sativa surveillance: redstone, revelry, and the repercussions

by jessebaum

Around one year ago (Easter Sunday, to be exact) a friend of mine headed to the Redstone green, to partake in the herbalism-themed festivities. Along with the customary melee of frolicking students in their tie dye and Bob Marley tee shirts, blasting Sublime and taking huge hits (from what were clearly cigarettes), this friend noticed that the celebration had taken an Orwellian turn.

For those of you who are freshmen (damn it, are you traumatized? I meant first years), or who simply can’t remember because of the customary Easter-time haze surrounding your memories, there were UVM police posted at the entrances to the green, (Cat)carding students for admission. More officers stood around the crowd, filming the students through the haze surrounding your memories, there were UVM police posted at the entrances to the green, (Cat)carding students for admission. More officers stood around the crowd, filming the students through the smoke.

What becomes of the footage? What is the rationale behind this quasi-illegal truce between narcs and narcotics aficionados? What does it mean for you students, just trying to poke some smot in (public) peace?

This UVM toke-fest is a tradition that goes back at least to the mid-eighties, though the celebration used to take place by Bailey/Howe rather than on Redstone. Although the true time to celebrate is at precisely 4:20 pm, people tend to congregate on the green all day because, as you know, time is but an illusion that flows like watercolors.

Pot is, of course, banned on UVM’s campus under the student code of ethics and standards. Citations from UVM police usually result in a fine as well as disciplinary action from the committee of student ethics and standards. Attendance at the extra-ganja varia, most likely because late April weather around here is about as predictable as the infinite probability drive. Will it be sunny? Or will friendly marine megafauna be falling from the skies? One never knows.

Revered today, as many educated substance-imbibers know, exists in legal limbo: illegal at the federal level, decriminalized in Vermont, legal and taxed in Colorado, Alaska, Oregon and Washington, and legal but unsellable in our nation’s Capital.

Enforcement of the herbal sacrament on Redstone (on that most sacred day) is spotty—the police pragmatically monitor the crowd rather than (probably ineffectually) prevent participation altogether. Apparently, UVM students’ love of dope knows no laws.

However, some, especially those harassing the officers, end up with citations. So what is the cops’ take on this? The arm of the Law? The sculpted calf of The Man?

Deputy Tim Bilodeau, who has been at UVMPD for almost three decades, says, “Students are getting together to express themselves…that doesn’t mean that they can break the law, but we try to be respectful of that.”

So where does this leave the footage from last year? (And this coming year, considering that most likely the cops will be filming and carding again)

Well, the film gets destroyed. Or, it doesn’t.

If there is some kind of disruption, disturbance, etc, or if a criminal offense may have been caught on tape, the tape is saved and can end up as evidence in a courthouse.

Likewise, an iPhone containing pictures of hundreds of people violating federal law may also be confiscated as evidence in that instance. Just food for thought.

The footage may also end up in the altogether. Apparently, UVM students’ community felt it was worth eroding the bubble of campus security to alert students of an off-campus criminal investigation.

Campus security as an institution and metaphor is an extremely important façade for the University to maintain. Consider why you chose UVM. The opportunities, the people, the mountains…most all of us fell in love with UVM’s setting and campus environment in one way or another. Maybe crime and safety was not at the forefront of your mind, but one can’t deny that feeling safe is comforting, and one short stroll down through Central Campus or Church Street sure makes you feel pretty damn comforted.

All universities understand the importance of students feeling safe and protected at their new home-away-from-home. What better sell is there for parents? “Don’t worry, we’ll take care of your babies!” Or for students: “The city of Burlington is yours…read the rest on page 5

the catastrophe commotion: awareness and safety & on-campus & beyond

by lauragreenwood

Early last week, my uvm.edu inbox was graced with a warning from the Chief of Police Services at UVM of repeated incidents of stalking activity “has been reported and is currently under investigation by the Burlington Police Department.”

The copy-and-pasted advisory sought to alert students about off-campus safety in the Loomis Street area, specifically for a silver VW and black male that has tried to lure victims into his vehicle.

This was not the first time I’d heard about these incidents, yet I was curious to find an email sent out to myself and the entire student body.

