

THE COMEDY GAZELLE



ERIC EMERSON

ABOUT THE GAZELLE

When I first moved to Chicago, I was immediately struck by the level of talent in the scene. "Fuck, she's good," I thought as I watched Kristen Toomey supercharge herself with a firm slap of the puss.

Why haven't I heard of her before?

It's a question I come back to often, and a major problem here. The city's bursting with household-name-level talent, but unless you're in the midst of it, it's easy to miss.

That's why I'm starting The Comedy Gazelle — to bring outsiders into the heart of Chicago comedy, and to showcase this city's unrivaled talent. To keep everyone up-to-date on the scene, and to do it in a fun way. And not just in a one-off article, but all the time.

Each issue will include an exclusive interview, as well as whatever else I can pull together.

Hope you enjoy.

— Jerry

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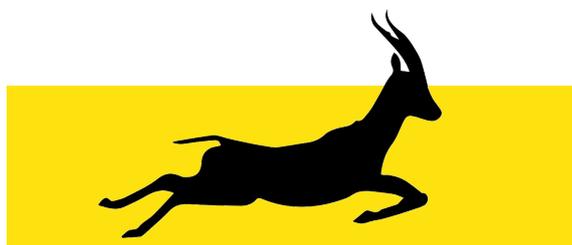
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INTERVIEW: ERIC EMERSON

Eric Emerson (@twobikesstevens) began performing stand up in his college town of Boone, NC, at age 21. Now, at 28, he's headlined, featured, and hosted throughout the country, and I can't wait to see what opportunity he gets gifted next. We talked negativity spirals, crowd work, Bionicles, and more.

One thing that really stands out to me about your comedy is that you keep the positive energy going throughout your set, and if something doesn't land, you don't get flustered or let it bother you. Do you feel like that's always been the case?

It's definitely a muscle that I developed. I think there's a bunch of skills that everyone is trying to master, but people start at different points on the mountain trying to get to the peak. Some people start out great writers, but they're not great presenters. Some people start out great presenters, but they're not great at coming up with material. Some people start out riffing — there's a million different things. It's a muscle that I was okay with that's gotten better and better. Hosting and repetition is big for that. I don't think I'd spas, but I definitely didn't handle it gracefully all the time. Now I don't freak out, the set moves along as it should. But once I'm off stage, I feel that very deeply. And you feel it on stage, but you can't languish in it on stage or you'll spiral. When you get off someone will say nice set and you'll be like, "Yeahhh..."

But that one sentence!

Exactly. It's not for lack of acknowledging it, it's just that I've learned over the years that letting yourself having a negativity spiral on stage is self destructive. It's not productive. If they didn't laugh and you think of something funny to say, that's fine. But just going, "Ohhh you guys hate me." People who didn't hate you will be like, "Oh fuck maybe I do. That's interesting that you pointed that out." I know the set will go better if I do it this way instead of this way.

Say you're hosting and you realize the crowd isn't super into it. What do you try to do in the moment to turn the show around?

As much as I hate to admit it, I go super positive and smiley. I enjoy hosting and I'm very happy for the opportunity, but I do look forward to when the initial burden of getting the show boulder rolling is not on your back. I smile big and I laugh a little bit. And I just



Photo by @creativknights

go, "We're having fun!" Sometimes it works and sometimes it doesn't. I don't know if I'm consciously telling myself this, but I think it comes from a place of, "Comedy is the funnest thing I could be doing." Even bombing the host set is so much better than the day job. Even if this moment isn't fun, this is cosmically fun and I know I'm doing what I want to be doing. I'm good at grinning and bearing it now. You learn to not bomb in an angry pathetic way. I think when you start blaming the crowd, you start lashing out, that makes everyone uncomfortable. Sometimes you can master that, like Bill Burr's Philadelphia incident, but if you go back and listen to it, it's not bombing in the sense that we bomb — that people in a small comedy club with no career do. It's almost like a roast. You see those Comedian Shuts Down Heckler clips — anything that's good, when you listen to it, it's like a roast. Nobody's putting up a clip like, "You fucking suck, get this guy outta here!" and that's the captioned clip they put out there.

I actually love that.

It would be very funny.

An angry comedian and your whole audience just comes to fuck with you

Exactly. That's a secret dream that I have if I was a successful comedian. To do the two shows on a Saturday, then the late show is heckle encouraged and everyone just gets to be mean to each other.

You wanna do that?

Oh dude, you know when you're riding on the train and you lean your head up against the window like Eminem and you're like, "Someday I'll get to do whatever I want in this goddamn business." But anyway, I go super smiley. Even if you have to shut down people or tell people to be quiet, it's still at its heart comedic. You're still doing something that's fun. It's not, "You guys suck. I hope you're ready for a bad show. Coming up next." You still have your clown smile on or whatever.

