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MAGGIE MAGGIE MAGGIE

Feature Screenplay Winner
**Out On Film:
 Atlanta's LGBTQ
 Film Festival**
 2022

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Margie Montgomery, a quirky Christian high schooler has her faith and identity tested by the reappearance of her

cancer-fighting,
pot-smoking,
pig-headed
grandmother....

as well as the
ill-timed discovery of her
homosexuality.

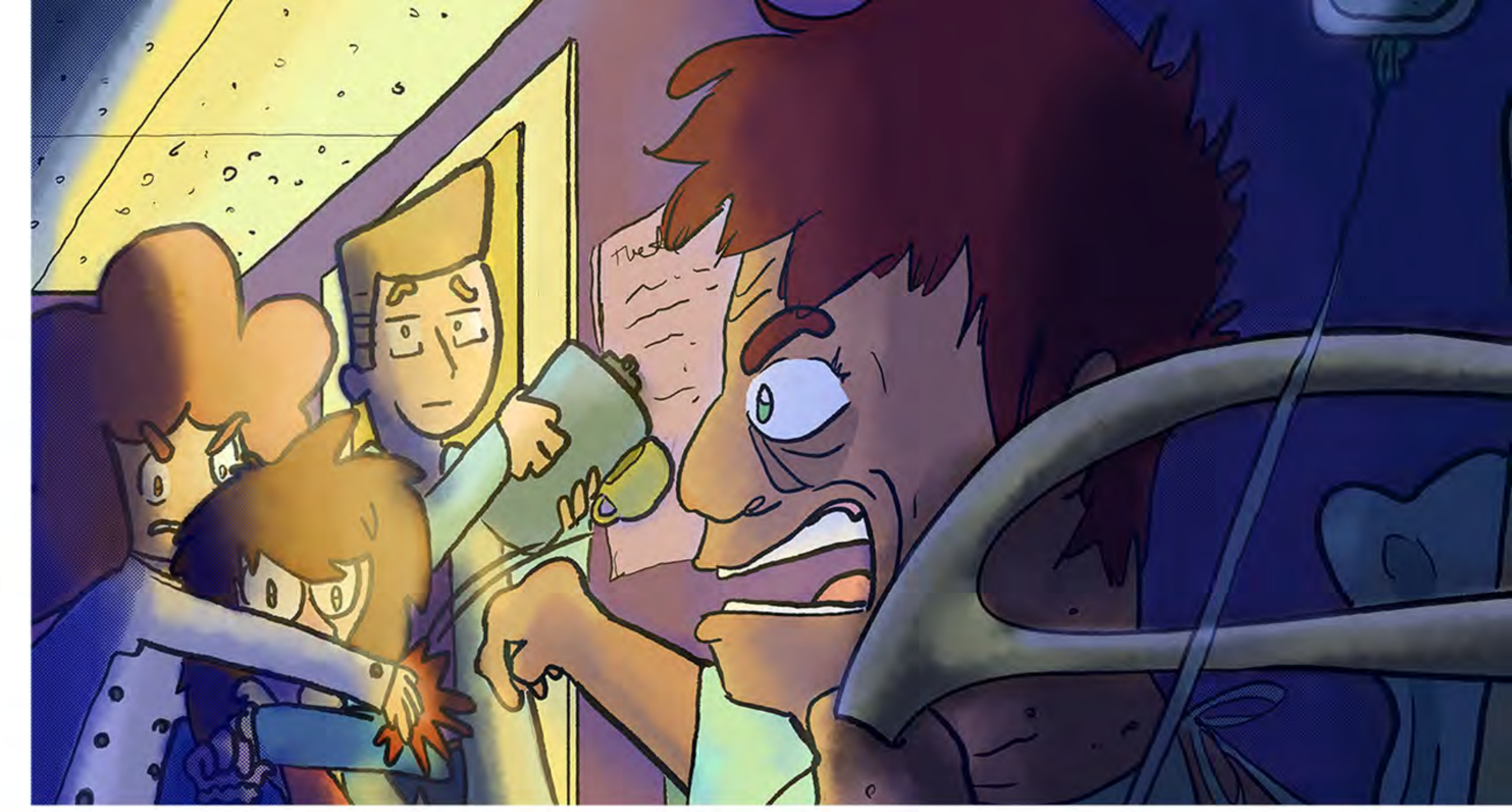
When Marilyn is diagnosed with cancer, Margie and her mother Emma are tasked with her care, despite Marilyn's LOUD protestations.

