

Godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come.

— 1 Timothy 4:8

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WHEN I WAS JUST A  
KID...

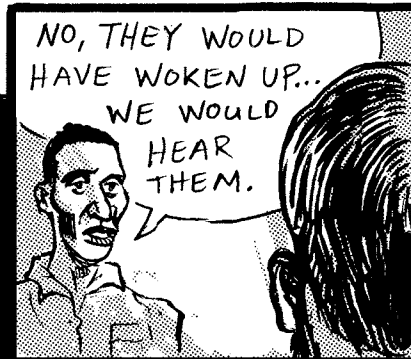
I BELIEVED  
IN DEMONS



I WOULD BE VERY OVERWHELMED SOMETIMES AS A KID. I FOUND THE ONLY WAY TO CALM MYSELF WAS TO LAY ON MY BED, TURN OFF THE LIGHTS AND WAIT FOR EVERYTHING TO SLOW DOWN.



MY PARENTS RAISED ME AS A CHRISTIAN. I'D READ THE BIBLE STORIES OF VARIOUS DEMON POSSESSIONS, AND JESUS CASTING SPIRITS OUT, SO I THOUGHT I WAS BEING POSSESSED, OR TESTED IN SOME WEIRD WAY.



LATER IN LIFE I WOULD REALIZE IT ALL HAD TO DO WITH ANXIETY...



... AND THAT WITH TIME I COULD LEARN TO MANAGE IT.



I DON'T BELIEVE IN SPIRITS OR DEMONS ANYMORE...



... BUT THAT DOESN'T MEAN OTHER PEOPLE DON'T HAVE THEM.

... COMING TO

**KILL ME!!**





I REACHED THE SOUTH AFRICAN BORDER

AND HAD TO SCALE THE FENCE

AHHH!

I MADE MY WAY SOUTH, AND ENDED UP IN KRUGER PARK.

I WAS ALMOST STAMPEDED BY AN ELEPHANT!

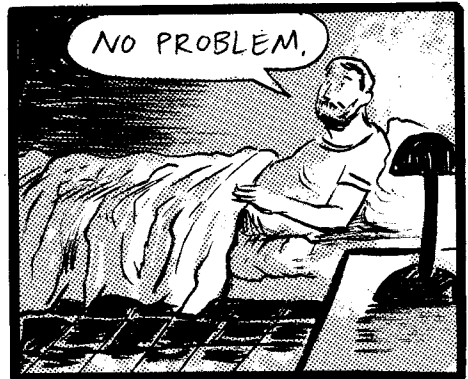
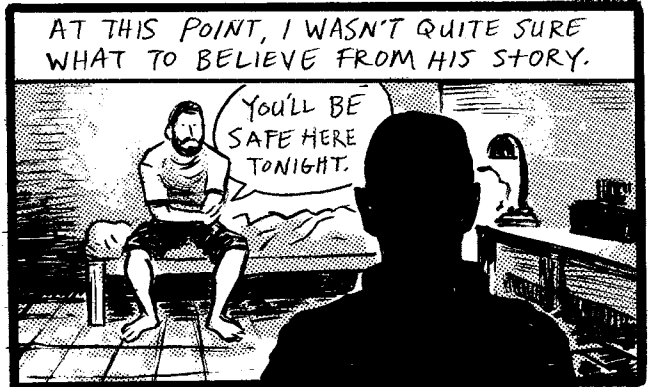


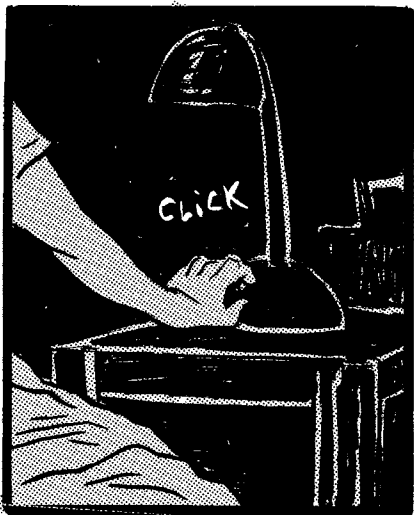


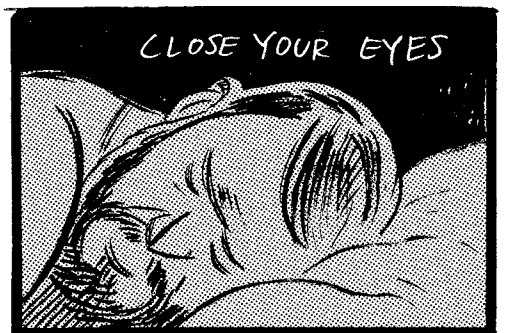
I CONTINUED TRAVELING, WORKING WHERE I COULD...

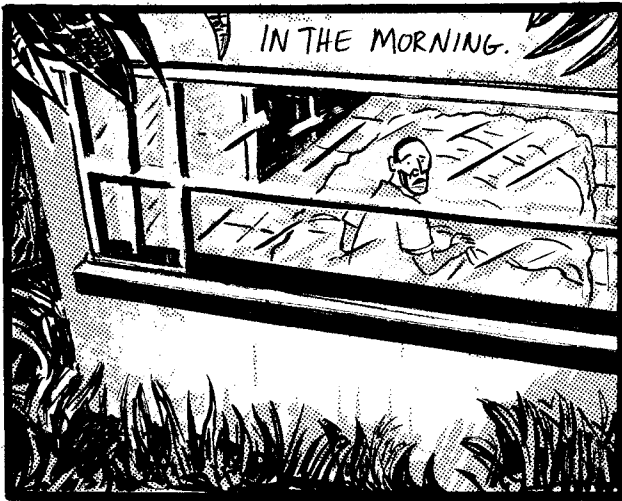


...UNTIL I ENDED UP IN THIS AREA.

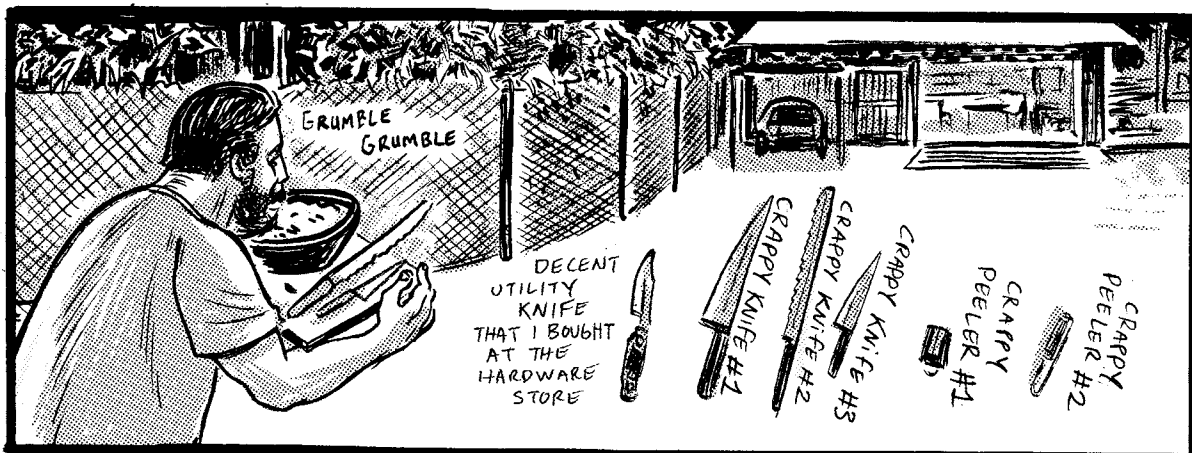








MY MAIN JOB EVERY DAY AT THE SANCTUARY WAS TO PREPARE THE FOOD EACH MORNING FOR THE MONKEYS; GATHERING PRE-COOKED FOOD, CRAPPY PEELERS, KNIVES, BOWLS AND CHOPPING BOARDS.

