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This year, Archarios has brought home two awards

Best of Show from the Associated Collegiate Press
AND
2nd Place Pinnacle Award for Four-Year Literary Magazines

We could not have done this without the extraordinary talent of the artists and writers who submit their work each semester, and the brilliant student staff who put in countless hours. Without their dedication, creativity, and hard work, Archarios would not have become what it is today.

You can submit your work during submission week each semester. We publish student poetry, short fiction, creative nonfiction, studio art, and design.

Archarios is published annually and unveiled in the spring. You can find the latest issue in the teal racks around campus. To learn more about getting Archarios magazines and merchandise, submitting your art or literature, or joining our staff, please email us at archclub@g.coastal.edu.

You can also visit our office at 204B Lib Jackson Student Union (above CINO Grille.)

Now, go create.
MEET THE TEAM

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
Pat Siebel

ASSISTANT EDITOR
Amanda Taylor

ART DIRECTOR
Erica Burkett

FROM THE EDITOR’S DESK

Searching a dead lexicon for my final few words in Tempo Magazine, Elliott Smith, via my stereo speakers, sums it up nicely:
“You got a look in your eyes/ When you’re saying goodbye/ Like you want to say hi.”
I’ll miss it here, but leave my little shoes for bigger feet to fill. Parting is such sweet cliché. It has been real, and it has been fun. But you could use a new pair of pants, a facelift, a lingual buzz saw, a new perspective, and a few other things I can’t offer.

As you flip through the next 60-something pages, you’re going to see the most talented writers, artists, and writer/artists Coastal Carolina has to offer. I’m blown away every time — defamiliarization that’ll knock you down like a playground bully, empathy that’ll pick you and set you back on your feet like a best friend. Let it continue, but let us part, quickly, because you’re a stubborn band-aid, and I have the most sensitive skin. Do I mince words? Goodbye, so long, farewell.

Dropping the mic,

Pat Siebel
Editor-in-Chief 2013-2015
LGBTQ PROGRESS

DOES COASTAL SUPPORT THE LGBTQ MOVEMENT?

After constantly seeing articles roll in on the Internet, nonstop coverage on the news, I was struck with the question: Where does CCU lie on the LGBTQ spectrum? Do we intend to follow our country’s progression, or will we continue to be mocked? It turns out CCU is marching forward — not only with LGBTQ, but other programs like sexual violence, diversity, and general education. I told her about an incident I had on campus where I was talking to a professional staff member, and they immediately assumed I was a straight male, asking if I was using protection when having sex with my girlfriend. I corrected them instantly, and they were taken back, even seeming uncomfortable for the remainder of the conversation. Piperato just nodded her head and said that’s a common situation. “The university needs to try and adopt a true universal design,” she explained, “One that focuses on our language, knowledge, and it needs to be done by everyone on campus — not just specific people.”

As I always do, I closed the interview with, “How would you rate CCU on a scale of 1-10 with LGBTQ awareness, safety, and friendliness?” She was pretty hesitant, but ended up rating CCU a three, which seems fair. She explained that when she got here this past summer she would’ve rated Coastal a one, easily, but that we’ve since developed. I asked why she thought we were so low, and she ended our conversation saying, “We have an awesome 25% on campus in full support of LGBTQ momentum and growth, but it’s hard to grow when the other 75% aren’t really focusing too much on it.” I couldn’t agree more. Maybe since construction is catching up, the university will begin to focus more on these topics. We’ll see within the next few semesters. For now, it’s a waiting game.

- RAY TAYLOR

But all these programs and initiatives will fall flat if there isn’t enough backbone from the administration and faculty on campus to make it worthwhile. Don’t get me wrong: We’ve made progress by being the first university in the state to incorporate “All Gender Restroom” signs in every building on campus; we just had the climate survey, which included LGBTQ issues. And since SC is a pro-marriage equality state now, HR has opened their benefits to same-sex couples. In the long run, we still have a ways to go. Jamie agreed with me, stating, “We have definitely made progress, but the university needs to make LGBTQ a priority and not put it on the back burner.” She went on, saying the university needs to include the topics of sexuality and gender within other programs like sexual violence, diversity, and general education. I told her about an incident I had on campus where I was talking to a professional staff member, and they immediately assumed I was a straight male, asking if I was using protection when having sex with my girlfriend. I corrected them instantly, and they were taken back, even seeming uncomfortable for the remainder of the conversation. Piperato just nodded her head and said that’s a common situation. “The university needs to try and adopt a true universal design,” she explained, “One that focuses on our language, knowledge, and it needs to be done by everyone on campus — not just specific people.”

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- RAY TAYLOR
THE ACTUAL ACRONYM: LGBTQQIIPAA

LESBIAN
A person who is a homosexual woman.

GAY
A person who is a homosexual man.

BISEXUAL
A person who is sexually attracted to both men and women.

TRANS*
A person whose self-identity does not conform unambiguously to conventional notions of male or female gender.

QUEER
An umbrella term sometimes used by people to refer to the entire LGBT community.

QUESTIONING
A person who is questioning their sexuality.

INTERSEX
A person with two sets of genitalia or various chromosomal differences.

PANSEXUAL
A person not limited in sexual choice with regard to biological sex, gender, or gender identity.

ASEXUAL
A person who does not identify with any orientation.

ALLY
A person recognizing that the community thrives best with loving supporters, although they are not really part of the community itself.

3.5% of adults in the US identify as lesbian, gay, or bisexual

0.3% of adults in the US identify as transgender

9/10 LGBTQ students have reported being bullied

1/10 people fall under the LGBTQ umbrella

30% of suicide are related to sexual identity crisis

5x more likely to skip school because of fear

IN THE WORKS AT CCU

GENDER INCLUSIVE HOUSING
An upper-classmen, gender inclusive or LGBTQ ally community (Fall of 2016).

ALL GENDER RESTROOMS
CCU will be adding over 50 new bathroom signs that are all gender neutral to help students, especially transgender, feel safer on campus.

CCU is the university to talk to the state engineer to change bathroom signs to “all gender” in South Carolina.
January 29, 2015, as the university was just getting into the swing of Spring semester, professors from various backgrounds and departments held a contentious debate about capitalism.

Coastal’s successful Tea and Ethics series fulfilled its namesake as mainly business majors sipped chai and passion fruit drinks and watched political and philosophical gridlock. What surprised me most was that every professor had a slightly different definition of capitalism. Some emphasized the free market and individual choice, while others favored market regulation and welfare for citizens.

The persistent question of the night was, “Will the market take care of it?”

The opening remarks reminded us that while Greece is rejecting austerity with a left-wing party, and the distribution of goods and wealth on this planet is more uneven than ever before, this debate is relevant for all of us students as we try to understand our world.

Dr. Michael Latta opened by quoting Alex Epstein, who wrote the controversial book, The Moral Case for Fossil Fuels, by defining morality as “that which benefits sentient creatures.” Humans seem to be the only entity in that category by his estimate. He emphasized laissez-faire, free market capitalism as a moral imperative, and through his contrast of profitable “virtuous cycles” versus “vicious cycles,” contended that if a business behaves unethically, people will boycott it, and the market will indeed take care of that.

Dr. Greg Geer comes from a background of Education and policy studies. His beliefs reject neoliberalism, to an extent, holding welfare projects like the New Deal in high regard. After giving a brief history of welfare in the United States, he posited that workers must be treated well for capitalism to function ethically; he also pointed out that the American ideals of egalitarianism and rugged individualism seem to be at odds: Google is an example of the companies that rain benefits on their employees, but still turn an impressive profit. He begins to hint that some things simply cannot have a value placed on them, like the benefits of our education.

Dr. Dennis Edwards disagreed. I sensed a rebuke of the modern welfare state as he said, “I didn’t go to school for 24 years to have my [income] redistributed.” He explained how more than half of government expenses go to social programs, stoking outrage at the extent of the welfare state.

He upheld a pillar of capitalism, the private ownership of industry, by reminding us what happened to the Soviet Union. (About half of the Q&A is accusation of hyperbole for this) Unlike some staunch free-market advocates, however, he feels that taxation is justified for the purpose of national security. Like Dr. Latta, he affirmed that any company maximizing profit illegally will be caught, and the market can take care of issues on its own, without regulations. Henry Ford, after all, paid high wages as an incentive for workers, without having the government force him to do so. Dr. Edwards frustrated with the gridlock in Washington, and warned that we are approaching a fiscal cliff that we will not return from.

Dr. Merrill Boyce focused on a more specific question: What does a free market mean for the individual? For him, the answer is choice and responsibility. He, too, used Henry Ford as a beacon of successful capitalism. He compared it to a similar car from East Germany during the Cold War, insinuating that communism has no incentive and innovation; Mao Zedong and Joseph Stalin serve as further examples of communism’s harm to the individual. Boyce believes that criticisms of the free market apply to other economic systems, too. In a moment of comic relief, showing comic strip parodying neoliberalism, he suggested that the market take care of children, since it takes care of everything else.

Finally, Dr. Pamela Martin of the Political Science department, took the floor. She pointed out that she is the only woman on stage and the only person of color. Diversity of faculty has been a major topic of discussion lately. She began by smashing the false dichotomy of freedom versus capitalism, and reminding everyone that there is a middle ground between completely free markets and communism. After briefly mentioning her work in the Amazon, she remarks that different cultures have different dreams. While the previous presenter had a PowerPoint slide showing a white woman dreaming of fancy cars and mansions, Martin explained that the people in Ecuador lived happily without modern technology and excess.

Capitalism, she contended, never accounted for our finite resources. She mentioned the ethics of depleting the environment, as ecological economics is one of her specialties. It’s a sad world, she said, where one cannot depend on one’s neighbor. Current capitalism has evolved to where it is now and can certainly change in the future. While self-interest was emphasized for most of the presentations, it is in our self-interest to preserve our planet. Do we serve the economy, or does the economy serve us? She brought up Amartya Sen’s Human Development Index, which quantifies wellness not in terms of how much money a country has, but by whether its citizens have access to clean water, food, and literacy. According to Dr. Martin, we must factor the costs of climate change into our ethical economic considerations. We need a sustainable capitalism, where growth does not exceed our resources.

We were left with thoughtful questions about what entities belong to the moral community, and what our place on the planet is.”
DEFINING “STUDENT LIFE”

THE FINE LINE BETWEEN STUDENT LIFE AND BULLSHIT

According to Merriam-Webster, a “student” is “a person who attends a school, college, or university,” while the definition of “life” is listed as “the experience of being alive.”

Merriam-Webster does not list a definition for “student life,” but one would think this term is a compound of the definitions for each piece: the experience of being alive as a person who attends a school, college, or university, perhaps?

Nope, not the case.

“Student life,” from what I understand, is the stuff you include on cover letters to make the organizations you were a part of in college actually seem relevant; “student life” is the honors society you dropped eighty-five bucks on to receive a pin, attend an induction ceremony, and never hear from again. Just because you wanted that extra something in your resume to stand out amongst the other thousand applicants who fell for the same ploy. Finally “student life” is the bullshit elevator speech practiced for campus-position interviews in order to make yourself more marketable than you are.

Since attending college, I’ve racked up some amount of bullshit I can throw onto my resume, to make myself dazzle amongst peers who actually enjoyed their college experience. I blew my gas money for a month on some leadership society and I got an awesome ash-colored tee shirt for joining. Since going through the induction process, I’m actually fortunate the society hasn’t had a meeting since.

I mean that because I have a ton of other “student life” shit going on.

Ever heard of the National Residence Hall Honorary? I hadn’t either until I got an email about it being kind-of famous. Allegedly this organization is made for the top 1% of students — what being in the top 1% constitutes is kind of ambiguous — living in residence halls.

I’m the Vice President of Sigma Tau Delta, the English honors society, and I’m proud to be the VP of STD. We do stuff. Like, stuff actually gets done likely because our advisor advises instead of trying to run shit.

I also had these two great jobs: Desk Assistant, where I signed out spare keys to drunk kids locked out of their rooms in the middle of the night, and working as Sports Editor for The Chanticleer. The whole editor thing looks great on a resume and all that other stuff, but that’s not why I did it. It was really an awesome learning experience. I took the Desk Assistant position to emphasize my versatility and fluff my wallet — not to build up my elevator speech.

Oh yeah, I also tutored NCAA athletes, which was cool as hell, but that was only when I found time between all the other crap I had going on.

I was once a part of a religious organization on campus, but I also had to give that up because I didn’t have the time to devote, even though it genuinely made me genuinely happy. I was also part of two other organizations under University Housing. Anything else I participated in, like leadership conferences or volunteer work, is a blur. I can’t even pitch the crap I devoted my time to during an interview.

But the thing I’ve blown the most time and energy on is being an RA (Resident Assistant). Don’t get me wrong, I wouldn’t trade the experience(s) for anything, and I’ve learned a lot about the professional world, campus resources, and crisis management; I’ve also made excellent connections and long-lasting relationships with other student leaders — and even my residents. But the worst thing about being an RA is being, essentially, a hall cop. It sucks knowing I’m the reason “student lives” have been ruined over making basic freshmen mistakes. Many people believe I’m doing these students a favor, and, yeah, if I caught a student cooking meth, then I absolutely did them a favor — but those students who drank a beer or two inside the residence halls? That kid who was pulled out of college because they couldn’t afford the fine for a glass of wine inside one of the safest buildings on campus, rather than pre-gaming then driving drunk to another location, or simply binging in an unsafe place?

