

# THE | STONY | PRESS BROOK



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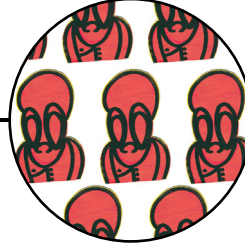
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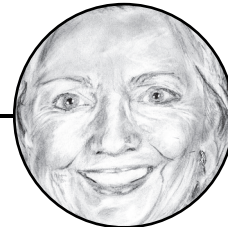
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# LETTER FROM THE EDITORS:

We are witnessing an assault on reason and decency, the very foundations of human society. We have “drained the swamp,” only to flood it with burning waste. Indeed, our republic is officially a kakistocracy. It is soon to be governed by the least qualified for their benefit – the only cost is global and domestic order and a few thousand lives from irresponsible policy.

Donald Trump, as stated in an opinions piece from Politico, has essentially told Europe to “drop dead.” He has cuddled up to Russian strongman and dictator Vladimir Putin, a former KGB agent who is working to undermine liberal democracy as we know it. Trump has refused to give a ringing endorsement of NATO, the very organization that has helped ensure relative stability since the end of World War II. In fact, he seems to trust Putin more than his country’s own intelligence agencies. That is not a battle any sane man should be fighting.

Trump is rewarding those who followed him. Jeff Sessions, who was deemed too racially insensitive in 1986 for a federal judgeship, will likely become attorney general. Ben Carson, the neurosurgeon who got behind Trump, is being tapped as the secretary for Housing and Urban Development—a position he has zero relevant experience for. And, in a headline that could be taken straight from The Onion, Trump wants the head of the World Wrestling Federation to head The Small Business Administration. And remember all the times he berated Clinton for giving speeches to Goldman Sachs? At least four GS alums are going to be in his administration.

Jean-Jacques Rousseau, the enlightenment philosopher, highlighted the vulnerability of democracy in The Social Contract. Democracy, in its purest form, demands the participation and education of all, not simply apathy. A government not reflective of the general will is invalid. As we are seeing today at home and around the world, this kind of government is most

vulnerable to civil war and sectarian strife. One faction, trying to impose something alien upon another, is a problem.

Perhaps we are guilty of contributing to this. Donald Trump is representative of the worst factions of our societies and all the vices Rousseau once lamented in his Discourse on Inequality, not the general will which demands our representatives act in our best interest. Trump seems incapable of empathy. Trump is nothing but an expert in infuriating the least deplorable among us, abusing our basic impulses just to destroy his enemies. He takes what he wants, whether it’s a woman “by the pussy” or the presidency.

The result is stunning—somewhat, anyway. Perhaps we underestimated the anger of America and overestimated people’s ability to do what is, in our opinion, the right thing. This is something we should have seen coming. As Van Jones noted on CNN, this is, at least in part, a “white-lash” to progress made through the Obama administration. About half of the American public rejected the “stronger together” narrative posited by Secretary Hillary Clinton. But at the very least, Clinton won the popular vote by three million. Donald Trump was rewarded by the electoral college system, not a majority—or even a plurality-- of the people.

Still, this is an incredibly hard day for most of us here at the Stony Brook Press. Our gay friends fear a rollback of LGBT protections built up during the Obama administration. Some of our Muslim friends are being told they should not wear their hijabs. Our Hispanic friends, both documented and undocumented, fear backlash. And as an office where women are respected, we naturally are nervous whether that will be the case in an Oval Office run by Donald Trump.

He has a Republican Congress behind him. He will appoint justices friendly to an uber conservative cause, potentially sabotaging the progress the next Democratic president

could achieve—as well as gut healthcare (which has already begun), environmental protections, and a woman’s right to choose (to name a few things). Republicans also control most state governorships and legislatures.

This could mean more redistricting that will secure Republican holds on their seats. It will mean more restrictive laws at the state level, by and large, on things like abortion and voting. Voter ID laws, which have been shown to disproportionately affect minorities (a Democratic base), will become the norm. This comes at a terrible time, as the protections of the Voting Rights Act (1964) have been rolled back as well.

The environment will also suffer under a head of the EPA (Scott Pruitt) who wants to take a hands off approach to climate change, despite being cited as a national security threat. Trump and some Republican constituents have toyed with the idea of scrapping it altogether. But at the least, Trump is likely going to roll back an incredible number of Obama’s regulations on the coal industry. He is selecting a few jobs over the collective health of the planet.

But we have drawn a silver lining. Donald Trump, with all of his conflicts of interest and obsession with control, will likely be impeached. Major protests were planned for the inauguration, and it doesn’t look like massive protests will be out of the norm over the next four years. Meanwhile, Planned Parenthood, The American Civil Liberties Union, and countless news organizations have seen record donations. These are among the first of many steps the people are taking to protect the most vulnerable among us.

The people of this diverse nation have awoken. It is now clear that we are, in the words of Benjamin Franklin, a republic, if we can keep it. Stand up for your rights. Never be silent in the face of injustice.

# BREAKING BOUNDARIES: HOME AND ABROAD

**MICHELLE S. KARIM**

Zoya Vallari walked down the winding hall on the fourth floor of the Physics building and poked her head into a large classroom where two graduate students were chalking calculus problems on the board. "May I use this room for a few minutes?" she said. As we walked into the room, she said with a laugh, "They have no choice but to listen to me."

Vallari is a fifth year PhD student who is working on High Energy Physics Experiments at the Stony Brook Department of Physics. Her project is called T2K, which is located in Japan and deals with an intensive study on neutrino oscillation, a topic that is critical enough to befuddle the average reader.

"When I went for my Masters at IIT Mumbai, one of the premier colleges in India, there were five women out of 40 students in the entire class," Vallari said. "Most people were like, 'Oh you should be happy you have five fellow women in class.'" She is also trained in Kathak, a Indian classical dance, as well as Contemporary and Modern Dance.

Vallari spent her childhood in India and went to an all women's college where she never noticed the inconsistency in numbers between men and women in her classes. In reality, the Science Technology Engineering and Math (STEM) field has been battling with an unpleasant reputation of unpopularity amongst women. When Vallari first joined the PhD program at Stony Brook, there were seven women in her class of around forty. "This was when Stony Brook Physics department was trying really hard to get women to join."

As she listens intently to questions on possible instances of misogyny or sexism she might have dealt with in her field, she wears a knowing smile throughout the entire conversation. "At the start of the

academic year, there was a lot of general conversation with my colleagues about the idea of women getting into the department because of Affirmative Action," she said. Affirmative Action is specifically designed to further the career of talented and skilled minorities and women in any given field, an executive order that was first passed by John Kennedy in 1961 that included race, creed, color and origin of the individual.

In 1967, gender was added.

After a pause, Vallari continued, "For example, someone would say, 'I had this woman in my undergrad who was as good as me, but she got into Harvard and I could only make it to Stony Brook because of Affirmative Action.'"

The scientist in Vallari is a constant working persona which she uses to conduct social experiments, supplementing thoughts with proof. Using the fitness classes at the Campus Recreation Center as her scenario, she convinced some of her male colleagues to join her for a Zumba and a R.I.P.P.E.D class, which tend to attract more females than males. "As soon as they walked in, they were like, 'Are you sure we can be here? Can guys really take this class?' and I replied with, 'Welcome to women in Physics issues,'" she said with a giggle.

Vallari also explains why these situations can sometimes put her on the spot because she becomes the mouthpiece on behalf of the entire female collective. "I think in India it is much more stark because you will have people tell you things like, 'Oh you did well in that class because the professor really liked you.'" She said that, over some time, it becomes easy to form a thick skin and forget discriminatory comments.

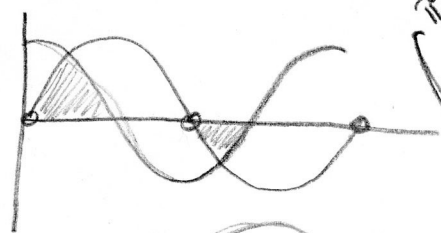
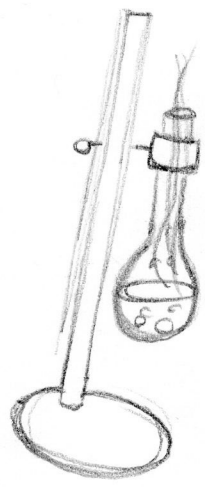
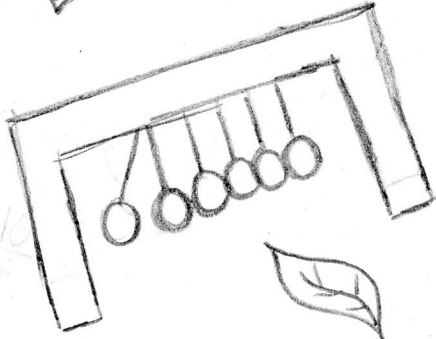
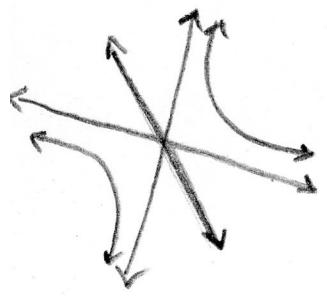
Vallari is the current president of the Graduate Women In Science and

Engineering (GWISE) club in Stony Brook. It aims to help women in science acclimate themselves to their respective programs and opening up conversations about sexism in the workplace. Vallari is also regular active member of Women in Physics Happy Hour nights, where a bunch of her colleagues go to The Bench, the college bar across from Stony Brook railroad, and between some much needed r&r, drinks and laughter, they make it a point to have tough discussions on race and gender. "Most days we talk about random things, but there are times when we do bring up issues around the workplace so everyone in the group is aware of the problem and can help that person in any way they can," she said.

Although not in the same department, both Vallari and Anusha Shankar share similar issues to a certain extent. Shankar, like Vallari, is also from India and came to Stony Brook to obtain her PhD in Ecology and Evolution. Her dissertation is on how hummingbirds "budget their energy" across sites in Arizona and Ecuador. Shankar has won the National Geographic Young Explorers Grant, Cedar Book Award, Tinker Field Research Grant and Departmental Unrestricted Research Award at Stony Brook University, among others throughout her graduate career.

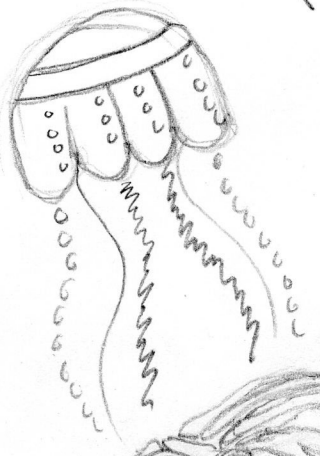
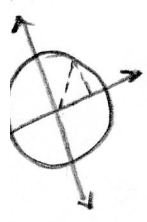
Shankar explains that the trend of casual sexism in India is more apparent than it is here according to her personal experience so far. "I think it has to do with the fact that Zoya is in Physics where there are very very few women, but in Biology there are a lot of women," Shankar said. "Both women and men in academia tend to not have families, they lead a different life than people outside of academia."

According to the 2016 report conducted by the National Girls Collaborative Project on

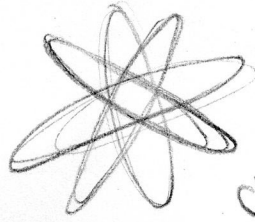
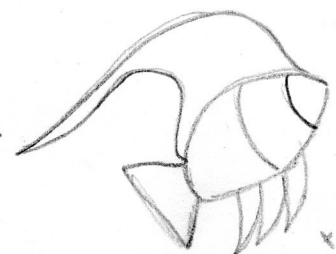
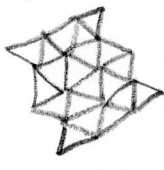


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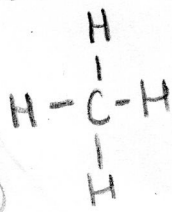
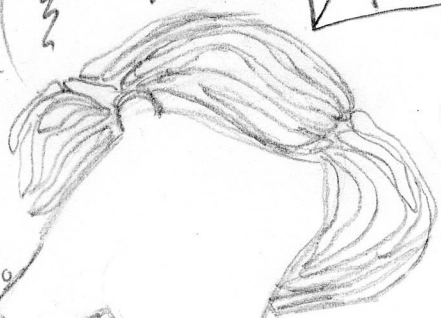
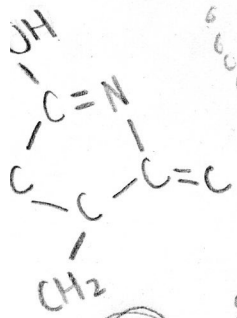
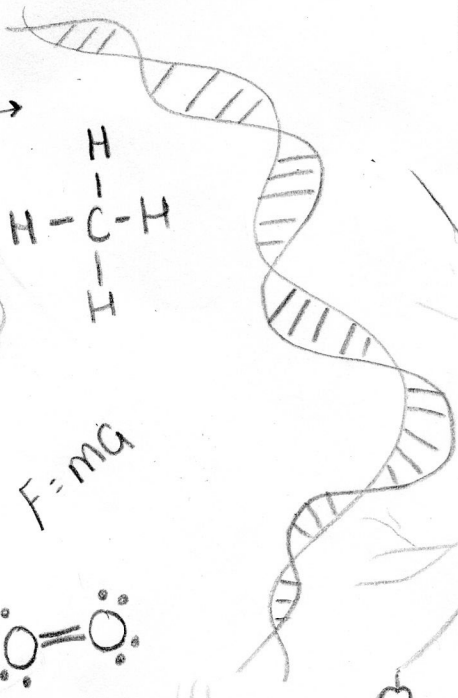
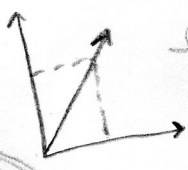
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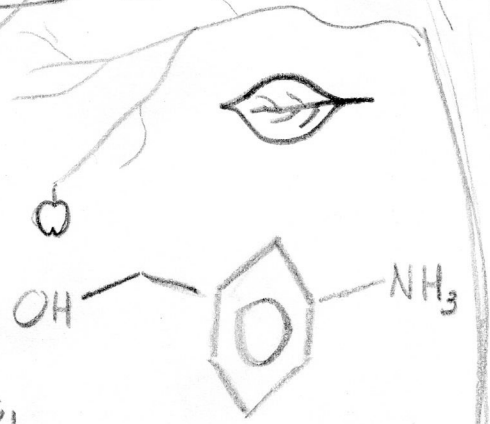
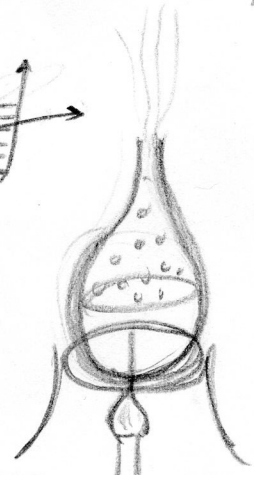
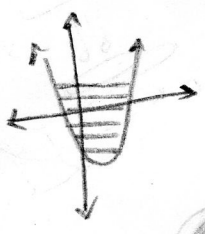
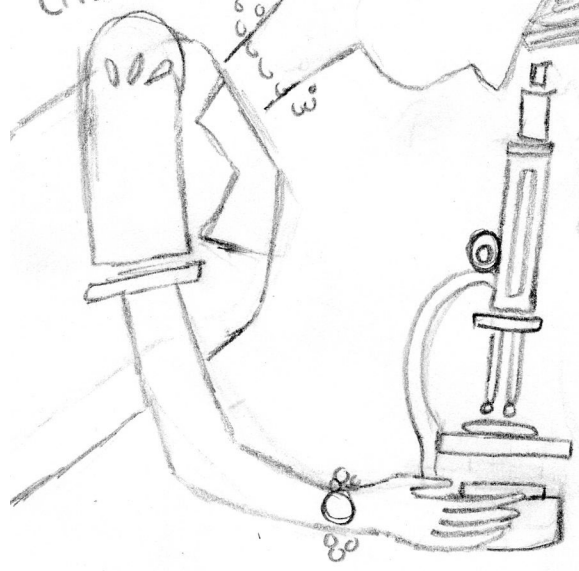
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the makeup of the STEM workforce in the U.S, only 11.1% of physicists are women and around 33.8% of ecologists are women.

