

february 2017

# LINK

MAGAZINE

BCIT & BEYOND

## Unnecessary Roughness

Domestic violence  
and the NFL

## BREAKING UP *is hard to do*

Learning to end unhealthy relationships

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

## Alexandra Fontaine

On diamonds and dancing

## Future Tech and Smart(er)phones

8 innovations from CES and  
8 apps to help you survive

## PHOTO FEATURE NICARAGUA

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

## Case Mutangadura

On bonding and beats

plus: Singles Awareness, gulab jamans, & adopting pets



## In this issue:

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <b>5</b> <u>BCIT</u><br>Heart & Soul                     | <b>18</b> <u>ADVICE</u><br>Break-ups              |
| <b>6</b> <u>STUDENT SPOTLIGHT</u><br>Alexandra Fontaine  | <b>20</b> <u>OPINION</u><br>Singles Awareness     |
| <b>9</b> <u>TIPS</u><br>8 apps for students              | <b>21</b> <u>POV</u><br>Student / Mom             |
| <b>10</b> <u>STUDENT SPOTLIGHT</u><br>Case Mutangadura   | <b>22</b> <u>WELLNESS</u><br>Adopting pets        |
| <b>13</b> <u>TECHNOLOGY</u><br>Consumer Electronics Show | <b>23</b> <u>FOOD</u><br>Gulab Jamuns             |
| <b>14</b> <u>PHOTO FEATURE</u><br>Ray Yu                 | <b>24</b> <u>OPINION</u><br>Unnecessary Roughness |



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#BCITandBEYOND

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## Featured Contributors



**Caroline Thompson**  
*Radio Arts & Entertainment*

Caroline is in her 2<sup>nd</sup> year and specializing in creative writing this semester. She writes a lot of commercials, but also likes to write about her interests in music, travel, nature, animals and *Harry Potter*. In her spare time she likes watching tv, looking at cats on the internet, playing *MarioKart* at her sister's house, and spending time outdoors (mostly only during summer).



**George Eliopoulos**  
*Radio Arts & Entertainment*

George's life has always revolved around sports; whether it be playing, watching or talking about them. As a five-year-old, he even made sure to introduce himself to everyone as Steve Nash. Now at BCIT, George is learning the skills necessary to pursue a career as a sports journalist.

# 'V' is for Vulnerability

INTRO

on the cover(s):

**Case Mutangadura & Alexandra Fontaine** combine movement and mood in a dancing double-cover.

photo: **maddy adams**



This page:  
illustration by **flora brodie**

Dear Reader,

I've written many love letters to you before, but you received none; I ended up scrapping them all. I suppose it's because I couldn't think of the proper words to express just how much I love you. After all, you can't write poetry if you can't English good. Since it's February (that "month of love") and I've yet to pick out a present for you, I thought I'd write this letter in an effort to show you how much I appreciate you, especially with all that's transpired recently.

There is one thing I ask of you for this special occasion. It's not easy, but I promise it'll be okay.

Be vulnerable with me.

I want to hear you talk about you. I want to know about your deepest insecurities; your desires from life; the anger you keep buried; and learn the silly quirks that make you laugh. I want to hear your pain and your joy. If you're willing to speak, I want to listen.

I see what you do — we've all done it. Even when your mind and body are in such an unbelievable amount of pain that you would rather sleep forever than stay awake another moment, you still get up, get dressed, and take on the day as it comes. Even when you're up the entire night, worrying about that presentation you need to do for school, you still get up there. Even when you feel like the

anxiety is crushing your chest, you still smile and ask your barista how they're doing. What an incredibly brave thing for you to do.

How about this: I'll go first. For this special month, *LINK* has crafted a special issue with an emotional overture to show you the importance of opening up. With great initiatives happening this month, like Bell's 'Let's Talk' and BCIT Student Association's 'Speak Up Speak Out' fighting the stigma against mental health, people are starting to recognize the value of honesty and humility. Do your part by lending an ear to a friend, a family member, a classmate, and open up to someone yourself.

There is no shame in being vulnerable. If you're feeling lonely, rejected, powerless, or small, reach out to me. Reach out to your friends and family. Don't be afraid to open your mind and your soul to someone. They will peer in and think, "Damn. You are beautiful." You're never alone, and there is always someone who will care.

So be courageous, ask for help if you need it, and be kind to yourself.

Love always,  
Me

— **Rachel Chang**  
Associate Editor



## All A Board: Pandemic

Ever wondered what it's like to save the earth from a worldwide pandemic? If the faith of humanity is entrusted in your hands, what would you do to find a cure? If you're a board game addict and a lover of medical disaster films, **Annie Sheng** found you the perfect balance between these two pastimes, in one game.



## More Than Change

Vancouver's homeless shelter occupancy is at 97% and homeless initiatives around the city need our efforts more than ever. **Selenna Ho** provided a list of major Greater Vancouver organizations that are working to end homelessness in our province, and she's urging us all to get involved.



## Student Spotlight Extras

Last month **Rachel Chang** introduced you to the young entrepreneurs at Ellebox who are working hard to defy the stigma associated with periods. Follow up that interview with more photos from our shoot inside their inspiring office, and be sure to cash-in on the exclusive 10% discount for BCIT students. Use the promo code "BCIT" online at Ellebox.com



RT  
#BCIT

@twilamam



'NEVER get this close when scrumming someone.'  
Oops! Real time scrum etiquette lessons in j-school. #BCIT #journalism



@jensenshields

"Using COOLORS to find the colour scheme of my brand! Where's the Canadian version, COLOURS?  
#Coolors #Colourscheme #BCIT #Webdesign"

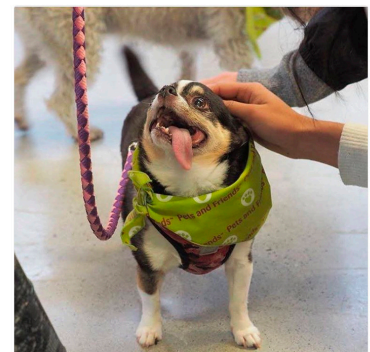
@stuartlosaltos

@bcit @TransLink Also, I teach English at #BCIT. Please help me and my students by spelling "affected" with an "a" on your screens.

@BCITSA



Yay! Doggie De-Stress for Speak Up Speak Out today in the Great Hall from 11:30-1:30 #BCIT...  
[ift.tt/2Ky2FMJ](https://ift.tt/2Ky2FMJ)



# HEART & SOUL

Take care of yourself, your future,  
and your future caretakers.