Traditionally, I have come to see our campus security manifested in two major ways: UVM Police Services and CatAlerts. So, on a random Tuesday, I was struck that, despite the so-called importance of this advisory, there had been no CatAlert text message issued when any of the six incidents had occurred. Yet still, the University felt it was worth eroding the bubble of campus security to alert students of an off-campus criminal investigation.

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get inside me:

development in india by jessebaum

super-accurate horoscopes by wesdunn & jessebaum

fuck james franco by cullenhairston

review: to pimp a butterfly by mikestorage
"In the midst of a severe drought, the governor continues to allow corporate farms and oil interests to deplete and pollute our precious groundwater resources that are crucial for saving water."

— Adam Scow of California’s Food and Water watch comments on California’s first-ever mandatory water limits, to reduce city and towns’ water use by 25 percent. The move seems to stigmatize private use over the more intensive petroleum and agricultural hydrological systems, which are responsible for the drought in an ultimate, if less tangible sense. The new law is California’s first mandatory water restriction. San Joaquin, our salad bowls weep for you.

“Every day, every month, every year that the state took from him, they took something that they don’t have the power to give back.”

— Attorney Bryan Stevenson comments on Anthony Ray Hinton’s recent exonerated. Hinton spent a national-shame-inducing 30 years on death row, until tests on Hinton’s gun cleared his name from a double homicide case in 1985. Despite explicit biases related to class and implicit biases due to race and even levels of attractiveness, America the Beautiful remains one of the last countries in the “first world” to cling to the death penalty, just as a male anglerfish clings to a female after mating. Forever. Sigh.

“Reeking of my own ball sweat all the time: You know what I’m sayin’ (Ladies.)

— We can’t wait for Tuesday. We are the water tower. You can’t help me reflect on this fact, on the possibility that one day I can find redemption.”

— Arthur Stevenson comments on his participation in Brazil’s new program that allows prison inmates to travel into the Amazon and take ayahuasca with religious groups as a form of therapy. Inmates report that it helps them experience their feelings of guilt and begin to heal, yet some citizens decry the program as being soft on prisoners. After all, torture is the key to true rehabilitation.

“Do you like to write? Draw? Talk about some weird shit that happened to you the other day?

We meet on Tuesdays at 7:30pm in the Williams Room, DC 4th Floor. Bring your shit. We want to hear about it.

Sometimes reading the water tower makes our readers want to get naked and fight the power. But most of the time, they just send emails. Send your thoughts on anything in this week’s issue to thewatertowernews@gmail.com

the news in brief

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"We considered the trash of Brazil, but this place accepts us... I know what I did was very cruel. The tea helped me reflect on this fact, on the possibility that one day I can find redemption.”

— Convicted child molester Darci Altair Santos da Silva comments on his participation in Brazil’s new program that allows prison inmates to travel into the Amazon and take ayahuasca with religious groups as a form of therapy. Inmates report that it helps them experience their feelings of guilt and begin to heal, yet some citizens decry the program as being soft on prisoners. After all, torture is the key to true rehabilitation.
Recently, Republican Senator Ted Cruz became the first person to announce a bid for presidency in 2016. However, Jeb Bush remains the favorite for the Republican nomination. If the GOP wants someone else to compete with Jeb Bush (and they really should), then they do not have to look far for another contender. With this in mind, the water tower has a couple options prepared that the GOP should seriously consider.

A Small Chicken Vera Cruz Burrito: The Vera Cruz is one of the specialty wraps offered at New World Tortilla and is a good alternative to its close cousin, Ted Cruz. Unlike Ted, it is available for $6.25 before tax (guac is extra) and was made in the United States. An early hopeful for the Vice Presidential ticket is a large order of Wings Over “Cruzin’ Altitude” flavored wings. Unfortunately, Vera Cruz’s staunch libertarian views will likely divide GOP voters, making a serious consideration for the presidency a long shot.

Donald Trump: I am not normally a fan of Donald Trump. That said, Trump shows a consistency that many of his constituents lack by continuing to hammer away at the “Birther” movement. Trump still refuses to admit that Cruz is eligible for the presidency because of his Canadian birth, regardless of the fact that Cruz is clearly a bona fide American citizen.

