



FLEXIBILITY

AS I SEE IT, THERE ARE 2 BIG ANIMATION FLAWS -

WE EITHER HAVE THE 'KING KONG' EFFECT
WHERE EVERYTHING MOVES AROUND
THE SAME AMOUNT

OR

EVERYTHING IS FLASHING AROUND
ALL OVER THE PLACE

SO

WE WANT TO HAVE A STABLE IMAGE
AND STILL HAVE FLEXIBILITY

AND

THIS IS HOW WE GET IT:

THE FOLLOWING DEVICES ARE GUARANTEED TO LIMBER UP, LOOSEN UP AND
GIVE 'SNAP' AND VITALITY TO OUR PERFORMANCE WHILE KEEPING THE FIGURE
STABLE AND SOLID.

WE'VE ALREADY INTRODUCED SOME OF THESE DEVICES WITH WALKS and RUNS, BUT I WANT TO TAKE EACH OF THEM SEPARATELY and DIG INTO THEM.

FIRST, The BREAKDOWN

A GREAT WAY TO GET FLEXIBILITY IS WHERE WE'RE GOING TO PLACE

The BREAKDOWN DRAWING
OR PASSING POSITION
OR MIDDLE POSITION
OR INTERMEDIATE POSITION
(WHATEVER YOU WANT TO CALL IT)

- BETWEEN 2 EXTREMES.

WHERE DO WE GO IN THE MIDDLE? CRUCIAL! AS WE'VE SEEN WITH THE WALKS, IT GIVES CHARACTER TO THE MOVE. IT'S A TRAVELLER - A TRANSITIONAL POSITION. AND WHERE WE PUT IT IS SO IMPORTANT. IT'S THE SECRET OF ANIMATION, I TELL YOU!

IT STOPS THINGS JUST GOING BORINGLY FROM A TO B.

GO SOMEWHERE ELSE THAT'S INTERESTING EN ROUTE FROM A TO B.

EMERY HAWKINS, A MASTER ANIMATOR OF 'CHANGE' SAID TO ME,

"DICK, DON'T GO FROM A TO B.

GO FROM A TO X TO B.

GO FROM A TO G TO B.

GO SOMEWHERE ELSE IN THE MIDDLE!"

A SIMPLE, POWERFUL TOOL:

I FIRST GOT ONTO THIS BY WORKING WITH KEN HARRIS, WHEN HE'D CUT UP MY DRAWINGS, OR BITS OF THEM, and HE'D STICK THEM DOWN IN A DIFFERENT PLACE.

I ENDED UP FEELING SO STRONGLY ABOUT THE BREAKDOWN THAT FOR YEARS I WENT AROUND RANTING and RAVING THAT I COULD WRITE A WHOLE BOOK ABOUT IT. (IT HAS ONLY JUST OCCURRED TO ME THAT THIS IS IT.)

LET'S TAKE OUR
2 EXTREMES
OF A MAN
GOING FROM
HAPPY to SAD -



PUT IN THE
MIDDLE POSITION
WHERE IT
WOULD BE
LOGICALLY -



OK, BUT DULL

EXTREME

BREAKDOWN

EXTREME

RIGHT, LET'S GO
SOMEWHERE ELSE
IN THE MIDDLE.



= MORE INTEREST.
MORE 'CHANGE'

WE COULD EVEN JUST
KEEP THE SAME MOUTH
AND DELAY THE CHANGE -



= A QUICKER CHANGE
- MORE VITALITY

OR THE CONVERSE -
ADVANCE THE CHANGE



= A QUICKER
UNHAPPINESS.

LET'S KEEP
THE SAME MOUTH
BUT PUSH IT UP -



= IT WOULD AFFECT
THE CHEEKS AND
MAYBE THE EYES
AND GIVE MORE
CHANGE TO UNHAPPY

KEEP
THE SAME MOUTH
BUT DROP IT DOWN



= IT WOULD
DISTEND THE FACE
STRETCHING
THE CHEEKS, NOSE, EYES.

OR TAKE
THE UNHAPPY MOUTH
AND PUSH IT UP -



= A TOTALLY
DIFFERENT CHANGE

STRAIGHTEN IT
AND PUSH IT UP -



= GULP...

STRAIGHT
AND LOWER?

