

# **CHAPTER IV**

## **FRANK ODOI SHOWS YOU HOW...**

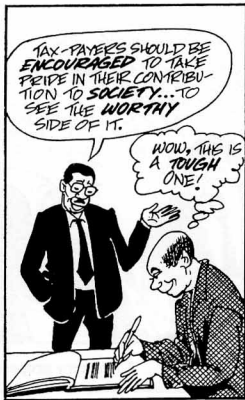
he makes comics with an anti-corruption attitude for an organisation called "Decency First". They have a message, Frank has pen and paper...

"Obviously, comic art is not neutral"

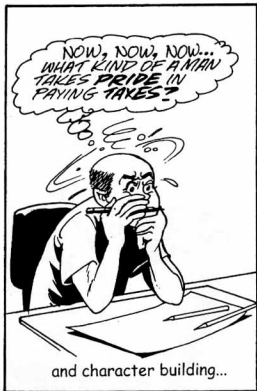
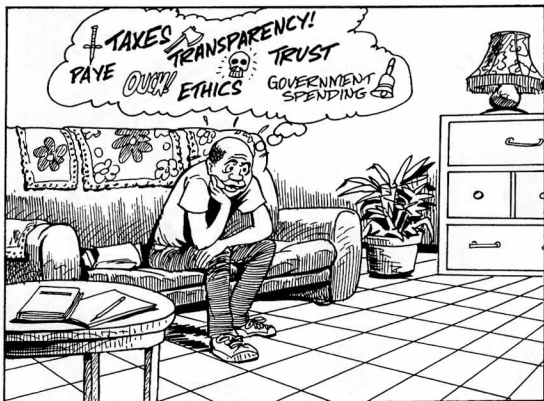
*Dr. John A. Lent*

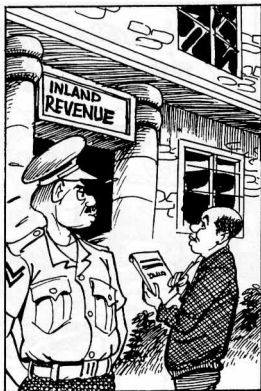
*American comics scholar*

# Making comics on a tax issue...

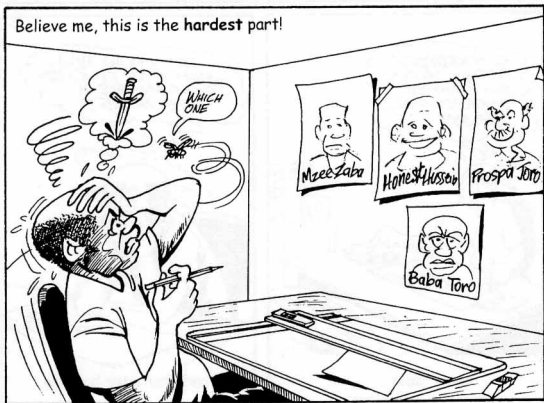








Believe me, this is the hardest part!



## NAME OF THE STORY

### Opening panel:

All characters and the opening situation should be introduced here

More dialogue or action

More dialogue or action

### Conclusion panel:

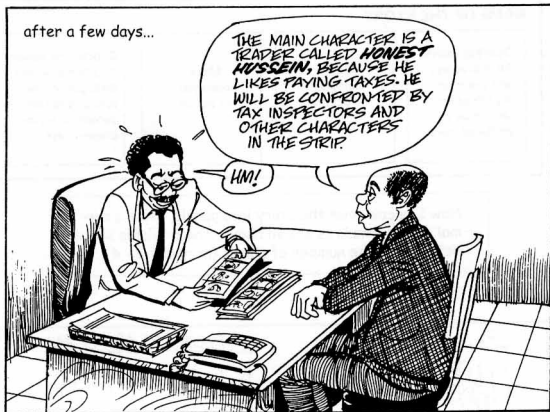
All elements, the dialogue, characters and action comes to a conclusion here

Now I break down the story into panels, using a normal strip formula as shown above. The available space determines the number of panels (normally 3 - 4).



I try different openings until I find one which is interesting and dramatic. The first panel must be good, otherwise the reader will not finish the story.

after a few days...





