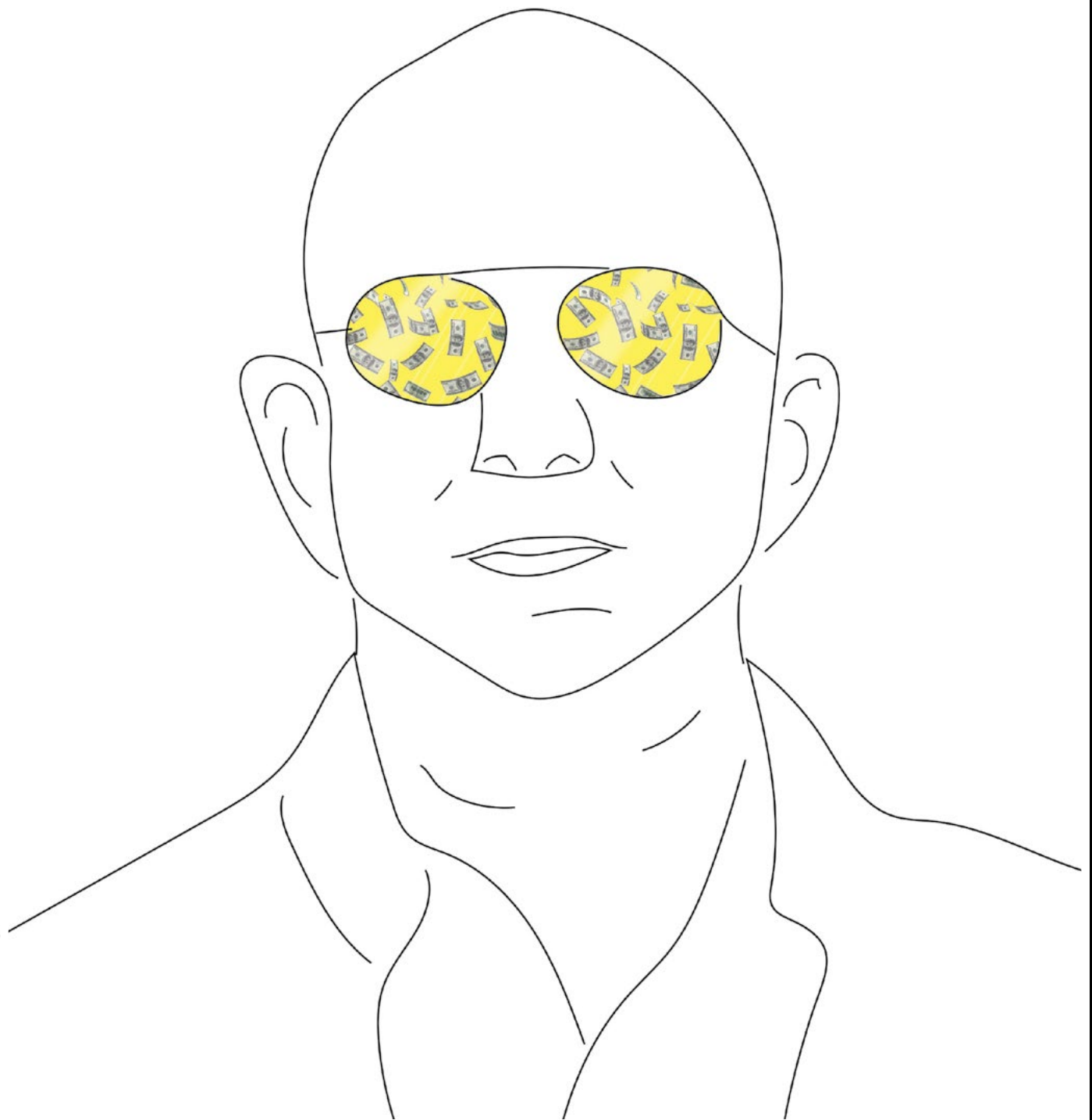


CRACCUM

ISSUE 16, 2019



Man Sits and Watches People in Public

And judges the living hell out of them

Welcome to the Jungle

Amazon CEO Jeff Bezos has all the money in the world but exactly no morals

Victoria's Secret University

"What if we write 'Victoria' really small and 'Wellington' really big?" - Grant Guilford

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The Best Advice is the Advice You Don't Take

BY BAILLEY VERRY



Each week Craccum's esteemed Editor-in-Chief writes their editorial 10 minutes before deadline and this is the product of that.

At the end of last year, when I was bright behind the eyes and surprised that I would be taking over *Craccum* I spoke to the editor at the time, Andrew, to find out what I was getting myself into.

The tradition of *Craccum* is an oral one, as in we handover to the next generation with an afternoon of questions, exchanging details for further questions, and a pat on the back. Not a foolproof system by any means, and despite my many (MANY) years of schooling, my notetaking is hardly flawless.

But valuable piece of wisdom I gained from our former editor was 'write a lot of editorials'. This way you could have a backlog for weeks where you are garbage and haven't got your mandatory offerings the opposite side of the contents page. I will note that Andrew never actually managed it himself, but it was a big learning point for which we could dish out some sage wisdom.

That is probably the one piece of advice I really remember from our December Q&A. It is also the advice that I never

followed through on. At the beginning of the year when writing the fun little blurb to my editorials, I thought it would be #relatable (and if we are completely honest reminiscent of most of ~~pre-university~~ entire schooling life). Past me had so much hope, so much optimism. I can't believe I genuinely thought that when I had time, I was going to write those editorials not once, but twice, in our two previous uni breaks. At that rate I might as well commit to catching up on every lecture I missed from the last three years.

So here I am ~~barbeque sauce on my titties~~ writing this editorial - much later than I should be, still trying to figure out the story I am actually trying to tell. At least I am not alone, as I recall Andrew telling me that he was so stuck for ideas he wrote an entire editorial about cooking chickpeas, and I am 90% sure that made it to print.

Following advice is hard, and following good advice is harder. So my advice to you is to follow advice. But this is bad advice. Hopefully somewhere in the advice paradox I have created you will do the shit you need to do.

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Pro-Hong Kong Protest Lennon Wall Is Torn Down After China Consulate Appears to Reproach University

DANIEL MEECH

A 'Lennon Wall' set up in the University of Auckland's city campus has been torn down, not long after Auckland's China Consulate appeared to reproach the University of Auckland for its actions.

The 'Lennon Wall' - which allowed students to post messages of support for the Hong Kong protests - was erected by the We Are Hong Kongers group a few weeks ago. It had been almost completely covered with post-it notes when the posts were torn down.

While it is yet to be confirmed why the walls were torn down, it is likely that it is a part of ongoing tensions between anti-Hong Kong protest and pro-Hong Kong protest students at the University of Auckland. Students on either side of the debate have repeatedly clashed over the issue. Last week, footage of We Are Hong Kongers and anti-protest students arguing over the Lennon Wall was circulated online. More recently, a demonstration on university grounds in favour of the protests was interrupted by an anti-protest man carrying a sign which accused the assembled demonstrators of being a "mob".

The debate isn't limited only to the university's campus. Following a confrontation between anti- and pro-protest students on university grounds, Vice-Chancellor Stuart McCutcheon sent all University of Auckland students an email which reminded them of their right to speak their mind on campus. Shortly after the email

was circulated, a spokesperson for the China Consulate in Auckland published a press release which appeared to criticise the university's response. The press release said the consulate did not believe it was appropriate for organisations to promote the Hong Kong protests "under the pretext of so-called academic freedom and freedom of expression". The release also claimed that certain organisations had engaged in "smearing attacks on the Chinese government and the Hong Kong SAR government" by failing to fight against the wide-spread "bias" and "anti-China sentiment" spreading throughout New Zealand. It is unclear whether the message was meant to refer to the University of Auckland, which has repeatedly stated students will be allowed to express their views - whether they be pro- or anti- protest - so long as no physical harm is done, or whether the message was intended for New Zealand media organisations (many of whom the Consulate has also reproached).

According to the University of Auckland, a witness saw three men tear down the posts before running away. Although security arrived not long after the posts were torn down, they were unable to find the perpetrators. A spokesperson for the university says they will be speaking to members of the We Are Hong Kongers group to determine whether they want to continue using the university space to host the Lennon Wall. If they do, new arrangements will be made to ensure it isn't vandalised again.

Nation's Polytechnics Will See Merger by 2020

BRIAN GU

A proposed merger for New Zealand's 16 polytechnic and technology institutes has been approved for April 2020.

As reported by *Craccum* in March, the Government has been trying to form a "unified, coordinated, national system of vocational education and training" for a while. In March, the Government hinted this national system would likely involve a single governing body overseeing the resource management, budget allocation and staffing of all sixteen existing institutes.

Now, it seems that plan is being put into action. The merger will be effective as of April 1st next year, and will see all sixteen institutes brought under the over-arching "New Zealand Institute of Skills & Technology". The reform will also see the formation of industry-government Workforce Development Councils, and will ensure Centres for Vocational Excellence are set up in regional campuses.

Hipkins says the changes "will give industry greater control over all aspects of vocational education and training, making the system more responsive to employers' needs and to the changing world of work".

However, not all are convinced. Lobbying action against the merger has persisted in the Otago region, where constituents contend the integration will be damaging to its existing institutes, Otago Polytechnic and Southern Institute of Technology (SIT), which have both seen high

enrolment numbers and profitability whilst being run autonomously.

SIT executive Penny Simmonds says the proposal "looks potentially damaging for SIT and Southland", while Invercargill mayor Tim Shadbolt has gone as far as to say the Government is "punishing [the Otago Polytechs] for being a success". "I believe our community is outraged about this proposal and we're going to do everything we can do to stop that," Shadbolt promised the media.

Hipkins denies the new system will hurt the Otago region, saying he believes the proposal retains the capability for "local and regional innovation". "There will still be good regional responsiveness, local voices will still be heard," he says, "[but] the plain truth is that while there are some bright spots, the current system is not set up to produce skilled people at the scale we need".

The Southland community are not the only party critical of the merger. National's Tertiary Education spokesperson Dr Shane Reti says "more than a thousand jobs will be lost" as a result of the change. Meanwhile, CEO of 'the Skills Group' Garry Fisseden does not believe Industry Training Organizations (ITOs) should be dissolved as a result of the merger as they are an "essential part in bridging the communication gap between industry and learning institutions".

Hipkins remains confident that he has "listened carefully to the concerns" of employers, students and the wider community.

Auckland City Council Sues Itself (Again)

MANNY DELGATO

The Auckland City Council has spent \$1,260,000 dollars fighting a court case against itself.

The dispute began when Panuku Development Auckland - the organisation the council relies on to complete its development projects - was instructed to build a seawall in Orewa.

In order to do this, Panuku was forced to apply for consent through the council resource consent process. The consent process, which vets all major developments in Auckland, and is supposed to apply to all developers, determines whether proposed developments can go ahead. Normally, the Auckland City Council hears all applications, but, to ensure the process was adjudicated fairly (and Auckland City Council did not grant consent to Panuku just because they had asked for the development) independent commissioners were hired to listen to Panuku's application on the council's behalf.

Unfortunately for Panuku and Auckland City Council, the independent commissioners rejected the application. Determined to move ahead with the plan to build a seawall, Panuku and Auckland

City Council have taken the matter to court, in an effort to overturn the decision made by the council itself.

Mayor Phil Goff says, while it is regrettable the matter has gone to court, he will not apologise for hiring independent contractors to adjudicate Panuku's application. "Not to have that process would ... allow the council effectively to do whatever it liked," he says. If the council did not hire independent contractors to review applications, it could potentially get away with breaking its own rules, as it would be "the judge in its own case" - an obviously unfair outcome.

