

Chicago Zine Fest 2015

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Captioned By: Lora S.

KARASCH & ASSOCIATES

>>> We'll just go around and room and say something and if she picks you up great, if not, I don't know. They're picking me up. Because of the microphone on the computer.

>>> This is fun. She heard me that time. (it's very muffled).

>>> It's muffled they say.

>>> What about now? Can you hear me now? This is Jenna.

>>> Let's just roll and see what happens.

>>> Welcome to the Zine Fest 2015.

Thanks for coming and working with us and texting us. We hope to get ready for a weekend of awesome. And we'll begin.

>>> Okay. Well, I'm Jenna Freedman. I'm on the panel. I thank you. Um before we get anywhere ill I would like to thank you the Chicago for.

I wish I could take credit for selecting these three but I can't. I appreciate all of it.

I really appreciate -- to you. I always like to appreciate the support staff who come out, the organizers who put up the chairs, the person that bakes the cake and the stickers and everyone. We appreciate that.

So okay in addition to -- librarian, I've been -- and two days ago. We have some partners that we forget already. Well, anyway. My -- and I'll tell you what that is.

Okay. So the structure of this panel -- am I -- do I have time for the -- okay. Thanks. I was going to say I'm going to invite anyone who needs me to slow down or needs anything from me or the panel, to say. So you can raise your hand or draw attention to yourself, I'm -- each panelist is going to speak for five minutes. I might ask them individually questions after reading. We'll see how that goes.

And then you'll do some discussion amongst the panel. I'm going to ask them questions and I promise you plenty of time for questions. There are some ground rules. The problem is -- gender pronouns. I propose what is not super-fun is the -- panel. If you ask a question I may not call on you again until other people have had a chance to ask questions.

If two people in the row have a question for one -- I'm going to ask that we address a different panelist.

Ocean will go first and then Jonas and Julia.

>>> I literally -- at Yahoo yesterday at my hostel. Haven't you heard of Yahoo.

Ocean has been doing this for half her life. She writes gloriously sad -- a young -- ocean wrote the most beautiful, lives in the bay area.

>>> I'm going to read two pieces. One came out five years ago. I forget to bring that with me but fortunately, happened to type up all this so I can find it on the internet and this is going to be my very first reading from a poem. When is it time to make another -- when you're going to die of boredom. When you're reading books about -- or actually part of something that -- when you do a little -- at the library and everyone in the audience brings a friend to like, you feel

nervous, you remember why you're here and what you're supposed to be doing. You remember that sharing stories is the best antidote. At times when -- so painful that -- ex-wife at home and now -- you can still write about her. Even though you're not that old and you -- the best client all day. Because they can't say your sorry or your heart -- when you're board, you live your life, note you have lots of -- and writing about them. Write another zine about a relationship and I -- in real life you get nervous and shaky. Things to say and everyone won't answer your phone calls. Maybe if you put it all out there in the world -- you write a zine when you want to do something but you don't know what. You have 28 now ask you started this at 14. Went to school, anything pretty much so why not do another one. I'm going to read a little bit from my new zine.

I can't read the whoa thing. It's called how to write your book. I was born -- compos pile and I didn't want to do it myself. A four-page story about two girls who find -- compost pile. As I typed the first sentence, full of writing garbage but this wasn't our fault and a shivering feeling up my spine. The story flowed from my hand and I forget about the -- before, I printed it out. So that was good. Part two. I had too much fun writing about. I wanted to learn more about them. If you see my hand -- writing on. And 16 pages, the longest thing written back then I began to realize I was writing a book. A book, that is so big, so meaty. I had written plenty of poems and blogs all of which were -- but a book. Didn't you have to be organized or diligent or have a plan, a plot, a formula. A 24 year-old from college and typing up on a computer my girl found in the garbage.

Written by people -- books are written by people who grow up, people who are -- books are written by -- obviously that one is true but the straight white men never had to explain the references or liberate themselves. Instead they get feed back along the line. Part three. That is done. Negatively of my work, it didn't feel good. I'm not writing it for you sometimes out loud. I'm writing it for the weirdoes, the gender police. I -- my experience. You can adjust yourself. It won't kill you.

Ivy league school, character talks taken back -- come on. You're being overdramatic. Did this really happen? We see them in our dreams. Instead -- unable to see. Wasn't believable. Stop writing the book.

>>> I want to ask you one question which is to talk a little bit about having work that's older still in the present, still in the world? Can you read from something five years later.

>>> Most of the things are really old issues and I was upset at the thought of anybody reading them. One time and read it in front of all these people that I know. Which is awkward. It's just like, where you were. I think even if the circumstances changed. There is still something --

>>> So moving onto Jonas. The style is Jonas writes busy. Cheer the Eff up. Include he's been writing since 2011. It's part -- and part fiction about fatherhood.

>>> Cool. Thanks.

>>> This is a piece. It's called --

>>> It's frustrating how hard I have to struggle can masculinity. For so long it's only had a negative meaning. As a child I had the strength and courage of resolution, act like a man. Men don't need help. They can do it all by themselves. As an adult, aggressiveness and insecurity, aggressiveness and anger. Positive masculinity is somewhere between. It's often so hard -- I can think of one time when I experienced what I call positive -- I love to read but -- I either didn't do homework, I almost never studied. At the same time I was afraid of getting bad grades. I did everything at the last minute and hoped it was enough.

In the meantime I didn't have many friends. I spent most of my time reading. Reading class should have been a piece of cake but I didn't read the material. A big project was the island of -- a short novel about a young girl surviving in the wild. We took weekly quizzes and I failed almost all of them. When I didn't fail it's just because I did an exceptionally good job at guessing.

My teacher then was named -- no kidding, Mr. Buchnaut. He has white hair and the full white bedder. A tattoo on his forearm. Hunting as a hobby. Loved football and baseball. He was a fan of Jack London. He spoke with a lazy accent. Half way through the school year we got to our midterm grades. He gave us a grade on slip of paper and talked to us and sent us back to the desk. It was my turn. He handed me the paper and shrugged. I don't know what to tell you.

I went back to the table and opened the paper and saw a big red X and start today cry. I didn't care -- I just knew that I was going to fail a reading class and my old man was going to give me an ass whooping.

Out of the corner of my watering eyes I could see Mr. Buchnaut. He came to my desk and handed me another slip of paper. It's a note that said it's okay to fail. It is not okay to give up.

It was sweet and thoughtful. My eyes only focused on the word "failed". Mr. Buchnaut helps me back. The first time I was hugged by another man. I didn't hug my brothers or my father. Wasn't hugged by anybody but female relatives. Then he told me it was going to be okay. The rest of the day wasn't so good. I didn't stop crying. I don't remember that well but I'm sure I -- belted ass whooping. The next day in reading class Mr. Buchnaut brought in a fresh batch of books. All classics. The night before he started an extra credit program. You could read any book on the shelf and if you could pass a 20 question quiz on it, you would get extra credit.

All the books were way above fifth grade reading level. Sense and sensibility. During the rest of the year I read so many books. Classic after classic. What the hell kind of little kid reads all his time reading David Copperfield. Book after book, quiz after quiz, meanwhile I continued to do poorly on everything else in the class. Just for extra credit alone my solid F turned into a B. I started reading just for reading sake. That hasn't changed. I'm always reading.

I mean I was a kid. He was a grown man. He didn't tell me to quit crying and being a man. This grizzly bear gives me a warm hug and changed his whole class to help me. When I think of masculinity that's the memory that keeps coming back.

>>> How much more we learn from failure than success. One thing is we all -- and the question that I want to ask you is a little bit about -- if you're -- so do you think of someone -- thinking of educating or sharing with other men or what were you thinking?

>>> Outside of -- I think in terms of like, I don't know, the ideal person. The person that -- when something happens they give up. So outside of that, nothing.

