

WORD

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LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

On this side of the bluffs, life continues to press pause. Campus lies desolate and barren for another quarter—its usual buzz of lively students replaced by the stealthy pitter-patter of raccoons, if anything.

If you peer over the cliffs, however, you'll find yourself facing the crashing waves in all their rhythmic glory. Waves that roll onto land, continuously unfurling new beginnings. Flowing in tune to some magnetic, melodic metronome of science. Unapologetic, steadfast, controlled, never-ceasing. Concepts that seem out of our grasp on land, but so anchored to the ocean. And it's a beautiful reflection of why WORD Magazine has decided to keep pushing forward.

While certainty seems like a distant myth, one thing we know is true: Isla Vista is a community of fighters, and these pages are proof. As the creators of WORD compiled another issue virtually, we set out to examine how our community has adapted to uncharted territory. What we found was astounding—from students taking to the streets to protest a broken police system to dance groups grooving away through a screen. Our community continuously overflows with talent, activism, and ambition, even as our physical home bases are closed off.

Although this new year holds many promises of life returned to normalcy, we know full well that control is far beyond our reach. So don't be too hard on yourself. Even dormancy breeds growth.

Find steady ground in what you can feel, even if it's just your breath. Fill your lungs with Mother Nature's abundant fuel and know that you are enough. Let the salty ocean air tickle the back of your throat as your inner cavity expands with life.

Then, exhale. Let go. All of it. That's your power, my friend.

We hope this magazine reminds you of your capacity for courage and resilience, that every page reignites your strength. You've got this.

Editor-in-Chief
Janet Wang

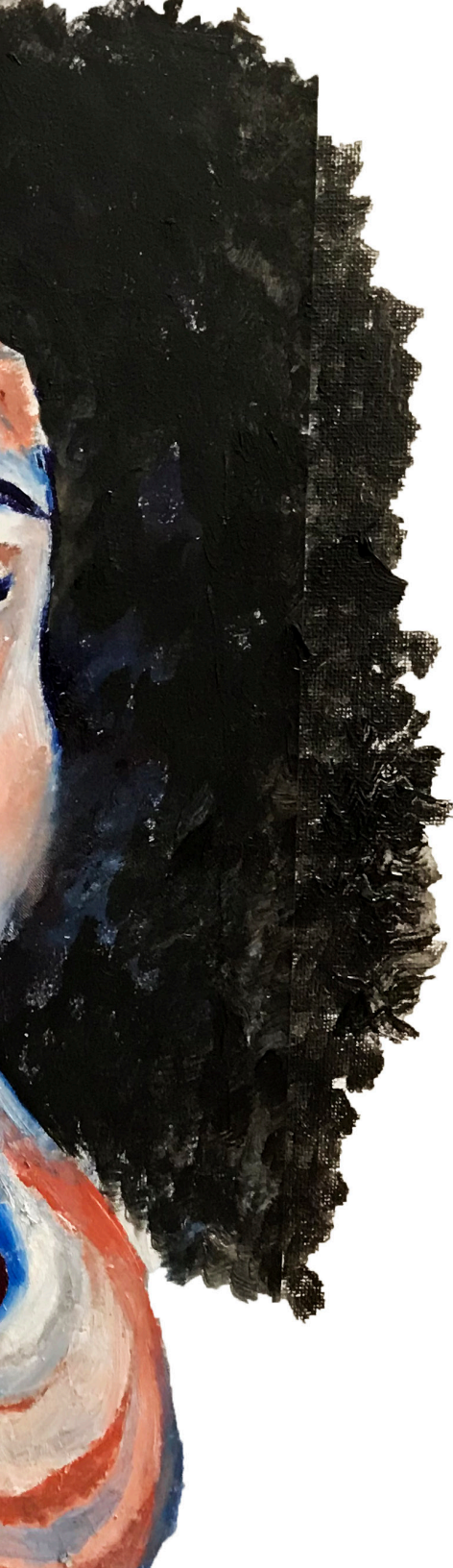


UC SANTA BARBARA





WORDS + ILLUSTRATION // ANGEL SCHNEIDER-REUTER
DESIGN // RACHEL DENG



BLACK LIVES MATTER

The Black Lives Matter movement is not led by one singular group or spokesperson. Rather, it's a public, collective acknowledgment that recognizes deeply-rooted institutional oppression affecting every aspect of Black lives, solely based on the amount of melanin in their skin. However, it's possible to be part of the solution. The fight for freedom, liberation, and justice is and has always been driven by community-led discussion and grassroots activism. Now, more than ever, it is necessary to challenge a broken narrative known to perpetuate hate and harm. When examined closely, the connection between human beings—regardless of the color of their skin—is impossible to miss. Existence is universal. We must march onward in pursuit of this truth. [w](#)

WATCHING THEM WATCHING US

Deconstructing Policing in Isla Vista

WORDS // JANET WANG

ILLUSTRATION + DESIGN // EILEEN BETTINGER



Photos in collage from Herald Examiner Collection, Los Angeles Public Library, 1970

ON THE FIRST DAY of fall quarter, Storke Tower's echoing bells fell flat against a desolate campus. Rhythmic chimes that marked the beginning of a new school year were heard by nobody. Meanwhile, on the streets of Isla Vista, the solemn tones were replaced by an ensemble of pots, wooden spoons, and baking sheets. A clamor erupted from a fervent crowd situated in front of IV Theater, where students, faculty, and community members gathered in solidarity as part of the Cops Off Campus movement.

"We won't say no, UCPD's got to go!" they chanted, passionate with righteous anger. While some took charge of directing and energizing the crowd, others raised their voices and handmade signs. "DISARM, DEFUND, DISMANTLE," one poster read, waving above the heads of demonstrators pouring into Pardall Road—now marked with the footsteps of social justice.

While anti-police rhetoric may seem prevalent from the recent Defund the Police and ACAB movements, Isla Vista and its law enforcement have had a long, complicated relationship. In the 1970s, this town was a central hub overflowing with radical activism, mainly stemming from the opposition against the Vietnam War.

Coupled with issues of police brutality, education budget cuts, and free speech violations, students took reform into their own hands. This marked a year of fierce conflict between the community, local law enforcement, and the university. One of the first notable incidents of police brutality was the beating of Richard Underwood—whose bloodied face is captured in historic photos—as police mistakenly accused him of possessing a Molotov cocktail. That night, the peak of the protests led to the historic Bank of America burning, where protestors met police officers with trash cans full of gasoline and flammables as they set the building ablaze.

In an article dated August 30, 1970, the New York Times referred to the events in Isla Vista as a "compacted civil war," reporting how students and officers alike were under attack from the opposing side. Officers dragged residents out of their apartments and houses to arrest them, while students fired back by hurling rocks at police cars and smashing windows. Two months after the bank burned, UCSB senior Kevin Moran was shot and killed for quelling the riots as he stood outside the Bank of America's temporary structure.

The killer who fired the bullet? He had just received Santa Barbara's 1969 "Outstanding Policeman Award."



Fast forward to this past summer, eight minutes and 46 seconds brought the nation to a startling, cold halt. Amidst a pandemic, this timestamp and George Floyd's death spearheaded a revitalized civil rights movement advocating for Black lives and scrutinizing policing institutions. With IV's history of attempting to overthrow unjust institutions, it would only make sense to zoom in on the nation's most pressing issues right here at home.

Isla Vista falls under the jurisdiction of UCPD as well as the Santa Barbara County Sheriff Department, which staffs IV Foot Patrol. In fact, UCPD polices all UCSB-owned property and one square mile around it—which happens to be the entirety of IV. Ethan Bertrand is a UCSB alum and the director of the Isla Vista Community Services District, which contracts services with UCPD to provide community policing initiatives. Bertrand acknowledges that currently, policing in Isla Vista revolves around low-level offenses and maintaining order as opposed to meeting the health and safety needs of the community. He notes the broken windows theory—a model of policing that focuses on aggressively tackling low-level offenses to prevent more significant ones from occurring—to describe the way IV is policed.

"When you have so many residents who are being contacted by law enforcement for things that aren't really issues of crime but are more health issues, behavioral wellness issues or issues of poverty, that really erodes the trust that can exist between the community and law enforcement," Bertrand stated.

For Ralph Armbruster-Sandoval, department chair of Chicana/o Studies, a similar sentiment regarding the

police holds. While acknowledging IV's over-policing for low-level offenses, Armbruster-Sandoval turns his attention to policing efforts affecting minority groups. "Students of color—Black and Latinx students—have really complained quite strongly about the IV Foot Patrol," he said. "They used to call [over-policing of minority students] 'driving while black and brown,' and sometimes it's just like 'walking while black or brown' and you're considered to be a suspect until proven innocent, and it's been a long-standing problem in the community."

"We are making the connection between the wider national anti-police movements and the UC's complicity in anti-blackness in the police state, in the carceral state"

As a multiracial (Black and Latino) queer individual, Bertrand has experienced mistreatment from the IV police firsthand. "There have been times when I've been doing nothing wrong, and I've been stopped by the police out of suspicion," he said. "And I realize that that's the case for actually everyone I live in my household with. All of us have been stopped at one time

or another by the police—and all of this unnecessarily."

These resulting sentiments were echoed by community members around UC campuses state-wide and culminated in the Cops Off Campus movement—calling attention to police funding and abolishing campus law enforcement. Felicity Stone-Richards, a political science Ph.D. student, helped organize the rally here at UCSB. "The idea of the rally was literally to make as much noise as possible to signal to the university that we are making the connection between the wider national anti-police movements and the UC's complicity in anti-Blackness in the police state, in the carceral state," she said. "They are no different from any other police force, and abolitionist



Photos in collage by Felix Dong for The Bottom Line, 2020.

conversations should be targeting them just as they target city police forces.”

As an educational institution, UCSB should be investing monetary efforts in student-directed programs rather than law enforcement, according to Stone-Richards. In the 2019-2020 school year, the UCSB police force received a budget totaling nearly \$9.7 million, and this total is expected to increase or remain unchanged—even as student jobs and faculty salaries are cut. With this budget, UCPD has been unclear about its spending.

“The only thing that they’re transparent with is what they spend on their salaries and officer salaries, so you basically have a police force that is being paid for by state money and student fees,” Stone-Richards pointed out. “And you don’t really have any idea what they’re doing with this money.”

Cops Off Campus’s main mission is straight-forward: get law enforcement off campus as soon as possible. While there have been calls to defund the police and reallocate resources, the movement questions if feeding funding back into the very system that sponsors UCPD is the right thing to do. Abolitionist rhetoric says no, but it doesn’t stop there.

“Abolitionism is not just about tearing down. It’s about creation. It’s about creating new forms of living,” Stone-Richards explained. “It’s making sure that UCPD doesn’t get replaced with a new version of itself, it’s making sure that you can retrain the community to start to take responsibility for their own actions.”

Alternatively, Bertrand takes a reformed approach to policing. In response to concerns from the community, Bertrand works with the Community Services District to center racial equity in law enforcement conversations. In a civilian review and police oversight resolution passed by the CSD this past summer, all law enforcement contracts must now have a provision on how racial equity will be advanced in community initiatives such as the IV Safety Station program.

“In carrying out those programs, there needs to be targeted outreach to representatives of groups that are working to advance racial justice and that there must be an effort to ensure equitable opportunities for people to be served by those programs,” he said. These conversations are held at community-driven, public board meetings.

Open, honest discussions are just as important to Ariel Bournes, a UCPD Community Outreach Officer. Bournes, a UCSB alum, has worked in community outreach since his days as a student community service officer. Now, his role mainly revolves around healing the gap between the police department and Isla Vista through planning events like Coffee With a Cop, reaching out to student organizations, and hosting open forums.

Bournes is both an African American male and a police officer—seemingly conflicting identities. In grappling with the death of George Floyd, Bournes was hit with different waves of emotions. “Being in mourning with the African American community, feeling that pain and feeling that hurt. Then on the police side, understanding that no matter how uncomfortable the conversation gets, I have to take it,” Bournes recalled. “I have to listen to it—I have to examine what I do and how it can improve.” With his own experiences of racism while policing, Bournes understands the necessity of creating conversation about racial equity. “Just because I’m a police officer doesn’t mean I stop being Black,” he said.


Similarly to Bertrand, Bournes acknowledges the broken windows theory as a defunct policing model. “When we first started having these conversations, a lot of police officers were really shocked. They were like, ‘Man, broken windows theory? That’s like basic policing. What’s wrong with that?’” he said. “It wasn’t intentional for a lot of police officers and it was done out of ignorance. We had to go back and read articles and get feedback from community members and have conversations and redo some of our trainings.”

To initiate conversations of police brutality and racial inequality within UCPD, Bournes states that the department has been making efforts to expand procedural justice training and reaching out to minority groups on campus. Simply increasing training hours is not enough—listening to the community and relearning need to be ongoing efforts.

Bournes praises activists—those on the opposing side of the police conversation—for his position. “My grandma is still alive and she was a sharecropper in Mississippi when she was growing up,” Bournes said. “Knowing that in her lifetime, she went from picking cotton in Mississippi to her grandson being a police officer, I clearly understand how much protest and law changes and angry people helped push this country forward.”

“There’s a shriveling up of our imagination, saying, ‘This is the only way to do it’ and ‘It’s either, we have the cops or anarchy. It can’t be that extreme.”

At the end of the day, there are no simple fixes to solving issues of policing and inequity. Isla Vista needs to push the boundaries of imagination for a working solution, Armbruster-Sandoval stated at the Cops Off Campus rally. “There’s a shriveling up of our imagination, saying, ‘This is the only way to do it,’ and ‘It’s either, we have the cops or anarchy. It can’t be that extreme,’” he said. “[We need] our ability to think outside of the box. Sometimes we can’t get there because we think that there’s no alternative—but there is an alternative.”

