

INSERVICE COMICS

# BIG SHINY TUNES



NICHOLAS FRIESEN

## Big Shiny Tunes, Issue 1, Tracks 1-6

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Other comic work includes:

*The Unpredictable Olivia Sea*  
*...with silver sunshine stares*  
*Abigail. Adeline. Arizona.*  
*American Youth*  
*Crush-O-Rama*  
*Ineccentric*  
*The Setlist*

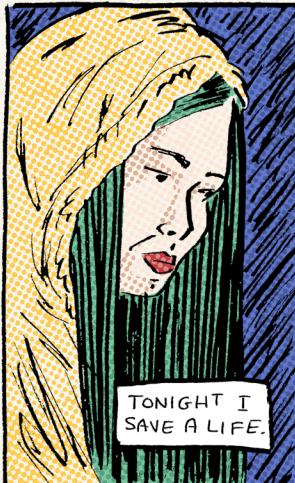


In loving memory of Samson  
2012-2024

Harv Stevens Presents

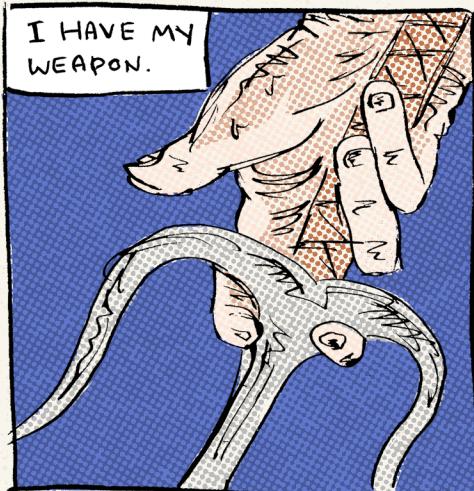
# BIG SHINY TUNES

MIDDLE CITY. IT'S WHERE I'VE ALWAYS LIVED. IT'S WHERE I'LL DIE. BUT NOT TONIGHT.



## track one One More Astronaut

I HAVE MY WEAPON.

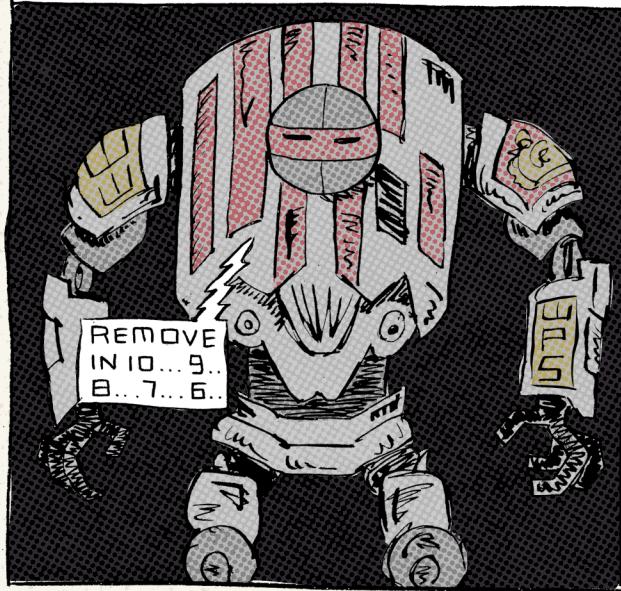


AND I HAVE MY SOUNDTRACK.  
NOW I NEED A DANCE PARTNER.

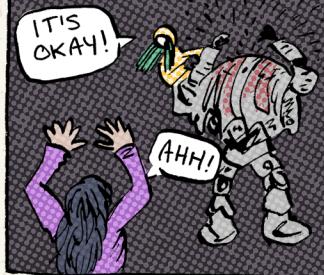




I HAVE TO ACT QUICKLY. THESE THINGS WILL



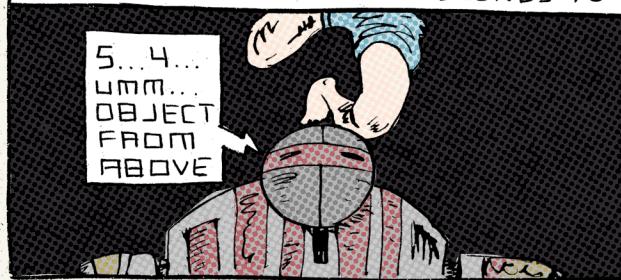
WOULDN'T IT COST LESS TO BUILD AFFORDABLE HOUSING THAN TO BUILD, POWER AND MAINTAIN KILLER ROBOT COPS?



SHE KEEPS SCREAMING.

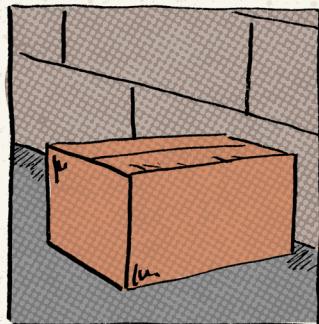


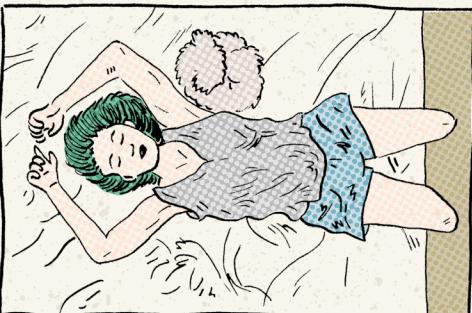
GIVE YOU LESS THAN 10 SECONDS TO



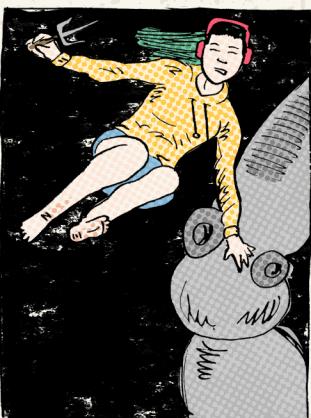
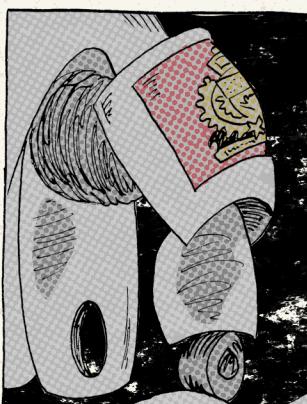
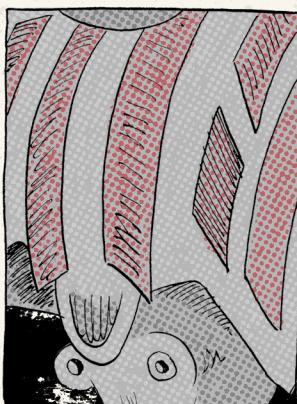
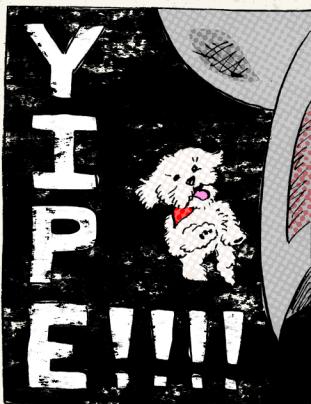
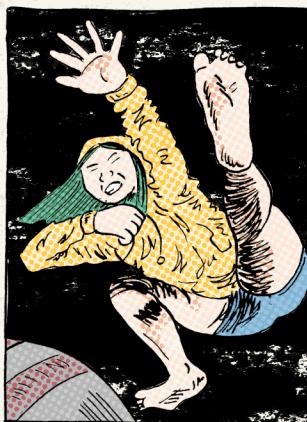
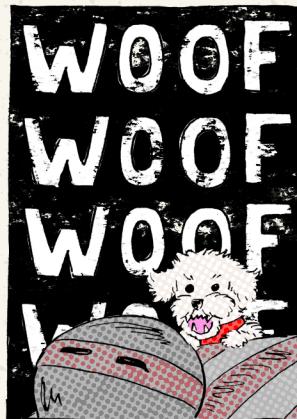
REACT BEFORE TEARING YOU TO SHREADS

