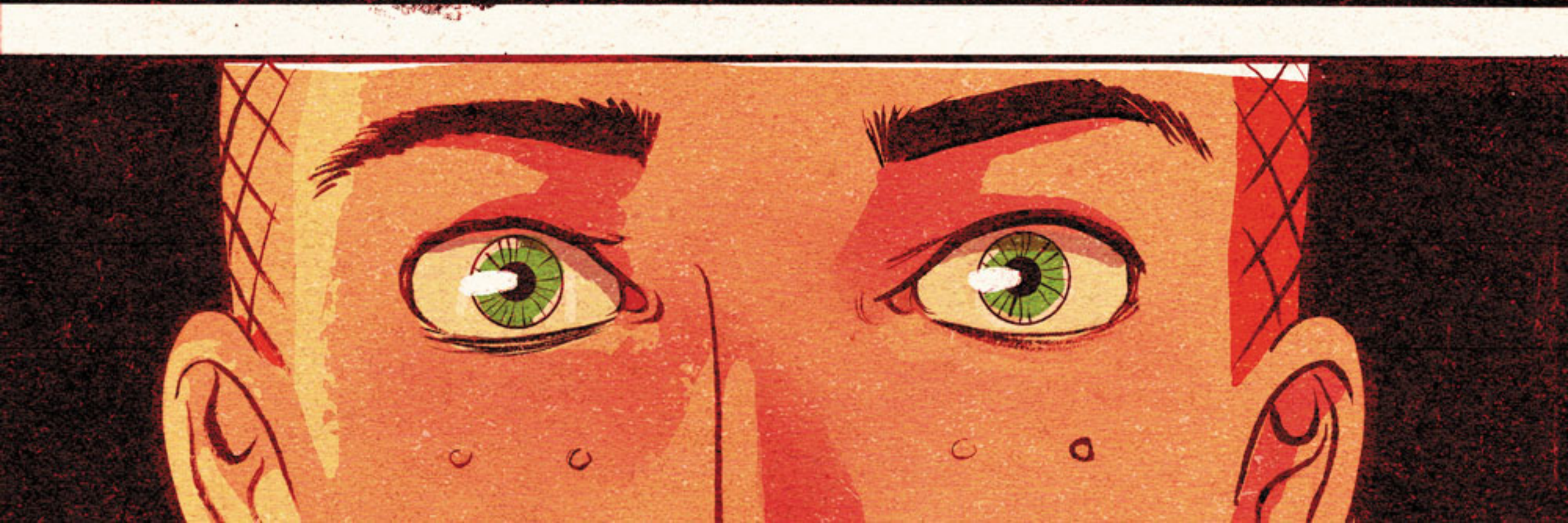PROLOGUE