>>> Okay. Great. We'll talk more about that.

>>> I like that one.

>>> Well if we don't come up with anything else -- now we have Julia Eff.

Julia -- mostly gender issues. And the people that love them. Longer than they've been making zines.

>>> I just -- everybody -- I'm excited about that.

This is actually a zine about my first true friend -- it's called the world is big enough without you. Nothing really happened. It's just like her phone name came, my phone number changed. We were living far apart and she got married. I mean growing up together and then -- and then she suddenly managed to pop back into my life. She's like I've been looking for you for four years. Holy crap. And we lived just miles from each other the whole time. This is something I wrote.

Most of my friends live really far away from me.

So yes.

My dog travel in packs of 8 or 10. They open their mouths and we wash them and the way they fixate and you see constant salvation from the group and it makes you go oh my god, no, Kyle you do not need a \$35 facial scrub for any reason. Much less just because the alpha preteen insists she does.

Dear Erin. Do you still have your snaggleteeth. When we were ten we were still rocking the thrift store for leggings and -- growing up with a child. Correctional glasses. Dear Erin. My voice cracked and my wisdom teeth started coming in. Did we never travel in packs because you were home schooled and I couldn't make friends or because the two of us were enough for the world already. I missed being in the backwater. I never once realized you were light years outta my league cuz back then we couldn't see the forest for the extremely aggressive trees.

Now I can't imagine you raising a child and doing your husband's laundry. Cuz we always used to be the same and I still feel like a kid and the world is strange and scary.

You know I was doing some reading and I learned I could blame my gender issues on my parent's divorce and my gapteeth. Maybe I'm handling this all too well for somebody that's so emotionally stunted it forced their body to stop developing early.

Dear Erin, remember being ten and going to the mall together. I was worried that I was talking too much. I hope we were never as annoying

as these girls at twelve and 13. And I hope we turned out better at 16 and 17 for our love of Myspace, bands and skinny jeans. Do you still see my baby cheeks and gapteeth. Sometimes I wonder if all the oops wrong numbers I get are people that don't remember me but still have my phone number. And what if spam e-mail is just searching for all the friends it can't recall?

This isn't a real question but is this also your first meeting?

>>> Like microphone meeting. I just want to stand on a box and yell at people.

>>> So my question for you is what helps you decide on making as you put it a --

>>> Oh like why I started doing ... Just because I started doing zines with the idea of -- and it wasn't enough to make a big zine. It doesn't have a function or other things attached to it. Usually I sit down and write and say, okay, I have a third of the idea. I have pieces of it and this and that and the other. But this is the thing I wrote about -- it ends up as one sheet. It's based on how much idea I have on that particular subject.

>>> I have ideas and I write them down in my journal and they all become one unit but it sounds like you write almost like tumbler.

>>> My zine ID is I have -- and being shown internet culture.

>>> How quickly they move and everything. I'll have an idea but it can take me nine months to get it out. I don't know. I'm sorry to put stuff out as quickly and timely as possible.

>>> So before I move onto asking more general questions for all the panelists, I just want to get a sense of who is in the room. It's kind of -- a little bit of a zine panel but if everyone in the room has been making zines for five years I don't want to ask basic things. Who has a zine? And who -- okay. Who is very familiar with zines? You've read ten or more zines? Okay. So there's a few people that are newer to zines. All right. And I'm constantly reminding myself to talk more slowly.

So I will start off with the first really big question, what is a zine? It's photocopy, it could be either -- printed in cool and alternative ways. The idea behind it is it's do-it-yourself. For me what is zine is you made this thing and it's yours and it's your baby and you can stop at any time or you can make more at any time. That's what a zine is for me.

>>> I agree with that. I guess I would add that ... I don't know.

Seems like once you get to like 1,000, it's a whole different --

>>> What is really popular. If you make them 100 at a time? If you have a zine it can be a thousand copies. A 150 is hardly anything.

>>> Is it a zine or not a zine, we don't know.

>>> What about you?

>>> I've been doing zines for almost 20 years. I think we -- little cost, you know like, it doesn't help your writing. I just want to say something. I say it to people that are going to want to hear it. And it gets me connected to people and gets my writing out there.

If I have it in a literary journal, it's something I never hear about.

But a zine, they are mailed -- impact -- right before the panel,

nondominant hand based on a play about carpal tunnel. To get people to do things in their nondominant hand.

I was so honored. It could be --

>>> Everyone brushes their teeth with their nondominant hand, every day.

>>> I have so many things to ask you. I think, I want to pick up on something ocean said about letter writing. I feel like letter writing is this important object. What impact if any does letter writing have on you?

>>> I mean I used to write letters a lot more. I found out about zine, a zine is a -- I wrote to them, a month later they would send one to me and on and on. I think they're hand in hand. People that started later. I won't say I don't like letters anymore. The only real -- is -- has been everybody else.

>>> Like, write, over being an internet person and when I share my zine with friends, they're all from the internet. But I will sit down and write them a really nice letter and I don't always get letters back but like a month half later it's like surprise. Here is a letter. She is like, yeah, we're busy and stuff and I'm doing my photography thing and blah, blah, but I did read your zine and I really love it and this is how I connected to you and why. It's cool to see how people that aren't necessarily in the zine community or in like the letter writing thing in their day-to-day life will then respond to my stuff which is really cool. It's a cool way to learn more things about your internet friends and stuff, too.

I have a friend heather, I knew a lot about her but what she told me in letters just made me see her more as a person. There's a level of depth there that you don't really get.

>>> We're starting out -- I had something to say. But like I guess the further along I got, I started working -- almost like more important than being sort of just -- I don't know. It's like just getting my zine out there to somebody I don't know. Another state, another country. Something that I wrote, it's just like, you know -- it's like doing something fun. More meaningful and substantial.

>>> I got your zine, it was pretty sweet, thanks, peace out. But they took the time to sit down and write out on paper. And then you go to the post office and get a stamp. And you know it shows that they're into it.

>>> With e-mail, like all the things internet, it's just like ... This whole concept, for that brief period that's the important person in your life. What's on your mind?

>>> It's cool when people send me dollars in the mail but I really like it when people send me letters.

>>> Thanks for the dollar. That was great. But if they write, oh man, I saw your stuff, blah, blah, blah.

>>> I can ask you all questions for hours and hours but I am -- I'm going to ask you one more, this came up on a panel I was doing yesterday at the comics conference in New York. And someone on the panel said something about his evening -- and I know. Is it pickled or organic. It's a cocktail. An old fashioned cocktail. The thing

that is so important to talk about is in addition to other things, there's also like this feeling that it's zines that aren't quite of the DIY -- the zines that are -- and I don't mean that in a critical way. It's not what I'm into. But zines are often getting more high end, really great vehicles. But what do we think about zines as like, are they our objects? Are they something that -- I feel like I'm framing this very negatively. It is my aesthetic but there are some -- zines.

I haven't been to Chicago zine fest before so I don't know what I'm going to see tomorrow.

>>> I'm a very cranky old man. It's cool to see these other kinds of zines but I feel oftentimes when you get into the more expensive processes and stuff of putting it together, you feel compelled to recoup some of that dollar wise and pricing yourself out of a lot. You can have a really great 18 page zine but it's \$8. I can get like 7 photocopies, more kind of variety, I could get more variety -- that would be extra super. Whereas if it's photocopies I feel there is less risk, I don't know. I'm very, like, oh yes.

I get things and hang onto them. So it's like if I'm going to give you dollars for your zine, I hang onto it.

>>> I usually am able to -- I really don't think -- the point I'm trying to make is -- and so I kind of under price my zine. I want to keep it accessible. It's a really good thing. A lot of the time it's not -- don't have money. Unless they're in a library or I can borrow them from somebody.

Is it more important for you, in following or whatever to write for 150 people or is it more important that you make that super-connection. And it's like 20 people. It's up to you I guess.

