

Craccmum

EST. 1927

FUMBLING THROUGH
A PSYCHEDELIC MAZE:
HOW TO ENSURE YOUR
TRIP TAKES A TURN FOR
THE WORSE

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INTERVIEW WITH MY
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Drugs Edition

For those cooking, or getting cooked

AUSA PRESENTS...
SELF-CARE WEEK
15 - 19 APRIL 2024

WEEK 6
MAKE YOUR OWN ALBUM
TUESDAY 16TH APRIL 2024



Tuesday 16th April 2024
5-8pm
In 206-220
Everyone is Welcome + Free Pizza!

AUSA x SciSA x ExercSciSA present...

Wellness Walk

16th April | 11am - 1pm | Auckland Domain



AUSA PRESENTS...
SELF-CARE WEEK
15 - 19 APRIL 2024



AUSA PRESENTS...
SELF-CARE WEEK
15 - 19 APRIL 2024

wednesday
rethinking eating
mindfulness, ayurveda 101 talk & plant-based dinner
5:00PM 17TH APRIL 2024
free entry for all UoA students

YOUR MEDITATION
SOUND
FOOD

AUSA X CMESA X UOAFG

AUSA PRESENTS...
SELF-CARE WEEK
15 - 19 APRIL 2024

Games In The Park

Wednesday, 17th of April
1:30-4pm, Albert Park



Learn more about being savvy with your finances!

Thursday April 18th
6pm onward
Grafton Campus

MONEY TALKS

More details coming soon!



AUSA PRESENTS...
SELF-CARE WEEK
15 - 19 APRIL 2024

WiHN

AUSA PRESENTS...
SELF-CARE WEEK
15 - 19 APRIL 2024

PAINT & SIP

Paint your own mini canvases and cards!



Join us for an afternoon of
painting and beverages

18th April
5pm-7pm
UoA Quad



AUSA PRESENTS...
SELF-CARE WEEK
15 - 19 APRIL 2024

FOR MORE
INFO & EVENTS
FOLLOW US ON
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WANT TO CONTRIBUTE?

**WE WOULD LOVE TO HEAR FROM
YOU! JUST SEND US AN EMAIL!**



KIERAN PANUI & KALA BURGESS



Harae mai, Cracc-fiends, to the electrifying world of drugs! Prepare for a journey through the highs and lows of substance exploration. This week, we dive deep into the kaleidoscope of mind-altering experiences, embracing the unexpected twists and turns along the way. So, let's buckle up and embark on this exhilarating ride through the realms of intoxication and enlightenment!

But why limit ourselves to the classics when there's a vast array of mind-altering substances awaiting exploration? From the obscure to the downright bizarre, the world of drugs offers something for everyone. Yet, amidst the allure of experimentation, it's essential to acknowledge the potential risks and consequences. If you or someone you know is grappling with substance abuse, help and support are within reach.

We'd like to mention that all residents of **Tāmaki Makaurau** can tap into resources like the Alcohol Drug Helpline (0800 787 797) for confidential advice and assistance around the clock. Furthermore, organisations such as the Auckland Regional Public Health Service are dedicated to providing harm reduction strategies and addiction treatment initiatives.

There is a small though not impossible likelihood that you, reader, may be intoxicated. If that is so, think of your mother and how proud she'd be of you, because we are.



Fares are changing for under 25s from 1 May

Register now for at least 20% off travel for tertiary students



The government is ending funding for free travel for 5-12 year olds and half price fares for 13-24 year olds on 30 April.

But Auckland Transport still has discounts available of at least 20% for full time Tertiary Students. There are also discounts available for Community Service, Total Mobility and Blind Low Vision NZ card holders. See if you qualify and register before 1 May to avoid paying full price fares.



To find out more visit **[AT.govt.nz/farechanges](https://at.govt.nz/farechanges)**



PUTTING ON A F*CKING GOOD TIME

OUR INVITATION TO HELP FUND YOUR EVENTS

Clubs/associations at the University of Auckland who put on an event during one of our Weeks are eligible for funding.

Find out more and apply at:
<http://ausa.org.nz/weeks-tender/>



Consumption of illicit drugs generally stable

Auckland, the most accessible district for cocaine in NZ



ALAN WU

The New Zealand Drug Foundation published its 2022/23 year report on drug consumption last month. We will take this report's key findings and look into the key statistics for young people.

The information in this report is collated via a combination of data from sources such as wastewater testing, NZ Health Survey, and NZ Drugs Trends. An important note is that this report is only concerned with alcohol, tobacco, or nicotine consumption. Please note that this report details data concerned with drug use and not drug harm.

KEY FINDINGS

- **Cocaine use has doubled** to 1.3% of adults since the 2017/18 period. Auckland police district named the highest location for use per capita and reported as highly accessible compared to other urban centres.
- The **use of cannabis has increased by 51% in the last decade**, from 9.4% to 14.2% of all adults. Nearly 200,000 are regular, weekly users.
- Amphetamine-type stimulant use (including methamphetamine) has remained relatively stable since 2017 (1.1% of people 15+ reported in the past year).
- **Disabled people are 3.79 times more likely to use cannabis weekly** than non-disabled people **AND 5.14 times more likely to have used amphetamines in the past year**.
- In 2022/23, 2.5% of adults reported using psychedelics like LSD, compared to 1.3% in 2017/18.

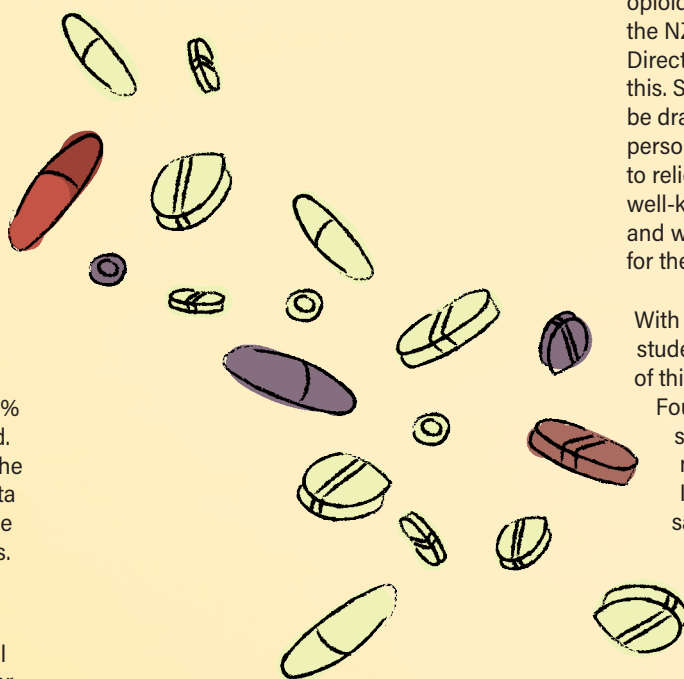
Cannabis is the most popular illicit drug used across New Zealand. As of this report's release, 23.9% (154,000) of the 597,000 reported users of cannabis were young people between the ages of 15–24 years old. However, data from

One other interesting finding is that disabled people are overrepresented in illicit drug use. Individuals with disabilities responded with a dramatically higher likelihood of being users of illicit drugs compared to non-disabled persons. This trend is consistent in the use of cannabis, opioids, and amphetamines. Sarah Helm, the NZ Drug Foundation's Executive Director, provides additional context for this. Some "informed assumptions could be drawn". Drugs may be used by disabled persons to manage health conditions and to relieve pain. Opioids and cannabis are well-known for their pain-relief properties and would therefore be highly sought after for their therapeutic uses.

With all this information, what can students, especially young adults, make of this report? Notably, the NZ Drug Foundation has received a surge in its substance-checking services, with a noticeable 51% increase from 2022. In 2023, the organisation tested 2602 samples at 98 clinics, identifying close to one in five drugs being different to what people thought they had. In light of this report, we invited comments from someone knowledgeable in the drug-testing sector to shed light on the situation and help us better understand it.

Tiana Marshall is a final year BSc Psychology (Cognitive Neuroscience) student at the University of Auckland and a Community Activator at the New Zealand Drug Foundation. Please note that the views expressed are her own as a student who has experience in the drug harm reduction space. They should not be taken as a statement from or as representative of the views of the NZ Drug Foundation.

"People who use drugs are incredibly diverse, and there's no one-size-fits-all reason behind drug experimentation



successive reports has indicated that cannabis use by young people (aged 15–24) has been on the decline now for 2 years in a row. This mirrors the decrease in alcohol consumption, which we noted in the Salvation Army's State of the Nation Report at the beginning of the semester. It might still be too early for us to infer new developments in our generation. We will need to follow these trends further for us to see if there has been a definite change in attitude amongst young people. Generally, the historical trend we have noticed is that as age increases, drug use declines.

in young people. Some non-exhaustive reasons include pleasure and entertainment, self-medication, and interests in anything from cognition and biochemistry to consciousness and spirituality. Experimentation with drugs other than cannabis and alcohol (the psychoactive substances people often try first) is often driven by similar reasons to experimenting with cannabis and alcohol. Social pressure and media portrayal can absolutely play a role; they should not be left unaddressed, but many young people who experiment with drugs have made an autonomous choice to do so.

