

# AMP

april 2024 | volume 20 | issue 7 | amputd.com

TEXAS

AT

DALLAS

UNIVERSITY



Temoc in your WALLS?  
He should be.

## Of Tulips and Temoc

This literal criminal  
isn't THAT bad

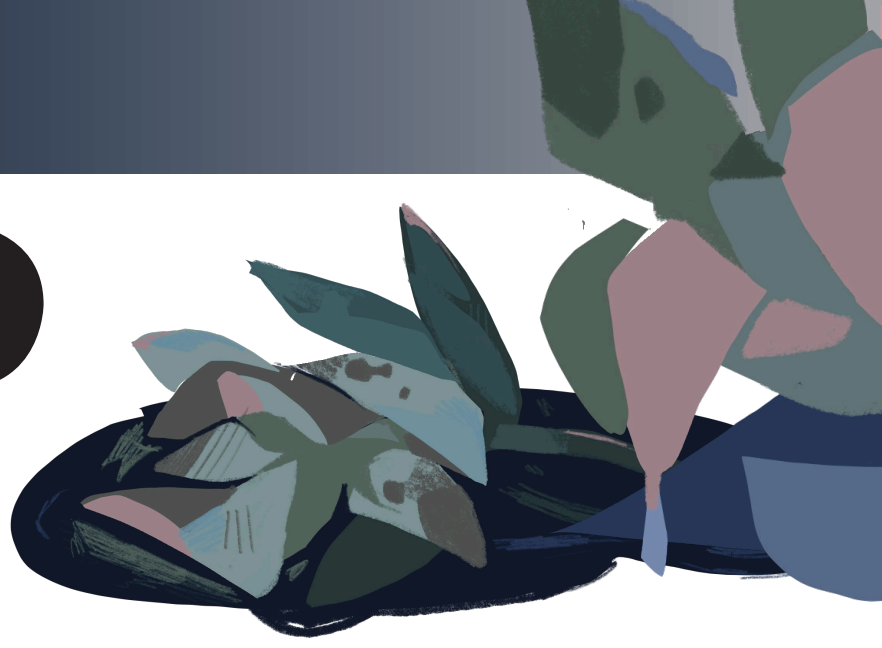
HOMICIDE? Nah.  
Homies RHYME

TEMOC

# AMP

## Editors' Desk

### Taking Stock



Heya, Comets! "Spring Break was too fast" may be a common sentiment, but in this case it's too true. With the last couple months of the semester underway, remember to lock in to the capitalist grindset, as is mandatory for any regular person who lives in this godforsaken country.

Also, the Pub is dead. They killed her.

Speaking on a topic people actually care about, TikTok might also be dead soon, although it's important to clarify that the federal TikTok ban hasn't gone to the Senate yet (at the time of writing). Nonetheless, the end of winter might be a sign of an oncoming social media winter, so be ready to bundle up with your favorite VPN and a blanket knit from all your dead hopes and dreams. It's a rather infuriating turn of events, too — while Congressional representatives are citing ties to the "Chinese surveillance state" in this decision, plenty of users stand convinced that it's primarily a move to suppress the youth voice in politics, particularly with regards to the Zionist genocide against Palestine. Sounds a little reminiscent of a certain group of rocks, doesn't it?

On a further serious note, we're keenly aware of the tragic loss of multiple students within the past several weeks.

Especially considering the news that at least one of these was a suicide, we at AMP want to remind you, dear reader: you are not alone. Your struggles are valid, but you are loved, and if you or someone close to you is battling depression and mental illness we encourage you to seek help. The Student Counseling Center offers counseling and psychiatric care, and for immediate attention you can reach their crisis hotline at 972-UTD-TALK or the national hotline at 988.

Things might seem to be looking down after this past month, and quite frankly, that's because they are. In a sociopolitical context, that's something that needs to change — now's a good time to call Texas representatives, especially senators, and to keep an eye on the presidential primaries. But as you advocate for change, remember to slow down in a more personal context. Sometimes it's okay to take a little time to feel down, to feel the loss in our lives and communities. To that end, we suggest you take it easy and call your loved ones. Maybe do something nice for a friend. Let the people you care about know you're thinking of them.

Stay safe, Comets. If for nothing else, then for your friends at AMP.



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# THIS ISSUE:

- 4 April Horoscopes
- 5 Food Review: Desserts
- 6 DJ Showcase - Mercury Morning News
- 8 Ratford Recycles
- 10 Benson Takes the Rocks in the Divorce
- 12 Revamping the Temoc Brand
- 14 They Don't Make Games Like They Used To
- 16 My Favorite Bugs
- 18 Totally Epic Recipes
- 20 Spit Bars, Not Bullets
- 22 You Don't Know This Literal Criminal Like I Do

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## Disclaimer

Opinions expressed in AMP are those of the editor or of the writer of the article and are not necessarily those of the university administration, the board of Regents of the University of Texas System, or of the operating board of the magazine.

**Have an opinion?**

**Think you're funny?**

Write for AMP! Contact us at [ampatutd@gmail.com](mailto:ampatutd@gmail.com) and follow us on social media @AMPatUTD for more information.

Handwritten notes and signatures: a star in a circle, "temoc", "temoc", and "temoc 2".

Handwritten note: "SHOOSH"



# AMP HOROSCOPE



## *Aries*

You're going to kill or be killed this month. It will be bloody and gruesome, and will likely change the trajectory of your life completely. Then you're going to finish your taxes, if you haven't already.

## *Taurus*

Aries might mistake you for their fated rival this month. Cowardice is your best trait, I think.

## *Gemini*

Sometimes the real treasure is the donuts the bakery throws into the dumpster we find along the way.

## *Cancer*

You might wind up stuck somewhere with an old friend, and you won't be able to get out until you tell them all about that weird guy you've been seeing. Include all the juiciest details.

## *Leo*

You're kind of a loser.

## *Virgo*

The stars have revealed to me that you're going to go through the entire plot of "Batman Begins" (2005), but like if Batman was broke as shit.

## *Libra*

You might witness your partner/crush brutalize someone in ways you didn't know were possible. Don't worry if you find it kind of hot. Do worry if the cops ask about a plastic bag they found in a box floating through the river.

## *Scorpio*

If you find yourself staring up at the ceiling late at night, reliving all of your worst mistakes and missed opportunities, don't worry! That's just you! None of the rest of us have to deal with that shit!

## *Sagittarius*

\*staring at a crystal ball with my hands tangled in my hair and the heaviest eyebags you've ever seen\* Jesus Christ.

## *Capricorn*

Fate can tell your life is going to be good. They didn't use tone indicators though so I can't tell if that's /srs or if they want me to grab some popcorn.

## *Aquarius*

If you open any cans of worms this month, whether literal or metaphorical, the stars think you're gonna have to eat the worms.

## *Pisces*

Your ability to get laid this month entirely hinges on whether or not you can handle The Horrors™.

**SASHA WUU**

sophomore | atec

Aries sun, Aquarius moon, Cancer rising

# Food Review: Desserts

## Feng Cha

This teahouse with sparkling drinks and cakes is right around the corner of UTD on Custer Parkway. Along with lots of seating, it also offers board games and a claw machine of anime plushies.

