

FIVEY

THE
MAGAZINE OF
THE 52ND STREET
PROJECT • #22 • 2020

IN IT TOGETHER





Smart Partners is the after-school mentoring program of The 52nd Street Project. *Fivey* is the program's annual magazine.

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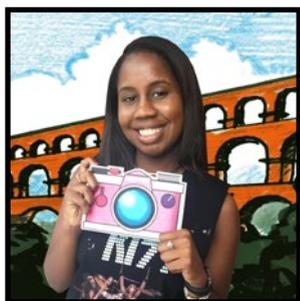
**Graduating from SP Program this year*

FROM THE EDITORS' DESKS

FUN FACT: Fivey #22 is the biggest issue in Project history.

The theme this year, ***In It Together***, speaks to the bond of our young people and their mentors, and felt very fitting to how they rose to the occasion during the second part of the year when we announced that Smart Partners would have to start meeting remotely due to the pandemic.

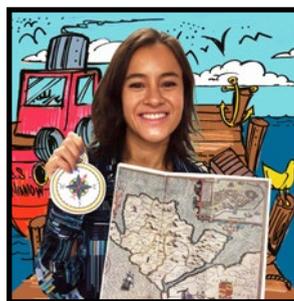
While they weren't able to go on adventures around the city together, they still made it work. Smart Partners did many different things. They texted, hung out on House Party, watched movies, worked on online jigsaw puzzles, played *Words with Friends*, cooked together, toured museums online, painted pictures, and collaborated on Fivey together. This issue proves how dedicated and unstoppable Smart Partners are, and we hope you enjoy this issue! — *Johanna Vidal*



Johanna Vidal



George Babiak



Caylyn Wan-Creager

GRB

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The Lost Earring

By Quilvis Medina and Kate Abbruzzese

There once was a murderous pirate named Viktor Plankbones who loved to sail the seven seas with his crew. Known for his terrible temper, he frequently lashed out at those closest to him, severing their limbs if they questioned his authority or didn't obey his cruel commands immediately. It was legend that he murdered most of his crew, so he was sailing with ghosts. But he was so feared, and so respected, that many lowlife pirates still fought to sail aboard his vessel. Once every decade, he would look for new crewmates in his home village, Stantonville.

This was how young Felicity George found herself competing to be aboard his ship, the Ragged Bone. Many of the other men competing doubted her abilities as a useful pirate, because she was a "mere female". But what Felicity lacked in brawn, she made up for in brains, cunning, and swiftness. She knew that she would be an excellent candidate to travel on the Ragged Bone.

Standing in the crowd of putrid-smelling wannabe pirates, Felicity watched as the barbarous captain strode onto the deck and announced the challenge to the rancid lot. He declared, "You shall all complete the task, climb to the top of the mast to look out. If you can see the lifeboat in the water, you may continue. But if not, you will be ELIMATED."

Felicity grinned as she climbed aboard the ship - climbing was her specialty. She had practiced often on her father Papa Henry's apple farm, scaling trees to pluck the juiciest fruit from the highest branches. She was the first chosen to climb the mast, and suddenly, the anxiety of 100 or so pairs of eyes hit her. With a gulp, she put her hands on the rigging



and readied herself for the climb - when she felt a ghostly presence just to her left. Knowing the crucial task at hand, she continued on, thinking it was just the wind.

"On yer mark," cried the captain, "Get set -- " he fired a pistol into the sky and a roar went up from the crowd as he screamed, "GO!" Felicity began to climb - climb as fast as she could to the top of the mast, where she stood, looking for the lifeboat. She squinted, the noonday sun beating down on her, and started to panic - she couldn't seem to spot it in the choppy waves that rocked the pirate ship back and forth. But then, with her attentive 20-20 vision, she was able to spot a red and white circle in the dark sea. She opened her mouth to call out, "Boat ahoy!" but stopped short when she felt a tug on her pants leg. She looked down, noticing there was nothing there, and said to herself "What is that?". She felt another tug, higher up, at her shoulder - more of a



tapping, this time. She looked around, trying to catch the mischievous person she thought was behind her, but she saw a ghostly blue figure standing right behind her. The figure put a finger to its rotting lips, as if to silence her, and Felicity noticed with horror that it had no fingers to put there - its hand was missing! Felicity tried to cry for help, but the ghost put his hand over her mouth, making sure that she was not able to cry for help.

"Child," he whispered, his breath smelling of the deepest parts of the ocean, "I'm trying to save you." Felicity was confused, but remembered the legend of the ghosts on this very ship. She felt something cold in her hand, and she looked down - the ghost had pressed a gleaming circle of gold, an earring, into her palm. Felicity asked, "What am I supposed to do with this?" And the ghost answered, "Go, and run, and hide this earring far away from here." And with a sound like the flapping of a gull's wings, he vanished, leaving Felicity stunned atop the crow's nest. Felicity thought about what the ghost had said, and put the earring in her pocket, and decided to lie, thinking that this ghost was one of the captain's victims. She climbed back down and said "I can't see anything."

The smelly group of men erupted in laughter. "Of course you can't!" snickered a weaselly-looking man nearby, "Women's eyes are too weak to see anything but needlework!" Felicity, angered by this statement, stomped off back to her home.

Papa Henry greeted her at the door with a big bear hug. "Hello my dear! Will you be sailing off on the seven seas with this ferocious pirate?"

Felicity hung her head, "No, papa."

"Good," Papa Henry said, with a sigh of relief. "I didn't want you to get yer limbs cut off."

"But Papa," said Felicity, "You were such a feared pirate for so many years . . . I wanted to follow in your footsteps, make you proud!"

"I know, but that man is different!" Papa Henry exclaimed. "I don't want you to be thrown off the ship er somethin' not because yer a lady but, er - I don't want you to get hurt."

Felicity looked fondly at her father. "I can take care of myself, papa. I want to take care of myself -- and bring back riches so you don't have to break your back working so hard on the farm!"

Papa Henry sighed, and said "Well, I've retired from being a pirate, and now I make a livin' working on the farm! Plus, it's a fun pastime to clean up cow dung and all that."

Felicity wrinkled her nose. "Not for me."

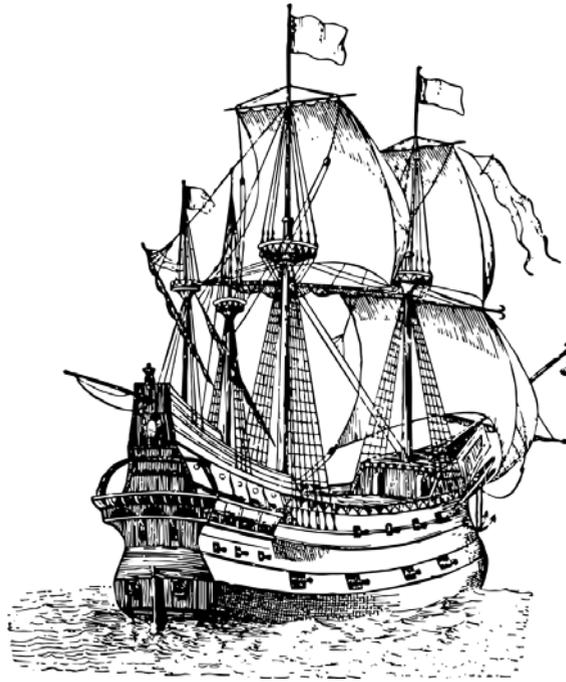
Felicity's father sat in his armchair and said, "Well, we're two different people I guess."

Felicity sighed, plunging her hands into her pockets -- where she felt the cool, smooth surface of the earring she'd forgotten about! Felicity asked, "Papa, have you ever worn an earring, like, as a pirate?"

Papa Henry shifted uncomfortably. "Felicity, you know I don't care to talk about my days as a pirate."

Felicity replied quickly, "I know, I just was a little curious, knowing that the captain I tried to impress earlier had one."

"Well, er . . ." Papa Henry sighed. "Truth is, I did, but I gave it away - I gave it away to a good friend who I never saw again."



Felicity looked confused, "Why? Didn't you want at least something to remember your pirating days by?"

"Oh, you know, my days as The Horrendous Pirate Papa Henry were . . . not ones I'd care to remember." He leaned forward and whispered confidentially, "I wasn't very good at it."

"Really?! What about those stories you told me when I was little?" Felicity said, with a surprised air.

Papa Henry looked sheepish. "I mighta fibbed a wee bit."

Felicity looked at her father with wide eyes "Papa!"

"I know, I know. I wanted you to think I was good at it! But the truth is, I'm better suited for farming. But this friend o' mine . . . now, was quite a pirate."

"What's his pirate name?" Felicity said. "I might recognize him by the name from my book, 'A History of Pirates.'"

A glimmer came into Papa Henry's eye. "We called him 'The Artful Artemis.'"

Felicity got up to get her book. "I've never heard of him, maybe he's in here somewhere . . ."

Papa Henry shook his head. "It's possible, but he was sly. That's why we called him 'Artful' - he wasn't one to go overboard with pilfering and looting, and he never laid a finger on anyone - he was in it for the fun."

Felicity looked up. "Wait . . . There's a ripped page here, maybe it means something?"

Papa Henry looked over her shoulder, squinting. "I don't know!"

Felicity decided to take out the golden earring from her pocket, and showed it to her father. "Papa, do you know whose earring this is?"

Papa Henry's eyes bugged out of his head. "I - I -" he stammered. He held out his hand. "Let me

see that." Papa Henry had put on his glasses, and inspected the entire earring, in search of some sort of writing, or sign.



Papa Henry told Felicity as he was focused on this inspection, "Pirates always have an engraving when they earn their earring, and it is a symbol representing their pirate name. Look in your book for a pirate with a symbol for a plank, and a bone."

Felicity flipped the pages, then stopped suddenly. She showed her father the page, emblazoned with the words "VIKTOR PLANKBONES" at the top, and an etching of the murderous pirate captain whose ship she'd just scaled!

"Oh my shipwreck!" Papa Henry said. "Viktor PlankBones! How did you get this!"

Felicity turned the earring over in her palm, where the engraving of a plank and bones glistened back at her with a sinister twinkle. "You wouldn't believe me if I told you . . ."

Papa Henry looked at her sincerely. "I will always believe you my dear! Now tell me, where and how did you get this earring?"

Felicity took a deep breath and began to speak. She told her Papa about everything that had happened on the ship: the ghostly tugs, the whispered warning, and the earring the ghost had given her.

When she told Papa Henry about all of this, he sat in shock. "Holy Pirate Booty! What did this ghost look like?"

"He was, well, kind of . . . smallish?" said Felicity. "And, um, dead. Ish." She racked her brains for other descriptive words. "He had a funny looking hat."

"What did the hat have on it?" Papa Henry asked desperately.

"A picture of the moon," said Felicity. "A crescent moon."

Papa Henry sunk back into his armchair. "Oh, Arty, my boy! I always wondered where you went!"

So it was Artemis, thought Felicity to herself. She had never believed in ghosts until now, but if this legend was true, then why did Artemis give her the earring?

Suddenly, Papa Henry slammed his giant fists on his chair and stood up. "That rat-munchin', slime-suckin', no good Captain... Captain... er, what'd ya say his name was?"

"Viktor Plankbones," Felicity said in an annoyed tone, because her father already forgot the name of the famous pirate.

"VIKTOR PLANKBO-O-O-ONES!" roared her father, and, with no warning, ripped the fabric from his comfy armchair, stuck his hand into the soft, cushy innards, and pulled out - a gleaming, razor sharp cutlass!

Felicity looked scared. "Papa! What are you doing?"

"TIME FOR MY REVENGE!!!!!!"

I will show him who I am for messing with other priceless pirates!" And with a bellow of rage, Papa Henry barrelled out of the room and down the hill, heading straight towards Captain Plankbones' ship.

"Excuse me! Big and dangerous man coming through!" Papa Henry exclaimed to the crowd of ocean-smelling pirates. Moments later, Felicity arrived on the scene, panting in her efforts to keep up with her father's massive strides. In two leaps, Papa Henry was aboard the ship and nose-to-nose with the evil pirate captain, Viktor.

"Well, well, well! If it isn't Henry the Horrible! It has been a while since I have seen you my dear arch-nemesis!"

"Viktor," growled Papa Henry, with a courteous nod. "I hear you're still not good at playing nice with your friends."

"Oh Henry! A good pirate is a VIOLENT PIRATE!" Viktor said, with an evil grin.

"That's not true!" piped Felicity from the sidelines.

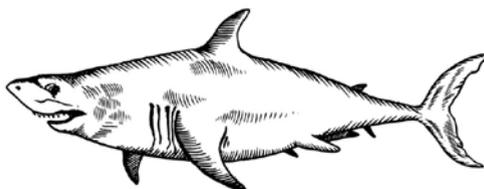
Viktor wheeled on her, brandishing his crooked blade. "Ah!" he crowed, showing a row of

blackened, rotting teeth, "the pathetic female who couldn't see the rowboat from the crow's nest!!"

Felicity walked up to Viktor, coming face to face with him. "I have devoted years of my life to practicing and studying how to become a famous pirate! But it appears I have wasted it on you."

The crowd all "ooh"ed in unison, after Felicity had insulted Captain Plankbones. They all knew that the only person with enough bravery to do this was her father.

"Why you little - " snarled Viktor, lunging at Felicity. Just in the nick of time, she dodged out of the way - revealing the plank she had been standing in front of! Viktor stumbled and tripped, cursing as he fell, managing to just hold on to the edge of the plank, so that he dangled there above the waves.



Felicity stood above the dangling captain. "I think you'll want this!" and she threw the earring at Viktor.

"My earring!" he screeched, and impulsively reached for it. "Where did you - " he blinked in surprise as he realized he had let go of the plank from which he hung.

Felicity looked at Viktor as he floated on the waves. "All of this time, and you did not realize you did not have the earring. Well then, I guess that a good pirate should be a clever pirate!"

Her papa came and stood by her side. "Felicity, you're a genius," he said, patting her shoulder. "You defeated Viktor without even lifting a finger - you just used that fantastic noggin o' yers!" He gave her an affectionate noogie.

The whole crowd began to clap and cheer for Felicity and Papa Henry, knowing they would have been nervous to work on this ship. They all gasped when they saw a giant shark jump up and swallow Viktor whole. But no one paid too much attention - they were too busy celebrating the newest captain of the ship: Captain Felicity, and her first mate, Papa Henry! 5

EXCERPTS FROM

RADIOMAKING



Despite the isolation of the 2020 Coronavirus lockdown, **Garrett Kim's** Radiomaking workshop continued training The 52nd Street Project's young people in the fine art of creating interesting audio pieces for the Project's podcast (better known as "the PROJcast"). **Sofia Santoni**, a member of the **Ghetto Film School**, a non-profit organization in the Bronx, had a long chat with some of her fellow members and a professional actor. Here is a transcript of it.

ON BEING A YOUNG FILMMAKER

AN AUDIO PANEL DISCUSSION HOSTED BY SOFIA SANTONI

Jianna: My name is Jianna Kristine.

Lynne: My name is Lynne Marie Rosenberg.

Luis: My name is Luis Chavez.

Juan: Juan del Rio.

Jianna: I am a rising sophomore at **School of Visual Arts**. I am a filmmaker. I specialize in editing, I do a bit of "scriptie" work.