Margie must navigate Marilyn's controlling animosity and Emma's inflated expectations of her if she's to survive.

As Margie's idealized version of the world begins to crumble, will she be able to accept Emma and Marilyn for who they are?



*... More importantly,
will she be able to accept herself?*



Margie in a lot of ways is like most High School Seniors: she's preoccupied with college, her abysmal popularity, and her relationship with her mom.

Margie also has an imaginary best friend who looks an awful lot like Jesus, a film club at school with only one member, and an "innocent" fascination with star of the girl's soccer team. Once Marilyn arrives on the scene, all hell breaks loose in Margie's life, and it'll take more than a moody short film to set it right.

Emma does it all, against all odds. A single mom with a single focus, she's constantly giving everything she has to the people around her, especially Margie. Emma gets burnt up and burnt out just to rise again. A serial optimist, she practically wills herself to happiness.

But her achille's heel - her mother - will test the limits of that boundless optimism. Will Emma be able to trust other people to hold the weight of the world with her? Or will she crush them, along with herself?

Marilyn is a woman who has seen a lot of life, and is thoroughly unimpressed by what it has to offer. She's got fire and spunk, and isn't afraid to throw hands with anyone who comes her way. She's fiercely independent because that's how she's survived this long. How could she trust hand outs? Everyone always attaches strings to those.

It may take more than the love of Margie and Emma to bring Marilyn back from her self-destructive spiral. It may even take death itself.

Magpie in a Nutshell

Margie Montgomery is a Christian high-schooler and wannabe filmmaker with two entire friends: her guinea pig (Alf) and imaginary best friend (White Jesus). Her mom, Emma, is doing her best to raise Margie on her own and together they have a contented life. Everything goes to hell when Emma's independent and cantankerous mother, Marilyn, comes crashing into their lives with a cancer diagnosis. Despite Margie's reservations—and Marilyn's explicit-laden protestations—Emma decides that Marilyn should come and stay with them.

Out of spite, Marilyn makes life difficult for everyone, especially Margie who bears much of the burden of caretaking. Margie is hardly equipped to handle Marilyn's antics which include a house-fire, a "stick-up" of an ice-cream shop, and a marijuana-induced slow speed car chase. Margie begins to focus more on her school's sad cinema club whose only members are herself and "business-partner," Rose. When the school's star soccer player, Bailey, enlists their help to make a highlight reel for college recruiters, Margie eagerly volunteers. As Margie spends more time with the funny and kind Bailey, Margie's feelings become...complicated.

The night of Bailey's big playoff game, Margie is excited to go, but due to Marilyn's deteriorating health, Emma insists she stay home. Pushed too far, Margie abandons Marilyn. At the game, Margie gives Bailey a finished copy of the reel as well as a bouquet of flowers. It's only when the other players are snickering and pointing out how it's, "gay as hell" that Margie realizes the true nature of her feelings. Mortified, Margie drives away, trying to leave her affections, her confusion, and her shame behind.

Meanwhile, Marilyn's home alone and on a new medication that has some terrible side-effects: Emma comes back to find Marilyn laying in a CSI crime scene of her own shit and blood. When Margie finally returns, Emma and her have it out, unleashing verbal haymakers as the tension finally boils over. But mother and daughter find a way to love despite it all—they realize that it's the only thing that matters.

Cut to a funeral. For a moment, we assume it's Marilyn's...until we see the size of the casket. Alf has passed. Marilyn delivers the heartfelt eulogy as well as a confession: her prognosis isn't good. Rather than prolong the suffering, she's decided to enjoy the time she has left. Alf's funeral becomes Marilyn's kick-off for the end, a boozy and raucous rager into that gentle, good night. Months later, as Marilyn is in her final moments, Margie is tempted to offer a prayer, but realizes that what her grandmother needs is much simpler. Margie crawls into bed beside Marilyn and Emma joins them. Together, they surround Marilyn in love, to her final breath.

