

# MISERY LOVES COMEDY

Written and Drawn by  
**IVAN BRUNETTI**

*with an Introduction by the Author's Therapist*



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The author is deeply grateful to all the unsung Fantagraphics staffers who, over the years, have helped with the coloring and production of the individual issues of **SCHIZO**. Also deserving of credit are Thad Doria and Jonathan Bieniek, for their assistance with the gray tones on portions of "Work Equals Degradation."

In addition, the author would like to state, for the record, that he will be forever indebted to Ben Dunn and Herb Mallette of Antarctic Press for bravely publishing the first issue of **SCHIZO**.

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## NOTES

**SCHIZO No. 1** was originally published by Antarctic Press in January 1995. The version reproduced here is the first Fantagraphics edition, published in October 1995.

**SCHIZO No. 3** has been painstakingly scanned and retouched from a printed copy of the comic book, as the film negatives of the entire issue have been lost and the author foolishly never kept any archival photostats or even photocopies of the original artwork (most of which was sold and/or destroyed long ago). Considering the contents of the third issue, some may consider this an “act of God,” and if so, what jury on Earth would convict Him?

The “Self-Caricature” serial has, needless to add, long been abandoned.

“32 Drunks” was originally self-published by the author as an 8-page mini-comic.

The home addresses listed for Mr. Brunetti in the three issues of **SCHIZO** contained herein are no longer current.

# INTRODUCTION

For Ivan, drawing cartoons is his life. It is also completely forbidden and frightening. How can such a thing be? It is so when the threatening voice is that of the parent, who after all does hold the life and death of the child within his/her hands. If the father is a large/volatile/scary man, how is the child not to be frightened for his life? If the mother tells the child not to upset the father (as if it were the child's fault that this volatile man was upset!) instead of protecting the child, how is the child not to believe that if only he were good enough/smart enough/worthy enough/invisible enough, he could please instead of enrage the father?

This information might come as a considerable shock to Ivan's many fans who devour the work he is able to put out into the world. However, even these fans might have wondered why Ivan isn't more prolific. Why do they have to wait so long between published works? It would probably never have occurred to any but those who are closest to Ivan that producing a drawing destined to go out into the world to face the judgment of others is so painful that it is generally only done when the fear of the anger of his editors becomes more powerful in the moment than the fear of the shame and annihilation that it seems must surely come when his work reaches the public.

Working this way, of course, is not only excruciatingly painful (and slow!), but it also makes it next to impossible for Ivan to get any joy out of what he is able to produce. Because the process itself is so painful and frightening, the entire process is suppressed as soon as possible after the work is sent off. Not only can the positive results that are available to Ivan upon publication of his work not feel good, they cannot be used to prove the child fears of shame and annihilation inaccurate so the process can be easier next time. Instead, there may be a brief sigh of relief, followed almost immediately by a focus on all the other work that is pending, which, of course, provokes more terror and shame. When Ivan thinks at all about the work he has completed, it is with shame that he didn't do it sooner/better/with less agony.

So, what is a person to do when he must draw but drawing is filled with shame and terror? Well, some people are brave enough to enter the therapeutic process to tackle the fear and shame. And thus Ivan ended up working with me. How does the process of letting go of the inaccurate child view of things work? Slowly. Really slowly. Frustratingly slowly. With lots of fear about tackling all that anger stored inside from a childhood that was not what he needed. For to be angry at the father instead of oneself requires almost superhuman courage. After all, in the world according to the child, which is alive and well inside until challenged and proven wrong, the father is not only capable of killing the child, but is correct in his assessment of the child.

So, a little anger is properly aimed and the world doesn't end. Then the anger gets aimed inward again making just getting out of bed seem difficult, and drawing seem impossible. But then there is a deadline, and Ivan draws again. Or there is a deadline that doesn't include drawing, and he gets that done. And then we work on how Ivan can put a little bit of good information inside so he can carry something besides fear and shame around with him. And he comes to his therapy sessions and complains that having to work a full-time job keeps him from drawing. While also acknowledging that having structure is good because he can't spend that much time drawing anyway. Or he organizes his drawing space in an attempt to increase his feelings of control over his world. And he spends more time with friends, and sometimes he is able to see that they actually like him. And he marries Laura. And he works on not aiming the anger at Laura when it needs to be aimed at his family. And he tries to draw. And sometimes he succeeds and then we can work on validating that he did the forbidden and the world didn't end, so the fear can be reduced a little bit and perhaps drawing can become a tiny bit easier.

What, then, is your role in all this as a reader of Ivan's book? Enjoy the cartoons. Don't get too impatient waiting for the next book. Treat your children well.