Though the answers aren’t easy, one thing is clear: the community needs to continue showing up. Even now, the remnants of fires past are burning bright. Its flickering embers are flying high and sparking radical movements all across the country and changing the world—and Isla Vista is no stranger to nurturing the flames. 



I DODGED COVID-19 AND LIVED TO TELL THE STORY. SEVEN TIMES.

HOW LIVING WITH FRIENDS DURING A PANDEMIC TURNED FOR THE BETTER AND WORSE

WORDS // CHELSIE ALEXANDER

ILLUSTRATION // ALLISON TRAN

DESIGN // KRIS CARRILLO

“I FEEL LIKE DEATH,” my housemate said to me during the first week of August. A few days earlier, we had seen a friend for their birthday, not thinking anything of it because everyone who attended was part of our socially-distanced bubble. “I’m going to get a rapid test in Ventura,” she told me. At the time, it was nearly impossible to get a test with fast results anywhere in Santa Barbara County.

She was exhausted, had a low-grade fever and felt dizzy, confused, and unwell. One hour later, she screamed in our living room, “I HAVE COVID!” and panic ensued. Then, another housemate tested positive. Over the course of a few days, five more. At the time of me writing this article, seven

of my 10 housemates tested positive for COVID-19 and I tested negative seven times (and I literally have no idea how).

Since the start of the pandemic in March, quarantining at home has brought numerous challenges to all UCSB students. Some of us, like myself, decided to stay and quarantine in our Isla Vista residences during spring quarter for a variety of reasons. My high-risk parents and even higher-risk grandma live at my home, and I decided going back would give me immense anxiety about accidentally infecting and killing my family. Remaining in IV seemed like the best decision for me, as I was better able to perform in online school and could spend what was their

last quarter of UCSB with my housemates. Having the beach as my backyard during a global pandemic was also a plus.

I have been residing in Isla Vista for the entirety of the pandemic—throughout all of spring, summer, and now fall—with

the exception of the two weeks when I tested negative and wanted to see my family. I have had two different living situations. The first one was with five girls in the spring. My current one is with 10 girls; eleven

total including me, which is over the limit for social-distancing rules, but IV housing be like that. I have watched the pandemic unfold in Isla Vista, from when there were zero cases in April to hundreds in August, and how the general view of the pandemic in IV has changed over time.

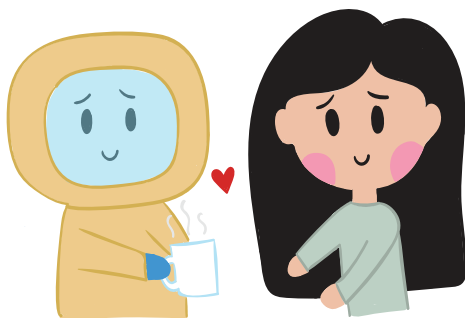
During a time of fear and uncertainty, I was fortunate enough to live with my best friends in our small Del Playa apartment for the first three months of the pandemic. We quickly became a family. Because everything was shut down, we got incredibly close at home, more than we normally would have without quarantine. We were forced to find creative ways to have fun and took up numerous quarantine hobbies as a house like painting, embroidery, cooking, tanning, and learning TikTok dances. Most of the time, we would just enjoy each other's company and do absolutely nothing together in our living room. My 21st birthday was in the middle of April when everything was closed, and my amazing housemates decided to improvise and throw me a surprise party. They turned one of their cars into a "Bill's Bus," driving me around IV and blasting music. They also transformed our small three-bedroom apartment into "EOS" with a VIP section (our living room), bouncer (our one guy friend), bottle-service girl (my

housemate), and a DJ booth (a desk with pots and pans as turntables). It was by far the best birthday I have ever had.

When I had to move houses after my first lease ended, I was initially nervous about living with 10 other girls that I was vaguely friends with. However, I found that the forced creativity persisted in this new living situation. Walks to Sands Beach at sunset with my new housemates became a daily thing, later becoming our favorite part of summer. We would

create house game nights, themed movie nights, obstacle courses, and generally would just do nothing together. I am blessed that I was able to have not one, but two amazing living situations with girls I loved during a time where many people have been forced to be alone.

While none of us wanted to get COVID-19, we all had different feelings and fears about the pandemic—ranging from being afraid to not caring at all.



By living with numerous friends during a global pandemic, the best moments have a special place in my heart and the challenging moments were difficult to overcome. In both living situations, our house had to have multiple conversations regarding our feelings and concerns about social distancing and COVID-19. While none of us wanted to get COVID-19, we all had different feelings and fears about the pandemic—ranging from being afraid to not caring at all. In my current living situation with 10 girls, each with our

predetermined “safe” bubble of people we were seeing, the numbers added up and we were all putting others at risk. These conversations were incredibly uncomfortable. It was difficult to force friends to follow self-imposed health protocol, especially because we all signed the lease a year in advance and had every right to do what we wanted. We all understood that living in Isla Vista was putting ourselves at a bigger risk than staying at home, but we wanted to continue living here for numerous reasons. Most of us needed to leave toxic situations at home or wanted to attempt normalcy as a college student. On top of that, it was difficult to find sublessors in the pandemic, so we decided to take the risk and live together. Though we had some guidelines about who and how many people were allowed in our house, eventually we all gave up because the risk of COVID-19 at the time was still low.

This brings us to August, when seven of my 10 housemates tested positive for COVID-19. We were forced to adapt to new rules quickly in the house like wearing masks in public areas, not allowing the infected people in the kitchen, and making them all use the same bathroom. These rules caused a lot of tension in the house, especially because everyone was afraid of getting sick. There were fights, restrictions on where the infected people were allowed to hang out in the house, and overall anxiety. I personally

was not scared, because I had adopted an “if I get it, I get it” mentality, and I was not planning on seeing my parents anytime soon. But the scariest part of this COVID-19 wave was living in constant fear that maybe one of us would become one of those unlucky severe cases that would have to be hospitalized. We had all read about how severe and scary COVID-19 could be, even for young people. It felt surreal that the virus everyone had spent months being afraid of was in our home and in the people I loved. Luckily, all of my friends and housemates who tested positive for COVID-19 only experienced mild to moderate symptoms and recovered quickly.

Throughout my experience, the lows were full of anxiety and tension, but the highs were incredible and I would not trade them for the world. I was able to make the strongest friendships I have ever had in both housing situations, and for that, I am eternally grateful. However, I faced the very real threat of getting COVID-19 not once, but seven times. Speaking from experience, I would recommend anyone living with roommates—especially friends—to have a plan ready in case anyone tests positive. Masks do absolute wonders for preventing spread and I truly believe that wearing a mask inside my house after confirmed positive cases was the reason I did not get infected. But if you're like me and lucky enough to dodge a virus seven times, I guess we're just built different. **W**



PROFILE OF MIKEY SANDERS

Existing Outside of Politics
In A Political Landscape

WORDS // MICHELLE POLITISKI

ILLUSTRATION + DESIGN // KAYTLIN TROXLER



Mikey and his dog, Penny,
hanging out after their
fresh haircuts.

WHEN SOMEONE THINKS of a college town in California, their assumption is that it's a politically liberal place. Isla Vista is no different. In fact, IV has a long history of attempting to overthrow institutions they find fascist;—in 1970, IV residents burned down the Bank of America in protest of the Vietnam War, giving a proverbial middle finger to a symbol of the establishment. It led to a chain of student activism that resulted in a tense relationship between residents of IV and the police—tension that hasn't stopped yet. Students' sentiments on the police continue to be abhorrent at worst, and tolerant at best. Flash forward to 2020: after the murder of George Floyd at the hands of Minneapolis police, national outrage spread, sparking debates on abolition, defunding, reformation, or strengthening of police.

On May 30, Michael Sanders organized the Black Lives Matter student protest, wherein hundreds of Isla Vistans marched from Storke Tower to Sands Beach in remembrance of Floyd. The march was also a way to hold space for Black students to voice their grievances against police, the UC system, and a community they believe does not suit their needs or protect them. Despite the turnout for the protest and the local activism that followed, liberal students have proven they aren't always accepting of beliefs that don't fit on a political sliding scale.

Following the protest, Sanders began receiving more online comments and direct messages arguing against his belief in police abolition and a communist system that would lead to Black liberation—the goal that he says defines his entire politic.

"A lot of people try to play devil's advocate," Sanders said. "They say, 'Well don't you think that if [communism or abolition] happens, blah blah blah would happen?' And it's never happened, so how do we know?"

He also experienced downright hatred in response to his educational initiatives. Sanders detailed, "There was an instance where I held a political education series when I still lived in Isla Vista [...] Some random people jumped into the Zoom call, and some of them were playing obscene music that was racist. Someone else hacked the screen-share and drew a swastika on it."

Sanders explained that although there is a connection between the online world and real life, he didn't feel threatened by that incident or any others. Instead, he felt backed by his own community. "Here, [where I now live,] I feel safe," Sanders said. "Back there, I was just worried about graduating and surviving the day. I didn't really have time to worry about people pulling up on me like that."

Talking to Sanders, the emphasis on community and mutual care was at the forefront. He detailed that he and other students on the margins tended to band together. Unlike his own circle, a majority of white, middle class students benefit from systems like capitalism, imperialism, and policing. However, he still experienced pushback from friends who thought his ideas ventured too far past the realm of realism.

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Sanders started leaning into the fundamentals of communism once he started reading outside of class, forming the basis of the communist, pan-Africanist beliefs he aligns with.


“You’d think it would come from the rich, white students. But it was a lot of my Black and POC friends who already get politicized, or are already aware of the conditions and the evils of capitalism,” Sanders said. “It was mostly, ‘That sounds like it’ll never work,’ or, ‘It sounds too utopian.’ It’s easy to be patient with the homies because I’m not a professor, I’m in the same position as [them].”

Sanders’ interest in communist ideas began around his second year of undergrad, where he began taking upper-division History courses that taught him about colonialism and imperialism. He began seeing through the veil of propaganda in a bipartisan system.

“I wanted to believe Bernie Sanders was going to come and really change the way that things were going, but then he plugged right into the DNC,” Sanders said. “When someone’s young and barely the legal age to vote, it’s hard to tell somebody [...] that shit is all fake and phony.”

Although Sanders learned about colonialism and imperialism in classes, he said it was ultimately through the lens of an imperialist UC system. He started leaning into the fundamentals of communism once he started reading outside of class, forming the basis of the communist, pan-Africanist beliefs he aligns with.

“When you’re reading in college, it’s mostly academic writing and stuff that’s not super accessible, and all theoretical,” Sanders said. “Outside of college, I was reading autobiographies, like the autobiography of Assata Shakur. ‘Revolutionary Suicide’ by Dr. Huey P. Newton was another good one.”

Access and study of these texts was made easier by the lockdown following the COVID-19 outbreak, since Sanders lived alone and had the time he needed to dig into the work. Now graduated from UCSB with a degree in History, Sanders works in the Inland Empire, helping to feed his community through the Feed the Block mutual aid group. 

CREATIVE

QUARANTINE, BUT MAKE IT FASHION

PHOTOGRAPHY + DESIGN // ANJILI MAHARAJ



A TRANSFER WITHOUT A HOME

How Transfer Students Have Navigated Finding Community During COVID-19

WORDS // DOROTHEE GODOY

PHOTOGRAPHY // LUKAS OLESINSKI

DESIGN // MADELEINE GALAS

IT'S MARCH. You're a transfer student checking College Confidential forums for updates on decision release dates for all the schools you applied to. Then suddenly the world shuts down, and you're surrounded by clouds of uncertainty with no view of what lies ahead. We all know what I'm referring to: COVID-19—the unprecedented crisis that swallowed up 2020 and took our lives with it.

When the virus first became widespread, students everywhere were told to return home as soon as possible. For the students who resided in sunny IV, this was a tragic blow. For transfer students, it felt especially harsh.

When COVID-19 hit, I was still waiting to see if I would even be accepted to my dream school along with every other freshman and transfer. I did not expect to get into a UC, similar to sociology transfer student Juan Bran-Gudiel, a foster youth, formerly incarcerated, Promise Scholar, and father of two. Bran-Gudiel was beyond excited to attend UCSB: “When I got the notice and I got the acceptance, I literally burst out crying.”

However, before he could commit, Bran-Gudiel had to deal with the issue of housing. Due to coronavirus, UCSB

rescinded its transfer housing guarantee to be able to abide by social distancing guidelines. This made newly admitted transfers decide whether to stay home or flee to the infamous IV. I remember seeing this question throughout the transfer community in forums, Facebook groups, GroupMes, and orientations. Where will you be attending Zoom University?

When the housing guarantee was taken away, the answer for pre-Communication transfer student Edwin Santiago was easy: stay home. Although he was looking forward to moving, meeting new people in the dorms, being on campus, and making connections, Santiago was scared by the people in IV who weren't abiding by state social distancing regulations, especially with his immunocompromised parents. On top of that, Santiago could tell the housing process was going to be “a mess” and was fine with working and saving money by living at home with his parents.

For the transfer students who decided to brave the storm, they were left in limbo from April to June with little communication from the University. But Bran-Gudiel couldn't sit and wait. Beginning in April, Bran-Gudiel began communicating with UCSB family housing, expressing he could

not commit without the guarantee of housing for him and his family. Out of all ten universities Bran-Gudiel was accepted to, only UCSB gave him the reassurance he needed to make the transition.

According to Bran-Gudiel, one of the coordinators of UCSB family housing helped him secure housing. “If you’re gonna come here, let me know you’re going to commit, and no matter what, we’ll get you a house. We’ll find your family housing,” he recalled the coordinator telling him.

