

Detroit Free Press Magazine

DEC 18, 1994



THE GRINCH II

BY JAMES RICCI

(With apologies to Dr. Seuss)

This time, he's got a lawyer.

PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES

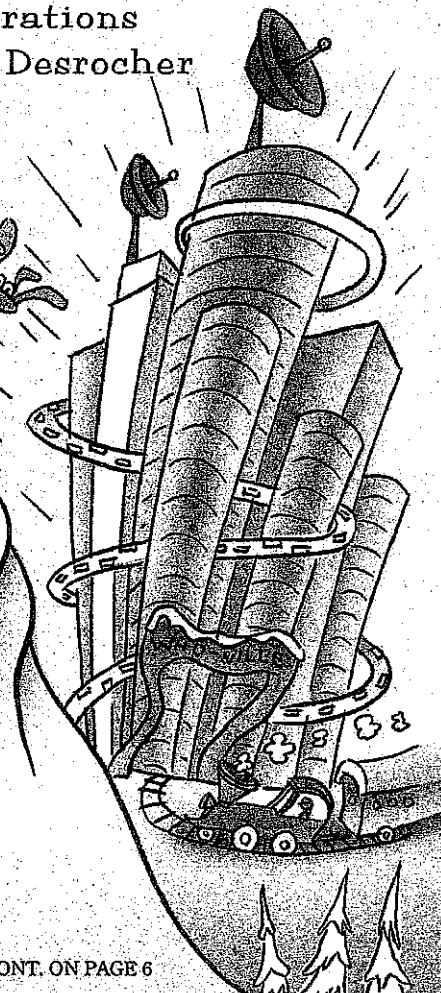


RETURN OF THE GRINCH

In 1994,
stealing Christmas
is no mean feat.

By James Ricci
(with apologies to Dr. Seuss)

