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down in the dirt

the  
mackenzie silver  
issue



revealing all your dirty little secr    ets...

down in the dirt

journals

1997 journal entries

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journal, 8/15/97

I'm hated for being good and I'm hated for trying to make myself better. Everyone has given up here, so I have to pick up the pieces after them. Others scream because they don't like hearing the answers I give to the questions they ask. They all just want me to do everything, and they want me to smile about it. No one can finish a job here; no one cares to. Then everyone wonders why I'm not happy here; then everyone thinks I'm overreacting. With us there's one of two things: no sense of pride or else there is an egoism coupled with a complete disregard for other people. And the thing is, I hate the fact that people hate me when I know I'm right. I feel like I'll have to settle for the rest of my life. Settle for idiots telling me what to do. Settle for idiots hating me because I have pride. Settle for idiots loving me, idiots who don't know why they do. I feel like I can't be an optimist forever when the odds are continually stacked up against me. I have nothing but my mind to help me with this fight, when everyone else is fighting me by shutting their minds off. How do I live in the middle of a barren desert? REMEMBER: Whenever you're at work, YOU'RE NEVER RIGHT. All the people outside know better than you. All the people you're the supervisor of know better than you. You're overbearing, obnoxious, and you always think you're right. Get it straight. REMEMBER: YOU'RE NEVER RIGHT. All you have to do is follow orders. No one wants you to use your mind. Just follow the whims of everyone who wants to rule you. Don't make waves. When they change their minds, don't ask why. Always take the blame, especially when it's not your fault. Always smile. Always be courteous. Always thank people, even if it's for doing something they were responsible for. Especially thank them for that, because who are you to think that people should know or do anything? Who are you to think? Who are you?

journal, 08/02/97

down in the dirt

A co-worker quit from the company I work for today. I work in an office with about thirty-five people. Now this co-worker was in charge of our important material and quit two days before an important even for our company was about to begin. Apparently she was at a meeting about the event and someone else started badgering her and twenty minutes after the meeting she was on the phone with her husband saying, "It's been bad enough that every day after work I cry when I get home, but now I'm on the phone crying while I'm at work." So her husband told her it's okay if she wants to leave, they can work it out. So leave she did. She collected her things, said, "Fuck you all, I'm quitting," and just... left.

Now I only got to hear about this scene second-hand, I didn't actually see her or even get to say good-bye to her, and that's a real shame because I probably would have shook her hand and thanked her for doing something that just about every person in our office has pretty much dreamt about on a daily basis. I mean, when I heard about what she did I let out a low, sadistic laugh, you know, one of those laughs that comes from really deep down, because we haven't had one of those angry quitting scenes in a while, and believe me, they're always fun to watch.

And I laughed like that because I know what she was going through and I know what a relief it must have been for her to do it.

She's not the first person to do this to my boss, and I'm sure she won't be the last. Once I saw a saleswoman walk right up to my boss in the hallway, get right up in his face, and tell him, "You're an ass-hole. You have no idea how to run this business. You are incompetent, and so are your favorite employees. You make me sick. I quit."

I've only been here four years, and I can tell I can't take it here much longer, but in these past four years I've seen a turnover rate of like forty percent or something and the retraining alone puts too much stress on a staff.

Journal, 08/29/97

I've got so many questions right now, and I have no way to answer them all. I have to be somewhat honest with people, but if I do I could hurt their feelings and burn bridges. I need to keep connections if I'm going to do the things I plan to do over the next year, but I don't know how long I can lie to people in order to do it.

I'm just not interested in my relationship any more. It seems that he wants too much from me. He wants a relationship, and I just can't give that to him anymore. I tried for too long, and there was nothing there in the first place. But how do you say that to a man who tells you he loves you?

Working with him makes things all the more difficult. Why can't he just get another job? The worst part is, I genuinely think he's not good at his job. Other people compliment him, but I think his work is cluttered and disorganized. But then when people compliment him, it makes me wonder if it's just me - am I being too hard on him? Do I not want him to succeed because it means on some level I have failed, since we work at the same job? It's both, I guess. I know I need to be the best at everything, and I know he's not as good as he thinks he is.

He just came up to me and told me that if things are bothering me, I can talk to him. That I shouldn't feel that I can't talk to him because I don't want to bother him with my problems. Would he feel the same way if he knew he was the problem? Now he thinks I'm keeping my problems bottled up inside of me for his benefit, to spare him from having to hear about my problems, when he just wants to help me. If I told him the truth I'm positive he wouldn't feel the same way.

We've been through a lot and I want to feel like I can talk to him and confide in him. But he wants more from me, and that complicates things. We get along when we're just being human beings, but then he'll try to make a move on me and I'll feel so uncomfortable.

I'm exasperated. He sends out resumes every week, but he isn't getting a job, at least not yet, and I don't know if he wants to leave here or not.

It almost makes me want to stay here, just so he can't have the satisfaction of getting my job, especially when he doesn't deserve it.

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## *down in the dirt*

I hate having pride in my work at this place. It is hard when you know you're good at something and everyone tells you you're good and yet no one will let you make decisions. I'm the highest-ranking worker in my field at this company and people outside my department overrule decisions of mine arbitrarily - and regularly. They destroy any consistency or style something may have. And then I have to answer for it, since I'm the head of this department. But I'm really not. I'm a slave to the whims of people who don't know anything about my work. It makes me want to leave so badly.

And then I feel like I'm in some sort of contest with my relationship, that I can't leave, because that means he will have won and he will have my job. And he will have to deal with all the crap I have had to, and he will do a very poor job of it, and a worse product will be created.

But I guess it won't be mine, so I shouldn't care.

I just hate seeing things that are good get destroyed. It's one of the hardest things for me to witness.