Like many things, recreational drug use will always come with risks. However, there are steps you can take to reduce this risk. By far the best advice? Get your drugs checked at a New Zealand Drug Foundation clinic or KnowYourStuff-attended event. It's free, legal and confidential, with both services operating under special licences. You get your sample back; in most cases, it's an entirely non-destructive process using infrared spectrometry (FTIR). A beam of light is shot through your sample, giving confidence readings compared with known readings in databases. These readings don't correspond to percentages or proportions but can detect what substances are present. Reagent testing is sometimes required, which destroys a tiny bit of the sample. For LSD tabs, a tiny "pizza slice" sliver is taken out, and for inconclusive samples, a few milligrams might be needed. You can come with a friend and bring multiple samples. If you can't wait for your results or arrive at the end of a clinic, you can leave a small 10-20mg sample and have your results delivered online. These small samples dropped off for online results can't be returned, and any samples unclaimed after the clinic ends will be destroyed.

Upcoming clinics can be found at thelevel.org.nz, and you can filter results for Tāmaki Makaurau. If you live near the UoA City campus, your closest options are clinics at Albert Park Caretaker's Cottage, AUSA and The Hempstore."

Tiana also provided additional tips and links outside of drug testing to further assist students in maintaining personal safety and well-being. Alongside this, we have also attached some relevant online information that could be helpful for users or friends and family.

TIANA'S DO'S FOR USERS:

1. Prior research, particularly if you plan to mix drug combinations or if you take prescription medication.
2. Measure your dose with scales or a micro scoop.
3. Source and check your drugs in advance of festivals and events.
4. Use in groups and stick together. The presence of sober individuals will help to ensure that someone can calmly take charge of the situation and get help.
5. Respect people's choices: avoid encouraging and pressuring people who have already expressed a desire not to participate in substance use.
6. Use clean, sterilised administration methods. Always opt for the most low-risk method possible— Do not share your equipment.



RELIABLE AOTEAROA-BASED RESOURCES

NZ Drug Foundation



High Alert



KnowYourStuff



Psilver Linings to Long White Clouds — <https://www.psilverlinings.nz/>

*Ideal for native Psilocybin mushroom identification, these websites are maintained by professional and amateur mycologists.

The Level Website — <https://thelevel.org.nz>

*For first-time users go to: thelevel.org.nz/safer-using/first-time-using

Free 24-hour helpline: 0800 787 0797

Online resources



Help for friends & family



Community Help



FEATURE



How Do I Make Drugs?

A reader-submitted question.



OLIVER COCKER

With the announcement last week that Pseudoephedrine would be on the open market, it seems a reasonable time to talk about how drugs are made.

Methamphetamine is a Class A drug under our Misuse of Drugs Act 1975, which might be a bit of an outdated name now, but nonetheless, it is highly addictive, widely abused, and allegedly reasonably easy to make using pseudoephedrine tablets. Normally, those tablets are for clearing your blocked nose.

Instead, crush a few up and find yourself a few more easy-to-get substances, and so long as the fumes don't poison you, it'll be done. You didn't really think we'd be allowed to publish the recipe, did you? Nonetheless, as I discovered, the steps are only a quick Google away. Such is a symptom of the modern age that the formula is freely published online, and we're just making it easier to get.

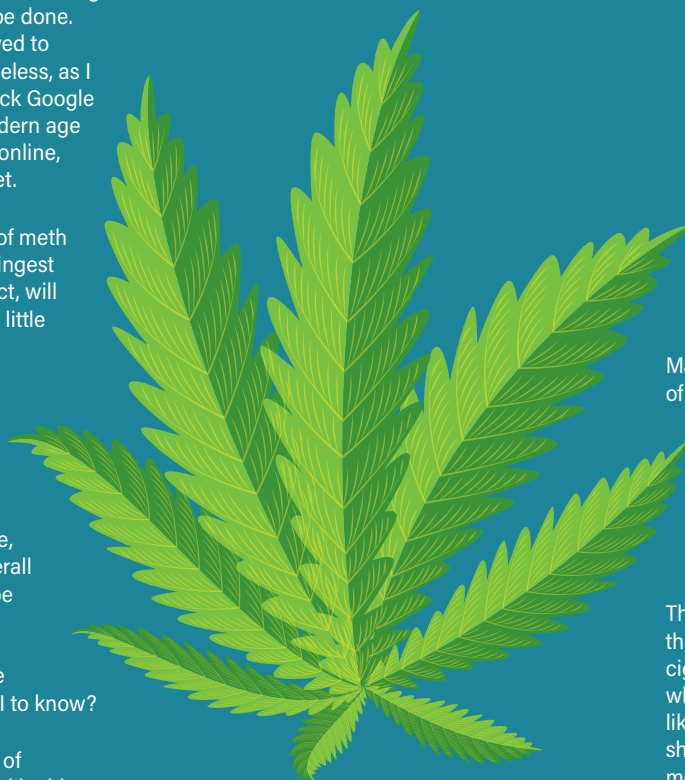
You will have yourself a few grams of meth and also a purple liquid that, if you ingest it or it contaminates the final product, will probably kill you if you drink even a little bit of it.

Each gram of Methamphetamine in New Zealand sells for about five hundred dollars, according to Parliament. Now, maybe our glorious leaders have decided that if they can make it easier to produce, competition will go up, then the overall price will go down, and we will all be thankful that this drug, which kills someone every two days in this country, will be easier to get. Maybe that's just the free market. Who am I to know?

It is true that tamper-proof versions of Pseudoephedrine have been created by big pharmaceutical companies in the United States, but it is also true that they did not work and only reduced the amount made by about five per cent. So don't worry; you can buy about forty-eight tablets for thirty dollars from your local pharmacy, and they will still be just as good as they were before they became prescription-only in Twenty-Eleven.

But hey, maybe meth just is not your thing. Maybe you want something that is more acceptable in New Zealand culture. Luckily for you, the Government has your back, too.

Marijuana? Just go out into a National Park. Both local councils and the Department of Conservation are cutting back on rangers, and that means that there is more space out there for you to grow your produce and not have it traced back to you. Alternatively, just grow it in the surrounding suburbs of Central Auckland. There's a constant Police presence up and down Queen Street due to some business people complaining nonstop, and plenty out West and South due to underfunded Police 'prioritising higher-risk areas,' which you can definitely read in what you want to, but if you want to grow in your Mount Eden or Grey Linn porch, they will not stop you.



Cocaine? I wrote at about this time last year that the drug appeared to be making a surge in the New Zealand market, and colloquially, I have heard in stories that this continues to be the case. Although it is commonly used by rich white men, in particular, it is rising in all demographics, with usage rates among Māori at just ten percent less than Pākehā. As far as all the research suggests, it is not being made here yet, because we do not live in the tropics, but with a little bit of Climate Change, a well-adapted greenhouse, and some of that Kiwi ingenuity, you could be the person that breaks into that market.

And I could go on with party pills, mushrooms, and other amphetamines, a veritable smorgasbord of drugs that can do whatever you really want them to. The reality is, that they are here, and although I'm not sure about the current position of our political leaders in simultaneously trying to punish drug users and make it easier for people to sell to them, is really that reconcilable.

Allegedly, dealers will not go back to using this simplified method because the more complicated recipe, which does not appear to be possible in Aotearoa, is more lucrative, even if it involves sneaking past customs. For some reason, banning it in New Zealand forced this method to occur, but if it were to come back on shelves, people would not just move back.

Perhaps a Pseudoephedrine tablet is good at unblocking your nose, and almost nothing else will work. But you could still get it prescribed.

Maybe it is an honourable attempt to take some of the weight off our medical staff, who are overworked and stretched to the ends of coping. I think most people can make the connection between more meth and more issues with it. And we know that many of the frontline staff will be those same medical professionals in the middle of it all.

There may be more raids on pharmacies, in the same way that there are on places that sell cigarettes. This was a concern from Labour, who wanted the drugs to be locked up, much like Codeine. But ram raids are quite 2023, so I should expect we will see a new vogue in the method. My predictions are on guns, should a different Minister get their way. But that is a conversation for another time.

Drugs are here, and drugs are here to stay. Whether you go the Portuguese route and legalise them all or execute dealers like in China, there's still going to be drug problems. Just don't make the people the problem. We need a robust system of support outside of legislation and everything that happens in the law. And I await the day that we are able to escape the false binary that certain people like to perpetuate, and even I can say that I have subconsciously pushed at a time that exists. There are not users who are all bad or pitiable or non-users who are virtuous or strong. Drugs, user or not, are not a personality trait.

Societal views will take a while to change, but they are slowly coming to this idea. Anyone who wants a change deserves a change because asking for it, especially in our culture, takes a bigger leap of courage than some are willing to recognise. And the rest of us, whether we do two point six kilograms of cocaine a week, as poorly created drug foundation graph might suggest, or nothing at all, just need to look inwards when we can and ask: "How do we make our drug system better?"

Ask Your Doctor if [REDACTED] is Right for You

***Side effects may include: nausea and vomiting, allergic reactions, drowsiness, insomnia, dizziness, heart problems, aches and pains, amnesia, hallucinations, nerve damage, loss of smell, confusion, impulsiveness, anal leakage, organ failure and death**



REEMA ARSILAN

Have you ever found yourself humming along to a jingle about urinary incontinence? There are only two developed countries which allow direct-to-consumer prescription drug advertisements: the USA, and New Zealand. It's not a particularly good look to be lumped in with the USA on any healthcare issue, and yet like it or not you're probably familiar with at least a few of the most televised ads.

