



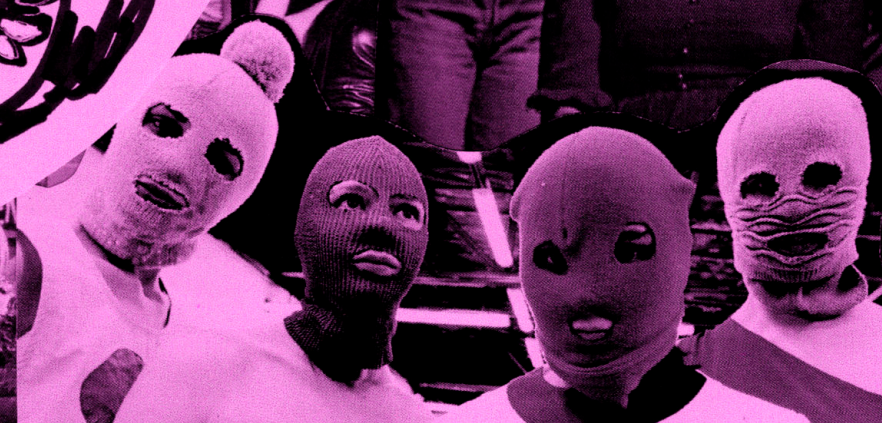
VOL. 43 ISSUE 3

BIANCA



PAREM DE  
#GENOCÍDIO

#MAD





**A Trip to Quarter Brick High:  
The Story of HeyTonyTV**

By Sarah Beckford

1

**Remembering Dadi**

By Falah Jalali

3

**The New  
Riot Grrrls**

By Keating Zelenke

7

**End the Enigma: The Dangers  
of Abstinence-Only Sex  
Education**

By Katharina Buczek

17

**Busker Goes Brooklyn: Black Pumas  
— A Concert Review**

By Lauren Canavan

21

**Stony Brook's Recognition of  
Turning Point USA Enables  
the Far Right and Endangers  
Students**

By Christine Kelley

25

**The BBL Effect**

By Katherine Heredia

31

**Hide Your Faves — Adele Is  
Back**

By Rafael Cruvinel

35

**Finding Pride**

By Jayden Feisthamel

39

**The Matrix Resurrections  
Shows The Quiet Sadness and  
Joy of Queerness**

By Christine Kelley

43

**Memento Mori**

By Emily Scott

47

Photos By Tuhin Chakrabarti

49

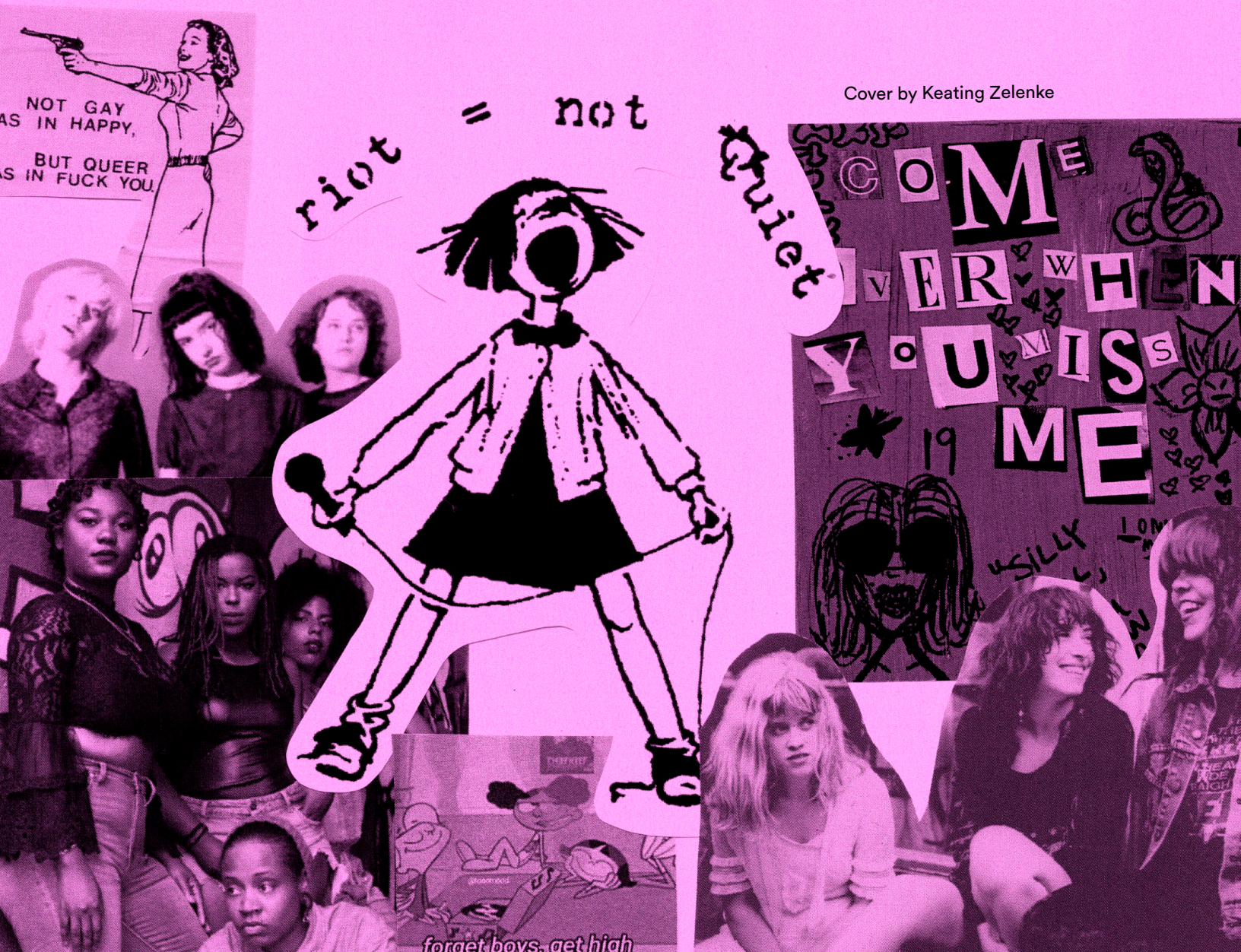
**Green Is The New Black**

By Emma Nicolas

51

**The Top 10 Crimes to  
Commit On Campus**

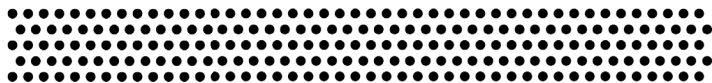
55



Cover by Keating Zelenke



# Letter from the Editor



By Josh Joseph

As someone who had the recent pleasure of digging his bike out of a foot of frozen snow, I can tell you that we're officially in that dreariest, chilliest, slushiest, grossest period of winter. Outside, tiny mountains of ice are being slowly whittled down, day by day, with brief rainfall from gray skies.

But I'm feeling optimistic, which might be a bit out of character for these letters considering my history of writing brooding, pseudo-intellectual laments about the pandemic and time and all that stuff. But yeah, I can't shake the feeling that despite the many obstacles in our path, we're going to make it.

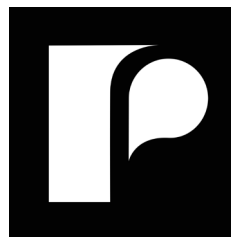
It's nice to be able to look back at old issues and appreciate that we made them and recognize their goodness, but that nostalgia can be limiting. I find myself getting in my head sometimes, like we couldn't possibly outdo what we've done so far.

That defeatist thinking is what gets in the way of doing, and we really have a lot to do around here. We have pieces to edit, layouts to make, podcasts to record and meetings to run. Instead, I'm trying to recognize my own patterns of thinking, independent of "quality" or any metric that I could measure "objectively." I might love my work one day and hate it the next, but in the long run, hindsight is vital — and more often than not, it shows me that I'm proud of what we do.

Instead of framing and hanging our past work and imposing expectations on ourselves, we're plowing forward, taking the fun little ideas we have and evolving them into their wildest versions. Someone's napkin doodle has just as much of a place within these pages as our most urgent written pieces, and that's what makes this magazine a gift. We have been empowered, over and over again, to give voice to our strangest ideas, our best thoughts and our silliest. We never pull our punches here, and we have fun doing it.

Our office is sometimes an unnerving place to be, especially while trying to focus — I'll inevitably shift my gaze to the hundreds of confusing objects around me: the ostrich egg at my side, the demonic Mona Lisa, the wooden giraffe, the ceramic chef, the whiteboard completely full of bullshit or the "40 and Sexy" wine glass. Some of these things have been here for decades, some just a semester, but it takes a certain kind of insane accumulation to be interesting even after I've spent months in this room.

I'd like to think, or hope, that we inject that overwhelming brand of weird into everything we do. The unblinking stare of our in-house Furby reminds me not to take this so seriously and to stop caring too much about the wrong things. I hope we never stop overwhelming and confusing people.



## THE STONY BROOK PRESS

FEBRUARY/MARCH 2022

Executive Editor	Josh Joseph
Managing Editor	Keating Zelenke
Associate Editor	Sarah Beckford
Business Manager	Julio Taku
News Editors	Janet Chow Melanie Formosa
Opinions Editor	Carmela Cassara
Features Editors	Sarah Beckford Jayden Feisthamel
Culture Editors	Carmela Cassara Sammie Aguirre
Music Editors	Lauren Canavan Rafael Cruvinel
Science Editors	Sydney Corwin Arun Nair
Satire Editors	Jayden Feisthamel Megan Walton
Lead Copy Editor	Melanie Formosa
Copy Editors	Jane Montalto Emma Nicolas
Graphics Editors	Komal Grewal Keating Zelenke
Press Mom	Emily Scott
Ombud Team	Elisha Asif Sam Rowland Nick Wurm

## JOIN THE PRESS

The Press is located on the third floor of the SAC and is always looking for artists, writers, graphic designers, critics, photographers and creatives!

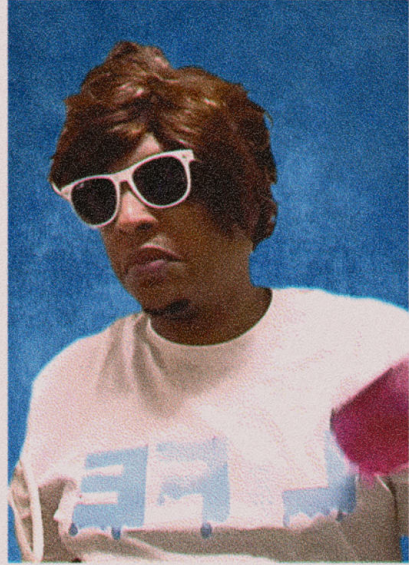
Meetings are Wednesdays in SAC 307K at 1PM and 7:30PM.

Scan with Spotify to hear what we've been listening to lately:





A TRIP TO  
**QUARTER BRICK HIGH**



THE STORY OF  
**HEYTONYTV**

BY SARAH BECKFORD



**“Q**uiet, please! *THANK you,*” says Antonio Neville, better known as HeyTonyTV.

He’s dressed in the now-instantly recognizable garb of the principal of Quarter Brick High, a fictional school from his skits that focus on high school life. All of his Quarter Brick High content can be broken into two subcategories: “how administrators in high school be” and “how girls in high school be.” It’s hard to tell which one is more popular — they’ve both definitely caught on.

HeyTonyTV has over 3.4 million followers and 101.3 million likes on TikTok, over 73,200 followers on Twitter and over 515,000 followers on Instagram. His videos see anywhere from a few thousand to over a million views per post. He’s had a successful year as his videos continue to gain popularity — including a trip to New York Fashion Week and a role in Megan Thee Stallion’s Nike ad.

Neville is no stranger to comedy — he’s been making skits on the internet for the past six years. He hails from North Carolina, where he enjoyed entertaining family and friends from a young age. It was during his time in college at William Peace University that he realized he wanted to pursue comedy as a career. He founded a comedy club on campus, and during his time as president of the club, they were able to organize two successful shows. But school became too expensive to attend and Neville eventually had to drop out. He left William Peace with an established fanbase that wanted to see more of his content.

He began making videos on YouTube and building his own brand of comedy. His early videos featured impressions of singers and pop culture figures like Patti LaBelle, DJ Khaled and Mary J. Blige, as well as videos that discussed various tropes from Black Christmas movies or common school memories his audience could relate to. But it was through his content on high school life, and his various characters, that his work began to gain more traction. The idea came from friends he grew up with.

“I hung out with a lot of friends like that, especially the girl in high school — like, I have a lot of girls that were my friends,” he said. “And so I hung out around that particular girl a lot because she had the keys to the car. You know, when you’re trying to skip class, someone with the keys to the car, you want to hang around

with a lot. And so I got to see that firsthand.”

He turned this experience into one character, a typical high school girl, and then developed another — a parody of a high school principal. He began posting on TikTok, where his sketches eventually went viral.

Though he’s experienced a significant amount of success on the platform, it’s common knowledge among users that TikTok does not treat Black creators fairly. HeyTonyTV still isn’t a verified account, despite consistent numbers and popularity. This summer, Black TikTok creators went on strike after Megan Thee Stallion’s single “Thot Shit” dropped. They refused to create a dance for the song, responding to a history of Black dancers not receiving credit for creating viral dances that white creators profit from. Think of the situation regarding the massively popular “Renegade” dance, and how Jalaiah

---



---

## “I WANT TO START CREATING SHOWS THAT ARE TOLD BY BLACK PEOPLE.”

---



---

Harmon didn’t receive recognition for creating it until months after it went viral. Black creators have also brought attention to how TikTok’s algorithm will censor or “shadow-ban” their content. (On TikTok, “shadow-banning” means that someone’s content won’t reach people on their For You page.) This happened often during the George Floyd protests in 2020 and it sometimes still occurs over content regardless of politics.

This type of censorship can affect creators’ ability to earn money from their content. There are two ways that creators can make money on TikTok — the Creator Fund and the Creator Marketplace. The Creator Fund allows for content creators to receive funds from their videos based on their views, their authenticity and the amount of engagement they receive. Those videos must follow TikTok’s community guidelines and its terms of services. In order to join, creators must have at least 100,000 authentic video views within the last 30 days. (As a note, TikTok has never clearly defined on its site what

counts as an “authentic” engagement or view.) In terms of payment, the Fund total varies daily, and it seems that the value per video fluctuates based on the amount of content that’s published that day. There’s no cap on the amount of funds given.

The Creator Marketplace allows content creators to connect with brands and gain sponsorship. To be involved, TikTok users are invited to join or apply once they meet various eligibility requirements based on video content, engagement, followers and other metrics. Once an account is approved, the marketplace offers a creator’s audience demographics and engagement to brands for potential sponsored content. An issue with the Creator Marketplace arose in July of 2021, when a TikTok creator named Ziggi Tyler pointed out that he was not able to include words or phrases in his Creator Marketplace bio with the word “Black” without being flagged for inappropriate content. TikTok claimed it was caused by an error in their hate speech detection tool and fixed it, but it left an impression — and Tyler’s video did go viral.

Neville recalls the 1990s and early 2000s as a golden era for Black actors and comedy, which was an inspiration for him.

“It means a lot to me, because I think one thing about comedy nowadays is that we have Black actors and Black comedians on TV screens, but you have other people who don’t have that experience, or never had that experience, or don’t know what the Black experience is at all telling your story,” Neville said. “And you’re just reading off the script, and it’s just not landing. So to me, I always want to make sure that my storytelling, especially with TikTok, or if I maneuver into television or film, is going to be something that my people can relate to.”

While continuing in comedy, Neville wants to help make an impact on the Black community by supporting arts and comedy acts.

