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THE COLLEGE VOICE

CONNECTICUT COLLEGE'S STUDENT NEWSPAPER, SINCE 1977

POCA and the New 'In Color' Magazine

SERGIO REYES
CONTRIBUTOR

2020 was a year to remember as the world was hit by an unforeseen pandemic, and the United States experienced a long-awaited social and racial reckoning. After the deaths of individuals like George

Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and Ahmaud Arbery, a series of protests unfolded throughout the nation objecting to police brutality. As a result, many places were called to re-evaluate their diversity and inclusion policies, including Connecticut College. Now, it is important to understand that these issues did not magically appear last year, but people were simply



In Color

Article continued on page 13.

The Man Behind the Many Emails

KERIN KRASNOFF
STAFF WRITER

As any Camel can observe from the many emails he has sent out to the Conn community this year, Dean Arcelus has been very vocal about what is happening on campus. On April 14, I talked with Dean Arcelus about his insights when setting up the

layout of this academic year in the midst of the pandemic as well as future plans for the upcoming semester.

To what extent are you involved in the planning process for the upcoming fall semester? Is there anything that is set in stone?

Arcelus: At the end of the day, a lot of the details about the fall will end up getting worked out over the course of the summer. Each campus in the state of Connecticut has a COVID coordinator and I am the COVID coordinator for Connecticut College. So we have a weekly call on Tuesdays with that whole group and then we have a weekly call on Thursdays with the Department of Public Health and all of the COVID coordinators. We are regularly asking the Department of Public Health all kinds of questions about not only the current semester but looking into the future and they are limited right now in terms of what they can predict is going to be the set of circumstances for the fall. Right now, based on the information that we and the Department of Public Health have, we think that it is likely that we will be wearing masks and that we will have some kind of testing. Again, what that means and how it will all work is largely going to depend on the variants and whether or not between now and the fall there are variants that are impacting our country and state that don't work as effectively with the vaccine and then whether or not there is going to be a booster to the vaccines to help address whatever variants there are. So there are still some unknowns that we need greater clarity on in order to know for sure what the fall will be. As President Bergeron noted, our intent right now is to go back to a normally operating campus in terms of academic schedules, classroom spacing, athletics, activities, and things of that sort.

Is there anything you learned from the past semester that went into the planning process for this semester?

Arcelus: We looked very closely at the experiences in the fall and tried to take that information and apply it to the spring semester planning. When we started the fall semester, there was a lot that was still being determined even as we started. I think that some of the information that we shared with students about how the campus was operating, it was being shared with you all through emails even over the course of the first few weeks. An improvement that I think we did over the spring semester is that by the time that we launched the spring semester, we had a much clearer sense of how to operate the campus and in our communication much more clearly. Two of the really important pieces I think were the onboarding process and trying to bring as little COVID onto campus as possible. By laying out the process to you all and communicating not only through virtual meetings, but in writing and videos, we were able to convey just how important that process was. At the end of the day, it allowed us to launch the semester with very little COVID on our campus. The other piece that was important in our communications with students had to do with trying to stay on campus and if you were going to go off campus to be very thoughtful and careful about the masking and social distancing and protecting yourselves when you're off campus so that you don't bring anything onto campus. That's what we have seen. I think that we have had very few cases this se-

Article continued on page 4.

IN THIS ISSUE

NEWS

3

The Dune
Brooke Sponzo

SPORTS

8

Varsity Gym
Edin Sisson

OPS

5

Conn's Covid Procedures
Jared Nussbaum

ARTS

13

A Coffee Chat
Elizabeth Berry

Letter From the Editor

JOZETTE MOSES
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

5 days ago we received an email from the Office of Communications announcing that on April 21 the college would release the biggest announcement in its history. Tomorrow afternoon at 4:30 p.m. at the disputed Dune, many of us will gather to hear an announcement that the administration decided required a five day delay to intensify its hype. So naturally, our editorial staff is not underestimating the impending news coming tomorrow. Like most of our community we've speculated for the last few days about what the announcement will be, and we'd like to share some of our predictions with you.

Morgan Maccione: "Going back to an all women's college???? I doubt it but it's funny hehe."

Elizabeth Berry: "My guess is as follows: the College has received a HUGE grant from some unnamed donor that will all go towards renovating Crozier-Williams. Said renovation will include all-glass windows/walls, a stir-fry station in Oasis, expanded dance studios with a built-in auditorium, and the re-installation of a pool in the now 1962 room for ~recreational swimming. I feel confident in my prediction ;)"

Nefertari Pierre-Louis: "We're changing the mascot."

Lucie Englehart: "Biggest' announcement ever definitely means biggest donation ever. SGA exec all thinks that it is a renovation at the AC and some waterfront additions."

Amanda Sanders: mascot change, changing college to bergeron college, renovating the plex (again)

Olivia Fechner-Lewis: "My wild guess is that they're starting a football team :)"

Elora Roy: "I've heard a few guesses around that it's going to be money to renovate Cro, but for a fun one I'd also like to speculate that we're changing our mascot to a mountain lion."

We all look forward to hearing tomorrow's announcement, and we hope it fulfills our already high expectations and yours as well. •

THE COLLEGE VOICE

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New Venue Spells Hope for Artists but DUNEsdays for South Residents

BROOKE SPONZO
STAFF WRITER

This Founder's Day, Connecticut College had more to celebrate than just its 110th birthday. On April 5th, President Bergeron officially opened The Dune: a new, seasonal stage on Tempel Green that's promised to host its fair share of music, theater, and dance department shows for the entertainment of Camels everywhere.

Well...*everywhere* is perhaps a stretch—not all students are happy to see the Dune rise. Those dwelling on the southern side of campus fear that the new venue will prove itself to be little more than noise pollution. “I really need some quiet,” an anonymous '22 student commented. The SGA released an April 4 meeting update that included an email contact for the Chair of Residential Affairs to be reached in the case of decibel drama (lenglehar@conncoll.edu).

When the Dune opened among a flutter of picnic blankets, tasty treats courtesy of NoRa Cupcake Company, and delectable prizes from CC Student Philanthropy, South Campus Camels feared that their complaints would soon be buried under the sand of happy fanfare.

This semester, many students still take at least some of their classes online over Zoom, a feat most often accomplished from inside their college bedrooms. As such, dorms have become places where excessive noise is considered disrespectful, as your high-volume tunes might not only threaten the security of your neighbor's nap, but their economics presentation, too. The consensus on the southern sidewalks of Conn is that the Dune and the teachings of over-video professors will exist as little more than competitors for sound waves.

But such fears aren't the only first impressions of the space. Performers and artists are more than happy to have their interests finally represented on campus. “I'd rather perform somewhere than nowhere, so I'm excited,” acknowledges an unnamed '24 student, while another chimes in with: “I think it's cool and will allow for more performances that rally the community. We can do a musical in the pandemic!” And they're not wrong: the stage is already serving as a backdrop for dance Capstones and student song groups, creating more events for students to flock to and enjoy as the weather gets nicer. “We finally get to have live performances after a year of absolutely nothing,” comments one student '21, while another adds that it's “kinda fun to have people out there rehearsing while you're hanging out on the Green.”

The exciting prospect of outdoor concerts isn't quite enough to sway every cynic in the crowd though. Our new campus banners advertise that Camels “fearlessly pursue the truth,” and, holding to that, Conn students are more than happy to poke as many different-angled holes in the Dune as can be sniffed out. “It's literally outside. What if it rains, or is dark, or just is cold?” an incognito '24 student asks. “The flapping sign makes loud noises in the wind,” comments a second, with a handful of agreements that note our campus' proclivity for particularly gusty weather. Other students raise to the foray the Camels' notoriety for not attending on-campus events: “what if no one goes to the events at the Dune?”

Students also brought forth the argument that the structure blocks their sight line to the distant Long Island Sound. “Ugly,” bluntly puts one anonymous senior of the stage. “It blocks the view from the top of the Green.” Other less-than-stellar appraisals poured in from the social media account @missed.conn. actions as well: “does anyone know who we can email to beg them to stop playing this classic a** music at 3 million decibels on Tempel Green for three hours straight, this is literally psychological torture.”

“To the person who is in charge of the Dune, what in God's name were you

thinking?” accuses another angered follower of the account.

However, others warned against the hypocrisy present in the growing North/South Campus split on the issue: “I just want to point out that this is pretty much what the Barn was for the Plex [and KB].”

