

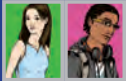


THE OTHER SIDE OF THE COIN

Genna and Martin have been going out for a few months. Recently, however, Martin has been a bit distant and Genna has found out that he's spending time with Melanie, a new girl at school. Martin, who recently added Melanie as a *Facebook* friend, has told Genna that they're just friends, but she finds it hard to believe him. She decides to do her own investigation by creating a false profile identical to Melanie's, and adding the real Melanie as a friend.

Melanie is, of course, concerned when she sees the false *Facebook* profile, and quickly accepts the friend request from the account set up by Genna. Once the request has been accepted, Genna sends a single message to all Melanie's friends, making them believe that Melanie controls the new (false) account, and that the old account, the one Melanie in fact controls, has been hacked. *"Please add my new profile, Melanie Baxter, to your list of Facebook friends because I no longer control my old account."*

All Melanie's friends, including Martin, add the "new" profile and destroy the old one. Genna then sends a private message to Martin.



Melanie, Martin
« Hey, Martin . . .

False Melanie

Hey, Martin, how are things? I'm really lonely at school, and I'm glad you added me as a Facebook friend!

Martin

No problem, I'm glad I can help. But don't worry, you won't feel lonely for long. Everyone's super nice here!

False Melanie

"Cool." Well, that's enough about the friends. Would you like to meet up and do homework this evening? Are you free?

Martin

Well, yes, I'm free. Give me a couple of minutes to check my diary.

False Melanie

I'm waiting . . .

Martin

LOL. Fine, I have a bit of free time to do homework. Where do you want to meet?

False Melanie

Tim Hortons. They're open all night. I think I'm going to need quite a lot of help. I'm veeery behind!

Martin

Perfect! How about 7:30 at Tim's, then?

False Melanie

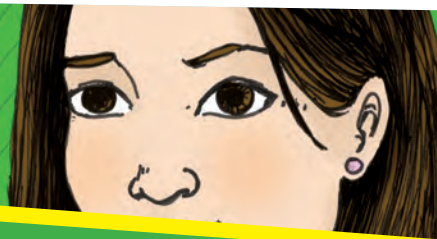
Cool.

Martin

Cool.

Genna is furious. “How dare he arrange to do homework with a girl he hardly knows? And he didn’t even invite me to come!” Angry, she sets up a hate page against Melanie, which she calls: “*Melanie B., the Spice Girl nobody wants at our school.*”

At *Tim Hortons*, Martin waits in vain for Melanie, but of course she doesn’t turn up. The following day, he goes to see her at school and asks why she didn’t come to the restaurant as they’d agreed. Surprised, she tells him she doesn’t remember agreeing to anything on *Facebook*, and adds that her account has been hacked. Martin quickly suspects that Genna may be involved, and goes to see her. He asks: “*Did you . . . by any chance . . . pretend to be Melanie on Facebook, to test me?*” Surprised, Genna can’t think of anything to say for a few seconds, and then blurts out: “*Hey, you’re the one who sees other girls behind my back!*” Martin can’t believe his ears. “*You really did something like that? I think it’s time we broke up, you and me!*” He turns on his heels and leaves.



- Why do you think Genna created the false profile?
- What could Genna have done to avoid creating the false profile and hate page?
- What might the consequences be for Melanie, and how does she feel? How might she feel when she discovers the hate page?
- Has anything illegal been done, and how can the situation be resolved?
- In the classroom or on the “Be cyber cool” platform, write a message to Genna, keeping in mind that Martin and Genna are going through a difficult time.

BE IN THE KNOW!

Committing online identity fraud and **posting a false profile** on *Facebook* **may be offences** under section 403 of the *Criminal Code*, if the constituent elements of the offence are present and can be proved. **Creating** a *Facebook* hate page may also **constitute defamation**.

In Québec, **the author** of defamation **may be civilly liable**, meaning that **the victim may be able to claim damages and interest** for harm to his reputation or invasion of personal privacy.