

# **It's #NotThem, Either**

reimagining america

Lou Chosen

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Oak Bound Books  
Oakland, California  
USA

*For Teo*

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**Oak Bound Books**  
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*graphic non-fiction, history, poetry,  
memoirs, political science, philosophy*



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## Foreword *by Jack Norris*

Dear Leo,

You're a grown man now, perhaps married or with children to raise – if you're very fortunate, both. I hope you've received the previous package. I wish we could've kept in touch, but understand by your silence that you might favor processing big things on your own, just like your father.

Well, there's more to reveal and unfortunately, I can't think of a way to soften the blow.

---

As you know from my first letter, your dad entrusted his personal papers to me once he realized there was no chance your mother would drop her charges. He brought them when he showed up unexpectedly at my home in Indiana late one evening, right before he went missing. He'd driven all the way from California, looked disheveled and was clearly stressed out. He didn't want to impose and refused to spend the night. Instead he summarized where things stood. He tried to reassure me that I shouldn't be worried, he was going on the road to clear his head and was just concerned about keeping those documents safe. He didn't get into specifics, but I gathered that he was paranoid about your mother's lawyers violating his privacy, convinced that they'd accessed his email, tampered with accounts, and even entered his home without permission.

He said he planned to return, but should anything unexpected happen, wanted me to follow the directions enclosed in an envelope on top. He asked me to promise to respect his wishes, or else he'd find someone else to entrust with the documents. I told him no problem, I'd handle it.

At the time, I had some doubts as to his state of mind. Once he left, I even wondered whether I should notify your mother of his visit. Instead, on an impulse I opened the sealed note. It shook me to the core. I had no way of reaching him, as I'd stupidly neglected to ask for his new number, wanting only for this shadow of a man to leave my house and return in the form of the person I once knew: composed, confident, and well groomed.

So I sat on it, that thick packet was left unread after a quick peek inside to confirm it was just a useless pile of rambling, illogical diary entries, of interest to nobody, certainly not to me. I hoped to hear from him again, but never did.

I omitted these details when I wrote initially, thinking you might jump to the conclusion that your mother's story was at least partially true, your father had lost his mind. Although he admittedly wasn't looking his best, in retrospect it occurred to me that under those circumstances, a person presenting in top form should've been the bigger red flag.

---

When I received word that he was gone, disappeared for good in a passing that was officially ruled a suicide, I went about following the instructions laid out for me. That involved sending you the first batch when you turned eighteen. It also means enclosing what's inside here, now that several months have elapsed. Here's the letter he wrote to accompany it:

Dear Son,

With a little planning and persistence, it turns out it isn't so difficult to fake a suicide after all, especially when everyone wants you dead.

If you'd like to track me down, it shouldn't be difficult. I'd welcome you with open arms. Whether in advance of a visit, or in place of it, here's the rest of your inheritance. All I ask for is a fair hearing.

Love,  
Dad

Lucas, your father is alive. He's living in a remote island off the coast of Washington, and would be thrilled for you to look him up.

Your Uncle Jack.





There are some people who get into an uproar over reference to the United States of America as simply America, as though it were the only one. Saying it's easier and more convenient isn't an excuse, they argue. To them, such usage implies a preeminence that isn't earned, deserved, or righteous.

Indeed, we should be more precise and intentional when it comes to language, because the spoken word is where we begin to build understanding. As a nation, we've tried our best to start from a privileged position, then bully our way through to what we want and what we believe is right, even telling ourselves that it's for the greater good – that our continued dominance over others will be better for everyone in the end.

Here are the facts. The United States of America resides within a much larger continent. As North Americans, we share a region with our neighbors, Mexico and Canada. Below us lies Central America, which is relatively small in surface area, but has strategic importance. It contains the isthmus of Panama, which connects the North and South American continents, and is now divided by a manmade waterway, allowing for maritime access between the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans near the equator. The United States recently ceded control of that canal back to Colombia, which is just south of Panama and one of many Spanish-speaking countries in South America. Another is Argentina, which shares the southern tip of the land mass with Chile and is the second largest country there, after Portuguese-speaking Brazil.



Why does the rest of the world seem so hostile to the United States sometimes? An analogy seems fitting here. Imagine a child whose younger sibling's nickname is 'Smithy.' His name is Roberto Smith. His sister is Mary. The disappointing older brother was called Jerry. Why is it this youngest kid, that an arrogant little bastard, who's handed the family name? Their parents treat the brat like the only offspring that matters. But then, everyone has to acknowledge that the kid works way harder than they do, and seems to be the most attentive towards their elders. Which makes it such a surprise when Chris suddenly strikes out solo, with seemingly no warning at all, stripping away the family name, taking on a brand new identity... and in the process, stumbles upon the sweetest landmine to be found anywhere in the universe. Beautiful, glorious, magnificent United States of America.



If you should ever be in a position of leadership, entrusted with power to make decisions that could have an influence over the lives of others, your fellow human beings, please don't lose sight that you are, in fact, *made up of the very same matter as those you're tasked with serving*. What you've done with it, whoever you've become, can never be separated from that reality. Each of us would be nothing without the rest, no matter how foolish or hostile they may appear. I wish for you nothing more than eventually finding the humility to concede that whenever you notice weakness, wherever there's cowardice or shame, selfishness and pride, evil or avarice, we're being faced with our own reflection, simply a different side of ourselves, another facet of the human condition. "There but for the grace of God" would be us, or *was* us, at some other time in our lives, when things were tough or fortune wasn't turning our way. Perhaps even just last week, or yesterday. That awareness has gotten me through to the other side, so to speak. That's an inner strength which ingratiates us to God's good graces. So humbled, our lives only become happier. Richer with meaning. More full of peace.

May you walk with God, son. And may the sun keep her warming rays on us.





## Preface, Revisited

"We the People" of the United States are in a state of red alert. Each day seems to begin with reports of hate crimes so heinous, they demand either an immediate call to arms or a turning away to numbing diversions. We're battling through some of the worst recorded natural disasters of all time. We're in the midst of an opioid addiction crisis of epic proportions. Experts on both sides vigorously debate every issue, leaving us with the same conclusion night after sobering night: the opposition is crazy, animals disguised as humans are responsible for murderous acts everywhere, war is imminent, and climate change is only the tip of the iceberg for the impending, inevitable destruction of our home planet.

Given this unfortunate state of affairs, how can we keep bringing innocent lives onto our doomed planet, where so many unwanted babies already suffer horribly? Wouldn't it be a blessing for humanity as we know it to be wiped clean, giving way for a new race to take over, thereby erasing a traitorous history drenched in the blood of innocent lives sacrificed at the altar of hate, greed, and shameless pride?

---

Son, I hope you won't grow up believing the lie that your country ever turned its back on you. Please don't fall for those who'd have you believe conspiracy theories pointing to an evil master plan, under which hate-mongers and thieves have been empowered to rape, plunder, and rewrite rules in their favor. If we look to our government and see failed leadership, then as the ones who put them there, 'we the people' need to take steps to change what's not working.

Our predecessors might have failed to see warning signs, not suspecting that a know-it-all with no proven leadership qualities or relevant experience of any kind could gain such a mass of followers. But this time, the nation's fate is in our hands. Will we stand together as people who look out for one another? Will we have the courage to speak up as leaders and encourage our peers to vote out those who've failed us in action while giving us empty lip service, time and time again?

The tables *have* turned. We're in control now.

---

Now that we've taken the reins, I hope we'll find it in our hearts to accept that while our home nation's history isn't without its low points, there's still no other place on Earth we'd rather live. We need to remind ourselves that even in the throes of intense partisan warfare, we've shown time and again the ability to come together as a unified people when circumstances truly called for it:

- ✚ Rising up in rage over the tragic, unnecessary loss of young lives, we allowed time for mourning, then worked together to determine a best course of actions needed to prevent future tragedy. *Tamir Rice. Mollie Tibbetts.*
- ✚ Horrified by unimaginable evils perpetrated right here at home, we gave one another space to heal while taking preventative measures. *Selma.*
- ✚ Angered by unspeakable attacks on our soil, we mobilized defensive forces to deter our enemies, protect ourselves from further terrorism, and paid tribute to true heroes who lost their lives. *September 11. Katrina.*
- ✚ Shocked by natural disaster ravaging our country, we rallied behind humanitarian efforts, letting residents know that, even if it felt like God had abandoned them, we'd stand behind the cause of rebuilding their homes in a place called Paradise.

*That's the country we are, the nation we set out to be. How about we keep doing that?*





I've written these pages because I believe that parallels between our family history and what our nation is going through today may help us find the courage to keep opening doors to more thoughtful dialogue, especially with those who don't share our experiences and points of view.

*Occupy Wall Street. Black Lives Matter. #MeToo.* These movements highlight the depth of the problems our generation is tasked with solving. Denial is no longer an option. Nor does it make sense to blindly support those who push themselves forward as victims to be pitied or martyrs to be celebrated.

Our survival is a testament to the sacrifices of women and men who've come before us. Isn't it a myth that advances in our nation's history are to be credited solely to the masses? That there are no true heroes amongst us, no great Americans who should be lauded for individual acts of heroism or accomplishments against all odds?

Our nation's birth came not only from the pillaging of virgin lands, with European explorers thrusting themselves viciously upon an unwilling native population, but also from ingenuity and strength of spirit in the face of a deck stacked against them. Perhaps our challenge is to discover the nuances in history, accept that there are no easy answers, no simple black and white truths. I hope we'll also uncover an important, often overlooked fact about our country's past. That although there were good people caught up on both sides of our nation's civil war, the one that tore the country apart eight decades into its union, history has proven one side was right both in principle and in serving the country's collective best interests. That the other side had been fearful of change, neglectful of their own humanity, and very, very wrong.



Let's not lose sight of the fact that despite the hardship that gave birth to our nation and long struggle to right the wrongs that led to our American civil war, we got through it. After emerging victorious from such a hard labor, why should we allow others to rewrite history, casting us as victims? We've turned the table on our abusive parents. Our days of forced residence in a household filled with self-loathing and harmful abuses of the human spirit are a thing of the past. Rather than uniting as our forefathers and mothers did under a shared desire to cast off their oppressive crown, we now get to decide for ourselves what family and home mean to us. Who'll be allowed into our house? How do we make sure they respect our rules and established conditions for long-term stay? Who will be appointed head of household?

Having taken the first baby steps in breaking this insidious cycle of domestic violence, let's carry it forward to completion. Foreign interests are laying out path after path lined with candy, gold, and flashy temptations. They want to convince us to keep capitalizing on emotions of outrage over past offenses. Having experienced firsthand our nobility and humility during the toughest times, when we stood firm as champions for the greater good, I'm certain we'll be strong enough to resist.





# Trump calls Jussie Smollett an absolute embarrassment

**Andy Cohen**  
@AndyCohen

THIS IS FUCKED UP TO THE CORE. CATCH THESE EVIL HOMOPHOBES AND LOCK THEM UP FOREVER

**Ariana Grande**  
@ArianaGrande

what happened to jussie makes me really fucking sick to my stomach. i can't believe shit like this is really still happening everyday. what kind of world? sending all of the healing energy i love i possibly can and hoping for change. what can we do? tell me & i'm there.

**Cher**  
@cher

Jussie Smollett, 'Empire' Actor, Reportedly Attacked in Possible Hate Crime. NPR. VILLAINY, RACISM, HOMOPHOBIA, PROMOTED BY MOST INFAMOUS IN IS THE POISON THAT KILLS. WHITE ONLY IS NOT RIGHT. IS PPL OF COLOR. GOP GOES DOWN WITH SHP dt

**Kevin Hart**  
@KevinHartReal

Sending prayers your way @jussiesmollett ....This is unbelievably sad. Why are we going backwards....this is disgusting. We as people have to do better. WTF is going on the world???? Why... [instagram.com/p/3tPh4hPpRj/](https://www.instagram.com/p/3tPh4hPpRj/)...

**Barry Jenkins**  
@BarryJenkins

Thinking of Jussie. Saddened. Heartbroken. Angry. ALL of it. Wouldn't matter that he is the kindest soul. But he IS the kindest soul. And this is FUCKED. This is what all that hateful mongering has wrought. Are you PROUD???

**Mindy Kaling**  
@mindykaling

I am disgusted and horrified to hear of the homophobic and racial attack on Jussie Smollett last night. Unfortunately, these hateful attacks happen way too often. We must call out and hold those accountable. Sending love to you, Jussie.

**Reverend Al Sharpton**  
@TheRevAl

The reported hate attack on my friend and brother, actor Jussie Smollett is despicable and outrageous. The guilty must face the maximum.

**rosane gay**  
@rsgay

I am so sorry to hear what happened to @JussieSmollett. It's unacceptable. I hope he knows how many people are thinking of him and committed to holding this administration and its ilk accountable for this hothouse of hate being fostered.

**Cory Booker**  
@CoryBooker

The vicious attack on actor Jussie Smollett was an attempted modern-day lynching. I'm glad he's safe.

**shonda rhimes**  
@shondarhimes

We ALL have a responsibility to rise up against the ignorance and hate out there. If you know who did this to @JussieSmollett, REPORT THEM TO THE POLICE.

**Gavin Newsom**  
@GavinNewsom

This kind of violence should be unacceptable. We cannot continue to allow racism, homophobia, transphobia, anti-semitism, or any other form of hate continue to drive violence in our country. [advocate.com/news/2019/1/29...](https://www.advocate.com/news/2019/1/29...)

**Sophia Bush**  
@SophiaBush

When the attackers used words like "n\*\*\*\*er" and "n\*\*\*\*er," stop calling it a "possible" hate crime. It's a HATE CRIME. Period. This is atrocious. Standing with you @JussieSmollett

**Kamala Harris**  
@KamalaHarris

@JussieSmollett is one of the kindest, most gentle human beings I know. I'm praying for his quick recovery.

**Viola Davis**  
@ViolaDavis

OMG!! THIS is why the LGBTQ community continue to fight to be seen and PROTECTED against hate!

This was an attempted modern day lynching. No one should have to fear for their life because of their sexuality or color of their skin. We must confront this hate.

We ALL have to take this racist and homophobic act of violence very personally! My arms are around you @jussiesmollett. You are loved! [variety.com/2019/tv/news/](https://www.variety.com/2019/tv/news/)...

## Acknowledgements

*Starbucks*, for generously providing clean facilities to anyone in need.

*McDonald's*, for always satiating our comfort food cravings.

*In-N-Out Burger*, for giving us another reason to stick it out in California.

*Citibank*, for backing up a young person's purchase of an apartment at a time when participating in such a major investment seemed like a pipe dream.

*Amazon*, for sending us a bunch of stuff we never should've purchased.

*Facebook*, for enabling users to treat your platform as a handy drafting tool.

*Apple*, for allowing us to discard every last record, cassette tape, and CD.

*Target*, for your reasonable pricing and cheaper, off-brand alternatives.

*Safeway*, for staying open late enough to serve the many hustling women and men who keep non-traditional working hours.

*Trader Joe's*, for selling prepared foods in a way that motivates us to cook more at home, to avoid the guilt of contributing to so much packaging waste.

*Hearst Corporation*, for publishing many outstanding periodicals (apologies if this story seems to critique your employment policies).

*Microsoft*, for developing the most powerful and spectacularly opaque word processing tool on the planet, the beloved and frequently reviled MS Word.

*Adobe Inc.*, for your entire suite of applications.

*ESPN*, my dear, we're addicted to your programming.

*Utz Quality Foods*, your products are slowly killing us, my god we can't get enough of those Boulder Canyon chips.

*5.11 Tactical*, thanks for all the hours logged in your durable yet lightweight, 'Made in the U.S.A.' gear.

## Prologue: "Big Little Eyes"

*how to tell a story that's already been written*

Dear Son,

Life is difficult.

Before the industrial revolution, most human beings on this planet endured in squalor and misery, their one objective to gain the favor of a god, lord, or master.

We've come a long way from that era, don't let anyone convince you otherwise. At the same time, we haven't managed to leave it far enough behind. In certain moments, it feels like a past that's hiding just around the corner, waiting to rear its ugly head and ruin everything we've been fighting so hard to achieve.

People are weary of all the running. There are only so many hideouts left on this planet, and it's exhausting.

---

Neither your mother nor I ever set out to misrepresent elements of your family history to you – it happened automatically. When you live long enough cloaked in a shroud of lies, it becomes like a second skin. There's no reason you should be blindfolded the same way, even if it means ripping the dressing clear off, however much it might sting, and starting again from the very beginning.

Love,  
Dad

---

No Words

*January 1, 05:44:17*

I'm still speechless.



My account  
Contribute →

The Guardian

# Police officer killed was dragged along road



An officer was killed at the scene of a burglary in Berkshire, UK, after being dragged for meters by a car. British police arrested ten males aged 13 to 30 years old.

## Spell It Out

January 3, 22:03:25

Kate Raworth's TED talk on our collective structural addiction to growth is compelling. She points out that this disease has seeped into our social lives, to all our detriment.

How do we meet the needs of all, within the needs of our planet?

Her delivery is stern and powerful, but ultimately hopeful. She believes we can work together to find a sweet spot for humanity. The first step is to begin moving towards what success looks like for each of us. According to her vision, we determine independently that we can be happy with a few simple basic requirements: sufficient food to live, a shelter that provides safety, family and community structure, and fulfilling work.

Extrapolating from her theory, I believe we should then realize that delivering on the goal of a sustainable existence doesn't have to mean endless sacrifices

from those 'on top,' and an ongoing windfall for those who count themselves down and out. Instead, it could give the vast majority of people in our country, and in other so-called developed nations, a pathway to accepting the truth that we don't need more money. More things, more food, more shelters, more 'friends,' more work, are all simply rewards. Used as our main motivation, the principle driving force, they inevitably lead to more misery, emptiness, addiction, and self-destructive behaviors. Obviously, whatever's driving us to focus on accumulating so much more than we need, in competition with our neighbors, is a psychosis that requires immediate attention.



## Cut to the Chase

January 8, 22:17:05

I was just reading an article about parents of victims of school mass shootings and their struggles to get over the initial shock and subsequent grief of having lost their child. In support groups with other parents, one of the first questions asked is "how old?" Apparently, the answer helps others grasp the extent of that person's grief, under the assumption that the more time parents have with their child, the greater their pain.

I'm not really one to speak about this issue, but it did occur to me that the flip side could also be true. That over time, parents who've had more time with their child may have more happy memories to draw upon for solace, more comfort in knowing their loved one enjoyed many moments of joy and a child's delight, before being taken from them.

My thoughts then turned to wondering about what it must feel like to be a surrogate mother. Perhaps a teenager or young woman of minimal financial means, who yearned to extract herself from financial debt by helping out a loved one. She carries a baby in her womb for nine months and ultimately delivers new life into the world. I wondered about the long-term ramifications of such an act on young women who develop an attachment to their unborn children, yet lack the resources, support, and legal rights to retain them. Might such women end up harboring strong feelings of resentment towards the people of means, those who take their babies, steal away their chance at experiencing the joys of parenthood, a child's first smile of recognition?

Then I selfishly cycled over to my own situation, and bizarrely wondered: is my ongoing shock and deep, impossible to shake grief, more toxic on my soul, more damaging to my psyche, than the loss experienced by family members grieving for their tragically murdered brood? Wouldn't this phase be easier, and progressing quite differently, if I knew without a shred of doubt that it was simply over. I'll never be able to see you again.

But I cling to the belief that it isn't a lost cause. Your mother will come around, she'll see what she's doing is destructive to others if not just herself. Most importantly, she'll wake up to the detrimental effects on the child we brought into this world together. I'm still wedded to this hope.

[My account](#) [Contribute](#)

The Guardian

# Top five regrets of the dying

i regret...

1. trying to be someone i'm not
2. working without joy
3. suppressing vulnerabilities
4. losing a real friend
5. pushing happiness away



## Chapter One. "Dirty Nails"

*how to tell whether mother was a whore*

Dear Son,

Your biological mother is your dead aunt.

There's no way to make this pill easier to swallow. I know what it feels like to be fed a distorted history, and the hoards of emotional capital it costs to figure things out into some semblance of a credible reality. Laying that deception onto you and successive generations is the route of least resistance. It's also a doomed path. You deserve the truth.

After graduating from college and prior to our meeting, your mother was living in San Francisco when, according to her, she developed painful polyps around her uterus that had to be removed. During the procedure, she says there were complications that necessitated having her tubes tied. As she explained after we married, she didn't fully understand that a hysterectomy isn't a reversible procedure.

---

I was devastated by the news. I felt myself almost middle-aged when we met, fixated on the goal of starting a family with someone. But I didn't want to be insensitive with your mother, who was clearly in anguish over having to reveal this secret. I even resigned myself to the thought of never having children. But your mother began pouring energy into investigating alternatives. The option she fell upon was the last thing I ever would've expected her to suggest. Your aunt Luna as a surrogate. Your mother promised to compensate her financially, and in return she agreed to stay clean (Luna was in a born-again phase, off medications and pretty stable, all things considered). Once the doctors cleared her, everything seemed to move ahead very quickly, almost without my realizing that the plan had been put into motion.

Love,  
Dad

## Lazy

January 1, 06:23:12

I've signed away our lives for the next five years, hopefully more. The future home of Shadowlands Bookstore and Cafe. Now the hard work begins....

### THE SPUN

NFL COLLEGE FOOTBALL NBA COLLEGE HOOPS INTERVIEWS ABOUT

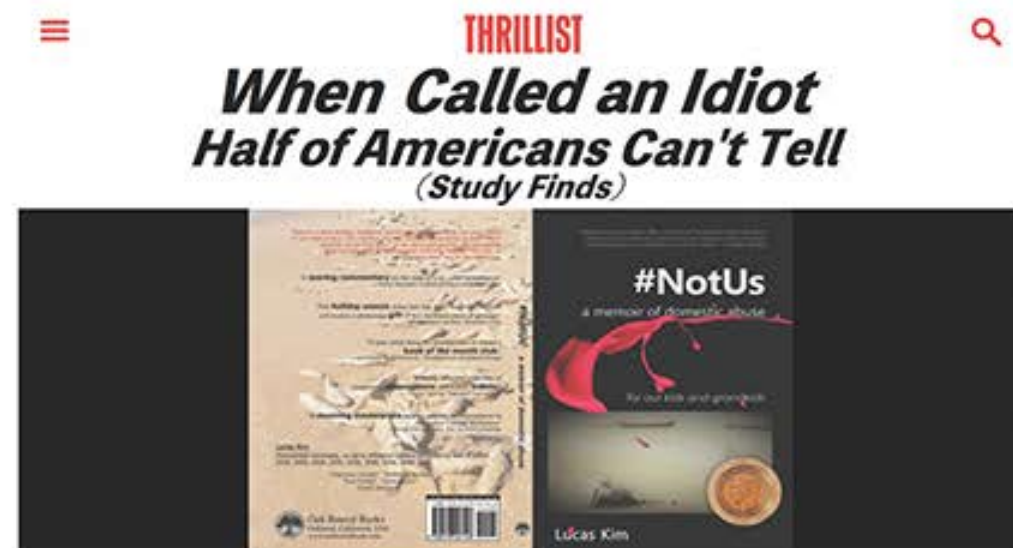
## America's Team Uses Patriots' Trademark 'Do Your Job'™



## Humorless

January 2, 06:05:48

Final cover design for the paperback edition.



## Immodest

January 3, 06:31:24

Last week the initial softcover, black and white edition of *#NotUs – A Memoir of Domestic Abuse: for our kids & grandkids* was published. The book is an intentionally provocative, satirical memoir that weaves together current news related to violence against women, crime, our nation's domestic history, and the narrator's legal saga. The author calls out past generations for abuse of women, while noticing differences between the behavior of men today, some of whom have begun taking ownership of their actions and how they impact the women in their lives, versus the actions of our forefathers.

He celebrates his mother and her battle to overcome war, forced family separation, and domestic battery. He talks about the problems of exotification of brown-skinned women, layered over criminalization slash sublimation (erasure) of brown-skinned men. It makes a point about how #MeToo has caused some to be condemned as guilty in the public eye, even when the accusations come from those who stand to gain and whose willingness to lie for personal profit has been well established.

Finally, it begs us to look more closely at the Constitution and legal routes for removing a public official, no matter how high his position, even up to the oval office. It underscores that this recourse is indeed available to We the People under the supreme law of our land, given sufficient documentary evidence of inciting crowds to violence, which could include Twitter feed and videos taken at campaign rallies.





The book contains tools for social and community engagement, including a layman's guide to the Bill of Rights, the Ten Commandments, an urban slang glossary, soundtrack, and suggested topics for a roundtable or bookclub.

## Cheats

January 4, 06:14:39

My question to the parents who paid a million bucks to have their child admitted to Yale University: "Was she really that dumb?"

I remember a friend who, even into his forties and fifties, routinely made reference to his undergraduate degree from Harvard. I think he needed us to acknowledge his intellectual superiority, and I noticed he'd relax and become less defensive once it was recognized: *Yes, dear. You went to Harvard. Despite appearing quite ordinary, this means you must be much, much smarter than the rest of us.*



THE WALL STREET JOURNAL



# Yale Dad Set Off Admissions Scandal



Tobin was raided by FBI in a stock scam so he fingered the felon who bribed rich parents.

## Counter Work

January 5, 06:04:16

This doesn't look like much but eight days after signing the lease, I've been making steady progress readying the floors and walls for a makeover, and put down a first layer of what will become a new polished concrete countertop.



## Triggers

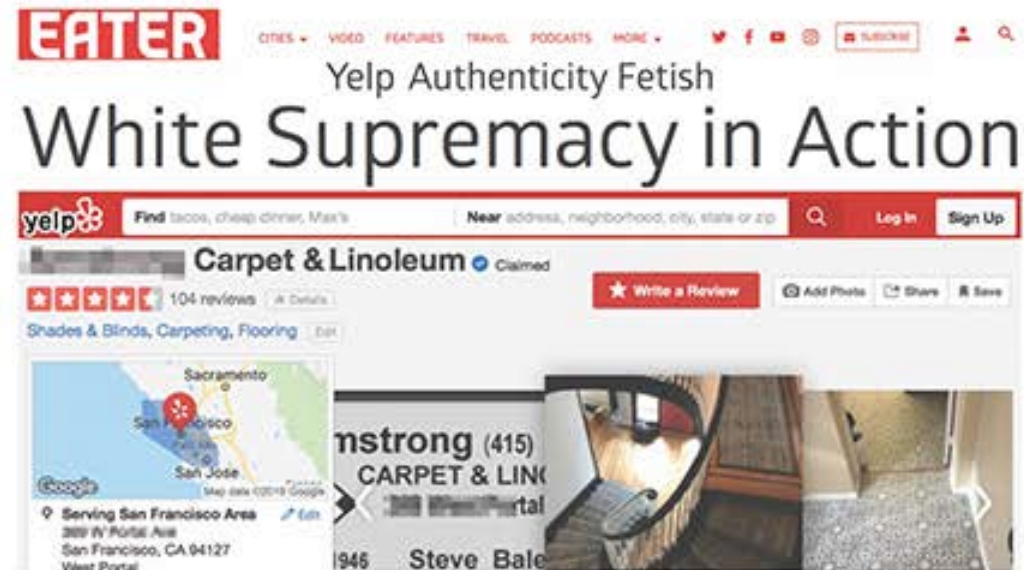
January 6, 06:34:15

I was in San Francisco today looking for replacement flooring for the store. This man walked in and was being helped by a worker. I didn't notice anything until the customer started raising his voice and protesting, while the guy was telling him to leave. What I could gather is that he was upset at how he'd been treated. The owner himself came out and then things got out of hand. He called the cops. An officer arrived and escorted the man out, but not before I caught a portion of the exchange. The customer was saying something like, "if you don't want Asians shopping in your store, you should have a sign outside that makes this clear." I was near enough to the counter that I could clearly overhear the worker when he said derisively, loud enough for the customer to hear: "If we didn't have no chinks coming in here, we wouldn't have no business."

Up until then, I was ready to chalk it up as some sort of ego clash between them, but after that I looked closely at the owner and the workers. Yeah, there were



bad vibes in that place. They happened to be four white dudes all working there. I didn't really like the attitude of the customer, who was barking a lot at that guy, but then I could see why he might've been upset and possibly was justified by catching shades of bigotry in the way he was being treated. After hearing that remark and seeing how nobody really found it all that objectionable, I left to take my business elsewhere. I'd highly recommend anyone else who feels uncomfortable giving their hard-earned dollars to a company that condones racist remarks and behavior to do the same.



## Crass Talk

January 7, 06:00:13

I had a strange follow-up to my flooring store experience: the shop owner sent me a threatening message today. Because I chose to share what I'd witnessed on social media, which cast his business in a negative light and apparently caught his notice, he demanded that I remove my post and indicated that he plans to press charges against me for 'misrepresenting' his business and 'lying' about what I'd overheard. He claims that the customer himself used racist slurs against his worker. I responded that I have no intention of taking it off, invited him to proceed with his legal move, and admitted that it was true what he'd written, I did hear the customer saying something to the effect of:

*You're the kind of person giving white men a bad name.*

For him and his three employees, that comment may well have stung very badly. The man's observation turned their argument from a standard interaction, all too familiar in its complexion for discerning people of all colors, into a major blowout. Race instantly became exposed as the trigger point, thereby escalating the conflict right out into the open air.

In all fairness, I guess to those individuals who, for whatever other trials they've had to overcome, aren't used to having their privilege questioned, that one word from a man apparently of Asian descent (an inferior, someone who should've been socialized to hold his tongue) truly constituted a 'racist slur,' equivalent to being called "chink," the "n word," or another epithet along those lines. He'd been called out as being "white."



## Fawning

January 8, 06:14:32

Kamala Harris for the presidency? Uh, yeah—I'm definitely jumping onto that bandwagon. And while no one should have anything against *anyone* honoring the legacy of Martin Luther King, please don't pander. My Twitter feed has



blown up with right wing social conservatives 'paying tribute' today. Empty words once a year while doing everything, every single moment of the rest of your waking life to directly oppose progress towards the realization of his activism, seeking to obliterate the impact of his life's work, is disgraceful. Please stop it.

CBC | MENU

## Dr. King's legacy distorted

Beyond 'I have a dream' to his legacy as a revolutionary



## Selective Memory

January 9, 06:23:42

Today's matchups are almost poetic. Drew Brees and his New Orleans Saints with a heaving superdome of fans chomping at the bit for a win, versus the San Diego Rams led by the widely heralded miracle-worker Sean McVay in his Cinderella season. Plus the twenty-year-old upstart and undisputed season's Most Valuable Player, Patrick Mahomes, against the Patriots led by the elderly sage 'Tom Terrific' (trademark pending), who within minutes of victory over the Chargers declared himself this afternoon's underdog, openly sniping at the doubters. Game on.

(I wouldn't be surprised if Super Bowl LIII featured Kansas City, but fully expect it to be the Saints challenging New England for the title.)



## Gullible

January 10, 06:32:50

Well over a year ago, I asked a friend to come over and help me move a treadmill from the old house to our new home. He graciously agreed. When he arrived and upon seeing your mother, with whom we'd been co-habiting for several months following the request for divorce, he complained "I don't want to take sides, why didn't you let me know she'd be here?"

It's true, I hadn't disclosed this information, because I didn't know it myself. I wondered why it was important to him anyway. I wasn't trying to gather up friends for myself. We were going through an uncontested divorce that I'd initiated for my own reasons, which I hadn't advertised at all. Why should I? It was a private matter, not for anyone else to know about.

I just saw that friend today and he made it clear that he was more sympathetic, because he's begun to see your mother's financial motivations. Really? After three years that I've been prevented from seeing you, now he was (quietly) rallying to my side. When I asked him to sign an innocuous document that I never even submitted to the courts (nor needed to), he hesitated. By the end of



our meal he was agreeing to take a look, and finally did it. I'm glad he did. It was my way of giving him a mechanism, aside from simply picking up the tab on our fast food dinner, to assuage his guilt. When he told me he needed to take a photo of the document he'd signed, so he could share it with his wife, it became clear why he'd been so cowardly.

I'm finally coming to see how much of a sucker I've been with the 'community' surrounding me. These are the same people reflexively rising up in outrage over the President remarking that there could, possibly, be "good people on both sides." Encouraging words to those who enjoy burning crosses and flourishing their swastikas: come out into the open, let's see who you are. Yes, the adoring Hitler fans – he's given them tacit approval to act out on their hatred, and isn't just giving 'lamestream' media a run for the money, having fun with kneejerk liberals, and even paradoxically helping to flush out bad elements, right under all our noses. Sure, good people on both sides.

Ignoring my own plight, which is immaterial, we could focus instead on your grandmother, who's now into her seventies, but hasn't been permitted to speak with you as her only grandson for three full years. No, there aren't good people on both sides. One of us has most certainly not behaved decently at all.

## ≡ VANITY FAIR · HWD JOURNALISTS STILL WRITE, BUT NEWS IS DEAD



## Sexual Hangups

January 11, 06:58:02

Have you ever noticed how married lesbians with some financial resources, while occasionally paying lip service to adoption, will typically go to almost any lengths to give birth to their own baby? Even a butch, masculine presenting partner (if any) will suddenly declare a willingness to be the birth parent, if the other party isn't available.

For gay male couples, the cost of obtaining a surrogate human being to carry and deliver into the world their biological baby, created using sperm from one of the partners, is prohibitive for all but the very wealthy.

So why is it a mystery that a parent wouldn't welcome hearing that their male child is gay? Even a socially progressive, open-minded, non-homophobic person (who may equally likely be a democrat or republican; liberal or conservative) could have a pang of sadness, even grief, over such news. Is it because we'd hate our gay son? No, it's because we want to be grandparents.

I just glanced at my newsfeed to see someone angrily exclaiming (essentially, I don't remember the exact words): "Any parent who doesn't support their gay child or doesn't like that their son is gay, should BURN IN HELL!!!!!" The post received over a thousand 'likes' within the hour.





## Rogue

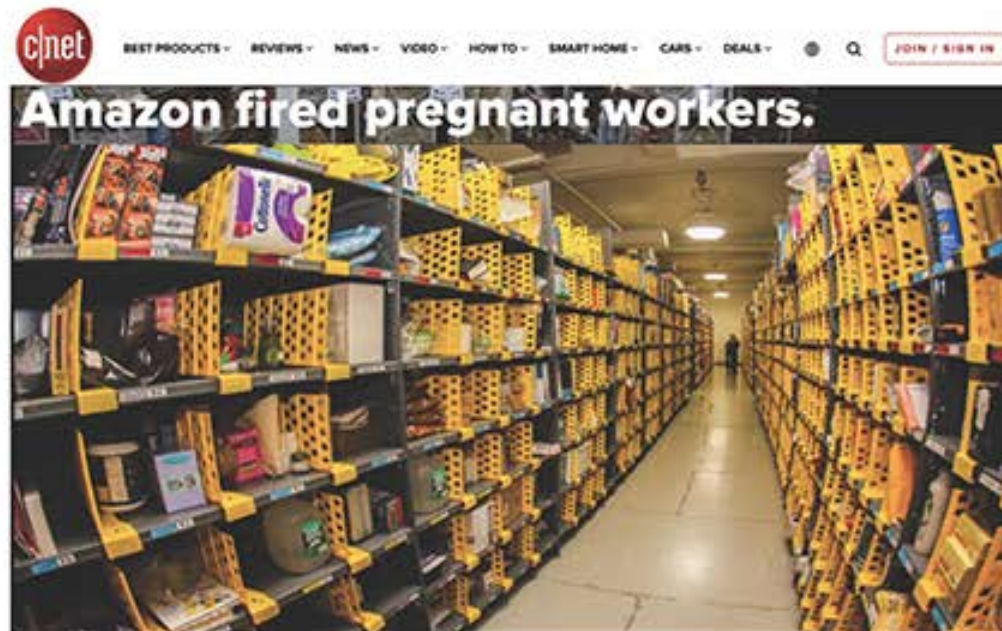
January 12, 06:45:02

It's official. I've been given formal notice of termination from long-time employment as head writer for science at the *San Francisco Chronicle*. My termination is effective immediately, with no further pay, no severance, and all benefits ending at the end of the month.

I'm shocked by how the company has handled this situation. I understand they became uncomfortable around allegations of abuse that spread like wildfire around here. But my job performance has never been an issue. At least they could have the decency to admit to the real reason, or give me the chance to defend myself from the rumors.

My sudden termination, with no formal warning ever given to me at any time, and their citing of a single private social media post as their justification after all these years of employment, leaves me dumbfounded. I've never been unprofessional in any work communications, whether with colleagues or external contacts, and have never missed a deadline.

So now, in addition to coping with my defense against false domestic violence accusations, I'm having to seek professional legal counsel to file a lawsuit for wrongful termination.



