

**GREATEST HITS: A VISUAL EXPLORATION OF STRAINED  
CREATIVITY**

An Undergraduate Research Scholars Thesis

by

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## **ABSTRACT**

Greatest Hits: A Visual Exploration of Strained Creativity

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Greatest Hits is a graphic novel about a group of 20-somethings sharing a room in the city trying to get by, while simultaneously attempting to create a following for their band. When given an opportunity to expand their popularity by playing their first big show, the band's frontwoman Hayley Adams makes a deal under questionable terms. The story focuses on Hayley as she battles with the pressure of an upcoming performance and her own shortcomings as an artist. The purpose of the creative artifact is to examine a different side of musicians that is not usually represented in media. Media representations about musicians tend to focus on larger-than-life figures and their rise and fall (and sometimes redemption) through a biographical or fantastical lens. These adaptations tend to commodify and objectify the subject they are portraying making the piece of media feel disingenuous to the subject's legacy. While few do have meaningful insight into the subject they are portraying, they still fall under the weight of tired cliches. This graphic novel tries to break the mold by offering a more intimate look into the inner turmoil a person might feel when faced with their own inadequacy, using the process of music creation as a vehicle to tell this story. Although the creative artifact deals with the subject

of music it will also reach out to other creatives who will find solace with Hayley's insecurities and frustrations as an artist.

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### Contributors

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## 1. AESTHETIC MOTIVATION AND RESEARCH QUESTION

An artist's creative process has always fascinated me when it comes to the creation of one's work. Whenever I consume a work of art I enjoy, I try to get a better understanding of the subject's mindset and the steps taken to deliver the final product. I am most interested by the artistic mindset of musicians since their creative process comes off as the most abstract to me. While brainstorming for my creative artifact, I found I wanted to develop a story about the mental toll in creating a work of art, specifically music. I decided on the subject of music based on this initial interest, but also, I felt the portrayal of musicians in the media lacked fresh stories that touched on this aspect. The narrative of tragic stories involving famous musicians and the glorification of their unsustainable lifestyles has been a fixation within popular culture for a long time. Audiences are drawn to stories of larger-than-life figures descending into the depths of their mental illness due to societal pressures and substance abuse. Could it be due to their idealization of the subject or is it the unfamiliarity of that kind of lifestyle to the average viewer?

Based on a research study done in 2015 by West Chester University of Pennsylvania they found that out of a group of 420 participants, "...individuals who pursue creative work for a livelihood or expected to be creative on a regular basis may experience greater stress..." (Ceci 622) So, for my preliminary research, I first looked for graphic novels involving the relationship between a stressful nature of a musician's creative process and its effect on their mental health. I noticed there was a lack of realistic representation of this subject matter in graphic novels, as most of them regarding musicians had plots with a fantastical premise. The few that had realistic themes were biographies. However, rather than making mental illness the focus of the story, they were mainly about the subject's life. I then expanded into films about musicians, which are



broken up into two categories: documentaries and biopics. Documentaries are marketed as insightful observations on the lives of musicians, whereas biopics give a dramatized retelling of key moments in a musician's life. Music documentaries do delve into the psychological aspects of their subject. However, like graphic novels, few make it the central focus of their film. Usually this is reserved for musicians who have had highly publicized bouts with mental illness and substance abuse. *Amy*, *The Devil and Daniel Johnston* and *Kurt Cobain's Montage of Heck* are films that serve as examples. Based on a study conducted in 2016 by the University of Westminster/MusicTank surveying U.K. musicians, they concluded that, "...[from] 2,211 responses, it emerged that 71.1% of respondents identified as having suffered from panic attacks and/or anxiety, and 68.5% from depression" (Gross 5). It was alarming to see a lack of documentaries on mental health decline while working in the music industry considering there are accessible studies available to the public. Music biopics are worse with this by only briefly touching on the psychological side of a subject. Most of them give little time to the mental health issues, instead focusing more on the substance abuse of musicians and not the mental state that led them there. They try to cram as much information about the musician's life that these themes are often left with no direction. Also, if left unchecked, there are notorious instances of omission of information or addition of false information. This is to either make the film more entertaining or to cover up any egregious acts any of the musicians might have committed. Notable examples include *Bohemian Rhapsody*, *Straight Outta Compton*, and *The Dirt* to name a few. While this type of media is commercially successful, these adaptations are disingenuous to the subject and viewer due to the commodification and objectification of these people's lives. The media uses the "mad musician" gimmick to victimize an artist and paint a romantic image of how gifted

musicianship always leads to the ultimate sacrifice (Pavlova 2). Although this is a topic of public discussion, there seems to be a lack of awareness of it in mainstream media.

Based on this preliminary research done, my goal is to offer my own take of chronicling the stress induced by the creative process from the firsthand perspective of my characters. In order to achieve this, I have to solve the problems presented by previous artifacts in the field. For one, the medium I ended up choosing was a graphic novel considering the lack of grounded fictional stories about musicians as well as the presentation of the medium. I felt a graphic novel would be perfect for my story because it has the intimacy of a book, but the aesthetics of a motion picture. I must pay careful attention as to not romanticize the harmful actions my characters perform in the story, like most music biopics do. To accomplish this, I am offering an extensive, personal look into my character's lives without omission of information. Media on musicians tend to give hagiographic accounts of their subjects, making them seem above us, an almost godlike status. I am combating this by humanizing the character of the musician. Although they live an alternative lifestyle compared to the average citizen, they experience similar hardships and anxieties. Granted, my story is fiction, but the internal strife that my characters face stems from the struggle of the creative process. The creative process is a personal, arduous, but rewarding journey and capturing that feeling for those unfamiliar with it would make for an excellent subject. I want readers who are familiar with these feelings to relate, but others who are unfamiliar to understand.

## 2. HISTORICAL CONTEXT, DISCIPLINARY PARADIGMS, AND AESTHETIC STANDARDS

Throughout the development of my creative artifact, I called on various resources in the field to aid in the creation of it. The first thing I needed to understand was the personalities, conflicts, and motivations of each character in my story. Since documentaries act as insightful examinations into an artist's life, I sought out those that aided in my goal. I also dabbled in biopics to see if there were any creative choices made that could be beneficial as well. In terms of writing and design of the graphic novel, I delved into existing artifacts in the field and gathered what I could to adapt into my work.

The documentary *Dig!* acted as a main source of inspiration for this story. It chronicles the burgeoning fame of two bands, The Dandy Warhols and The Brian Jonestown Massacre, over a seven-year period. In the beginning, it is an examination of the love-hate relationship between each bands' respective frontmen Courtney Taylor-Taylor and Anton Newcombe. The relationship they possess shows an appreciation for each other's creativity as musicians, but a resentment of each other's personalities, which was a fascinating thing to watch. As the film progresses, it transforms into this character study of Newcombe, showing the creative genius he could become, but ultimately held back by his self-destructive tendencies. There is a real juxtaposition at play here as The Dandy Warhols continue to gain critical and commercial success, while The Brian Jonestown Massacre are held back by their most intriguing, but harmful asset, Newcombe. This conflict of the band's most colorful asset also being the catalyst for its downfall was the most captivating takeaway from viewing this documentary. Observing it from a psychological standpoint, I felt this could be used as an approach to examining the mental toll of

music creation. A character would continue to perform self-destructive acts which backs them into a corner thus creating this cycle of stress. The love-hate relationship present between these two frontmen is another interesting storyline to explore within my creative artifact. Having this relationship between two band members instead might give the characters a reason to keep pushing forward for the band's sake against their better judgement.

For a glimpse into the studio experience, I watched the documentary *I Am Trying to Break Your Heart: A Film About Wilco*. This documentary focused on the band Wilco and the creation of their most critically and commercially successful album, *Yankee Hotel Foxtrot*. Most of the film revolves around the studio sessions of the album and the hardships they experienced in creating it. While the film eventually focuses on their music label pressuring them about the album being too experimental, the sections I homed in on were the studio sessions. It was insightful to see the interactions they had while creating it, such as the experimentation and the infighting between two main members of the band. I gathered what I could from these interactions to help get a better sense of a band's artistic process when developing material. I would eventually use what I observed to develop the studio scenes within my story. The reasoning for the infighting of the two main band members was based on the dynamics within the band. One was the leader, while the other was a talented musician who opposed him, probably because he felt the band could do more. This dynamic helped to shape some of the conflict in my story, as the two characters who end up in a conflict share similar dynamics as the band members in this documentary.

Although I criticized biopics previously, the film *Love & Mercy* is an exception. The unconventional biopic is about Beach Boys' co-founder Brian Wilson where instead of recounting his entire life, it opts to focus on two specific sections of it. One section revolves

around Wilson's younger years through the completion of the album *Pet Sounds* and his failure with completing the album *Smile* due to his battle with mental illness. The other section follows Wilson during his older years where he is still struggling but is also dealing with an abusive therapist who exploits him. Not only are they bringing awareness to the harmful aspects of music creation, it also shows how it affected his artistic ability to create music. While the film takes some artistic liberties for the sake of the plot, the elements of the film that stood out were the scenes focusing on his mental state. Through visual and audio cues, they highlighted the effects of the stress in creating these ambitious albums. This film forced me to pay attention to how I am depicting the effects of stress in my own story. A lot of what my character experiences within my story mirrors the doubt and frustration that Wilson is feeling in this film. While I do not have the aid of audio, whenever a key scene involving stress is displayed, I made sure to push the how the character feels internally through visual means.