Lynne: I am predominantly an actor. I am also a writer, and a director, and a TV host, an interviewer and I also consider myself a casting advocate, where I work to try and change representation and inclusion issues in the entertainment industry.

Luis: I'm a gaffer, filmmaker.

Juan: And I'm a filmmaker from Spain.

HOW DID YOU GET INTO THIS?

Jianna: For a while, I was really hyped up on being an art major and I wanted to be an illustrator until I took a film class and then I realized, and sort of, like, fell in love with storytelling and emotion and how each part of film contributes to that. That's sort of how I got introduced to film.

Lynne: Some people have these really clear stories about how they became, or when



Sofia Santoni

they became actors, or when they knew that that's what they wanted to do, and all I remember is when I was going into second grade, you used to find out over the summer who your teacher was going to be. And I remember my mom saying to me, "Oh, you got Mrs. Goverman, she does little plays

and things. You'll really love that." And so, people knew about me that I was a performer but I don't remember WHY they knew that about me."

Luis: I had this realization one day, after I think I watched *Goodwill Hunting*, and I'm like "Wow, I wanna live so many dreams, I wanna go to space, I wanna be a physics professor, I wanna do so much, but I can't do it all because of time." But, I could write a movie about it, or I could be a part of a movie that does something, could somewhat live that life to some degree. So it just attracted me; it spoke to me that way.

Juan: The movie that inspired me to make movies was *Jurassic Park*. That's the movie that changed my life. I saw it when I was 4, or 5 and movies became an obsession of mine. And for 8 to 10 years I just watched movies and consumed movies all the time, constantly, like, obsessively.... I don't know

how I got my hands on a camera, I think it was my dad's, and then I started recording with my friends, so I became a filmmaker because it was inevitable.

ON TEACHING FILMMAKING

Juan: I think stories should lead, always, so if you have an idea for a story, you should just go with it. I don't believe in agendas... It's a personal thing, I never believe in saying "I'm going to make a movie about injustice." That's not for me. I think stories should lead. I think stories should be, "I want to make a movie about a character who goes through this, and then this happens." And then, through drafts, through the creation of the story, then you start finding out "Oh, I think I know where this is going." When you're teaching film, teaching techniques and stuff, you're exercising a muscle and people will ask you things and you have to... rationalize everything that you're teaching and make sure your beliefs and what is correct and incorrect are cemented in something that makes sense.

Being passionate is contagious, so when somebody's very passionate about something, it's just, almost intoxicating. And if you love it like is my case, I can be talking about film all day, and that's what we do in **GFS (Ghetto Film School)**; we make films and we download them. So it's great. It's kinda like a dream.

ON GHETTO FILM SCHOOL

Jianna: Ghetto Film School is basically a 30-month program where students from all over the city come and learn about film, we get a bunch of opportunities, and it's free. It's in the Bronx. Yeah, I learned a lot of stuff there. If it weren't for GFS, I don't think I would have fallen in love with everything the

way I have... Going back to GFS, We have to "pitch" in order to go on a trip to Rome, make a film, and I was a "scriptie" on that film. And so, everything was fine. Everyone was really sweet, except for this one guy, I think it was the first day that we were actually on set. Each of us had mentors, and mine was a female scriptie. She was really cool, really helpful. Where we had Video Village, which was where you have your monitor and your seats for your director and your scriptie. I

was going back to Video Village and my director's mentor was sitting in my seat and he was super-close to the monitor and he was blocking the director and I asked him, "Hey, can I get my seat back?" 'cause, as

a scriptie, you have to actually sit down and stare at the monitor and write down what goes on in each take. So, the mentor was like, "No, absolutely not." He pulled another seat from God knows where and says "Sit here behind us." My mentor comes over and she was like "What are you doing? We're all learning here. I don't understand why you're being like this towards her because she's younger. She's learning. We're all learning."

ON BEING YOUNG

Luis: So **Binnie Barnes** is this writer that was a mentor of ours at GFS. She gave me a job to work as a PA (production assistant) on a set. So there was a gaffer there and I was hanging out with the gaffer and asking him questions about like, y'know "How do you get on a set like this and how do you do x-thing, x-thing, x-thing, and, mind you, at the time I had a beard. I looked older than my age, and I was eighteen at the time and we're talking for a good two hours, he's becoming my best friend on the set, and he gets down to "Look, how old are you?" I think he was about to give me, put me on to a job, just by the way

GHETTO FILM SCHOOL

I was speaking about things and I told him my age, I told him I was eighteen and he was like, “Woh-woh-woh-woh, you’re eighteen? No, I don’t believe you.” I pulled out my I.D. and showed him that I was eighteen. He was like, “Damn, dude, you’re young. You’re a young gun!... Graduate college first!” I’m like, “Goddammit, man.”

He was telling me how to “bounce” light off of the wall, but he was explaining how it would affect and I’m like “Dude, I know that.” But I don’t think he believed it. I don’t think he believed it. I mean, I don’t blame him. When you’re young the outlook of a young person is that you’re reckless. You’re a teen-ager, you got some angst, you got some fire to you. You’re likely clumsy. And, y’know, clumsy doesn’t pay the bills. At least in film. You got to know your stuff. The person that knows their stuff the best is probably the one who’s gonna get hired.

Jianna: I’m going into editing, so I have to, like, get certified. You can’t just trust someone to walk up to a computer and know “Oh, this cord does this, and this is how you break it up, you set it down.” You have to go to school for that, and I know a lot of filmmakers that advise against going to film school for filmmaking, which I somewhat agree with when it comes to storytelling, but I guess I think if you are getting certified in something more technical, like if you’re going to be a D.P., you can’t just pick up a red, just pick up a camera and then expect to know everything. I have to learn all of those things and just turned eighteen so obviously I can’t learn everything at once, so it’s learning that I have to take things a bit at a time and I can’t really force everything and expect myself to know everything, ‘cause, again, I am eighteen and there’s things that I just haven’t had the time to learn. But I DO want to learn.

Juan: I wouldn’t say as a blanket statement that young filmmakers are treated unfairly in the industry, because I have encountered

people that do treat a filmmaker as a filmmaker. It just depends... To be honest, it depends on the background. Like, indy producers, y’know, if they like you, if they see you’re the real deal, they might listen to you a little closer. And there’s other people whose job doesn’t depend on hiring filmmakers so maybe they’re not, how you say, as “kind.” I guess it depends. I would say, if there’s one piece of advice I can give on that, don’t take it personally. Before you go to a meeting, try to think “If this goes THIS way, if this person treats me THIS way, it’s probably not about me, it’s probably about something else,” so because it happened to me a couple of times, I had meetings where I’m like, “This person is being a little bit disrespectful,” but then you think about it and you say “Of course. If this person’s job doesn’t depend on finding the new **Ryan Coogler**, she’s probably not gonna care, so why bother?” You know what I mean? It’s more about that and less about taking it personally. And believe me, you’re gonna get a lot of that. So, I guess you gotta navigate it. People assume that movies are just made, oh, movies just happen. I just come here and just write it and it happens. No, no. It’s a lot of work; it’s a marathon. It’s a lot of work and a lot of time, so you gotta put (in) the hours.

Jianna: So, basically, I don’t think I’m old enough to have been on as many sets as I would like to have been. I’ve lived a pretty short life. I’m eighteen.

Luis: I don’t even see it as a disadvantage, I see myself at the bottom of the ladder, and I just have to climb up. So, work will be slow, I’m sure. Especially now, for, like, the next two years. It’s just gonna be really slow, but it’ll... it’ll just come

OWNING YOUR OWN EQUIPMENT

Sofia: What’s that like, investing in your own equipment? Because I know equipment is just so expensive nowadays and people buy cameras and people buy their own lighting

equipment but... you're pretty young, you know, and you have your own stuff. What's that like, investing in yourself like that?

Luis: It feels so good not to depend on an outlet to pick up your stuff from.... These lights here, they've been helping me throughout this director's workshop that I just had. I bought these lights around January. So I used them throughout the semester, and they're lovely. They're so lovely. Investing in equipment, especially if you're going to work hands-on in production, helps a ton, because that's one less expense that you'll have to use in your films. And if you have your own equipment, you become an asset, because you bring your own stuff to x-place that you go and work for, and then you can help people with your own things, so it makes you more valuable as a filmmaker. I definitely want to invest way more in my own stuff, like I'm sure every filmmaker does, to be honest.

Jianna: When I came to school, when I was comfortable academically, I talked to myself, "Okay, I need to make up for time that I physically do not have." There are 24 hours in a day, so I started skipping classes. And, like, the high school that I went to, we have an equipment room and you could dim the lights, and that was a really cool thing for me. So I spent time in the dark just editing away.

WRITER'S BLOCK

Juan: Writer's Block is what makes the difference between somebody that writes and somebody that doesn't write. Everybody has Writer's Block, that's just the default. Nobody has ideas. Sometimes it happens, but most of the time, the default is "I don't know what to write about." So the difference between a writer and a non-writer is the writer sits down and then just goes through that looking-at-the-sky silence of "Oh, my God,



I'm worthless. I'm not a writer... That process of you punishing yourself psychologically is the difference between a writer and a non-writer. The writer knows that that's what it is. It is what it is. And then you write... and then you rewrite it, and then you keep going, and then you keep going until you get to something that's kind of acceptable, because it's never going to be "This is the thing! This is perfect!" That's just not gonna happen.

THE UGLY SIDE OF CASTING

Lynne: If you've ever seen what's called a casting breakdown, which is essentially a job listing for actors, they have a nasty tendency to be extremely offensive, and I, of course, was only seeing the crap that a white woman would see because that's what I would see demographically in the casting software, and I was just so fed up, so done with seeing "must have big tits." Stuff that you could never get away with in any other industry that you could get away with in the entertainment industry. So I started posting them on Facebook and I would comment with my funny commentary and my friends would comment back and it was really just a way to commiserate with people. So then the more I did that, I started digging into "Well, what are other people seeing?" and so friends of mine who are in communities that I don't belong to would send me "Well, this is what WE'RE seeing." It was like, down a rabbit hole. So I created a **Tumblr**, a blog, basically, that was just pages and pages and pages of real, lifted, bad casting notices. And I mean, that thing is hundreds of pages long. I had a very strong connection at **The Public Theater** and **Joe's Pub**, which is a wonderful comedy and music venue there, I got a slot for a night. So, the very first one I did was a fundraiser for **The 52nd Street Project**.

Sofia: Nice!

Lynne: That was in 2014... I wrote this little script and I weaved together all these terrible breakdowns and I hosted and it was really fun and people liked it so I did that for, like, 4 or 5 years and then I had a point where.... Self-producing is so hard. It's financially exhausting, it's physically exhausting, it's mentally exhausting. It's so satisfying and when the final thing happens, you're so proud...

Sofia: 100%

Lynne: ... but my God, is it unsustainable. So, I wanted to keep doing the work, but I'm like, I can't keep doing these shows, it's just too much on me. And so I came up with a One-on-One version; an interview version that I called *CastAndLoose Living Room* and I just had friends come over, we'd hang out and eat snacks, and I would have them read bad breakdowns on my webcam and it just so happened that a very close friend of mine from college became the senior producer for a network called **ALL ARTS**, a **PBS** affiliate in New York, and they were building content, and I was having lunch with her and she said "Do you have anything you want to pitch me?" and I was, like, I have 34 really shitty webcam videos that I made that really no one's watched, but I think would make a cool show. And that was how *Famous Cast Words* was born. It was amazing to see... something that went from this weird little content I was making and putting on the internet to become a TV show that I can watch on my own television, and can watch streaming on a network. The production value went way up, it went from web cam and auxiliary audio to a three-camera set-up and three producers.

NETWORKING

Jianna: Well, I have a half-brother that I never met, so I sort of, took inspiration from that. I started asking myself, what if this half-brother that I never met came knocking on

my door and was like "Hey, I need help." Would I help? And so, that took its own life... You (Sofia) were on the crew, you were the producer... I think when you're a filmmaker you... have people that you make mental notes (about), and you're like "Okay, I liked what this person did. Mental note: Maybe use them for a later project." Or "Oh, mental note: I like how these two people work together..."

Lynne: Even when you do shitty projects, like when you do something that's like "My, God, this thing is just the worst. What am I doing?" There's always one person, you can always pull one person out of that, who's the one who catches your eye when something's going on, like "Oh, YOU get it. You understand that what we're doing, we're both above this." Or we both CARE more than this. You can always pull one person out of things, and that to me is lower-case "n" networking, which is just finding your people, finding the people that are on the same wavelength as you.

Jianna: You think about... personalities. For me it's important that, yes, I know that you can do your work and, yes, I know that you're talented but will you cause me an issue on set if I am panicking about, like, actors, and if I'm worrying about a logistical problem. Will you be an issue? That's the question I ask myself. I don't like working with people that are problematic or who make a big deal out of things.

Juan: I always thought that people are, in general, a little wrong in the sense that they think they have to network up. Yeah, up to network. And I always say you have to network also on your level, like the people who are in line with you are the ones that will hopefully make films with you, so you gotta also look in with your peers, which is also very helpful.

Lynne: And I think, what you do is gonna be so integral to this, is that you have spent your teenage years working on stuff, making

friends in the industry. NOT in the industry, making friends, period, who then, twenty years from now, will turn out to be the person who gives you some amazing job.

Luis: In my high school, I learned the basics of film again and again because I kept getting new film teachers and they each, all of them, assumed that we gained nothing from the previous teacher, so they went over the 180-degree rule a thousand times and I'm sick of it! I want to make a film with somebody that's gonna challenge me to become something even more than I already am. I wanna be around people... like, the people at GFS are completely dedicated to doing this craft. I feel like the people at my school are not, at least the majority, are not... they don't have that mentality. They're kinda just doing funksies, doing it because they want to be a journalist, they do it 'cause they wanna make YouTube videos... and that's not what I want. I want to be around people who want to tell stories.

Sofia: I love that.

Luis: That's like, the goal.

Jianna: I think as time goes on, you get to know more people and, think again, one of the pros of going to film school is that now I can say "Oh, those aren't just my college friends, those are also people that I make movies with. Those are people that I tell stories with." I think it's definitely harder to socialize... A lot of film events, even when Ghetto Film School hosts them, oh, it's like 21 plus, it's drinking age, it's like social hour and stuff like that and obviously it's not that you don't want to go, it's that you can't go 'cause there's an open bar and so, sometimes that sucks, but I think that generally, if you go to film school you definitely have it easier than someone who's young and doesn't go to film school.

Luis: If you know somebody who is in the industry and they have an ability to vouch for you, then you should 100% take that, and

run with it, because those are the people that, they will carry you to the next level. 'Cause if you just start from the bottom it's gonna take a while to get off the bottom. You need those cheat codes. Cheat codes are other people. You gotta know people; you gotta meet people.

QUALITIES NEEDED BY YOUNG FILMMAKERS

Lynne: I also believe "be of service" would be really important, too, especially because we got a world in a lot of pain right now, even without COVID, we have a world in a LOT of pain. So be of service. Find ways that your skill set can be of service, because you have a much more satisfying time, just emotionally, if you're getting up every morning and thinking "Alright. How does my ability to see pictures, and see lighting, and see angle, help the world. And honestly, being here for community will make it more fun. You get to work on stuff with people you like, I promise it's going to be a more enjoyable experience.