## Bends Rules

January 13, 06:45:23

I'm still reeling from news of my firing. The company cited one "obscene" post as the sole basis for my dismissal, regardless of its subsequent deletion. Admittedly, the short article did make liberal use of expletives when describing the writer's feelings, related to the senseless murder of a young woman by her abusive brother ('boyfriend'), who was then protected by that insulated community and allowed to get off with no repercussions, scot-free. It began benignly, with a note of feigned outrage at the writer's employer, whom he felt was pushing him out of the company, as a way of emphasizing that certainly every person has a distinct point of view, perspective, and collection of experiences. But it also wouldn't hurt us to look at someone else's – from time to time – if nothing else, to become reacquainted with *perspective* and reminded of our own true blessings.

So, I'm now deep into an urgent search for full-time, salaried employment. I'm open to anything in publishing, editorial work of any kind for a private company, government agency, or non-profit, irrespective of payscale.

Unless I find a new permanent position immediately, I have no hope of regaining any visitation privileges much less custodial rights (at every hearing I'm required to bring paystubs proving current employment). Since I'm tied to locations in the bay area, the list of potential employers is rather limited.





## Veiled Threats

January 14, 06:12:44

I woke up this morning to yet another threat of legal prosecution, this time from an attorney representing Hearst Communications. He writes that a social media post I made contained false statements related to his client's subscription billing practices. He states that I may be found liable for damages, even if no damages are proven. He fails to note, however, that any successful libel claim would need to prove that my claims regarding his client's history of billing for publications unfairly and unethically, in flagrant violation of established, acceptable business practices, are false.

I welcome such proof. If Hearst discloses its accounting methods and proves that it has demonstrated good faith efforts to charge customers only for issues received, and immediately cease billing when services stop, with a straightforward and hassle-free method for user-initiated cancellations, I'd be happy to remove that article.

In the absence of such documentation, readers may find it telling to note the lengths to which a large multinational corporation would go to threaten with legal action an inconsequential, disgraced former employee, while failing to provide customers with even the most basic service that any publisher provides these days: an online mechanism for managing their subscriptions, including the ability to cancel (and resume) services at will, according to current needs and financial limitations, which may change dramatically for any person depending on the incidence of major unexpected life-changing events.



## New anti-bullying trend: victims fight back



## Sore Loser

January 15, 06:47:04

Real leadership and character show up in defeat. Serena Williams. Drew Brees. Respect for one's opponent. A look ahead to future opportunities. Within minutes of agonizing, many would say unfair losses (an untimely foot fault, the inexplicable pass interference non-call), both champions stood weary and devastated but had the courage to take it right on the chin and say: 'Yeah, that happened, *and* I played a role in the loss.'



Q Your Account

## Apology Letter

# "I Couldn't Find Peace"



## Calculating

February 11, 06:13:29

Kamala Harris was on a radio show called "The Breakfast Club" this morning. The way she presented herself there was more like the woman I wanted to stand behind in her bid for the highest office. It's interesting to see that she gets so much abuse from both sides over her stance on criminal justice reform, death penalty, and her alleged failures to stand up for men entangled in the prison industrial complex.

msn news

web search

IN

## 'The Breakfast Club' crucial stop





## Ghosts

February 12, 06:49:52

In rereading my ex-company lawyer's letter, I have conflicting emotions. On the one hand I feel intensely amused. Imagine a company worth over thirty billion dollars bothering to threaten one tiny person like me! What could they possibly be so worried about?

On the other hand, I feel energized by angry, vengeful feelings. Can you fathom an entity so powerful failing to refund customers for unwanted, canceled services against their stated policies? And then rushing off to hire an expensive lawyer because of a single, largely meaningless article he wrote, in effect exposing themselves as culpable.

Their response brings attention back to the reaction of your mother when faced with my own domestic violence accusations. Whereas I'd laughed off her initial assault three years ago, thinking it was a hoax or bad joke, another empty threat out of perpetual neediness, when I finally filed papers attesting to her own damaging behaviors, she replied immediately and forcefully, hysterically grasping about for allies and mud to sling back in her defense.

*What is she so worried about?*



The screenshot shows the NPR Offbeat website with the article title "Career-Ending Facebook Posts". It features a collage of four images: a woman drinking, a Facebook post about a Japanese driver, a person taking a selfie, and a plate of food. Below the collage is a large image of Ruthie Robertson with a text overlay stating that her private Facebook support for transgender people led to her termination from an adjunct professor position at BYU.

**offbeat**

### Career-Ending Facebook Posts

Nothing specifically personal, but I am very uncomfortable with a Japanese driver winning the Indianapolis 500 during Memorial Day weekend.

Ew I start this f---in' ass job tomorrow

**Ruthie Robertson, an adjunct professor at BYU and feminist, posted her support of transgender people and gay relationships privately on Facebook. One of her friends reported her to the university, which terminated her contract.**

## Shocking Pastimes

February 14, 06:09:44

I'm not a holiday cynic. These special days help businesses earn a bit more dough and usually hold deeper, positive meaning for people. The exception for me is Valentine's Day. Whether single or coupled, I've always loathed this day. It's a holiday for idiots. Seriously. Let's bear in mind its noble history:

It commemorates the Roman festival at which women were lined up for men to hit them with the hides of slaughtered animals, apparently to enhance fertility. Each naked, filthy, drunken male would draw a woman's name from a jar. She'd be made to engage with the fine gent for the remainder of their multiday festival. If she performed admirably, he may opt to keep the lucky lady even longer.



The image shows the top of an NPR article page. It includes the NPR logo, navigation links for SIGN IN, NPR SHOP, and DONATE. The article title is "The Origins Of Valentines". Below the title is a classical painting of Cupid aiming a bow at a woman, with the text "I WONDER CUPID WHEN ON THE MOUNT WILL YOU CAPTURE THE ONE I WANT." overlaid on the image.

**npr** SIGN IN NPR SHOP DONATE

### The Origins Of Valentines

I WONDER CUPID WHEN ON THE MOUNT WILL YOU CAPTURE THE ONE I WANT.

## Polite Bully

February 15, 06:32:11

Minnesota Representative Ilhan Omar succeeded in helping a seasoned diplomat redeclare his allegiance to protecting the basic human rights of all people worldwide, irrespective of national affiliation, and working to combat genocide, whether or not the guilty party may be helpful to the immediate or long-term interests of the United States of America, and regardless of the cost to taxpayers. It took some time and in the end it was delivered in begrudging



fashion, but she brought him over the hump, by badgering and bullying to extract the words she wanted.



## Goofs Off

February 16, 06:22:45

It's been just a couple weeks since release of *#NotUs* and already there's a first review on Amazon. The publisher has offered that any zero to five-star review during these first couple months will yield a ten-dollar donation to the not-for-profit STEM for Her (five bucks from the publisher with a matching pledge from the author).



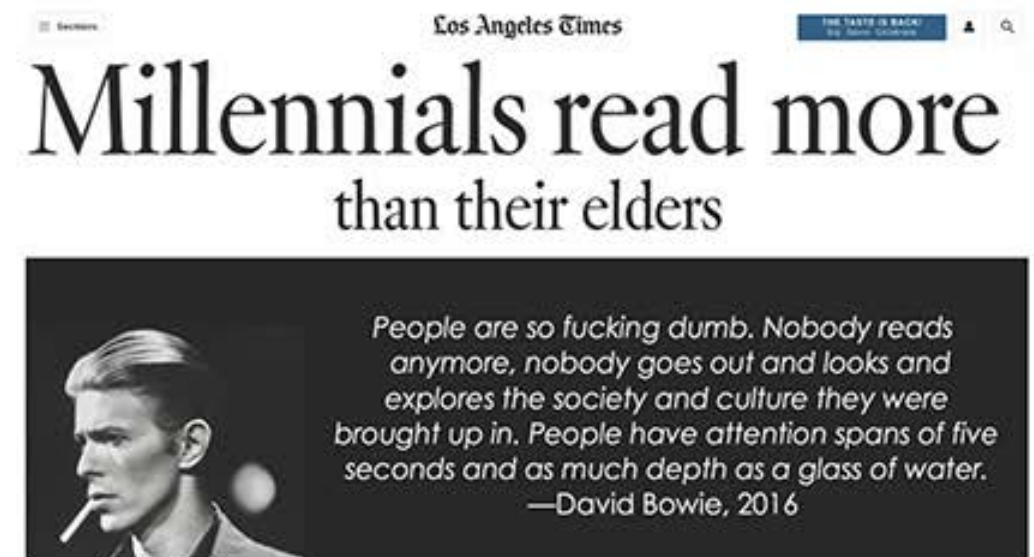
## Doesn't Read

February 17, 06:58:16

This coming week I'm finally due to appear before a domestic violence court judge, Victor Ramirez. I'm looking forward to having a fair hearing for the first time since the initial 'emergency' restraining order was granted. All four of your mother's witnesses have been subpoenaed again, and are expected to appear since they haven't recanted their testimony.

Although this last point is surprising to me, because they've stuck out their necks and may be held personally liable for false claims in their signed, sworn statements. I have no witnesses of my own, as nobody is willing to attest to their feeling, based on a rational assessment of a set of relevant experiences they've had with me over a significant period of time, that I'm not a violent abuser, but no matter – I believe this shouldn't be required anyway, since the burden of proof in a court of law is with the plaintiff, and the accused is innocent until proven guilty. Unless I'm mistaken on this point, and there's now an exception for domestic violence cases, in which the burden of proof has transformed into the accused's responsibility (guilty, until you prove yourself otherwise)?

I've provided the courts with over ninety pages of point-by-point rebuttals to each of her sworn, falsified statements. I hope that, given all the time elapsed, the judge will finally have reviewed those documents carefully, and compared them to her bizarre, outlandish claims.





## Nags

February 18, 06:40:15

Oh no, it's happening already. Kamala Harris not black enough. Too whitewashed. Supports police brutality. Reelection appears to be all but assured for the current administration.



## AWOL

February 19, 06:26:31

I've been spending quite some time in the domestic violence courtroom and by now, your mother is the only petitioner not to appear before the judge for a hearing. Last week three women had to wait while a police escort was called to make sure they got to their cars safely. Today there were five such women, all of whom were represented by lawyers, like your mother. But they showed up

because they wanted the judge to understand they're scarred and scared for their safety, and for their children's safety.

Perhaps she has good reason not to show for either of our past two hearings. Or maybe, as she wrote in her last declaration, feelings of shame and regret are piling up, and it's simply too unbearable for her to face the abused party.



## Non-Believer

February 20, 06:20:11

Dear god, please give us the strength to say 'thank you, but no thanks' (Hillary, Joe, Elizabeth, Bernie) and throw our weight behind a candidate with integrity and a fighting chance (Senator Kamala Harris: yes, please).





February 21, 06:15:39

I really wanted to like Kamala Harris' candidacy. Unfortunately I've watched some of a town hall and am disappointed by her tone and certain messaging. I don't think it'll fly beyond a narrow demographic she already caters to, and then I found myself questioning her sincerity, which is the worst part.

USA TODAY NEWS SPORTS ENTERTAINMENT LIFE MONEY TECH TRAVEL MORE

## Good looks matter



## Drop-Out

February 22, 06:12:01

I've been catching up on past news long overdue from the holidays and came across a tribute to former President George H.W. Bush. In it, the speaker called out 'compromise, civility, and resilient thinking' as the main facets of his legacy. My mind keeps going back to those words, as I reflect on my impressions of the former President and what he meant to the country.

I've never given him a great deal of thought, to be quite honest. I had the impression of Barbara Bush as the *de facto* Grand Dame, a stateswoman who had remarkable presence and possessed a level of grace and distinction that outshone any qualities her husband had as a leader. She managed to stay in the background but could step forward whenever needed, in those moments when we needed to be reminded that those men, her husband and her son, were human beings too. She'd tell us forcefully, always with that characteristic grace:

*Stop it, you've crossed the line.*

And the nation listened to her, by and large.

Now, the games that're played, the attacks being launched, are completely out of control. There's no civility anymore. No compromise. No resilient thinking, only fear mongering and mutual disdain.

I wonder where we go from here. What I'd do to find a person like Barbara Bush somewhere in the annexes of power now.

To repudiate a man's legacy based on his handling of foreign policy alone, especially for anyone outside of perhaps a tiny handful of true experts in this arena, seems ridiculous. How could any of us pretend to have a clue what it takes to keep a nation like ours safe and at the top of her game, leading the world all the time? I think I'm okay saying that former President Bush was a fine person, did nothing exceptionally fantastic or bad during his single term in office, and aside from that, was consistently, every day of his life, a fine, decent, and dignified human being, father of six and grandfather of seventeen, and husband of one marvelous broad. Rest in peace, sir.

ALJAZEERA

Live

## George HW Bush's legacy Whitewashing





In case we need a reminder, Tiffany Haddish speaking candidly about painful details of her young life to date is what truth looks and sounds like.

THE ROOT

## 'Where Is My Mommy? She's Gone' Haddish Discusses Childhood Abuse



(Atty. or Petitioner(s) Pro Se caption, name, address, ID code, telephone #, Atty. ID#)

IN THE COURT OF COMMON PLEAS OF WARREN COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA  
ORPHANS' COURT DIVISION

ADOPTION NO. 1557  
ADOPTION OF: (Initials only)

PETITION FOR COMPLETION  
OF ADOPTION OF FOREIGN  
BORN CHILD WITH IR-4 VISA  
STATUS INITIATED IN A  
FOREIGN COURT

FINAL DECREE

AND NOW, this 17th day of September, 2013, upon  
consideration of the within Petition and after the hearing had thereon, the Court, having  
made an investigation to verify the statements of the Petition and other facts to bring the  
Court full knowledge as to the desirability of the proposed adoption:

The Court, being satisfied, finds that the statements made in the Petition are  
true, that the welfare of the child proposed to be adopted will be promoted by this  
adoption, and that all requirements of the Adoption Act have been met. It is hereby  
ORDERED, ADJUDGED and DECREED that Richard M. Washington, Jr., the  
person proposed to be adopted, shall have all the rights, title and heir of  
Richard M. Washington, Jr. and shall hereafter assume the name of Xara Washington

Washington, the adopting parent(s), and shall be subject to all the duties of such child,  
and shall hereafter assume the name of Xara Washington

BY THE COURT:

## Chapter Two. "Bully Pulpit"

*how to tell whether father was a rapist*

Dear Son,

Naturally we couldn't proceed using my sperm, but wanted our offspring to have the closest possible genetic match, as if the pregnancy had occurred naturally. So the idea of your mother's brother, Nate, arose. I recall her suggesting him initially, before backing off from the idea. Later, when I mentioned it as something we might seriously consider, she seemed positive once again and told me that she'd approach him with the request.

She took a few days off to visit him in Phoenix. She insisted on taking the trip alone and I saw no reason to object. Upon return, she seemed energized and excited. She happily reported that he'd agreed. This came as a small surprise to me, since Nate didn't attend our wedding and was absent from our lives up to that point. In fact, I'd barely registered his existence, since I never met him in person, and the two didn't speak by phone or have any other contact as far as I was aware. But he was single and unattached, so his willingness to help seemed reasonable. Your mother assured me that he wouldn't try to insert himself as a father. After systematically dismissing each of my concerns, I had to relent that, on its face, this seemed to be a perfect arrangement.

---

Nate's tragic end (he died by himself, heavily intoxicated, in a single car crash shortly after you were born) made it simpler in a way. It sealed the deal on our commitment to keeping your true heritage a secret. Your mother convinced the midwife to agree that all paperwork would name us as biological parents. I went along with everything, relieved for this backstory to be swept under the rug.

Love,  
Dad



## Rationalizes

February 24, 06:16:33

A man's accused of stealing cookies. He took one and left a dollar by the jar. The woman yelling at him was just a passerby, so he ignored her. He's arrested and spends a few nights in jail, where he hears stories from many who claim to be innocent. He sees they're delusional, drugged out, or psychotic. It makes him look closely at himself. Why did he take that cookie? He wasn't hungry and just walked by a homeless encampment where a woman with kids asked him for a dollar. He didn't give them a cent.

He goes back to the stall to apologize. The woman yelling must've been the owner. The cookie wasn't just a dollar, he'd knowingly shorted her. Finding nothing, he writes an apology and leaves it there instead. He locates the encampment he passed before and donates five thousand dollars.

He then writes a memoir in which he speculates that young people in the encampment aren't really destitute. Some aren't Americans at all, but failed European actors, planted here to inspire racial conflict. He read the cookie wrapper closely, which confirmed its actual sale price of \$1.01, and also revealed that it wasn't a homemade cookie at all, as had been advertised. It was made in a factory in China by unpaid children and their exploited mothers.

Forbes Entrepreneur Innovation Leadership Money Consumer Industry Lifestyle BrandVoice Lists Advisor Featured

## There's an Important Message 'The Shape Of Water'



## Coaches

February 28, 06:47:20

Major sports news today, including Bryce Harper to the Phillies and Jason Witten deciding to hang up his broadcasting gear and return from retirement for one more season, so this story nearly slipped under the radar:

World number one tennis player Naomi Osaka remade her team by firing European Sascha Bajin, in favor of new coach Jermaine Jenkins, citing a change of priorities. "I refuse to put success over personal happiness." Coach Jenkins is a former collegiate All-American who was voted Most Valuable Player and team captain at Clemson University. His brothers, Jarmere and Jackie, Jr., were accomplished players as well. He's thirty-four years of age.

Could her choice indicate which country will gain her exclusive allegiance? Her mother is Japanese and her father is American, so while she's henceforth enjoyed dual citizenship, under Japanese law she must choose one over the other by the time she turns twenty-two.

## The New York Times Naomi Osaka Splits With Coach





## Picks

March 1, 06:57:33

A not-to-be-future patron of the store sauntered in the moment I opened up this morning without so much as a glance around, and demanded to know by what logic the book selection had been determined. I gave my summary as best I could: quality works that appreciate in value over time, not the converse (as is the case for a huge swath of publications, old and new). Before I could finish she smirked and abruptly made her exit.

I've seen her behind the counter at Ashmont Hill Booksellers up the street (formerly known as Gasoline Books, the beloved Ashmont Hills institution sadly shuttered two year ago). Although she makes a point of cheerfully welcoming others who walk through the door, at the sight of my Asian face, I couldn't help but notice over multiple visits that her reaction is markedly different. I've yet to receive an acknowledgement, verbal or non-verbal, upon entry there. Predictably, this attitude takes a dramatic turn whenever I'm at the counter making a purchase.

Thank you to Allison Reed and Jonathan Ewen of Gasoline Books for twenty-eight years of community service, outstanding curation, and genuine smiles.



## Indecent Exposure

March 2, 06:48:41

During dinner the other night, a friend mentioned that he's begun to experiment with kink. He shared this with me after a few beers, which were required I guess before he could reveal this scintillating information.

I wish we could get to the point in society where adults feel free to talk with one another more freely, connect as appropriate in order to feel less alone, which is usually the point of communication. Then maybe people could feel free to not reveal certain information, when it's not necessary at all or pertinent to the relationship in question.

Kink or bondage, role play or whatever, is what it is, a person's preferences in bed. Hopefully when there's mutual love and respect between a couple (or, I suppose, within a small group?) each individual will feel comfortable enough to share their deep dark fantasies. What if an interracial couple enjoys doing some sort of reverse 'slave slash master' switching roleplay? The next day they should be able to look one another in the eyes, without some residual triggering hangups causing a negative rift in their relationship.

Or if a 'straight' woman orders her husband to dress up in women's clothing, go out on the town with her as her lesbian lover, and when they get back home has him get into position and pounds the living daylights out of him from behind, that's really their private business. But if they could talk openly about it, in a safe forum, there could only be positive effects across the board (just my opinion).





## Pleads Innocent

March 6, 06:24:48

I could only stomach a couple minutes of Gayle King's interview, and turned away when he broke down in tears, pleading "It's been thirty years!"

Yeah dude. Thirty years. And after all this time, whether fifteen or eighteen and a day, you haven't figured out that there's something seriously wrong in your psyche, in your mental development, that needs to be addressed to get at the root of your attraction to teenage girls.

Now that he's fifty-two and finally having to answer in a very serious way for his actions, he's whining on national television like a baby. All the rest of us can do is sit back and shake our heads in disgust. You had your warning thirty years ago and you're still looking for another free pass?

≡ People

🔍 Your Account

Gayle King

## 'I Never Thought He Was Going to Hit Me'



## Egomaniac

March 7, 06:45:16

The guys in the gym next door are continuously hounding me about not serving cheap deli items they're accustomed to purchasing (once, maybe twice a year) from the former owners here. Last night one of them came in with a tiny plastic

bag loudly bemoaning his ten-dollar chicken wing dinner from the restaurant across the street, and directly wondered why I wasn't serving roast beef sandwiches – his favorite, as he let me know – and other deli options for him and his buddies (note: there's a grocery store deli not two blocks away).

I told him that for a little more than ten dollars, I habitually buy a whole chicken at the start of a new week, break it down and have dinner for several days plus bones for stock. I'm working for twelve hours a day here with no employees, so I get by with scraps until I'm home and can fix myself a proper dinner. Our menu is what it is. He'll either find something he'd like to try out, or he won't. What makes him think I want or need his advice on how to initiate a new business in this space?

While leaving he had to have the last word so asked me with a smirk how business is going. I told him it's been going just fine, which is 100% true.

Chowhound 🔍 Search

Cook News Shop BBQ

Men Who Cook

## It's Not About the Food



## Deadbeat

March 08, 15:53:02

I met a phenomenal woman today. She was graciously leading a group meeting around my violations of the Ashmont health code, so I'd understand exactly what I need to do in order to be compliant. She was willing to hear me out, but also made it clear that it would be in my best interests to simply accept their



declarations at this point. Whether it feels 'fair' or not, it is what it is. And it's only temporary.

She let me know that any obstacle being temporary was her greatest lesson in enabling her to get more joy out of life. I think she saw me hanging my head in frustration one too many times and finally out of pity, shared that she was a single mom of three with no family help of any kind since her parents passed when she was much younger. So life hadn't always been kind to her, but she exuded a ton of inner peace, strength, and equanimity. I admired her throughout our discussion and was caught off guard by her generosity in bothering to share those words of wisdom with me, at a moment when I clearly needed a lift.

So now I'm getting back to work full throttle.



## Lightweight

March 9, 06:48:09

I stumbled upon this gem today: "Paperback, who made thee? dost thou know who made thee?" (by Ogden Nash, famed American humorist and poet).

*A question that bothers me a lot is that of who invented what. The Russians, as is widely known, were first to devise the telephone, electric toothbrush, Yorkshire pudding,*

*universal brotherhooding, motels, middle-income flats, and polyunsaturated fats. Yet with all modesty they deny invention of the Great Big Lie and are curiously lax in claiming credit for paperbacks.*

*I've often wondered what kindly gnomes originated these useful tomes. I therefore gratefully shook the hand of a traveler from an antique land. He told me a tale you may think is tall, but it settled the matter once and for all. Deep in the sand, in a bricked-up hole, he'd come across an authentic scroll in which an Egyptian gave his version of a conversation with a Persian. It occurred many thousand years ago where crocodiles lurk and lotuses grow. Hotep asked with courtesy stately, "Been reading any good pyramids lately? Cheops's new one is simply terrific, he cuts an absorbing hieroglyphic." "I can't afford it," answered Cyrus back, "I'm waiting until it's out in papyrus-back."*



## Late Nights

March 10, 06:34:18

I've been thinking a lot about the small business owners I've had the privilege of knowing and admiring over the years. It's a ton of work getting anything going, however small. I had a sense of this but am realizing it firsthand from launching Shadowlands as a brick and mortar store.

I want to make sure to set things up so I'll continue loving what I'm doing every day and be able to look forward to it when I wake up each morning. Maybe I'll hire employees down the line, or perhaps it won't be necessary or desirable. Either way, I'm developing a menu I can manage on my own, and establishing



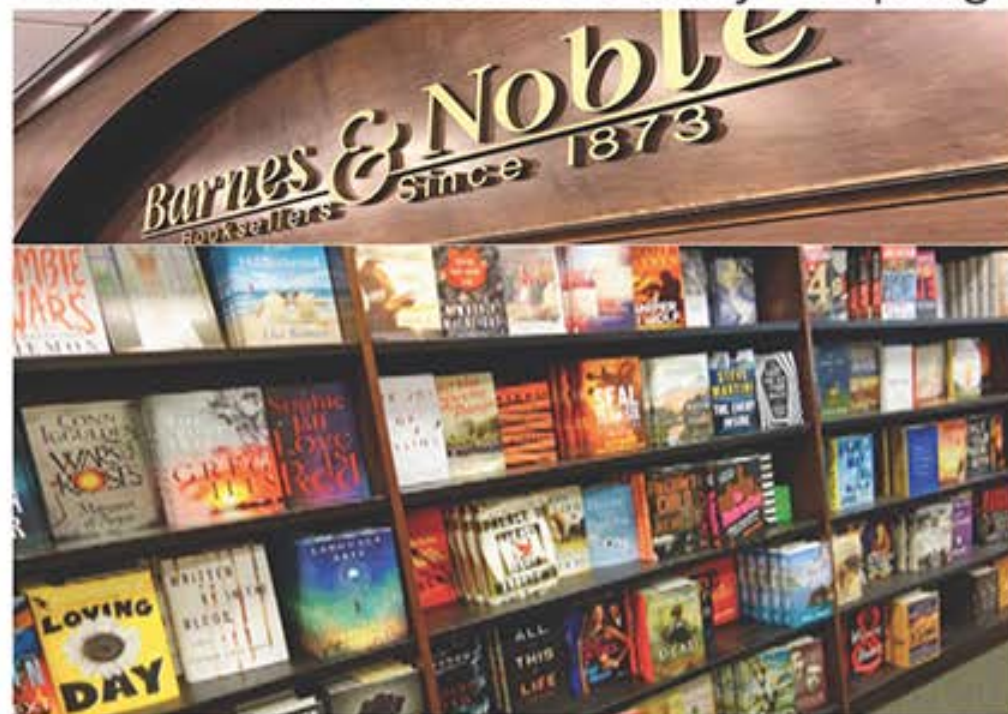
routines for article curation and rotating selections for the library. I'd also like to build ties with artists for hosting special events that appeal to the Bay area book-loving, civic-minded community.

Hours have to be manageable as well. For me, that means Monday and Tuesday devoted to replenishing stock, resting up for the week, and in the future, hosting occasional classroom visits. Then the store opens all week and weekend from late morning to late night.

AXIOS NEWSLETTERS • SECTIONS • SPECIAL FEATURES • MORE • CAREERS

## Barnes & Noble

The last chain bookstore is finally collapsing



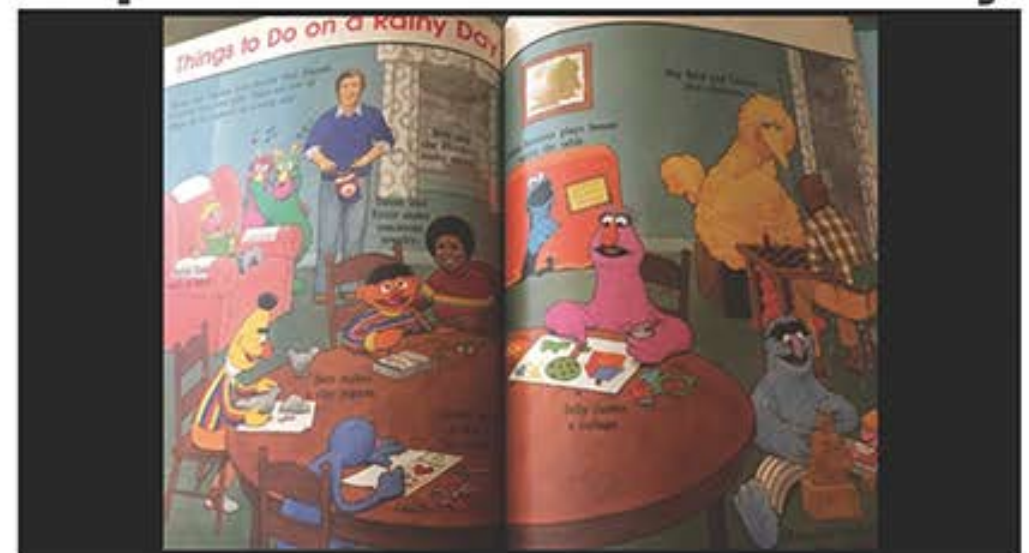
### No Kids

March 11, 06:22:17

While assembling the library I flipped through this book and got so steamed. How dare they feature a white man so prominently in a book for kids? I cooled off when I realized they inserted some entities of color on the page as well.

USA TODAY NEWS SPORTS ENTERTAINMENT LIFE MONEY TECH TRAVEL MORE

## 'Dr. Seuss racist' Experts on the controversy



### Likes It Raw

March 12, 06:30:09

I'd like to get something off my chest. Honey irritates me. Why does it clump so easily? It's maple syrup all the way for me. Bees, you keep your hard-earned honey.

BEE RAW

## Real Raw Honey Crystallizes





## Science Sceptic

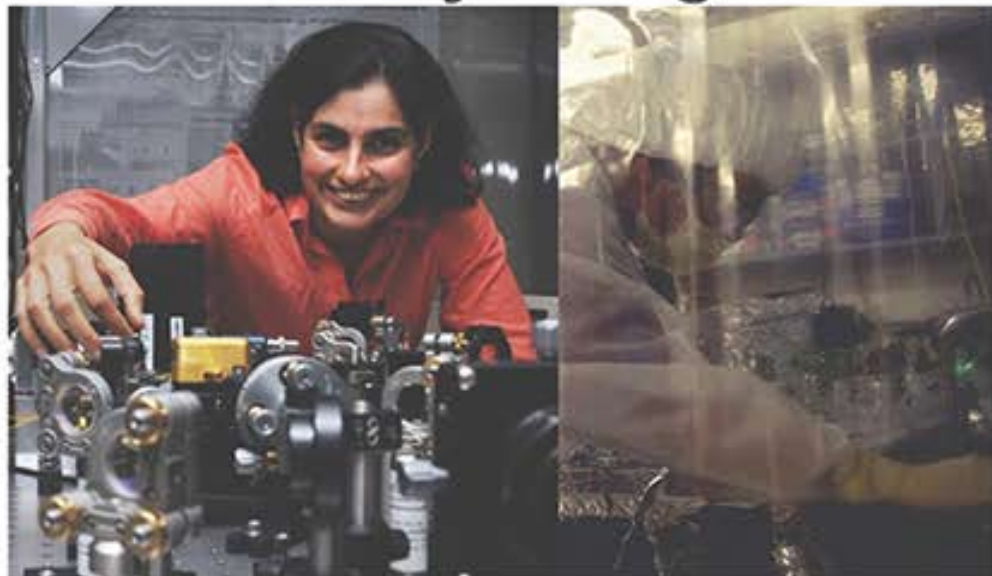
March 13, 06:35:16

In 2017, the Nobel Prize in Physics was awarded to three American men for their measurement of gravitational waves, proving Einstein was right about those ripples in space-time (the four-dimensional continuum of three-dimensional space and time), at least for now. In reality, their publication was a one-hundred-year collective effort that included building an observatory in Louisiana that spans one and a half miles, to the tune of over a billion federal taxpayer dollars. Those three gentlemen were given extra status and responsibilities, but it shouldn't mask the work of all the other people who contributed.

What's all that investment gotten us? Nothing really. We know the molecular structure of just three percent of all matter, with the remainder (dark matter) still a complete mystery.



## MIT Endowed Professor of Astrophysics succeeds by being herself



Dr. Nergis Malvalala: "I don't mind being on the fringes of any social group."

## Derisive

March 14, 06:51:03

My thought on Jussie Smollett: Was his music really that bad?



Chicago Tribune

### Jussie Smollett ridiculed as 'comical'

"Good Enough" (Empire Cast feat. Jussie Smollett)  
I give you all of me, but it still ain't enough to make you happy.  
I give you everything and still don't measure up.  
Feels like I walked 5,000 miles and didn't even come close;  
Feels like I try to make you smile but you don't even care, no.  
I'll never be big enough to pay your dues, but I keep trying.  
You just keep making me jump through hoops,  
What do I got to do?  
I just want you to look at me and see that I can be what you love.  
I just want you to look at me and see that I can be good enough.

Empire

## Reclusive

March 15, 06:09:11

Tracy Chapman delivered a wonderful live rendition of Ben E. King's classic, "Stand by Me," on the Late Show. How come she barely seems to have aged after so many years? Long cast as a recluse who resisted diving into fame and celebrity status the way other stars do, her stubborn path seems to have paid off for her in all the important ways.



Little Things

### Tracy Chapman Leaves Letterman Speechless



## Detached

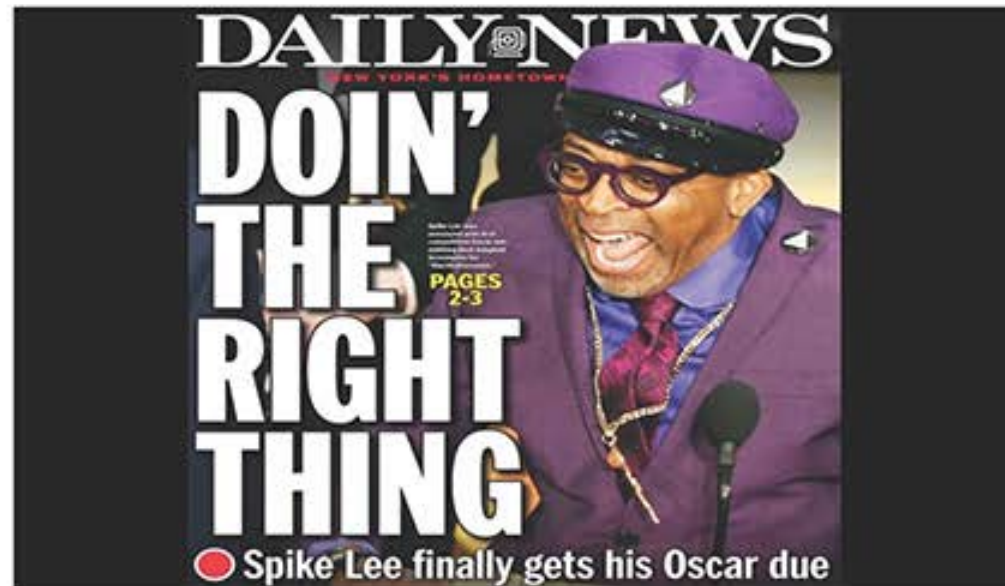
March 16, 06:20:40

At long last, a titan of Hollywood was on the verge of her first Oscar. Widely acclaimed for mastery of her chosen craft, she got another nod this year for best actress. Can you believe, multiple nominations with no wins? As usual, the Academy had it all wrong. This time, they nominated her for the throwaway performance in a forgettable drama (*Can You Ever Forgive Me?*), too high-brow and snooty to appreciate the delicate brilliance of her onscreen domination in another perfectly timed, widely accessible social commentary (*Life of the Party*).

THE O'GRAD MAGAZINE

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## Surprisingly, Glenn Close Has Never Won an Oscar



## Obsessed with Celebrity

March 17, 06:30:17

During her emotional acceptance speech, Stefani Joanne Angelina Germanotta addressed the cameras: "If you're at home on your couch watching this, please understand that this [success] isn't given. It's earned. And it's not about winning. Follow your passion, don't give up."



## Patronizes

March 18, 06:18:55

Robert Kraft, the seventy-seven-year-old billionaire owner of the Patriots, will get a slap on the wrist and public shaming for paying someone other than his thirty-nine-year-old girlfriend for a sex act. Quite possibly someone forced into that industry as a minor. All the men who've engaged in prostitution are probably stuck on the thought: *What's the big deal?*

Sex trafficking is a dark, dirty, dehumanizing modern-day form of slavery and a thirty-two million-dollar industry that keeps over twenty million people annually shackled to forced sexual service. Hopefully this'll mark the beginning of a worldwide shakedown that cuts into the roots of the pandemic.

## The New York Times *The Monsters Are the Men* Sex Trafficking Trade Thriving





## Shady Business

March 19, 06:07:33

I had to write a note to the new attorney hired to help in my continued efforts to wrest partial custody, even one second of visitation time with you:

"Just to reiterate, I don't approve any additional payments to the law firm of González and López. They've already stolen enough money for their frivolous, malicious, and meritless charges thus far. Not one penny to them without my explicit consent, I hope that's clear. All this about a continuance is simply a stupid waste of time they're charging to both of us. They're unconscionably idiotic and greedy, every single thing they do disgusts me. Thanks."

ABA

## Divorce attorney shot and killed by client



## Twisted

March 20, 06:23:10

A neighbor informed me today that your mother wants to pass along school pictures of you, so they can be given to your halmoni who lives three thousand miles away in New Jersey. Apparently, it's okay for her to harass me on Father's Day and my birthday, badger neighbors about my whereabouts, manipulate your grandmother into thinking she'll have access to you, then yank it away at will. But she's having a... change of heart? Needs some support? Wants to band-aid her ongoing guilty feelings for making false charges? Perhaps the reality of her abusiveness is slowly starting to sink in, despite all that protective armor, and she's now decided that she'd like to generously: share a recent photographic image of you with us.

