



OUR  
CLIMATE  
ISSUE?

SEPTEMBER 6, 2021//VOL. VI, ISSUE 1

EMMA  
NOBLE



# *We're baaaaaaaaack.*

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# PSAKI CLARIFIES THAT 'THIS ADMINISTRATION BELIEVES IN SCIENCE' ONLY APPLIES TO THE FACT THAT YOU CAN POWER A CLOCK WITH A POTATO

//MATTHEW BRIAN COHEN

WASHINGTON, D.C. – White House Press Secretary Jen Psaki, when asked how the Biden administration could claim to “believe in science” despite its consistent failures to adequately address the COVID-19 pandemic and climate change, clarified that the administration only believes in science when it comes to powering a small clock with a potato.

“Unlike President Trump, President Biden believes that a potato has enough energy to power a clock,” Psaki said. “For decades, scientists have been warning us about the potato’s mild phosphoric acid content and its ability to oxidize zinc. And when it comes to generating just a few volts of electricity, the science is clear: we have to act now. That’s why we’re urging every American, especially those facing eviction now that the Supreme Court has ended the eviction moratorium, to locate a potato and some wires and try it out for themselves.”

When asked why the White House is on pace to approve the most oil and gas drilling on US soil since the George W. Bush administration despite the recent UN climate report indicating we’re at a “code red for humanity,” Psaki became irate.

“We go in the direction of the data,” Psaki said. “And the data is telling us that several billionaires would like to see their stock portfolio tick up a couple more percentage points. The data from the potato clock is also telling us we have three more hours until the market closes today. But I’m surprised you’re even asking me

that question when there are Republicans in the House that dispute the very existence of potato-powered clocks.”

“What my Republican friends need to understand,” President Biden said later that afternoon on the White House lawn, “is that the potatoes are powering the clocks *now*. Not ten years from now, not when our grandkids are on Mars fighting in the Amazon Delivery Drone Wars, right now. If we don’t act... I don’t want to think about what could happen.”

When a reporter asked what could possibly happen if we continue to allow potatoes to power clocks, President Biden stepped down from the podium and jabbed his finger in the reporter’s face.

“Annihilation! But if we could harness their energy, convince them that we share a common enemy in China... that’s why I’m allocating eleven trillion dollars for the Pentagon to develop potato-powered power plants to take America into whatever the next century is. But in the meantime, all we can do is wear a mask—unless your governor has forbidden it—keep schools open to give the Delta variant some time to spread around our unvaccinated children and tucker itself out, and frack our little white asses off.”

President Biden declined to answer any more questions before leaving for Marine One, offering instead, “Now it’s time for me to let the Missus comb my hair over a bowl of Christmas soup!” 🥔



# How to Transfer Your Starbucks Points to an Afghan Woman in Need

//DIANA KOLSKY

AMERICANS. WE LIKE OUR LATTES FOAMY AND OUR CAPITALISM LATE-STAGE.

And sometimes, we want to help.

Perhaps you've heard of Miles4Migrants, the wildly popular charity that enables consumers privileged enough to have accrued skymiles to transfer them on to the displaced people of the third, fourth, and even fifth world. But what about the rewards points you've accumulated from your daily double affogato?

Enter Afghané™—a new program partnership between Starbucks and The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. Afghané™ facilitates the transfer of Americans' delicious Starbucks points to Afghan women in need. Worried about those veiled vixens? Must be downright sweltering running from oppression wearing all that stuff. Now you can create a moment of indulgence in one (or two!) gal's life with the new Summer Fruit Refresher™, or mayhaps a tried-and-true Frappuccino™ (available in Mocha Cookie Crumble or Caramel Ribbon Crunch for a limited time).

*How does it work?* Simply sign into your Starbucks Rewards account and click the Afghané™ tab. Follow a series of prompts allowing Starbucks to gather some basic information, like your name, age, height, weight, social security number, employment history, political leanings, and favorite Starbucks drink. Make sure you accept our Terms and Conditions—we legally cannot donate your Starbucks points without your full consent to any tracking/data harvesting/Manchurian Candidate-ing we might subject you to in the future. But that warm, sip-sized philanthropic feeling will make it all worthwhile. Additionally, there's an optional form at the end where you can pledge a percentage of the transfer and usage fee your special lady (or two!) will be responsible for upon receipt (note: this can be up to \$1700.00 USD, so please consider chipping in).

Make an Afghan woman's week, today. She'll definitely say *مننه ملکه او یا د کافی پاچا او د متحده ایالاتو* , or "THANK YOU, QUEEN AND/OR KING OF COFFEE AND U.S. KINDNESS AND FEELING" in Pashto, according to a quick click on the ol' Google Translate. *Is that what they speak there? Feels fake. Geri, look into that. No, don't type this part up. What do you mean your backspace key is broken? Fuck it. Just print the fucking thing.*

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# AS THE PLANET BURNS, ONE MAN FINDS SOLACE IN A NEW HOBBY: PERFECTING “HOMEMADE McDONALD’S”

// JAMES DWYER

**ANOTHER HAZY  
MORNING GREET'S  
RICKY DINKLE AS  
HE STARES OUT  
UPON HIS YARD  
IN SWILLUP,  
PENNSYLVANIA.**

“The poor air quality we’re seeing is a result of the smoke from the raging wildfires out West,” Dinkle murmurs as he sips orange juice from a disposable Tim Horton’s cup. “It’s looked like the damn end of the world for three weeks now, and we’re suffering from the least bad consequences of it all. Can’t imagine what it’s like out in Oregon. Fuckin’ climate change, man.”

