

OLYMPIC ATHLETE DOPING SCANDAL



IMAGE COURTESY OF NY TIMES.

Kamila Valieva's recent scandal at the Olympics rushes forward questions on the integrity of the skating community. Read more about this topic in Opinion's section this week.

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VERBATIM

"I must have missed this question on my application, but based on the number of pedestrian collisions I see on a daily basis, this had to be an admission requirement. So, in order to survive this concrete jungle full of dangers, we need to revisit such sidewalk etiquette."

- GAVIN D'ELIA
THE YUKKA
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GREEK LIFE

UCSD Sororities Suspend Social Relations with Fraternities Amidst Increasing Allegations of Misconduct, Sexual Assault, Drugging, and Violence

BY JOCELYN BROSSIA ASSOCIATE NEWS EDITOR



Art courtesy of Ava Bayley for UCSD Guardian.

Editor's Note: This article contains potentially upsetting anecdotes and descriptions of sexual harassment, sexual assault, drug use, racism, and violence.

In a decision announced internally on Feb. 15, UC San Diego's Collegiate Panhellenic Association effectively canceled social events with all chapters in the Interfraternity Council for the remainder of Winter Quarter 2022. The CPA decision comes in response to rising allegations of sexual assault/harassment, drugging, and physical violence occurring at off-campus fraternity parties.

The canceled social events across Sorority and Fraternity Life include "exchanges," which are social events that typically occur between a designated sorority and a fraternity. The decision doesn't include "opens," which are larger events where both those affiliated and unaffiliated with SFL are welcome to attend. For this reason, practices differ between fraternal chapters on who is welcome to attend their opens — especially when considering whether men who are not in their chapter are allowed to attend.

An anonymous upperclassman from a UCSD sorority shared with The UCSD Guardian that CPA's desired next step is to work with IFC to strengthen their communications and connections. Some of their goals are to reach an agreement that attempts to mend the situation through heightened risk prevention policies, recognition of the victims' trauma, and ultimately comprehensive measures that empower members of SFL to feel safe and comfortable at social events.

An imperative measure she highlighted was to look closely at the chapters which have allegations against them.

"What we wanted to see was that they care and just hear us out and care about amending the situation as much as they can," she said to The Guardian. "Obviously, you can't time travel and stop it from happening, but one of the things that is really important is finding out if it's a chapter that is cultivating that kind of and perpetuating that kind of behavior or whether it just happened to be an individual in that situation."

The anonymous member stated that IFC needs to have better risk management practices that are communicated more clearly to party attendees. She recognizes two truths: the boards of SFL, CPA, and IFC are doing what they can to protect their members, and that their lack of expertise due to their age and their experience dealing with assault allegations may make it more difficult to work effectively.

Above all, she said that she hopes that people recognize the traumatic nature of this situation rather than view it as gossip.

"I want people to remember that this isn't just gossip about who can't hang with who," she said. "People have actually been traumatized and people are actually going through legal channels and there are actually open investigations and this is actually a very serious thing and it's not just 'no more partying.'"

In the perspective of a second anonymous source from a UCSD sorority — who wanted to remain anonymous to avoid possible repercussions — halting social relations with IFC is the safest decision for everyone at the moment.

Despite this decision, the member has expressed concern that students will still throw parties regardless of the ban and that unofficial parties likely will not have the same supervisions (e.g. sober monitors) that allow people to seek help and accountability lest something go wrong. She is also worried that behaviors will not change, due to her belief that current fraternal measures to handle allegations (e.g. the revocation of access to parties or membership in the chapter) do not provide consequences serious enough to match the gravity of the offense.

"I think the entire idea is to kind of let things cool off, work on it for the rest of the quarter, and then get back next quarter and just continue as if nothing really happened," this sorority member said. "Which I am pretty skeptical about because I feel like that's what we say every single time and I haven't seen a single change in IFC since I came to this school."

Previous Allegations Among SFL at UCSD

Most recently, allegations of assault and drugging occurred at a Jan. 30 Sigma Nu party; it was themed after the TV show "Euphoria," which itself has met criticism for potentially glorifying drug use. The party was open, meaning that anyone could attend as long as they obtained a wristband.

The anonymous sorority member, who attended the "Nuphoria" party, said that approximately 400-450 wristbands were allotted for distribution to guests in order to attend the party. From her perspective, the event was unable to be properly supervised due to the fact that the house's capacity was not suitable for the large number of individuals in attendance. To her, this created a significantly overcrowded, sweaty, and uncomfortable environment.

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HOUSING

Graduate and PhD Students Protest at Chancellor's Mansion Against Rent Burden

BY BRANDON MARIANO
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

UC San Diego academic workers and their supporters participated in a march on Wednesday, Feb. 16 that began at Pacific Hall and concluded at Chancellor Khosla's residence. The protestors demanded the University of California act on the housing crisis that has put a financial burden on many academic workers.

Some attendees of the demonstration said that they were focused on developing a bargaining process with the University of California to lower rents, have greater availability of housing, and provide housing stipends for academic student workers. Demonstrators also expressed frustrations involving the fact that Chancellor Khosla received an over \$100k raise in his pay while living rent-free in his La Jolla mansion across from campus.

It's important to note that San Diego has recently passed San Francisco as the most unaffordable housing market according to a recent report by OJO Labs. Not only did the report mention affordability but the lack of housing supply has all contributed to a greater housing crisis. San Diego also has a reported shortage of affordable rental housing with average cost being \$2,009 a month, thus making the off-campus housing alternative highly difficult to come across and an expensive option.

"Our goal is ultimately to negotiate with the UC on the matters of housing. The Chancellor told us that this is a student issue and not a worker issue," stated Kaden who is a biological sciences PhD candidate at UCSD. "The UC is also our landlord in terms of housing so then this is an employer and employee issue. Civil disobedience is necessary sometimes to bring attention to some of the issues that we face."

Many PhD candidates and other graduate students have faced a housing market crisis across all of San Diego in both availability and affordability. Some even stated that many of them were overworked and some had to live within their labs or other places of work. Academic workers are now spending an average of 30% of their income on housing alone with most being rent burdened. Those living within UC graduate housing have faced sudden increases in rent costs, with the average being a 31% increase and the highest reaching up to 85% for

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In addition, she said that there were a plethora of popular recreational drugs at the party, including alcohol, cannabis, nicotine, LSD, MDMA, psilocybin, cocaine, ketamine, and lean. To her, the level of intoxication she witnessed was greater than she had seen at any other event; she believed people to be past the point of being able to ensure their own safety, to ensure the safety of those around them, and to hold others accountable for inappropriate behavior.

"I think the Sig Nu party kind of pushed it over the edge because that was like a—there were so many allegations that night that people just had to point fingers and everyone was panicking because people were drugged and people were sexually assaulted out in the open and people got hit and cut open and it was so bad," the sorority member said.

Safety protocols that Sigma Nu stated they would implement in their Facebook invitation were not enforced, according to the sorority member.

"Sig Nu said that they would have a strict [COVID] policy and they definitely did not," she said. "They also said wristbands would be pretty strict, but I feel like 450 wristbands of a very generic color being given out to people to distribute [...] I think it was not a great way of ensuring that people's safety was a top priority."

As the second anonymous sorority member said, the scope of misconduct and abuse expanded past the events of the Sigma Nu party — and fraternity parties in general. She stated that fraternity members generally behave disrespectfully and are exclusionary towards those who are not in fraternities.

An anonymous employee at UCSD Recreation stated that she was verbally harassed by players on the IFC basketball intramural teams a few weeks ago after instructing them to leave when the building was closing. She said most fraternities there were involved in the harassment — some of whom she previously considered to be her friends.

"The most recent completely jarring one was being called a [b—] and a [w—] and a [c—] by members of IFC," she said. "Also being hit on to my face super explicitly by members of Pike, like they walked behind me and literally said 'Look at her ass,' and then one of them was like, 'I wish my girl had a booty like that.' And I turned around and I was like, 'Are you serious?' and they just laughed in my face and

kept going and were so disgusting about it. I had problems with almost every single frat there and all of them making comments and being disrespectful."

"I had friends that ignored me — or I guess I wouldn't call them friends now — people that I knew and had been friendly with that ignored me that then turned around and called me a [b—] to all of their friends for doing my job," she continued.

These recent allegations are not isolated events. CPA's decision follows a public sexual assault allegation against the president of Phi Gamma Delta (commonly known as Fiji) in Fall Quarter 2021 and the University's ongoing, multi-year suspension of Sigma Chi due to sexual assault allegations since Spring Quarter 2019.

In Winter Quarter 2010, Pi Kappa Alpha (Pike) and IFC threw the racist 'Compton Cookout'-themed party. The event's aftermath led to the dubbing of Winter Quarter 2010 as "Black Winter" and was referenced in director Justin Simien's film "Dear White People." In Spring Quarter 2003, images of the Ku Klux Klan appeared on allegedly-falsified Spring Rush fliers for Sigma Chi. In a since-deleted Instagram post, Fiji announced that they removed the former president from the chapter. Sigma Chi continues to operate locally outside of affiliation with UCSD.

