


Snyder Bat-Tweets a glimpse at Bat-Fleck

By Matt Reed  May 13, 2014



Yesterday, Zach Snyder revealed on Twitter a teaser for the new Bat-mobile in the upcoming *Man of Steel* sequel *Batman vs Superman*. Not gonna lie, you couldn't see much. However, peeking out from under the grey tarp is the rear-end of what looks like a 80s or 90s era Bat-mobile, complete with Bat-fin and Bat-rocket booster. Of course Zack Snyder held up to his promise on twitter and he revealed the Bat-wagon but that is not all. We also get a glimpse of good ol' Ben in full Bat-fleck mode. The slight glimpse of color of the Bat-mobile shows that Snyder is borrowing from the Bat-tumbler found in Chris Nolan's *Dark Knight* Series. The Bat-tumbler was a very cool concept Nolan borrowed from Frank Miller's *Dark Knight Returns* comic mini-series back in the 80s. However, I always liked the Bat-mobile more as a car than, well let's face it, a Bat-Tank.

Bat-Fleck looks a little big, he looks ripped, let's just come out and say it, he looks badass. What I like most, however, is how it doesn't look like some kind of high-tech armor, more like some kind of composite fiber that is almost reminiscent of the *Batman: Animated Series* cartoon from the 90s.

What I see in this picture is a lot of influence from a wide verity of comics and cartoons. The short cowl ear fins are reminiscent of the silver age cowl; the costume is from the old cartoon, the Bat-Mobile looks like a cross between multiple different Bat-Mobiles. I have come to really respect a lot of Snyder's work. He is a real fan of comics and he seems to put a decent spin on a lot of his comic-based films that show his passion, and this Bat-Picture gives me hope for this Bat-Film which is of no Bat-Surprise.

Twitter Link: <https://twitter.com/ZackSnyder/status/466249462348644352/photo/1>

A Tribute to Dad

By Lisa Hirst ◉ May 15, 2014



It was an early Saturday morning and the beautiful array of fall colors seemed to gently line up one by one, as they fell gracefully from the trees that once held them into place. The sturdy oak tree with vibrant green leaves had begun to grow weary from the years of harsh winters and scorching summers. At first glance, we may observe just an old tree that's lost its vigor and needs to be removed from our yard. In our haste, we may miss the depth of beauty within each and every orange and yellow leaf that the tree has allowed to fall from its branches. Suddenly, my eyes welled up with tears as I glanced at an amazing eighty-four year old man, sitting hunched over at the kitchen table sipping warm coffee slowly from his favorite worn out cup.

At eighty years old, you may think that my father is frail, sickly or perhaps unable to move. Quite the opposite, my dad has always been of a strong athletic frame that at one point could lift me onto his shoulders in a pool, as I dove into the water. Granted, those days of lifting me onto his shoulders are gone, but nonetheless he is blessed with a hearty appetite and walks quite well with his cane. My dad has bright blue eyes, rosy red cheeks, and the warmth of his hugs still feel as if I had been wrapped in a wooly blanket. As I looked across the table sipping my coffee, my dad and I began to reminisce about life and how the unseen hand of God has continually blessed our family and brought us through some very difficult times.

I asked my dad what he values most in his life and he stated that providing and caring for his family the best that he could was always his top priority. I witnessed the truth of his words throughout my life, as I saw him work an eight hour shift, sleep for a few hours and then return back that evening to work a second eight hour shift. His deep love and compassion for my mother still amazes me, because a marriage that lasts for 53 years is not something that just happens. In fact, my dad stressed to me that, with five children it took the grace of God and a strong commitment to my mother to make it through.

It is very evident to me that a strong commitment to God and to others will continually bless the generation after us, if we are willing, like my dad, to fight for what is right and if we never give up. My dad grew up with a loving mother and father when, at five years old, tragedy struck his family. His father was killed in a car accident and his mother had to raise my dad and his brother alone. My grandma also chose to give her children a strong faith and Catholic upbringing and worked very hard to do that. Although stricken with the death of my grandfather, my grandma chose to fight for the very best life that she could give to her children.

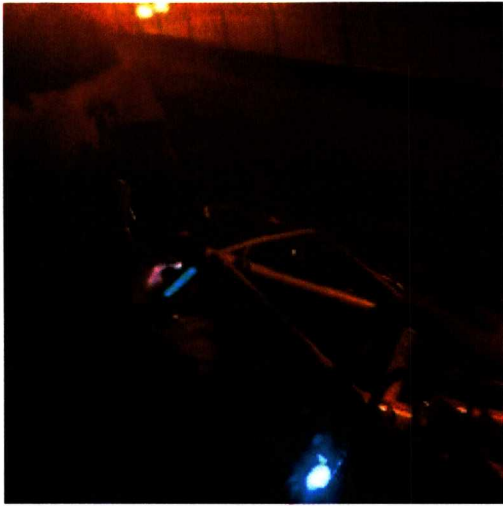
My dad attended Chaminade Catholic Boys Prep school and went on to St. Louis University. He worked at Anheuser Busch, when he met my mother and chose to give up college so that he could pursue a marriage and a family with my mother. My dad stayed on at Anheuser Busch for 45 years until his retirement in 1998. Because my dad chose to work hard and was so committed to my mother and his family, my mother was able to stay home to care for me and my three sisters and one brother. The depth of love and sacrifice that my parents chose to give to their children has led to nine amazing grandchildren, two of which were adopted from Russia.

My dad was in the Korean War, experienced the death of his father and his mother, was committed to his wife and children for 53 years, consistently went to his place of work for 45 years and has endured many struggles and triumphs within his eighty years on this earth. He simply states that his only regret is that he wishes he had finished college and been able to spend more time with his family.

I'm sure that you can see why my father is so very special to me and how strongly I value him, but I'm not sure that everyone values our senior citizens within our society as they should. In a world of microwave ovens, technology and the quick paced schedules that many of us keep, we often miss the array of colors that are so beautifully displayed through the life and legacy of our senior citizens. I hope that I have encouraged you to put away your busy schedule, turn off your computer and to share a cup of coffee with a senior; you may just see a beautiful orange and yellow leaf blow your way.

Bike St. Louis

By Tyler Fernandez  May 15, 2014



In the Spring of 2005 the City of St. Louis, introduced an organized entity entitled “Bike St. Louis,” to the public. The aim of the project was to connect all of the City Parks across the Metropolitan area through cycling paths. Since 2005, the city has seen a dramatic increase in cycling popularity and its number of bikers.

For most of St. Louis City dwellers, cyclists are the annoying, brightly colored, spandex clad nuisances that take up unnecessary space on our roads and cause unbearably slow traffic, a hypocritical reputation I assign to them when I get behind the wheel of my car, considering I am a biker myself. “Stay on the sidewalk! Get out of the road! Your ponytail makes you look like a fag!” are some common insults. For most St. Louis City dwellers, bikers are like ants invading their picnics. But there is an unexposed culture behind cycling that most do not see. A culture that is rich, raw, and strange.

When my friend Alex told me he was going on a bike ride one night in June of 2013 I was confused and intrigued.

“You bought one of those fancy Tour De France bikes? How could you afford something like that?” I asked.

“No, no,” was his response. What he showed me was what could only be described as a 1970’s ten speed. A black, Motobecane, ten speed. My skepticism was high that evening.

“Got this for 90 bucks. I’ve been riding with Rob and his crew for about two months now. I’ve never felt more in shape, or had this much fun in a long time,” Alex told me. I was under the impression that he had turned into one of those aforementioned 20 point pedestrians.

“So what do you do on these rides?” I asked mounting his highly positioned seat.

“We get really drunk,” Alex said simply.

“Where?”

“In the parks. At 12 at night.”

On a straight-away stretch of road between Kingshighway and Vandeventer is a district called “The Grove,” a hot spot for the homosexual and hipster community in St. Louis. Middle-class restaurants and bars, music venues, and curio-shops are the cores of this area. Business is aimed towards craft beer drinking, menthol smoking bikers with funny 1950’s haircuts and curly moustaches. They come in swarms to 80’s night to check out the up-and-coming indie-rock and folk bands, and to show off their bikes. These were the skater and punk kids from your high schools, these were the mall rats and metalheads from middle school. If you had ever wondered what happened to them, well they grew up and have transitioned from their dying Chevy Cavaliers to their Bianchis. They’ve become the bartenders and clientele of this street.

Handle Bar is known as The Grove’s most popular bicycle bar. Serving as a verdant haven for the cycling community, Handle Bar adorns its walls with retired bike parts, a bar counter with gears embedded into the wood working, and a vending machine that sells inner tubes and sealant. Outside is a large yellow sculpture of one of those bicycles with an obnoxiously large front wheel. It serves as an iconic bike rack and a climbable statue for Instagram selfies.

Cyclists gather for two dollar New Belgium pints on Fridays and Saturdays when the weather is nice. And on Saturday nights the St. Louis favorite “London Calling,” event has its happy home on Handle Bar’s dance floor as speakers, projectors, and laser lights produce remixes of 80’s songs. Outside of the bar is “The Meat Master of Manchester,” a man of exquisite grilling capabilities. A dreadlocked, tattooed, pierced chef, the Meat Master grills up succulent sausages and blackened brats for The Grove’s drunken patrons. From his little cart he commands a lucrative business that has riders making a journey from Soulard all the way Central West End to meet this man and get a hold of his meat.

A few times throughout the summer that Alex introduced me to biking, I had the chance to ride with him and a few other friends. In the months that followed it seemed like everyone was getting a bike. Old Schwins, Fujis, Cannondales, and Motobecanes appeared in my friends' backyards, all of the bikes matched the personalities of their owners. I got stuck with the spares and the decaying. We would meet at Alex’s house around 11 and start our night long journey from South City, up the city streets, down to SLU’s campus, across to the West End, through the Loop and then back down on our way to The Grove. In the darkness and seclusion of Forest and Tower Grove parks we made our way into the trees to smoke hookah and drink the case of Miller High Life or PBR we had purchased on the way there.

Laying in the grass staring at the black sky the nights were cathartic and full of camaraderie. We would make our way downtown to gaze across the city-scape from the top of parking garages and then down to the riverfront to watch the sunrise at 6 am on the banks of the Mississippi. Our wheels carrying us and our legs straining to reach our destination.