>>> Also I think a lot of zines, I just try to -- that anybody like -- don't have that kind of confidence in my work. I don't know, like you can give me like 4 but that's okay. Give people what they want even if it's not really in your best interest. It's complicated.

>>> I'm the same way. It's just kind of like what is going through my head but I don't know that it's ever conveyed. If someone just keeps talking to me about the zine, chances are I feel like the five minute mark ... As far as like the -- I guess, I gravitate towards more the photocopies.

At the same time I'm glad there's like the full range of it out there. Because I think as a medium it would be boring if they all looked one way. Your zine can be this way or it can be this way. There is something for everybody.

>>> People say this is really cool, like art people and you do fun things with them. Bring that back, okay. Read the draft. That is really awesome and I like the juxtaposition. This is my zine, that touches my heart.

>>> We're not dragging. Soul sisters. It just so happens that the four of us kind of do ... Okay.

Now I really do need to turn this over to other people.

>>> When you get that juxtaposition of accessibility versus DIY.

>>> I'm going to try to boil this down so the typist can get it. I

know they're really interested in these topics. Let me know if I'm not getting it right. So the next question I'm going to bring the mic to you.

The question was about photocopier aesthetic and whether it's about hanging onto the old technology almost for nostalgia stake versus the greater accessibility of communicating on the internet. And there was a bunch more nuance to it. That was a really good question. Let's try to summarize that.

I can turn it over for the panelists. Thank you.

>>> What was the question?

>>> I'm doing this out of nostalgia for sure. But I don't think that -- accessible, like it hasn't been super accessible. I couldn't afford it if I wanted to. Like I -- I don't like being old school, it's actually really interesting how you see some research about it. There's a -- the act of using your hands -- a certain part of your brain. So I feel like -- I didn't do like --

>>> I have so many answers to this question. There are two very separate realms of my life. I have internet self and I have zine writer. The internet is -- it's painfully public. Somebody can goggle you and bring up everything about you. And honestly zines for me is a private public thing. If I don't like you or you were mean to me or whatever, I don't have to give you my zine. Whereas there is -- beat me up all the time in high school. And when I -- she would try to talk to me constantly. And I don't want you reading my zine. I don't want you on my Facebook.

Even though -- audience in mind. I'm like oh god, I'm going to photocopy this, I'm still -- of my -- Google me and read all the crap that I have written. Or my boss, I'm like no. So it is important to make it accessible. Because so much is internet based nowadays, if you don't open that technology you're excluding people. And it's cool to have a source where people can -- and enable people to find you.

But I'm still into the photocopy thing. It's sort of a privacy --

>>> I'm still trying to piece together the process when I was thinking about this. So I think part of this goes back to the conversation that I had yesterday. The idea of the cell phone in my head. It was essentially about how sort of clean and stuff -- maybe some aspect of your life, communication and language. I won't go into the whole thing. But putting it out to the internet where it's focused on more instant gratification, like accessibility. I wrote this and let's see who is paying attention.

Who is going to reply. I want to know right now who likes it.

Because they're going to press some button that says like. At the same time I'm sort of like, it's sort of redefining like communication, what correspondence and all that really means.

In that sense I think it's an idea of community. Because it's like the internet is just this big, huge, like swamp of opinions. It's not really a community. It's just -- and whereas like the zines, that's community. There is an effort that you make, here are the people that you're going to be introduced through this. I made this work, now here are the people that are accessible to me. Here are all the

things that are accessible to me. Instead of I made this and here is another drop in the ocean.

That is not a community. And so for me it's not really like, I don't really think I'm -- I really think -- it's still a door way to my specific community and not just to like get my voice out to the whole world and who is going to respond.

>>> Oftentimes nobody is responding. If you post it on Facebook and nobody likes it, did you actually post it on Facebook?

>>> Other questions?

There is a question about aesthetics. I read versions -- and we all have a very distinct aesthetic. Very good with tying the aesthetic with what they're trying to accomplish. How do you --

>>> I myself it's tied with the aesthetic, because if I've written something and it's in my head because I don't write rough drafts and I can't figure out the lay out I will be stuck. And I'll threaten to go out -- and oncoming traffic. It's superimportant to me and I think I had like this very strong art education background and then I have this -- art teacher who was instrumental in helping me do things in different ways and constantly challenging me and challenging your own growth basically. This is kind of embarrassing but hear me out.

Well, I never think about, I think about aesthetics but I never thought of them as having their aesthetics but there are -- I wish I liked white space more.

Because the last -- I usually make that work at 5 in the morning on an overnight shift. But I still haven't -- that is one of the draw backs.

>>> Honestly, it's huge to me, not necessarily nostalgic, when I'm making a zine I am still living in 1995. Like, wow, I can like have backgrounds.

>>> If you have an aesthetic though ...

>>> I just kind of like, it's -- I mean it's like that -- I keep whether it's -- I keep it going back to the zine fest first. Ideas from that, that is what is ingrained in my head.

>>> I figured out how to put my -- back on. Yeah. I do have an aesthetic. Going back around to having -- I am constantly re-examining my aesthetic and going, okay, what can I do here and how can I grow this? I usually do quarter size zine but I did a half size zine. I want to do 85 pages and I want to do 3 pages. I want to see how far I can push my own creative boundary. And I don't absorb so much from other zines although I read tons and tons of them. Most of my art influence and aesthetic influence comes from -- art work and the -- TV or whatever. My influences when I started making zines was the album art from the LP version of volunteers by Jefferson airplane. And the dichotomy of the art work and old timey newspapers from great disasters and stuff. That helped shape my aesthetic more than other things because I started doing it when I was like 14.

>>> We have five more minutes and I want to get one more question in. Do we have any flexibility on the end time? I'm guessing these are the youth readers, I don't know.

>>> Let's do one more question and if there is still some wiggle room

we'll do one more.

>>> My friend recommended to me these safety poles that are like \$7 and they come in a little tin. And they are completely worth it. You can staple like hundreds of issues. It literally changed my life. Anybody who is having problems with your stapler jamming, get one of these. It's worth it.

>>> Where did you get it.

>>> I got it at staples. And they're way overpriced. They sold out. If anybody cares, thank you so much.

>>> We'll talk about this later.

>>> Okay.

>>> My question is -- to me they all come off as being very personal, about your own lives or life around you. Is there a genre of zine that is -- like you will go the zine fest tomorrow and find something that is not necessarily about someone's inner most thoughts, what would that be?

>>> So the other one. This is the very top of my list. A friend of mine -- yes, it's just this whole thing about -- whenever that comes up among friends which is more often than I would think. I'm always like, okay, you have to read this. This is just amazing. Something like that that's -- this whole area. Just write about it. So it's a move from like the context effect. Something like that is just like I would not have expected it to be like that. It's totally outside of what people think.

>>> That's like a really -- somebody is really committed to this idea. I love seeing a document, internet phenomenons -- zines that I got several years ago. Anything that you know, horror fanzines, fanzines, black metal (ph.) is one of my favorites. That is not a personal thing at all. You can tell somebody -- it totally shines through is really cool. They're crazy in a way -- they made this whole thing and they photocopied it and I found it in a store. It's cool.

>>> I like zines about --

>>> Zine librarian pets, love the nerdy intersection. When it's two totally different things that come together.

>>> I think we'll do one more.

>>> How do you guys approach marketing or how do you get your audience?

>>> Somebody really -- it was a serious, I would post it. Myspace. I had a Myspace. Because I figured like most of the people that would want to read them is other internet people like me. And I do still reach out to -- letters and stuff. Do you think you can send me some stuff or whatever. It's a way that things are shifting culturally. A lot of it --

>>> I don't do that. It's kind of just like I'll send it to a bookstore. And that's it. I feel like we don't have to do that. Especially -- it's like okay, I make a zine, I send it out and I would like it to find people that want to read it. If it does, that's fine, if not, they're reading something else and it's cool. There's no pressure of got to market myself, got to get out there. Win this

audience.