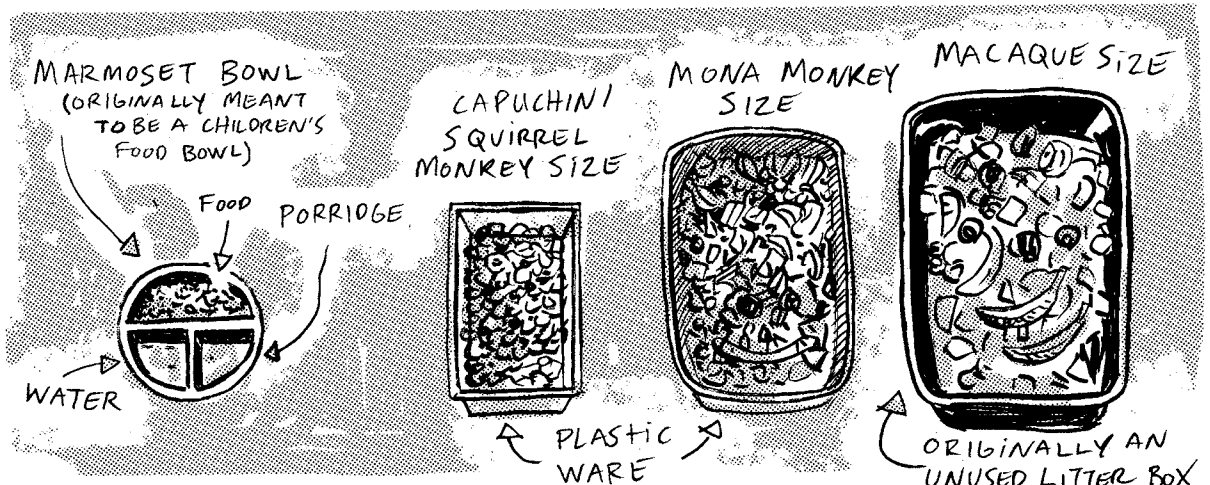
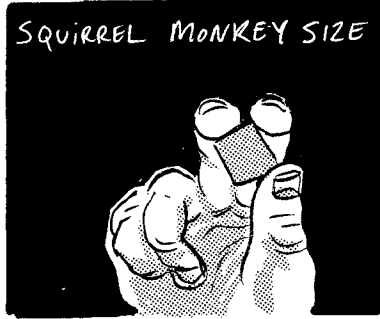
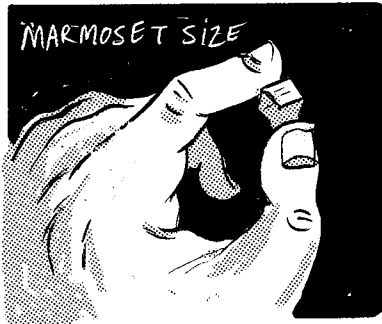


ALL OF THE CHOPPING MATERIALS WERE ALSO USED LATER AT NIGHT, DURING THE PREPARATION OF THE HUMAN FOOD, BECAUSE WE HAD NO FUNDS TO BUY EXTRAS. ALL OF THE KNIVES WERE VERY DULL.



I WOULD USUALLY HAVE ONE OR TWO SHORT-TERM VOLUNTEERS (MORE IF I WAS LUCKY) HELPING ME EVERY DAY. I HAD TO INSTRUCT THEM IN THE BEST WAY TO CHOP AND DISTRIBUTE THE FOOD PROPERLY FOR EACH DIFFERENT SPECIES OF PRIMATE.

THE FOUNDER OF THE SANCTUARY, SUE, HAD VERY SPECIFIC SIZES THAT SHE WANTED THE MONKEYS FOOD CUT TO, SO A LOT OF MY JOB WAS MAKING SURE THE VOLUNTEERS WERE DOING IT PROPERLY. IF IT WASN'T THE RIGHT SIZE, SUE THOUGHT IT WAS WASTEFUL. THE MARMOSETS WERE ESPECIALLY PICKY AND FICKLE WHEN IT CAME TO THE SIZE OF THEIR FOOD.



WE WOULD PEEL ALMOST ALL OF THE FRUIT TO ELIMINATE EXCESS WASTE IN THE ENCLOSURES. IT WOULD BE CHOPPED TO THE CORRECT SIZE, DEPENDING ON THE SPECIES, THEN EACH BOWL WOULD GET A CERTAIN NUMBER OF EACH ITEM, DEPENDING ON THE BOWL SIZE AND THE NUMBER OF PRIMATE PER ENCLOSURE. THE MARMOSETS USUALLY RECEIVED 6-8 DIFFERENT FOOD ITEMS, DEPENDING ON WHAT WE HAD AND WHAT WAS IN STOCK. AFTER WE FINISHED IT WAS ALL PUT INTO THE FRIDGE FOR THE NEXT MORNING FEED.



FOR VERY LONG STRETCHES OF MY STAY AT THE SANCTUARY, I WAS THE ONLY AMERICAN, THE ONLY MALE, SO WHILE EVERYONE WAS (USUALLY) VERY NICE, THERE WAS A LOT CULTURALLY AND SOCIALLY THAT I COULDN'T RELATE TO ON MANY LEVELS.



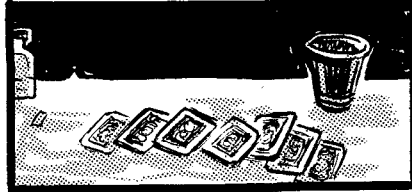
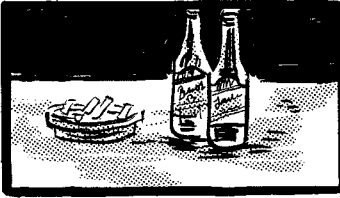
I'VE NEVER HAD AN ISSUE RELATING TO WOMEN, BUT SOMETIMES THE GENDER DIVIDE SEEMED PRETTY HUGE. ESPECIALLY WHEN THE OTHER LONG TERM VOLUNTEERS ACTED AS IF THEY HAD SOMETHING TO PROVE, THAT THEY WERE JUST AS "TOUGH" OR "STRONG" AS A MAN.