"I used to live in the United States when I was younger and I had faced a lot of racism back then," Shankar said. "Sometimes it would be the younger kids who would show religious aggression, there were parents who would tell their children to come back inside if they saw them playing with my brother and I."

Shankar has a female adviser and has two male and one female on her PhD committee. Although she has never felt "looked down upon" by her male colleagues, she does believe that the requirement for success for men and women get differentiated as they move ahead in life. "This is a very difficult one for me because there are men who are really driven, but are they driven because they are men or because that is their personality?" she said, pausing to gather her thoughts. "I don't think men realize how much women have to struggle, balancing a family life and a separate successful professional life. They say things like, 'you should just get over it,' 'just be ambitious,' 'why is this so hard for you' and you are constantly trying to compare yourself with them."

So why do women care so much? Shankar tackles the question by simply making the probable conclusion that women have to deal with a lot more and their strive to prove themselves at home and as scientists are equally great. "We probably think about that recommendation letter and want people to say that 'she did this, as well that that,' but men can get away with being just awesome researchers," she said. "I do so much better if I know that what I am doing with my life is going to help other people and not just me."

Maria Guadalupe Barrios-Sazo is a Research Assistant in the Physics and Astronomy department at Stony Brook University. She is a third year PhD student and she is from Guatemala. Sazo's experience in casual workplace sexism was not a problem back home. "I have always had a very strong personality, so if men back home would say something about more women in a department making it less picky, they knew I would be able to come back with a

reply," she said. "Here at Stony Brook I have never faced anything directly, but since the department is not diverse at all I feel judged and I cannot hide." Sazo is the only Latin American woman in her entire department and explains that any professor easily recognizes her by her name.

Sazo says that she is visible because of her name and her race. She also speaks with a distinct accent which makes her unique and also adds to her vulnerability, in addition to the fact that she is always self-conscious of being assessed academically by her peers and her professors.

Just last week, Sazo was part of a four-person research team to get the INCITE Award to study stellar explosion on one of the world's most advanced computers, according to the Stony Brook Alumni website. She is one of the two graduate students and the only woman on the team.

One of the problems that Sazo has noticed personally is that there are women in science departments who leave without completing their degree. "Before coming here I never thought about diversity issues and gender issues," she said. "Here you can see how it really affects women. Since I have come here, it has become harder for women to pass the qualifying comprehensive exams."

Sazo grew exasperated as she explained that even though women of color can be as competitive as the regular white male, somehow women seem to score less on the qualifying tests. "There are certain evaluations and criteria for admitting students into competitive programs and there have been an increasing number of studies which show that people can determine your race and gender because women, especially minority women, tend to score less," she said. "Again, there are women who are fabulous at scores but it is not the norm."

For the past three years, Tiffany Victor has worked as a Research Assistant in the Brookhaven National Lab specializing in the chemical makeup of cells and tissues by using infrared and X-ray spectroscopy, using energy from a synchrotron source. She is a fifth year graduate student from the Chemistry department and is also

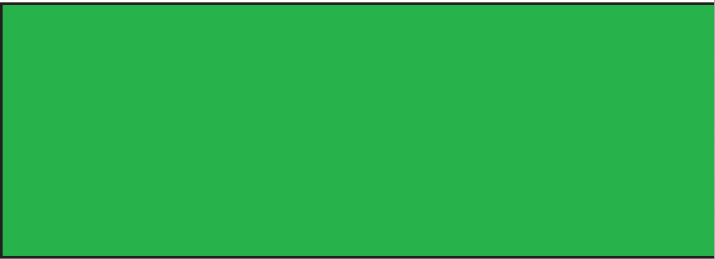
a native to the island of St. Lucia in the Caribbean.

"I have always had a great support system at home," Victor said with a bright smile. "I am happy to say that people I have met along the way like professors have been open minded to motivate me to become the best person that I could be." Victor completed her undergrad in Louisiana, but in terms of encouragement she has never felt any different than when she was a high schooler in St. Lucia. "I grew up in a household where I was told that there is nothing I cannot do," she said. "My mother and my sister would leave inspirational quotes on the fridge like 'shoot for the moon, and even if you miss, you'll land among the stars.'"

Victor explained that her "go-getter" attitude has helped her immensely but as the discussion moved to the hard-fought and surprising 2016 election results, her analysis was as bleak as the mood of the country the morning after. "Not yet," she said with a laugh when asked about if the outcome has kept her awake at night. "Honestly, it all feels a little bit surreal, it amazes me that in the year 2016 we have things like that happening," she said, expressing her shock at the violence and hateful rhetoric that has spread across the nation.

Victor is the current vice president of the Graduate Student Organization (GSO). "It's amazing because a lot of the times I find myself in a meeting with a room full of colleagues and other scientists and it's usually two to three women in about a room of twenty," she said. "A lot of the times I am the only black woman in the room. I now see myself seeing color more than I used to before."

Despite the disparities in numbers, all four women agree that more discussions about gender and race equality issues are taking place, which is a giant step in the right direction. "Most grad students feel like they can't make it, more women feel so than men and that is when I try my best to educate and help them," Vallari said. "I'm a little outspoken about these issues and I think I have started to see some changes in people around me."









ARTWORK BY JUSTIN CANAPERI

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# WHAT STUDENTS HAVE TO SAY

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My facebook timeline is already filled with **HATE CRIMES** against people of every group, not just Muslim women, which is the specific demographic that I happen to belong to

A lot of the people who act out against those groups [Muslims, women and latinos] now have of **VALIDATION** because they have an authority figure that they can look at who says these things

It was hard for me to believe that all these people I'm surrounded by agree with the things he's said all throughout the election and I just feel I didn't do my part in convincing the people I interact with that **I'M A GOOD PERSON**

Believe it or not **I ACTUALLY LOST** \$100 on this election because I really thought Hillary was gonna win

I woke up on Wednesday morning feeling like I had woken up in another world. It wasn't just **DONALD TRUMP** who won, to me **SEXISM** won, **BIGOTRY** won, **RACISM** won, **ISLAMOPHOBIA** won, **WHITE SUPREMACY** won, **HATRED** won

In the end I wound up voting for him because **HE WAS THE ONLY CHOICE**, I guess

I think that given the nature of what it means to be American, we'll be able to **GET THROUGH IT**

Just because it might not affect you doesn't mean that **YOUR NEIGHBORS** and your other human beings aren't going to be affected. And i think a lot of people that seem to be **TURNING A BLIND EYE** to that aren't really helping the problem. I think that if we don't stand with each other than that **HATEFUL RHETORIC** can really do damage

By **REVERSING OBAMA'S TRANS PROTECTIONS**, I'm specifically worried about what that could mean for myself and other gender nonconforming people

What I'm **HOPING** is that when he gets the power of the office he'll transform into someone who is **MORE RESPECTFUL** of that power and takes a more **RESPONSIBLE** approach towards leading the country



# BOMBING

# LONG ISLAND

LEI TAKANASHI



Remade  
**YES**



How

**CR**  
**C**



**A**t 60 miles per hour everything looks like a blur outside the window of a speeding Long Island Rail Road train. The Port Jefferson line cuts through the Island's thick foliage and creates waves of green, with grey houses and highways cutting into the mix.

But as the train begins to slow down into each station, one can't help but notice the few bits and pieces of graffiti seen on buildings from station to station. Names like JOEY and LAMEO appear suddenly and fade away once the train hits the platform. Impressively, they show up again miles apart from their last location.

"It's very suited to the environment. Painting track spots or trains roots back to the beginning of writing graffiti. It has a lot of exposure to the general public who use mass transit to get from A to B, allowing your work to be seen by an endless amount of people," Joey said.

"In the shadow of New York City, Long Island doesn't typically come up on the radar as a place for graffiti," Phetus, a Long Island graffiti veteran, said. Originally from Huntington, Phetus began his career as a graffiti artist, or a writer, in the 1980s by taking trips into New York City where the underground graffiti movement exploded. Phetus became well known for his character Phat Phace, a cartoonish, menacing face that he sprayed throughout Long Island. One of Phetus' crown achievements was painting this face on every trestle from Montauk Point to Penn Station in 14 months.

"I was going out three, four nights a week and walked the train lines finding every trestle. This was before the internet, there were no iPhones. I had a map of Nassau and Suffolk County and found where the train lines went," he said. Phetus even meticulously planned where he could park his car and then surreptitiously enter the tracks.

"Track sides are unique on L.I. because that is what people put their all into," writer Clyde said. "Many of the towns are super pretentious shit so street side catches buff (or gets painted over) quickly so track sides are sacred tomatoes in a way."

Despite the graffiti on the LIRR, Phetus and other writers said that there is no graffiti scene on Long Island, and as someone that has painted all over the Island Phetus believes that there isn't much going on.



Phetus said it is because many writers don't leave their areas of the Island and that writers do not stick together. Joey, who is actively writing today, also agreed.

"It's basically a washed down, wannabe version of New York City," Joey said. "There's a lot of various factors that can contribute to that. I can tell you Long Island is different because of the landscape or geography, but nowadays a lot of so-called writers lack the

ability, drive, attention span or resources to become educated in the culture, and thus you get a lot of people who got different pieces of the puzzle but can't really get the full picture or understanding of what this art/culture is."

Even if graffiti isn't as big on the Island as it is in the five boroughs, law enforcement is still watching. Within Suffolk County's seven police precincts, 25 arrests have



been made for making graffiti and 246 incidents have been reported from January to the end of October this year according to statistics provided by the Suffolk County Police Department. Suffolk County has its own graffiti task force and Nassau County officials have also taken a serious stance.

"Crimes like graffiti or other types of criminal mischief is something that is frequently seen in the county," Nassau

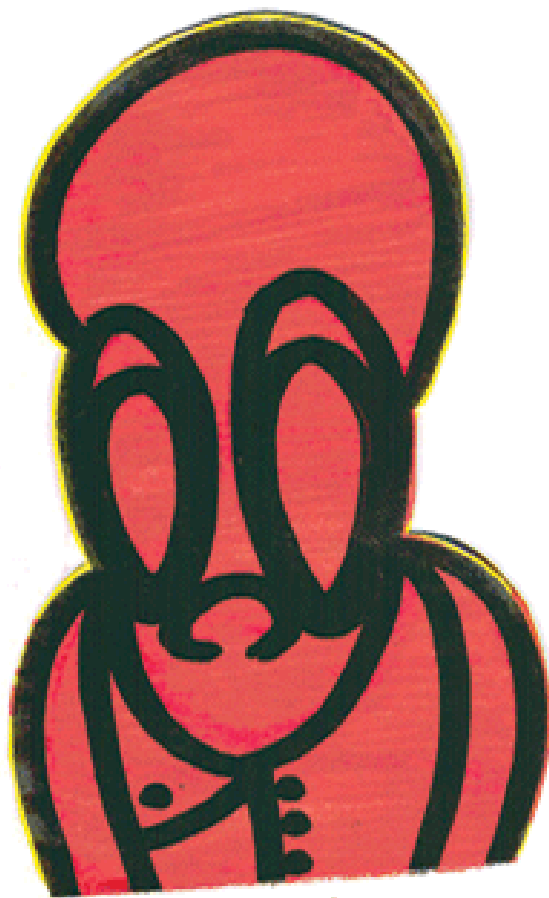
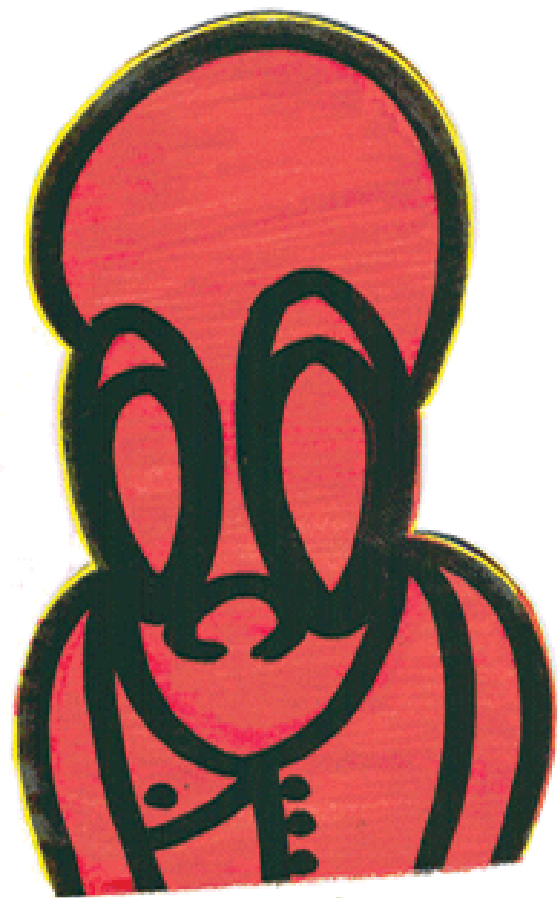
County Detective Vincent Garcia said. "A lot of it can be attributed to gang activity and young people who tag property with gang signs or other writings. We do see biased types of graffiti as well and, depending on the circumstances, these instances may be investigated as hate crimes."