This is my blanket apology; I couldn’t risk losing my job. “Student life.” I gave that shit up my senior year. That’s when I actually started to live.

- LAUREL NUSBAUMER

“Since attending college, I’ve racked up some amount of bullshit I can throw onto my resume to make myself dazzle amongst my peers who actually enjoyed their college experiences.”

I'm actually fortunate the society hasn't had a meeting since.

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5 BREEDS OF CHANTICLEER

You’ve seen these archetypal Chanticleer before and you’ll see them again. This is a guide to Coastal’s most infamous students.

Illustration by Ashley Loper
1. THE SCHOLAR’S ACADEMY CHILD
   The cutest little chaunceys of them all.

2. THE BASIC GREEKS
   They exist on every college campus, live in packs, and prefer to mimic each other.

3. THE BAREFOOTED BOHEMIAN
   They prefer to be as natural as possible... by not wearing shoes.

4. THE OVER-OVER ACHIEVER
   Guaranteed to make you feel like a slacker. Whatever, who wants to be on a first name basis with their professor anyway?

5. CHAUNCEY’S #1 FAN
   You know, the ones that bleed teal.
This project came to me a few years ago when I first discovered Brandon Stanton and his beautiful blog of Humans of New York (www.humansofnewyork.com). I was captivated by his openness, how easily he spoke with strangers, and how he captured a little piece of the soul with just a picture, a short story, or quote. I’m always wondering what people’s stories are when I’m walking around campus, so Brandon’s work immediately captured my heart. So, in hopes to break my own social barriers, to feed my endless curiosity of strangers and love for photography, I decided to take his approach.

Follow @PeopleOfCoastal on Instagram

“I have a job, and I’m working towards my major and a minor, so I’m trying to stay on top of everything but sometimes it’s overwhelming.”

“It’s called Poi. It originated in New Zealand as a form of exercise to improve dexterity. I just do it for fun honestly.”

“Being alive means you’re enjoying life, like you’re actually enjoying life. When you’re living, you’re not having any fun. There’s no purpose.”

“I really go out of my way for people. I try to anyway, because I feel like that’s what I should do. I’m always known as the girl who’s way too nice.”

By Paige Johnson
“If you were to wake me up at three in the morning and say ‘Who are you?’ I would probably say ‘A Shakespearean.’”

“People will walk by and say ‘That’s so cool!’ And that’s all I want—I just want to make people’s day.”

“If could change one thing about the world I would create a society where people value folks for who they are.”

“My biggest challenge right now is just staying motivated in classes, I guess, more than anything else.”

“I was a part of the first class of African Americans to graduate from Conway High School.”

“I love clothes. I go thrifting all the time. My mom gets on me about buying cheap clothes, because the more expensive ones last longer.”
THE PROFESSORS SKETCHDIARY
It’s a casual Monday night; you’re sitting on the couch with your friend and they are viciously ignoring your mindblowing conversation while swiping their finger left and right across the screen of their phone. Hello, stop ignoring me, you yell into their face. Sorry, I’m on Tinder.

Tinder, the app that essentially allows people to say whether they find a person hot or not, has gathered so much talk and use this year that it’s becoming one of the most popular ways to score a date or hookup. The app that’s available on smart phones allows men and women to swipe left if they like you and right if they aren’t interested. If two people swipe left for each other it’s a match (probably not made in heaven, though).

Up until a few months ago, I didn’t know what Tinder was. I considered joining the app for the sake of this piece, but opted to just go on a friend of mine’s to see what it’s all about. I was hooked in a matter of a few minutes. There was something glorifying about being in charge of who was allowed to talk to me (or really, my friend). Tinder users get to skip over all the nonsense that we deal with in real life; no more running away from guys you find creepy at the bar, or girls who keep giving you weird looks from across the dance floor. It allows for some peace of mind knowing that you have some say in the people who are talking to you.

To get a better sense of Tinder other than using my friend’s account every now and then, I talked to three people in their early twenties about their experiences with the app. From outrageous messages to getting catfished, their stories reinforce my decision to stay off of Tinder.
I got on Tinder to find boys in my area that wanna get together and hang out. And by hanging out I mean anywhere from going out somewhere to just hooking up with someone. I’m 20 and in college, so it’s not that hard to meet guys, but using the app makes it a lot easier. I normally look for people in my area; I’m not trying to drive far. While swiping through I look at the first picture, and then if I like it I look through the rest. If you only have one picture up I swipe left — that’s weird to me. It’s 2015, I know you have more selfies than just that one. Stop being sketchy.

I’ve met up with 33 people, and I wasn’t scared to meet any of them. I always told my friend where I was going and gave them a picture of the person, their name, and all that just in case something happened. But I never was, like, scared someone was going to kill me. Maybe I should worry more, but we never think anything bad will happen to me. Some people that I have become friends with still talk to me and hang out every now and then. Living here in Myrtle, people come and go, so, like, during the ‘in season’ you have people in your area from all over. Also, like when I go on trips, I meet people on Tinder that live in the area. For most people it’s a onetime thing. It’s been good so far so I’ll just stick with what I’ve been doing.

I mostly wait on them to message me to know if they are actually interested or just liking everyone they see. But I’ve matched with people and messaged them first before. I see nothing wrong with it. I’ve also been the one to make the move for us to hang out. I get on the app with intentions of meeting these people, not just messaging them. But I never go on Tinder with the intentions of finding a boyfriend. That’s not what the app was made for, though I’m not too close-minded to completely shun the idea.

It gets weird sometimes. I’ve matched with someone, and have messaged them, then I’ll see them on campus. It can be awkward. The worst was when I matched with this guy and went over to his house to watch a movie only to find out he was roommates with someone else that I’d been messaging earlier that day. I know that it’s totally weird, but nothing has ever thrown me off enough that I wanted to stop using it. It’s just too easy.
It sounds bad, but whatever, I use it for sex. It’s a lot easier than it should be. Like, in real life I feel it’s harder to hook up with a girl. It’s weird to think that these girls don’t even have to hear my voice, and they’re still willing to come hang with me, but if I go out it’s harder to convince a girl that she should come back to my place. I go for the same exact type that I go for when I’m out: A cute girl in college who isn’t up for a relationship. If they give me the slightest sign that they’re going to want more than a hook up, I’m not about it. Abort mission. She’s not gonna get that from me, and I don’t want a stage five clinger. Peace.

I’ve met with, like, 20 girls. It sounds like a lot, but my friends have met up with so many more than me. Like, they’re kind of gross, going for any girl that looks slightly decent. I’m not that desperate. One time this girl messaged me “Is that a banana in your pants? Because I’m going to go ape shit over you.” It started off cool, right? Sounds like she might wanna do something with me, talking about my banana. But then she gets all weird — “I’m going to go ape shit over you?” No, thanks. Ugh. Why would you even say that?

Most times I’ve met up with a girl, I’ve never been worried about anything. I mean, sometimes it’s sketchy. This one time I thought this girl was cute, and then I go and meet up with her and her weight in real life did not match her weight online. It wasn’t like she photoshopped herself; more like the picture was a couple of years old, or she caught herself at a good angle. I wasn’t about it, but I didn’t want to just leave either. It got weird, though. Like, I was never fully comfortable the whole time I was with her, but it wasn’t because I was afraid or anything. I was mad because I felt lied to. But I feel like that’s something you have to expect. Everyone has seen “Catfish,” right? It happens to everyone nowadays, which is dumb, since they have a whole show saying that this shit happens, but still.

Shit like that just reinforces my reasoning for never getting serious with girls on Tinder. I would never even try to find a girlfriend using it. I’m sure there are some girls that are nice, and I’m sure there are some guys that are nice, but at the same time there are girls using the app for the same reason as me. So, no. I’m not trying to find a girlfriend from something I use for sex. I’m only 22 — it’s not that important for me to settle down. I mean, we are all looking for Ms. Swipe Right, but I’m just trying to find her in real life.”

At best, Tinder is a regular trial-and-error dating app that allows people to find a quick date, and then another date if the first one fails. At its lowest, it’s merely an app that helps you hook up with people without leaving your home. Tinder is ideal for students in college that are just looking to hang out, or my favorite, “watch a movie.” Until you’ve reached the age that your mom is constantly harassing you for a spouse, or grandkids, stay away from Match and eHarmony and keep on swiping. It’s easy, kind of fun, and quick — much like the sex users are likely to have.
I’m 20 and play junior hockey. I start school next semester. I guess, I was just waiting for the best deal I could get, I couldn’t really see myself going to any of the big schools that were looking at me, so I literally just committed to a school in New York a couple of weeks ago.

I got Tinder when I moved to Idaho, pretty much the same time it became a big thing. There’s nothing to do there, like, nothing at all besides play hockey. I only joined to meet girls in the area, but I either go for the really hot girls or the ok girls that message me. I can’t just limit myself to one type, that’s unfair for everyone.

I have a few pictures up there — most are of me playing hockey. I call the last one the “baby-face killer,” it drags all the girls in. It’s from a few years ago when I had all my real teeth still, but it’s a good pic. I don’t look a lot different from that except my hair is longer and I have a tooth that I remove sometimes for fun. They don’t know that, but not a lot of girls mind, which is fucking great. Once, at a party I got this girl to put the tooth on her tooth. It was completely disgusting, but I think we’re meant to be. I kinda hope that I can find her on Tinder.

Girls can be weird, though. Like, I’m sure guys can be weird, but girls are weird, too. My bio says “talk to me about your daddy issues,” and it’s def’ a joke, you know? Like, I don’t actually want to talk about your dad. This one girl messaged me one day, and was all “Hey, I’m here today to talk about issues regarding my father.” What? No, that’s weird. Like, I thought it was funny at first, but then it wasn’t a joke to her and I stopped messaging her. Even though that happened and other girls have been weird, I think it’s cool still. I’ve met probably around 15 girls in real life, and I never worried about if it was safe. I mean, they were all girls. I got catfished with a fat girl, though. We started snapchatting and she looked skinny in all of them, but I met her and boom, it wasn’t pretty.” That was the last time I saw her. I’ve only met with one girl more than once, but that wasn’t anything either.

I wouldn’t try and find a girlfriend on Tinder. No. I mean, unless she was, like, a smoke show. But nine times out of ten, no. I’ll meet with girls and that’s fine. We can be “friends.” I try and make the hot girls come to me. The ugly ones, I go to them. When the girls come to me, the ball is in my court. Like, okay, cool, I got this hot girl to come drive to me to hang out. The ugly ones, eh, if I wanna go home at any point I can leave. I don’t have to be a dick and ask them to leave if they’re at my place. It’s a good strategy.
Artificial Intelligence continues to push boundaries and impress, even at home. I was bored, playing Grand Theft Auto 5, sick of the main narrative, when I finally steered away. This isn’t new territory; most anyone familiar with the game is privy to a certain sense of recklessness. But why? Well: we need so many explosions and murders to fill our day’s quota; this need is subconscious. We see it on the news — action is story — and are bored by any less. But story, I think, lies outside of action, in small fragments of minutae throughout the day. Many knew this much earlier: Joyce and Beckett, fathers of monotony, followed by Baker, Antrim, Lynch, etc. Oh, just consider what it is to do nothing — and I often return to life just to do the whole thing again.
Sometimes it’s just testing motor skills. Pushing my weight backwards/forwards on the Mt. Zonah Medical Center curb, toes curled around its edges, just thinking. I think it’s good to experience weather again. A middle-aged woman looks over. My balance is unsteady — it has been a while. She gives me the shiteye — thinks I’m a drunk — then calls me a loser; a sentiment I don’t entirely disagree with, before walking away.

I don’t object because there’s nothing to object to. Civil absolution doesn’t sew the moral thread, legislation/jurisdiction both have amnesia, and semantics are guilt’s favorite progenitor.

Across the street, at the Weasel Dorset — a small, sort of sad, side-street theatre; the place only ‘certain types’ know about — a new show is advertised, signs and posters of varying sizes plastered on the storefront: WTF: A Tale of Online Love. “That show is amazing!” pasersby offer up as I study the marquee. I look around. Maybe it is amazing. This place, the Weasel Dorset, certainly seems like a place where one could be amazed: by coteries of artist-types in loud statements of indignation, impressing themselves on the walls; or maybe there’s something amazing in the curious futility of an young woman adjusting her already-adjusted leggings — or a blonde who, for no apparent reason, has wedged herself between the show-time posters and myself.

“What’s up?” she says.

This, to me, is a very Miranda July thing to do. It’s something necessary in the moment, a sort of break in life’s diagesis — a new, more appealing route. A shot at an uneventful life. I think whatever she’s doing is funny, and in my head I’m laughing, but I look around, left/right, up/down, ignoring her because I think if I’m getting her humor/personality right, she’ll find it funny. An obvious disinterest to signify my interest. Makes sense. We’ll laugh about it later, go see WTF: A Tale of Online Love, then shred it for its shortcomings, its clumsy Wes Andersonness, while holding it sentimental for providing a springboard. Only it doesn’t happen this way — another lesson in expectations. Her world and my world were not the same. Something fails to signify. She walks away, as do I, in a different direction.

I walk passively, accepting things as they come. In this way, I end up in a sports car, climbing and falling down steep mountain roads. This is a me thing to do: lose the grand narrative, rediscover nature. It’s a narrow, empty road that winds through the entire range. A good place to think. The irony does not escape me here: I remember the Chevy commercial with the misappropriated Thoreau-quote at the end. Deer line up on the edge of the road. I always anticipate the jump. Harm is never done. I wonder whom the expensive car I’m driving comes from. Nice gift. I thank them, kindly, but, if someone can afford one, another isn’t likely to be a problem, and that’s just how those things go.

