



# THE VOICE

Vol 32 Issue 06 - 2024-02-09

## **Minds We Meet**

Interviewing Students Like You!

## **World War III?**

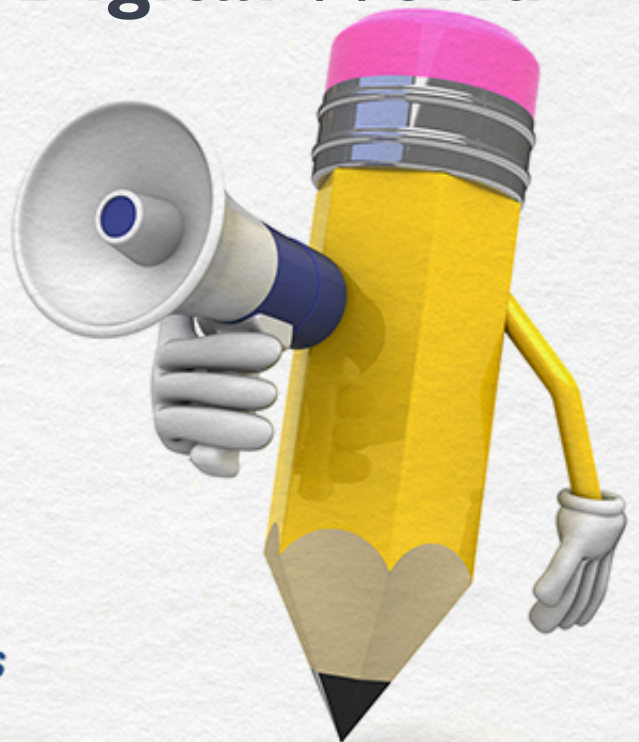
The Existential Threat of Iran's Nuclear Arsenal

## **The Craziness of the Digital World**

Hacking and the Dark Web

*Plus:*

*Voice and What it Means for Writers  
Black Valentines for Haunted Hearts  
and much more!*



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## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

***Hey! Did you know the Voice Magazine has a [Facebook page](#)?***

No kidding! We also do the [twitter](#) thing once in a while if you're into that.

## Editorial Electile 'Dis Function

Karl Low



A bunch of long articles and a fight with Windows Update has caused some issues with the issue, but there's a lot in here that I'm happy to provide. Starting off with one of the most in-depth Minds We Meet I've seen in a while, Josh Flis gives us some unusual and interesting ideas for his stint as the AU President, along with tips for studying that were hard won. Then we have a look at hacking with a Canadian connection. What's interesting is while I've heard of one or two of the people mentioned, I never knew that they were Canadian. And Marie Well is lining up a lot of dots that create a very unpleasant picture in her article, "World War III?". And that's just the start.

We've also got a very good article for those of you out there who find Grammarly or Word providing advice on passive writing. What's passive about it? Take a look at Jessica MacLeod's latest to find out.

Of course, this coming out on the ninth means that it's the last issue before Valentines Day, and that hasn't gone unnoticed by our writers either, with [blue rare] and the Fly on the Wall both giving a nod to the holiday of beheadings

and ancient roman key parties. And you thought romance was dead.

However, this coming out on the ninth also means it's the last issue before the call for candidates for AUSU Council opens on February 13. It only happens once every two years, so if you're at all interested, you should take the opportunity to throw your hat in the ring. If you're worried that you have no board experience or knowledge of what's going on at AU, I'll let you in on something: Most of the people on now didn't either before they joined. I certainly didn't when I joined way, way back when. And if you ever hope to be on a board, then this is a great place to get some practice, learn how things tend to work, beef up your resume or CV, and who knows, maybe even get flown across the country for various meetings. It can be a lot of fun and eye-opening in a way.

But, being perfectly honest, it can also be a pretty hellish experience with the wrong set of people. Fortunately, that's unlikely to happen as AUSU members seem to be pretty savvy with their choices most of the time. We only really get in trouble when there's too few running so not enough choice to be had.

I should note that it was being on AUSU council that made me really understand that government isn't this massive, faceless thing, but, really, just a bunch of ordinary people. People with hopes, fears, biases, idiosyncrasies, and everything that comes with being a person. People who are usually trying to do the best they can in the way that they believe is right. That doesn't mean their good at it, of course. But as a member of AUSU council, you could well have a part in influencing those in government to help them be better at it, at least when it comes to AU and your fellow students.

So, if you haven't already, perhaps take a moment to think about running for AUSU Council. After all, being selfish, I'm always happy to have more Voice readers on it.

Enjoy the read!

A stylized, handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Karl". The script is fluid and cursive, with a long, sweeping tail on the final letter.



# MINDS WE MEET



*The Voice Magazine* recently had a chance to chat with Josh Flis, a student from Barrie, Ontario, who acknowledged that Barrie is “the traditional territory of the Anishinaabeg people.”

Josh is “currently pursuing a [Bachelor of Arts degree with a major in Psychology](#),” with an “objective, depending on ... academic performance, is to graduate in 2025 and then take the LSAT and/or MCAT examinations.” The ambitious student continued, “This is part of my plan to embark on a career path in law or medicine. However, I have a contingency plan in place: should my initial plan require adjustments, I intend to pursue a Master’s degree in education.”

Josh had some great study tips for fellow AU students. “After three semesters, I’ve finally established an effective study routine. This involves a combination of sketching, note-taking, self-testing, and reading. Reading, despite being the most challenging part due to the concentration it requires, is crucial. Sketching notes, such as theories, models, and concepts, helps me feel more engaged with the material. Self-testing is a key component of my strategy, as its effectiveness is well-documented. My note-taking approach has evolved; I used to jot down everything, but now I focus on summarizing and capturing specific details. By reducing

general notetaking and increasing reading and sketching, I’ve found the content to be more meaningful and less overwhelming.”

Josh continued, “My motivation stems from several sources. First, my career aspirations - whether that’s becoming a doctor, lawyer, theorist, or educator - require academic excellence. These career paths are driven by personal reasons. Second, the sheer opportunity to learn motivates me. Lastly, my innate curiosity and desire to understand things fuel my motivation. My experiences with theory, theology, philosophy, leadership, crisis, success, and global exposure have fostered my love for people, health, justice, and learning. One final piece of advice about studying: take breaks to walk or exercise. Fresh air and increased blood circulation can rejuvenate your mind.”

As for advice for new students and/or prospective students? “My advice to new students is to get comfortable with reading because good reading stamina and comprehension is going to translate into better writing, clearer thinking, and a greater experience. Don’t resent the process of reading, but rather immerse yourself in it. I’ve found myself laughing while I read textbooks, journals, and other material. The authors of these texts are as funny sometimes as they are intelligent, and

if you allow yourself to be intellectually humble and learn with integrity, you will not only read simple words, but you will hear the authors' voice."

When this busy student is not studying, Josh let us know about some favourite hobbies and pastimes. "In my free time, when I'm not absorbed in my studies, I often find myself occupied with reading (at present, I'm juggling four books). Besides that, I enjoy going for walks while listening to music, snowboarding, and cooking. I also play some video games: Destiny 2, Halo, and Fortnite occasionally! Having grown up in the era of SNES, VCRs, Myspace, and MSN Messenger, my hobbies align with those typical of an 'elder' millennial."

Josh let us know about three memorable AU courses, namely PSYC 323: Developmental Psychology, SOCI 301: Social Statistics, and HUMN 313: Early Christians.

For PSYCH 323, Josh mentioned, "You know, my personal childhood experiences seemed to fuel my desire to dig deeper into this subject than I have in others. I achieved my first perfect score (100%) on my final paper, a comparative analysis of Vygotsky and Piaget's theories, which held profound significance for me. I tend to take risks in my writing, and when these risks pay off, it not only boosts my confidence but also makes me feel like I'm thinking on the same wavelength as the theorists I study."

As for SOCI 301? "I took Social Stats out of necessity, not interest. Surprisingly, I scored 88%, which was an unexpected and amusing outcome I will never forget."

And HUMN 313? "I chose early Christian history due to my existing strong understanding of the subject. However, my grasp of theory and church history was often dismissed by my faith community, which was quite disheartening. Nevertheless, HUMN 313 recognized and rewarded my insights, marking the first time my knowledge was acknowledged, which was truly uplifting."

Josh's communications with course tutors "varies," explaining, "I can imagine that there is a lot on their plate. As a student, I try not to bother my tutors unless something has been bothering me for a couple weeks or if something is obviously urgent. From my understanding, no university experience offers as close of a tutor/student relationship as AU does. I am thankful for the access I have to my tutors and for their input. And look, if I don't get the input that I am expecting, I just tell the tutor more directly that I need further help from them and try to schedule a 30-40-minute call. Online learning isn't always 100% digital, we can use the phone from time to time, eh! Sometimes a good chat is all a student really needs."

*The Voice Magazine* asked Josh about a possible first project if this student was hired as the new president of AU. "As a student majoring in psychology and the hypothetical president of AU, my inaugural project would involve formulating strategies to enhance the AU experience by introducing new graduate programs in psychology. For instance: Can we integrate MBA coursework with advanced Psychology studies to establish a top-tier Organizational Psychology graduate program, akin to the Wharton School of Business? Can we capitalize on our reputation for excellence in psychological research and education to launch a unique Psychology graduate program specializing in personality and learning development, thereby producing graduates who are coveted educators and sought-after researchers?"

Josh continued, "These proposals aim to ensure long-term sustainability and build on the progress AU has already made. Naturally, such initiatives would require funding and resources. After consulting with staff, reviewing other programs, and researching the most effective ways to implement these programs at AU, I, as President, would draft a letter of intent to the board and begin preparing an investment pitch to secure support. The next steps would involve devising a



strong, evidence-based plan, effectively communicating the opportunity. And, of course being prepared to accept a certain degree of professional risk!”

Next, we asked which famous person, past or present, Josh would like to have lunch with, and why. “I would love to sit with Carl Jung. His deep understanding of the complex interplay between the mind, body, and spirit is so compelling. Additionally, I’d enjoy the opportunity to spend time with CS Lewis, Freud, Robin Williams, and Hans Christenson, the renowned fairytale author.”

Josh also let us know about a valuable lesson learned in life. “The most valuable lesson in my life is simple, ‘Life is a game, and there are levels to this.’ I don’t get caught up with measuring myself by others success. Instead, I get inspired by other people’s successes and failures. Live authentic, not arrogant. Be humble but not humiliated. Value truthfulness over deceit. Be fair, because the spirit of good sportsmanship is the inherent expectation in this game of life. No matter what kind of challenge comes along the way in life, meet those moments with dignity and integrity, but don’t forget to be clever when you can!”



