

CAST AWAY ILLUSIONS;
PREPARE FOR STRUGGLE.
— MAO TSE-TUNG



SOMETIMES THINGS GET
CONFUSING WHEN YOU'RE
**MENTALLY
ILL**

\$1 *Cheap
Thrills!*



Warning: Rough Seas Ahead

This little zine collects comix I've made sporadically since 2005 about my struggles with depression, PTSD, marriage and fatherhood. It's not fun stuff. If you want light-hearted fare, look elsewhere. Triggers abound. Abandon hope all ye who enter here. Etc., etc.

When I started these toons, I was at rock bottom. I'd suffered a crash at the end of 2002 as all the symptoms of post-traumatic stress bubbled to the surface. I was virtually unable to leave my apartment for months. Therapy and medication had failed miserably, even when I could afford them. My new partner Michelle, whom I'd married in 2001, had to carry this burden. In 2004 she lost her sister to cancer, and our daughter was born two months later. I wanted nothing more than to die, but I was resigned to keep plodding through to care for my child.

Things are getting better now. I have been back in therapy and on meds for over a year, and this time it's actually helped. For the first time in my life I have been able to open up and seek out friends and confidants. I'm making zines and speaking fearlessly about the personal as well as the political.

But recovery has brought new crises as well. I am especially vexed by the boundaries of friendship, empathy and erotic/sexual contact, both as someone who has always questioned society's hypocritical status quo, and as someone who has never learned to create and defend safe boundaries for himself. This has seriously jeopardized my relationship with my wife and caused heartache for me and other people I love.

I want to hear what you think, especially if you have been or are going through similar experiences.

—redguard, 9/08

Contact: redguard@gmail.com

Order from: www.absent-cause.org or redguard.etsy.com

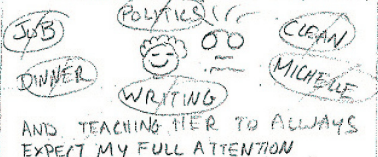


I AM MENTALLY ILL

SOMETIMES PEOPLE COMPLIMENT ME ON BEING SUCH AN ATTENTIVE FATHER...



BUT I KNOW I'M TOO ATTENTIVE - MAKING RIPLEY TOO DEPENDANT



IT'S THE FLIP-SIDE OF MY RAGE OVER A LIFETIME OF ABUSE...

SINCE SHE IS THE ONLY THING I HAVE TO LIVE FOR, AND THE ONE PERSON I CAN'T GET MAD AT...



AS SUCH, IT'S JUST ANOTHER EXPRESSION OF MY MENTAL ILLNESS...

AND NOT SOMETHING REAL HEALTHY FOR HER TO BE AROUND,

FEARS FOR RIPLEY:

- USED TO ALWAYS GETTING HER WAY
- NOT MUCH INTERESTED IN OTHER KIDS
- THINKS GADWIN-UPS WILL ALWAYS BE KIND LIKE DADDY

I'M AFRAID THAT BY COMPENSATING FOR MY OWN CHILDHOOD ABUSE + FATHERLY NEGLECT...



AS USUAL.

A PERSONAL TIMELINE

1971:



GREG IS BORN IN EAU CLAIRE, WIS.

Circa 1974:



GREG AND HIS MOTHER MOVE TO THE WOODS WITH HIS FATHER.

Circa 1982:

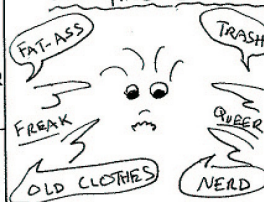


GREG IS A FAT KID WITH LOTS OF PROBLEMS...

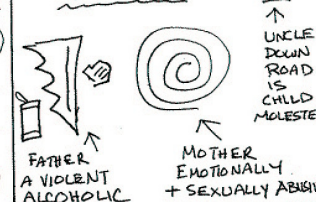
POVERTY



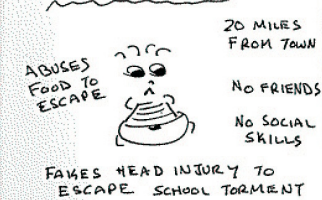
BULLYING @ School



ABUSE



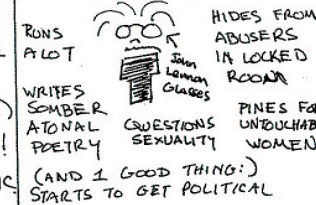
ISOLATION



SUMMER 1983:

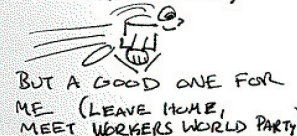


TEEN YEARS:



1989:

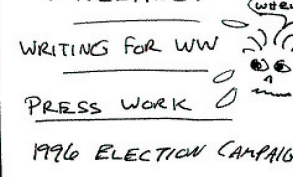
A bad year for the world (Counter-Revolution sweeps EASTERN EUROPE)



FEB 1990 - OCT 1996: NEW YORK CITY



ORGANIZING DEMOS + MEETINGS



AND THEN ...

