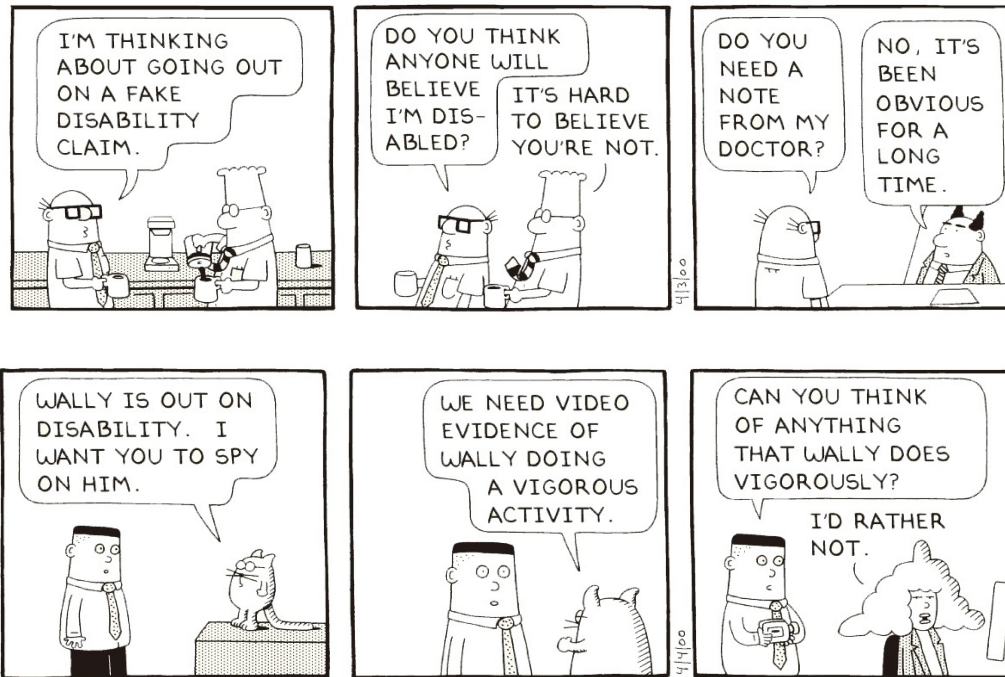




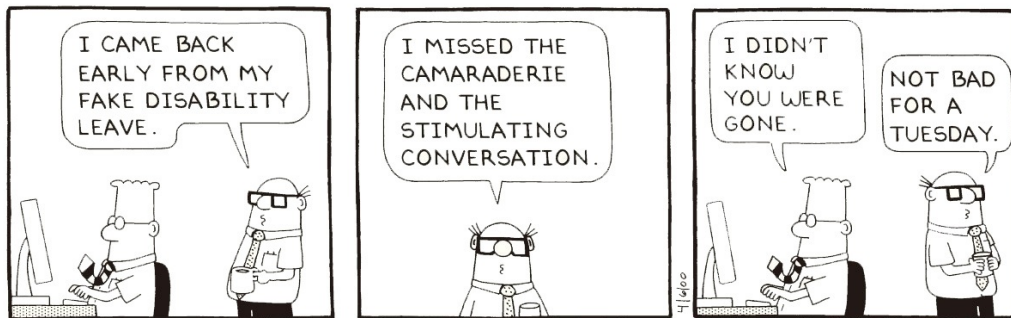






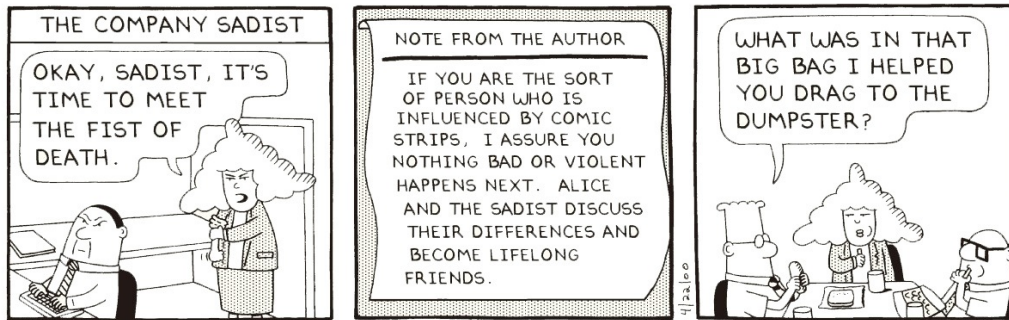


There's an art to making references that people with impure thoughts recognize as impure and people with pure thoughts don't notice.



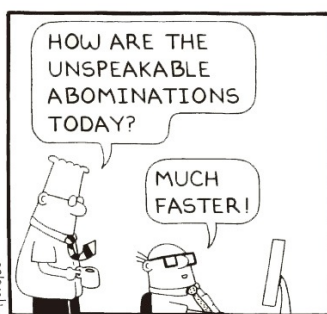
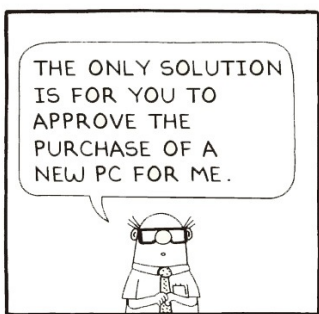
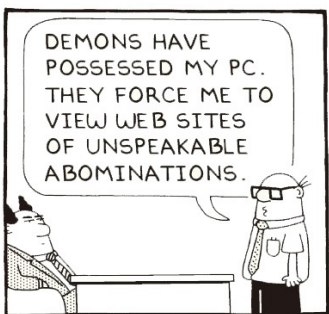
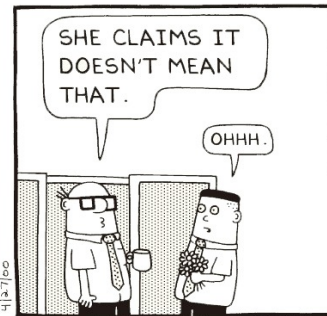
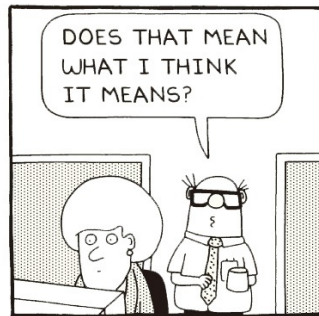
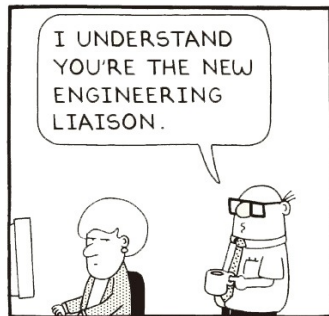
One of my discoveries about writing dialogue is that in real-world conversations, people often say things that seem to have no correlation to what the other person said. People are in their own little worlds.