And Josh’s proudest moment in life? “In the business realm, one of my notable achievements was securing RX Drug Mart (now known as Neighborly Pharmacy) as an exclusive client when they initiated their retail pharmacy chain and acquired 23 Rexall stores across Canada. I had the responsibility of establishing all 23 stores with new Pharmacy managers and staff pharmacists. I take pride in having contributed to shaping the culture of an entire pharmacy chain. I’ve collaborated with Loblaw, Walmart, McKesson, and numerous other retail pharmacy banners, but my experience with Neighborly Pharmacy was the most enjoyable and rewarding because it was a start-up experience that has blossomed into a great business, something I was intimately part of creating.”

As a final thought, Josh let students know, “Learning is the cornerstone of life, and the evolutionary result of risk/reward equilibration. From cell divisions to our choices, we learn to keep learning. I have an affinity for taking risks, a trait shaped by my upbringing where risk-taking was also a coping mechanism. However, I’ve redirected my own risk-taking appetite from life choices and back into my writing style. Personally, I’d prefer to be corrected for thinking too ambitiously than for not thinking ambitiously enough. So, if I was to impart one final thought here for the other students, it would be this: know your limit and play within it.” Best of luck Josh!

At times, in an online learning environment, it can feel like you are all alone, but across the nation and around the globe, students just like you are also pursuing their Athabasca University (AU) studies! Each week, *The Voice Magazine* will be bringing you some of these stories. If you would like to be featured next, do not hesitate to get in touch!

*Natalia Iwanek (she/they) is currently completing her Bachelor of Arts in English with a minor in Political Science at Athabasca University.*



## World War III?

Marie Well

### The Existential Threat of Iran's Nuclear Arsenal



#### Iran's Nuclear Proliferation

Despite years of sanctions and payouts, Iran has made alarming strides in the pursuit of nuclear weaponry, presenting an existential threat not only to Israel but potentially to the entire Western world. A recent development in 2024 underscores this concern: Iran has solidified a 20-year cooperation agreement with Russia, mirroring a similar agreement it holds with China. Considering these developments, the question arises: Should the response be one of inaction, intensified sanctions, increased financial incentives, military action, or perhaps an alternative approach? The decision lies with you.

#### Obama's Response to Iran: the JCPOA

In 2015, Western nations crafted an agreement called the JCPOA to restrict Iran's growing nuclear arsenal:

In 2015, Iran, China, France, Germany, Iran, Russia, the United Kingdom, the United States, and the European Union signed the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA). The JCPOA required Iran to implement agreed-upon restrictions on its nuclear program and accept specific monitoring and reporting requirements in exchange for the gradual lifting of these sanctions. (Donovan et al, 2023)

Under Obama's administration, Iran had been given "\$150 billion [in] .... foreign assets that belonged to Iran and were frozen by sanctions imposed to impede its nuclear program" (Norton, 2023).

The deal was breached by Iran: "The limit set in the 2015 nuclear deal was set at 202.8kg of uranium, but that limit has been breached for many years by Iran" (Wintour, 2023).

#### Trump's Response: Sanctions

Trump in 2018 ended the JCPOA deal and introduced new sanctions: "President Donald Trump withdrew the United States from the deal in 2018 and reimposed U.S. sanctions and introduced new sanctions" (DeLuc & Williams, 2023).

According to a 2019 CBS News article, these sanctions were intended to prevent Iran's development of weapons and support of terrorism networks:

The Trump administration is imposing new sanctions affecting Iran's iron, steel, aluminum, and copper sectors, as the U.S. continues to pressure the regime. The sanctions are aimed at denying Iran revenue that the administration says could be used to support the production of weapons of mass destruction and terrorist networks.



.... Iran announced this week that it would stop complying with parts of that deal. (Watson, 2019).

Trump's sanctions led to Iran's inflationary recession and the drop in the Iranian currency and oil exports:

Since 2017, the Trump administration has continuously tightened the noose of sanctions on Iran, targeting more than 80 per cent of the country's economy. There can be little doubt that this "maximum pressure" policy is inflicting considerable economic harm on Iran. Economic growth that followed the lifting of sanctions in 2016 has given way to an inflationary recession. The Iranian currency has lost two-thirds of its value, and oil exports, which are a crucial source of government revenue, have dropped from 2.5 million barrels/day to less than 0.5 million barrels/day. (International Crisis Group, 2020)

### **Biden's Response: Financing**

Biden, on the other hand, has been criticized for granting Iran \$6 billion in frozen Iranian oil revenue:

The Biden administration has faced criticism from Republicans in Washington over its past diplomatic efforts to try to revive the 2015 Iran nuclear deal and its decision to grant Iran access to \$6 billion in frozen Iranian oil revenue to secure the release of five Americans held prisoner in Tehran. (DeLuce & Williams, 2023)

Also, there is consideration of lifting the terrorism label on Iran, which could cause woes for the US's Middle Eastern allies, such as Israel: "Now administration officials are debating how to proceed, knowing that lifting the terrorism label would spark a scathing reaction in Congress and among Middle East allies" (DeLuce, 2022).

### **The Inside on Terrorism Financing**

Here is how terrorism is financed, along with its ramifications:

Terrorists yield destruction to economies, nations, and human lives using simple and fairly cheap technology. To successfully execute their attacks, terrorists need financial resources. Typically, they use different sources of money depending on what's available, their motivations, and the barriers they face from law enforcement. The aim of terrorism is not funding but rather pursuing their ideological goals. Financing is only used as a means to an end. ...

Terrorist financing is like transnational crime as it involves similar aspects including:

.... The use of extreme violence such as murder, blackmailing, kidnapping, and threats of retaliation;

.... What is terrorist financing? .... In most cases, terrorists engage in crime and cooperate with criminals to generate funds and procure weapons. It is also common for terrorists to participate in the drug trade, trade in arms, smuggling large amounts of cash and other illegal substances, trading in precious stones, or kidnapping to generate money. ...

Besides focusing on the main attacks, funding is required for other activities including acquiring weapons, training new terrorists, paying bribes, forging documents, and seeking support through media in the form of propaganda. (Financial Crime Academy, 2023)

Iran's support of Hamas terrorism helped propel the Hamas attack on Israel: "Tehran has been militarily and financially propping up Hamas for years, which ultimately advanced the terrorist group's ability to launch the attack against Israel on October 7" (Donovan et al., 2023).

We know that Iran supports terrorist groups such as Hizballah with weapons:

In Iraq, Iran supported various Iran-aligned militia groups in 2021, including the U.S.-designated terrorist groups Kata'ib Hizballah (KH), Harakat al-Nujaba, and Asa'ib Ahl al-Haq, with sophisticated weapons — including increasingly accurate and lethal unmanned aerial systems (UAS) ... . (Bureau of Counterterrorism, 2021)

Iran has also supplied Hizballah with thousands of rockets, missiles, and small arms, a major concern especially for Israel:

Since the end of the 2006 Israeli-Hizballah conflict, Iran has supplied Hizballah in Lebanon with thousands of rockets, missiles, and small arms in violation of UNSCR 1701. Israeli security officials and politicians expressed concerns that Iran was supplying Hizballah with advanced weapons systems and technologies, as well as assisting the group in creating infrastructure that would permit it to indigenously produce rockets and missiles to threaten Israel from Lebanon and Syria. Iran has provided hundreds of millions of dollars in support of Hizballah and trained thousands of its fighters at camps in Iran. (Bureau of Counterterrorism, 2021)

We also know Iran supports terrorist groups in Gaza:

Designated as a State Sponsor of Terrorism in 1984, Iran continued its support for terrorist-related activity in 2021, including support for Hizballah, Palestinian terrorist groups in Gaza, and various terrorist and militant groups in Iraq, Syria, Bahrain, and elsewhere throughout the Middle East. (Bureau of Counterterrorism, 2021)

Specifically, Iran provides weapons to Hamas and other Palestinian terrorist groups:

In 2021, Iran continued providing weapons systems and other support to Hamas and other U.S.-designated Palestinian

## AU-thentic Events

### Upcoming AU Related Events

#### Library Chat

Tues, Feb 13, 10:30 am to 2:30 pm MST  
Online

Hosted by AU Library  
[www.athabasca.ca/library/index.html](http://www.athabasca.ca/library/index.html)  
No pre-registration needed; access through chat box on home page

#### Learning MLA

Tues, Feb 13, 12:30 to 2:00 pm MST  
Online via MS Teams

Hosted by AU Write Site  
[www.athabasca.ca/news/events/learning-mla-2](http://www.athabasca.ca/news/events/learning-mla-2)  
Register through above link

#### AUSU Student Council Election Info Session

Tues, Feb 13, 5:00 to 6:00 pm MST  
Online

Hosted by AUSU  
[www.ausu.org/event/student-council-election/](http://www.ausu.org/event/student-council-election/)  
RSVP through above link

#### Research CRAFT event: Understanding Data Deposit

Wed, Feb 14, 10:00 to 11:30 am MST  
Online

Hosted by AU Library  
[www.athabasca.ca/news/events/research-craft-event-understanding-data-deposit](http://www.athabasca.ca/news/events/research-craft-event-understanding-data-deposit)  
Register through above link

#### Developing Your Research Series: Research Data Management

Wed, Feb 14, 1:00 to 2:00 pm MST  
Online

Hosted by AU Library and Write Site  
[www.athabasca.ca/news/events/developing-your-research-series-research-data-management](http://www.athabasca.ca/news/events/developing-your-research-series-research-data-management)  
Register through above link

*All events are free unless otherwise noted.*

terrorist groups, including Palestine Islamic Jihad and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine-General Command. These groups were behind numerous deadly attacks originating in Gaza and the West Bank. (Bureau of Counterterrorism, 2021)

It has also aided terrorist attacks against Israelis:

Iran pursued or supported terrorist attacks against Israeli targets in 2021, including a thwarted January plot to attack an Israeli embassy in East Africa, a January bomb attack outside the Israeli embassy in New Delhi for which the Indian government said the IRGC-QF was responsible, and a disrupted attempt to attack an Israeli businessman in Cyprus in October. (Bureau of Counterterrorism, 2021)

### **Iran's Ties to Terrorism**

Sanctions don't stop Iran from funding terrorism, \$700 million annually to terrorist groups and \$100 million annually to Hamas and other Palestinian terrorist groups. Iran also supplies Palestinian groups with artillery and the knowledge to build rockets and missiles:

Despite being heavily sanctioned, Tehran [the capital of Iran] has continued to provide more than \$700 million annually to support terrorist groups, including Lebanese Hezbollah, and up to \$100 million annually to Hamas and other Palestinian terrorist groups. It has also transferred artillery rockets to Palestinian groups. More importantly, Iran has transferred the know-how and equipment to give Palestinian terrorist groups the capability to build rockets and missiles locally. (Donovan et al., 2023)

Iran uses shell companies for transactions to evade sanctions: "As a countermeasure to US, Western, and UN sanctions, the Iranian regime has set up an illicit global network of shell companies, banks, and exchange houses that facilitate transactions on its behalf ..." (Donovan et al, 2023).