This isn't the first time this has happened - late last year, Panuku took Auckland City Council to court over a similar dispute. Panuku had applied to build a five-storey retail and apartment block on Dominion Road, but their application has been denied when Auckland City Council hired independent contractors to review the application. As with the Orewa case, the matter has since been taken to court. According to Radio NZ and Auckland Mayor Phill Goff, this legal dispute - which is still ongoing - has cost rate-payers more than \$600,000 so far.

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MAD About You: An Obituary

KEEARA OFREN

There were several moments in my life that violently shook me to the fact that I probably needed to grow up. That awful 1970s puberty video they made us watch in year 7, the day Whitcoulls Botany got rid of the volcano tunnel on the second floor – and the kicker that came to me at age 21; that MAD Magazine was to cease new publications. At once, I felt like Tom of 500 Days of Summer, flicking back through memories and wondering what the hell went wrong.

MAD Magazine was a breath of fresh air in what was to me, a rather stodgy and pretentious magazine market. Potty humour, Austin Powers-esque innuendo, pop culture lampoons and shameless political satire had stamped this magazine's cheeky persona into pop culture history since 1952.

The magazine was read by the likes of Jimi Hendrix and generations of teenagers wanting to make sense of the world in a crass, transgressive, mischievous way. MAD was a mix of political cartoons, mock listicles, celebrity interviews and comics. From King Arthur to Donald Trump, no stone was left unturned. Alfred E Neuman, the magazine mascot with his red hair, gap-toothed smile, freckles and lopsided ears was the dark Tintin. This was journalism, baby! But not as we knew it!

My introduction to MAD was from my older brother who collected them for the Spy vs Spy comics and the distinct illustration style of the regular contributors. Grotesque and politically incorrect, I think the magazine had a role in making those who might not otherwise be political, able to question consumerist trends and political leaders. My brother's MAD collection from the mid 2000s was a time capsule of the decadence, vacuous famous-for-being-famous celebrities, the dawn of reality television and foretold what can be the gatekeeping and condescending attitudes of niche communities and fandoms. The cherries on top of this pie were the lampoons of George W Bush and the kind of rabid incarnation of American imperialism re-emerging at the time.

Why are we going to war? Why is it in-

evitable that we would win? Must we accept leaders in our media, our politics when we are told to? All were questions raised by the magazine at this time and rightfully so. In other words, had this publication been made in another nation, it's the type that would attract a ban, curfew and sedition charges. Which made it all the more appealing. MAD became a delicious tamizdat*, but to quote Avatar the Last Airbender, 'when the world needed [it] the most, [it] vanished'.

Cracks in the façade started to show when a few months ago, MAD had undergone a rebrand. The sheriff style typeface in the covers had changed to a more modern comic style. Perhaps the sheriff of this media conglomerate world was retiring? Or had run out of energy to rein in the world. Social media had made independent comics accessible and mere commentary wasn't cutting it anymore. To survive in an algorithm dominated social media, you either need money to be sponsored or have a sponsor or be able to truly shock and incite global reaction. Memes, Twitter screenshots and bombastic or overly sexual figures had filled the world of the cheeky or political.

MAD's demise may seem like another grave in the magazine industry but like any grave, desecrated or forgotten, new demons come to the forefront.

1. Though the world of social media seems to have filled many a gap left by departed mags, one crucial role has not been replaced as it should be. This is the role of an independent, non-partisan source of political criticism. Our current exposure

through this is through memes and sites as say, The Onion. These are fleeting. In the case of memes and news sources, algorithms and an inclination towards echo-chambers have prevented a humorous intermediary. As such, a political divide is encouraged and views can become more polarizing and frustrating.

2. The violent and angry masculine groups and personas that MAD have criticised are taking a page out of the magazine's appeal. Humour and visual appeal have been tactics of the alt-right to attract sympathisers on the guise of being edgy and hilarious. You catch more flies with honey than with vinegar. Unfortunately, honey with discriminatory frames seems to be the flavour of this political cycle. Information and relentless negative views have become the vinegar. It's high time for optimism and humour in the media. For if we are too late, this dream of laughter may very well be exploited by dreams of violence.

Growing doesn't necessarily mean moving on without nostalgic treasures or accepting the depressing realities of the media world. It also means having maturity to recognise the changing nature of the world and to not accept the stupidity of the world as inevitable. Ironically, it was the world's most immature magazine that showed me that. And with hope, the many generations who grew up with MAD too.

**Banned and smuggled media in the time of the USSR.*

New Zealand, Please Stand with Hong Kong

THIS IS AN OPINION ARTICLE BY POLITICAL GROUP WE ARE HONG KONGERS

Who are we?

We are a group of students studying in New Zealand who care a lot about Hong Kong. With the introduction of the controversial proposed Extradition Bill (the Bill), this puts Hong Kong people and anyone who is found in Hong Kong to be at risk. Therefore, we gathered together to show solidarity with the Anti-Extradition Bill movement in Hong Kong and to raise public awareness in New Zealand.

What is the Extradition Law Amendment Bill?

The legislation of the Bill, specifically the Fugitive Offenders Ordinance and the Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters Ordinance proposed by the Hong Kong government, shall allow:

Hong Kong residents or visitors to be sent over to the Chinese government for allegations lodged by the Beijing Authorities

Extradition can be applied on possible suspects of as far as they can provide "prima facie" evidence to Hong Kong courts

The Chief Executive of Hong Kong holds final decision over the suspect transfer, foreigners in Hong Kong will also be applicable to the bill!



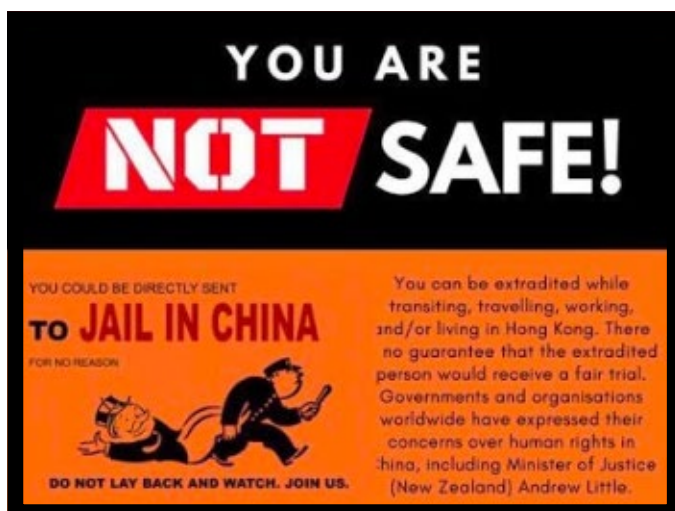
Why should we care?

Everyone can be at risk if they say or do anything that China deems to be a crime. As you are travelling /working /studying /transferring in Hong Kong, you can be arrested and handed over to China if you have committed crimes against China.

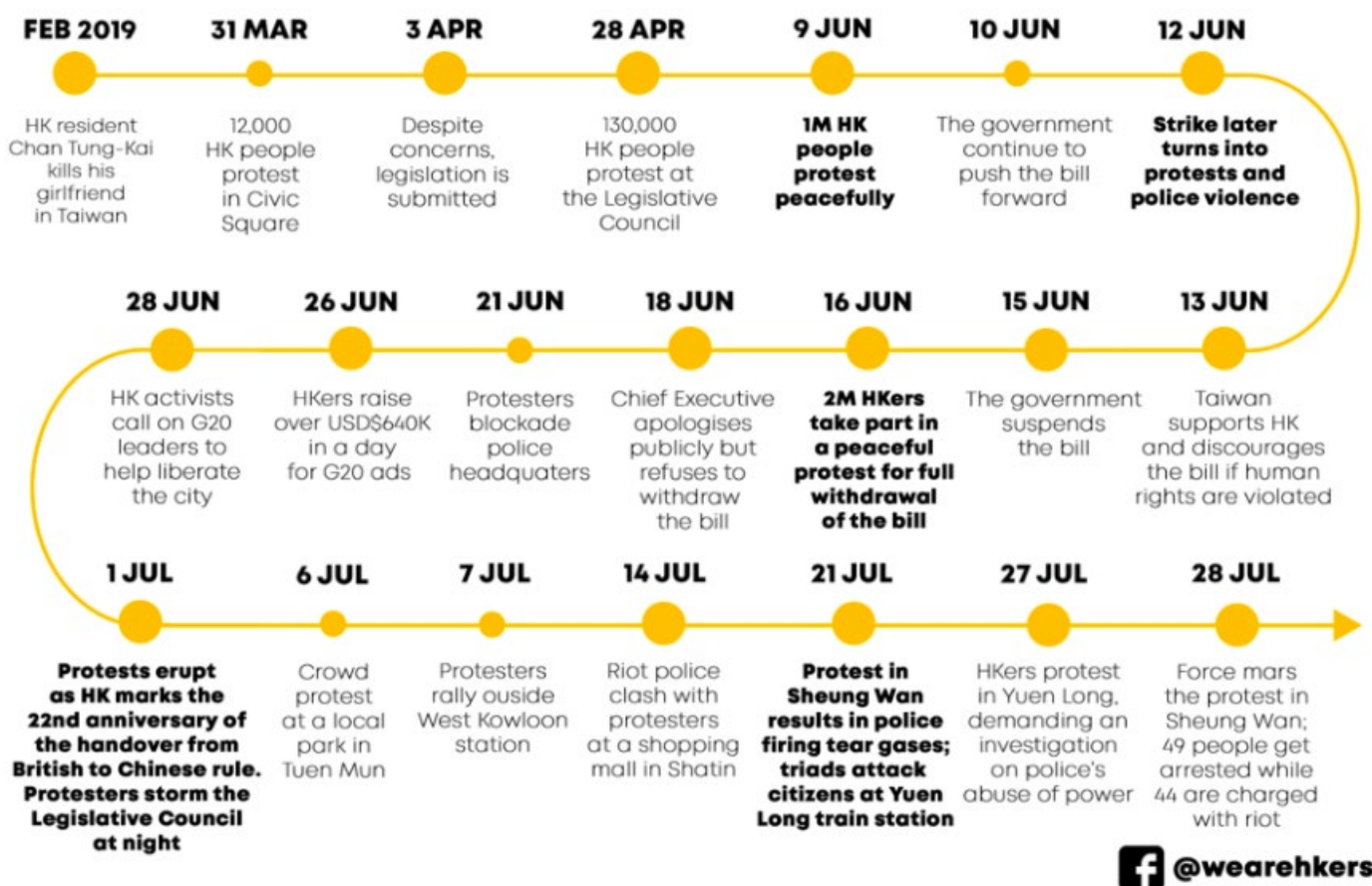
The legislation puts New Zealand citizens at risk. The New Zealand Court of Appeal holds grave concerns regarding the physical safety of individuals extradited to China, "New Zealand has obligations under international law to refuse to return a person to a jurisdiction in which they will be at substantial risk of torture, or where they will not receive a fair trial," Judge Helen Winkelmann said.

What is happening in Hong Kong?

Since June 2019, people in Hong Kong have used various peaceful means to carry out protests and to convey to the Hong Kong government. However, the Hong Kong government has turned a blind eye to the people's voice and the police have used excessive violence, including firing rubber bullets and tear gas, to stop protesters from protesting. According to the Amnesty International report on 21st June 2019,



Road for democracy in Hong Kong



it stated that the use of force by police in the largely peaceful protest was unnecessary and excessive. People took to the streets after the police used excessive violence against peaceful protestors whom the government denounced as 'rioters'. Violating international law, the police attacked journalists, shot protestors in the face with rubber bullets, and tear-gassed permit-approved protest areas.