The fact that he does not look like every other asshole who made wild allegations about Obama’s citizenship and then immediately changed face when presented with a much more legitimate question of citizenship shows a stick-to-your guns kind of attitude that the presidency needs.

A Large Bag of Money: It is obvious that the Republican Party is pushing hard for the Latino vote in 2016 with some of the early hopefuls including Senator Marco Rubio (R-FL), a Cuban American, and Jeb Bush, another Floridian, who polled very well with the Latino demographic. With all the work being put into making the Republican brand more appealing, it is a very high possibility that the GOP may just start bribing the demographics that they want. The abhorrent stance on women’s rights that is a hallmark of many senior Republican senators may be more appealing to the female vote if they are simply electing a large bag of cash that they can all split at the end of a successful election. Bribery makes the world go ‘round, and I for one would probably value my voice in our democracy somewhere around $20 if anyone is asking.

Godzilla: Now, I am a huge fan of complete government shutdowns. Anybody not down with the occasional furlough of government employees need only stop by the Burlington DMV to get on board with Ted Cruz’s bold approach to compromise. However, 2013’s Cruz-led shutdown lasted only a mere 15 days. Why elect a man so incompetent at shutting down the most influential government in the world when the OG is just a couple ill-advised nuclear tests away? That’s right, Godzilla himself would make a strong nominee, with a platform centered on the destruction of all mankind and what I can only assume is a hard-line approach to immigration reform. Plus, I would like to see Jeb Bush fight Motifra and come out on top.

Me: In the spirit of Ted Cruz, I would like to officially put my name forward for the GOP nomination. As my experience, I offer the 600 words in this article. I think it shows the blatant ignorance and aggressive insensitivity that the modern GOP candidate needs.
how to get a job on church street

by mikaelawaters

Church Street, the street of the church. For tourists, parents, diners and shoppers, it’s a mecca of good food, cute shops, and window displays that induce an “aww! Scute!” response. For others—poor students trying to be legally employed for the summer season—Church Street is ground zero, the war zone. It’s a place where one hath no friends, family, or morals—only the thirst for gainful employment.

Less than half a mile long, the Church Street Marketplace is the heart of Burlington and home to its most popular and bustling businesses. In addition, this half-mile hosts the places Burlington’s brightest and most unemployed want to work.

However, herein lies the problem: one street + nine thousand undergrads + townies + graduates who never left + those who never graduated but stayed = not enough jobs. But, dearest readers and would-be employees, you have an advantage that your competitors do not. You have this sage advice; you have the water tower.

Now before we dive into the nitty-gritty of how to get a job, please understand that there is only so much that I can do to help you. If you have no prior experience, have terrible social skills, or are a fuck-up in general, the help that you require is beyond my pay grade.

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1. The List
Take a moment before your search really begins and compile a list of places you would be interested in working. Are you looking for retail or for a restaurant? For a chain or for something local? On Church Street or a neighboring block? Look to Yelp or www.churchstreetmarketplace.com for handy lists of nearby businesses.

2. The Hello Email
Now that you have your list of desirable locations, send them a preliminary email. Introduce yourself, express your interest, ask if they are hiring, and inquire as to the next steps in the application process. Even if they don’t get back to you, it shows initiative and proactive interest.

Example:
Hi, I am a student at the University of Vermont and am interested in a job for the summer and coming year. I have experience in (insert your experience) and would love to join the (insert business) team if you are hiring. Please let me know if there is a time I could meet with you and drop off a résumé. I love your (restaurant/shop/café, etc.) and would be so thrilled to work with you. Thank you so much and I look forward to the possibility.

(Yo’ name)

3. The In-Person Ambush
Block off a chunk of time and take a stroll down to the battlefield. Have a stack of printed and updated résumés ready and stop by the businesses you have previously contacted (or ones you haven’t!). Walk up to an employee or manager, and say, “Hi! How are you? [wait for response] I’m ___ ___ , and I’m wondering if you are hiring? I sent an email a few days ago but just wanted to stop by and drop off my résumé.” Make sure to smile while doing this, and a casual handshake never hurts. Thank them for their time and say you look forward to hearing from them.

