CONFLUENT
CHRONICLES
THE DATA STREAMING REVOLUTION
Issue #1
RISE OF
THE KAFKA HEROES

Located in the heart of Mountain View, the trailblazing shoe retail titan, NewLimits, is no stranger to success. However, confronted by growing demands from customers for real-time experiences and internal stakeholders for up-to-date data, management is forced to acknowledge the need for transformation. Yet, the 'how' remains a mystery—hopefully one that our intrepid heroes, Ada and Jax, can solve with the aid of Apache Kafka®.

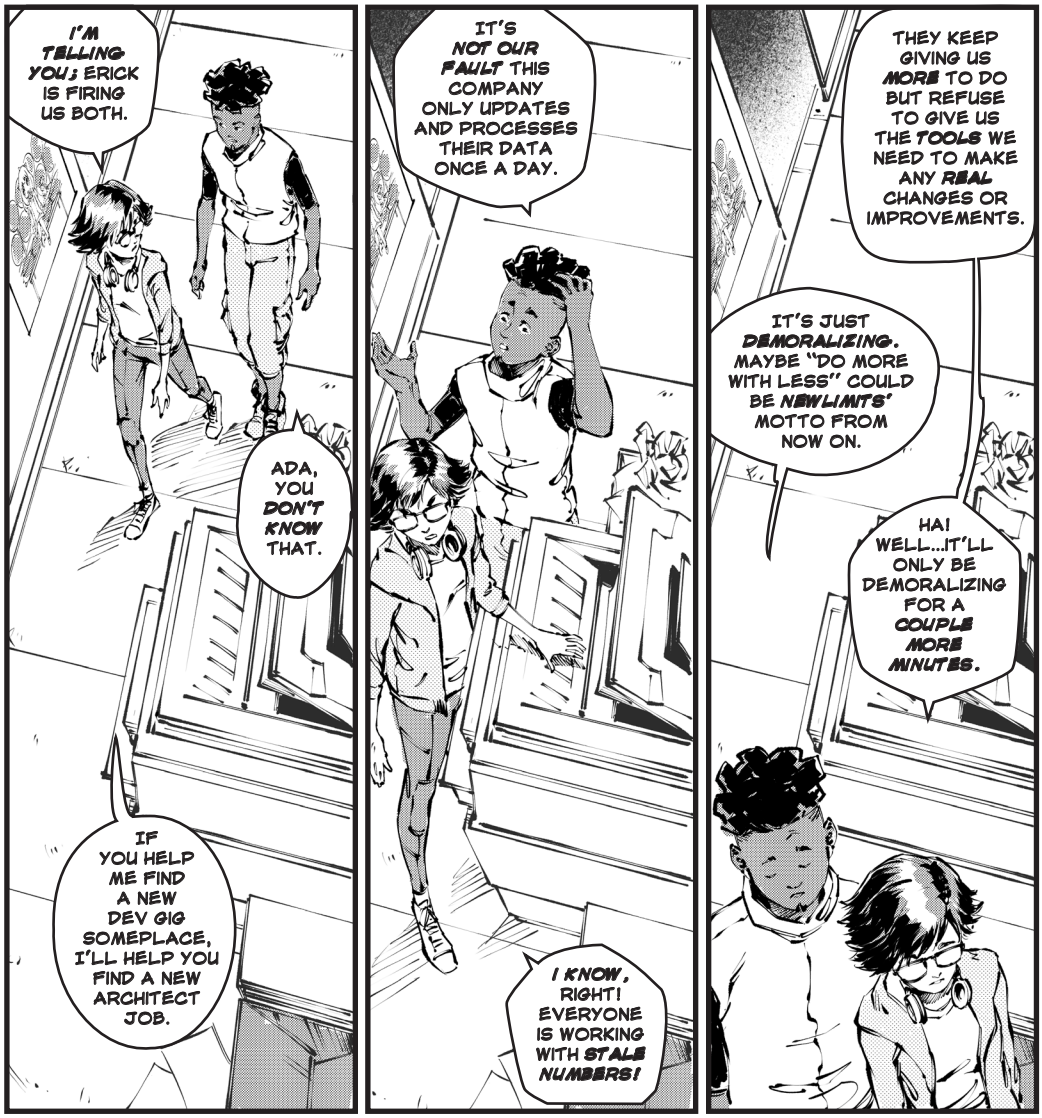
Renowned for its use by over 80% of Fortune 100 companies, Apache Kafka is hailed as the defacto standard in the realm of data streaming. As an open-source distributed technology, it's leveraged by countless businesses to power their streaming data pipelines and real-time applications.

That's where Confluent steps in, transforming Kafka with a robust array of enterprise-grade features that fosters developer productivity, ensures efficient operation at scale, and addresses all architectural prerequisites for production. Businesses deploying Confluent experience a 60% reduction in Kafka costs and accelerate their streaming use cases into production by over half a year, all the while significantly diminishing operational risks and burdens.

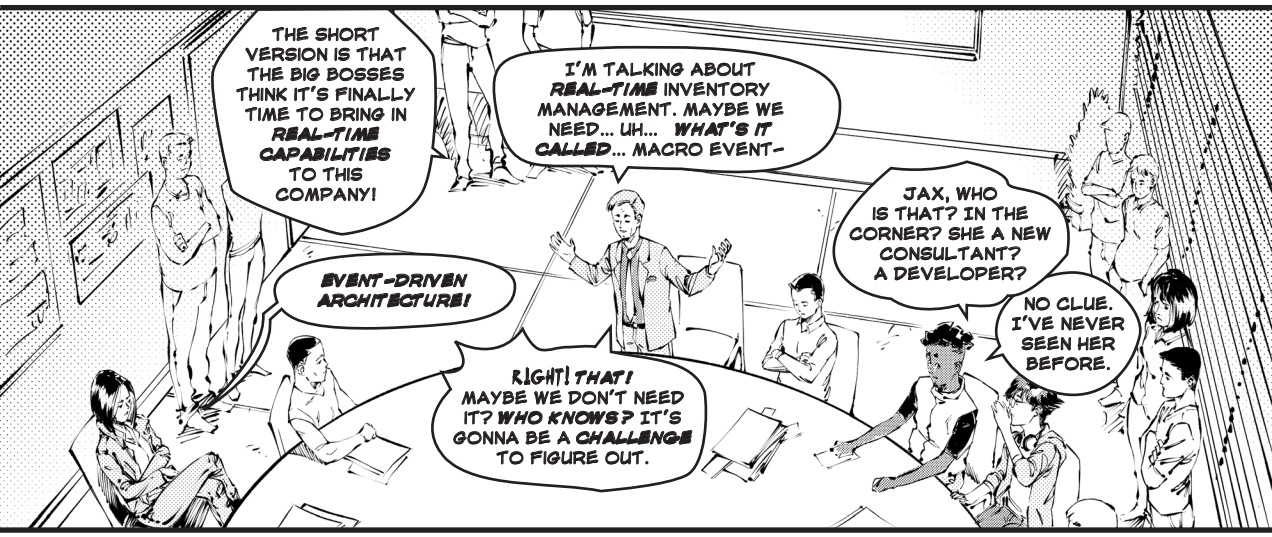
Ada and Jax must fast-track the implementation and scaling of solutions. *But wouldn't it be simpler if a guide were to illuminate the path ahead?*

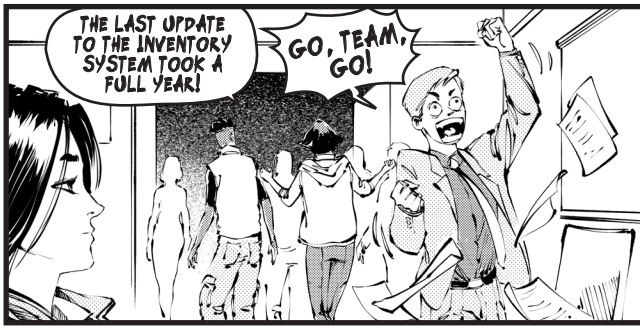
CORPORATE HEADQUARTERS OF NEWLIMITS.
NewLimits
I CAN'T BELIEVE THE NIGHTLY BATCH JOB FAILED AGAIN LAST WEEK.
YOU UP FOR A COFFEE BREAK? I CAN'T KEEP LOOKING AT THIS. MY TREAT.
DON'T THEY SEE THIS HOMEGROWN ETL TOOL IS JUST A DISASTER? ADDING POINT-TO-POINT INTEGRATIONS DOESN'T HELP EITHER.
ADA? I SAID MY TREAT. FREE CAFFEINE. YOUR FAVORITE. THIS IS THE PART WHERE YOU AGREE AND INSIST WE ALSO GET A PASTRY.
ADA? YOU OKAY?
NO, JAX! I'M NOT OKAY !!!!!
SORRY, JAX. I'M JUST FREAKING OUT A LITTLE BIT. I'M STILL SIFTING THROUGH ALL THE DATA THAT GOT LOST.
SOME OF THE SALES FIGURES ARE SCREWED UP AND THE WAREHOUSES ARE ALL LOOKING AT DIFFERENT NUMBERS FOR THE INVENTORY AND--
I FEEL LIKE I'M JUST WAITING FOR ERICK TO COME IN HERE AND FIRE US.
UM...ADA? JAX? I NEED TO SEE YOU BOTH RIGHT NOW. KIND OF URGENT.
BE RIGHT THERE, ERICK.

