

Fall 10-24-2019

Garnet & Black Fall 2019

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GARNET & BLACK MAGAZINE



WHO ARE GLASS MANSIONS?

+

POISON IN THE WELL

ON-THE-GROUND CRISIS COVERAGE IN
DENMARK, SC

REELS OF CHANGE

REPRESENTATION ON THE SILVER SCREEN

RED LIGHT SPECIAL

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Garnet & Black magazine is produced four times a year by students of the University of South Carolina and is distributed free to members of the university community. All editors and staff members can be contacted at (803) 777-1149. The office is located in Russell House room 339.

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COVER PHOTO BY **COLEMAN ROJAHN** COVER DESIGN BY **MEREDITH PRICE**



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LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF **MARY-BRYANT CHARLES**



When I first sat down to write this letter, it was the afternoon of July 19th, 2019. It'd been about an hour since the vote by the Board of Trustees to select USC's new president and my phone had been buzzing non-stop, red notification bubbles blossoming from every messaging app I had. People were sad. People were angry. People were confused and disappointed and I felt sick to my stomach sitting there on my couch, scrolling through Twitter and Facebook as the world shook its head at us. I didn't know what I was supposed to say to you all after that. Still don't, honestly. I thought about not saying anything, about just using this little letter to hype you all up for the amazing work you're about to see, because you're about to see some amazing work. And that probably would have turned out fine. We're a handful of weeks into the academic year. Conversation has died down. We have papers and projects and presentations to think about now, but it still felt wrong not to talk about it.

No matter how you feel about how things with the presidential search played out, it's emblematic of a lot of the growing pains USC has experienced over the past couple of years.

Remember when you could be in and out of the Chick-fil-a line in three minutes if you played

your cards right? Or when there were always enough places to sit anywhere you went? Just like the kinks with the Russell House renovation, just like the dramatic increase in accepted freshman and all the resulting space and housing issues that, the presidential search felt like it was done without us--the students-- truly and fully in mind. So what's our place in all of this, here at the magazine? What do we do with all this change, all this newness, this shift in feeling and dynamic?

Obviously, I can only wish the best for the new president. I have to, because I can only wish the best for you. For this student body. Because even when you hold me up on the way to class with your slow walking, even when you drive me nuts with those football chants, or spam my Instagram feed with Dance Marathon posts, I can't help but marvel at you. At your talents, at your drive, at your stories. That is our role in all of this. We are a place for you and we can't wait to see what this community has in store this year.

Mary-Bryant Charles

CANCEL

CULTURE IN THE MUSIC INDUSTRY

WHEN MISCONDUCT LEADS TO BOYCOTTING

BY NICOLE KITCHENS • DESIGN BY OLIVIA GRIFFIN



WHAT DO YOU DO WHEN YOUR HEROES TURN OUT TO BE TERRIBLE PEOPLE?

When I was in high school and David Bowie died, I cried for hours, but when a girl in my class told me that back in the mid-70's he ran rampant with underage groupies, the tears stopped. I coveted the Ryan Adams songs on the playlists that college boyfriends made for me, but when the allegations came out that not only did he emotionally manipulate upcoming female musicians, but engaged in illicit Twitter messages with an underage fan, I sold all of his records that I owned.

Cancel culture began with the rise of social media, where it was suddenly easy for anyone to call for immediate ethical change by "cancelling," or calling out individuals who possess less-than-wholesome values. By refusing to buy products from corporations whose owners are racially insensitive or by choosing not to listen to the newest music from an artist who has objectified and abused others, cancelling isn't just a way to right wrongdoings. It can promote a decent society where fame and power don't constitute being able to do harmful things.

BUT WHERE DO WE DRAW THE LINE?

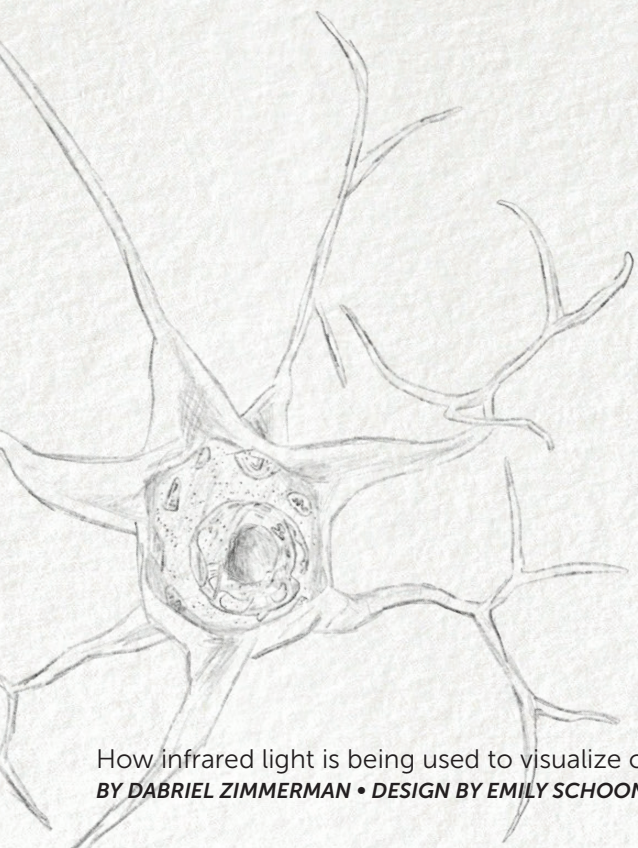
But where do we draw the line? A New York Times Article on the subject began with the sentence, "Almost everyone worth knowing has been cancelled by someone," and nothing could be further from the truth. Seriously. Taylor Swift? Cancelled. Kanye West? Cancelled. Even everyone's favorite avocado enthusiast from Queer Eye, Antoni Porowski? Cancelled over an Instagram story, where he was wearing Dolce and Gabbana.

Instead of giving space for apology and reflection, or giving someone a chance to truly atone for mistakes, most of these critiques end in a ruined career or a stained reputation. While still being able to do some good, cancel culture really just lacks empathy, which has been replaced by screenshots and calls to action. In the end, as Kimberly Foster of the female-led organization For Harriet points out, cancelling people can't get rid of the harm that they've done.

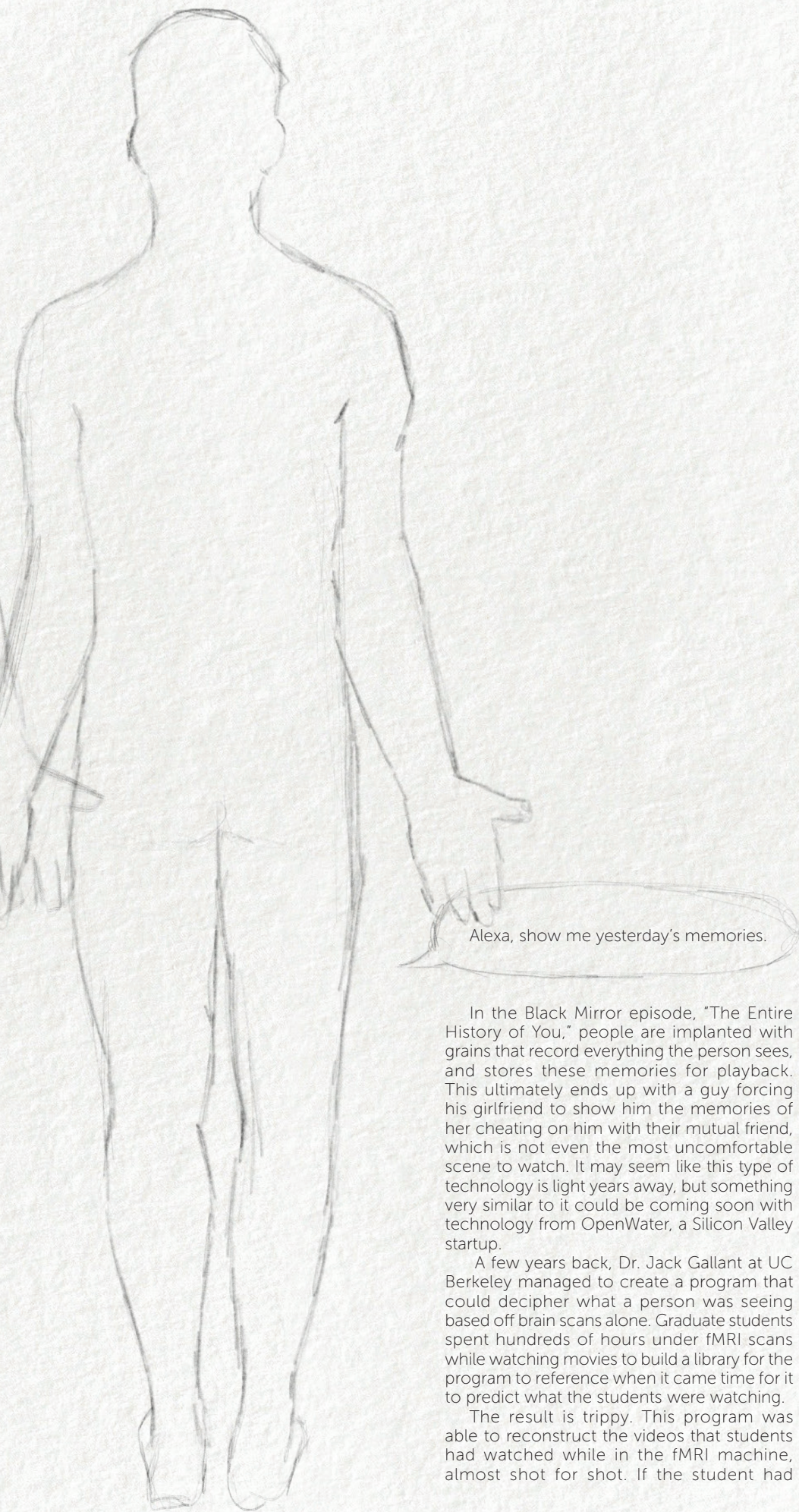
I wish I could tell you what to do when your favorite artist commits an unspeakable act and becomes the newest subject of mass boycott. I wish I could tell you where to shop when it comes out that the founder of your favorite store wants Planned Parenthood defunded. But I can't. It's all personal, whether you choose to differentiate people from their wrongdoings or join the new custom of dismantling someone's career.