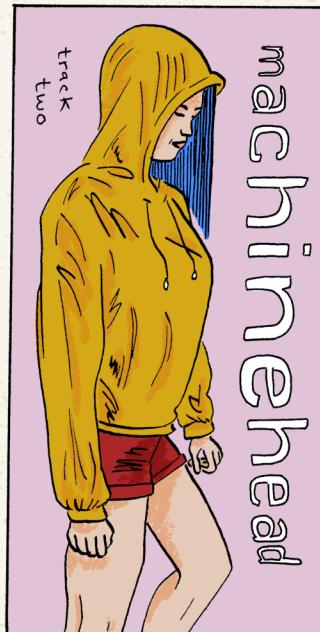


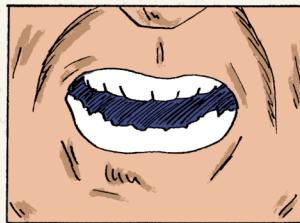


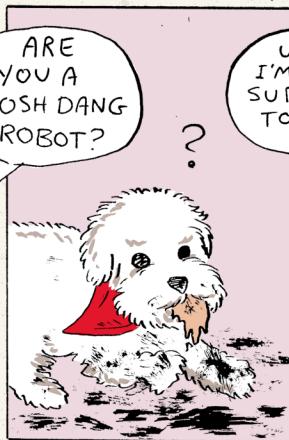
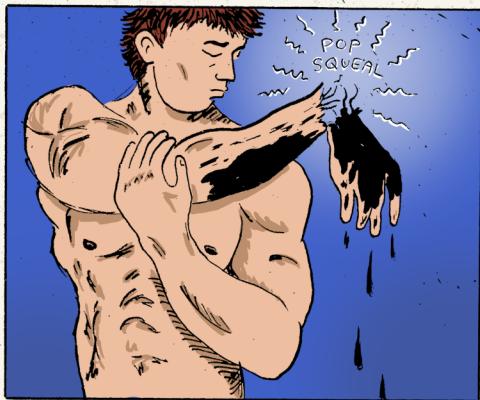


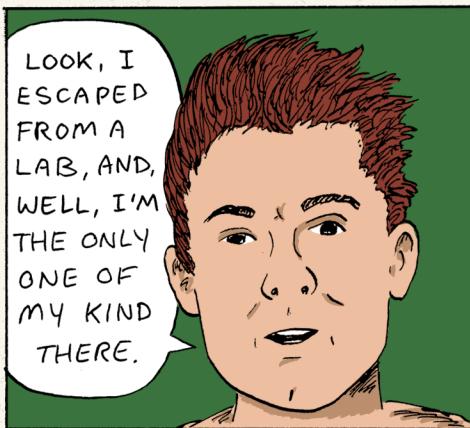




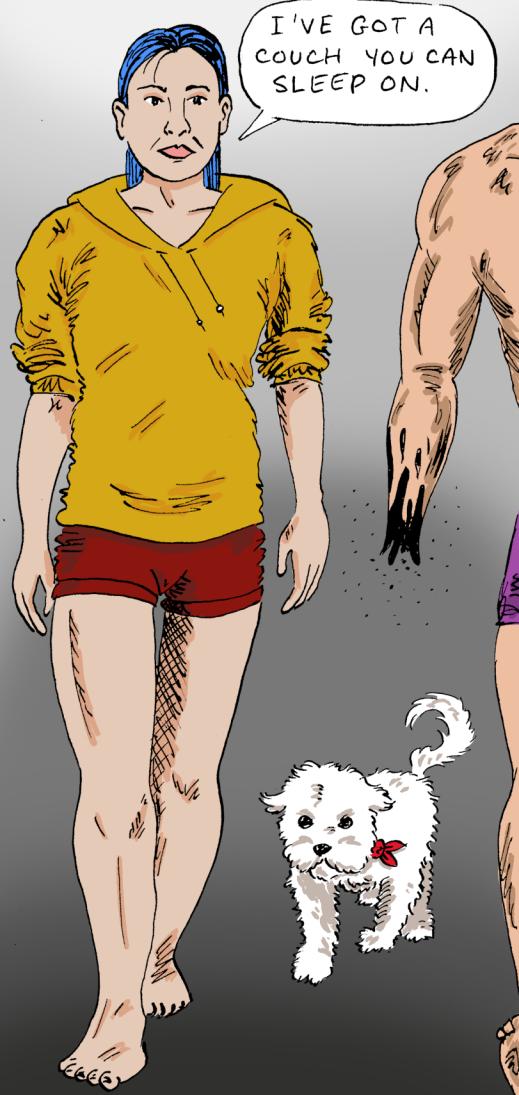




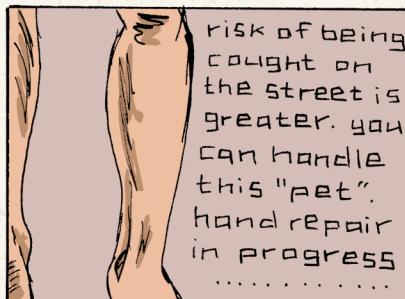
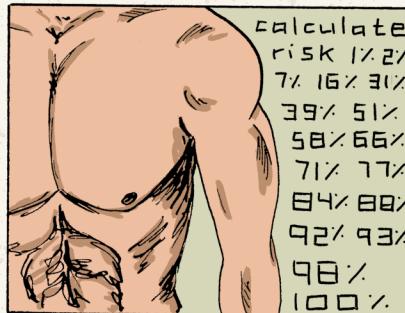