So you do a lot of crowd work. Are you analyzing the crowd and paying attention to what's going on so you can use that as material? Or do you jump in and go blind?

I'm a pacer, so I pace around a lot. If I'm in a place where I can look at who's on before me or look at the crowd before the show starts and come up with a fun thing, that's gravy. But I try not to need it. The last couple months I've been trying to do a better job of trusting that I'm funny, I have material that is solid that I trust, and I'm confident with the crowd work stuff. I generally just pace around and try not to overthink. That's the big takeaway. If I can see something and put it in the pocket, great. But I try to get very empty headed before I go up. I always feel bad when my girlfriend wants to come to a show. She came to a show where I was the second to last person up and 50 minutes of the show I'm not in the room with her. When she tries to talk to me I'm not responsive.

Are you just nervous?

I feel like it used to be, but over the years it's become the you're-about-to-go-on-a-roller-coaster feeling. It's not fear. It's like, "Oh, something big is about to happen." The real deep internal fight or flight reptile is bubbling up. Like, I'm not walking out. This is happening. I always equate it to when the red light comes on when they push the paratroopers out of the plane. The plane isn't taking me back down so I have to not fall to my death right now. If it's a longer set then I'll look over a set list, but for the standard 5-15 minute sets on a weekday, it's like just try and make peace with your god and accept that you're about to go on stage.

When you're doing crowd work and have smaller crowds, does that make your life harder?

No, no. I don't know. It's fun, but sometimes it'll take me a little bit longer because I have to piece puzzle pieces together a little bit more. I like it when the jokes kind of flow together and it's easier to do if there's crowd work for me. But worst case scenario I'm like, "Well that reminds me of another thing that vaguely relates to this first topic." Sometimes the small crowds are fun because a lot of the crowds in Chicago are first time show goers.

They don't know any of the tricks or anything.

Yeah, the nice thing with a small crowd is that you can get intimate with them and they can get to know you as a person. So if there's a big crowd everyone will laugh because - this is all theory I have no research backing this up, you need to put a big disclaimer on this that says Eric is making everything up as he goes along - but a big crowd you can get everyone rolling because nobody's really paying attention to who's laughing or whose thinking what. A small crowd you can kind of get everyone to know each other and then they're all on the same page.

The crowd getting to know each other. Can you talk more about that?

I feel like it's a dynamic that happens especially probably when it's a lot of people's first times. It's not as big of a factor at a world famous comedian's show cause they've already agreed, "We like Bill Burr, we like Chappelle," or whatever. My big theory with Chicago comedy has been that nobody in the crowds here has really - they watch stuff online so they have an audio cue telling them when the laughter comes, but now they're deciding for the first time what to laugh at. Like, "Oh shoot, it's on me now to decide if I think this is funny. So it becomes a little bit more of

a group thing because it's a lot of people putting together like, "Oh I can laugh at that."

You think they take cues from the people around them?

I think most of the cues come from the performer, but it's not a one way street. I was talking to a buddy at The Comedy Bar, Colin, the sound guy, about this and I feel like the relationship is very student-teacher. The main point is the performer. They have final say if they're doing it right. But you've been in a class where no one respects the teacher. It doesn't matter how smart the teacher is or how well prepared they are. If the class as a group isn't willing to be taught or doesn't buy into what the teacher is saying, then you get rowdy and paper airplanes start flying.

Do you feel like a teacher when you're on stage?

I don't know, the feeling when I'm on stage is so ethereal. It's hard to describe. I've never been up there and been like, "You know, I'm a real professor right now." But I think the audience wants to feel like you know what you're doing and that you're comfortable. All the aspects of comedy are incredibly important, but I think in the live shows, especially because so much comedy is consumed online now, that people forget. It's a different dynamic than when you consume comedy from a special or clips or an album or whatever.

Is there anything you're trying to improve on comedy wise?

I'm running into the middle section wall, which is something I noticed when I got to Chicago. People had been doing it for five years, I had been in Chicago for one year, then I'm like, "Well, they're doing the same jokes every time I see them." Then you get to five years or six years where I'm at now, and you're like, "Oh yes, never mind. That is a huge part of it." When you're on showcases all the time you do good material. You get out of the open mic time warp a little bit.

And you stick with what works cause you never want to go back.

Yeah, exactly. And it's so easy to backslide. But it's also easy to just stay at that middle level and just do your 10 that works for years and years and add on tags here and there. So I'm trying to find a healthy middle ground between not lashing myself, but also not passing up opportunities. I try to do mics when I don't have shows, at least a few nights a week. So I'm trying my best to make sure I'm not stagnating and to make sure I'm always checking in.



Photo by @selfoto

I liked what you said earlier, the metaphor of everyone starting at a different place on the mountain. Can you talk more about where you felt you started?