With that statement, Bran-Gudiel could finally exhale in relief that his family would have a roof over their heads. But not surprisingly, this was not the last hurdle he and his family would face. Upon arrival, Bran-Gudiel was hit with around \$6,000 in initial moving fees—money he didn’t have. His family was down to their last thousand bucks. When the bills came, Bran-Gudiel started a GoFundMe and looked for scholarships, emailing all over the university looking for resources.

“I needed money. I just kept trying to scratch and claw every penny that I could,” he said.

Unlike Bran-Gudiel and Santiago, Psychological & and Brain Sciences transfer Keyona Lenox came to IV despite all the uncertainty. “I didn’t really think about it too much. I just jumped, to be honest. I was like, I’m moving to Santa Barbara. I don’t care how much it costs me,” she said. Lenox feels the college experience is priceless, which is why she was prepared to make the move—COVID-19 or no COVID-19.

I had a similar mindset. I didn’t want to wait in limbo, so I quickly went to the UCSB Housing Facebook page looking for a place to call home—and I found one. Now the quarter has started, and we’ve all settled in our locations. But amidst a pandemic, things are not normal no matter where you are. Your day is still consumed by screens, eye drops have become a quickly cherished best friend, and that



30-minute-midday walk saves your life. So how exactly are transfers finding community from wherever they are?


The experience has been a little different for everyone. Personally, I feel lucky with my DP home where I live with four other classy ladies who I luckily found solace with during my transition into the IV community. I quickly joined clubs that have connected me with people and am a part of UCSB's Educational Opportunity Program. My college experience has been as normal as it can be, given the circumstances.

For Bran-Gudiel, imposter syndrome was real and prevalent when first moving to Isla Vista. Being a formerly incarcerated Hispanic with tattoos, he feels as though he sticks out like a sore thumb at times. Because he has to work to support his family, Bran-Gudiel doesn't have time to join campus organizations. Luckily, a friend from community college transferred with him, and they often check up on each other and offer support. Furthermore, the Underground Scholars program where he was hired to be on the "Behind the Wall" project along with a team of eight other formerly incarcerated individuals has become a much appreciated safe space.

On the other hand, for Lenox, finding a sense of community in IV has been difficult because she doesn't know how to find research opportunities or student organizations. Also, due to COVID, community centers that would usually be holding fun activities for students like Lenox and her daughter are unfortunately closed. She has joined a few group chats for her classes and the EOP program she is a part of, but that's about it. Despite not finding a community with fellow students, she has no regrets about her decision to move.

"I think it's a better school system for my daughter and myself. It's just a better environment, in general. I feel like I'm adulting, even though I have a kid and I'm already older, I was still living with my mom, you know, still under her rules," Lenox said.

Similarly, Santiago has tried to find community from his home in Los Angeles through internships, ONDAS, GroupMe, the McNair Scholar Program, EOP, Bumble, and Greek life. Although he feels that his new friendships are still surface-level, he is hopeful and keeps in mind that so many other students are going through this. It's not just us.

Despite COVID-19, transfers are still hungry for community—so the search continues. 



OUT-OF-TOWN OVERLOAD

Exploring Outsiders' Effects on Isla Vistans

WORDS // ALLISON KHADOO

ILLUSTRATION // HANNAH FORD-MONROE

DESIGN // VERONICA TORRES + RACHEL SMITH



OCEANSIDE RESIDENCES. Beautiful weather year round. Laid-back people. What more could you want?

Isla Vista is a dreamworld for any college student. For this reason, UCSB became a hotspot for students from other colleges during the COVID-19 pandemic. Since classes have moved online, Isla Vista has seen students from other colleges slowly trickling into town.

With outsiders adding to the existing population comes the potential increased spread of the coronavirus.

In the first two weeks of August, Isla Vista saw an increase of 53% in COVID-19 cases, raising alarm to the infection spread. On August 14, 2020, Chancellor

Henry Yang made a statement via email about the problem.

"Recently, we have seen an influx of non-UCSB students leasing apartments in Isla Vista and adding to the density of the community. These living situations make physical distancing very difficult and greatly increase the likelihood of spreading the virus," Yang wrote. "Unfortunately, UC Santa Barbara has no control over private housing in Isla Vista."

Fernando Perez, a San Jose State University student, moved to Isla Vista to live with a friend who is a UCSB student. Perez had previously been living with his parents in Sacramento and was looking for a change of scenery.

"I wanted to be somewhere I could grow," Perez said. "I wanted to do my online classes in a space where I could enjoy my environment."

Under normal circumstances, finding an apartment in Isla Vista (and California in general) is not easy. With the pandemic still running its course throughout America, many students have been leaving IV or staying home—posing a problem for rental companies.

It was rumored that rental companies were purposely advertising to out-of-state students to make up for the UCSB students moving back home.

According to Zumper.com, the average rent for a one bedroom apartment in Isla Vista is \$1,845. I could not help but wonder how non-UCSB students can afford to live in IV and how the situation is impacting rent. Meridian Group is a rental company in Isla Vista advertising nearly 400 units. When I asked them about students from other colleges, they informed me that they do not have a database of where renters come from.

"Most units are leased at the beginning of the year in January, so it is unlikely that students from other colleges signed on for one-year leases," Meridian said.

Although students from UCSB may have signed a year-long lease initially, there is a chance that leases have been transferred to other people.

"Renters have to find people to take over their lease by themselves," Meridian said. "We do not ask where they go to school."

Eddie Schultz is a third-year UCSB student who has observed the non-UCSB infiltration, but believes there is no impact on rent.

"If you signed a lease before the pandemic happened, I do not think that would impact rent at all," Schultz stated. "The difficulty comes when students who aren't UCSB or SBCC students are making a reputation for UCSB students."

Schultz works as a lifeguard at the Recreation Center and heard from one of his bosses that a student from Columbia University was living in IV and looking for a job at UCSB.

"That was the first confirmation I got that students from other colleges were in IV," Schultz said.

An assumption as to why students from other colleges are moving to IV is to party. Partying is a well-known part of life in IV. If life were normal this would not be a public health issue, but for obvious reasons, it is.

The second time Schultz heard of out-of-state students in IV was from a friend who lived next door to a group of Harvard students.

"They have a die table and painted it half blue and half yellow to try to blend in," Schultz said.

The attempt for Harvard students trying to blend in demonstrates that they know they should not be in Isla Vista and that they are contributing to the COVID-19 problem. Why else would you try to blend in if you did not have something to hide?

Perez and his friends, conversely, do not party. "You have to live your life to some extent, but you have to be safe," Perez said.

Between the perceived Harvard students and Perez, there seems to be a difference when it comes to transparency about not attending UCSB while living in Isla Vista.

Harvard is an Ivy League school on the other side of the country. Not wanting anyone to know you are living across the country—assuming you are not originally from California—screams a guilty conscience. Under normal circumstances, Harvard students would be bearing the incoming winter cold, not hiding in a sunny beach town. If they hypothetically were living in IV during a normal school year, there would be no life or death repercussions to hide from.

Evidenced through Yang's emails, UCSB knows the spread of coronavirus is



happening in IV. As a way to prevent the virus from continuing to spread, UCSB set up free, asymptomatic testing for students in October and extended free testing to all Isla Vista residents.

Although the university has taken precautions to stop the spread of COVID-19 with asymptomatic testing, these precautions may not be on the top of non-UCSB students' agenda.

"Whatever happens in IV is considered to be UCSB or SBCC students," Schultz acknowledged. "So if anything goes wrong, whatever that may be, that's where the credit gets thrown."

UCSB students are already blamed for the spread of COVID-19 in Isla Vista, even though there are students from other colleges likely causing equally, if not more of a problem.

"Post-grad if someone sees that you were from IV during this period of time, it is going to be portrayed as you," Schultz said.

Being a transfer student in the middle of a pandemic who has not yet stepped foot on campus, I can see why this misconception is a problem. Like most people my age, I was looking forward to leaving my parents' home and starting my own life among my peers. Instead, what I got was unwarranted months of quarantine and the hope of living in IV someday to be minimized to a quarter or two.

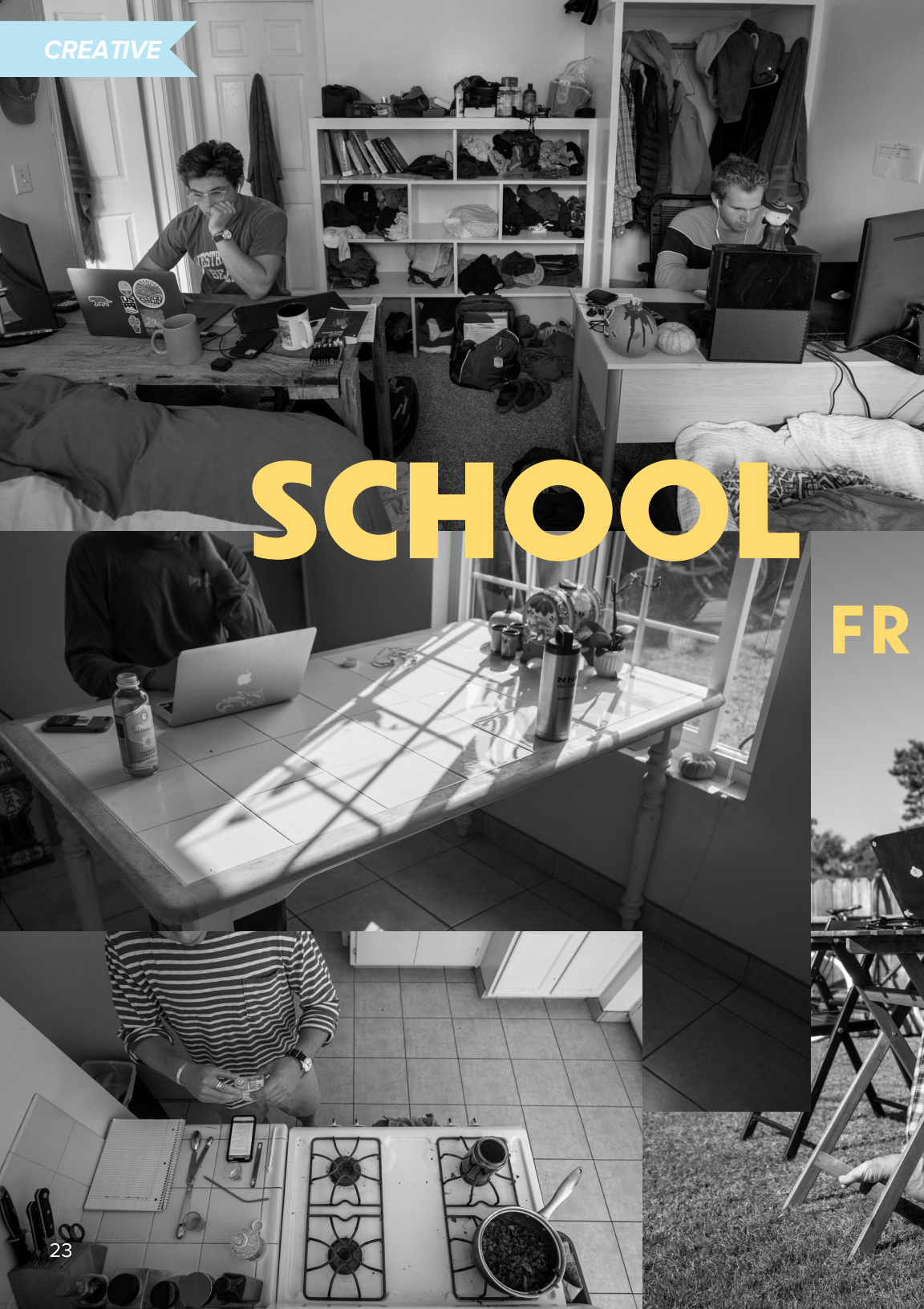
I sacrificed nearly a year of my life to keep others safe only to find out that students from other colleges were enjoying the IV life myself, other transfers and new freshmen worked hard to have. Random students from other colleges are taking advantage of the situation and not considering the impacts this is having on the community.

When COVID-19 is eventually under control and these students leave Isla Vista, the blame is going to be on UCSB students, like Schultz said. This should be something we all worry about—it's collectively our problem. W

CREATIVE

SCHOOL

FR





OM HOME



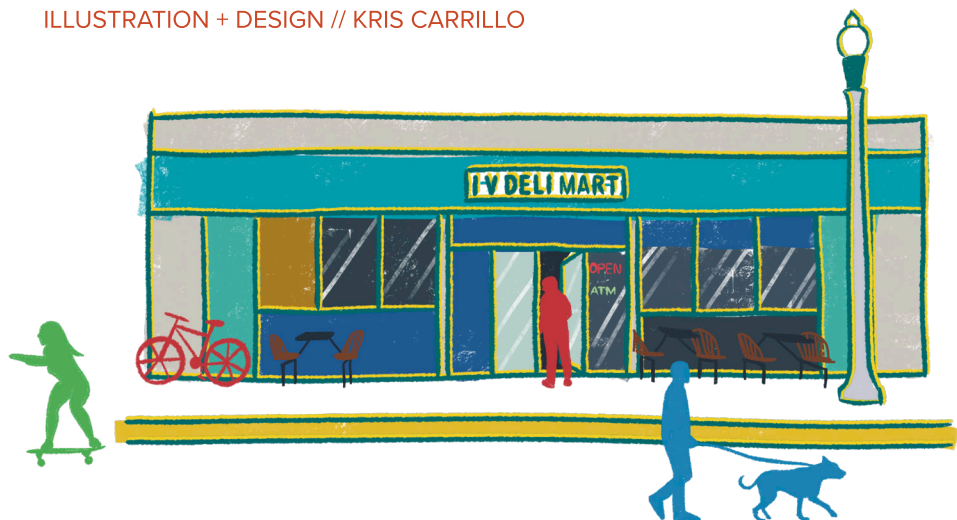
PHOTOGRAPHY // LUKAS OLESINSKI
DESIGN // RACHEL DENG

RESPECTFULLY, I DISAGREE

PABLO'S LIFE AS A CONSERVATIVE IN ISLA VISTA

WORDS // TYLER FERGUSON

ILLUSTRATION + DESIGN // KRIS CARRILLO



LIVING in Isla Vista... and conservative? To you, that may sound like a paradox, but nope, you read that right. In reality, there are many conservative college students living behind the scenes in the seemingly far-left, beachside paradise of Isla Vista. Based on interviews with conservative students and the lack of a visible presence of conservative spaces on campus, it is safe to infer that most of the conservative students here in IV keep their political views a secret, dawning the term “closet conservative.” They fear the repercussions that may come about from being open about their personal political beliefs—not this one, though.