To continue my research, I decided to look at several scripts of graphic novels from authors I am familiar with. This included the works of Brian K. Vaughan, Neil Gaiman, Alan Moore, and Christopher Yost. I was hoping to get some inspiration on structuring and formatting my script. I found that there were no concrete guidelines on how to write for graphic novels. The only thing that was similar between scripts were the organization of pages and panels. In terms of approach to writing, some writers like Brian K. Vaughan are very concise with how they deliver their information while others like Alan Moore, write paragraphs explaining every action down to the minute detail. Some formatted their script to look more like a screenplay while others formatted it like a novella. It is also important to keep in mind that the writer is communicating to an artist to flesh out their ideas, so large portions of the scripts are addressed to the artist. For my script, I decided to make it detailed to remember the visuals I brainstormed

while writing and formatted it like a screenplay to keep it organized. I added in stage notes like transitions and cuts to signify where a page turn or the start of a new page would happen. These elements coming together along with the conventions picked up from reading published scripts helped me to finalize mine.



Figure 2.1: A comparison of styles between *The Adventures of Tintin* (left) and *Scott Pilgrim* (right).

I also looked at printed graphic novels to gather ideas on how to structure the artifact from an artistic standpoint. The main draw for graphic novels is their method of storytelling. This all comes down to how they structure panels and dialogue through clever design choices. *Saga*, *Y: The Last Man* and *The Adventures of Tintin* are all examples of stories that are very dialogue heavy. They still implement the use of the “show don’t tell” method that most other graphic novels utilize, but they have considerably more dialogue bubbles filling the space where background drawings would normally go. Most of the ideas and narrative that the writer wants to get across comes out through these exchanges between characters. The art is a backdrop for the story that is taking place and serves to set the tone. Because of this, dialogue bubble placement and the number of panels to a page is key to keeping the flow of conversation natural. On the

other hand, we have more stylized entries like *Hellboy*, *The Metabarons*, *Black Science* and the *Scott Pilgrim* series. These graphic novels have dialogue that carries the story forward, but heavily relies on the art as a device for storytelling. Some of them have more complex designs than other graphic novels, due to the writer dedicating more time to describing the scene rather than dialogue. These books tend to be more dynamic by having objects break the panel, having sound effects exemplified with giant lettering or designing the panels with irregular shapes rather than the standard rectangle. Figure 2.1 shows this clear difference in styles between graphic novels. For my creative artifact, I wanted to do a hybrid of the two. I aimed to let my character's personalities come out through the dialogue. In these character-building moments, I want the panels to be simple so all you focus on is the conversation and the narrative taking place. When more action packed, intense or more introspective moments occur within the story, I planned to break the panels or change the panel layout to reflect the difference in pace.

Using the information gathered from previous media within my field, I utilized aspects from each to help develop my creative artifact. The films about musicians that I focused on helped in creating the personalities of each character and influenced narrative decisions made within the script. I wanted to make my characters to be as authentic to the subjects in the industry and although my story is fiction, the motivations, and conflicts stem from these experiences. Also, I have read through the graphic novels mentioned before, but revisiting them gave me a new perspective on how they incorporate design into their storytelling. The techniques they used became more apparent to me with my expanded knowledge of the field and by me actively seeking out those elements from each one. Having never tackled a project as expansive as a graphic novel before, these resources aided immensely and allowed me to visualize the final product for the first time since conceiving the idea.

### 3. EXPLANATION OF EXHIBIT

My original goal for this creative artifact was to create a 30 to 40 page black and white graphic novel exploring the idea of stress in creating a work of art when faced with a deadline. As stated previously, my decision for choosing a graphic novel was due to its aesthetics and personal connection with the reader, not only from a literary standpoint, but a visual one too. The crew behind most graphic novels usually consist of either an artist/writer combination of two or a standalone creator who works on everything. The work becomes more personal as a result since the project is not shuffled around and the artist(s)'s creative vision is more transparent. With a book or a film there is a limitation to what you can produce whether it be lack of visual clarity or lack of resources. The artist's only limitations in what they want to create within a graphic novel lies within their technical skill, which can be learned, and their own imagination which is arguably limitless. My process for formulating ideas around a topic and creating a story out of those ideas starts from my own thoughts. I try to imagine the atmosphere of the world I am creating in the story. This involves me brainstorming the style of characters and props, the general color scheme of the world and whether the environment is fictional or more grounded in realism. Once those ideas are laid out, I then try to imagine a specific scenario taking place in this world and relate it back to the topic. When developing the scenario, I think of how it would look visually as if it were filmed, the overall tone of the scene which drives the tone for the rest of the story, rough ideas on narrative choices and motivations based on the purpose of the scene, etc. For how I want to express these ideas, graphic novels are the most accessible medium for me because they occupy this middle ground of being a literary and visual vehicle for telling a story. This medium gives me a chance to write the script and design the visuals the way I originally



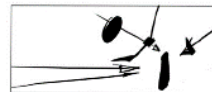
intended. It helps me form this personal connection with my work especially when sharing it with others because I want them to experience my vision unfiltered.



The second set of thumbnails will depict the dynamics of the image in terms of lines, whether physical or perceived (i.e. "connecting the dots"; see page 026). In the case of example 'B' we see that the texture of the rocks and terrain also point to the stranded cowboy, adding to the drama.



Here in example 'C' we get physical lines like the fence, the hill on the left, and the shacows on the wall to the right, all of which draw our eye to the cowboy in the background. Additionally, there are imaginary lines created from connecting dots as seen before, like the one resulting from the butt of the pistol, the bad guy's knuckles and finally the head of the man in trouble.



035

Figure 3.1: A page from *Framed Ink* discussing panel composition.

The artistry of the graphic novel would prove the most challenging portion of this creative artifact, considering this is the first time I have worked on a project of this scale. I sought out various resources from books and around the Internet to give me an advantage in tackling my graphic novel. The book *Framed Ink* was immensely helpful in the development of panels within the graphic novel. It touched on topics like panel composition and framing as seen in Figure 3.1, which help make scenes more appealing. It also discussed techniques like how to

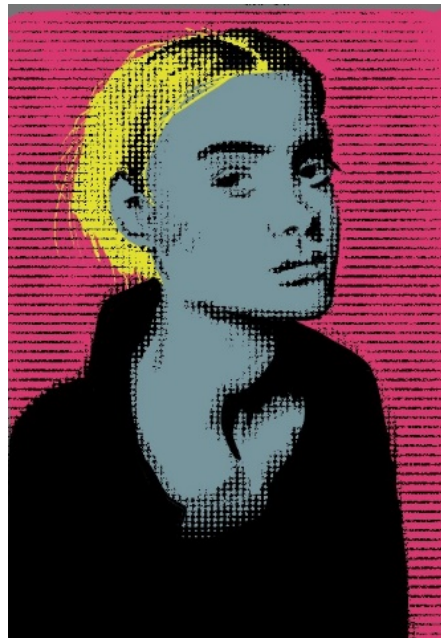
design the panels on the page so they flow in a correct and easy to read manner. I found various art tutorials from YouTube and Gumroad to aid in improving my technical skills like character design and perspective. This included resources from BAM Animation, Foundation Patreon, Proko and Ethan Becker. My faculty advisor also proved to be a great resource as his feedback was beneficial for making my work look the best it could be. Regarding the style of the graphic novel, I wanted semi-realistic looking characters and environments in the style of 70s punk fanzines, more specifically Flipside and Slash (Figure 3.2). I thought the shadows and artifacts created from the poor printing had an interesting visual flair and gave personality to images of local punk bands being displayed at this time. The grungy look of these zines is something I wanted to emulate in my story to fit the tone of the urban environment they live in. I also did a couple of studies emulating the artwork of Bruce Timm, one of the main artists for DC Comics' animation division and Jamie Hewlett, co-creator of the virtual band Gorillaz. From this, I was able to use what I learned from these more established artists to aid in the conceptualization of the characters in my story. I noticed when studying Bruce Timm, he put a large emphasis on shape language when designing his characters. His stockier characters like Superman and Batman had dominant square shapes in the design while his curvier characters like Harley Quinn pushed more of a circular shape design. Also, he heavily abstracts the way shadows are displayed to imply wrinkles in clothing or the way light is hitting a surface. Jamie Hewlett plays around with proportion in the way he designs his characters. Most of them tend to have short torsos and long legs, but it works because of the subtle things he might do to other parts of the character like the head or the clothing. The way he uses expression and the gesture of the body you can tell the personality of one of his characters without ever seeing them talk or move.



Figure 3.2: *Flipside Issue #2 cover (left) and Slash Issue #1 cover (right).*

The development of the graphic novel was a laborious process, but I utilized various resources and programs to accomplish my goal. Incorporating all of the new artistic skills into my creative artifact, I used Adobe Photoshop and a Wacom Cintiq 16' Drawing Tablet to draw the graphic novel. I decided to make the graphic novel digital due to the ease of use in working digitally. Any mistakes or changes made can be easily addressed rather than starting over when working traditionally. Also, I preferred to use Photoshop since it is the program I am most familiar with for digital work. To fit the style I wanted, I searched for brushes through Photoshop's databases and decided on Kyle's Manga Brush Pack. Through some experimentation with the brushes, I noticed that some of them had textures like the punk fanzines I was looking at (Figure 3.3). They also utilized Ben-Day dots and crosshatching which are commonly used textures within comic books. I thought these would be perfect to capture the visuals I was looking for. This all culminated into the creation of my rough layouts which can be found in Appendix C. Writing for my script, I compiled most of it in Microsoft Word. I thought to take advantage of the formatting tools available within Word to emulate other scripts within the field. I was recommended the book, *Save the Cat!: The Last Book on Screenwriting You'll*

*Ever Need* by a film major friend of mine, who told me to specifically look at their section on beat sheets. A beat sheet outlines the key events that will happen within the story, which helped a great deal in the beginning for organizing the story structure. The finished script can be found in Appendix B.



