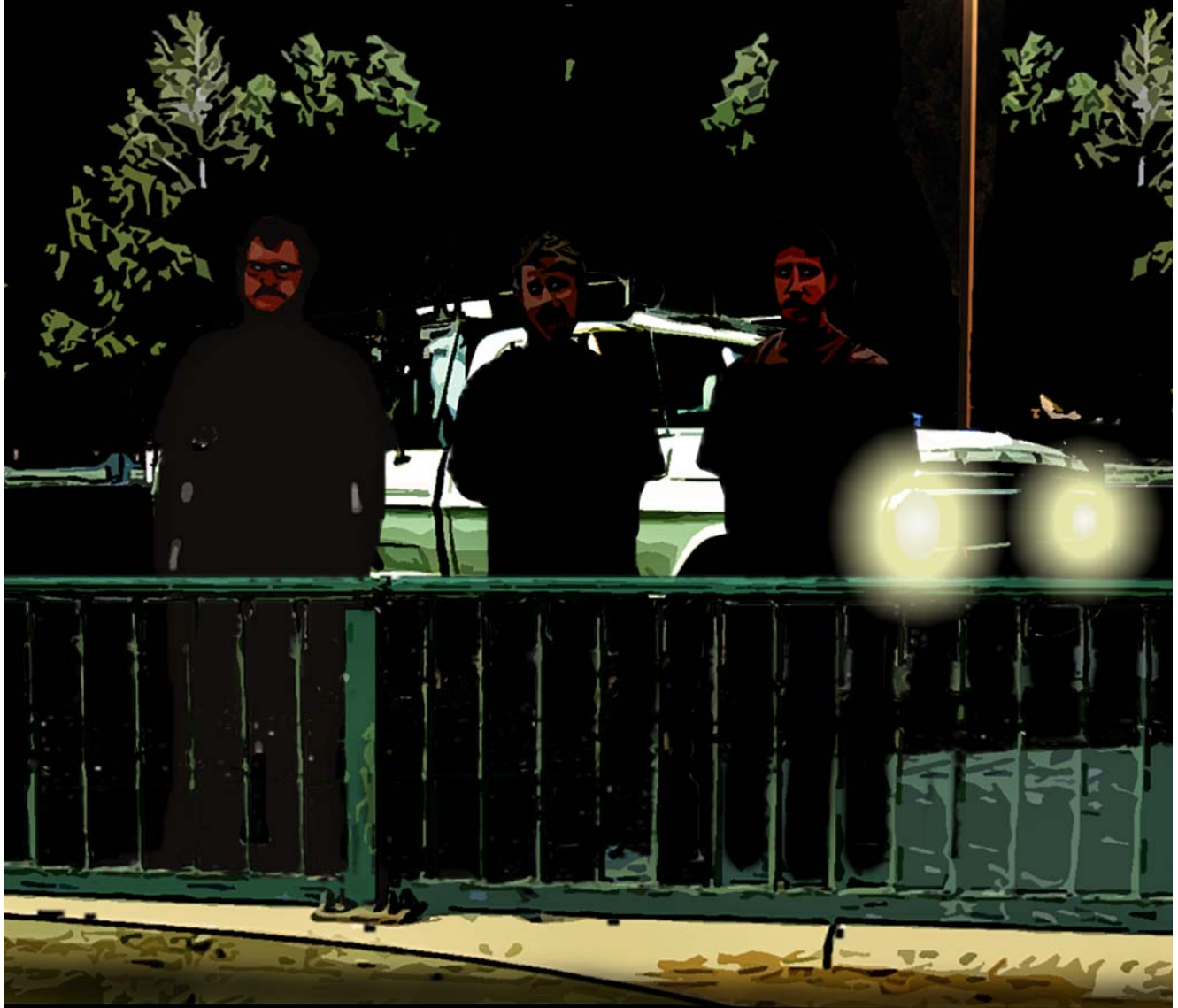


THE GOOD SHIP ABANDON



WRITTEN & ILLUSTRATED
BY WES MODES

WE DROVE AROUND OMAHA AT NIGHT
UNTIL WE FOUND THE RIVER.