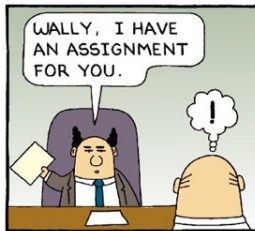




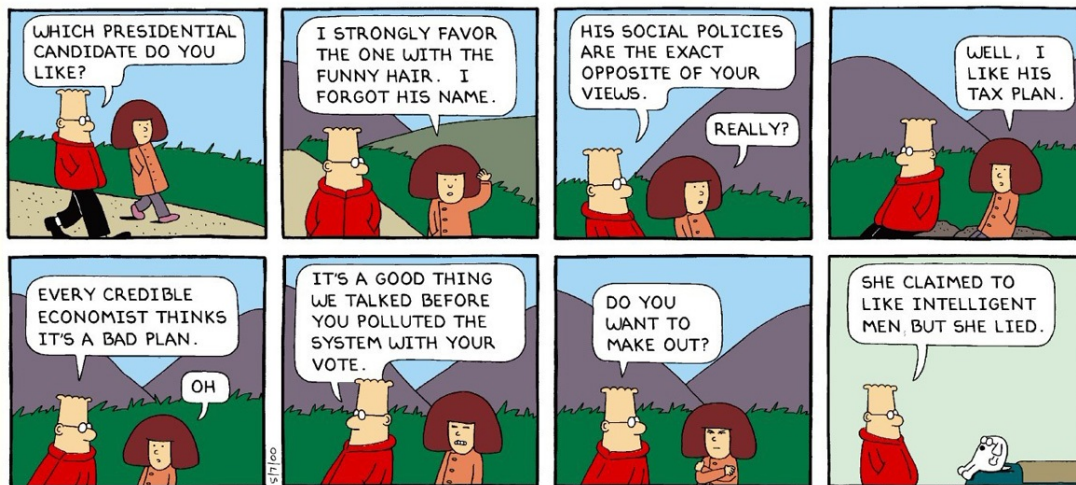
It's convenient to have a character that is willing to kill off a character I'm done with.

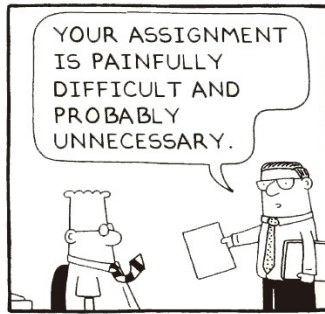


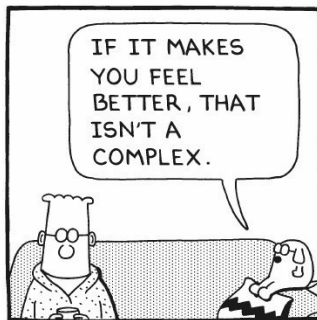
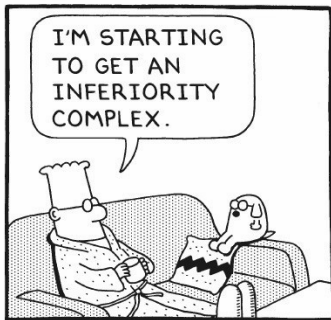
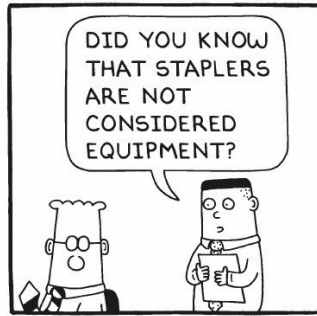


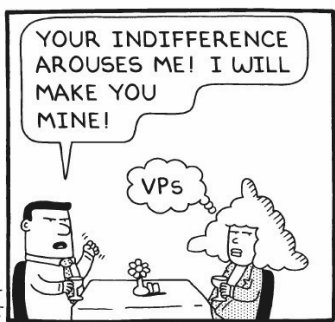
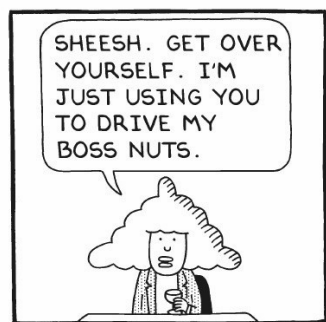
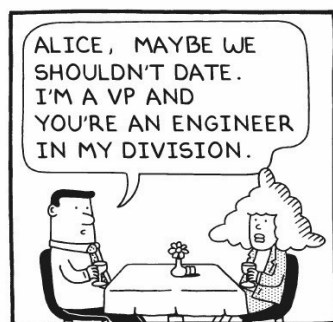
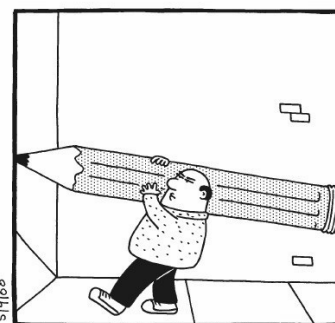
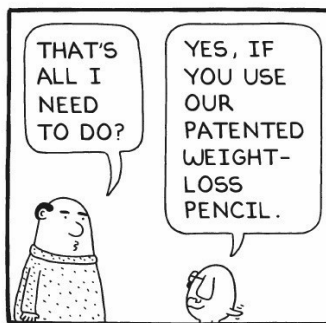
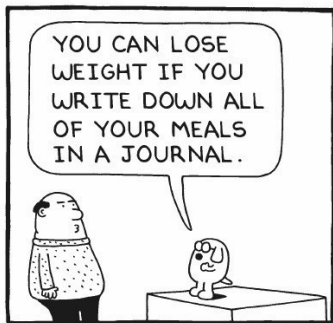