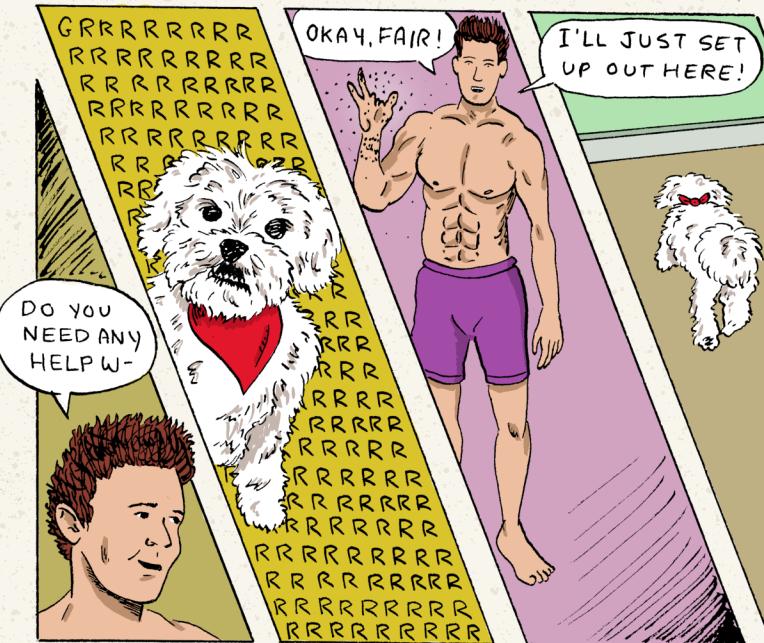
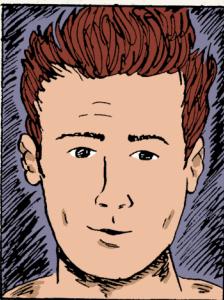
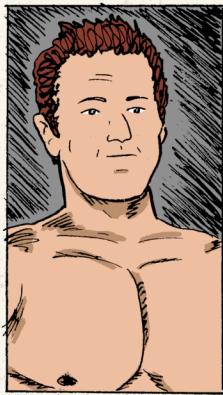
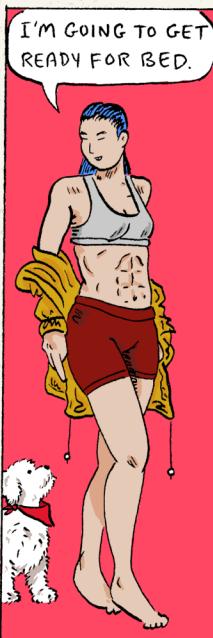
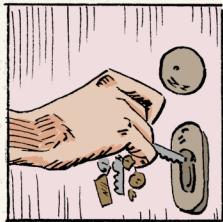


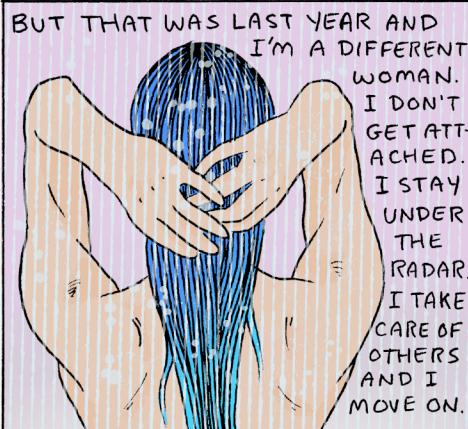
SO, I DECIDE TO GIVE THIS BIG, CONFUSED, HUNK OF SOMETHING A CHANCE, AGAINST MY BETTER JUDGEMENT, AND I TAKE HIM HOME WITH US.



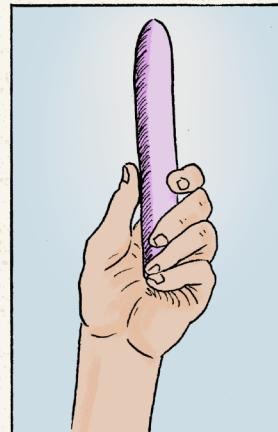
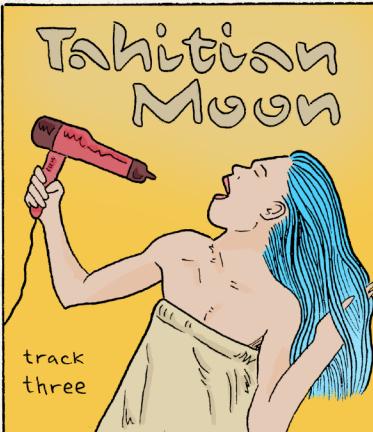
i don't know about sleep but getting off of the street is essential to my survival.







IN JUST OVER A WEEK  
I WENT FROM LIVIN'  
LA VIDA SOLO TO HAV-  
ING A DOG AND MAYBE  
A ROBOT UP IN MY BIZ.  
IT HAS BEEN A PRETTY  
LONELY FEW MONTHS,  
BUT I ALSO NEED  
MY TIME TO MY-  
SELF. IT'S CALLED  
UNWINDING, MAN.



ALTHOUGH, I DON'T WANT TO BE A RUDE HOST, AND THERE IS ONE OF THESE ATTACHED TO A VERY NICE BODY IN THE OTHER ROOM...



WAIT, WHAT IF IT... HE.. DOESN'T HAVE ONE? HE HAS TO HAVE ONE. THE REST OF HIM LOOKS REAL, AND HE IS WEARING SHORTS TO HIDE HIS SHAME ...



I'M JUST GONNA ASK.

SO, WHAT YOU GOT UNDER THE HOOD?

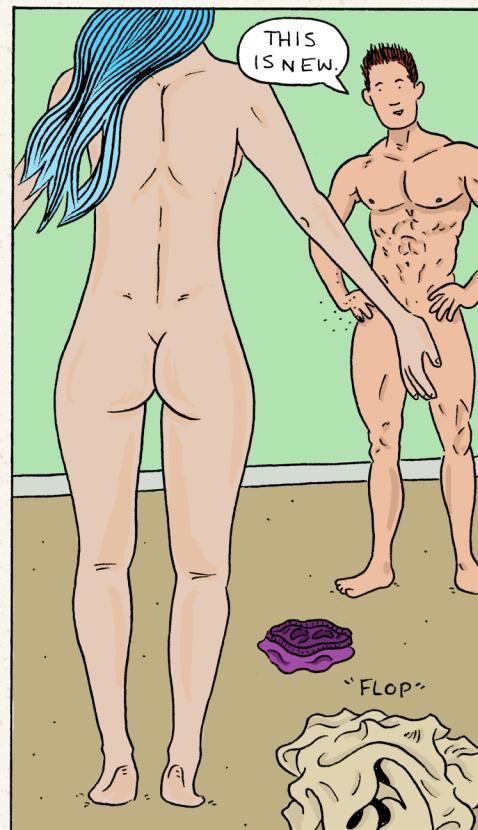


OH. MY. LANTA.



THIS IS NEW.