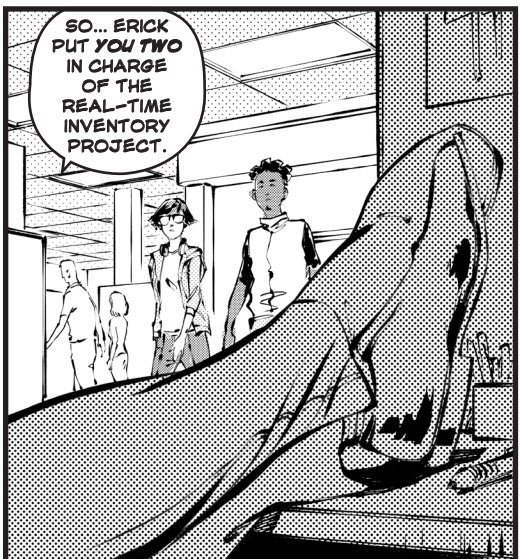
READY TO GET FIRED?
LOOK ON THE BRIGHT SIDE. IF WE GET FIRED, WE WON'T HAVE TO SIT THROUGH ANOTHER ONE OF ERICK'S BORING MEETINGS WHERE HE LECTURES US ABOUT THE "BIG PICTURE" AND "BOTTOM LINE".

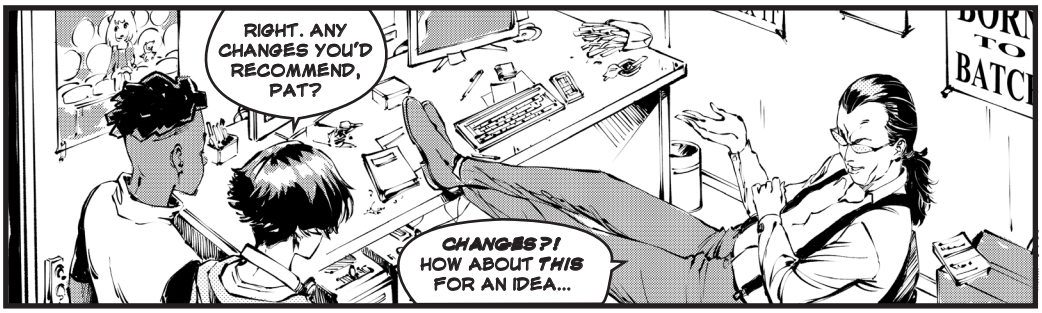

I'M TELLING YOU; ERICK IS FIRING US BOTH.
ADA, YOU DON'T KNOW THAT.
IF YOU HELP ME FIND A NEW DEV GIG SOMEPLACE, I'LL HELP YOU FIND A NEW ARCHITECT JOB.
IT'S NOT OUR FAULT THIS COMPANY ONLY UPDATES AND PROCESSES THEIR DATA ONCE A DAY.
I KNOW, RIGHT! EVERYONE IS WORKING WITH STALE NUMBERS!
THEY KEEP GIVING US MORE TO DO BUT REFUSE TO GIVE US THE TOOLS WE NEED TO MAKE ANY REAL CHANGES OR IMPROVEMENTS.
IT'S JUST DEMORALIZING. MAYBE "DO MORE WITH LESS" COULD BE NEWLIMITS' MOTTO FROM NOW ON.
HA! WELL...IT'LL ONLY BE DEMORALIZING FOR A COUPLE MORE MINUTES.

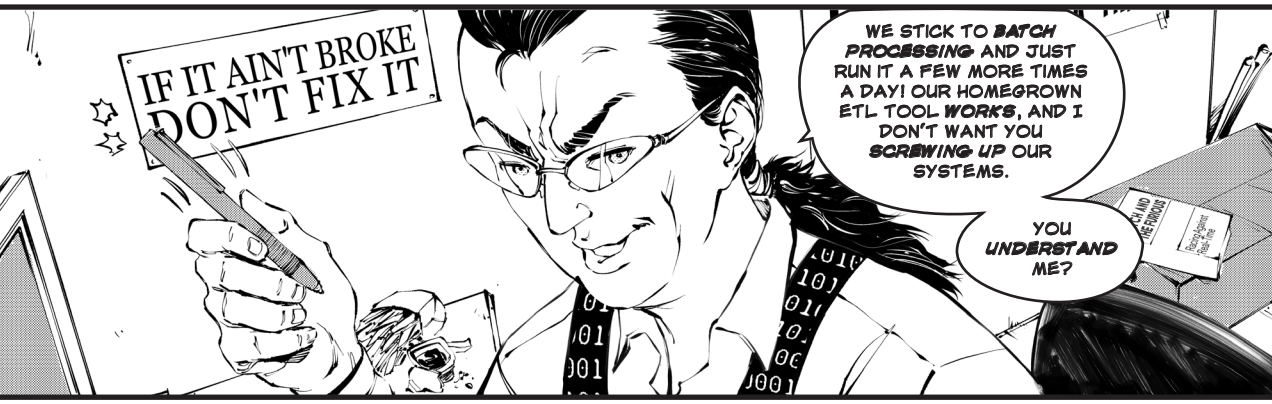
JUST A FEW MOMENTS LATER...



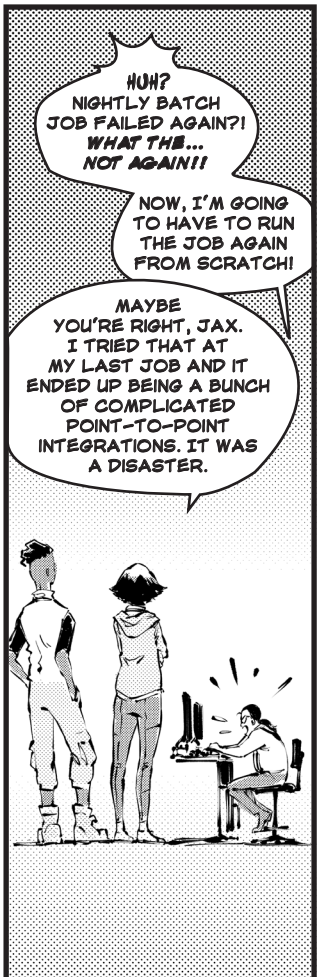




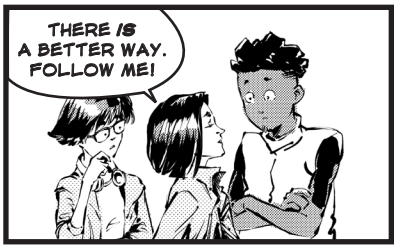

RIGHT. ANY CHANGES YOU'D RECOMMEND, PAT?
CHANGES?! HOW ABOUT THIS FOR AN IDEA...
BORN TO BATCH

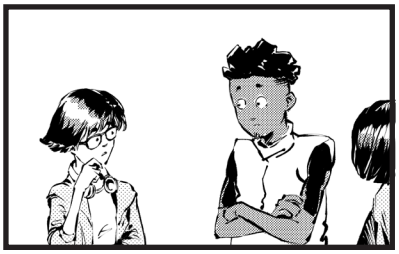

IF IT AIN'T BROKE DON'T FIX IT
WE STICK TO BATCH PROCESSING AND JUST RUN IT A FEW MORE TIMES A DAY! OUR HOMEGROWN ETL TOOL WORKS, AND I DON'T WANT YOU SCREWING UP OUR SYSTEMS.
YOU UNDERSTAND ME?