>>> I want to say finding an audience for me is pressure. I don't care about the money, I just want you to read it. Look at my baby, it's great. Everybody thinks their baby is really cute and most babies are not. Especially when they're -- yes. Your baby is really great. But I just -- it's not so much trying to find -- oh I must appeal to X number of people. Just look at it.

>>> I don't market myself as much as I should. I'm kind of at a lost. I feel bad about not marketing myself. But at the same time -- you know, I sell to stores.

>>> Something was said on the panel yesterday -- he said that zines are about building community. That was obnoxious, let me get in the last word.

>>> I would love to continue a conversation like this when we get into the nitty-gritty of things like staples and internet searches and handwriting and just how we all make our zines. We'll have that conversation tomorrow. But for now I really want to -- schedule that our organizers have set up. So I think we'll call that a panel. ... (applause) ...

>>> Thank you.

>>> All those readers have material in the back. Keep the conversation going. There is -- if you get a snack attack. If you need to go to the bathroom, do that. Any of the readers, come up front.

>>> Hi. Hi. We're going to get ready and start to youth reading in like 60 seconds. So if everyone can come back to their chairs or just hang out where they are now and just listen with your ears that is cool, too. I'm one of the fellow organizers for Chicago zine fest. So thank you for coming out.

I'm going to jump right into it. These students have been working on pieces to perform for us at is zine fest. And I promise that two of them are from my own school where I work at and they're going to kick off the event for us.

Without further adieu -- is nine years old. In third grade. She likes singing, dancing and acting.

>>> Hi, my name is Lexy. And my third poem is called -- it's about. Sunshine, sunshine oh sunshine -- they will be quite sour. You can get them in the --

My second poem is a poem I wrote a couple days ago. Here we go. Strawberries is raw berries and don't forget the bananas. Fix it in the blender, that will give it flavor but be ware it's vicious. My last poem is a surprise. First off I would like to give a big shout out to my mom who is always helping me. Roses are red, violets

are blue, you are my mother and I love you. My mother is -- and my mother is a friend.

>>> Let's give it up for Lexy.

Lexy is one of the most -- people I know. And literally an hour before this happened she was like coming up to me saying -- I'm going to freak out. Did she freak out? No. She did great.

Our next reader is Henry Benton, 7 years old and in second grade. And Henry likes to water ski, read, and write. Give it up for Henry.

>>> My first poem is called light rain. It's a -- probably had enough but lightening -- my second poem. Even though you're down under. My third poem is called courage. You're fighting a battle from a saddle.

>>> Let's give it up for Henry.

...(applause)...

They are just phenomenal students so I want to say good job, guys, you did a really good job. Our next reader is returning from last year. She read last year, Eliza. She is a sophomore in high school. A member of rebirth poetry ensemble. Her writing has been published in black light magazine. I'm published in that, too, so we share a publisher.

A poem -- words on a page. She has been writing her zine, creative evolution since eighth grade. Which is really cool.

>>> So this piece is called crush for you crush. And it was published in.

I been here around Valentine's Day, there was a tradition for a dollar you could have an orange crush delivered to your crush. You fill in your name on a little board and you can choose to write your name too so they know who sent it. Otherwise you can send it completely unanimous -- circulated the halls and the social networks. Do not send me one, you have to send one or we all know who she is sending one to. Or do you think you have a chance with him, or worst of all let's send one to her as a joke. I was always -- around this time of sixth grade when I liked a different boy -- or at least I told people I did. I sometimes came up with a new crush, a fake one just to confuse this group. But right then in the mistake of crush can season I didn't see, deserved this level of commitment. There was one outlier candidate that stuck out to me and her name is Leah. She has one of those stand out personalities that -- didn't want to talk to her. And you wanted her to talk to you. She was sincere, supportive -- and low ponytail and an oversized cardigan like no one else I knew. She didn't think about friends like that. Like a lot of the guys that I -- times that year, the ones with the warm smiles, the clear hair, it was hard not to like her like that just a little bit. I told my best friend about the possibility of sending a crush -- as we walked up the stairs to French class a few minutes late like always.

I hadn't told her about a crush before this. This was the first one that I acknowledged. She is the kind of friend that you can tell that type of thing without worrying that the secret is going to get out. We passed notes all through French. I don't know I know. You would be so cute together. So thinking about it more carefully I couldn't

imagine -- Leah at all. I don't know if I really did like her or it was me partly experimenting with the idea of liking her. So should I do it I asked as we walked downstairs to the lockers. Do what? Send a crush or should I not do it. I think you should she said really? She nodded. If you want to.

The next day at lunch I told two other friends about my crush on Leah. It's totally fine if you're a lesbian. I don't judge you. The other one said something like cool, with newfound confidence I began to discuss the situation in greater depth. I should do it anonymously, right. Oh my gosh, I should not do it. Oh my god, should I send it to her. Just do it. Maybe she was genuinely encouraging me but she -- like a mile run in PE or borrowing money for a bake sale. Did you say send a crush to her someone sitting near by asked. And I attempted to nonrespond. I half nodded and half shook my head. What was I doing? At the end of that same lunch period I did it. I bought a crush can and scribbled her name on the paper. In order to protect my identity I kept the handwriting as boyish as possible but guys like girls have no universal handwriting and even if I did, I had no idea what would look like. It was slanted and rough looking and then I decide it was fake. Too much of a caricature. Decided to scratch out the girly scribble, rip up the paper and write it out in the least gendered handwriting I could.

Finally I walked back over to my table only to find -- did you send one? She asked me. Yes, I replied without thinking caught off guard. Oh, who to? I froze. Should I go straight out and tell her or lie and say it was my latest crush list crush or deny sending one at all. Is it okay if I don't tell you. Who did you send it to. Leah nudged my shoulder and raised her eyebrows. I'm really, really sorry. I can't tell you. Why can't you tell me? I just -- it's just kind of personal, okay. Please, just tell me. How private can it be. It's true that coming from the same lie that would have sent many a lunch student -- the crush of week in front of an entire table's worth of other girls this was pretty strange behavior. I looked up at the clock on the wall and saw that lunch was ending. The perfect escape. I have to go, I'll talk to you later. I beelined for the trash can. Oh my god that little thing, I almost told her. And oh my gosh. I looked like any other confused, excited preteen in this moment. Sorting through the emotional ups and downs that marked strand adder crush drama and questioning my sexuality and hoping that friends didn't question that question. On the inside it was starting to dawn on me that maybe I didn't like Leah so much after all or maybe this turned into exactly what I didn't want it to turn into. A half crush that gave me something new to fixate my worries on. My stomach hurt, I had a headache. I didn't do the handwriting right. And I wish I let the whole Leah thing pass. We received our cans a few weeks later. The teacher called out the cans and the kids walked up front to claim their bounty. By this point I didn't have feelings for Leah anymore. I didn't receive any crushed cans. Leah found me on the way out. Crushed can balanced under her arms. She held one out in her hands along with the included note where I

could barely make out the jagged edge of a boy letter. Look she said. We made it to her locker and she set her can down on the floor and held up the note I wrote, scribbled and all. I think a girl sent me this. I pretended to study this for a few seconds like I was plugging my gender handwriting into a formula. And then I asked her why for a fact. Oh my god, that is so crazy. Who would do that. I know she said, weird. Well, see you around. Yeah, I said, see you. ... (applause) ... We have a poster and a postcard so if you haven't gotten one, stop by. We're going to take a quick break and get ready for our exhibitors, performers. Okay. We're going to give ten minutes and we'll be back. Thanks.

