

# Degrassi

## Digest

Vol. 1

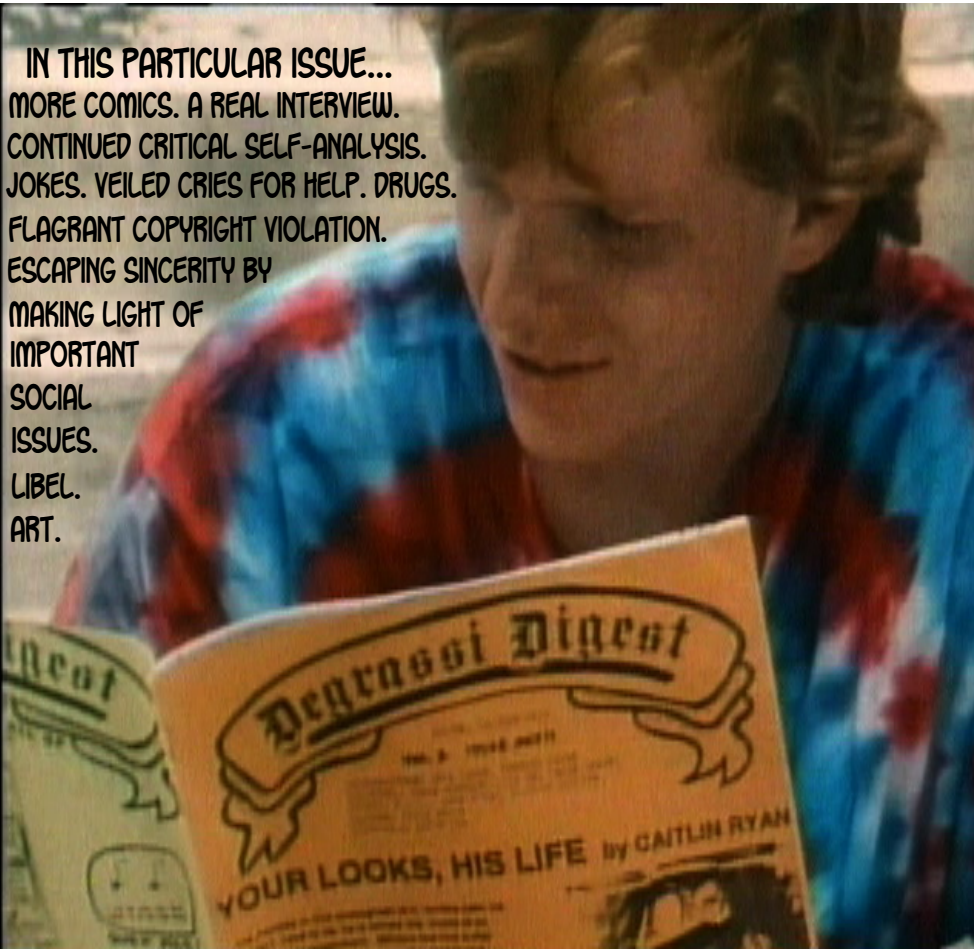
Issue 2

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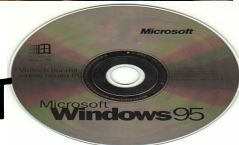
"It Goes There. We Follow."

Free

IN THIS PARTICULAR ISSUE...  
MORE COMICS. A REAL INTERVIEW.  
CONTINUED CRITICAL SELF-ANALYSIS.  
JOKES. VEILED CRIES FOR HELP. DRUGS.  
FLAGRANT COPYRIGHT VIOLATION.  
ESCAPING SINCERITY BY  
MAKING LIGHT OF  
IMPORTANT  
SOCIAL  
ISSUES.  
LIBEL.  
ART.



BONUS MINI-CD FEATURING DEGRASSI-  
CENTRIC MUSICAL ENCODINGS? INCORRECT



What have I done!



postcards from Degrassi St.

Hey buddy...welcome to the second installment of Degrassi Digest. This thing is new and improved for real. There is an actual interview....MORE NON-ME contributions....and a complete failure to deliver in the MUSICAL CD department! It's all very exciting. Did you hear that? My hip just popped because I'm that excited. Some people have asked me how long I think I can keep this up...like...how much Degrassi is out there to analyze before you just start repeating yourself. My response is this. I had a lot to say about Degrassi for YEARS before this zine started and in the meantime there have been many exciting entries made in the big book of Degrassi. So...the streets will run red with Degrassi for the foreseeable future. BANK ON that. Thank you for reading this...and forgive the often informal tone of it all.



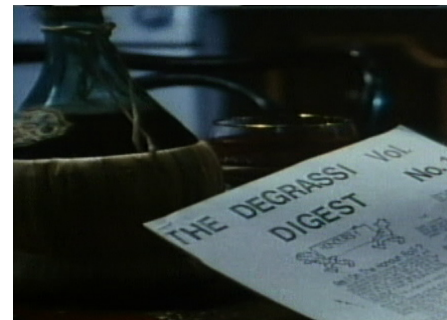
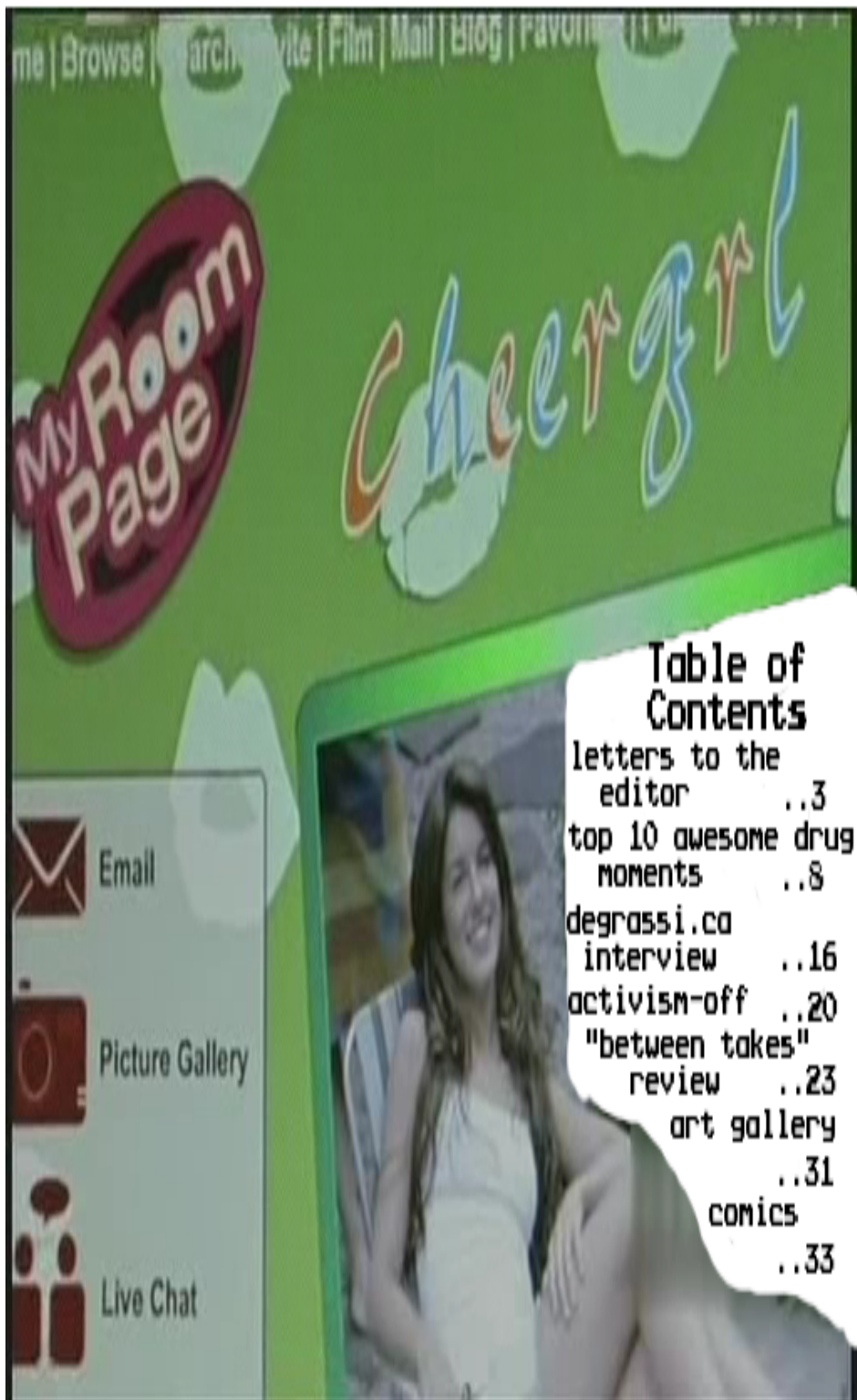
Oh, one last thing. Degrassi Digest has a Myspace page now. So if anyone wants up to the minute news on all new Digest activities and goings-on...point your cyber browsers to...