Either way, I still listen to David Bowie. ■

RED LIGHT SPECIAL



How infrared light is being used to visualize our internal systems—and possibly read our minds
BY DABRIEL ZIMMERMAN • DESIGN BY EMILY SCHOONOVER



Alexa, show me yesterday's memories.

In the Black Mirror episode, "The Entire History of You," people are implanted with grains that record everything the person sees, and stores these memories for playback. This ultimately ends up with a guy forcing his girlfriend to show him the memories of her cheating on him with their mutual friend, which is not even the most uncomfortable scene to watch. It may seem like this type of technology is light years away, but something very similar to it could be coming soon with technology from OpenWater, a Silicon Valley startup.

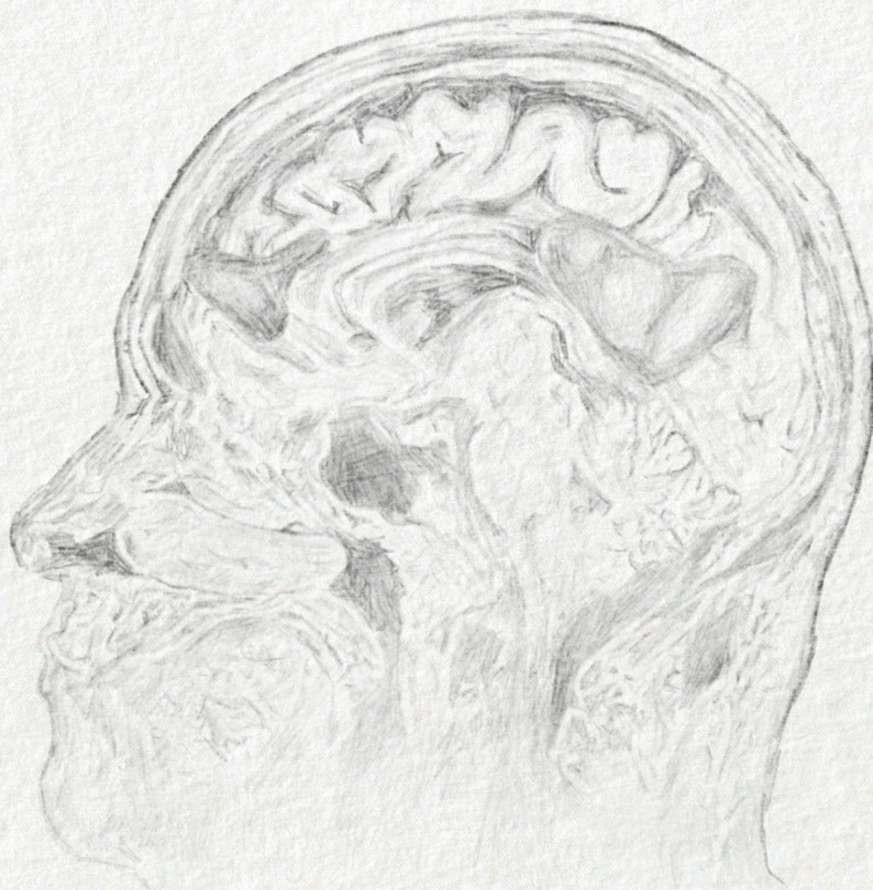
A few years back, Dr. Jack Gallant at UC Berkeley managed to create a program that could decipher what a person was seeing based off brain scans alone. Graduate students spent hundreds of hours under fMRI scans while watching movies to build a library for the program to reference when it came time for it to predict what the students were watching.

The result is trippy. This program was able to reconstruct the videos that students had watched while in the fMRI machine, almost shot for shot. If the student had

been watching a video clip of a human, the program produced a very grainy image of a human. When presented with a clip of a plane descending, the program produced a large mass descending in the middle of the screen.

You can say that Dr. Gallant was able to read his students' minds, but it is practically useless outside of experimentation if it requires hundreds of hours in an expensive machine the size of an entire room. If you have never needed an MRI, congratulations on your health, but if you had, you know just how massively uncomfortable it is to lie there with your head in a cage, listening to that god-awful noise. And because of the poor resolution of fMRI's, the images produced were extremely out of focus.

However, tech from OpenWater could make a wearable imaging device, about the size of a child's fingernail, akin to an MRI that could decipher our thoughts, effectively seeing – and possibly recording – everything that we see.



Founded by Dr. Mary Lou Jepson, OpenWater is on the mission to disrupt the current medical imaging system using a technique called holography, basically photography without a lens. It creates an image that allows you to see all of the light that gets transmitted through, passed through, or reflected off an object from every angle - all at the same time. This technique works because the human body is translucent, so near infrared light can penetrate the surface, even through bone, to a depth of about 6 inches - deep enough to pass through our skulls.

The system uses ultrasonic pings, near infrared light and Artificial Intelligence to visualize our internal systems. It could change the way we approach medical imaging because it does not utilize cancer-causing gamma or x-rays, it just uses red light. This has the potential to be very useful in detecting cancers, treating strokes and improving mental health, which are the main goals of OpenWater's research.

Jepson was inspired to create a wearable medical imaging system after experiencing a crushing bout of sickness in graduate school that doctors could not figure out. She was going to drop out of school until one of her professors paid for her to get an MRI where her doctors discovered a brain tumor. This saved her life - and without that generous professor, she probably would have died. This is the reality for so many people who do not have the money to simply see a general

practitioner, let alone get a MRI scan that can be several thousand dollars. Poverty is a death sentence for billions of people, yet Jepson was not living below, or even near the poverty line when she "went home to die." The costs of medical imaging have gotten so astronomical that even the middle class cannot afford it, and every day we move toward a reality where if you are not rich, any sort of sickness can be a death sentence.

OpenWater plans to use the same infrastructure that makes your smartphone to manufacture this wearable imaging device so the cost will be similar to that of everyday consumer electronics instead being upwards of two grand for just 1 scan in an MRI. Their technology would also have a resolution of two thousandth of a millimeter, while an MRI only has a 1-3 mm reach. This could be the difference in catching cancer in stage one versus in stage four, and if you have a family history of cancer like I do, then this could easily save your life or the life of a loved one down the road.

But it doesn't stop there - OpenWater claims that this technology could also read our minds. Just imagine everyone being able to go home to their Cerebro machine and connect to people around the world like Professor X. Because blood absorbs near infrared light, this technology would be able to detect where blood is and where it isn't. Most importantly, they will be able to tell if that blood is oxygenated or non-oxygenated, indicating activity in the brain. Because of the

extreme resolution in this system, they would be able to focus down to individual neurons and measure their oxygen use. It would then scan the entire brain, forming a 3D map, or hologram, which a program would be able to analyze to decode what a person was thinking, feeling or seeing - similar to Dr. Jack Gallant but with more resolution.

This technology could go further and use ultrasonic pings to activate or inhibit neurons, essentially controlling our minds. When you think about it this way, this program seems more nefarious than life saving, but Jepson makes sure to point out that the system would only work with consent: you have to "think into it" in order for it to read your mind.

But once tech with such capabilities is out there, who's to say that it would require consent? We all know that Big Brother wants to be omniscient, Edward Snowden already proved that to us. So how do we know that they won't get their hands on this, and turn it into something similar to the grains seen in "The Entire History of Us" and slip them into people's brains?