It is also aided by The United Arab Emirates (UAE), which is a haven for sanction evasions for Iran:

A significant number of entities in Iran's now-sanctioned "shadow banking network" are based in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) ....

The UAE's favorable, low-tax business environment, vibrant gold trade, and strategic location attract investors from around the world. Unfortunately, the UAE also attracts nefarious Iranian, Russian, and other actors who are taking advantage of loopholes in its financial system to evade sanctions" (Donovan et al, 2023).

Iran is swiftly advancing toward nuclear weaponry, and so the west must not dismiss Iran's potential to deploy it:

Iran's nuclear program made headlines again on February 20 after Bloomberg reported that the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) detected uranium particles enriched to 84 percent at an Iranian facility. Unsurprisingly, Iran denied that it has ratcheted up enrichment to that level, which is just short of the 90 percent generally considered weapons grade. .... Tehran [the capital of Iran] has



recently threatened to pursue 90 percent enrichment to build leverage over the United States.

Iran's brutal repression of protesters and its transfer of kamikaze drones to Russia for its illegal war in Ukraine have drawn US and European focus away from the JCPOA. .... [T]he United States and Europe cannot lose sight of the growing proliferation threat and how current geopolitics may drive Tehran [the capital of Iran] to decide nuclear weapons as necessary for its security. (Davenport, 2023)

Iran also has the potential to accelerate its development of nuclear weapons, meaning it could potentially make four nuclear weapons in less than a month without being detected by the international community:

More efficient centrifuges and a stockpile of 60 percent enriched uranium will enable Iran to quickly ratchet up its enrichment to produce weapons-grade material, possibly before the inspectors could detect a change and the United States could respond.

... using 60 percent—or even 20 percent—enriched uranium as a starting point for enriching material to weapons-grade (90 percent) significantly reduces the time it would take to produce enough material for a bomb.

If Tehran started with 60 percent enriched uranium, for instance, it could produce enough 90 percent material for a bomb in less than a week—a timeframe referred to as “breakout.” This short window is quite worrying because Iran could try to achieve breakout between IAEA inspections, but it is not new. What is changing, however, is Iran's breakout time to multiple weapons, which is largely due to the growing stockpiles of 60 and 20 percent material.

.... With stockpiles of this size and a growing enrichment capacity, Iran could likely produce enough material for four weapons in less than a month. As that timeframe shrinks, which is likely given that Iran shows no signs of rolling back its enrichment, the proliferation threat will continue to increase.

.... If Tehran can breakout to multiple nuclear weapons before the international community can detect and respond, the proliferation threat increases significantly. (Davenport, 2023)

### **Iran's New 20-Year Alliance with Russia**

Last month, Russia and Iran agreed to a 20-year cooperation deal. It complements the 25-year Iran-China deal.

Iran's Supreme Leader, Ali Khamenei, gave his official approval on 18 January to a new 20-year comprehensive cooperation deal between the Islamic Republic of Iran and Russia .... It will replace the 10-year-deal signed in March 2001 (extended twice by five years) and has been expanded not only in duration but also in scope and scale, particularly in the defense and energy sectors. In several respects, the new deal additionally complements key elements of the all-encompassing ‘Iran-China 25-Year Comprehensive Cooperation Agreement’ ... . (Watkins, 2024)

Iran uses Iraq to side-step sanctions on oil and increase Iran and Russian weapon deliveries for attacking Israel:

The shared fields of Iran and Iraq have long allowed Tehran to side-step sanctions in place against its key oil sector, as it is impossible to tell what oil has come from

## More AU-thentic Events Upcoming AU Related Events

### MBA Application Webinar

Thur, Feb 15, 10:00 to 11:00 am MST

Online

Hosted by AU Faculty of Business

[www.athabascau.ca/news/events/online-mba-application-webinar-20240215](http://www.athabascau.ca/news/events/online-mba-application-webinar-20240215)

RSVP through above link

### Library Chat

Thur, Feb 15, 10:30 am to 2:30 pm MST

Online

Hosted by AU Library

[www.athabascau.ca/library/index.html](http://www.athabascau.ca/library/index.html)

No pre-registration needed; access through chat box on home page

### 2024 Open Forum—Innovations in Graduate Education:

#### Critical Engagement with AI

Thur, Feb 15, 9:00 am to 2:45 pm MST

Online

Hosted by AU Faculty of Graduate Studies

[www.athabascau.ca/news/events/2024-open-forum-innovations-in-graduate-education-critical-engagement-with-ai](http://www.athabascau.ca/news/events/2024-open-forum-innovations-in-graduate-education-critical-engagement-with-ai)

Register through above link

### AUSU Student Council Meeting

Thur, Feb 15, 6:00 to 7:00 pm MST

Online

Hosted by AUSU

[www.ausu.org/events/](http://www.ausu.org/events/)

No pre-registration necessary; refer to meeting agenda for instructions to join the meeting

*All events are free unless otherwise noted.*

the Iranian side or the Iraqi ....Another advantage of the shared fields is that they allow effectively free movement of personnel from the Iranian side to the Iraqi side, and the utilisation of key oil and gas developments across Iraq is a key part of Iran's longstanding plan, fully supported by Russia, to build a 'land bridge' to the Mediterranean Sea coast of Syria. This would enable Iran and Russia to exponentially increase weapons delivery into southern Lebanon and the Golan Heights area of Syria to be used in attacks on Israel. The core aim of this policy is to provoke a broader conflict in the Middle East that would draw in the U.S. and its allies. (Watkins, 2024)

A senior E.U. security sector source claims that Iran will be given a license to manufacture Russian missiles; a selection of Islamic militants will be trained to use them:

"Selected IRGC [Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps] personnel will be trained on the latest Russian upgrades of several short- and long-range missiles .... before the plan to manufacture them under licence in Iran begins, with the aim being to have 30 percent of them stay in Iran, with the rest being sent back to Russia," he said. (Watkins, 2024)

The 20-year Iran and Russian deal will mean Iran has a stronghold in the Middle East while the US is less able to protect its allies:

"What all of this means, is that the new 20 -year deal between Iran and Russia will change the landscape of the Middle East, southern Europe, and Asia as Iran will have a much-extended military reach that will give it much more leverage to make political demands across those regions .... This reach also means that countries in these areas will feel that continuing to rely on the U.S. for their protection is a lot more of a precarious option than it was before," he

concluded. (Watkins, 2024)

In January 2024, Iran launched missiles and drone attacks, capable of reaching Israel:

Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps launched missile and drone strikes, targeting extremist groups and an alleged spy base in Iraq, Syria, and Pakistan. ... The strikes launched by the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC) on January 15 and 16 made use of sophisticated missiles, violated the territorial

sovereignty of Iraq, Syria, and Pakistan, and were clearly intended to send a message.

"We are a missile power in the world," Iranian state media quoted Defense Minister Reza Ashtiani as proclaiming. "Wherever [enemies] want to threaten the Islamic republic, we will react, and this reaction will definitely be proportionate, tough, and decisive." (RFE/RL Staff, 2024)

Iran and Israel tensions have escalated during the present Gaza strip war, leading to multiple Iranian partners and extremist groups, which it supports, aligning against Israel

Tensions between Iran and Israel have soared amid the ongoing war in the Gaza Strip. Multiple Iranian proxies and partners have entered the fray against Israel in support of the Palestinian cause and the Iranian-backed Hamas, which is considered a terrorist organization by the United States and European Union.

Iran openly supports the so-called "axis of resistance" -- Tehran's term for the extremist groups and even state actors it guides to varying degrees in opposition of Israel. Many in the axis are now in possession of Iranian or Iranian-derived missiles. (RFE/RL Staff, 2024)

The missiles fired showed that Iran could launch them all the way to Israel:

In what Tehran called Iran's longest-ever missile strike, sophisticated Kheibar Shekan ballistic missiles capable of reaching Israel were used on January 15 to attack the "terrorist bases" of the Islamic State (IS) and other extremist groups in northwestern Syria. (RFE/RL Staff, 2024)

### **Dealing with Iran's Existential Threat to Israel and World**

A new strategy needs to happen to stop nuclear bomb proliferation in Iran or the possibility of war. Some possible solutions for dealing with Iran:

Speaking in Berlin, Israel's visiting foreign minister, Eli Cohen, claimed there were only two options to deal with Iran: using a so-called "snapback" mechanism to reinstate wider UN sanctions on Iran; and "to have a credible military option on the table as well" (Wintour, 2023).

However, some additional solutions to Iran's nuclear bomb potential have been suggested by CSIS:

Redouble U.S. and allied intelligence collection on Iran's nuclear program ....  
Keep the diplomatic door open [despite Iran's funding of terrorism and breaching of agreements].

The option of last resort: a military strike. (Brewer, 2021)

### **UN Stops Restrictions on Iran's Trade of Missile Technology**

On October 18, 2023, the UN ban on Iran's trade of missile technology expired, despite Iran's nuclear development outside of the terms of the JCPOA:

Further, despite Iran's nuclear development outside of the terms of the JCPOA, UN restrictions on Iran's trade of missile-related technology expired on October 18, 2023. This could allow for supplies and ballistic missile components to move more freely to and from Iran and no longer require approval by the UN Security Council. The United States, United Kingdom, EU, and others have issued new sanctions on Iran to continue the prohibitions on missile and UAV technology,



but without the UN restrictions in place it will remain to be seen how countries like China and Russia respond. (Donovan et al, 2023)

Lapsing UN penalties on Iran's missile tests likely embolden Iran on its terror and arms proliferation:

"Lapsing U.N. penalties on Iran's ballistic missile tests, transfers and other activities will be yet another sign of the international community's irresolution to say and do the right thing on Iran. It will, therefore, embolden Iran to double down on its terror proxies and arms proliferation," said Behnam Ben Taleblu, a senior fellow with the Foundation for Defense of Democracies" (DeLuce & Williams, 2023).