What have we done already?

- Since mid-June, we have been trying different ways to gain the attention of the New Zealand Government in response to the developments in Hong Kong. Also, we have contacted different MPs trying to seek their views on the Bill.
- We have also been in touch with Amnesty International New Zealand to look for ways to raise awareness in New Zealand regarding the police brutality.
- Several rallies were held in Auckland with the aim to raise local awareness.
- We have been given the permission by the University to put up a

Lennon Wall within the University of Auckland's campus

What can you do?

- Keep an eye on this issue and help us to spread the news to your friends
- Share your feelings and comments on the Lennon Wall which is located in the room next to PB Tech, between Kate Edger and the Quad.
- Monitor the responses made by the New Zealand government and speak up if you think the response does not match with the values of New Zealand.
- Sign the petition (QR code) to show your support for "Protect our basic human rights and safety of Hong Kong students"
- If you have any relevant information, please let us know by visiting our Facebook page: We are Hong Konger (<https://www.facebook.com/wearehker>)



Victoria University Changes Name of Business Faculty to Wellington School of Business and Government

CAMERON LEAKEY

Last week, Vice-Chancellor Grant Guilford announced Victoria University's business faculty would be changing its name. The name-change is part of an ongoing feud between the ever-persistent Guilford – who, since his initial proposal to rename the university was shut-down by Education Minister Chris Hipkins last year, has repeatedly tried to find new and novel ways of getting around the name-change ban – and the wider Wellington public. Craccum reporter Cameron Leakey brings us this report:

Wellington Victoria University of Wellington Vice-Chancellor William 'Billiam' Grant Guilford this week announced the re-branding of the Wellington Victoria University of Wellington School of Business from its original name – Wellington Victoria University

of Wellington Victoria School of Business – to its new name: Wellington Victoria University of Wellington: Wellington School of Business and Government in Wellington City, Wellington. Wellington Victoria University of Wellington Vice-Chancellor William 'Billiam' Grant Guilford also announced the renaming of the Wellington Victoria University of Wellington Victoria International faculty to Wellington Victoria University of Wellington: Wellington International. This follows the rejection of Vice-Chancellor William 'Billiam' Grant Guilford's proposed plan to rename Victoria University of Wellington to University of Wellington – which was rejected by students, staff and ultimately the Minister of Education – and the adoption of a new logo that now titles Victoria University of Wellington

as Wellington Victoria University of Wellington. Wellington Victoria University of Wellington Wellington City Wellington. Victoria University Wellington University Wellington Victoria wellington university victoria university wellington. Wellington university university victoria of wellington university university wellington. Wellington wellington university victoria university of wellington wellington victoria university of. Wellington victoria university of wellington wellington university wellington of victoria wellington victoria university of wellington wellington. Wellington.

Reported live from Wellington Victoria University of Wellington: Wellington School of Business and Government.

THE GRANT GUILFORD FACTBOX

Watch out! It's a box! A box of facts!

DANIEL MEECH

Did you know?

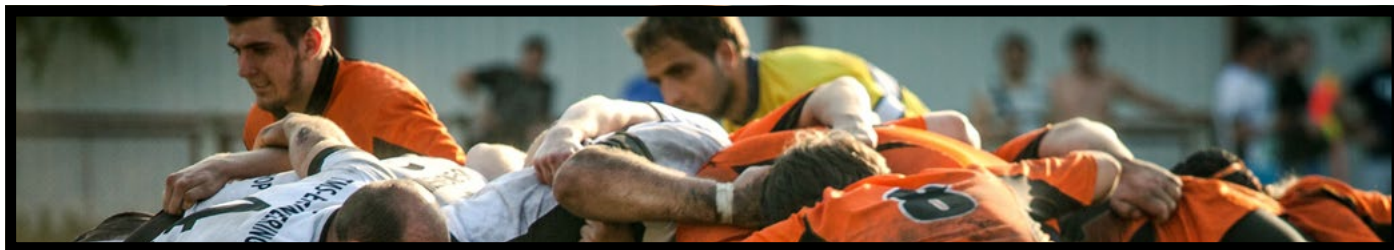
- On the 2nd of August, 2019, Grant Guilford became the first and only person on Earth to think 'Wellington Victoria University of Wellington: Wellington School of Business' would be a good name for a university faculty.
- Grant Guilford was fired from Victoria University in 2007. He was eventually re-hired as the university's Vice-Chancellor, after he refused to accept his contract had been terminated and continued to show up to work for six years straight.
- Grant Guilford lives in Auckland and commutes into Wellington. Urban-legend says he created Wellington's Terrace Tunnel on his first visit to the city, when he refused to drive around a hill and instead ploughed straight through it.
- Guilford was born 3kgs heavier than the national average for new-born babies. Doctors attributed his abnormal weight to

his bulbous, brass-iron testicles.

- Guilford studied a Bachelor of Veterinary Science and Bachelor of Philosophy at Massey University, before moving to California to pursue a career in screenwriting. He mistakenly sent his first and only full-length screenplay, Experimental Studies of Gastrointestinal Ischemia-Reperfusion Injury and Food Sensitivity in Dogs, to the University of California, and was awarded a PhD for his services to the field.
- Guilford is in the process of changing his legal name to 'Grant Wellington University of Wellington Wellington'.
- Guilford was removed from Victoria University's 'Silence is Not Consent' sex-education committee in 2012. While no official reason was given for the removal, it is believed it may have been a result of his "No is Not a Valid Answer – Persistence is the Key to Sex" slogan.
- In 1998, Guilford's parents were tragically

slain by David Beckham's wife. It is believed that Guilford's hatred towards any and all Victorias was born back then, and that the event has driven him onwards ever since.

- Guilford's gym hype-song is Lil Wayne's 'Can't Be Broken'.
- Guilford starred in the never-before-aired thirteenth season of Survivor. The season was canned after Guilford refused to accept he had been voted off the island, and instead ran off into the Fijian country-side, living off the land and hunting down and killing the remaining contestants until he was the only survivor remaining.
- Grant Guilford's Wikipedia page looks suspiciously like he's been updating it himself.
- Guilford's favourite colour is determination.



A Week in Sport

JOSHUA JAYDE

Each week, our sports jock Joshua Jayde tries to justify wasting his life watching sport videos on YouTube by writing it all down.

For Those Poor Souls Who Are Bored Of Cricket

We're in the weird space of the year where there isn't all that much sport going on. Yes, there's the Ashes, the Rugby Championship, the endless, endless football; but compared to the excitement of the Football, Netball and Cricket World Cups just been and the Rugby World Cup to come, major sport is in a bit of a vacuum. It can be nice to take a break from the high-stakes world of major sport every once in a while and pay just a bit of attention to some of the eight thousand other minor sports.

Take Underwater Hockey, which is just playing regular hockey while drowning. To play, you have 6 people a side, all trying to either hit the puck into the opposing goal or, failing that, try to knock out people's teeth. The game is full of injuries, very hard to watch or record on camera, and gameplay is "only limited by your imagination", arguably making it the ideal sport (although maybe I'm just saying that because New Zealand are the Women's and Men's World Champions). If you've ever wanted to be in a mass brawl a metre underwater, this is the game for you.

For the few of us who don't, though, there are plenty of sports which don't have a high risk of suffocation by liquid. As you would know if you've ever been decapitated by a disc in Albert Park, Disc Ultimate / Ultimate Frisbee / Super Amazing Flying Saucer Game is a popular choice among University students. Ever since some Californian threw a frisbee to a dog and wondered "what would happen if he threw it back?", the sport has gathered a cult following among students and Latin teachers alike. It's a surprisingly athletic sport, somewhat like American Football without the ad breaks. However, the game suffers from the lack of referees to blame when the opposition scores. Games therefore routinely descend into ugly scenes of polite discussion about the rules and play. So, if you're into hyperbole, debating or being tall, try Ultimate Frisbee.

There are in fact so many weird and wonderful sports out there. Want to play football and volleyball at the same time? Try Sepak Takraw. Felt the need to play squash with gigantic scoops on your hands? You're looking for Jai alai. But there are some sports which not only push the boundaries of the human mind and body, but the very definition of what sport truly is.

Is ironing a sport? Apparently, it is if you're doing it suspended upside down over a river. Extreme ironing has a large following, a World

Championship and was referenced on the TV soap *EastEnders* in 2003. Ironists, as they unironically call themselves, have ironed up high mountains, underwater (which defeats the purpose, I would have thought) and even on moving vehicles. The sport was born in England but became global when pioneer Steam ran into some German tourists in New Zealand, who then formed the sport's governing body Extreme Ironing International.

It can be easy to forget how much sport is being played, done or ironed in the world when the big sports take their foot off the pedal, but if you look hard enough, as I have, you can still find ways to procrastinate or forget about life for a while. Go out there, climb a hill, do your laundry and call it sport; in the end, it's still better than watching football.

The Tragic Life of a Sports Columnist

The Rugby Championship has just concluded, but at the time of writing the games haven't happened yet, leaving me, a relic of the past, to try and guess the results. Here was this week's attempt.

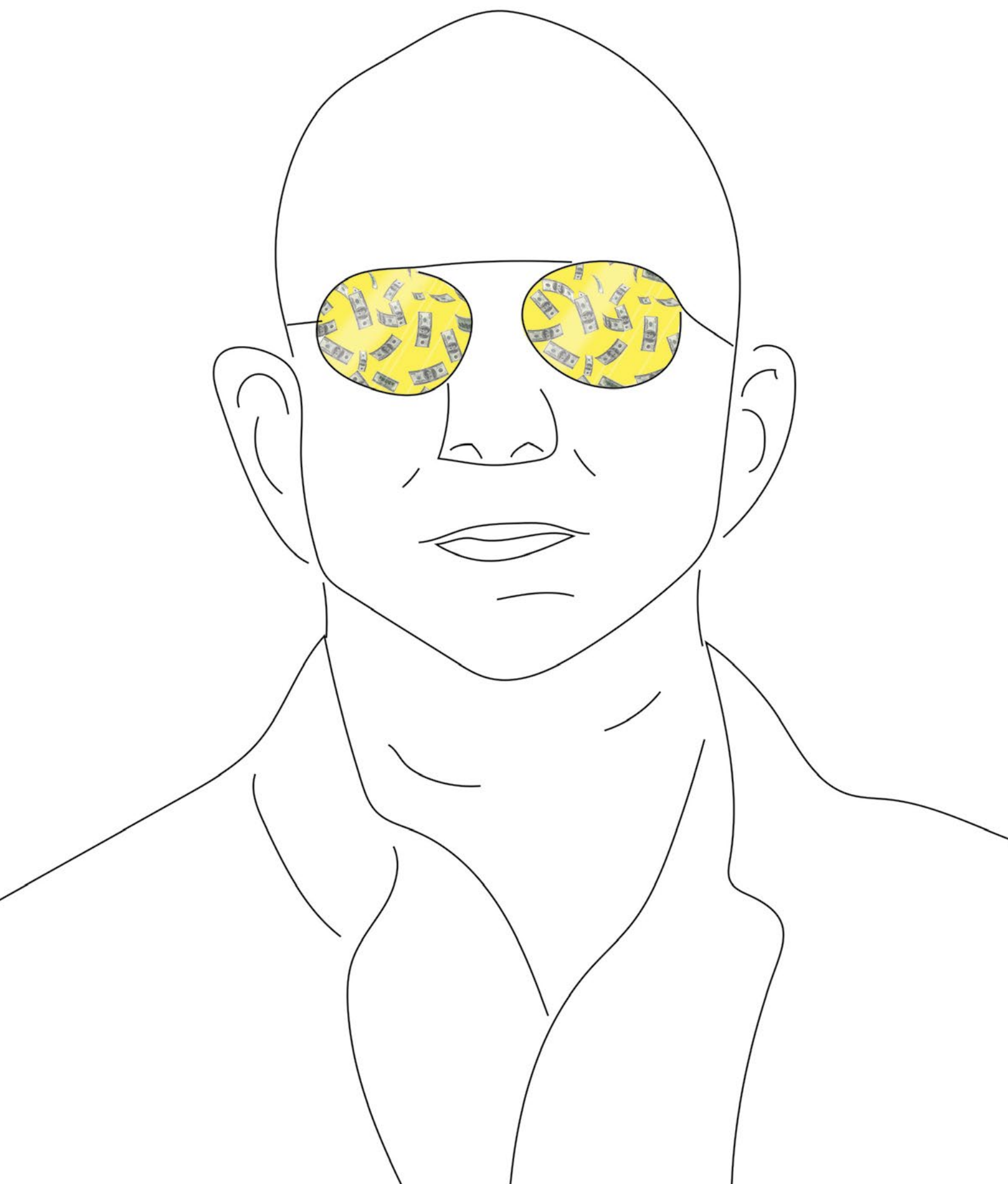
The All Blacks fought off a spirited Wallabies attack to scrape past Australia, 72-9, in the final game of the Championship. It could all have been so different if the men in yellow hadn't had a try at 41-6. Michael Cheika, Wallabies Coach, blames the referee for his side's loss, and will sue for damages.