My initiation into the biking community came on a Tuesday night in August when “The Fucking Bike Club” had its monthly moonlight ride. This also happened to be the last one for the season. A Facebook group/page “The Fucking Bike Club,” is a community of warm hearted and welcoming St. Louisans that ride together. Hipsters, athletes, and sometimes basement dwellers gather in South City and pick up more and more riders as the night goes on. The mob may reach 200 riders in an hour. Each monthly Tuesday night ride, is themed ranging from movie characters and Victorian England, to the infamous “Naked Bike Ride” night. I happened to attend my first on “dapper gentlemen night.” I had been running late and when I finally caught up to the group I found Alex sitting upon his bike in nothing but his briefs and a necktie painted in Sharpie on his hairy chest. In drunken bliss he handed me three

beers and celebrated my arrival.

“It’s this kid’s first ride, let’s goooo!” he cheered and the crowd around us screamed in excitement hollering like troops ready for battle.

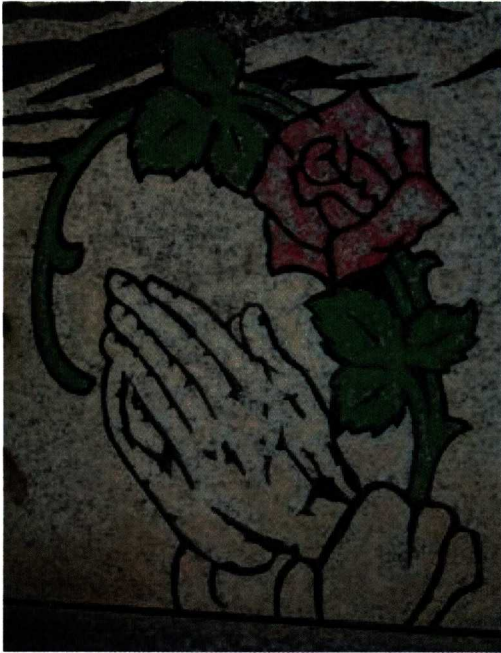
That was almost a year ago, I still don’t really consider myself to “one of the riders” yet but I have purchased my own bike. A bright gold Motobecane, made in France (something that I learned determines its value.) I now ride my bike to school and always get the same questions and funny looks from my classmates when I tell them I’ve just rode 9.2 miles in less than an hour. “I couldn’t do that. That’s insane,” and my favorite, “why don’t you just drive?” But where is the fun in that? The wind in my hair, the freedom to take any road I want, my music blasting in my headphones and the satisfaction of exercising while I accomplish something makes a ride worthwhile. I’ve been at Handle Bar almost every weekend since March and my friends and I are becoming regulars. Since then Alex has upgraded his ride to a project that’s worth about 2,000 dollars. A white track framed, Motobecane with a red wheel set and a shiny red fixed gear. A sight to behold. When we first started riding I asked him, “what’s all this about?”

“Riding? Freedom, friends, drunk, I don’t have to worry about getting in a car and risking my life. I don’t worry about parking. I get in shape. And it’s free.”



From Addict to Recovery - A Spiritual Journey

By Sean Pellegrini ◉ May 15, 2014



I have a friend who I met on campus about 18 months ago, who I will name Theresa. Even though she is older than me, we became instant good friends. She tells me stories about when she grew up and how things were. She talks to me about her past and her family that died over 30 years ago. She has all kinds of wonderful stories to tell me about her parents, her grandparents, her children and past spouses.

She has lived a pretty hard life emotionally and at one time was an alcoholic and drug addict, but she has been in recovery for over 25 years now. She is not a traditional student but she has accomplished much at Fontbonne. She started at Fontbonne in 2012 and has been a straight A student in Social Work all the way through as well as being in two honor societies. In about 2 weeks, she will graduate with a BSW with high honors and she is very excited.

But her life has not always been this good. She was raised by two severely alcoholic parents and lived with a lot of violence. She attended Catholic school and went to church 6 days a week. She told me that she believes that her spiritual life saved her from going totally insane.

When she reached her teens, she began drinking and using drugs heavily. She stated that many times she should have died but believes a Higher Power protected her. She said she lost all belief in God and turned away from church for about 20 years. Then, in July of 1988, she hit an emotional, mental and spiritual bottom and sought help at a treatment center in St. Louis. She then joined Alcoholics Anonymous and is a member to this day.

She was told to find a power greater than herself to turn to in AA but she had trouble believing in a God who let her down so many times in the past. So, she used her AA group as a power greater than herself. Here was a group of alcoholics staying sober together and she could not do it on her own. So,

she made the AA group her Higher Power for about the first 5 years of sobriety.

As time went on, she began to believe again in God and returned to her Christian roots. All went well for many years. She met the man of her dreams, married, and had two children.

But one day, out of nowhere, her dream husband decided to leave. Then, her job was taken away. Try as she might, no job was forthcoming. She had a home to pay for. She lived on unemployment and found a female room mate. Things were very bleak for her. She saw no end in sight of the bad things that continued to happen to her. She knew that alcohol and drugs would not help but she once again lost all faith in God and AA. She related to me that the only option she could see was suicide. She had major depression and no health insurance to seek help or medication.

As time went on, she got thinner and thinner and cried 24/7. She still continued to go to AA almost nightly as she did not want to be alone. Eventually, with many people praying for her in and out of AA, she began to reach out and try to help others who were trying to get sober. Within a year, she felt much better.

She then enrolled in community college and finished her Associates degree in Human Services. From there, she went on to Fontbonne to obtain a Bachelors in Social Work.

Today, she speaks to people about recovery. She lobbies legislators in Missouri, and once in Washington, DC to help heroin addicts. She has made videos and been featured in brochures to help expand Medicaid in Missouri. Things she never dreamed of doing in her life, she now does.

She attributes all of her successes to God and Alcoholics Anonymous. She believes today that God takes care of all her needs. She still has her home, two wonderful roommates, three dogs and a host of good friends. She has recovery not only from drugs and alcohol, but even from cigarettes for almost two years. Again, she says God has done for her what she could not do for herself.

This lady is 59 years old and has the energy and enthusiasm of a young person. She is very open-minded about diversity, music and keeping yourself young-minded. Many have said that she is an inspiration to them. She states that if she can help just one person, life is worthwhile. And, that it isn't her, but God working through her.

Happy

By Sean Pellegrini ☺ May 15, 2014



“If you’re happy and you know it...” Wait, are you actually happy? Well, did you sing that part at least? Could you if you tried or does it only annoy you? If it annoys you, you must not be happy. Now, it is not necessary that you are happy while reading this, but being happy tends to make you happier. If you are not happy, do you know what you can do to change it? Maybe I can help.

I have been through a lot that could make me permanently unhappy, but I strived to make myself the happiest I can be. Growing up, there was not a day that I was not bullied at school. Other children hated me. They saw something in me that they just did not like: my perseverance. Sure, I suffered miserable times, but I always had hope that it would get better. Happiness comes from within. You cannot seek happiness from outside of you. You have to always see yourself as your friend. Talk to your inner-self to let your peace come out, and let yourself smile. Times may be rough, but there is always something to smile about. One thing that I do every day to instantly make myself feel better is get some fresh air. I open the windows to let in air during any season (not for long in the winter- I just open it slightly for a few seconds and just take deep breaths). But since it is late spring, I enjoy leaving the windows wide open in my home and only breathe air that was recently outside.

Dr. Deborah Phelps, a professor of Sociology, helps others relax in her classroom by hosting deep-breathing exercises every day before class starts. One can learn to relax and be at peace just only taking slow, deep breaths! If it is a sunny day outside, like many days are in St. Louis, take a short walk outside before you start the day. If I am not happy after the walk, then I put on some Zumba music and go work out! Dancing never fails.

Be okay with spending a little bit of time alone. I myself am an extrovert, but there are times when my friends can’t hang out. Luckily, I am never bored. I pursue what I know makes me happy: music and movies! I have my own laptop that I use 24/7. In the age of technology, there is nothing that I can’t do! I have apps that connect me to my favorite websites and videos. Everything is connected to each other, and that means that everything is connected to your own happiness. If you let it, anything can make you happy and keep you satisfied. Connect with your passions. For me, my passions are acting and dancing. I have not acted in a play for a long time, but I have never stopped dancing (even without a choreographer). All throughout grade school I held the lead role in school plays. Some of my favorite roles were Charlie in “Charlie and the Chocolate Factory”, Jack in “Into the Woods”, and The Wiz in “The Wiz”. One of my passions used to be singing, and oh! How I could sing. I could not wait to sing my solo to the audience. It was so easy for me to do. Singing and acting were what I was meant to do at that point. When I reached high school, my focus has transferred to dancing. I did Irish

Dancing when I was in second grade, so it was wonderful to get back into dancing after ten years. When I came to Fontbonne, I was thrilled to have started my freshman year with taking Zumba classes. Some people enjoy running, but I prefer dancing. It is important for my health that I stay happy.

Smiling every chance I get helps keep my mood positive. I always smile regardless if I am having a successful day or even a day that seems somewhat boring. I realized that there are really no boring days. Every day is truly a gift. When the day is over, I am usually happy, too. Sleeping never fails to make me happy. I wake up in the morning refreshed, take my warm shower, and head to breakfast at Ryan Dining Hall. Doing those three things as my morning ritual constitutes a happy morning, thus making the rest of my day a good one. I remind myself daily how lucky I am to live during the day. I welcome the morning. I say hello to those who I pass. I make sure to don a smile for others in my presence. If I get just one person to smile back in the morning, I am happy. I feel the environment change. The world gets lighter as I see more smiles.

When the day gets rough, I go for a little walk. Just a little bit of movement helps. I love to walk around until my legs get tired. I sometimes write about my walk and the thoughts that I have during the day. Usually when I am on my breaks I think about my assignments for school. I try to get the daydreaming part about them out of the way so I can focus on my work when I get back. If I need to take a break, I do not deny myself the need. It is good every now and then to say “enough is enough” and free yourself from the day’s work, or even just for a few moments. A key to happiness is not overworking.

Smile! This article is over. Enjoy your day. Think about what you can do to improve your current state of happiness. If you are at work or school when you are reading this, go home! Get some rest. You deserve to give yourself time to do what pleases you. Listen to your environment. Enjoy the silence. If you are in a noisy place, tune the noise out. If you want to perk up your mood, listen to music with headphones on. If you are around friends, go talk to them! Live life with much pleasure. Embrace every moment. Be happy, my friends.