**KAREN M. SCHNEIDER, MSW, ACSW**

Licensed Clinical Social Worker

Chicago, Illinois

September 2006

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SCHIZO

# Schizo

by Ivan Brunetti

Mature  
Readers  
ONLY



My Body  
is A  
GULAG.

# SCHIZO #1

## contents

Why Every Single Person in the Entire World Could Be Instantaneously Obliterated from the Face of the Planet and I Wouldn't Turn to Look, Even If There Were a Loud Noise or I Hate You. I Hate You ALL! ..... 1

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*Everything Sucks* ..... back cover

\* Chapter 1 of an eighteen-part series called *Self-Caricature*. Next issue's installment will be "Turn Your Eyes Inside and Dig the Vacuum." Stay tuned.

## A MANIFESTO, OF SORTS

Gentle Reader,

Welcome to my universe. My name is Ivan Brunetti, and I'm not an artist, writer, cartoonist, or creative person of any kind. I am a manuscript editor by trade. More precisely, I am a filthy creature fit only for extinction, doomed to an existence of obscurity, and condemned to live in unimaginably excruciating mental pain. And that's on a good day.

I don't expect anyone to read my comic book, at least not in my lifetime. Despite my hope that someone, someday, somewhere on this planet will find my scribbles somewhat intriguing, perhaps even amusing, I sincerely doubt that such an occurrence is likely. I harbor no illusions about my lack of worth, both in the large scheme of things and in the small picture. I lack the necessary skills, intelligence, courage, and honesty required to produce work that is not utterly without merit.

The mark of any great artist is his willingness and ability to say what everyone else is afraid to even think. A myriad of contradictory thoughts, emotions, and impulses floods our minds throughout the day, and especially the night. Most of us whisk them away, rationalize them, or outright repress them.

The artist ensnares those thoughts and explores them fearlessly, no matter how ugly or unpleasant the process, no matter if anyone else understands, cares to understand, or in some cases, dares to understand. Notions of propriety, safety, tact, gentility, and "political correctness" must be tossed away unceremoniously if one wishes to be a great artist. The subconscious is morally reprehensible. The id wants to fuck your mother and butcher your father. The id wants to sniff assholes. The id wants to rape and be raped. The id wants to eat flesh and lick bodily secretions. The id wants to piss all over itself and cry like a shit-encrusted infant, howling in naked fear as it stares at its own eventual deathly demise.

What man buries in the inner recesses of his brain is his limitation and the source of his eventual downfall. The id reminds him that he is an animal and should be slaughtered like one. It is fitting that our subconscious life depicts all of us as insects crawling around a big dirtball floating through space. Whatever it is that makes us human is tenuous and illusory. Society ostracizes those that know this and communicate it to others, maybe justly so, as society cannot function when the harsh light of truth illuminates humanity's ghastly visage.

However, the artist is right to shine this light, because we will never evolve if we fail to see that all we believe is an illusion. The greatest art is that which confronts and attacks mankind, nature, civilization, body, and mind, yet simultaneously celebrates and rejoices in the very filth and stench of life itself, for life is paramount: it is our heaven and our hell. If there is potential in man to rise above his self-imposed limits, if he is ever to see that God itself is underneath that pile of dog shit he has stepped on, if he is ever to progress beyond that vile and ignoble creature he insists on remaining, then certainly he will devote himself to ensuring that this world should provide at the very least a tolerable habitat for all that have been thrust upon it. The artist should make you loathe yourself and all those around you, as he exposes the absurdity of this world and the ridiculous folly of human behavior; only then will there be hope that mayhaps we shall stop being assholes (some of us are more guilty than others, to be sure).

Ahh, who am I kidding? It'll never happen. Humanity is doomed to destroy itself. Things will probably get 500,000,000 times worse than they ever have been. Fuck everybody.

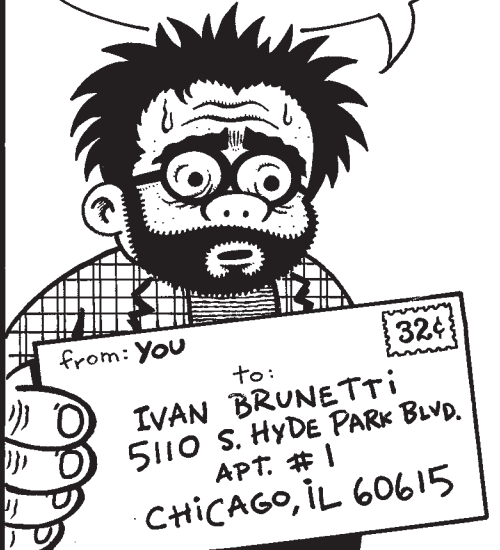
Thus, I have chosen the path of the clown, cowardly court jester that I am. At best, my work merely offers a brief respite from the horror of living. Reading the comics contained herein is not unlike having your feet tickled at knife-point.