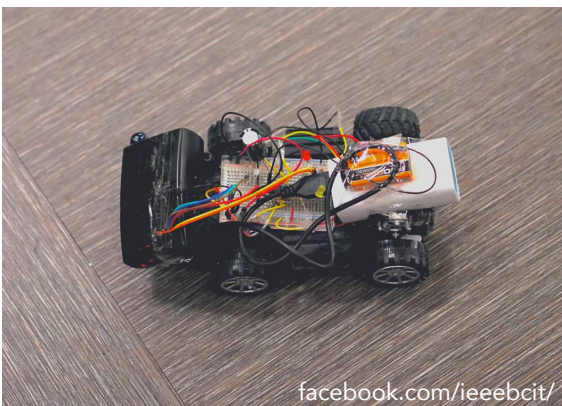
## LET'S GET CLINICAL

Missed your flu shot so now you've got to miss class? You're not the only one. It's flu season after all, and with it comes contagious coughs, headaches, and mucus (ugh!) Grandma's chicken soup may be a heartfelt cure, but will it win over the hearts of your attendance-obsessed instructors? Didn't think so. For an alternate plan, check out BCIT Burnaby's drop-in clinic, located at SE16. You only need to bring your student ID and Care Card to get a check-up and/or a doctor's note. So get cozy in your comforter and rest up, if not for your sake, then for the sake of your classmates.

## THE HEART OF CAMPUS

The heart wants what the heart wants. Here at BCIT, think of the SA student executives as the brain, and you, the student population, the heart. See, the brain keeps having this recurring dream about an amazing **new Student Centre** on the Burnaby campus, dedicated strictly to all the things the heart needs to beat at full strength.

So the brain sent out a survey, asking the heart for its feedback on making this dream come true. Hundreds of little beats came back, and it turns out that the heart has some pretty amazing ideas for how this future Student Centre could serve the entire student body. The next step will be to vote on this plan, so pay attention to messages coming from the brain, and remember to vote with both your heart and your head. Learn more at [www.bcitsa.ca](http://www.bcitsa.ca)



## DES-CARS

Let's be honest, the term "self-driving cars" is a little misleading. To imply that a car has a 'self,' is to both figuratively, and literally, throw a wrench into our ongoing understanding of what it means to be human. *If an inanimate object can have a "self," does that mean it also has free will?* My gears are seizing up just thinking about it. So let's put that one aside for a minute and just get back to being blissfully unaware. The annual IEEE RC Classic is back this month on the Burnaby campus, so head down to the Great Hall on February 28 at 6pm and watch BCIT engineers build and exert power over their remote control cars. It's always a fun-filled event, and who knows, this might be your last chance to relish our final and fleeting moments as a species with control over the very machines we create.

[facebook.com/ieeebcit/](https://facebook.com/ieeebcit/)



# ONE STEP AHEAD

**Alexandra Fontaine** is an accomplished award-winning ballet dancer who made her way to BCIT via Nanaimo to study Mineral Exploration. Originally drawn to dance by the artistic beauty of ballet, her passion has since evolved into an appreciation for the athleticism and storytelling ability of the performers. As we chasséd our way across the Burnaby campus, Alex shared her thoughts with us on dance, balancing school with creativity, and what drew her into an unlikely career in the geological sciences.

interview **nick macDonald czapiewski**

photos **maddy adams**



## What do you study at BCIT?

The program is called Mineral Exploration and Mining Technology. Basically, we study mine operations, mineralogy, and petrology; so the study of minerals and rocks. We also do a lot of general sciences and we also study surveying techniques, how to use them, and how to actually read what we're measuring. It's really fun... I would love to work for an exploration company, hopefully finding minerals. That would be the main goal. I really like the outdoors, and camping and all that stuff, so I'd love to work for a little exploration company, scouting out the land.

## Why did you choose to study Mineral Exploration and Mining Technology?

I was in Alaska on a family trip and they had these seminars on our cruise ship. They were all about diamonds, because Alaska is a big producer of diamonds. I went and found them really interesting. I think I went to every seminar on that boat. They had one or two seminars a day, so a minimum of eight. My mom said, 'Alex, you're really weirdly into this.' And I'm like, 'yeah, I guess I kind of am.' So I did some research and found BCIT, then enrolled and now I'm really excited to move onto this chapter and start being a geologist.

## How did your passion for dance start?

I was five-years-old. I think I watched a TV show with a ballerina on it and I knew I wanted to do that. And it didn't stop. [Eventually] I moved into a semi-professional dance career after high school, and danced with a few companies and got signed with my agency Premiere Talent Management.

I'm still signed with them to this day, still going to auditions and doing little shows for them.

## Why did you choose to specifically specialize in ballet?

I just love the artistry of it and I love how graceful and elegant everyone looks doing it. I think that's what initially drew me to it; just how beautiful it looked, all the pretty costumes. Growing up, later in life I loved the athleticism of it and just how elegant it was and how it really tells a story. It's very cool to interpret the specific story they're trying to portray.

## How does dancing make you feel?

It actually kind of depends on what style I'm doing. Overall I love dancing, it makes me very happy, but then depending on the style I'm doing and depending on what that underlying message of the dance is, that emotion really plays into me as well. So for example, if I'm doing an emotional contemporary piece, I will be feeling very upset or very heavy. But then overall, the act of dancing makes me happy. It definitely depends how much you want to get into it, dancer-by-dancer. Emotion is what really drives me, so I like to use my emotion and experiences.

## What is the most difficult thing about dancing for you?

Again, playing with that emotion. I think the most difficult thing is interpreting an emotion that I haven't felt yet. The only examples I can really think of are in hip hop, but often that's a lot of aggression, a lot of strong anger, and I don't feel those emotions very often. It's very hard for me to interpret that genuinely, so that's kind of a struggle.

continued...



"Emotion is what really drives me."

**As a choreographer, where do you draw your inspirations from?**

I get really inspired by music. I download a whole bunch of random music; I have about 6,000 songs on my iPod. I always just put it on shuffle and when I hear something, I'll write it down and go back and try choreograph to it, just because it inspires me so much. Whether it's an emotion, some type of beat arrangement, if there's little clicks in the music, or big basses or really cool syncopation to this music, that really inspires me. That makes me want to do something.

**How does your passion in dance inspire your personal fashion?**

If I'm going to a dance class, or if I'm going to a dance event, that really determines how I'm going to dress. If it's for a hip hop class, I'll try and look really edgy and commercially fashion forward. So a lot of leggings, baseball tees, ball cap. If it's a ballet or a contemporary event, I'll dress a bit classier. Maybe heels, a dress, really do my hair up nice.

**How would you compare your dance social community with your BCIT social community?**

I love both, but they're both so different. My BCIT community is a lot more personable, it's a lot smaller of a community and you stay within your community; it's a lot more focused. In my dance community, it's all about the social aspect. You get to keep the few close friends you have, but other than that you're constantly meeting new people all the time. You're trying to make connections in both communities but the way you make connections is very different. I feel like in BCIT it's about showing your work ethic and making those really personable connections, and on the dance side, it's simply just getting out in the community and meeting people over and over again until they finally ask you to do things with them. They are both very different but very awesome.