“If we're complaining about sound,” another Camel chimes in: “I'd much rather have a conversation about the beeping that happens when food is brought to and from the JA dining hall.”

In the Dune's defense, it's makeshift attorneys cite the age-old sports v. arts divide, one that caused a point of contention between the two groups at several college-run town halls at the start of the semester, much to the disparagement of Zoom's comment section. “All these athletes who were 85% of the COVID cases last semester now complaining? Absolutely not,” snapped one disgruntled senior.

Such diverse remarks lead me to wonder: will the Dune find a way to warm up to its seemingly mixed reception by the Camels? Will we find the jokes of the students to be only that, or will the stage prove itself to be a real problem, and an object of spite as well as jest?

It's been only a week—time has yet to reveal the venue's true intentions.

And one senior helps to remind students that anti- and pro-Duners may have more in common than they believe. “We [the theater majors] don't like it either,” she admits. “Sorry we have to perform outside, but what else would they suggest during COVID? Is this ideal? No! But it's the safest option. If anything this will show people how much work goes into the performances—people in the arts don't just show up to perform, there's a lot of practice and, yes, noise, that goes into a final product.”

A recent Instagram poll hosted by the satirical Instagram account @conn-collapocalypse asked the community if they thought the Dune was “cool” or if they “hated it.” The results were cut straight down the middle with, out of 120 answers, exactly 50% of respondents giving the Dune a yay, and 50% holding out a thumbs down for the new space.

On April 12, Dean Norbert released an email containing a performance schedule for the Dune, officially addressing noise complaints in saying: “I have asked all faculty, students and staff running rehearsals/tech to significantly turn down the volume during the week. Events will only use full volume during formal performances.” He also indicated that spaces other than the library will be available for South campus residents to reserve on the occasion that they have a class or an interview during a time in which the Dune is active. •



The Man Behind the Many Emails (Cont'd)

Article continued from front page.

mester so far in large part because students have been very thoughtful and mindful as to how to operate on campus and off campus in limiting the spread.

What have been some successes this semester in regard to Conn's response to COVID? Is there anything that surprised you? Is there anything you would have done differently?

Arcelus: I am pleased to see that we were able to maintain such a low level of COVID and we haven't had a positive student in the last 20 days, and we have had only two positive student cases in the last 38 days (Note: this interview was conducted prior to the two positive student tests on April 16). So that has allowed us to stay in Green which has allowed us as a community to be more engaged with each other and to be able to do things together in person. For example, the 40 Days event that we had for seniors this past weekend, the events that are happening on the Dune, the athletic competitions, all of that is made possible because students are doing a great job of managing these circumstances this semester. However, that's not the case for all of our peers [NESCAC schools]; some of our peers have had significant outbreaks on their campus and that is not to say that we may not have that in the next 5 weeks, we can still have an outbreak. Now, we are having more and more students being vaccinated which again presents a protective factor that will help to keep the cases low.

Has COVID added any particular challenges to your work at Conn? Have you been sending out more emails than a usual semester?

Arcelus: I usually don't send many emails. I can probably count on one hand the number of messages I would send in a year to students as a whole community. I don't normally send a message a week. It's funny, I sometimes go into a week thinking that I don't really have anything to send to the students that week and then inevitably something comes up that is important to try to convey. All the messages are archived on the Path Forward website from last semester and this semester and it is surprising to see that virtually every week there has been something, at least one or two messages, that helped to convey to you all about what is happening on the ground at the moment and what to be thinking about. Then with most of those messages, I also forward to parents, faculty and staff so that they know what we are communicating to students. My sense is that people have generally been appreciative of the information. I realize it's a lot of information. Hopefully, it's a way to help people understand how the college is progressing and how we are trying to open it up more and more over the course of time.

Have you volunteered to communicate more with the students, parents, and staff, or is it a part of your job description?

Arcelus: As the Dean of Students, I had a significant responsibility for the students' health and wellbeing and when this all started out back in March [2020], I had taken a leadership role institutionally in how we were going to be responding to the pandemic and then I became the COVID coordinator which none of it is in my job description to do. Therefore, I am in regular contact with other Connecticut schools, with the department of Public Health, with Hartford Healthcare and with our NESCAC peers. My job this year, as a lot of the staff in Student Life, has been totally different than what our jobs are normally. Our job has been to continue the work that we normally

do while at the same time having a heavy focus on COVID and how the whole college is operating within the pandemic.

Are you doing more COVID work than you are doing regular work in a school year?

Arcelus: Yes. Right now, I am largely focused on COVID, but I am still doing the things that I normally need to do. Student life in a sense has adjusted our focus this year to be on COVID which means that other projects and initiatives that we would normally be working on in this year, that are outside of the day to day operations, we had to put on hold. Normally, I don't have this institutional focus on how to run a college in a pandemic, Dean Cardwell doesn't normally have the responsibility on how to run a testing center, CC Curtis (Director for Wellbeing and Health Promotions) is not normally focused on contact tracing. In essence, each of us as examples have had to do our work very differently to be focused on how to manage the college in a pandemic. Everybody's job across campus had to learn to change and adjust and it has been a massive team effort as an institution to make this work. I think that the differences of a lot of the responsibility on the nuts and bolts of how to work under a pandemic are on key people within student life that have had to change their work.

Is there anything you are looking forward to at Conn as the spring semester comes to an end?

Arcelus: I'm looking forward to seeing you all enjoy these last few weeks of the semester. I'm looking forward to seeing the performances this weekend: the dance performances, and the cabaret performance on The Dune. I am looking forward to seeing the athletes continue to compete. Basically, just seeing students around campus. I live on campus so I am regularly here and walking around and I am hopeful that everyone can have as enjoyable of a spring on campus as we can possibly have.

Recently, Conn has said that they will have a vaccination clinic at the Athletic Center. Were you involved in that planning?

Arcelus: Yes. I have been in regular touch for the past several weeks with various different partners to identify a potential source of vaccine that could be brought to campus. I have been in contact with Hartford Healthcare, with Walgreens, with CVS and the community health center. In the end, the Community Health Center made the most sense for us to be able to have the Pfizer vaccine on campus for one day where we could do a large percentage of the student body. This is all thanks to the state of Connecticut and how supportive they have been of having college students get vaccinated before they leave campus because there is a window of time to do it. Given the challenges that have been happening with the Johnson and Johnson vaccine, the only option really was Pfizer because it had a three week gap for the two doses and we had to be able to do it next week in order for students to get the second dose before they leave campus. I was very involved in identifying the vaccine and negotiating all of the details.

Going back to the preparation for the fall semester, is Conn going to require students to be vaccinated before arriving on campus?

Arcelus: At this moment, we are not requiring it. I know some institutions are beginning to communicate that they are requiring it. We are not at that point at the moment. In the coming weeks and months, we will continue to evaluate the details for the fall. The good news is that roughly 95% of students are planning to be vaccinated which is good for the fall.

At the very beginning of the school year, you framed our success regarding COVID as something that could "put Conn on the map." Do you think Conn's response to COVID might change public perception of the school?

Arcelus: I think at the beginning of the year what I tried to convey to students was that I think we could demonstrate how we are a community that has always been a place that we take care of each other and that the way that we handle COVID is a way for us to demonstrate to ourselves, to our alumni, to the broader public those broad values of care and concern for each other. I think that that started to get communicated after the fall semester. There were some articles written about the successes of our fall semester in the national media and my hope is that we can continue to have a successful spring semester and be able to tell our story more broadly about how we were able to provide you all with an on campus experience in the midst of the pandemic.

Do you believe that our success could be attributed to the kind of close-knit community we are?

Arcelus: I think it comes together in a wide variety of factors that contribute to our success. I think the core part of it is the fact that this is a place where people care about each other and take care of each other where we really came together as an institutional team to figure out the challenges that we had to overcome in order to be able to be in person that way that we have been. When I think back to March when this all got started, I remember that there were all these cruise ships that were all having outbreaks on them and I sat here thinking about how we would bring everyone back to campus, thinking about the fact that we have "cruise ships". Each residence here has its own cruise ship and I am thinking to myself, "how are we going to operate a campus with all these cruise ships on campus." Over the course of the summer in partnership with Hartford Healthcare, colleagues all across the country, and our alumni medical professionals, we came up with a set of protocols and plans for how to do this. I think that says a lot about the community that we have that we were able to be as successful as we have been for the course of the year.