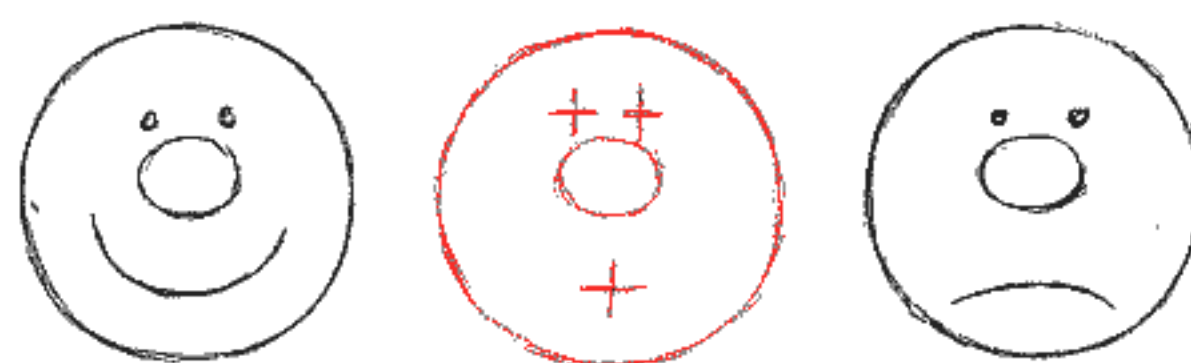


= OH, OH...

	EXTREME	BREAKDOWN	EXTREME	
DO WE GO UP ON ONE SIDE?				= THINKS ABOUT IT,
INCREASE the SMILE?				= FALSE CONFIDENCE
REDUCE IT?				= HMMM...
LET'S REDUCE the UNHAPPY MOUTH				= I KNEW IT...
EVEN JUST A SIMPLE BLINK				= GIVES SOME MOBILITY
WE CAN START TO STRETCH THINGS				= OOPS.
LET'S START TO BE IMAGINATIVE..				= SOMETHING I ET? OR HAD A DRINK?
				= YOUR SECRET IS SAFE WITH ME

WE CAN GO
ON LIKE THIS
FOREVER...

EXTREME BREAKDOWN EXTREME



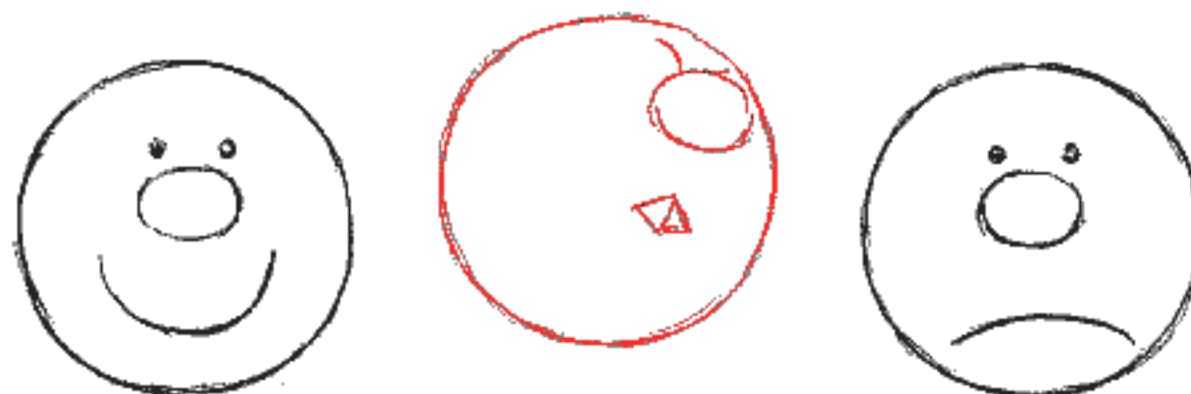
(THIS'D BE BETTER
IN REVERSE...)



JUST A SIMPLE
TILT TO IT...



LIFT THE MASS?



IT'S ENDLESS...

CONCLUSION:

WHERE WE GO WITH THE MIDDLE 'TRAVELLING' POSITION
HAS A PROFOUND EFFECT ON THE ACTION AND CHARACTER.

I HANG MY HAT ON THIS!

