

JOHN HICKLENTON'S ZOOM MEETING

CAST OF CHARACTERS



ME (UNDERGROUND COMIX VERSION (EARLY IVAN BRUNETTI DODGY REMIX EDITION))



ALSO ME (MARK BEYER PARANOID SURREALIST VERSION)



JOHN HICKLENTON

THIS STRIP IS PART OF AN ONGOING PROJECT USING AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL DRAWING TO EXPRESS, CONCEPTUALISE AND COPE WITH MY EXPERIENCE OF LIVING WITH MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS. THE FIRST INSTALMENT WAS PRODUCED DURING A POSTDOCTORAL RESIDENCY IN UAL'S ARCHIVES AND SPECIAL COLLECTIONS CENTRE AT LCC. GUIDED BY THE RESIDENCY'S REQUIREMENT TO RESPOND TO WORK HELD IN THE ARCHIVES, AND MY EXISTING INTEREST IN STYLISTIC VENTRILOQUISM, I PRODUCED TWO ANECDOTAL STORIES THAT ADOPTED GRAPHIC LANGUAGES INSPIRED BY MARK BEYER AND IVAN BRUNETTI. PERHAPS PARADOXICALLY, DRAWING "IN DRAG" AS ANOTHER CARTOONIST PROVIDED FREEDOM TO SPEAK WITHOUT RESTRAINT ABOUT SOME OF THE MOST CHALLENGING ASPECTS OF MY ILLNESS.

IN MORE RECENT WORK I'VE BEGUN TO ADDRESS MORE DIRECTLY MY UNDERSTANDING OF MY STILL RELATIVELY NEW STATUS AS A "DISABLED" INDIVIDUAL, AND HAVE INCORPORATED ASPECTS OF MY ARCHIVAL RESEARCH THAT WERE NOT REFLECTED IN THE EARLIER COMIC: THE EXPERIENCES AND REFLECTIONS OF MUSICIAN LINDSAY COOPER AND CARTOONIST JOHN HICKLENTON, BOTH OF WHOM SUFFERED FROM MS.

IF THERE IS AN ARGUMENT HERE, IT IS THAT TRAUMA IS ALWAYS EXPERIENCED IN RELATION TO OUR SOCIAL WORLD. MY COMING-TO-TERMS WITH ILLNESS – A PROCESS THAT, IN THE CASE OF PROGRESSIVE DISEASE, CAN NEVER BE COMPLETED – IS REFRAMED BY MY RESPONSE TO OUR CURRENT STATE OF GLOBAL ILL-HEATH AND TO THE EXPERIENCES OF TWO INDIVIDUALS WHO PASSED AWAY LONG BEFORE I BEGAN THIS WORK. TO ASK WHETHER HICKLENTON'S HORRIFIC IMAGERY HERE SERVES AS A METAPHOR FOR PERSONAL PAIN OR PERVERSIVE PANDEMIC IS TO MISS THE POINT: WE ALL EXPERIENCE BOTH SIMULTANEOUSLY.