When you look back on yourself from a year ago, is there anything you would tell yourself about how well Conn is doing under the circumstances? Were you worried about Conn's future or did you think that we would be successful?

Arcelus: No, I was very worried. Through the summer I have had many sleepless nights, wondering how this would all play out. Particularly, when we were working through how to establish a testing center and have access to tests to be able to regularly test the community. I think that a key part of this whole process is to have the kind of data and information to have the prevalence of COVID on campus. The BROAD Institute has been an incredible partner in this- the testing center closes at 5 pm, the results are driven up to Boston, let's say the results have gotten there by 8 pm, by 6 am, I have the results from yesterday's tests up on my computer. In an incredibly fast matter, we are able to have the results of campus and that I think has been a really important piece to the puzzle.

Is there anything else you would like to add?

Arcelus: Just my deep appreciation for how wonderful everyone has been through these difficult times and how just supportive I think students have been with each other and how collaborative students have been with the faculty and staff and figuring out how to do this. •

Connecticut College Gets Vaccinated

AMANDA SANDERS
MANAGING EDITOR

Walk into the library, coffee shops, Athletic Center, or any building on campus and you'll hear students talking about their COVID-19 vaccination experience.

On April 1, the state of Connecticut opened up vaccinations to all residents, workers, and students in Connecticut, prompting a mad rush amongst Conn students and Connecticut residents alike to book an appointment. Over the last three weeks, herds of students have refreshed all and any websites with possible vaccine appointments and driven to vaccination sites all across the state.

"Getting my vaccine was a surreal experience a year after being sent home from Italy last spring and having spent this year navigating my senior year in a pandemic," says Elizabeth Berry '21 who got her first vaccine at the Earth Convention Center at the Mohegan Sun Casino on April 8. Along with many of her friends, she drove to the site where long lines of Connecticut residents and college students waited to get one of the (then three) available vaccines along with a sacred vaccination card. On April 9, Martha Kenyon '21 received her first vaccine at the Earth Convention Center as well, a seemingly popular place for students to get vaccinated. Despite hearing that there were occasional long wait times at the Center, it took Kenyon very little time to get her shot, but "I heard there were lines on and off and one formed right after I left." Kenyon got a free donut at Krispy Kreme after her dose to celebrate her success, the donut chain is offering free donuts to Americans who choose to get vaccinated as a way to promote widespread vaccination. "It took five minutes to get an appointment but that's only because someone sent it along to me. Otherwise, I think it would have been a pain in the ass."

Spots for vaccinations have been filling up quickly throughout the state. The United States as a whole is averaging 3.2 million shots a day and 48% of the population of Connecticut has gotten at least one dose of a vaccine, making it the fourth most vaccinated state in the country as of April 18. 31% of the state has been fully vaccinated at the time of this article's pub-

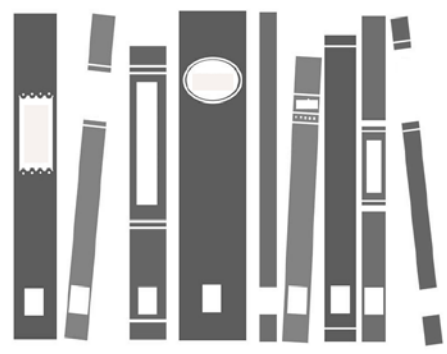
lication.

Kat Carrion '22 also received her first dose of vaccine in early April off-campus. "I went to Walgreens in East Lyme, the whole thing probably took thirty minutes." Carrion also pointed out that while students were lucky to have gotten shots at different clinics in Connecticut, Connecticut College is beginning to vaccinate students starting this week, with 400 students already signed up. At the time of Berry's, Kenyon's, and Carrion's shots, the College had not yet begun to vaccinate students.

On April 20, the College will host a vaccination clinic with doses of the Pfizer vaccine. The vaccination clinic will be done through the Community Health Center of New London. There will be a second clinic to administer second doses on May 11. The clinic will be able to vaccinate between 500-600 students. The College is also offering doses to out-of-state remote students able to drive in after realizing they had more doses than students interested in being vaccinated on campus. If there are still available doses after the clinic, the College will offer them to family members of College employees. One student I spoke to about being vaccinated at the college said, "I chose to schedule my vaccine here because I didn't feel an immediate need to do it. Plus community members here [in New London] deserve to get it first, I just happen to be here." The college originally planned to administer doses of the Johnson and Johnson vaccine which requires only one dose. However, on April 13, federal health authorities recommended that vaccine providers stop administering the vaccine after six women reported blood clots after being vaccinated.

"If you can get your vaccine through the College and leave appointments in New London for residents you should," Carrion reminds us. The College has estimated that 95% of Connecticut College students have plans to be vaccinated, an exciting note to end the year on and one that suggests that next year may look a little more normal. •

BOOK



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INFORMATION SERVICES

Satanic Panic

CAOIMHE MARKEY
CONTRIBUTOR

It's about time to hide your husbands, folks, because Lil Nas X is crashing back into the music world in leather knee high boots with his newest single "MONTERO (Call Me By Your Name)". On March 26th, the artist released an explosive music video that took us through the world of 'Montero,' Lil Nas's dreamworld that he describes as a place where the 'parts of ourselves we don't want the world to see' can be out in the open.

The video begins in an ethereal heaven-like place, where, after making out with a rhinestone clad alien version of himself, Nas is brought before a jury of Lil Nas' dressed in blue Victorian chic. This jury of selves sentences him to a stoning, which is likely a nod to his view of his own sexuality growing up, which he stated in a *TIME* interview was an environment in which being gay 'is never going to be OK.' After this scene, Nas swings gracefully down to the depths of hell with a toss of his new bright red dreads, and gives the devil the lap dance of his existence.

Lil Nas X explains in a video with Genius that his real name is in fact Montero Lamar Hill, after which the song is named, and the 'Call Me By Your Name' piece is playing on calling the other person (upon whom the song is based) by his own name, the aforementioned Montero. But, if your first reaction to the song name was to link it to Luca Guadagnino's 2007 film *Call Me By Your Name*, as I did, you wouldn't be wrong to assume its involvement in Nas's inspiration. Nas says that he wrote the song soon after watching the movie that shot Timothée Chalamet to fame, and cites it as a major source of influence for the song, which is about embracing one's sexuality.

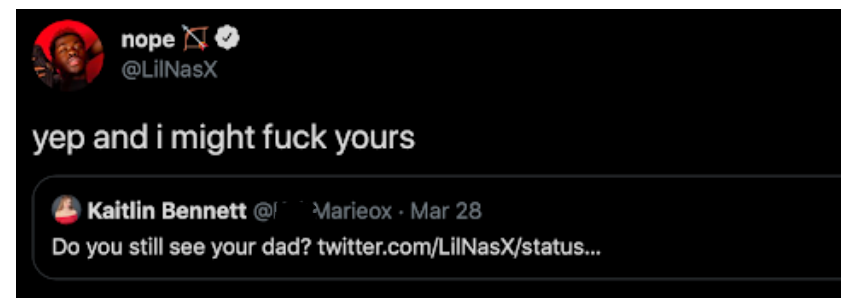
Unsurprisingly, the reactions to the music video are vicariously mixed. Many praised him for the irony and humor of the video, and for redefining the common homophobic insult that 'gay people are going to hell.' Others were scandalized at this graphic representation of homosexuality, especially given that Lil Nas X was known for his 'Old Town Road' song to which children all over the nation had given their heart and soul.

It seems Lil Nas X, however, could not be less fazed about the mixed feedback. Of

course, he expected backlash from 'impassioned' Christians, given that he designed a music video depicting himself, a publicly gay man, pole dancing his way happily down to hell. Whatever the case, Nas had no trouble shooting down his opposition via Twitter, most prominently the gun rights activist Kaitlin Bennett, who dared to ask Nas "Do you still see your dad?" to which he responded "yep and i might f**k yours."

Nas published a letter on Twitter dedicated to 'young Montero,' in which he reflects on how he had promised himself to "never be 'that' type of gay person" and "to die with the secret" at fourteen years old. He mentions the fear of flaunting his sexuality so publicly, the anger it will likely indite, but reassures his younger self that it is for a purpose, which he goes on to say is "to make people stay the f**k out of other people's lives and stop dictating who they should be."

