

CRACCUM

magazine 14



podcast pleasure

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inspiring conspiring

CATRIONA BRITTON INVESTIGATES CONSPIRACY THEORIES.
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you havin' a laff?

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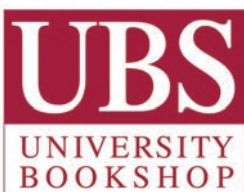
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fairfucked?

Let's preface this editorial with a glaringly obvious point – we, as editors of *Craccum*, really have no business criticising other publications. This week, we published a story unironically titled “News Editor Refuses To Do Work, Copy and Pastes Instead”. We think adding “amirite” to the end of jokes makes them funny, and last week we named our pub quiz team “Jet Memes Can't Melt Stank Beams”.

We are almost certainly the worst. But riddle us this: what is the point of having a magazine entirely at your disposal if you can't force your opinion on a bunch of people who didn't ask for it? And yes, by “bunch” we mean the four people that read *Craccum*. And yes, by “read” we mean have heard of *Craccum*.

So, despite our relentless, debilitating shortcomings, we absurdly think we have some sort of mandate to talk about the state of New Zealand print media. More specifically, we're interested in the proposed merger between Fairfax and NZME. If you're like Caitlin and business terms like “merger” turn you off quicker than hearing “you sound just like my mum when you orgasm”, then what this is in non-commerce terms is the company that owns *The New Zealand Herald* (NZME) is potentially going to join together with the company that owns Stuff.co.nz, Wellington's *Dominion Post* and Christchurch's *Press* (Fairfax).

The appropriate reaction seems pretty straightforward – it's a bad idea. Merging two of the largest media companies in the country threatens to place too much editorial control in the hands of too few people. A few months ago the *Herald*, along with One News and 3 News, placed homelessness in Auckland under intense scrutiny which led to public outcry and widespread demands for the government to take action. In this case, the *Herald* chose a worthy cause. But imagine if they decided to promote something nasty – say, the idea that homeless people are just lazy – and there were no other major news publications in the country to contest them, because they were all owned by the same company. Newspapers still have the ability to massively influence public opinion (at least while baby boomers still waddle around), so having just a few people in charge of all of them seems dangerous.

However, the state of print media in New Zealand does seem to be increasingly precarious. One submission to the Commerce Commission – who are deciding whether or not the merger can go ahead – said that without the merger, the companies will have to compete with one another for the dregs left behind by Facebook and Google. “One of us will probably destroy the other eventually,” the submission states ominously. And we can very clearly see this playing out, with both companies desperately scrambling for advertising revenue – at the expense of quality.

Bear with us as we trudge over to the *Herald* homepage. We're greeted with the “latest” tab, a list of ten stories churned out in the last hour. A cursory glance confirms our suspicions – out of ten stories, six are veritable horseshit:

“Dating tips from the 1950s”, “Find your perfect foundation match”, “Most beautiful celebrity, according to science”, “My strange, tense, Thai food experience”, “Demi Lovato splits from new boyfriend”, and “Instagram posts reveal your age”. Oh wait, the Thai food one is by Steve Braunias – the legend, the journalistic messiah, the man who both editors have chosen to be our dad in our recently created Fantasy Family League (Caitlin chose Sam Neill as her other dad, Mark chose Tilda Swinton as his mum). Scratch that, *five* out of ten belong in the centre of a bukkake, such is their saturation of wank.

Switch over to the “news” tab, and all ten stories are actually legitimate. They cover both domestic and international concerns, and are informative and well-researched. It would be grossly petulant for us to say that every story the *Herald* publishes is tawdry clickbait – particularly as that would make us a shameless pot calling the tacky kettle black. However, it is undeniable that in both their print and digital platforms, the *Herald*'s level of pandering is increasing by the day. Their ratio of lightweight fluff pieces to serious journalism is becoming *Craccum*-level bad.

If the merger does take place maybe – just maybe – the *Herald* can stop its embarrassing bid for website views. If the same company is directing both Stuff.co.nz and the *Herald*, perhaps the *Herald* can go back to being an actual newspaper and Stuff.co.nz can take over the lightweight shtick. It's still generally a bad thing for New Zealand journalism, but it seems as though it may just be a necessary evil if we want to retain any sense of dignity in our largest newspapers. ■



PSA: STREAM SHOWS THROUGH UOA LIBRARY NEWS WRITER PATRICK NEWLAND SHOCKS EDITORS WITH ACTUAL NEWS

Do yourself a favour, go to the University Library site, and click on the “TV and Radio” link on the left-hand side of the homepage. Here, you will find films and shows that postgraduate students have requested to record, free for all UoA students to watch as long as you enter your login details.

This started in August last year, when TV and Radio Beta was launched for Politics and FTVMS students, meaning that they no longer had to tramp down to the Chapman Archive to find audiovisual sources. Almost twelve months on, the service has evolved to bring all students into the fold.

The ability to request the recording and posting of almost any television show has not been lost on cash-strapped postgrads. The Library website now offers a great opportunity to get your *Game of Thrones* fix, watch dreamboat Tom

Hiddleston in *The Night Manager*, and catch up on *House of Cards*. It also provides a variety of news programmes and current affairs shows such as *The Daily Show* and other non-fiction treats like Louis Theroux’s documentaries. With more content being added each day, it provides a very decent, free Netflix replacement that does not eat up any of your uni bandwidth allowance. ■

MAYOR WATCH [LIKE BAYWATCH, GEDDIT?]

Welcome to week two of our rolling mayoral coverage of the Auckland mayoral elections. Craccum will be posting short snippets covering the local body elections each week, until such a time where University students can be relied upon to go out and fucking vote.

Important things this week:

UNITARY PLAN

The Independent Hearings Panel’s final recommendations on the Unitary Plan will be publicly released this Wednesday. The document that they release will be the product of more than three years worth of political labour and public consultation.

The Unitary Plan works as a sort of ‘rulebook’

for urban development, determining the size and shape of development projects around Auckland. This has obviously been an increasingly contested topic, given Auckland’s housing market. The main debates around the Unitary plan surround the benefits of expanding city limits versus increasing urban density, and also ways to best encourage an increase in housing supply. The council itself is divided on these issues, as are the council and central government.

The Independent Hearing Panel’s deliberations were the subject of some controversy earlier this year, when the council itself was forced to pull its own suggestions to the board after last minute changes were made to high-density housing areas.

This Wednesday’s report will be the last document submitted to the council before the Unitary Plan is finalized. The council has 20 working days to consider the recommendations, before making a final decision on August 19th.

FIRST DEBATE

The first Mayoral Debate of the official campaign period was held last Thursday, at the Acacia Cove Retirement Village in Wattle Downs. The event was hosted by the Wattle Downs Residents and Ratepayers’ Association.

Only four candidates out of the nine currently in the race for the Mayoralty were invited to take part in the debate – Victoria Crone, Hon. Phil Goff, John Palino and Mark Thomas. [*news ed: this event took place after print date, hence the lack of more nuanced coverage*]. ■





TRUMP FORGETS TO TURN IT IN

The Republican National Convention was always going to court some kind of controversy, given that Donald Trump was the leading man. Yet the story coming out of the first night of what should have been his coronation as party leader was not only unbelievable, it was also highly avoidable.

Someone on his campaign should have done their academic integrity modules. It is traditional that the candidate's spouse introduces

themselves to the American people on the first night, and most of the media coverage was initially focused on Melania Trump's performance. She met expectations and considering English is her second language managed to talk to twenty million people without a shudder. Yet it appears that significant passages of her speech were lifted directly from Michelle Obama's address eight years earlier.

There has been much finger pointing. Melania initially claimed to have written most of the speech herself. This has since been clarified, and the Trump campaign has said that it was in fact a writing team with Melania's input. Regardless, this amateur-hour mistake managed

to railroad media coverage which was meant to revolve around the theme "make America safe again".

Not that the media coverage would have been great to begin with – from a fight on the floor in a last ditch effort to remove Trump, to the botched issue rollout which saw the Donald give an interview to Fox News just as one of the night's most emotional speakers was starting, overriding her message. As time went on it seemed as though Trump was just running the whole show himself and it showed. In a week that was Trump's chance to shine, he tripped over. At least he's predictable. ■

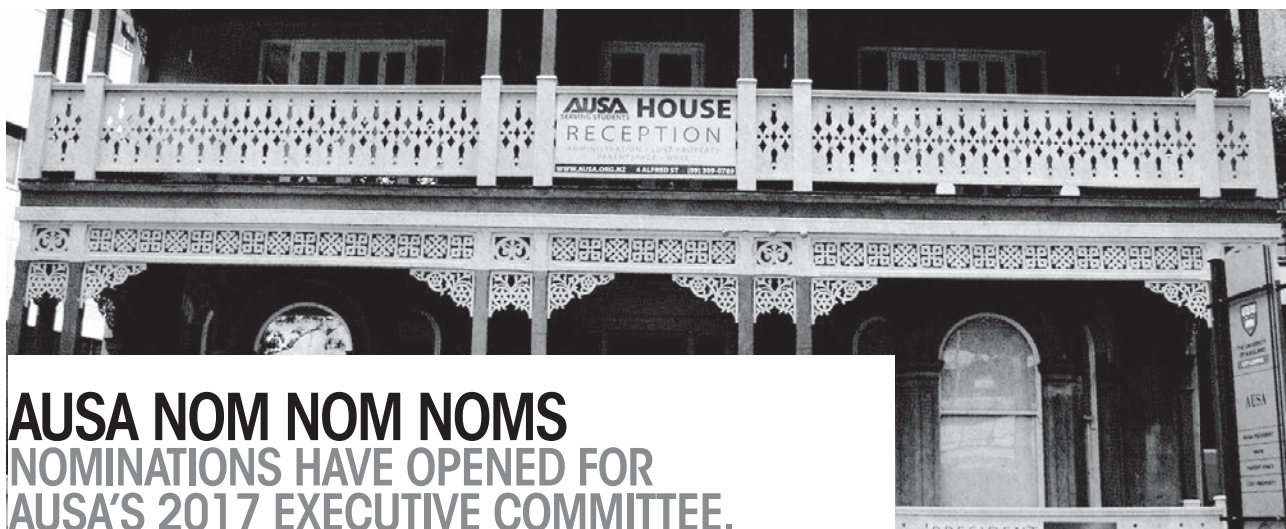
TANK YOU, UNIVERSITY! THE QUAD WILL BE GETTING A TANK JUICE BAR LATE NEXT MONTH.

The announcement is only the latest part of an ongoing push by the University to improve campus culinary options.

Since the beginning of this year, the University Quad has seen the introduction of Shaky Isles, Moustache Cookie Bar, a MexiCali, and a Waffle Supreme – albeit with the parallel eviction of New Zealand Natural.

TANK will inhabit the currently empty space opposite the University Rec Centre. ■





AUSA NOM NOM NOMS NOMINATIONS HAVE OPENED FOR AUSA'S 2017 EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE.

Students interested in applying for the AUSA Executive can find nomination forms at reception at AUSA house. Applicants will need to provide proof that they are currently enrolled at the University of Auckland.

Positions available include [*news ed: deep breath*] President, Administrative Vice-President, Education Vice-President, Welfare Vice-President, Treasurer, Clubs and Societies Officer, Culture and Arts Officer, Environmental Affairs Officer, Grafton Representative, International Students' Officer, Media Officer, Political Engagement Officer, Queer Rights

Officer, Student Forum Chair, Tamaki Representative, Women's Rights Officer, and, finally, Craccum Editor.

The positions are all paid, in varying degrees: The President of AUSA works forty hours a week, while Vice-Presidents work 20 hours a week – both on minimum wage – while Officers and Representatives are reimbursed based on performance, with a cap of \$300 a semester.

The AUSA Executive “represents and advocates for students at the University of Auckland” as well as “providing an extensive range of services for the wider student community”. Members of the Executive plan and execute a number of major University events each year – including

O-Week, re-O-Week, Politics Week, Cultural Week, Environment Week, Book Week, Dog Week, and Beer Week. [*news ed: i forget what AUSA does so I just made stuff up lol*].

The organisation also works to advocate for changes to government and university policy in order to help protect student interests – earlier this month, AUSA advocated for the University to divest Alumni funds from businesses that harm the environment, while earlier this year the organisation voiced support for Labour's Free Tertiary Education programme.

Nominations will close on the 5th of August, at 3.00 pm, with forms handed in to AUSA reception. ■

BURIED TREASURER

AUSA is pushing for reforms to the Treasurer role next year, including a name change and lowering entrance requirements for the position.

The role will be renamed to Finance Vice-President, bringing the position in line with the other AUSA Vice-Presidents, as well helping separate it from other treasurer roles on campus and the position's old duties.

In addition, AUSA wants to reduce the number of accounting papers that eligible applicants are required to have taken from two papers down to one paper. AUSA claims that, while knowledge of the basics of accounting are important, the role can be fulfilled by anyone with a reasonable level of business knowledge and a “keen interest to learn, participate, and think critically about a number of issues”.

In order for these reforms to be enacted in time for AUSA elections, they will have to be passed at the next general meeting, set to be held on 3rd August. ■



NEWS EDITOR REFUSES TO DO WORK, COPY AND PASTES INSTEAD



The second Graduate Longitudinal Study New Zealand (GLSNZ) report has been released.

Beginning in 2011, GLSNZ is the most comprehensive study of life post-university ever conducted anywhere in the world. It follows almost 9000 students in their first ten years after University. The results of this first report pertain to data collected in late 2014 – roughly two and a half years after the study began.

- 81% of respondents were employed at the time of the survey.
- Of the remainder, only 2.7% were actively seeking paid work and were also not enrolled in study (ie, were unemployed).
- The remainder were either enrolled in tertiary study, travelling or living overseas, and/

or parenting or caregiving.

- 48% of international graduates returned to live in their country of origin.
- 43% remained in NZ (with the remaining 9% living in a different country that was not their country of origin).
- 95% completed the qualification they were studying towards in 2011.
- 24% are still pursuing tertiary study.
- 75% reported a good work/life balance (up 4% on the initial results).
- 91% reported being satisfied with their job.
- The median annual income bracket for the group was \$40,000 – \$50,000 NZD per year.
- The median student loan debt was in the \$10,000 – \$15,000 range.
- University apparently seems worthwhile: 80% of participants reported that they thought their study programme had been worth the investment.

- A similar high percentage reported that their university experience had lived up to their expectations (73%).
- Participants rated their own lives as a solid 7.2 out of ten at the time of the survey, with a standard deviation of 1.9.
- They expected to boost that number up to an even more solid 8.35 out of ten in ten years time with a standard deviation of just 1.5.
- 0.5% of respondents felt they were “very fluent” in te reo Māori.
- That’s 1/7th the proportion who felt they were “very fluent” in NZ Sign: 3.5%
- 67% of participants indicated that they had experienced at least one stressful life event since the survey began.