Illustrations
by Jack Desrocher

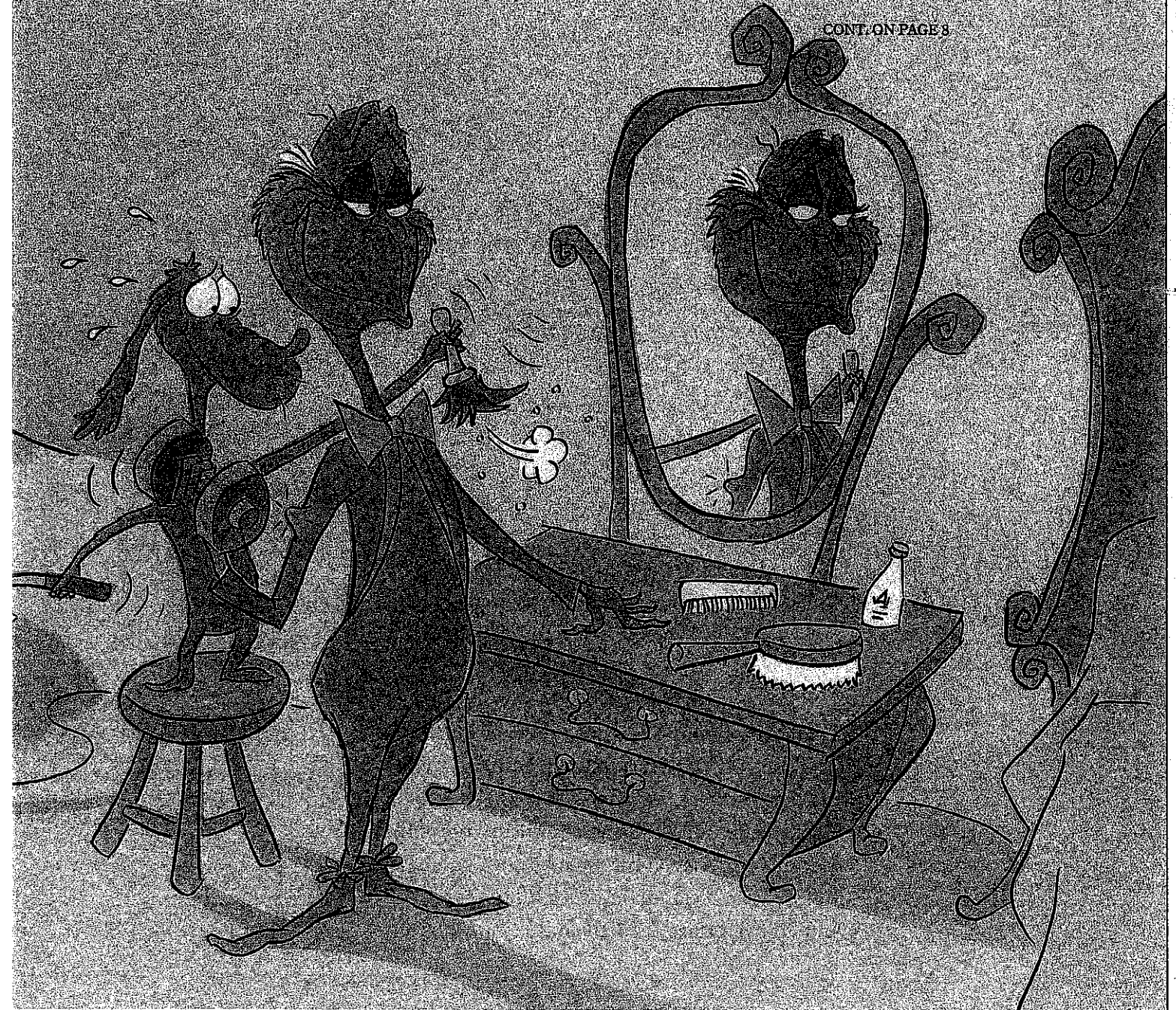


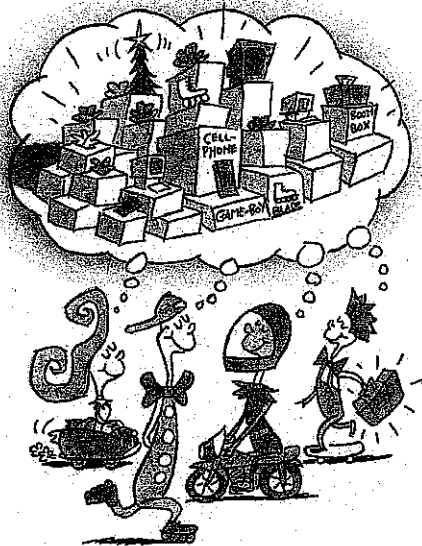
Way up in his cave north of *Who*-ville, the Grinch
Was enjoying retirement; life was a cinch.
He played on his PC and tweaked other hacks
And talked of old times with his aged dog, Max.
He rarely went down to the town of the *Whos*,
Save to stock up on roast beast and *Who*-hash and booze.
He preferred not to rub on the slow-healing sore
Of his near-theft of Christmas two decades before.

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So Grinch swept his cave of its Grinchy debris,
And combed out his fur to receive company.
This Cindy-Lou Who, who was now twenty-two,
A graduate student at East Who-ville U,
Her voice was no longer the coo of a dove,
But firm and commanding, as if from Above.
She wasted few words in unveiling her plan,
She wanted the Grinch to steal Christmas — *again!*

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CONT.
FROM
PAGE 7

"Since your last theft attempt, time has taken its toll;
"Now *Who*-ville's Christmas *deserves* to be stole,"
Said Cindy-Lou in a most righteous tone
(Grinch captivated by how much she'd grown!).
"Back then when you took all the presents away,
"We *Whos* nonetheless celebrated the day.
"But now no one holds hands, and nobody sings.
"All we *Whos* care for is getting more things.

"The radio broadcasts Yule songs in July,
"To pump up the *Whos* to get out there and buy,
"Lest Christmas morn, when they rise from their sleep,
"The gifts 'neath the tree aren't eleven feet deep.
"The whole, long ordeal leaves most every-*Who* stressed,
"Exhausted, debt-ridden and deeply depressed.
"Oh, we must stop this madness, we must, must, must, *must!*
"Before the day's meaning has turned all to dust."