Pablo Tobaruela is a third-year Global Studies and Economics & Accounting double major at UCSB, originally from Spain. He has lived in the United States for about a dozen years now. He likes to go on hikes, kitesurf, go to the beach, play

volleyball, and play spikeball. He is just like any other 20-year-old college guy. There is just one thing that sets him apart from the others—he is also a conservative.

Unlike many conservative students here at UCSB and across the United States, Tobaruela is very open about his political beliefs. He publicly and proudly supports a free market capitalist economy but heavily opposes abortion. His vocal support for the pro-life movement has even landed him in hot water with some of his more pro-choice peers.

However, Tobaruela also breaks away from most conservatives with his progressive views on climate change, immigration, and LGBTQ+ issues. He also loudly expresses his disdain of President Trump, which has landed him in hot water with some of his more conservative peers. He is not your “typical conservative,” and he is not afraid to show it.

Tobaruela hopes that his political openness may inspire other conservative students with similar views to freely express their thoughts and opinions. To closeted conservatives on campus, Tobaruela says: “Unapologetically be yourselves. The left is always preaching about tolerance and acceptance, but when it is time to accept others who don’t think like them, they struggle. They have to work on accepting us. If you actually cared about the issues you claim to care about, then you would be open about them and you would be willing to share your opinion.”

However, Tobaruela understands the hesitation that some conservative UCSB students have about expressing their political views publicly. In the past, Tobaruela has felt like he would be judged or ostracized by his peers for his political views. He has also experienced verbal and even physical harassment on various occasions in IV by other UCSB students for being a conservative.

“Freshman year I was tabling for this conservative club that I was in at the time and this girl walks up to me, stops for a second, asks what I was here for, and then she just throws her drink at me and tries to get it all over my pamphlets and fliers,” Tobaruela recalled.

Luckily not every social experience has been negative for Tobaruela, who has found good friends on campus and in IV on the left who accept him for his political views, even if they disagree with them. “If someone who is my friend will stop being my friend because I have conservative views, then they are just not my friend to begin with,” Tobaruela said.

Tobaruela and I, as a conservative and a liberal respectively, discussed the importance of free debate, free speech,

and free expression for a functional, diverse society to thrive and prosper.

“To those on the left, please practice what you preach. Focus on being tolerant and being accepting. We really need to realize [that] we are a diverse country [with] diversity in race, diversity in gender, diversity in sexual orientation, but also diversity in opinion. That is a big one that tends to be overlooked. We need to [hear] other opinions that might not be exactly the same as ours,”

Tobaruela said.

We discussed that far too often, people on both sides of the aisle will falsely classify each other and put all those from the other side of the political spectrum in a metaphorical box. While some conservatives falsely call all leftists radicals, communists, socialists, or snowflakes, some leftists also falsely categorize all conservatives as bigots—a term Tobaruela has been labeled before.

To combat the false narrative, Tobaruela emphatically said: “I condemn racism, bigotry, homophobia, and white supremacy. Those are basic pillars of my beliefs—tolerance for everybody.” In fact, the Republicans he associates with feel the same way as he does about social justice and equality.

Tobaruela and I also discussed that the term “conservative” is not synonymous



with Republican. Tobaruela, although a conservative, has no party preference. "I'm not a big partisan guy. I disagree with [the Republican Party] on a bunch of issues," Tobaruela said.

While many people assume that all Republicans are conservative and vice versa, that is simply not the full truth. Although most Republicans identify as conservative, according to a 2019 Gallup poll, over one in four Republicans actually identify as moderate (22%) or as liberal (4%). This is noticeable in society through politicians such as Governor John Kasich, a centrist Republican from Ohio, and groups like the Lincoln Project, who are prominent Republican politicians from previous Republican presidential administrations, who endorsed President-elect Joe Biden in the 2020 United States presidential election.

Tobaruela is an example of someone who accepts others who may have different views than his own, even if others do not accept him and his views in return. Hopefully, Americans across the political spectrum can start to support each other and accept each others' differences in opinion, experiences, goals, and beliefs—just as he has. Hopefully, we can stop labeling and classifying each other, and stop putting other people in metaphorical boxes without getting to know them first. Maybe, just maybe, we can start that chain of tolerance here in Isla Vista. Who knows? It could all start with you. W



CREATIVE

INTENTION CARDS

WORDS + ILLUSTRATION + DESIGN // RACHEL SMITH

Living with intention means making choices and living your life in a way that leads to feelings of fulfillment and meaning. These cards are meant to guide your intention and serve as a reminder to do something positive for yourself. To use intention cards, cut along the lines and orient all of the cards face down in a deck. Each week, shuffle your intention cards. Then, draw a card and leave it on the deck face up. Use the message on the card as guidance as you set your intention for the following week.



GROUND YOURSELF

Although detaching from the now may seem to serve you, your presence is needed to live mindfully and intentionally.



SEE ONLY LOVE

Use your compassion to look past seeming errors and mistakes. Choose to see only love within every person, especially yourself.



STEADY PROGRESS

Acknowledge any progress you have made. Celebrate any progress, remembering that productivity does not define your worth.



THE OCEAN

Take a dip in the ocean. Cool water will bring clarity and wholeness to your life. If you are not near the ocean, try imagining it when channeling your intention.



PERFECT TIMING

In this moment, you are right where you need to be. Remember to enjoy this chapter of your life, practice mindfulness, and live in the moment.



FRESH AIR

Prioritize spending time in nature. If you find yourself unable to venture outside, open your windows. Fresh air can clear your mind and bring focus.



THINK

DON'T GET IT TWISTED: I'M MIXED-RACE, NOT EXOTIC

A Look Into the Life of a Multi-Racial UCSB Student

WORDS // VISALA TALLAVARJULA

ILLUSTRATION // VERONICA TORRES

DESIGN // VERONICA TORRES + RACHEL DENG



“Knowing how to address a multi-ethnic person is something that should be brought up at both UCSB and in the community of Isla Vista, especially in this day and age.”

EVERY MIXED-RACE INDIVIDUAL is different. We all come from unique backgrounds, and there are many ethnic variations within the mixed-race identity. Making any sort of generalization—whether it be based on appearance or demeanor—is impolite. As a rule of thumb: if we want you to know about our ethnic background, we will tell you.

As an example, I'd like to tell you a little bit about my own personal journey as a mixed-race individual. I grew up in a culturally diverse household. I would often ask my mom, who is from Poland, about her childhood under a communist government. My dad, who is from India, read me bedtime stories about Indian deities and their complex interactions with humans. Even my diet was influenced by these two very diverse cultures—I love eating chana masala as well as gołąbki. Yet, I could never quite fit into either culture, and I was constantly reminded of this at school, during family gatherings, and even by random people on the street.

This sort of treatment is not new for many, if not most, mixed-race people. People behave differently towards us all the time, especially when they first get to know us. Tinder, one of the most popular ways for UCSB students to meet others, is filled with users who have yet to learn how to respectfully interact with mixed-race individuals. Being called “exotic,” having people ask, “What are you?” and having others try to guess my

ethnicity are all common on Tinder. A similar sentiment was echoed during my interview with Katie Lau, a fellow mixed-race UCSB student. “Oftentimes, men, especially white men on dating apps, like to bring up ethnicity... if I asked them, ‘Why did you say that? Why do you think that I’m mixed-race?’ they would say the weirdest, most abstract things,” she said.

Neither of us were surprised by how strangers on Tinder approached us, and here’s the reason why: when you’ve been raised in a certain environment, it can deeply affect what you are used to when others address your mixed-race background. For example, Katie grew up in the suburbs of Northern Virginia, where it is predominantly white. She noticed that, in her community, mixed-race people—or even people of monoethnic minority groups—were treated like their race or ethnicity was a trivial fact about them. But when Katie came to UCSB, she was amazed at the amount of spaces offered here for almost every kind of demographic.

Of course the community of Isla Vista is quite different from Northern Virginia, but maybe not as much as we would like to think. Katie mentioned that in both her hometown and in Isla Vista, there is one prominent issue that permeates both societies: most people in both areas have similar beliefs about mixed-race people, such as wanting us to “pick a side.” At the end of the day, many people throughout America, even

in my multicultural hometown of Santa Clara, feel like they have to see a mixed-race individual as one ethnicity, not multiple ethnicities at the same time. For some, this may be a grey area but it is important to reform this wide-spread and normalized mindset.

I asked Katie about how we, as UCSB students, could work towards making the community of Isla Vista more culturally, socially, and racially/ethnically aware, especially for mixed-race people. Her response was inspiring: “I feel like having some sort of training session, like Gaucho FYI, should bring up not just racism, but also the topic of being of a mixed-race individual and what we experience on a daily basis.” Because a lot of people have not previously been exposed to this problem, they simply may not understand why referring to a mixed-race person in a certain way is an issue. And if the mixed-race identity isn’t something that is being addressed or taught by UCSB, it could instill an underlying assumption that this topic is not important enough to learn about. But, if proper ways to address multi-ethnic people are brought up by UCSB, the community of Isla Vista could become even more inclusive.

Isla Vistans still have a lot of work to do to create a community that is both educated and respectful of mixed-race identities. Nevertheless, I have hope that if any community could do it, it would be this one. **W**

WHAT *NOT* TO CALL OR SAY TO A MIXED-RACE INDIVIDUAL:

Mixed: We are people, not a smoothie made of ingredients that you can blend together.

Exotic, or anything that similarly objectifies us: Just because we don’t look exactly like you, doesn’t mean you should further alienate us from society by pointing out that we look different.

“What are you?”: I’m a human being, just like you.

Any statements about racial indications that involve our appearance (ex: “You’re Indian? You look Brazilian!”)

HOW TO RESPECTFULLY REFER TO A MIXED-RACE INDIVIDUAL:

Multiracial: If we decide to inform you about us being a person of two or more ethnicities, you may refer to us as multiracial. This encompasses the fact that we are many different ethnicities and cultures.

Biracial: If we decide to inform you about us being a person of two ethnicities, you may refer to us as biracial.

Anything that respectfully addresses the fact that we are of a mixed-race background (multi-ethnic, mixed-race, etc.).

IN SEARCH OF SOMETHING WANDERING

// Jessica Garcia

Please do not ask me "What is the matter?"

Lies come like sunlight after morning gloom.

On some days it's there like simple laughter.

I have let this moment make me sadder,
Whispering words not quite in tune.
Please do not ask me "What is the matter?"

A saucy wink from her might not flatter,

If recalled, at the worst time, in a room.

On some days it's there like simple laughter.

Daydreams that end in silly disaster,
Another curious stare, "Good afternoon!"

Please do not ask me "What is the matter?"

I can fill the silence with vapid chatter
And say it both with and without costume.

On some days it's there like honest laughter.

No one likes the answer. I will not stutter;
Even if my mind is lost—it will be here soon.

Please do not ask me "What is the matter?"

On some days it's there like simple laughter.

UNTITLED

// Casey Cheatham

pooling money for value meals

counting coins onto the table
and scooping them up
to give away

drawing out the time we sit
for as long as we are able

water dripping from our hair
pools in puddles on the table
out of money but richer still

our empty hands will find some more
so we can do it
the next day.