Most police are clueless to graffiti and it is not worth their effort at the end of the day, Joey said. Joey had cops drive past

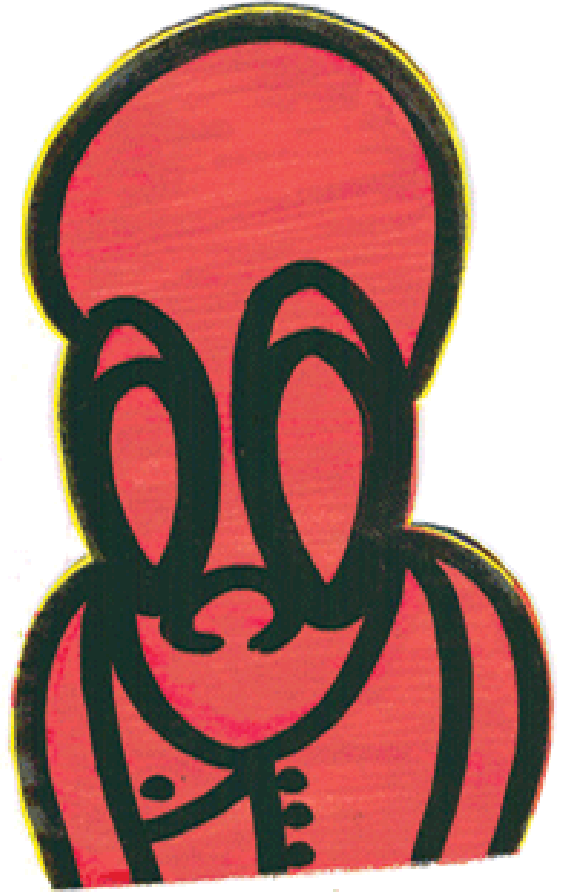
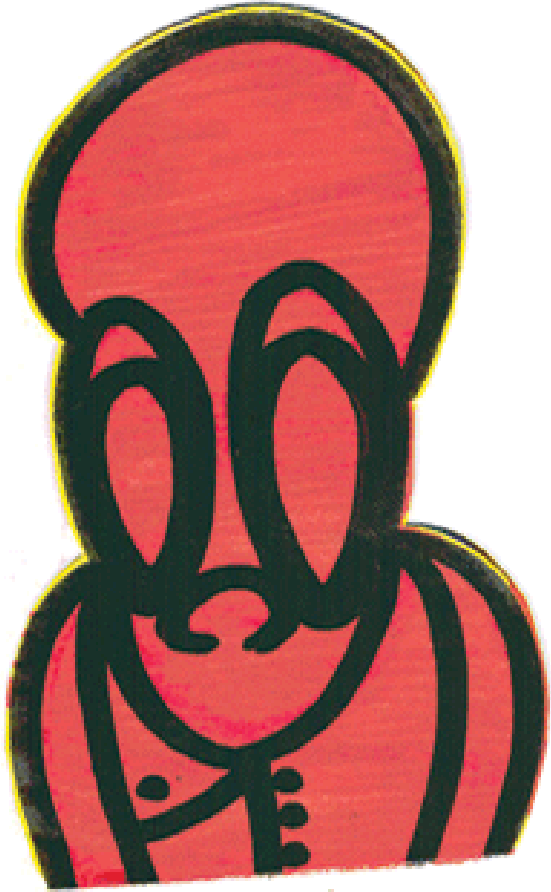
him multiple times while painting, has been involved in intense foot chases and escaped. Some nights cops would just sit him down on the curb for hours and then release him. Other times he took a trip to central bookings. "Shit happens," he said.

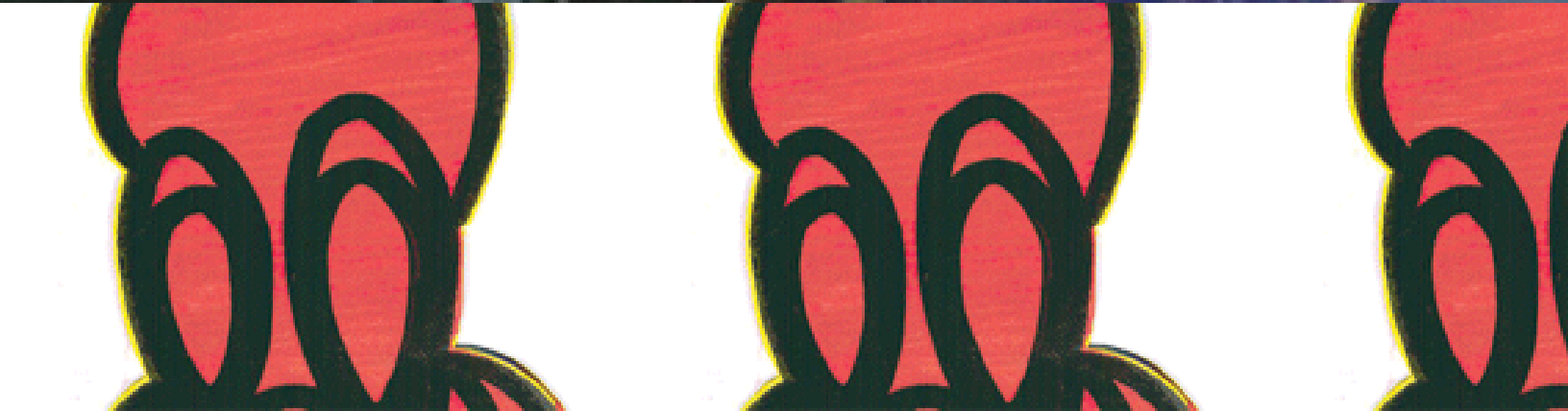
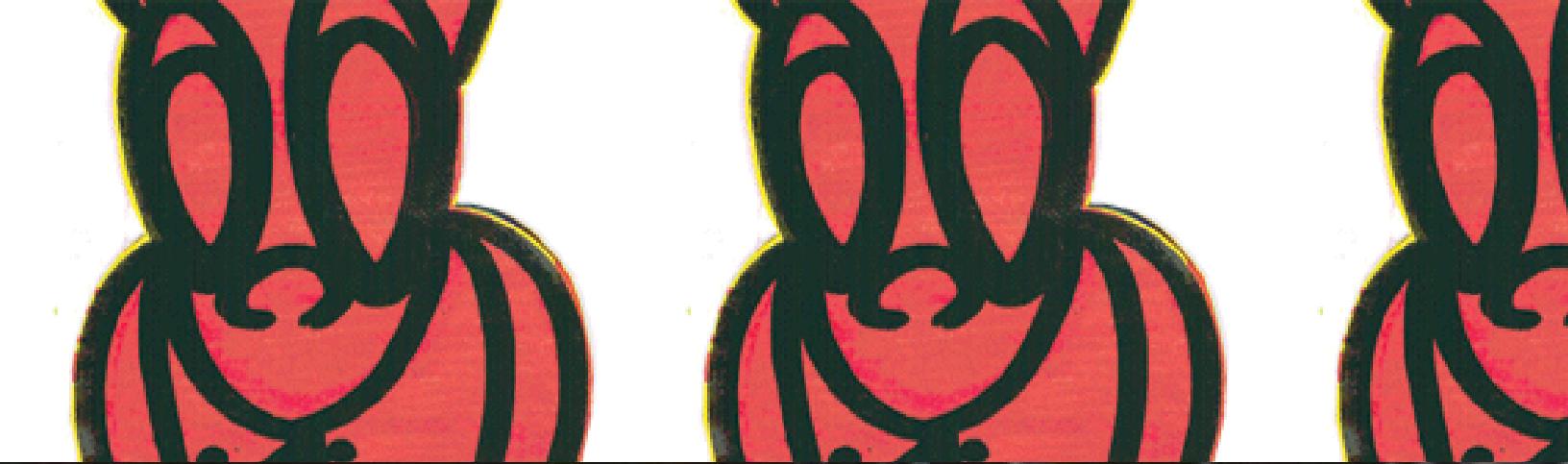
But Phetus warns that graffiti writers could face serious repercussions.

"I just beat four felonies for bombing









(writing graffiti) the Meadow Brook Parkway two years ago,” Phetus said. Phetus faced numerous charges such as trespassing on MTA property, trespassing on state property, eluding police and possession of 27 cans of spray paint. Phetus found the right attorney who wiped the charges away.

“Four felonies on your record? You can’t ever get a job again!” Phetus said.

Even Long Island college students have faced heavy charges for doing graffiti on their college campus. In 2010 at Stony Brook University, 20-year-old commuter student Jesse Jay Riker was hit with a class E felony charge for criminal mischief in the third degree. Riker was known for putting up numerous tags under the name “Walter” throughout the campus.

Despite the legal risks, writers are drawn in.

“It’s like derelict boy scouts,” Clyde said. “You are judged on your level of heart, integrity and pretty much insanity as opposed to the money driven materialistic based things in life.” Clyde and Joey also said that the chance to freely explore new areas and chase an adrenaline rush are also things that drive them to bomb.

And for older writers like Phetus, graffiti is also what pays his bills. Phetus has found numerous ways to make income off doing what he loves. He has made custom clothing for famous rap artists such as Flavor Flav of Public Enemy, Ludacris and 2 Chainz. He has designed logos, including the “We The Best” logo for the viral sensation DJ Khaled. Phetus was also the first one to make a graffiti-centric app for the iPhone and it got 15 million downloads. He is currently working on a graffiti emoji pack.

“Do you want to go work at McDonalds or make a logo for 100 bucks?” Phetus said. “I just made more money drawing something then going to flip burgers type shit.”

## **Extended Q and A with Joey and Clyde**

### **Tell me the story of how you started?**

My mom would tape paper to the walls in her house. It helped me a lot growing up

with adhd.

My mom was a single parent so my Nana would watch me, she would take me to art classes to a small art studio in town. I would draw a lot my entire childhood and as I grew older. I started going into Manhattan to take photography classes at the Fashion Institute of Technology during the summer and I’d take the train from Port Jefferson to Penn Station.

### **Who or what motivated you?**

First off my mother and grandparents were super supportive. They backed me in any decisions I made. I had a lot of friends who rode BMX and also wrote, I was the youngest out the group I hung with and they had a big influence on me. They showed me the ropes and took me out to the train yards etc.

### **What’s your style inspired by?**

I have to say my two closest homies Zong and Feck. Feck was a huge influence and he had the whole squatting/freight hopping background from Philadelphia and taught me priceless amounts of information. Zong too had a huge influence on my early years developing he had gave me a true understanding of style and structure. I find myself being inspired by all different artists and art, really whatever sparks my creativity.

### **What drives you to keep writing?**

It’s fun, I enjoy trying new things and going new places trying to push myself, the experiences it presents me. I do it for the rush.

### **Tell me some history about Long Island graffiti. Who were the pioneers?**

I like to think I’m educated about the history of Long Island graffiti, but to be completely honest I’m not. There are no history books or records to look this shit up. If you are lucky enough to be well connected you can get an idea of the true pioneers of this scene and kinda form a timeline to figure out the roots of this culture. When I think pioneers or early Long Island graffiti I think of Fyt, Sih Abk, Mcs, Au Crews, but I know it’s way deeper than that. The names I remember are Hater, Dama, Duner and Beck, Zam, Phetus, Celf, Odesk, Desn, Bose, Demok, Static, Zeus, Cece, Pace, etc.

### **People don’t see Long Island as a center of graffiti as NYC is, yet they are so close to one another. What makes Long Island graffiti unique?**

Good question. I wouldn’t call it unique, it sucks at the moment. There’s a lot of various factors that can contribute to that, I can tell you it’s different because of the landscape or geography. Like you said it’s so close but nowadays a lot of so-called writers lack the ability, drive, attention span or resources to become educated in the culture and thus you get a lot of people who got different pieces of the puzzle but can’t really get the full picture or understanding of what this art/culture is. It’s basically a washed down, wanna be version of NYC.

### **How is law enforcement around here? Are they tough on artists? Share any stories you have dealing with police if you like.**

Dealing with the police sucks, man, regardless of the circumstances. You can catch a break here and there, but that’s typically cause you wind up lucky. Most are clueless to graffiti, it’s not worth their effort at the end of the day. It’s the politicians who will sometimes put the focus on the graffiti and then the police pursue the primary focus of the politician’s goals of the time. Drugs Theft, etc. I’ve had the cops drive past me multiple times while I’m painting. I’ve had intense foot chases where I just barely get away both in the city and the island. I’ve been sat down on the curb for a few hours to only be let go with a warning and then I’ve had nights in central bookings. Shit happens.

### **In NYC people bomb anything, but in Long Island graffiti seems to be concentrated on LIRR tracksides and hidden spots. What do you got to say about this?**

It’s very suited to the environment, Painting track spots or trains roots back to the beginning of writing graf. Its has a lot of exposure to the general public who use mass transit to get from A to B, allowing your work to be seen by an endless amount of people. Painting those types of spots are typically safer too because you’re not in public and have more time to practice your work. The same can be said hidden spots too, although they aren’t seen by the public really.

# SURVIVORS

## ANONYMOUS

My mother was a victim of domestic abuse.

Except she doesn't consider herself a victim.

She survived 23 years of emotional, verbal and physical abuse while single-handedly raising seven children on her own.

She is a survivor.

Twenty people per minute are physically abused by an intimate partner in the United States, according to the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence. That is 10 million men and women per year. One in three women and one in four men are reported to have been victims of some sort of physical abuse by a spouse or significant other.

My mother's story is part of an astonishingly large statistic. It deserves to be heard.

When she was 17-years-old, her parents arranged for her to marry a man, as was the custom in Indian culture at that time. She had no college career or job to support herself; my father became her everything. She did not know anything outside of his existence. So she endured the emotional and verbal torment silently.

My siblings and I never knew what mood he would be in when he came home. We would tiptoe past him, breaths bated, hoping not to incite him into his terrible fits of anger.

But even the smallest thing would set him off.

Somebody forgot to wash their dishes, somebody forgot to say hello when he came home, somebody didn't iron his shirt on time.

Within seconds, he would be reaching for a glass to throw, a belt to beat us with, an onslaught of profanity to yell at us.

I, being the youngest, never had to face the full brunt of his explosive episodes. My

mother and older siblings worked hard to keep me from harm's way.

But they have been through hell and back—each one of them.

He kept us from seeing our mother's side of the family, believing that they were a bad influence on us. So we grew up isolated, only having contact with his traditional Indian family, who supported his violence.

There were nights that were so terrible, and then there was that night.

April 9th, 2008. The night I thought I would die.

I was 11-years-old, and I was sure my father would try to kill me. One night, he found out that my older sister, Sana, who was 21-years-old at that time, was dating a boy. This went against his tyrannical, religious rules somehow. He lined up the rest of his children and began yelling at us.

"Tell me your email password. I want to read your messages," he screamed at my other sister, Farheen. "You're probably talking to a boy behind my back. You're [a] slut, just like your sister."

But she refused to give in. "No," she replied calmly. In response, he grabbed her arm and twisted it backwards.

Dena, the closest sister to my age and who was always the most outspoken one out of us seven children, saw this, and without hesitation, bellowed, "DON'T YOU DARE TOUCH MY SISTER."

My father's face reddened in raging madness. He grabbed Dena and dragged her to the kitchen.

My sister Farheen ran to the other room to call the police, and I ran to the kitchen to see that my father had turned on the stove's burner and was attempting to burn Dena's hands. And in that moment, my 11-year old self became the most courageous I have ever been. All fear dissipated, and in

that moment, the only thing I was aware of were Dena's screams, so I ran to her and grabbed her away from my Father.

But my impulsive, brave moment was fleeting; all adrenaline seeped away, and I was left to face my father's anger. His face was twisted in such agony that I could've sworn he would kill me. But he didn't. As he came toward me with his body shaking in fury, I could see his senses snap back to him. He stopped in his tracks.

## DON'T YOU DARE TOUCH MY SISTER

In retrospect, I think this change in his demeanor may have been because, as the youngest, I was considered his favorite. In his rare good moods, he would love to tease me playfully and call me "his darling." And as the realization of what he was about to do dawned on him, he abruptly turned, grabbed his keys and left. This gave my mother enough time to usher all of us down to the basement where a trapdoor that led outside could be found. My father returned a few minutes later, parking his car recklessly on the lawn. With that, he began banging incessantly on the front door, which my mother had preemptively bolted shut.

