



Vol. I
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January 2008

"Putting the ass back in Degrassi"

Free



Hi. THANKS for showing up to the fourth ever issue of the Degrassi Digest. I'll be honest with you, this is my favourite one yet. The theme this time is "Degrassi High"...because on October 4th 2007, the Degrassi High DVDboxed set was birthed unto the world. Things just haven't been the same ever since. The secret undercover theme is actually "friendship" though. So this whole thing is basically about Degrassi High and friends and the emotions that surround all of that stuff. I feel detached from Degrassi these days. I've seen everything that the pre-2000 years of the series have to offer, and my cableless state has left me woefully behind as far as "Next Gen" is concerned. I've used this time apart from my Canadian girlfriend to read a ton of comics, diversify food offerings to my cats (a new ORGANIC option). listen to a bunch of records (Bauhaus for LIFE), and travel around. I've got a couple more issues of this crap left in me, but the time for moving on draws nearer. There are only so many lessons to be learned at this school.



"Hey thanks" to the city of Portland...where people walk around with their keys on those little climbing hooks and all look like hipster janitors. Big thanks to Ali, Erin, and Emily for being my pals and hanging out with me. I also want to thank Cleo for leaving my crawlspace after an 8 month stay. She's back and more awesome than ever. Thanks to Heather and Drew, who I am excited to be friends with, and am very grateful that they put up with my neuroticism. Finally, thanks to Joe for subtle/awesome inspiration.

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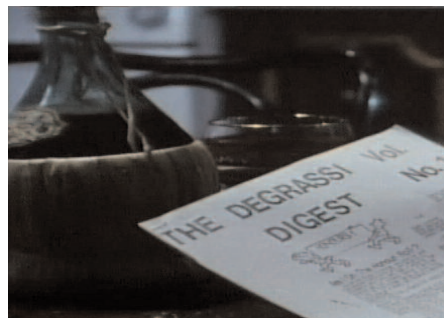
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--LETTERS TO THE EDITOR--

The post office security cameras are the ONLY things that have seen it, but I get a big smile when I get mail from you. Send email to thezitremedy@gmail.com Please send your tangibles to P.O. Box 56551 Portland OR 97238. KTHXBAI!!!

I actually got a fair amount of letters during this "off season" from the Digest, but I'm going to publish them next issue because I want this section to be one page and I JUST got this letter in the mail...

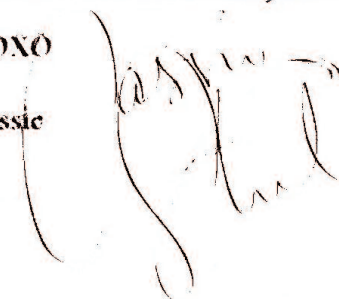
Cassie Steele from Degrassi writes...

Hey Scott,

It's been crazy lately and I am only able to work on the backlog (letters) so much. Thank you for all the compliments and support. I'm glad you enjoy the show - I think each season it gets better. We have finished filming for now but expect to start up again in a couple of months and I will have some new music released in the not too distant future. I hope you like the picture I've enclosed and I wish you all the best.

XOXO

Cassie



I was a Nerdy "fanboy" type dude when I was in my early teens. I'm cool with that...no problem. Surprisingly, I escaped this period of my life without writing any fan mail to the objects of my fandom...so I guess I feel I'm sort of making up for all that in my twilight years by writing scores and scores of letters to the principle cast members of this TV show. To date, this is the longest response that I've received. It's very upsetting and sort of gives my heart a headache sometimes. Celebrity worship is kind of gross in the first place, so it feels double-sad to not even get word back from these people when I decide to playball and write them gushing fan letters. WHATEVER. I don't even really LIKE Cassie Steele. She seems really smug and probably thinks she is "down to earth" because she eats at Canadian McDonalds and I bet she drinks diet coke and I bet she KNOWS who all the rappers are right now. I'm ashamed of Cassie Steele and I'm actually GLAD that she didn't write me back...because those letters I sent were just ironic joke letters and I don't even care. Cassie Steele...stop sending me pictures of yourself.



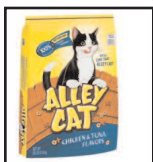
So, I have some friends that are actively into Degrassi. These ladies watch the show and have a visceral reaction to the mind-blowing teen drama that unfolds before their eyes on a (god-willing) weekly basis. When news that the Degrassi High DVD was hitting the streets in mid-October started circulating, I knew that it was time to venture back to the Midwest. I could never conquer the drama within those region-encoded discs on my own. On 10/9/2007, I boarded a plane to Chicago.



Chicago, our nation's capital.

WARNING: This entire "article" contains very little actual information or discussion about the Degrassi television series. Please skip ahead if you aren't into hearing about complaints and tears and lofty metaphors.

THE CREW



Ali : A master of television. I'm not even kidding with you. I think I probably lost a good four years of my life sitting on various couches across Michigan doing nothing but getting high and watching television...and I come nowhere close to being the authority on TV that this lady is. On numerous occasions during the trip I found myself asking her to refresh my memory as to the back story of various Degrassi regulars. I write a fucking zine about this bullshit, and this lady was educating me on these things like she learned them in catholic school.



Emily : The brains of our outfit. A PhD student at Northwestern, and not a PhD in philosophy or the fine arts or some bullshit like that, this lady is a scientist. This lady also likes Degrassi a lot and exhibits a moderate tinge of passion for discussing it. I'm 4

not saying that she's a creep and gets the wide eyes when she's talking about Toby or something like that. Her passion is evident to me in the way that she casually rattles off Degrassi facts...as if it were mythology that everyone shares and has shared for ages.

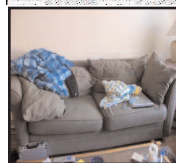


Erin : The hilarious element of the whole thing. Erin is a party animal in the truest form...but not annoying at all. Erin is partying at its most sincere...and was a perfect "caliente" to the otherwise "mild" dynamic that Ali, Emily, and myself would have formed on those couches. I can't really do Erin justice with words...I'm trying, and it's not working. Two parts Joan Rivers (when she was doing stand-up), and three parts Princess Leia Organa.



Me : An embarrassment from Portland Oregon...feeling very meek being back under the scrutiny of midwestern eyes. Oh, I have some cats too.

THE VESSELS



This is where Ali and Emily made their Degrassi zone. They are the renters of this apartment, so it makes sense that this would be their zone...and even if a typical weeknight for them involves hanging out together on separate couches watching DVR together, in my mind's heart...I will picture them together on this couch. This is also where Mooky (Emily's cat) sat for most of the experience. Good "vibes" from this "zone"...



Couch B : This is where Erin and I setup base camp. This couch is from Ikea...and is actually a futon. Due to its Scandinavian origins, it was not without its structural flaws. Halfway through the marathon, a supporting plank slipped out of its mountings...leaving a five inch gap in the middle of the sitting zone. Luckily for the customer service department at Ikea, I like to sink into stuff, so I welcomed this addition to my Degrassi zone. Erin's side of the couch had the 5

worst vantage point in the room, and I would sometimes look over at her and feel terrible about that.

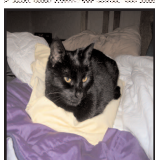
THE CREATURE COMFORTS



The real star of this trip. I love Mooky AND am in-love with Mooky. She's an incredibly nice cat. She has her limits...and will not be detained...but I think she's really great. She watched most of Degrassi High with us.



Comforters : As a single guy that lives alone and goes to graduate school and works full-time, I realize that there are certain things that get put to the wayside in order to better facilitate my lifestyle. Sometimes, lack of money is the reason that I choose to not play ball with these aspects of existence. For example, I will go days eating nothing but carrots, sandwiches, cereal, and bananas because of a very long and probably boring line of thought that I have on purchasing, preparing, and eating food (CLIFF'S NOTES: waste of money, waste of time, unsatisfying). Sometimes, a single-minded burning passion for the important things in life (zines, making mix tapes, reading a book) is the reason that I can't "get it together" and "live." What I'm rambling about here is...there is a palpable lack of comforters in my house.



These are things that I would consider luxury items. I'm always cold, and I hate to turn on the heat...but somehow...winter after winter goes by and I still find myself thinking "I should get some comforters"...but never get the comforters. Wasn't it fascinating to read about how I don't have any comforters? Anyway, I don't...and these ladies do...and let me tell you...PARADISE. I felt like god's mom was hugging me the entire time I sat on those couches.



Day 1



3B A dark beginning to this trip, for sure. I love to travel, I am essentially Uncle

traveling Matt...but it never ceases to amaze me how horrible and atypical a "flight" situation can be. I don't get out much...so my exposure to the "general populace" is limited to anyone else that is in line to get the daily special at Subway (don't knock it) and my trips to the Lloyd Center to use the discount ink cartridge refilling stand. Seriously, I get my groceries at the hippy food co-op down the street...my video rentals are received and sent via the US Postal Service...and since I live in the beautiful state of Oregon, I don't even have to get out of my car to get or pay for gas. I am basically Sandra Bullock from "The Net", with a much less graphically intensive software development environment. Do you believe me? Maybe you don't believe me, maybe this isolation is being played up dramatically in my head...maybe not. Regardless of the reality of my condition, I feel it...and I feel it very intensely in tight quarters filled with a crowd of people. The flight out to Chicago didn't disappoint on the quarters or "crowd of people" fronts. Middle seat. I spent six hours trying to delicately balance the upper half of my body in a vertical manner without the aid of armrests (they were ruthlessly taken away from me by my seatmates), while at the same time trying to package and stow my lower half into the little footsy area underneath the (fully reclined) seat in front of me. That'll be the extent of my complaining, sorry about that. I'm 6'4" and planes are rough for me.

Luckily, at the end of this plane ride I had some wonderful friends waiting to pick me up. I don't consider myself a happy person. Not even a little bit. But when I was sitting there at 3H, freezing my ass off due to an ill-planned jacket situation...I felt something that I don't get to feel very often. I felt unadulterated and explosive joy. I was sitting there smiling like an idiot and it was a very good feeling. Friends, Chicago, and Degrassi. Let's do it.

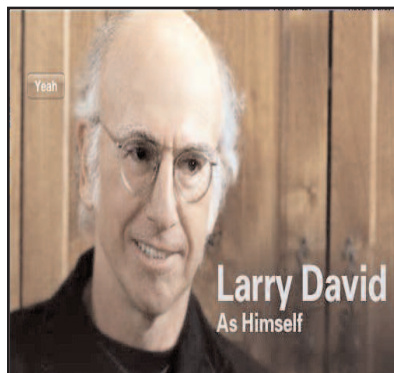


I hope everyone got their plastic "wings" from the cockpit when they were a kid. That shit is FORBIDDEN now.

1st Steps Into A Bigger World

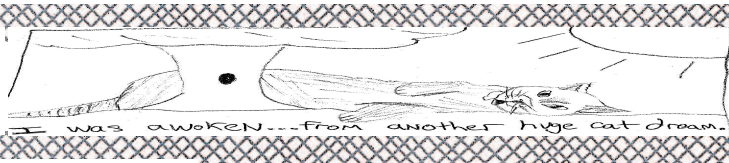
Although it was already 11pm, we couldn't get to the TV quick enough. As soon as all luggage was placed carefully ON the ground and everyone was seated in a comfortable place ON a couch (the seating arrangements stayed pretty much exactly the same for the entire trip), it took all of two minutes to decide that we had to rip into this Degrassi High DVD box set that had been placed suggestively in the center of the table...and was now wordlessly daring us to start our adventure.

Episodes 1-3...in a whirl-wind. We lost Ali to sleep, Emily followed shortly afterwards. Erin and I, still high from our West Coast time zone...soldiered on well into the night. Curb Your Enthusiasm makes a nice Degrassi chaser.



This show is funnier than any other show that you might be watching...and I'm pretty sure that you know this...

Day 2



Science Friday

Today was "be a scientist at Northwestern" day for me. I got to come help Emily in the labs under the guise of "visiting scholar." What I learned is, science looks really hard. You have to set a lot of stuff up and you have to write everything down. No time for love, Doctor Jones...give me the warm "fudge it" zone that computer science affords its disciples any day. That stuff was too smart for me. I have no idea how those people get anything done.

For a time, I decided to walk around school

grounds, following people to their classrooms, trying to guess where we were going and what their major was. If a crime had been committed on campus that day, I'm positive that a bunch of



This may be a good school, but I still saw people wearing crocs.

people would have come forward and said something to the effect of "there was a suspicious character walking behind me on my way to class...something felt amiss" and I would have to go to some room and answer questions. But, none of that happened. I DID get kicked out of the engineering library though...apparently Northwestern can't handle it when the black arts of computer science are practiced on school property. Squares.

The four of us reunited at the apartment around 5:30pm to joyful yells and much fanfare. I can't really remember the last time when I was fully and very sincerely wanting to be around a specific group of people doing a specific thing for a very extended period of time. This was the moment when I realized that watching Degrassi as a team had become a mission for us...and I was looking forward to seeing this thing through to the end. We watched 3 or 4 episodes until socialization forced us to remove ourselves from our D-Holes.



Surprise parties are the only legit form of party throwing

The Surprise Party

Today, there was a surprise party planned for a friend. I don't do well at parties. I never know how to conduct myself...so I spend most of the evening off in the corner trying to be polite while at the same time trying to watch what everyone else is doing...research for future parties. For the record, twelve years of actively "going to parties" has yet to provide me with a breakthrough in this field of study. I was introduced to a group of strangers...and one of them blurted out "OH YEAH! THE DEGRASSI GUY!" This is when I started drinking a lot, and quickly excused myself to the bathroom. You may have noticed (or probably haven't and don't really care), but I don't attach my name to these zines. They serve a very distinct (and actually kind of dark) purpose in my life, so when I see them starting to open up doors that I'm not prepared to go down...I panic. I'm always trying to keep a close eye on the reason that I make this zine, and right now I'm pretty satisfied that my reasons are legit enough to keep me a safe distance from all the horrible and counterintuitive things that seem to be hovering over the

"creative community." I just want to make sure that the misery that I chronicle in these things is sincere. OK...moving into uncomfortable territory here; the party was nice and I had fun. The people I met were nice too.