From asthma to hair loss to erectile dysfunction, various ailments have been portrayed onscreen with talent rivaling that of a male football player. The depths of human misery are then miraculously cured with whatever magical and infallible drug is being pushed. This kind of advertising

tactic has been labelled harmful by various experts for years, as its purpose is to drive choice rather than inform it. Advertisement is manipulation used to increase commercial success, however drug ads are often portrayed as information given out of the kindness of the pharmaceutical companies' heart in the interest of the patient (profit merely being a convenient side effect).

There may be some regulation in place, but ads for prescription medicines will never give people all the information they need to make informed healthcare decisions; that wouldn't be profitable. These ads tend to be vague and misleading, pathologising normal human experiences and contributing to the notion that medication

is the only fix, which often isn't the case. Direct-to-consumer advertising increases the risk of inappropriate prescription, which can have detrimental impacts on health and higher costs. As well as this, it creates more work for medical professionals and puts the doctor-patient relationship under stress when patients request advertised drugs that aren't appropriate for them.

Maybe it's the ethical implications, maybe it's the sheer annoyance, but medical professionals all seem to agree that direct-to-consumer prescription drug advertising should be banned in New Zealand. Who do you trust more, your doctor or your TV?



RACISM IS DRUGGY, AND IN 2024 WE ARE CALLING IT OUT

STANDING UP FOR DESIGNATED SPACES FOR MĀORI & PACIFIC SPACES AT UOA



IATUA FELAGAI TAITO

Taeao Manuia & Mōrena everyone! I hope everyone had an excellent mid-semester break. Well, most of us likely had a good break, but for Māori and Pacific students, I think it was pretty hard emotionally. I'll tell you why. So, in week 5 of this semester (the week before we all went on break), someone posted this photo on reddit.com asking people to "What are their genuine thoughts?" for this image.



And then it went viral, and the comments under it were so damaging and inflammatory, and yes, indeed, it was racially insensitive and racist. I am not repeating those hurtful comments and jokes under the post because I don't want to breathe life into those words in this Craccum edition from people speaking about a community they are not a part of. As a result, as your Pasifika editor, I was notified that our Māori and Pacific students are getting physical harassment, as well as people spitting on our students' cultural attire when they wear it on campus, which is horrible.

I'll begin with why it is vital to have these designated spaces for Māori and Pacific students here in the first place at the University. It is important because of one of many academic research articles, particularly this article: *Equity in New Zealand University Graduate Outcomes: Māori and Pacific graduates*. It points out how Māori and Pacific are heavily under-represented in NZ universities.

So specifically, having these designated spaces offers additional support for underserved communities within tertiary spaces.

However, why the backlash? It baffles me because, within universities in NZ, we have designated spaces for queer people, such

as queer spaces for women as well called women's spaces. In addition, we have specific groups and clubs at UoA as well that cater to everyone. There are arguably 200 clubs/associations at UoA, according to the UoA website. However, for this particular space, why is there so much animosity online and in person?

To make matters worse, our coalition government from the ACT party started to say there's a "blocking access to spaces on ethnicity," which is not true. For anyone who takes part in Tuākana, which is an academic support program for Māori and Pacific students, people know that it is an open space for anyone and everyone who needs extra help. It has always been like that, yes it is specific but it is not discriminatory because it is based around Te Moana nui a Kiwa values of Tuākana - Teina relationships based on helping all people succeed. Whether you're Māori and Pacific or not, it is an inclusive space for helping everyone do well in their studies.

But of course, the ACT party wouldn't know that because their fear-mongering tactics to create a harmful rhetoric of division are starting to fester online and, unfortunately, in person too for Māori and Pacific students at UoA. Discrimination of all forms is occurring, so I want to remind people why these spaces exist, and in short, it exists for equity reasons.

It doesn't exist to have this Māori and Pacific domination to cause havoc at Universities; it is a space where people who have similar values and philosophies come together to have a sense of belonging. Most students I have talked to personally who are Māori and Pacific always tell me the same thing: that they feel isolated or are one of very few to be the only Māori and Pacific person in their class being the minority. So, these designated spaces are there to help them with their self-esteem and confidence, knowing that they belong in these tertiary spaces and in their respective disciplines here at UoA. Seeing racist comments online and people arguing that these spaces are racist is misguided.

These designated spaces and initiatives for Māori and Pacific students have been happening for many years. For example, MAPAS, PILSA, Pasifika Success, Unibound, Tuākana, Vaka Moana, and many more.

I am also grateful that our Vice-Chancellor,

Dawn Freshwater, and our UoA staff understand the importance of these spaces.

Freshwater states: "We have designated rooms across the University for multiple teaching, research, study and extra-curricular purposes. Some of these spaces are for Māori and Pacific students... These programmes have received government support from 2001 and are recognised as contributing significantly to Māori and Pacific success".

Fundamentally, she's implying that these spaces for Māori and Pacific students aren't new, and they are successful in helping Māori and Pacific excel.

So with this recent publicity of hatred being swallowed by people being threatened or angry about these spaces, they need to get off their bandwagon of racism and not be influenced further by the druggy tactics of the ACT party and our current Deputy Prime Minister Winston Peters saying it is like the KKK or it is similar to apartheid.

Those extreme comparisons and divisive language that fails to comprehend why these spaces exist go to show how they feel about spaces that are different from them, especially when it is for equitable purposes. They'll find a way to disregard the plethora of research out there to say massive claims like 'KKK', 'apartheid', and 'segregation' to normalise their unconscious bias around Māori and Pacific communities.

Think about it, the government wants to get rid of Māori names from government departments and revert them back to English, disestablishment of the Māori Health Authority, slashing of 40% of staff for the Ministry of Pacific Peoples, and extensively review the MAPAS program at UoA even though it is a successful and needed program. All I can say is there is a pattern, particularly with what has happened in regard to this topic of designated spaces, because of their influence and misinformed comments on this matter; now, our Māori and Pacific students are dealing with discrimination and racism in extreme measures from students. It is not okay!

If you want to chat more about this and understand more about why it is vital to have these spaces, please email me at Pasifika@craccum.co.nz

How to Deal with "Penis Envy"



MIKE CROSS

In the world of fringe mycology, the term "Penis Envy" doesn't refer to a Freudian concept but to a particularly sought-after strain of psilocybin mushroom. Known for its distinctive shape and potent effects, this variety has piqued the interest of enthusiasts worldwide. However cultivating such mushrooms comes with a complex web of legal, ethical, and safety considerations, especially here in New Zealand.

With that in mind this is a purely hypothetical article that I and Craccum do not suggest you try any of what is printed here and most certainly don't write to us with your findings and experience! we wouldn't love to hear about it at Environmental@craccum.co.nz.

The Legal Consideration

In New Zealand, the cultivation or possession of psilocybin mushrooms is illegal, falling under the Misuse of Drugs Act 1975. Activities involving these substances can lead to significant legal consequences, including fines and imprisonment.

A Closer Look at Penis Envy

"Penis Envy" mushrooms are known for their unique appearance and high psilocybin content. However, due to the legal status of psilocybin mushrooms in New Zealand, cultivating or possessing Penis Envy mushrooms is prohibited.

"Penis Envy" is a strain of *Psilocybe cubensis*, which is one of the most popular and widely known species of psychedelic mushrooms. The effects of consuming Penis Envy, like other psilocybin-containing mushrooms, can vary widely from person to person and are influenced by factors such as dosage, individual sensitivity, environment (set and setting), and the user's mental state. Penis Envy is often reported to be more potent than many other *Psilocybe cubensis* strains, which means its effects can be more intense at lower doses.

Physical Effects

- **Enhanced Senses:** Colors might seem brighter, sounds more distinct, and tactile sensations more pronounced.
- **Pupil Dilation:** A common physical reaction to psilocybin.
- **Changes in Heart Rate and Blood Pressure:** These can fluctuate, often increasing.
- **Nausea:** This can occur, especially during the onset of effects.
- **Muscle Relaxation or Weakness:** Some users report feeling either relaxed or somewhat weakened physically.

Psychological Effects

- **Euphoria:** Feelings of well-being and happiness are common.
- **Altered Sense of Time:** Time may seem to slow down.
- **Visual Hallucinations:** Users might see patterns, shapes, or colors that are not there, or their environment may appear distorted.
- **Emotional Shifts:** Rapid changes in mood, including waves of joy, introspection, and in some cases, anxiety or paranoia.
- **Increased Openness or Extroversion:** Users often report feeling more open to new ideas, thoughts, and feelings.
- **Spiritual Experiences or Feelings of Connectedness:** Many users report profound spiritual experiences or a sense of oneness with the universe or nature.

Potential Negative Effects

- **Anxiety or Paranoia:** Particularly in unfamiliar or uncomfortable environments, or if the user is not mentally prepared.
- **Challenging Psychological Experiences:** Sometimes referred to as "bad trips," which can include intense fear, confusion, and negative thought loops.
- **Aftereffects:** Some users report feeling mentally exhausted or experiencing mild depression in the days following use.