Magpie is a story that explores frightening beginnings and wonderful endings. Through it all, Margie learns so much about friendships, feelings, and faith. But most importantly, she learns who she is and that sometimes the greatest gift we can offer ourselves is acceptance—we must learn to love ourselves.

Margie

MARGIE (CONT.)

Be not wise in your own eyes, fear the Lord and shun evil, this will bring healing to your body and-

She peeks.

MARGIE

(quickly, under breath)

Nourishment to your bones. Damn it.

WHITE JESUS

Hey. Cool it on the language.

Margie glances over to where an anglicized Jesus has appeared on her bed. He lays there, flipping through a magazine like a 90's schoolgirl at a sleepover. Margie gives a look.

WHITE JESUS

Jk. I've heard worse.

MARGIE

Thank you.

WHITE JESUS

What verse you have next?

MARGIE

Leviticus 24:9-

WHITE JESUS

(scrunching)

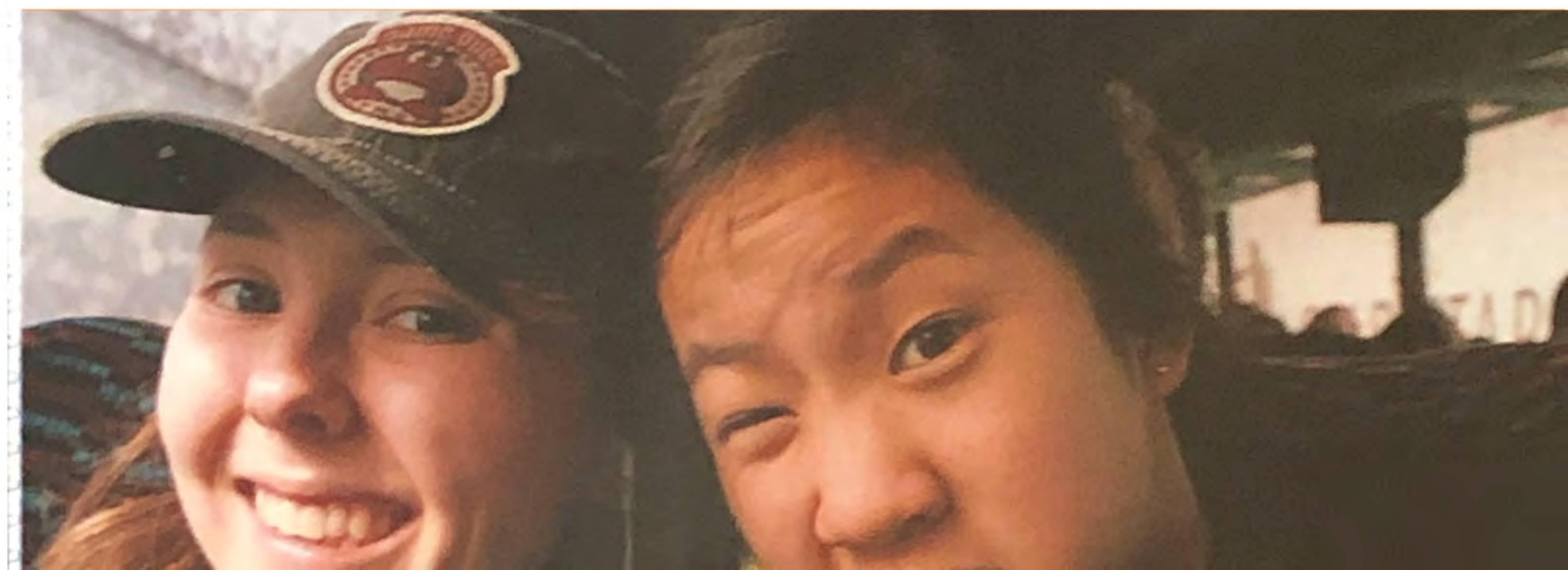
Don't bother. Nobody reads Leviticus-

MARGIE

I'm pretty sure that's sacrilege.