“I want to start creating shows that are told by Black people. I want to start creating movies that are told by Black people. I kind of want to go back to that renaissance of Black movies, Black films, Black art. And I want to help these creators who have this dream to be successful and be in a movie or a television show — I want to help them get that role.” ■





جولائی ۲۰۲۳  
JANUARY 2023

31	1	2
2	3	4
5	6	7
8	9	10
11	12	13
14	15	16
17	18	19
20	21	22
23	24	25
26	27	28
29	30	





# Remembering Dadi - By Falah Jalali



In an attempt to turn pain into art, I wrote this five days after learning that my only living grandparent might pass and I would not be able to visit her. Missing the passing of a loved one is a common immigrant struggle. Most of us simply cannot catch a flight back home. The work of obtaining a visa to travel, taking leave from work and buying an expensive plane ticket is all a complex ordeal.

Once I found out that I could not go back home to see her for the last time, I started to soothe myself. In my eight years of living away from home, I have perfected the process of self-soothing. Even after taking a hot shower, offering namaz and making keema sandwiches for myself, I felt a baseball-sized lump in my chest.

*Crying*, I thought to myself, *has always soothed me*, and so I cried. Thanking my stars that I had saved some hundred videos of my *dadi* — the word for grandma in Hindi — in my Snapchat memories over the years, I went through them. Drops of tears turned into streams. The videos triggered a flashback of the time she wanted to try every filter on Snapchat, how she clapped her hands and laughed when the filter turned her face into a baby's.

Razia Jalali was born in the 1930s in Uttar Pradesh, India. During a time when people thought only the uncultured folk sent their daughters to school, she earned a bachelor's degree. She did not work after marrying, but the point of studying was never to earn money, she had told me. She studied to gain knowledge and pass it on to her family.

With 9 children and 19 grandchildren, she took many opportunities to pass her knowledge on. In my absolute favorite picture of her, she is using a magnifying glass to read a book, capturing her insatiable thirst to learn. From history and health to housekeeping, she gave us lessons on everything. She taught me the basics of arithmetic and how to sew a button.

Sitting next to her feet in a circle peeling peas, my girl cousins and I would often talk about how we would never do the

**After all the lessons I learned from books, professors, friends and strangers, the ones taught to me by Dadi are still the light that helps me navigate life.**

housework when we got married because we're feminists. She overheard and said, "*Angrezi baatein sunne se sirf angerzo ka fayda hota hai*," which loosely translates to *foreign ideas serve foreigners best*.

Shortly after, I was accepted into Stony Brook and came to America. After taking a few women's and gender studies classes, I gained the wrong kind of confidence in my education. It's tough to admit, but I thought I was better than other people because I read a few books and I could not wait to "enlighten" my *dadi* with what I had learned when I returned home to India to visit.

As I entered *Dadi's* house, I saw her talking to a woman who sweeps the street outside her home in the morning. *Dadi* was pressing a few 500 rupee bills in her palm, whispering something to her. Thanking *Dadi*, the woman quickly left. *Dadi* told us how that woman needed help to escape from her husband, to which my dad replied, "I can give her a job at my company." My *dadi* quickly said, "*Sabki zarurat ka hal ek jaisa nahi hota*" — *one kind of solution does not work for everyone*. It took dedicated professors years to teach me what my *dadi* already practiced in her everyday life: feminism with class consciousness. If I had spent time observing my *dadi*, I would've learned tangible ways to help people in my community. A new job at a company is not a valuable resource for a woman who is dependent on an abusive, controlling partner. *Dadi* offered the woman a room in her home and a job to tend to her garden.

While plaiting hair, pickling lemons, washing clothes and whispering jokes to each other, women in Lucknow who had never studied feminism practiced it aggressively in their everyday lives. They shared resources, information and advice with each other. The feminist ideals that drew me to the West had always been with me, if only I took the time to observe.

When I was young, I used to think America was the gold standard for education and human progress. I aspired to migrate to America and work for my own golden stamp of approval, but somewhere between then and now, I realized the hollowness of that pursuit. My values, my family and my culture were not made to fit into the Western idea of normalcy. The history of my existence is golden with or without America's approval. I felt confident in myself for intellectualizing the struggles of women of color through theory and academia while women who lived and navigated through that reality could not feel confident in themselves. After all the lessons I learned from books, professors, friends and strangers, the ones taught to me by *Dadi* are still the light that helps me navigate life. ■





**RAZIA JALALI**

1930s-2021



# SLANT 6

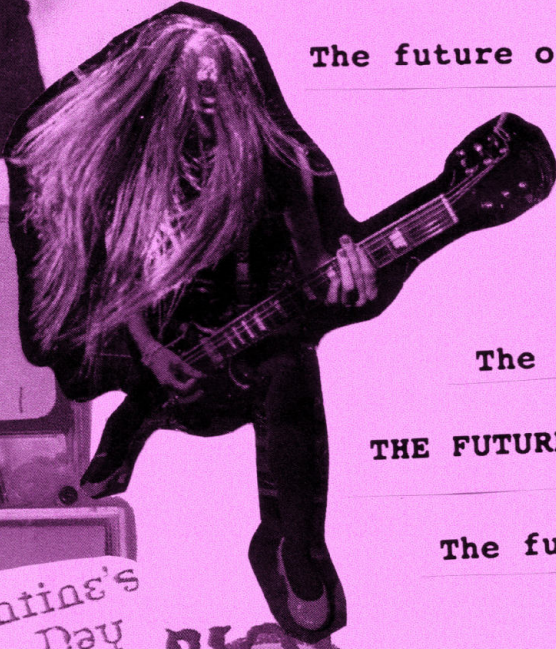


The future of a "dead" movement

The future of a "dead" movement

heavens to betsy

x 782 Olympia, WA 98507



The future of a "dead" movement

THE FUTURE OF A "DEAD" MOVEMENT

The future of a "dead" movement

Valentine's Day

RIO



The future of a "dead" movement

The future of a "dead" movement

featuring: SISTA GRRRLS







The new riot grrrls

The new riot grrrls

The new riot grrrls



THE NEW RIOT GRRRLS



The new riot grrrls

The new riot grrrls

The new riot grrrls



By Keating Zelenke



In middle school, Larissa Oliveira found herself slowly slipping out of place in her small, conservative Brazilian town. Born in Itabaiana, Sergipe — the smallest geographic state in Brazil — she had attended Catholic school all her life, but her lessons were just now starting to lead to more questions than answers.

Her body was changing too — one of the most troubling and disorienting burdens of adolescence. The other girls in her grade seemed to pounce on her vulnerabilities. They called Oliveira the ugliest girl in the class and made fun of the hair on her arms. If she had been shy before, she was shrunken now, as if willing herself to be completely invisible.

“I didn’t speak — I was a really quiet, quiet girl,” Oliveira says now, at 26 years old, from her apartment in Rio de Janeiro. One of her hands is wrapped protectively around the tattoo on her wrist — two little words written in delicate cursive: *riot grrrl*. “And then, you know, I discovered this movement and it was life-changing.”

Riot grrrl is a counterculture feminist movement that began on the West Coast of the U.S. in the early 1990s, in parallel with the ‘90s grunge movement. Artists like Nirvana crammed three-digit audiences into dark music halls, a mob of listeners donning sweat-soaked flannels and black Sub Pop t-shirts with “LOSER” emblazoned across their chests. Bleached-blond heads whipped back and forth to heavy bass and scratchy vocals while fans and musicians alike took to crowd surfing, limbs flying everywhere.

Almost all of the big names in these circles were men. Young girls were reduced to groupies — tossed around, harassed and frequently assaulted by other audience members. Riot grrrl music created a space in alt-rock for women to be everything they weren’t supposed to be — horny, angry, petty, gross and, most importantly, loud.

“It’s part of my survival,” Oliveira said.



Itabaiana, Sergipe



Riot grrrl music created a space

in alt-rock for women to be

everything they weren’t

supposed to be —

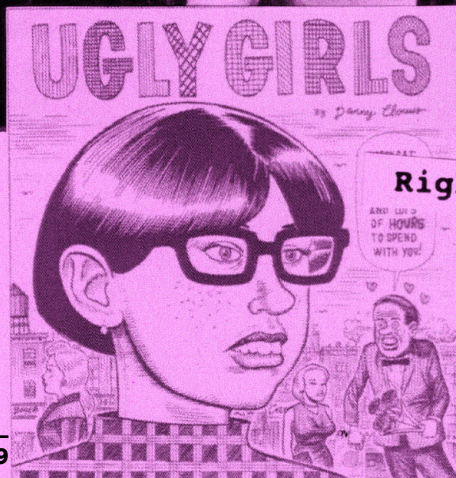
horny, angry, petty, gross and,

most importantly, loud.



Right: Larissa Oliveira

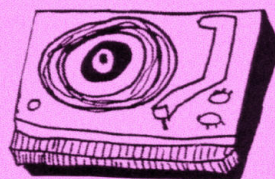
in high school





# Bikini Kill

SLUT PRIDE



*I believe in the radical possibilities of pleasure, babe*

*I do, I do, I do*



She discovered the genre around 2010. Most major riot grrrl acts at that point — Bikini Kill, Bratmobile and Sleater-Kinney, to name some of the most famous — had broken up years beforehand. However, a decade later, the tone and lyrics of each song still resonated with 15-year-old Oliveira, who was otherwise navigating her sexuality and place in society alone.

Because Northern Brazil — where Sergipe is located — is one of the most underdeveloped regions in the country, Oliveira had little access to the internet, even in 2010. Still, she used every fleeting moment of global access to research the riot grrrl movement in the U.S. She devoured classic riot grrrl albums and read whatever books she could find. A rock record shop opened in Itabaiana, and she devoured every biography, memoir or music history book that was even tangential to riot grrrl.

And she started to change.

Her hair came down. Tied up in a bun on the back of her head for years, she started to wear her wavy dark brown hair down around her shoulders. And she picked up a tube of dark lipstick — like the plummy red lip she was wearing now — and started wearing bracelets, ones with spikes and ones that jangled when she moved her arms. While speaking about these small changes, she starts and restarts her sentences, blushes and laughs, trying to justify outward changes as though they might be seen as superficial.

“I saw these women being so expressive, and I wanted to be expressive too,” she says. “It’s so simple, but so complex at the same time.”

Oliveira was unlearning invisibility. She was unlearning the shrunkenness she had turned to for so long.

English had always fascinated Oliveira — she spent hours illuminated by the blue-white glow of the TV screen, watching English-language shows and movies. So, in Bikini Kill’s “I Like Fucking,” Oliveira heard her curiosities about sex in Kathleen Hanna’s cool-girl voice: *I believe in the radical possibilities of pleasure, babe / I do, I do, I do.* And in Bratmobile’s cover of “Cherry Bomb” — *Can’t stay at home, can’t stay at school / Old folks say, ya poor little fool / Down the street, I’m the girl next door / I’m the fox you’ve been waiting for* — she heard her own worries and resentment of the daughter her parents expected her to be.

Her Portuguese-speaking classmates, though, only heard unpleasant screaming and loud drums.

“It was a lonely, lonely place,” she said. “I had my riot grrrl moment by myself.”

Since its birth in the early ‘90s, the riot grrrl movement has been criticized for being exclusive, and many of the earliest riot grrrl acts did follow a certain mold: white, American, cisgender, thin, English-speaking. Because of this exclusivity, many critics of the movement — and even its founders — have said riot grrrl is dead, and rightfully so. Others, like Oliveira, are less sure. In the future these new grrrls blaze ahead of them, they are making an effort to reform an imperfect movement to include a wider range of people, rather than permanently close it off from larger audiences.



In 2015, amidst an emotionally abusive relationship, Oliveira picked up her headphones and started listening to some of her riot grrrl favorites — Bikini Kill, The Breeders, Slant 6, 7 Year Bitch — and, using an app on her phone, absent-mindedly made a collage of some of the members of each band. She gave it a title when she was finished: *I wanna be your grrrl*.

“I was like, *am I making a zine?*” she said, laughing. And then: “*Okay, I am making a zine.*”

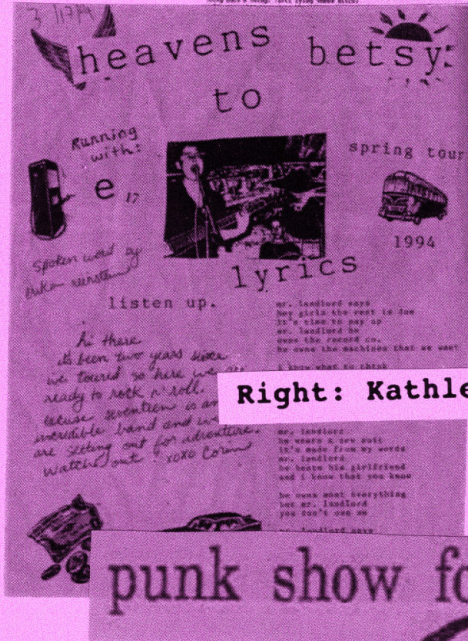
Zines — mini DIY magazines — were a huge component of the movement in the ‘90s. Inside folded printer-paper booklets, zinesters pasted in their favorite lyrics and quotes from riot grrrl artists and wrote about how the movement had empowered or otherwise helped them. The riot grrrl movement was Kathleen Hanna performing with “SLUT” written in marker on her stomach, and it was Donita Sparks of L7 pulling out a used tampon on stage and throwing it into the rowdy crowd, but it was also this — high schoolers and college students sprawled out on the floor with fellow grrrls, surrounded by photographs and markers and magazine cutouts and glue sticks, with Slant 6 or Babes in Toyland or any of the other essentials blasting in the background, writing about vulnerability and finding strength in womanhood.

Oliveira eventually expanded her first collage into a whole zine, talking generally about the history of riot grrrl and her discovery of the movement. Recognizing how making zines could help her emotionally, Oliveira made the Instagram account @iwannabeygrrrlzine and continued creating. She now has a collection of eight zines and has contributed to a handful of projects by other people in the movement. Her later zines include manifestos on modern feminism, interviews with riot grrrl artists and poetry written by women all over the world. Soon after starting her zine project, Oliveira also found the courage to break up with her abusive ex-boyfriend and further avoid toxic men who put her down and make her doubt herself.

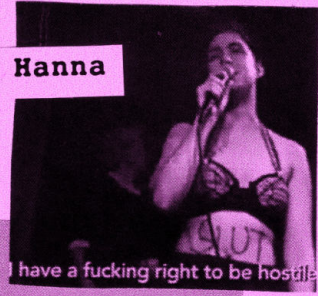
“This was a way to connect myself again with that powerful girl who had a voice and then suddenly was silenced.”

Oliveira has garnered an audience of over 2,500 followers on Instagram since she started her account. Aware of how language barriers kept her classmates from connecting with the movement as she did, Oliveira has also made an effort to make her activism as inclusive as possible. Every Instagram post on her account is written in Portuguese and English, as are her later zines, and her manifestos have focused specifically on dismantling white feminism and fighting for the rights of trans people.

“When I started making zines, I had a point to push the movement forward... I wanted to — and I think this is really important — to take what I learned and make something of my own.”



Right: Kathleen Hanna



I have a fucking right to be hostile



Left: Donita Sparks



**start a riot** ❤️

there is going to be this convention in dc on the first weekend in august. we are inviting girls from all over to come out and communicate and try to make this a weekend for us to help strengthen our girl scene. hopefully there will be speakers, workshops, bands, meetings, performance art and whatever else you've want. **SELF** we need your input! there is no precedent; this can be anything we want it to be and no idea or issue is too trivial to be left unmentioned. if you girls are interested in helping out or just coming to the convention PLEASE write and we out here will try to facilitate your needs. hopefully there will be places for girls to stay; many girls have offered their homes, and if worse comes to worst, maybe some girls can pool together money and get hotel rooms or something. for serious, there's nothing stopping you... so grab your pens and go girl. GO!!!!!!!!!!!!