[chief editor's note: anyone who made it to the end of this godawful list can have a Shadows jug on us] ■

THE TOP 5 POLITICAL EVENTS YOU MAY HAVE MISSED

1. A New Zealand MP ran over a protester.

No doubt the severity of National MP Chester Browes’ “careless use of a motor vehicle causing injury” was not as bad as reported by the press (who have presented it as something from *Mad Max: Fury Road*), but the former cop has been charged in the Whanganui District Court, and will fight the charges.

2. The United Kingdom (call it that while you can) has a new Prime Minister. Not even David Cameron’s own staff believed that the Tory party

would be able to pick itself a new leader so quickly, having a meeting planned with John Key the morning of his last day at Number 10. On a side note, the election of Theresa May has removed the possibility of the most interesting trans-Atlantic leadership group ever, because if nothing else Boris/Trump would have been entertaining.

3. Australia does not have a new Prime Minister, which given their track record is surprising in itself. The election that was meant to rid Malcolm Turnbull of his cross bench problem just made it worse. Even though he held onto a slim majority in the lower house, there are now more independent senators than ever before. Somewhere Tony Abbott is grinning.

4. The United States has problems. While in itself not news, several of their bigger ones came to a head in recent weeks, calumniating it an attack on police officers in Dallas. While there is no doubt that the Black Lives Matter movement has some serious beef with the establishment with good reasons, it is the few not the majority on both sides that are the problem, at least in my uninformed opinion.

5. England voted to leave the European Union. Wales did to, Scotland not so much. No one saw it coming, least of all Nigel Farage or Boris Johnson. One the biggest criticisms of the Leave campaign prior to the vote was the lack of an exit plan, here’s hoping they come up with one soon. ■

WHAT'S ON 25-31 JULY

This Wednesday is the Wrap Party and Screening for **Avoiding Climax: Bella and Theo Understand it Better but the Frog Dies**, a detective series by Isabella Dampney and Theodore Macdonald. The screening starts at 5.30pm in the General Library foyer, with television tropes, detective drama and supernatural occurrences guaranteed – this is one show you don't want to miss!

Orleans and SOMSA present: **The Jazz Sessions: Session 4**. Head down to Orleans on Tuesday for a night of sweet sounds from funk, soul, rhythm and blues and Jazz. Performances by Diego Rice, Vape Nation Authentic and JM Quartet. From 7pm til late, with plenty of deals to be had on drinks and food.

UoA vs AUT Fight Night is on this Friday from 7.30-9pm at The Classic Studio. Don't let the name fool you, this is a comedy event in which 8 comedians from UoA and AUT compete to find out which of the two universities is the biggest joke. They will be fighting dirty. Tix are \$20 with 100% of sales going to Auckland City Mission.

This Sunday five hoarders are clearing out their closets and collections at the **Vintage Garage Sale**, 627 Great North Road from 12-5pm. This underground (in a garage) event promises great vintage bargains and its 'interested' list is rapidly growing on Facebook, so don't miss out – remember to bring cash! ■

AGONY AUNTIES

Dear Agony Aunties

I've been in a relationship since I was freshly 18. I'm newly single and feeling secure... but also planless

Friday night. Can you just remind me of what I should be doing with my time?

Thanks Aunties,

Never-single-til-now



Dear *Never-single-til-now*

Well first off, there's nothing you 'should' be doing but maybe refrain from calling up old flames and/or new ones on a particular flame icon related app... You have just as much time, effort and love to give so distribute as you please! Uni, work, friendships can all take up this newfound source of energy. Most importantly, you have more time for you – don't be afraid to spend Friday night by yourself.

All our love,

Aunt Phryne and Aunt Wilhelmina xxx ■

PLEASE SEND YOUR PROBLEM IN 50 WORDS OR LESS TO LIFESTYLE@CRACCUM.CO.NZ, ANONYMITY GUARANTEED.



BRUNCHING ON A BUDGET

Brunch. A weekend portmanteau synonymous with bougie living. Yet, on a StudyLink budget, how is a student meant to aspirationally satisfy their palate? More so how are you gonna keep up with your friends who have already graduated and are earning the big dollars? These are problems this little list seeks to remedy. With 10ish dollars in hand let's navigate weekend eating in Auckland together.

First on the cards is the most bougie of places: **Orphans Kitchen**. It's definitely going to come up on that group chat while you brainstorm places to go on a Sunday morning. While the cheaper offerings are slim you can definitely get away with a light and shared brunch here. Split the filter coffee (\$8) and crumpets (\$9) and have for yourself a grapefruit with caramelised coconut sugar (\$4).

If sterile minimal eating isn't for you there is always a very similar offering at the **Fed**. Inside the Americana diner grab a booth and order these things from the menu; bottomless coffee/tea (\$4.50), the best cinnamon bun you can order in New Zealand (\$4.50) and a bagel with schmear (\$7). While over budget by \$6, you can always sneakily split that bottomless coffee.

Bun Hut, unlike the Fed and Orphans, will leave you feeling full of carbs and blissfully content.

It's also the only one on this list where you can have both savory and sweet. Order the mini pork buns (4 for \$5) and for brussert* a bowl of red bean gruel (\$3)

that you can dip your brown sugar filled triangle buns in (\$1.50). This is one of my favourite places in all of Auckland and (like Orphans) goes off in the weekend so be prepared to wait.

So close that group chat, get on a bus, and head to brunch! ■

*a new portmanteau of brunch and dessert

FASHION ON CAMPUS

"'Ratty Chic' is the best way to explain my style." - *Bonnie Harvey* ■





MINESTRONE SOUP

This soup is a great winter warmer that is perfect for using up any slightly sad-looking veges lurking at the bottom of your fridge. My mum gave me the recipe and she makes it differently every time so don't be afraid to mix it up!

You need:

- **1 onion, some garlic, 1 carrot, a couple sticks of celery and some cabbage, all chopped** (or any other vegetables that you have – or you could use a mix bag of frozen veg!)
- **Rosemary** (don't buy rosemary: you can easily find it around. There's a rosemary bush on Symonds St by Brick House Café, that's where I pick mine from.)
- **A couple of rashers of bacon, or you can go for a proper ham hock** if you are feeling a bit alty.
- **1 tin chopped tomatoes**
- **Handful or two of pasta.** Risoni/Orzo or alphabeti spaghetti are the best, but you could use any other pasta that you have instead.
- **Salt and pepper**

First up you need a nice big pan with a glug of oil. Add the veges, whole bacon rashers or hock, and rosemary and "sweat" for 5 minutes over medium heat. This basically means keep stirring them to soften the veges a little without allowing them to brown. Cover the veg with boiling water or stock and cook for 20 minutes. Add the tin of tomatoes and the cabbage, and cook for around 10 minutes. Then remove the meat from the pan, cut it up and add it back into the soup with the pasta. Just remember that the pasta will expand in the soup so don't put too much in. You may want to top it up with some more hot water to make sure that everything is covered and the soup still has some liquid to it. I also remove the rosemary stalks at this point as the leaves have usually all fallen off anyway. Once the pasta is cooked, the soup is ready! Season with salt and pepper to taste. If you are feeling a bit baller, serve the soup with some grated parmesan cheese on top.

If you are vegetarian, or don't have any bacon, leave it out and just make sure to add plenty of vegetable stock and some extra seasoning, and use a vegetarian parmesan.

If you are vegan, leave out the bacon and cheese and substitute the pasta with borlotti beans or lentils. Use a lentil that will hold its form – puy would be my pick. ■

LOOP GROOP

Loop Groop is a cycling co-operative operating out of the sweetest pallet shed you have ever seen at 21 Minnie St. Carl Naus tells us about the project and how it got started...

What's the origin of Loop Groop? I did a job for Auckland Council talking about the new inorganics service, where they are now working to divert more stuff from landfill by recycling. As part of the job we visited the recycle warehouse, where I saw huge piles of bicycles and thought, I have to do something about this. So I applied as a "community recycler" to get bikes and started fixing them up with friends to sell on. I'm interested in junk in general, but am an avid cyclist – bikes are endlessly repairable and modular so that makes them a good thing to recycle. And also with education, they seem like complicated machines but once you know how each part works then it's pretty easy to fix it, and it's easy to pass that knowledge on.

How did you learn to work with bikes? I learnt at Tumeke Cycle Space: I was really poor, I rode a bike, it broke and I didn't know how to fix it. A bike shop quoted me a lot of money on the repairs but then I heard about Tumeke from a friend so I went there.

For a cyclist who doesn't know much about bikes, do you think it is fairly easy to learn the basics? Yeah totally, because there are a few things that will go wrong and they are quite easy to fix. And it's just about knowing the logic of how all the things know so you know when *this* happens you do *this*.

And people can bring their bikes to you when they need help learning how to fix it? Yeah, it's a mix. We do up recycled bikes here, if people want to bring their own bikes they are welcome to do that and we will help and guide them. We do bike repairs for people as well as we have so many parts here.

Do you think that Auckland as a city is becoming more aware of alternative forms of transport, including cycling? Yeah, most definitely. Auckland Transport has a lot to do with it – they are actually helping a lot which is real cool. It's not often that these big government bodies are actually good at stuff! And you have lobby groups like Bike Auckland as well, there are more people on bikes all the time. That's one of the reasons that I thought we should do this, because if we don't exist then people are just going to Bike Barn. People should be able to get a bike without having to deal with capitalism.

What do you see as the biggest challenge facing the cycle movement in this city? Audis! Audis, taxis, courier drivers and buses!

Any last message for the students of University of Auckland? Get a bike – it's cheap, it's fun and you can ride it drunk. ■





AUSA NOTICEBOARD

AUSA Special General Meeting - Executive Changes And Democracy Sausages

The AUSA Executive has officially given notice of a Special General Meeting of the Association, to be held at 1pm on the 3rd of August 2016 in the University Quad, convened to pass changes to the AUSA Executive.

WHAT ARE THE CHANGES?

At the meeting, students will be asked to vote on the following changes:

- Altering the Queer Rights Officer position to allow it to be held by a pair, instead of one portfolio holder.
- Changing the name of the Treasurer to 'Finance Vice President'
- Changing the eligibility criteria of the Treasurer/Finance Vice President from two first year Accounting papers to one first year Accounting paper.

WHAT'S THE RATIONALE?

Queer Rights Officer: The QRO position was created in 2012, and since then has picked up a huge workload and many other duties. These include: the maintenance and supervision of Queerspace, providing a basic level of pastoral care for queer students, working with the University Equity Department on various initiatives, organising Pride Week and publishing a Pride issue of Craccum.

The AUSA Executive has agreed that this is too much work for any one person, and has therefore proposed that like the Women's Rights

portfolio, the QRO position should be able to be split between two members.

Treasurer: Since 2012 the Treasurer position has changed a lot. While the Treasurer used to audit AUSA Clubs, this role has passed on to Campus Life. Now, the Treasurer operates as the leader in the drafting and supervision of the AUSA Budget, the Chair of the Finance Committee, and as a vital advisor to the AUSA President and Executive. It was felt that the title 'Treasurer' no longer suited what the role had become, and that 'Finance Vice President' was more appropriate, and brought AUSA in line with other Associations and organisations.

Because of this, the Executive no longer felt that the two Accounting paper requirement to be eligible to run for the role was necessary, and that the reduction to one paper would ensure that successful candidates still had some level of financial knowledge, but that this would also open the position up to a wider range of students in the Business, Commerce and Accounting faculties.

DEMOCRACY SAUSAGES

We'll be following Australia's lead, and putting on a free barbecue for everyone who takes part in the SGM. Come along to have your say on the makeup of your student Executive, and get a free feed at the same time! ■

Student Forum Now At 1.15pm On Wednesdays

Just so that you can all get from your classes to the Quad in time for Student Forum, we're now starting 15 minutes later at 1.15PM. ■

AUSA Executive Nominations

Don't forget nominations for the AUSA Executive 2017 are open and will close on Friday 5 August 2016 at 3pm. Don't miss out - pick up a nomination form from AUSA Reception today. ■

We Need You: Food Drive 2016

AUSA distributes over 200 food parcels each year to students in need. Our foodbank is stocked solely on donated goods and at the moment, the shelves are looking a little bare. Please drop off your donations of non-perishable food items at collection points across campus from 25 - 29 July. Of course, you can drop off donations any time at AUSA Reception. Any questions? Email welfare@ausa.org.nz ■

Get 10% Off At Shadows

Upset about Shadows jugs being \$8? Get 10% off simply by being a member of AUSA and showing your membership sticker at the bar. If you had any troubles in the first week of semester, it's all fixed now - you're good to enjoy your \$7.20 jugs. Not a member of AUSA? Sign up at AUSA Reception on Alfred Street. ■

Notice is hereby given of an AUSA SPECIAL GENERAL MEETING

to be held on

WEDNESDAY, 3
AUGUST 2016

at 12.00 pm
in the Student
Union Quad

The SGM has been called to consider the
following changes to the Constitution:

CHANGES TO TREASURER

THAT Section 2 (i) be amended by deleting the
line "Treasurer" shall mean "The Treasurer of
the Association"

THAT Section 27 (iii) (e) be amended by delet-
ing the word "Treasurer" and replacing it with
the words "Finance Vice President"

THAT Section 38 (ii) be amended by deleting
the word 'Treasurer' and replacing it with
'Finance Vice President'

THAT Section 41 (v) be amended by deleting
the word 'Treasurer' and replacing it with
'Finance Vice President'

THAT Section 1 (ii) of the Second Schedule to
the Constitution be amended by deleting the
word 'Treasurer' and replacing it with 'Finance
Vice President'

THAT Section 1 (ii) of the Second Schedule to
the Constitution be amended by deleting the
words 'two accounting papers', and replacing
these with the words 'one accounting paper'

THAT Section 13 of the Second Schedule to the
Constitution be amended by deleting the word
'Treasurer' and replacing it with 'Finance Vice
President'

THAT Section 17 of the Second Schedule to the
Constitution be amended by deleting the word
'Treasurer' and replacing it with 'Finance Vice
President'

THAT Section 3 (iii) of the Third Schedule to
the Constitution be amended by deleting the
word 'Treasurer' and replacing it with 'Finance
Vice President'

THAT Section 2 of the Fourth Schedule to
the Constitution be amended by deleting all
instances of the word 'Treasurer' and replacing
these with 'Finance Vice President'

THAT Section 3 of the Fourth Schedule to the
Constitution be amended by deleting the word
'Treasurer' and replacing it with 'Finance Vice
President'

CHANGES TO QUEER RIGHTS OFFICER

THAT Section 27 (iv) (f) be amended by adding
'(who shall be a queer member or group of
queer members)' after the words 'Queer Rights
Officer,'

THAT Section 28 (i) be amended by deleting
the words 'and Women's Rights Officer' and
replacing it with the words 'Women's Rights
Officer, and Queer Rights Officer'

Association Secretary



Notice is hereby given for Nominations of 2017 AUSA EXECUTIVE

OFFICER POSITIONS:

President, Administra-
tive Vice-President, Ed-
ucation Vice-President,
Welfare Vice-President,
Treasurer



PORTFOLIO POSITIONS:

Clubs and Societies
Officer, Culture and Arts
Officer, Environmental
Affairs Officer, Grafton
Representative (Must
be a Grafton Student),
International Students'
Officer (Must be an
International Student),
Media Officer, Political
Engagement Officer,
Queer Rights Officer,
Student Forum Chair,
Tamaki Representative
(Must be a Tamaki Stu-
dent), Women's Rights
Officer, Craccum Editor

Nominations open on Friday, 18 July 2016

Nomination forms are available from AUSA Recep-
tion, 4 Alfred Street

Nominations close at 3.00 pm on Friday, 5 August
2016. They must be handed in to AUSA Reception
only.