IT'S HUGE.

WORD.

WE'RE GOING
TO DIE.

A RAFT MADE OF TRASH

THE WATER WAS BLACK AND
SWIRLED WITH TURBULANCE

CAN WE GO BACK
TO THE GREEN
RIVER NOW?

IT WAS MOVING
VERY VERY FAST

GLUGGLUGGLUGGLUGGLUG

WOW,
WE MIGHT DIE
DOING THIS.

WE MIGHT.

I DONT WANT
TO DIE YET.



WE MET TWO FISHERMEN.

CATFISH.

BUT THERE'S EVERYTHING IN HERE. RAINBOW, PERCH, STEELHEAD, BULLHEADS, CRAPPIE--

BUT WE GO FOR CATFISH.



BAIT?

"STINKEYBAIT." HERE SMELL THIS?!



THEY WERE TAKING A BREAK FROM WORK TO FISH

**RESCUE
ROOTER**

MO 769-3106



THAT RIVER'LL KILL YA

IT'S A MEATGRINDER.

THERE'S UNDERTOWS.

UNDERTOWS.



SUCK YOU STRAIGHT TO THE BOTTOM

AND YOU'RE LUCKY IF YOU COME UP WITHIN THE WEEK.



BUT WITH LIFE VESTS?



THAT'S WITH A LIFE JACKET!

I HELPED THEM PULL A KID OFF THE BOTTOM OF THE RIVER.

HED ONLY BEEN IN THE WATER THREE HOURS.

SKINNED HIM LIKE A GRAPE!

ARIEL WAS FREAKING OUT.

THIS IS NOT
MY DREAM.
THE MISSOURI
RIVER--

IT'S TOO BIG.
IT SCARES ME.

I'M WORRIED
ABOUT THE
BARGES.

MAYBE WE
SHOULD FIND
A SMALLER
RIVER?

THE--HOW YOU
SAY?--PLATTE
RIVER?

THE GREEN
RIVER?

I DON'T
THINK WE'LL
FEEL FREEDOM
ON THIS
RIVER.

SO, UH, I THINK YOU'RE
SAYING YOU'RE **NOT** THAT EXCITED
ABOUT THIS RIVER?

YES! EXACTLY.

HMM. THINK YOU COULD HAVE
SAID SOMETHING WHEN WE WERE
PLANNING THIS MONTHS AGO BEFORE
WE DROVE 2 THOUSAND MILES?

≥SIGH≤
SO WHAT DO YOU
WANT TO DO?

I DON'T KNOW.
BUT I'M SO TIRED
MY **BRAIN** HURTS.

WE DECIDED TO SLEEP ON IT.

BUT I DO KNOW THIS:
THE MIDWEST IS BEAUTIFUL.
GREEN GRASS, THE BUZZ
OF CICADAS

BZZZ ZZZZ BZZZ ZZZZ

WAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAA

SHIMMERING COTTONWOODS,
AND A TRAIN WHISTLE IN
THE DISTANCE.



NEXT MORNING, WE TOOK ANOTHER LOOK AT THE RIVER.

IT DIDN'T LOOK QUITE AS TERRIFYING.



OK, WE MIGHT NOT DIE RIGHT AWAY.

THIS IS ARIEL. HE'S FROM ISRAEL. SUPER ENTHUSIASTIC, EMOTIONAL, FUNNY..



ADDICTED TO JUNK FOOD AND POP CULTURE, PRONE TO WILD SWINGS FROM SULLEN POUTS TO HYSTERICAL WORRY!

THIS IS MORGAN, FERAL NOMADIC ELF RAW FOODY, BAREFOOT WANDERER, FOLKLORIST, ADVENTURER



SERIOUS AND PLAYFUL, EQUAL PARTS HEDONIST AND ASCETIC!

THIS IS ME, RICO. WHAT DO I SAY? MY COMPANIONS WOULD DESCRIBE ME AS VISIONARY, WELL-MEANING,

DRIVEN AND OBSESSIVE, & PRONE TO TOTALITARIANISM. THIS RIVER TRIP WAS MY CRAZY IDEA! SORT OF!