Junior Cara Puscasiu, a formerly-affiliated member of the Pi Beta Phi sorority, dropped her chapter in an act of an alliance with victims of sexual assault nationwide; she felt a widespread lack of support from the Panhellenic community towards victims. Puscasiu said that when she asked her chapter to inform SFL about an individual (non-affiliated but in adjacent social circles) who had assaulted her, no action was taken. Puscasiu also felt as though she was denied the opportunity to take on a leadership position within her sorority due to assumptions made about her in terms of her involvement in sexual assault allegations and the perceived state of her mental health.

"As I learned more about the internal structures of Greek Life as a whole — nothing related to Pi Phi, specifically — but, the environment of protecting sexual assaulters and people who are accused of things — there should be a zero-tolerance policy and it just doesn't seem like there is," Puscasiu said.

Puscasiu emphasized that both Panhellenic and IFC should have more strongly established channels in place that consistently educate and enforce policies about assault and abuse. Considering how common cases of assault and abuse are among SFL, she thinks it vital for these edu-

cation and policy practices to prevent the enablement of assaulters and abusers — who are both formally affiliated and non-formally affiliated with SFL.

"The chapter didn't do anything even when I talked to higher-up people," she continued. "[...] Just kept saying they would talk to people higher up [across SFL], and then I basically asked like 4-5 times and like, 'Oh, did you ever hear back from them?' They're like, 'We're just dealing with something a lot recently so we haven't been able to talk to them specifically about this, and then, by the time I dropped there was not anything really that could be done.'"

An anonymous member of one of the fraternities stated above said that he feels disappointed by the continuous cases of sexual assault and the general intoxicogenic nature of SFL, especially in light of various chapters' statements that say they are working to rectify existing cases of assault and strengthen risk prevention practices.

"They claim to be really against sexual assault and everything that comes with it, but it obviously keeps happening," he said to The Guardian. "I feel like a lot of time when they kick them out it's just like a publicity stunt — just like to make sure the sororities know that they don't do it or that they take action against it."

"I think that, for the majority of the people in Greek life, over at least 75%, [...] they go there for the reason of a potential sexual encounter," the fraternity member continued.

Additionally, the member of the fraternity stated that he is saddened by watching the impact that sexual assault in SFL has on victims in real-time.

"Seeing the flip side of those who have had the bad things happen to them that [...] they're stopping the parties for — the sexual assault — I've known people who are the ones that have been assaulted," the anonymous source said. "I think that it's really sad that I was, and all my college friends were a part of something that could lead to so many cases of that. And it's not just an anomaly."

Moving Forward

As previously mentioned by the first anonymous source from a sorority, CPA hopes to proceed by strengthening communications and relations with IFC in a manner that honors CPA's requests to increase safety and comfortability.

The anonymous fraternity member offered suggestions on how to increase safety at social events in a way that demonstrates IFC takes this matter seriously. One option is to decrease and set a limit on the amount of alcohol bought in preparation for a social event. Another would be to move social events entirely away

from individual off-campus homes to rented venues; hosting an event at a venue would help limit excessive consumption of alcohol and ensure alcohol is not served to those under the age of 21.

"Most of them, if that got taken away, they wouldn't see the point of Greek life, which is sad, but oh, well," he said.

Puscasiu stated she believes sororities and fraternities both should spend their time without social events trying to make concerted efforts to increase communication and transparency about their behavioral standards and risk prevention policies.

"It would be good for them to communicate standards and really proactively create measures to actually prevent this from happening in the future," she said. "I think it's a first step, but they have to take this time wisely because they can't just be like 'Yeah we're taking a break and holding people accountable and investigating,' like we've all heard that a million times. And then nothing really changes, and I think UCSD should be that university that really puts an end to these types of things because it's so normalized — it's disgusting."

The second anonymous sorority member echoed sentiments that the cancellation of social events is a good first step. She continued that she believes harm reduction practices are a necessary implementation to move forward in creating lasting change. Her ideas include comprehensive harm-reductionist drug education that seeks to teach young adults about drug interactions and dosages that cause overdoses. She said that sexual assault and harassment training within SFL should be redesigned to place greater emphasis on the consequences of assault that will follow the victim and the perpetrator for life. Additionally, the source said that allegations of sexual assault need to be seriously investigated and with more serious repercussions for perpetrators within their chapters. Finally, she questioned how impactful a consequence being dropped from one's chapter actually is.

The Guardian reached out to SFL, CPA, IFC, and the publicly-available contacts for the chapters' executive members for comment. SFL, CPA, and IFC did not respond to a request for an interview. 12 of 12 contacted sorority boards and 11 of 12 contacted fraternity boards did not respond to a request for an interview.

Editor's Note: The author of this article was affiliated with the

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Sigma Kappa sorority from Fall Quarter 2019 until her resignation in Summer 2020. Additionally, she is currently employed at UCSD Recreation, where one anonymous source also works. Their shared place of employment did not impact the production of this article in any way.

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some units.

Demonstrators said that if these costs aren't covered in a timely manner, then this leads to holds on their student accounts. For many graduate students, this means that they are not able to sign up for classes and are not able to work.

"We can't let the university continuously ignore the housing crisis that they helped perpetuate," said Ahmad Aktar, a graduate student in the UCSD physics department. "Through really exploitative housing practices, like raising rents exorbitantly on graduate students, we're here to really fight on this issue and force the UC to respond to it with real solutions."

"I think if we don't take action now and start bargaining with the UC to get affordable housing for our workers then the university will continue to profit off of us and not take students' and workers' best interest at heart," commented Lauren Bibi, a fifth year graduate student in the UCSD biological

department. "The university really extracts profit from us and we need to take a stand." When asked if the university has given them any justifications for the increase in rents, she simply stated no.

The only claims for the raise in rents on graduate housing was to cover the costs of new housing and other structures for the university's influx of students. Due to the fact that the UCSD housing department doesn't receive federal, state, or tuition funding, the costs of these mortgages and staff salaries are being covered by student rents. The only remedies offered by the university's housing department to make up for the raise in rents was giving students the option to double up in rooms and apartments.

If one is in dire need of emergency housing on campus at UCSD, they may rely on Basic Needs. The process begins when one fills out a Basic Needs Assistance form but they may also email basicneeds@ucsd.edu for temporary housing.



Image courtesy of Millie Root.

POLICE BRUTALITY

UCSD Medical Director Testifies in Police Brutality Cases



Art courtesy of Angela Liang for UCSD Guardian.

BY ANDREW HA
NEWS EDITOR

With at least 1,134 people killed by the police in 2021 alone, police brutality remains a salient topic within public discourse. However, what is not as often discussed is the power of expert witness testimonies in influencing jury decisions in the ensuing legal process. These experts are doctors and researchers — some of whom are from UC San Diego — study the effects of force on the body and how similar police tactics could contribute to the death of individuals.

Some of these expert witnesses are UCSD professors like Dr. Gary M. Vilke or Dr. Theodore Chan. Dr. Vilke is a prominent individual in the San Diego medical community due to his positions as the director of both the emergency and risk management

departments of UCSD Health and a professor of emergency medicine. Dr. Chan, moreover, is the chair of the department of emergency medicine at UCSD and has worked previously in the California State Senate and Washington D.C. Office of the Assistant Surgeon General. According to a New York Times investigation, their research and expert testimonies are used in many court cases spanning over two decades and often conclude that defendants' actions did not contribute to the death of the arrestees.

These incidents, legally referred to as death-in-custody cases, define a body of police action that encompasses the death of those under arrest, undergoing incarceration or are incarcerated in a prison. In California, there is a disproportionately higher number of minority — especially African American — representation in the percent of arrest-related deaths compared

to the overall population. Vilke's reports are repeatedly critiqued by police accountability advocates as an institutionalized means of exonerating misconduct.

Movements like Cops Off Campus, which is composed of many UCSD affiliates, have called upon the university to remove ties with the police and halt the usage of campus officers. A student involved in the group stated that incarceration is unjust because it does not take into account societal inequalities that push people to break the law in the first place.

"[Vilke's] 'expert' testimony is precisely the condition of individualizing, pinpointing, and not allowing outside events or circumstances to enter a courtroom," the student said. "You have the moment of criminalization happen through this one particular event. The courtroom, through prosecutorial power, aims to solidify that one moment as all that should be talked about. It does a gross injustice on understanding the multiple co-occurring injustices that the state wields on its population."

In the recent 2017 case of Anthony Perez, Fresno police officers had stopped Perez on the street because he looked distressed; it was later discovered that he had taken a high dose of methamphetamines. According to the officers, attempts at deescalation made Perez more belligerent and paramedics placed a gurney on top of Perez in order to take him to the hospital. Throughout this process, a paramedic instructed an officer to

sit atop of the backboard in order to apply enough pressure to strap Perez down. This act of compressive asphyxiation and restraint was deemed the cause of death by the Fresno County Coroner's office.

Dr. Vilke, who was later hired by American Ambulance, stated — in contradiction to the coroner's office — that the paramedics were not at fault for Perez's death. In his expert report, the doctor argued that Perez's death was caused rather by his use of meth in conjunction with heart illness, agitation, and continued resistance. In particular, he noted that the officer sat on top of the gurney at the position of Perez's butt, not chest; this and the modest weight applied throughout the interaction was allegedly insufficient to cause death by asphyxiation.