### **Iran and US are Now in Combat**

On Friday, February 2, 2024, Iran provoked the US into combat:

[T]he US conducted major airstrikes on 85 targets across seven locations in Iraq and Syria ... the start of what will likely be a series of larger-scale US strikes on Iranian-backed militants who have carried out attacks on US troops in the Middle East. The retaliatory strikes ... came in response to a drone strike by Iran-backed militants on a US military outpost in Jordan on Sunday, which killed three US service members and wounded more than 40 others. (Bertrand et al, 2024)

### **Final Commentary: God's solution**

On a personal note, a friend of mine had four near-death experiences. She claims she went into heaven, where she was exposed to the future of Earth's catastrophes, and revealed that many of these visions have come true. But what strikes me as most profound about her experience is the solution God gave her: love.

So, what would the above situation look like if every one of us chose a path of unconditional love for all others? There would be no terrorism financing, mainly as ideological divides wouldn't exist. That's because when we love all others unconditionally, divisions don't occur. There would be no need for sanctions and no citizens suffering from hyperinflation and low living standards. There would be no bomb threats, no initiating attacks on neighboring countries, and no need to retaliate. There would be no existential crisis, weapons manufacturing, and weapons sales profiteering. There would be no extreme wealth, particularly through ill-gotten gains, pushing ideological dominion. There would be no dying and suffering nor the provocation of global war. There would only be harmony and love.

Is this possible? I believe it is.

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## Unearthing classic articles from previous issues of *The Voice Magazine*

Hungry students will be interested to know that February 9 is National Pizza Day. Similar to that food's myriad variety, we found a multiplicity of pizza references in the archives.

**In praise of battleaxes.** Bill Pollett makes the case that the world could use more people like his blunt-talking, pizza-toting friend, Linda. "By her own admission, she's a 'loud-mouthed old broad', thick-skinned and outspoken to a fault, and not the sort of person to suffer fools gladly. I sometimes suspect that she relishes being on the opposite side of any debate just for the sheer pleasure of dusting her knuckles." Lost & Found – Ode to a Loudmouth, April 6, 2004.

**The Great Pineapple Divide.** Tara Howse muses on the vehemence of those who can't abide by the sweet yellow fruit on pizza. "Writing this article has me now wondering whether the naysayers hate all fruit on pizza and, if that's the case, how does tomato and tomato sauce stand up to this line of thinking?" The Pineapple Principle, April 14, 2017.

## The Craziest of the Digital World

### Hacking and the Dark Web

Alek Golijanin



Before transcribing the digital footprints imprinted over the digital world, sharing with the world how they translate to tell the story of Canadians as being the most eccentric, ballsiest, and greatest hackers to ever walk the digital world, some absolute truths need to be established first. To start, hacking is extremely illegal in Canada, and breaking into someone's digital device constitutes a criminal offence. Also, Canada does not provide hackers immunity, nor has it ever encouraged hackers to attack other nations like some countries do, and it would prosecute hackers it identified who did so. But if it did give them immunity, the digital world would be ruled by a single benevolent hacking superpower, and the digital world would "probably" be better for it. To be clear, the reason I say "probably" and not "certainly" is because some hackers are unpredictable. Albeit, if what *Canadian Bacon* (1995) said about the sovereign nation of Canada as being known for ages as a polite and clean country and if that

translated over to every one of our hackers, then I would say, "certainly".

#### **Sometimes history and fate will cross paths. At a certain time. At a certain place.**

Few people can understand how Canada has given rise to some of the greatest hacking talents that have ever traversed the digital world. Maybe it has something to do with Alexander Graham Bell inventing the telephone, then blessing us with good fortune, which manifested in the form of dial-up internet. What is likely to be of greater interest, however, is the over-the-top personalities involved in hacking and the dark web who have the skills that match their personalities, during the decade of 2000 and 2010. Many of those hacking OGs transitioned away from hacking and the dark web into different careers, while others simply disappeared, but this is the story of some who failed to stop while they were ahead. The top three personalities for me during this era are: "Mafiaboy", Pimp\_alex\_91@hotmail.com, and "Xenomega".

Back in the early 2000s, the average 15-year-old boy might secretly look through their dad's Playboy magazine collection or go to a nearby convenience store to look through Playboy magazines if their dad did not have any. However, Mafiaboy was not your average 15-year-old, he was Michael Calce from Ile Bizard, Quebec, and his hacking exploits resulted in the RCMP and FBI launching a joint manhunt that lasted two months and resulted in a giant police-issued boot footprint being left on the front door of his parents' home. Mafiaboy was found guilty of 55 counts of mischief and sentenced to eight months in a youth detention center, because his hacking exploits allegedly resulted in the loss of \$1.2 billion in USD. What got this little mafioso caught was not any state-of-the-art detection system, but the fact that he went on discussion boards and chatrooms and took credit for bringing down websites including eBay, Amazon, CNN, and Dell, and claimed credit for attacks that were carried out but never reported anywhere. Looking back, it is likely to be the first known instance of "dry snitching" before it became popular to do so on Instagram.

Some may have heard of the website "Silk Road", created by Ross Ulbricht, or watched the documentary, *Silk Road* (2021), about a dark web marketplace for the most illegal contraband and



services can be procured. Few are likely to be aware that a Canadian version of the “Silk Road”, called “Alpha Bay” existed. It was many times bigger than “Silk Road” and estimated to have sales in the hundreds of millions of dollars annually. The individual behind “Alpha Bay” was Alexandre Cazes, a baby-faced youth in his early 20s from Trois-Rivieres, Quebec, who would end up moving to Thailand and getting involved with shady characters from the underworld. Although he attempted to move to a country known for its vulnerable institutions, Cazes seemed to forget that the U.S. Department of Justice’s hand stretched around the world and that on its fingertips rested the three letter agencies including the FBI and the DEA. The U.S. Department of Justice’s official explanation behind what got Cazes caught was his email handle, [Pimp\\_alex\\_91@hotmail.com](mailto:Pimp_alex_91@hotmail.com) (seriously, what is it about hackers that so many end up also wanting to embody rappers or pimps?). There were also rumors that the anthem for “Alpha Bay” traffickers was a remixed version of Asher Roth’s song *I Love College*, by G Malone titled *I Love Dollars*, with the most ironic line, “Last night I made bread. Hope the FEDs didn’t get to tape it.”

In the world of hacking and the dark web, the only thing better than being able to obtain a newly released video game by pirating methods is being able to hack into a game development studio and play games that have yet to be released. The Mount Everest of video game hacking achievements is hacking into a gaming console development studio and finding out the exact technical specifications of a new gaming system, then deciding to build an unreleased version of that gaming console years before it is available for sale, and actually managing to sell one for close to \$20,000. Well, that is a mountain that a group of gaming hackers known as Underground Xbox (UX) managed to climb. with the group’s leader being a Canadian.

The leader of UX was David Pokora known as Xenomega, a youth in his early 20s from Mississauga, Ontario, with a look similar to Kurt Cobain, and he was playing unreleased games like “Gears of War 3” and “Call of Duty: Modern Warfare 3”. Pokora was the person that built an Xbox One years before it went on sale, and there were talks that his group had managed to hack PayPal accounts too. However, what guaranteed that UX members were going to get a lethal injection of anti-virus was that Pokora hacked into network systems that housed U.S. military information – a big no-no. Even though these hacks were extremely sophisticated, they were carried out by teenaged-youth and those in their early 20s. However, all the sophistication could not save them from the U.S. Department of Justice’s grasp and the FBI. How many iterations of *Alien vs Predator* do people need to watch to understand that the Predator always beats every version of the Xen, from the Xenomorph to Xenomega?

When I say that the only other place on earth that can live up to Hollywood and its shenanigans is a city called Ottawa, the capital of Canada – I really mean it. Some may wonder how that is, because Ottawa also holds the record for being the most boring city in the world, but who ever bestowed us with that title is unaware that we have some of the most interesting people in the world. One of them was an Ottawa high school student hacking into Ottawa’s radio frequencies and creating an “underground” radio station (2010). The hacker kid had the best radio station in all of Ottawa, and it resulted in Hot 89.9 and Magic 100.3 snitching on him because they were losing listeners. Just kidding, the reason this hacker kid got busted was because he decided to brag about his radio escapades.

**Here's one of my crazy stories. It is the craziest one I've shared so far.**

Back in 2023, I shared a crazy “digital world” story about tracking down a person living in Britain who tried to hack me and steal my financial information to buy computer parts during the Covid-19 lockdowns. The hack attack on me failed, I managed to get the order canceled and sent the hacker a photo of his front door, and we talked things out. That might classify as a pretty “out

there” story, but I have an even crazier story that dates back to 2010 when I was a high school student that blows it out of the water.

It was the Fall of 2010. I was a high school student at Hillcrest High School in Ottawa. The class was Global Business. The classroom was our computer lab. Yes, this crazy story “digital story” involves hacking during high school. It is so out there that it is worth quoting Rod Serling’s opening monologue of *The Twilight Zone* (1959-1969) before getting into it. “*You’re traveling through another dimension, a dimension not only of sight and sound but of mind. A journey into a wondrous land whose boundaries are that of imagination. That’s the signpost up ahead—your next stop, the Twilight Zone!*”

There was a kid in that Global Business class in 2010 who got caught exploiting a website vulnerability on the back-end where user credentials were stored and available for anyone who bothered to look during class. The website that was being exploited was that of the Ottawa Police Service. And the reason that the kid got caught for snooping around was only because they logged into the email of someone extremely important at the time and sent a very silly email to another member of the Ottawa Police Service, because they thought it was funny and wanted to look cool. So when the first Ottawa Police Officer (female school resource officer) came to the classroom, they wanted to confiscate every single desktop computer in the lab—over thirty computers.

There was another kid in that same Global Business class that told the hacker not to send the email, to stop showing everyone, and then asked the hacker kid if they were aware that there were other police services, agencies, and departments that had the same vulnerability. After the kid hacker got caught, suspended, and charged for breaking into the Ottawa Police Service’s network systems, the other kid followed hacker “omerta protocols” and teased that female resource officer about “cool stories”, which, looking back in hindsight, probably made things worse for the hacker. But thankfully for the hacker kid, they were considered a minor, being only seventeen years old at the time of the incident.

There is no way anyone would believe that in the Fall of 2010, a grade 12 student at Hillcrest High School got caught for hacking into the Ottawa Police Services network systems from the school’s computer lab. But it happened. It was the start of the 2010 school year at Hillcrest High School in Ottawa, I was a student in that Global Business class, held in the school’s computer lab. And this incident resulted in the Ottawa-Carleton School Board making significant changes to computer access, but there were Canada-wide changes too. Other school boards followed suit, and there was even an informal “inquiry” that explored network system vulnerabilities of policing stakeholders, and those findings were scary. There were other instances of individuals managing to hack into the network systems of other policing stakeholders. Simply put, “big brother” was getting big brothered, and the identities of some of the individuals who managed to break into the network systems remains unknown.