At some point, probably subconsciously to show off my new whip, I wind up downtown. There are buildings, lots of them. I drive, tuning everything out until I can’t. Something undermines my radio’s presence, an argument. A punk-rock kid, a cigarette in hand, is engaged by a cop. Words are said, and the kid looks shaken. When I step out of the car I say, “Hey.” Well: The cop must have thought I was hitting on her — FYI: I would never hit on a cop — because she does one of those “Hi”s that somehow means both “hello” and “goodbye,” simultaneously. She walks away, showing her disapproval, but leaves the kid and his mohawk alone. As she rounds the corner I feel like Joyce’s Poldy Bloom, and I didn’t want to cause trouble, but there were things she should know. “Hey,” I say. She continues on. So do I, in clarification: “Think you’re hard?” She stops, turns around, then pulls out a gun.

Chekhov, in certain ways, would be proud of the officer. I’m shot in a careless burst. Lying on the ground, looking up, another Joycean thought occurs: “You could die just the same on a sunny day.” I stare into the sun and let it burn into my retinas. Everything turns white, and sound becomes the single note of a distant hum.

The edge of a hospital curb becomes a metaphor for the beginning of life. One better understood/more familiar to us. A theatre across the street has a big marquee sign reflecting bright lights off the pavement. People, along the wall, are gathered; certain things seem relatively clear.

This time I walk up first. Beat around the bush and get shot in the face by a Los Santos police officer. One quickly learns, after a time or two, (how) to avoid being shot in the face.

I say “Hey, baby,” then stare hard at the ground.

It’s not quite me — I miss the mark completely — but maybe, I think, she’ll take it with humor. She should, when considering how to consider me, consider my shame. I make it apparent, but, at this

“OH, JUST CONSIDER WHAT IT IS TO DO NOTHING — AND I OFTEN RETURN TO LIFE JUST TO DO THE WHOLE THING AGAIN.”

Some day, consider me, consider my shame. I make it apparent, but, at this
point, to this degree, it feels contrived. My facial expressions feel forced, just to the point where they no longer feel correct, and people, I think, are beginning to stare.

I begin to say something else. Perhaps a clarification of sorts, but:

“Shut the fuck up,” she says, “and get ready for the experience of a lifetime.”

The girl in leggings, my first crush, lifts her head for a moment — “Oh!” — then looks down and resumes her adjustments. She pulls and pushes, pulls and pushes, the lazy Sisyphus, then stares down the sidewalk. I want to tell her I love her, or would love to take her to the Weazel Dorset, any show she’d like, then offer, without implications of any sort, to buy her a new pair of stockings. The blonde continues on about “the experience of a lifetime,” and what, exactly, that entails. Many words are said, none of which I hear, and by the time I remember to turn back around, to give the woman an answer regarding her offer, she’s gone. Sisyphus is I: chase shadows to become one. Suffer forever. All right, very well. I turn around. Leggings is gone. Very well. Since that’s the way we’re playing it, let’s play it that way and speak no more about it. I stand in the middle of the road where nobody ever stops, yields, or swerves.

Hospital, curb, theatre: These things, as I see them, are all familiar, but uninteresting. A hurried driver in a business suit rear-ends a woman right in front of me. Her bumper is history/my interest is piqued. Her head rests on the steering wheel, and the horn blares, and he does not get out to apologize/inquire on her wellbeing, so I force him out. While he’s out, I grab his car. I ditch the city in a new Ocelot F620 Coupe, driving without destination, trailblazing dense forests, accelerating down the sawtooth declines of mountains, and carefully negotiating tight peak-turns where, at the outermost parts, the world in its entirety is visible below.

Tiny, moving specks go about their respective whatevers.

You can climb up the big VINEWOOD letters set out on the Hills, and, when you reach the top, you can look over the city at every little, individual
speck of flickering light and see yourself in just about everyone. It all seems natural, fluid, but isn’t. Werner Heisenberg, in a 1950-something series of lectures delivered in Scotland, reminded us “We have to remember that what we observe is not nature herself, but nature exposed to our method of questioning.” We see what we’ve trained ourselves to know and know what we’ve convinced ourselves we’ve seen. Two small, nimble cars zip around Vinewood Hills, multiple ambulance/police sirens reverberate through the air, someone somewhere yells in terror. It’s familiar — the sounds together — and because of its familiarity, I assume it has been created for me — to end me. The city sings my name as it searches for retribution.

And while it sings, coming surely to have its way with me, to take me and do as it pleases until next time, three girls stroll up the trailhead. I slide down the VINewood ladder.

“Hey, Sweetheart,” I say.

“Hello,” one replies.

Her intonation is one of interest/curiosity. I like the way she says it, but she says nothing else. Just pulls out her phone for a scenic Selfie.

“Hey,” I say to the other.

She too pulls out her phone. It occurs to me to ask if I could take a picture of all of them, as the third girl has, at this point, pulled hers out as well. All three stand in a perfect equilateral triangle, phones raised over their heads, faces bent to strange expressions. Sirens still blare. I can stay, or go. If I go, and I’m not wanted, I will be.

Then, for no reason at all, they began to call me names. Which? I can’t recall. But I just crawled back into the Ocelot and tore down the Vinewood hills into the Vinewood streets, not stopping for anything, anyone, because regardless of whatever, and I’ll always have another shot at this whole thing, I always sort of was a motherfucker.
YOU WERE DRINKING, WEREN’T YOU?

Duh. I was a sophomore in college and literally broke up with my boyfriend — of a record breaking one month (go me!) — three hours before I started. I broke up with him, so why I cried so much, I don’t know. My then best friends decided that we were going to celebrate my “independence” — the shackles of that month were clearly much too hard to bear — and we were going to drink until either 1) I stopped crying, or 2) I made out with my crush, Mark. I was going all out, and by that I mean we got the big bottle of raspberry Burnett’s. I’ve always been classy. In between shots I would start tearing up, thinking about all that Paul, my ex-boyfriend of three hours, said before he left my room. My roommate, Steph, kept telling me that it was okay, and that we would go to the party with her boyfriend and Mark and have fun.

“He looked like a sloth, Amanda. Screw him. Drink what’s left in the cup, and we’ll go downstairs to pregame.”

Forty five minutes later I was ready, with some Burnett’s and cranberry juice still in my plastic Disney princess cup. We rode the elevator down to the second floor in silence.

Okay, I’ll be honest, I had kissed Mark — a quick peck, I swear! — the day before, and felt guilty as I walked into his apartment. I took sips from my cup, rotating it each time, making each princess drink along with me.

“You okay?” he asked?

“I’m fine. My cup is getting low, but I’ll drink more when we get to the party.”

He smirked, and I remember thinking it was good that I wasn’t thinking about Paul, who kept texting me “Amanda, c’mon.”

Fast forward an hour and we were finally at the party, which was only a few blocks away. Instead of having fun, I was feeling off. It wasn’t the alcohol; at most all I had was a buzz, and my stomach was churning. Mark had stuck around me all night, and kept telling me that I looked good for feeling so shitty.

I leaned against the wall and told Stephanie I needed to leave. She wanted to stay and asked if I could hold out a little longer.

Luckily, I had Mark there, and instead of walking home by myself he came along. So, yes, I was drinking, but no, I wasn’t drunk. Mark would’ve taken care of me anyways.

Emma Sulkowicz committed Ivy League sin when she decided to tote around her mattress as a piece of performance art for her senior thesis, calling attention to the fact that she had been raped two years prior. She claimed that Columbia University failed to handle her case properly. Attacked in August 2012, Sulkowicz, like many rape survivors, decided not to report the case. It wasn’t until others admitted that the alleged attacker, Paul Nungesser, had sexually assaulted them too, that she decided to speak up.

Risking her word Sulkowicz took her case to the administration of Columbia only to wait six months to be misrepresented and embarrassed. Sulkowicz accused the administrators of taking inaccurate notes and being rude about her situation, asking questions about lubrication and sexual positions. Three women, including Sulkowicz, all accused Nungesser of sexual assault, but Columbia declared him innocent and refused to hear an appeal. Nungesser walks freely around campus, each girl likely to bump into him at some point and be reminded of the assault, but Sulkowicz isn’t letting this go to rest.

Word of the Ivy League senior toting around a huge mattress wasn’t kept quiet for long. She began to draw heavy media attention. Sulkowicz noted and was rude about her situation, asking questions about the alleged rapist, but Sulkowicz isn’t letting this go to rest.

“I’m tired,” I said. “I think I’m gonna head out.”

Was that the sign you’re talking about?

“There’s rape and then there’s rape,” claims Susan Patton, author of Marry Smart and Princeton Mom. In an interview with CNN’s Carol Costello, Patton gave her thoughts on the media giving lots of attention to the ongoing problem of campus rape. The two-star author ignorantly protests that there are two types of rapes, implying that one is serious and one is merely a “regrettable experience.” Campus rapes have always been around, mostly swept under the rug so schools can keep their good name, but as more and more schools are having issues with how to handle rape cases, Patton surprisingly seems to side with the accused. “It no longer is when a woman is violated at the point of gun or knife, we’re now talking about or identifying as rape what really is a clumsy hookup melodrama, or a fumbled attempt at a kiss or a caress,” she says. Patton continuously overlooks the fact that all rape is violent — a gun or knife is just an accessory if the outcome is still the same.

DID YOU SAY ANYTHING? PEOPLE LISTEN IF YOU SAY SOMETHING.

That’s a stupid question. Of course. “No.” I can’t tell you why, because I don’t know myself, but I was really calm as he took off my shirt and unbuttoned my pants. There had been nights with Paul when I would let it get to the same point, but never let him go through with his intentions. I wasn’t a virgin, but I didn’t just have sex. Paul would sigh, but would always roll back to his side of the bed as soon as I said no. I assumed the same thing would happen with Mark. He was directly on top of me and moving his sloppy hands all over me.

“I’m so glad you actually broke up with your boyfriend,” he whispered into my ear.

ARE YOU SURE YOU DIDN’T GIVE ANY SIGNS?

What does that even mean? Signs of what? When we got back to our building, we both agreed going back to his apartment was better. The temperature was always a bit cooler than mine—and closer in case I got sick. I drank water, and we watched some stupid Rob Dyrdek show for all of ten minutes before he kissed me. Again, I wasn’t feeling my hottest, but maybe this would distract me from whatever was going on in my stomach. I wanted this make out sesh to happen at some point anyways, just not in this setting. We eventually wound up in his room—smooth, he was — but for some reason I couldn’t get Paul out of my head. Not even a solid seven hours since we broke up, and I was already in someone else’s bed. He was right, I thought. I am a total bitch. All this was running through my mind as Mark continued to kiss me, and it wasn’t exactly a mood setter.

So, I was drunk, but no, I wasn’t drunk. Mark would’ve taken care of me anyways.

DID YOU SAY ANYTHING? PEOPLE LISTEN IF YOU SAY SOMETHING.
“Yeah, me too,” I responded in a sleepy struggle, as he started to pull down my underwear.

I grabbed his hand, chucked, and told him that this wasn’t going to happen.

“No, I seriously just broke up with Paul. No, not tonight,” I told him in a voice I thought was solid.

People don’t always listen.

“DRUNK SEX CAN BE FUN AND A LEARNING EXPERIENCE WHEN IT’S CONSENSUAL

...AND BE THE ONE OF THE MOST PAINFUL EXPERIENCES IF IT’S NOT.”

While she poorly insists that she supports rape survivors and sympathizes with them, throughout her interview Patton almost always seems to blame women for not getting themselves out of “prickly” situations. When Costello informs Patton that most rapes are committed by friends or in their own houses, Patton asks why the women didn’t just “get up and leave?” It never seems to cross Patton’s mind that leaving isn’t always a possibility. It’s easy to think of what you would do in a negative situations, but when it becomes real your reactions may not be what you assumed they would. Though Patton swears she’s on the same side as the victims, she seems to do what most of America does when looking at a rape case: Her eyes turn on the survivor, not the attacker. Costello brings up the idea that when someone gets shot, as a society, no one asks why that person didn’t see the bullet coming or what they were wearing when they were injured. But when someone is raped, people begin to question what the survivor did “wrong.”

“[Drunk sex] is a learning experience,” Patton tells Costello towards the end of their interview. What she fails to say is that drunk sex can be fun and great and a learning experience when it’s consensual, and be the one of the most painful experiences if it’s not. Too often alcohol becomes a major factor in whether people choose to believe survivors or not. But why should that matter? If the survivor expressed that they didn’t want to engage in the act, that should be enough. If the survivor is too drunk to respond their silence doesn’t mean “Yes.” Until consent, no sexual advances should be made. Patton attempts to reason that rapists will always be rapists, and that it’s a person’s job to prevent themselves from getting raped as she compares them to burglars stating, “We can teach burglars not to steal, but better advice: lock your door.” Or, the most simple thing in my opinion, would be for rapists to stop forcing themselves onto people who aren’t interested in hooking up with them.

WHY SHOULD I EVEN BELIEVE YOU?

I don’t need you to believe me; I don’t need you to try and support me; I don’t need you to feel bad for me, to validate me, or to even know this about me — but I think people need to realize it isn’t always what it seems. I wasn’t drug behind a shed in the woods like the other women you hear about on the news. But what makes those women’s story more confirmed than mine? I don’t want to be a survivor or a victim. I don’t want to be linked to something that gets questioned far more than it should be.

