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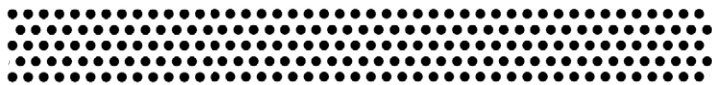
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Letter from the Editor



By Josh Joseph

So here we are. And here I am. Sitting in the Press office on the third floor of the SAC while an hours-long rainstorm continues outside.

The empty room is so quiet that I can hear the water drain from the roof through the red pipe that stretches from the ceiling to the floor. I think about putting on a record, but I don't. I need time to think, to write this letter — the first since I became executive editor in December.

I leaf through a stack of our past issues, finding the same kind of yearning and inertia in each editor's note. I delete sentences and retype them. I put a record on anyway, drowning out the sound of the water as the rain lightens on the window.

If you told me a year ago that I'd be here now, completely alone, devastated by a pandemic that has just passed its second peak, I would struggle to believe you. Back then, I'd always find someone here, regardless of what time or day I decided to bike over. Now, I sit here for hours at a time, slowly working out the layouts you see now to beat back the boredom. Having my fellow editors over for a meeting, even on Zoom, feels like a reunion every week.

There's a past that hangs in the air here. Paper plates, signs, posters and extra magazines left over from the pre-pandemic era. The writing on the whiteboards has been here so long that it's going to take more than an eraser to remove it — and someone with more determination than myself.

Ruminating on all the shit that's piled up can be isolating, as the future in which we emerge from our socially-distant cocoons inches further and further away. Staring at it too long, I feel like the atmosphere is thinning, and all the people who brought meaning to this place have drifted out of orbit.

Yet we're not completely alone. This magazine is a testament to the fact that despite the immense presence of COVID in our lives, we can do something together. Even in the face of the virus, our brains are still bursting at the seams with ideas — and we can put them in print. Like so many before, I'm sure this magazine will bring a smile to my face when I see it bound and printed, and I sincerely hope it does the same for you. If it does, please come to a meeting.

You might discover you belong here too.



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CRISTIANO,
RONALDO

FOOTBALL'S
ALL-TIME LEADING
GOALSCORER

BY JAMES BOWEN

It's official. Cristiano Ronaldo is association football's leading career goal-scorer. He netted goal number 760 against Napoli on January 20, and has now usurped legendary strikers Josep Bican and Pelé to reach the apex of footballing folklore. Cristiano stands out from Bican and Pele because he reached that apex during modern times, when the eyes of the world were glued to his every touch of the ball on TV and online. But despite the pressure of the astronomical expectations placed upon his shoulders, Ronaldo performed night in, night out. As a result, he's gained the reputation of a goal machine, having normalized the unthinkable: having more goals than games played. But things weren't always this way.

When Cristiano first stepped onto the field in 2002, his play style was uncannily similar to that of his footballing idol, Luís Figo. Both Portuguese right-wingers possessed sharp technical ability, flair and a cross-oriented play style. They contributed to their teams more through their assists than with their goal-scoring prowess — as Ronaldo's first 26 Champions League games proved. He netted a whopping zero times, yet today he stands alone as the leading goal-scorer in the competition's history with 132. So what sparked such a drastic change in Cristiano's play style? One man: Lionel Messi.

The diminutive Argentine has shared the headlines with Cristiano Ronaldo for the past 15 years, with a stranglehold over football's greatest prize: the Ballon d'Or trophy. They've been recognized for the honor on multiple occasions, with Ronaldo winning five and Messi earning six of the coveted awards. Each player pushed the other to reach greater heights and score more goals.

Before these two, Spain's Raul led the UEFA Champions League goal-scoring charts with 74. Today, Cristiano alone has nearly double that.

In football, the ultimate team prize is the FIFA World Cup — but on the individual front, it's the Ballon d'Or. Since Cristiano wanted to be number one, he needed that Golden Ball to cement his status as the greatest player in the world.

So in 2008, he made it happen. Ronaldo netted 42 times across all competitions that season, including a head goal in the Champions League final. That night in Moscow, Cristiano knew he'd accomplished his individual goal. Six months later, on Jan. 12, 2009, he was handed his first Ballon d'Or in Zurich, while Lionel Messi received the second-place medal — but they'd soon switch places.

The following year, in a packed Estadio Olimpico in Rome, Italy, Barcelona defeated Manchester United 2-0 in the Champions League final to knock Cristiano Ronaldo off the top of the footballing ladder. Now, it was Messi lifting the Golden Ball, prompting Ronaldo to head to Madrid to renew his quest for dominance. The rivalry was just beginning, with 40-goal seasons becoming the norm.

From 2009 to 2012, Messi became the first and only player to win four consecutive Ballon d'Ors — his final one courtesy of his record 91 goals in a calendar year. Cristiano's 63 goals just weren't enough.

But the following season would be his year. With 69 goals in 2013, Ronaldo won his second Ballon d'Or — and his tears let the world know just how much it meant to him. The rivalry stood at 2-4, with Messi still well in the

lead. But Cristiano was on his way. The only problem was a borderline existential question: Why?

Why score all these goals if there's no trophy to show for it?

To his doubters, Cristiano had a response of epic proportions.

From 2014 to 2018, Ronaldo won four of the five Champions Leagues, and was the top scorer in every single one of them. He broke the all-time Champions League record and — to this day — still holds the podium all to himself, with 17 goals in 2014, 16 goals in 2016 and 15 goals in 2018.

Upon bidding farewell to Real Madrid on July 10, 2018, Cristiano left the history books with 450 goals to his name. That summer, he took on a new journey at Italian outfit Juventus. Today, you can still tune in to the soon-to-be 36-year-old's goals — as he scores week in, week out.

As for Pelé, he claims his official record of 578 goals should actually be 1,283 goals, one that may never be eclipsed.

But if in a couple years' time, you hear Cristiano beat that record too, don't be surprised.

For CR7, it's never a matter of if — but *when*. ■

IF IN A COUPLE
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DON'T BE
SURPRISED.



JEFF BEZOS STEPS DOWN AS

CEO



AFTER
REALIZATION
IT WAS
TECHNICALLY
A UNION
POSITION

BY JUSTIN LIGASAN

Amazon CEO and founder Jeff Bezos, who has sat at the helm of the company for 27 years, stepped down on Tuesday. Bezos' resignation as CEO caused stock prices to stagnate as investors expressed caution about the company's future. Taking to Twitter, Bezos had this to say:



“HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS”

 **Jeff Bezos** ✓
@JeffBezos

I woke up one day and realized that my position as a CEO was technically a worker-focused body that provided adequately for my needs as a human being. I founded this company on the idea that anyone could get anything they wanted at any point they wanted, regardless of how (1/2)

6:66 AM · Feb 2, 2022 · [Twitter for Magazine](#)

310 Retweets 214 Quote Tweets 4.6K Likes

Notably, the resignation comes on the one-year anniversary of Bezos tweeting a picture of himself and Lizzo, and while Bezos denies claims that the stock drop has anything to do with him selling off shares to fund his desire “to be with a real Amazon” and “procure a DNA test to scientifically prove I am 100% her biggest fan,” many remain skeptical.

 **Jeff Bezos** ✓
@JeffBezos

many human rights violations it took. So I'm stepping down as CEO, but rest assured I will continue to stand on the shoulders of small children in Cambodia. (2/2)

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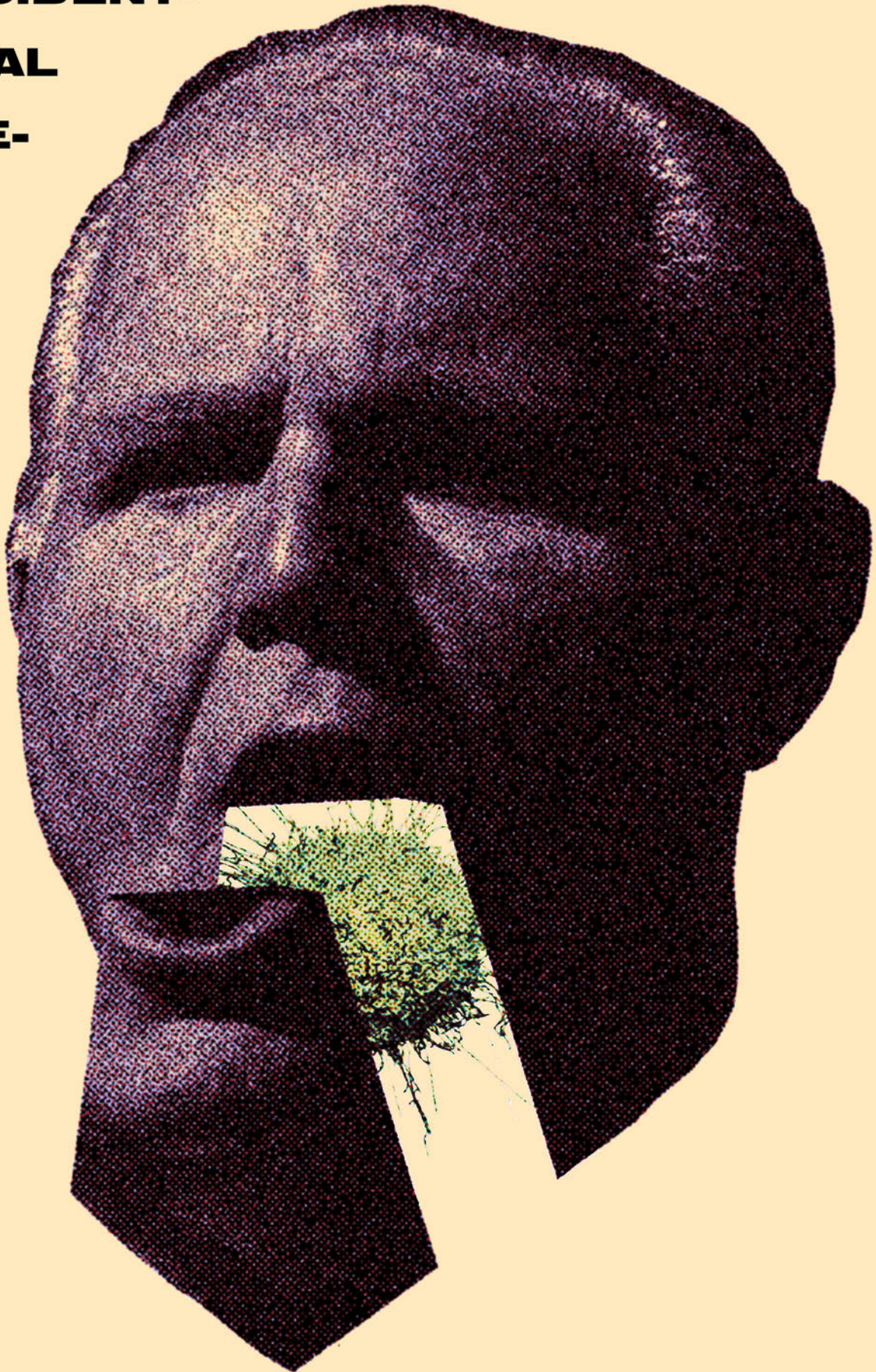
Amazon Union organizers were quiet about the decision, but given the paradoxical nature of the very term “Amazon Union,” there can only ever be an Amazon Union organizer for about three seconds. With Bezos' new position as chair of the executive board, he told sources that it was “only a matter of time before I can get the drones to a point where we can drop a crate full of Alexas on anyone whose brain waves signal they might be enjoying themselves.”

Shares quickly recovered. ■



**RUSH LIMBAUGH'S LUNG CANCER
TO BE AWARDED
PRESIDENTIAL
MEDAL
OF FREE-
DOM**

**BY
NICK
WURM**



**CIT-
ING** its contribution to society as a whole, President Joe Biden announced today that the lung cancer that killed noted conservative parasite Rush Limbaugh will be the latest recipient of one of the nation's highest civilian honors, the Presidential Medal of Freedom.