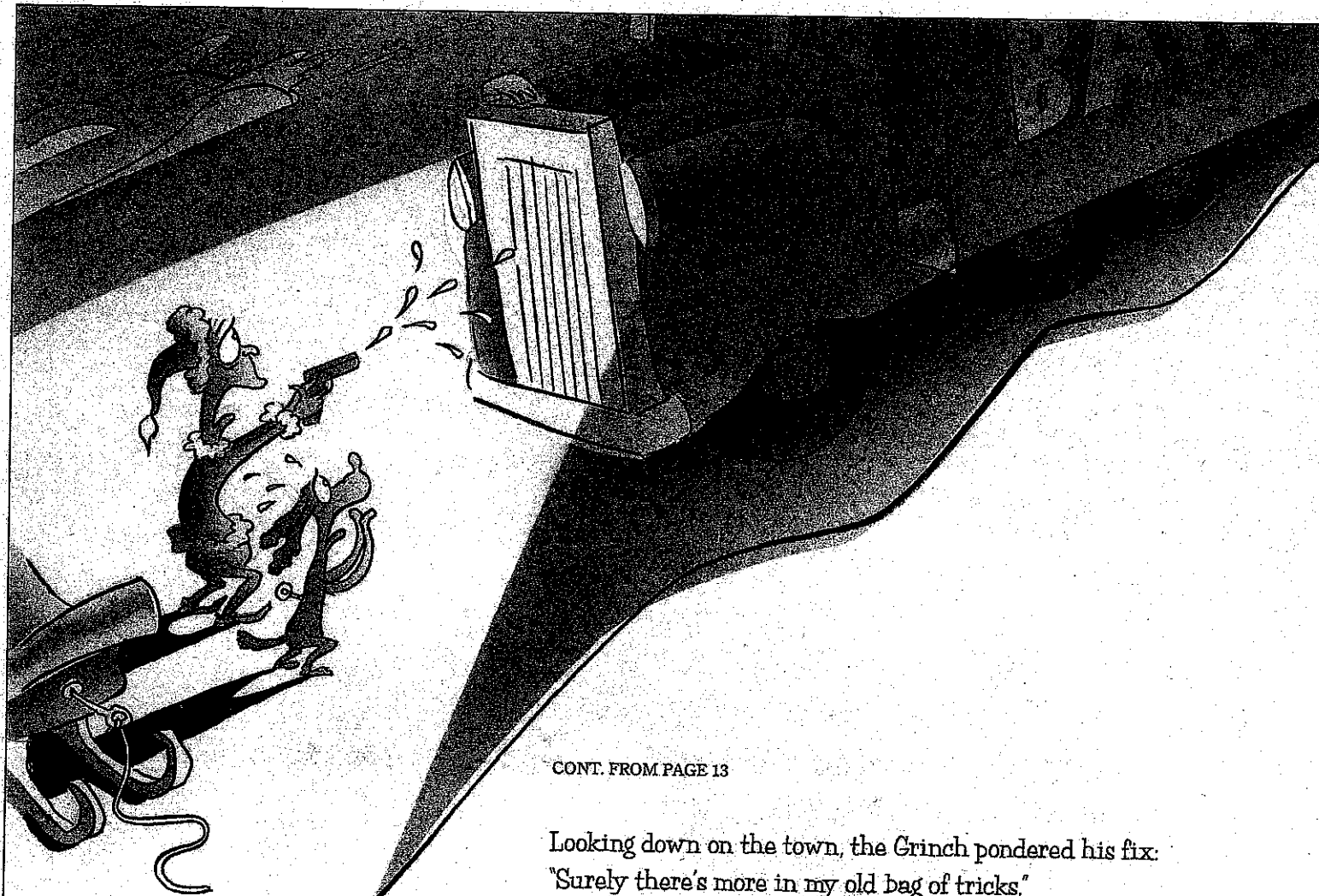
Said Grinch, "Heaven's sakes, Missy, why come to me?
"I can't steal their Christmas - I'm *seventy-three*."
Said she, "Oh, I know that you'll think of a plan;
"You did it before, you can do it again."
Then she gave to old Grinch, to ensure his enthralled-ness,
A daughterly kiss on his male-pattern baldness,
Making him blush underneath all his fur
And vow to himself, "I will do it - *for her*."

