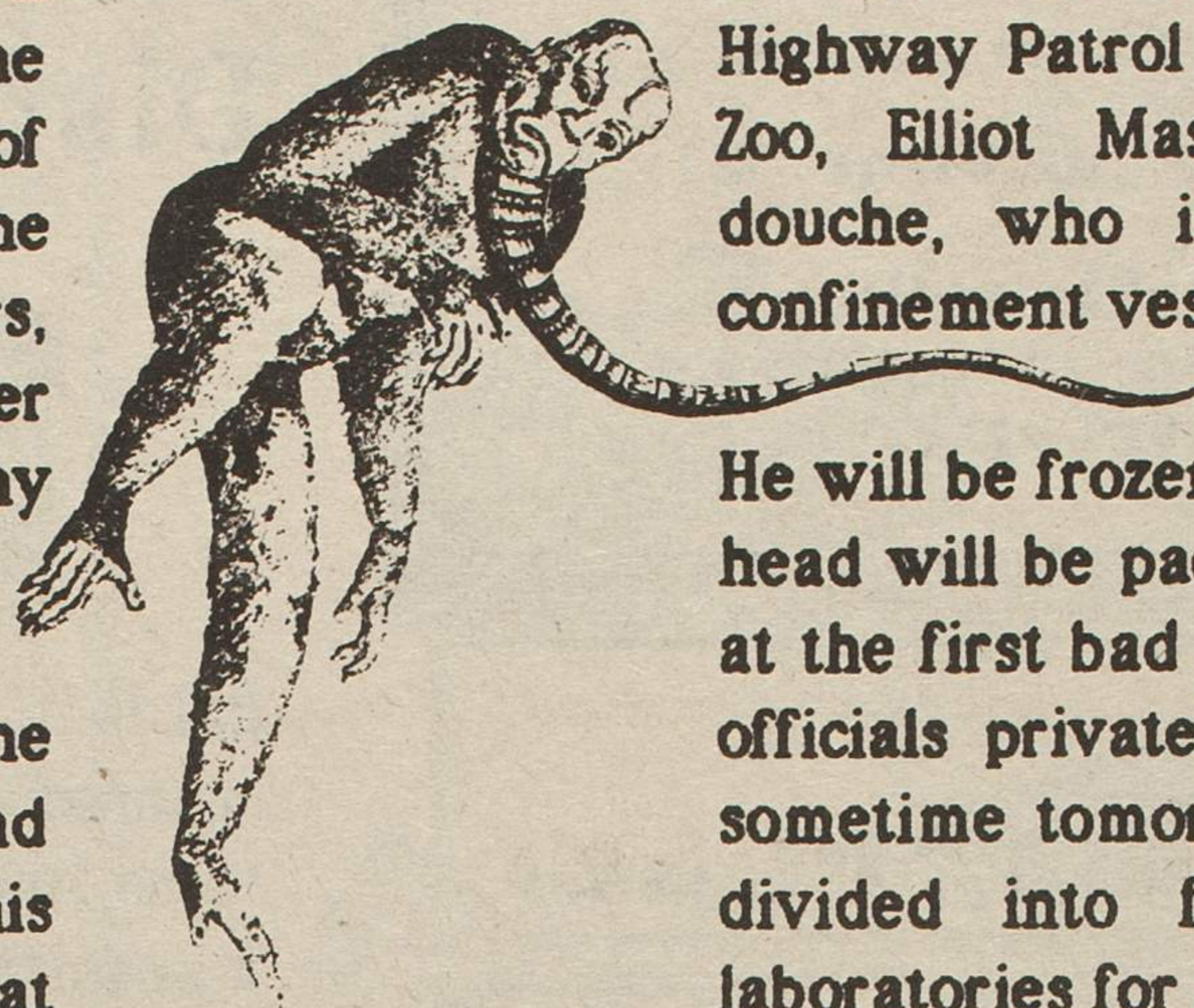


Demon in check at state zoo

One day the demon John Horton drank Royal Crown Cola through a checkered cotton workshirt. The starchy RC stimulated a lifelong overproduction of stomach acid. The demon tried appeasement with the angry organ, eating conch shells, lead pipe, mufflers, baseball bats, batteries--acid & all--and jackhammer bits. None of it did any good. The demon's paunchy gut barked and snarled like a hungry cur.