>>> All right. I'm johnny and I'm the organizer. Thanks so much for bearing through this whole afternoon, or not only afternoon but tonight. It's so weird. There's a lot of changes tonight so I hope you're enjoying it. We appreciate in being in a new space. Tomorrow is a new location as well. Farmers hall. So hopefully everybody has a good time.

That being said, I'm just going to snap into it.

I know readers -- today was awesome. It was the first year -- every year onsetting up chairs and tables and this year because we have a new space, they were really great. So I was ... I don't know. Enough of me talking. I talk a lot. I don't know why they ask me to do this but so be it.

The first reader, comedy, sings for working magazine. C2 girls and makes -- fire with Sofia for -- she appears in the sy-fy feature --

>>> Thank you. Thanks to zine fest, I'm very excited to be reading tonight. I lived in Chicago. This slide show thing is going automatically. That's why it's turning.

I'm very excited to be here. So this -- I'm going to read three comics. This is the third part of my series. Which is a video -- on the website. It's intense. There is stuff about dealing with long-term trauma and harassment and -- I don't care. Do what you need to do.

And this is probably going to flip around a lot because it's doing it automatically and I don't know how to stop it. So the first panel here is a poster for this event.

At the bottom it says Rankroshinbutt and this is in reference to my feelings -- they would write together during their relationship together and break up that was all in secret.

While Frankenstein's creature was a -- for queer isolation, it was a classic symbol. That's why it bothers me so much. I got this image

as a kid when -- are you afraid of the dark.  
So glad it's over. Yeah. How are you ladies doing tonight? You can buck off. I said buck off. I'm so sorry. Second time today. Jesus. I almost never get harassed here. God, what it is about dykes. A woman appears are blood on her lips. How drool you think. Oh my god, I'm so sorry. It's okay. Huh, I guess we lost? The glitter says come. Is that -- yes. Do you mind if I smoke? It helps me sleep. I don't mind but can you blow it out the window. Sure. Okay. I'm serious about this teenage thing. I didn't get to have a high school experience.

I think I made -- if you want to. Are you sure. How are you doing? Freaked out. Freaked out. Can I do anything for you right now? You can play with my hair. Sometimes -- I think it's going to be hard to stop or concentrate. Sometimes it helps to just ignore it. What are you doing now? That was me doing a response. He is the other person in the comic and reprogram. I'm going to read -- I was thinking about reading this comic, no-no no, but it's really intense but I love it. I'm going to read this really goofy thing that I made in four hours when I was not sleeping in college.

It's called clue, clue, clues starring sonic. Copyright 2008. Do you think I made sonic, who the fuck are you, what did you make today. Know me, remember me. I don't --

(singing ...) at least I'm not a child anymore, I think. I need a ladder to get out of the hole I dug myself. But I remember nights -- backseat of my parents car after a Christmas party at my cousins. I wish I had gotten my cousins disease. No, no, no. Okay.

One more. This is my favorite. It's from a comic book world (ph.). It was the summer I finally settled on the name queer. I -- by a gas station when a friend stopped to get cigarettes. We met up at a coffee shop holding a mug with a logo. She told me about, a giant buck came across us. He was huge. I felt like I was facing one of those prehistoric deer I've seen skeletons of in New York City at the natural history museum. I grew up in a forest.

Okay. That's as good as we're going to get. I grew up in a forest and saw deer all the time. She told me growing up as a teen run away and how she got fired from her job. The boss always praised her performance. We sat in a slip of grass on the graves and talked and kissed and cuddled until the grass got cold. I kept taking my jacket off and on as her body overheated me and then chilled me. She said I like you and I'm surprised how easy -- she curled her hands around her knees and said she really wanted a -- when she visits friends in Brooklyn we can sit on my roof and drink tea and listen to music. We started talking about what to do next. Well, I'll stay out literally as long as you want. She showed me the bus stop. As I road the bus down a small, bleak, Pittsburgh roads I felt about the high school shenanigans I felt too cooped up to do. Back then I had so much baggage. Cerebral palsy and not knowing I was a tall girl.

cats -- on the bed. Sex at this point in my life means to me that we did things that weren't just kissing. So have you ever kissed someone and felt like you totally got fucked. I did things that scared me.

You know in cartoons when they see stars, I say tracers and flash backs from mushrooms. And -- wondered what those referred to. I realized that nice sex for me feels like a nice drug trip. The curtain gets pulled back and the walls and ceiling and comforter are all shimmering. That's all for me, thank you very much.

...(applause)...

>>> Once again, give it up. It was awesome. Sorry about the tech.

>>> You're going to get the best right now. That was the best, too. But it's going to keep getting better.

It's like some bad 80s montage. All right. Also this is the last zine fest you see me do anything on a microphone. That's cool. I have enough time left. Before the show, it's my job to make you feel like awful and shitty. You were so awesome. And then I get back up here and it's like that person was awesome and I suck like that. Okay. Enough.

Next up, Celia Pérez is a librarian living right here in the windy city of Chicago. Been making zines and more for 20 years plus. Celia Pérez everyone.

>>> I thank you for having me out here to zine fest and thank you everyone. So after I had an anthology of my 20 years of making published -- I asked family members who they write for and I think that is a good question and for me its changed from when I was -- I first started writing in 1994 to now.

So if I can tell you how I got into zines, I can tell you how I got into zines but you probably already heard that story. There maybe -- there may be a zine add lib that she can fill in to get the story. It's now -- instead, instead I'll tell you why so many things about the coming year -- this project is going to be documented. That was on my mind. I've been thinking, document the children arriving from South America. Forgot what it means to have something down on paper. I had read and written my way through life in some ways -- document is now -- most of my zines are about. My good friend moved away from my college town in the summer of 74 and I decided to make a zine. I looked back on that first zine and while it's embarrassing it's a picture of what I was at that particular time and in that particular place. 20 years later I think my zine -- changed. Each member of my family, now that she is older I can get her talking at times. There is still so much I don't know about her and a ticking clock. There is only so much time to get those stories before it's too late. I didn't understand until my father died. Even if they never shared with anyone -- I make zines. I make them to reveal myself. I make them to document the exciting and -- that make up my life. I write them to remember my stories. I write them so if I never tell you you'll still know.

The best part of this project is when I gathered up the zine writing and felt I could probably put it to work -- these are the things that are always there. Not on the surface but not too far below. This is what I look for in a story, people, morals in life and what I hope to convey in my own writing. Humor and wonder and history.

On my 21st birthday went out to dinner and then to a bar. I was 21

and didn't drink -- tell my mom I had a heart murmur. I probably never saw a doctor again after that until -- the heart murmur was about to get me. But then I -- something that used to be lame and not do stuff. Heart murmur. Nope, can't drink, it will kill me with a heart murmur and all. Have you ever noticed that sometimes it takes writing about yourself to realize how weird a person you are. Anyway, I -- to the bar, especially because my roommate -- despite us -- they said they would -- we were going to Joeys, one of those college town bars. And the most exciting thing about my 21st birthday. I wanted a pair of dock Martin boots and finally bought them. To go with my boots -- to go with my boots I wore a pale green. 1993. I thought my outfit was the shit. I felt old wearing the boot and they had gotten worn. I don't know if I can -- Part of my sobriety, 21, I love that age. It was a time of discovery -- wanting to be that age forever is something we all identified with. So we had cheap, budget, Forever 21. I don't know -- Forever 21, changed the name because they thought -- I admit I shopped at Forever 21 well into my 30s and into my 40s. Not that I ever saw things -- even I could accept those clothes were too young for me. Too young, too trashy and too body for my taste. I wanted to feel when it felt to be 21. So I went into the store. I took a field trip -- and here are some of the things I discovered. Very loud music. Forever 21 is really loud music, like really loud. I mean really loud for my age. It's loud -- and then you go through the store pulling stuff off the racks like a valley girl. By the time Bananarama's "Cool Summer" came on. There is something about Forever 21 thug. Everything had thug. A thug machine. Thug makes everything edgy. The plain green -- thunder dome cocktail party. The cute white dress had a palish pattern. The ground floor, second floor and base. What do we know about the basement it's usually where we stored our own crap. This basement was different. A left, right pattern of exercise clothes and a small selection of shoes. In order, it was a pile of shoes laying on the floor and no one could be bothered to pick them up and put them back. Most of the shoes were shipper shoes, the shoes that don't go with anything. American Indian theme. This is the thing. Urban. White tank top with an image that looked like -- Forever 21 is -- some totem pole. The best thing about the tank top is the strap of course. Nothing says American Indian like thug. Weird shit I came across. One, forest green blazer. Seemed like it was -- no rhyme or reason. Just stuff among stuff. There was only one of these blazers. It was like something that -- go to this other store, forever 50. Which leads me to ask who the heck wears a forest green blazer from Forever 21 or from anywhere for that matter. There was a woman -- wearing forest green blazer. It was like a -- worm. The tank top with the shredded fabric thing. I think -- also Forever 21 would like to sell a -- three, no colored form fitting dress with a ruffle around the waist.