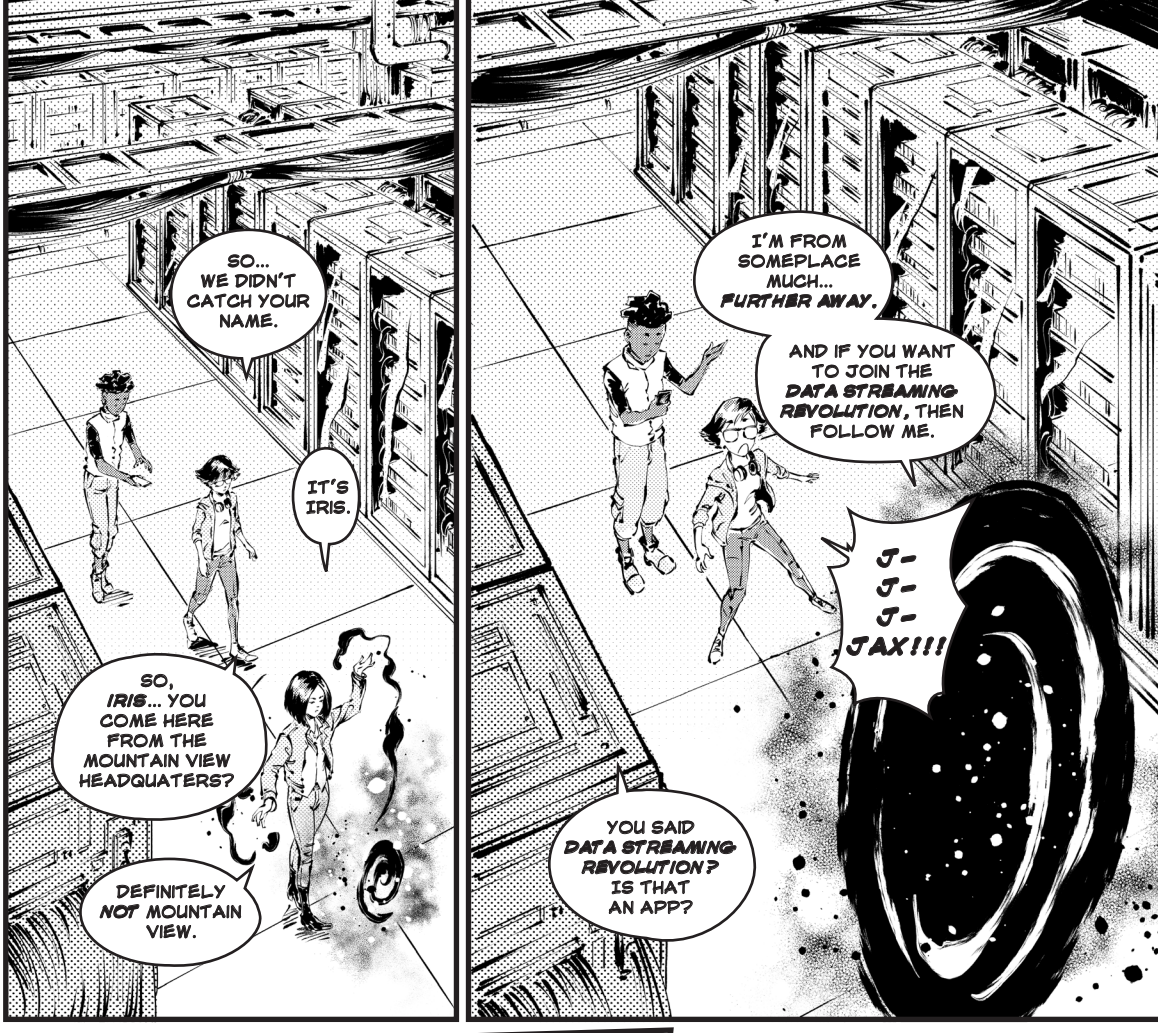
I'M WATCHING YOU!
MAYBE WE SHOULD JUST TAKE PAT'S ADVICE. HE IS THE SENIOR DEVELOPER AFTER ALL.
EVEN IF IT'S A NIGHTMARE TO MAINTAIN, IT'S PROBABLY BETTER THAN BUILDING NEW EVENT-DRIVEN SOLUTIONS FROM SCRATCH.
OUR SYSTEM WORKS FINE! JUST F-

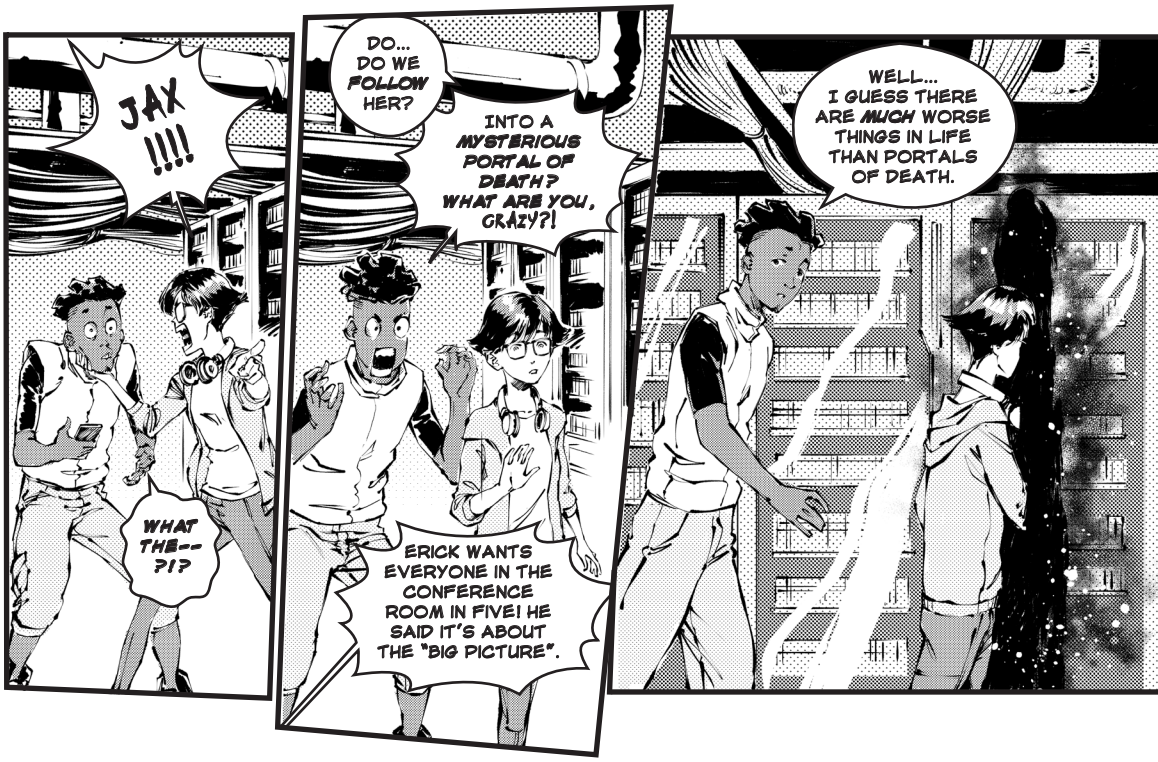

HUH? NIGHTLY BATCH JOB FAILED AGAIN?! WHAT THE... NOT AGAIN!!
NOW, I'M GOING TO HAVE TO RUN THE JOB AGAIN FROM SCRATCH!
MAYBE YOU'RE RIGHT, JAX. I TRIED THAT AT MY LAST JOB AND IT ENDED UP BEING A BUNCH OF COMPLICATED POINT-TO-POINT INTEGRATIONS. IT WAS A DISASTER.

THERE HAS TO BE A BETTER WAY.