There are two types of people: people who think of work as an extension of themselves, people who are productive, and continually strive to improve, to move forward, and there are people who think of work as some sort of evil necessity to help them exist because no one will give them money for some reason. So they go through work making a greater effort to not work and act like they are working, they stay in the same job, the gossip, and they make life difficult for productive people. One of the greatest benefits of Capitalism is that when the most productive people are allowed to work and to excel and to own and fully reap the benefits of their labor, then the standard of living is raised for all. Consider how well off homeless people are in this country as opposed to other countries, for instance. There is such a wealth of goods and services that it trickles down and improves the lives of all. When new technology is created, the old technology becomes cheaper, and more affordable to the lower classes. Well, my point from all that is that yes, that's one of the greatest things about Capitalism, but I must admit that there are times when on an entirely selfish level it bothers me that people who choose not to create, not to work hard, not to really contribute to society, still get the benefits from intelligent people's work.

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I have a headache that just does not want to go away. It is so strong, and it is all over my brain. It's like there is so little moisture separating my brain from my skull that I'm really afraid to move my head around, for fear that the scraping will not only hurt but eventually damage parts of my brain I may actually need. I need to drink some water.

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I feel like I'm making such a large decision in my life now. When I left college, I knew I was only going to be going to school for four years, this was the logical conclusion to my schooling, but it was a great change to go back home, as an adult, and start to look for a job. Once you're working, though, you make your own schedules. You can stay at the same job for thirty years, you can marry and quit your job and take care of a family, you can get another job. And the thing is, I had no idea how long I was going to be at this job. I thought I'd be here for at least six years' that's when my 401(k) becomes fully vested and I will have made the optimal amount of money in it, then I'd be ready to go, I'd have a few other investments, I could quit my job right about when I was probably ready to get married and possibly move to another city. But here I am, quitting a year and a half ahead of my plan, planning to spend a third of my savings on travelling instead of working for the next year. It's strange. I've always been so insistent that I be financially secure. I've always planned everything. I've always done the most logical thing. Is this logical? I figure that I'm young and I have a savings and I hate my job, this is as good a time as any. If I get married and/or start another job, I might not have this opportunity in my youth again. Right now, other than my job, there's really nothing holding me back. So this is my chance.

But it's not like me. It's not like me to throw away a job that makes me great money. I have perks here. I can work on other projects here. The equipment is excellent. But I'm treated like a second-class citizen here. I have four to six people who answer to me, but I can't tell them what to do when someone from another department is overriding my decisions all the time. I can hardly be an effective leader when no one allows me to lead.

I've mentally just gotten tired of fighting this place. So I'm here for another two months, I'll try to save all of my money, and then I move on.

And recoup for a year.

I don't know what I'm looking for when I go to Europe. I want to be alone, really. I want to see different sights. I want to see different sights through my own eyes, with my perceptions, with my perspectives. I want to be able to react to the world.

*down in the dirt*

Does that make sense?

I want to know I can do this. That I can.

And as I said, this is a very risky thing for me to do, this is not something that is in my nature. To reject my stability. How safe is it to travel on the other side of the world by myself? Oh, I know I keep thinking of all of the bad things that can happen, but I need to be prepared for all of them.

The first thing I'm worried about is that all of these people that said they'd get me a place to stay or go for a month with me are going to back out at the last minute, after I've quit my job and bought the ticket. Like my relationship. One woman I know said she was interested in an extended stay in Germany with her sister. Urgh. Who knows, no one can give me a definitive answer about anything. I just have no idea if I'm making the right choices or not.

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One of my male coworkers is leaving work. Today is his last day. I've worked with him for over three years, more like four, I think. He got another job in Los Angeles, and the market is better there in education for his wife. His brother is also out there, married with a new baby, so this guy will be able to spend more time with his brother. And the weather is warmer. And it's not THIS PLACE.

I told him I'd visit, that I'm planning on being in California in the beginning of February. He has no idea what the circumstances will be, though. I almost want to tell him my plan, right when he's about to leave, you know, let him in on the secret. It's strange, really, working with someone for so long, going through so much garbage with someone. Usually when someone quits in this office they've only been here for a year, that's not much time, people like that come and go regularly (especially here, where the turnover rate is so high because everyone hates it here so much), but this guy has been here a while.

We used to talk a lot about religion. from the atheist perspective when you talk or argue, well, the people you have the most interesting religious conversations with are, of course, the religious freaks, the ones who don't drink or swear and saved themselves for marriage and go to bible study. Well, when he was first here, we'd talk on our lunch breaks about life and it was really interesting. But then his wife got wind of the fact that he was having lunch with a "girl", all alone, oh my gosh, I might convert him (or worse yet, pervert him), so then he was forbidden by his wife to really spend any time with me.

You know, I never understood why she didn't want him to talk to me. Even if she didn't trust me, which she could have, she should have at least been able to trust her husband. I think he's probably one of the most trustworthy men ever to work here (well, I guess that's not much, since the men that work here are usually jerks or alcoholics anyway), but why did she browbeat him all the time? And why did he put up with it?

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The man I'm dating called me three times after work this evening. Twice to see if I was okay, because I told him I was in a bad mood, and once to start an argument with me about how I never open up to him and he can't take this anymore and he never wants to speak to me again. So I ask him if he means that and he says no, that he wants to make me happy. Can't he make up his mind?

I don't mean to drive him crazy, I really don't. But I can't stand the way he badgers me for more than I am capable of giving to him. He's been too much of a jerk in the past for me to think of him as reliable. And since we work in the same field I can judge his work, and it's hard for me to respect someone that is wiser than me in their career. I know I demand a lot of a person, but I know I have a lot to give and am worth it. And I know I need to look up to someone, and I feel I can't look up to anyone right now.

Sometimes I think of a past relationship, and how it always seems to fall into place with him.

Sometimes I really miss him.

Sometimes I wonder if we'll eventually get married anyway, even though we've been broken up for a year now.