## HONEST HUSSEIN



shop view with  
both characters



moving in closer



close-up



same view as in  
the opening

Now I start final planning of the strip's visual appearance. I choose different perspectives, angles and where to use close-ups. If the size is set, I ink the panel borders now. It is like a signal to myself that this is the final artwork.

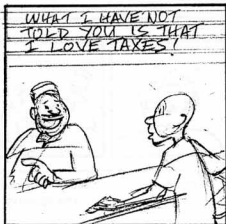


body forward, hands raised and  
mouth open, he is surprised!



chest forward, smiling broadly, head  
tilted slightly back, he is confident!

Body language and facial expressions, all must have a meaning in the story.

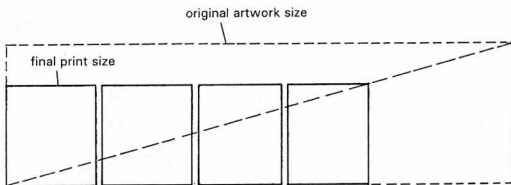


unedited - too long



edited - just right

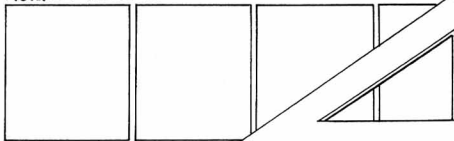
For final editing I take a very close look at my texts and shorten them more, if possible.



The artwork size should be about 120 - 150% of the final print size. With this enlargement, it is comfortable to draw, otherwise, small details are just too small.

However, often when I work with people who have DTP-facilities, I have to limit the original artwork size to A4 as they don't have big scanners. Don't forget to ask about this!

## HONEST HUSSEIN



I divide the panels and make sure the corners are 90 degrees, using a square ruler.

I choose my paper carefully, it must be rigid (135 - 200 gsm/M2), absorb ink well without spreading it, and not smudge when I erase the pencil traces. My favourites for black and white artwork are uncoated offset papers.

## HONEST HUSSEIN



I draw guidelines for the texts and pencil them in. Then I indicate the size of the speech balloons. I also try to keep the texts near the panel borders to give more space to the drawing.

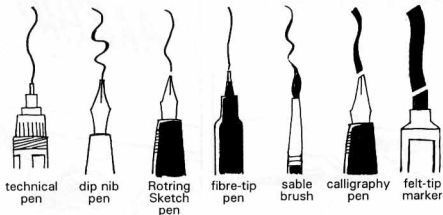
## HONEST HUSSEIN



I now draw lightly the main shapes of the characters and the background with a semi-soft pencil.

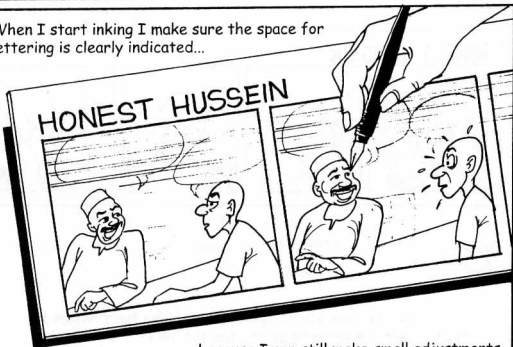


I start pencilling in the details until the strip is finished. I now use a slightly harder pencil.



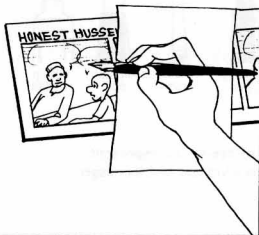
For inking I use a variety of tools. The important thing is to get a line that is vivid and black enough to reproduce well.

When I start inking I make sure the space for lettering is clearly indicated...



...because I can still make small adjustments in the drawing, but with the lettering, no way!

While inking I protect my artwork...



AARGH!



...or my artwork could look like this!

## HONEST HUSSEIN



nib pen



lettering pen



thin brush



nib pen brush

I finish all the linework using different inking tools. When I'm ready, I put the artwork aside - for the ink to dry properly.

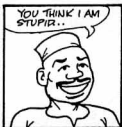


When the ink is completely dry, I start to erase...



steadily and thoroughly - all pencil traces must go. Then I use a brush.

### HONEST HUSSEIN



missing dot



missing line



I go over the artwork very thoroughly and check that all lines are inked - sometimes the pencil lines cheat my eye so that I miss a detail.