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So Grinchy dug out the old Santa Claus suit
That in the first place was his best attribute.
Then he called his dog Max and took some red thread,
And tied a big horn on the doggy's old head.
He hitched up the poon to a reindeer's stagh,
Which he filled up with sacks for to haul out away.
Then he waited for children to fall on the town
And told Max, "Cuddap," and began the trip down.



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Looking down on the town, the Grinch pondered his fix:
"Surely there's more in my old bag of tricks."
On what thing, he wondered, did Christmas depend,
The supply of which he, Grinch, might act to suspend?
"Why, *batteries*, of course!" he told Max (who just looked).
"Without them, this Christmas' goose will be cooked!"
So, with squirt gun and mask, he headed off straight
With Max and the sleigh to the new Interstate.

"When the truck full of batteries comes down the road,"
The Grinch-jacker chortled, "We'll hijack its load!"
Max, for his part, felt unsure and afraid
To be used, at his age, as a street barricade.
At last came the semi, and Grinchy yelled, "Stop!"
And brandished his squirt gun like some kind of cop.
But the truck just roared on, and it knocked the Grinch flat
And crunched through the sleigh — and, well, that was *that*.

Lucky for Grinch, he'd just joined HMO –
The truck broke his hinch bone and linch bone and toe.
"I can still use my hands," Grinch told Max (who just snored),
And sat himself down at his PC keyboard.
"I'll make a computer bug cripple and maim
Every *Who*-ville computer and video game.
"All Christmas purists will surely admire us
"When they see the effects of our cyberspace virus."

Grinch started to program, oh, he hacked, hacked, hacked, *hacked*,
And soon had a virus all set to attack.

He was poised to press ENTER and set off the plague
When he heard a loud knock on the door of his cave.

