Report backs use of genetic fingerprinting

WASHINGTON (AP) — Genetic fingerprinting is a reliable and valid way of convicting the guilty and freeing the innocent, and should continue to be used in courts, a National Research Council report said Tuesday.

The report said that genetic identification techniques now in use are good, but that they could be improved by setting a national standard for laboratory techniques and by the certification of lab personnel.

"We think it is a powerful tool for criminal investigation and for exoneration of innocent individuals and one that should be used even as standards are strengthened," said Victor A. McKusick, chairman of the NRC panel of experts that conducted a two-year study.

"We did not say that courts should cease to admit this evidence," he said.

McKusick, a Johns Hopkins University gene expert, said that the committee found no reason to call for a halt in use of the current genetic identification system, called DNA fingerprinting.

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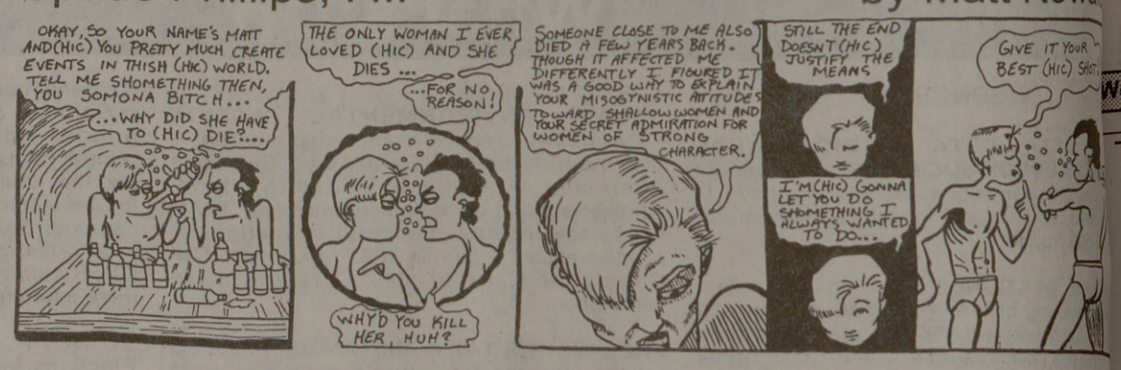

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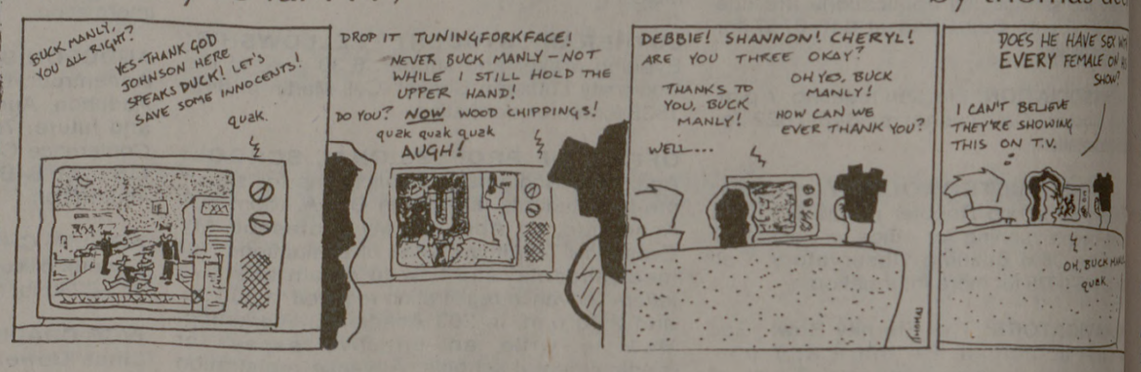

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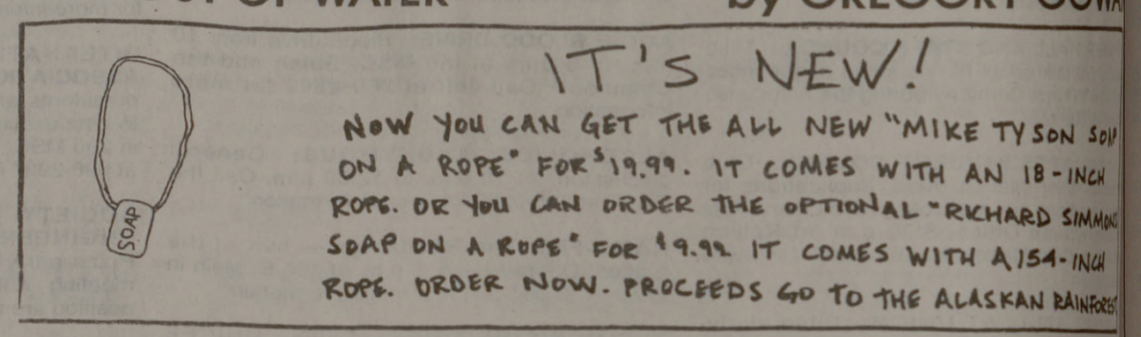

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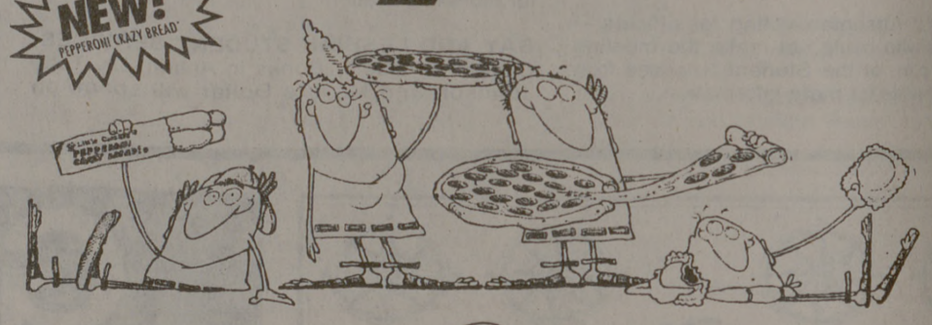

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