I ordered the “Strawberry Overload,” one of their most popular drinks. It was a little sour and packed a punch as

I added some sparkling water, and the extra strawberry chunks added to the texture with a good mix of sour and sweet. My brother ordered the “Dirty Boba,” a matcha tea with cheese foam on top, matcha in the middle, brown sugar around the sides, and boba on the bottom.

However, what I was most interested in was the cakes. I usually stick with “Strawberry Princess,” which is covered in cheese milk foam and strawberry. I also tried their “Cookie Snowfall,” with cheese foam and Oreos. It certainly tastes like Oreo, however the sour strawberry in the Strawberry Princess compliments the foam better. The taste of chocolate was absolutely present in “Tiramisu Treasure,” but the bitter hints of coffee weren’t for me. Even my coffee-fanatic brother says the coffee is a little overwhelming. The Strawberry Princess was my favorite; I love dunking the entirety of the cake into the extra milk foam.



Overall, I love the environment of Feng Cha. It’s a peaceful and quiet place to hang out with friends or focus on work. They keep everything clean and comfy, and the staff is very nice. They also recently added kiosks to order digitally instead, which is usually my preference. If you’re in the mood to stay outdoors, in front of the teahouse is a central grassy area with trees, decorative lights, and tables. If you’re looking for a peaceful place for studying and sweets, definitely stop by Feng Cha!

**Food: 7/10   Atmosphere: 10/10   Price: 6/10**

## Aqua S

Aqua S is a cafe about 40 minutes from campus known primarily for its ice cream. Every month, they theme the location after an anime. March was a “Sailor Guardian Cafe.” They decorated the place with Sailor Moon posters, figurines, and cardboard standees. You could watch Sailor Moon while eating, and each food item was based on the sailor guardians. I hadn’t gone to Aqua S before this, but I’m inclined to try their other foods next time they have a new theme.

I got the “Moon Princess” ice cream, a vanilla soft serve with strawberry drizzle and sprinkles. The vanilla was some of the sweetest ice cream I’ve ever had, and the strawberry wasn’t overwhelming. The sprinkles helped add texture, and it even had Fruity Pebbles at the bottom. When just the waffle bowl was left, it absorbed just the right amount of ice cream so it was crunchy, not too hard, and very sweet. I wish I could’ve ordered more to take home!



I also tried the two cakes they offered. “The Destined Love” is a vanilla cake with a strawberry drizzle. It’s pretty similar to “Moon Princess,” but in cake form. “Luna Artemis” is a vanilla cake with chocolate drizzle and a Ferrero Rocher on the top. I was somewhat disappointed by the lack of chocolate flavor in the cake, but that may just be my craving for more.

As much as I loved the environment and food, the biggest difficulty was getting to Aqua S in the heart of Dallas traffic. However, it is a good opportunity to sightsee around Dallas and grab a sweet treat. We were able to take in the mood as we sat outside and ate our ice cream. I highly recommend stopping by when spending some time in Dallas with friends or family.

**Food: 8/10   Atmosphere: 7/10   Price: 7/10**



## VICTORIA STEINER

junior | psychology / child learning and development

Professional eater. Here’s how: get the food, eat the food!

# DJ SHOWCASE: Mercury Morning News

## What is Mercury Morning News?

Picking up a brand new issue of *The Mercury* — UTD's student newspaper and AMP's sister publication — is always exciting. However, all of us get busy sometimes. If you want to catch up on all the latest local and campus news but don't have time to read it yourself, you can just let the hosts of the Mercury Morning News podcast explain it to you instead! Every Sunday at 10 a.m., people from all corners of Student Media get together on RadioUTD to inform and entertain, so tap into your inner child and get ready for your weekly storytime.

## History and Forming the Group

Mercury Morning News (MMN) actually originated as a serious news podcast in 2021, hosted solely by writers at *The Mercury*. Each episode was around half an hour, and the podcast primarily covered local events on and around campus. Since then, MMN has evolved into a collaboration between multiple branches of Student Media. The podcast is meant not only to inform the student body, but to create a space for UTD students to share information and opinions on local news that excites them!

MMN was reborn on RadioUTD in Fall of 2023, and hosts were invited to participate on the basis of interest. After that, various tests were done to see if the group had chemistry (spoiler: we did) and could deliver relevant information in a way that was entertaining and engaging, as well as adding our own personal flair onto the airwaves. This semester's host lineup includes Gavin Arriaga (AMP), Mickey Dolphin (AMP), Andre Averion (AMP and *The Mercury*), Maria Shaikh (*The Mercury*), and Tyler Viator (RadioUTD). Additionally, episodes are recorded and uploaded on UTD TV's YouTube channel, making this a project that all four Student Media organizations get to play a part in.

## Plenty of Variety

The atmosphere in the recording room during MMN is nothing short of delightful. No matter who's available for the lineup that week, everyone has something fun and interesting to contribute. The benefit of having a rotating host list is that everyone has their wheelhouse, and can offer insight on specific topics. For example, you may hear Andre delve into the latest UTD sports story, Gavin explain recent video game news, or Mickey talk about developments in the film and entertainment industry. Each host has something unique they bring to the table.

Similarly, every episode of the podcast is a little different. There are new topics each week depending on current events, of course, but also different personalities who bounce off each other in entertaining ways. We have five total hosts this semester, but any three hosts from that pool could be on air any given week. Some hosts tend to have a quiet and chill vibe, while others are more high energy for anyone who prefers to get their day started with a bang. (Apologies for laughing so loud, unless that's the kind of thing you like from a commentator, in which case you're welcome. -Gavin) Hosts for the next show get announced a day or two in advance on social media; if there's someone whose hosting style you really like, you can keep an eye out for them. Or rather, an ear.





## Vibes of the Show

Between the casual chatting and chill jazz tracks, we hope that students can feel the same cozy morning vibes while listening to Mercury Morning News that we feel while recording it. We want to invite our listeners in, like we're all friends talking over brunch. To be honest, while MMN seeks to inform, it's just as important to let the student body get to know us. This show serves as a peek behind the curtain in that way, giving names and voices to the people in Student Media. (Contrary to popular belief, AMP and The Mercury don't just magically materialize on campus every few weeks.) For those who want to learn a little more about Student Media, or even those who are thinking about joining, MMN shows off the friendly and collaborative atmosphere our office has.

## Growth and Opportunities

Hosting a radio show together has given us many notable bonding moments both on and off the air. Just as an anecdotal example, during the Fall 2023 semester both Andre and myself, Mickey, had birthdays in early September. After that week's recording session we spent almost the entire day in the office — going to Jollibee for lunch and showing me what I had been missing out on, as it was my first time eating there — before going out to dinner with everybody that evening at a Korean BBQ spot. It ended up being a fantastic night and an unexpectedly wonderful way to spend my 24th birthday! I seriously didn't anticipate how much fun I'd end up having.

MMN may seem like just another podcast, but for us it's a little hour of bonding between three folks in a recording studio. On top of that, it's been extremely interesting and useful learning the ropes of radio as people who, for all intents and purposes, had minimal involvement with radio outside of listening to it. The technical side of this operation never ceases to fascinate us. Plus, it's extremely nice of the RadioUTD staff to trust us around their equipment. I'm

not sure I would if I were in their shoes, but they do regardless, so everyone say thank you RadioUTD!