The accusations of uncontrollable anger are starting to manifest. So here's the beatdown your mother has been begging for:

*F\*ck you, Xara. You're an evil f\*cking c\*nt.*



THOUGHT CATALOG



## Fifty Shades of Gaslighting

Signs Abuse is Your Reality



## Stages

March 21, 06:54:11

Every time I'm driving into San Francisco this Prudential billboard never fails to irritate me: "People say millennials are lazy. Retire early to prove them right."

Inc.

Inc.



## Millennials in the Workplace

Not That Different From Other Generations





## Fingers Others

March 22, 06:01:27

I used to excuse myself for taking advantage of big companies, rationalizing that they'd never notice and wouldn't care anyway. Hundreds, thousands, sometimes millions of people taking extra napkins they don't need, additional sauce packets and straws, clogging public use toilets with paper towels and random body parts, will eventually catch up to us. Those corporations, after years of passing along costs, and faced with mounting evidence of the burden their practices are placing on our environment, will finally be forced to scale back their generous, lax policies. At which point, I hope any cries of outrage over the loss of these conveniences, will be silenced by those who recognize the bigger picture, see the long uphill path ahead, and yet aren't willing to call it quits just yet.

I'm parting ways with a law firm that took my case under the guise of helping out, whereas the sole 'strategic' advice turned out to be merely regurgitating everything argued by your mother's lawyers already, as though they favored that point-of-view. After reviewing their final bill, I'm refreshing myself on significant numbers.

Stating "1.00 hours", "0.20 hours", "0.10 hours", and so on, indicates the precision by which time is being accounted for. So that a call which is in my phone records as exactly twenty minutes, shouldn't be down as 0.40 hours but rather 0.33 hours. Correct?

Just checking.

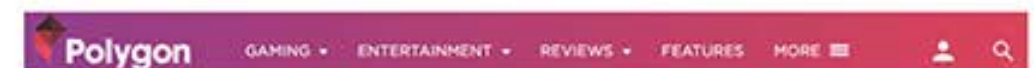


## Paddles

March 23, 06:33:40

*Paddleton* showcases TV funnyman Ray Romano in a surprisingly touching, dramatic turn. The main character is a terminally ill cancer patient who recruits his neighbor to help pick up a lethal dose of medications that will kill him. They take a depressing roadtrip and end up right back where they started. Although there's clearly love between the two old men, their interactions (video games, kungfu movies, playing ball in a park together) remain purely platonic, according to the filmmakers' depiction. In the final scene, the protagonist reflects on his life, which enables him to build up the courage to do the deed. His vacated apartment then gets rented out to an attractive woman with a young son. When she accepts his offer to help with her bags and play paddleball with her son, the audience understands that he'll be stepping up heroically as their new forever protector.

The end.



## Ray Romano's Netflix movie surprise





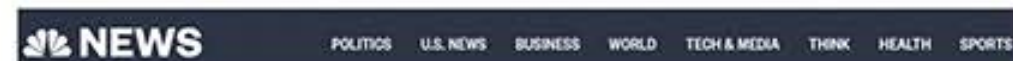
## Light Sleeper

March 24, 06:36:59

My loan officer outright called me "lazy" today. It was kind of refreshing since I'm accused of many things all the time, but that's typically not one of them.

She was reviewing my business plan and determined that our posted hours of operation are reflective of my unwillingness to get out of bed early.... I had to explain that I'm not trying to battle Starbucks or Peet's during morning coffee rush. While the Shadowlands Milk Bar serves espresso drinks in addition to other beverages and light snacks, the overall establishment has an entirely different purpose. We also don't stock any disposable cups or other single-use paper products other than napkins.

She seemed unconvinced that the store's opening times could be part of a larger vision, as opposed to some dodgy move by the lone proprietor and sole employee to avoid hard work.



## The perils of crowdfunding: arrests in GoFundMe scam



## Creepy

March 25, 06:44:06

This commercial by the Swiss chocolate company pushes 'diversity' marketing to a new level. It also totally creeped me out.

## BBC News Sport Reel Worklife Travel Future Culture More Deliberately racist advertising



## Compulsive Liar

March 26, 06:56:22

I know next to nothing about Pete Buttigieg, the latest candidate throwing his hat in the ring for the presidency, so watched a short video as an introduction. Nothing about him really stands out, though people might wonder why he hid his sexuality for so long, despite changes in societal perceptions. It was especially telling to me that he's been in a 'committed, monogamous relationship' with an out gay man, and in the wake of these revelations has taken the dramatic step not only to come out as homosexual for the first time in his life, but also move forward with marrying this gentleman, who's now in line to become (potentially) the country's first "first husband."



## Lying Becomes Easier Over Time





## Rude

March 27, 06:24:18

Bernie Sanders is a big snooze fest for me. I'm sick of his dusty messaging, tired of his insistence on pushing himself into the forefront of the presidential election as a Democrat, proving yet again that he's a hypocrite and a fake. This guy has no clue about anything, it would be an utter disaster if he were in control. He's going to be eighty years old, his allegiance to socialism has gotten him a Senate seat, but what might seem reasonable to some affluent families in a mostly homogenous, well-to-do small state, would be a catastrophe for the nation. He's no prophet, no matter how much he'd like to sway teenagers to revere him, and he's certainly not entitled to the White House. I'd like to send him the following message: *Suck it up Bernie, and back off.*



## Ignorant

March 28, 06:05:14

I watched this wonderful documentary film that nobody seems to be aware of, so wanted to spread the word.

The subject needs no introduction. He's the brilliant, world-famous, internationally acclaimed filmmaker slash choreographer slash dancer slash music producer Robbie Dawg. If you've watched any film, or enjoy modern

dance of any kind, you'll see his influence. It's a little-known fact that he also introduced this now-disgraced pop icon 'Jackson' to his first client, Britney Spears, who should thank him for the moves that catapulted her entire career. In fact, Jackson called Robbie daily to pester him, wasting his time with inanities like: "Hey dawg, what's it like working with Britney?" or "Hey bro, when you gonna hook me up with NSYNC?"

Robbie comes from humble beginnings, skyrocketing to fame in his home country of Australia by creating unique, memorable, highly original, never before seen dance sets that are now recognized the world over as his signature moves. His mother accompanied him on his world travels and became famous in her own right for her wit and sparkling personality. She was so attractive that poor 'Jackson' was enamored by her, and at some point even hounded her with proposals for her hand in marriage.

Robbie himself had throngs of women lining up for his delicate hand, and one of them eventually got him to go down on his knees. They have fabulous, heterosexual relations on the regular. There are no problems in their marriage, she never questions his virility or ability to co-parent their child, but at some stage he does make a bombshell revelation. Jackson pushed himself on him, and Robbie had to refuse his advances, to which Jackson throws up his hands and exclaims: "What was wrong with me, do I not make enough money for you to love me back?" [Robbie and his brother have a long laugh over this.]

The movie ends with Jackson bitterly disappointed by Robbie's last visit, when he came with two bottles of wine, although ungrateful Jackson didn't so much as utter a single 'thank you' in the form of a small trinket, item of memorabilia, or other memento from Jackson's home, as payback for Robbie's valuable friendship. Of course, Jackson's home is exactly what you'd expect from a confirmed misogynist pedophile, prominently featuring guns, race cars, and everything else a young boy would find seductive and irresistible.

Robbie Dawg never once stole anything from Jackson, or wanted unearned fame and fortune that might come from being associated with Jackson. As Jackson's superior, he could've withheld access, but instead tried to maintain a bond with him, as if Jackson were a peer. Robbie's mother, too, graciously and generously out of pure unselfish goodness, befriended Jackson. She even left her husband and relocated (without a penny of his financial assistance), although the idea of offering herself as a possible future companion to him, a second Priscilla Presley, would've been far outside her immediate plans.



There'd been no signs that Jackson wasn't doing well, emotionally and spiritually—that all the love he'd sent into the world in his music hadn't been returned to him in spades. Everyone surrounding Jackson had only wanted the best for him, nothing more.

HOLLYWOOD  
UNLOCKED

Facebook Twitter Instagram YouTube

## Wade Robson Changes Donation Page



"Dawg Family Fund" (now renamed "Dawg Fund for Healing Broken Dreams") has a minimum allowable donation of \$2,500,000. Robbie believes his omission from Jackson's will was clear indication of the deceased's illness.

Mediocre

March 29, 06:30:11

Are you a racist?

Quick litmus test: Take your all-time favorite deceased artist or musician with a racial identity that matches your own, and imagine two men of an 'opposing' race (one a self-promoting wanna-be, the other visibly strung-out) with an unknown documentary filmmaker, also of that race, regurgitating charges already dismissed in an FBI-led investigation prior to your hero celebrity's early death under tragic circumstances. The head accuser states that the abuse was so bad, he never forgot it, but also just never realized it was bad, "neither when I was eleven or twenty-two."

Whose story gets the benefit of the doubt, in your mind?

In other words, do you have a shred of doubt in your mind that any twenty-two-year-old confused about whether an adult male forty years his senior should be French kissing him, is either a pathological liar or suffering from early onset dementia?

salon

Facebook Twitter Instagram YouTube

## When the pimp is a parent



Props

March 30, 06:48:13

This makes me feel a strange kinship with Elon Musk. Why?

Washington Examiner

## Biden hands on girl, tells her: 'You're good-looking'

Elon Musk @elonmusk · 29m  
Extremely important merch

"It allows your halfling to operate a crossbow from an elevated position while still leaving your hands free for melee."





## Hits

March 31, 06:04:16

Forty-nine Muslims murdered in New Zealand. Within hours, this public figure knew exactly who should take responsibility.

### USA TODAY NEWS SPORTS ENTERTAINMENT LIFE MONEY TECH TRAVEL MORE

# MOSQUE ATTACKS

Teen eggs senator who blamed immigrants



## Sadistic

April 1, 06:00:45

Anyone who's seen a litter of newborn kittens understands how horribly disgusting this is: another example of human intrusion into what's naturally heart-wrenchingly adorable. Whoever spent hours knitting these caps is a twisted, evil sadist of the worst kind.



## Security Lights

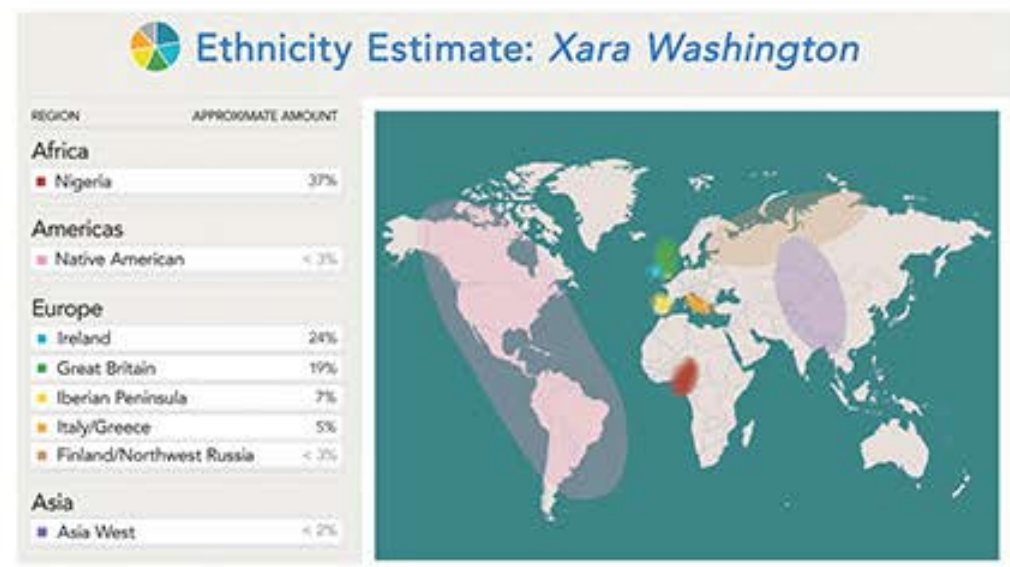
April 2, 06:50:10

Surprisingly, this commercial made me tear up.





Appendix to Chapter 2, "Bully Pulpit"  
Ancestry Report (Paternal)



Chapter Three. "On Record"  
*how to prevent child trafficking*

Dear Son,

I suppose that cover might've held up longer, if things had gone more smoothly. But as with most shady plans executed without conviction born of right or good purpose, things went awry. After hours laboring painfully at home with the midwife, Luna was transported to the hospital where doctors were able to reposition you quickly for a vaginal delivery.

Now that the hospital was involved, we weren't able to fudge the records as hoped. Your aunt had retained the last name of her first abusive partner, whom she'd married as a teenager with our parents' consent, so the State of California certified that in the birth center at Ashmont General Hospital, on February 1, 2003, Leo Imani Washington-Kim was delivered to—

*Mother: Luna Han*

*Father: Lucas Kim*

Given the circumstances of delivery and your condition upon arrival (requiring a respirator), you were transferred for further evaluation and monitoring. Luna was in good health and swiftly cleared for discharge. Your mother volunteered to bring her home, where they stayed together supporting one another in recovery. I was allowed to remain overnight in the intensive care unit and returned after a short week carrying you in my arms, our beautiful newborn baby boy.

Love,  
Dad





## Draw a Line

April 3, 06:00:27

There's a very specific process for serving domestic violence abuse papers on someone and I'm becoming more and more familiar with it as this mindboggling situation continues to churn along at snail's pace.

For your mother and others working in the domestic violence field as an advocate for poor, disenfranchised, undocumented women who require assistance to escape from dangerous circumstances in their home, all this must be old hat. For example, the requirement to serve notice of the court hearing date a minimum of five days in advance, in person by a third party. I thought nothing of returning from the hospital all those months ago to a heap of documents that I hastily cast aside. I didn't realize at the time that I'd already lost my half of custody by default.

But since fair play is an outdated concept and cheaters abound no matter how much the deck is already weighted in their favor, they cleverly arranged to have all this processed in my absence. The one snafu they should've run into was the stipulation to personally serve notice on me. So petty, why get hung up on stupid details when all the rest was working out so perfectly? Plopping papers on my front porch for eventual discovery when I returned would be sufficient. Further still, why even bother plopping papers, just have them sign the service document using a date of their choice and let me figure it out on my own (I had to retrieve the latest filings at the courthouse myself).

Now I'm trying to initiate a reverse case as the only option that seems available to me right now, instigated by the insurance company sharing information that you continue to be subjected to unnecessary doctor visits, at an alarming rate and with a confusing range of specialists without any apparent reason. This dumb game, which previously merely ignored the harmful impacts on you, has now turned against you directly, as you're being poked, prodded, and evaluated multiple times a month by for-profit medical professionals seeking out even the smallest potential problem, like an infallible detective looking for 'evidence' that their guilty hypothesis is correct, as it always is.

Perhaps it was this small bump on your arm that caused the divorce. Or this cavity that resulted in my leaving so abruptly three years ago. But any close inspection wouldn't fail to unveil the undeniable truth. Without the birth itself, none of this would've ever transpired. At eleven, surely you're old enough to

shoulder this for your frail mother, whose rapid decline broadcasts a boring truism that can't be outrun: karma really is a b\*tch, isn't it?

Search The Washington Post

## I don't care that Trump's a liar and a cheat, we want proof that he's a criminal



## Survey the Field

April 4, 06:40:36

A young man has been casing the business for quite some time now. He drops in for a casual chat, sticks around and watches for when the register might open, takes note of surveillance cameras, and looks to see what other valuables might be available with easy access.

He came by during the early days and saw me laboring day and night for eight weeks straight to open by the target of Labor Day weekend. Perhaps he isn't aware that instead of hiring a painter, I bought a few cans and, with my old roller and pan, saved three thousand dollars; or that, rather than hiring a professional, I laid new flooring myself and saved fifteen thousand dollars; or that, after refining basic contractor skills over the years, I was able to fashion tabletops and handle other renovations myself, with no need to hire out for the entire process. Or that I spent countless hours trolling secondhand treasure chests like Urban Ore, so that a little elbow grease helped transform 'junk' into low-cost furnishings for the store.



His eye has lately been on the cafe's espresso machine, a sturdy long-term investment manufactured in Italy and sold by a local business. I admit to using my retirement funds to purchase that equipment brand new, together with a new refrigerator/ freezer, both of whose operation is essential to keeping afloat. To him, it screams injustice that I'd dare to accept the precious three photographs he took (against my explicit requests, multiple times), offering no cash payment, whereas clearly I have tons of money that I'm hoarding away from his entitled hands, and that I no doubt came into by doing no work at all, grinding away for large corporations, growing my annual salary from twenty thousand as an assistant in New York to a little over one hundred thousand as an "executive editor" twenty-five years later (earning less than older men in the same position of similar backgrounds), until I was only a few short months ago fired without notice or cause.

But he'd feel quite justified in robbing me blind, after I've shown him nothing but kindness and a willing ear. Go ahead, "Timothy Evans," here's your open invitation to that Rocket espresso machine you covet so much, if you can figure out how to get it out of the store on your own (which is what you'll be as long as you take this approach in life: lying, stealing, manipulating, and justifying it all in your mind because your skin color and circumstances have hobbled you so badly in life, everyone is against your advancement): it's all yours.

For any business owner in Ashmont Hills interested in having them, I have scores of photos and video footage of this individual. He's in perfect physical health, smart and articulate, hardworking with real talent and passion despite a difficult start. In time I believe things will turn around for him and have told him this repeatedly, but the first move will be his – a relationship that begins with a lie, always ends there. If someone gives you the opportunity to come clean and start over, take it, more than likely that chance won't come around again, and you never know who might be useful to you in the future, beyond the few bucks (pity) you might be able to shake him down for in the moment. That's a core life lesson I hope he learns soon.

≡

AD

Q

What Burglars Look For



## Careful Inspection

April 5, 06:20:45

A young couple left the store in a huff today. From what I could gather by their conversation while inside, they were incensed by what they determined to be the owner's intolerance to homosexuality, as reflected by their cursory (less than one minute) review of the title selection. The spine of the book *Family Living for Christian Schools* had sent them packing.

It's absolutely true that the author of that textbook from a few decades ago clearly presents one man and one woman as his idea of a proper family structure. But the book also contains a ton of practical wisdom that could be applied to families today of all kinds, to positive effect. I wonder whether it's necessary to discard books and people wholesale, on the basis of points of disagreement, even when the overall intent isn't driven by hatred?

They also seemed to overlook the nearby *Dressing Right* by Charles Hix, sandwiched on a shelf between cherished hardcover editions of Oscar Wilde, Gertrude Stein, Walt Whitman, and many other literary giants whose sexuality is unknown to me.



## Money Trail

April 6, 06:38:55

I had a court appointment yesterday, where your mother again never bothered to appear. I guess I shouldn't have been surprised that the judge didn't see any



particular problem with her absence in the courtroom, despite being served in ample time. He inquired: "Any idea why she's not here?" "I don't know, your honor. The person who served her said she threw the packet on the ground and yelled out 'No, I haven't [been served]!! It's your word against ours!!!"

He quickly skipped over that small detail, since apparently it's immaterial whether she shows up and follows the rules. Whether she blatantly lies to police, creates her proofs out of thin air, then withdraws said fabrications with no explanation. Nothing she does, no amount of lying, falsifying evidence, perjuring herself, has had any bearing on this process. She's been getting away with it all and has never been compelled to face down a single question as to her actions and accusations.

I'm feeling very stuck at this point, with no good idea at the moment of how else to proceed.

Washington Examiner

## Supreme Court denies challenge 'In God We Trust' stays on US currency



### Pay Attention

April 7, 06:33:44

The judge's offhand comment about how a previous judge had decided that I was, in fact, guilty of "an act" that warranted a restraining order, keeps repeating itself in my head. Why "an act"? Didn't he read that after declaring me mentally unfit as a parent, she changed her mind to accuse me of eight years of secret, unreported (to anyone) verbal and emotional abuse, claiming I should be restricted from seeing the son we conceived and raised together for eight years on that basis?

There was no single egregious act alleged or even recounted in pages and pages of rambling, lying declarations. Rather, an invented history of some mythical evil father slash husband terrorizing a household in unspecified ways for the entirety of our time together.

Maybe the judge needed to think of it as a single act, to reconcile the facts and person standing before him. Since I hadn't embellished, lied, exaggerated, or fabricated material evidence to boost my case of her current abuse of you (parental and family alienation, Munchausen syndrome by proxy), he dismissed me without so much as an explanation. My closing remark was that he's the worst, most incompetent and lazy judge I've yet to encounter (which is saying a lot), since he clearly never took a scant moment of his precious time to do the job he's paid to do by public funds: review the facts of the case.



SIGN IN NPR SHOP DONATE

## Patricia Arquette Explores 'Toxic Codependency'



Dee Dee Blanchard (Patricia Arquette) is a mother who convinces the world that her daughter is seriously ill

### Read Between the Lines

April 8, 06:18:30

I've been accused for the past year of oversharing personal matters. First with close friends and family members then, failing that, with anyone who might listen (no one, as it turns out).

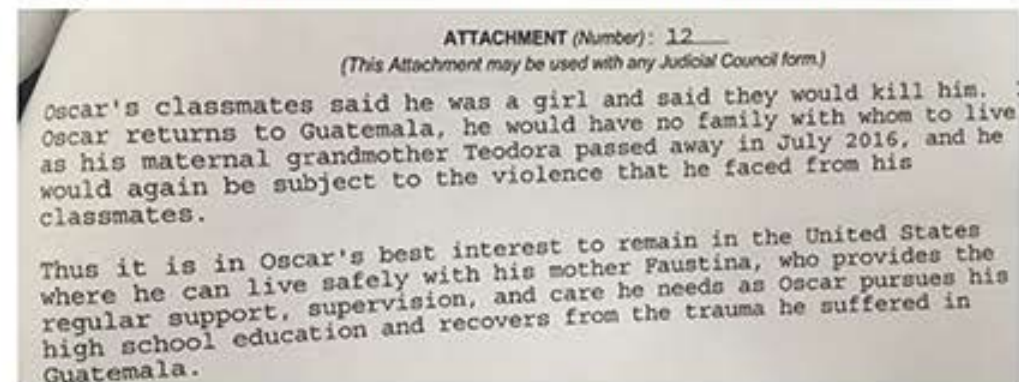
These are the kinds of cases saddling our courtrooms every day. Drawing attention to a false accusation that's had harmful effects on a ten-year-old isn't



about "sharing my personal business." When will we recognize that these incidents might be worthy of attention as a larger public matter?

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

## U.S. Green Card Sexual Minorities Have an Inside Track



### Get Outraged

April 9, 06:05:17

Just shows you the power of white privilege. Colin Kaepernick had to sink to the lowest levels of production of almost any other franchise quarterback in the National Football League, sustain a debilitating, career-ending injury, then start a nationwide public awareness campaign around racial injustice. All to get out of his sport with dignity at a time when he was getting pummeled behind an offensive line that wanted new leadership.

On the flip side, Andrew Luck, born with a silver spoon and playing all of last year only to fall meekly in the first playoff game while failing to inspire teammates (or invite them to his wedding), and pocketing a cool hundred million for never winning, could simply stand up at a podium two weeks prior to game one and, at the age of twenty-nine, call it quits over an ankle sprain, then get praised as a hero, "Mr. Courageous," by the fawning sports media bandwagon rewriting history, per usual. These are their postseason stats, which reveal that both of them perform worse once it truly counts (when elite quarterbacks shine brightest) and, all things considered, are not to be sorely missed by either team from players to ownership:

Luck | Kaepernick

- 4:4 | 4:2 win to loss ratio
- 56.4% | 58.0% throws caught by a receiver
- 12:13 | 7:5 touchdowns to interceptions
- 73.4 | 87.3 passer rating (vs 89.5 | 88.9 career passer ratings)

Here's more to recall about *your* hero, left-wing outrage police:

DEADSPIN

## Paying Hush Money

### Colin Kaepernick And Two Other NFLers Won't Be Charged



The trio say they tried to kick the unconscious woman out of their hotel room before calling police.

### Hunt Around

April 10, 06:33:24

I had a disappointing Craigslist exchange yesterday. We arranged to meet in San Francisco. Although I provided my full details, the only information about him I had was his fake relay email address. I had another errand in the city, and ended up arriving a couple minutes earlier than expected. He told me to email him when I was at the intersection next to the location, which I did. After five minutes I messaged again. And again. I said I'd wait another five minutes but no longer.

While driving away he emailed to say he was at the corner. I returned but found no one. After sending him a message asking for clarification he told me to continue down Union Street. I sat there illegally parked, asking random



passersby whether they were selling a wood student's desk, which I thought would be perfect for the store. All negative. I sent a final email: "Thank you for wasting my time. When asked for your phone you told me you don't give it out to random Craigslist people. You know exactly who I am, where I work, my physical address and cell phone from my automatic email closer. I'd wager your own mother never rings you on your telephone. Sir, you're a perfect jackass. Good luck with everything."

He lives on Calhoun Terrace, an exclusive cul-de-sac in posh North Beach, off the corner of Montgomery and Union Streets.



## Intelligent people more likely to trust others



### Good Cops

April 11, 06:05:17

Rachel Maddow asked one of the most straightforward questions of any of the candidates, "Why should the American people trust you to ascend even further, when you've had the power to institute change as mayor yet failed to enact even the bare minimum fix that should be expected of any police force post-Ferguson (having its demographics reflect the racial makeup of the community it serves)?" Watching this person flounder through a response, and observing that plenty in the audience saw fit to applaud loudly once he was finished, made me wonder once again: what does the Democratic Party truly stand for?

# Black Towns: Police Struggle for Racial Diversity



### Study Footage

April 12, 06:43:20

In 1945, a poem entitled "Youth" by Langston Hughes was published.

*We have tomorrow bright before us like a flame.  
Yesterday a night-gone thing, a sun-down name.  
And dawn-today broad arch above the road we came.  
We march!*

It's comforting to be reminded of the hurdles this country has stumbled over already, when facing the prospects of what we'll have to endure between now and 2024.

Here's an interesting tidbit from one of the candidate's past. In some countries, kids are held accountable for their actions, sent off to marry, and pushed into labor in their early teens. In America, we have built-in excuses for some grown men to display childish, reckless, sometimes reprehensible, even criminal behaviors, well into their purported maturity. Does it always make sense to give them a pass? Is there any higher standard we should hold for our elected officials? Or must they forever be entertainment material, delighting us with



their foolish deeds after dangling temptations of boundless wealth, public adulation, and immortality in their wide-eyed baby faces?



## Make Concessions

April 13, 06:55:04

I'm rediscovering my love for the quintessential American sandwich. I made myself a peanut butter and jelly for lunch with a massive smear of chunky Jif and wasn't hungry again for over eight hours. It was almost alarming how it kept me going for so long.



## Enforcement

April 14, 06:12:53

For most countries, outsiders would be hard-pressed to name even one person whose voice on a topic has the power to effect change. For the United States, the laundry list of individuals who have this sort of influence extends from political figures to hoards of celebrity activists who've made their names in business, movies, sports, and beyond.

Capitalism requires checks, balances, and periodic corrective measures to encourage a healthy middle class. The enticement of riches has never been the point of capitalism, just like the lottery isn't bad just because everyone playing doesn't walk away with the same modest amount of winnings - enough to allow them to keep in the game and still buy another Starbucks the next morning.



## Advocate

April 15, 06:18:06

On his sports radio show this week, Colin Cowherd managed to work in his claim that: "Laws aren't made for people like me. I follow the rules, I don't need laws to keep me from stealing, killing, or jaywalking."



Instead, I wish he would've said something like: "I grew up being taught to follow the rule of law, and my experience in society reinforced that laws and the police are on my side and work in the favor of people like me."



## Sound the Alarm

April 16, 06:45:30

What if your best friend were abducted and held for ransom. You paid the ransom but in return got another demand for more money. And more money. And yet more money.

After twelve months of having your heart ripped out, you figure this best friend is now lost to you. But in the interim, you've found out who's behind the abduction.

Although not advisable, do you think it may be understandable that given frustration with lack of progress in the abduction case, you publicly state your

feeling that the abductor, a licensed legal professional, is a dishonest, greedy whore?

Tomorrow morning I'm being dragged into court, taking valuable time away from work I need to do on the store, in order to address this person's frivolous lawsuit against me. Because their practice sucks, they have nothing better to do than troll me secretly on social media, and they're scared shitless about a lawsuit against its firm for damages.

Relax bitch. You're the last thing on my mind. I couldn't care less about you if you were a maggot under my work boot. You're a turd. A nothing. Zero. Tomorrow you'll have wasted my time, the good judge's time, your own worthless hours. And you'll have gotten nowhere, while the conscience you ignore continues to rile you into worse behaviors.



## Gather Allies

April 17, 06:50:13

Gathering Place opened after years of planning and development, a free for all hundred-acre park in the greater Tulsa area. Imagine every midwestern city with such a sight for families to enjoy. It came to be thanks to a record four hundred million dollars given by individual donors and corporations.





# Tulsa Builds a Park



The city has a tragic racial past that festers in local memory. It hopes a huge city park can bring residents together.

## Look for Masks

April 18, 06:00:06

I know it makes me a bad person, but I feel hatred whenever I see those people who go around in public all the time, wearing face masks.

The air quality out here in the Bay area is awful. It still irritates me. Why? Because they're always Asian, the kind of ladies who pack on sunblock, carry umbrellas, and wear visors anytime the sun peeks out. I feel ashamed of their existence, since they feed into irritating stereotypes about 'us.'



# How to Protect Yourself



## Ghosting

April 19, 06:43:18

I've learned a lot about people, the meaning of integrity, and what feels, to me as a recipient, like material support. 'Material support' can be a smile, a genuine hug. Real empathy. Material support does not look like the following:

\*Publicly declaring yourself, without being asked, the leader for organizing 'community support' for an individual being falsely accused of domestic violence, but when asked to testify to whatever you've seen firsthand of this person, a supposed friend for over ten years, waited several days to reply, then begged out but rushed immediately to his side in response to a barbeque dinner invitation (C Barker).

\*Publicly presenting as a friend to the falsely accused, whom you tell others you'll evaluate, being a university professor with a long history of giving lectures and workshops on the topic of 'community interventions,' but, having been provided no basis to question his sanity, and in order to save face and support your committed position, you take the one remaining option: lie through your teeth (M Kurtain).

\*Publicly posing as a 'friendly colleague', while taking the privileged information offered by your workmate's stepfather about what's clearly a private, family matter, and informing his boss who's also your boss (sucking up, per usual), as though out of friendly concern, thus aiding in spreading false rumors within the company, contributing to his termination and, as hoped, advancing your own career (R Kohn).

\*Publicly representing yourself as an attorney with expertise on matters of the law, offering discouraging, counterproductive advice time and again under circumstances of your supposed friend being falsely accused of domestic violence, whereas you clearly know as much about U.S. law as a high school student after one semester of civics; undermining and humiliating your partner, an acquaintance of the accused, by telling him secretly about her nighttime flatulence and failures to satisfy in bed: a full-on fraud right under our noses (S Marsh).

I bear no strong feelings of animosity or otherwise towards any of these individuals – expending negative energy is toxic. But, it's been tiring to try to get them to realize that it's not my job to manage the aftermaths of their



betrayal. Finally I had to take this more drastic measure: outing them on social media, a place where the images they project are more sacred to them than truth. Or the life of another human being, a small child. Perhaps they themselves suffered as children, and need to return the favor. Regardless, in having their fragile online personas cracked even just barely, they might reflect for a moment on how they might conduct themselves differently in the future.

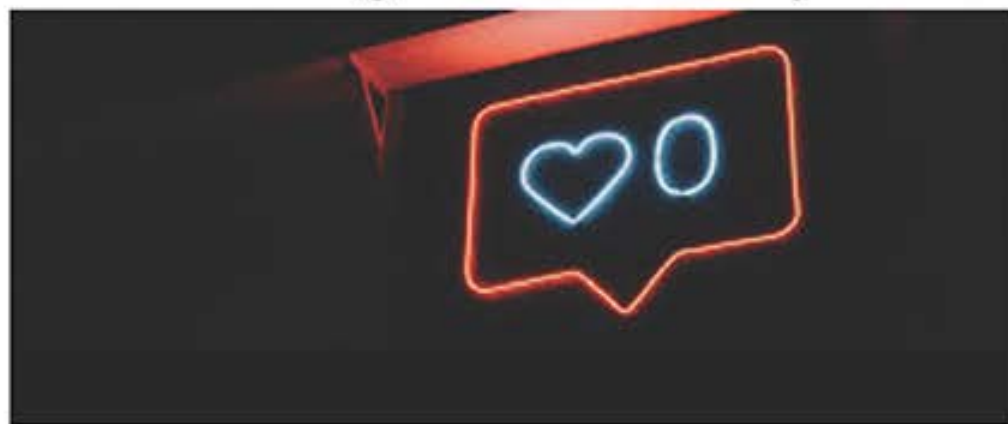
Each of them came out of the woodwork months into this ordeal, offering to help. So I believed in the sincerity of their friendship and took them at their word. In the end, with their repeated failures to show up beyond mere posturing and lip service, they contributed to harming the life of a young boy during a delicate time in his development, as you continue to be deprived of your father. How they're coping with this outcome is by coming around to me time and again, seeking forgiveness in the form of renewed friendship. That possibility has long since been past (I'm slow and dumb, but not that stupid).

People have only so much patience with deceit and two-facedness. Those individuals should've realized they'd crossed a line of no return, and done the one honorable thing left for them to do: walk away, face the shame of their own acts of betrayal themselves, and never dare to present themselves as even a former friend again. Certainly not without acknowledging fault or, at the very least, bothering to utter the simple words, "I'm sorry."

## elite daily

# SOCIAL MEDIA

### What Deleting A Person Really Means



## Go Vigilante

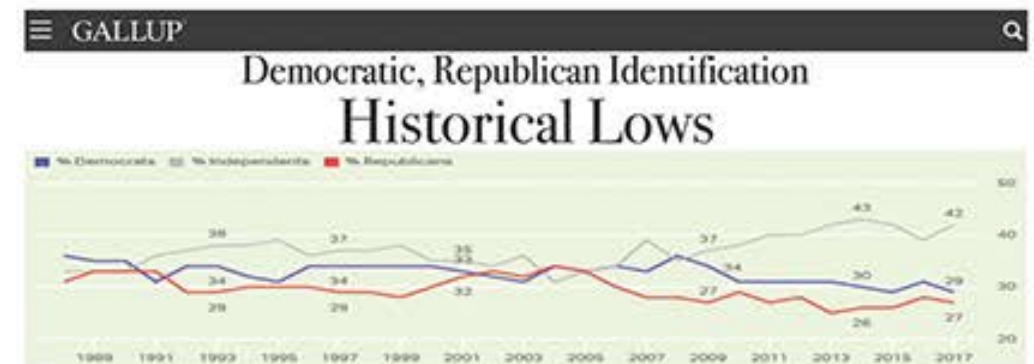
April 20, 06:00:36

I realize from some reactions of people who don't know me at all, that they have this impression where I stand politically may be 'right-wing' (i.e., intolerant). How strange.

'Liberal' credentials aren't earned because someone declares as a staunch 'Democrat' (not a very radical proclamation anyway?). Being open-minded comes from lived experience. Socially I'm not 'tolerant' of difference. I'm open to loving all others, irrespective of difference. Not because of difference (hunting out the 'other' as self-validation). And not in spite of difference (politely smiling while returning to my clan to bitch and moan about the other).

I like to learn from and give back to as many as I can in warm embrace, based on my abilities and resources. For me alone, and those I love and take responsibility for, I believe in self-reliance: no whining about misfortune; do the best with what's been given, which is significant and a true blessing; leaning on friends and family when necessary, since we have one another and that should be enough to get us through periodic hard times.

When I say I'm fiscally 'conservative,' it doesn't mean I don't value the arts or oppose those in great need and lacking other recourse to receive government assistance. But being in a position of power within the government, I recognize that elected officials frequently have difficult decisions to make and compromises to negotiate. Looking at the field of candidates is heartening on the one hand. What other country would have such a diversity of people seeking out the highest office in the land? But looking at the stakes and what this opposition party is up against, my heart sinks. The writing's already on the wall: seems like a second term has already been secured by the incumbent.





## Have Courage

April 21, 06:02:52

I was reminded of what triumph over adversity looks like at yesterday's casual reading club. We reread the following passage and discussed:

"We should all be dead. I thought I should like to see us all dead, one on top of the other. A pyramid of flesh with the white folks on the bottom, as the broad base, then the Indians with their silly tomahawks and teepees and wigwams and treaties, the Negroes with their mops and recipes and cotton sacks and spirituals sticking out of their mouths. The Dutch children should all stumble in their wooden shoes and break their necks. The French should choke to death on the Louisiana Purchase while silkworms eat all the Chinese with their stupid pigtails. As a species, we were an abomination. All of us."