Hitting the Reset Button

By Matt Reed ↴ May 15, 2014



A current trend in American pop culture is the reboot. A reboot is the process of taking an old version of a film, comic, or song and updating it by adding to, changing, or recycling its original form with the advancements of technology that were not available at the original creation. This process has been a part of comics for a long time. The two major companies in the industry, Marvel and DC, have done this many times to update story lines or make characters more relatable to the reader. However, what is usually done is called a “soft reboot.” It’s a lot like just pressing the reset button on a computer; it doesn’t disconnect the story to the previous storylines, just resets the issue count.

This “soft reboot” is what Marvel Comics did in March 2012 with their new line of Marvel NOW! comics. What they did is not that extreme, having done this in previous story arcs such as *Iron Man: Extremis* (2005) and *Thor: First Thunder* (2010) which both retell the origin stories of the characters but eventually always flow back into the original count which exceeds the 600 issue mark for both characters. The significance of the Marvel comics changing to the new Marvel NOW! Comics is that the publication name has not changed since the 60’s when the company had gone from Timely to Atlas, and eventually to Marvel comics. This change could possibly stick, only time can tell, but for now it seems to be doing fairly well.

“I felt like I could jump right into Marvel NOW!” said one comic fan, Tim Keil. Tim is from the St. Charles area and he just started reading comics on a regular basis. Despite the resetting of the issue count, Tim said that the Marvel NOW! storylines for *Thor: God of Thunder*, *Nova*, and *Uncanny Avengers* gave him a “good anchoring point to get into the comics.” That being said, some lifelong comic fans find themselves more firmly in the DC comics’ camp with their “hard reboot” from September 2011, New 52. Where Marvel NOW! just reset their issue count, DC actually disconnected themselves entirely from the previous comics which occur mainly before the comic event (a major cross title event that brings the fictional universe together in a single storyline) of *Flashpoint*.


Alex Watson from the Florissant area said that he has had “nothing but good experiences” with the New 52 comic line from DC. However, the issue many comic fans seem to have with New 52 is the inconsistencies in character personalities and actions. For example, a lot of characters did not act like themselves in a recent story arc in the new comic event *Justice League: War*. In *Justice League: War*, Superman, who was always a conscience for many characters in the past, is brash and almost angst-ridden in the entire comic. Darkseid, a very regal and evil villain, is shown as primal and crazed with almost no sense of direction; blindly leading an assault on the Justice League and is dispatched much too easily. Batman, according to one comic fan, Darnea King, also from the St. Charles area, was

portrayed “very inconsistently” by revealing his always well-guarded identity to Green Lantern Hal Jordan after just meeting the character for the first time earlier that day.

“This is not the same universe, so the characters are not the same,” says Joshua Cheney, a lifelong comic fan and die-hard Batman fan. The argument Josh and some other comic fans are making with this inconsistency extravaganza is that the comic writers have completely severed ties with the previous comic universe and therefore these characters can have altered personalities. The problem with that is that the particular things that are being changed are what most fans liked about the characters. The side of DC that I particularly like, as a lot of fans have pointed out, is that the lower level characters, the “B and C list” if you will have gotten a lot of attention and have had some great storylines. Characters like Red Hood and the Outlaws, Nightwing, and O.M.A.C. seem to have good storylines and great characterization but this causes the major titles like Batman, Superman, and Justice League to really suffer.

All in all, both sides have their pros and cons. Marvel definitely gets my praise for doing right by fans and keeping most, if not all of their characters' personalities and behaviors in check, but at the same time, they really didn't take much of a risk whereas the guys at DC took a big one pressing that metaphoric reset button. Despite the overall poor quality of their first wave, DC has caught on to a lot of what fans are disliking and they seem to be creating something even better than they started with, which could prove prosperous for them.

Kurdistan of Iraq

By Sean Pellegrini  May 15, 2014

I have a friend from Iraqi Kurdistan. He tells me stories of his culture and home life. Today, Kurdistan is not an independent country. Modern day Kurdistan is a territory made up of four parts: Iraq, Syria, Iran, and Turkey. Iraqi Kurdistan is the traditional name of the northern region of Iraq. Iraq has two governments, Central and Northern (also known as the Kurdish Government).

My friend lives in the city of Sulaimaniya, which has a population of 1.6 million people. Awbarik is the name of his neighborhood. The people are hospitable and open-minded. Due to the welcoming and kind nature of the Kurdish culture, Iraqi Kurdistan has a very low crime rate compared to Central Iraq. The area is so safe that people, including children, can be out late at night and not worry about being robbed or kidnapped. In general, people leave their doors open without the fear of intruders. The area is so friendly that everyone trusts and respects each other. For example, strangers ask one another for rides and meals without receiving weird looks. Sulaymani is the capital of the Kurdish culture, even though the Kurdish Government is housed in Erbil. The Kurds are very open minded and liberal. They hope to one day regain their independence and become their own country.

Love and Hip Hop: The Real Thing

By Chris Bush  May 15, 2014



Ignoring his suspicions and street smarts, a young man travels under the influence of lust to a dangerous neighborhood to consummate his summer long pursuit of a girl. He spots her across the street waving, luring him over, and begins to approach her when he is faced by a group of thugs and beaten, then robbed. While not a member himself, he rides with his gang member friends scouring the streets for the assailants, pressured into seeking vengeance, leading to tragedy, redemption, and ultimately success. This engrossing, uplifting story can't be seen in motion on any screen, or read in a book. This is an auditory narrative told through the challenging and layered lyrics of rapper Kendrick Lamar.

Good Kid M.A.A.D. City (My Angels on Angel Dust) was endearingly and immediately branded as an instant classic upon its release serving as a reminder of the cultural impact that the genre can have. It continues to sell despite its age and has remained in the top 100 of hip-hop albums since its debut two years ago. At that time, Kendrick Lamar wasn't considered a familiar name in the genre. Known mostly as a YouTube artist, he hadn't gained much respect among the mainstream crowd. His decision to create a concept album as his first major release was a significant gamble in a medium where currently risk is rarely rewarded. A concept album is a production where all the content on the project ties around a central theme. The LP brazenly shakes free of hip-hop's current binds of materialistic pride (fast cars, faster women) and focuses on the dilemma's we all face in searching for our life's purpose.

Kendrick's storytelling style is reminiscent of legends like Nas and Scarface with his uncanny ability to dart between simplicity with scene setting to ultra complex description of action and emotion that requires multiple listens for complete understanding. Tracks are strategically placed to further the narrative while the singles seemingly serve as breaks in the action. However, the selection of singles from this project are deceptively brilliant as they thwart hip hop's conventions and condescend to lackadaisical listeners. In "Bitch, Don't Kill My Vibe" Kendrick expresses his disdain for producers, artists, and listeners that compromise music by commercializing it with simplification of content in order to reach a wider audience. Those people singing along with him in the chorus are unknowingly the same ones he's calling out for killing what he loves. In another single "Poetic Justice" Kendrick presents a love song to appeal to the emerging important female audience (also a bit of a tribute to the indelible Janet Jackson). He uses a smooth, laid back cadence in this song, as if he's reading poetry to the woman he's courting. Surprisingly, in context of the album, the woman he's hoping to call his is the siren that set him up for the robbery, destroying the illusion of enduring love presented in the song. The fallout of this act appears on Kendrick's most popular single off the LP "Swimming Pools" a song that

gets regular radio, and club play. Club hoppers sing along swaying, raising their drinks, and taking shots misinterpreting the disguised anti-drinking theme of the song as party music.

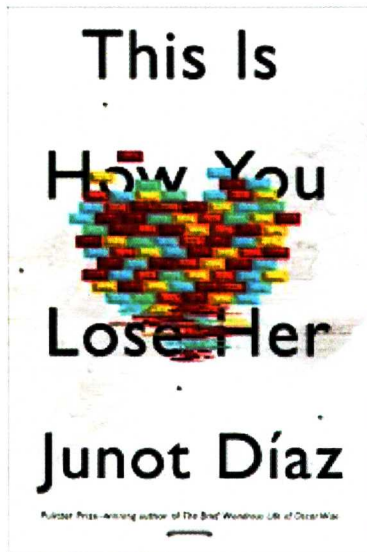
This message crystallizes when, under the influence, Kendrick and his friends find his attackers and pop shots at them. Their opponents blast back, killing one of his friends. In retaliation, the brother of Kendrick's fallen friend murders the killers only to be later killed himself in vengeance. Burdened with the guilt of their deaths and weary of the endless cycle of gang violence, Kendrick has an epiphany and begins to realize his unlimited potential as an artist.

The storyline represents a common misconception of Hip Hop since the genre became mainstream. The best lyrics are gritty, sometimes brutal, but they serve a purpose. In the early to mid 90's hip-hop had taken on a second evolution. Previously, DJs used to be the star of a rap album while the MC was used as support, a way to bolster the dope beats blasting from the speaker. Rappers shifted from boasting about their skills on the microphone, to stories of the street life they had to navigate to not only be successful, but to survive. This approach splintered into two styles. One was gangster rap, which often has the artist proudly flout his or her wreckless lifestyle as a way to express their freedom from societal norms. Other times this style is confrontational, with the artist embracing their role as product of the injustices and tough upbringing forced on them by the system, now here to horrify America's favored residents with their gestating anger and fearlessness. Complementing this inciting and controversial form was conscious rap. Here, MC's would pair their stories of the streets and crime with a level of morality and lessons gained from the experience. Both styles bring attention to American issues, but conscious rap wants the listener to sympathize with their plight and learn from it, while gangster rap doesn't want sympathy, it wants paranoia. Artists sometimes straddled these lines (Hip-Hop icon Tupac Shakur was a master of this), delivering the gangster rap tracks from their album as "club" songs or singles while the more thought provoking songs were placed at specific intervals on the project. *GKMC* sits firmly on the conscious side of hip-hop, and the latter half of the album demonstrates this expertly.

In a planned shift in tone, the album tracks go from hard hitting, gritty, bass heavy beats to slower, simpler, mellowed beats reflecting Kendrick's change in mental state allowing for deeper exploration of his internal thoughts. These thoughts are manifested in the underlying theme of the power of love laced throughout the story, finally coming to the forefront in the last few tracks on the album. Embattled with love's destructiveness, lust, street credibility, gangs, money, and love's reinforcement, love of the divine, his hood, music, and family he realizes love of self is the best weapon to ward off the vices that could crush him. Combined with all the other stabilizing qualities of it, he finds the strength in self worth to not care how he and his music are perceived. He only cares about getting his message of the regenerative force of love, music, and higher power to the people that need to hear it. All of this is implicitly stated in the LP, just have your mind prepared to work for the knowledge.