## Looking Forward

Mercury Morning News has already changed and evolved a few times, so we're excited to see what its future brings. A few of the current hosts will be graduating this semester, but that just means new people will get to join in for the next season of the show.

We've been participating in more of these cross-organizational projects lately, both because they're a great way to support each other as members of Student Media and because many of us are already friends. Beyond our hopes for MMN itself, we look forward to even bigger, brighter, and more creative collaborations within Student Media as time goes on. We've grown a lot in the past year, and we hope that growth continues far into the future. If you're at all curious about what we have to offer, consider hopping on board and adding your voice to the conversation!



**GAVIN ARRIAGA**

senior | marketing

I'm being so normal right now



**MICKEY DOLPHIN**

junior | atec

Bloodborne (2015) made me transgender but not in a way that's comprehensible

# Ratford Recycles



design by: susan zhang





## Hello, Concerned Comets!

This month, I'm on a mission to make the world a better place. Many of you, like me, are concerned about the Earth and want to relieve the burden that is 2.12 billion tons of waste simply rotting in our landfills, so I'm taking your suggestions on being green and staying cool. Join me as I go over your top ideas for how to save the planet!

**1 Facepaint**  
You know what, this is quite an astute observation. I see what you did there, Comet! I think I'll take this one to heart — after all, nothing says going green like Going Green! But where to find rat-friendly green paint...? I also need it to be edible, you know, in case I get hungry.

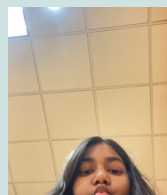
**2 Eat Your Veggies**  
I've heard rumors of a Comet who consumed so many carrots that they actually turned orange! I blame the dining hall...

**3 Start a Personal Garden**  
Now this is a suggestion. This is a fantastic idea! It's time to get down and dirty, Comets. Instead of eating your store-bought food from the grocery store, I can now eat the ripe fruits of your labor! Literally. I will be digging in your yard. You didn't think I'd be the one gardening, did you?

**4 Set Everything on Fire**  
With the current state of world affairs, this isn't a bad idea. As an added bonus, we can roast marshmallows over the yawning pit of hellfire and smoldering coals, watch as the ashes settle over our burning world, and enjoy the sweet, sweet aroma of melting plastic. Which leads me to our next suggestion...

**5 Eat Plastic Bottles**  
YUMMY. As an avid consumer of all things plastic-related I'm certainly doing my part, but this suggestion is more for you, Comets. Go ahead and take a nice, crunchy bite of your favorite plastic water bottle. Now we can all consume micro and macro plastics like God intended, and keep them out of the ocean.

**6 Reduce, Reuse, Recycle!**  
Yayyyy! My favorite suggestion! I love reducing, reusing, and recycling. I especially love when you Comets sort your snacks—I mean, waste—into trash and recycling. Or, as I like to call it, yummy and yummiier. You all make my job so easy.



**SHREYA PARIMAL**

junior | neuroscience  
I love bio



## EROL WINNER: BENSON TAKES THE ROCKS IN THE DIVORCE

Dallas isn't built to accommodate downpours like this. The gutters are overflowing into frigid puddles, sloshing around their ankles and soaking into their socks — but for once, Temoc is grateful for the rain.

“Don't do this,” he breathes, like it could possibly begin to help. “Richard, please.”

If the other man gave a response, the howling midnight wind must've whisked it away. All Temoc can make out through glittering streetlights and the moon's almond-silver crescent are blue eyes, narrowing. Shoulders recede on themselves, posture bitter and unyielding, as if instead of two feet of wet concrete it's a groaning chasm separating him from Temoc. From home.

“You know I have to,” he responds coldly.

“You don’t! We had something beautiful, how could you just throw it away like that?!”

Richard turns away, little black umbrella doing nothing to save his suit from the storm. The white hair at his temples is plastered to his scalp; Temoc remembers seeing that same look after morning showers, after summer days poolside, after the Northside leakages they’d cheerily done nothing about. He remembers when that hard, unflinching scowl used to be a soft smile, wrapped in the private hours of daybreak.

He remembers the spring of 1998, all magnolia blossoms and promise, when he’d met Richard for the first time and immolated in the spark between them. He remembers the decades since, awash in their whirlwind romance. It’s sour now, jagged and bleeding, trashed at his feet: all those years, all that love.

Temoc’s clenched fist slackens helplessly. Divorce papers flutter to the ground and steep in the streetwater.

“Didn’t I mean something to you?” And he’s shouting now, he can’t help it, because he thought this was forever. He still remembers how Richard’s hand felt in his when he’d promised him ‘Forever, Temoc, you and me.’ “Don’t I matter? You sweet-talked me for years but now you won’t even hear me out?!”

“Temoc,” Richard sighs. “Please.”

Temoc is grateful for the rain, a perfect disguise for his white-hot tears.

“You said you loved me! My thoughts, my ideas, my willingness to stand up for what’s right — you told me, over and over, I always believed—”

“Stop!”

Temoc flinches. Richard whirls around.

“I like your ideas when they’re about engineering,” he growls, canines gleaming in the lowlight. “Not social justice. Over twenty years and you still couldn’t get that through your head — that’s why it’s come to this. Now sign the papers and get out of here.”

Temoc bends to pick up the drenched papers, flicking through pages of bleeding ink without reading a word. His vision swims, his inhaled keeps shuddering. He wants to wake up from the nightmare.

“Sign,” Richard insists, offering a pen. And because Temoc can’t help but trust him even now, he signs.

Only then does he see the clause that will end his life.

“Th-the rocks!” he gasps. “You just made me sign away the Spirit Rocks!”

Richard smiles, but it’s not the summer-sunshine smile Temoc cherishes. It’s cruel and cold and calculating, tactic and strategy where there used to be warmth.

(Or was there ever warmth? Was Temoc’s own flaming hair the only heat between them? How long had Richard despised him so thoroughly like this?)

“They’re all I have,” he tries to beg, before Richard rips the signed contract out of his hands. “Please, you can’t — you can’t do this, I’ll do anything, just don’t take the rocks. We can negotiate partial custody, just let me have weekends—”

Three Enarcs rumble past, spraying floodwater on Temoc until he’s shivering. There’s one Spirit Rock each suspended in their chains. Richard pockets the contract wordlessly, not even sparing them a glance.

“Where are you taking them?”

“I think it’s time you leave.”

“Please, just tell me — where are you taking my children?!”

A mocking scoff, almost inhumane. “You can find scraps of their paint in the new Student Union’s walls... if you’re lucky.”

Temoc crumples to his knees. Richard turns away again, finality and purpose hard in his shoulders, a self-satisfied smirk on the pale lips Temoc used to adore. He looks downright proud, as if this has been a long time coming.

As if this was his plan all along: lure Temoc in, learn his dirty secrets, then destroy him and everything he cares about.

Temoc bawls.

Richard doesn’t spare a glance over his shoulder as his form disappears into the endless night. His voice just barely carries over the howling rain, the freezing wind:

“Best whooshes.”



