

functionally dead



D.KOLSKY

[Insert Snappy Slogan Here]

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Cuomo: I Guess I Must Re-explain the Simple 13 Color COVID Zone Index to You Morons

//JAMES DWYER

APPARENTLY, SOME OF YOU ARE “confused” by my intuitive COVID Color Zone Index THAT HAS BEEN THE LAW FOR MONTHS and need me to re-explain it. I don’t think I should have to. People don’t usually get an Emmy for being confusing, but hey, I’m a good guy. A good guy who just so happens to have an Emmy coming his way. So I decided I’ll really break it down for these stugots who are still having trouble getting it:

GREEN - Green means GO. For example, if you see a green light, you expect to gun that engine whether or not a pedestrian is still lingering in the crosswalk because, legally, they have usurped all agency over their own safety to you and the light system. We all know this! It is legally permissible for you to do whatever ya want in a Green Zone, including run down an elderly woman who dropped a can of soup in the crosswalk as her right of way expires. Green means “you can literally do anything.” Everything can open at full capacity, people can swap spit or piss... I don’t care and don’t want to know! You haven’t defeated the virus but you have earned the right to help spread it again as if we’ve learned nothing.

YELLOW - Hey now, this isn’t great. Yellow tends to be a signal for caution, that you should be on heightened alert because red is just around the corner. Knowing this, if your neighborhood is in a Yellow Zone, that means you gotta get whatever you gotta do done before that little jaundiced baby turns red, capisce? You need to run any errands, go to any family reunions or Sunday dinners, or have a ton of anonymous sex in the basement of a grocery store? Then you gotta do that NOW because things are getting BAD and they’re about to get WORSE. All gyms, schools, and religious gatherings are restricted to 50% capacity. Indoor dining at 75%. Hey, we still gotta eat.

REGULAR ORANGE - This is the stage *just* before Red. “But I thought you said Yellow means Red is just around the corner?” Shut up you nerd! Regular Orange is almost Red. We’re starting to see more community spread because people got wild during the Yellow phase. How dare you! Who told you to do this? And don’t say it’s me, because I don’t buy it! If your neighborhood is designated a Regular Orange Zone, you jamokes did that to yourselves! All gyms must skip leg day. It’s called sacrifice, you mamaluke.

CHEETO ORANGE - This is less about what YOU need to do and more about what’s going on with me. Cheeto Orange means Donald Trump and I are engaged in some kind of strange public battle of words and I am presently aroused by the attention. When your neighborhood is deemed a Cheeto Orange Zone, I ask that you give me space. I need to attend to this circus >>

>> where I am the ringmaster and Donald is whatever else happens at a Circus. Whatever zone you were in previously, assume you must continue to adhere to those restrictions while fervently watching the back and forth as Trump and I publicly spar. What don't you get about this?!

RED - When you're on defense and you're in the Red Zone, you're on high alert because the other team is in danger of scoring. I tried an NFL analogy to get through to those of you who seem to be afflicted with CTE, since you can't comprehend this simple system. A Red Zone is BAD because we're on defense against the virus. Pretty much everything closes in a Red Zone. If the virus scores on us while we're in the Red Zone, Tom Coughlin's gonna be pissed. Outdoor dining, indoor gyms, and indoor beaches all remain closed. Indoor dining at 80%. People gotta eat!

BLUE - We haven't really figured out where Blue fits into the equation yet. If your neighborhood is designated as a Blue Zone, we want you to feel a general sense of unease not about the virus, but about your purpose. What purpose do you serve? What should you be doing with your life? Blue Zone neighborhoods should reflect on their lives until they are designated a different color or until *I* change what the definition of a Blue Zone is. Which you should already know by now, you gavones.

FAKE OUT RED - I used to wake my children up once every few months by screaming "fire, there's no time, we gotta go." I'd time how long it took for them to get out and then berate them for trying to save the dog. I completely lifted the idea from the Ben Stiller character in *The Royal Tenenbaums*, only I don't do track suits—they chafe my nipple rings. If you are in a Fake Out Red Zone, you'll think you're in a Red Zone and must behave accordingly until I announce "Fake Out" 24 hours later. You will be graded.

BURNT SIENNA - What is this color? What is this zone? These are questions you're probably asking because you've been goofing off when you should've been studying for the exam (there will be an exam). Burnt Sienna is the "Make It Your Own" Zone. There is a moderate level of risk of community spread, and we want you to find creative ways to take that risk seriously. Make

a giant hamster wheel and walk around in it? Sure, haven't seen that one yet. Buy a NASA space suit and say you're from the future? Sounds fun. Sounds like you've made it your own. Sounds like you understand the concept of the Burnt Sienna Zone in which you currently reside. Private businesses may remain open with their own fun safety guidelines.

POOP - I don't like this one. We let my daughter's boyfriend pick a color for the Index, and he insisted on "Poop." I also gotta say, I obsess over this boy day and night, and for some reason the media thinks it's cute. It's not cute for me. When I think about him, I hear a voice that sounds similar to mine, but I don't recognize it as my own. It tells me to do things, things I wouldn't normally do. *I'm scared I may actually murder him.* If your neighborhood is in a Poop Zone, it means the virus is the least of your concerns. You have personal demons that you must reconcile with. Everyone in a Poop Zone is encouraged to disregard the virus entirely and go on a Catholic Jesuit retreat for the weekend. What's so hard to understand here? Indoor dining at 85%. All entrees are two-for-one.

DOUBLE FAKE OUT RED - Easy. It's Fake Out Red, but 24 hours after I proclaim it was a Fake Out, I say it was a Double Fake Out and it's actually been Red this whole time. It's reverse psychosis. You should learn to trust no one if you're going to survive this virus. Any Red could be a Fake Out Red or a Double Fake Out Red, and if you don't understand that, you haven't been paying attention. Schools only open for left-handed kids, or, as my mother used to call them, "the Devil's children."

RAINBOW - In honor of the LGBTQIA+ community we have named one of the Zones "Rainbow." This is a completely symbolic gesture that means absolutely nothing. Anytime we declare that your neighborhood is in a Rainbow Zone, that neighborhood is sponsored by Bank of America. Movie theatres must remain closed unless they open exclusively for showings of *Milk* and/or *Carol*.