Day 3



Hardcore Degrassi Watching: Peripheral Vision

This was one of those awesome days when no one REALLY wakes up until 4pm. Everyone is awake and laying on couches and totally covered up in blankets and it's like this really superior slumber party that guys and girls were never allowed to have together while they were still living with their parents. Plus, oh yeah, it's like 11am and everyone is drinking coffee and we're all under the influence. This is my idea of a good time, forever. So it's one of these days and we're just hanging out and watching Degrassi. We spent the better part of the day watching D-High and you know something...I don't remember much of anything that was going on in that TV set while this was going on. We just sat around bullshitting and petting cats and talking about our hopes and dreams and cats. Cats. It was as magnificent a time as I can imagine and I wish I could capture the day in a poster to hang up at work.

Who the Hell is "The Go! Team"?

This is going to sound completely pretentious and shitty, but whatever, I don't keep up on any new music unless it is produced locally in Portland Oregon (and to a lesser extent, Olympia Washington). I don't CONSCIOUSLY try and ignore the other stuff, I just listen to a lot of older music (the geographic rules do NOT apply to old music...for some really boring reasons that no one cares about). If something is happening in some "scene", it needs to be within biking distance of my house or I am unlikely to discover it. Sorry "world", Portland makes the best music and you know it. It's hard for me to listen to new music made by twenty-somethings in New York or Berlin when I am a twenty-something living in Oregon. It just doesn't feel as "sincere" for me to be connecting with it. DUMB? Yeah, I guess. Like I said though, it's a good thing that Portland Oregon produces the best music in the world. Anyway, I was

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supposed to go to this concert by some band called "The Go! Team." Due to my Olympia loop-hole, I am familiar with "The Go Team", but not "The Go! Team." So I'm already NON-plussed with the prospect of dropping \$25 for the honour of standing upright for two hours. Also, if there's anything I hate more than joyful dancing...it's cheerleading...and that's what Wikipedia said to expect from this band, which roguishly purport to

be one exclamation point greater than Calvin Johnson.. Not psyched. Unfortunately, Erin had lost her wallet earlier in the trip and had no way of proving her age to enter this 21+ show. She made a valiant effort using an old ID of Ali's, but the doormen were unflappable. I think we were working under a theory that doormen become fatigued if they check a bunch of IDs in a row. I was the person that had to go in ahead of Erin so that this 300 pound beastman would be too tired to notice if Ali and Erin are the same person or not. Upon hearing that Erin was turned away, I lamented the fact that despite being IN the club, I was OUT \$25. I had this Charlie Brown-esque moment of self pity for about two hours until I realized that I was stressing myself out and my brain wasn't allowing my organs to run properly. The night was saved with a trip to the liquor store and a gathering at someone's house. We played Jeopardy on the PSII. With the aid of some fortunately placed Star Trek questions, team Degrassi won. Once again, couch-based activities prove to be more rewarding than club-based ones.



Day 4



Hardcore Degrassi Watching: The Hardest Core

I'm not sure that the average person that reads a zine is going to think too highly of me for saying this...but today I spent eleven hours on a couch watching television with my friend Emily. I only left the house twice. One of the times was to go pick up a pizza. The other time was to go to a bar. Say what you will about all that, but I'm pretty sure that's how god spent its day off too. Dr. Emily and I wiled away the hours watching three discs of

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Do not fall for these guys.
They are lying to you.

Degrassi and having MASSIVE amounts of "girl talk." Best day of October.



GoodNight Chicago

This was the last Night of "wild drinkin'" that I did in Chicago. These are definitely my "wild" drinkin' friends, so while tonight may not have been super wild up to their standards...it was enough to put me out for the count. I can barely even remember what happened. I know

We drank mostly pumpkin beer we went to this kind of upscale looking Chicago place that had fancy beers. It's funny to me when bars obviously pander to a more "upscale" crowd when they are serving more "upscale beers." It's a stark contrast to Portland Oregon...where even shitty house parties typically have some kind of cheap and awesome microbrew sitting in the kitchen (thanks, captured by porches). Anyway, the only thing I remember about this night is Erin, Emily, and myself pooling all of our money together near the end of the evening...and then handing it all to the bartender and saying "this is all the money that we have in the world right now..." and not even really asking for more beer...because we couldn't even really do that at this point...those were the only words that the three of us understood, the rest went unspoken. *HISTORICAL ACCURACY* All the money that we had in the world equated to one more pitcher of pumpkin beer.

Day 5



Catching Up With Old Friends

Vacation on a Monday is stupid. It is also pretty boring. Everyone had to go to work...Erin caught her plane...it was now just Mooky and I on the couch. I took the four hours of free time that I had until I had to start venturing to O'Hare and spent them catching up on TV shows that I have previously loved. I don't have cable TV or Internet at my home...I'm a gross hippy...



This is not the enemy. Your own laziness and complacency is.

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So now-a-days when I find myself in front of a DVRed TV, I am enraptured. A lot of people are down on TV, and I totally understand this line of thought. But think about this for a second...why are you down on TV? I am down on TV because it's the most awesome fucking thing in the entire universe, and if it is around...I'll do nothing but watch it. You don't even have to watch commercials these days. I love TV...too much. By eliminating it from my life, I'm now able to do things like make zines and read books and actively confront my misery...which seem like pretty decent things to do. When old man TV shows up though, I welcome him in and bring out the good dishes.



This shirt is not worn ironically. I recognize it is gnarly, but it is NOT intended to be ironic.

Getting Out Of Town

This non-Degrassi ranting of mine has gone on too long. I'll sum up my trip out of town...I feel like it's eventful enough to sum up.

Buses in Chicago are really easy to use...but much scarier than the buses in Portland Oregon

I stepped on dog crap right before I boarded the blue line train to O'hare...it smelled for the entire trip home

I sometimes wear this t-shirt that has a really gnarly wizard on it. I don't consider this irony...because although it is clearly an ugly t-shirt, I put in my dues as far as Dungeons & Dragons is concerned. Anyway, in Portland...I'm not saying that people like the shirt, I definitely get some "fucking hipster" looks...but in Chicago, it was like I had a picture of Manny's aborted fetus on my chest. While waiting in line for my food, the employee at the register yelled out "OK, NEXT? GANDOLF THE GRAY OVER THERE ALREADY ORDERED HIS PIZZA. WHO'S NEXT?" Everyone stared at me and laughed (the laughter may have been imagined). Worst nightmare. In a sad attempt to fight back at this heckler, I stared intensely at him. I won the eye contact battle, but in fairness to this guy...he was on the clock...and I was so dead inside at that moment that

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I'M NOT SURE My stare CONVEYED "anger"...it probably LOOKED MORE like "guy who DOESN'T speak English and wants to KNOW what you said."

Going through the security checkpoint, I was called a "pushy asshole" by SOMEONE'S dad because I guess I was following TOO closely behind him when we went through the x-ray machine. I THINK the guy was really stressed out...and I promise you I was NOT being UNREASONABLY close to him....but the anger of the situation MADE Me really sad and Set a bad tone for My flight home.

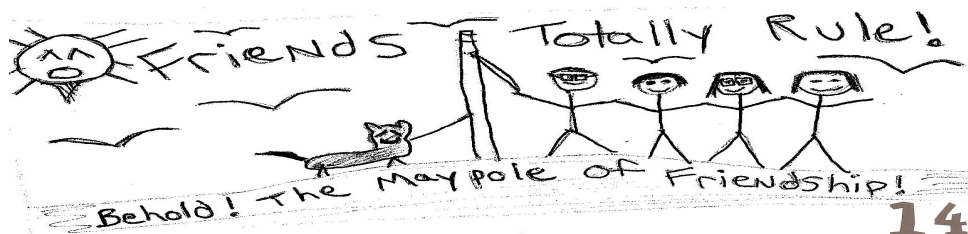
Sitting ON a bench for two hours...blinding depression....reading VOLUME 1 OF "The ESSENTIAL Tomb of Dracula" (which is really awesome by the way)
Two flights home...crying babies next to Me...luckily, they MASKED the SMell OF Chicago dog poo that was encrusted ON My favourite shoes.



CONCLUSIONS

OK so, that was my Degrassi trip to Chicago. I realize that we've just gone deeply into "personal zine" land, but get over it. What I learned from this trip is...friendship is the MOST important thing in the entire FUCKING universe. People get married, people have kids...these are good things, important things. BUT, I think the

Now I know how these ladies joy of being around a group of people that you must feel all day long... love and care for with that UNMUDDIED respect is UNMATCHED in this world. My ONLY goal ON this trip was to watch the entire season of Degrassi High with my friends. Although I realized after I left that I have zero recollection of anything that transpired ON the TV during My stay there, and would NOW have to rewatch the entire series in order to properly review it for this zine...it was definitely "MISSION accomplished."



Character Guide

If My calculations are correct...about 1% of the "people that could potentially read a zine" COMMUNITY actually give a shit about the events that transpire during an episode of Degrassi High. If you are in that 1%, you can safely SKIP this section. This section is for the cold-hearted and boring 99% of you that feel like your life is too cool and precious and WHATEVER to sit down and give SOME MOMENTS of your existence away to this triumph of television. Despite the playful jab that your face has just received from those words I wrote about you: I am actually really appreciative of the fact that you are reading this zine...and I've made a cheat sheet character guide type thing for you. If you are ever CONFUSED at any of the stuff that I'm talking about, please refer back to this guide, for...guidance. PS: if you are in the 1%, please realize that you are walking proof that you can learn MORE from TV than reading...USE the time that you saved here today to watch the 11pm showing of Seinfeld in ADDITION to the 10:30. *NOTE* This guide is definitely NOT comprehensive, but I feel it does a good job covering the major characters in the series.



Joey Jeremiah

DON'T kid yourself, this entire franchise of TV shows is basically about this guy. It's too bad too, because he's a total scoundrel. Joey is the fake party animal of Degrassi...and wallows in his own insecurity MORE than the average teenager does. He is basically trying to get through life by being "goofy." I give him a C-.

SNAKE is a pretty legit guy. He has an over protective MOM, and is really tall...SO I relate to him a bit. He generally does the right thing...but will grow up to be the type of person that cheats ON his wife. Inappropriate. SNAKE spends MOST of high school wishing that he was SOMEONE else...and trying his best to attract a make-out partner. Bt.





"Wheels" Wheeler

This is for sure ONE of the worst people ON this TV show. He starts off as some KIND of NOBLE blue collar dude, but eventually turns into a liar and a thief. Check out how tight this guy's pants are. At first, my instinct was to make fun of him...but by the end of the show, I developed a respect for how CONFIDENT he must be to wear them. D.

Erica seems like a really cool lady that I would probably want to hang out with. She has the "good times" attitude that has eluded me my whole life, and generally seems like a positive force. You'll find this out pretty soon, but she gets totally pregnant early ON in the series and has an abortion. She handles the situation like a champion. A.



Erica Farrell



Heather Farrell

Your eyes are NOT playing tricks ON you. Heather is Erica's twin. Heather is the button-down and boring one. My instinct is to gravitate towards people like this, but Heather is actually just a major downer. She is very affected by the world and tends to give up her own identity too much. Who am I to judge though? B.

Everyone had a crush ON this girl for some reason. Caitlin is into being political, and she actually seems pretty legit about it. I don't plan ON making fun of her here. Caitlin tries to do the right thing, but often comes up short. Everyone wants to french her and all the girls want to be friends with her. I don't trust people like that. B-.



Caitlin Ryan



"Spike" Nelson

This is the ONLY person that the average Degrassi watcher is familiar with. It's weird too...because she's sort of dumb. She's a single teenage mom and all that, so...you know, credit where it's due, but she's still sort of a dullard. She wears t-shirts that say "The Smiths" and "The Pogues" on them...but anyone with \$15 can pull that off. B.

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Liz O'Rourke

Liz will TRICK you dude. She is the perfect example of why you shouldn't judge a book by its cover. Cool haircut? Check. Into good music? Check. Snappy dresser? Check. A really great "I don't like" stare? Check. Militant and disrespectful pro-lifer that will give you shit if you don't agree with her? Check. Fuck you Liz. D.

This guy is a total, pardon my french, dipshit. Check out that beard! What the fuck? This guy walks around trying to be the outsider, but just ends up trading the costume of conformity for the costume of outsider. You are a joke to me Claude. Oh, check this out...his name is pronounced "Claude." Yeah right buddy. E.



Claude Tanner



Bronco

This guy is cool. He's the class president and wears leather hats. Sometimes he walks around the halls singing rap songs about the stuff that he runs afoul of. He's got a weird smile, but I could totally see watching cartoons with him or something. He doesn't show up until later in the series, but that's cool...his name is totally rad. A-.

For my money, this is the true hero of Degrassi. Lucy started out her Degrassi career as a shoplifting miscreant, but ON this series she totally kicks everyone's ass. Lucy is a tough cookie of a lady that has a lot of goals and actually follows through with them. She is tormented throughout the show...which just proves that the writers are dicks. At.



Lucy Fernandez



L.D.

LD gets infinitely more screen time in Jr. High than she does in this series. This is UNFORTUNATE. LD is a "tom boy" character who always wants to do the right thing and is totally respectful of everyone. Despite how boring that explanation of her sounds, I am an LD supporter. I would have sat at her lunch table and traded food. A.