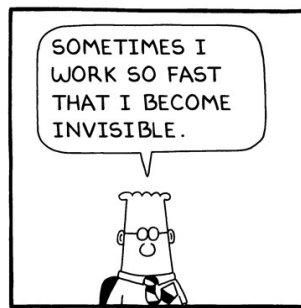
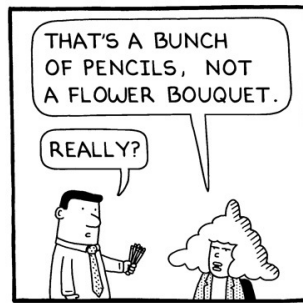
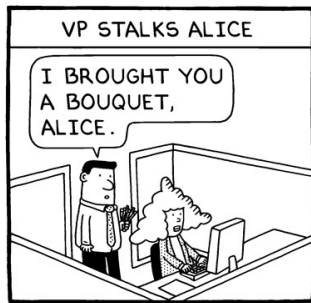
One of the challenges of cartooning is coming up with situations that are more absurd than reality. This comic is based on a conversation I had with a friend, without the invitation to make out.

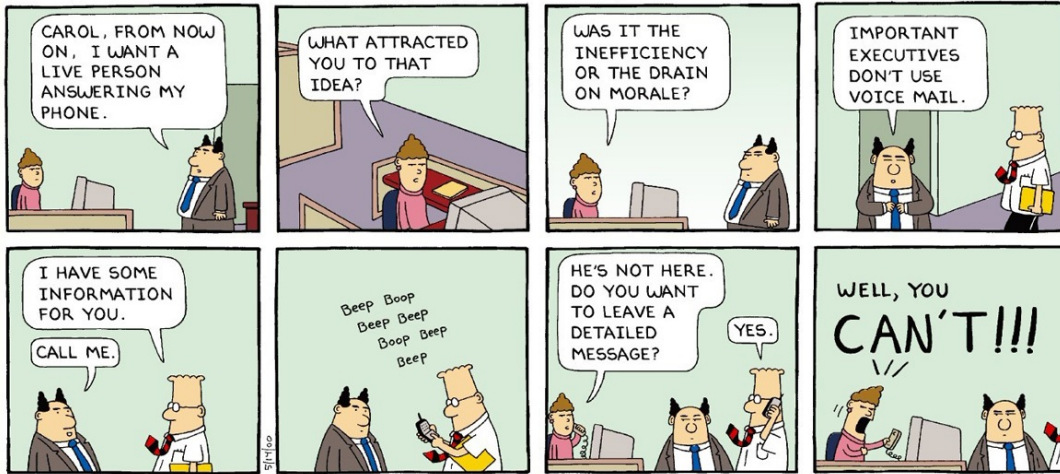


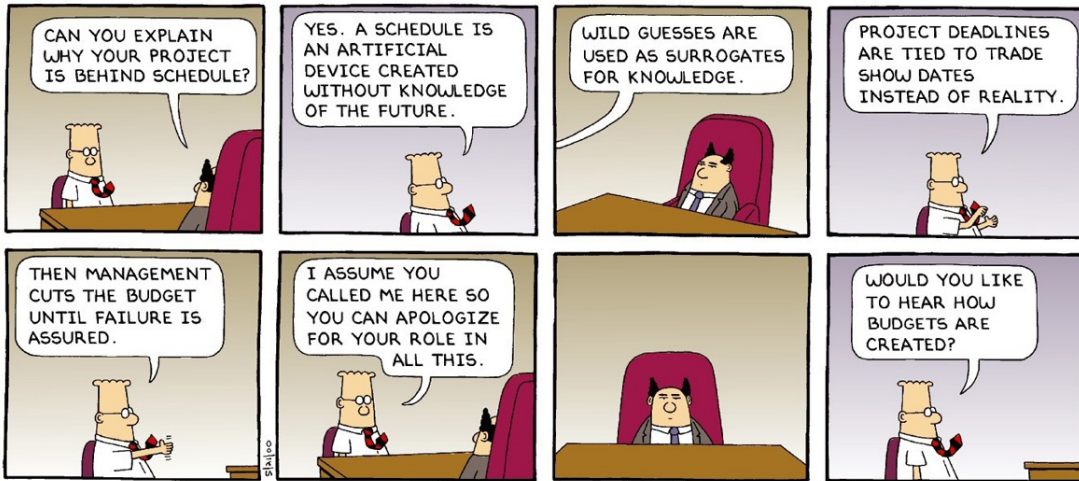










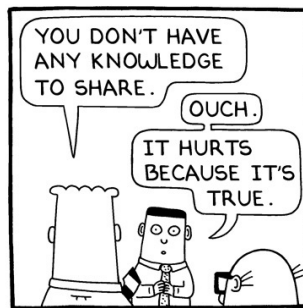
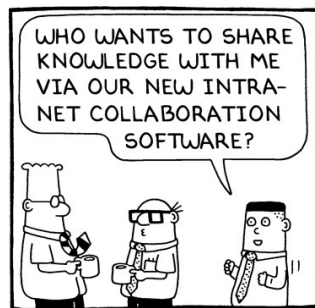
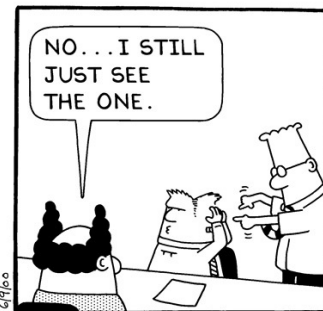
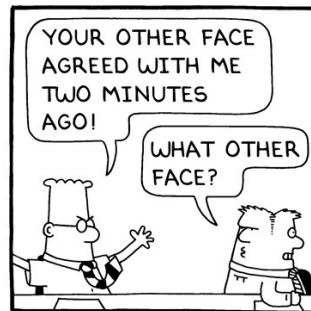
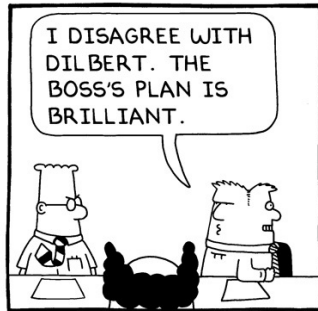