He broke in through a window, shattering the glass. My mother used her body to block the basement door, trying to buy her children more time to escape, but he pushed her aside effortlessly. We could hear his distinctive, pounding footsteps coming down the basement stairs. The trapdoor, which had not been used for many years, was jammed shut. Somehow, at the last possible moment, Sana was able



1 IN 5 WOMEN

1 IN 7 MEN

## IN THE UNITED STATES, AN AVERAGE OF 20 PEOPLE ARE PHYSICALLY ABUSED BY INTIMATE PARTNERS EVERY MINUTE

to unfasten the lock that had rusted over, and we escaped out in the open, with my father right behind us. He yelled at us over and over again to stop. When I look back at this memory, I think I could hear remorse in his voice, but that could just be a hopeful child willing her father to be a good person deep down. We continued running.

My mom's parents lived two doors down from us, so were able to run there for safety. I think it was seeing us grandchildren, beating on their front door, clad in pajamas at 3 a.m., panting and crying, that made them realize they needed to step up and help my mother finally leave my father.

My mom's parents grew up on strong Indian values. Divorce was the unspeakable taboo.

But enough had been enough. My father had gone too far.

So five months later, when my mother finally gained the courage to leave him, they offered to support her financially for a while, until she was back on her feet.

Many might think my mother was weak to have stayed with him for 23 years. But I don't believe that to be true. My mother is resilient, and in those years of their marriage, I never felt unsafe when I was with her. My childhood memories aren't dominated by the visits from Child Protective Services or sirens whirring outside my house.

Instead, I mostly remember coming home

every day from grade school to a house warmed with smells of homemade-pizza, the kind where I can literally smell the crispy crust rising slowly in the oven, freshly baked cookies sprayed with gooey chocolate chips that melted at the touch of my tongue and scrambled eggs peppered with salt and chili powder with a dollop of ketchup on the side, just because she knew I liked it that way. I remember stacks of pancakes glazed with syrup, Indian cuisine showered in wondrous, exotic south Asian spices and herbs that made my mouth salivate just by the aroma. These smells and flavors were inherent parts of my childhood, and they are what I first recall when I reminisce about my past. Not the yelling, the throwing, the hurting. None of that. My memories are of my mother's cooking and cozy hugs right when I walked through the door after a tough day of kindergarten.

My mother is the most courageous person I know. She finally left him for the sake of her seven children, not of her own. It was in September of 2009 when she decided enough is enough. We had moved from Long Island to a county upstate by this time. My father had gotten a new job there. Two weeks into living in this new place, sequestered from her family and more susceptible to my father's abusive ways, my mom, encouraged by my older sisters, knew that it was time to leave him for good. He had gone off to an overnight conference, so that night my mother came into my room to tell me to pack up my stuff.

A few hours later, my father came home to an empty house.

The abuse took a horrendous toll on all of us individually. I myself developed insomnia, anxiety and crippling distrust of anyone who approached me in a romantic way. I developed suicidal thoughts in my freshman year of high school. One of my sisters was also suicidal. Only she did try to kill herself by overdosing on prescription drugs a few years ago.

My mother was the one who kept us sane. When we moved to her parents' house, she took on a full-time job, went back to college, got an accounting degree and played the dual role of both mother and father. She still sometimes has panic attacks and nightmares of my father, but she always fights through the day to make it to another night.

My siblings have all risen up from the pain through therapy and each other. One of my sisters is a successful doctor, another has just recently passed the New York Bar, one is about to graduate Harvard Law School, another has started medical school in NYIT-COM and yet another has just graduated from college with high honors.

My siblings and I owe all we have accomplished to my mother. She is a remarkable creature, so inspirational, in every sense of the word. Her vigor and grit are incredibly awe-evoking, and I am honored to be able to call her my mother.

# THE PIPETTES

## DESIRAE GOODING

In the fall of 2013, Erynn Mcleod spent her first semester at Stony Brook University behind a desk, memorizing facts about phytoplankton and marine mammals. Since then, the current music director of The Pipettes, Stony Brook's all-female a cappella group, has realized that performing is her calling and that the stage is her home.

Her father, Raymond Mcleod, has been a Broadway talent for many years, starring *Evita* and a stage production of *Jekyll and Hyde* to name a few. For the Mcleods, music is and always has been, a major part of family life. "[She's been] musically inclined since birth," he says. "The first music she sang wasn't Barney but show tunes."

Erynn Mcleod's up-beat attitude is no surprise. The high-maintenance theatrical world is hardly difficult for someone born into it.

"She was literally born in the trunk," Raymond Mcleod, said. The family had been touring Houston, Texas for a Broadway production of *Jekyll & Hyde* and the travel merely continued as they flew to Seattle less than two weeks later, staying for an extended period of time.

Raymond Mcleod recalls his daughter's star-studded toddler years spent in admiration of her father and the other performers in a national production of the Broadway show, *Evita*. "She would stand mesmerized at the side of the stage watching every night," Raymond Mcleod said. "She had the whole show memorized at age 2 ½ and would comment to the singers and dancers when they did even the slightest thing differently from night

to night."

Needless to say, when Raymond Mcleod started out as a Marine Biology major, he was utterly confused. "It took me a while to wrap my head around it but, she came to her senses!" he says, with a laugh.

This sentiment is one that Erynn Mcleod certainly agrees with.

"I needed to find some sort of singing outlet because I was suffocating ..." she said, "I auditioned for the Pipettes the spring semester of my freshman year. I got in and it was wonderful!"

Afterward, her switch in major did not take very long. "That next fall, I started as a music major [thinking] this is what I love, this is what I need to be doing with my life."

Though Erynn Mcleod claims that she was never fond of the idea of a sorority, she feels that The Pipettes have definitely turned into something of a sisterhood and that having that sort of bond is great.

As Music Director of the group, however, her job is not without its challenges. Stage performances of any kind take a lot of work to put together. The drastic difference of a cappella to other forms of music, as well as the varying degrees of vocal ability in each member, makes intense planning an absolute necessity.

Erynn Mcleod adds that the songs sung in an a cappella group are more in-line with pop music, as opposed to the classical sound of a choir.

"It's a much more social experience," she says. "You need to match the tone

of everyone in your group. Finding new songs and genres of music that match everybody's vocal type so that everybody has opportunities to be a soloist – that's a challenge."

However the excitement and exhilaration of being on stage, as well as the joy of performing with friends, is enough to combat any obstacle.

Just two years ago, Erynn Mcleod and her fellow Pipettes boarded a bus to Hofstra. After months of planned choreography, rehearsals and repetition, the women were finally on their way to performing in the quarter finals of the International Championship of Collegiate A Cappella, or the ICCAs – a world-wide competition made famous in the 2012 film *Pitch Perfect*.

The group rehearsed over ten hours each week in the months leading up to the performance, fully committing themselves to learning as many songs as possible within that span of time. The process was what Erynn Mcleod often referred to as "boot-camp;" phones were turned off and bellies were left empty. An audition video was submitted and entry into the competition was paid for. Everything looked to be just within reach. The Pipettes, however, did not make it past the quarterfinals.

Erynn Mcleod admits that the loss was a little disappointing. However, despite not getting very far, her sweet smile and cheerful disposition refuses to fade. "That experience was so much fun," she said. "I was so proud of how much we improved and how close we became while preparing for it that it became so much more important than winning."



She points to Abbie Cobb as one of her closest friends in the group. The two bonded at a karaoke party toward the end of their first semester, but it was their respective membership in the Pipettes that cemented their two years of friendship.

"We became closer because we saw each other so much during rehearsals and gigs, and started hanging out in each other's suites," says Cobb.

Like Erynn Mcleod, Cobb also cites the group's time competing in the ICCAs as one of her greatest experiences. "We ran

our set over and over again, but it never felt like a drag because I was doing it with my friends." She says, adding that their time spent on stage brought out the best in them as a collective. "I think we performed the best we ever have as a group!"

Cobb adds that, "knowing that all of my friends' voices are there supporting my sound makes [performing] so much easier."

When it comes to singing, Erynn Mcleod says, "It just releases everything. When I sing, I'm present. I feel organic."

Citing her father as one of her greatest influences, Erynn Mcleod says that music is not only an incredible source of joy, but of comfort as well. "There are certain things that you do in this world where you lose track of time doing them, and I feel that those are the things you should be doing with your life."

"I think she sees music the way I do," says Raymond Mcleod. "It's a way to express how you feel, no matter what you're feeling at the moment."

# THE BRIDGE TO NOWHERE

KEVIN MATYI

Nowadays, the “Bridge to Nowhere” is something of a myth, a story told to freshmen about how absurd the campus they call home is. When new students are in their first semester or so, they are told about how Stony Brook University built half of a bridge, going from the second floor of the Union and just stopping in midair near the library. No stairs down at the end or anything; just a sharp cutoff in midair.

It turns out that the Bridge to Nowhere not only existed, but also did so up until fairly recently. It was completed eventually and had good reasons for its strange history.

Construction on the bridge began in 1967 as a way to avoid traffic accidents. The road splitting the Union from the academic campus was open to traffic at the time, so students had to worry about being run over if they tried to walk to or from the Student Union.

In those days, the Union was the heart of academic life. The Student Activities Center did not exist yet, so the Union was where many clubs met and housed one of the main eateries on campus, the Union Deli. Most students went to the Union quite often.

Thus, Stony Brook University decided to build pedestrians a bridge to go from the Union to the library so that the campus would be safer and more efficient.

Unfortunately, the campus also had undertaken many other building projects at the same time, such as the math and physics buildings which needed expensive facilities in order to teach students.

As a result, the bridge’s construction was halted by budget constraints, and the bridge was left hanging until more money could be devoted to completing it.

“For years, it became a campus symbol of incompleteness,” according to a Newsday article from 2012, referencing another Newsday article from 1977 and collected by the University Archives at Stony Brook University Libraries.

The article mentions that the bridge was so well known it was “oft joked about” and even had merchandise like shirts advertising it.

Complicating matters, the library had been expanded from its original three story construction in 1971, meaning that in order for the original plan to be completed, the new North Reading Room would need to be closed and partly demolished to make way for the end of the bridge.

Instead, a new plan was formed. Rather than the bridge going in a straight line, it would take a sharp left turn and go into the second floor of the Staller Center For the Arts.

The bridge was finally dedicated on Nov. 11, 1977, 10 years after construction began. In total, it was 30-feet wide, 475-feet long and still had problems.

The concrete acted like a sponge, soaking up any water that fell on it like rain or snow. According to Norman Prusslin, Director of the Media Arts at Stony Brook University, the bridge itself would start raining a few days later, once the water had percolated through.

Still, the bridge persisted. Stairs on the side of the construction let students go from the upper to the lower level without committing to either one for the entire length of the bridge, and for a time, events like flea markets were even held on it.

However, a glance toward the Union now shows that the bridge is gone. It was destroyed in 2002.

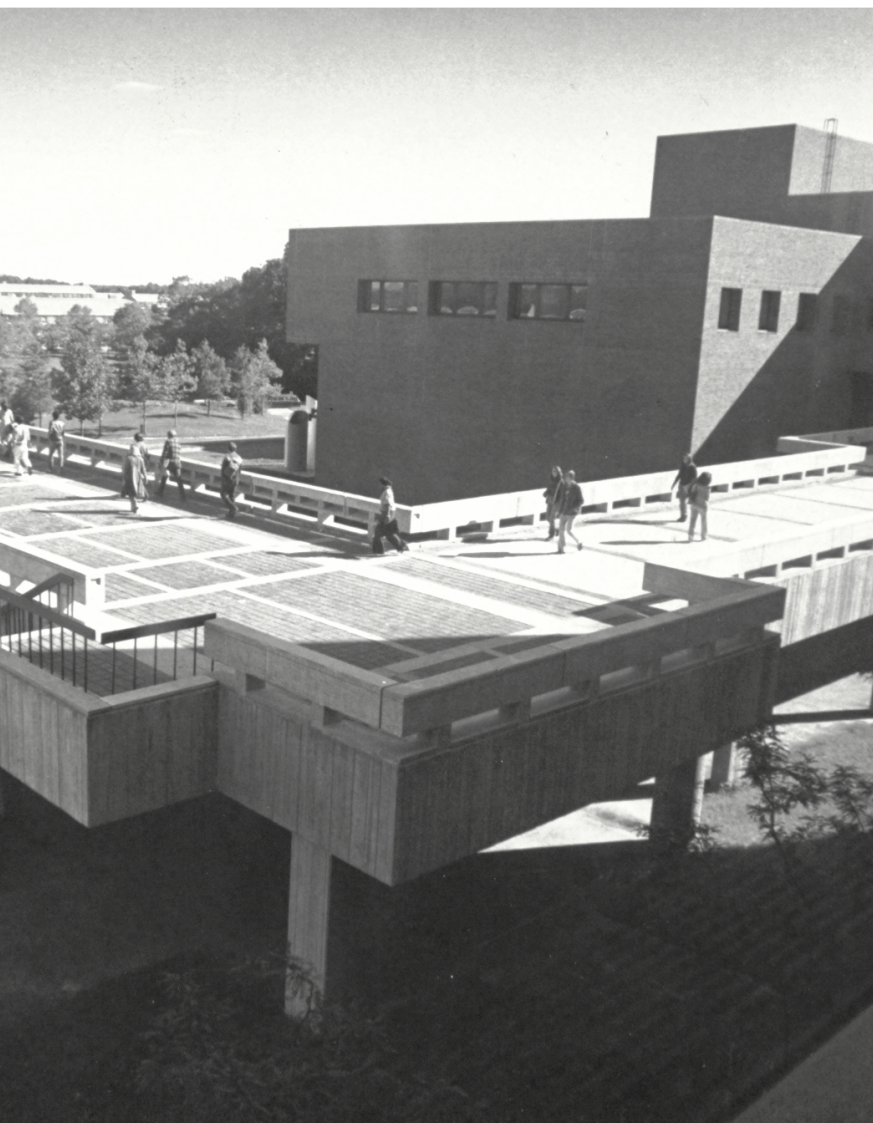
A Newsday article from 2002 attributed Richard Mann, Vice President for Administration as saying that “the bridge was demolished because it was unsafe,” and that chunks of concrete constantly fell from it.

A bridge that took 10 years to complete rained both water and concrete on people walking under it.

Good job, Stony Brook.







# THE COST OF COLLEGE

ZAYNAB UBAID

Geuris German is a young, industrious college student who dreams of becoming a biomedical engineer, but there is a catch.

His single-parent family, with an annual income of only \$25,000 a year, couldn't afford the rent on their house. They were evicted, losing most of their possessions, including a couch, china cabinet and TV. "It was hard," said 18-year-old German, recounting that day.

Yet despite his financial hardships, German managed to excel in high school and was accepted to Stony Brook University. Now he struggles to pay for college.

German is one of many who is academically qualified but financially unqualified for college. According to the Department of Education, poor students with high math scores are as likely as to graduate college with a bachelor's degree (41 percent) as rich students with low scores. The probable cause?