My efforts are sure to go unnoticed and will eventually be forgotten by all. I originally hoped that I'd be dead before any of my work saw print, yet I am now strangely compelled to be judged by you and everyone during my own lifetime. Who are you anyway, dear reader? I long to see your face and softly caress your lips. I love you. I want to have sex with each and every one of you. I want to ram my tongue down your throat, fuck you, strangle you, kill you, no, no, wait, perhaps not.

I want none of these things. Please forget you ever saw this book. Burn it, along with any memory you may have retained of me. I beg your forgiveness, for I know I am nothing. Thank you.

-Ivan Brunetti

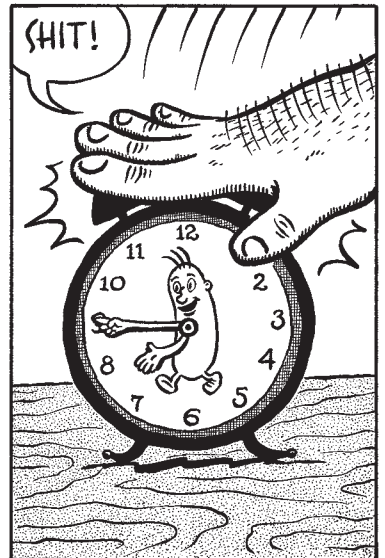
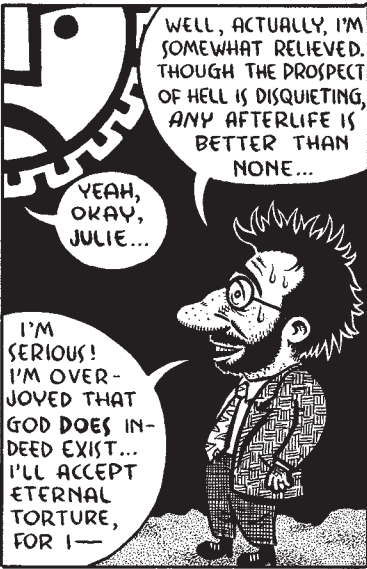
SHOULD YOU DESIRE TO WRITE ME, PLEASE DO NOT HESITATE TO DO SO...

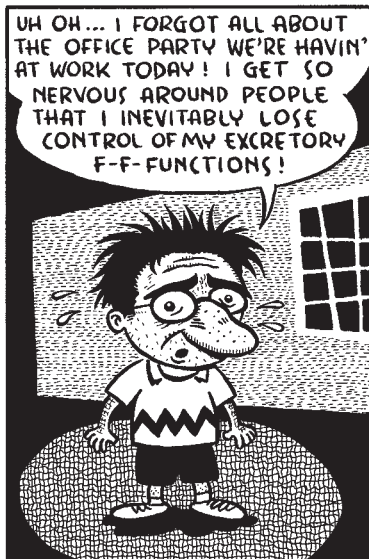


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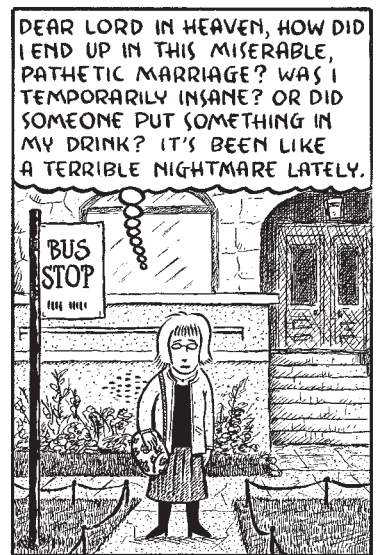
WHY EVERY SINGLE PERSON IN THE ENTIRE WORLD COULD BE INSTANTANEOUSLY OBLITERATED FROM THE FACE OF THE PLANET AND I WOULDN'T TURN TO LOOK, EVEN IF THERE WERE A LOUD NOISE  
Ⓞ I HATE YOU. I HATE YOU ALL!











...WHY DID I GIVE UP ALL OF MY DREAMS AND OPT FOR A LIFE OF TENUOUS MATERIAL SECURITY? I BOTCHED MY EXISTENCE... I FUCKED UP ROYALLY, I REALLY DID... I SHOULD JUST DIE...