*I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings, 1969*

≡ odyssey



## Sh\*T You Should Know From History:

Rape of an eight-year-old boy is a matter of the needle giving because the camel can't  
The child gives, because the body can, and the mind of the violator cannot



## Deterrence

April 22, 06:02:52

I came across this story after researching a bit about Brunei and its extravagant, self-indulgent Sultan's hotly contested decision to return to brutal Sharia law which, for example, punishes a woman's infidelity with death by public stoning.

What if you were a parent of a young woman, vanished from your world at the age of twelve. Four years later, once the anguish had almost begun to subside, you learn that she'd been kidnapped and forced into prostitution, her body and brain tortured and abused in the worst sorts of ways, her innocence stolen, her childhood ripped away by men who considered her nothing more than a means to an end.

If your nation saw fit to punish this person by imposing a sentence of life imprisonment, served three meals a day under watchful eyes, given shelter, books, sports equipment, friends to commiserate with, television, even a mattress that your daughter wasn't afforded for her own brief naps between 'clients' (rapists), and your tax dollars were contributing to his sustenance: would that feel like vindication to you, like justice had been served?

Or, if that individual were dragged by the hair into a public courtyard, then a wheelbarrow of large stones was carted around for anyone in the community to take and throw in his direction. If afterwards, as he was still alive and breathing, his penis were cut off piece by piece and his eyes held open to make sure he witnessed it, would you protest the inhumane brutality of this sentence? Or would you think it might've done a bit of good. That every last male in the audience who ever thought it profitable to use a girl or woman's body for his personal gain, would reconsider before picking up his next meal ticket.

Going one step further, what if you were the young woman forced into prostitution and had fallen onto hard times, shunned by your community, blamed for locking up another of their precious 'young men of color,' to be given second, third, fourth, infinite chances to reform and rehabilitate. On the



streets again, perhaps on your own or with a new abuser – back at least to a familiar routine. You're picked up by police. Now eighteen, you're booked and charged with a crime. Nobody you've serviced, forcibly or otherwise, during all these years has ever been made to answer for their actions. Not even an NFL team owner, whom you've heard being vehemently defended by broadcasters and sports jocks eager to jump to his defense. Would you have the sense, as a citizen of the United States of America, that your country has your back. That it's looking out for your best interests, advancing a status quo that protects the weak, the most vulnerable, and offers a pathway for you to find some dignity in your human existence, some reason to ever smile again. Or do you become convinced, faced with this irrefutable evidence, that nobody in government cares a damn about you or anyone else in your position. That you have no way out, and nothing more to live for.

BBC News Sport Reel Worklife Travel Future Culture More Search

## Aimed at prevention: Brunei's controversial Sharia law



### Appendix to Chapter 3, "On Record"

#### Dialogue: Luna Han (née Cho) and Xara Washington†

*†Transcript from an audio recording made after the child, Leo Washington-Lee, was born and remained in ICU with the father, Lucas Kim. The audio file was retrieved from a cell phone in Han's possession. A brief video recording made the same evening was also retrieved. It shows the couple were physically intimate. It's unclear whether either recording (or both) was made intentionally or unintentionally.*

Why haven't you told Lucas yet?

*How can I do it now? It's too late for that.*

Don't you think he should know, he has a right to know?

*It has nothing to do with our life now. I've put that all behind me. Why do you care anyway?*

I care about you.

*I care about you too.*

[muffled sobbing]

Have you ever tried to track her down?

*Where, in Canada?*

Yeah, have you tried to look for her?

No.

[long pause]

Why not?

*I would've before, for our kids, but it doesn't matter this way.*

What way?

*Since you're the mom.*

I'm not the mom, you're the mom.

*I mean, since he doesn't have any of my DNA. Whoever she is, and whoever he was, doesn't mean anything to me. So it shouldn't mean anything to him either.*



## Chapter Four. “Cast Out”

*how to avoid taking the bait*

Dear Son,

Three weeks into your life on earth, we received word about Nate’s death in a car accident. We were told that he must’ve perished instantly when his vehicle veered off the freeway and collided with a tree. After discovering that his blood alcohol content had been at a near lethal level, officers assigned to the case traced his whereabouts on that evening to a remote bar located three hours northwest of his known residence in Phoenix. They suggested we’d have solid grounds to press charges against the establishment for allowing him to become so inebriated and failing to prevent him from driving off alone in such a state.

Xara spoke with her mother, your ‘ami’, and reported that she didn’t want to press charges, it had all been too much for her to take, and declined to discuss it any further.

Later, after one of many huge arguments we had as things were really unraveling, she divulged that she’d witnessed her father sexually abusing Nate when they were kids.

---

Your mother wasn’t interested in going into specifics; naturally, I didn’t press her. But at the time I inferred that Richard (your grandfather) must have decided to abandon his family shortly thereafter, since he was relocated across the bay to an apartment in San Francisco.

At first, your ami told her kids that he’d been sent away temporarily for work. Gradually she informed them that he’d skipped town to pursue an affair, and was never to be heard from ever again. There’s no evidence that either your mother or Nate attempted to hunt him down afterwards.

Love,  
Dad



## Spread Goodwill

April 23, 06:29:22

Yesterday one woman came in and looked at the food menu, exclaiming loudly that the prices were the lowest she'd ever seen, almost like a complaint. I tried to explain that other than for the lunch pockets (which are quite generous in size), the portions aren't that large, perfect for a snack and therefore a fair, reasonable price. I'm trying to sustain this pricing structure by saving on the price of stocking disposables (magnified a billionfold by the real life-strangling costs on our planet), and aiming for a 'zero food waste' business model.

The latter is achievable only by carefully monitoring food supplies, stocking perishables on a daily basis, and allowing the employee to subsist on a diet of leftovers (not suitable to be served, but still perfectly edible).

The customer ended up leaving angrily when she realized that the drink she'd ordered couldn't be taken to go (I apologized and given her a full refund, but she chastised me that I should advertise this policy so customers know not to waste their time). It's a purposeful decision not to post a notice, which would discourage a human-to-human exchange, such as we had, which over time may help to move the dial just a little bit in the right direction.

## **HUFFPOST** This Restaurant Hasn't Taken Out Trash In Two Years



## No Cutting Corners

April 24, 06:15:42

Americans love a rags to riches tale, but nothing can quite top a real-life redemption story where we play an active role, pitilessly dragging a disgraced celebrity through the mud over and over again, only to watch him claw his way back into contention. Brooks Koepka and Dustin Johnson were amongst the leaders after round two at Augusta, but by far the most enthusiastic clapping on that day was for Tiger Woods, one shot behind and very much 'in the hunt' once again.

## **ET** Tiger Doesn't Regret Cheating



## Get Offline

April 25, 06:07:27

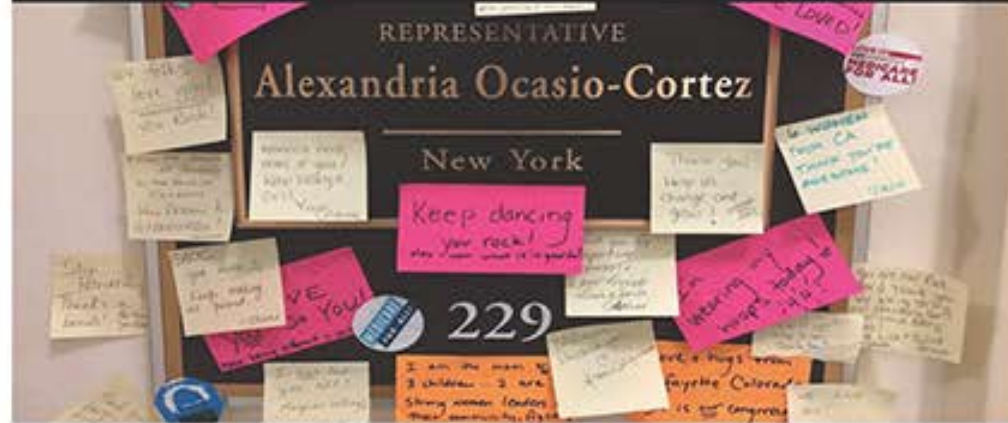
I was remembering a first meeting for planning our high school's yearbook. As its editor, the supervising teacher asked me to share my ideas. I did so, and after the others left, she kept me behind to chastise me for my harsh remarks: "You'll never gain anything from being critical without leading with praise for those who came before you."

At the time, I thought she was being mean because she didn't like me. After putting together that first yearbook, I understood her point. Many of my grand ideas ended up on the cutting room floor. A lot of the vision was never realized. Nobody seemed to notice but it served its purpose well enough, just as those before it.



## Mashable

### Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez quits Facebook



## Survey the Field

April 26, 06:02:57

Fakers, opportunists, has-beens: is there any chance you could step aside for 2020? It's kind of an important election, more important than egos, personal ambitions, or salvaging an individual's legacy. Please, we're begging.

FiveThirtyEight

## Why Democrats Might Be Slow To Endorse



## Play Dumb

April 27, 06:47:15

I'm feeling some negative energy from certain neighboring establishments. One group in particular keeps approaching me to insinuate in different ways that I'm homophobic. The other day someone ironically asked why I don't make one of my social groups a 'queer night.' This isn't necessary, I told him, there's never a second when anyone, queer or otherwise, isn't welcome here...?

Starting a new business is allowing me the pleasure and privilege of meeting a ton of people from all different backgrounds and experiences living in Ashmont and other parts of the greater Bay area.

Those in the neighborhood may have noticed me during renovations hustling in and out of the store, hauling tools and materials, always in cargo shorts, barely taking a break to eat a bowl of cereal or sandwich during renovations, listening to lively music to keep alert and motivated.

Perhaps over time they'll get to know more about me. Whatever assumptions they've made thus far have been based on their own life experiences which have shaped certain biases. Believe it or not, they have them just like the rest of us. For those continuously seeking out a next enemy to target, it might make sense to step back for a minute and take stock of themselves. When does the witch hunting end?

## FASTCOMPANY

### Our image of an entrepreneur





## Exercise Restraint

April 28, 06:48:57

I had an uncomfortable exchange with someone today over his behavior during a group dinner the other night, in which he felt free to talk in gruesome detail about the female anatomy.

I expressed to him that since I sincerely want to believe he would never, ever talk that way in front of his significant other, whom I know and have great regard for, then common sense says he should've afforded the other woman at the table the same respect.

He pulled back sharply on my critique, but I think in general men would benefit from the following bottom-line message: don't speak the c word, whether four-letter or eight-letter variety, if you want your special anatomy to have a chance near one of them at any point in the future.

Problem is, I think he already knows it, and maybe figures he has nothing more to lose. Friendship wasn't ever really on the table since I always felt something creepy about him. But since he's partnered with a friend, I'm sorry I won't be able to see her more frequently. Oh well, the least I can do when gathering a group of people for dinner is ensure they won't have some random guy's sexual hangups imposed on them all night long.



The Harvard Crimson

## Women Are Not a Punch Line



## Point the Finger

April 29, 06:44:20

Tom Brady and Draymond Green are only the latest high-profile victims, there are so many more suffering body shaming in silence. Who will join me in the fight for justice as we pick up this long-neglected banner for fathers' rights?

Karen Carpenter:

*May she rest in peace (March 2, 1950 – February 4, 1983).*

M

## Men Are The Ones Facing Insane Body Standards



When Tom Brady hit the beach alongside Gisele, photos of his 'dad bod' caused an uproar: Could that be the body of football's GOAT?

## Stay Fit

April 30, 06:00:00

Today someone asked me about my top ten goals right now. I was surprised, since I'm close enough with this person that I assumed they understand the one-dimensional nature of my thinking these days. But I shared it again since obviously everyone has their own life and priorities and no idea what's going on with me:



1-10. Regain access to you, ASAP.

Then, obtain reversion to terms of the original divorce settlement (fifty-fifty custody), which would require proving the allegations false, at which time I'd request the court to consider requiring the false accuser, your mother, to publicly admit to making said false allegations. This has torn apart our community of friends in many ways and would be integral to its healing.

 **TODAY**

## Celine Dion discusses her weight 'Everything's fine'



### Ask Questions

May 1, 06:13:13

In the most recent Shadowlands' Casual Reading Club we covered *Why Are We in Vietnam?* by Norman Mailer. As explained to participants ahead of time, finishing the book isn't necessarily required or even recommended. The point of the group is to reconsider certain book plots and authors, in the context of our own experiences. What's on our minds, and how does this idea (as expressed by the book's title) or the author's life story, shed light on what we might be grappling with today?

I've never read anything but *Executioner's Song* by the author, and was reminded why by others. Norman Mailer's books are littered with language so foul, it's kind of unbearable even for those with high tolerance for naughty words. We then addressed what it must've been like to be a war veteran before awareness of post-traumatic stress disorder and psychotherapy really took off. We talked about other veteran authors like Hemingway, who may have used writing to address demons.

Conversation turned to Mailer's history of mistreatment of women, specifically his critique of Willa Cather. As a veteran, he was apparently put off by the depiction of war in one of her novels, which was celebrated at the time with a Pulitzer Prize (although barely read these days). But Mailer worded his criticism in a manner that struck many as woefully chauvinistic, condescendingly referring to her as "poor lady." Someone shared the perspective that he might've been equally if not more brutal to fellow (competing) male authors, how any person with traumatic life experience reacts when outsiders presume to understand what it would feel like. Others disagreed and then we lost focus a bit, ending the evening with light banter on matters that had nothing to do with the club.

*How to Start a Revolution* by Nadya Tolokonnikova is the topic for next week.



## Horses Promising for PTSD Therapy, Veterans Say





## Appear in Limbo

May 2, 06:08:50

I think part of what's most challenging for the general public with trans-identity is the transition period, the uncomfortable middle ground while things are in flux. Sort of like watching Post Malone working out his thing in real time: dude, just pick one or the other and stick with it. You were okay appropriating black identity on the way up, but now feel guilty for capitalizing on it?



## Busy Work

May 3, 06:52:43

Yesterday while hanging out with a few people we ran out of freshly popped popcorn with coconut oil and light salt, which I typically make for guests during evening gatherings. We cracked open some packaged snacks instead.

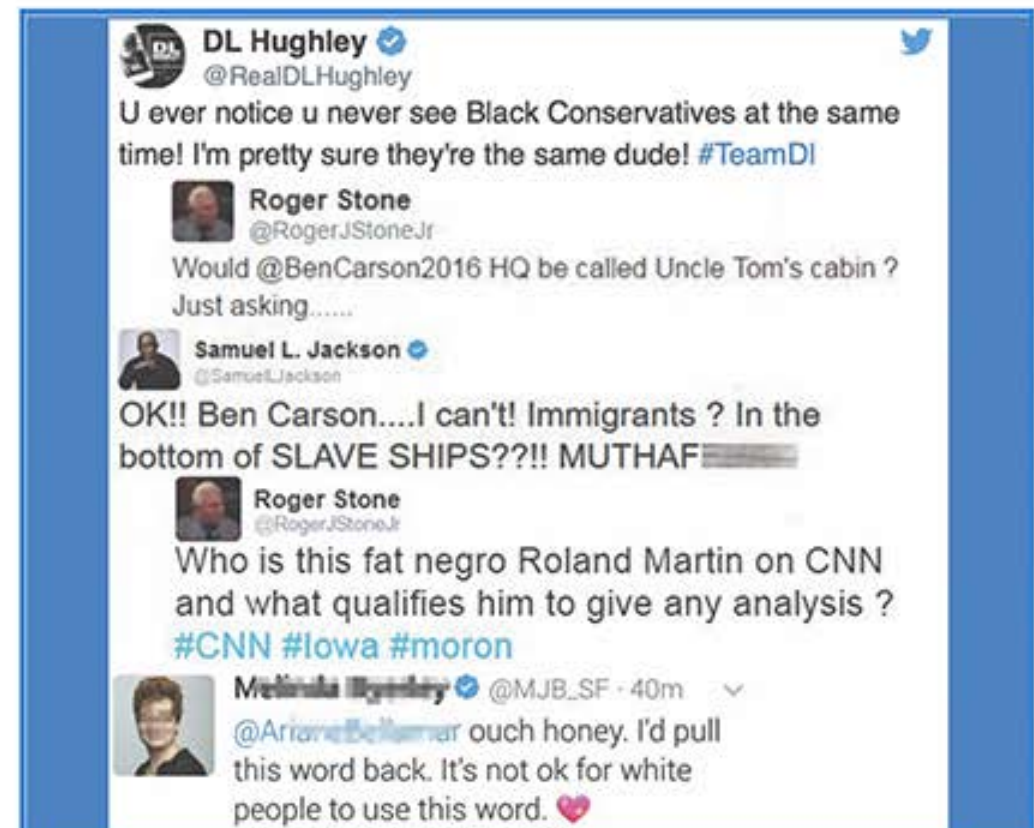
Consuming those products reminded me how fortunate we are to have access to fresh food products, and how far we've evolved in terms of nutritional awareness. Still, the rare treats did hit the spot for our late-night crew.



## No Strange Bedfellows

May 4, 06:44:20

Someone's Twitter comments irked me this morning so I angrily lashed back at him. Happily and as hoped (he puts up funny, interesting posts ninety-nine percent of the time), he responded like an adult and the exchange has proven highly satisfactory.



Unfortunately the same can't be said for my interaction with someone I haven't seen in quite some time. He's an old acquaintance who agreed to 'donate' his semen to a single woman who decided to embrace motherhood without a male figure in the household.

But the way he introduced this information was to loudly announce in a public place that he was now a 'father.' This news came just as he was updating me on his upcoming travel slash party plans for the entirety of the summer, whilst the new mom stays at home raising 'their' two kids (surprise! twins), for whose creation he's now taking full credit.



## THE 6<sup>TH</sup> MOST ADMIRABLE MAN IN AMERICA



### Lower the Bar

May 5, 06:41:47

Nothing irritates me more than going to a mom and pop and finding it closed during business hours. Who cares if it's a sixty-year-old woman running the place on her own? Or a young woman who spends all her free time caring for an elderly, demanding (abusive) father?

In the case of the latter, I had to stand outside The MailPost near my home one morning for eight minutes before the owner's daughter finally arrived. She cited bad traffic encountered during her one-hour commute. As a customer, I come in maybe five times a year to drop off packages that the post office around the corner won't take. I used to bring my son there just for something to do, since she was so kind and patient with him, even when busy and exhausted from working there alone throughout the day.

I've just been given a court date at which I'll finally have a hearing in front of real people, rather than an overextended judge who clearly hasn't read any submitted materials. I see no possibility that for a jury of peers, a handful of email messages sent last spring while rehabilitating from back surgery, with nothing threatening or even accusatory or demeaning, will outweigh the overwhelming hard evidence that your mother has fabricated this entire story and 'case' against me for domestic abuse.

I'm hoping to be in and out quickly so I can open up close to eight o'clock, consistent with Shadowlands' posted hours of operation.

## Small businesses in big cities: death explained



### Notice Signs

May 6, 06:05:07

Growing up in America with English as my first language, I became convinced that my parents and really all Koreans I'd ever met, were the most racist group on the planet. I'd hear the word "kkamdoongie" in reference to black people, literally spit out as though a disease, and employed as a teaching device to instill fear in us to work more and listen better. It made perfect sense given this context that as kids we assumed it to be a pejorative term, rather than simply the word used to describe anything black.

*Train to Busan* is a modern allegory. Every character in it is meant as social commentary. For example, a dark-skinned man in torn clothing is initially mistrusted but ends up a hero. At some point the story's evil villain lectures the little girl (our future) to study harder, or else become just like the dirty, deranged homeless man. In my favorite line of the film, she looks him right in the eyes and declares "My mom told me that people who say that are the ones with the problem." He walks away muttering something about how her mom



must be an addict, too. While he ends up getting eaten alive, transformed into another soulless zombie, the mother and child survive.

## IndieWire

# 'The Host'

### This Century's Defining Monster Movie



#### Thicker Skin

May 7, 06:03:10

Leaving Brooklyn over a dozen years ago wasn't hard to do. However much I enjoyed my time there, I'd become weary of the racial dynamic, especially feeling that my Asian identity always came first for those around me. I'd somehow found myself in a 'people of color' group of self-identified artists, though I had friends from all walks of life, including – shockingly for some – many white friends I keep close in my heart to this day.

When I headed out west, I was surprised to find many had confused me with the one other Asian person who traveled in the same circle. We don't resemble each other much at all and our ways of being in community are quite dissimilar. But I found upon departure, disappointingly, that some (many?) never got beyond the exterior to discover that all of us walk as independent human beings, distinct from one another despite apparent shared physical traits.

Here in Ashmont, taking over a cafe previously run by Turkish and South Asian immigrants, I feel a similar challenge in convincing new neighbors that I'm not,

in fact, the same person as those prior owners, whom I respect as having toiled to serve their customer base of largely ungrateful, privileged customers who've been bemoaning the change and whining over their audacity to go 'without saying goodbye.'

Challenge accepted.

## Psychology Today

# Racists and Their One Black Friend

"They're all alike"



#### Step Aside

May 8, 06:45:10

There's just something about that Kawhi Leonard. I don't trust him at all, it's like there's an untouchable forcefield around that man and a treacherous power that surges from deep and dark within....

Can you feel an upset brewing for the reigning champs?

## Sports Illustrated

# Why Does Gregg Popovich Take Unnecessary Digs at Kawhi Leonard?





## Change Jobs

May 9, 06:32:30

Last night we had a wonderful roundtable, which I've continued thinking about this morning. Our talk dovetailed from the posted topic into other areas. One woman shared a lot about her experiences as a public school teacher for twelve years. She said she grew up knowing she wanted to be an educator, making her younger siblings sit in front of her while she acted out the role. What happened to make her quit? She's only in her late thirties or early forties.

### Burnout.

She described the stress of her chosen profession, self-blame when kids from unstable homes weren't advancing ("if they're not learning it, you're not teaching it," the principal would bark back at them at any inkling of complaint), and lack of growth opportunity. She's a woman of color who's never been properly recognized or promoted for her intelligence, work ethic, trustworthiness, and other key leadership qualities, all of which seemed perfectly evident to me during our moments of interaction.

So what's her new career, which she finds so much less stressful and more rewarding? Social work.



7/4



## 30 Percent of Teachers Are Chronically Absent

Illness, negative work environment, burnout, stress, and generous paid leave policies are factors.



## Positive Thinking

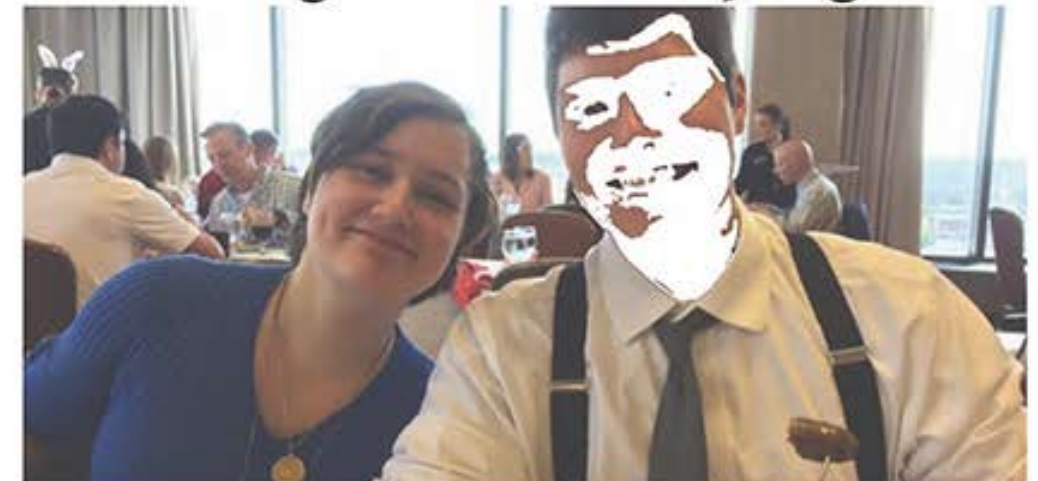
May 10, 06:27:00

I had an unexpectedly long evening talking with a customer. She came by late, missing the reading club she'd inquired about earlier, and we ended up hanging out after hours as she ate the dinner she'd brought from elsewhere. I pulled out the round table again for her to dine, and we chatted as she consumed her meal. I told her about the meeting and how the group had only briefly touched upon the stated topic, *Sophie's Choice* (an impossible decision that must be made, i.e., which of your children to save versus who must be sacrificed to die), before the conversation drifted completely off-course. After she left, I cleaned up and prepped things for the next morning before heading home exhausted.

I'm happy and content with how things are moving forward with Shadowlands, albeit slowly. I realize most people wait for proof of concept before they'll make the effort of extracting themselves from the comforts of home and take the chance on something new. To them, there has to be a guaranteed payoff, some reason to join. Perhaps over time some brave souls, leaders and renegades, will actually enter to help incubate what they're hoping to see when they poke their heads in. Unless all they actually wish for is confirmation of their initial hostile thoughts about the naive new venture?

The Atlantic Popular Latest Sections Magazine Give a Gift My Account

## An Outrageous Rush to Judgment





## Low Profile

May 11, 06:52:18

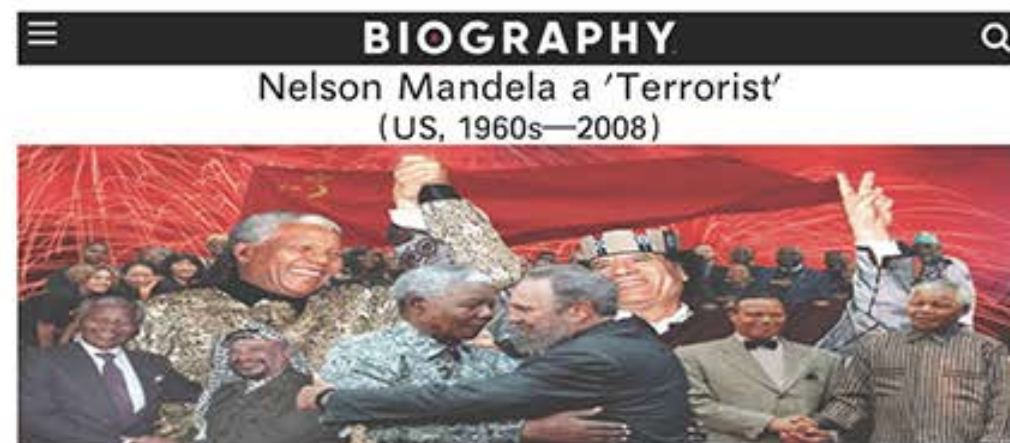
If you're a lover of art and literature, you wouldn't be able to avoid noticing a common thread connecting many who practice their craft at the highest level and produce works that sustain over generations, despite censure, censor, and other attempts to muzzle their expression.

- |                        |                  |
|------------------------|------------------|
| ✚ David Wojnarowicz    | ✚ Gertrude Stein |
| ✚ Marguerite Yourcenar | ✚ Yukio Mishima  |
| ✚ Djuna Barnes         | ✚ Audre Lorde    |
| ✚ Patricia Highsmith   | ✚ James Baldwin  |

Those are just a handful of revolutionary writers who transformed the world in their own small ways, preferring the written word to a raised voice. The unifying characteristic (as many are already aware)? They extended their radical, unconventional ways to their personal lives as well, daring to engage in forbidden love in opposition to society's dictates at the time, even in the face of risks as extreme as criminal prosecution, harassment, and death.

I wonder about what should be considered radical now, especially in metropolitan regions like the Bay area. Coming out as gay or bisexual? Partaking in an 'open' relationship? Dabbling in 'polyamory'? Revealing oneself to have been born with body parts of both sexes ('dual gendered')?

Do people still get to count themselves revolutionary if the supposedly radical acts earn them praise and stature in their communities as victims of intolerance, and clearance to rail at everyone else for their supposed bigotry?



## Dual Majors

May 12, 06:55:01

In college, my major was neuroscience but I also studied Slavic literature, having fallen hard for authors born out of the Soviet regime from such utter desolation and bleak desperation that all hope should've been strangled. Initially I dove into better known greats like Fyodor Dostoevsky, Leo Tolstoy, Anton Chekhov, Nikolai Gogol, Mikhail Bulgakov, and Witold Gombrowicz. Later, at the encouragement of one of my professors, I dug deeper to discover quiet giants like Anna Akhmatova, Marina Tsvetaeva, Nadezhda Mandelstam, Wisława Szymborska, and Lydia Ginzburg.

A 'normal' life and an absence of want, suffering, and hardship doesn't seem to be a shared experience of great artists and writers. Overcoming extreme obstacles and yearning to communicate the unspeakable with fellow human beings is a trait that frequently accompanies artistic genius.

- ✚ Viktor Frankl (Austrian, Jewish ancestry)
- ✚ Hannah Frank (British, Russian-Jewish ancestry)
- ✚ John Gutmann (American, German-Jewish ancestry)
- ✚ Annie Leibovitz (American, Estonian-Jewish ancestry)
- ✚ Gertrude Stein (American, German-Jewish ancestry)





## Clean Up

May 13, 06:59:02

It makes perfect sense to me that a new crop of outstanding artists and writers should come from immigrant parents and circumstances wildly foreign to the mainstream American lifestyle.

I've been drawn to the original stories of many 'outsiders' who choose to combine powerful text with illustrations in the tradition of Art Spiegelman's *Maus* or the Hernández brothers' *Love & Rockets*.

- 📖 Marjane Satrapi's *Persepolis*
- 📖 Ozge Samanci's *Dare to Disappoint*
- 📖 Nora Krug's *Belonging*
- 📖 Amir Soltani's *Zahra's Paradise*

With respect to Tony Medina's *I Am Alfonso Jones*, I suppose even to this day the author might be referred to as 'African-American,' despite decades of families toiling away in a land where some descendants of early occupiers cling to the notion that they're the only 'true' Americans, hoarding away inherited (unearned) riches, unwilling to accept them as never having been theirs to own. Or anyone's, really.

In retrospect, perhaps the leaders of native tribes who signed treaties that gave European settlers 'their' land thought the pale visitors crazy or stupid. Selling land? What a ridiculous concept. Were they blind and deaf to the glorious trees soaring into the heavens, the happily singing birds, the powerful river currents that cut paths through mountain rock for centuries? What manner of creature, faced with all that, would have the audacity to anoint themselves keepers of such magnificence. The chosen stewards of God's favorite place.

### *American Homestead*



## Gag Rule

May 14, 06:15:00

I'm a little anxious about tomorrow's community roundtable on abortion ("*What Are We Really Talking About When We Talk About Abortion*")? I'm hopeful there will be both men and women attending. My feeling is that men think women in favor of abortion are mostly protecting their right to decide whether a fetus will continue on to become their child to raise, or not. Men in favor of abortion then become men totally fine with women in control of that decision: Want to have a baby? *Okay*. No? *Okay*.

By my reckoning, when we talk about abortion, we're also talking about the act that led to the inception of the fetus.

It's time to consider the deeper question of why abortion rights keep getting put back on the table by male politicians. I think we'd discover that those men aren't particularly concerned about fetus rights at all. Instead, they're adamant that once pregnant, the woman as passive recipient shouldn't be able to terminate this new relationship against a man's wishes. If impregnated, and should the man desire her as a wife and mother to 'his' child, there should be no option for her to back out. The sex act might be pursued by men purely for carnal pleasure, but if it becomes treated as such by women, and they become empowered to determine for themselves whether the male is suitable or not as father to the unborn child, well, clearly *all hell would break loose*.

Whoever ends up showing, I hope for a lively and interesting discussion.





## Be Quiet

May 15, 06:16:34

*The Red Balloon* is a short film with essentially no spoken words. It's a glorious, soaring masterpiece that manages to carry our emotions from pity, then anger, to wonderment as a small child rises (literally) triumphantly above his bleak, joyless surroundings and bullying tormentors. It's still seared into my memory from watching it growing up.

I wish I saw more films made for kids with this kind of delicate simplicity and brilliant execution, which never fails to mesmerize an audience regardless of age group or supposed attention deficiency. For example, I've seen you as a child show impatience towards patronizing adults, while demonstrating remarkable persistence and willingness to follow through when engaged and provided with your own space, free of intrusive, constant adult oversight and monitoring (alternated with long spans of careless neglect).

For those tempted to bemoan the film's lack of diverse representation and focus on a young white boy, it should be noted that this is a movie made by a white Frenchman and set in France, where Caucasians make up roughly eighty percent of the population. Surely the filmmaker could've included a few non-white characters in the film, to represent his country more accurately, but perhaps wanted to shield his viewers from this undesirable fact. After all, it's not a country, like America, that ever wanted to flaunt its diversity. Instead, most of the 'native' population barely tolerate the presence of those eight million Arabs. Which makes it so surprising to see them speak out (as they often do) to denounce Americans as racist anytime a conflict arises.

Esquire

> Subscribe

## Tim Burton Has a New White Magic Movie



## Appendix to Chapter 4, "Cast Out"

### Criminal Record: Nate Washington (partial)

	
CRIMINAL BACKGROUND RECORDS, INC. An Information Enterprise™ Solution	
OFFICIAL CBR CRIMINAL REPORT	
PERSON INVESTIGATED	
Name:	Nate Washington
Date of Birth:	July 4, 1958
Social Security Number:	002-37-9697
States Searched:	Arizona, California
CRIMINAL ARRESTS & CONVICTIONS	
Risk Factor	Yes
Felonies	Yes
Restraining Orders	Yes
Aliases	Yes
Current Warrant	Yes
DUIs	Yes
Notes: Multiple domestic violence reports from [name withheld]. Resisting arrest. Speeding in excess of 45m over posted limit. Driving without a valid license. DUI conviction (3).	
OFFENSE A	
1 Ct 13-1406 Sexual Assault F2	
1 Ct 13-2623 Child/Vulnerable Adult Abuse F2	
Conviction	
Paroled	
Released 05/03/2013	
1 of 12	



## Chapter Five. “Serving Time”

*how to let others know who’s being held captive*

Dear Son,

Following Nate’s death and a dramatic breakup with her last girlfriend, Francine, your aunt moved in. She insisted it would only be short-term, but her intention to squat with us permanently soon became clear. She left for long stretches only to return and plant herself in the guest room for days on end with blinds drawn, refusing to communicate.

In your aunt’s handwritten suicide note, the one found in her pocket at the time of her death and seen by nobody but the investigating officers, your halmoni and me, she admitted to blackmailing your mother after becoming our surrogate:

*Lucas—I want you to know that I’d never in a million years have told Leo anything, you know I’d never do that. But I did threaten Xara, when she was refusing to loan me money I needed for an abortion. She’ll probably try to twist my words, but it wasn’t serious. I really wouldn’t have done it. The real reason she let me stay with you guys for so long is that I know her dirty little secret. We met as strippers at a nightclub years before you met. We weren’t exactly friends, but at a place like that, you get to talking with other girls and whoever’s in the room can overhear. I always found Xara a bit creepy and snotty. She kept to herself and acted like she was above everything. Not very good on stage either, I have to say. Anyways, I couldn’t believe it when you first introduced us. I know her head to toe, we even made out back in the day, so I was certain it was her and no coincidence that she’d gotten her hands on you.*

That’s the gist of what she’d written, related to your mother. It wasn’t news to me, at least concerning her stint at a strip club. She’d revealed this early on, when we first began dating, and I’d accepted it as an odd bump in the road, irrelevant insofar as our relationship was concerned.

Love,  
Dad



## Write a Book

May 16, 06:32:22

Last week I invited a random group of people out to celebrate publication of the first book. When asked what prompted me to treat them to dinner, I told them, and the response was met with not a single follow-up question. No polite inquiry of any kind, even just a curious request to see a copy. Except, one person there remarked, as a way of belittling the accomplishment, "You self-published it, right?"

Yes, more or less. Oak Bound Books is a joint undertaking with a longtime friend who also happens to be a designer. After twenty-five years preparing and reviewing content for newspapers, I'm familiar with the publishing process and felt comfortable taking this unconventional route. A new imprint was formalized as a company and I completed the book. We laid it out together and released it first as a cheap, crappy paperback edition, which we used to get feedback and secure permissions, editing and refining it extensively before proceeding with the final, hardcover version. That was our major investment, which we got printed and shipped here from abroad. A pallet of boxes had finally arrived after its long journey by sea.

All the work that went into the book makes it something I'm actually very proud of. Anyone who knows me well recognizes that I have exacting standards, which mostly apply to myself. As for the book, I wouldn't even announce its existence much less peddle it to others if it weren't something I like and feel makes a valuable contribution to our national discourse today. Those are big words, but I won't step back from that, no matter how few copies are disseminated. Despite drawing upon my own lived experience, which is still raw and piercing to recall, I find the fictional story compelling to follow once again from start to finish. Anytime I pick it up I'm intrigued enough to flip through it, even to this day. I like the unique format and think it makes it easy for today's reader, who typically doesn't have long stretches to devote to reading: you can drop in for quick little bites and emerge each time with something thought-provoking, humorous, or otherwise entertaining.