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Patrick

I hate this fucking guy. He's from Ireland and dresses more like a skinhead than a rudeboy...but I think he's trying to do the whole rudeboy thing. Fuck you dude. He walks around playing the guitar and doing bad Morrissey impressions. This is basically unforgiveable to me. He is really into the Pogues, which I think is lame because he's Irish. D.

Diana is a pretty cool person on this show. She gets really good grades, but she smokes alone in her room and receives no obvious "image" payoff for her troubles. She grew up in a strict Greek-lady house. I've never done that before, but I guess it's pretty oppressive...so double points for Diana on any cool stuff she does. A-.



Diana Economopolis



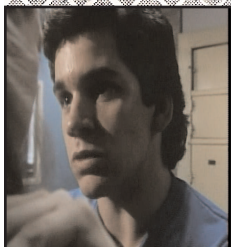
Kathleen Mead

Kathleen bugged the shit out of me in Junior High. She was a total NARC and tried to act really grown-up about stuff that she doesn't understand. She gets pretty rad in High School though, so keep an eye out for her. Kathleen's attitude will probably lead her to make some poor choices with men during her college years. Oh well. B.

I love Melanie. Melanie is that person that knows she is doing really stupid stuff, but has faith that anyone catching her doing it will be able to dismiss it all because she is just SOOOOOO cutesy. I'm usually really "anti" that sort of thing, but Melanie has me caught under her spell. She is a really awesome pot smoker too. A+.



Melanie Brodie



Scott

Besides looking like the type of guy that would call me a "fag", this guy is also famous for beating the shit out of girls. It's really weird and horrible to watch it go down. Scott seems to have a lot of friends at school though, so I guess he probably has parents that aren't home a lot and everyone like to party at his place. Embarrassing. E.



Mya Goldberg

Mya is OK. She is everyone's really good friend and does a good job of having an opinion without being two-faced about it. She can be REALLY depressing sometimes though, because she makes these off-hand comments about how much being in a wheelchair sucks. I guess we should relax and give her the right to do that when she wants. B.

This guy is sort of a jock asshole, but I like him for some reason. I guess he's like, the jock asshole that used to be really into GI Joe or something...so I get the sense that him and I would connect on a couple levels. Yeah, B.L.T. is cool. Check out that haircut too! Wow. B.L.T. has a sweater that says "B.L.T." on it. C+.



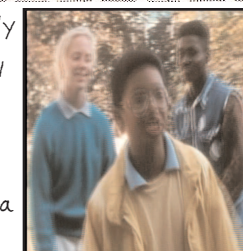
Bryant LT (BLT)



Bartholomew Bonds

I think I'm supposed to be pretty into this guy, but I'm not. His "thing" is that he's this smart kid that is two grades ahead of where he should be. He carries around a briefcase that has his name on it in sticker letters. Is that cool? I'm not sure, I feel torn. It might be cool, but I don't think he's doing it for the right reasons. C.

This guy reminds me of a young Will Smith. I think I probably would have watched Star Wars with this guy, and work on breadboards with him just for fun. I guarantee you that shortly after college, Scooter will know more about music than you can ever hope to know. Scooter is a nerd with a future. I salute him and his gentlemanly ways. A.

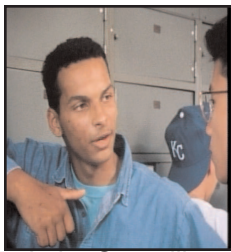


Scooter Webster



Arthur Kobalewscuy

The total dweeb of the series, I have no sympathy for Arthur at all. He tries to seem like he's trying to do the right thing, but it's sort of obvious that all his actions are performed just so other people will like him. He wore a beret for a while, which should speak volumes of where he's at in the discovery of his personal identity. C-



Luke Cassellis

I almost didn't even include this joker in the character guide. He's a stoner buddy of YiK, and a couple girls like him. He has a pretty goofy laugh, wears sweatpants, and looks like he'll probably end up being a bunch of people's boss someday. I'm only including him in this guide because he smokes more pot than anyone else at Degrassi. C.

I know a lot of intelligent girls with good taste that are attracted to YiK, but I don't see it. YiK was a total loser in High School, but now he's a popular burnout guy. He actually seems to make that transition pretty respectfully. I just don't like how arrogant he seems about stuff...and he sort of looks like he'd have BO. C+.



YiK Yu



Tessa Campenelli

This girl figured out that if she has sex with a specific type of guy, they will like her for it...and she is definitely seeking out negative male attention in her life. It's a bummer too, because Tessa seems like she has potential to be a positive female rolemodel to impressionable kids watching at home. She says the F word. B-.

This guy is sort of a joke. To his credit, he gets good grades and wears cool glasses...but he's still a doofus. He wears suit coats with shorts...he talks to his peers like some whiney baby...and he is a loud mouth about secrets. I've seen him do some random acts of kindness, but overall I think you want to steer clear of this guy. C-.



Alex Yankou



Dwayne Myers

This is the school bully. I got through the whole series without hating Dwayne, which was rare for me because I usually hate the bullies. Luckily for him, he exhibits the slight hint of melancholy and insecurity that every bully needs in order to humanize their despicable acts. I ton of shit happens to this guy, so keep an eye on him. C.

20



Peanut Butter Tough

This is totally a minor character, and you don't even find out what her real name is until the last episode...but I love peanut butter tough, so I want to honour her a bit. This girl walks around with a jar of peanut butter and a spoon...beating up girls. This is a great idea for a character and I would like to see her star in a spin-off. A.

Miss Avery got a lot of airtime in "Jr. High", but not so much on this series. If you missed out on Jr. High, you just need to know that everyone liked her as a teacher and a bunch of people thought she was a lesbian. Miss Avery is the sort of teacher that you might run into at the mall and then feel really confused about that. C.



Miss Avery



Mr. Walfish

I'm pretty sure that this guy is a rapist. He's the super cool homeroom teacher that is DEFINITELY harboring a secret. I'll let you off the hook with this right now, there is no definitive proof that he touched any kids at Degrassi High...but I'd imagine a lot of child molestation cases are never reported. You are gross Mr. Walfish. D+.

This guy is the "square figurehead" of the entire place. He is the assistant principle, and is therefore the enforcer of the school rules. I think the lesson that we're supposed to learn from him is that strict teachers are just being that way for your own good. I never learned this lesson from Raditch though...he's just sort of a dick on a powertrip. D.



Mr. Raditch



Special Ed Spikes

I put her on here because she has liberty spikes and is in special ed class. She never says much, but comes across as "mindful." Her admirers are "good looking athlete" dudes, which I don't understand. I'm not saying that good looking athlete dudes don't fawn over special ed students with mohawks...wait, I guess I'm saying that. B+.

21



Hey, how's it going? What have you been up to? Me...oh, you know...I've been watching Degrassi High pretty much NON-stop for the last two MONTHS. Yeah, basically living the American dream with some Canadian TV. I've watched so much of this TV show lately, that I actually feel crazy NOW. I never would have guessed it...but there are limits to the AMOUNT of Degrassi that I can enjoy. Before my mind stopped working (it will now only focus itself long enough to allow my hand to put gobstoppers in my mouth), I was able to pull together a review of every single episode of Degrassi High. I am NOT proud of this. I worked very hard ON this zine for a very long time, but pride is NOT something that I am feeling right now. I feel the same way right now that I feel when I go fareless ON the MAX and get to my destination without transit cops showing up. I'm obviously NOT PROUD of what just happened...but it happened...SO deal with that NOW, Portland. Whatever, it's all DONE...SO you should probably check it out anyway. I recommend reading it in "bursts" rather than going through the whole thing in ONE sitting. It is SERIOUSLY just me bitching and moaning about how hard my life is. Jesus...when did it come to that? **22**

A New Start Part I



The series begins with a quick vignette of different students getting ready for their first day at high school. An especially poignant moment for me was watching Joey Jeremiah looking at himself in the mirror and saying something to the effect of "you'll be the coolest guy at Degrassi High." I remember a number of embarrassing moments that I had during my late middle school / early high school years when I would make DECISIONS to enhance my "image"...in an attempt to be the coolest person in High School. Luckily, these forays teetered off somewhere in the middle of freshman year (when I realized that I would never be the coolest person in High School), but the cringe worthy attempts stuck with me, and to this day I have to wear new clothes in private for a few weeks before I "believe it" enough to wear in public. My most embarrassing moment was deciding that I wanted to start wearing colourful vests (possibly inspired by Joey Jeremiah), and my dad forbade it because he thought I looked like Balky Bartakamus. He was right, but NO ONE wants to hear their dad's mocking laughter when it comes to a fashion choice. Anyway, people are dressed up and pumped for school. Erica however, feels ill. Like I mentioned earlier, I watched this show with three ladies and they IMMEDIATELY said "preggers" when Erica mentioned she was sick. I've seen similar reactions from other ladies when they hear that a fellow lady is sick...and it's always funny to me. I think it's like an "N word" thing though...so you can't say it unless you are a girl.

So now we're at school and we see some new additions to the cast...toddler Emma in a stroller (on her way to day care...do most high schools have in-building day care?) and a nasty beret on Arthur's head. **23**



This is not a good look

Apparently Arthur went on some kind of European tour with his lottery winning mom and his sister (Steph Kaye). Since he went to France, he now feels justified wearing this very time period and location specific/appropriate head-gear. Fashion foul Arthur. I know where he's coming from though: I wore a trench coat for a while during the first couple seasons of "Parker Lewis Can't Lose" and I wore a gangster-style fedora for a couple weeks after a particularly meaningful series of experiences on the "Great Movie Ride" at MGM Studios. Back to the action though. There's lots of milling around the halls and talk about "hazing." Degrassi High does a really great job of capturing realistic and "off the cuff" teenage discussion. I sincerely believe what they are saying...but it doesn't always make for riveting discussion unless the viewer is currently entrenched in similar talk during their 8-3 weekday. The highlights:

Remember how Degrassi Jr. High burned down at the end of the series? Well all the middle schoolers are now at Degrassi High, and it's crowded there. By my count, four schools have burned to the ground during the last 15 years of this school district's history.

Erica lost her virginity to a "super hot" camp counselor named Jason. Jason Vhories perhaps?

Simon (the blonde dude) was in some magazine called "Dude." This thing looks like it belongs in the bathroom of a pedophile



Hazing seems to play a big role in the school so far. The primary hazing crew consists of Dwayne, a girl that is constantly carrying around a jar of peanut butter, and some guy with a unibrow that wears a bandana. Their names aren't important. They all wear varsity jackets, but I don't think anyone ever mentions what sport they participate in. The felt letters on the back that spell out "Degrassi" are often falling off...so it's possible that they made their own jackets to support a more cohesive gang image. I'm getting bored of talking about this episode at length, so let's slip back to the bullets...

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This girl eats A LOT of Skippy brand peanut butter.

Erica takes a pregnancy test...Negative. There is exuberant celebration and a lingering camera shot with the two twins on the bed together...with Erica letting out a really oddly pitched exhale. This is good news because Heather refers to the abortion clinic as the "Killing center" and I bet no one wants to go to a Killing center.

There is an introduction of a homeroom teacher named "Mr. Walfish." He has A LOT of chesthair...and seems to be very proud of it because he always has at least three of his top buttons undone. If we get through this series and he doesn't molest anyone, I will be stunned.



Pee into vial A. Place contents of vial A and vial B into papier mache volcano. If volcano erupts, you are pregnant. If it lays dormant, your womb is barren.

The episode ends with a brief discussion about menstruation. It's still amazing to me that girls have to deal with that every month.

Find the moral of the story would appear to be...

The "pull out" technique only works if you have "home court advantage." Never attempt this at summer camp. Also, never wear a new hat on the first day of school.

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A New Start Part II

I love it when Degrassi episodes are two-parters. Something I've noticed about Degrassi High vs. Degrassi TNG though...problems in Degrassi High never get fixed in half an hour. Even though this is a two-part episode, the impact it has will continue to be discussed well into the series. This is really cool, and way more realistic than the quick fixes and rug sweeps that you see in TNG.



These people have no jobs. This episode was highly censored or unaired in the US and Australia. I'm not a fan of censorship, but I understand why people got itchy trigger fingers with this one. It is, forgive the cliché adjective, RAW. There's an abortion discussion in this one that is incredibly frank and detailed. I think it's fantastic and is exactly what kids that age should be seeing. It probably dispels a lot of myths and gives them the facts to draw their own conclusions with.



Guess what? Erica is pregnant. Bummer. Pretty much no one wants to be pregnant, so I understand why she is so bummed out. An abortion discussion in Mr. Chesthair's classroom brings to light the fact that Liz is VERY VERY anti-choice. This was surprising to me and kind of counterintuitive. That's basically it for the "meat" of the episode. There's a lot more hazing filler. We find out that Mr. Raditch took

This lady held up a fetus action figure and said "this is your baby"...over and over again.

some night classes and is now conveniently the vice principal at Degrassi High. We also find out that the computer teacher at the school is named Mr.

Wozniak, which is almost certainly a nod to Apple Computers pioneer (and total creep) Steve Wozniak. Nice. Anyway, long story short...Erica is going down abortion lane, and Heather decides to stand by her even though she doesn't agree with the decision. The same scenario will later be repeated (and similarly censored) with Emma and Manny.

On a final, and definitely disturbing note...the seed is planted for a potential liaison between Caitlin and Claude (winner of the creep-off). Gross.

And the moral of the story would appear to be...

Button your shirt in the classroom, you are making me uncomfortable and you are ruining the lives of countless students.

