

TOO
COOL

*to be
Forgotten*



ALEX ROBINSON

TOO
COOL
to be
Forgotten

For the *loners, losers* and *outcasts*.

May you show them all someday.

**TOO
COOL**

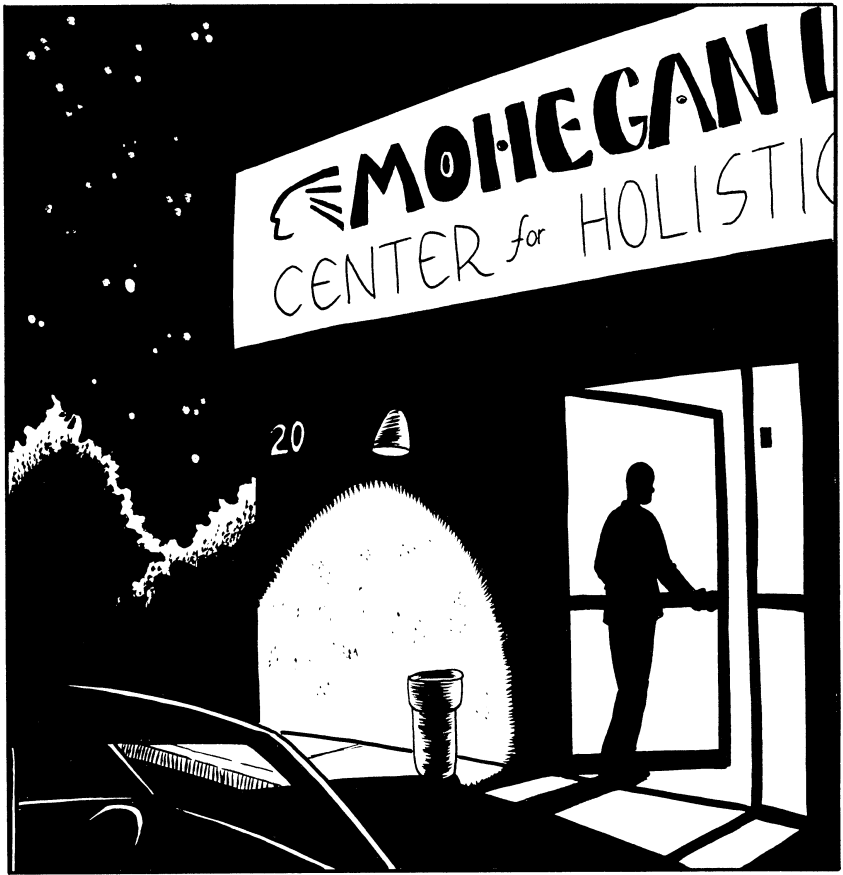
*to be
Forgotten*



ALEX ROBINSON



CHAPTER ONE: ONE MORE TRY



NO, BUT I KNOW YOU DON'T BELIEVE IN THIS NEW AGE MUMBO JUMBO, SO I APPRECIATE YOU HUMORING ME.

WELL, NOTHING ELSE HAS WORKED SO FAR SO WHY NOT? BESIDES, THIS WAY I CAN RUB IT IN YOUR FACE WHEN IT DOESN'T WORK.



I WOULDN'T EXPECT ANYTHING LESS, HAHA. SO ON BEHALF OF AMBER, SOFIA AND MYSELF, THANKS FOR TRYING.

I KNOW IT'S HARD.



MR. WICKS? DR. AL COLA IS READY TO SEE YOU.



IF I COME OUT CLUCKING LIKE A CHICKEN IT'S YOUR FAULT, LYNN!



MMM, WE COULD USE THE EGGS.



RIGHT IN HERE, MR. WICKS.



PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY

DATE 6/18/10

NAME: Robert Andrew Wicks
ADDRESS: 138 Salem Ct.
CITY: Mohansic STATE: NY ZIP: 10598

D.O.B.: 10/30/70 SEX: F M TG
HT: 6'2" WT 195 OCCUPATION: Computer Tech

MARITAL STATUS: S W DIV WID SEXUALLY ACTIVE? YES
CHILDREN? Amber (step-daughter), Sofia (daughter) ALIVE DECEASED ?
MOTHER'S NAME Susan Wicks ALIVE DECEASED ?

FATHER'S NAME Robert Wicks ALIVE DECEASED ?
SIBLINGS Patrick (older brother), Gina (younger sister)

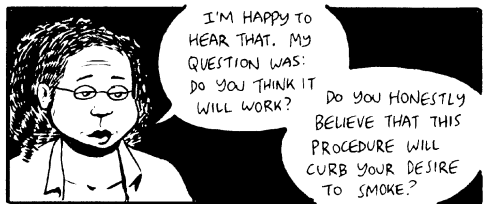
PETS (NAME, SPECIES, BREED): Abe, dog, German Shepherd mix
ALLERGIES: Needles (?)
PHOBIAS: "How to Build Your Dream Deck or Patio" by Michael Radtke

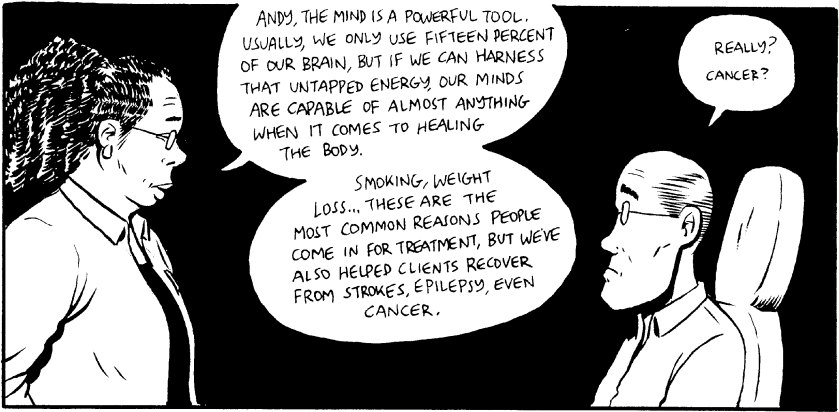
LAST BOOK READ: "How to Build Your Dream Deck or Patio" by Michael Radtke
DO YOU HABITUALLY USE TOBACCO? Y N ALCOHOL? Y N
ARE YOU CURRENTLY TAKING ANY PSYCHOACTIVE MEDICATIONS,
PRESCRIBED OR OTHERWISE? IF YES, DETAIL: None

APPROX HOW MUCH SLEEP DID YOU GET LAST NIGHT? 6.5 HRS
WHAT WAS THE SUBJECT MATTER OF YOUR LAST NIGHTMARE?

tidal waves
CIRCLE FIVE (5) WORDS BELOW WHICH BEST DESCRIBE YOU?
ENERGETIC REALISTIC CALM EGREGIOUS PUNCTUAL
FREE-WHEELING ACERBIC DREAMER THOUGHTFUL CURIOUS
DEPRESSED OBSTUSE SPIRITUAL DETERMINED FUN
SENTIMENTAL IRONIC CLEVER BEAUTIFUL NERDY
TIRESOME FRUSTRATED THWARTED ARROGANT AVERAGE
IF FORCED TO RELOCATE, WHERE WOULD YOU LIVE? MORTAJA
REASON FOR YOUR VISIT? I want to stop smoking.

CONTINUED >>>







"SO, ARE YOU READY TO QUIT SMOKING?"

"READY AS I'LL EV--
YES! YES, I'M READY
TO QUIT SMOKING!"

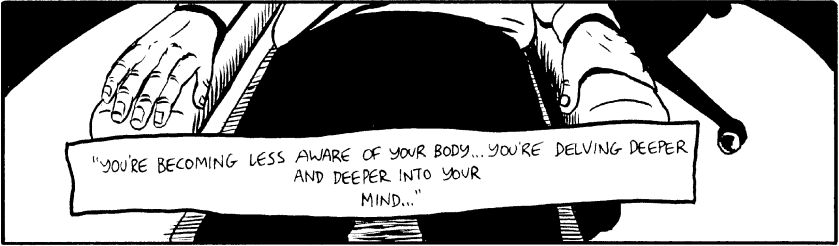
"EXCELLENT. ANDY THE FIRST THING
YOU'RE GOING TO DO IS JUST LAY BACK AND
RELAX, OKAY? JUST SIT BACK AND LET YOUR
BODY GO AS LIMP AS POSSIBLE, ENTIRELY
AT EASE. JUST KEEP ON LISTENING TO
THE SOUND OF MY VOICE."

"YOU'RE DOING
GREAT, ANDY."

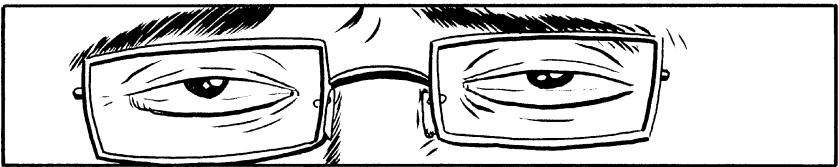


"NOW, UP IN THE CEILING YOU'RE
GOING TO SEE A BLUE LIGHT. AS
YOUR BODY BECOMES MORE AND
MORE RELAXED, FOCUS ON THAT
LIGHT, OKAY?"

"JUST FOCUS... AND
RELAX... FOCUS...
...AND RELAX..."



"YOU'RE BECOMING LESS AWARE OF YOUR BODY... YOU'RE DELVING DEEPER
AND DEEPER INTO YOUR
MIND..."

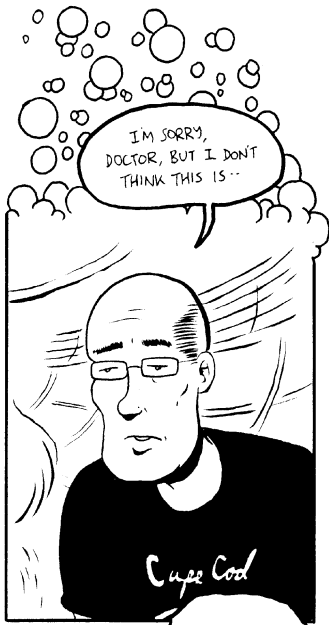


"FOCUSING..."

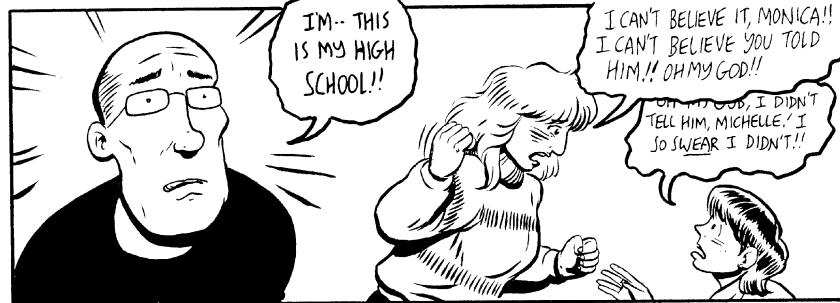
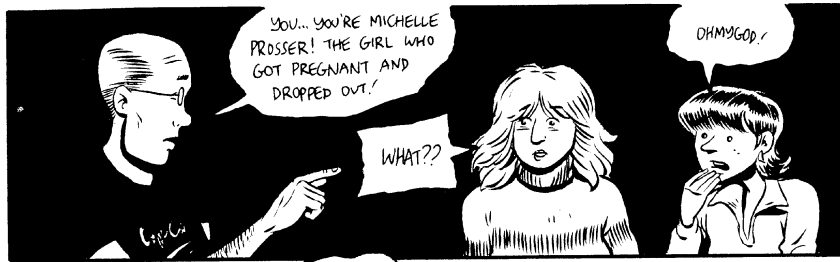
"...RELAXING..."

"FOCUSING..."

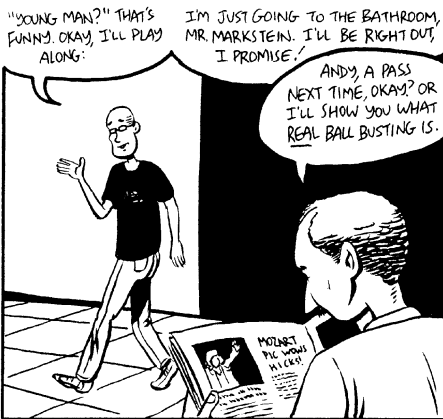
"RELAXING..."











"YOUNG MAN?" THAT'S FUNNY. OKAY, I'LL PLAY ALONG:

I'M JUST GOING TO THE BATHROOM, MR. MARKSTEIN. I'LL BE RIGHT OUT, I PROMISE.

ANDY, A PASS NEXT TIME, OKAY? OR I'LL SHOW YOU WHAT REAL BALL BUSTING IS.



YOU GOT IT, AND THANKS A--



OH, UH, HEY, FELLAS. I WAS JUST TALKING TO MR. MARKSTEIN OUT THERE.

I HOPE I'M NOT INTER--

WAS HE TELLING YOU HOW GOOD YOUR NUT-SACK TASTED LAST NIGHT?

PHAHHAHA!



WHOA! HAHA, OKAY, LET'S TONE IT DOWN A NOTCH, OKAY? YOU--

YEAH, I HEARD HE GAVE YOU FIFTY BUCKS TO LET HIM GIVE YOU A BLOW JOB AT DOWNING LAST NIGHT.



WH--?? YOU GUYS DON'T EVEN KNOW ME. WHAT THE HELL IS YOUR--

SURE I KNOW YOU. WE'RE IN THE SAME GYM CLASS YOUR NAME IS GAYLORD, RIGHT?

YEAH, GAYLORD QUEERBAIT, RIGHT?







chapter two:

NOBODY TOLD ME

(There'd be
Days like
These)

OKAY, OKAY.
CALM DOWN. RELAX.
YOU AREN'T JUST IN
YOUR HIGH SCHOOL,
YOU'RE IN HIGH SCHOOL.

I'VE GOTTA BE
FIFTEEN OR SIXTEEN
YEARS OLD, WHICH
MAKES THIS, WHAT?
1985 OR SO?

JESUS!!



STUPID QUACK DOCTOR!
I GUESS SHE DID THIS
TO ME BECAUSE I DIDN'T
BELIEVE HER HYPNOSIS
MUMBO JUMBO.

(ALTHOUGH I GUESS
IT WASN'T MUMBO JUMBO
SINCE I'M HERE.)

HERE IN
HIGH
SCHOOL!!

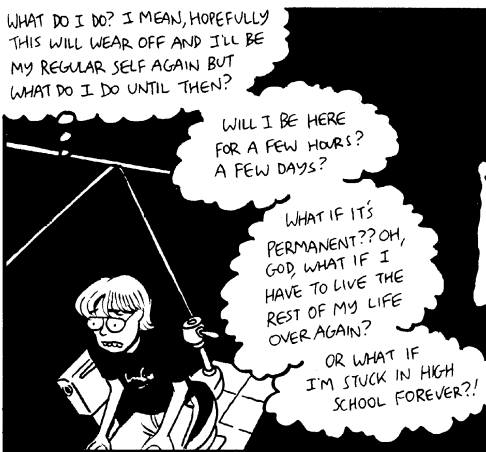


MAYBE IT'S MY FAULT.
WHILE I WAS GOING UNDER
I THOUGHT ABOUT MONICA
O'CONNOR. MY MIND WASN'T
CLEAR. MAYBE THAT'S
WHAT DERAILED THE
PROCESS.

WHY DIDN'T SHE
WARN ME THIS COULD
HAPPEN?? WHAT IF
I THOUGHT ABOUT
NURSERY SCHOOL?

OR THE
CIVIL
WAR?







WILL! OH MY GOD,
I HAVEN'T SEEN YOU
IN YEARS!
LOOK AT
YOU...

COME ON,
MAN, WHAT DID
SHE SAY?

I HAVE NO IDEA
WHO OR WHAT HE'S
TALKING ABOUT.
IS 'SHE' SOME
GIRL? A TEACHER?
MY MOM?

UH, NO, NO. I
FORGOT. I MEAN,
I DIDN'T GET A
CHANCE. 'Y'KNOW?



YOU DIDN'T
PUSSY OUT, DID
YOU?