THIS WAS SOMETHING I HADN'T EVEN CONSIDERED OR QUESTIONED, BECAUSE I THOUGHT OF US ALL AS A TEAM; NO MATTER WHAT GENDER WE WERE, WE ALL WORKED TOGETHER. OTHER TIMES IT WAS JUST THE SHOCK AND DISAPPOINTMENT OF HOW SO MANY OF THEM NEVER EVEN CONSIDERED THAT THERE IS ANYTHING OUTSIDE OF NETWORK TELEVISION OR TOP 40 RADIO

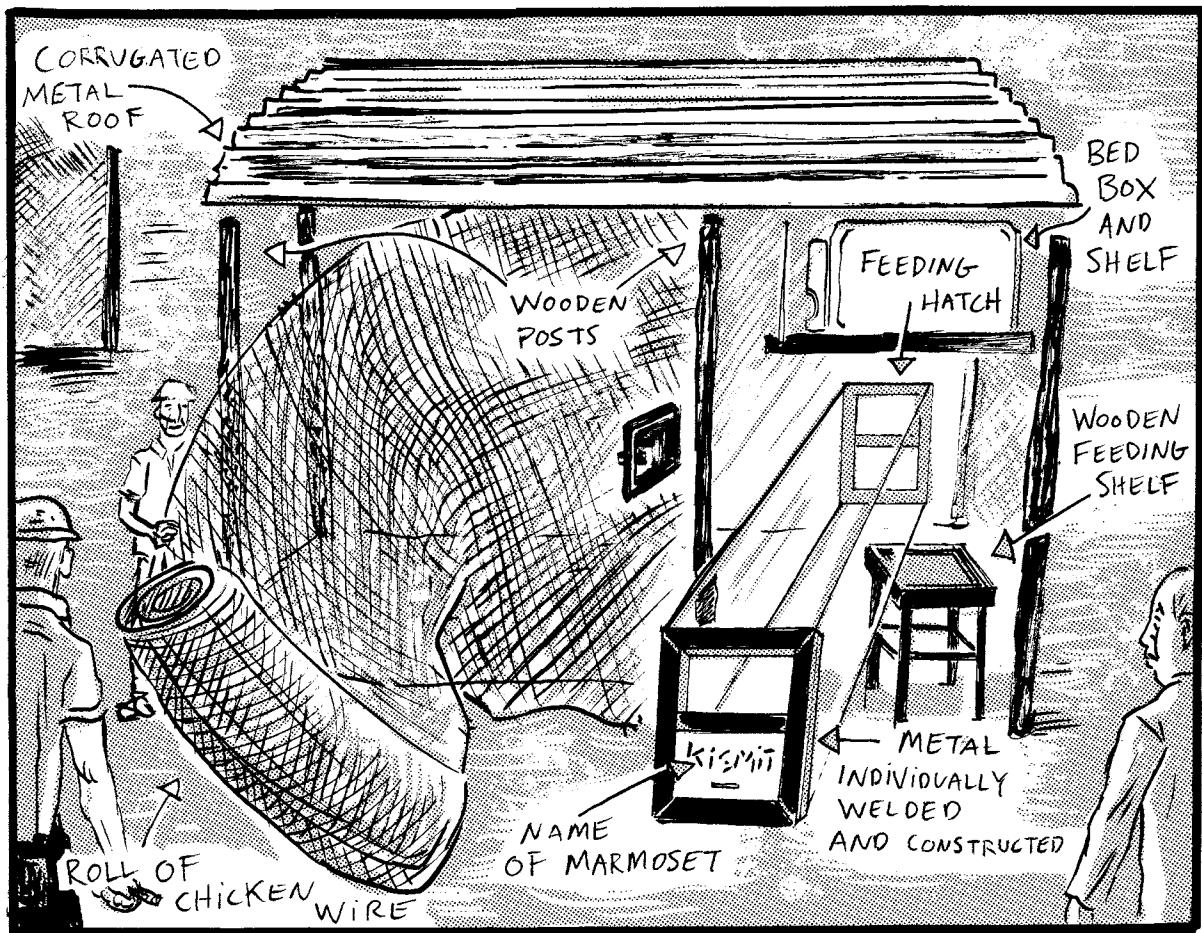



THERE WERE ALSO SOME PEOPLE I GOT ALONG WITH INSTANTLY, DESPITE WHATEVER INTERESTS WE HAD. MICHAEL AND I HAD JUST ABOUT NOTHING IN COMMON CULTURALLY, BUT IN MANY WAYS HE WAS A KINDRED SPIRIT.



MICHAEL HAD A GREAT SENSE OF HUMOR, SO I LIKED HIM RIGHT AWAY.

MICHAEL WORKED WITH A CREW OF THREE OR FOUR NATIVE SOUTH AFRICANS AROUND THE SANCTUARY. THEY WOULD TAKE CARE OF THE VARIOUS MANUAL LABOR JOBS THAT NEEDED TO BE DONE, BUT THEIR MAIN JOB WAS BUILDING AND MAINTAINING THE ENCLOSURES.





WE TRIED TO PROVIDE THE PRIMATES WITH THE BEST LIVES AND LIVING CONDITIONS THAT WE COULD; SO PRETTY MUCH EVERY EFFORT AND RESOURCE WAS PUT TOWARD THEIR COMFORT AND WELL-BEING.

FILLED WITH TREATS

A STRING

BOTTLE CAPS

AN OLD T-SHIRT

SWEET HAMMOCK

ALL OF THE ENCLOSURES WERE OUTFITTED WITH "ENRICHMENT," WHICH IS BASICALLY INTERIOR DESIGN FOR MONKEYS.

VOLUNTEERS WOULD BUILD TOYS, HAMMOCKS, PLACE BRANCHES, STICKS, TWIGS, ANYTHING TO MAKE THE ENCLOSURES MORE HOSPITABLE.

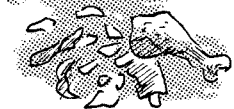
THEIR BED BOXES WERE COOLERS THAT HAD A HOLE DRILLED IN THE LID, STUFFED WITH BLANKETS FOR THEM TO MAKE A NEST.

EACH DAY THEY RECEIVED SUPPLEMENTS, WHICH WAS BASICALLY A SWEET PORRIDGE MIXED WITH VITAMINS AND MEDICINES EACH MARMOSET MIGHT REQUIRE.

SOMETIMES THEY WOULD RECEIVE PIECES OF MARSH MALLOW AS A TREAT, OR WHEN WE NEEDED TO MOVE THEM FROM ONE PART OF THEIR ENCLOSURE TO ANOTHER.

THE PRIMATES HAD A HUGE VARIETY OF DIFFERENT FOODS. SHE WANTED TO HAVE THE BEST DIET THAT COULD BE PROVIDED. THE FOODS INCLUDED:

**BOILED CHICKEN**

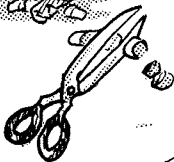


(USUALLY SHREDDED OR DICED UP.)

**BOILED CHICKEN NECKS:**

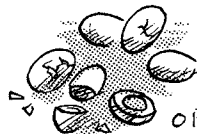


THESE WERE CUT WITH SCISSORS, AND IT MADE A TERRIBLE SNAPPING NOISE. THEY SMELLED AWFUL.



**HARD BOILED EGGS:**

FOR THE LARGER PRIMATES, USUALLY CUT IN HALF OR QUARTERED.



**SKINNED, BOILED POTATOES:**



CAME OUT IN A BIG STINKY MASS, THEN DICED UP INTO CUBES FOR THE MARMOSETS.

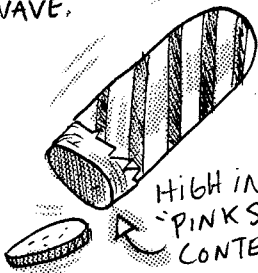
**"OMELETTE"**

BASICALLY 12 EGGS MIXED IN A PLASTIC BOWL, HEATED FOR 10 MINUTES IN THE MICROWAVE.



**POLONY:**

A CYLINDRICAL BRIGHT PINK "MEAT" PRODUCT, SOLD FOR HUMAN CONSUMPTION. THE MONKEYS DIDN'T LOVE IT.