Fuckin’ climate change, indeed.

In a recent poll, nearly 7 in 10 Generation Z social media users said they feel “anxious” about the future as a result of climate change. Almost as many believe that the climate crisis should be a top public priority to ensure the habitability of the planet for generations to come. To alleviate their never-ending sense of existential dread, some turn to activism in the hope that they can spur change through direct pressure. Others share information on their various social media channels, keeping the rising climate catastrophe part of their social circle’s conversations. Ricky Dinkle, however, has a different trick to abate his >>



>> global warming woes: turning all of his available time to the task of perfecting what he calls “homemade McDonald’s.”

“I was involved in my local DSA for a while, I went to protests, I wrote to my Congressmen,” Ricky regales me as he gets to work in his kitchen, “but once you realize that even the ‘good guys’ don’t intend to do enough to keep the world hospitable... no amount of activism will do anything to relieve your panic attacks. So you devote yourself to a hobby that doesn’t matter. For me, that’s perfecting homemade McDonald’s.”

So far, Ricky claims to be close to having a perfect replica of the Egg McMuffin. “I am doing one item at a time. Right now I’m 90% there on the homemade McMuffin. The egg loaf is the tricky part, but I’m this close to cracking the code. Once I’ve got this bad boy down, I want to tackle the homemade McGriddle. It’s gonna be wild.” Ricky then produced his homemade McMuffin, and I must say, it’s pretty darn close to the original, rubbery egg loaf and all.

So has the hobby been successful? Is this the answer to help an entire generation free themselves of the burden of climate change? According to Ricky, this may not be the light at the end of the tunnel that I’ve projected onto him. “What? No. I do this to distract myself. I’ve lost all hope. Isn’t that obvious? I mean I’m making homemade McDonald’s to eat alone. There is no louder cry for help than this. I’m going to watch society collapse in my lifetime.

There will be extreme humanitarian crises on a level we’ve never seen while the wealthy continue to hoard resources. Did you think that I think making homemade McDonald’s is some kind of virtuous act? I’m fuckin’ depressed! I know where this is going now. You’re going to write about this as if it says something about an entire generation, when I’m just one sad sack cooking homemade McDonald’s to prove to the world that I have given up, aren’t you? Aren’t you?!”

Aren’t I?

My 90 minutes spent with Ricky solely to manufacture a story on climate change that completely trivializes the anxiety felt by Generation Z and Millennials gave me much to think about. After being seated in first class for my Philadelphia to D.C.

flight, I couldn’t help but recall that Tim Horton’s cup Ricky sipped his morning juice from. It was a disposable cup made from plastic produced using petroleum that can only be accessed via deep-sea drilling. For a generation so concerned about the impact businesses and the government have on the climate, one would think they’d know better than to use single use plastic. I never had a chance to ask Ricky about that cup, or more importantly, if he still uses plastic straws.

I bet he does. I mean, that’s how they serve the drinks at McDonald’s after all. Authenticity comes at a very high price and for young wokes, that price is their super-sized progressive stance on climate change. 🤖

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*The sucked the juice off her aged fingers*

## ***Diversity Loss! Asian Grandmother Tired of Being Included in Your Poetry***

//MADELEINE TOMASOA GUEST CONTRIBUTOR

FUNCTIONALLY DEAD WAS ABLE TO CATCH UP with Regina Kabir, 78, on a recent Sunday morning while she was slicing into mangoes. She sucked the juice off her aged fingers, annoyed, and turned to us with a frown on her face.

"Please tell my grandchild to stop including me in their poetry," she was quoted as saying. "I know the saying is 'write what you know', but have they considered writing what they *don't* know? Are you even earning money from this?"

When we told her no, and that some poets even resort to paying submission fees in order to be published, she stepped back from the pan and held onto the counter for support. "It's pay-to-play?"

Mostly, yes.

Regina's eyes widened. She took out a mortar and pestle and began to grind the chilli into a fine paste. "Why are you paying to get your stories submitted? Who is the arbiter of these truths?" She paused to breathe and stared at us in disbelief.

When asked about her thoughts on poetry as a whole, she gave us a dismissive wave and a snort.

"It's all rubbish," she said. "Should've asked my daughter to send them to law school instead, like her cousin Gerald did."

What did she think about the Millennial-slash-Gen-Z tendency to use trauma as a narrative tool?

I don't understand this obsession with trauma." She shook her head. "My life was pretty traumatic. I walked to school barefoot and back. With blisters on my feet, even." She pointed a knife at our photographer Billy Boy, who jumped back in terror. "I could've bragged about my grandkids to my peers if they'd written something else. Anything else."

Regina pointed at the ominous portrait of Jesus above our heads and sighed wistfully. "Jesus didn't write poetry. He healed people."

Maybe poetry carries the capacity to heal people.

"Yes, but not through descriptions of my 'weathered smile,' that's for sure," she said, stomping on a cockroach while Billy Boy screamed. "My grandchild lives in an apartment in London that her father pays for. How is she oppressed?"

We tried to inform her about racial microaggressions, but she shook her head.

"Now you're just making up words."

After our kitchen chat, we retired to her quaint sitting room, where we asked her about her thoughts on the mango as a literary device.