In accordance with the Auckland University
Students' Association's Constitution, nominations
are open to currently enrolled students of the
University of Auckland, who must be members
of AUSA. Accordingly, all nominees must present
proof of current enrolment, and any other required
information, to the Returning Officer no later than
the close of nominations, or their nomination will
be ruled invalid.

Please Note: To run for the Treasurer's position you
must have passed at least two Accounting papers
at the University of Auckland and show proof of
this.

AUSA Returning Officer



Run in the AUSA elections!

Nominations are now open for people who want to be on the AUSA Executive for 2017. Any currently enrolled student, who will also be enrolled at the University of Auckland for the entirety of 2017 (with the exception of the President, who doesn't need to be a student for 2017) is eligible to be nominated and run in the elections. Over the next few pages we will be telling you everything you need to know about the AUSA Executive and elections!

So why should I run?

Being on the AUSA Executive means that you can make a difference at this University, and in more ways than one! As an Executive member you can be involved in any or all of the core functions of AUSA: Advocacy, Events, Representation and Welfare.

ADVOCACY AND REPRESENTATION

As an elected student representative, you have a unique opportunity to represent the student voice at the highest levels of this University, as well as in local and national government. Most of the decision making at this University takes place through a hierarchy of committees, ranging from the Class Representative meetings right up to the University Senate and Council. As an AUSA Executive member, you have the opportunity to be on these committees and create some change. Here are just a few things that AUSA Executive members have used these committees for this year:

- Campaigning to ensure the inclusion and preservation of breastfeeding spaces across all campuses
- Lobbying for an ethical investment policy at the University of Auckland
- Working to achieve an optional withdrawal policy for students who object to animal dissections in class
- Providing feedback on the Compulsory Student Services Fee (a sum taken from all student fees to fund various University projects)
- Working with the Equity Office to establish an effective representative body for student

refugees

- Speaking out against student fee rises

If you're more politically inclined, AUSA also offers the opportunity to get active in engaging students with local, national and international politics, as well as having some influence on policy. At AUSA this year, we've already:

- Run a 'Politics Week', engaging students with political debates, campaigns and ideas in a fun and student oriented space
- Created a submission on the Residential Tenancies Amendment Act, and presented this to a Parliamentary Select Committee
- Met with MPs including Andrew Little, Phil Goff, Jacinda Ardern, David Cunliffe, Chris Hipkins, Nikki Kaye, David Seymour, Tracey Martin and Denise Roche to provide feedback on key student issues and to lobby for students
- Started planning a local body election campaign that focuses on boosting student turnout to vote and getting student views on key issues, like public transport, into the discourse
- Worked with local MPs, Auckland Councillors, Auckland Police and Auckland Transport to improve safety conditions in

Albert Park

- Spoken strongly on student issues on national television, in print and online

If any of this interests you – then you could be the next one making it happen! Remember too that 2017 is a General Election year, and it could be you that gets an issue of importance to students on the agenda.

EVENTS

At AUSA, we pride ourselves on being the premier provider of high quality and professionally run events on campus. We have a huge portfolio of major events that expands every year, and now includes Orientation in the Park, Re-O Week, End of Daze, Battle of the Bands and the Shadows Sessions. However, as an AUSA Executive member you can also take the lead in organising your own events including:

- Politics Week
- Pride Week
- Cultural Week
- Eco Fest
- Stress Less Study Week
- Sex Week
- Themed Pub Quizzes (which attract hundreds of students!)
- Any week or one-off event that interests you! The possibilities are endless!

As an event manager, you will get vital organisation, planning and budgeting experience, and have the absolute pleasure of being responsible for events that attract hundreds of students, and make life on campus a little better!

WELFARE

The reality is that being a student is hard. Everyone struggles, but there are those students who struggle a bit more. That could be because of their financial situation, their disability, language barriers, mental health issues, or anything else that just makes everything that much harder. At AUSA we are here to help those students, and as an Executive member you can make a difference too. As a member of the 2017 Executive you can be a part of:

- Administering thousands of dollars in hardship grants, textbook grants, optometry grants and childcare grants
- Creating and administering AUSA food parcels
- Looking for sponsorship for AUSA Food Parcels and welfare
- Organising Stress Less Study Week, and other events designed to relieve the burden on students
- Advocating for the rights of students within the University

I'm interested – what's next?

If any (or all) of these things sound like you, then we want you for AUSA! There are a few things that you need to do next to make sure you're all set up to run for the Executive:

Pick up a nomination form from AUSA Reception. You need to be nominated by **two AUSA members**, and you need to be a member yourself. Don't worry if you aren't already, you can sign up at Reception.

Hand in your nomination form before **3pm on the 5th of August**. At this time, you will also need to submit a statement on your candidacy to be published in *Craccum*.

Campaign! Campaigning takes place from the 16th – 18th of August. You will also have to take part in two candidates Q&A forums at midday on the 11th and 17th of August. AUSA also has a guide on campaigning available if you need some tips!

That's all for now! Stay tuned into *Craccum*, because we will be continuing to run a series on our upcoming elections! ■

broadcast. 95 FM

Congrats on having to go back to your lectures. We at bFM trust you are enjoying learning things and walking on the nice new carpet in that science building. We'd also like to say a massive thank you to the kings and queens who have been placing lures on the *Pokémon Go* stop at Shadows.

This week, I want to tell you all about a couple of our ancient radio mariners. Stinky Jim and Dubhead have put in a collective half-century of magnificent taste-making and purveyance of top-notch tracks. Dubhead can be found every Monday night from 9 till 11 on the Rhythm

Selection – your source of the dankest dub and a skanking swag of ska, reggae and hip-hop. Stinky Jim hosts Stinky Grooves every Tuesday from 7 till 10. It's your ticket to the freshest reggae, dancehall, hip-hop and more.

Maybe one day you could become a revered and beloved old dj. The first step is joining the b team. Come say hello and drink some complimentary water or Red Bull. We're on the top floor of the AUSA building, opposite the cultural space and Craccum office. We just got new carpet! ■

TOP TEN

1. Miss June — Anxiety on Repeat
2. The Echo Ohs — You Don't Mind
3. Aporia — Stereo Moon
4. Badbadnotgood — Lavender ft. Kaytranada
5. Leisure — Control Myself
6. Blood Orange — Best To You
7. Aphex Twin — CIRKLON3
8. Sam Gelliatry — The Gateway
9. The Julie Ruin — I'm Done
10. Rim & Kasa — Love Me For Real

Interview With Daddy Dean *

Dean Cutfield is our Treasurer here at AUSA. He's been called "resident Dad" by the editors of this magazine and spends a lot of his time making sticky little comments that stick in people's minds.

SO DEAN, HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT BEING CALLED "RESIDENT DAD" BY THE CRACCUM EDITORS?

Completely fine with that. If I could make my jokes more cringe-worthy, I would. You sculpt those phrases for the ultimate cringe. It's not about whether others enjoy my jokes, it's about whether I enjoy my jokes... It takes a lot of patience to make such bad jokes.

AS RESIDENT DAD, YOU MUST KNOW THE UNIVERSITY WELL. YOU ALSO PICK OUT THE EXECUTIVE DINNERS. WHERE ARE THE BEST PLACES TO EAT AROUND HERE?

I go for Munchie Mart pies, a snack box from Jewel of India and chips from Kebabs. That's how I've saved money! Oh, there is that small, dingy food mart down Symonds Street that has delicious Indian food, looks scrungy as fuck but it's delicious. It depends on how broke I am, which is funny because I'm the Treasurer,

ABOUT THAT, ELECTIONS ARE COMING UP - WHY SHOULD PEOPLE RUN FOR TREASURER?

Either (1) you wanna do something good and finance is your skill set, or (2) you're a bit of idealist without the ideas; or (3) you wanna get some experience and want to learn the ropes of a NFP.

ARE YOU AN IDEALIST WITHOUT IDEAS?

I have some ideas, they're just batshit crazy.

LIKE?

We need a market for organs and a global resource reparations payments system.

WHAT'S A GLOBAL RESOURCE REPARATIONS PAYMENTS SYSTEM?

Resource consumption of countries is tallied up, maybe per capita, and then the consumption of those finite resources are paid to the countries who bear the extraction of those

resources. It also helps improve global warming. It would never work, unless you had a 100 warheads, nuclear obviously.

SORRY I ASKED... WHAT DOES TREASURER ACTUALLY DO?

50% of the time I'm just thinking about different problems and thinking about different solutions - which anyone could do if they just put thought into it. I also give people the specific information that they need. Basically, it's just balancing a lot of things. I'm around when something crops up, which always happens because we're a student union.

WHAT'S THE WEIRDEST THING THAT'S CROPPED UP AND THAT YOU'VE HAD TO SORT OUT?

Probably being sent to fetch groceries for Stress Less Study Week last semester. I ended up in a supermarket in the middle of the city, buying 10 cartons of milk and the storekeeper just watching and knowing I don't have a car.

ARE YOU NOW OR HAVE YOU EVER BEEN A MEMBER OF LABOUR PARTY?

No, not at all. My family is shades of Act and National. I took a picture with one of the Labour leaders once and my brother called me up really concerned... I love watching Fox News just because it's fun to disagree with... probably why my family got a bit of a shock when I said I was leftist.

HAVE YOU BEEN FOLLOWING THE US ELECTIONS ON FOX?

Not as much recently... but I've been following broadly with the rest of the world in amusement. It's funny watching Fox because they don't know what to do. They don't like Trump, but they also don't like Hillary... I just want to hear a Fox news presenter say they want Hillary over Trump, I'm just waiting for that.

ARE YOU ALSO WAITING TO CATCH A PERSIAN ON POKÉMON GO?

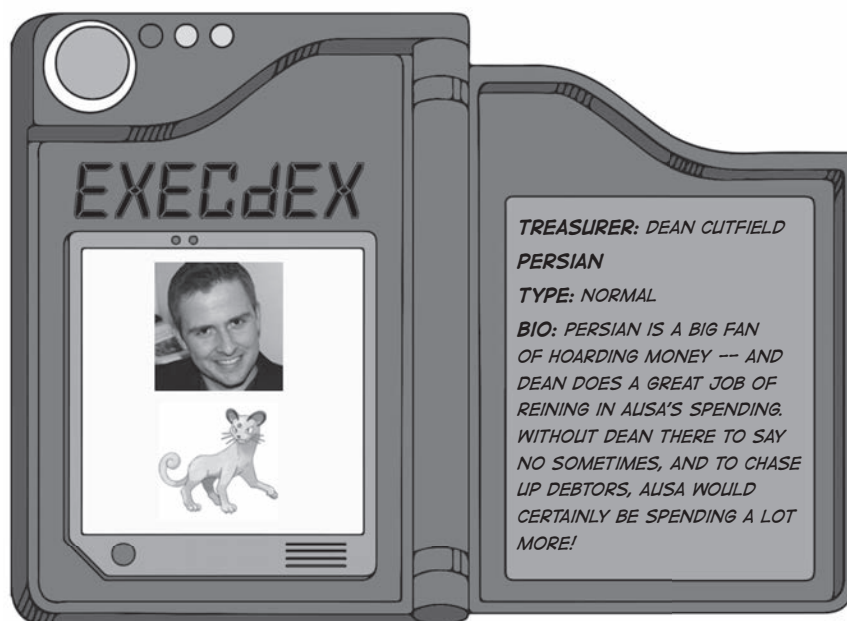
Yes, I've only got it's pre-evolved state.

PERSIAN IS THE POKÉMON WILL ASSIGNED YOU, DO YOU HAVE ANY COMMENTS ABOUT THAT?

I think the Pokémon actually has a move called pay-day, which is funny because I sign off things. But I don't actually pay anyone.

I would have preferred it in its pre-evolved state because in the cartoon it talks a lot, and has one of the most annoying cartoon voices. It talks to the audience and I like that because I like breaking the fourth wall--Hello Craccum readers, this interview is over. ■

**paraphrasing former writers on this topic*



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Change the
Treasurer into the
**Finance Vice
President**

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SPECIAL GENERAL MEETING
3rd August 2016, 1pm, University Quad



inspire to conspire

catriona britton becomes a little bit paranoid
over conspiracy theories so you don't have to

Here are some concepts I'm just going to throw out there.

John Key is a mindless droid sent to us from other extraterrestrial beings to truly screw us over (ssshhh we can't let them know it's working). You can spot it a mile away: the abnormally monotone accent (even for a Kiwi), the mechanical malfunction of the three-way 2011 Rugby World Cup handshake, and the electrical, dead-eye twitch every time he automatically begins a response to a question "ohh, look".

Then there's Scribe. In his absolute banger of a track "Not Many" he reps Canterbury way too hard for my liking because you know what else is in Canterbury? Well, maybe a couple of skeletal remains in the Avon River, but otherwise not a hell of a lot at present, so my theory temporarily stops there.

Nothing gets you going quite like a solid, airtight conspiracy theory. They are typically used to explain events that are a result of one or many secret plots used to achieve evil and malevolent goals, which are devised by incredibly

powerful and cunning conspirators. They're a worldwide phenomenon. There is almost no area of humanity left untouched by suspicious minds. Although most appear to have their roots in some sort of hidden political agenda, conspiracy theories can cut across the social, cultural, scientific and spiritual areas of society.