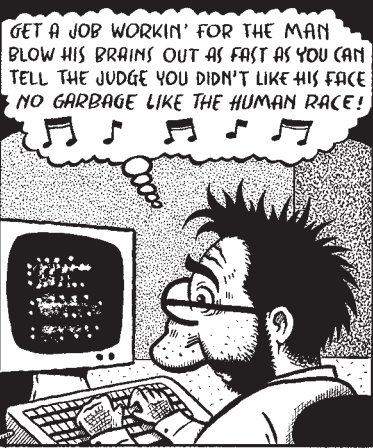
OH SURE, MY LIFE ISN'T EXACTLY TRAGIC. I SUPPOSE CERTAIN ASPECTS OF IT HAVE A VENEER OF COMFORTABILITY, BUT IN MY HEART I KNOW THAT ANY SEMBLANCE OF NORMALCY IS ILLUSORY...



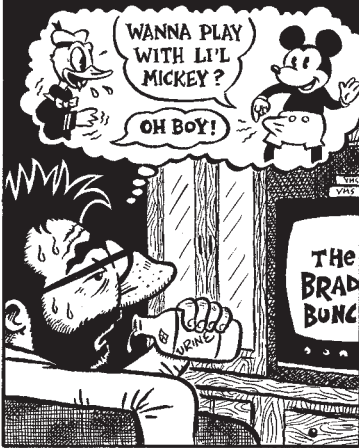
I MEAN, LET'S ANALYZE IT, OK? IF WE PEER BENEATH THE SHROUD OF "STABILITY"-- SCRATCH THE PATINA ON MY HUMDRUM, SQUARE LIFESTYLE, IF YOU WILL-- WHAT DO WE, IN ACTUALITY, DISCOVER TO CONSTITUTE MY "EXISTENCE"?



WELL, WE'D FIND AN ENERGY-DEPLETING, EYESIGHT-STRAINING JOB OF LITTLE SIGNIFICANCE (SAVE A STEADY PAYCHECK)...



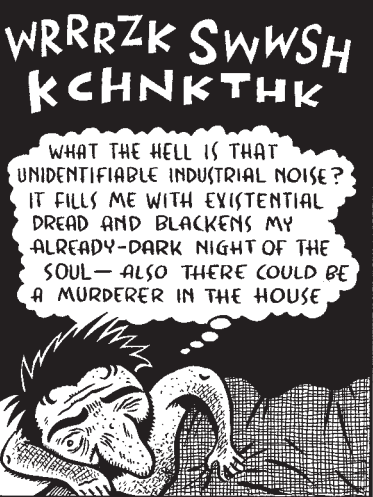
INTERMITTENT PERIODS OF FRAGMENTING SELF-DELUSION MASQUERADING AS MIND-NUMBING BOREDOM...



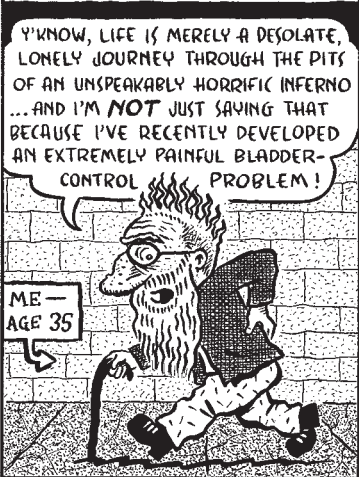
FOLLOWED BY BOUTS OF SEVERE, SLIT-YOUR-WRISTS LEVELS OF ALL-ENCOMPASSING DEPRESSION THAT BELIE MY SEEMING "AVERAGENESS" AND EXPOSE THE PROFOUND SADNESS CORRODING MY VERY ESSENCE...



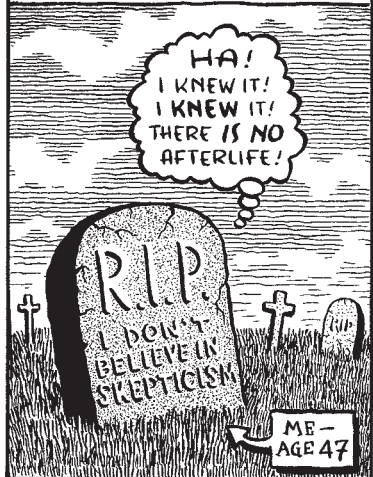
PUNCTUATED BY SPASMS OF ASSHOLE-PINCHING FEAR...



...PEPPERED WITH EPIPHANIES STARKLY ILLUMINATING MY SPEEDY BIOLOGICAL DECAY...