WE MORE OR LESS AGREED TO GATHER MATERIALS AND SCOUT OUT POTENTIAL LAUNCH SITES.



OLD INNERTUBES CAME FROM A TIRE STORE

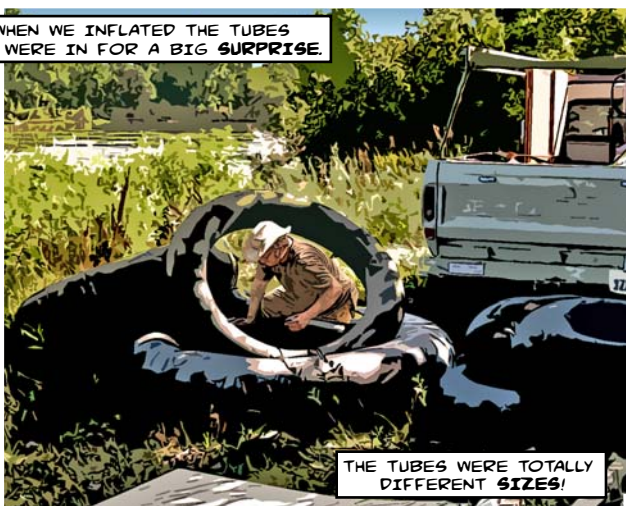
I'M GLAD YOU GOT A PATCH KIT. WE'RE GONNA NEED IT!



WE FOUND A PLACE TO BUILD THE RAFT.

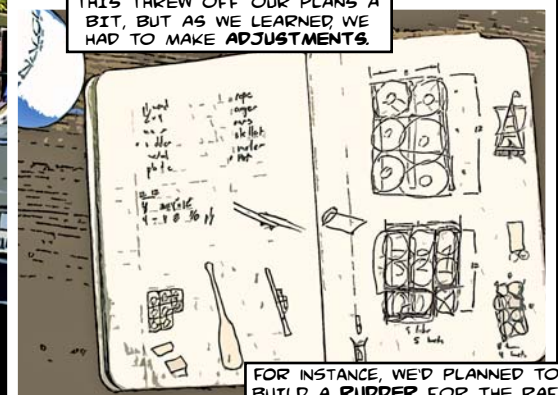
OK. MAYBE WE CAN DO THIS.

WHEN WE INFLATED THE TUBES WE WERE IN FOR A BIG **SURPRISE**.



THE TUBES WERE TOTALLY DIFFERENT **SIZES!**

THIS THREW OFF OUR PLANS A BIT, BUT AS WE LEARNED WE HAD TO MAKE **ADJUSTMENTS**.



FOR INSTANCE, WE'D PLANNED TO BUILD A **RUDDER** FOR THE RAFT

BUT SOMEONE EXPLAINED TO US

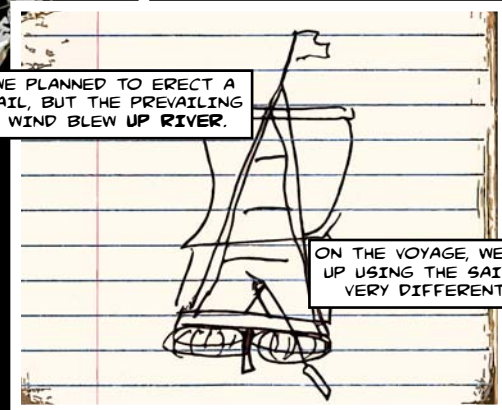


THAT IF YOU ARE **DRIFTING** WITH THE CURRENT, A RUDDER WON'T DO A THING.

(SO MUCH FOR THE ILLUSTRATION ON EVERY COPY OF HUCK FINN I'VE EVER OWNED)

The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn

WE PLANNED TO ERECT A SAIL, BUT THE PREVAILING WIND BLEW UP **RIVER**.



ON THE VOYAGE, WE ENDED UP USING THE SAIL IN A VERY DIFFERENT WAY.