Gone are the days when conspiracy theories were frothed over by nerdy, white boys in their parents' basements. Now it's all of us, your (ir)regular town and city-folk, hunched over our laptops, the blue-glow of the screen the only light in our bedrooms. It's getting close to midnight (or later), your tea is cold and you've found yourself buried deep in *that* part of the internet. No, not the dark web. Conspiracy blog sites tend to be darker – places where your mind wreaks havoc over every hypothesis, every paranoia that other minds have concocted. You're on a wild, midnight train going nowhere remotely conceivable, but each connection made turns into a neurological brain spasm that could very well send you off the rails, furiously messaging and pestering friends about your latest discovery. You won't rest until they too believe the hype of the hypothesis.

Why do we indulge ourselves in these late-night mysteries and fantasies? Psychologist Rob Bretherton believes conspiracy theories resonate with us because we understand

people's selfish ways in that they likely don't have our best interests at heart. Rather, people have hidden motives and get together to do "shady stuff". And so these initial assumptions and fears can appeal to our inquisitive nature on a global scale. There continues to be debate among psychologists and historians alike as to what exactly drives us to believe such nonsense (actually read: genius): a search for meaning, confirmation biases, communal reinforcement, psychological projection, or simply a bizarre form of reassurance that truly awful occurrences are not random, but rather ordered by some sort of cabal, which means there is hope to bring the cabal to justice.

So what about little ol' New Zealand? What's going on right under our noses that we may not be aware of? Well, in my extensive research, I found a shitload of average, barely held together conspiracy theories, mostly political in tone – foreign investors taking more than their fair share of our land, our participation and role in the United Nations' Agenda 21 (a global action plan for sustainable development) being one giant fascist ploy for wacky world domination, the Royal Society of New Zealand's claims on sea level rise just not adding up because their scientific data is "dubious".

As you can see, our nation is right in the midst of some "serious" questionable activity.

Our conspiracy theories (or significant lack thereof) are about as exciting as Jordan “tap ‘n’ gap” Mauger holding a koala. (Did you know that koalas are being absolutely ravaged by chlamydia? Food for thought.) These conspiracy theories are so overwhelmingly and disappointingly boring, there is no point going into them in detail. So instead, let’s look at the place where all good conspiracy theories are born, America, land of the free (which is a centuries-old conspiracy theory in itself, amirite?), and see how they may relate back to New Zealand.

Elvis with the pelvis died on 16 August 1977, but grainy footage emerged on YouTube in June this year of an elderly gentleman wearing an Elvis t-shirt fiddling with a hose on the grounds of Graceland. According to the uploader of the video, The Shadow (how fucking vague is that?), it is Elvis in the flesh purely because of the fact that he raises two fingers to the top left of his head, which in Chaldean Numerology signifies 9, the “proof of life” signal. Oh, as well as the fact that this man often wears his hair in a ponytail, which Elvis apparently used to do.

This theory is rubbish. I googled “Elvis ponytail” and “Elvis hair” and there are no photos of Elvis ever wearing his hair in a simple up-do. And maybe this man just had a wee itch on his temple? Or maybe he was throwing up a cheeky insult to the camera? It is far more likely that Elvis is in New Zealand, has undergone extensive cosmetic surgery and liposuction, somehow managed to get his hot, little hands on an anti-aging drug with his unfathomable amount of royalties, and is now living under the name of Brendon Chase. He is an “Elvis impersonator” – the ultimate disguise – and he is damn good at it, having played major venues in Australasia and the Pacific Islands, and even coming third this year in the Ultimate Elvis Tribute Artist Contest. This man is playing us all. WAKE UP, NEW ZEALAND!

Obama. Please don’t leave us. Some whackos, dubbed

As you can see, our nation is right in the midst of some “serious”, questionable activity. Our conspiracy theories (or significant lack thereof) are about as exciting as Jordan “tap ‘n’ gap” Mauger holding a koala.

“birthers”, continue to claim that Barack Obama wasn’t born in America, but rather Kenya. A handful of these people went so far as to approach, unsuccessfully, the shitstorm that is the American justice system in order to obtain court rulings declaring Obama ineligible to be president. Obama publicly released his birth certificate (he’s Hawaiian) to put these birthers to shame so they’d

slip back into their Southern, gun-adorned man caves. But they still claim it’s a forgery because conspiracy theorists NEVER QUIT; plus they have the support of potential Hitler 2.0, Donald Trump.

It’s more fair to say that yes, Obama was born in Hawaii, but he spent his teenage years in New Zealand attending Burnside High School and fitting in with some of his fellow Polynesian brothers. It is here that he met our “powerful” leader of the future, John Key. They bonded over their love for Hawaii and hitting balls onto the green, fantasising about the day they could hit their balls together in Hawaii. They are both the same age and were born five days apart, which only adds to the likelihood of this conspiracy theory being true. They are soulmates. They are brothers from other mothers. WAKE UP, NEW ZEALAND!

Aliens. What’s up with them? Besides supposedly spinning and zooming around in our skies every now and again, peeing out of their fingers, and occasionally being pests for our agricultural folk with their damn crop circles, they may unluckily find themselves in Dreamland, otherwise known as Area 51. There ain’t nothing dreamy about this place. The purpose of the US Air Force facility is unknown. However, if you’re a lil alien happily going about your morning commute, but find your UFO malfunctioning only to crash on US soil, you’re fucked. You will be taken to the barren Nevada desert, some weird men will pull apart your ship, sit you down to have a chat, force you to reveal all your secrets regarding time travel and teleportation, and then will probably kill you and cut you up to inspect your green blood and organs.

But did you know that New Zealand is contributing to the US’s secretive extraterrestrial dealings? You may have heard about or been in those trendy stores “Area 51” in Newmarket or High Street. Don’t be fooled that these stores are New Zealand owned and operated, where hip young’uns spend their day trying to look busy by making sure the hangers are evenly spaced out. It is more plausible that US top dogs are the puppet masters behind this small chain of stores, seeking to expand their commercial empire down the country (there’s a shop in Wellington) because they’ve heard the Desert Road is a prime spot to set up shop in the Southern hemisphere for all UFO activity in this part of the world. Also, close to our military, which is a big plus. They’re using these shops as a subliminal message to consumers to get them comfortable with the idea that their own Area 51 will be on the front doorstep soon enough. Nothing like luring in the unsuspecting with a freshly unpacked Huffer tee and drop-crotch trouser combo. WAKE UP, NEW ZEALAND!

As an exception to the US-running theme, for some real freaky, sci-fi antics look no further than the theory concerning the Reptilian Elite. According to former BBC sports reporter David Icke, there are numerous prominent individuals within our global community that are shape-shifting reptilian humanoids with the sinister agenda of enslaving the human race. Icke, who also for

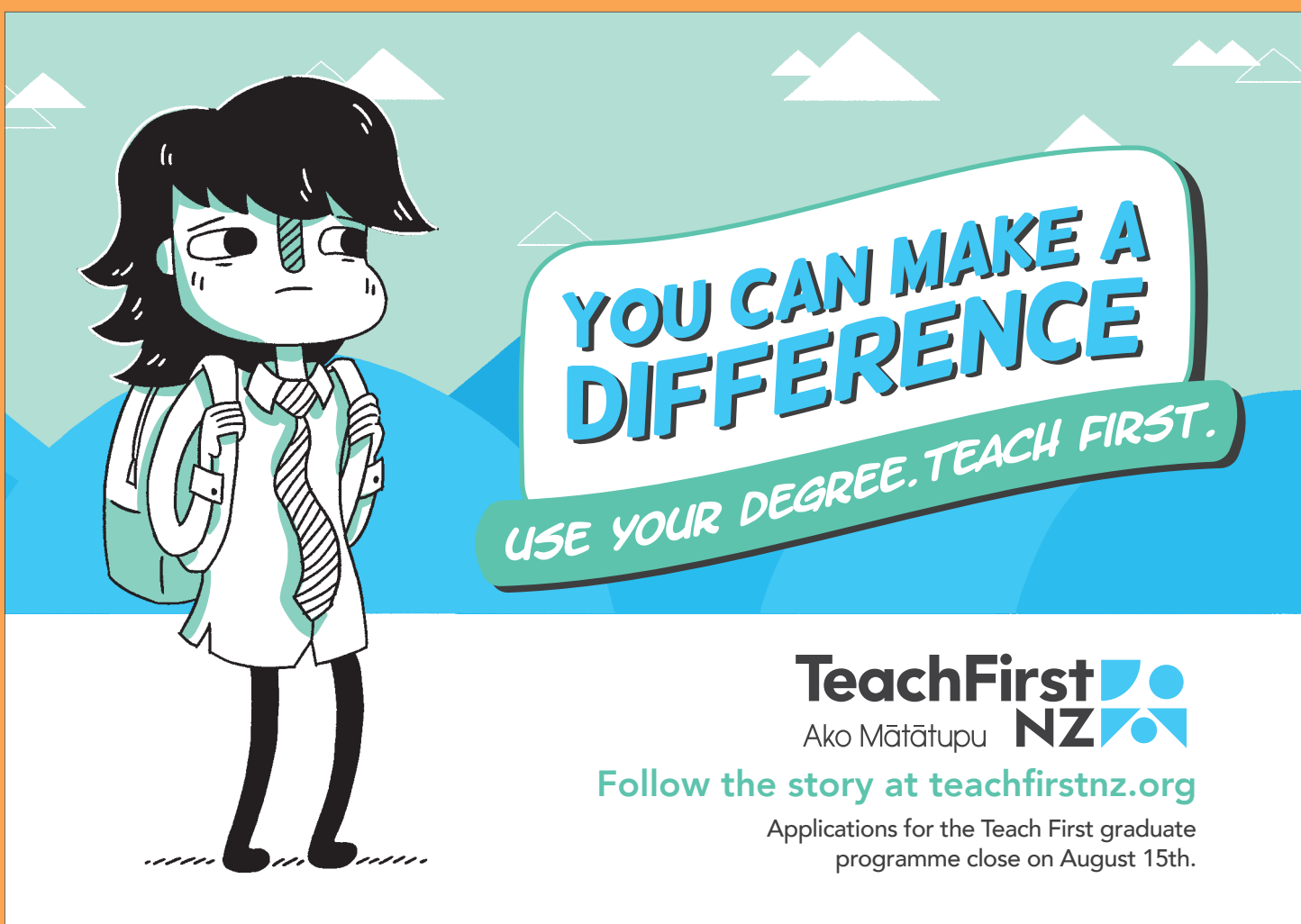
a period of time only wore turquoise, claims to be the Son of God and said New Zealand would be pummelled by natural disasters in 1997 and consequently disappear, believes members of the Royal Family, George W Bush and Bill Clinton are some of those among the scaly beasts. Icke is due to give a 12-hour show at Auckland's Logan Campbell Centre on August 6. This is not a paid advertisement, but you should head along nonetheless, even if only to heckle him from the back row (the \$90 may be worth it).

This theory is just plain icky. The only real Reptilian Elite is found right on our shores. The tuatara. We have fucking dinosaurs that probably house more wisdom than Icke on a good day. The tuatara has a "third eye" on the top of its head, but its purpose remains unknown. It is thought that perhaps it's used for absorbing ultraviolet rays to produce vitamin D, or to determine light/dark cycles, or to assist in thermoregulation. Nonsense! That third eye is the eye of a wise supernatural being that has chosen the tuatara as its physical form on Earth to keep tabs on us all and to stop us from self-destructing (which is looking more and more likely to happen). Although the eye is covered over by opaque scales and pigment six months after the tuatara has

hatched, it remains all seeing because tuataras are rad. If they have survived for so long, they have got to be doing something right. So, take a page out of the Real Reptilian Elite's book and be über chill. WAKE UP, NEW ZEALAND!


The world would be a little duller if conspiracy theories didn't exist. New Zealanders should participate in them, embrace them, slowly crumble under the weight of mounting paranoia (to an extent). It's all a bit of fun, until the time comes when you have such a shocking realisation and things actually start to add up and you begin to question everything and everyone around you. Then it stops being fun and starts being a literal nightmare. Don't get to this point.

Sometimes it's far better to participate in ignorance than to seek out an explanation for everything and ultimately become a self-made, psychotic mess of a human. But as we are naturally curious and questioning animals, why not have a little faith in the ridiculous? Just watch out for that recurring eye twitch, those little green bodies running next to your car as you drive past Ruapehu, or flashes of vertical slit pupils after a quick blink. ■



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it's all in good humour

saia halatanu takes a rather serious
look at what makes us giggle

“Something which has never occurred since time immemorial; a young woman did not fart in her husband's lap.”

This cheeky Sumerian quip is the world's oldest recorded joke, dating back to 1900 BC. In the book of *Genesis*, Sarah eavesdrops on a conversation between God and her husband Abraham, the former briefing the latter with the news that despite her age, Sarah was to have another child. Sarah laughs to herself, “After I have become old, shall I have pleasure, my lord being old also?”

Humour has long been a sought after characteristic amongst people. Desperate Tinderites never fail to add “a sense of humour” to their list of desired traits in a partner. It might have something to do with the old banality that a good sense of humour connotes some form of intellect. In fact, the search for a good ha-ha is universal; laughter transcends all cultures, races and religions. You wouldn't expect a person to exist who has an absolute displeasure for humour.

But what is humour? What makes something funny? And why do we laugh? Surprising-

ly, despite its salience, very little is known about laughter. Science explains the human mechanics of the act of laughing but fails to cross the frontier into why we laugh and what makes something funny. Even philosophy has little to offer on the topic and what little has been offered comes as a somewhat cynical view of laughter and humour. In the *Republic*, Plato states that “when one abandons himself to violent laughter, his condition provokes a violent reaction ... The ancients generally thought violent laughter undignified.” Aristotle wrote in his *Nicomachean Ethics* that “those who carry humor to excess are thought to be vulgar buffoons.” Arrian wrote on the lectures of Epictetus and warned against laughter: “Don't allow your laughter be much, nor on many occasions, nor profuse.” He saw laughter as an ungentlemanly behavior and likened it to swearing and other vulgar entertainments.

Despite its criticisms, humour is still with us and appears to have developed from hedonistic vice to commonplace pleasure. Over time, three philosophical theories of humour have emerged – the Superiority Theory, Incongruity Theory and Relief Theory.

Arguably, the Superiority Theory could be the

one that critics of humour focus on because it is necessarily at the expense of another person. In German it is “*schadenfreude*” which translates to “harm-joy” and describes the pleasure derived from witnessing the misfortune of others. This theory of humour simply posits laughter as an expression of superiority over others. Famously, Mel Brooks said, “tragedy is when I cut my finger; comedy is when you fall into an open sewer and die.” We've all done it before, watched a friend trip up and eat shit and then proceeded to exhale a prolonged, roaring guffaw before we'd even checked to see if they had a pulse. These physical fails seem timelessly funny. The earliest silent film comedies were dependent on this physical slapstick humour that essentially elevated the audience to a position where they could laugh at another person's pain. Its popularity continues today – one only needs to look at the number of views on any Fail Army video online.