What is so fantastic about Lil Nas X leaning into this heaven versus hell narrative in MONTERO is not only the ginormous f**k you it delivers to homophobic rhetoric, but also that embracing your sexuality despite possible 'hellish' consequences from others is worth the freedom it gives you, and can liberate you from the pain of suppressing your identity. •



Caoimhe Markey

The Left's Lies About Georgia's Election Reform Bill

PETER GATTUSO
CONTRIBUTOR

In response to a Georgia election reform bill that was signed by Gov. Brian Kemp on April 1, President Joe Biden took after his predecessor by propagating lies, calling it "Jim Crow on steroids," and "a blatant attack on the Constitution and good conscience." In factuality, the bill, SB - 202, is indisputably constitutional as Article I of the United States Constitution clearly expresses that "The Times, Places and Manner of holding Elections for Senators and Representatives, shall be prescribed in each State by the Legislature thereof," while Biden also demonstrated his blinding partisanship by comparing a bill that expands voting access for most Georgia voters to the notorious voting restrictions implemented by turn-of-the-century Southern Democrats that prevented people of color from voting. Biden is not alone when it comes to Democrats disseminating disinformation: Stacey Abrams, the 2018 Democratic gubernatorial candidate who attempted to steal the election by claiming massive voter fraud despite losing by over 50,000 votes, not unlike Donald Trump's 2020 election claims, falsely claimed the bill "suppresses voters, criminalizes compassion & seizes election authority from local + state officials." Earlier this week, Abrams praised a New Jersey election reform bill that mandates 9 days of early voting, yet still claimed the Georgia bill that mandates 17 days of early voting was voter suppression.

With all the disinformation of the Georgia election bill from public officials, news organizations, and social media, it is understandably challenging to recognize what the bill changes. Despite Biden's false claim that the bill would "end voting at five o'clock" and "ends voting hours early so working people can't cast their vote," (a claim that received "Four Pinocchios" by *The Washington Post*) the bill allows voting precincts to be open from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. while mandating they stay open for a minimum of eight hours. Additionally, the bill expands early voting access to 17 days (including at least two Saturdays and two optional Sundays). The bill keeps in place no-excuse absentee voting, allowing people to vote by mail for any reason, limiting the time to request an absentee ballot to a mere 67 days while also allowing them to be completed online. The most significant change with absentee ballots is replacing signature verification—a time-consuming process for election workers—with verification through a driver's license ID, (which 97% of Georgia voters have) the last four digits of their social security number, (which 99.9% of Georgia voters have) or a voter identification card (which is free to obtain). If voters do not have access to any of those, they can still submit verification through a photocopy or digital picture of their "current utility bill, bank statement, government check, paycheck, or

other government document" that includes their name and address.

One of the most publicized features of the bill is the prohibition of the distribution of money, gifts, food, and drinks within 150ft of the polling place and 25ft of voters in line. The provision does not prohibit polling places from providing water and/or food to voters in line, but merely prohibits distribution by organizations to prevent electioneering. Other changes in the bill include codifying drop-boxes into Georgia law, stating there be one for every 100,000 registered voters or advance voting locations in a county, whichever is smaller, and having the state legislature select the chair of the State Election Board on the basis that the Secretary of State, the previous chair, could be influenced by re-election and other political aspirations.

Democrats and other voters have reasonable instincts against a GOP-led election reform bill in Georgia just months after Donald Trump attempted to truly disenfranchise Georgian voters by propagating conspiracy theories. However, Democrats have tried to turn this bill into something it is inherently and patently not, and it is disappointing to see President Biden contradict his own inaugural message of "reject(ing) a culture in which facts themselves are manipulated or made-up," by doing just that. In response to claims of voter suppression (a claim that *The Washington Post* and *The New York Times* have stated as false), Georgia election official, Gabriel Sterling, asserted "It's a lie. This is no different than the lie of Trump saying there was voter fraud in this state."

Unfortunately, these lies are already having consequences against Georgians. Major League Baseball's (MLB) Commissioner, Rob Manfred, knelt to the mob by announcing it was moving their All-Star Game out of Atlanta over "restrictions to the ballot box," a boycott of Georgia proposed by the President of the United States. Despite Biden's boycott for a baseball game solely because Georgia passed a bill that broadly expanded voting access, Biden has not proposed a similar boycott for the 2022 Olympics held in China, where they currently hold Chinese Uighurs in internment camps. Holly Quinlan, president and CEO of Cobb Travel and Tourism, announced that the "estimated lost economic impact" from MLB's relocation is more than \$100 million. Sterling responded to the boycott called on by Biden: "I think it's morally reprehensible and disgusting that he's perpetuating economic blackmail over a lie." It will be interesting to see if Commissioner Rob Manfred decides to move the MLB's headquarters out of New York upon discovering that their current election laws only offer 9 days of early voting, excuse-only absentee voting, and a prohibition on food and water distribution to voters in-line. •

Is Conn Successful with Covid Procedures?

JARED NUSSBAUM
CONTRIBUTOR

Given the dire and unusual circumstances students are faced with during this school year, it is warranted to wonder whether the Conn student body has been successful in following the COVID-19 rules and regulations put forward by the World Health Organization (WHO), Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and other courageous healthcare workers. Without a doubt, the current spring semester has been more successful thus far than the previous semester, as evidenced by the consistently lower weekly positivity rate of COVID-19 among students and employees of the school, as well as the decidedly brighter general outlook on the future.

That being said, Conn students have certainly made, and continue to make, mistakes in their attempt to limit the spread of the virus. However, perhaps we should not be disappointed by this, as the pandemic that we have now been wrestling with for over a year was both unanticipated and unprecedented, and thus one can expect Conn's response to it to be only impressive, but not flawless. Indeed, this is exactly what it has been.

One could assess whether Conn has been successful in adhering to COVID-19 procedures in a number of ways. For example, one could cite the positivity rate, reference the party scene (or lack thereof) on campus, or compare Conn's handling of the virus to that of similar institutions. One could even simply take a poll of those on campus. Personally, I prefer to judge whether Conn students have been successful in this endeavor according to the rules that Conn itself has elucidated and enforced on campus. These are difficult to miss because they are everywhere.

Wear a mask! Wash your hands! Watch your distance! These are the pithy directives drafted and enforced by Conn that appear everywhere you look. In fact, these three simple rules guide the behavior of all those in public spaces, everywhere in the world. Because these rules are ubiquitous and widely recommended by healthcare professionals across the globe, they must have the potential to meaningfully reduce COVID-19 infection rates, and insofar as this is true, it can be said that these measures are, though banal, highly important. Therefore, it is reasonable to wonder if Conn students have done these things sufficiently well, and if they have done them consistently and frequently enough to make them the social norm.

Wear a mask! I will say, happily, that I have not come across a person walking around on campus grounds without their mask. This is not to say that every single student wears their mask exactly as they should when they should, for this is certainly not the case. On many occasions, I have seen students wearing their masks over their mouths, but below their noses, which is technically a violation of proper mask-wearing. I have done this myself many times when I am not near anyone in an outside space. Given this, it does appear that there is room for improvement in terms of students properly wearing their masks, especially in dorms as well as in dorm bathrooms. Nevertheless, I am happy that most students do properly wear their masks when they should.

Next, we have the instruction, wash your hands! The truth is that whether or not we are in the midst of a pandemic, some people simply will not wash their hands, and we cannot fix that problem. (Thankfully, though, you would not want to come within six feet of these people anyway, so there is nothing to worry about.) As for those who are interested in keeping their hands clean, I do think that we have done a reasonably good job of this; however, this is true only insofar as using hand sanitizer is equivalent to washing one's hands with soap and water. The only problem with using hand sanitizer is that if you are unlucky enough to use the wrong type, you have to immediately rush to the bathroom to wash the motor oil off your hands.