"It's delicious," she said thoughtfully. Her cataracted-eyes looked pensive as she mulled over our question.

Anything else?

"No."

Unfortunately, the interview was cut short after we informed her that her grandchild spent more time on Twitter arguing about critical race theory than actually writing their elder-fetishizing odes. 🍌

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*Madeleine Tomaso has a crippling disease that makes them write fruitlessly 'for a living' and 'for fun.' They are from Jakarta, Indonesia. Twitter: @madeleinets, Instagram: @kerentm*



# It's [Insert Date] and COVID is Surging Again. Here is what you need to know:

COVID APPEARS TO BE HERE FOR THE LONG HAUL (especially if you have long COVID!), so the FD editorial team has gone ahead and pre-written some prompts with our best guess at what the next surges will look like. This way, we can crank this clickbait out as fast as fucking possible. We want to be drowning in clicks everytime COVID is ravaging the heartland. Never miss an opportunity to score. **\*\*\*DO NOT PUBLISH\*\*\***

*It's October 29th, 2021 and COVID is surging again. Here is what you need to know:*

- The Delta Plus variant is 10 times more transmissible than the Delta variant.
- The Governor of Alabama has surrendered to the virus, naming Delta Plus the Governor Supreme.
- Despite a viral TikTok claiming otherwise, the Biden Administration insists trick or treaters should not avoid Mounds bars out of a concern that Mounds bars are a breeding ground for the virus (the science on Almond Joys remains inconclusive).

*It's February 7th, 2023 and COVID is surging again. Here is what you need to know:*

- The Christopher Nolan variant is spreading like wildfire, muting all visible colors to tones of gray and blue in your field of vision, giving life an over-the-top sense of dire gravitas.
- Now that the border wall protecting the rest of the United States from Florida has been completed, the President Biden Hologram has called upon the National Guard to begin dumping the aerosolized Moderna vaccine across the state using USPS cargo planes that had been going unused since Biden banned the delivery of mail, mistakenly believing it would upset Louis de Joy.
- NYC Mayor Curtis Sliwa insists the only way to defeat the virus is to release 100,000 feral cats into the streets of Manhattan. The cats are slated to be released on February 10th at dawn.

*It's March 19th, 2028 and COVID is surging again. Here is what you need to know:*

- The CDC has determined the everpresent wildfires in the Northern California region cannot contract the new Theta variant.
- Schools in Florida will remain open, on the slim chance there is a woman on Earth who is still able to bear a child.
- 1% of Africans have received the first shot of the COVID-19 vaccine, a number that has not changed since 2021. >>

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>> *It's June 1st, 2036 and COVID is surging again. Here is what you need to know:*

- The Los Angeles Cyborg Police Force (sponsored by Tesla) will not enforce Governor Olivia Rodrigo's mask mandate. The Police Chief Algorithm commented: "it's up to each citizen to determine for themselves if they will die from COVID or from the merciless hands of the cyborg police force."
- The much-anticipated \$15 stimulus check has been voted down in the Senate, by a total of 2-55 (the remaining 43 Senators missed the vote after testing positive for COVID).

*It's October 14th, 2040 and COVID is surging again. Here is what you need to know:*

- The anti-stimulus bill goes into effect on November 1st. All Americans are required to Venmo the US Treasury \$2,000 by the end of the year or have their citizenship revoked.
- An outbreak of the DeSantis-2 variant at today's "We're Back!" re-re-re-re-opening parade sent hundreds to local hospitals, putting DC Metro hospitals at 105% capacity (2 to a bed, 69-style).

*It's December 25th, 2040 and COVID is surging again. Here is what you need to know:*

- The Jesus's B-Day strain is no fucking joke. Skin will bleed infinitely. Sins will not be forgiven. You can run, but you cannot hide.
- Send Pfizer a check for at least \$5,000 if you want to save one of your children. Write which child in the memo line, i.e. "Lil' Margot." 🤖



**MAN, YOU  
GOTTA LEAVE  
HILLARY  
ALONE!**

//BRADY O'CALLAHAN

I'VE BEEN SEEING IT POP UP on social media more and more. "I'm still with her." Man, what? Leave her alone.

Some of y'all will not let that woman REST.

*Trump was a disaster? Bernie decided to run again? Biden actually decided to withdraw from Afghanistan?*

"I'm still with her."

Man, she embarrassed herself on a national scale and now is trying to take a walk in the woods. What the hell do you mean you're "still with her?" In the *woods*? Why are you in the *woods*? She's GOT a reason. She wants to escape all this bullshit (and maybe wash the blood off her hands in a babbling brook). You don't have an excuse to be in the woods. Did you lose one of the most consequential Presidential elections in history after listening to the dumbest group of consultants ever assembled?

Leave 🍌 her 🍌 ALONE 🍌.

I get y'all aren't happy about how things turned out. You wish it could be different. I bet she does, too. But have you ever lost >>



>> something you really cared about and then had *anyone* come up to you and say “great job?” That is, no joke, the worst feeling in the world. Let her live her rich lady life out in peace. You couldn’t be with her there, anyways. She has the type of wealth and connection you’ll never even come close to seeing. And you’re out here saying you’re “with her?” Man, ain’t no one with her, except maybe oil lobbyists and war profiteers.

And if y’all try to come out and say you’re *with her* ideologically, then... what? In what way? She’s not doing anything, but you’re still with her? You’re doing nothing, too? Weird to take such a bold, public stance on it, in my opinion. Let’s say you *were with her* ideologically when she was actually doing shit, even if it wound up being bad and no one liked it.