Perhaps this crazy “digital world” story leaves readers with more questions than answers, but film director Christopher Nolan’s movie *Inception* (2010) did the same and won some Oscars for it. So, perhaps the best way to end before the credits roll is to quote Rod Serling once more, with a minor edit, “*What do we do when our world is turned upside down? When everything we thought to be true is ripped away and we’re forced to face a new reality? You’ve just awoken to the fact that when we put away childish things, we may be closing our eyes instead of opening them and that perhaps our only hope is to face our reality: a multitude of truths, not shrinking from that vital, arrogant, fatal, dominant X beyond imagination, but to embrace it. To open ourselves to the unknown. Not the end of the story, but a new beginning for the Twilight Zone.*”

*Alek Golijanin is an AU alum who considers himself a gentleman first, a scholar second, and a combat sports fanatic third. In that order.*



## Cities in Six

### Angra do Heroísmo

Barbara Lehtiniemi

To launch this series, in which I'll try to give a flavour of various cities I've visited using only six photos each, I'm starting with one of my favourite cities: Angra do Heroísmo ("Angra" for short.)

If you've never heard of Angra, you're not alone. Angra sits on the island of Terceira, in the nine-island archipelago of the Azores. The Azores, an autonomous region of Portugal, lie in the mid-Atlantic, roughly west of Portugal and south of Iceland. My husband and I have visited the city twice (and intend to return); these photos are from our February 2020 visit.



Angra's built heritage benefits from its UNESCO World Heritage designation. The city suffered major damage from an earthquake in 1980, but was rebuilt within four years.

Angra is a compact city, sandwiched between its sheltered bay and Terceira's volcanic spine. The red-tiled roofs and pastel-painted buildings lend the city a European aura. This view is from Monte Brasil, an extinct volcanic cone which is criss-crossed with hiking trails.







Among the black cobbles, contrasting coloured stones are used to create artful designs.

This one pays homage to the island's dairy industry, which produces some amazing cheeses.



Cobbled streets lead steeply up from the waterfront. Angra is a walkable city, and if you're not already fit, you'll get fit just strolling around. Not a great city for those with wonky knees or mobility issues—but there are lots of taxis.



After walking up and down cobbled hills, cold beer tastes great. Angra has many small bars with outdoor tables, and, at the time of our visit, beer was only a little over one Euro each.



The Azores enjoys a borderline Mediterranean climate and the temperature is pleasant all year long.

Nearly anything seems to grow there, and the Jardim Duque da Terceira (Duke of Terceira Garden) is lush with exotic vegetation from all over the world.

Travel note: There are direct flights to the Azores from Toronto and Montreal, as well as many European airports. Most flights from Canada land on either Sao Miguel or Terceira islands, or both; the remaining islands can be reached via regional flights or ferries.



## Inside AU Events

Natalia Iwanek

### How to APA: The Essentials of Formatting, Citing, and Paraphrasing



At times, it can be difficult to find a sense of community in AU's digital sphere. However, there are a great deal of events occurring on a consistent basis. These range from style guide tips for assignments to research tips and tricks.

This *Voice Magazine* writer recently had a chance to attend an AU style guide-focused session.

How to APA: The Essentials of Formatting, Citing, and Paraphrasing, which was co-sponsored by AU's Write Site and the Faculty of Graduate Studies, took place on January 30, 2024 from 12:30 pm to 2:00 pm MT.

A total of ninety-two students joined this event, which was hosted by Sarah-Jean Watt, AU's Write Site Coordinator, following a brief introduction by Krystal Zahara, AU's Coordinator, Graduate Thesis & Academic Records.

#### Essentials of Formatting

The session began with an overview of formatting essentials required by the American Psychological

Association (APA).

In particular, APA style is required by various disciplines, including Psychology, as well as many other Social Sciences.

It is known as a flexible style—the most recent version, APA 7, places an additional emphasis on readability and accessibility. One example of this is the focus on Sans Serif fonts, such as Calibri or Arial, which are considered more readable.

#### Title Page and Headings

Next, the session focused on formatting a title page, as well as headings. It is important to note that APA 7 no longer requires a running head, as opposed to previous versions. However, it is still best to check with your instructor, because certain projects may still require it.

In addition, in APA 7, the page number remains in the upper right corner, while the title is centred and bolded. The title case, namely capitalization, follows previous rules, with articles and prepositions lowercased.

The session continued with a discussion of abstracts at the beginning of research papers, as well as a focus on different levels of headings seen throughout papers, which are used to make organizations simple.

#### Citation Requirements

The discussion then moved on to in-text citations and formatting standards for different source types. Particularly, in-text citations are used to direct a readers' attention to the Reference section at the end of the document. They are primarily used to provide readers with sources for further reading, as well as for adhering to standards of academic integrity. Indeed, students must cite all outside ideas included in a paper, including paraphrases, quotes, data, tables, and figures.



Mid-way through the session, there were a bit of technical difficulties. While participants waited for the session to restart, Tunde Tuze from AU's Write Site continued answering student questions in the chat. After a short pause, all technical difficulties were resolved and the discussion continued. In particular, discussion centered on how to cite traditional knowledge and oral communications from Indigenous Peoples, including Elders and Knowledge Keepers.

### Tips for References

Finally, the session ended with a discussion on references, which provide full information on cited in-text sources. In particular, Sarah-Jean Watt provided information about stylistic requirements for the Reference page, including capitalization, italics, commas, and semi colons.

### Future Events

For students who would like to attend future events, you can find what's going on and dates in our AU-Thentic Events column, and updated information is available on AU's [The Hub](#)

*Natalia Iwanek (she/they) is currently completing her Bachelor of Arts in English with a minor in Political Science at Athabasca University.*

## [blue rare]Black Valentines for Haunted Hearts Playlist Suggestions For Unique Dining Occasions (Part 2)

**Oliver-Moorcraft Sykes**



This week, to mark the upcoming Valentine's Day celebration, part two of my three-part column of thematic playlist and menu choices will offer up selections that connect in some way to themes of romance and intimacy. However, I also want to recognize the fact that there are few things in life more irritating than two people who are genuinely in love. If you are part of that .03% of the world's population to whom this applies at any given point in time (this is according to the roughly penciled calculations I've just made on the back of my tear-stained dive bar cocktail napkin), then that's a truly wonderful thing, and I could not be more happy for the two of you. Just be sure to keep it to yourselves. The rest of the world is either searching for love, falling out of love, recovering from love, writing a country-and-western song, or simply wondering what the fuck just happened.

Sentimental ballads, like public displays of affection, just rub everybody's face in it and make them want to pop your heart-shaped helium balloon. Besides, nobody needs suggestions for light-hearted love songs, anyway. If you find yourself head-over-idiomatic-heels, *any* tune you associate with the apple of your eye will stir feelings of longing and desire within your fevered breast, whether it be "Take My Breath Away," or "Pigs (Three Different Ones)".

Nope, what I am pushing your way with this idiosyncratic list are pieces of music that I believe evoke the more enigmatic and melancholy aspects of the capacious human heart.

With this in mind, my first suggested track this week is "Limestone & Fe," by the Russian-born classical cellist **Anastasia Kobekina**, from her sonorous, recently released recording **Venice**. Like all the tracks on the record, this piece is a small musical jewel that succinctly conjures the mysterious, shadowy, and perhaps a tiny bit sinister, qualities (much like the nature of love itself) of that fabled and most romantic of cities. Draw the red velvet drapes, light some candles, and allow yourself to be swept away, alone or with another.

Suggested food pairing: I think something visceral and rich should fit the bill. Veal sweetbreads, maybe, or fresh squid ink pasta, served with an old world wine, such as a chianti or a barolo. Preferably enjoyed in a crumbling Venetian palazzo haunted by the ghost of a husband-poisoning 19th century Contessa, its gargoyles and lanterns reflected upon the swirling black waters of the Grand Canal.

Next, I offer up the song “**Black Valentine**,” by the ever-saucy, always delightful jazz / pop songstress **Caro Emerald**. It's a sultry ode to secret, reckless love, the sort of song that evokes the smoke-filled cabarets of 1920s Montparnasse.

Suggested meal pairing: Hell, we're in Paris! You can't go wrong. I think I'll order the duck confit, followed by crêpes suzette for dessert, and a tray of boulevardiers, maybe. The evening is young, after all, and we are so very beautiful.

Finally, I proffer for your consideration the torch song “**One For My Baby (and One More For the Road)**”. Crafted by the sterling songwriting partnership of Johnny Mercer and Harold Arlen back in 1943, the song tells the tale of a heartbroken bar patron bending the ear of a (hopefully) sympathetic bartender, as they share the story of what went wrong in their failed relationship. It's wry, haunting, and perfectly relatable for anyone who has found themselves forlorn and alone hard up on closing time. There have been many excellent takes on this jazz classic, not least by Dean Martin and Frank Sinatra, but my favourite has to be the nuanced performance by the sublime **Billie Holiday** from *Lady Sings the Blues*.

Suggested meal pairing: The hour is late, and unfortunately the kitchen is closed. Happily, though, the honeymooning couple from Barcelona have finally left, and there is room on the stool beside me at the bar, and half a bowl of salty peanuts still left. Feel free to join me if you can.

At the very least, please visit me here next time, when I will be dishing up my final menu of musical and culinary suggestions, no reservation required. Next week: “Music and Food Suitable For the End of the World”.

## Scholarship of the Week

Digging up scholarship treasure for AU students.

**Scholarship name:** UCT Heaston Scholarships

**Sponsored by:** United Commercial Travelers (UCT)

**Deadline:** March 15, 2024

**Potential payout:** up to \$6000 per year

**Eligibility restriction:** Applicants must be high-school seniors who are enrolled and entering a undergraduate university or college program in the coming academic year.