## MARIA SHAIKH

s\*phomore | biochemistry  
temporarily disgraced shounen  
protagonist



# Revamping the TEMOC Brand



The UTD brand is an absolute mess, and at the core of this issue is the school's failure to properly utilize the TEMOC brand. Animal and ambiguously racist mascots are a dime a dozen across the United States, but sexy anthropomorphized rock men are truly unique. Not only is Temoc an iconic figure for his looks and workout routine, but his previous versions going all the way back to 1998 had such putrid and caustic veneers that they had to be locked up in glass cages to avoid their escape. Not even the most depraved minds behind PepsiCo's logo could have come up with such a devilish brand — it strikes both fear and desire within the hearts of the student body, yet its consistent underutilization has led to ultimately lackluster results which disappoint those invested in this campus. Since Temoc is already both sexy and horrifying, all the campus needs to do is lean heavily into the omnipresence of this seductive rock devil.

A cursory analysis of the student body of UTD would immediately reveal one crucial fact: students adore the idea of Temoc. Just look at him! He has that searing hot hair that sets a fire within even the most stalwart of hearts, that pale blue skin reminiscent of the starry night from which he descends unto his faithful fans, and those massive biceps which could easily split a freshman in two. Temoc has starpower which Richard Benson and the rest of the school administration ought to utilize everywhere.

Tragically, Temoc isn't everywhere. His iconic visage is underused and heavily limited in its scope. You might catch a glimpse of Temoc in orientation videos, back-to-school events at the start of fall semester, or at special ceremonies, but this simply isn't enough. When one has access to such a vital asset, it should be used at every conceivable — and inconceivable — opportunity. Students should constantly be teased by the thought of Temoc's hunky figure meandering through every nook and cranny of the campus. Playing basketball in the Activity Center? Temoc should be there. Eating lunch in the SU? Temoc should be there. Meeting with the dean of your school in the

admin building because of alleged academic dishonesty? Temoc should be there, and he should be the one to hand you your academic suspension letter. But Temoc must also be a subtle art; you want the student body to hunger for him constantly, and yet you never want to satiate them. Students should be ravenously searching for Temoc if he is incorporated properly into standard school procedure and maintenance.

A key part of keeping the student body both entertained and desperate for more is to use a variety of Temocs with unique characteristics based on the building he is in. A toned athlete Temoc might be found in the southern sports fields of campus. A learned and studious scholar

**“STUDENTS SHOULD CONSTANTLY BE TEASED BY THE THOUGHT OF TEMOC'S HUNKY FIGURE.”**

Temoc could roam the McDermott library. A toxic waste Temoc could hang out in the Bioengineering and Sciences Building. Original Temocs could scurry through the school's underground tunnels as the cruel wardens who hunt down trespassers. An abstract representation of Temoc could dwell in the Arts and Technology Building. All of these and more could be spread throughout the campus, with a Temoc specifically tailored for each building and region of the campus.

A Temoc menagerie would also allow the campus to monetize this iconic figure by creating collectable trading cards for each Temoc type. Since the UTD campus is comprised primarily of nerdy hobbyists and Temoc fanatics, each Temoc could be given certain traits and abilities which could be central parts of a UTD centric trading card game — à la Pokemon or Magic the Gathering. The TEMOC brand game would undoubtedly be infinitely better than these outdated games, however, because it would include a variety of alluring and pristine Temocs alongside famous figures like the Specters of the Spirit Rocks, Tobor the Harbinger of Calories, and the Immobile Sticker Pole. A critical analysis of Temoc also reveals that it is, by definition, horrifying. Not only did it wipe out the dinosaurs when it arrived on Earth 66 million years ago, but it also maintains a constant grimace of joy, never faltering in its creeping joviality nor making any attempt to blink. It doesn't even eat, unless you count the souls of the students forever lost in the tunnels as nourishment. One might think that this all negatively impacts the TEMOC brand, yet one would be a fool.



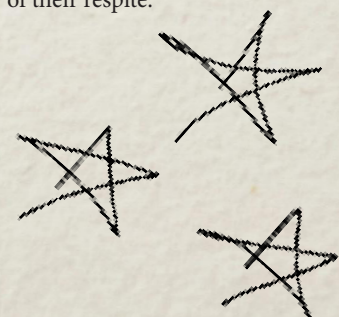


The modern myths that surround cryptids and the occult are all the craze with the youth, and it is within UTD's best interest to capitalize on Temoc's dual role as both the 21st century's sex symbol and as the incomprehensible horror that haunts your nightmares.

A key part of creating a sense of dread around the Temocs is to ensure that students never really know when Temocs will arrive. While it should be guaranteed that students will see some variety of Temoc at least once per week, the student body should constantly feel as if there is a large presence looming behind them which could plausibly be Temoc at all times. To this end, UTD needs to hire more students to take up the dark mantle of the reigning Comet of this campus so that every student can be properly haunted by this maligned mascot.

While typically off limits for most students, the maintenance tunnels beneath the school would serve as excellent nesting grounds for the brood of Temocs UTD should develop. The tunnels are an easy way to access key parts of the campus while providing an added sense of dread within their damp, dark, and narrow corridors. The Temocs should be given full reign over these underground tunnels so that they can move around secretly to more effectively frighten students. Tobor help you if you find Temoc in the Founders building's stairwell.

Just imagine what a great experience it would be for students if they had to whisper in terrified murmurs in response to the desiccated squirrel carcasses left in Temoc's wake, or because they swear they can hear the brutal gnashing of jagged canines as Temoc tears into some unfortunate Comet that wandered outside of their respite.



With events such as EROL occurring with regularity at UTD, it is clear that the student body has a deep interest and desire for Temoc lore, fanfiction, and modern horror. UTD could engage in a large-scale campus wide collaborative storytelling effort around the horrors of interacting with Temoc. Each harrowing encounter and narrow escape would add to the cumulative pool of Temoc paraphernalia and shared understanding which could be distributed across the school's facilities to create a strong sense of kinship between surviving students. Students currently are receiving paltry crumbs of their horrifically tempting mascot, and it is the duty of campus officials to provide them with more to satiate this uncontrollable hunger for Temoc.

The best approach UTD can take to rebuild its school spirit, revitalize an old mascot, and bring in additional revenue to fund the creation of a bigger Plinth is to lean in hard into the TEMOC aesthetic. UTD must be a trendsetter when it comes to college mascots by using Temoc to both terrorize and tantalize the student body. Only through a concerted campaign to rethink Temoc can UTD truly give its students what they desire.

Whoosh  
whoosh



## GREGORIO OLIVARES G.

freshman | political science and philosophy

How can I know that I am me when the perception of self I hold seems to be so malleable? Rather easily, I liked mangoes yesterday and I continue to like them today.



