

# Smith-Struck

*My Life With Morrissey* deserves to be loved, just like anybody else does.

By Adam Bulger

**My Life With Morrissey**

Sept. 10 and 11 (late shows only)  
 Real Art Ways  
 56 Arbor St.  
 Hartford  
 (860) 232-1006

Combining *The King of Comedy*, *Being John Malkovich* and MTV's *120 Minutes*, *My Life With Morrissey* is a charmingly disturbing microbudget gonzo comedy.

Jackie, a self-described "career girl," is obsessed with Morrissey. Her bedroom is plastered with his pictures. She spends her nights driving through Southern California looking for him.

Following a tip, Jackie comes within minutes of her idol — she finds a page of his poetry and an uneaten tofu hot dog at a hot dog stand. While she deepthroats the dog in tribute, Morrissey appears and Jackie vomits uncontrollably. Ever the proper Manchester gent, the pompodoured moper offers her a ride home. Petrified by desire, Jackie freezes up and is unable to say a word to him the whole ride. Her failed meeting with the former Smiths singer makes her snap and she spends the rest of the movie going crazy.

Jackie's increasing craziness isn't immediately noticed by her coworkers and friends, mostly because they're all insane, too. The movie's writer/director Andrew Overtoom is a former animation director for *Spongebob Squarepants*, and the movie has the sensibilities of a cartoon. The characters have single defining traits, and the plot is a series of episodic gags that seems at times almost stream-of-conscious. There's no logical reason why Jackie should be attacked by a gang of evil Catholic schoolgirls, but thankfully she is anyway. Like an episode of *Spongebob*, the story moves in disjointed, arbitrary directions. *Spongebob* also influenced the casting; with *Spongebob's* voice and former Mr. Show cast member Tom Kenny appearing in a cameo.

Unlike *Spongebob*, Morrissey does not appear in the film — a convincing doppelganger stands in for him. There's no actual Morrissey or Smiths music in the movie,



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Girlfriend in a coma: in her mind she's married to Morrissey.

Jackie tongue-kisses her Morrissey posters and humps her Morrissey blow-up doll and it's a great sight gag fearlessly performed by a talented comic actress. But it's even funnier because it's Morrissey.

allegedly because the filmmakers couldn't afford them. Instead, the soundtrack is composed of bright, brassy punk rock bands that seem to only exist to provide music for soundtracks for low budget indie comedies.

That could have been a conscious choice, though, as the movie could easily be read as a brutal insult to Morrissey fans. Jackie is a pathetic cubicle drone whose job consists mostly of making photocopies and fetching coffee. The office she works in is filled with silly decorating schemes that are supposed to inspire a sense of worker-bee cheer, but only emphasize the blandness of the job. You can almost smell the toner.

The movie is set in bright, primary-colored Southern California, and has as its reference point a songwriter whose iconic imagery is gloomy industrial England.

Jackie's crush on Morrissey is never explained; we have no idea why she should have a crush on a singer with a deliberately obscure sexual identity. Morrissey is a diffi-

cult sexual idol, to say the least. Like the Cure's Robert Smith — who at least has the courage and good sense to be a cartoon character — Morrissey is too gloomy and self-involved to express sexual desire.

Much of the comedy stems from how Jackie's sexual dysfunction (an untenable crush on a distant celebrity) is itself dysfunctional (Jackie is repeatedly asked "isn't Morrissey gay?") Jackie tongue-kisses her Morrissey posters and humps her Morrissey blow-up doll and it's a great sight gag fearlessly performed by a talented comic actress. But it's even funnier because it's Morrissey.

Though the movie sometimes drags and some of the gags don't pay off, *My Life With Morrissey* is, overall, an excellent low-budget indie comedy. The movie's star, Jackie Buscarino convinced me that combining bridal gowns, tangled jet black hair and low-top Chuck Taylors is a sexy look. Hopefully they'll start selling the outfit at Hot Topic soon. ■

abulger@hartfordadvocate.com