"My opinions and testimony are based on assessing the facts available and the applicable body of scientific literature," Dr. Vilke said to The UCSD Guardian in an email. "I do not regret any of the opinions that I have given as they are based on my training, education and experience. All cases involving arrest related deaths are sad and impact many people who are involved. Our scientific work has been performed to find out what are the physiologic impacts and what may or may not be causing these deaths in order to implement scientifically validated strategies to prevent these tragedies in the future."

Much like the Perez case, Estate of Michael Barrera v. City of Wood-

Much like the Perez case, Estate of Michael Barrera v. City of Woodland, et al. highlighted similar features of police brutality that were dismissed by expert testimony. Barrera, who was allegedly wielding a golf club and intoxicated, was tasered by officers and put into a restraint. Barrera's family claims that the Woodland Police Department and the Yolo County District Attorney covered up the case and used Vilke's report to absolve the police of wrongdoing in Barrera's cardiac arrest and death.

In either the Barrera or the Perez case, many of the research studies cited, some of which were written by Dr. Vilke and Chan, used healthy patients to draw conclusions about the lethality of police restraint and force. While it is unethical to provide drugs to subjects or choose subjects with pre-existing health conditions, the use of solely healthy individuals in research studies highlights major limitations for real-world application. Nevertheless, expert witnesses still use these studies to draw generalized conclusions in death-in-custody court cases in which arrestees are intoxicated or ill.

To address this shortcoming, a subsequent epidemiological study was conducted by Vilke et al. that observed the results of police force on a variety of individuals, some of which were under emotional distress or had taken drugs.

Read the complete story online at ucsdguardian.org.

EDUCATION

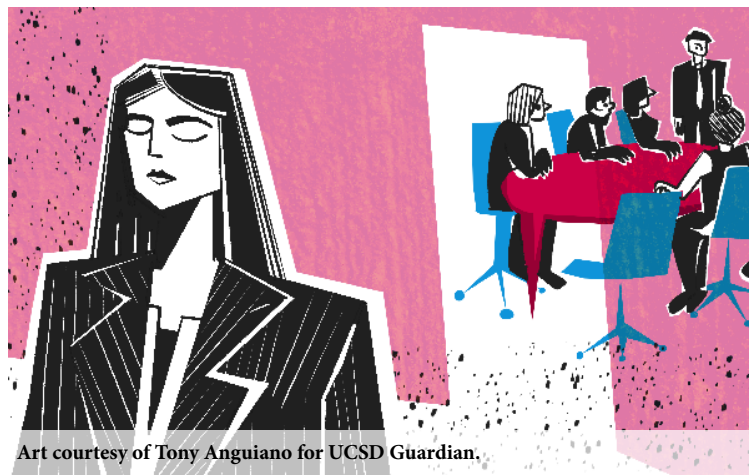
Two UCSD Faculty Resign from Critical Gender Studies Executive Committee

BY ABBY LEE
STAFF WRITER

Two UC San Diego faculty members, Assistant Professor Dr. Shaista Patel and Associate Professor Dr. Wendy Matsura, have resigned from UCSD's Critical Gender Studies (CGS) Program's Executive Committee. On Jan. 4, the CGS program's Executive Committee authored and published "CGS Statement on Faculty Affiliation" that addressed concerns about Associate Professor of Anthropology Dr. Saiba Varma's research in Kashmiri clinics, as an upper caste Indian anthropologist with familial ties to India's highest intelligence agency, the Research and Analysis Wing (RAW).

Their resignations follow an advisory decision by the CGS program to remove CGS Executive Committee's Jan 4. statement. Patel and Matsura will continue their positions in the UCSD ethnic Studies and history departments respectively, and remain affiliated with the CGS program.

Varma has been embroiled in controversy since September last year. On Sept. 14, an anonymous Twitter handle revealed that she had concealed her father's employment by RAW in Kashmir in the 1990s, when researching the interconnectedness of medicine and militarism in the Kashmiri context. The Twitter account, which claimed to represent "a group of Kashmiri activists, students & researchers," asserted that such concealment violated standard research ethics and protocol.



Art courtesy of Tony Anguiano for UCSD Guardian.

These revelations sparked both condemnation and defense from numerous groups. A separate group of Kashmiri scholars defended Varma, arguing that she should not be held responsible for her father's involvement. On the other hand, the Indian publisher of Varma's book, Arpita Das of Yoda Press, advocated for researchers' complete disclosure on her Twitter account.

In response to the online furor, the CGS had released a statement discussing Varma's research practices. Referring to an open letter signed by "dominant caste Indian scholars, other concerned scholars, and everyone in solidarity with colonized people of Kashmir" to Duke University Press, the U.S. publisher of Varma's book, the CGS Executive Committee's statement asserts that Varma's decision to conduct research in Kashmir on Kashmiris, despite her intimate familial ties to the RAW, was deceitful and violent.

"We also believe that Varma's

unrelentingly violent decision to work in this place, where the colonial Indian state intelligence apparatus had appointed her father ... and his colleagues to draw up plans that included torture, sexual violence, and counter-insurgency as instruments of war and everyday occupation was dishonest and deliberately misleading," the statement read.

The statement also asserts that Varma's non-disclosure of her father's employment with the RAW to other Kashmiri scholars, and most importantly to her research subjects, Kashmiris seeking treatment at psychiatric clinics, was both harmful and irresponsible.

"Furthermore, Varma worked without disclosing these familial ties to the patients in whose sessions she sat, or to the psychiatrists and other Kashmiris she is accountable to as an Indian anthropologist working on Kashmir, teaching courses on decolonial methodology, and claiming to harbor a commitment to decolo-

nial, anti-racist, and feminist of color politics" the statement continued.

In closing, the statement concluded that CGS has disaffiliated from Varma, clarifying that Varma's courses will no longer count toward the CGS major or minor.

However, during the faculty affiliates' meeting on Feb. 4, it appeared clear to Patel and Matsura that CGS faculty had conflicting views about the statement.

In Matsura's resignation statement, they elaborated on the proceedings of the faculty affiliates' meeting. Matsura wrote that their primary reason for resignation was their feeling unsafe to remain on the Executive Committee, given the differences in priorities of CGS faculty.

"I resigned primarily because it did not feel safe to remain on the executive committee," Matsura said. "During the affiliates' meeting, it became clear that the most vocal of those who attended were mostly offended by what they read as a 'breach in collegiality' and a violation of the 'due process' rather than what the statement amplified — serious questions of professional ethics by an anthropologist working in Kashmir that scholars and activists had been voicing, but that came to broader public awareness last September."

In Patel's resignation statement, they explained that the meeting was unproductive in fostering discussion about improving accountability practices in research, given the questionable research practices of the UCSD-employed caste-dominant

Indian academic.

"Testimonies from us mostly Dalit, Muslim, Indigenous, and racialized women and non-binary untenured scholars (clearly all on one side with mostly tenured white faculty on the other — think about this matter even just in terms of the visual optics) advocated for strengthening practices of accountability in academic research, but were ignored for the sake of staying on the side of institutional power and upholding its misogynist, casteist, colonial, and racist practices," Patel wrote.

Patel noted that academia's disconnect with and distance from the individuals it conducts research on is nothing new. However, Patel reaffirms their commitment to continue fighting for gender studies programs as a Muslim feminist social scientist.

"Decades ago, gender studies departments and programs were fought for by Black, Indigenous, Latinx and other racialized women and non-binary scholars on this continent in ways that connected the streets to these ivory towers," Patel wrote. "We pay homage to that radical organizing and are absolutely not invested in upholding the power of any program that seeks to do convenient solidarity work."

Varma has not responded to CGS's statement directly, but she had previously addressed a statement from a group of 53 scholars condemning Varma's research practices.

Read the complete story online at ucsdguardian.org.

OPINION

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How Eteri Tutberidze's Skaters are Repeatedly Failed by Those Around Them

BY MARCELLA BARNELO
Staff Writer

A recent doping scandal in women's independent figure skating at the 2022 Beijing Winter Olympics has shaken the foundation of the sport and caused outrage among athletes, coaches, and the general public. Kamila Valieva, the 15-year-old skater representing the Russian Olympic Committee stands at the center of this scandal after failing an anti-doping test for taking trimetazidine, a heart medication intended to increase endurance. While it is simple to acknowledge that the ingestion of banned substances is a top tier offense in athletics, the underlying issue here stems from the fact that Valieva is an impressionable minor who was subjected to incredible amounts of pressure and responsibilities far above her age level. Standing behind this young girl is a notoriously ruthless woman named Eteri Tutberidze who is widely known for coaching her skaters into early retirement at the age of 17 to 19 at the latest.

Tutberidze, originally from Russia, began her coaching career in America before eventually moving back to her home country and taking up a position at the Sambo-70, a widely regarded children's and youth sports school in Moscow. It was here that Tutberidze began to turn out young skaters.