The demon was first noticed publicly when he disposed a barbecue pit (entire), wurst and coals and grate and concrete and bones and steak, and his reputation swelled when his quirky appetat suggested he eat a country church, lively sexton, good



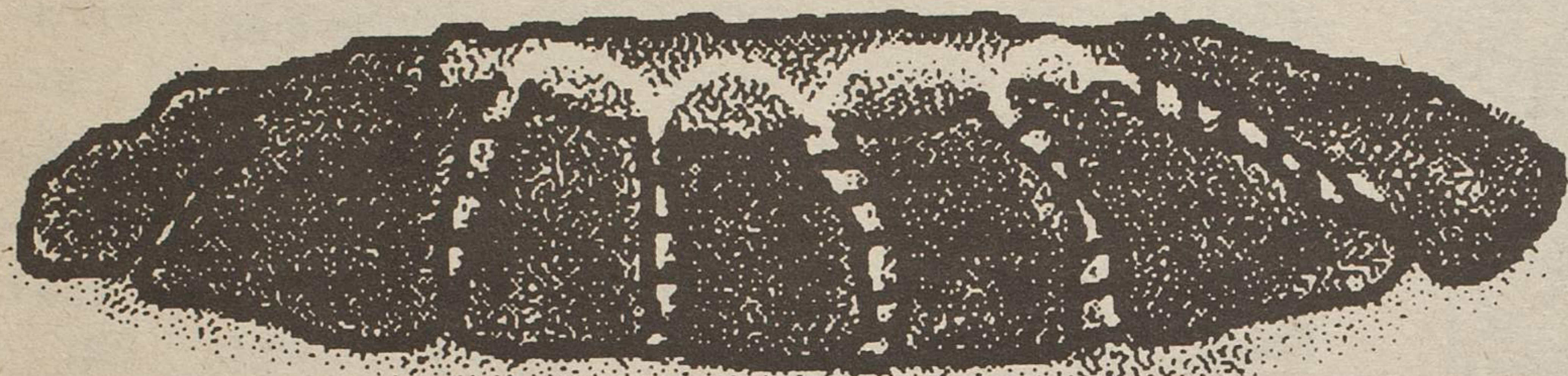
minister and all the congregation. After capture, the Highway Patrol took him to the Curator of the High Zoo, Elliot Massengil, inventor of the disposable douche, who is seeing to the demon's elaborate confinement vessel.

He will be frozen rock hard in helium to his neck. The head will be packed in cosmolene and wired to ignite at the first bad thought. The demon knows this. Zoo officials privately say the thing's head will fall off sometime tomorrow, or next week, and then will be divided into five slabs and mailed to anxious laboratories for analysis and, ultimately, disposal.

TEXAS MAN DIES OF PROSTATE CYST

A Texas man, Bubba, greeted Charon yesterday after taking 3,000 direct blows to the stomach. He was briefly in critical condition at the nearest hospital. It started on a talent program, when he offered his gut to all comers for punching and for charity. Five hundred asswhippers came. He couldn't take it. He was brain dead a few hours. His death was incurred by the bursting of a prostate cyst. They say he laughed through the first 1,000 punches, complained of a bellyache at 1,503 and spat blood from his penis at 2,908. Out of mercy, God tucked him away at that point.

Flatball is played like this in Hell



The team of the Devil has won again. This makes 52 straight. No one doubts the future. Hell is predictable. The demon will return. Next season. For the opener. To pitch against Kerouac. Who will be killed by the demon's first pitch but return the following season. For the opener.