Beyond the Envy: Legal and Safe Alternatives

For those interested in the science of mycology and the practice of mushroom cultivation, there are numerous legal and equally fascinating mushrooms to explore. Varieties such as oyster, shiitake, and lion's mane not only offer culinary delights but also provide a gateway into the complex world of fungi. Cultivating these legal varieties can sharpen your mycological skills and deepen your appreciation for nature's complexity.

As budding mycologists or simply curious minds, New Zealand's natural ecosystems are treasures to be preserved, and any activities undertaken in this regard should ultimately be conducted in sterile controlled conditions as not to spread any unwanted organisms.

The "Microwave Rice" Method

The "Microwave Rice" method, named after the popular brand of pre-cooked rice, has become a go-to technique for mycology enthusiasts looking to cultivate mushrooms.

This method's appeal is in its simplicity and accessibility, utilizing ready-to-eat rice bags as a sterile substrate for spore inoculation.

While commonly associated with the cultivation of psychedelic mushrooms, it's important to note that the "Microwave Rice" method is not limited to such uses. It can also serve as a tool for growing gourmet and medicinal mushrooms, which are perfectly legal and can offer an inroad to the world of fungi.

Step 1: Gathering Your Supplies

- **Grain Spawn Substitute:** Look for sterilized, ready-to-eat grain bags (like the "Microwave Rice") as they serve as an ideal substrate for growing mushrooms due to their sterile environment.
- **Mushroom Spores or Liquid Culture:** Ensure you're using spores or cultures of legal mushroom varieties. Spores can sometimes be bought in syringes, making them easier to inject into your grain bags.
- **Micropore Tape:** This tape allows for gas exchange while preventing contaminants from entering.
- **Sterile Syringe and Needle:** For inoculating the grain bags with your mushroom culture.
- **Disinfectant:** Isopropyl alcohol or any other disinfectant to sterilize surfaces and tools.
- **Gloves and Face Mask:** To maintain a sterile environment as much as possible.

Step 2: Preparing Your Workspace

- Clean your workspace thoroughly with disinfectant.
- Wash your hands and wear gloves and a face mask to minimize contamination.

Step 3: Inoculation

1. **Sterilize the Needle:** Use a lighter to heat the needle until it's red hot, then allow it to cool or quickly cool it with alcohol without contaminating it.
2. **Prepare the Grain Bag:** Gently massage the grain bag to break up any clumps, making it easier for the mycelium to colonize.
3. **Sanitize the Injection Site:** Wipe down a small area of the bag with an alcohol swab where you plan to inject the spores or liquid culture.
4. **Inject the Culture:** Carefully insert the needle through the bag's plastic, injecting the mushroom culture into the bag. You'll want to distribute the spores or liquid culture in a few different spots within the bag to encourage even colonization.
5. **Seal the Injection Sites:** Cover the injection holes with micropore tape to allow for air exchange while keeping contaminants out.

Step 4: Incubation

- Place the inoculated grain bags in a warm, dark place. The ideal temperature range depends on the mushroom species but is typically around 75-80°F (24-27°C) for many common varieties.
- Wait for the mycelium to colonize the substrate, checking occasionally for any signs of contamination. Full colonization can take several weeks, depending on the mushroom species and conditions.

Step 5: Fruiting

1. **Prepare the Fruiting Environment:** Once the bag is fully colonized, it's time to introduce it to conditions conducive to mushroom fruiting. This often involves higher humidity, fresh air exchange, and indirect light.

2. **Initiate Fruiting:** Cut open the bag to expose the colonized substrate to your fruiting conditions. Some growers transfer the colonized substrate to a fruiting chamber or box to better control these conditions.

Step 6: Harvesting

- Mushrooms are typically ready to harvest just before or as their veils begin to tear. Harvest times can vary widely based on the species and environmental conditions.

Step 7: Enjoying Your Harvest

- Once harvested, your mushrooms can be cooked (if edible), dried, or used as needed based on their type. Remember, identification and safety are paramount with any type of mushroom.

This method demystifies mushroom cultivation, making it accessible to hobbyists and enthusiasts alike. Remember, the key to success in mushroom growing is cleanliness, patience, and careful observation of your mushrooms' needs.

Happy hypothetical growing!

While the intrigue surrounding "Penis Envy" mushrooms and the "Microwave Rice" method is understandable, it's vital to channel our curiosity towards legal and constructive mycological pursuits. By doing so, we not only comply with the law but also contribute positively to our understanding of fungi, their role in our world, and any cosmic journeys we wish to undertake.

As we nurture our interests and education in mycology, let's prioritize legality, safety, and ethical considerations—turning our "envy" into enlightenment and engagement with the natural world, and remember "loose lips sink ships"

****Disclaimer:** The information provided in this article is for informational and educational purposes only and is not intended as professional medical advice, diagnosis, or treatment. The substances discussed, including their effects and cultivation methods, are controlled and considered illegal in many jurisdictions. This article does not promote, endorse, or encourage participation in any illegal activities. Craccum does not take any responsibility for the actions or side effects taken by readers based on the information provided herein, including but not limited to: incarceration, prosecution, expulsion from university, self-defecation, vomiting and nausea, experiencing the "munchies", having a sudden desire to "freak out, man", embarking on cosmic journeys to unknown realms, achieving enlightenment or the opening of the "third eye", feeling an inexplicable urge to commune with nature/the universe/household plants, giggling uncontrollably at seemingly mundane objects or situations, discovering newfound appreciation for the intricacies of existence, ego death, experiencing time dilation or a sudden understanding of the universe's vastness, developing an insatiable curiosity about the mysteries of the cosmos, feeling an overwhelming sense of interconnectedness with all living beings and the cosmos at large.**

FUMBLING THROUGH A PSYCHEDELIC MAZE

How to Ensure Your Trip Takes a Turn for the Worse



BENN WEST

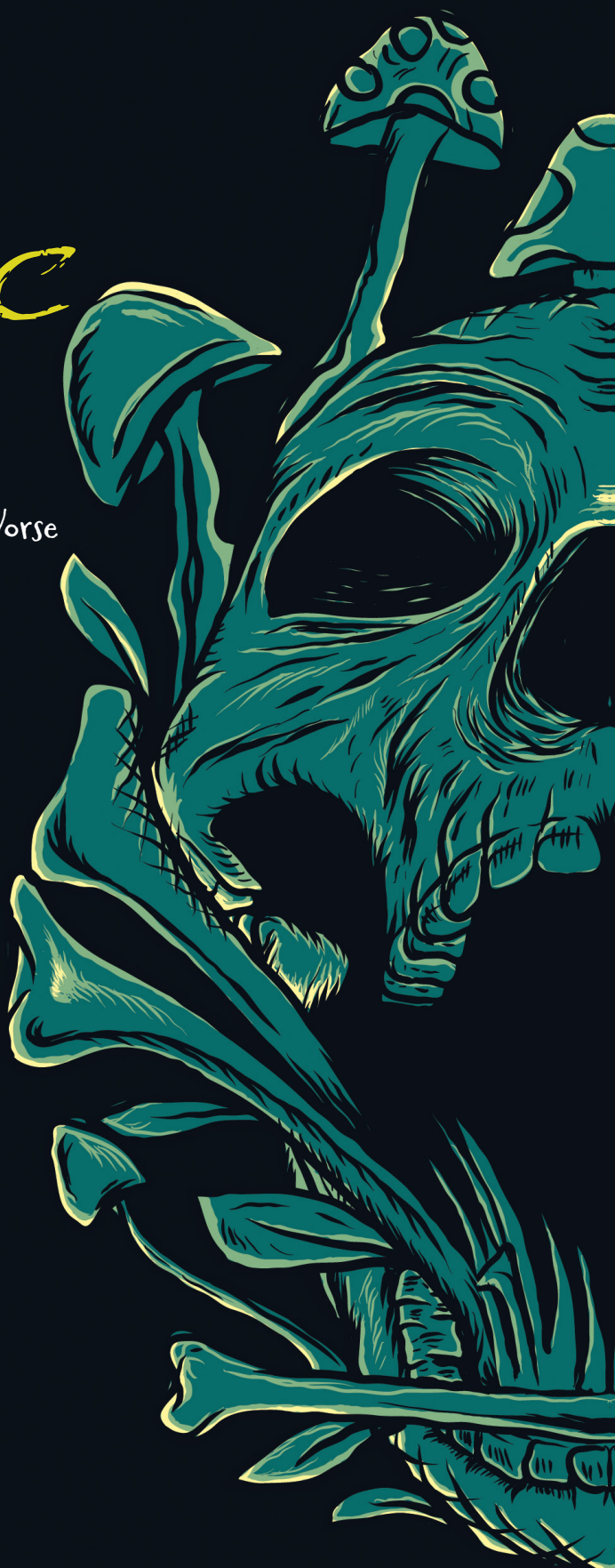
If you've ever found yourself pondering the mysteries of psychedelic exploration, you might also be asking: "How can I turn this potentially enlightening experience into a colossal train wreck?" Well, you've found the guide that will turn your trip into a series of slapstick comedy errors. We here at Craccum aren't qualified to help you up but we can teach you how to get down

1. FIND THE HIGHEST POINT WITH A BREATHTAKING VIEW

Nothing screams "serenity" like being perched on a ledge contemplating your existence while tiny ants (sometimes referred to as people) scurry below. You don't need safety harnesses when you've got psychedelic courage and a vague notion of superhuman abilities? Just remember that the views grandeur is inversely proportional to your grip on reality

2. BE WITH PEOPLE YOU DON'T TRUST

When it comes to the delicate territory of companionship or more accurately, the conspicuous absence thereof. Forget about your loyal comrades instead, we're throwing common sense to the wind and rolling the dice with that enigmatic character you stumbled upon during rush hour traffic. You know the type, emitting a mildew reminiscent of conspiracy theories and spilt nitro, you can find these people haunting bus stops, mall entrances and your local gaming lounge. Nothing screams "bad trip" like tethering yourself to someone who's one tinfoil hat away from a complete mental unravelling.