The malignant mass of cells was hesitant to disclose when exactly it began the work that cured the world of Limbaugh, but noted it was not always a sure thing.

"To be honest, I don't think I'm alone in saying I thought a heart attack was gonna get him first," the cancer said. "But this is America, so I pulled myself up by my bootstraps and got it done."

Limbaugh's lung cancer downplayed the award, saying any good, patriotic American in its shoes would've done the same.

During his announcement, President Biden told reporters he wanted to present the award to someone or something that actually earned it.

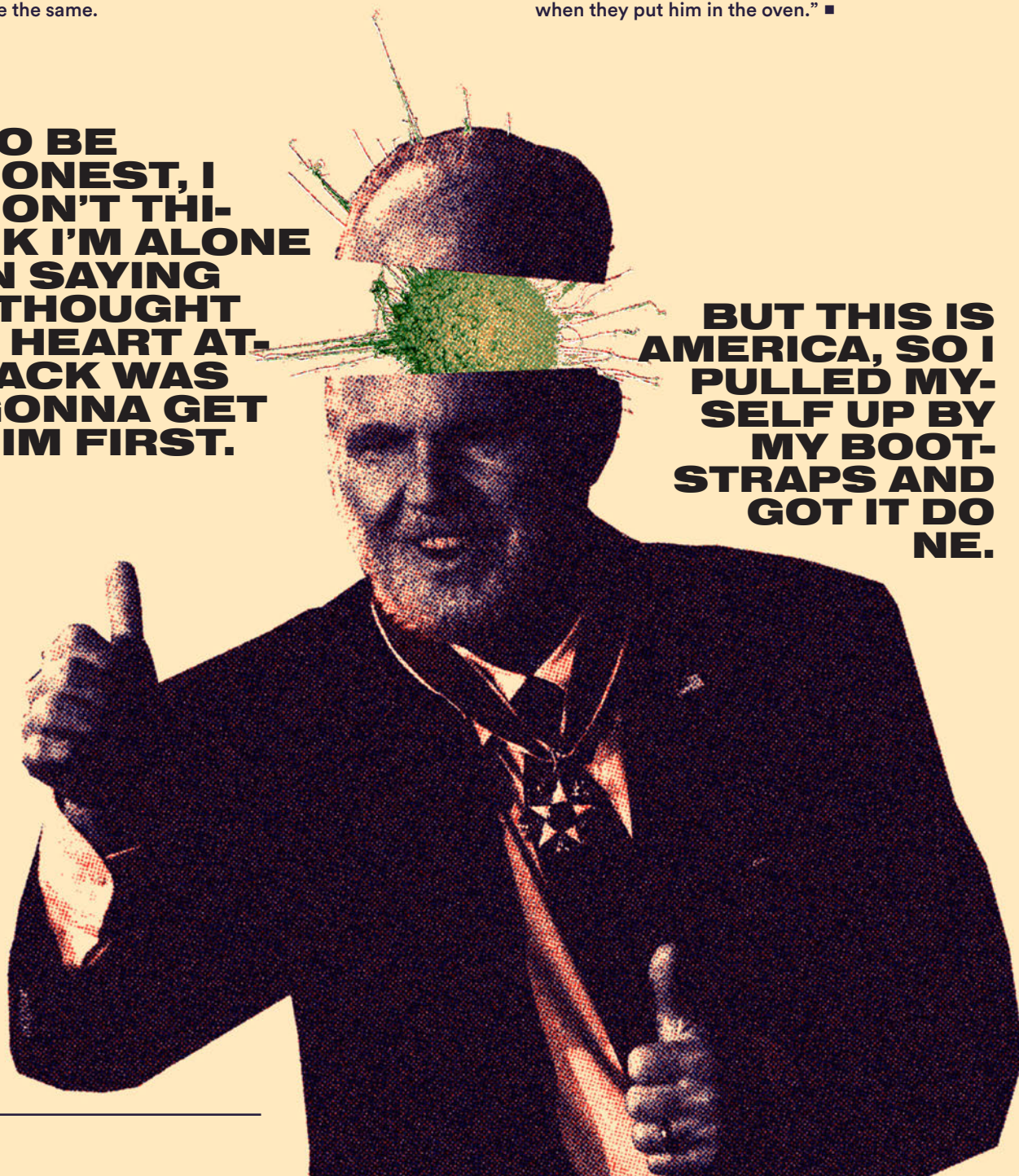
"Ya know, I was talking to George Soros the other day and he was saying how it was a bunch of malarkey when they gave it to Limbaugh a few years back," the president said. "So we wanted to bring back some of the prestige the award had when I got it."

A date for the ceremony was not revealed during the president's announcement, but the lung cancer assured reporters it would be heading to Washington after it was removed from Limbaugh's chest to attend his funeral.

"I spent a lot of time growing up in Rush's lungs," the cancer said. "I think I owe it to him to be there when they put him in the oven." ■

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NE.**




THE WORLD'S ECONOMIC CRISIS

ARE WE HEADED
TOWARDS AN
ECONOMIC
UTOPIA?

OR A DYSTOPIA?

THE WORLD'S ECONOMIC CRISIS





WHILE WE EXTEND THIS
UNDERSTANDING TO BOTH
OUR BIOLOGICAL AND
POLITICAL BODIES, WE DO
NOT DO IT TO OUR
ECONOMY — AND WE
MUST ASK OURSELVES
WHY.

The image of the political leviathan is that of hundreds of individuals forming a greater body. As depicted by philosopher Thomas Hobbes in his signature 1651 text *Leviathan*, this body does not reflect a singular entity, but the unity of hundreds of discrete persons, all of whom have, through an unwritten social contract, given up a fragment of their liberties to form the whole of civil society.

The Hobbesian body politic is much like our body in that its every part relies on the many others. Although it is a conglomeration of the disparate parts forming the leviathan's chest, its importance lies not in the fragments that constitute it, but in the whole they ultimately form. In this way, the body's very existence hinges on its individual members abiding by the social contract.

Our bodies can be perceived in a similar light. We do not characterize our hearts as independent despite their discrete functions; we do not disassociate ourselves from our lungs despite our ability to distinguish them from our esophagi. We can certainly individuate our biological features up until our very rudimentary cell composition — but we do not do this because we understand the value of interdependence when it comes to our body. We know how vital each organ is to our survival — and we know how crucial it is in constituting what we ultimately consider the self. While we extend this understanding to both our biological and political bodies, we do not do it to our economy — and we must ask ourselves why.

Our economy is a similar network of individual processes, every individual's destiny intertwined by a good or service. Where a good serves as a link between the consumer and the millions of agents contributing to its production, an act of service bridges two interdependent actors, both of whom are reliant on the other for their livelihood. Their fates are inextricable.

After all, what happens if the garbage collectors of the world wake up one morning and decide they no longer want to collect their neighborhood trash? What if all banana farmers divorce themselves from the supply chain, refusing to share the fruits of their harvest? What if the consumers of cheap commodities realize the inhumanity that goes into their production, resulting in a steep decline in demand? The economy undergoes what economists refer to as a shock. A widespread, undiversifiable shock erodes the life force of the economy, causing it to collapse. In this way, our economic system reflects a body. It is a marriage of integrated, interdependent actors, every one of whom has a distinct role to play. Their subscription to these

roles determines the health of the economic body. An inability to take care of one part of the body would result in a

casualty akin to an affliction in one's most vital organs. It would cause the system to weaken, determining if the economy will live on or if it will die.

This is the interconnectivity we were never told we are a part of. It is a democracy we all actively participate in. Through the simple act of purchasing a good or investing in a service, we are choosing not just which parts of our body ought to live on, but *how* they ought to live on — and this is jarring. It is jarring because it implicates us in our economic decisions, many of which are often conducted in a vacuum, enabling the afflictions of millions across the world. As global poverty is projected to increase significantly in the wake of COVID-19 and the impact of climate change is felt by the most vulnerable populations across the world, our unconscious economic decisions perpetuate such a reality, eroding the most vital functions of our body — and we are oblivious. We are oblivious because we choose to be — because we choose not to view the global economy as a singular body. If we did, every good and service would serve us beyond its material value for its ethical value; and the sweat and toil of the children mining the cobalt for our smartphones in the Congo would be our own sweat and toil; the sleep deprivation of the factory children illegally working overnight shifts to compose Amazon products in China would be our own sleep deprivation; and the large scale destruction of the forests in the Ivory Coast for cocoa extraction would be our own demise.

In the same way that we respond to pain in one part of the body as something to remedy immediately, we would see it as our priority to alleviate the pain of the many people and natural elements constituting our economic body. Our inability to do so is our tragedy.

As we veer towards a world of climate catastrophe and deepening inequality, it is critical now more than ever to consider how we want the economic body to live on. Do we want it to be preserved in its entirety? Do we want each part to thrive? Or do we want to impair certain organs for the embellishment of others, leaving our limbs under the constant threat of dysfunction and our tissues riddled with disease while we carry on with a painted face, fashioning only the illusion of a flourishing body? In the same way that our liver hoarding all of the body's resources would result in its destruction, the unjust distribution of wealth at the expense of both human and environmental lives will accelerate our species' demise.

So here we find ourselves — in an allegedly free world that has been organized in such a way that the global 1% possesses nearly half of all the world's wealth, while 99% of the world lives on less than \$52,000 a year. Exacerbated by the dominant global economic model, defined by economist Branko Milanovic as “production organized for profit using legally free wage labor and mostly privately owned capital, with decentralized coordination” and universally known as capitalism, this form of economic organization champions the idea of human freedom. One of its primary tenets is decentralization, which relegates the role of the central government to merely the protector of that freedom — of the right to private property.

Private property is central to every capitalistic economy, of which one's ownership over a product privileges them with the right to use it, to extract income from it, to determine its future and to enforce these rights through legal jurisprudence. In a society where our bodies are our most private assets, it is critical to consider where they fit amid this discourse surrounding private property.

Upon initial examination, it may appear that our bodies are privately ours. We have autonomy over their everyday functions. We have the ability to enjoy income from them through legally permissible wage labor — and we can theoretically determine their future in an economy absent of coercion. That is to say, we *choose* to work, we *choose* where we work and we can very well *choose* to leave our spaces of work if we so desire.

A deeper analysis, however, reveals these liberties to be an illusion.

Once we enter into an employment contract, we aren't entering into a consensual agreement as it may appear. We are legally prostituting our bodies to the market in exchange for a wage. We do this by suspending our bodily autonomy to those to whom we supply our labor. How is this any different from any other form of rental transaction, such as that of an apartment or a car? Both agreements are characterized by a temporary difference of ownership, in which an individual forgoes their private property to another in exchange for revenue — in this case a wage, though they are one and the same.

This idea of a legally abiding employment agreement as a darker human rental contract is not novel. It was recognized by philosopher James Mill in his 1821 text *Elements of Political Economy*, in which he notes that “the labourer who receives wages sells his labour for a day, a week, a

month, or a year, as the case may be,” while “the manufacturer, who pays these wages, buys the labour, for the day, the year, or whatever period it may be.”

Where income constitutes not just a monetary reward but a means to livelihood for many workers, the relationship between an employer and an employee becomes one not of mutual consent, but of dependency. When the wage is further set at an arbitrary equilibrium price by invisible market forces at play, when the employee has no means of bargaining for the true value of their labor and when every human's capacity to survive is determined by their productive capability, the human becomes another product from which the economy merely extracts value.


“The facts are that all the people who work in an enterprise, employees and working employers, are jointly de facto responsible for using up the other inputs and producing the products,” writes economic philosopher David Ellerman. “But due to the human rental contract, which operates as if that human responsibility can be alienated and transferred, allows the employer to appropriate 100% of the positive and negative product, which means the employer owns all the assets produced and owes all the liabilities created in production.”