I started in a college town with no comedy at all. So you're doing longer sets, which is where I think the crowd work thing comes from. I had four minutes of very bad jokes, and not only are you new, but there's no one better to guide you. So you hit your 3-4 minutes of bad jokes and you start going, "What's up with the art on the walls? That guy's got a gay hat! Whatever, whatever." I think that's where that came from initially. I think I started much more on the side of developing your comedic personality and I didn't have a lot of guidance in terms of joke structure, laughs per minute, stuff like that. It was very much feeling your way around in the dark with the other ten people who joined the club. We'd write together and do feedback stuff and hit the 2-5 open mics you could do a week.

You worked on your personality, crowd work, longer sets — I think that's all still very apparent now.

It's weird. And then when you move to Chicago everyone here starts on a different side of the mountain, and it's a good side to start on. When I moved here it was very much, "Shut up and learn how to write." Like three years.

Every set is three or four minutes. For two years no shows, just open mics. Not a lot of time to get your pops from building up a rapport with the other six comics at the mic. So it was a great crash course. People will ask, "How do I get good at the crowd work stuff?" Or people will say, "I'm trying to get good at crowd work. I'm just gonna do crowd work for my five minutes at the open mic." Someone told me they talked to a touring comic and they said, "Don't worry about that till you're doing longer sets." Don't worry about it until you have to fill the time. I just had to fill the time early, cause I was getting 15 minute sets when I was six months in. Then I did a year in Raleigh before I came to Chicago and just bombed every time. Cause you go up for the three minute open mic spot and you're like, "I have this eight minute rambly kind of half coherent thing about how I felt unloved as a child." It's just nonsense. I didn't have the skills to whittle that down to comedy.

I don't know if you remember us talking about this, but it's another metaphor that you have — you've got good metaphors.

That's that philosophy minor finally coming into play.

We were at North Bar and you were talking about Bionicles, and how when you're trying to build yourself up as a comedian, you're almost taking different parts of other comedians and assembling this "Super Bionicle." I'm curious to know who you're composed of. What does the Eric Emerson Bionicle look like?

My favorite compliment that I ever got in stand up was that I didn't sound like anybody. I always felt honored because I would always get in my head that I would sound like people. But anyway: Shane Gillis, Louis, Norm, Patrice O'Neal. Used to be Bill Burr a lot. Big Jay Oakerson. Those would be people I deep dived into. That might be the Bionicle. But part of what I meant with the metaphor is that you also want to make sure not to adopt the weakness. There's hero worship, but that can kind of blind people. I think that's what Chicago's good for. Like you have this pantheon of the snow Bionicle, the fire, water, earth or whatever and you can look at these people who are doing these things really well and you can learn from it, but at the same time you can also be like, "Oh shit, the fire Bionicle got blackout drunk and missed an entire weekend of shows. Maybe just take the fire sword and leave the other stuff." Then you look at the water Bionicle like, "Hey, they're great but they have raging mental health issues that they refuse to address. Alright, maybe I get the mask from the water one but not the gears or whatever." So

it's a real case study in a positive way, where you're around talent but we're not necessarily treading in the footsteps of gods. You know what I mean?



Right, you can kind of see the mistakes that people are making and learn that way too.

Yeah, and you can watch people overcome the mistakes and get better. Literally every month I'm like, "Oh shit, finally I'm the final version of myself! I finally figured it out! Here come the accolades!" Then every month you're like, "Oh shit, I was black out drunk guy. I was mental health guy." You start taking the Bionicle parts off yourself and putting the other ones on.

That's my question for you. If you were a Bionicle what parts should we discard of you?

That's fantastic. Really anything up until early 2022 is a lot of useless stuff. I'd say my general sin in comedy is the malaise of like — I don't like sending the emails to get booked. I don't like investing a ton of time into social media. I don't like the networking and the hang and, "You should go buy so and so a bouquet of flowers cause they book such and such."

You don't suck enough dick that's the problem.

Look at that shitty work interview answer: "Oh my biggest weakness in comedy is that I'm too cool to give a shit about anything." Thank you for

catching me on that cause that might be another one. But if you were to discard stuff from me it would be don't wait for stuff to happen. When you're doing 10 minutes all the time I felt very uncomfortable putting myself out for 20 minute spots. And I wish I had done it earlier because maybe I would've had it sooner or whatever. So push yourself and don't count on accolades or running a show or one thing going well. And also learn from your mistakes quickly. I think I fought change that I should've accepted sooner.

How so?