Breaking Up Is Hard To Do



This is the "guess what, BLT and Michelle are dating" episode. As the season slowly progresses...people are starting to be romantically paired up. This is also the "Michelle's parents are getting a divorce and divorce is totally rough" episode. Don't worry kids that have divorced parents and are watching Degrassi High...it happens to other people too. Being the stand-up guy that he is, BLT

Someday, I will own a house on this street. Believe it. Michelle. Unfortunately for all parties involved, he is researching the impact of divorce on the American family. I've visited Canada a bunch of times and I'm pretty sure that the impact over there is that you go drink a "two-fer" and have some chips with vitamin C in them. Look, I'm making light of divorce! HILARIOUS!

So now Michelle has to make the decision as to which parent she wants to live with. Her first instinct is to live with her mom, which is totally understandable because her dad seems like a really harsh guy (and kind of like a toucher)...but she quickly softens when she comes home and finds that he has fucked up all of her laundry and totally can't even make himself dinner. This guy managed to turn all the whites into pinks...I don't understand this. Does this type of thing happen in real life, or is this just something that is reserved for TV moments? I don't separate my colours and I have NEVER had this happen to me.



Sometimes it's better to not learn about stuff.

I'M wearing shirts today that I've been wearing for like twelve years and they are as white as ever. I must sweat bleach.

Remember how Erica got an abortion in that last episode? I forgot too...but LIZ didn't. LOOK what she wrote ON Erica's locker. VERY intense. I've never vandalized school property before, so this made me wonder how one finds the time to make such an elaborate and nicely fonted mark like this on a locker in the middle of the hallway. Erica takes it real hard...which is understandable. I'M 110% pro-choice...and I'M not well versed on the opposite arguments...but if there WERE a murderer here (there is not), wouldn't it TECHNICALLY be the person that is performing the abortion? I don't want to turn this fanzine into something political or anything...but that thought just occurred to me.

This episode felt like it was just setting up events for other episodes...which is fine...but it has forced my hand in rating it a 6/10.

Find the moral
of the story
would appear to be...

Don't mix your whites and your reds. Learn to cook for yourself well before your wife starts sleeping around on you. Don't call your daughter's boyfriend "that black boy"...unless he's not black and you're just making a joke.

Dream On

You know how people like to tell other people about their dreams...and it's never EVER as interesting to the teller as the teller? Well that's what this entire episode was, cute little dream sequences that were just opportunities for the writers to get lazy in the name of creativity. Arthur has the hots for Caitlin, and it's sad/horrible to watch it all play out because you



One person's libel is another person's free street cred.



know that she has absolutely NO interest in him whatsoever. It was doubly hard for me to watch because I identify with Arthur's fear of asking a lady out on a date...and I heard him say a lot of things that I am usually thinking. Seeing the rejection and the sad laying on the bed aftermath of the whole thing really struck a chord for me and pretty much assured that I'll be staying in my basement til the end of the year, with Sassy.

Apart from a series of awkward dream sequences involving cutesy mockups of adult situations with teenage stand-ins (eg bottle of coke replacing bottle of wine), the entire point of this episode seems to be that everyone at Degrassi High has the hots for Caitlin. Personally, I don't see it. She has this weird white streak in her hair that is very reminiscent of the X-Men character "Rogue" (after her encounter with Marvel Girl). I have the first appearance of Rogue...so I dug it out of the archives to double check...and surprise...her first appearance pre-dates Caitlin's haircut. It appears that Yan Moore is an X-Men fan...and a total rip-off artist. Regardless of this shameless appropriation, Claude is into her...Joey J is into her...and now poor Arthur is into her too. Let's all just get over it...together.

The final quasi-interesting chunks from this episode are as follows...

Skippy peanut butter sightings...often just half-full jars sitting on tables with knives sticking out of them...numerous and conspicuous placement
Caitlin and Claude go see the movie "Masculine Feminine"...so I Netflixed the film, rewatched this episode, stopped it when they go see the movie...then I popped in "Masculine Feminine"...watched it...then finished up the episode of Degrassi High. My life was not enriched by any measure after I had completed this task.
Unibrow and Peanut Butter tough are apparently together, because they are seen frenching in front of Kathleen's locker
I spotted a picture in Yik's locker that seemed kind of out of place and is making me think that he's attracted to the male form.



4 out of 5 girls like it when she gets to kiss Gambit.

Kathleen goes NUTS ON peanut butter tough



Righteous Anger.



None of my business Yik...
but still pretty surprising.

find the moral
of the story
would appear to be...

I KNOW YOU THINK YOUR dreams are interesting. I THINK My dreams are interesting too, but NO ONE wants to hear about them. Seriously. I'M NOT blaming YOU specifically...it's just NEVER OK. I've ONLY Met ONE guy that seems to consistently have interesting dreams. His Name is Joe and he's good with Legos. Unless your Name is Joe and you're good with Legos, Keep it to yourself.

Moral PS: DION McGregor has interesting dreams too. LOOK that guy up!

Everybody Wants Something



OK, we get it!!!!

This is the "Shit hits the fan" episode that has been building up for the last two or three installments of the series. FINALLY. We begin with some tasty foreshadowing in the discovery of ANOTHER lip-stick smear campaign in the lady's washroom. OK, we get it...Erica is a Murderer. I think I would be Kind of OK with it if people went around My high school putting up signs that said I was a Murderer...because then people would think I was a

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tough ass fighter and would leave Me alone. I guess it's different for girls though. Erica is NO longer sad...she is PISSED.

Degrassi Digest fanatics may recall that during the "creep-off" of issue 1, I MENTIONED that the actor that plays Claude wore his real street clothes during the filming of the series. Honestly, what Claude wears ON-screen is what the guy playing Claude seriously wears in real life. This was the early 90S...and I'M NOT SOME Kind of FASHION genius or something like that, but a SILVER BOWTIE? This guy is wearing a silver bowtie. I bet Peter Murphy had a really hard time in high school, and I imagine NOT even HE would have sympathy for a guy wearing a silver bowtie. Caitlin ON the other hand, LOVES IT. Her relationship with Claude is cemented with a Nasty and lingering french in front of her locker. This causes an IMMEDIATE breakUp with Joey Jeremiah...and his reaction to it (quiet dignity) is the first time in the long run of the Degrassi franchise that I have ever felt anything close to sympathy for him.

Uh Oh, Erica caught Liz posting ANOTHER "Erica loves abortions" poster to the lockers...and Erica just can't take it anymore. There is pushing, and eventually a fight. It's a good fight too...NOT just yelling and hairpulling...there are punches and trips and elbow drops. I can't really say for sure who won, but Erica definitely seemed to be MORE into it than Liz was. Liz is basically a villain ON this show, which is very disappointing to Me.

Despite the Majority of this episode being about the shooting of a music video for "The Zits", that is hands down the most boring part about it...but I'd be negligent if I didn't at least SUM it up for you. There is a shot of The Zits standing ON a car, hanging out in the dumpster, throwing Wheels from the 2nd floor of the school, and walking around a tree. It's actually NOT a bad



Even less tough than the
lead singer of popular 80s
band "Bronksi Beat"



I have never seen two
girls physically attacking
each other in real life.

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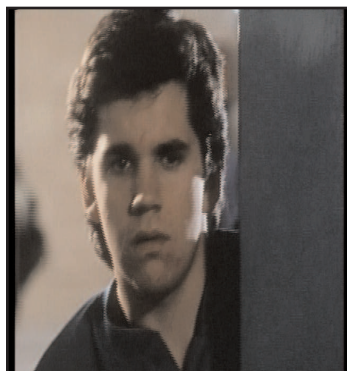
MUSIC VIDEO CONSIDERING WHO MADE IT AND THE THINGS THAT THEY HAD TO WORK WITH.

Find the moral
of the story
would appear to be...

PUNK ROCK PEOPLE LOOK TOUGH...AND I'M PRETTY SURE THEY ARE TOUGH...BUT I'M ALSO PRETTY SURE THAT WHEN TWO CHILDREN GROW INSIDE THE SAME WOMB, THEY ARE IMBUED WITH THE STRENGTH OF ONE AND A HALF PEOPLE. DON'T FUCK WITH TWINS.

Nobody Is Perfect

THIS IS THE "ABUSERS ARE LOSERS" EPISODE. THIS GUY NAMED SCOTT WITH A HORRIBLE DIRT-STACHE IS THE ABUSER...AND KATHLEEN IS THE ABUSEE. I WAS CRUSHED TO SEE THAT THEY PICKED A GUY NAMED SCOTT TO BE THE ABUSER. MY FIRST NAME IS SCOTT, SO IT WAS HARD FOR ME TO SIT THERE AND HEAR THINGS LIKE "STOP IT SCOTT! YOU ARE HURTING ME!" VERY JARRING. ON THE OTHER HAND, I GOT TO HEAR KATHLEEN SAY "SCOTT IS THE BEST THING THAT HAS EVER HAPPENED TO ME"...WHICH WAS COOL. KATHLEEN GREW ON ME A LITTLE BIT, SHE IS THE "LIBERTY" OF DEGRASSI HIGH.



TO MY KNOWLEDGE, THIS IS THE ONLY SCOTT. I WISH MY NAME WERE BRONCO...OR CHESTER.



High School...a place where pairing up was 75% date Spike from Degrassi High, but take a look at based on your t-shirt. these episodes again. She's a really nice person...and would make a good confidant, but putting on a Smith's shirt doesn't mean

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that you want to go to Outback Steakhouse with her and your parents. Spike is the girl that you go to when you want to ask about other girls. This is NOT me disparaging Spike here...this is a totally awesome and honourable and RARE girl to have around in your life...but let's NOT ruin things with that girl and pretend that this is some kind of physical relationship that should be pursued. It's time for those of us that used to have this crush to sit back and reexamine where she should be in our lives. Let's be fair to the memory of Spike.

With this really intense abusive-centric episode, Degrassi High once again proved that it is ten times more "go there" than TNG is. They really pulled no punches back then. Kathleen is SOCKED IN THE FACE many times...and is even kicked while she's ON the ground AND is called worthless. The camera sticks around a few extra moments to capture her crying. I think TNG tries to bring the realism and intensity into this zone, but usually trips up and ends up in soap opera land. Kathleen is in a bad place, and I feel terrible for her. Scott buys her flowers though...so everything is magically OK. Girls, what is the deal with flowers? Why are flowers such a powerful gesture? This is probably the most impersonal and unpractical thing I can think to purchase for another human being. It's like saying "here...I bought you this colourful plant...the lady at New Seasons helped me pick it out...it'll be dead in a couple days...but here...I got it just for you!" Buying flowers seems on-par with buying a colourful arrangement of construction paper. Don't get me wrong, I'm a flower-buyer. I play ball...but I will never understand the attraction.



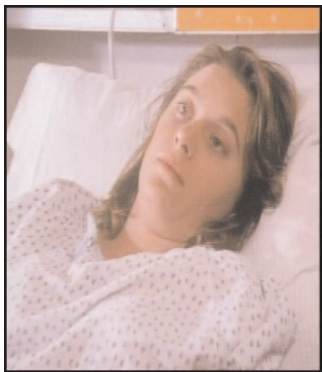
It must be hard to put on make-up to cover up the make-up that is there to represent your injuries

Find the moral
of the story
would appear to be...

Verbal and physical abuse...partnered with flowers...can break the human spirit. Take note, CIA interrogation agents.

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Just Friends



I wonder when LD will get out of the hospital...WAIT...why is LD in the hospital? When did LD go to the hospital? I watched every single episode of Degrassi High in a state of 100% sobriety, and I don't recall them slipping this information in. Oh well, she's there now...and she's turning my "broken heart meter" up to 10 with her sickness. She's got leukemia...and I'm going to forego making

I like LD. She is a fairly minor character, but she's really non-offensive and legit. Thanks a lot, god.

any jokes about that because this is a disease on my list of diseases that I could see myself getting someday. I'm really sorry LD. Luckily, Lucy is a pret-

ty good friend and spends a lot of time with her in the hospital, picking out clothes from magazines. Is that what girls really did in High School? I hope not...because that is really boring and a little bit gross.

The real meat and potatoes of this half hour goes to the Wheels love trap party that Heather is throwing. She has had her eye on his nasty mullet and INSANELY tight pants and not that bad actually glasses for the entire year, and this is going to be the party where she tricks him into putting babies inside her.

All kinds of awkward moments lead up to the moment of frenching...but it is finally achieved after some well-timed slow dance music and some chilly breeze from Mother Nature herself. Speaking of Mother Nature, Heather has an attitude that will HOPEFULLY stick with me next time I find myself in an awkward pre-french tension moment: her reply to Erica's insistence of playing it cool and just letting "Nature take its course" is..."Forget Nature, I am not missing my big opportunity." After the frenching is done, Wheels realizes that she's not that into Heather and



Wheels, too tight dude. Quit.



Someone's gonna get a sore throat.

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is totally embarrassed to have locked lips in-front of the whole of grade 9. Oh, one minor subplot that is totally worth mentioning. Like 20% of this episode is there for Mya to make all kinds of "wheelchair rights" statements. No problems there, if you are in the chair...I think you deserve at least 20% of a half hour to talk about the trials and tribulations that you face. Mya comes off pretty legit...but she pulls out one of the biggest "The Office" (UK version) moments of the entire franchise with the following scene. Sorry to take up your time drawing this out, but I want to try and capture as much of the moment as possible...

Scene: The "have not" club (the hilarious, self imposed, moniker for the group of Kathleen, Mya, Melanie, and Diana) is sitting around talking about how great guys are and how they are going to get married and shop at Ikea and blah blah blah. There is some laughter after Melanie says some stupid shit about prince charming...but the laughter is quickly broken when Mya blurts out...