In such an economy — in our economy — such a dynamic is unavoidable. And participation is mandatory. If an individual revolts against the human rental contract or does not possess the characteristics an employer deems worthy of rental — or in embellished terms, if they have low human capital — their status is relegated to that of an undesired product on a vacant supermarket shelf. Untouched and abandoned, they are consigned to oblivion until they are removed from the market entirely. Like products left to decay, they are left to die. How is this freedom?

This is not freedom.

Founded in a deep irony, capitalism promotes the moral framework of autonomy while at the same time eroding the true freedom of the vast majority. Where the human body has become nothing more than a mere tool for production, we have lost our freedom over our emotions, over our bodies — and over our right to flourish as human beings. ■





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— WHY THE —

WEEKND

IS THE BEST CHOICE FOR A
COVID-ERA SUPER BOWL



BY ANTHONY LEON

A

bel Tesfaye, known professionally as The Weeknd, performed at the Pepsi Super Bowl LV Halftime Show on Feb. 7, in Tampa Bay, Fla. The Weeknd is coming off the release of his fourth studio album, *After Hours*. “Blinding Lights,” the second single off the record, was the number one song on the 2020 Billboard Year-End Hot 100 Singles Chart. Although the show was very different this year — due to COVID-19 attendance restrictions — his dark pop and R&B styles were well-suited for the occasion.

The Weeknd is only the third singer selected to headline the show under the NFL’s new partnership with Jay-Z’s Roc Nation. The league entered a long-term partnership with Roc Nation in 2019 that is designed to allow the label to advise on musical guest selections for performances like the Super Bowl. This year’s show was directed by Hamish Hamilton and produced by Jesse Collins — who became the first Black executive producer to work on a halftime show.

The NFL’s deal with Roc Nation came after artists like Rihanna and Cardi B turned down the opportunity to perform at past halftime shows in support of Colin Kaepernick. The former quarterback, who has been unable to find a job in the NFL since 2017, started kneeling during the national anthem in protest of police brutality while with the San Francisco 49ers. In 2020, NFL Commissioner Roger Goodell said he encourages players to peacefully protest and that he wishes he “had listened earlier” to what Kaepernick was protesting for. In addition to music, this agreement is supposed to help expand the league’s social justice efforts through the Inspire Change initiative. With the success of Shakira and Jennifer Lopez’s halftime show last year, Roc Nation chose The Weeknd to continue pushing the NFL down the path towards music diversification.

Since *After Hours* is musically different compared to his previous albums *Starboy* and *Beauty Behind the Madness*, The Weeknd used this performance to demonstrate how he’s grown as an artist and evolved his music. From “The Hills” in 2015 to “I Feel It Coming” in 2016, which featured French electronic music duo Daft Punk, The Weeknd has started to incorporate more disco, electronic and pop elements into the dark R&B style that has allowed him to talk openly about his fame, relationships and drug use.

After Hours evolves The Weeknd’s style even further by incorporating psychedelic, new wave and dream pop elements into a new display of his dark and crazy wild side. With a red suit and a bloodied self-portrait on the album’s cover, The Weeknd uses themes from the movie *Joker* and Las Vegas’ gambling culture to sing about regrets regarding his promiscuous behavior. This year, he and Dua Lipa utilized a combination of syncopation and steady rhythms, as well as a lot of ‘80s synth-pop techniques that were uniquely re-introduced prior


to quarantine. The album’s production by Max Martin, Illangelo and Metro Boomin especially highlight The Weeknd’s sound, since his high tenor voice is mixed well with the synthesizers, drum beats and instrumentation. His versatility as both an impressive singer and performer helped to create a magnificent show.

The performance started out with an 80s-themed Las Vegas strip, filled with bright lights, a flashy convertible and a retro Pepsi logo. An angel in a white robe descended, joined by a red-eyed robotic choir in the stands as they sang a rendition of “Call Out My Name” from The Weeknd’s 2018 EP *My Dear Melancholy*.

The pre-built stage opened and The Weeknd emerged, singing “Starboy” and “The Hills,” both hits from *Starboy* and *Beauty Behind the Madness* respectively. He then retreated into a room full of gold lights, holding the camera close to his face while spinning and singing “Can’t Feel My Face” directly into it. When he reached the chorus, the camera was pushed away and his backup dancers appeared, dressed in identical red suits and facial casts reminiscent of his character from *After Hours*. The masked dancers bumped into each other, and The Weeknd escaped to transition into “I Feel It Coming,” with a fireworks display above the field behind him.

With an acoustic guitar-heavy live band and the choir in the stands, The Weeknd sang “Save Your Tears” from *After Hours* in a neon-lit cityscape before transitioning into “Earned It” from the *Fifty Shades of Grey* soundtrack. His choir, now wearing sparkly jackets and playing violins, joined in as The Weeknd glided across the stage. He moved onto the field, joined by his masked dancers in a lock-step dance rendition of “House of Balloons/Glass Table Girls” from his debut mixtape *House of Balloons*. The performance ended with The Weeknd moving to the NFL logo at the 50-yard line for “Blinding Lights,” as his bandaged dancers lit up the entire field. Fireworks and smoke engulfed the stadium as he basked in the glory. Although the performance was very unconventional, The Weeknd delivered while staying true to his artistic roots.

After receiving zero Grammy nominations this year, The Weeknd was more motivated than ever to put on a spectacular performance. The Grammy Awards, which were rescheduled from Jan. 31 to March 14 due to a COVID-19 spike in Los Angeles, notably left him out, and he tweeted in response, “the Grammys remain corrupt. You owe me, my fans and the industry transparency.” Fans are speculating that The Weeknd further dished the Grammys with the release of his new “Save Your Tears” music video, in which he sings to a trophy before throwing it offstage. After planning to perform at the Grammys for weeks, The Weeknd felt that his performance was no longer needed as “in my opinion, zero nominations [means] you’re not invited!” In an interview with *Billboard*, he said, “Look, I personally don’t care anymore... I have three Grammys, which mean nothing to me



now, obviously...I suck at giving speeches anyways. Forget award shows.” The Weeknd told *The New York Times* in March he would be boycotting all future Grammy award nominations and shows, saying, “Because of the secret committees, I will no longer allow my label to submit my music to the Grammys.”

Around 25,000 fans were allowed to attend Super Bowl LV. With a limited seating capacity, the NFL originally planned to fill about 20% of the seats at Raymond James Stadium, but instead filled nearly 40%. With limited capacity at many NFL stadiums this season, many fans who would have attended in person ended up watching the big game at home.

Guest artists are usually invited to partake in the halftime show performance. However, The Weeknd wouldn’t have invited any special guests, regardless of COVID-19, saying in an interview with NFL Network, “there wasn’t any room to fit [guests] into the narrative and the story I was telling in the performance.” His diverse portfolio attracted a lot of viewers — and with many party hits spanning his four studio albums, such as “Starboy” and “Can’t Feel My Face,” The Weeknd’s creativity was on full display during the show. ■

**“IN MY OPINION, ZERO
NOMINATIONS MEANS
YOU’RE NOT INVITED!”**



A definitive examination of

plant-based burgers

by Sam Rowland

Hamburgers: possibly the most American food ever in the popular imagination — even if some say it came from German immigrants. Some might even consider it a staple food due to its prevalence across fast-food menus. I, a proud American, sadly perpetuate this stereotype.

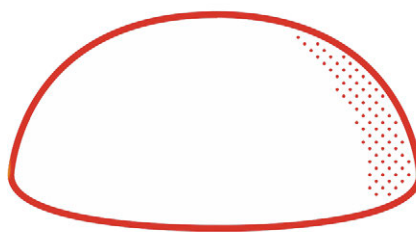
I love hamburgers. And with the success of Burger King and McDonald's — and the ubiquity of burgers at backyard barbecues — I am not alone in loving them.

That was why it took me so long to finally commit to becoming a vegetarian about three years ago. The exact reasons why involve podcasts, personal philosophy and maybe a little unhealthy guilt, but these are too complex to explain without their own article. Suffice to say that it was a hard decision to make, in part because of the prospect of forgoing cheap, filling and moderately tasty burgers.

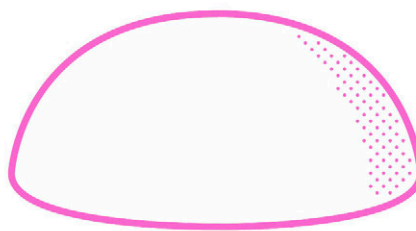
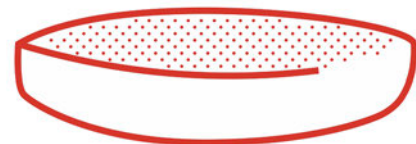
Traditional vegetarian patty sandwich options had always been a part of my diet, like black bean burgers and garden veggie burgers. But to me, they had never actually tasted like the same type of food. I like black bean burgers, but their texture was always more smooth and paste-like than ground beef. The same goes for garden veggie burgers, which are often at their best more sweet than savory — due to their corn and carrot components.

For the first couple of weeks of my life as a vegetarian, I was set to never taste what I assumed was the unique savory profile of beef and fish ever again. But then I saw a strange ad at my community college cafeteria asking me to try the Impossible Burger. Alongside claims of carbon footprint reduction, it had a similar promise to a later ad for their Burger King outing: “Try it and don’t see the difference.” And at least for me, I can say that the Impossible Burger did the impossible successfully — it made a beef-like burger without any beef. Now, especially after Burger King started selling the Impossible Whopper in New York, I may be eating more burgers than I did before I went vegetarian.

And I’m not alone in this. In 2016, a study from the Pew Research Center about American attitudes towards food, found that nearly one in ten Americans say they are either entirely or mostly vegetarian or vegan. A full 22% of people who said they were



Now, I may be eating more burgers than I did before I went vegetarian.



“focused on eating healthy and nutritious food” also said they were mostly vegetarian or vegan. Since then, the market for what marketers call “plant-based meat” has grown every year, with over \$900 million in sales in 2019.

According to registered dietician Jenna A. Werner, who has worked in the field for 15 years, what makes these new “plant burgers” more beef-like than previous recipes is a “variety of vegetarian protein sources instead of just soy- and bean-based products, as were popular in the past,” Werner said in an interview with Shape.com. “Brands are using pea and rice for protein, plus fruit and veggie extracts added for color.” Impossible Foods even claims that each Impossible Burger uses 87% less water and 96% less land in its production process than an equivalent 4-ounce ground beef patty.

So, with that in mind, I decided to look into how these new burgers stack up against the classics and each other.

How healthy are they?

It is important to remember that the serving size used to give nutritional information varies. For uncooked, pre-packaged patties available at the grocery store, the serving size is one patty, no matter the patty’s actual size. For a burger served in a restaurant, the serving size is one whole burger, and includes the bun, seasonings and toppings. A store-bought sesame seed bun alone can add around 90 calories to a meal, and Burger King’s Whoppers openly advertise larger-than-usual buns.

The size of the patty is also not standardized. Most of the beef and “plant meat” patties I’m comparing are 4 ounces (a little over 113 grams), as is industry standard. The more traditional veggie burgers, already marketed to a more health-conscious audience, are slightly smaller. So, keep those two qualifiers in mind — calories from non-patty ingredients and unequal serving sizes — as you make your choices.

How much will they cost you?

According to Vice News, an average American consumes three hamburgers a week. This average includes people who eat none, as well as people who eat multiple hamburgers every day — so the standard deviation may be significant. However, for a simplified

exercise, let's assume this subject is a college student who eats some sort of burger three times a week.

That student starts out eating 12 burgers a month. Eight of them may come from a fast food restaurant — because who has time to cook? When they have the time available though, they'll grill around four burgers a month, buying a pack of four hamburger buns to eat them with. So, the student starts off paying around \$52.50 per month for their burger habit.