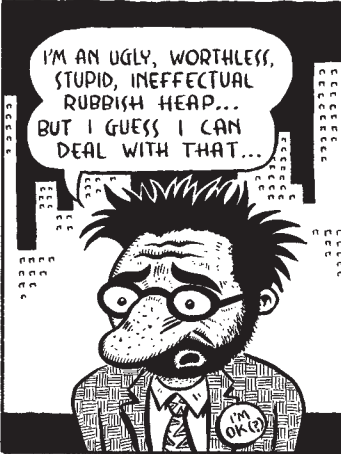
... AND INFUSED WITH CONSTANT MORBID OBSESSING OVER THE UNAVOIDABLE, I.E., 'DEATH'.



ALL RIGHT, SO WE'VE ESTABLISHED THAT I'M INCURABLY UNHAPPY AND THAT LIFE SUCKS HORSEDICK, SO NOW WHAT? WELL... THERE ARE BASICALLY THREE (3) CHOICES AT ANY POINT IN ANYONE'S LIFE.



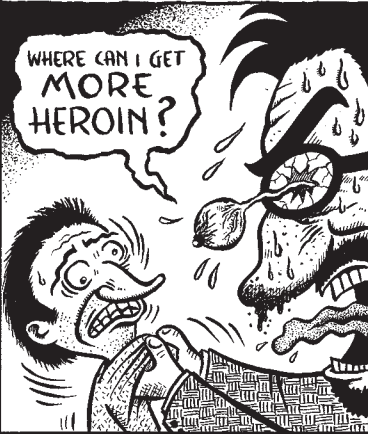
1. ACCEPT YOUR FATE : RESIGN YOURSELF TO THE FACT THAT YOUR LIFE IS NOT GOING TO GET ANY BETTER.



2. GIVE UP: KILL YOURSELF! GO INSANE! OR BOTH! WHATEVER!



A COROLLARY TO ITEM NUMBER 2: SUPERIOR TO EITHER INSANITY OR SUICIDE IS DRUG ADDICTION, WHICH CONDENSES ALL OF LIFE'S MANY WORRIES INTO A SINGLE PROBLEM:



3. MAKE SOME CHANGES: BIG OR SMALL, IT DOESN'T MATTER—AS LONG AS YOU MAKE A GODDAMNED CONCERTED EFFORT TO FORGE AHEAD AND EFFECT SOME IMPROVEMENTS:



LET IT BE KNOWN THAT I BELIEVE THIS LIST OF OPTIONS TO BE A HIERARCHY IN ASCENDING ORDER OF DIFFICULTY, THAT IS, THE LAST OPTION IS THE HARDEST CHALLENGE—AND THUS THE MOST ADMIRABLE, FOR ONLY THROUGH SUFFERING CAN WE REAP—

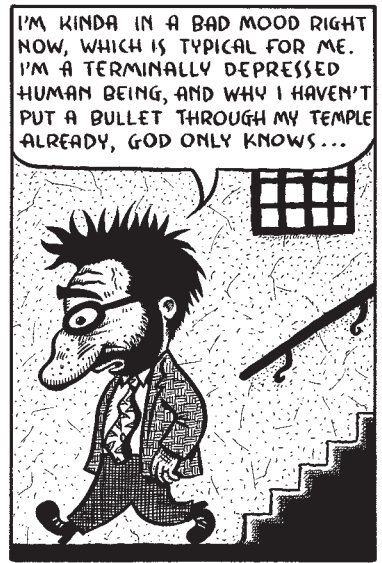
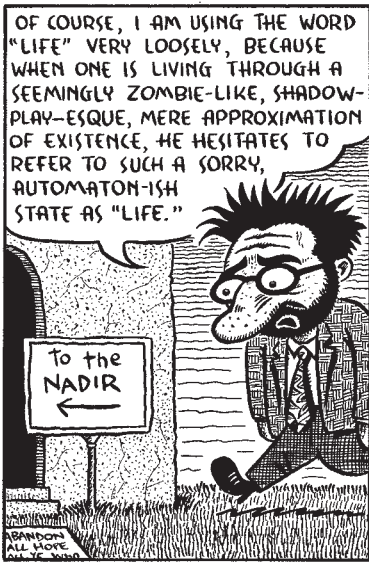
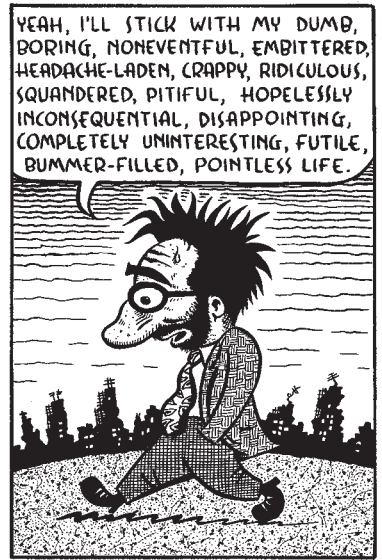


OH, I SEE... YOU THINK THAT OPTION 2 IS EASIER THAN 1?