MAPLE
HOUSE

DRIVING THROUGH

// Shahira Ellaboudy

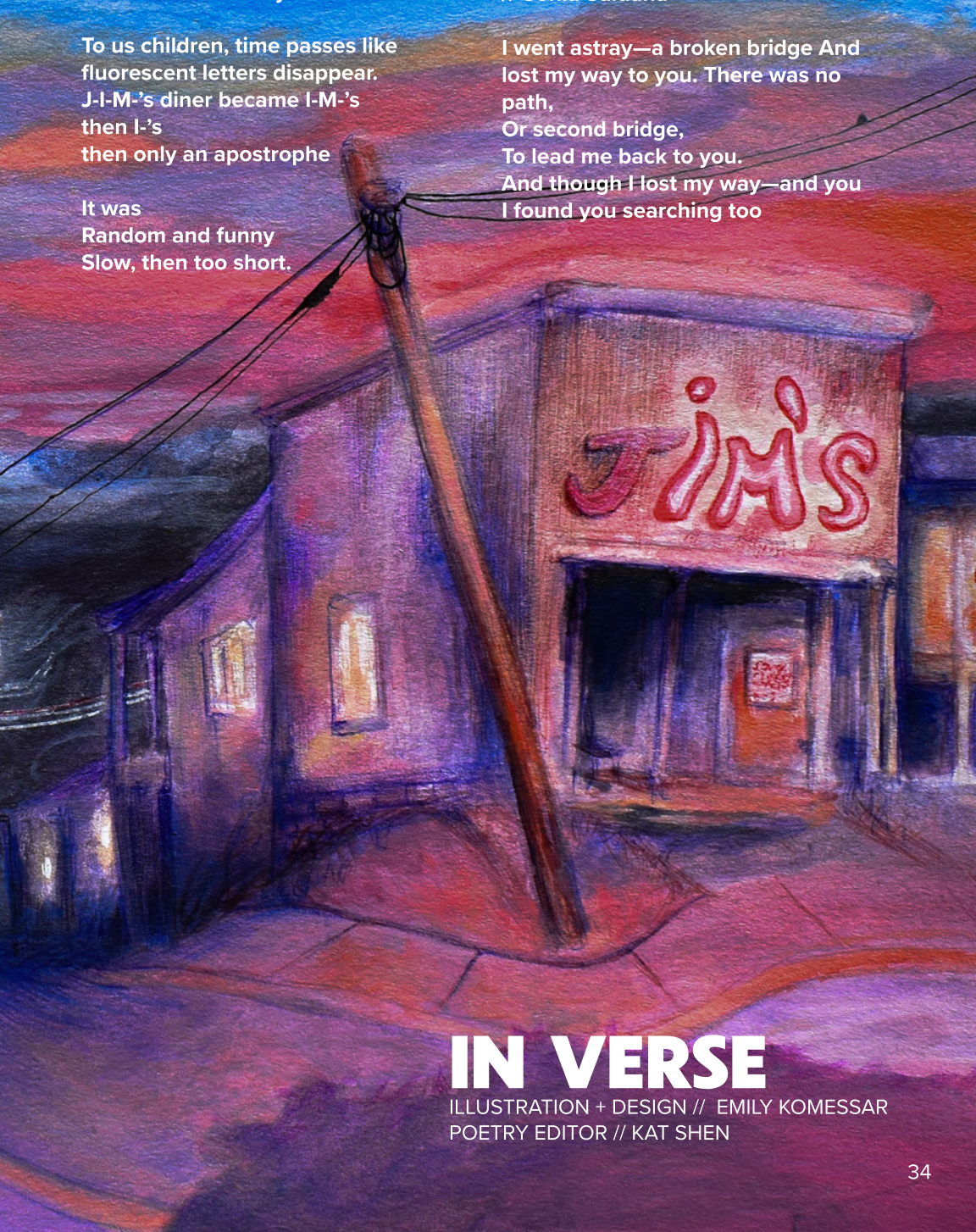
To us children, time passes like
fluorescent letters disappear.
J-I-M-'s diner became I-M-'s
then I-'s
then only an apostrophe

It was
Random and funny
Slow, then too short.

LOST AND FOUND

// Sonia Saldana

I went astray—a broken bridge And
lost my way to you. There was no
path,
Or second bridge,
To lead me back to you.
And though I lost my way—and you
I found you searching too



IN VERSE

ILLUSTRATION + DESIGN // EMILY KOMESSAR
POETRY EDITOR // KAT SHEN

Walk

Immerse yourself in a walk outdoors, away from all digital screens.

Thank

Keep a gratitude journal to gain new perspective and clarity on your circumstances.



CREATIVE

Affirm

Fill your room with affirmative notes to constantly remind yourself of how worthy you are.

Q&A WITH CONTENT CREATOR **HAILEY SANI**



BALANCING A CREATIVE CAREER AND ACADEMICS

WORDS // LESLIE REYES ILLUSTRATION + DESIGN // ANNA MONZON

AS STUDENTS WALK or bike down the streets of Isla Vista on their way to the UCSB campus, most are thinking about the day that's ahead of them. That can include lectures or sections that have to be attended, papers that have to be written, and studying that needs to be done before an exam. After all their academic tasks are completed, students have leisure time. But that's not the case for Hailey Sani, as she has additional tasks like editing, filming, and creative planning that need to be done before the day ends that are equally as important. Sani is a third-year Communication major at UCSB, and she's a successful content creator. She also has 1.38 million subscribers on YouTube, over 700k followers on Instagram, and has worked alongside household brands like Marc Jacobs, Target, CVS, and Fresh Beauty. Hailey isn't your average UCSB student—so we asked her to give us insight into her work, her student life, and how she balances the two.

What's your day-to-day schedule, does it vary?

I'll wake up and try to get all the schoolwork of that day done first. When I'm done with school, I either film if I need a video for that week, or if I already have content, then it'll be a day where I'll edit that. If I don't know what to film or have anything to edit that day, I'll spend the rest of the day planning. It can be a filming, editing, or planning day.

How many hours do you dedicate weekly to school?

About 10-12 hours.

How many hours do you dedicate weekly to work?

About 20-25 hours.

Are there more responsibilities for your job besides filming and editing?

Yes. I usually have 2-3 meetings a week. They aren't at the same time/day every week—it changes. They're usually an hour long. If I'm doing a brand deal, brands will meet with me to go over talking points for the video, and I'll give them an idea of what my creative direction will look like for the content. If it's a brand deal video, I usually end up renting the studio or hiring an editor or videographer, and then I have to plan that too.

How do you balance school with your job?

I always try to put school first. I'll always make sure I finish my schoolwork before I get started because I get excited about my videos. I try to make sure I'm set with school, so I don't have to think about it when I'm working.

How did the process of finding your balance between both go?

It was terrible. My freshman year I was in four classes and lived in a dorm so my filming space was non-existent. I had to bike everywhere, and that would take so much time out of my day. If I didn't feel like

biking, I would kill time on campus so for that one hour [between classes] I was just hanging out.

Has it ever been overwhelming?

Every day. Sometimes I can't have a meeting with a big company like Target and I'll be like, "I can't have a meeting with Target, I have Art History," and it's little things like that to manage. Sometimes I'll have a really big brand deal, so that's a big project the same week I'll have a research paper due. I'm only one person. Usually, people who are doing YouTube are only doing that video, and if you're a student you're only doing that research paper. When I have to do both, I'll think, "How do I do this?" It's challenging.

Has living in IV made it harder to work/create content?

I thought it would because my hometown is LA and before the pandemic, there would be so many events/brand deal trips in LA and that made it accessible. I would ask myself [before college] how being in a tiny little college town would change that. The crazy thing is people really liked my college content, seeing me do random things on campus, and it was interesting to them that we could go to the beach in between classes. Since people liked seeing that real setting of what I'm actually doing where I actually am, it didn't make it as hard as I thought it would be.

What's your favorite part about IV?

Cajé! I literally had an oat milk matcha latte from Cajé every single day [when I lived in IV before the pandemic]. I crave it every day.

How has studying at UCSB helped you?

Studying at UCSB has made me a smarter person. It has helped me not only in my YouTube channel but in all aspects of life. Since I'm in a lot of Communication classes and what I do on YouTube is communicate with people and give them advice, I can

apply the academic background that I have to what I'm talking about in that video. If I'm giving someone advice, I'll back it up with a communication theory or something I learned in a psychology class. It makes me more credible. So it definitely has helped me a lot.

With school being on Zoom, is it easier to balance both school and work?

I secretly like online school because right now if I don't have a class within an hour, I don't have to be killing time anymore. I can be looking at emails or I can be getting on a call with a manager or an agent. Right now, I feel like the balance is perfect for me. So yeah, it kind of [is easier].

What's your "why" in wanting to get a degree even though you've reached success as a content creator?

When I first graduated from high school, I was applying to all these schools. I actually didn't think I would end up going to any of

them. In my own head, I was like, "I don't need to go to college, so I'm just going to apply. Let's see if I get in, and just go with the flow." I got into UCSB, and I really thought about it. A college experience is something that you literally have once in a lifetime. I know everyone says you can go back, but being with my peers all in the same chapter of our lives—I think that was an opportunity I didn't want to miss. I had so much fun on campus when I was living there. I felt like I wasn't done learning in an academic setting; I love learning. I took two quarters off after I started freshman year just to do my thing, to work, and I felt very unsatisfied with myself. I felt like I've taken that step in my life of only focusing on my career a little too early and I didn't like it. I was still a kid, I still want to be learning and doing homework. I felt like I had so much more knowledge to put in my brain, so I decided to go back. I don't regret it—I'm definitely going to graduate. **W**



HEY, YOUR NAME IS IN FANFICTION!

DEEP DIVING INTO Y/N FANFIC'S ORIGINS AND IMPACT

WORDS // LINDA CHONG

ILLUSTRATION + DESIGN // ANNA MONZON

“GALE LIFTS YOUR HANDS—fingers intertwined—and asks, ‘Will you join me, y/n?’” To think you and Gale Hawthorne could be conversing, let alone running away together, is impossible. Characters are supposed to stay within their two-dimensional build. But what happens if we combine fandom determination and character infatuation?

All aboard those who have fallen in love with a fictional character. For those in denial, this means all imagined personalities fabricated into some narrative that we delusionally have glorified and projected into our daily lives. It's nothing to be ashamed of, because this obsessive nature is embedded in our generation, and we certainly have witnessed the fandom phases as they come and go. Whether you were involved or not, you've heard about the century-old debate of Team Edward vs. Jacob mass-printed on Target t-shirts. You've seen the borderline religious Katniss Everdeen sidebraids, and you've definitely repressed anything related to “Glee” or “The Vampire Diaries.”

Even recognizing these previous terms without ever getting involved proves that fandom is powerful, because it defines periodic enthusiasms and the ways people coped with them. Now in the era of TikTok, global loneliness, and COVID, a pre-

existing coping mechanism has become normalized and circulated to the public: the underground world of fanfiction. Despite its unspoken dominance in any deep-hole fandom you've encountered, fanfiction is finally accepted in our Gen Z culture—hats off to the anime, One Direction, and K-pop community for its foundational discovery and contribution.

To be clear, fanfiction is fiction written by fandoms. Fans take it upon themselves to rewrite, add to, or spice up fiction content that features components from TV dramas, movies, shows, anime, manga, and idols. Fanfiction also has genres within itself—it encompasses smaller interests such as alternate universe, crossover, gender-bending, smut, and y/n. Aside from the endless content that is hidden underneath “fanfiction,” the greatest feat by fandoms is the fanfiction genre of “y/n,” abbreviated for “your name.”

It's a technique in which the author writes the reader into the reimagined narrative, under the indicator “y/n.” Some first questions that come to mind for those of you that are just hearing about this are: how can y/n possibly encompass and represent every single individual that reads it, and why would anyone insert themselves into fiction?

Both of those questions can be answered by knowing the purpose of this



genre, and why it has risen in popularity during quarantine. If you think about it, when we as the audience view fictional worlds, part of our interest comes from the content portraying a desired relationship, scenario, or interaction. Of course, we're also entertained by these storylines, but projecting ourselves into a fictional narrative is subconscious. This is why we get butterflies when we watch enemies shift to lovers or swoon as the main character gets hit on by CEOs. It's why we cry for Kylo Ren when he dies after giving his life energy to Rey. We attribute ourselves to recipient characters, and we emotionally relate to them. They're the externalized fantasies we didn't know we wanted.

Although it sounds odd, this tendency has been with us since the beginning. Ghost stories, moral fables, and heroic tellings have scared, inspired, and taught listeners because we process the script and place our own self within it. So, why is y/n any different?

Fans are doing the work for you, composing scenarios that you are literally in. They might not write your

literal individual responses, but it's what the author assumes for the reader to progress the interaction between you and the characters. The point is, fanfiction—particularly y/n—is a physical copy of your literary experience with whoever you want. You can partake in an affair with Draco Malfoy at the Yule Ball while Cedric Diggory rushes to break you apart as your real partner. You can argue with Harry Styles while the band members slowly start to fall in love with you. The possibilities are endless.

Why does Gen Z engage in this virtual matchmaking? Has growing up on Wattpad encouraged us to pursue novel writing, which unintentionally morphed into fanfiction? Is fanfiction written to compensate for our collective lack of meaningful interaction, considering our generation is notorious for an often isolating online presence? The universal answer to why y/n or even fanfiction as a whole exists is because we're all lonely people with hedonistic tendencies. We want to access people and worlds we could possibly never reach—it's a coping mechanism to counteract reality. ^W

SELF ADVOCATE OR POLITICAL ACTIVIST?

The Intersection of Politics and Social Media



WORDS // LOLA LEUTERIO
ILLUSTRATION // EILEEN BETTINGER
DESIGN // ANJILI MAHARAJ

THE POLICE STATE AIN'T SEXY. Brunch pics. **ARREST THE COPS THAT KILLED BREONNA TAYLOR.** Isla Vista sunset! **HOW TO PROTEST SAFELY. HOW TO REGISTER TO VOTE. HOW TO BE ANTI-RACIST.** Mirror selfie, bikini selfie, selfie-selfie.

Scrolling through social media these days can produce a confusing mixture of content. Images alternate from infographics on structural racism to birthday posts and back again, displaying the lasting effects of an increase in political activism since last spring. Because 2020 brought on so many changes within the U.S., people may overlook a seemingly small one: the way we use Instagram. Yet, this change has had far-reaching consequences. What was once a platform solely dedicated to self-promotion has slowly become a hub for political exchange.

It's important to note that, by its very nature, Instagram doesn't encourage skepticism. The app isn't designed to stimulate critical thinking regarding our social media participation, it is designed to keep us scrolling. Maybe that was fine back when Instagram drama never got more serious than users stalking their exes, but our usage of the platform has changed—maybe our engagement with it should too. If we are going to continue using Instagram as a political resource while the U.S. struggles through issues such as racial tensions, a pandemic, climate disasters, and party polarization, it may be time to ask some evaluative questions. Why has our generation chosen Instagram as the site of a cultural movement? How did online events such as Black Out Tuesday alter racial relations, especially in a predominantly white community like Isla Vista? Perhaps most importantly, should we trust this app with our political plans and opinions?