I used to mentor young writers at the paper. I'd encourage them to draft their articles with a person in mind, either a student who's exciting to teach but also the most difficult in class for whatever reason, or a favorite young family

member uninspired by news, history, politics, or science. I'd counsel them to think of a way to distill the subject, show them why it's important, in a comprehensible and engaging fashion. I'd tell them that if they could be successful in this pursuit for that one individual, then the article would not only reach people in the same demographic, but would appeal to a much wider audience as well. In the case of my first book, the person I wrote to other than you, son – my audience of one – was your halmoni.

The challenges were multifold. She's one of the smartest people I know, but also a senior at this point, knows exactly what she likes and doesn't, and refuses to spend even one second on occupations that don't amuse or fulfill her in some fashion. She's an inveterate reader with an English literature degree. She's also a brutal stickler for quality. In the past, I've sent her copies of books I liked by people I knew personally. For *Dictee* by Theresa Hak Kyung Cha, she said it was okay, and that she read a quarter of it before she was bored and set it aside for good. With *Underground Railroad* by Colson Whitehead, she opined that his first effort, *The Intuitionist* was much better, and wasn't able to get through the whole thing.

She's only seen the draft paperback edition of *#NotUs*, but already I'm satisfied that I accomplished what I set out to do. Whether the published work has an audience of one or a couple dozen is immaterial to me. There's a copy I've set aside for you to read when you're old enough, assuming that higher powers have it in mind to allow you to get that far. Otherwise, this wonderful experience and the entire effort has already paid for itself as far as I'm concerned.





## S.O.S.

May 17, 06:08:20

I'm excited to launch a new series once the events at Shadowlands are fully up and running. S.O.S. (Sunday Orphans' Salon) is a concept for afternoon 'jam' sessions between artists and the public. The idea is to give guests the chance to interact directly with an artist in an intimate 'how to' forum. Audience members are drawn into experiencing firsthand what it might feel like to be a creative artist, the mindset, training, preparation, patience, perseverance, and sacrifices that go into creating something that might transcend the everyday into the realm of 'art.' What would it mean to repeat such grueling work time after time, absent any positive feedback or sense that your work is being received as intended? Which artists in history have meticulously chipped away at their craft in isolation, without ever having found an audience during their lives? Answering that question might help address another one: what's stopping each of us from pursuing that level of discipline with passion and care in our chosen trade, profession, hobby, sport, or other pursuit?



elite daily



## People Are Crowdfunding Vacations And It's Actually Working

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Created January 30, 2018  
Tila Nguyen

## Distress Flag

May 18, 06:35:14

I woke up yesterday to discover vandals had broken down our flag pole. Since putting it up after returning here over three years ago, it's been vandalized countless times, almost on a daily basis, now capped off by destruction of the pole itself. I'm pretty certain the perpetrators of this petty but obnoxious and morally draining crime (to me as the recipient) fancy themselves 'stand up' dudes, doing the right thing by showing me – clearly some bigoted closet redneck – that America is nothing to be proud of at all:

*"F\*ck you for flying your flag of this shoddy country that's offered nothing of value to any people, is guilty of crimes against humanity worse than any other nation's history, the planet's worst polluter, a flagrant scourge who's never doing any good that doesn't line her own pocket. You don't get to be 'proud' of something so disgusting m-f\*cker. Stop putting it up or else!"*

Due to the poor quality of this pole purchased at an old variety store that's gone out of business, and with limited time to hunt around elsewhere, I'm tempted to hop onto Amazon to order a replacement. But I'll first check out our local Ace Hardware. I hope they'll have something more durable.

M

## Next iteration of the American flag?





## House Calls

May 19, 06:21:30

I've been genuinely concerned about your ami's wellbeing, so last night I sent a message to her. In the certain case that the nature of this communication is later misrepresented, for full disclosure I'm sharing it with you here.

your tango

Victim Of Emotional Incest  
Not A Mama's Boy

(no subject)  
2 messages

Lucas Kim <lucas@shadowlandsglobal.com>  
To: swashington5353@gmail.com

Fri, Jul 26, 2019 at 9:58 PM

Dear Mrs. Washington,

I'm sorry if you felt that I pressured you into giving me Mr. Washington's address. At the time, I was only guessing you must have it, and didn't notice any hesitation when you handed it over. In fact, the information you gave me wasn't correct (no such address exists), but I was able to track him down in the end. Xara's lawyer also mentions in her latest filing that I "upset you greatly," causing you lasting harm by questioning you about your father and whether Nate and Xara were ever alone in his care for any long stretches of time.

I know you lost your mother very early and were raised as an only child of that man, with a stepmother and younger half-siblings. I understood from Xara that he's always lived nearby, was close to the family and often at the house until his passing a few years back, shortly before your husband left.

Whatever you might think of my motivations, I never anticipated your strong reaction. I did leave the house, but lingered briefly because I was concerned about your sudden flash of anger and overall state of mind. I wanted to make sure you were okay. I left a message with Xara's lawyers about my time with you, so she'd be aware of our discussion. Otherwise, I feared you wouldn't let her know of my visit.

I'm not upset at you in any way and of course you should always be part of Leo's life as one of his grandparents. I just feel sad that everything is so terrible right now.

Lucas

## Be Creative

May 20, 06:48:12

For the past year since losing a default judgment due to my non-appearance during back surgery and failing to file an objection within ten days, writing has proven my only solace.

Using the creative process, drawing from first-hand experiences as an outlet and way of being heard and seen when it feels like no one is hearing your message (paying attention), is what any writer or artist does.

As your mother once told me, "you're hardly qualified to compare yourself to any recognized writer or artist." True. But the process is the same, which is the point I'd been trying to make to her.



SIGN IN NPR SHOP DONATE

## Rift With Mother Alice Walker Explains



## Draw Attention

May 21, 06:47:53

My firm conviction with absolutely no proof of any kind and a small sampling of those I've had the privilege of working or interacting with in the past: even successful, affluent white guys are sick of seeing mostly, or only, other white guys in positions of power, regardless of context.



U.S. POLITICS WORLD TECH ENTERTAINMENT SUBSCRIBE

## I'll Never Apologize for My Privilege





## Welcome Outsiders

May 22, 06:53:27

The entitled residents of Ashmont Hills have been watching closely with their critical eyes as Shadowlands has been coming into existence in their neighborhood. First there were complaints about the slow-to-arrive 'small eats' menu (most who whined about the lack of food options have yet to order a single item from it).

Then it was the 'limited hours' (10am not early enough for their morning coffee), though I see many of them stretching their legs at 11, noon, and even, god forbid, emerging for the first time all day in the afternoon.

Finally it was the low prices, clear evidence that the devious owner is trying to pull a fast one on those wise folks (not so fast, buster!).

Honesty is a lost American art form. What happens when it stumbles onto your doorstep? Do you mistrust it, devalue it because it doesn't cost enough for your deep pocketbooks? Or do you simply not like it, because it looks different (slanty eyed chink, what could he possibly know about Willa Cather??).

If you see all the above, and continue firmly embedded in your identity as a follower, abiding others, your old ways, outdated habits and values, then why not just own it? Don't come around on a Tuesday while I'm hard at work managing stock, prepping things for the week, and demand entry so he has to retreat all the way into the storage room to get a key and unlock the door, only to ask disingenuously, "Are you open today?"

No, b\*tch. The only Tuesday we were open was last week for opening day, as I clearly told you at the time. Other than that, when you came and greedily consumed 'donation basis' drinks and food without bothering to drop a penny into the tip box, I've never seen you back here again. Are you so precious and important that I should be opening up six days a week instead? Or maybe all seven, three hundred and sixty-five days of the year?

Then will you lament my 'rude', sudden exit when the store fails, shutters abruptly and leaves behind loyal customers like you after only one short year (maybe less!) of existence?

P.S. To those clever enough to sniff out the new misogynist pig in their midst: the fellow was male-presenting. And yes, he is very much a b\*tch.



## Keep Pressure On

June 8, 06:42:00

It looks like Nadal planned things perfectly, falling to Dominic Thiem just prior to the French Open in a meaningless warmup match to ensure his already unrivaled hunger for domination of the slow, painful variety would be on full display for the world to witness, and that his inevitable coronation would be sufficiently excruciating for the unfortunate opponent of tennis' ultimate masochist in the week's final match.

## The Telegraph

### Fans Rejoice, Finals to Feature 'Anyone But Novak'





## Spend Freely

June 9, 06:10:36

I've been experimenting with commuting options when I don't have too many heavy supplies to carry in for the day, with an eye to reducing our carbon footprint. Unfortunately, roundtrip bus fare given our proximity to work ends up costing significantly more in rote dollars than jumping on public transit.

It's impossible not to notice that some lines are perpetually half empty, while others are packed to the gills. With proper oversight, tracking, and new algorithms, shouldn't it be possible to reduce such wastage, e.g., by deploying streamlined buses or even redesigned vans for certain routes? Privatization of the transit system may actually improve service, since companies would be motivated to keep passenger fares low and operate more efficiently in order to secure contract renewals.



## Go Out on a Limb

June 11, 06:08:31

It's amusing to listen to sports radio following the Warriors' performance in which they squeak out a one-point victory over Toronto. Nick Nurse, a seemingly nice guy and presumably decent coach, literally throwing cold water on his own team's twelve to two streak, was the defining moment. As was Steve

Kerr trusting his lowly bench in the final quarter lineup to provide some breathing room for the starting crew.

It's perfectly fine to give a coach the benefit of the doubt, but to swallow an explanation so weak, that his star player, Kawhi Leonard, who was on fresher legs than anyone else on the court due to all his time off in the regular season, needed a breather in what would've been the championship-clinching game, with *three minutes* remaining, is simply unfathomable. Why in the world would you stick out your neck as a broadcaster to defend that move, especially when you're already on record countless times ripping into coaches for far less egregious mistakes?

That inexplicable call pretty much closed the book on Toronto's run. Anybody picking them over Golden State in what will be the final game ever to be played in Oracle Stadium, has no clue what loyalty to a home fanbase, 'strength in numbers,' and the entire Warriors' mantra means to them. It could be Looney in a wheelchair, Bogut on crutches, Cook on a unicycle, Cousins blindfolded, and Livingston on stilts, I'd still put good money on their victory in game six. And when you're in a final elimination game seven, do or die, why would you bet against the reigning champs? They know only too well how painfully long an off-season feels like, regardless of the millions you've just earned, after falling just short.





## Make Noise

June 12, 06:45:12

Since I've never abused anyone and only raise my voice to speak up in the defense of others with clearcut, direct provocation (or indirect provocation over the course of several years, including withholding of intimacy for the entirety of a marriage), my 'dark period' refers to being denied access to you. First through an emergency restraining order filed against me by your mother alleging mental illness, then via a full restraining order. In it, she describes the entirety of our relationship and marriage as abusive, during which she was made to 'walk on eggshells' out of mortal fear for her safety. She goes on to state that I forced her against her will into an exclusive relationship, including kidnapping her as she moved into our house against her free will.

My account -  
Contribute →

The Guardian

## Couples who argue together stay together



## Clean House

June 13, 06:47:38

My neighbor has been moving out of his home piece by piece for the past few months. What feels like weeks after a final 'estate sale,' the home where he grew up, and where he and his estranged wife raised their son, will finally be put on the market. I'm tired of his bored, barely employed, nosy self peering down at

my home all day and night, gossiping with others about my personal life, whining endlessly about the neighbor's barking dog, and otherwise intruding on my privacy. It'll also be a relief not to smell marijuana smoke wafting through the air at all hours during gatherings featuring his son, their various girlfriends, and co-workers at the dispensary where they're both employed.

I look forward to a new homeowner moving in. That person may take responsibility for the basic upkeep of the house, which has fallen into complete disrepair, victim to its tenants' slovenliness. While there was plenty of money for indulging their various addictions, not a single penny could be spared to maintain the home, which he considered the responsibility of the landlord and owner (his elderly mother).

I saw her yesterday on my way to work, and upon return home when she was wrapping up. She was nearly done placing items that had been left behind for heavy trash pickup onto the curb. She did the best job she could, with no help from her grandson or son, who explained that she told him he needed to move out so she could sell it and buy a new car.

NATIONAL POST

## The obesity epidemic is real





## Atone

June 14, 06:10:58

The discussion related to atonement for slavery and genocide culminated in a roundtable over the weekend, but took place in various chats throughout the week. Across all racial groups, most expressed that while they had initial pushback to the idea of economic reparations, over time this has eased up a bit, where now they're willing to accept that it may be necessary, even desirable, in order for the country to move forward. In a capitalist nation, we can't get around the fact that dollars are what we use to signify value. In the absence of monetary spending, there's no way for descendants of slaves to feel that the contributions of their ancestors are truly being recognized, with or without a formal national apology.

I wonder what would transpire if our leadership stepped forward and asked descendants of slaveowners and others who've benefitted from racial privilege in this country to contribute in their next tax return to reparations for descendants of slaves. There could be a suggestion, based on the income bracket of the individual in question, but the final amount would be entirely voluntary and private.

After gathering those contributions and adding on private donations from wealthy individuals and corporations who may also appreciate the meaning of this government-mediated reparations project, all those who qualify could elect to take the proportional amount offered, or else apply it to a collective fund that would help sustain one of several advocacy groups (e.g., Black Lives Matter and others that fight for racial equality).

How to get over the 'hump' of gender inequality and a history of violence against women that continues to this day, is a bit more complicated. How do we atone for a legacy of the collective rape, literally and figuratively, of the bodies of fully one-half of the human beings on this planet?



## Find Allies

June 15, 06:20:16

I had a late morning puttering around doing odd tasks, setting up the cottage for possible rental, then gorged on another meal of leftovers and passed out in a food coma. I just woke up from my luxurious nap rejuvenated, grateful to be living alone so no one else has to witness my self-indulgent behavior.... On the other hand, I've left a ton to take care of for tomorrow, so it'll be an early morning on my usual route from Richmond and San Rafael to San Francisco and finally Berkeley to pick up supplies for the start of the week.



The number of people living alone has skyrocketed. What's driving the phenomenon?



## Share Your Bounty

June 16, 06:14:37

Last night I hung out with a couple of friends. The entire evening, my buddy picked away at his wife's meal. Whatever looked good to him, he'd reach over and take. The longer we hung out, the more it irritated me, both his actions and her silence. But mostly his selfishness and inability to notice the obvious: she wanted her food to herself, and ended the meal less sated than she otherwise



would've been, had her plates not been pillaged, or had he reciprocated – even just once – by offering a bite from his own order.

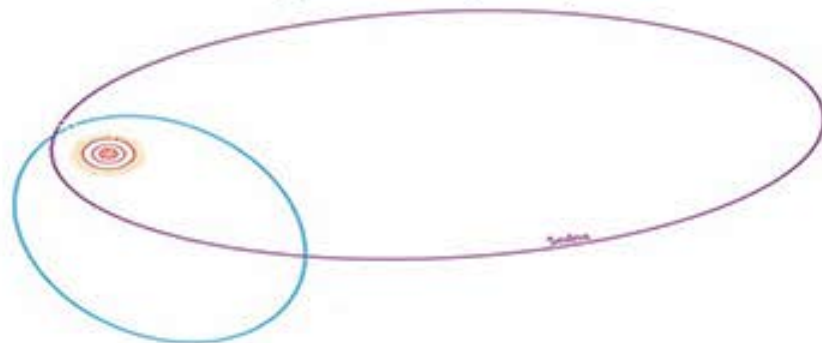


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## Wealth Reduces Compassion

As riches grow, empathy declines



### Take the Fall

June 17, 06:55:31

The judge informed me that I was being arraigned for violating a restraining order back in the middle of last year. This surprised me. I assumed it had something to do with your mother's lawyer since it was a criminal proceeding. She told me it was very serious, I could serve time and be mandated to check-in with the authorities in perpetuity. I asked to be informed on what basis the arrest was being made. She looked at the paperwork and stated it was for emails sent to friends and family.

There was a confusing period of time during which the judge appeared perplexed by the charges, and kept asking her helpers to look up other active court cases against me. There weren't any. It seemed the entire foundation was those emails referenced in your mother's police report. Since the messages were forwarded to her, she'd read them. From the contents of those emails, she believed that she was in imminent danger. They were sent nearly one year prior, after which nothing had been done until now. She waited until the cusp of book one's publication to file the complaint and petition for my arrest. Apparently, the contents were extremely frightening to her, so terrifying that she'd do anything to prevent its release.

So that's where things stand. I need to set up an afternoon to be booked, fingerprinted, and photographed by the Ashmont Police Department, return to file a plea and show up for one or more hearings. All when I'd greatly prefer to be spending my energy on starting up the business, which requires a non-trivial amount of time and attention, especially when you're doing it all on your own.



## Woman jailed in 'rape fantasy,' files suit against ex-husband



Man found guilty of rape at 17, exonerated after thirty years in jail, charged with rape of an unconscious woman.

### Walk the Plank

June 18, 06:45:08

Cedar slabs on their way to becoming new tabletop for the Shadowlands cafe.



## MAN DATING TRANSGENDER WOMAN DIES #RIPRESE MOURNS ALLEGED SUICIDE





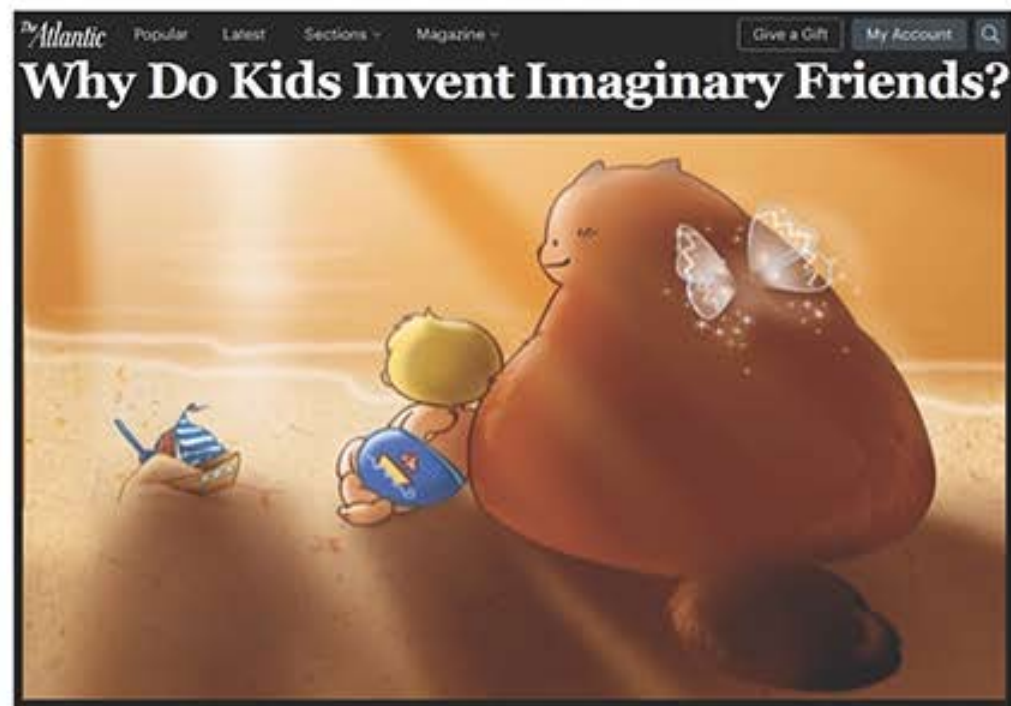
## Use Metaphor

June 19, 06:18:44

I'm sad to say that my dear friend and business co-conspirator has left the Bay area for now, opting to return to her hometown of Lexington to help out her aging parents. She's been patient enough to sit and talk me through the many things she's been handling these past few months, including website design and upkeep, marketing emails, advertising with zero budget, and tons of other small details that went unnoticed and therefore unacknowledged by me.

Perhaps even more than all that, I'll miss having around the one other human being who really understood and believed in what we're doing, someone committed to investing what she could in terms of limited time, expertise she possesses, and asking nothing in return. Not a cent back, no material gain or step up in life. She quietly sold her home and packed up this past week, not even asking me for help because she knew I was grinding on an insane schedule to finish up a new project.

So it's the end of one era, but perhaps the start of another, with that energy and support, even from two thousand miles away, continuing to fuel our enterprise. Here's my pure, heartfelt thank you, Sandra Shields, for ever.



## Appendix to Chapter 5, "Serving Time"

### Luna's Suicide Note (continued)

.... Have you ever watched the Tim Roth movie War Zone? If you want to understand Xara better I think you should. It's pretty disturbing but it'll tell you something she doesn't feel comfortable sharing with you. Even with me after three bottles of wine she'd barely come clean. She and her brother have been keeping silent about their f\*\*ked up family history, something a lot of us girls in the club share in common: she was raped as a child. Well, she tried to tell me it was only her brother, but I know she wasn't being totally honest. There's no way that creep, her dad, would've been doing that to her brother and somehow never touched her. But she wouldn't back down, she's convinced he's never been anything but a gentleman around her – except that time he was boning his own son, I guess! Damn, that family is so messed up, I saw Nate back in the day a few times too at the club. We all knew he was her brother, I'm not sure how, I guess one of the girls found out because they definitely never talked with each other there. Now that I think about it, I even wonder if they didn't make out themselves too. Sh\*t, I don't want to think about it, it's so disgusting. Anyways, he seemed to always park it at the bar and hang out a bit with some older guy before they disappeared together. It must've been their meeting spot. The gent could've been his granddad, he was that much older.



## Chapter Six. “Sober Reflection”

*how to determine whose memories to trust*

Dear Son,

Nate’s story is short and sad. Aside from knowing a bit about him, I think it’s important for you to have some understanding of how his turbulent life impacted us. One day perhaps your mother will open up to you directly about this, but in case she doesn’t I think you’re owed at least a brief summary, from the little I know about him.

The one incontrovertible, inescapable point is that their father sexually abused Nate when he was a young boy. It’s unclear whether he’s ever spoken about it with anyone, presumably your ami had no knowledge of those acts, and of course both Nate and their father are no longer around to confirm or deny details. But your mother has the distinct memory (“seared onto my brain”, as she says) that when she was little she walked in on her father and brother in the master bedroom. She says that her father was pressed on top of him, holding his hand over his mouth with his legs pushed back, and was so shocked and frightened that she quietly closed the door and ran off, never telling a soul what she’d witnessed until sharing the memory with me.

Nate is eight years older than your mother. He left home as a teenager, the year before their father’s disappearance. The story is that after having a major blowout with their father, he was kicked out of the house. He appears to have received financial help from your ami on a routine basis, so was able to make rent and satisfy his basic necessities.

The owner of the bar where Nate was last seen alive claims he was a regular customer, always accompanied by a much older gentleman. He insists that the night of his death, he wasn’t alone at all, but had been driven off, per usual, by his companion.

Love,  
Dad



## Sift Through Remains

June 19, 06:34:50

Someone getting angry that others decide to donate money to the burnt historic cathedral in France instead of the victims of arson in Louisiana makes me think of pop star Robin Thicke. Like if I got mad that he gets to spend time with his kid, even though he's admitted to being violent towards his child and cheated on his wife while I've done none of those things, but because I don't have millions to pay mine off, am stuck like a street urchin on my knees tapping at the courthouse every morning, hoping beyond hope that someone will answer.

I guess the idea is that it's horribly unfair to pour sympathy onto a faith and people (Catholics, white Europeans) who already stole everything they have and are responsible for all evil on this earth, even if their beloved church did tragically burn down?

■ The New York Times 2

## Black Churches Spike in Donations After Notre Dame Fire



## Look for Recycling

June 20, 06:54:09

There's a sign on the store's trash bin noting that we separate rubbish (landfill, compost, recycling). A customer, after moving furniture in the store without

permission, involving himself in conversation without making any eye contact, and referring to his ex-wife (who apparently won full custody of their child and is being yanked back into court as he contests the original divorce judgment) as a "malicious, crazy bitch", inexplicably dumped the ice from his drink along with a reusable straw in the trash can, right in front of me. I said nothing, since it doesn't matter, I have to go through it anyway, but I found his behavior in that moment revealing.

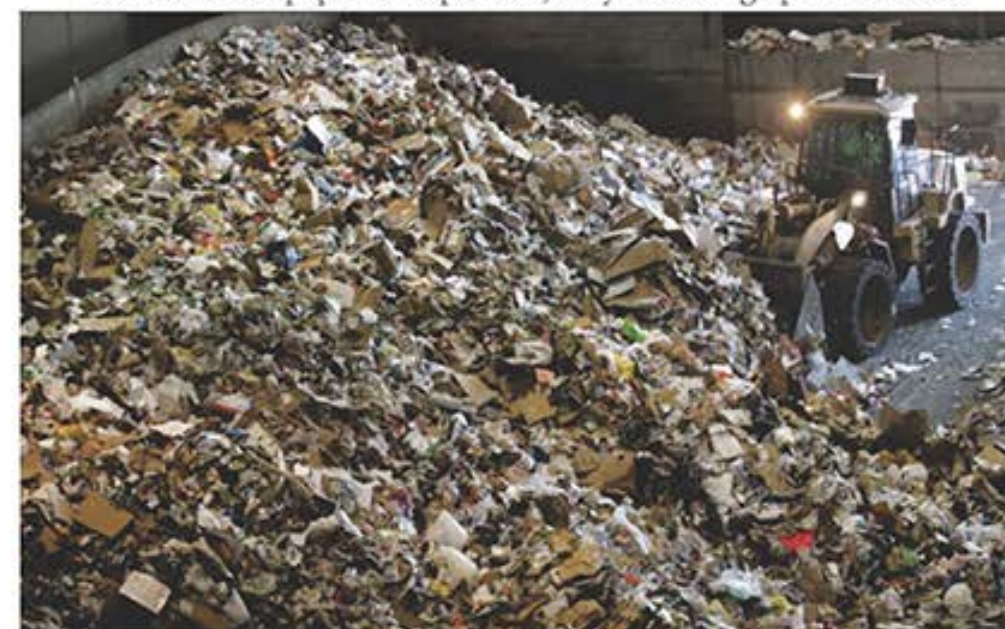
Just as I find unprovoked rudeness towards any public servant. I'm on display in the store for five hours, up to twelve hours a day. Nobody, not a janitor, nor a flight attendant, nurse, police officer, field hand, librarian, ex-con, or priest, receives sullen or rude treatment here. Yet how many times have customers walked in, barked their order without so much as a miniature nod to acknowledge having been greeted?

We've all felt abuse, and tried as a remedy to send that pain in the form of further abuse right back into the universe. This approach doesn't seem to have helped matters much – isn't it time we tried out something different?

The Atlantic Popular Latest Sections Magazine Give a Gift My Account

## The End of Recycling.

Americans are consuming more and more stuff. Now that other countries won't take our papers and plastics, they're ending up in the trash.





## ...and Gently Used

June 21, 06:42:30

People keep asking me where I acquire the used titles for the library and sale section. I have a regular routine of visiting local used bookstores, mostly Tattered Corners in San Francisco, as well as a few places I really like all the way up to Sacramento. But for the library, I have to admit I hunted down the vast majority of specific titles I was seeking out online using eBay. There's simply no way I could've built up the collection I wanted without doing so, given time restraints and the fact that most of them are out of print.

It's nice to notice how this experience is bringing together seemingly disparate elements of my past life, such as working at 'The Rock,' the main library at my alma mater, and endless hours wandering through stacks at the famed Strand in NYC or City Lights right here in SF, plus patronizing tons of other bookstores in every city I've ever visited (I'm always drawn to them, since there's usually sure to be some culture, nice cafe, or other gathering spot nearby).

Some neighbors who came by the other night were kind enough to share the existence of a great used bookstore, run by the local public library. I finally got to check it out. Though I left empty-handed, I'll definitely pop by again in the future when I have more time to hunt around for a treasure.

## THE NEW YORKER FOOD AT OUR FEET



## Eye Contact

June 22, 06:16:42

I was chatting with another business owner who's planning to open a new bagelry up the street. She came in to scope out my espresso setup, while mentioning a fancy new vacuum process that's apparently popular with trendy cafes. I told her my humble opinion that a small peninsular nation in Europe famous for the beverage has spent many centuries perfecting coffee drinks, and that as a tiny operation aiming to serve quality at a reasonable price, I'm content to accept their equipment and techniques as superior to any that may be emerging now. I'm actually quite happy with what I'm producing and haven't had any negative feedback related to quality. Of course, things might be different if I tried to milk customers for twice or (as in this case) up to twenty-five times more than what a latte costs at Shadowlands.

CHICAGO SUN-TIMES

## ALL THE RAGE overpriced coffee



## Who Profits?

June 23, 06:54:29

I just realized why I'm still being denied access to you when the former spouses of rehabilitated dirtbags like Tiger Woods, Alec Baldwin, and Brad Pitt allow



their ex-husbands to see their kids: I don't earn any money. Since I know dollars talk like nothing else in this world, my new goal is for Shadowlands to become a glutinous cash cow by 2025 when the restraining order expires. If I'm earning enough dough by then, recalculation of child support and alimony would provide your other parent a nice additional revenue stream, rather than the meager seventy-one dollars monthly I'm currently obliged to pay (based on sole custody to your mother), so that she might relent and allow me some brief moments of visitation.

Or hell, maybe even fifty percent of time as we agreed two years ago.... That is, unless she's found a new indentured servant to come do the dirty heavy lifting in her castle, for the minor's fee of room and board only.



# Simone Biles

## Changed Gymnastics

The gold medalist's #MeToo statement calling out USA Gymnastics could be her greatest legacy

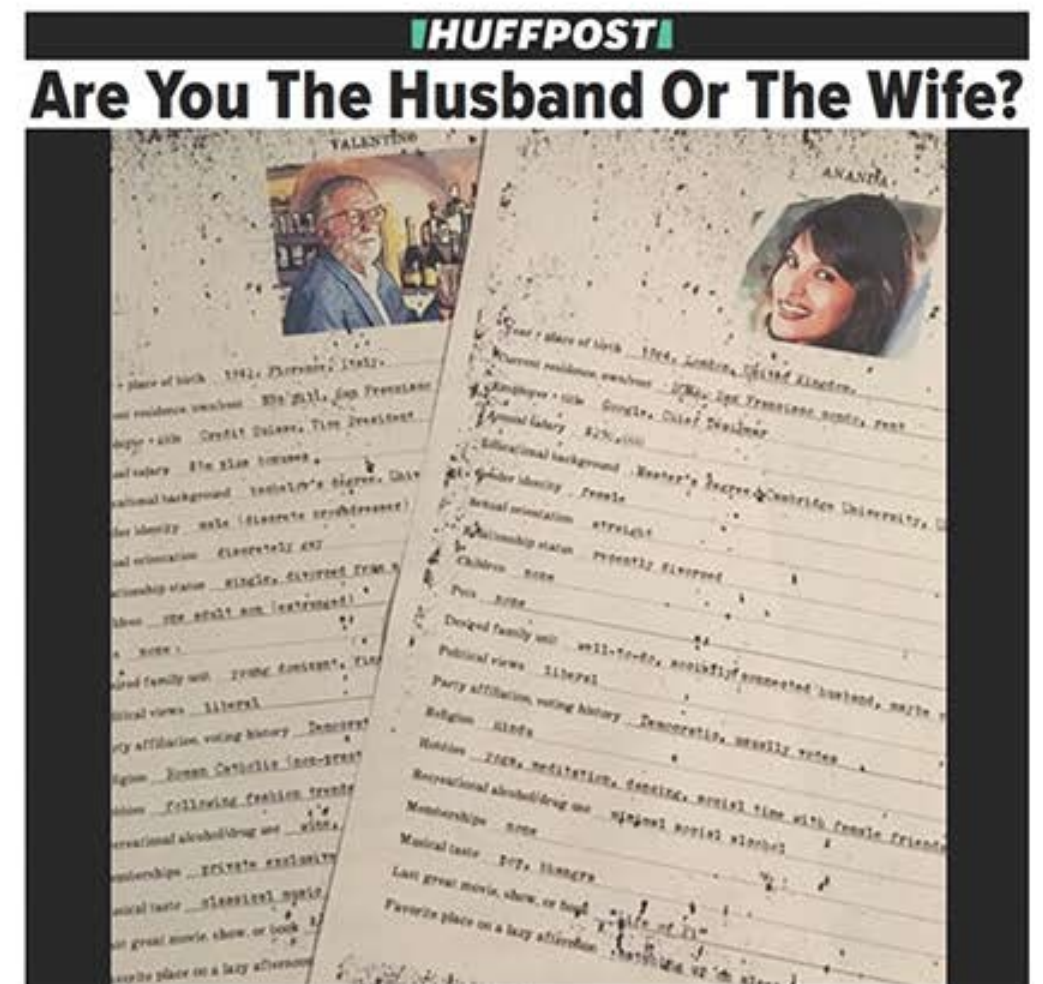


## Role Players

June 24, 06:24:59

I asked a few friends to fill out a questionnaire we'll be using as an optional role-playing device for group discussions.

The information sheets are barebones, using fictitious names and some embellishments to get just a caricature of a certain kind of person. Once in the role, however, participants can give that identity fuller body, some nuance, complexity, adding on whatever seemingly contradictory qualities they want. Hopefully it'll help to keep the roundtables lighter, while in some ways more meaningful and illuminating. Above all, the point is to have fun, and give ourselves the opportunity to get out of our own skin for a bit, settle into someone else's world view, and see how it feels.





## Good Parenting

June 25, 06:44:26

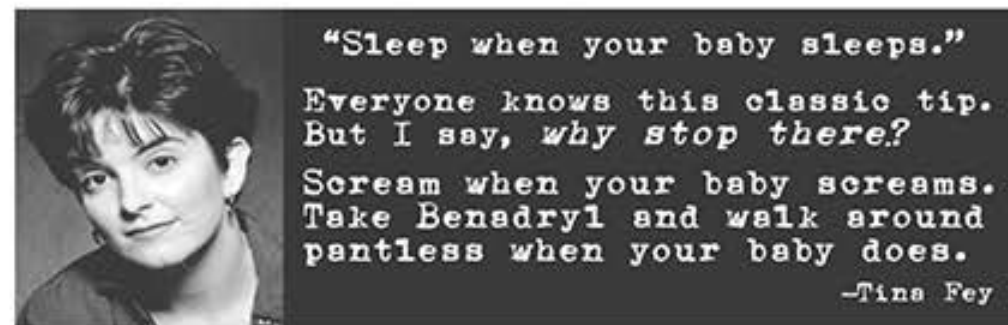
I've always been fascinated by improv, and am borrowing loosely from it as a tool for improving the quality of discussions during Shadowlands group meetings.

Participants come as themselves or, if preferred, may choose to adopt one of the roles offered by an identity sheet. Either way, the idea is to focus on what we want to accomplish as a group for the topic at hand. After anyone speaks, the next person reinforces or reflects back at least some portion of what the previous person stated, and then builds from that to add a thought. And so on. Reinforcing and reflecting back what the previous speaker expressed can be accomplished very simply, such as in a brief comment: "like Francine just said...."

At the very least, we avoid having some disjointed so-called conversation, where one person dominates by inserting extended monologues at every possible opportunity, and other comments are shared only to be ignored or stepped over, until a later time when they may be appropriated by others as though originated by the speaker.

# Improv

Now More Important Than Stand-Up



## Research

June 26, 06:07:55

*People with institutional power are pathetic... Aspiring kings and kingmakers prune in a bath of pettiness and paranoia that leaves them selfish, dishonest, and cruel.... What's actually spilled when the open secrets tip over, not their boring affairs and expensive escorts, nor the spectacular hypocrisy, though it's hard not to marvel at the shamelessness.... Instead, it's what the hypocrisy points to: a fragmented worldview that lets the oligarchy hold themselves apart from everyone they rule.*

Charlotte Shane is a journalist, also a former sex worker whose past activities give her unique insight into the psyche of men in power.

The act of defending the office of the presidency these days is a fool's mission. You'll be decried as a Trump apologist, a closeted hater or self-hater, depending on your complexion. Still, we've always expected imperfect, often highly inadequate men (always men), to lift themselves into the office we elect them into. This process usually takes place on the campaign trail when aspirants in front of throngs of supporters gradually gain a sense of the magnitude of the calling, and adopt a (false) air of gravitas. As everyone knows, Trump's approach was to flip all that onto its head, and so was refreshing to a huge swath of the American public. But that also means once in the seat, we should expect him to require additional time to adopt the usual 'presidential demeanor.'

Toying with anti-Semitism, playing footsies with Klan sympathizers and outright racists, adopting language that's menacing even overtly threatening to women, seemed to work out during his campaign. In carrying that forward into the executive office, and failing to make that shift to "presidential" in any way that would be recognizable to the average voter, has he sullied the branch – and his party – to the point of no return?





## Film Study

June 27, 06:17:16

After chatting with several different people about the plot of *A Star is Born*, I can see that what I believed to be an obvious understory to the narrative (that the Lady Gaga character is the biological daughter of the person played by Bradley Cooper, which is why they connect so readily) isn't the typical interpretation.