It just might happen.

*journal, 08/30/97*



## down in the dirt

I just had breakfast with my guy. It was very nice. I talkd to him yesterday that we should be happy more, that we should just be happy, that we shouldn't keep fighting. And it was nice.

And then we were watching television and a song was on MTV, and it was a song by Jewel, and it was all about how she does the little rituals during the day, like brushing her teeth, or turning down the sheets of her bed at the end of the day, or leaving the light on when she leaves a room, and how all of these little rituals or idiosyncracies remind her of the one she loves. And every time I hear that song I actually think of someone else, and I try not to, but I do anyway. And I keep thinking that I keep trying to be good, I keep trying to be the best I can be, I keep trying to exceed my expectations, which are everyone else's expectations, but I can enver match him. I can never be as good as that ex. And I had to let him go.

And then I came home from breakfast and my roommate was waiting for me, and he saw I wasn't happy, and he was concerned, and he managed to make me smile for a little bit, but I still feel terrible.

Why do I feel like what I want is unreachable?

I keep thinking that my one ex that things seems to just flow more easily with is the one, and I still feel like I'm destined to marry him, even though I don't believe in destiny, but I feel like I can't talk to him. But I fear that it's not his fault; I fear that the problem is with me, not him, or anyone else. I feel like I have all of these demons inside of me, and I can't let them out. I have all of these secrets.

Then I think of people that make me think of him when I hear that song... Why can't I just stop loving him and get it over with? Why did he have to shape me so much? Why did he have to make me think? Sometimes I want to curse him for it.

Ignorance is bliss, they say. It makes me wonder if it would be easier if I just didn't think; but I don't know how.

I see glimmers in my ex sometimes. I see what I loved in him. And he can sense that, he knows what I am thinking when I am thinking that I love him. I wish he didn't know sometimes, and sometimes I wish he knew more than he did.

Like the song says:

Isn't it...

Isn't it...

Isn't it just like a woman?

Today I've been going back and forth between elation and complete depression. I have learned to turn it off when I need to, the depression, that is, when someone surprises me or if someone gives me a call I have learned how to just turn it off. But then I get off the phone, or they leave the room (finally), and I am allowed to feel as miserable as I did before again.

I guess it doesn't help that I'm on my seventh beer, and it's two o'clock in the afternoon. It's probably time for me to go.

Journal, 08/31/97

Princess Diana died last night. I think I want to write something about it. I suppose that sounds rude, mentioning that I want to write something about the incident, instad of saying that I feel terrible or something. I mean, it's sad that she died, but I didn't know her. I do find it fascinating that she died while being chased by photographers on motorbikes and that the media is still in a frenzy, broadcasting hour after hour about her life ending in tragedy. I think it's also interesting that she became a princess at what, nineteen?, and she though she was really becoming a princess, as did the rest of the world, but really she was just a tool for the royal family, including and especially her husband. And she had to learn fast how to deal with the paparazzi, and the affairs, and everyone wanting to know every detail of her life, and he husband never admitting he loved her. And she was bulemic, and she suffered post-natal depression, and then she went on to do charity work, and then she was divorced. And then she tried to start her life over again and the tabliods snuck around for every photo of her with men that they could get and made her out to be some sort of whore, and just as she's probably starting to feel better about the past seventeen years of her life, just as she's starting to move a life, she dies in a car accident.

It really is strange, if you think about it.

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down in the dirt

I'm visiting my friend right now, Well, his roommate is telling me about the obnoxious neighbors, and how they've been lighting fireworks late at night that are loud, and then she said one of her neighbors lit a cat on fire. And I thought, well, they probably just lit the tail and it went out a second or two after they did it. I'm then listening to the news later on tonight, and one of the stories shows a picture of a cat with almost no hair, burned all over, with a cone on.

## journal, undated

Do you know how difficult it is for me to find someone? What is it, are my expectations too high?

Without someone to date, the chances of physical interaction are even more slim than they already seem to be for me.

God, I can't stand this. I'm here at work and it's after lunch and I'm so fed up with work for one reason or another, that's the way it always is, and so is he, I mean, he's fed up about one thing or another that's happening to him, so neither one of us are happy. And the thing is, I'm tired of trying to make things better for him when he makes no effort to do that for me.

Whenever I can tell that something is bothering him, I always try to put on my happiest face, ask him what the problem is, see if I can do anything to help. But he doesn't do that for me. If he bothers to make some sort of an effort, it always seems pushed, and it always seems that he's still unhappy... Okay, if I tell him I feel physically sick he'll offer to get something for me, or help me carry my stuff, but it doesn't seem to matter to him when I feel emotionally sick. It's like I'm putting him out by needing comforting.

But the problem is, I need that comforting from him.

Sure, why don't you just break up with him, you say. You think he's no good anyway. But there are two reasons why I keep trying:

1. Men are NOT, according to the opinion of the masses, banging down my door and begging me to go out with them, telling me how attractive and intelligent I am, begging to spend lots of money on me and whisk me away to a better life. I look around and everyone seems to have found someone wonderful and I can't seem to find someone tolerable. I've been waiting for the point where I decide that being alone would be more enjoyable than where I am now, dating someone. It's getting to that point, closer and closer. The thing is, the way we are now, it's almost like I'm alone, he spends no time with me, he works a lot, and I can understand that, but then he socializes once or twice a week and doesn't include me in his only social plans. I always include him in mine, I at least offer him the option of seeing me. He doesn't even seem like he wants to be with me, either.

2. While men reach their sexual peak at 18, women reach theirs at around age 30. Hence, I'm getting more and more horny by the minute and I keep hoping that by staying with him I have a better chance than I do if I don't have a boyfriend. See, I'm not even too interested in trying to find a new boyfriend, because I've gotten to the point where I feel like no one on the face of this earth can even come remotely close to making me happy.