Lust, Loss, and Dominicans

By Erica D. Lee 🕒 May 15, 2014



I'm not a bad guy. I know how that sounds – defensive, unscrupulous – but it's true. I'm like everybody else: weak, full of mistakes, but basically good. Magdalena disagrees though. She considers me the typical Dominican man: a sucio, an asshole – "The Sun, The Moon, The Stars"

When I came across Junot Díaz's short story collection, *This Is How You Lose Her* in an English class this semester, I promptly picked it up. The description on the back of the book and the instructional title caught my attention. I am a hopeless romantic with a penchant for Díaz's story telling and the essence of his Dominican culture in the entirety of his writing.

Díaz has a skill for making a story seem to unfold right in front of you. His narrative style is so personal and realistic. You'll have a difficult time pulling yourself out of the world of Dominican romance, boyish lust and family life. In this nine-story semi-autobiography, Díaz manages to create three-dimensional characters that speak to the honesty and tragedy of love and loss.

Yunior is the voice behind most of these stories. We watch how this younger brother of Rafa goes through a vast number of girlfriends as if he were a modern day Casanova. Rafa himself as well as a couple other boys in Yunior's youth go through passionate relationships that leave them either wanting, cursing or relieved. This collection is comparable to Díaz's 2008 Pulitzer Prize winning novel, *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao*. It is tactfully put together and displays Díaz's talent for taking the everyday human's experiences of love and passion and turning them into tasteful artwork.

In "Nilda", Yunior displays a childhood crush on his brother Rafa's girlfriend, Nilda. Rafa mistreats Nilda throughout the story and her relationship with Yunior seems to bring out more of who she is than what she would like to show. They enjoy geeking out over the latest comics while alone in Yunior's basement, but the moment Rafa returns home, Nilda bounds up and transforms into the ultra-girly girl, forgetting Yunior's presence. This story is an important piece in the series as it goes in depth into Rafa's sickness and untimely death. The brotherly love is so subtly portrayed through the story of Nilda and Rafa that it produced a very soft ache in my heart when I read it, because it does not seem a

story about brotherly love at all, but of how in love Yuniior was with Nilda.

“The Sun, The Moon, The Stars” is undoubtedly my favourite of the nine stories. It is the opening story and Diaz’s conversational, honest tone disarms the reader as he introduces his relationship with Magdalena, or Magda as she was more commonly called. Right from the start we learn of how he cheated on her with “this chick who had tons of eighties freestlye hair.” Magda found out through a letter that girl wrote to her that contained every dirty detail, “shit you wouldn’t even tell your boys drunk”, Yuniior swore. Diaz touches on the subject of regret and loss in this story as it depicts Yuniior’s desperate fight to keep Magda in love with him after that. I loved it purely because it is such a relatable story and it does not end the way Yuniior wants but he learns to cope anyways, which is often how my own life plays out. We see the struggle to keep a relationship going from a man’s point of view and, to me, that is valuable.

“Alma” is the shortest of the nine stories, spanning a brief four pages that mirror Yuniior’s feelings of loss towards this particular girl. To me, this is the story that captures the brilliance of the entire collection. The graphic description of their sex life contrasts with the closing paragraph after Alma finds out Yuniior has been “also fucking this beautiful freshman girl named Laxmi” after she reads his journal. Alma’s passionate display of anger and hate is accompanied by Yuniior’s sheepish (and very feeble) attempt to apologize. In my opinion, Yuniior’s reaction towards Alma brings the entire series to a culmination and holds all the stories together.

The remaining stories in the collection add volumes to this realistic sort of guide on how not to go through relationships. It is also a poignant revelation that most of us do go through relationships in this shithead-infused manner that Yuniior and his pals seem to have perfected. None of us can claim every relationship we have ever been in to be flawless, painless, and that we have never once screwed up. Whether you are a hopeless romantic, a Grinch in the love department, recently single, or in a wonderful long-term relationship, I strongly recommend picking up your own copy of *This Is How You Lose Her* and allowing the familiar feelings this series offers to wash over you.

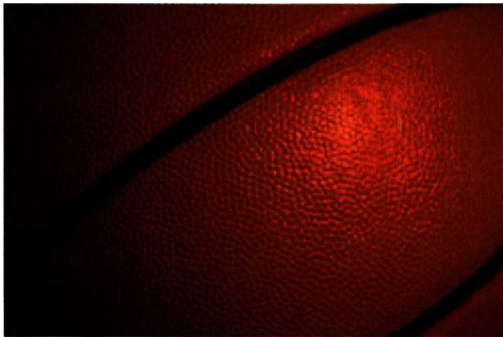
Instead of lowering your head and copping to it like a man, you pick up the journal as one might hold a baby’s beshatted diaper, as one might pinch a recently benutted condom. You glance at the offending passages. Then you look at her and smile a smile your dissembling face will remember until the day you die. Baby, you say, baby, this is part of my novel.

This is how you lose her.

– “Alma” *This Is How You Lose Her*

Silver's Sterling ruling shines for the NBA

By Chris Bush  May 15, 2014

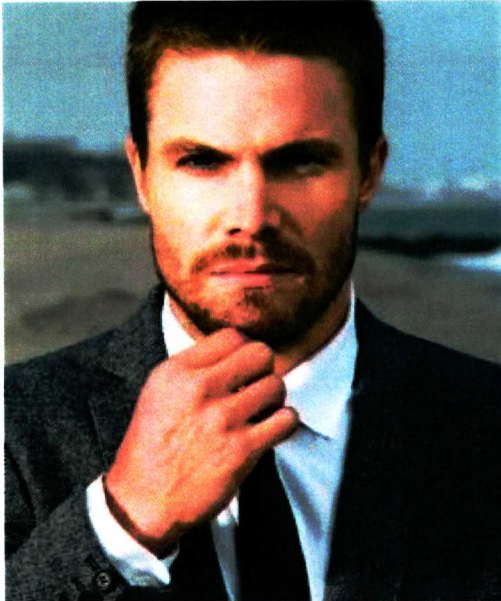


Former players, current players, league executives, and city officials, applauded NBA Commissioner Adam Silver for the appropriately devastating adjudication on the Donald Sterling controversy. For his racist comments regarding black players and black Americans in general, Sterling is banned from the league for life. He cannot attend any NBA functions and the process of ousting him from ownership of the Los Angeles Clippers has begun. Many claimed the decision enshrined Silver as a worthy Commissioner and leader of the league. Some journalists, radio and television personalities weren't so quick to praise Silver, pointing out that he had no other choice but to give such a stiff penalty and the decision shows that he's merely a competent human being.

In a sense these detractors thoughts are valid. In an ideal world Silver would have banned Sterling from the NBA and taken his team from him and everyone would nod in agreement that proper justice was served, but we don't live in an ideal world. The world is cynical, what's considered morally right in the eyes of some is met with vitriol by others. Many of the comments in online articles on the Sterling ruling are a mess of bigoted comments along with a twisted interpretation of the American constitution and first amendment. There's articles saying the bigger issue is that Sterling's privacy was invaded by being a victim of an illegal call recording. Some are actually defending the billionaire owner, the highest authority of a professional team who seems to view the players as slave labor, as a victim. Silver could have easily let these voices sway his approach to his decision but instead he stood by his moral convictions and dealt a proper punishment. Fear of backlash from not appeasing everyone could cause some to refrain from doing what's right, but righteousness in the face of adversity deserves commendation. Commissioner Adam Silver deserves every bit of praise he receives.

Stephen Amell Doesn't Just Play a Hero on TV

By Matt Reed  May 15, 2014



Some of you probably recognize the name Stephen Amell. Those of you who don't need to watch *Arrow*. Amell is the actor who portrays the DC Comics masked vigilante Green Arrow on CW's hit TV show. On the show, he plays the billionaire playboy philanthropist like so many superheroes (seriously, everyone is jumping on that bandwagon. Not pointing any fingers, Robert Downey Junior) However, unlike many of his superhero-portraying, thespian compatriots, Stephen Amell is going above the call of duty to offer a unique way to funnel big bucks to charities that are close to his heart.

In a video on Facebook a couple days ago, Amell announced that he will be using ebay.com to auction off some unique piece of memorabilia relating to the show, that he will autograph with whatever the winner wants. The idea is, whatever amount the item goes for, Amell will write a check to the Charity of his choosing for the exact amount, sending 100% of the auctions proceeds to that charity. So Stephen Amell may play a billionaire playboy philanthropist on TV but he also is one in real life.

Facebook Link: <https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?v=646319962119941>

Superheroes Spotted on Campus!

By Tyler Fernandez ◉ May 15, 2014



It's a bird! No! It's a plane! No it's Superman!...No... literally... it's Superman! Since the spring semester of 2014, Fontbonne has taken on an exciting new study in literature. Professor Vince Willoughby has created a class based upon the reading and analysis of a very well known medium in the nerd world, the graphic novel. For those of you who don't know a graphic novel is, a simple answer is that it is like a comic book only significantly longer. Graphic novels have been around since the 1960's and they operate the same way comic books do -- (I'm hoping some of our readers are at least familiar with comic books.) -- window paned illustrations with speech bubbles containing dialogue, loud onomatopoeias that jump of the page as our heroes smack baddies, and a very underrated amount of backstory and meticulous attention to detail. This form of literature does not just appeal to a falsely presumed younger audience. In fact, most comic book readers are about the age of fifteen. There is no lack of violence, gore, and sexual themes within the stories; some of the time these things are uncensored and raw. Alan Moore, who is considered by many fans, dabblers, and newbies alike to be one of the greatest graphic novelist of the 20th and 21st century, is well known for filling his novels with unrated and uncut violence. His works *V for Vendetta*, and *Watchmen* (a required text for Professor Willoughby's class) serve as the bloodiest of illustrations.

Comic books and graphic novels, like any other medium, contain intense dialogue and striking visuals. It is like reading a movie. You can sit down with a 200 page graphic novel and enjoy it just the same as a trip to the theater. But what makes it academic? Comic books and graphic novels undergo the same detective-like scrutiny that all other texts do. The same theory techniques used to analyze more canonical works apply to our unique form. Like the name states, they are "novels." Economic and social commentary, themes of the "gothic novel," and the pinpointing of visual and literary motifs are some of the more commonly studied aspects of graphic novels and Professor Willoughby's class has been able to delve into them.