Sofia: Way better, way better.

Lynne: Favor community as much as you can. A really good friend of mine once said "Don't change anything about yourself for the industry, 'cause the industry will never thank you for it." And, I really took that to heart... If I'm gonna make it, I'm gonna make it, if I'm not, I'm not. And also, what is "making it" is like, a whole other question.

Jianna: For me, I don't think I'd ever want to make it as like "Oh, I want to be famous. I want to have millions of dollars, 'cause for me that's not why I'm in the industry. I'm not in it to be a millionaire. I'm not in it to have five houses. I'm in it to share stories with people, to make people feel things, regardless of whether that's a small indie production, a student film, or something with a bigger budget. It's all the same.

Lynne: I, a long time ago, decided I am just here to make friends, I am here to build

community, and I would hope that ultimately that also leads to building my own bank account, but in the meantime, I can't be here to try and achieve, whether it's stardom, or getting a pilot sold, or getting a film sold, I can't be here for that, I just have to be here for community.

Juan: The word has some negative meaning now, but you are manipulating people into feeling things in a way that is almost invisible. People don't realize how much effort and care goes into making you feel something and making you think something and I think...I find that very, very attractive. Even when I am by myself, sometimes I'm watching movies and I forget I'm watching a movie, and then, when the movie's over it made me feel aware that, yes, it's amazing... I don't know, there's some magical element to it that I really love to dedicate my life to generate for others... Find the thing that you like about film and then you drill on that. Again, we're going back to being honest to who you are. Don't pretend that "Oh, I'm big into sound mixing." If it's not your thing just find the thing that YOU like about films and then that's who you are, that's the thing that you want to dedicate your time to.

Luis: Speaking is a muscle that you have to train. You got to keep flexing it. Constantly flexing your verbs; flexing your word choice, flexing your enunciation and things, and all other aspects and just be brave and try to put yourself out there in the most vulnerable way possible. That's what people like. People enjoy people who they can see themselves in. At least, they can see into and not think you're full of shit.

Jianna: It would definitely be to have patience, I think being a mature person enough to not let age divide you and sort of... just be there for someone.

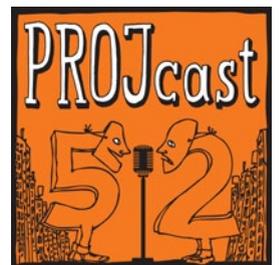
Luis: I guess they should take more chances. I mean this is very vaguely, too, I mean take more chances in general.

Juan: You gotta take advice with a grain of salt. I'm gonna tell you what worked for me and what I think works, but you gotta find your own way, right? Because, at the end of the day, this is not a science. You gotta figure it out. You know, advice is great, but I do think that finding your own way is a very important part of becoming a successful artist and filmmaker. Writing is tough, and film is long hours and it's a lot of work so you got to put (in) the hours. You got to put (in) the hours. And even in success stories, where they tell you "Oh, it's a success story, from night to day, overnight, this guy, he..." It's never that way. It's never that way. They just skip the six years of knocking on doors and getting nothing. They just skip that. Overnight stories are not really a thing.

Jianna: All of the times, when it came to "Okay, I'm in the industry, what do I want to do now?" There's so many aspects of film that you can do, there's like hundreds of jobs, what do I want to do? I felt like, um, **Barry Benson**, from *Bee Movie* with like, all the little jobs. I think, in your art, when you do something, you'll feel that passion for it, you'll feel that connection for it and... allowing panic to set in and allowing panic to rule over you is definitely not something or a road that you should be going down. If you love something, go after it and figure out how to make it real. It's a lot to say "Okay, I love film." It's another thing to say "Okay, I love film. How am I gonna get where I want to go." Small steps. Make small goals. Where do you want to be tomorrow? Where do you want to be in a week, in a month, in a year? ⑤

Subscribe to **The 52nd Street Project Projcast** to hear the original recording of this piece when it is released in the near future.

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SONGMAKING SECTION

Buoyed by the success of the 10 songs featured in The 52nd Street Project's virtual gala in April and May of 2020 (see [Game Changers YouTube Playlist](#)), Program Director **Garrett Kim** and Musical Director **Avi A. Amon** kept barrelling on into the Spring with a Zoom-run songmaking workshop for young people. Here are the results, complete with hyperlinks to music videos of the songs! (Special thanks to **Ross Vedder** for editing the videos.)

STUCK IN A TRAP

By Jessica Elie-Pierre

Jessica's song is about a pop star named Surreal and it... is special.. -Avi



I wish I don't want to let things go
because those stuff are me who I am
but I
have to let things slide
and move on to my job

But still
when I give stuff away it isn't me any more
because
it's like I am a whole new person
but if
I didn't have this job
then I won't keep the money
but I'll keep my special things

My favorite color is pink and black
Because pink is my spirit
And black is my dark side

I think of my job is fun but hard
because I have to practice for weeks
I sing in Broadway because I like to be there
The reason why because I like people seeing
me
My audience is my mom and strangers.

My favorite color is pink and black
Because pink is my spirit
And black is my dark side

I got kidnapped by a fan
because this person really loves me so much

that she really had to take me away
The next thing that happened is that
she put me in the back of the car
and she drove off

Why did I get kidnapped?
...who is this ohhhh
please help me get out of here
help me get out of here
oh oh oh help me..free me PLEASE
Why am I here in this place...I don't like it
please..please..free me

If I was in this situation which I am
I would find a key to get out
After I get out a car was coming
So I quickly go to the sidewalk
Then I was there but I didn't know where to
go
I was scared that I can't go to my performance
in time
But there was another car coming
That car crashed me
Someone called the hospital
I was in pain
I didn't make it

My favorite color is
Pink and black
Because pink is my spirit
And black is my dark side 5



STAND STRAIGHT

By Melanie Correa

Melanie's song is about three trees named Blossom, Jerry, and Alisa figuring out their relationship (except for Alisa). -Avi

BLOSSOM

I'M SO HAPPY SOMEONE FINALLY
SAID FOR PEOPLE TO STOP LITTERING
THE WORLD SMELLS BETTER AND BRIGHTER.
LOOK PEOPLE ARE ACTUALLY
WATERING ME AND MAKING SURE IF
THERE IS TRASH THEY'RE PICKING IT UP
ISN'T THAT COOL, JERRY (the tree's brother)



JERRY

THIS IS AWESOME. LOOK ALISA IS ENJOYING IT

ALISA

HI, YOU GUYS LOOK AT MY LEAVES

BLOSSOM

THEY LOOK GREAT, ALISA

JERRY

THEY DO LOOK NICE.
LET'S STAND STRAIGHTER SO OUR LEAVES LOOK BETTER

BLOSSOM

GREAT IDEA!

ALISA

GREAT IDEA

BLOSSOM

I CAN'T BELIEVE YOU WOULD SAY THAT TO ALISA

JERRY

WHAT DO YOU MEAN.

BLOSSOM

THE LITTLE COMMENT YOU TOLD HER NOW
LOOK YOU CAN'T EVEN SAY SORRY
BECAUSE SHE'S DEAD
IT'S ALL YOUR FAULT
I HOPE YOU KNOW THAT.



JERRY

YOU DON'T THINK I KNOW THAT
I MISS HER
I KNOW I MESSED UP

BLOSSOM AND JERRY

AND NOW SHE'S DEAD.

BLOSSOM

YOU'RE A HORRIBLE PERSON

JERRY

WELL, YOU ARE TOO
I HOPE WHAT HAPPENED TO ALISA HAPPENS TO YOU.

BLOSSOM

OH YEAH

JERRY

YEAH.
STAND STRAIGHTER SO YOUR LEAVES LOOK BETTER

BLOSSOM

FINE AND NEVER TALK TO ME AGAIN
(BLOSSOM looks away because she can't walk away)

BLOSSOM

I'M SO MAD AT HIM
WHY WOULD HE SAY THAT
BUT I SHOULD FORGIVE HIM
HE IS MY BROTHER

JERRY

I HATE HER
SHE'S PUTTING ALL THIS GUILT ON ME
WHY WOULD SHE DO THAT
BUT SHE IS TRYING TO TEACH ME SOMETHING
I SHOULD TELL HER THAT I SHOULD HAVE NEVER SAID THAT TO ALISA

BLOSSOM

I SHOULD APOLOGIZE I WAS TOO HARSH
LET ME TURN AROUND TO TELL HIM

JERRY

LET ME TURN AROUND TO TELL HER

BLOSSOM

LET ME TURN AROUND

JERRY

LET ME TURN AROUND

BLOSSOM

TO TELL HIM
LET ME TURN AROUND TO TELL HIM
LET ME TURN AROUND TO TELL HIM

JERRY

TO TELL HER
LET ME TURN AROUND TO TELL HER
LET ME TURN AROUND TO TELL HER

JERRY & BLOSSOM

LET ME TURN AROUND
LET ME TURN AROUND

JERRY

I'M SORRY WHAT I SAID

BLOSSOM

I CAN'T SPEAK TO YOU

JERRY

PLEASE FORGIVE ME

BLOSSOM

FINE, BUT PROMISE ME YOU WILL NEVER TELL ME THAT AGAIN

JERRY

PROMISE.
NOW LET'S STAND STRAIGHTER SO OUR LEAVES LOOK BETTER

BLOSSOM

OF COURSE.
I'M GOING TO MISS ALISA

JERRY

ME TOO

JERRY & BLOSSOM

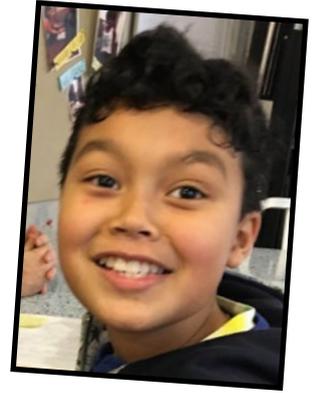
BUT AT LEAST I STILL HAVE YOU ⑤

JUST FOUND

By Xavier Espinal

Xavier's song is about a bottle of hand sanitizer named Encore who is having an existential moment.
-Avi

I was always meant to be useful, to clean the hands that are in need.
I only watched the world hanging on a pair of keys.
I was used few times, but I was missing something inside.
I was fine.
waking up day by day.
waiting for something.
waking up day by day.
waiting for something.
I was decent, getting used at times, but missing something.
waking up day by day.
waiting for something.



I was finally getting off from the keys. Stopped hopelessly hanging.
But when they put me on the shelf, I knew it was something else.
Not the reason I thought it would be.
I was stranded on top of a shelf, the dust collecting all on me.
I was hoping and praying every time that they pass, they would use me.
Feeling the same satisfaction, when they win the lottery.
I was fine.
waking up day by day.
waiting for something.
waking up day by day.
waiting for something.
I was trapped, stranded on a island without something to eat, Something to breathe
waking up day by day.
waiting for something.

Lost, not found
Incomplete
Lost, not found
Bitter, sweet
Lost, not found
Incomplete
Lost, not found
Bitter, sweet



I was about to close my eyes and wait for another useless day,
and then a giant human ran coming straight my way.
they stared at the glowing screen looking at each other, gasping.
one of the giant things tentacles wrapped around me
feeling a soft sensation as they lathered me upon their hands.
rubbing with enough strength, to light a vibrant flame.
Did I finally find my something
That was missing my whole life

Day by day
not waiting anymore
Day by day
Serving a purpose
I was happy, Finally living
living for something.
Day by day
not waiting anymore
Day by day
not waiting anymore
anymore ⑤



Xavier and Avi work on the lyrics to Just Found.

FEELING A PURPOSE

By Sarah Lopez

Sarah's song is about a jigsaw puzzle discovering its self-worth. -Avi

You know when you're first born into this world,
it seems like you're going to be done quickly.
But, when most people see me,
they realize that it's going to be a bit tricky



I was just placed here, I haven't really been here for a long time,
every time I hear footsteps I feel the hope
that somebody will pick me up from this high place and bring me down.
I want to be be desired
I wanna be made into my full picture
I want to feel feel desired.
I wanna be seen as my full picture.

The thought of being brought down is hard to believe
Coming to terms with the fact that you're about to leave
The ride from up there feels like a rollercoaster
It hits the pieces in my box the hardest, it would be my guts but I don't have any

I was just placed here, I haven't really been here for a long time,
every time I hear footsteps I feel the hope
that somebody will pick me up, then that same hope vanishes and becomes fear.
I want to be be desired
I wanna be made into my full picture
I want to feel feel desired.
I wanna be seen as my full picture.

Sometimes I feel the hope, other times I feel the despair
Then I realize that someone wants me there
Or else they wouldn't have brought me here
they wouldn't have brought me here

I'm glad to be be desired
Now I'm made into my full picture
I want to be be desired
I wanna be made into my full picture
I want to feel feel desired.
I wanna be seen as my full picture. 5



THE "WRITE" TOTTO RAMEN FOOD REVIEW

By Aengus O'Donnell and Jimmy Kenna



Two **Smart Partners** by the names of **Aengus** and **Jimmy** met at **The 52nd Street Project** one inconspicuous Wednesday afternoon with one sole intention. To eat at **Totto Ramen**. This is the story of that afternoon.

At the corner of 52nd and 9th, next to **Lucky's**—Aengus' proclaimed favorite fry joint (ever since the **Shake Shack** shut down)—sat Totto Ramen. From the outside it looked pretty large, but upon entering it was smaller than we thought. A kind host led us to our seats informing us we had only 40 minutes to eat. We were not concerned.

Our cozy table in the back provided us with chopsticks, spoons, napkins, and a fork for Aengus (no shame). The only materials we would need. Glancing through the menu, it was clear there were no bad options. Jimmy went for the spicy pork patain and Aengus for the vegetable ramen. There were lots of other things on the menu, but we honestly didn't get around to looking at them.

We were here for ramen. And ramen only.

Barely two minutes after ordering, our ramen came out. Piping hot and looking good. Aengus remarked that "My mom is going to be so happy I'm eating all these veggies." And with that the first bite commenced.

Aengus and I—the cunning journalists we are—devised a clever system of rating. This isn't a simple 1 to 10 scale, oh no, this isn't amateur hour. We had five categories. First, **Taste**. It is how good it tastes. This is an important category.

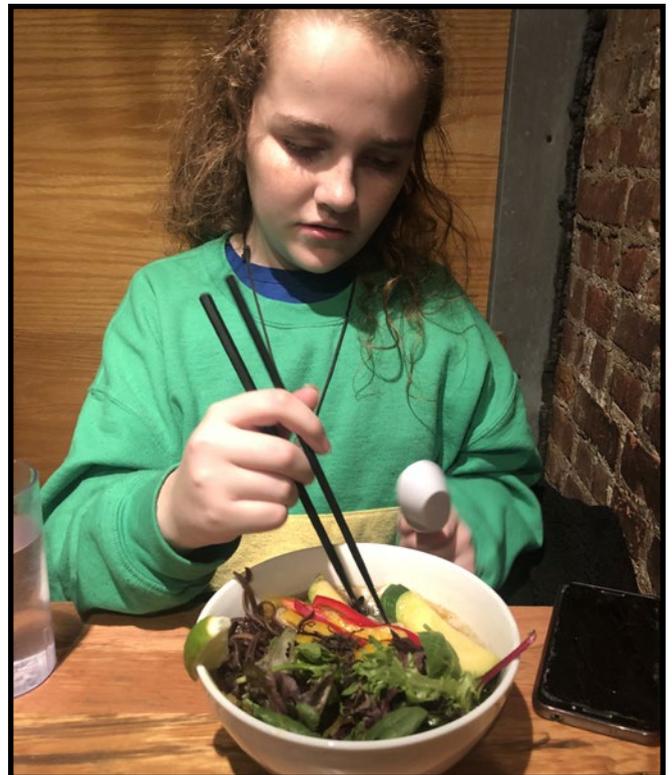
Second, was **Warmth**. We expected the ramen

to warm us up on this cold day. To evoke. To inspire.