The answer to the most basic of the questions—why Instagram?—is multifaceted. Instagram is one of our

generation's largest gathering spaces. In fact, a study on Vox found that the average user spends 53 minutes a day on the app. With this in mind, recall how large-scale revolts often begin in common gathering areas. Take the Boston Tea Party, for example, where countless chests of tea were tossed into the ocean right at the harbor where many fed-up colonists worked and lived. Or the Montgomery Bus Boycott during the Civil Rights Movement, which took place on the daily work commute of a black community. In 2020, we didn't get to meet in public or take the bus to work. We were left to our phone screens, and someone somewhere decided to take advantage of the fact that millions of us spend a decent allotment of time each day on the same virtual app. That someone, unbeknownst to them, actually provided the platform for the largest nation-wide social justice movement in U.S. history. Whatever else we might say about it, the technique of using Instagram to prompt a guaranteed historic struggle for civil rights was wildly successful—and the first of its kind.

However, I don't think our frequent usage of Instagram is the only reason it provided a foundation for the movement. Perhaps a more compelling justification lies in the fact that Instagram and politics are two social arenas that rely heavily upon egotism. Every four years we vote on a figurehead to lead our country, and this single person is supposed to represent all that we want to see in society. Throughout the election process, we focus intensely on personality, physical appearance, and charisma. Not only do we arbitrarily link exterior characteristics to policy and leadership skills, but we also consider our political affiliations to be crucial identifiers of who we are. Instagram has always been an ego-incubator: like political campaigns and affiliations, it thrives off the images we create of ourselves and the perceptions we hold of others. It only makes sense that

[Instagram] isn't designed to stimulate critical thinking regarding our social media participation, it is designed to keep us scrolling. Maybe that was fine back when Instagram drama never got more serious than users stalking their exes, but our usage of the platform has changed—maybe our engagement with it should too.

Instagram has finally been conflated with political activism and that the result was groundbreaking.

Anyone who witnessed the civil rights movements of 2020 (or, put more simply, any current social-media user) has seen the vast amount of information exchanged and spread through Instagram. Yes, Instagram may be our generation's main collective gathering space, and yes, it allows for a rapid spread of news and opinions. But does that mean the app is a trustworthy host for our political agendas? Maybe that depends on what the political agendas are, and what each of us hopes to get out of them. The question of Instagram's reliability comes down to the issue explained above and the literal foundation of the app: egotism.

On November 3, 2020, the day of the election, Instagram was flooded with messages encouraging people to vote. The voting-enthused posts followed specific patterns: girls posing provocatively with the caption #Horny4ThaPolls, made-up celebrities standing in line with masks reading VOTE, and "I Voted" stickers placed over the nipples of topless influencers.

So, people are encouraging participation in our democracy. They are using provocative and flashy imagery, but

why should that mean Instagram isn't a trustworthy site for political movements? The answer resides in the simple fact that posting on Instagram is a reward-based process. You post, you get likes, and you feel good. The issue is that not every post can be "rewarding." Some posts don't get likes—beyond that, some posts get torn apart or cyberbullied. This encourages people to post what they believe will get likes: a flattering selfie, maybe, or a message that is already being circulated within the online community.

In this fashion, Instagram users foster manmade echochambers. We have always posted things that make us look desirable—and now, we are also posting things to make us look agreeable. Instagram encourages us to assimilate to current norms, which produces in-app homogeneity and reduces diversity of opinions. Returning to the Black Lives Matter protests beginning last spring, Instagram users fell victim to certain trends that ultimately limited the success of the movement. For example, in week two following George Floyd's death, Instagram's #BlackOutTuesday caused wide-spread, national drama. Millions of people began posting black squares captioned #blacklivesmatter or #BLM, and the repetitive use of BLM clogged

the hashtag and blocked protesters from accessing important news updates and resources. The point of the event was to silence white voices for a few days and amplify black ones in order to keep the trending subjects of police brutality and racism alive. People in Isla Vista were on board, but it may have been hard for us to truly get the point of the exercise considering how white our community is. Some people were turned off by the apparent emptiness of the gesture, claiming that the act was performative and generally unhelpful. Yet despite certain individuals attempting to speak out and spread alternative views, Instagram was dominated by millions of blank, black squares. The appeal of joining the masses may have overridden the initial purpose of Black Out Tuesday, which was to create space for fresh,

typically unheard ideas. While humans have always thrived on social acceptance, political movements throughout history have required independent thought and genuine debate. Instagram provides us with an expansive territory in which we may be granted or denied our basic wish for peer approval. Yet somehow, it has also become a political hub—ground zero for a revolution of sorts. At the end of the day, progress is progress, and having a starting point is better than nothing. However, going forward, we should try to think critically about what we share on Instagram as well as what we receive. Are the ideas we put out there authentic, or are they merely reiterations of the status quo? Are we attempting to make a difference, or do we simply want to affirm our political correctness—and show off that new bikini while we're at it? **w**



We have always
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look agreeable.

STUDENT ORGS IN = TRANSITION =

LEADERS DO THEIR BEST TO ADAPT TO COVID-19

WORDS // VERONICA VO ILLUSTRATION + DESIGN // HALEY WALKER



WHEN YOU SPEND so much of your day staring at a screen, spending your night at a club meeting can end up feeling like a chore. It's the way you have to make the effort to turn your camera on and speak, but not speak over other people—not to mention internet issues. Club presentations can end up feeling like lectures, and it's easier to feel bored. Your physical isolation means social interaction depends on breakout rooms, which are, well, breakout rooms. If the people in your room manage to start talking after the standard minute of silence, it can be really awkward, and you can't just turn and talk to different people like you could in person. It's harder to make connections, and you just can't feel the vibes the same way over Zoom. Because of these factors, COVID has put the students in charge of these orgs in a difficult position, but they are continuously rising to meet the challenge.

For Miranda Tran, recruitment chair of national honor fraternity Phi Sigma Pi (PSP), the transition online was chaotic at first. With every board member having to adapt their specific duties to a virtual setting, it was a process that lasted throughout the summer. Community service, she mentioned, has been especially hard to organize with places currently closed to donations or volunteering. In terms of recruitment, Tran sought new ways to

make sure it would still be fun for members while acknowledging student fatigue.

"We've never had a game night before," she noted. "Now we're planning to use Spyfall, Jackbox—there's also a scavenger hunt game I came up with myself." She continues to think of innovative ways to stay engaged, as rushing for PSP won't be happening until winter quarter. Still, she's not immune to Zoom burnout.

Turning to her frat as a family to relax with in the past, she admitted that it can get tiring now. "The pressure is on the executive board to make sure it doesn't feel like that for the members," she said. Tran remains optimistic though, and she believes people who are rushing should still be excited.

While PSP is still planning for the future, other orgs like the Vietnamese Student Association (VSA) have already begun scouting new members. Sophia Bui, co-president of VSA, says the biggest change that came with the virtual shift was the process of recruiting. Promoting digitally more now than ever, VSA has been trying to replace what would normally be in-person flyer-ing and tabling. The staff has been brainstorming ways to transition to CO-VSA (the pandemic edition), and their large staff size has made it easier to publicize events on social media.

"Our staff have been reaching out to more people personally," Bui mentioned. "I've even added people straight off UCSB Facebook groups and changed my bio to 'Join VSA!' so they know why." Bui makes a point to emphasize the importance of community during these trying times. Being in a pandemic together forms a common thread between all members, and she wants the club to be a place where people can check up on each other. "VSA has always been a very safe space, and I hope new members can feel that way too," Bui said.

Despite the online nature of club meetings being solidified for now, large

"Even when I run into challenges I didn't expect, it's never a burden."

org-wide events are still up in the air. For VSA, their annual high school outreach program (VOICE), cultural night (VCN), and male beauty pageant (Pho King) are being played by ear. With the events happening toward the end of the school year, there's no predicting what format they'll be held in. The staff is making sure they have backup plans but are holding out hopes that their ideal scenario will be a reality.

Months of planning can go into a single event for Ryan Sewell, director of recruitment for UCSB's Model United Nations. The org started meeting and scheduling conferences at the start of summer, when they expected to be going back. With the situation steadily worsening, their completed plans—all the way down to the hotel bookings—had to be changed.

"Conferences are the whole scope of what we do," he said. "A lot of the fun of conferences is the social aspect, which is the biggest thing we'd miss doing it online." There are positives to the virtual setting, he noted, and these include not having to schedule hotel arrangements, as well as being able to attend farther conferences more easily such as those on the East Coast.

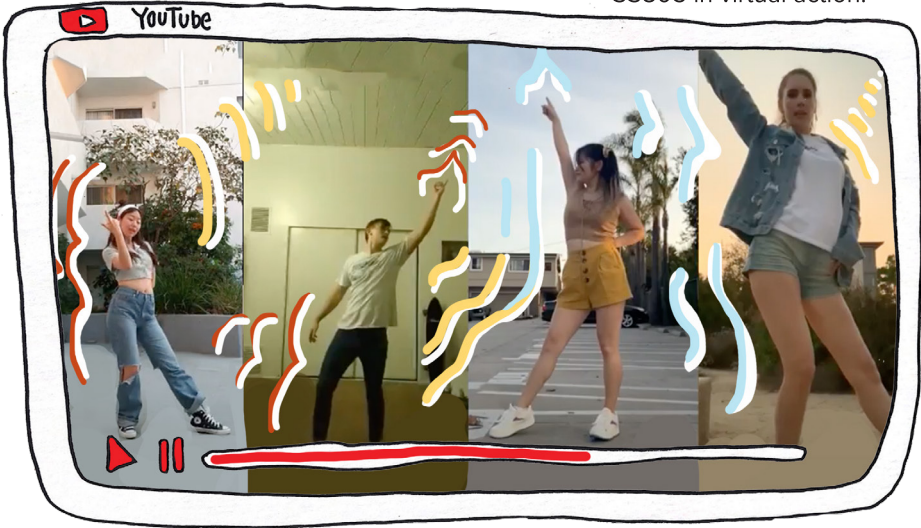
For Sewell, the most challenging aspect of online recruitment has been the lack of face-to-face contact itself. "I can't really visualize who's coming out to

meetings and tryouts," he said. "It's hard to recognize names alone, since people don't always have videos on. Sometimes I can't even see them until the day of tryouts." The inability to meet in person has put a damper on many orgs and their activities, but for Shin Shin of SS805, adapting to an online environment has completely changed the way her org looks and operates.

SS805 is UCSB's K-pop cover dance team, and their activities consist largely of dance covers, performances, and competitions. According to President Shin Shin, the transition online has made the experience a lot less fun, as a crucial part for members was being able to dance with others in person. Although they still meet weekly on Zoom, it's harder to coordinate dances. Since congregations of people are no longer allowed on campus, SS805 has not been able to film any performances. Instead, they've decided to have members split into groups, learn songs they want, edit the videos together to be side by side, and have group viewings of these recordings. Team bonding is harder to do online without being able to dance together, and different time zones also make it harder for international members to join them.

In terms of recruitment, what would normally be live tutorials and auditions in front of judges are now pre-recorded


"We're all learning as we go, trying to adapt as best as we possibly can."



tutorials on YouTube, with potential members sending in their audition videos.

"It was a hard transition since we've never done anything like it before, and there was no online format to base it off of," Shin Shin said. "It was manageable with the board all working together." Despite not being able to perform together, she emphasizes how much she values her team members and her organization. "I like SS very much. Even when I run into challenges I didn't expect, it's never a burden."

Among the diverse experiences of these student leaders, there was a common theme. Many are feeling the pressure to present a seamless transition from an in-person to virtual club format, but the reality is difficult. Luiza Rosa, president of the Society for Undergraduate Psychologists, summed up these shared sentiments. If there's anything she wants people to know about organizations in general, it's to have patience.

"We're all learning as we go, trying to adapt as best as we possibly can," she stated. "Try to understand our side too. We really want to provide cool events, but sometimes it's not possible with the current situation." This time of transition has been rough, but it's clear that the leaders of student organizations are trying their best to make the most of it for their members. College hasn't felt the same since everything moved online, but student orgs are making it work—one breakout room at a time. 



QUARAN-TINDER

Kiss Me Through your Mask:
How To Date Amidst A Deadly Pandemic

WORDS // KAT SHEN ILLUSTRATION + DESIGN // KAYTLIN TROXLER

ETHAN WIEN was supposed to be off to another state, starting his dream internship, meeting new people, and living the life he had worked so hard the last few years for. Instead, the 22-year-old UCSB student was lying on the floor for the fifth consecutive hour, trying for the third time in a row to get a girl to respond to a hastily copy-and-pasted pickup line about Trader Joe's.

For some, this scene isn't a far cry from their own quarantine tribulations. And for many, the disappointment of isolation is all too real. Many have turned to online dating as a possible solution. The topic of online dating has been thrown around in virtually every group of friends, in news headlines, and in too many articles to count. But lately, the pandemic has been

a topic of discussion that has trumped others. But how is online dating faring under the restrictions and dangers of the pandemic?

One of Tinder's largest demographic of users is college students. As we are all aware of by now, many college campuses are under strict restrictions, or—in UCSB's case—completely closed down. Tinder's initial reaction to this was to open up "Tinder Passport," a feature that lets users connect from all over the world. The feature is typically only available to Tinder Plus and Gold members who pay for those subscriptions, but the company announced it would be making the feature free for all users amid the coronavirus pandemic. This was a way for people to make new friends and create relationships

within the comfort of their own home—in a safe way—during quarantine.