<http://www.myspace.com/degrassidigest503>

...I had to have a Myspace page in order to get access to the D:TNG media section of Myspace. Don't you dare judge me. Seriously....stop.

"Hey thanks" goes to Shayla once again (without her there would be no colour in the Digest)...the Portland Oregon zine community (for giving me ideas to rip off)...my cats (for sitting on my lap while I made this thing) and everyone that read the first one and didn't make fun of me. Hey thanks.





--LETTERS TO THE EDITOR--  
 Some people wrote me letters! I was surprised too. So I guess there's a "letters to the editor" section now. If you have anything stupid to say...send it to thezitredey@gmail.com. I'd love to talk about Degrassi with you.

From Marta and Tom:

Creep Off. And though I have to sadly admit we are not up to the Claude days in Degrassi old school land, you have made me incredibly incredibly excited for them. There is a Degrassi character more entertaining than ren-fest-haired m'lady-spewing unjustifiably-girlfriend-abusive Rick?!?! There is a God!!

First off, I think it's awesome that you seem to be implying that there is a "justifiably-girlfriend-abusive" person out there. Another thing...I was rewatching the whole Rick shoots Jimmy storyline the other day...and I can't believe that I forgot to mention that the KISSING CONTEST prize was a set of "role playing dice".....and that when Toby won, it appeared that he got a tube containing only four dice. There are six pieces in a standard set of "role playing dice" (4, 6, 8, 10, 12, 20) and that's assuming that you don't have any extra 20-siders. Everyone knows this. HELLO WRITERS?!?! Anyway, I think Rick should have gotten more points for that.

#### Did you notice:

Toby is out of the intro this season. I'm guessing this has to do with the fact that he has gotten uncomfortably unattractive to the point where he has to be kicked out of most plots of the show. I



had anticipated a similar thing might happen to Liberty, but to my surprise she has actually started getting physically ordinary this year. It's too bad, I kinda enjoyed their silent duel of who has the biggest eyebrows.



I PROPOSE A 'BROW-OFF!!!!



### Agree to disagree:

Ashley is goth?? Ohhhhhh please, she is a big fucking poser. She only became pseudo-goth (and not in any cool Bauhaus-loving old school ways) after she was inspired by Ellie's ultra cool "I don't live by anyone's rules" lifestyle. Ellie rules, Ashley blows.

OK we are both in agreement as far as Ellie goes...however...Ashley is totally a goth. She doesn't dress like one anymore...but after that pill, she crossed over. I don't look like I listen to industrial music, but when I crossed over in tenth grade...I did it for life. Ashley is totally a goth. She's one of those goth people that you hate because they AREN'T Bauhaus cool...but you watch...in like ten years when we've all stopped caring about Bauhaus, Ashley will still be keeping hope alive. She will be cool with time.

THANKS SO MUCH FOR YOUR LETTER GUYS. It was very exciting to see that people care about Degrassi in a very deep and meaningful way.

From Robin Bougie (<http://cinemasewer.com>

<http://bougieman.livejournal.com>):

My sweetheart Rebecca was at work today (an animation studio here in a Vancouver called STUDIO B) and they had a halloween costume party. This one girl in production got dressed up like Spike (she didn't win, the guy who draws 100 GIRLS for Arcana comics won in his Bob Ross costume) and was wearing a "Gourmet Scum" scum shirt she made. This one animator who sits a few cubicles from Rebecca -- Andy Bartlett -- he goes "Hey, thats me and Gerry Fournier (another animator in the studio) in that picture".

Turns out Andy and Gerry were in GOURMET SCUM when they were kids living in Toronto! Spike was freaking out, going "You're blowing my mind!! You're blowing my mind!!"

Loved the first issue of the zine. Make another one!

Robin Bougie is my zine hero...so I was really psyched to get this one. He makes a really fantastic zine about old horror, exploitation, sci-fi, etcetc. 4



films. And there's also some stuff about old porno movies that makes me blush. ANYWAY, not only does this dude have a really cool zine that you should check out right away...he can also draw incredibly well. He drew a picture and wrote a little story for this issue of the Digest...but I just couldn't put it in here. Seriously. I really WANTED to put it in here...but it's just too graphic dude. It's so awesome that he did it though. If you want to see it, go to <http://bougieman.livejournal.com/135955.html>. You have been warned...it's extremely "not safe for work." Either way though, please go find his zines and buy them.

Emily M. of Chicago Illinois writes:

as i revisited my adolescent afternoons through degrassi junior high season 1, i felt the urgent need to write down my observations and share them with you. it's a whole different perspective from the first time i watched it. things that concern me/blow my mind:

-how did the casting directors not notice that stephanie kaye is missing a TOOTH? perhaps i've overestimated the quality of dental care in the 80s, but was it common to not have a tooth?



Yeah, Stephanie was a particularly gnarly selection to be on the cast. I'm guessing that she must have been the daughter of someone on the crew? Still...there is a definite beauty to Steph Kaye. She's totally beaten up and yet is the most popular girl in middle school...walking proof that beauty comes from within.

-ummm...lucy's eyebrows?

OK I put her eyebrows over there on the right so everyone could see. Eyebrows are definitely a theme in the Degrassi universe. I'd put my top five eyebrow offender list at...5) Lucy...4) Liberty ...3) Toby...2) Spike (High years)...1) Sean (he will never be defeated).

i know that degrassi the next generation just

did different versions of each character from the old generation and i've been working on determining exactly what the one-one relationships are. some are obvious: 5





lucy = jimmy brooks  
 rick = sean but with a twist-spinner's haircut!  
 stephanie kaye = manny/emma?  
 joey jeremiah (who is clearly the best dressed) = kind of jt, but more popular with marco's sense of style  
 caitlin ryan = emma's environmentalism, but more normal looking

Excellent assertions...all of them. My personal favourite is the Arthur/Stephanie vs. Toby/Ashley rip off. Someone told me a couple of weeks ago that this zine was dumb because it was basically just me (and you) saying a bunch of really obvious stuff about Degrassi. I disagree. I like to think of conversations like this as explorations below the surface of Degrassi. We are all kind of these lost and curious people who really love Degrassi and we're all meeting up here to figure it out together. That's what we're all like, right?