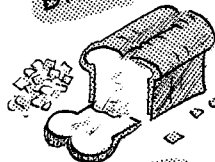


HIGH IN "PINK SLIME" CONTENT.

**BOILED PASTA:**

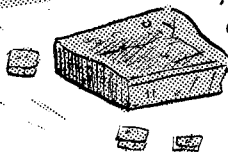


**CHOPPED BREAD:**

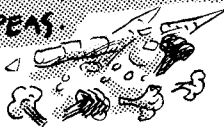


**RED PELLET CAKE**

A BASIC CAKE MIXTURE MADE WITH NUTRITIONAL PET MARMOSET FEED PELLETS.



**BOILED CARROTS, CORN, BROCCOLI, PEAS**



**JELLY (LIKE JELL-O)**

THEY HAD THIS AS A SNACK



**SAGO PUDDING:**

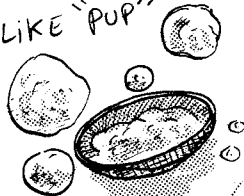
SIMILAR TO TAPIOCA PEARLS, BOILED WITH WATER AND SUGAR INTO A STRANGE TRANSLUCENT GOO.



**PAP:**

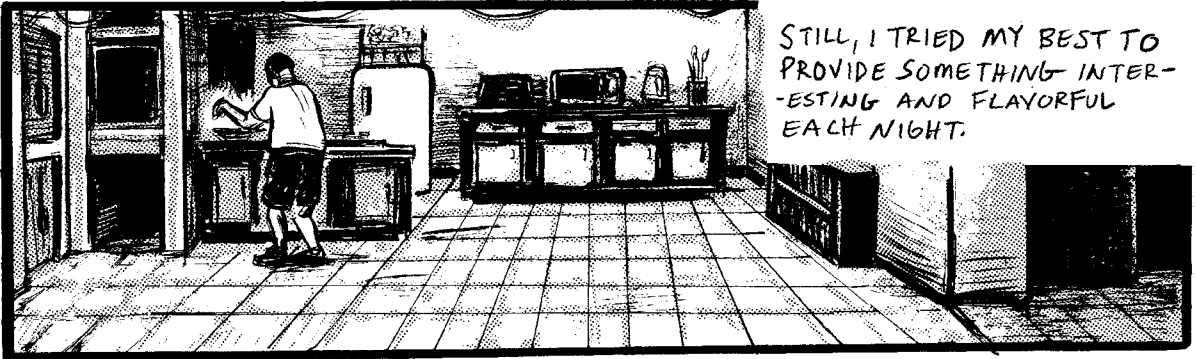
SOUNDS LIKE "POP"

OR, MIELIEPAP: A MAIZE FLOUR, BOILED AND FORMED INTO BALLS OR PORRIDGE. A SOUTH AFRICAN STANDARD.



MOST OF THEIR DIET CONSISTED OF FRUIT, AND THE REST WAS USED TO TRY AND BALANCE THAT OUT; BANANAS (ALL THE MONKEYS LOVED THEM.), PEACHES, ORANGES, SATSUMA (LIKE A SMALL ORANGE), PAPAYA, MANGO, TOMATO, LYCHEE, WATERMELON, CUCUMBER, PLUMS, KIWI, APPLES, PEARS, ETC. BASICALLY IF IT WAS AVAILABLE WE'D BUY IT AND GIVE IT TO THEM.

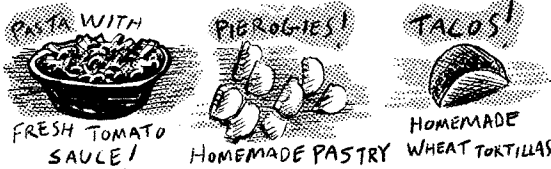
IN THE EVENINGS, AFTER MOST OF THE OTHER MONKEY DUTIES WERE FINISHED, I'D START DINNER FOR THE HUMANS. MOST OF THE INGREDIENTS WERE PRETTY BASIC, AND IN CONTRAST TO WHAT THE MONKEYS ATE, THERE WASN'T A HUGE VARIETY.



STILL, I TRIED MY BEST TO PROVIDE SOMETHING INTERESTING AND FLAVORFUL EACH NIGHT.

WHEN I FIRST ARRIVED, I TRIED MY BEST WITH WHAT LITTLE INGREDIENTS I HAD, AND WHILE I LIKED THE CHALLENGE, IT WAS DEFINITELY A STRUGGLE AS TIME WENT ON.

THEY HAD A SHORT TERM VOLUNTEER HELP ME FOR THE FIRST WEEK, BUT THE REST OF THE DINNERS I PREPARED ALONE.



AFTER AWHILE IT WAS CLEAR THAT SUE AND THE OTHER VOLUNTEERS WEREN'T BIG FANS OF MY COOKING. SUE EVEN WROTE A SIX PAGE "GUIDE" OF INSTRUCTIONS OF WHAT I WAS SUPPOSED TO BE DOING, AND WHAT I HAD BEEN DOING WRONG.



FOR LUNCH, IT WAS EVEN A STRUGGLE TO GET A FEW CANS OF TUNA, BAKED BEANS, OR THE TERRIBLE PROCESSED CHEESE AND POLONY THAT SUE BOUGHT. (I EVENTUALLY DEVELOPED A BIT OF A SCARY CRAVING FOR POLONY.)

THE BREAD SUPPLY WAS EVENTUALLY MONITORED AND PORTIONED BY SUE'S CRAZY CHRISTIAN SISTER (WHO ALSO THOUGHT SHE WAS A CANINE BEHAVIORALIST), SO I WAS A CONSTANT FIGHT TO EVEN HAVE TOAST IN THE MORNING.




THE VOLUNTEERS WEREN'T ALLOWED FRUIT, UNLESS THEY PAID EXTRA FOR EACH PIECE, BECAUSE IT ALL WENT TOWARD THE MONKEYS.



SUE HAD TAKEN MICHAEL IN AS A REFUGEE FROM ZIMBABWE, JUST ONE OF MANY WHO HAD COME OVER THE BORDER INTO SOUTH AFRICA, MOST FLEEING THE MAD RULE OF ZIMBABWE'S HEAD OF STATE, ROBERT MUGABE, WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR A HOST OF HUMANITARIAN ATROCITIES. SOME EVEN REFERRING TO HIM AS "THE BLACK HITLER".

HE WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR FORCED LAND RECLAMATION, SEIZING FARMERS LAND THROUGH VIOLENCE AND THREATS, THEN GIVING THE LAND OVER TO MEMBERS OF HIS CABINET, DISPLACING MANY FAMILIES.