But Superiority Theory isn't limited to physical humour. It also manifests itself in a form that is popular with politicians – insults. Former British Prime Minister Benjamin Disraeli said of his rival, William Ewart Gladstone, that if he ever “fell into the Thames, that would be a misfortune, and if anybody pulled him out,

that, I suppose, would be a calamity." Statesman John Bright called Disraeli a "self-made man who worships his creator." Then there's Frenchman Georges Clemenceau on Britain's David Lloyd George: "Oh, if I could piss the way he speaks!" The politician probably most well known for his wit, Winston Churchill, said this regarding Prime Minister Clement Attlee: "An empty cab pulled up to Downing Street. Clement Attlee got out." Although many find these funny, it looks as if a new boundary has emerged. Like the early criticisms of laughter, some people today would argue that people should not be the targets of scorn. Others would put money on the fact that the same people who argue that position would struggle to repress a chuckle should Donald Trump's toupee greet a strong wind.

The examples given at the start of this article fit the Incongruity Theory of humour. This theory holds that humour is found in the violation of standard thinking patterns and expectations – that is, when a norm or expectation is suddenly curbed. In both aforementioned cases, the norm is the gender role associated with women. Given women's reputation as the fairer sex, they are supposedly uncontaminated by such filthy thoughts and behaviours. The association of women with farting (as with the Sumerian joke) or old people and sex (Sarah eavesdropping) causes a shift in an initial thought pattern and the surprise is what makes one laugh.

Of course there is a contextual element to humour, which means both jokes may not translate to contemporary audiences very well. A modern internet take of the Sumerian joke is a meme that displays a picture of an attractive woman accompanied by the caption: "I don't fart. I whisper in my panties." Another meme asserts as a matter of fact that "women don't fart. They do, however, shoot tiny puffs of glitter that sound like a unicorn's laughter and smell like rainbows". All of these are essentially the same joke, but the up-to-date versions are more likely to bring a wry smile to the reader's face, if not a chuckle to their belly.

Other examples of Incongruity humour include Rodney Dangerfield's pithy "I get no respect: I played hide and seek; they wouldn't even look for me". Dick Gregory, a black comedian of the sixties, disguised a political statement as a joke when he related how he "walked into a restaurant, which was the wrong restaurant, in Mississippi... I sit down, the blonde waitress walked over to me and I said, 'I'd like two cheese-burgers.' She said, 'We don't serve colored people here,' and I said, 'I don't eat colored people nowhere!'" The Incongruity Theory appears to be the foundation for most modern stand-up comics and is perhaps the more encompassing theory since it covers forms of humour that do not display a form of superiority. It also covers puns and jokes that don't involve sex, racism or women. But who actually thinks those are funny?

Gregory's joke might also come under the banner of Relief Theory. This theory holds that laughter is the result of a dissipation of pent-up nervous energy originally intended by the body for an expression of another emotion such as fear, anger or sadness. This makes Relief Theory and Incongruity very similar. Gregory's joke builds up the audience's nerves when he mentions the contentious issue of segregation, but when he follows with the punchline that makes light of the

situation, the nervousness dissipates and causes relief and laughter.

Sigmund Freud explained his own version of Relief Theory, arguing that our enjoyment of a joke was the result of an overcoming of inhibition or a release from a repressed taboo. This explains why people laugh at jokes about sex, racism or women; not solely because he or she thinks these topics are frivolous or plainly humorous (though there could be that), but because as a society we afford them such sturdy protection. A joke about race starts us off nervous because we've already begun by avoiding our internal censor that says "this is wrong". The energy that's usually used to repress these thoughts is already building and laughing is the release of that unused energy.

You might notice that matters become more hilarious when you're expected not to laugh. When Louis C.K. uses the word "nigger" in his comedy, there isn't much that is inherently clever or witty about it. Most people are laughing for the fact that a white man is openly using a word that is considered taboo to certain people. Richard Pryor spent much of his career exploring race relations. His "Word Association" sketch on *Saturday Night Live* also played with the controversial word and remains one of the greatest SNL skits of all time. Chris Rock made many jokes alluding to black people and is now considered a comedic paragon. Justin Bieber once tried it and was vilified. The question then arises: what separates humour from bad taste?

A popular joke amongst Kiwi tradies and labourers tells of how an Englishman, Irishman and Māori man meet Jesus in a bar. After buying him a drink and shaking Jesus' hand, the Englishman rejoices, "The headache I've been suffering from for the last 20 years is gone!" Similarly, after buying Jesus a drink and shaking his hand, the Irishman stands up with perfect posture claiming, "it's a miracle! My 10-year-old back pain has disappeared!" The Māori man noticing this, buys Jesus a drink but refuses to shake his hand saying, "don't touch me bro, I'm on ACC." Like most jokes, a certain stereotype is pushed. In this particular case the stereotype is that of Māori, although it is, surprisingly, a common joke told in industry populated by Māori. It therefore seems that the line between funny and offensive is how one takes a joke.

As with all the examples given here, most humour is built on an irrationality – that is to say that the violation of mental patterns means that there is no real objective truth in humour. When asked how to fight racism, Slavoj Žižek answered "with progressive racism. We should adopt racism." He argued that the shared obscenity creates camaraderie and can act as a form of solidarity. This seems the case of the Māori joke told amongst workmen. Many others alluding to Pākehā and Pacific Islanders circulate too.

But maybe it's better to see the function of humour as play? An editorial published in the 1907 edition of the *American Journal of Psychology* is still as relevant today: "Perhaps [humour's] largest function is to detach us from our world of good and evil, of loss and gain, and to enable us to see it in proper perspective. It frees us from vanity, on the one hand, and from pessimism, on the other, by keeping us larger than what we do, and greater than what can happen to us." ■



Rekt-oplasm

ARTS EDITORIAL BY SAMANTHA GIANOTTI

A lot of ink has been spilled on the topic of the all-women *Ghostbusters* reboot. The prospect of writing an editorial about it felt a bit like poking a sleeping bear; the online juggernaut of sexist jibes and man tears seemed to have slowed, with the film debuting to middling reviews and a domestic total of \$46,018,755 in its opening weekend.

But just like *The Revenant*, when Leo thinks that bear has finally buggered off, the big hairy beast returns. Last week, *Saturday Night Live* star and *Ghostbusters* team member Leslie Jones was harangued by Twitter users in disturbing displays of racist, misogynistic, bigoted bullshit. Jones ultimately had to leave Twitter for a spell, a move some framed as her playing the victim because she had made a 'shitty' movie. Leslie, if you could just chill out about people comparing you to a gorilla, calling you a "big lipped coon", and saying people who call you beautiful are "liars", that would be tip top.

At the Montreal Comic-Con earlier this month, a panel in celebration of Star Trek's 50th Anniversary convened William Shatner, Brent Spiner and Kate Mulgrew, from *The Original Series*, *The Next Generation*, and *Voyager* respectively. Things pretty quickly got weird. Shatner reportedly quipped a few times that "a woman's place is in the fridge" (possibly flexing his rhyming muscles after a fan shouted out "a woman's place is on the bridge" in support of Mulgrew's turn as captain). This obscurely sexist fuckery continued when Mulgrew was asked what it felt like to finish filming *Star*

Trek: Voyager. She replied that she "wept" when her time ended, and that she had loved her time as the captain of a starship. Shatner's reported retort was that weeping was "so female", and that he couldn't envision the captain of a starship crying. (Important note: Chris Pine, reprising the role of Captain Kirk, definitely looked like he was about to squirt some in the scene in *Star Trek: Into Darkness* where he and Spock longingly press their hands against a glass divider as Kirk dies from radiation exposure).

Shatner's comment speaks to a larger issue: most of the central roles in science fiction are a space for men, where women, and traits that are associated with being a woman, are excluded. This seems to be the keen issue underlying most of the manly gripes about *Ghostbusters*, as an all-women reboot creates a space that doesn't prioritise the visibility or centrality of men. I wanted to be reasonable writing a piece on *Ghostbusters*. I wanted to make concessions in line with those expressed by people who didn't enjoy the movie. Some of the jokes did fall flat. Some of the writing was a little on the nose. The film's villain didn't inspire much in the way of mirth or distress. Sure, the gender of the Ghostbuster is irrelevant. And it certainly is true, men and women should equally be able to brandish a proton pack. But as I watched the *Ghostbusters* reboot last week, all those things were secondary. I was positively jazzed to be watching four women competently, skillfully and jovially bust some paranormal pests. Some of the best scenes* were the ones where our four leads were shooting the breeze in their Chinese restaurant-come-laboratory, surrounded by the impressive ghoul grappling tech made at the hands of Kate McKinnon's Jillian Holtzmann. Nothing was really made of the fact that the four

members of the team were women (besides a couple of tongue-in-cheek references to all the shitters on the internet), and their friendship was woven seamlessly into the formula of a summer action blockbuster.

When I was younger, I often wished I could be a boy. Not because of some underlying identification as a male – because of the things I saw that boys or men could be. Sitting in the theatre, watching a bunch of well-rounded, fleshed-out, funny ladies busting ghosts and taking names – it was seeing women front and centre on the big screen that suddenly made it clear just how sorely I'd been missing them. The film also avoids pitfalls surrounding Leslie Jones' character, positing Patty Tolan as a smart, genuine, essential member of the team. This all sounds very cheesy and over-earnest, but it is true. Despite the fuckos who continue to display the grotty, gross underbelly of humanity, a lot of good is sure to come from this movie. Just do a Google image search of "kristen wiig ghostbusters premiere" and look at the photo of her clasping the hand of a young female fan dressed in costume, proton pack and all. Proceed to cry for 3-5 hours about your hope for the future.

A space is being carved out for women in big blockbusters, in science-fiction, in films that are intended to appeal to a mass audience. If that doesn't excite you, or if such a prospect upsets you – you need to check yourself. ■

**Actual best scenes: Kate McKinnon fighting a crowd of ghosts in slo-mo after licking her self-made proton pistol (granting all viewers a tiny orgasm), and (spoilers) Sigourney Weaver's mid-credit cameo as McKinnon's savvy af mentor, a welcome upgrade from her previous outing as Bill Murray's boner fodder.*



Beware the Slenderman

FILM REVIEW BY EUGENIA WOO

Beware the Slenderman is definitely a documentary involving Slenderman, but it isn't necessarily about the creepy, suited-up weirdo. I learned this during the opening credits of the film as someone narrated the story of the Slenderman stabbing to an audience of mostly senior citizens. They all recoiled visibly when a recording of police communications detailed how a 12-year-old girl had been viciously stabbed started playing. They hit us with the heavy stuff right off the bat.

For context, the Slenderman stabbing was carried out in 2014. Two teens stabbed a friend of theirs nineteen times in an attempt to kill her and earn Slenderman's approval; they thought this would let them live in his mansion in the middle of a national park. I remember reading this and not taking it seriously because of the fact that the stabbing involved Slenderman, a bit like someone getting in trouble for bashing some turtles at a petting zoo because Mario told them to. This documentary made sure I never cracked a joke about it ever again.

It was humanising, polarising, inquisitive, and as unlikely as this sounds, a rather compassionate look at the lives of the perpetrators and their families in the context of how the internet age can turn fantasy into reality. Richard Dawkins made an appearance talking about how memes like Slenderman can be termed viruses of the mind, and when I left the theatre I was contemplative. "That was pretty dark," my friend observed. "Understatement of the century," I replied. *Beware the Slenderman* was provocative but educational, and it did what any good documentary would have done – it made me ask the tough questions. ■



The Handmaiden

FILM REVIEW BY WEN-JUENN LEE

Showing in this year's film festival is the wonderfully lesbian, art house-gothic *The Handmaiden*, a refreshing adaptation of Sarah Waters' award-winning novel *The Fingersmith*. Director Park Chan-wook shifts the dark humour and gothic aesthetics of Victorian England to 1930s Korea, where rustling hanboks, dark cherry blossoms and zen gardens work seamlessly in an environment thick with sexual tension, longing and deceit.

Con artist 'Count Fujiwara' enlists the help of Sook-hee, the daughter of a famous thief, to win over the affections (and money) of heiress Lady Hideko. Becoming her servant and handmaiden, Sook-hee is tasked to persuade her mistress to fall in love with the new Count. But life is never quite that simple, and Sook-hee and Lady Hideko find themselves inevitably drawn to each other instead.

Punchy sequences, in true Park fashion, are dotted with stifling sexual tension. The on-screen chemistry between Sook-hee (newcomer Tae-Ri Kim) and Lady Hideko (Min-hee Kim) is raw, intimate, and palatable. The complex character development of the two is also praiseworthy; the plot twists are not only about who is tricking who, but how underestimated Sook-hee and Lady Hideko are as seemingly subservient women. In this way, Park shows us a woman's experience of sexuality without a man (fuck yeah!), often to the point where male sexuality from the Count and Hideko's uncle (and his band of smutty men) is caricatured and grotesque. In contrast, the sexuality explored between Lady Hideko and Sook-hee is celebratory and lovingly crafted – although, some have argued, in a way that gets a little gratuitous and male gazey. Despite this, the final result is a film that is sexually empowering, visually stunning, and explosive from start to finish. ■



Ants on a Shrimp

FILM REVIEW BY EUGENIA WOO

If you've got Netflix, you've probably been bored out of your mind at one point and ended up watching something from their selection of food documentaries. *Chef's Table* is one such gem which marries tantalising shots of food with character portraits of chefs and their inspirations. Maurice Dekkers' *Ants on a Shrimp* tries to recreate that alchemical cocktail that screams "on-demand success", but unfortunately, it falls just a bit short.

Ants on a Shrimp is a food documentary about Rene Redzepi, the owner of the Michelin-starred and gourmand-adored restaurant, Noma. More specifically, it's about Redzepi and Co's 2015 stint in Tokyo where he temporarily closed down his beloved Copenhagen haunt and relocated to Japan to create a limited edition 14-course menu out of regional ingredients. I was expecting it to follow the *Munchies* formula of chef show-and-tell: some visits with local connoisseurs, an attempt at foraging for traditional ingredients, and a money shot of the resulting fine dining masterpieces. For better or for worse, Dekkers put together a documentary that was mostly sous chefs getting yelled at in a basement kitchen.