WHITE JESUS

You'd know that better than me -





Emma & Marilyn

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - LATER SAME NIGHT

EMMA
YOU ARE SO PIGHEADED-

MARILYN
YOU'RE DAMN RIGHT I AM. MUST BE LIKE
LOOKIN' IN A MIRROR FOR YA!

Margie sits in one of the guest chairs by the bed, silent and stiff as a board.

EMMA
Well then what's your plan, Mama?

MARILYN
I don't know, Emma, it's not like I
just found out. I guess I'll have to
ponder on it.

She shoves Emma back. Margie watches her mom's face, and the tears that start to form. But then Emma clenches her jaw.

EMMA
Fine. That's fair. Just...Please. Call
me when they release you so I can
drive you home-

MARILYN
Can't. I deleted your number a long
time ago.

Painful beat.

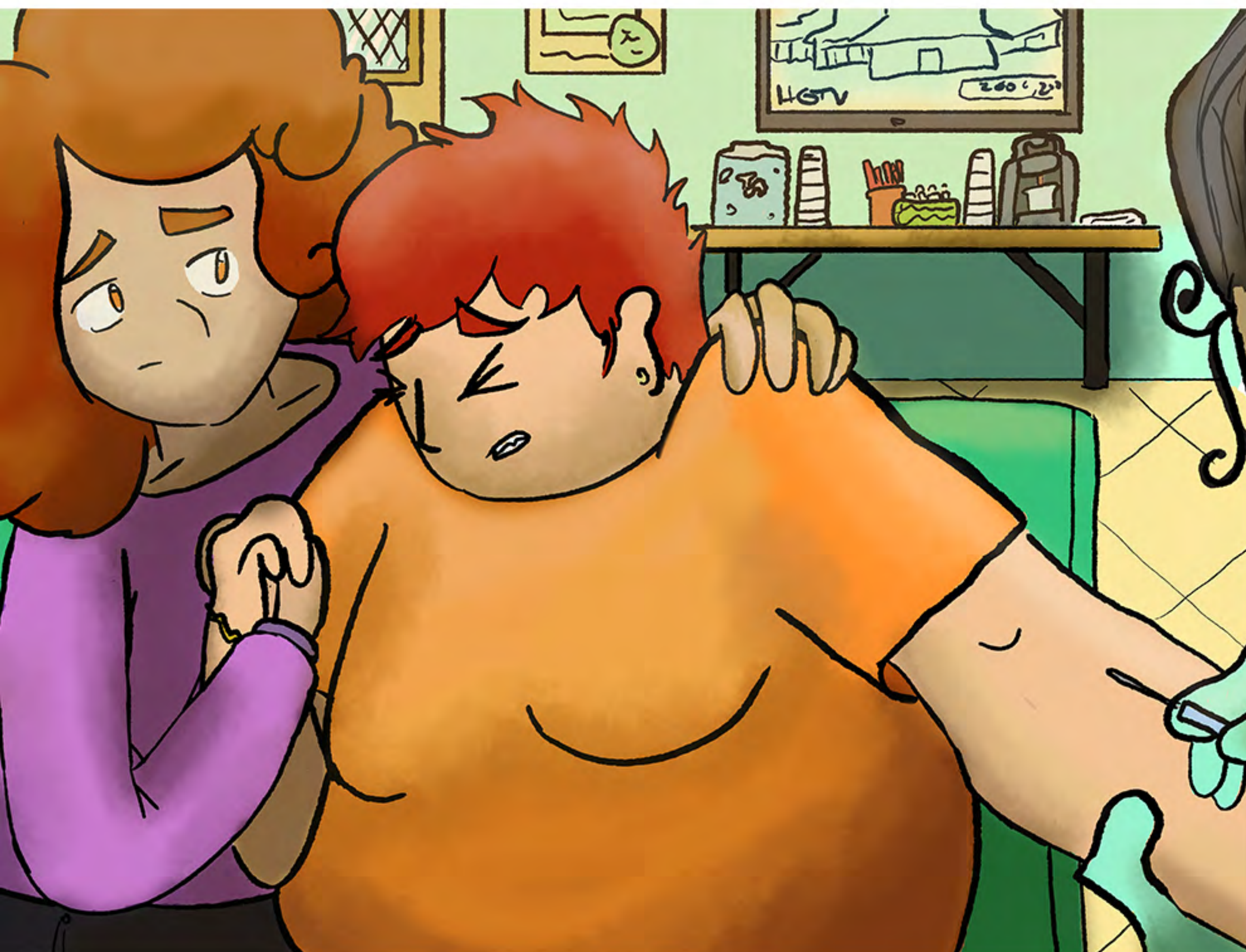
EMMA
Margie...give me your notepad.