In the wake of sexual assault cases going “wrong,” Stanford University is straying from its collegiate counterparts and is properly dealing with its most current rape case: Brock Turner, a 19-year-old student athlete, who was caught on top of an unconscious woman shortly after midnight on January 18th. Two male students riding their bikes across campus happened upon Turner and the woman and chased him down when he ran away. While one of the men restrained Turner, the other phoned the police and waited until they took Turner away.

Bravo to these two students who took action. The swimmer was charged with five felonies ranging from rape of an unconscious person to assault with the intent to commit rape. While Turner allegedly voluntarily withdrew from the prestigious university, it’s most likely he left before expulsion. Along with not being allowed to set foot on the California campus, the swimmer turned attacker’s profile on the team’s online roster has been removed. As the police continue to investigate, Stanford’s spokeswoman Lisa Lapin claims the university will partake in its own investigation. Though Turner has pleaded not guilty, it’s a nice surprise to see a school taking the right steps and making the attacker accountable and not the survivor.
By Krysten Elliott

Our generation is fascinated with social media: we post parent-friendly statuses and pictures on Facebook, spend countless minutes editing photos to put on Instagram so we won’t have to even think of the horror of getting less than 11 likes on a picture, tweet about our lives and retweet glorified anon accounts. Over the past year, a new app whose dock icon is a fuzzy animal with horns — a yak — has found its way onto our phone. If you weren’t familiar with the yak, as an animal, it’s almost guaranteed by now you do; Yik Yak now sports over 5,000,000 downloads on Android devices alone (this obviously discludes iPhones), and is ranked the ninth most downloaded social networking app in America.

Before attending CCU, I studied at the College of Charleston and actually met and played tennis a few times — totally casual — with one of the Yik Yak’s founders, Will Jameson. Along with two Furman University graduates, Tyler Droll and Brooks Buffington, only one week was spent developing the app. In November 2013, Yik Yak was available for iOS 7 and Android 4.0.

While you won’t find Will’s name when you google the founders of Yik Yak, he was the mastermind behind making the app compatible with Android devices. However, shortly after Yik Yak’s popularity soared, he decided to become less involved in order to put more focus on completing his college career. “You only have one chance to go to school as a true college student, and no immediate amount of money is worth missing that experience,” he said. “People create their own opportunities and I am confident I will be able to create another one after graduation.”

Jameson has a reason to be confident; at the sprightly age of sixteen, he’d already created his first iPhone app — and in his sophomore year of college, he founded his own app company, SupremeApps. With has six apps under his belt, he doesn’t plan on stopping soon. He’s currently working on two new apps he plans to release soon if all goes as planned. If you go to SupremeApps.org, you can find a list of all the apps he has created: Front Flash Snapchat (Fun fact: he filed a lawsuit against the creator of Snapchat for stealing his Front Flash Snapchat invention), Front Flash for Android, PhoneSpy, Yik Yak, InstaKeep, and HangOver. When discussing his process for inventing apps, he says that he doesn’t spend his days thinking of new inventions, he simply finds solutions for problems with apps that have already or have yet to be created. “I’m not constantly trying to think of ideas, I’m trying to think of problems that I can fix myself,” said Will. For those interested in technology entrepreneurship, he suggests that learning code is essential because while everyone has ideas, not many can execute them. He advises to “look for features in major apps that you would like to see added in the future, then add the feature on your own.” To create his apps, the programming tools he finds to be most useful are git, Dropbox, and Google Analytics.

When at parties in Chucktown, you would think Will is just your typical college student; wearing cowboy boots (not Gucci crocodile loafers), blue jeans and
Will manages to keep his daily life relatively normal aside from dining regularly at Hall’s Chophouse in Charleston, which is a pretty high-class restaurant to say the least. Besides being awesome at working with technology, he’s also an awesome tennis player and is one of the leading players on CofC’s Club Tennis team. He says his daily schedule usually includes playing tennis, going to class, and doing what he does best—coding.

While Will is down in Charleston doing his thing unnoticed, the other two founders of Yik Yak are gaining popularity, and sometimes in worse ways rather than good. An author for Fox News Opinions online was super cynical about the app, bashing Droll and Buffington as individuals and bashing the project they built as well. “The creators of Yik Yak decided to disseminate the technological equivalent of crack cocaine on America, and I hope these drug pushers, disguised as techie entrepreneurs, attract the attention of world-class, class-action attorneys,” wrote Dr. Keith Ablow. He continues on to describe Yik Yak as the “most dangerous form of social media” he’s ever seen and says it is the “ultimate tool for bullies.” This “doctor” is a psychiatrist, so one would presume he knows what he’s talking about…but he must not be aware that the app is designated for college students. As college students, the users shouldn’t be using Yik Yak for immature purposes, and even if someone did post something derogatory, it would be gone within seconds due to downvotes (once a “yak” receives -5, it is automatically deleted).

While doing research on Yik Yak, I pulled the app up on my phone and began reading yaks from the Coastal community. Among the feed, there were posts complaining about exams, people making jokes (not about one another), helpful alerts to fellow students, the occasional attempted drug deal, and satirical odes to exes. “We can put a man on the moon but GOD forbid the vending machine accepts my slightly bent dollar.” “Made a graph of my past relationships. I have an ex axis and a why axis.” “Green Jeep in the overflow lot with SC license plate JFS361 your lights are on.” “Summer where art thou?” Yik Yak has basically become our local bulletin board and in a sense, is creating a more tight-knit community. If you don’t already have this infectious app on your cellular device (except you Windows users…again, sorry), go to your App Store or Google Play right now and download it—it’s free! And as for my fellow Yakkers, keep on spreadin’ the word to grow the herd.
SORRY DANNY,
YOU'RE WRONG
A Sort-of Celebration for
American Horror Story’s
Third Season, Coven

By Pat Siebel

My friend Danny and I talk pop culture. By that I mean Danny introduces me, world-class curmudgeon, to various pop-culture phenomena. One night discussing FX’s primetime hit American Horror Story and, more specifically, the show’s well-received third season, Coven, he tells me “Skip it.”

“Why?” I ask.

“Well,” Danny says, “I watched a few episodes, really gave it a fair chance, but it was, I don’t know, too young adult? I skipped to the new ones.”

I don’t watch television much, can’t sit still that long, but for whatever reason, I enjoyed American Horror Story. I watched the box with great interest, fell victim to the show’s plot-laden structure, and wanted to continue on. Past the old New-England home of season one, literally haunted by its own memories; past the second season’s morally obscure insane asylum/convent and its almost-abandoned extraterrestrial trope; to a small, diminishing coven of Salem descendants — witches — living/dying/living again within the confines of a New Orleans boarding home.
“WHILE YOU’RE RIGHT, YOU’RE ALSO KIND OF WRONG. 
AND HAD I WATCHED ALONE, LEFT TO MY OWN GROUSING 
JUDGMENTS, I MAY HAVE SKIPPED COVEN TOO.”

Little tutelaries, cartoon-like binary caricatures, hover over each shoulder: Danny on one, staring me dead in the eye. “No, no,” he pleads with comic intensity, “don’t do it!” On the other, my fiancée’s doppelganger who, regardless of genre/whatever, can find merit in most anything. “Please,” she looks up through her eyelids, “can’t we give it a whirl?”

Danny, we whirled.

But let me give credit where credit’s due: Danny was by no standards wrong, and Coven is, by any/all standards, a young-adult wet dream: witches, spells, drama, drama brawls, drama-laden plots, drama-laden sub plots, etc.

But Danny — Reader, do you mind if I call you Danny? — while you’re right, you’re also kind of wrong. And had I watched alone, left to my own grousing judgments, I may have skipped Coven too. Let’s get it all out: The conceit is loud and, at times, childish. The first episode is called “Bitchcraft.” I’ll give it to you that at some point, some marketing head probably held an office-wide One-liner Contest for dialogue and the winners weren’t very good at all. A lot of what you said is true. Some of the character development was questionable, Stevie Nicks, as culture rotates on its nostalgic axis, makes awkward cameos a little too often toward the season’s end. Sure, sure, I also would have done a couple things differently. But lets not cast off a work because of its contradictions when contradictions are a call for conversation. Now: I know my introductory rebuttal — coming shortly, assuredly — is slippery. But let's throw salt. Hear me full circle, please. Coven, in its own way, is kind of the shit.

“Well it’s modern television, and it’s pretty good,” I turn and say to my fiancée a few episodes in. “We don’t exactly get Twin Peaks anymore.” (This was just days before finding we would, for better or worse, get Twin Peaks again.) When Danny and I started talking about it the next day, I told him I considered today’s entertainment a give-or-take. A coming to terms with, those of us who care, that in order for a show today to survive, there’s going to be a deal of some sort with the devils in suits. Throw them a few one-liners and cheap thrills, let them revel in their plotty plots but, in return, give us some Goddamn nourishment. Just a speck of occasional hope.

Hope, if you wait, comes in the form of an immortal racist, damned to life, a near-caricature if her story weren’t mostly true. Danny, meet Madame Delphine LaLaurie (Kathy Bates). Historically, Madame LaLaurie — Marie Delphine LaLaurie — was a New Orleans socialite, thrice married and once revered. On 10 April 1934, her kitchen was seized by fire. When help arrived, a seventy-year-old woman, one of Madame LaLaurie’s cooks, was found chained to the stove by her ankles. Questioned, she — the slave — admitted to arson. The fire, a suicide attempt, was a last-ditch effort to circumvent LaLaurie’s harshest punishment(s).

Danny, let’s visit the attic.
In the show, Marie Delphine LaLaurie’s mansion is a marked historical site — curious explorers survey the three-story home, bottom to top, alongside their tour guide. During the attic finale crowds coo/ca, moving about, touching/toying with just about everything, contemplating intricate torture devices, some repositioned into staged reenactments. One has the impression, in flashback scenes to LaLaurie’s 1800s, that her barbarity is/tools are, by a long shot, to say the least, antiquated.

Danny, this made me smile.

It did. Because it’s one of Coven’s most, um, poignant nudges. In a quick, synoptic nutshell: LaLaurie tortures the wrong guy — then, in return, the wrong guy’s wife, Marie Laveau (Angela Bassett), who happens to be something of a high priestess in voodoo curses LaLaurie with immortality, burying her — LaLaurie — underground. She lies there in the darkness, mouth taped shut, as generation after generation passes over her body, until she’s dug up as part of another sub-plot. When she’s unearthed her archaism are polarized. She’s the butt of a huge joke. American Horror Story, in its wide-spanning appeal — and this is where the show’s corniness is finally justified — is ultimately a pretty solid moral allegory: The aged, conservative Southern bayou value system is broken, old — like, Victorian old — and long buried. LaLaurie is conservative ideology, modern racism, a slob in a frilly dress; she’s Darren Wilson, ISIS, and every case, every day, of social antiquities/ injustices. The joke is her lack of self-awareness; the implication is that, well… you know: She’s something that should be long buried, something that has no place in modern culture.

But when you consider such a despicable antagonist — though antagonism in the show is a fairly ambiguous and subjective thing — it’s unlikely you consider the vulnerable image of him/her tucked in, fetal, under a comforter at night. Empathy, for LaLaurie, comes, then goes — and it’s all just a quick lesson that trust, like a good ending, must be properly earned.

Though Coven premiered in 2012, and I didn’t tune in until late 2014 — no thanks to you, Danny — its message was uncannily fitting. Especially in the light of recent tragedies. There’s something there — that high-/low-culture intersect Fredric Jameson first spoke of, that Americans seem to love and cling to so dearly — that makes American Horror Story truly American. A disparate plea and open invitation to the prime-time box gazer, saying “Hey, you there? Open your fucking eyes.” The passive observer may not notice, and this is the skill of AHS’s writers, but they may, through some vague, inexplicable occurrence of defamiliarization be able to detect something bubbling beneath the surface (no pun: cauldrons/brews find no place amongst the cliches). You see what I’m saying, Danny? There’s a lot here. Danny, do you get it? Danny Danny Danny Danny Danny Danny Danny Danny.

Danny, you know what I enjoy most of all? A deep, meaningful gouging straight into, up, and through capitalism’s most precious hole. So: a few characters are talking, dudes in suits, and they’re more or less witchhunters — murderers — but you know what else they are? CEOs, Danny. Deep-pocketed suits whose selfishness leads them toward shameless murder. After the CEO’s assistant makes sure his company is aware of his boss’s position, he immediately mentions how “the Liberals in Washington are just looking for an excuse to sic the FBC” on them. It’s Wall Street running from Warren, the veritable Bernie Sanders, your favorite Upton Sinclair novel. Maybe, if nothing else, it’s something slowly, surely making its way into the collective consciousness. It should. Doesn’t it seem like every day we fall a little further from content?

Danny, let this serve as a formal invitation to come over, lounge on my favorite couch, and give it another whirl. I don’t want to say too much, but I think the show will say something for itself. Different people, different reactions, but complete indifference? Come on. This is where Frederick Jameson realized something beautiful: we’re all in this together.
On Thursday, February 5, a group of 30 undergraduate and graduate students filed into a small boardroom in Northampton, NC filled with muffins, coffee, fruit, and other welcome gifts. Most of us had just gotten done taking Selfie, because this was the first time many of us had worn hard hats and protective neon jackets. On top of our suits and dresses, this gear looked downright ironic.