After completing the lineart, I fill in the solid blacks with a brush or a marker



Then create textures such as wood, cloth etc.



I use a correction fluid pen or white poster colour (on non watersoluble ink!) to make corrections...

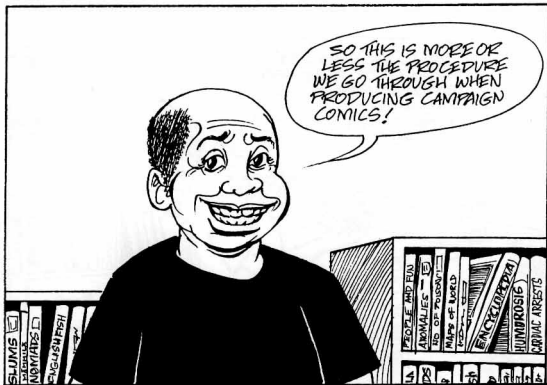
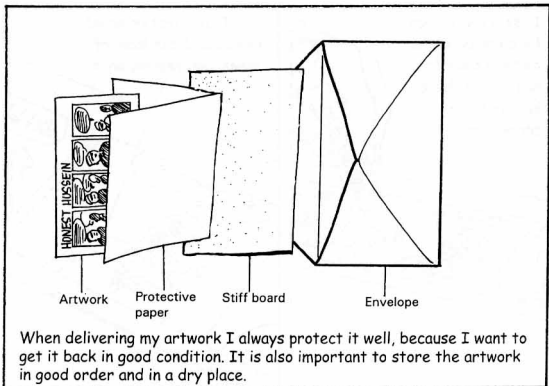


...or I can stick on an adhesive address label of paper, and redraw on it



HELLO MR NGUGI, THE FIRST STRIP OF **HONEST HUSSEIN** IS READY. ARE YOU COMING TO COLLECT IT OR SHALL I SEND IT BY MAIL?

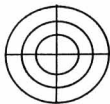




When you are discussing about making comics for an organisation, this is your basic checklist:



**What messages?** What is it that the organisation wants to say? Sort messages into important and less important ones. Have 1-2 messages in the story, more will only confuse the reader.



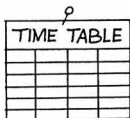
**What target group?** Try to have the readers of your story identified as far as possible, consider age, sex, profession, cultural affiliation etc. You must create a story that makes sense to your readers.



**What kind of publication?** A strip in a paper or magazine, a page or a half-page, a booklet or a collection of stories, a leaflet, a poster?



**How much space is available?** The printing/reprographic method? Artwork requirements? It is better to know in advance, than to find out the hard way, how your artwork is suited to the methods which will be used.



**Timetable, payment, copyright** and other contract issues. Make a timetable for sketches and ideas, for delivery of artwork and schedule of payments. Put it on paper, it's usually best so.

## MORE PRACTICAL ADVICE:



**Pencils and erasers:** For loose sketching I use soft pencils (B). For artwork pencilling I use harder pencils (H-HB) because the artwork traces must be erased and it's easier to erase harder pencil traces.



**Pens:** For lettering I use Rotring Artpen Calligraphy 1,1 mm nib, Lettering B nib or fibre-tip pens. For drawing I use mainly Rotring Artpen Sketch F. If I need a very interesting line I use a traditional steel-nib pen (nib Mitchell no 5). When drawing borders and boxes I normally use Rotring Technical Pen 0,5 or 0,7 mm.



**Brushes:** For black inking I use a Sable Watercolour Brush No 2. For colour work I use the same brushes, but try not to mix them as the black inking wears down the brush quite quickly. The Sakura Co in Japan has produced some very interesting rubber-tip and soft fibre-tip brushes, but they are hard to find. You are better off with equipment that you can have a constant supply of.



**Inks:** I normally use water-proof ink, because it does not dissolve if you have to make corrections with correction-fluid. This is called India or China ink. This ink, however, spoils the Rotring Artpen pens, so for them I use either the Rotring cartridges or the Rotring converter with Rotring Brilliant ink.



