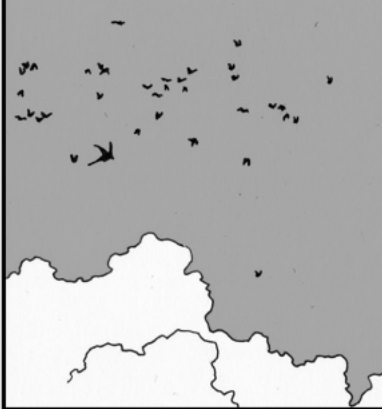


What would you do if an evil scientist announced that he was going to blow up your city unless the government paid him 20 million pounds in unmarked used bank notes?



To be honest it's doubtful that you'd actually ever get to hear about it.



This was Great Britain, after all.



The government would sort this out without the average person being any the wiser.



They'd either pay him, track him down and force him to switch the thing off or get a good scientist to switch it off instead.



If all else failed there'd be plenty of warning, time enough to pop on a tube and get to safety.

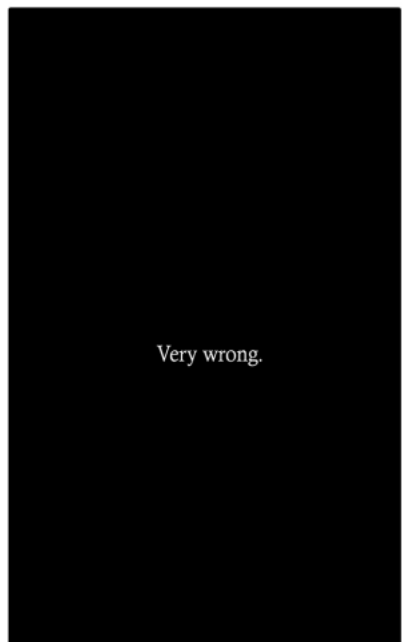


Whatever the solution, the outcome would be the same. Taxes would continue to be paid for the foreseeable future and all would be right with the world.



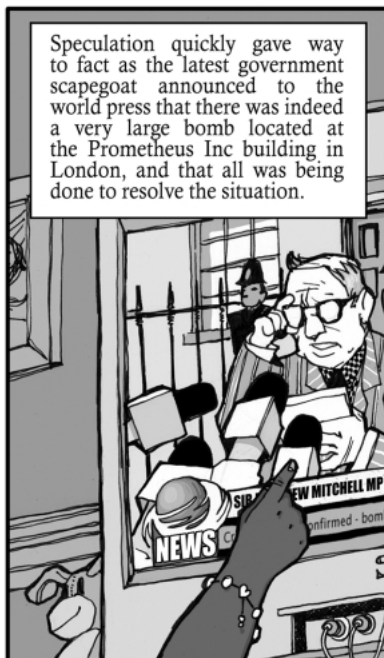
Sadly, such a threat had been made but for reasons that the person on the street would probably never discover, things went wrong.

Very wrong.





With only 1 hour to go until detonation the news was filled with footage of key city businessmen, many with friends in government positions, jumping into helicopters, called in to fly them over busy city streets.



Speculation quickly gave way to fact as the latest government scapegoat announced to the world press that there was indeed a very large bomb located at the Prometheus Inc building in London, and that all was being done to resolve the situation.



He also advised that everybody stay where they were, being safer in buildings than on the city streets...



...should the worst happen.



Armed with this information the British people did what anyone would do, and took to the streets in their thousands.

Well meaning or otherwise, this announcement only really served to add more cars to the already overburdened London streets.

Bobby Doyle observed all of this on the television over the bar at his work's local public house.



He was out with friends for a 'long lunch', and on hearing this news...



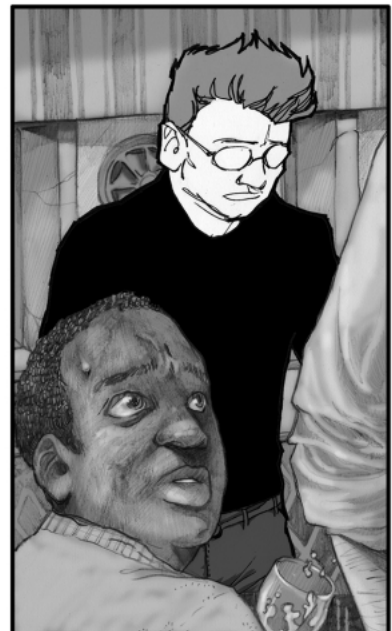
...accepted that his was going to be even longer than planned.



With a sigh he put his half-empty pint glass on its beer mat ...