-it's depressing that spike and joey were better actors as teenagers than they are as adults. i like spike's reaction to getting pregnant: looking down at the floor. i also like how spike's mom was a hairdresser and a teenage mom too! (side note: i was so baked while watching this that for some reason i convinced myself that emma was also a teenage mom/hairdresser like her maternal ancestors, but when i shared this thought with ali i realized that i was totally wrong).

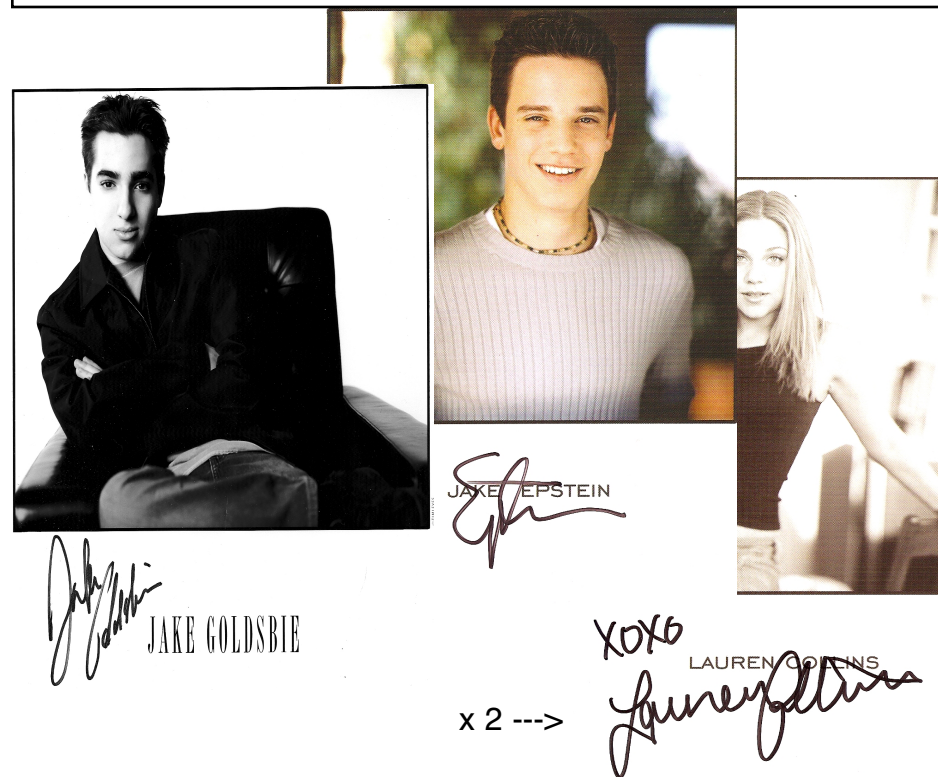


note: as i wrote all that on friday, i felt that i was the wittiest, most original genius in the world. i think i should stop smoking.

That's stinkin' thinkin' Emily. Smoking is pretty much the only reason that Degrassi Digest is possible...do not spur this catalyst for introspective hilarity.

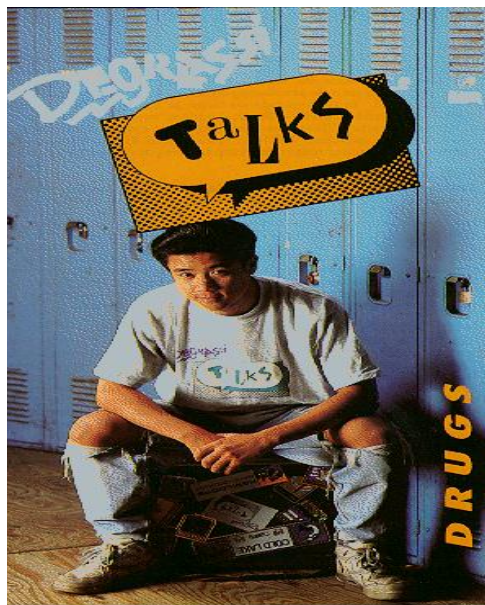
Thanks for the letter dude. Stay strong in the windy city.

The entire principal cast of Degrassi The Next Generation responds to over 20 typed letters with:



Pardon My anger here...it's just that when you stay up until all hours of the night banging away on a typewriter with PERSONALIZED letters to people, it's a little disappointing to get NOTHING back but an envelope from Canada with these inside. Yes, obviously I'm pumped to have signed Degrassi photos...they are already proudly displayed in my study. However, it's difficult to explain with words the agony that was going on in my head during the process of writing to the cast. It was a Saturday Night....and I'm alone in my house just pouring my heart and soul out to these people...and asking them what I THOUGHT were some pretty intense questions. The ones that I asked the guy that plays Craig were particularly heated. So to put that much of myself into something and have some generic autographed photos come back is disenchanting....I'd like to think that Lauren Collins doesn't ALWAYS put "XOXO" on her photos though. I'd like to think that was something special for me. But anyway, this is what I get back I suppose. They must be too busy doing whatever it is that they do during the off-season.





The writers of Degrassi DO NOT like drugs. This is a major bummer. This would be like Crispin Glover showing up at your house every Friday Night at 5pm for like a half hour or so...but he's constantly making fun of the fact that you read comic books while he is over. You are psyched to have his company, but you just feel sad the whole time. I have compiled a list of my top ten favourite Degrassi drug moments. They are ranked as follows.



10

**"Benjamin Walks the Dog"**  
Info: Who cares cigar smoking in the clubhouse

Honestly, this is more of a pity prize than anything else. I feel bad for never including "Kids of" in this zine. It is the crappiest series though. HOWEVER, kids smoking cigars in their clubhouse is pretty cool...plus a dog ran away while they were doing this.

**"Total Eclipse of the Heart"**  
Season 5 Episode 17 TNG  
Canadian airdate:  
October 20th, 2006

**Liberty gets totally wasted because her child is moving to Seattle**

9



Yeah...UMMM...alcohol is a drug too! What'd you fail D.A.R.E. or something? I didn't. It is. This episode is totally awesome. Liberty makes a toast to Einstein. Then she toasts her parents saying "here's to dressing me in overalls until grade nine." She won me over after all this. I am 100% pro-Liberty now.

8



8

**"The Experiment"**  
Season 1 Episode 3 DJH  
Canadian airdate:  
February 1st, 1987  
**Joey sells fake drugs to grade 7s. Wears a hat that totally matches his shirt.**

Joey sells Kathleen some vitamins that he calls "New Zealand Zappers." Everyone is just eating these vitamins and giving Joey five Canadian dollars and walking around saying "Cool...smooth...cool...smooth." It's pretty much the moment where you realize that Joey Jeremiah is fucking awesome. Joey Jeremiah is the friend that you wish you could be more like, but he already did it all first...so your desires become fraudulent. Oh PS, Joey sells to a kid in a wheelchair. This is fucking awesome on two completely separate levels.