# They Don't Make Games Like They Used To

Growing up, I didn't play many video games. Most of the games that I know of were through my brother, which meant that much of my game knowledge consisted of the various iterations of "Madden NFL" and "NBA 2K." Very recently, I started playing console games, thanks to all the hype (and fan edits) that I would see for characters like Leon Kennedy and Cloud Strife, from the "Resident Evil 4" remake and the "Final Fantasy VII" remake respectively. While the story for these games are absolutely incredible, the main thing that made me want to play the games were

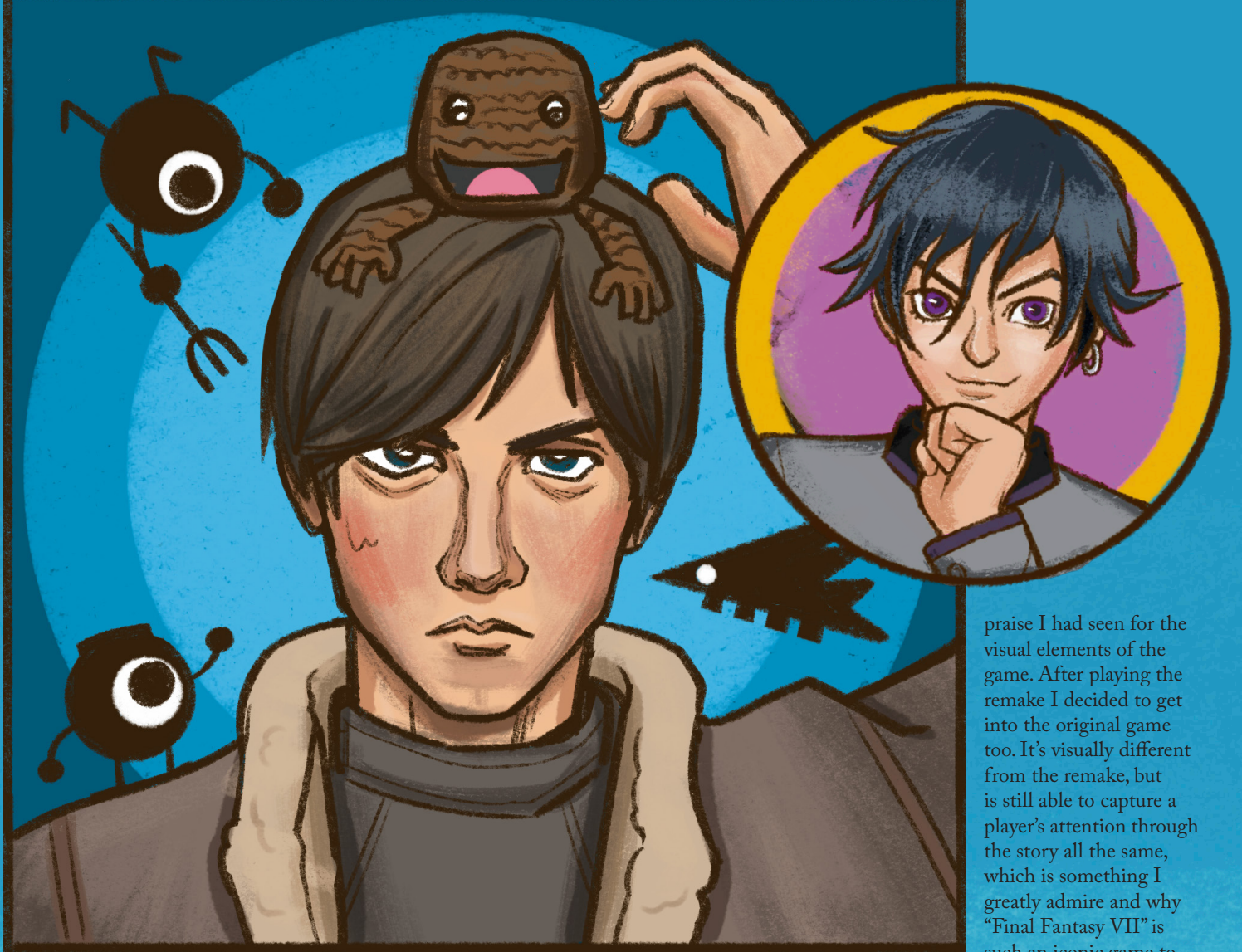
the visuals, despite not knowing anything about the franchises previously (Resident Evil and Final Fantasy please don't come after me — I've seen the light and would honestly say that playing the "Resident Evil 2" remake and "Final Fantasy VII" remake have totally changed my life).

When it comes to talking about what makes a video game "good," especially in 2024, there is usually a lot of talk about how the graphics look and how pretty the game is. Some recent examples that come to mind are the horror game "The Quarry" and the action game "Cyberpunk

2077." Both of these games received tons of praise upon release, with much of it directed towards the graphics. They were incredibly detailed and heavily leaned into the realm of being hyper-realistic, so much so that scenes in the game tended to look like movie shots, instead of a video game. Which isn't necessarily a bad thing, but once games start to look the same, with all of them having this incredibly realistic sheen to them, it can get quite tiring to see repeatedly when you are on the hunt for new games to play, especially when the plots don't seem to hold up to the quality of graphics.

Recently, I was able to fulfill a childhood dream by buying a PSP, which got me thinking about the other games that might not be so lucky enough to have breathtaking visuals to back up an equally good story. It can be easy to immediately write off a game as being lackluster at first glance if you feel as though the graphics aren't that impressive, especially if these games are older. While there are still some games that are loved by the masses despite their dated graphics, there are others that don't get that same amount of love or respect. Since the PSP is a decade-old console, many of the games that I've been playing on it are just as old. It would be unfair to say that the graphics for some of these games are downright terrible, because that is simply not true. However, these games having less reliance on graphics leads to a larger emphasis on story and gameplay, and an ability to set themselves apart from other games.

A game I've started playing recently is "Patapon," released in 2008 and developed by Pyramid and Japan Studio. At its core, it's your standard rhythm game with a twist — in this game, you're a god! You act as deity to a tribe of anthropomorphic eyeballs, who can be commanded to do things like move, attack, and defend through a sequence of beats, which also gives the game a strategic element, since you are continuously fighting against enemies with the power of drum beats. Something unique about the game was the fact that the characters you control throughout the game, called Patapons, chant in response to the beat that is being played, creating this fun back and forth between the two that is very charming. In terms of the visuals, the design of both "Patapon" — the game — and the Patapon tribe themselves is very simple.



It's something that gives the game a lot of its own personality, and establishes its own visual style, in contrast to the video games of today that tend to have similar graphic styles.

"Shin Megami Tensei: Persona" is the first installment in the "Persona" game series, developed by Atlus Studios and released in 1996. Recent games in this series are known for being incredibly story-based, with there being hours of story before reaching any conflict. However, as I discovered while playing this game, the series didn't start out this way. The main story revolves around a group of high schoolers who gain the ability to summon a persona — a physical manifestation of a character's psyche and subconscious to be used in combat — who are tasked with defending their town from demons. As someone who tends to play primarily story-based games, I found "Shin Megami Tensei: Persona" to be an incredibly fun change of pace. Most of the combat consisted of "dungeon crawls" where you are roaming through the world and have

an enemy spawn out of nowhere, and start a turn-based fight between a demon and your character's persona. This isn't the type of game combat I was used to, but I still found myself enjoying it nonetheless. Even though the game is combat-oriented, I found the story that revolved around the gameplay to be incredibly impressive. What the game lacks in overly stylized graphics is completely overshadowed by the plot, which break off into two separate paths depending on the choices you make early on in the game. Both paths of the game are extremely intricate and heavily involve philosophical themes and the law vs. chaos dichotomy, something I had never really seen in the video games that I had played up until this point. I enjoyed the fact that "Shin Megami Tensei: Persona" connected certain concepts like that into the gameplay.

I had recently started playing the "Final Fantasy VII" remake due to the influx of

praise I had seen for the visual elements of the game. After playing the remake I decided to get into the original game too. It's visually different from the remake, but is still able to capture a player's attention through the story all the same, which is something I greatly admire and why "Final Fantasy VII" is such an iconic game to this day. I am thankful to

have played the "Final Fantasy VII" remake because it opened my eyes to a lot of great older games that I wouldn't have known about otherwise, simply because they don't fit into the modern expectation for gaming graphics.