MAKE THE EXTREMES (OR CONTACTS) THEN THE BREAKDOWN (OR
PASSING POSITION.) THEN MAKE THE NEXT BREAKDOWN BETWEEN
THE EXTREME AND THE MAIN BREAKDOWN. KEEP BREAKING IT
DOWN INTO EVER SMALLER BITS.

(THEN DO SEPARATE 'STRAIGHT-AHEAD' RUNS ON SEPARATE BITS)

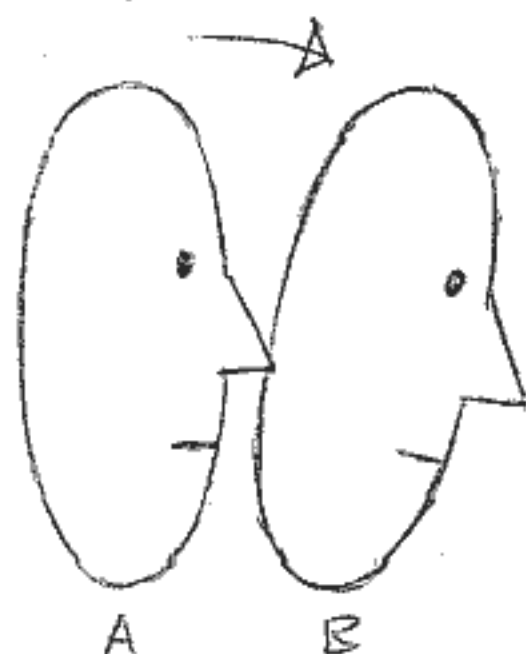
30 YEARS AGO WHEN I WAS FIRST CATCHING ON TO ALL THIS STUFF, I WORKED BRIEFLY WITH ABE LEVITON, KEN HARRIS'S EARLY PROTEGE. ABE DREW BEAUTIFULLY and I WAS IMPRESSED BY BOTH the 'QUALITY AND the QUANTITY OF HIS WORK. 'FAST AND GOOD,' WORKING ON TOUGH STUFF, ABE PRODUCED 20 to 25 SECONDS A WEEK WHILE the OTHERS MANAGED TO STRUGGLE THROUGH 5 SECONDS. AND ABE'S WAS BETTER.

I ALWAYS REMEMBER ABE SAYING TO ME ON A TUESDAY :

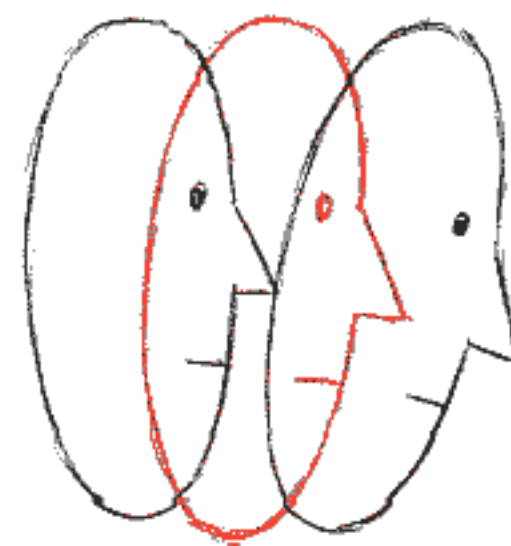
"DICK, I'VE DONE ALL the EXTREMES.
TOMORROW I'M GOING TO BREAK THEM ALL DOWN.
THEN the REST OF the WEEK I'LL ADD IN the BITS and PIECES."

AGAIN,

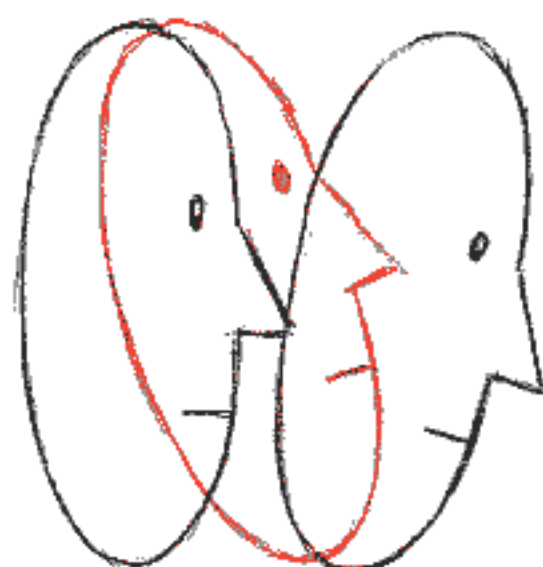
LET'S SAY
A HEAD
JUST
MOVES
FORWARD
A BIT -