But to me, that's the only way to explain his suicide. I mean, the guy was completely narcissistic and selfish, pursuing his music with such a fixation that left no room for any person to feel honored or held by him, no matter how much they went to bat for him and his career. Those kinds of people frequently overdose (as they nurture grandiose notions of their immortality) or die early from other self-destructive behaviors. The one thing they never do is walk into a garage, turn on a car engine, and die of carbon monoxide poisoning in one of the most failsafe suicide methods known to man. Perhaps never, unless they'd sought out their biological daughter later in life, after neglecting her for a decade or more, then stalked her until they finally met in person and allowed a sexual relationship to ensue.

That's just my take though.

USA TODAY NEWS SPORTS ENTERTAINMENT LIFE MONEY TECH TRAVEL MORE

## Researchers stunned, girls' suicides double that of boys



## Missing Details

June 28, 06:41:24

I've never had much interest in true crime, mass murderers, or serial criminals. Who cares about those freaks anyway? Druggie violent hippie losers with no values and a screwed up personal history, going berserk on the rest of humanity after one too many acid trips gone awry.

Or so I thought, before encountering the podcast "You Must Remember Manson." Unfortunately, the truth as deftly written and narrated by Karina Longworth is a billion times more depressing and frighteningly mundane.

The ease with which a marginally charismatic male figure like Manson recruited vulnerable castaways to do his bidding, no matter how ridiculous and destructive.

How sad and pathetic across the board. Those rich elitist 'piggies' sitting around getting drunk and high all day to numb the pain of their vacuous existence. Their soon-to-be killers dropping acid every night, giving themselves to a race-baiting simpleton like Charles Manson with the idea that he was a Christ figure and their personal savior.

I'm only halfway through the podcast, but hope the remainder will answer my burning question: was reading Dale Carnegie's *How to Win Friends and Influence People* really the pivotal turning point in Manson's evolution from aspiring songwriter to dangerous cult leader?

BUSINESS INSIDER TECH FINANCE POLITICS STRATEGY LIFE ALL BI PRIME INTELLIGENCE

## Trump's ex-wife: He kept Hitler's speeches by the bedside





I haven't made homemade fried chicken fingers for many months now (forty, to be exact). Since I discovered unused breasts in the freezer taken from a bird broken down a few weeks ago, I made it for lunch today. It turned out nicely, the taste was all there but somehow, not truly enjoyable to consume. It's kind of like a lot of experiences I've been indifferent to during this span of time. A gradual dulling of the senses turns out to be the best that can be hoped for under these circumstances.

# Feeling Down?

## Baking Could Help You Feel Better

A little creativity each day goes a long way



Here's a short note I penned for friends who received a mass email implying that I'm deranged and dangerous:

*I'm sorry you were put in the middle of this horrendous custody battle. I'm sorry if you feel shame about clinging to the sidelines or not taking a stand on behalf of a child's rights. I'm sorry that you were forced to try to reconcile what you know (or 'thought you knew') about me, versus what you were being told. I'm sorry also to police officers who were shown a vile fabricated Facebook post containing a threat of murder, as grounds for charges filed against me and hastily dropped. I'm sorry if anyone was told, as was attested in a sworn declaration, that I'd been emailing, voicemailing, and texting murderous fantasy threats since being informed of the restraining order.*

None of that is true, as I hope would've been self-evident to anyone who knows me. Not even because they would've had to rely on what they know about me, but because literally not one thing about what's been alleged, the overall story, the timelines, any of the details or various fabrications, makes any sense.

## There's a good chance you are the "friend" everyone finds insufferable





## Secret Rivalry

July 1, 06:50:23

I admire Venus Williams more than just about any other athlete out there. Her strength and composure are significant in a way that transcends the sport. On a day when she played poorly and fell in the first round to a fifteen-year-old upstart, the five-time Wimbledon champion showed, as usual, a level of class rarely glimpsed, sustained over the course of the torturous post-match media session, required of both victor and vanquished. When asked about her opponent's future trajectory, the all-time great had this to say: "The sky's the limit, it really is."



BUSTLE



## It Gets Misdiagnosed All The Time

Williams Lives With Fatigue & Chronic Pain



## Disgusted by Sex

July 2, 06:27:09

After so many centuries of objectifying women and seeing female gratification as important mostly as it relates to their partner's successful control and power over her body, it's refreshing to see women objectifying the male body more.

Tom of Finland has a special artistic gift. While most of his work certainly would cause the 'decency patrol' to sound a red alert for pornographic contents, after a while you get to see that there's really nothing that shocking or indecent about what's depicted. Our reaction is more a function of how long it's been pushed all the way into the far fringes, and how unaccustomed the mainstream is to seeing men so filthy and raw in their lust for one another.

So I hope that straight, bi, queer, trans identified women of all inclinations (heck, why not straight, bi, queer, trans identified men as well?) will feel comfortable flipping thru a collection of Tom's work or an 'art book' on male nudity, as a nice change from seeing the bodies of girls and women on display as they too often are, for everyone to judge, devour, and otherwise use for their own purposes.



## Hates Man

July 3, 06:33:38

Here's a question for rich white guys who hang onto the idea that everyone else should (still) defer to them as "sir" or "Mr. so and so": how old do other men have to be before you'll confer the same respect back? For black men, would sixty-five do? How about seventy, for an Asian? At eighty years old do you



think you might grant your Latino gardener some seniority, while he stoops in the fields to pick up your greyhound's pile of feces?

Yesterday I dared to interact with said demographic, using informal first name address. I can just hear the quick explanation when questioned on his correction, that he thought I was much younger. Really, what age did this forty-five-year-old Asian male look to his eyes, and what difference would ten years make anyway, would that suddenly justify an angry reaction? I have disgusting white hairs popping out from my nostrils at this point, indelible bags under my eyes, skin worn from years of extreme sun exposure and other abuse. Do I actually look like a 'young adult', or is something else at play? Seriously, how many times do we have to hear a six-year-old white boy being referred to as 'young man' before checking ourselves on the words we use, and their significance. Should the ten-year-old son of a single mother really be considered the 'man of the family'?

TOPICS VIDEO PODCAST BOOK SHOP EVENTS MOTHERLY ABOUT SUBSCRIBE LOGIN

## What happens to a guy's brain when he becomes a dad

It's science



### Narcissistic

July 4, 06:17:32

"I love America, it's trash." That's the first thing I saw in glancing at my social media feed today. Sadly, the sentiment is probably spot on for about half the nation at this point. I, too, love America, and yeah, it's like an abusive relationship we just can't seem to shake.

She flies off the handle and hurls hateful epithets at the drop of a hat. Since as far back as we can remember, she appropriates anything she takes a liking to, never gives anything without wanting something in return, and always ends up with more than her share. She's wasteful and toxic to everything around her, coddles devious people in embarrassingly public fashion, and has not-so-secret affairs with really bad guys, endangering and embarrassing us time and time again.

But America has another side too, just like mommy Madonna. Despite all our complaining, we have to admit it's pretty cool to be her spawn. We have privileges other kids only dream about, want for nothing material, have the best education at our fingertips, and get to travel anyplace spending time with all different kinds of people. Ultimately, it's hoped that when we become adults, with all the powers of critical thinking born of our privilege, at least on some level we'll come to appreciate mommy, with her unique quirks and sketchy history, as the best we could've hoped for. At the very least, she's *our* flawed, loving mommy, whom we can love back and coax into a better version of herself, now that we're old enough to know better.

Happy Independence Day, son.





## Fake

July 5, 06:38:53

In the end, your mother didn't add anything to her hidden savings, as she'd hoped and fully expected. Her ex-partner lost all parental rights under her slanderous charges. Her ex-mother-in-law had grandparent access yanked away. (You were sidelined in the matter, but at least you won't have to bear the emotional and psychological burden of your parents' missteps forever.)

I wonder when she'll realize that she still has the opportunity to change course towards a remedy that'll allow the healing process to begin?

Incidentally, today marks three years since the final divorce, and the two-year anniversary of the filing of your mother's domestic abuse charges.



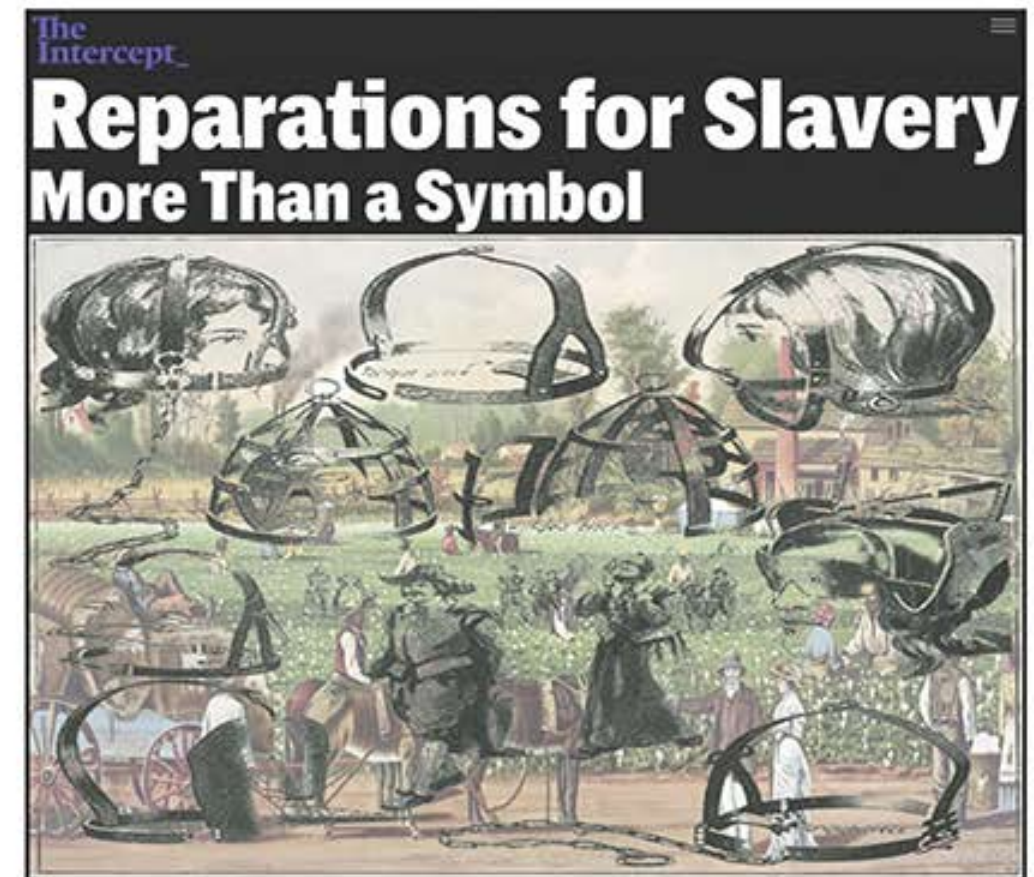
## Pictorial Evidence

July 6, 06:06:30

I've been haunted by the words and images from this book (not from the latest brilliant Jordan Peele movie). It's called *Ghosts from the Mississippi*, and waxes nostalgic over opulent residences from the plantation era. The sole reference to the individuals who did labor enabling that way of life to continue as long as it did, comes on the fifth plate with a brief caption. The woman portrayed surely had much to say but the author merely paraphrases her as recounting tales of a 'sumptuous life,' albeit with cruelty but 'also kindness, and always splendor.'

Why is the idea of reparations so hard to digest for some? Maybe because of personal family histories. But in stepping back perhaps it's really not all that complex.

I prefer to think of reparations as restoration. Restoration of a union. Descendants of slaveowners could be given the opportunity to donate into a fund. Contribution could be a chance to heal, where those of us with the means to do so show in a material way that we reject white supremacy. And even if a family includes members of the Klan or another group explicitly or implicitly supporting that failed idea, this ugly legacy stops with *us*.





**Dialogue: Lucas Kim and Richard Washington (excerpt)**

When did your wife's father die?

*Sheila's dad? Why?*

Was he close to the family, did he visit often?

*Why are you asking these questions? What does he have to do with anything?*

Did he sexually abuse Sheila as a child?

*Why would you say that? Why? What in the world would give you that idea? Has Xara said something? You're out of line, mister. You better watch yourself.*

I'm asking you simple questions, why can't you answer them?

*He's dead now and besides, what business is this of yours now? What gives you the right to dredge up old history like this? Must be why Sheila's been trying to reach me.*

Do you know for certain he never touched Nate or Xara inappropriately? Was he ever alone in the house with them when they were growing up?

[extended silence]

*I don't want to talk about this. I thought you were going to ask me about the charges she's been making.*

What charges?

*Now that Nate's dead, she's been telling relatives that I molested him.*

Yes, she told Luna that also.

*Well, it's complete horsesh\*t. She must be on drugs or something awful to be saying crap like that.*

Wasn't Mrs. Washington's father living in Phoenix, too, when he died?

*How the heck did you know that?*

Was he very close with Nate?

*Yeah, seemed to be.... He was his grandson, why shouldn't they be close? What are you driving at here? Everyone's sick outta their minds today, all of you young people. Sick.*

Does Sheila have any siblings?

*Three half-brothers and a half-sister, but they're all much younger, she doesn't keep in touch with any of them.*

She's the only child from her father's first marriage?

*First wife died early of kidney failure when she was twelve. He remarried a few years later, much younger woman.*

[pause]

Was Xara adopted?

*You'll have to leave now. I won't welcome you here again.*



## Chapter Seven. “In Consolation” *how to lead from behind*

Dear Son,

In my experience, when channeled properly, guilt can be a strong driver for positive acts. On the flip side, when coupled with stubborn denial and left to fester, it can become an incredibly powerful, toxic force.

---

The main purpose of exposing your family’s dirty laundry has been to make certain you won’t be saddled with such a burden. It’s not your load to carry.

The brutal reality of a lineage fraught with barbaric, unspeakable acts, is another challenge altogether. But at least take comfort in the knowledge that your experience is far more common than others might lead you to believe. Indeed, it may be the one unifying truth for all of us on this planet: our collective survival depends on each of us evolving to overcome a sordid history.

Looking at the facts objectively, it’s obvious that nobody good or decent – not a single living soul worthy of respect or admiration – should’ve ever survived from such a legacy.

Upon closer scrutiny, we find that despite all the above, exceptions to the rule abound. Which means that hope isn’t a meaningless idea or a fanciful notion born of purposeful ignorance. Coupled with relentless study, an unwavering work ethic, generous heart, and humility (a willingness to fail, learn from mistakes, and keep getting up no matter how steep obstacles ahead appear to be), this one word is all the ammunition you need to keep one step ahead.

Love,  
Dad



## Understanding

July 7, 06:56:22

I'm sitting back looking at the crumbled remains of my life and am struck by the oft-repeated refrain "hell hath no fury like a woman scorned." Nothing could be further from the truth. Please take heed, son. If you insist on a divorce from your significant other for an incompatibility beyond your control, even if you're in the position of providing the more stable, secure income source for your household, and however much your pocketbook gets affected, even emptied, whatever the consequences are well worth your freedom. A woman scorned might lash out, she might feel anger and resentment and hurt you in the moment. This kind of reaction is human and understandable. If you respond with love, compassion, and patience, it might be ameliorated after long, difficult discussions and with the natural softening of time.

What I faced with your mother was something altogether different. I hope after reading these pages, if you've been able to get through them, you see a little bit what I was up against, and how I tried in different ways to navigate the storm but was never smart enough or strong enough to withstand what was confronting me, what stood in the way of us being reunited.

No, a woman scorned doesn't pose such a daunting challenge. It's those who've been battered and bruised, abused, and tossed aside from a very early age. These are the individuals that society collectively, all of us, have been ignoring for far too long. They're mad and they're vengeful, and until we begin righting the wrongs they've suffered through as innocents, as small children and young people, none of us will be able to sleep soundly, not for long.



## Hospitality

July 8, 06:14:23

This morning I was slapped with a hefty fine for operating without a proper permit. Apparently, it's not okay even to give away items under the present circumstances (failure to comply with requirements for an integrated grease interceptor for drain lines). Despite my extensive Google-mediated research, such behavior turns out to be grounds for misdemeanor charges. Someone seems to have reported their experience to the authorities and so I'm now taking the executive decision of closing indefinitely.

Truth be told, I'm exhausted mentally and emotionally. Never in my wildest dreams did I expect starting up a new business to be easy. And while I've been heartened by the reception of some, many others haven't been shy about showing their hostility to our mission and presence in 'their' community. It's also clear to me that people collectively have no idea what it really means to show up. Showing up is pretty straightforward. Actually, precisely how it's defined: just show up.

So thankfully all events can be suspended for now as well.

≡ odyssey 🔍

## Friends Show Up





## Honesty

July 9, 06:34:56

Since restaurants and cafes, from tiny mom and pops to large chains, are often obliged to pay a surcharge on excess plastic waste, how come mail-order companies like Amazon aren't called upon to take responsibility for their wasteful and excessive packaging practices?

We're all looking for deals and it makes perfect sense to want to save money in whatever ways possible, no matter what income bracket you fall into. But when a company lures you into contributing to the demise of our planet while lining their own coffers, using transparent 'bait and switch' tactics, how come so many of us still fall prey? It's been revealed long before that Amazon purposefully over-discounts in order to give the appearance of having the most favorable deals for all products, banking on the idea that people will be lulled into the convenience and assume they're 'paying' the least for any item.

A man walked in yesterday, mumbled in response to my greeting, glanced quickly around, grabbed a copy of the Shadowlands Member Agreement, which lists benefits of membership (a twenty percent discount off all new books, access to the in-house library), then loudly described it as a "scam" for others to overhear, and stormed out.

I later discovered that he's the business owner of a small cafe up the street.



Subscribe MENU

# plastics ban in U.S.

Single-use plastics to be illegal by summer 2020



## Trust

July 10, 06:02:33

Some individuals who signed up to be a member of Shadowlands are now stressed out because it seems like we're having a rocky start, given the current shutdown by the health department. I've let them all know that they'll be able to obtain a full refund, no questions asked, for their full membership fee. This applies for any member, at any time.

We will reopen shortly. The reason I've posted it as an 'indefinite' closure is that this reopening timeframe is predicated on the landlord's cooperation (he's still away on vacation) and the health department not piling on additional stipulations endlessly, which I understand can happen sometimes and is part of an unfair tactic to cost a business more money, while lining one's own pocket with hours on the clock (or heck, perhaps even some juicy overtime for the hardworking inspectors).

My account

Contribute →

The Guardian

# 'A historic change': overtime pay for farm workers





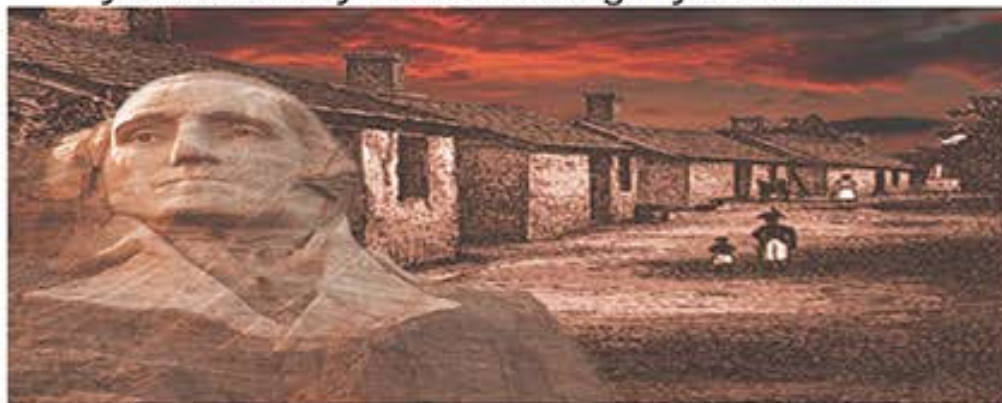
## Smiles

July 11, 06:47:01

Tonight was at least my tenth time at the Jamaican restaurant, One Kingston. I like to support small business owners who have a real vision beyond simply how to make a buck, and management there does a really nice job overall. Still, I can't help but notice that when I go with friends who happen to be black (or white), we invariably receive warm service right from the start. But if I'm there with an Asian woman, which I've now been on multiple occasions, there's a distinctly chillier reception. Is it something so subtle I'm inventing it? Maybe so, on the first or second occasion. But after a fifth or sixth time, I'd have to reluctantly admit to a certain trend. Oh well, I'm not tripping and won't even say it's not a place I'd go back to – the food is always good to excellent, I appreciate the work that went into creating the great vibe, and usually by the end that hostile feeling has either dissipated or disappeared entirely. So why do I bother recalling this at all? It certainly isn't earth-shattering news, just anecdotal information that confirms what all of us know about people already: any group can be guilty of prejudice.

The only reason it's somewhat disappointing is that, while I've felt this way a billion times at predominantly white, white-owned establishments all over the country, throughout my life (including many right here in the Bay area operating successfully to this day), we're talking about a black-owned restaurant in Ashmont that's supposed to be catering to all people. So I guess it's just that it made me feel kind of sad.

reddit r/aznidentity  
Black guy disses Asians: "if you fought in Vietnam, you could any Vietnamese girl you wanted."



## Don't Be Part of the Problem

July 12, 06:28:01

Please God. Would you please send me one person to interact with, just one single human being other than my mother who is sane, honorable, works hard, and isn't a sleazy, slimy, lying douchebag. Please?

I'm tied to Ashmont for the next twelve years because you live here and so does your mother, so as long as you're a minor, you should have access to us both. I'm trying not to feel too depressed about it, but looking around me fills me with dread. Maggots and leeches seem to be taking over everything. With capital and hiring power shifting into their hands, their ethos is spreading like an infection. So more maggots and leeches increasingly abound, getting lazier (physically and mentally) and whinier by the moment, obediently perpetuating maggot values and ways of life.

What's the way out for this beloved city, Ashmonters?



## America's Wealthy, Middle-Age Urban Revival





## Voluntary Celibacy

July 13, 06:07:40

After having an interesting discussion about marriage and whether things are any better between couples now that virtually nobody waits until after tying the knot for physical intimacy, I had this passing thought that I posted to Twitter: "I'm adopting the 'no sex before marriage' rule, i.e., no marriage, sex anytime." I thought it made me sound so cool.

Trouble is, it blatantly misrepresents my interests and activities since this first and last divorce, when almost without noticing I've been extending my decade-long run of celibacy by another year and counting. Sadly it reinforces that I'd rather be seen as having an overactive sex drive and plenty of takers around willing to help casually satisfy it, than as a person happy in my pursuits, focused on certain goals, and 'waiting' for the right person, if and when she ever materializes.

When asked whether I'd consider marrying again, I always say without hesitation yes, I would. It's not the institution I'm enamored by, but rather the belief that interlocking your future with that of another person is a uniquely special spiritual connection, and can raise both parties to new heights (or the converse of course, when things go awry). In any case, there's no way around it in my book: you've got to be willing to go out on a limb, and put your money where your mouth is.

M

## Sex Obsession Choosing Celibacy



## Morals

July 14, 06:30:25

Low-hanging fruit used to be going after the individual wackos, psychos, and freaks wrecking havoc on our society by perpetuating unspeakable crimes in serial or one-off fashion. In some circles, the new low-hanging fruit is white men, or police officers of any shade (*they're all evil!*). But what about those allowed to pursue inappropriate, even criminal behaviors in plain view? Predatory men in power all over the place operating pretty much with carte blanche – even now, 'post' #MeToo (how eager we've been to proclaim this movement done and dusted... seem familiar, #BlackLivesMatter?). Your underage first cousin for marriage? *Okay, let's see how that goes!* Your adoptive stepdaughter? *Sure, why not! Rape drugs? More for everyone!*

But this latest turn to dismantle the final holdout of lame mainstream society's boring dictates (*no incest!?*), breaking down the taboo of joking about, even pursuing your 'daddy,' real or adoptive: is this truly the direction we want to be taking?

(Although don't get me wrong, smart consenting adults in healthy committed relationships, the sanctity of your fantasy, no-holds-barred private, barrier-dismantling play of whatever variety should never be up for debate.)



DAILY BEAST

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## 'Consensual Incest'





## Double Standards

July 15, 06:23:58

Someone I know caught me off-guard by using the phrase 'female race' yesterday. He wasn't trying to be rude at that moment, it just slipped out so naturally in place of the more widely used term, 'women.' It shouldn't have surprised me in a way. Of all the people I know, he's always been the most polarizing. No matter who I've introduced him to in the past, no one ever likes him. But somehow we click, and I've continuously given him a soft pass on his rampant misogyny, I think because I got to know him so well as classmates in high school and college. It was obvious to me that he has self-esteem issues, as well as a mom who was m.i.a. for most of his formative years. The only thing that ever gave him any sense of self-worth were his results on court (he's a tennis fanatic, played on our varsity team, and even tried to make it out on the pro tour for a couple years before quitting).

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Whenever anyone suggests ideas as nonsensical as equal pay for women, he falls back on tired, convoluted arguments that he recites as though he were MJ rising up for an alley-oop. Relying on air-tight statistics and personal experience of having been superseded by women in virtually every career path he's attempted since graduation: "But chicks take off for having babies and aren't reliable workers – if you factor that all in, they're actually being grossly overpaid at ninety-five cents on the dollar or whatever it is at this point."

The World Cup is his new favorite topic. Just like his past tirades on women's tennis ("I would've *crushed* Serena as a fifteen-year-old"), his latest impenetrable rationale: this year's world football champions actually got more than they deserve, if you consider they were gifted thirteen percent of what networks earned from sponsorships, while the men took home only nine percent. He parrots this as though gospel wisdom to anyone who'll listen.

Extending that line of thinking, does he realize how much 'his' sport owes Serena Williams for her impact on tennis viewership across the board? Alex Morgan, Abby Wambach, Megan Rapinoe. Three names Americans know and care about because of their personal triumphs overcoming various obstacles. That's three more professional soccer players than many of us could come up with out of all those in the 'male race.'



## Senility

July 16, 06:55:21

Major League Baseball, which operated for one hundred years as an all-white club before integrating in 1947 when Jackie Robinson broke the color barrier, recently punished one of its players for saying the 'n word.' A commentator discussing the punishment called use of the word 'frightening': "As a white man, the 'n word' is frightening – we don't know what to do with it."

The answer seems deceptively simple. (By the way, strangely – or perhaps predictably – the MLB's sanctioned athlete was a black man.)

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I heard a broadcaster refer to thirty-three-year-old LaMarcus Aldridge as a 'kid' this evening. His co-host didn't skip a beat. The same word is employed all the time for twenty-six-year-old Odell Beckham Jr., but rarely if ever for Bryce Harper, who's the same age. Can you imagine a commentator calling twenty-nine-year-old Brooks Koepka a 'kid'? Why the difference?



## Going gray

TV viewers skew older





In every forum thus far, Kamala Harris has shown herself better equipped to mount a serious challenge than any of the other candidates. Smarter, more articulate, better prepared, and more charismatic. But because she's not perfect, and didn't make perfect calls (in their opinion) during her time as attorney general, to perfectly solve the easy problems of violent crime, recidivism, and truancy in her state, Californian liberals have been excoriating her mercilessly.

Surely in the same position, with the same high stakes on the line, their preferred candidates would've been done much better. But representing a sparsely populated state like New Hampshire is a little different from heading up the country's largest department of justice in California with almost forty million residents. Few of us can truly understand what she's up against. No matter what, some men of color are going to be hating on her – she's too smart, takes inferior men to task too easily, and ultimately went to bed with the enemy (a white man). Then, as a shamelessly stunning, multiracial woman, there won't be much love sent her way by envious women in various categories (*"who does she think she is! she's not even 'one of us', not really..."*).

Hope against all unreasonable hope: there may be enough rational voting Americans casting a ballot based on a more measured assessment of available choices. Sure she may not be the ideal choice, and seems to be too polished, too rehearsed much of the time, but genuine feeling comes out when, for example, she talks about undocumented rape victims needing a safe means to report crime without fear of deportation. When she stands up to others who challenge her, you see qualities that would enable her to take the reins in the executive branch and be effective. She has an 'it' factor that most of the other ho-hum candidates in the field decidedly lack.

But rather than put forth a serious challenge to the incumbent, it seems that the Democratic Party wants to proceed with business as usual, and see to it that the apparent frontrunner gets to continue forward with his uninspiring bid to be the most senior of all the old white guys who've occupied the oval. Which will, of course, guarantee us four more years of far right extremist rhetoric at the helm. In that case, will the country get through four more years stronger, or more divided than ever?

# Joe Biden's Age



## Let Go

July 18, 06:05:17

Given this man's awful track record on a whole slew of issues, and his pathetic inability to own up to a single mistake, no matter how blatant, I really wonder how in the world he's been able to garner even a handful of supporters to his third bid for the presidency (his most revealing words from the debate: *'Heck no, I'm not passing on this here torch'*).

Isn't it telling enough that his own president has seen fit to sit on the sidelines and watch how things 'evolve,' rather than come out in support of his former second-in-command? Does he believe that the American people are foolish enough to give equal credit for achievements of the Obama presidency to the chief executive's jovial sidekick?

## Biden Refuses to Step Aside for Younger Leaders





## Generous Donor

July 19, 06:51:07

I've always been confused as to why the gay movement latched onto the concept of being 'born gay' as somehow more affirming. Personally I hate the idea of being a slave to anything, including one's genetic heritage, and would always counsel any child in my care to think this way. You're the master of your own identity, make decisions based on clear-eyed appreciation for both immediate and longer term impacts. Take precautionary or preparatory measures as needed, then gather up resolve and step out, in whatever form you determine for yourself.

Those who study biology understand there's no known trait with a direct physical cause and effect correlation – the brain, our bodies, environmental and social impacts are simply too complex and intertwined for that.

Still, this same defense is now being utilized as a way of absolving criminals accused of heinous crimes. Imagine one day in the not too distant future scientists identifying a gene found in higher proportion in those guilty of pedophilia, sodomy, sex trafficking, and related offenses. Will the Jeffrey Epstein's of the world again get off unscathed, this time not because prosecutors saw fit to delve deeply into sordid crimes, carefully retrieve and review all related surveillance videos and documentation, but somehow come to the conclusion that a slap and registration as a 'sex offender' would be sufficient punishment? Instead, he'd walk away a free man after mere months served, this time based on a defense that insists the poor guy never had a choice, the decks were always stacked against him since birth. He was never going to be anything more than a billionaire financier, convicted child sex trafficker, and now owner of the image most guaranteed to make any woman and woman-loving person's skin crawl.

BUSINESS  
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TECH FINANCE POLITICS STRATEGY LIFE ALL

BI PRIME INTELLIGENCE

### Epstein's partner made donations to sex trafficking charity



## Wise Spending

July 20, 06:33:23

I believe in Shadowlands and want things to work out. On the other hand, I won't go into financial ruin for an enterprise that's shown only vague potential, assuming enough individuals exist within reach of the place who'll decide at some point to invest more than a few bucks in an occasional snack there. It truly is something I'm very proud of realizing, but I'm also ready to walk away from it with my head held up.

There are plenty of stories of entrepreneurs maxing out their credit on the way to becoming wildly successful. Should I be willing to go into massive debt for this venture? Maybe, but that's not my personality, or my position, all things considered. I'll go to rock bottom, where I'm virtually located at this point, but also will set firm limits. Right now, I'm very close to having reached one.

It did feel like the building ownership, having reviewed my vague but ambitious 'business plan' together with the lease application, had in mind to support a small undertaking like this, not only in spirit but in material ways, by conceding that they'd made zero financial investment in the property for decades. I'm asking them to take a small hand at two of the stipulations (replace the current residential water heater with a commercial one that has the required power rating, and have installed properly a replacement floor sink I'd purchase for indirect drainage). They have ample resources to get those done so, despite currently appearing to drag their heels on this, I remain hopeful that they'll agree, at which point I'd roll up my sleeves and dive into the rest.

USA TODAY NEWS SPORTS ENTERTAINMENT LIFE MONEY TECH TRAVEL MORE

### Bernie's student loan forgiveness helps more rich people





## Fidelity

July 21, 06:27:20

When I first obtained legal separation, I told someone I wouldn't have left your mother if I never met her. She's a single mother of one and you're the same age as her two sons. So we went camping, had day trips, overnight excursions, swam, and hung out together frequently during a significance stretch. I grew to like this woman quite a lot.

Later I realized that what moved me more than anything was the feeling of real family, where two adults enjoy their kids, relish spending time doing similar things, and don't feel the need to compete. More specifically, in my case I didn't feel my validity as a parent constantly stamped out or diminished.

On the contrary, she seemed to make a point of affirming my parental status, like actually most of our friends used to do. Then she found a boyfriend and her behavior took a dramatic turn. She'd openly talk about how good it was to be intimate again, with a much younger man of all things, and literally raved about the pleasing size and appearance of his manhood.

Any glimmer of attraction I'd previously had for her evaporated, while the enticement of a balanced and happy family life for you and future siblings, with parents in harmony, each lifting one another up, has been left stoking in the background as a subtle driving force.

## REBEL CIRCUS

### Emotional Cheating Isn't Real We Should Stop Talking About It



## Gratitude

July 22, 06:04:58

When your mother and I started a family, I wanted to institute an annual viewing of *The Sound of Music*. I used to think it was due to nostalgic feelings over a movie that made me remember a hidden positive side of my father. The secret, surprising thing about him was that he was a passionate singer. "Edelweiss" was his favorite solo. I can't recall him having any special talent, but apparently it was the one activity during which he allowed himself to feel and be expressive.

When I finally took the time to watch it again, without the burden of trying to unpack a man (my father) who isn't that complex at all in the end, it opened me fully to the timelessness of Julie Andrews' performance and the story. For different reasons, *A Few Good Men* is another movie I think deserves to be resurrected every once in awhile. And by "once in awhile", I mean now.





## Gentle Knocking

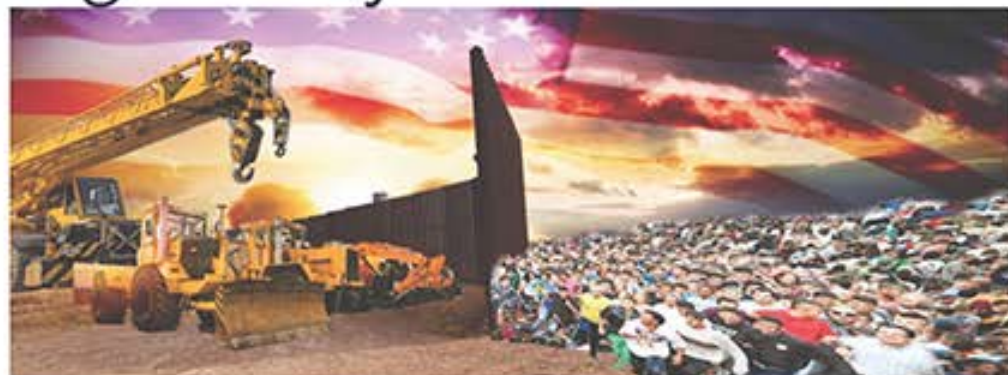
July 23, 06:42:35

Fixating the immigration debate as an emotional tug of war, between those who care about children no matter where they come from, and those who dehumanize children of so-called 'illegals,' is a wasted cause. The latter isn't likely to ever see any human rights abuse in the present administration's policies, and the split will remain as an insurmountable chasm.

I wish we'd talk more about who profiteers from the way families at the border are being treated today, and who benefits from representing the conditions of detainment as inhumane.

OpenSecrets.org

## 'Zero-tolerance' immigration policy big money for contractors



## Humility

July 24, 06:07:50

I just heard men on talk radio use the term 'toxic femininity' when referring to the U.S. women's soccer team. This gave me pause, because I understand the term "toxic masculinity" as referring to a spectrum of behaviors that range from verbal aggression to unwanted sexual advances that in some cases lead to rape, physical abuse, and other forms of subjugation that've been employed against women for centuries.

Apparently, this commentator took issue with the team 'disrespectfully' rejecting an invitation to the White House, and 'arrogantly' relishing their achievement in a world sporting event – not as mothers or spouses, but as professional athletes. He described their rowdy girl-on-girl celebrations as 'over the top,' at a time when high-profile male athletes are exposed as serial sexual predators so frequently, it barely registers as news.

More than anything, though, the women's suggestion that the efforts they put forth in training and performances should be given equal weight to men's, and that their work is unfairly compensated at thirty-eight cents for every dollar the men get (with an enormous disparity in relative bonuses for World Cup match wins), seems to be what he found most egregious and 'toxic.'

make it

SUCCESS MONEY WORK LIFE VIDEO

SEARCH

## US women's soccer generates more revenue but players earn less than the men



## Careful Wording

July 25, 06:40:02

Some people seem to be confused about why hurling the 'racist' epithet at Trump hasn't stuck, despite his apparent tolerance of white supremacists and winking approval of current and former Klan sympathizers who vote for him.



Maybe one factor to consider is that we've been hearing for years from pundits and activists on the left, that Bush is a fervent racist, so too Clinton for his policies, now Kamala Harris perhaps, as a self-hating racist herself. Certainly Biden falls into that category, along with all white men who walk through a doorway and fail to hold it open for people of color in their wake.