Some of us were undergrad students barely 18, and others were grad students in their thirties. We had just been on a bus tour at the Wilmington Port, where wood pellets for biomass energy would be shipped to Europe. We were told this was also where the final scene of Iron Man 3 was filmed, which sent us all into fan mode. For many of us, this was our first actual fieldwork trip. I felt a certain pride when holding up the “DYER INSTITUTE FOR LEADERSHIP AND PUBLIC POLICY” banner, as this was my first chance to represent Coastal, and hopefully someday publish my findings.

Dogwood Alliance, a Southeastern forest protection group, had just given us a presentation about how Enviva was reducing biodiversity in our forests by replacing natural forests with pine plantations. Enviva is a wood pellet plant, which turns logs into tiny wood pellets for biomass energy. It is quickly replacing coal throughout Europe. The allegations against the wood pellet industry included taking more of trees than was promised on company websites (not “just the tops,” for example). Of the Dogwood Alliance, Emily Zucchino and John Qua have made a living of researching wood pellet plants, which produce biomass energy almost entirely for countries in Europe. They had pictures of trucks heading to Enviva, and pictures of alleged deforestation. What they lacked before this trip was a chance to see inside the very places their activism struggled against.

I expected that merging of people from very different walks of life would be a lot more awkward than it was. Emily even told us that Enviva’s Communications & External Affairs manager, Morgan Pitts, had followed them on Twitter. Most environmentalists find that Exxon and BP are not available for collaboration or comment, but Enviva presented a PowerPoint, and took us on a tour.

Something about our three-day intensive environmental research trip felt like touring the Pentagon. Some groups on the tour of Enviva, I was told, got to take pictures. But as any decent PR manager, Morgan Pitts was exceedingly cautious. The only pictures we took in my group were of the unbelievably high piles of Carolinian trees, soon to be pelletized and shipped overseas. Any pictures of machinery (or at times, even any open notebooks) could get trade secrets out to wood pellet companies competing with Enviva. I didn’t know
this at the time, but “trade secrets” would be the mantra that would frustrate our marine scientists endlessly.

As researchers, we are impartial. But many of us had questions with a very clear slant for the Enviva wood pellet plant workers. What about the birds? What about the woodland creatures and insects that make homes in these trees? Many of us had concerns about whether cutting down the carbon-sucking, oxygen-producing trees would exacerbate climate change.

But our Dogwood and Enviva friends had more in common than many students expected. Everyone that we spoke to at Enviva said some variation of the words “sustainability,” “renewable energy,” and “climate change” at least once. What really got our attention was how committed Morgan Pits was to the environment. He was skeptical of biomass energy at first, but he said it was indisputable how much better for the environment these wood pellet plants were than the coal plants they replaced. It was eye-opening how both those working to produce biomass energy, and those opposed to it, all claimed to take an environmental stance.

After our tour, we spoke with residents of Sampson and surrounding counties. They voiced concerns about pollution, noise, and especially particulate matter like sawdust traveling from the plant to their homes. Although Enviva had assured us that the dust remained at the plant, residents had very vivid stories of pool filters getting clogged with sawdust, people moving away if they could. Many took a social justice stance, pointing out that these plants are always built in poor neighborhoods, often neighborhoods of color. Moving was not only a financial issue, but a sentimental one — one woman joked (we hope) that she’d rather give up her son than her land. We were impressed with the good humor and helpful information on both sides of the issue.

While Wednesday and Thursday were spent studying deforestation in North Carolina and biomass energy abroad, Friday was devoted to my case study — fracking. Basically, this is the process of getting natural gas out of the ground for fuel by pumping water, sand, and various chemicals into shale deposits deep underground. We were double-hooked by the Energy and Mining Commission, so we have to research the fine-with-fracking side on our own. We did, however, get to hear presentations from and interview members of Frack Free NC, Clean Water NC, and the Southern Environmental Law Center in Chapel Hill, NC. Frack Free/Clean Water’s presentation brought together science and the rights of landowners. We learned that sometimes, people buy land without being informed that they do not have “mineral rights,” or control over what goes on underground. Their grassroots work is designed to distribute petitions and show movies in their community, which will inform them of the dangers of fracking to the environment and property values. Earthquakes are also a major concern of these citizens, as the fracking would occur on fault lines. Plus, this is a racial justice issue: Ericka Faircloth, of the Lumbee tribe of Native Americans, shared the concerns of the Lumbee and 7 other North Carolina tribes, all of whom oppose fracking. Shortly after, two vibrant attorneys shared information on the Energy and Mining Commission. It is the goal of these attorneys to dismantle the rules set by the EMC, and block fracking in other significant ways, like regulating the industry more. This is where the term “trade secrets” pops up again: Companies often won’t disclose the chemicals they blast the ground with, as other companies might use the same methods. But it means that the average consumer doesn’t know if benzene or methane could get into their water. Plus, we found out that shale in North Carolina is so lacking that we could use up all the natural gas within 6 years. Everyone’s figures are different, but that doesn’t sound sustainable. We left knowing so much more about the science and community aspects of fracking and biomass energy, in a way that couldn’t be delivered in a classroom. We got so many quotes to use in our case studies, plus dozens of potential follow-ups. Dr. Pamela Martin, of the Political Science department has been organizing this trip for months, and hopes to go on many more with dedicated students of political science and marine biology. She said: “Issues of energy abound in the Southeast where we are confronted with finding sustainable practices for energy that motor our lives and our economies, and keep the planet safe for future generations. This intensive field research trip examined the issues of woody biomass and our Southern forests, as well as hydraulic fracturing in NC. What we learned is that strong scientific study and policy that connects these issues are vital to our development forward. We hope this research opportunity is the first of many to seek out solutions for the 21st Century that apply here in the South and resonate globally.”

This trip has offered me an opportunity that makes me so proud to be a student at Coastal. What I learned was not only eye-opening, but great in the sense that I can now properly advocate for what I think is right with all this newfound knowledge. I’ve been telling everyone that I’m going to write a case study as a sophomore, and while I can hardly believe it myself, I’m more focused on getting the facts out there and making people aware of actual issues not just who should have won album of the year.
Hipsters: those who are seemingly fashion forward though most of their wardrobe is filled with flannel, denim, or buttoned up shirts. They drink from mason jars, jock Walt Whitman-esque hats, have a lot of photos of them casually strolling through the forest. The men have beards lumberjacks are jealous of, and the women look like Urban Outfitters models. Some love to hate them, but really they want to know how the guys slick their hair back so well.

In the past few years the word has exploded with connotation. We no longer expect them to shop solely at Goodwill; we now assume their cheap look is actually really expensive. Beards no longer represent the unkempt, but manliness. The thicker the beard, the more the man; girls who can effortlessly keep their hair in natural waves, or even up in a messy bun are envied. Let’s face it, being a Hipster is mainstream, regressive. But their style is undeniably cool. Go out, buy a mason jar, product for your beard, a midi ring (because who doesn’t need a ring that’s meant to not go over your knuckle). Hundreds of dollars’ worth of clothing to help you resemble someone from the depression era. Give in, give in, give in. It’s (not) cool, I swear.
White Lace Dress
Free People $300

Mens Brown Shoes
Perry Ellis $60

Blue Dotted Socks
J Crew $10

Floral Button Down
Pacsun $35
Red Blouse
Free People $150

Brown Ankle Boots
Sam Edelman $175

Suspenders
Urban Outfitters $25

Leather Laptop Case
Aixa Sobin on Etsy $190

*Fresh & Pressed*
Weekends

Combat Boots
Wet Seal $10

Cut-Off Jean Shorts
Forever 21 $30

RUCA Tank
Pacsun $30

(S)Vandals
Pacsun $45
The Art of Shaving

Andrew Mattioli

I use my straight blade, mustache wax, and Boars beard brush more than anything. They are the key to shaving. My barber was the first person to introduce me to the idea of shaving without razors; he taught me steady hand techniques, the proper angle at which to approach, and how to shave others — if they aren’t afraid of a straight blade. Without Lush mustache wax, I wouldn’t maintain my curls through the day. I’ve tried other brands, and the others don’t hold up nearly as well. Lush seems, in my opinion, the only way to go. But again, that’s just me — a guy with incredibly thick, stubborn facial hair. I’d recommend the straight blade to any boy who’s trying to transition himself into a man, so he can keep his hair/beard line sharp at all times. Yeah, yeah, let’s get it out of the way — the process can be a hassle. But what’s better than looking your best every day and enjoying the art of shaving?

Curl Perfection

Brittany Leonard

My hair products are all Shea butter based, packed with good natural ingredients to keep my hair healthy. I use the Shea Moisture Deep Treatment Mask every two days. It works like a face mask, but for hair. And the longer you leave it in the better, so put it in after a shower and leave it in all day. I’ll generally wash it out the next day when I shampoo. It keeps my hair strong and healthy. In order to avoid waking up with matted hair, I use the Shea Moisture Curl Enhancing Smoothie before bed. It’s simple: wet your hair, part it into four sections, apply it root-to-ends, then twist. In the morning I untwist and shake it out. It’s a lot of time and work and, to be honest, I get lazy sometimes; especially in the wake of a rough semester. For everyday styling, I use Cantu’s Shea Butter Leave-In Conditioner, applying a generous amount to my hair after a shower. It makes your curls soft while maintaining the texture. It’s great if you don’t have time to do anything special, but still want to look nice. Though it’s a lot of work maintaining curls, it’s definitely worth it.
CREATIVE WRITING
Space Therapy
BY JAKOB HAAS

Chuck: “Houston, I have a problem. Over.”
Houston: “This is Houston, what seems to be the problem?”
Chuck: “Well, it’s my wife…”
Houston: “You’re breaking up, say again? Over.”
Chuck: “That’s right, we’re breaking up.”
Houston: “Say again?”
Chuck: “It’s my wife Houston, she’s leaving me. Over.”
Houston: “Roger that, I’m sorry to hear. Where was the DZ?”
Chuck: “It was in a restaurant, nice Italian place downtown. Middle table.”
Houston: “Was that before or after dessert? Over.”
Houston: “Wilco. Do you request a hug?”
Chuck: “Negative Houston, I’m fine. I just need time to think about it. Over.”
Houston: “Did she give you a reason?”
Chuck: “She says I never listen to her, that we barely communicate anymore.”
Houston: “Roger so far.”
Chuck: “It’s not just that Houston. We’ve been trying to have a baby, but it didn’t work out for us. Neither of us knew why”

(RADIO SILENCE)

Chuck: “I kept telling her that it was my fault, you know, probably one too many spins on the gyroscope? But then I went to the doctor…”
Houston: “Did you get a test done? ‘Fill up this cup’ sort of thing.”
Chuck: “Affirmative — doc said they were all clear to go.”
Houston: “Did you tell her? Over.”
Chuck: “God no.”
Houston: “Roger.”
Chuck: “Would you tell her?”
Houston: “That’s a big negative.”
Chuck: “Houston, can I ask you a question?”
Houston: “You have the go-ahead.”
Chuck: “Do you ever just, I dunno, stop loving someone? I’m not talking about… shit, I don’t mean growing to resent them, it’s nothing like that. I just mean a sort of—”
Houston: “Numbing?”
Chuck: “Yes! It’s like a numbing, and no matter how hard you try to get those same feelings back, they just don’t come. Not the same way, at least.”
Houston: “Jesus Chuck…”
Chuck: “I’m sorry, I didn’t mean to —”
Houston: “No, it’s (clears throat) I’m glad you came to me about this.”
Chuck: “It’s over, isn’t it Houston?”
Houston: “It’s over, Chuck.”
Chuck: “Yeah… over.”

END TRANSMISSION
I knelt next to the dying sheep, yellow-brown entrails oozing from her hindquarters, and stroked my fingers over her skull, rubbing her short fur. My thumb zigzagged down to the spot between her black, unblinking eyes as she stared up past me.

I’d need to put a bullet exactly there.

My hands trembled whenever I handled a gun, a quivering that crept up my arms to my shoulders. Dad tried to teach me how to shoot when I was a boy, and out of the upturned buckets he’d lined up in the pasture. I managed to graze only one — and not the one I’d been aiming for.

The sun started to set as I leaned in close to her head. “Let me go and get the shovel and Dad’s pistol and I’ll get you settled.” Living alone with my parents, one crippled and the other losing her mind to Early-Onset Alzheimer’s, the animals were the only company I got.

I slid my hand along her spine, careful to avoid the entrails. I noticed the shaking, little life next to her. Curled into a ball, the lamb wasn’t much more than a bundle of dirty white fur with his nose pressed against his ass. I laid a hand on him and felt how cold he was. He’d die before his dam if I didn’t get him warm and fed. I scooped him up and tucked him just inside my coat. He felt like an ice pack held against my gut. His trembling continued as I stood.

Three years ago, I came home to the misery of Mama’s Alzheimer’s after my first and only year at college. Mama was out in front yard, lilac nightgown hanging from her coat hanger shoulders. She was shouting about someone trying to shoot her, her face blood-red. I killed the engine and got out of my truck and looked to the rust-colored brick house expecting to see a stranger with a gun. My dad walked out, hobbling along with his cane, wearing only jeans as if he’d gotten dressed in a rush. Mama went around to the passenger side and pulled on the handle. Dad came down the steps, gripping the rail with his one good hand, carrying his cane with the other.

“Son,” he said, “you’d better open the door for her. Let her sit in the truck and maybe she’ll calm down.”