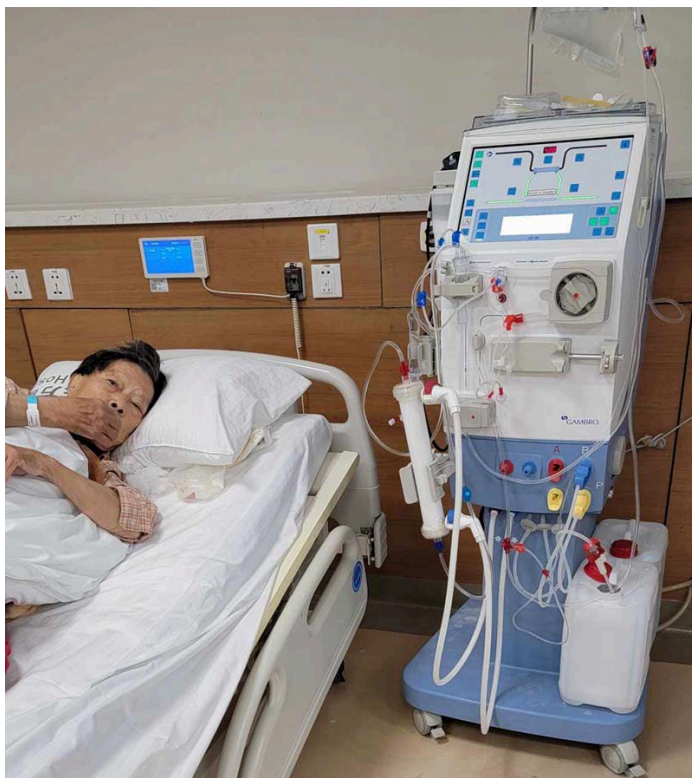
**What's required:** A completed application form, along with a personal narrative discussing your academic career and extracurricular activities, three letters of recommendation, official transcripts, and an acceptance letter.

**Tips:** Applications must be mailed and received by the deadline, so allow for ample time.

**Where to get info:** [www.uct.org/the-uct-heaston-scholarship/](http://www.uct.org/the-uct-heaston-scholarship/)



## Lessons from a Sick Loved One



*One of the most helpless moments that I felt for a long time was watching the nurse hook her up to a dialysis machine. At the same time, I felt extremely proud of her to be incredibly resilient throughout the process.*

the fact that moments like these are precious and finite. Taking the time to visit our loved ones makes an impact on our health and happiness too.

## Xine Wang

Recently I took some time off work to visit my grandma in China. Despite only being overseas for 1 week (just 4 days on the ground), it taught me a lot about life. Due to my grandmother's health, she was unable to be reunited with her family overseas, so my family, over the years, has taken turns to visit her.

### The importance of family:

Like many AU students, I lead a fairly chaotic and busy lifestyle. I love packing my schedules full and feeling productive almost all the time. However, this trip has given me more perspective than simply working blindly. Since the COVID pandemic, I have not had the opportunity to see her. Her kidney disease progressed to more significant end-stage renal disease that requires frequent dialysis. Three times a week she would sit next to the dialysis machine in a sanitary room for hours waiting for her blood to be detoxified from waste. It's a gruesome process to say the least. Taking the time to visit her has been extremely rewarding. Despite the pain and suffering she has undergone, her face lit up when we saw each other in the seniors home. It really shed light on

### Gratitude of health:

Witnessing a loved one's health struggles gave me a deep appreciation of my own finite timeline. It's not every day that we have these reminders of mortality. However, having walked around the entire senior's home, a sense of grief washed over me imagining the final days lived out in a home similar to this. It gave me a greater sense of purpose for accomplishing my own dreams. More importantly, it reminded me that taking care of our body is one of the best investments one can make. Starting early to improve our mental and physical wellbeing will go a long way to allowing us to lead longer and more fulfilling lives.



*My grandma had taken care of me from a young age. When my mother was away for work, she would be my primary caretaker as a child.*



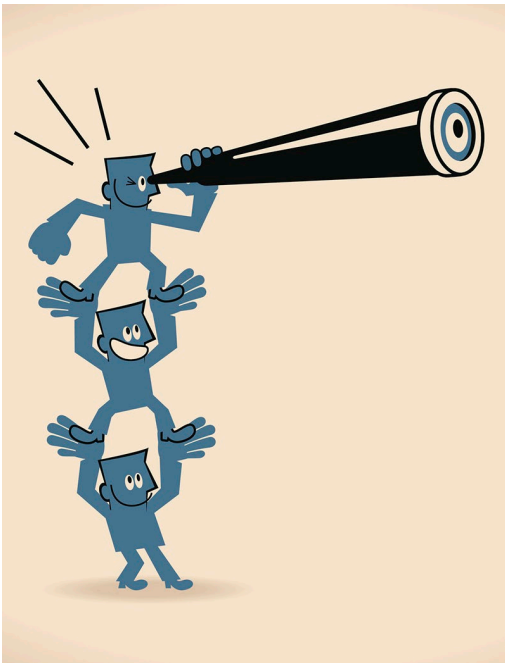


*Due to her health, there are many foods that she cannot eat. However, I am thankful that I was able to take her to this supermarket to grab all the snacks she could enjoy.*

### **Resilience and adaptability:**

Despite the daily challenges my grandmother faces, including a recent outbreak of shingles in the seniors home, she has faced life with a lot of optimism. Some of the struggles that generation faced are hard to put into words. Through famine and warfare, she lived through some significant events that caused her to mature at an early age. Her wisdom in life, including facing everything as it comes and taking things one step at a time, has really helped me in my lowest points in life. There's no shortages of obstacles in life but certainly facing it with some blind faith will help us make the most of it. My personality has always tended to be more of the anxious and over-worrying type, but after speaking to her, I felt that if we always face life with this anxiety, we won't be able to fully enjoy it. Good or bad, taking things one step at a time has been my new mantra.

### **Research Assistant Opportunity Moodling Toward Better Learning!**



As a student you may be familiar with platforms like Moodle, Blackboard, and Bright Space. What you may not know is how little is understood about such platform's relative efficacy, in terms of quantifiable participant statistics. Despite feedback from pupils to tutors, such "data is very difficult to access and interpret by instructors and learning designers, and thus very seldom used effectively." It is the task of this research assistant project to adequately unpack such feedback, the better to improve teaching management tactics. To this end the successful applicant will demonstrate programming and web development skills.

This project will utilize an "Academic Analytics Tool (AAT)" for further goals of uncovering which requirements are needed in a given setting, adding a "configuration interface" to improve functionality, and to enable an open-source method of utilizing the works within academic settings. Two assistants will be hired to analyze, utilize, and even train others (optional) in the deployment of these digital learning spheres.

Interested parties are asked to send their cover letter, resume, transcript, and two references to [sabineg@athabascau.ca](mailto:sabineg@athabascau.ca).

## Fly on the Wall Valentine's Day with Freud

Jason Sullivan

### Is That a Tongue in Your Cheek Or Is it Just a Cigar Being a Cigar?



The notion of receiving something for nothing invokes a tricky psychological algebra. Whether its investing in extraterrestrial acreages in hope of becoming a lunar landlord or raising one's kilt in glee after having purchased some Scottish highland peat bog (the better to become an exclusive member of a landed gentry, any gentry), the promise of cheap thrills for pleasurable rewards abounds within us all. We didn't ascend this high on the evolutionary food chain as a species by an excess of charitable magnanimity or an inability to calculate the easiest way to get what we want. As organisms there's a hydraulic force at work in much of our life, whereby our purposeful pursuit of pleasure and egoistic expansion into untapped realms runs up against that old nemesis of hard work and diligent

labour: common sense. What we call common sense, in life as in learning, likely arises from the deepest of deep time recesses when the first primates emerged from the jungle into the light of day of conscious self-awareness.

Where meanings and motivations are concerned, Sigmund Freud's body of work is particularly worthy of a gander. To Freud, we nubile primates are in essence exactly what every steadfast Gen Z member of the popular science fandom claims: animals doing animal things, with animal desires and animal impulses. And urges. Freud's starting point, in terms of understanding the ways and wiles of *Homo sapiens*, might best be summarized by a 90s rock song by the aptly-named band the Fun Lovin' Criminals. "You and me Baby, we ain't nothin' but mammals, so let's do it like they do on the Discovery Channel".

Pursuant to pleasure's carnal and intellectual aims, Freud named this implacable core drive, with its many offshoots and avenues impacting modern life choices from feverish creativity to rabid baby fever, the *pleasure principle*. The pleasure principle, ranging from how much butter we slather onto a piece of bread to how much money we spend on a Valentine's Day bouquet, involves matters social to others and egoistic in our mind's eye. Through pursuit and withdrawal, the pleasure principle serves to guide our actions and our passions. Throughout life's little circumstances, happenstances, and accidents, "the course of those events is invariably set in motion by an unpleasurable tension, and it takes a direction such that its final outcome coincides with a lowering of that tension—that is, with an avoidance of unpleasure or a production of pleasure" (Freud, 21). Cultural calculus, in other words, combines with the rawer drives of our organic essence as living beings. We have to balance and define needs and wants, be it in bank statements or verbal statements. As with paramecia in a petri dish or bacteria in a jug of yogurt, we must attain an unstable peace betwixt exigent realities of society and the innate tendency to fulfill procreative desires. Despite, as Aristotle put it, being the human who thinks, reproductive—gonadal—realities affect the way that we humans decide our fate. Our body is the arbiter of our mind via the unconscious in ways that are hard to pin down, let alone hold in bondage per se, in the manner of the comedy tune "tie me (sic) kangaroo down, sport."

To be sure the passionate and sometimes ill-advised pursuit of our most carnal pleasures provides dubious and fleeting rewards that balance against an awful lot of heartbreaking consequences. From tawdry divorce court proceedings under the enraptured eyes of millions of livestream viewers, to the emotional maladjustment of children whose innocence is lost when they realize that Mommy and Daddy were only pretending to love one other, the earnest pursuit of pleasure is never a value-neutral drive in the manner, say, of a squirrel seeking nuts for winter or a pooch seeking a pantleg whereby to relive itself. As humans, we're responsible for the consequences we engender, and no time of year is this truer than in our participation in that time-honored litmus test of loving relationships and labile expectations: Valentine's Day.

Contrary to the pleasure principle, which to Freud and biologists alike may be said to be the Prime Mover of all that we do and desire, the *reality principle* holds sway as a means by which we biped organisms hold our most fanciful fancies in check, the better to preserve our reputations, dignity and adulterous veneer. Freud succinctly summarizes the reality principle's prime directive: "Under the influence of the ego's instincts of self-preservation, the pleasure principle is replaced by the reality principle. This latter principle does not abandon the intention of ultimately obtaining pleasure, but it nevertheless demands and carries into effect the postponement of satisfaction...and the temporary toleration of unpleasure as a step on the long indirect road to pleasure" (26). Pleasure-cum-reality, to add a Latin flourish, may be said to involve compromises, tradeoffs, and transactions—not least of which between our little inner angel and inner demon, the stuff of which cartoon climax scenes are made.