The ROC is also represented by gold medalist Anna Shcherbakova and silver medalist Alexandra Trusova who are both 17 years old and coached by Tutberidze. Together, Tutberidze intended for Valieva, Shcherbakova, and Trusova to sweep the podium by taking a formulaic approach and crowding each girls' performance with quadruple jumps and especially difficult moves in order to achieve inflated scores. Valieva was the first woman to successfully complete a quadruple jump at the Olympic games, and Shcherbakova and Trusova were quick to follow, with Trusova planning a record-breaking five quadruple jumps in her routine.

However, it should be noted that quad jumps become almost impossible to perform after the age of 17 and Tutberidze's method of rotating before performing the jump is known to cause incredibly harmful long-term back injuries. In order to have almost all her athletes perform this jump in competition, Tutberidze began to set her sights on 12 to 15-year-olds, working these children tirelessly with up to 12-hour training days with little regard to the long-term mental and physical toll of this training and the pressures of international competition. In the skating community, Tutberidze is known for her "one and done" scheme with none of her athletes earning more than one gold medal before retiring.

Eight years ago, Yulia Lipnitskaya won a gold medal at the age of 15 in Sochi's 2014 Winter Olympics. She performed stunningly, skating to a song from "Schindler's List" and quickly becoming a crowd favorite. Like Valieva, she was coached by Tutberidze until she retired at the age of 19 due to her battle with anorexia that required hospitalization and three months of treatment. Tutberidze once reported to the news that Lipnitskaya was sustained by an all-powder diet, which kept her "fit" enough to perform well on the ice. Lipnitskaya later spoke out about her difficulties with the pressures of the public eye and the need to achieve perfection. Lipnitskaya's final performance before her retirement was heartbreaking; she struggled through the larger jumps in her program and stopped mid-skate with tears in her eyes. She finished in last place. While these events took place years ago, nothing has been done to intervene and put an end to this notably discernable pattern that continues on with Valieva and her teammates. The skating community has repeatedly acknowledged Tutberidze's harsh methods and yet no corrections have been made. In fact, Tutberidze was awarded coach of the year in 2020 by the International Skating Union (ISU) who described her as a talented coach.

This inaction is reminiscent

of what occurred with USA Gymnastics Doctor Larry Nassar who abused young gymnasts for countless years while the Federal Bureau of Investigation was aware of the situation but remained inactive for nearly a year, essentially enabling his horrible actions. All around, the system as a whole failed to protect these young girls and ensure that they were getting proper and safe treatment from those around them. Nassar was eventually sentenced to 60 years in prison, but this does not undo the pain he has inflicted on these athletes, and clearly the Olympic Committees on a national level have not learned their lesson. While the ISU and multiple antidoping agencies pushed for Valieva not to compete due to her failed doping test, there would have been no interference or red flags raised had she passed the antidoping test.

In addition, the Court of Arbitration for Sport – an independent international body that aids in settling disputes – made the executive decision to allow Valieva to skate in the women's free skate since disqualifying Valieva while her doping investigation remained ongoing would result in personal "irreparable harm." Though, if the COA genuinely had Valieva's best interest in mind they would have sent her home and provided proper resources for her to mentally and emotionally overcome the challenges she has faced and the barbed criticisms

raining down on her from all angles. Furthermore, if the ISU focused on the well-being of its skaters, it would raise the minimum age and not allow children to experience the strain and pressures of the Olympics when they are not yet mentally and emotionally equipped to handle such difficult challenges. It is disheartening to see that a large scandal is required for committees to reanalyze an already flawed system and finally pay attention to the abuse occurring right under their noses rather than excusing it.

Valieva is arguably one of the most talented female figure skaters on the ice at this year's Winter Olympics. Her performances are breathtaking to watch and the execution of her jumps and combined artistry marked her as a future gold medalist with a promising career ahead of her. Now, due to the actions of her coach and the adults around her, her shining career may be boiled down to a performance riddled with mistakes and nowhere near indicative of her true talent. To protect young girls from experiencing the same difficulties in the future, the minimum age of the sport needs to be raised, and athletes should be looked after instead of viewed as mere tools to achieve gold medals for their country.



Image courtesy of The New York Times.

There's No Such Thing as a Moderate Change-maker

Listen to the people, stop blaming "radicals" and forge ahead on progressive change

BY SPARKY MITRA
Staff Writer

The Democratic moderate has failed. He failed when he praised stability over progress. He failed when he referred to the Democratic progressive as a dividing force. Instead of telling Americans what they don't need in a candidate, it is time for Democrats to follow through on providing Americans with the help they do need to survive.

Democrats are weak in the U.S. House of Representatives and are on the brink of losing their majority. Rather than bolstering their approval ratings by following through on radically-progressive yet exceedingly-popular campaign promises, many Democrats have chosen to use their negative congressional position to sow fear of the unknown among constituents. In one of my own encounters within the political space, I witnessed a moderate unduly claiming that getting behind him, the incumbent, was a surer way to ensure the maintenance of a Democratic congressional majority. His race was deemed safely democratic,

yet he was keen on making other Democratic contenders out to be less feasible than him.

When Americans go to vote in safely blue or red districts, most are no longer voting for a political party in a competitive district. Most are no longer concerned about blank statements by politicians trying to win solely with identity politics. They are voting for the candidate based on their respect for the struggle endured by their constituents. They are voting for those who value their masses over a few big donors. They are not voting based on partisan rivalries. They are instead voting on what candidate's promises cater best to them. Voters are not dividing a party by standing beside one candidate over an incumbent, both of whom are Democrats. They are instead writing the future of the party's political movement towards the left. They are gradually redefining what it means to be a Democrat based on their needs in the 21st century.

Instead of focusing on the progressive label of primary challengers, moderate Democrat incumbents must start looking at the issues their challengers amplify. Some representatives

have done just that. Whether it is to run against progressives or to choose a successor who may lean left of them, some moderates are open to being genuinely receptive to the people in their constituency. Congresswoman Eddie Bernice Johnson is precisely one of these people. A mainstream Democrat with a relatively-progressive political record, this lawmaker of 30 years endorsed Jasmine Crockett, a civil rights attorney with the backing of multiple leftist groups. More consequentially, taking inspiration from competitors like Bernie Sanders, Joe Biden has shifted considerably left (though perhaps not enough) on programs such as student loan forgiveness. Coming to the aid of ordinary Americans over Big Pharma and big money is a popular idea, supported by 80% of us according to Gallup.

Instead of starting at a compromise on bills bolstering voting rights and citizens' economic power, Democrats can work down to that. The idea that the most progressive solution will shut down any room for legislative discussion with conservatives is an archaic one, considering the radically-racist legislation that is breezing

through legislative bodies nationwide. The conservative position is to be skeptical of progress. They will always say, "No!" to reform. Moderate lawmakers like Senator Joe Manchin fail to realize this fact.

Being a good lawmaker is important, but running an election where you rely more on excusing your moderate positioning to just "doing your job" and "passing bills" is preposterous. A bill that helps no one is just a pretty piece of paper. Representing people is an elected

official's primary job. That is why they are elected.

It is time for moderate Democrats to drop this charade of trying to bring progress slowly. It is time for them to stop villainizing those who can't afford to wait. Democrats were elected to follow through on their promises, mainly of which have become exceedingly progressive due to the needs of the youth. Don't treat progressives as rebels, understand their vision and maybe, just maybe, adopt some of it as your own.



"A moderate promise for all my constituents: Count on me, for a 0% guarantee!"

Art by Sparky Mitra for the UCSD Guardian.



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FEATURES

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The battle over information happening in Russia

As Russian and Ukrainian tensions boiled over for the past few months, Russia's media control gives them the first win without firing a shot.

BY NELSON ESPINAL
Features Editor

Over the past few months, Russia has increased its level of aggression towards Ukraine. Through placing forces closer to the border and intelligence leaks from the Pentagon warning of an attack, Putin is establishing at least the threat of an attack.

[The diplomacy between Russia and Ukraine deteriorated a while ago](#), starting with Ukraine's

cyber-security and politics at the faculty of arts and social sciences, outlined the rise of Russia's control over the media.

"When Putin came to power, he started a campaign to take power back from the oligarchs, including in the media sphere," [Wijermars wrote](#). "Slowly but steadily he nationalized TV channels and established control over most newspapers. Since then, the news has become one-

for the Russian public to blame Biden for the lack of diplomacy.

According to [The Moscow Times](#), the Russian media is blaming the United States for the reports of an invasion on Ukraine. The government denies the claims and believes that the U.S. is simply trying to generate "hysteria."

"The majority of the Western elite thinks that eventually Russia will evaluate everything and retreat, allowing Kyiv to

it happened and started.

The circulation of information slows down when the information is funneled through the Russian government, creating a delayed reaction to events or allowing for the events to be retold in a different fashion.

An example of the information transforming is in the story of the exploding car on the edge of Ukraine. A few cars caught on fire and outright exploded, [a "false-flag" that](#)

dominance of traditional media, Russia's grip over the social media realm places a chokehold on information.

The state of media in Russia provides a key example of how Putin is able to shape his narrative not only among his people, but the world at large. The inconsistency of the reporting requires further digging from Western reporters or intelligence officers in order to truly know what happens in the Kremlin.