I obeyed in a daze and watched Mama clamber into the truck, her bare feet filthy. After closing the door behind her I turned to Dad, a thousand questions shooting through my head. I looked at Mama; she seemed content to just sit there. The fear in her eyes had bled away, replaced by a blank stare.

Dad sat on the tailgate telling me how bad life with Mama had become in the past few months. He looked years older than he had the last time I saw him, years older than fifty six. His beard had gone all gray, web of wrinkles framed his eyes. He told me how Mama had something of a mental breakdown after the hospital fired her and how he’d struggled to care for her on his own. He wanted to leave me ignorant as long as he could.

I looked back at Mama, her hair wild, eyes unfocused. I didn’t know how to compare her to who she’d been at this past Christmas when she’d smiled so wide to get a framed photo of me as a five year old in a faded blue rocking chair, just beaming up at the camera.

I named the lamb Lucky. Optimistic of me maybe, but I could feel him breathing as I walked into the house. He still wasn’t moving much. Mama, bare from the waist up hard, pencil eraser nipples, was pacing back and forth in the kitchen.

“Mama, you got to keep your clothes on.”

She just smiled and said, “Is Mrs. Becky feeling any better today?” I hadn’t a clue who Becky was. The lights flickered overhead and I squinted up at them. I’d have to replace them soon.

“Becky’s doing tons better today.”

I slipped a hand down to pat the top of the lamb’s head poking out from my coat. “Mama, this is Lucky,” I said. “He’s not feeling so well right now, but I’m going to try and get him better.” She reached toward him and I pulled away. Back when we had a cat, Mama would walk around with her, clutching the poor fur ball to her chest. I found the corpse of it stiff and cold one morning.

I dodged around Mama and went into the laundry room. As a boy I watched Dad raise orphan lambs anytime we had a dam die, and he always kept them in cardboard boxes in front of the washing machine and dryer, his hands dwarfing the lambs anytime he handled them. I grabbed a box out of the corner and dropped a blanket into it. My hands ached from the cold still as I lowered my coat’s zipper and gingerly tugged Lucky free. He felt a little warmer than he had when I first picked him up out in the sheep pen. I set him down on the blanket and rubbed at the base of his tiny ear. He let out a hoarse bleat, barely managing to make any sound at all.

When I was seven, Dad took in a pair of lambs, twins that lost their dam that winter. I was out checking the fence with him when we came across them nuzzling at the body of their mother. He told me to look away and to go on home. On my way out of the sheep pen, I looked
back and saw him lifting the limp body as if it weighed next to nothing.

He came home a while later, a lamb under each arm. I named them Bugs and Bunny. Mama came home as we were setting up their beds, and I dashed out the front door.

She was walking around the back of her car when I ran up and hugged her. “Slow down before you knock me off my feet.” She knelt to hug me back as the hem of her lab coat brushed against the concrete of the carport.

She whispered to me, “There’s pizza in the backseat. It’s pepperoni.”

I squirmed to be free as she held me all the tighter.

“He’s asleep in my arms, her body curled in on itself.”

I left Lucky in his cardboard box bed and grabbed one of Mama’s nightgowns. She was picking at the wallpaper when I walked back into the kitchen, and I winced to see the scarring the walls were already. Her adult diaper sagged on her bony hips.

I touched her shoulder from behind. “Mama, stop picking at the wall. Can you turn and face me?” She wrenched her shoulder back and turned, her smile from earlier gone. Her hand swatted at the back of mine. My fingers clenched, and I fought myself. It’d be too easy to vent my anger by grabbing her too rough. I dropped my hand from her shoulder, walked away into the next room, and breathed deep.

I had to remind myself that she didn’t know what she was doing.

The thud of something striking the kitchen floor had me rushing back to Mama, the nightgown forgotten. I found her croupled on the floor, her legs tucked up against her stomach. I bent to pick her up off the dingy linoleum. She was such a spindly thing, her skin pulled taut against her bones, that I hardly noticed the weight of her as I stood.

I couldn’t help but glance to his left arm — the withered and shorter, only a memory of its former strength. I should’ve been there the day he fell, when he tried to catch a young ram on his own, but tripped instead. The arm took the brunt of the fall.

He looked up as I walked past with Mama and asked, “She fell?”

“Think so.” She was asleep in my arms, her body curled in on itself.

“Break anything? Watch her legs as you’re going through the door.”

It took a few minutes to carry her to the back of the house, into the room that used to be mine. Stickers of snakes adorned the door. As a boy, I loved every critter that walked, crawled, slithered. Mama’s hospital bed stood against the far wall beneath the room’s only window. Dinosaur sheets, the only twin size ones we had, covered the mattress. I laid her across them, taking care to arrange her legs, hating how shrunken they’d become.

I tugged the sheets around her neck. There was so little fat or muscle I was afraid she’d get sick. The sun was setting when I glanced up out the window — the sky a red and purple bruise. A flock of geese cut through the clouds, and I envied them their freedom. There was no pain in her face for once when I looked down, just the quiet numbness of sleep.

She was never a good mother.

Not a terrible one, either, just absent. She’d take me to work every day when I was too young for school, leaving me with the nurses as she did her rounds. I knew them better than I did her. Her lab coats hung in the closet still, not that she’d recognize them.

I went to go sit with Dad in the living room, in the chair next to his. The one that used to be Mama’s when they would watch TV together. I told him how worried I was about her with her falling more

“She was such a spindly thing, her skin pulled taut against her bones, that I hardly noticed the weight of her as I stood.”
and more often. We were both out of our element; she was the doctor. It was her advice we needed, if she could still give it. Tending an animal was the closest either of us had ever come to giving medical care.

Dad leaned forward. His eyes fogged over like they always do when he thought about the future. He always talked about his own mortality, and Mama’s, expecting that neither of them would live for long. If anything he seemed to hold out more hope for Mama than he did himself. The doctor gave her eighteen months to live three years ago, calling Early Onset Alzheimer’s a quick killer. I knew Dad thought of his own dad who died at sixty.

“We must get him the help he deserves.”

I put him in the laundry room, but I’m not that hopeful right now.

“Only a sliver of sun remained on the horizon when I walked outside, Dad’s pistol in my hand. Lucky’s dam had a long, torturous night ahead of her if I didn’t go put a bullet in her skull. Was it wrong of me to wish I could do the same for Mama? Her death was coming just as surely; the difference was Mama had to suffer until her mind was so gone she’d forget how to swallow.

Lucky’s mother was still breathing, short gasps, when I reached her. I stood before her, the pistol leveled at her. She didn’t have the strength to lift her head. Her eyes opened, watching, almost accusing, of the future. He always talked about his own mortality, and more often. We were both out of our element; she was the doctor. It was her advice we needed, if she could still give it. Tending an animal was the closest either of us had ever come to giving medical care.

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“‘When I die, don’t bury me. I can’t stand the thought of worms crawling through my skull.’ He smirked. ‘But if you do bury me, bury me with a flashlight and a shovel. Just in case.’

“You know they check for a pulse before putting you in the ground.’

“If you get greedy, you might bribe someone to overlook the pulse just so you can get at my will all the quicker.’

“That could work.”

He settled back into his chair, the amusement gone from his eyes. His voice was lower, almost too soft to be heard.

“I don’t know which of us is going to go first, me or your mama, but I plan for both of us to be cremated and placed in the same container, so her ashes can mix with mine. There might not be an afterlife, but it never hurts to hedge your bets.”

I nodded.

“I want to be with her in whatever life we find together after our bodies break down.”

I thought of the dying sheep, her entrails falling out. “We’ve got a sheep that’s nearly dead out in the pen. Can I grab your pistol?”

He told me to be careful; it was locked.

I went to his room. The pistol was on the windowsill next to the bed where he could grab it in an instant if someone broke in. Reaching over his bed, I brushed back the curtain and grabbed the gun, taking extra care to never point the muzzle toward me. I held death; I could feel my fingers quivering.

On my way back, I stopped by his chair. “She had a lamb with her. I put him in the laundry room, but I’m not that hopeful right now that he’ll make it.”

I gripped the pistol tighter and walked to the laundry room. Lucky was standing shakily in the middle of his box, and I smiled. I knelt by him, stroking my fingers over the back of his neck. “You’ve got some life left in you yet, huh?’” He collapsed onto his belly, but I gave his neck one last stroke. “Good effort, anyway. I’ll get you fed soon. Try not to think about your dam. I’ll make it quick.”

Only a sliver of sun remained on the horizon when I walked outside, Dad’s pistol in my hand. Lucky’s dam had a long, torturous night ahead of her if I didn’t go put a bullet in her skull. Was it wrong of me to wish I could do the same for Mama? Her death was coming just as surely; the difference was Mama had to suffer until her mind was so gone she’d forget how to swallow.

Lucky’s mother was still breathing, short gasps, when I reached her. I stood before her, the pistol leveled at her. She didn’t have the strength to lift her head. Her eyes opened, watching, almost accusing, of the future. He always talked about his own mortality, and more often. We were both out of our element; she was the doctor. It was her advice we needed, if she could still give it. Tending an animal was the closest either of us had ever come to giving medical care.

Dad leaned forward. His eyes fogged over like they always do when he thought about the future. He always talked about his own mortality, and Mama’s, expecting that neither of them would live for long. If anything he seemed to hold out more hope for Mama than he did himself. The doctor gave her eighteen months to live three years ago, calling Early Onset Alzheimer’s a quick killer. I knew Dad thought of his own dad who died at sixty.

“‘When I die, don’t bury me. I can’t stand the thought of worms crawling through my skull.’ He smirked. ‘But if you do bury me, bury me with a flashlight and a shovel. Just in case.’

“You know they check for a pulse before putting you in the ground.’

“If you get greedy, you might bribe someone to overlook the pulse just so you can get at my will all the quicker.’

“That could work.”

He settled back into his chair, the amusement gone from his eyes. His voice was lower, almost too soft to be heard.

“I don’t know which of us is going to go first, me or your mama, but I plan for both of us to be cremated and placed in the same container, so her ashes can mix with mine. There might not be an afterlife, but it never hurts to hedge your bets.”

I nodded.

“I want to be with her in whatever life we find together after our bodies break down.”

I thought of the dying sheep, her entrails falling out. “We’ve got a sheep that’s nearly dead out in the pen. Can I grab your pistol?”

He told me to be careful; it was locked.

I went to his room. The pistol was on the windowsill next to the bed where he could grab it in an instant if someone broke in. Reaching over his bed, I brushed back the curtain and grabbed the gun, taking extra care to never point the muzzle toward me. I held death; I could feel my fingers quivering.

On my way back, I stopped by his chair. “She had a lamb with her. I put him in the laundry room, but I’m not that hopeful right now that he’ll make it.”

I gripped the pistol tighter and walked to the laundry room. Lucky was standing shakily in the middle of his box, and I smiled. I knelt by him, stroking my fingers over the back of his neck. “You’ve got some
Presence

Incantation, the newly washed sheets against the bed frame, the mundane repetitions of the fan, fingers sifting through hair, sun beams peering through the windows, summer air, solace, the bluest eyes, images of rolling waves, the clock hands proceeding duty, balanced breaths, a soft voice breaching the silence, Presence, raising the hand, queen amongst the gods, flowers blooming their art, a peeled orange, a perfect sphere, ecstasy to the tune of disbelief, time slowing down, knives cutting meat, caress of steel, laughing with friends, the bloated hums of the air conditioner, tremors, sacrilege, days are gone, rain crashing against the pavement, metronomic feet, the march of ideals, indignation, the heavy sighs of a long day, a lonely day… the loneliest of days, after shock, the key revolving the lock, a crowd of black clothes, the unknown future, a grim procession, Presence lost, a single mass upon the bed, eyes steadfast towards the ceiling, acceptance.

Temple of Abandon

My body is a temple. 
She chose me as her monument. 
The worship, an endless surge that left ruin out of reach. 

They came in droves, lining the steps towards the shrine of worship, anxiously awaiting their turn to praise. Through me, they ascended. Through me, they worshiped… her. But she has left, and with her so too has the devotion.

Now, all is silent as death, the air a staunch, seeping, volatile poison. The relics begin to rust as the torches dim and fade into antiquity. Vines have gripped and wrapped my toes, scuttling their way towards a vacant heaven. A desert of dust has begun to form, an oasis submerged in ancient time. Tears descend like acid rain trickling down the throat of the world. The stairs that led to admiration now falter under the weight of nothingness. Only one remains, trapped in the shadow of the blackened halls. Left behind, the celebrant cries out incessantly, aware that I hang on every reverberated word. Depravity.

My body was a temple, but she has abandoned me. Time wounds all heels, mine are planted in the ground.

Pars Dobetica… wait, what?

“Mike Kane, Poet!” A brief description for those who don’t know me, my gravitas is poor so I tend to write absurdity. [Prove it!] For example, to say my writing is irrelevant is like a cantaloupe trying to grow a trunk and dance like an elephant. Clever, right? Your tears of laughter fill my cup labeled “self worth,” or are they my own? I admit it, I’m not perfect. Sometimes my writing becomes a ruse, hiding behind the construct of my shame. “Till death do us part” it replies. Is my writing idolized, or simply scripted idle lies? There’s more to it than that. What was it Emerson called us? Liberating gods.

Yes, I am a god. A poised participant among a pantheon of creators.