It's not that *Ants on a Shrimp* lacks a focus on food. There's plenty of time devoted to Redzepi and his apprentices foraging for mushrooms and other strange-looking herbs. The downside is that there's also plenty of time devoted to him criticising the efforts of his chefs in what starts to sound like code after a while. We see Noma's chefs pacing around, chewing on bits of soil, and eating smoked fish at a local market, but the 14-course menu is never quite a visual reality beyond a hurried slideshow at the end. *Ants on a Shrimp* teases and titillates with a good score and the anticipation of what artfully shaved garlic leather and scallop fudge might taste like, but it ultimately leaves you high and dry. Spoilers: everything that looks like dirt probably also tasted like dirt. ■



Parson James at St Mary's Cathedral Church

GIG REVIEW BY GEORGIA HARRIS

Despite the biting cold, the courtyard outside St Mary's Church was bustling with people eager to see Parson James perform. A church may seem like an odd choice for a gig, but for James, performing at a progressive Anglican church was the perfect fit. The church's limited capacity gave the gig a rare intimacy, and the grandeur of the space had just the right amount of solemnity to suit the concert's serious undertone, as a fundraiser for victims of the Orlando shootings.

Parson, who is mixed-race and gay, has faced more than his fair share of racism and homophobia growing up in South Carolina. He reminded us before beginning the gig that although his music is meant to be an uplifting experience, that we should also keep the ongoing struggles of LGBT people on our minds, in solidarity with them.

The concert had a somewhat churchy vibe to it, but in the best sense of the word. Think less yawning-in-uncomfortable pews and more energising, uplifting gospel-pop music that makes you feel like you're part of something bigger than yourself. Like a preacher in-tune with his congregation, James exuded an easy confidence and charisma that was certainly aided by his delicious Southern accent. Adding to the religious-like experience was GALS, a lesbian and gay choir who contributed their soaring vocals alongside James.

Along with the endearment of the open, humble way he interacted with the audience, *I believed* him when he sung. The whole performance was raw, rich, emotional and passionate. The show itself was short, lasting about 40 minutes - a definite case of quality over quantity. Along with the joy and togetherness felt in St Mary's church on that cold night, I like to think everybody left thinking about how they could spread that feeling to others. ■



The Circus

TELEVISION REVIEW BY PATRICK NEWLAND

US politics are not often shown in a positive light on television. With *The West Wing* standing as a glaring contrast, Washington DC is portrayed as the home of special interest, where politicians possess downright contempt for the public. It is this that makes the Showtime real-time documentary series *The Circus* so interesting. It seemingly doesn't have an angle. It's led by two journalists, one left leaning the other centrist, and by a former republican strategist (a close friend of George W. Bush, and his chief media adviser in both 2000 and 2004). These three use their combined clout to follow several of the primary campaigns in a behind-the-scenes manner not normally seen until months after the fact.

In particular Jeb Bush, Ted Cruz and Bernie Sanders were unsupportive and gave them fly on the wall status throughout the many campaign stops. This lighter look at politics is contrasted by the backroom meetings in which old party hands dish (some of) the dirt, and show how they (at least try to) influence the race. Without narration, *The Circus* lets you draw your own conclusions; it doesn't interpret any candidates' views, it just lets you hear what was said in the moment.

The show is back after a break since the last competitive primary. Covering the conventions, we again dive into what should be the most scripted political events in the world. With the world's most unpredictable candidate and a level of social unrest America hasn't seen for several decades, the next two weeks are likely to go down in history, one way or another, and *The Circus* is likely to go down as one of the best political documentaries of all time. ■



Teens of Denial

Car Seat Headrest

ALBUM REVIEW BY JEAN BELL

Teens of Denial is the most recent release from the intriguingly titled indie rock band Car Seat Headrest. What began as the highly successful solo project of lead singer Will Toledo, Car Seat Headrest has flourished into a full band venture, boasting a record deal with label Matador Records. *Teens of Denial* pulses with passion and energy. While the tracks tend to be lengthy they are consistently full-bodied, rich with spirit and vigour.

Toledo maintains a clear influence in the lyrical content of the band's work, at times speaking of the anxieties and troubles facing a whole generation of young people. "Ballad of the Costa Concordia" compares becoming a functioning adult to a sinking ship. In the track titled "Joe Gets Kicked Out of School for Using) Drugs With Friends (But Says this Isn't a Problem)" Toledo confesses his substance abuse, with steel guitar personifying the deflated and resigned feel of the song. Moving beyond a purely rock-oriented sound, "Drunk Drivers/Killer Whales" features mellow electric guitar with a synth in the background, generating a dreamy, almost space-pop sound. Horns also feature on the album, with mournful and poignant horns characterising "Cosmic Hero", a track where Toledo makes brutally honest observations about the effects of substance abuse.

Given this is only the second album to be released by Car Seat Headrest as a full band, the potential for the act seems immense. Toledo is being saluted as an indie-rock hero; not only is he able to craft structured indie rock songs that avoid being too formulaic or predictable, Toledo also demonstrates a talent for writing clever and snappy, yet emotive, lyrics. With the driving force of a band behind Toledo, hopefully Car Seat Headrest will be on the road for some time to come. ■

Marie Antoinette

(2006, DIR. SOFIA COPPOLA)

There are a small number of movies I watch every year, at least once a year, without fail. *Marie Antoinette* is one of them. I was 13 years old at release and every detail of the production appealed to me – a doomed princess who poured her misery into frippery, cakes used as set dressing, that shocking pink typeface on the posters.

I'm notorious for fidgeting while watching movies; knitting, mending, embroidery, more often my attention is on my hands than the screen. Not so with *Marie Antoinette*. Watching it is the visual equivalent of that feeling when you take the first sip of a drink and feel it go all the way down and think to yourself "damn, I didn't know I was that thirsty". The film strikes a careful balance reimagining the 18th century in a way that reads as period but still makes allowances so as not to alienate modern audiences from the core theme of a young woman at odds with who she is and who she expected to be.

Points to recite so people think you are clever:

1. **Biopics:** As a genre biopics make me a little uneasy, firstly because I'm unsure how to pronounce "biopic," ("bio-pic," "biop-ic?") and secondly because they reframe a person's life as entertainment. Marie-Antoinette was murdered. Three of her four children died before they reached the age Marie was when she was married (fourteen). To dress those facts in macaroon shades of sugarcoating sounds like an insult. Thus align the facts that I love this movie and that I would never wish in a thousand years for anyone to repeat living through the events depicted. However, *Marie Antoinette* revolves around a simple emotion of isolation that transcends the scopophilia of the production.
2. **Dressing Political Women:** This is one of my favourite things to tell people about even though I can see the exact moment their eyes begin to glaze over as I get too into the topic. The key to talking about politics at parties is never to verbally confirm where you align yourself on the scale of left to right and mix in plenty of fictional examples. In addition to discussing the political narratives of Marie-Antoinette's dress, name drop Yulia Tymoshenko's hair, Ruth Bader Ginsburg's

jabots, Margaery Tyrell's various spousal influences, and a bit on Princess Leia.

3. **Aesthetic:** there is a trend to dismiss the use of the word "aesthetic" as being improperly applied, much in the same way "literally" is used. Guess what though, "aesthetic" is being used just fine. I've snapped up as much reading about Marie-Antoinette and *Marie Antoinette* as I could find over the years, paying careful attention to the accusations of hollowness in the film's plot behind the

sheen of depictions of French court. In short, critiqued for placing aesthetics over content. However, Sofia Coppola's film uses the inferred frivolity of fashion to reflect the painted eggshell fragility of the French royal families' power. I love this movie.

Please watch this movie. Sometimes at night I shed a single tear about my inability to go back in time and give Marie-Antoinette a hug.

■ ASTRID CROSLAND



Five Fictional Podcasts to Listen to in the Dark

THE BLACK TAPES

"When *Serial* meets *The X-Files*" I think everyone's calling it, and they're exactly right. *The Black Tapes* is about fictional host Alex Reagan's journey into the mysterious and terrifying world of the supernatural, interviewing psychics, mediums, and ghost hunters about their jobs and their beliefs in the paranormal. But things start to get all too real when she starts investigating paranormal sightings herself with the sceptical Dr Strand and inadvertently tangles herself in a web of conspiracies that may or may not be real.

The podcast can be a bit corny at points, but the rest of the time it is genuinely terrifying. They create a fantastic atmosphere that would keep any horror enthusiast up at night and the sceptic/'I want to believe' dynamic of the two main characters à la *The X-Files* is a nice nod, and creates an interesting tension within the series.

WELCOME TO NIGHT VALE

One of the most popular audio fictions out there and certainly the one with the biggest fan base, *Welcome to Night Vale* is set in the style of a local radio program in the eponymous desert town of Night Vale where ghosts, angels, and Lovecraftian monsters exist as an ordinary part of daily life. *Night Vale* is an eerie, surreal and often existential comedy that plays around with the radio show format in absurd ways. Each episode, Cecil, the show's host, reports on a new incident that occurs in the town whether it be an ominous glow cloud mind controlling people, an interdimensional portal opening up in the rec centre, or wheat by-products turning into snakes.

Night Vale's absurdism is balanced out with a lot of heart. While most of the podcast seems strange, random, and lacking any sort of morals, there are certain themes, characters, and long arching plots that anchor it to reality. Most notably, the love story between Cecil and scientist Carlos, and the respectful treatment of both love and death gives the series its spine and creates bittersweet moments that balance out the craziness in this paranormal parody.

LIMETOWN

Limetown is quite a recent podcast, only about a year old, with the same faux-documentary/investigative journalism style as *The Black*

Tapes. This sort of *War of the Worlds*-esque 'is it real, is it not real' format has taken the fictional podcast landscape by storm and I think *Limetown* does it best. *Limetown* is a sci-fi mystery about a town that disappeared ten years ago, and a conspiracy to keep the whole thing hushed up. It follows reporter Lia Haddock as she tries to figure out the mystery of why the town's folk just up and left all of a sudden.

The show currently has only one season and is looking to get a second, but I managed to listen to the whole season in a day because it was just so gripping; some parts are truly terrifying, leaving you at the edge of your seat, always wanting more.

WE'RE ALIVE

I must admit I don't listen to this one as religiously as the others just because I'm not much of a fan of zombies, yet *We're Alive* is still a brilliant display of performative art. A more cynical side of me would say this is just *The Walking Dead* or *28 Days Later* in audio form, but there are moments in *We're Alive* that go above and beyond that. Set in a post-apocalyptic Los Angeles, the story centers on ex-soldier Michael Cross and his large group of survivors trying to secure a safe haven called the Tower from zombies, as well as rival factions and other post-apocalyptic nasties.

There's something very interesting and unique about a zombie podcast, as if podcasts and zombies are a match made in heaven. There's a certain terror in the knowledge that your visual judgement has been impaired creating this blindness in the listener who is forced to use their hearing to sense danger, which can be quite terrifying.

ALICE ISN'T DEAD

A humble little series from one of the co-creators of *Welcome to Night Vale*, *Alice Isn't Dead* follows the story of a truck driver who is on the hunt for her wife who disappeared out of the blue. The series has the same surreal, dream-like vibe of *Night Vale* but in a more serialised and grounded format. At points I found that the narrative didn't really know what it was doing or what it wanted to be but by the end of the first series, it had found its feet and I had a little more confidence in its ability to tell me a story.

That being said, I really quite enjoyed its subtle offhanded critique of American road trip culture and the myth that there's just empty space in-between cities. A lot of the podcast is an ode to the vast countrysides that are never noticed but make up the bulk of America. ■ MICHAEL CLARK

A Guide to Underrated Romcoms

The romcom is a staple genre. From *The Holiday* to literally any Hugh Grant movie, romantic comedies have the ability to make even the toughest of us believe in true love. But with all the making out in the rain and Jennifer Aniston quotes, many of the best of the genre go unnoticed. Here are five of the most underappreciated and underrated romcoms to get you through your week.

***Stuck in Love* (2012):** A fantastic family romcom, *Stuck in Love* follows a writer, his ex-wife and their teenage kids as they each experience love and relationships over a year. With great performances from a solid cast including Kristen Bell, Logan Lerman, Lily Collins and Nat Wolff, the fairly well-worn story comes across as refreshing, realistic and very heartfelt. You

can't get much better in terms of your standard indie romcom.

***What If* (2013):** With Daniel Radcliffe in the main role, you'd think *What If* would be a little more popular than it apparently is. Like most romcoms it answers a question about love most people will eventually face: what happens when you meet the person of your dreams but they're already taken? Although pretty cliché and predictable from the beginning, *What If* tries and succeeds in bringing something quirky and unique to the typical romcom, delivering a lot of laughs along the way courtesy of the amazing Adam Driver (you know, Kylo Ren from that little thing called *Star Wars*).

***Life After Beth* (2014):** Definitely the weirdest on the list, *Life After Beth* is not at all your typical romcom, beginning with titular character Beth's (Aubrey Plaza) funeral. But this is still a love story. Beth unwittingly comes back to life as a zombie and rekindles her relationship with boyfriend Zach (Dane DeHaan). As she becomes more and more zombie-like, Zach and her family prepare for the worst, ending in one of the funniest zombie apocalypses I've ever seen. Whilst not your typical romantic comedy, *Life After Beth* is both funny and romantic, so it makes the list.

***Hello My Name is Doris* (2015):** Adorable and filled with hilariously awkward and embarrassing moments, *Hello My Name Is Doris* tells the story of Doris (Sally Field), a sixty-something stuck in a bit of a rut in life. Doris takes the advice of a 13 year old girl in an attempt to date her much younger co-worker (Max Greenfield). Funny, sad and uplifting, it's the perfect romcom to kill an afternoon and one you won't easily forget.

***What's Your Number* (2011):** Despite potentially being the most well-known of the movies on this list, I feel like most people discarded *What's Your Number* as a typical trashy romcom, but it's better than that – placing this as perhaps the most underappreciated movie here. Starring Anna Faris and Chris Evans, it tells the story of Ally Darling (Faris) as she attempts to hunt down all 19 of her exes to try and find "the one". Hilarity ensues thanks to cheeky cameos from the likes of Andy Samberg, Martin Freeman and Chris Pratt, but the story also has heart, making you fall in love with the characters and the relationships that follow. ■ NICOLE BLACK

Will Anything Stop Pokémon GO?

Pokémon GO is an augmented reality mobile phone app based on the well-known *Pokémon* video game series. It allows you to catch Pokémon, battle in Gyms and collect items, so long as you're prepared to get outside and explore the real world. The interface resembles Google Maps and points to places in your neighbourhood where Pokémon can be found.

If you're in the anti-group (and there aren't many of you), you might be wondering what on earth is so great about *Pokémon GO* and why it has exploded worldwide. Immediately after its release in Australia and New Zealand, Nintendo's shares boomed, and the game has seen more active users than the tedious yet addictive Candy Crush Saga. Most of the planet has the game now and stories of mass captures of rare Pokémon, awkward encounters with businesses and strange PokeStops continue to flow in (see the Koffing found at the Holocaust Museum).

The question of how *Pokémon GO* got so big

requires an acknowledgement of the Pokémon series itself, which has been around for twenty years and happens to be the second most popular video game franchise of all time, behind only Mario. As a massive fan, Pokémon has been with me for most of my life and I've always had friends to play Pokémon with, but sales were limited to owners of the Nintendo Game Boy or DS series. Reaching into the smartphone market has allowed *Pokémon GO* to thrive where the main series couldn't.