9/11 - I can already hear some of you saying "but 9/11 isn't a color," and my response to that is: "it is now." One of the many ways we can ensure we "never forget" is to rename the color Magenta, >>

>> “9/11.” If your neighborhood is designated as a 9/11 Zone, all bets are off. This means thousands are dying daily. In addition to all Red Zone restrictions, we will release Rudy Guiliani from whatever hotel room he is currently holed-up in so he can pose for photos with firefighters and police officers in your neighborhood as the bodies pile up to the sky. We hope to never have to designate a neighborhood as a 9/11 Zone, but if we do, that’s on you because I refuse to be held accountable for anything I can blame on poor people, fat people, sick people, or poor people. Indoor dining at 90%.

BLACK - You know how in Karate, there’s all these belts and the black belt is reserved for people who have mastered the art of Karate? Well, a Black Zone is kind of like getting a black belt in Karate. If your neighborhood is in a Black Zone, that means you’ve intimidated the virus into submission. You’ve figured out a way to eradicate it from your neighborhood without any outside help whatsoever. I’m proud of you for doing that on your own, and I will gladly take credit for it. If your neighborhood is in a Black Zone, your neighborhood will get a special thanks in Volume 3 of my COVID book trilogy in which I obviously play the hero. All businesses can reopen to full capacity and restaurants must serve all food pre-cooked on as if to dare the virus to return.

And there you have it folks. My simple color-coded COVID index. I don’t think I could make it easier to understand! I’d like to take this time to announce that anyone who still doesn’t get it is officially living in an Off-The-Menu Meatball Zone ‘cause you got spaghetti for brains.

That’s a joke probably! If you don’t like it, I blame the MTA! 🤪



AN OPEN LETTER TO JAMES CARVILLE: I MISS YOU, MAN

//SEAN O'REILLY

Now that the election has ended (and it has—the steal will not be stopped), I am left with a profound emptiness. In much the same way the orgasm is called “the little death,” the end of the campaign is a “little death” for me. There is a hole in my heart—and inbox—where missives from my best friend James Carville once flowethed over. James, if you’re reading this: I miss getting emails from you. So much. Sure, the Georgia runoffs have losers like Reverend Warlock and Jimmy Ass-off sending me nerdy, PANICKED emails at two in the morning asking for money, but it’s not the same. Who are these guys, my cousin Phillip? I know you, James “The Cajun Stallion” Carville would never do that.

You wrote me every goddamn morning from the time that Bernie Sanders gave the Democratic Party establishment my email up until November 5th. You would email to tell me about new things that were happening in the Biden camp and how the Republicans were or were not on the run depending on the day’s polls. It was glorious. James, you became my best friend and closest confidant. But now? *Nothing*. Absolutely nothing. I’ve emailed you at least four times a week since election day, but there has been no response. In fact, I’ve been asked to stop replying by people who work for you, and I’m told they’ve never had to ask anyone to stop before. I guess I care. Come on, JC (my fun nickname for you that you assuredly love)!

Sweet James, I wish I could convey the emptiness I feel. Even emails from Barack Obama taste like ash in my mouth; they can never fill the alien snake-shaped Carville chasm in my soul. I remember the funny inside jokes you’d >>

>> put in the subject line like “a win is a win,” or “re: \$70,000,000.” You always knew exactly what to say to get me to pony up another fifty bucks; not only because it was the right thing to do, but because you know what was best for me. Like when I was feeling really scared in early November, your “I’ve had enough” *was* enough... to tell me it was time to take things seriously and improve my life (via donation to the DNC). I just hope you’re reading this so I can tell you how well I am doing and you can reach out to finally tell me why October 30th was “scary.” Knowing you Jimmy, it was something about Mitch McConnell—you really hate that guy.

I love you, man. Please just email me again. It could be for a mailing list, donations, or just an update on how the Dems plan to take the Senate. Just to read the sonnets you construct but one more time I would battle a hundred legions of Tom Cottons and drink covfefe with Lindsey Graham himself. Please come back to me, my campaign friend. I know you will not improve my life in any real measurable way, but that’s American politics. That’s what meaning is. That, as you taught me sweet prince, is life.

Yours,
Sean



YOU'RE WELCOME: AN ORAL HISTORY OF ALEC BALDWIN'S TRUMP IMPRESSION

//MATTHEW BRIAN COHEN

SOME MIGHT KNOW HIM AS the President of the United States. Others might know him for hosting the reality game show *The Apprentice*. Still others might know him for raping dozens of women, including his ex-wife. But the WWE Hall of Famer is perhaps best known for being the target of Alec Baldwin’s mockery on the long-running sketch comedy (think camp skits, but longer) institution, *Saturday Night Live*. With an impression that many have deemed “adequate,” Alec Baldwin has mildly skewered our Commander-in-Chief unlike anyone else. *Functionally Dead* takes a look back.

THE ORIGIN:

LORNE MICHAELS: We needed someone to play Trump, obviously, because we do political comedy on the show. Or we attempt to do political comedy, anyway. I suppose it’s not really political in the sense that we have no political ideology or larger satirical point we’re making, but we reference people in the political world, and that’s good enough for our audience of hogs.

MARCI KLEIN (longtime SNL producer): We needed someone who wasn’t in the cast, because Lorne and I have nothing but contempt for our actors.

LORNE: If they were any good, they’d already be famous, right?

ALEC BALDWIN: I had never wanted to play Donald Trump. Donald Trump is a narcissist, a sociopath, a racist, a sexist... just an arrogant, elitist asshole who thinks he’s God’s gift to humanity. And I couldn’t relate to that at all. I’m just too kind and gracious of a person, you know? The kindest and most gracious person—just ask my slut pig daughter. >>

>> LORNE: Trump almost agreed to play himself.

MARCI: We had it all worked out. The President would fly to New York on Air Force One on Friday, do the show on Saturday, and then take a car out to Bedminster Sunday morning to golf until the table read.

MAYA RUDOLPH (former (current?!) cast member): He was really excited to be the first sitting President to appear as a cast member on the show after Carter quit to handle the Iranian hostage crisis, but in the end, it didn't work out.