Give me pen and paper, and I will construct worlds.
**WASP BOX**  
Jason Ockert

Rock Clarke, author of Exley, calls Wasp Box “full of wonders.” He goes on, expounding on a novel “full of drunken fathers and the Finger Lakes of New York and middling wineries and too-smart-for-their-own-good kids and bomb shelters and young love and lost love and lost diaries and killer wasps.” And, yeah, it’s true. Jason Ockert’s first novel is all of that. But it’s also more. In just under 180 pages, Wasp Box is the violent reaction to change; a poignant statement about the American family; and most importantly, as it always is with Ockert, it’s a profound lesson in universal empathy.

“Do you know why I’m really letting you go see him now?” Hudson’s mother asks before he and his half-brother Speck depart for a summer with Hudson’s father. “Because you’re old enough to discover for yourself what a lousy man [he] is.” At their summer home, a small-town New York vineyard with a growing wasp problem — a parasitic-wasp problem — Hudson works alongside an unstable family friend, explores young romance, and tries to connect with his estranged alcoholic father while Speck, alone with his buzzing mind, discovers a soldier’s journal in the woods. As the character’s lives and home fall apart, the soldier’s dairy entries serve to explicate the relationship between the novel’s multiple narratives, and does so with grace.

A Jason Ockert novel review, at the time of writing this review, is nonexistent — do however explore his back catalog of short-story collections: Rabbit Punches (2006, Low Fidelity) and Neighbors of Nothing (2013, Dzanc). That said, another novel has already been slated for a 2016 release, and I’m sure, right now, just like me, a multitude of delighted scribblers have just finished their advance-reading copies of Wasp Box and are staring at their computer screens, wondering, like me, how to review such an emotionally brilliant book; Ockert seems to capture human emotion to the capacity that his stories resist the conventions of mere plot summary. Don’t get me wrong — the plot, in its subtle way, is huge. Calamity ensues, and life quickly destabilizes for everyone. But Ockert shines brightest in his execution: Wasp Box, despite its swelling conceit, is a beautiful lesson in subtlety. If he hadn’t already proven his ability for syntactic perfection, his ability to tackle any/all subjects avoiding platitudes and cheap sentimentality, his complex understanding of human intricacies, he does so here with little room for disagreement. This first novel from a master of the short form shows Ockert has no restrictions, no boundaries. He has a profound aptitude for narrative, manipulating readers’ hearts without trickery or deception. As always, behind Ockert’s conceits are always phenomenally large insights into what it means to be alive.

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**COLLECTED ALEX**  
A.T. Grant

If Charlie Kaufman and David Lynch wrote an earnest Buddhist parable together,” writes Ken Baumann, “it might read like Collected Alex.” The problem: If either of these filmmakers tackled the project, together or alone, the chosen medium would not be print.

This is to say, like many other Lynch-inspired stories, Collected Alex seems to hold itself to the standards of another format, failing to adhere to the conventions of written form. Grant splits the narrative into three sections: “The Body,” “The Room (The Voice),” and “The Smoke (The Stage) (The Star),” all dealing with Alex — the stories central, and perhaps only character in the traditional sense — as he negotiates his way through a series of surreal events: from carrying a dead body over his shoulders everywhere he goes, to his entrapment in a small room he describes as “approximately two Alexes wide by two Alexes long by two Alexes high,” to his denouement on a dark stage, illuminated by a single spotlight, where he’s faced with an adoring audience, each member wearing an exact, but inexplicably dissimilar Alex costume.

I read a blurb by some guy on the Internet coining Collected Alex as “hyperallegory,” and I’ve got to give it to him: It’s a pretty fair assessment. Don’t let me color this pejorative when it’s not. Grant’s novella is an open signifier, an uncanny palimpsest in which concrete designations are constantly turned on their own heads. Destabilization is a constant, in which we, like Alex, are always “in the middle.” The conventional story, demanding of logic/reason behind narrative escalation/progression — is overturned to suggest that Grant’s biggest problem — his irreverence in the face of convention — may not be a problem at all. In fact, it isn’t. There are beautiful moments of meditation, where revelation comes in the form of dream, life allegories stronger than experience itself.

A.T. Grant does a lot in the space of 90 sparsely-prosed pages — and after the story’s end, in his bio, we witness Grant bend genre again with a simple sentence: “A.T. Grant lives in Virginia, where people call him Alex.”

-PAT SIEBEL
**PROJECT ALMANAC**

Time Travel. We’ve all seen it before. Found-footage. We’ve all — begrudgingly — seen that before, too. I’m going to speak for all of us when I say that we’re completely over both of them. Each time a filmmaker attempts to do either of the two, we are weary. Let’s face it, no one has handled time travel well since Marty McFly got in that Delorean back in 1985. And found-footage? Who likes to sit down for two hours watching a movie that was shot with a shaky hand? No one, that’s who. Despite all of that, David Israelite’s *Project Almanac* isn’t as bad as we probably all assumed.

Things are looking up for high school senior David Raskin (Jonny Weston/Macson Lintz) when he gets into MIT, but they quickly fall apart when he finds out he’s been given only a partial scholarship and is unable to come up with the rest. His sister, Christina (Virginia Gardner), catches David’s excitement and following disappointment on camera, as she does everything else throughout the movie. Applying for one last grant, David searches through his deceased father’s old stuff looking for inspiration. The two siblings fail to find anything project worthy, and instead find their father’s old video camera, which holds David’s seventh-birthday party on its tape.

Here, things complicate. He shows his two best friends the footage saying, “There’s this footage of me at my seventh birthday. I mean, I was at my seventh birthday.” What sounds obvious — David at his own birthday party — quickly gets weird as we discover seventeen year-old David was really his seventh birthday party. He and his friends decide the box he’s holding in his hand was his vessel through time, and set off to find it.

After a bunch of mistrials, with the help of David’s crush’s car, they successfully send an old Barbie back two hours. David’s crush, Jessie (Sophia Black-D’Elia), becomes part of the group after that, which makes for a lot of awkward moments within the rest of film.

The group decides to go for it and send themselves back just a day at first. Then a few more days.

They win the lottery, pass a science presentation, go to Lollapalooza. It’s pretty cool, but then David screws up when Jessie gives him the okay to go for it. Unhappy with how it turns out, he goes back alone — something they vowed they’d never do — and while things work out with him and Jessie, a massive ripple effect catches everyone else: deaths, plane crashes, broken limbs. It’s not good. David comes clean and tells them he has to break the machine, and then the other camera that they used to film all of their time travel. David, having seen both cameras, confidently goes up to Jessie as they meet for “first” time and tells her that they are about to change the world.

I don’t know; my feelings are a mixed bag. It’s a decent film — decent enough — unless you can time travel to the future when it’s shown on FX. But maybe, like the film’s headline, it’s “better the second time around.” My honest appraisal? This is the perfect film to spend a dollar on, and maybe a few more on a decent pizza, whenever it comes out at RedBox. The operative word all-around is “decent.”

-AMANDA TAYLOR

**ROTTEN TOMATOES TOP CRITICS:**

“In *Project Almanac*, we have a very likeable, if very lightweight, teen time-travel thriller.”

- Leigh Paatsch, Herald Sun

“The premise has been done to death, but screenwriters Andrew Stark and Jason Pagan give it a fresh and pleasant spin by using it as a vehicle for adolescent wish fulfillment.”

-J. R. Jones, Chicago Reader

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*List provided by iMDB.com*
CONOR OBERST: 
*Upside Down Mountain*

If in the 60s Dylan was a sort of postmodern post-child, the voicebox of a loud, opinionated generation, then Conor Oberst is, in 2015, our generation’s Bob Dylan. X is our generation’s Y arguments are generally pretty terrible, so grant me self-awareness at least, but what I’m saying might be more-accurately/less-troublingly expressed as “Conor Oberst’s music best exemplifies this generation’s feelings — what he himself describes as ‘the ennui of our times’ — like Dylan did for a generation of rolling stones.” We don’t tell Oberst this, because there was a period where Oberst seemed aware of his own Dylanness, and what arose music-wise couldn’t hold a candle to either an Oberstian Oberst or Dylan in his worst 80’s suit. But a post-Bright Eyes, newly married Oberst has reinvented himself, again, maintaining his residual Elliott Smith-ness, while enjoying the success to be crasser in outside resources.

With standouts like “Artifact #1,” “Kick,” “You Are Your Mother’s Child,” and “Desert Island Questionnaire,” and the filler — though filler here transcends its pejorative connotations — at times also approaching perfect, *Upside Down Mountain* is Oberst’s triumphant highpoint in an oeuvre that, as of late, has been yawn. But allow Your Humble Reviewer to cower behind the fourth wall and admit he couldn’t listen to “You Are Your Mother’s Child” for months without strong emotional response. Return to objectivity: What really drives this record is its lyrics, the perfect collaboration of sincerity/wit, the palimpsest of uncanny/defamiliarizing. That dreamy, ethereal guitar in “Artifact #1.” Probably, most of all, “Desert Island Questionnaire,” and its genius contribution(s) to the world of images. The low point, if there must be one, is after the thirteenth track when the record abruptly stops.

ALVVAYS: 
*Alvvays*

Give me new music, I turn to an old curmudgeon croaking at children from his doorstep.

I tune to Spotify radio, ears programmed to passive, to hear a million Related Artists murder/masturbate to Johnny Marr riffs. One night, bar-bound, NPR on my car radio, something resonates. I access the Shazam app on my phone for the first time — Artist: Alvvays, Song: “Archie, Marry Me.” I turn the volume up loud, lower the windows. The late-night breeze fills the car. “Whoa,” my passenger says, “sounds like Best Coast meets The Cranberries.”

“Hush,” I say. It doesn’t sound like that at all, and that’s only a half compliment because Best Coast ultimately lacks identity, depth, or anything outside of catchiness, which itself is even rare. Molly Rankin — first, foremost — fantastic imagist, lyricist, twee-pop wet dream, has a natural ear for *Alvvays*. The album’s first track, “Adult Diversion,” begins with jangly surf-rock guitars reminiscent of, um, a lot, before Rankin — lazy, laden with reverb — enters to break expectations. In the album’s grand scheme, the opening track is little more than an extremely well-written pop song, enough to continue listening/to not discredit the band, but it’s ultimately a segue into something greater. The album’s highest points — “Archie, Marry Me,” “Ones Who Love You” (a veritable contender for the most timely “fuck” ever dropped in pop music), “Party Police,” “The Agency Group,” “Atop a Cake,” and “Red Planet” — constitute two-thirds of the album. And the other songs are nothing to brush off — all well-crafted, catchy pop tunes that could hold a candle to scorch most post-C86 bands.

If I were to guess, I’d assume “Red Planet,” the album’s closer, is the shape of Alvvays to come—a wet, spacey sequel to the predictability of Beach House’s better songs.

The album ends, Rankin repeating the same line we’re all thinking: “That’s unusual to me.”

—PAT SIEBEL
SAM SMITH.

Only three months into 2015 and Sam Smith has most likely had a better few months than we’ll have an entire year. The British singer started his nearly sold out North American tour and won four Grammy awards — this happened in just two months.

On January 15, Smith performed to a sold out show at Madison Square Garden, one of New York’s most difficult arenas to sell out. Up and coming British folk singer George Ezra opened up the show, moving his fingers quickly across the strings of his guitar and singing catchy tunes like “Budapest” and “Blame It on Me,” in his successful attempt to win over new American fans. Short and sweet was his performance, and it wasn’t long after that the audience began to chant for Smith to come out.

Unlike many who play at MSG, there are no gimmicks to Smith’s performance. There aren’t tons of flashy lights, back up dancers, or crazy images on the screen. The audience paid to see a true performance, and that’s exactly what they got. Behind a curtain that had an outline of his face, Smith kept his shoulders back and his head down while his fans cheered for him to start performing. Guitarists, drummers, and string quartet, started to play the opening for “Life Support,” teasing the audience who were waiting to see Smith.

The music slowly built up only to suddenly stop. The curtain dropped, Smith picked up his head, and his soulful voice began to sing to a crowd of screaming fans.

A little over a year before he took the massive New York arena, Smith played his first New York show at the Mercury Lounge. “Holy shit. This is a really big, big place isn’t it?” was the first thing he said when he was done singing the opening song. Later in the show, he admitted to his audience that maybe 100 people showed up to that first show at Mercury Lounge, a huge difference from the thousands of people who showed up at MSG.

Smith’s songs deal mainly with love, specifically, unrequited love, which he speaks openly about. At one point in the show he thanked the man that broke his heart two years prior, because without him Smith might not be where he is today. His first and only album, In the Lonely Hour, has been number one on the billboard charts, producing hit singles like “Stay With Me,” “I’m Not The Only One,” and most recently “Lay Me Down.” Still, having only one album made the move to play at MSG seem a bit farfetched, but Smith did it flawlessly.

The morning pre-sale tickets came out I searched for codes that would allow me to purchase the tickets two days earlier than the general public would be able. In the middle of my British Literature class my code finally went through, and I left to call my mom and beg her to buy the tickets as a Christmas gift. Five minutes and just short of two hundred dollars later, I was guaranteed access into Sam Smith’s concert. The seats my brother and I had were separated — one being in the center of the area but a little far back and the other being on the left side of the stage, 12 rows away from Sam. By some New York miracle, we both sat in the side section all night; apparently, a 14-year-old was left drunk in the back of car with her driver as her friends watched the concert, leaving an open seat right next to the one that we had bought.

Smith crooned “Leave Your Lover,” and we sang along with him. He belted out “I’ve Told You Now,” and we belted out right along his side. His seemingly flawless switch from tenor to falsetto is a highlight of Smith’s. Before almost every song he gave a brief explanation as to what the song was about (even though they are all about the same thing), giving us more insight to his private life and making the show seem a bit more intimate despite the large crowd.