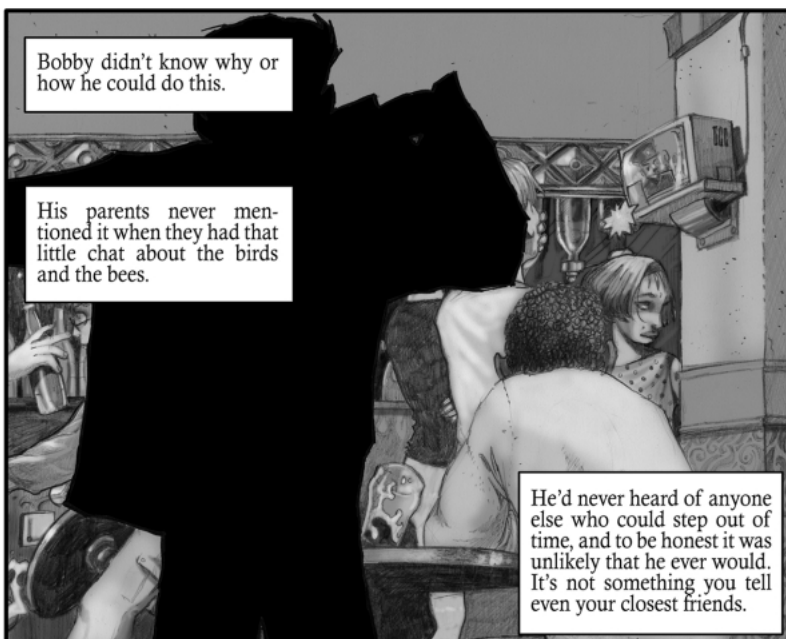


...and stopped time.



Bobby didn't know why or how he could do this.

His parents never mentioned it when they had that little chat about the birds and the bees.



He'd never heard of anyone else who could step out of time, and to be honest it was unlikely that he ever would. It's not something you tell even your closest friends.

But Bobby could do this.

Bobby was special.





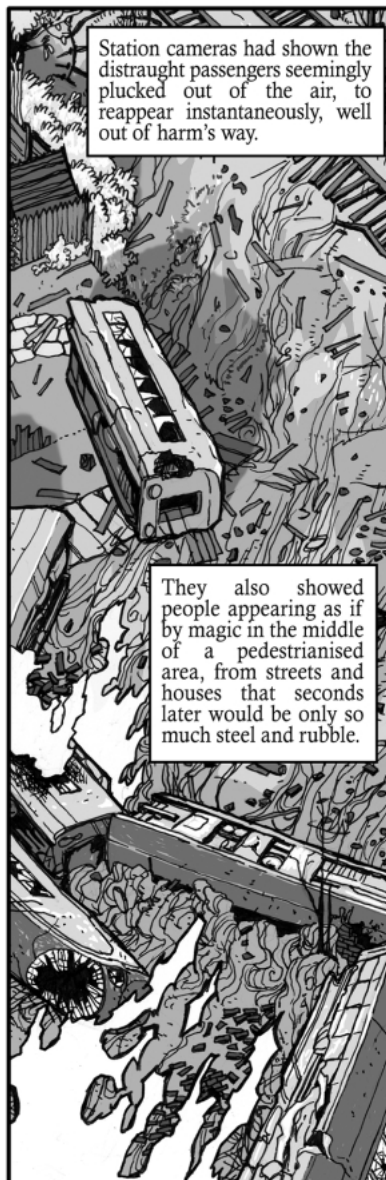
In his twenty five years of struggling with life, Bobby had done this quite a few times before.

The last two of these had been quite public displays and had created the urban legend of 'The Fastest Man Alive'.

Saving a train full of passengers as it left the rails had been an instinctive act, made possible only by the fact that Bobby had been in the right place at the right time.



He had been sat in Coach B as the screeching and juddering had started.



Station cameras had shown the distraught passengers seemingly plucked out of the air, to reappear instantaneously, well out of harm's way.

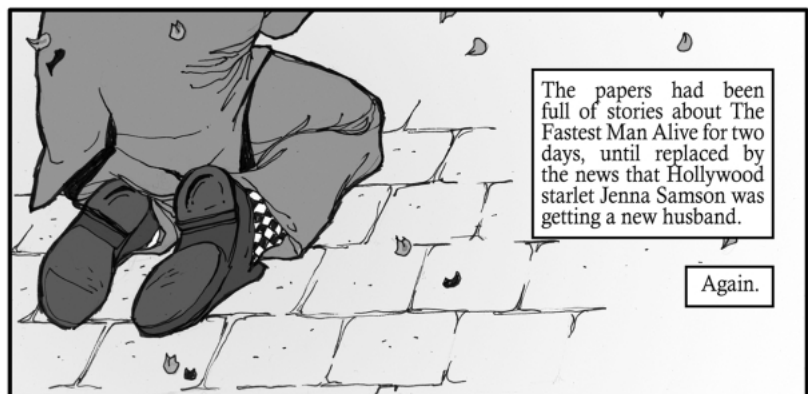
They also showed people appearing as if by magic in the middle of a pedestrianised area, from streets and houses that seconds later would be only so much steel and rubble.



Only the driver thought he had had a glimpse of a man opening his door...



...before finding himself, like the others, safely observing the crash from the platform.



The papers had been full of stories about The Fastest Man Alive for two days, until replaced by the news that Hollywood starlet Jenna Samson was getting a new husband.

Again.