However, with recent restrictions getting looser, and with people feeling a greater need to go out, people have been meeting up amidst the chaos. And it seems that in Isla Vista, this is especially true. So, the question is: is there actually a safe way to go about online dating amidst a global pandemic?

One would probably assume, firstly, that it sounds like the worst possible thing to do during quarantine. Why would they assume this, you ask?

A list of things people shouldn't do during a pandemic:

- Meet completely new people
- Make close contact
- Make direct contact
- Lie to people about who they've been seeing

A list of things people do when dating online:

- Meet completely new people
- Make close contact
- Make direct contact
- Lie to people about who they've been seeing

It would be reasonable to argue that this is definitely not the best or safest idea. But sometimes, you just gotta do what you gotta do.

Lucas Smith* met a UCSB student through Tinder and went about it in a safe(r) manner. Was it worth it?

"I had some good conversations with people, and people were able to talk about the frustrations they were having with COVID," he recalled. "And it was nice at the beginning of quarantine to have people to talk to." Even without the prospect of face-to-face interaction, many users enjoyed being able to talk with others who were going through the same trials of quarantine, and made isolation a bit more bearable.

"I asked a few people to hang out and we both wore masks and hung out in open

spaces since we were all concerned about meeting each other," Smith said. "One of them actually turned into multiple dates, and now we're actually dating, which was a bit unexpected especially during quarantine, but was pleasantly welcome."

Tinder, in this case, was used as a newer way to create opportunity amidst a pandemic. As a new user with a good experience, Smith believes it was worth the risk and took the most precautions he could.

Colette Wang was also a new user with a slightly different experience.

Like most people, she got Tinder as a joke, but decided to redownload the app during quarantine. "I started going on dates with friends of friends that I would meet on the app, but then I started to go on more and more," she said. "My normal friends started to not want to hang out because of quarantine, so I wasn't going out and meeting a lot of people... It made me almost want to go out and meet new people more."

However, Wang notes that she didn't have good experiences with the first three



people she met, which made her want to go on more dates to make up for the ones that went badly.

Quarantine has also contributed to the after-effects of Wang's bad dates feeling worse than they normally would since she's stuck at home. "It's given me so much more time to think about it, which then makes me want to go out more to try to forget the bad times," Wang said.

This was a situation where Tinder not only gave Wang worse results than she could have imagined, but she also felt as though using it during the pandemic was not worth the risk because of the results.

Ethan Wien, an avid user of Tinder, was hopeful with the prospect of finding a possible quarantine date. However, he unexpectedly dealt with struggles that he didn't deal with before, which seemed to be COVID-specific.

"I'm not really looking for anything specific. In terms of the differences I felt before versus, during COVID, one thing I noticed was that people reply a lot faster since they're so bored and have nothing to do. I also feel like the standards may have lowered a bit," he laughed. "The approach, at least now, is a little bit less forward than before COVID, since there are other factors in play."

Now, he scopes out whether a match is comfortable going out. "If a girl is saying she goes out with friends, then I know it is a lot more likely that she would be down to meet up," Wien said. "But, one of my matches said she was out partying every night. To me, I would never meet someone like that since they seem more careless about COVID."

COVID could make it more nerve-racking to ask a girl to meet up since there's an added reason to be rejected, but Wien doesn't seem affected by this possibility. "I think it could be harder since there are fewer public things to do," he remarked. "I had a picnic with one girl since there weren't any other things to do. It does make it harder to decide what to

do since there's such a limit though."

Eli Linden lives in the same house as Wien and gave his thoughts on dating during the pandemic. "I think people are giving a lot during COVID so if you take a little and decide to date a bit, that's okay," he said. "If you're upfront with people and tell each other who you've been hanging out with, and you start a bond with someone, then human interaction is a good thing to have during quarantine."

It seems that there are many ways people have been going about the guidelines of the pandemic, and finding new and unique ways to date under the everpresent, looming pandemic. And if one does choose to go out, there are numerous ways one can be more careful and take extra precautions for the safety of themselves and others.

Either way, two things are for sure: Tinder, safe or not, is still alive and thriving amidst quarantine. And, UCSB students are willing to risk it all for love—or at the very least, some socially-distanced eye gazing. W

*Name has been changed per user's request for privacy reasons.

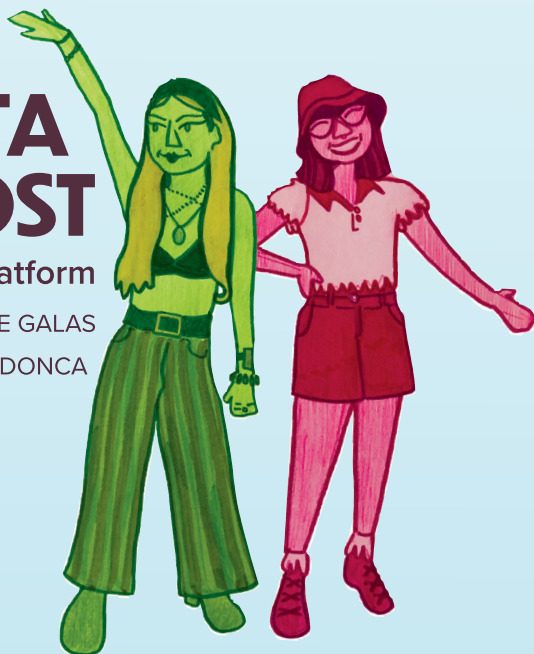


ISLA VISTA TRADING POST

IVTP Adopts Online Clothing Platform

ILLUSTRATION + DESIGN // MADELEINE GALAS

WORDS // RAINA MENDONCA



ISLA VISTA TRADING POST, now a staple in many Isla Vistans' closets, is a student-run secondhand clothing organization that's been cultivating an appreciation for sustainable fashion since 2018. This local organization aims to destigmatize secondhand clothing by promoting environmentally conscious shopping habits. IVTP places a strong emphasis on community and advocates for change within the fashion industry. Before the pandemic hit, IVTP was known for hosting pop-up trading events where community members were invited to give and take clothing for free. These events educated local Isla Vistans on the power they have to challenge fast fashion and change the fashion industry. Since COVID-19 struck IV, IVTP has had to make changes to their organization so that they are able to bring sustainable fashion to the streets of Isla Vista, while still being safe and mindful.

This has led to the creation of IVTP Closet, an Instagram account (@ivtpcloset) crafted by the members of IVTP to continue distributing clothing to the community at an affordable price. Each article of clothing is posted to the account with a description including the size and price. Customers are able to comment or DM the page if they are interested in purchasing clothing or have any questions. From vintage cowboy boots to graphic t-shirts, IVTP Closet offers a little something for everyone. New, sanitized clothing is updated on a weekly basis to keep the inventory fresh and up-to-date. In order to respect social distancing measures, IVTP Closet also delivers for free within the IV/Goleta area.

Proceeds collected from IVTP Closet are donated to a local nonprofit organization every month. IVTP offers support to organizations that are focused on addressing and resolving

environmental and social justice issues. For the month of November, all money raised from purchased clothing was donated to Acacia Counseling and Wellness. This organization offers qualified and affordable counseling services to college students in the surrounding area.

Julian Elmurib, co-President of IVTP, described IVTP Closet as an “easy, safe way to get secondhand clothing, and most importantly, you know where it’s coming from.” Elmurib has been with IVTP since his freshman year and has been able to watch the organization grow and flourish during his time at UCSB. He finds that shopping sustainably is a way to show that you care about the world and demonstrates a sense of respect for the earth.

According to Business Insider, fast fashion comprises 10% of carbon emissions caused by humans and is one of the leading consumers of the world’s water supply. It also pollutes our oceans and rivers with microplastics that are used in fashion production. It’s important to become more aware and educated about the negative environmental impacts the fashion industry has on Mother Earth and what we can do to help as a community.

Secondhand shopping is not only good for the environment, but helps one develop their own sense of style. Clothing is a form of self expression—what you wear is an extension of who you are as a person. IVTP encourages people

to use their creativity and imagination when thrifting so they are able to design outfits that are unique to their tastes and personalities.

COVID-19 has had a large impact on thrifting and has taken away the enthusiasm for dressing up and buying new clothes since people have been encouraged to quarantine as much as possible. However, it is more important now than ever to not get discouraged by the pandemic and continue to develop your wardrobe and style, if for nothing other than your own joy.

IVTP has been promoting Thrifted Thursday’s on their Instagram page, where they invite their followers to submit photos of themselves dressed in their fully thrifted wear. The grooviest outfits crafted by local IV fashionistas are featured every Thursday on IVTP’s Instagram.

“Dressing good makes you feel good, it’s a part of your identity. We hope that Thrifted Thursday’s inspire people to get creative with their closets and foster more involvement in the community,” co-president Siena Hooper said.


IVTP is constantly growing and expanding their organization within the community and is currently in the process of finding a permanent location in IV. They hope to set up a trailer where people can come to trade and donate clothes. Currently the clothes are being kept between the houses of IVTP members, so finding a definitive space in IV would





help the organization continue their good work and become more established in the community.

Entering his final year at UCSB, Elmurib is proud to see the progress IVTP has made since his freshman year. "I'm hopeful that IVTP will be able to put on COVID-19 safe events towards the end of the school year and am excited to announce that we will be coming out with a newsletter so students and members of the community can stay up-to-date with the latest happenings," he said.

Supporting local organizations like IVTP is an important aspect of being a community member or student in Isla Vista. IVTP is doing an amazing job raising awareness for sustainable fashion while also endorsing other local nonprofits. Make sure to follow their instagram page (@ivtradingpost) and IVTP Closet (@ivtpcloset) to show your support and love for the wonderful work they have been doing in the community! 

MAJOR DILEMMA

A Rant from an Undeclared Student

WORDS // JANE NGUYEN ILLUSTRATION + DESIGN // TRUDY PADDEN

“WHAT MAJOR ARE YOU?” is probably the most asked question that you’ll encounter during your time in college. Of all of the 90 majors UCSB has to offer, I - being the extremely indecisive person I am - chose to apply with no major. Whenever I tell people that I’m undeclared, I occasionally get the response, “Oh you’re FUN-declared!” But let me tell you, being undeclared is anything but “fun.”

During high school, many of us go through those four years doing whatever is laid out and expected of us. Now, we’re suddenly shoved into adulthood without much guidance and where you’re supposed to have at least some idea as to what you might want to do for the rest of your life. I, for one, have absolutely no clue. Picking a “main passion” for my career seems like too big of a step, when I don’t have any particular strengths and my interests are all over the place. Making decisions just isn’t my thing. I even accidentally submitted two SIRs

(Statement of Intent to Register) on the last day to commit to college two years ago—I ended up at UCSB out of panic.

As I enter my third year of college, logging onto GOLD with “Undeclared” as my major is unsettling for me. Actually, it scares the shit out of me, because it reaffirms my lack of grip on my own future. Although I’ve pretty much completed my GEs, what’s missing is that green check mark next to the word “Major.” The words, “You must declare a major to graduate” are imprinted in my head, reminding me that the only thing holding me back is actually declaring a major.

Consoling words from others have become redundant. The common phrase, “You have time. You’ll figure it out someday,” isn’t exactly comforting—especially to an undeclared college student expecting to graduate within 4-5 years. In an environment where students are constantly polishing their resumes and applying to their third, or even fourth,



internship, I feel behind. While people are finishing up their major requirements, I'm still figuring out my path after taking random GEs I didn't want to take because I don't have course registration priority due to my undeclared status. Sorry, "Geography of Surfing." Well, at least I knocked out calculating frequencies of beach waves as a possible career option. I'm getting somewhere!

Looking back, there were several moments I wished I could just say I was a Biology, History, or really any major. Last fall, a classmate asked about my major and gave me the most baffling response: "Undeclared? You're a second-year now. What the hell were you doing all this time?" Believe me when I say that I have never wanted to leave a lecture hall so badly until then. Another time, a co-worker was ranting to my supervisor about how he didn't understand why people come to UCSB to study non-STEM subjects after I had told him I'm not really interested in STEM. My confidence was shot down and I questioned whether I was doing this college thing right. I wasn't completely aware of it at first, but I was seeking validation from others about my decisions, and it kept me from moving forward. Uncomfortable phone calls with my mom about my future were also more frequent than I would have liked. "Don't worry about it, mom!" was a common response

before I hung up and continued on with my usual life crisis.

Recently, I've felt some sense of clarity from a small conversation I had. A math major in my class said he loves his major, because he gets a boost of serotonin whenever he gets a problem right. At first, all I thought about was how I wished I could easily get the correct answers for my calculus class. But soon after, I realized that I had forgotten what I should've focused on all this time in college—what I actually enjoy. That conversation reminded me of when I forced my housemate to come with me to pick up a copy of my first-ever published article for the school newspaper. Although it was just a step-up from a typical Yelp food review, physically holding the paper in my hands made me the giddiest person in the world.

Now here I am, sitting in my little apartment in IV, a little less lost. If you're like me and struggle with navigating through college, I encourage you to take any opportunity that you might even have the slightest interest in. Find that small thing that makes you excited, whether it's learning about the laws of physics or creating poetry! Figuring out our purpose can be daunting, but claim your own college experience and enjoy it without anyone else's influence. Remember: there is no "right" way to do college. **W**



WORDS // NICK TASH
ILLUSTRATION + DESIGN //
RACHEL DENG

SIERRA HOTEL: READY TO SLAY

I WAS ACTIVE for four years in the Marines. Aside from the usual PT and field ops, my entire career was spent behind a desk doing paperwork stateside. I never deployed. This is something that used to bother me.

