

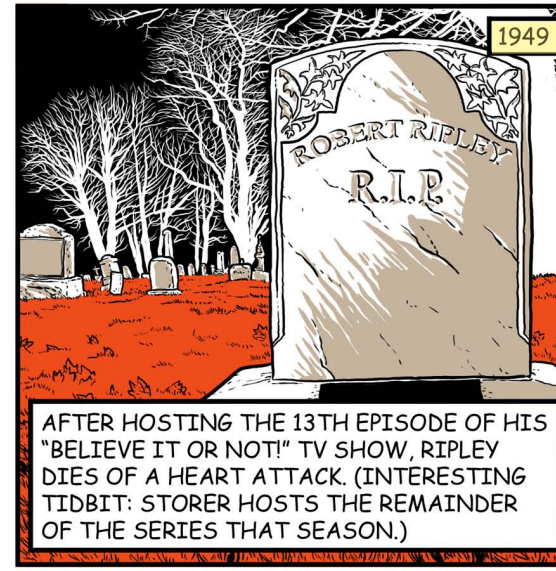
THE UNBELIEVABLE TRUTH

DECADES AGO, THANKS TO A CLEVER ALUM AND A POPULAR SHOWMAN, A BIZARRE COLLECTION OF ODDITIES ARRIVED AT THE COLLEGE MUSEUM. THE ONLY THING STRANGER THAN THE RELICS IS THE CURIOUS TALE OF HOW THEY GOT HERE, THE ENSUING CONTROVERSY AND WHY THEY RARELY SEE THE LIGHT OF DAY.

ROBERT RIPLEY LAUNCHES HIS "RIPLEY'S BELIEVE IT OR NOT!" CARTOON IN THE NEW YORK DAILY GLOBE. BY THE 1930S THE SYNDICATED CHRONICLE OF WEIRDNESS WAS READ DAILY BY 80 MILLION PEOPLE.



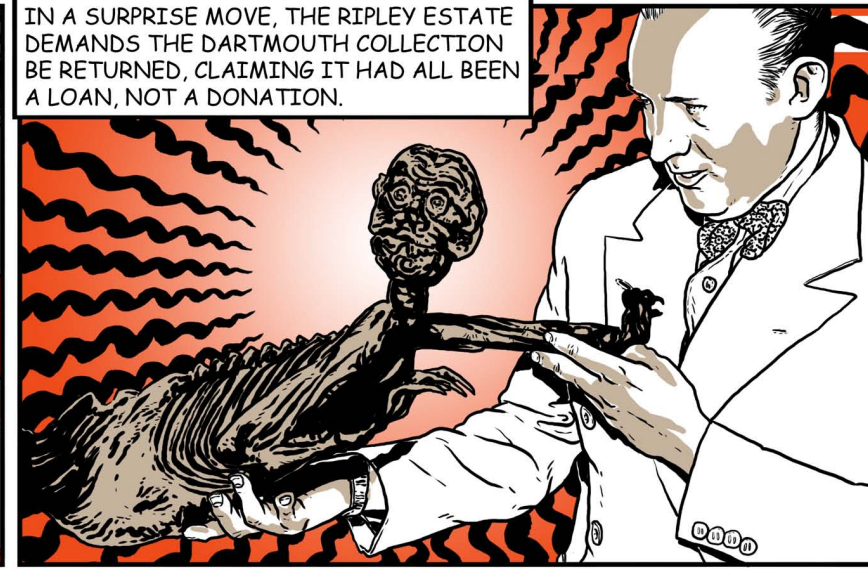
1919



1949

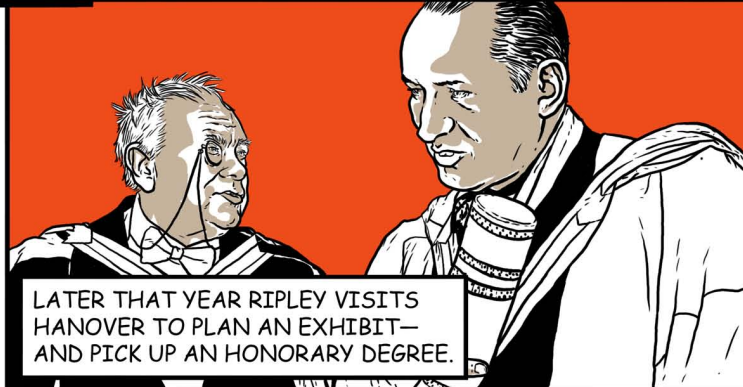
AFTER HOSTING THE 13TH EPISODE OF HIS "BELIEVE IT OR NOT!" TV SHOW, RIPLEY DIES OF A HEART ATTACK. (INTERESTING TIDBIT: STORER HOSTS THE REMAINDER OF THE SERIES THAT SEASON.)

IN A SURPRISE MOVE, THE RIPLEY ESTATE DEMANDS THE DARTMOUTH COLLECTION BE RETURNED, CLAIMING IT HAD ALL BEEN A LOAN, NOT A DONATION.



1939

ENTERPRIISING RIPLEY PRODUCER DOUG STORER '21 HAS A BRAINSTORM TO BOOST HIS BOSS'S REPUTATION AS A SCHOLARLY COLLECTOR: DONATE SOME ODDITIES TO DARTMOUTH.



LATER THAT YEAR RIPLEY VISITS HANOVER TO PLAN AN EXHIBIT— AND PICK UP AN HONORARY DEGREE.