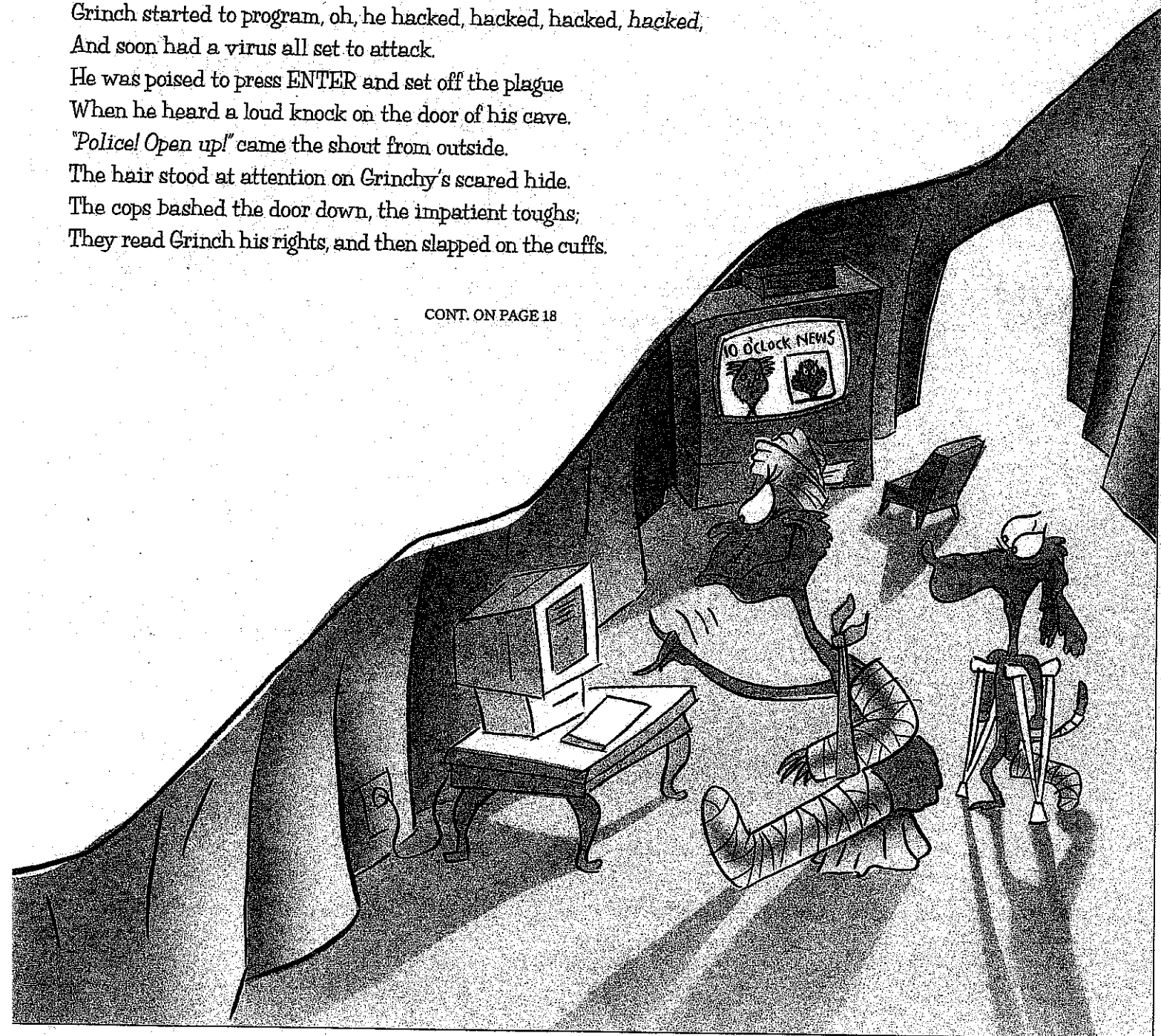
"Police! Open up!" came the shout from outside.

The hair stood at attention on Grinchy's scared hide.

The cops bashed the door down, the impatient toughs;

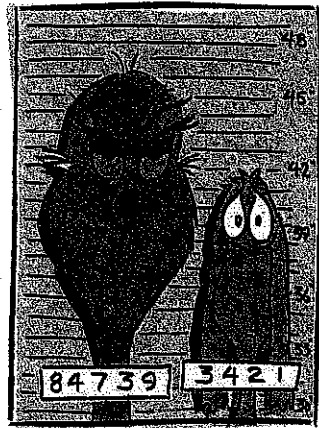
They read Grinch his rights, and then slapped on the cuffs.

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WHO-VILLE
FREE PRESS
GRINCH
MOTIVES WERE
PURE!



CONT. FROM PAGE 17

Through Grinch-prints they'd traced him and made
the charge stand:

Attempted hijacking and larceny, grand.
Another fact made Grinch's plight still more tender —
He might go to trial as a repeat offender.
And so Grinchy landed in *Who*-ville's *Who*'s-gow
Along with poor Max, his reluctant bow-wow.
They cowered in corners and tried to steer clear
Of guys with tattoos and lascivious leers.

Then one day a visitor came to see Grinch;
His suit looked hand-tailored, each exquisite inch.
Reading his business card, jailbird Grinch saw:
"Robert Shapir-who, Attorney-at-Law."
"I'm taking your case," said the lawyer, "and, too,
"My fees will be paid by Ms. Cindy-Lou *Who*.
"I'll make you a hero, role model, the works.
"They'll never convict you, the slow-witted jerks."