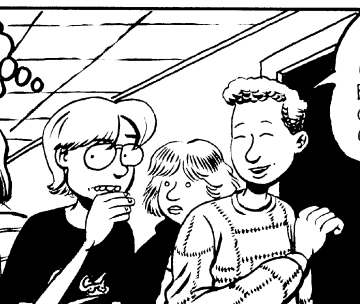
SHIT. I WAS HOPING YOU'D DONE
IT SO IT WOULD MAKE ME ASK
CATHY. SHIT.

FUCK, I SHOULD
JUST ASK HER,
RIGHT?

ALL SIGNS
POINT TO
"YES."

WELL, THAT WAS EASY,
AT LEAST. I KNOW WILL
WOULD UP-- WINDS UP-- GOING
TO THE PROM WITH CATHY
MONITOR SO THAT SHOULD
WORK OUT OKAY.

WAIT A MINUTE:
MAYBE IT WAS KEVIN
POPOLIZIO WHO GOES WITH
CATHY? WILL WENT WITH
THAT FAT SOPHOMORE.
OR WAS THAT -- UH-OH.



HEY, YOU KNOW WHAT
MIKE TOLD ME? MONICA
O'CONNOR WENT TO THE
BILLY OCEAN CONCERT AND
GAVE BLOW JOBS TO THREE
GUARDS TO GET BACKSTAGE!

MAYBE I
SHOULD ASK HER
OUT INSTEAD!
HAWHAW!

IT'S SO WEIRD WALKING DOWN THESE HALLS.
I CAN'T GET OVER HOW YOUNG WE ALL
ARE... AND HOW MANY KIDS I DON'T
RECOGNIZE.

I GUESS MOST OF
THEM ARE IN GRADES ABOVE
OR BELOW ME (WHAT GRADE
AM I IN, ANYWAY?) OR ARE
JUST THE BORING, UNDISTINGUISHED
RABBLE WHO DIDN'T SURVIVE IN
MY MEMORY.



I'M JUST KIDDING. SHE'S
WAY TOO FLAT FOR ME. I LIKE
A GIRL WITH BIG THINGS AHEAD
OF HER! HAHA.

I GUESS IT'S NOT REALLY FAIR TO CALL THEM BORING. I'M SURE I DIDN'T MAKE MUCH OF AN IMPRESSION ON MOST PEOPLE. MAYBE I JUST DIDN'T KNOW THEM. THEY'RE JUST REGULAR KIDS TRYING TO GET BY.

WHO ARE THEY? WHAT ARE THEY DOING NOW? STOCK BROKER?

BLACK JACK DEALER?

BOOKSTORE MANAGER?

REAL ESTATE AGENT?



I DON'T KNOW WHY BUT IT MAKES ME SAD SOMEHOW. ALL THESE POTENTIAL PEOPLE... I HAD THIS CHANCE TO GET TO KNOW THEM AND NOW IT'S GONE.

BUT YOU KNOW WHO'S HOT, THOUGH? MEGAN O'KEEFE. FROM BIO? SHE'S GOT HUGE BOOBS!

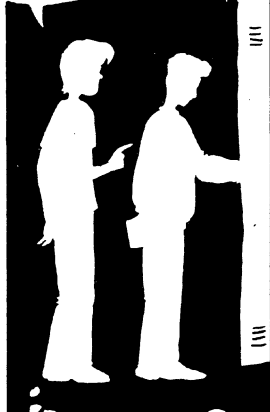


WHO KNOWS IF IT WOULD'VE MADE MUCH DIFFERENCE? I WAS REALLY GOOD PALS WITH WILL HERE BUT AFTER HIGH SCHOOL WE DRIFTED APART.

WAIT A MINUTE, DID YOU SAY SOMETHING ABOUT OUR BIO CLASS? BIOLOGY?

HUH? OH, YEAH, LIKE FIVE MINUTES AGO! DUH!

OKAY, SO AT THIS POINT WE'LL BE USING THE SLOPE OF THE LINE TO DETERMINE THE SECOND POINT. IN THIS CASE, THE SLOPE IS $\frac{1}{2}$. THIS GIVES US THE Y VALUE CHANGE OVER THE X VALUE CHANGE. OKAY, SO THE DENOMINATOR, OR CHANGE IN X VALUE, IS, IN THIS CASE, 2. NOW...



BIO! OKAY, THAT MEANS I'M A SOPHOMORE. BIT BY BIT I'LL PIECE THIS TOGETHER...



HOW ON EARTH DID I DO THIS??
THIS HAS TO BE THE MOST BORING,
INCOMPREHENSIBLE GIBBERISH
EVER SPOUTED BY AN ACTUAL
HUMAN BEING!



BUT LOOK! MY NOTEBOOK
IS FILLED! WITH NOTES!
TABLES, FORMULAS (FORMULI?
FORMULAE?), SINES, COSINES
... AT ONE POINT I ACTUALLY
KNEW ALL THIS JUNK!

WELL, I'M JUST GOING TO HOPE
THAT THIS TIME TRAVEL THING
IS TEMPORARY, RATHER THAN
START TRYING TO RELEARN IT.

ON THE BRIGHT SIDE,
I NOW KNOW FOR SURE
WHAT I ALWAYS SUSPECTED:
THIS STUFF HAS ABSOLUTELY
NO USE IN THE REAL
WORLD.

I WONDER IF MR. AMBROSE
IS REALLY INTO THIS STUFF?
DOES HE GO HOME AND READ
MATH MAGAZINES ABOUT ALL
THE LATEST, UH, THEORIES? OR
IS THIS JUST A JOB?



IT'S LIKE FINDING OUT
I WAS ONCE ABLE TO READ
FRENCH BUT SOMEONE ERASED
IT FROM MY MEMORY BANKS.

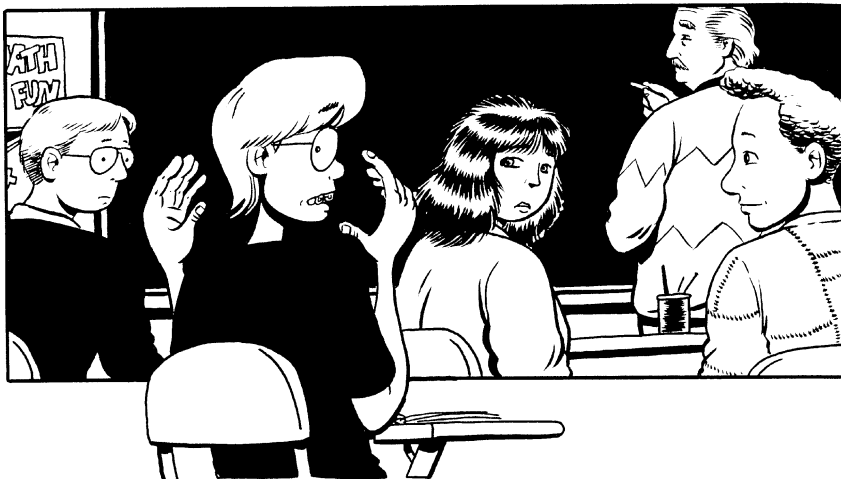


HE'S ACTUALLY NOT THAT MUCH OLDER THAN I AM BUT THAT DROOPY MUSTACHE AND COMB-OVER MAKE HIM LOOK MUCH OLDER.



HE'D LOOK MUCH BETTER IF HE JUST--

SWAH!!!



IS SOMETHING WRONG, ANDY?



OH! NO, SORRY!

IT JUST HIT ME THAT I HAVE HAIR AGAIN.



HEH HEH.

◊ AHEM ◊

SORRY.

SIR.

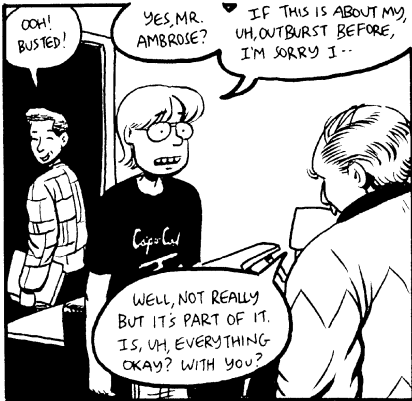




MAN, I THOUGHT LUNCH WOULD NEVER GET HERE!

LUNCH? GREAT!

ANDY?
A WORD?



OOH! BUSTED!

YES, MR. AMBROSE?

IF THIS IS ABOUT MY, UH, OUTBURST BEFORE, I'M SORRY I--

WELL, NOT REALLY BUT IT'S PART OF IT. IS, UH, EVERYTHING OKAY? WITH YOU?



ACTUALLY, NOW THAT YOU ASK, I'M A FORTY YEAR-OLD MAN STUCK IN MY FIFTEEN YEAR-OLD BODY BEING FORCED TO RELIVE HIGH SCHOOL BUT OTHER THAN THAT

EVERYTHING IS FINE. WHY?



IT'S JUST THAT, AHMM, LATELY, EVEN THOUGH YOU'RE IN CLASS, YOU AREN'T... HERE.

I, UH, UNDERSTAND YOU'VE BEEN HAVING SOME... DIFFICULTIES IN YOUR HOME, UH, LIFE SO I JUST WANTED TO OFFER--



DIFFICULTIES? ME? NOW?

MY ONLY DIFFICULTY IS THAT YOUR CLASS IS SO FRIGGIN DULL, YOU BORING DRONE!!

NO, NO, EVERYTHING IS OKAY. BUT, UH, THANKS FOR YOUR CONCERN, YOU KNOW, CONCERN AND ALL.

UM, WILL'S WAITING FOR ME SO WE CAN GO TO LUNCH, SO... CAN I GO? NOW?

SURE, ANDY.



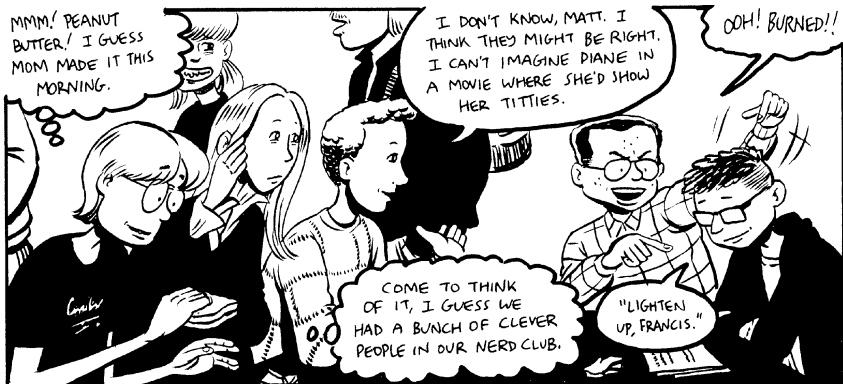
WHAT THE HELL WAS THAT ALL ABOUT?

HE'S PROBABLY JUST JEALOUS CUZ HE WISHES HE COULD HAVE HAIR AGAIN. C'MON...

Chapter
THREE!





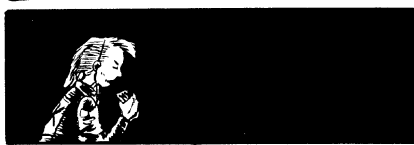


I ALWAYS THOUGHT OF MYSELF AS NOT FITTING IN IN SCHOOL BUT I GUESS I DID HAVE SOME FRIENDS.

OKAY, THEY AREN'T THE JOCK ELITES OR ANY-THING BUT THEY AREN'T THE DREG BOTTOM FEEDERS I THOUGHT THEY WERE, EITHER.



JUST LOOKING AROUND IT'S OBVIOUS WHO THE REAL OUTSIDERS ARE...



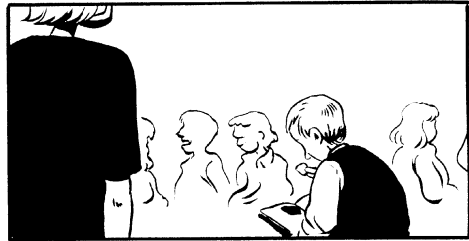
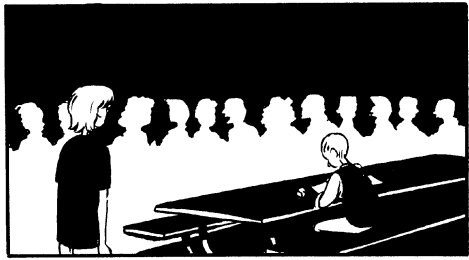
THOSE KIDS ARE CLEARLY HAVING A TOUGHER TIME OF IT THAN I EVER DID. I WONDER WHAT HAPPENED TO THEM AFTER HIGH SCHOOL?

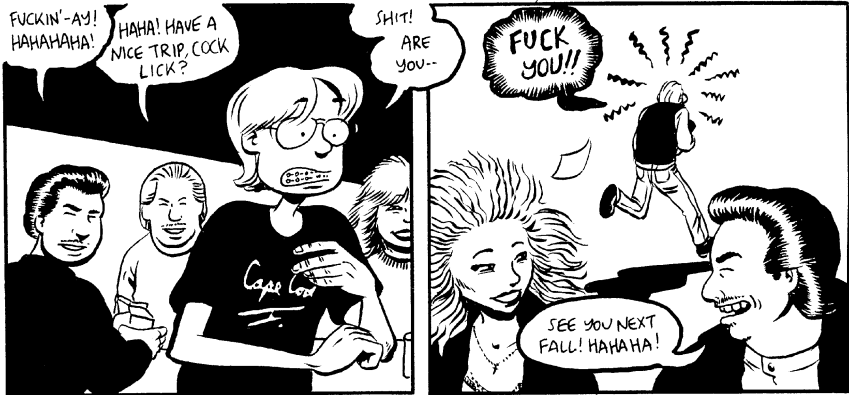
HOPEFULLY, THEY PULLED IT TOGETHER IN COLLEGE. IF THEY WENT. BUT...

I MEAN, THEY BLOSSOM LATER, RIGHT? EVERYONE EVENTUALLY...

THEY CAN'T JUST GO ON...









UM, REMIND ME AGAIN WHAT PARTY IT IS YOU MEAN?

EARTH TO ANDY: MATT'S COUSIN'S? FRIDAY NIGHT? HEL-LOOO?

SHE'S OVER THERE WITH DONNA RIGHT NOW. YOU SHOULD TOTALLY DO IT NOW!

COME ON, GUYS, DON'T PRESSURE HIM.



MARIE SIMONE?? YOU'RE CRAZY! SHE WOULD NEVER--
WAIT! MATT'S COUSIN SCOTT?

OH MY GOD! THAT'S IT! I REMEMBER GOING TO THIS PARTY! IN FACT, IT'S WHERE I HAD MY FIRST REAL CIGARETTE!!

CONRAD AND I WERE TRYING TO IMPRESS THOSE GIRLS FROM SCOTT'S SCHOOL!

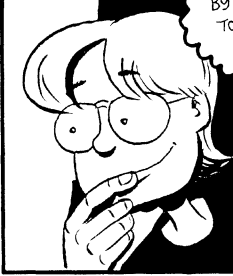


THAT MUST BE WHY THAT QUACK SENT ME TO THIS TIME! I CAN CHANGE MY HISTORY BY NOT HAVING THAT FIRST SMOKE!

I'LL STOP SMOKING BY NEVER STARTING TO BEGIN WITH!
BRILLIANT!

ONCE I'VE DONE THAT MY MISSION WILL BE COMPLETE AND I'LL RETURN TO ADULTHOOD--A NON-SMOKER!

MAYBE SHE KNEW WHAT SHE WAS DOING AFTER ALL!



DAVE, I CAN HONESTLY SAY THAT THIS PARTY IS LITERALLY GOING TO CHANGE MY LIFE.

YOU'RE LOOKING AT A BRAND NEW ANDY WICKS!

AWESOME, DUDE! GO FOR IT!!

IF YOU SHOW UP WITH HER YOU'LL RULE!

WHILE YOU'RE THERE ASK MICHELLE IF SHE'LL GO WITH ME! HAHA!

(I'M JUST KIDDING! DON'T REALLY ASK! HAHA.)

HUH? WHAT ARE -- OH, RIGHT.