Y’all are the fans hanging at the backstage door hoping the star comes out and notices you, but they just want to go home and drink until they forget their role in the current national nightmare. Long after the lights go down, you’re saying you’re “still with her.” Man, leave her sorry ass alone. She doesn’t owe you anything. 🧟

# I WAS VISITED BY THE GHOST OF MARX

//TIM MAHONEY



FOR THE LAST THREE NIGHTS, at around 2:00 AM (EST), I’ve been visited by the ghost of Karl Marx.

The spectre haunting Europe—in my case—is the German philosopher himself, visiting my bedroom in upstate New York. The first night it happened, I thought I was going crazy.

I was staying up late watching the TV show *Love Island*, when out of nowhere, the lights flickered and my bed began to shake. The warm August air was replaced by a stale, frigid blanket of musty vapor. >>

9

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>> Then darkness...

Silence...

I must've closed my eyes and held my ears shut because it was super dark and very silent. I felt two big hands pull my wrists down from my ears as I heard:

"It's okay! It's me, German philosopher Karl Marx! I'm a ghost now, and I'm in your bedroom, Tim!"

I opened my eyes. It was true. German philosopher Karl Marx was a ghost and he was in my bedroom. Maybe it was the familiar background noise of *Love Island*, maybe it was some undigested bit of potato; in any case, I felt no fear. I looked upon the German philosopher as a friend. I suspected no ill-will in his kind, overworked eyes.

"Karl," I managed to squeak, "why are you here? A ghost in my bedroom?"

"Now is a crucial moment, Tim," he said. "The capitalist class holds more power than ever, ruling ideas are once and for all becoming dreams of the working class."

I had trouble hearing him, so I went to turn *Love Island* down, but in my haste, I mistakenly turned it up super loud.

"Whoops, sorry Karl!" I shouted over the now-blaring hilarious commentary of *Love Island*.

I managed to mute it and implored him to continue.

"Workers of the world are perennially at a crossroads," he went on, "where on one side..."

He trailed off.

"What is it, Karl?" I asked. "Are you okay? Do you have to return to the afterlife?"

"Yes, yes! It's just that, I *do* have to return to the afterlife. I only have a short while here, in your bedroom."

He turned around, looking at the TV, which I imagined must've

shocked his 19th century sensibilities.

"What's this show?" he asked, with his back now fully turned to me.

"It's an English show called *Love Island*. Surely some ruling-class propaganda to coax us into quiet acceptance, right Karl?" I responded.

"Who's this girl? Is she with this guy?" he asked.

I couldn't see who he was pointing to so I couldn't answer.

"I'm not sure," I said.

Suddenly, the power went out. The warm August air returned, and when the lights flickered back on, Karl was gone.

THE NEXT NIGHT, I was hopeful that the ghost of German philosopher Karl Marx would visit me again. I ventured to recreate the same climatic conditions so his apparition could more easily cross into our corporeal world.

I began to get sleepy, and turned on the hit English reality show *Love Island* to keep me awake. I had lost track of what was happening on the show some time ago, but liked to put it on in the background and pay attention every once in a while.

As I began to lose hope, my bed began to softly shake. The lights? They were flickering, alright. Instead of being scared, I was excited and happy to finish where Karl and I left off. Now was a crucial time in human history. The ruling class has tricked us all into bowing down to *their* world and *their* dreams. Cooperation and community, they've convinced us, are best to be established through economic rationality.

"Tim! It's me, the ghost of Karl Marx!" my big bearded friend exclaimed.

It was great to see him, and I made sure to waste no time.

"Tell me, Karl," I said. "What should we do!?" >>



>> “It’s just that, my friend, now is the moment.”

“It’s much worse than you thought, Karl,” I whined, as I looked down at the notes I took on my phone from earlier. “I know you anticipated the necessity of environmental sustainability, but you undertheorized the extent to which—”

“Is Toby really changing his mind *again*?!” Karl shouted.

I looked up to see the German philosopher’s back turned to me once again. He was talking about a man on the TV show *Love Island*.

“I think so? I don’t really remember who he is,” I replied.

“He left Caz to go after Chloe to go mmm ammm.”

I had trouble hearing him, because it seemed like he turned up the TV volume as he was talking.

“I can’t hear you, Karl!” I shouted over the very loud sounds of British conversation.

The lights went out; Karl was gone.

---

ON THE THIRD NIGHT, I took the TV out of my room because I think it was distracting him. Right before he finally arrived, the lights flickered and the bed shook.

Before I knew it, the German philosopher himself was yet again at the foot of my bed.

I was prepared this time, ready with my notebook and pen to not miss a beat of his otherworldly advice.

“You wanna have a chat?” he said.

I was confused, because it was not how he sounded the previous two nights. Still, I knew our time was limited.

“Yes, absolutely, Karl. What should we do?”

“First thing’s first,” he said. “Where’s the telly at? I feel like you had a telly in here before.”

“Yes, Karl, I did. But I moved it to the other room so it wouldn’t distract us.”

Before I finished, he left for the other room.

“I love the TV show *Love Island*,” I heard him call out from the other room.

I exited my bedroom and entered the other room to see Karl sitting on my couch, with a gigantic bowl of popcorn, loudly munching away.

“Karl, shouldn’t we talk about capitalism?” I asked.