3. TAKE THE TIME TO LOOK DEEP WITHIN YOURSELF

You have been told by the one chill smelly dude in halls, that using mushrooms can be beneficial for your mental health, he totally believes in the power of mushroom tea therapy. While mushrooms might not hold all the answers to life's woes, they certainly excel at making said woes feel more bizarre and bewildering. Use this trip to look into the depths of your subconscious. Prepare to navigate the labyrinths of Childhood Trauma, where every twist and turn feels like stumbling through a carnival designed by a fever dream Salvador Dali.

4. PICK THE RIGHT MUSIC

What's a descent into madness without a suitable soundtrack to accompany the journey? Trust in the Spotify algorithm, it knows you better than you can know yourself. Why pick a curated playlist when you can embark on a sonic odyssey that feels like being trapped in an elevator with a band of harmonica players on speed? Brace yourselves for a cacophony of chaos, where every beat feels like a punchline waiting to land and every melody seems to mock you with the absurdity of your own continued existence.

5. MIX YOUR PSYCHEDELICS WITH OTHER SUBSTANCES

Who needs caution when you have curiosity and a pharmacy at your disposal? Tequila and gold tops, a splash of absinthe with a side of existential dread. Why settle for a bad trip when you can have a full-on catastrophic nightmare, it's like playing Russian roulette with a fully loaded blender.

6. PRACTICE SELF-CARE

Spa days and scented candles are placebos true self-care is about embracing the grotesque. While your mouth is drier than the Gobi desert you can try brushing your teeth and experience an oral waterfall of blood pouring out your gums. Experience the unsettling thrill of peeling off a face mask that's fused with your skin like a clingy ex, because nothing says "I hate myself" like subjecting your body to a Cronenbergian nightmare.

7. FIXATE ON TIME

Strap on a watch and obsess over every tick of the clock like a time-obsessed maniac. What's more fun than feeling the relentless march of time creeping up on you while you're busy contemplating the fabric of reality?

8. SET UNREALISTIC EXPECTATIONS

Prepare for disappointment by approaching your psychedelic journey with the misguided belief that you'll achieve some greater spiritual resonance with the universe instead of staring at seeds for extended periods. Spend an eternity chasing the elusive golden dragon of enlightenment, only to realize that the only thing you've achieved is a monumental headache and a newfound appreciation for sobriety.





CRACCMUM?

AN INTERVIEW WITH MY MUM, LOUISE MATHESON

THE ROAST OF CRACCMUM



LEWIS MATHESON CREED



Last week, I sat down for drinks with not a Joel, but a Louise, who is co-founder, or mother (as it's colloquially known), of your Arts Editor. She's a legend in her own lifetime in my book. Imported from Scotland at a young age, she was raised in Wellington. She's been a professional screen printer, a ship's captain and had a brief stint as an 80s action hero in Beverly Hills. After all that excitement, she settled down in Auckland in the 1990s, where she has been based ever since. She's incredibly kind and generous to friends, family and strangers alike: volunteering every fortnight at Feed the Streets Avondale. She's also a huge fan of Craccum, so the first question I always get when I walk in the door on a Monday is "where's my Crack?" I love you mum!

HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE YOURSELF IN ONE WORD?

Old.

WHAT COLOUR ARE YOU FEELING TODAY?

Today? Well today I am RED! Very red.

WHAT WAS THE LAST ALBUM YOU LISTENED TO?

Ooo la la, it's gotta be that one with the teeth isn't it [sic: Jaguar II by Victoria Monét]. Hmmm album? Got that's a hard question. Might have been Hackney Diamonds by The Rolling Stones when I was in the car.

FAVOURITE RESTAURANT?

Timmur in Avondale at the moment. Love Indian food.

YOU USUALLY DO THE INTERVIEWING IN YOUR JOB. HOW DOES IT FEEL TO HAVE THE TABLES TURNED?

Well. For one I know that I won't be going to court.

[ME: YET, DEPENDS WHAT YOU SAY MUM].

No, it's much nicer than one of my interviews. I'm a nasty, nasty bitch. I lure them in with my dulcet tones and elderly sweetheart charms and then I reel them in. You can't make me confess, you don't have the confession skills bub.

HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN READING EVERY ISSUE OF CRACCUM, COVER TO COVER?

Four. Long. Years.

WHY DO YOU ENJOY READING IT SO MUCH, DON'T BE AFRAID TO BE BRUTALLY HONEST?

Well sometimes I read it and think 'I've never read such shite in my whole life.' Then I think: 'all these young people are so full of themselves. I wasn't like that was I?'

Sometimes these kids surprise you with a really good article, it's like a box of chocolates. You open the fucker up and find out what these little shites have been up to. I always need a large glass of wine to accompany it, to make it go down better.

WHEN YOU WERE IN THE TARGET DEMOGRAPHIC AGE GROUP, DID YOU READ ANY STUDENT MAGAZINES?

Yes I did, Salient. It was more political back then, but I don't think they ever went to parliament, just the pub.

WHAT APPEALED TO YOU ABOUT THEM BACK THEN, SINCE YOU WEREN'T A UNI STUDENT?

Oh you've outed me now!? What appealed? The articles which ripped the back out of politicians and the humour.

DO YOU THINK MUCH HAS CHANGED IN THE LAST 50 YEARS WITH STUDENT JOURNALISM?

God that's really ageing me isn't it? [Art Editors Note: Sorry mum!!!]

Yes. More sex, drugs and less sense. Worse articles, less current affairs, less piss takes. Watered down shallow crap. That's why I read it.

DO YOU HAVE ANY ADVICE FOR KIERAN AND THE CURRENT TEAM TO PERHAPS RESURRECT THE 'GOLDEN AGE' OF STUDENT JOURNALISM?

Yes, well I actually think Kieran is putting his own spin on it and I like it. My advice is to keep course and put your own

stamp on it. Good on ya.

But stay away from day drinking and P, it's a slippery slope.

IN RECENT MEMORY WHAT WAS YOUR FAVOURITE YEAR OF CRACCUM AND WHY? AND WHICH WAS YOUR LEAST FAVOURITE?

My least favourite was the year before last. What year are we in? The one with all those girls was absolute rubbish in 2022.

[ME: YOU KNOW THEY WON A LOT OF AWARDS THAT YEAR, RIGHT?]

Well they must have been snivelling up to someone, or up their arse, either or.

This year is my favourite so far, because I think Kieran's got a great team and I can already smell the changes. I think their social media is better than it's ever been. Don't slack off when exams come around. Mama needs her Crack kiddos.

WHY SHOULD UOA STUDENTS READ AND CONTRIBUTE TO CRACCUM, MUM?

Cause it's their ferkin' magazine. Read dumb fucks. Be part of it. It's a no brainer. Anyone who doesn't read it needs slapping.

WHAT'S SOMETHING YOU'RE LOOKING FORWARD TO IN THE FUTURE?

In my future? Um. It would be retirement, but then I get no money? Probably my trip to Hungary and Croatia with my cuz [Art Editors Note: her bff].

LASTLY, IS THERE ANYTHING YOU WANT TO PLUG OR SHOUT OUT TO OUR READERS?

I want peace in Palestine, that's what's most important.

Recovery is far from a beautiful thing

A gaze beyond the veiled realities of self-improvement

BAILEY ALICE GINSBERG

Recovery is far from a beautiful thing
It's a morning spent vomiting in the bathroom sink
It's an evening in tears, pulling out your own hair
It's an awful, faux feeling that leaves your heart reeling

Recovery is far from a beautiful thing
It's coughing up tar out the windows of cars
It's bleeding each time that you brush your own teeth
Because you were so high you forgot for a week

Recovery is far from a beautiful thing
It's craving a poison that makes your life bleak
And feeling so anxious that you hardly sleep
While each dream seems its own antithesis of peace

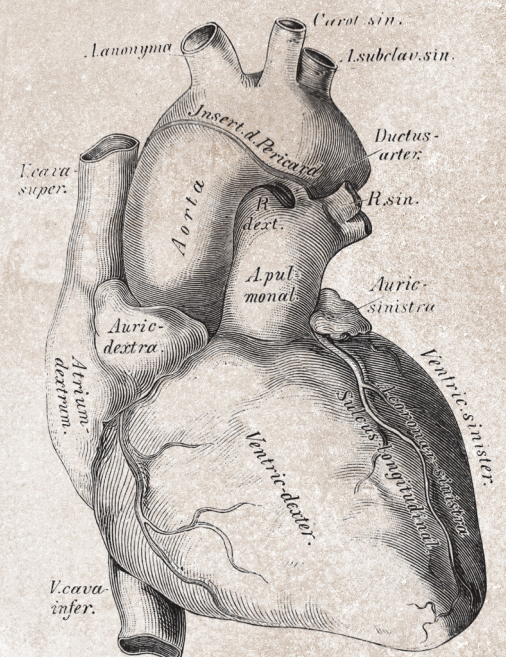
Recovery is far from a beautiful thing
It's reclaiming your mind, to accept what you find
It's a flood of lost memories that wash over at once
It may feel like you're drowning, it may feel like too much