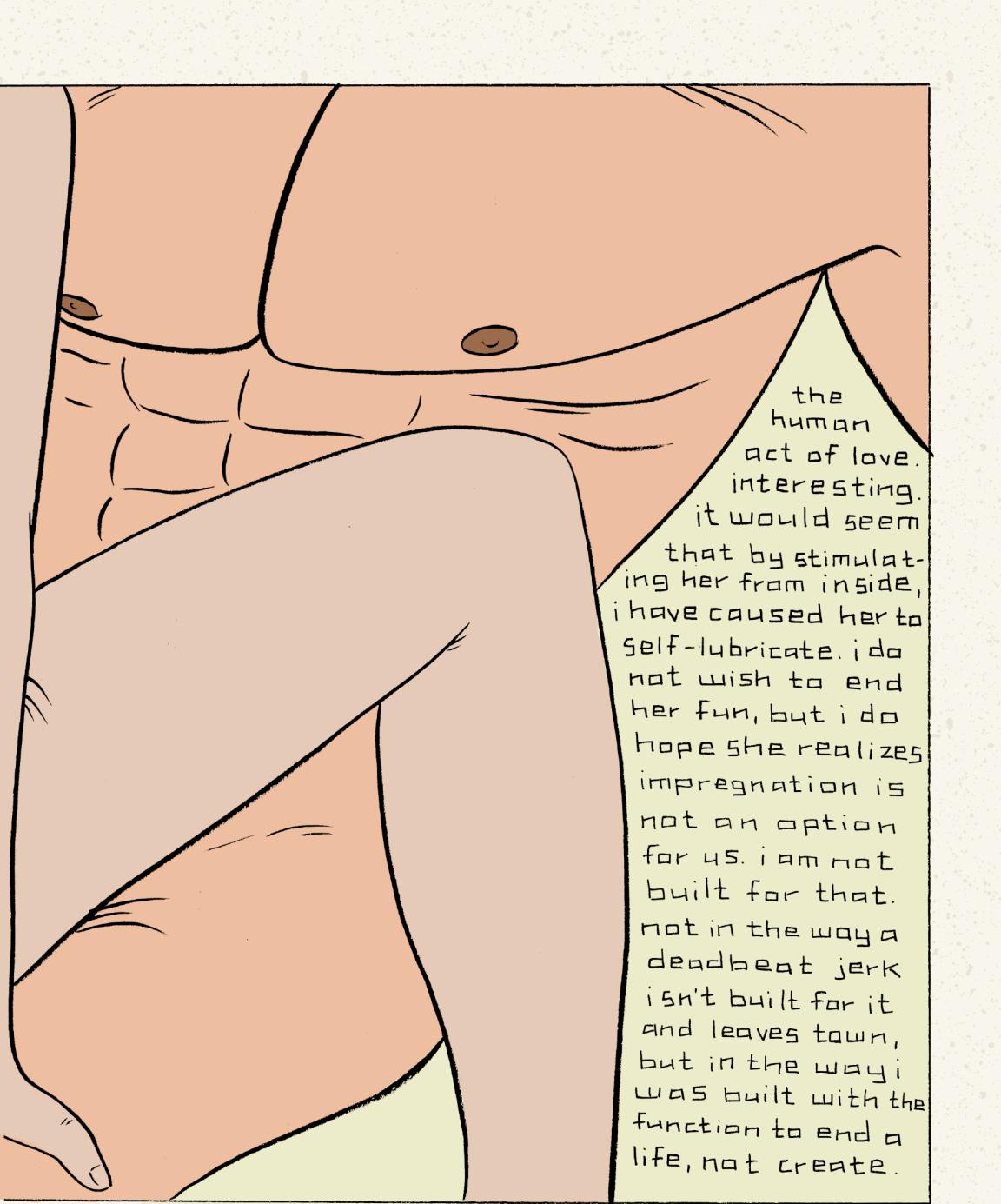
"FLOP"



DID I MENTION I'VE  
NEVER BEEN WITH  
A GUY? THAT I'VE  
NEVER KISSED  
A MAN, LET ALONE  
WANTED TO HAVE  
ONE INSIDE OF  
ME? GIRLS, YES.  
ALTHOUGH,  
IS THIS A  
REAL GUY?  
I'M STILL  
ON THE  
FENCE.  
SEEMS  
REAL  
ENOUGH  
TO GET  
ME  
WHERE  
I NEED  
TO  
GO.

track four

# Queer



the  
human  
act of love.  
interesting.  
it would seem  
that by stimulat-  
ing her from inside,  
i have caused her to  
self-lubricate. i do  
not wish to end  
her fun, but i do  
hope she realizes  
impregnation is  
not an option  
for us. i am not  
built for that.  
not in the way a  
deadbeat jerk  
isn't built for it  
and leaves town,  
but in the way i  
was built with the  
function to end a  
life, not create.

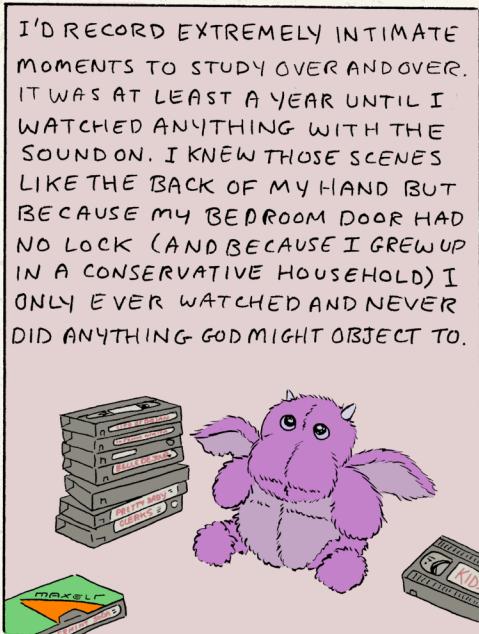
MY SEXUAL HISTORY IS NOT A CRAZY ONE. IT'S MORE ABOUT SELF DISCOVERY THAN SHARED MOMENTS.



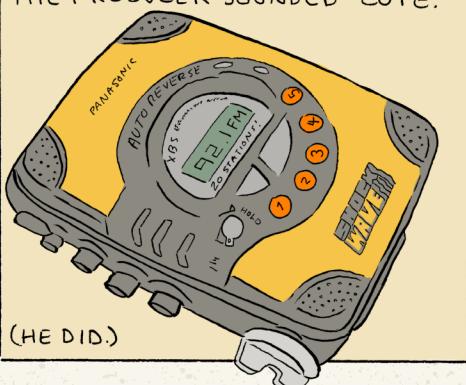
I HAD A TV/VCR IN MY ROOM AS A KID, WHICH MEANT I COULD WATCH THE DRAMBUIE SHOWCASE REVIEW, HOSTED BY CHAS LAWTHER OR VALERIE BUHAGIAR OR THAT GUY WHO RUNS T.I.F.F. NOW. THEY'D PLAY WILDLY INAPPROPRIATE FILMS LIKE "PRETTY BABY" AND SHOWS LIKE "EROTIC TALES" AND "RED SHOE DIARIES" AND I'D BE HOOKED.



I'D RECORD EXTREMELY INTIMATE MOMENTS TO STUDY OVER AND OVER. IT WAS AT LEAST A YEAR UNTIL I WATCHED ANYTHING WITH THE SOUND ON. I KNEW THOSE SCENES LIKE THE BACK OF MY HAND BUT BECAUSE MY BEDROOM DOOR HAD NO LOCK (AND BECAUSE I GREW UP IN A CONSERVATIVE HOUSEHOLD) I ONLY EVER WATCHED AND NEVER DID ANYTHING GOD MIGHT OBJECT TO.