"I want to marry a doctor who will fall madly in love with me and dedicate his whole life to curing my disease."

...the laughter immediately stops and it gets totally awkward.

And the moral of the story would appear to be...

Don't make out with your friends. But wait, aren't you supposed to be friends with someone before you enter into a serious relationship? Thanks for giving me more things to double think, Degrassi.

Little White Lies

This is the strip club episode. Strip clubs, I just don't get it. You spend a lot of money to sit in a chair and look at naked girls dancing in front of you. I like naked girls as much as the next guy...I am pro-naked girls, but I will never understand the appeal of a strip club. I had my 15th birthday at Hooters and that was enough for me to never want to involve myself in this world again. It's just uncomfortable and horrible and expensive. Anyway, guess who

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is psyched about going to a strip club? Correct...the Zit Reme- I mean The Zits. I wonder if things will work out for them or if they'll have a bemusing experience that will make little kids watching at home go "AWWWWW" and the grown-up men watching it with them say something to the effect of "boys will be boys!" or "I got into some trouble in my day too!" My guess is bemusement.

I'm gonna long story short this one out...because

really...the whole plot is drawn out to fill a half an hour and the details aren't that amazing. Bullet points, engage...

The Zits don't have enough money for the three of them to get into the club, so only two enter. Joey and Snake both have fake IDs that say "Joey Jeremiah" on them...which is the same situation Ali and Erin were in for that "The Go! Team" show!

The word "sexsational" is not only used to advertise for the strip club, it appears to be made into a hand-painted sign. Craftsmanship. More hand-painted signs in this world please.

Joey doesn't get into the club, so he goes outside...flagrantly litters, and is aggressively propositioned by an unscrupulous prostitute.

All three lie to each other about what happened inside and outside the club.

Masturbation (unpictured...and not even implied during the episode, but come on)

The other main theme of this episode is WAY better than the strip club is. Apparently Diana is tired of being the smart greek girl at school ("brainer" is the derogatory term du jour at Degrassi High for people that are smart and don't walk around with jars of Skippy) and has decided that she is going to



Flyers were WAY cooler back in the 90s I guess.



I would have been grounded FOREVER if this happened.

3h

play up a bad girl image. She also has a crush on Yik (as does Ali)...so she's doing stuff like SMOKING and saying the word "yeah" more than people typically do. Diana pulls a few plays from the subversive literature being studied in Mr. Chesthair's class: NOTHING MAJOR...DRINKING, SNEAKING OUT, and SMOKING. She eventually gets caught by her greek-ass brother (who also sort of looks like a toucher...EVERY DUDE IN CANADA AT THIS TIME IN HISTORY LOOKED LIKE THEY WANTED TO TOUCH KIDS!). She gets full marks from me in this episode though, very sincere rebellion without the hint of letting her grades slip.

OH, one more thing. Melanie has the best one-liner so far in the series...

(The "Have Not"s are working in the library...Luke just walked by)

Melanie: I bet he thinks we're real nerds...working in the library.

Diana: At least we make money.

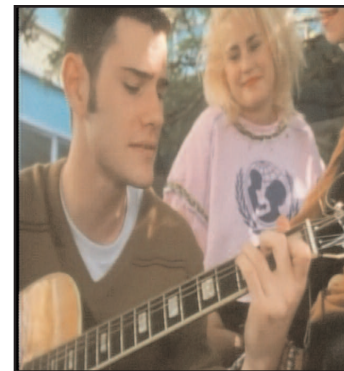
Melanie: Great, we're professional nerds.

...so awesome. This series has A LOT of likable characters, which is a huge contrast to TNG...which is mostly just embarrassing assholes.

Find the moral of the story would appear to be...

Lies make for good stories...but get off your ass and actually commit some crimes once and a while and you'll get more freedom in the longterm.

Sixteen Pt I



There is a moment when you see his face, and his mouth is closed, but you can still hear him singing.

Remember how that Irish toolbox was trying to get Spike to date him? Well, Spike is starting to take the bait. Let me sum this guy up for you in one sentence...he brings his guitar to school with him, everyday. Do you have the mental picture of what this guy is all about? If you don't, be careful...because that means you are susceptible to the contrived deceptions of this man and many like him. I've spent my whole life quietly watching people like this snatch up every girl that comes within the range of their acoustic noise. Anyway, Patrick wrote Spike a song and he has no

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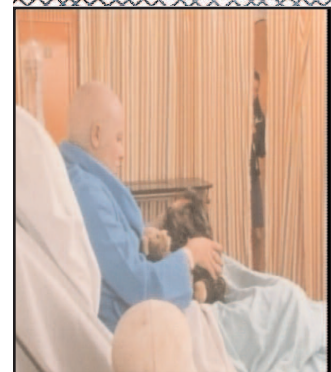
qualms about playing it for her in the middle of the diag. in front of everyone. The lyrics are essentially lifted directly from Morrissey's catalogue...and he seems to make NO attempt to hide this in his delivery or inflection. Whatever.

FULL DISCLOSURE I have recently learned to play the guitar...but I only write songs about Sassy & Cleo...and I only sing the songs to them. I can play "Everybody Wants Something" too, but I have changed the lyrics to be more cat-centric and it's now called "Every Kitty Wants ONE thing." I'll leave that one thing to your imagination. (HINT: It is to be pet ON their faces)

In this two-part disaster, we are also subjected to numerous "wah waaaaaah" moments as we watch The Zits fumble their way through driver's education. I can't complain TOO hard, because these are things that real high school students have to deal with...and I appreciate the writers giving it some air time. The entire process seems really slap-sticky though. I was unsatisfied.



He looks like he's been awake for days...



This was a "Murphy Brown gets breast cancer" moment for me. Since the on-screen deterioration of Pedro Zamora (obviously more of a bummer because he is not a character on a tv show, but rather, an actual dude on a tv show) have I felt such a tangible sadness for someone being sick on my television. I went to bed early that night.

Oh yeah...the entire point of this episode is that Michelle is really bummed out living with her toucher dad and wants to move into her own apartment. **38**

This is a doomed idea, but we're forced to watch teenage excitement grow and grow...knowing all along that things will end in tears. Thanks a lot Degrassi. She circles classified ads and has a near-montage walking around Toronto with her pals until she finally ends up renting a room in some non-descript college kid house. BORING EPISODE...I give you 4/10.

Find the moral of the story would appear to be...

Guitar playing shiteheads have had girls chasing after them for like 50+ years now.

Sixteen Pt II

This is the beginning of the series of video diaries that Lucy makes for LD while she is in the hospital. This is a pretty nice thing for Lucy to be doing, but I can't help but feel there is at least a hint of personal glory seeking behind Lucy's productions. Irrelevant though...I suppose. Lucy's idea is to get a bunch of people from Degrassi to do stupid shit on tape and then say "happy birthday LD" at the end of it. The first incarnation of the aforementioned stupid shit is a contingent of Degrassi's notably sparse and perhaps demographically underrepresented African-Canadian population (and Kathleen). Any guesses what they are going to do for LD? If you guessed "rapping", you were right...even Kathleen raps, but the camera cuts mercifully away from her face during that part. The whole thing is actually pretty awesome...so I unfortunately can not make jokes about it. The name of the rap outfit is "MC Degrassi & the Desktops"...which is essentially the greatest name for a rap outfit ever conceived by man.



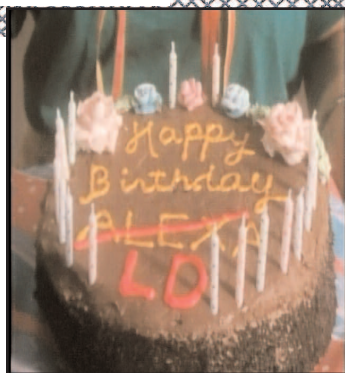
The twins introduce all the bits on the video, and wear the same outfits for each intro...which doesn't seem to happen much and is totally spectacular.

The "Michelle moved out" and "driver's ed" plots are both wrapped up in part two of this crappy nightmare. I don't want to think about it because the whole thing makes my mind feel stupid, so I'm just going to sum it up... **39**

Michelle is working a lot in order to pay her rent...She makes up with her dad and I bet she ends up moving back home in a couple episodes (or...more likely, this whole situation will never be mentioned again)

Joey and Snake both fail driver's education. No one cares.

Back to the totally depressing "LD in the hospital all leukemiaed-out" story...it's PARTY TIME! The sweet 16 day has arrived and the video is ready to be premiered. A bunch of Degrassi's finest pile in to LD's hospital room and there's a lot of "off the cuff" banter and nervous laughter as everyone tries to make the best of this uncomfortable and totally sad situation. It's OK...kind of nice, actually...BUT...check out the birthday cake situation. They have crossed Alexa's name off it and hastily scribbled "LD" instead. Why not go the extra mile and remove it properly and then shamelessly pass off a second-hand cake instead of putting the afterthought in front of everyone's face. She has leukemia...now is the time to put a little effort in.



I love birthday cake, but not birthdays.

They have crossed Alexa's name off it and hastily scribbled "LD" instead. Why not go the extra mile and remove it properly and then shamelessly pass off a second-hand cake instead of putting the afterthought in front of everyone's face. She has leukemia...now is the time to put a little effort in.

Find the moral of the story would appear to be...

Identical twins should be legally obligated to wear the exact same clothes at all times. I know that's really stupid and shitty for me to say...and I recognize that identical twins are unique individuals with their own thoughts and feelings...but come on, that just looks awesome every single time. I know, pay twins \$100 for each day that they wear the same outfit. Incentives.

All In A Good Cause

This is the episode where evidence becomes conclusive that Claude, in spite of his really cool Bauhaus jacket, is in fact, a complete douchebag. We're no longer just passing judgement on him because of the way he dresses, we now have some verbal AND tangible evidence. The entire school seems to be

entrenched in fundraising efforts for UNICEF, but old Claude can't be troubled with the trials of unfed children while a factory near Degrassi High has begun to manufacture parts for nuclear warheads. "No Nukes is Good Nukes" he proudly proclaims...and immediately prints up a battery of flyers stating something to that effect. Our vision of this revolutionary is challenged though...

One of his fellow upper classman calls him out on how he's always changing his causes. I guess a couple years ago he was trying to save the whales, now it's NUKES.

The organization that Claude ALLEGEDLY is involved with is called "People For Peace." I did some research...and there is NO fundraising or activist group operating in Toronto called "People For Peace." This adds a level of deception and suspicion to Claude that I'm not even going to attempt to wrap my brain around.

There's a sort of mini-vignette of Claude "challenging" people...which made me realize that he picks up these causes so that he can always discuss them with people rather than stuff that is actually important. Claude is building surface relationships.

When challenged on his knowledge of who the "Chicago 7" are, Claude suggests that they were "seven guys from Chicago...who did radical things."

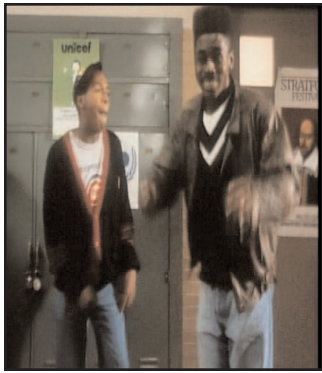
Incorrect Claude, incorrect.

Anyway, dickhead eventually convinces Caitlin to spraypaint some slogans on the side of the warehouse, I mean warehouse. Caitlin gets all stuck on a barbed-wire fence while they are trying to escape a security guard and Claude runs away and leaves Caitlin to be captured. OH MY GOD.

The subplot in this episode surrounds the fundraising campaign and competition that a couple homerooms are having with each other. The homeroom that raises the most will have the opposing homeroom as their "slaves" for a week. Why would the school allow this to happen? I was really uncomfortable watching the African-Canadian students saying things like "I don't want to be anyone's slave next



Yik often wears this tie-dyed "Captain Eo" shirt.



week", but maybe that's just my own white guilt and maybe we're all on level playing ground now with phrases like that. I doubt it though. Sub-plot, Yik and his buddy Luke think that Arthur is a total nerd...so now Arthur is out to prove them wrong

It looks like MC Degrassi & The Desktops are at it again, this time they are rapping for a cause

I sort of really like the idea of "rap" fundraisers. I sort of really like the idea though. Unicef fundraising has taken the school by storm. So much in fact...that people that are participating feel that they are still allowed to call OTHER people nerds. I played Dungeons & Dragons like twice a week in high school, but not even I would participate in school activities like this. Nerd means something different in Canada and frankly, I'm not onboard with it.

The killer plan for homeroom A is the notion of gathering money from students for a "bet" stating that someone will TP Raditch's house. This is the perfect opportunity for Arthur to prove that he isn't a big nerd...because HE will be the one throwing the TP all over Mr. Raditch's place. I don't think that unnerds you Arthur, it just makes you a violator of Canadian malicious mischief laws. Regardless, Arthur follows through...the bet is won...homeroom alpha now has a contingent of their peers as slaves for a week...and Arthur receives the fist pounding from Luke that proves he is "down." I hope it was worth it dude.



I don't like looking at this picture. It offends my taste.

And the moral of the story would appear to be...

You go down with the ship. If your activist girlfriend is about to get busted...by god, you get busted with her. If your homeroom is about to enter indentured slavery, well...you purchase a shitload of toilet paper and you throw that toilet paper all over the vice principal's house. Also, the term nerd should be taken with a grain of salt if it is ascribed to you by a Canadian.

Natural Attraction

This is basically a "big dance" episode. This is also the episode where I had to do some serious soul-searching...it was becoming difficult to sit alone in my basement with a pad of paper and a pen and take notes on this television show while half hour after unforgiving half hour of teenage drama raped all the remaining goodness from my heart and soul. When people ask me what I'm doing tonight and I say "watching Degrassi High", I usually get this weird look from them (sometimes accompanied by a sound effect that seems to scream "you are really pathetic"). After I got through watching this one, I think I finally understand where they are coming from. Regardless of this wavering, I powered through. Everyone wants/needs a date to the big dance...and I just HAD to see how that was going to unfold.