LORNE: Trump insisted he get to do the "What's Up with That?" sketch, and really, that's Keenan's character. I mean I still would've let him do it, he just changed his mind. It didn't really have anything to do with "What's Up with That?" now that I think of it.

ALEC: Lorne called me on a Thursday before the show. I'll never forget what I was doing, primarily because it's something I do all the time—screaming at my adult daughter. She had done something stupid like letting me drive my Mercedes into the Chelsea Piers or refusing to acknowledge that the twenty-three year old waitress at Cirque found me sexy. I was losing my voice I was screaming so loud. It was a stellar performance. I actually picked up the phone mid-scream and started accidentally screaming at Lorne! I think I even called him a slut pig.

LORNE: It was the right kind of energy.

THE IMPRESSION:

ALEC: I actually didn't think about it before I did it for the first time. That's real, by the way! I actually admitted that on Jimmy Kimmel. Can you believe I said that?!

TINA FEY: The day before the show, Alec called me up in panic and said, "what am I going to do you slut pig?!"

ALEC: Tina gave me great advice. She said, "imagine you're Sarah Cooper, but instead of lip syncing, say the words." And that just unlocked everything. I don't think Sarah Cooper was famous yet, but at the time, it just really clicked.

LORNE: When I first saw Alec in the Trump wig I actually said out loud, "we've jumped the shark."

KYLE MOONEY: Yeah, he did say that.

MARCI: I remember Lorne telling me, "we both have enough money to live the rest of our lives in complete and total luxury. What the fuck are we doing here?" But you know, we persisted.

ALEC: I really wanted to "go there" with Trump. Wear a suit, move my hands around, talk in a silly voice... there was nothing I wouldn't do.

MAYA: You have to remember, it was 2017. It was the Wild West back then.

ALEC: The way I puffed out my lips and squinted... you couldn't get away with that now.

LORNE: Did we upset the censors? No. Did we get calls from NBC? No. Did we upset the powerful in any way? No. But we came close, I think. Once or twice. Maybe once. Hard to say as I don't care.

MARCI: I remember watching Alec in the makeup chair, and I asked, "should we really be putting that much bronzer on?" And Alec looked at me and said, "much like the Shakespearian court jester, us comedians are the only ones allowed to tell the truth." I still don't know what that meant.

MAYA: Alec was very protective of Trump. He would go through the sketches and change lines, you know, "that isn't what Trump would say," "Trump should talk about how upset the smart and talented Alec Baldwin is making him," and "Trump would only do this sketch with a topless Kate Upton."

MARCI: One time he sent a PA to bring him a hot cup of "covfefe," and I realized then how deep in-character he actually was.

KYLE MOONEY: Yeah, he did say that.

TINA: On the surface, it looks like Alec's just coasting by with the laziest impression of one of the easiest men in history to impersonate. But there's a subtlety to it most people miss. Think about it: Donald Trump does a bad job as President; Alec Baldwin does a bad job impersonating him.

THE SKETCHES:

LORNE: There were some legendary ones, I assume. >>

>> MAYA: You know that feeling when you're in the moment and you realize you're living through something historic? I never felt that way performing with Alec, but he certainly talked about it a lot.

ALEC: All the sites wrote about us. *HuffPo*, *Vulture*, *The AV Club*. I don't visit these sites, but my slut pig daughter does.

MARCI: I mean, the list of great sketches is endless. What was that one where he said "you're fired?" There had to be one of those, right?

KYLE MOONEY: Yeah, he did say that.

TINA: There's the one where Brad Pitt played Dr. Fauci. The ones where Melissa McCarthy played Sean Spicer. The best sketches are the ones where you don't remember any of the jokes, only the famous actors that were in them.

ALEC: The genius of the sketches was that

I said what Trump had actually said—that's method. My method. I invented that method. It's called The Kominski Method.

THE END

LORNE: It was Alec's idea to sing "Macho Man." It certainly wasn't my idea. I checked out in 2005.

ALEC: I wanted to do something that wasn't funny per se, but really made you think. Here's this guy, who purports to be this "macho man," and he's doing something incredibly gay. I mean, playing the piano? Who does he think he is—Elton John?

THE LEGACY

ALEC: Did I expect my impression to have such an impact? In one word: yes. And in the end? Donald Trump is no longer President.

TINA: I think Alec held up the sign that

said, "you're welcome," not because he was trying to take credit for Trump's loss, but because his hyper-inflated ego demanded he take credit.

LORNE: The Biden campaign actually did reach out to thank Alec for his impression. Apparently it was more campaigning than Biden ever did.

KYLE MOONEY: Yeah, he did say that.

MARCI: We were actually going to have Joe Biden play himself on the show. We had him fly down and wait sixteen hours to meet with Lorne just like we do with our cast, you know, treat him like shit? But then the Internet found some old clips of Biden writing some really racist bills, so we Shane Gillis-ed him and got Jim Carrey instead.

ALEC: Should I say it? You want me to say it? I can't—he wants me to say it! Come on! Okay, fine: *You're welcome.* 🙄

MAX KNOBLAUCH

HENRY KISSINGER TEACHES DISCIPLINING YOUR DOG

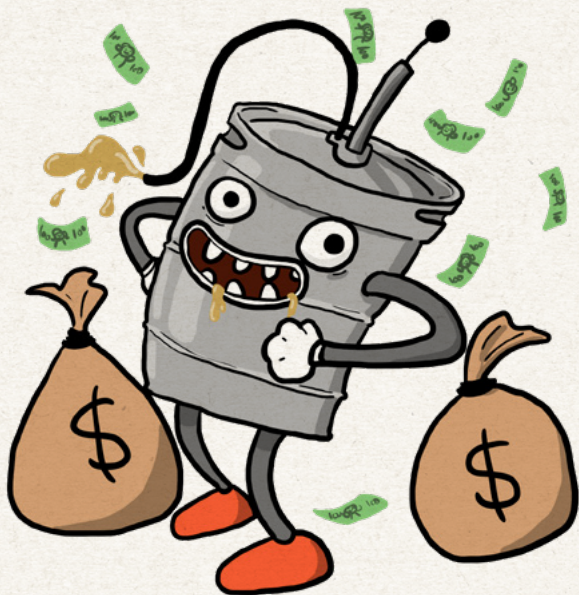


IT'S A GREAT DAY

TO JOIN DSA

JOIN HERE

D. KRISKY



Debt Jubilee? More Like Creditor Kegger, Bitch!