Teenage girls. Like anywhere there is cheap stuff, like anywhere there is cheap fashion, teenage girls -- I don't know what goes on in Forever 21 but I'm talking about cool girls here. I know what you really want to know, if I purchased anything that made me feel better. As I mentioned earlier, cool summer came on. I remember that -- all these short jumper things and I tried on a couple. The other was from the American Indian collection. Those little jumpers were like lake Michigan. But even though they -- pretty much undress every time you have to go to the bathroom.

American Indian jumper is what -- design. The best thing about it is it's very -- fascination with inappropriate clothes. Perhaps this is my midlife crisis. Small flat -- I planned to wear the hell out of it this summer. The thing I found most appealing about Forever 21, no matter how old you are, there's a mutual understanding of where we all belong and under the shiny, the cheap fabrics and gross colors, they all mean the same thing.

Thank you.

>>> Celia Pérez. Sounds like the forever 2 is catalog, you have to visit her site. And never step foot into a Forever 21 store. I will walk on the other side.

All right. Put your hands together, the author of one more for the people. She has been publishing her zine, I can't pronounce that. Somnambulist. It's like, I don't know really know.

I barely -- but she has been publishing a zine that I can't pronounce for ten years so clearly she's been having success with that. She is going to read one for us. And she has stuff at her table so stop by and say hi to Martha and put your hands together.

>>> Thanks for sticking around for me. So I'm going to read something new. This is the 25th issue of somnambulist. Low and behold -- maybe because they paid a certain amount of money, I had all these limitations, having flexible, I have a chronic illness, a physical job, I'm a writer. Everything was perfect about this job. Some background. I was working for a private investigation firm that investigated people with worker's comp claims. And our client was the insurance company. As insurance companies go, the way they make money is not paying the claims. They would hire us if they suspected that someone was lying about their injury and they needed the private investigators to -- the claims. There was the claims adjuster and my job was to interview. And I came in pretty naive about the whole insurance city. And as you'll see -- quickly dispersed.

This is the around the middle of the zine.

So next week I was thrown into the job with four or five cases and a lot to learn. The thrill of calling the claimants yourself. You had to keep track of the time that you called them and which number you used. You tried to track down phone numbers and addresses. I had to write down all the pertinent details and there were a lot. Claim numbers, employers and injuries. They wanted to know the details. They told their managers they like to hike. Why is it taking so long to file the claim.

There were other seemingly irrelevant details like single line e-mails

informing the claim -- domestic abuse or DUI on the record. This made me uncomfortable. As if the adjusters wanted me to make judgments about them before I even interviewed them. I wondered what that had to do with whether a claimant was injured on the job. If they had a criminal record, that made them more likely to commit fraud. I don't know if I agree. They would write something like this. This is a -- does not comply with a mandatory compliance order or this claimant is -- work ask her what her BMI is.

-- I started taking extra doses of steroids and started having chronic diarrhea. The most important thing for the diarrhea didn't let up. The most important thing to learn was how to put on an air of respectability and authority. It was true that I had a private investigator's license and I was a proxy for the insurance company but in reality I was a message on someone's voice mail. They didn't know me and I didn't know the name of the insurance company or the third party administrator -- denies or approves claims and I was calling from my personal cell phone. I was a hired snooper and my call to a claimant meant they were now under investigation, a fact -- encouraged me to avoid mentioning if possible. I was instructed to introduce myself by name and I was a representative of the insurance company which is not a lie but not exactly the whole truth.

I learned this on the first phone interview. The claimant was from Washington state and -- at a restaurant. I left a few messages on the voice mail asking him to call me back. He called me in the morning. Who are you he asked. How do I know you're not some random person trying to get my information. You're calling from an Oregon area code, is this your cell phone. He caught me off guard.

I'm a representative of your employer's insurance company I said into the phone. What would my siblings -- in the background. How do I know that. Who do you work for? I felt my stomach turn over. Ten second into my first professional interview and the gig is already up. I walked up to the bedroom and shut the door. I work for a company called marly and marly. I left off the word investigations in the title.

I continued. My only job is to do this interview. I know nothing about your claim, your injury, my function is to take the interview, write the report and send it to the claims adjuster. That was true. I was just a calling machine. There was a pause on the other end of the line. I felt my heart out of my chest. I was a morally bankrupt robot.

I could hear the hesitation in his voice. He just needed more assurance from me. Sometimes people just do what you tell them. But I went on. You don't have to do this interview. You don't have to answer any questions that you're uncomfortable with. If it makes you more comfortable, I can have my boss, Josh call you. The man replied fine, bet let's get this over with. Can we schedule a time to do the interview, it takes an hour. Look we do it now or don't do it. Okay. Let me just get my computer up and pull up your files. Where are you, you don't have an office? I don't have an officer. I'm a part-time employee and have to do these interviews wherever I happen to be.

I had to get the digital recorder now. The man is 49 years old and lives in a small Washington town that I never heard of. He declined to give me his social security number. No hobbies and single and lived alone. An eighth grade education. He was -- at the restaurant where he injured himself and happy is decided by a Washington state governmental body that I never heard of. It's a fact. He was annoyed and impatient with nearly all the questions and kept asking me why I needed to know. I explained that I was following the form and I was asking and he was welcome not to answer. I asked if he used drugs and alcohol and he said he used to but not anymore.

I asked who the supervisor was and how long. What. That question makes no sense. How long has he been your supervisors I asked. I don't know. Since I started working there. This is so stupid. I really hate stupid questions. Okay. I asked him how to describe how he injured himself. I was breaking down boxes and hurt my foot. How did that happen. Well, I was going into the garbage area and breaking down boxes, do you know what that means? Yes. I kicked one of the boxes with my foot and felt something snap. Did anyone witness you're injury? I don't know. Did you tell anyone about the injury? No. It's a kitchen. I work 10, 12 hours a day. Have you ever worked in a restaurant. I have. So you don't tell anyone? No. I asked if he had ever been arrested. That's a matter of public record. That is public record. Where is he currently working. At Sandies and what is that. A convenience store, like a 7-11. How long have you been working there. Rachel was nice enough to give me a job there after I got fired from the restaurant. I was going to have a job at the restaurant for the rest of my life. Here was a man with a criminal record and no education and working at a convenience store. That sucks I said. I'm sorry. Yea. After the interview I called Josh to talk about how it went. I paced back and forth in my sister's backyard. Josh, I wanted to check in with you. This guy was suspicious and didn't want to answer the questions. Some people just want the give you a hard time. You're going to run into that. I thought if I were this guy, he had a hard life, I wouldn't want to talk to me either. I would have been suspicious of my intention and worried if the person on the other end of the line was trying to screw me over like everyone else. I told him he was free not to answer the questions. That's fine. Just don't use the word investigation. Okay I said. I hung up the phone and went into my sister's bathroom.