ANYWAY, THOSE ARE PRETTY MUCH YOUR CHOICES IN A NUTSHELL.







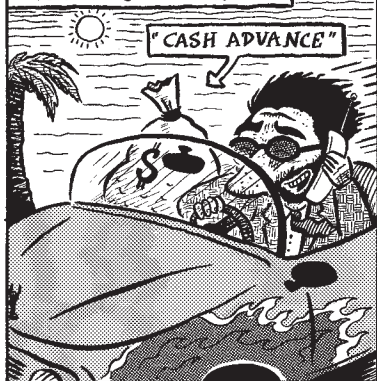
YOU KNOW, I WAS JUST THINKING, LET'S SAY I ACTUALLY DO WANT TO KILL MYSELF RIGHT NOW... WOULDN'T IT BE GREAT TO APPLY FOR A ZILLION CREDIT CARDS? (I'M ALWAYS GETTING A TON OF SHIT IN THE MAIL TELLING ME I'M PRE-APPROVED FOR A \$5,000 CREDIT LINE-- SURE, THERE'S USUALLY A PROHIBITIVE ANNUAL FEE AND INTEREST RATE, BUT THAT'S BESIDE THE POINT.)



OK, SO LET'S SAY I TAKE UP ALL THESE CREDIT CARD COMPANIES ON THEIR RESPECTIVE OFFERS, AND A MONTH FROM NOW I GET LIKE TWENTY CREDIT CARDS IN THE MAIL... THE TOTAL CREDIT LINE MAY ADD UP TO SOMETHING LIKE \$100,000...



SO, CONCEIVABLY, I CAN BLOW MY MONETARY WAD ON WHATEVER I WANT, AND I WOULDN'T EVEN SEE A BILL FOR THIRTY DAYS. PLUS IT WOULD TAKE THREE MONTHS TO REPOSSESS EVERYTHING I BOUGHT...



ANYWAY, FOR THIRTY DAYS, I COULD SPEND, SPEND, SPEND LIKE A MANIAC, LIVING LIFE TO ITS HEDONISTIC EXTREME, EATING GOURMET FOODS EVERY DAY, FUCKING HIGH-PRICED CALL GIRLS AS I WATCH PORNO LASER-DISCS.



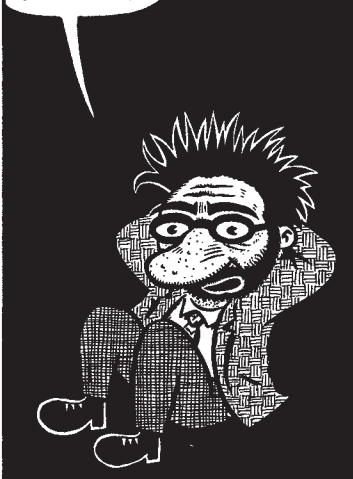
I'LL SHACK UP IN THE EXPENSIVE HOTEL ROOM I PUT ON MY 'VISA' OR WHATEVER, DRINKING TOP-SHELF LIQUOR ALL DAY AND VOMITING LIKE A DECADENT ROMAN EMPEROR.



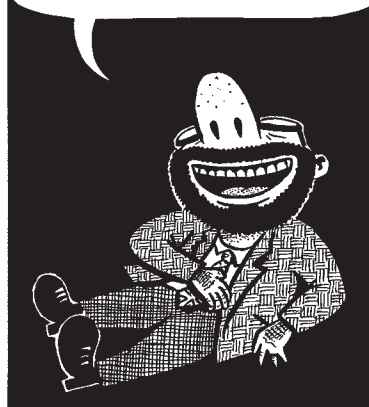
I COULD LIVE LIKE AN IMMORAL, RICH SLOB FASCIST FUCKHEAD FOR AN ENTIRE MONTH, AND THEN I COULD BLOW MY BRAINS OUT...