MARIE.

GUYS, YOU KNOW WHAT?

I'M GOING TO GO ASK HER OUT RIGHT NOW!

THIS IS CRAZY. I REMEMBER HAVING A BIG CRUSH ON MARIE BUT I NEVER HAD THE BALLS TO ASK HER OUT. SHE WAS NICE TO ME BUT I ALWAYS FIGURED SHE WAS OUT OF MY LEAGUE.

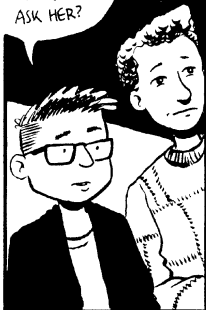
BUT NOW? WHAT THE HELL! SHE'LL PROBABLY SAY NO BUT AT LEAST I'LL HAVE GIVEN IT A SHOT AND IT SEEMS LIKE MY FRIENDS ARE IMPRESSED.

THIS IS KIND OF EXCITING, IN A WAY. EVEN THOUGH I KNOW NOTHING WILL COME OF THIS, I'M ACTUALLY NERVOUS!

HAHA! I'M ACTUALLY FINALLY ASKING OUT MARIE SIMONE! HAHA!



DID YOU ASK?
WHAT DID SHE
SAY? DID YOU
ASK HER?



WOW!

SHIT, MAN,
YOU FUCKIN'
RULE!

HAHA, IT
WAS NOTHING,
OLD CHUM!

YEAH, THAT'S
GREAT.

HEY, YOU KNOW
WHAT I JUST REMEMBERED?
THAT NEW MICHAEL J. FOX
MOVIE IS OPENING THIS
WEEKEND. MAYBE WE
SHOULD GO TO THAT
INSTEAD, RIGHT?



WE SHOULD! AND WHEN
WE GO WE'LL MAKE SURE
YOU'RE, LIKE, WEARING A
DIAPER, HAHHAHA!

CUZ YOU'RE
SUCH A BABY!



HMM... MAYBE THIS
WEIRD TRIP INTO THE PAST
WON'T BE ALL BAD. IN ADDITION
TO NOT SMOKING, I CAN CORRECT
ALL THE DUMB MISTAKES I MADE
AND TAKE ADVANTAGE OF ALL
THE BLOWN OPPORTUNITIES!

IF NOTHING ELSE
I FINALLY ASKED OUT
MARIE. IT TOOK ME
TWENTY-FIVE YEARS
BUT I DID IT!





IT MUST BE SOME KIND OF HORMONAL THING. I AM FIFTEEN YEARS OLD, AFTER ALL, AND WHO KNOWS WHAT KIND OF PHEROMONES ARE BEING PUMPED INTO THE AIR BY ALL THESE ADOLESCENTS.?

ONE OTHER THING I'VE NOTICED IS HOW, WELL, HEALTHY I FEEL. I'M NOW IN A BODY WHICH NOT ONLY HAS TWENTY-FIVE YEARS LESS WEAR AND TEAR ON IT, IT'S ACTUALLY STILL GROWING!

PLUS, ITS LUNGS ARE UNPOLLUTED BY TOBACCO, NEVER BEEN HUNG OVER, NEVER TORE ITS A.C.L. DURING THAT STUPID BASKETBALL GAME IN 1997. I FEEL FANTASTIC!

IF I CAN FIGURE OUT A WAY OF BRINGING THIS BODY BACK TO THE PRESENT I'LL BE ALL SET, HAHA!

I DON'T KNOW HOW LYNN WOULD FEEL ABOUT IT BUT MAYBE IT WOULD WORK OUT: DON'T THEY SAY THAT GUMS REACH THEIR SEXUAL PEAK AT SEVENTEEN BUT FOR WOMEN IT'S THIRTY-FIVE?

SOMETIMES "THEY" ARE A BUNCH OF IDIOTS.



THIS IS...
THIS IS JUST
WEIRD.

EVEN THOUGH I WAS
JUST HERE AS AN ADULT
A FEW MONTHS AGO, AND
KNOW THAT EVERYTHING
HAS CHANGED, THIS IS
STILL HOW I THINK
OF "HOME" LOOKING.

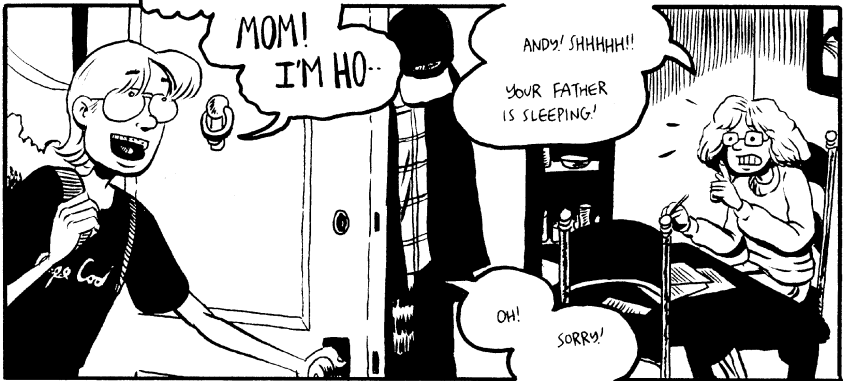
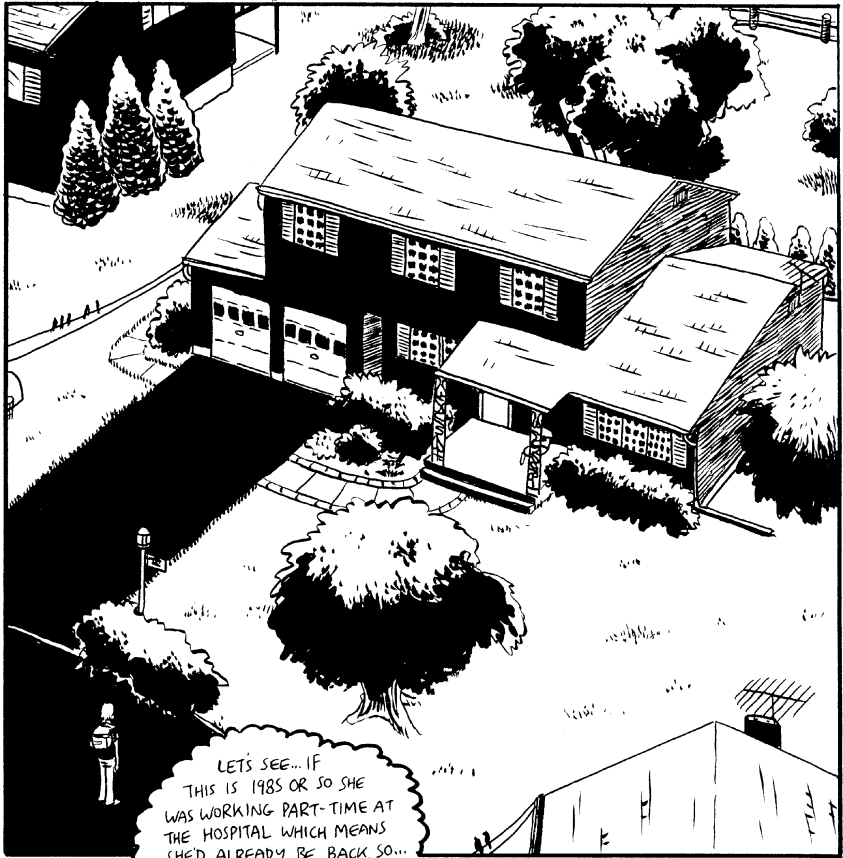


THE COCAPRILLI'S
STILL LIVE ON THE
CORNER. IN THE '90S
THEY MOVE AWAY.

A FEW YEARS AFTER
THAT, THAT DRUNK KID
FALLS OFF THE MONKEY
BARS AT LARKSPUR
ELEMENTARY SO THEY
GET RID OF THE
PLAYGROUND.
BUT NOT
YET!

STUBBY!
STUPID DOG.
AH, THE WARRENS
NEVER LET YOU OFF
THAT CHAIN SO IT'S
NO WONDER YOU'RE
CRAZY.

THE BIG TREE
IN FRONT OF THE
MONGERO'S HASN'T
BEEN HIT BY LIGHTNING
AND CUT DOWN YET...





WOW... WHAT'S GOING ON, HERE? SHE'S EXACTLY THE SAME AS IN THE PRESENT!

OKAY, HER HAIR AND GLASSES ARE A LITTLE DIFFERENT BUT OTHER THAN THAT SHE'S THE SAME WOMAN IN 1985 THAT SHE IS IN 2010.

BUT... IS SHE?

MAYBE IT'S JUST MY PERCEPTION. MAYBE SINCE I'VE KNOWN HER FOREVER MY CONCEPT OF "HER" IS REALLY AN AMALGAM OF MEMORIES FROM MY ENTIRE LIFE.



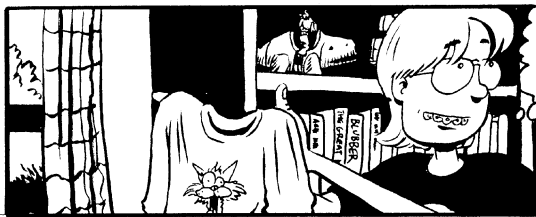
OKAY. I GUESS I'LL BE UP IN MY ROOM.



WELL, I'M GOING TO SCREW MY FIFTEEN YEAR-OLD SELF TODAY BECAUSE THERE'S NO WAY I'M DOING THIS HOMEWORK.

BUT SINCE I GOT HIM A DATE WITH MARIE FOR FRIDAY I'D SAY WE'RE SQUARE.

JEEZ, WHAT A SLOB I AM! NOW I KNOW WHERE MY DAUGHTERS GET IT FROM.



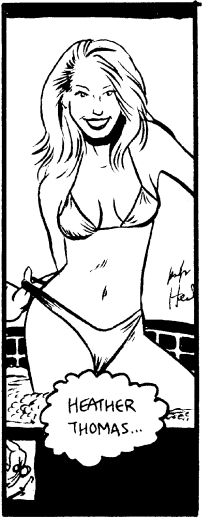
HA! LOOK AT THIS PLACE! I FORGOT HOW INTO POSTERS I WAS AT THIS POINT.

"GHOST BUSTERS"

MURPHY'S LAWS...



IRON MAIDEN...



HEATHER THOMAS...



DENISE DOWNS. WAS SHE AN ACTRESS? SINGER? I GUESS THIS WAS HER FIFTEEN MINUTES. I HOPE SHE SAVORED IT.



HMM, SPEAKING OF FORGOTTEN TREASURES, I WONDER IF I'VE STARTED MY COLLECTION YET...

HAHA! HERE THEY ARE, THE SECRET GIRLFRIENDS WHO HELPED ME THROUGH MANY A LONELY AFTERNOON...

THIS LITTLE TRIP I'M ON HAS MADE ME SO AWARE OF HISTORY, OF TIME. THE GIRLS IN THESE MAGAZINES ARE NOW IN THEIR LATE FORTIES, EVEN FIFTIES...

BUT HERE THEY ARE, PRESERVED IN PRINT FOREVER, AT THEIR PEAK OF NUBILE ALLURE...

THEIR TAUT, FIRM BODIES, SO FRESH, SO...

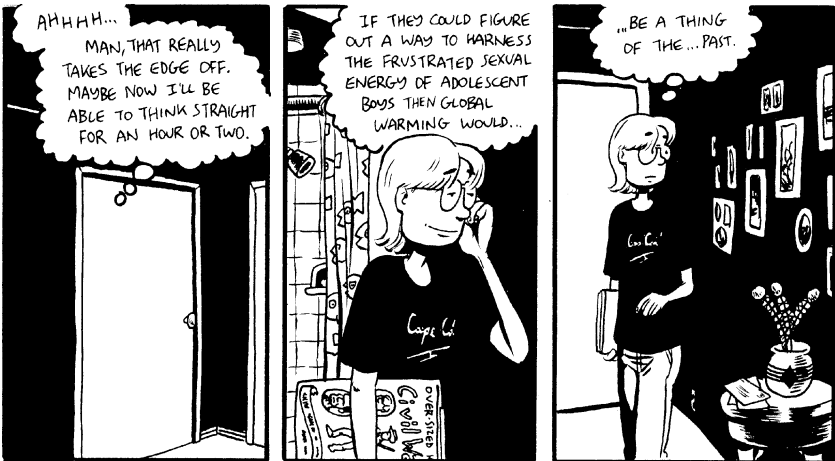


AHHHH...

MAN, THAT REALLY TAKES THE EDGE OFF. MAYBE NOW I'LL BE ABLE TO THINK STRAIGHT FOR AN HOUR OR TWO.

IF THEY COULD FIGURE OUT A WAY TO HARNESS THE FRUSTRATED SEXUAL ENERGY OF ADOLESCENT BOYS THEN GLOBAL WARMING WOULD...

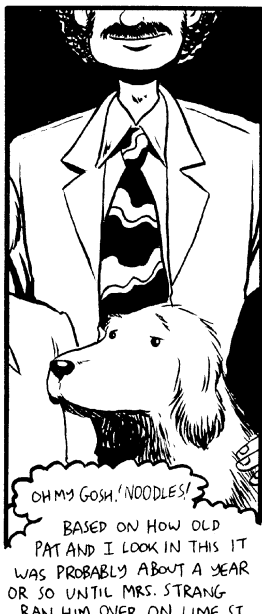
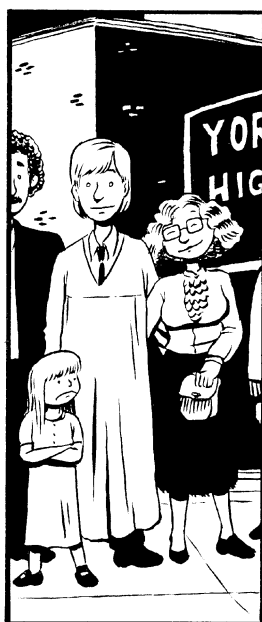
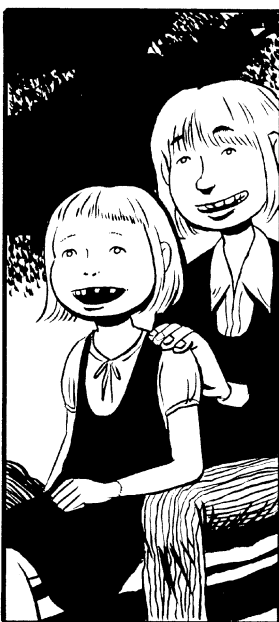
...BE A THING OF THE ...PAST.



Wow.

I FORGOT ABOUT ALL THESE PICTURES. MOM TOOK THEM DOWN WHEN THE HOUSE WAS RENOVATED IN A FEW YEARS...







LOOK AT HIM THERE, ALL HAPPY AND DUMB AND TRUSTING, LITTLE GUESSING WHAT FATE HAS IN STORE, HOW LITTLE TIME HE HAS LEFT...

I REMEMBER WHEN DAD BROUGHT HIM HOME ON THE DAY OF MY BROTHER PAT'S CONFIRMATION. I GUESS THAT WOULD'VE MADE ME... SIX? WAS HE REALLY A PART OF OUR LIVES FOR SUCH A SHORT TIME?



GOD, I LOVED THAT DOG.

I WISH THAT HYPNOQUACK SENT ME BACK A FEW YEARS EARLIER SO I COULD SEE OL' NOODLES ONE MORE TIME.



SO I COULD SAY GOODBYE...



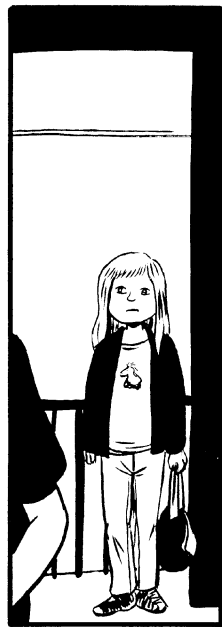
= Sniff =

SHIT, WHAT'S WRONG WITH ME? HE'S JUST A DOG -- A DOG WHO'S BEEN DEAD FOR DECADES NOW! PULL YOURSELF TOGETHER!