At this point, we just have to wait and see. OpenWater has yet to reveal their system to the public, so it could be years before we start seriously having a conversation about chips the size of our fingernails being used to read and control our minds. The human body's translucency is the key, but to what doors it will open has yet to be determined. ■

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Opinion: Where Do We Draw the Line?

MORALITY IN POLITICS 2020

BY ALEXIS KING • DESIGN AND ILLUSTRATION BY ALIZAJANE HICKS

With the 2020 presidential election on the horizon, politics have begun to demand full control of our news cycle yet again. From countless ads plastered throughout social media to nonstop television coverage, it feels so hard to escape it. Every way we turn, we are confronted with political rhetoric – and it can be overwhelming. In the midst of trying to navigate who we plan to support and the changes we hope to see for our country, it is important to examine the character of our candidates. There have been glaring issues presented from both sides of the aisle in regards to major personal flaws seen in Presidential and Congressional candidates. Granted, every politician is human and allowed to be imperfect, but should there be a limitation enforced? Is there a line that shouldn't be crossed when it comes to the moral judgment of the leaders of the free world?

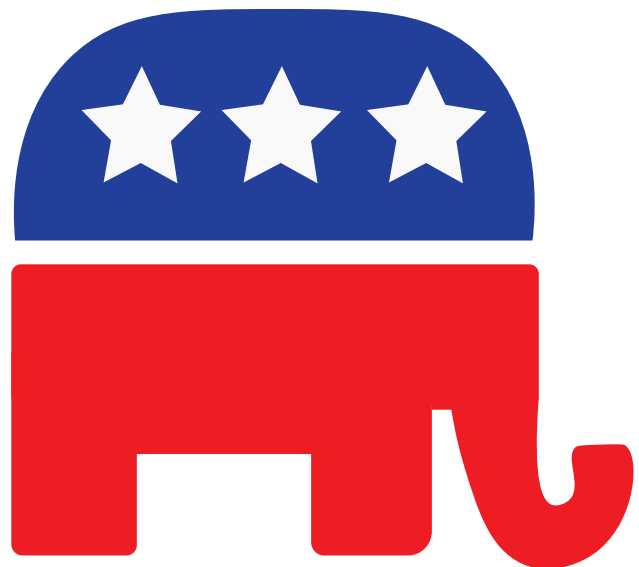
Political moralism has evolved over time. In the 243 years since the birth of the United States, we have faced an ugly history, harsh truths and countless redefining moments. The morals of this country and our leaders have been under scrutiny throughout this entire process, but it does not seem as if that benchmark has been permanently changed. Immoral acts have always been present; however, we have never seen such intense media coverage as there is now. We have evolved from presidents owning slaves and forcing Native Americans out of their homelands to seeing political leaders tweet racist sentiments and carry accusations of sexual assault without a single repercussion. The lack of integrity and accountability still rears its ugly head – just in different forms than years ago. It is evident that the standard for our elected officials is not nearly as high as it should be. The days of turning a blind eye to scandals and misconduct due to party loyalty must end for the greater good.

In this modern era, every few weeks another scandal is exposed, and then accordingly swept under the rug. Anything from the corruptio escaping the White House to votes being tampered with, election interference, exploitation, etc. It feels as if before we have time to absorb one issue, another one pops up front and center. Decades ago, before having readily accessible technology and news at our fingertips, it seemed as if there were fewer

distractions keeping people from addressing a single issue at a time.

It is imperative to not allow ourselves to get caught up in the notion of every matter being Democrat versus Republican. Naturally, there are fundamental differences and beliefs between the two groups in terms of policy and ideology, but that should not allow us to lose sight of what really matters. We need strong-willed and morally sound leaders if we hope to continue our evolution as a nation. It is crucial to get back to the basic fundamentals; it is not hard to treat others as you wish to be treated. You can disagree with someone all day, but that does not give the right to be hateful or nasty.

Furthermore, it has become blatantly obvious that the narrative of "left versus right" has become ingrained into political figures and Americans alike. Pitting these two parties against one another only furthers the mistrust, divisiveness, and lack of unity seen amongst the American public. At the end of the day, it is evident that corruption lies on both sides of the table. Deceptiveness, greed, and lack of







leading world power, we must rise above labels and start addressing these incidents as what they are. We must ignore the falsehoods presented to us and advocate for what we deserve: a set of fundamentally sound leaders.

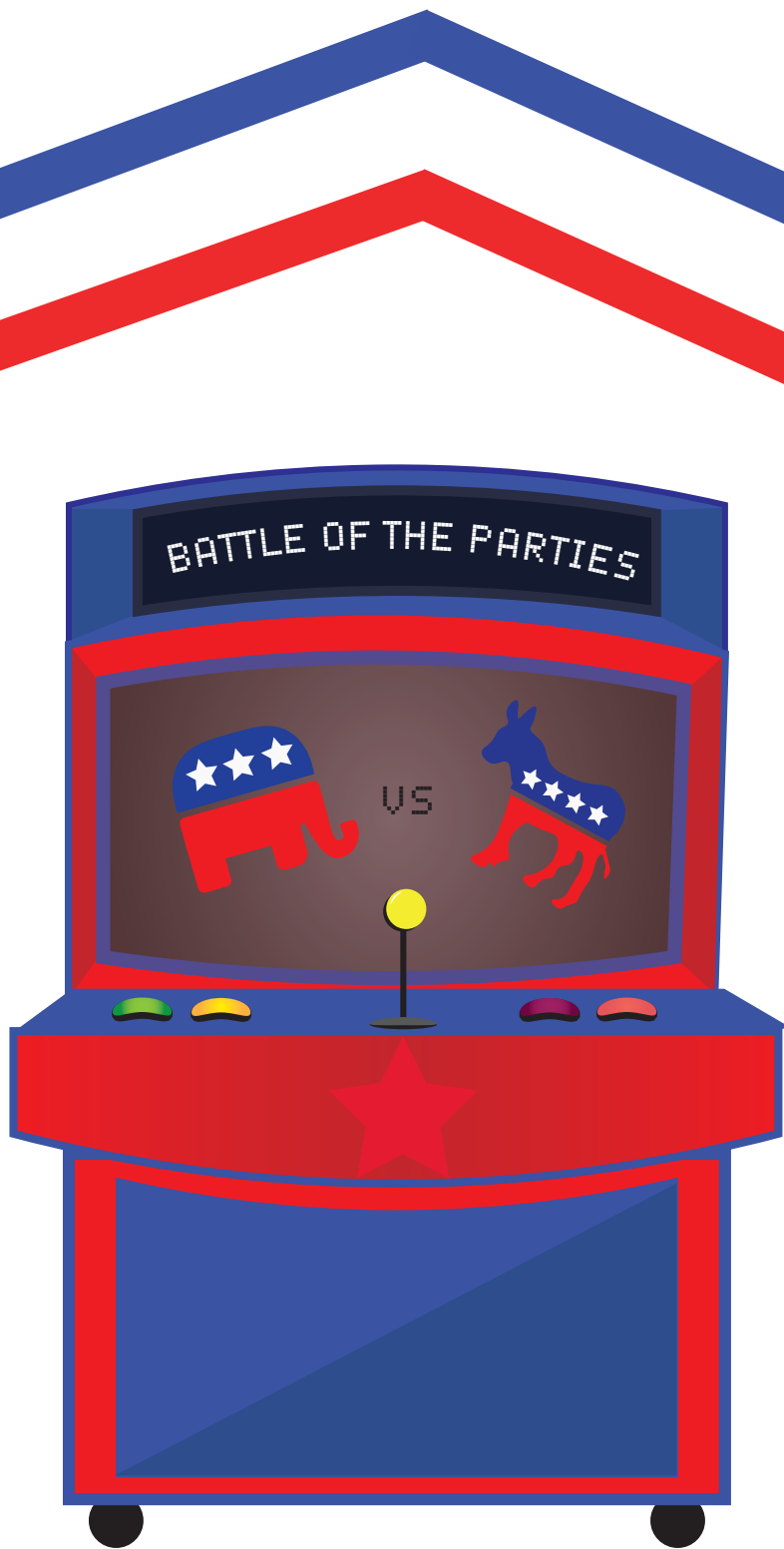
This is no longer a partisan issue of left versus right, but one of right versus wrong. Superficial party ties should not keep voters from staying true to their moral compasses and beliefs. Individuals should not feel pressured by their party when in the voting booth and should stay true to their hearts. It is wrong for politicians and other leaders to drive a wedge between someone remaining loyal to a party and wanting what is best for themselves and their country. Unwavering "loyalty" to a certain group will in no way help catalyze the improvements that we so desperately need. To do so only hinders the progress that could be made when there is less emphasis placed on the two-party system. The United States deserves better at all levels of government in regard to having ethically sound leaders. Politics aside, we urgently need individuals who will conduct themselves with grace and poise in order to represent this nation to the best of their ability.