WE LASHED THE INNERTUBES TO THE PLYWOOD WITH **ROPE**.



THE RAFT GOT ITS FIRST TEST IN THE WATER



IT WAS 4 SHEETS LONG, OR ABOUT **8 FEET BY 16**.

WE LOADED OUR MOUNTAIN OF STUFF ON TO THE RAFT,



AND MORGAN ROUNDED UP TWO **OARS**. (LATER THEY'D **SAVE OUR LIVES!**)

WITH ARIEL'S LAST MINUTE ADDITION OF A **FIGUREHEAD**,



WE WERE READY TO **LAUNCH**.

LIKE THE DEAD

IN A FIT OF BRAVERY OR MAYBE FOOLISHNESS, WE SHOVED OFF ON OUR UNSTEADY RAFT MADE OF TRASH!

ARIEL,
CAN YOU GIVE
US FULL STEAM
AHEAD?

ARIEL WAS RIGHT,
WE WERE GOING TO DIE.

I HOPE ALL
YOUR SHIT IS
TIED DOWN
BACK HERE.

BUT WE WEREN'T SINKING.

ARIEL?

IN FACT, WE WERE FLOATING ALONG
QUITE NICELY. AND THE SUNSET OVER
THE AIRPORT WAS BEAUTIFUL.

ARIEL?

ARIEL WAS SO SCARED,
HE WAS CATATONIC!

ARIEL!

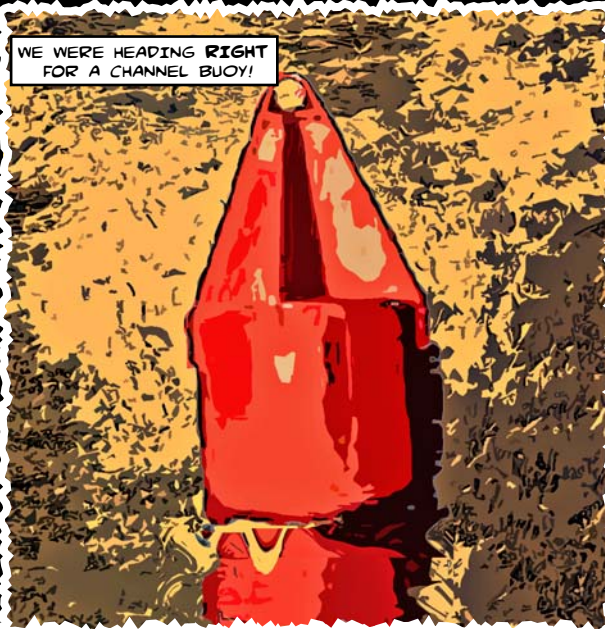
IF YOU CAN'T PADDLE, AT
LEAST TURN THE OAR OVER
TO SOMEONE WHO WILL!

NO!

THEN I
WON'T HAVE ANY
CONTROL!

I'M NOT ASKING!
LOOK!

WE WERE HEADING RIGHT
FOR A CHANNEL BUOY!



MAKE A CHOICE!
WHICH WAY?



LEFT,
NO RIGHT!



THEN
PADDLE HARD!



TOO LATE!



IT ALL HAPPENED
IN AN INSTANT.



WE HIT THE BUOY.