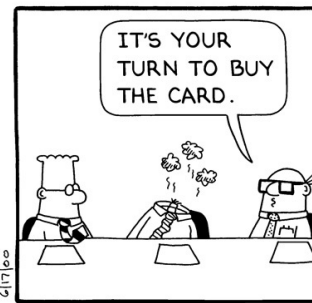
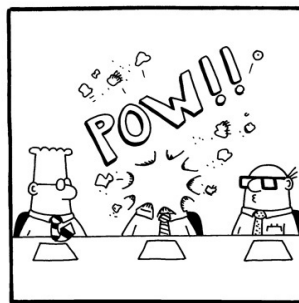
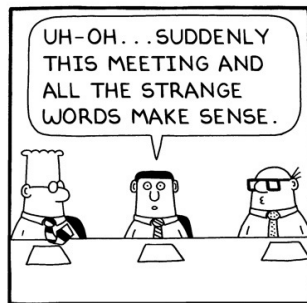


On this day, many cartoonists mentioned the Peanuts comic strip as a tribute to Charles Schulz. In this comic, the cashews are offered in exchange for a urine sample; in other words, they are pee nuts. I don't think anyone made the connection. It isn't my best work.

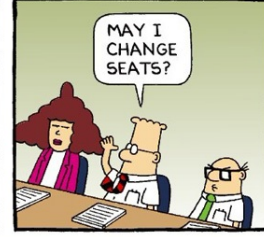
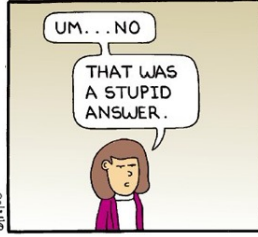


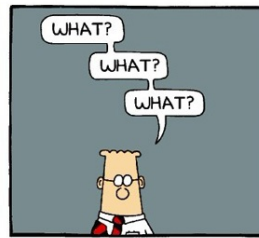


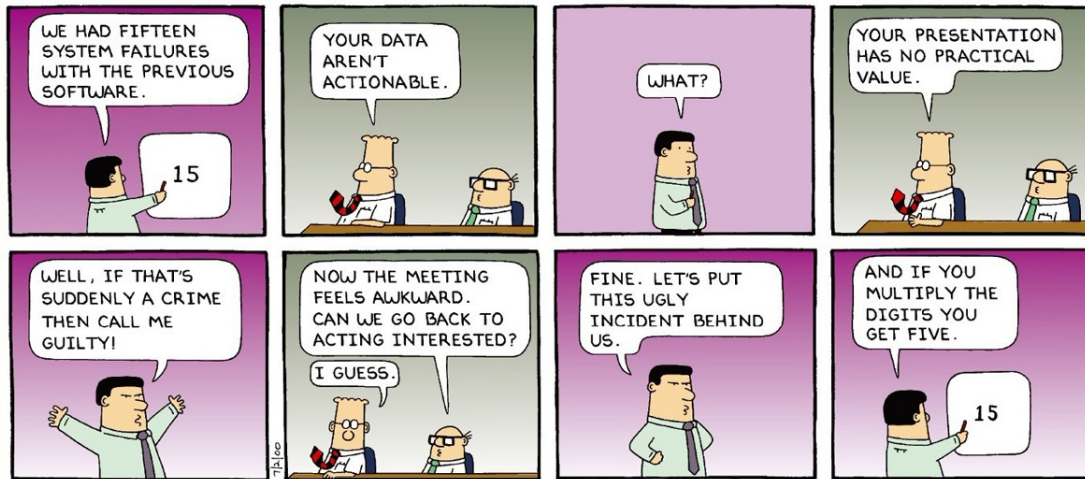






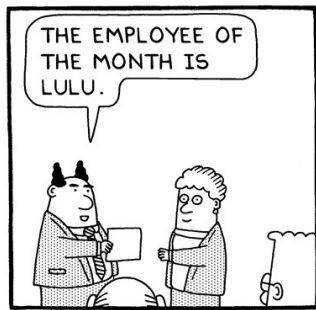








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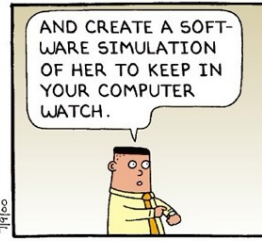
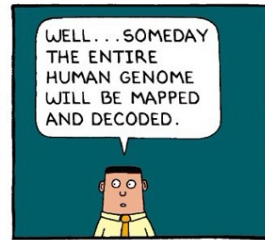
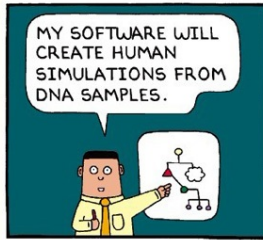


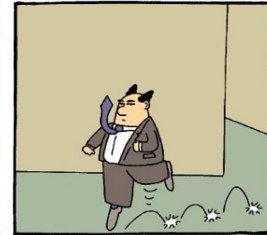
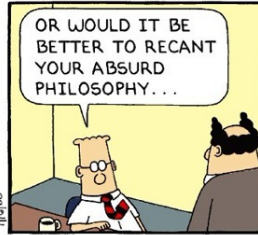
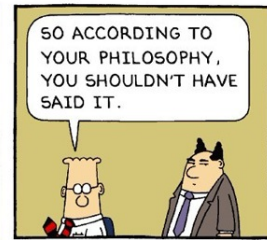
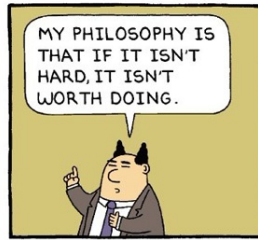
7/17/00