= Sniff =



GOD, MAYBE THE STRESS OF THIS WHOLE CRAZY SITUATION IS GETTING TO ME. MAYBE I NEED A--







SO, DID ANYTHING INTERESTING HAPPEN IN SCHOOL TODAY, GUYS?

ACTUALLY, YES! MATT'S COUSIN SCOTT IS HAVING THIS BIG PARTY ON FRIDAY THAT WE'RE ALL GOING TO.

I ASKED THIS GIRL MARIE, WHO I'VE HAD A CRUSH ON, AND SHE ACTUALLY SAID YES.

ISN'T THAT GREAT? AFTER DINNER I HAVE TO CALL HER TO WORK OUT THE DETAILS.

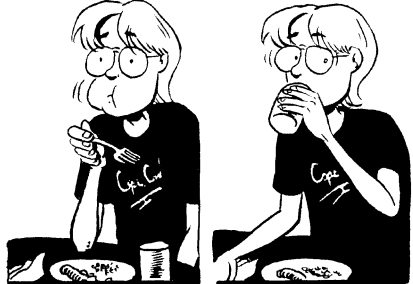
Chapter Five: BROKEN WINGS



MATT'S COUSIN? HE'S HAVING THE PARTY? THE ONE IN COLLEGE?
WHEN EXACTLY WERE YOU PLANNING ON TELLING ME ABOUT ALL OF THIS?

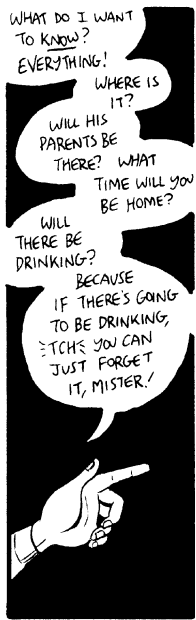
UM...
=CHEW=
:CHEW:
:CHEW:
:CHEW:
:CHEW:

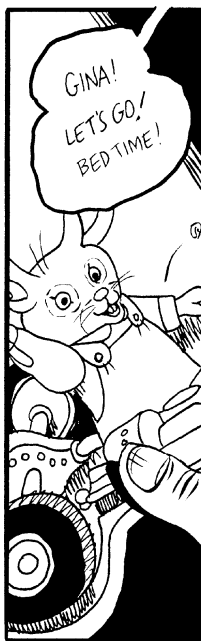
=GULP=
WELL...



I GUESS I SORT OF FORGOT ABOUT IT UNTIL NOW.

I WASN'T REALLY SURE IF I WAS GOING TO GO, IT SEEMS, BUT NOW I HAVE THIS DATE AND ALL WITH MARIE.
AREN'T YOU HAPPY I HAVE A DATE?





THE NEXT TWENTY-FIVE YEARS ARE NO PICNIC FOR POOR GINA. SHE JUST BARELY GRADUATES FROM HIGH SCHOOL AND DROPS OUT OF COMMUNITY COLLEGE WHEN SHE GETS PREGNANT.

DIVORCED TWICE BY THE TIME SHE'S THIRTY.

IRONICALLY, SHE AND HER DAUGHTER, BETHANY, LIVE IN THIS HOUSE NOW, SINCE SHE MOVED IN WITH MOM IN '07.



I... I KNOW I TOLD MYSELF I SHOULDN'T TINKER WITH THE PAST TOO MUCH, BUT I FEEL THE URGE TO HELP SOMEHOW... DO SOMETHING.

YOU TELL HIM!
(HAHAHAHA!)



GINA.

WHAT AM I GOING TO SAY? "MAKE SURE TONY CHEVRON WEARS A RUBBER WHEN YOU DO IT IN TEN YEARS?"

BUT EVEN BEFORE THAT GINA SEEMED TO BE ON A TROUBLED COURSE.



WHY? BAD LUCK? DESTINY?
WHAT GOES WRONG BETWEEN NOW AND THEN?
MAYBE NOTHING. MAYBE IT'S ALREADY--



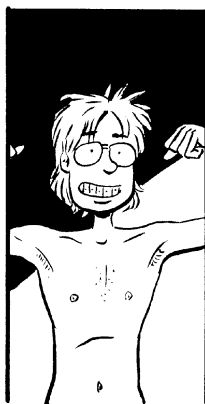
GINA! WHAT ARE YOU DOING??





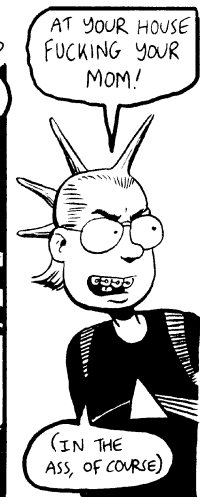
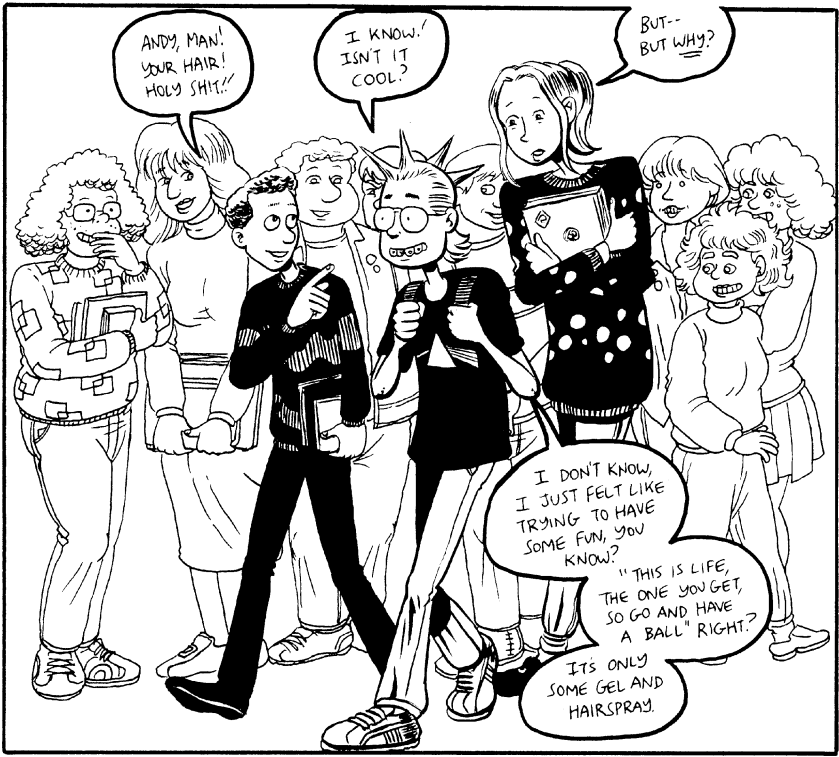


Chapter Six



The Authority Song





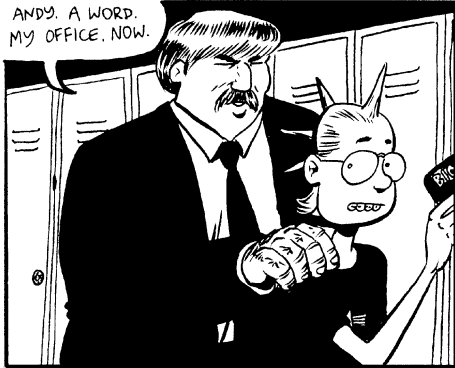


WOW! I CAN'T BELIEVE YOU SAID THAT! THAT WAS FRICKIN' RADICAL!

AH, WELL SCREW HIM. I CAN DRESS HOWEVER I WANT. I SHOULDN'T HAVE TO LISTEN TO...



ANDY. A WORD. MY OFFICE. NOW.



OOOOOOOOOOHHH!



I DON'T UNDERSTAND WHAT THE BIG DEAL IS, SIR.

DON'T YOU GUYS HAVE MORE IMPORTANT THINGS TO WORRY ABOUT THAN SOME DUMB KID'S HAIRCUT?



ARTHUR VALE ASSISTANT VICE PRINCIPAL

ACTUALLY, IT'S NOT EVEN A HAIRCUT! IT'S JUST GEL AND AQUANET SO IT'S A HAIRDO!



I MEAN, A HAIRDO? AREN'T THERE 'AT RISK' KIDS WHO NEED HELP OR SOMETHING? YOU--



IT'S A
DISRUPTION.

NOW, YOU AND ME
HAVE BEEN SEEING WAY
TOO MUCH OF EACH OTHER
LATELY, SO--

NO! I'M
TOTALLY IN MY
RIGHTS. I WON'T
WASH IT OUT.

I'LL SUE
THE SCHOOL.



I KNOW YOU'RE
BASICALLY A GOOD KID.
UNTIL RECENTLY YOU'VE
NEVER BEEN IN ANY
KIND OF TROUBLE.
WITH--

I STILL
HAVEN'T BEEN
IN ANY KIND
OF TROUBLE!

WHAT'RE
YOU DOING??
"SUE THE
SCHOOL?!"

-- WITH ALL
THAT YOUR, AH, FAMILY
HAS BEEN GOING
THROUGH, MAYBE
NOW ISN'T THE
BEST TIME TO
BE MAKING YOUR
BIG...

YOU'RE HERE
TO STOP SMOKING,
NOT BECOME
SOME FIRST
AMMENDMENT
TEST CASE!

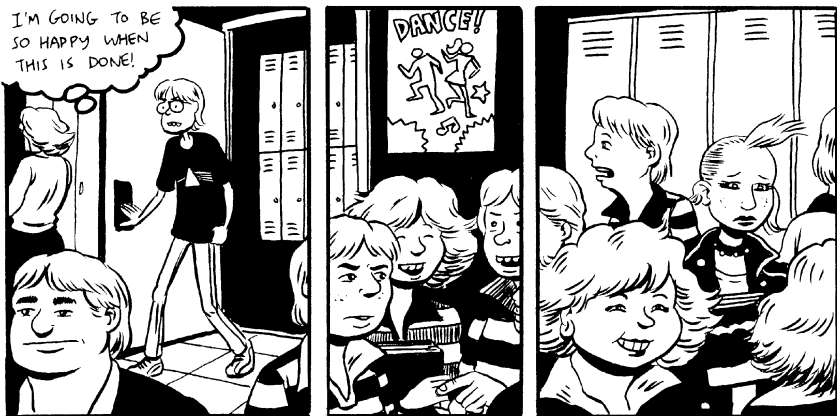
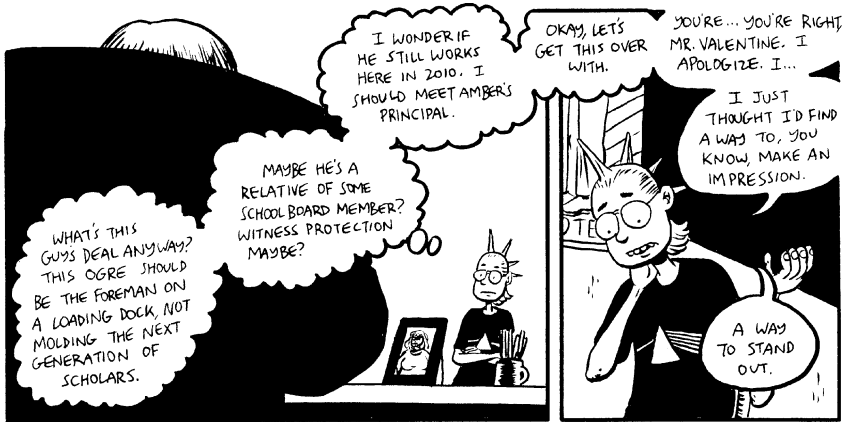
PLUS, IF
YOU GET IN TROUBLE,
MOM MIGHT NOT
LET YOU GO TO
THE PARTY AND
THAT BLOWS YOUR
CHANCE WITH
MARIE!

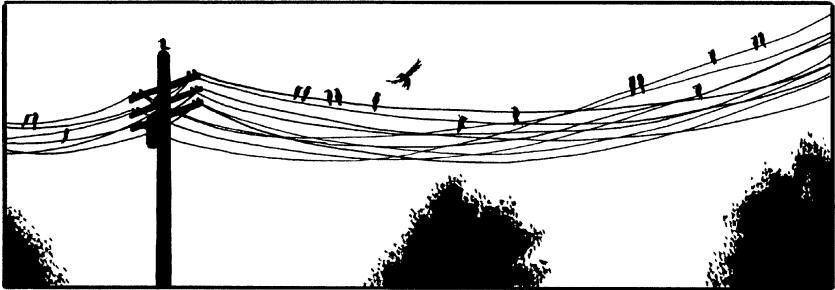
BESIDES YOU
DON'T EVEN LIKE
PUNK ROCK!

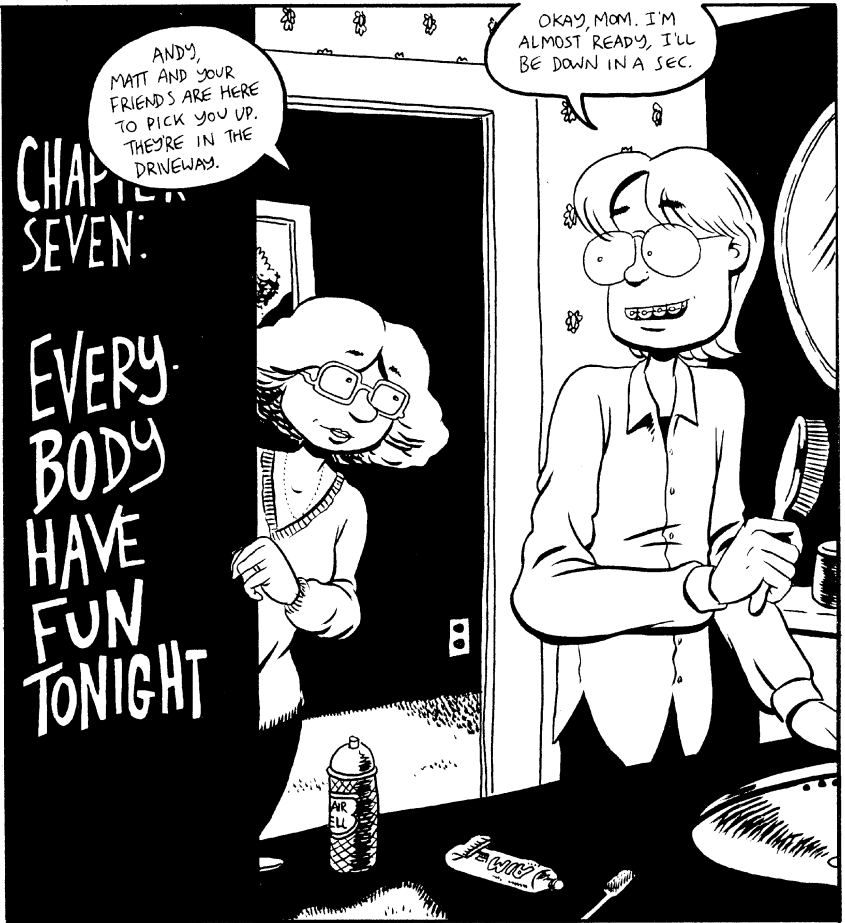


... STATEMENT?

SO WHY NOT
SPARE US ALL-- YOU,
ME, YOUR MOM--
ANY MORE, AH,
HEARTACHE?







ANDY,
MATT AND YOUR
FRIENDS ARE HERE
TO PICK YOU UP.
THEY'RE IN THE
DRIVEWAY.

OKAY, MOM. I'M
ALMOST READY, I'LL
BE DOWN IN A SEC.

CHAPTER
SEVEN:
EVERY-
BODY
HAVE
FUN
TONIGHT

THIS IS IT. ONCE I GO
TO THIS PARTY AND REFUSE
THAT CIGARETTE, I WILL
HAVE ACCOMPLISHED MY
MISSION.

THIS HAS BEEN
AN INTERESTING TRIP
BUT I'M LOOKING FORWARD
TO MIDDLE AGE AGAIN.



STILL, THERE ARE WORSE WAYS TO SAY GOODBYE TO THIS SECOND ADOLESCENCE THAN FINALLY GOING ON A DATE WITH MARIE SIMONE.