The average cost of tuition, fees and room and board rose ten percent over the past five years for public colleges, making low-income students unlikely to attend or finish college, says the College Board's 2016 annual report.

German is one of the lucky ones, but his journey to receive a higher-education was arduous.

Three years ago, he and his family were homeless; their house was foreclosed and they were forced to move into a cousin's apartment, where the German family of four lived in one of the three small bedrooms. The rest were occupied by the cousin, her brother, her sister, her mom and dad. The cramped living space brought the family together, and they would often spend time with each other, going out, talking late into the night and cracking jokes with one another. Two months later, the German family found an apartment of their own.

Born and raised in the Bronx, German grew up without a father figure. His father, a

Dominican Republic immigrant, abandoned German when he was two years old and his two older brothers, to return to his home country and start a new family. German's family could now only rely upon his mother's measly substitute teacher salary, where pay and work days were sporadic and inconsistent. The family had to go on food stamps for a few years and receive help from Section 8, a housing voucher program that assists poor families in paying their rent.

"My boys, when kids, asked me to go to Disney, and I would say 'one day,'" said Yoanna German as she broke down crying. "I would take them to the park instead to play baseball with them. But one day, I can afford Disney and I'll take them," she said with a small laugh.

German did the most domestic chores in his house while his mother worked and his two brothers—Victor, 29, and Jonathon, 19—focusing on work, college and their personal lives. He would cook for the whole family, clean the bathrooms and go grocery shopping.

"Geuris—he is special to me," said his mother proudly. "He helps me out so much."

German, regardless of the economic burden placed upon him, was able to attend college through the Education Opportunities Program (EOP), a financial aid program that helps bright but poor students attend and transition into the college life.

He has always enjoyed learning, even getting accepted into the Engaging Latino Communities for Education (ENLACE) program when he was in 7th grade. This program exposes low-income Latinos who have shown academic merit to a variety of science and math courses. In his six years of being enrolled in ENLACE, he befriended Derrick Canales, another student who comes from a disadvantaged background.

"He can be a little too overconfident at time," said Canales with a smile on his

face, his square-rimmed glasses perfectly framing his face. "Geuris can be an overachiever and would underestimate some classes. But he would always go the extra mile in studying and asking questions if he didn't get the material."

German's impressive high school Grade Point Average of 91, despite his economic handicap, made him eligible for EOP. The program has a graduation rate of 84.6 percent, according to Cheryl Hamilton, the Assistant Director of EOP at Stony Brook University.

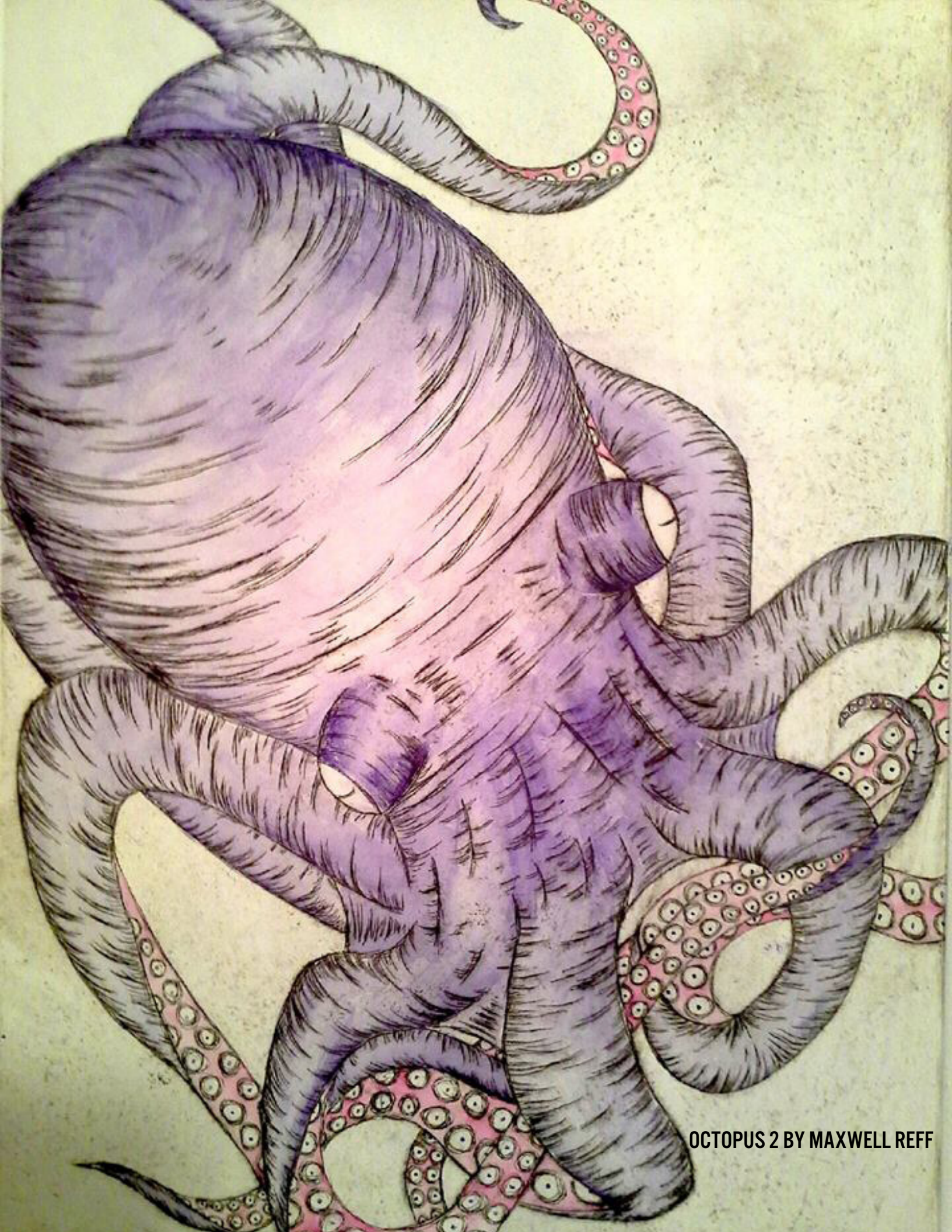
"If it weren't for EOP, I wouldn't have done well as I have done so far in college," said German with conviction.

The program gives an annual \$900 book stipend and provides students with advisors and counselors who guide their students throughout their college careers, setting them up for networking opportunities and programs. It also makes its new students attend a five-week immersion program in the summer, where students have to take four types of vigorous classes. This prepares them for their freshman year of college.

"The EOP advisors tailor themselves around each individual," said Isaiah Thomas, an EOP senior who also relies on a one-parent income. "When I first started college, I was struggling to keep up with my schedule, and my advisor would call me to remind me when my next class will be."

German, even with his financial aids and grants, needed to take out an annual loan of \$5,500 and is now at a work-study program on campus where he works \$11 an hour for eight hours a week. He wants to add more hours in the near future, hoping to make time between his heavy course load and the many study groups he attends.

"I just remember my dreams and what I want to achieve," said German with a nonchalant shrug. "And that's how I get by."



OCTOPUS 2 BY MAXWELL REFF

# LITTLE BIRD

## RONNY REYES

It happened at the corner of Fantasy and Eternal Solitude, which is not a metaphor of any kind but the actual names that the streets would be given by the government in the early 21st Century.

But in 1998, on that South American corner, I stood at the roof of my home--a simple, three floored apartment structure, of which my family occupied the first. Despite the wind blowing in my eyes, I looked past the strange, muddy river behind my home. I looked past the house of the crazy old river-woman whose dogs bit a hole in my older brother's leg. I looked past the crime infested stairway built into the side of the tall hill on the other side of the river. I looked past the old, abandoned textile mill, which my mother used to tell me was an old castle where witches would live and cast spells on anyone foolish enough to wander the stairs at night. I looked past it all towards the very top of the hill across the river, to the movie theater airing a flick that I could not yet pronounce at the time, "Saving Private Ryan."

Who was Private Ryan? Why did he need saving? I didn't know. I didn't care. What I did care about was the fact that my older brothers went to watch it without me. Those scumbags. They thought that just because I was five-years-old at the time I wouldn't understand the film's narrative, but the truth was that they just didn't want to spend an extra 500 sucres on me. You know what else costs 500 sucres? Two bags of popcorn. So while they relished in their buttery snacks and thrilling movie, I was left alone at home with a bowl of chicken-foot soup. But there was no way my five-year-old self would accept such injustice. And in order to right that wrong, I hatched a plan of such sweet revenge.

It was a simple scheme. I would fly off the roof, crash through the theater's ceiling, steal my brothers' snacks, and dump the popcorn on their heads. The look on their

stupid faces would certainly balance out the misery that they had caused me. But then a serious question dawned on me. Could I fly?

Everyone called me "pajarito," little bird. It was nothing more than a colloquial term to describe the youngest child, the chick-of-the-family. But could there have been more to it? Was I really a bird? There had to be some truth to my nickname. I was at the edge of bird and boy, wondering if just a leap of faith, like the type so many young birds take, would release my earthly shackles and allow me to soar past the river, past the crazy woman's house, past the stairs, and past the old textile mill.

But faith needs a preacher, so I went to the one person who I felt I could trust with the truth, my oldest cousin, Jose-Carlos. He was a petty thief, a spoiled brat, a wannabe punk rocker and a sorry excuse for a skater, but to a pajarito, he was a cool rebel who could easily beat the third castle in Super Mario Bros. So I asked him if I could fly, but my preacher of truth was just too busy watching reruns of The Simpsons on TV. So I begged and pestered him, wanting to know the secret behind my nickname, until he finally grew annoyed enough to tell me what I needed to hear.

"You're a pajarito," he said. "Of course you can fly. You can go anywhere no matter what anyone says. People are always going to try and hold you down, but you're a bird who flies. Never forget that you can fly anywhere."

That was it. That was all I needed to hear.

And so in 1998, on the corner of Fantasy and Eternal Solitude, I took a leap of faith. I believed in what my preacher had said. I believed in the same spiritual powers that my mother believed in. I believed in the nickname that I was given. And I believed in my revenge. So I jumped. And I fell.



# OBSERVING

COURTNEY GERACI

On a roof top  
peering out the window.  
Pine trees, highways, buildings,  
and the sun shining on Lake  
Superior.

Restaurant on the roof floor.  
Looking down at Minnesota.  
School buses, cars, rollerskaters,  
but not a boat in site.

I stand up here,  
way high off the ground from down there.  
I can see for miles,  
but no one can notice me.

The view changes,  
ever so slightly,  
but my mood stays the same.  
All those colors sinking into my eyes,  
as it all passes me by.

I stand up here,  
Receive my glimpse,  
Then take the elevator back down to my room.  
I think "goodbye",  
as no one watches me leave.

# STRANDED AND SURROUNDED BY NICK CAGE: TALES FROM THE EMPLOYED WORLD

JULIANNE MOSHER



ARTWORK BY HOLLY LAVELLI

I was at work when I had a realization. It was early August and I had just started my job working in the film industry. My life was good: college was done, I was making money, my cats were plump and healthy – what could go wrong?

Every morning I would stroll into work at a major television network that was in charge of playing the movies and shows that flow through your tubes. It was great there. I felt safe. For 12 hours a day, I used my \$40,000 Stony Brook University degree, and it was glorious... but then I started to feel weary.

It was October. Clowns were surfacing in the woods surrounding Long Island. Murderers were crawling out of their crypts near the already haunted Pilgrim State. Halloween was approaching – a holiday made famous for its tricks and treats. But no. Not there. Not at that job.

I saw the leaves on the trees outside turn from a potent green to beautiful shades of orange, brown and red. Red. Like blood. Fake blood like in the 2015 film, Blood Sand.

A b-list flick that had only one star that looked vaguely familiar, Mitchel Musso, (of the famous Hannah Montana franchise), and a surprise cameo appearance by Jamie Kennedy. The film was meant to be a new, terrifying tale of horror that we began showcasing often at my place of work.

My job plays movies on all 12 of our networks over... and over... and over again. I get to watch the same things over... and over... and over. Blood Sand is always on – especially in the spooky season of fall. It was on so often that it became real.

The movie starts off with a group of college kids partying on the beach during spring break. But then, something goes wrong. Their black Saab convertible 9-3 mysteriously dies overnight. The group is asleep inside the car. One person gets out. He gets sucked into the sand, screaming, crying “NO.” The sand eats him whole.

The acting is horrid, as is the fake blood. Everyone always jokes with me when it comes on to play, “Hey Julianne... That’s your car!”

It was my car. I had the same vehicle outside in the parking lot.

Nothing could go wrong, though... right?

Wrong. Things began to get weird. My car

started to make a humming noise as I drove to work that horrible, horrible day.

It was a Monday morning. I settled into my hub and began to look through the day’s paperwork. I put the weird sounds my sad little Saab was making out of my mind. It was nothing.

I started to look through the log and began to notice Blood Sand on back-to-back. That’s strange I thought to myself. Aren’t we going to at least break it up a little bit? Why not throw something else into the mix like we usually do?

But I shrugged it off.

It was 12 p.m., and I was on my fourth feature of Blood Sand. The lights started to flicker and the room fell dark. I turned around and nobody was there. Everyone had left. I felt uneasy and heard my co-worker scream in the distance, “GET OUT WHILE YOU CAN!”

What’s going on!? What is happening! I started to scream internally. I felt my heart beating faster and faster as the screens surrounding me showed nothing but static. This isn’t supposed to be happening. Who is fucking with my networks!?

The room went pitch black. I felt a cold breeze graze across my arm. Channel one turned back on. A scene from Gone in 60 Seconds appeared on the one screen.

Nick Cage’s face smoldered at me.

What the fu... another screen turned on. Nick Cage in Stolen showed up. Then again in Valley Girl. Then again in Next. Then again in National Treasure. Over and over Nicolas Cage was staring, deep into

my soul, surrounding me on every single screen from one of his 8,000 movies. I was alone. I was scared.

I ran out. I busted down the door of the abandoned office and ran to the parking lot. I could hear Cage’s voice trailing behind me, “You will not be saaaaaved.”

Then it was morning. I woke up startled and confused, breathing heavily and shaking. It was just a dream. Thank God, Nick Cage wasn’t after me. I clearly must have been working too much.

I got into my car and drove to work. I played Blood Sand again and watched the plot unfold. The sand wasn’t actually the bad guy in it. It was the weird sea monster with glowing tentacles that pulled the poor assholes into their demise. How stupid. How far-fetched.

It was 7 p.m., and I was the last one to leave the office. The parking lot was deserted and I climbed into my little convertible and put the key into the ignition.