To make an easy example, yelling at the audience. I don't know if this is something I ever did, but if a joke doesn't go well, you want to be the guy who tears the audience down. That's how you see yourself in your head and you refuse to not see yourself as that. So everytime a joke bombs you're like, "This is my thing. I'm the Comedian Slams Heckler guy," despite the fact that it's self sabotage. Making those mistakes is part of it. You have to make mistakes your whole comedy career to learn from. But I think the biggest thing is self awareness and I think I realized how important self awareness was before I was willing to onboard the self awareness program myself. Self awareness is like number one. That's how you're gonna make the crowd let you get away with dirty jokes early. That's how you're gonna let the crowd know you're in control, is being fully aware of how you're being perceived and all that stuff. People will tell you how they see you and you'll be like, "No, I'm actually this. I'm actually Crowd Work Guy, I'm Prolific Joke Writer Guy, I'm Louis, I'm Burr, I'm Patrice."

Are you though?

Exactly. You want to onboard the positive lessons. You wanna be like Patrice, you wanna be like Louis. But you can't force people to see you as you think you're seen.

You said you were trying to be something you weren't. What were you trying to be that you couldn't accept?

It's tough to go back and retroactively put a finger on it. I think it's generally that you're trying to be great before you're good. I think I was generally bombing at open mics. You're out late, pretty much until 1am, you're not working a real job, you don't have a girlfriend, you have nothing tethering you to the world except your burgeoning open mic career, and you're just fueled by Louis' new special, or you just listened to Elephant in the Room and you've never heard anybody crush harder than that. And you want people to recognize you as that, so you take every complement to the extreme. You take every reaction to the extreme. I don't even want to discourage it because that's kind of how you learn and denote what you want to be in the future, but it's really important to remember as you're growing you're not going straight from open mic to Kevin Hart or Chappelle.

Do you feel like you got better when you accepted that you're not great at this?

Yeah, although I will say I think your body kind of accepts it before you mentally accept it. When you're bad but you're acting like you're great? That's nuts. It's less nuts to be good and act like you're great, if that makes sense. And when you're good, part of being good is that you recognize that you're good. So you're not acting as great. It's such a natural evolution that I think everyone goes through. But I think what happened for me specifically was that I decided that every Thursday I was going to do the mic at the old Comedy Bar. Thursday was a day you could do 12 bar mics if you wanted to and I was like, "I like how it feels to be in this comedy club." I'd show up three hours early and I really beat my head against that one wall. It gave some structure to my week, it gave me a baseline level to read how jokes were doing. I was getting feedback from people who were better than me, instead of peers. That's where I started to recognize the importance of who you are. Cause when you act like you're better than you are in front of somebody who's been doing it long enough to read that, that embarrassment will stick around.

Are there any Chicago comics you feel like you've learned a lot from? Going back to your metaphor, who's part of your Chicago Bionicle?

Yeah, directly I would say Asmus is a great example of how if a joke doesn't land you don't let it spiral your set. Watching him present stuff confidently. His comments on his jokes have been good to watch. He firmly believes in the product he's presenting. Even if we do comedy differently, I think that was a good takeaway. Watching Kristen Toomey and Dale McPeck perform is always a treat. Dale is kind of the embodiment of that unbridled confidence or whatever you wanna say. Toomey is very Louis-ish in my mind and makes me want to write about topics I'm passionate about. She approaches big topics kind of in a way that Louis does, where she makes it very quick and easy to laugh at something that's big. I've learned a lot talking to Sohrab [Forouzesh]. He's good at comedy, I don't mean to put down his comedy, but he's also great at the business side of things and being able to make things profitable. And then all the North Carolina comics I'd credit deeply with the self-actualization stuff.

So about the Chicago scene itself. If you had to change anything about it, what would you want to change?

I like the hustle of the Chicago scene and the pride in it to an extent, but I think it could be really served well by taking a deep breath and just admitting that it's awesome that this is the best second-best place to be doing stand up. Instead of constantly pushing for it to be the top of the mountain where we're like, "The industry is coming here!" It's just Chicago Med, PD, and Fire. It's okay.

It's that self awareness.

Exactly. I would pressure for some self awareness. It would be so cool if Chicago became like a farm, where people get good enough here to be competitive in New York or LA, then within five years, if you're on the road, you take your buddy from Chicago as your feature. And you give him a credit and then he can move to New York or LA, where in five years he can take his buddy on the road. "I featured for so and so." I think that's a good way to be supportive. And this is my other thesis statement about the scene: Chicago is just small enough that everyone interacts with everyone, but it's too big for everyone to be buddy, buddy. So you end up in this weird networky middle ground. Everyone's gonna see

you, but also people think they're gonna get something from you. It just has a little bit of that Enron feeling where you're just shaking hands and making business deals. It's also a scene with enough new people that you get those schemes. The schemes are going always. It's a little high school. It's almost to that collegiate New York, LA level. That's something I loved listening to Shane Gillis talk about. Once he started making headliner money he was like, "It's weird how not angry I am about stuff. I'm on shows with people who I know don't like me and it doesn't bother me. I have my career." I think Chicago is a bunch of people who feel like they're about to make it. Everyone wants to be on the varsity team.