**Papers:** Paper should be rigid, in order not to wrinkle. For normal black and white artwork I prefer to work with uncoated offset paper 120 - 160 gsm/m<sup>2</sup> that I buy directly from the printer. Coated papers, which you can identify from a supersmooth surface, tend to mess up when you erase pencil traces. Always try out the paper with a pencil, ink on it, let it dry and erase. This is how you find out the properties of the paper. For water colour work I use aquarel paper from 200 gsm/m<sup>2</sup> upwards.



**Drawing board and light-table:** I prefer to work on a flat surface, but with slightly bigger artwork a sloping board is more comfortable. Normally, I don't use a light-table, but I can see its usefulness, as there is no need to erase pencil traces as you ink directly on the final artwork, with the sketch underneath the paper.



**Computers:** I don't use a computer myself, but most of the work I do is processed in scanners, graphics and publishing programs. Make sure that you know about the requirements they have. Be friendly with the operators, otherwise they can do nasty things to your art, such as change proportions to suit their own needs.



**Sketching:** Draw as much as possible, only by drawing you can keep up the skill you have. Drawing is cooperation between the brain and the hand.



**Keeping a visual reference library:** You will be asked to draw people with different professions, uniforms, specific houses, certain types of vehicles etc. Therefore, it is very useful to keep a reference file (or just a box) with pictures. This can save your time quite a lot. Some pictures of people engaged in different activities such as farming, running, marching, playing etc. are also useful.



**Promotion portfolio:** When you meet new or prospective clients you should have your promotion portfolio up to date. It should include 2-3 of each category of your latest work. It is important that the client can see the variety of your work.

When making comics remember:

- You are telling **stories**, the drama and humour are what attract people! A dramatic beginning means that the reader will, by all means, finish the story, because he wants to know how the story ends! This is comics power!

- You are not writing literature, you are not making art, you are combining these two ways of expression in a creative way.

Comics are meant to be **printed**, not to decorate walls with.

It's a **great** profession!



Copyright: Leif Packalén (script) Frank Odoi (art), 1999.

**Copyright information:** The creators of each cartoon or comic have the original copyright. The creators are identified as far as they are known in connection with each cartoon or comic in this book. The samples are shown for the purpose of critical review only. In the list below we have tried to identify, as far as possible, the contact addresses to the copyright holders.

**Chapter I, Illustrations:** Leif Packalén, Vanamontie 4 E 156, 01350 Vantaa, Finland: pages 7,8,11,12. Katti Ka-Batembo, Box 420, Morogoro, Tanzania: the cover and pages 8,9,10,15. Frank Odoi, c/o Daily Nation, Box 49010, Nairobi, Kenya : page 14. Tarmo Koivisto, Osuuskunta Käyttökäva, Hakaniemenranta 14 a 28, 00530 Helsinki, Finland: page 13.

**Chapter II, Six stories:** "Degedege": Katti Ka-Batembo, Box 420, Morogoro, Tanzania. "Unwanted girls": M. Venkata Krishnan, c/o Munusamy, Keekalor Post Village, Thiruvannamalai via (T.K.) 6604601, Tamil Nadu, India. "Ignorant women": Noel Peter Shedden, No. 3 Freeman Street, Kottapattu G.O.C. (P.O.), Trichy 620004, Tamil Nadu, India, "Efficiency or deficiency?": Angelina Neves, Av. Francisco Orlando Magumbe 1020, Maputo, Mozambique. "On getting it wrong...": Baobab, C.P. 3, Dakar-Fann Senegal. "Why was I born a girl?": C.A.V. Raj, Krishnakuppam & Post, Kullanchavadi, via Cuddalore T.K. 6607301, Tamil Nadu, India.

**Chapter III, Health:** Teenage pregnancies in Malawi: Ministry of Information and Tourism, Malawi. Measles campaign in the Caribbean: UNICEF Caribbean Area Office, Shirley House, Hastings, Christ Church, Barbados. Migrant workers' risky lifestyle, Zimbabwe: Baobab Books, Academic Books (Pvt) Ltd. P.O.Box 567 Harare, Zimbabwe. Tanzania AIDS story: Benedictine Publications Ndanda - Peramiho, Tanzania. Sex education in the Caribbean: UNICEF, Box 1232, Barbados. HIV/AIDS information to schools in Zimbabwe: Action team, Box 4696, Harare, Zimbabwe. Safe sex, Côte d'Ivoire: Société Africaine de Representation en Librairie, 18 B.P.839, Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire. Boyfriends and AIDS, Tanzania: Tapoma/Faraja Trust, P.O.Box 420, Morogoro, Tanzania. Condom promotion in West Africa: Emma Says, No 2, Family Health International (USAID Project 936-5972-31-4692046, Contract HRN-5927-C-00-4001-00). Cholera prevention in Tanzania/Children's nutrition in Tanzania: Katti Ka-Batembo, Box 420, Morogoro, Tanzania.