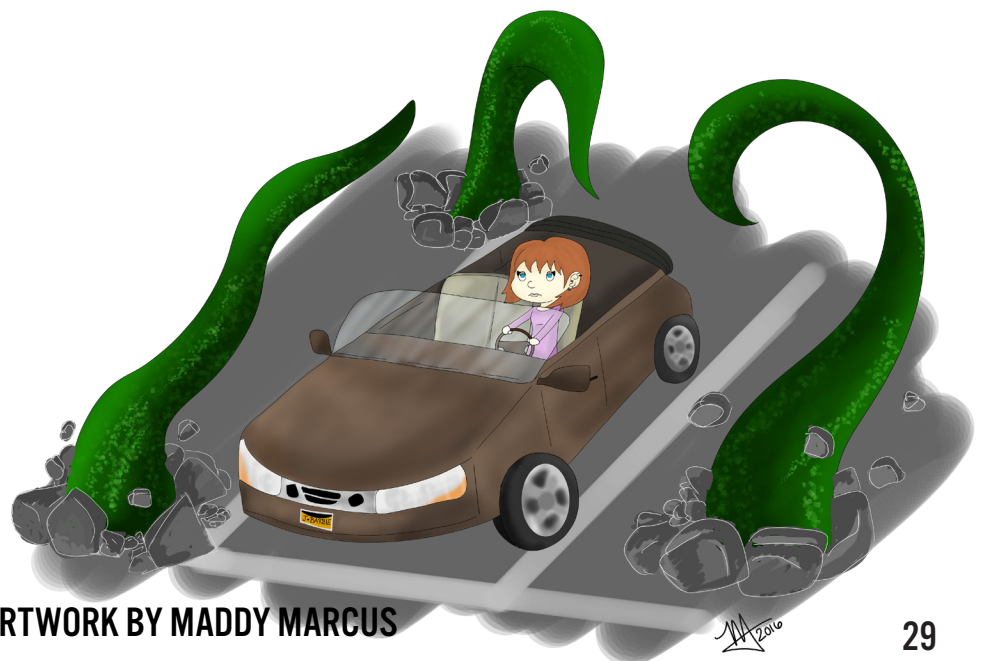
She purred, but didn’t start.

I tried again. She wouldn’t kick over.

All of a sudden in the darkness of the networks parking lot, I saw the glowing green tentacles of the Blood Sand monster crackling out from the pavement.

Oh my God, I’m going to die. What is happening? Who is doing this!?

Then... I heard it. I heard Nicolas Cage’s hearty and robust laugh in the distance. He was coming for me.





# SUN



## KEVIN FUENTES

2016 has been a monumental year for fans of Pokémon. It honestly feels like no other franchise has celebrated a yearly anniversary like Pokémon did. Under the 20th anniversary there were new additions and remade classics to the trading card game, a notably good season of the XYZ anime, a Super Bowl commercial, multiple events such as the Twitch Watches Pokémon marathon and other developments that revolved around celebrating the long-lasting phenomenon.

Of course, there were also new games such as Pokken Tournament, the Pokémon-based fighting game, that was released outside of Japan earlier this year. Pokémon GO also became an instant success. Although it is not perfect, it is enjoyable and admirable for what it has accomplished. Even the original versions of Pokémon Red and Blue were re-released digitally, which is a rare occurrence when it comes to The Pokémon Company. They remake old games but they have rarely re-released one of their previous entries for another device, even if it was a Nintendo handheld or console.

These game releases and events ultimately culminated in the release of Pokémon Sun and Moon, the game that serves as the introduction of the “7th Generation” of Pokémon and brings new features to the series - new game mechanics, characters and of course... pokémon, as well as the return of previous mechanics that were well desired like character customization. Perhaps the most exciting aspect of this entry is that it has all the potential to revitalize the series and to maintain interest in the franchise for the near future.

Before getting into all of the new mechanics and features for the upcoming title, it would be best to take a look of some of the new pokémon that can be trained and captured throughout the game. The three starters for Sun and Moon are Rowlet, Litten and Popplio, based on an owl, cat and sea lion respectively. In addition to these starters, other new pokémon within Sun and Moon are based on a plethora of creatures and objects including woodpeckers, sardines, orangutans, bee flies, donkeys, mongooses, meteors, mushrooms and the obligatory sand castle.

Naturally, there are new legendary pokémon for each version as well in the form of the sun lion, Solgaleo and the moon bat, Lunala. A new group of pokémon were also displayed in the form of the “Ultra Beasts” which appear to be created beings that could rival legendaries or pseudo-legendaries.

Sun and Moon takes place in the Alolan region, basically the Pokémon equivalent of Hawaii, which explains the design choices of the new pokémon that can be encountered in the game. With this in mind, there are numerous islands that make up the region that also contain their own guardian. Alolan forms of pokémon from past generations were also unveiled as pokémon such as Raichu, Vulpix, Meowth and Exeggutor, who have been given new forms and variations with changes in typing. With all of this in mind, there is a multitude of new pokémon designs that are surprisingly good, as there is a nice balance between the simple and cute pokémon and the complex and intriguing pokémon with only a few uninteresting additions for this entry. The Alolan forms



# MOON



of pokémon from previous generations range from absurdly silly (alolan exeggutor and alolan dugtrio are the first that come to mind) to unexpected improvements (alolan sandshrew and alolan ninetales are noteworthy examples). My only gripe with this is that the first generation of pokémon got most of the love when it came to getting alolan forms.

The new mechanics that are introduced in Sun and Moon serve their purpose in keeping things fresh as a multitude of features develop a distinct identity for the Alolan region. Other features go above and beyond in allowing players to interact with their pokémon and traverse through each island of the region. In Sun and Moon, Z-moves are introduced and basically serve as an incredibly powerful, type-based move that can only be used once per battle like mega-evolution. A Poké-Finder photo system is also displayed, allowing you to take pictures of pokémon in various environments. Another prominent feature within Sun and Moon is Poké Ride which provides quick access to rideable pokémon that allow you to travel throughout the

Alola region and reach blocked off areas in a manner similar to using HMs such as Surf or Rock Smash. As for multiplayer features, a festival plaza was introduced that allows you to interact with other players by trading and battling and to take part in activities to gain “festival coins” which are essentially “battle points” from the previous generation of Pokémon. A new multiplayer battle was introduced in the form of the “battle royal” where 4 players face off in a free for all type of battle where the winner is determined once the one trainer runs out of pokémon. It’s about time that this game mode was officially introduced but I expected more out of the multiplayer features or at least something better than the festival coin system.

Overall, the impressions received by this entry were optimistic to say the least. The majority of the new features and mechanics are serviceable distractions or additions that provide some nice convenience. Most of the new designs for the pokémon had admirable qualities. For those that enjoy post-game content, the Battle Tree location will hopefully provide a challenging

battle system where you’ll encounter noteworthy trainers of the past in battles that will likely garner the interest of long time fans. Player models were thankfully upgraded and player customization was also reintroduced. In terms of gameplay the premise is essentially consistent with each title, you explore various locales as well as battle and trade pokémon. There isn’t really any drastic change in gameplay, the features, revisions and new pokémon are what will ultimately serve as the main draw for this entry. Possibly the most exciting premise of Sun and Moon is that it truly feels like a celebration of the Pokémon franchise as a whole, an aspect that hasn’t really been replicated by many of the past entries. For 20 years the Pokémon franchise grew continuously, impacting the lives of many and becoming a cultural phenomenon. At this point if The Pokémon Company continues to promote the franchise as they have during this year, then it will only continue to thrive.



# SNAKEHEAD

DEMI GUO

Evan Jackson Leong, 37, has been working on Snakehead, a film about the New York Chinatown underworld, for nearly 10 years. He is best known for directing the 2013 Sundance selection film, Linsanity.

### **D: What jump-started the idea for Snakehead?**

E: I was inspired by the story of Sister Ping in New York Chinatown. The story of what she represents in the community, but also what she did and the way it all happened, was all very intriguing to me. I realized that's a story that I've never seen on film or in movies, and I know a lot of strong Asian women in my life that aren't necessarily dragon ladies and aren't necessarily submissive, they're three-dimensional. But there's a lot of powerful and strong woman leaders in the community and I can relate to that. So I know what she is, I know what kind of Chinese woman she is, so I wanna make a movie showcasing a Chinese woman, an Asian woman in this country.

### **D: What do you seek to do for the image of Asian, and especially Chinese, women in America?**

E: As an artist growing up, all my heroes were black or white...and there were no Asian heroes, no Asian American role models, no one I could look up to. The first time I saw Big Trouble in Little China was the first time I saw an Asian character speaking English without an accent. Some of them do, but not all of them. I want to make stories that I can see myself in. More importantly, you create these stories, these characters and these role models. I do it for myself, obviously, but I also know the impact it has on a kid. It's not necessarily that you're gonna be the next Jeremy Lin or the next Justin Lin or the next Sung Kang, but at the same time there's an idea there that's like, "Oh, I could do that. I could become something, what I want. These guys followed their dream and they did it." It wasn't easy for them, and their story is one of hardship, but at the same time it's such a powerful thing to see that. One man embodies that, then all of a sudden America looks at you differently. I guarantee that everyone was looking at every Asian baller differently after seeing Jeremy Lin doing it.

### **D: How old were you when you first saw someone Asian on TV without an accent, without that sidekick role?**

E: With Big Trouble in Little China, so it was in the 80s sometime. And it had kung fu elements, right? It was well-received, at the same time it was also anti-received. There were boycotts, they were protesting about this "fantasizing of Chinatown." I get that too, everyone is valid to their opinion. For me, it represents something different. I'm sixth-generation Chinese American, so I'm in a completely different perspective than some of these other generations. My family's a lot more established in the community, so I'm the future of what you guys are all gonna be. I grew up feeling like the majority. In San Francisco, I never went to a school not dominated by Asians.

### **D: At what point did you move to New York, and what difference do you see between the communities here and there?**

E: LA is just culturally different. I think, and I talk about this with everyone, about Chinatowns around the world, right? Chinese towns, Asian American communities, they adapt to the environment that they're in: the Vietnamese in Texas or Louisiana, the Chinese in Houston, and the Chinese in Mexico and the Chinese in Spain, they all adapt differently to the environment. Yet they still have the same sort of core elements that we have, so we share those things. The good thing about LA and New York is that there's a lot of Asians, so you don't have to worry about those things. Just in terms of community, there's a lot more community events here.

### **D: Sounds about right. What've you been working on between Linsanity and Snakehead?**

E: I've always been working on Snakehead, Snakehead's been my 24/7. I moved out to New York to make Snakehead.

### **D: You've been working on it for eight, nine—**

E: It'll be 10 next year. When I was on the third draft I thought, "Let's go live in New York," me and my wife, so we could make a movie. Moving out here I'd have to build all-new relationships, find new people, so I worked at MGB for about two years then I quit my job, like, "I'm gonna make my movie." Two weeks, two of them blew up. I was really surprised 'cause I was doing it on the side. As an artist you just do things that you care about. If there's no money or whatever you still do it 'cause you want to, and you care so much about the subject matter. Usually those are the ones that really come out beautiful because there's this good energy behind it. That was one of those projects that a lot of writing time. I've got like 10 projects that I'm working on now. Documentaries, you kind of wait for the moment to happen, and so Jeremy was like, "All right, that's just one we're gonna do at some point," finished, and then it blew up and we were like, "Yeah, let's do that. Let's put Snakehead on hold and stay on for about two years to make the documentary." And then here we are. Three years later. I wanted to make it three years ago because, basically, we're raising money. It's hard to raise money for Asian American funds. We're not proven to make the money back, we're not proven to make box office money. Indie films in general is a dying cause. A lot of people don't watch it. You see great films in theaters, but no one's there. It's hard to make money off indie films anymore, so raising and fundraising I was like, "You know, I can't do try to chase this money anymore, I just need to make it." 'Cause I know I can make it. You know, movies are expensive. Forty million dollars, four million, four hundred, four thousand; you can make a movie at every single level with those, it just depends on what you want to do to do it, right? What you want to give up, what you want to juxtapose for the story. Sometimes you can't do sci-fi for a living, but maybe you could. Maybe you could, if you knew the right way to tell the story, then you could. For me, the movie was like, "Okay, well, I've always imagined if I had to scale it down, then I could do it. if I got to scale up, this is what I can do." I could add bigger shit, I would have to get a smaller fight scene.

**D: In terms of the storyline, I know there are other indie films and web series set in Chinatown based off very similar material. I recently worked with some people in Chinatown who were involved with gangs from about the 50s to the 80s, and I know they starred in some online series around those circumstances. So what are you bringing that's new to the table?**

E: That's a good question. I mean, I'm not from New York, and I know those 80s and those 90s people, they glorify it, they modify it. It's kind of like this crazy era that people talk about in their stories, about what happened. And I'm not actually making a movie from the 90s, I'm making a modern movie based in this time period, right now. It'd be naïve to say the world has disappeared, 'cause it's still here. It's just not as loud and big and well-known as everyone sees it, but it's still here on a different level. The underworld movies I love are Scarface, Godfather, Eastern Promises, things like that where those characters are universal. See how they do bad shit? Yeah, they're bad people on some level, but we find what makes them special. The difference is that they're relatable, and their stories are universal. And you don't have to be Italian, you don't have to be Russian, to understand them and understand what they're about and the issues that they deal with. I think what happens is we get a little stuck sometimes with glorifying something when we don't take care of the actual characters of the story. It was a really sad and crazy era; people died, a lot of bad things happened. People talk about it as like, "the old, good days," but if you're living there you didn't want to be around that, it wasn't a good thing. That's just a part of this story and it shows up in my trailers. It's not what I'm trying to tell. 'Cause with trailers, it's an easy thing for people to hook, but what I really want to share is Chinatown and what it means to me, and what it represents. There's that element, that one percent, that two percent that's all those gangsters, but there's a whole part of the

rest of Chinatown that's beautiful and cultural, and things that me and you like, like the comfort food. Things like the sites, smells and people, the funny, crazy shit that Chinese people do, I want to showcase those things as well. You do deal with the Underworld, but you know it's not all about the underworld. I think you make those characters. With gangsters it's like they become so much of a gangster that you forget to see that, you forget to see that they're humans too. You know all the Triad movies, they deal with real life because they know real gangsters and they portray them as full, three-dimensional characters. Yeah they do some bad shit and maybe you might do that, but if you take out that part of their life, they got a family, they got kids, they got all these things that're responsibilities that everyone else has.

**D: So how far along in the movie are you now?**

E: We're moving into production, we're gonna do a couple of small productions coming up and then the bulk of it is in February.

**D: And when do you expect it to be finished?**

E: Who knows, movies take a long time. It took 10 years. Obviously I'm not gonna rush to finish it, but it is what it is. It's just, it could be done quick, it could be done long, depending on how everything kind of works out. I mean, you know, it has to be good, so we're gonna rework it until we make it good.

**D: Were there any points when you really felt like giving up?**

E: I guess I've never really given up on this. Definitely there were moments of frustration. Lots of frustration. Never giving up, because at the end of the day I know I can just do this by myself. I run around with the camera, find someone who's going along with me in front of it. And if I had to, that's what it's gonna be. I think I'm lucky I have a very supportive wife. She believes in me, so I'm not alone. She keeps me in check, but it's frustrating for sure. And you could point at all these opportunities and you could point at all these things in Hollywood, but at the end of the day if I'm

not livin' to it and making some great work, then we're kinda playin' about. I've been through failures, and I don't look forward to them, but I do know when you do fail, that's when you grow. And when you figure out what you're gonna do that's very empowering, right? Those are the biggest moments when you go down, but then you shoot wayyyyyyy back up. And then you fall again, and you shoot way back up. There's always a negative to a positive and a positive to a negative, and hopefully you wanna be more in the upswing and choose that right path 'cause you only figure it out by failing.

