

Mr. Pitful
by Michael Cowgill

How can you trust a man who wears both a belt and suspenders? The man can't even trust his own pants.

-- Frank, Once Upon A Time In the West

PAGE 1 (6 PANELS)

PANEL 1

A completely black panel with white letters that read: TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN...

PANEL 2

A close, tight shot of our main character Stuart's face. It should almost fill the panel. Light comes from the right, and much of the left side of his face is in shadow. This light will shift in each panel. It's a strobing police light. Also the shadow of part of a window's cross pieces should cut across his face. He wears glasses, and his normally slicked-back hair is unkempt. We can't really see his clothes, but he normally wears a suit with a bow tie, suspenders, and a belt.

CAP/STUART

I'm not the type of man who elicits attraction.

PANEL 3

A closeup of a broken coffee cup, the shards lying on a hardwood floor in a pool of drying coffee.

NO TEXT

PANEL 4

We've moved out some now but are still inside the window and now have a fuller view of Stuart, including his neck and the slope of his shoulders. It should be obvious that he's a thin man, and he should look more gaunt here at the end of things. An untied bow tie hangs from the collar of his pinstriped shirt, and suspenders cut across his shoulders. The light should be from straight ahead now with more shadows from cross pieces making a dark grid on him.

CAP/STUART

No. "Attraction" is the not the right word.

PANEL 5

A closeup of a TV with a shattered screen.

NO TEXT

PANEL 6

Now we've moved just outside the window and can see Stuart from the waist up. The bottom of the window obscures his hands. Light comes from the left now.

CAP/STUART

Perhaps I should say...

PAGES 2 AND 3 (1 PANEL)

PANEL 1

Two-page spread. It's night. We've pulled back across the street to reveal police cars, police officers, and SWAT officers facing Stuart's suburban house. SWAT officers point rifles over the hoods of the cars, and two more flank the window, where we can still see Stuart.

CAP/STUART
attention.

PAGE 4 (4 PANELS)

NOTE:

We're shifting in time and space for the next few pages. The general look of this page should be more realistic -- no stylized lighting, etc.

PANEL 1

Looking down a crowded train platform at the tracks. A train approaches. Commuters stand in small groups, talking, watching the tracks. In the foreground, Stuart stands alone in profile. He wears a suit with a bow tie, his thin hair slicked back. He holds a briefcase and has a newspaper tucked under his left arm.

CAP/STUART

For instance, in all my years riding trains to and from work, I never made a new friend...

PANEL 2

Stuart sits on a train reading his newspaper. He holds it in front of his face, the whole paper spread out rather than folded for convenience and space. A businesswoman approaches. We can see enough of her curvy hips and long legs coming from her short business skirt to know she's attractive.

CAP/STUART

never found myself sitting next to a beautiful woman...

PANEL 3

Stuart has folded over the corner of his paper and looks up at the woman, his eyebrows furrowed and a general look of contempt on his face.

NO TEXT

PANEL 4

In the foreground, the woman walks away, and she is indeed a young, attractive business woman. She holds up her hand in a "forget this" gesture and rolls her eyes. In the background, Stuart has returned to reading his paper.

NO TEXT

PAGE 5 (4 PANELS)

PANEL 1

Stuart and an older man sit next to each other. Stuart looks out the train window. The older man is talking, gesturing with his hands, telling story.

CAP/STUART
or, say, a stirring raconteur.

OLDER MAN
When we landed on Omaha Beach...

PANEL 2

Stuart sits next to a plain but certainly not ugly middle-aged woman. He examines the contents of his briefcase.

CAP/STUART
Instead I usually found myself sitting next to an elderly woman...

PANEL 3

Stuart sits next to a Sikh man wearing a turban and a suit. Stuart naps.

CAP/STUART
or someone who spoke little, if any, English...

SIKH
Shakespeare's tragedies receive warranted attention, but I find the romances like *A Winter's Tale* particularly fascinating.

PANEL 4

Stuart sits alone, reading a book, a slight smile on his face.

CAP/STUART
or, more often than not, it seems, no one at all.

PAGE 6 (9 PANELS)

NOTE:

Panels 4-9 of this page contain a series of one-panel flashbacks. These images will reappear later in context. They should again be more stylized.

PANEL 1

This one's not a flashback. In profile, Stuart looks out the window at the police cars.

CAP/STUART

In short, I have not lived...

PANEL 2

Stuart's hand reaches toward an automatic pistol on top of a piece of paper on a desk. We can see portions of handwritten letters, but the pistol obscures them.

CAP/STUART

what some might call...

PANEL 3

Close on the piece of paper on the desk. We can now read the handwritten text: "an interesting life".

PANEL 4

A man in silhouette walks toward an open doorway (really just white here to set him off). In the foreground, a little boy reaches toward him.

NO TEXT

PANEL 5

A teenage girl (Janie) leans in toward a teenaged Stuart, her lips open, ready to kiss him. Her long hair obscures much of her face. She has her hand on his glasses, about to take them off. Stuart looks just a little bit scared.

NO TEXT

PANEL 6

In silhouette, a large man (Mitch) fires a gun at an angle down at a man on the ground. Blood spatters from the man's head.

NO TEXT

PANEL 7

Stuart and Janie in their late twenties. They're wearing wedding clothes and kiss under a wooden arch covered in ivy.

NO TEXT

PANEL 8

Mitch in his late thirties -- bald, numbers tattooed across his forehead – he's yelling and pointing a gun.

NO TEXT

PANEL 9

Stuart has a look of horror on his face. He's covering his ears with his hands.

NO TEXT

PAGE 7 (3 PANELS)

PANEL 1

Stuart looks down at the pistol in his hand.

CAP/STUART

Though, I suppose, some might say how I found myself here at the end of things...

PANEL 2

Looking down as if from Stuart's point of view, we can see the pistol in his hand, his feet, and a woman's and a man's limp hands on either side of a pool of blood.

CAP/STUART

surrounded by violence and death...

PANEL 3

A closeup of Stuart similar to Page 1, Panel 1.

CAP/STUART

an interesting story.