WE HAD A SLUMBER PARTY ONCE, ME, KACY, ABBY, AND OLIVIA. WE STAYED UP LISTENING TO "RHONA AT NIGHT" ON MY PANASONIC SHOCKWAVE TAPE PLAYER/RADIO, GIGGLING ABOUT THE CALLERS' RELATIONSHIP QUESTIONS, ASKING EACH OTHER IF WE THOUGHT MATT THE PRODUCER SOUNDED "CUTE."



I DIDN'T KNOW I LIKED GIRLS UNTIL I WAS 12, AND IT WASN'T FROM WATCHING ANYTHING ON CHANNEL 24, OR LISTENING TO LATE NIGHT RADIO.



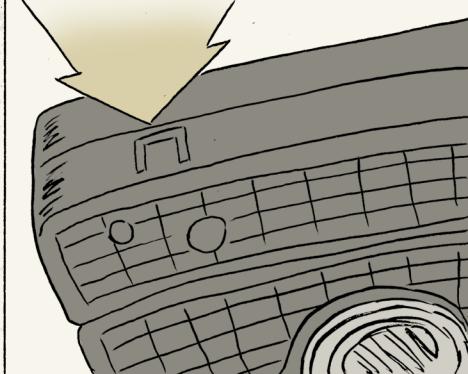
I WAS AT MY PIANO RECITAL. NERVOUS, ANXIOUS. THIS OTHER GIRL, I THINK HER NAME WAS LUCY, NOTICED ME FIDGETING. SHE HELD MY HAND AND SMILED.



WHEN IT WAS HER TURN TO PLAY, I COULDN'T TAKE MY EYES OFF HER. SHE WAS BEAUTIFUL. I PLAYED FINE. BUT I WAS FOCUSED ON GETTING IT OVER WITH SO I COULD TALK TO HER. BUT HER PARENTS SCOOPED HER AWAY BEFORE I COULD.



BY THE TIME I WAS 17 I HAD 86 TAPES, MOSTLY SIX HOUR BUT THERE WERE A FEW EIGHT AND TENS IN THERE. IT WAS HARD TO BUY TAPES IN 2007, SO I HAD TO BE VERY CHOOSY ABOUT WHAT MADE IT ON TAPE, AND WHEN I "LOCKED" A TAPE BY PUNCHING THE LITTLE TAB. PERMANENCE.



I DON'T WANT YOU TO GET THE IMPRESSION I ONLY WATCHED OR TAPE SMUT, FAR FROM IT. I SPENT HOURS WATCHING MUCH MUSIC, THE NATION'S MUSIC STATION, WITH MY THUMB HOVERING OVER 'RECORD/PLAY', IN THE HOPES OF CATCHING BJÖRK OR FIONA APPLE'S LATEST VIDEO.

I WISH SOOK-YIN LEE AND MASTERT WERE MY FRIENDS.



BUT IT WASN'T JUST THE BIG SHINY TUNES THAT I LOVED, IT WAS THE VJS. I CAME ON BOARD JUST AS SOOK-YIN AND MASTERT WERE AGING OUT, MEANING MY DAILY DIET CONSISTED OF MATTE, BRADFORD, AMANDA, RACHEL, JENN, RAINBOW, ED THE SOCK, AND GEORGE. RICK THE TEMP BECAME JUST "RICK".

I CAN'T BELIEVE AMANDA WALSH IS ON AND I'M NOT!

MEH, SHE GETS FIRED FROM "THE BIG BANG THEORY."



FOR WHATEVER REASON, I FOUND IT MORE AROUSING TO WATCH RACHEL PERRY OR JENNIFER HOLLETT LOOK AT ME THROUGH THE TV AND MAKE EYE CONTACT, TALKING TO ME ABOUT MUSIC OR INTERVIEWING SOMEONE INTIMATELY AND INTERACTIVELY IN THE MUCH ENVIRONMENT. IT FELT REAL.

AFTER MUCH I WENT TO HARVARD

THEN I WORKED AT TWITTER!



THERE WAS NOTHING MORE REAL TO ME THAN MY MUSIC FANDOM. I WENT TO EVERY CONCERT THAT I COULD.

THEY'RE SO GOOD LIVE!



SO WHEN I DECIDED TO AUDITION TO BE A MUCH V.J., I WANTED TO MAKE MY TAPE AS REAL AS POSSIBLE. I PUT MY WHOLE SELF ON TAPE.

UM, ABBY?  
I'M GAY.



TO BE AS REAL AND HONEST AS I COULD, I MADE THE DECISION TO COME OUT. FIRST, TO MY BFF, ABBY.

I ALWAYS  
HAD AN IDEA!  
THX FOR  
TELLING  
ME!



THEN I SPOKE TO MY DAD. HE ALWAYS SAID HE LOVED ME NO MATTER WHAT, AND AFTER I TOLD HIM, HE TOOK A LONG PAUSE AND SAID:

I AM PROUD OF  
YOU FOR FIGURING  
OUT WHO YOU ARE  
AT SUCH A YOUNG  
AGE, I LOVE YOU!

SITCOM  
AUDIENCE:  
"AWWWWW!"



SHA NA  
NANA

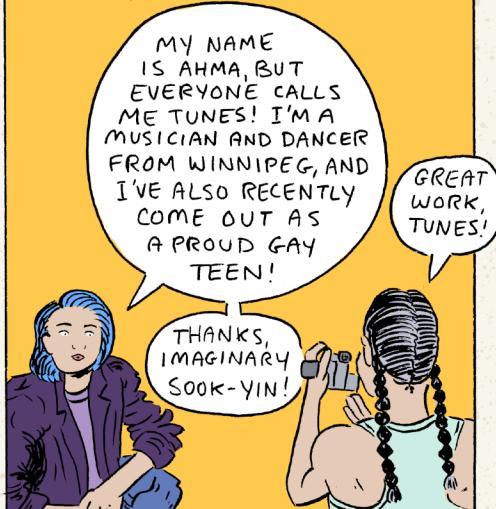
MY MOTHER WAS A WHOLE DIFFERENT ANIMAL. I HAD TO DIP MY TOES IN.

MOMMY, DID  
YOU KNOW THE  
ACTOR WHO PLAYS  
GEORGE ON "GREY'S  
ANATOMY" CAME OUT  
OF THE CLOSET?

WHY WOULD  
HE CHOOSE TO  
RUIN HIS SHOW  
AND CAREER  
LIKE THAT?



MOM WASN'T GOING TO BE AN EASY SELL, AND TALKING TO HER ABOUT IT IN PERSON WAS GOING TO BE WAY TOO HARD, SO I JUST PUT IT ON TAPE.



SHOWING MY MOM THE TAPE WAS... INTERESTING. SHE DIDN'T REACT WELL.

SO YOU THINK YOU'RE GAY NOW? WHAT DO YOU KNOW ABOUT GAY!? ELLEN IS GAY AND THEY TOOK HER SHOW AWAY UNTIL SHE HELPED FIND NEMO, BUT YOU'RE NOT ELLEN! YOU'LL NEVER BE ELLEN! IT IS HARD WORK TO HOST A SHOW AND YOU CAN'T EVEN PRACTICE PIANO FOR THREE HOURS A DAY! HOW ARE YOU GOING TO HOST MUCH MUSICIANS? AND WHO CALLS YOU "TOONS"? IS THAT A GAY CODE? THAT'S IT, NO MORE TORI AMOS!