Okay, okay, I was wrong, there's a third reason:

3. Break-ups are always a bitch. And I know this wouldn't be a clean break-up.

And, you know, I was walking down the hall today, and I saw a cute guy in a suit (well, we were in my office building, what do you expect...) and I thought, wow, that's a cute guy, and I haven't seen one of those in a very, very long time. I haven't even been attracted to someone in a very long time. It's like I can't even find someone to match the physical criteria I've developed over the years, much less get past that and like them as a human being.

And right now, I'm thinking that I could deal with having to close my eyes and go through the motions. But I'm not even getting that.

I'm sure that guy in my office building was married anyway.

Hell, one of my exes even has a friend from high school that I met on the day of the gay pride parade, and even though we were all at the gay pride parade, none of us were actually gay, and I thought this guy was cute, too. But that would be too cruel - date someone that is friends with your ex.

That would be me just twisting the knife that I already shoved into his back.

Or at least that's how he would see it.

## down in the dirt

I do get hit on at bars sometimes, but it's usually be someone twice my age. Yes, Casanova, you're just what I'm looking for. Help.

I met someone that I've now become friends with, and he's a very, very excellent person. We have a lot in common. I like the work that he does; he's very talented. And I know he likes me, hell, we even had the conversation:

"Well, you know you don't like him. It's obvious. Break up with him. You know how I feel. The ball's in your court."

"It's not that simple. I don't want to spoil our friendship and our working relationship. And I can't just break up with a guy; it's not that simple."

Yes, he is an excellent person, But I

(a) am just not physically attracted to him, although I have to admit that there's still some nice tension there, and

(b) fear that, knowing that he's like me, we'll be having fights in no time and throwing stuff at each other and then I won't be able to interact with him at all and that would be a real shame, because, as I said, he's talented and I admire his work. I'm trying to be politically correct.

Okay, okay, there's a third reason:

(c) I can tell from what I've learned about him that he is relatively neurotic, and I really don't want to have to deal with someone else's dysfunctionality. I've got enough of my own dysfunctionality to go around.

So now I'm getting to the point where I just can't take it anymore, so when I'm just about to tell my boyfriend to take a flying leap out of his office window, thinking that he's not going to the party tonight that I invited him to weeks ago, he comes in, saying give me a call, and I say,

"Why? I'm going straight from work to the party."

"Oh, well, I thought we were going together."

"Well, you said a lunch today that you were going to go home and be by yourself and drink whiskey instead."

"Well, I wasn't planning to, I said that for everyone else's benefit."

Then there's that really shitty pause.

"Well, then call me and let me know your time plan, maybe we can meet up for it or something."

Why did I say that?

So this is where I am. What do I do? Maybe I should post this on some "relationship news group" on the internet and see if anyone can help me. I know you're going to say that I bring all of these things upon myself. But I feel like I have no choice half of the time. It's either get next to nothing or get nothing. Maybe if I got nothing I would at least stop kidding myself.

I told my boyfriend last night that maybe the idea of being boyfriend and girlfriend is not the right idea right now, and maybe we should just hold off a while until we actually miss each other and want to see each other and go out on a date. And I know I'm still not going to find anyone that doesn't look like an ape and isn't in debt. Not that money is the only factor, mind you, it's just that if they can't get their own life together, they can't get together on a life with me, and my life will be scooping them out of trouble and helping them out and being a mom to them, and I sure don't want that. I did that enough with one of my exes.

My boyfriend says he tries, and when he outlines examples I tell him that in those situations he made me feel bad for putting him out and now he's trying to make me feel guilty for ever asking for help when he had other things to do. Yeah, it's him that I need comforting from, and if he's causing the problem he can hardly be the solution, right? Well, as I said, I talked to him last night, hinted that we should cool off.

Maybe I should go for high school grads. I'm sure the male peak at 18 means they can do it forty times, at ten seconds a pop. Cool.

Oh, well, one can joke...

A guy I used to go out with went to the party that my boyfriend and I went to last night, and my boyfriend was just sitting there, not wanting to talk, and my ex was being very personable and funny and nice. It made me kind of sad, like, why couldn't he be cool when he dated me?

Oh, and about last night... I was out until 1:30 on a wednesday night and didn't even drink. i'll now explain the story of my crazy week:

Okay, this guy I was telling you about, he's a very, very talented man. Well, we went out with another guy Monday, and he told me at the end of last week that he liked me. well, he's very cool, but... Well, I told you his how I felt.

But... even there are all these problems with us dating, the thought does cross my mind. But I don't want to screw it up and



## *down in the dirt*

make him my enemy.

And he's probably thinking the same thing.

Okay, fine.

So... I come to this party Wednesday with my boyfriend, who has had one hour of sleep because he worked and slept at the office the night before. and so we start talking about things, because I didn't even want him to go to the party, and I surely didn't want him to get mad and expect me to leave and drive him home. I wanted to just be able to enjoy the party. Anyway, so we start talking, and I say that maybe we should cool it off for a while, since this hasn't been working for a while. he says he knows he hasn't made me happy in a while, and frankly, he's not happy either. So he seems agreeable, and I say, "maybe the idea - right now - of being boyfriend and girlfriend isn't working for us. maybe we can get to the point where it will work by giving us some time." That bothered him. He said that time just usually means time before two people break up. I said, well, maybe we can get to the point where we actually like each other again, where he wants to ask me out on a date, where he really misses me, where he's really attracted to me, and maybe at that point I can feel the same way. Maybe we can have a date and it will go really well, and we'll value each other again.

But that's not happening now. So maybe we need some time.