Despite being over a year away from Election Day, it is imperative to ask ourselves the important, and sometimes difficult questions. Are we fine with having candidates accept Super PAC finances? What is my candidate's track record comprised of? What kind of tweets fill my candidate's Twitter page? When will we as Americans reject bigotry and racism finally once and for all? Do we condemn violence and hate that dismantles our communities?

It would be incredibly dangerous to continuously allow history to repeat itself

and not correct past mistakes. No matter where you may fall on the political spectrum, it is important to not feel limited to one box. It is crucial that we as a society rise above maintaining a two-party system in this nation and finally let go of the "lesser of two evils" approach. We must look toward the future and be cognizant of how our political choices of today will impact generations to come. Instinctual fortitude is truly the only option we have left. The days of maintaining the status quo and remaining politically stagnant must end. We deserve to have representatives that hold true to what this nation stands for and the ideals that it was founded upon.

We should have representatives who are decent human beings and treat everyone with respect. **It is okay to disagree with others and not see eye-to-eye on every issue, but it should not make us recalibrate our morals in doing so. ■**



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WHO ARE GLASS MANSIONS?

MTV MUSIC PLACEMENTS, PUBLISHING DEALS, CREATIVITY AND MORE

BY HALLIE HAYES • PHOTOS BY COLEMAN ROJAHN • DESIGN BY OLIVIA GRIFFIN

THEY WERE ONCE US - bright-eyed, hopeful kids imagining a dream that they desired to create a reality from - and that they did. A living testimony that dreams do come true, it's safe to say that local band, Glass Mansions, is on the rise, creating a journey paved from hard work, passion and music.

Glass Mansions met over 10 years ago at none other than the University of South Carolina. The power duo behind the name, Blake Arambula and Jayna Doyle, played their first set together unexpectedly. In the moment, what they didn't realize is that together, they were creating a masterpiece.

"USC had the Battle of the Bands going on and they needed recordings of the band," Blake Arambula sips his coffee, reminiscing over playing with Jayna for the first time, "Our singer didn't show up. So, I called Jayna and said 'Hey, do you want to come in and sing this?' and so she did... we applied to Battle of the Bands and got in, and that's our first time playing together."

One simple moment - that's all it took. Though their first time creating music together, it would be far from their last.

Both Arambula and Doyle have taken part in different four-to-five person bands together. It was only three short years ago that the two would decide to create something for themselves - the exotic simplicity of vocals and a keyboard. They would call themselves Glass Mansions, a name that would be declared all over the Columbia area in only a matter of time.

"Glass Mansions started three years ago. We did a whole rebranding... way more electronic,"

Jayna Doyle, vocal powerhouse, describes. "We re-released our Gossip EP under the name. We're a two piece - sometimes we have Rodney Liles from Charleston join us on drums, he's an incredible drummer."

As most newcomers do, the band played every local set that they could - from New Brookland Tavern to the infamous Art Bar. From there, Glass Mansions would not only grow a fan base, but they would create a radiant career with grand opportunities: a 21-day US tour coming in October 2019, three song placements (Bravo, Netflix's *The Last Summer*, and MTV's *Ex on the Beach*), playing their first ever Canadian Festival in November 2019 and, finally, signing with their first booking agency and publishing deal.

"The publishing deal is with people in LA and Nashville - basically they're going to be working on our behalf to actively pitch us... we're really excited just to see what opportunities it brings," Arambula explains.

The booking agency is set to develop more time for the duo to create, write and produce - something the band hopes to make a primary focus.

"We've never had a booking agent. We've always booked our own tours," you can hear the excitement in Doyle's tone. "We started working with this guy named Matt Kipper at Artery Global."

With the extra time to focus on music, the electro-pop duo is spending more time writing, allowing themselves to create a new, focused and intentional sound.

"Our music has definitely become more focused. We've gone more electronic."

Arambula says, describing what to expect with their upcoming projects. "I'm excited for these new songs because they feel different... because I feel different," Doyle adds.

Glass Mansions not only creates sound for those who listen, they create sound for themselves, always intentionally asking the question: what makes our music tick?

This industry is a way of life for the two, there's a passion for everything within it - every note sung, lyric written, and night spent sleeping on floors during tour. It's the connection between all mentioned that make what Glass Mansions do worthwhile.

Even a moment as simple as hearing new fans in an unknown city drive by blaring their music reminds the duo why they chose this industry over 10 years ago. "That was the moment for me. I was like, 'You know what, I'll keep doing this,'" Arambula says on new fans, with a sudden, giddy smile.

Glass Mansions has created a lifelong journey in three short years, and they are ready to produce more for you, for me, and for fans halfway across the country.

Listen to their music. Feel their music. Express yourself through their music.

And to all of you bright eyed, hopeful kids trying to create a career in art of any form, remember Glass Mansions. Let their passion be your hope and proof that anything can happen. Because, you - and they - are unstoppable. ■

"THAT WAS THE MOMENT FOR ME. I WAS LIKE, 'YOU KNOW WHAT, I'LL KEEP DOING THIS'"



A FAMILY EXPERIENCE

SWYPE dance group offers students a home away from home

BY JESSICA FIELDS • PHOTOS BY MARK MADDALONI • DESIGN BY EMILY SCHOONOVER

According to member Nerielle Legaspi, SWYPE is a vital part of her UofSC family. The dance organization, which began in the spring of 2011, is “no dance experience necessary,” opening up the floor to students of all types, from all places. The choreography is designed by a smaller group of students in order to accommodate differing skill levels, so that even those who have never danced before can try.

The dance executive team, comprised of a few experienced students, is responsible for choreographing one showcase and multiple minor performances each semester. To the dance executive team, diversity is the name of the game, and that diversity begins with the personal style of each dance leader. Memories, interests, and cultural backgrounds all join together in the showcase. Each member also has the opportunity to audition a piece to teach and perform at the showcases, achieving the kind of member involvement that many on-campus organizations have difficulty incorporating into their productions.

The group isn’t just about incorporating personal diversity, but also about setting an example of philanthropy for the rest of the community. At the beginning of last year, SWYPE partnered with St. Jude’s on-campus organization in order to raise support for discovering cures to debilitating children’s diseases, a partnership that has continued into the current school year.

Legaspi, a junior and member of SWYPE, first wanted to join the group in middle school. Her older brother was one of the first members, and she saw it as an opportunity to try out new styles of dance. More than anything, Legaspi recognized the group as a sort of family. When asked what the group hopes to communicate through their performances, Legaspi says: “We all come from different backgrounds, and dance brings us all together. We really hope our sense of community shines through in our performances.”

The group champions a diversity extending far beyond individual dance styles; many of the students in the group are from US minority

backgrounds, and several are from other countries altogether. Wilson Wong, a 2018-2019 exchange student at UofSC and member of SWYPE, cited the group as an easy way for him to connect on campus when he arrived.

Wong, extremely extroverted and skilled at making new friends, categorizes himself as atypical compared to other international students, who often find it difficult to connect to campus life and American culture. Combined with differing levels of language barriers, these factors often prevent international students and American students from developing friendships outside of the classroom; SWYPE is breaking those barriers and welcoming international students into our UofSC family.

In particular, Wong joined SWYPE because he took initiative to blend in with other UofSC students. He has danced since he was in high school and knew several members of the group prior to arrival in Columbia from the IBC program. Some of Wong’s favorite UofSC memories come from SWYPE: performing at a scientific fair, an Indian dance competition, and two showcases in the Russell House Ballroom. From these experiences, he felt like any other member of the student body, a feeling that unfortunately, many international students never experience during their time on campus.

The group is just beginning their practices for the current semester, so it’s not too late to join! Practices are held Sundays and Tuesdays in Strom 127 from 9:00-11:00 PM, with the first showcase held on November 17th. Anyone interested in trying something new and meeting new people on campus should give the group a try. Who knows, you might be the next SWYPE success story. ■

A TALK WITH *THE LONG CON*

Sharp SC sounds after your heart

BY CASSIDY SPENCER • PHOTOS BY COLEMAN ROJAHN • DESIGN BY MEAGAN HORRES



The Long Con is a local post-punk ensemble, boasting an ethereal and brazen sound; comprised of Nicolasa Dobe on vocals, Gabe Crawford on guitar, Lee Garrett on drums, and as of late, Richard Wells on bass. I've always noted the experience of seeing The Long Con as something borderline spiritual—Nicolasa sparkling center stage, writhing and twirling, Lee throwing his body into percussive movement, Gabe building worlds of sound to lose oneself in—himself often getting lost right along with the listener.

They remain a relatively new group, but have experienced already a vehement and enthusiastic response from the community since their fruition in January of 2019. I caught up with Nicolasa, Gabe, and Lee after their August 23rd show at The Space Hall, and got to pick their collective brain in the Tapp's lobby;

G&B: So, The Long Con, why are you a band?