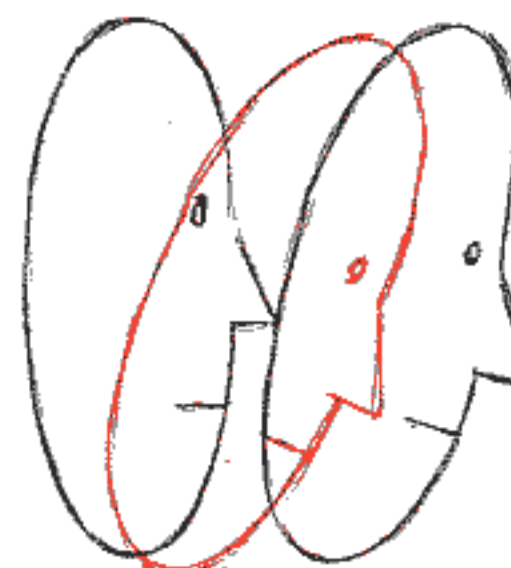
JUST
PUTTING
the
BREAKDOWN
IN the
MIDDLE
IS DULL



SO WE
CAN
DO THIS -

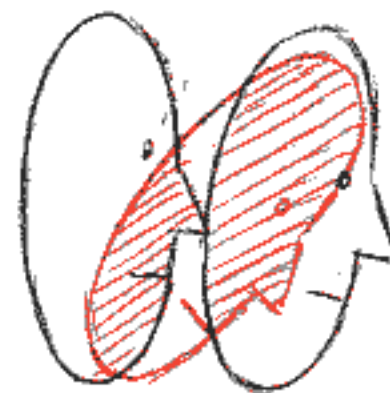
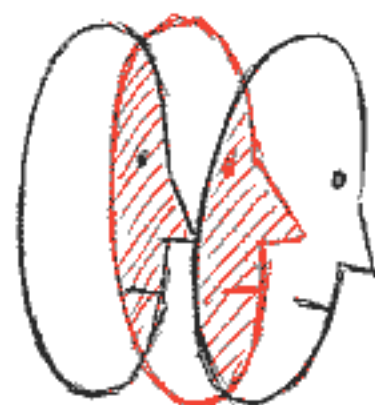


OR WE
CAN
DO THIS -



THIS 'SIMPLE OVERLAP' GIVES US ACTION **WITHIN** AN ACTION. MORE 'CHANGE' - MORE LIFE.

THIS IS the RAW IDEA.
WE CAN DO IT
VERY SUBTLY
OR WE CAN DO IT
BROADLY



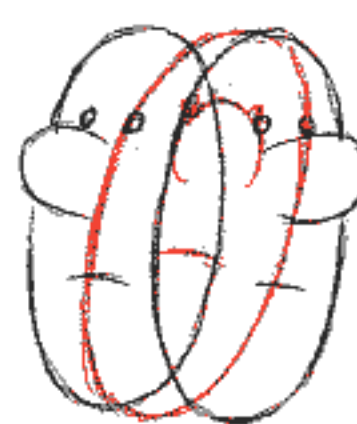
GIVES US
'MORE BANG'
FOR OUR BUCK'

- GIVES US MOVEMENT **WITHIN** A MOVEMENT.