Any spouse who'd really prefer not to get gussied up and spend three hours at a fancy and overpriced restaurant but desires the happiness of her spouse and the memory of a well-done Valentine's Day to go with an over-seasoned steak can relate to how the reality principle provides checks and balances to our desires. Probably we'd prefer to simply receive free lunches and easy tickets out of the "my spouse is an asshat, let me tell you why" jail free card. But, in foraging, as in fornicating, the human realm follows the way of nature. We can't, as Mick Jagger sang with those fulsome, miniskirt-flapping lips, *all* get what we can't. Some of us, but not all of us – although, as the saying goes, even a blind squirrel finds a nut now and then.

Then again, maybe we *can* all have our Valentine's Day cinnamon hearts and eat them out too. As students and adult-esque citizens, the means to our ends need not merely inveigh a weighing of pros and cons, truths (sometimes bitter) and consequences (sometimes dire). True love, real romance, and authentic good intentions can be the stuff of Valentine's, just as such sentiments can impart a rosy glow to third dates, proposals, and My-Big-Fat-Canadian-Weddings. Love, however it translates itself out of our primordial soup bowl of DNA and through the symbolic sycophancy of cultural expectations, is a fascinating thing to behold - and an even more lustrous event in which to participate. This Valentine's Day, let's remember that on the greatest report card of life, it's not whether we spoke or wrote a perfect answer, or expressed an elegant silence, but simply whether our actions were filled with loving kindness towards that special someone who we love the most.

(This article is dedicated to my dear wife Janice, for eight wonderful years!)

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*Jason Hazel-rah Sullivan is a Masters of Integrated Studies student who loves engaging in discourse while working in the sunny orchards and forests of the Okanagan.*





## Voice and What It Means for Writers and Readers

Jessica MacLeod



I don't know about you, but I make pictures in my mind as I read. When I read clear writing, I can easily gather concrete, specific details that I use to make a better picture. Through the picture-making process, I develop a better understanding of whatever I am reading. Voice influences what, how, and when certain details make it into the picture I am constructing.

Just one of many factors that influence clarity of expression, voice refers to whether the subject of the sentence is performing an action or receiving the action. To identify voice, which can change from sentence to sentence, we have to pick apart sentence structure and understand the relationships between its actions, performers, and objects.

A simple active sentence provides a clear subject that acts.

- Protesters climbed over the barricades.

A simple passive sentence shows the subject as receiving action.

- City Centre was overcome by protesters this

week.

Notice the change in subjects and emphasis. In the first sentence, protesters are the subject and we see them climbing immediately. In the second sentence, the subject is City Centre. We picture that first, but then we have to guess what that would look like if it was overcome, but we only know by whom (the protesters) at the end of the sentence. This processing happens quickly, but you can see how the passive structure slows us down compared to the active structure.

In some passive sentences, we may never find an answer to the question of *by whom*. I'm sure you are familiar with these evasive examples of political rhetoric:

- Mistakes have been made.
- An investigation has been launched.
- The matter will be addressed.

Clearly, the intent is to not be clear. In statements like these, readers or listeners do not get real details to add to our picture. This construction deliberately omits the performer to hide issues of blame or responsibility.

In longer sentences, diction and word placement can obscure the actions and performers, making it difficult for the reader to see the sentence as either active or passive, and create the necessary mental pictures. Sometimes the words that seem to convey action are acting as other parts of speech rather than as verbs. Fun stuff, eh?

Most style guides say that the active voice encourages direct explanations that fall in a natural sequence of words. Active sentences tend to be shorter, clearer, and more specific. Passive constructions tend to be wordy, awkward, and vague. The *Publication Manual of the American*

*Psychological Association* says that while both types of voice are permissible, “many writers overuse the passive voice.” It encourages writers to use active voice “as much as possible to create clear, direct sentences” (American Psychological Association 118). The *Chicago Manual of Style* agrees, stating, “As a matter of style, passive voice ... is typically, though not always, inferior to active voice” (University of Chicago Press 264). They acknowledge that, sometimes, passive might be more appropriate.

Benjamin Dreyer, copy chief of Random House, has some helpful and amusing advice about identifying active or passive voice. “If you can append ‘by zombies’ to the end of a sentence,” he says, “you’ve indeed written a sentence in the passive voice” (Dreyer 14). You can also look for these words: *was*, *were*, *by*, and *will be*. They do not guarantee the sentence is passive, but the sentences they are in are worth checking closely.

Hemingway Editor and Grammarly have passive voice checkers which are helpful but not always correct or reliable. They can check for passive voice, but not discern when it may be more appropriate to change voice. A human writer or editor who understands passive voice, as well as the written content and context, is the best judge of when to use active or passive voice.

So how do we know which voice to use in a given sentence? Here are some questions to consider if you are revising a sentence for voice:

- Where does the reader’s interest lie at this time? Should the performer be emphasized with an active sentence? Is the action more important than the performer? Or is the object or recipient of the action more important than the performer and action?
- Do I have a reason to tame, hide, or delay certain details? Is the performer of the action unknown or unimportant?
- If I use a concrete noun and definite action (in the form of a verb), will I create a more efficient and detailed picture in the reader’s mind?
- Am I trying to avoid using a personal pronoun?
- Would changing the voice of the sentence ease a transition between sentences or paragraphs?
- Have I used too many direct, active sentences? Is there a choppy or repetitive cadence to the paragraph?
- Have I written a sentence that is too long and awkward to comfortably read aloud?
- What voice and arrangement of words will ease the experience for the reader?

Remember, most of the time, the active voice is best. However, the writer who is willing to give readers the most comfortable and elucidating experience will consider these questions while revising sentence by sentence. By shifting and changing certain words, we adjust emphasis and affect how our readers build pictures and meaning from our writing.

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*Jessica MacLeod is a writer, editor, and indexer happily living with her family in rural Eastern Ontario. She loves learning, creating, reading, writing, and actively enjoying the outdoors.*



## Beyond Literary Landscapes

### Mystery Authors

Natalia Iwanek



From my early beginnings as a young introvert, the public library has always been a bit of a refuge. Years later, not much has changed, albeit with an additional affinity for endless hours spent scouring second-hand bookstores to add to my ever-growing “to-read” pile.

From one bookworm to another, this column will be underscoring and outlining various literary genres, authors, and recent reads and can serve as an introduction for those unfamiliar with these works, as a refresher for long-time aficionados, and maybe as an inspiration for readers to share their own suggested topics. Do you have a topic that you would like covered in this column? Feel free to [contact me](#) for an interview and a feature in an upcoming column.

#### Who

This week’s column introduces readers to a wide world of mystery authors.

Since the following list of mystery writers ranges from classic mystery novelists to more contemporary authors, it is hoped that there will be something of interest for all types of readers.

#### What

Although this column usually offers several specific book recommendations for each author, this week, I have decided to take a different approach. In particular, I have decided to focus solely on mystery authors by era. Why, you may be asking? Well, mystery authors are often extremely prolific writers; it would be impossible to narrow down their popular works into one or two recommendations. In addition, the careers of many of these writers span decades.

Without more ado, some notable classic mystery authors include Agatha Christie, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, and Edgar Allan Poe.

Mid-century mystery authors include Patricia Highsmith, Daphne du Maurier, and Raymond Chandler.

Examples of more contemporary mystery authors include Gillian Flynn, Stieg Larsson, and John le Carré.

#### Where

These authors come from a variety of geographical locations, including the United States, Sweden, and the United Kingdom.

#### When

Many of these works were written during the 20 and 21-centuries.



## Why

These works may be of interest to AU students who would enjoy suspenseful and intricate stories, as well as those who would like an introduction to the world of mystery writing.

## How

AU's wide range of diverse courses make it easy to study this topic in depth. Courses related to the mystery novel are available in a variety of disciplines, including one's that may fit into your Degree Works. (Always check with an AU counsellor to see if these particular courses fulfill your personal graduation requirements!)

AU students interested in this topic may consider enrolling in ENGL 491: Directed Studies in Literature, a senior-level, three-credit course, which "is designed for students who want to pursue a particular topic of study in literature, cultural studies, or both." (Please note that this course requires several prerequisites, including ENGL 211: Prose Forms and ENGL 212: Poetry and Plays, as well as two additional senior-level ENGL courses and course coordinator approval.) Happy reading!

*Natalia Iwanek (she/they) is currently completing her Bachelor of Arts in English with a minor in Political Science at Athabasca University.*



## The Path to Becoming an Academic Investigative Journalist

**Alek Golijanin**



Out of all my personal stories, none might be less believable than my path to becoming a "academic investigative journalist", a term I coined as a result of my academic approach to investigative journalism, which often focuses on public policy matters. What began from a desire to improve my writing and to get into a habit of looking over my speed writing before clicking send, snowballed into leveraging my experiences and educational background to write about things that were of interest to me and that I thought might pique the interest of others.

In the four years that I have been writing for *The Voice Magazine*, during the investigative process I have had some individuals randomly tell me things like, "*We can not name any potential bills after you.*" and "*You do not have a background in immigration, and you are not a lawyer, what makes you think you are qualified to write about immigration as it pertains to the law?*" Then there was a fun two-week waiting period after I requested to connect with the FBI's media department, and one of the questions asked during this screening process was whether I had ever worked with the FBI before. Although I wanted to respond by

somewhat mirroring their question and making reference to an award-winning TV series by asking, “Have I ever worked with the FBI? Do I give off Neal Caffery from White Collar (2009-2014) vibes?”, I used better judgement. Eventually hearing back from them and getting to where I needed to go.

Perhaps the cherry on the cake of my academic investigative journalism is having two consecutive frivolous police reports being filed against me by small-time street level officers regarding questions I had wanted to ask police brass, and a request I made as a sitting board member of my local community association. The police reports were void of any mention to these questions and factual information, and they somehow required six police officers to be mentioned in them. More weird, the police reports make it clear that the two officers who filed them only did so after their supervisors told them to do so, essentially making it so that they would be absolved of any wrongdoing since they had “followed orders”. One of the officers who filed the first report happened to be our community resource officer who attended our community association meetings every month. Another one of those six officers also included an officer who was representing the Chief’s Office, but never identified himself as such and instead only stated that he was replacing the supervisor of one of the supervising officers. On the other hand, to counter the actions of the small-time street level officers, other officers went out of their way to refer to me as “buddy”, which was kind of funny.

One byproduct of that series of events is that it allowed me to add this joke of an interaction to my arsenal of knee-slappers, “How many Ottawa Police Services officers does it take to file two consecutive frivolous police reports? I have gotten up to six, just do not ask me to elaborate on the kind of thinking that was involved on those two occasions.” On a more serious note, it helped me uncover other public policy deficiencies related to the institution of policing and systemic failings at the provincial level. Overall, the positive and fun interactions have significantly outweighed the few isolated incidents of “What the f@ck?”, but the biggest takeaway from everything has been how there is so much scepticism about anything that has to do with journalism and questions that are aimed to get at the core of an issue. Simply put, the journalism landscape is more toxic now than ever before, and it is worth looking into why that might be.