**D: What do you think's happened since Linsanity came out? What's happened for you, what's changed for you, what you think might've changed in the way Asian Americans are seen?**

E: I didn't really change much as an artist but everyone looked at me different and my career looked different because this moment happened. Jeremy was the same player before and after, he was on a national progression to getting better and he had a hot streak basketball game which was really great and powerful. But I think people recognize that moment as that next plateau, where everyone's like, "Oh! Wow, you didn't think you could do that," or you never got the chance to do that. For me, having the opportunity to do something like that, it definitely elevated everything I did 'cause everyone's like, "Okay, what are you gonna do next?" They care about what you're doing because, "Oh, you did a good job on a good story."

**D: I know your other films took a long time to direct too. Is Snakehead going to be the longest one to make?**

E: Oh, for sure. If this is going to be my first and my last, I'm fine with that. Hopefully it's not my last, but we'll see.





**M**ost people think my bookcase is chaos. I don't organize my books alphabetically, chronologically, or by genre. But there is a system and to me, it somehow makes sense: I arrange my books according to what authors I think would enjoy each other's company. Catherine Lacey resides next to Flannery O'Connor. Colson Whitehead next to Sherwood Anderson. Ann Beattie next to F. Scott Fitzgerald. In this unconventional and somewhat bizarre arrangement, living authors rub elbows with the dead.

Until recently, I never gave the fact that I read contemporary novels much thought. I always regarded them as inseparable from the rest of literature, some even more compelling than certain classics. It was not until my American Literature professor informed the class that he refused to read contemporary novels that I realized such a literary proclivity even existed. When asked why, he said he'd rather read something that had "stood the test of time."

I was baffled. How could he think this? This man wrote poetry—didn't he realize that his view undermined his own work? Did he really think the words he wrote would lack value until they aged for a few decades? That until then, he was just writing into a black hole?

I told myself that the professor's aversion was ridiculous, perhaps the result of too many years spent in academia, and that the majority of people would see it this way too. But then I found another offender. Then another. And then another. Their reasons followed a similar logic: if a text had persisted in the canon for a long duration of time, it has a better chance of being a worthwhile read. It had "stood the test of time."

The test of time. Most of culture is not subjected to it—we don't hesitate to listen to a song, see a movie, wear a style or use a device just because it is new. But this isn't the case with new fiction (or modern art, which undergoes similar scrutiny). Within the finite number of pages we can digest during our lifetime, we are more reluctant to take a chance on a text with no received opinion.

But we shouldn't be.

# WHY CONTEMPORARY

## What did Billy Shakespeare do for me?

JESSICA VESTUTO

Let me preface my point by saying I wholly understand the value of classics. As an English major and a person with a penchant for typewriters, I know and appreciate how the old informs the new. Before laptops, there were typewriters, and before contemporary writers, there was Chaucer. My plea is not to stop reading classics but to read contemporary texts as well, because they give us certain things classics cannot.

They give us more perspective. A product of their time, many older texts exclude the viewpoints of women and minorities, who either were not allowed to write (the word "poet" in Latin, *poeta*, is a masculine noun, as the Romans could not dream of a woman with this profession), or wrote work that did not survive, a result of what was then valued in literary circles. When I read an older text, in the back of my mind, there is always the question of who was silenced at the time.

Books are representations of life, composed entirely of human thought, bringing what people are thinking at the time to light. Because of this, Huckleberry Finn cannot be disassociated from the Civil War or *Crime and Punishment* from the Russian peasantry-aristocracy divide. The prejudices in these narratives are as obvious as breaks in an x-rayed bone. Time has drawn them out, and we are unable to not see them. But not all of today's prejudices are as obvious to us. Our fractures and breaks have not been collectively diagnosed yet. Contemporary

texts require that we exercise our own judgment on the world as we wait for the dust to settle, to realize whom we treat unfairly and what moments are defining our time.

I understand what Allen Ginsberg felt when he wrote, "I saw the best minds of my generation destroyed by madness, starving hysterical naked." Sixty years after he wrote this, I've had a similar feeling. But I don't think I can ever feel the way Ginsberg's audience felt at the Six Gallery in San Francisco when he first recited *Howl*. It was their generation he was writing about. Reading the poem, I can experience a version of what they felt, but I can only get so close to it.

The opposite is true, too. I think Anton Chekhov knew a great deal about what it meant to be human, and though his words have the ability to move me in a supremely real way, he will never know what it felt like to be a spectator of the tortuous 2016 election cycle. His work might recall a similar feeling, but he can only get so close to how it actually felt.

Enter Catherine Lacey. Karl Ove Knausgaard. Jhumpa Lahiri. Marilynne Robinson. Jamaica Kincaid. Some of "the best minds of my generation." They've seen my world—it's their world too. How they feel about it will work its way into their stories.

I don't want to wait 50 years to hear what they have to say.



# WHY CLASSICS

## Perserving the beauty of the English verse.

MICHELLE KARIM

**R**eading is still one of those rare activities that retains the power to keep a man in check with reality. I do not recall exactly when I started reading classics, but I do remember how reading the unabridged version of “Little Women” made me feel. It was a domino effect from then on. I would finish reading a 300-page novel within four days and then borrow another classic from the school library so I could read it over the weekend and start a new cycle Monday. Within a very short time, I had read almost all major 19th century literary works, from Daphne Du Maurier to renowned writers like Jane Austen and Charles Dickens— most of them British, with few of them male.

Classics have always succeeded in making the average reader revisit a concept or a personality trait through the characters that they construct. Reading “Pride and Prejudice” when I was 10 years old had a different effect on me than when I reread it at 20. It is hard to understand character choices and dissect personalities or plot defects when you are young and just tasting literature for the first time. The persona behind Elizabeth Bennett is probably one of the most misconstrued characters of literature and wantonly butchered in

movie and television adaptations, none of which succeed in representing her femininity and brashness to its full extent. Bennett’s character explores the concept of female individuality and independence, way before its time. The fact that a woman could go on with her life without having to settle for a man of higher status, regardless of their level of compatibility, is a theme that was brought up successfully during an era that cried out for societal conformity. The classic version provokes us to look for hidden meaning behind what she says and begs us to analyze her choices. Each time I read it, she seems like a different person- I understand her better. I might even know who she truly is some day.

Austen could have existed in this era and written the same story about a 20-something woman trying to settle down, find love and make it in the world. It would have turned out to be a lot more different. Somehow Tinder might have been involved. Or text messages at 1:30 a.m. And maybe even a failure to paint the layers of the protagonist due to the lack of a complex language form that induces deep thought and inner reflection into the human soul.

“My courage always rises with every attempt to intimidate me,” Elizabeth Bennett said and I can still relate to this

particular line of thought that has stood the test of misogyny and female psyche through the ages.

Contemporary literature strays away from using complicated Shakespearian or Victorian verse because they do not seem preferable for ingesting the written words in the modern era. The style used is much more conversational, much simpler and aimed to provoke thought in the most unseasoned of readers.

The argument here, therefore, would be how the usage of plainer language has taken away from the beauty of the English verse. Does the lack of a complex linguistic structure deprive us of the joy of rediscovering some of our favorite characters? Does it prohibit them from growing along with us as time moves forwards? Probably so, just because of the fact that people do not discuss modern literature as works of mystery that they cannot comprehend. There aren’t classes that revolve around understanding what they mean and what their purpose for existence is.

I remember the first time I picked up Jhumpa Lahiri’s “Interpreter of Maladies” on a recommendation by a cousin. The first chapter lacked the hook I yearned. I barely remember what it was about and so, it was laid to rest. It still lies on my shelf to this day, gathering dust, besides my old, worn out copy of “Wuthering Heights.”

Not all contemporary literature fails to fascinate me. I finished reading Alex Haley’s “Roots” in less than a week. The book glued to my hand, day and night, until I discovered Haley’s genetic connection to the story, which seemed to be a fiction of usually vivid detail. I’m not ashamed to say that the book made me wallow in others’ unfortunate circumstances for a couple of days after.

But so did “A Tale of Two Cities,” “Rebecca” and “Jane Eyre.” No, I didn’t let loose my waterworks with every book I read. It was also happiness, sadness and in some cases, depression. It was the English language in all its unmasked glory, untainted with colloquial contamination and perhaps the most beautiful thing that makes me want to pick up that dusty book from the forgotten shelf.

# IF HILLARY HAD WON

JANELLE CLAUSEN

Tonight, the country voted to be stronger together. It showcased our spirit of diversity and looking forward, serving as a rebuke to the American Nazi Party and the Ku Klux Klan who endorsed Donald Trump. It was a vote for a different kind of patriotism.

We are standing as a wall to a growing tide of right-wing populism around the world, ranging from France's National Front Party and the Brexit Vote to Hungary's literal building of a fence around its country. Germany's Chancellor Angela Merkel and her Christian Democratic Union, who called for taking in hundreds of thousands of refugees, is facing massive backlash.

But we, as the strongest country on Earth, have sent a strong message to the rest of the world. We respect our allies. We respect the plight of refugees, upon whom our country was built. Other people matter.

And of course, it goes without saying that President-elect Hillary Clinton broke the glass ceiling. Little girls across the country went to sleep knowing that they, too, could become president, so long as they are qualified. This election told women everywhere that a misogynist and man

who bragged about sexual assault cannot represent our country.

Meanwhile children in general have also been shown a case study that hard work and determination is a strong rebuttal to ignorance and bullying. Logic wins. We said no, even if it was timidly, to anti-intellectualism in the executive office.

Naturally, we have a lot of work to do. This election showcases that there are divisions within this country. Suffrage activist Susan B. Anthony, whose grave is covered by "I Voted" stickers, is smiling down upon the massive turnout of women that elected an accomplished woman president. It took 96 years, but better late than never.

We have voted for a constitutionalist who knows there isn't a 12th article of the Constitution, understands how a bill becomes law and knows that there's more than just the Second Amendment. She understands the right for a free press, relatively speaking. She does not turn crowds against a reporter for bad coverage. She does not threaten to sue and bankrupt people who speak against her.

I would be remiss to say that all is wonderful and that the country is unified. The country

is divided, roughly 50-50. There is an entire subsection of the population that feels left behind amid the tides of change and globalization.

This election has revealed an underbelly of America with xenophobes, misogynists, Islamaphobes and racism—some of it subtle, some of it blatant. It revealed some contempt among the public for intellectualism and patience, a yearning for a past that wasn't necessarily good for what most of the population will become the 2030s.

Congress, meanwhile, is under Republican control. It will be hard for progressive legislation to inch through, and it is honestly kind of sad.

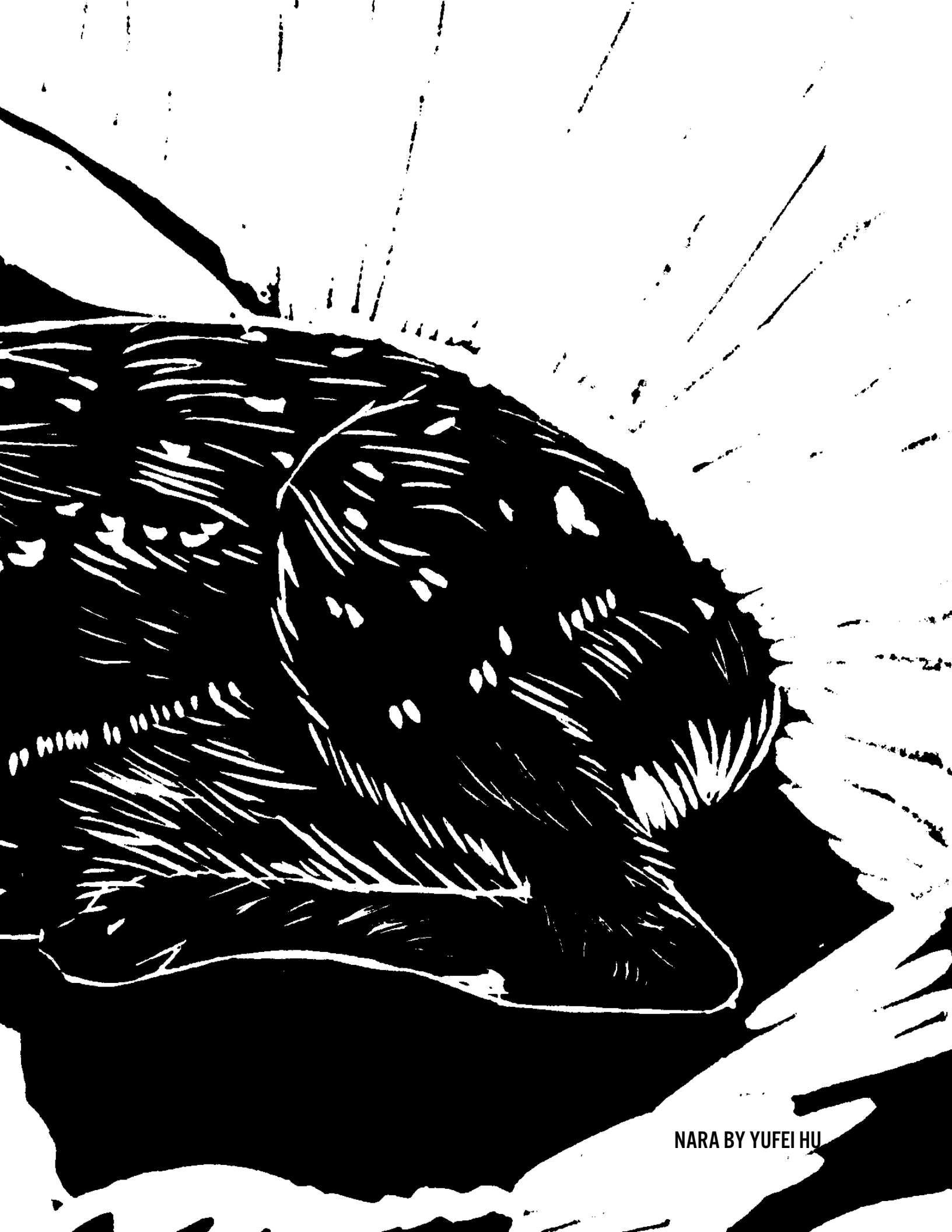
But I would much rather have Hillary Clinton, who has worked with Republican colleagues before in the Senate, than a loose cannon who doesn't understand how government works trying to fix government. I will keep my health care, many of my friends can stay in the country and my LGBTQ+ friends can rest assured that the most powerful person on Earth is behind them.

Thank you, America. Seriously.

ARTWORK BY JUSTIN CANAPERI







NARA BY YUFEI HU

# DEMOCRACY IN THE MIDDLE

**KERRY MURPHY**

Democrats and Republicans. Blue or Red. One or One. For most of America's history, there has been a system of two parties overwhelming the rest, whether it be called the Democrats and Republicans or the same values under older names. They've always been at war with each other for power within the government. This past election cycle has been a demonstration of the flaws within that system, as it does not display the feelings of the majority.

In George Washington's Farewell Address, he famously warned against the issues that could come from partisan fighting. "The alternate domination of one faction over another, sharpened by the spirit of revenge, natural to party dissension, which in different ages and countries has perpetrated the most horrid enormities, is itself a frightful despotism."