*Figure 3.3: Study with Kyle's Manga Brush Pack done in Photoshop.*

Regarding the finished product, I plan to display the creative artifact in a couple of ways. The version displayed in Appendix A was directly scanned from Photoshop and formatted to show each page. This way all the information on each page is readable and clear to whoever is looking through this document. After the thesis, I have other ideas of how I want to display the final work. I wanted to create a simple website where it can be flipped through like a webcomic. I hope to distribute it through social media channels so other people can see the progress I have made. If possible, I also want to print a physical version to test out whether the story works in a traditional setting.

## 4. REFLECTION

*Greatest Hits* initially started out as a complex story of how mental illness and the pressures of the music industry can make someone spiral out of control and lead them down a path of nihilism. However, as I continued with the project, it proved to be a huge undertaking that would be too big in scope. To accomplish this, I would have needed more time to develop these characters for those serious topics to cause conflict. This realization greatly affected my mood due to being discouraged about not being able to tell the story I originally sought out to do. This shortcoming made me take a step back to refocus what I wanted my project to become. During this time, I reflected on making the decision to focus in the arts as a career and it has been a tough one for me. Not only have I received some pushback from family members, but I put a lot of pressure on myself to succeed. This is a common occurrence among artists due to the uncertainty of creative fields. Since what you create holds personal importance, this breeds an unhealthy connection between what you create and your self-worth. I believe this is where the motivation for this story came from. I opted to tell another story which still deals with the mental aspects of music creation, but it is focused on a character's struggle with their own insecurities. This decision helped me to connect with the project more since I felt it mirrored the process of making this graphic novel. I hope readers can find some catharsis like I did throughout the creation of this creative artifact.

Looking back through the plot of the story, I noticed that the characters and situations had a bit of myself injected into each of them. My character Hayley represents where I am now in my artistic career. She has the drive to succeed regardless of her skill level and what opportunities she must take. Granted, her overzealousness sometimes puts her into difficult situations where

she bites off more than she can chew. Her foil Kiki represents the artist I strive to be and my competition. Hayley and Kiki have similar goals to be recognized for their art, but Hayley feels threatened by her extensive knowledge and mileage as an artist causing resentment towards her. It was this battle between passion and expertise that I found some form of catharsis. While some of Hayley's actions in the story are questionable, I would be lying if I said I did not share some of the same opinions at times. However, the point is to overcome that feeling of inadequacy and collaborate with others to build something better rather than destroy it. This is something that Hayley has yet to learn which ends up complicating her original goal in the first place. I look back at the past nine months I have spent working on this creative artifact and there were moments where I was not sure I made the right decision undertaking a project this big in scale. The stress that Hayley feels when trying to put everything she had into this one show mirrored my own process with creating this graphic novel. However, through the support of friends, mentors and "Kikis," I realized I accomplished much more than I originally anticipated.

This project acted as a beneficial learning experience not only in my artistic career, but from an organizational standpoint as well. The process of writing the script was a fish out of water scenario for me, since I have never written a graphic novel script before this. The process of working on it was interesting because I found myself explaining the environments and situations with a great amount of detail. I was basically having a conversation with myself to make sure I did not forget anything important while I was conceptualizing. When sitting down to draw the rough layouts, which was a daunting task, I had to consider a variety of design choices that I never considered beforehand. I think this helped to challenge me by forcing me out of my comfort zone and attempt certain ideas that I normally would not. This section of the creative process also pushed me to improve on my time management skills. With the sheer number of

panels I had to make for the story, I made sure to time myself and move on if I was working on one for too long. Moving from the roughs to the 2nd pass and eventually the final pages, I greatly improved in my process of iteration, something I struggled with prior to creating this graphic novel. Going through the pages and adding more detail each time really put the project into perspective for me. Towards the end, it was almost like completing a complex jigsaw puzzle and seeing the final pieces fall into place was a humbling feeling.

In the process of making this creative artifact, there was a requirement to present my work publicly at a symposium. I decided to share it at the 2021 Undergraduate Research Scholars (URS) Symposium held within Texas A&M University. As stated many times within this thesis, whatever I work on holds personal importance, especially this project due to it being as broad as it is. Because of this, sharing this creative artifact with others outside of my general group was a hurdle for me. However, I am glad that I was forced to confront this fear of rejection in my work considering the positive reception I received from the URS Symposium. The format was different from other years considering the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, so it was all conducted online. I feel that I lost some of the experience, due to presenting over video rather than a room of people. Nevertheless, I overcame that fear of presenting my work to a public audience and gained confidence regarding the importance of the work to me. The feedback I received mostly focused on the presentation of the information given in terms of displaying visual aids and body language. I plan to take in these suggestions in the future to improve for later symposiums or speaking events in general.

I want to create something like this again because the sense of satisfaction I felt when the story finally came together was gratifying, especially since this is a topic I wanted to tackle for a while. Reflecting on what I would do differently, the biggest change would be to spend more

time formatting the script before attempting the art. After I got my script to a good point, I immediately started drawing the graphic novel on Photoshop and found that I was getting stuck on what I wanted to draw, even though I had descriptions in the script. In hindsight, I feel this added a large amount of time to the development of the panels, since I was making design decisions and deciding which dialogue goes where in an unplanned manner. While working on my graphic novel, I found a blog post of established comic artist, Bryan Lee O' Malley, discussing his workflow with a page from the *Scott Pilgrim* series. What he did was outline a story beat per page and then went in to write the dialogue for each page depending on the situation. Next time, I plan to incorporate this strategy into my writing process, while taking it a step further and figuring out which lines of dialogue will be in which panels. I feel that this would help expedite the amount of time taken when doing the art. An aspect of comic creation I did not consider while drawing is the proportion of objects when doing close-up panels. I found that I had sizing problems with certain objects in relation to other objects in scenes. I plan to do some studies where I practice object placement from various viewpoints. I also want to experiment with doing a graphic novel in color next time. I made the decision early on to do black and white so I can focus on improving my skills in certain areas since adding color creates more design problems that need to be addressed. However, when it is used effectively it adds another layer of depth to the visual aspect of the creative work. Another skill that I am looking to improve in the next time I tackle a project this big, is the speed at which I work. I found that working on this graphic novel, I was a bit of a perfectionist which inhibited how fast I made each panel. There are some positives to this because I feel like I am producing the highest quality work that I could do at this time. However, if I am planning to work on projects in the industry, I need to be able to produce drawings in a quicker manner. While this mostly requires long term



practice, I plan to incorporate more timed sketches into my workflow. I have been advised this helps you make better decisions in what are the most important aspects of making a drawing work. I hope that the next time I revisit this medium I am further developed in my skillset than I am now. This is a constant goal for me as I continue in my artistic career. I want each project to be better than the last and to achieve that I need to take in this feedback as well as put in the time to let myself grow.

Although I did not get as far as I would have liked on my creative artifact, *Greatest Hits* proves to be the most important thing I have worked on to date. This project has propelled me further in my artistic career than I could have ever imagined. I strengthened my preexisting artistic skills while picking up a ton of new ones along the way. The final work that I am displaying is the first chapter of a longer story that I plan to finish during Summer 2021. While I just finished a bulk of work with this project, I am eager to jump back into this medium and tackle more. Following the completion of this thesis, I want to continue to develop more stories and I am considering revisiting this story sometime in the future.

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APPENDIX A: CREATIVE ARTIFACT – FINAL PAGES