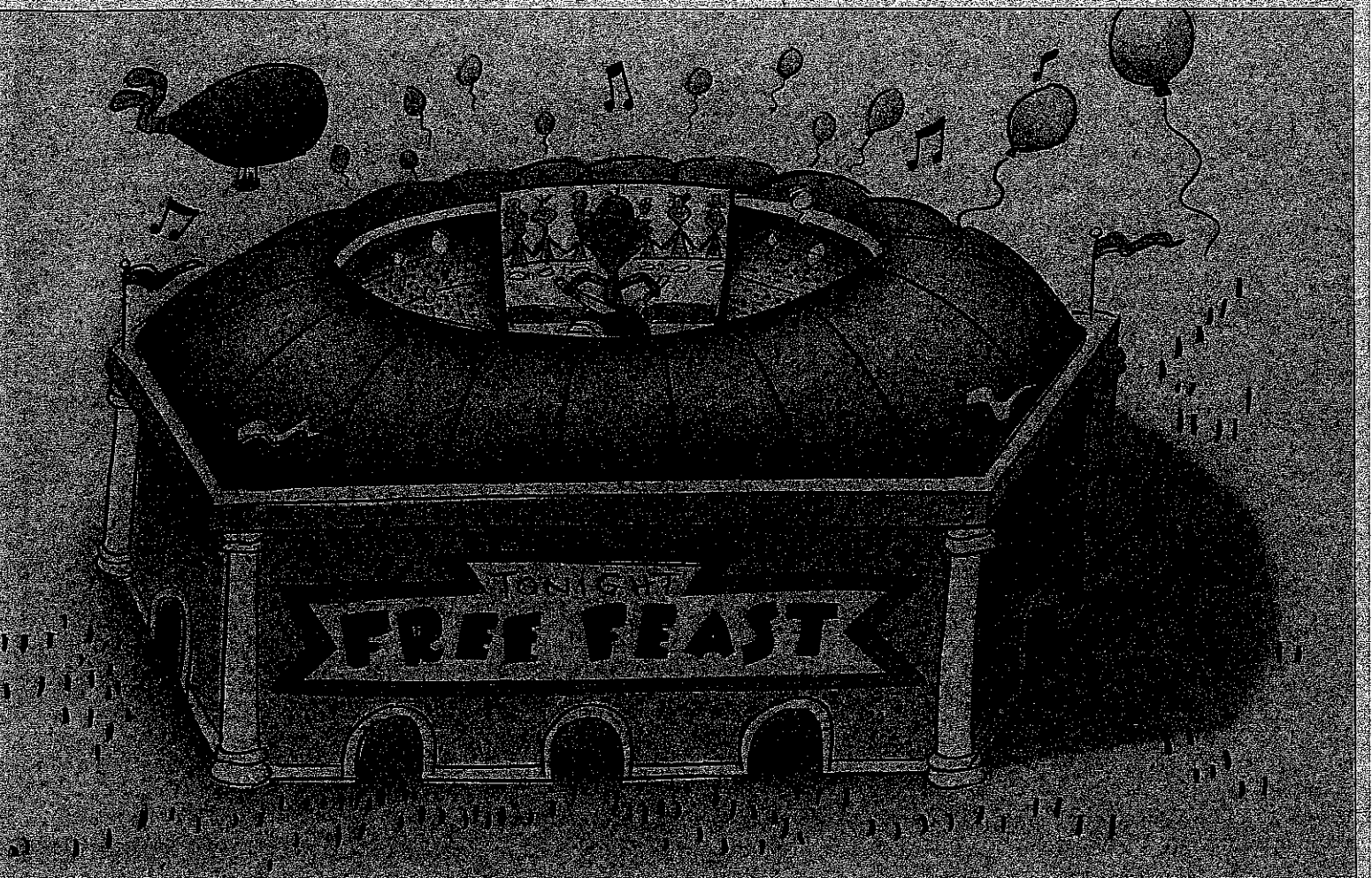
Shapir-*Who* sent Grinch super-agent Mike *Who*-vitz,
Who soon orchestrated a media-zoo blitz.
Newspapers headlined, "Grinch motives were pure."
Talk-show hosts called his confinement "manure."
A hurry-up movie was made of his plight.
He spoke, live, with *Who*-prah via satellite.
Everyone talked of his brave, lonely quest
To bring Christmas back to an era more blessed.