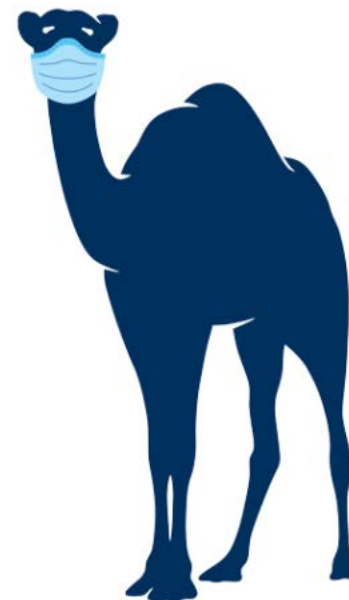
Lastly, we have the directive, watch your distance! The main issue with this one is that nobody seems to know exactly what kind of social distancing is appropriate in any given situation. As a result, students in a group

tend to expect one person to orchestrate the social distancing arrangement, and this almost never happens, which inevitably leads to insufficient or improper social distancing. Thankfully, though, I do think that most students are at least reasonably attentive to the distance they are from others, especially when they are indoors.

The importance of social distancing during a pandemic such as this one cannot be overstated, as we are grappling with a highly infectious respiratory virus that propagates itself through the air in the form of respiratory droplets. Despite the obvious importance of social distancing, I think that this is the regulation that we all struggle to follow most. Again, I will be the first to admit that I have violated this rule countless times, as it is very difficult to follow. That being said, I do think we can be more attentive to the distance we are from others, especially when we are indoors, and I think that a concerted effort to improve upon our social distancing habits would serve us well, as well as put many people at ease. After all, we are near the end. With a few million Americans now receiving a COVID-19 vaccine every single day, according to the *New York Times*, and with many students already partly or fully vaccinated, we should soon emerge from the COVID pandemic as a population that is largely immune.

I think that the COVID-19 pandemic has revealed an illuminating truth about college students in general: they are cooperative, but perhaps only to the extent that their cherished college experience is not disrupted in a major way. I think that in a lot of ways, this desire not to let the invaluable four undergraduate years go to waste is something that encourages regrettable behavior. I also believe that this desire can explain some of the misdemeanors we have seen thus far on campus, including violations of social distancing in dorm rooms, lack of mask-wearing or improper use thereof, and more. Perhaps this obstinacy that inheres in college students is not something that can be eliminated, but only mitigated.

To conclude, I believe that the uncommonly low prevalence of COVID-19 on our campus is a testament to the success that students, by and large, have had with managing the virus (and of course, to the success that Conn as an institution has had in doing so). I think that we all deserve more credit than we sometimes think we do, and I am extremely grateful that I have been able to spend my last year as a Camel on campus. I hope that others feel this way as well. •



"Do the Work, Get the Results"

EDIN SISSON
CONTRIBUTOR

Connecticut College has been making efforts to create the best environment, resources, and opportunities possible for students while still staying safe from the spread of COVID-19. Although the Athletic Center has been open via appointment for all students the entire semester, athletes have been struggling with limited availability to free weights, and an inability to access alternatives off-campus. As spring, winter, and fall sports alike have begun competition, Conn has taken new steps to provide an organized space to help aid with more effective training for student-athletes specifically. Thanks to the efforts of Strength and Conditioning Coach Analisse Rios and Women's Volleyball Coach Josh Edmed, along with a group effort of many coaches and staff, Conn now has a new Athlete-only training room.

The new gym has taken the place of the previous multi-use yoga studio hidden in the back room of the athletic center. The 1,600 square foot room has a capacity of 24 athletes and includes Olympic lifting stations, kettlebells, dumbbells, medicine balls, resistance bands, TRX bands, plyometric boxes, new trap bars, and more. In order to ensure maximum safety with COVID-19 protocols, as well as monitoring lifts, a coach or athletic staff member is required to be present during all athletic lift sessions. Despite this requirement, student-athletes are feeling appreciative of the new facility.

When asked what was the inspiration behind the new gym, Edmed explained that the goal was to "provide our athletes with the best resources in order to compete at the highest levels possible." He admitted that "the Lee and Ann Higdon Fitness Center can get very crowded," and commented that the addition of this new strength center opens up a lot of space and access to the Lee and Ann Higdon Fitness Center for all of our community members," as well as benefiting our student-athletes.

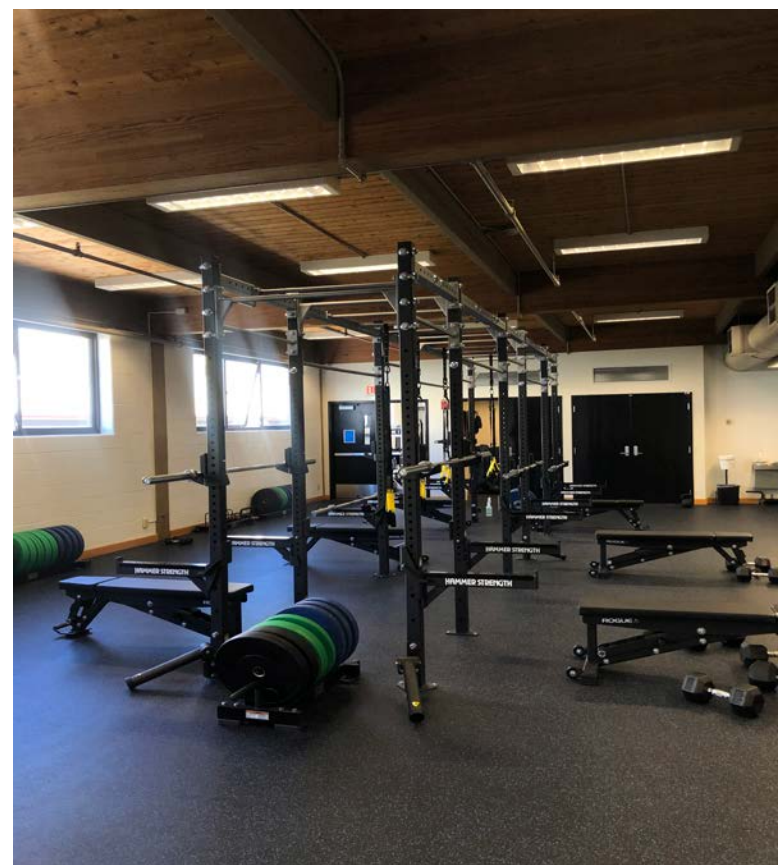
Emily Lorry '22 from the women's soccer team feels that the new gym has made team lifts more "efficient, but also more effective." She is appreciative of the availability of equipment during lifts, and commented that "It is important that our varsity athletes have a space dedicated for their use so that our teams can compete at the highest level." As Lorry stated,

"Many of Conn's teams are vying to be seen as a NESCAC powerhouse and this new space is a crucial step in the right direction."

Brett Moccia '23 on Men's Hockey feels similarly to Lorry about the new gym. "It's nice to have a space that dedicates an area to us to improve our skills and allows us to bond as a team and to get better," Moccia reflected.

By creating this new space for teams to train in, Rios hopes it will provide an opportunity for athletes to more readily "achieve their fitness goals that will then transfer to the field, court, ice, or water." But the vision for this new gym was not only individual success. Rios and Edmed crafted the plan for the space with the intention of creating a motivational atmosphere for teams. In order to stick with this goal, a large reminder is painted across the wall of the gym reading "Do the Work, Get Results." After contemplating making temporary improvements to the room, the two coaches decided that revamping the equipment, flooring, and walls was the best way to "take strength and conditioning to the next level," as Rios explained.

It has been especially cramped in the Athletic Center this spring because of so many teams being in season. In addition to spring teams including lacrosse, track and field, rowing, sailing, tennis, and women's water polo, many sports that are traditionally in season during the winter and fall are also competing this spring. After their seasons were canceled, soccer, field hockey, volleyball, men's water polo, basketball, hockey, squash, and swimming are all vying for training time to prepare for their first competitions since the beginning of the pandemic. The new weight room will be essential in providing enough equipment, time, space, and coaching to teams in light of the impacts that COVID-19 has had on Conn athletics this past year. As Edmed stated, "this amazing new space along with our Sports Performance Team provides a strong foundation for growth and development for all athletes by providing sport-specific training plans that are able to be facilitated through the use of state-of-the-art equipment." •



Sam Maidenberg

The Market for Sports Trading Cards Has Gone Virtual in the Form of NFTs

JOHNNY ALEXANDRE
STAFF WRITER

NFTs are all the rage these days, even getting their own rap song on a March 28 SNL episode hosted by Jack Harlow. What are NFTs? Non Fungible Tokens are one of a kind digital entities that can be auctioned off, similar to the way a physical item would be. The items are certified as being one of a kind because of the way they are programmed on blockchains. What are blockchains? Blockchains are just incredibly secure ways of recording digital information that can't be copied, hacked or stolen. Why not just screenshot the digital art someone else is willing to pay hundreds of thousands of dollars for? This will suffice but what people are gaining by purchasing a NFT is ownership of the digital entity itself. With an investors mindset people may believe they are purchasing something now that could be 10x as valuable or more years down the road. All in all, NFTs are one of a kind, and when desirable, also very very valuable.