Startled by her sudden inclusion, Margie shakily grabs her pocket pad and pen from her jacket pocket and passes them off. Emma glares at Marilyn while she scribbles down her number. She roughly tears the page out and thrusts it into Marilyn's hand.

EMMA
(through teeth)
Don't hesitate to call.

Emma leaves the room. Margie finds herself frozen in place. Marilyn looks at the paper, then at Margie. Suddenly, she sticks the paper in her mouth. Chews it to a pulp. Spits it onto the ground.

Something like fury stirs in Margie's soul. Marilyn senses this and smirks.





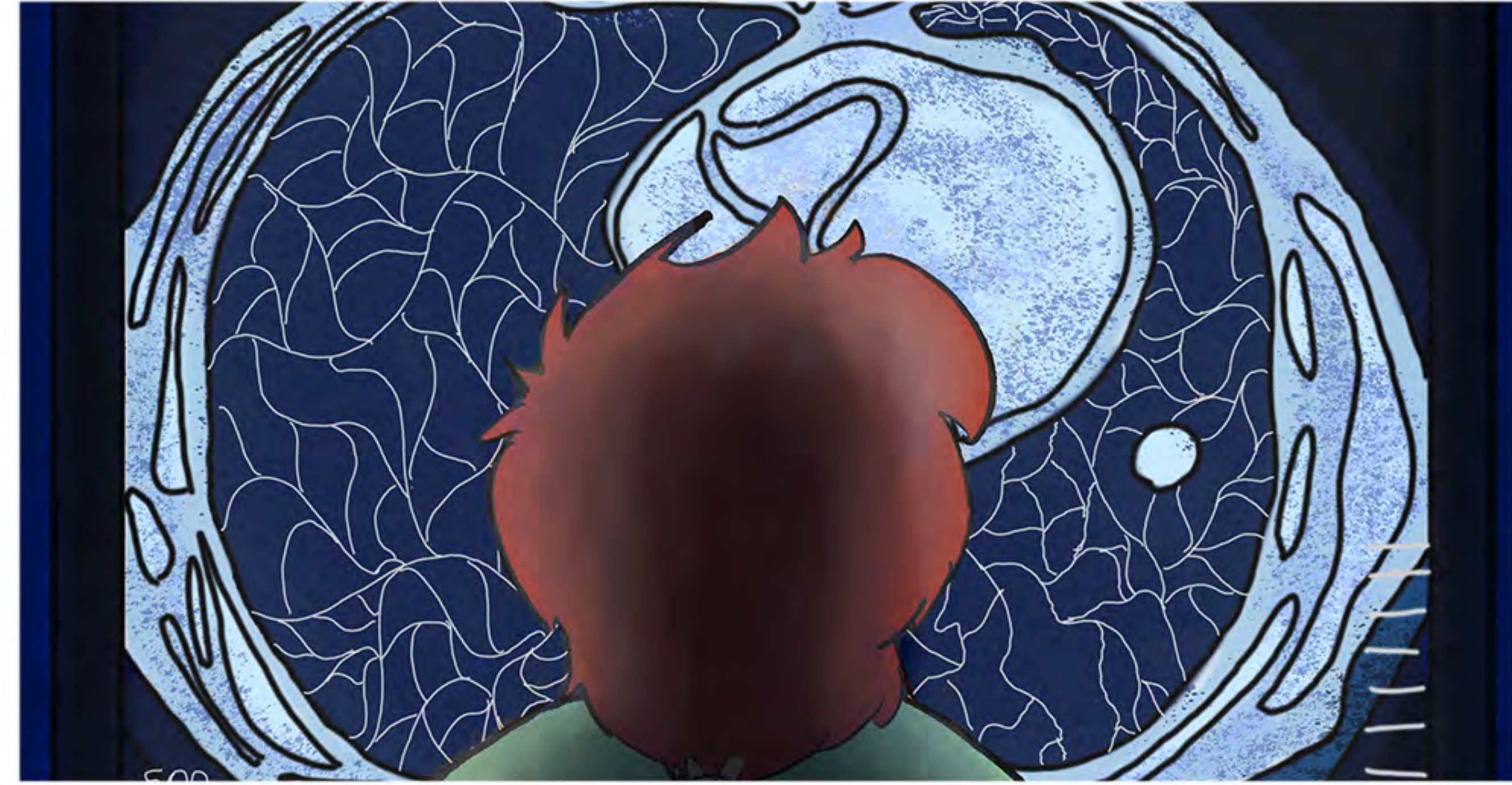
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Concept Art