Thirdly, was **Nostalgia**. Aengus once had ramen a long time ago. Jimmy eats ramen more than he cares to admit. Nostalgia and taking one back to a previous memory of our younger years was our purpose.

Next. It must be **Transformative**. It really depends on your definition of transformative. But to us it means if someone hasn't eaten this before, would they start eating something like this?

And finally: **Would Naruto approve?** (Naruto is a legendary Japanese ninja and the central figure in a famous Manga series - Ed.)



Aengus's Vegetable Ramen

Taste: 10/10

Warmth: "It's like kind. It makes your heart feel good."

Nostalgia: "It's pretty good. It brings me back."

Transformative: It made me want to eat more things with vegetables (and of course ramen). I tried avocado, sweet red peppers, and mushroom for the first time. I'll definitely try them again.

Would Naruto Approve? Yes. For sure. Obviously. He's the King of this wonderful dish.

Jimmy's Spicy Pork Paitan

Taste: 10/10

Warmth: A slow simmering candle in my tummy

Nostalgia: For a moment, I nearly thought I was 7 again. It was a comforting, if not troubling experience.

Transformative: Yeah. They used chicken broth instead of a more standard pork broth. I really liked this.

Would Naruto Approve? You betcha.

Afterthoughts:

So we've eaten. We're very full. We have some afterthoughts.

We would come back, for sure. The price was fair, the portions large, and the esthetic was great. Tutto Ramen is a 10 out of 10 establishment. We would definitely recommend. It has the Aengus and Jimmy seal of approval. And if that doesn't convince, really nothing will.

We hoped you enjoyed this review. Hopefully it isn't our last. This is Aengus and Jimmy signing off. Peace.

— A & J



RECORD MAKERS

By Sevan Asencio (with Sean Kenealy)



The day is March 2nd and this starts where all great trips start - **The 52nd Street Project**. Me (**Sevan**) and my Smart Partner **Sean Kenealy** meet there and start the walk to the train to head to Brooklyn for **WWE Raw**. On the way over there me and Sean are just hyping up the show as it's Sean first-ever wrestling event. As soon as we arrived in Brooklyn the time was around 6:45pm and the start was still less than an hour away so when we finally got to **Barclays Center** and through security there was a table where you can buy wrestler's shirts, masks, and accessories. Sean thought it would be a good idea for me to get a shirt and I ended getting an Edge shirt, since he had just returned and was one of my favorites growing up.

As we finish up with buying the shirt we head to our seats as they are right next to the entrance stage where they come out from. There is still about a half an hour till it starts so we start to get comfortable till it starts. The show ends up starting at 7:45pm with a pre-recorded show they film on Monday but shown on Thursday. It ends up having 2 matches that weren't really notable for anything. The commentators come out around 7:58 and now the real show starts.

It starts out with a fantastic pyrotechnics display as all the shows start with. This is topped with the WWE champion **Brock Lesnar** comes out and sets off more pyrotechnics. When he gets to the ring his manager is trying really hard to hype his match for **Wrestlemania** but he keeps calling his opponent a sham and a fraud and that he is going to lose but then out comes his opponent **Drew McIntyre** to one of the biggest crowd reactions I've ever heard. When he gets to the ring they lock eyes and Brock plans to leave the ring but changes his mind and runs back at McIntyre but runs right into a **Claymore Kick** (McIntyre's finishing move) which puts him down.

The funniest part of that segment was when Brock was getting back to his feet the crowd was chanting things like "You deserve it" and "Na Na Na Na Hey Hey Hey Goodbye" and as he is back in the ramp McIntyre comes out and delivers 2 more **Claymore Kicks** to his **Wrestlemania** opponent which spoiler alert McIntyre defeats Lesnar in less than 10 minutes and wins his first WWE championship which he's working for since 2009.

The next was the first match of the night and it was for the **Raw Tag Team Championships**





as the defending champions "**The Monday Night Messiah**" **Seth Rollins** and his tag team **Murphy** put the titles against the **Street Profits** (**Angelo Dawkins** and **Montez Ford**). During the match the rest of Seth Rollins' group was on top of the ramp as they were the muscle and only used when needed and that almost came to work but as soon as they were circling Ford who was on the ground so the referee was distracted and Rollins was attacked by his Wrestlemania opponent **Kevin Owens** as he gave him a Stunner (his finisher) and Murphy and the rest of Rollins' group was chasing Owens out the ringside area Ford hits a top rope frog splash on Rollins and pins him to win as the Street Profits are your new Raw tag team champions.

Fast forward through the night as there were no really noteworthy segments or matches that happened. The last T.V. match of the night features a **Lucha Libre** showcase as the team of **Rey Mysterio** and **Humberto Carrillo** faced off against the team of **Andrade** and **Angel Garza**. The ending happens when Rey Mysterio neutralizes Garza on the outside and Carrillo lands a picture perfect moonsault on Andrade to land the victory for him and Mysterio.

In the final segment of the night Edge's wife **Beth Phoenix** came out to provide a Medical update on him because his "friend" **Randy Orton** attacked him after calling him a brother and part of his family. As soon as she is about to talk Randy Orton comes out and tries to

hug Beth but she ain't having any of it. Beth tries hard to talk to Randy and berate him for what he did but he kept interrupting and the Orton and he says stuff like "Edge will never wrestle again," "That Edge saved him after he got suspended for drug use," also things like "Edge will forever be a stay-at-home dad", and lastly "That he loves Edge and Beth's 2 daughters more than they do." All of this while Beth is starting to cry and she tries really hard to hold it in and instead of crying she puts all of her might into slapping Orton as he starts to get pissed off and says something to her and she kicks him but he recovers quickly and RKO's (Orton's finishing move) her and as the show goes off the air multiple people from the back rush down to see if Beth is ok.

The one notable person who came out after the show went off TV was Drew McIntyre and he calls out Orton for a match right there but it's not Orton who comes out it's Rowan who comes out and says he's there for a match and as usual McIntyre decimates Rowan and hits him with a Claymore Kick for the win and that was the end of the show.

The only horrible thing that has happened from March 2nd until now is that multiple superstars from that show and the preshow have been fired (because of the pandemic – Ed.) so me and Sean wish them luck in their future endeavors. ⑤



**SHORT POEMS WRITTEN
DURING QUARANTINE**



The Song “What The World Needs Now”

By Hannah Santos

A song that sounds like a crowded city day
A song that teaches everyone is here, not as close as before.
A song that makes you feel like anyone is next to you, from far away.



Ode to Purple

By Tiffany Yam

Lavender purple,
A garden in Spring.
My bedroom walls,
a fluffy sweater,
Grapes hanging from the vine,
Lavender purple.



Red, O Red, Where Are You Now?

By Adolfo Sinchi

Red O Red, in the said
Red O Red, in my bed,
Red O Red, they came in
From the med in the call
Red O Red, where will you be



Blue, Oh Blue, the Greatest Color of All

By Adolfo Sinchi

Oh, Blue, Oh, Blue the greatest meal of all
The splash-splash, in the crash-crash,
In the waves, from the caves,
Oh, Blue, Oh, Blue,
You've given me the flu.

Poem 1

By Olive Moayed

Thank you for giving me the sweet softness of you,
Thank you for teaching me the beauty of you,
Thank you for giving me the ocean, which is you,
Thank you for the sea,
Thank you for the sky,
Thank you for the case to my dad's AirPods,
Thank you for everything that is you.



Poem 2

By Olive Moayed

If my mood were a color, it would be blue,
If my mood were a smell, it would be that residue
When you don't wash the dishes.
If my mood were a taste, it would be sour and moldy.
If my mood were a sound, it would be nails on a chalkboard.
If my mood were a feeling, it would be rough sandpaper.
We all have different moods, and we all feel differently.

A Song the World Needs Now

By Thiana Goode

This is the song the world needs now,
A song that sounds like it's early in the morning, with birds chirping.
A song that teaches you to don't be worried,
A song that makes you feel relaxed,
A song that tastes like camomile tea,
A song that holds you like a warm hug that feels secure.
A song that spreads love and positivity,
A song that tells you things will get better. 5



EXCERPTS FROM

RADIOMAKING



A TALK WITH DR. ERNESTO LIRA DE LA ROSA

AN INTERVIEW BY CHYANNE PEÑA

GROWING UP IN TWO WORLDS

So I identify as Latinx, Mexican descent. I also identify as queer. And I wasn't born in the U.S., I was born in Mexico, and I came to the U.S. when I was pretty young, I think five years old. My parents both came here undocumented and we eventually worked our way up to acquiring a permanent residency.

Growing up for me in a very traditional Mexican household, I always felt like I had to navigate, like, the American world and also the Mexican world, because I was speaking Spanish at home and we had a lot of cultural values and beliefs that I really love and are really great yet they oftentimes were in very much conflict with the American way of being... The things that I would hear...like my mom would say "Just because you're 18 doesn't mean you're an adult and you're out of this house. I'm still your mom." It's a very Latinx way of understanding. And there was always this conflict of being told, "You're not American.

I felt a lot of pressure of having to reconcile these two worlds. And also navigate my own identity at the time as well. What does it mean to be Mexican, to be Latinx, to be queer? All these different things.... Me coming out to my mom was a very big thing and I didn't do it 'til my senior year of high



school... It was a really great response, but I know some people don't have those positive responses because of cultural things. And it's not to blame the culture, but I think it's just sometimes, lack of awareness or understanding, so yeah, I think that all those things definitely impact how when I speak with someone in therapy... I've been there before, when I was a teen-ager or navigating these relationships or having multiple minority identities. Those are things that to this day I'm still

kinda trying to make sense of for myself, being part of two worlds, so I think all those things have definitely helped me get a sense of what it may be like for the people that I work with.

HIGHER EDUCATION/ FINDING A COMMUNITY

I eventually ended up having my permanent residency come in when I was 18, right before I went to college, so I was able to apply for financial aid and go to a university that was in my home town, where we were living.

This was in Wisconsin, that's where I grew up, most of my life, and I went there, I majored in psychology. I've always had an interest in psychology, but



never really knew what it entailed...

I did a lot of work in the undergraduate level, getting involved with research... I ended up getting, in my junior year of college, an email from this Latina doctoral student in counseling psychology. They were doing a study on the experiences of Latinos and Latinas at the time and I said "God, I would love to participate."... That's when things kinda shifted for me. She invited me to get coffee with her and sit down and she let me know "Hey, there's a field of counseling psychology where I am right now doing research on Latino identity. and we have these Latina professors that are psychologists that are also doing this great research with the Latino community" and I was just kind of blown away because at that point in my junior year of college I had never heard about Latino mental health, that that was even like a thing and I was like, "What? This exists?" So I started getting involved with the research and I really kind of fell in love with it...

I ended up applying for a doctoral program and I got in, and was mentored by many wonderful Latinx professors and other professors of color that showed me the way into the world of higher education... I realized that I could make a difference in just being visible for communities of color, for people that look like us... We have to be visible. We need more people that look like us in this profession and many other professions. .. We're not alone and there's many people out there that are navigating this world in the same way and building that community is so important...

WHAT THE DOCTOR DOES NOW

Right now, I am considered a licensed clinical psychologist, so I have my Ph.D in counseling psychology and I work at a university here in New York City providing therapy for students at the university. So my day-to-day life has definitely shifted what with being at home, but we're still doing therapy through Zoom.

So I essentially provide short-term therapy to students that are coming in and that have any concerns ranging from stress about navigating higher education, any family stuff, relationships, people that have maybe anxiety, depression, I also work with a lot of students that are international students that also often come in with some of their experiences navigating being here in the U.S. and differences from being back at home... Usually our sessions are 45 to 50 minutes, every other week... I also have a part-time private practice where I see people weekly, and this is more long-term therapy.

ON YOUNG PEOPLE

Adolescents react to the world they are living in and there's a lot of expectations we put on young people. As soon as you start looking more mature, or you're getting to a certain age, there's all these expectations about what you should be doing and how you should be doing things, and we sometimes forget that those are still young people, they need support, they need guidance and they're going through their own identity formation at that age. So they're going through a lot... They're having to navigate family life, social life, having new independence, trying different things, finding their communities, so I think a lot of the misconceptions sometimes with teen-agers, like "Oh, they're being dramatic, they're just being teen-agers," and it's like actually, there's some developmental things happening around that age that are really important for us to be on the lookout for, as parents, as adults, to listen to them, to know that they're going through changes, physiologically, biologically, and even your brains are being developed still...

I think people they see you, or see us, growing so fast, right, and in their mind it's like "Wow, they're mature, they're adults. They're getting old." And it's true, but we're still in some ways young. And even as adults we treat adults and teen-agers in a very, I

think, harsh way... Be patient. Be gentle. Be in some ways, understanding. Just because we look older doesn't mean that we completely know what to do all the time.

ON BEING "CRAZY"

Whenever someone goes to therapy or seeks out mental health treatment, I think there is a stigma of like, that person is crazy, or something is wrong with that person. And I think I hear that a lot more in communities of color, which is something that makes sense given that historically how much the field of psychology has been hurtful to our communities, so we have a distrust, I think, of the mental health field for good reason... What I usually tell people is that "No, you're not crazy. You're responding to whatever is going on and we all respond to things going on and we all experience them differently..."

Sometimes people do seek out therapy because they have a lot of more serious mental health conditions like schizophrenia, bipolar disorders, things that would warrant a different type of treatment, but most people go through life, if you're a human being chances are you have some stress, anxiety, depression. And anyone would benefit from seeing a mental health therapist. But you're not "crazy" for seeking out mental health treatment.

DEALING WITH THE CURRENT TIMES

One of the first things I always say, when I'm trying to talk to people is, letting them know, "Whatever you're experiencing right now is okay. Some of us may be feeling very scared, very anxious, very sad, angry, overwhelmed because this is really something that we haven't really experienced before, and there's a lot of uncertainty, so we're all going to go through our own experiences of emotions, or range of emotions. There are days you might feel really good and days that you don't feel good at all. And that's okay.

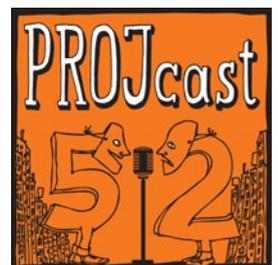
I think in some ways that I tell people that,

one: just honor whatever you're feeling, listen to what's going on because that's your body and mind in some way giving you clues about what they need. Maybe it's rest. Maybe it's talking with someone, maybe it's doing something that doesn't require a lot of effort. And also telling people that, as much as we can, trying to establish a sort of routine, because all those little things that we were doing before like, I think of myself, like walking to the subway, listening to music, seeing my co-workers, getting my coffee. All those little things are no longer accessible for some of us... So... establish a routine at home, if you are at home, where it's like waking up at the same time, going to bed at the same time, getting ready, putting on clothes even if you're not going anywhere... it gives your body a sense of routine, so it's really important to do something like that to give us some structure....