LATE 1996




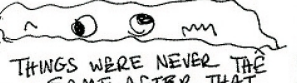
GREG GETS INVOLVED WITH VARIOUS ...

DISASTER

DISGUISED AS LOVE

L.A. to N.Y.C. OR BUST



<p>1997 - LOS ANGELES:</p>  <p>IT SEEMED LIKE A PERFECT MATCH-- AT FIRST</p>	<p>IT DIDN'T TAKE LONG FOR THE ABUSE TO START...</p>  <p>AND I FELT EASILY INTO ROLE OF VICTIM</p>	<p>ALL THE CLASSIC SIGNS OF A BATTERER:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ISOLATE VICTIM - MANIPULATION + GUILT - JEALOUSY + PUNISHMENT - CONSTANT ROLLER COASTER TO KEEP VICTIM OFF BALANCE - CLIMATE OF FEAR
<p>AUGUST 1997:</p> <p>GREG RUNS BACK TO NYC...</p>  <p>... SHE FOLLOWS A MONTH LATER</p>	<p>LATE 1997 - DEC 98:</p>  <p>CONSTANT CRISIS</p>	<p>UNTIL JAN 1999:</p>  <p>WHEN GREG FINALLY SAID 'ENOUGH' AND ENDED IT.</p>
<p>1999 WAS TOTAL MELT DOWN</p> <p>THREATS + INTIMIDATION</p> <p>COMPLETE ISOLATION + FEELINGS OF BETRAYAL BY FRIENDS + CO-WORKERS</p> <p>RAN AWAY TO VA.</p>  <p>THINGS WERE NEVER THE SAME AFTER THAT</p>	<p>2000 SEEMED TO BE LOOKING UP...</p>  <p>GREG RETURNED TO NYC + BECAME A WW EDITOR</p>	<p>BEST OF ALL ... IN JULY 2000</p>  <p>I MET MICHELLE GORE</p>
<p>TOLD MYSELF IF I HELD OUT, I COULD RECLAIM MY LIFE...</p> <p>SENSE OF SELF... PLACE IN THE PARTY</p>  <p>BUT IT WASN'T TO BE</p>	<p>IN EARLY 2001...</p>  <p>DON'T REST IN PEACE</p> <p>GREG DIED. (IT TOOK ALMOST 2 MORE YEARS FOR ME TO REALIZE)</p>	<p>I HAD WANTED TO RESUME MY LIFE AS A REVOLUTIONARY AND SHOW MICHELLE THE 'REAL' GREG...</p>  <p>BUT ALL THAT'S LEFT IS A SHELL, A VAMPIRE, UNDEAD. (ABUSING FOOD BADLY) AGAIN, TOO</p>

AT THE START OF 2004, I (THE SHELL) WAS READY TO DISAPPEAR + END MY TORMENT FOREVER ... NOTHING LEFT TO OFFER THE PARTY OR MICHELLE... NO REASON TO CONTINUE THE MASQUERADE.

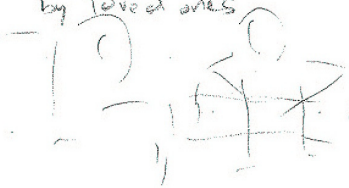
THEN MICHELLE GOT PREGNANT, AND I HAD TO STAY.

I LOVE MY DAUGHTER, BUT I KNOW SHE WILL END UP HATING THE GREG-SHELL ... JUST AS I DO.

RIPLEY BORN 10/25/04

It must be so comforting to have a family - ~~knowing~~ You'll die at home surrounded by loved ones

That's not true ... I know I'm going to die alone



?? Scarier or later, my wife will get sick of my shit and leave

My daughter will end up hating me ... I know, because I hate me



And I'm no use to the world anymore, so...

I'll either die by my own hand...

Or alone in a gutter somewhere.



Either way is fine...

I want to be dead.