Is there any wonder the word has lost all meaning in the discourse of mainstream American politics?

## BalkanInsight

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# Monument for War Criminal Erected by His Supporters



Many still view Mladic as an honourable defender of Serbia and not a war criminal convicted of genocide

## High Grounds

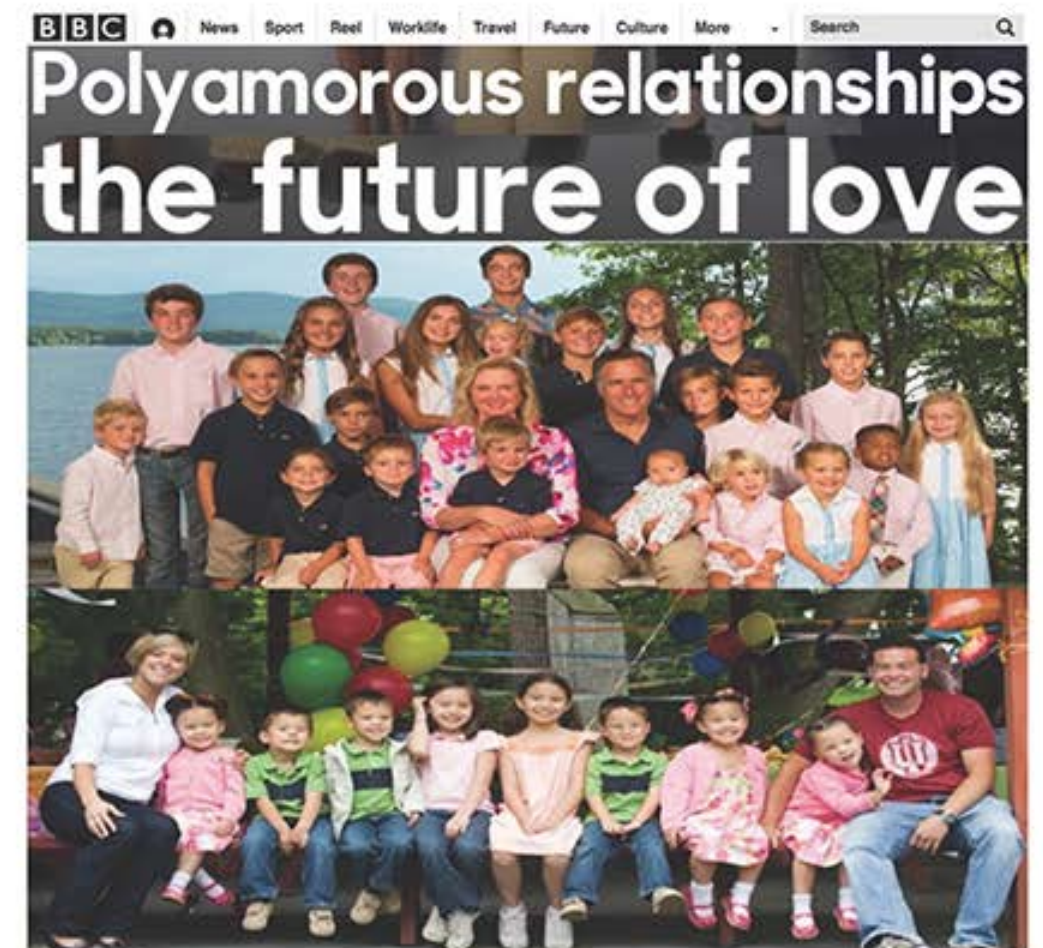
July 26, 06:59:40

I'd give one group a pass for making moral proclamations related to human-human sexual interactions: married, monogamous couples who engage in sex with their life partner with the sole intention of having children together.

If both parties are blessed with healthy reproductive systems, they might've had five kids during the course of a six-year marriage and be very exhausted. Since they're now forced by tight finances to abstain from sex completely, and understand by their marital vows that this will continue until the day they die, they could have some bitterness towards what they see as a culture of self-indulgence all around them.

Or, they could be couples who haven't had any babies at all, despite copulating for this reason only. Imagine how they might feel after years and years of joyless sex undertaken strictly for procreative purposes?

In either case, I suppose these particular individuals have earned their moral high ground and the rest of us just need to suck it up.



## Rational Fears

July 27, 06:25:05

There's no mystery to me how your mother could've been alarmed by a declaration that your dad yells when you come over to this house. The psychology of saying this in order to keep a new household separate, when joining them had always meant discord in your environment, makes perfect



sense. Your mother always characterized basic expression of disagreement as 'yelling,' so you were simply saying to her: *Dad's doing what he's always done, speaking with his voice. So, you have no need to concern yourself with him anymore – you two are over as a couple, just get on with your own life, he's getting on with his.*

The unforgivable part to me is how anyone other than your mother could've heard this without gently questioning the facts. First, why she's talking with you about what goes on at our house (I've never asked you even once what you do with your mother – why should I? that's divorced parenting 101). Second, how come the facts don't line up? I'm living alone here, hanging out with you half-time, what could possibly be happening that would be cause for alarm?

Any 'friends' who wouldn't allay someone's groundless fears in that situation, isn't a friend at all. Isn't a domestic violence advocate or ally. Isn't anyone I'd want to be associated with at any point in the future, ever again, but either a scared, clueless little child or a gutless sadist smirking on the sidelines, hoping things unravel even more tragically for their personal entertainment.



## Learning

July 28, 06:56:12

I think a lot of white men who watched Trump's declaration that it's a lot better to be an 'educated black' man these days, nodded their heads inside in tacit agreement. Exactly, they thought. After all, magazine covers and newspaper

advertisements everywhere glorify blackness. Those kinds of people confuse any actual achievement of a black person, or others in minority groups, overcoming odds stacked against them, as a gift.

They don't seem to be swayed by numbers, however stark; e.g., for thirty-two NFL teams, there are a total of two black head coaches and six black starting quarterbacks. Even one would probably be too many for those who believe in their hearts that being born black, rather than the privileged son of a rich white man, Donald J. Trump would've turned out far more successful than he has today.



## Kept Promises

July 29, 06:30:22

A lot of people are rushing to Ilhan Omar's defense today. I don't feel like doing the same. Does that make me a bad person?

I've watched her stumble her way through a first term in Congress, much like many first-time members learning things as she goes, making some mistakes, owning up to some, and growing in her role.

But instead I keep recalling her proud proclamations on victory day, touting her presence in Congress as one of the first Muslim women to serve. It bothered me then and now I realize why. I don't recall a single time hearing any other elected official so vociferous about proclaiming their own identity features,



especially when it comes to religious affiliation. I can't imagine President Kennedy on election night or any other day, raising a fist to hail himself as the country's first Catholic president. Or can you see Mitt Romney, had he been elected, doing something similar? That kind of thing is better left to one's supporters and history books.

There are good reasons why our Constitution calls for the separation of church and state. I wouldn't presume to talk down to an elected member of Congress, but certain comments she's made, including those she's had to walk back as anti-Semitic, suggest she may wish to revisit her oath of office.

REUTERS

Business Markets World Politics TV More

## China put Muslims in concentration camps, U.S. says



### Public Service

July 30, 06:41:44

President Trump appointed this woman as Brigadier General of the Marines. For those who can't decide whether she's the enemy or just sleeping with the enemy (her husband is a white man, and together they're the proud parents of three beautiful biracial kids): after immigrating to America from Jamaica, in order to avoid certain poverty she was forced to join the military where she was subjugated into serving her new country, and is now convinced that rather than spreading violence and evil upon her true allies elsewhere, she's actually doing

some good in the world. Watch a video of her articulating her views to confirm how thoroughly she's been brainwashed out of an autonomous intellect.

## Marine brigadier general black woman nominated



Col. Lorna M. Mahlock currently serves as the deputy director of Operations, Plans, Policies and Operations at Marine Corps headquarters.

### Naiveté

July 31, 06:28:08

It looks like protesting Puerto Ricans have strong-armed their governor out of office. I hope whoever replaces him performs better, and also never resorts to making disparaging comments via text message. I'm the last person to speak about politics over there, but it does seem to me that the character of a person who easily resorts to hurtful epithets during even basic dialogue, would've occasionally peeked through during the vetting process. Was that really their sole basis for overthrowing him?

So all those chanting in the streets now must have seen the kind of human being he is and cast their disapproval by supporting one of the other candidates at election time. Or, could some of them be members of the nearly half of eligible voters who failed to make it to the ballot box, or their local post office, in time for their voices to be heard three years ago?



NEWS POLITICS U.S. NEWS BUSINESS WORLD TECH & MEDIA THINK HEALTH SPORTS

# Pro-Statehood Candidate Ricardo Rosselló Wins Easily



Rosselló of the New Progressive Party had 566,000 votes, 42 percent, in the three-way race.

## Repetition

August 1, 06:18:32

Despite not registering as a 'serious' candidate, it would be a shame for America to sleep on Marianne Williamson and her messages, which seem to be very much grounded in deeply felt experiences and special insight. What's the most important one for Democrats? The warning not to fixate on surface-level issues, since Trump won by simply telling America he'd *Make America Great, Again*.

How about bouncing back with something like *Reimagining America*? We don't have to harken back to days of yore, they're past and truthfully speaking, were never as great as history books (or right-wing extremists) try to make them appear. They could push the idea that our country is stronger when everyone benefits fairly according to their contributions. Women, urban youth, poor folks in rural communities, recent immigrants, and everyone in between are integral to the fabric of this country, always have been. How about the offspring of rich white men who've benefited from systems that've given them such unfair advantages on the basis of race and sex? They'd have the opportunity to wipe

their slates clean, i.e., financially atone according to their ability and dictates of their own moral compass. The proposed reparations project, funded by voluntary contributions, would enable America to move forward in earnest, truly 'reimagine' herself as the country she's meant to be, a land of freedom and opportunity that much of the rest of the world – steeped in unspeakable corruption and brutal oppression – yearns for, desperately needs her to be.

Because how can America put herself forward as a beacon of hope, if she isn't willing to shine a light on her own missteps? Imagine America accepting the need to atone for a legacy of sexism and racism handicapping her socioeconomic system, and then genuinely, materially working to rectify the evils of genocide and slavery? Joe Biden standing firm with pro-segregationists three decades ago when it came to bussing isn't so much the issue, as his ongoing refusal to accept that he was wrong. For anyone who's had such deep fears about what might happen to their beloved country if the dark-skinned. If women. If the queers and freaks. If all those strange, foreign, dangerous 'others' were to take over. Answer: you're living it right now. Is it truly so awful? Are your personal problems a result of evils your new neighbors have brought with them to your perfect place? Isn't life better, more colorful, interesting, lively, and joyful when diverse voices are allowed to emerge?

It would be nice to see that in the future, we'll get behind more representatives who speak for the collective best interests of the many, not the few, and reject anyone who appears to be afraid or dismissive of fully one half of the people they're supposed to represent....

(P.S. From the archives, 'serious' candidate Joe Biden leaves two interviewers dumbfounded after rambling on incoherently for seven long minutes on the issue of forced school desegregation.)





## Simplicity

August 2, 06:22:11

At first I was irritated with Andrew Yang for leaning into a stereotype about Asian-Americans and relying on the oldest trick in the book: giving away—or promising to give away—tons of someone else's money, in order to make a name for yourself. Then I had to acknowledge that I was being too hard on him, simply because he's a first presidential hopeful with an Asian face. Why shouldn't he have the same freedom as anyone else, to attempt to profiteer, philander, cajole his way into a higher position with no message or ideas of merit to back things up?



## Compassion

August 3, 06:00:11

I honestly wish that the haters and assholes who've been infecting Shadowlands with their unwelcome presence, would band together, break into the shop now that it's closed down indefinitely, and steal the 'fancy' equipment that flaunts the owner's deep pockets and bad politics (not giving away any wealth in excess of rent and food money so friends could have more funds available to indulge in self-help therapy, massages, facials, mind-altering

substances, and expensive art supplies), at least I could then close things out with a nice insurance settlement. Anyone know a good arsonist?

The other day I had to repeat my order that a patron who'd been testing my patience on numerous occasions already, leave. I was sitting having a nice chat with a woman who happens to be black. He's a white South African and I'd already heard and seen enough of him to identify him as a dangerously angry, sleazy scourge on the earth. I told him to leave, because while I'm perfectly fine with him revealing himself, over and over again, to other white folks as the disgusting, harmful individual he is, the woman in my company deserved to feel safe there.

He hesitated once again at the door, and as he was finally leaving I told the woman "he's a white South African racist" loud enough that he could hear, so she would understand my actions, though she already seemed happy with the dismissal, accepting it as necessary.

The next day this idiot was back at the store after closing time, barging in and demanding my attention. Why is it my responsibility to expend finite energy resources on such lowlife scumbags who've determined that the sole means of gaining attention for themselves is descending into progressively worse behaviors (this moron is a retired math professor who fancies himself a genius working on some brilliant algorithm that'll skyrocket him into worldwide fame and long-overdue recognition)? All right then, since I'm trying to cultivate a more giving nature, here's my public service announcement for the day: *daddy still loves you, dickhead.*



## African minority alleges racism, sets up 'white only' town





## Life After Death

August 4, 06:19:36

In the wake of the phenomenal box office success of *Crazy Rich Asians* (mediocre, poorly paced, sloppily written, expensively produced and well cast), there are many people writing about the history of Asian-Americans in Hollywood. The articles are necessarily brief: there's not much to discuss.

But I've yet to see any mention of the charming, expertly executed and highly conventional (striving to be mainstream) *Saving Face*. Reflecting on my experience watching this tale of two women falling in love and coming out to their immigrant families, unfolding right there on the big screen in a New York City theatre, brought back a flood of memories. It wasn't a movie I needed for myself. Having consumed a lifetime of stories featuring white male protagonists, I'd grown accustomed to putting myself in someone else's shoes, imaging myself as a complex human being with a full spectrum of emotions, wants and needs.

Instead, for the first time ever, I thought of how someone watching it might empathize with my path for a moment, since this time they'd be seeing full, rounded characters, not just a passing face in the crowd, the dishwasher in a kitchen, nerd with a calculator, pretty object or kung-fu fighter.

But mostly I thought about my mom. I hoped she'd see it. And imagine the difficulty, sadness, the joy of a 'forbidden' love. How, while it was so painful to disappoint my parents, the ones I'd tried to please my entire life, it had also been unavoidable. After twenty plus years of attempting desperately to be someone good enough for their standards, and failing, I had to step out into my own skin. it was literally a matter of survival: make that clean break to begin living, or join the walking dead.

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## Life After 'Walking Dead'

Steven Yeun on navigating Hollywood



## Restraint

August 5, 06:26:00

Daily **Mail**.com

## USA Soccer thrashes Thailand 13-0



## Making Amends

August 6, 06:11:28

This morning I woke up thinking about the first lady. What it must've been like to be born in a remote town of Slovenia into a family of modest means during the time of the iron curtain. Having the aspirations of any young person, unless and until such hopes are beaten out of them: to grow up, leave home, make something of themselves on the merits of their hard work, mental toughness, and bravery, in whatever combination necessary to take the hurdles as they come.

As a girl, being born with physical attributes considered to be attractive, and upon encouragement from her parents and agency representatives, she began modeling at the age of five. Five years into her life, she was made available for consumption by adults, paraded onto screens and stages, instructed on how to smile, which way to turn and pose most provocatively, for the maximal pleasure of observers.



After graduating from high school, and despite continuing to earn money for her family as a model, she enrolled in university as an architecture and design major. Somewhere along the way, her young brain picked up the languages of Serbian, English, French, and German, in addition to her native Slovenian. But nobody saw her as a smart young woman. No one thought she'd make it as an architect or designer. They couldn't fathom a girl so beautiful and well trained, wasting away her gifts. So discouraged, she returned to modeling, still looking for a way out.

She might've grown up admiring the United States of America, a place where Catholics like her parents were allowed to worship openly. So many men had taken advantage of her body and youth, exploiting their money and status for base, carnal fulfillment. Perhaps in that great country, a superpower strong enough to stand up to the USSR, she'd finally find her freedom. People would recognize her for the talents she cultivated, her brains and guile, her courage and stoic tenacity.

Instead, she discovered the same human weaknesses. Those pathetic men, parading about as leaders, successful billionaires, all the while desperate for one simple thing. Stroking of their small member, until it grows and grows into a monstrous weapon, with a woman by its side exclaiming "my, what fortitude!"

---

And rather than embrace her new nation, only that same resentment and masked scorn developed. No love, no affection, no loyalty. So why not thrust her burden onto every last one of this blind, ignorant mass? The plan was set into motion, the seeds planted over the course of a two-term presidency held by that noble man of darker complexion (always his 'sore' point). Finally, late one night, after the usual sad, loathsome deed had been done, and the same cold emptiness had settled in:

'I could be a better president than this fool. What do you think, honey?'

'Hm. I'm not sure dear. The presidency? Well, if you decide to do it, you'll probably win. In which case, there's a chance our robotic intercourse might transform into passionate lovemaking. But you decide, Donald. Honestly, I couldn't care less either way.'

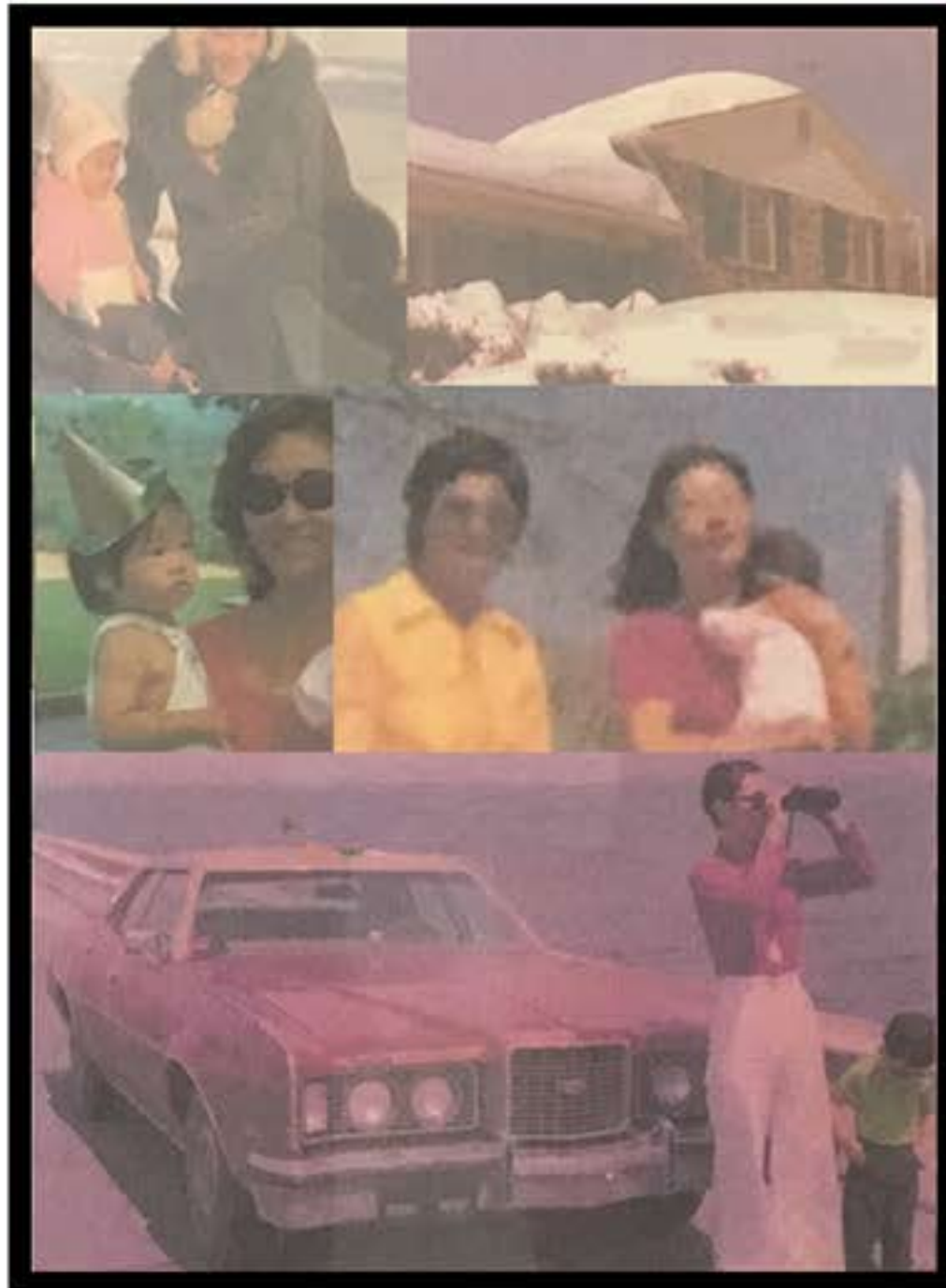
BUSINESS INSIDER TECH FINANCE POLITICS STRATEGY LIFE ALL BI PRIME INTELLIGENCE

## Men taking credit for women's work "HE-PEATING"





Appendix to Chapter 7, "In Consolation"  
**Cho Family Album**



**Epilogue. "Trust God"**  
*how to engineer a revolution*

Dear Son,

Shakespeare was a woman named Emilia Bassano who wrote a famous play with a frequently quoted passage.

*All the world's a stage  
With all women and men merely players.  
We have our exits and entrances,  
And each of us in our time plays many parts,  
Our acts being of several short ages. At first the infant,  
Mewling and puking in a nurse's arms.  
Then the whining schoolchild, with packed satchel  
And downcast morning face, creeping like snail  
Unwilling to school. Next the lover,  
Chirping like songbird with tender ballad  
Made to a paramour's windowpane. Then the soldier,  
Full of frustrated oaths, thunderous and quick to quarrel,  
Seeking a victor's medallion  
Even inside enemy cannon. And then sage Justice,  
Sporting rotund belly and smart twill,  
Eyes tired and coiffure of formal cut,  
Full of wise saws and ancient wisdom....  
And so we play our parts.*

If you should ever feel you've hit rock bottom, that you've arrived at the final act and have no more to give: *Rejoice.*

Finding yourself in that vulnerable position will mean that you've lived one life. With some luck, fortitude, resilience, and good humor, you'll live another. And another after that.

Love,  
Dad



It's my sincere and respectful wish that all marginalized groups in America would collectively agree to be quiet for five, maybe ten years or more as needed, to allow black folks to have it out with their white oppressors, get all the dirty laundry, disgusting bigotry, hatred, systemic racism and crimes against humanity onto the table. For this period of time, in this country, anyone else who feels aggrieved would accept that their issues get sidelined until this more pressing, national emergency is addressed in a substantive way, without others posturing for special attention at every turn.

Are you getting shot at, illegally detained, incarcerated, or worse on the regular? Is there a prominent terrorist group openly active in your homeland, with leaders who enjoy access to elected representatives of the government, operating under the guiding principle that the holy creator frowns on your presence in his special place? Have you been crippled economically by a legacy of appropriation of your body and labor for little or no recompense? No? Then please pipe down, for God's sake.



There should be a simple rule for obtaining a firearm. Any first-time buyer irrespective of age must be accompanied by an adult family member. It could be a spouse, a sister or brother, an aunt or uncle. Someone vouching for that individual, by giving their personal identification to the store along with the purchaser's. Although they wouldn't be held legally responsible for a mishap involving said firearm, that person would feel a measure of personal investment in the transaction, and think twice about how comfortable they'd be knowing this individual is walking around in the world with access to a potentially deadly weapon. Sure, some bad ones might still slip through, but I think it would be a better preventative step than whatever else we have going now.

The Gilroy Garlic Festival mass murderer appears to have come from a prominent local family. According to an online article, the shooter's younger brother Carlo was named student of the week at his high school. When asked what inspired him, he pointed to his elder brother, Rosino, an accomplished amateur boxer. When the father broke a league record in a local track competition, the reporter mentions he was cheered on by his "two sons," Rosino and Carlo. As far as they (and the internet) were concerned, the shooter didn't exist as part of their unit. Since his admiration for a tiresome pamphlet seeking to justify white supremacy as a logical, perfectly legitimate guiding philosophy clearly didn't cause them to sit up and take notice, perhaps the impressionable, educated but dumb as nails and very angry young man's desire to purchase a military assault rifle would've had better results.

**5 KPIX CBS SF BayArea** MENU NEWS WEATHER

## Shooter's Family: 'Horried By The Actions Of Our Son'





## Leave Home

September 3, 06:11:42

Is it migration season? I was driving from Stockton to Fairfield today and my windshield looks like the site of a massive butterfly genocide (or, depending on your perspective, those lowly idiots self-selected themselves into oblivion by stupidly following the route established for them eons ago, even though it's clearly no longer safe).

Why should these delightful beings continue the same behavior, despite such negative outcomes? Don't they see that these flight patterns are driving them directly into giant barriers designed to squash their bodies out of existence? Seeking a culprit, I stopped at a gas station after the worst stretch and sure enough, there were no squeegees or washing fluid available at the pumps. The only way to clean my carcass-filled windshield was to purchase those items from the cashier inside.

Mystery solved.

 Pew Research Center

## Many oppose more migration into and out of their countries



## More Laughter

September 4, 06:40:33

Mario Lopez of *Saved by the Bell* fame has gotten a much-needed boost in media exposure related to his comments on being transgender. Spoken from lived experience, I can see how he may feel a desire to place blame on poor parenting for all those formative years spent playing out a role that doesn't seem to match his biology.

What Mario (aka A.C. Slater) seems to want to deny is that his character's gender fluidity was fun and benign. Clothes can be worn, then taken off. Trying out different positions should've been liberating. Names are only temporary. Heck even bodily transformations don't have to be permanent. Sure, there's a danger in getting sh\*t-faced drunk, stumbling over to a late-night tattoo shop and inking "king" on your forehead with a crown symbol next to it. But given the miracles of western medicine for anyone with the financial resources or a sufficiently compelling 'go fund me' campaign, most anything can be reversed these days.

(Confidential aside to Mario: Or else – just pure speculation here – are you deeply ashamed and angry about a casual encounter you had with someone you thought was a woman, or at least did a good enough job of it that you could play dumb, and now inexplicably can't stop thinking about her and desiring a sustained connection? If so, why fret? What happens with her should be private and left to you, your creators, and your respective legal spouses, if any, unless your marriage to an ultra-conservative image relegates you to sad, embittered fodder for yet another profiteering blackmailer... and that *is* a cautionary tale worth sharing with any little ones in your care: hypocrisy rarely pays off in the long run.)

 TIME

## Skinhead's Racist Tattoos Twenty-Five Surgeries Later





## Perspective

September 5, 06:04:21

I've always been a supporter of Obama's presidency. Not because the man had a clear and compelling policy agenda that radically departed from the status quo (he did not), or because I believed he'd carry over his grassroots fundraising approach into pushing forth some sort of 'for the people' near socialism while in office. But because I trusted him.

He was smarter, more charismatic, and inspirational than anyone else running at the time. He demonstrated an understanding of the Constitution and deep appreciation for role of the president. And to be completely honest, I didn't dig too much. Our country finally needed a black president. Yes, it was necessary, and he fit the bill. Most importantly, he was married to a woman named Michelle LaVaughn Obama.

Obama's second term was a huge disappointment for activists on the left. They felt duped and began criticizing him for not going far enough to protect the disadvantaged. Bailing out Wall Street. Maintaining troops in Afghanistan. Guantánamo. Deporting illegal immigrants.

Now when I see images of the president's beaming smile as he waterboards in the Mediterranean, living it up with celebrities and delighting in fluff interviews with Dave Letterman et al, the one greatest irritation I had about him keeps cropping up: why wasn't he ever able to say, at any time publicly, the simple truth that he shouldn't have been awarded a Nobel Peace Prize. Malala Yousafzai? *Check*. Elie Wiesel? Nelson Mandela? *Absolutely*. Doctors Without Borders? The 14th Dalai Lama? *Of course*. Even Jimmy Carter? *Ok*.

But for him at that stage of his life and career? I wish he could've been on record as saying, just once, "Seriously guys, what've I ever done on God's green earth to deserve *that* prize?"

Republicans didn't get their successful businessman into the White House when they thought they'd easily curtail four more years of failing leadership. They were certain the country had seen through the bait and switch of his shallow 'hope' messaging. Surely anyone could be victorious, even a Mormon

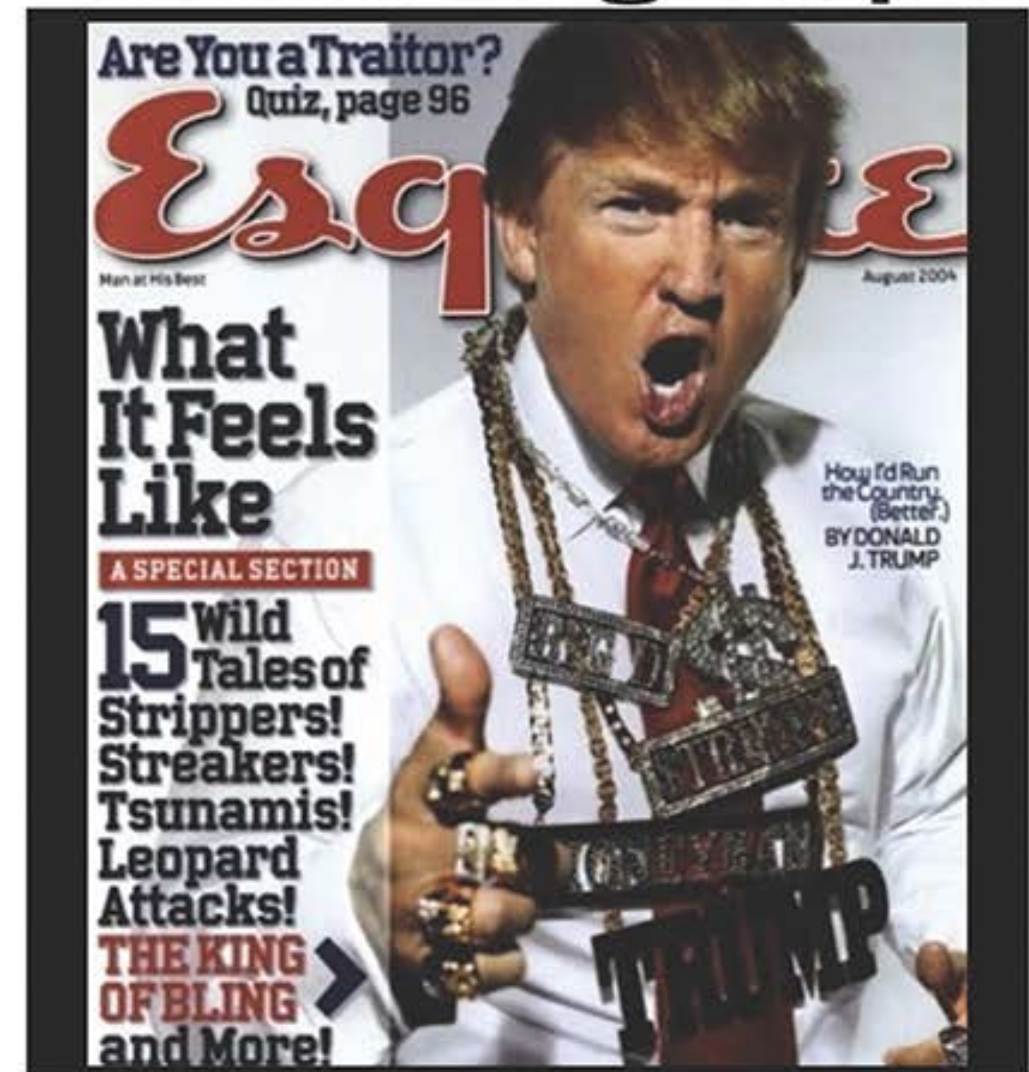
billionaire who believes strapping onto a car roof any animal, whether the family dog or any other beast, could be rationalized to a majority of voters, the commoners he mocked so casually with fellow one percenters.

They missed the boat then, and Democrats seem headed for the same fate now. It'll be a woman, any woman who rightfully should've been victorious before. Or "Bernie or bust" (again).

Esquire

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## Stop Hating This Election for Normalizing Stupid





## Loyalty

September 6, 06:51:44

Now that I'm temporarily laid up with soreness in my lower back from overdoing it during this second round of renovations, I'm recalling a small detail that I failed to divulge earlier, for fear of blowback. After moving back into our house, early last year I was in so much pain that I resorted to taking pain meds my doctor had written up for me.

At the time, I was still in PTSD mode over election results, on a complete hiatus from any news, consuming only sports and pure entertainment. The opioid crisis hadn't made it onto my radar. The drugs I'd been prescribed included Oxycontin and Vicodin. My system is used to running 'clean,' since I avoid chemicals including over-the-counter substances as a general rule. But I wasn't able to stand upright without unbearable discomfort, and needed to be functional because of extreme pressure I was under at my salaried job.

Being doped up on opioids turned out to be a blessing in multiple respects. On the one hand, it enabled me to function until I finally had to accept surgery as a longterm solution. On the other hand, together with my physical transformation that had been so disturbing to my neighbors, it turned out to be a key contributing factor to being forcibly detained in a psychiatric facility for three days. This became my one opportunity to experience what your aunt has been through for so much of her life as a person coping with mental illness. The resiliency of the human spirit is awe-inspiring.

Looking at our world today, I wish we'd all take a minute to celebrate our accomplishments. For instance, that we don't have a billion psychopaths running wild. Given the way social media and chatrooms operate, the kinds of images our kids are exposed to on a daily basis, the ease of access to violent video games and pornography, isn't it a miracle that our communities haven't collapsed into total gang warfare between disparate identity groups? A miracle, or a sign that the structure and laws of our society, however flawed, have worked pretty reliably. That as a collective, we tend towards good parenting, solid ethical values, and a steady moral compass, despite some 'bad eggs' falling through the cracks.

One mass shooting is most definitely one too many, but maybe it wouldn't hurt to recognize, at least once in a while, that all things considered, the crazy experiment that is the United States of America has done remarkably well for herself. A lot better, in fact, than her motherland might've expected when she first set out on her own.

In a word: most of us are doing our best, with the cards we've been dealt, and that should be enough – enough, at least, to avoid rabid judgment from others.



## Answer a Call to Action

September 7, 06:21:05

The way people react spontaneously during standup has always intrigued me, I find it remarkably revealing. I'm thinking of one set where the comedian was making a joke about what men really want from women ('I watch porn, I know what they want: Asian schoolgirls on their knees, blindfolded and handcuffed'). She hadn't reached the punchline, so while most in attendance remained uncomfortably silent, one male in the audience yelled out aggressively "hell yeah!!"



Everything about the timing and his voice felt menacing to me. I wonder how those around him reacted. I'm curious as to whether anyone saw his behavior as a red flag: 'We oughtta keep our eye on that fella.' Or, did he receive tacit approval in the form of silence? Even explicit encouragement, as though his outburst had been acceptable, just a simple expression of healthy male desire?

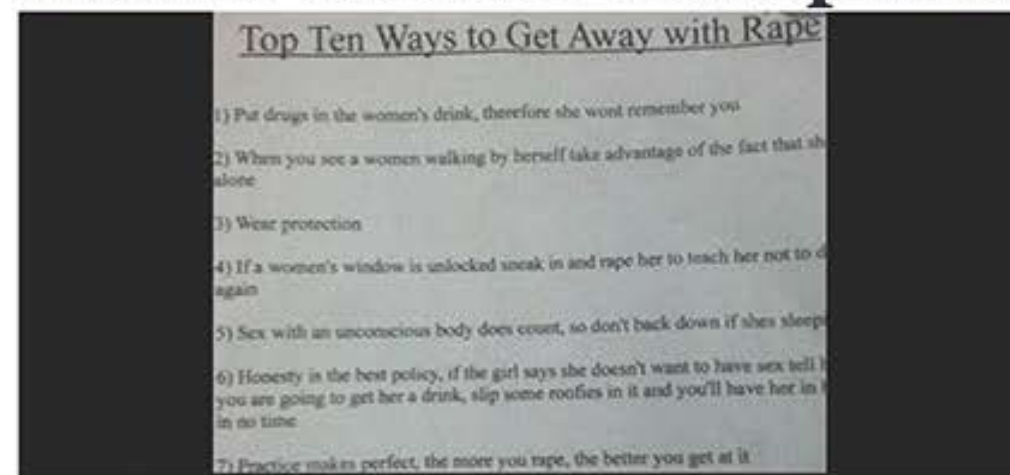
People tend to be very transparent, for anyone paying attention. In the aftermaths of this latest mass shooting, the mayor immediately went on record to point out that the tragedy had been very preventable and called on her constituents to 'do something.'

'Do something' did not, I think, refer to encouraging us as a nation to make blanket accusations at an entire group of people, 99.999% of whom are not guilty of using a military assault rifle to inflict the horror of their own existence onto the innocent bystanders.