All those years ago, George Washington knew of the dangers that could come from this two party system, and how it would end up as a never-ending stalemate. Frankly, when we look into modern American politics, how can we say that we are not in this situation? In a place of stagnation, where there are two sides that only represent the totality of views of a

minor part of the population? In a place where one's voice feels drowned over that of the smaller group with the bigger microphones?

The biggest flaw within this system is that with the two polarized extremities, there is no place for a middle ground. We see within our Congress system that the two parties cause nothing to get done, as seen in this past congressional session, because congressmen are more focused on pushing the agenda of their party than they are for reaching a sense of middle ground. In the way Washington describes it perfectly, this idea of revenge is what seems to be driving it. It's as if the parties have to one up each other at every turn.

This is where I find most of the flaws within the two party system. In the past presidential election, we saw two candidates who represent the respective parties— and a lot of people caught in the middle. There are arguments for both sides, if we stick to the issues, but it's rare for one to meet someone who is completely one way or the other when it comes to every issue unless they are a party activist. There is no way that one can be.

America needs to change, and find a way to make progress and evolve as our Democracy forges on. With two polar opposites and a majority of people stuck in the middle, it seems as if most of America has a similar take on the systems that we have at hand.

I do not have a solution for this problem. Americans are stuck in the middle of this divide, and it is hard to find a way for us to move from it. There has yet to be a successful rise of a third party within our history, but that doesn't mean that there is not the potential to be. Even then, would the same cycle inevitably occur? Would this new third party not just simply replace one of the older ones? Is a multiparty system just another big division for us to handle?

It's hard to say. The most important thing at the end of the day is to have conversations in which we break down what can be done about the systems that we are involved with. As Americans, it is our right to question our government, how it operates, and do whatever we wish in order to fix it to be the way we desire it. The people have the power after all, it's just a matter of if they use it or not.



**ARTWORK BY WINNIE WONG**

# THE REAL AMERICA:

## WHERE DEMOCRACY DIES

KATHLEEN KISSANE

On Nov. 8, Donald Trump stood in front of our nation to give his acceptance speech as our 45th President of the United States. This may have come as a shock for many people, especially since Hillary Clinton won the popular vote but still lost the election. However, that is why we have the Electoral College. Our government allows everyone to have a voice, until that voice goes against what the people in power want.

The Electoral College was created to ensure each state is fairly represented and has some sense of equal say during the election. However, a candidate like Clinton, who was ahead in the popular vote, still lost to Trump because he made it to 270 electoral votes first.

While the system was created to fairly represent smaller states like Rhode Island alongside much larger states such as California, it overlooked one small thing: the votes of the actual people a representative democracy is supposed to empower. When the candidate with the most votes loses an election, it reinforces the idea many Americans have that their votes truly don't matter. So many people stay home on Election Day because of outcomes like this one. What is the point of voting if the candidate chosen by the people is ignored for the candidate the people in power have chosen?

People all over the nation are outraged at how many US citizens decided to sit this election out and watch from the sidelines. Americans are told they have a civic duty to go out and vote for who they want to see run the country, but are then told their votes were nowhere near as important as the Electoral College. In the 2014 census, a total of 318.9 million people resided in the US. Over 100 million eligible voters did not vote in the election.

While yes, it is extremely important to have a say in who will run the country, can we really blame people for believing their votes don't matter? Can we really look at write in slips that say "Harambe" and not understand why people just don't care anymore?

A majority of the votes in this 2016 election went to a woman who promised forward motion in progressive ideals. Clinton's platform consisted of supporting the DREAM Act and creating a path to citizenship for undocumented immigrants, advocating for a woman's right to control her own body by being pro-choice and expanding gun control legislation. Fair and square, more people in the US decided that a President with these ideals would be best to run our country.

So what did our government do? Elect. The.

Exact. Opposite.

Trump is pro-life. He wants to deport all undocumented immigrants and build a wall on the Mexican border to ensure no further illegal immigration and he also does not want to expand gun control legislation.

Trump has instilled a vice president that publically and repeatedly opposed same sex marriage laws, degraded women and belittled immigrants and minorities. So for the majority of you, who decided that a progressive, tolerant woman wouldn't be the right choice for our country, piss off.

Instead, if you feel women should be told what to do with their bodies, LGBTQ people, along with immigrants and minorities, should live in fear of having their rights taken from them, and guns should be kept in every household (because we all know how safe that is), then say Hallelujah because you're in the best damn country in the world.

But for those of you who performed your civic duty, went out, voted for Clinton and watched her lose even after winning the popular vote, you're living in the real America: a place where democracy means your vote matters, until it no longer serves a purpose to those who hold the power.







# CONSTITUTIONAL CONTEMPT: DONALD TRUMP AND THE FIRST AMENDMENT

JANELLE CLAUSEN

Almost never has a president shown so much contempt for the amendment that protects his right to tweet and express nonsense.

President-Elect Donald J. Trump seems to hate the first amendment. It does, after all, guarantee a freedom of expression, even if it paints someone in an unflattering way.

Hardly a day goes by where Trump doesn't refer to the "failing New York Times" or some other publication. He even finds time to criticize Saturday Night Live's portrayal of him or whine about Broadway actors telling Vice President-Elect Mike Pence they were alarmed that the Trump administration seemed so anti-diversity.

We saw a presidential candidate, inspiring his followers to revolt against a teenage girl who dared question him, get elected. "The arrogant young woman who questioned me in such a nasty fashion at No Labels yesterday was a Jeb staffer!" Trump tweeted on October 13, 2015. "HOW CAN HE BEAT RUSSIA & CHINA?"

A president (or someone attempting to become it) does not attack people, let alone teenagers, directly on Twitter. That's not normal. And in the event he does and the person is pelted with rape and death threats, as she was, he should be standing up for that person's freedom of speech. But I have yet to see him strongly denounce any of his rabid followers for attacks like this.

You can say "oh, it's not Trump doing this; stop blaming him for everything!" You're missing the point. His tweet inspired people to say they were going to curb-stomp her and piss into her bloodied mouth. They said she knew where she lived. They essentially tried to silence her right to question an authority figure.

There was no apology or condolences from candidate Trump.

Trump would later call out union leader Chuck Jones for writing an opinion piece against him. He "has done a terrible job representing workers," Trump tweeted on December 7, 2016. "No wonder companies flee country!" His office is now receiving threats too.

There was no apology or condolences from president-elect Trump.

Let's not forget the time Donald Trump pointed reporter Katy Tur out to a crowd of over 10,000. He was essentially inciting a mob against a journalist whose reporting, while honest, did not look kindly upon him. This was a blatant act of intimidation against the press.

Then, of course, Trump threatened to open up libel laws to financially harm newspapers that dare write a word against him. While I doubt he could force Congress to write any bills hurting the media, the spirit is clearly hostile.

Perhaps the worst offense of all, however, was when he championed punishing people for burning the American flag. He proposed either a year of jail or revoking someone's citizenship: both unprecedented extremes.

A conservative Supreme Court said in the 1989 Johnson case that burning the American flag is symbolic speech protected by the first amendment. It counts as expression, so long as it does not physically/violently harm someone, impede them from expressing a right, or count as obscenity. In fact, it technically falls under the highest protection since this is political speech, which is why the first amendment exists. Someone may burn the flag to say they disagree with government policies, abuses, that it doesn't represent

what they want in their country, and so on.

To take any steps towards infringing upon that is, in my opinion, construable as a domestic threat. I'm not saying I agree with American flag burning. But, as New York Times reporter Molly Ivins once said, "I prefer someone who burns the flag and then wraps themselves up in the Constitution over someone who burns the Constitution and then wraps themselves up in the flag."

Free speech is a pillar of our representative democracy. A strong press and an educated public, after all, are the key to fighting any form of tyranny. It was political speech, ranging from portrayals of the Boston Massacre to the writings of Thomas Paine, that inspired people to revolt against the British Crown.

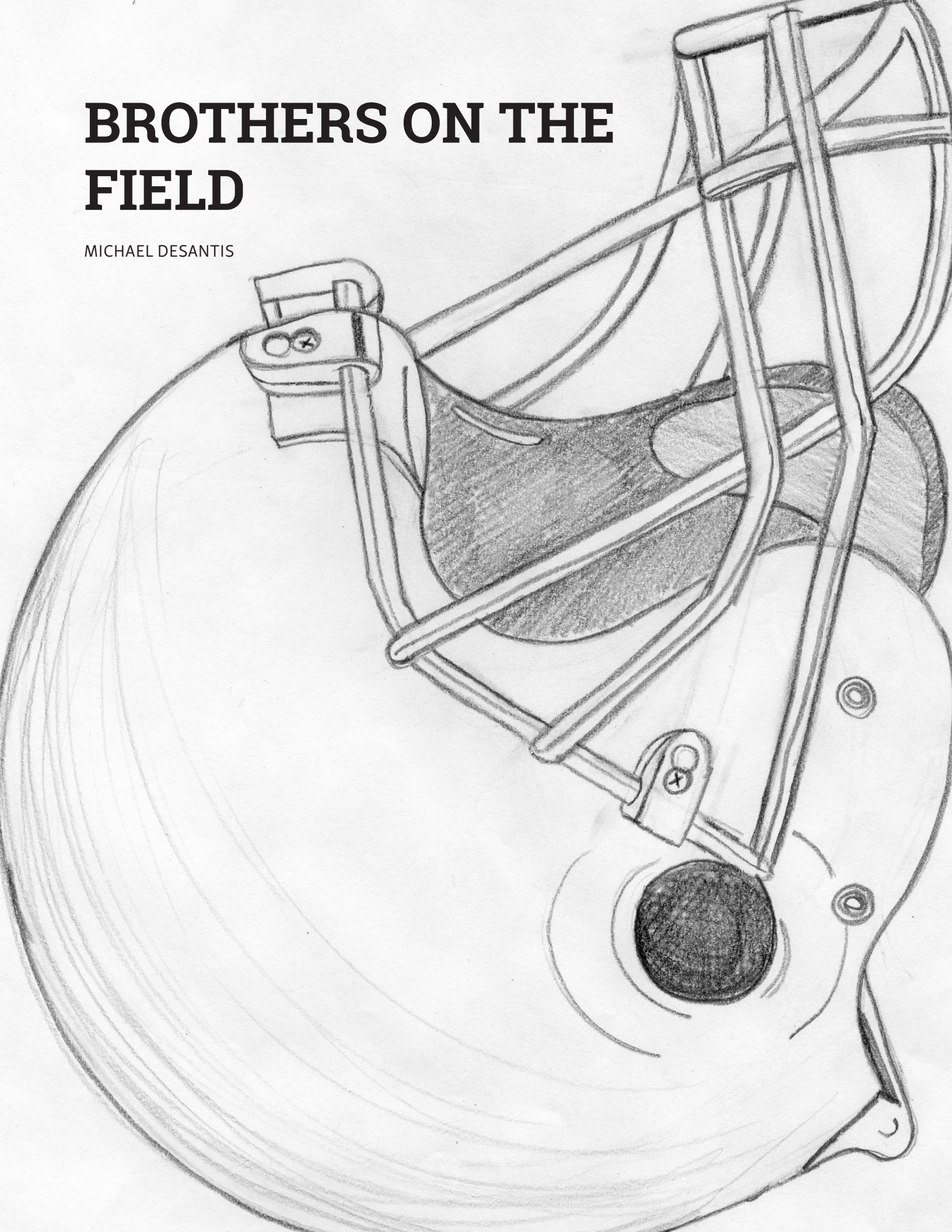
It was free expression that abolished slavery, gave women suffrage, drove the Civil Rights movement, and took down a sitting president who tried to illegally sabotage the opposing political party and obstruct justice—just to name a few things.

Yet here we are, dealing with a President-elect demanding "the press cover me accurately & honorably" so he has "far less reason to 'tweet.'"

Donald Trump's contempt of the first amendment and those who exercise it should not be tolerated. While he may never apologize for his wrongs, we should never let him silence our rights. After all, in the words of President Theodore Roosevelt, "To announce that there must be no criticism of the president, or that we are to stand by the president, right or wrong, is not only unpatriotic and servile, but is morally treasonable to the American public."

# BROTHERS ON THE FIELD

MICHAEL DESANTIS



Stacey Bedell and Jordan Gowins have quite a bit in common: they both play prominent roles on the Stony Brook Seawolves football team, they're both running backs and they're both having solid seasons. What most people may not know is that the two are cousins.

Gowins, a sophomore, joined the Seawolves this season after playing his freshman year at Boston College. His decision to come to Stony Brook was due in large part to the opportunity to play with Bedell, a redshirt junior who joined the Seawolves a couple of years earlier.

"I grew up watching him and my brother," Gowins said about his cousin "I never really expected to be playing on the same level and reaching for the same goals [as Bedell], so when the opportunity came, it was something I had to take. I don't regret it at all."

Naturally, Bedell shared the sentiment and was pleased to finally be able to compete with Gowins.

"It was definitely a good feeling for him to be joining me. He's my cousin," Bedell said. "We never had a chance to play together on the same team as kids."

Bedell and Gowins agreed that they shared a close bond throughout their lives. Since Gowins has arrived to Stony Brook, the duo have shared a house off-campus, thus spending a lot of time together.

In their first full season together at Stony Brook, Bedell and Gowins have been a force in the backfield: the two have combined 12 touchdowns and over 1,000 rushing yards in nine games as of Nov. 5. Bedell credits their contrasting abilities as the key that throws off opposing defenses.

"Our styles definitely complement each other well," he said. "[Gowins] is more of a power guy and I'm more of the fast, shifty dude. The defense is not going to know what to expect when he's in the game or I'm in the game. We can hit them with a different punch."

Gowins described the experience of being able to look to his left or right and see his cousin standing there on the field alongside him as "surreal." The two admitted to each enjoying a friendly game of one-upmanship, as long as it results in their team winning.

"When [Bedell] breaks a big run, I feel I've got to do the same, and vice-versa," Gowins said. "It adds fuel to the fire."

Their head coach, Chuck Priore, has taken notice of their friendship and how it equates to on-field success.

"It's pretty special," Priore said of his running backs. "When you play the same position, you have to root for the other guy who's taking some of the things you want to do, but they have a special relationship. I think they have a lot of respect for each

other. Stacey's older, and Jordan looks up to him, but Stacey doesn't treat him that way."

Bedell has rediscovered his stride this fall after a season-ending injury held him to three games the previous year. While Bedell has gotten the bulk of the work in Priore's offense, Gowins has undoubtedly been a crucial complementary player in the backfield. While the two will likely never be directly involved in exchanging the ball, barring a wildcat or lateral play, the two have still found a way to help each other on the field in the heat of the action.

"When we're in the game at the same time and one person is blocking for the other, I feel like we're going to get it done," Bedell said. "Because we're family."

Family has played a role in the running backs' fan support as well. Bedell and Gowins' parents, aunts, uncles and cousins all show up to support them every home game.

The feeling that Bedell and Gowins get from gazing into the crowd at their respective number 21 and 23 jerseys is just one more perk of the pair's familial status. At the end of the day, it's their skill that has made them successful. Priore thinks that their bond doesn't hurt, though.

"They're probably best friends first and teammates second," he said.