Yeah, like everyone's on JV or you're the bench player trying to get that one at bat.

Yeah, and the way you can imagine the JV guy who thinks he should be on varsity. Being like, "Thomas isn't very good at football. He's not very funny." It's the same kind of thing. That's been my biggest COVID realization, just the deep exhale. Learning how to do the cold water plunge of life. "It's okay. I can't do that show and that's okay. I'll be fine. They're allowed to not like my style and I'm allowed to keep doing comedy." Just finding some sort of peace with all that ego stuff. I like talking shit. It's so much fun and it alleviates the stress. And I don't think it ever goes away. I think being a comic is being that kind of person, cause if you're not talking shit about somebody, you're talking shit about the president, or politics or Uber Pools or whatever. It's all some version of making fun of something.



If you like talking shit, who do you think is the most overrated comic in Chicago?

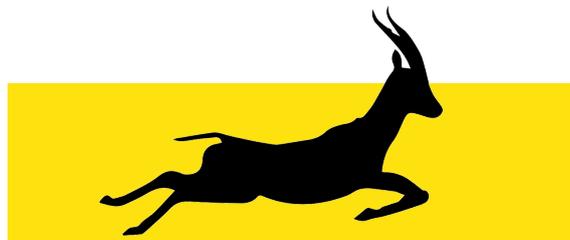
You're recording right now, dude. Have you done this for everybody? You know, if you did that for every comic and recorded it you'd get booked on everything. See that's a great scheme.

I gotta start blackmailing my way into gigs. What am I doing?

Exactly. It's not the least honorable thing you can do. It's very tactical. And you'll know when a comic has made it when they say, "I don't care, release it." If we do this interview again in seven years and everything's gone right? Name drop, name drop, name drop!



Photo by @nckhlmbly



BONUS: Eric Emerson's Top 10 Chicago Comics

1. DALE MCPEEK

2. KRISTEN TOOMEY

3. THE NC 3

(MARK MCPARTLAND, NIK CARTWRIGHT, KENYON ADAMCIK)

4. SUSU CREW

(MO GOOD, MIKE ROBINSON, BLAKE BURKHART, MICHAEL MEYERS)

5. EVAN HULL

6. DJ RYBSKI

7. KEN HAMLETT

8. TUCKER BROOKSHIRE

9. GEOFF ASMUS

10. SOHRAB FOROUZESH

SHOW SPOTLIGHT: THE REGULARS

This month's spotlight is on The Regulars (@theregularschicago), a cant-miss Lincoln Lodge showcase run by comedian Craig Cabrera (@craigcabreracomedy).

If I'm someone looking for something to do on a Friday night, why should I come to The Regulars?

What I tell every person that gets in my Ubers is that The Regulars is gonna be the best show they've ever seen. But that's because it's the energy that happens when you have real friends working on something together. I'm lucky enough that I'm surrounded by people who really want to help me make this thing better. When you have options for hosts, like Carinda Larson, you're not gonna fail on having super high energy and lots of fun. I think it's the family vibe. We want you to come back and we're trying to build something here. We want to build The Regulars' family. I know that most people aren't going to see comedy more than once a month or season, so I like that we're monthly. It allows us to focus on the quality of everything, and that's the most important thing. Because if you're just putting out a bunch of shit, then you're just making your brand look bad. We've all seen poorly handled shows and I don't want to be one of those guys.

Can you talk more about the family vibe you're trying to cultivate?

I think about the first comedy shows I ever went to watch. I think the first stand up show I saw I went to the Schaumburg Improv to see Bryan Callen, and I had so much anxiety because I was worrying about how I was gonna enjoy this event and I didn't really understand what was gonna happen. So I always think about what the audience members are feeling going into the show and I want to alleviate that right away. I don't want people to be thinking about anything that they just had going on in their world before that. I want them to know this is their home now and we're here to have fun and have some laughs.

What are some of your goals for the show?

It was very frustrating for me that Chicago doesn't have a spotlight on it in a way that New York or LA does. And even at the higher level of stand up, comics just don't really give Chicago the time of day.



I just wanted to try to create something that is all about putting a spotlight on the people that essentially become The Regulars. It's gonna be really dialed in. It's eventually gonna be like a seasonal cast of comics that you can expect to see at this location, and we're expanding to other cities. We're already in the works on doing that right now. It's almost like you can expect this group to tour around. I found that the Lincoln Lodge had all of the energy, all of the commitment to helping out comics that you would want to see to cultivate a new energy to cultivate something like The Comedy Store.