I SENT THE TAPE IN ANYWAY, AND WAS SELECTED TO AUDITION IN PERSON!



WHEN THE MUCH VJ SEARCH CAME TO WINNIPEG, MY PARENTS WOULDN'T LET ME AUDITION. I WAS UNDERAGE AND WAS TOLD TO FOCUS ON SCHOOL, PIANO, DANCE, MY FUTURE. THAT NIGHT I WENT TO OLIVIA'S AND POURED MY FEELINGS ONTO HER BEDROOM FLOOR. SHE LISTENED, NODDED, AND SMILED.



OLIVIA HAD COME OUT AND FALLEN FOR HER STRAIGHT BEST FRIEND. I FIGURED SHE'D BE A GOOD PERSON TO TALK TO ABOUT ALL THIS WITH. WE WOUND UP MAKING OUT UNTIL AN HOUR PAST MY CURFEW. I THOUGHT THIS MEANT SHE LOVED ME.



THE NEXT DAY AT SCHOOL I WENT TO HUG HER HELLO, BUT I SAW THE WAY SHE WAS LOOKING AT THIS BITCHY GIRL FROM OUR DANCE CLASS, SO INSTEAD I ASKED HER IF SHE WANTED TO START A BAND WITH ABBY AND I. SHE DID.



OLIVIA WANTED US TO BE A FULL ON ROCK BAND, AND SINCE SHE DIDN'T LIKE BEN FOLDS, THAT MEANT I COULDN'T PLAY PIANO. BEING A TEEN IN THE MID-AUGHTS MEANT YOU WATCHED "GILMORE GIRLS" AND THERE'S NO ONE COOLER THAN LANE KIM, DRUMMER OF HEP ALIEN AND NEGLECTED FRIEND OF RORY GILMORE.



BANDS ARE FUN AND DIFFICULT AND EVERYONE SHOULD BE IN ONE AT SOME POINT JUST TO SAY THEY WERE. I MET MY FIRST GIRLFRIEND, TESS, AT A GIG OPENING FOR GMAC AND THE PAPSMEARS. WE WERE ALL OVER EACH OTHER FOR A YEAR.



WE TURNED 18 THAT YEAR, HAD SEX ABOUT A BILLION HUNDRED TIMES, AND WERE THE ONLY GAY COUPLE AT GRAD. OF COURSE WE WERE OSTRACIZED BY PEOPLE WE'D KNOWN SINCE KINDERGARTEN, BUT IT WAS 2008 AND GAY SLURS WERE STILL POPULAR ON THE BIG SCREEN. SO WHY NOT YELL AT TEEN-AGE GIRLS DURING A SCHOOL EVENT?



THEN OUR BAND WENT ON ITS FIRST (AND ONLY) TOUR, A LOVELY DISASTER THAT ENDED IN THE BAND LITERALLY BREAKING UP ON STAGE. THE VAN RIDE HOME FROM BC WAS SILENT, SO IT GAVE ME TIME TO WRITE MY OWN MUSIC.



TESS WAS BEING WEIRD WHEN I GOT HOME, SO I THREW MYSELF INTO HOME RECORDING. GARAGE-BAND WAS MY SAVIOUR AND MYSPACE WAS MAKING SUPERSTARS OUT OF LILY ALLEN AND KATE NASH ALL BEFORE THEY'D PLAYED A GIG.



I WAS BUILDING A COMMUNITY OF OTHER MUSICIANS AND EVEN A FEW FANS! IT WAS SO WEIRD AND COOL. I ASKED TESS TO COME OVER TO HEAR SOME OF WHAT I'D BEEN WORKING ON, AND SHE INFORMED ME THAT SHE HAD KISSED SOMEONE ELSE, OR THAT THEY KISSED HER AND SHE DIDN'T RESIST. I WAS SHOCKED.



I ASKED HER IF SHE WANTED TO BREAK UP, SHE SAID NO. I ASKED IF SHE HAD FEELINGS FOR THIS PERSON. SHE SAID NO. WE BOTH CRIED AND THEN HAD SEX FOR WHAT I NOW KNOW WAS THE LAST TIME. IT TURNS OUT SHE



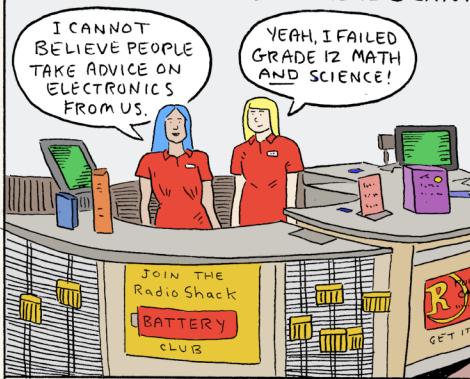
HAD BEEN CHEATING ON ME THE WHOLE YEAR. THERE WERE OTHER GIRLS, SOME GUYS, EVEN A FEW ONLINE RELATIONSHIPS (CYBER SEX WAS VERY POPULAR AT THE TIME). SOME OF THESE PEOPLE WERE OUR FRIENDS, BUT MOST WERE RANDOM.



THAT PERSON SHE FESSED UP TO BEING KISSED BY? JOE? SHE WOUND UP MARRYING HIM AND HAVING FIVE KIDS. YOU ALMOST CAN'T GET MAD ABOUT THAT SHIT.



SO I REBOUNDED WITH CORI. I HAD THIS SUMMER JOB AT RADIO SHACK AND SHE WAS THE ONLY OTHER GIRL THERE. SHE WAS SO BORING AND KISSED ME WITH HER WHOLE FACE, BUT SHE WAS CUTE AND BLONDE AND DIDN'T LIVE WITH HER PARENTS. I WILL TAKE FREEDOM WHERE I CAN.



OUR STORE HAD A BIG SALE ON NECK MASSAGERS AND WITH OUR EMPLOYEE DISCOUNTS, WE WERE ABLE TO DISCRETELY PURCHASE OUR FIRST SEX TOYS FOR CHEAP. WE WORE THEM OUT.



I WAS ALSO ABLE TO PURCHASE A NEW VIDEO CAMERA AND ALL THE MINI DV TAPES I WANTED. MOST PEOPLE WERE SWITCHING TO DSLR CAMS IN 2008, BUT I LIKED MY STACK OF TAPES. I FELT A SENSE OF ACCOMPLISHMENT WHENEVER I WOULD LABEL ONE.



WHAT DID I USE THE CAMERA FOR?  
USE YOUR IMAGINATION. WE SURE DID.



LIKE I SAID, I WASN'T SUPER INTO CORI (AND I THINK SHE WAS MAYBE STILL FUCKING HER HIGH SCHOOL BOYFRIEND) BUT WE WERE HAVING FUN.



I WAS MOSTLY FOCUSING ON MY MUSIC, WHICH WAS TURNING INTO THIS POWER TRIO WITH ABBY AND HER FRIEND ALLY, SORTA OF AN ELECTROCLASH-MEETS-POPSTAR GROUP WITH UNIRONIC GANG VOCALS.



