

All Jokes Aside . . .

GAUTAM BULUSU



WRITER'S COMMENT: I wrote this piece in Dr. Karma Waltonen's UWP104F class. The assignment was a case study in which we explored a theme in health science by telling a story through an interview. I was approached by my friend Sam (name changed for privacy) to give his story, which was an opportunity for both of us to explore a topic that is not very prevalent in today's dialogue on genital health. I started writing this as any normal essay, but I became frustrated with my inability to capture the emotions and experience of Sam. Luckily, Dr. Karma gave the class the opportunity to write this piece in a graphic format, which worked to bridge my love for drawing with Sam's story. The comic explores consequences of a lack of sexual and genital health dialogue in some families; additionally, it dives into testicular torsion as a serious issue for men who might not know what it is. I hope this comic is an enjoyable read and provides insight to whoever picks it up.

INSTRUCTOR'S COMMENT: Having taught courses on graphic novels, I know that Davis has many aspiring artists, not all of whom major in art. Thus, in several of my classes, I offer students the chance to compose their nonfiction essays in graphic novel form. Many students have begun this project, only to give up—it's hard, and it takes much longer than writing a traditional essay. I warned Gautam about that when he took my UWP 104F (Writing in the Health Professions) class last summer. Gautam chose to write his lay case study in graphic format. It was challenging—he had to choose which ideas should be

presented in pictures and which in words. He had to figure out how to convey the scientific information that the case study needed. In other words, he had to balance subject and story at the same time he created a piece of art. What he created will be a wonderful example to my future students—and a very hard act to follow.

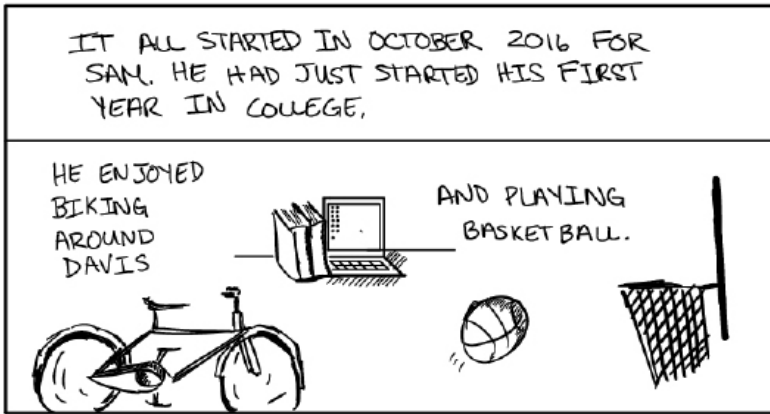
—Karma Waltonen, University Writing Program

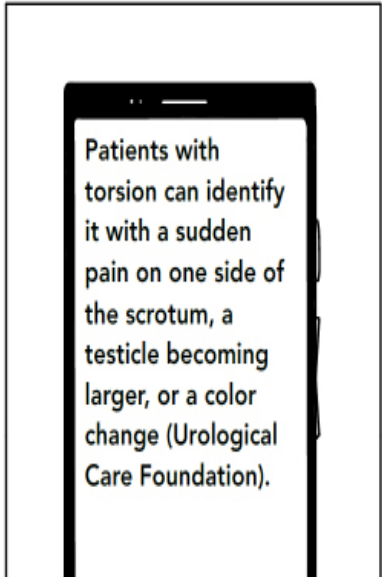
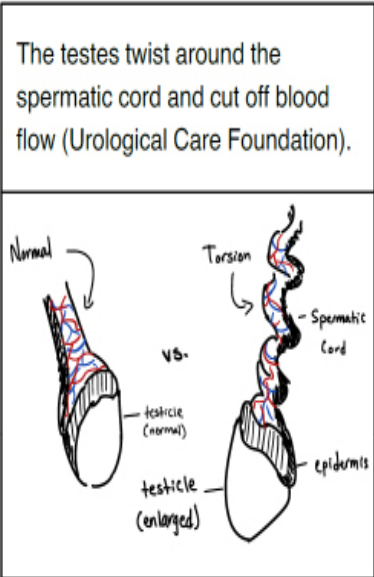
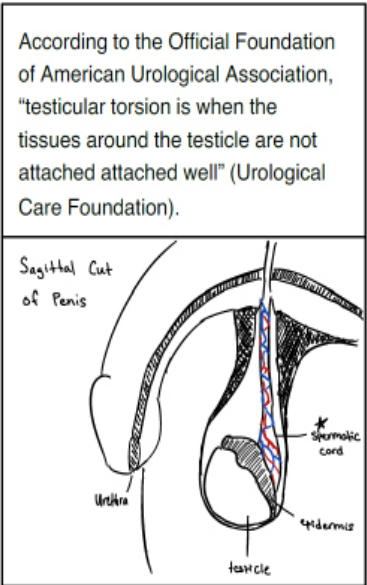
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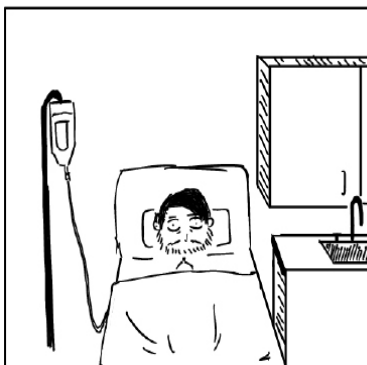