And the other piece is taking the time to shut everything off. A lot of information, that we're hearing in the news, through social media, it sometimes can be just too much and, it'll be there if you just say I'm gonna put my phone away for two hours... that's really important right now because we're getting so much stimulation... we need to give ourselves a little bit of a break and rest... We're all experiencing something, we're doing it together and it also feels very isolating at times. We need... to keep taking care of ourselves so that when things return to whatever this new normal is gonna be, that we know we're gonna be okay. 5

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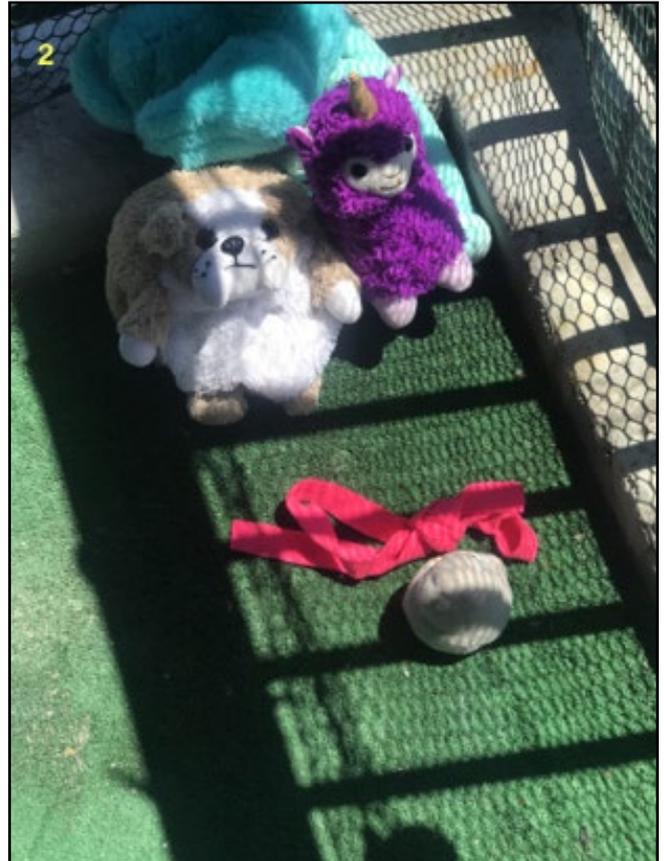
From Rivals to Emperors!

by Cassandra Sinchi & Olivia Gilliatt

Once, in a land far away...



Flamingo: Guards, no need to strangle this hamster. Little Chungus, I accept your peace offering and in return I will give you this ribbon of friendship. Use it as you may wish but be careful not to lose it! The next one will be little Chungus accepting the offering and attempting to wear it! He will then be given the Llama as a horse so he can look more intimidating!



Little Chungus: I do not think you need guards since I am no threat, I accept this ribbon of friendship and plan on wearing it so you do not lose me!

Meanwhile, elsewhere in the galaxy...



Captain: Mount an aggressive attack? No need! This planet will never know what hit them. The Flamingo Dominion and Small Rodent Empire have been at war for years -- they'll NEVER notice if a teeny weeny group of hearts invades their planet and infiltrates their systems... Mwahahahaha!



Random Heart: I don't know if we should attack those two empires, the Flamingo has two powerful guards and the rodent is a master of stealth. Won't our army be defeated immediately if we challenge them, this attack won't be so secret since you gave them a declaration of war yesterday.



Captain of the Heart Army: Are you doubting the power of our army? What makes you think we will not be able to defeat a rodent and a flamingo with his two minions? Our attack will be stealthy all I sent them was a poisoned apple, that can be taken for many interpretations.



Captain: Random Heart, we do not want you here if you are beginning to doubt our ability to defeat such weak empires, you must go far away from our army and never come back!

Random: No! I cannot leave, I care for this army that is why I am saying we should not attack those two empires please let me—

Captain: Enough, leave!



Flamingo: Wow, Little Chungus! Nobody has ever managed to successfully negotiate a treaty in hamster/flamingo history! I do believe this will be the key to World Peace.



Little Chungus: I know! This day can't get any better and what's best is—



Runaway (formerly Random) Heart: Please don't hurt me! I have come to tell you news, the heart army is after you! They plan on bombing your empires soon! Before you ask why I'm here I got kicked out of their army, all I want now is to show them what they are planning is wrong!



Little Chungus: That does sound like terrible news but I don't buy it the heart army has hated us for a long time, for all I know you could be a spy. So we will keep you locked up but Flamingo what should we do?



Flamingo: I agree with you the heart should be locked up but I have an idea on where the heart army's headquarters could be! Dragon I need you to go to the forest nearby and if you see the heart army don't be afraid to smush em!



Captain: Tanks? Check! Nerf Guns? Check! Great looks like everything is ready to go it's time to raid this empire! Don't hold back this empire has only brought trouble to us, taking away our land and food just because we stole it!



Army: We are coming for you rodent and Flamingo!!!

Captain: Don't think you can stop us this time! We are—



Captain: Huh? When did this dragon get here, thing identify yourself! Where are you from? Who serves you?



Big Draggo: Nobody serves me! I am here to protect the Flamingo and Little Chungus at my own will! I will not let you pass!



Big Draggo: Stay away from my friends!
Heart Soldier: Uh oh, we are out of ammo, this dragon is going to kill us!!!
Captain: No it can't end like this! We were so close!!



Captain: I can't believe we were forced to retreat, we already lost some members I swear we'll get em next time!
Random Heart: Sir...I don't think we can our tanks are damaged beyond repair and we are injured, we also need something to get rid of that dragon.



Flamingo: Ah hah! We finally caught you, after years of attacking Little Chungus village we will give you a punishment greater than imaginable, Little Chungus what do you think?



Little Chungus: Yeah! I suggest we make these hearts live their lives in a house so they can't bother anyone anymore!



Flamingo: What?! Put them in a house, they invade your land and ruin the soil there and you want them to live a happy life? I prefer we decapitate them once we find out where their heads are.



Little Chungus: No that's such a brutal punishment, it only makes us no different from them! We should keep them in a house where they can no longer harm anyone, I kinda feel bad for them...they wanted land to live on and I think giving them what they want will silence them...



Captain: Despite getting babied by those two empires they finally gave us what we wanted, but that doesn't mean I will get them back - Mwahahahaha!

The Small Heart In The Mailbox: No we shouldn't get revenge we already got what we wanted! Plus that big dragon scared me what if Little Chungus and Blue Flamingo let the dragon actually kill us! It's too comfy to start another war!!!



Captain: Oh boy I can't wait for us to enter this house, it's looks perfect, just think of all the stuff we could do!



Captain: Is everyone ready for the doors to open because I can not wait!



Big Drago: ...Yes?



Captain: Ahhhhhh!! It's that dragon that almost killed us earlier! We don't meant any harm this is the house Little Chungus and Blue Flamingo gave us!!!



Big Draggio: What are you doing here? This is my home not yours I'm pretty sure Little Chungus got this all mixed up!



Captain: No, this is our home. Little Chungus repeatedly told us this is where we will live! I don't want to start a fight but I suggest we all have a better relationship with each other so it will be easier to live together.



Small Mailbox Heart: We can't live with this beast! He'll kill us all!!



Captain: No, this will work out. The dragon knows that if he hurts us he will be severely punished!!



Small Heart:
I think I could
get used to this!

Flamingo:
Me too.

Big Dragger:
... Me three!

Everybody: And that's how the empire of The Big Three began!! 🍀



DEALING WITH THE THREAT OF CORONAVIRUS

KAI CENIZA INTERVIEWS HIS MOTHER, YVETTE

Yvette: Hello, there. I am your mother. My name is Yvette Fernandez. I am a mother of six children. I have five daughters and one son. I was born May 4, 1967. I'm a single mom; single working mom. What else would you like to know?

I clock in to work at 7:45 every morning. I put the coffee on... before that I already took my shower and everything, and the first thing I do is put New York One. Yeah, I like to know what's going on. I always like to be aware of what's going on, especially because I leave the house three times a week. I like to know what's going on out there. You know, the weather; and the update on the Coronavirus. I like to know that the numbers are going down. You know, I'm very afraid because of my condition. When I first heard about it was when it was hitting Wuhan and I'm old school, so the first thing I started doing was telling my friends and family, "Start buying canned goods. You know what happens; people panic. And they buy everything out of the stores. It sounds serious. Eventually it's going to get here because of travel. People always travel here."

Kai: Can you name a few people?



Kai and Yvette

Yvette: At work. Some co-workers. Some people who were saying I was scaring them. Even your own sister. I told her about it and she laughed at me and she goes "Mom, we're never gonna run out of stuff. Why are you saying these things?" 'Cause they call me a hoarder when it comes to food, because I like to be prepared. That's my mentality. Because I remember as a little girl in 1977 when we had a blackout, people went bonkers. And that was only for a few days. They were breaking into stores, and look how long this has taken. I'm surprised that, y'know, with so much unemployment people haven't gotten buck-wild. I guess because we're not allowed outside. But I've seen a lot of things growing up and I guess I have that mentality of just hunkering down and being prepared for the worst. I mean, I have candles and stuff for a blackout. I mean, I raised your sisters on my own, so I'm self-sufficient. Because I have so many children, I have a bad habit of over-buying food, so we were set with that.

Kai: How are you gonna look back at this in the future?

Yvette: Um, this is major. I mean, I remember 9-11 like it was yesterday. To me this is big,

this is a big thing. We lost a lot of lives, you know, and it's scary, because you don't know if this thing is coming back. They're saying that it may come back in the fall. And then they're saying that people with immune systems, they have an immunity. How do you know? When you have the flu, you get the flu again next year! (Laughs) You don't have an immunity! I mean, the shot helps you from different strains, but the flu has so many different strains, how do you know it's not gonna mutate? So you have to be prepared for everything.

Kai: Let's say God forbid you contract the virus. What are your thoughts, reactions? What would you do?

Yvette: Well, the first thing I'd do is sit your sister down, and email your sisters, all your sisters. I'd give them all the passwords to my bank accounts, you know, whatever they need. Um, I'm afraid that I won't survive it, so I want to prepare, I need to make sure that you're okay, that you're taken care of. Of course I don't want to get it. Of course you never know what's intended in life. You could be walking down the street, a car hits you. You don't know what life has in store for you.

When you were first born, I got high blood pressure, you know, it was due to the... it's hereditary. Which is okay, that's the only medication I was taking. When you were young, I started having back pains, and I was having trouble getting up from my bed and at first they told me it was a nerve and it ended up being a cyst in my back and I had surgery and I had it removed. But after the back surgery, I noticed that I was still having trouble walking, and I've always worked, so it's very hard for me not to get around. So I went back to the doctor, and they referred me to pain management, and pain management was giving me many medications for pain, and for nerve pain, and for swelling, and for this and that. Well, eventually, after a year of medication, I noticed that I was swelling

up. So I called my main doctor because I was concerned, and he called me in and he asked me what medications I was taking and I told him, and it so happened that I was overdosing on like, an ibuprofen-based medication so I ended up damaging my kidneys. So now, they tried to fix it. After that, I still had problems with my back. I finally went to Columbia and they told me that I needed back fusion because I was gonna have trouble walking, because it was if like my back was broken. So, I went in for the surgery and after the three months, for my follow-up, when I went back in, they told me they couldn't believe I was still walking 'cause all the screws came out and I needed to get reopened and the surgery done again. So I went through a major depression, I didn't want to deal with anybody and during this time I was still going through this treatment of them trying to get my kidneys working again, but they couldn't so right now I'm currently on dialysis three times a week for four hours each day. I go after work, Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays.

Well, I actually see a pulmonologist. Because of my dialysis, I have more conditions now, and now I have a heart condition and I have congestive heart failure so I have pulmonary problems, too. And when I went to see my pulmonologist before... when the Wuhan stuff started, he had told me "Oh, don't worry, Yvette, it's just like a flu." And I had already had gotten the flu twice and they kept me in the hospital for it. That's how bad it was.

Kai: 'Cause your immune system is low.

Yvette: My immune system is also compromised. Correct. So I looked at him and I said "Well, you know, that doesn't sound... I mean, are you sure?" And he goes, "Yeah, yeah, it's just like the flu." Remember, nobody really knew about this Wuhan thing. Everybody assumed it was gonna be like the flu. But I still was very careful when I went to work. I made sure to let my HR know that I

have a compromised immune system and if it's possible for me to work from home. So I was one of the first people that left the office to work from home, because of my condition.

Kai: So, what specific precautions have you taken?

Yvette: I used to work in the hospital system for over 14 years, so I'm very aware regarding germs. We had some Purell. We didn't have a lot, but we had some. Jasmine, your sister, and I we made some Purell with aloe and alcohol. We have a lot of Lysol, we try to disinfect the doorknobs. I have a lot of alcohol pads. I wear masks when I go out, I wear gloves, disposable gloves. And I stay away from people. 'Cause even though I have a mask, I don't trust.

Kai: I recall talking to you about it. Didn't someone from your dialysis unit have it?

Yvette: One of my nurses...

Kai: Had the Coronavirus.

Yvette: Actually, first it was a patient and we get these papers informing us that... going forward, they were going to be checking us before we had dialysis. Checking our temperature, and asking us questions to make sure that we don't have a cough, that we weren't around anybody that traveled outside of the country. I noticed that one of my regular nurses wasn't around, and when she came back I asked her "Hey, what's goin' on?" and she informed me that she had the virus and that she had gotten over it but she still couldn't taste. It takes away your taste buds.

Kai: It does?

Yvette: Yeah.

Kai: I didn't know about that. Compared to your past hardships, where would you rank the Coronavirus, the quarantine right now?

Yvette: I don't mind being on quarantine.

Kai: It's not that bad, right?

Yvette: I don't mind being at home. I always

worked, all my life, so this is like a break because I'm not traveling, I'm not taking the trains. And I can do my job through, via computer, so it's okay, I'm fine with that. I don't have to rush. That stress of the commute is gone. You know what a big difference that is?

Kai: No people just yelling...

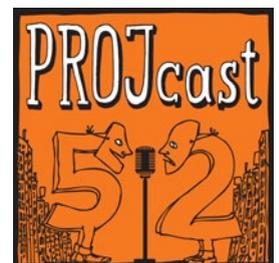
Yvette: Nobody bothering you, you just do what you gotta do, my work is up to date. I'm fine, I'm fine. Wherever there's a con, there's also a pro. Look at the environmental part of it. The Earth is doing so much better. The waters are getting cleaner and the air is less polluted. If you think about it, hey, you never know, it could have been thrown out there saying, "Hey, you're killing me. You're choking me. I need a break here." I don't know. Everybody has their own ideas. I think it's natural.

You know what? I'm not gonna let it keep me down. I still listen to my music. I'm still always laughing. I'm doing my arts and crafts... You know what? You just have to enjoy life, Kai, because truthfully, you don't know if you're gonna not be here tomorrow. You need to enjoy the time that you have now. Try to do your best; at least when you leave, you know that you did the best you can do. You lived a good life. I know that I'm happy, I'm calm. I have the most beautiful, wonderful children in the world. God blessed me. And I can't complain. I can't complain.