It may come as a surprise to some but the first graphic novels were actually not about super heroes. *V for Vendetta* by Alan Moore, and Art Spiegelman's *Maus* (one of our required texts) are two perfect examples. *V For Vendetta* is a story based in dystopian London in which a chemically altered man dons a Guy Fawkes mask and commits a series of murders of government officials to instigate a revolution. *Maus* is a story of a German Jew and his wife who survived their time in Auschwitz. The characters are portrayed as mice living in 1930's and 40's Nazi Germany which is ruled by cats with little Hitler moustaches. It contains themes of politics, economics, suicide, and horrific portrayals of what humans - or in this case cats and mice - are capable of. The term "graphic novel" was not coined until sometime in the late 1960's when some of the most iconic works of this genre were being

released. Interestingly, the term was actually not coined by authors but by the community and audience of readers. The works received such a strong positive feedback that the genre soon blossomed. Many pioneering graphic novels are about superheroes, but many are about everyday people. "Some graphic novels, like *Marvels* by Kurt Busiek and Alex Ross, are about both," Professor Willoughby stated.

Professor Willoughby, our literary crusader had a few words to say about his own class. When I asked him about what motivated him to start this course he stated, "I love comics, and have long wanted to teach an entire course on the graphic novel. Many students at Fontbonne are also eager to explore the medium, so our department thought the time was right to offer it." But is this something new? Have people been teaching this stuff before? "Courses on the graphic novel have been offered for some time now, so I can't claim to be a pioneer in this regard. However, some people may still be surprised to see comics treated not as disposable entertainment, but as a quintessentially American form with its own history and conventions, worthy of study and consideration for the unique way it addresses subjects such as love, death, heroism, and history," Willoughby said. So it really is academic. Many people are unaware of this type of study, even literature majors and comic book lovers could go their whole careers without really picking apart a graphic novel. So why bring it to Fontbonne? "It's an exciting time to begin engaging with the field, since graphic novels have been conveying interesting narratives in increasingly sophisticated and innovative ways. As Scott McCloud argues in *Understanding Comics*, the form requires active participation and involvement from readers, who are called on to stitch together discrete panels into a seamless story," Willoughby said.

The students are really working with the pieces instead of just reading them. Every novel is allocated about a two week period in which students read the work on their own. When students come to class Willoughby opens with a write up and the students detail their observations however minimal or in depth. The students then give their individual responses, whether it was just what they particularly liked and disliked or the themes and analysis of dialogue and visuals. Then an open ended discussion is led by Professor Willoughby and he poses questions about the novel. The students analyze motifs, themes, color, dialogue, character development etc. For those of you who have taken any sort of literature course this should sound very familiar. There is also the incorporation of literary theorists and commentators on the works. During the study of Alan Moore's *Watchmen*, Willoughby mentioned an author's proposition that the whole novel functions symmetrically and that every visual and text based detail was symmetrical all meeting in the very center page of the novel.

Matt Reed, one of Fontbonne's biggest lover of comics as a genre had nothing but praise for the course. "As a comic book enthusiast I was very excited; I have spent the last couple of years trying to incorporate comics in my other literary courses so to be given the chance to be part of a class that is actually about the genre is great." Matt also claims that the course is really doing the genre justice. "For what the class is, absolutely. It's difficult to put comics, or graphic novels however you want to say it, into a clean cut category in any sense. Put that with a class that is doubled up with 100 level gen. ed. students and 300 level English majors it's difficult to find a middle ground that makes both parties comfortable with discussing the material. That being said, Dr. Willoughby is doing a great job. He genuinely cares and respects the material and that that comes through in his teaching." Matt is a History and English dual major and he has told me about his own mini comic book company called "Alpha/Omega Comics." He has high hopes to create his own stories, and is a complete advocate for this type of study.

But what about students who are new to this stuff? The first time the class met, most of the students said they only knew about the newspaper "funnies", or received most of their "superhero knowledge" from the movies that have been produced in the past decade. Guter DeZurik mentioned in

during the discussion of Frank Miller's *The Dark Knight Returns* that, "I wasn't aware of the stuff that broke "the comic book canon." Like with Batman, I was just familiar with the old movies and the one's that came out with Christian Bale. I had no idea there were so many alternate stories." Reading a graphic novel is considerably easier than sitting down with a whole story from an anthology, there is no doubt about that. So a relaxed study makes this a little more appealing to students. They are also working with texts that are, lets face it, a little more fun than traditional literature. Everyone likes to watch Batman kick ass and everyone likes explosions.

I have asked around campus about the course and when I mention that "I'm on my way to comic class" my colleagues are always really interested. "You're in a comic class? What do you do?!" or "I want to take that!" Or my favorite, "you English majors are jokes." But the interest is genuine and mostly well-intended. Most of the students say they did not know that the course was being offered or that they wanted to take it but couldn't fit in it. But in both cases they state, "that sounds awesome, I hope they are offering it in the fall."

Thank You

By Juanita Cockrell-Nelson 🕒 May 15, 2014



My eyes are red. I'm tired, sluggish, irritated, bloated, and starving for eight hours of sleep. I am working more than 50 hours a week on my job, on-call 24 /7. Does it sound like a lot? Wait, it gets better. I also carry eleven credit hours this semester here at Fontbonne University. It may sound like I have a lot on my plate and some days I feel like I do; however I would not trade this experience for the world. You see; in less than 20 days it will all be over.

For four years I have traveled down Big Bend to Wydown to then search for a parking space in a very small lot. Not to mention the fact that I have had to pay \$80 a semester for a parking pass just to drive around for 10 to 15 minutes searching for one spot no matter how far from the class I need to attend. I've had classes all over this campus from Ryan Hall, AB building, East Hall, and even the library. I'm sorry but I will not miss the blackboard outages or the numerous password changes. . Still, I would not have traded this experience for the world.

To all of my professors and instructors who believed in me when I failed to see the potential in myself, to Mary K. Sullivan and the Social Work Department whom I pestered endlessly concerning my class schedule, to the business office and financial aid office who tolerated my endless visits and calls each semester asking for just a few more days to get the money that I owed: Thank you.

My hat goes off to all my classmates that help me with projects when I had no clue on how to complete them. To the students that taught me that you can still learn and benefit from learning through others that are younger than your own children: Thank you!

I really want to give a shout out to my Griffin Roar classmates. You have taught me about Batman, Charlie Chaplin, the apocalypse, Hunger Games, and so many other things and movies that I have never heard of. To Dr. Sommer, you have encouraged me to continue writing. My classmates in English 208, you all have accepted me and made me feel young again even when I felt too old to learn.

To everyone who's reading this article; thank you for keeping the Fontbanner/Griffin Roar alive. Its students and faculty like you who give people like me hope. Thank you!

I really do not have a clue as to what I will do after May 17, 2014 after being on a journey to obtain my Bachelors' Degree for eight long years. Many times I did not think that I could make it. During the four years here my Mother and my Best Friend passed away. Many of you here at Fontbonne

didn't know that I will be the first in my family, at the age 54, to ever graduate from college. The personal challenges that I have had to endure seem worthwhile now. Who knows, maybe a Master's is in my view.

Juanita Cockrell-Nelson

Class of "2014"

The New Face of Homelessness

By Juanita Cockrell-Nelson ☺ May 15, 2014



Does homelessness really have a face? Take a look around you; do the people you see look homeless? If you are reading this article and happen to be in class or at your favorite spot on campus, you might want to take a second look. The new face of homelessness could be an average college student.

A young man who I will call Mike is 22 years old. He is a Junior, a Business major at a university here in St. Louis, and he is homeless. Mike found it hard to think about being homeless, let alone hear the word come out of his mouth. He has been living at a shelter since January.

"School was starting in a week and I had no place to go," says Mike. "People got tired after a while of me staying over at their house or always asking for help. Back then I didn't have a job, all I was receiving was 189.00 in Food Stamps.

"[My family] knew I was trying to go to school, but when they got tired of me they stopped answering their phones or they acted like they were just leaving." Mike could not make many calls, because all he had was a government issued phone with limited minutes on it which he had to save in case of an emergency. Mike did not have much to say about his friends except "They have their own problems and I guess they just don't have time or room for another problem,

"I have stayed at Rev. Rice [New Life Evangelistic Center Shelter.] Boy, that place is a trip. You have to be there by a certain time, sometimes you get lucky and get a good place in line so you can get in. You can stay the night but have to get up and leave early in the morning. It's better to sleep with everything you have up under your body so other people won't steal your stuff." Mike talked about having to sleep in a vacant house, the Greyhound Bus Station, and in parks when it was warm. Mike told of having to wash up in gas stations, McDonald's, or anywhere that had a bathroom.

This went on for about 4 months until he had had enough. Mike went to his school counselor and she made some calls. He could not get into a shelter right away so he had to go back to Rev. Rice's shelter and inside the bus station for another week. Finally, Mike got a call that there was a place for him at a long-term shelter. "I was so tired of sleeping wherever I could. I was scared because this shelter was in the county and everybody knows county police don't like homeless people." Although he was uneasy, Mike still went to the shelter. "Honestly I did not know what to expect when I got to this shelter, but I knew it was starting to get cold again outside, and at this place I could stay up to 4 months or more, so I took a chance." It's been two months now and Mike is still at the shelter.

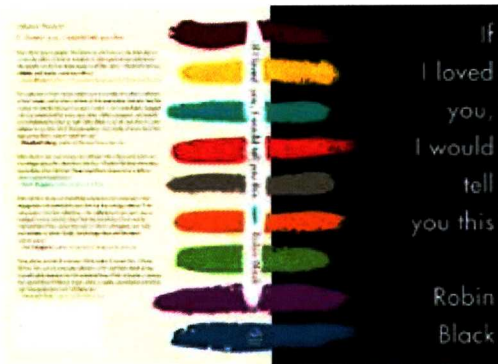
With a toothy smile Mike said, "Since I have been here, I have been able to study. My grades are great, I share a room just like a dorm, I can eat three meals a day, I can take a shower daily, this is my home for 120 days, and they are even helping me with getting my own place. I have saved some of the money that I earned doing work study." Mike seemed to be grateful for all the help he has been getting and welcomes the idea of having his own place soon. To other students in his position, Mike said "I would not wish this on anybody. After High School I'd never have thought that I would ever have to worry about being homeless. All I can say is, if this is happening to you run, don't walk to your counselor and tell them what's going on and they will help you."