4. The Follow-Up
After you probably super-awkwardly dropped off your résumé and walked into a chair on the way out, send a follow-up email. Wait 2-3 days after your visit and draft a short, simple email reminding them of who you are, that you spoke with (insert employee’s name) and are still very interested in a job if the positions haven’t been filled. Employers are people too, lazy and forgetful, and they respond well to enthusiasm, reminders, and a display of initiative.

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Confused UVM students declare early summer

by jessebaum and wesdunn

It has recently come to the attention of the best news team in the UVM-verse that, according to many members of the student body, summer has officially arrived.

“Now that it’s summer, I can wear my jewelry out!” said one engineering student, seemingly unaware that it had snowed the previous day.

Despite the fact that the country’s sixth largest lake is (as of yet) still frozen over, and temperatures are still regularly well below freezing, there have been reported sightings of merriment, sunbathing, and even egregiously unseasonable shorts-wearing.

All of this would suggest that the thermostatic bar has not simply been lowered, but rather crashed precipitously through the floor.

Perhaps it’s the “spring break” that irreverently bisects winter, or the confusing effect of daylight savings that catapults us from Hadean darkness to over 12 hours of sunlight. Though admittedly it’s around forty degrees warmer than it was last month, we at the water tower want to be real with you: it’s still fucking freezing.

“Look, if summer is the time to wear a tank top and do mushrooms with my boys out in the woods, then I’m just gonna call it: it’s that time of year again!” reported a bro seen wearing flip-flops outside of Harris/Millinis fine dining.

The mass delusion gripping the sun-starved student population was evidenced in reports of drastically increased amounts of dazed individuals ambling around looking skyward, as well as the customary careening of newly fledged longboarders.

“Normally, longboarders wait to release their young from their nests until the average daily temperature is sustained at or above 50 degrees,” renowned UC Berkeley gnar-ologist Walter Smith explained to us by phone. “They also tend to favor paved surfaces, eschewing ice and mud. If they act on a premature perception of spring, the consequences can be disastrous.”

There were also reports of vast early migrations of fair-weather joggers, inundating the bike paths and sidewalks of Burlington. “We understand that this is a natural occurrence,” the DPW Director said, “but I worry that when they misjudge things, they could really get stuck out there in a bad situation. They’re out there with hardly more than a base layer! I really wish they would stay in hibernation a little longer, but that’s climate change, I guess.”

At press time, students could already be found preparing for the ceremonial night in which they all partake of the herb, drinketh of the ethyl alcohol, and run around naked. Presumably at that point, it may get above 45 degrees.
oyster, so go meander at ease!" As someone who used to often walk back from
downtown alone and/or intoxicated, I never felt there was a need to worry because
hey, man, it's Vermont and it's Burlington and it's all good, right?

Therefore, I am always struck by moments when the University feels it is worth
chipping away at our inflated innocence to inform us of criminal activity happening
off campus. We certainly have the right to know, but wouldn't it be in the campus's
best interest to not stain their hands with the criminal activity that doesn't even
happen on their premises? I'm left stuck wondering if the campus is alerting us too
much or perhaps too little.

Morally, the University may feel obliged to keep students in the know about
potentially dangerous incidents in the community, but they are also compelled
by a higher force: the Law. We have the Clery Act, (aka Student Right to
Know and Campus Security Act of 1990) to thank for our handy-dandy
CatAlert notifications in the first place. This act was instated with the
intention of "providing a safe and se-
cure environment for all members of the University community and visitors" and
requires strict reporting on behalf of the university to uphold federal standards. The
University outlines our compliance with the Clery Act through seven objectives,
one of which is the issuance of campus alerts for crimes that "represent a serious or
ongoing threat to campus safety."