AGAIN,
GOING
FROM
HERE
TO
HERE -



OR



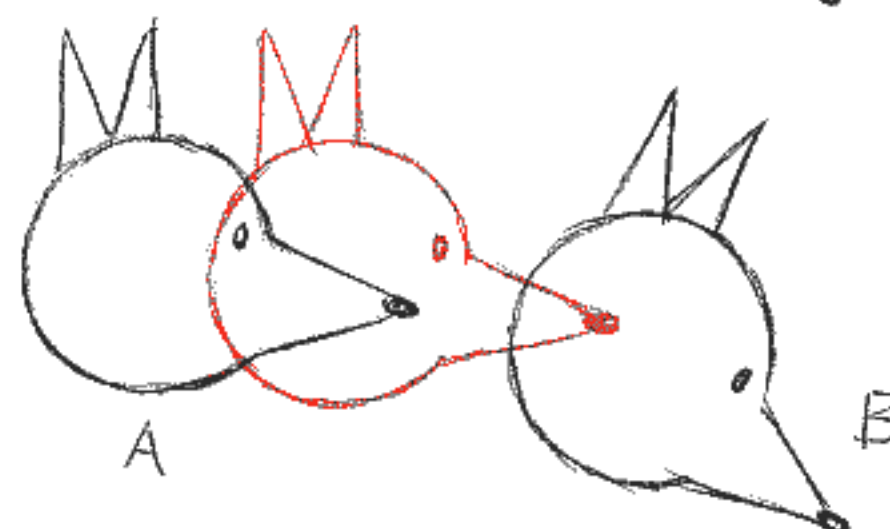
PULLED APART -

KEN HARRIS WOULD OFTEN DO A VERY INTERESTING THING:

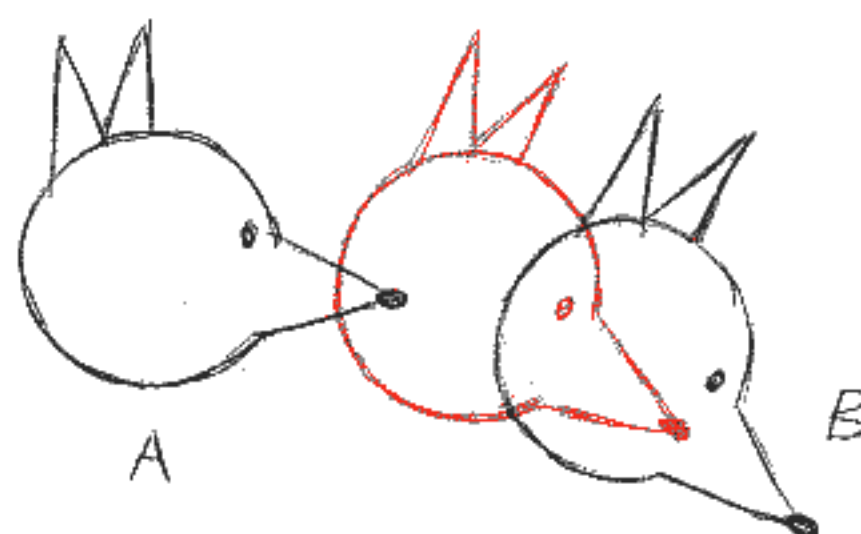
THOUGH HE WAS VERY CONFIDENT OF HIS ANIMATION ABILITIES, KEN HAD LESS CONFIDENCE IN HIS DRAWING.

HE LIKED TO MAKE FULL USE OF THE ROUGH SKETCHES BY CHUCK JONES, HIS DIRECTOR AT WARNER'S - and LATER ON, MY DIRECTING DRAWINGS.

I'D OFTEN FIND KEN MAKING AN EXACT TRACING OF MY DRAWING "A" OR "B" and USING IT AS THE PASSING POSITION - (OR BREAKDOWN) BUT HE'D PLACE IT TO FAVOUR DRAWING "A" LIKE THIS →