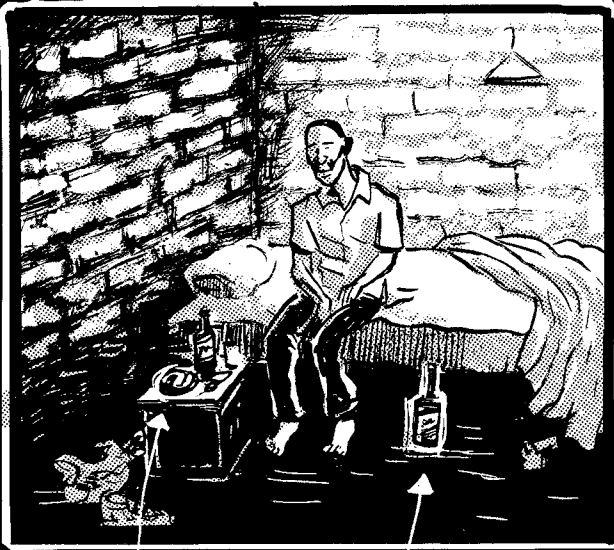


HE REFERRED TO HOMOSEXUALITY AS A "FILTHY DISEASE" THAT "DAMNS NATIONS". HE WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE DEATHS OF 20,000 ZIMBABWEAN CIVILIANS WHO SUPPORTED HIS OPPOSITION, AND THE CURRENT VIOLENT SUPPRESSION OF ANYONE WHO OPPOSES HIS RULE.

NEEDLESS TO SAY, 'THE COUNTRY IS RUN BY A MONSTER.'

MICHAEL LIVED IN WHAT WAS ONCE THE STORAGE SHED. HE HAD RETRO FITTED IT WITH WHAT HE NEEDED FOR BASIC COMFORT, HE WOULD USUALLY NOT JOIN EVERYONE FOR DINNER, INSTEAD PREFERRING TO

GRAB A PLATE OF WHAT WE WERE HAVING, AND WASH IT DOWN WITH A CARLING'S BLACK LABEL BEER IN HIS HOUSE.

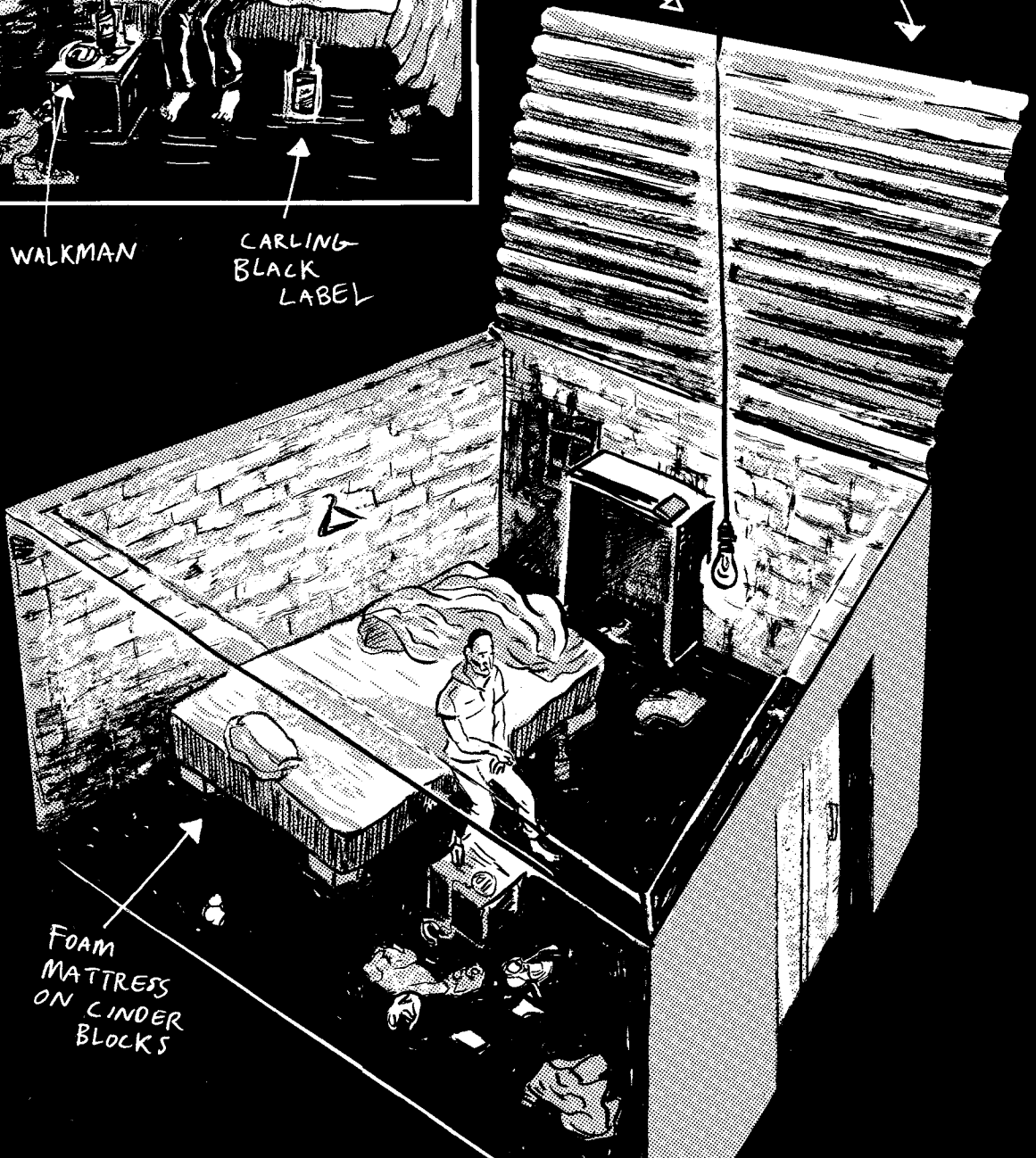


WALKMAN

CARLING  
BLACK  
LABEL

LIGHT THAT  
MICHAEL RIBBED

CORRUGATED  
METAL  
ROOF



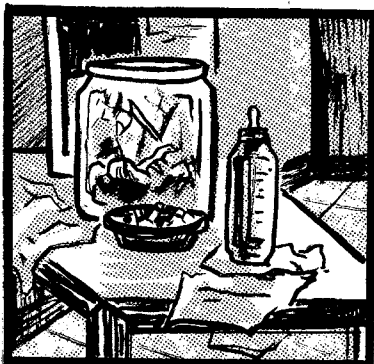
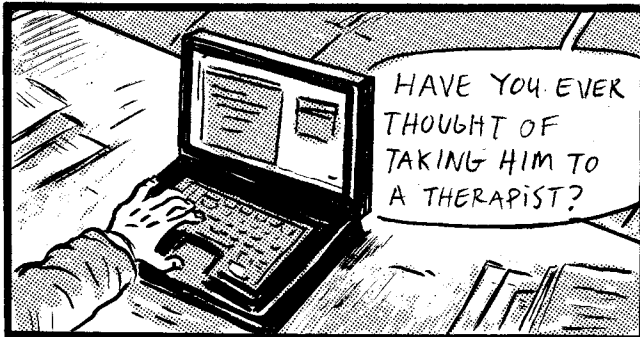
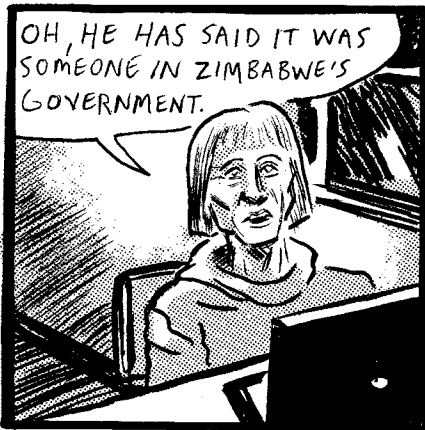
FOAM  
MATTRESS  
ON CINDER  
BLOCKS



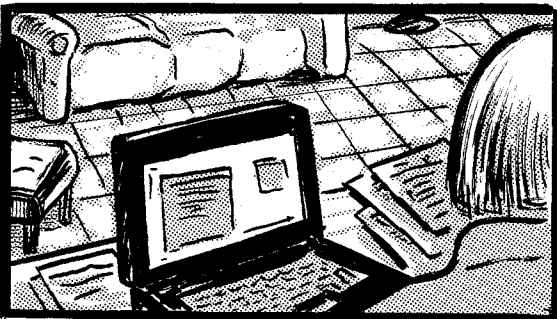
WHEN I SPOKE WITH SUE, SHE WASN'T EXACTLY SURPRISED BY MICHAEL'S STRANGE BEHAVIOR.