Then, the student decides to try out vegetarianism for a while, but doesn't want to give up burgers just yet. The next month, they opt for an Impossible Whopper whenever they go to Burger King and buy Beyond Burgers at the grocery store when they want to grill. Now they're paying \$66.70 per month — about \$14 more than before.

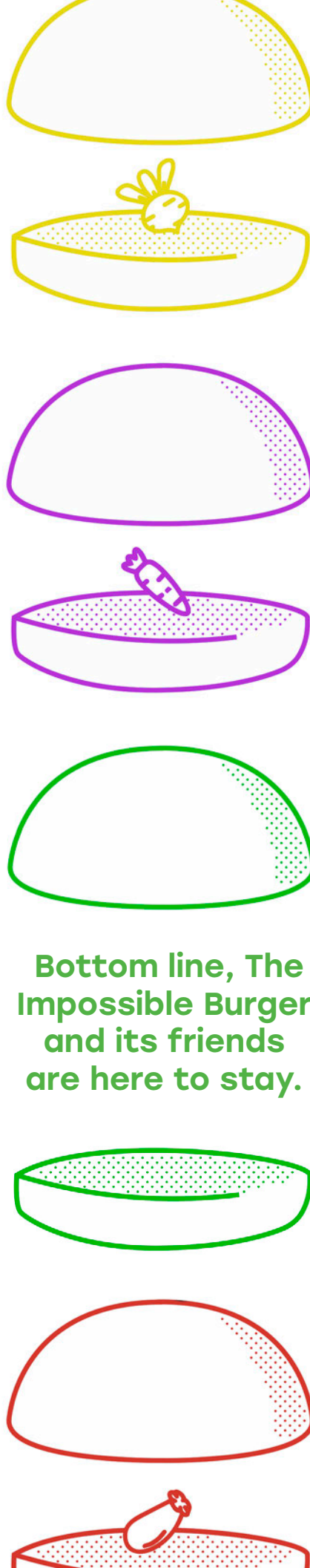
After budgeting and seeing this increase, the student decides to keep buying vegetarian, but give up on plant-based meat to save money. Buying 12 traditional garden veggie burgers and a pack of 12 buns that month, they only spend a little over \$23. However, they will have to choose between a Fieldburger's high sodium content and traditional garden veggie burgers' very un-beef-like taste.

But what about the environment?

I had initially thought to compare the carbon footprint of each product the same way I compared everything else in the tables. But as I researched, I realized a single number cannot really represent the complexity of measuring environmental impact.

First off, food transport in diesel-engine trucks between processing facilities, grocery stores and consumers is a major portion of greenhouse gas emissions. So the carbon footprint of a single burger varies wildly depending on the distances between these places — not to mention the fuel efficiency of the vehicles used. A single average would be useless information for the environmentally-conscious consumer.

Moreover, the modern “plant-based meat” movement — that actually seeks to prove it can and should replace meat in our diets — only really began with the launch of The Impossible Burger in 2016. The



Bottom line, The Impossible Burger and its friends are here to stay.

research on impact is in its scientific infancy. It will be many years before someone will have enough data to independently determine and compare the effects on the environment.

What is known is that multiple sources have shown that raising cows for slaughter is the most resource-intensive activity in the world food industry — so cutting down on the cows we eat might be a good idea. It certainly can't hurt the environment to encourage more legume and soy protein production, but the difference in impact between a veggie burger and plant meat seems small so far.

I would like to give an unequivocal stamp of approval to the plant meat burgers, but I cannot. None of them are noticeably more or less healthy than a beef burger once you add in traditional toppings like mayo, ketchup and onions. It seems that if you want a meaty taste, a burger is always going to be a burger. It's never going to be healthy food.

When it comes to cost, if you're strapped for cash, plant meat is either about as expensive or more expensive than beef. So for low-budget vegans, traditional veggie burgers are the more economical option.

And as for the environmentalism angle that got the industry started, the data linked earlier does indicate that producing less beef would reduce humanity's carbon footprint. However, right now there is still too little data on the difference between the carbon footprint of traditional veggie burgers and plant meat burgers. The global carbon footprint reduction companies like Impossible Foods and Beyond Meat are aiming for would come from more people eating less beef due to their products' more meat-like taste, but the plant meat industry is still young — with a smaller reach compared to traditional meat suppliers.

Bottom line, The Impossible Burger and its friends are here to stay. And who knows, maybe they will replace meat one day in the far future. Beyond the taste though, there is not much special about them. They're neither that harmful nor that healthy, and they are definitely not that cheap. But if you want to reduce your environmental impact without changing your diet, maybe the financial hit is worth it.

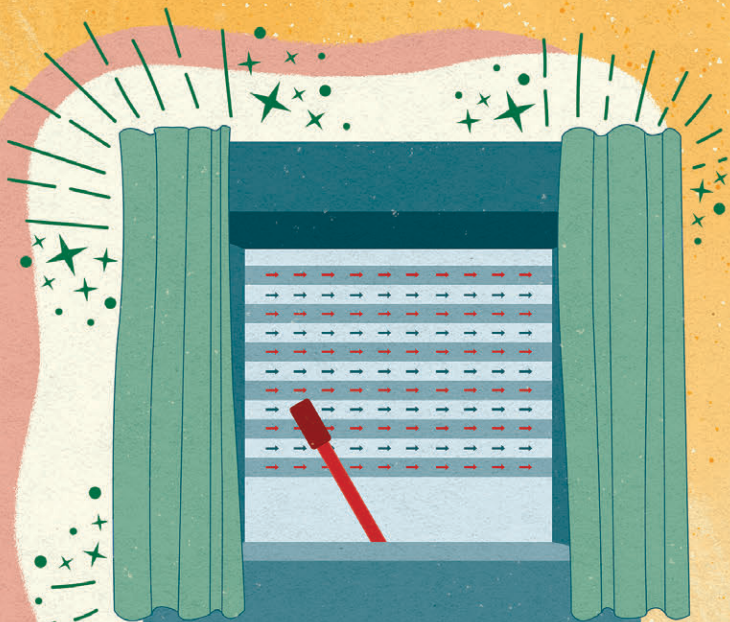
I, for one, am still eating them. ■



When I was Nine

—THIS SHIT STILL SUCKS

By Emily Scott



2004

OBAMA
BIDEN

2008

MCCAIN
PALIN

As far back as I can remember, my parents always took my brother Jack and I to vote with them so we could “see how democracy works” and “exercise our civic duty,” as my mom would say. I loved it — I would always go in with my dad when he voted and he would let me pull the crank, back when you voted with the crank machines with the little arrows to push down.

I don’t remember much about the 2004 election, except for the rows of red and blue arrows. To five-year-old me, the machine was huge and confusing. I remember my dad picking me up to pull down the crank, thus casting his vote, and the privacy curtains behind us flinging

was made up, and she was voting for Barack Obama. My dad, on the other hand, still hadn’t decided who to vote for — despite the fact that we were a “Democratic family.”

In the auditorium of one of the local high schools, I stood next to my dad inside the poll.

“I don’t care who wins,” he said, looking at me. “You pick.”

Nine-year-old me stood there, wide-eyed, next to my dad. *I get to pick? I get to vote?*

Rolling up onto my tippy toes, I pushed down the blue

The first time I voted was when I was nine years old. Yes, nine, like the number between eight and ten.

open. *It was magical.* I thought that it was so cool, and told my dad that I couldn’t wait until I was old enough to vote.

The first time I voted was when I was nine years old. Yes, nine, like the number between eight and ten.

It was November 4, 2008. The year that there were two new candidates on the ballot, as the Bush administration neared its final days — after eight years in power. Barack Obama, an Illinois senator, faced off against Arizona senator and war veteran John McCain. My mom’s mind

arrow for Barack Obama and Joe Biden. And just like I did in 2004, I pulled the crank (without the help of my dad this time), casting my first-ever vote in an election. It felt cool, knowing I had a part in who gets to be the next president of the United States.

2012 was the election I didn’t go with my parents to vote in, thanks to Superstorm Sandy. Barack Obama was elected to a second term, so thirteen-year-old me was happy, because he was the Democratic nominee — and we were a Democratic family.



BALLOT

2018

That night
I saw the
“blue wave”
take over
and realized
that my vote,
my voice
does matter.
I did that.
I went out
and voted
blue!

Fast forward to 2016.

I’m five-ish months shy of turning 18. I can’t vote in this election — I can only watch in horror as the election night coverage projects Donald Trump to become the next president of the United States. I cry, afraid of what the next four years will look like.

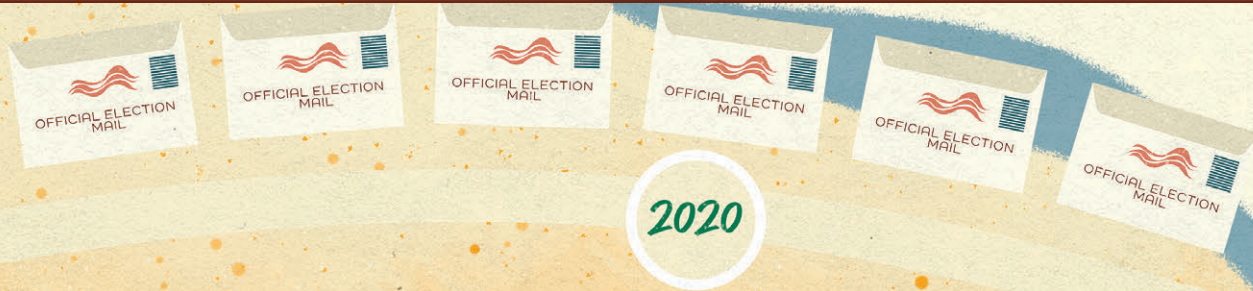
Two years later, the 2018 midterm elections — the second time I voted, the first time as an adult. The crank machines of my youth are no more, having been replaced with a scantron-like paper ballot. But while the nostalgia of the crank machines is gone, the excitement of voting is still present. I bubble across the ballot, voting blue up and down, left and right. That night I saw the “blue wave” take over and realized that my vote, my voice *does matter. I did that. I went out and voted blue!*

The 2020 election, the first presidential election I’m eligible to vote in. I watched as potential Democratic nominees dropped out of the race, leaving Joe Biden as the candidate on the ballot. The coronavirus has rocked the “traditional” way of voting. Massive amounts of mail-in ballots hold the votes to hopefully change the future of the country, the fear of the pandemic very real and very present still.

I stood in line on a cold, rainy Monday morning in October outside Brookhaven Town Hall to vote early, unsure of what the polls would look like on Election Day. I waited for two and a half hours before I stood inside the polling booth, looking at another scantron-like ballot. It’s 2020 and I’m voting on paper. Hey, at least I went out and did my civic duty.

Was I excited? Of course. 100 years ago I wouldn’t have been able to vote at all.

But now, here I sit, on my couch, twelve years almost to the day since my dad let me vote for him, terrified of the results.



BIDEN WINS!!

The last four years have shown how ugly America can be — the hatred and racism buried in deep pockets of the country. I did my part and voted, but did everyone else? Did everyone else either mail in their vote or brave the lines and wait to cast their ballot like I did? I mean, people will do it for a sale on Black Friday — but did they do it for the fate of the country? Were they even able to?

I don't feel the same excitement staying up and watching the election night news broadcast anymore.

November 8, 2020.

The results of the 2020 Presidential Election are announced. Democratic nominee Joseph R. Biden is the president-elect.

I'm at work when the news finally breaks, a busy Saturday in a post-Halloween, pre-Thanksgiving Target when a coworker asks me if I'm happy. Confused, I ask her what the hell she's talking about.

"Joe Biden won."

I shake my head. No, Arizona and Nevada haven't called the election yet. No way.