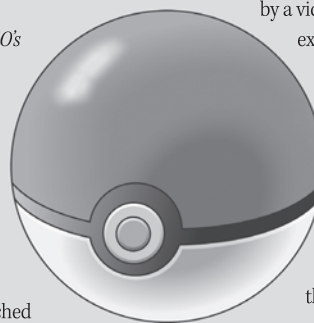
The second factor of *Pokémon GO*'s success is its ambition. I've played every single main series Pokémon game, and fans like myself have been perfectly happy with new releases every three years that differ little from their 90s origins. Knowing that, it wouldn't surprise you to find that Pokémon fans approached *GO* with quiet scepticism, and were far more interested in the Pokémon Sun and Moon panel at last month's video game convention, E3. *Pokémon GO* was considered a big risk to the loyal players, so it's to the credit of the developers that it has paid off without upsetting the fan base. I

mean, who really thought that the hundreds of people trying to catch a Mewtwo in Times Square could actually happen?

The third and most important factor of *Pokémon GO*'s success is that it is an incredibly unique, social, pro-active video game experience that has never been done before. Co-developer Niantic Labs' previous game, Ingress, had a similar idea but didn't come close to the universal appeal of Pokémon. Parents are impressed and encouraged

by a video game that gets their children exercising and socialising out of the house rather than lazing about at home, and some of them like the idea so much that they join them.

Pokémon GO is huge, and if you're sick of hearing about it, it's worth considering that in these divided times we live in, it's amazing that the world has managed to unify and come together over something as trivial as a mobile game where you catch monsters. Well, there is the Team Mystic/Instinct/Valor argument, but that's never led to worse than benign memes, I hope. ■ JACK CALDWELL





Editors' Essentials

THE MUSIC AND MOVIE RECOMMENDATIONS NO ONE ASKED FOR

What is your number one guilty pleasure movie?

CAITLIN

Angus, Thongs & Perfect Snogging: Not only have I seen this movie at least a dozen times, I have also read all the books in the series that inspired the film. There are ten of these books. They have titles like *Dancing in My Nud-dy-Pants*, *Startled by His Furry Shorts* and *Are These My Basoomas I See Before Me*? I passionately believe that these titles speak directly to my authentic self. It is not uncommon to find me drunk at 2 AM, encased in my old dressing gown that is the precise fleshy-pink of a ball sack, inhaling KitKat Chunkies and crying over the fact that Georgia chose bloody Robbie over Dave The Laugh who was OBVIOUSLY THE BETTER CHOICE AND WHY HAS HOLLYWOOD TOLD US TO GO FOR THE UNRELIABLE MYSTERIOUS ONE INSTEAD OF THE EMOTIONALLY AVAILABLE NICE ONE DO THEY KNOW THE DAMAGE THEY WREAK. This film has a ripper of a soundtrack (in an actual unironic way) and I would advise pairing it with similar cinematic triumphs *Wild Child* and *St Trinian's*.

CATRIONA

13 Going on 30: There's something about *13 Going on 30* that truly pisses me off. I can't put

my finger on it. Is it the corny, cringey, choreographed "Thriller" dance? Is it just Jennifer Garner being a generally hopeless actress? Or is it the fact that this film annoyingly reminds me of myself as a preteen – the awful fashion (polos, short-strap handbags), the bitchy girl groups (although these are timeless), being a generally obnoxious, Hubba Bubba-chewing, sticky lip gloss-wearing child? Regardless, if it's showing on TV (you can count on it being aired at least twice a year), I will watch it. I will watch it because I live for the "Razzle Red" moments, Matty and his crafty, pink house magic, and those tear-jerking high school photo-shoots where Matty smiles warmly at a blissfully happy Jenna. Bless.

SAMANTHA

The Princess Diaries 2: Royal Engagement: I once watched this movie fourteen times in eleven days while in a flu-fuelled haze, surrounded by tissues (some for nose blowing, some for tear wiping). My party trick is that I know all the words to the Genovian national anthem. This is a party trick no one ever asks me to perform. I do it anyway. The film's sexless love story is exactly the chaste romance my fourteen year old self craved, riddled with fully-clothed under-tree spooning and brief moments in broom closets where I shout "MAKE OUT ALREADY" (a response now reserved for watching James McAvoy and Michael Fassbender eye-bang each other in *X-Men*). Chris Pine's hair is unnecessarily coiffed for the duration of the film; this is compensated by the final scene where he looks up at Anne Hathaway during her coronation, misty-eyed and proud as hell. Honestly, fuck my life.

WINIFRED

The Step Up films: I haven't actually seen any, but I think I'd like them.

HANNAH

Shrek Forever After: There are so many things I love about this movie I don't even know where to begin – wee Rumpelstiltskin and his absurd collection of wigs, fat Puss in Boots, and the angry, lollipop-licking man-child who keeps asking Shrek to "do the roar". To be honest this movie is so brilliant I didn't think it even fell into the category of "Guilty Pleasures" but I was overruled by my fellow editors and their superior movie tastes.

FELIXE

Sex and the City: Because *The Holiday* is already taken I'm going to have to go for the first *Sex and the City* movie. Following on from the TV series, at feature length there is plenty to indulge in – questionable fashion choices, dramatic sex and so much brunch. There's just a lot of vicarious livin' to do! Plus, in comparison to Carrie's love life, you almost definitely have your shit together.

MARK

The Holiday: Loyal readers will recall Samantha's editorial from last week, where she recounted her dismal performance in the '1001 Movies You Must See Before You Die' list. *The Holiday* was not on that list, but the editorial team would have performed much better across the board had the list been titled 'Watch *The Holiday* 1001 Times Before You Die'. It is the filmic equivalent of comfort food, a nice cinematic casserole. Kate Winslet and Jack Black are the hearty beef cut, Jude Law the potatoes, Eli Wallach the crusty loaf and Cameron Diaz the rosemary stalk, not really edible or appreciated but forgivable considering the big picture impact. While only two of the characters end up banging, the film is overwhelmingly sexy – for the soul. ■

A Love Poem For A Honey Badger

WITH ELOISE SIMS

Everyone has a favorite animal, right? Lions. Tigers. Elephants. Bears (oh my). Maybe even a kiwi or a kea for those wannabe DOC rangers out at the Tamaki campus.

For me, from ages ten 'til nineteen, my absolute favorite animal was a takahe. Not just any takahe, by the way. It was Greg the Takahe on Tiritiri Matangi who earned the title of the bird to steal my heart, one bright January morning in 2007.

I would like to say it was love at first sight. However, Greg took me by surprise. And I mean that quite literally – as his first move was to attach himself to my seven-year-old brother's leg and begin vigorously humping him.

My brother squealed with frightened indignation. My parents fell about laughing, snapping pictures of Greg, wings splayed, going full throttle. His beak trembled with effort. Eventually, with a dignified squawk, Greg detached himself, waddling away in peace. All that remained was a slightly damp patch on my brother's trackies, and a gaggle of German tourists who had gathered to watch the show.

One of them offered him a post-coital cigarette.

From that moment on, for the sheer value of sibling bullying, Greg was my favorite animal of all time. I was truly heartbroken when he died in 2012. It felt like the end of an era. My brother, then 12, offered his condolences.

"I really just have to be thankful he didn't fully finish on me." He said solemnly. Then – "Jesus, that's not a sentence I ever wanted to say about a bloody bird."

Moving stuff, truly. However – this story does have a happy ending. Four years on from Greg's tragic and untimely death, I am delighted to announce I have a new favorite animal.

This animal is the incredible, fearless honey badger.

I'd like to dedicate the rest of this column to this majestic beast. Though it is native solely to Africa, Southwest Asia and the Indian subcontinent, I would like to propose usage of the honey badger's image as a universal picture of *indestructibility*. In particular, I am in love with an unstoppable South African honey badger called Stoffel. Stoffel is, well, a unique beast.

He resides in Moholoholo Wildlife Rehabilita-

tion Centre, having been hand-raised by farmers, meaning that he can never be released into the wild. Stoffel's story begins when he was first put in Moholoholo 18 years ago. He was first kept in a rehabilitation center – and was banished in disgrace after "poor behaviour". This included straight-up *murdering* other residents of Moholoholo (deer, rabbits, and an eagle), chasing people out of the kitchen, and tearing open people's handbags to eat their food.

Yes, you read that right. This 28-centimeter-tall badger is literally ferocious enough to not only chase other humans, but to *assassinate a fucking fully-grown eagle*.

And we're only just getting started.

After these incidents, Moholoholo was forced to put Stoffel in a quarter-acre caged camp of his own. They paired him with a female honey badger, named Pammy, in an attempt to calm him down. However, this proved to be a tragic mistake. Pammy and Stoffel soon became partners in crime, devising a system of standing on each other's shoulders to pull the two bolts of the door free.

Honey badgers are not only machines of death; they are trained-assassin-level-of-smart. They've been known in the wild to use logs, sticks, and mud as tools to help them climb into trees to – you guessed it – kill more things in their unstoppable paths.

Stoffel, at this stage, had proven himself as the future conqueror of mankind. Irritated, Moholoholo, at great expense, built an enormous concrete pen in which to seal Stoffel. They called it "Honey Badger Alcatraz". Stoffel escaped it within a night through climbing an adjacent tree. So Moholoholo cut all the trees within the enclosure.

The next night, Stoffel escaped again. This time, he utilized various rocks lying around to build a footstool, allowing him to jump the fence. So Moholoholo removed all the rocks in his enclosure.

The third night, Stoffel broke into the house of the head keeper, by building an enormous mud ball to escape his pen once more.

At this point, you might as well ask yourself – why does Stoffel keep escaping? Couldn't Moholoholo just let him roam free, being the criminal genius he was born to be, through the African plains? Ah, but there was a reason why Moholoholo couldn't allow Stoffel's reign of terror to continue.

You see; this incredible beast – this furry ball of wrath – was jumping into *the lion cage* in his getaway, to go and fight the lions.

The first time he escaped, he won the fight. Against an adult male lion. The second time, he was so badly injured in the battle that he had

to be put in the hospital wing for two months.

After a rehabilitation period, where he regained the use of his limbs, he was put back into his pen – whereupon he *burrowed out of his cage to go and fight the lions again*.

Stoffel is a national hero.

In fact, he's an inspiration for all of us.

If you'd like to know more about this actual living chainsaw of an animal, I'd recommend watching the BBC Two documentary, *Honey Badgers: Masters of Mayhem*. Otherwise, let Stoffel's story serve as a reminder to all of us: that if you want to go and fight some lions, *let nothing stand in your way*.

Also, if the US military used Stoffel on the front line in Mosul, ISIS would probably have surrendered by now. ■

ELOISE IS ONE OF THOSE GIRLS WHO MADE A SHOW OUT OF HATING JUSTIN BIEBER WHEN SHE WAS TWELVE YEARS OLD. NOT MUCH HAS CHANGED. SHE LOVES JOHN OLIVER, PICTURES OF LABRADORS, AND IS RETURNING HOME TO MT. EDEN ROAD THIS WEEK. PLEASE FOLLOW HER ON TWITTER (SHE WANTS TO TELL HER MUM SHE'S FAMOUS): @SIMSELOISE



BJ

WITH RAYHAN LANGDANA

Boris Johnson is the new Foreign Secretary of the United Kingdom. Boris Johnson, he of the blonde mop and the too-tight suits, the same guy whose bloated bulk saw him stranded in mid-air on a zip line, the foul-breathed, roast chicken-eating epitome of whiteness, the middle-aged man who floored a small, young Japanese schoolboy in a game of touch rugby last year, is going to be the Foreign Secretary of the United Kingdom.

Boris Johnson, the guy who oscillated around and vacillated about his Brexit stance for months before being convinced to become pro-exit by Michael Gove (who'd later knife him and recede back into anonymity), presided over the referendum that has left every non-racist, non-old resident of the UK scratching their heads and cursing their passports, and then published a lengthy op-ed piece the day after the referendum about how Brexit doesn't mean the UK isn't part of Europe anymore, is the new Foreign Secretary of the United Kingdom. Boris Johnson once called Barack Obama a "half-Kenyan with an ancestral dislike of England."

While I've done my best – in a superficial, hackish way – to assassinate Johnson's character, that's not my point. My point is that Johnson had an affair a few years ago with a fellow journalist named Petronella Wyatt. He denied it. At the time of the denial he was a publicly elected official – the lie he made was to the electorate who'd given him his power in the first place. Lying to the electorate is a pretty bad thing in any situation.

Let's quickly turn to Zara Holland. Zara Holland won the Miss Great Britain beauty pageant in 2016. Following her win she scored a spot on the reality TV show *Love Island*. On the show (again, called *Love Island*) she had sex with someone. Once 'news' of the consensual sex she had (ON A SHOW CALLED *LOVE ISLAND*) broke, Holland was stripped of her crown and endured public slutshaming by the Miss Great Britain organisation (an organisation whose sole purpose is to preside over a competition that requires women to dress in bikinis for a largely male audience). Despite her title being reinstated after public outcry, Holland's face was splashed across every major newspaper in the UK and she was painted out to be a promiscuous example of everything that's wrong with millennials.

Boris Johnson is Foreign Secretary of the UK and he lied about an affair he had to the electorate that voted him in. Somehow that's the least bad thing about him. Zara Holland won a beauty pageant, went on a reality show (reminder: the show was called *Love Island*), had sex with someone, and was torn apart by the press. One of these people is a public figure. The other isn't. One of these people is married with children. The other isn't. One of these people is now Foreign Secretary of the UK.

The other isn't.

If I were to tell you that there was once a guy who had the most important job in the world, and that while he had that job (and in the very office where he did his work) he got a blowjob from a young intern who wasn't his wife, and that subsequently he lied about that relationship and was only found out when his, ah, genetic material was found on that young intern's dress, and that he drank Diet Coke and talked about ice hockey during his deposition for lying about getting a blowjob from an intern who wasn't his wife, and that things ultimately turned out absolutely A-OK for this guy, I doubt you'd believe me.

At the time of the denial he was a publicly elected official – the lie he made was to the electorate who'd given him his power in the first place. Lying to the electorate is a pretty bad thing in any situation.

To me, it's unclear whether we should even moralise about sex or adultery anymore. There are probably countless statistics to suggest that at this point, it's probably pretty mathematically unlikely that none of our parents have philandered at some point or another; heck, the *trailer* for Amy Schumer's hilarious film *Trainwreck* saw a character teach his children that "monogamy isn't realistic." However, we do moralise about sex. And we moralise about it in different ways. And it's kinda gross. ■



Checking Out Early To Avoid The Rush

WITH CURWEN ARES ROLINSON

"Besides, the way America's public schools are sliding, they'll all be this way in a few months. I say, lay back and enjoy it - it's a helluva toboggan ride" - Superintendent Chalmers, The Simpsons.