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His fame soon surpassed more illustrious names
And led to Grinch dolls, bikes and video games
Which all hit the shelves just in time for Yule sales
And made for store profits of unheard-of scales
Grinch said Shaggy-who, with this latest deal
You're sure to be bigger than Shaquille-Who-Near
Bigger than Shaq? That thought took Grinch aback
But he *did* have endorsements too many to track.

At his trial, crowds applauded when Grinchy stepped forth
Looking nobly self-righteous as Who-Iver-North
His lawyer cried oh, he talked, talked, talked, *talked*—
And the jury acquitted the Grinch in a walk.
After a limousine whisked Grinchy home—
Not to a cave, but a new pleasure-dome
With twenty-four rooms and a house staff of three
Who rosted with bubbly his being settled.

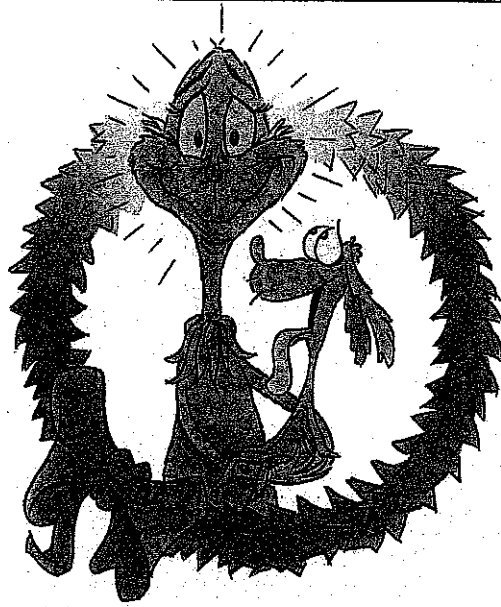
Next morning while Grinch lounged in opulent stitz
Discussing residuals with agent Who-vitz
The butler announced with meticulous ado
A certain Ms. Who has arrived to see you.
Grinch put down his cell phone
and tightened his tie
And strengthened the brow
over each Grinchy eye.



But Cindy-Lou scoffed at his mansion and loot
And smirking decided his *Who* man suit
I was foolish, she spat, thinking you'd lift the curse
You didn't save Christmas, you just made things worse
Said Crutch in a half-hearted, mutably way
I tried to do right — it just happened to *pay*
But his high spirits fell, oh they fell, fell, fell, fell
They could not have fell *more* if they'd fell in a well
And suddenly Crutchy knew what he must do
To regain the esteem of Ms. Cindy-Lou *Who*.

Straight off he called up his financial adviser
Knowing his wishes were sure to surprise her
And he emptied his savings and 401Ks
Got rid of his stocks and his fat IRAs
He sold off the mansion and world-class wine cellar
Sold the cigar boat with corkscrew propeller.

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CONT.
FROM
PAGE 21

And not only *Whos* but all *Whats*, *Whys* and *Hows*
From neighboring villages, cities and towns.
Grinch rented the *Who-Dome* and gave dinner, free,
To twenty-eight thousand, eight hundred and three.
Homeless and friendless, the rich and the poor —
No living creature was turned from the door.
The menu was *Who-hash* and prime-rib roast beast,
And plum cakes and loaves of bread baked with *Who-yeast*.

But before the feast started, all present joined hands
And sang Christmas songs played by two dozen bands.
And all, intermingling, wished all others well,
And couldn't remember so fine a Noel.
Impressed, Cindy-Lou gave the Grinch a great hug
And planted a smooch on his Grinchy old mug.
"You failed to steal Christmas," she whispered, "and yet
"You've set an example we'll never forget."

And afterward, Grinchy went home to his cave,
Quite pleased with himself and the Christmas he gave.
He felt that his heart, once two sizes too small,
Could now scarcely fit inside Carnegie Hall.
"It just goes to show," he said, nodding his head,
"You get more from giving than getting ahead."
"You're richer admired than rich-and-reviled."
He patted the head of old Max (who just smiled). ■