I run behind the guest service desk and pull my phone out of the back pocket of my jeans to see a slew of text messages from my mom, my brother — even my little sister sent me a Snapchat telling me Joe Biden won.

Am I still nervous about the fate of this country? I'd

...for the first time in four years, I have some hope.

be a fool not to be. Misinformation spread like wildfire this election cycle, former President Trump claiming the election was "stolen" from him, inciting an insurrection from his mob of MAGA followers a few weeks ago as the electoral college counted their votes, officially confirming Joe Biden's victory.

However, for the first time in four years, I have some hope. Not a lot, but some. ■

Not a lot, but some.



WHERE WE'VE BEEN

AND
WHERE WE'RE GOING

PROTESTING AT
STONY BROOK
UNIVERSITY

BY KEATING
ZELENKE





you ask a Stony Brook University student about activism on campus, they'd likely have little, if anything, to say. To Mitchel Cohen, a student from 1965 to 1975, that reality is hard to swallow. Just half a century ago, Cohen's days were punctuated with protests on what, according to him, was the most politically active campus on the East Coast. As it turns out, the history of Long Island's "sleeper campus" is littered with smashed windows, smoke bombs and student arrests.

In Stony Brook's early years, the university administration juggled a laundry list of internal issues and student complaints. With the university rapidly expanding its campus, construction was the soundtrack of student life and living conditions were poor. Roaches scuttled along the tile floors of overcrowded, hastily built dorms, and a student was even vaporized in February of 1973 when he fell through an open manhole into the steam tunnels — his death commemorated by the Science Fiction Forum on Sherman Raftenberg Day in early February every year.

The diversity of the student body was a sore spot for surrounding communities as well. Decades before the university was established, 30 minutes south of Stony Brook in East Islip, the KKK held what was at that point one of the largest rallies in history, with somewhere around 25,000 members in attendance. Another 30 minutes east of the university, and you'll find the sleepy little town of Yaphank, which was home to a Nazi summer camp that mirrored the Hitler Youth in the 1930s. Deep-rooted white supremacy on Long Island, paired with a university that actively recruited students from different racial and ethnic backgrounds, created a tense town-gown conflict, which, to some degree, still exists today. The administration scrambled to improve the university's relationships with surrounding residential communities, but over-policing and bad press would continue for decades. One of the clearest examples of borderline militant police use at the university was Operation Stony Brook in January of 1968, where months of planning from the Suffolk County Police Department resulted in one of the largest drug raids — in terms of officers involved — in American history.

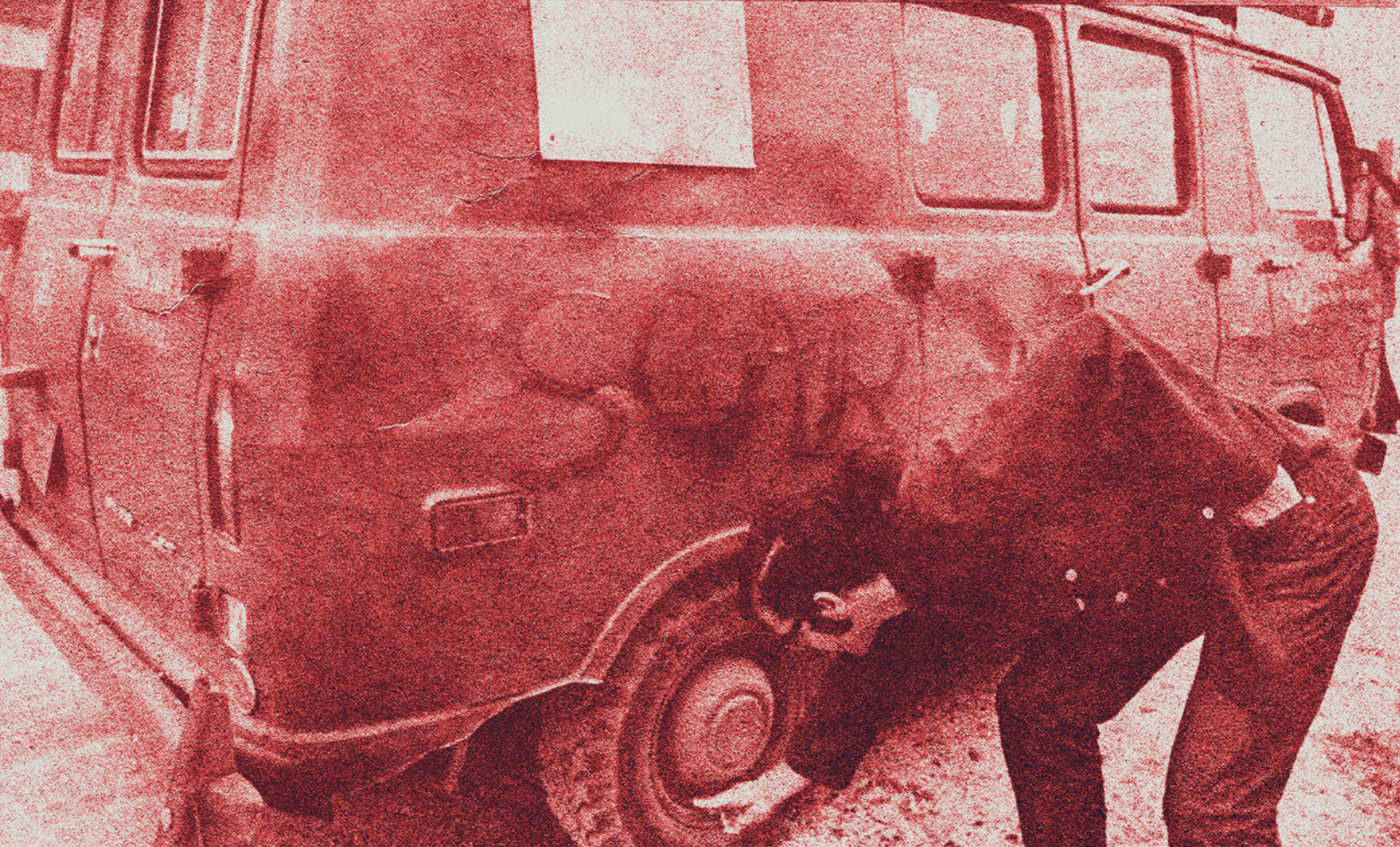
These issues and more, plus the nationwide backdrop of the anti-Vietnam War movement and the end of the Civil Rights Movement, cultivated a generation of students who were not afraid to demand change — and demand they did. Cohen said that he and other members of the Red Balloon Collective, a prominent student activist group on campus at the time, got creative with their tactics. To protest the university's collaboration with the military during the Vietnam War, members of the Red Balloon Collective broke into the graduate student research offices and stole war-related papers written by students, professors and even the president of the university himself. Cohen laughed as he remembered students crawling through the ceilings with stolen papers, right over police officers barricading the other side of the door. When the campus was covered in mud due to constant construction and deforestation, students dumped buckets of it in the library and

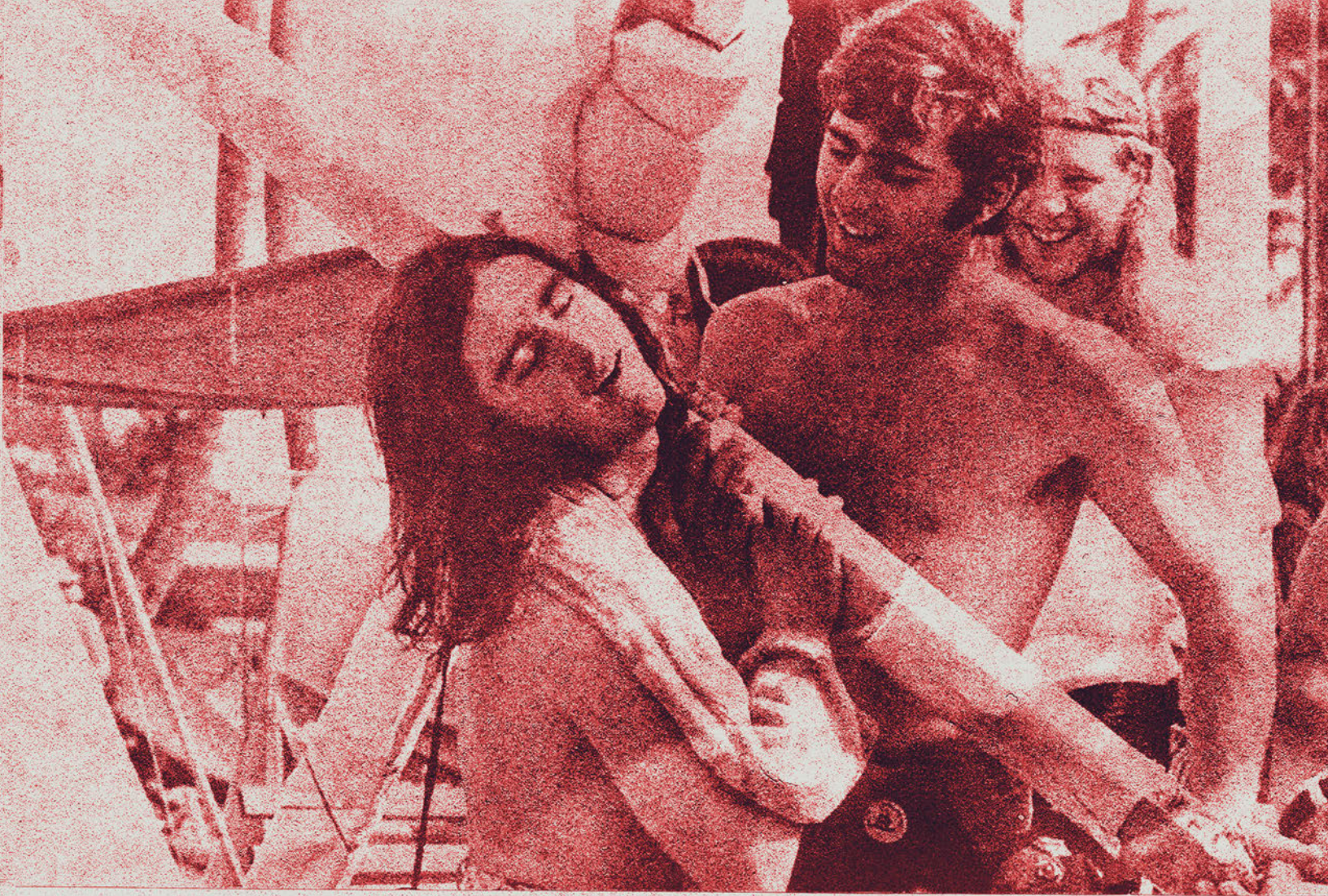
**“WE WERE SERIOUS ABOUT
WHAT WE WERE DOING,**

BUT WE DIDN'T WANT TO DO IT

**BY THE
BY THE WAY,**

IN A DEAD SERIOUS WAY.”





**"YOU CANNOT BE FREE
UNTIL EVERYONE IS FREE."**



administrative offices. Cohen even described interrupting a SUNY Board of Trustees meeting to present then-university president John Toll with the "Prick of the Year" award. His trophy? A several-foot-tall penis.

"A lot of the movement in the past eight or nine years is worried about being marginalized," Cohen said, referring to a slew of so-called radical left ideas like Black liberation, gay and lesbian rights and women's liberation. "We didn't worry too much about that." While politicians today might water down their ideas to avoid scaring people off, Cohen and the Red Balloon

Collective maintained their radical politics while attempting to find understanding in others through humor and art.

"We were serious about what we were doing," he said, "but we didn't want to do it in a dead serious way."

It's hard to say exactly how and why the passion for activism on campus has diminished so greatly. Cohen said the university administration has always made a concerted effort to quiet students by taking away independent community spaces. When he was a student, they closed a cafeteria run by students in an effort to keep activist groups from meeting there, and many of the residential quads built in the time since Stony Brook's wildest days were constructed to be "protest-proof" (consider Kelly Quad: are there any open spaces for students to gather?).