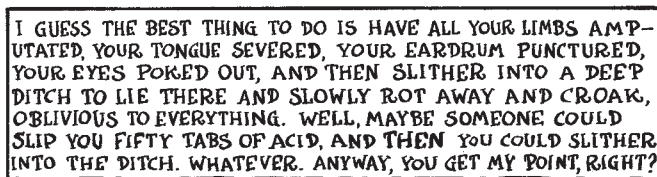
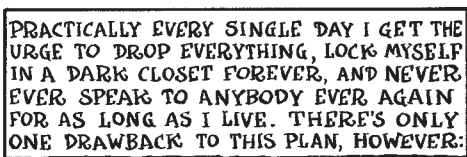
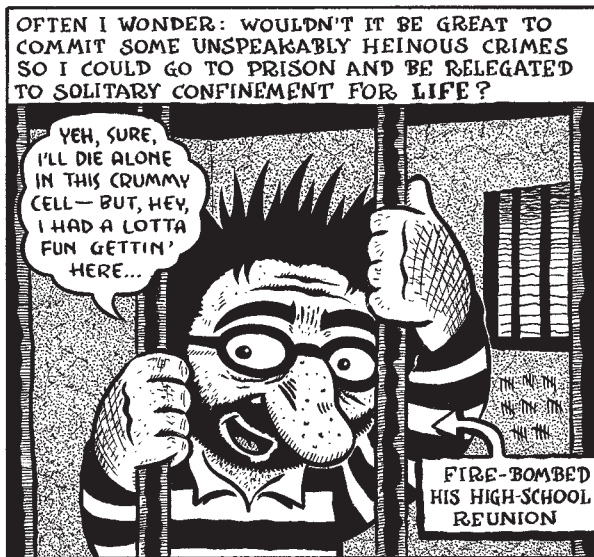
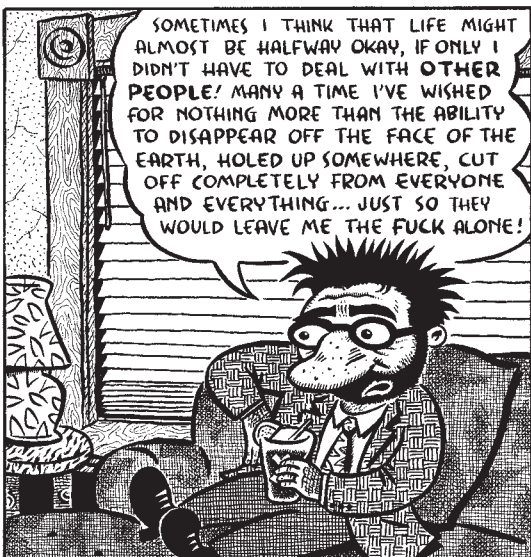
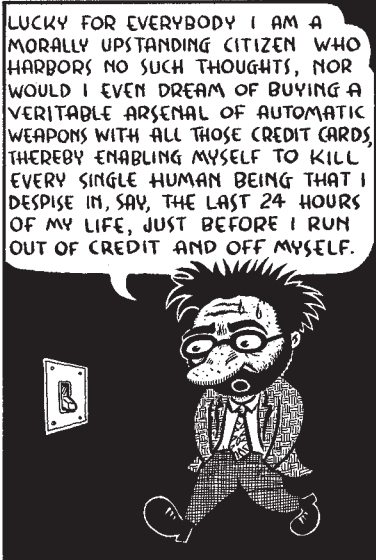


...AND THE CREDIT CARD COMPANIES WOULD BE SCREWED.



HAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHA!





AHHH... TO BE ALIVE AND RETAIN MY CONSCIOUSNESS, YET FUNCTIONALLY BEING DEAD... A DECAYING, NON-BIOLOGICAL, INSENTIENT MASS... THAT WOULD BE SUBLIME... IT WOULD TRANSCEND — UH...



... I NEED HELP.



I KNOW THAT THE MAIN REASON I DON'T WANT TO BE PART OF THIS WORLD IS THAT EVERY CULTURE EVER DEVISED PANDERS TO THE BASEST INSTINCTS OF MAN. WE HUMANS EMBRACE ALL THE WORST ASPECTS OF NATURE AND IGNORE THE FEW GOOD EXAMPLES IT SOMETIMES OFFERS...



THERE'S PROBABLY NOT ONE PERSON I HAVEN'T AT SOME POINT FANTASIZED ABOUT KILLING, FUCKING, AND/OR DEFECATING UPON...



ASSOCIATING WITH PEOPLE IS LIKE RUBBING LARVAE ON MY DICK... AND THAT'S WHEN I'M IN A GOOD MOOD! MOST OF THE TIME IT'S TANTAMOUNT TO BEING DEVoured ALIVE AS I LIE RAVAGED BY FORMICATION.