**"Voices Carry" Part 2**  
Season 4 Episode 12 TNG  
Canadian airdate:  
November 9th, 2004

**Craig not taking his medicine to control his violent (and totally rad) actions that result from him being bi-polar**

7



Craig is my mortal enemy. He embodies everything about guys that I just can't stand. I've basically ruined my own life in order to make sure that I never ever act like Craig does. Anyway, turns out Craig is bi-polar and he really HATES to take his medicine. This is good news for the audience, because he does amazing things when his brain is undrugged. Whether it be crashing gay weddings...proposing marriage to a 16 year old during said wedding...beating the SHIT out of Joey Jeremiah (pictured)...making friends with methed out squeegee kids...DESTROYING hotel rooms...I could seriously go on and on. Actually, maybe I don't hate Craig as much as I thought. This will ALL change if Ellie allows him to french her next season though. Ellie NO..please.

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**"The Big Dance"**  
Season 1 Episode 2 DJH  
01/25/1987  
**Stephanie Kaye is totally wasted at the dance that she is supposed to be in charge of...Voula is treated poorly...contributing to her leaving Degrassi**

This is the second episode of DJH. IN two episodes Stephanie Kaye manages to dress like an 80s whore, buy votes with kisses, totally dick out on her friend (Voula...the first editor of Degrassi Digest), and then get totally throw up wasted at the school dance. Stephanie Kaye is alright. As someone who didn't start drinking until college, I find the notion of being drunk in middle school to be INCREDIBLY rivetting. Stephanie Kaye probably lived more in this one night than I did for like 10 years.

**"Death of a Disco Dancer"**  
Season 5 Episode 3 TNG  
Canadian airdate:  
October 3rd, 2005  
**Paige tokes up and blows it with Banting.... also ... she dresses up during a really uncomfortable montage**

5



I just rewatched this last night and I'm seriously considering moving it to the number 3 spot. This one is gold. Paige is given some REALLY shitty looking weed from her old flame the student teacher (who is now all indied out and moving to BC to smoke pot and listen to Kid Elrich all day)...and then her and Alex smoke it and go to a college meet and greet thing at Degrassi. Here is my problem with the way smoking pot is portrayed on TV. First her and Alex wander around making dumb noises and pointing at things and laughing. That's fine, I'm sure I do that and I don't even notice....my PROBLEM though is how the pot gets blamed when the shit hits the



10

fan. Paige is called into the library to meet with the admissions lady at Banting (the Harvard of the North) and she freaks out. Alex (the pothead) tells her to just LEAVE. This is good fucking advice Alex. Alex you are a genius and you remind me of Liz from the original series. Anywho, Paige goes to the meeting ANYWAY. It's not pot's fault that you are stoned for your meeting you jackass...it's your own fault for walking in there in the first place. I've seen the word "cramps" used by ladies who don't want to do things and it ALWAYS works. So either say that word or just relax and let this wonderful drug allow you to more comfortably relate to other people.

**"Taking Off Parts 1 & 2"**  
Season 3 Episodes 8 & 9  
01/17/1989  
01/24/1989  
**Shane's LSD trip off the bridge single handedly ends the freewheelin' 70s drug mentality presented in the media**

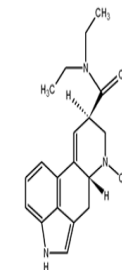
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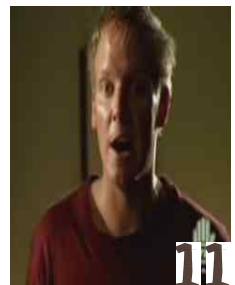
This is one of the defining moments for the entire Degrassi series. Shane takes the \$20 that he was going to give Spike for child support (for Emma!!!!) and instead spends it on a ticket to go see Gourmet Scum in concert...with a few hits of acid to get him through the evening. Reread that and try to figure out why Shane plays second fiddle to Joey Jeremiah in the "coolest at Degrassi" department. Anyway...on the way home he either JUMPS or FALLS off a bridge (this is never answered) and totally damages his brain. His parents send him to a mental hospital place (not sure what the PC term for that is) and there he stays....knitting and probably replaying that Gourmet Scum setlist in his head for the last fifteen years. Eventually Emma goes looking for our hero and well...it's too awesome to get into here. Here is a diagram of his transformation.



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**"Turned Out" Part 2**  
**Season 5 Episode 8**  
**Canadian airdates:**  
**November 7th, 2005**  
**JT steals oxycodone...**  
**sells oxycodone... ODs**  
**on oxycodone... basically**  
**does awesome things**  
**with oxycodone.**

OK first of all, note the NAME of this episode. ISN't that a phrase to describe what a pimp does to a girl when she officially becomes a hooker? Kind of weird to call the episode that. Anyway, this one is a double whammy. First JT starts stealing oxycodone in order to pay for an apartment for him and Liberty....then he totally swallows like a handful of the pills and chases them with a beer when he gets bummed out. Bravo JT. While writing all this out I realized that this sounds pretty pedestrian. I mean, people do dumb things and make mistakes, right? What makes this particular drug incident special is the further exploration of the ravine that goes on. Apparently there's this area of Toronto...SOME ravine in the middle of suburbia... that's just filled to the brim with underage STD sex, bonfires, oxycodone, and abusive drug dealers. JT is basically Pinocchio and everyone else are donkeys to be. So anyway, JT screws up his drug deal and makes Liberty cry. His answer is to "just party"....which means taking a bunch of pills and slamming beers/pouring them on your own head until you pass out. The really awesome thing about all of this, and kind of the first feelings of DOUBT that I've ever had with Degrassi is the amazing recovery time that JT breezes through to get back on the show. Apparently STEALING and then SELLING 200 or so pills of Oxycodone doesn't warrant any jail time in Canada....and that wicked buzz that all the squares are telling you to avoid by never mixing pills with alcohol only lasts a few hours or so....then you're back at school fresh as a daisy. Major ball drop Degrassi....major.



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## **"The All-Nighter"**

**Season 5 Episode 7 DH**  
**Canadian airdate:**  
**12/17/1990**

**pot smoking at a slumber party...**  
**25 cents for a bag of joints**

2



First off, sorry to reuse pictures from the last issue. I have a good excuse...seriously. Anyway, I have a lot of love and respect for this episode. This is the one that kind of blew my mind as a kid and made me think that I should be trying to find pot and then smoke the pot. So...the newly cool Yik decides that smoking drugs is just the tops....but...smoker beware, there are some random-ass locker checks going down. Yik does pretty much the smartest thing that anyone has ever done and decides to hide his fat joints in a tampon machine. No one uses those things, right? If I were a lady I think I would roll with my OWN brand on hand....just in case. I mean, you know that this thing is going down every month....and you have a basic idea of a date range that you'll be dealing with all this, right? Seems like it'd make sense to pack your own "sanitary napkins" (totally gross



Name)....instead of gambling that your school district is stocking something that is honestly going to address whatever issues you have to deal with during those trying times. I really have NO business commenting on any of this because I am just a guy and all my ideas on the issue

are just innocent speculation. Using that machine seems kind of lacadaisical to me though...I would accessorize for this if I were a lady. Oh whoops, I'm supposed to talk about drugs. So...most of the ladies of Degrassi sit around puffing what came out of a tampon machine and just generally being awesome. Anorexia is discussed at length and some tears are shed. 9.5/10.