OR HE'D PLACE IT TO FAVOUR DRAWING "B" LIKE THIS →

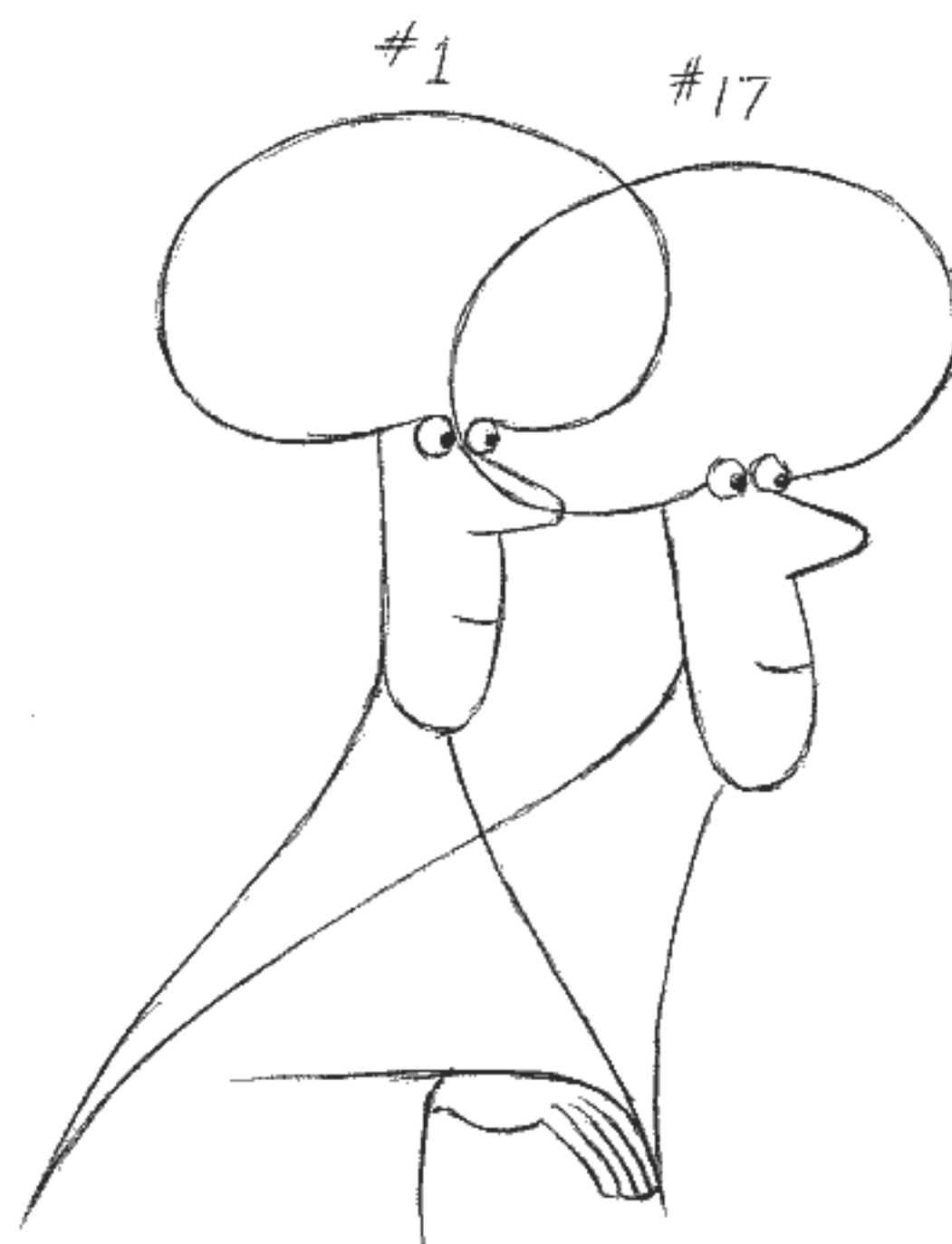


FAR FROM BEING A LIMITATION, THIS ACTUALLY WAS AN ASSET TO KEN. IT GAVE HIS WORK A STABILITY - INSTEAD OF HAVING FACILE DRAWINGS FLASHING AROUND ALL OVER THE PLACE - 'OVERANIMATING'.

WATCHING HIM DO THIS - and SEEING THE RESULTS, I GRADUALLY LEARNED TO UNDERSTATE and GET SUBTLE MOVEMENT WHICH WAS STILL 'LIMBER'.

SIMPLE OVERLAP

SAY WE HAVE A MAN WITH A TURBAN -

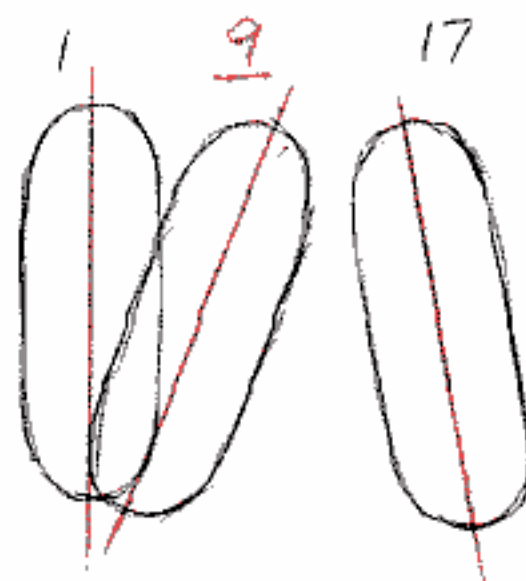


AND HE LEANS FORWARD -

IF WE **TILT** the HEAD **#9**
IN the MIDDLE - and
MAKE IT **CLOSER TO #1**
WE GET THIS
WITH the HEAD -
and LOOK WHAT HAPPENS
TO the TURBAN MASS -
IT'S SMACK IN the MIDDLE.