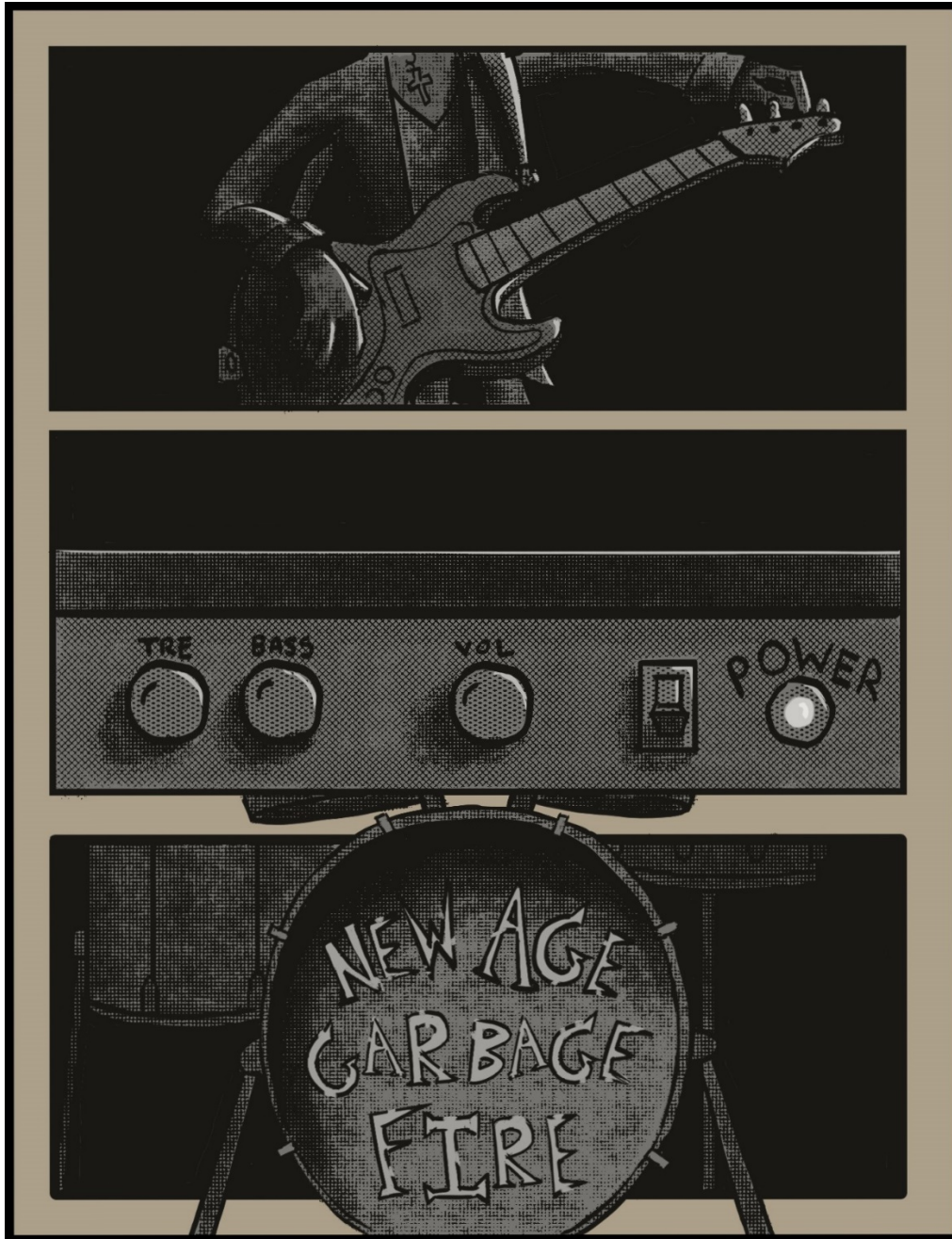


Figure A.1: Page One

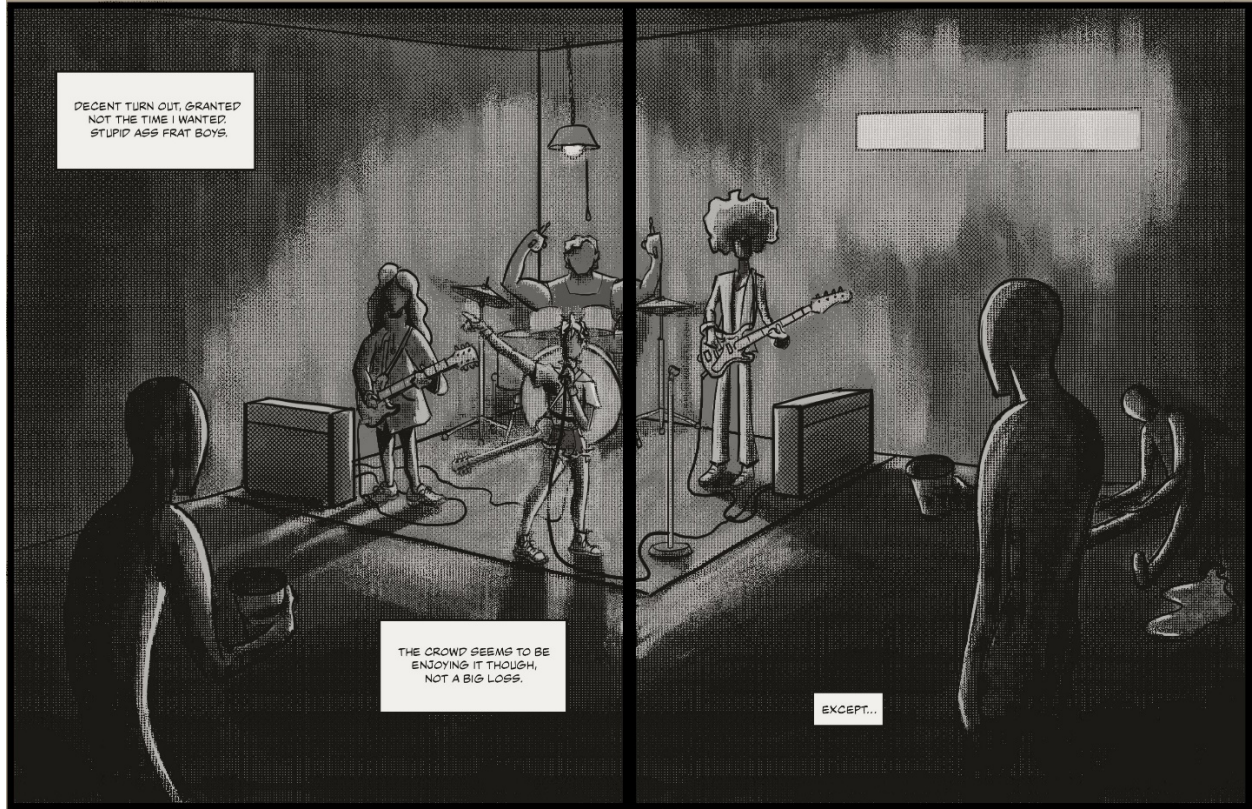


Figure A.2: Pages Two and Three



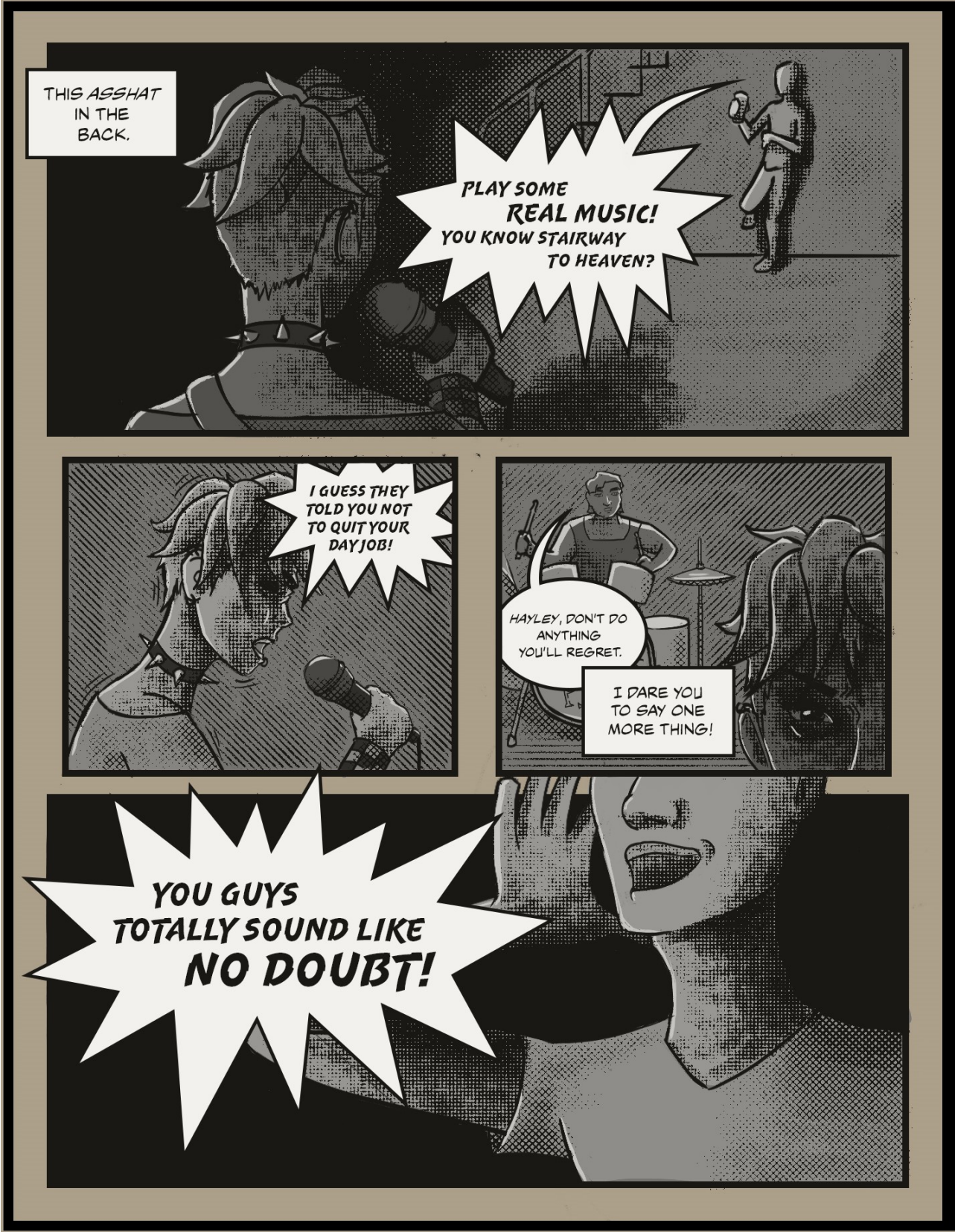


Figure A.3: Page Four





Figure A.4: Page Five





Figure A.5: Page Six



## **APPENDIX B: CREATIVE ARTIFACT – FINAL SCRIPT**

THE FINAL SCRIPT STARTS ON THE FOLLOWING PAGE

GREATEST HITS

A ONE-SHOT WRITTEN BY JORDAN STAWSKI

48 PAGES, BLACK AND WHITE

FINISHED ON 03/21/21

-1-

We open with a flash of instruments and music equipment; a band is about to play a show. Their drum proudly displays their band name, NEW AGE GARBAGE FIRE.

