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another. I've been surprised to find that some people just naturally really want to be in a monogamous relationship and that's what they're interested in. But I think one thing that confounds it is that we sort of lump together dating and attraction and sex and it's like those things are really linked to each other.

And so, even the people I've dated who are super monogamous in terms of only wanting to date one person will still find multiple people attractive and can still entertain the idea of, oh, I could sleep with multiple people in my lifetime. So, I think humans are probably naturally inclined toward non-monogamy in terms of sex. Whether we're geared towards non-monogamy in terms of relationships is, I think, really difficult to prove or suss out because we have such a history of our specific culture here gearing us toward monogamy as being the only option.

S.H.: *In writing this book, you interviewed a lot of people across the country, some more high-profile, some not. What was the best story you heard in your interviews?*

S.M.: Well, I was sort of most taken aback by interviewing Betty Dodson, the older woman who lives in New York, who was the raunchiest interview probably. I guess I sort of thought of her as this old-school icon, whereas in real life she was both very straightforward and not — she didn't have a practiced story to tell, she was just very off the cuff and very honest, and really focused on me and put me on the spot. She started asking me all these questions about my life. I liked her stories about, when she was young and moved to New York and sort of looked at her relationships, and she was part of the sexual revolution in the late '60s early '70s. She told this really vivid story about being at some 1960s swingin' sex party and women fixing their hair during sex, and that was just such a clear visual that got at so much stuff that she was talking about. Which is like, even in that context, people not being focused on what women are getting out of it.

S.H.: *Do you think that things have come a long way since the sexual revolution that she's talking about, in terms of a focus on women's pleasure?*

S.M.: In every aspect of every day, there's still stereotypes around female sexuality that aren't true and male sexuality that aren't true and don't reflect people's actual experiences, and that's what I'm trying to do with this book — to say here are some actual people talking honestly about their lives and their sexuality. And hopefully that can counter some of the very pervasive

ideas that are out there, that are top-selling dating books.

I think we've come a long way, but if you look at the top 50 dating books on Amazon, four of them are written by pickup artists, like, here's how you get a lady to like you by playing this very traditional masculine role. And numerous others are titles like, ignore the guy, get the guy, that are also based on really traditional gender roles and the idea that men want sex and women don't. Those are still best-selling books, and that blows my mind. Looking at my friends and the people I know and people in my generation, it's like, who's still selling this and who's still buying it? So many people I know are not doing that at all with their lives. And there's not a lot of media that reflects those very different and real experiences.

S.H.: *What do you think is the most important piece of journalism that you've ever written?*

S.M.: Hopefully this book, I guess. I would say this book for sure. Runner up would be this comic I did about female veterans who served in Guantanamo. What was important about it to me is the person who's in the comic, who it's about. It's a nonfiction comic. This woman came to me and said, "I served in Guantanamo and I have no idea how to deal with this experience. A lot of shit happened to me and I don't know what to do." And I said, "Ok, let's try and make an art project out of it." And over the course of a year, we wound up making it into a comic where I interviewed her about her experience and made it into a story and she and I together interviewed somebody about their story and we made that into a piece.

And I was nervous all along that she would not be down for going through with it...but instead at the end, it definitely changed her life. At the end she was able to have a story she told. Rather than just a bunch of shit that happened to her, she had a story. And then she wound up organizing a panel about Guantanamo here in Portland. She is so nervous to speak in front of people and could not have said anything about it before and she ended up organizing a panel on her own about this stuff. And she went to New York to present at an art conference about it. That's the time when my skills were most clearly able to help somebody else get through a really hard spot and make something they wouldn't have been able to make otherwise...where I've been like, wow, because I was up for doing this and I have the skills that I do, this person was able to really come to a place of more peace in her life and deal with some horrible stuff that she went through. And that is basically the goal, I think. So that one actually worked, and that's rare.



PHOTO BY JACQUES VON LUNEN

The increased mobility brought on by homelessness affects students academic and social skills, says Julie Barbour, a teacher at Kelly Elementary School. "They wonder, 'How long am I going to be here?'" Barbour said.

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But a family currently has to earn nearly \$37,000 per year to afford a two-bedroom apartment in the Portland area, according to an April report by the county's Department of Human Services. A minimum-wage earner would have to work 80 hours a week to make that kind of money, the county report said.

Part of the solution prescribed by the state economist who prepared the jobs report is to raise the overall education level of Oregon workers. This doesn't necessarily mean getting a college degree, but it does mean finishing high school and going through additional job training.

The report also includes Portland maps with areas of job losses and high poverty marked in color. Not surprisingly, the darkest colors — the most poverty — are found in the areas with high percentages of homeless students.

Not having a place to do homework and being hungry, these students will have a hard time rising to the ranks of high-wage earners, which means they — and their children — may one day wonder where they'll sleep that night.

Programs work

All of Oregon shares \$480,000 of federal money specifically earmarked for homeless students, said Bolt, the state coordinator. The state's 197 districts can apply for 10 grants out of that money in a highly competitive process.

Beaverton shares one \$60,000 grant with three other districts in Washington County.

"It's not much," said Mentasana, the district liaison. "But you know what? It really helps."

It sure helped Isabel. One day, a teacher put her in touch with Mentasana. Years later, Isabel started crying over the memory of that day.

"It was the best feeling in the world because I felt like someone cared," Isabel said.


She got the extra help and graduated, even if it was a year late. She worked for a couple years to save up some money and this fall enrolled at Portland Community College.

"My youth has been sucked up," Isabel said. "But it's the best feeling that I'm going to school now."



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