**Fun question: if you could have any super power in the world, what would it be and why?**

I would definitely want to read minds [laughs]. I think just because I always like to be one step ahead. ■

# APP HAPPY

BCIT student life, while rewarding, can come with a lot of stress, assignments and neverending deadlines. These student-enhancing tools I've selected here can help make your BCIT experience a little bit easier.

words **annie sheng**

Plan a project

## TRELLO

Trello is a giant board filled with lists and cards that are customized to your preference. It's great for a wide range of tasks, from a simple to-do list, to planning an entire term project. The drag & drop interface makes the app easy to use. Since your entire project is laid out in front of you, you can virtually see the bigger picture.

Record lecture notes

## EVERNOTE

What I love about Evernote is that all your notes are stored in their cloud service, ready for viewing, editing, and downloading at any time. You can even access these offline with a paid account. You can customize your notebooks, organize your files however you like, search for a specific document through keywords or tags, and record lectures.

Take a calm break

## HEADSPACE

Sometimes we get so caught up in our deadlines that we forget to take a breather. With this app, you can learn meditation in just 10 minutes a day. Headspace also teaches mindfulness in different areas of life. Their subscription gives you five categories: Foundation, Health, Relationships, Performance and Pro. No matter your lifestyle, there is something for everyone.

Planner on your phone

## iSTUDIEZ

iStudiez is like a digital student planner that you can sync between your mobile and desktop devices. It provides you with a calendar overview of your day or week, a place to document your upcoming assignments and their due dates, and a planner to manage your schedule, assignments, and GPA.

Personal finance

## MINT

Living on a student budget requires planning. When school gets stressful, it's easy to lose track of spending and payments. Mint is a personal finance tool to help you stay on top of your money. The app provides you with budgeting tools, bill payment scheduling, and tips to improve your credit score.

Self-learning

## COURSERA

Is there a topic your instructor has briefly touched upon that piqued your interest? Coursera provides you with courses that cover a wide range of topics that you can take at your own pace. Each course has videos, quizzes, and projects, so you really feel that you're working towards something with tangible results. Free to learn but you'll need to pay for an official certification of completion.

Digitize your docs

## SCANNER PRO

How many times have you lost a receipt or received a low-quality photo of a paper document? Scanner Pro makes high-quality digital versions of your paper documents, and lets you upload them to third party apps that you use for sharing or digital archiving. It even has a text recognition tool, so you can grab the texts on that document and use it to its full benefits.

Team communication

## SLACK

Slack is a messaging app that allows team members to send direct or group messages, share files, and make calls. Not only does it reduce internal email, it also has fun and useful tools: built-in reminders, code snippets in various languages, custom emojis, GIFs, and a slackbot assistant, which helps you with reminders, answers any technical questions regarding the app, and monitors your emails.



# BONDING WITH BEATS

**Anesu “Case” Mutangadura** is a dancer whose body speaks through the rhythm of hip hop. Case has danced with five groups, performed in almost 20 shows, and has choreographed multiple classes throughout the Lower Mainland. When not dancing, Case focuses on his academics, evident in his major scholarships from both UBC and BCIT, and his current enrollment in the GTech program. As an only child of a United Nations mother, Case developed a humbled and well-rounded perspective after living in seven different countries. Of all the things he’s seen and experienced, there’s a certain magic about dance that keeps him coming back for more.

interview **selenna ho**  
photos **maddy adams**



## How did your passion for dancing start?

Dancing is something that’s always been around. Dancing starts of course, when everyone’s young. I started dancing properly in 2010, when I was taking dance classes at UBC in this club called Dance Horizons. But the first class I ever took in dance was at the Harbour Dance Centre. It was a Level Two hip hop class, which completely kicked the ass out of me. It was quite embarrassing, but I finished it. It was then that I noticed the classes at UBC, and I took those classes for awhile. I don’t dance that often. I mostly dance around the school year, twice a week. I take some time off during the summer and breaks.

## Why did you choose to specifically specialize in hip hop dancing?

For me, hip hop is the kind of music that I feel the most connected to. I listen to a lot of music, like rock, rap, and some old country. But watching and doing hip hop dancing for me has always felt natural and easy to come by, so I stuck with what felt good to me and what felt right... It’s not necessarily hip hop that I’m passionate about though. It’s more about staying active and social, because dancing is not a solo thing that you do by yourself. You meet people through dancing, you talk to people through dancing, and dancing also helps you create bonds. Because when you’re dancing, your heart beats faster. Psychology says that the faster your heart beats, it helps you like people more when you dance, because you feel a connection with them. You think, ‘Okay, we’re doing this together, and it’s a good feeling.’ It’s not just hip hop, ballet, jazz... it’s all dance – it’s how you look at it. You just have to relax, have fun, and smile.

## What is the most difficult thing about dancing for you?

So many things: level of dancing, self-consciousness, dance time,

progression. Like, those things are all really difficult. But the biggest thing is the fact that dance really is a mental game. You have to be able to accept your failures, be okay with your mistakes, and love who you are. And oftentimes, that’s not the easiest thing for people to do, especially for myself. You have to worry about your image, and where you stand, and be okay with it. You have to think: ‘Okay. I’m not the best person in the room here, but I try hard, and I’ll get better over time.’

## How does your passion in dance inspire your personal fashion?

Oh boy, here we go. With dance, your appearance is everything. If you’re not wearing appealing clothes, or clothes that suit your body, you will often look worse if you’re not careful. If your technique is good, it doesn’t really matter what you wear. So for me, my fashion reflects my dance style. If I want to be a suave dancer, I’ll wear a fedora hat and a buttoned up t-shirt. If I want to be more hip hop and gangster, I’ll wear baggy clothes, bomber jackets. It’s more of how I’m feeling with my own dance, and how I feel with the music. I often wear slim-fit clothes that work well with the current trend of dance, and things that feel comfortable to move in. I don’t want to worry about tearing, ripping, or lack of mobility. So all my clothes have some kind of range that I can move around in and not worry about.

## How would you compare your dance social community with your BCIT social community?

With dancers, once in the industry, they’re often more competitive and therefore: crazy. So you’re doing gigs, auditions and performances. If you’re talking about just simple dance communities and freestylers, it’s a lot more relaxed because not all of them want drama. But with dance, there’s drama everywhere; it’s probably one of the biggest drama places in the

continued...



**"You have to be able to accept your failures, and be okay with your mistakes."**

world. Drama as in: people stealing other people's jobs, people talking bad about other people, people dissing others' dance styles. Because dance is our life, and when someone talks bad about your dance, it often becomes a defensive move to fight back at them. So you often see people having fights – fist fights and dance battles – and it gets aggressive and rowdy. But for the most part, and from most of the people that I hang out with, people want to avoid drama, so they're mostly laid back. It still occurs, but it's not as evident or self-pronounced.

With BCIT, it's a really competitive place where people are constantly trying to work for themselves, get their job, and life, in their way. My class works well and hard, we do a lot of good stuff. There's no drama, but it's not as open-arms welcoming as some places can be. Whereas in dance, there are times when people can be really open-hearted, but it also depends on how you approach

them. The thing is, with BCIT, it's a lot more go-go-go, get a job, join the workforce and be somebody. In dance, there's the same type of feeling, but you can't go anywhere without somebody teaching you or helping you. The drama that does occur is often when people are full of themselves and they end up not making it.