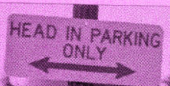
contact riot grrrl at:  
11162 sarfield way  
reston, va 22090

**start a Fuckin riot** ❤️

girl love is in for '92 in a big fuckin' way as will be evidenced by the RIOT GRRRL tour featuring HEAVENS TO BETSY and BRATHEMILL. if you don't live in any of these places please call yr friends and tell them to come out and support, dialogue with and feed these grrrls. this is their first tour and they are forging new aesthetics and ways of being. so check it out girlfriends!!!!!!!!!!!!

This is a newsletter for women girls interested in female revolution. it's about NO money it's about your revolution it's about queer revolution it's about white trash revolution it's about black revolution it's about animal revolution it's about the fact that as a white girl i pretty can't think of all the different ways for how people are marginalized so i need to learn together with my cool supportive friends! SOUL Revolution OF THE fuck hierarchies kind





Their caution demonstrates

the difficulty for

individuals to understand where

to start when it comes to

dismantling a global system of

white supremacy and

cissexism.



Above (left to right):

Right: Liz

C-Roll, Jessica, Liz, Alli, Marie

“So using our platform to bring awareness to issues that people are still facing in 2021, and being a safe space for people to come to if they, you know, don’t feel comfortable going to other shows. You’ll always have a safe space seeing Sharp Violet.

“We are allies,” she finishes sincerely. Jessica, the lead guitarist, nods slightly in agreement with Liz’s answer. Alli, the band’s rhythm guitarist, is looking past her webcam and into the back corner of her room. Marie, the bassist, continues to look up and away, deep in thought.

Sharp Violet’s desire to be allies, like many white artists who aim to be supportive of minority groups, is undoubtedly genuine. However, their caution demonstrates the difficulty for individuals to understand where to start when it comes to dismantling a global system of white supremacy and cissexism.

The five members of Sharp Violet — a modern riot grrrl band from Long Island — look on from different windows in a Zoom screen.

“Liz, that’s a great point about inclusivity because I was gonna ask about that,” I say. “[The riot grrrl movement] was criticized, like you said, in the ‘90s for being kind of skinny, white, femme, cisgender and American. What are some ways that you guys try to combat this stereotype?”

The call falls a little quiet and hesitant. All five members are white, cisgendered women, and though they may have asked themselves this same question before, it seems possible — probable, even — that they haven’t thought about it enough.

Lead singer and songwriter Liz itches the back of her head and breaks the silence.

“I mean, here we are, this basement band from Lindenhurst, Long Island, and people are hearing our music in Italy and in Mexico, in Australia,” she starts out a little cautiously.





There is no clear pathway to allyship, but instead miles and miles of baby steps that include uncomfortable conversations, deep introspection and unlearning social constructions you didn't even know existed. In other words, what most white artists — and people in general — don't realize at the start of their activism is that being an intersectional activist is *hard* and *constant*.

"Cissexism never sleeps," says Anna Claudia, the musician and trans woman behind Brazil's post-hardcore doom-noise act Umbilichaos. Despite being an intersectional feminist and a fan of riot grrrl music, she says she has always felt more like an observer of the movement, rather than a participant. Much like Oliveira, Claudia grew up in a small town and had little access to the internet for much of her life.

Claudia later quoted American philosopher and queerfeminism scholar Judith Butler: "If a woman doesn't identify herself as a feminist, maybe that feminism doesn't include her and it needs to change."

If a woman like Claudia — who consumes riot grrrl music and makes music influenced by punk and her own experiences as a woman — doesn't consider herself a riot grrrl, maybe riot grrrl doesn't include her and it needs to change. *But how?*

Take, for example, Sharp Violet. Liz was right — they're a basement band from Lindenhurst. Unlike Oliveira and

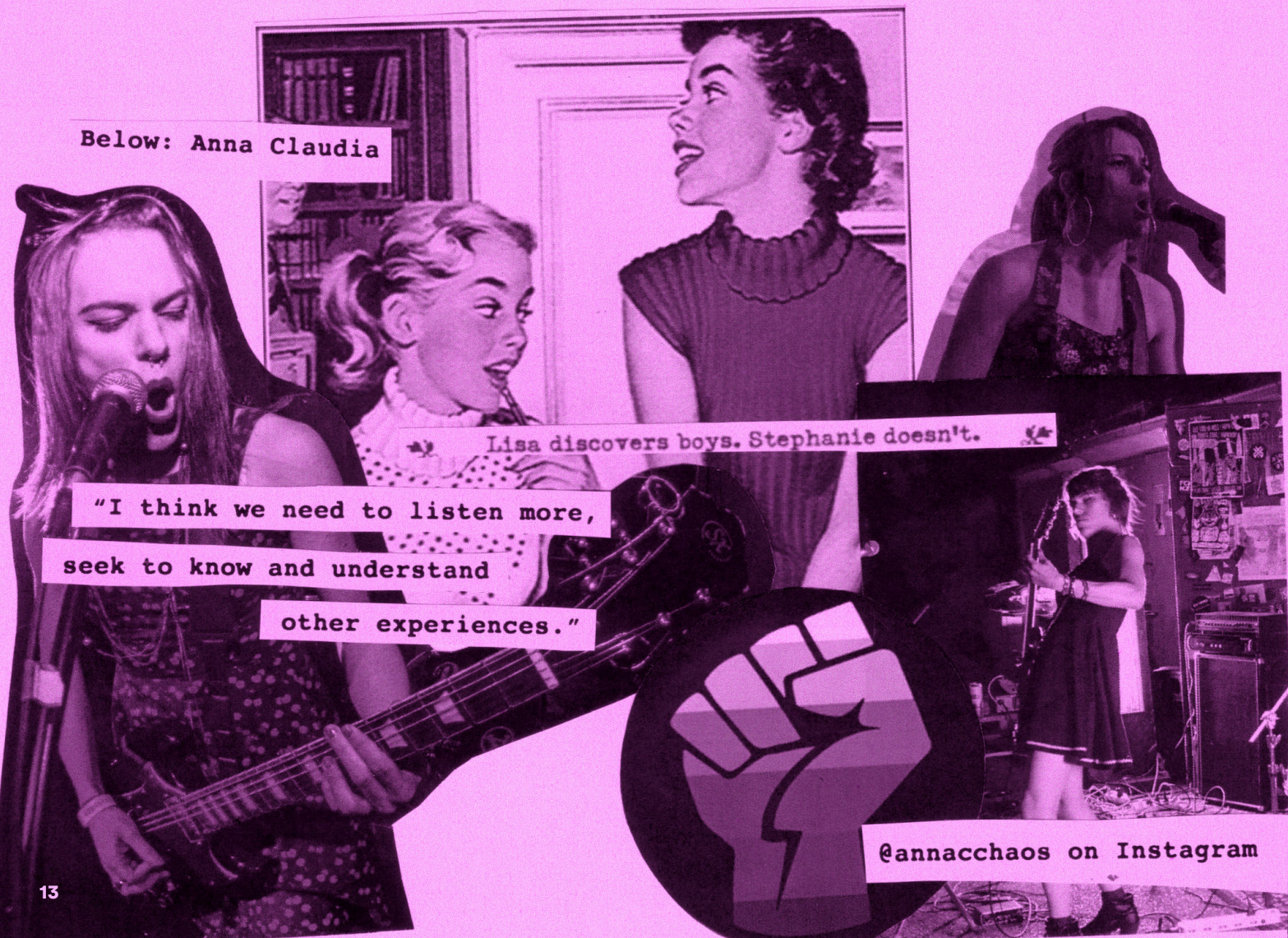
Claudia, they are not bilingual and can only perform their music in English. The members of Sharp Violet, as mentioned previously, are also all cisgender and white — it would be wrong of them to speak on the experiences of BIPOC women or gender-nonconforming people.

So, without existing at the intersections of the people they seek to include, what really can they do? How do they dive into identity politics in a productive way, not one that further alienates them from different audiences or inadvertently harms the audiences they seek to include?

"I think we need to listen more, seek to know and understand other experiences," Anna Claudia said. She's speaking about riot grrrl as well as intersectional feminists as a whole. "Question more, instead of focusing on having ready-made answers for everything."

The dilemma riot grrrl faces is one that gender theorists and race theorists have been struggling to answer since the birth of these disciplines. No one individual band or artist is going to solve the dual and opposing goals of intersectional feminism: How do we acknowledge inequity on the basis of race and gender while simultaneously arguing that the notions of race and gender are reductionary, meaningless social constructions?

Below: Anna Claudia



Lisa discovers boys. Stephanie doesn't.

"I think we need to listen more, seek to know and understand other experiences."

@annacchaos on Instagram



Claudia's suggestions, however, are a well-established starting point. As many students learn on their first day of a women's and gender studies course, the personal is political. There is power in putting your personal truths into words. When we express our unique experiences through words, we are able to understand how social constructions affect us and discuss the feasibility of dismantling them.

If this theory seems inaccessible, look no further than Oliveira.

"Speaking. I am, all the time, speaking." Riot grrrl gave her a voice when she had been silenced.

"Riot grrrl — what I love about it is that it's a community," Liz said, the other members of Sharp Violet nodding in agreement. "And helping people find their voices and to speak out against anybody who is not tolerant of everybody."

"What would have been of those women without riot grrrl?" Claudia said, referring to the founders of the movement. Through talking with fellow grrrls at shows and reading zines, women were able to have conversations about things — sex, masturbation, beauty standards, queerness — that were otherwise shamefully locked away in their hearts. These kinds of discussions are feminism in action, not just theory. "It opened many doors to women from punk and hardcore to central discussions of feminism."

What riot grrrl did for radical feminism in the '90s, it could do for intersectional feminism today, with a new emphasis on the voices of BIPOC women and gender-nonconforming people.

Considering the wave of right-wing conservatism washing over the globe, the new voices of this "dead" movement are quickly becoming more

important than ever. In the U.S., Donald Trump's presidency took American feminism back decades. His conservative Supreme Court appointees, Neil Gorsuch, Brett Kavanaugh and Amy Coney Barrett, threaten access to safe abortions and the right of trans people to simply exist. It's important for American activists to remain vigilant — if we have learned anything in the past few years, it's that however great our capacity for progress may be, our capacity to backtrack is just as strong.

Parallel to the United States' conservative shift, Brazil elected President Jair Bolsonaro in 2018, setting the South American country back several decades as well. Bolsonaro, who has been described as the Donald Trump of Brazil, has cut funding from programs aimed at helping women escape domestic violence.



Within Latin America, Brazil had the highest number of femicide victims total in 2019, about 1,326 women.

That's more than 3 women murdered every single day.







"This is not something that died.

I am sure millions of people

in other places are going to have

this moment, too."

These cuts were taken from an already meager program in the most dangerous region in the world to be a woman: Latin America. Within Latin America, Brazil had the highest number of femicide victims total in 2019, about 1,326 women. That's more than 3 women murdered every single day.

Prior to Bolsonaro's election, Brazil had been a relatively progressive country in terms of trans rights. As Claudia pointed out, a trans person in Brazil has the right to change their name and gender on legal documents without having to medically "prove" they are trans. This right to gender self-determination is not even established in countries like the U.K., where you must receive a gender dysphoria diagnosis from a doctor and prove that you have presented as your gender for two years before you can pursue changing your birth certificate. While this right has remained intact, President Bolsonaro, who once said he would prefer a dead son to a gay son, has made clear that trans people are not wanted — and not safe — in Brazil.

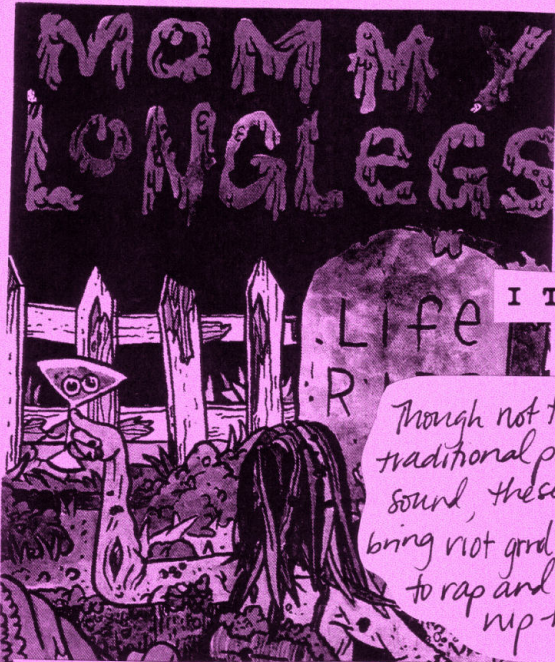
"If identified as trans, I can die for that alone," Anna Claudia said. "To be a lesbian will not be even mentioned. But if read as a cis woman, I could die for being a lesbian — and most days, just for being a woman, because we have very high rates of femicide too. In the end, Bolsonaro's election just legitimized dominant ideas, but it was always like a civil war for us."

The people on the front lines of this "civil war" of ideas are Larissa Oliveira, Anna Claudia and the other grrrls worldwide who are, in many cases, fighting for their lives.

"This is not something that died," Oliveira said. "I am sure millions of people in other places are going to have this moment too."

Considering the amount there is for women to scream about globally, she may be right. ■





THE NEW RIOT GRRRLS -

Starter Playlist

And Breeding - Priests

Nice Nice - Dazey and the Scouts

I Threw Glass at My Friend's Eyes and Now I'm on Probation - Destroy Boys

I Disagree - Poppy

Rage - Rico Nasty

Cry - Ashnikko (feat. Grimes)

She's So Strange - Sharp Violet

Silver Spoons - Skinny Girl Diet

Assholes - Mommy Long Legs

Maggot - Slutever

Fall Asleep - Big Joanie

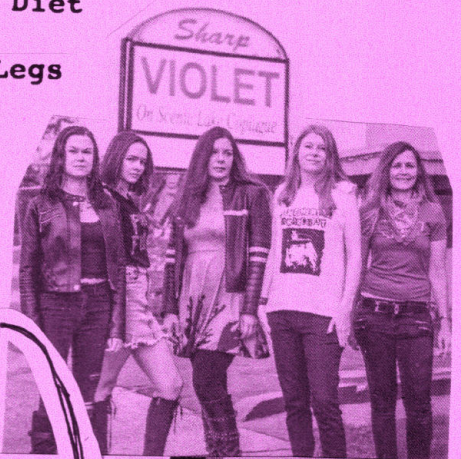
Someday - The Male Gaze

Spazz - Fea

SKINNY GIRL DIET



Jamaican-English  
sister-duo  
Delilah + Ursula  
Mothday



IDEAL WOMAN



Project from Grrrl Gang -  
a riot grrrl collective from  
Manila, Philippines



Slutever A

side A:  
3mother  
I Miss America  
Teen Mom







VaV

P

U

END THE ENIGMA

L

S

N

Ur



An anatomical diagram of the female reproductive system, including the uterus, ovaries, and fallopian tubes, rendered in white lines on a black background. The diagram is heavily obscured by large, thick red scribbles. Several anatomical labels are visible: 'Sp' at the top left, 'V' at the top center, 'Pr' at the top right, 'P' on the left side, 'Vv' on the left side, 'B' at the bottom right, 'Sph' at the bottom right, and 'U' at the bottom center. The text 'THE DANGERS OF ABSTINENCE-ONLY SEX EDUCATION' is printed in white, uppercase letters across the center of the diagram, partially covered by the red scribbles.

THE DANGERS OF  
ABSTINENCE-ONLY  
SEX EDUCATION

BY KATHARINA BUCZEK



Sex in America today is an enigma. Nearly 90% of Americans have sex before marriage, yet many receive little to no formal instruction on how to have sex safely. Abstinence-only education still comprises nearly half of the nation's curriculums despite its complete impracticality. These teachings disproportionately endanger young women too. Sex education must enter the 21st century and work to actually educate young people rather than shame them.