Reflecting on his future, Mike added, "I have learned that being homeless is not a punishment and there is help out there for you. I now have goals for the future. In another two months I will have saved enough money to qualify for the Transitional Living Program." If all goes well, in 2015 he plans to graduate with a Bachelor's Degree in Business. " I will never forget this experience. I guess God wanted me to go through this in order for me to be a better man. I just want to thank God, my Counselor, and everybody here at the shelter who believed in me".

According to the National Association for the Education of Homeless Children & Youth (NAEHCY) there were 58,000 or more college students that were homeless in 2013.

Universal Element of Love

By Shannon Fitzpatrick  May 15, 2014



The natural desire for love is often complicated by the obstacles and challenges that life hands us on a daily basis. Robin Black's book of short fiction stories, *If I Loved You, I Would Tell You This*, chronicles the lives of vastly different characters who have one commonality: they are all struggling to find love in their darkest days.

Black's characters are not merely searching for romantic love; some have lost their preexisting family and are again learning how to love the people left by their sides even when the conditions are strenuous on their hearts and minds. These characters have found themselves in unforeseen situations, but they are the center of their families—what's holding together the few pieces that are left—so they have to put on a brave face and redevelop the love they share for each other. In the story, "The Guide" a father, Jack Snyder, finds himself caring for his blind daughter, Lila, alone because his wife has become distant from her family after a tragic incident. The fighting and lack of romantic love drives Jack to another woman, hoping to generate the love of two parents for his daughter. Jack's affair leads him to the understanding that he cannot be the vision Lila needs. Jack's guilt over the lack of love that has been given to his daughter slowly disappears as Jack finds love in letting his daughter be her own person.

Black's stories in *If I Loved You, I Would Tell You This* are not just about finding the love we crave or the love we deserve, but also about the power of love that has the ability to make people view things and other people in an alternative perspective. Black's writing captures the idea that people oftentimes do not see flaws in the ones they love. It is not until they fall out of love or are betrayed by the one they love that their outlook on that person and love itself is questioned. "If I Loved You" and "Immortalizing John Park" are two stories in this book whose main character goes through one of life's challenges and begin to understand that their love, or lack thereof, may be the underlying factor in some of their relationships. From a woman battling cancer to a woman whose husband cheated on her with multiple women, these stories rely on the feelings of love by the main characters to those around them. If the woman battling cancer had loved her neighbor, she wouldn't have been so bothered by the fence he put up—she was convinced it crossed her property line. Love would have convinced her to look past the fence and focus on the qualities she cherishes in him, similar to what she does with her husband.

The enticing language and fixation on love and the human need for the high love produces, even when they know about the destruction it risks, is not unique to Robin Black. Ellen Hopkins is another writer whose work takes on love as a cure while at the same time conveying how love can be damaging to the body and mind. Hopkins prefers to write her novels in poetry form whereas Black's specialty is in prose writing, specifically fictional short stories. Even though their form is different, both writers take on the same focus of love, both the positive and the negative. Besides their connection through love, both writers use inviting language. Their readers may not be experiencing the extreme circumstances their characters find themselves in, but the two writers use of familiar language makes the reader feel like they too have been in that exact situation.

If you're looking for a book that is going to take you on a whirlwind of emotions, *If I Loved You, I Would Tell You This* is one you should go pick up and read. Each story may be focused on love, but it's not your typical love story. From open to close, you will experience the feelings of love, hate, disgust, frustration, and hope. Each story and each character introduces a new aspect of love that plagues their life and how they find comfort through finding love in another person or what they accomplish in their daily lives. Some of these stories end without love solving all of their problems, but that is what makes these stories real and relatable for readers.

Zodiac Killer, I Am Your Son

By Corie Krisch 🕒 May 15, 2014

A Baton Rouge author, Gary L. Stewart just released his new book *The Most Dangerous Animal of All* on May 13th, 2014, in which he made a claim that his biological father is the notorious Zodiac Killer, and no one was expecting it. This book has been kept secret for several months. There is controversy regarding whether the author is indeed the son of the Zodiac Killer, and if his book is withholding information about the murders. Some wonder if the San Francisco police will look to the book for evidence, but there isn't much information available to the public just yet to know fully what the police are going to do or to even make our own conclusions.

The Zodiac Killer murdered four men and three women between the ages of 16 and 29 in San Francisco in the 1960s and 70s. He created and sent cryptograms, or text written in code, to local Bay Area press to scare them. There were a total of four sent, and only one has been depicted. The murders are still unsolved to this day, and the Zodiac killer is still unknown. Police do not know who he was, or even if he is still alive. Stewart, though, is claiming that this man is his father, and if that is true, he could be holding information that is vital to closing this case.

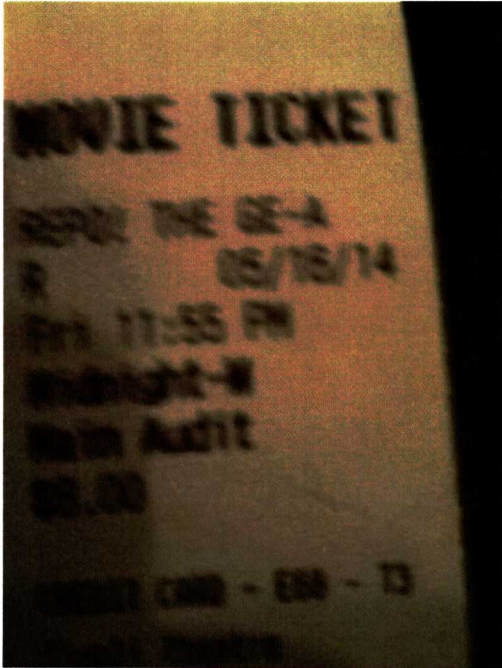
The official plot summary of the book is very vague: "An explosive and historic book of true crime and an emotionally powerful and revelatory memoir of a man whose ten-year search for his biological father leads to a chilling discovery: His father is one of the most notorious-and still at large-serial killers in America." =

I, and probably others, believe that he is withholding information in this book. After doing twelve years of research, he concluded that he is the son of the Zodiac Killer. There are no specifics on why he came to that conclusion. No actual DNA results have been confirmed. So is he really the biological son, or is he trying to make fast money? There is no doubt in my mind that a lot of Americans are going to bookstores to purchase this book.

If the authorities can solve these murders, it will be great news for the families of the victims. Right now there isn't enough information for me to decide the author's motive and if he is actually the biological son. A DNA test needs to be done to prove any relation, with that I think it will be huge news across the country and another step closer on figuring out the Zodiac Killer. I am conflicted between two theories behind this book: one, that he is withholding information, and it is in his book and he will go to jail for it, or two, that he is sharing what research he has found and is wanting a conclusion on his father and who he is, why he murdered people, and where is he now or what happened to him. I will be tracking this story to see what more develops and maybe pick up the book myself.

“Repo! The Genetic Opera” at the Tivoli With “The Graveyard Shift” Shadow Cast

By Amanda Teeter ◊ May 17, 2014



“You have such a lovely face,” muses Pavi in his thick accent as he grabs my giggling seventeen-year-old sister by the chin and flashes a hand mirror in front of the both of them, “may I keep it?” His manner is flawlessly flamboyant, his costume perfectly creating the illusion that he, like his corresponding character in the movie, has another face fashionably stapled on top of his own.

The Graveyard Shift shadow cast put on a truly wonderful, energetic performance on Friday night, May 17, at the Tivoli theatre on the Delmar Loop, as a complement to the film Repo! The Genetic Opera which played as part of the “Reel Late at the Tivoli” midnight film series. Celebrating their fifth anniversary, each member of The Graveyard Shift portrayed their character with such precision, it was clear that they were passionate about the unique film and dedicated to doing the character perfect justice.

In Repo! The Genetic Opera, each character has a very different, unique purpose, all relating to moral and philosophical conflicts about the human body, biology, and genetics. The concept of the film is that in the near future, replacing your organs with synthetic ones created by a company called Geneco becomes very fashionable, people are having regular elective surgeries. But if they cannot make their payments on the surgeries, a repo man will come and retrieve the organ, killing them. The main character is, unbeknownst to her, the daughter of the repo man. She is sick with a genetic disorder passed down from her dead mother, and is trapped in her room which, her father tells her, is the only place she will be safe. You can read my full review of the film here:http://fontbanner.fontbonne.edu/index.php/stories/comments/what_to_watch_on_halloween_repo_the_genetic_opera

Shilo, the main character, represents the question that the film centers around, a version of the Nature

Vs. Nurture debate. She is so heavily affected by her genetics as far as her disease is concerned, she is conflicted as to whether or not she is genetically predisposed to share in her father's choices as well, whether her genetics may affect her as heavily mentally as they do physically. She is also the only main character with a strong fear of her own mortality, though a few characters now from the start that their deaths are inevitable. In the shadow cast, Shilo's conflict and innocent wondering came across very thoroughly.

The Largo siblings, Amber Sweet, Luigi Largo, and Pavi Largo, are fan favorites, but clearly more token characters, plot points which advance the storyline by serving as a sort of generic but necessary disappointment to their father (and a representation of how genetics are actually much less important than they seem in the world of the story). Luigi serves little purpose besides his murderous temper (which is rather funny in the context of the film), Pavi little other than his obsessions with surgery and sex, and Amber is significant only for her drug use and promiscuity, but even still, each actor put forth a passionate and convincing performance, with Amber strolling through the seats before the film and during many scenes she was not in, flirtatiously stroking the hair of audience members.