>>> Martha Grover PI.

Mat Davis is an artist that lives in Chicago. Owns a small press called perfectly acceptable press. Underneath there is -- he is going to get up here and read something and you're going to be wowed and it's going to be like, wow.

Matt Davis.

>>> Hi guys. I'm going to read a zine today. It's a collection of e-mails from when I was a kid. I spent most of fifth through ninth grade -- and friendships were online only. People who lived in other states. Who I never met in person. And this particular, these are all e-mails that I received from this one guy named Thomas. He lived

in San Diego and -- it was one of those relationships where you're kind of best friends but you're kind of best friends so you can be really mean to each other. Because, you know -- he was -- had a bad upbringing. And it's hard for me to -- because I don't come off as a very great person in this. Sorry.

But I -- it's something -- it's like that thing with G mail where you're searching for like party or something and you get this e-mail from like 2,000 sites. Anyway, I thought I would read a bunch of those in front of an audience. So I am going to I think stop and apologize now but I'm also going to say that -- just a lot of paddle, wrestling, spiritual violence. So -- okay.

Here we go. Subject, yo dude. I forget to tell you but before I was on -- talking to you my mom took me to this -- and made me go shopping. I stole two boxes of liver. I took them out of the box so the alarm wouldn't go off. OMG I'm so going to get busted. I went out the door and no alarm went off. 200 feet away from the exit I was walking and this dude sets the alarm off. I'm hyper. I took 16 once and my mom found out. I was so sick I had to make myself throw up. Subject. I'm so drunk. Right now my dad was like you're graduating in a couple of months so you have access to the alcohol tonight. But don't tell mom. Just put it in a cup like you're drinking water. Ha ha. My dad let me get drunk. He is cool. I love you.

I'm sending this e-mail to other people but only you and my best friend get the I love you part. And then -- I think it's like lips sealed but I think it means -- very ... Subject, holy crap. Watched a documentary called dyke ice. It had three parts. The first part is about -- and how all religions are based on some god. This movie opens the mind. It's -- never say it was the government. Here is to lain.

About how the federal reserve is bad and how things are going down the shit hole. It's worth the watch. The last 20 minutes made me shiver. Subject, super-dad was fucking amazing. I laughed my ass off during the movie and -- how many times I laughed out loud. I was laughing during the whole movie. Superbad is really dirty, too.

They showed the trailer for -- it's sort of like the original but this one was good. In the trailer Harold says this is going to be like -- but it's not.

Anyway, I came to realize that California sucks and every hot chick was smoking around the theater which I have no problem with but they use it as a fucking accessory. I went to an Italian restaurant and the people were passing a cigarette around like a joint. A ho bo came up and they passed him a cigarette. I did however smoke a jointed on the way home from the theater in the car. Luckily no cops were around.

Subject, yeah.

EDW, maybe sometimes -- I do -- get recognition. Everything you do you get praised for. OMG, when I do it you say one thing all the time. Sassy. And when you make a nice layout you say I'm the best Weber in the world. Give me a break.

Subject, oh.

I won't lie anymore. I swear. Even if I suck at what I attempt to do I won't lie. Smiley.

Subject, where are you, man.

>>> I'm freaking out. You're not on AIM. Dude. I just -- meet together. Me and my friends were in my car and we were all tripping the fuck out. We saw corn fields and shit which is really weird. Luckily we were parked in the middle of nowhere so no cops. Dude, right when I left to go home my car's muffle said fuck you and it sounded like a muscle car. This muscle car drives up to the left of me and I had to fucking race the thing out. This is when my friends were in the car so they all cheered me on and I won. And to rub it in my face I cut him off. He was laughing because smoke was coming out the windows because the idiot in the back was smoking again.

Subject, I have no idea. I'm bored and sad. I have an idea and talked to my parents. If I get a student loan like on Monday, I can pay the money to my parents and -- use the car whenever I want but the title will be given to me when I graduate so I can use their insurance and not have to pay my own until I get a real job.

So then -- remaining money from the student loan to buy gas to drive where you are. Dude, this could rule so fucking much. Hopefully I can make this happen. Do you know anybody that has weed. We can find a party or find some for free, probably.

That's all. Thank you.

>>> Dave roach did it.

>>> Thank you all for stick around. Give yourself a hand. Next up is H melt who is an artist born in Chicago. Queer and trans-communities. Literary, original plumbing and zine times. Author of survival in the sin city, survival in the second city. Thanks for your Chicago poems and second to none, queer and trans-chicago voices.

>>> Hey, I'm going to read an introduction to second to none Transqueer voices. This is a theme that I -- in 2014, last year. And it's a collection of essays, speeches and interviews with queer and trans artists and writers and activists in Chicago.

Dear reader. There are many reasons why I felt the need to create second to none. After Chicago IRL stopped printing new issues and stopped publishing new content online, I felt there was a lack of a Chicago focused space for queer and trans writing.

I'm often frustrated that there are not more resources and opportunities for queer and trans writers in the city, even within the queer art scene. Chicago is home to many organizations that provide social, medical, and legal services for queer and trans people, there is not enough support for writers and artists which often forces them to move elsewhere.

Our thriving underground culture is often overlooked outside of the city. I know that there are many queer and trans writers creating work in and about Chicago. Over the past year I've come across many different texts online especially essays and interviews that feature a range of voices from Chicago's queer and trans communities.

I've heard people reading works in person that strongly resonated with

me. I wanted to create a more permanent home for the work I was finding by collecting some of these texts together in a print publication.

I specifically curated this collection, based on nonfiction pieces that I encountered. By archiving these formally disparate stories together, I noticed that critical queer nonfiction literary voice emerged that is strongly rooted in Chicago.

Several themes connect these pieces including the need to the talk more openly about race, class, and privilege. The power of community support and of course the experience of living in Chicago itself. Second to none is only a small sampling of Chicago's queer and trans voices. It's not meant to be exhaustive or representative of all queer and trans people in the city. It's meant to inspire other projects and readings and workshops and publications that help establish Chicago has a place where queer and trans writer and publishers can thrive. Chicago IRL, we need to be queer and similar queer publications based out of Chicago that have come before it. I hope to make Chicago's queer and trans history more accessible by recording our history as we live through it.

So there is about 10 people in this zine. Nick, Joseph, Alexis. And then all of them are talking about random topics from being HIV positive to identification and segregation in Chicago. To being in a gang in Chinatown decades ago.

I'm going to read my essay called how queer zine changed my life. It was a lazy summer afternoon when I walked into Quimby. It's a bookstore. It's a great place to find literature. Knickknacks like -- and newly published friction, poetry, politics and more. I pursue the gay smut section first.

Sometimes it's a little too -- and I walk over to my second favorite area in the store, labeled made in Chicago. That's where I found the first issue of Chicago IRL. On the cover the advertisement was a queer Chicago collaboration of culture and classlessness. Seeing the words queer and Chicago next to each other basically convinced me to pick up the white, glossy and sleek looking publication. The price tag said it costs \$20 that seemed steep but I couldn't resist. This is exactly what I was searching for. A space where queer artists in Chicago could come together in print.

I took it home and couldn't stop looking at it. I knew there was potential in the pages but also felt like there were voices and bodies missing. There was a lot of butts and chest hair. Not that there is anything wrong with either of those two things. I enjoyed the comments about relationships and Rebecca Quinn's writing about consent. I wanted more balance. I provided a wider range of experiences from trans and gender people, people on the feminine section and -- these are some of the representations lacking in mainstream queer culture at large.

Chicago IRL became more inclusive with every issue. I took the advice on the back cover and submitted to the next one. Luckily my work was accepted and later -- Chicago IRL which would be the final issue. When I flipped through the pages I didn't know one person. All of the

writers, artist, performers and creative people in the publication were complete strangers to me.

