

CASE STUDY ONE: THE LEGAL SECTOR

In which an underground cartoonist helps create contracts for a law firm.

Loui has been making comics since the 1980s when he made edgy stories for a motorcycle magazine. After illustrating children's books for many years, the work dried up and he began helping friends in the corporate world to illustrate their presentations. This led to a range of graphic recording and information design jobs, and now Loui works full-time helping businesses and organisations develop new visual language.

Meanwhile, **Camilla** is a pioneer in the legal space. She's helping to develop a new kind of legal contract that utilises the language of comics. Her goal is to help ordinary people get a better understanding of the contracts that they sign by replacing 'legalese' with carefully crafted comics.

As a contracts lawyer, the traditional problem that Camilla has to solve is how to accurately describe a relationship or a transaction between two parties. As a graphic lawyer, however, her problem is how to do that in a way that is more accessible than in the standard contract. Camilla is not an artist, so she often needs to employ someone like Loui with a graphic storyteller's skillset to help translate a complicated set of legal statements into a comic.

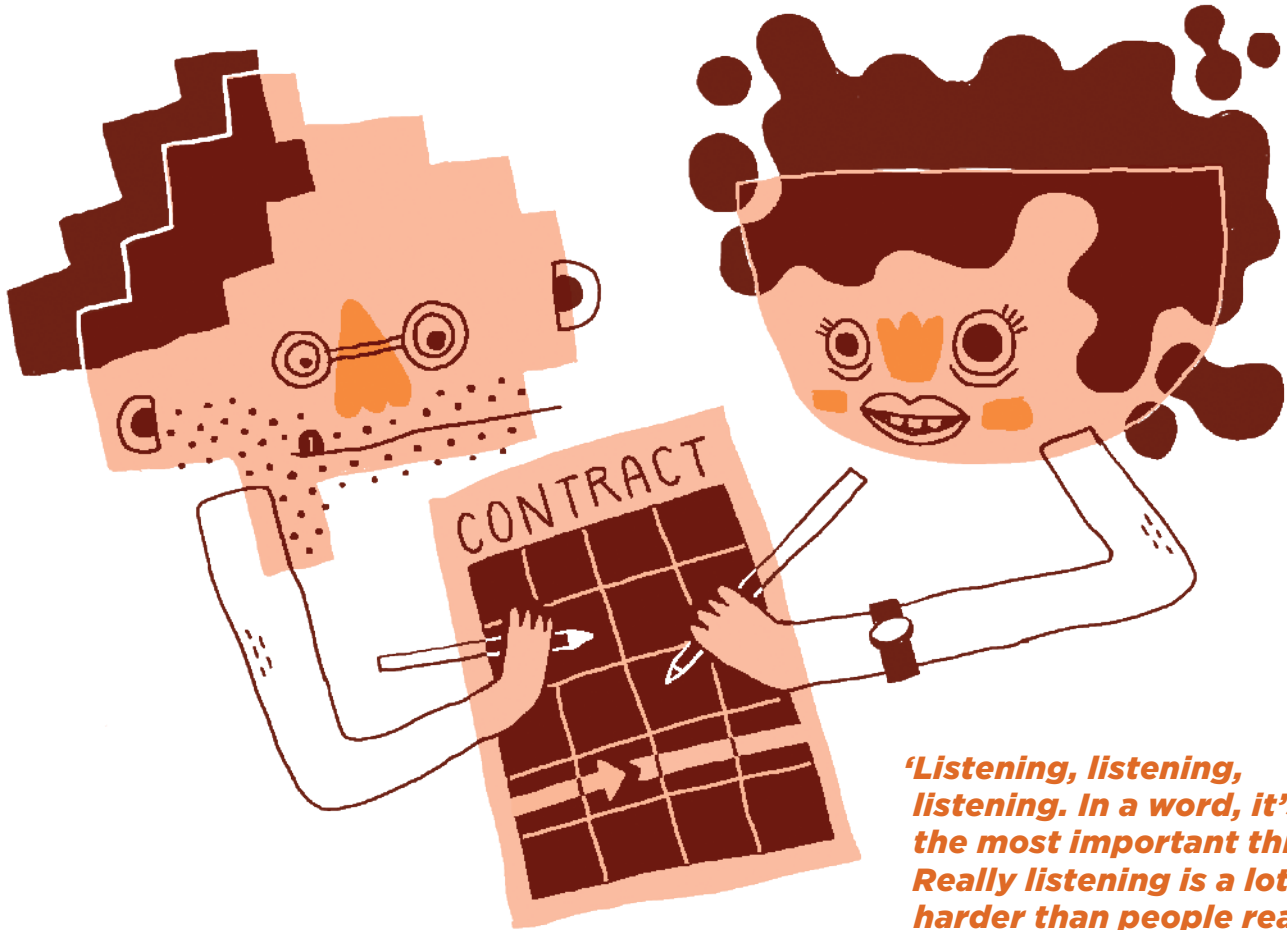
At the beginning of Loui and Camilla's working relationship, Camilla imagined

that the legal team would think up images and would then tell Loui what to draw. But in practice she found that Loui contributed much more to the translation. He wasn't just the hired pencil that they thought they were getting.

Loui sat in on a meeting during which Camilla and her colleagues were arguing about how to illustrate a certain concept. At one point, Loui grabbed a napkin and drew the solution to the problem: a way of illustrating the concept that Camilla and the legal team would have never arrived at on their own. In this instance Loui quickly produced two visual metaphors and nested them together in a single cartoon to communicate a complicated relationship between two parties.

As the relationship developed and Camilla and Loui worked on more and more contract projects, Loui became a true collaborator in the translation process. Loui and Camilla both identify listening as the key skill that Loui is able to bring to complex ensemble discussions. Loui said, *'I've developed the skill of listening carefully to what someone is saying and making drawings that get to the nut of it.'* And Camilla echoed, *'Listening, listening, listening. In a word, it's the most important thing. Really listening is a lot harder than people realise.'*

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Loui has honed the skill of synthesising complexity into simple combinations of lines and words. The team did much of their most crucial work 'in the room' together brainstorming and visualising different approaches to the legal language problems in front of them. Loui's job was often to create visual metaphors and weave them together to articulate a legal concept, and Camilla's job was to apply her legal rigour to the new language to ensure that it was as precise and unambiguous as possible.

So what are the skills that Camilla thinks make a good graphic contract? She is looking for more than just the ability to make nice illustrations: *'I think there are some magnificent visual thinkers out there*

who can't draw, and then there are some amazing, talented artists who are not very good at visual thinking. It's very rare to find someone that can do both.' Ultimately what Camilla needs is someone who can draw and also has empathic sensibilities of a storyteller, someone who can put themselves in someone else's shoes and try to anticipate what they will understand when they see something.

Graphic contracts are a new legal innovation, still mainly used by legal researchers, but Camilla and her colleagues are certain that the contracts work. This is a field with huge growth potential and a possible source of new opportunities for those with the graphic storyteller's skillset.