Kai: Thank you for doing this interview with me. ⑤

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GALLERY

PHOTOGRAPHS BY DARBY O'DONNELL AND SARAH JOHNSRUDE



Body-less Old Guy, by Darby O'Donnell



Compost by Sarah Johnsrude



Sleep Paralysis Demon by Darby O'Donnell



Kernels for Emily by Sarah Johnsrude

THE BREAKFAST CLUB **REVISITED**

A candid discussion by Sarah Lopez and Lynne Marie Rosenberg

The Breakfast Club, made in 1985, was an extremely popular movie that was beloved in its time, made millions of dollars, and turned its five young cast members into stars. But how does it look from today, 35 years later? Sarah and Lynne took a hard look at the film and discussed it on Zoom.

Lynne: So, Sarah, you and I both watched *The Breakfast Club*.

Sarah: Yes.

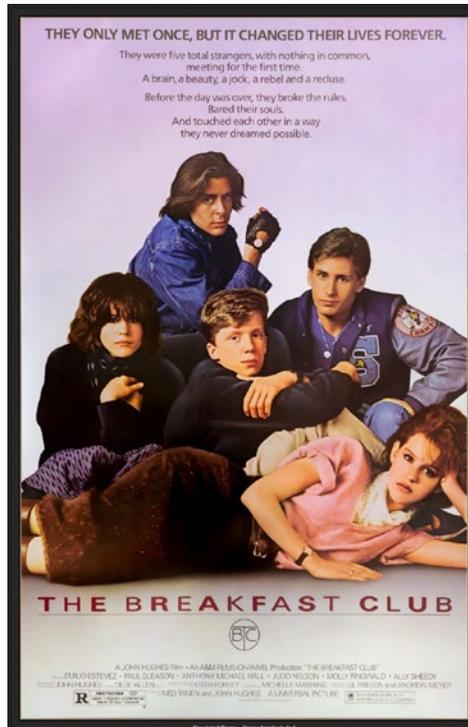
Lynne: I took notes. I have a page of notes, because I have a lot of feelings about this movie.

ON STEREOTYPES

Lynne: Something that I'm interested in your opinion on was like the really kind of specific boxes that each character falls into in terms of high school stereotypes. To my eyes they're doing that intentionally, but I don't know that they break through that enough to make them really human people. What do you think?

Sarah: Well, like when it first began I could tell they were doing it on purpose to sort of like show - I thought it'd be like a film where like they all like start off with their own stereotype and toward the end they all become friends they all sort of like break out of those stereotypes. But in the end they were talking about how they - they would never say hi to each other in the hallways. It sort of like drove me away from like that ending. Those kind of stereotypes they're not like as alive as they are now.

Lynne: Do you think so?



Sarah: I think so from what I watch - they're there but they're not as heavily as encouraged as they were.

Lynne: Yeah, do you feel like, like in your experience of school there is a less - there's a more nuanced allowance of person - that people don't have to be stuck in these roles necessarily?

Sarah: I mean like, absolutely. Like the difference between the popular kids and the not so popular kids it's still there. But there isn't like the jock, the princess, the prom queen or like the dark emo kid - there really isn't like anyone like that.

Lynne: But you know what's interesting? Is that, even if that's not your lived experience, you just listed off - you knew exactly who they were so like where did that come from?

Sarah: From the films we watch. These films are just like that. Also it's in books, I think it comes from books a lot. Oh, that book I was reading, *Two Of Us Are Lying...* Please note I just pulled it out of nowhere.

Lynne: I'm very impressed.

Sarah: Thank you. Like it talks a lot about like the prom queen. As much as you wouldn't



ON REPRESENTATION OF WOMEN AND SEXUAL ASSAULT

Lynne: Also, I was really bothered by how much casual sexual assault there is.

Sarah: Oh, my god!

Lynne: Yeah can we talk about the way the women are dealt with? 'Cause like -

Sarah: It was crazy.

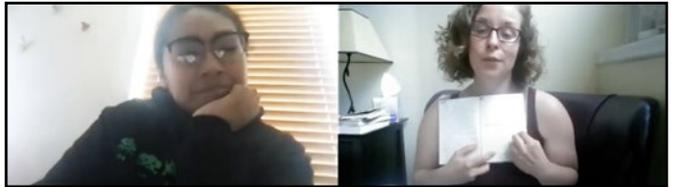
Lynne: Yeah! That he could just sexually molest her and everyone's like ha ha ha.

Sarah: She never said anything! She never even seemed bothered by him!

Lynne: The opinion of the movie doesn't seem to argue against the way he's treating her. He LITERALLY sexually assaults her!

Sarah: I remember that scene.

Lynne: And it's just like ha-ha-ha she closed her legs on his face. Like, no! That is sexual assault!



Sarah: I'm not sure 'cause I wasn't alive in the 80s, if sexual harassment or like molesting people was like a big thing, or if women were still forced or it was preferred that they not speak about it.

Lynne: I think you nailed it, I think it was not talked about the way, in the last 10 years or so we have started to - well, less time than that - but the way we've really started to talk about it and say, hey this is completely unacceptable.

So that leads me to what drove me completely bananas about the way the women are dealt with in this film. Well, two things. One is, the most either of the two women speak in the entire movie is when they're talking about men or talking about their sexuality. The rest

want a stereotype like that to be alive, it still is even if it's not like visible.

Lynne: Well it's funny because it sounds to me like you're saying the in-person experience of school you're not experiencing this, but that we're still writing about it, we're still representing it in film and television.

Sarah: Oh, we so are.

Lynne: It's an interesting question to me to ask: if this isn't really how life is, why do we keep representing it back to ourselves?

Sarah: Well that's a good drama, like a good juicy drama. That's where like - you're not gonna get something like that without going into - into dividing people. If you divide people there's the drama, everyone's being separated, then you go like, there's this group versus this group.

Lynne: So do you - that's really interesting - so the use of stereotype and the use of regurgitated representation is a device for conflict? Is an easy device for conflict in stories, that's what you feel?

Sarah: Absolutely.

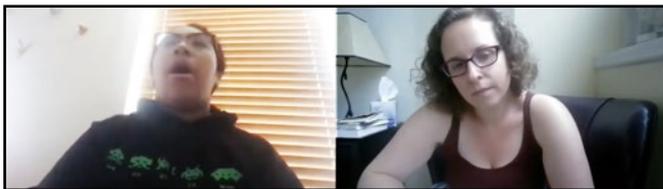
Lynne: That's so interesting. I've never thought about it that way. Cause then it raises the question - and you as a writer this is a question for you to think about - how do you do the "not lazy" thing? How do you write nuanced characters that aren't these rehashed stereotypes and still get interesting conflict?

Sarah: That's something a lot of people are struggling with. Something that's still being explored currently. I think it's really hard - to write something without having to divide people without having to label people under categories. Or label them under stereotypes.

of the time they kind of don't talk.

But then the other thing - what did you think of the end where the Allison character gets a makeover and suddenly the jock is super attracted to her?

Sarah: Ha! That was so stereotypical first of all. It just blew my mind how these characters they force them to follow such crazy



stereotypes. But it also reminds me - each time I saw it I try to remind myself - this was this time period, which doesn't really justify it but makes sense why it is this way.

Lynne: Yeah, I mean I agree with you I think there is an aspect of it that it is a product of its time. My issue, especially with that ending with Allison, is the movie seems to be trying to show that people are not their stereotypes, that they're like more than that or nuanced than that, but then the big, big finale is that she falls deep into this female stereotype! And I think it, you know it was made and produced by a man...

Sarah: I know!

Lynne: ...and I think there's some real misogyny to that movie.

Sarah: Yeah, and there were some stereotypes with Claire. If you notice just alone with what she was wearing or the way she talked.

ON THE FILM'S REPRESENTATION ISSUES IN GENERAL

Lynne: I think especially in this moment right now where we're really talking about injustice - and obviously we're talking about injustice about a different subject right now but it makes you think about it I think in many different ways - and of course I'm always thinking about representation. We didn't even

talk about the fact that it was a whole lot of white people!

Sarah: When you put in all the aspects of under-representation from both women and both women of color and both people in the LGBT community you really get into how this movie is not good at that.

Lynne: I can't remember what the quote is but it starts with something that sets it off as, "This is going to be a tale about what it means to be a teenager." But of course what it is is what it means to be a teenager who is cisgender, able-bodied, straight, white, you know and the closest thing to any sort of difference is Allison, and then by the end she's just like everybody else, right? She goes back - she basically becomes what's her name.

Sarah: Claire.

Lynne: Claire. I can't remember anyone's name.

Sarah: That was horrible I didn't like that at all. When you put it in all these aspects it's not good, it's not a good film. You can call it sexist, you can call it racist, you can call it so



many things, you know?

Lynne: This is why people get mad at me because I ruin movies for them even if they enjoyed them.

Sarah: I would be angry at you if it was a movie I really liked, that I was actually passionate about. But I'll shade this movie as much as you want.

ONE FINAL THOUGHT

Lynne: You know you're not represented in that film.

Sarah: Exactly. 🍷



ARIEL ESTRADA

KAREN TINEO INTERVIEWS AN ACTOR AND MARTIAL ARTS CULT SURVIVOR

Ariel: When I was 20 years old, I started training in this Indonesian martial arts called Poekoelan, and it ended up being... had all the hallmarks of a cult. I was too young really, to know about it or understand what kind of an organization it was.

I didn't come from privilege. A lower middle-class family, I went to school on scholarships and lots of student loans and working my butt off at 80 hour a week jobs to work my way through college on top of a full course load. I double-majored in theater and music. And doing Poekoelan at the time, just training all the time. And, I was very afraid. I was, in a situation where I didn't really have anybody supporting me. I was also not out of the closet at that point... At that point, it was dangerous to come out. You could not get a job, you could not get health care. All these terrible things could happen to you, still, if you came out as gay. Now, I don't know how much you've studied about, or how much you know about what the culture was like for

gay men at the height of the AIDS crisis... I started coming of age when AZT was just starting to come out... a drug that made AIDS a manageable disease, at least

for a certain sector of the population with privilege, right?... At that point, AZT was just as bad as the disease. It was killing as many people as it was helping.

When I entered the martial arts school for the very first time, when I was 20, I saw a picture of one of their black belts and a candle in front of him and, my "gaydar" immediately went off. I knew that man was gay in that picture; and I asked the front desk receptionist "Who is this person?" and she of course confirmed who this was: he was an openly gay man who was dying of AIDS who was one of their black belts. And I was immediately hooked, because I had always wanted to train martial arts, and I knew on some level, that I wanted to learn how to empower myself, and defend myself, because I felt so disempowered....Having the benefit of hindsight, of course, I didn't know what I was feeling... Feeling now, I know I was feeling then, actually, was fear. And the lack of a place to belong, and then Poekoelan gave that. For a while. And then it got really weird and terrible. It was ALWAYS weird and terrible, but as often happens in cults, you just sort of get indoctrinated. Slowly you



get deeper in. And of course, that's what then happened to me.

It sure starts out with a good story, right? With the premise of helping people. The premise of how she (the founder) was running the school was she was openly lesbian... Most of the senior students in the school were women martial artists. Many of them were survivors of rape and domestic violence who were using self-defense and martial arts training to empower themselves and heal from their trauma, but then in practice, it got really bad. Not the least of which was the pyramid scheme stuff.

As I'm sure you read in some of your research, cults are often known by the control over the lives of the members of it by the person who leads it. Pretty extreme financial duress that they put their members under. Weird repetitions of the psychological traumas that these people had already been through. Rather than empowering these people, it ended up for many people, in fact, I would say ALL, a repetition of the things they had gone through that brought them to the cult in the first place, but it just had a nicer face. That's what so seductive about cults. It gives you very easy answers to very complex problems... And also it's perfect for people who blame themselves, who have low self-esteem because of course they're going to say to themselves "Oh, it's MY fault that I have alcoholism, it's MY fault that I broke my leg." It's so damaging and incredibly unhealthy and toxic.

I can tell you a couple of misconceptions about what it means to be in a cult...because again that was sort of the impetus of me writing the show, of my own solo show (*Full Contact*), because I was asking myself, "How did I get involved with this?" because I thought I was smart, I thought I was educated, I thought that I was stronger than this, right? And, that doesn't preclude that I'm a relatively smart guy, and it doesn't preclude

that I am strong, right. But again, that's not what cults do. They are designed to prey on your weaknesses and they're designed to prey on the weaknesses of even the strongest people. That's what they're for, that's why they work. I think one of the biggest misconceptions about people in cults is that they are somehow uneducated or too dumb to know better.

Cults prey on your own fear and they prey on your own insecurities. And you don't have to be wealthy or poor to have insecurities or to have fear...

At my deepest point in the cult I was on the National Board of Poekoelan. I wouldn't say I was a decision-maker, that's for sure, but I was doing a lot of work to try and spread Poekoelan because I was so enamored with the thought that I was helping to spread this empowerment. But I will say, even at that point I had begun to have had doubts. I had so many doubts, actually. And again, this is fairly common among most cults, is that people that who are in it, will feel a lot of doubt; that they're afraid to leave. Again, a very toxic situation where people don't want to leave. It's Stockholm syndrome. You know that term? It's a Stockholm situation where people become their own jailkeepers. And they are afraid to leave a situation they know is bad for them. But they stay, because they are too afraid of what else is going on on the outside. It's not lost on me that the more comfortable I became as a gay man in New York City, the more like I felt I could leave, gather the strength to leave. I don't think I could have gathered the strength to leave unless there had been a significant amount of liberation happening. Or the gay community.

I'm 50 now. I stopped training seriously somewhere between 40 and 42. So I've been out of it for like, 10 years now. But it's taken me this long to feel relatively comfortable about even talking about it...

Being in this cult for 20 years also ruined

my body, or it did have a significant toll on my body. I had two hip replacements. My shoulders have both been reconstructed, both my knees were reconstructed. Just from the wear and tear that my body took... I also had significant concussions over the years. Occasionally I will notice that "Oh, I don't remember things very well."

I started writing the show about two years ago, a little more than two years ago, at this point. It took me eight years to get to the point where I was ready to even talk about it, because I did a lot of suppressing of it, actually. Saying, "I'm fine! I'm fine! I'm absolutely fine." And it was not fine... What's common with a lot of solo actors who are telling these very deeply personal stories is when they're first developing the piece, it is traumatizing. You are reliving your trauma that happened to you, not just once but over and over again.

I remember the very first day I did a section of it. I got a development residency at an organization called Barn Arts in Maine... that culminated in doing the first 20 minutes of the show. It was mind-blowing. I could feel something shift in me that hadn't shifted in eight years. It was scary...

After that first workshop in Maine, I couldn't touch it again for six months. It was too painful to look at again. And then I managed to look at it again six months later for another writing residency. And then I did it again another six months after that. And now I've done it in three months. The most immediate workshop that I did was just a few weeks ago.... so I'm getting shorter and shorter periods of time in between! I can tell I'm getting better because I'm able to recover a little faster from writing it. As I'm getting a closer to something I feel that is real. It's fun being an artist...