“No, I am tired of that and much prefer the TV show *Love Island*,” he said. “Can you believe Toby?”

Frustrated, I turned off the TV set.

“No, I don’t really remember who he is, Karl! I thought you came here to tell me about this crucial moment in human history!”

“I did,” he replied “but I really like the TV show *Love Island* now, and I want to watch that instead.”

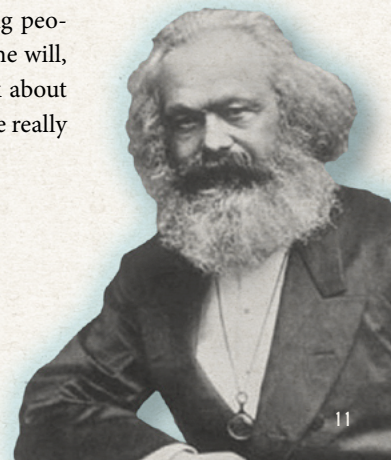
The room went black. The lights flickered back on, and Karl was gone.

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IT’S NOW NEARLY 2:00 AM (EST) and I suspect the German philosopher Karl Marx will arrive any moment. I’m hoping he will give me a lot of great advice about our time and the future of working people everywhere, but I am worried he will, instead, want to watch and/or talk about the TV show *Love Island* because he really likes it.

Wish me luck.

In solidarity,  
Tim Mahoney





**CLAP if you think ISIS should suffer.**

**CLAP if you think Jamie Spears should die.**

**CLAP if you have ever heard of TikTok Star "Swavy".... I hadn't until now!**

**He wears ugly clothes and I'm not sure why he's so popular...**

**He was murdered last night.**

**He died having more followers than me and now his body has been laid to rest.**

**I hope his head is on a pillow.**

**Lord knows I need a new pillow.**



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A lot happened  
this week—  
Let's see how  
the *Left Feel'd*  
about it.



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**Ya know, the guys currently driving this burning ship further into hell.**





# Neoliberal Fascists Ruthlessly Critiqued by Bo Burnham Thrilled to Award Him Little Gold Statuette



//LIZ WIEST

WITH WILDFIRES RAVAGING THE AMERICAN WEST, the Delta variant spiking in the Southeast, and a chaotic withdrawal of US troops from Afghanistan that has given the Taliban de facto control of the government, we here at *Functionally Dead* felt it was our moral duty to provide extensive coverage on the topic at the forefront of everyone's minds... the 73rd Primetime Emmy Awards!

This year's theme? Well, in 2021, nothing is more chic than ironic self-awareness, as Bo Burnham proved to us with his boundary-breaking Netflix variety special, *Inside*. Burnham's solo comedy special was written, shot, and produced during the height of the pandemic, nabbing a whopping six nominations, and more importantly, becoming a sound-bite gold mine for the sassy teens of TikTok.

Our team initially intended to score an in-

terview with Jeff Bezos to get his thoughts on Burnham's iconic "Bezos I" song, but since he was off implementing a new colonial imperialist era on Mars or something, we decided to fixate on our second-favorite Bo lyric instead:

*"Private property's inherently theft, and neoliberal fascists are destroying the Left. And every politician, every cop on the street, protects the interests of the pedophilic corporate elite."*

Naturally, this very same neoliberal pedophilic corporate elite will gather outdoors this September at the Event Deck in LA to revel in laughing alongside Burnham as he is recognized for his (admittedly) stellar work. But while a lot has changed in the past year, the spirit of authentic creativity remains exactly the same. Much like their enthusiasm in campaigning for Joe Biden, this group of untouchables will

be absolutely ecstatic to utilize their personal brands to endorse a piece of artwork that claims to critique everything it does not already inherently uphold. Especially since they'll be more energetic from not having to fight off the usual jet lag acquired from flying in from Little Saint James the night before!

At the end of the day, what are the Emmys if not a star-studded opportunity to remind us of just how little we have compared to the 1%? And while the cinematography and VFX categories are chock-full of incredible effects, the *real* movie magic is the brief escapist fantasy where we can feel that, if we work hard enough, we too can have all of what the beautiful people enjoy and more! After all, if Leo DiCaprio flying in on his private jet to chastise poor people about single-use plastics doesn't drive you to be better, truly, what will?

And while we can't speak for how he truly feels about it, it seems like on some level, Bo already predicted this elite circle-jerk would happen. But sadly, as he so eloquently explains to Socko (and the rest of us!), there is nothing we can do to stop the momentum of How the World Works. Enjoy the Emmys, everyone! 🧐

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# How to Talk to Your Son About Mansplaining in a Place Where Your Wife Won't Point Out That You Do It, Too

//ANDY SPAIN GUEST CONTRIBUTOR



## STEP 1: ELIMINATE DISTRACTIONS

Gather your son's Nintendo Switch controllers, his iPad, his iPhone, his laptop, and the TV remote. Put them under a pile of dirty clothes in the laundry room; you know he won't find them there and might actually focus on what you have to say. CRAP, your wife just walked into the laundry room and asked what you're doing in there. Cram some clothes into the washing machine and get out, quick! >>

//MAX KNOBLAUCH



## STEP 2: GO TO THE GARAGE

You'll need a quiet place to be alone with your son. Tell him you have a new circular saw blade and you want to show him how to switch out the old one, even though he didn't ask. OH, COME ON! Your wife's in the garage now? Looking for what—a screwdriver? You already told her you would fix the master bathroom light switch later. She probably doesn't know you have to turn the breaker off first, so make sure to tell her that.