Nearly every industry, from advertising to entertainment, resorts to sexual stereotypes — and specifically, the female body — to make a

## CHILDREN ARE BEING FORCED TO LEARN ABOUT SEX ELSEWHERE.

buck. While this may not be surprising, the actual age demographic that these industries target is cause for concern. The Government of Quebec's most recent report revealed that the global advertising industry tends to target people as young as 8 to 14 years old. Children at this age are more likely to check multiple sources of digital media, have more spending money than previous generations and will likely continue consuming the same brands into adulthood. According to the report, advertising agencies also track and observe tweens' behavior in order to "sell them a sexualized image of themselves." The fashion and cosmetics industry is particularly guilty of this by purposefully targeting young girls with "seductive clothing" and gender-specific products and toys. Think back to being 8, 10 or even 14 years old — how impressionable were you? Children are being encouraged to "adopt sexualized attitudes and behaviors" online every single day. Yet they are grossly underprepared in their emotional, intellectual and physical development.

Imagine how perplexing it must be to attend school and receive a completely sugar-coated education compared to what you are constantly exposed to outside school walls. Currently, abstinence-only education teaches students that abstaining from sex is the only morally acceptable option of birth control. There is also

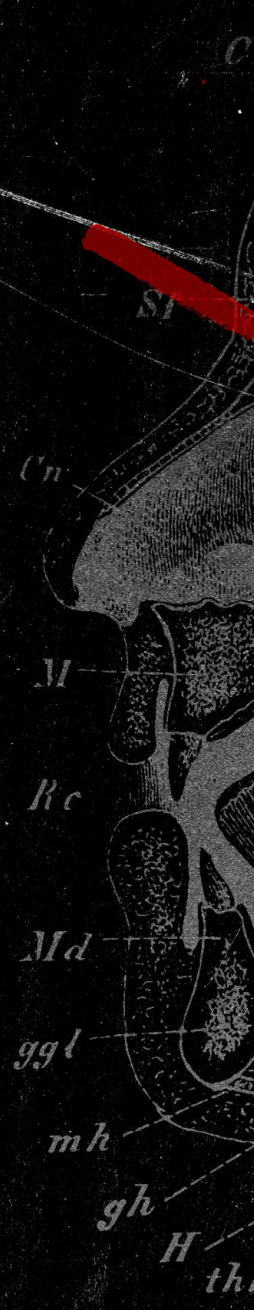
no mention of how to properly use birth control or condoms; teachers only emphasize their unreliability.

With so many mixed signals, children are being forced to learn about sex elsewhere. Whether through porn, Reddit forums or podcasts, children are bound to seek out new information one way or another. There are whole enterprises that capitalize on narrating tales of young adult sexcapades. The "Call Her Daddy" podcast, in which host Alex Cooper shares graphic details of sexual encounters with her three million listeners, is one notable example. Do we really want the younger generation turning to PornHub or "Call Her Daddy" for realistic information?

Beyond its failure to provide accurate medical information, abstinence-only education also keeps young adults from learning how to form equitable relationships. According to a study conducted by Harvard University, "abstinence-only programs... actively deprive young people of information they need to avoid the adverse consequences of sexuality during the critical years of young adulthood." Plus, the few people who do remain abstinent until marriage have a very difficult time communicating about sexual topics with their partners.

What's even worse is these "adverse consequences" specifically impact young women. In the United States, one in five women will suffer from either completed or attempted rape during their lifetime. Despite sexual assault running rampant throughout the nation, abstinence-only education disregards any discussion of rape, sexual assault or coercion. These traditional teachings also reinforce women as submissives whose only purpose is to be a vessel for pregnancy. Instead, the young women of today need to know that they *can* say no — and that they can even enjoy pleasurable sex too.

Deborah L. Tolman, the director of the Center for Research on Gender and Sexuality at San Francisco State University, described how young women are internalizing these gender role messages. "Our research shows that more girls buy into stereotypes about how they are supposed to behave in relationships and about treating their own bodies as objects," Tolman wrote. This manipulation lowers girls' self-esteem and shames them from even broaching the topic of sexual intimacy. Girls are growingly terrified of being slut-shamed or viewed as promiscuous. It also prohibits girls from properly





preparing for safe sex. By making young women feel guilty for enjoying a natural sexual function, “they are less likely to purchase and carry contraceptives because they risk appearing to have planned ahead and being seen as initiating sexual activity.”

All of these facts and figures are constantly glossed over since teen pregnancies in the United States have drastically decreased. But this doesn't apply to statistics state to state. A study conducted by the Drexel University College of Medicine and the University of Pittsburgh found that states whose residents have more conservative religious beliefs have, on average, higher rates of teenage pregnancy. Researcher Joseph Strayhorn believes the exclusion of a well-rounded education on contraception is to blame. “We conjecture that religious communities in the U.S. are more successful in

## ABSTINENCE-ONLY EDUCATION ALSO KEEPS YOUNG ADULTS FROM LEARNING HOW TO FORM EQUITABLE RELATIONSHIPS.

discouraging the use of contraception among their teenagers than they are in discouraging sexual intercourse itself,” he wrote.

The bottom line is that sex surrounds us every day and is a normal part of life. I am in no way advocating for tweens and teens to become sexually active at an early age. Still, there is no denying that abstinence-only education is severely damaging both physically and mentally. Religious beliefs aside, every young adult should be prepared for any possible situation — whether that be a romantic relationship or a potentially dangerous sexual encounter. Women of the latest generations have worked way too hard to close the gender gap for young girls to continue to internalize misogyny. While we may not be able to change how sexualized the world has become, we do need to equip the younger generation with a well-rounded and equitable sexual education to stay safe and form healthy and balanced adult relationships. ■



**BUSKER HITS BROOKLYN**

# **BLACK PUMAS**

**A CONCERT REVIEW**



**BY LAUREN CANAVAN**



# IT WAS A WEDNESDAY AFTERNOON IN SEPTEMBER.

I sat in anthropology class fidgeting in my chair and incessantly checking the time on my phone. I'd soon be slipping out of the lecture hall to catch a train from Stony Brook to Manhattan.

I'll never forget the feeling of excitement that washed over me as I ordered the concert tickets for Black Pumas back in June. My anticipation for this show was unmatched, as it had already been postponed once due to — you guessed it — COVID-19.

My first exposure to Black Pumas was watching their performance of “Colors” at the Grammy Awards in 2020. Struck by the lyrics, I was an instant fan.

Eric Burton's catchy, repetitive lyrics spur listeners to sing along. As a result, his important message carries beyond music platforms like Spotify and Apple Music and into the mouths of our youth and society at large. His message isn't forceful; it's celebratory. And, fittingly enough, “Colors” is the song that propelled Eric Burton into the mainstream.

Before Black Pumas, the California sun served as his spotlight. In an interview with CBS News, Burton explained he had to take three buses and multiple trains to the Santa Monica Pier, where he would busk for money. But traveling to the pier didn't guarantee him a performance spot. He had to place his name in a fishbowl and hope he was one of fourteen names chosen to stay and perform.

“It'd take me hours to get there but it's made me who I am for sure,” Burton said.

Burton met guitarist and producer Adrian Casada through a mutual friend and the two clicked immediately. Casada had long been a part of the Austin, Texas music scene, primarily playing in Grupo Fantasma, a Grammy-winning Latin fusion collective. Soon after meeting Casada, Burton left his beloved Santa Monica Pier behind, and the two began booking Black Pumas gigs at C-Boy's, a popular club in downtown Austin.

Within months the group was nominated for three Grammys — Record of the Year and Best American Roots Performance for their single “Colors” and Album of the Year for their self-titled debut.

The long train ride to Manhattan gave me a perfect opportunity to play their album one last time before seeing them live. I tapped to the beats of my favorites, including “OCT 33,” “Know You Better” and, of course, “Colors.”

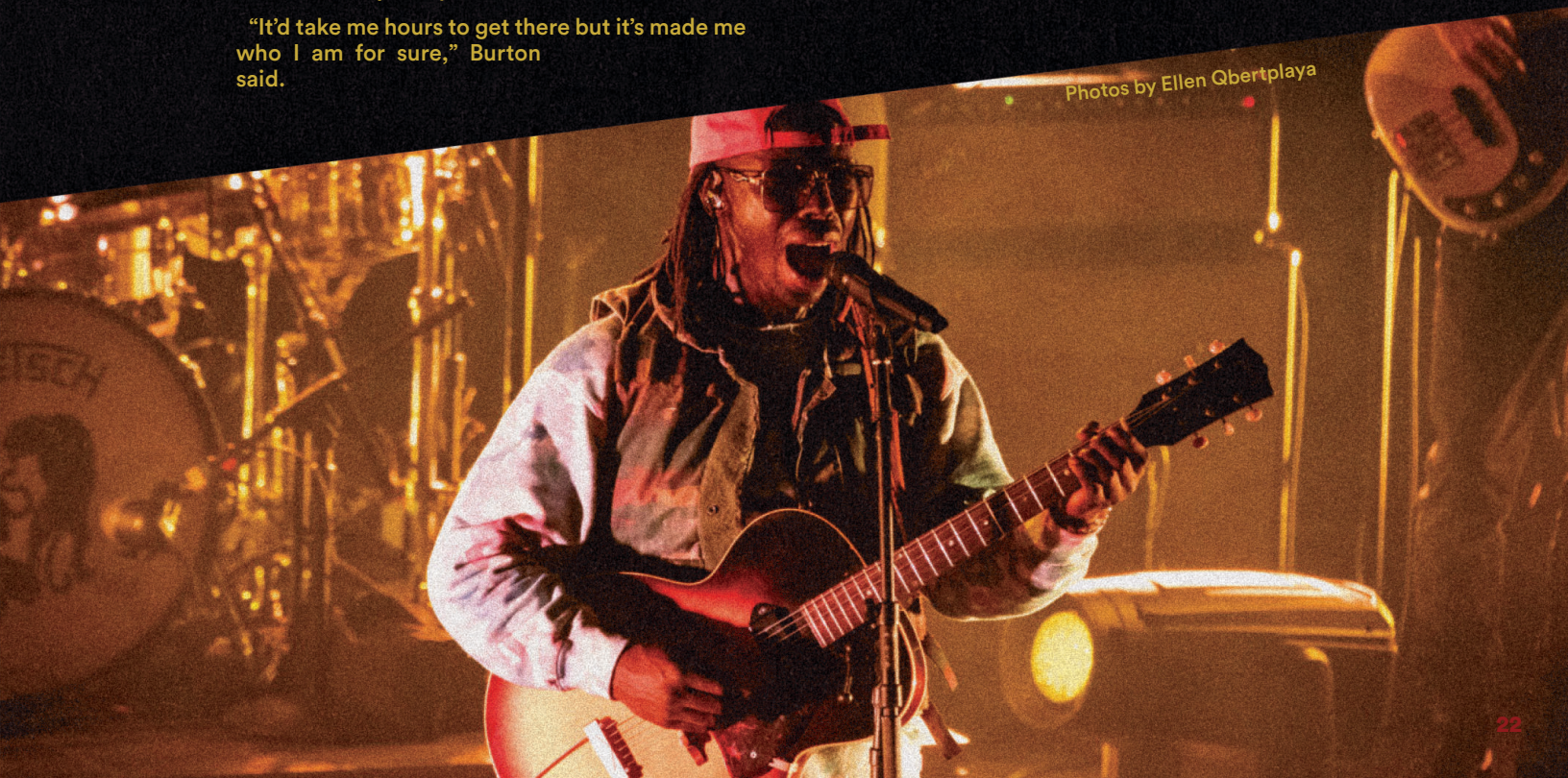
I met up with a friend and we hopped from line to line on the subway, eventually arriving at Brooklyn Steel, a former warehouse turned club venue on Frost Street. We walked into the giant space filled with people swaying to the background music, drinks in hand.

Before the show, I was close to experiencing burnout, an all-too-familiar feeling for college students. The atmosphere alone allowed me to shed my stress and embrace the moment.

We rocked back and forth, shifting our weight to tolerate the soreness of standing. Despite my exhaustion, as soon as the opening act left and the sound technician came out to start tuning guitars, an electric shock of excitement surged through my body.

With the dimming of the lights came an eruption of cheers. Following a year-long city shutdown, Pumas were one of the first live acts to revive New York City's timeless music scene.

Photos by Ellen Qbertplaya







**MY SISTERS AND MY  
BROTHERS  
ALL MY FAVORITE  
COLORS**



The instruments crashed to life as the band emerged on stage. The great thing about club shows is how incredibly intimate they are. Dancing and singing together, the crowd was united in the spirit of music.

Pumas rolled through their setlist seamlessly. Burton was very personable, holding the mic out for fans to sing along and jumping down into the crowd to feel the concert experience from the ground. He also gave continuous credit to the band — especially to Casada, who shredded on lead guitar. Pumas usually perform with two backup singers, Angela Miller and Lauren Cervantes, but on this night, Cervantes was ill. For music that is heavy on backup vocals, holding down the fort was no easy feat, but Miller killed it.

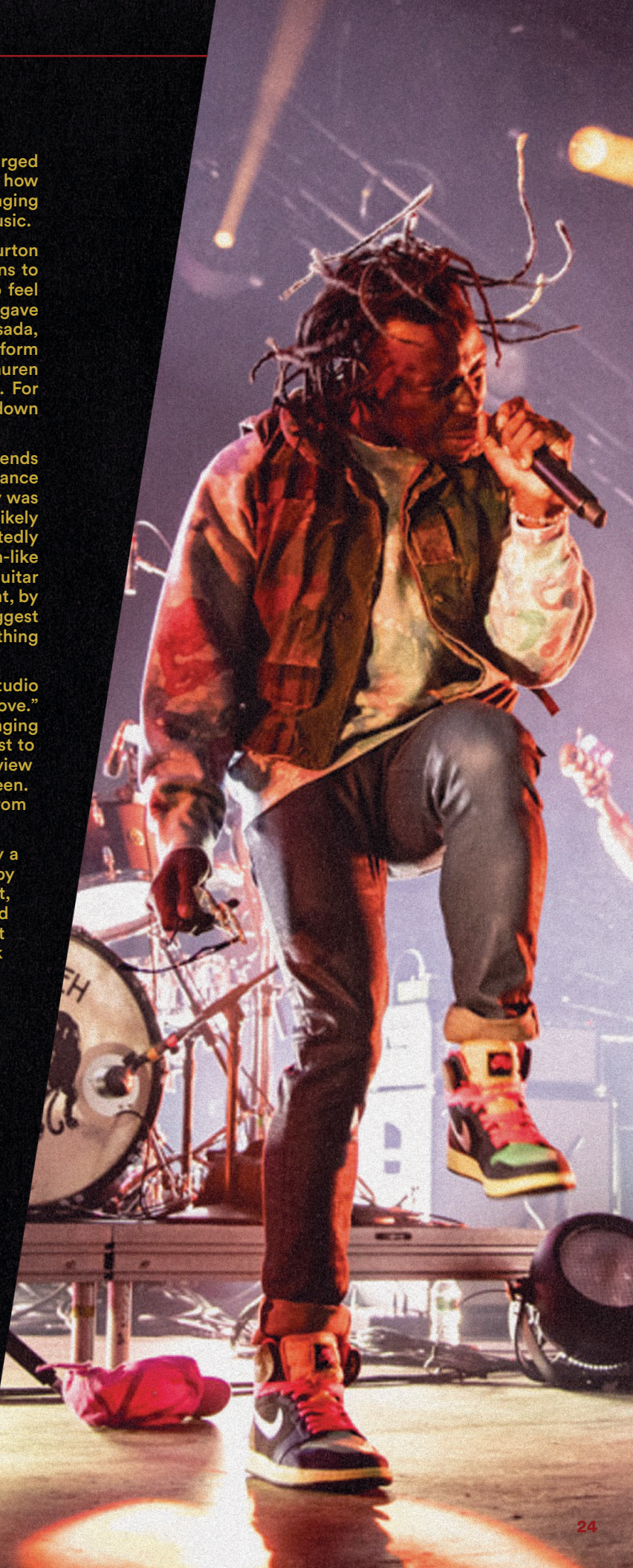
At past concerts, I've been ridiculed by friends over how I tend to stay in a frozen, analytical stance instead of dancing. By the second song, my body was overtaken by a rhythmic groove. Despite the likely awkward look of it, I felt incredibly free. I repeatedly found myself eyes closed, simulating a dream-like state as I swayed back and forth to the bluesy guitar riffs. I was entranced by the music, by the moment, by the night. For anyone struggling right now, I suggest attending a live show. Music is my therapy, something I'll never be ashamed to admit.