Although it is really impressive to see just how far the gaming industry has come in recent years, there is still something so charming about playing retro games that I will always appreciate. Which is why I urge you to play older games regardless of how they look and see the potential that these games have and get completely swept away by some of the wonderful gaming experiences that these retro games have to offer.



**AGNES GARRETT**

senior | literature

yes im a real gamer, i play papa's freezeria

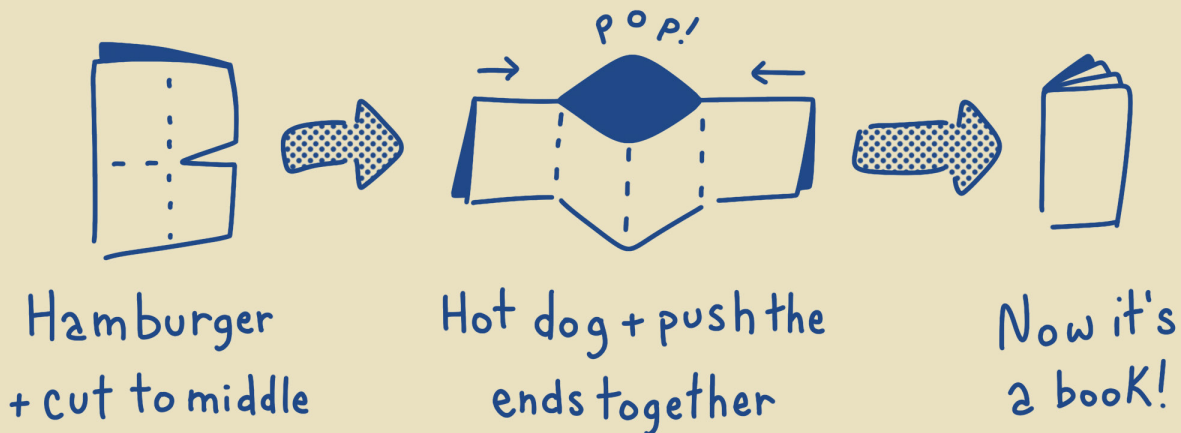
# WHAT ARE ZINES?

To put it simply, a "zine" (short for magazine) is a small, independently-made art book. They can include printed art, drawings done directly on the paper, collages, photographs, or pretty much any kind of art! Zines are an easy way to express yourself without rules, and the whole point is that they're cheap and easy to make.

If you're reading this, I encourage you to cut out and fold up the zine on the next page as an example, then make your own on a blank sheet of paper! I made my zine about bugs, because I think they're cute and fun to draw, and that's as deep as it needs to be. You can make a zine about pretty much anything, but if you need some inspiration, here's a list of topics: Write out the lyrics to your favorite song and doodle what they make you think of. Make an informative pamphlet on something you care about. Cut pieces out of a magazine (coincidentally, you're holding one right now!) and use them to make new images.

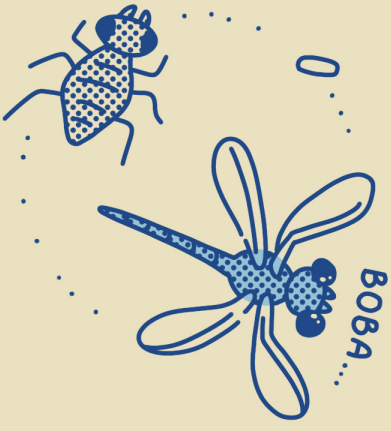
While getting your work published can be difficult and may restrict your creativity in favor of meeting the publisher's standards, zines are personal projects. You can share them with friends or even sell them if you want, but it's perfectly acceptable to make zines just for the sake of making art. You may be the only one who ever sees a zine, and that's okay as long as it brings you joy.

## HOW TO FOLD A ZINE:





**DRAGONFLY**  
Imagine Dragons...fly.  
Imagine if dragons could fly.



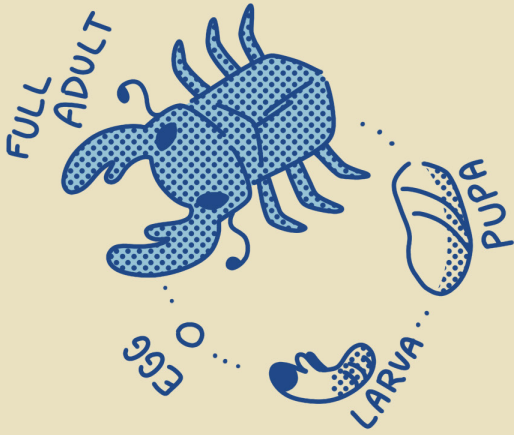
**SILKWORM**  
Stay a worm. The moth is cute too but please.

**MONARCH BUTTERFLY**  
They migrate to Mexico.  
Latina queens.



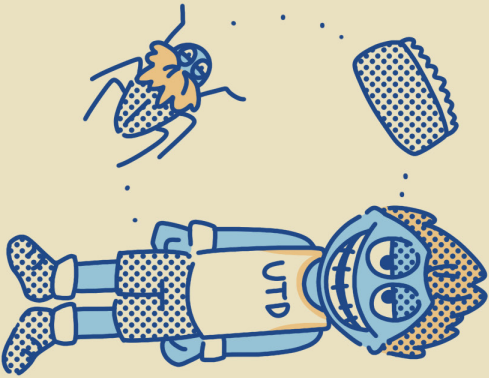
**LADYBUG**  
One pooped on me as a Kid.  
Apparently that's lucky.

**BUMBLEBEE**  
They're little architects that look like cotton balls.



**STAG BEETLE**  
Such lovely antlers,  
I want some... ♡

**TEMOC ROACH**  
One day he will retake his throne.



# MY FAVORITE BEES



by Gavin Arriaga

# TOTALLY EPIC RECIPES

Homemade with love — one of these recipes is probably pretty good. Try them out and share with your enemies and loved ones <3

## PB & DILL

you'll need

- peanut butter
- toast
- dill pickles



Spread the PB.

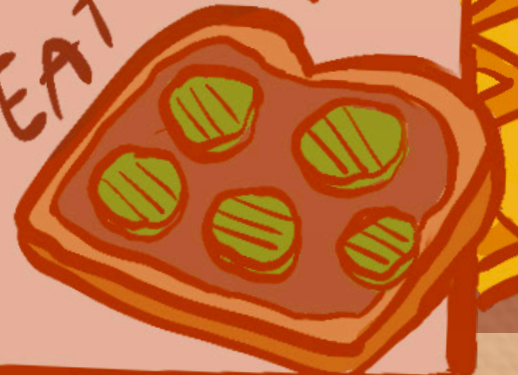


Cut the



Pickle

PUT TOGETHER  
EAT IT.