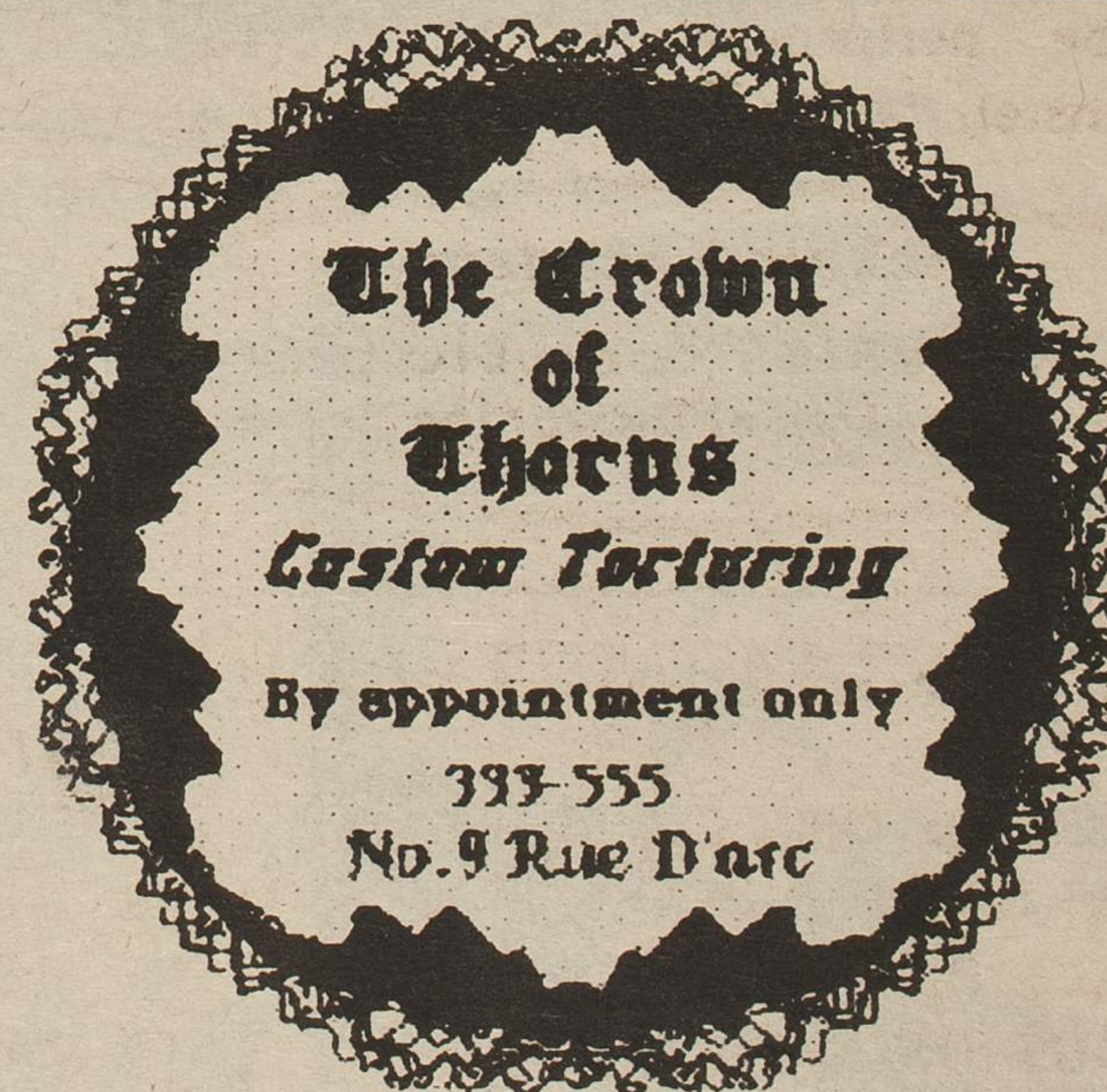
Have you ever played flatball? These balls have flat human heads at their core--discus-sized--with squashed eyeballs. They will wrap around a bat if you hit them wrong and if you connect, rocket into the bleachers and kill fans. Here are a few basic rules of flatball:

1. The bow cannot forever stand bent.
2. Flatball is not the highest kind of enjoyment.
3. In its time and place, flatball is as proper as prayer.
4. A batter's nostrils must be plugged with chloroformed Q-tips.
5. Do not turn your ass to a fellow player.
6. Baserunners must carry a pail of brickdust in each had.
7. They must balance a pail on the head.
8. Fans must shout, "Shake, baby, shake! You don't shake you don't get no jellycake."
9. No crowd is too small.
10. If the game ain't done when the sun goes down, it's played in the dark.

Different regions of Hell observe the rules differently. For example, Hollywood, on the edge of the Salton, allows its citizens to play street flatball on Sunday but no other day.

Flatball is the game of today and tomorrow. Pitchers die eating flatballs on the mound. They have to take them away from umpires. Nobody willingly gives them up. The game spreads beyond the stadium. Even dogs can't get enough of this ball. Everyone and everything plays. One ball feeds a thousand, another 10,000. Ball cloning comes to every household. Nobody leaves for work until the game is over, and that takes years. But everybody's fed. And happy. And that's the game that is played with flatballs.

Meanwhile, there is the grisly business of the ball's manufacture, which requires a steady supply of heads and access to cadavers. Plenty of head will come to the surface of a tarry nuclear bog, free for the picking. Transported to factory, these almost-fresh heads are soured with caustic soda and lime and softened by wrapping in salt-water soaked gauze and newspaper. They are flattened in vises with crushing force. Then they are embedded in leather, stitched in by master sewers and put into play.



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