## STEP 3: GO OUTSIDE

Tell your wife you need to help your son break in his baseball mitt (by the way, "breaking in" a glove just means oiling it and working the leather to make it less rigid and fit more snugly—not sure if you gals knew that). Throw in a mention of famous father and son baseball duos she probably wasn't aware of, like Ken Griffey Sr. and Ken Griffey Jr. She's so cute when you talk sports to her.

Once outside, put your arm around your son's shoulders in a way that makes him feel like you're a man with wisdom to impart and he should listen up. The important thing to clarify about mansplaining is that women usually don't like it, and that's the only reason

you sometimes have to—DANG! Your wife's on the porch and can hear everything you're saying. She says she's relaxing with a gossip magazine and a mimosa after fixing that light switch herself.



## STEP 4: PRETEND YOU'RE GOING TO MOW THE LAWN

Walk around the yard and tell the boy about how much direct sunlight grass needs to grow (even shade-tolerant grasses, which are totally misunderstood by most women). Then, when your wife's out of ear-shot—NOPE, she followed you out there to talk about

needing to hire an arborist to take down the dead trees by the fence. She probably doesn't realize the arborist only makes recommendations and a tree removal service *actually* does the cutting and grinding. Just nod and smile. You'll tell her tonight.

## STEP 5: ACTUALLY MOW THE LAWN

If you yell loud enough, your son can still hear you over the mower engine without your wife picking up what you're saying. Make the boy grab up all the sticks, rocks, and pine cones in the yard so it looks like he's helping, which I guess he technically is. Tell him how to use the mower properly and ignore whatever he says about already knowing how to use it (he doesn't fully understand all the ins and outs). OH, FOR THE LOVE OF PETE. You're almost to the mansplaining talk when your omnipresent wife walks up with a pitcher of lemonade and two cups.

## STEP 6: GRAB THE TRIMMER AND DO THE SIDEWALK EDGES

The trimmer isn't quite as loud as the mower, but it'll do. Your son will roll his eyes when you bring up mansplaining and act like he's an expert, but wave him off with a "No, wait, let me explain" and—whoops, you just massacred your wife's azaleas with the trimmer AND OF COURSE SHE'S STANDING RIGHT THERE. Shake your head and tell her you have to do that from time to time to thin out their numbers, or they'll all wither and die.

## STEP 7: GO FOR A WALK TO COOL DOWN

NOPE, your wife says it's a nice day and wants to go, too. Abort.

## STEP 8: TAKE A SHOWER

Go into the master bathroom—hey, she *did* fix the light switch—lather up, and think of a good place where your wife won't follow and you can school your son on the ABCs of mansplaining. >>



## STEP 9: TELL YOUR SON TO WAIT FOR YOU IN THE GARAGE

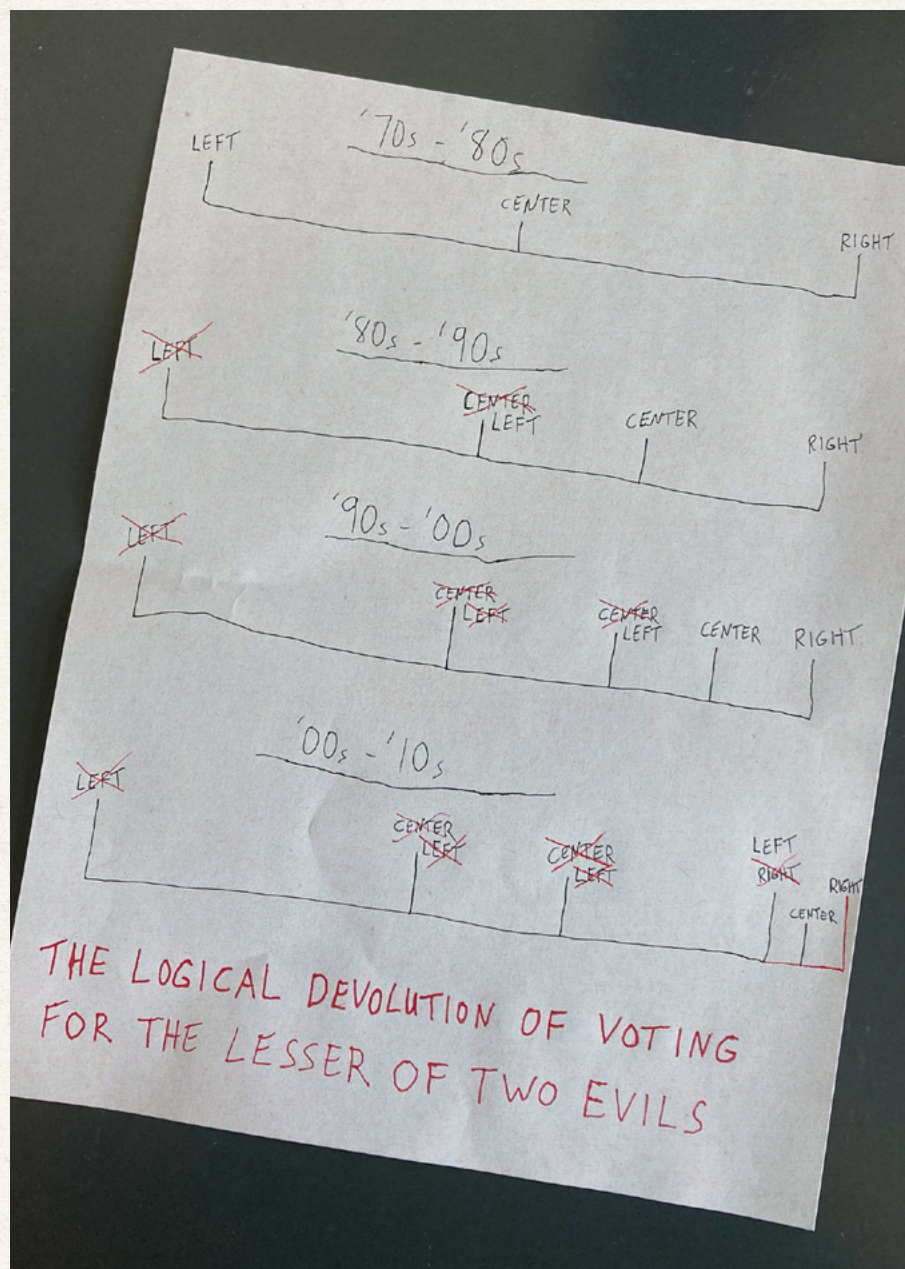
Your first choice was probably right, so go with your gut. Kids like waiting in garages anyway, like you're letting them in on some juicy Watergate secrets. Tell him to crouch behind the van and not to touch the circular saw.