WHO KNOWS? MAYBE I'LL GET LUCKY!



HAHA!



HERE HE IS!

COME ON, PUNK ROCK! LET'S GO!

OKAY, MOM. I'M HEADING OUT.

OKAY, HONEY, HAVE FUN AND REMEMBER: WE HAVE A DEAL.



I KNOW, I KNOW. AND... THANKS.

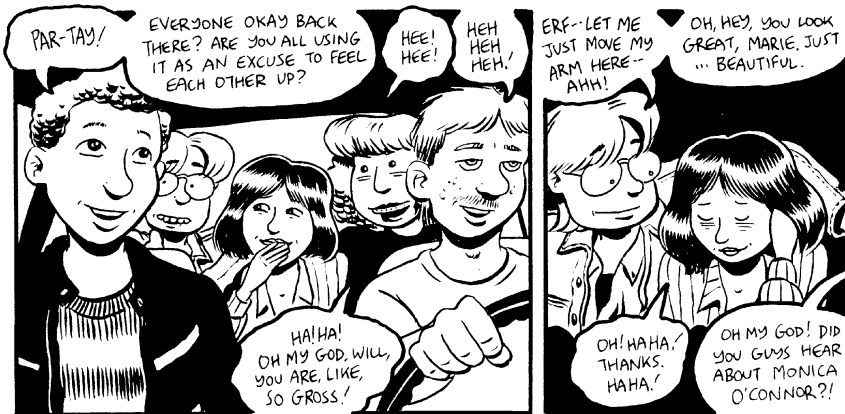
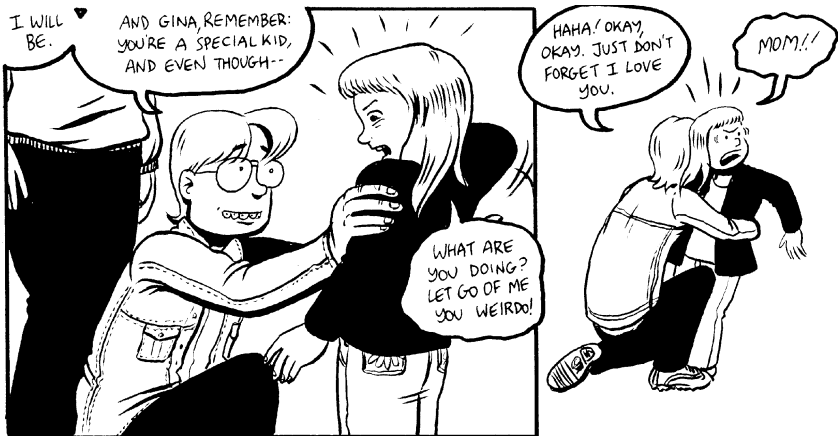
THANKS FOR LETTING ME GO TO THIS PARTY... AND FOR TAKING ME AND JIM TO THE MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY WHEN WE WERE KIDS... AND, AND FOR ALL THE CLOTHES YOU BOUGHT US, EVEN THOUGH I SAID THEY WERE UGLY.

AND THANKS FOR ALL THE CHRISTMAS PRESENTS AND... AND FOR JUST, YOU KNOW, RAISING US. THANKS. THANKS FOR ALL OF IT.

OH! HAHA! MY, WELL, YOU ARE WELCOME!

ARE... ARE YOU OKAY?

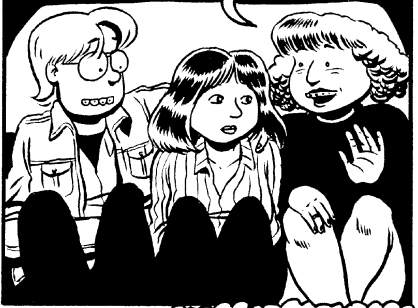




SHE REALLY IS BEAUTIFUL... AND SHE SMELLS GREAT.

MING RAGIND TOLD ME THAT SHE, LIKE, TOTALLY SAW HER AT A BILLY SQUIRE CONCERT, LIKE, OUT AT JONES BEACH?

THEY WERE, LIKE, BRINGING HER OUT ON, LIKE, A STRETCHER? SHE HAD TO GO TO THE HOSPITAL SO THEY COULD, LIKE, PUMP HER STOMACH OR WHATEVER!



WOW! WHAT HAPPENED? WAS SHE ON PCP OR SOMETHING?

YOU WOULDN'T BELIEVE SHE GAVE BLOOD TO FIFTY GUYS! I JUST ASKED HER OUT AND SHE SAID STOMACH THEM, THREE GALLONS.

I STILL CAN'T BELIEVE THIS IS HAPPENING AFTER ALL THESE YEARS! I JUST ASKED HER OUT AND SHE SAID YES! THERE'S A LESSON HERE, I THINK.

LEWWWWW

THAT CAN'T BE TRUE! HAHA!

HA HAHA!

HOLY SHIT!

CROSS

OH MY GOD, I'M GONNA HURL!

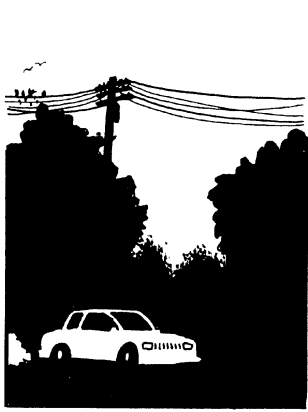
HAHA!

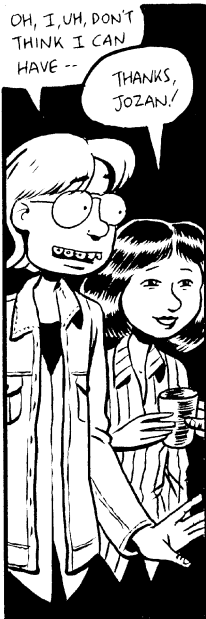


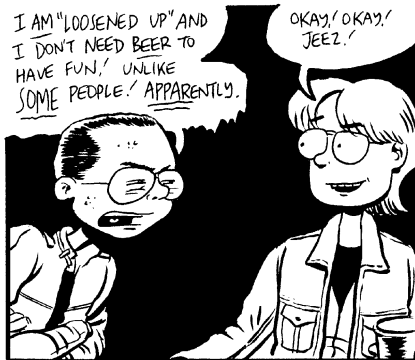
TONIGHT SHOULD... UM- OH! I FEEL A BONER COMING ON!

SHE IS LIKE A TOTAL SLUT, RIGHT?

I WONDER IF SHE'LL BE AT THE PARTY.







DUDE, I KNOW THIS IS GOING TO SOUND, LIKE, INSANE BUT: TRY AND HAVE SOME FUN TONIGHT, YOU KNOW?

SURE, HIGH SCHOOL SUCKS, I KNOW, BUT THERE ARE SOME THINGS YOU CAN GET AWAY WITH NOW THAT YOU WON'T BE ABLE TO LATER!

I DON'T KNOW, LIKE, YOU KNOW THE DUMB THINGS US TEENAGERS DO! LIKE DRIVING SOME GIRL IN A CAR OR PLAYING LOUD, SHITTY MUSIC TO ANNOY OLD PEOPLE OR CAUSE A RUCKUS AT THE MALL!

OH! WHAT LIKE DRINK BEER AND GET WASTED? YOU~

AND, YEAH, GET DRUNK AND ACT STUPID!

BECAUSE, BELIEVE ME, FORMING A BAND OR GETTING PIERCED OR DRINKING BEER BONGS IS AWESOME WHEN YOU'RE A KID...

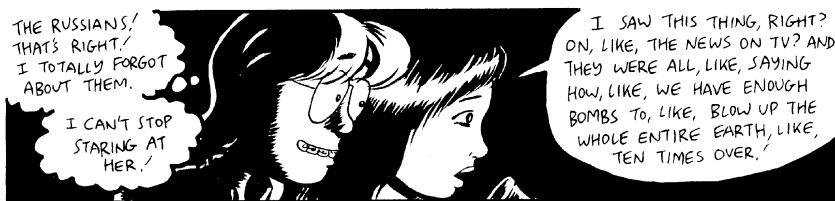
BUT IF YOU DO IT WHEN YOU'RE FORTY IT'S JUST PATHETIC!

BLZML... YEAH! DJUGUYS FIN'A SEDDA GEESE, RITE? SHIT! HAHAHAAAAH!

UH, OKAY, I CAN'T DECIDE IF THAT PROVES YOUR POINT OR MINE, BUT JUST TRY AND ENJOY YOURSELF EVERY ONCE IN AWHILE.

NO ONE IS EVER ON THEIR DEATHBED WISHING THEY'D SPENT MORE TIME BEING UPTIGHT AND JUDGING PEOPLE, RIGHT?

CARPE DIEM, DUDE!



TWENTY YEARS? GOD, I HAVE NO IDEA. I'D BE... THIRTY-SIX? SO I'LL PROBABLY BE ON MY THIRD WIFE AND SIXTH KID. (THAT I KNOW OF)

THAT WOULD BE, LIKE, 2005.' IT'S GONNA BE ALL, LIKE, THE JETSONS BY THEN, RIGHT?

OH, COME ON, MATTY THAT'S TOTAL BULLSHIT! YOU KNOW THAT BY THEN YOU'LL BE A FAMOUS HOITY-TOITY BIG-SHOT WRITER.

THEY'LL PROBABLY BE FILMING THE SEQUEL TO THE "HIDDEN CAVERNS" MOVIE TWENTY YEARS FROM NOW. (IF THEY EVEN MAKE MOVIES ANY MORE!)



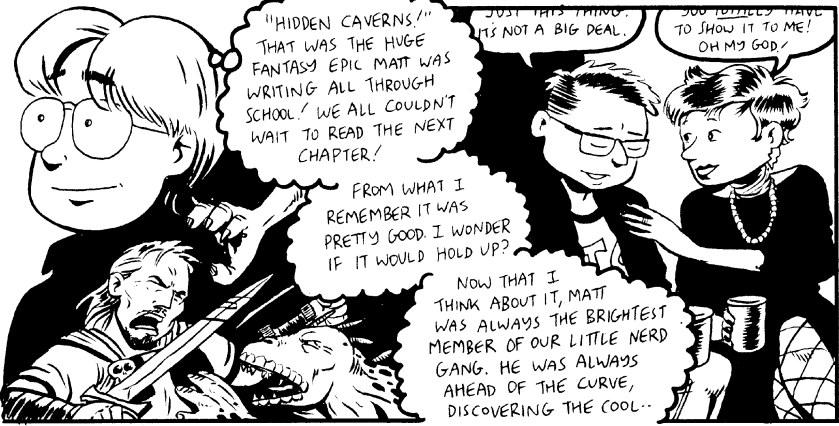
"HIDDEN CAVERNS!" THAT WAS THE HUGE FANTASY EPIC MATT WAS WRITING ALL THROUGH SCHOOL! WE ALL COULDN'T WAIT TO READ THE NEXT CHAPTER!

JUST THIS THING. IT'S NOT A BIG DEAL.

YOU TOTALLY HAVE TO SHOW IT TO ME! OH MY GOD!

FROM WHAT I REMEMBER IT WAS PRETTY GOOD. I WONDER IF IT WOULD HOLD UP?

NOW THAT I THINK ABOUT IT, MATT WAS ALWAYS THE BRIGHTEST MEMBER OF OUR LITTLE NERD GANG. HE WAS ALWAYS AHEAD OF THE CURVE, DISCOVERING THE COOL..



HEY.

HUH? WHAT?



LET'S GO GET SOME MORE DRINKS.

OH... AHHEM! OKAY!















YOU IDIOT!
YOU FUCKING
SEX-CRAZED
IDIOT!

SHE'S
YOUNG ENOUGH
TO BE YOUR DAMN
DAUGHTER!

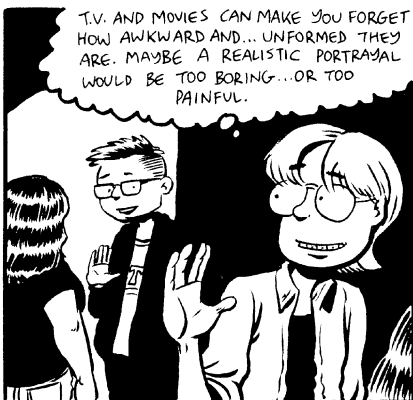


CHAPTER EIGHT:
**Take Me
Home Tonight**

IN FACT,
SHE'S ONLY A FEW
YEARS OLDER THAN
AMBER, YOU SICK
FUCK! I'VE GOT
TWO WORDS FOR
YOU, PAL!

STATUTORY
RAPE.

OKAY,
OKAY. RELAX.
TAKE IT
EASY.



PICKING YOU UP?
BUT... WELL, I'M
SORRY YOU DIDN'T
HAVE A BETTER
TIME.

TRUTH BE
TOLD, THIS WASN'T
QUITE AS FUN AS
I EXPECTED.

HA! SEE?
I TOLD
YOU GUYS!!

I TOLD
YOU.

HAHA,
YEAH,
YOU DID.

YOU'RE
RIGHT.

HEY, DO THINK IT
WOULD BE OKAY IF I
GOT A RIDE? COULD
SHE DROP ME OFF ON
YOUR WAY HOME?

SURE, I'M SURE
SHE WOULDN'T
MIND.

HEY, UH, DO YOU
WANT TO, LIKE, COME
OVER INSTEAD?

WE COULD
STILL CATCH
"SPENSER."

MY BROTHER
GOT "PITFALL II"
FOR HIS BIRTH-
DAY.

REALLY?
"PITFALL II?"
HMMM...

SHIT, I WISH I COULD
BUT I TOLD MY MOM
I'D BE HOME. THANKS,
THOUGH, DEFINITELY
NEXT TIME

OKAY,
COOL.

"OKAY, THEN, LET ME GET MY
JACKET AND WE'LL WAIT FOR YOUR
MOM OUTSIDE."

I THINK
I LEFT IT
ON THAT
COUCH...

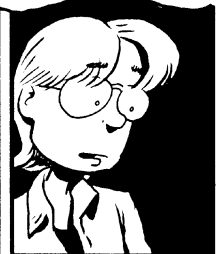
EXCUSE ME, IF I CAN JUST REACH AROUND AND GET MY--



ANDY!!
OH!
HEY!
WHAT'S UP?



I WAS JUST SITTING HERE AND, LIKE, SHE CAME OVER AND, LIKE, NEEDED A PLACE TO, UH, SIT, BUT THE COUCH WAS, YOU KNOW, FULL, SO-- HAHA



UM... NO, NO, IT'S COOL, WE'RE ALL COOL, IT'S JUST MY JACKET IS, IS...
JUST EXCUSE...



OKAY!
WELL, UH, I'M GETTING A RIDE IN CONRAD'S MOM, UH, IN HER CAR SO...
SEE YOU LATER!



I... I... WHAT WAS I SUPPOSED TO DO THERE? KICK HIS ASS?

CALL HER A TRAMP OR SOMETHING?

I REALLY DON'T KNOW. DID SHE WANT ME TO CAUSE A SCENE TO PROVE I STILL LIKED HER AFTER WHAT I DID OUT ON THE PATIO?

AND WILL... WHAT AN ASSHOLE! HE KNOWS I LIKED HER! THE GYM CODE DICTATES HE KEEPS HIS HANDS OFF HER, RIGHT?

EVEN IF I'M THE ONE WHO ABRUPTLY AND MYSTERIOUSLY STOPPED MAKING OUT WITH HER.

IT'S IN THE GYM CODE!!





AAARGH, THIS WHOLE MARIE THING WAS A BAD IDEA. DOES THIS MEAN THAT IF I HAD ASKED HER OUT SHE WOULD'VE SAID YES? WOULD'VE (AT LEAST!) MADE OUT WITH ME AT SOME PARTY?

WOULD WILL HAVE BEEN A JERK AND TRIED TO WRECK IT? NOW MY HIGH SCHOOL MEMORIES ARE RUINED BY THINGS THAT DIDN'T EVEN HAPPEN!

OR DID THEY HAPPEN?