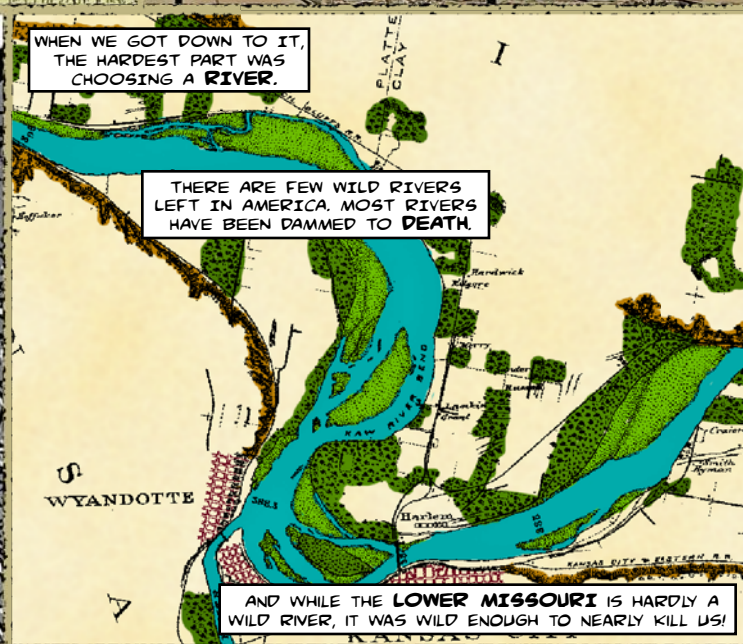
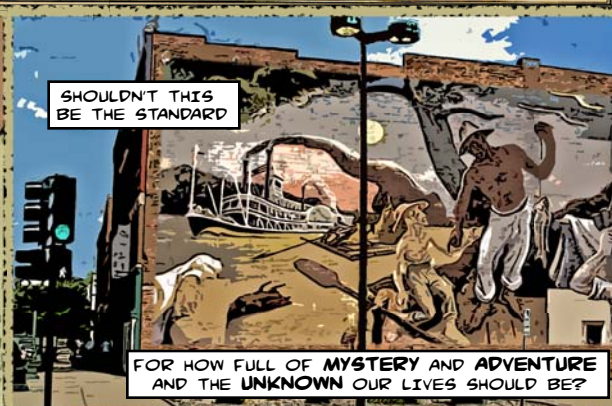
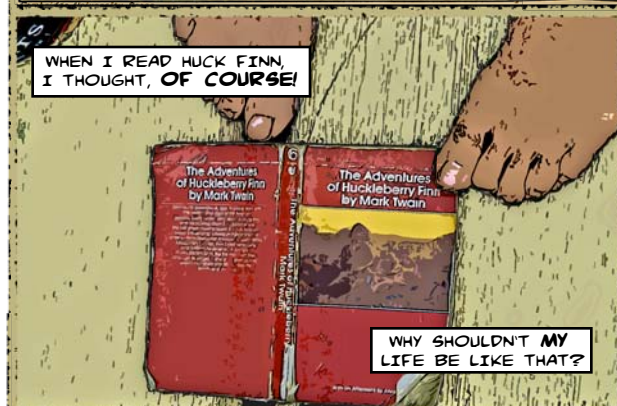
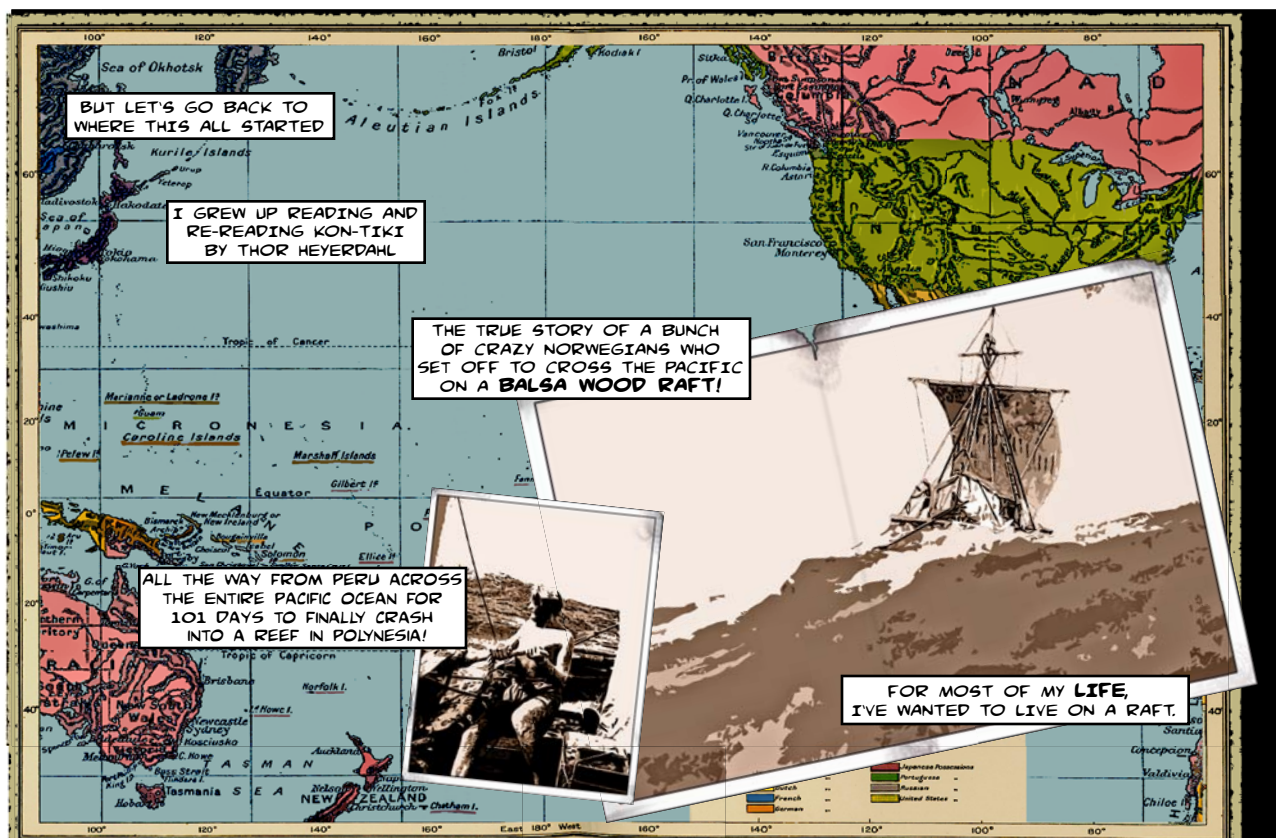