Recovery is far from a beautiful thing
It's defending yourself and all that you could be
And rejecting the things that left you feeling free
Though it leaves you so lowly, replacing them slowly

Recovery is far from a beautiful thing
It means thinking about water when you need a drink
And thinking about fire when you talk about smoke
To peer into warm light, rather than choke

Recovery is far from a beautiful thing
But it's feeling your lungs again each time you sing
It's living your life without fear or pretense
It's chemical calm, in a natural sense

Recovery is far from a beautiful thing
Recovery is far from a beautiful thing
And some days are harder than others, believe me
But I'll improve myself for as long as I'm breathing



CLUBS

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- Make new friends
- Develop leadership skills
- Make an impact
- Regular Social Events



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GET INVOLVED:

- Community support
- Career planning
- Self-paced learning
- Self-driven projects
- Co-working space

EFFECTIVE ALTRUISM UOA

Our focus is on supporting members to upskill, learn, and start on their career path by helping solve some of the world's biggest problems (e.g. pandemic prevention, AI safety, and climate change). We're initially trialling a new project co-working space with current members but will soon invite new members also!

The bender is over, the Craccum podcast returns

BENN WEST

Lighters to the sky folks, the Cooked. Craccum. Podcast returns from hiatus. Ben Lai and Benn West are your trip-sitters for this week as we come crashing into the end of our benders and the return of academic responsibilities. Join us as we take a deep hit and discuss the articles and guides in this edition. With all the urgency of a broke man walking out of Wall Street, we are scraping our mental grinders to find something to talk about, who knew being professional yappers was such a hard job

but we live to support the habit for some of our addicted listeners. We'll be prescribing our listeners the best snacks to beat the munchies, the films for their tender souls and the music to make them the main characters. Benn has found a way to relate this week's themes to his special interest and how drugs intersect with Pro Wrestling and the long tragic history of wrestlers battling addiction problems that led to a lost generation and how modern wrestling stepping out from its long shadow.



Ride your spaceship again

A Josh Lu Film



**AN INDEPENDENT
COMING OF AGE FILM**
Starring Lucas Zhan

**06
APRIL**

Feat.
4runner by Brenn!
Nosebleed Seats by Vansire



scan to watch



link on IG: josh_llu

FILMMAKER'S SPOTLIGHT - TINA

A COMING-OF-AGE FILM BY LOCAL UOA FILMMAKER JOSH LU



TREVOR PRONOSO

It's often rare to encounter new, fresh-faced filmmakers springing out of the orange-coned, construction-riddled campus of the University of Auckland.

For Josh Lu, who is a second-year BCom/LLB student, there's an almost overwhelming amount of dignity and self-determination to one's imagistic identity that emanates from his new 20-minute coming-of-age short film, *TINA*.

The film, titled as a humorous misnomer to the aged Nissan Almera Tino hatchback, foregrounds its aforementioned adventurous automobile through the innocent imaginations of a young Felix (played by Lucas Zhan), an eight-year-old Chinese boy whose car rides with his family see the Nissan Tino transform into a supersonic spaceship, "Tina". The tenacious Tina tirelessly traverses the numerous extra-terrestrial terrains, displayed in cutely colourful children's drawings featuring 'intergalactic planets' such as a McDonalds PlayPlace, a small forest gathering, and the monkey bars of a playground. Piloted by our free-wheeling Felix, arms outstretched like Rose from *Titanic*, the astronaut life is undoubtedly uplifting and liberating. Old camcorder footage of these forests and playgrounds captured by Felix invites us to step into the time machine of early home video and peer into its grainy window of the past, a past of seeming childhood innocence that can only manifest through film as fragmented, fuzzy digital derelicts of human experience. Nostalgia is not meant to last forever.

15 years later... A nine-to-five, the constraining cubicles, the grayscale grind to the grocery store, the 'everyday' endlessly endured. An older Felix (Josh Lu) is left disempowered. What remaining ambition and curiosity from his childhood has been buckled permanently in the back seat due to

his stressful work. Yet, in the corner of his darkened room, a light pierces through: a LEGO toy model of his old Tina. A spark is lit inside Felix. He needs to come back.

On the pilgrimage back to his childhood home, Felix spots Tina rotting in the garage, the tarpaulin hiding years of neglect. The nostalgic illusion is shattered and brought into stark contrast—not out of its immediate panging axiomatic distance from the present, but because it has been taken for granted. The joys of unfettered felicity through momentum, the thrill of trekking up the Sisyphean mountain never left, but unfortunately have been rendered redundant from the hustle and bustle of rote urban lifestyles. Felix, once stunted, begins to experience that inertia once again.

And in this spur of continuous momentum, we see past and present intermingle and intercut with each other via montage. As Felix begins repairing his treasured Tina, there is a particular focus on the gestural movement of hands; contained is an underlining of the simple, small mundane objects that imply the nature of 'assembly', a consideration of the sum of moving parts generally ignored now given individual heft and emphasis. The same way a child combines a disparate array of LEGO bricks to form a car, Felix puts his head down and picks up the fallen pieces of his distant childhood one by one. Hands grasp multiple objects of utility: a wrench, a screw, a spark plug, an ignition key. Repairing Tina, reclaiming one's essence to "become" anew takes hard work, fueled by an unshakable desire to discover newfound happiness from the familiar. It is possible to forge your own fulfilment from the ground up.

After having a lengthy dialogue between me and Josh over the last two weeks, it seems almost

appropriate that his favourite genre of movies is animation, especially those that revolve around navigating childhood independence and their formation of identity outside traditional norms (*How to Train Your Dragon*, *Wall-E*, *Spirited Away*). Hell, the road to making *TINA* framed as his personal relic to the world wasn't easy for him, constantly wracked with fear and anxiety all throughout the production process. In his own words:

My goal was to release TINA, delete Instagram, and go back to studying my Accounting because this was not going to work out for me... I was wrong. TINA wasn't a flop... and I would have never expected some of the positive comments and feedback that people have given for it. I am truly grateful for everyone who has supported me along the way, and to everyone who has watched it and provided feedback.

TINA's wonderfully vibrant confluence of narrative and form is metonymic to Josh's own personal journey and to the wider awakening current upcoming filmmakers deserve right now. Scorsese wasn't lying: pick up your damn phone and film something! The emergence of digital has revolutionised the filmmaker from economic constraints and universalised the accessibility of moviemaking capital. Your smartphone, Google Drive, DaVinci Resolve, and a bunch of friends willing to flail around in front of the camera is all you need. Take a good look at your own personal Tina's and fight for it till the very end.

Josh Lu's *TINA* is available to watch for free on YouTube and to log on Letterboxd.

*ANY UP AND COMING FILMMAKERS WHO WOULD LIKE TO HAVE A REVIEW BE WRITTEN AND PROMOTED FOR YOUR PROJECTS, PLEASE EMAIL TPRO520@AUCKLANDUNI.AC.NZ IF YOU'RE INTERESTED, OR IF YOU JUST WANNA CHAT ABOUT MOVIES 🍿

'THE CONVERT' REVIEW

Lee Tamahori's latest film dramatises the Musket Wars era of Aotearoa's history



LEWIS MATHESON CREED & TREVOR PRONOSO



The Convert, currently screening nationwide, is based on Hamish Clayton's 2011 novel, *The Wulf*, which details a time before Te Tiriti, a time when colonialism occurred on a more localised scale haphazardly, a time when Pākehā had to pay rent to Māori since the nearest British court was two-thousand kilometres away in New South Wales. Despite Aotearoa being a very different place nearly 200 years ago, the colonial tensions remain as strong and relevant as ever. Legendary Kiwi director Tamahori (*Once Were Warriors*, *Mahana*, that one James Bond film with Pierce Brosnan, and surprisingly an episode of *The Sopranos*) has described his latest film for *Stuff* as "very timely" for New Zealand, and we couldn't agree more.

The film is divided mainly into two acts. The first focuses on the racist townsfolk in the colonial settlement of Epworth, and the second focuses on the inter-tribal conflict between the chiefs Akatārawa and Maianui. And in between these "acts", these disparate realms of culture and communities forcefully grating generational grievances against each other via vengeful violence, lies our symbolic stand-in, the nexus, the vanishing point whose metaphorical mediation between Pākehā & Māori bear the tumultuous barriers of biculturalism apropos to the historical, formative identity of Aotearoa: Christian missionary Munro (played by Guy Pearce, wowee).

Colonialism in *The Convert* is idealised as a two-way interaction, with the caveat that both cultures have good and bad to offer each other: peace and violence, Christianity and muskets, utu and rangimarie. The ignorant Pākehā of Epworth, who disrespect the local Iwi, are shown to be selfish and deplorable characters who murder each other and live their lives out of fear, cowardly "clinging to a beach at the edge of the world". Conversely, the hubris of Akatārawa (Lawrence Makoare), fueled by the greed and a thirst for blood from the Pākehā, meets his nemesis at the hands of Maianui (Antonio Te Maioha), who wishes for peace and strives to preserve the traditional mores of his iwi and cultivation of matauranga and tikanga. Munro himself, perhaps speaking the director's words, says that if Māori keep destroying each other, they are playing into the hands of the colonisers. I think this is why *The Convert* is so relevant right now. Today there are still people like those of Epworth who support the deplorable anti-Māori agenda lurking in our country's politics which aims to take any opportunity to undermine Māori indigenous rights and redact what little provisions Te Tiriti provides. Tamahori's film, within this political context, suggests that Māori must resist in solidarity to stand any chance in the face of such overwhelming colonialist forces.