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"Jagged Little Pill"  
Season 1 Episode 15 TNG  
Canadian airdate:  
March 3rd, 2002

**Ashley rolls...big time...setting off a series of events that led to the creation of this zine**

Bear with me ON this one...I'm going to gush a lot. This is the episode that singlehandedly thrust the Next Generation DEEP into my heart. This episode is pretty much the reason that I love Degrassi enough to spend many lonely nights writing letters to Canadian teen actors. I DON'T even KNOW where to begin...SO I'll just state the facts first. JT and Toby get some E(ONE HUGE looking pill...like "big" Smartie size) and try to impress Sean with it. Sean gives it to Ashley to throw away....Ashley takes it instead. There are two incredible drug plots going ON here. The first is Ashley's AMAZING performance while ON the pill....the second is JT and Toby's really embarrassing performances while they THINK they are ON the pill. I'll start with those losers first. Check it out...JT is holding AND he's rocking a rather garrish tie-dye t-shirt. JT's future coolness is definitely foreshadowed here with his ability to procure cool drugs...and the sticktoitNESS that is needed to save up three weeks worth of allowance to fund this trip. Let's NOT forget Toby though...he takes his half of the "pill" with little if NO coaxing at all. This proves that he's willing to do whatever it takes to be seen as "down" in the eyes of his peers. I'm guessing this is going to resurface in part 2 of season 6...write that down. These two perform a text book version of little kids acting like they are ON drugs. My little brother sent me some "wii-mail" a couple days ago that included a photo of him smiling REALLY big while playing some unnamed



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video game. The entirety of the email's text was "NO, I'M NOT STONED". For some reason that brought my mind over to this moment of the episode. Kids think that THIS is the face of "fucked up". Kids, you are SO UNCOOL. Anyway, enough of these jokes...ON to Ashley. I was going to try and describe this the old fashioned way...but I think I'll just write some free-form poetry instead. Grab a hand,

turn towards the light. Liberty...figurative and literal. Tiny dancer...you are raping a shy person's right to reservation. Call your boys...sweaty cherub. Rejoice in the hairspray bitterness of your ill cut Canadian speed blend. Dehydrate. Pontificate. DRINK from the toilet of jokes...be emboldened by agreeable uncomfortable



laughter. French kiss you pill whore. French kiss until your mother comes home. Smash a vase....smash a face. Call out Paige...express your E-rage. Everyone knows that she's a hag so it's probably not a big deal if you just point that out in front of everyone....I mean everyone knows that ecstasy makes people want to say really mean-spirited things about their friends and then run around and dance with Liberty and then french right in between some massive brows. I mean Jimmy is your boyfriend but boyfriends are cheerers and you are a roller and everyone should probably understand where you are coming from. You will awake in the morning...a goth.

One final non-poetic note. Jimmy Brooks says the single best one-liner that anyone has EVER said in the history of life. Upon finding out that Ashley is ON E and got it from JT and Toby...he grabs Toby by the shirt and says "DON'T you know that E leads to harder things...like my fist." Fucking RAD.

15

# Degrassi. Ca

*an online reference source to the Degrassi TV series*

ran away" or "I'm starting to think that Santa Claus is bullshit." Nowadays it's all gay bashing and rape. Those are pretty easy things to get into...they obviously make for some pretty rad television (Note: I do NOT condone either of those things.). Despite the modern mastery of the rape and assault arts that Degrassi TNG exudes...there is a guy out there who was bitten by the bug long before Manny strapped on her thong. He runs a website called "Degrassi Online" (<http://degrassi.ca>)...and if there's any website that is more legit Degrassi than the word DEGRASSI with the abbreviation for Canada after it, it doesn't exist on the Internet yet. Mark Aaron Polger owns this beautiful piece of Degrassicana. He was kind enough to answer a few questions I had. Let's see what that's up to, huh? That OK with you?

So I was looking at pictures of the Degrassi convention that was held in 1999. I'm very upset that I didn't make it to that. Any plans for a repeat?

I doubt it. I am 32 years old now. I was 24 at the time, a university student, was living at home with my parents, got some financial help from another Degrassi fan who came down with her husband from California. A convention can cost a lot of money (hall rental, we rented space from the real community college where they filmed DegrassiHigh, we rented a security guard, bought food and decoration and Kit Hood lent us his collection of framed photos)...planning, marketing, and promotion was purely done on the web site and through our mailing list so it was free, but we only had about 10 cast members and about 40 people....I'd love to do it again but I am too busy...I work full time, I teach at a community college part time, I review restaurants for a Toronto-based reviews web site, I run full (and half) marathons, and I am an avid cyclist...so I am super busy.

What's your take on the new show? Do you like their take on the old plotlines...or does it feel like a rip off to you?

I like the new show. I do feel it's a rip off of the old plotlines. I also feel that some of the new character names were taken from Degrassi World Fan Fiction (c. 1998, 1999, 2000), and

Degrassi is some deep shit. Lets level with each other on that issue. Back when it started, people had problems like...."the dog

I do not like how we were never given credit...typical of TV production companies, they pretend they appreciate their fans but their interests are purely corporate...only want to sell the Degrassi trademark and name...I think the new show is more

slick. With professional actors, studios (as opposed to on location

**"Pat is a liar."**

filming) and a slicker cast who have many talents besides acting, the new show is more entertaining and more popular than the original which ran on CBC (the Canadian version of PBS) and was shown on PBS without much publicity and promotion, so it was almost hidden on PBS...at that time, not many teen-based shows in the late 1980's, early 1990's so Degrassi was a milestone...but not many people (in the age category that Degrassi was trying to target) watch the original on PBS...

Now the new show is on Noggin/The N and CTV, both commercial networks and different than CBC and PBS which were not for profit "public" networks....non corporate. The end result: the new show has a different "look and feel" than the original show. The production budget is much larger for the new Degrassi and being on commercial networks makes it different. Actors are professional with careers before Degrassi (original show had non professional actors with NO agents and most never acted before)....

That makes a lot of sense Mark. Lets lighten things up with a little dirt digging. What's Pat Mastroianni like in real life? He seems like a real character based on that website of his. I picture him kind of acting like Joey Jeremiah acts.



Pat is very friendly and sociable. What I dislike about him is that he is arrogant and cocky (in my opinion) and he thinks his shit does not smell. The truth is, he did not have a successful career in L.A., came back to Canada, did not have a flourishing career in Canada, so he works in his dad's tarring driveway business, lives with his wife in Markham (his web site says Toronto but he DOES NOT live in Toronto) and he now occasionally acts on Degrassi. He claims he wanted to break free of his Joey character but he came right back to it with open arms (canyou say DESPERATE?) so I do not like



him. We've gone out for lunch about 5-6 times from 2000-2001 and I maintained his web site from 2000-2002 and he is a nice person, but not my cup of tea.

THANKS for picking up the pace ON the swears Mark. As far as Pat goes...I think I agree with you (although I've never met him). He refused to do any kind of interview with me whatsoever....which is fine, I'm sure people are busy. What "bugged me" though was that he said that all the money he makes on his website (selling \$40 MP3 CDs that he creates) goes to charity. Now I don't have a real BASIS for saying that this is a lie....but I dunno....it doesn't seem likely.

Pat is a liar. He sells things on his eBay site for HIS OWN POCKET. All products are copies so he sells them "en masse", nothing is original...all are copies. He does NOT sell them for charitable organizations, that is bullshit.

That's really sad. You know Nicole Stoffman too don't you? She performs jazz music in Toronto (where Mark lives). Please tell me that you've been to one of her shows.

No, I do not like jazz, never been to her shows. I may be open to see her in the near future, but maybe for nostalgic purposes. I never really got into Kyra Levy's band either (Psycho Key) and I've never seen them in concert. On another note, Cathy Keenan teaches yoga in my old neighbourhood but I've never attended a class of hers.