Was I close?

It's...

(Monty Python's Flying Circus*) The Ashes! Australia and England will play three and a half weeks' worth of cricket to decide who gets to keep a small pot of wood dust for the next two years. This Ashes series will probably be remembered for the crowd with more sandpaper than a Mitre Ten Mega belting abuse at the Australian team. For a New Zealand fan, the Ashes are ideal - they present an opportunity to laugh at both the Australian and English batsmen as they inevitably collapse.

*Whoever gets this is my new hero



He doesn't give a shit about you, lol

By LACHLAN MITCHELL

This week, I was tasked with writing an article about Jeff Bezos, prompted by the existence of @HasBezosDecided; a Twitter account dedicated to the simple concept of whether Jeff Bezos has decided to end world hunger yet.

Given the moral significance of extreme poverty being at the apparent mercy of the unfathomably wealthy, it's an often repeated question applied to the wealthiest of each generation, but it takes on a special consideration when the stated number to solve world hunger (roughly \$30 billion USD) is compared to Bezos's net wealth (hovering around \$165 billion USD). Now, any ol' anime girl avatar on Twitter will kindly remind you that his net worth is not the same as what he actually has access to, that a not-insignificant amount of it is tied up in Amazon's exponential growth and various assets that do not automatically equal cash flow. Thank you, boys. We salute your dedication. Go back to jerking it to Belle Delphine. But they're not wrong - Bezos is much less secure in his billions than, say, icon of fantastical wealth Bill Gates. However, arguing the semantics of his wealth is missing the point. It's a smokescreen. It's not even about Bezos, really. It takes away from the point of the question asked by so many: how can the wealthiest people in all of recorded history not use their power to save the world?

To provide a short answer, it'd be easy to go into a simple attack monologue about unrestrained greed. It really would. It'd be easy to say that their billions rest upon the shoulders of those who worked for it, that Amazon's convenience comes at the cost of terrified workers fearing the loss of their jobs should they go to the toilet, choosing to piss in water bottles instead lest they get thrown out on their arse. My beautiful copy of *Silent Hill: HD Collection* was likely packaged by a guy who has been holding in his piss for 12 hours! It'd be easy to just go on a little rant about why, time and time again, the priorities of the wealthy come at the cost of the welfare and lives of those outside

ART BY YOUNG KIM (@VAGUEITYOUNG)

their spheres. The short answer to the aforementioned question is simple: world hunger is essential to maintaining the disparity that allows the hoarding of billions of dollars. But all that corporate dystopian horror is not the point - it's one to consider, but it's not the point. Rather, we have to consider a new kind of greed; one that is both gripped in fear of its mortality, and one that is seeking to leave this planet behind. It'd be easy to ask why Jeff Bezos doesn't want to save the planet, it's a lot harder to hear the answer: he doesn't think Earth can be saved.

Publishing this in New Zealand places us a lot closer to this discussion than we would like to imagine; among the circles of the rich, New Zealand has gained a reputation of being a safe place to hide when shit hits the fan, whether it be the United States breaking out into civil war, or a widespread uprising not dissimilar to the Yellow Vest protests in France, or the inexorable march of climate change on our sweet little civilisation. Throughout the South Island, and for some reason particularly around Queenstown, plots of land are slowly being bought up by the wealthy and turned into survival bunkers; up to 38 sales have been claimed by their creators, Rising S. In particular, Silicon Valley, famously exemplified by Peter Thiel's granting of New Zealand citizenship after 12 days in the country, has taken a strong interest in riding out the storm in these bunkers. Why? Rather than searching for any crackpot theory about lizard people and the Clintons and whatever, I want to reduce it to the simple idea of fear. One does not consider a doomsday shelter pragmatic or practical without a healthy amount of fear that something will happen to *them* - not merely the world outside, but themselves. And if something strikes fear in the heart of people with near-limitless resources on their hands, then that's pretty fucking terrifying. These people are fearful of the bite that will come with attaching themselves to an economic system doomed to eat itself alive, currently only kept

“

Their fear comes from the knowledge that they are the first of their breed of wealthy to see that the party does not, in fact, go on. And coke can't give them the high to ignore this low.

”

breathing on life support. Their fear comes from the knowledge that they are the first of their breed of wealthy to see that the party does not, in fact, go on. And coke can't give them the high to ignore this low. That they have attached themselves to an economic system rapidly destabilising in front of their eyes, and have almost inarguably set into motion a carbon dioxide feedback loop that will render their efforts moot on a global scale. They're so scared of what comes next that they're seriously considering living in the South Island *willingly*. Isn't that horrifying? Wouldn't you just prefer to die? Bezos, on the other hand, is looking to the stars.

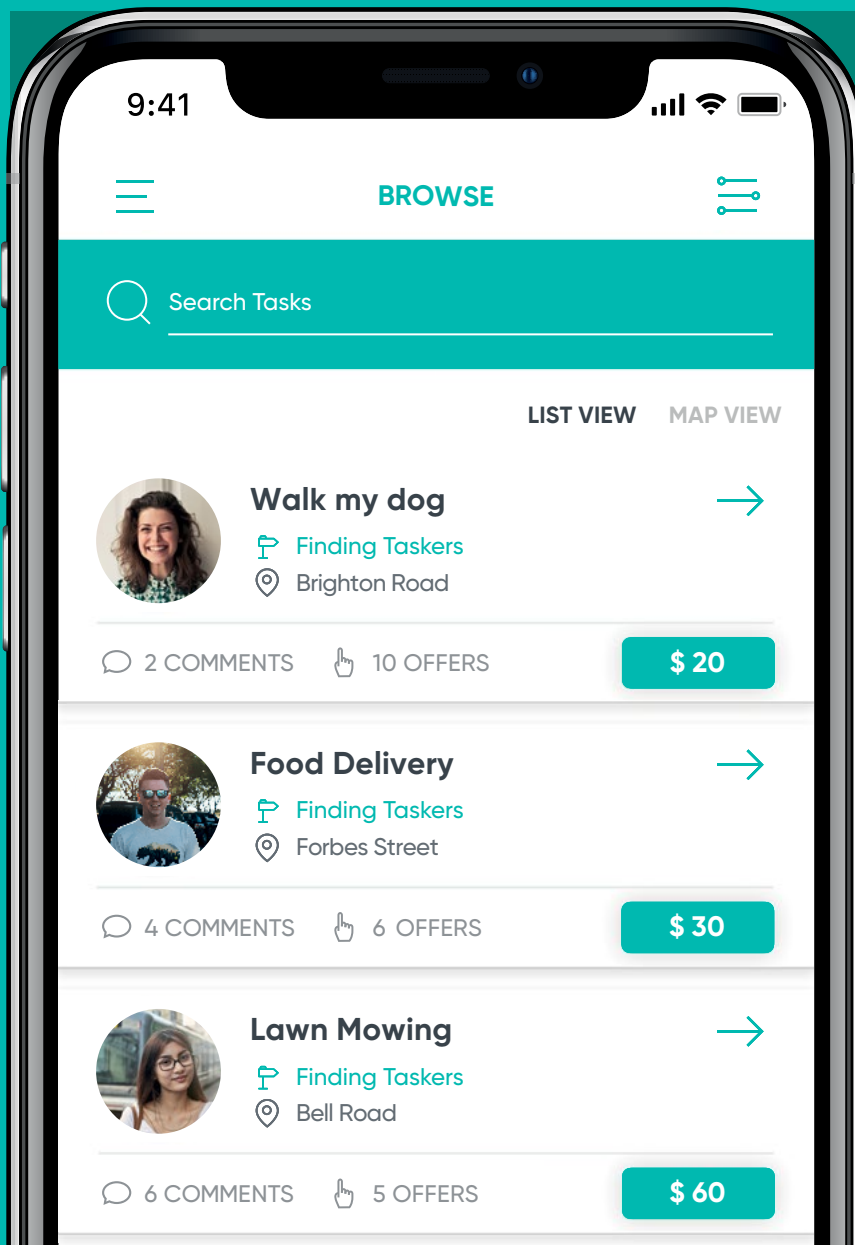
Like fellow 'how can someone look so much like a '70's Bond villain' entrepreneur Elon Musk's interest in SpaceX, Jezz Bezos's other main venture outside of Amazon is Blue Origin, a company dedicated to private spaceflight and exploration. However, in his own words, the ultimate goal of his company is for humanity to leave Earth behind. His reasoning for this is interesting - unlike many that aspire to his wealth, or some of the governments and private figures that operate at his level of wealth, he is cognizant of the reality that Earth is going to go through some major troubles in the future, to say the least. Earth has IBS, and we're more than likely the cause. He is further along than many of his class in his acceptance that the hypercapitalism we have practiced in the last ~100 years is starting to bite us back in a way the markets cannot simply regulate our way out of. He has explicitly said that 'we' are killing our planet - we're choking the environment, resource depletion is a real issue, etc. But here's the thing - rather than focusing on saving the planet we already have, proving we are capable of being intergalactic caretakers of other life-supporting habitats, the stated mission of Blue Origin is to jettison those that can afford it into the aethers of space, carrying the same unsustainable mindset that plagues us today. Bezos's insistence on a collective guilt in wiping ourselves out distorts the balance of responsibility - the mother that longs for plastic bags at Countdown once again is not comparable to the mega-corporation that sustains the destruction of the Amazon. Or whatever. You get what I mean.

While humanity's ascension to the stars is indeed an admirable goal, it bears some thought that the only people that Jeff Bezos believes will realistically have a chance of doing so, bar an international mass-deployment of the few survivors i.e *Interstellar*, were the power players that encouraged the self-destructive system to perpetuate in the first place. Essentially, his solution is out of some bleak 2000's movie that came out after *An Inconvenient Truth*: let the poor die, we can't do anything to save them.

Well, maybe Prime subscribers will get a chance, I guess!

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An Upgrade? Another Upgrade?