Besides thematic implications, *The Convert* is beautifully filmed, with "urban" spaces

such as Epworth and the Māori villages having a somewhat muted colour tone, which suddenly bursts into rich shades of green and light in the bush. Landscape shots and birds punctuate the scenes, providing a rich soundscape that Lewis only picked up on during his second viewing. The chiefs in their black and white cloaks have an otherworldly screen presence and steal all the scenes they are in with their Mana. In the tradition of Māori cinema, narrative beats and the slew of characters introduced and frequently interacting within given scenes constantly intercut between each other as Munro enters a harmonious, non-individualistic Māori society; the story moves from him as the protagonist to then the wider community as he participates in the defence of Maianui's village, somewhat defusing what we feared was going to become a white saviour narrative. Ultimately, *The Convert* serves to remind us that Aotearoa is "a land steeped in blood" and that the racial tensions that linger today have their origins in our past. Biculturalism may be the best compromise we have to find peace, but don't you ever let them forget the indispensable ichor shed by those who have fought for their right to stand on the whenua they take for granted.

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'Mobile Suit Gundam SEED Freedom' Movie Review

The overcooked conclusion to the mid-2000s anime series



LEWIS MATHESON CREED & FANIA KAPAO

MSG SEED Freedom is the latest instalment in the 45-year-old Japanese Mecha-Fighting anime series. I was looking forward to seeing it because I had known about Gundam for years and was curious about the series. This film is the grand finale of the 2004-2006 run of the SEED sub-series and has been in the works for 18 years! But as with many creative projects that enter development hell, SEED Freedom was probably better off dying on the operating table. Fans of the original series have enjoyed this long-awaited conclusion since the Rotten Tomatoes Audience score is in the triple digits. But as a standalone feature without nostalgia goggles, it's all spectacle with little substance.

The movie throws you straight into a massive battle scene with no context. Going in blind, I scrambled to Google to help explain what was unfolding. The script threw around all this jargon with no exposition, which was quite disorienting to a newcomer but I eventually found my footing about half-way through. TL;DR there's basically a race war happening between GMO humans who are psychic called PLANTS and "Natural" Humans. There are political machinations, framing and casual nuking of at least three cities along the way. There's also a subplot romance rivalry love triangle between President Lacus and her



suitors, the hero, Kira Yamato and the villain, Orphee Lam Tao.

The main flaw of the film comes from it being absolutely tone-deaf, swinging between the petty squabbles of GUNDAM squad members and children being incinerated, and crowds being gunned down by soldiers and suicide bombers. Although the stakes are infinitely high, as all the nations of Earth are held at Death-Star-esc gunpoint by the GMO humans, none of the heroes take it very seriously since the romance subplot is far more important to them. The CGI fight scenes are, at first, jaw-dropping and spectacular, filling the whole screen with missiles, explosions and chaos. But after 2 hours, it begins to drag on far too long and eventually becomes tedious. The film also has several unnecessary and near-sexist shots of the female characters, which only serve the male gaze and are cringeworthy. I give the film a Sonic Forces out of 5. Nevertheless, a huge thank you and shoutout to Madman Entertainment NZ for providing us with a reviewing double pass :)

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The 95bFM Top 10

10 April 2024



LADY SHAKA
E TU



with Smashton & Big J

10 April 2024

1. Lady Shaka - E Tu [NZ]
2. Joe Ghatt - Always Remember [NZ]
3. MOKOTRON - Decolonize Existence (Big Fat Raro remix) [NZ]
4. Jim Nothing - Easter at the RSC [NZ]
5. Fu Manchu - Hands of the Zodiac
6. The Local Group - what a time to be alive [NZ]
7. Te Huhu - Skipping Stones [NZ]
8. Angus & Julia Stone - Cape Forestier
9. VIDA - Time Wars [NZ]
10. Les Big Byrd - Just Like Arcadia

Text VOTE with your favourite song to 5395 or visit 95bfm.com/vote
The 95bFM Top Ten, every Wednesday from 7pm

GETTING HIGH AT STARDOME

40 Minutes of a Psychadelic Reality

Well for legal purposes, no... I definitely wasn't high... But I can swear on my life that I pierced through the mesh of space and time, warped through three-dimensional heiroglyphics, got chased through a maze, and fell into the palms of giant beings with some cheeky ass. 'XYZZY' is a hallucinogenic art screening, displayed through the 360° over-the-head dome screen at the Stardome Planetarium. And it's an experience you HAVE to have.

Created by our very own Aotearoa-born artists—Jess Johnson & Simon Ward—this immersive artwork is a result of a decade of passion and creativity. The weird and wonderful life of 'XYZZY' stems from the hand-drawn complexities of the mind of Jess Johnson. These illustrations are then reinterpreted by Simon Ward into an animated virtual universe.

OH, AND THE MUSIC! As if the visuals weren't mind-blowing enough, this work of art is truly a voyage through the senses. The whole of this screening is so out of this world, that I don't really have the right words to describe the sound. But if I tried to, I'd say



Excerpt from the 'XYZZY' trailer



XYZZY
Stardome, Maungakiekie/One Tree Hill Domain
April 20 | May 10
Monthly Screenings
2024

something along the lines of an abstracted synthesiser, experimental electronic, like you're stuck inside a 2D pixelated video game, but also inside a fish tank. The soundtrack is composed by musicians Andrew Clarke, Luke Rowell, Stef Animal and Lachlan Anderson. Then, it's customly designed and mixed by Anderson and Graham Kennedy to fit the physical space of Stardome.

The collaboration between idea and presentation, visual and aural, digital and physical, you cannot help but escape into a new reality.

I am thoroughly impressed by this artwork, a whole 5 out of 5 on my Letterboxd account. And honestly, if it was me who created it, I would confidently call it my magnum opus. The epitome of my artistry. Too far? Sorry, I'm a fan.

So... if you want to have a high without going through a 12-hour panic attack and thinking you'd die if you fell asleep, 'XYZZY' would be awesome to go see! The next screening is on April 20, but if you can't make it there's one on May 10. For any future dates you can check out stardome.org.nz

ARIANNA RAMOS



Caught in the Mirror

Beauty Addiction



KALA TAKEBE BURGESS

Beauty addiction is often overlooked in our society. I am not trying to speak for everyone as everyone's experience is different, but I certainly have had this addiction to beauty for a long time and still do now.

So what could this mean? I take it as an obsession with how you look and present yourself to the world. Constantly worrying about how others may perceive you, always wanting more and continually feeling like you are not enough.


Do you constantly find yourself in front of the mirror evaluating how you look? Always finding something to nitpick, no matter how hard you have tried to reach your 'goal'? You might have an addiction... to beauty.

Sure, this addiction might not sound bad at the surface level, but it does come with its consequences, possibly affecting you for a lifetime until you come to terms with yourself. In our generation's constant exposure to social media and the endless trends with body and beauty, it is already extremely hard to overcome this addiction.

First, there is the constant low self-esteem. No matter how much people compliment you, you always think negatively and never believe what others say. You are constantly striving for an idealised version of beauty. In many cases, these are unrealistic standards that society has engraved in our brains. From a young age, we have been constantly in the cycle of comparison and envy.

Not to mention the financial strain beauty has on us. From all the extra steps in your perfect 10-step skincare to appointments at the clinic, we are constantly investing money into our appearances. Sure, a little bit is fine, but when you reach a certain point, it becomes excessive and unmanageable. I know for a fact that holding up my appearance has cost me monthly; how does my eye mask cost me 30 dollars??? Ugh, capitalism. But in reality, I probably don't need it, but then again, I seem to not be able to resist the chance of looking 10 years younger when I am in my 60s.

Important !!

One's self-worth is not tied to physical attractiveness. True beauty comes from within. We need to stop prioritising appearance over other aspects of life. Whether it's practising self-acceptance, reevaluating priorities/values beyond appearance, self-affirmation or just simply taking a social media detox, there are ways we can all overcome this addiction. This is something I have to come to terms with and still am in the process of learning to accept. At the end of the day, we are all beautiful and deserve all the hugs and kisses in the world 



The White Powder Addiction

Sugar is a Drug, and I Refuse to Quit



KAAVYA GHOSHAL

If you claim to have never touched a drug in your life, I'm here to burst your bubble. You know exactly what I'm talking about. That feeling after a meal, where you simply must have the vanilla ice cream stacked in your freezer? How about those midnight "study reward" TimTams? Or, perhaps you've added vanilla to your iced latte, and now regular coffee feels like a drag?

Yep, you're addicted.

When we think about powdery, white drugs, there should really be one obvious answer that comes to mind. It's the most common one out there, and both you and I consume it on a daily. Sugar is a drug, and it's an addiction that I'm not sure I ever want to quit.