Poor little Scooter doesn't know how to slow dance and Tessa Campenelli just asked him to the big show. I totally understand where he is coming from...and you know something, watching this episode sort of made me want to slow dance with a lady right now. I don't like dancing, but I don't consider slow dancing to be dancing. When a dance has a set of choreographed motions, I'm usually OK with it. In fact, I actually enjoy skanking. But enough of that: slow dance is the topic of the moment and slow dancing is what Scooter needs to learn. Bartholomew Bonds, his pale friend, decides to teach him. Bartholomew Bonds (referred to as Barry Bonds over the intercom system) also watches documentaries about turtles and says stuff like "Isn't time travel an intriguing concept?" Yes Barry Bonds, it is...and my friends and I spent most of our high school (and college) years discussing it at length.



This guy is like...the special ed heavy metal shit-face...and everyone wants to date him



Despite the fact that every bully in school sees this; neither are hit with fists.



The other major dance pairing scenario is the argument between the relatively UNKNOWN characters of Allyson and Amy. The writers tried to sneak these two jokers into our hearts, but as you will see...they back off (much in the same way they backed off with Chester ON TNG. Remember that guy? What was that all about?). I'm gonna long story short these two out, because I don't think

I just learned from a friend that all girl's bathrooms have 50 cent tampon machines. I don't get it.

they deserve a lot of our time...

Allyson notices that wheels' pants are UNNATURALLY tight. This is always hilarious to me.

Both ladies have a thing for Snake, this causes all kinds of trouble...which is weird, because Snake doesn't seem like a big prize at Degrassi High or anything like that.

The Snake conflict eventually leads to a shouting match and then the returning of borrowed clothes (that were currently being worn) inside the lady's washroom. What could have been an erotic scene, turns into hilarious defusement when someone walks in on the two ex-friends...who are suddenly friends again. That's how that works, huh?

Oh yeah...plus it turns out that Heather is having some gnarly nightmares about the fact that Erica had an abortion. Kind of an intense reaction, but I'm not going to pass judgement on reactions to other people's abortions.

And the moral of the story would appear to be...

Documentaries about turtles are way more interesting and fulfilling than a high school dance. Also, time travel is an intriguing concept.

Testing

1...2...3...

It's time for final exams at Degrassi, and you'll never believe it...but

people are stressed out. There's a lot of little cutesy storylines following how each person is dealing with it, but the real star here is the previously backgrounded actions of Alex: the homeroom president. He's the guy that wears sportscoats and shorts to school every day, and he's probably the guy that most closely resembles what I was all about in high school (except I wasn't an active participant in voluntary school events). Up until now, you are given the impression that the dude is smart...but CORRECTION...the dude is NOT smart. He has an older brother that saved all of his work from high school and Alex has just been riding those coattails to academic cobra-la. So basically, Alex decides to make a zine out of his brother's work and give copies to most of his classmates. Apart from the fact that photocopies are 10 cents A PAGE at Degrassi High (higher than Kinkos is charging...10 years later), nothing much interesting happens with that. The kids get caught and have to retake a biology test. Boring.

Putting up a good argument for main plot, but ultimately weighing in at subplot quality, we have "Joey Jeremiah has dysgraphia." You know how he's always doing really shitty in class, even when he tries really hard? Well I guess that was the dysgraphia talking...which, according to a psychiatrist on the show, means that he might be a bright guy (arguable)...

but his brain isn't letting the information find its way to his hands. This condition is apparently a one way ticket to special ed. I guess the driver's license that he's been bragging about must feel kind of useless, because Joey now has the ability to request a ride to school on the short bus. I feel comfortable making fun of people with dysgraphia in this zine because the nature of their condition dictates that they won't be able to put their thoughts into words hard enough to hurt my feelings! ZING, you disabled trolls.

Rounding out a REALLY solid episode of D-High (8/10), we have some

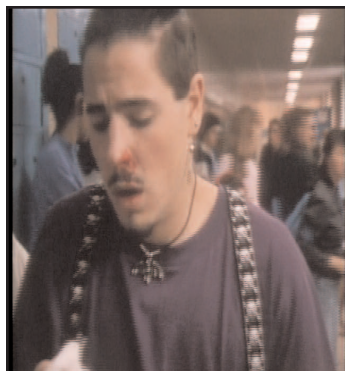


The techno beat of a copying machine working at full force is intoxicating...



Surprisingly, Joey kicks Dwayne's ass.

progression in the "Caitlin is pissed at Claude" story. Caitlin wants to give him another chance. If he promises to come to her trial, she will probably fall back in love with him (due in no small part I'm sure, to his awesome Bauhaus jacket). No surprises here though, Claude chickens out. Caitlin decides to make an expressionist style painting about her feelings...using CLAUDE'S OWN BLOOD as her medium. Nice shot Jackson!



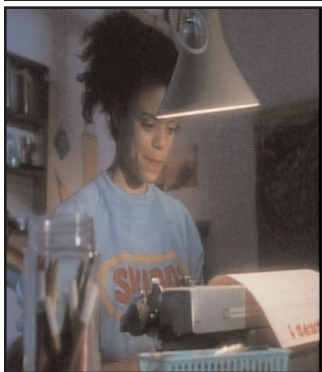
If anyone wants desktop wallpaper of this image, send me an email.

find the moral of the story would appear to be...

Don't always believe grown-ups when they say you are "very bright" if that is a response to "do I belong in special ed?" If you are actually of normal intelligence, they wouldn't embellish like this.

PS - I apologize if anyone reading this has dysgraphia and had their feelings hurt by my totally awesome zing.

It Creeps!



This episode is like 90% about Lucy making the world's first "feminist horror film." The other 10% is about Shane coming back to Degrassi after taking acid and jumping (Luke says jump-

There are A LOT of Skippy ing) off a bridge. Is there footage of this?

I swear I've seen a photo of it online, but I don't remember seeing it on the actual TV show. Fuck, I really want to see it too. To honour Lucy's film, I'm going to do this review using a lot of pictures.

4h



There is definitely some "almost nudity" in this film.



These were the pants that Lucy wore to school the day she decided to pitch her script to Mr. Chesthair and hope that she could film it instead of writing a stage play.



There's a pretty drawn out scene where Wheels goes and takes a shower and the janitor walks in on him. Yan Moore, you are a monster.



Here is an example of the graphic violence that Lucy uses in the production of It Creeps.



Lucy is bummed out because everyone laughed at her film, and she meant for it to be scary. Lucy, I totally understand where you are coming from...sincere expressions of misery in the Degrassi Digest are often mistaken for jokes.

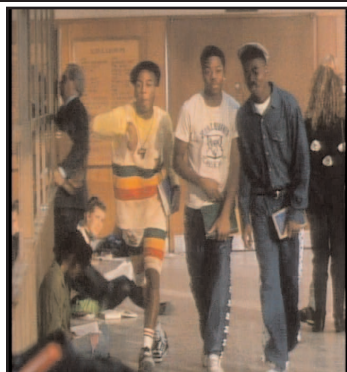
find the moral of the story would appear to be...

Lucy Hernandez is the true hero of the Degrassi Digest series...Spike gets WAY too much cool cred on this show. Lucy is totally better.

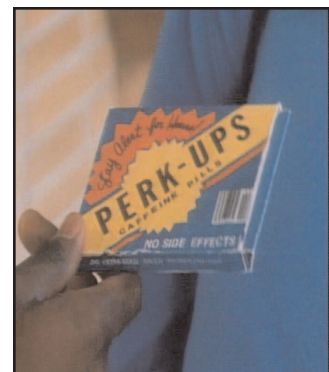
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Stressed Out

Anyone care about watching Michelle take a bunch of caffeine pills and then flip out? Me either...but I watched it happen for 25 minutes or so. Jessica Spano would come around in like three years and perfect the delivery of this performance. For now, we just have to suffer through Michelle doing it. Basically, people are STILL taking their finals (3 episodes in a row seem to happen within the span of three days, that means that the previous 12 episodes covered a span of 9 months. That seemed like an unusual amount of time to gloss over) and are totally STRESSED OUT



MC Degrassi & The Desktops are now just walking through the halls making up impromptu rap jams about the relevant events and topics circulating around Degrassi High.

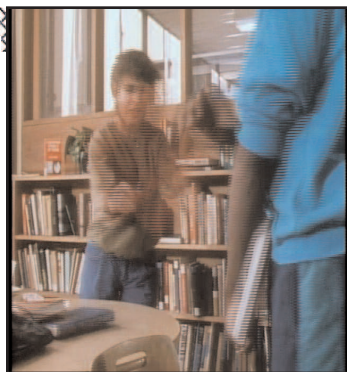


All boxes and advertisements were cool in the eighties and early ninties.

So...as we have learned, Michelle has to stay up all day going to school and working to pay for her new apartment. She decides to start taking a ton of caffeine pills...gets pissed at BLT and throws things at him...She apologizes...I pause the episode a lot to go to the bathroom (too much coffee) and double check that NO ONE has called me and left me any messages (NO messages). No one cares about this Michelle thing. I DON'T even think Michelle cares...

Super embarrassing moment: Caitlin is cleaning out her locker...and discovers a moldy sandwich inside of a bag. This is HILARIOUS to all parties that witness the sandwich. Diana says: (IN cliche robotic-alien-Martian voice) "We are earth people, we will NOT harm you." But you see...She does it in the FUNNY voice. Why would earth people talk in the FUNNY voice!?!? The sandwich would have the FUNNY voice! Not cool Diana.

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Watching Michelle flip out wasn't funny or satisfying...my indifference is a mystery.

The subplot to this fine/very fine (6/10) episode is that Miss Avery isn't coming back next year and Caitlin is pissed and wants to write a letter and blah blah blah activism self righteousness...turns out Miss Avery just wants to move further north and who even cares anyway? Caitlin is embarrassed because she basically realizes that she's turning into Claude with the shifting and blind passion that she places behind random causes. The episode ends with Caitlin smiling though, because Caitlin is everyone's favourite and the writers always take care of her. Surprise.

Find the moral of the story would appear to be...

Everything that Michelle was attempting to gain from taking those caffeine pills can more safely be provided through the habitual intake of coffee. Michelle, I used to spend time in Ontario...I know you have Tim Horton's up there, and I know they serve coffee...get to work.

Bad Blood Part I

I picked up on something which I consider pretty amazing. During the opening credits of this episode, and ONLY this episode...you can hear sound effects during the montage. Like, the usual series of "wah waaaaaaah" shots are still present, but when Joey's face is smashed against the door...you hear a smash...when BLT gives a high five...you HEAR the high five. I replayed it like five times to make sure, and it's definitely there. WHY? So weird...



So basically, sex education has taken the school by storm. I don't recall the lessons learned when I

Did Dwayne have sex with this girl? Did he contract the HIV virus from unprotected contact with her genitals? Answer's in pt 2.

was instructed in school as to how "it" is done...and my home teaching LITERALLY consisted of my dad having my mom relay the message of "if you have any questions, come ask me." Luckily, I was Internet savvy at a

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very young age...so disaster averted. IN Canada though, they take it pretty seriously. There are packets that you have to read and they put condom machines in the bathrooms.

This episode is mostly about Joey in special education class and wanting to buy a car and getting tripped by Dwayne, but there are a few loose ends that get tied up. Let's employ some bullets to save time so I can get back to brushing my cats...

BLT has a new girlfriend and hasn't told Michelle about it. His new girlfriend wears neon track suits.

Lucy has started taking the LD documentaries a little too far and frankly I'm a bit annoyed with her. Good news though, LD is in remission. Her dad sold the house and the garage, and they bought a boat to travel down "the islands." A rushed, but happy ending to that story...

Skippy peanut butter must have backed off their funding to Degrassi, because all the Skippy signs have been conspicuously replaced with "Dipps" ads. Dipps are basically chocolate covered granola bars...and now people are walking around the halls carrying boxes of them. Shameless.

Dwayne's "bullying" of Joey takes center stage here. Joey wants to raise a bunch of money to buy his dream car...so he takes bets that he won't walk ass-naked through the cafeteria. The intent of buying the car is to "cruise for chicks", but do chicks want to be cruised by the bare-ass naked cafeteria guy? I'm not a lady...but my guess is no. Nudity is a special thing that is shared by two people that love each other very much...it's not to be flaunted in public like this. At what price, your car...Jeremiah? Skip ahead...Dwayne rats Joey out and he gets busted by Mr. Raditch.



Condoms look like some gross kind of pasta.



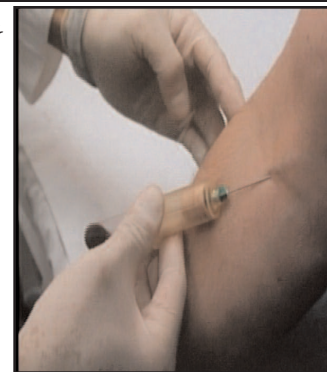
Here is Dwayne...committing an act of homophobia.

And the moral of the story would appear to be...

Everyone knows that wearing condoms totally sucks.

Bad Blood Part II

Does anyone else have a problem watching someone else's blood get taken? Watching metal being slowly inserted into the human body is really hard for me to watch because it is a reminder that my brain is inside this sack of meat...and that is a really harsh reality for me. Brain in a jar by '09. Well, Dwayne didn't seem to have much of a problem with the process...and guess what, broham has HIV. Bing bong, you've got HIV.