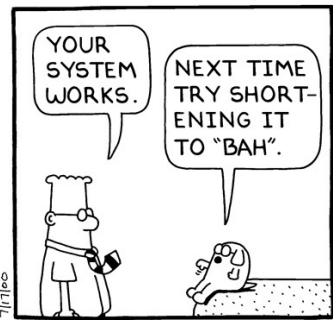
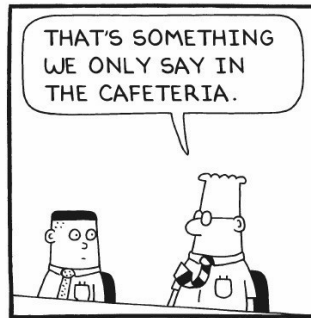


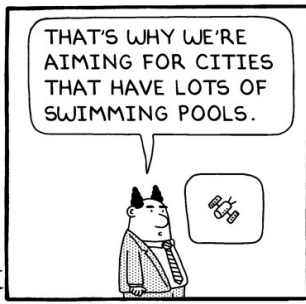
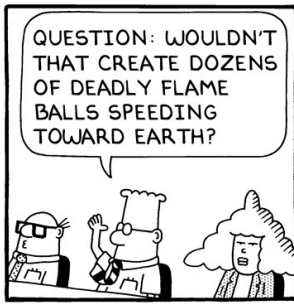
I have a casual hobby that involves identifying sentences that have, in all probability, been written or uttered only once in human history. "You frighten my hoagie" is probably one of them.

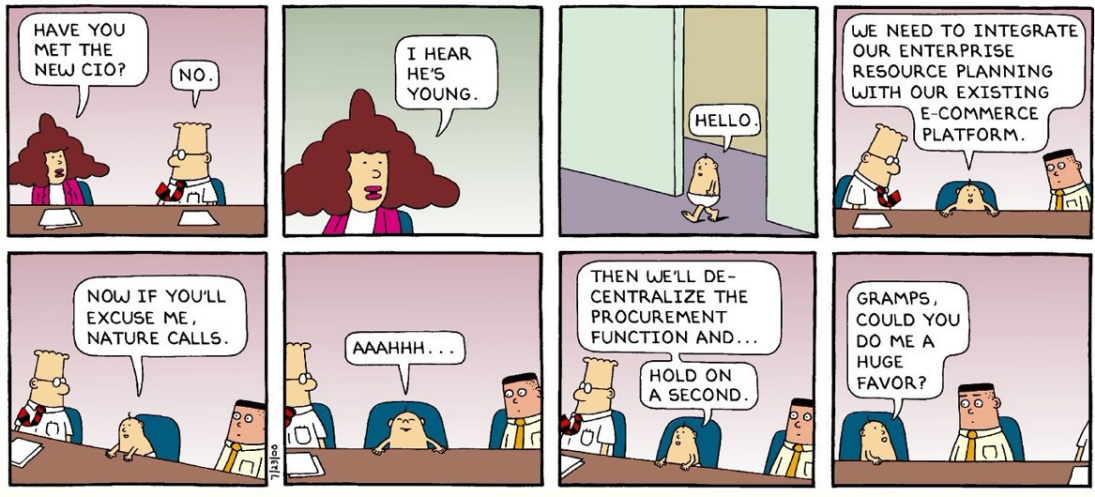






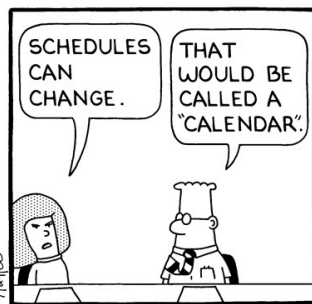
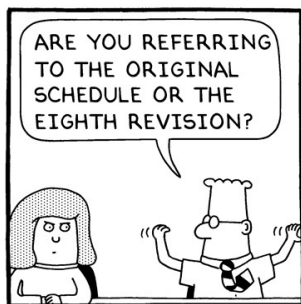
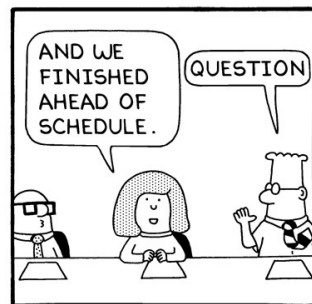
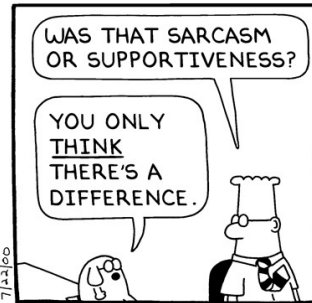
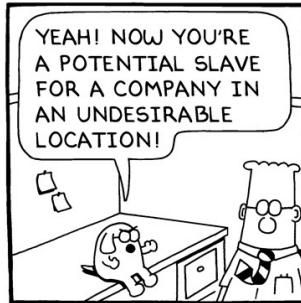


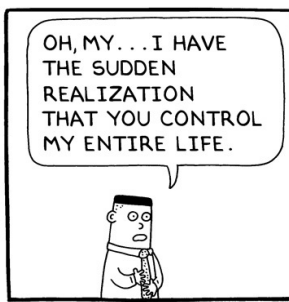
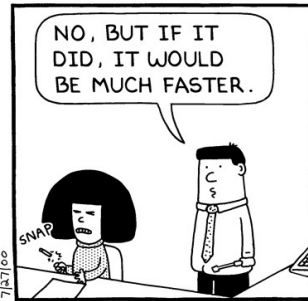
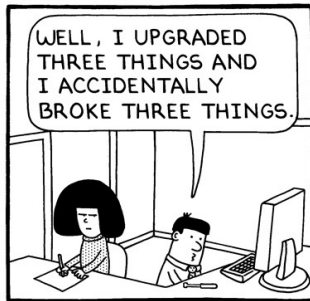


