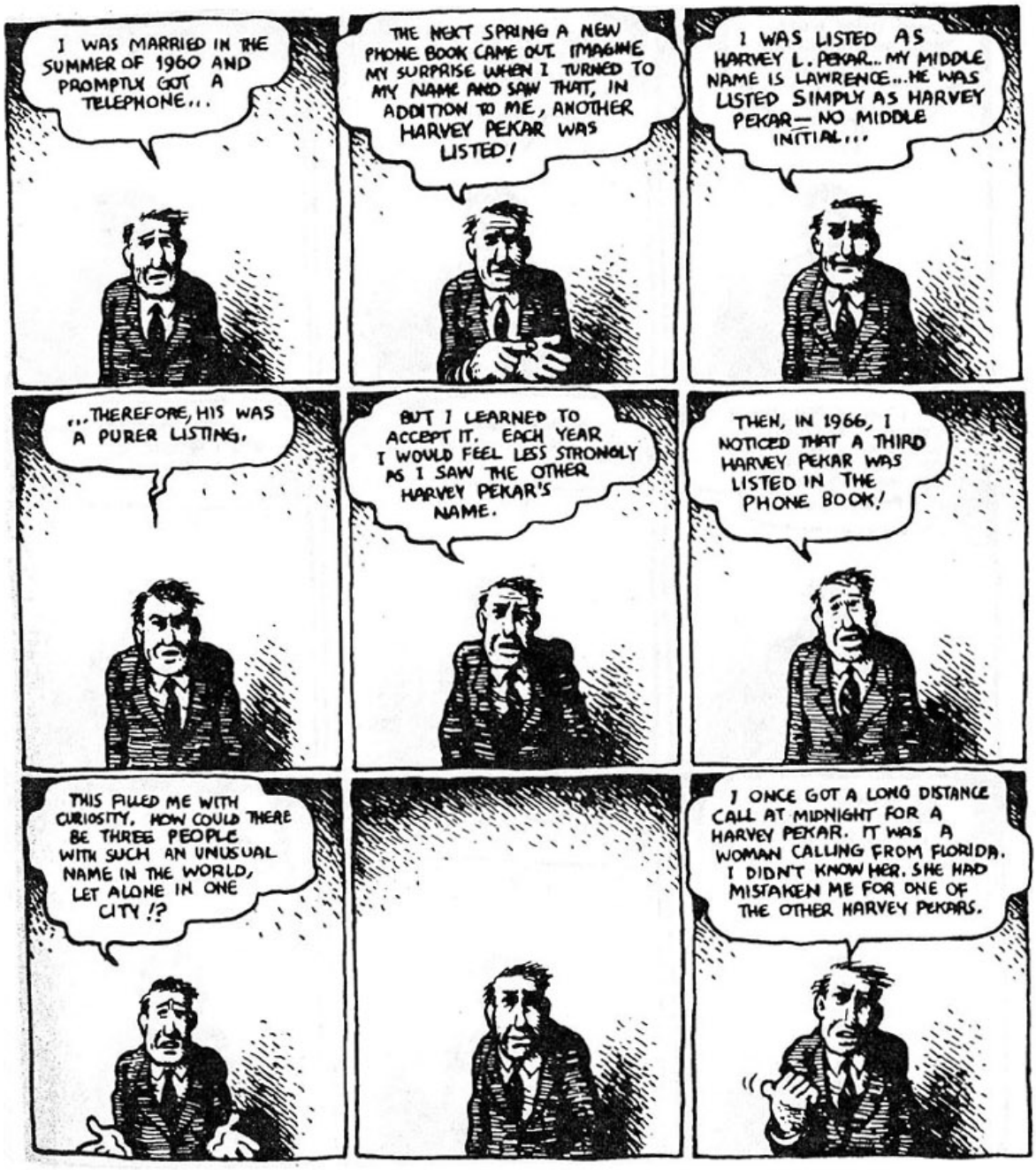
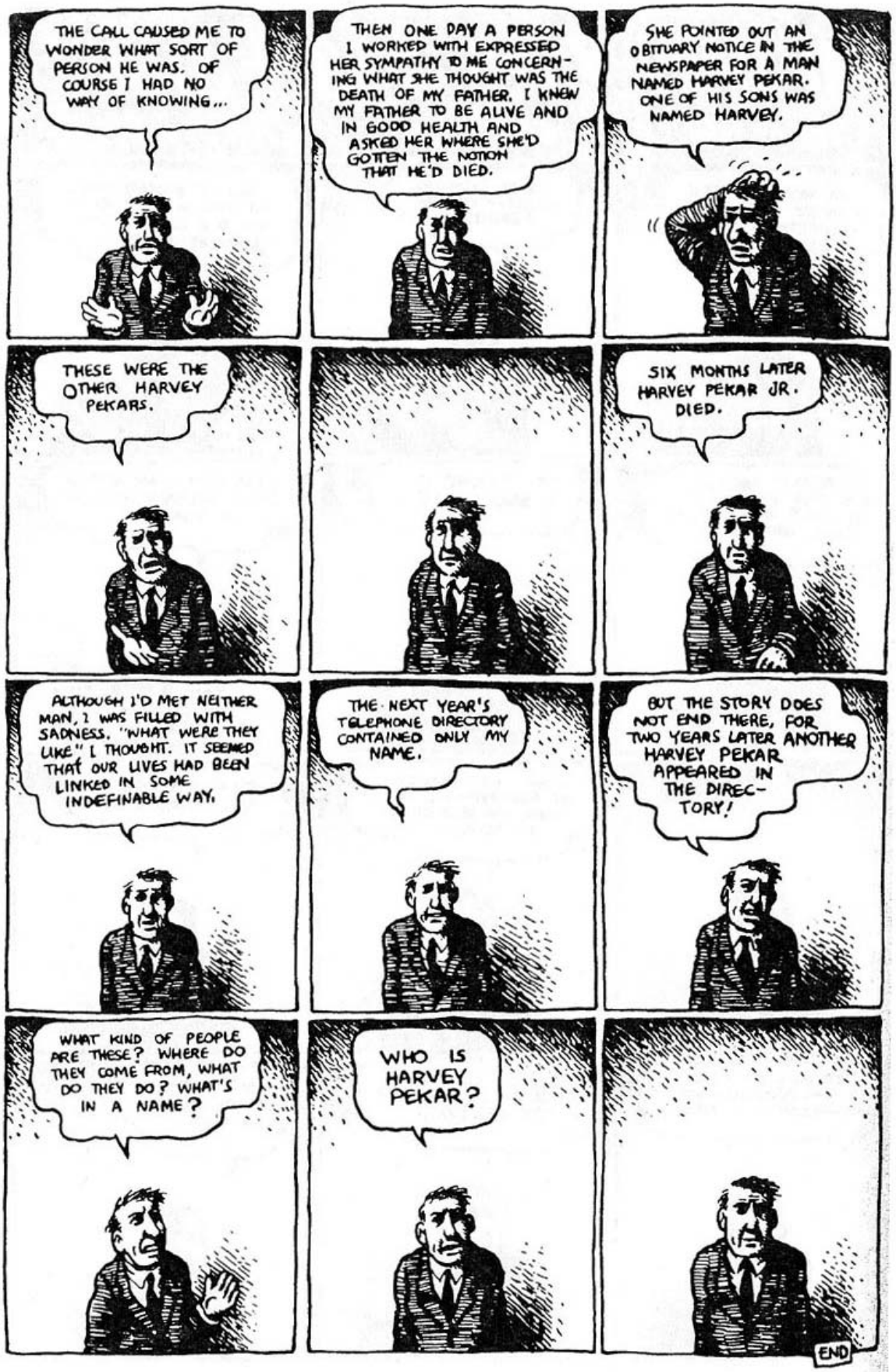
Excerpt from “The Harvey Pekar Name Story” by Harvey Pekar, Art by Robert Crumb.




THE CALL CAUSED ME TO WONDER WHAT SORT OF PERSON HE WAS. OF COURSE I HAD NO WAY OF KNOWING...
THEN ONE DAY A PERSON I WORKED WITH EXPRESSED HER SYMPATHY TO ME CONCERNING WHAT SHE THOUGHT WAS THE DEATH OF MY FATHER. I KNEW MY FATHER TO BE ALIVE AND IN GOOD HEALTH AND ASKED HER WHERE SHE'D GOTTEN THE NOTION THAT HE'D DIED.
SHE POINTED OUT AN OBITUARY NOTICE IN THE NEWSPAPER FOR A MAN NAMED HARVEY PEKAR. ONE OF HIS SONS WAS NAMED HARVEY.
THESE WERE THE OTHER HARVEY PEKARS.
SIX MONTHS LATER HARVEY PEKAR JR. DIED.
ALTHOUGH I'D MET NEITHER MAN, I WAS FILLED WITH SADNESS. "WHAT WERE THEY LIKE" I THOUGHT. IT SEEMED THAT OUR LIVES HAD BEEN LINKED IN SOME INDEFINABLE WAY.
THE NEXT YEAR'S TELEPHONE DIRECTORY CONTAINED ONLY MY NAME.
BUT THE STORY DOES NOT END THERE, FOR TWO YEARS LATER ANOTHER HARVEY PEKAR APPEARED IN THE DIRECTORY!
WHAT KIND OF PEOPLE ARE THESE? WHERE DO THEY COME FROM, WHAT DO THEY DO? WHAT'S IN A NAME?
WHO IS HARVEY PEKAR?
END