Nicolasa: I think Gabe is a very talented guitarist and he is the first person I contacted when I wanted to start a band.

Gabe: The idea came from Nicolasa to me, and then we started looking for people. I didn't know what kind of sound we wanted to do,

but I had a ton of demos and I sent them to her. And she picked her favorites, and started writing lyrics to them, and that's where we got our first batch of songs.

G&B: What about Lee?

G: Lee came in a little later, because we had Preston, and then we lost Preston, and, we've-we've gone through a whole rhythm section--!

N: Rest in peace.

G: He's not dead, he's just married.

N: Miss you, brother.

G&B: So, how would each of you describe your sound?

G: I would describe our sound as, like, somewhere between... post-punk 80's goth and also noise rock from the 90's via Sonic Youth.

N: Well, I got told tonight that we were 'haunting' which was pretty sick.

L: I think we're melodic post-punk that pulls from new wave and industrial- and, I think surprise is a big part of our sound, too- I think there is a relationship between the audience and performer that's very mutual, and if we're doing our job right, they feel like they're a part of the experience, too.

G&B: Well, that's a good thing to bring up, because I was going to ask what you want your audiences to feel or experience at your shows.

G: Well, the idea that I come to with this band is that I want people to trance out. I want people to get lost in the sound that we make, cause we trance out, and so we want people to just... feel it.

L: I think music can be very healing- there are ways that we communicate with each other that are beyond language and we need things like sounds and tempos to access them. I feel like our message, though nonverbal, can be felt so strongly when we all feel like we're doing the same thing at the same time.

N: I just want to feel like an animal. I want to leave my body.

G&B: Why are you called The Long Con?

N: I was talking to Gabe while we were brainstorming about the band, and I said something not related to the band, and I was like, "Oh, yeah dude, that's the long con" cause that was just, like, something I was saying for a while-

G: And I looked at her and I was like, (gasps), "That's it."

G&B: Do you have any favorite or standout moments with the band so far?

N: Actually, yeah, our first show was just the craziest thing. The entire thing was just out. of. this. world. The crowd was so hype and the room was full and everybody was losing their (censored), and it was just like, 'Oh, we can actually do this.'

G&B: What can we expect or hope from The Long Con in the future?

G: Well, we have an EP in the works and we will be releasing it very very soon and by that I mean probably a month.

N: And we're going to write more songs after that because we want to expound our sound, if you, could, um, direct quote that

please.

G: Yeah 'cause right now we only have five songs and a cover.

N: Gabe-

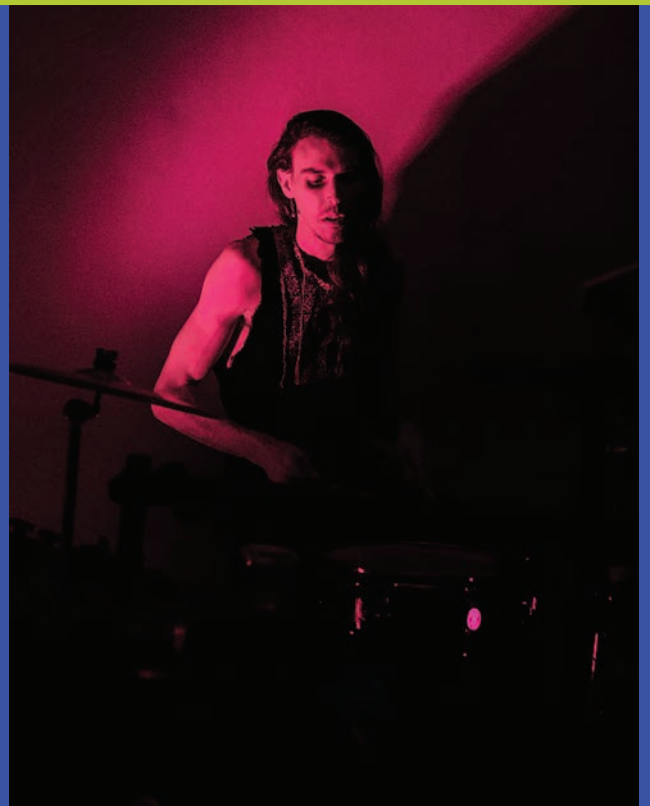
G: I mean, nevermind, I didn't say anything.

Find The Long Con on South Carolina stages in the coming months to trance out for yourself, or catch their EP coming out this fall. ■

"There are ways that we communicate with each other that are beyond language



and we need things like sound and tempo to access them"



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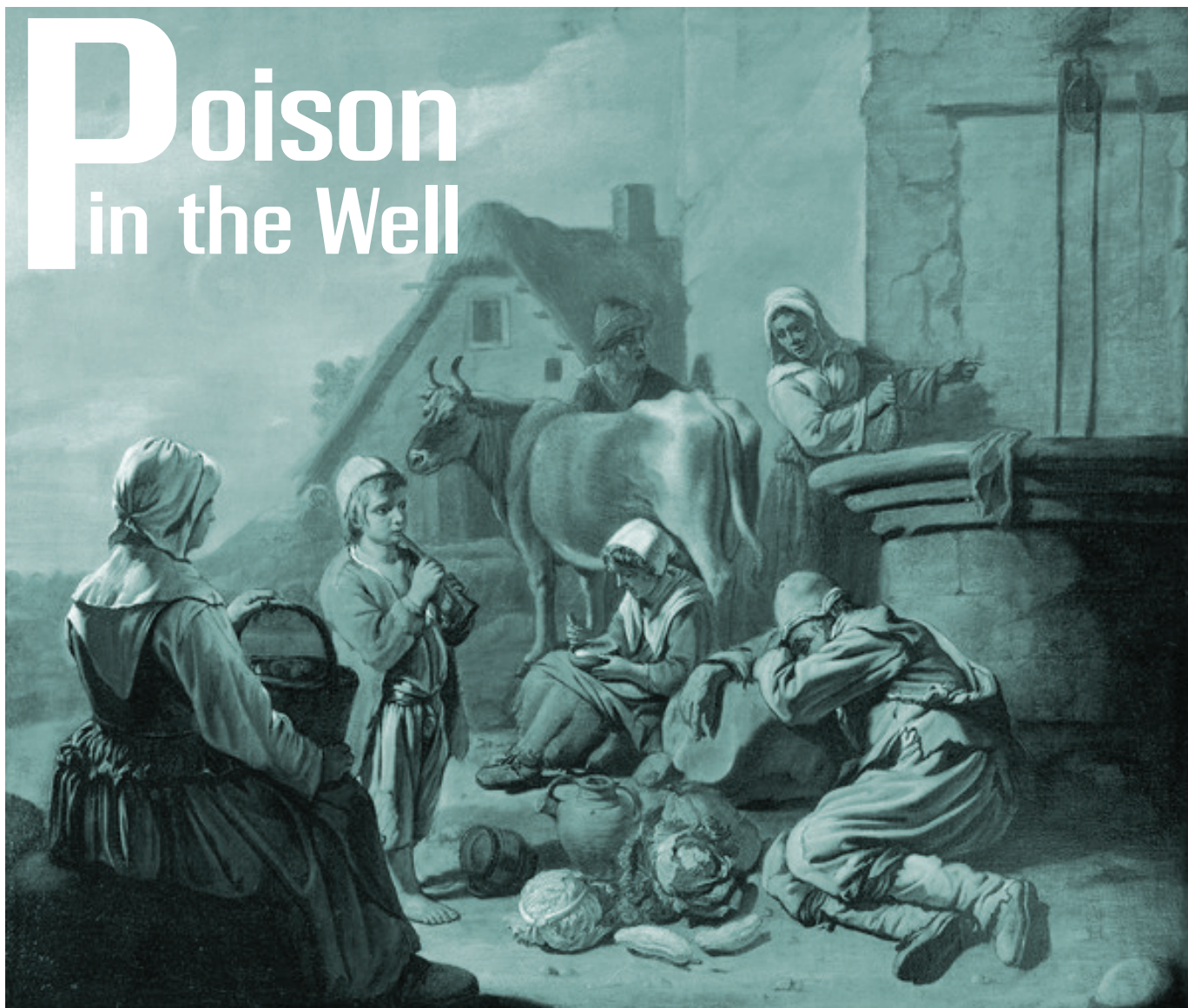
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Poison in the Well



WE DESERVE SAFE QUALITY DRINKING WATER

BY CAROLINE FAIREY • PHOTOS BY NANCY STERRETT • DESIGN BY MEAGAN HORRES



If you have not heard of this lowcountry town

Drive down Blossom Street, towards Cayce, across the Congaree, out toward Lizard's Thicket and then Krispy Kreme. Keep driving toward the exit for Charleston, and then keep driving, faster, then slower, then faster again as the speed limit ebbs and flows. Keep driving until almost all motorists have fallen back to drive roads more often traveled.