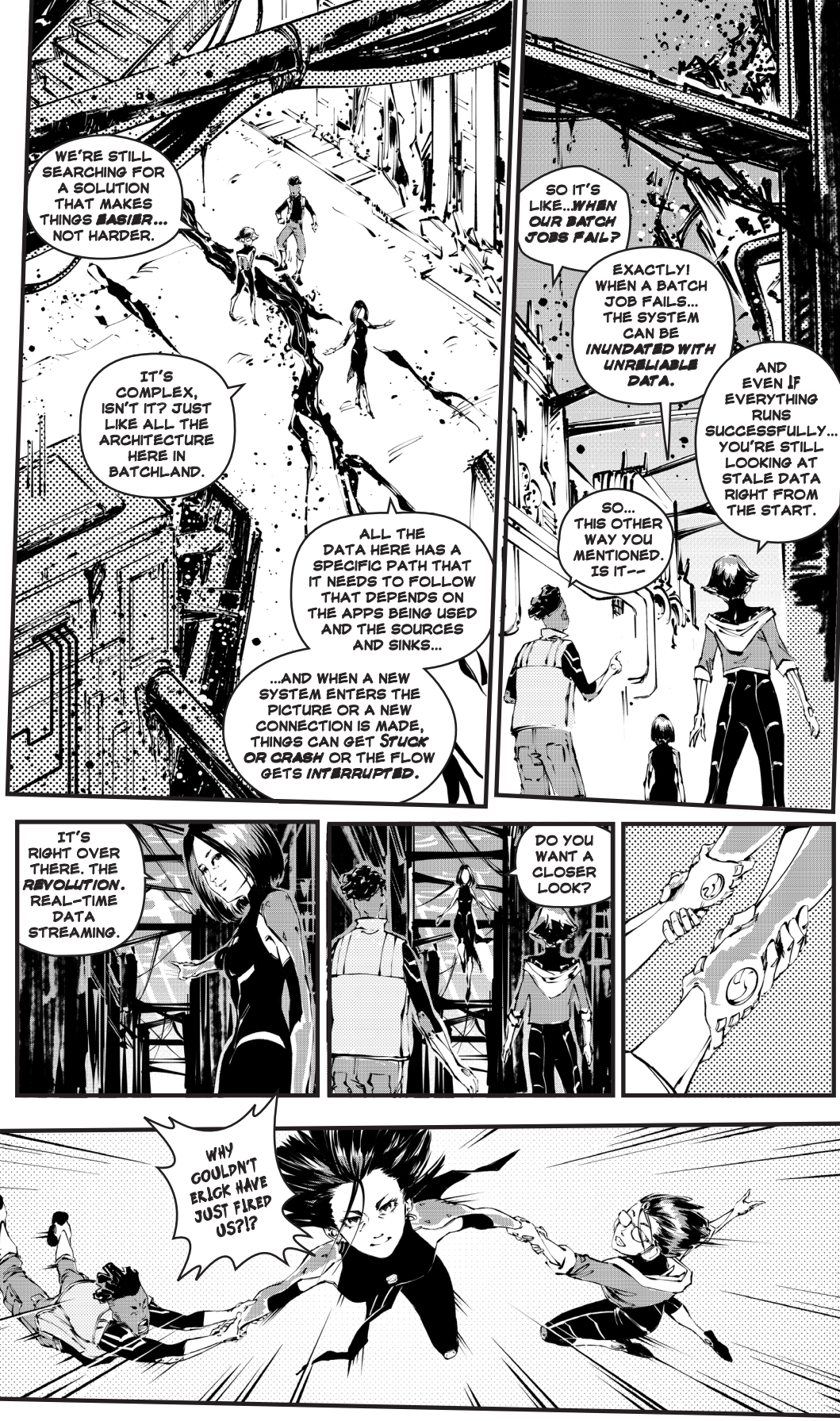

THERE IS A BETTER WAY. FOLLOW ME!




SO... WE DIDN'T CATCH YOUR NAME.
IT'S IRIS.
SO, IRIS... YOU COME HERE FROM THE MOUNTAIN VIEW HEADQUATERS?
DEFINITELY NOT MOUNTAIN VIEW.
I'M FROM SOMEPLACE MUCH... FURTHER AWAY.
AND IF YOU WANT TO JOIN THE DATA STREAMING REVOLUTION, THEN FOLLOW ME.
J- J- J- JAX!!!
YOU SAID DATA STREAMING REVOLUTION? IS THAT AN APP?


JAX !!!!
WHAT THE--?!?
DO... DO WE FOLLOW HER?
INTO A MYSTERIOUS PORTAL OF DEATH? WHAT ARE YOU, CRAZY?!
ERICK WANTS EVERYONE IN THE CONFERENCE ROOM IN FIVE! HE SAID IT'S ABOUT THE "BIG PICTURE".
WELL... I GUESS THERE ARE MUCH WORSE THINGS IN LIFE THAN PORTALS OF DEATH.

MOMENTS LATER
UMM... WHERE ARE WE EXACTLY? AND WHAT ARE WE WEARING?!
WHEREVER IT IS, I KNOW IT ISN'T MOUNTAIN VIEW.
WE'RE IN A PLACE KNOWN AS BATCHLAND.
BATCHLAND? RIGHT... I MEAN... IT KINDA LOOKS COOL AND ALL... BUT... WHEN YOU SAID TO FOLLOW YOU... YOU SORT OF HINTED THAT YOU COULD HELP US WITH OUR PROJECT.
YOU KNOW? THE REAL-TIME INVENTORY PROJECT? OPTIMIZE EFFICIENCY AND SEAMLESS CUSTOMER EXPERIENCES? ...ALL OF THAT STUFF ERICK LOVES.
REMIND HER ABOUT THE BLACK FRIDAY DEADLINE.
SHHHH! WE'RE WAITING!
WE DON' T HAVE TIME TO WAIT! ERICK WANTS US TO FIGURE EVERYTHING OUT BEFORE BLACK FRIDAY HITS.
THAT MEANS WE HAVE TO START WITH A PROOF-OF CONCEPT AND MIGRATE THE REST OF OUR SYSTEMS-
VHUUUUUMMMMMM
WHOA! WHAT IS THAT?
THIS IS A DATA DUMP. IT'S THE DAILY DATA TRANSFER HERE IN BATCHLAND. ALL THESE ISLANDS... ALL THE SYSTEMS IN HERE... IT'S ALL RUN BY BATCH PROCESSING.
IT LOOKS KIND OF... UGLY. AND SLOW? AND INEFFICIENT?
WELL, JAX, INEFFICIENT PROCESSING IS UGLY AND SLOW.
BUT I COULD HAVE SWORN I HEARD YOU BOTH SAY IT'S NOT WORTH THE EFFORT TO CHANGE FROM BATCH PROCESSING.

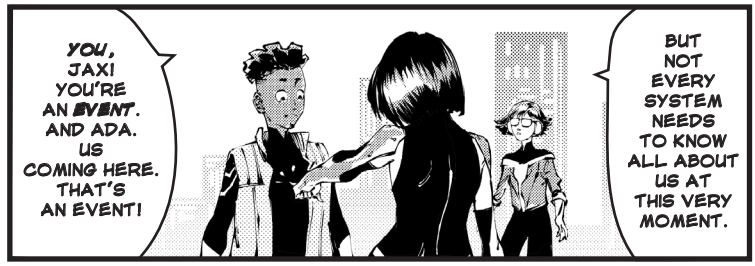

WE'RE STILL SEARCHING FOR A SOLUTION THAT MAKES THINGS EASIER... NOT HARDER.
IT'S COMPLEX, ISN'T IT? JUST LIKE ALL THE ARCHITECTURE HERE IN BATCHLAND.
ALL THE DATA HERE HAS A SPECIFIC PATH THAT IT NEEDS TO FOLLOW THAT DEPENDS ON THE APPS BEING USED AND THE SOURCES AND SINKS...
...AND WHEN A NEW SYSTEM ENTERS THE PICTURE OR A NEW CONNECTION IS MADE, THINGS CAN GET STUCK OR CRASH OR THE FLOW GETS INTERRUPTED.
SO IT'S LIKE...WHEN OUR BATCH JOBS FAIL?
EXACTLY! WHEN A BATCH JOB FAILS... THE SYSTEM CAN BE INUNDATED WITH UNRELIABLE DATA.
AND EVEN IF EVERYTHING RUNS SUCCESSFULLY... YOU'RE STILL LOOKING AT STALE DATA RIGHT FROM THE START.
SO... THIS OTHER WAY YOU MENTIONED. IS IT--
IT'S RIGHT OVER THERE. THE REVOLUTION. REAL-TIME DATA STREAMING.
DO YOU WANT A CLOSER LOOK?
WHY COULDN'T ERICK HAVE JUST FIRED US?!?

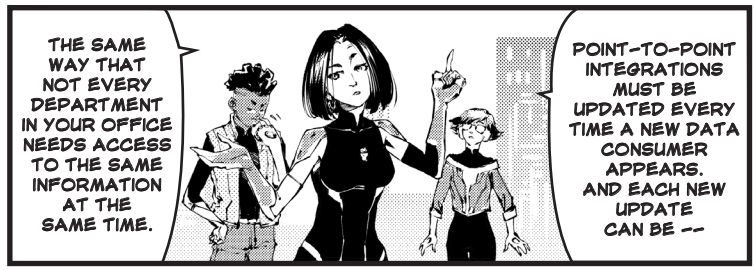
IT'S... IT'S... BEAUTIFUL!
ARE WE STILL IN BATCHLAND?
DOES THIS LOOK LIKE BATCHLAND?! THIS PLACE IS CALLED STREAMSCAPE.
WHAT'S UP IN THE SKY?
IT'S DATA. IT'S FLOWING ALL AROUND US.
THAT'S ALL DATA?! FLOWING AROUND US?!
THE DATA IS ALWAYS IN MOTION HERE.
YOU TWO SKIP YOUR COFFEE THIS MORNING?
YES. AND I'M REGRETTING IT. WHAT MAKES THIS PLACE RUN?
IT BEGAN BY HARNESSING POWER FROM APACHE KAFKA, BUT NOW IT'S BEING RUN BY CONFLUENT.
WAIT! IS THIS AN ELABORATE SALES PITCH?
YES AND NO... KAFKA ITSELF IS OPEN SOURCE, BUT THERE'S MORE THAN JUST KAFKA HERE...

