



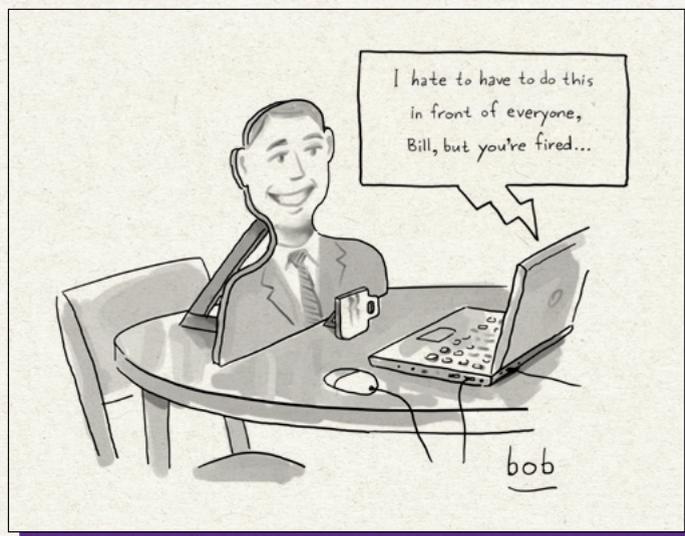
FUNCTIONALLY DEAD  
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INAUGURATION 2021



# *Now make your way across the highly-polished floors of the crypt...*

COVER ART BY **MORGAN MONAGHAN** GUEST CONTRIBUTOR, @MahoganyHands

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*Bob Eckstein is a New York Times bestselling author and New Yorker cartoonist. Check out Bob's books All's Fair in Love and War: The Ultimate Cartoon Collection and The Elements of Stress and the Pursuit of Happy-ish in this Current Sh\*tstorm*

# AM I... MALARKEY?

## THE INNER THOUGHTS OF PRESIDENT JOE BIDEN

//MATTHEW BRIAN COHEN

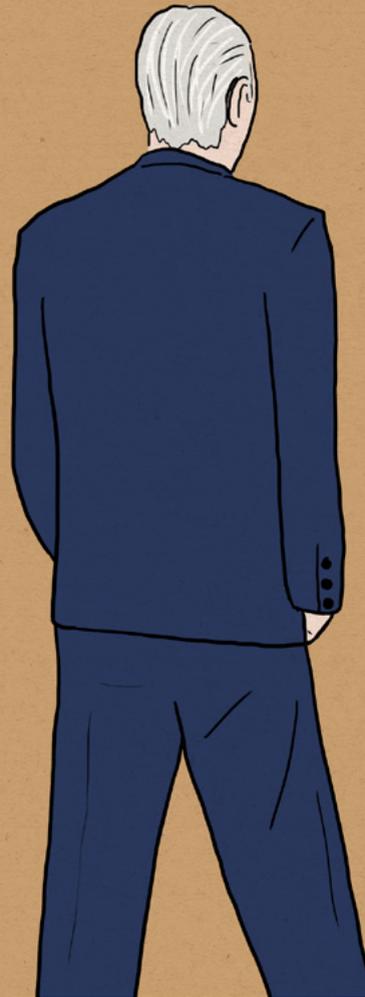
*Joe, you have gotten yourself in quite the pickle.*

If there's one thing I stand for, it's no malarkey. I made a promise to myself when I was just a small kid swimming with Nelson Mandela in the segregated Delaware pool that not a single dribble of malarkey shall ever spit forth from these lips.

*But yet...*

Telling people they were going to get two thousand dollar checks if the Democrats took the Senate, only to clarify after the fact that we actually meant fourteen hundred dollar checks, does sound quite a bit like malarkey. But I don't do malarkey. I reject malarkey and all His empty promises. I would never do or say anything even close to malarkey... would I?

*All this time... I ran on no malarkey. None, zero, zip, nada, nunca. I had my campaign bus engraved with the words "No Malarkey." Most people don't know this, but I spent millions of campaign funds developing a malarkey-powered engine, allowing me to travel across the country fueled solely by the malarkey of others. We never*



//MAX KNOBLAUCH

*ran out of fuel for that beast. And here I am, barely president a week, and the malarkey is already piling up, only this time, it's coming from inside the bus. I promised no malarkey, damnit. That's literally all I promised. I can't break my malarkey promise. Any other promise, be it to civil rights leaders, unions... no problemo. I'd throw them under the Malarkey Bus in a second. But you took a vow in that segregated pool with Nelson Muntz, Joe. A no malarkey vow. You shaved your leg hair together until your thighs were silky smooth. "No malarkey," you whispered, as his chocolate >>*

>> hands gripped the Bic and dragged it down past your knees.  
"No malarkey."

It's just one piece of malarkey, Joe. It's tiny. It's fun-sized. It's fun!  
What could one teensy-weensy malarkey hurt?

*Don't listen to me, me! I'm drunk with dementia. Think: when does the malarkey end? Where is the thin malarkey line?*

C'mon man! Surely, the people will understand just a little malarkey. Everybody's doing it. It's the latest craze! TikTok is nothing but malarkey!