I moved back to Chicago just in time to attend the release party for the last issue. The party took place at the beauty bar where queer people take over a few nights a month for eventers. As I walked up to beauty bar, Joe was standing outside smoking a cigarette.

We recognized each other from the internet and he greeted me with a hug. I gave him a copy of my latest poetry collection at the time. Once in I performed several poems alongside, gay, Stan, Wes, Terry and others. Mark Hern was there. Who wasn't there? After the performances were over many people came up to say hello and introduce themselves and give me a hug, a complement. I knew I had found home. Even though Chicago IRL is no longer in production, the community that surrounded it is still very much alive. Jesus does my hair, Dan took photos, Dave is my parter -- interviewed me. These are the people that keep me alive. These are the people that I write about. Joe helped me understand the importance of developing relationships with other queer artists and the importance of supporting each other. Through Chicago IRL he helped me understand the need to document our performances, our writing, our art, our lovers, our community, and our lives. If we don't document ourselves, who will.

...(applause)...

>>> We're coming up to the last reader. If you don't get to say hi to any readers that you wanted to today they will be here tomorrow and you can have a conversation then.

Talk about staples or whatever.

So rounding out the night. We have Mimi Thi Nguyen. Sorry if I butchered that name. We were glad she was on a panel a couple years ago. At the Friday afternoon event. It's nice to close up with her reading. She writes about war and empire among other things. She will tell you that punk -- she writes slander.

>>> All right. Thanks for having me. I'm superexcited to be here. I'm going to read two different things. The first thing I'm going to read from is the compilation that I finished. The 20 year anniversary -- pander. Started in 1995 by Erica Bailey and it was such an important piece. So I did -- I decided to do a 20 year anniversary.

So I'm going to read from the introduction. In a conversation with OSA about the compilation theme she smartly observed that -- are a significant part of the sometimes difficult and often thankless -- that make our scene possible. Not unlike booking shows. Running a magazine, or securing DIY spaces in inaccessible cities in the name of the quality of life.

In the same way, the contact -- a senior transit, bringing together remotely because we're often at a distant. And intimately. Such that we can save conversations about the things that are meaningful to us in the moment. Run by the blunt Erica Bailey, from 1990 to 2005 with an ethical blueprint, but it's probably safe to say that more than any other -- in the last 20 years, for just that reason everyone has a story to tell about how pander changed their lives.

Pander is crucial to the compilation and what followed after. I began looking for people in 1995 and having conversations about ourselves and race and racism and started -- rock and roll and the catalog of the -- existence at the time. Contributors, contacts. Carry Morgan, pander, writing letters to strangers on the other side.

But if you remember that Erica had the foresight to distribute the first compilation when finished. She ordered more when she ran out. In 1997 I was and still am a terribly inconsistent copier and mailer. So Erica did me a great favor. Whoever ordered the zine or copied their friends and on and on. Everything that followed -- including our beautiful brilliant community of black and brown pre-femme mists queers and weirdoes. It's the same then as now. Erica and this magazine. She was a fucking ally like none other and I'm not sure I thanked her adequately -- the reverberation of the theme can be overwhelming but it's also because and I think this is consistent with that -- that she brought to her endeavorer. She never accepted thanks for having my back.

Take the measure of what -- meant to us individually and collectively. In the course of bringing together the contributions, I heard over and over where I do again. Pander had more intimacies, because the zines were a subset of the collection that Erica curated from the hundreds of submissions she received over the years and there were and are whole other worlds that she set in motion.

At the closing which does nothing to calculate the measure of -- meaning I want to say this. The glad work of the -- for Erica, it's a small gesture of love and appreciation for everything you've done for me and all the -- that brought together so we can use our hands and hearts to make things great.

>>> I had this ambition to finish 3D but that didn't happen. I finished the pander tribute thing. I had this other zine that I'm working on. There is a Buddhist named -- I feel like they would get along really well. So I'm doing a series of -- I'm taking like, I'm -- into a bunch of films. We're going to make this movie and they captured them with brilliant insights.

But I didn't finish that one in time. I'm going to read from the ninth issue of slander which I didn't finish in time like I said. It's a game of thinking about -- the first event happened at a warehouse in Brooklyn. Pieced together salvaged lumbar and set up in the common area before the table and the stove. House number -- bring up a white sheet -- columns and rafters on which we projected slides. A table cloth. Capital letters.

Our -- maybe 60 or 70, traveling into town from New Jersey. Crowding in between the tables. Four rad women of color got into the reading. Before that, in the Q and A, raised your hand and asked me, you're so old. How has it changed.

I don't quite remember how I answered. I laughed I know that and told everyone how old I was. I was 38 at the time. And much more -- than when I gave her that mic.

At 19 when the first compilation was a small -- I wouldn't have believed that a zine reading would be possible or that I would be 20

years later reading from and reflecting upon it still. I'm overwhelmed that a compilation theme circulated like it did. And -- could not have predicted. I wondered what I could say that might capture the dense bright feelings of sadness, anger, wonder among them. Lighting up part of me that belonged to the -- and all it meant.

I found I couldn't capture them yet I settled for a collection of -- partial story about the making and the after math. The original call to contribution, the introduction to the first and second issues. I prepared other pages in case I didn't want to recall the encounters. That first reading at 530, I wasn't sure what my place on -- would be. Because I hadn't read zines in such a long time. I put so much energy into another word in the past decade.

So then I talk about how, I'm going to skip ahead. I talk about how I got a job. For the first time in my life I was in a small town. I was never in a small town. It was easier to quit when I was in a big city.

Then I was punk in a small town and I was really weird and I thought that punk might save my life again. Under these changed circumstances I felt so much more awkward or maybe it's less permissible. That I can be fumbling and stand offish all at once and allowances were made -- my colleagues are refusing to do so at other times. Having spent my formative years as a teenager, it's difficult for me how to be sociable with people that don't share the same.

I made friends but I missed the intense -- the willingness to ask questions about what we might care about or want from ourselves and others in idle conversations. I described how this feels to me before and it's still true. It's sitting in the dark, listening to records and telling intense stories about what saved your lives or fucked it up more.

No coincidence, fall in love. This is what first four felt like. Every night we poured ourselves into the readings and asking how you can survive as a queer in a catholic family. And every day told stories about what it all means and how does it feel.

On the tour I remember -- that were so important to me and I lost touch with during my time in a small college town -- intense awkward friendships built on moments of shared frustration and -- tell it to my heart off loud and off key in a van while driving down the road. I speak in front of audiences all the time, being on tour is something else. It's another me and a part of my live that was distant from me. Because it was such another moment I felt responsible to convey how fucked up it was for just those reasons asked, what changed and what hasn't. I struggled to be personal and talk about the series of events that lead me to where I am now. But to narrate how it felt to be me, I felt responsible for telling a story about the transformation and maybe even -- but even now 20 years later and having told these stories again and again I can't translate it into word -- public with rage. There was also -- sadness. Am I wiser now that I'm older and do I have something else to say about that moment that I couldn't say then? I'm not sure. I'm so far away from that 19 year-old man, I

know this because there is so much. And other times she is still here, awkward and unsure, scowling and smiling all at once. The conditions for the violence that informs the race right compilations -- happened before and since. What has changed is the experience of being a freak or misfit may not be so isolated or isolating. There is a genealogy and history of us and experience of so many others in a warehouse or living room.

>>> I want to say thank yous to Julia and Jonas, Jenna and -- thanks to them for being here.

I want to say thanks to Danny and margo and Celia and H and L and Matt for reading. One more time for them.

...(applause)... You've been organizing since September. That is why we do it. Get everyone out and hanging out and sharing what they do.

I also want to thank all my organizers who -- ...(applause)...

We're going to rock it tomorrow. And that's it. Have a good night.

We'll see you then.