THE COLLEGE GOES TO COURT TO DEFEND ITS OWNERSHIP OF THE MATERIAL. NEW YORK CITY ATTORNEY PAUL H. FOX '32 REPRESENTS HIS ALMA MATER. STORER SIDES WITH DARTMOUTH AND INSISTS THE GOODS WERE A DONATION.

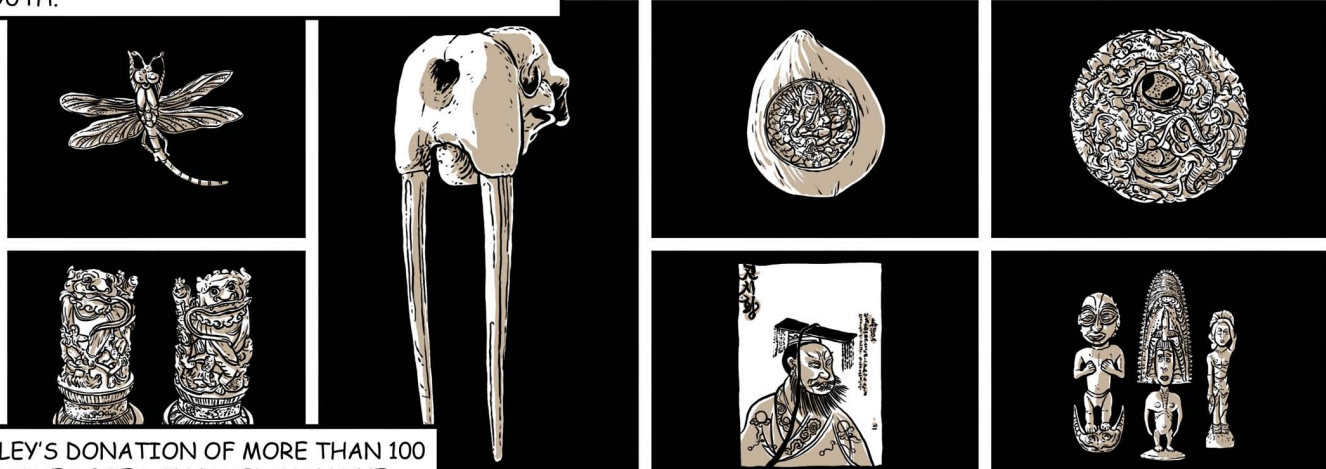
TO CURRY FAVOR, COLLEGE TREASURER JOHN MECK '33 SENDS TWO APPLICATION FORMS TO RIPLEY'S BROTHER, DOUG, FOR HIS TWO SONS (ONE AN INFANT, THE OTHER A TODDLER!)



AFFADAVITS CONVINCING THE RIPLEY ESTATE TO WITHDRAW ITS CLAIMS IN JANUARY. FOX BILLS THE COLLEGE \$290.



1950



RIPLEY'S DONATION OF MORE THAN 100 ODDITIES GOES ON DISPLAY IN THE ROBERT RIPLEY ROOM IN WILSON HALL.



INDIGNANT CURATOR W. WEDGWOOD BOWEN WRITES TO STORER, CLAIMING THEY COULD DRAW A "LARGE CROWD OF MILL-HANDS" BY PRESENTING MORE OF THE ARTIFACTS, BUT HE DID NOT WISH TO LOWER "THE RATHER HIGH STANDARD WHICH I HAVE MADE IT MY POLICY TO MAINTAIN FOR THE MUSEUM."

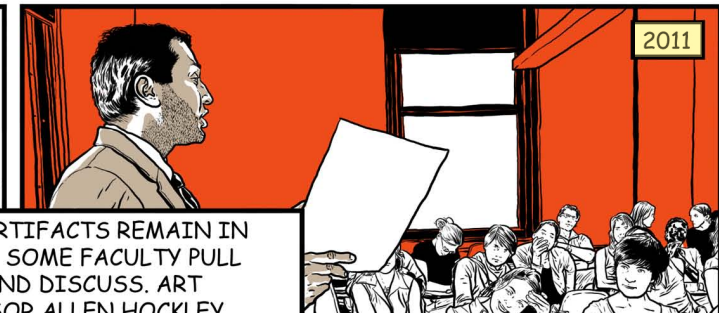
1940

THE RIPLEY COLLECTION GOES DARK WHEN IT IS PUT INTO STORAGE TO MAKE ROOM FOR ITEMS MORE DIRECTLY RELATED TO THE EDUCATIONAL PURPOSES OF THE COLLEGE. PRESIDENT MUSEUM CURATOR ELMER HARP JR. WRITES TO VICE PRESIDENT ORTON HICKS '21: "I BELIEVE WE SHOULD NOT BE TOO HASTY ABOUT GETTING RID OF IT...ONE DAY IT MIGHT TAKE ON A NEW VALUE FOR TEACHING PURPOSES."



1961

WHILE RIPLEY'S ARTIFACTS REMAIN IN STORAGE, INDEED SOME FACULTY PULL ITEMS TO VIEW AND DISCUSS. ART HISTORY PROFESSOR ALLEN HOCKLEY, FOR INSTANCE, SHOWS CLASSES RIPLEY'S JAPANESE NORIMAN, WHICH HE BELIEVES MAY HAVE BELONGED TO A RULING FAMILY IN THE 1800S.



2011

AND SO GOES THE INCREDIBLE IVY ODYSSEY OF RIPLEY'S ODDITIES. BELIEVE IT OR NOT!