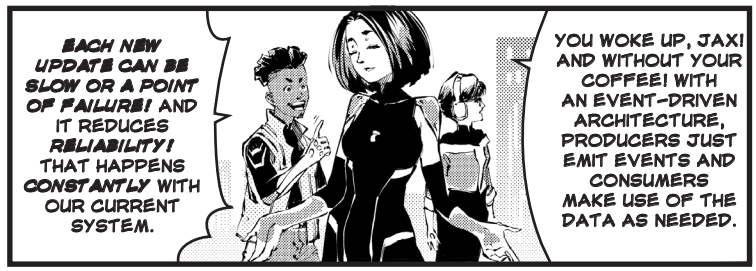
SEE THAT IN THE CENTER OF THE SKY? THAT'S APACHE KAFKA AND ALL THE DATA IS FLOWING SEAMLESSLY THROUGH IT.
IT'S A SCALABLE, OPEN-SOURCE DISTRIBUTED SYSTEM USED TO BUILD STREAMING DATA PIPELINES AND REAL-TIME APPLICATIONS.
IT ELIMINATES THE NEED FOR POINT-TO-POINT CONNECTIONS.
AND NOW YOU JUST NEED ME TO FORWARD THIS INFO TO TEN OF MY CLOSEST FRIENDS, RIGHT?

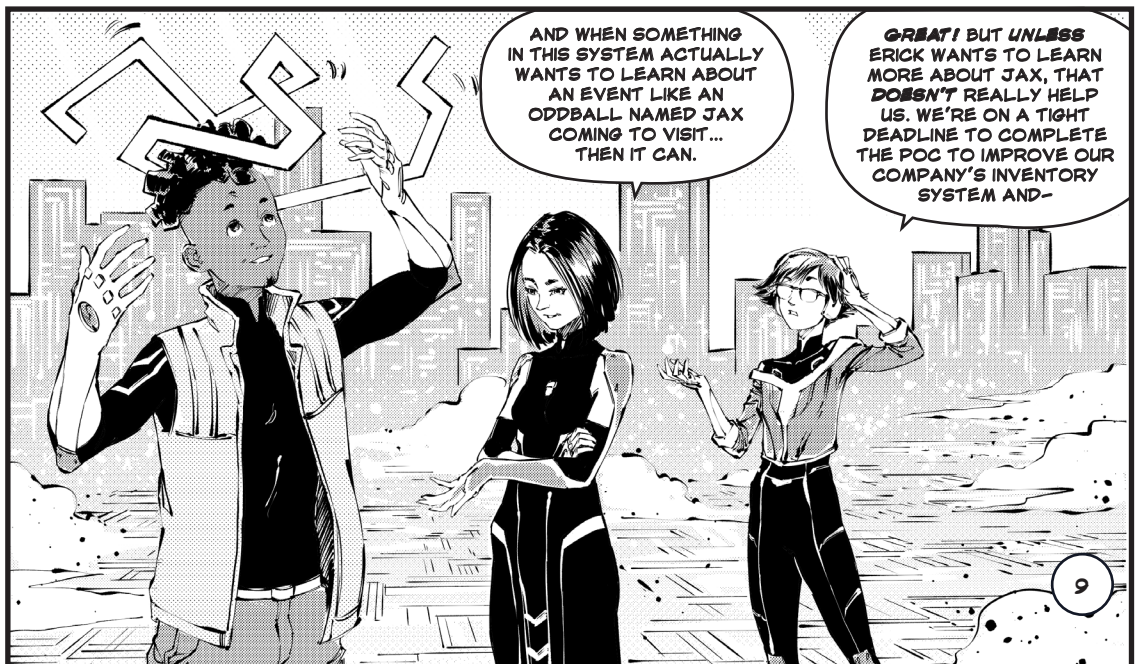
I DON'T NEED YOU TO FORWARD ANYTHING, HOT SHOT. THE DATA IS OUT THERE ALREADY.
IT'S DATA STREAMING! INSTEAD OF STAGNANT DATA WE LOOK AT DATA AS A ***REAL-TIME STREAM OF EVENTS***. YOU KNOW WHAT AN EVENT IS, RIGHT?

OF COURSE, I DO. I WENT TO MY NEIGHBORS' QUINCEANERA LAST WEEKEND. IT WAS QUITE THE EVENT.
I'LL TRY THIS A DIFFERENT WAY.


YOU, JAX! YOU'RE AN ***EVENT***. AND ADA. US COMING HERE. THAT'S AN EVENT!
BUT NOT EVERY SYSTEM NEEDS TO KNOW ALL ABOUT US AT THIS VERY MOMENT.


THE SAME WAY THAT NOT EVERY DEPARTMENT IN YOUR OFFICE NEEDS ACCESS TO THE SAME INFORMATION AT THE SAME TIME.
POINT-TO-POINT INTEGRATIONS MUST BE UPDATED EVERY TIME A NEW DATA CONSUMER APPEARS. AND EACH NEW UPDATE CAN BE --


EACH NEW UPDATE CAN BE SLOW OR A POINT OF FAILURE! AND IT REDUCES ***RELIABILITY!*** THAT HAPPENS ***CONSTANTLY*** WITH OUR CURRENT SYSTEM.
YOU WOKE UP, JAX! AND WITHOUT YOUR COFFEE! WITH AN EVENT-DRIVEN ARCHITECTURE, PRODUCERS JUST EMIT EVENTS AND CONSUMERS MAKE USE OF THE DATA AS NEEDED.

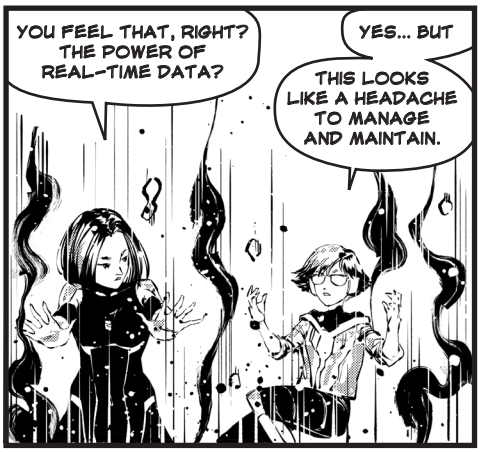

AND WHEN SOMETHING IN THIS SYSTEM ACTUALLY WANTS TO LEARN ABOUT AN EVENT LIKE AN ODDBALL NAMED JAX COMING TO VISIT... THEN IT CAN.
GREAT! BUT ***UNLESS*** ERICK WANTS TO LEARN MORE ABOUT JAX, THAT ***DOESN'T*** REALLY HELP US. WE'RE ON A TIGHT DEADLINE TO COMPLETE THE POC TO IMPROVE OUR COMPANY'S INVENTORY SYSTEM AND-

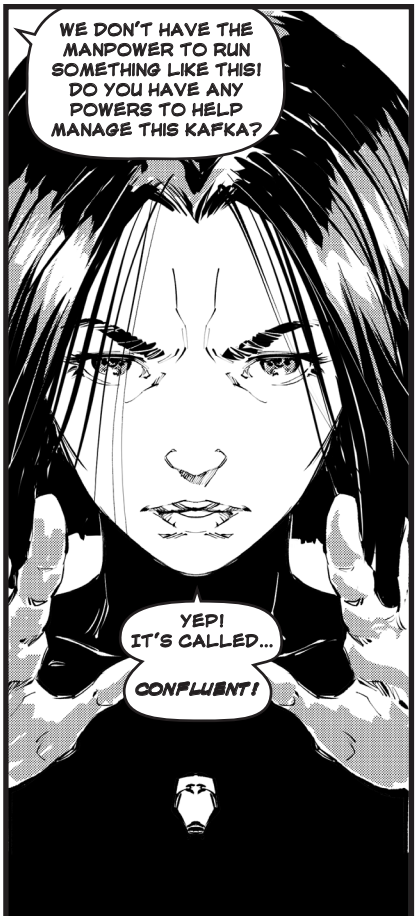
AND *THAT'S* WHAT I'M TRYING TO SHOW YOU, ADA! ALL THIS LIGHT ON YOUR RIGHT IS PART OF A SYSTEM THAT'S ALREADY HARNESSING THE POWER OF REAL-TIME DATA STREAMING.
AND ON THE LEFT IS PART OF YOUR COMPANY'S SYSTEM! *NOTHING* STREAMING AND *NOTHING* FLOWING IN OR OUT.