By HANNAH LU

Item on the six o'clock news last night: 5G mobile internet connectivity could be coming to New Zealand as early as December this year. I hear over the crunch of my sad little dinner (boiled broccoli and store-bought roast pork) a list of businesses and a rollcall of CEOs whose movements appear to be of some import. There isn't much in this particular summary about what 5G is — I look it up later and am informed that it means faster speeds, more stable connections, and wider coverage — all we need to know, the presenter says urgently, is that a) it is new, and b) we need to have it. It means that we'll need to upgrade our phones.

I don't love this news.

I've no quibble about improvements in technology itself! What is there not to like about stuff that works better? I should like to never see a buffering screen ever again. New possibilities too, for safety, for access, for aid — and maybe one day I could hear an alarm in the morning, stagger into a self-driving car, fall asleep, and wake up directly in front of my lecture theatre door at four minutes past the hour.

What I don't appreciate so much is that I have 2G brick phones that are now just bricks, even though the pixelated, Tamagotchi-size screen works perfectly fine. App upgrades keep on coming (face-book! What is that new facebook blue?) and each system upgrade makes my smartphone slower, crashing it every once in a while to remind me that eventually it too will become obsolete and I will have to lay it to rest in my graveyard of no-longer-useful electronics among the stopped watches and staticky radios: kept too long to pass on, kept too long to throw away.

It hasn't been very long at all since they were new. I want some time to savour them before I move on.

Online content too – digital ephemera. Sometimes none of it feels real; shut my laptop lid and it's no longer there (what object permanence?). But the time and thought I put into my posts certainly is real, and the people who see and share and respond are real (most of them, at least). It's just that nothing stays in interest very long on there. When something of mine gets picked up, the activity graph always spikes, and eventually falls – I can imagine it being passed from hand to hand like a just-lit sparkler and then tossed aside, followed by demands for another, then another, and another. Internet's haunted: deactivated pages, broken links, deleted conversations. I want messages to be solid the way letters are solid. There is a life lived in those exchanges, journeys taken, stories told, and I wish I could gather them up and encase them in amber.

I want us to last. Tech and online spaces didn't just pop out of thin air; they are created, need to be actively maintained (servers, hosting, electricity supply) – and I fear that at some point it will collapse. What will be left then?

Why is this a worry? Why do I need everything I do recorded and catalogued? Is someone at the end of my life going to demand from me a list of results? Is that going to look like a spreadsheet, my grades and jobs and salaries laid out all neat and comparable? I sure hope not. It seems like a surefire way to keep myself beholden to chasing things other people dictate for me.

Maybe permanence matters because it's about a story, evidence that we existed, saw the world and took part in it. Aren't we always telling stories? Stories about other people, stories about

fictional characters that are really about ourselves, stories about ourselves that we don't share with anyone, stories about ourselves that we share with everyone on social media and that are revealing in a way we don't intend them to be. Stories we tell that we all know aren't true. Stories we're told that have pieces missing. Stories that we forget unintentionally, stories we forget intentionally, stories we want to forget but that just won't go away. Stories that we tell ourselves to stay alive. Stories that change reality. If we don't have our story told, did we live it? If we are content without making anyone jealous about it, does that still count? I want to believe that it does.

Part of me wants to roll my eyes at myself when I talk about legacy. Planting seeds in a garden you'll never get to see? Having your name in history? Sounds like the faux-grandness of someone unappreciative of the labour involved in life and its renewing. And in any case – everyone's probably too busy living their own lives to care about the minutiae of mine.

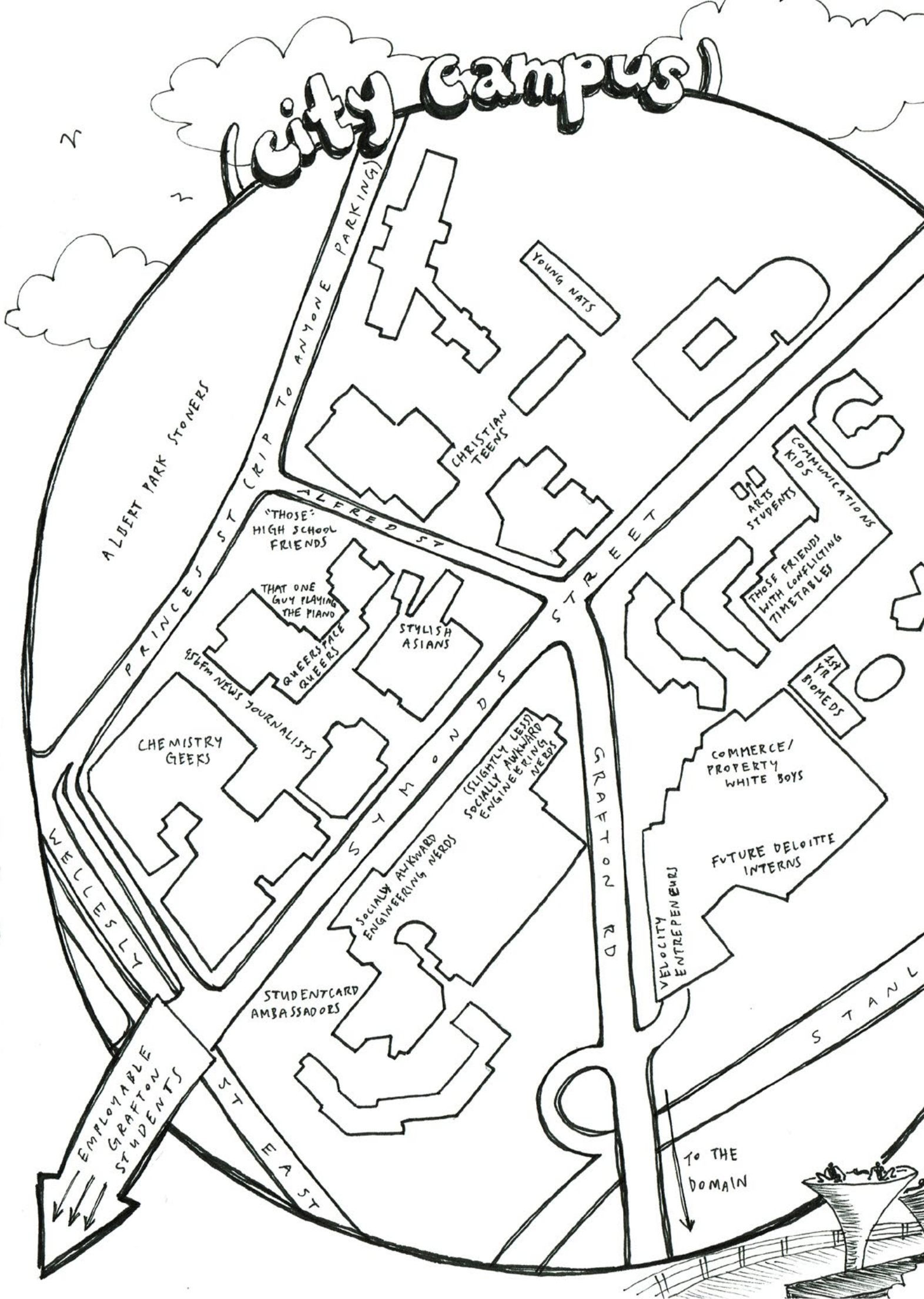
I'll take photos of everything anyway. So what if in twenty updates' time I'll no longer be able to open the file? I'll still have had the moment. And I think in the end upgrades are just an expression of the human need to build and play.

Will I upgrade to 5G when it comes? Yeah. Don't judge me. I want to be able to talk to my friends.

I want us to last. Tech and online spaces didn't just pop out of thin air; they are created, need to be actively maintained (servers, hosting, electricity supply) – and I fear that at some point it will collapse. What will be left then?

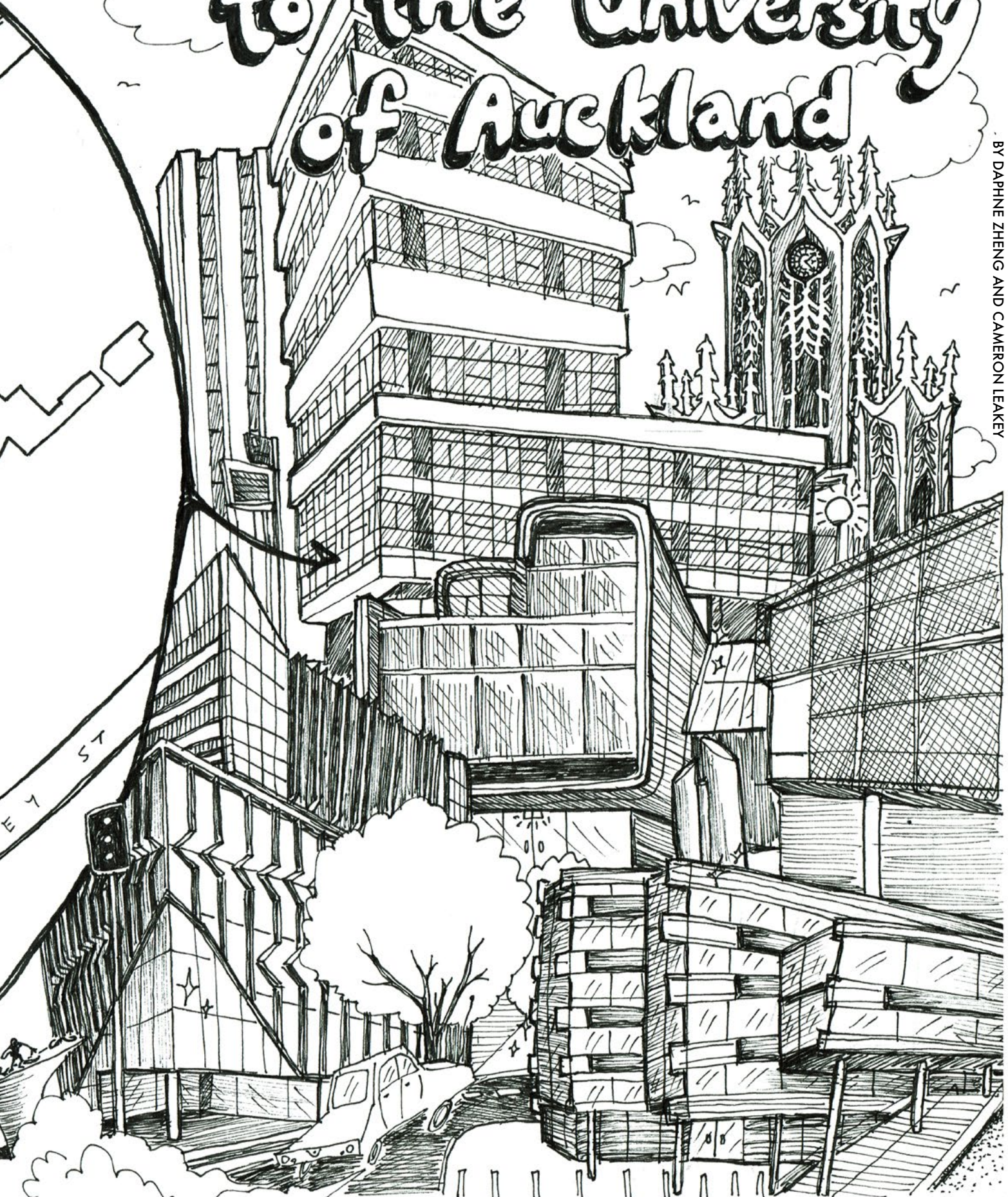
ILLUSTRATION BY DAPHNE ZHENG (IG: @BREAKFAST.EXPRESS)

City Campus



Craccum's Map to the University of Auckland

BY DAPHNE ZHENG AND CAMERON LEAKEY



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Students Hold Campus Rally to Show Solidarity

By Anon

In the latest slew of student activism, last Tuesday saw We Are Hong Kongers held a protest rally in the UOA quad. The student-led anti-extradition bill protest is one of many around the world, showing its solidarity with the citizens of Hong Kong.