On this upcoming show, you have one of my personal favorites, Ray Holleb, and have had some others in the past that are also really, really strong but might not be getting all the opportunities in the world. Is that something that's important to you?

I've always enjoyed hanging out on the sidelines of any shows I could find in the

past. When I had a ton of free time I was watching everything and I definitely noticed what you were just saying. Yeah, these kinds of comics aren't getting all the opportunities, and so I do want to make a point on this show that they have a home now. When you look at a place like The Comedy Store or The Comedy Cellar, their regulars there are constantly growing and getting better because they know they're always going to get this stage time. If I can make my own infrastructure to help people get that gym to work in, I'm gonna do that. That's what it's about. It's gonna be more people for now, but we're gonna get back to tightening that up to where eventually it's gonna be 12-15 people that are on this rotating roster. That's definitely where it's going.

It sounds like you have a big vision for it. That's awesome.

This show's my baby. I'm so happy to be at the Lincoln Lodge because I think it's the most important place in Chicago comedy right now. It attracts a very enthusiastic, supportive crowd. It's very healthy there. But if something ever happened where we're not at the Lodge anymore, it's gonna keep going. This is something that I'm going to be cultivating for as long as I'm working on stuff here. I'm putting all my energy into this.

Interested in supporting The Regulars?

Upcoming shows: Friday, Jan 28 | Friday Feb 25. 9:30-11:00 PM.

Tickets (\$10): [eventbrite.com/e/the-regulars-tickets-169736872555](https://www.eventbrite.com/e/the-regulars-tickets-169736872555)

Location: The Lincoln Lodge | 2040 North Milwaukee Avenue | Chicago, IL 60647



FIVE WAYS TO TELL IF YOUR WIFE IS ACTUALLY JUST A CACTUS

by Luke Ipsum (@lukeipsum)

1. When you two smooch, her sharp needles mutilate your lips

If every time you go into the office on Monday you feel like you're answering the same, "Oh my god Luke, what the hell happened to you? Your face is absolutely mutilated. No seriously what the fuck Luke. Are you okay? Oh no Luke, don't use the water cooler. Oh please Luke. Come on Luke. You're getting your blood everywhere Luke. Jesus Christ Luke," question again, your partner may not be what you think she is.

2. She loves absorbing water through her shallow root system in preparation for arid droughts

Sure, sometimes we all like to absorb minuscule amounts of water through our stems in preparation for long harsh dry conditions, but if that's all she wants to do — maybe she doesn't have the anatomical structure to digest food.

3. She'd rather undergo photosynthesis on the window sill than help out with chores around the house

If your wife is *absolutely obsessed* with gently leaning towards the light and combining energy from the sun with carbon dioxide and her stored water to create glucose and oxygen and doesn't care to help dust the mantle, be suspicious fellas!

4. Her wedding dress was a ceramic pot and her bridesmaids were a Haworthia and gardener named Geoff

Did the priest say something like, "I know this is Vegas, but Luke honestly I don't know if I can legally do this. Oh no, don't use the water cooler Luke. Oh please Luke. Come on Luke. You're getting your blood everywhere Luke. Jesus Christ Luke." Check your marriage certificate and if it says "**INVALID**" in big red letters anywhere, this just might be the clue you're looking for.

5. She's cheating on you with a tumbleweed

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Luke Ipsum is a freelance playwright based in Grand Rapids, Michigan and graduated from NYU Tisch school of the arts in 1998 with a 3.2 GPA. He has been nominated for 14 Tony awards and loves his beautiful daughters Cac and Ti and his wife Carnegiea Gigantea-Ipsum. When he's not sharpening his craft he, his wife, and his two daughters occasionally enjoy sharing a glass of water between the four of them.

ACRYLIC NAIL INDUSTRY TAKES HIT AFTER WOMEN CONVINCED BOYFRIENDS TO LET THEM FINGER THEIR BUTTHOLES

by Brigid Broderick (@brigid_broderick)

"I was reluctant at first," said Dave Ward of Salt Lake City, "Even though I wanted my prostate stimulated I thought that her sparkly, pointy nails might, well, hurt." After talking about it with his girlfriend, Sheila Starker, the couple decided that she could totally blast his asshole with her finger, under one condition: she had to get a regular manicure instead of her usual acrylic claws.