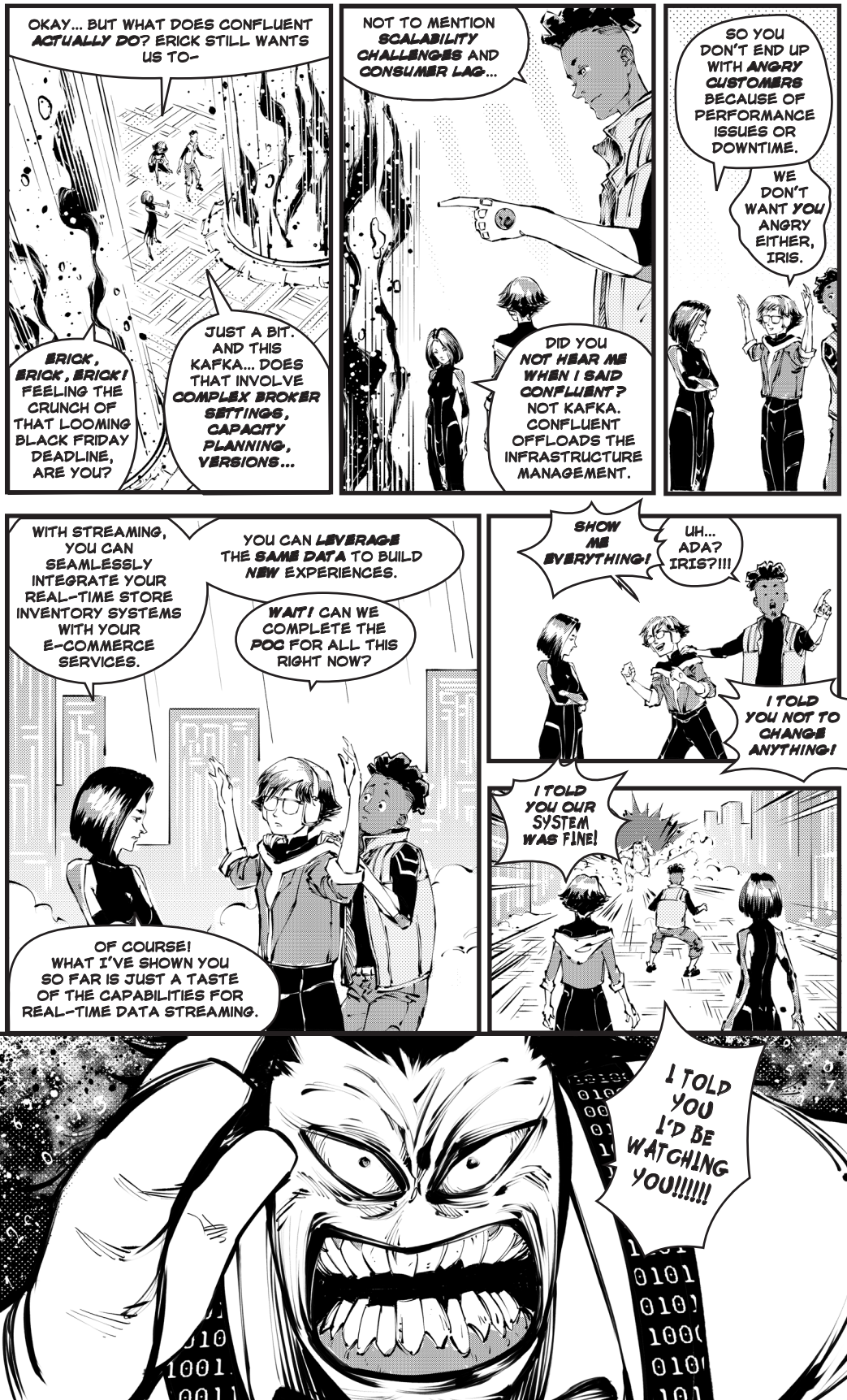
I'LL PUT THAT ON MY TO-DO LIST WITH THE THOUSAND OTHER THINGS ERICK NEEDS. YOU NEED ME TO POST ANY *TIKTOK* VIDEOS TOO? I'VE GOT TIME TO KILL...
I GUESS IT'S WORTH A SHOT.
I SHOWED YOU THE FOUNDATION FOR EVERYTHING YOU SEE HERE IN STREAMSCAPE. CAN YOU FEEL IT? TRY TAPPING INTO IT.

KAFKA?

FWOOOSH!


YOU FEEL THAT, RIGHT? THE POWER OF REAL-TIME DATA?
YES... BUT
THIS LOOKS LIKE A HEADACHE TO MANAGE AND MAINTAIN.


WE DON'T HAVE THE MANPOWER TO RUN SOMETHING LIKE THIS! DO YOU HAVE ANY POWERS TO HELP MANAGE THIS KAFKA?
YEP! IT'S CALLED...
CONFLUENT!


OKAY... BUT WHAT DOES CONFLUENT ACTUALLY DO? ERICK STILL WANTS US TO-
ERICK, ERICK, ERICK! FEELING THE CRUNCH OF THAT LOOMING BLACK FRIDAY DEADLINE, ARE YOU?
JUST A BIT. AND THIS KAFKA... DOES THAT INVOLVE COMPLEX BROKER SETTINGS, CAPACITY PLANNING, VERSIONS...
NOT TO MENTION SCALABILITY CHALLENGES AND CONSUMER LAG...
DID YOU NOT HEAR ME WHEN I SAID CONFLUENT? NOT KAFKA. CONFLUENT OFFLOADS THE INFRASTRUCTURE MANAGEMENT.
SO YOU DON'T END UP WITH ANGRY CUSTOMERS BECAUSE OF PERFORMANCE ISSUES OR DOWNTIME.
WE DON'T WANT YOU ANGRY EITHER, IRIS.
WITH STREAMING, YOU CAN SEAMLESSLY INTEGRATE YOUR REAL-TIME STORE INVENTORY SYSTEMS WITH YOUR E-COMMERCE SERVICES.
YOU CAN LEVERAGE THE SAME DATA TO BUILD NEW EXPERIENCES.
WAIT! CAN WE COMPLETE THE POC FOR ALL THIS RIGHT NOW?
OF COURSE! WHAT I'VE SHOWN YOU SO FAR IS JUST A TASTE OF THE CAPABILITIES FOR REAL-TIME DATA STREAMING.
SHOW ME EVERYTHING!
UH... ADA? IRIS?!!!
I TOLD YOU NOT TO CHANGE ANYTHING!
I TOLD YOU OUR SYSTEM WAS FINE!
I TOLD YOU I'D BE WATCHING YOU!!!!!!

IS THAT... IS THAT... PAT?!?
WHAT HAPPENED TO HIM?! HE TRIED PROGRAMMING SOMETHING IN "C", DIDN'T HE? HE KNOWS BETTER THAN THAT.
HE'S BEEN INFECTED BY BATCHLAND! HE'S TRYING TO LOCK UP ALL THE DATA AND CONTROL HOW AND WHEN IT MOVES.
I THOUGHT I MIGHT FIND YOU HERE. TRYING TO "FIX" THINGS. IT'S JUST LIKE WHEN YOU CONVINCED HQ TO SWITCH FROM ROLLERBALLS TO GEL PENS.
I LIKE ROLLERBALLS!
THERE'S NOTHING WRONG WITH OUR SYSTEM. I WON'T LET YOU CHANGE IT!!
J-J-JAX... KAFF... H-H-HELP US!
TELL ME WHAT TO DO!! I DON'T HAVE ANY POWER!
YOU DO HAVE POWER, JAX! FOCUS!
REMEMBER WHAT I SHOWED ADA! YOU'RE NOT LOCKED INTO RUNNING BATCH PROCESSES MULTIPLE TIMES A DAY!
I'M TRYING. BUT I CAN'T--
I JUST CAN'T FEEL IT.
I CAN'T... I JUST... I-
HEY, PAT?

LOG THIS !!!!
THOOOOM!
I THOUGHT IT WOULD'VE TAKEN HIM MORE TIME TO PROCESS.
I THINK JAX MIGHT NEED YOUR HELP.
OH, I'VE GOT THIS!
HEY, PAT! IT'S NOT QUITE TIME FOR THAT DAILY BATCH TRANSFER YOU LOVE SO MUCH. BUT I'VE GOT SOMETHING ELSE FOR YOU.
INSTEAD OF ENDLESS LINES OF CODE...
KAFKA!!!
...HOW ABOUT JUST THESE FIVE DIGITS?!!

IT DOESN'T HAVE TO BE THIS WAY, PAT! WE WANT THE SAME THING IN THE END... AN EFFICIENT SYSTEM! WE DON'T HAVE TO PULL DATA FROM A DATABASE ONCE OR TWICE A DAY.
WE DON'T EVEN NEED TO CHANGE THE DATA PRODUCER SYSTEMS, WE CAN USE CHANGE DATA CAPTURE.

I THINK I CAN GET THROUGH TO HIM, JAX. YOU AND IRIS DECOUPLE THE REST OF OUR SYSTEM TO FREE UP ALL THE DATA AND START BUILDING OUT THAT POC.
I'LL DEAL WITH PAT.

WHAT DO YOU SAY, PAT?
WE CAN HEAD BACK TO THE OFFICE. JAX TOLD ME THIS MORNING THE COFFEE WOULD BE ON HIM.
WANT TO JOIN US IN THE DATA STREAMING REVOLUTION?
WITH CDC, OUR SYSTEM CAN AUTOMATICALLY DETECT CHANGES TO DATA IN THE SOURCE DATABASE AND EMIT THEM AS EVENTS.
NEVER!!!!!!
BATCH GANG! ATTACK !!!!