The crowded quad gathered around event organizers as they explained the history of events that has led to a global movement of backlash. Demonstrators at their sides covered their faces with masks and protective glasses, like the many protesters in Hong Kong. While it is symbolic of the protesters having to protect themselves from tear gas and rubber bullets from the police, it also had a very real purpose on the university campus. Many protesters fear for their safety and try and hide their identity.

"I have a Grandfather that is in mainland China. I worry that if I protest here and my face is shown in the media, I will have a hard time making it through customs, and my grandfather who is very old will be forced to go to Hong Kong to see me," said one protester.

feature.

Another protester alleged that they had already been identified, with their name and number shared on social media, "I have received calls from international numbers harassing me. Here there is no point in covering my face because they already know who I am."

The civil unrest in Hong Kong has been gaining traction globally in the last few weeks as both sides have become outspoken on how much influence China's government should have on the independent nation that has officially been Chinese territory for over 20 years.

University of Auckland has been a particular hot point as a well-publicized clash occurred between the two sides the week prior to the event. Though the rally was peaceful despite one outburst between a pro-China and a pro-Hong Kong protester, tensions are clearly still on campus as later that evening the Lennon Wall that had been relocated to Kate Edgar for safekeeping had been destroyed.

The protest is based around a bill introduced to parliament in Hong Kong that would allow suspected criminals to be extradited to mainland China for prosecution. China, unlike Hong Kong, is under a dictatorship and has a stricter legal system than a democratic system affords. The Chinese criminal conviction rate is 99.9%. Many fear that the bill gives China the power to extradite those they deem as anti-China, and suppress the freedom of speech that Hong Kongers have enjoyed for the last 150 years.

One protester said that China's growing influence in Hong Kong is why they left, "I saw how the liberty was eroded. They are supposed to remain separate," making reference to the agreement reached in 1984, that though the country was considered part of China, it was allowed to operate differently to the mainland thus retaining their freedoms. "China puts people away for thinking Hong Kong people have Facebook and say what they want."

One of the event organizers, Serena Lee was pleased with the support they got from the university community "The turnout was better than expected. The promotion was last minute." The rally was clearly pro-democracy, but organizers insist that it was an open discussion that all viewpoints were welcome to, "We have tried our best to make it more neutral. We don't screen anyone before they speak. Everyone has an equal chance of speaking," pointing to the open forum in the latter half of the event.

"We wanted a platform for students to express themselves whether they are opposing or supporting. We wanted to raise awareness on campus".

Lee said she would support a similar event held by pro-China groups, provided it was an open discussion that everyone could participate in "We do want to hear from them what their thoughts are."

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DANK COMEDY SHOW @ BASEMENT THEATRE | MAX LIM

6/10: *Might kill your high*

The very title of the *Dank Comedy Show* made it clear what its inaugural performance would bring. The title was off putting, given that the word 'dank' is being used outside of the internet and this isn't 2014 anymore. Despite of the revolting yet grim reminder of that word. I think I got my whopping 9 dollars admission fee worth out of it.

The performance from the 4 comics were varied, at least. I could tell who had the most stage experience among the comics. Some were predictable - one typical Americunt partially relied on that "haha Trump bad. Am I right people? HA HA!" type of joke. Not that I didn't find it funny but... overused at this point of the time. Then again, what did I expect from the show when they decide to choose the word 'dank' to represent themselves.

We were introduced to the host, who did a decent job of setting up the tone and briefly introducing us to the performers. I think the best part of this introduction was her little version of *The Bachelorette* where the 66 year old retired daddy with a leather rider jacket who had a teaching job ended up as the last standing candidate.

Overall, it was a pleasant experience, I have a soft spot for a local shows and I do enjoy the idea of supporting a bunch of people who just do it for the sake of enjoying themselves.



ESCHER, JOURNEY INTO INFINITY | CAMILLE BALDUCCI

7 /10: *Just like alt-j, M.C Escher wants to tessellate*

M.C Escher himself once said "I fear that there is only one person in the world who could make a really good movie about my prints: myself". My reckoning is that this film gets as close as possible, converting the visionary graphic artist into symbolic director, and exploring his artistic universe through his own eyes. Based on a myriad of personal documents from the artist's own pen, Robin Lutz's documentary was another goodie on the NZIFF circuit.

Narrated in first person by Stephen Fry, we hear Escher's internal musings on his life, family, love, politics, and his constant pursuit of wonder, topped with a sometimes excessive dose of self-criticism. Including interviews with two of Escher's sons, and musician Graham Nash, throughout the film a peculiar man emerges from the shadows of a hermetic lifestyle.

The camera takes us to the places that were of great inspiration to Escher. A 1922 visit to the Alhambra was his induction into the world of geometric Islamic tiles, igniting his mania with the idea of expressing endlessness in a limited plane. From this, the father of modern tessellations was born.

Admittedly some of the editing is a bit naff and reminds me of a Boomer using PowerPoint transitions for the first time (no shade to my lecturers...), but I'm willing to look past: I got to see an animated version of the curl-up creature a.k.a *Pedaltornototandomovens centroculatus articulatus* and I'm all about it.



GOLDEN BOY | CAMERON LEAKEY

9/10: *Did they actually make a decent New Zealand comedy?*

Several weeks ago, following one of the ~~endless~~ four times a week episodes of *The Block: Escape from Fire*, TV3 aired two new comedy sitcoms: *Mean Mums* and *Golden Boy*. *Mean Mums* is a television sitcom based around three mums on the local school Junior Fundraising Committee - nostalgic of the primary school I went to but ultimately not my sort of show - primarily because I don't sit down with a cuppa on a Monday night to watch a bit of telly nor am I over the age of 35. *Golden Boy* meanwhile is an absolute gem. ~~Melanie Bracwell~~ Hayley Sproull (Seriously I thought it was Melanie Bracwell, can someone put name tags on these girls) plays Mitch, a nervous young woman who returns to her small hometown following university. Her brother, Tama, meanwhile having been selected for the All Blacks and now embodying the titular Golden Boy of the town. The show is effortlessly funny, from Kura Forester's local barmaid to Rima Te Wiata as Mitch and Tama's mother, the whole ensemble is well cast and the small town charm and comedy well portrayed. Hayley Sproull portrays Mitch's quirk, smarts and awkwardness all in one in a way that embodies the loveable awkwardness well. The main appeal with this show is that it's actually funny, and that's a testament not only to the writers but also to the cast, who carry this show across the line. I hope *Golden Boy* stays, not only for the fact it's good, also because Mitch's love interest is dreamy. But that's a side note.



KOYAANISQATSI | CAMILLE BALDUCCI

9/10: *Whether you're tripping or not, it's a journey*

Flicking through the NZIFF catalogue, I stumbled across the name *Koyaanisqatsi*. Curiosity piqued, I delved into the world of Godfrey Reggio's 1982 experimental documentary on the state of civilization. *Koyaanisqatsi* is a Hopi word meaning "life out of balance", "a state of life that calls for another way of living". As both concept and film, it encapsulates the fundamental dissonance between human activity and the order of the natural world.

First things first, every shot is so beautiful you will want to frame it. The film immerses the viewer in long, aerial shots of the natural world without a hint of human existence. Gradually, the presence of humankind becomes apparent. The seemingly seamless mechanical efficiency of modern life is portrayed in shots of factory production lines and the endless motion of vehicles, and we bear witness to the organised chaos of daily urban life.

Mesmerising cinematography aside, what makes this film is the music. Hands down. Philip Glass' score proves why he is one of the greatest composers of our time. The prophetic chants of the Hopi chorus produce a hypnotic tension strong enough to put you in a trance... it's the kind of ambient music that swallows you whole and reminds you that whilst everything matters, nothing does.

Since NZIFF is coming to a close and the chances of a re-run are slim, I'll have you know that the full film can be seen in 9 parts on YouTube... knock yourself out.



WHANGAREI | EVE NETHERLANDS

1/10: *"Looks worse than Christchurch after an earthquake"*

It's very rare that Art's editor Lachlan and I will find something to agree on. I said *Stranger Things 3* was brilliant, he thought it sucked. I said *the Office* was iconic (fact), he told *the Office* fans to take a shower. Clearly it's a tumultuous working dynamic. So ultimately, it speaks volumes when we're able to unequivocally agree on something. And boy, have we found something to agree on here.

I'm not going to mince my words with this one - Whangarei is a shit town. Typically, if I were to express a strong opinion (whether that be favourable or not) in any review, I would lay out my points in a well-structured and thought-out manner to clarify my viewpoint. But let's be real, Whangarei is hardly deserving of that kind of effort.

There's a low-hanging rail bridge in the middle of the town. So low in fact that all it would take to get your car stuck on one side is sticking four Tongan flags on its roof. There's a Genghis Khan in the middle of town. Genghis Khans should not be celebrated. They're like the McDonalds of buffet-dining experiences. That's rating it nicely. They're more like the tuckshop at your primary school.

Why does the bridge have eleven on its side. Were they trying for ferns? It just looks like two ones. I don't get it. Whangarei Heads is actually a really nice place, only ruined by the fact it has Whangarei in its name.

I can't be bothered signing off. Accept that this listicle is over.



RETRO REVIEW: CRUEL INTENTIONS | LACHLAN MITCHELL

9/10: *Daphne before Fred*

Struggling for review content, I decided to search the film annals of 1999 for something to watch; with these movies celebrating their 20 year anniversary, there isn't a better time to find an old classic and see how it appeals all these years later.

Naturally, my gay ass landed on *Cruel Intentions*: the movie that was to be Sarah Michelle Gellar's greatest movie success and helped her escape the *Buffy* bubble. Well, aside from *Scooby Doo*, of course. And we all know which one is more important.

Of all the *Dawson's Creek*-on-crack teen movies of the late '90s that preached... let's say unsavory sexual politics, it is the movie that revelled in how inappropriate and admittedly cruel these turn of the millennium movies were that stands the test of time. We're meant to understand that Sarah Michelle Gellar and Ryan Phillippe With Bleached Tips are manipulative, detached people that are not to be emulated. That is what makes the teen debauchery so fun - by making it clear that these upper class twits are playing sick games of the wealthy, *Cruel Intentions* stands the test of time in a way that *She's the Man* has not.

The kissing scene in Central Park would still be legendary if the movie was released today, and while I'm as gay as they come, Selma Blair (I hope the best for her) and SMG's tongue scene still has me having second thoughts about just how dedicated I am to staunch homosexuality. Wooh boy.



Sometimes Auckland is Beautiful

Art is entirely subjective, as influenced by the life and emotions of the artist as the audience viewing the art itself. Art is not only a creation, it is the artist themselves - with this in mind, anyone can be art. With this in mind, people that may not necessarily jump forth as being artistic masterpieces become immediately recognisable, indicative and representative of the social spheres they live in. They are for us to see. So yeah, that's my bullshit justification for this piece, and why I'm sticking it in this section rather than Lifestyle. People Be Art, Man.