THE RAFT WENT UNDER.



MORGAN DOVE OVERBOARD
TO SAVE THE RAFT.





MORGAN FREED THE RAFT FROM THE BUOY AND CAME UP SPUTTERING AND ANGRY.



WE RETRIEVED OUR STUFF - SLEEPING BAGS, FOOD, ETC - FLOATING ALL OVER THE RIVER.

HOURS LATER, AFTER OUR HEARTBEATS HAD FINALLY RETURNED TO NORMAL.



WE WERE DRIFTING THROUGH THE GATHERING DARK.



OUR ONLY LIGHT, A KEROSENE LANTERN.



ONCE WE USED THEM, WE FOUND THE OARS HANDY FOR KEEPING US OUT OF THE WAY OF STUFF.



PADDLE WHEELERS, BARGES BRIDGES, SNAGS, AND, OF COURSE, CHANNEL BUOYS.

WE FLOATED THROUGH OMAHA IN THE DARK



ACCOMPANIED BY THE SOUNDS OF A ROCK CONCERT IN COUNSEL BLUFFS ACROSS THE RIVER.

THIS IS DANGEROUS! NO LIGHTS! NO MOTOR! YOU COULD RUN INTO THAT PADDLE WHEELER!



THIS IS THE CRAZIEST THING I EVER HEARD OF!



WELL FRIEND, THANKS FOR THE CONCERN

BUT YOU'RE KIND OF KEEPING US FROM PADDLING OUT OF THE WAY.



ARIGHT, ARIGHT! IT'S YOUR FUNERAL!





WHEN WE FINALLY MADE CAMP
IN THE EARLY MORNING HOURS



WE SLEPT LIKE THE DEAD.



MODES.IO/PUNKRAFTING

WES MODES is an artist and high-tech runaway. In various lives, he is a sculptor, writer, performer, artist, community organizer, geek, and mischief-maker.

Wes lives in Felton, a village in the hills above Santa Cruz, California, in a little cabin he's been fixing up for years, making art in a converted travel trailer.

Follow the chronicle of his journey designing, building, and floating a little hillbilly shanty boat: SHANTYBOAT.MODES.IO