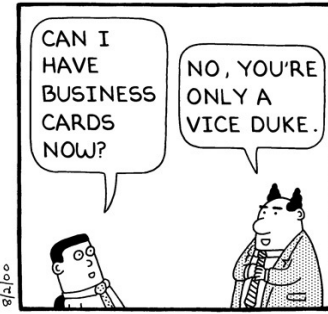
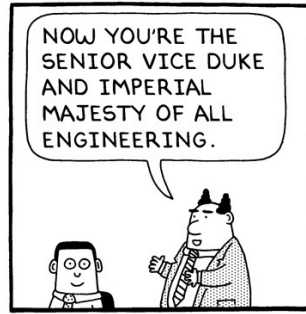


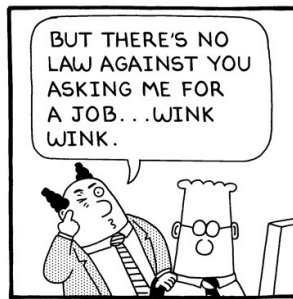
I had to redraw the last panel because the original showed the top of Wally's butt crack. Apparently butt cracks are offensive to people who have no mirrors.



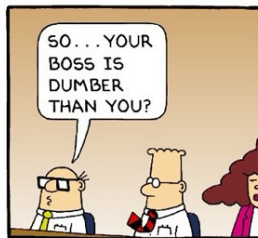


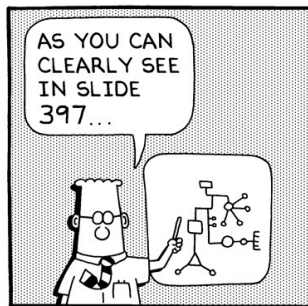
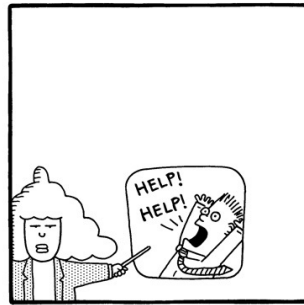




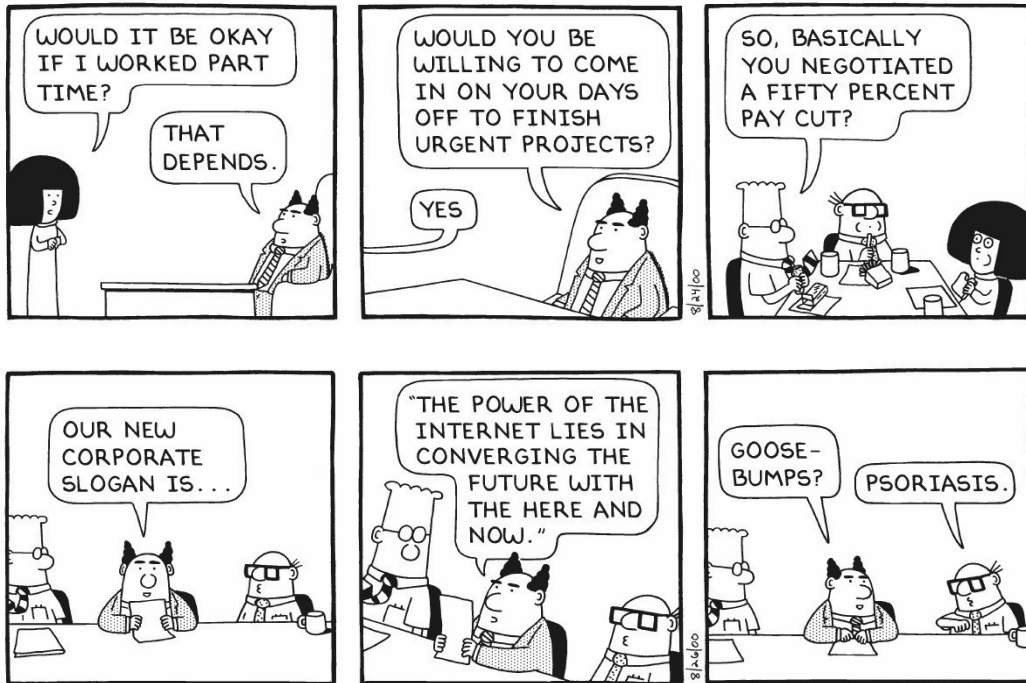










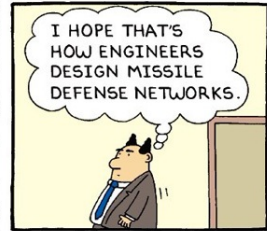
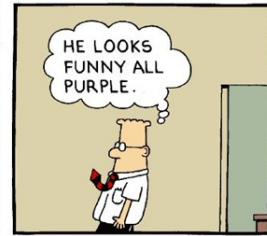
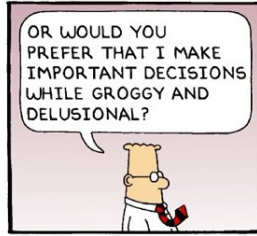


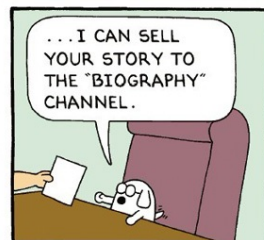
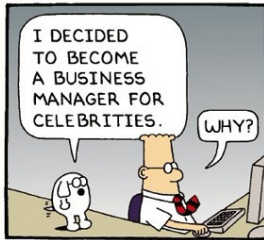
This slogan was taken from an actual company, verbatim.