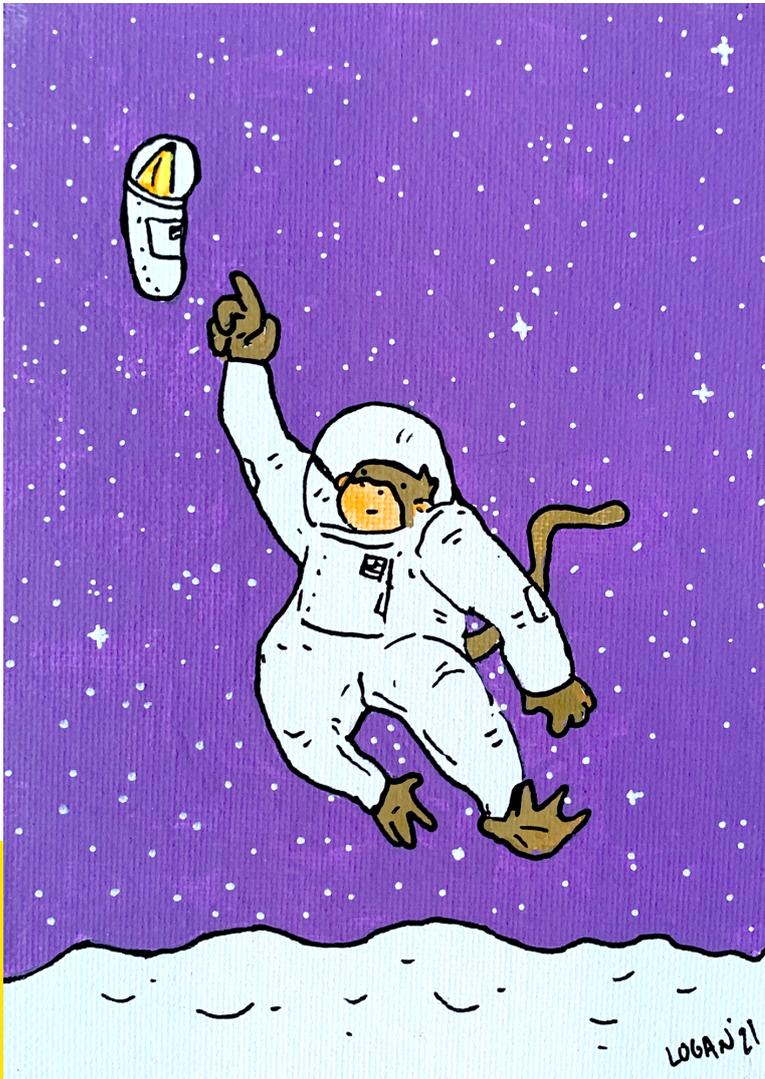
"It's a small sacrifice that I'm willing to make," Starker added, "To be honest, I don't think I would want an acrylic nail in my ass either. It only makes sense." The spike in assplay has gutted the acrylic nail industry, with women who used to wear colorful, rock-hard, pointy acrylic nails now opting for regular manicures. Deborah Gardner, owner of Glamour Nailz in Cincinnati, Ohio told us her acrylic nail sales are down 60% and continue to plummet. "I keep telling my clients that I could file them round or make them shorter but they will have nothing to do with it! All they want is to safely finger their boyfriends' buttholes. Where is that going to leave me and my business?" asked Gardner.

Caroline Bristol of Peoria, IL expressed her own readiness to give up her claws. "My nails used to look like Cardi B's nails. I could barely put my contacts in my eyeballs, let alone finger my boyfriend's asshole. But now I'm saving money by not having acrylics and he is calling me mommy in bed. It's a win win win," stated Bristol.

A national poll revealed that acrylic nail sales continue to decline and acrylic supplies sales are down 56% since October. Whether or not the industry will recover is uncertain at this time. "It's a tough time for everybody. I just hope anal play is a passing phase." concluded Gardner.

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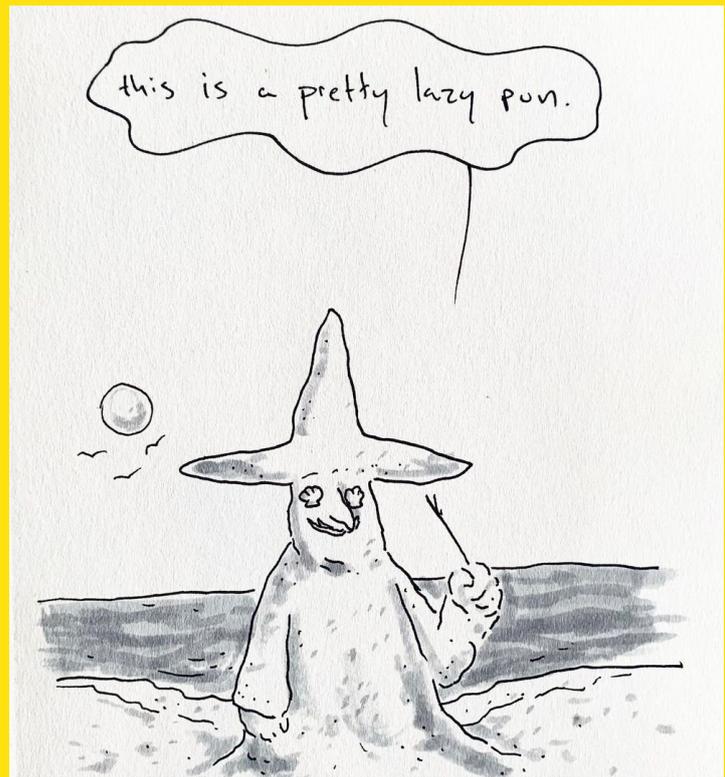
MY NAME IS LOGAN LUKACS (@LOGANS_SKETCHBOOK), I'M FROM DAYTON, OHIO, BUT I'VE BEEN IN CHICAGO FOR THE PAST FIVE YEARS. I DO MOST ILLUSTRATIONS WITH PEN, INK, AND MARKERS, BUT ALSO PAINT HERE AND THERE. MOST OF MY WORK IS JUST SINGLE PANEL GAGS, SELF PORTRAITS, AND A LOT OF ANIMALS. I HAVE TWO COLLECTIONS OF CARTOONS UP IN MY WEBSITE FOR FREE WHERE I ALSO HAVE A COMMISSION FORM LOGANJAMESLUKACS.COM.