Image courtesy of Geralt of Pixabay.

departure from the Soviet Union. After the Soviet Union collapsed, the nuclear weapons were spread across four countries, two of which were Russia and Ukraine. Ukraine gave up their arms in exchange for diplomacy with Russia.

[The issues came when the United States offered an invitation for Ukraine to join NATO](#), making Putin feel threatened by the western alliance group. The threat is based around having a Western-allied power so close to the motherland.

[Back in 2015, Putin threatened with a similar attack](#): push military forces to the border of Ukraine and Russia along with an upstick of Russian propaganda in the area.

Now, Russia is pushing in again on the Ukraine borders, moving in tanks, military personnel, and resources. While their administration denies any kind of attempted aggression, the United States military feels otherwise. On the brink of war, Russia is continuing a staple of the Putin administration: controlling the narrative their people receive.

The vast majority of media based in Russia is government controlled, which allows the government to direct the narrative reported to the masses. Mariëlle Wijermars, assistant professor in

sidied again, even though there still are a few exceptions, and Russian state media do not shy away from using propaganda and conspiracy theories."

The Russian government, over the course of the last year, attacked the Ukrainian government through the media with stories labeling them as "pro-nazi" and [detailing a story about a boy who was crucified in Ukraine](#).

Paired with their alliance to the United States, Ukraine's portrayal in the Russian media is meant to show the need for an invasion. Along with the selective stories, the spin placed on the stories usually are meant to get across certain ideals as well.

The media often peddles anti-Western culture messages, aiming at America the most prominently. From painting Biden as weak and dangerous, [Russia is able to generate hysteria towards Americans](#) through their media channels.

The anti-American coverage is no accident — Russia repeatedly villainizes America and their transgressions overall. The establishment of the bias against the United States allows

forcefully cleanse Donbas of everything Russian," [an anchor stated in the Moscow times](#). "But along with this illusion, there is also a concrete plan, and we know who is behind it — to pit Russia and Europe against each other in a total war of sanctions."

Apart from instilling ideals, the Russian government carries the ability to redirect the focus of the Russian people and some of those in America with denials of what is actually happening. In regards to the recent showings of aggression, their conflicting reports with America pose questions for both sides.

"Even as Russia gathers troops at Ukraine's border, the Kremlin's messengers have been planting the seed that Ukraine and/or Western governments are planning a false flag operation to incite a conflict with Russia," [the Alliance for Securing Democracy stated](#). "Officials and state media have warned about Ukrainian/Western terrorist attacks, chemical weapons attacks, and sniper fire, among other alleged plans to provoke war."

If Russia started a war against Ukraine, the Russian people could, theoretically, be the last people to find out

[Russian wanted to use](#) as a means of invasion. The Russian media blamed the bombing on the United States, stating the action was a means of provocation and turning Europe against them.

Such a case shows the control Russia wields over an event, but traditional media is not the only means of doing so. Through the years, Russia is targeting the new-age information source: social media.

New censorship policies provide a greater control on what is seen on social channels, with Russia passing a similar law against hate speech that Germany once passed.

"Since 2017, large platforms need to have a complaints mechanism where users can report illegal content," [Wijermars wrote](#). "Russia makes clever use of this by simply stating 'look, Germany does it too and Germany is a very democratic country, we are just following their lead in banning information from social media that can be harmful.' In reality, Russian censorship of course goes much further than what the Germans do in terms of limiting online hate speech."

In combination with the

One lifeline for Russia media consumers is the rise in social media activists. [According to the Maastricht University, there are groups which are protesting and circulating information at a faster rate in Russia](#). These groups are able to circumvent the "hate speech" legislation put in place.

Yet, the rise of such activist groups casts doubt on where Russians can turn for information about their own country. These activist groups remain sparse and only able to relay so much.

"I also find it quite troubling to view social media as the beacon of democracy and freedom of speech," [Wijermars wrote](#). "That's why it's so important to remain a critical thinker."

The United States, along with NATO, might enter talks with Putin over a non-violent resolution, but the flames of a Russian attack are already stoked among the Russia people.

While the United States and Russia work towards a potential diplomatic resolution, the battle for control of the narrative is already won. To his people, Vladimir Putin comes out on top again, adding to his credibility for a potential real attack down the line.

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

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“Marry Me”: What Happened to Romantic Comedies?

After watching Jennifer Lopez and Owen Wilson’s “Marry Me,” Staff Writer Kaley Chun wonders what it will take to reinvigorate the rom-com.

The weekend before Valentine’s Day, the new romantic comedy “Marry Me” was released in theaters, as well as online for premium subscribers of Peacock. In the movie, Jennifer Lopez plays Kat Valdez, a pop star and international influencer. At a televised concert in which she is supposed to marry her fiancé and fellow performer Bastian (Maluma), she discovers clips of him cheating. As a result, Kat picks unassuming math teacher Charlie (Owen Wilson) out of the crowd and decides to marry him instead. In the aftermath of their hasty and public wedding, Kat and Charlie get to know each other. She is a beautiful celebrity, while he is a normal single father — over the course of their relationship, they have to ask: Are their vastly different worlds capable of coexisting?

The premise of “Marry Me” is implausible, but the romantic comedy genre is built on a foundation of far-fetched bets, coincidental meetings, and unlikely pairings. Part of this is the magic of movie-making, but also, luck is a part of love. Accidents happen, though in real life they usually do not involve the risky high stakes of marriage to a stranger. Even Kat is unable to fully explain why she felt compelled to marry Charlie, but she tells the world: “If you want something different, you have to do something different.” There are less drastic steps she could have taken, but it is a movie. The audience is asked to suspend disbelief and imagine a world where normal people can attain unbelievable good luck. If you can get past these flaws in logic, “Marry Me” is a fun film. Lopez and Wilson have an awkward chemistry that never fully makes sense, but they are two charismatic actors who light up the screen.

This film has its flaws, but some people refuse to take the romantic comedy genre seriously regardless of quality. “Chick flick” is a descriptor that devalues a film’s worth, and a plot focusing on love will immediately turn away certain audiences. Romantic comedies are rarely considered reputable, and part of the issue is that women’s perspectives in film are not as respected as men’s. As a result, the number of romantic comedies has shrunk over time and fewer audiences care to watch them in theaters. Though the genre includes countless iconic films such as “When Harry Met Sally” and “10 Things I Hate About You,” the relevance of the romantic comedy in pop culture has faded within the last few decades. The genre was popular and effective in the 90s and early 2000s because of its relatable characters and settings, but in recent years the film industry has been focusing less on romance and more on action films with guaranteed profit.



Image courtesy of Variety.

“Marry Me” is a prime example of this change: it shows two people trying to harmonize their different lifestyles, it contains catchy original songs, plus Jennifer Lopez, Owen Wilson, and Maluma are all legitimate stars. On paper it should be a successful film anytime of the year, yet “Marry Me” was released at a pointedly chosen time. Are people only allowed to enjoy love the week of February 14th? Is that the only time a romance can be successful in the modern film landscape?

In recent years, popular culture has been spending its time and money on sequels, remakes, and films that hit familiar notes of comfort and nostalgia. There is nothing wrong with franchises, but unique, self-contained content is also important. Romantic comedies have been pushed to the side, but their lack of popularity is not due to a lack of interest. With Netflix’s aid, they are making a slow but steady resurgence. However, most of the streaming rom-coms are predictable, silly, low-budget attempts at creating thoughtless content to fill streaming platforms. Of the thin selection of contemporary romantic comedies, glamorous films like “Crazy Rich Asians” are few and far between, while low-budget adaptations like “The Kissing Booth” and “He’s All That” fall into the same acting and writing snafus as “Marry Me.” Lopez’s newest acting endeavor is a fine and fun film overall, but it misses the heart and the chemistry that characterizes the best films of the genre. Hopefully its existence points to a resurgence of charming romantic comedies, but unfortunately, it does not meet the mark itself.

Time will tell whether romance cinema has the capacity to make a serious resurgence. Will the genre ever again hold a place against the steep competition of traditional blockbusters? No genre is ever resolutely dead, and it is difficult to tell what stories will make a resurgence at any given time. It feels likely, because the desire for quality rom-coms exists. There is a low, steady clamoring for a new kind of revival instead of the millionth reboot this year. It may take years, and maybe the 90s rom-com is history, but putting two stars in a funny, romantic film can be magical. Finding the right plot, the right actors, and the right film is still a possibility. “Marry Me” is not going to be the film to inspire the reinvention of a classic genre, but it may be a step in the right direction. Though the romantic comedy revival is slow, Lopez and Wilson provide hope that someday, the film industry will recapture the power of movie star charisma and discover the heart in love stories once again.

Grade: C

Directed by: Kat Coiro

Starring: Jennifer Lopez,

Owen Wilson, Maluma

Release Date: Feb. 11, 2022

Rated: PG-13



Image courtesy of CBS Sports.

Review: 2022 Super Bowl Halftime Show

A show that celebrates both the music and architecture of Compton.