Okay, so with that said, my ex came then arrived at the party, just for a few minutes, and he was being fun and nice and cool, which I'm not used to, and my boyfriend is being crappy as usual. I mean, I'm trying to have fun, they're playing the Smiths and REM and I'm dancing in my chair, trying not to look like I'm having one of those kinds of discussions, and my boyfriend then decides he has to leave. Then my ex leaves a few minutes later, which was what I wanted in the first place - to be there alone. I knew people there at the party, that guy I was with Monday was there, and there were people there I really needed to make contact with, introduce myself to and schmooze with. I needed to mingle.

So I talked to people and was having a really cool time, and there were like 75 people there, and when it was all done we said, let's all go to a bar right across the street.

So I tell the Monday-guy he can keep his stuff in my car so he doesn't have to lug it around and then they go smoke put and I watch because I just wasn't up for it and then I decided I wasn't even going to drink because I won't be able to stay up or get into work on time and I've been drinking too much anyway. So I get to the bar after everyone else from the party got there, and I walked in and saw everyone, and I felt like Herb Tarlek from WKRP in Cincinnati walking into a room and doing a gunshot move with my hands to some people and waving to others and being a big cheese-ball... So I'm just mingling and everything is really cool and the Monday-guy is talking to an ex of his a lot, but I figured he'd be talking to other people anyway so I wouldn't talk to him much. And then I see this really cute guy, he looks YOUNG, but hell, I'm desperate and as I said he's cute, and the thing is he looked just like Shawn Cassidy. Big droopy eyes. So I'm looking at him over the course of the evening and I can see that he's doing the same to me which is really cool because that hasn't happened in a long time for me. Okay, so then I'm just talking to people and then Lisa comes up, and she's friends with the people at the next table, including Shawn Cassidy, so I say, "Those are your friends, right?" And she says "Yes," and I tell her the blonde looks like Shawn Cassidy and she says something about him really loud so he now has the opportunity to turn around and join in on our table to see what we're talking about.

So she tells him he looks like Shawn and he says that women ask him out because of it, and that it's really scary and I say, "well, don't think of it as a bad thing, because, I mean, Shawn Cassidy is a good-looking guy." And he just looks at me and pauses and says, "I'll take that as a compliment." So we smile at each other for a minute and then I say, "You know, I don't look like any star. Someone once told me I looked like Rikki Lake and I said no way and then they say, no when she's thin, and I still said no way," and there were looking at me saying I didn't look like her at all, and then Shawn or whatever his name is says, "You don't have to look like someone, you're very good looking by being you." And I say, after a long pause, "I'll take that as a compliment."

So we're just talking a bit and I don't even know this guy's name so as he's leaving I say, well, it was nice to meet you, but I didn't even get your name, and he tells me his name and he then says he'd like to see me again so I tell him to go to this one bar next Wednesday because his friend will be there and I'll be there too. Then he says good-bye to me two more times and leaves.

And the whole time our mutual friend is looking at me like this is just too unreal that all this cutesy eye-contact was being made between me and Shawn.

So then I finally decide I'm going to go, I mean, it's after 1:30 and I do have to be at work at 8:30 in the morning, so I say my goodbyes and tell the Monday-guy to get his stuff out of my car. And he is so stoned and we're walking to my car and we pass a fast food place and Shawn is sitting at the window, right by the open door. So I mess up his hair as I walk by and the

*down in the dirt*



*down in the dirt*



## *down in the dirt*

just keep going, so he runs out after me. So now i've got the Monday-guy and Shawn standing at my car. I ask Shawn to wait while I get the Monday-guy's belongings out of my trunk. Then the Monday-guy, the sweet thing, then asks me if it's okay that he's staying and I'm going. and I'm thinking, "I could tell you were hitting on your ex," and I say, "of course it's fine, you don't have to think that it would bother me," because really, it wouldn't, I just want everyone to be happy. So he leaves, and Shawn and I just keep looking at each other and slightly smiling, and he said he wanted to go back to the bar to see me after he left and he was wondering if he could give me his phone number. I told him, well, I do know, I'm kind of busy for the next few days, so maybe it would just be cool if he would please show up at the bar next Wednesday, because then maybe we could get the chance to talk a little more, since we've barely had the chance to get to know each other. He said that was cool, and then I got in my car and drove home.

Phew.

So, in other words, I'm feeling pretty good right now. I didn't set my alarm right, so I woke up at 8, and I have to leave at 8 to be on time for work, so I got ready in three minutes and begged my roommate to give me a ride. So, 25 minutes after I woke up I was in the office.

Phew.

My "boyfriend" hasn't shown up at work yet, it's almost 10:30, and he told his supervisor that he's late because he had some stuff dumped on him last night.

Boo-hoo.

Sorry, I'm being mean. I just like feeling wanted. Is that so wrong?

Okay, so this part of the story is called "when it rains, it pours":

My buddy calls me and asks me to go out with him and his friend because it's John's birthday and it would be cool. I'm telling my buddy of my frustrations with my boyfriend and he says "go out with my friend." I'm like, well, I don't know if that's a good idea, and my buddy says why not, he's got a masters degree, and I say, well, he's not interested in me, and my buddy says sure he is. I say, well, we had a falling out before, so to speak, and my buddy says no, he really liked you, but he didn't know if you liked him. so now I know I'm going to meet the two of them at a bar tonight and I just know there's going to be a lot of tension, unless my buddy gets his friend really drunk.

Hmm.

The new installment...

My buddy came over but his friend never showed up for dinner. He had no idea my buddy was planning on taking him to see me or that other friends were meeting with us at the bar. So... I went out with my buddy and we talked and everything was fine.

I talked to my "boyfriend" Thursday. we started to argue about all of the little things that we don't do for each other anymore, the way we always argue lately. I said, this is why we need to spend more time apart recovering. And he said, I don't know how spending time apart will help; if I don't make you happy maybe we just shouldn't bother. And I thought, he's throwing the baby out with the bath water, and I said, well, right now you're feeling the way I'm feeling now, you're not happy now, right?