# PINEAPPLE CASSEROLE

You'll need

- pineapple
- cheese
- sugar
- flour
- crackers



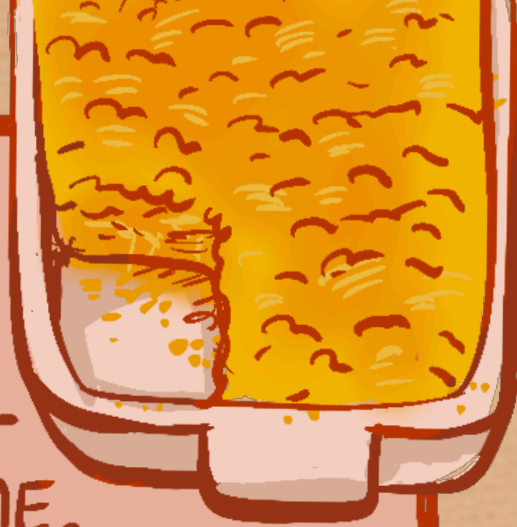
LAYER IN A PAN  
FLOUR  
SUGAR



Sprinkle  
crackers  
on top.  
BAKE.

CON-  
SUME.

and enjoy it.



# THE OL' RAISE N DIP

You'll need

- oatmeal raisin  
cookie
- clam chowder



POUR THE  
CHOWDER.  
prepare  
your cookie.



DIP IT.



EAT IT.

# GAMER CEREAL

You'll need

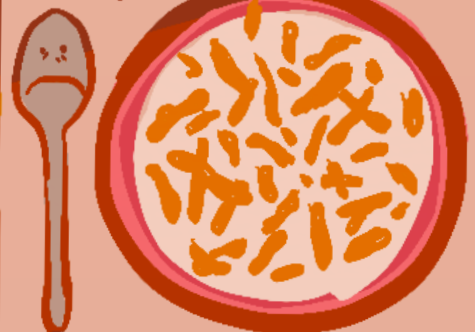
- cheetos
- milk
- bowl
- spoon  
(optional)



JUST  
POUR  
THOSE  
PUPPIES  
IN.



Yummy!



eat well.

# Spit Bars, Not Bullets



Ahh, Texas... a great state that's pioneered many things, the most important of which being Buc-ee's, the breakfast taco, and gratuitous gun violence perpetuated by a culture of separatism and resistance to change. But worry not! As your newly elected senator, I promised I'd make some improvements around here and goddammit, that's what I'm gonna do.

See, to solve the truly perplexing problem of gun violence we need to really think outside of the box. For example: you can't shoot anyone without any firearms at your disposal, right? Now I know what you're about to say; "Ohhhh Senator, that just won't do! Total gun bans are completely ineffective here, don't you know your audience?" And to that I say, I don't NEED to know my audience, because I already know what's best for them. You people are too stuck in your ways, you need to open your minds to the possibility of weaponless warfare. You thought my focus was on harm reduction, yes? You stand corrected! I believe that a healthy level of violence is key in any functional society. We don't need less harm; we just need fewer guns. Or preferably no guns so that we can harm each other more creatively. See, guns make things too easy. Interpersonal conflicts become so stale once guns get involved. It always goes the same — people have beef with each other and the quickest way to end that beef is to pull the trigger. Can't really argue with someone when they're either dead or bleeding from a few fresh holes in their body.

Now, I think that's plain lazy. Where's the inspiration? The method? The creative process!? Whatever happened to crafting elaborate, cartoonish schemes to get back at people? What happened to verbally scathing someone so severely that they become ostracized from their community and are forced to pack up and leave out of pure shame? What happened to dedicating your life to besting a fated nemesis who thwarts you at every turn and gradually develops a slightly homoerotic relationship with you? Don't you see? We've lost something near and dear to the human experience, all because of these blasted guns. Well, I'm sick of it. I'll have no more of it and neither will any of you. I don't care if it's beyond my power; ideology cares not for titles. Art bows to no institutions or systems. There is only one way to reconnect with our souls — and that's through the art of rap. Good ol' rhythm and poetry.

Okay, stay with me here. Perhaps you're confused, maybe you're even anxious if you happen to be Caucasian and have trouble staying on the beat in any situation. That's okay. I share your plight and I'm here for you. But here's the thing, I never said you had to be good at rapping. Most people aren't that good at rapping. You only really need to be worried if you piss off André 3000 or something — and even then, you'll probably be fine considering he makes experimental flute albums now. You are beneath him. In any case, rap is the one thing that has the potential to unite us all under this garishly star-spangled flag. The flow, the creativity, the complexity... it can serve not only as a weapon, but it can also bridge the gaps between us. I'll give an example: let's say your neighbor has been

putting his trash in your bins every week even though you've told him repeatedly to stop. One morning you spy him over the rim of your mug and decide that you've had enough. You confront him on the front lawn, and he's dismissive as per usual. All you'd need to do is whip out a truly inspired excerpt from "Rap God." What's he supposed to do, defy you? You, who just proved at 8:34 a.m. on a Monday that you can, in fact, do the fast part of "Rap God?" He won't just choose to stop putting his trash in your bins, he will be forced to do so by your objective superiority. Anyone can shoot a .38 caliber into someone's left foot, but not everyone can do the fast part of "Rap God." The choice is clear.

Admittedly, it's not a perfect system. Already I can detect some potential power scaling issues. What if you and your opponent are equally bad at rapping, or equally skilled? In this case we defer to the artist, i.e., whoever's verse you're rapping. (If you're freestyling, then I apologize, but you're on your own.) Which artists outrank each other then? It can be difficult to say, considering how many rappers there are in the world. My people have been doing some studies behind the scenes, and we've made some interesting discoveries. First off, the highest amount of damage ever dealt by a single verse was from a Lil Dicky song. We were just as surprised as you are. It's not something we can explain, but we've observed it on multiple occasions. The Lil Dicky strategy is certified fresh. Secondly, different languages have no bearing on score. Whether you whip out an RM verse or a Missy Elliott one, both are equally valid in the eyes of the law. I know that RM mostly raps in English but just ignore that and focus on what I'm trying to say. The last issue (and most glaringly obvious) is fairness — who officiates these things? Does anyone preside over a rap battle, or does it just sort of happen? And to that I say, I don't know, dear citizen, does anyone officiate a parking lot shootout? No, of course not! We have to keep it fun somehow! The rules of rap battles are fast and loose. It's very much a vibe-based activity, so the mediation should be vibe-based as well. If it's taking a little too long, then a concerned citizen is more than welcome to step in and act as a judge. If one of the opponents is clearly being dragged through the mud by the other, then the rap battle is serving its purpose! May that poor bastard never again incite the wrath of that individual for as long as they continue to live.

Obviously, all of this is still a work in progress, but I plan to roll out this new legislation by the end of the year. Soon our citizens will cast down their guns and pick up microphones in their stead. The world will be an infinitely better place when we are awoken not by distant gunshots and screams, but by someone trying and failing miserably to rap Nicki's verse from "Monster." Imagine the conversations we could be having when we aren't trying so hard to kill one another. Now if you'll excuse me, I hear loud, innumerable footsteps and what sounds suspiciously like several rifles being cocked down the hall. I must make my escape through the window as I anticipated this would be the initial response to my forward-thinking gun control plan. Au revoir!