//DIANA KOLSKY

OK, SINCE I SEE IT making the rounds on Rose Emoji Twitter, here goes. The concept of “Debt Jubilee” dates back thousands of years and has been employed countless times over history (though not in our lifetime). The Book of Deuteronomy mentions a forgiveness of debt every seven years—the idea being that debt is a crushing hellscape and even society’s most wretched losers (read: the poor) shouldn’t be saddled with it for *too* long. But honestly? That’s horsheshit. We need those impoverished scumbums to live out their numbered days in fear, cuz it makes us creditors so goddamn flush. Let’s all STFU about amnesty for debtors! Fuck the Bible. And fuck their little Jubilee—it’s Creditor Kegger time, son!

WTF is a Creditor Kegger, you may be asking? And why do we need to lionize the privileged few who get rich on the backs of

the indebted majority whose shrinking wages and federal protections make living on credit the only way to subsidize their already difficult lives? Fair questions if you’re a penniless sack of debt. Answer: I have a fucking yacht, bitch! Plus, I can get some indebted deadbeat to pump a few silver kegs full of Moët. Yeah I can get that shit in kegs. You there?

I’m talking tits, ass, *and* caviar, baby. I’m talking about the kind of primo gala event where we get questioned afterwards by the boat police about the woman who “fell” over the side of the Master Baiter (my boat’s name—it’s a joke about how much I masturbate) and drowned (don’t worry, I paid off the law here on the Cape—it’s merely a formality, and you won’t be late for dinner). I’m talking hot-tubbing in the gold coins we harvest from the hungry masses and drying our dicks off on a handful of bundled million-dollar liens. You want to jerk off on the dock or BE the party? The answer is clear, my shitty friend. You can do both.

Take national treasure and my personal hero Jeff Bezos: he doesn’t actually *have* two-hundred billion dollars. Much of his ill-amassed wealth lies in what is *owed* to him. Liquid-shmiquid—gimme that debt! Debt keeps us big fish monied, swimming in imaginary cash and balling on interest. You don’t get rich on human rights and you don’t become a billionaire without actual slaves (luckily we moved ours overseas, so we never have to think or talk about it).

But I hear you crying, “wahhhhh, what about the market here at home?” Shut your hole. So many whiny puds insist that a Debt Jubilee would jumpstart the economy, allowing these IOU Eeyores to merge back onto Acquisition Avenue—the meek, once trapped under the crushing weight of their debt, would be free to seek a higher education, buy a car, buy a house, and most of all, take part in America’s favorite pastime: consumption. But ya know what? I fuckin’ love that they’re drowning in debt, cuz it means *I’m* drowning in pussy.

So toughen up. Toss whatever you have left of your humanity into this late-stage capitalism dumpster fire, and consider this your invitation to the soiree of the fuckin’ century. Keg stand! 🍻

How I've Managed to Thrive Off My One Stimulus Check



//BRADY O'CALLAHAN

LATELY, I'VE SEEN A LOT of criticism from my peers online over the government's choice to issue a single \$1200 stimulus check to cover the entirety of this ten month (so far) pandemic. I'll admit that even I, the son of a prominent NYC hedge fund manager, was a bit worried at first, but I soon grew confused by the outrage of everyone who—by every measure I can fathom—is just like me. Not only have I survived this long on \$1200. *I've thrived.* Here's how:

I humbly began quarantine in a studio at the top floor of a Cobble Hill brownstone. I had gotten blackout drunk on Pappy Van Winkle and passed out there the night before. I stumbled my way downstairs to the other three floors of the brownstone where I meagerly live alone and scheduled an at-home visit from the service that comes to pump me full of water and electrolytes intravenously, as I do not like the taste of either.

That's when I received the email. I had just been laid off from my job as sort of like the idea guy at my uncle's media advertising company. This was unacceptable. My racehorses depend on that income! I knew I had to take swift action.

Luckily, my stimulus check had just been deposited that morning, but I knew I would have to make it last. So I took the \$1200 and bought an \$1100 first-class plane ticket to my parents' quaint home in Greenwich, Connecticut. I thought it wise to save a little cash living there rent-free for a while. With the Brooklyn brownstone having recently been vacated, my parents employed me to email the new tenants a bill every month, and I kept the money since they forgot to ask about it. We're very lucky that we were able to convince the renters it was OK to pay way beyond market rates given the state of the world.

Knowing this wouldn't last forever, I rolled up my Oxford sleeves and sought full-time employment. Realizing that nothing on the market particularly spoke to my unique skill set, I had no choice but to launch my own scrappy startup, sourcing and selling steel to my grandfather's weapons manufacturing plants. I was able to quickly locate a steel manufacturer that Pappy had recently severed business ties with, purchase steel from them for a fixed price, and sell it back to him for a modest 400% profit. I now have over seven different weapons manufacturing clients. Fun fact: each one of those clients is a blood relative of mine!

Supplanted by my new, paltry income, I decided to analyze my lifestyle to see where I could cut unnecessary expenses. Surprisingly, I had many. I stopped eating out three times a day, seven days a week, and instead made do with the meals prepared by my parents' private chef, Emeril Lagasse. I stopped doing cocaine as much on Fridays and did more on Tuesdays when my dealer had a deal sort of thing going. Altogether, I was able to save \$8400 each week.

And now? I'm thriving. When the world gets back on track, I'll be set up for success because I didn't cower and cry at my appointed (?) officials to give me a handout. I melted my silver spoon down into a silver straw, put my nose to the grindstone where I lined up my cocaine, and got to work. And so can you.