THIS TIME TRAVEL STUFF IS A PAIN IN THE ASS. I MISS MY WIFE.

ALL SET?



YEAH... LET'S BLOW THIS TACO STAND.

HA HA!



SAY, CONRAD... I WANT TO APOLOGIZE.

HUH? WHAT FOR?

BEFORE, I FELT LIKE I WAS SORT OF... PRESSURING YOU DO THINGS YOU DIDN'T REALLY WANT TO DO AND, WELL, IT WASN'T RIGHT.



YOU'RE STILL YOUNG. YOU SHOULDN'T DRINK, OR, WHATEVER, DATE, UNTIL YOU FEEL LIKE YOU'RE READY.

YOU'VE GOT THE WHOLE REST OF...

WHAT? SCREW YOU, BUDDY! I'M READY TO DATE! I JUST HAVEN'T FOUND A GIRL I WANTED TO ASK OUT YET!



NO, NO, I KNOW! I JUST MEANT THAT--



AND, I DON'T NOT DRINK BECAUSE I'M NOT "READY," I DON'T DRINK BECAUSE DRUNK PEOPLE ARE "ANNOYING!"



WELL, HA! NO, THANKS, "DUDE!"

I MEAN, LOOK AT THIS PLACE! IT'S LIKE THEY ALL THOUGHT "HMM. I'M NOT RETARDED ENOUGH. WHAT CAN I DO TO MAKE GAINS IN THIS AREA?"

"I KNOW! I'LL DRINK THIS DUM-DUM JUICE!"

OKAY, ALREADY! I WITHDRAW MY APOLOGY! IT MUST'VE BEEN THE DUM-DUM JUICE TALKING, I'M SORRY.



APOLOGY ACCEPTED.



DO YOU THINK WE SHOULD WAIT A LITTLE FURTHER FROM THE HOUSE? SO YOUR MOM DOESN'T SEE -- DOESN'T MISS US?

WHAT? NO WAY.

I DON'T WANT TO WAIT ON SOME DARK STREET WHERE SOME DRUNK DRIVER WILL RUN US OVER! PSSH!





THAT--
THAT WAS
IT!

THAT WAS THE
MOMENT I WAS GOING
TO HAVE MY FIRST
CIGARETTE.

I DID IT!
I CHANGED
THE PAST!

NOW I LL...



CONRAD, WHAT THE
HELL ARE YOU
DOING?

YOUFF: RELAX, MAN! YOUFF
I'M JYOUFFYOUFF: I'M YOUFF!
I'M JUST ENJOYING A PUFF
WITH MY NEW FRIENDS!



BOY, WHAT CHUMPS WE WERE! I ALWAYS
REMEMBERED US SMOKING IN THE HOPES
OF US LOOKING COOL TO THESE COLLEGE
GIRLS BUT CLEARLY THEY'RE JUST MAKING
FUN OF US.



I GUESS I SHOULD'VE REALIZED
THAT A BUNCH OF CO-EDS AREN'T
GOING TO BE INTERESTED IN
TWO DORKY FIFTEEN YEAR-OLDS.
OH WELL, ANOTHER MEMORY
TARNISHED...

CON! YOUR
MOM!



HANDS UP,
WHO WANTS
ICE CREAM?



IT'S FUNNY BEING THIS CLOSE TO THE END. I'M EAGER TO GET HOME BUT IT'S SORT OF BITTERSWEET.

WHO DOESN'T THINK ABOUT WHAT THEY WOULD DO DIFFERENTLY IF GIVEN THE CHANCE TO GO BACK?

BUT, ACTUALLY HAVING THAT CHANCE... IT'S REALLY A DOUBLE-EDGED SWORD.

I KNOW I DAD WHAT I CAME BACK TO DO AND THAT MY FOCUS WAS THE SMOKING THING...

BUT SHOULD I HAVE DONE MORE?

I ASKED MARIE OUT BUT BASED ON HOW THAT TURNED OUT I'M AFRAID TO THINK WHAT MIGHT'VE HAPPENED IF I TRIED TO "FIX" ANYTHING ELSE!

BUT, ACTUALLY, I CAN'T THINK OF MUCH ELSE I WOULD HAVE CHANGED... UNLESS I REALLY WANTED TO CHANGE THINGS...



INSTEAD OF GOING TO SCHOOL I COULD MOVE TO SEATTLE AND HELP KVRT KICK OFF THE WHOLE GRUNGE THING...

...OR GO TO SAN JOSE INSTEAD AND START UP SOME DOT-COM, RETIRE WHEN I'M THIRTY.

IT COULD JUST BE SOMETHING I COULD DO SIMPLY BECAUSE I'M A YOUNG GUY WITH ONLY THE FUTURE AHEAD, LIKE COMPETE IN THE OLYMPICS OR HAVE AN AFFAIR WITH A PROFESSOR...

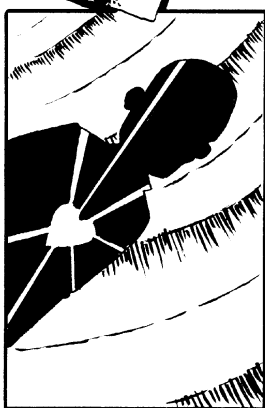
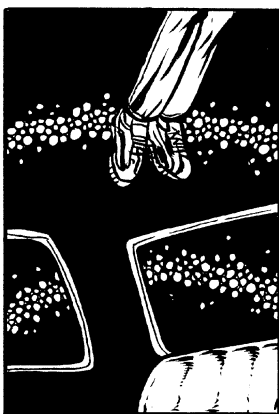
... SPEND A YEAR LIVING IN CHINA, OR PRAGUE.

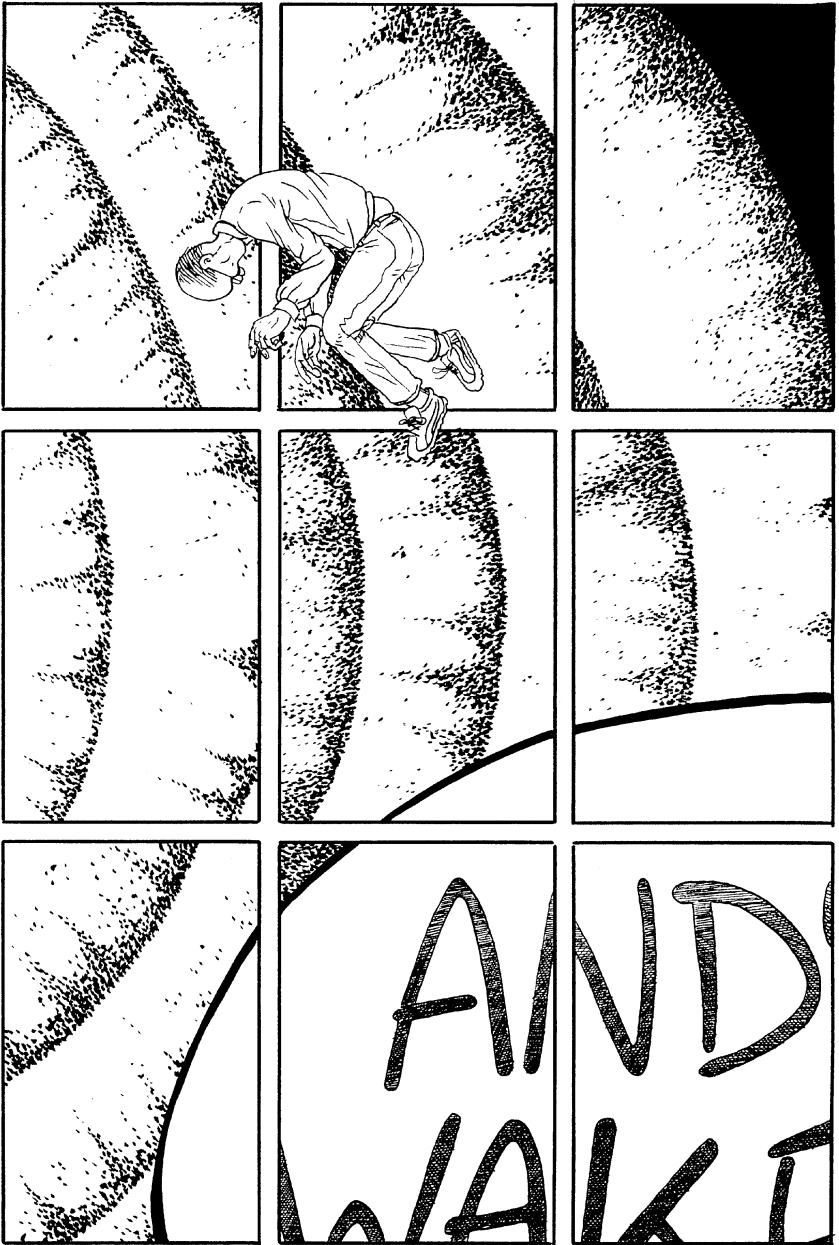
AHH, WHO AM I KIDDING? THOSE ARE ALL LOFTY GOALS, BUT I'M PRETTY CONTENT WITH MY LIFE...

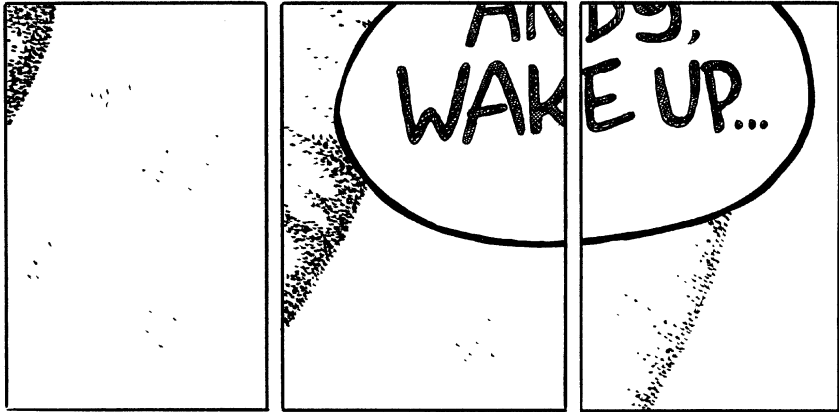
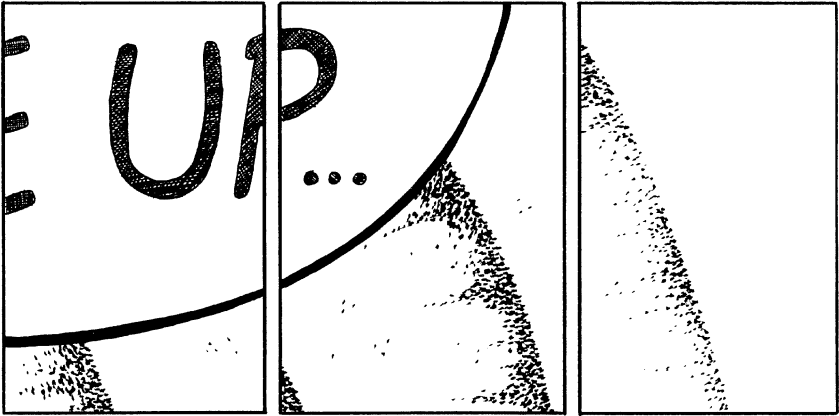
LYNN, THE GIRLS, MY CAREER... WHY RISK IT WITH SOME TIME TRAVEL NONSENSE?

LYNN... GOD, I MISS HER. I FEEL AS IF I HAVEN'T SEEN HER IN YEARS...

YEARS... AND YEARS...









ANDY...

ZZZZZZ

COME ON,
ANDY...

WAKE UP,
I NEED TO GO...



DID... DID
IT WORK?

THAT WAS
SO WEIRD!



COME ON, COOKIE.
TIME TO GET UP,

I'M GOING
TO BE LATE
COMING--



MOM?
WAIT... WHAT
HAPPENED??

You...

CHAPTER NINE. HERE I GO AGAIN



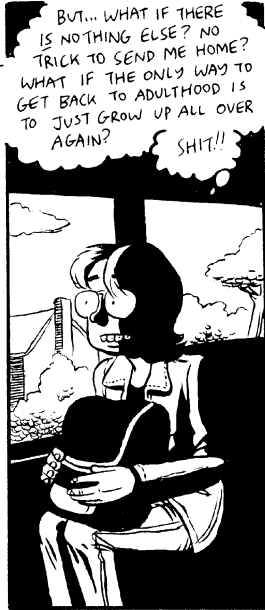


SO... WHAT DO I DO NOW? WHAT WENT WRONG?

MAYBE NOTHING.



I MEAN, I JUST GUESSED -- ASSUMED -- THAT TURNING DOWN THAT FIRST CIGARETTE WOULD CHANGE MY DESTINY. I THOUGHT I COMPLETED MY "MISSION" AND WOULD GO BACK. WHAT ELSE AM I SUPPOSED TO DO??



BUT... WHAT IF THERE IS NOTHING ELSE? NO TRICK TO SEND ME HOME? WHAT IF THE ONLY WAY TO GET BACK TO ADULTHOOD IS TO JUST GROW UP ALL OVER AGAIN?

SHIT!!

RELIVE HIGH SCHOOL, DAY AFTER MISERABLE DAY, ALL OVER AGAIN UNTIL I GRADUATE, GO TO COLLEGE AND SO ON AND SO ON? I CAN'T DO THAT! EVEN IF I DIDN'T GO INSANE I'D BE EXPERIENCING A WHOLE DIFFERENT LIFE!

WHEN I LOSE MY VIRGINITY WITH CAROL METER IN MY JUNIOR YEAR AT BROCKPORT I WON'T BE THE SAME ANXIOUS, NAIVE NINETEEN YEAR-OLD, I'LL BE AN ANXIOUS, WORLD-WEARY FORTY-FOUR YEAR-OLD!

WOULD IT EVEN BE WITH CAROL METER? FOR ONE THING I DIDN'T EVEN LIKE HER ALL THAT MUCH. NINETEEN YEAR-OLD ANDY DIDN'T THINK HE COULD BE PICKY.



MORE IMPORTANTLY, EVEN IF I WERE TO TRY AND MAKE THAT HAPPEN AGAIN, TEN THOUSAND DECISIONS PUT ME AT THAT SCHOOL AT THAT PARTY ON THAT WEEK-END -- TRYING TO RETRACE MY STEPS TWO DECADES LATER WILL BE IMPOSSIBLE!



AND IS THAT WHAT MY LIFE IS DOOMED TO BE? TRYING TO RECREATE MY OLD LIFE AS CLOSELY AS POSSIBLE, JUST SO THAT I CAN GET BACK TO SQUARE ONE? DO I HAVE TO DO IT ALL AGAIN? EVEN THE MISTAKES?

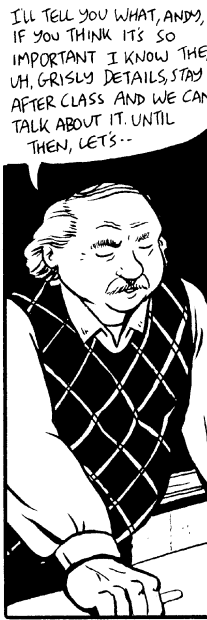


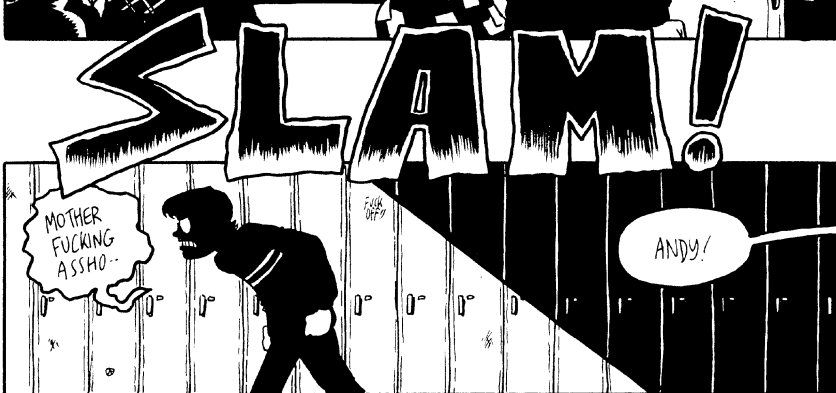
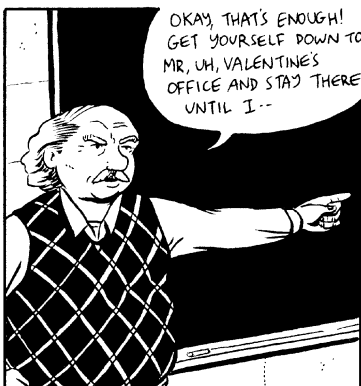
DO I HAVE TO PURPOSELY SMASH MY MOM'S CAR INTO THAT GUARDRAIL? WORK THAT AWFUL BUSBOY JOB? FAIL ADVANCED PLACEMENT HISTORY? DO I GET EMMA PREGNANT AGAIN SO THAT WE CAN HAVE AN ABORTION AND THEN WATCH OUR RELATIONSHIP WITHER AND DIE OVER THE NEXT YEAR?