One song that didn't stand out to me on the studio recording but blew my mind live was "Ain't No Love." Burton's personality, coupled with the crowd singing along, made me fall in love with it. I tried my best to refrain from filming during the show; I wanted to view the experience live — not through my phone screen. But I did get some clips, and one of them was from this song, which I caught about midway through.

Every fan secretly wishes that an artist will play a deep cut live. "Fast Car," a tune made famous by Tracy Chapman, never interested me. I knew it, but only because I had subconsciously listened to it on a loop at either Applebee's or Chili's. But the vocal twist that Burton added to the track gave me a newfound appreciation for the song. He brilliantly placed "Fast Car" on his setlist as part one of the band's encore. After leaving the stage, Burton reemerged on the rear balcony. Under a single spotlight with his acoustic guitar, he began plucking out the intro. It was breathtaking.

As Burton charmed the crowd full of phone lights, the band snuck back onto the main stage. Within seconds of finishing "Fast Car," they ripped into two more songs to seal off the night.

After Pumas left the stage, the crowd dispersed. I remained still. I embraced the ringing in my ears and the reverb of the instruments still swirling through the air. My friend and I met eyes, perhaps for the first time since the concert began, and smiled. This band — this performance — would be the source of my happiness for weeks to come. ■





**STONY BROOK'S  
RECOGNITION OF  
TURNING  
POINT  
USA**

**ENABLES THE FAR RIGHT  
AND ENDANGERS STUDENTS**

**BY CHRISTINE KELLEY**







# RIGHT -WING

nonprofit Turning Point USA's (TPUSA) recent victory at Stony Brook University is a disaster for students, educators and workers. Stony Brook's recognition of the billionaire-backed, far-right organization has outraged students — nearly 600 of whom signed a petition against TPUSA's establishment as a club. After months of Turning Point agitating the community — including its September rally against COVID-19 vaccine mandates that brought far-right figures to campus — Stony Brook has rewarded the organization's white supremacism, dark money and conspiracy theories. As we go into the spring semester, we must ready ourselves for even more vicious behavior from this now-officially recognized and emboldened crew of bigots.

Stony Brook is not the first school Turning Point has infiltrated. The group claims to have 1,400 chapters across the United States. Conservative student Charlie Kirk and the late entrepreneur Bill Montgomery founded Turning Point in 2012 with financial backing from the late Republican megadonor Foster Friess. The organization recruits students to promote right-wing economics, aiming to “educate students about the importance of fiscal responsibility, free markets, and limited government.” Turning Point's website boasts that its student activists are “the community organizers of the right.”

TPUSA's practices have included “funneling money into student government elections across the country,” according to The New Yorker's Jane Mayer. One of Turning Point's targets has been Critical Race Theory, a term which used to refer to race studies and which the right has turned into a buzzword for schools acknowledging that racism exists. Other projects have included promoting COVID-19 misinformation

and threatening the trans community. Additionally, the group manages Professor Watchlist, a watchdog site that lobbies for the firing of liberal, progressive and leftist academics. Meanwhile, Turning Point preaches the value of free speech.

The Anti-Defamation League characterizes Turning Point as “alt-lite,” or adjacent to the alt-right, while the Southern Poverty Law Center has condemned its “blooming romance with the alt-right.” Countless Turning Point members have exhibited racist, misogynistic, antisemitic and queerphobic behavior, which the organization has sometimes publicly distanced itself from — despite privately continuing to work with said members. Their leadership exhibits the same far-right and even fascist views that alarm fellow conservative organizations like Young Americans for Freedom. Co-founder Charlie Kirk recently called for citizens to protect “white demographics” at the southern border, while former communications director Candace Owens once defended Hitler.

This isn't some niche of Republicans with Nazi-sympathetic ideologies. Turning Point has national traction in conservative and libertarian politics



Attendees at Turning Point's rally against vaccine mandates at Stony Brook on Sept. 12, 2021. Photo by Christine Kelley.



as well as an alliance with Donald Trump and Donald Trump Jr. On Jan. 6, 2021, Turning Point Action, a TPUSA affiliate, deployed seven buses with about 350 people total to the Capitol rally. A few days before, Kirk announced in a now-deleted tweet that his organization would send “80+ buses full of patriots to D.C. to fight for this president.” Kirk has since condemned the rally, despite Turning Point Action’s participation. Stony Brook permitting members of the Capitol rally to organize on campus is like having a Stony Brook Proud Boys club.

In December, Turning Point convened the embarrassingly named (and massively transphobic) AmericaFest in Phoenix, Arizona, where thousands of people gathered to see a roster of guest speakers that included Tucker Carlson, Sarah Palin, transphobic congresswoman Marjorie Taylor Greene (who used a racial slur during her speech) and the recently exonerated Kyle Rittenhouse, whom the audience applauded for killing two people.

In addition to its support from major conservative politicians and pundits, Turning Point is funded by numerous right-wing billionaires and foundations for dark money — political donations made through nonprofits which don’t have to name their donors — for its promotion of free market capitalism, including the Richard and Helen DeVos Foundation, various Koch Brothers funds and Robert and Rebekah Mercer. The Mercers, whose money propelled Brexit and Donald Trump’s 2016 presidential election victory, invested nearly \$20 million into dark money fund Donors Trust, which gave Turning Point \$906,000 in 2019. It is clear that Turning Point is part of the same far-right dark money network that, among other things, has engineered the backlash against so-called “Critical Race Theory.”

TPUSA’s COVID-19 misinformation campaign has come out of this network. They have created a webpage dedicated to COVID myths, despite the group’s co-founder Bill Montgomery dying of COVID in 2020. Recent investigative reporting from The Daily Poster has shown that the

Kochs, among others, funded groups that promote COVID misinformation so they could reopen their companies and raise profits. This isn’t some movement of principled objection to government overreach: it’s a group of plutocrats trying to make money.

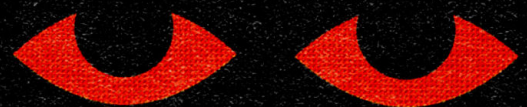
Turning Point has ridden into Stony Brook on the coattails of these conspiracy theories. In September 2021, during one of Turning Point’s tabling sessions prior to its acceptance at Stony Brook, I confronted the group in a recorded exchange I then posted to Twitter.

Our conversation centered around government control and vaccine mandates. Turning Point members made various false claims about COVID-19 vaccines including that they

were all produced from stem cells (Pfizer and Moderna vaccines used cells isolated from fetal tissue in test stages but not in actual production) and that vaccines don’t prevent COVID.

Turning Point has had to be covert about its ideological leanings, particularly at Stony Brook due to the school’s vibrant left-wing and progressive community. In practice it hasn’t done so, but students unfamiliar with the group can be deceived by talk of personal liberty, or its co-opting of progressive language with questions like, “Should a person’s ZIP code determine their success?” to promote the conservative policy of school choice. This is how indoctrination works: an interest group will lure in uninformed students with deceptive

**STONY BROOK PERMITTING  
MEMBERS OF THE CAPITOL  
RALLY TO ORGANIZE ON  
CAMPUS IS LIKE HAVING A  
STONY BROOK  
PROUD  
BOYS  
CLUB**





language and slowly introduce them to their ideology.

The Turning Point field representative who led the group I spoke to outside the university's Student Activities Center stressed that "we're nonpartisan, we're not working with any political affiliation." When I mentioned Turning Point's backing from Foster Friess (who she had never heard of), the representative stated, "We are a partisan organization in that we're a charity," referring to Turning Point's 501(c)(3) nonprofit status, which does make the group apolitical on legal grounds. After Turning Point's acceptance at Stony Brook, a group leader told *The Statesman*, "We're nonpartisan, so there's no reason we shouldn't be recognized by the university." While Turning Point is legally nonpartisan, the fact that the organization is helmed and funded by

conservatives to promote conservative legislation seems to render the word "nonpartisan" meaningless.

The organization is in step with right-wing dogma on COVID and vaccines. Turning Point co-organized the Sept. 12 rally against vaccine mandates on campus, which was rampant with vaccine misinformation. Despite the group's insistence that it merely opposes a vaccination mandate, the rally's speakers and attendees completely decried COVID vaccines. I entered the crowd and saw one protester carrying a sign that said, "Vaccines known to cause: seizures, encephalitis, autoimmunity," — all claims unsubstantiated by real doctors. Guest speaker Gavin Wax, who has documented ties to white nationalists, told the crowd he was less likely to get COVID than vaccinated people were, while another speaker — who said

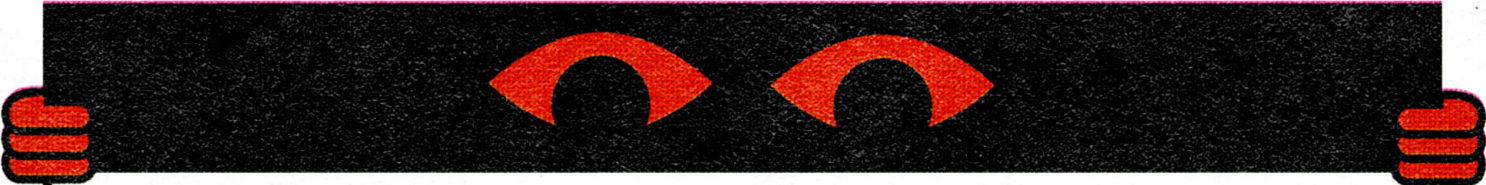
he was discharged from the military years ago for not getting vaccines — advocated for "diversity of health."

The rally was populated by far-right figures such as Wax, student activist Isabella DeLuca and Ian Smith, a COVID-denying gym owner. Ashley St. Clair, a transphobic children's author and former TPUSA brand ambassador whom the organization (at least publicly) cut ties with after she was photographed with white nationalists, was prominently advertised as a guest speaker, although I didn't spot her at the rally. The function was co-organized by local far-right unit Long Island Loud Majority (LILM), which shut down Manhattan's Fifth Avenue in a pro-Trump 2020 rally. The Southern Poverty Law Center has condemned LILM's "anti-democratic activity." I also spotted Dominick Thorne, now a Suffolk County legislator, distributing



Some of the guests at the Sept. 12 rally, including Gavin Wax and Ian Smith. Photo by Andrew Sypher.





# EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS AND POLITICAL ORGANIZATIONS ARE BEHOLDEN TO CAPITALISTS AND DARK MONEY

campaign materials at the rally. Thorne opposes New York State's vaccine mandate for healthcare workers.

Stony Brook's Turning Point chapter boasts about racial diversity in their ranks, and while this is true, it does not refute the fact that they brought white nationalists to campus. Nor does it change the fact that the group asked students if "biological men" should participate in women's sports, a flagrantly transphobic challenge to trans women's identities as women. The group's presence is dangerous to Stony Brook's student community, which is racially diverse and full of queer people.

Stony Brook's administration could have prevented this risk to students. Turning Point frequently held tabling events on campus before being accepted as a club. As early as September, its Instagram touted the "Official TPUSA Chapter at Stony Brook University." These acts seemingly run afoul of Stony Brook's Code of Student Responsibility, which prohibits "unrecognized groups/organizations" from "[using] the University name, logo, equipment, or facilities" and "[hosting] events/activities on campus."

On legal terms, Stony Brook's choice to recognize Turning Point is reasonable. Unless there's a cut-and-dried example of a group violating university rules, Stony Brook can't decline a chapter's application, lest the university risk losing federal funding. It's unclear whether Turning Point's conduct at the time of its acceptance violated these rules. Still, the fact that University President Maurie McInnis made a statement affirming free speech rights days before TPUSA's rally, with a follow-up message days later weakly affirming Stony Brook's commitment to diversity, suggests the administration is unwilling to fight this battle.

This wouldn't be the first time Stony Brook bowed to a group with billionaire ties. In 2011, Stony Brook accepted a \$150 million donation from billionaires Jim and Marilyn Simons and their Simons Foundation. Jim Simons, a former chair of Stony Brook's Department of Mathematics, also founded hedge fund Renaissance Technologies, or RenTech, which in September 2021 agreed to pay the IRS \$7 billion in one of history's biggest settlements after years of tax avoidance.

Stony Brook, for its part, renamed its medical school the Renaissance School of Medicine in 2018 after receiving more than \$500 million in donations from RenTech employees. One of RenTech's founders, by the way, is TPUSA donor Robert Mercer. While this by no means shows that Mercer is leading a concerted effort to inject far-right ideology into Stony Brook, it does show that educational institutions and political organizations are beholden to capitalists and dark money.

The result is a culture of money and avarice that promotes white supremacy, patriarchy, queerphobia and authoritarian capitalism. This culture has created an institution that is by its very nature unwilling to favor morality over money. It is up to the progressive and leftist student community, sympathetic professors and other school workers to keep Turning Point USA and dark money at bay. Let us hope the community is up for the challenge. If not, it'll be a particularly dark day when Charlie Kirk or Kyle Rittenhouse comes to Stony Brook. ■



**The Brazilian butt lift is one of the most popular plastic surgeries in America —**



# **THE BEL EFFECT**

**but how safe is it really?**

**By Katherine Heredia**





**Despite its recent popularity, the Brazilian butt lift is one of the deadliest procedures in plastic surgery.**

The Brazilian butt lift, or “BBL,” is a fat transfer operation that uses liposuction to remove fat from one part of the body and inject it into the buttocks for an enhanced and more voluptuous appearance. According to a survey conducted by the International Society of Aesthetic Plastic Surgery, the BBL is one of the fastest-growing in popularity among plastic surgeries, with 40,320 buttock augmentations and 21,823 procedures completed in 2020 alone. The growth in popularity is likely fueled by the fact that this surgery has become a social media phenomenon.

The hashtags #BBL and #BBL-effect are racking up a combined 3.8 billion views on TikTok. Many of these videos show montages of transformations before and after the surgery. The “BBL Effect” is a TikTok trend in which users poke fun at the idea that people who’ve undergone the procedure also acquire a certain flamboyant personality.

Dr. John Layliev, a plastic surgeon who practices in Huntington, New York, said social media and celebrities had a big hand in the BBL’s recent spike in popularity.

“In the last five to ten years, there has definitely been an increase in the demand for Brazilian butt lift surgery,” he said. “In my opinion, a reason for that is because of the way social media portrays new trends and new body types and there’s been a lot of celebrities, reality show stars, that are showing off their large buttocks and their figures.”

Despite its recent popularity, the Brazilian butt lift is one of the deadliest procedures in plastic surgery. According to the American Society of Plastic Surgeons, 1 in every 3,000 BBL patients dies due to complications during surgery. Like most surgeries, there are general risks involved with anesthesia. However, the largest cause of death associated with the BBL is called a fat embolism — when a piece of fat is released into the bloodstream and eventually travels to the lungs, which results in a blockage of blood flow.

“This could only happen in cases where the fat was actually injected into the gluteus muscle,” Dr. Layliev said. “This is not allowed anymore in the United States. In the right hands, where it’s appropriate, there should be no risks of any fat entering the deep blood vessels of the buttocks and traveling upwards towards the lungs because the fat should only be injected into the skin of the buttocks region and not the muscle.”

Dr. Layliev said that in the last few years, the media has exaggerated the risks of fat embolisms and deaths due to complications. Yet he still emphasizes that all prospective patients should be made aware of these potential risks.