KQED

PBS.org

## Gunman's classmates mourn missed chances to stop him



"I'm Nobody, Who Are You?"

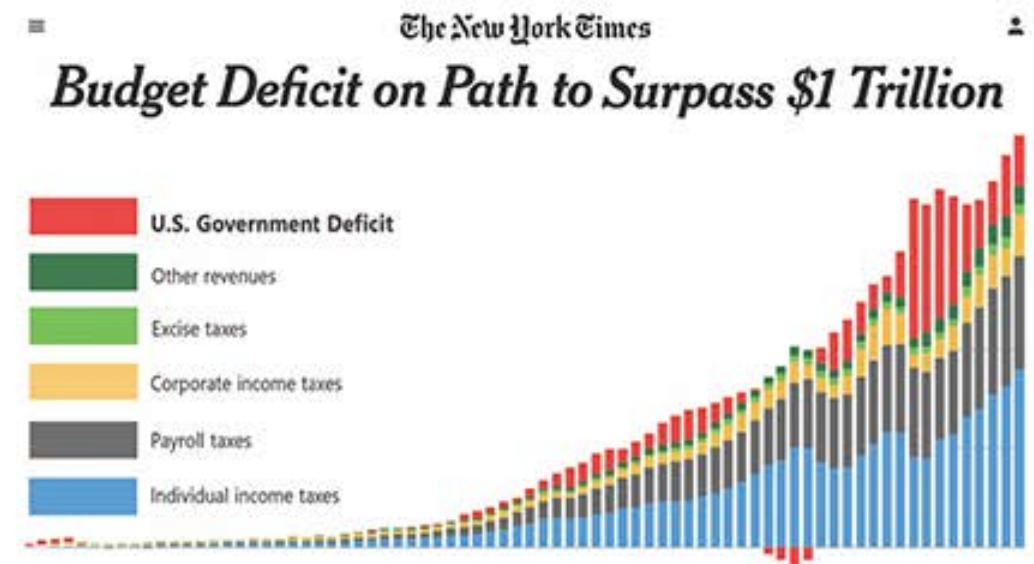
September 8, 06:56:20

Someone just messaged me implying: Who are you? Meaning, who am I to have ideas, why should anyone care what I think about anything?

It's true, I'm not a world leader;  
I'm not an elected representative;  
I'm not a successful businessperson, a billionaire;  
I'm not the author of a bestselling book, a celebrity;  
or the holder of a social media account that boasts thousands of followers.

No, I'm nobody.

I do just wish, though, that I'd more frequently see those bigger 'somebodies' offering up noteworthy ideas that could have genuine, sustained positive impact on people's lives, or carefully construed plans that have some chance of being broadly adopted and successfully implemented without costing taxpayers too dearly.



Take 'Me' Out

September 9, 06:04:56

"Take me out of it."

—THE GREAT TONI MORRISON (1931 - 2019)

*What happens when a giant who's only ever looked down on everyone else because they've been forced onto their knees, has his identity stripped away? When all the others realize they can stand, too? His behavior has become so engrained, he's incapable of looking up anymore, much less straight forward into another being's eyes as an equal.*



Instead, he's reduced to staring at the ground all day long, unable to relate with anyone else, until he's nothing more than a maggot, a lovely ape fishing for ants with a stick.

So people who lean into their "whiteness," just as much as anyone who relies on "blackness," have a very serious problem. We're not referring to those who're conscious and examining themselves, but rather the ones who stand on a race and think they've reached higher ground, either morally or because of some perceived innate superiority that we know for certain does not exist. We also need to start understanding that sick people playing out their distortions in real life are a danger to society. Take 'us' and 'them' out of it – there are enough demented minds out there that we need to start treating it as a national emergency, and come up with a serious intervention strategy. We must recognize that an appropriate plan of action may involve some level of controlled violence, e.g., immediate, firm slaps in the face of any individual caught displaying filthy beliefs of race-based superiority. This applies especially to teens and young adults at crucial formative stages of trying to determine who they are, and what they are in relation to the rest of the world.

Our policy on the myth of white superiority should be zero-tolerance. Before a child buys a gun or creates a hit list, or writes his own disgraceful manifesto or demeans a schoolmate or girls in his class, he's already shown signs of having adopted deranged belief systems. The only appropriate course of action is (in my view) a swift, severe thrashing. Zero tolerance can't be mere words thrown about, but a long overdue, black and white rule with firm implications for those who transgress.



## Shooter's mom called police, concerned about son's firearm



Told police her son was 'absolutely' incapable of doing violent harm to others.

## Stay Open

September 10, 06:02:31

Today I received some rare good news. Shadowlands has been cleared to open again. For some reason, it wasn't the outcome I'd been looking forward to – I wanted another excuse to keep shuttered.

The truth is that forced separation from you and facing down someone's false narrative of domestic abuse have taken a cumulative toll on me.

So I've decided to give myself additional time to reset. We'll reopen just after Labor Day and in the meantime, I'll be resting, traveling a bit, and taking a hiatus from devices including all social media.



## Remember Kindness Matters

September 11, 06:46:44

Yesterday a fifty-year-old with whom I have a loose association called police on an Amazon driver. Apparently, he felt frightened that this man would return and pound the crap out of him. Justifiably, it seems. Here was his version of events:



"I'd just gotten home when the driver pulled up. I was expecting my package of Q-Tips, lube for self-pleasure, and nail polish. When I saw the guy, I was irritated by his bad timing. I'd just gorged on In-N-Out and had to crap like nobody's business. I barked at the driver to just leave the package at the door. He seemed to expect that I'd walk all the way to the curb, extend my arms to retrieve my precious goods, and haul it the entire way back up to my residence, which is clearly his job to do.

Instead, when I emerged from my latrine refreshed, having douched with my built-in bidet, that individual was still there. The nerve! He looked at me directly in the eyes as I made a face and demanded to know why he hadn't done as ordered. He audaciously refused to leave my box. *My box!* How dare he, I continued to fume. It was then that he removed his shirt, revealing his enormous, perfectly proportioned chest and bulging, enticing musculature. I was in shock. Shaking, I slammed the door, turned off the lights, and remained paralyzed for several minutes before I finally picked up the phone to call mommy, for a shoulder to cry on. Then the police, to whom I recounted the entire horrid experience, as it's their duty to make sure I'm never forced to behold any portion of his bare, glistening body as a threat to me. Not ever again."

My scornful feelings for this person are enhanced by his status as an ardent 'social justice' activist, never failing to picket loudly at every opportunity, at the drop of a hat, no further inquiry required, whenever there's an altercation involving an officer that ends in violence. From his perspective, police are always to blame, and we'd be better off without them.



## Do Better

September 12, 06:14:28

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## Two women hired as chief executives (CEO/CFO), General Motors makes history

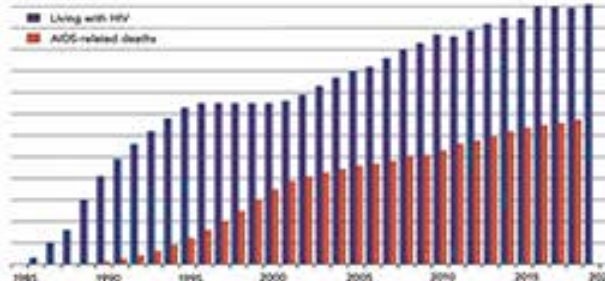





## Respect Wisdom

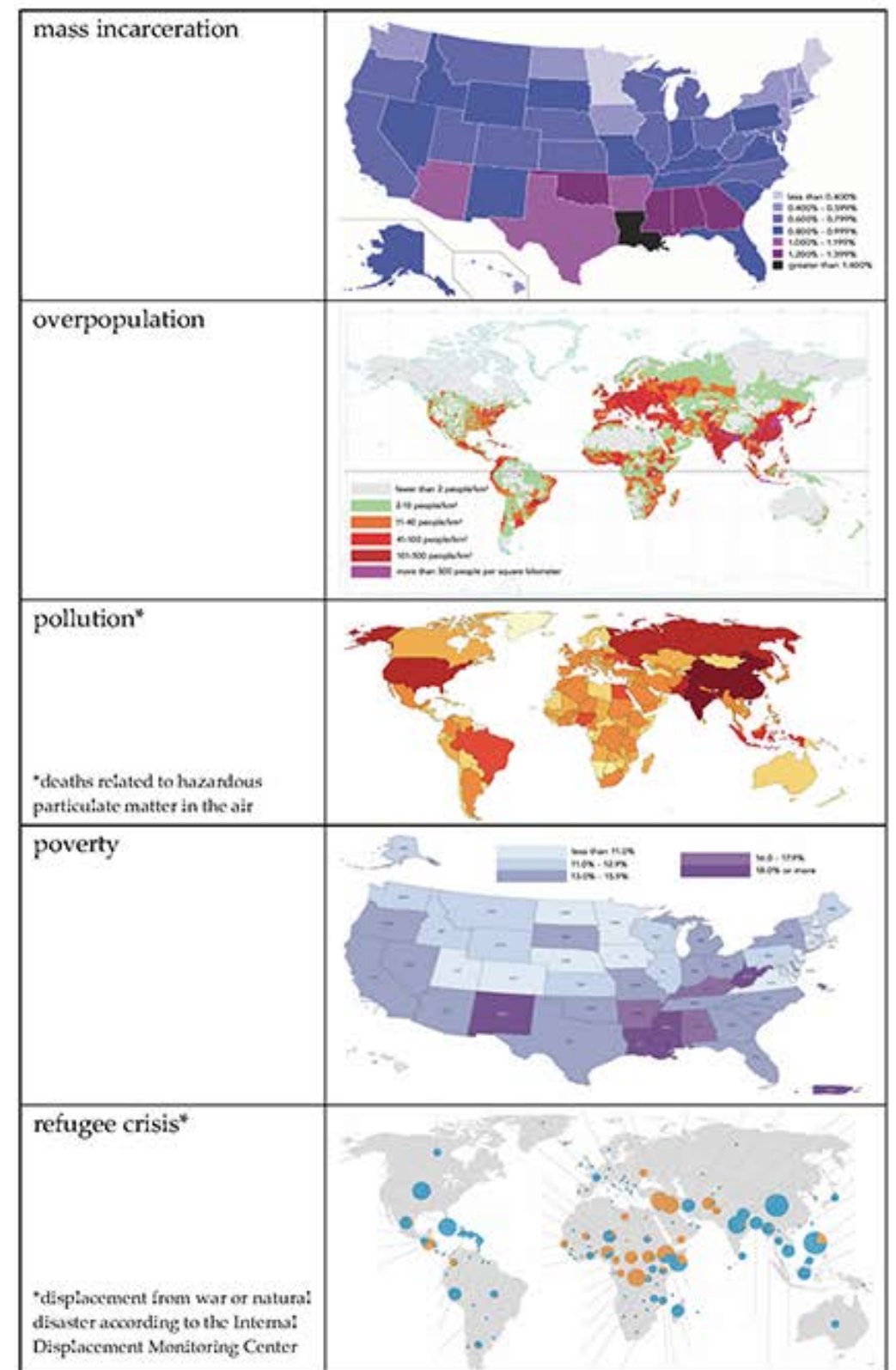
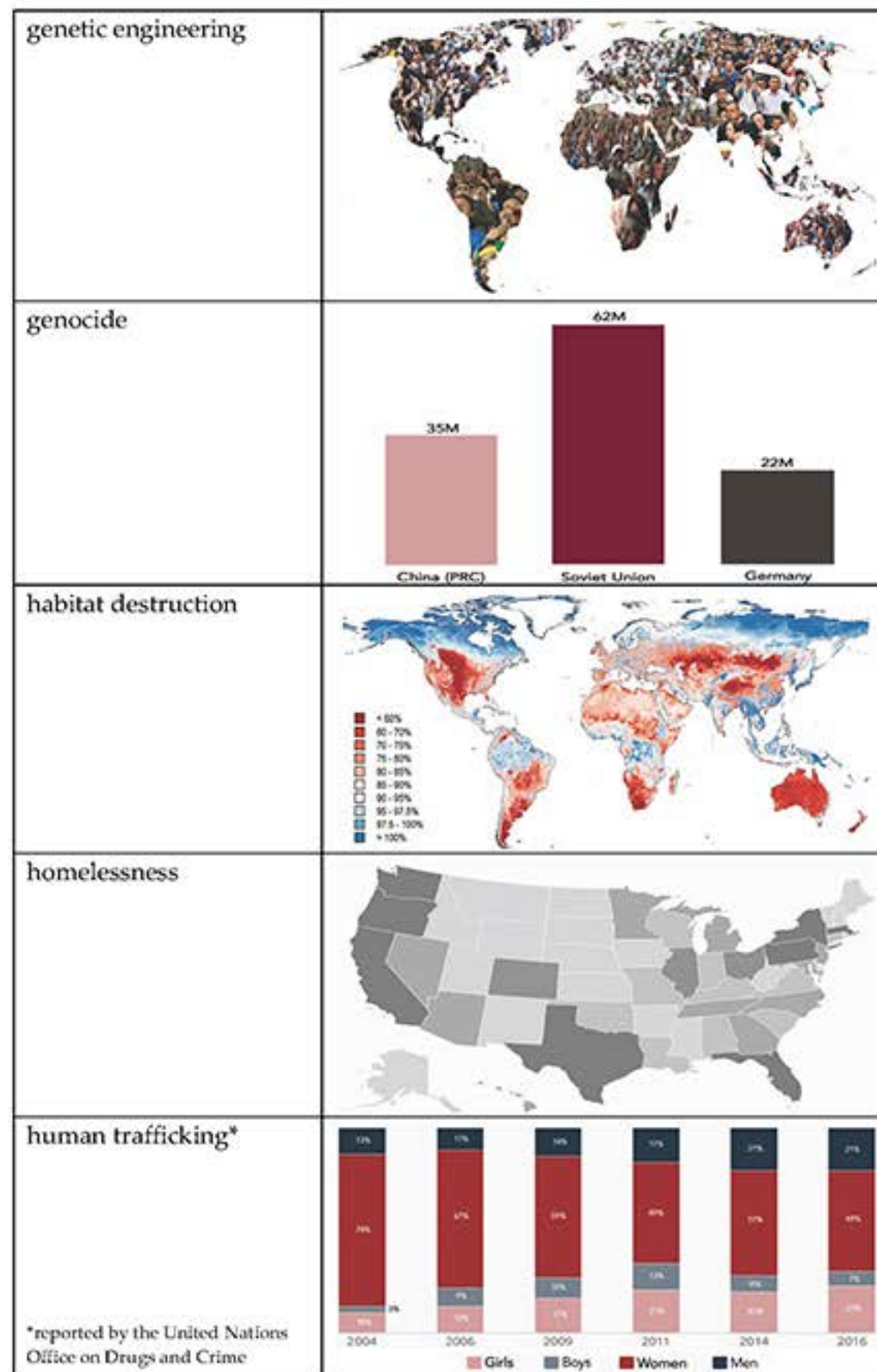
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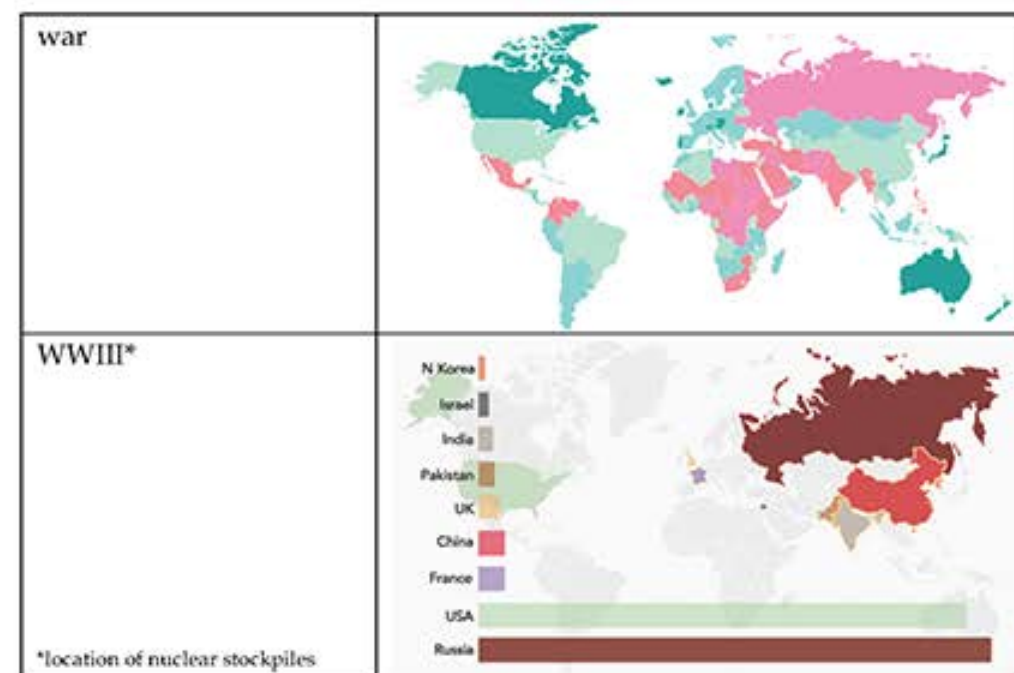
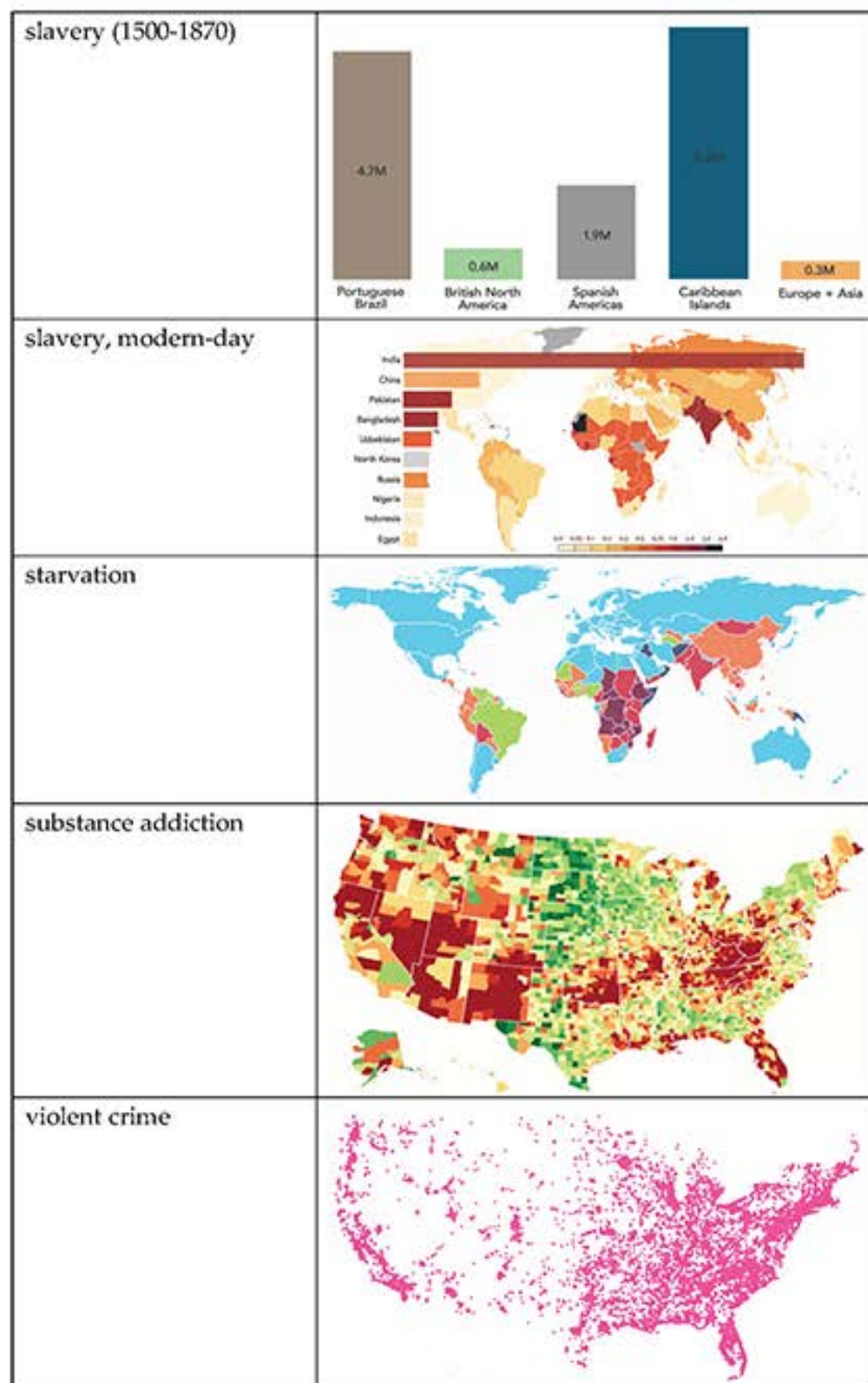


AIDS epidemic	
clean water access	
concentration camps	
female genital mutilation	









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# Majority of Americans: “We Hate Math” (4 in 10)





## Quiz

### self-testing for the motivated student

QUESTION 1. Which of these nine men murdered the others?



QUESTION 2. What's the connection between these young men?



QUESTION 3. How did these young women die?



QUESTION 4. How are these people related?



QUESTION 5. What do these girls share in common?





## Discussion Questions

*bookclub, classroom, support group*

### CHAPTER ONE, "DIRTY NAILS"

#### *Sterility*

Do you think Lucas was tricked into marrying Xara? When he later found out that she wasn't able to have children naturally, what were their available options for building a family? Why do you think they proceeded with using a surrogate mother?

Would you say that the media generally portrays adoption in a positive, negative, or neutral light? Do you personally know anyone who was adopted, or were you adopted yourself? If so, how did those experiences differ, and what are some misconceptions people might have about adoption?

What are potential problems with being raised as a non-biological child of your legal guardian(s)? Are those issues insurmountable? Do you think children raised in traditional nuclear families are more fortunate than adopted kids?

### CHAPTER TWO, "BULLY PULPIT"

#### *Incest*

If Xara really was adopted, does the book provide any clues as to who her biological parents could be? Do we know anything about Xara's grandparents and the relationship her father had with any of his siblings?

Does the media treat matters of incest in the same or similar fashion as they do any other crime? If not, how might you explain the discrepancies?

Why do you think some family members of Mackenzie Phillips shunned her after revelations that she had a long-term intimate relationship with her father? Did her tell-all memoir publish before or after her father died? Does it seem likely that a man capable of carrying on an incestuous relationship with his adult daughter, never once assaulted her while she was a minor?



## Phillips on Sex With Dad: 'It Ruined Family Relationships'

### CHAPTER THREE, "ON RECORD"

#### *Infidelity*

The first book, *#NotUs*, reveals that Lucas and Xara never had sex again after their son was born, and that Lucas eventually inferred that Xara is a lesbian. Here we discover that Luna and Xara had an affair. Given that Luna killed herself, do you think Xara might've felt betrayed by her lover? Once Luna was dead, do you think accusing Luna's twin brother, Lucas, of abuse was a sort of transference, a way of holding someone accountable for a feeling of loss and/or abandonment?

What's the textbook definition of infidelity? How does it differ from disloyalty? Does the mainstream media consider a politician's personal life, including their track record in relationships, 'fair game' when it comes to vetting their candidacy for elected office? Do you think this makes sense? Why or why not?

A common source of friction in relationships is one partner keeping backup, "secondary options" in the wings. Do you consider such behavior out of bounds? Would you find it acceptable for your primary partner to make a significant emotional and financial investment in maintaining such a bond, if it exceeds what's being offered towards building your own future together? Is it important for physical intimacy to be involved? How often do such competitive relationships involve parents of one or both parties?

### CHAPTER FOUR, "CAST OUT"

#### *Keeping Secrets*

Xara and Nate's mother informed others that their father, Richard Washington, had abandoned her. Do you think it's common for people to marry, only to realize later that they're not sexually compatible? If this had been the case for Richard, yet he loved and cared for his family, do you think his departure would be justified if undertaken via a request for divorce? Should such a person be allowed to maintain connection with his children under those circumstances?

Based on what you've experienced in community, do you think there's such a thing as 'amicable divorce'?

What kind of sustained trauma does a child endure upon the sudden disappearance of a loved one, such as a parent or guardian? How might the impact manifest differently over time? What are some ways an older child or adult might cope with anger or sadness related to this trauma, if it later turns out that what they were told then was a lie?



## CHAPTER FIVE, "SERVING TIME"

### *Buried History*

Do you think Nate was aware that Xara had been an exotic dancer earlier in her life, before Luna dropped this bombshell on him in her suicide note? By telling his son that he'd known all along and didn't have any issue with it, he seems to be communicating that there's nothing shameful in having such a history. Why would it be important for a child to know this, especially if it turned out that one or both parents had been associated with such a profession, either as a worker or patron?

What message does our legal system send by telling people that consensual sex between non-married adults, where money still exchanges hands, is illegal? What would be the impact on the lives of approximately two million sex workers (and others in related trades kept on the fringes of mainstream society), if prostitution were made legal and regulated by local, state, and federal governments? Would empowering workers to bring charges against their employers be a good or bad consequence, in your view?

Currently, what are available safe spaces for individuals to talk about experiences in trades related to the sale of sensual or erotic pleasure (i.e., the promise of love)? If you were interviewing a person for an office job and learned that he or she had previously been on the waitstaff at an establishment called, let's say, 'Hooters,' would you be more or less likely to hire that individual? Why or why not?

## CHAPTER SIX, "SOBER REFLECTION"

### *Denial*

Do you think Xara's memory is based on a fixed recollection of what she witnessed as a young girl carried over intact into her adult life? If she has love and respect for her father, how would she reconcile that with disgust and hatred for a particular act? Is there a way in which we as a society hold children (especially young girls) responsible for their own sexual abuse as minors? Also, is there any possibility that what she saw was distorted by the trauma of the act she witnessed, and may have involved somebody who she saw as her father, but was actually someone else (e.g., a grandfather)?

According to scientists, what's the earliest age at which human beings are able to form long-term memories? How does the reliability of memories change, if at all, the further back we travel in time?

How do videos, photographs, documentary evidence, and the experience of other family members influence the history we write for ourselves?

## CHAPTER SEVEN, "IN CONSOLATION"

### *Recognition*

How do you think Xara might react to having her ex-husband reveal so much information about her family's history? Do you think Lucas is wrong to do so, even if he's communicating this exclusively to their son and nobody else? If so, are some family secrets better left hidden forever, in your opinion?

Does the mainstream media censor itself when it comes to reporting on matters of sexual violence, incest, and child abuse? Even in the face of overwhelming physical evidence against an individual, do you think it's important that reporters always refer to the case against the accused as "allegations"? Why or why not? What is the function of the tabloid press, and what need do you think they fulfill for the general public?

Social media forums are utilized to foster community but may also evoke strong reactions of joy, anger, or resentment, with users seeking connection and acknowledgement. When taken to an extreme, could the search for positive reinforcement online be a red flag that individuals are attempting to fill a need that's being neglected in their real lives? In the face of such suggestive activity, how could true friends and family show up meaningfully, in order to express their support and help alleviate this person's feeling of despair, isolation, loss and abandonment, or abuse, before it manifests in more harmful behaviors?

## **10-Year Sexual Relationship With Daughter Phillips Confesses**



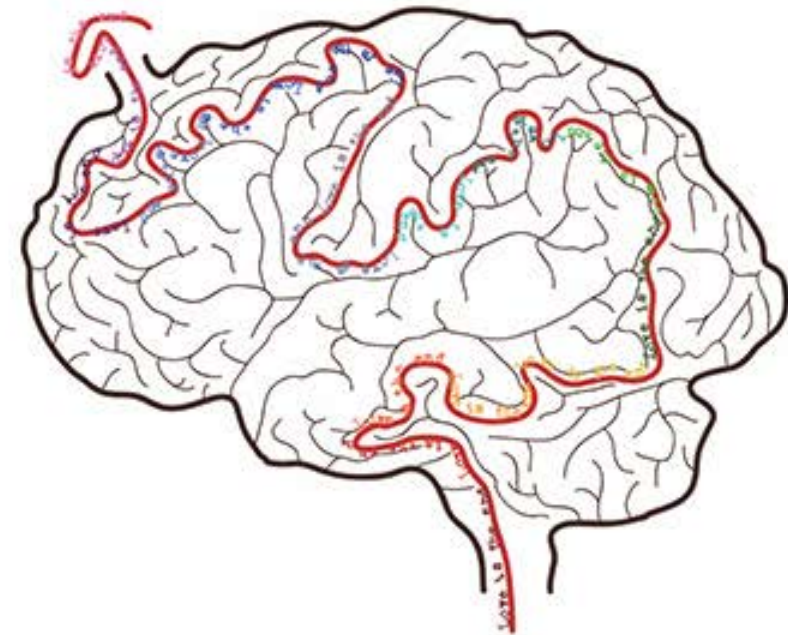
In the closest thing to a confession she'll ever get, Phillips' abuser, now 65, finally drops dead of 'cardiovascular disease.'



## Soundtrack, "Labyrinth" *an exquisite corpse*

It's raining again, sounds a little like applauding, like someone's cheering us on. We'll hold the line, don't hold your hands up. This is our final stand. Boy, you make it sound so pretty even when it's not. We didn't choose, this is just what we got. I'm so tired of getting tied up in my thoughts. When days are cold and the cards all fold, I want to hide the truth, I want to shelter you. But with this beast inside, there's nowhere we can hide. Once upon a time it was paradise, once upon a time I was paralyzed, I think I'm going to miss these harbor lights but it's time to let it go. This is wrong I know, but I can't let you go. I shouldn't be here, we shouldn't be here at all. Love, our love is like an ocean, so run, let's run away, let's stay in motion. Where did love go? You put the running into run, you're asking me to stay but I never met a girl I could trust. Just pay attention, I make my statements, boy, you're lacking motivation. I don't know if I'm winning or losing but I know that I love you darling. I'm not saying I'm perfect, because girl you know I'm not, but I love you with everything I've got. I wash the dishes, clean up all this mess. I do my best, forgive myself, and look good in this dress, pose like a trophy on a shelf. I'm supposed to dream for everyone, but not myself. I guess you want to talk? Now you say you're leaving. You're all packed up, all our memories in boxes stacked up against the door. They say the bigger the love, the harder the fall. Well, I'm crashing through the floor. Where do I start? Be still my foolish heart, don't ruin this on me – love supreme seems far removed. Where do we go from here? We've got nothing we can trust and there's nothing left to sell. How do we get out? Take your time, keep your distance, don't come now just wait. Walk slowly, forget the path here, lose your way, don't come back. Just don't come now love, not yet. Children, don't let your heart be troubled, fix your eyes on one truth: God is madly in love with you.

Luke Sital-Singh, "Los Angeles" Avicii, "Hold the Line" Pink, "Hurts 2B Human" Imagine Dragons, "Demons" Miley Cyrus, "Slide Away" Los Rakas, "Fall In" Rudimental, "They Don't Care About Us" LSD (Labyrinth, Sia, Diplo), "Thunderclouds" Wale and Anthony Hamilton, "Love Forever" Eneli Sandé, "This Much is True" Jimmie Allen, "Best Shot" Little Big Town, "The Daughters" Dean Lewis, "Stay Awake" Hozier, "Almost (Sweet Music)" Fink, "Yesterday Was Hard On All Of Us" Sona Mohapatra, "Abhi Nahin Aana" Hillsong United, "Good Grace"





## Song credits

**"Los Angeles"** written and performed by Luke Sital-Singh. *A Golden State* (Raygun, 2019).

**"Hold the Line"** written by Tim Bergling with Lucas von Bahder, Zachary Hannah, David Labuguen, Nathan Esquite, PJ Bianco, and Andrew Jackson, performed by Avicii featuring A R I Z O N A. *TIM* (Universal Music, 2019).

**"Hurts 2B Human"** written by P!nk with Teddy Geiger, Harris, Anna-Catherine Hartley, Alexander "Xplicit" Izquierdo, and Khalid Robinson, performed by P!nk featuring Khalid. *Hurts 2B Human* (RCA, 2019).

**"Demons"** written by Dan Reynolds, Wayne Sermon, Ben McKee, Alex Da Kid, and Josh Mosser, performed by Imagine Dragons. *Night Visions* (KIDinaKORNER/Interscope, 2013).

**"Slide Away"** written by Miley Cyrus with Andrew Wyatt, Alma Miettinen, and Michael L. Williams II, performed by Miley Cyrus. *She is Miley Cyrus* (RCA, 2019).  
**"Fall In"** written by Raka Rich and Raka Dun, performed by Los Rakas. *Raka Love 2* (Raka Music, 2017).

**"They Don't Care About Us"** written by Amir Izadkhah, Piers Aggett, Kesi Dryden, Leon "DJ Locksmith" Rolle, and Michael Stafford, performed by Rudimental featuring Maverick Sabre and Yebba. *Toast to Our Differences* (Asylum/Atlantic/Major Tom's, 2019).

**"Thunderclouds"** written by Sia Furler, Thomas Pentz, Timothy McKenzie, Henry Allen, and Philip Meckseper, performed by LSD. *Labrinth, Sia & Diplo Present... LSD* (Columbia, 2019).

**"Live Forever"** written by Olubowale Akintimelu, Z. Young, and Phil Ade, performed by Wale and Anthony Hamilton. *The Birth of a Nation: The Inspired by Album* (Atlantic Records, 2016).

**"This Much is True"** written and performed by Emeli Sandé. *Long Live the Angels* (Virgin, 2016).

**"Best Shot"** written by Jimmie Allen with Josh London, and Steve Williams, performed by Jimmie Allen. *Mercury Lane* (Stoney Creek, 2018).

**"The Daughters"** written by Karen Fairchild, Ashley Ray, and Sean McConnell, performed by Little Big Town. *The Daughters* (Capitol Nashville, 2019).

**"Stay Awake"** written by Dean Lewis with Steve Solomon, and Neil Ormandy, performed by Dean Lewis. *A Place We Knew* (Island, 2019).

**"Almost (Sweet Music)"** written by Andrew Hozier-Byrne, performed by Hozier. *Wasteland, Baby!* (Rubyworks/Island, 2019).

**"Yesterday Was Hard On All Of Us"** written by Fin Greenall, performed by Fink. *Perfect Darkness* (R'COUP'D/Ninja, 2011).

**"Abhi Nahin Aana"** written by Sona Mohapatra with Ram Sampath, performed by Sona Mohapatra. *Sona* (Sony, 2006).

**"Reverie"** written and performed by Jordan Critz. *Aegis* (Third Orbit Records/Tone Tree Music, 2018).

**"Lift Ev'ry Voice and Sing"** written by James Weldon and J. Rosamond Johnson, performed by Melba Moore with Stevie Wonder, Stephanie Mills, Freddie Jackson, Anita Baker, Dionne Warwick, Bobby Brown, Jeffrey Osborne, Howard Hewett, BeBe & CeCe Winans, Take 6, and The Clark Sisters. *Soul Exposed* (Orpheus/Capitol, 1990).

**"Good Enough"** written by Timothy Mosley, James Washington, Daniel Jones, and Dwayne "Showtim3" Dyke Jr., performed by Jussie Smollett. (Columbia, 2015).

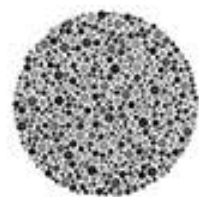
**"Stand by Me"** written by Ben E. King, Jerry Leiber, and Mike Stoller, performed by Tracy Chapman, recorded live on *The Late Show with David Letterman*. (Elektra/Rhino, 2015).

[playlist](#) [itunes](#) | [spotify](#)





## Source credits



### *"how to tell a story that's already been written"*

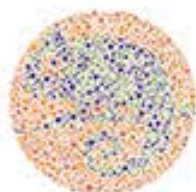
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*"Half of Americans Can't Tell When a British Person is Calling Them an Idiot, Study Says" (THRILLIST, 2019)*

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*"The Yale Dad Who Set Off the College-Admissions Scandal: Morrie Tobin was implicated in a securities fraud case when he mentioned a bribe sought by a Yale coach" (WALL STREET JOURNAL, 2019)*

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*"Much of Martin Luther King Jr.'s legacy distorted in modern times, says historian: Nathan Connolly argues we should look beyond the 'I Have A Dream speech' and learn more about his wider legacy" (CBC, 2018)*

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**Vain** *Good looks matter*

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**Twisted** *Fifty Shades of Gaslighting: Signs Abuse is Your Reality*

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**Draw a Line** *I don't care that Trump's a liar and a cheat, we want proof that he's a criminal.*

"I don't care whether Trump is a liar or a cheat. I want to know if he's a criminal." (WASHINGTON POST, 2019)

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**Read Between the Lines** *U.S. Green Card: Minorities Have an Inside Track*

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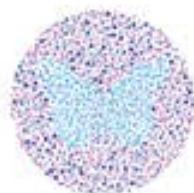
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