SUE DIDN'T SEEM ALL THAT CONCERNED ABOUT MICHAEL, AND SHE HAD A LOT OF ADMINISTRATIVE WORK TO DO FOR THE SANCTUARY EVERY DAY.

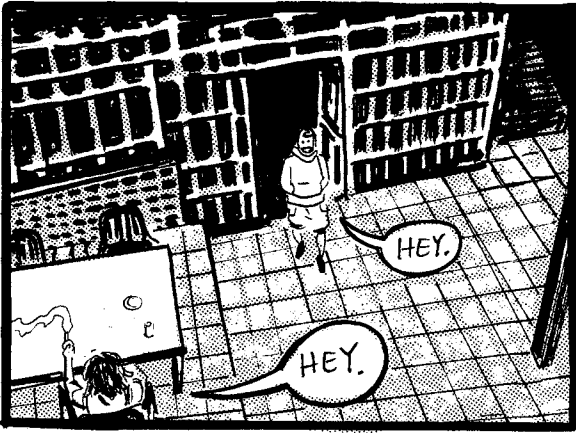


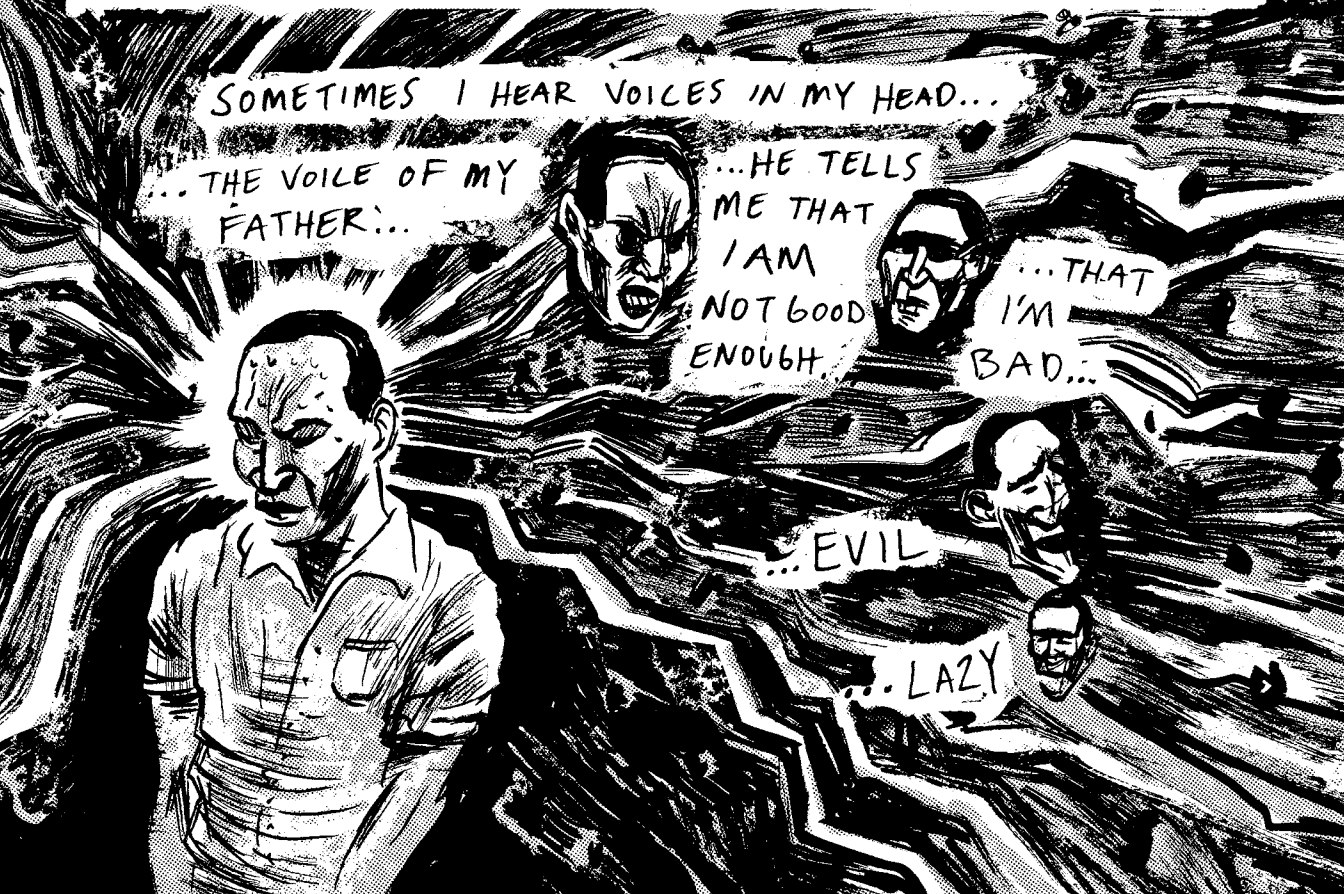


MOST OF THE  
OTHER VOLUNTEERS  
WERE PRETTY  
APPREHENSIVE TO BE  
AROUND MICHAEL...  
...I WAS TOO, SOME-  
-TIMES.

I'M NOT SURE  
EXACTLY WHAT IT  
WAS...

...HE HAD A CERTAIN,  
PALPABLE UN-EASI-  
-NESS TO HIS PRESENCE, AND  
IT SEEMED TO SPREAD TO THOSE  
HE WAS AROUND.





...HE TOLD ME  
I'M GOING  
TO DIE...

THAT  
I WILL BE  
MURDERED  
BY A MAN...

NAMED INNOCENT!

I HEAR HIS VOICE...  
AND I DON'T KNOW  
WHAT TO DO...

I DON'T  
WANT TO  
DIE!

OH, MAN... MICHAEL...  
...I THINK WHEN YOU  
HEAR THOSE THINGS...

...MAYBE TRY TO  
REMEMBER THAT IT  
ISN'T REAL...





I'VE ALSO BEEN HAVING A PAIN... IN MY GROIN...



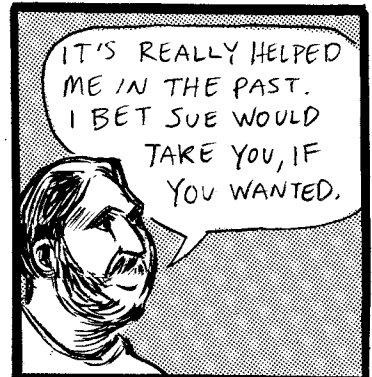
I WAS WITH A WOMAN A FEW WEEKS AGO... UP AT MY HOUSE...

GEEZ... SO DO YOU THINK YOU CAUGHT SOMETHING?