*No, Joe. No malarkey.*

C'mon, man. This is just a little dope smoke of malarkey. Just a tiny bit of malarkey hashish. It's not like I'm doing heroin malarkey or smoking actual weed, a thing I still believe should be illegal in order to keep Black people in jail. What's the big deal?

*C'mon man! It is a big deal, man. You're talking about gateway malarkey, man. You let some malarkey in and pretty soon the malarkey starts running the house. You'll be answering to the malarkey instead of the malarkey answering to you. Malarkey says jump, and you say how high!*

How high? Now who's the dope fiend, fat?

*C'mon, man. C'mon... me?*

Ahh, I shouldn't have said that to me.

*It's OK. I forgive me. Take a deep breath. Remember your old man. Remember his Corvette.*

Woof. That car could drive.

*Woof. That car could drive.*

If the old man could see your No Malarkey bus. How you took all the malarkey of the past four years and drove straight to the White House. Excuse me, the Obama House.

*You're excused.*

I was the first white boy to ever live in that house. Find me any other white boy in the Obama House, and I'll show you a white boy that ain't worth their weight in salt.

*No other white boy has lived in the Obama House.*

Don't die on me now, No Malarkey bus.

*Don't die on me.*

**That bus. That bus that ran on malarkey... was me.**

\*\*\*

At this moment, Joe Biden has been standing in front of a podium on live television. He has not said a single word out loud for seven and a half minutes. Finally, to the horror of all those watching, he speaks.

"Presidendled Trumplt. You're the one that's Friday, man." 🗿





# MY BAD! I GOT HIGH WITH ANDREW YANG AND TOLD HIM TO RUN FOR MAYOR OF NYC

//DIANA KOLSKY

LOOK DUDES, I GOTTA COP TO IT. I smoked a Baby Yoda bong with the head honcho of the Yang Gang himself, Andrew Yang, back in early December. He was receptive and giddy—fresh off a food line glad-handing sesh—and I’m sad to say I’m pretty sure it’s my bad this hapless tech bro is running for mayor of NYC. I was totally joshin’ when I told him he’d be a “great leader for the Big Apple,” but he obviously thought I was serious. That Sunset Sherbet sticky is no joke, and I’m like, truly sorry guys.

It all started when I ran into Yang at the Rockefeller Christmas tree. He was easy to spot since rather than a winter coat, he was wearing fourteen Indochino blazers over nine Untuckit Oxford shirts and three pairs of premium stretch jeans from Bonobos. The twinkling tree lit up his face like a Silicon Valley rainbow\*. I was like, “Whoa you’re Yang” and he was like, “Oh hahaha, yeah, I *am*—crazy!” I sparked up and passed that shit (he crossed his heart he didn’t have COVID), and we ended up slurping all that gnar gnar ganj while looking for Rocky the owl.

We hung out for like maybe two hours, and in that time he ate six bananas and

drank four ice teas, which he kept calling “the breakfast of champions.” I was like, “You should make a video about that,” obviously joking because it was such a dumb stoner thing to say outloud so many times, but he ended up doing that, too. Sorry y’all.

Yang also pulled some Reddi-Whip out of one of his jackets and tried to squirt it in my mouth. “No thanks, my dude!” Finally, a rando staffer came outta nowhere and took the bottle with a firm “NO ANDREW. BAD ANDREW. BAD.” Yang made a weird noise (a laugh maybe?) and pivoted to giving me unsubstantial life advice like, “It’s so cool you’re married. I am, too. Stay that way if you like it,” and “Eat what you’re in the mood for and sleep at night if you can. Sleeping is restful.” He told a woman who couldn’t find her son, “If you love something, set it free.” She wouldn’t stop crying, so he Venmo’d her two thousand dollars.

Finally, we found Rocky perched on a low branch. He looked pissed, probably because Andrew kept taking TikToks with him and screaming “Hashtag owl boys!” He was like, “This bird is the ultimate New Yorker—he doesn’t GAF!” and

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HE TOLD A WOMAN WHO COULDN’T FIND HER SON, “IF YOU LOVE SOMETHING, SET IT FREE.” SHE WOULDN’T STOP CRYING, SO HE VENMO’D HER TWO THOUSAND DOLLARS.

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I was like, “Ha, you totally *get* New York bro, *you* should run for mayor.” He threw his phone into a fountain and got really serious. “I just made a wish. Thank you, Dana. I’ll always remember this,” Yang whispered before riding off into the sunset on a solar-powered Segway. “It’s Diana,” I said as a taxi almost hit him. He shouted, “Hey, I’m walkin’ here!” but he didn’t say it in a Dustin Hoffman voice—he said it like Alex Rodriguez. Did he not know he was quoting *Midnight Cowboy*? Who has an Alex Rodriguez impression in their back pocket? Anyway, I have a feeling we’ll be seeing a lot more of that guy—my bad. 🙄

\*an LG 49WL95C-W 49" 32:9 Curved UltraWide HDR IPS Monitor

# THIS WHOLE FAILED SOCIETY THING IS STARTING TO ANNOY ME

//BRADY O'CALLAHAN

I DON'T KNOW ABOUT Y'ALL, but this whole failed society thing is starting to annoy me. At first, it was like... OK, I guess growing up seeing certain opportunities and privileges go to some kids solely because of the circumstances of their birth is fine, but the more I think about it... that's kind of crazy! Like, some kids have personal scuba instructors and other kids have to come home right after school to make dinner for their younger siblings, even though they themselves are only ten years old, because their single mom is working two jobs just to be able to barely afford rent.