EVERYWHERE, I SEE, HEAR, FEEL, TASTE, AND SMELL OUR ABJECT CRUELTY AND WILLFUL IGNORANCE. I MEAN, I DESPISE MYSELF... I LOATHE EVERYTHING ABOUT ME... I WANT TO STAB MYSELF IN THE THROAT... BUT, SHIT, I THINK I'M BETTER THAN EVERYONE ELSE! \* PEOPLE ALTERNATELY ANGER AND DEPRESS ME...



\*I KNOW I'M NOT (BUT SURELY I'M IN THE TOP PERCENTILE).

EVERYTHING HUMAN DISGUSTS ME... THE WAY I FEEL IS AKIN TO... I DUMNO... IT'S LIKE WATCHING A GROTESQUELY OBESE FELLOW URINATING... DISTURBING, NO? WELL, I FEEL THAT WAY 24 HOURS A DAY. OH, THE DISQUIET! EGAD!



THE HUMAN ANIMAL OVERWHELMS ME... THE STUPID LITTLE GAMES... THE FRAGILE MASKS WE WEAR... THE FAÇADE WE CALL THE EGO ... EVERY PERSONALITY IS A TROMPE L'OEIL TYPE OF TRICKERY, HIDING THE VACUUM WITHIN... CAN'T ALL THESE, THESE, SHEEP SEE THEIR FLAWS AND HYPOCRISIES?



IT'S ALL SO TRANSPARENT TO ME. I CAN EASILY FIGURE PEOPLE OUT.. IT'S AS IF THEIR "PERSONAE" WERE MADE OF CHEAP GLASS... I'D LOVE TO SHATTER IT, BUT I'M WEARY... I REFUSE TO EVEN PARTICIPATE IN THIS MADNESS...



IT'S ALMOST AS COMICAL AS IT IS INFURIATING, THIS ALL TOO-HUMAN TENDENCY TO INFLATE THE VALUE OF THEIR WORTH (OR SHOULD I SAY THEIR QUESTIONABLE WORTH). THEY CREATE ABSOLUTES AND FASHION ABSTRACTIONS, ALL THE WHILE BLINDING THEMSELVES TO THE TANGIBILITIES OF THEIR REALITY...



IT'S ALWAYS SIMPLE TO RATIONALIZE OR EVEN DEFEND OUR ANIMAL SELVES... PEOPLE THINK THEY'RE SO CLEVER... BIG WHOOP. SO ARE LABORATORY RATS...



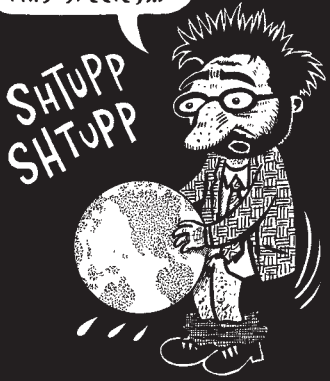
OH SURE, EVERY ONCE IN A WHILE A VISIONARY GENIUS APPEARS, BUT ONLY TO BE BRANDED INSANE OR MURDERED OUTRIGHT...



MOST PEOPLE SUCK. THEY ARE TRULY DISAPPOINTING. I REFUSE TO BELIEVE WE'VE EVEN BEGUN TO FULFILL THE POTENTIAL OF HUMAN DESTINY, MUCH LESS SPIRITUAL EVOLUTION...



JESUS, ONE LOOK AROUND YOU OR EVEN IN THE MIRROR SHOULD BE ENOUGH PROOF OF THAT! WHAT IGNOBLE CREATURES WE ARE: VAIN, SELFISH, VIOLENT, CRAZY, STUPID... HOW NIGHTMARRISH TO BELONG TO THIS SPECIES...



NOT THAT I WANT TO SUCCEMB TO THE INTELLECTUAL LAZINESS OF MISANTHROPY... IT'S A DEAD END, PHILOSOPHICALLY... I MEAN, IF ONE TAKES MISANTHROPY TO ITS LOGICAL EXTREME, HE ENDS UP A MASS-MURDERER AND/OR A SUICIDE...



PLUS, UNCONDITIONALLY HATING THE HUMAN RACE IS JUST AS DUMB AS UNCONDITIONALLY LOVING IT... I'M NO MISANTHROPE ... I JUST EXPECT TOO MUCH FROM THE MAGGOTS-ER, PEOPLE...



WELL, ACTUALLY, ALL I EXPECT IS A MODICUM OF CIVILITY, A DESIRE TO STRIVE FOR PERFECTION, AND A STRESS ON COOPERATION... APPARENTLY, THIS IS WISFUL THINKING...



...MAYBE EVERYONE ELSE CAN ACCEPT AND TOLERATE THIS SHITHOLE OF A PLANET, BUT WHY SHOULD I LOWER MY STANDARDS? FUCK YOU!