Yet I'm still a bit torn on the Loomis Street advisory we received. Unlike dorm
burglaries, Loomis Street does not directly implicate on-campus housing or even
really fall within the jurisdiction of UVM Police Services "public property" polic-
ing. Loomis Street is part of Burlington, but that's not to say crimes don't also frequently hap-
pen around other popular student neighborhoods like Hickok or Buell Streets. And
let us not forget that even the stabbing that had occurred on campus three years
ago, which involved UVM students outside dorms, somehow failed to warrant a
CatAlert.

I worry that the CatAlert system is not as effective as it sets out to be due to its
inconsistencies and seemingly arbitrary use. The use of campus advisories directly
challenges the University's commercial interest in making students feel safe and
free from outside danger. Many of you may strongly advocate the importance of a
diverse array of CatAlerts, and argue the important obligation that the University
has to inform the student body when crime is nearby. But I worry about where the
line gets drawn in how the alerts ought to be utilized, because honestly I don't know
and I don't think the University firmly knows either.

In one moment CatAlerts will warn us about a possible bear spotted near cam-
pus, and the next of suspicious

these horoscopes are extremely accurate

by wesdunn and jessebaum

Aquarius:
The influence of Mars on your birth sign can
only point to the emergence of another kerfuffle
concerning whose dishes they are, and why they are
always dirty when you just did them. An ex-
tensive investigation will not help in the slight-
est--but the influence of Jupiter necessitates one
anyway.

Libra:
Chronic indecision (due to the influence of Ura-

Capricorn:
As Venus glides gracefully from Taurus into
Gemini: The whimsical arrangement of Saturn and the
moon this week will spell utter and complete

crisis. This week, with the rotation of Neptune in ef-
fect, you might want to postpone asking that
person out. There's a high chance on an initial
yes', but an even higher chance of a subse-
quent confusion as to whether or not they un-
derstood you meant it romantically.

Taurus:
Everywhere you go this week, the journey will be

Aries:
This week, with the rotation of Neptune in ef-
fect, you might want to postpone asking that
person out. There's a high chance on an initial
yes', but an even higher chance of a subse-
quent confusion as to whether or not they un-
derstood you meant it romantically.

Leo:
You may be very confident that you can slay that giant drag-
on of assignments and obligations as Mercury glides into Ar-

Scorpio:
Shame on you. You know what you did.

Sagittarius:
Not to sound too certain, but if you go out this weekend,
there's a pretty good chance that you'll end up having a little
too much, and say a lot of things you'll really regret. Luckily,
you'll say these things in Catalan, so you should be okay. But
there will still obviously be a lot of questions.

Cullen Hairston
"I like to think that I'm gay in my art and straight in my life," Franco explains. "This is all me, Imerso's just me; it's really just me wearing a suit and tie and staring at myself in the mirror, and pretending to give a shit about the gay community because I don't think they really care."

This problem is making them, and themselves define with a label that is not meant for them.

"Gay in art" is a very interesting concept. According to this, Franco must feel that being gay in his art is more than just an attraction to the same gender and lifestyle is more than just an attraction to the same gender and sexuality. But the moment he's no longer in the public eye: "In the twenties and thirties, they used to define themselves in a mirror (and ends it by kissing the mirror)."

"Gay in art" is not being gay in an art project or a persona you can put on like a mask when you want. "No, you probably couldn't," he replies. "Just because you can't drive a stick shift, does not mean that upon sitting in the driver's seat you'll dislodge half a hot dog from their wind pipe. Likewise, just because you have watched someone drive a stick shift, does not mean that you can successfully twist-up on a semi-frequent basis and they actually work! Tune in full two minutes and limit my eye movements significantly - but progress has been made - but I can now successfully twist-up on a semi-frequent basis and they actually work!"
As you've probably seen on Facebook from that friend who insists on posting about the 90s shows they really like, as if that makes them better than the reality TV heathens of today, The X-Files is returning soon for short season in the near future. And even with nine seasons, two movies, a comic series, and a theme song that sounds the way Benedict Cumberbatch looks, The X-Files had given unto us one treasure not so often admired: Gillian Anderson's outfits from the X-Files era.

Anderson had been a superstar for a while now, ever since the X-Files' first season, and though she's done great acting works and has even published a novel, she can also be remembered for some of her more interesting fashion choices.