“However, in the right hands, that risk really is minimized,” he said.

In the United States, Brazilian butt lifts can cost up to \$10,000. Some patients choose to travel outside the U.S. in hopes of getting the popular body shape for a discounted price.

“I think that’s a very, very bad decision,” Dr. Layliev said. “People who are looking for a cheaper surgery price by traveling further out are basically short-





**No matter  
what body  
type you  
have,**

**know that  
your body is  
perfect the  
way it is,**



**as long as  
you love it.**



changing themselves. They're not having the continuity of postoperative care, or if they're having complications, they're not having that surgeon or doctor manage them after surgery. In the case where there are complications, they're not with U.S. healthcare."

Dr. Layliev stressed the importance of verifying whether or not their surgeon is certified by the American Board of Plastic Surgery, meeting rigorous criteria and safety standards in this country.

"There are plastic surgeons out there that advertise themselves to be doing this procedure, but they aren't board-certified... You should also make sure that you've seen plenty of before-and-after [photos] from that surgeon that exemplify realistic improvements that you're looking for."

Yani Monroe, 29, is a bartender with dreams of entering the beauty industry one day. Less than a year ago, she underwent a Brazilian butt lift procedure. She said that everyone has their own reasons for getting the surgery and it doesn't always stem from insecurity.

"I had done research on BBLs and had over ten consultations in over three years before I actually went ahead and did it. I want an overall proportioned look to my body, so for me it was like an enhancement because I also decided to keep it a lot more natural-looking."

Monroe says that ever since she has gotten the procedure, the quality of her life has been improved in many ways.

"I noticed my Instagram following going up, more stares and attention from other women and me beginning to stop more for questions about my body. I currently work in the nightlife. Appearance is everything when you are a bartender, so I think it has definitely increased my tip amount. As far as career goals, I think it will help attract more people to me, something I like to call pretty girl privilege — which is messed up, I know, but unfortunately, we do live in a shallow world."

About a decade ago, socialites and models were idolized for having slim figures. Now, having an hourglass figure is the beauty standard currently upheld by society. Although it is more "inclusive" of those with curvier bodies, it can completely exclude anyone who is on the thinner side or who is curvier in areas of the body other than the hips, buttocks and breasts. Whether or not the hype surrounding this body type is just a passing trend, Monroe said that a lot of good can come from supporting different body types regardless of beauty standards.

"I definitely think having an hourglass look is a trend and a huge goal for many women to achieve, but with that being said I also believe other body types are beautiful as well. Surgery isn't for everyone and natural bodies are beautiful, but skinny bodies were the way women were once told to look and now curves are accepted and encouraged! I love it. I think women are beautiful and the curvy 'trend' is here to stay."

When deciding to undergo plastic surgery, be aware of the risks and be sure that it's something that you truly want. Do not chase trends in effort to please those around you. What may be deemed beautiful one year can completely change the next. No matter what body type you have, know that your body is perfect the way it is, as long as you love it. It does not matter what society tells you is the "desirable" body type — always do what allows you to feel your most confident and happy self. ■

**A lot of good can come from supporting different body types regardless of beauty standards.**



HIDE YOUR FAVES —




# ADELE

IS BACK

BY RAFAEL CRUVINEL





When Adele posted the teaser for “Easy On Me,” the lead single from her new album *30*, we all knew it was time to put our favorite artists out of her shining path. Because this is what Adele’s success looks like: a tsunami that breaks all possible records no matter what — or who — is in the way. No fanbase wants to compete with her.

Speculation that she was going to release new music started in 2020, when the singer returned to Instagram to celebrate her birthday after a four-month disappearance from the platform. Following the post, she was announced as the host of *Saturday Night Live*’s Oct. 24 episode. Many thought she would reveal her musical comeback at some point during the night, but instead it became an opportunity for us to meet her new self.

Adele has changed since the last time she was in the spotlight. She lost weight, left her marriage and got older. It wouldn’t be the smartest decision to release new music right away.

When an artist changes their image, it takes time for people to get used to it. It happened with Katy Perry in 2017 during her *Witness* era and more recently with Billie Eilish and her second album. Although everything seems possible for Adele, it was better to first let people understand where she is now and then tell the stories she wanted to tell. SNL was the stage she chose to show us how she was doing after undergoing all these changes.

And this was it for Adele’s 2020.

Hopes were renewed this year when the number 30 was projected on billboards around the world. The gold lettering and dark blue background didn’t fool fans. They knew this was the name of Adele’s new album, which follows her pattern of naming records after the ages they reflect.

She hinted further at the upcoming announcement, changing her social media profile pictures to the same dark blue background. Then Taylor Swift unexpectedly changed the release of the new version of her album







*Red* from Nov. 19 to Nov. 12. This was the first time Swift had changed a release date in her career, and fans immediately theorized it had to do with Adele's comeback. After all, *no one* wants to drop the day Adele is dropping.

Theories were confirmed on Oct. 5 when Adele posted a video of her driving a car to the sound of a piano melody. The caption: "Easy On Me — October 15." On Oct. 13, she posted a picture of herself within that dark blue background — the same color scheme that had filled the billboards. Guess the caption: "30 — November 19." The internet couldn't be happier.

Talking to my friend about it, she asked if I thought this song would be better than "Rolling in the Deep," the classic lead single from her 2011 album *21*.

The thing is, I am emotionally attached to that song. My mother bought a *21* CD when the album was released, and she would play it for me on our way back from school. But because I lived five minutes away from school, the only song that I could fully listen to was "Rolling in the Deep." It became not only the song of that year for me, but also the song of my childhood. Listening to it was a highly anticipated part of my routine.

## THE SONG DELIVERS SUFFERING AND CONFESSION IN A WAY THAT ONLY ADELE CAN.

Although the joy ended after my mom's car got stolen, and the CD along with it, the feelings never left my heart. Maybe another artist could indeed beat Adele on the charts, but I was sure that no one could compete with her in my childhood memories — not even herself.

It turned out to be true. "Easy On Me" is not as memorable as "Rolling In The Deep." It is not as emotional as "Hometown Glory," and it will hardly be as iconic as "Hello," but it is still a really good song!

I first listened to it alone in my room with the lights off. I wanted no distractions. It was my moment with Adele — or at least my moment with her new song. Three minutes in, I could do nothing but listen to her voice, like I was back in my mom's car returning from school.

The experience couldn't have been better. As I closed my eyes, I could feel my heart pulsing. I was curious to discover what "Easy On Me" sounded like. I never imagined curiosity about a song could make me nervous, but I guess this is one more addition to the list of things only Adele can make me feel. I danced with my eyes closed almost the whole time. In the last part though, I lay in my bed and opened them. They were teary. It was emotional to have a new Adele song to listen to.

About the song itself — it was clear for me right after the first listen that my favorite part was the piano melody. The chorus didn't command my attention as much as her other songs, but the verses in between — especially the bridge — pleased my ears.

Although simple, the music video conveys that we are in a new era. Adele leaves the location where "Hello" was filmed and transitions from the trademark black and white of that music video to full color with the movement of her hands. She is living a new chapter of her life, and she is ready to share it with us.

The lyrics demonstrate how fragile her divorce made her. While she asks her son and her ex-husband to go easy on her, she reflects on past decisions:

*I had no time to choose*

*what I chose to do*

Moreover, she vents about her efforts to save the union of her family:

*I changed who I was to put you both first*

*But now I give up*

The song delivers suffering and confession in a way that only Adele can. It's more of the same, but that's what fans wanted anyway — or at least what I wanted. The rawness of emotion she can transmit through her songs creates special memories in the minds of those who listen.

That's one of the reasons why she has been so commercially successful. On its debut day, "Easy On Me" became the most-streamed song in one day on Spotify. Only five hours after being made available on streaming services, it debuted at number 68 on the Billboard Hot 100 and reached number 1 on the next week's chart. The most impressive part is that no one seems surprised. Adele is so used to breaking records that when she does, it seems perfectly normal.

During a 73-question interview with *Vogue*, she was asked, "If *25* closed the trilogy, what is something new you will explore for the first time on your next album?"

"Does anything ever really end?" she answered.

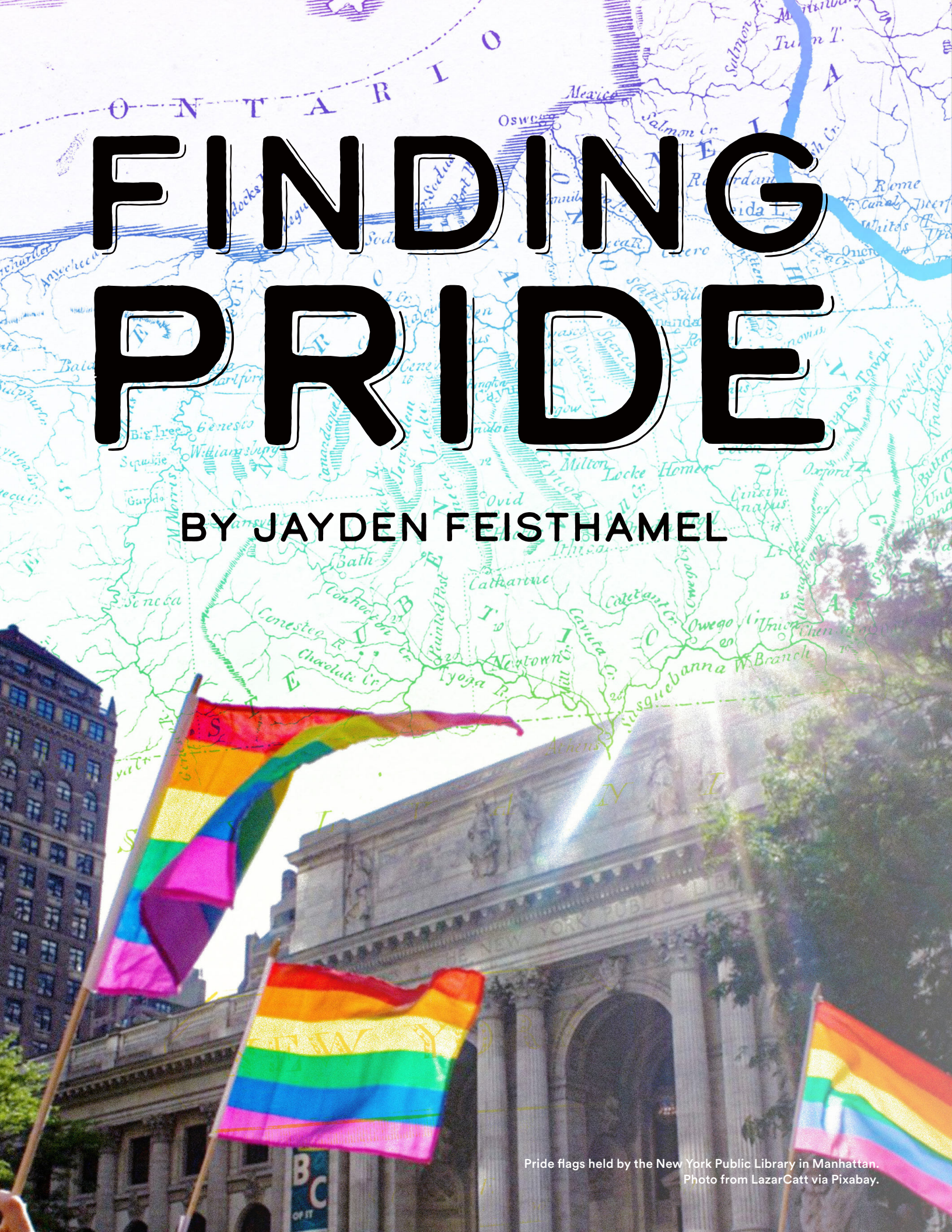
This makes sense: her albums can be seen not as a trilogy but as the continuous story of her life told through music. Her success seems to be inevitable thus far. For now, it's better to keep our favorites hidden.

Adele's success is unique. It doesn't mean she is the greatest artist in history; it doesn't mean no one will ever have better numbers than her; and it doesn't mean she is my favorite musician of all time. It means that I can't compare her to other artists because nothing (and no one) can compare to my childhood memories. And I am looking forward to discovering what memories I will create around "Easy On Me." ■



# FINDING PRIDE

BY JAYDEN FEISTHAMEL



Pride flags held by the New York Public Library in Manhattan.  
Photo from LazarCatt via Pixabay.





Attendees at New York City's famous Pride parade. Photo by Debbie Saslaw.

**P**ride events are not just a celebration of our identities in the LGBTQ+ community. They are existential experiences that push us forward to be our best selves — they teach us who we are. Pride events celebrate love, union and progress. But sometimes, a sense of pride is elusive, like when we feel judged. In extreme cases, pride is forbidden. In the rarest of cases, pride can be found in the last place you'd expect it. This was the case for my first Pride event in my hometown of Watertown, New York.

I was not thrilled to have a second summer of the COVID-19 pandemic back in upstate New York. Ever since I got accepted into Stony Brook University and moved to Long Island, my expressions as a gay man were endless. How could they not be? New York City was two hours west and Fire Island was half an hour south of me. Those of us in the queer community tend to flock to the metropolises of the world — gay rights arguably started at Stonewall in Manhattan. In 2019, we held Stonewall 50 — WorldPride NYC, the city's 50th Pride celebration since the Stonewall riots in 1969 — and that was one of the largest events ever held in New York. But COVID was coming to change all of that.

I was privileged enough to be able to attend Stonewall 50. I remember thinking how incredible it was and how hard it would be to top the parade in the following year. COVID-19 shut it down, but the pandemic could never remove the experience I had, nor the one I was going to have in the summer of 2021.

Taking all the Pride events I had been to before for granted, I called Stonewall 50 “my first real Pride.” It was the first time I really felt like I got to celebrate myself. It was honestly one of the greatest days of my life, but

even then, I knew something was missing. What I didn't know is I would find what was missing in that moment in the one place I hated most: home.

Driving six hours home from school for the second pandemic summer infuriated and depressed me. Most of us who lived on campus at Stony Brook had to relocate, and I lost my on-campus summer opportunities. So I was staying with my parents for the summer. I felt robbed of being able to experience Pride in 2021. It already seemed like there was never much to do in Jefferson County, where Watertown is located. Adding a pandemic onto that made it feel like a barren wasteland. Jefferson is in the North Country, part of upstate New York, which is also one of the most conservative areas of the state. It comes as no surprise to see more Confederate flags than Pride flags. And so, my coming out experience was not the greatest. I found few outlets to be a young gay man. Most of the men I was interested in on dating apps were in Canada. The one gay bar we had closed down. It was also a place where I never felt like I could be my full self. It is a place where an alarming number of people believe COVID-19 is a hoax and gay rights should not be allowed.

I did everything I could in the last eight years to get away from home. But this past summer there, I filled a hole I had been digging in my heart.

I heard through friends and family that Watertown and Jefferson County had started having Pride events. Just like New York City and the rest of the world, those plans were voided in 2020 because of the pandemic. But local members of the LGBTQ+ community were building something special for 2021.



It started with some events at a few bars. I went alone because my one gay friend from home had to work. To my surprise, the events had huge turnouts. In my naiveté, I just assumed this was because COVID-19 numbers were dwindling and we were vaccinated now — I still couldn't see or feel the truth.

I was at The Paddock Club in downtown Watertown when a diverse group of attractive men I had never seen before in town approached me in my lonesome. They were flirty and nice, and they invited me to sit with them. I got their names and asked where they were from. I was confused, flabbergasted and even angry when they told me they were from New York City. Here I was, sulking over the fact that I couldn't celebrate Pride back in the city. Yet there was this group of young, attractive gay men willingly coming up here? They were all friends who worked in the city and said they were tired of the same Pride things there every year. They heard through a local friend that Watertown was having one of its first pride weeks ever. So they all took vacation days and drove six hours north, excited for something different. I started to feel embarrassed as I ignorantly told them not to expect much. I wasn't being open or fair to my community.