-2 & 3-

It is then revealed that the band is playing in a basement, to an audience of 5 drunk teens for a small house party.

**Hayley:** (thinking) Decent turn out, granted not the time I wanted. Stupid ass frat boys. The crowd seems to be enjoying it though, not a big loss. Except...

-4-

**Hayley:** (thinking) This asshat in the back.

**Heckler:** Hey, can you play Stairway to Heaven!?

**Hayley:** (thinking) I dare you to say one more thing!

**Heckler:** I guess they told you not to quit your day job!

HAYLEY, the group's frontwoman, is singing her heart out and getting visibly more frustrated with the heckler's outbursts. VICTOR, the band's drummer, notices her frustration.

**Victor:** Hayley, don't do anything you'll regret.

**Heckler:** You guys totally sound like The Cranberries!

-5-

With that last comment, Hayley picks up a discarded beer bottle off the floor and chucks it directly into the heckler's face. She runs at lightning speed towards the heckler and proceeds to beat him up. WILL and KIKI, the band's bassist and guitarist, as well as VICTOR watches in horror.

-6-

Cut to a local bar where a disgruntled HAYLEY is sitting in a booth smoking a cigarette. She has a bloody tissue in her nose from the fight earlier. VICTOR is counting the money while KIKI watches with anticipation and WILL is digging into some pizza.

**Kiki:** Was the beer bottle necessary, Hayley?

**Victor:** Yeah, you're lucky he didn't press charges.

**Hayley:** Underage prick had it coming.

**Victor:** Regardless, after that fight we were lucky to come out with \$20 to split between us.

**Hayley:** We're not doing this for the money, it's all about the exposure. We need to get seen sometime soon or else the band will sink.

**Kiki:** Money would be nice too... (Looking at her almost empty wallet)

There's a DING at the front of the restaurant.

-7-

A 20-something year old man approaches the table and places his hand down to get to the band's level. He's pretty trendy looking with a beanie, dark tinted glasses and a pair of headphones around his neck. He looks like your typical skater boy, complete with baggy sweater, jeans and a skateboard by his hip.

**Club Worker:** Hey were you the band that played at Milton Drive tonight? Great set, you guys sounded great! Killer ending too. It's blowing up on the internet. (Raises phone to show video of the fight)

**Hayley:** See, what did I tell you, exposure...

**Club Worker:** Well, let me put some names to the faces, who've we got here?

**Hayley:** So, we've got Vic, he plays the drums and runs a pretty tight ship. Kiki, our smartass multi-instrumentalist. And Will, doesn't say much, but he's one hell of a bass player.

-8-

Hayley suddenly jumps up on the table.

**Hayley:** And then you got me Hayley Adams! The fearless leader and most kickass vocalist who has ever lived.

**Kiki:** Self-proclaimed. (Hayley glares at Kiki)

**Club Worker:** Ah well, can I talk to you alone Hayley?

-9-

HAYLEY has a confused look on her face as she follows this guy towards the entrance of the restaurant.

**Hayley:** Look if you're here to kidnap me, expect to end up like the guy in the video.

**Club Worker:** Not at all! You look like you know what you're doing. So lemme cut the bullshit-- my boss wants some opening

acts at our club to bring in the younger crowd. You guys have that fiery attitude he's looking for. You game?

**Hayley:** What's the catch?

**Club Worker:** No catch. We pay you \$1000 for the night regardless of attendance. My boss is kinda desperate for new faces.

HAYLEY'S face begins to light up at the sound of the deal.

**Hayley:** (thinking) Most we make from house parties is \$100 for the night, if we're lucky.

**Club Worker:** However, heard you guys playing a lot of covers tonight. My boss could just hire a cover band for that, so probably play some of your original stuff.

-10-

Hayley's face changes quickly after hearing that. A bead of sweat drips down her face since she knows the band hasn't progressed that far yet. But the deal sounds too good, and Hayley buckles under the pressure.

**Hayley:** (thinking) Well shit...

**Club Worker:** You do have some of your own stuff, right?

**Hayley:** Oh yeah, of course! Just wait till you hear it! We were still warming up before that asshat interrupted us.

**Club Worker:** So you're in?

Hayley reluctantly looks back at her bandmates in the bar. Another bead of sweat drips down.

**Hayley:** Oh you bet...

**Club Worker:** Great! You're really saving my boss' ass here! (Shakes Hayley's hand) Show's at The Pits. We'll give you guys two weeks to get everything in order. And remember, \$1000. (Takes off on a skateboard)

That's all HAYLEY needs to hear to put her back in a trance. She goofily walks back to her seat in the bar. Her other bandmates look at her weirdly and wait for her to tell them about the conversation.

**Victor:** So...

**Hayley:** So? (Still in her trance)

**Victor:** What did he say?

-11-

**Hayley:** Oh he's booked a gig for us for two weeks from now. (Trance)

**Victor:** You're shitting me!? (Look of surprise)  
**Kiki:** You're joking right? (Look of doubt)  
**Hayley:** And we get paid \$1000. (Trance)  
**Victor & Kiki:** HOLY SHIT!  
**Hayley:** And I agreed we would play original material there.  
(Trance)  
**Victor & Kiki:** YOU WHAT!?! (Hayley snaps out of trance)

-12-

Transition to a living room area which is presumed to be the band's house. One would assume an apartment of 20-somethings to look like crap and you would be correct in that assumption. There are band posters lining the wall, music equipment everywhere, papers on the coffee table and the floors, clothes strewn about the place and about 6 mugs in different places, even though no one drinks coffee. The band is gathered on the couches debating on how to fix the mess Hayley got them into.

**Kiki:** It's official, Hayley screwed us.  
**Victor:** Dammit Hayley, you can't just agree to things without telling us, you really put us in a tough spot.  
**Hayley:** Hey, I thought it was a pretty good deal. Exposure, decent venue, \$1000, what's not to love?  
**Victor:** Did you forget the part where we only have 2 weeks to make songs?  
**Hayley:** Look this is all part of the plan. My philosophy is sometimes you need to be thrown in the deep end. And we're only the opening act, that's like, what... 5 songs? We have four talented, capable people in our band-- we can definitely come up with some new material. It'll be fine.  
**Victor:** Why don't I trust you when you say that?

-13-

**Hayley:** You never have faith in me, Vic.  
**Victor:** I take it with a grain of salt. Whenever you say everything will be fine, it's like an omen.  
**Hayley:** Like when?  
**Kiki:** When you set Will's hair on fire. (Will points at his hair)  
**Victor:** When you got us banned from that chain of music shops.  
**Victor & Kiki:** The *incident* at the Underground.  
**Hayley:** Hey! We don't speak of that, I was totally within my rights! Anyway we could look at every mistake I've made, but I got us here, right? Trust in your fearless leader. First priority is getting a tape out.

-14-

**Kiki:** Oh, sounds great Hayley. And you plan on recording this how? (rolling eyes)

**Victor:** Renting out a studio isn't cheap and we're not exactly in the position to be dishing out that kind of money.

**Hayley:** Isn't Will an overnight janitor at the university that Vic went to? (Will shoots a thumbs up in the background)

**Victor:** Your point?

**Hayley:** You did some classes in a recording studio, I'm sure Will could get us in there and you can work the boards.

**Victor:** That's breaking and entering, Hayley.

**Hayley:** Your point?

**Victor:** There's no way you're convincing me of doing this!

-15-

Transition to the band unloading their instruments at a university parking lot.

**Victor:** Can't believe you talked me into doing this...

**Kiki:** So what about campus security or anything like that?

**Victor:** Oh no one cares about the music department since it's so small. There's no cameras in the building to guard anything. (Hayley makes a mischievous face in the background) And don't even think about it, Hayley.

The band makes their way through the halls, lugging their equipment with them.

-16-

They eventually make it to the recording studio. The equipment is a bit older compared to today's standards, but for a group like this it's perfect. There's a couple of couches and a table behind the recording station. There is also a booth in front of the recording station, big enough for a band to fit in, how convenient!

**Hayley:** Okay we're here, so what now?

**Kiki:** Isn't it your job to figure out the plan, o' fearless leader?

-17-

**Victor:** Well I'm gonna re-familiarize myself with this setup, you guys start stringing together some chords, write some lyrics, just get the juices flowing.

**Hayley:** Yeah, what he said!

WILL plops down on one of the couches and starts working out some bass lines. KIKI is watching over VICTOR'S shoulder as he tries to figure out the equipment. HAYLEY sits on the couch opposite WILL and pulls out sheets of paper. The next few scenes focus on HAYLEY as she plays guitar, writes down some chords, throws the paper away, tries to write lyrics, throws the paper away again, until...

**-18-**

**Hayley:** ARGH! CAN'T THINK OF ANYTHING!

**Victor:** Hayley it's only been like an hour...

**Hayley:** I'm going out for a smoke.

**-19-**

HAYLEY storms out of the studio and her confident facade start to break down as she shows her aggression by punching and kicking the wall.

**Hayley:** (thinking) Dammit Hayley! You looked like a chump back there. Vic handled that way better than you. How can you be the leader of a band if you can't even come up with anything yourself?

Cut to VICTOR and KIKI back in the studio.