The current NFT market is valued at over \$300 million dollars in total.

The total market value for NFTs has increased over 700% in the last three years and is rapidly climbing (Forbes). NFTs come in all shapes and sizes. Twitter CEO Jack Dorsey turned his first tweet into an NFT and sold it for over \$2 million dollars for charity in March 2021. A graphic designer who goes by the name of Beppe, sold a piece titled "Everydays: The First 5,000 Days" for an unfathomable \$69 million dollars through the auction house Christies, giving NFTs "a newfound institutional legitimacy" (Insider).

Trading cards, the physical kind, have been selling for record breaking prices. All in the last calendar year records for cards of the MLB, NBA, and NFL have been set in the sales of a \$5 million dollar Mickey Mantle card, a \$4 million dollar Luka Doncic card and a \$2 million dollar Tom Brady card.

Topps, the ever popular trading card brand that made the record setting, now a \$5 million dollar Mickey Mantle card back in 1952, experienced a 23% rise in sales, earning \$567 million in 2020 (CNBC), largely in part to the company's focus on the digital market. The company will go public this year, pushed by a \$250 million dollar investment by investor Jason Mudrick who is betting heavy on the future for the company in the NFT market.

Topps, a powerhouse when it comes to physical trading cards will have to compete with already established NFT trading card companies like NBA Top Shot in the digital world. Since October 2020, NBA Top Shot, a Canadian blockchain technology company, has earned over \$500 million dollars in sales of virtual one of a kind "moments." The company is already a smashing pop culture success with investors like Michael Jordan, Kevin Durant, and 2 Chainz.

What are people buying exactly through a platform like NBA Top Shot? By going to NBA Top Shots online website, nbatopshot.com, and creating an account, individuals can acquire, collect and trade their favorite players "moments" by shopping the Top Shot "marketplace" or obtaining "moments" at random through the purchase of "packs."

These player "moments" are NBA certified blockchain based video highlights that can be collected, bought and sold with live fluctuating prices

similar to stocks in the stock market. Players who participate in having their Top Shot "moments" included are eventually compensated through the 5% sellers fee on every purchase that gets shared between Top Shot, the NBA, and the NBPA. The most expensive NBA Top Shot moment sale thus far was a LeBron James windmill dunk for \$210,000 on March 20th, 2021.

In one of the first experiments by an individual athlete in the NFT market, tight end Rob Gronkowski created digital trading cards of himself to be sold online at auction. He created five different cards, with four of them each having 87 editions and the last card, a "Career Highlight Refractor Card" being a singular one of one edition. The results were unbelievable. Gronk netted \$1.6 million from the total sales of the cards, with the individual "Career Highlight Refractor Card" selling for \$435,000 alone.

The Gronk NFTs are now being resold on OpenSea, the world's "largest digital marketplace for crypto collectibles and Non Fungible Tokens (NFTs)." An example of the listing price for one of the cards on the resale market is 54 ethers (a cryptocurrency), aka \$113,231.

Many other athletes have quickly followed in Gronk's footsteps. Luka Garza, the winner of the 2021 Naismith Award, naming the best college basketball player in the country, completed the auction of his first NFT card on OpenSea on April 10th. Garza, who played his last college basketball game as a senior in the March Madness tournament earlier this year is no longer bound by NCAA rules stating he is not able to profit off of his image, the way a professional athlete like Serena Williams would in a Gatorade commercial. The card sold for \$41,141 with a portion of the proceeds going to charity. The auction marks one of the most effective ways for big time NCAA athletes to profit off of their name and likeness, an issue that is being heavily debated in sports today.

In addition to all of the NFTs, many sports games such as the always popular, Madden, FIFA, NBA 2k and MLB the Show franchises all have their own versions of "ultimate team" modes. Within the ultimate team mode of each video game users assemble their "ultimate teams" by collecting the electronic cards of their favorite players to compete with. Players are primarily acquired through in-game packs or through each game's online open market in which different users can buy and sell cards to each other with the in-game currency. Users can earn in-game currency by competing in online games and tournaments and also by strategically generating buying and selling electronic player cards to generate profit on the open in game market. The ever popular game mode gives sports fans yet another platform to express their desire to collect trading cards.

No matter the fashion, digital or physical, people will always love to collect. The new emergence of NFTs gives sports fans another way to relate to favorite players and express their fandom, pointing towards a future for trading cards and sports memorabilia that is still yet to be fully explored. •



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Watch Out for the "Haitian Creation"

MARC STERN
CONTRIBUTOR

Growing up, Julien Legros '23 led a busy life. Between practicing saxophone for the school band, working hard in classes, and practicing judo with his dad, there was very little time for other activities. However, Legros always found time to go to his swim club team's practice, the Marlins, at a local Boys and Girls Club a couple of minutes down the road from his house in Westchester, New York. At home, pictures of Legros' father representing his home country, Haiti, were lined up along the walls. His father placed 21st at the 1992 Barcelona Olympics in Judo for Haiti, where he is originally from. Seeing this high level of success in sports gave Legros something to push for: to make the Olympics just like his dad and bring pride to his family and the country of Haiti. Despite not being from Haiti or ever even being there, he still felt a connection to the country and believed it was an important part of who he is. The biggest question he had at this time was what sport would he do?

Legros' original motivation to go into swimming was through watching the success of his older brother Marcel. Later on, he would go on to tell me that he believed the times his brother swam were unattainable and out of reach for him. Growing up, Legros never had a certain stroke or race that was consistently his go-to, changing distances and techniques as he got older. His big break came as he entered his senior year of high school, where he was able to find his stride swimming sprint freestyle. Following a breakout first half of the year and midseason meet in North Carolina, Legros decided to take his talents to New London, joining an already strong lineup of incoming swimmers. All the years of hard work and dedication in the water were paying off, as he had not only caught up to but surpassed his older brother that he had looked up to for so long.

Once joining the Conn swim team, Legros stepped into the big shoes he knew he had to fill and became a leader on the team as only a freshman, securing a spot on two of the top relays at NESCAC Championships. Legros had high praise for his teammates and the

culture, saying "the team here at Conn is a family and we always have each other's backs when we need a pick-me-up or help with anything. Every single person is dedicated to the sport and sees the full potential in everyone. It truly is something very special here."

Following his success freshman year, his goals of representing Haiti at the Olympics now seemed attainable and realistic for him to achieve. After scouring the web to find ways to reach out to the Haitian swim coach, he was finally able to find her on LinkedIn. His determination to succeed and reach his goals has been a trait that has followed him throughout life. His longtime friend Henry Blair reminisced about times spent trying to come up with goals for Legros for swimming and in life, praising Legros's work ethic as he "works to achieve his goals regardless of how attainable they are." After seeing his times, the coach knew he was a great addition to the

Haitian National Team.

When asked about what/who motivates him to be successful, Legros pointed to his friends and family who have supported him along the way, citing the "endless love and support from everyone that believed in him along the way" and that they are the ones that always push him to be better, both in and out of the water. He said that his biggest fan though is his mom, who drove him to practice/meets for years, and always believed that he could be his best self if he set his mind to it.

Due to COVID, Legros' first meet with the national

Haiti team will take place later this April down in Clermont, Florida, where he plans on competing in the 50-meter freestyle, 100-meter freestyle, 200-meter freestyle, and 200-meter individual medley. When asked about what is the biggest obstacle he is currently facing, Legros said that the transition from a 25-yard pool, which he has been training in all year, into a 50-meter pool should be interesting, but he's "extremely excited for what's to come." When asking his long-time club coach David Ellinghaus about Legros' achievements, Ellinghaus said "It's great to see him develop and reach greater heights. People should watch out for the Haitian Creation!" •



Camel Athletics

Judas and the Black Messiah & Promising Young Woman: No Quarter for the Nice Guy

ELI CHRISTOPHER
ARTS EDITOR

Since the pandemic laid waste to the world we once knew, I've more or less been Kubrick staring at my bedroom wall every night waiting for movie theaters to finally open back up. But despite my initial skepticism that any of the new awards season releases coming directly to streaming would underwhelm, I have to say that two movies in particular have proven to be, well frankly, awesome. Shaka King's *Judas and the Black Messiah* and Emerald Fennell's *Promising Young Woman* are two of the best movies I've seen in a long time.