And he said yes.

And I asked, did I ever make you happy?

And he said yes.

So I asked, do you want to try to get that back or do you just want to throw it all away?

So then he agreed with me.

So... I went out last night with my buddy, and the Monday-guy called me yesterday, and he's coming over Friday night.

Hmm...

What chapter am I on?

Okay, so I go out Tuesday and see the woman who was friends with the Shawn Cassidy look-alike, and she's out with us Tuesday, and then I say I'm not sure if I'm going to make it Wednesday, because I have a work function, and it depends on how drunk I get, and she say, well, Shawn Cassidy is going to be there. so I say, okay, I'll be there, I promise.

I just thought, this opportunity is too good.

Okay, so I go to my work function, and I make sure I don't get hammered, which I didn't, and the thing was done by like



## *down in the dirt*

9:15 so I drive there and there's a lot more people there than usual, which is a good thing, and people are already there, so I just grab a seat and listen. It's dark, I'm having a hard time seeing, so I have no idea if Shawn is there. Then she looks at me in the audience and says, "Did you know he was here?"

and I'm just like, splendid, just what I needed.

Okay, so he says hi to me and then he moves so he's sitting closer to me, so that we can play that little game we were playing when we first saw each other, you know, glance over at the other one while you're talking to someone else, smile just a little and then look back at your conversation, over and over again.

So I know that Shawn, if all is going according to plan, is now officially hooked.

Hee hee.

So he ends up coming over and sitting next to me and we're whispering while others are there and we kept talking, you know, in groups with a bunch of other people too, but alone too, and we're talking about America's love of mass murders and pornography and having good conversations, like interesting ones, ones you can't just have with a frat guy type in a bar. And I was a little surprised, because I know he's only 23 or something, so I didn't know what kind of conversation I'd be having to deal with.

So, to make a long story only slightly less long, we talk until after one in the morning, and I give him my email and my business card and he gives me his number and email and I drive him and two other people part of the way home and ...

Well, that's it, I guess. It was just all very cutesy, and nice.

Hmm.

Oh yes, I'll see him again, at least if I have anything to say about it I will.

And he's taller than me.

Okay, am I missing something?

So we get to the party and he tells me he wants a relationship and since I don't seem to want that, he's dating someone that night be better for him. And I'm like, fine. You know, fine, like I didn't want a relationship with you, you were right, don't worry about it. Only thing is, I wish he could have told me before we got to this party, because now we've got this uncomfortable tension, unless he was just trying to get a ride from me, so he held off on telling me until he actually got to the party... So then three minutes after we have that discussion, which is like three minutes after we get to this party, some jerk knocks into me and spills my full glass of wine all over my shirt and a little on my jeans, too. So now I'm like, well, I've been here for a total of six minutes, had an awkward conversation and got a full glass of wine spilled on me and am now soaking wet. I've had about as much fun as I could possibly have at this party, so I should probably just go home, towel off and go to bed.

So I go home, and it's only like 11:30 on Friday night, but I'm in too pissy of a mood to go out and try to meet up with anybody, besides, I really don't know where anybody is. And of course Shawn calls at like two in the morning and wakes me up and he's apologizing and I said no problem, don't be mad if I sound groggy, and we talked about all sorts of stuff, none of which I can completely remember since I wasn't lucid. I do remember talking about the play Caligula, which I just saw, but other than that I remember nothing. I think we both said we like each other. Who knows.

So then I'm kind of hoping he calls me, and he doesn't for the rest of the weekend. Poo. No emails either. So since I'm dying and have no restraint I call and leave a message at like 4:00 Sunday afternoon. No call back. So I went out to dinner with the fuy I just broke up with and am still friends with and watched "The X Files" and half of a movie and drank wine and came home. Still no messages.

Geez, he can't even call me back.

So I wake up and get to work and I have an email from him. and it goes:

I tried calling you last night. I guess you were eating. You did not say anything bad on friday :) You would have a hard time offending me. I am so not awake yet. I got up early to work on homework-only to find I don't have any. Well time to eat some Capt. Crunch. Talk to you soon.

Went on a date with Shawn.

## down in the dirt

Okay, so at one point we were talking about throwing up stories, right? And I'm trying to come up with the grossest story I have, and I think it's when someone threw up on me. So we're swapping stories, and he says he's got one, and then he says he shouldn't tell it.

So I'm like, well, you have to tell it now.

And he says, well, you know how bulemics throw up?

And I say, yeah.

And he says, well, a woman did that once, in my presence, but it wasn't with a finger.

And I just thought, oh my god, she threw up on his penis! I mean, what's that going to do to a guy's psyche?

Okay, well, I'm also thinking, I can't believe this guy is telling me this story, and I just couldn't stop from laughing.

Okay, so then I'm thinking she had to be drunk, right? And I ask how drunk she was, and he says she wasn't, it was just from hitting the back of her throat.

Okay, so now I'm even more embarrassed. I mean, I'm dying. I can't stop laughing, but I'm at least comforted that his dick is at least long enough to get to the back of some woman's throat.

I was so flushed, I couldn't stop laughing. I mean, what would you do if you were on a first date and your date told you this story? I mean, yeah, he didn't want to say it, and it's not like he was proud of it or anything.

Oh my god, I didn't know how to react.

## undated journal entry

I think I'm going to quit my job. I really can't stand it here; even though I'm paid well I'm treated like crap by the owner; it's like he resents me because I asked to be paid what I'm worth. And everyone seems to fight me on any decision to be made, even though everyone will say I am the best here at my job, they'll still argue with me. I have really gotten to the point where I just hate it here, so much that I feel like I almost have to leave.

That's a big step for me, that's a big thing to say for me, it's like a bigger jump like when I was leaving college. I don't plan on looking for another job. Either:

1. I'm going to take like a year off and travel, or
2. I'm going to start a new company, or
3. I'm going to take like a year off and travel, and then I'm going to start a new company.