**Kiki:** I can't believe she signed us up for a gig we aren't even prepared for!

**Victor:** You know Hayley, overzealous as always, but this is her dream. I can see why she jumped on the opportunity.

**Kiki:** You're always taking up for her, she constantly gets us into shit, you know this.

**Victor:** I'm up for the challenge though, kind of agree with her that we need to take some risks to get noticed.

**Kiki:** (rolls eyes) Risk? More like irrational thinking..

**Victor:** Well put yourself in her shoes for a second. A deal like that, there's not a small part of you that wouldn't jump on it. Granted it was irresponsible not to talk with us first, but hey, you need a little chaos to break up the monotony. What's done is done, no use carrying on about it.

**Kiki:** (scoffs and walks away from Victor)



-20-

Cut to the band packing up their instruments in the university parking lot.

**Victor:** Good first day everyone! Don't get discouraged if we don't have many ideas yet. It'll flow once we get more comfortable with the space.

VICTOR glances at HAYLEY who's a bit down from earlier and he notices that she's acting weird.

**Victor:** And good quick thinking from our fearless leader here, even if it was a bit illegal.

**Hayley:** (Hayley snaps out of her funk) Oh, yeah, like I said, all part of the plan. (Kiki is seen rolling her eyes in the background)

-21-

Cut to HAYLEY lying in bed and staring up at the ceiling. She turns over as we get a close up of her clock beside her. It reads 4:06 AM. She grabs the clock to look at it annoyed as she can't sleep for some reason. Something is definitely on her mind.

**Hayley:** Can't stop thinking about this show. We get our big break and I can't think of anything. Dammit, my thoughts are so foggy. Maybe if I just sleep it off..

She throws a pillow over her face and finally gets some sleep. When she eventually wakes up, the clock reads 4:26 PM.

-22-

HAYLEY makes her way out to the living room. She looks like a wreck, complete with wrinkled shirt and bedhead.

**Kiki:** Well look who decided to wake up.

**Hayley:** Can it, Kiki. You're not my mother.

**Kiki:** Nah, if I was your mother I'd tell you to get a job so you're not waking up at the end of the day. (Hayley grimaces at her)

**Victor:** You two, stop bickering! Hayley, pizza's on the counter. I'm headed back to work now.

**Kiki:** Wait up for me, I'm heading back too. Hayley, make yourself useful and get some band stuff done before we come back. (Hayley flips off Kiki)

**Victor:** Don't be a wiseass Kiki. (Victor and Kiki walking out)

**-23-**

HAYLEY walks up to the apartment window and lights up a cigarette.

**Hayley:** Ugh, my head feels like shit. I want to write right now, but nothing's coming to me. God, I hate this feeling, I can't let Kiki have the satisfaction though. The show must go on, it seems.

Later, HAYLEY has given up and has let the couch absorb her as she watches TV. At this point, VICTOR and KIKI return from work.

**Victor:** Heyo! Any progress made?

**Hayley:** A riff. That's all I got... (Hayley whips a paper over her head to give to Victor, Will also slides his paper across the table)

**Victor:** Well two riffs ain't bad, lets hop over to the recording studio.

**-24-**

Cut to inside the recording studio, HAYLEY is sitting on the couch annoyed, VICTOR and KIKI looking over the riffs and WILL tuning up his bass. KIKI picks up her guitar and starts to play HAYLEY's riff.

**Kiki:** I can't seem to get the flow right here Hayley, what were you going with?

**Hayley:** Well I guess something like this? (Hayley picks up her guitar and plays it)

**Kiki:** Hmm okay, I see what you're going for. What if we change it up a little bit? Up the tempo, add a few more notes in between, make it flow better. (Plays the riff) See, sounding better already.

**-25-**

**Hayley:** Really going in on my riff, huh?

**Kiki:** I'm just giving some critiques, I think what you gave us is a good start.

**Hayley:** Could you not patronize me?

**Kiki:** I'm not, I'm probably going to do the same for Will's part too.

**Hayley:** But you had to start with me though, just to stick it to me.

**Victor:** Hayley! Kiki! Come on, you guys have been sour all day, let's just cool it a bit.

**Hayley:** I'm cool Vic! Just... keep going.

**Kiki:** I'm gonna look at Will's part now. I have some stuff I was workshopping at work today, so we can probably look at those after.

**-26-**

HAYLEY glares at KIKI as she's helping WILL. KIKI for the remainder of the night is overseeing everyone. She's workshopping a bunch of parts with the band, conversing with them about the sound and how to change up certain things to make the song come together. And she's succeeding, the band is actually coming up with a song. You could tell KIKI is devoted to this band in her own way, but more importantly she's very passionate about music in general. She's even trying to pick up new skills by watching VICTOR work the boards. Meanwhile, HAYLEY still struggles to work on songwriting. She's getting into her own head, watching KIKI run the band like a true leader. You see the frustration, insecurity and jealousy start to build up within her as she's essentially watching KIKI take command of her band. After a lengthy session, the band is packing up their stuff to go home.

**Victor:** Well shit, great job today everyone, I'm feeling a bit more confident now! Kudos to Kiki for really stepping it up today!

**-27-**

**Kiki:** Oh... uh thanks. I mean I'm not really doing much, just had a spark of ideas is all.

**Hayley:** Show-off. (under her breath)

**Kiki:** Actually, I was thinking. I have a keyboard at home that we can play around wi-

**Hayley:** Out of the question.

**Kiki:** This could be a big break for us, why not experiment a little?

**Hayley:** No we should just stay the course, people like our sound now, adding another instrument will complicate things.

**Victor:** I kind of agree with Kiki though, this could be a time to-

**Hayley:** Yeah but I'm the leader of the band and I say it's too risky, people could hate it. I'm not jeopardizing the band over a decision like that.

**Kiki:** Just like how you put us in a shitty deal. (Under her breath)

**Hayley:** What was that? (Hayley snaps toward Kiki)

**Kiki:** Nothing, could you at least give it some thought, it's the least you could do.

**Hayley:** Well if you don't like it the door's over there, my band, my rules! I don't see another band around that'll pick you up.

**Kiki:** Fine, we'll do it your way, o' fearless leader. (Kiki storms away)

**Victor:** That was harsh. Hayley what's gotten into you? (whispers to Hayley)

**Hayley:** Everything's fine, let's just get outta here.

-28-

Another passage of time happens where the days are ticking down until the band's big gig. In this sequence, HAYLEY and KIKI have grown cold to each other. They're seen doing little petty things to each other such as, letting the door close on their face, HAYLEY correcting KIKI when giving advice to WILL, directed critiques to each person while in the studio space. But despite this, they're somehow getting material together.

-29-

Cut to their living room where HAYLEY and WILL are chilling on the couch watching TV and KIKI is in the kitchen. VICTOR is walking into the living room space.

**Victor:** Band meeting everyone! (Everyone looks toward Victor)  
Okay so we've been getting a lot done these past few days, but I've noticed we've all gotten a little tense. I suggest we take the night off, grab some drinks and kick back. We'll start recording the stuff we have tomorrow.

**Kiki:** Solid idea.

**Hayley:** Pass, I was actually about to head out.

**Victor:** Hayley, come on you love getting drinks.

HAYLEY exits out the front door.

**Kiki:** God! What's her problem recently, she's been such a downer.

**Victor:** I don't know man, she's been off all week. Was hoping some booze might cheer her up.

**Kiki:** I feel like she's been dragging us down lately.

**Victor:** Now come on, don't say that. She's just in a funk is all.

**Kiki:** Well I mean, look at what we've accomplished this past week. She hasn't been pulling her weight, which is worse cause she's the one that put us in this position as well. (Hayley comes back)

**Victor:** Kiki...

**Kiki:** I'm speaking the truth, hell if she didn't start the band I'd probably take her place.

-30-

**Hayley:** Forgot my lighter...

**Kiki:** Shit...

HAYLEY whips her jacket over her shoulder and proceeds to walk away. VICTOR quickly gets up to grab HAYLEY.

**Victor:** Hayley wait.

**Hayley:** Get your hand off of me or I'll break your fingers. (Victor quickly shoots his hands up in the air)

Cut to HAYLEY angrily walking down a city street, drinking some alcoholic drink and cursing to herself.

**Hayley:** (thinking) God she's such a bitch, I'll show her!

-31-

Cut to HAYLEY busting open the door of the recording studio and taking a seat on the couch. She angrily pulls out pieces of paper and starts to write intensely. She's tearing papers apart and throwing them all over the place. Still livid with anger she finds the box where all their current material is and takes it outside. She lights up a cigarette and throws it in the box. And just like that all of their progress is gone as she walks away from the flaming box.

-32-

The rest of the band eventually shows up to the studio looking for HAYLEY. She is sitting on the couch, nonchalantly smoking a cigarette.

**Victor:** Hayley, come on let's go home. This isn't healthy to keep forcing yourself.

**Kiki:** (off panel) Hey guys, uh where's the box?

**Hayley:** Probably up in smoke by now.

**Victor:** What?

**Kiki:** You're joking right!?

**Hayley:** Nope, should be in a landfill by now along with the rest of your music.

**Kiki:** You bitch! How could you!?

**Victor:** Hey, let's simmer down.

-33-

**Hayley:** Simple, if you want everyone to suck your dick do it somewhere else! Remember this is my band, you can't just come in and act like you own the damn place! You love taking control from me in the studio, going against everything I say, but whenever you have some snide shit to say on the side then you're too chickenshit to step up to me face to face!