One of the things that you begin to become in tune with as you get more experienced as an actor is sort of like, "Oh, is the audience with

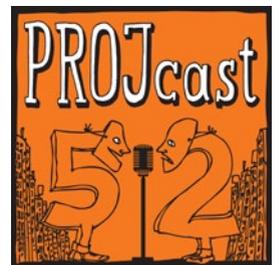
me? Are they not with me?" The audience will always be with you when you're telling the truth. And then the audience will always NOT be with you if they sense that you are B.S.-ing. And that is one of the magic things about live theater, and one of the things I miss most of all about the times that we're living in right now, in quarantine, is that we don't have that wonderful connection that we get in live theater where there is an immediate exchange of energy, and truth, and a dialogue about that truth, going back and forth, and it's happening in the moment, it will never be seen again, and even if you record it, it still doesn't come through...

Creating art is the most healing thing I have ever done, and particularly in terms of my solo show, but working on my solo show has also made me a better actor when I'm using somebody else's words, when I'm telling somebody else's truth, what they're writing, because I know what it feels like when I'm telling my own truth... when you're an interpretive artist, like an actor doing a play and acting somebody else's words, being genuine, having integrity, all those things matter so deeply. 5

This is just an excerpt from Ariel's interview. He had a lot more to say about his life, his art, his family, his experiences with racism, and more. Watch for the longer audio version when it appears in the Projcast later this year.

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HORROR COMPILATION

BY FAITH VILLANUEVA AND ANNABELLE COUSINS

We decided to set up a Zoom call and do something out of the ordinary called SFX (Special Effects) make-up. Since Annabelle did not have the supplies, Faith did a tutorial!



STEP 1: OUTLINE!



STEP 2: TWO-FACE MAKE-UP #1



STEP 3: APPLY LIQUID LATEX & COTTON WOOL



STEP 4: APPLY FOUNDATION



**STEP 5: ADD SCAR
WAX ON OUTER EDGES**



**STEP 6: APPLY
RED & BLACK FACE PAINT**



STEP 7: BLENDING & EYE SHADOW



STEP 8: ADD FAKE TEETH AND BLOOD

BOO!!



JUST MERCY

A REVIEW

By Jayleen Velez and Daiva Deupree (Jayva)

*I'm going to start off by saying that I cried 3 times during this movie... yeah, I know. I don't really watch movies based off of true stories because I feel like they're hard to keep up with but this movie was so interesting and it was easy to keep up with. I was so invested during the whole movie which is not what I was expecting at all. **Just Mercy** tells the true story of a man from Alabama named Walter McMillian who was put on death row for a crime he did not commit. There was evidence that McMillian wasn't the person who did it yet many cops, judges, reporters, etc., decided to proceed with his sentence. Bryan Stevenson, after just becoming a lawyer, was determined to get justice for Walter despite the many obstacles he faced.*

-Jayleen

SPOILERS

How would you say your privilege has affected your everyday life?

Daiva: My privilege has affected my everyday life in so many ways. I only have to worry about getting pulled over because I don't want to get a ticket, I never ever have to worry about dying. I get treated differently in stores and airports. Everywhere. There are too many ways to even count.

Jayleen: Although I am hispanic, my skin tone is enough to get the privilege that not everyone gets which sucks but to answer the question, I don't have to worry about getting stopped when walking out of a store, or getting pulled over when I drive, or even walking in the street. That kind of weight isn't on my shoulders.

What part of the movie affected you the most?

Daiva: I think Herbert's execution hit me the hardest. I was kind of a mess. And the part where they strip-searched Brian.

Jayleen: Definitely Herb's death. I cried so much because I knew how unfair it was and how much he didn't deserve it. Ray had said that Herb fought for this country just to get treated like this and it was 100% true.

Would you say this movie is realistic to what's going on in present time or what's been going on for many years?

Daiva: It's been going on for years and years, unfortunately.

Jayleen: Yeah, it's realistic to a certain extent. It definitely has been worse in some situations but it does show how racism could affect someone's life, career, family, etc.

Do you think the end of the movie was satisfying just because Walter McMillian got justice?

Daiva: No, because there are so many others just like him who don't have anyone to help them.

Jayleen: It was satisfying when he was set free but I didn't feel completely satisfied because there were still so many people who didn't belong in there and so many people who lost their lives for no reason. It was unfair and frustrating.

What are your feelings on Herbert's case?

Daiva: It's complicated, and I truthfully didn't totally understand exactly what happened. But I do think vets need rehabilitation after going through what they go through.

Jayleen: Herbert's case hurt me the most in the movie. He fought in the war and was diagnosed with PTSD but didn't get the proper help so he killed a girl because he wasn't mentally stable. Yes, killing someone is obviously wrong but if he would've gotten the help he needed, it wouldn't have happened. Herbert was executed by electrocution. He stuttered and hesitated a lot and you can see how much he was struggling. It hurt the most when he got the letter of them setting his date.

Have you ever experienced a time where your privilege has gotten you out of something that a black person wouldn't be able to get out of due to their skin color?

Daiva: I haven't ever really gotten into anything, but every time I set the little alarm thing off as I'm leaving a store, and they just wave me through, I think about how I might have a much different experience if I were black.

Jayleen: I don't think I have.

During the movie, Bryan Stevenson faced so many obstacles and had been turned down by the court, officers, etc., a countless number of times. Did you ever lose hope and think he should give up?

Daiva: No, but I could understand if he wanted to.

Jayleen: No, because he was very determined to get justice and make a change but I could see why he would.

The movie took place in Alabama in the 1990's, how do you think that affected the McMillian case?

Daiva: That's a really good question, that I don't know if I know enough to answer. It's a generalization, but I imagine things like that happen worse in the south.

Jayleen: Definitely. People are much less open minded in the south as well as during that time period in general.

Eva put her family's life in danger to help Bryan, do you think that was the right call?

Daiva: It's a tough call for sure, but that's what people have to do if they want to stand up for what's right.

Jayleen: Eva said that she didn't want her son to grow up knowing that his mom quit on something that was right and she's making a great example for him. It was scary but it was worth it.

A line that stood out to me in the movie was said by Walter McMillian and he said something like "we're guilty the minute we're born." Were there any lines that stood out to you?

Daiva: That whole entire speech.

Jayleen: The line I said above, "we're guilty the minute we're born."

Why do you think Mr. Chapman decided to side with McMillian and drop the charges?

Daiva: I don't know, actually.

Jayleen: That's the only part that I wasn't too sure about.

How did you feel when we learned, in real life, Ray was set free after 30 years on death row?

Daiva: It's heartbreaking.

Jayleen: Of course I was happy for him but I was mainly annoyed and frustrated. It was annoying how he spent that many years away from his family for nothing. How 30 years of his life was thrown away like that.

What would you rate this movie? would you recommend it?

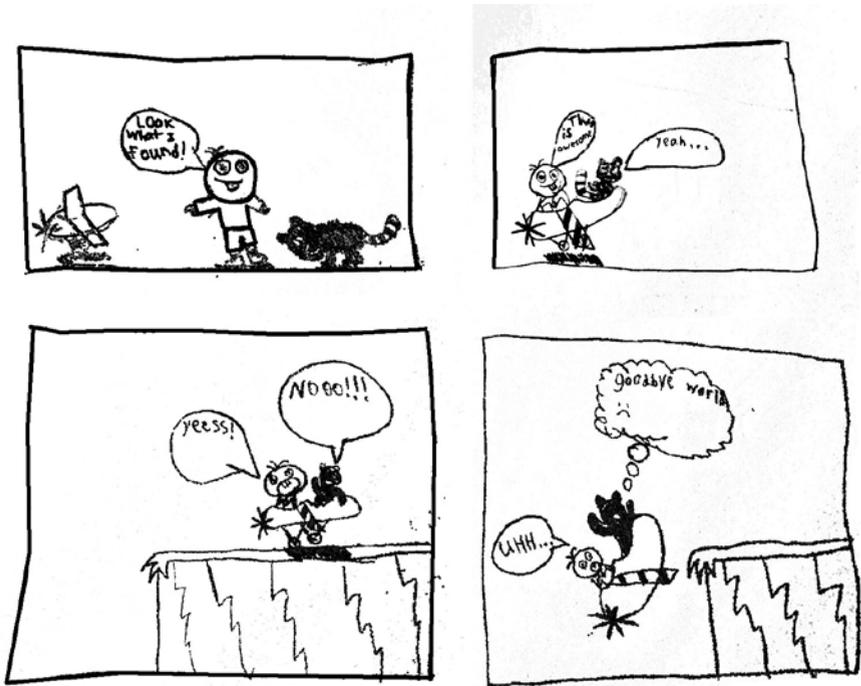
Daiva: I would highly recommend it.

Jayleen: I would rate this movie a 10/10. GO WATCH IT!!!! 5



GALLERY

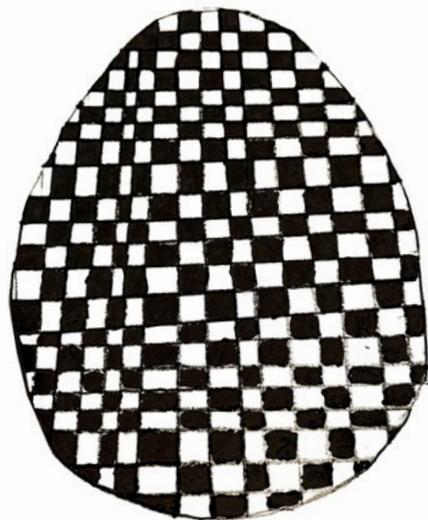
SAMPLES FROM OUR VIRTUAL ARTMAKING CLASS



Finding a Plane, 4-panel strip by Aidan Vasquez



Imaginary TV Show Art, Laila Suero Loyola



Patterned T-Shirt and Patterned Easter Egg by Evaluna Santoni

A SOCIALLY DISTANCED INTERVIEW

SMART PARTNERS
HANNAH LEON AND
HELEN CESPEDES
ASK EACH OTHER
ABOUT THE
QUARANTINE

Helen: What is your favorite part about distance learning?

Hannah: Umm...that I don't really have to participate. Umm... they don't have to call on me. I don't really have to talk if I don't want to.

Helen: What is your least favorite part about distance learning?

Hannah: Going to class. "Is the commute really tough?" No...just class. At least now I can draw without them catching me. "What do you draw?" A lot of random things... umm...sometimes me and my brother do challenges with each other like drawing octopuses or weird wording formats like 3Dish.

Helen: How have you set up your "work space?"

Hannah: Ah, so I mostly use my brother's side of the table to do my work because it's usually the cleanest so I usually take my laptop to his side of the table. All I really need is my laptop but if I'm missing something from class I just ask my brother to get it for me.

Helen: What is your morning routine? Do you get dressed? Do you take a shower? Do you wear your pajamas to school?

Hannah: Well, if it's a school day, I wake up and, of course, I change into an "appropriate-outfit-pajamas." I usually brush my teeth and eat breakfast and I usually check my emails before I log in to BlueJeans (a video conferencing app - Ed.) and when I log in to BlueJeans it's mostly my teachers annoying me but sometimes I annoy my teachers.

Helen: So do you wear your school uniform?

Hannah: Uh no. Well, we don't have to if we don't want to. I just wear a different shirt that I go out in and my sweater and I keep my pajama pants.

Helen: What is something you learned about a family member while everyone is at home?

Hannah: Hmmm...that's a hard one. I would say...that...my family sleeps way much more often than I thought they did. And...I'm starting to think I have insomnia because I can't sleep at all...

Helen: You can't sleep?

Hannah: No. I guess I'm just on my phone too much.

Helen: I'm so sorry.

Hannah: It's ok. My logic is messed up. But, the way I think of it the more time I'm up, the more time I have in the day.

Helen: What is something you learned about yourself while being at home?

Hannah: I don't sleep as much as I used to... or, as I should. Besides that I guess that I paint a lot. I picked up some of my hobbies like art and painting. Something to pass the time. I've been painting a lot of random things. Like cards or canvases. I'm trying to paint a whole deck of cards. And I'm trying to paint on paper, which hasn't been working out so well. Paper isn't strong to hold.... Oh, I paint landscapes sometimes and the sky, which I like. I paint a lot of things like this. Acrylic paint is more helpful. I sometimes paint with watercolors but it's much harder.

Helen: How do your pets feel about you being at home so much?

Hannah: My dog just sleeps most of the time but I think she's happy that she gets more attention



Helen and Hannah.

now. And, My snake just sleeps. Nothing much has changed there. I do play with her more. But, there isn't much difference except that she's growing a lot. She's really big. We might have to get a new tank. She's longer than the tank.

Helen: What is something you cooked while being "quarantined"?

Hannah: Empanadas. Yesterday we had corned beef empanadas. And, another time we had just regular cheese and egg empanadas, which was really good.

Helen: What do you do to relax?

Hannah: Mostly do anything that relates to art. Or just...watch art videos on YouTube which are very relaxing and calming.

Helen: What is something you are excited to do or someone you are excited to see when the social distancing restrictions are lifted?

Hannah: Probably my friends and my school overall. And actually going outside. The actual world once this whole thing is over. I've only been outside once since this happened. And it's kinda weird...feeling the actual air made by nature itself. My parents usually go out to get stuff that we need and my brother and I just stay home.

.....

Hannah: How do YOU feel about quarantine?

Helen: I feel that it's really important that we all stay at home to keep each other safe. And, I feel really lucky that umm...I have a comfortable home and shelter to be safe and healthy in. And, I feel so so grateful to the essential workers who are continuing to go to work every day to keep those of us who can stay at home healthy and safe.

Hannah: What have you been doing to keep yourself occupied?

Helen: Well, I've been doing a lot of catching up with friends on FaceTime or Zoom like we are now. And, I've been umm...revisiting a lot of writing and creative projects that I had put on the back burner while I was busy with acting work. And, I've been doing a jigsaw puzzle that I just completed except for one piece that I somehow lost even though I've barely left my home. SO...I blame my cats. I think maybe one of them ate it... or maybe they're just hiding it from me to watch me have nervous breakdown.

Hannah: What food have you tried or eaten so far?

Helen: I've been eating a lot. Hahaha....And cooking a lot. This is the first time in a long time I've cooked all three meals at home...so, I've been getting creative. A lot of different things with beans and rice because it's cheap and lasts and is tasty. But, the thing I just cooked because I wanted some comfort food was a Chocolate Banana Bread and it was BALLER. It was so good.

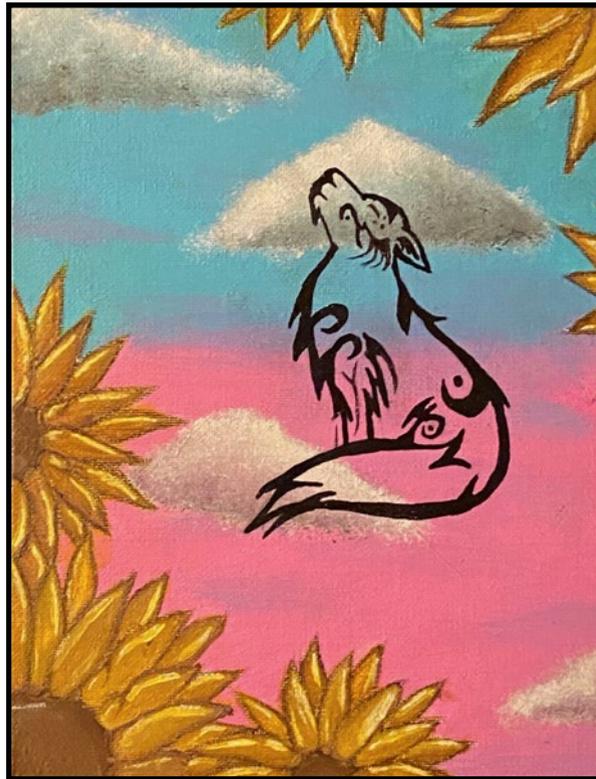
Hannah: Did you pick up any hobbies?