## STEP 10: MAKE SURE YOUR WIFE IS IN ANOTHER ROOM AND HEAD BACK TO THE GARAGE

Quickly, quietly, tell your son about mansplaining. Hold the circular saw blade in your hand so if anyone sees you, they'll think you're talking about guy stuff. Right when you say, "I feel like I might mansplain sometimes, too," that's when your wife walks in and asks who put a Nintendo Switch controller in the washing machine. Shrug and say she probably did it herself because she hates how your son tunes her out when he plays video games. When she asks what you were just saying before that, tell her she wouldn't understand.

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*Andy Spain is a video editor and motion graphics designer living in Durham, NC, with his wife and four children. His humor writing has appeared in McSweeney's Internet Tendency, Weekly Humorist, Slackjaw, et al. His debut novel Cash Grab is forthcoming from Humorist Books in Fall 2021.*



//MURF MEYER GUEST CONTRIBUTOR Find more Murf [here](#) and peep @murfmeyer on Insta



# OP-ED: I'M A TALIBAN SOLDIER. WHAT THE TALIBAN NEEDS IS A STRONG MODERATE LIKE ME.

//MATTHEW BRIAN COHEN

LIKE SO MANY, I WATCHED as Taliban forces descended upon Kabul. I could scarcely believe my eyes just how quick and decisive their victory was. As a Taliban soldier myself, one would think this would be cause for celebration. But the only emotion I felt was *disgust*. This was not the Taliban I knew, not the Taliban I fought valiantly alongside, and not the Taliban I signed up for. I barely recognize this Taliban at all.

Back in the eighties when Reagan funded and armed us, we had noble goals—institute Shariah law and kill Communists. Though internally, we occasionally disagreed on petty matters, we all came together over our shared values: family, freedom, and faith. The word “Taliban” literally means “student,” and students we were. The CIA was eager to teach us military tactics and strategy, and we used those to institute a brutal theocracy that

flogged and murdered dissidents. It was the kind of government that was the envy of many Republicans in the US. While you might call us extremists, at our soul, we were moderates—moderates who knew the value of reaching across the ocean to compromise with America to gain power in exchange for fighting a proxy war with the Soviet Union.

Yet I hardly recognize the Taliban as it exists today. We've let the fringes of our organization take over, and that's just a shame. When I see predominant Taliban leaders give press conferences pushing conspiracy theories about Facebook censorship and catering to the woke Left with commitments to women's rights and freedom of the press, I can only shake my head and wonder where we lost our way. What happened to the Taliban that was able to find common ground with Pakistan's military, who also received hundreds of millions

of dollars from the US under the pretense of hunting down Al-Qaeda? What would Mullah Mohammed Omar think of the Taliban now? I, for one, think he would be ashamed.

Just as Nancy Pelosi said Americans need a strong Republican Party, I'm sure she agrees that Afghanistan needs a strong, united Taliban—a Taliban that won't think twice about killing a woman who goes to school, a Taliban that can easily defeat the most powerful army in the world when it inevitably returns after 20 years of failed nation-building to try to seize control of our rare earth mineral supply. When your opposition is strong, you're stronger for it. That's why I'm running for Congress in Texas District 10. The Lincoln Project has already endorsed me because of my strong conservative values and distaste of Trumpism. If you'd like to see more moderates in office, I hope I'll win your vote. 🇺🇸

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# Thank You Disney for Finally Introducing Non-Binary Characters Who Form a Cishet Relationship! IT'S VERY RELATABLE!

//SMRUTISNAT JENA GUEST CONTRIBUTOR



THERE'S JUST NOT A LOT DISNEY CAN'T DO. There are brown kids in Asia who want nothing more than to be Tony Stark—a billionaire whose company made fortunes by selling weapons that killed thousands of brown kids in Asia. They have even managed to somehow make us want to support the white-woman-perennially-cast-as-Asian, Scarlett Johansson. By focusing so much on relatability, Disney has perfectly bottled the essence of "what cake are you?" BuzzFeed, but with slightly better production values. Amazing!