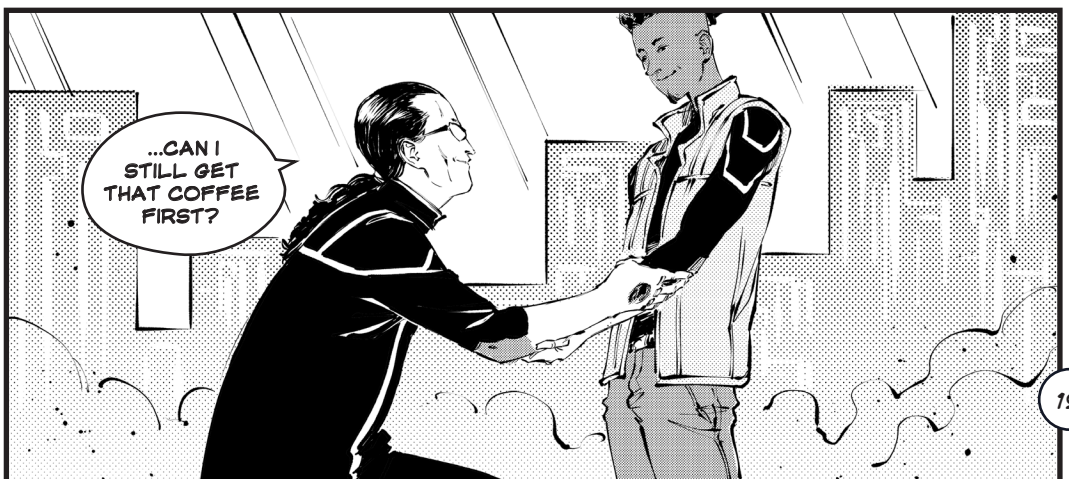
IT LOOKS LIKE THEY'RE TRYING TO BUILD OUT THE POC TO JUSTIFY SWITCHING TO AN EVENT-DRIVEN ARCHITECTURE!
THIS OUGHT TO PUT AN END TO THEIR LITTLE EXPERIMENT. HAHAHA!
BATCH SCRIPT!
BATES NUMBER!
BATCH UP!
NOOOOOOO!!!
BATCH JOB!
BATCH FILE!
NOW... FILL THE SYSTEM WITH BAD DATA!

BATCH JOB!
OH, NO! THE DATA THEY'RE DUMPING ISN'T STRUCTURED PROPERLY AND IT'S BREAKING EVERYTHING!
I'M NOT SURE WE CAN WIN THIS FIGHT!
MAYBE WE LET PAT HAVE HIS WAY AND JUST STICK TO BATCH PROCESSING?
THERE'S JUST TOO MUCH TO MANAGE AT ONCE! IT'S ONLY THE THREE OF US HERE! IT WOULD TAKE MONTHS!
I KNOW! ALL THE INFRASTRUCTURE IN HERE AND THESE ADDED SECURITY THREATS! IT'S IMPOSSIBLE!
IT'S NOT IMPOSSIBLE!
REMEMBER I TOLD YOU BOTH THAT EVERYTHING HERE BEGAN WITH APACHE KAFKA, BUT NOW IT RUNS ON CONFLUENT. YOU JUST HAVEN'T SEEN THE FULL CAPABILITIES YET.
THWACK!!
AND WITH CONFLUENT IT WON'T TAKE MONTHS TO GET THIS SYSTEM IN ORDER... IT WILL TAKE MINUTES!
MINUTES ?!?

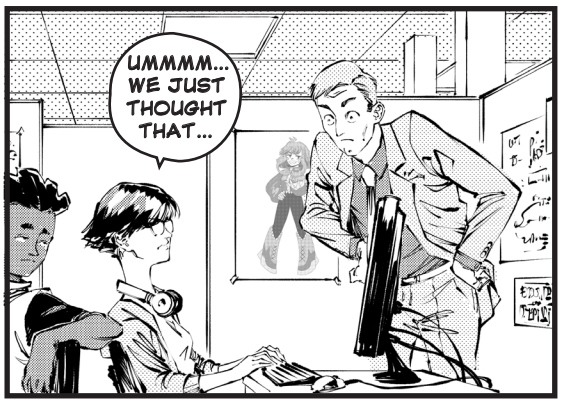
CONFLUENT HAS REINVENTED KAFKA FOR MODERN DATA TEAMS EVERYWHERE TO JOIN THE DATA STREAMING REVOLUTION.
BY PROVIDING DEVELOPER TOOLS SUCH AS PRE-BUILT CONNECTORS AND STREAM PROCESSING, YOU CAN QUICKLY ACCESS, JOIN, AND ENRICH ALL YOUR DATA TO BUILD HIGH QUALITY, REUSABLE DATA STREAMS. AND I CAN FOCUS ON PAT AND HIS BATCH GANG!
SO, WE'LL BE ABLE TO DO MORE WITH LESS?!?
IF WE SURVIVE THIS BATTLE, ERICK WILL BE ALL OVER THAT!
YOU'LL BE ABLE TO DO MORE. PERIOD!
THE KORA ENGINE POWERING CONFLUENT WILL HELP SCALE YOUR OPERATIONS UP AND DOWN THIRTY TIMES FASTER!
FIRST, WE NEED TO DESCRIBE THE SCHEMAS AND ADD SCHEMA ENFORCEMENT TO BLOCK BAD DATA.
THEN LOOK AT AUDIT LOGS TO IDENTIFY THE VERY MOMENT THEY DUMPED BAD DATA.
AND THEN WE USE RBAC TO PROVIDE ACCESS ONLY TO THE THREE OF US.
GONFLUENT!!!
GOO

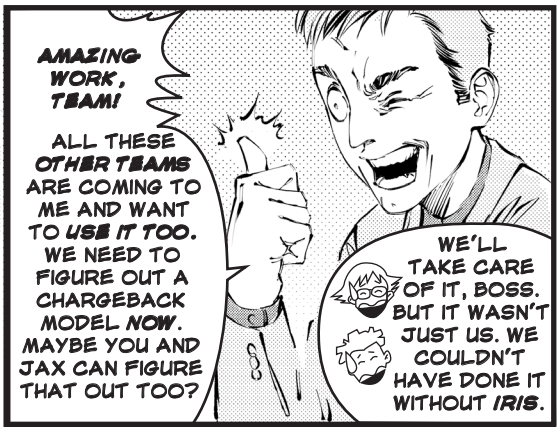
I JUST DON'T LIKE CHANGE!!!!!
ROLLERBALL?
NOO OOOO!!!
BATCH FILE?
BATCH FILLLLL-
CONFLUENT!!!
NO! I WON'T LET THIS HAPPEN! BATCH PROCESSING HAS EVERYTHING!!
WITH BATCH PROCESSING I CAN... IT'S EASY TO... IT'S PERFECT FOR-

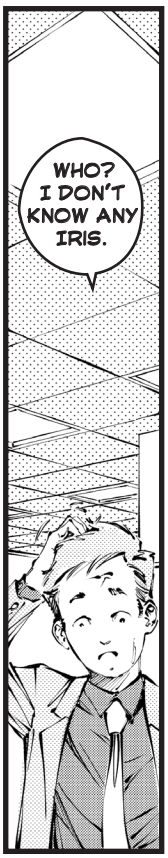
SO... THIS IS THE DATA STREAMING REVOLUTION YOU MENTIONED ...
I TAKE IT YOU'RE READY TO MAKE THE SWITCH NOW?
REAL-TIME DATA! EVENT-STREAMING! SCALABLE FOR WHEN OUR COMPANY GROWS!
DAMN SURE WE'RE READY!
WHAT ABOUT YOU, PAT?
I KNOW DEEP IN YOUR HEART YOU MUST BELIEVE IN EVENTS.
WE CAN SAVE YOU, PAT!
YOU... YOU ALREADY HAVE...
I SEE IT NOW... THE FUTURE IS IN EVENTS. YOU WERE RIGHT. YOU WERE RIGHT.
SO, YOU'RE READY TO HELP US REVOLUTIONIZE THE WAY WE PROCESS DATA?
YEAH... BUT...


...CAN I STILL GET THAT COFFEE FIRST?

A SHORT WHILE LATER...
DON'T LOOK NOW, BUT ERICK IS HEADED THIS WAY.
WHICH ONE OF YOU ADDED CONFLUENT TO OUR SYSTEM?!?