Between Norway and Govan, an hour down the road, the two-lane highway swells—swirling green, yellow, white dogwood flowers centerpiece the road. Along the sidewalk, there's an Art Deco theater blocked off by caution tape, an imposing brick building painted ANTIQUES, and several darkened businesses with signs advertising long-closed establishments.

This is Denmark, South Carolina. To the uninitiated viewer, Denmark might look like another blink-and-you'll-miss-it town. But if you haven't heard of this Lowcountry town, you haven't been paying attention.

The bottom line is this: for over ten years, a chemical called HaloSan, which was not approved for use in drinking water by the EPA, was injected directly into the Cox Mill Well, one of four wells serving Denmark residents. Residents report murky water with metallic residue sinking to the bottom coming out of their taps. Some credit kidney or digestive problems to the water. Denmark is experiencing a true water crisis—and their local and state leaders can't (or won't) address the problem.

We pulled into Deanna Miller-Berry's driveway around lunchtime. Ms. Miller-Berry graciously offered to make time to speak with me, but when I arrived, I realized the nature of her prior engagement—her house was buzzing, filled with residents, activists,

filmmakers and the uniquely Southern smell of crab legs and shrimp boil. Everyone was there helping film a campaign segment for a presidential contender.

Among the crowd were Paula Brown and Eugene Smith, referred to as "Mom and Pop" by members of Denmark Citizens for Safe Water (DCFSW). They appeared in a Bernie Sanders campaign video and have been collecting, dating, and documenting the water in their home for over ten years.

"That's how I became involved in the water crisis," Miller-Berry said, "I was in a community meeting, talking with people, listening to concerns, and this couple came up to me and placed these thick binders down in front of me and asked, 'What are you going to do about this?'"

Deanna Miller-Berry, as it turns out, wastes no time wondering about what to do. She grew up in Ridgeville, SC, but she and her husband have lived in Denmark for 6 years, making this their home. Her personality is magnetic and magnanimous—in her first years in the town, she started the Saving Shannie Foundation, the local branch of Toys for Tots, and ran a late-game, write-in mayoral campaign, breaking a record among Black women for receiving the highest number of write-in votes. She serves as one of the administrators for DCFSW, a local activist and advocacy group with one sounding cry—"WE DESERVE SAFE QUALITY DRINKING WATER!"

"People are having to haul water twenty miles round trip and pay \$200-\$300 on bills

You have not been paying attention.

for water they can't use," she said. Often, when water comes out of the taps murky, the city's advice is to "run the water" until it clears. This, as well as leaks and structural faults, lead to inflated water bills on a commodity that many citizens feel unsafe using for anything but flushing.

Although Denmark citizens have been complaining about the water quality for years, Mayor Wright has insisted that the water is safe to drink, both before and after the discovery of HaloSan. When Miller-Berry approached him with photocopies of Brown and Smith's binders back in 2016, Mayor Wright said to her, paraphrased: There is no water crisis... the people are crazy, they don't know what they're talking about, they're not educated.

"People in this community weren't hopeless; they just lost hope in being heard," Miller-Berry said. "The more I talked to people, the more they told me their stories on how they did speak up [about their water quality] but were not heard."

Consequently, Miller-Berry's specialty is getting the word out. In January, DCFSW held a rally and a march downtown. Attendees included activists from Flint, Michigan, toxicologists, local supporters, and researchers, including Dr. Sue Richardson, the UofSC researcher responsible for the discovery of HaloSan. Miller-Berry has been instrumental in accruing both political support for Denmark's crisis (Sanders was the first, but Booker, Warren, Williamson, Harris, Yang, and more have all reached out, and some have visited) and scientific evidence.

"Science will set you free. Policy is made by man, but you cannot alter science," she said.

Dr. Marc Edwards, researcher at Virginia Tech most renowned for publishing the data proving the severity and urgency of the Flint water crisis, has visited Denmark often. On multiple occasions, he has offered to test the wells and taps in citizens' homes at no cost to the city, but Mayor Wright has refused his proposal, opting instead to cooperate with USC researchers.

"As it turns out, UofSC were our heroes," Miller-Berry said. "They're the ones who found the HaloSan." The HaloSan was unprecedented. HaloSan is a chemical (scientific name, bromochlorodimethylhydantoin, or BCDMH) that kills bacteria and other dangerous biomatter in raw water. Never before had it been used to disinfect drinking water. In fact, Denmark, SC is the only well system in the world that used HaloSan for this purpose. And the city of Denmark did not keep strict records of how many times or in what amounts it was being used.

"I happened to notice when we were testing at the Cox Mill Well, there was this bucket of the BCDMH — I happen to know that one because I once did a study on swimming pools and hot tubs — and I thought, What is that doing here?" After Dr. Richardson voiced her concerns to DHEC, she contacted the EPA, who confirmed that HaloSan had never been approved to treat well water.



***People are
having to
haul water
twenty miles
round trip.***



"It's fine to have that in your swimming pool, but it may not be fine to have it in the water you drink," Dr. Richardson said. "When this molecule disseminates into a pool, there are huge charted spikes of leftover bromines and chlorines—and this was being injected into the groundwater, so it was going to stay around."

"I think Denmark was desperate to find something to kill the iron bacteria in the raw water," she continued, "Systems that serve less than 10,000 people are the most frequent violators of the EPA regulations. They just don't have the resources to monitor or invest in innovative systems."

The UofSC research team tested for lead, iron, manganese, and other metals at the request of DHEC. In their published report, they found no contaminant levels in any well that exceeded the EPA recommendations. But the levels, especially of iron and manganese, were not zero; in the DHEC report, the iron levels in two wells (Acacia and W. Voorhees) ranged from .015 to .2 milligrams per Liter and the manganese levels were between .01 and .03. That doesn't sound like a lot, but the EPA guidelines for drinking water for iron caps at .3 mg/L and .05 mg/L for manganese. Not only do these metals cause the discoloration, but depending on the testing date and time, the levels could be higher, both in the groundwater and in individual pipes and homes.

The Cox Mill Well has been taken out of service. But no real answers have been delivered to the citizens of Denmark, many of whom feel that the city and state have simply swept their history of negligence under the rug without apology. Before the HaloSan was discovered, DHEC and the city of Denmark claimed the water was safe for drinking, bathing, and cooking; now, after stopping the use of this chemical, their claim hasn't changed. Who can blame the residents for their distrust?

From Dr. Richardson—"If that was coming out of my tap, I'd be drinking bottled water too."

As the film crew angles a shot of the opening warehouse door, a beat-up Ram 1500 moseys along the side road. The driver sticks his neck out to ask whether there's a distribution happening today, but Remela Duncan, another board member for DCFSW, waves him off. "We're filming today," she says, shooing his truck down the empty street.

She tells me that on distribution days, they serve over 600 families with pallets of bottled water donated by businesses, organizations, and individuals. They also distribute to three local facilities for the elderly, the local schools, and two local colleges, Denmark Tech and Voorhees College, both HBCUs.

Naviree Johnson, a graduate of Denmark Technical College and a lifelong resident, says the local colleges and school districts don't take any chances. "No one drinks the water, really," he said. To some students in Columbia,



***The People
of Denmark
are not
uneducated***

***Nor are they
complacent
in the face
of injustice.***

this reality might be commonplace—but to others, it's unfathomable. Denmark is certainly not the only water system in the state to need a full overhaul.

Slowly, the issue is gaining national traction, but currently, reform from the state and city offices are what the citizens sorely need. If you feel, rightly, that UofSC students, as residents of the state of South Carolina, cannot and should not let fellow South Carolinians suffer from infrastructural violence, Deanna Miller-Berry had some advice: "Volunteer. Help make phone calls. Research. Rally. I won't say donations because I was a college student too. If we sound the alarm loud enough, get the word out nationally, we can make a movement."

The people of Denmark are not uneducated, nor are they complacent in the face of injustice. Meeting members of DCFWSW floored me—this, truly, was a community that cared about each other, that mobilized with a purpose and a clear mission, that wouldn't stop until Denmark citizens feel safe using the water running to their homes.

Next time you drive to Charleston, Hilton Head, or Charlotte, take my advice: take a back road. Stop at a local meat-and-three; try to resist Chick-fil-a. See for yourself the other side of South Carolina's "smiling faces and beautiful places" that the interstate bypasses. Communities like Denmark make up much of the state—and what we do there, in the smallest towns, makes us, for better or worse, who we are. ■



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A woman with dark hair and gold hoop earrings is shown from the chest up, wearing a white, long-sleeved blouse with puffed sleeves. She is looking upwards and to the right, with her right hand raised near her face. The background is a solid, vibrant pink. The text 'CORPORATE SAVVY' is overlaid in a large, white, serif font, with 'CORPORATE' on the top line and 'SAVVY' on the bottom line.