Remember the hype about the first openly gay character in the MCU in *Endgame*? I know it was just a guy played by the movie's director talking about a crappy date for 30 seconds. But he said he was gay, and we all know a gay person who's in therapy. That's relatable!

And who can forget the buzz around Captain Marvel, the first female superhero. Sure, she's essentially just Captain America, but able to fly a plane without crashing. She literally had the same haircut as him in *Endgame*! But that's as real as it gets. You think women in uniform didn't murder innocent Iraqis? You're wrong. Cap'n Marvel is basically hot Amy McGrath. Boom, relatable again!

This brings us to Loki. The Norse god in mythology is widely accepted as pansexual, a Captain Jack Harkness of sorts. And in

the MCU, they're genderfluid *and* bisexual, which means Mobius and Loki were meant to bang, right? Like, on a beach somewhere, possibly on a jet ski? Yeah, WRONG! How many people do you know who work together and are in an openly gay relationship? Very few, because ostracization is real. Very relatable again!

So when Loki and ~~Lady~~ Loki Sylvie tell each other they are gay AF but really just end up being in a cishet relationship, it just feels right. It would be so much weirder if they had, you know, fallen for any one of their million-and-a-half variants, one that wouldn't conform to the cishet nature of their relationship. I mean, they said they were bi once. It's canon. The Lokis can act gay behind the cameras, where nobody can see them and possibly be made uncomfortable by their very existence, which is still kind of cool in a way where everyone's almost happy!

And that's just Marvel. Disney did us all a favor by calling Lando Carlisan pansexual. Now do you want Danny Glover to call Han Solo "baby" in a movie featuring Emilia Clarke? Baby steps, Skywalkers! How will your father, who still thinks about '70s-era Carrie Fisher in that metal bikini, relate to this?

Some people might want to blame the Mouse for playing it safe. At least it's making an honest effort. I mean, Disney spends more money on convincing you that it's cool to be gay and/or non-binary as long as it doesn't potentially impact the opening weekend domestic box office. They're making an effort to be relatable and inclusive. It could always be worse. They could just go back to not employing women because "they are not as creative." But Disney would never do that (unless they really, really needed to in order to increase the stock price by even a fraction of a percent).

Look, Disney is the root system that allows America's thick trunk to grow and prosper. Sure, those roots have been fertilized with the corpses of basic human rights, but that is the fairytale story of this great American tree, isn't it? And look! Leaves! 🍃

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*Smrutisnat Jena spends most of his time hanging out with his dog and getting pissed off on Twitter. He also sometimes writes for Flexx Mag. Twitter handle: @smrutisnat*



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# I READ THIS ZINE, AND ENDING A WAR IS STILL WAY MORE CONTROVERSIAL THAN STARTING ONE

## What Do I Do Now?

//DAN LOPRETO

THE WAR IN AFGHANISTAN—a [failed](#) statebuilding project and nonstop [shitshow](#)—is finally coming to an end ([kind of](#)). After trillions spent and thousands dead, the only entities walking away from this [crusade](#) with any upside are weapons [companies](#). Here are a few educational resources about the situation in Afghanistan and some links to organizations that are trying to help the situation on the ground.

### [THE AFGHANISTAN WAR WAS FOUNDED ON LIES. SOME PEOPLE ARE STILL TELLING THEM // NEW REPUBLIC](#)

“America, in short, can’t do whatever it wants in the world, and shouldn’t try. We are not, as Madeleine Albright infamously affirmed in 1998, the ‘indispensable nation’ able to ‘see further than other countries into the future.’ If anything, we’re the opposite, and it’s time for Americans to look themselves in the mirror and ask: What if we’re the bad guys?”

### [THE TALIBAN’S VICTORY PROVES THE WEST HAS FAILED TO LEARN THE LESSONS OF THE PAST // LSE](#)

“There is no adequate humanitarian presence in Kabul right now to keep the refugees there safe. It is no surprise that those who believed western promises and worked with the West to achieve them now feel betrayed and abandoned.”

### [THE AMERICAN WAR IN AFGHANISTAN: A HISTORY // OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS](#)

“The first authoritative history of the entire American war in Afghanistan, which is now the longest conflict in US history. Covers all of the sides in the conflict in depth, drawing from his own unmatched expertise and a wide variety of sources.”

### [AS U.S. TROOPS DEPART AFGHANISTAN, CENTRAL ASIA BRACES ITSELF // DAVIS CENTER](#)

One possible scenario, that warlords will directly contest the Taliban, “seems the most realistic. If it materializes, then apart from the refugee crisis, the Central Asian countries may face serious threats to their security... the region and the international community should hope for the best but prepare for the worst.”

### [THE SIMPLE STEPS YOU CAN TAKE RIGHT NOW TO HELP AFGHAN REFUGEES // NPR](#)

“In the days after Taliban forces took control of Afghanistan’s capital city of Kabul, thousands have attempted to flee the country. United Nations groups have warned of a humanitarian catastrophe... Here’s how you can help them and organizations on the ground in Afghanistan.”



IN THE NEXT ISSUE: AS HOSPITAL SYSTEMS FAIL, LAWMAKERS VOW TO VIGOROUSLY EXPRESS THEIR CONCERN



I see death. And you are all that stands in his way.

FOLKS TO BLOCK:

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