**Fun question: if you could have any super power in the world, what would it be and why?**

It's a hard question to answer because you see all those superheroes on TV and it makes you wonder what is so good about it. I feel like for myself, if I had a power, I would want it to do good, but I don't want to be labelled as somebody that's different. I don't want to deal with the drama of the world right now (we already have Trump as president). I would probably want super strength or super speed, because it would help me do my daily activities and make sure I'm capable of doing everything. ■

# FUTURE FUNCTIONS

Smartphones, VR (Virtual Reality), and drones are swarming the market faster than ever — a rate that the average consumer finally approves of. For people who love technology, innovation never ceases, and there's only one place where can you go to celebrate new technology in all its coded glory: the Consumer Electronics Show (CES). Held annually in Las Vegas, CES is the one event I follow closely every year (one day I'll make it down there) where consumers get a glimpse into our not-so-distant future. Here are some of my picks from this year's show.

words **jarell alvarez**

## BMW AirTouch 3D

Remember how cool we thought it would be to command a spacecraft with quick swipes with your fingers in the air? It is finally being shown off in the BMW 7 series, which will give the user limited gestures to use the screen without actually touching it. Seems like the mouse may finally be outdated.



## Kodak Super 8

With all the crazy tech floating around it seems weird to take a step back, right? With its retro design, this little camera is riding the trend of film-to-digital features (such as how *Star Wars* was shot in 35mm). Revival of old tech has never been so cool.

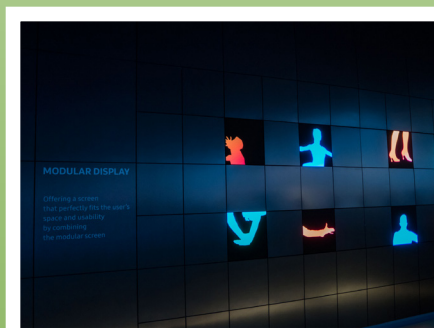
## LG Rollable OLED Display

Don't you ever wish screens were more convenient to bring on your morning commute? Say, in a bendable, rollable format? From a ten-year developmental phase, this new tech is closer to production than ever. Powered by organic light-emitting diodes rather than glass, this can be one great looking future display.



## Samsung Family Hub Refrigerator

Now I know everyone's experienced being dazed and confused in the grocery store after rummaging through their pockets for a forgotten list. Everything needs a touchscreen to be smarter and the fridge is no different. Now your fridge can become a hub for both food and apps. With the family hub refrigerator, you can soon order groceries directly through the fridge.



## Samsung Modular Display TV

Imagine a television setup with limitless potential for screen size. You'll never miss another moment of your *Stranger Things* binge. Samsung has figured out a way to eliminate pesky black bars, ensuring a seamless experience throughout.

## Polaroid Snap

Stuck with hundreds of pictures in your phone that have been patiently waiting to see the light of day? With a budget-friendly camera that lets you snap, print and share on social media instantly, without the hassle of an ink cartridge, you can finally make that collage you've been dying to create — both online and offline.

## Cota by Ossia Wireless Charging

Finding the power cord for your phone charger is one of the worst experiences ever, especially in the dark before going to sleep. Now imagine that every time you walk into a house, coffee shop, or airport, your phone automatically starts charging. Environmentally friendly wireless charging of multiple devices (like standard wifi outputs) is the type of future I can get behind.



## EHang 184

This is easily the weirdest, but coolest, tech to come from *The Jetsons* playbook. Finally we see drones that will ship us anywhere we want to go. The EHang 184 is a fully autonomous drone that will bring us to our future destinations. This ready-to-fly environmentally friendly machine is definitely part of the future.



Anything cool we missed on this list? Tweet us @linkbcit





# Ray Yu

BCIT Graphic Design

**Ray Yu** recently travelled to Nicaragua for six months, where he helped build a turtle and pelican conservation hostel on the beach, before heading off to volunteer at a surf and yoga retreat.

Ray used to work in structural steel construction but he felt like he was going crazy, so he made the decision to quit construction and enroll at BCIT.

When Ray was little, his parents bought a 110 film camera from McDonald's for him to play with. This was his first camera and Ray remembers bringing it with him everywhere – family outings, camping trips, soccer practice etc. "I think because I goofed around with photography at an early age," Ray says, "it sort of stuck with me as a hobby."

Ray is inspired by books, magazines, movies, music, museums, surfing, sports and travelling, but he also loves hearing stories of people overcoming the odds; stories of the hero's journey.





# BREAKING UP

## THE ROMANTIC BREAK-UP

words jarell alvarez

"I don't think this is working out anymore," I told her. This was the moment I'd been dreading for days: the end of my first real relationship. I'm almost 21, and although I haven't dated much compared to my friends, I've observed other relationships that have worked out, and others that haven't. With that, and my own recent experience, I learned a lot about what I want from another person.

As my feelings started changing for this other person, I realized that the joy I'd felt up to this point was just an illusion I'd conjured in order to feel happier. I began noticing how the little red flags that seemed trivial before started growing into flagpoles that I needed to address immediately in our relationship. But with my lack of experience, I was unsure of how to properly address them. Maybe these were just "normal" parts of the relationship experience?

I decided to start with one simple question: "What do I like about the other person?" From there I set out on a stressful, yet ultimately rewarding, mental journey. I tried to confront my feelings head-on. I looked for connections between my feelings at the moment and the actual experience as it happened. In the end, I confidently moved with my decision to end the relationship.

Since I'm big into personal growth, I'd like to share some of the strategies that helped me meet my feelings head-on. Whether you're a veteran to the dating scene, or new to it all like me, I'm sure there's value in all these strategies and what you ultimately choose to do with them.

### The close friend comparison.

If you're not sure how you "should" feel about a romantic partner, try thinking of both them and one of your close friends separately. Gauge how you feel about each. For me, it was like a third eye had opened. I realized that I could barely talk with her, and felt more comfortable and excited talking with the close friend.

### Imagine you're in a room with a bunch of people and you have something to say. Who do you address first?

You might be surprised by the answer. My friend told me that she would choose her boyfriend above all else, even in times of doubt. I realized that I didn't feel the same way towards the person I was seeing. But I *wanted* to feel this way with my partner. We all deserve this feeling. Having real feelings for another person is complex, and when it becomes real, make sure it's with someone with whom you want to share your passions.

### Try to remember any tiny "uh-ohs" or little red flags.

There were moments of doubt in our relationship, but I didn't realize their impact at the time. When they occurred, I was prone to second-guessing myself. But upon reflection, I found deeper meanings to my frustrations. Sometimes we need to step away from a situation to objectively analyze the bigger picture before it's too late.