**Kiki:** Oh so that's what this is about! Hayley, your band is slipping from your fingers because of you! You make shitty decisions without us! You shoot down my ideas, with none of your own! And you waste all your goddamn time feeling sorry for yourself while we slave away for the *fearless leader!*

-34-

At this moment, HAYLEY tackles KIKI to the ground. She ends up getting a punch in which angers KIKI more and she manages to headbutt HAYLEY's chin. They continue to pull hair and trade blows with each other on the floor.

-35-

VICTOR and WILL manage to separate the two after some time.

**Victor:** Alright, enough you two!

**Kiki:** Look at you, you're scared shitless because you know that I'm better than you. You can't take the shame of being number two. You can play dress up, hide behind *your* band and act like a rockstar all you want, but to me you're nothing but a fucking poser. (Will is pulling her out the door)

HAYLEY tears up after KIKI's words cut into her.

-36-

HAYLEY stares blankly at the wall as her breaths become heavier. She clutches her head as a look of concern shoots over her face. HAYLEY starts to shake, her forehead sweating profusely.

**Victor:** Hayley, what the hell is wrong with you!?

**Hayley:** Oh fuck, what did I just do!?

**Victor:** Hayley?

She is now kneeling on the floor as she grabs her chest, her thoughts are surrounding her and consuming her.

**-37-**

VICTOR reaches out and puts a hand on HAYLEY's shoulder. He lays her down gently against the wall.

**Victor:** Hey, you're alright Hayley, stay with me now. Just breathe in and out.

Close up on HAYLEY's face as we see her get more and more calm with each breath.

**Victor:** Come on let's get some fresh air, do you some good to get out of here.

VICTOR picks her up and leads her out the door.

**-38-**

Cut to the outside of university in front of the back alley entrance.

**Hayley:** GODDAMMIT! (Hayley punches the wall, her knuckles bleed)

**Victor:** Hayley, calm down.

**Hayley:** She's right...

**Victor:** Hayley, listen-

**Hayley:** No Victor, I'm a fuck up! (Hayley through tears) All I've ever wanted to do is music, but look at me. Can't write shit, can't play shit, can't manage shit. How am I supposed to get this band anywhere!?

**Victor:** Your entire musical career isn't defined by this one gig, you think this will be the last?

**Hayley:** It's not just about the gig! I've busted my ass for years trying to get ahead and I'm still falling behind! I've pushed myself to the edge for this and I don't know how much more I can take. I ain't getting any younger and if I fail, I don't know what I'm going to do.

**Victor:** Everyone here has the same worries, hell I've felt that way before I got into this. Come on Hayley, you're tougher than this, I've seen you face worse.

**Hayley:** But I can't compete with Kiki...

**Victor:** It's not a competition though. You guys want the same thing, you want the band to take off. You guys are just too busy having a dick measuring contest to see it. We got your back Hayley, we won't let you fail.

**Hayley:** Thanks, Vic.

**-39-**

WILL and KIKI go back to the apartment. KIKI enters in still fuming, reaching for an ice pack to help nurse the punch she received.

**Kiki:** God she's such a little- (Will puts his hand on Kiki's shoulder) I know, I'll be calm.

The panels keep closing in on KIKI'S face.

**Kiki:** It's just that the gig is so close that I'm freaking out. Maybe Hayley's feeling that pressure too. She acts confident, but man she has a terrible poker face. I guess it didn't help that I shut her out too. Doesn't excuse the fact she burned our work though. (Will nods in agreement) Dunno man, gotta sleep on it, thanks for the advice Will. (Will shoots a thumbs up)

**-40-**

Cut to the next day, the band's only got a week left and no material to work on. HAYLEY is sitting on the living room couch waiting for KIKI to come out. KIKI walks out of her room.

**Hayley:** Hey... uh... sorry, ya know... for blowing up yesterday. I came to the realization that we both want to do right by the band.

**Kiki:** Did Victor feed you that line?

**Hayley:** Well... yeah, nevermind that. I screwed up big time and I probably cost us our first major gig. But I need you Kiki, I can't keep forcing myself to do this alone based on some stupid pride I have to flex. I'm beg-

**Kiki:** Look Hayley, for as insufferable and irrational as you can be, you got us here and that counts for something. You bring a bit of chaos into my life and I can appreciate that. So, what's done is done.



**Hayley:** Oh Vic totally fed you that line.

**Kiki:** Please... don't ruin it. I'm gonna let you in on a secret, I don't know what the hell I'm doing either. I just channel all those insecurities into my music and see what sticks, I suggest you do the same. Now come on, we still got a gig to play.

**-41-**

VICTOR listening in on their conversation busts out of his room with WILL now standing in his doorway.

**Victor:** Yay, you guys made up! (Hayley and Kiki look stunned)

**Hayley:** Please don't tell me you were eavesdropping.

**Victor:** Every word, now back to more pressing issues. It just so happens that because I'm an alumni, I could've rented out the recording studio the whole time! Funny what you can find out with just a little bit of research. (Victor has a gloomy look on his face) Anyway, I took off from work and rented it out for the weekend, so we have unlimited access!

**Hayley:** Sweet!

**Kiki:** Neato!

**Victor:** Okay everyone, let's roll out!

**-42-**

Cut to the recording studio where the band is now working together and getting stuff done. There's a panel of KIKI playing some stuff on the keyboard with HAYLEY watching. A panel of WILL in the studio playing bass with VICTOR on the drums. A panel of the four of them exhausted on the couches. And a couple of panels of a new box of songs being filled up showing the progression of the time passing as they work through the weekend. It keeps filling up until the box is full.

**-43-**

Cut to them packing up their gear, bags under their eyes and hair all messed up.

**Hayley:** Shit guys, we might've done it!

**Kiki:** Don't celebrate yet, the songs are pretty rough still. We gotta bust our asses until the show to clean them up.

**Hayley:** We can celebrate a little though.

**Kiki:** Okay, yeah we can. (Kiki's face lights up)

**Victor:** So I was thinking, our instruments kind of look like hammered shit. Renting some would at least make us look cool if the gig doesn't work out.

**Kiki:** Sounds like a plan. So what should we name this set of songs?

HAYLEY holds up the box with a name already on it. It reads "THE WEEKEND TAPES."

**Hayley:** Already ahead of you!

**Kiki:** That's a bit unoriginal.

**Hayley:** It has a vintage flair to it!

**Kiki:** Okay Hayley..

**-44-**

Fast forward to the night of the gig. We see the entrance of The Pits, it's pretty unassuming from the outside since it's just a staircase leading underground. But go down the steps and you feel that grungy atmosphere. Trash on the floor, the walls graffitied and sticker bombed. There is haze that rolls through this area and it reeks of alcohol and cigarette smoke. Maybe that's the reason people call this place The Pits. There seems to be a decent showing tonight too. Cut to the backstage area where the band has gathered. HAYLEY runs into the CLUB WORKER that booked them.

**Club Worker:** You guys are looking great tonight!

**Hayley:** Thanks, we try.

**Club Worker:** So uh... where's the merch?

**Hayley:** We have none.

**Club Worker:** No CDs or anything?

**Hayley:** Just one, here it is. (Holds up The Weekend Tapes CD)

**Club Worker:** Wow, looks like it was made yesterday.

**Hayley:** It was.

**Club Worker:** Uh... should I be worried?

**Hayley:** Maybe! (Hayley pats him on the shoulder as he looks on in horror)

HAYLEY joins the rest of the band now. All four band members are backstage getting ready to perform for the first time. The venue personnel are seen bringing their equipment to the stage. VICTOR is looking out from behind the stage curtain as a crowd of about 20 to 30 people gather below. When looking back at the band members you can see them coping with their pre-show jitters in their own way. KIKI is biting her nails, WILL is pacing the area and HAYLEY is seen head down, sitting on a couch, smoking a cigarette.

**Victor:** Sure is a lot of people, huh?

**Victor:** Well no use sitting here and moping about it. Let's-

**-45-**

Suddenly, there is a WOOSH behind WILL. He looks in surprise and sees HAYLEY jump halfway across the stage to the base of the microphone.

**Hayley:** WE ARE NEW AGE GARBAGE FIRE AND WE'RE GOING TO BURN DOWN THE HOUSE!

The crowd blankly stares at HAYLEY, the only one on stage. The Club Worker is in the back trying to show his support with minimal success. The rest of the band, confused and panicked, runs out to the stage and grabs their instruments quickly to join her. VICTOR grabs his microphone to provide some damage control.

**Victor:** We're not actually going to, don't worry.

**-46-**

There's the same flash of instruments from the beginning of the story, but reveals a much bigger crowd this time around. They begin to play and the crowd starts to take notice, even the people who pregamed a little too hard. The band is getting into their song and clearly the crowd is too. HAYLEY giving off that energy that only she can do, singing her damn heart out. To her right, WILL has transported to his own world as he focuses all his attention on the bass. KIKI is to her left, shredding on the guitar and killing on the keyboard too. VICTOR is in the back, drumming like an animal and also watching to make sure nothing goes wrong. They play a couple of songs for the crowd. The crowd is hype and going nuts for NEW AGE GARBAGE FIRE. VICTOR, KIKI and WILL all exchange smiles and relish in the moment.

**-47-**

Out of nowhere, HAYLEY, who was definitely feeding off the rowdiness of the crowd smashes her guitar against the amplifiers with brute force. The rest of the band watches in horror as she effectively dumps \$1000 down the toilet. KIKI clutches her keyboard in her arms in an attempt to protect it from HAYLEY'S destruction. WILL watches from afar blankly looking at HAYLEY'S antics. VICTOR tries to jump in to stop her, but has to avoid her violent swings.