HECTOR ARRIETA SENIOR STAFF WRITER

On Feb. 13, the 2022 Super Bowl Halftime Show boasted a first in the lineage of halftime shows. This Super Bowl Halftime Show was the first of its kind to feature an all hip hop line up of artists that included Dr. Dre, Snoop Dogg, Eminem, Mary J. Blige, and Kendrick Lamar, alongside guest appearances by 50 Cent and Anderson .Paak. Being from Los Angeles, a lot of aspects of the performance resonated with me, the most obvious being the music, but the set was the first aspect that caught both my attention and admiration.

There were several elements of the set that immediately stood out, especially in comparison to previous halftime show sets. With the exception of 2021’s show headlined by The Weeknd, the stages are usually just platforms with lights that are nothing more than a canvas for the artist(s) to perform on. However, this year the set took on a life of its own, being part of the show through artist interaction with the environment and the set actively conveying the history of Compton. A notable example includes the studio mixer Dr. Dre would interact with, changing sound channels and levels throughout the performance. Another memorable example was when Eminem literally broke out of the Compton Courthouse on the left end of the stage to begin his part of the show. Speaking of a notable Compton landmark, everything about the set exuded Compton’s personality. On the field was a projection of the map of Compton. Then, on both ends of the set were the Compton Courthouse and the Martin Luther King Jr. memorial, both images synonymous with the city. Growing up at my grandma’s place I had a great view of the towering courthouse; even now I can close my eyes and picture it in my head. In between the courthouse and the memorial were other notable locations like the Tams #21 on the corner of Central and Rosecrans Ave, both streets I repeatedly crossed through. Each building on the set featured the rooftop and a hollowed-out interior, both spaces the artists could perform in. Even the interiors of the sets conveyed either the personality of Compton or the history of the artists. For example, the building that housed the mixer Dr. Dre used featured a projection of his studio and accolades. During Snoop Dogg’s performance of “The Next Episode,” there were projections of his old album covers and music videos including the scene where he turns into a Doberman from “Who Am I (What’s My Name)?” and the cover for “Doggystyle.” Other parts of the set included projections of other notable locations like Dale’s Donuts on Atlantic and Alondra Boulevard. In sum, all of the components of the set design worked together not just to serve as a canvas, but as its own performer, speaking aloud insight into the culture and history of both Compton and its hip hop scene.

Moving on from the set to the music, all of the artists seemed to be enjoying their time there. For instance, Snoop Dogg, who looked like he felt at home “crip walking” his way throughout the set, or Dr. Dre and Anderson .Paak constantly smiling throughout the show. You could see the passion in the

eyes and facial expression of Mary J. Blige as she sang the words to “No More Drama,” and in Kendrick Lamar through his movements as he sang, most notably the way he twitched his hands to the speed of his verse from “Alright.” All of the song choices were great as they all recalled the history and influence of hip hop from both the old and new generation. My only issue with the entire performance is that Kendrick Lamar didn’t perform more. Lamar only performed the intro to “m.A.A.d city” and “Alright” from the albums “good kid, m.A.A.d city” and “To Pimp a Butterfly” respectively. These two albums are arguably the best in his discography, always swapping the number one and number two spots in most peoples’ rankings, so it makes sense for those songs to have been there. However, he completely left out his most recent album, 2017’s “DAMN,” which received both critical and commercial success. Kendrick also has a history of performing unreleased music or music for future releases, like during his performance at the 58th Grammy Awards where he performed “Untitled 05” a month before “Untitled Unmastered” was even released, but nothing of the like was done either. Although the show was clearly more geared towards “old heads,” as both Dr. Dre and Snoop Dogg dominated the show, it would have been amazing to see Kendrick Lamar take the reins for longer, demonstrating a passing of the torch moment, rather than just coexisting with Eminem, Dr. Dre, and Snoop Dogg continuing to rap soon after.

Regardless of my slight critique of the limited performance from Kendrick Lamar, I still believe that everything about the 2022 Super Bowl Halftime Show blended together to make the perfect tribute to the history of hip hop and the city of Compton. For it being the first time hip hop took center stage at the Super Bowl, it made a great first impression and will definitely be in the conversation as one of the greatest halftime shows of all time.

Artists: Dr. Dre, Snoop Dogg, Eminem, Mary J. Blige,
Kendrick Lamar, 50 Cent, Anderson .Paak

Director: Hamish Hamilton

Grade: A

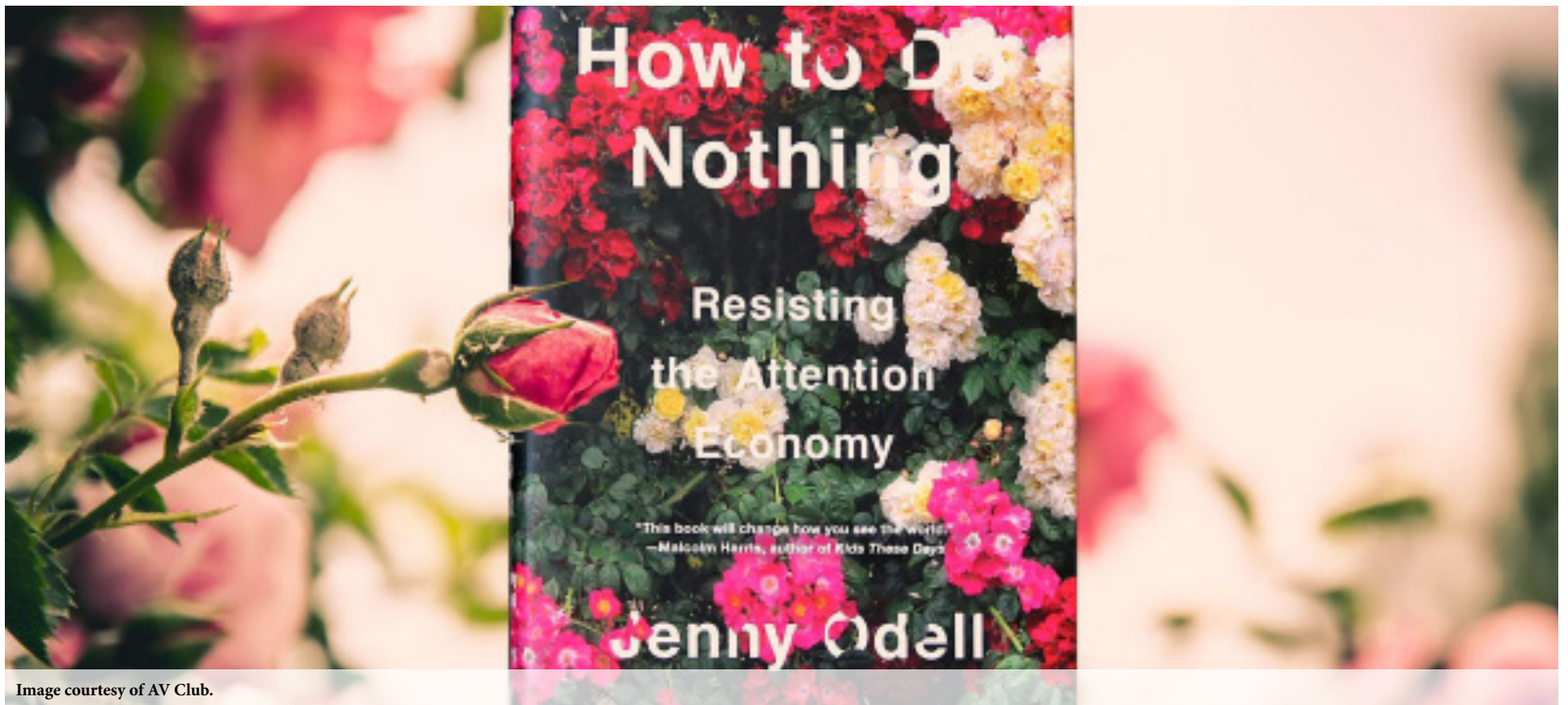


Image courtesy of AV Club.

Sarah's Book Corner: A Literary Guide to the Digital Apocalypse

From social media manifestos to sci-fi excursions, here are five literary pieces that convey the pessimistic existentialism of the internet.

When all of our cultural consumption is curated by “for you” pages on social media apps, books are the natural alternative. Gone is the nefarious influence of the capitalist economy: readers are able to evade the subtle mind-controlling tactics of the algorithm, unimpeded by the slew of advertisements that have come to characterize online platforms. What better medium then, to explore the apocalyptic implications of life on the internet and how we have changed in response to its ubiquity? As someone who is both chronically online and an avid reader, I resort to books to help make sense of the digital spaces I occupy. Below is my literary guide to the digital apocalypse.

“An Absolutely Remarkable Thing,” Hank Green

Written by YouTube veteran and VidCon co-founder Hank Green, “An Absolutely Remarkable Thing” is an insider’s glimpse into the pitfalls of the influencer economy. The novel begins when 23-year-old April May vlogs her discovery of a sentient metal sculpture she nicknames “Carl.” What ensues is April May’s collision with the celebrity economy, as she grapples with the implications of her newfound stardom. Green’s debut novel is an exercise in self-awareness; few people understand our propensity for self-commodification as acutely as Green does. Just as April May’s fame results in unprecedented wealth for her and her friends, so too does it invite a distorted perception of self. “An Absolutely Remarkable Thing” critiques the dual-identity syndrome rampant in internet culture and reasserts our vital need for collective compassion.