**Chapter III, Agriculture and environment:** Squatter farming in India: Noel Peter Shedden, No. 3 Freeman Street, Kottapattu G.O.C. (P.O.), Trichy 620004, Tamil Nadu, India. Cattle rearing in Kenya: Mazingira Institute, P.O.Box 14550, Nairobi, Kenya. Rodent Control in Madagascar: TSIPIKA Editeur, 48 Ialana Havana Antsahabe, Antananarivo 101, Madagascar. Pesticide use in Tanzania: IPM, Udhibiti Hushishi, P.O.Box 476, Shinyanga, Tanzania. Farming as a profession in Tanzania: Inades Formation Tanzania/MVIWATA, P.O.Box 3220, Chuo Kikuu, Morogoro, Tanzania. Local farming knowledge in Senegal: Baobab, ALIN, Casier Postal 3, Dakar-Fann, Senegal. Erosion Control in Tanzania: Dovap, S.L.P. 3230, Dodoma, Tanzania. Beekeeping in Tanzania: Pambazuko, MVIWATA, P.O.Box 3220, Chuo Kikuu, Morogoro, Tanzania. Waste and litter in Zimbabwe: Action team, Box 4696, Harare, Zimbabwe. Anti-dam action in India: Orijit Sen, c/o People Tree, 8, Regal Building, Parliament Street, New Delhi -110001, India. Global desertification: UNCCD, GEC, 11/13 Chemin des Anemones, 1219 Châtelaine, Geneva, Switzerland. Global climate action, Finland: Leif Packalén, Vanamontie 4 E 156, 01350 Vantaa, Finland. Rainforest action: Seppo Leinonen/Ympäristö ja Kehitys, Eerikinkatu 5, 20110 Turku, Finland.

**Chapter III, Human rights, democracy and civil society:** Gender issue in Kenya: National Council of Churches in Kenya/Views Media, P.O.Box 26166, Nairobi, Kenya. Domestic violence in Papua New Guinea: Women and Law Committee, P.O.Box 3439, Boroko, Papua New Guinea. Working women in India: Institute for Cultural research and Action, 902, Irindranagar, I Stage, Bangalore - 560038 India. Consumer action in Peru: COPAPMA, Iquitos, Peru. Racism in Europe: Godfrey Mwampembwa, Daily Nation, Box 49010, Nairobi, Kenya. Immigrant school children in Finland: Leif Packalén, Vanamontie 4 E 156, 01350 Vantaa, Finland. Dalit education in India: S. Anandhavel, 52, Jeewardan Street, Pondicherry, 605001 India. Child labour in Peru: CELADEC, Av. General Garzón 2267, Lima 11, Peru. Children's rights in Tanzania: Kuleana, P.O.Box 27, Mwanza, Tanzania. ANC-information in Sweden: Afrikagrupperna, Barnängsgatan 23, 11 641 Stockholm, Sweden. Revolutionary hero in Cuba: Pablo de la torriente, Editorial, Calle 11 no 160 e/K y L, Vedado, La Habana, Cuba. NGO accounting in Côte d'Ivoire: Agripromo, Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire. NGO management in Tanzania: Inades Formation Tanzania, S.L.P. 203, Dodoma, Tanzania. Traffic education in East Africa: Frank Odoi, c/o Daily Nation, Box 49010, Nairobi, Kenya. Youth employment in the South Pacific: Commonwealth Youth Programme, South Pacific Regional Centre, P.O.Box 1168, Suva, Fiji. Multiparty elections in Tanzania: Paul Ndunguru/ESAURP - Regional Council for Democracy/Tema Publishers Co., Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. Culture shock in the Central African Republic: Entropy Ent. 5306 Knox Ave. So., Brooklyn Center, MN. 55430 U.S.A. World Bank and workers' rights: Public Services International, B.P.9, F-01211 Ferney-Voltaire Cedex, France. The debt issue: Brick/The New Internationalist, 55, Rectory Road, Oxford OX4 1BW, England.