So... what are you waiting for? 🤖

Rahm Emmanuel: Give Me a Cabinet Position or I Kill This Dog

//JAMES DWYER

Functionally Dead has obtained exclusive access to a letter written by former Chicago Mayor and current scumbag Rahm Emmanuel threatening President-elect Biden that he will murder a dog if he does not receive a cabinet position. It is unclear if the letter was ever received by Biden's team. We now present the full, unredacted letter:

JOE,
Give me a cabinet
position or I kill
this dog. - RAHM





SANTA: CHRISTMAS WILL BE LATE BECAUSE I LEASED OUT MY ELVES TO DIG MASS GRAVES IN TEXAS

//KYLE EWERT GUEST CONTRIBUTOR

HEY KIDDOS, IT'S ME, SANTA CLAUS, and I've got a bit of unfortunate news to bring to you. Christmas will be delayed indefinitely this year.

I know, I know. It's terrible. But due to a contract Santaco (my LLC) recently inked with CoreCivic, I've leased out my elves to help dig mass graves in Texas alongside the prison population. Now before you get too upset: this is good for the elves! Texas is currently paying \$2 an hour for each prisoner they use to load bodies into freezer trucks, which is double the rate I pay the elves here at the Pole. Plus the great thing about elven labor is that they never tire due to their magical nature! Not only is this a win for Santa and his elves, it's a win for grave digging.

I know this all *sounds* exploitative, but I give these elves lodging and food for the entirety of their lives on top of their wages! No one has done that since Feudalism ended! So if Santa can make a little extra scratch by loaning a lil' labor to the U.S.'s largest private prison corporation, then what's the harm? Sure, the elves are highly susceptible to COVID due to their snowflake immune systems—I've lost hundreds of good, hard working elves—but when you bury an elf, two more elves spring up from the ground in its place. Like they say—when life gives you eggs, make egg-nog! Think about it: would you rather my elves pass out from dehydration while assembling something as trivial as a *Paw Patrol*

playset or while doing something historic, like burying an exponentially growing number of infectious corpses in the Lonestar State?

Don't worry: you'll still get your *Paw Patrol* playset, but it might not be until spring (of 2022). On the bright side, now that I've grown Santaco's profits by over \$100 billion since the pandemic began, I can offer you two-day shipping (the elves needed my sleigh to haul carcasses to the body pit) once it is made. It really is a win-win—it just requires some patience and probably a little Lysol on your presents, just to be safe.

One other thing: If you happen to live in Texas and see any signs that the elves are even *thinking* about unionizing, please send out a letter to good ol' St. Nick. I gotta put that pro-labor fire out immediately... It's just not in their best interests, you know?

Anyway, I'm excited to get cracking on your toys once we can and I do apologize for the delay. Soon you'll forget about this whole operation and you'll be gaming the pandemic away on your brand-new PS5.

See you in a few months! Wear a mask! 🦺

Get more from comedian Kyle @kyleewert



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READY PLAYER TWO

A VERY REAL BOOK REVIEW BASED ON READING A FEW REVIEWS AND SKIMMING SOME EXCERPTS

//MATTHEW BRIAN COHEN

THE SUCCESS OF ERNEST CLINE'S debut novel proved that we were in fact *ready* for *player one*. But are we *player two-ready*? That's the question posed in *Ready Player Two*, the long-awaited sequel to author Ernest Cline's novelization of Steven Spielberg's science-fiction film *Ready Player One*.

For those who haven't read the first movie, the world of *Ready Player Two* is set in the not-too-distant future where the Internet has been replaced by the OASIS (as it is the only "oasis" from a planet ravaged by income inequality and climate change) and is now run entirely by the tech company GSS. Users "plug" into the OASIS via a virtual reality headset, allowing them to experience the magical and addictive feeling of walking around a website. In a word: wow. This utopia comes to a crashing halt, however, when a bad company called IOI decides they want to make even more money off the OASIS than the good company GSS. Luckily, plucky nerd and frequent masturbator Wade Watts uses his knowledge of videogames and 1980s movies written for horny virgins to win a contest, allowing him to be the sole dictator of the primary means of human communication. Neat!

In *Ready Player Two*, our returning hero Wade Watts is now the richest and most powerful man that will ever live. However, despite his unlimited wealth and power, things aren't all they are cracked up to be. Wade's girlfriend (fellow OASIS hacker Art3mis [the 3 is silent]) has dumped him because she is a bitch. Heartbroken, Wade decides that videogames are "for baby nerds" and he never really liked that dumb stuff anyway. Instead, he is really into "big boy" tech like crypto and ONI, a super-secret tech that posthumous creator of OASIS James Halliday made that allows

people to actually "feel" websites, getting to experience things no human ever had before, like giving birth to yourself or having an orgy with your dad. Things get even worse for Wade when he decides to release this dad-fucker technology, resulting in humanity—still hopeless and defeated due to the economic and environmental tragedies nobody bothered caring about in the first novel—becoming instantly addicted to it. It's now a race against the clock as Wade must figure out how he can use his wealth, power, and fame to get people to still use OASIS all the time so he can continue to make ungodly sums of money, but not use it so much that they are fucking their dad an unhealthy amount.

Unlike some sequels that simply retell the story of the original, *Ready Player Two* adds several satisfying wrinkles. Instead of yet another tale about a young man going on an Easter Egg hunt only to learn that the Internet is bad except when it is good, *Ready Player Two* has Wade exploring the idea that the Internet might be really freaking bad, except when it is really freaking good. On this second go-around, an emboldened Cline doesn't shy away from political commentary. Competing to steal Wade's Internet monopoly is rival company FaceJournal, led by billionaire entrepreneur Elon Stench (no doubt a stand-in for PayPal and Palantir founder Peter Thiel). Cline uses this character to demonstrate that some billionaires are inherently evil, instead of just incidentally evil.

Ready Player Two also expands on the themes of race and LGBTQ issues introduced in the original novel. When Wade first lands on the Michael Jackson planet, he hears the famous lyric "it doesn't matter if you're black or white," and nods approvingly before saying, "it's so true." One of the new characters is a trans



>> woman—upon learning this fact while investigating every facet of her private life without her knowledge or consent, Wade remarks, “now *that’s* hip to be square” as Huey Lewis chugs a Pepsi Free and fucks his dad.