### Take a mini-break. How do you feel without them?

This played a major role in my reflection process and was the number one question I kept asking myself. Some people may find it hard to answer, because deep down, we might be scared of the truth. Oscar Wilde said it best: "The truth is rarely pure and never simple."

### Is the physical element balanced with the emotional?

I believe nothing should be meaningless, and if the relationship is strictly physical, then there's no true emotional foundation to build on. If you're having doubts, I believe it's important to completely separate the two and focus first on the emotional over the physical.

### Build a relationship by being friends first.

It's important to get through this stage at the start in order to see if you guys are compatible and have things in common. The worst feeling is trying to force conversation topics when you know that deep down, they don't really care about the matter. Be sure you communicate what you want out of the relationship before making things official, or unwanted pressure can seep in.

### Hang out with them in person as much as possible.

In my case, she lived an hour away, but we tried to make it work with the little amount of time we saw each other. We did a lot of video calls, but I began dreading them. If that happens, step away to see if it's still worth it to keep going.

### Don't try to force an image onto another person—it never works.

If they begin to tell you about something their ex did to them and they don't want you to be like that, they're projecting an image onto you, and you don't deserve that. One person shouldn't set expectations for another due to a past experience.

### Remember: you determine your own happiness.

I've had to accept this fact in nearly every personal relationship I've been a part of. I make sure that I can still be my usual self away from them to ensure that they aren't the sole reason for my feelings. The ability to be happy ultimately comes from within, so take your time in finding yourself and the right person will appear when you least expect it. ■

**"Be sure you communicate what you want out of the relationship before making things official."**

# IS HARD TO DO

## THE FRIENDSHIP BREAK-UP

words **rachel chang**

The friends you make at certain points of your life are often a reflection of yourself when you first met them. Two strangers, brought together by chance and shared interests. You fit this extra person into your life, and not before long, you begin to wonder what you even did with your free time before they came along.

As you get older, you start to notice the slow fading of your friendship. A friendship that initially blazed with the intensity of a thousand suns eventually washes out one re-scheduled coffee date after another. You grow up, you make new friends, and new friends take precedence over old friends. Enter: work, school, romantic partners, adult decisions, and suddenly you realize you haven't seen each other in half a year.

For a long time, she was my best friend. We hitched a train ride to Seattle together. We bar-hopped until the streets emptied. She picked me up from my front porch after an argument with my mom. We had sleepovers, did our makeup together, ate at sketchy restaurants together. We talked about boys, and cackled ourselves silly over wild fantasies. I loved her, and she loved me, but it didn't last.

There are many reasons why friendships end. It could be a disagreement of epic proportions, maybe a slow "fade out" that happens to everyone at some point, or differences that become more pronounced as time goes on. If you Google "breaking up with a friend," you get millions of results, tons of literature, and hundreds of *Thought Catalog* lists that claim to have the secret method of getting over a BFF breakup ASAP. But as common as this phenomenon is, friendship breakups don't quite get the acknowledgement and sympathy that romantic relationship breakups get, even though they trigger the same feelings of pain and loss.

Time passed, and I grew up. I stopped frequenting the Gastown bars. I met my boyfriend who helped me mature and find my way. I got a full-time job, and decided to do something with my life. She remained stagnant. She became a monolith, rooted in my past. The further away I drifted and the more I grew as a person, the harder she sunk her heels in and fought for me to come back to the old ways of carefree partying and drinking. Our friendship soured and resentment grew in the cracks. It eventually became so toxic that our texts could barely conceal the dread. Neither of us wanted to see each other anymore.

We reached the point where talking couldn't solve anything. Our arguments became circular and added to the bitterness that she felt towards me, driving me further away. Yet we felt like we owed it to our previous selves, so we continued to make half-hearted attempts at fixing something that we were starting to realize was irreparably broken.

**"We felt like we owed it to our previous selves, so we made half-hearted attempts at fixing something."**

Ending that friendship was one of the hardest conversations I've ever had. Though it had been a long time coming, it had completely blindsided her. She had made the mistake of assuming friends will stay friends, no matter how you treat them. That should never be the case. Of course, you never enter a friendship assuming it will end in a breakup, and if it ever does, there's usually a pretty damn good reason why. I was backed into a corner with her passive aggression, her fair-weather nature, and the constant let-downs. So I had to end it for both of us. But mostly for me.

The loss of an important person in your life can have real physiological responses. Dr. Melanie Greenberg, psychologist and author, has stated that a break-up triggers the same parts of the brain as it would if you were stabbed in the arm. "Broken heart syndrome" is a real thing. I grieved the loss of my friend, someone I had shared years of memories with. Time passed. I spent weeks obsessed with my own pain, knowing she was probably going through the same thing. I did everything I could to help myself: I wrote in my journal, I read friendship forums, I asked internet strangers for advice and most importantly, I confided in friends who had grown with me and understood me. Having someone listen to me was cathartic and I was reminded that I would be eventually be okay, and so would she.

Breaking up with a friend might seem like a drastic step to take, but is sometimes necessary for both. Taking the time to reflect upon yourself, to understand each other's differences, to evaluate the situation and assess how the future is going to look, is something all BFFs need to do (or are forced to do) at a certain point. Eventually, I forced myself to stop checking her social media accounts, and I deleted the nasty messages we sent each other. As heartbreaking as the breakup was, I learned some important lessons and I became a better friend to others because of it. Many friendships don't make it to the finish line, but owning up to your shortcomings and learning from those experiences will help you in your future friendships. And hopefully, make them last.

Two years later, I still get the occasional Facebook message from her. We wish each other well. And we move on. ■

# GOING SOLO

words **lacey polack**

Feb 14th, Valentine's Day, for many it's a day that is dedicated to romance. But for many others, it's a dreaded day when they come face-to-face with the fact that they're still single. But being single doesn't have to come with all those feelings. Singles Awareness Day (or S.A.D for short) is an alternate holiday celebrated either on V-day or the day after, that began when single people wanted to be able to have their own celebrations to stand up and say: it's okay to be single.

And you know what? It is okay to be single. That may come as a surprise to some who believe that they need to be in a relationship just to be happy, but there are many great things about being single. I was single for many years and even though I'm in a relationship now, looking back I see how much I learned about myself; more than I ever could in a relationship. You get to focus on yourself, learn more about your strengths and weaknesses; you set goals for your future and you learn what you really want out of life. When you're single you're totally and completely free. You can make your own decisions, on your own time, and you don't have to feel bad if your partner doesn't agree with them. You actually get to sleep in peace and quiet. You get the last slice of pizza. That Netflix account? It's all yours, so you can binge-watch any TV show you want.

Pop culture tells us that your soulmate is supposed to be your best friend. But when you're single, you realize how to become your own best friend. Too often people get caught in relationships and lose their sense of self; they constantly try and fulfill the other's needs and they lose sight of their own. That's why being single is an essential precursor to any successful relationship. You should enter

into a relationship knowing yourself as a whole rather than as a piece of some incomplete puzzle of love.