Karl Grossman, a former reporter for the Long Island Press, was handpicked to cover Stony Brook in the late 1960s in an effort to offset some of the ruthless negative press the university was getting in response to student protests and alleged drug use. As a "sensitivity reporter," he was able to get to know the university intimately over the course of several years, both the administration and the students.

"The vision of Stony Brook was to become the Berkeley of the East," he said. "It was not intended to be like a CalTech."

He explained that as the educational focus of the university shifted more towards STEM and farther from what it was meant to be, activism seemed to fizzle out fairly quickly. This has some validity — many of Stony Brook's early protests had major support from humanities students and were largely ignored by those studying science and math (perhaps because their schedules are too loaded to take time out to focus on protesting). According to Grossman, the university flourished the most under former President Shirley Strum Kenny, who came from an English background and bolstered humanities programs. Former President Kenny brought the university closest to what Grossman believed it was intended to be, and the happiness of the student body reflected those changes.

Current students also have their own theories about the lackluster *vocal* activism. "Vocal" is the key word, because according to students Kyria Moore, Nia Wattley and Oreoluwa Adewale, *performative* activism has become a big problem.

"I wish there would be more action," Adewale said, "because a lot of people on this campus were posting over the summer."

Wattley and Moore are members of the Black Student-Athlete Huddle, and Adewale is president of the university's NAACP branch. The two groups collaborated to put on October's Black Lives Matter rally on the Staller steps, and Wattley, Moore and Adewale emerged as the student leaders

at the helm of the protest. With more than 200 students in attendance, they managed to pull off the biggest student-led protest on campus in recent history.

Adewale was grateful and humbled by the rally's turnout, but had also taken notice of the gap between the number of people she saw posting about George Floyd in June and the number of people who actually marched alongside Black students in October. When asked about whether or not the university was politically active, Wattley paused for a moment and said, "Not out loud... maybe on Twitter, maybe on Reddit, but when I'm walking around, I don't feel like it's politically active."

When discussing October's rally and the potential for more in the future, Moore expressed her excitement, saying, "because there [haven't] been prominent protests on campus that I've seen... it inspires me and other students to make change and be seen."

Wattley was also very excited about the potential for more activism.

"I love to see students with voices sharing the things that they've learned, their stances, their opinions with others," she said.

Equally enthusiastic, Adewale courted other student groups for future demonstrations, saying, "the NAACP is always willing to collaborate."

Collaboration may prove to be one of the most important tools budding Stony Brook activists can use. Back in Mitchel Cohen's time, all the issues the students fought for — Black empowerment, peace, women's liberation, gay and lesbian rights — were connected, and all these groups supported each other in their advocacy. Cohen encouraged current student leaders to put an emphasis on unity. Too many people, he said, fight for *others*, causing an existential disconnect. He said he wished that he and his fellow "comrades" had created circumstances in which people could realize they were fighting for *themselves* as well as other people. As he said, "you cannot be free until everyone is free."

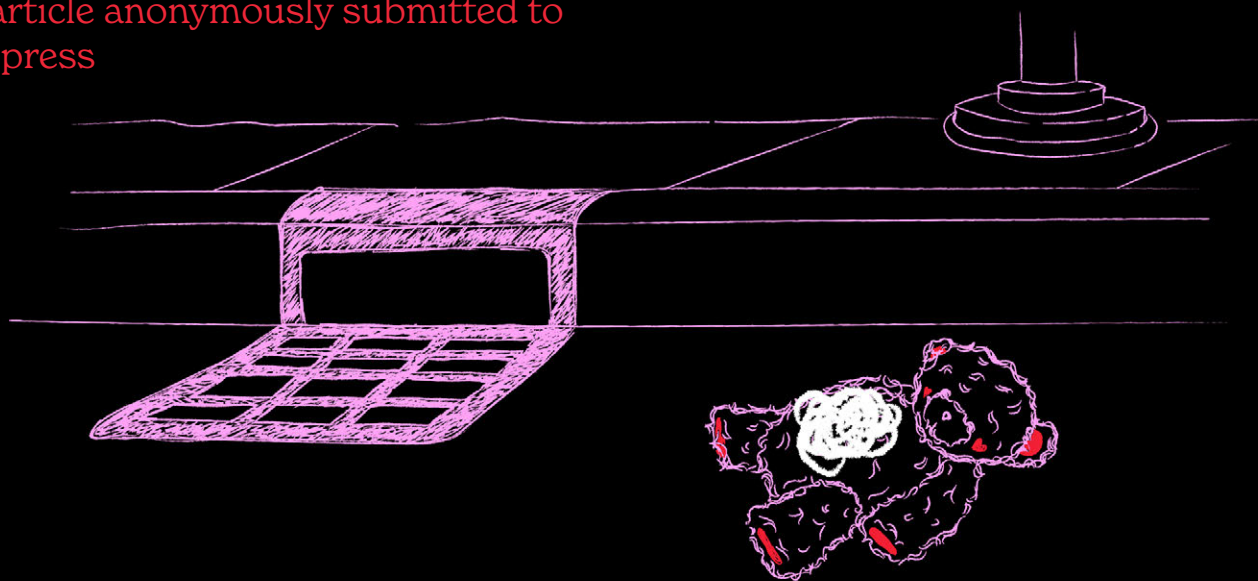
Hopefully, student activists here at Stony Brook find that advice useful. It is up to the students whether the October rally is the beginning of something bigger. "The wind's at their back," Professor Zebulon Miletsky of the Africana Studies department said, in reference to budding activists. As someone who has studied civil rights and Black power movements, Professor Miletsky said he believes the knowledge of activists long graduated can impact current students.

"Each new crop needs to find an entry point," he said. He believes this generation has found theirs. ■



the day romance died

an article anonymously submitted to
the press



I always defined myself as a romantic,

and always felt I could sense the love in the air of any room. That love filled me with excitement, joy and hope. For me, love was always bigger than everything else. Love and romance were the keys, the answer — they kept my world spinning and my heart beating a thousand times a minute just at the thought.

Growing up I had a predilection for romance novels, love songs and movies where the tall, dark, bright-eyed man got the pretty girl at the end. But being different — black, poor, obese and gay — robbed me of many of the experiences of love that I sought so deeply. Vague memories of doodling hearts in my notebook, blasting Sarah Bareilles or Adele on my way to school and creating fictional relationships with boys in my classes who didn't know I existed colored the memories of my childhood — and much of my adulthood.

I was determined to find my prince charming, my Peeta Mellark, my Tobias “Four” Eaton — the man who would love me in the way I knew I deserved, the way I yearned for.

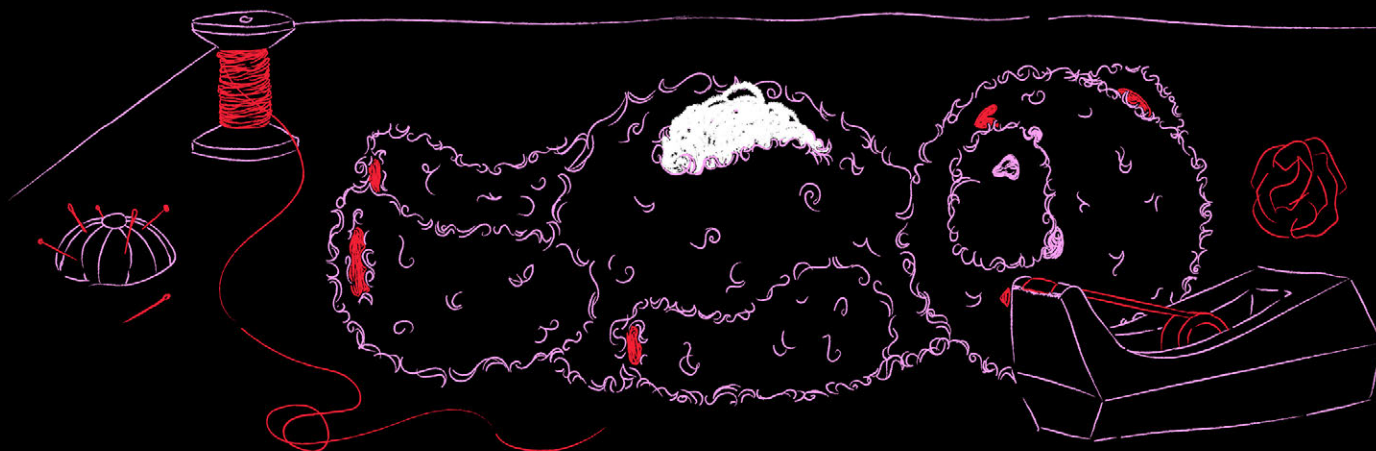
In high school, most of my friends had lost their virginity in experiences I could only describe as quick, fatuous, obscure and painful. I decided young that I would wait until marriage; this was an answer that pleased the ears of many adults around me — who were both shocked and proud of my unyielding stance. I had made my decision not for Christianity — even though I was a Christian — nor for any reason other than romance and love. I was determined to find my prince charming, my Peeta Mellark, my Tobias “Four” Eaton — the man who would love me in the way I knew I deserved, the way I yearned for.

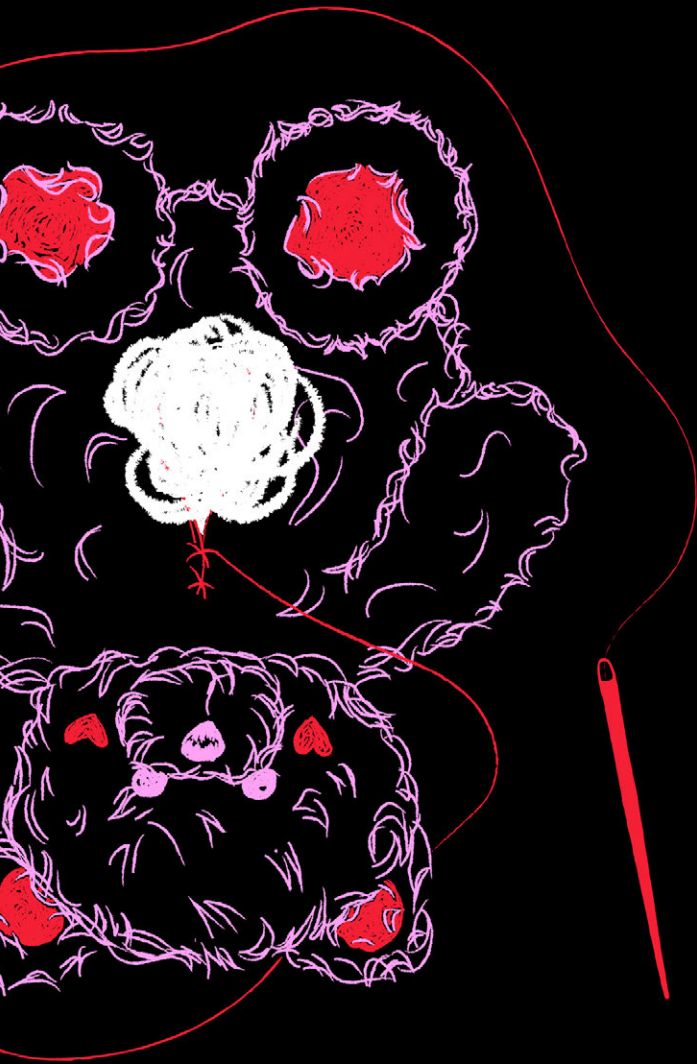


I knew I didn't just want the lust and desire of sex. I wanted to make love to a man who accepted every part of me, every curve and edge, every quirk, every crack, every bruise, every flaw, every habit, good and bad, every insecurity, my bitchiness, my big heart and even bigger mouth. I realize now that was just a fairytale, a lie, a facetious conception of reality.