I can't watch needle in arm on TV or in real life. Gross.

BLT's hair is akin to Spinner's hair from TNG in that it is constantly changing and almost never looks good. The really lame and brief subplot here is that he finally breaks up with Michelle. No one even cares.



No one ever clipped things onto their Gumby ridges. the fact that he has HIV. Nothing funny or interesting happens. There's one scene where he gets really sad about his bad blood and decides to take out his aggression on the condom machine in the boy's room. Is this a metaphor? Does the machine represent the forgotten condom that caused his phallus to enter an HIV infected zone...and now he's all HIVed out? I think this is the metaphor. Joey and him have a nice old fashioned fight and get all covered in blood.

This entire half hour is Dwayne walking around getting emotional about



Joey wins this fight...but is probably HIV positive now

And the moral of the story would appear to be...

HIV infection is the only effective countermeasure against the school bully.

Loyalties



This was hands down one of the worst episodes of Degrassi High that has ever been created by a human being. Yan Moore phoned this one in because I bet he was skiing a lot on the weekends and didn't even care if he lost his job because he was having so much fun wearing ski outfits and wanted to see if he could push his life in the direction of doing that all the time. His laziness is an insult to

Me. This episode is all about Snake being in love with Michelle, and Caitlin catching her dad having an affair. You can probably just skip the whole analysis on this one and you won't really be missing out on much.

The one saving grace of this one was watching Snake agonize over how he was going to ask Michelle out. He raises an incredibly interesting question...how is a gentleman supposed to ask a lady out on a date? How do you approach that unclear and scary cliff and toss yourself off in the hopes that there's a load-bearing trampoline at the bottom ready to send you back up into the sky? This is a question that I've pondered for pretty much my entire life...and I'm always asking girls for their opinions (so far, no good answers). Well, I spent like 20 minutes eagerly waiting to see what Snake comes up with. The answer turned out to be just walk up to the girl and say "do you wanna go to a movie or have a dinner sometime?" Snake has loads of courage and it works out. Michelle is still totally wounded and hung up on BLT, but she agrees.

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"I didn't mess up!!!!"

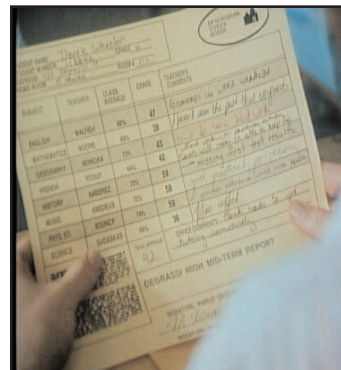
The date is a disaster...and Snake is worried that he blew it. I think this is probably the best Snake episode in the history of Degrassi High. There are all kinds of cringe-worthy date moments in this one. Michelle just lets him know that she's bummed out about BLT and everything suddenly becomes OK. It's sort of weird that Snake shifts from being enamored with Michelle to just being happy that he "didn't blow it" with her...but that's OK

Oh yeah...the Caitlin's dad affair. He lies to Caitlin's mom and...surprise...buys her flowers. All possible suspicion of the late hours he has been keeping at "the office" (which is a middle school...so...why would there be late hours there?) are suddenly defused upon presentation of the coloured plants.

And the moral of the story would appear to be...

\$20 will buy 7 decent comic books, 2 newly released records, at least 4 awesome books, five meals from New Seasons, or a fun night out at the Florida Room...girls apparently aren't aware of this fact though, because they'd rather have \$20 worth of flowers. This flips some weird switch in their brain that makes things better. I don't mean to generalize here, but this is what I've observed. I'm not calling anyone gullible, I just don't understand the appeal.

A Tangled Web



French class average: 64%

This installment begins a series of episodes in the "downfall of Wheels" saga. This saga is LONG overdue. I've never been a big fan of Wheels, and I was pretty much OK watching his life go to pieces. It is kind of weird how the writers totally 180 his character though. It seems like everyone had a crush on Wheels before this episode...and to be honest, he didn't seem like that bad of a guy. But, nice guy no longer.

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Wheels is failing all of his classes, and NOT OWNING up to his own Shittiness.



The really weak subplot in this turd was the fact that Alex has a thing for Tessa Campenelli. Arthur plays cupid and sends both parties "secret admirer" cards...so eventually they find themselves waiting ON the front steps of Degrassi. Tessa is pretty bummed out when she finds out that Alex is her secret admirer, but Alex completely redeems himself and pulls out the Nerd charm. Some guys are just

A sobering, visual personi- looking for sincere reasons to chat a lady up
fication of my social life. Tessa...some guys can't conduct themselves properly
when there is build up or pretense for a discussion...some guys need to get to
know a lady before they can turn the charm ON and not feel like they are
attempting to commit some kind of violent manipulation. Alex ends up winning
this lady over...and in doing so, gives hope to Canadian Nerds watching at home.

The final straw for Wheels' grandma was him lying
about going to study somewhere...and instead, going
ON a really ill-conceived roadtrip with The Zits to
see Gourmet Scum in concert. He could have
totally spun that whole situation and said that he
wasn't lying about studying...because his band went
to STUDY another band. Wheels is not this clever
though, and gets busted when he comes home late.
His grandmother KICKS him out of the house..
harsh... but sort of hilarious too. I give this COM-
plete "set up" episode a 3/10...



Your friends are too nice to
be outwardly mean to you,
so I'll pick up the slack...
Wheels, you are a loser.

And the moral
of the story
would appear to be...

Lying to a grandmother is at least twice as hard as lying to your parents.
They have more experience with young people lying to them..and they have the
advantage of being able to say "fuck it" when it comes to restraining expres-
sions of their true feelings. Their close proximity to death becomes their
greatest advantage...and you should use caution when dealing with them.

Body Politics

This episode is the "Bikini Kill" of Degrassi High and
just adds more to the argument that Lucy is the
TRUE Spike of this series. Take all the good stuff
that you have floating in your head about Spike,
even the superficial good stuff like how cool she
dresses...and kindly shift all those vibes over to
Lucy. She is deserving of this. We start things off
with Lucy doing the LD video diary and being sad
that she can't go to the dance because NO ONE will
ask her...and she thinks it's because she is "mouthy."
Like, she speaks her mind too much for a girl. Now,
personally...issues of gender equality are rarely ON the forefront of my mind.
It's a no-brainer to me that ladies and gentlemen can equally perform tasks
and should all have the same rights and opportunities and get paid the same as
each other for work...it just makes sense. I don't feel the need to walk
around with a t-shirt that says something to that effect, because if someone
around me isn't onboard with that line of thought, I just cut them out of my
life. Sounds dumb maybe? Well...according to "The Specials", if you have a racist
friend...now is the time...now is the time...for your, friendship to end. I just
stretched that out and applied it to sexism and homophobia. I typically feel
like trying to convince people otherwise isn't worth
your time...and sometimes turns into a personal
self-righteous type thing ("Aren't I awesome for
spreading this message?", etc)...but in Lucy's case, I
was totally in. Get mouthy, lady.

The subplot in this episode is that Spike and Patrick
broke up and now Patrick wants to ask Liz out on
a date. Spike does the "oh that's cool, I don't mind"
thing...but it's obviously NOT OK and Patrick/Liz are
about to break the UNSPOKEN (yet firm) rule that
you can never date your ex-girlfriends friends. You
have to wait two years after a breakup before you can even



I'd ask Lucy on a date if I
were on this show...actual-
ly, untrue...but I would
WANT to ask her.



I'm not even going to say
anything. I don't want peo-
ple to say I'm just bitter or
jealous or something.

ATTEMPT this. No one fully adheres to this rule, but it's the only way to safely remain friends with all parties involved.

Back to the action though. I'm skipping a lot of story here...this was a very Lucy-intensive episode...so I'll pull out the bullets...

- Girls volleyball team isn't getting decent practice time in the gym because the boy's basketball team is hogging it all
- Lucy gets asked to the dance by the captain of the boy's basketball team

- Lucy gets "mouthy" by demanding better practice time for the girl's team...and in doing so, loses her date to the dance
- Bronco swoops in and saves the day by vocalizing his interest in Lucy...and being all proud of her for "mouthing off."



This is one of the few moments on the show that Lucy actually looks happy.

find the moral of the story would appear to be...

The moral of the story SEEMS to be that ladies should speak their mind and not be stigmatized for that. I agree with this...but the real moral of the story TO ME is that, regardless of gender, one should never mouth off. We should all operate under our own system of morals and principles. If we witness people violating this system, we should silently collect "evidence" as to why that person doesn't belong in our lives and then one day present a solid case that can't be argued against because you caught the person totally by surprise and they had NO idea they were violating your rules. Then, just cut them out of your life. Just kidding, that's not cool to do at all...hahahahaha

Crossed Wires

This was a really weird episode of Degrassi High, and there aren't that many weird episodes of Degrassi High. The basic schpiel is that Liz got totally sex-abused when she was young and now has trouble getting close to dudes.

5h

A reasonable response to a really UNFORTUNATE situation. What is weird (to me at least), is that although the PROBLEM is very clearly outlined, there are NO possibilities of resolution presented. Usually Degrassi holds your hand and shows at least one (if not a few) possible ways that a person could perceive and deal with a tough situation. Not in this one though; this one is all "isn't this shitty for Liz"ed out. I half expected someone to walk up to her ON the street, point at her, and yell out "you got RAAAAAAAAAAPED" with a mocking tone.



I heard Gore Vidal on NPR saying that he doesn't think it should be illegal to look at child pornography.



If only Tim knew what a horrible person Liz is... (and deeply offended me). So, Tim tries to capitalize ON this and moves in for a kiss as Liz is closing the door. Bold move Tim.

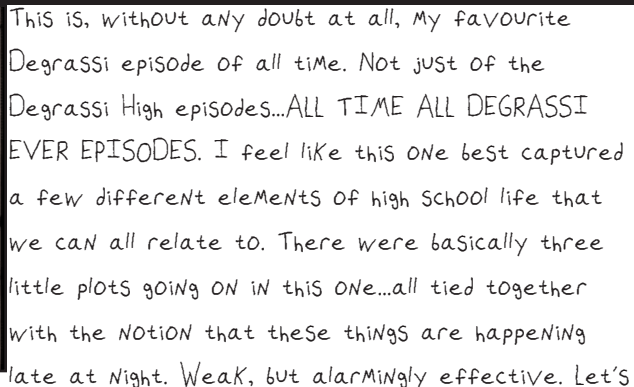
This saucy act earns him a doorslam...which is really funny and satisfying to watch. This is a pretty traumatic series of events...seems like someone watching at home that has been through sexual abuse might want to know how Liz can go about resolving these issues. No dice though, Degrassi provides nothing. Liz talks to Spike about it the next day...and apologizes to Tim...and that's it. No mention of counseling or kicking-boxing school or those classes where ladies all stand around and learn how to yell "NO" really loud or ANYTHING. I'm sure I'm just overthinking things, but this strikes me as weird.

The cutesy subplot delves into the deepening of relations between Alex and Tessa. I paid extra attention to this storyline because the gist of it is that Alex wants to french Tessa and he has NO idea if/how/when. Like,

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Find the moral of the story would appear to be...

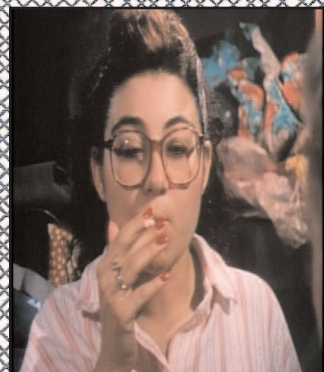
The All-Nighter



58

59

She starts telling all the awesome jokes...She politely passes the doob when the moment is appropriate (and therefore avoids the dreaded "driving miss daisy" label)...She is active and engaged with her friends...but, whoops, she spills the beans about Kathleen being in therapy for anorexia. I've seen every episode of Degrassi EVER, and I don't remember this being a storyline. Regardless of all that, Kathleen is bummed out...but don't even worry about it, because all is forgotten and everyone is friends again after the next couple episodes roll by. I watched this masterpiece like 27 times because it is really great...and then I spent the next week thinking about it a lot, so I would say I've probably seen it like thirty times. I'm not trying to brag or anything though.



The best smoking scene in Degrassi...

Do 15 year old girls wear those hair ribbons to bed?

This is what it would look like if my bubbie smoked.

Wow, I just realized that this is the "super nerd expo" of Degrassi episodes.

All major plots have some of the nerdier cast members in them...and even BETTER...the Nerds are doing stuff like smoking dope, gambling, and drinking a lot of pepsi. 10/10. This IS Degrassi.

find the moral of the story would appear to be...

Smoking pot is HILARIOUS and really good for you.

Home Sweet Home

Wheels got sort of a break in the last couple episodes as far as being called out on his douchebaggery goes...but things get slammed back home with a vengeance in this little sob story. In short, Wheels is a lying loser of a liar. **h1**

Everyone in his life will hate him by the time this twenty five minute masterpiece is over. FUCK YOU WHEELS. Things start out with Wheels straight up stealing Canadian change from Joey Jeremiah's mother. We've all been there, right? We've all stolen things from our friend's moms, right? BUSTED! CAUGHT! I have NEVER done that...and back there, when I was pretending that it was the "norm"...I was just using a police procedure called "entrapment" in order to weed out unscrupulous readers of this fanzine. If you stole change from a friend's mom...please deposit this zine in the nearest bathroom (that is NOT your own bathroom) and let's never speak again. Yeah, I'm that serious about the right to privacy that every mom's purse deserves.



...no patience for theft.