THIS CREATES
A REALLY NICE
OVERLAPPING
OF the MASSES
ON A VERY
SIMPLE MOVE -

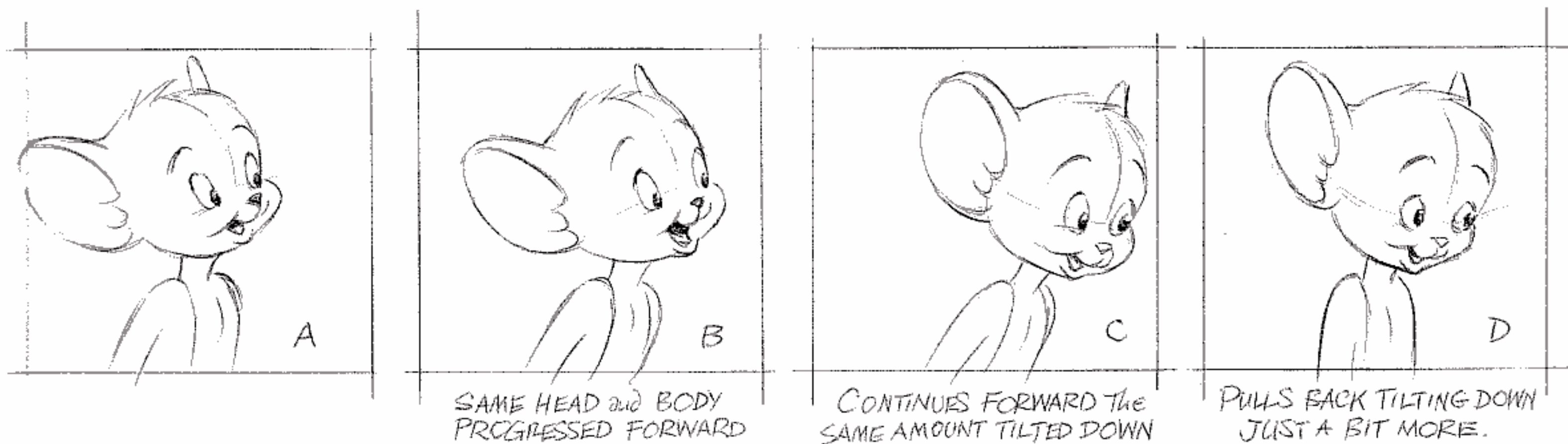


and WE'VE USED
ONLY 3 POSITIONS.
The REST WOULD BE
STRAIGHT
IN BETWEEN.

WE'VE DONE THIS ON A BLAND DESIGN OF A SIMPLE CHARACTER - WITH NO CHANGE
OF EXPRESSION - NOT EVEN A BLINK - MAKING A VERY ORDINARY MOVE.
AND YET IT WILL HAVE A LOT OF LIFE JUST BECAUSE OF the SPACING.

(So) WE LOOK FOR WAYS TO PLACE the MIDDLE BREAKDOWN POSITION -
(OR POSITIONS) WHERE WE CAN GET AN OVERLAP OF the MASSES.
= MOVEMENT **WITHIN** MOVEMENT.