### **Yellow Journalism. Tabloid Journalism. Click Bait.**

Hearing someone yell, “fake news”, is far more understandable than hearing someone say, “yellow journalism”. The term “yellow journalism” is somewhat of a forgotten term that was used in the early 1900s to describe journalism that was an exaggeration of facts, sensationalized, and focused on grabbing a person’s attention in the hope that it would result in them buying a newspaper. The way it worked was that the undesirable elements of a story that made it less exciting or provocative would get removed, and the focus on stirring up controversy or creating a scandal turned out to be a quite lucrative model. Back then, a tabloid-like title on the front page of newspaper could sell a newspaper on its own, and since Google and Bing did not exist the readers would often believe the entirety of what they read – there was no fact checking back then.

Over the decades, however, more and more stories that had been published would end up getting exposed as complete fabrications, everything from the lives people lived to how businesses did business. It resulted in some reporters being exposed for lying and some publications getting the reputation of being conspiracy peddling mediums. However, everything seemed to change after the arrival of the internet, when discussion boards and chatrooms began to be leveraged to expose news stories from the past as being fake stories. Then Google added the “news” extension to its search feature, archived news pieces became available, and with the arrival of Facebook and Twitter, the entire media and communications landscape changed over a few short years.

Communities that had historically struggled with disenfranchisement and who had to rely solely on media outlets to have their voices heard also became able to bypass the traditional gatekeepers of stories, as did the elements of fringe that only existed in chatrooms and discussion boards. Facebook and Twitter put a picture to people's voices, but more importantly it allowed for everyone to congregate on the platforms and to create somewhat of a global community where everyone had instant access to everyone. Then when cell phones began to have 2- and 3-megapixel cameras and when they became able to record videos, that was the beginning of the end. Few could have imagined how this combination would eventually end up challenging peoples' belief systems of the world we lived in. Soon enough, stories that might have been considered too unbelievable, too extreme, or too risky for media outlets to publish bypass media outlets all together and instead made their way on Facebook, Twitter, and eventually YouTube.

Individuals who understood how to leverage boosting services during the early era of social media and how to manipulate social media algorithms are the recipients of an unfair advantage over legacy media outlets who are late to the game. Legacy media outlets are unlikely to spend the same amount of money in order to gain viewers. Even if legacy media outlets did manage to breakthrough, the manner in which the public consumes news has changed so much, a lot of it is unmonetizable, like breaking news posted on X (formerly Twitter). However, the same fight that was fought over people to buy newspapers back in the 1900s has returned in the form a fight that is fought for clicks, eyeballs and engagement over different social media platforms. And the yellow fever that was once exclusive to yellow journalism has seeped into politics and throughout civil society.

### **The worst of yellow journalism, "Finally. Someone who thinks like me."**

Perhaps the most dehumanizing piece of writing that I have ever come across dates back to 2016, an article titled, "*Finally. Someone who thinks like me.*" After reading the article, it represents the very worst that journalism has to offer. It is so bad that referring to the article as journalism feels wrong, because the purpose of the article seems to have been a desire to paint a broad picture of the kind of people that voted for Donald Trump. The "perfect candidate" was a woman who lived in a small town in Pennsylvania and who was open about her mental health struggles, her struggles with employment, and who seemed to have experienced a significant amount of trauma in her life.

Almost immediately into the article, things start to go off the rails when the woman mentions conspiracy theories that had to do with a former President's faith and orientation. The woman also shares how she experienced sexism and harassment in her professional career, and how it ended up giving her PTSD, depression, and anxiety. Then there is reference to the town she lives in being economically insecure, which was once full of work in coal mines and on railroads. There is even mention how sometimes the woman even forgets to take her medication, how she was even hospitalized for radicalization and posting online threats directed at the President, and how she had once been a Democrat. By the end of the article, it is impossible not to feel bad for the woman who seems to have lived a difficult life and been exposed to a lot of traumatic experiences, having fallen on hard financial times, and still struggling to find balance in her life.

The article seems to have been a hit piece from the get-go and as a way to get at Trump at the expense of an unwell woman in her 50s, but there are so many

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unanswered questions about how it came to be. How did this writer find this woman, and what did they tell her for her to agree to share some of the most intimate parts of her life? Did this woman know that she would be portrayed in the manner that she was? More importantly, however, how did nobody think that this article may be a bad idea, that it dehumanized a 50-year-old woman in order to score cheap political points against a person who was also known for dehumanizing language? Whatever the story behind this article may have been, hopefully articles like this one can be relegated to a point in time where journalism's trajectory took a slight dip.

### **From following our North Star to chasing dysfunction.**

Pure journalism has never been about dehumanizing people as if they were a soulless combination of meat and bones and nothing more. Pure journalism has always been about focusing on good governance and transparent institutions, the rule of law and the equal administration of justice, societal highs and lows, and celebrating the freedoms of democracy. Because the world is full of countries that will jail journalists and dissidents when they make it known that they want to celebrate the freedoms of democracy and bring to light the issue of uncomfortable truths,

After Donald Trump entered the world of politics, however, it is hard not to feel that the institution of journalism dipped and continued to do so into the Covid-19 lockdowns. It might be one of the hardest falls from grace for any institution; seeing journalism move away from chasing the North Star and reporting on the stories that mattered most to stories that chased dysfunction and othered people. But that story that needs to be told from this period, including articles like *"Finally. Someone who thinks like me,"* is that the institution of journalism had a close call with national disunity. All because of an infatuation over someone who thought greatness was what showed up in the rearview mirror on the path forward despite history telling us that greatness has always been the result of people looking toward the future. But now I think journalism is back on its trajectory and trending in the right direction, and that is what matters most.

### **What matters most is how a person's mind works.**

What started out as a way to improve my speed writing and get into the habit of looking over what I write has contributed to me continuing my lifelong learning, somehow becoming a member of the Canadian Association of Journalists, and even getting media accreditation status with the Public Inquiry into Foreign Interference in Federal Electoral Processes and Democratic Institutions. Yet being told that laws can not be named after you is something one would expect to hear if they were asking for recognition or reward. Then being told that you are not a lawyer, nor do you have a background in immigration is something one would expect to hear if they were condescending towards another professional. Although I did neither of those things when I had individuals say those things to me, I was not offended, nor discouraged, because easy thinking, shallow thinking, and bad thinking seems to plague our society at all levels.

Whether a person went to a fancy school to get an education or not has no bearing on that individual's ability to think and to understand. What matters most is how a person's mind works. Even not having a post-secondary education does not make a person less than, because our world's history is full of people who were autodidacts, forced to learn on their own, and likely came out better for it. The true measurement of a person is how their mind works and whether it is capable of deep thinking, hard thinking, and good thinking. Best of all, everyone is capable of developing their mind to that level of thinking, and it starts by burning the midnight oil.

*Alek Golijanin is an AU alum who considers himself a gentleman first, a scholar second, and a combat sports fanatic third. In that order.*



## Always a Saint

**Marie Well**



I went swimming this week and saw this swimmer in pink who swam better than any dolphin ever could. She effortlessly and calmly swam across the pool, gracefully, at a speed I'd never seen before. I tried copying her arms, and a loved one said my swimming instantly improved by 150%, and I looked like Michael Phelps. Another lifeguard told me to do double breaths instead of single breaths, and for the first time, I believed I could swim a lane, do a flip turn, and swim back without stopping. The swimmer in pink is a Varsity swim athlete with the potential for an Olympics. My loved one and I made such friends with her today that in the change room, she approached me with a huge smile and offered swimming tips. We laughed and had a wonderful conversation.

Tonight, I thought about that magnificent Varsity swimmer and how I'd love to be personally coached by her, and I received approval from my loved one. So now I'm praying I'll see the pink swimsuit to recognize her and approach her. What in life could be more exciting than being coached by a potential Olympian?

Seventeen years ago, I was coached by an Olympian wrestler, and it was the time of my life. This Olympian had a beautiful attitude and often called out to me, "Go Tiger!"

I loved this woman and miss her greatly. She's still coaching, and I may one day run into her again.

And now, to my great joy, if I see this varsity swimmer again, I will start swim lessons with her.

This is newsworthy because I needed water wings eight months ago when swimming. I did such a horrible dog paddle that I barely moved and fearfully clung to a flotation device. I was at high risk of drowning in any depth of water above my shoulders, and I looked like a fool as an adult woman in water wings in a deep pool, which caused embarrassment for my friend.

I'll pray every night and throughout the day that my pink swimsuit varsity friend returns and a new journey of athleticism begins. There is a high probability we will see her again.

Recently, I saw three YouTube near-death experiences, all in a matter of days, where the temporarily deceased people were examining water creatures in the afterlife, which caused me to worry that God was going to reincarnate me as a fish, assuming reincarnation exists. Hopefully His goal is to reincarnate me as an Olympian swimmer instead.

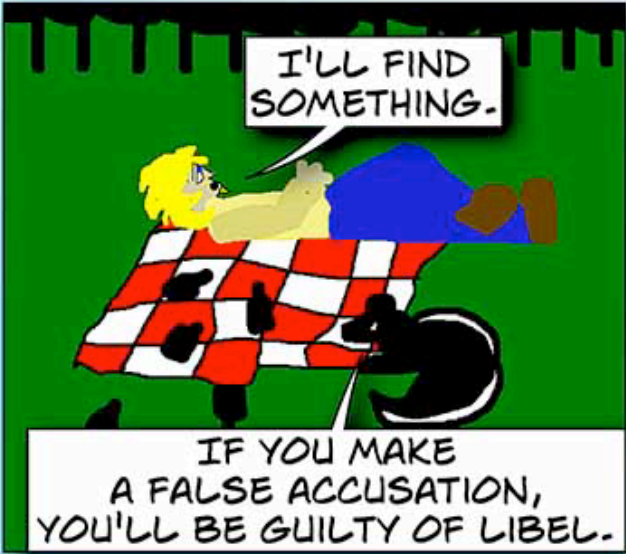
The moral is that we should never stop aspiring toward our goals, even if we're 110. That's because gaining skills anytime in life is a significant purpose, and if reincarnation exists, we surely want to re-enter this world more skilled than if we had not followed our callings.

And if it's a toss-up between returning as an Olympic swimmer or a fish, I hope to swim like an Olympian, either way.



Poet Maeve  
Appeal, Appeal, Appeal

Wanda Waterman





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