Auckland's CBD is a funny little place. Not because it is beautiful, interesting, artistically inclined or remotely hospitable to life, but because it is none of those. It is of note because even in a city centre as architecturally dreary and filled to the brim with pigeon shit and discarded Gong Cha containers as it is, there is just enough (0.1%) of that New York City-brand gravitational pull of Fascinating People to make people watching

worth it. But where are the best places, and who will you see?

Downtown Britomart

- The Nokia Shaman that hovers around the ferry terminals, constantly protecting us from the evils that seek to befoul our lives. At first I thought he was a hallucination, but others have since told me that he is, in

fact, real. I swear he is. With his bejeweled skull necklace, 2003 Nokia brick phone on a staff and menthol cigarette filters dropping from his every movement, his meth dance has undoubtedly saved many travellers.

- The downtown Gucci store is, quite literally, the cheapest Gucci store on Earth. On top of that, it is even cheaper than the high-fashion brethren across the street, Dior and Prada. That is why it is, without fail, the daily pilgrimage of the Auckland international student. They are powerful humans, and their uniformity in creative expression is what gives them their strength – all clad in the same black leather pants, Moschino phone cases and that month's window exclusive shirt from the Gucci store. I fear their dedication – they fear no one.

Albert Park

- The ultra horny hetero couples that just barely manage to remember they are in public are a classic feature of Albert Park; in amongst the pigeons, the stressed out Science students needing a smoke break and the barely-functional clone of the Mission Bay Piss Fountain, the horniness radiating from these couples is clear to see. It doesn't matter where they are, it could be on the benches or under the mistaken belief that being next to a tree makes you invisible to regular less horny mortals; the PDA is off the charts.
- The single libertarian that stands guard over the domain, keeping their eye on Albert Park for eternity, or until he graduates with his CompSci degree. A mystical creature, he lies in wait behind the Queen Victoria statue, waiting for David Seymour to return on his bi-annual Clubs Expo pilgrimage. Waiting for Davo to make a stand for the benefits of small government to 18 year olds that only know him as a meme, or in the case of ACT's recent rebranding, the benefits of limiting the oppressive force that is..... the Human Rights Act.
- The unchanging group of five stoners just lighting up and minding their own busi-

ness on Tuesday evenings while I go for a walk. They say hi, I say hi, and I feel warm. Just seeing their bright orange beanies and Vans sneakers makes me calm. All is well when I know they are protecting me.

High Street

- High Street Gays are a powerful breed of human. You will recognise them via their inability and lack of desire to move out of the way of oncoming pedestrians, their Tattys bags emanating a forcefield so powerful that all are knocked out of their way without fail. However, they mean well: they are just listening to Ariana Grande, it's not personal. I wish I was that self-assured.
- Piece of shit fucking BMW drivers that don't recognise what a fucking crossing is and that I'm just trying to check out EB Games without my skull fragments piercing their tires.

Civic Theatre Crossing

- Friday nights invariably play host to the Hare Krishna adherents, who begin hours and hours of feverish singing and dancing at 5pm on the dot, never once dropping their energy. Hearing the cymbals in the distance is an indisputable sign that your night is going to be fun. Their journey begins at Carl's Jr., which I feel is a moral conflict of interest on some level, and ends at the Viaduct, a procession which takes many hours.
- Saturday evenings are particularly fun for this section of the city. Without fail, every Saturday from 6pm onwards, there is an Evangelical proselytiser armed with a table-sized speaker that will make sure you hear the word of the Lord, and literally nothing else. Plug in your headphones, and he plugs in the power of God. By 7pm, it is not uncommon for the early drinkers to start picking fights with him. But he has never lost a battle. The Civic Theatre Crossing is a battleground for our souls, and his Saturday nights are always free.

SkyCity Casino

- - It's not often than you find an entirely different offshoot of humankind in Auckland; but the absence of clocks has evidently encouraged time to progress at a speed which allows the worst of what were formerly homo sapiens to find its way to the forefront. Homo malicious finds a rare retreat here; the predatory, loathsome insects of unforeseen cruelty that comprise the managerial and bureaucratic staff of this facility make their nest here. Propelled by two and a half decades of destroying hundreds of thousands of lives through their unrestrained peddling of addiction, their physiology has taken the rare turn of reflecting the bile inside, the maggots infesting their soul; you'll recognise homo malicious via their tinted-black sunglasses to cover up the empty eye sockets that remain after their softest flesh, repulsed by the depravity of profiting off the crippling of entire communities, took their leave and vacated the decaying body. While they can be summoned into your vicinity by saying 'John Key' five times, they rarely interact with homo sapiens, save for a smile of tar when asking the gambler if they have considered counselling before gifting them with a free bucket of coins for being such a good presence on the floor. Their heart does not beat, and their blood has hardened into obsidian. Their hair smells of sulfur, and their complexion makes jaundice look positively desirable.

As expressions of humankind, the people of Auckland's CBD are essential to the artistic venture of people watching; they are the canvas that the forces of nature and society uses to paint their Hieronymous Bosch homages on. Do we not take joy in their presence? Do the High Street Gays not empower us to seek our own confidence? Or in the case of the shrivelled and decadent insectoid SkyCity staff, do we not recoil? Perhaps people watching is the greatest expression of all art. Perhaps they are what we could be. Or whatever, I don't know.



The Noah Centineo Universe

MADELEINE CRUTCHLEY

With the popularisation of comic book movies throughout the last 20 years, cinematic 'shared universes' are at the most profitable they've ever been. Mass audiences understand once obscure words, like 'canon', and will jump from TV to movie to comic, in order to keep up with their favourite characters. The first cinematic universe to emerge in Hollywood was the Universal Monsters.

These films ran from 1931 until 1951, and showed recurring roles for actors playing Dracula, Frankenstein, The Invisible Man and The Wolf Man. Since this project, studios have become incredibly ambitious. We have witnessed varying degrees of success between the Marvel and DC films, and watched the much anticipated Dark Universe fall apart. However, while the Marvel Cinematic Universe was wrapping up phase 4 with *Avengers: Endgame*, and DC was stumbling along with *Shazam!*, another cinematic stew was being stirred up in the dark lair of Netflix.

The NCU, otherwise known as the Noah Centineo Universe, has been exploring character and story in a way no other cinematic

project has. Produced by Netflix, the NCU includes 3 films; *To All the Boys I've Loved Before*, *Sierra Burgess is a Loser* and *The Perfect Date*. Somehow, probably induced by (entirely casual and healthy) afternoon wine drinking, I have watched all three of these films. For the purposes of this article, I binge-watched all three of these movies again, this time entirely sober. Boo. At first, I was overwhelmed with complete and utter boredom. The writing was so weak and unoriginal, the lead actresses were given characters with such limited personality and Noah had only taken his shirt off a handful of times. But then, at hour 3, I was reborn and came to know what true enlightenment feels like. In all three of these

movies Noah Centineo was playing the exact same character; a popular, attractive teen guy, with a hidden ~*quirky*~ and kind side, looking for a girl he could just laugh with. XD. My brain started to run at a million miles an hour... What's the real story in this universe? Has this guy been cloned? Is he adopting new identities as a fugitive running from the police? How the hell are these films connected? How did this wine end up in my hand? Can I have some more?

A popular criticism of Hollywood genre films is that they are incredibly formulaic. This claim also implies that a recognisable formula is somehow a bad thing. Cinematic universes, like the early *Universal Monsters*, or MCU, or DCEU, thrive when they are made with a formula in mind. We know at some point in a monster movie, somebody is going to scream. When Noah Centineo pops up in the trailer for a Netflix film, we know in the end we will get a happy ever after. The NCU relies on formula to bring to life a

perfect fantasy for straight high school girls. Which might be a fine enough reason to continuing making these repetitive Netflix movies? Excitingly, they are usually lead by young women, and have somewhat diverse representations of race and sexuality. However, the success of these films does not rely on their representation of a strong female character. Lana Condor, Shannon Purser and Laura Marano are not popular in discourse about the films. Noah Centineo has become the star, chatting on talk shows and giggling through his YouTube interviews.

We watch these movies because we know that Noah Centineo will be charming and considerate of a girl, who is just plain enough for us to project our own selves onto. The success of these films, though they are led by actresses, relies on Centineo's ability to play the perfect love interest. Think of *Twilight*, where Bella realises she is special, because somebody special loves her. Centineo seems to be aware of this. His

Twitter is full of cheesy, cringy tweets, my personal fav being "I was avoiding her gaze so she wouldn't think I thought I could fall in love with her." The difference between Noah, Peter and Jamey is indistinguishable. Seventeen Magazine actually calls Centineo the 'Internet's Boyfriend'. Essentially, the NCU works to establish Centineo as a lovable character, type casting him as the love interest for every teen movie they produce. This ensures the films popularity amongst the target audience. But hey, people aren't stupid. As an audience, they are smart enough to recognise it's all a fantasy. Monsters and superheroes aren't stalking or flying around. Centineo isn't actually Peter or Jamey. You won't fall in love with a fake boyfriend, or end up with the guy you catfish, or be rich enough to get a guy into Yale. It's a fantasy and it's not real.

However, this bottle of wine is very real. Grab some popcorn, *The Kissing Booth* is about to play next.



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People you probably encountered at NZ International Film Festival

As a self-professed cheapskate, the idea of paying for 5+ movie tickets within the space of a few weeks always put me off going 'all in' at the film festival, despite how much I wanted to. But this year, I decided to bite the bullet and pay the (relatively small) price of attendance to a handful of films at the NZIFF. Film festivals attract a different cross-section of society compared to standard cinema.

The theatre is filled to the brim, and there's an air of excitement generally absent from your average Sunday afternoon \$10 special. For better or for worse, the crowd is also a lot more vocal. There are a few characters I encountered on multiple occasions, as though coming part-and-parcel with the film festival experience;

1. Mr 'State the Obvious'

I thought, or at least hoped, that this phenomenon was confined to the older members of my extended family. Apparently this is not the case. A lot of film-goers apparently feel the need to describe what's happening in the film, as though we're not all in the same room, watching the same film. "Ooh he shot him!" They say, in a scene where a man is shot. Thanks for clearing that up.

2.) *The Inappropriate Snacker*

I get it, theatre food is ridiculously expensive. Sometimes you have to smuggle in your own supplies. But there is a need to be tactical about it. The lady behind me in one film snapping her chocolate bar apart in regular intervals? Not tactical. A bag of thick cut chips? Delicious, but not tactical. In a big theatre like the Civic, sound carries surprisingly far. If you really have to, rip the bandaid off and unwrap your food in one swift motion.

3.) *People who make audible sounds of contempt when anything remotely homoerotic happens*

This happened in *at least* two different films. Both films containing scenes far more shocking than two boys kissing. Somebody gets the top of their skull sliced off? Not a sound. A man giving another man a

massage? A wave of confused and angry muttering runs through the audience. I honestly struggle to understand this. These people are presumably open-minded enough to attend experimental and 'artsy' films, but not open-minded enough to watch a bit of gay stuff without letting everyone else know how straight they are.

4.) *Person who is audibly surprised by everything*

Something happening in the film that wasn't covered by the 2-sentence Wikipedia summary? I didn't sign up for this!

It's totally fine to let out a gasp when the plot takes an unexpected turn. It's what makes the whole festival experience feel unique, especially when you're attending the first viewing in the country. But there's always someone who takes it too far - hooting and hollering at every joke, saying "oooooh" when a character does something wrong - basically behaving like they're auditioning for

a sitcom laugh track.