But all those themes take a backseat to what really matters: fifty-five straight pages describing Wade fighting Balkie from *Perfect Strangers* in a Gundam. Cline expertly weaves references to Neon Genesis Evangelion with references to the Atari Lynx with references to the Corey Haim movie *Double O Kid* in a way that writers like Ernest Hemmingway or the creator of the Choose Your Own Adventure books never could have imagined. *Ready Player Two* reaches its climax when Wade challenges Elon Stench to a game of *Cool Spot* for Sega Genesis, with the winner gaining control of all of the data in the universe. I won’t reveal who wins, but let’s just say that Wade wins and the book ends with our hero, having complete and total access to every piece of information that has and will ever exist, making a digital copy of himself and his closest friends to live on a spaceship forever while everyone on Earth continues to suffer, happily ever after.

Do I recommend you read this book? I don’t, but only because there will eventually be a movie of it, and you can see all the things instead of wasting valuable brain resources imagining them. Until then, I’ll see you (and your dad!) inside the OASIS. 🤖



THE OBAMAS' HIGHER GROUND SET TO PRODUCE *BAD GRANDPA 2*

//JAMES DWYER

HOLLYWOOD, CALIFORNIA - Barack Obama’s production company Higher Ground Productions has signed on to executive produce *Bad Grandpa 2*. The film is a sequel to the 2013 film *Bad Grandpa* in which Johnny Knoxville dresses up as an old man who is a bad grandpa. Also signing on to executive produce are Johnny Knoxville’s managers, Preston Lacey and Rake Yohn.

The film marks a departure for the Higher Ground team, having previously produced *American Factory*, the anti-union documentary about how Americans don’t work as hard as the Chinese. Johnny Knoxville released the following statement:

“We’re happy to be working with President Obama, Michelle, and Higher Ground on *Bad Grandpa 2*. They understand how important it is for Americans to witness the plight of a fake grandfather terrorizing his grandson as horrified onlookers do nothing, especially during this dark chapter in our history. Or at least I think they do. I don’t really know.”

Pressed for comment on why Higher Ground chose to produce *Bad Grandpa 2*, Barack Obama said, “let me be clear, my compound on Martha’s Vineyard doesn’t pay for itself” before missing a 3-pointer he insisted we film. After repeatedly asserting that he normally makes these shots, he forced everyone in attendance to delete the video from their phones. 🤖



ALYSSA MILANO OFFERS OLIVE BRANCH TO #METOO MOVEMENT (VIA TWITTER)

//BRADY O'CALLAHAN

Wow! TWITTER WAS ABSOLUTELY ABUZZ last week when Alyssa Milano (*My Name Is Earl* star best known for relaunching the #MeToo movement in 2017) called for unity among #MeToo activists and the Hollywood players who threw the movement under the bus in 2020 in order to support an establishment candidate who didn't threaten to overtax them. It's time for peace, and we are HERE FOR IT. Check out the tweets below!

I'd like to extend an olive branch to the #MeToo movement.

I am ready to move #ForwardTogether.

There's so much work to do to heal the nation. Let's be a part of the solution and not add to the problems we face, like you all almost did.

My comments are open. Please reply with #ForwardTogether.



Please join me on this healing journey. I need to forgive Trump voters real quick so I can talk to my friends and frequent my favorite businesses again. #ForwardTogether



Look, you almost single-handedly blew the election and gave us another four years of Trump. It was beyond short-sighted to hold fast to the principles upon which you were founded if it meant tanking the chances of the only viable candidate who probably assaulted a former subordinate. It's irresponsible to weaponize the #MeToo hashtag for stuff that really inconveniences me and many other wealthy people! #ForwardTogether

Need I remind you #BernieOrBusters that he often reminded Twitter users of really, really mean ex-boyfriends? That's pretty much the same thing, and I'd like #MeToo to consider moving #ForwardTogether on my terms, where Joe Biden is fine, actually, and Bernie is bad.

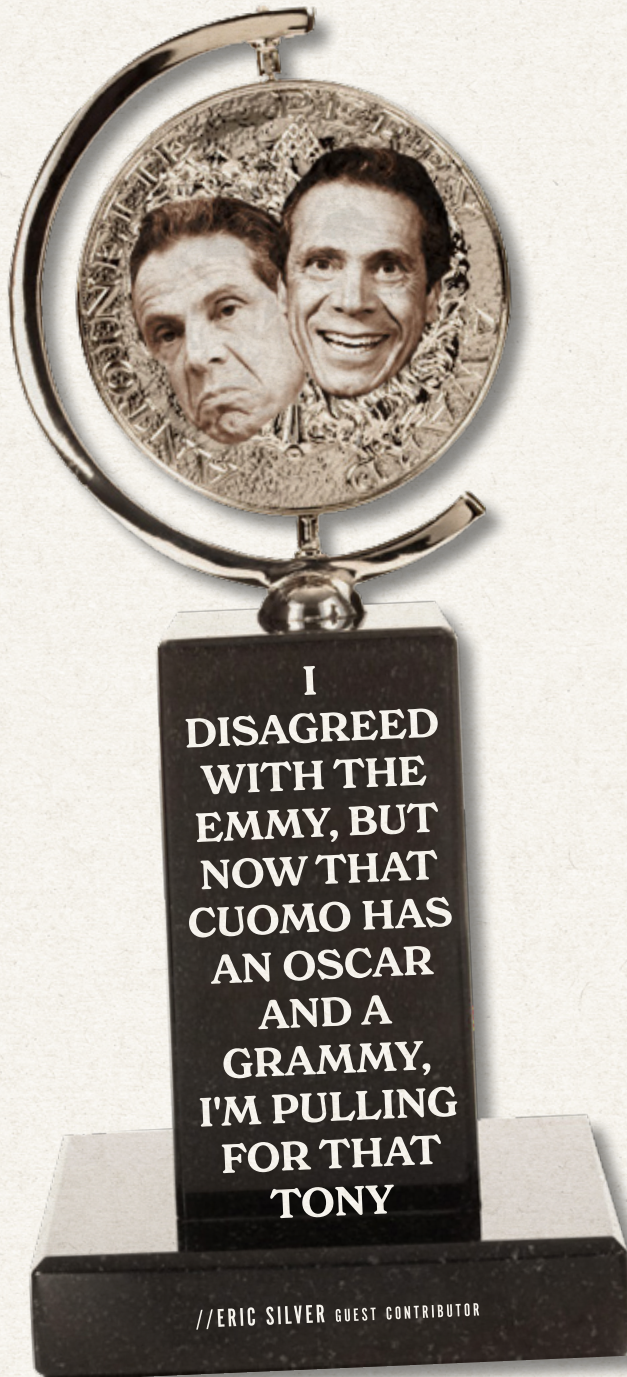


I'm sorry that we had to radically part ways on the campaign trail because the #MeToo movement wanted four more years of Trump, but I'm ready to extend the olive branch—a symbol of peace—to you if you beg me for it and grovel at my feet. If you don't, it doesn't matter. I've gotten all I need from you, and you can rot in the state we've left you.