“Ten Arguments for Deleting Your Social Media Accounts Right Now,” Jaron Lanier

In his brief manifesto on digital consumption, Jaron Lanier illuminates essential truths about social media; it is making us sadder, dumber, and angrier. Lanier interrogates our time on the internet with all the graveness that it demands. To Lanier, the prevalence of social media is not just irritating — it is dooming. The algorithm has so corrupted our autonomy that we are reduced to diluted versions of our former selves, unable to distinguish our own personal tastes from that of our TikTok account’s perfected algorithm. While Lanier’s musings have a strong philosophical basis — Lanier himself is an ex-Silicon Valley tech bro, and has spent ample time reflecting on the consequences of his contributions — he offers little hope for the future of social media consumption. Indeed, Lanier’s conceptions of internet use are without imagination. Refusing to engage with others online is not a panacea for all of society’s ills, but there is a resounding truth in Lanier’s skepticism of the internet. Despite his misleading fatalism, Lanier’s core argument is indisputable: we must reevaluate how we use social media.

“No One Is Talking About This,” Patricia Lockwood

Why are we so prone to emulating the slang and rhetoric we hear on TikTok? Because, Patricia Lockwood answers, the internet has indelibly altered our lexicon. In her novel, “No One Is Talking About This,” Lockwood conveys the utter sense of disillusionment that life on the internet invites. We follow the unnamed narrator as she experiences profound personal tragedy all the while maintaining a presence on the internet. The narrator speaks the language of social media influencers: she digresses, pontificates, and accuses with all the zest of an internet microcelebrity. Through convoluted prose and a startling emulation of online vernacular, Lockwood so clearly expresses our modern dilemma — that is, the struggle to reconcile our private lives with the performative nature of social media.

“How to Do Nothing: Resisting the Attention Economy,” Jenny Odell

In a capitalist economy that rewards productivity and monetizes every facet of the human experience, doing nothing is an act of resistance. “How to Do Nothing” is both a clarion call to detach from online living and a rumination on the destructive quality of capitalism. Jenny Odell’s contemplative essays urge the importance of doing nothing in the digital age. If to be online is to abandon all pretext of geographic location and time,

then situating ourselves in the physical present is a refutation of internet culture. Odell is most convincing when she settles into her key philosophy: that participating in activities outside the realm of productivity and social media fosters a more joyful existence.

“Night Sky,” Carl Dennis

Carl Dennis, in his poem “Night Sky,” renders the unfathomable as ordinary; the cosmos are not a feat of galactic proportions, but a “stream / Or a glassy roadbed or bank of flowers.” Dennis connects our existentialist fears of mundanity and worthlessness with the natural world. He asserts that our lives, however trivial, will matter as long as we engage with the world in meaningful ways. Therein lies the key to online living. We must not be subsumed by the information on our social media feeds, but be able to experience the universe as it extends itself to us.

-SARAH DELIMA SENIOR STAFF WRITER

Read It First: Conversations With Friends

Sally Rooney’s first novel cements her signature witty and intimate dialogue while centering uniquely damaged characters. Her blunt way of delving into the darker aspects of the human condition is unmatched, making it a must-read before the television adaptation airs in May.

Picking up a Sally Rooney novel for the first time can be visually off-putting. The fact that there are no quotation marks around the dialogue makes for a slight learning curve. It’s a trademark of hers, most likely birthed out of the speed at which she gets her words onto paper. Rooney’s writing process seems to consume her completely. She tells The UCSD Guardian that the first draft of “Conversations With Friends,” although incredibly rough, only took her three months to complete.

Of course, it took much longer for her story to eventually grace bookshelves, but once it did it became abundantly clear that Rooney had a knack for taking seemingly mundane moments and making them deeply engaging. It is easy to start appreciating the lack of punctuation, which eventually feels unnecessary, and consequently tear into the book with the same obsessive nature in which she created it. “Conversations With Friends” begins with her hypnotic style, and it only takes a few minutes for readers to become captivated by the fast-paced dialogue and be fully immersed in the perspective of Frances.

21-year-old Frances is a mild, dark, and attentive personality. She performs spoken word poetry with her best friend and ex-girlfriend — Bobbi — who is of a bolder and slightly narcissistic nature. They meet a famous photographer at one of their performances — Melissa — and quickly become intertwined in the lives of the photographer and her husband, Nick. While Bobbi gravitates towards Melissa, Frances finds herself flirting with Nick over email and in public through subtle interactions. Before long, the two of them are involved in an affair that thins almost every one of their external relationships.

The most gripping part of the novel is not the relationships or the affairs, but simply the tone of the novel as a whole. Rooney shapes Frances’s thoughts paradoxically: both cold and deeply emotional. Everything is stated as a matter of fact, but her matter of fact is borderline pessimistic. Even in the most emotional states, she appears relatively numb, expressing emotions simply as passing thoughts and navigating the world in a rather passive way. The few glimpses of emotional action manifest themselves self-destructively and are impossible to turn away from.

It’s hard to not grow to love Frances, a girl who seems unaware of how desperately she desires it. She rolls the feeling between her teeth and lets it come off her tongue in the form of lust. Lust is an easier feeling for her to digest, as she finds desire to be easily swayed whereas love sits like a pit in her stomach.

-JONATHAN SHLESINGER CONTRIBUTING WRITER

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LIFESTYLE

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7 Haikus that Encapsulate Winter Quarter

BY BRADLEY BEGGS
Lifestyle Co-Editor

1. WEEK 1

Oh no, here we go
Another quarter to come
Maybe I'll be fine

2. IN THE DEEP END

Only Week 3 and
I am already drowning
I need a floaty

3. MIDTERMS

I have not left the
Library in days. Do I
really need this class?

4. FRESH AIR

The stress is over
The air is sweeter... and hot
Time to hit the beach

5. BACK TO NORMAL

Study, sleep, repeat
Hang with friends and go to work
Finals still lurking

6. FINALS

S.O.S send help
I didn't study enough
Too many beach trips

7. SPRING BREAK

It's over; it's done
Now to enjoy this big life
Spring will be alright

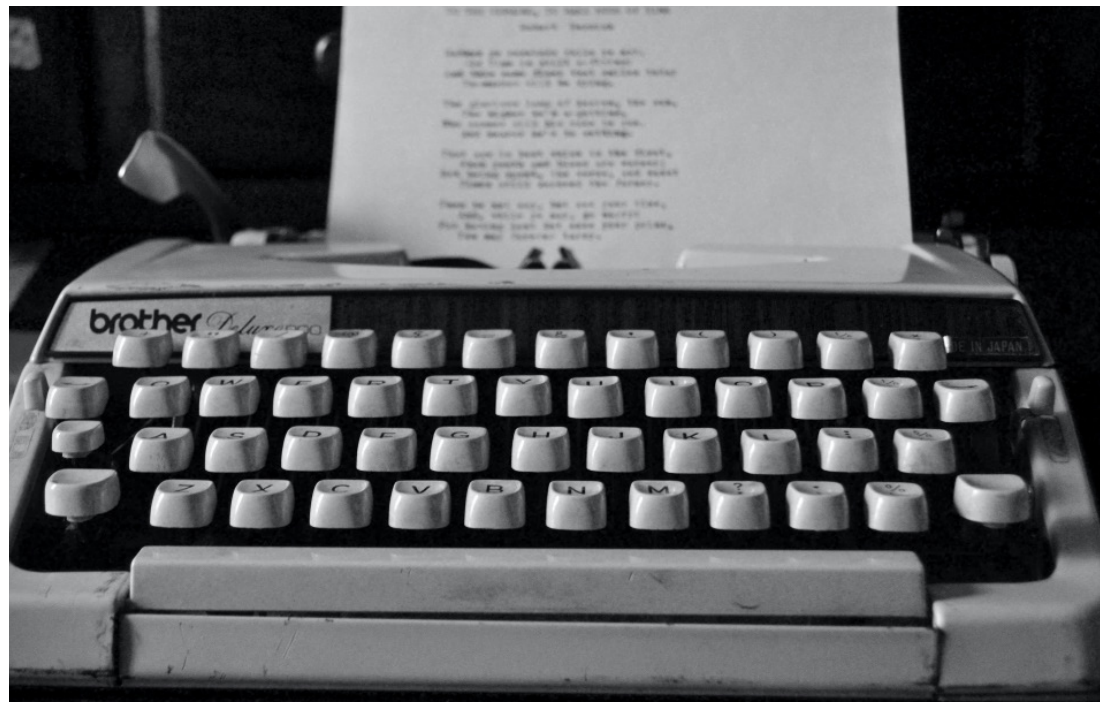


Photo via Jules on Unsplash.

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SPORTS

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UPCOMING
UCSD
GAMES

Baseball	2/22	6PM	at USC
W Basketball	2/24	7PM	vs Long Beach State
M Volleyball	2/24	7PM	at UC Santa Barbara
W Tennis	2/26	12PM	at Long Beach State
M Basketball	2/26	1PM	vs Cal State Fullerton



Image courtesy of UC San Diego Athletics.