**Chapter IV, Frank Odoi shows you how...:** Leif Packalén (script), Vanamontie 4 E 156, 01350 Vantaa, Finland/Frank Odoi (art), c/o Daily Nation, Box 49010, Nairobi, Kenya.

## BOOKS:

**Eisner, Will (1995). *Graphic Storytelling*, 164 p. Tamarac, Florida: Poorhouse Press**

This book is written by the grand old man of comics, Will Eisner of U.S.A, and is good reading for understanding what differentiates comics from other forms of expression. It is, however, based on a very American career in comics. Eisner is the creator of the Spirit-series and has worked also as a teacher in comics.

**MacCloud, Scott (1993). *Understanding Comics -the silent art*, 215 pages, Northampton, MA: Kitchen Sink Press**

MacCloud explains comics as a medium and its different components, sometimes in a very philosophical way. The book is written in a comics format and has a lot of useful information on techniques and picture communication.

### **Other useful books to have would be:**

A good **anatomy** book - you will be drawing people, and it is useful to understand how the human body is built.

A **how-to-draw** book - you will need, once in a while, to refresh your skills with this kind of book. Try to find a book which is produced in your own area, so that the drawings mean something to you.

A book on **perspectives** - it is good to know at least the basic perspectives.

## INTERNET WEB-SITES

Those who have access to Internet can find many interesting web-pages that are related to comics. Most of them are run by commercial publishers, but you can also find many interesting sites by doing a search with keywords such as: "comics", "cartoons", "strip cartoons", "comix", "visual campaigning", "bandes dessinees", "bd" ect. You can also make searches in the web with the name of an artist, a publication or a publisher.

**www.worldcomics.fi** is the web-site of World Comics - Finland, a small organisation, founded in 1997 to promote the use of comics in education, development and cross-cultural communication. Check it out to learn more about the comics workshops carried out by this organisation. [www.kupla.net](http://www.kupla.net)

**www.kupla.net** – The Finnish Comics Society's site is one of the oldest (since 1994!) comics web-sites in the cyberworld and features a good archive of Finnish comics (in English) published for the Internet.

This book is also available in an Internet version on the web-site: <http://global.finland.fi/comics> of the Department for International Development Cooperation, Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland.



## COMICS POWER!

Comics, made with an attitude, have a lot of communication power in development and education. When you have something to say, consider using comics! This book is meant to show you how this is done in practise.

Comics are very versatile and when used in a well planned way, the medium becomes a strong tool for presenting ideas, issues and new facts. You can use comics both for tightly defined target groups and mass audiences. Furthermore, when you use local creative talent for your information campaign comics your message will be more relevant to the reader.

The book has six full stories, about 40 commented samples from various campaign comics, and a "how-to"-section, which was made in comics format by Frank Odoi.

Hopefully this book will serve as an inspiration to many new, locally produced, comics.

**LEIF PACKALÉN**, is the Chairman of World Comics, a small Finnish non-governmental organisation that promotes the use of comics as a communication tool in education, development, and cross-cultural information. He has been in charge of several workshops and seminars in Tanzania, India and Mozambique. Packalén has a background in development cooperation, civil service and NGO-work. He has lived for more than ten years in Africa and works now as a free-lance cartoonist and comics consultant. Packalén has also produced several exhibitions on comics from Africa and India.

**FRANK ODOI**, born in Ghana, but resident in Nairobi since 1979, is one of Africa's top talents in making comics. He is published regularly in Kenya, Ghana, Tanzania and Uganda and draws a variety of strips, fact-files, cartoons and stories. Odoi has also been a central resource person in a number of comics workshops and seminars in Tanzania and Mozambique and he has lectured about his work at several cultural festivals in Europe.

An internet version of this book is available on the Department's web-site: <http://global.finland.fi/comics>

ELEMENTS  
for DISCUSSION

MINISTRY FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF FINLAND



UFUGAJI BORA PIA ULIFUNDISHWA SAMBAMBA NA MARINZO YA KILIMO.