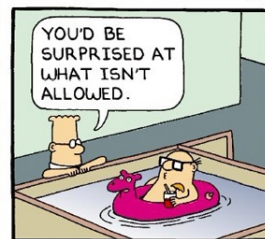
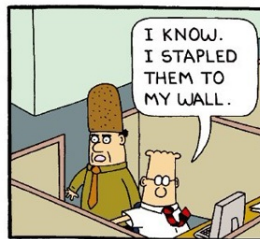
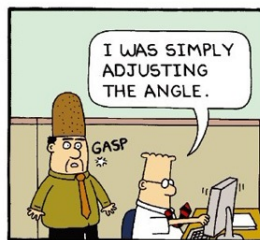
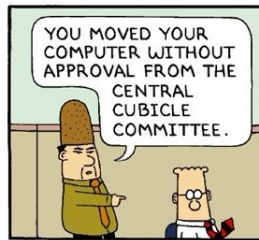


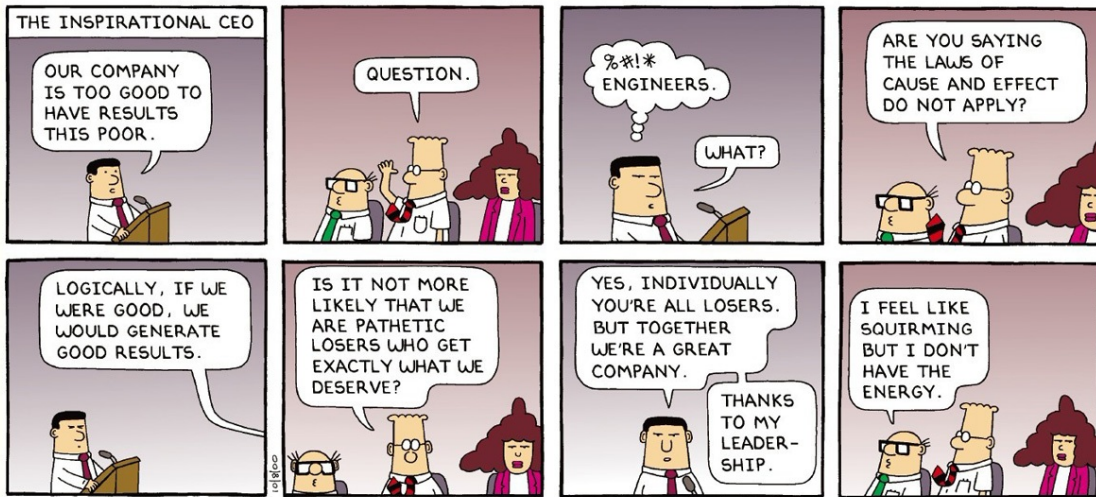
A big part of cartooning is picking the right words. In this case, I doubt there is a funnier word than "moist"..

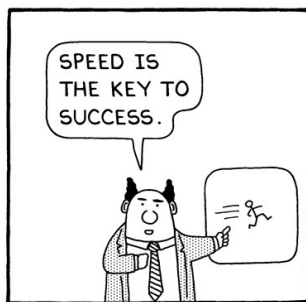




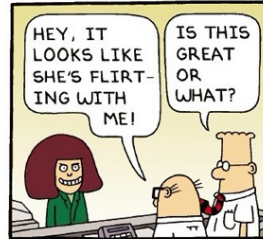
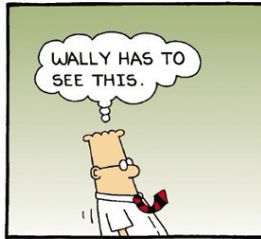
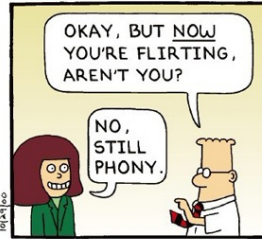
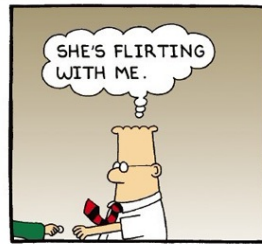




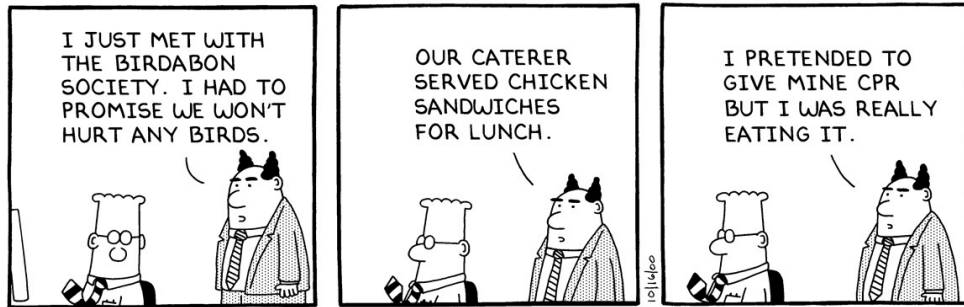




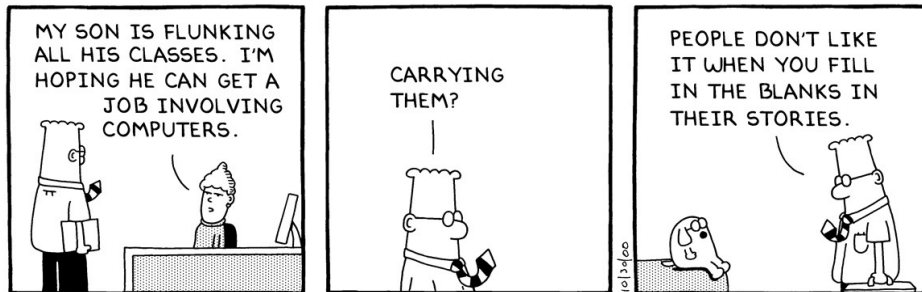


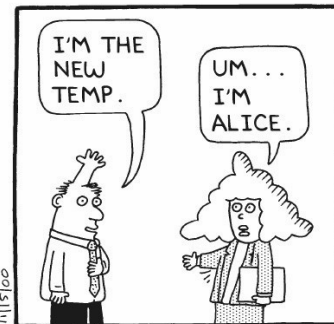
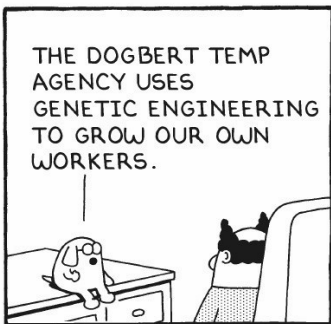
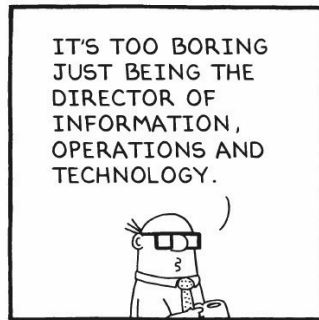