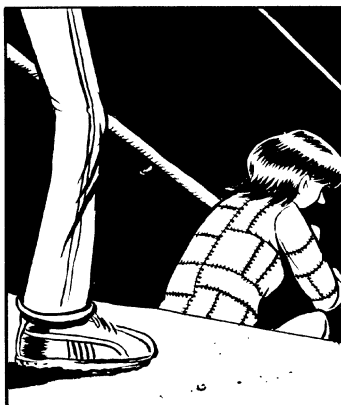


HOW DO I KNOW WHAT'S IMPORTANT? WHAT WENT INTO MAKING ME THE MAN I AM--OR THE MAN I BECOME? WHAT...





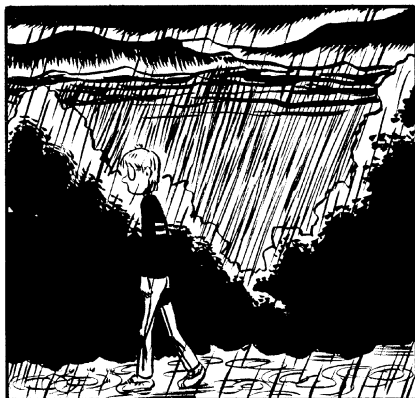






CHAPTER TEN
TOO MUCH TIME
ON MY HANDS

RUMBLERUMBLER



EVEN IF DO EVER MAKE IT BACK I'M SURE I'VE SCREWED THINGS UP SO BAD THAT IT WILL ALL BE DIFFERENT.

I'M GOING UP ROUTE 132. DOES THAT GET YOU CLOSER TO HOME?

SURE. I LIVE RIGHT OFF THERE

MAYBE...MAYBE NONE OF THIS IS REAL. MAYBE THAT DOCTOR DID SOMETHING TO MAKE ME GO INSANE.

YOU, UH, CUTTING OUT OF SCHOOL, THEN?

YEAH, I'M KIND OF SICK.

OH! WELL, IF YOU'RE GONNA PUKE ROLL DOWN THE WINDOW! HAHA!

OR MAYBE I'M NOT IN "THE PAST" AT ALL. MAYBE I'M JUST SOME FIFTEEN YEAR-OLD KID WHO'S HAVING A NERVOUS COLLAPSE.

MY DAUGHTER GRADUATED IN '83. YOU KNOW HER? MAURA BEESLEY?

NO, I DON'T THINK SO.

IF I CAN'T FIGURE A WAY OUT OF THIS I GUESS THAT'S WHAT MY LIFE, MY ADULT LIFE, WILL HAVE BEEN -- A STRANGE DREAM OR HALLUCINATION.

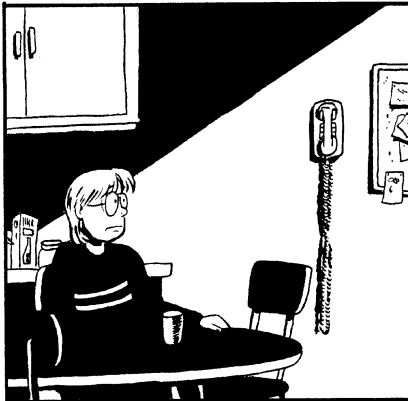
YEAH, SHE'S GOING TO CORNELL NOW. YOU HAVE ANY COLLEGE PLANS YOURSELF?

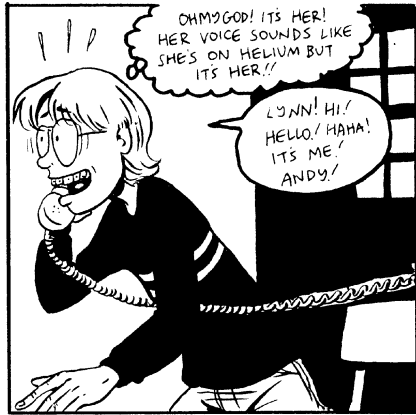
BUT I CAN'T THINK ABOUT THAT! I KNOW IT'S REAL! I HAVE TO FIGHT FOR MY FAMILY! THE IDEA THAT AMBER WILL NEVER BE BORN, THAT LYNN AND I WILL NEVER MEET --

STOP IT!
STOP IT!!

OKAY THIS IS FINE I LIVE RIGHT OFF SALEM SO I CAN WALK FROM HERE THANKS!!

HUH?
OH, UH,
OKAY.
IF --





WHAT?? NO! NO, IT'S ME!
ANDY! ANDY WICKS!
I... WE...



"WE WIND UP MEETING FOR
THE FIRST TIME AT YOUR
COUSIN VITO'S FORTIETH
BIRTHDAY AT A FRIDAYS IN
YONKERS."



"I WORK WITH VITO'S WIFE,
MINDY, WHO INVITES ME TO
THE PARTY TO SET ME UP
WITH HER FRIEND, RACHEL."



"BUT RACHEL WILL TURN OUT
TO BE A DRIP, SO I WIND UP
TALKING TO YOU INSTEAD."



"YOU'LL HAVE JUST SEEN THIS
AWFUL EXPERIMENTAL PLAY THE
NIGHT BEFORE AND WE LAUGH
ABOUT THAT AND FALL IN LOVE."



"YOU HAVE A DAUGHTER FROM A
PREVIOUS MARRIAGE AND SHE
WILL CONSENT WHEN YOU TELL
HER THAT I PROPOSED TO YOU."



"WE'LL HAVE ANOTHER DAUGHTER,
SOPHIA, AND SHE --"

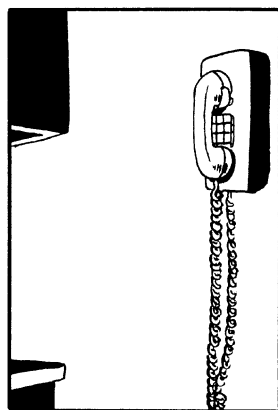
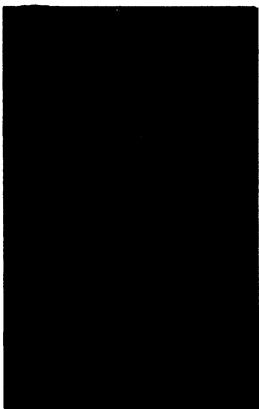
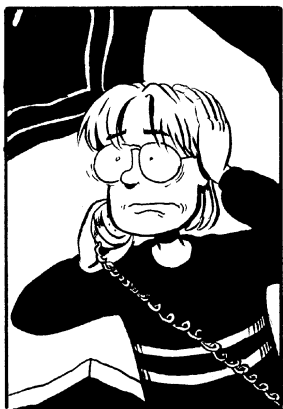


HELLO?



LYNN?



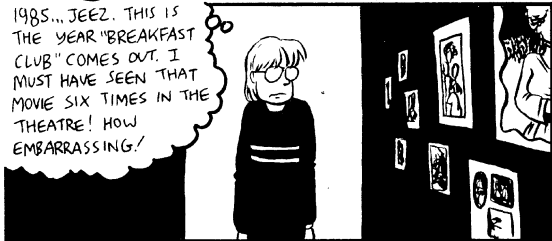




TOMORROW, I GO BACK TO SCHOOL AND REPEAT THE TENTH GRADE. GOD, TALK ABOUT GETTING LEFT BACK... SHOP CLASS... BIOLOGY ... WHATEVER THAT STUPID MATH THEY'RE MAKING ME TAKE IS...



1985... JEEZ. THIS IS THE YEAR "BREAKFAST CLUB" COMES OUT. I MUST HAVE SEEN THAT MOVIE SIX TIMES IN THE THEATRE! HOW EMBARRASSING!



THE ONLY REASON I EVEN REMEMBER THAT IS THAT THIS IS THE SUMMER DAD DIES SO I --



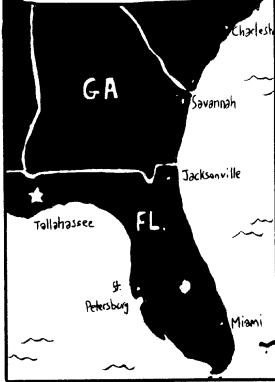


HE WAS FIRST
DIAGNOSED AROUND
1983 OR SO... IT'S HARD
TO SAY, EXACTLY, SINCE MY
PARENTS TRIED TO KEEP IT
FROM US FOR AS LONG AS THEY
COULD. ONCE IT GOT BAD ENOUGH
WHERE HE COULDN'T GO TO WORK,
OF COURSE, THE JIG WAS UP.



I ALWAYS
REMEMBERED MY
DAD AS BEING SORT OF
KLUTZY. IT WAS NO BIG
DEAL, JUST A QUIRKY,
SOMETIMES FUNNY PART
OF WHO HE WAS... LIKE
HIS BEING A CUBS FAN OR
THE WAY HE LAUGHED.

IT'S KIND OF LIKE FINDING OUT THAT SOMEONE IS AN ALCOHOLIC: FOND MEMORIES YOU MIGHT HAVE OF THEM BEING TIPSY AT THE OFFICE CHRISTMAS PARTY SUDDENLY TAKE ON A DARKER TONE.



IN 1983 MY DAD'S KLUTZINESS TURNED INTO MY DAD'S A.L.S. -- LOU GEHRIG'S DISEASE.



IT'S A HORRIBLE, HORRIBLE DISEASE FOR MANY REASONS, BUT ONE OF THE CRUELEST IS THAT, USUALLY, YOUR MIND IS UNAFFECTED.

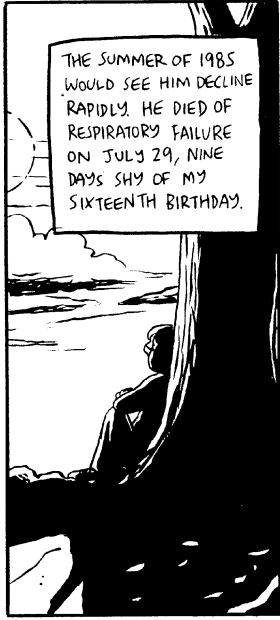
IT'S YOUR BODY WHICH GIVES OUT.. BETRAYS YOU.



THE CREEPING NUMBNESS GRADUALLY TOOK OVER HIS BODY, TURNING IT INTO A PRISON.

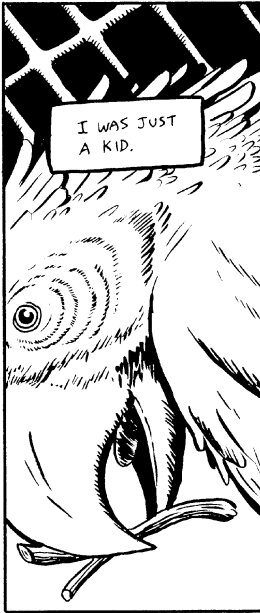


THE SUMMER OF 1985 WOULD SEE HIM DECLINE RAPIDLY. HE DIED OF RESPIRATORY FAILURE ON JULY 29, NINE DAYS SHY OF MY SIXTEENTH BIRTHDAY.





IS ANYONE EVER REALLY PREPARED FOR THE DEATH OF A PARENT? EVEN IF YOU KNOW IT'S COMING, AS WE DID, YOU DON'T REALLY KNOW HOW YOU'RE GOING TO FEEL UNTIL...



I WAS JUST A KID.



I CAN, AND HAVE MADE EXCUSES: I WAS YOUNG, I WAS CONFUSED, ALL TEEN-AGERS ARE NARCIS-SISTIC, WRAPPED UP IN THEIR OWN WORLDS.

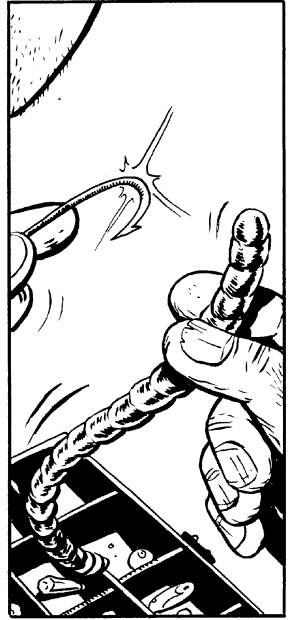


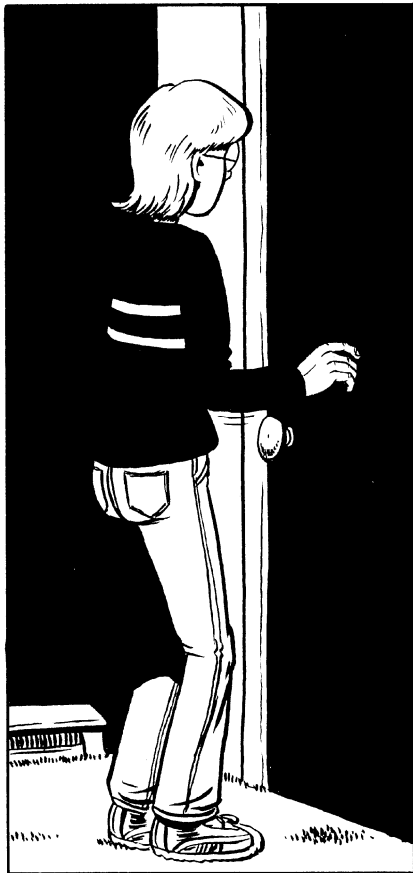
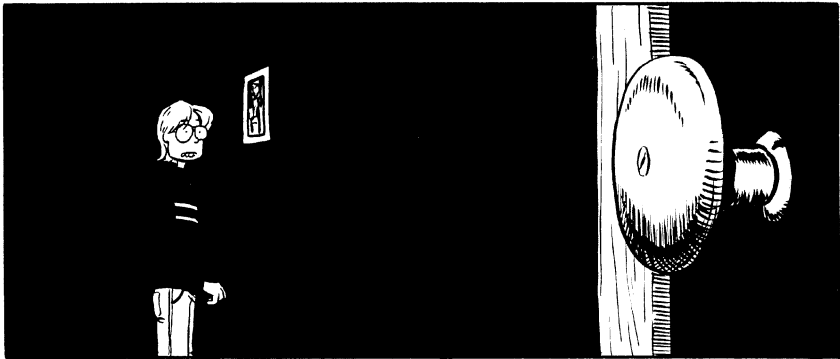
SELFISH.