SOMETIMES THOUGH,
I WONDER,
AM I EVEN
A GUY?

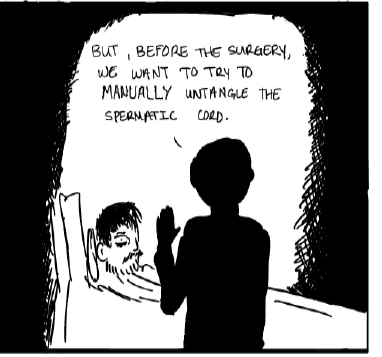
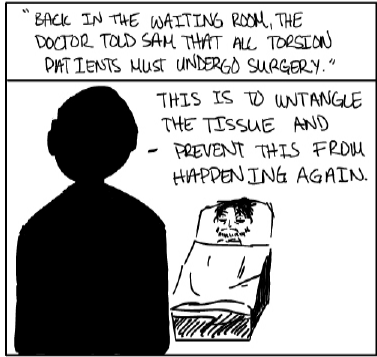
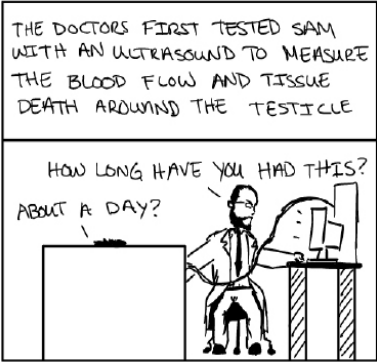


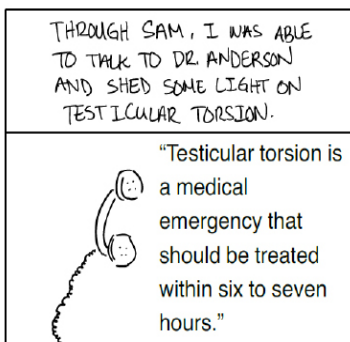
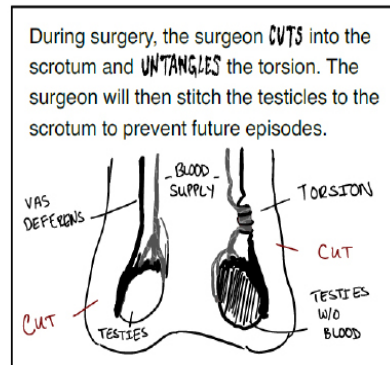
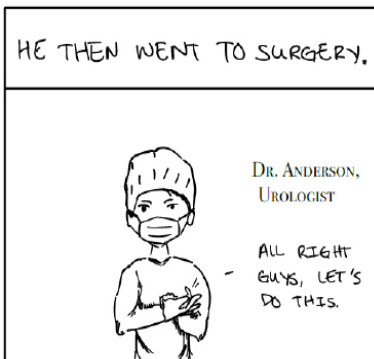