#ForwardTogether



There's a time and a place for everything, and the election just wasn't the time or the place for the #MeToo movement. I hope #MeToo will restart its incredibly important work and that we can continue to ignore this whole credible Biden allegation, as the time and place for discussing that is never and nowhere. #ForwardTogether 🤪



WHEN THE ACADEMY OF TELEVISION Arts & Sciences announced on November 21st that Governor Cuomo would receive an International Emmy for his “masterful COVID-19 briefings,” I was understandably a bit upset. Did they know who they were celebrating?

Wasn't this the same governor who downplayed the virus back in February, then in March forced nursing homes to readmit patients who had tested positive for the coronavirus? Didn't this governor propose \$2.5 billion in cuts to Medicaid in early April while the virus was ravaging New York City? Didn't he preside over the infection of 625,000 New Yorkers, and the deaths of 34,000? Hadn't New York City just announced two days earlier that the public school system would be shutting down again in light of a resurging infection rate, and didn't Cuomo on that same day say, “so, the restrictions work and just to make it very simple, if you socially distanced and you wore a mask and you were smart, none of this would be a problem. It's all self-imposed. It's all self-imposed. If you didn't eat the cheesecake, you wouldn't have a weight problem,” and in doing so, laid bare his basic misunderstanding of the role state government is meant to play in public health policy as well as the basics of BMI, nutrition, and genetics? What could Cuomo have done to possibly merit *any* award, let alone the highest honor in television?

But then something strange happened.

In the days that followed, the Grammys announced their nominations for 2021, and Cuomo's name was on their list. Months later in January of 2021, he won the Grammy for Best Spoken Word Album for the audiobook of *American Crisis: Leadership Lessons from the COVID-19 Pandemic*, a 320-page book that was published seven months into the pandemic and one month before the official start of a deathly new wave of that same pandemic. *Ok, I thought, maybe it's actually kind of >>*

>> *impressive that he averaged over a page a day, including re-writes.* That's like a Kerouac-writing-*On the Road*-on-Benze-drine-level of achievement. And he does have a *certain* style of delivery. Then, just a few weeks before that virtual award ceremony, the Academy suddenly announced that they were also considering Andy from Queens for one of their own awards (and it wasn't even one of the honorary ones). They just slid him in for Best Dance Direction with no further explanation. When he won, I thought I was going insane.

Now, I have to be honest with myself. I mean yeah, he's a monster, but he fucking needs to get that Tony. Sure, it's currently the spring of 2021, we're in our third lockdown, we hit ninety-thousand deaths in New York State alone, and Cuomo has just issued an executive order outlining the days of the week that restaurants can be open for indoor dining *by cuisine* (Southern Italian and Northern Italian getting clear favoritism with their respective Friday and Saturday slots), but I have two words for you: Rita Moreno. Ms. Moreno has had a distinguished 70 years in entertainment, but her most notable crowning achievement is the elusive EGOT. Imagine how cool it would be if our negligent, shouting governor could join the ranks of Rita Moreno, Whoopi Goldberg, Mel Brooks, and other elite entertainers—swoon!

Does it cheapen an accomplishment earned by only twenty-one composers, actors, directors, producers and comedians to count among them a career politician who funnelled money to Republicans during an election year in an attempt to stave off a supermajority by Democrats in the state senate so that he could maintain austerity while the populace becomes poorer and sicker? Good question! Did EGOT-winning producer Scott Rudin ever undermine his directors in the way that Cuomo seems to constantly castrate equally contemptible NYC Mayor and part-time "living statue" street artist Bill de Blasio? It's possible! I don't know what the industry tea on Rudin is, actually. But I *do* know that EGOTs are super rare, and New York needs a win. We're already so far down this path to hell, let's get it in the history books!

Realistically speaking, this is the best opportunity the American Theatre Wing (in partnership with the Broadway League) has to

acknowledge Andrew Cuomo. I don't see him writing and starring in *700 Sunday Dinners with the Girls and the Boyfriend* after his term in office, or even netting a Special Theatrical Event Tony for it. The Tony Awards Administration Committee would need to focus on what he's done for The Great White Way now, and it would need to at least have *the pretense* of being merited, at peril of incurring the greatest backlash of all: the ire of theater nerds everywhere. One option would be something in the Lighting Design categories, since for months he's done an impeccable job in his pressers of gaslighting New Yorkers into insanity as conditions obviously worsen while he declares "we've got the virus on the ropes." If that's too esoteric a category for the big "T," they can take advantage of the dearth of productions and shuttered theaters over the last year and credit him with the revival of a classic. After all, does anyone really know enough about the book for *Anything Goes* to say it *isn't* about the arbitrary rule that every bar in the state needs to serve food with a customer's first drink? But maybe it's most fitting to honor him as a producer, for single-handedly keeping *RENT* going straight through the pandemic, sinking more residents into insurmountable debt and cleaning out small businesses.