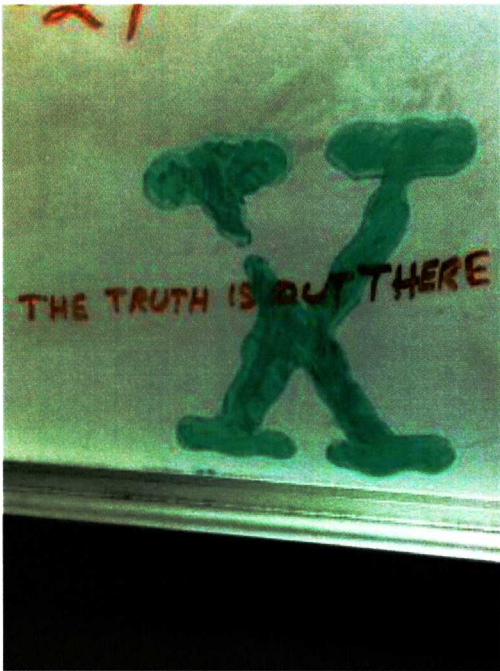
As always, Graverobber stole the show. In the film Graverobber is a drug dealer selling black market Zydrate, which is a blue glowing liquid extracted from corpses. Graverobber also serves as a kind of omniscient presence in the film, a wise character in a sea of corruption, yet also pretty corrupt himself. The Graverobber in the shadow cast stalked the aisles of the theatre between scenes with his Zydrate gun (complete with blue glowsticks) and shouted jokes. During his scenes, he was smug and funny, disapproving but unburdened by the horrors around him, just like his character in the film.

Blind Mag and Nathan (or the repo man) both gave passionate, conflicted performances as well. Though their characters struggles were very different, their performances complemented each other perfectly by being near opposites, yet similar in many ways. Mag and Nathan are both facing difficult decisions: In Mag's case, she has to keep representing the evil company, or else they will kill her. In Nathan's, he has to keep killing people for the same company, or else his true identity will be revealed to Shilo and he will lose the only person important to him. They are opposite because arguably, Mag is always on the right side and Nathan is always on the wrong side with momentary lapses in judgement throughout, but both are convincingly conflicted.

The other actors were brilliant as well, Rotti Largo being fittingly cold and distant, and the gents and side characters gave fluid and lovely performances despite a number of quick changes. The entire performance was meant to add an element of humor to the film, which it certainly did, but also truly accentuated the deeper parts of the film by bringing these characters thoroughly to life.

Throwback Thursday!: The X-Files

By Amanda Teeter ◀ May 23, 2014



In the 90s, there was a show that had all the answers and all the elements. It was scary, it made you believe in things you never had before, it made you question your knowledge of the world. It made you paranoid, had you questioning authority, the government, your own logic. And it was sexy. It redefined sexual tension, took it to a whole new level, and teased you with seven years of intense foreplay before allowing you even the satisfaction of a kiss. The chemistry, script, and performances were always amazing.

The X-Files was incredibly central to 90s pop culture, the story of an FBI agent hell-bent on rescuing the sister whom he swears was abducted by aliens as a child and his level-headed, skeptical, tough, and sexy red-headed partner appealed to such a range of viewers it became a cultural phenomenon. The best part about it is, rewatching the series now that I'm not a terrified child hiding under a blanket, I realize it's completely timeless. The storylines are often very specific to the fears and paranoia of 90s viewers, covering topics like Y2K and genetic modification, but despite the way it dates itself in that way, it will never stop being relevant. Watching it now, I'm a paranoid Mulder, hypersensitive to any sign of someone I've lost. I'm a kickass but vulnerable Scully, who can take down monsters as well as any man in the FBI, and can do it in her signature pantsuit and heels, but will still run to a friend's arms shamelessly when in need. I'm the Lone Gunmen, geeky, inquisitive, curious, and determined. And occasionally, I'm a terrified adult hiding under a blanket.

When looking for something to revisit on Netflix, or if you happened to be a little too young to be into it when it first aired, The X-Files is definitely the right choice to stay in and watch on a rainy night. If you're not convinced, besides its gripping storylines, deep characters, and witty writing, the X-Files also stars pretty much the most gorgeous two people in the world. They also happen to have flawless chemistry and understandings of their characters so deep that it can be hard for fans to differentiate Scully from Gillian, and Mulder from David. They just seem to become them on the screen. The

slow-growing relationship between them in the show is the ultimate romantic fantasy, a true, caring partnership developed over years of purely intellectual attraction before a hint of physical action is ever implied on screen. The tension is so extreme that the relief of their first kiss several seasons in left the manliest of viewers suppressing a squeal.

The show brought inspiration to many aspiring science-fiction writers and truly reshaped the genre, bringing it an element of legitimacy that people doubted would ever apply when the show was first pitched. Scully's classy intellect paired with Mulder's quirky wit brought even non-sci-fi fans to the screen every week to watch them fight another monster or unveil a new conspiracy, all the while partaking in an intelligent flirty banter that is thus far unmatched. The show brought clarity to the sexually confused ("I used to suspect I was bi, but then Gillian Anderson proved I was." – me) and confusion to everyone else ("I used to think I was straight, but David Duchovny has such incredible eyes..." – all men, I assume) while the entire audience clung to their every flirtatious joke, ("I was told once that the best way to regenerate body heat was to crawl naked into a sleeping bag with somebody else who's already naked."- Mulder "Well, maybe if it rains sleeping bags, you'll get lucky." – Scully, season 5, episode 4).

I wish everyone would rewatch the X-Files, and I hope each successive generation picks it up, because it would still appeal to a huge audience. Regardless, though, I'll be watching again and again, being inspired by Scully's class and intelligence, Mulder's determination, the intensity of their attraction, and the wonderful writing and story arcs no matter how far in the past the 90s start to seem.

Batman Vs Superman Logo

By Matt Reed  May 27, 2014



So I have been thinking lately about the new logo released for the new *Batman Vs Superman* movie and I have to say, I really like it. It's an obvious homage to the 2003 run of the Superman/Batman run that started with Superman and Batman being wanted criminals. (It's a great comic, you should read it.) The logo is cool, using the classic format with the updated logos. Personally I like Superman's new logo, it is reminiscent of the big, bold, S emblazoned originally on Superman's chest but still has a sense of alien-ness to it that let's us know that this isn't your grandfathers Superman. Some have said they think it makes the Bat-symbol look a little, "morbidly obese," as our editor Amanda has pointed out. I think it works.

Actually, my issue doesn't really stand with the logo, my issue would be with the title. Don't get me wrong, *Dawn of Justice* sounds just fantastic. A friend pointed out to me recently though that they are still calling it *Batman Vs Superman*. To me that is just silly. Mainly because it won't be about them fighting, I'm sure they will fight once or twice, tops, but they will eventually team up an fight a common enemy. It just kind of bugs me because I know people will go in expecting some two and a half hour Deadliest Warrior type of thing and it won't be that. In any case, that's just a small critique, as I have said for a while now, Zach Snyder won't disappoint.

DOTA Competition

By Tyler Fernandez ◡ May 28, 2014



A five million dollar prize pool for winning...a video game tournament? That's right, the biggest prize pool in the history of e-gaming sports is going to go to the victorious team of the fourth annual *DOTA 2* International. Also known as "Ti4," the *DOTA 2* International is a gaming tournament in which teams from around the world compete in the online game *DOTA 2*. Still in its preliminary rounds, the final match of the International will take place at KeyArena in Seattle, Washington beginning on the 18th of July lasting through 21st.

DOTA 2, or *Defense Of The Ancients 2*, is the sequel to the popular online massively multiplayer battle arena game, *DOTA*. Created as a modified version of Blizzard's *Warcraft 3*, modders took away controlling armies and replaced the dynamic of the game to have players control "heroes." *DOTA*, was only a downloadable mod for *Warcraft 3* but in July of 2013, the gaming development company Valve bought the rights to the mod and produced *DOTA 2*. The long awaited sequel quickly became the talk of PC gamers and the closed-beta version of the game gained so much popularity that the servers became overpopulated and some crashed. On July 18th, the game was released as a free-to-play downloadable game available on Valve's online gaming client, Steam. *DOTA* has become so popular that even renown European electronic artist Basshunter has wrote a song about it.

DOTA 2 is a game of strategy, teamwork, and quick thinking. Teams of five choose from a pool over 100 individualized playable heroes each with their own unique abilities and skill sets. Teams then engage in battle using said skills to acquire in-game currency to purchase items, lead their army of "creeps" into the other team's base, and attempt to destroy the enemy team's "Ancient." The first team to destroy the opposing Ancient, wins the match. The game is also not very easy to jump into. Beginners to both *DOTA 2* and PC-gaming in general will have a hard time becoming accustomed to the style of game play, so when I say that the professionals are uncannily skilled at this game, I mean it.

The professionals are not the kinds of people that come to mind when people picture PC-gamers. There is a negative schema of said gamers that portrays them as greasy, overweight, socially awkward, and refusing to leave their mother's basements. The pros break this mold. Most players are young, clean cut, and physically fit. Most of these guys are European as the game has its strongest fan base in Northern European countries like Sweden, Russia, and the Ukraine. Really, they are just big kids who like to play games.

Ti4 means a lot for these guys. Reputations, renown, and a large chunk of cash is at stake for these players. This year Team DK, from China, is favored by gaming commentators and bloggers to take the prize. However, returning champions [A]lliance of Sweden, will surely account for an epic battle for the Chinese team. [A]lliance's rival Team Na'Vi (an abbreviated form of the phrase "Born to Win" in Latin) of the Ukraine will make an appearance with its two All-star players and *DOTA 2* celebrities "Dendi," and "Puppey." Team Na'Vi is considered statistically to be the most successful team in the history of pro-DOTA. Having taken first place in Ti1, and second place in Tis 2 and 3, they loom sinisterly over the rest of the gaming world. All three teams have been "invited back" to compete.

Still in its qualifying rounds The International has a complex pooling system. 11 teams are invited back to play and have secured spots already, 16 teams total. For a team to take a place on the roster they must win their qualifying rounds. There are four regions to compete from, North America, Europe, Southeast Asia, and China. The winner from each of these regions will advance to Ti4, the 16th spot goes to the 2nd place team from one region, so the runner up from all 4 regions will play against each other to be the 16th team.

As of today, North American teams lead in the rankings to secure a spot for Ti4. American teams NAR (North American Rejects) and Team Liquid were fighting for their qualification. However, due to a spike in lag on the servers the match was postponed and will take place later this weekend. Team EG (Evil Geniuses) has also been invited back to play and serves as the United States' favorite.