Meet the Director/Writer

In the words of Cameron Esposito: "Growing up, it would've been easier for me to discover I was a leprechaun than to discover I was gay. I thought they both were mythical creatures for parades." Growing up in the 90's South had much the same vibe as her suburb in Chicago. I was always known as the tomboy at my school and felt alienated for most of my adolescence. The one place I felt reek belonging was in church. I buried myself in scripture, bible camps, and platitudes, somehow finding peace in it all.

Imagine my dismay at 19 when I discovered I was gay...and in love with one of the very few, true friends I'd made thus far.

Funny enough, my sexuality was not the first thing to challenge my faith: my grandmother was. She was tough and obstinate, with a loud mou and too much to say. At the time I knew her, we were polar opposites. I was a people pleaser, and she was the one person who could not be plesed. We would often argue over religion and what it really meant to be a "good person". Even when she was diagnosed with cancer, she had a way of hitting you right where it hurt. And suddenly, every prayer I ever had came up short in the face of her unflinching self assurance. My coming of age mirrored her end of life. I began grasping for independence all while she was losing hers.

As I've grown older, there are many things I regret about that time. I regret d demanding so much of her. I regret not wondering where her meanness was rooted, and why. And most of all, I regret not appreciating her good parts while I had the chance. She had a wicked sense of humor, a loud and infectious laugh, and cared deeply about the people she loved. That included me.

Magpie is comedic and dark in tone, but it's also a love letter to her and my former self. It's a story full of grace and forgiveness, for her and I both.



We could pitch Magpie as a coming of age story and that would be true. We could pitch it as a matriarchy story and that would also be true. We could pitch it as a Queer story and...you get the picture (there's a step on me joke for crying out loud people, Lesbians are funny.) We want to see Magpie exist because it's simultaneously about figuring out who you are, how you relate to the world, and what you're supposed to do about it. Growing up is a lot; it's difficult, beautiful, and the most agonizing shit most of us have ever been through. Watching it through Margie's eyes makes it all a little more magical. It's still hard, but the sparkle is there too.

Megan as a director inspires and pushes me, she is one of those people with creativity bursting out of their pores. Megan is vulernable and talented enough to take her insecurities and make them relatable and beautiful. She was born to create things, doesn't matter the medium, I'm lucky enough that she chose the collaborative art form that is filmmaking so I can be a part of it, and bring to life an imaginary friend who looks like White Jesus [every producer's dream.]

I want to pull this story off the page and get people talking. What does it mean to grow up in the American church? What does it mean to be the peacekeeper in a fighting family? What does it mean to become an adult? Spoiler alert: it does not mean getting more mature. We were all dumb as kids, and still are in a lot of ways. We are just *fingers crossed* better at navigating our own stupidity now. Practice makes perfect.

Meet the Producer

Stay in Touch!

Magpie is a creation of Prankster's Ink.
Visit us at www.prankstersink.net to
see more of our team's work! Thank you for
reading, and feel free to reach out to
us anytime!