We all exchanged numbers and agreed to meet up the next day for Watertown's Pride drag show. That's where it finally happened.

The show was held in a conference room of a Ramada hotel, a small space with poor lighting and a burnt-yellow carpet with no stage — not the ideal location

**I HAD SPENT MY ENTIRE LIFE GETTING AWAY FROM HOME, TRYING TO FIND WHAT PRIDE MEANT TO ME, JUST TO FIND PRIDE WAS THERE AT HOME AFTER ALL.**



A 2021 Pride celebration in Watertown. Photo by Mark D. Irwin.



for performances, but drag queens are resourceful, and this show was different. It was Pride, so they gave it their all.

The Queens were decorated in glitter, sequins and rainbow patterns. Their performances were lively and entertaining. I kept looking for reactions from my city friends, hoping they wouldn't be disappointed. They loved it. But then one performance shifted the emotions in the room. There was a stillness and seriousness as it began. The lights dimmed, and a sound bite played over the speakers with a familiar, famous voice. This was not some flashy pop music number, but an important message. The audio was from 11 years ago, when Ellen DeGeneres sent an important message on the awareness of gay suicide and bullying. The Queen walked to the center of the room quietly and respectfully as Ellen's words went on. They were a tribute to Tyler Clementi and a call to action. As Ellen reminded us, Clementi was a bright student at Rutgers University who took his own life after his sexuality was exploited by other students. The sounds of emotion-filled hiccups filled the room while tears ran down people's faces. A heaviness filled my chest and my heart started racing. The lights came back on and the performer took the time to remind us what Pride was all about, and how important it was to love each other. They also shared that during Ellen's sound bite they heard a couple of parents whisper, "This is exactly why we brought our kids to this."

At that point, I felt more than I could handle. I rushed to the bathroom where I finally let the tears escape — but I wasn't crying because of how moving the performance was or how important Ellen's message was. I was crying out my guilt.

I had spent my entire life getting away from home, trying to find what Pride meant to me, just to find Pride was there at home after all. It was in the one place I refused to believe it could exist. The hole that was in me at Stonewall 50, and every other queer event, was the unfinished business of the hole I had dug back home. I doubted my fellow locals and queer community. I marginalized myself and the community. I compared us unfairly. I took what I had for granted, while beautiful people like Tyler Clementi were truly robbed of celebrating their Pride. And in that moment, I promised myself I would never do that again.

I wiped my face dry, took a deep breath and walked back to the party — proudly.

The emotions and pride continued the next weekend, with a first-ever Pride flag raising in the town of

Clayton, New York with Vogue model Maggie Rizer as a guest speaker. Maggie, an AIDS activist, grew up in Watertown, and told another powerful and touching story that caused tears throughout the audience. She spoke about the life and experiences she had with her biological father, Kevin Rizer — who was gay and died of AIDS in 1992 — and what it was like being in high school and having a gay parent. She spoke of the importance of advocacy in the gay community.

I felt it again.

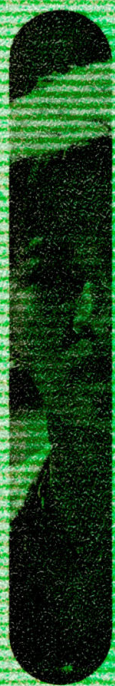
The heaviness in my heart grew as new tears formed. Yes, it was induced by the power of Maggie's story, but something else was also making me emotional — the presence of my family. My mother actually went to school with Maggie, and she whispered to me, "I never knew that about her." I replied that it wasn't something people would want to tell their friends in high school back then. She nodded and I smiled.

I am a lucky one. For many members of the queer community, coming out is not easy. It wasn't easy for me or my family either, but I've had the privilege of healthy growth from it. My family was skeptical at first, but they checked their skepticism and loved me unconditionally. I wish the same for everyone who comes out to their friends or family, but I never expected to see my mother decorated in rainbow attire at a Pride event with me. My stepfather was also there, along with my grandmother, whose face my mother bejeweled. That day, my grandmother told me my family was there because "we love you and we support you." I looked around to take in my appreciation for their presence, as many of the queer children and young adults around me did not seem to be accompanied by a parent or guardian. I hope that one day, they are all accompanied at Pride by someone who looked after them while growing up. I feel that my family's pride in me and others like me is also a part of my pride.

When this past summer ended, for the first time in my life I was sad leaving home. If anyone is ever trying to find their pride, try looking in the places you would least expect it. I built my own prejudiced, one-track story of my hometown, and being vulnerable taught me differently. We have to celebrate ourselves and the ones we lost along the way to truly be proud. We have to believe in the power and pride of a community that comes together, no matter how big or small that community may be. Home can be where the heart is, but your heart should be in a home that you're proud of, and one that's proud of you too. ■



THE







RESUBSCRIPTIONS  
1-800-368-5276

SHOWS THE QUIET SADNESS AND JOY OF QUEERNESS • BY CHRISTINE KELLEY





hile nostalgic blockbusters rampage through the film industry, *The*

*Matrix Resurrections* shows that a sequel can form a dialogue with its past while redefining the present. After years of wrangling with studios, writer-director Lana Wachowski has triumphantly returned to the big screen with a movie that contains extensive reflections on aging, trauma and liberation alongside high-octane, telekinesis-heavy kung fu brawls.

Wachowski's brand of thematic bluntness, intertextuality and stylistic boldness — staples of her and her sister Lilly's classic 1996 debut *Bound* all the way to the pair's gloriously dumb *Jupiter Ascending* — is alive in *Resurrections*. There are glimpses of the series' iconic digital rain and red pills and allusions to *Alice in Wonderland* and the original movies' debt to sci-fi anime like *Ghost in the Shell*. But Wachowski, a solo filmmaker after her sister's late-career turn to indie queer media, refuses to simply revisit old stomping grounds, announcing her intentions with meta lines like, "this cannot be another reboot, [or] retreat."

*Resurrections* invites its audience to reflect on their relationships with stories. An extremely meta montage of game developers analyzing *The Matrix* — which the protagonist Neo has turned into a video game to which they're producing a sequel — repeats verbatim arguments real people have made about *The Matrix* over the years, saying the movie is about "trans politics" or "capitalist exploitation." Neil Patrick Harris' character The Analyst, Neo's therapist, baldly claims at one point: "It's all about fiction. The only world that matters is the one right here," while pointing to Neo's head. The movie blatantly acknowledges *The Matrix's*

status as an influential text, how it's been read in the years since and how it intends to proceed now.

Blue-haired hacker Bugs — played brilliantly by Jessica Henwick — serves as the audience viewpoint character. A fan of Neo indebted to him for liberating her mind, Bugs enables his return to the real world. An intrinsically 2021 sci-fi protagonist with blue hair, a silly, queer-coded name and a true nerd's appreciation, Bugs gives the new generation a voice within the movie. *The Matrix* returns because the youths want it back.

Bugs' role provides a doorway to *Resurrections'* themes, which are largely invitation and consent to participate. The act of watching a movie or video game can be a gateway to participation, but mere spectating frees nobody. Bugs sees Neo and helps free him from his malaise as a game developer in the Matrix. The movie's climax hinges on Neo seeking the consent of his former lover Trinity, now an amnesiac occupant of the Matrix, to return to him and the real world.

Merely existing is insufficient. *Resurrections* argues that complacency and watching events unfold without acting is spiritually fatal. We lock away our desires and trauma ostensibly to free ourselves, but inevitably trap ourselves in another prison. In the movie's words: "Are memories turned into fiction any less real?"

Doubtless this is why many fans have railed against *Resurrections*. The original movie's red pill has been co-opted by the alt-right, and nerdism is largely crypto-alt-right these days. Reactionary nerds were never going to appreciate an out trans filmmaker's sequel movie that rejects nostalgia. The film's leisurely-paced second act shows how characters' failures to negotiate with reality in *Reloaded* and *Revolutions* has affected their lives. This kind of nuance doesn't accommodate nostalgia. *Resurrections* embraces aging as a painful yet beautiful path to growth.

Fittingly, this means *Resurrections* centers Keanu Reeves and Carrie-Ann Moss, who've aged 20 years but remain obnoxiously beautiful. While the original *Matrix* trilogy can be fairly criticized for its somewhat shallow view of emotional bonds, *Resurrections* uses the passage of time as a dramatic engine. The fact that Neo and Trinity have known each other for so long is a dramatic hook. The movie acknowledges the audience's love for the characters without taking it for granted, presenting their relationship as fraught and challenged, yet worthwhile because it is hard-won. As desire persists, distance increases.





It's no secret that Lana Wachowski made this movie while healing from her parents' deaths. Last year at a German panel appearance, she said the story came to her fully formed one night while she mourned: "I couldn't have my mom and dad... yet suddenly, I had Neo and Trinity." The movie is called *Resurrections*, after all. It's art as healing wish fulfillment: losing a relationship and gaining a new one.

Wachowski, who is trans, undoubtedly understands the silent, unattainable desire that is often part of queer people's lives. Sometimes you look across a room at someone but never speak to them. Sometimes you see somebody and want to be them. You look in the mirror and see a person who's not you, as Neo often does. Even within queer relationships, there's shame and trauma to overcome. That we have any visibility is a wonder to us some days.

As the current sole major trans filmmaker in Hollywood, Wachowski could easily have made a movie that was about transness, responding to long-standing theories about *The Matrix* being a trans allegory (which isn't quite right — *The Matrix* never seemed consciously trans so much as two trans filmmakers' pre-coming out work with trans resonances). *Resurrections* acknowledges trans and

queer readings, dropping little gags like "paint the sky with rainbows," a queer in-joke and reference to *The Matrix Revolutions'* ending. Yet Wachowski steers away from "*The Matrix* is trans now," instead crafting a movie whose themes are profoundly relevant to queer people.

While no characters are explicitly trans, the movie has staggeringly trans moments. Neo's self-image is shown — dashing middle-aged Keanu Reeves — while in the Matrix he's perceived as a much older man who's only briefly glimpsed. It's an astonishingly trans use of cinema, evoking experiences of gender dysphoria with film techniques that echo *Mr. Robot's* similarly formalist depiction of dissociation. And then there are the movie's motifs of face-changing, blue pills (estradiol tablets are blue) and Neo's endless gazing into mirrors.

*Resurrections* tackles all of these themes with aesthetic boldness and yet real subtlety. It's quieter than its predecessors: Wachowski's use of silence makes *Resurrections* peaceful and tender. Under cinematographer John Toll's influence, Wachowski has embraced natural light in shooting scenes, even spontaneously rearranging shots to capture a moment's authentic lighting. Atypically, composers Johnny Klimek and Tom Tykwer scored the movie before it was shot, meaning editor Joseph Jett Sally cut scenes to their music, creating fluidity and a spacious approach to time.

*Resurrections* owns its moment. It embraces the passage of time and falls into line alongside the feminist science fiction of its era while dialoguing with its source material. It assesses the landscape of cinema and science fiction and says *here's my role*. The movie rebukes the alt-right's appropriation of the red pill with diverse filmmaking. It rebukes the insulting notion that a sequel should be anything less than a challenge to its own source material. *The Matrix Resurrections* is one of the finest blockbusters in years. It's strange and queer and fun and tender; if more movies were this benevolent, we'd have a healthier film industry. ■

"Are memories  
turned into fiction

any less real?"



# Memento mori

by Emily Scott



As I get older, I find that my brain has sorted my memories into little sections, stowed away into file cabinets that litter my noggin. The ones I think of often are kept towards the front of the cabinets' drawers — like the summer my dad drove up in the middle of the night to my grandpa's cabin in western New York to surprise us, after swearing he couldn't get off work to come with; or the various trips to Darien Lake filled with endless roller coaster rides that left my dad and me screaming before jumping back on line.

Of course, other memories often come to the front of my mind — stupid things, like the “picture frame game” I'd play with my brother Jack using the mirror that hung across from our mom's bed, which involved pushing each other out of the “camera” view; or playing on the swingset in the backyard.

There's also the painful memories that resurface, ones that, for the longest time, I forgot resided alongside the happier ones in the file cabinets. They're dark, murky and filled with a feeling of dread and anxiety. They're traumatic, and would send me spiraling into the darkest corners of my mind — the ones filled with self-hatred, questioning who I am, asking “Does anyone *really* like me, or are they just putting up with me?”

I would avoid those memories at all costs.

But that's the thing about trauma. The longer you let it sit and fester, the further it worms its way into you, sinking deep into the marrow of your bones, seeping into the corners of your brain.

It fucking sucks.

After a year and a half of therapy, working through my past and things that happened to me that were simply out of my control, those memories don't hurt anymore. I'm not afraid to open up the file cabinets and dig to find the memories at the back of the drawer, the other ones of my dad — they can't hurt me the way they used to. Does it still sting to think back on them? Oh, absolutely.

I can think back to the 8 a.m. soccer games in the rain, my dad wearing a raincoat on the sidelines, cheering for me as I defended the goal. I can think about the secret trips to Friendly's after NYSSMA with him, and the mint chocolate chip sundae the size of my head that I ate, or the corduroy celery green jacket that was a staple in his wardrobe — and that he always managed to wear when we'd go to the DMV to renew his license. The good memories were the first ones I digested without the fear of vomiting — the ones where he was still the dad I had known and loved.

“does anyone really like me,  
or are they just putting up  
with me?”



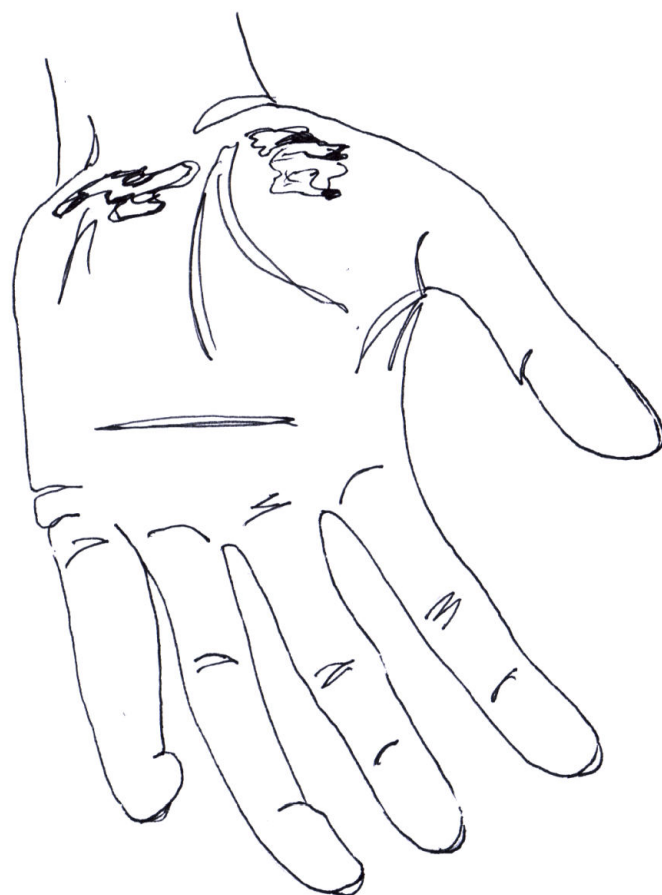
I can think about the night he came over after my grandma died, sitting in the spot on the couch where he had sat for the past 14 years, or the time he sat in that same spot, eyes focused on the color-blocked rug as he admitted to the affair he had been having, silence filling the void no words could. I can look back and realize that was the last time I saw the dad I had grown up knowing.

I'm not afraid of the memories about Jon anymore. The memories of the things he said and did can't attack me the way his words did when I was 15. Does it hurt to think back on the good memories of having my dad in my life? It does, but in a different way. It's almost like when I ate shit on the asphalt when I was 9 and fell off my bike, scraping both knees and cutting the palm of my hand. It stings, but I've pulled the chunks of street out of the cuts. The gaping wound has started to scab over, and the giant gauze pad protecting the broken skin is finally being removed from my knee. But just like the physical reminder of the fall, there are scars. One day the scars of the trauma will fade the way the scars on my knees have, to the point where they're damn near invisible, only noticeable if you're squinting and know what you're looking for.