Judas stars LaKeith Stanfield and Daniel Kaluuya, and follows William O'Neal, an undercover informant for the FBI (Stanfield) as he infiltrates the Illinois chapter of the Black Panther Party, gains the trust of its leader Fred Hampton (Kaluya), and ultimately assists in his assassination. On the other side, *Promising* stars Carey Mulligan as Cassandra, who after a tragedy in her past, begins to live a sort of second life, enacting a complex plot of revenge against a very specific set of targets: sexual predators who prey on women.

Both movies have strong stances on the respective issues that they tackle, mainly those of civil rights and systemic racism for *Judas* and sexual assault and rape culture for *Promising*,

and the thing that struck me most about each of these movies as they approached these themes was how relentlessly they did so. Amongst other movies that have discussed similar topics, these two seemed remarkably fresh amongst even their contemporaries. And perhaps my favorite thing about this new, more aggressive approach was its absolute disregard for a factor that you typically find in other Hollywood productions about challenging topics.

You see, typically bigger budget Hollywood films like to cut the broader, general audience a sort of break in these movies. Rather than letting their films serve as an absolutely scathing analysis of whatever they're critiquing, more often they'll insert what at this point is almost a constant trope: "The one good ____."

Sometimes this means "the one good cop" in a movie about police brutality. Sometimes it means the one good politician in a movie about government corruption. In movies about race, this often takes the form of the oh so beloved "white savior" trope. Whichever form it takes, these movies usually provide one noble exception to whatever group or institution they're criticizing so the audience can exhale and go "Oh, everything is fine. I would be that guy. He'll help fix all of this." And while there are certainly more nuanced exceptions to this generalization, I personally think that more often than not, it does nothing but compromise the message of the movie, and lull the audience into a false sense of security. Because when a movie simultaneously critiques a system, but also shows that there's a sweet, Jefferson Smith type doing their darndest to help fix it from the inside, the audience gets to think that despite the egregious problems demonstrated throughout the film, the problems either were or are currently being resolved by somebody else. The audience gets to think this big problem is over and they don't have to do anything. *Judas and the Black Messiah* and *Promising Young Woman* deliberately avoid this trope.

Perhaps they have an easier time doing this because they aren't your typical Oscar bait, fall dramas, and I don't just mean with their thematic approach. These are both genre films, with *Judas* acting as a crime thriller/drama, likening itself more to something like Martin Scorsese's *The Departed* (2006) than a typical biopic. *Promising Young Woman* strikes a completely unique tone as a

sort of black comedy thriller, with more of a focus on active revenge.

In fact, perhaps my favorite thing about how these movies strike at their specific messages, and how they deliberately ignore the "one good ____" trope, is in their casting decisions. *Judas and the Black Messiah* refuses to show Jesse Plemons' FBI agent Roy Mitchell as anything other than villainous despite his hollow insistence that he's "all for civil rights." However, *Promising Young Woman* in particular puts a unique twist on its attack on rape culture. Similarly to how Jordan Peele's *Get Out* (2017) critiqued white liberals of today rather than the classic trope of movies about race almost exclusively attacking Southern conservatism of yesteryear, *Promising Young Woman* elects to target what seems like untouched territory up until now: the "nice guy." The movie is showing that these guys who say they're sweet, noble dudes are just as possibly (if not more so) contributing to a system of violence than these men they say they're different from. The predators in this movie look more like Maxwell Smart than Max Cady. This idea is perfectly encapsulated by the casting decisions. Casting actors like Bo Burnham, Adam Brody and Max Greenfield (classic prototypes of sweet, lovable dudes from properties the audience likes) as real pieces of s**t beautifully reinforces the message of the movie, rather

than watering it down by keeping them as a gentlemanly exception. *Judas* does something similar with its casting of Martin Sheen as J. Edgar Hoover. Here he plays the paradigm of a racist, abusive figure of power ruthlessly enforcing a system of oppression, completely in contrast to perhaps his most famous role as liberal wet dream President Jed Bartlet on *The West Wing* (Hey no shame, I still wish this dude was emperor of America).

And while these movies offer some instances of redemption or forgiveness for those who have participated in these systems they a) don't make them the main focus, and b) show that these instances require legitimate remorse, and active participation against oppression rather than simply being a bystander. Because again, it's the system that is on trial here. In order to show the system being at fault, you can't constantly be choosing to show how it will sort itself out. These themes culminate in each movie's respective, tragic final acts. They show the

full extent of the violence that these systems can perpetrate very matter of factly because dreadfully, this is how it is for a lot of victims. And while the very end of these movies leave the audience with a very key touch of optimism, I personally was left feeling more of a bitter-sweet catharsis, thinking: "I'm really happy about what I'm seeing, but Jesus Christ! Is all of that what's necessary for us to get here? Is *that* what it takes?"

I'm happy that going forward it looks like we're going to get more movies that not only address social issues in more interesting genres in extremely entertaining ways, but also that they'll be tackling said issues without apologizing for it. I don't know how many more movies I can take that discuss society's most serious subject matters with a benign, watered down stance of "it's all good, nothing needs to change because even though you personally don't do anything to help, this fictional sweetheart is out there giving it his all."

Go see *Judas and the Black Messiah* and *Promising Young Woman*. They're fantastic.

Love,
Eli ;)



Unsplash

POCA and the New 'In Color' Magazine

Article continued from front page.

newly created club, POCA, weighs in. The People of Color Alliance was created in October of 2020 when its founder and current president, Lyndon Inglis '24, noticed the need for an organization at Conn for all people of color to come together. Whether someone identifies as Black, Hispanic, Asian, or any other race, they are welcome to join POCA.

In an interview with President Inglis and Vice-President Junice Caminero '24, I got all the information about the club and their soon-to-be-released magazine.

Why was POCA created?

Inglis: Well, the main goal of it is to bring unity. I feel like there was a lot of separation between affinity groups, and I don't know if this is a consensus for just the freshman class, but there was a lot of overall disconnection this year. One of the other main goals of POCA is to be able to speak up about our concerns to non-POC people. Essentially, we want to have a voice and in order to achieve this, we have come up with big ideas. We are always thinking big! Unfortunately, it was hard to achieve this goal now that we are in the middle of a pandemic. Also, I want to point out that we have a lot of people working in this club: we have an executive board and committees. Within those committees, we have directors that have their own people.

Caminero: I agree with Lyndon. There is nothing wrong with affinity groups, but we felt the need to form a group that's not based on gender or a specific race. Also, some people identify with more than one race, so this club welcomes anyone who identifies as a person of color. I, myself, am mixed. Another thing about affinity groups is that there is a certain feel of clique within them and nothing wrong with people being super close, but the thing is that all of these groups should not make new people feel like they are intruders. I have reached out to some students of the class of 2025, and incoming students of color have already followed the POCA Instagram page.

Did COVID influence the creation of POCA?

Caminero: COVID certainly made a big difference because many of the affinity groups did not have meetings due to the pandemic, but I feel like even if the pandemic weren't happening, we'd still feel isolated. Many of the people of color on campus are upperclassmen, and they already know each other, so we freshmen coming in an isolated environment definitely made it harder to feel connected to our groups. The pandemic also allowed us to see the things that other clubs needed to work on. It took us a while to schedule our first meeting but we hope to be active on campus now that everything is getting back to "somewhat" normal.

What about the social awakenings? Did they have an influence?

Inglis: I think it's important that POCA is happening now. We need to be aware of the fact that these things happen. We need to fight against injustice together and affinity groups cannot be together all at the same time. I think our generation is a generation of change. I think that with all the things that have happened over the last months, more awareness has been created, which is good.

Caminero: Because things happened during the pandemic, we were all forced to watch it. It made me think about the role I play in society. I need to speak up, and I feel like we got here and nothing happened. I feel like the only time we spoke about social injustices was during our Genesis class. We do not just want to raise awareness amongst POC but all people on campus.

tired of continuous impunity. Luckily, 2021 is a year for change, which is where the

In terms of your upcoming magazine, can you tell me more about it?