My dream came crashing down when the virginity I sought to keep sacred was taken from me — snatched from my hands. Through my struggles and pains and, inevitably, the torture of life, romance raised the sun and kept my earth spinning. Until the day I laid face down on a twin-size mattress — having what little pride and dignity I possessed unduly ripped from me as the man lying on top of me soiled me from the inside out.

Soiled, spoiled, unclean, unfresh, used, disposable.





the perpetual crying and I'm hoping that you will understand how this feels — not because I would ever want someone to know what this feels like, but because I'm in pain. I can't eat. I can't sleep. I can't focus on my school work, my job or my friends because I keep replaying the day that romance died inside of me.

Something that once brought me so much joy in life, so much hope for the future, now brings me pain and aching in my heart, and ice-cold shivers to places that were once

I felt broken, like something inside of me was being taken — stolen.

warm. I'm writing this because as much as I would never want this to happen to anyone, we live in a cruel and evil world — and if it should happen to anyone, they shouldn't feel alone. They should take some hope for the future; and for those who have the privilege of never experiencing this type of degradation, you take with you some empathy.

To everyone, I hope you spread both kindness and awareness. My story doesn't have its happy ending yet, but I am not the victim. I am the victor.

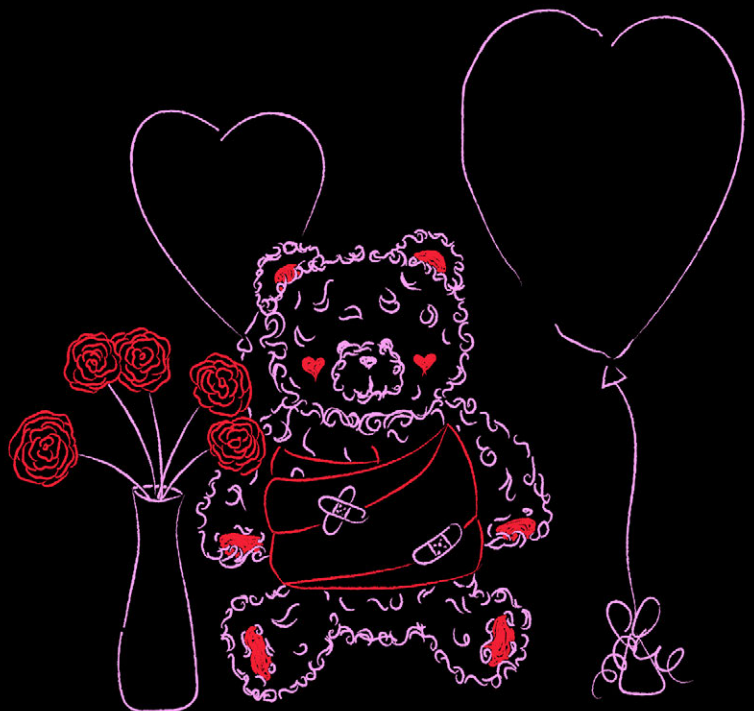
I am forever a hopeless romantic, and I am a survivor. ■

I felt broken, like something inside of me was being taken — stolen. I felt like I was being ripped in two. I wanted to run then. I remembered running track and how free it felt to run, the motion of my legs, and the refreshing feeling of the breeze on my perspired skin. But I wasn't running. I was still, silent but screaming on the inside. With every thrust, I held back a mountain of tears welling up and burning inside me. As my emotion spilled out into the changing season of September's cold, I felt dead inside, ice-cold, frozen.

Frozen is how I felt in the weeks that preceded, but not right away. At first, I told myself it was only a nightmare. I tried to convince myself I read it in a book, or had just seen it in a movie. I refused to believe or admit that it happened to me.

It wasn't until this very day that I accepted what had happened. This day, the day before I find out if my assaulter poisoned my body with an STD, some type of virus, some type of disease.

I'm scared. I'm sitting in my lavender pajamas at four o'clock in the morning listening to "Hold On" by Shawn Mendes, typing away because I can't sleep and my eyes burn from





**a woman
at night**

by keating
zelenke

It has become my new daily — or nightly — routine. Since the beginning of the semester, during the daytime, I sleep through online lectures, lie in the middle of my big, empty triple, and stare at the ceiling. And when the sun finally sinks below the flat sky, I grab my backpack and wander outside for the first time all day.

I like being out at night. I like the way buildings look when they're empty, and I like to see which windows are still lit up. I like lying in the middle of the sidewalk and listening to music. I like seeing which doors are still unlocked, and I like to look inside. I like who I am at night, when no one is around to see. The dark drags a quiet authenticity out of me. It's not so much that the moon keeps better secrets than the sun; the moon just casts a kinder eye on those she watches.

When I was a kid, my nightly routine looked a lot different. Every night, I would crawl into bed and, ever the annoying little Catholic kid, pray nothing bad would happen to my family during the night (I would also pray that the zombie apocalypse would not happen the next morning because I was 9 and that was another big concern of mine). Then, my father would come into my room, sit on the edge of my bed, and tell me not to worry — he had turned on the monster-repelling force field for the night. And on his way out, he'd press play on my stereo; a book on tape would distract my brain enough so I could sleep. I have never, to this day, slept with the lights off. Even with a whole laundry list of things to make me feel safe at night, I still ended up in my mom's bed more than I'd like to admit.

I like
who I am
at night,

when no
one is around

to see.

Eventually, I'd outgrow the force field lie, but even after I stopped believing in God, I had to pray every night — just to cover my bases.

As soon as I was old enough to stop worrying about the kinds of night-crawling monsters with tentacles and scaly skin, a new kind of monster would occupy my brain. The kind without a failsafe repellent or force field.

When she was a teenager, my aunt was raped and assaulted. That night altered the course of her life, and despite being unborn, somehow also mine. After I found out what rape was — and even worse, that it was something that could happen to anyone — nights of sleeping in my mom's bed turned into nights spent constantly asking my parents to check the house for some intruder — *I swear I hear footsteps!* — and wrapping my arm under the fitted sheet so no one could steal me from my bed. As a 19-year-old living alone for the first time, it's become checking the lock on my door every few minutes and — whether it's a pair of scissors, a Swiss Army knife, or a can of pepper spray — sleeping with a weapon in my arms. From my brain comes the constant reminder: *you know, Ted Bundy raped and killed women in their dorms.*

My aunt's rape has created a kind of generational trauma for the women in my family. My cousin carries a pink, bedazzled handgun to protect herself. When I first told my mother about my new nightly exploits earlier this semester, she begged me for nearly ten minutes to, *for the love of God, stay inside at night.* Before I left for school, my aunt's parting gifts for me were a panic button to clip to my backpack and the aforementioned (technically illegal) maximum strength can of pepper spray. At every holiday and birthday, she gives me a whistle or some sharp object to clip to my keychain, and before I come back to campus every semester, she recites the same lecture about being

overly cautious and trusting no one.

I don't know what first drew me out onto campus at night. Maybe it was the combination of the August heat and living on the third floor of a building without air conditioning, or maybe it was the impending stress of an assignment due at midnight coupled with the inability to work in my room any longer. Because make no mistake, I was petrified of the nighttime, of people I thought were hiding in the bushes waiting to hurt me, or figures I thought were following me, only to recognize my own shadow. But the first few nights I was out and lived to see the next morning unscathed left me wanting more.

I feel like the night belongs to me. People will tell you it doesn't. I have been told countless times by countless people, TV shows and movies that it doesn't. But maybe that's why this little thing that I have discovered has become so special to me. I watch the lights on the second floor of the GLS Center flicker all night long like a little mini light show only I can see (because they do flicker, all night long, every night). I walk circles around the fountain in the center of the academic mall underneath the moonlight. I play a song on a piano for the ghosts in the basement of Staller. I don't know how to play piano, but that doesn't matter at night. The ghosts, ironically,

never boo me. The night reminds me of the surface of a swimming pool before someone jumps in for the first swim of the summer. *I am the one who breaks the stillness.*

It's a fear thing probably, or rather a control thing. Or maybe it's an adrenaline thing, I don't know. My greatest irrational fear is the open ocean, but I'm trying to make documentaries about it (not to mention, the open ocean episode of *Blue Planet* is the one I watch when I'm sad). I press down harder on the gas pedal on the highway when I remember that at any moment I could yank the wheel and kill myself. Like an idiot in a horror movie, when I hear a noise, I seek it out. My family always warned me not to ruin my red hair growing up, so this winter, I'm shaving it off. For no reason, I enlisted to be an active-duty firefighter this summer. Nowadays, when I see a spider, I try and get it to crawl on my hands. And after being taught for nearly two decades by women traumatized by their own abuses that the world underneath the moon is not a safe place for me, I walk outside at night.

I don't do these things because I am brave. I do them because I am terrified. All the time. Wound so tightly my back is sore and my jaw is tired from grinding my teeth. I seek out my fears because I am begging reality not to be as bad as my thoughts, and each time something goes well, my muscles can loosen just a bit.

The girl I am at night, someone able to put one foot in front of the other despite the pounding in her chest, or the fingers wrapped around the pepper spray in her pocket, or the constant glances over her shoulder, is the girl I want to be.

If you see me out on campus at night, look through me like a ghost. I'm pretending you don't see me anyway. ■

The night
reminds me
of the surface
of a swimming pool
before someone jumps
in
for the first swim of the
summer.