As a busy BCIT student, you might think that because you're starting your career and planning for your future, everything you need in your life needs to be determined right now. That's totally not the case. You may be tempted to start thinking that you're going to end up alone and you'll never find someone. That's not the case either. There are billions and billions of people on this planet and the thought that you need to find one this very second is unrealistic. There's no rush. In the next few years you'll be further into your career, learning more about yourself and more about what you want in a partner. So give it time. You don't want to settle on less than you deserve.

So go ahead, take that last slice of pizza, binge your favourite Netflix show, hog every pillow on the bed and put on those dancing shoes to dance the night away. And if you are looking for that special person, they will come eventually, and usually when you least expect it. For now, just try to look on the bright side and know that you're going to be okay. You're in charge of your own happiness. Stop seeking someone else and start seeking yourself. ■

# Student / Mom

One woman's journey from India to Canada to BCIT

words **tanushree pillai**

**"I'll see you in 5 months,"** I said to my husband as big fat tears rolled down my cheeks. Our son was hugging both of us, not quite sure what was happening. Life was about to change and he was our beautiful catalyst.

The year before, I decided to move from India (Mumbai) to Canada, just me and my son. We were in search of a better quality of life. Life in India was awesome, but we were concerned about the kind of schooling we would be able to provide our son.

We decided to get educated in the Western world. We knew we had to take risks and explore unknown territories to broaden our horizons and give our child the life he deserves. The question was: what would this do to our family? My son and I were leaving behind my husband for God knows how long, and life without your spouse is hard. Especially when you have been together for a decade like we have.

Indian families are an emotional lot and ours is no different. Tears, smiles and hugs come naturally to us. However, phrases like, "I love you" and "I miss you" are foreign to our culture. The grandparents cry every time we Skype, but have not learned to tell their grandson that they love and miss him.

Being an international student in Canada is an exciting and challenging position to be in. Add to that the fact that I am a parent, taking a full-time program, and balancing a part-time job for five hours a day, six days a week, and you've arrived at the wonderful image of me being lost a lot of the time. But there is no time to slack, because the Broadcast and Journalism program at BCIT requires all of us to be at the top of our game every day.

What I've learned thus far is that being a full-time student and a mom is chaotic combination. Classes have a set schedule, but parenting never ends. My day starts at 5:30am, even though my first class is at 8:30, because it takes me that long to haggle a three-year-old out of his PJs and into the kitchen for breakfast. Even when I'm supposed to be resting for the next day of classes, I am woken up at least five times by my blessed child who is thirsty, or the complete opposite (it's not unusual to find a leaked diaper because he drank 200 gallons of water between 12:00 and 12:05 am). At school, my instructors apprise me of upcoming tests and exams, but I have zero knowledge of when a full-blown tantrum will hit the food court at Metrotown because we only got two ketchup sachets instead of three.

I look at my classmates and colleagues and realize that my 'international' status allows me to see things from a different perspective. I am one of the many international students that our country welcomes: the Canadian Bureau for International education reports that there were 353,000 international students in Canada in 2015, with 34% of these students coming from China, followed by India at 14%. At BCIT, the number of international students has increased by 200% since 2005 and currently stands at 2,400 students from 85 countries in both full-time and part-time programs. For someone like me, it is sometimes an isolating situation to be in. I know practically nobody here, I have zero geographical knowledge

of this place (I rely on Google Maps for everything), I struggle with who the big broadcast industry names are, and I pretty much have a non-existent professional network.

But it's worth it for me. For the average Indian woman, this is freedom. I am "allowed" to leave my family (read: husband) and travel to a foreign land where women arguably have the same professional standing as men – oh, the liberty! Most of my extended family (and boy, do we have a big one) were flabbergasted that I was even given permission to follow my dreams. When I was in the process of applying for our visas, the police department in India told me that I needed a signed declaration by my husband (that also had to be notarized in front of a judge) stating that he allowed me to leave, and why. When I went to the officer with all the signed documents, he asked me why my husband didn't write "allow" on the papers. He made us rewrite the document to include the statement: "allow my wife to travel." I was angry that he couldn't wrap his head around such a sacrilegious act of a wife leaving her husband to study abroad. Yet here I am.

*"We knew we had to take risks and explore unknown territories, to broaden our horizons and give our child the life he deserves."*

**Five months on**, and I'm still here. I made it. I started out at zero and even though I am still at stage one of my new Canadian life, there are miles to go before I reach my goals. A new place and a new life: it's hard, but it's worth the struggle. More than anything, I focus on how much my son can gain from this life-changing experience at his tender age.

The best part about being a parent is that even though you're doing a lot of mundane stuff, you're doing it through the eyes of a child and you feel great about it because life is so 'meh' and being childish at the age of 34 totally rules. This means riding buses all across the lower mainland because your child wants to "see Canada on a bus." This also means dealing with my son's ultra-powerful, battery-charged, testosterone-filled lungs on the weekends when he screams: "Where's the top of the mountain?!" at SFU. (God forbid the security cameras on campus captured that Oscar moment and bar me from coming back. What would I do on my next free weekend?)

To those folks who are contemplating about moving countries or making any other big decision, I say do it and do it now. This sounds so cliché, but it's so true: life is really short and you only get limited opportunities. This is, hands-down, the craziest thing I have done in my entire life. But I am so proud of myself for making it this far. I went to university 16 years ago, yet Round 2 is when I am having a ball. I originally dreaded going to school with "kids" whose average age is 21, but I have to admit that they have given me such a fresh outlook on life. I didn't even know what Snapchat was until I met them. The freedom is definitely something I could get used to, but it's the joy of seeing my son's face when he talks of Canadian bus numbers in his sleep that is truly priceless. ■



# FINDING YOUR FUR-EVER FRIEND

words caroline thompson

You're sitting on your couch at home, you really need to get started on your paper, but there are five different classes on your mind and you just can't focus. You need something that will help you take the pressure off and relax. Going out with your friends or binge watching the latest Netflix series will only get you behind in your school work.

But what if you had a little buddy sitting next to you while you read your notes? He's soft and snuggly, and unlike your instructors, doesn't expect much from you except food, shelter and affection. Pets are a great way to reduce your stress, and add value to your life, but there can be challenges to owning a pet while you're a busy student. However, with the right resources and planning, owning a pet might be just what you need to ease the pressure of school.

Owning a pet can improve your physical and mental health. I spoke with Tricia Leslie of the Vancouver SPCA, who told me that pets can reduce blood pressure, tension, and feelings of loneliness and depression. Pets can also keep you active, give you a sense of purpose, and help reduce stress, especially in college students. If you've ever stopped by one of the "Doggie De-stress" events held by the BCIT Student Association, where there are trained and adorable dogs that students can hang out with, you'll know how just how easily petting an animal can put a smile on your face.