SO...Wheels gets his ass kicked out of the Jeremiah house due to his thieving ways and lackadaisical attitude towards finding a new place to live. Followers of the show will remember that he ALREADY got kicked out of his grandma's house in earlier episodes because he is a lying cheat of a tightpants mullet. Sorry if there are any fans of Wheels out there and you think I'm being too

No one cares about you, Wheels. No one cares.

hard on him...but this guy is representative of a lot of bad attitudes that I see in youth culture today. This guy feels "entitled" to things and has a whole cache of shady reasons why he feels justified in this thinking. I wish I could dig up Ayn Rand's rotting corpse and throw it at Wheels. Just walk up behind him, tap him on the shoulder, yell out "OBJECTIVISM", and toss old Ayn right at him. That is pretty much the only thing that will ever put my mind at rest here. Back to the story though, Wheels is kicked out of Joey's house...refused access to Snake's house...and shut-out back at grandma's. He spends the night outside on a couch, and if you turn the volume up really high around the moment when he realizes that his life is in shambles...you can hear Jesus Christ laughing feverishly. **h1**

The subplot to this one is Michelle finally giving up the dream of having her own apartment at the age of 16. BLT dumps her, so it doesn't make sense anymore to rebel against her father...so she packs up her unicorn posters (seriously, there are unicorn posters) and moves back in with her dad. I think the writers of Degrassi got bribed by a parent's association to do this part of the storyline, because it is totally demoralizing to kids.



Watch her dad's neck during this scene...it is VERY noticeably moving around.

Find the moral of the story would appear to be...

It is really hard for Canadians to steal change from people...because over there, change comes in \$1 or \$2 coins...and I would argue that this isn't even change anymore. People notice the loss of that kind of money.

Extracurricular Activities

This episode was just a bunch of little cutesy crap about how this fake-ass band called "The Savages" was going to be shooting a music video at Degrassi and everyone finds out and wants to go see the rock band shooting their stupid video. Guess what, high schoolers...rock and roll bands are comprised of people just like you and I. If anything, folks in rock bands are a more annoying calibre of people because they are made up of people that put aside all attempts to "play ball" with the unwritten rules of the world and instead are arrogant enough to presume that people should support them in the pursuit of their ART. Guess what, rock bands...some of us have a mortgage to pay...some of us have kittens to feed...some of us need to save our money up to buy rock band albums when they come out (whoops)! So, my point here is...it was annoying to



No teenager has ever done this, not even Canadians.

h2

watch a bunch of teenagers lose their shit because a band was going to be in their school. I didn't want to be subjected to thirty minutes of misplaced awe.



Unfortunately, thirty minutes of this crap was all the writers felt like coughing up this week. There is a really weak side story about Caitlin's parents and how they are going to try and get back together and have some kind of loveless fake marriage. As crushing as a development that COULD have been, it didn't really phase me at this point. MAN! I do NOT ever want to be divorced.

One of many "wah waaaah" moments in this episode. Are you kidding me? It seems really terrible.

This episode felt like a weak-handed attempt to be a "playful high school fiasco." I feel like kids are fed little adventures like this on TV and movies while they are growing up...wacky "Ferris Bueller" type antics that never actually get put into practice by real world teenagers. It's unfortunate, because I think it puts some kids in the mindset of "the big adventure" constantly being just a couple of years out of reach...but one day you realize that you are older than Ferris' sister was, and the adventure that you couldn't wait to be old enough to have...never showed up. I'm just trying to say that I wish there were less blueprints of fun like this being hammered into kid's heads.



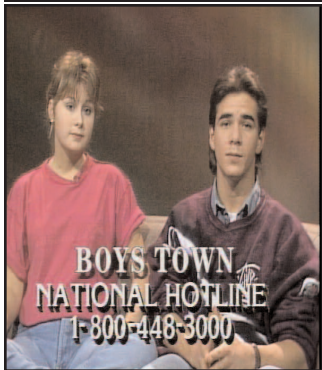
"rock n roll takes a lotta lotta lotta lotta your soul"

Find the moral of the story would appear to be...

Built up notions of fame from art are really offensive to me. "Art" seems like it is and SHOULD be a really subjective term. Again, not trying to get too deep on you here...but I love art. I just think the "art world" is really gross and counter-intuitive. Hey artists, stop ruining art for everyone.

h3

Showtime Ports I & II



Any episode of Degrassi that starts out by having the actors ON the series talk to the audience about the sensitive nature of the material they are about to view has a 95% chance of being awesome before it even begins. This episode stayed mercifully far away from that bottom 5%. We begin with a lecture from Pat and Stacie about how suicide is a major bummer (thanks for the SPOILER Joey) and NO ONE should ever do it. Now, geewhiz...I wonder what Degrassi hero is going to kill him or herself in the coming hour of cinematic genius?

Flagrantly breaking through the fourth barrier, which always makes me feel really uncomfortable.

SURPRISE! This shit head did it! Could you imagine if Claude had shot someone ELSE rather than himself in this thing? "The Degrassi Massacre" sounds way cooler than the "Columbine whatever it was called." I guess it's not really funny to make a joke about school shootings, but it seems like it probably should be.

So yeah, Claude is all bummed out because he

recited his totally awesome goth poetry at the



This is not a scene from "It Creeps!"

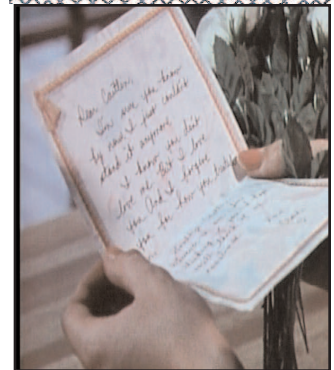
talent show audition and everyone thought it was really shitty. The real hit of the show is this group of basketball players that wear ballerina outfits and dance around the stage. They call themselves "The Jockettes" and I feel really terrible for any transgendered Degrassi students that had to sit in the audience and watch their classmates all laugh their asses off at boys wearing what is traditionally a girl's outfit. Erstwhile, Snake raises his hand and asks to go to the bathroom because he's



I wonder if "new romantic" will ever make a comeback..

"had too much tea for breakfast." Now, I KNOW that tea isn't a diuretic... and I also KNOW that it is often served really warm. So, does this mean that Snake was basically standing up in front of the whole class and saying "I have to #2?" It seems like a weird thing to say. Whatever was going on in his bowels that morning, it put Claude's fate on a collision course with Snake. Snake discovers Claude in the bathroom with his face totally blown off.

While all this is going on, Caitlin is LITERALLY ON the stage performing what appears to be some kind of racist "soft shoe" dance in front of everyone. Claude totally gets her back though by sending some shitty flowers and a letter that says "My name is Claude...i love you blah blah blah...it's your fault that I'm dead." While all THAT is going on, the entire school is basically sitting around in their classrooms bullshitting about what a jackass Claude was. My favourite comment was from that heavier girl on the opening credits that never says much on the show...her take on the situation is that "now he's going to hell." I think it's the longest string of consecutive words that we ever hear from her.



This was back before suicide notes were emailed or left via youtube.



Grrr...I'm the ghost of Claude. I'm checkin you out.

So, the second half of this thing is basically just showing the recovery process for the students because everyone is so traumatized that this guy that NO ONE liked shot himself. Caitlin has a lot of moments where she sees a "ghost Claude" in the reflections around school, Snake is totally cry baby scarred for life over the whole thing, and the rest of the school pretty much doesn't care at all. The audience is subjected to Claude flashbacks... which seemed in poor taste to me.

The sort of gross thing that gets mixed in with all the post-suicide meltdowns is that this is basically the springboard that sends Joey and Caitlin back to second-base lane. Joey is failing pretty much all his classes, and Caitlin is conveniently chosen to tutor him in her spare time. He makes some stupid

jokes...and Caitlin, used to ONLY hearing bad jokes about French movies, totally eats all of it up. I'm not saying that I have sympathy for Claude here, or that people should all stop their lives and pay tribute to him because he killed himself. I'm not saying that. But it seems weird to me that they are so touchy feely so soon after this stuff.

At the very very end of this whole thing, Pat and Stacie come back and pretty much just repeat all the stuff they said at the beginning...except this time, Stacie implicitly states that the actor that plays Claude did not actually kill himself in real life. I realize that most reasonable people would have come to this conclusion on their own, but it is oddly comforting to hear it directly from Stacie.

Find the moral of the story would appear to be...

Don't date or marry people that look like they have a chance of materializing in the human world after they have passed over into the spirit world.

Three Is a Crowd

No one likes TV show flashbacks (unless they are on *Lost*) and no one likes a two-timer. No one likes being two-timed! OK? Despite no one liking those things, we have to deal with them for 25 minutes or so while the writers of *Degrassi* have their way with our minds and try to inject their own morals into our impressionable lives.

Two-Timer #1: This one doesn't really fully count as an official two-time, but I am trying to be a cheerleader of this TV show by shifting my



One of *Degrassi's* many acid-trip dream segments.



These two will be roommates some gross day.

thinking over a few lines and supporting the notion that there is a cohesive theme in these episodes. So, whatever...Spike likes Snake all of the sudden, which is gross to watch because we all know what's coming in like 12 years. Snake likes Michelle though...and she likes Snake and whatever. So, come prom night, who gets the honour of frenching Snake on his nasty chapped lips? The answer is coming up later on in this review.

Two-Timer #2: This situation, woah Nelly...this is text-book "Three's a Crowd." The morally unscrupulous Tessa Campinelli (who, don't worry, will get her comeuppance pretty soon in the "School's Out" movie special) totally makes a move on Yik, even though he is three months deep into a relationship with class super-nerd - Alex. Gross.

Two-Timer fallout : scenario 1 - Spike pulls off a nice move and lets Snake go to the dance with the kind of bossy and dumb Michelle. She overhears that dumbass Snake telling Michelle how he really likes her and not Spike and that he basically just feels sorry for Spike and stuff. Total shitead territory, but Spike just rolls with it and does this anonymously stand-up move. Snake winds up inseminating Spike at a later date, so base and biological human imperatives end up winning here in the long run.

Two-Timer fallout : scenario 2 - This one actually turns out a little better than maybe it seems like it should. Alex and Yik almost get into a shoving match during the lacrosse portion of their gym studies...but that's seriously about it. I mean, Alex says that he doesn't want to be friends with Tessa anymore...but you can tell that Tessa doesn't really care. This is the last time we see Alex on this series, so you can also tell the writers don't really care and this was just their last chance to say "fuck you" to the practitioners of the nerdy arts. The writers would later take out these aggressions on Toby Isaacs.



Kissing is pretty cool, but watching it is kind of not.



This is the episode that finally made Spike a sympathetic character...to me.

And the moral of the story would appear to be...

Single MOMS and Nerds have a lot of difficulty finding dates to the prom.

One Last Dance

This is the last episode of Degrassi High, ever...and it pretty much SUCKS. The whole plot in this one revolves around Dwayne coming out of the HIV closet and letting his infection flag fly. There's also an afterthought MENTIONING OF the fact that the school is closing down Next year for renovations. People are outraged, but ONLY for about 11 minutes or so.



Since this is the last episode of the series AND it's a prom episode...I figured we should take a bit of extra time here and do some critiquing of what everyone was wearing. I love doing stuff like that, and it's probably the reason that most girls look at me as just a friend.



Tim wears Jeans, a dress shirt, and a bowtie. Can you even believe it?

Joey dresses like an asshole from the Godfather. Wheels' shirt is unwashed

I'm all for the encouragement of safe sex, but not at the cost of basic grammar.



Don't worry...Peanut Butter Tough dances with Dwayne. Unibrow is mad.



h8



Caitlin looks like she has to go the bathroom all night. Mya's jacket is really puffy.



Lucy is wearing a silver garbage bag. The twins both go as Max Headroom.



Saying "why not?" after you say yes to something seems kind of insulting to me.

And that's it. As you can see in the image over there, Special ed Spikes girl walks up to Mr. Raditch and says "Hey Mr. Raditch, do you wanna dance?" Raditch says "Sure, why not?" And suddenly, the series is over. It is so completely UNFULFILLING and weird that it just cuts out right NOW. I realize that all this is followed up with the feature length "School's Out" motion picture...but still, KISSING your sister with this ending right here.

And the moral of the story would appear to be...

Prom Night is the ONE Night of the year when it is NOT OK to express yourself. Buckle down and wear something traditionally HANDSOME and/or elegant. Dress pants...sports jacket...tie, for the gentlemen. A dress...with shoes that are probably hard to wear, for the ladies. Sorry, this is your ONLY chance to NOT LOOK like an asshole in ten years. If you are SOMEONE that "expresses yourself" ON NON-PROM Nights, then this ONE Night of CONFORMITY can be SPUN to be IRONIC CONFORMITY...and you still WON'T LOOK like an asshole in ten years. I wore a powder blue tuxedo to my prom, and I do NOT LOOK at those pictures and nod approvingly. Sorry, I'm all for expressions of NON-CONFORMITY through asshole looking outfits...but pick your battles.

h9

So, that's it. That's pretty much how I feel about Degrassi High. It's kind of liberating to have all that stuff imprinted on my brain now - actually embedded into my UNCONSCIOUS thought. It's become a part of me and my reality...and can now serve to further alienate me from real world CONVERSATIONS because I'll try and slip this stuff in and NO ONE will care. I sort of wish that I had gone with my original idea and made this a zine about Star Trek rather than Degrassi High, but I've come too far to give up ON this program NOW. Loyalty.

In the NEXt issue of Degrassi Digest...

Degrassi Goes Big Screen

Snake is Sexually Attracted To Men?

A Few More Really Obvious Comparison/contrasts of Old And New Characters

Emotional Outbursts

...in-depth analysis of THIS guy (*SPOILER* I Do Not Like Him)...



All of this is coming to you at an unknown time in the probably distant future. See ya.