Besides his hits from In the Lonely Hour, Smith gained popularity for singing on summer hits “La La La” and “Latch.” He sang both, as he couldn’t discredit the songs for helping him get recognized, and the crowd ate it up. On his album, Smith has a slow version of “Latch,” a song he did with British DJ duo Disclosure. The crowd seemed a little disappointed that he chose to sing the album version, rather than the one he was known for, but in the middle of singing the song he yelled “stop,” and told the audience that he couldn’t perform at MSG without bringing out Disclosure. The two DJ’s rose from each side of the stage with their equipment on hand, and the song started over again, with Smith once again proving that his voice isn’t limited to just one genre. The concert ended with his album’s most popular hit, “Stay With Me,” and the crowd finished just as strong as Smith did. With nine months left in the year, it won’t be surprising if Smith graces MSG with his heartbreaking songs and soulful voice just a few more times.

-Amanda Taylor
Lumos.
Looking at the title, you might know who this is going to be about — as you should. I’d shun you if you didn’t.
Emma Watson, English actress, model, and activist, is known for her role as Hermione Granger in the world-renowned movie franchise Harry Potter. After Harry Potter, many thought she would fizzle out into the world of small cameos. Many were wrong.
She started out small, a voiceover role in The Tale of Despereaux, which, to be honest, I’m not in the least familiar with. Supposedly it has something to do with a mouse. Hopefully not Peter Pettigrew in disguise. She then appeared in the television adaptation of the novel Ballet Shoes. Again: never heard of it. I bet it was good, though, since she’s, like, perfect. Then she kicked it up a notch. Watson landed the lead female role in The Perks of Being a Wallflower.

Watson was widely praised by critics. Let’s just say I wanted to obliviate myself after this movie because of all the feels. I couldn’t take it. Then came The Bling Ring, which was a pretty bad movie if we’re being honest here: terribly written, terribly acted. Still, I kind of loved it; Emma stole the show, and she wasn’t even the main character. It was fun seeing her in a non-serious, um, “slutty” type of role. Strange, but intriguing.

Emma isn’t just about celebrity stardom and big screens. She gracefully handled all the press of Harry Potter attending Providence, Rhode Island’s Brown University. Oh, and Oxford University. I guess all those hours studying in the Hogwarts library paid off. She even walked across the stage for graduation. Her fan base was proud of her and, I mean, who wouldn’t be? And have you seen Emma Watson? She’s gorgeous. Not only has she been on magazine covers, she has also worked with campaigns for Burberry and Lancôme. Talk about high fashion. She even helped create a line of clothing for People Tree as a fashion consultant.

In 2014 Ms. Watson was honored by the British Academy of Film and Television Arts, winning for British Artist of the Year. There was no competition in my book. Winning British Artist of the Year was huge, but Watson’s greatest accomplishment since breaking free of her wand was her appointment as a UN Women Goodwill Ambassador. If this wasn’t enough, she helped launch the UN Women campaign HeForShe, which calls for men to advocate gender equality. When Emma promoted HeForShe with her amazingly heartfelt gender-equality speech, the internet blew up. Like someone sent a mass bombarda spell to the entire worldwide web.

A lot of people began to see her as more than the smart chick from Harry Potter. They saw her as a woman advocating for change. A woman who was more than just one franchise. A woman who got an education because she wanted to. And now, they get to see her as the classic Disney Princess Belle in the new, live-action movie set to release in the near future. She’s even going to be singing in it. Can this woman do everything? I would argue that yes, she can. Nox.

- RAY TAYLOR

EMMA WATSON | EXTRAS

HOW WELL DO YOU KNOW EMMA?

1 How many journals and diaries does Emma own?

2 What sport did Emma play in high school? Hint: Not Quidditch.

3 In what city was she born?

4 How old was Emma when she was first casted to play Hermione?

5 What is her favorite alcoholic drink?

6 What are her cat’s names?

7 Which Harry Potter character did Emma have a huge crush on?

A COLLEGE STUDENT’S GUIDE TO THE POST-GRADUATE BLUES

Q What line of work do you plan on going into?

A I’m going into some 9 to 5 shit job I hate, but it’ll pay the bills.

Q Do you know what you want to do after graduation?

A I don’t, actually. I’m trying to survive these years in school first, maybe not be up to my eyeballs in debt.

Q Your Masters degree is the new college degree... no one will hire you without it.

A So I’ve been told.

YOU’VE HEARD THESE QUESTIONS

You’ve heard them so many times that your answers are given with little to no effort; you just spew the same bullshit at whoever’s on the receiving end. Of course you’ve thought about the real answers; they take up 90% of your brain activity, but your time has to be spent on actually figuring out what the hell it is you’re doing — not telling someone what they want to hear.

After high school, you’re given the option to further your education. You can major in something that has at least some importance to you instead of wasting eight hours Monday through Friday on subjects and topics you couldn’t care less about. We have an idea of where we’d like to end up, where we would like to see ourselves in 10 years… and some of us will live out our daydreams while some of us will be facing the ultimate question that undoubtedly presents itself once graduation is over:

WHAT HAPPENS NOW?

We all share one common fear: the unknown. It’s this weird excitement that fills our minds while simultaneously freaking us out. We want to experience the world outside the confines of cement classroom walls, but with little to no money in our pockets it’s impossible. We want to land the job opportunity of a lifetime that sets us up for nothing but success as soon as our diploma is handed — or mailed, rather — to our parent’s houses. Imagine this: we’ve all been grouped in a dark and crowded room, disoriented with no way of knowing where we stand (literally and figuratively). You’re given a series of tests to perform in this blacked-out area but there is no way of knowing if you pass or if you fail. Scary, right? Well, it doesn’t have to be.

I asked a group of college-aged students to tell me the three things they’re most worried about when thinking of life after college. The answers varied, as expected; people mentioned things from not being able to get pregnant to not getting married to not getting into grad school to actually having to work a legitimate job as something other than a waitress. Some people even said they were afraid they weren’t going to have enough money to go out and party on the weekends. Clearly this generation has its priorities straight. It’s clear that the fears and worries of our peers came in a variety of answers, but every person held common ground.

They were all scared of things that were seemingly out of their control.

Students have so many ideas and passions about life — the Millennial naiveté is not a force to be reckoned with. Being in this “out of sight out of mind” state is too prevalent in college. You develop tunnel vision, and you’re just trying to make it to happy hour, but once you walk across the stage you’ve got bigger fish to fry. The best way it was described to me was “you’re walking to your future. You hold the piece of paper and all of a sudden, life smacks you in the face. It’s up to you whether you choose to fall down or keep moving forward.” Fresh out of college and the world is your oyster. What are you going to do? With that said, here is what I’ve heard happens after college. I had the opportunity to talk to a few professors here at Coastal Carolina University about what the future actually holds:

“I took a year off and taught in a high school. It’s hard to get into grad school but its not that hard to get into a program somewhere. You have to cast your net wide and I definitely recommend putting schools into tiers of, you know, schools you like, your dream schools, mid level and safety schools and schools that guarantee something for you. I can only speak on behalf of majoring in English, someone who might major in business will have a different plan.”

(Dr. Daniel Hasty, Linguistics)

Dr. Hasty makes a good point. After college, regardless of where you end up, you’re starting from scratch — for the second time. You finished high school and most likely went to college or straight into the job force. If you took the college route, you finished and are now either taking
time off, starting a job or figuring out your grad school options and if you choose grad school, essentially you’re back at square one. First, remember to breathe. Second, devise a plan. Place your dream schools into one category, then your mid-level/ your backup schools. You can’t go wrong with a plan B.

“For me, the hardest thing about leaving college was that there was no easy way to tell if I was succeeding or failing. In school, for better or worse, you get a grade — A, B, C, etc. — so it’s pretty obvious if you’re making progress or not. You’re constantly being evaluated. You get lots of feedback. In the “real” world, that sort of evaluative feedback doesn’t come nearly as often, so you have to kind of fumble in the dark, uncertain about how you’re doing. When faced with this uncertainty, too many of us look to our salary as a guide. We assume that if we’re making lots of money, we’re succeeding; and, conversely, if we aren’t making lots of money, we must be failing. This kind of thinking is completely understandable, of course, because money is tangible and easy to measure in a way that more slippery concepts like happiness and fulfillment just aren’t. But the trouble is, the success that can easily be reflected in a paycheck is the most narrow and hollow kind of success. It doesn’t matter, and it doesn’t last. So here’s my advice (and I learned all of this the hard way, over a span of decades): Try to find a method of evaluating yourself — a method that transcends any notion of a plan B. First, devise a plan. Place your dream schools into one category, then your mid-level/ your backup schools. You can’t go wrong with a plan B.

“Let me clarify something.

Before I continue — I am twenty one years old and at the peak of my naiveté. The bit of life I’ve experienced has been wild, but I’m still in college and have a year left before I’m introduced to the real world. I’m excited, to say the least, and incredibly optimistic. There are a thousand things I want to do, tons of places I want to visit, and people whom I don’t even know that I want to meet. There’s a whole big world out there we’ve yet to experience, and I’ve never been more excited. If you take away anything — leave with this: It’s okay to be scared and it’s okay to not know everything yet. You’re allowed to not have things figured out. It’s all a part of growing up. However, it’s not okay to leave college and retreat back into your shell. Take the bull by the horns and soak up as much as you can. Your time here is shorter than you think.

— Eden Halevy
By Nicole Russell

As a kid it’s hard to believe that adults lie. Maybe even adults thought it to be true, because they were told the same lies. Adults have used these creative myths to manipulate children for decades. I hope that the next generation will think twice before lying to their children. We always find out the truth, parents. Always.

1 YOU ARE WHAT YOU EAT

Ever been told by a parent that if you eat too much of something you’ll turn into it? It’s not even that great of a threat; I’d love to be pizza. But kids go through phases where they only want to eat one thing, for every meal, everyday — and how do we solve this problem but by convincing them that the food will fuse with their bodies until they turn as yellow as their favorite instant macaroni? I would also love to be a cupcake.

2 COLUMBUS DISCOVERED AMERICA

To this day, kids have a day off of school to commemorate the hostile takeover that was the discovery of America. In elementary school we’re painted a happy picture with Native Americans and handshakes and best friends forever. Poor, naïve kids. Let the children make their paper headdresses and pilgrim hats, but let them know it’s a lie.

3 MILK BUILD STRONG BONES

Milk, actually, is bad for you. And all the years your parents forced it down your throat, telling you it helps you grow big and strong, is a lie. Recent studies show milk has the opposite effect. As nature would have it, the milk that comes from cows is designed for, um, cows. So unless we start hooking women up to milk pumps, we aren’t meant to drink a lot of it. Not only is it high in calories, but it also contains a lot of potassium. So unless you balance it with sodium, those recommended three cups of milk a day will actually make you fat and deplete the calcium it claims to put in your bones. Thanks, mother.

4 AN APPLE A DAY KEEPS THE DOCTOR AWAY

Come on, really? Is the apple going to make a magic force field around my immune system? A typical adult ploy to force their children to eat fruit. I don’t know about you, but when I was a kid, there was no amount of apples that could stop the hundreds of coughing, sneezing, booger wiping kids from getting me sick.

5 SEEDS WILL GROW IN YOUR BELLY

We were all told this one. And for little ones who don’t really know what it takes to grow plants, it can actually be quite believable. There’s no soil or sunlight in your tummy, but maybe this one’s all right: My guess is that it may prevent kids from choking on small seeds.

6 COFFEE STUNTS YOUR GROWTH

This one is genius. Kids wanna grow big and strong, so they won’t want to drink this highly caffeinated drink that will make them bounce off the walls for hours. You can become addicted to caffeine. They should just tell the truth: “Wait until you’re older, unless you want to become dependent,” but most kids, thankfully, can’t understand addiction. Also, adults are too busy to be sharing their coffee with their already-hyper children. Well played.

7 WAIT 30 MINUTES TO SWIM AFTER EATING

Remember when it was time to take a break from swimming for lunch, but you couldn’t go back into the water for “at least 30 minutes?” It turns out a full stomach does not cause the cramps that will make you drown. What causes them is dehydration, lack of food. Not one drowning case from cramps was ever caused by a post-meal swim.

8 CHOCOLATE CAUSES ACNE

In those awkward tween years, when acne hits hard, what’s the first thing that gets blamed? It’s chocolate, but there’s no actual link between chocolate and acne. What really causes pimples to grow is bacteria in the oil glands of your skin. Tweens are supposed to be starting to watch their weight, so my guess is that the number one cause of weight gain was blamed for their hideous blemishes, but who knows. Probably parents trying to keep their children healthy.

9 CRACKING KNuckles GIVES YOU ARTHRITIS

When I discovered the wonders of knuckle cracking, I wouldn’t stop. But I was told if I didn’t, my knuckles would get fat and I’d develop arthritis. The cracking sound, however, is not bones at all; it’s the air trapped between the sponge and bone. Think about it as chiropractics for your hands. You’re doing them a favor.

10 YOUR FACE WILL FREEZE THAT WAY

Children never win arguments with adults. It’s a losing battle. So, how do they compensate for it? They make ugly faces. But instead of retorting, adults just tell them they’ll freeze that way — and no child can stand the thought of being teased for that. In reality, you may get a headache from going cross-eyed, but that’s about it. It’s the perfect threat for parents who don’t want to walk around in public with their obnoxious-faced children.
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