Caminero: First of all, we wanted to make a magazine because it's fun. This year there weren't many fun activities due to the pandemic, and we as freshmen want to feel like we did something meaningful while enjoying the process. The point of *In Color* is the same as POCA: it's a project meant for us, and for incoming freshmen, too. We wanted to make a magazine to highlight people of color. We want to show everyone else who we are, and that we are proud of ourselves. Also, we wanted to make a magazine that is different from the rest of the other magazines. How many times have you heard of a cultural magazine? Not many. We are aware that we have another cultural magazine here on campus, *Awkaaba*, but then again they are mostly upperclassmen. We want to be able to say there is more than one point of view, and there is more than one cultural magazine.

What are some of the things students can expect to see in the magazine?

Inglis: We have articles written by President Katherine Bergeron, who, by the way, is really excited about this project, Maurice Tiner, and pieces from upperclassmen and freshmen. We don't only have statements from people of color, we have other articles that are very interesting, as well. We have Black fashion, Black culture, the importance of financial literacy, poems, among many other things. I'm not going to spoil everything because I want it to be a surprise,

but we are really proud of what we have created. There is a piece in the magazine that talks about equity and inclusion, which is my favorite.

You have drawn some criticism with your promotion of the magazine. What do you have to say about this?

Inglis: There was a recent post on @blackvoicesconncoll apparently written by the classes of '21-'23 that's basically attacking POCA. We do not have anything against upperclassmen, but it seems like they do have something against us. I want to remind them that I'm Black and that this project was initiated by freshmen who did not feel entirely welcomed by other people of color on campus. Our goal is to have as much diversity as possible, but it's hard to get everybody right now. POCA just started, and it's hard to judge an organization that hasn't even had its first meeting yet. Quite



In Color

frankly, it's unfair.

Caminero: We do not need to turn other people of color down. What's interesting is we have not gotten any pushback from non-POC, so why do other affinity groups have a problem with us? We have an awesome group of people.

Is there anything else that we should know about?

Inglis: We have tons of photos. There is a theme where everything is pretty much black and white except for the photos. The magazine itself is about people of color on campus, and the pictures are representing students of color shining. They are the color of the magazine as well as the color of campus. Flowers are also a big part of it because I think it brings life.

While POCA was created back in early October of last year, they weren't given official recognition by the college until this semester. Keeping in mind that it takes time to gather people and have them sign up properly on ConnQuest, POCA is going to have their first meeting on April 24th from 2:00-3:15 PM EST, and the release of the magazine will be the following day. Their team expects to release more issues next year. In the meantime, some sneak peeks have been posted on their Instagram page, @incolor.poca, which showcases the creative side of this motivated group of camels. Stay tuned! •

A Coffee Chat with a Creative Camel

ELIZABETH BERRY
ARTS EDITOR

"My earlier drawings were horny cries," says Hannah Pozen '19 of her illustrations hanging above the sugar and cream in Coffee Closet. The nine panels are attached to a red frame I can only assume was once a window. My first

article for *The College Voice* investigated the art scattered around the interior of Coffee Grounds. So, it only felt right that I learn more about the current artwork in CG for my second-to-last article. I returned to my investigative roots and (virtually) sat down with Pozen over FaceTime to learn more about this particular project and her time after Conn.

Pozen majored in Art History, but took studio art classes and envisioned pursuing a secondary degree in art. She had discussed MFA programs with artists, but it was not until a family vacation where she spoke with an artist in residence that this path began to solidify. Formerly employed at Coffee Grounds, Pozen used her latte skills to work as a full-time barista in San Francisco while applying to programs in the CA area. When COVID-19 hit in March 2020, her top choice said they would not be able to welcome a class of 2022 due to financial problems. This, however, did not stop Pozen. She got onto the waitlist for Mills College in Oakland, CA who ultimately accepted her. Currently, Pozen is finishing her second semester of a two-year studio art program at Mills. Her studio has become a safe and comfortable space where she feels the most gratitude and is able to, literally and metaphorically, brush away the "blah blah blah."

Although Pozen now refers to herself as a multidisciplinary artist, she says "I have always been drawing." Whether painting in her studio courses or doodling in the pages of her notebook, art and illustration have always been there. Her current aesthetic, however, grew out of her time abroad junior year. One day sitting in a cafe, she did a figural line contour sketch: "Once I recognized I liked what I was doing...and it resonated with others...and I could do it again, I was like this is it." Illustration also allows her to incorporate writing into her drawings, emulating the style of a diary. It's "a place for my thoughts to exist in a visual world," explains Pozen.

However, having just one aesthetic is an identity Pozen is toiling with as she pursues her MFA. She originally applied with an illustrative portfolio with the idea to build these zones and universities beyond the drawing frame. But when she got to Mills, she asked herself: "was I just gonna keep doing this forever?" This question pushed her to start thinking about painting, which she had previously worked in via an abstract-focused painting class with Professor Barnard. However, she wanted to move away from abstraction and instead use similar techniques and aesthetics present in her illustrations in a new medium. One piece of feedback she received from her professors was removing the figure from her paintings, a hallmark of her illustrations. She is still trying to figure out how to combine her aesthetic and this critique, but says "it has been really fulfilling to solely rely on objects and manipulation of space."

As for her art hanging in Coffee Grounds, Pozen says it is about "yearning for somebody." We've all been there. "The only way I could think to handle that [experience] would be to draw that." The illustrations are based on real experiences but are also imaginary: it "isn't real but the feelings are. The people are real, too, in the context of my brain." Pozen says, "I work a lot from memory and experiential feeling to make the stuff that I do." The story stems from having a crush and instills that relatable feeling of wanting to tell someone you love them, but not being able to. As mentioned previously, her illustrations have this diary-like feel, which she has often been told to steer away from. But Pozen explains this aesthetic allows for vulnerability: "you're sharing, which to me is the best part of being a human, and you are sharing your vulnerability."

The illustrations hanging in CG originate from a project Pozen completed in Professor Wollensack's class, *Artist's Books*. Part of the syllabus included a class trip to RISD where Pozen saw Karen Chance's 1987 book "Parallax" which navigates the stigma around AIDS. Chance's book has an accordion format that allows for a Western front-to-back reading from the point of view (POV) of someone who is very hateful towards the AIDS epidemic. The last

page re-orient the reader to begin a new POV in the other direction which tells the story of someone who is living with AIDS. "The formatting of it blew my mind," explains Pozen. This structure was her inspiration to tell two perspectives of a love story. The narrative itself grew out of a shared summer with a close friend. Pozen explains this was her first time navigating queerness while her friend was more confident in her identity. This dynamic led to some difficulties with communication, says Pozen. The first perspective is of her friend as they listen to music, ride the subway together, and lay side-by-side in the park. Pozen purposely made these panels ambiguous through vague facial expressions to suggest the uncertainty of whether or not her friend returned the same feelings. In contrast, the second POV is Pozen's and more obviously portrays her love for her friend through hearts and stolen glances.

The last page is lyrics from Angel Olsen's song "Something's Cosmic," which is alluded to throughout via the two listening to music together and yellow stars twinkling in the night sky. Olsen is another idol for Pozen and this particular song speaks to cosmic love, a bond that you don't have to comprehend because it's greater than you both. Pozen associates this song with that summer. Taylor Swift's Platinum Edition of *Fearless* may put you in your feels, but put "Something's Cosmic" in the queue if you want to stargaze and fantasize.

Pozen ended up making four editions of this particular illustration, one of which ended up in Coffee Grounds after the manager at the time, Martha Wiley '19, encouraged Pozen to display it. As a creator, Pozen says having spaces like Coffee Grounds and the Barn at Conn are so important: "these creative spaces are there for you, and you are totally entitled to feel seen in those spaces." Pozen explains that navigating queerness at Conn can be difficult but displaying queer art in these spaces reaches out to students who are also dealing with this navigation. Pozen expresses that "visualizing queerness in any form is super sick." Her goal is to create visibility around queerness but also let students know that these creative places exist on Conn's campus.

Right now, Pozen is trying to find a more sustainable distribution practice so she can share her illustrations. But for now, head over to Coffee Grounds for an oat milk latte or New London Fog and enjoy Pozen's artwork, reminiscing about your own version of a complicated love story, which I am sure we can all relate to. •



Elizabeth Berry