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STYLED BY JASMINE WHITE • PHOTOS BY MARK MADDALONI, NANCY STERRETT, CAMILA TRUJILLO • DESIGN BY MEREDITH PRICE



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Reels of Change



SUPPORTING MINORITY FILMMAKERS, ONE SHOW AT A TIME

BY LIZ SMITH • PHOTOS BY MARK MADDALONI • DESIGN BY MEREDITH PRICE

In the past few years, audiences have seen their theaters and televisions being populated by more diverse filmmakers than ever before, from the blockbuster acclaim of *Crazy Rich Asians* to Spike Lee's Academy Awards nomination sweep for *BlackKkKlansman*. While Hollywood has certainly come a long way in such a short span of time, the industry still faces an accessibility issue. Many commercial theaters will forgo a diversely created film, and instead opt for the next installment of a multi-million dollar action franchise. If those already on top are the ones being further fanned, what is to be done about minorities' widely unrecognized art?

Omm-Salma Rahemtullah, the Assistant Director of Programming at the Nickelodeon Theater here in Columbia, is committed to empowering minority filmmakers, one screening at a time. She chooses which films are to be screened, and thus has the frequent opportunity to showcase work by underrepresented people. At this point in cinema, when there is arguably more representation than ever before, who continues to be underrepresented? Rahemtullah states: "While many minorities are finally getting their spotlight, women of color — women in

general — have been underrepresented in the film industry. I think women of color don't get the opportunities to make films that would be considered, for example, for the Oscars. In any industry, if you have all of the gatekeepers being white men, that will always keep out women of color until it's changed." The generalized increase, however, is still notable and history-making. "It's only a cultural shift to the majority," says Rahemtullah. "We've been doing this forever, but it's just now getting out into the mainstream."

All filmmakers have their own themes in all of their movies. Martin Scorsese frequently leads tales about Italian-Americans in urban America, Christopher Nolan directs stories of professionals with whip-smart bravery, and Wes Anderson directs characters who are twee and precocious. The issue may not be that white male filmmakers aren't creating diverse films, but that underrepresented filmmakers are not as widely recognized for their storytelling.

"We all can only speak from the experiences that we've had," says Rahemtullah, "but this is a creative field as well, so there's lots of space for creativity - for creating stories - but they definitely are a reflection of our experiences and of the access we have. Who's telling the

story is important because that perspective varies, it changes from person to person, and just being able to see a diversity of perspectives and approaches is so important."

In a literary context, F. Scott Fitzgerald never could have written *The Color Purple*, because that's not his story to tell. Any attempt could come off as, quite literally, skin-deep. Perspective defines story, whether from the author or the character. As Rahemtullah says, "It's not only in the stories, it's in the makers: while white male directors tend to hire white males for their teams, women of color directors tend to hire other people who are also in marginalized communities to be on the project, so that it opens up the whole field to the people who've been shut out of it."

On this note, many minority-made films tend to be brushed under the rug in lieu of more money-making blockbusters, so many are underwatched and underrated. Rahemtullah praises the little-known *Give Me Liberty*: "I saw this beautiful, incredible film and it just struck me. It's made by a white Russian man, but the way that race was approached was just beautifully refreshing and really on point, and it didn't get distributed like it should have." On the other side of the coin, "Get Out," she says, "opened a genre to mainstream that has otherwise been underrepresented. The

reality of African American lives, the horrors of racism and slavery, at its core, that tradition is as old as the slave trade, but for it to be in a mainstream film is really game-changing, in a sense."

Rahemtullah (a South Asian woman from Africa) rejects the idea of numbing out categorization; race isn't something to be transcended from one day, but something important to hold on to. "I never want to be seen as 'just a woman'," she asserts. "We show the Toni Morrison documentary here, and she said

she never wanted to be a woman writer, she always wanted to be a Black woman writer. So kind of diluting and mainstreaming our history isn't necessarily beneficial. We all have different experiences, and those should be on the screen as well. We're part of the American fabric."

Taking one look at the Nick's website or social media is enough

to realize that this is no Regal Entertainment Theater; this is a haven of community, art, and visibility. There are usually two carefully chosen films being screened per day, as well as special events and series highlighting especially diverse titles. For example, the Foreign Focus series highlights a foreign film once a month, and the Out Here series is dedicated to LGBTQ+ filmmaking. Rahemtullah has the vital job of selecting which films to screen, and she states that they plan to "work on implementing an

"JUST BEING ABLE
TO SEE A DIVERSITY
OF PERSPECTIVES
AND APPROACHES
IS SO IMPORTANT."

'equity chart,' where [The Nickelodeon] can track and be really deliberate about choices. To track that as a reflection and go in a direction where we can make commitments like that so we can be a conduit to equity within the film industry, that's the goal." Mid-October, there will be screening of *This Changes Everything*, a look into gender inequality in Hollywood, which will include accounts from women like Zoe Saldana, Natalie Portman, Meryl Streep, and Rashida Jones.

The Nickelodeon's partner organization, Indie Grits, is known for their community events, most notably for staging hands-on workshops for filmmakers of all ages and backgrounds. Through these workshops, individuals are able to take the reins of their storytelling. "I've never touched a film camera," Rahemtullah says, "and having access to that equipment and that mentorship is just so empowering. It makes you think, 'If anyone else can do it, why can't I do it?'" Examples of workshops include Intro to Screenwriting, Costume Design on a Budget, Intro to Premiere Pro Software, and Group Media Workshops for Youth. In her words, it's "very accessible because [their] approach is really grassroots; you don't have to be intimidated." In the Columbia community, she finds that "there's a curiosity here that you don't often see outside of the South, which is really refreshing. I don't want to categorize, but I do see that exciting kind of keen interest here."


All this being said, how can Columbia locals support minority filmmakers? Well, Rahemtullah assures that it's much simpler than you may think: "Come out and watch their movies! That's the most important thing to do, show your support if you have the means and access to it." You don't have to own



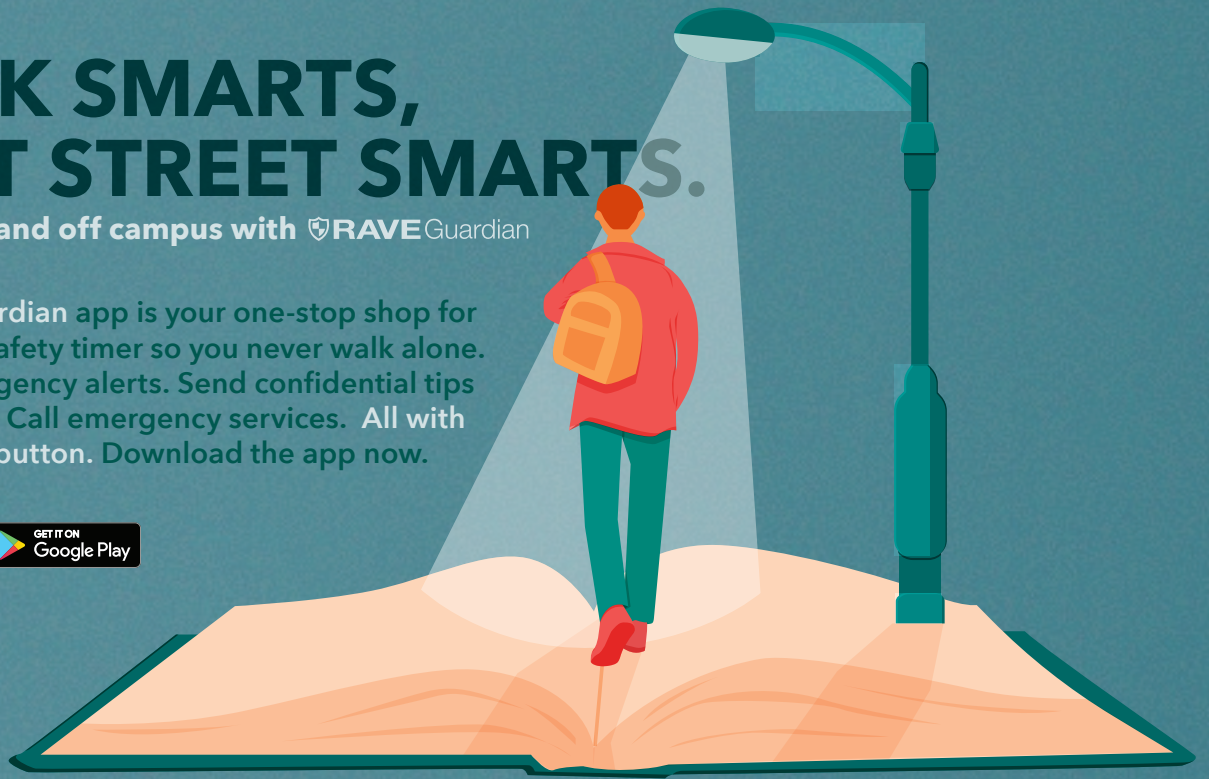
a multi-million dollar production company to support minority film; anyone with a few dollars and a free couple of hours has the ability to spread and recognize the work of these filmmakers, wherein every pair of eyes is a triumph. Succinctly put by Rahemtullah, the selector of the screenings herself: "Come out and see films, experiment a little, and you'll be pleasantly surprised." ■