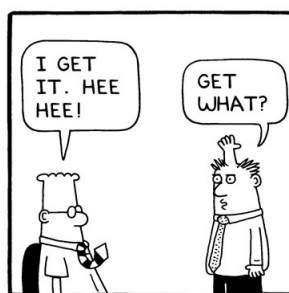
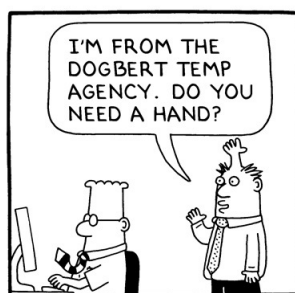


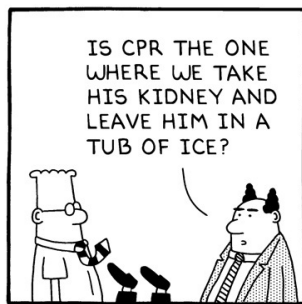
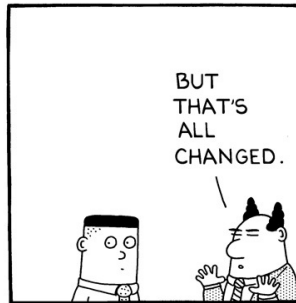
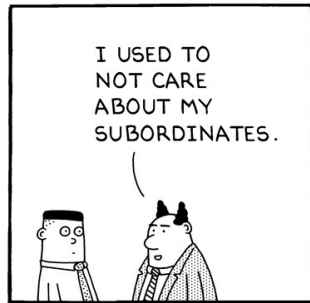


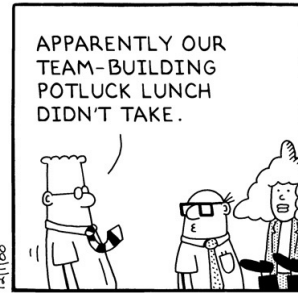
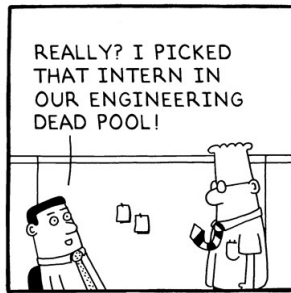
This is one of my personal favorites. The art is totally irrelevant because the funny part is imagining the scene the boss describes.

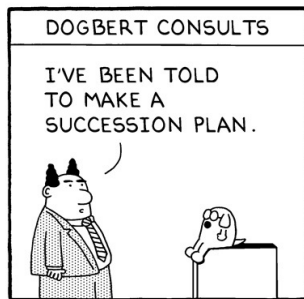


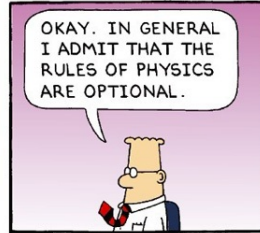
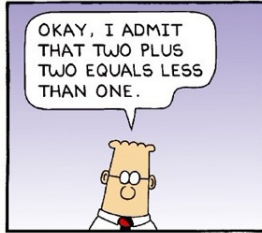




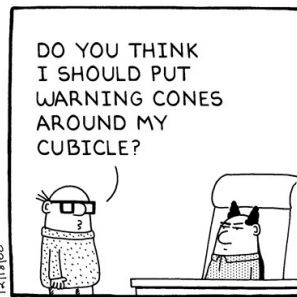
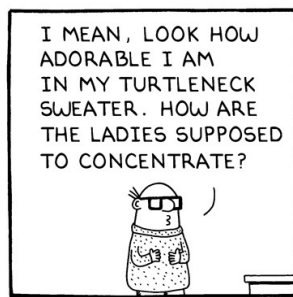


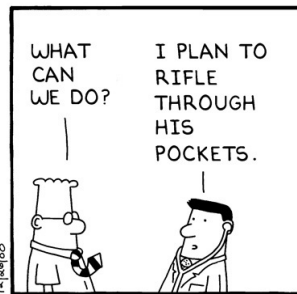


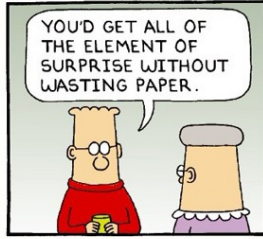


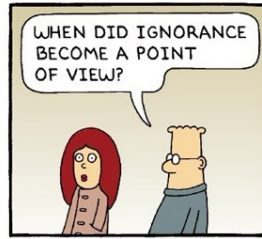
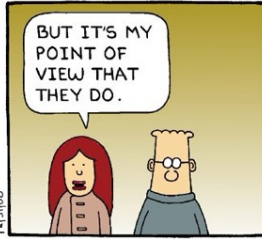
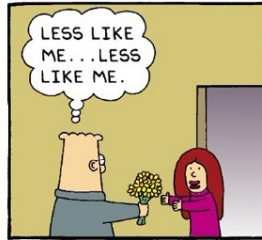
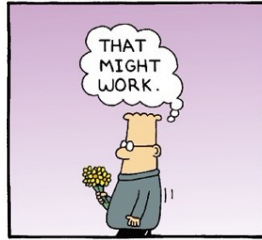












For Jack Cassady

Thank you for the advice.

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