**MICKEY DOLPHIN**

junior | atec

Bloodborne (2015) made me transgender but not in a way that's comprehensible

# YOU DON'T KNOW THIS LITERAL CRIMINAL LIKE I DO

Hey guys! So, if you haven't seen the newest video in the controversy, DM me. I can send you the summary, but honestly, I don't think watching it is very productive, and it gives money to Ash's accuser. Yes, he said the proceeds would go to an anti-infant violence charity, but I don't really buy that, and you shouldn't either. If you have no idea what I'm talking about, I'm @silver\_m00nie, and I'm so sorry this is how you're being introduced to my favorite brainrot of all time, Unproblematic King Ash Silver. He's a YouTuber, streamer, and everyone's favorite cat ear wearer. Unfortunately, he's been unfairly involved in some drama recently — and as someone who has been a fan since basically day one, I want to give my perspective on why it's clear that this is bullshit, and my fave remains on TOP.

So, for the uninitiated, two days ago one of Ash Silver's FORMER best friends, Lucidity, went live and accused Silver of dropkicking a baby at a park. Which, WOW. Absolutely insane to cancel him over something so clearly false. As mentioned at 1:39:40 in his July 7th, 2019 Super Smash Bros. stream, Silver HATES kids. He would never go anywhere near a baby in the first place, much less kick one. He hates their crying and the feeling of their weirdly perfect skin— it reminds him of the traumatic bullying he experienced in middle school for his acne. He's literally been through so much, he would never do something like this. It's obviously Lucidity trying to deflect all the hate he's gotten recently — last month, it came out that he was buying underage streamer Carly Shot alcohol, which was literally deranged, and he never took accountability either. Ash RIGHTFULLY cut ties after that, and this is obviously a sad and desperate to deflect hate onto an innocent Silver.

I know what a lot of you are thinking. "Um, Moonie, didn't you see the video of him kicking the baby?" First of all, Photoshop exists. Second of all, even if he did kick the baby, it's still a major overreaction to cancel him for that. Honestly, I think a lot of the people trying to get him suspended from streaming need to get some perspective. Ash Silver is one person, and most of the real world's problems have nothing to do with an influencer with no real control over people. Climate change is going to make that

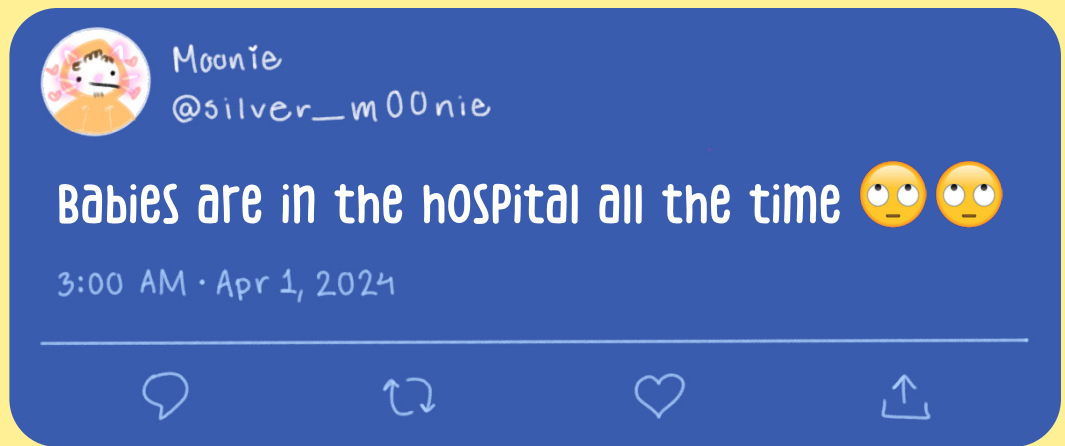


design by: ann jayan

baby's life worse than a little tap from someone the baby should feel HONORED to be kicked by. Besides, I guarantee everyone hating on him uses Amazon and has an iPhone. Y'all are complicit in way worse atrocities, but you just want to get mad at him over something that's honestly not even that big of a deal so you don't have to think about how you contribute to a way worse evil: capitalism. You freaks need to go do some praxis and leave my baby alone. The kid is probably fine anyway.

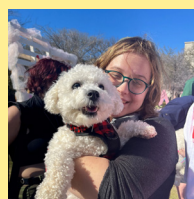
Which, okay, sure. The baby is currently in the hospital, but like, so what? It's not that big of a deal. Babies are in the hospital all the time. It probably just needed a vaccine or burped in its sleep or something. Parents can be super paranoid about their kids getting hurt. I'm sure he just cried too hard when Ash kicked him and his parents freaked out, even though babies cry a lot. It was a joke, and the baby was blowing it out of proportion. I've gotten a lot of DMs about Ash's apology where he admits that he wanted to hurt the baby, but I honestly think those people are focusing on the wrong part of the apology. He admitted that he's in therapy now. Coming out with that was probably really hard for him, and I'm proud of him for getting the help he needs. The people trying to cancel him with 'suspension from streaming' and 'assault charges' need to stop being such vultures and let him get better. Even if he didn't say it, he's obviously really sorry, and that baby is way too sensitive.

Honestly, I think his haters are also way too overdramatic. Worse than that, they aren't even trying to understand where he might be coming from. Ash Silver has had a really hard life. His parents got divorced when he was five. I already talked about how traumatizing his bullying was. His friends are all British. He had it really rough. Worst of all, he experienced all of that while dealing with something truly terrible — a debilitating mental illness. Ash Silver has ADHD. He was mentally ill and improperly medicated; he didn't actually want to hurt that baby. ADHD people need to stim, and you can see in the video that the poor guy didn't bring anything to stim with. The only thing he could use was the baby. That's why he ripped it out of its stroller chair right in front of its father. He was stimming when he kicked that baby. It was an innocent mistake, he couldn't help it. Are people not allowed to make mistakes anymore? You guys are all hypocrites — all of you have hurt people by making mistakes. That's human nature. He's not a 'monster,' he's an innocent human like you and me. TBH, I think this is more on the dad than anything. Baby kicking is a really common stim for ADHD people, so the dad should've carried some stim toys on him so no one had to kick his baby. It was pretty inconsiderate in my opinion.



I really don't think the people who've been shitting on him for this understand him like I do. I met him once when I paid \$300 for his meet-and-greet last Comic-Con (it was worth every penny). As soon as I walked up to him, he immediately grabbed me by the hair, made hard eye contact with me, and told me that all his stans were worthless nightmares who only serve as stepping stones to endless power and money. I haven't cut my hair since, TBH. But the point is, he's a jokey guy! He loves a good bit, and he gets close enough to joke with people really quickly. He definitely didn't mean to hurt the baby, no matter what his apology said, and if he did, it was just a joke.

Edit: Hey guys, I'm coming back to this. I've watched the video of him kicking the baby a LOT, and if you listen carefully at around the 10-second mark, you can totally hear that baby saying a slur. To be so bigoted at such a young age honestly tells me that baby was like, mega evil. Ash was doing the world a service by punting it so hard. He's really just a great ally to marginalized communities for taking such a no-tolerance stance against bigotry. He did this FOR you, FOR his marginalized fans, and now the internet is CRUCIFYING him for what he did to protect all of us. He's basically Jesus, and all his haters trying to cancel him are like the Romans killing him. He was literally just trying to get rid of a racist, and the way you guys are coming for him says a lot more about y'all than about him. Silver\_m00nie OUT.



**ELLIE MAGUIRE**

sophomore | neuroscience  
geek who went greek

by: victoria bruno



Give him his ticket.

# AMP

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