Whatever path they take, the destination is the same: the world's first EGOT Governor (EGOTernor? No...), and he'll have made history twice over by ousting Double EGOT winner Robert Lopez for winning his first four awards in the shortest span (it took that loser Lopez over 9 years). But why stop there? Let's continue to heap laurels on our dutifully elected leader 'til they loom large and unwieldy, like the mountain of body bags that piled up through the bulk of April and May of 2020. What award committee will stand up and be counted next? I'll be keeping my fingers crossed the AVN Awards get back to me soon about my proposed new category: "Best Actor in a Cuomosexual Scene." 🤪

Eric Silver is a New York-based comedian and co-host of Hell in a Cellphone, a wrestling podcast about The Attitude Era. (He's the one who knows nothing.) Find him on Twitter @primesilver



FAILED STATE FAILS

where we play back all the wackiest State Fails in the Failed State we call home.



with Rob Dyrdek

feat DJ Scribble

// SEAN O'NEILLY

ILHAN OMAR IS JUST JEALOUS OF MY KICKASS ROCKETS

By a Lockheed Martin F-35 Lightning II™

Hi, I'm a Lockheed Martin F-35 Lightning II™. Recently Rep. Ilhan Omar (D-MN) introduced a resolution to ban President Trump's sale of 23 billion in arms (including a few of yours truly) to the UAE. I submit to you, dear reader, that despite what she may say, it is only because she is jealous of my kickass rockets. The motto of the United States is "get paid, get laid," and I don't know why this lady can't see that. Ignoring the one trillion dollars in development, sales of the F-35 (a big-dick war machine that can drop a nuclear bomb on Iran like it's nothing) will bring in \$70 million a pop! Also, the F-35 means jobs for dozens of people, at the cost of only a few thousand (foreign and therefore valueless) lives per job. While some commies might bitch and moan about the innocents who meet the business end of my 25 mm GAU-22/A cannons, they can get bent. I am simply a tool of death, and any man who has a hand in my creation is a murderer (which is incredibly metal and rad). I could be a congressperson, but Ilhan Omar could never muster up the guts to kill hundreds of people in the blink of an eye, periodt hunni! And that's why she's so fucking jealous of my shit.

According to Omar, the 100 million dollars it takes to construct an F-35 could feed 40 million children. Then what? Kids are only going to get hungry again. Which one of us can actually stop a child from being hungry forever—my sleak ass sending them to an early grave, or some petty cash given out by a DSA member? Um... I think me, bro! The entire "Squad" is full of naive, powerless fools, which is why the entire right wing is constantly yelling and screaming about them. We're all laugh-

ing. Our screams are actually laughs, remember that. We're-scream-laughing because the Squad wants to cut funding to the military and weapons programs that enrich the Good People* at decent God-fearing** companies such as Northrup Gruman, Raytheon, Boeing, Lockheed, and Charmin wipes. I humbly ask you, dear reader: to what end? To put all those people who had jobs on welfare? If the United States hadn't spent so much time and money developing a next generation air superiority fighter, another country would leap forward with an even cooler jet. Can you imagine what fucking losers we would look like if China had a F-36 jet, with like laser bullets and a Punisher logo on the side and shit? Omar would just love for the Chinese to be cooler than America. She's so jealous of how fucking cool I am. It's sad, really. Also I'm stealth and can do nukes, so eat my ass, I guess? Universal healthcare is for pussies, and I'm here to stay folks.

Let's be real: the United States doesn't manufacture anything besides weapons and movies. We are gun runners and pornographers. Sorry if I don't want to apologize for American values and the future of our nation. Ilhan Omar apparently does—jealous much?! She wants to take the money it costs to make me and my drone pals to fund infrastructure, free college, healthcare, and jobs programs. You know, stupid shit that helps no one. I mean, can you even imagine the untold horror that would inflict on the world? We need to get this envious broad out of office so we can keep killing anyone we want, anywhere we want, like God intended!

It's not all doom and gloom for your old pal F-35. I know Joe Biden is a good and honorable man, and he will assuredly sell as many of me as he can to all the countries currently bombing Yemen. But until he takes office, I'm putting Representative Omar on notice: you mess with the F-35, you get the DOW JSAM cluster munitions.

God Bless America, and God bless the fire I rain down upon the enemies of American freedom*** 🇺🇸

*deeply evil

**ignoring

***capitalist interests

I READ THIS ZINE, AND AMERICAN HOUSELESSNESS IS AT AN ALL-TIME HIGH. What do I do now?

//MALIN VON EULER-HOGAN & JOHN PURCELL GUEST CONTRIBUTORS

Here are a few resources for helping our unhoused neighbors this winter:

STREET WATCH LA

"Street Watch stands apart from progressive and non-profit homeless outreach efforts because we explicitly acknowledge that the housing and homelessness crisis cannot be solved through charity within the capitalist framework. Capitalism itself is the cause of this crisis. Therefore, we acknowledge that it is not only the private sector's control of housing policy that forces people to live on the streets, but also the private control of health care, labor, law enforcement, and government."

HOUSING JUSTICE FOR ALL

"We are a diverse coalition of tenants, homeless people, manufactured housing residents, and advocates. We represent New Yorkers from every part of the state, including Long Island, New York City, Westchester, the mid-Hudson Valley, the Capital Region, the Southern Tier, the Mohawk Valley and Western New York. We are united in our fight for stronger tenant protections, an end to evictions, and an end to homelessness in New York."

RECLAIM & REBUILD OUR COMMUNITY

"On November 25, 2020 Reclaim and Rebuild Our Community (RROC), a group of houseless activists and families, recouped 20 abandoned homes owned by the state agency Caltrans within the now defunct 710 freeway corridor."

KTOWN FOR ALL

"Ktown for All is a volunteer-led grassroots organization serving Koreatown's homeless community members through direct aid and political advocacy."

SOLUTIONS NOT SWEEPS

"Solutions Not Sweeps is a coalition of unhoused San Franciscans and allies, including front-line service providers, physicians, public health professionals, and advocates for justice for our unhoused neighbors."

Peruse more issues of Functionally Dead [here](#) and if you're interested in contributing, [check this out](#).

IN THE NEXT ISSUE: HUNTER BIDEN SIGNS ON AS 2021 PENIS OF M&M'S



FOLKS TO BLOCK:

//ANDY BUSTILLOS//MATTHEW BRIAN COHEN//JAMES DWYER//PATRICK KEENE//MAX KNOBLAUCH//DIANA KOLSKY//
//DAN LOPRETO//TIM MAHONEY//CATHRYN MUDON//BRADY O'CALLAHAN//SEAN O'REILLY//ROSIE WHALEN//