But owning a pet isn't just beneficial to you. If you take the route of adopting from a local shelter, you will help make a better life for an animal that needs you as much as you need them. Adoption gives animals a second chance. You could adopt a playful kitten and give it its first real home or you could adopt an older dog and give it the good life it deserves during its remaining years. Shelters can become

crowded and adopting a pet will make room for new animals. Pets in the SPCA are always spayed and neutered, lessening overpopulation and the number of strays.

Pet adoption can be extremely fulfilling, but before you fill out an application, make sure this is something that you can commit to. It's essential that you do some pre-planning. Set a budget for food, vet bills, and anything else your pet will need. Make sure you have enough time to give it attention, take it for walks, or clean its litter box. Have a plan to care for them while you're in class too. If you live with family or roommates, some of these tasks can be divided amongst you. If you're worried about large or sudden vet bills, pet insurance is a good option to consider. The SPCA provides six weeks of complimentary pet insurance when you adopt.

Owning a pet is a big responsibility, especially for a student, but if you have the resources in place, and a solid care plan, it could have huge benefits not only to your health and wellbeing, but the animal's as well. Visit your local SPCA first and get to know some of the animals there. See their different personalities and find a friend that you connect with. While you're finishing all of those assignments, your new pet will be making itself at home, and it might just add a little needed joy to your life.



# SUGARY SWEETS FOR THE SOUL

words **tanushree pillai**

The trick to eating Gulab Jamuns is to chuck your cutlery manners out the window and just grab one with your hands and shove it in your mouth. Let the sugary syrup drown you in its sweetness and *voila*: you just bought a one-way ticket to food heaven and you ain't never looking back!

For the uninitiated, Gulab Jamuns are an Indian dessert. These sweet balls of white flour are deep-fried in piping hot oil or even ghee (clarified butter) and then dunked in sugary and sticky syrup that's made from caramelized sugar. They are then left overnight in the syrup to soak in all the goodness where they become nice and fat and spongy.

Some versions of the gulab jamun use freshly curdled milk to make the balls, then they are garnished with dried nuts and saffron to entice our taste buds and make our brains spin with sugary excitement. Typically, gulab jamuns are golden brown in colour but some versions are really black and are referred to as "kala jaam" – literally: 'black ball.'

One could think of the gulab jamun as a fritter. The word itself takes its roots from the words 'gul' (rose) and 'aab' (water); a lot of the preparation focuses on using rose water to add flavor to the fried fritters. The sugary syrup is called 'chashni' and most Indian kids, especially those who lived in hostels, would be lying if they said they did not get high on the "concoction."

Roadside kiosks in the northern parts of India, which are cold (not Canadian cold, but it does snow in some parts), sell plates of gulab jamuns, typically serving two per plate and costing you just a couple of dimes.

Most Indian weddings, traditional ceremonies and festivals, all depend on the humble gulab jamun to add pizzazz to an otherwise Butter Chicken-heavy night. The gulab jamun, served in a glass bowl with piping hot chashni, is the perfect accompaniment to rainy nights, even days, like those we get a lot of around here. Most Indian buffets here almost always consist of the gulab jamun to end an already massive feast, and rightly so.

A dear friend of mine recently treated us to some mouth-watering Indian food in the Punjabi district here in Vancouver, and we stuffed our stomachs, faces and souls with extremely fatty food that tipped our weighing scales to the right side. Of course, at the end of the gorge, the mighty gulab jamun called out to us. How could helpless souls such as we have said no? The dessert Gods were guiding us toward gulab jamuns. We rushed, our dessert bowls in hand, and quickly took two each (maybe more? I'm not sayin'...) and came back to our table. We popped them whole into our mouths, and let the syrup swirl around inside. Like kids, we giggled and guffawed at how much we'd eaten. Next thing you know, we were looking into each others' eyes, drunk with the powerful, drowsy effect of the gulab jamun and we both nodded. *Two more?*

# Unnecessary Roughness

## Domestic Violence & the NFL

words **george eliopoulos**

**D**ecember 13<sup>th</sup>, 2016. It's Prime Time NFL at Arrowhead Stadium in Kansas City. As the Oakland Raiders get set to punt the ball, a deafening chant of "TYREEK! TYREEK!" breaks out. The crowd is cheering on the Kansas City Chiefs' rookie punt returner, Tyreek Hill. He fields the punt, jukes past the first defender, turns on the jets and heads to the end zone as the crowd bellows from above.

Rewind a couple of years, back to December of 2014 when Hill was a Junior with the Oklahoma State Cowboys and a tantalizing NFL prospect. That is, until he was abruptly dismissed from the Oklahoma State program following a domestic assault charge. Hill had had an argument with his pregnant girlfriend, which escalated into him punching her in the face and stomach, along with choking her. He ended up pleading guilty to Domestic Assault and Battery by Strangulation.

Horrific, isn't it? Surely someone responsible for punching the stomach of his pregnant girlfriend would be off the board for the upcoming NFL draft. Evidently not, as the Kansas City Chiefs drafted Hill in the fifth round of the 2016 draft. The team took some backlash locally for the decision, but ultimately the organization deemed his talent to be worth the public relations hit.

The NFL has a problem and Tyreek Hill is simply the latest example of it. Over the past few years, numerous NFL players have been convicted of crimes related to violence against women, and the league's response has been minimal, motivated primarily by public relations. What kind of message does this send? One that seems to say: as long as you can produce on the field, heinous acts off it can be overlooked. I understand the difficulties in policing violence by men playing a sport quite literally built around it, but there is no excuse for gender-based violence in our society, and it becomes clear that the NFL is not prepared to make that distinction when they fail to take a firm and punitive stand against it.

The NFL's inadequate response to domestic violence and its players really came to the forefront with the case of Ray Rice. In February of 2014, Rice was arrested for assaulting his then-fiancé Janay Palmer in an elevator at a casino in Atlantic City. When video footage of Rice dragging an unconscious Palmer out of the elevator surfaced, outrage began pouring in, with many calling for serious action by the NFL. Instead, NFL Commissioner Roger Goodell suspended Rice just two games, as per the NFL's old domestic violence policy. It wasn't until a second, more shocking video from inside the elevator showing the moment Rice brutally assaulted Palmer became public, that things changed in the NFL's response.

The public backlash to this video was swift and fierce. The NFL, Goodell, and Rice became piñatas for the media and the public everywhere. Only then did it seem Goodell realized he had no other option but to suspend Rice indefinitely. The Ravens followed suit, cutting ties with the troubled running back. Rice ended up winning his appeal to overturn his suspension, but it was too late. The NFL had moved on and Rice was never signed again.

The NFL and Ravens' eventual response to Rice's off-field problems, while late, were adequate to satiate the public's cry for justice, but I believe we may be missing the ultimate point. Rice certainly deserved every bit of front-page backlash that came his way, but what many may not know is, since then he has taken complete responsibility for his actions, moved forward with his now-wife Janay Rice and their daughter, and became a public advocate against domestic violence. Isn't that exactly what we'd hope would come of his story? More broadly, is a man who commits a criminal act of violence, but acknowledges it as wrong and then learns from it, a man who deserves a second chance? As a society we can continue to debate the merits of rehabilitation, but it appears that decision has already been made in the business of football. Rehabilitation has simply proven not to matter in the perspective of talent vs. public relations.