Helen: Ummm.... well, besides jigsaw puzzles which is a continuing passion of mine...I've been baking a lot of bread... which

is something I started doing a couple years ago and it's been really useful to make my own bread so that we have bread but also it requires some attention and then long periods of time so it's a great thing to do when you're at home all day because you can go back and knead it every 30 minutes to an hour. so that's been really fun to do.

Hannah: What is your favorite animal?

Helen: I love dogs. I've always loved dogs. I've spent my whole life wanting a dog. I have two cats and no dogs. My husband and I have been talking about adopting or fostering a dog for a



One of Hannah's paintings



long time and in certain ways this feels like a good time to do it because we're home all the time so if we had a puppy we could give it all the attention that it needs and the monitoring and care. But also, that means that many more times that we would have to interact with other people or the outside world. So, we'd have to go in the elevator that much more often to take the dog down. So it seems like...not the responsible thing to do right now...to adopt a puppy and have to be going out more than is needed. But, definitely dogs. Dogs are my favorite animals.

I also love penguins. When I was little I had two little stuffed animal penguins I called Baby 1 and Baby 2... umm. I was not very creative with the naming. But, I was obsessed with these two penguin stuffed animals and now I have two tuxedo cats...so, they're kind of like penguins. They're also very Puppyish cats.

Hannah: If you were to go anywhere you wanted where would you go?

Helen: I think right now I've been feeling a strong desire to be in nature. So, I think I would go to a national park. I've never been to Yosemite or Yellowstone or Glacier....one of these big national parks where you can really take in nature's majesty. I think that's where I would go...right now.

Hannah: What is your favorite book genre?

Helen: I really like coming-of-age stories...I like to watch a protagonist go through experiences and challenges and overcome them. So, I think I'm really drawn to those kinds of stories....of watching someone go through a period of growth.

And I think that's probably because I feel like I'm always going through some sort of period of growth and always learning and trying to come out the other side of an experience. So, I think maybe that kind of story really resonates with me. That's such a good question!

Hannah: What is your favorite color and drink?

Helen: My favorite color is always changing.... Until recently I've really loved a rusty pink color. Pink with a little bit of brown or terra-cotta in it. And my favorite drink....I love a grapefruit seltzer. Which is also kinda pink-themed. So yeah...a grapefruit seltzer and a rusty pink.

Hannah: What is your favorite show to watch?

Helen: So, for comfort..I return to *The Office* time and time again. Something about that show just makes me feel good. I think it's really funny and really well made and really well acted. It's very real without being a downer. But, I did... like everyone else... watch *Tiger King*... this documentary on Netflix and I have to say that was pretty riveting. It's about these real people in the US who breed and keep Big Cats (lions and tigers and panthers). Some of it is legal and some of it is not...and it is wild. Let me tell you. America is a strange and vast place.

Hannah: What is your favorite clothing design?

Helen: I tend to gravitate towards what I guess would be modern Japanese kind of design. The sweater I'm wearing right now is from a Japanese chain store called Muji. I also like Uniqlo. Solid colors, simple lines, almost like a uniform and I find that very calming. I like to dress up sometimes but I don't think I'm someone who puts a lot of thought into expressing themselves through their clothing. I tend to go for comfort rather than expressing something particular about my personality. So...yeah....modern Japanese design...but that's coming from somebody who knows NOTHING about fashion. So... maybe somebody who knows about fashion will be like "what are you talking about modern Japanese design is not Muji and Uniqlo, you stupid American." ⑤

SPYSCAPE ADVENTURES

From Xavier Espinal's P.O.V., edited by Ronald Peet



I ran down 8th Ave. and whooshed into the vestibule through the front door after being paralyzed from confusion about where we were meeting (I thought it was at **The 52nd Street Project**, Ronald thought it was at the **Spyscape Museum**.)

I stumbled into the lobby, spotted Ronald,

and then we were greeted by a lady at the front desk. We got cool wrist wear that held our electronic identities and I was convinced that if we failed the missions we would explode. We put our stuff in our locker (don't tell but the password was ****) and were escorted to the first of many electronic question stations where we scanned our wristbands and confirmed our identities through touchscreens. We followed our guide into a huge elevator that told us about the facility and what Spyscape is. The elevator played an introduction that was broadcast on the walls. When we arrived on the next floor, our guide told us how the question stations worked. OKURRR THE QUESTION IS HOW MANY OKURRR CAN CARDI B CURRR IF CARDI B OKURRRR PERIOD. JKJKJKJKJK.

Some stations had questions about us and our personality, while others had math questions or games. We entered the activities like a starving man to a banquet. We both aced our mission to save the limping lady (a famous early 20th century spy) by decoding words.



We next had the challenge to deceive a lie detector. Ronald, unlike me, aced lying to the detector. I, sadly, blinked twice and smiled (dead giveaways of deception.) Then we had to decide when the person being shown to us on a screen was lying. Ronald failed tragically and got $\frac{1}{3}$ incorrect and I did worse and got $\frac{2}{3}$ incorrect.

A few question stations later, we were faced with looking at multiple camera feeds. We had to tell the commanding voice in our headset what was happening in each camera feed and which person/thing the voice mentioned was in which feed. There must have been over 10 screens all playing at the same time, in a 360 degree layout!

Next up was the highlight of the whole event: the Special Ops Laser Tunnel. We had 75 seconds to hit as many buttons as possible in this dark tunnel with buttons lining both walls and lasers shooting across the space like something out of "Mission Impossible!" The goal was to hit buttons that were lit and to not hit any of the lasers. The buttons would go dark once we tapped them. We had to crawl and stretch in order to avoid the lasers hitting us. I only got hit once but Ronald got hit twice. You can't win them all, as they say. My button hitting average was 1.6 buttons per second and Ronald's was 3.1 buttons per second. He was faster but sloppier, so...

After that we got to find out what spy role we were best suited for, based on how we did on all of the challenges. Ronald went first and got "Intelligence Analyst: An expert who gleans crucial insights from intelligence." I was up next and got the same thing!!! Soooooo I guess we are well-matched, both as SmartPartners and as spies. 5



Maria's First Manicure! (and Marielle's Millionth)

A Smart Partner Adventure to Nam's Nail Spa in Hell's Kitchen
By Maria Alcides and Marielle Young

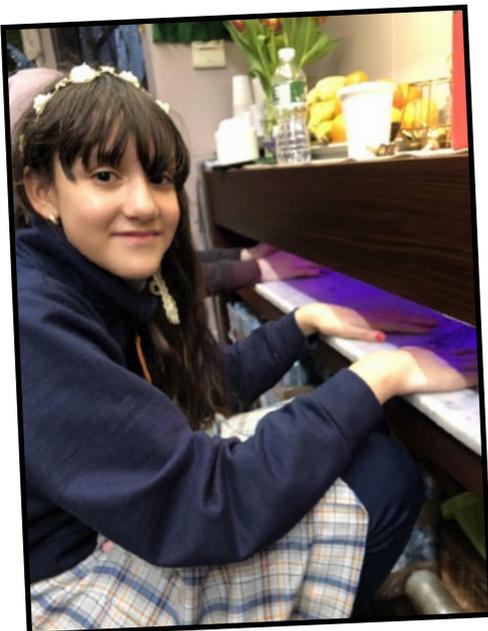
On a very rainy winter day, we walked to Nam's Nail Spa on West 46th St. for Maria's first manicure... EVER! We were greeted with some tea and chocolates. Thankfully the tea warmed us up because we were shivering from getting wet even though we had umbrellas!

Maria: Step one was we had to pick out our colors. Let me tell you. There were a LOT of colors to choose from.

Marielle: I was extremely indecisive (as per usual!) so Maria picked out my color for me.

Maria: I picked California Coral... something like that. I know it had something to do with California in it.

Marielle: Maria picked a matte metallic pinkish beige color for me. Thanks, Maria!

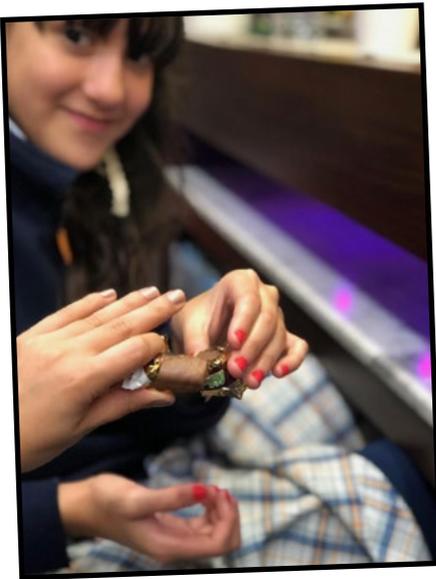


Maria: While getting the manicure, I didn't expect it would hurt a lot! Well, for me.

Marielle: Maria didn't know what cuticles were and if they grew back, but I assured her they would. She now reports they have grown back "a little bit" but only on her left hand.

Maria: I hated staying still. I cannot stay still. But you have to stay still when they are at the part where they paint your nails.

Marielle: Yeah, we definitely had to adjust to staying still because we had both been talking the whole time during our manicures, but Maria had to focus once the painting part came in.



Maria: While drying our nails in the machines, we were given more chocolates and other delicious treats to enjoy.

Marielle: They even have fruit (I ate a banana!) that is complimentary. Such a sweet touch!

Maria: While sitting in the drying chair, they gave us a back massage that lasted at least a minute. I hated every second of it.

Marielle: It was so funny watching Maria's face while they gave her a back massage. I loved my back massage! But Maria was ticklish!

Maria: When our nails finally dried, it was sadly the end of my first manicure experience ever and we had to say goodbye.

Marielle: We picked up our wet umbrellas and the nice woman at the front helped us put our coats on to protect our nails.

Maria: After that, we went back to **The 52nd Street Project**, worrying if our nails would get destroyed by the rain. Luckily we made it back safely with no harm to our gorgeous nails.

Overall review: We LOVED Nam's Nail Spa. The nice touches there that are definitely unique are the chocolates, fruit, tea, treats, and back massages while your nails dry. Rating: 5

Is Maria going to get her nails done again after her first manicure experience? She says: "Maybe when I get older." Stay tuned to find out! 🍪



ESCAPE TO CENTRAL PARK!

By Tiffany Yam and Sarah Quigley

When Tiffany arrived at **The 52nd Street Project Clubhouse**, Sarah was waiting for her. The sun was streaming through windows onto the patchy squares of the Project carpet: it was golden hour! After we got ready, we left the Clubhouse and ventured off toward **Central Park**.

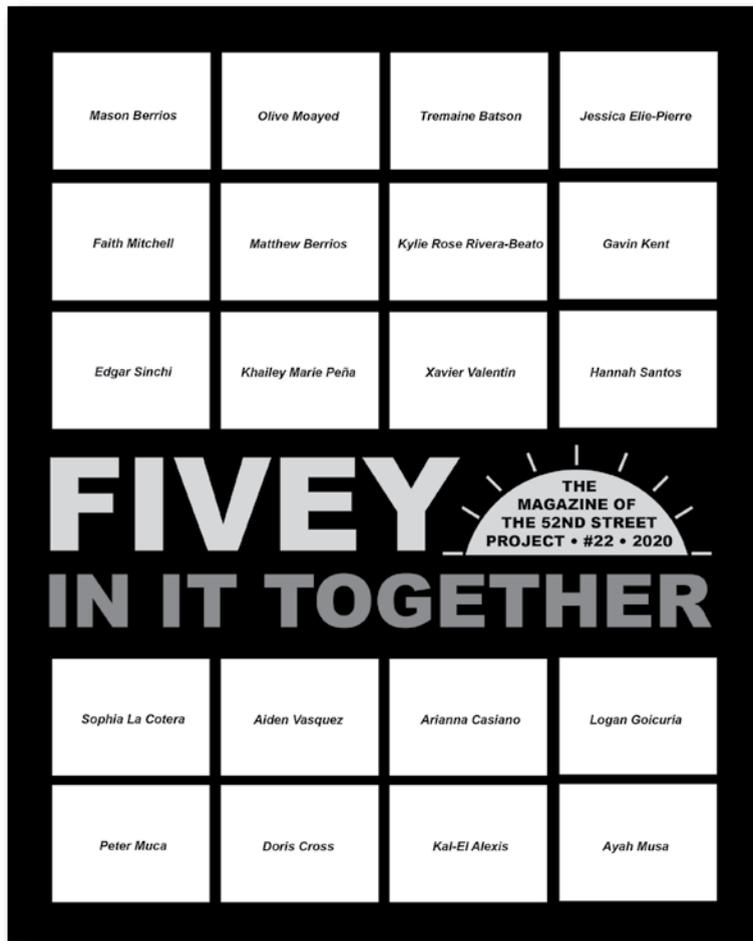
And suddenly—we had an idea! We decided to get Fro-Yo from **16 Handles**. Sarah couldn't seem to locate this particular Fro-Yo location on the map, so Tiffany took the lead. We went into the underground train supermarket thing and there it was! In all its sugary topping-filled glory: 16 Handles. Tiffany decided on Chocolate Fro-Yo with M&M's. Sarah took much longer deciding, so many flavor and topping combinations! She finally chose Coconut Fro-Yo drizzled with raspberry sauce.



As we ate our ice cream we walked over to Central Park, where we spotted a gigantic rock. Sarah exclaimed “let’s climb it!” We climbed to the top of the rock, finished our ice cream, as we looked at the blue sky. It was a beautiful day in New York City, and it seemed that everyone in the park had the same idea as us. After finishing our ice cream, we ventured further into the park where we found a pretty bridge. We spotted lots of dogs on walks, and squirrels on a mission. As we left Central Park, we spotted an old building that looked similar to a jail cell—but upon closer inspection we discovered it was just a bathroom.

As we strolled back to the Project, the sun in our faces, we passed by a few Project friends on the street—including **Natalie Marshall Hirsch!** Then we reached the Clubhouse and our adventure was over. Until next time, of course! Stay tuned for our next adventure post-quarantine, when Sarah attempts to teach Tiffany how to ride a bike! ⑤

WHO'S WHO ON THE COVER?



The young people you see on our front cover are 20 of the most recent inductees into the Project; the youngest, newest members of our organization. These are the children who are really missing out this year because of the Coronavirus pandemic of 2020. Some of them didn't see their first plays produced because of the Spring show cancellation; others will not be able to go on one of our trips to the country this summer. Since we can't treat them to these programs, we thought we should, at the very least, honor them on our cover.

The 52nd Street Project salutes you, youngest members! And we hope to make this year up to you in the near future!

Cover photography, design, and layout by George Babiak.

To see this issue (and all previous ones!) in full color, download it from our website: www.52project.org.

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