I could do freelance work as well, to tie me over, if I can get the clients. That way I'd have an income, all while working at home, not having to commute, not having to dress up, not having committees changing everything (I would get paid by the hour), and I could take time off when I wanted to.

Then again, I'd have to get the clients.

Okay, so for at least now, the idea still comes back to travel.

This is probably one of the only chances I'll have in my life to see other places, to really take the time to do it. I could write while I'm out, too. I know a family in Scotland, I may know someone with a home in London (if all goes according to their plan for getting a place in London), a friend's family stays and has relatives in Prague and offered me a job there. I thought I could stay with people and work off my stay there or something, and just live differently for a while. I'm still single and have a savings, so this is probably the best time for me to do it. And I can't stay at this company for another Christmas. They have a ton of extra work starting in November and we put in 80-90 hours a week and I never have time for the holidays. I can't do that to myself again, and a part of me relishes the idea of short staffing my boss and making his life difficult.

Well...

But I can't stay here.

I'm single.

I have a savings.

Last Christmas I was just crying. I was so fed up then with my job, and I told her I wanted to travel. She did it when she was younger, and she just kept telling me, "You know you can always make it, if you have to work at McDonalds, you'll always be resourceful enough to make it. So if you want to take the chance, go ahead and do it."

down in the dirt

And I don't know if I can look at myself on Christmas day 1997 if I'm still miserable and haven't done anything about it. know what I mean?

I've made plans a few times to go to Europe, or Russia, but they fall through. I want to actually do it.

## 1998 journal entries

August 21, 1998

Friday

non-American time

Sometimes people just don't want to hear about complaints. People would rather just process thoughts than actually think. When I meet people who are in charge of pro-life movements, and actually against anti-religion, or anti-life, or anti-thought movements. These are the types of people who would like to defend racism, or other things that seem to represent some people but not all people.

I don't understand how some people can support a life-decision, but not a life-philosophy. There is no consistency in that argument. Seldom do I see consistency in anyone's argument. Seldom do I hear people start to talk about religion, or philosophy. Seldom do topics like that fit into other people's arguments.

Sometimes the world just makes less and less sense. I've probably said too much, and I've probably said the wrong thing, and I should know this for myself; I should know this more of the time.

Sometimes my days make more sense and sometimes the world makes less sense. I think it's 11:30 in the morning. In less than 2 hours I have to be at another meeting.

I'll just keep repeating to myself that this is supposed to be my last day here.

But nothing gets better and no problems get solved and my head still hurts and I've only been here six weeks and everything still sucks.

In less than two hours I'm supposed to be gone.

That never works.

This is my life.

I still want a happy ending and I never find one.

I have written at this for way too long and used too much unreal paper. This could be my world. I still have over an hour and a half to go.

I wish I could just sleep through the pain sometimes.

down in the dirt

August 24, 1998

NonAmerican

Journal Entry

Nothing from this new world makes sense.

People are regularly losing ... At, well, .... what do you call it? Daytime baseball, I suppose. I still hate the usual baseball - nothingness. I still hate most of the concerns that has nothing to do with any of the sports I feign interest in. I don't like football, or baseball, or most things that have anything to do with interaction.

Commercials on WGN or Fox or whatever I have on television suck. In case you're curious. This nonsense is still on tee-vee. I have a permanent headache and nothing gets rid of my headache. It's 12:40 in the afternoon and I have NOTHING to kill time-wise for the next 20 minutes until my next hour-long class of pain before I hate this place even more and someone I don't care about gives me a half-hour painful ride home.

Some actions, some ideas, some thoughts, are loud, and HURT.

Everyone is about to go to lunch, except for the two people in the two beds, and me. I'm still writing and venting. Nothing ever changes.

There's too much time to kill, and too much nothing to do. Such is my life.

1999 journal entries

1/27/98

Here is the deal. I am writing this while I am working. There were things I wanted to say, but I didn't bother. you want to know what my issue is? My ISSUE? That I always want more. Yes, I know, that is MY problem, not yours. But after what I have gone though this year, my goals are even more defined and more specific now.

What does that mean for you? Well, it is a favor, I know, but if your definition of love comes anywhere close to my definition of love (no, that doesn't mean I want to get hitched and have six kids), but if your sense of understanding the value of love, if that is anywhere close to my definition, then maybe you would be willing to hear me out on this one.

I don't need a guy relationship or any of that other crap. I've pretty much gotten used to the idea of not being gushy in pub-



*down in the dirt*

lic or anything; that's not my style. But I know I'm an attention whore, and sometimes I just need to hear that I am worth something. I know, I know, but I never pay attention to that; it's like I'm not capable of understanding that kind of stuff. I know there are men out there that find me attractive, too, but it is like this: in my own perverse head I often discount what other people say or think. Well, usually my assessments are accurate, but you know, such is life.

That's what I hate about thinking. My goals and values are so different from the average person's goals and beliefs and such, that it is just a disappointment. I get tired of being disappointed all the time, and I get therefore tired of thinking all the time. Which is why I ask what the point is, unless I change (at the core) who I am?

So either I have to get hit by a truck or happen upon a completely changed world. which option do you think will happen first?

It is hard to think about that "love" theory, and all that other crap, when there is nothing like it out there... according to my views.

So in other words... I know full well (I know, I know, that wasn't even proper english, grammar-wise) that people don't think about things like this and people accept whatever other standards seem popular at the time.

At least that is the average person.

So now this is supposed to be truth time for me...

I guess what I was asking for was someone more stable to be the rock I can lean on.

oh, that didn't make sense. But I at least know what I meant there...

The thing I miss is not having control all the time. I am too used to being the rock for everyone else, I am used to being the voice of reason when everyone else loses their head, and most importantly, I am tired of having everyone think that as long as I seem fine, I am not needed.