For example, when she wore a knee-length flannel dress with high boots and a leather jacket, and teased her hair into some sort of early 90s ensemble that I'll never understand.

Perhaps that time she wore a brown shiny blazer and brown slacks and a white scrunchie in the mid-90s, or, also mid-90s, when she showed at the 100th episode celebration of The X-Files in a fuzzy white sweater. "How fuzzy?" you may wonder. "The fuzziest.

There's also that one time she showed up to the Golden Globes—in a bathrobe. I honestly wish I was kidding. Or when she wore a jean jacket, a tube top, and a floral skirt—all with a fan and red tinted glasses like she's Cyclops from X-Men.

There's her in her velvet, see-through flowery top, complete with a huge backpack and glasses. In 1998 at the Golden Globes after party, she arrived in a full-length purple backless dress—which showed off her very prominent thong. There's no way that this was an accident—this dress was definitely designed to show the thong (that or the dress was so good, she had to find the right thong for it). And somehow, she rocks it. You go, Gillian Anderson. If only others followed your stylish examples…

Anderson now has developed a more conventional fashion sense, but since the X-Files are returning, perhaps so will her X-Files-era fashion. One can hope. And I want to believe.
trash.

i want you so bad

someone on campus catch your eye? couldn't get a name? submit your love anonymously uvm.edu/~watertwr/iwysb.html

To my Butt who drifted away:
What came out of my butt today?
I'll never know cause it drifted away.
I miss the surprises you gave everyday.
A kiss of warmth, I flushed completely away.
Down my throat I crushed that hot sauce container.
It gave my mouth flavor but returned you no favor.
I hurt you Butt. I understand your leaving.
and that my pleading won't ever stop the bleeding.
My hot sauce addiction caused this affliction.
the competition, and all other contradictions.
It was a collection of conflicting misdirection.
I needed correction from this invisible perception.
I'm grateful, for everything you gave me,
saving me, craving me, never
letting anything get the best of me.
Butt, my hot sauce isn't the only thing to fear.
You may want to steer clear of the sperm that appear.
They push you over when you've already fallen.
Leaving a sticky mess and only a hole to crawl in.
Some may say they have changed themselves,
Butt, my hot sauce isn't the only thing to fear.
You may want to steer clear of the sperm that appear.

We shared so many good shits together.
Should've known good things don't last forever.

When: erryday
Where: crazy suppa times
I saw: A drifting Butt
I am: Buttlless

I saw you from across the room,
your jet black hair perfectly coiffed.
We've made eye contact countless times,
Ever since you smiled at me on the bus.
The way you look at me is so intoxicating,
One day I'll find a way to actually say hello.

When: like once a week
Where: usually Davis Center or Marché
I saw: guy so fine
I am: guy almost as fine

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interested in writing for the water tower?
general meeting every tuesday
at 7:30 pm
in the williams family room
on the fourth floor of the davis center.
everyone is welcome!

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uvm.edu/summer
Drugs, strippers, guns, and a whole lot of money. Atlanta has, for the past decade, transformed into hip-hop Hollywood, a mecca of trap music and all of its associated vices. Noisey, a subset of Vice News, recently released a 10-part miniseries on hip-hop culture in Atlanta, certainly worthy of some praise. The series can be watched via YouTube on Noisey’s channel.

The interviewer of choice was Thomas Morton, a scrawny, timid white suburbanite with an honest demeanor and surprisingly powerful analytical skills. Throughout the series, he interviews producers, rappers, and fashion icons associated with hip-hop, as well as strippers and drug dealers to see how all of these components form the bedrock of Atlanta hip-hop culture.

While it is obvious Morton is less than confident walking through the ghettos of East Atlanta, his genuine curiosity is appreciated by those he interviews and results in some legitimately interesting conversations. Throughout the series, he speaks with many famous rappers and producers, including 2-Chainz, Rich Homie Quan, Young Thug, Poochie Longway, iLoveMakonnen, Young Scooter, Migos, Metro Boomin, TM88, Southside, Mike Will Made It, Sonny Digital, Zaytoven, and more.