Picture this; taking a bite of a Mrs Higgins warm chocolate cookie after a long day and being transported to a state of euphoria, where suddenly, all your assignments seem

insignificant and the world seems like a happier place. That is the power of sugar.

Just like any drug, there's a high and then a crash. The crash is terrible, really. It feels like all the energy has been sucked out of you. One minute, you're floating on a cloud (probably made of cotton candy) and the next, you're face-first in a pile of regret, wondering why you didn't just stick to cucumber and water.

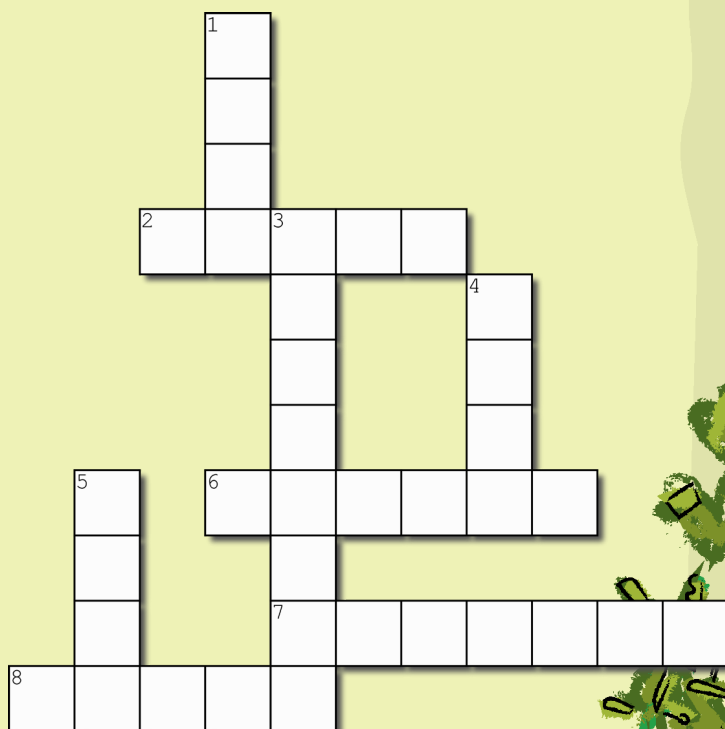
But why is sugar so addictive? Well, apparently it's all about dopamine—the feel-good neurotransmitter that gets released in your brain when you indulge in something pleasurable. Sugar triggers a dopamine rush that makes you feel like you can do absolutely anything. We're also creatures of habit, and have conditioned yourself to "cleanse" our palette with desert after a meal. So when you bite into that cheesecake, your brain tells you; "Damn, this shit makes me happy. Let's have more!" And you do!

"But sugar is so bad for you!" *Everything* is bad for you if it's not in moderation. And, here's the thing: when it comes to addiction, you pick your battles. Me? I choose sugar. Unlike its illicit counterpart, sugar is legal, very (sometimes way too easily) accessible, and comes in a variety of delicious forms—sure, you might need to hit the gym a little more (or a lot), but can you *really* imagine a world without it?

Sugarheads, embrace your addiction. Life's too short to deny yourself of the simple, decadent pleasures. As someone whose mom is a baker, I will never tell you to stay away from sugar, because that would be depriving you of a world of happiness.

I'm now going to reward myself for finishing this article by eating a cookie. You should reward yourself with one for reading it!

CROSSWORD



Across

2. a centre for people who enjoyed drugs a little too much
6. drug made tastier when you add milk and vanilla to it
7. a drug whose name is a synonym of 'extreme happiness'
8. white and addictive but it isn't cocaine

Down

1. 'it's better than smoking a cigarette!'
3. your state of being the day after partying
4. underground parties
5. japanese liquor available in many flavours

SUDOKU



WORD SEARCH

T U T V J H

L N I Q O E

H V X P

H N Y J

Y J C P

A A X J

E O P Y

F D D X

F R N B

G U K J

P G X Z

K S U E

G G D O

R S N F

C E L H X Y H N I X

U I N K G G Y F E X D Y

T M J O D Q K T P N I S

S M B U T E T M L V I Y

M U E R R S E Y Z S L A I E

G Q I N S E W T M K I C C D

I K Q J E W L O A U A O F Z

K B I J E I O A T E S C Q U

Y L Y Y R F N E V R M T

L I H X Z F B D Q F

S L A V M A Q B

X A R G I C

P M Q E E H

E Z T N U L B J

W C J H Z P O U

U

P

T

W

G

R

I

J N

P Z C

M T K Y

H B O C

G G A C

D P C S

DRUGS

STONER

SHROOMS

CAFFIENE

ACID

WEED

COCAIN

VAPE

BLUNT

DEALER

GUMMIES

HOROSCOPES



CLARICE DE TOLEDO

If things feel chaotic right now – most definitely blame it on the Total Eclipse of the Sun that took place on the 8th of April on the sign of Aries. Mercury is also still retrograde, the air is dense, like we're inside a fog and everything is subjective to change. Especially if you have Aries, Libra, Cancer and Capricorn in your chart, you may be feeling these energies even more intensely. Intensity – is not always good or bad – it just is, and I think it's something to be aware of when we talk about Eclipses.

For next 6 months, this Eclipse will be influencing different parts in your life, depending on your birth chart. These energetic shifts can feel overwhelming and dramatic. And they are. But they are also equally powerful. A check that you are going in the right direction, and if something feels off, it's time to shift into a new measure.

Please check your rising sign as well for more accuracy xx

ARIES

This is the most fertile ground you will have the whole year to start something new. Whatever you plant around this time, you will be sure to harvest the fruits later in the year. So make sure that everything is nice and fresh, with the best of your heart's intentions. Is a good time to invest in your health, start a fitness journey, and pay more attention to your body and appearance. Maybe a new haircut? An update on your style? Why not?

TAURUS

Your mental health could be a real focus at the moment, the relationship that you have with yourself, habits that could be holding you back, and ways you become your own enemy. Spirituality could be a big theme as well, learning ways to better regulate and understand your emotions, becoming more present and connected, shedding away what no longer serves you. Heavier topics can come up as well, if you're dealing with addiction or depression, talking therapy can also be a light during this time.

GEMINI

You could be putting more life energy into your dreams. Make some vision boards, take the steps to make them concrete. This could be a shift where you realise where you would like to be, what you would like to achieve, what makes your heart beat the loudest. That could be travel, professional goals, spiritual or financial, but whatever it is. It is entirely yours, and this eclipse

invites empowerment to achieve them. There could also be shifts within the dynamics in your friendships, or something significant that happens in a friend's life.

CANCER

Your career and professional life could be going through a major shift. You could be looking into starting a new business, or changing paths entirely. You could be changing your major at university, or thinking more about your long-term goals and your public image. Making the steps around this time can be very fruitful.

LEO

You could be experiencing a lot of change when it comes to your belief systems, your religion or your spirituality, your ideas and inner philosophy. You could be feeling a lot more powerful when it comes to manifesting things in your life, things could be coming a lot more easier towards you. You could be thinking of travelling, and making plans for it, or learning more about a certain culture, or even learning a new language.

VIRGO

This eclipse could be influencing you to look at aspects within yourself that reflect your shadow side, your darker side, and things that you hide from others. Secrets can come to light, as well as heavier themes you could be holding onto. We all have this side, and this eclipse is asking you to come to terms with this side of you, and integrate it. Learn and transform with it. It can feel a little heavier but also extremely freeing. Money could also be a big theme for you. How to invest your money and take better care of it.

LIBRA

It could be that you are starting a new relationship around this time, or dealing with issues that come up in your current relationship. Eclipses can bring everything to a surface, so this is the time to be completely honest about how you feel and how you can come up with solutions together. It could also be that you have started some type of business partnership as well.

SCORPIO

This eclipse could be bringing a lot of opportunities within your work life. Changes that are necessary and can bring a lot of fulfilment in the long run. Taking risks will pay off. You could be leaving a job and starting a new one, or you'll

be looking into more effective ways to complete your studies, whatever tweaks you make in your routine around this time, trust it that it is for the better. You could be changing up your approach, deciding that you wanna have more fun with the work that you do.

SAGITTARIUS

You could be feeling more of a fire to experience life to the fullest. This will be a time that invites a lot of fun, a lot of movement, parties, people, kissing, hooking up... You could be feeling more creative, and wanting to express yourself more. Or a new relationship could be starting up as well. This is a really positive energy, full of life. However be careful, and make sure you that you're having some type of contraceptive because you be extra fertile as well xox

CAPRICORN

It could be that your home is going through a lot of change right now, you could be moving, redecorating or renovating your house. Or you could be going through some things that happened in your past and you're coming to terms with that, finding healthier and better ways to move forward.

AQUARIUS

You could be exploring a lot of different topics that you would like to learn more of, but without any pressure. Learning just for the sake of learning. You could be going out more, and meeting some new people. Or starting a new project that's related to social media, podcasts and newsletters. You could also be feeling more inspired to travel around, not necessarily far, but somewhere that you can escape from your routine.

PISCES

There could be a change of attitude when it comes to money. Maybe you're reevaluating your relationship to your finances, or how to manifest money into your life. You could be thinking about different ways to bring more income, or just how to handle it better. This will be extremely powerful, specially if money has been a wound for you, learning how to manifest it an authentic way that aligns with your values and with who you are.



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