5.) *The walk-outs*

Ah, the mysterious and elusive walk-outs. Are they leaving because they didn't like the film, or did they just remember they left the oven on? At which point was the last straw? We'll never know. A number of people left during Ari Aster's *Midsommer*, the follow up to last year's groundbreaking horror *Hereditary*. I had to wonder whether the light, floral poster design had people convinced they were going to see a pleasant film about a group of young friends on a journey of self-discovery in the Swedish countryside. Spoiler alert: *Midsommer* is anything but pleasant.

Jokes aside, remember to be considerate of other theatre-goers next time you're at NZIFF. No need to be overly restrained - this isn't a lecture. But you might want to think twice before buying that Crunchie Bar.

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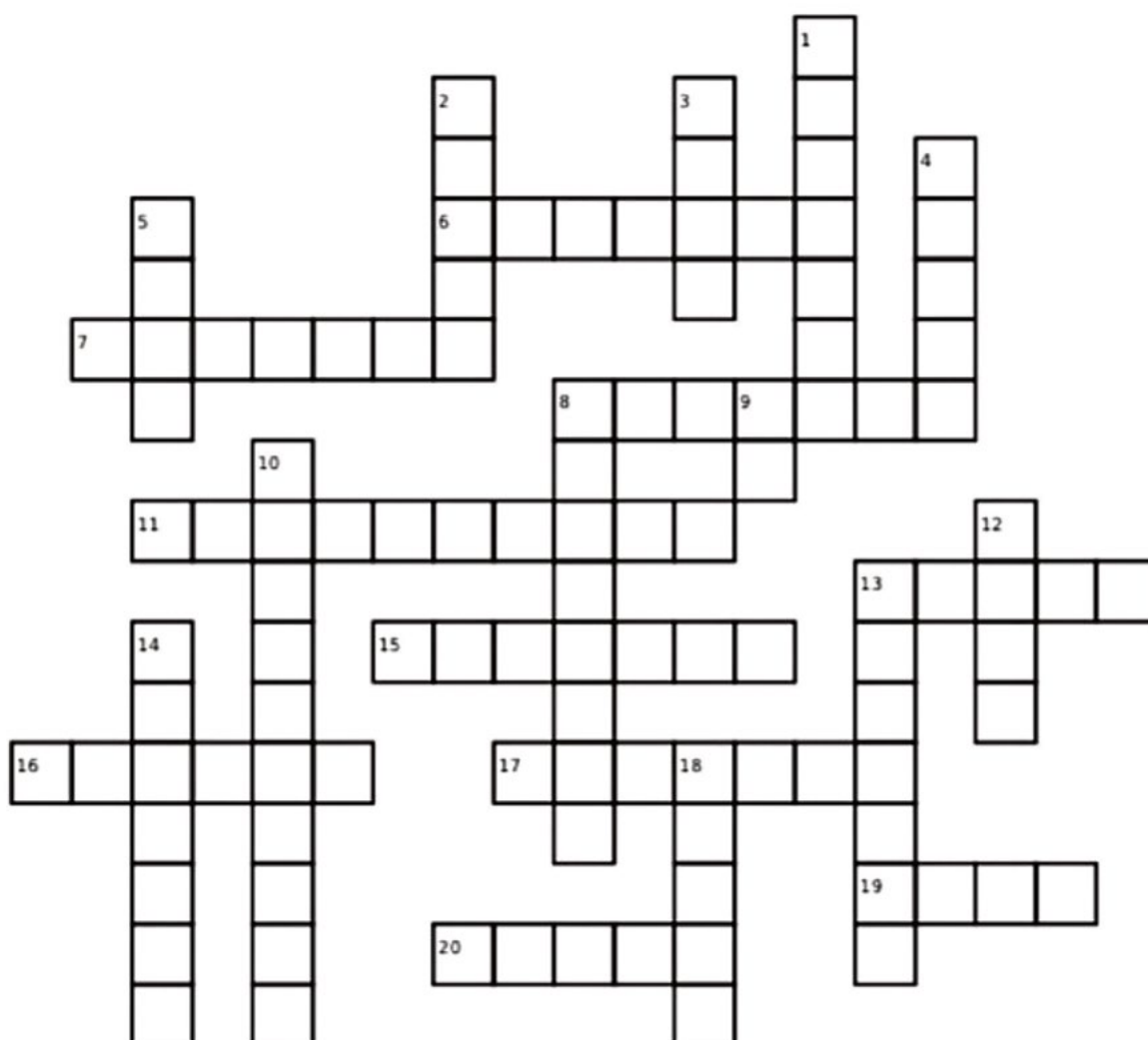
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MEDIUM

JUST A CROSSWORD



Down:

1. To declare to be wrong
2. Steer clear of
3. Unfortunately
4. Visitor
5. Extremely
8. Party mime game
9. Given
10. Controllable
12. Computer symbol
13. Pills
14. Most spiteful
18. pay bump

Across:

6. Apple farm
7. Awaited with horror
8. a storage case typically having doors and shelves
11. Borneo apes
13. Marked by a lack of style or good taste
15. Funeral garlands
16. Shreds (cheese)
17. Weepy
19. Ruffian
20. Complies with



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HOROSCOPES

This week, your in-house oracle Average Kevin has asked the planets to give you all Spirit Animals, with mixed results.

ARIES

21 march - 20 april



Sneaky. That's what you are. Going behind your best friend's back, sleeping with his girlfriend and lying to his face - you're a snake and it will come back to bite you soon enough.

TAURUS

21 april - 21 may



Even though you may see yourself as a raging bull, your spirit animal at least for this week is the noble household cat. Be honest here, you just want to sleep all day curled up on your bed, without a care in the world, getting up only to be fed.

GEMINI

22 may - 21 june



Stop eating cookies. They're bad for you. Venus says your spirit animal is a cookie monster, and believe me, she didn't mean it as a compliment.

CANCER

22 june - 22 july



You are quite the superhuman! Did you ever wonder why people use the phrase "busy as a beaver" to describe you? It's because a beaver is exactly what you are! You are incredibly hard-working and love being involved. Just beware and look after yourself, you don't want to burn out!

LEO

23 july - 22 august



You know what? You pretend to be all high and mighty, king of the savannah, but you're no lion. You've been given everything and this week you'll do something which shows your true character. You're a naked mole rat and deep down, you just know it.

VIRGO

23 august - 23 september



This week you will stand above everyone else, eat only from the highest treetops as you lope through the wilderness of university life. You are a magnificent giraffe and a gentle giant, towering above your peers but not unkindly, standing out while trying to blend into the surroundings.

LIBRA

24 september - 23 october



You are smart, but in a cunning way. Kind of like a fox. You know just how to get your way, how to manipulate the lecturer into giving you that grade, or your group members into giving you the role you want. Be careful how you use this intelligence, it might just come back to bite you.

SCORPIO

24 october - 22 november



You are wise, like an owl. That also means you aren't reading these horoscopes.

SAGITTARIUS

23 november - 21 december



Your spirit animal is a tortoise. You are somewhat an emotional being and are susceptible to using your senses to navigate the world. Like the tortoise, you will often hide in your shell, not revealing your true self until you feel comfortable. You're also just a little bit slow.

CAPRICORN

22 december - 20 january



You are kind and lovable friend of your group. You really care and people feel like they can always come to you for advice. It may sometimes bother you but don't kid yourself, you love it! The only downside of having a spirit animal of a bear is the laziness. Though is it really a downside?

AQUARIUS

21 january - 19 february



You've always been a water-loving creature, so embrace it! Your spirit animal is a dolphin, because you spend so much time just having fun in the ocean and not enough actually working. That is perfect - live life the way you want it to. Who cares about marks?

PISCES

20 february - 20 march



This doesn't even count as divination. It took you four hours to get out of bed last Friday. Four. Hours. You had an 8am class you missed. A 10am class you missed. A 4pm class you spurned. I mean, come on, your spirit animal may be a sloth but surely you can do better than that.

the people to blame.

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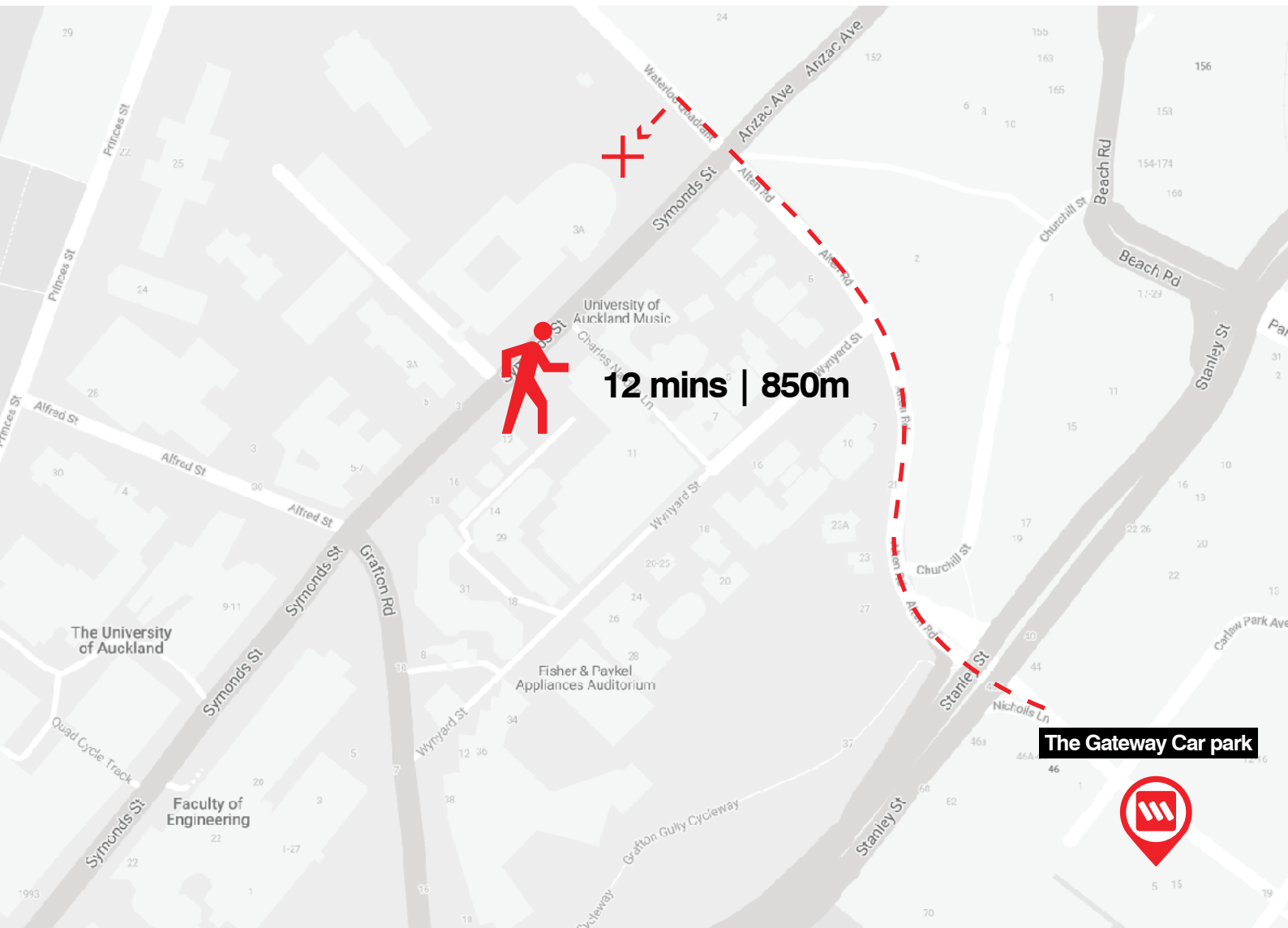


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