These interviews are very diverse in the sense they bring to light the unique career trajectories of each rapper. They also highlight the importance of producers, the ones who create the beats and are responsible for the overall sound of the track. Older rappers such as 2-Chainz followed the route of signing to a major label, while younger rappers such as Migos (Takeoff, Quavo, and Offset) rose to prominence with an independent label and have remained independent after releasing a plethora of hits.

This highlights the hustler’s ambition of new Atlanta rappers, who in many cases are multitalented and can rap, produce, and market their product successfully. They believe there is no need to sign to a major label and be subjected to contracts and their subsequent fees and conditions.

I was intrigued by how Morton was able to gather, through interviews, the process by which a song can make it from a basement studio to national radio stations. Rappers from Atlanta utilize their relationships with DJs and strippers at the numerous strip clubs throughout the city. Strippers who like the song will ask the DJs to play it while they perform, potentially garnering a following for the rapper as more people hear the song. If the song becomes popular enough at the strip club, it sells itself to local radio stations, which showcase the song to the entire city, where it can then move on to become a national hit.

This is in contrast to other cities, where rappers must bring their songs to the radio station and plead their case as to why they should be given exposure. As a result, many rappers migrate to Atlanta to start what they hope will be a successful career. I was impressed by how Thomas was able to gather this information organically over the course of ten episodes. He traversed numerous sections of Atlanta and interacted with a vast array of prominent rap figures. Each person exhibited his or her own personality and approach to the art. I would recommend this series to all fans of hip-hop and those looking for gritty, informative journalism.

The biggest difficulty for me in enjoying To Pimp a Butterfly lies in the lack of fluidity on the album. Many of the songs end or begin with lines from Kendrick’s final poem that he delivers to Tupac on the album’s final track, “Mortal Man.” While the poem reflects Kendrick’s complicated emotions and the deeper racial tensions that he addresses throughout the album, these spoken word portions of the track detract from the album’s overall flow. A frantic Kendrick appears on this album. He takes on an angry tone on many songs, but he also takes on a softer side in others. To Pimp a Butterfly is heavy, and not for the faint of heart. However, it goes places that few hip-hop albums have gone before and should definitely be listened to by everyone.

The upbeat songs on the album include frantic jazz beats (see “Wesley’s Theme” and “For Free?”) and hip-hop bangers (see “King Kunta” and “The Blacker the Berry”). These upbeat songs contrast with the slower, moodier songs on the album. But the highs and lows, once again, reflect Kendrick’s life and feelings.

Many of the songs on this album, especially the frantic jazz, remind me of portions of Flying Lotus’ You’re Dead!, which came out in October of 2014. Kendrick collaborated with FlyLo for the song “Never Catch Me” on this album, and apparently wanted the song for TPAB. FlyLo also produced the first track on the album, “Wesley’s Theme.”

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in the woods

by michaelfinley

No breeze. Still. As if the world around is still asleep. Dawn stretches long, golden fingers over the dew-dropped trees, and they twinkle like a canvas of leafy stars. The stream trickles, its water like bell chimes over the smooth stones. The air is thick with the scent of hearty undergrowth and sweet pine.

Then something stirs. An owl skitters over the fallen leaves strewed about the earthen soil, and the world begins to wake. A chorus of birds pick up their morning melody and the once quiet woods begins to sing with the steady rising sun. The stream too seems louder now, as if the rest of the world its waters begin to wake and pour fast and true down the slopeing banks, carrying their way along like a plow through soft earth; its light chimes now like church bells to ring in the dawning hour.

The wind stirs, and the breeze comes back to the forest to collect the scents of every flower, stream, and sunlight patch of cool, green grass. The wood wakes up, and the boy with his bow slides a single arrow in place along the slim, sinew string.

He sees everything atop his lofty perch. Between twin boughs, he hides, masked in the shifting shadows of the dancing leaves. There he waits, his arrow nocked in place, for the perfect shot.

Minutes pass like hours as the wood around carries on undisturbed. Whether it knows the boy is there or not, it does not falter, it does not slow. The wind blows, the water pours, the leaves shake, shift, and tumble through the air. Every animal with a task and a bee for every flower, for nature knows its course and runs it well.