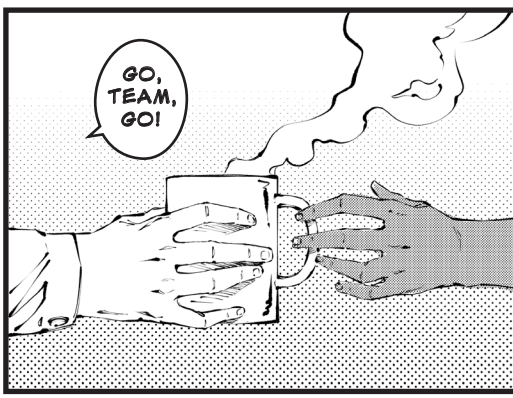

UMMMM... WE JUST THOUGHT THAT...

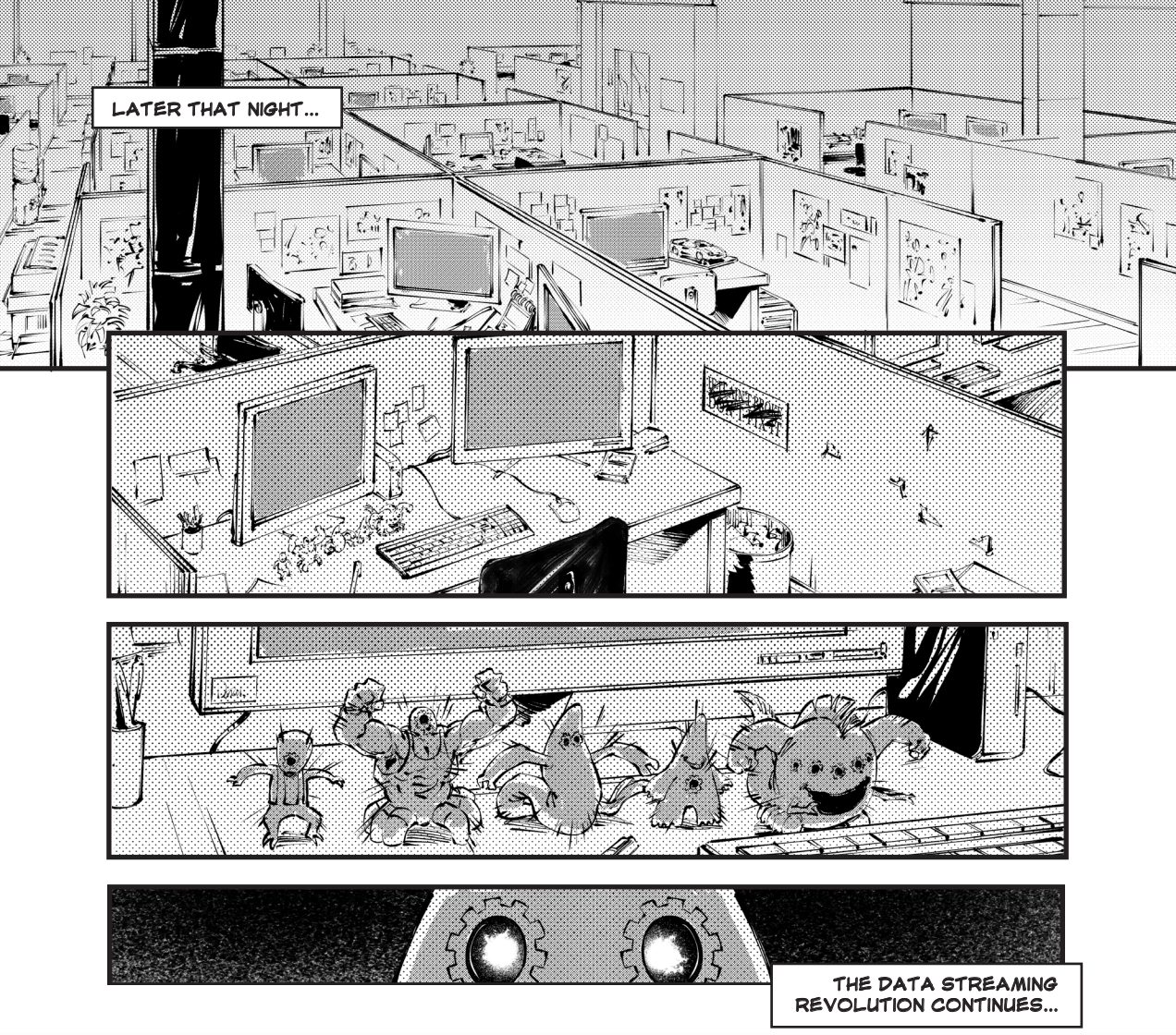

AMAZING WORK, TEAM!
ALL THESE OTHER TEAMS ARE COMING TO ME AND WANT TO USE IT TOO. WE NEED TO FIGURE OUT A CHARGEBACK MODEL NOW. MAYBE YOU AND JAX CAN FIGURE THAT OUT TOO?
WE'LL TAKE CARE OF IT, BOSS. BUT IT WASN'T JUST US. WE COULDN'T HAVE DONE IT WITHOUT IRIS.


WHO? I DON'T KNOW ANY IRIS.

...I'LL BE RIGHT BACK.
TASTY NOT WASTY

HEY... GO, TEAM, GO, HUH?


GO, TEAM, GO!



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Special thanks to:

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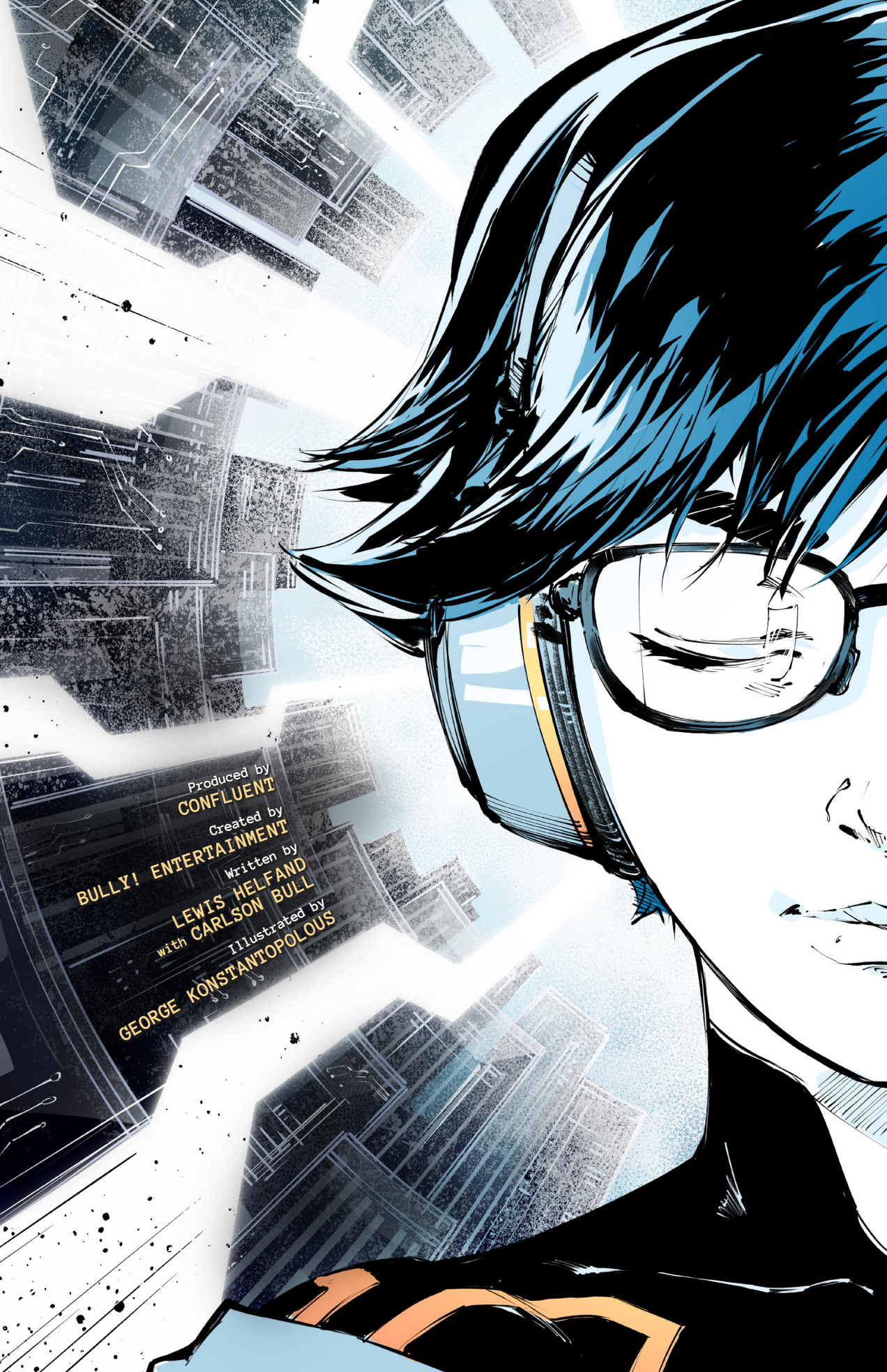
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