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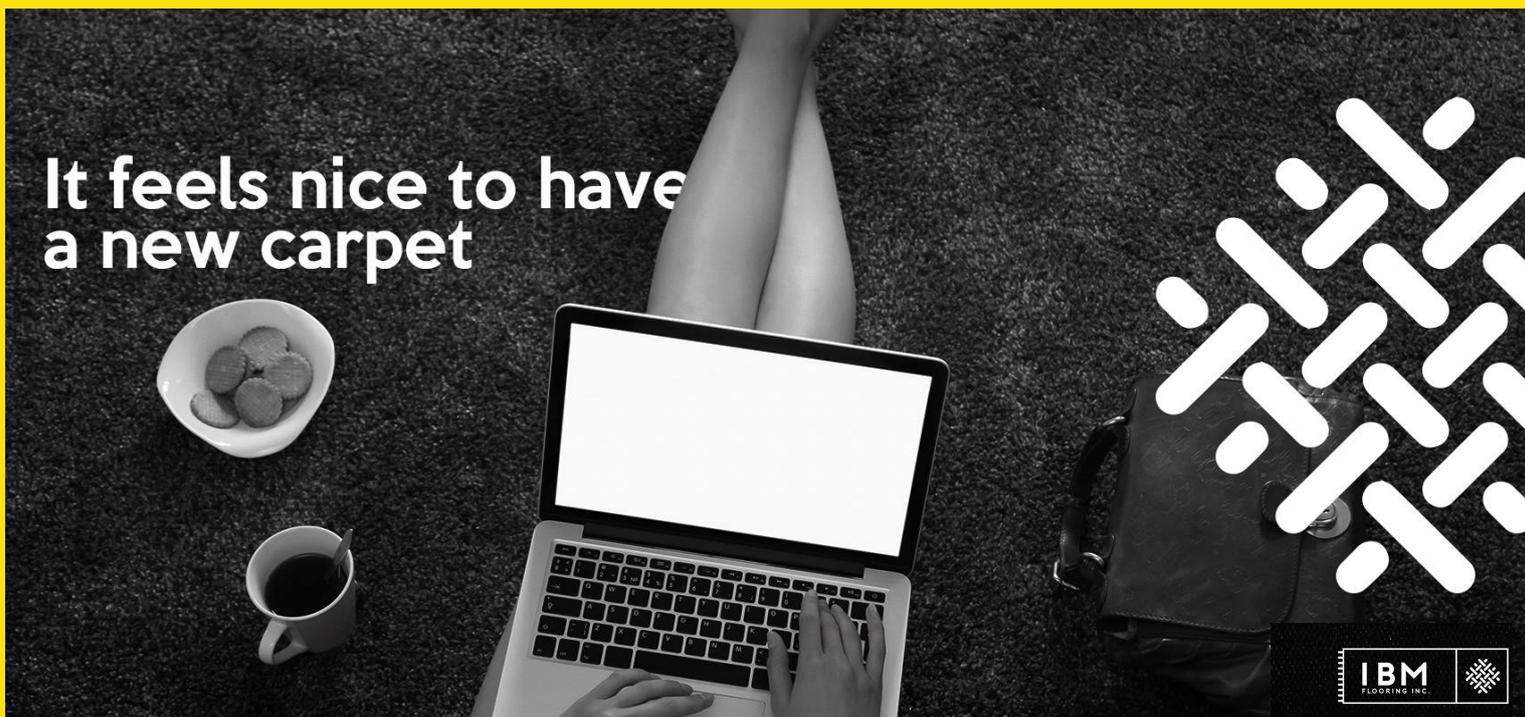


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