The Nickelodeon can be found at 1607 Main Street. For tickets and showtimes, check <https://nickelodeon.org> or call (803) 254-8234

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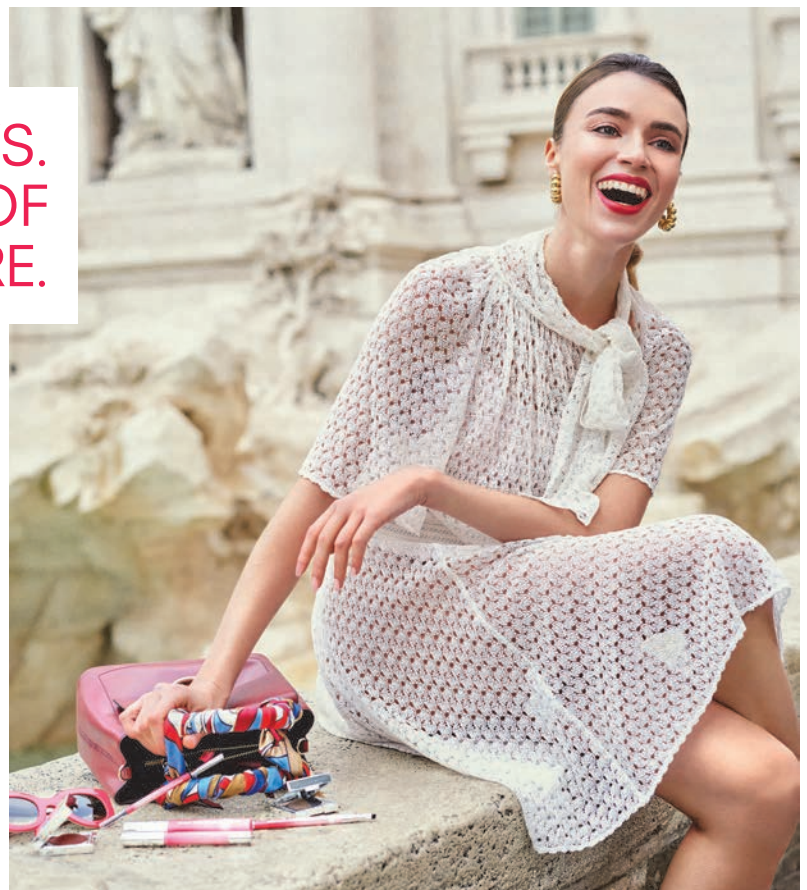
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o these are cows

Some cows I have petted their nose. Some cows I wave to as I drive by and I say cows.
All cows are some cows who I know and have seen in a fenced pasture blue window driving.

On canvas these cows are all cows haloed in the bodied beast in which all cows find themselves.
The sloped neck and twig-legged bow, the blue sky and moss-dark crunched grass haloing cows.

What do the cows see of the sky. What does a bodied beast know of bordered green pasture.
These cows shape mother belly and toothpick calf. These cows color black and brown.

I know these cows lumber and low miles from my home and I wave from the blue window.
But here finally we are not driving past. We are the field and there is no fence



BY CAROLINE FAIREY • ILLUSTRATION BY EMILY SCHOONOVER

ALBUM FIRST LOOK

BEN WOLVERTON'S HOMEGROWN COLLABORATION CELEBRATING HIS MOTHER

BY JESSICA FIELDS • PHOTOS BY ABBY MEYER • DESIGN BY ALIZAJANE HICKS

"Don't settle for so little."

That's the hidden treasure in Ben Wolverton's new album, "Home." Released in late August on both Spotify and Apple Music, the singer-songwriter's album begins with the song entitled "Forward," a sort of literary introduction to what follows. It opens the listener to a kind of piecemeal narrative, pulling individual lines from each of the other songs on the album into one joyful collage.

According to Wolverton, the songs came together somewhat randomly, but ended up forming a soundscape of joy, peace and gratitude—incorporating elements of his family life and childhood.

The song "Breathe," released prior to the rest of the album, had already surpassed 100,000 streams on Spotify by the album's release date. It situates the listener atop Mount Hippos, just outside of Jerusalem, with wind chasing in and out of the landscape. Two other songs on the album, entitled "Come Home" and "Barabbas," are perspective pieces, telling two biblical stories from alternative points of





view. These songs reflect the gratitude that Ben employs in his everyday life, but none more so than the song entitled "Joy." On the surface, a listener would never know that "Joy" is written for and to Ben's mother. Though never explicitly identified as the inspiration during the song, her vibrancy is imprinted throughout- especially in the line "It's time to laugh and dance and sing." All four of her children sing background vocals on the track, fulfilling her request to them: "All you siblings need to do a song together."

In Ben's words, "She is the epitome of joy to me here on this earth," and the album itself reflects his recognition that he grew up with the sort of joy and love in his family that the majority of those surrounding him did not experience. "The real joy is forgetting those plans and dreams and hopes" in favor of the sort of bone-deep, ever-present joy that his mother modelled for their whole family.

To continue tracking Ben's music, you can **follow him on Instagram @btwolv or on Spotify**. Just remember to pursue those moments of peace, joy, and gratitude. In Ben's words, "don't settle for so little." ■

"She is the epitome of joy to me here on this earth"

INNER WILDERNESS



Mimi Kato's visionary art
BY NICOLE KITCHENS
PHOTOS BY ALYSSA WILLEY
DESIGN BY EMILY SCHOONOVER

I arrived at the Columbia Museum of Art with the full intention of seeing a Vincent Van Gogh exhibit, but I'd arrived about two months too early; after the guy at the front desk gave me a confused look, he pointed directly behind me to a poster donning Van Gogh's infamous portrait...and the words: "Exhibit Coming October 4th."

"Oh. So what else is there to see?"

When he recommended Mimi Kato, I wasn't sure what to expect. But I was met with a bold self-portrait series in which the artist challenges the power and femininity of women in the workplace. Using photography and computer editing, Kato combines elements of bold, crass humor, traditional Japanese art landscapes and shocking archetypes to display the subdued women of Japanese corporations in a free wilderness of their own.

While the initial three-panel scenes of "One Ordinary Day of an Ordinary Town" are certainly eye catching on their own, taking inspiration from the Edo-period work scenes in and around the capital and turning it into a visual overload of modern Japanese tourism and city life, it was the narrative of her Wild Corporation series that was hard to turn away from.

Basing the tropes of the narrative on her upbringing in Nara, Japan, Kato reflects the sexist corporate structures of Japan that developed during the twentieth century. The available career paths for women broke down into two choices; Sogo Shoku and Ippan Shogu. While Ippan Shogu found women placed in more managerial positions, Sogo Shoku consisted of "office ladies," who worked secretarial jobs and poured tea for male superiors with the encouragement of leaving the job when they reached their 30's, in order to marry and start families.

While the office ladies of Sogo Shoku are known for being subservient and reduced to mundane jobs, Kato calls the office ladies of her work "smart and powerful." They take back their workplace in the midst of their own environment, despite being still dressed in their assigned uniforms. Kato also expressed her desire to explore why women in workplaces often choose to fight each other, rather than pull together to gain more as a whole. In one portrait, a group office ladies sit in front of a dead grizzly bear in the midst of the woods. One woman, holding a pair of standard-office-supply scissors examines her

handiwork in the bear's wounds, while another woman cries, her face contorted with disgust and sadness at the dead animal before them. Another smears its blood onto her lips, gazing into a compact mirror as though applying lipstick.

In another, aptly titled "One Step Ahead", women stand on the slopes of a snowy hill, those in plaid skirts and yellow shirts screaming out with their hands bound and their hair braids tied together. At the top of the hill, a woman in a blue uniform screams at them defiantly. In the middle of the setting, another woman clad in the blue uniform stands tall, looking into the distance as though she's figuring out her next move.

As a female viewing Kato's work, it's almost impossible not to see yourself reflected in these images. The constant clawing to get ahead, the contorted and dramatic expressions that cry out against the monotonous. It's hard not to see the reflections of the #MeToo movement as well, whether that was Kato's intention or not; the idea that women are constantly pitted against each other in the workplace while also being minimized to a pretty face in a pretty uniform, performing delicate tasks as they await their so-called real future within traditional gender roles.

Perhaps every woman needs to embrace the ability to contort against what's expected of them in society.

More importantly, perhaps every woman should embrace their own wilderness. ■



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