I've never done yoga before, so I could take her class and I'll be all crap-py at it and she'll have to give me a bunch of special attention. I guess that's a creepy thing to do. Anyway, you have a really impressive collection of Degrassi memorabilia...the best that I've seen. You mention on your site that you got some of it from two cast members on the show. Do you mind letting us know which two? How did you get so tight with all these people?



Donated by Karryn Sheridan (now Karryn Ransom who played Vicky Friedland) - Degrassi Varsity jacket, Degrassi "PWT" pendant, actual award ceremony ticket stubs.

Donated by Pat Mastroianni: 2 VHS tapes of raw Degrassi behind the scenes footage from Degrassi High 1989-1990 and 1990-1991, Zit **18**

Remedy Homemade T shirt, School's Out script.

Donated by Cory Mistysyn (Stacie's brother)- Stacie played Caitlin - a chunk of Stacie's personal collection of PWT documents, memos, scripts, and other documents.

Donated photos from Rebecca Haines (Kathleen): photos of her in 1998

Donated by a fellow Degrassi Fan Jason Howlett- promotional interviews in the 1980's/1990's by Degrassi actors (DVD compilation)

Donated by Natalie Earl from Amanda Stepto (Spike)- PWT (Playing With Time) memos, papers, minutes of meetings with actors, scripts, episode guides, press kits of Amanda, photos, calendars, other textual documents.

I am not really tight with these people. I was just been emailing them back and forth....They found me!

Could get a look at any of the academic papers that you wrote on Degrassi? I found it really interesting that you compared 90210 to Degrassi. When I try to explain my love of the show to people they usually say things like "so it's Canadian 90210?" I never have a good answer.

Yes, I can send you the major paper (100 pages) I wrote in 1999 on the depiction of adolescence in Canada versus U.S. teenage TV programs Degrassi and Beverly Hills 90210. I did a content analysis of episodes on Degrassi and Beverly Hills 90210 and focused on Canada versus U.S. values, Canadian versus U.S. identity, politics, government, and of course the TV industry in Canada and the USA.



Mark this is really amazing...thank you for taking the time to do this. Also, thank you for answering my questions. This has been very interesting.

If you're in Toronto and want to take a yoga lesson from a lady that played a cool punk rock girl on a Canadian teen soap opera....call The Yoga Sanctuary at 416-928-3236

<----- Actual photo of Cathy doing yoga **19**



# Activism

"Let's find groups of people that already agree with us. Then we all dance."



EMMA was produced from a clipboard. BACK IN 1990, Yan Moore had highlighted and copied every MENTION OF Caitlin Ryan in a big text document that had all the Degrassi scripts in it. His computer blew up the MOMENT he executed his copy command (Caitlin is pretty awesome). Then like 11 years later he gets the call to write a script for TNG. He makes the kid who plays Toby fix the BLOWN UP computer for his audition to be ON the show. When it's fixed, he opens a new document and hits paste (he likes to make sure it's always empty when he starts)...and BOOM. Make way for EMMA Nelson. Which take ON the idea was MORE successful in the field of activism you ask?



**Ban GM foods IE Boycott the Caf'**  
 <--

vs.

**Environment Club**  
 ---->



1 week's detention, facetime on the announcements, food fight, wicked nickname

Rap Songs on the PA, smoker's guilt, girlfriend status with Rick

Good start EMMA. This episode got her the Nick-NAME "cause girl", which is the laziest NickNAME I've ever heard in my life. EMMA got extra points for this one because there wasn't a boy involved with her cause. There's a disturbing trend of Degrassi activists (and I think the activist community at large) using their causes to french other Degrassi activists. EMMA wins big time.



20



**Get Rick to leave Degrassi**

<-----

vs.

**Keep Spike At Degrassi**  
 ----->

Rick's eventual suicide and oddly; the love of Rick

Spike's "angry face", anger of Raditch, wasted red paper



Close one. You could argue that Rick Killed himself in part because of this protest. That's go there. But Caitlin goes further and brings public embarrassment to a single mother. It should be noted that this article was "too hot" for the Degrassi Digest of the 1980s. Caitlin wins despite the fact that Spike gets Kicked out of school anyway.



**Spirit Squad is sexist**  
 <-----

vs.

**Ban Nuclear Weapons with Claude**  
 ----->

Loss of hot tub privileges, a year setback in popularity, Manuella-less summer

ruined outfit from fence injury, justifiable smear campaign against Claude

The Spirit Squad fight was definitely the start of a good year of major fights between EMMA and MANNY...but a guy Killed himself over the SCORN that followed the nuclear graffiti protest. The betrayal of Claude puts Caitlin off of activist campaigns for an extended period of time. Caitlin wins and loses with this one.



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Manny is preggers and can't have it vs. Animals are being forced to wear makeup -->



Mind blowing discussion between Manny and Spike

Kathleen is yelled at over lipstick, posters are hung

Wow Emma. Turning your back ON your best friend during the MOST "go there" moment of her life. DICK move. But...you win because we got to see Spike have a talk with her daughter's friend about the same exact situation we saw her go through 15 years ago. I'm Not Kidding...I teared up for this.



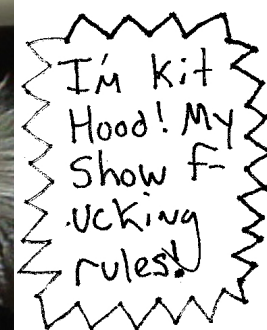
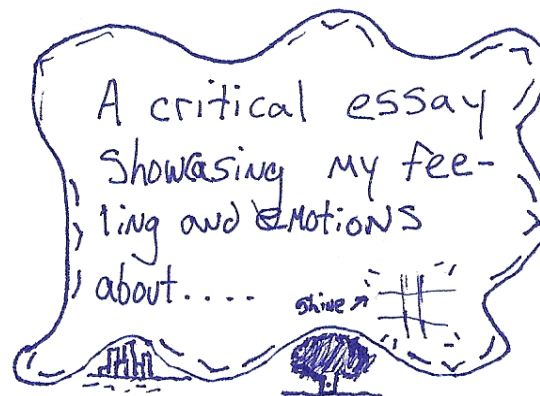
Yeah, like Caitlin was going to lose.

Seriously ....time for a Degrassi reality check. Emma Nelson is a piece of shit little whore whiney baby and Caitlin is just amazing. This is NOT up for debate. Caitlin becomes a famous Canadian TV personality...She makes love to Joseph Jeremiah...and

she shows up ON TNG as a critical plot point, not some whorish filler. You could very easily make an argument that the real hero here is Tessa Campanelli because if she hadn't "fucked" Joey (Caitlin's words...) then Caitlin never would have left Toronto and gone ON to do the things that she did. She'd be Mrs. Jeremiah...verbally and physically abused by her good for nothing used car salesman husband. Your argument would be kind of dumb though.

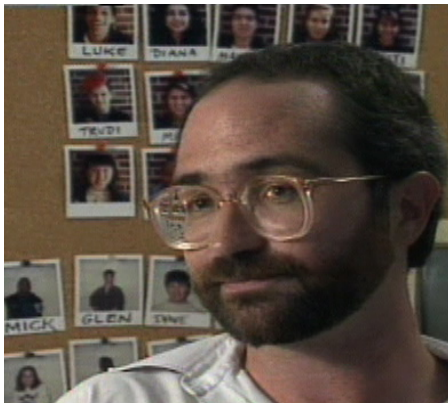


Caitlin Ryan



The show begins by slapping you in the face with how awesome it is. That seems pretty arrogant...but if you stop and be honest with yourself and your emotions for a minute...you realize that the show actually IS pretty awesome, so this is OK. Anyway, guess what? Degrassi won a lot of awards shithead! In fact, Emma is called Emma because it's a play ON the word Emmy....which Degrassi fucking WON! Degrassi gets PS3s and Wiis for free. From here we are introduced to Linda Schuyler...who looks suspiciously like Chicken Lady. She is in charge of making sure that the kids don't go crazy some day because of a bad experience during the filming. You never see an ex-Degrassi star ON the E channel, so she's doing a good job apparently. Everything seems pretty good for the kids...Linda's got it covered...you start to think that maybe they had fun ON the set....and then Yan Moore comes along.