**"Rehabilitation has simply proven not to matter in the perspective of talent vs. public relations."**

Rice didn't have enough talent at that point in his career to justify signing him and risking a public relations nightmare. Greg Hardy, on the other hand, shows the flipside of that same equation.

The timeline for Hardy's domestic violence case was near parallel to that of Rice, but received nowhere near the amount of public attention, despite being a far worse offense. In May of 2014, a bench trial convicted the ex-Carolina Panther of assault on his ex-girlfriend Nicole Holder. The following excerpt was made public following the conviction of Hardy:

"I tried to get up, he pushed me," Holder said, "then I started fighting back, he threw me into the bathroom, I hit the back of the shower wall and fell into the bathtub where he pulled me out." Hardy then dragged her out by her hair and picked her up again, Holder said, throwing her onto a futon covered with several weapons; what she described as, "guns from ... the Army or ... like, from video games." She landed on top of the rifles and then fell onto the floor. In her telling, he stood above her and strangled her with both his hands. She would later say she thought she was going to die. "His pupils were tiny," she said. "I mean he looked... crazy."

What Rice did was terrible, and there is absolutely no excuse for it. This, however, was truly a much more horrific act. Yet, without video, photos, or audio evidence to make this incident hit home for the public, Hardy's story subsequently faded out of the spotlight. In addition to Hardy's crime not being able to adequately stir the emotions of the general public, the other thing you need to know is that Hardy was coming off of a career year in which he was third in the NFL in sacks. Hardy's domestic violence story was far less publicized than Rice's, and after serving a 10 game suspension, he was signed to another team without ever showing remorse for his actions.

The Ray Rice and Greg Hardy stories signal to me that rehabilitation, or the potential for it, is not a consideration in the NFL's decision to suspend players, nor is it a consideration when some teams

sign players. I believe as a society we should always seek to rehabilitate those who commit crimes, athletes included, so long as the potential for rehabilitation exists. Many people who serve sentences or suspensions are still dangerous and unable or unwilling to change, but the opportunities to do so should be available. The best prison systems are ones that successfully reeducate inmates and integrate them back into society. Professional athletes have the luxury of money and access to the best treatment, so why is the NFL not doing all it can to rehabilitate those who make mistakes?

Ray Rice appears to be a changed man today, but players aren't often given the support they need to achieve this kind of transformation. Greg Hardy showed no remorse, at least publicly, for his actions, yet he was given another chance to earn a living playing professional football based on his talent alone. No one cared if he confronted or changed the underlying issues that led to him assaulting Nicole Holder, so long as he could sack the quarterback. I understand that players with more talent are always going to be given a greater benefit of the doubt, but the NFL is missing an opportunity to make better men out of its players.

Michael Vick is a perfect example of the possibility for change. Although his case did not involve domestic violence, the illegal dog fighting and killing he participated in was also despicable. When he came back into the league, I was among those who called it abhorrent. It took time for me to realize that Vick had not only paid his dues with his time in prison, but that he had also profoundly learned from the ordeal. Super Bowl-winning coach Tony Dungy took Vick under his wing and showed him the good he could do after his time in prison. By all accounts, Vick is a changed man who understands the errors of past and has done a ton to make the world better because of it. Not every man makes the most of his second chance, but the NFL has the means to put them in the best position to do so, and it's time to start doing it.

**"Players with more talent are always going to be given a greater benefit of the doubt, but the NFL is missing an opportunity to make better men out of its players."**

Since the NFL has been publicly forced to deal with the domestic violence perpetrated by some of its players in recent years, the league has done everything it can to *appear* to care about its players and their families, particularly women. The league has rolled out a new domestic violence policy, which they presented in a way to make it seem as though there would be a minimum six-game suspension for first time offenders, though that has proven not to be the case already. What remains clear is that business and public relations, not the wellbeing of players and families, are most important. The league has also proven that, before it acts on off-field player behaviour, it first takes the temperature of the general public from a PR position. The onus then, is on the public and the media to let our feelings be known. I believe we need to force the hand of the NFL to not only penalize those who are charged with crimes related to gender-based violence, but also view these same players as people who may be rehabilitated, and not just commodities who can be thrown back on the field if they can still produce. Maybe then a person like Tyreek Hill could become a better man on his way to a second chance playing football. ■

FILM



# A Cure for Wellness

dir. Gore Verbinski  
(new regency)

Visually speaking, this film is a shining gem. Unfortunately for Gore Verbinski, the rest of it is one slimy turd drenched in eel-infested waters.

Dane DeHaan is Mr. Lockhart, an ill-mannered young executive who travels to a mysterious rehab center for old rich people in the middle of the the Swiss Alps. Everyone's looking for the "cure" for their sickness. Everyone seems

like they're having a great time. Nobody gets to leave. Intriguing plot? Sure. Well-executed? No.

The story crawls along at a limp, stopping every once in a while to goad the audience with its shockers and "twists." We've been stuck atop a hill in a loony bin filled with old people in bathrobes for 45 minutes... What do we need? A nonsensical scene with awkward dancing in a bar filled with teenage Nazis! This story makes no sense... What do we need? Exposition, and an eel slithering up someone's cooch to gross out the audience enough they don't see how ridiculous the exposition is.

The characters and performances were not the saving grace you were looking for. I felt zero sympathy for DeHaan's character, some corporate asshole whose sole objective is to get some naked old man on a plane back to New York so he doesn't lose his job. The demented bad guy is so obvious he might as well have been wearing an "I AM THE BAD GUY" sign around his neck. Towards the end of the movie, I found myself hoping that the mountain would just explode and kill everyone along with it.

This movie is a whopping 146 minutes long – about 146 minutes longer than it should've been.

- rachel chang

FILM

# John Wick: Chapter 2

dir. Chad Stahelski  
(summit entertainment)



Keanu Reeves. Guns. Killing. If you have never seen a *John Wick* movie this is the best summary that's available. Coming from a somewhat stale genre but making its action feel authentic with realistic gun handling and over-the-top body count, this film is able to push the genre forward. *John Wick: Chapter 2* feels like a velvet-covered gun that is both elegant and brutal in the best possible way. The sound and colour design make this trip to Rome highly memorable and highly action-packed. The subtle storytelling of an underground worldwide crime syndicate that elegantly deals with any turmoil, tells a strong tale

under all the incredible action. There were many moments that made me wince and want to cheer at the same time. These were hands-down some of the best fighting sequences, with huge impact on each bullet fired or punch thrown. There's something incredible about seeing a man so focused on a mission to kill, yet having a lot of character through quieter sequences from past memories. Side characters like Common gave *Wick* life, and added uplifting dialogue to a higher degree through honour and respect. Remember: John Wick kills a lot of baddies, and it's amazing.

- jarell alvarez

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