UCSD Men's Basketball Entertains, but Loses on Spirit Night

BY DONOVAN PEREZ-SCHIPPER
Senior Staff Writer

The UCSD men's basketball team (11-13, 5-8 Big West) drew a big crowd of 1,753 Tuesday night for Spirit Night festivities against one of the better conference foes the Big West has to offer. UC Irvine (12-7, 6-3 Big West) was one of the preseason favorites, and although they are very talented, they've disappointed this

season. UCSD's balanced attack would look to take advantage of Irvine's methodical pace and win a crucial rebounding battle to come out on top.

The game started out with a lot of energy from both sides, and the star big men for each team were ready for the high-profile matchup. Early on, it was UCSD senior forward Toni Rocak with the advantage, with six early points and a tough layup finish on his third basket to give the Tritons a

10-8 advantage, forcing a UCI timeout.

UCI was the aggressor on defense early on, leading to many difficult shots for the Tritons. In what seemed destined to be a matchup with a lot of back and forth, sophomore forward Jake Kosakowski knocked down a three without hesitation to retake the lead at 15-14. The Triton defense answered the call and forced a long Irvine drought until about the eight minute mark, but the offense wasn't able to stretch the lead much. Both teams fought hard on the defensive end, and eventually the shots began to all rim out for the Tritons as well. After a run for UCI, UCSD needed a big bucket. They found it in freshman forward Francis Nwaokorie's big and-one layup. UCSD went on a run of their own, capped off by a sweet reverse layup from Rocak on a baseline drive. The 7-0 run put the Tritons up 25-23 with only a few minutes to go in the half. The trend of small runs for each team continued with UCI getting the last laugh, as a five-point run brought the score to 28-25 at the close of the first half after an open corner pocket three-pointer went in at the buzzer.

The second half brought much of the same action as the first half. The two teams each seemed to have difficulty with the length and tenacity of the perimeter defense. The

contested shots for each team were not high-percentage looks, which was reflected in the outstanding field goal percentage numbers. UCI shot a paltry 34%, and UCSD shot an absolutely ghastly 30% from the field. Neither team being able to capitalize off of missed shots and opportunities off of turnovers was the running theme, and right when it seemed like either team was about to get hot they would go on a large drought.

To start the half, UCSD came out throwing the first punch with five straight points after a three from Nwaokorie and a short jumper from Rocak. The Tritons would only score another two points in the next ten minutes though, and UC Irvine made a few free throws to all of a sudden take a 39-32 lead with nine minutes remaining. Rocak was the lone effective offensive force for the Tritons, and his herculean effort was most evident in the comeback effort. He scored free throws and a few layups to score the next six Triton points, and the lead was now 43-38. A UCI three pointer increased the lead, but Rocak responded with a converted and-one to keep the game within striking distance.

With UCSD down 46-41 and three and a half minutes left on the clock, the need for some quick scores seemed dire. Free throws from UCI inflated the lead to nine, seemingly

insurmountable with such little time. Two threes, the second one a bank shot from close to the logo, gave the Tritons exactly what was needed. The deficit was three at 50-47 with still 1:22 to go. Free throws were traded, and the lead was cut to two after UCSD was fouled on a three pointer and sent to the line, so the score sat at 52-50 with 40 seconds left. UCSD regained possession off a textbook drawn charge from Rocak, and UCSD called timeout to draw up a play for the winning basket.

With 20 seconds left, the Tritons inbounded the ball and set a double baseline screen for Kosakowski to leak out behind. He caught the ball cleanly, but was short on the three point shot. UCI secured the rebound and made their free throws, clinching the victory. The final score to this hard fought game was 56-50, with both halves scoring an identical 28-25 in favor of UC Irvine.

The UCSD offense was not ready for the aggressive and athletic brand of defense they faced from the Anteaters, but their own defense gave them plenty of opportunities throughout the game. The Tritons will look to figure out their anemic offense as they travel to California State University, Long Beach for their next matchup, which will take place Thursday, Feb. 24th.

The Full Nelson: UFC 271

BY NELSON ESPINAL
Features Editor

Instead of the usual big-picture set up followed by the detailed fight breakdown, this time, we're doing something different. Israel Adesanya and Robert Whittaker fought for the middleweight title on February 12th. The fight was a technical master class, human chess at the highest level. Both fighters are extremely well-coached and are two of the best strikers in the UFC. There were plenty of stakes for both fighters, but what happened in the fight was what grabbed my attention the most. After the fight, there was plenty of discussion about the scoring of the fight and whether the rightful winner actually won. This week in The Full Nelson, I'll be getting into what happened in this fight and in the clash of the heavyweights, Derrick Lewis and Tai Tuivasa.

Main Event Breakdown

The bigger picture of the fight was centered around the feints Israel Adesanya used. These are some sort of fake-out where the opposing fighter does not know whether a movement will turn into an attack or not, requiring a fighter to mirror every body movement between the feint and their actual strike. Adesanya is a master at feints, with hip movement, different postures, and constant stance switches which always hide what attack comes next. The angles are always different, and in combination with his otherworldly head movement, he is a handful striking-wise.

Whittaker is also a proficient striker, but a lot of his success comes from mixing up his jiu-jitsu along with wrestling as well. Robert's triple jab was really effective in the fight,

staying away from looping punches and keeping them straight for this fight. He mixed in a few takedowns and engaged in grappling situations to fight the best fight he could.

Round 1 was all Adesanya. Whittaker came out flat which allowed for Israel to establish range, setting traps with the feints. Israel beat up Whittaker's lead leg, making it red after the first 3 minutes. Adesanya eventually dropped him with a straight right after a feint leg kick. Adesanya has a lot of ways to get leg kicks, but his stance switch to southpaw created so many avenues for the leg kick, eventually rocking Whittaker to sleep and then going for the head.

I scored Round 2, 3, and 4 for Adesanya, all of which featured a similar tale. Whittaker landed a few takedowns and Adesanya showcased a high-level scrambling ability to get up from the takedowns almost immediately. Adesanya continued to punish the legs of Whittaker, limiting his mobility and success overall. Round 2 was the closest out of the three, with Whittaker landing a good number of hits with the triple jab. But Adesanya's kicks just seemed to cause too much damage to ignore. Whittaker wore them well, but their effectiveness was pronounced in the fight. If Whittaker addressed them with checks or just moving out of range completely, I think he would have won what ended up being a really close fight.

The fifth round showcases the plan that Whittaker should have put out in the first place: the triple jab along with takedowns. None of the takedowns caused much damage, but with a fight that featured little damage from either side, takedowns and effective punches made

the difference. Adesanya started out so hot that as the fight progressed, he became comfortable after the 4 rounds. This allowed Whittaker to easily win the 5th round and establish a game plan for a potential third meeting from these two fighters.

The fight was a showcase of easily the two best middleweight fighters on the UFC roster today. Adesanya is a puzzle, one that no one except Jan Blachowicz has managed to figure out over 5 rounds. He is one of the most dominant fighters in the UFC, his kickboxing the best that the fight promotion has to offer. His traps, feints, and accuracy is just unbelievable, with his counter punching being devastating if a fighter gets too aggressive. The key to his game are those leg kicks, slowing the fighter down too much to be effective.

Whittaker did an amazing job not showing the effectiveness of the kicks, but the damage was visible. Adesanya uses a tacit striking style full of tricks and deception. Whenever a fighter feels like they have him figured

out, there are more layers to peel back. The leg kicks make the difference for Adesanya and until a fighter can provide an answer for them, "And still" is going to be uttered every time he fights.

Co-Main Event Breakdown

The banger that was promised was delivered. Big time. Heavyweights Tai Tuivasa and Derrick Lewis faced off in a classic heavyweight slugfest. Both fighters are known for their power and willingness to stand in the pocket and trade. Lewis is a UFC veteran, holding the most knockouts in UFC history and providing notable power. He has fought for the title a few times, but continues to search for the belt. Tai Tuivasa is a surging heavyweight, known for his willingness to punch and stand in with anyone. He is known for his signature "shoey," which features him getting a shoe and a beer thrown from the audience. He spits in the shoe, pours the beer inside, and chugs it, letting the foam drip on his head once he is done.

These heavyweight stars

promised to "swang and bang," and they did exactly that. The first round featured Lewis having the most success, catching Tuivasa clean with punches to the chin. Tai showcased an incredible chin in the fight, taking multiple shots in that first round that would put away most fighters, but although he got rocked, he remained in the fight, clinching when needed to create some time to compose himself.

The fight somehow got into the second round, with a takedown from Lewis in the clinch that led to devastating ground and pound. Again, all of these shots put away 90% of the heavyweights, but Tuivasa would not fall. Lewis' spirit broke while at the same time eating large swinging overhands from Tuivasa. Eventually, after a clean elbow from the clinch, Lewis fell over. Tuivasa was so tired he couldn't even get up the cage, leading to a delayed shoey from the top of the cage.

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Image courtesy of UFC.