THE THING WAS, SUMMER WAS ENDING AND I WAS ENROLLED IN THE U OF M'S SCHOOL OF MUSIC PROGRAM, SOMETHING MY 18-YEAR-OLD BRAIN THOUGHT I DID NOT NEED TO ATTEND, NOW THAT I HAD "BUZZ".



INSTEAD OF SAVING THE MONEY I MADE SELLING CORDLESS PHONE BATTERIES AND DVD PLAYERS, I WAS SPENDING IT ON GEAR AND CLOTHES, NOT TUITION AND BOOKS.



I PUT ALL OF MY EGGS INTO THIS ONE BASKET, AN INDUSTRY SHOWCASE AT THE ROYAL ALBERT. THERE WERE PRODUCERS AND MANAGERS COMING IN FROM TORONTO. IT WAS DO OR DIE TIME.





# Across THE Room!

Room!

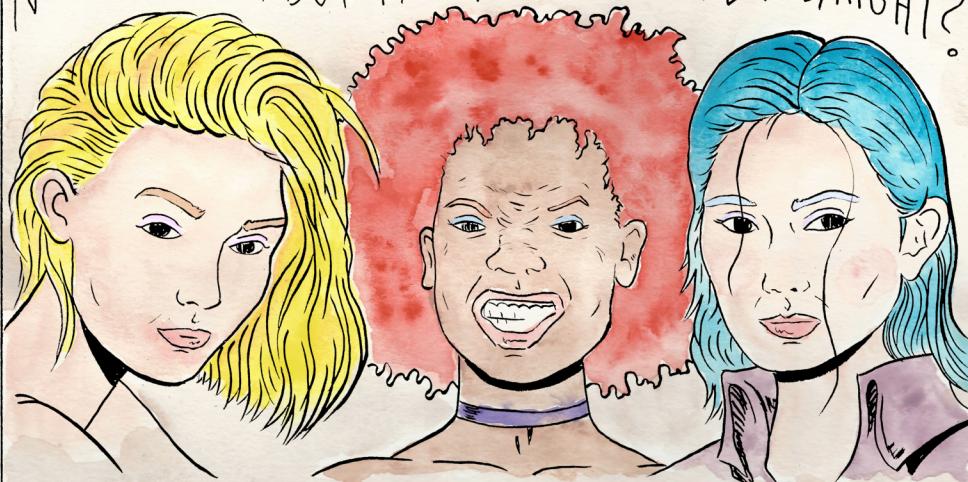
Room!



track five

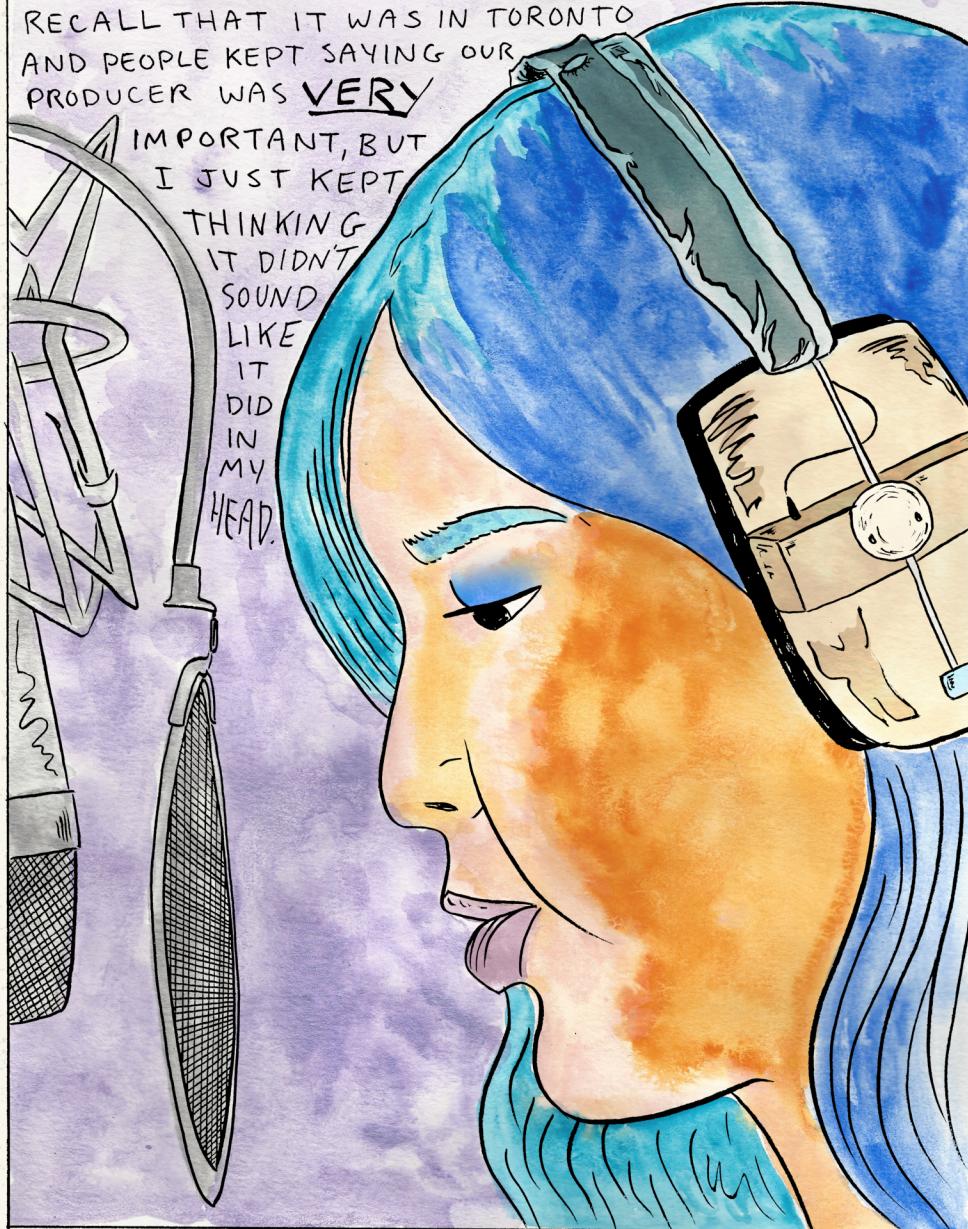
# SWEET DREAMS

WE PLAYED OUR HEARTS OUT AND SOMEHOW WE SIGNED A RECORD DEAL - SOON WE'D MAKE AN ALBUM AND A VIDEO AND IT WOULD CHART ON MUCH MUSIC BUT IT WOULD NOT REACH NUMBER ONE, ALTHOUGH WE DID GET SOME AIRPLAY IN THE STATES AND ONE OF OUR SONGS WAS USED ON THE SOUNDTRACK TO A HORROR FLICK THAT NOBODY SAW, BUT IT'S ALL GOOD IN THE HOOD, RIGHT? .



EVERYTHING THAT HAPPENED THAT YEAR WAS A BLUR.

I DON'T REMEMBER MUCH ABOUT RECORDING. I DO  
RECALL THAT IT WAS IN TORONTO  
AND PEOPLE KEPT SAYING OUR  
PRODUCER WAS VERY  
IMPORTANT, BUT  
I JUST KEPT  
THINKING  
IT DIDN'T  
SOUND  
LIKE  
IT  
DID  
IN  
MY  
HEAD.