People change, though. They grow. And unfortunately, they grow apart. I'm not the same kid I was, just like he isn't the same man he was. I've accepted the fact that I will never have the same dad I did as a kid. No one is perfect — myself included.

But that's part of the healing process. Will I ever be fully healed? Maybe one day. But for now, I'm content with the healing I've done. Healing is not a linear process — it's filled with highs and lows. But each bump along the way has made me stronger. ■

*People change though. They grow.  
And unfortunately,  
they grow apart.*





PHOTOS BY TUNIN CHAKRABARTI



BROOKLYN, N.Y.  
SEPTEMBER 11, 2021





NEW ORLEANS, LA.  
JUNE 7, 2021



# SPRING SALES ANSWER

**GREEN IS THE NEW BLACK**

**0.00**

Your  
satisfaction  
guaranteed  
or your money  
will be refunded  
for all  
unmailed  
copies.

**VISA**<sup>®</sup>



Soft  
1 Pri

**AM** **\$6.99**

*Call Now*

**FREE**

*Details*

BY EMMA NICOLAS

**"FREE"**



offer expires  
 Dec. 5, 1992

**\$25.92!**

**W**

hen I pushed the door open, I could only see clothes. Piles and piles of clothes were scattered everywhere and littered on the floor. Even more clothes hung on the racks, packed so tightly you could barely look at them. People were jostling me, striding headlong into the endless line at checkout. That brutal Zara SoHo store scent — a combination of plastic, sweat and perfume — was heady and made me queasy.

My first Black Friday experience in America turned me against the entire concept. As one of the most highly-anticipated events of the holiday season, it prompts millions of deal-hungry shoppers to jump on massive discounts. Today, Black Friday is so heavily marketed worldwide that it has expanded from a single day to an entire week of sales.

On Black Friday in 2020, the fast fashion brand PrettyLittleThing sold dresses for £4 (around \$5) in the U.K. This past year, they gave away clothes for free with each purchase. “Buying” a “slinky shirt” made of plastic — 95% polyester and 5% elastane to be exact, both of which are just fancy names for plastic — may have been free, but it’s very costly to the planet.

There is too much clothing in the world. Most Black Friday fashion purchases are the result of unnecessary desire, which drives shoppers to purchase — even without any need. The average consumer is now buying 60% more clothing than they were 17 years ago. Not only are we buying more clothes, but we’re also producing more clothes than ever. There are nearly 8 billion people in the world, yet we produce more than 100 billion pieces of clothing every single year. While the fast fashion brand Zara launches about 500 new items a week, its Chinese counterpart Shein releases 6,000 a day.

Higher clothing consumption and production increases pollution. Excess clothing ends up piling on top of cities in southern countries, which are already buried under mountains of other products that have been discarded by Western countries.

What happens to Black Friday fashion purchases? Nearly one-third of consumers purchased clothing on Black Friday 2019 — however, a quarter of all fashion items purchased online in 2019 were sent back. In 2020, clothing returns soared because Black Friday online sales were unusually high.

This excess has several effects, most notably pollution, as mentioned

previously, but there are other damaging impacts as well. In the U.K., the transportation and shipping of clothing for Black Friday 2020 has churned out 429,000 metric tons of greenhouse gas emissions — the equivalent of 435 round-trip flights from London to New York. These anthropogenic greenhouse gas emissions strengthen the greenhouse effect, which causes and accelerates climate change.

And what about the clothes that buyers keep? Although clothing production rises, the number of times clothes are worn before being discarded is shrinking now more than ever. One in three British women now wears a new piece of clothing once or twice before considering it “old,” the lowest amount in decades. Most Black Friday 2019 fashion items (up to 80%) and any plastic packaging they were wrapped in have ended up in low quality recycling after a very short life.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) estimates that textile generation reached 17 million tons in 2018. Overall, the recycling rate for all textiles was 14.7%, with 2.5 million tons recycled. The EPA calculates an even smaller recycling rate for clothing-specific and footwear textiles at just 13%. The remaining non-recycled Black Friday 2019 fashion purchases would have ended up either in landfills or incinerated. The EPA reports that while a large amount of textiles was burned (3.2 million tons) in 2018, a much larger amount was landfilled (11.3 million tons).

**1/2 PRICE**

**\$6**

**SALE**

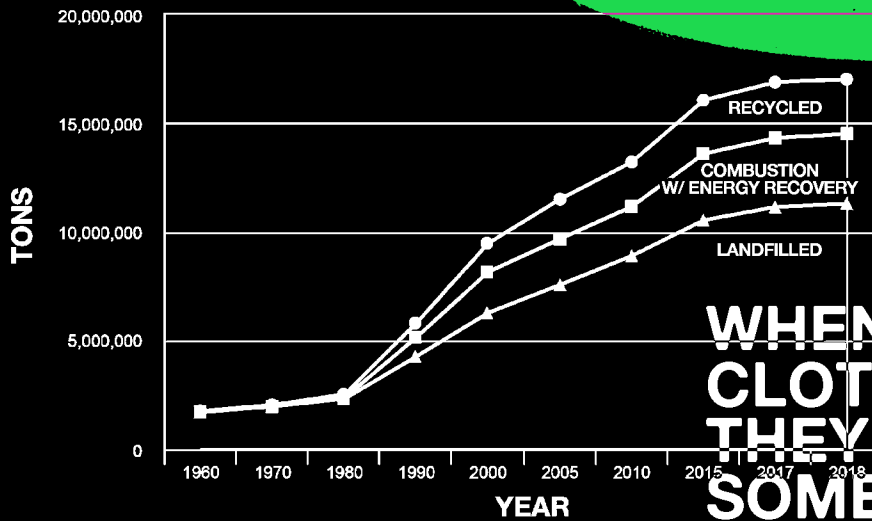




# YES!

# NEW

## TEXTILES WASTE MANAGEMENT: 1960-2018



**WHEN YOU THROW CLOTHES “AWAY,” THEY STILL END UP SOMEWHERE.**

Evidence has also piled up to show that the amount of clothing people throw away is becoming much more significant.

In all of 2015, about 75 pounds of clothing were thrown away per person in the United States. Several years later, that amount has only increased — the average American citizen threw away about 82 pounds of clothing in 2020.

What many heavy consumers don't realize is that when you throw clothes “away,” they still end up *somewhere*. Discarded clothes are shipped overseas. Chile's Atacama Desert suffocates under a growing mountain of wasted clothing. Every single year, about 59,000 tons of clothing are stranded at the port of Iquique in the free zone of Alto Hospicio, in northern Chile.

When discarded clothes don't end up in Chile, we throw them out in Ghana. In Ghana's capital Accra, about 15 million discarded pieces of clothes from the U.K., Europe, North America and Australia flood the city's

sprawling Kantamanto market every single week. It is the largest influx of clothes to the region in any decade since the 1960s. About 30,000 people are working together to recycle, resell and keep these items from being landfilled, burned or ending up on the ocean floor and on beaches. However, an estimated 40% of the clothes leave Kantamanto's market as waste, as the supply far outweighs the demand.

Lack of waste management is the result of “waste colonialism” — the export of unwanted and discarded clothes from Western countries, who consider themselves leaders in the fashion industry, into the less wealthy Global South.

So, before buying new clothes, you could simply ask yourself a few questions. *Do I sincerely need these new clothes? Am I really going to wear them more than a few times? Where do these clothes come from, who produced them and where? What are the conditions of their production and from what materials are they*

*made?* An app called Good On You (@goodonyou\_app on Instagram) encourages eco-friendly fashion by listing thousands of brands based on their impact on the planet, workers and animals. If a brand isn't good enough, the app suggests better alternatives, so people can start making better choices.

Still, avoiding clothing purchases on Black Friday is a first great step — limiting your consumption on Black Friday is not only a fashion statement, but an environmental statement. It shows support for the planet and the environment. ■



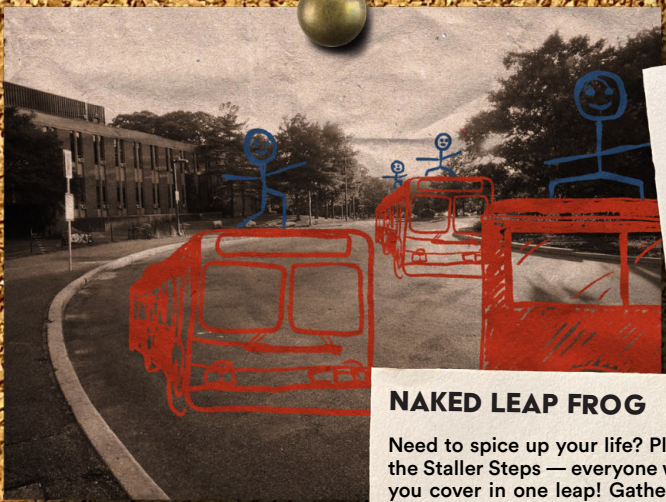
## Free Gift Bonus

10% off your order from the



# THE PRESS PRESENTS THE TOP 10 CRIMES TO COMMIT ON CAMPUS

THE STONY BROOK PRESS DOES NOT ENCOURAGE  
ANYONE TO DO ANYTHING LISTED BELOW.  
BUT IT WOULD BE PRETTY FUCKING COOL IF YOU DID.



## SHUTTLE SURFING

Recreate the iconic Subway Surfers app and glide from shuttle to shuttle in either the SAC or Engineering loop. No more waiting in those long bus lines! Bonus points for double jumps. Climb on top of a shuttle bus anywhere on campus and assume a wide surfer stance. Put both arms out for balance and stay on for as long as you can. Be mindful of frequent and sudden stops — helmet, knee, elbow and shoulder pads are recommended. Free parking anywhere on campus will be granted to those who can ride the Outer Loop shuttle for its whole route.

## NAKED LEAP FROG

Need to spice up your life? Play a childhood classic with a twist! Naked leap frog up the Staller Steps — everyone will want to join in! Bonus points for the amount of steps you cover in one leap! Gather a group of at least three to five people at the Staller Center Steps for this game. Once you've assembled your group, undress down to your birthday suits. Since there are normally no winners in this game, whoever's legs give out first has to streak across the academic mall during Campus Lifetime following a route chosen by other players.

## GAS GUZZLIN'

Gas tank on E? No problem! South P is full of empty cars all day, and no one goes over there anyway! Just grab a container and start suckin'! Bonus points for spitters! Go to your local hardware store, gardening shop or supermarket and pick up a 5-gallon gas can and a 6 to 8-foot hose. Make sure the hose is transparent to avoid accidentally ingesting gasoline. Open the gas cap on your car of choice and insert the hose into the tank. Suck on one end of the hose like a straw, then transfer it into the container right before the fuel enters your mouth. Keep the container below the level of the fuel tank to continue siphoning. Spit out any fuel in your mouth and rinse with clean water immediately after. The main goal is to drain the car before Campus PD is called or the owner returns.





## FRENCH PARKING

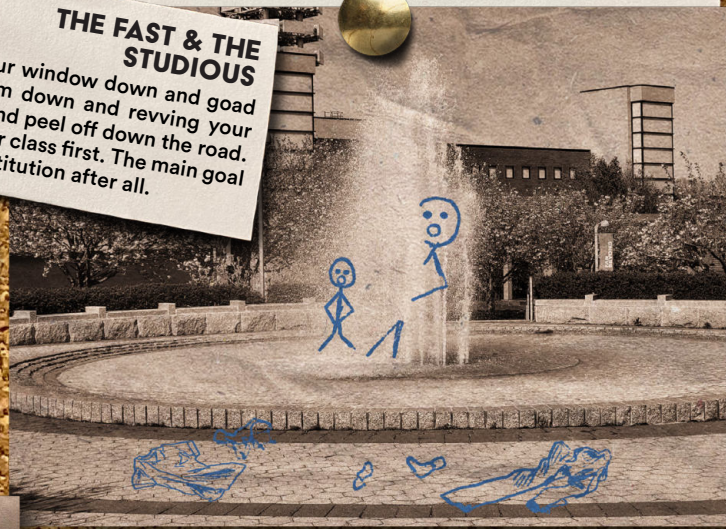
Sometimes you just need to occupy space. Double park your car across two parking spots — sideways. Yes. Sideways. Not facing in. Not backing in. Sideways. Parallel park between two cars in any given lot. The goal is to make the doors of the adjacent cars impossible to open.

## FULL FRONTAL FOUNTAIN

For the days your roommates might be taking too long in the bathroom or you simply overslept, the university has so kindly installed a showering fountain right at the center of the academic mall. Bring your loofah, body wash, slippers and towel to freshen up on your way to class. The fountain is as functional as it is beautiful. Try to get through your shower without acknowledging any passers-by.

Line up at the lights on Stony Brook Road, roll your window down and goad the driver next to you into a race by staring them down and revving your engine. As the lights turn green, bury the throttle and peel off down the road. The winner is whoever finds parking and gets to their class first. The main goal is to get to class on time — this is still a research institution after all.

## THE FAST & THE STUDIOUS



## FIREWORK FRENZY

Purchase fireworks from [redacted] and set them alight in your choice of LaValle Stadium, the baseball field, the train station, the SAC courtyard, the Zebra Path or, of course, the Staller Steps. Nothing more to it. Light it up. The goal is to get through all of your fireworks before Campus PD arrives.



## RUMBLE IN THE COURTYARD

Sometimes, peer mediation via CAPS doesn't work because some people just don't understand words. They understand hands. Squabbles between roommates and friends will now be settled in a temporary boxing ring in the SAC courtyard. Gloves and headgear will be supplied by the Rec Center and Wolfe will referee the match. The main goal — obviously — is to knock out your opponent.

## HACKER OF ALL GRADES, PASSER OF NONE

Undergrad hasn't been as easy as you thought it would be. You're failing four out of your five classes in spectacular fashion. However, you got some coding certifications over the summer and know a virtual back door to SOLAR. Hack SOLAR and adjust not only your class grades, but also your GPA, and even switch majors if you wish. The main goal is to hack your way to valedictorian without alerting the university's web programmers.



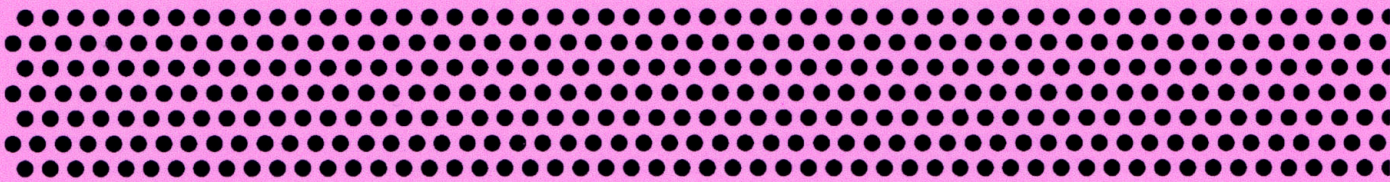
## HOOKUP MONOPOLY

There are many discreet spots around campus to commit the act. If you know, you know. Find a trusted partner, use contraception and clean up whatever mess you create. Mutual orgasm is mandatory. The main goal is to hook up at every location in two semesters.



Create  
with us.

See your work  
in print.



## Join The Press

**Stony Brook's  
campus magazine**

We're looking for artists,  
writers, graphic designers,  
critics, photographers  
and creatives.

We meet on Wednesdays  
at 1 and 7:30 PM  
in SAC 307K.

SBPRESS.COM  
🐦 @SBPRESS  
@THE SBPRESS

Stop by and  
share your  
creativity.

Scan to  
sign up for our  
email list  
and follow us!