At the time of writing (and, for that matter, for the foreseeable future if not outright perpetuity), the fallout from Brexit continues.

In my column last week, I sought to address the weaponized misconception that all support for, enthusiasm about or empathy in the general direction of Britain leaving the E.U. had to be motivated by racist sentiment. But thinking about the issue over the previous seven days, another – even greater – misconception has come to light.

That there was actually some sort of semi-mythical choice on offer to maintain the extant allegedly-working status quo in the first place.

Let's be clear about this. That's not what the Remain option was offering and for one simple reason: the European Union as we know it is fundamentally creaking at the seams. Ever since the Common Market became the Eurozone with the adoption of the single currency, there has been an escalating set of problems for many of the less-well-off economies which comprise Europe's southern rim.

The poster-child for how 'ever-closer-union' failed in practice is, of course, Greece. The inability of the Greek government to set or seriously influence its own monetary policy – its own interest rates, investment regulations, money supply and all the rest that goes with that – seriously hamstringing any indigenous Hellenic efforts to meaningfully respond to the crisis then gripping Europe.

Instead, Greece's monetary policy was effectively set in Germany and the other more well-off and less hard hit northern and western members of the Euro club. And while the conditions the European policy-elite thusly rolled out might have been about right for the large and robust virile economies of Germany et al, they were piteously inadequate for attempting to assist the Greeks to get back some modicum of stability – let alone growth and recovery.

That's the trouble with attempting to run a continent-spanning monetary union and thus, consequently, a single monetary policy encapsulating an incredibly broad range of differing local economies. Local needs and diversity of circumstance simply get lost amidst the 'big picture' (or, less charitably, are overlooked in favour of catering to the economic needs of the 'big players' whose picture, increasingly, it seems to be).

Making matters worse, as part of the deal by which Greece managed to stabilize at the political and monetary equivalent of death's door thanks to massive (and largely German) economic assistance, the Greeks suddenly found themselves in the unenviable position of having their fiscal policy effectively dictated to them and run from elsewhere in the Eurozone. We all saw how that turned out.

Now I don't just mention this because it's an extant case study in how the E.U. has historically mismanaged the needs of an ailing member state. Instead, I draw attention to it because what happened to Greece – in the sense of an escalating surrender of fiscal policy to unelected or foreign Eurocrats to go along with the previously handed over control of monetary policy – is the inevitable pathway further forward for the Eurozone as a whole.

You can't run an ever-closer economic union without an ever more centralized degree of direction for both fiscal AND monetary policy that applies across largely the whole union. To suggest otherwise is tantamount to insinuating that the successful economies such as Germany – whose money is increasingly spent subsidizing the state budgets of less salubrious member-states to the south – ought to have a limited degree of say over how what effectively amounts to their own domestic tax-take is spent in their own backyard. Perhaps this is the right thing to advocate, but good luck getting the Germans to agree to that.

More likely, in the not too distant future we are going to see serious proposals put forward for Eurozone-wide taxes, and a European treasury in order to fund such things as European internal spending and control European fiscal policy, in a way similar to and perhaps explicitly modeled on how monetary policy is already centralized and constrained. Perhaps that is why the translation to the phrase Merkel used to refer to the E.U. in a speech recently was more properly rendered "European Unification Project" rather than "European Union". Because this is already being thought about.

The other option, of course, is to go diametrically the other way. Conclude that the Eurozone experiment in its present form has not exactly worked for a number of European economies, and that it might well be time to curtail it and roll it back – at least for those states who have not done particularly well out of it. Certainly, countries such as Sweden, Norway, and Switzerland prove that it's perfectly possible to remain party to the Common Market without having to 'render unto Caesar' by all adopting the same coinage. (Although interestingly, the E.U.'s position on the Treaty of Maastricht is that joining the Euro is not something E.U. member-states are supposed to have a choice over). Further, 'Renegade Economist' and general man-against-time Yanis Varoufakis' Plan B to save Greece proposed in extremis to do exactly that.

But is this likely to take place? In stark contrast to much of the rest of the course of human history, will the technocrats of Europe realize that they're half in a hole and start scrabbling frantically to get out rather than pushing further on, Pooh-bear style in the hopes that the hole leads somewhere wondrous?

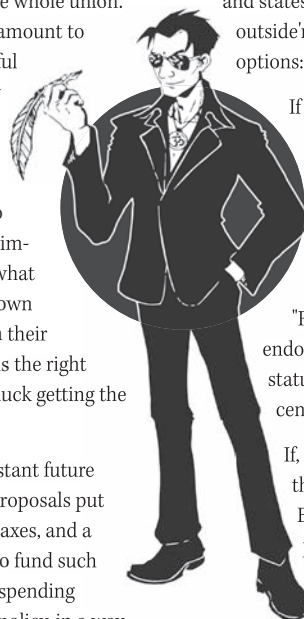
Unlikely. Nobody wishes to admit they've made a mistake, particularly when it's a continent-spanning, decades-encapsulating, Zeitgeist-embracing colossus of a potential botch-up.

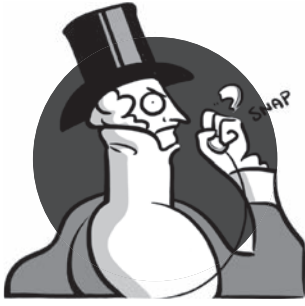
The response to the twin (and ongoing) European crises of serious economic malaise and states weighing up their options 'on the outside' may therefore be cast as one of two options: 'All In', or 'Fold'.

If "All In", then Brexit voters were quite vindicated by seeking to put the brakes on further British integration (particularly sans democratic mandate – the referendum result in 1975 never talked about any of this). A "Remain" vote was cast as being an endorsement for the 'status quo', but the status quo was unsustainable and the center cannot hold.

If, on the other hand, "Fold" becomes the vote du jour (whether for the Eurozone at large or for more peripheral member-states) then Britain has not done something singularly self-mutilating. Instead, it has merely pre-empted what will shortly be a swathe of rumblings from other disgruntled E.U. states.

To quote Death in *Good Omens* ... "DON'T THINK OF IT AS DYING [...] JUST THINK OF IT AS LEAVING EARLY TO AVOID THE RUSH". ■





The Monsters Within

WITH ADITYA VASUDEVAN

Micah Xavier Johnson killed five police officers in Dallas. He formerly served in the Army Reserve for six years and did a tour of duty to Afghanistan for nine months – in that time he faced a sexual harassment complaint from a female soldier.

After returning to America, he began associating with black power groups online, culminating in the tragedy that now fills the news cycle. The oft-posted and seemingly intuitive conclusion that the world has reached since the shooting is that we can regret both police brutality against African Americans *and* this

retaliatory shooting. I want to query whether our moral judgment should be so simple.

The heartrending truth is that we are numb to being told how often African Americans are killed by American police; it has almost become commonplace. News reports on structural discrimination that provide comparative statistics remind us again and again that there is a 'Black America' and a 'White America'. But when it comes to an individual case of radical or extremist backlash those structural reports and reasons seem to lose their force in people's eyes. The same applies to acts of terror. We are told that thousands of civilians were killed in Iraq by US troops. We are also told that many were unjustifiably detained and tortured in horrific institutions like that at Abu Ghraib. But when it comes to an individual act of terror, or even in our perspective of ISIS, the shock of the individual instance eclipses the obvious structural causes. Readers and viewers seem to mentally separate reports about structural issues from reports about individual events.

Explaining why an event happened does not mean justifying it. Victims of terror attacks do not deserve to die. The police officers in the Dallas shooting were actually helping the protesters rather than brutalising them, trying to push back against the way police forces have traditionally treated Black communities. Having a perfect victim, innocent and good-hearted like the officers

in this case supposedly were, does not mean we need a perfect villain. Structural causes, like historical police brutality, can explain an atrocity without justifying it at an individual level. They can make the perpetrator less culpable. The same logic can be applied to any mass shooting. Factors like access to guns, mental illness (noting that most people with mental illness are not, in fact, violent in any way), or exposure to radical ideologies are regularly present as causes that explain a shooter's actions without necessarily justifying it.

It is human nature to think every atrocity deserves a perfect villain, because to see the real causes of a person's actions is to see the monster in ourselves. It makes us think, "in those circumstances, maybe I could have done that". Shades of this reasoning are present when right-wing commentators say that the Muslim community has a particular responsibility to condemn an act of terror. On the one hand, it is true that people who know something is wrong and are in a good position to point it out should do so. But on the other hand, implicit in the right-wing commentator's expectation is a suspicion of guilt – a suspicion that every Muslim has the 'evil' forces within them. In making this claim, the right-wing commentator separates himself or herself from the monster, from the evil forces. It lies within *those* people and not within people like me. The sad truth is that monstrosity is more universal than we give it credit for. It just rears its head in particular circumstances. ■

The Nation, The Team

WITH ADEEL MALIK

Last week Pakistan won the first test at Lords, the home of cricket. To a Pakistani fan, Lords is not merely the home of cricket, but also where the game was brought into disrepute by our captain and players.

Butt, Asif, Amir – our best players were caught spot-fixing. Two of the best bowlers in the world at the time. Many in the cricketing world called for Pakistan to be banned, all decried it – we were well and truly humiliated.

International disgrace was something we as a nation and people were very used to at the time. Our economy was in shambles, we were begging the IMF for a loan, terrorism was rampant, the Taliban had taken over large chunks of the nation, we were caught proliferating nuclear weapons to Iran and Libya, 7/11, 9/11 and Mumbai all had some connection with Pakistan. Even mother nature had a vendetta

against us, first by killing over 86,000 people in an earthquake then displacing 20 million through floods – to put it into perspective, that's one in nine people in the country. It felt appropriate that cricket should mirror the shit show.

We didn't get banned from cricket. We got to play in the UAE, in empty stadiums. Our cricketers had turned into what most Pakistanis aspire to be, immigrants. Yes, the Pakistani dream is to no longer be in Pakistan. We are okay with both the indignity with which the Arab states treat us, and the xenophobia and Islamophobia that is becoming more and more prevalent in the West. We clean other people's shit, drive their taxis and are more than comfortable with the limited legal recourse that is available to us in case we ever get abused. We just quietly do our jobs. Much like Misbah's men, who went about playing dreary cricket in the desert. And when other test playing nations don't honour their MOU with us, and tell us to fuck off, we just quietly do – content in our servitude.

Like the lonely immigrant with no family or friends, the cricket team laboured turning to its home away from home, a fortress. Since that infamous Lords test we have not lost at home. Even after losing our best bowlers to bans due

to spot fixing, and the replacements to doggy actions. After each iteration, we came back stronger. Like a typical immigrant that moves up the socioeconomic ladder, the cricket team entered the upper echelons of test ranking. A team that is still mirroring the society it represents. A society that no longer needs monetary support from IMF, has greatly subdued terrorism, taken back Taliban's territory, and has a national sentiment that is no longer sympathetic or willing to tolerate terrorism. Pakistan still faces many problems. The cricket team still faces many problems (although considerably minor ones vis-à-vis the country). A fragile opening combination and the return of Jimmy Anderson could potentially expose the middle order to the moving ball. But right now Pakistan – the nation and the cricket team – has hope. ■



LIFE IS TOO LONG

Autists In a World Gone Mad

WITH SHMULY LEOPOLD

The car sputters to a halt. A Caltex in Sanson. Shmuly gets out of the car and lights a cigarette. The sky is grey and the people are grey and buildings are grey. *What do these provincials do? Are they happy? Do they read books? Hunt wild animals? Make hearty and passionate love to women? And all that other stuff city-dwellers have in common with Hemingway?* Shmuly squinted into the dusk, coughed briefly, and expectorated on the ground.

A road trip was underway. These trips have many advantages: group bonding, the development of in-jokes (for instance, screaming "what's wrong with your pussy?" at members of the unsuspecting rural public, sophisticated, witty, urbane), the consumption of fast food (Shmuly had the aioli double-down), and most of all it makes for an easy column. The easy column is a joy to behold. In the past two years there have been approximately six road-trip columns by two columnists. All the same journey (Auckland to lower North Island and back again), all the same jokes. "Stop criticising my columns!" Shmuly screamed into the heavens.

looked at Shmuly, and Shmuly looked at the beast, and there on the neck of the beast was the number 666. The wings of the beast spread wide across the horizon and the beast took flight.

Flame spilling from four of the beast's heads and the fifth vomiting forth purple Fanta. The beast flew above the car of Shmuly and covered the sky, and Shmuly looked up. There was writing on the belly of the beast and that writing said "buy Hell pizza, 0800-666-111".

Shmuly's driver hit the gas. "Faster!" screamed Shmuly. "I'm hot" sighed the driver. A host of mouldy mediocre creatives began hurling themselves from the hills in front of the car. "I'm selling a CD!" screamed one. "Come to Young and Hungry" pleaded another. "I only work at McDonald's to fund my art!" one proclaimed as his head was crushed by the Mazda's front wheel.

A five-hundred foot giant, cloaked in fake tweed and black jeans plucked the car from the road. "I'm just a performer by nature! Sometime I just stop in the streets and perform!" he wailed before eating the car.

That, or perhaps the road trip column is on its last legs.

■

Picasso-esque hills rise up and up, and Shmuly believes Wellington is upon him. The hills keep rising. Sea on one side. It looks as it always does in Wellington, blood red.

Shmuly was struck with the sudden idea that he should speak to a local. Because it would take the column in a different direction. He wandered up to the cashier at the gas station.

"How is being in this town, woman?"

"How's being from where you're from?"

"I'm from Auckland, it's pretty good."

"Fuck off CUNT"

Wondering what he said, Shmuly walked back to the car. The Mazda begins to swallow oil again and Shmuly our hero nods off to sleep. Not long to Wellington.

Picasso-esque hills rise up and up, and Shmuly believes Wellington is upon him. The hills keep rising. Sea on one side. It looks as it always does in Wellington, blood red. The sky too looks as it always does, a deep swirling purple. The hills continue to rise, the colour they always are, fluorescent orange. A five headed beast bursts from the crevice of a still-growing mountain. The beast





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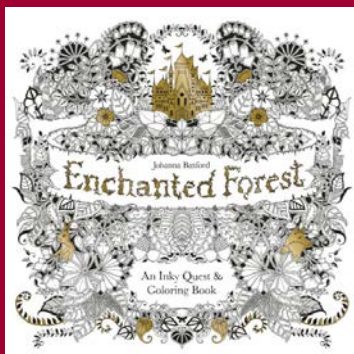
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