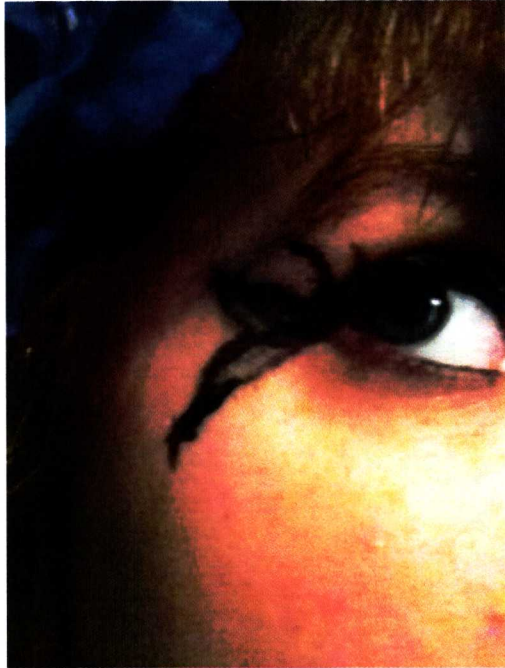
Ti4 is just as big of a deal for the players as it is for the fan base. Casual players know the routines and some are even devoted followers of their favorite teams. Cosmetic items for heroes modeled after the star players, custom artwork, and t-shirts are all available for purchase over the Steam store. Two of the most popular pieces of art right now are depictions of epic battles from the 2013, All Star Game, and the last match of Ti3. In fact, the reason The International's prize pool is at 5 million, (and growing!) is because of the fans.

Non-professional players can purchase "Compendiums" which include an access code to watch the livestream of the qualifying rounds for Ti4, a few cosmetic items for heroes, and most importantly, challenge markers that players can meet by doing in-game achievements. The more matches played the higher the "Compendium level," gets. The higher the level the more awesome prizes for players. Every Compendium bought increases the international prize pool and every cluster of 25 "compendium points," (affectionately referred to as "bubbles" by players for their pink ectoplasmic shape) goes towards players achievements and adds to the prize pool as well.

Ti4 will shake will the PC-gaming world come June. Pros and fans are anxiously awaiting some of the biggest matches in *DOTA* and are looking forward to players showcasing new tricks and ways to play the game. This will be a battle none of us will forget.

The 5 Things They'll Never Tell You About Unconditional Love

By Amanda Teeter  May 28, 2014



You're taught to be pretty. Shaving your legs was a rite of passage. Wearing lipstick, your first two-piece bathing suit, they were things you looked forward to. You were supposed to put value in yourself as a woman based on your ability to walk steadily in stilettos and fill out a B-cup bra before the end of ninth grade, it never mattered what your parents said, how much they encouraged you to value your own smarts over your looks, the whole world seemed to be working against that. Now that you're older, your value is in beauty, in sex appeal, as you were taught from a young age, and then once you take pride in it, show off the figure you've been subliminally taught should be a priority, people say you're asking to get raped. If you do, they say you deserved it. They argue that looking attractive is like dangling a piece of meat in front of a shark. They forget that there's nothing wrong with taking pride in our sexuality. We put a little too much focus on it, sure, but that's not entirely our fault, and it's certainly no cause for violence.

That's a huge issue, and it's generating a lot of talk lately in the feminist (and general good people) community. What I really want to focus on is an outcropping of this rape culture, a kind of section of it. I want to focus a little on spousal rape and abuse. Your husbands, boyfriends, girlfriends, whatever, still don't own your body. And the reason we often think they do is not because we're stupid or weak. In a lot of cases it's because we don't understand unconditional love.

We think that because we love someone, we can only express the strength of that affection by enduring whatever they put us through. That's not what unconditional love is, and people don't think to explain that to us. I guess it goes without saying to most people, or they just don't worry about it as much as a group of us do, but there's a lot to understand about unconditional love if we want to have healthy relationships. These are the five things that I learned from my worst relationship, that they

don't teach you about unconditional love.

1. It doesn't mean staying unconditionally.

There is a big difference between loving someone and being with them, and there's also a big difference between loving someone and depending on them. Once you depend on someone, you don't love them, it's something different. You stop loving someone when you can't let them go, they become non-human, objects of interest. When you become that object, you need to leave the person who once loved you.

Leaving is okay. Often it's necessary. You don't stop loving someone because they hit you, because they forced you, because they just don't treat you the way you think they should, but leaving is different than not loving. Yes, unconditional love takes strength, and you think you're doing the strong thing by enduring the pain that came with it. What's stronger is leaving, even though a part of you will always love the person that ended up being wrong for you. The strongest is leaving and allowing that love to evolve, not to turn into hatred, but to turn into a basic love of humanity and hope that they will find whatever they need to become better people in the future.

2. It should only take as much energy as the other person is willing to expend.

No, all things are not equal in love, but anything you do for a lover that they wouldn't do for you should be done out of pure happiness and willingness on your own part. Anything you do that feels like a sacrifice must be something that they would reciprocate. Any part of your relationship that feels like work must be a shared burden, or else it goes back to point 1. You should leave and let your love evolve into that less impassioned, more inclusive kind.

3. Self-love must be unconditional.

You're the one person you're stuck with for the rest of your life no matter what. Why would you love someone else no matter what they do when you have a choice to keep them in your life, but hate yourself for mistakes that you could easily forgive someone else for? Before you're ready to love someone else, you have to learn to forgive your own mistakes.

4. Which would win in a fight? Love of the self or love of the other?

Both should be unconditional, sure. But if it comes to a point where the two conflict, where you cannot love yourself while loving the other, you must keep that respect for yourself before allowing it to submit.

Would you let someone speak of your lover the way they speak of you? If someone interacted with the person you love the way that person interacts with you, would you like them? If no, then you have to sever ties no matter how hard it is.

5. Unconditional love is not weakness. Even when you make the wrong decision.

I've heard it. People make fun of people who let others put them through Hell. They put on a high-pitched, mocking voice and try to explain their actions. They'll say she let him hit her "Because she looooved him" in that hateful tone. They'll roll their eyes and act superior, I've seen it many times. But the truth is, it takes a lot of strength to devote that much of yourself to loving someone. They probably just didn't understand that they were devoting their strength to the wrong cause.

The people who survive domestic abuse of any kind, physical, verbal, sexual, financial, whatever, are incredibly strong. They chose this thing, this concept of unconditional love, and they stood by it because it sounded like something they believed in. They stood by it until they felt like it destroyed them, in some cases until it killed them. They stayed because all we're taught about unconditional love is that it means loving someone no matter what. We're not taught that it doesn't mean putting up with everything they do, that it doesn't mean loving them over yourself, that it doesn't mean you have to stay. What we need to teach those people who have been through abuse, is that if they really want to devote their lives to this beautiful concept, they can do that and be happy. But they need to do it by getting out, retaining the capacity to love that strongly, and redirecting it at themselves and those who complement them.

What Maya Angelou Taught Me at my High School Graduation

By Amanda Teeter [u](#) May 28, 2014



When I graduated from high school at sixteen, I was home schooled and part of several home school groups, but the one that hosted the graduation ceremony was extremely religious. They always made me feel uncomfortable whenever I attended their events because they liked to draw attention to the fact that I was the only non-Christian participating. Most of the secular kids opted not to partake in the ceremony, but I didn't want to miss out. Despite how poorly I fit in, despite the fact that religious parents (not the kids, mind you, the parents) were likely to jump to conclusions that everything I said and did had heathenish undertones, I wanted to wear a cap and gown and march across the stage to get my diploma in front of everyone. I wanted to show the tiny section of the world packed into that church what I had done. I wasn't about to be intimidated away from that by a few closed-minded adults who didn't want me influencing their innocent eighteen-year-old kids.

I was on a Maya Angelou kick at the time. She was incredibly wise, and my best friend was named after her. Maya, my Maya, was the one person in high school that was consistently kind to me throughout. She saw something in me, I still don't know what it was, that led her to go against her own popularity and her beautiful, popular friends who mocked me in what was not even the peak of my awkwardness, and support me; to stand with me, be seen with me, refuse to laugh at jokes made at my expense. Maya was a gift to me and she is still one of the most valuable things in my life. She got me through high school, and her namesake would get me through graduation.

I was awkward, shy, too embarrassed to stick up for myself more often than not, and when someone in the home school group made me feel inferior because of my religion, I often silenced myself. We were supposed to each do some kind of performance for the ceremony, and I decided that I wanted to read a poem. In front of a group of twenty of my peers, the leader of the group, a rather vile woman who had made a point since she first met my mother that non-Christians were not welcome in the

homeschooling community, named off the students who had volunteered to perform. Everyone but me. “Yours will all be fine, I trust you.” She said, and looked at me, “but Amanda, I’m going to have to read yours first to make sure it’s not inappropriate.”

I was embarrassed, and I mean it was a small act of discrimination, very small, I don’t want to act like I’ve been through some great struggle. But at sixteen, despite my intelligence, my innocence, the fact that I was younger than everyone else by two years, I saw what it meant to be singled out due to something that you can’t control. I could keep my beliefs a secret, but that would be dishonest. I realized that I was subject to humiliation because of who I am, and not because of my character at all. I was silent once again, though, and let her approve my poem.

I was silent and obedient throughout. When our graduation song was a cheesy Christian rock ballad, I didn’t care. When we read the Pledge of Allegiance as a group, I paused as the rest of the class said “under God” because if I say it when I don’t believe it, it makes the whole pledge meaningless. When I was forced to stand on stage during the pledge to the Christian flag, I uncrossed my heart, but bowed my head respectfully.

Each of us, though, was required to choose a bible verse to be read aloud when we crossed the stage. I refused. I am an atheist, a very moral atheist, and the bible displays a lot of morals that I disagree with. I was glad to listen to what verse inspired each of my classmates, but I refused to choose one. I had to make my own choice.

I was last in line. After about twenty bible verses in a row, no longer feeling so debilitatingly shy, unafraid, thanks to Maya, to look different, I crossed the stage while the rude woman read:

“Each of us has the right and the responsibility to assess the roads which lie ahead, and those over which we have traveled, and if the future road looms ominous or unpromising, and the roads back uninviting, then we need to gather our resolve and, carrying only the necessary baggage, step off that road into another direction. If the new choice is also unpalatable, without embarrassment, we must be ready to change that as well.” - Maya Angelou, *Wouldn’t Take Nothing For My Journey Now*

I had to choose to conform or to make my own path, and I chose to respect everyone else’s path, but as it was distasteful to me, I chose not to make it my own. Rest in peace, Maya Angelou, and thank you for inspiring me to forge my own paths, and never to judge someone else’s, for the rest of my life.