4 DRAWING OVERLAP ON A CALIFORNIA -ISSUE MOUSE

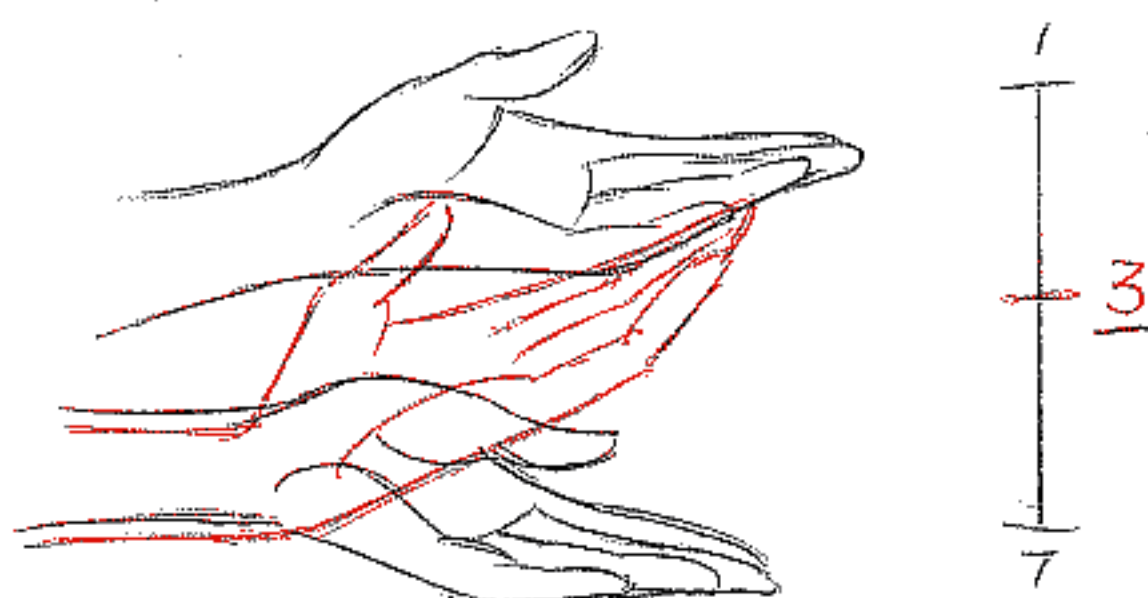


OF COURSE, THIS BREAKDOWN POSITION KIND OF THING CAN GET OUT OF HAND. LIKE EVERYTHING ELSE, IT'S HOW, WHEN and WHERE WE USE IT.

WHEN I WAS ASSISTING KEN HARRIS and THERE'D BE A HAND SETTLING LIKE THIS -



- I'D START BEING CLEVER and THROW THE BREAKDOWN OFF LIKE THIS -



KEN WOULD FREAK OUT, "GODDAMN IT, DICK, I JUST WANT A STRAIGHT IN BETWEEN IN THERE! JUST GIVE ME A STRAIGHT IN BETWEEN! THE GUY JUST RELAXES HIS HAND! I DON'T WANT ALL THIS CRAZY FLASHING AROUND ALL OVER THE PLACE KIND OF STUFF!" (KEN HAD AWFULLY GOOD TASTE.)

BUT WHEN I DID GET TO KNOW HOW, WHEN and WHERE TO USE IT, I CAN ALMOST SAY I MADE MY LIVING WITH THE BREAKDOWN DRAWING.

I OFTEN HAD TO PRODUCE MASSIVE AMOUNTS OF FOOTAGE AT THE LAST MINUTE. I BECAME 'THE TELEPHONE ANIMATOR' ANIMATING AT THE SAME TIME AS DOING THE BUSINESS ON THE PHONE. CLIENTS WOULD RANT, "WE CAME TO YOU BECAUSE OF HIGH STANDARDS - WE DON'T CARE IF YOUR MAN'S IN THE HOSPITAL OR IN TIMBUKTOO - IT'S YOUR SHINGLE ON THE DOOR, BUSTER, - YOU FIX IT!"

WE USUALLY HAD GOOD STORYTELLING KEYS and EXTREMES, SO ALL I HAD TO DO WAS JOIN A LOT OF STUFF UP IN AN INTERESTING WAY. I FOUND THAT ALMOST ANYTHING WILL WORK. PUT IT SOMEWHERE ELSE IN THE MIDDLE, FAIRLY INTELLIGENTLY. IT NEVER LET ME DOWN.

OF COURSE, THE WORK WOULDN'T BE AS GOOD AS IF I'D HAD THE TIME TO ANALYSE and THINK WHAT THE HELL I WAS DOING, BUT AT 5 IN THE MORNING, WITH JET LAG, HOLDING THE LAB BATH and A GRUMPY CLIENT PHONING IN 4 HOURS, IT GETS YOU THROUGH.