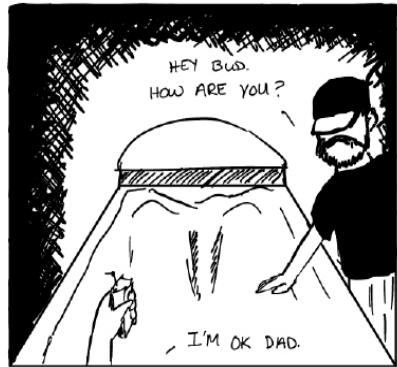




THIS CAN'T BE HAPPENING.
Will I have kids??
Can I
How will my  parents take it?
What will sex? others think?







"I'M SORRY. YOUR LEFT TESTICLE WAS DEAD THEY HAD TO REMOVE IT."



THAT WAS DEFINITELY
ONE OF THE
WORST
MOMENTS OF MY LIFE.



PHYSICALLY, I'M THE SAME.
BUT, SOMEHOW, EVERYTHING
HAS CHANGED.

SAM TOLD A HANDFUL OF
HIS FRIENDS ABOUT HIS
SURGERY.



"AND YET, IT'S AS IF THEY
DON'T KNOW WHAT IS OK
TO JOKE ABOUT AND WHAT
ISN'T."

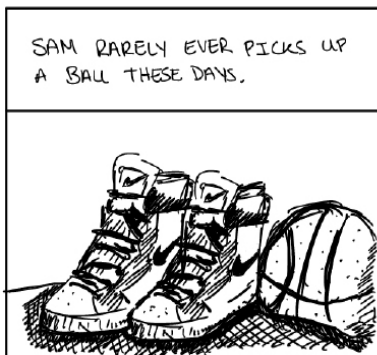


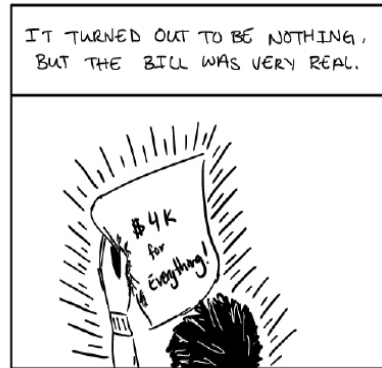
"BUT, I DON'T WANT TO BE THAT GUY
WHO CAN'T TAKE JOKES. SOMETIMES
I FEEL LIKE THEY'RE INVESTED IN
MY BALLS MORE THAN ME."



NOW, HOWEVER, SAM'S BIGGEST
FEAR IS IN THE POSSIBILITY
OF LOSING HIS OTHER TESTICLE.





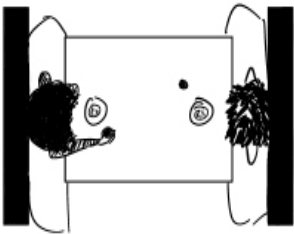


THROUGH ALL OF THIS, SAM IS FINDING HIS OWN WAY TO DEAL WITH EVERYTHING.

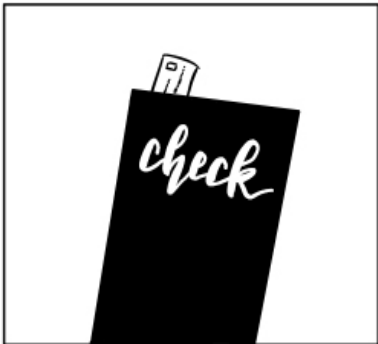




"SO I GUESS AT THE END OF THE DAY, I CAN TURN THIS INTO A POSITIVE!"



THIS IS SAM.
FROM THE OUTSIDE
HE LOOKS LIKE
A NORMAL GUY.



in.

A black and white cartoon of a hand holding a pen, with the word "in." written next to it.

Works Cited

Anderson, Kirk, MD. Personal Interview. 2 September 2018.

Sam (does not want name disclosed). Personal Interview. 2 September 2018.

Urological Care Foundation. "What Is Testicular Torsion?" *Urology Care Foundation - The Official Foundation of the American Urological Association*, Urological Care Foundation, 2018, www.urologyhealth.org/urologic-conditions/testicular-torsion.