*I am the one who breaks the
stillness.* ■

the duke of

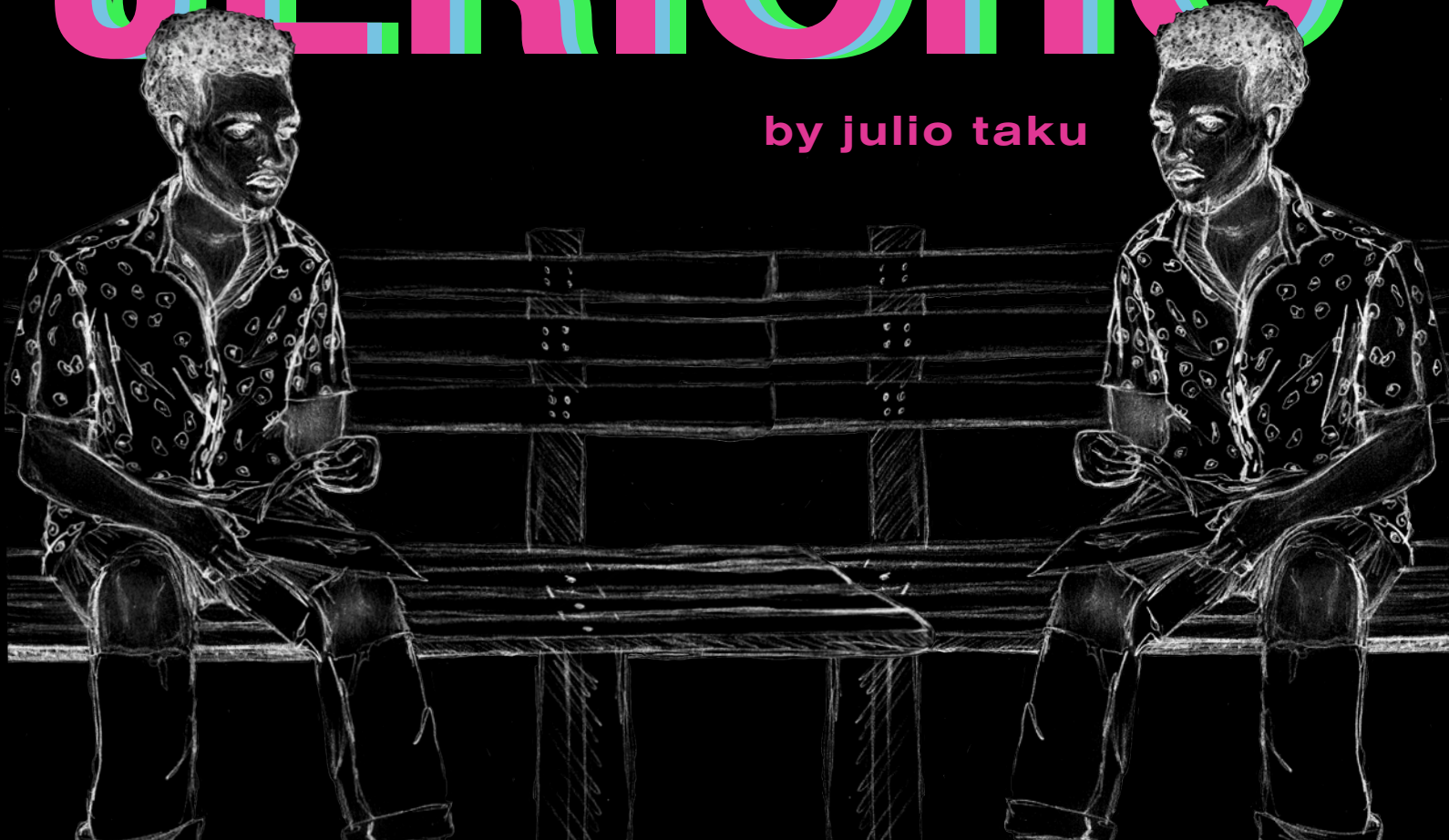
JERICHO

JERICHO

JERICHO

JERICHO

by julio taku



dylan dukes,

@itbejericho on Instagram, is an 18-year-old Huntington Station native with a penchant for indie music, Fender Stratocaster guitars, lo-fi aesthetics and grainy photographs. He is the product of a generation raised on the internet with fleeting viral sensations, quickly digestible music and a DIY spirit that can turn anyone into an overnight musical sensation. However, his musical journey is more home-bred than online.

Music has been a big influence on the Dukes family for as long as Dylan can remember.

“It was very present in my upbringing,” he said. “My father was a producer who worked with Shaggy. He also worked on songs on the *Holes* and *Little Mermaid* soundtracks.”

Dukes had an affinity for music that he said began when he left the womb. He used whatever he could get his hands on as percussion and drove his family crazy. Eventually, they caved and bought him a drum kit when he was 8 years old.

Dukes’ biggest musical inspirations of all time are Michael Jackson and Tyler, The Creator. A close runner-up is Steve Lacy, who recorded all of his music on his phone at the start of his career. Dukes mimicked Lacy when he started creating music of his own in tenth grade using the GarageBand app on his iPhone.

In 2018, Dukes released his first song “Happily Ever After” on Soundcloud under the alias “JERICHO.” The origin of the name has to do with the town he grew up in, Huntington Station, New York. It comes from Jericho Turnpike, the highway that leads into the town of Jericho, Long Island.

“What is so interesting about Jericho Turnpike is the different directions you can go and where they can take you,” Dukes said. “Also, all of my memories and favorite times were on Jericho Turnpike.”

“Happily Ever After” was heavily inspired by Steve Lacy

“what’s so interesting about Jericho Turnpike is the different directions you can go and where they can take you.”



and Rex Orange County — and Dukes drew on influences from the indie bedroom pop scene that proliferated at the time, producing his own interpretation with distinct sounds and drum loops. This is something he has been doing since he started out, armed only with an iPhone and his own creativity. Now he bases a lot of his musical style on aspects of DIY music, hip-hop, midwest emo, jazz and lo-fi.

“I’m trying new things and trying to create my style of music with this next project,” he said.

His subsequent project *DNL* was a mixtape he wrote while suspended from school for three days. *DNL* was inspired by Frank Ocean’s critically-acclaimed album *Blond* — a project that touched him deeply.

“I hadn’t truly understood how I could relate to the subject matter until I grew as a person,” Dukes said. “I adore tracks like ‘Self Control,’ ‘Futura Free,’ and ‘White Ferrari’ — not because of the lyrical content, more so because of how it makes me feel: melancholy, but also filled with a strong sense of nostalgia.”

Making *DNL* was cathartic for Dukes.

“It felt more like therapy than it felt like making music,” he said. “The recording process of *DNL* was special, as it was the first time I had used Logic to record a full-length project. I had played around with the different ways I could record using the microphone. It felt like I was making music for the first time again.”

The chord choices were very simplistic, but held personal significance to him. Dukes decided against fine-tuning any of the vocals because he wanted the mixtape to have a live

sound feel to it.

“My favorite part of the recording process was when I recorded the guitars for the intro track, then I opened the door to the studio and let the mic run to get the sounds and ambiance of the outdoors,” he said. “I studied the different sounds used on *Blond* for the first day of my suspension, the second day I wrote all three songs for the project, and on the third day, I recorded everything.”

This suspension occurred at Cold Spring Harbor High School, where Dukes found some of *DNL*'s biggest supporters in his classmates.

“Even some of the underclassmen had been listening, which surprised me,” Dukes said.

His most important supporter was Ryan Mullen, a good friend of his who passed away in September 2018. When Dylan had just released his first EP and had given up on

making music, Ryan expressed admiration for his work and other creative endeavors, motivating him to keep at it.

“It was cool because he was a popular kid and I wasn't,” Dukes said. “I was the weird — and only — Black kid (in his grade), so when *this guy* told me *that*, I kept making music and sent him stuff to get his opinion. Without him, I probably would've stopped making music, honestly.”


Not everybody was as enthusiastic as Ryan though.

“I wouldn't say I had a lot of doubters, but people mostly didn't care at first,” he said. “I had to really gnaw at them to get them to listen, and eventually they did.”

Since then, Dukes has been working on his craft — playing guitar more often, making beats, producing and recording. Due to the current global pandemic and limited mobility, Dukes is unable to meet up with friends for a jam session or go to professional studios to record.

“I hate being in my room,” he said. “I miss trees and I miss the homies.”

His plans may be displaced for now, but he's taking the



“it was cool because he was a popular kid and I wasn't. I was the weird Black kid, so when this guy told me that - I kept making music...”

opportunity to work on his music as much as possible.

"I learned that there is nothing that'll stop me from creating," he said. "Whether it's filming a promo video or recording sounds around the house or outside, I'll do whatever it takes. I'll make it work."

Making music during quarantine was admittedly weird for Dukes. While it didn't halt his writing or lyrical ability, it compromised his drive to create. "I felt like it was weird to make music every day, so I didn't," he said. However, when he did find the drive to work, it was to extend his production skills and learn more about the way he and others were making music. The amount of information that proliferated online about all types of creative fields allowed for a change of pace.

"It was nice to have a Zoom call so that I could still make music with all types of people from all over," Dukes said.

One of the connections he made involved producing songs for an indie-duo named Tayo — Filipino-American artists who contacted him through Instagram. Their single "Out Of Service" is their first-ever song, and the first song Dukes produced over Zoom.

"It's cool to see such talent from across the country, as they reside in California," he said. "I have more music coming from their end and my end that I have produced for them."

Despite these new creative efforts, the slump of quarantine does get to him.

"I do feel like I am less productive due to each day blending into themselves," he said. "It feels more like hours are passing by than it does days."

To combat the disconnect and isolation created by quarantine, Dukes has been interacting with his listeners through social media. He makes beats and posts them on his Instagram stories, inviting followers to help him develop their sounds through polls. He also usually makes short demo music videos before releasing new music. However, he ended up taking a break to lock in and work on *DNL*.

Dukes has seen an uptick in interaction from his fanbase. COVID-19 lockdowns and quarantines have resulted in better retention and steadier listenership. His current aspirations are to grow as an artist and a person — but long term, he's thinking even bigger: "Maybe one day, I can get on Tiny Desk or work with Tyler." ■

**please consider
donating to the
"Ryan Mullen
Strive for Five"
charity.**

"I miss trees and I miss the homies."





Gratitude ————— by Arun in the face of ————— Nair Adversity —————

My name is Arun Nair, and I'm pretty unremarkable to look at as a student here. I'm Indian, and I have a mustache (which is typical, especially for South Indians like me) and glasses. If you talk to me, you'll hear that I have a bit of a speech impediment.

No surprises so far. What you probably won't guess is that I'm a 35-year-old veteran of the U.S. Army who served in Iraq from 2007 to 2009.

I stay active because I have to. I feel dead if I don't. I had to go one day without working out in the past few years: when I first came back to school and the gym hadn't opened yet, I was out of luck because it was too late to do yoga. I felt lost, as though I were moving through molasses. The sun rises every morning, and I do yoga every morning so I won't repeat this experience.

I also know it's not just discipline, but I'm also incredibly lucky to have the opportunity to exercise every day — from the good people who drive my bus to the people who work at the gym to keep it running in good order for me to use. Then, of course, there are my parents, who had me and raised me here in New York, where I attend one of the best public universities in the world, and I can write a bit about some of the things I'm grateful for.

I was the smartest kid I knew, with a 1590 SAT — because I got impatient on a math question and didn't show the work — but now I'm brain-damaged. This motivates me to work out every day in the hopes of improving.

I saw videos on YouTube by the good people at "What I've Learned" (and others) that told me aerobic exercise helps neuroplasticity (our brains' ability to grow new neurons, new cells; not just synapses, connections between those cells), so I try to run and do yoga every day.

I go to the gym every day while I'm here at Stony Brook because it's available for everybody to use. Right now, I'm training for the Murph challenge, which involves a one-mile run followed by 100 pull-ups, 200 push-ups, 300 squats and another one-mile run, all in a 20-pound vest or body armor. I think I need to focus on pull-ups, so I plan on running every day along with a set of 100 pull-ups (broken up by a set of 100 crunches) every Monday, Wednesday and Friday.

My speech is mangled now just like my body was after a car accident in 2012 — the details of which aren't important, but I wasn't driving, and I'm trying to make my life now moving forward.

I don't have kids, so this is the main focus of my life now — speech therapy once a week, yoga, meditation and exercise every day, and of course, doing well in my classes here at Stony Brook University.

Gratitude is the best thing I can possibly have that money can't buy. It informs everything I do. For example, *right now*, my vision is blurry because my optometrist is trying a new lens on my glasses. But rather than be upset about this, I'm grateful that I have an optometrist, that I was able to travel to go see him, and really, that I can see at all.

Gratitude is the best thing I can possibly have that money can't buy. It informs everything I do.

I'm grateful to have access to clean water and healthy food options, the types of which are specific to the university town of Stony Brook, N.Y. Most people throughout history have not had access to these provisions.

I think it is important to be grateful for all these things that we have been given, because we really do have a whole lot.

Thank you for reading so far. ■

an SBU student lying in bed, so burnt out they
could die♡

AND YOU'LL HAVE
3 ASSIGNMENTS ON FRIDAY...



STAYCATION
2021!

an SBV student, lying on a horse, so burnt out
they could die ♡



it goes without
saying...

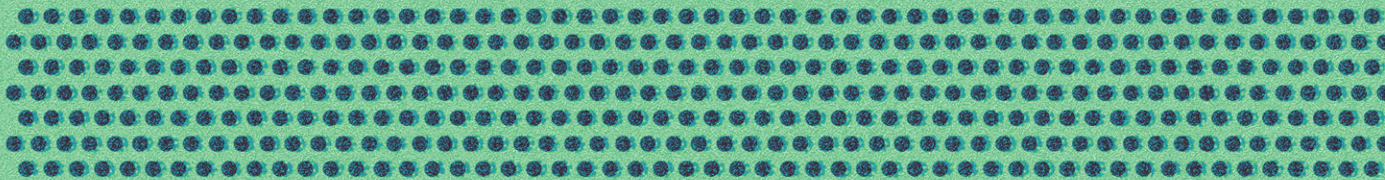
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