

# My Eventual Stalker

by Jeff Somers



Figure 1. Stalking

*Editor's Note: This was originally written for HiJinx at the request of Joanie, it's uber-babe editorix. Unfortunately, I never saw it in print and HiJinx seems to have disappeared, so I'm using it here to fill some space.*

It had only been a \$6 cover, which meant more beer for us. Irving Plaza was basically a gym with a decent sound system, and it was painfully obvious that about 30 people had shown up to hear *Too Much Joy* - which also meant: more beer for us. I forced Ken to buy me a beer by sheer force of personality, and settled back to complain that Rakes Progress was the more popular band only because of the unfairness of the universe. Ken agreed silently, which was his way. The unfairness of the universe was a favorite topic of mine, and I sensed he was getting bored with my drunken tirades concerning it.

There might have only been 30 people, but there was a lot of love in Irving Plaza that night. *Too Much Joy* hadn't had an album out in 3 years and their sudden appearance in New York City, crap capital of the world, was an encouraging sign to the faithful. Maybe the rumors of Tim Quirk's priesthood were not true, after all, and I know I was not alone in hoping that the sensitive Mr. Quirk would take up the ancient Joy tradition of disrobing on stage during some of his more passionate vocals. I mentioned this hope to Ken, who nodded sententiously but, as usual, said nothing.

My Eventual Stalker was moving through the crowd with a girlfriend of hers, selling their Zine, which I will not name for fear of reviving the nightmare. I was favorably disposed towards them both because a) they were *Too Much Joy* fans and b) their skirts were rather short. They approached Ken and I and asked us to buy their Zine for \$1 each and Ken and I, being natural born suckers, smiled and did so. My Eventual Stalker faded away to charm more cash out of unwitting drunken men, because she had not yet become my stalker.

*Too Much Joy* hit the stage in fine form, drinking beer and urging us all to buy the band drinks. I jumped around and manhandled Ken, who stoically watched, bobbing his head a little to the music (which is the most you get out of Ken, usually) while I sweated and hugged him. I was suddenly hit with an urge to have a cigarette, although I don't smoke any more, and as TMJ launched into their sublimely punk-as-fuck version of "Seasons in the Sun" I asked the girls standing in front of us if I could bum a cigarette. I got a menthol from My Eventual Stalker, who gave me a wry smile and a glassy-eyed stare, and a light. Then I leapt onto Ken and he cradled me in his arms, and I started to scream "PLAY TAKE A LOT OF DRUGS!", which they eventually did, although I am unsure how much my influence had to do with it.

Later on, riding the train home with Ken sitting silently next to me, I read their Zine and was impressed. It was funny, disrespectful, and in their article concerning scamming they suggested that the easiest scam in the world was getting young men to give them money simply because young men will always give young girls money, especially if they are wearing rather short skirts. I thought that was great, because Swine respect other Swine when they smell them. I stumbled home and wrote the Editor a drunken letter, where I blessed her for a) reviving my faith in beauty and b) letting me bum a cigarette. I waxed slightly poetic, sealed and stamped an envelope, and passed out at my desk. For some reason when I woke up the next day (my head lying in a deep puddle of drool) I mailed the damned thing, and promptly forgot all about it.

A week later I got a letter back, which proclaimed me

the best thing since sliced bread. She told me I had saved her from a major depression, because her boyfriend had dumped her recently, and that the only problem was she couldn't really remember who I had been, because she'd been pretty stoned that night. It was a touching, sweet letter; it was obvious she was smart, it was obvious my letter had touched her in ways I had never imagined, it was obvious she was 15. It was also obvious she lived not far from me and had given me her phone number. I called Ken and told him the new story, and he grunted at me in disinterest. I thought about her letter for a while, and decided I needed to end this, quickly. I wrote her back telling her that we could never be, partly because I have an innate fear of anyone who makes those kind of emotional connections with people they cannot even clearly remember, and partly because I knew the definition of the word *statutory*.

A few days later, secure that I had handled the situation with aplomb and maturity, I was sitting at home smoking cigarettes and feeling slothful, when she called me. Using my mailing address, she'd called information and gotten my number, under the impression that normal, well adjusted people like being stalked. I suppose some people might get a charge out of someone tracking them down in this urban jungle, but I am patently not one of them. I barely tolerate my friends, I barely want to hear from people I know and care about, the last thing I thought I'd want is a phone call from a total stranger. As I considered it, however, I began to realize heretofore unplumbed depths of weirdness in my own psyche: I realized with a sinking feeling, and then a slow burn of exhilaration, that I'd been stalked! At least I'd been stalked if you define "stalked" as someone acquiring information about you that you did not provide for the expressed purpose of making unwanted personal contact with you. And here is where everything fell apart, because I loved the fact that I had a stalker. I encouraged her to call me often, I was enthusiastic about the dramas and tragedies that would enliven my otherwise grim life over the course of her stalking, and I was already planning to call everyone I knew and brag about being stalked. This, naturally, made her not want to stalk me, since a key ingredient to obsession is the unwillingness of the stalkee to be involved in it. Otherwise, stalking becomes dangerously like "dating". She grew disgusted, and hung up.

AND that was my brief brush with the flame of obsession. Two weeks later I saw My One-time Stalker at a Liz Phair show in midtown I went to with Lauren (who is much more talkative than Ken and smells quite a bit better, too), where my stalker was part of a pack of rabid kids chasing the aforementioned Liz Phair down the street, screaming like a pack of wild hyenas (as opposed to the tame hyenas you see so often) apparently hell bent on murdering her. I laid my head on Lauren's shoulder and felt a stab of regret. I had lost the only person who had ever wanted to stalk me. Lauren clutched me to her bosom and told me there would be others, just think of all the weirdos in the world! This was small comfort, though. I swore to myself then and there, if I were to ever be so lucky as to invite obsession into my life again, I would not screw it up, but nurture it. Next time, I will be ready for My Eventual Stalker.