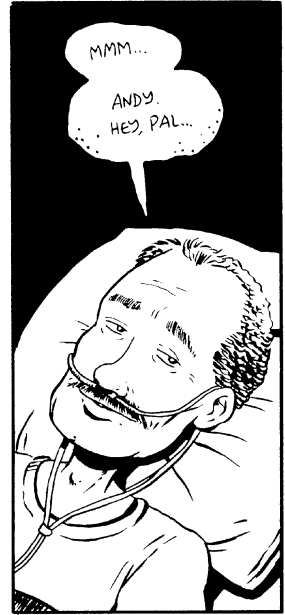
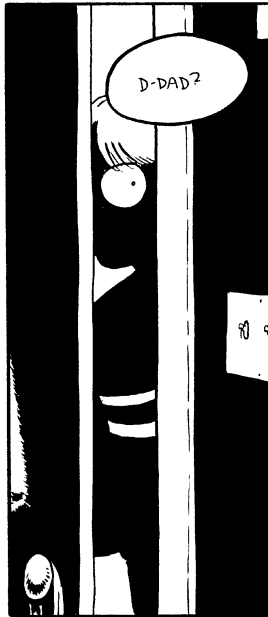
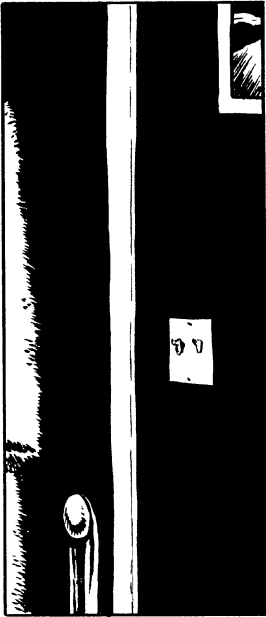
THE THINGS I SAID, THE THINGS I DIDN'T SAY... I CAN'T EVEN DESCRIBE THE FEELINGS. REGRET? SHAME? RAGE? SORROW?



MY MOM, GINA, MY BROTHER... WE'VE ALL TALKED ABOUT IT, ABOUT OUR COMMON EXPERIENCE, BUT I'VE NEVER TOLD ANYONE ABOUT MY EXPERIENCE.









YEAH, Heh, WELL, SORRY ABOUT THAT. THINGS'VE JUST BEEN... LIKE...

UH...

SO, HOW DO YOU FEEL?

URGH!!
"HOW DO YOU FEEL?"
HE'S DYING YOU IDIOT!!

I KNOW! I KNOW!
BUT GIVE ME A BREAK!
IT'S NOT LIKE I HAD TIME TO PREPARE FOR THIS!

(AS IF YOU COULD PREPARE FOR THIS)



OH, YOU KNOW: EACH DAY IS... BETTER THAN THE NEXT... AS THEY SAY. HEH...

WHAT ABOUT YOU? ... HOW ARE THINGS GOING?

WELL, NOTHING TOO EXCITING, YOU KNOW.
JUST A CRAZY TIME LATELY.

MMM...
YOUR MOM TOLD ME YOU... HAD A BIG DATE THE OTHER NIGHT... YOU OLD DOG... WHO IS SHE? A CUTE ONE I BET...

HAHA! YEAH. YEAH, SHE IS. I'M GLAD I FINALLY WORKED UP THE NERVE TO ASK HER AT LEAST.
BUT WHO KNOWS HOW IT WILL TURN OUT, RIGHT?

HEH! THIS IS TRUE... HOW'S SCHOOL THESE DAYS?

SCHOOL? UH.

LET'S JUST SAY I REALLY CAN'T WAIT TO NEVER HAVE TO GO THERE AGAIN.

HA... ALSO TRUE, BUT THAT'S WHAT LIFE IS SOMETIMES... IT GETS BETTER...



I REMEMBER WHEN YOU WERE LITTLE... YOU HATED GOING TO SCHOOL... AND IT BOTHERED ME BECAUSE ... IT REMINDED ME OF HOW MUCH I HATED IT, TOO... BACK THEN.

IN FACT, I CAME THIS CLOSE ... TO DROPPING OUT ALL TOGETHER.

REALLY?? YOU? WOW. I HAD NO IDEA. WHAT HAPPENED? WHAT CHANGED YOUR MIND?

HA, WELL, POP-POP GAVE ME SOME GREAT ADVICE: "BOBBY" HE SAID. "IF YOU DROP OUT OF SCHOOL I WILL KICK THE CRAP OUT OF YOU!"

OH MY GOD! THAT DOESN'T SOUND LIKE POP-POP. / HAHA. /

NO. / IT DIDN'T / THAT'S PROBABLY WHY IT WORKED! HAAAA!

HAHAHA! GOD. SEE!

LEARNING THAT, GETTING TO HEAR STORIES LIKE THAT? THAT'S WHAT I... THATS...

WHAT?

THAT'S... THAT'S THE KIND OF THING I'VE... I'LL MISS WHEN YOU... AFTER YOU...

AFTER I DIE.

SHIT, I'M SORRY TO... TO BRING UP, YOU KNOW, I DON'T MEAN TO GET ALL, OR TO GET YOU ALL, YOU KNOW ALL--

NO, NO, LISTEN:

IT'S NOT AS IF YOU'RE... REMINDING ME OF WHAT'S GOING TO HAPPEN...

IN FACT, IT'S KIND OF... (WELL, I WOULDN'T SAY "NICE" EXACTLY)... BUT TALKING ABOUT IT IS... IMPORTANT.

I JUST WANT US ALL TO... BE HONEST. THERE'S NO TIME FOR... FOR...

TRUST ME... IT'S NEVER NOT ON MY MIND...

ARE YOU

WE-- WE BOTH HAVE SO MUCH TO SAY... AND THERE'S NO TIME...

IT'S OKAY, DAD.



I HATE THAT YOU KIDS
HAVE TO... GO THROUGH
ALL OF THIS. PATTY, HE'S
A LITTLE OLDER, BUT...
YOU, GINA...

IT'S HARD ON PATTY,
TOO.' I'VE TRIED TO BRING
IT UP WITH HIM A BUNCH
OF TIMES BUT HE'S--

I MEAN, I
GUESS HE DEALS WITH
IT FINE, BUT, YOU
KNOW, NONE OF US EVER
REALLY... WE...

SHIT, DAD! I CAN'T
DO THIS! I DON'T KNOW
WHAT TO SAY!! IT'S JUST--

YOU SAY YOU
WANT US ALL TO BE
HONEST BUT HOW?
HOW THE HELL CAN
WE DO THAT??

WHAT'S
STOPPING
YOU?

"WHAT'S
STOPPING
ME??"

WHAT'S STOPPING
ME IS THAT YOU'RE
FUCKING DYING, DAD!!
YOU'RE DYING!!

YOU'RE
ANGRY.



YOU'RE DAMNED RIGHT I'M ANGRY!! NOW YOU'RE NOT GONNA BE AROUND TO TEACH ME HOW TO DO A THREE-POINT TURN OR EMBARRASS ME IN FRONT OF LIZZIE MCCARTHY WHEN I BRING HER TO THE STUPID PROM!!

YOU WON'T BRAG TO YOUR CO-WORKERS ABOUT ME WINNING THAT DUMB SCIENCE PRIZE!

MOM'S GOING TO HAVE TO GO ON A BUNCH OF DATES WITH JERKY GUYS WHO CALL ME "SPORT" AND WANT TO TALK ABOUT FOOTBALL AND CARS, AS IF I GIVE A SHIT!

AND "JERKY GUYS??" GINA'S GOING TO SPEND THE REST OF HER LIFE TRYING TO REPLACE YOU!! ONE ASSHOLE AFTER ANOTHER!!

YOU WON'T GET TO SEE
ME GRADUATE FROM COLLEGE
OR, OR, OR WARN ME THAT
MOVING TO TEXAS WITH JAMIE
IS A REALLY BAD IDEA!!

NOW... NOW I'M GOING TO
WATCH LYNN'S DAD MAKE A TOAST
AT OUR WEDDING AND WONDER WHAT
YOU WOULD'VE SAID!

THINK ABOUT
HOW PROUD YOU
WOULD'VE BEEN!!

YOU WON'T BE AROUND
FOR ANY OF IT! WHEN, WHEN...
WHEN LYNN HAS TO GET THE
EMERGENCY C-SECTION AND
I'M TERRIFIED I'M GOING,
UH, UH, TO LOSE, UH---









NO, NO, DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT. BELIEVE ME, I UNDERSTAND EXACTLY HOW YOU FEEL.

I'M ANGRY, TOO.

I'D GIVE ANYTHING TO GET TO SEE YOU GUYS GROW UP, FINISH SCHOOL, FALL IN LOVE... RETIRE WITH YOUR MOM, DRIVING AROUND THE COUNTRY IN A WINNIEBAGO, GRANDKIDS ... ALL OF IT.

BUT I GUESS THAT'S LIFE.

GOD, IT'S A TERRIBLE IRONY OF LIFE THAT THE DEEPEST TRUTHS CAN'T BE EXPRESSED WITHOUT LAPSPING INTO CLICHÉ. OH WELL. THIS, TOO, SHALL PASS, RIGHT? HEH HEH...

GOD, I AM SO TIRED.

MM... IF YOU DON'T MIND, I'M JUST GOING TO SHUT MY EYES FOR AWHILE.

THAT'S OKAY. I'M SURE THAT ALL THIS...

...THIS IS...

WAIT.

THIS... THIS IS IT ISN'T IT?

AFTER THIS, I NEVER -- WE NEVER --

MMM? I JUST NEED TO REST A BIT. I'M GLAD WE HAD THIS TALK, THOUGH, COOKIE. I'M REALLY PROUD OF YOU.

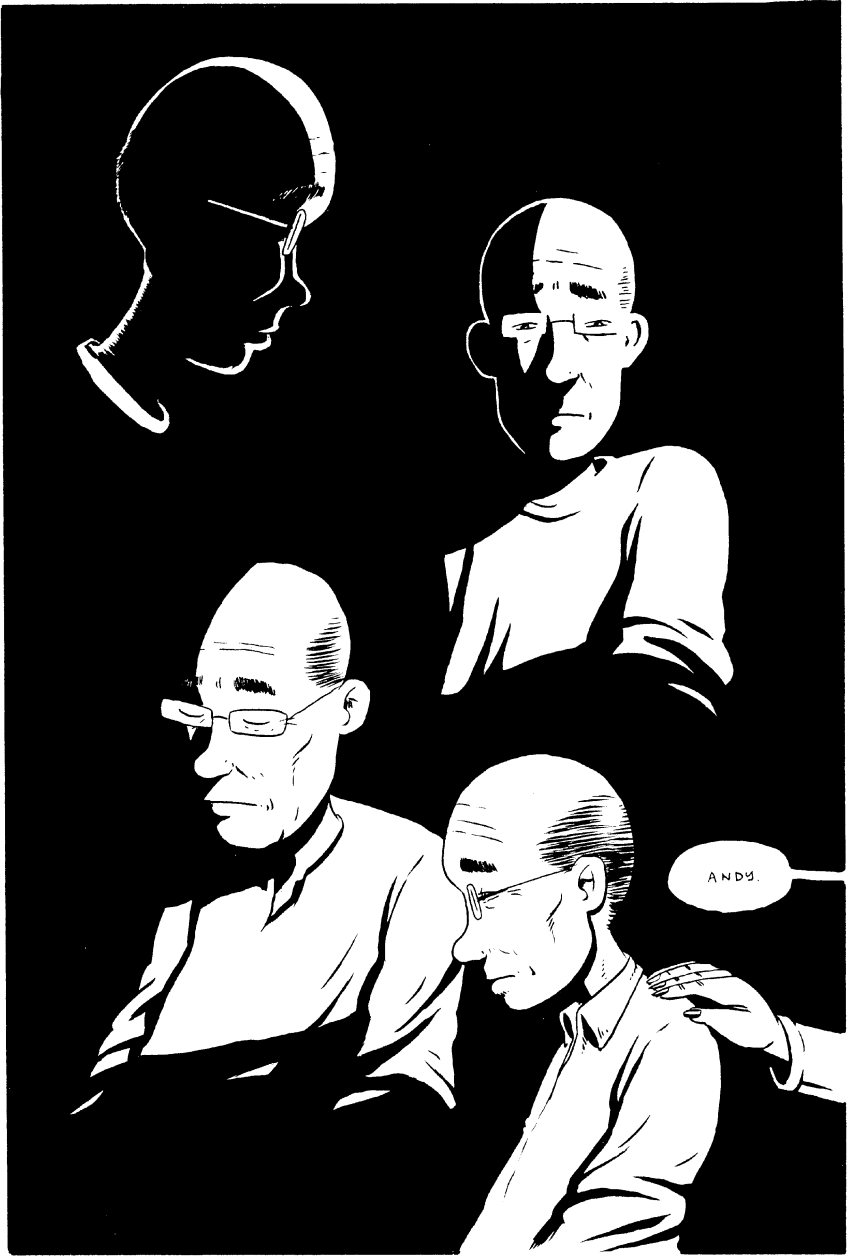
YOU'RE GOING TO GROW UP TO BE A FINE MAN, ANDY.

W- AHHEM!

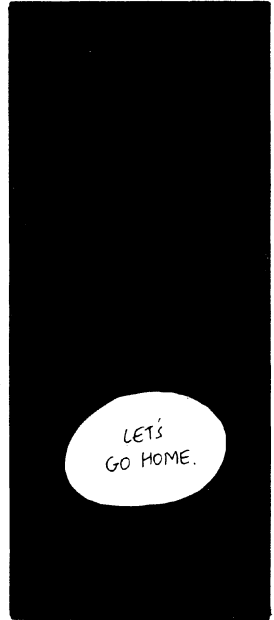
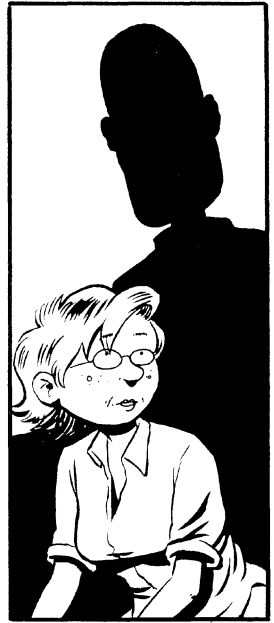
WELL, YOU AND MOM DID A GREAT JOB.











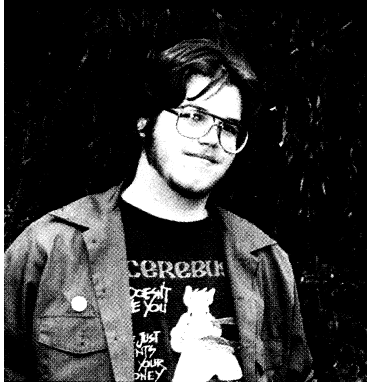
Thanks to Al, Andrew, Bob, Burr,
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Thanks for Aliza and Vania, my
Pink Panther sisters, and Ruby the
littlest Panther (for now...).

Thanks to *Kristen*, for her
seemingly endless patience,
support and love.



Alex Robinson lives in

New York City with his wife and
their two cats. His other books,

all available from Top Shelf
Productions, are **Box Office**

Poison, BOP!, Tricked and **Alex
Robinson's Lower Regions**.

He graduated from high school

in 1987, and was voted "*Most
Artistic*" by his classmates. He

was not invited to the reunion.

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[Page 84 includes an error in which the protagonist, Mr. Wicks, thinks the word "Dad" instead of "Did." This will not be corrected in future editions, as it was intentional on the part of Mr. Robinson. The publishers and proofreaders wish to note their opposition to including such grammatically awkward and painfully heavy handed foreshadowing, but have let the issue rest out of respect for the author. We apologize if the author's stubborn refusal to listen to reason, demands or threats at all diminished your enjoyment of another otherwise entertaining Top Shelf product.]

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1. Graphic Novels
2. Humor
3. Time-travel

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WARNING: Middle-aged Andy Wicks has tried everything to quit smoking — from going cold turkey, to the latest choices in patches and nicotine chewing gums, so he figures he'll give this hypnosis thing a try. What's the worst that could happen? Unfortunately, he's dealt a fate worse than death — high school! He's transported back to 1985 and now Andy must relive his formative years, as a gangly, awkward teenager. Is he doomed to relive the mistakes of his past, or has he been given a second chance to get things right? One thing's for sure — this time he will not pass up the chance to ask out that girl he has a crush on from his math class...

"This is Alex Robinson's best book, and one of the rare comics not written by Stan Lee to perfectly capture the tragedy and triumph of being a teenager. Totally recommended."

—Brian K. Vaughan, Y the Last Man, Ex Machina

"A master of the slice-of-life indie comic genre, Robinson brings a strong dramatic force to his work as well. Robinson's talent allows his characters to be comprehensible even when they act like spoiled jerks or sabotage their own chances for happiness — but his authorial generosity returns them all to their own best selves by the end."

—Publishers Weekly

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