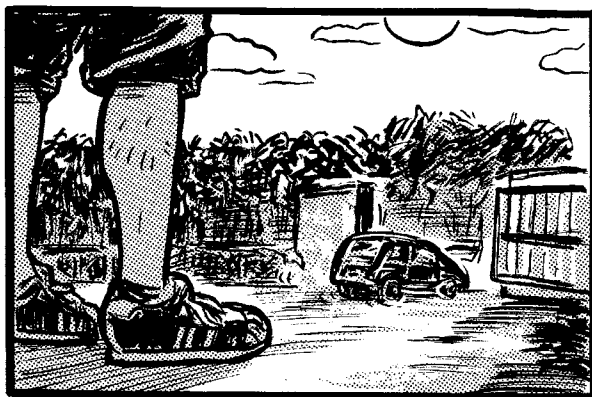
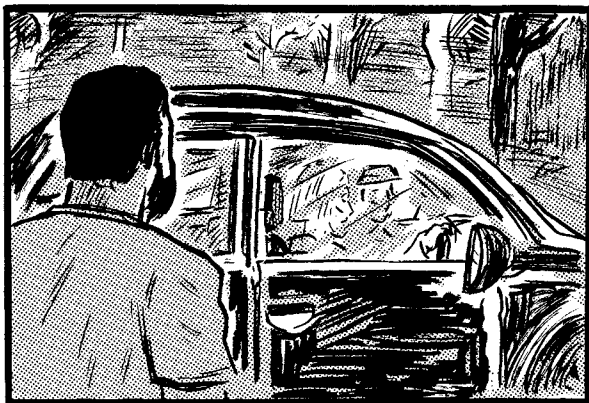
I THINK SO...

MICHAEL ... YOU HAVE TO TALK TO SUE...

YOU'VE GOT TO SEE A DOCTOR.



THE NEXT DAY, SUE MADE SURE MICHAEL WENT TO THE DOCTOR.



MICHAEL ENDED UP STAYING IN MY ROOM FOR ABOUT A WEEK, BUT LEFT AFTER HE STARTED TO FEEL BETTER, I GUESS HE DIDN'T WANT TO FEEL LIKE A BURDEN.



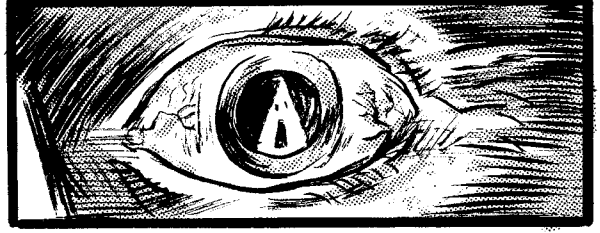
THE DOCTOR TREATED HIM WITH ANTIBIOTICS, FOR WHAT TURNED OUT TO BE SOME KIND OF STD. I NEVER ASKED WHICH ONE.



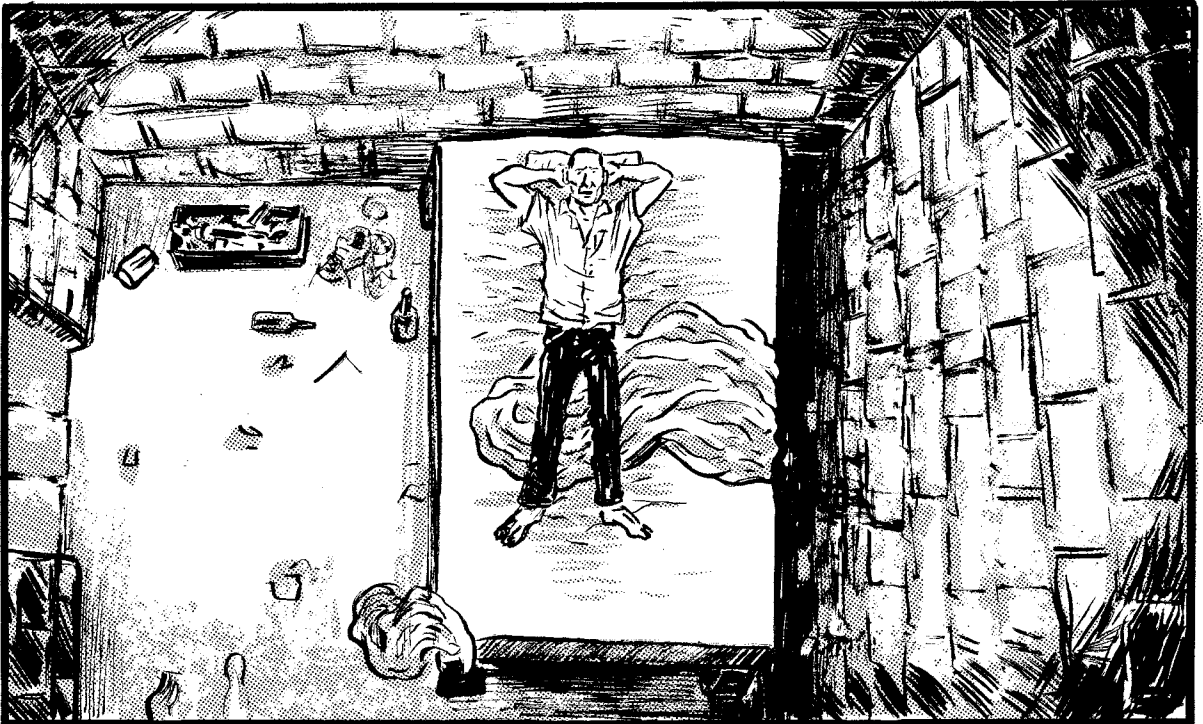
MICHAEL'S ATTITUDE SEEMED TO IMPROVE FOR AWHILE AFTER HIS DOCTOR'S VISIT.

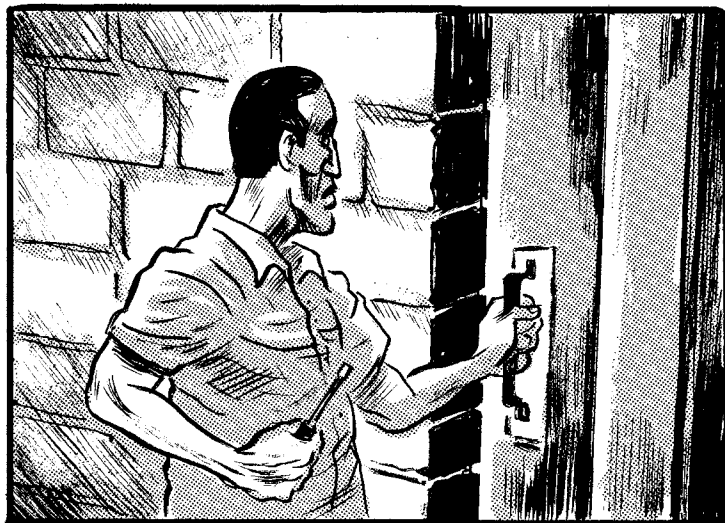


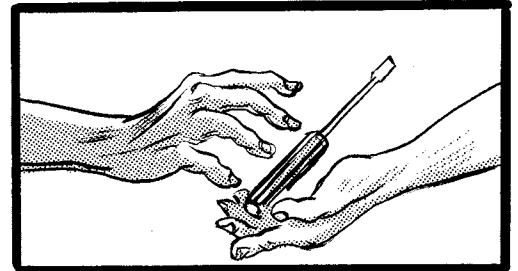
BUT AFTER SOME TIME, HE HAD BECOME MORE DISTANT AND GLASSY-EYED, AS IF HE WAS LOOKING SOMEWHERE FAR AWAY...