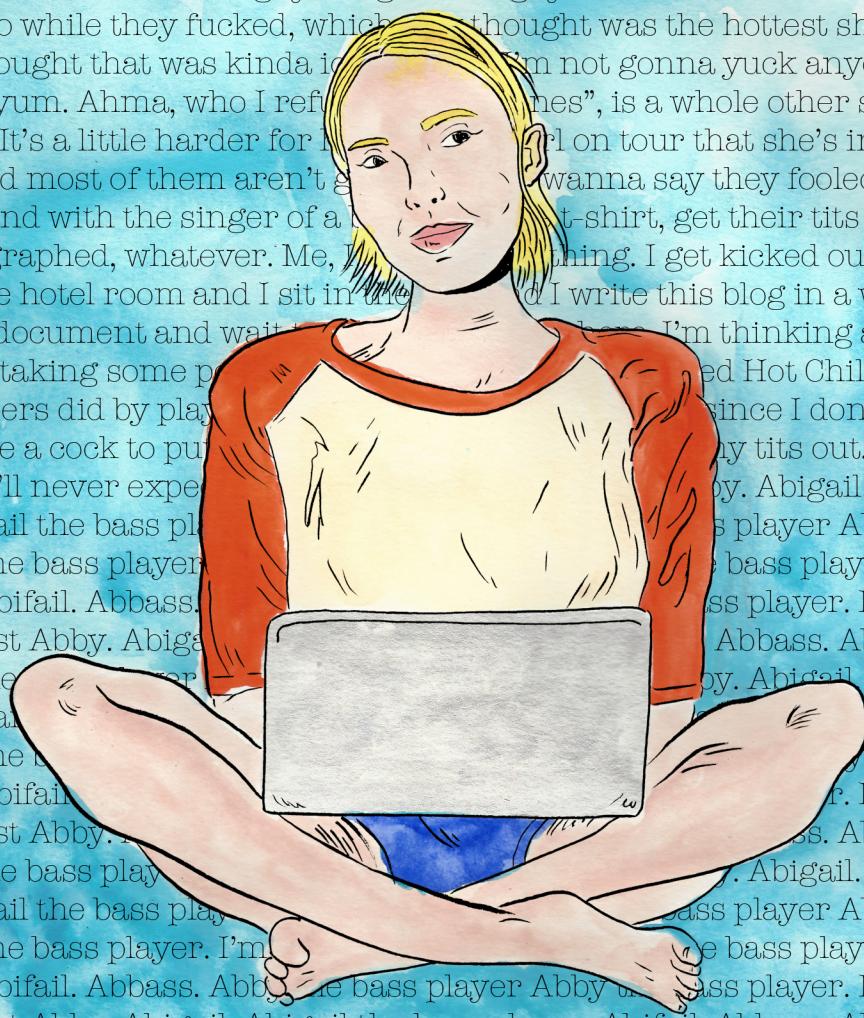


ALLY MET A DIFFERENT GUY EVERY NIGHT AND ENCOURAGED ME TO "ENJOY MYSELF MORE" AND I FORGOT ALL ABOUT CORI.



ABBY KEPT A TOUR BLOG AND LEFT NOTHING OUT. IT WAS BAD. SHE HAD GONE OFF HER MEDS AND SHE WROTE WITH NO FILTER.

A hand-drawn illustration of a woman with blonde hair, wearing a red and white striped shirt, sitting cross-legged and holding a laptop. The drawing is done in a sketchy, colorful style with visible lines and shading.



WE TOURED  AS THE SUPPORT FOR 

BUT BEFORE WE  
KNEW IT, WE HAD  
SET UP OUR  
OWN

NAME  
REDACTED  
CUZ  
LAWYERS

HEAD-  
LIN-  
ING  
TOUR  
!!!

ROCK AND ROLL BAND?



SO NOW WE'RE IN TORONTO  
FOR A MEETING WITH OUR LABEL.  
WE DON'T KNOW THESE EXECS  
BUT THEY'VE GOT OUR NUMBER.

THX FOR  
MEETING WITH US.  
IT'S IMPORTANT TO  
HAVE THIS CONVO  
IN PERSON.

DON'T BE  
SO ANXIOUS,  
ABBY! I BET THEY  
JUST WANNA GIVE  
US OUR GOLD  
RECORD!

YOU'RE  
DROPPING US,  
AREN'T YOU? I  
KNEW THIS WAS  
TOO GOOD TO BE  
TRUE.

track six

# SCOOBY SNACKS

A BREAKFAST MEETING SEEMED LIKE AN IDEAL SETTING TO DROP AN ARTIST FROM YOUR ROSTER. IT'S MORNING, SO THEY'LL BE TOO GROGGY TO FORMULATE A POWERFUL RESPONSE, AND LIKELY JUST THANK YOU FOR THE OPPORTUNITY TO SPEND A BUNCH OF ADVANCE MONEY THAT WILL TAKE 30 YEARS TO PAY BACK. IF YOU GET IT DONE QUICK, IT MAY JUST BE COFFEE, AND THESE EXECS CAN JUST MOVE ON WITH THEIR DAY. DONE. DONE. ON TO THE NEXT ONE.



BUT THIS ISN'T A DAY ANY OF US WILL EVER MOVE ON FROM. NEVER.



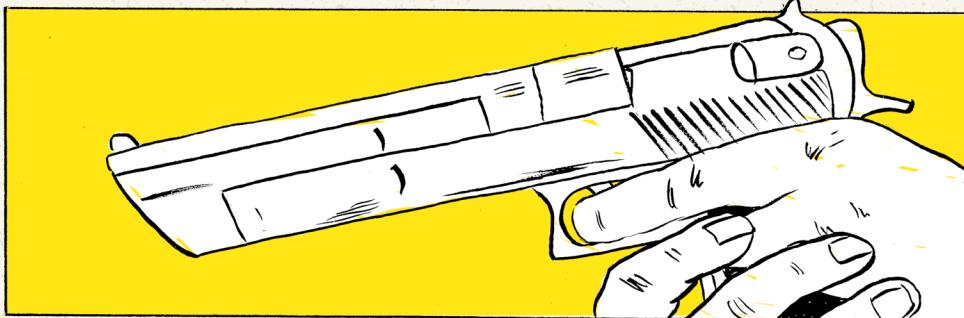












BLAM

BLAM

BLAM

BLAM

ALLY LOST HER HEARING, ABBY GOT MORE ANXIOUS. THE LABEL EXECS GOT WHAT WAS COMING TO THEM. WELL, MAYBE THEY DIDN'T DESERVE TO DIE, BUT WHEN YOU TREAT PEOPLE LIKE A PRODUCT, YOU SHOULD HAVE TO GIVE UP YOUR HUMAN RIGHTS. AT THIS MOMENT I FELT FREE- FREE OF MY CONTRACT, OF MY BAND, OF MY OBLIGATIONS. I FELT FREE TO START OVER. FREE TO DECIDE. FREE FOR THE MOMENT. FREE TO BE JUST A GIRL.





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