Then it happens: a deer steps into the clover rich clearing so carefully watched by the boy from his tree and the whole world seems to stop. Its light brown coat fades softly into the backdrop of the tall oak trunks, and its antlers, six sharp points in all, stark white against the vibrant greens. The wind blows but the boy does not feel it, the water pours but he does not hear it, and for every leaf that shakes upon its stem, the boy sends his prayers. Nothing else exists.

Like loose wood panels under a heavy foot, the string cracks faintly as the boy pulls it taut. The deer lifts its head, flicks a black-tipped ear, and then returns to its grassy meal. A head of sweet trickles down the young boy’s face as he braces the cocked arrow against his cheek. He tilts the bow, just enough, and counts to three. One. Two. Three.

Exhale. The arrow flies, loosened from the bow, cutting through the air like a knife cuts effort through paper. The twang of the snapped string rings in the air. Then, a dull thud as the arrow hits hard and sinks deep. The deer snorts, flashes its white tail, and falls. Then silence, no breeze. Still.

Dawn now gone, the sun rests high in the clear blue sky, its rays hot upon the warmed wood. The boy walks quick and quiet, his kill strewed across his arms. Held in place by his strong grip, two legs to a hand, the deer rests limp on the earth that raised it. Now it is raised above, free from bone and blood, but its use is not yet gone. For the boy the deer will be food, it will be warmth, weapons, tools, and trade. To the boy the deer will be life.

Dusk falls like a secret known to all, hushed but displayed. The sky burns a deep orange and purple clouds roll slow and long across the horizon, covering mountains and the distant tops of trees. The boy returns triumphant, the proof about his shoulders now proof upon a butcher’s block waiting to be carved; but like all things when night weighs heavy on the soul, the work can wait till morning. For now the boy lays his bow aside, its duty and deed fulfilled, as he trades hunter’s cloak for a warn hide sheet wrapped thick about his tired body. His weary head sinks into the downy pillow and in moments he slips away, the hunter now no more than a child asleep upon his wicker bed. Harmless and peaceful, with no more concern than daily chores, the boy will rest and dream of futures bright and gold.

And in the forest too, the world does sleep. All settles down for the cool summer night, as the sinking sun begets the moon and the wood is basked in silver. The birds hum their song, the vole finds its nest, and the deer bed down in the tall, wispy grass. The stream levels out, and the wind slows down, as the wood slips into silence. There is no breeze. Still. Until it all begins again.

grant daverson:

by leonard bartenstein

Daverson sniffed the air, his nose pointed up so that he was able to smell it. “Baron,” he said, “I know that she’s here. I know that she’s near.”

“How could you know that?” asked Barton, glancing quickly back and forth around the clearing in the woods.

“Because I can smell that awful perfume she insists on coating herself in from a mile away,” he commented, before continuing to read the note. “If you really want to meet me, find your way to Lone Rock Point tomorrow night at midnight—and come alone. I’ll be waiting to finally meet you again, Mr. Daverson.”

“Does it say anything else?” asked Barton.

“It’s signed ‘Rachael Valencé,’ ” said Daverson.

“And then there’s a place where she kissed it.”

“What?”, asked Barton.

“No, ” said Daverson, “but the postscript is. It continues: P.S. I really mean it when I say come alone. Like, don’t come with someone hiding in the bushes or something, that would be really uncool. I asked you to come alone—so come alone. Don’t be a jerk. See you then. Midnight. Alone.”

“Are you going to meet her?” asked Barton when Daverson finished reading.

“I—I don’t have any choice.”

Check back next week for the thrilling and exciting conclusion of “grant daverson: ace detective.”

Next issue, we serenade True Love. Please write raps and contribute, however long or short they are! Send your lines to thewatertower.erevines@gmail.com with your favorite rapper in the subject line. The best student rapper of the semester gets a fabulous prize!
Lyric of the (Bi)week:
“Cliche malaise in a dumb conversation
Predictable drama for 5 AM exits
Fridays they only pick up the recycling
So thank god it’s Monday ‘cause I’m useless garbage”

- The Lows, Jeff Rosenstock