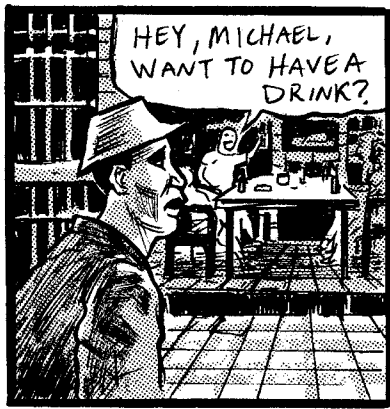
... SOME PLACE DARK.











I GUESS.



A FEW MONTHS BEFORE MICHAEL STARTED ACTING STRANGE, WHEN I HAD FIRST ARRIVED AT THE SANCTUARY, WE ALL CELEBRATED MICHAEL'S BIRTHDAY WITH A PIZZA PARTY.

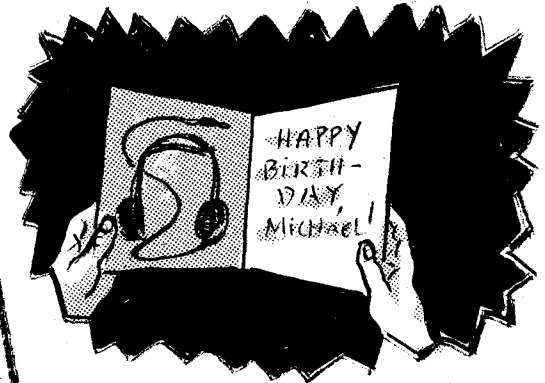


WE WENT TO NORTH PRETORIA TO PICK UP PIZZA ESPECIALLY FOR THE OCCASION.



A SOUTH AFRICAN PIZZA CHAIN. PRETTY GOOD.

AS A GIFT, I MADE HIM A BIRTHDAY CARD WITH A DRAWING OF HEADPHONES.

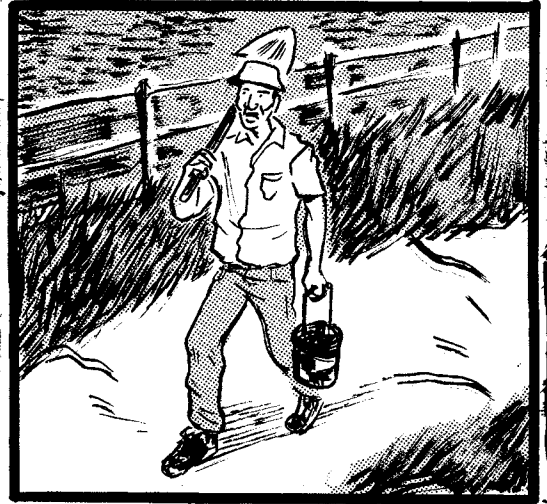


HE WAS A HUGE FAN OF DJ'ING AND DANCE MUSIC, SO IT WAS THE ONE THING I COULD THINK OF THAT HE'D LIKE.



FROM THE ONLY PHOTO I HAVE OF MICHAEL.

THE NEXT DAY, I WAS WALKING UP TO THE ENCLOSURES FOR THE AFTERNOON "TOP UP", WHICH WAS BASICALLY VISITING EVERY DIFFERENT ENCLOSURE TO MAKE SURE THEY HAD ENOUGH FOOD, WATER AND PORRIDGE FOR THE DAY.



...EVERY ONE IS STRANGE TO ME...

I FEEL LIKE THEY ARE ALWAYS TALKING ABOUT ME.

YEAH...


...I FEEL LIKE THAT SOMETIMES, TOO.

WELL... I HOPE YOU CAN STAY, MICHAEL.





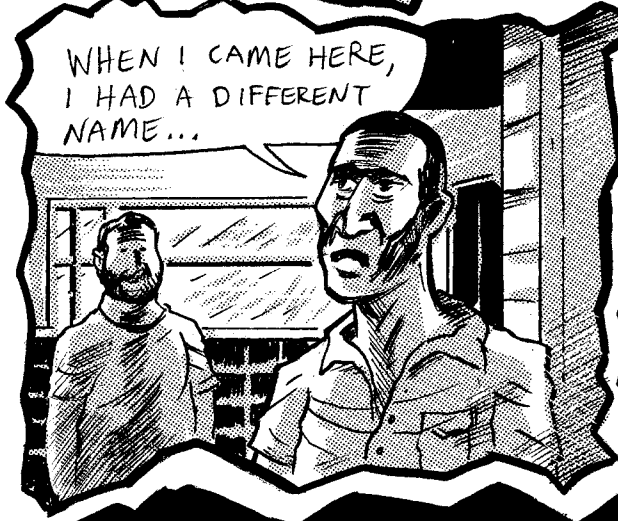
YEARS AGO, MY GOOD FRIEND BRYCE DIED FROM AN APPARENT  
OVERDOSE. HE WAS A SWEET, CREATIVE AND KIND PER-  
-SON, BUT LIKE MICHAEL, WRESTLED WITH HIS OWN  
DEMONS - ADDICTION AND SCHIZOPHRENIA.  
HE ACTED AS IF HE WAS NEVER  
COMFORTABLE ANYWHERE -  
LIKE THERE WAS A CONSTANT  
WEIGHT, SOMETHING OTHERS  
COULDN'T SEE.



IN MY YOUTHFUL IGNORANCE,  
I FEEL LIKE I DIDN'T DO ENOUGH  
TO HELP HIM... AND MAYBE I  
COULD NOW.

BUT MAYBE  
NOTHING  
COULD  
HAVE  
HELPED.

NOT LONG AFTER, MICHAEL LEFT THE SANCTUARY, WITHOUT EVEN SAYING GOODBYE. AFTER COLLECTING HIS PAY FROM SUE, HE JUST TOOK OFF, LEAVING BEHIND MANY SCATTERED ITEMS IN HIS HOUSE, BUT THE ONE THING HE DIDN'T LEAVE WAS THE BIRTHDAY CARD I MADE FOR HIM.



I DON'T THINK I'LL SEE MICHAEL EVER AGAIN, BUT I HOPE HE'S FOUND SOME PLACE HE FEELS SAFE.



FOR MY FRIEND  
BRYCE IAN  
MORRISON  
1983 — 2009

AND FOR ANYONE SUFFERING QUIETLY  
THROUGH THEIR INNER BATTLES; THERE IS  
HOPE FOR YOU, AND PEOPLE WHO TRULY CARE,  
THOUGH THEY MIGHT BE HARD TO FIND SOME-  
TIMES, THEY ARE OUT THERE, AND THEY WANT  
TO HELP.

FEEL FREE TO  
WRITE ME AT:  
[CONTACT@MIKEFREIHEIT.COM](mailto:CONTACT@MIKEFREIHEIT.COM)

YOUR FRIEND,  
MIKE  
2014

THANK  
YOU TO:

MY FAMILY, MEGAN, JESS R.  
JESS W., DUFFY, TOM, JOSH B., JEFF Z,  
DAVEY K., ELLIE MAE, JORDAN, CHARLIE,  
EVERYONE WHO PLEDGED VIA KICKSTARTER,  
AND THANKS FOR READING.