Meet Yan. The head writer of Degrassi since it's inception. The guy still writes scripts today! You are staring at the closest thing we have to the physical embodiment of the Degrassi universe. Look at him just chilling out in his office...completely SURROUNDED by polaroids of kid's faces with their names written under them. I hope my office's

copy machine is able to pick all this up...because it's breathtaking. Yan talks about how much of a fucking genius he is to hang around with kids all day and write down what they say. You start to get the feeling at this point that what you are watching could potentially be shown to a jury one day. After he says "it's OK to have wet dreams...it's OK, it's OK" with this really wide eyed look....you KNOW that you're watching something that will eventually only be sold in bootleg format. Yan is shown throughout the video laying on carpets with children. After the cameraman backs away from this creep...we are off to our next stop, "a house in east end toronto" where the cast is doing a read through. Don't people usually practice TV shows in a studio? Playing With Time productions must have been pretty guerilla back then. Anyway, the amazing thing here is seeing the cast in their civies. I could write pages about the outfits that are in this



scene. We don't have time for all that right now though....so I'll cut to the chase and spend some time on the real winner of the evening. Look it's Andy Warhol in sweatpants! You have NO idea how happy I was to see this dude show up in some red sweatpants (short ones!). There was EASILY a good three years in

life when my mom dressed me SOLELY in sweats. Top and bottom. The colours would either be exactly the same (Ninja days) or would be coordinated with their exact opposite (star trek days). I took a lot of screen captures of him wearing the sweatpants to celebrate how much my mom must have hated me. After the parade of awesome sweaters and horrible stitch-patterned jeans, we are shown the terrifying truth about Degrassi makeup and hair styling. The kids do all the work themselves. I think it's a genius idea and it's made me look at the show a lot differently when I rewatch it. So anyway, we're treated to some shots of the kids combing their hair. Big fucking whoop. I'd like you to WOW me again Degrassi Between Takes! You don't WOW me anymore. Just when I reached for the fast forward wheel...tween Takes delivers a right hook of astonishment. Behold....the terrifying EXACT FEMALE REPRESENTATION of Arthur. You might remember her from the show. She was his cousin....so obviously the resemblance is purposeful, but I've never seen her look exactly THIS much like Arthur. I'd ask the Internet if the two are related in real life....like obviously that's a really easy thing to check....but to be honest: I'd rather not know. But anyway....we see the amazing Arthur-Dwayne-Cousin hybrid



doing some finger painting. We are then treated to a montage of the kids "hangin' out" and doing "whatever". The whole thing has a very big "tornado vibe" to it. Like when you are stuck inside because of a tornado warning and there's nothing to do...but there's a tornado outside....so whatever you are doing seems really exciting. That's pretty much what I see here. Get one last look at the photo to the left before you turn the page. It is currently haunting my dreams.



There's My sweat bro...flat tycoonin' ON SOME MONOPOLY. LOOK at the way he's staring DOWN that extra over there. It's like he realizes that he's ONLY ONE line away from BEING that extra.....SO he's trying to do the "beat the shit out of the toughest guy in the room" strategy to position himself well in his new caste. He also refuses to sell a piece of property because the Kid "has got all the gull-dern MONEY". He proves he was manipulated into



portraying false comfort and bemusement because NO Kid would EVER say "gull-dern" UNLESS they were nervous about something. So anyway, those two are playing MONOPOLY. Somewhere ON a radiator next to the window we find our old chum Basquiat-man showing everyone a picture of him when he was a child. That's just the kind of thing that happens at work...people bring pictures of themselves when they were in

elementary school and then everyone talks and laughs and laughs. For real though, these Kids LOOK bored and scared. Maybe Pat Mastroianni is up to something hilarious.

Oops...turns out he's trading what APPEARS to be business cards with an extra. Some kind of elephant pinata seems to be dangling above their heads, and their legs and feet have officially passed "just friends".

You're slipping again  
"Between Takes. WOW ME!



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OK OK....I'm into that. We're whisked away to a party....where the Kids are dancing UNCOMFORTABLY and pairing off in UNFORTUNATELY predictable cliques (especially for Canadian standards). Anyway, once you get past the brief shock of watching dance partners that would just NEVER be if those people weren't people and were actually the charac-



ters that I wish those people would actually be....you start to feel the film shifting into a higher gear. This moment is represented figuratively and literally by showing Pat Mastroianni driving around in his REAL car. There's now a little bit of creepy narraton from Pat as our eyes are raped with some

images of him "pallin' around" with the principle members of the cast. When is the last time you put one of your friends in a headlock and did "NOOGIES" ON their head? If you ever did it at all, you owe them an apology because it was NOT fun for them. It was fun for you...and you owe them something now.



Anyway, there's lots of walking around now....waiting at stop lights and polite laughter. The guy that plays Yik is wearing a suit too...which surprised



me for some reason.

Anyway, the Kids are psyched for something. Energy levels are definitely high and you can tell that they are walking with a purpose. I wonder where our heroes are off to ON this blustery Toronto afternoon....

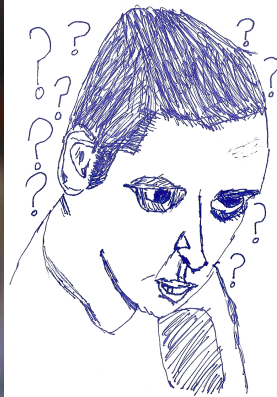
27





LIMERICKEY'S! LOOK under the L....that's the girl that plays Lucy jumping off a bench ON the way in. She is THAT excited about Lime Rickey's. Inside we get to hear all about how Pat put a production van into reverse and got busted for it. Then Yan Moore wrote an episode about it. I can just picture Yan in his office and this PA comes in and says "Yan, Pat threw the car into

reverse".....and Yan's face gets all red and puffy....but then it dawns ON him that his problems are solved and he can go home to his sham family this weekend after all. You fucking creep me out Yan Moore. I want to meet you and drink something like tea....and just observe how you conduct yourself. Oh, check this out too...when Pat is telling the van story...he describes the distance it moved as "2 feet." Then everyone playfully retorts that it was more like "2 Meters." Why would Pat adopt the English system of measurement as his standard? I'm sure that's a really dumb thing to think about....but that jumped right out of the screen at me. OK so that part of the show ends....and we're immediately confronted with greatness. This one is dead ON....I give you George Michael Bluth. This is a good one, right? I like



when they are actually good ones....and I feel pretty confident that dude looks EXACTLY like George Michael. Anyway, the tubbers ON the left asks a stuttery (and endearing) question in a thick New Jersey accent. I loved it.



The show pretty much downshifts into the "darkside" of Degrassi...which is kind of a weird move. But anyway, here's the guy that plays Wheels talking with Yan about how his parents died...so it'd be awesome for him to act out a plotline where his character ON the show loses his adopted parents

in a car accident. The picture above isn't moving, so you can't tell...but he remains frozen in that awkward "just chillin'" pose for the entire discussion.