**-48-**

HAYLEY stands at the edge of the stage like holding the broken guitar posing like a gladiator after winning a big fight.

**Hayley:** HOW ABOUT THAT FOR SOME CHAOS!

**Victor:** Well there goes our security deposit...

**END**

## APPENDIX C: CREATIVE ARTIFACT – ROUGH LAYOUTS

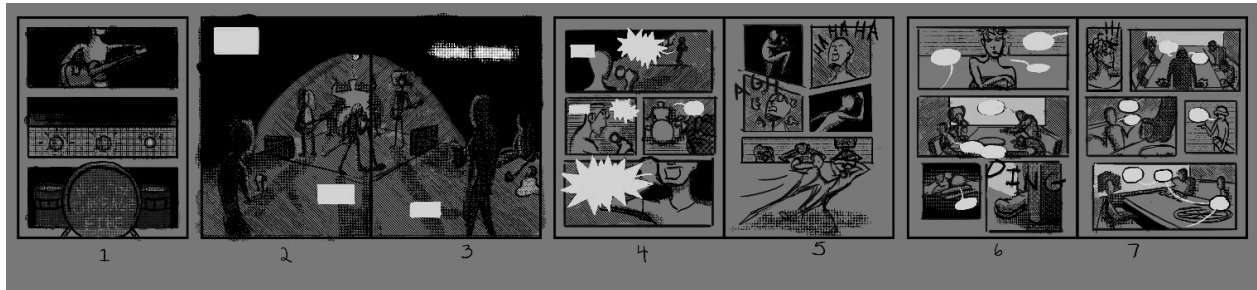


Figure C.2: Pages One through Seven

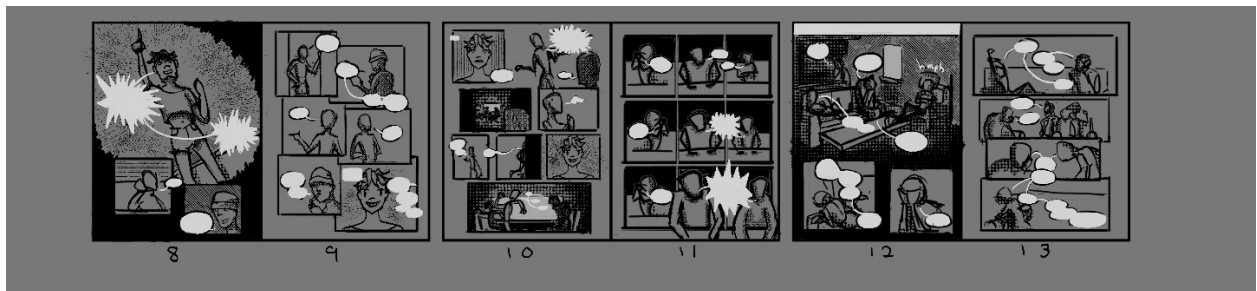


Figure C.2: Pages Eight through Thirteen

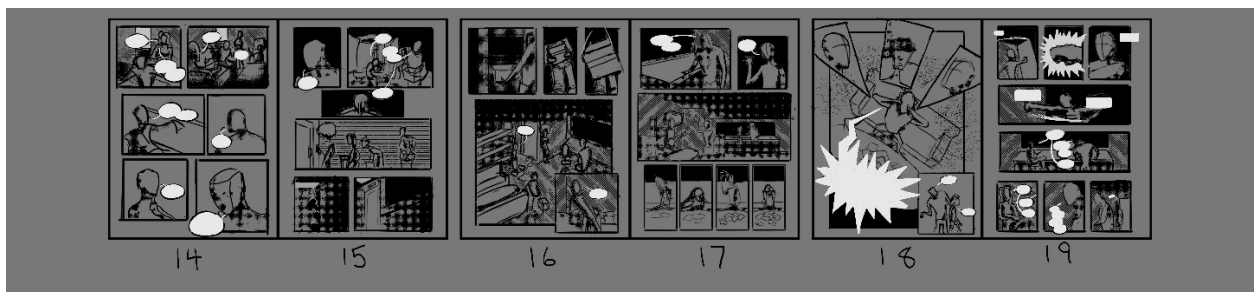


Figure C.3: Pages Fourteen through Nineteen

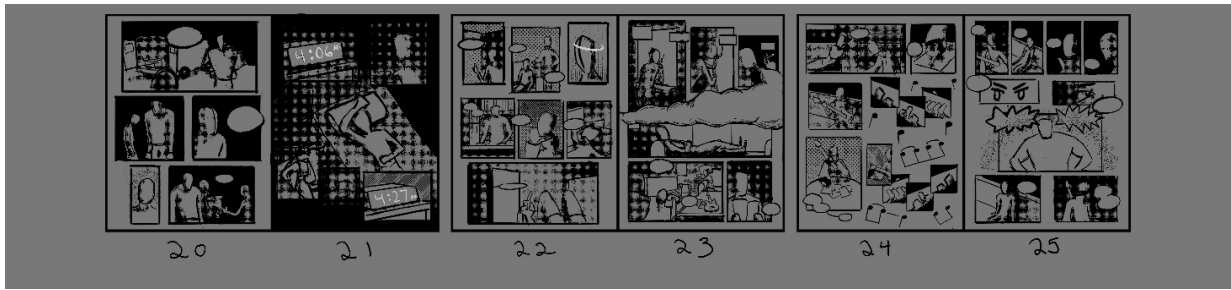


Figure C.4: Pages Twenty through Twenty-Five

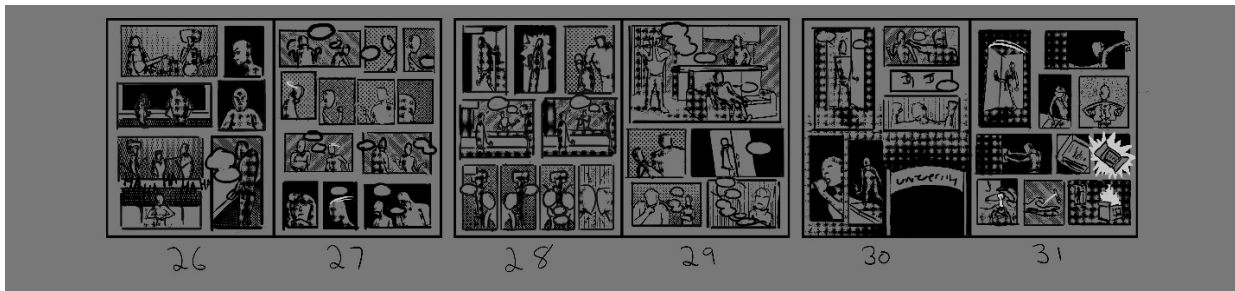


Figure C.5: Pages Twenty-Six through Thirty-One

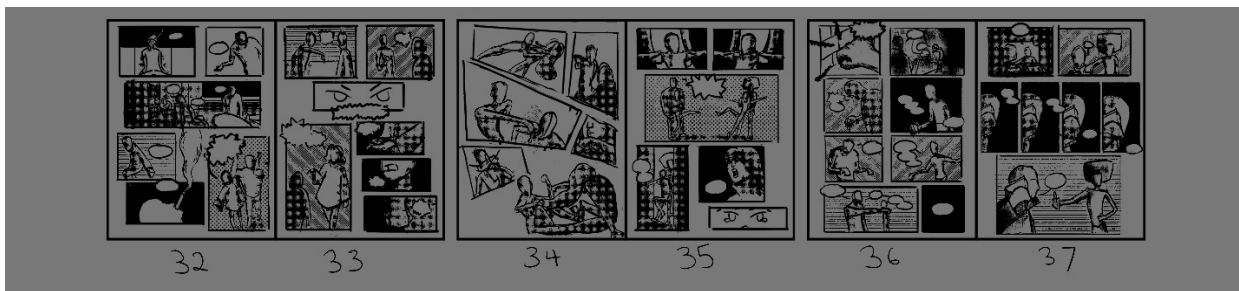


Figure C.6: Pages Thirty-Two through Thirty-Seven

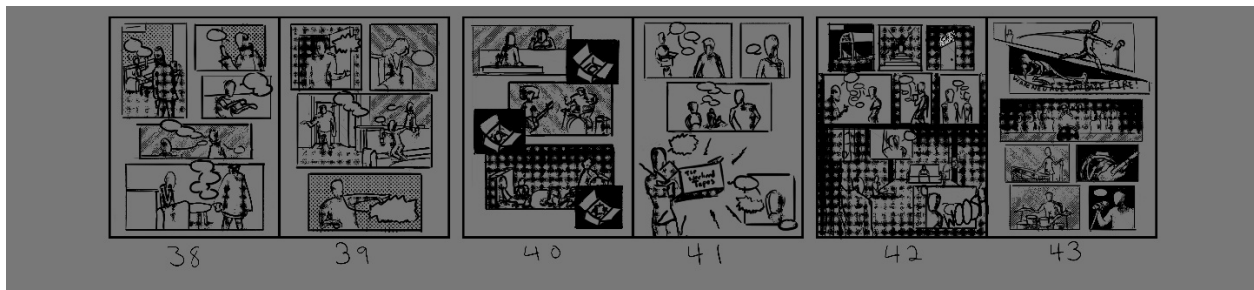


Figure C.7: Pages Thirty-Eight through Forty-Three



Figure C.8: Pages Forty-Four through Forty-Six