Friends are fickle, and selfish, and they lie. This much I know. Even when I'm not at full capacity I am aware of this. That is why I shut up all the time and don't tell people things.

I'm too used to people saying things and meaning them, in part, at the time, when they'll change their mind on it two months later. That is why on some levels I clam up, and on some I tell too much.

I guess that is another one of my problems...

But the things I want are a big deal to me, and they require at least some honesty and openness on my part, in order for me to get them. I'm too used to being the rock for everyone else, and I want someone to be the rock for me. That's what I want, and that is the most vague way I can put it. And the most general way. I am an attention whore, and I have been looking for it in any way that I have the capacity. Men want a piece of flesh, well hell, I don't even care about my own, so why should I be girl-like and act like it matters to me?

Well, it does matter, and I try not to say it and I try to not think about it. if I care about nothing else, why should I care about that?

1/29/99

I'm too used to being treated like shit, so when things go well I think, what, did I do something good? did I deserve this? When I talked to my sister she was saying that I needed a female friend as I was growing up and then I wouldn't feel so alone all the time. I guess that is her theory on why I get along with men more than women.

Granted, they can steal from me, they can beat me up, they can rape me... but hell, other than that, they are nice guys. Trust them as far as you can throw them. I guess.

oh, nevermind. I've discovered that it is pointless for me to have hopes. I've done a pretty good job of repressing all my

*down in the dirt*

dreams. we'll see if he wants to see me again.  
or tonight.  
or whatever.

I have met one person who has been honest with me. I mean, that I know is honest. But honesty is seldom the best policy, at least for the average person.

I don't know how I fit into the way I think versus how the average person thinks... that is probably why I ask questions about religion and such. People at least on some level are somewhat honest about those beliefs.

But how often do I hear the truth? If you want my answer, it is next to never. People are not honest, that much.

I've discovered that people are not honest, and so if I say anything, it will be the first thing taken seriously out of my mouth. So I tend to shut up and the like.

Just a theory.

My childhood? I was made fun of all the time. Teased because I was smart, I was fat, I was the teacher's pet... you see, I talked to the teachers because unlike everyone else I wasn't afraid of them, the teachers liked me because I was smart. Kids can be cruel, though, and they will search for things to pick on. I don't want to remember specific details about how they acted, because the memories are something I have tried to repress. So in other words, I hate looking back on a good part of my youth. I was just a kid; I wasn't strong enough to stand up for myself or be strong. Which I am now.

I've discovered that people are not honest, and so if I say anything, it will be the first thing taken seriously out of my mouth. So I tend to shut up and the like.

I was just reading over these now, and yes, I am very used to people lying regularly to me. I am not used to honesty. I crave honesty, and I never get it. it's like this, if someone seems honest with me, they might hold back on the truth and all, but I want people to be people who don't lie. well, not to me. I want to have hope in something. I have been let down so much that I don't know what or who to turn to any more. Even when I have hope, I have to get let down, and then I have to kill a little piece of me. And I am tired of doing that to myself.

8/8/99

Working for days a week for a month doesn't even cover my rent, so it is getting harder and harder for me to justify my reason for staying here.

Like any other day when I am here, I guess. living alone, metaphysically, and being alone, spiritually.

journal 08-05-99

I'm early.

I'm early for my first day of quasi-work at this quasi-job. I shouldn't be so pessimistic about it, but when I know the difference for me between a job and a career, when I know how I stumbled into this position, well, it gets easier for me to sound like I'm above this all.

Which I shouldn't say, because it IS work, which I have not had for 6 months, and it gives me a reason to not hem and haw about my internet connection.

I'm processing orders, and possibly doing some receptionist work. So it has been an interesting lack-of-moneyjob, interesting to see how models think and act, but otherwise fruitless.

It gave me a reason to put make-up on every once in a while.

*down in the dirt*

8/6/99

It's so strange working for people who don't have everything together.

So some of it required me having to ask someone there, and they seemed to always be running around in stress mode, and they were also SO disorganized. At one point I saw that there was an order that needed to be done today, so I saw what kind of shipping it needed and I saw that it was going to the UK and so I got the right kind of packaging and I went to fill out a customs card and address label. Chanteen looked at me and asked, "what are you doing with that?" And I said, well, I know we're sending it out now, and I saw from the address and the shipment that it needed express delivery, and since it was going to the UK I got the global package. So I stay there and waited for a response.

She said okay.

I don't think she expected someone with half a brain to do this work.

Hell, I wouldn't expect it of me, either. Lucky fucking me.

They keep hard copies of all their orders over the internet, one for the "sort by name" file, one to go to the boss, and one to go to the manager. So she and the boss can record it all into the computer.

I still think it would save paper to put it all into a database, but the boss said that was not a proper use of their computer resources. So I wasn't going to argue with him on that one. Hell, it was my first day on the job.

Either way, when they were done processing the order, one copy went to the customer, one stayed in the "sort by name" file (which wasn't sorted totally alphabetically, just by the first letter of your last name... you would have no way of seeing from the file how many orders were done by a Jane Doe, unless there were NO other D names in the file), and the last one went to the "sort by date" file. If the order was processed on the 24th of July, just put it in the file with the other orders for the 24th of July.

Very disorganized. I know I'm anal-retentive, but hell, there has to be a better way to keep this all together.

And this has to be a waste of paper.

Anyway... enough about the job. I feel I get to talk about these kinds of things with no one, so I ramble here. Forgive me.

I love it when the bad breaks come in sheets for me. It's fun.

down in the dirt

we are begging you...

we want your writing, and we want to put it in magazines like this and in collection  
books that scars publications and design does, as well as on the internet. so i beg of you...

send your writing (in the e-mail letter or as an attachment) and your art to us, please!!!

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