The Marines always seemed to me like the toughest branch. I remember seeing the over-the-top marketing, which included TV commercials in the 90s that showed a man slaying a dragon. The slogan was a cool as the commercial itself: “The Few, The Proud, The Marines.” The man in the commercial seemed to be part of the elite. I wondered if had what it took to be one of the “Few and Proud.” If I ever joined the military, I knew it would be the Marines. I recognized the symbolism that slaying the dragon represented: be trained intensely in order to complete the high-level missions that, of course, all Marines do when deployed. This idea of the dragon stayed with me until I went to boot camp.




In boot camp I was taught to do everything a certain way, or else other Marines would be killed. This included following orders exactly as they were given. Some of the training was insanely difficult, but it was representative of my “slaying the dragon” moment. I even imagined myself transforming into a Marine at my graduation. The intense training followed me to Supply school, where I was taught how getting the correct gear to the infantry at the right time would be the difference between life and death. I was nervous, but I accepted that I was going to be vital in case of a deployment. When this moment came, I would be ready.

I grew more and more jealous of the friends who got selected to go on deployment. They had to have been doing things intense and action packed. When they returned, normally after around seven months, I would ask them how it had been. More often than not, they told me how boring it was. Apparently, they

did the same things over there that they did here, just without the benefits of air-conditioning. “Well,” I always said. “At least you got to deploy.”

This was a strange reply. Apparently, I didn’t want to deploy just to do the high-level stuff I had imagined. After thinking about this awhile, I realized that I had wanted to be useful. I thought back to the dragon slaying commercial, and I realized that it didn’t just show what happened to the Marine after he transformed. He just looked...ready. Ready to answer a call no matter where it might bring him. Ready to deploy OR to stay stateside.

While I do sometimes get disappointed that I never got to deploy, I understand, now, that my purpose was to help the mission, wherever I could. In my case, that meant remaining stateside. I had completed the intense training from boot camp, and like the Marine in the commercial, I was ready. 

ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

Nick Tash graduated from UCSB in June 2020 with a Bachelor of Arts degree in philosophy. He served in the Marines from 2010-2014. He is now a paralegal in the Army Reserves. He is planning to study law at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas and become an attorney in the U.S. Judge Advocate General’s (JAG) Corps.

ABOUT THE SIERRA HOTEL:

“Sierra Hotel” represents writing from participants in UCSB’s creative writing workshop for veterans and military dependents. The workshop, which began in 2012, provides the opportunity for this unique group of UCSB students to write about their military experiences as they study the craft of creative non-fiction. To read more work by UCSB student veterans and military dependents, visit Instant Separation, a Digital Journal of Military Experience from the University of California: www.instantseparation.org



SO YOU THINK YOU HAVE A TERRIBLE HOUSEMATE

Practical Steps to Getting. Them. Out.

WORDS // MICHELLE POLITISKI

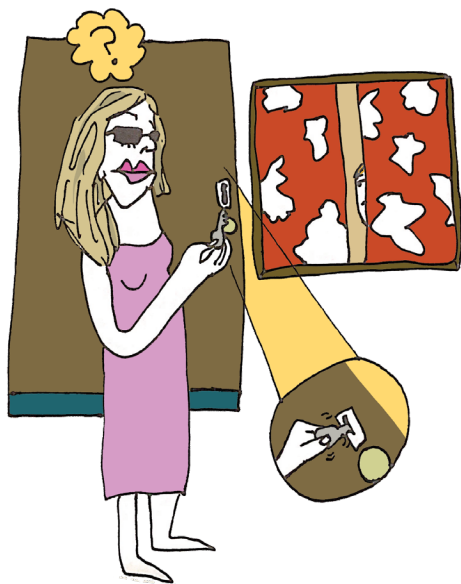
ILLUSTRATION // HANNAH FORD-MONROE

DESIGN // RACHEL SMITH



LIVING IN ISLA VISTA is expensive, stressful, and at times, damn near intolerable. As much as I have pride in my community and love where I live, I know there have been times where I, and certainly some friends of mine, have struggled with our living companions. But in times of COVID-19, housemate courtesies aren't as simple as doing your own dishes or not eating my eggs, dammit (those are my eggs, and you know they are). Consideration for your nesting bros is now a matter of health and safety more than it ever has been.

What if, completely hypothetically, you had a housemate whose supposed "influencer" job required them to party on a different yacht every weekend with dozens of unmasked strangers? What if they had two different restraining orders against them from two different people? What if they threw a COVID-unsafe party on your deck while you were sleeping, and one of their friends tried to drive away drunk and hit your car backing out of the driveway? How could you, hypothetically, get this person kicked out forcibly, assuming you've already asked them to leave? I'm going to give you some tips and tricks to start this journey and outline what you need to know.



1. It is not criminally illegal to lock your roommate out of your apartment.

Okay, this may seem like a drastic first measure to take, and you could still be civilly liable for what happens here. But, consider this—you're faced with the option of letting a potentially COVID-infected person into your apartment, when you could just...leave 'em outside. Do with this information what you will.

2. Unfortunately, you can't legally evict your roommate if they are a co-tenant.

So, on the bright side, if the inconsiderate goon in question is a sublesser, you maintain the right to break the sublease contract (or have whoever is subletting the room do it), if they have violated said contract. If your person of interest is an affectionately named "actual tenant," not a leeching sublesser (i.e. their name is on the lease) you can't kick them out yourself. This is where...*shivers* landlords come in.

3. During COVID, your landlord may be unwilling to evict a tenant.

This could just be my landlord (shoutout Meridian!) but upon asking them what our options were, they told us they couldn't evict a tenant easily during COVID-19 because of the restrictions on evictions during this time. But...that's where you're wrong, Meridian! Those restrictions only apply to landlords trying to evict for nonpayment of rent. Nonetheless, it doesn't seem that tenants have much persuasion power toward their landlords. Landlords are, in fact, parasites and don't actually have a job, so I guess we can't expect much.



4. There are some...unorthodox ways you may be able to get them to leave.

Y'know how sometimes when you're in a bad relationship but you don't want to be the one to end it, you might...do things that make your partner want to end it? It's less than ideal, I know. But consider the following:

a) Hard boil a dozen eggs and peel them. Every day, sneak into your housemate's room while they're gone, and stash an egg under their bed. The smell of rotting eggs is similar to sulfur, and everyone knows that if you smell sulfur, there's an evil spirit running amok. The smell will eventually wake your housemate in the middle of the night and they will be spooked enough to cast themselves out of your home for good, as long as they're any reasonable level of superstitious.

b) Cover yourself in double-sided tape, roll around in a pile of dog hair, and take a little nap in your housemate's bed. It's not illegal. Perhaps draw on a nose and whiskers while you're at it.

c) Get it on. Loudly. Up against your shared wall, if possible. Oh, and make sure it's between the hours of 3 and 5 a.m., and that the soundtrack is the Home Depot commercial song at max volume.

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5. Worse comes to worst, you are allowed to pursue a restraining order.


Again, this may seem drastic. The bottom line, though, is that people's safety and health are at risk every day that this pandemic escalates. If it comes down to it and you've hit every brick wall there is, someone can't live with you if you file a restraining order that proves they are recklessly endangering you and others. And that's that on that. **W**



- by hannah fm - @ PLAYLIST

- by hannah fm -

© PLAYLIST

You're a Zoom university student in sunny Isla Vista, habitually waking up to your neighbor's untimely and unwarranted 10 a.m. EDM. You ponder your helpless position in the world before finally getting out of bed to make oatmeal for the eighth day in a row. Your room is a big mess, but instead of cleaning it, you just leave your camera off all day so nobody can tell. Suddenly, your silly watch informs you that the entire day is gone, even though you accomplished absolutely nothing. In the evening, you leave your house for the first time and walk what feels like 500 miles to IV Market to buy a tall boy, because you deserve it, queen! You remind yourself on your walk home that you aren't going crazy and that just because you have nowhere2go doesn't mean you aren't going to graduate with flying colors in a boring Zoom slideshow, whoopee! Four episodes of Kitchen Nightmares and a blunt later, you stare at your beer belly in the mirror and wonder "Why did I get so high?" to which you can only respond, "Why not." Another day replayed with pre-recorded lectures unwatched and unfinished, you fall asleep like you always do, dreaming that you and the homies were all dogs in space. 

SCAN TO LISTEN



IV ARTS UNVEILS NEW LOGO!



IV Arts and its AS Student Board would like to thank WORD artist Anna Monzon Torres for creating this new logo that captures the oceanside feeling of our artistic oasis.



ISLA VISTA GIVES YOU CREDIT

ILLUSTRATION + DESIGN // RACHEL SMITH



WORD MAGAZINE

INT 185ST

THE CREATION OF THIS MAGAZINE

Contact Anna Jensen at:

akjensen@ihc.ucsb.edu

This issue of WORD: Isla Vista Arts & Culture Magazine is brought to you by the student artists and writers in INT185ST and its partner SEAL/OSL campus organization. We welcome new writers, designers, photographers, and artists from all majors to learn or perfect their craft.

IV LIVE!

THEATER 42/142

PR & ON-SITE EVENT MANAGEMENT

Contact Janine Leano at:

janine@ucsb.edu

All majors welcome! Explore public relations, advertising, and production management in this real-world setting. Learn backstage and front-of-the house skills as you produce weekly comedy, improvisation, musical theater, a capella, or dance performances at Embarcadero Hall.

MAGIC LANTERN FILMS

FILM/MEDIA 119ML

ISLA VISTA FILM EVENTS

Contact DJ Palladino at:

djpalladino@ihc.ucsb.edu

Magic Lantern Films teaches the ins and outs of film programming using IV Theater as a lab (if COVID conditions allow). Students gain experience in budgeting, publicizing, researching, theater management series-pitching, and curating. The course culminates in the execution of screenings that come out of students' own pitches.

SHAKESPEARE IN THE PARK

THEATER 194A:

GROUP STUDIES IN ACTING
& DIRECTING

Contact Anna Jensen at:

akjensen@ihc.ucsb.edu

All majors welcome to a class that produces an entire play production. Learn about acting, stagecraft, and backstage practices as you rehearse and perform. The course culminates in public performances at the end of the term. If COVID conditions allow, we will be on an outdoor stage in Isla Vista.

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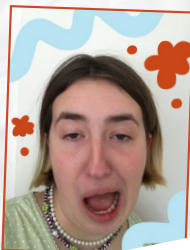
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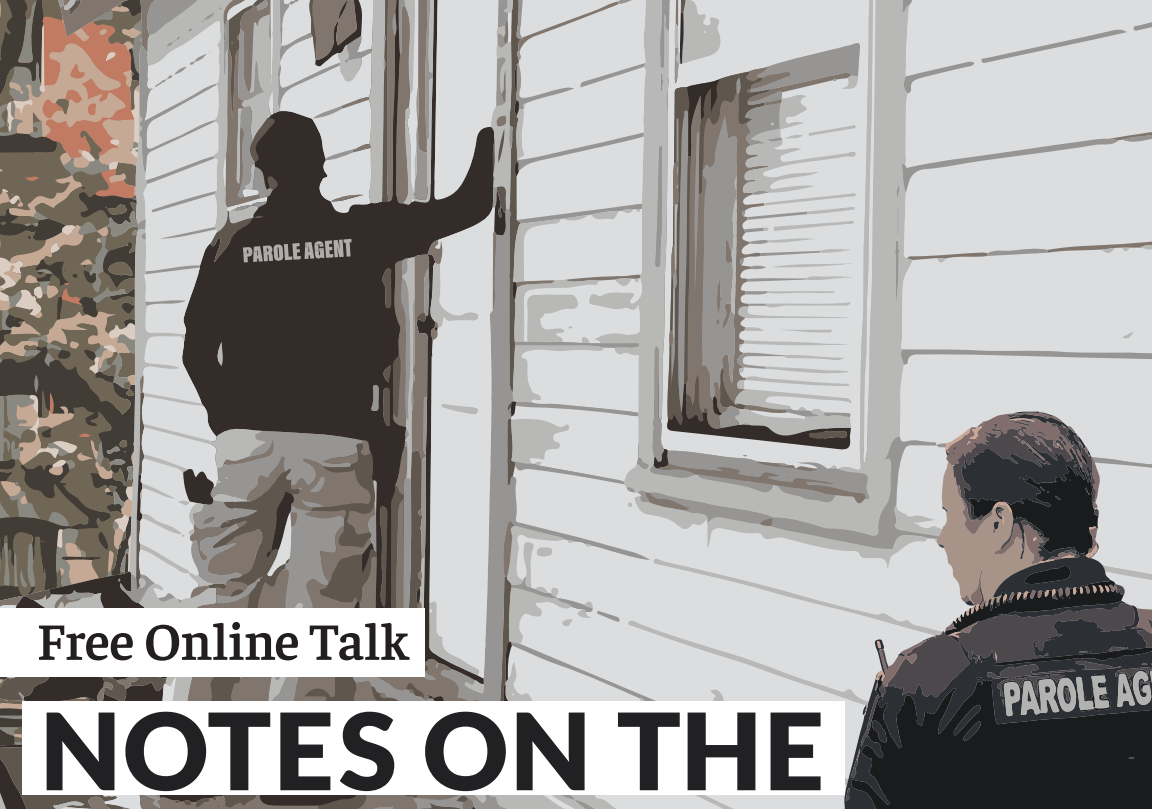


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Free Online Talk

NOTES ON THE AFTERLIFE OF MASS INCARCERATION

Reuben Jonathan Miller

University of Chicago

FEBRUARY 25 | 4:00 PM

ASL and Spanish interpretation provided
Habrá interpretación en ASL y español

Reservations required at
<https://bit.ly/Miller-IHC>