Trust me, it's uncomfortable. Yan also has on really tight jeans and his arm is inching underneath Wheels' pit. You can almost see the thoughts in his head. He's trying to decide if a "playful tickle" would be well received or not. Fuck you Yan Moore. You are an unholy beast..



From there we are treated to more shots of inappropriate touching. Sorry, I just don't think it's OK for that girl to be holding the director like that.

He said that he "thinks like the kids" now....and that's just some obvious excuse that he's built up in his head why it's OK to touch the kids. It's not OK beardo. Check out the lady directly to our right...guess what she's doing. She's answering fan letters. Apparently she sucks at it because I wrote like 20 fan lett-





ers and I haven't received a single reply. ANYWAY....we're wrapping up now. We finish up with the girl that plays Spike going ON Canadian radio to talk about what it's like to be Spike. What follows is pretty depressing. They play about four phone calls that she gets ON-air....three are from creepy sounding middle aged guys....the fourth is from a woman who asks "what do you think about young kids having sex?" in a pretty confrontational and provocative tone. At first I was horrified at the NOTION that this teenager had to sit there and talk with creeps about a TV show that she's ON....but then after some reflection I realized that I

would have been one of those creeps if given the chance. This led to about three hours of blinding depression.

Seriously dark times. Anyway, that's about it. We hear a little more about how awesome Degrassi is and then they roll the credits. The whole thing left me feeling pretty empty. I don't want to be given any hint that these



kids aren't actually the characters they play ON the show. It's impossible for me to look at them any other way. I think that's probably me admitting some kind of severe brain condition or something like that...because that can't be good....but here we are. Anyway, the credits are a welcome end to this disaster...I thought I was off the hook..until the image below flashed ON my screen and held its gaze for a couple moments before slowly fading out. It's like Between Takes got all its friends together for one last kick in the groin. I give this show a 6/10. Do not skip this if you are a hardcore



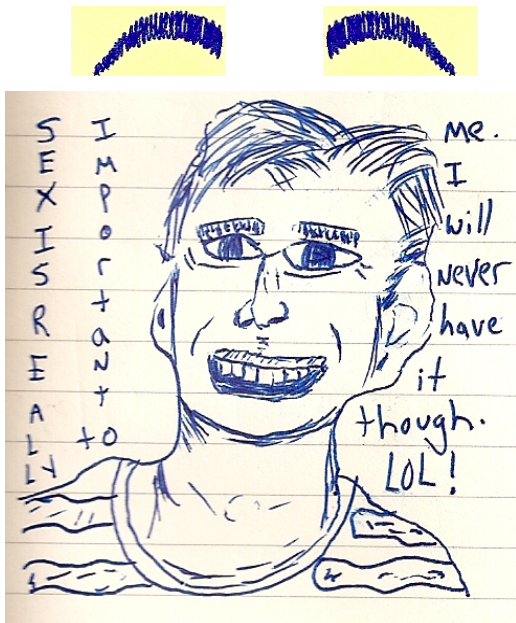
Degrassi fan.



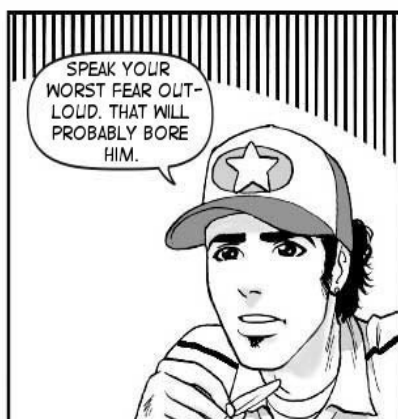
Yeah, I can't draw. Ha ha ha ha. See? It's really funny. Anyway, I got some requests for there to be more drawings in here and the power is out in Portland Oregon right now (high winds...or possibly foul play)...so light some candles and take a look at what a pilot precise V5, some printer paper, and the power of my imagination is capable of.



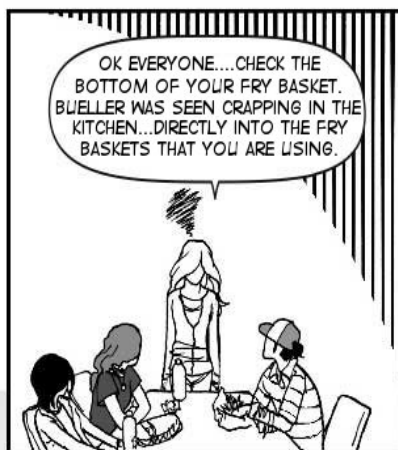








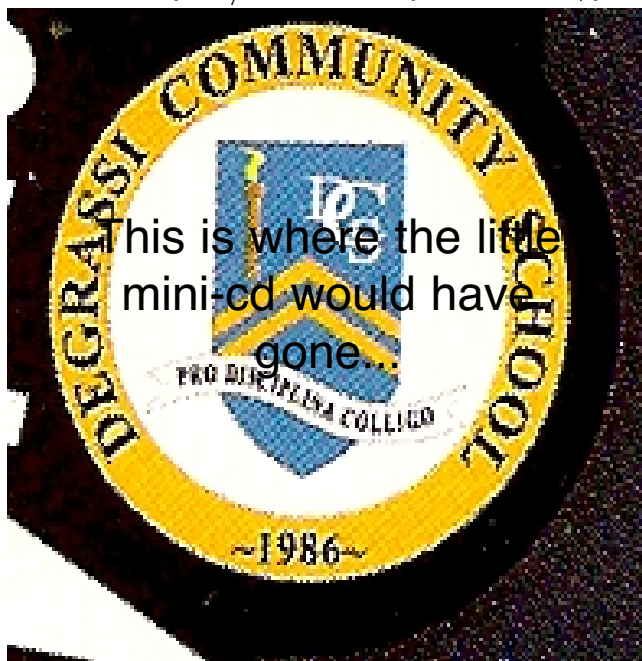






A great composer of music once proclaimed through song...."whatever it takes, I know I can make it through". Unsurprisingly, this is the unofficial mantra here at the Degrassi Digest. That's what makes writing this so hard. In short, I've failed. For some reason I got it in my head that I would be able to just blissfully sit in front of some piece of musical hardware and twiddle my fingers around until a masterpiece came out of the other end of it. While something DID come out, I wouldn't want it to be the last thing you walk away from the Degrassi Digest with. This whole thing is kind of a half-assed operation to begin with...so the mathematical theory is that two half-assed things would produce one horrible-assed disgrace to the Degrassi universe. The last thing I'm here to do is drag this show's name through the mud of unskilled sequencemanship. Hence...no musically encoded CD is included in this

issue of the Degrassi Digest. I want those to be the only words in my obituary when I die. I hope you didn't pick this thing up because you missed the fact that I crossed out the word "Correct" and drew a charmingly modern "emoticon" underneath that should denote disappointment. My intent here is not to deceive.



So anyway, many thanks to Selector Catalogue... ([www.myspace.com/selectorcatalogue](http://www.myspace.com/selectorcatalogue) and <http://www.rejectrecords.net>) for being the only guy to submit a track for this failed dream that lived so delicately in this really deep area of my heart. He did a breakcore remix of the theme to "Degrassi Talks"...which would sound really cool if it was played over the opening to the "Degrassi Talks: Drugs" segment. Thanks bud...maybe there will be a mini-CD in the future. For now...I gaze longingly out my window. Dreaming of what may have been...and trying to live once more. 38