That seems not good. And it's starting to annoy me?

I've had it just about up to here with taking on tens of thousands of dollars of debt just to get a college degree so that I can have a job upon graduation but then find myself graduating in the middle of a recession when jobs are notoriously scarce even though

the richest people in the world are doubling their wealth due to technological advances in automation and stagnant wages.

## Am I the only one?

I'll admit, for a good long while, I thought that it had to be the case that there were just two equal sides battling over their own self-interests, but—and this is really kind of bugging me—it turns out that one very small group of the extraordinarily privileged have weaponized small differences in identity to drive a majority of the population into separating themselves from each other out of fear that the other groups would try to take away what meager allowances they had, as all these groups ignored their common interests, needs, and capacity for unity to demand more from the small handful of incredibly wealthy that deceive them. Ugh.

It seems like society as we know it has failed at a monstrous level. Doesn't that *kind* of annoy you?

I feel like I'm starting to go crazy, and if nobody does anything about it, I just might *really* start to go crazy. I might even get really ticked off by the whole thing. But I think there's gonna be a four hour *Justice League* movie coming out soon, so that's pretty cool. You take the good with the bad, I guess. 🤖



# WTF Kind of Bingo Are We Playing Here?

//PRIYA PATEL



I THINK I'VE BEEN PLAYING BINGO entirely incorrectly. You might recognize me from the night I won \$3200 at Reading Pennsylvania's Shelbourne Walk-In Bingo Hall and be shocked to hear this, but it appears I'm no ace at the game after all.

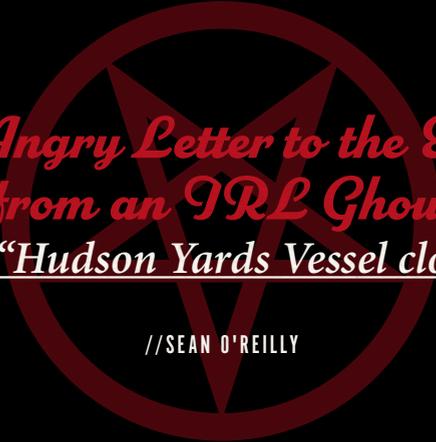
I consider myself an educated and cultured person; I read *The Washington Post* and *The New York Times*, and give reverence to those reporting real journalism. I trust the White House correspondents and anchor people on the news, so you can imagine my absolute shock when they claimed they didn't have "Donald Trump doing \*that\* on [their] bingo card!" Holy shit. What?

These folks have a vast and deep knowledge of American culture and politics. Philip L. Graham famously said "Journalism is the first draft of history." According to the American Press Institute, journalism's first obligation is to the truth. So when Lester Holt claims he didn't have QAnon Shaman on his bingo card, it gives me pause. As a multi-generational bingo player, I was always under the impression that numbers were printed on a bunch of balls and called at random; I never came across a TikTok of a bunch of white college kids singing about heteronormative family structures via milk being the dad the mom is the box as a square. Could I have been adding random shit to my bingo card this whole time? If so, at what point can we add and take off squares? >>

>> Journalists, academics, and professionals across media platforms and media sources all seem to be playing the same game of bingo that is completely unrecognizable to me, claiming “Oh boy! I didn’t have THAT on my bingo card!” It seems as though the bingo I’m familiar with is child’s play, while these esteemed pillars of our community have been engaging in 4D bingo with social events and international catastrophes as squares, all of which were unforeseen and geering toward civil annihilation. Do they wish they had these events on their bingo card? Are they trying to win? If they win, do we all die?! This is not the game that my great grandfather Hugh J. Ward standardized in 1933. It was never supposed to get out of hand.

I consider myself a pretty balanced progressive—I retweet both DSA and The Lincoln Project—so I’m not afraid of change. Yes, this game is incredibly important to my family, but I can handle new norms for a new age. I gotta say though, logistically, I’m lost. Do we still use the little ink pen thing to mark out cards? Do we still bring good luck charms, like Troll dolls and mini-license plate keychains to the ol’ bingo hall? Wait, I just realized they probably don’t even use paper cards. Where do we even find these new e-cards? Is there an app I’m somehow unaware of or can you get it on Prime?

I love the Illuminati, so please know I trust the powers that be, but I must further humble myself when I ask: who the fuck is running this bingo hall? Because what I’m gathering is this entire world (galaxy?) is enclosed in a bingo hall, and until someone calls bingo, we are destined to experience bizarre forms of pain and suffering. Does the Dalai Lama call bingo? I guess I can see that being a part of his job on this energetic plane. Will we know ahead of time before they officially call bingo so I can tell my family I love them? I hope whatever happens after they call bingo is at least, like, cool. All I know is when I won my pot back in the day, I was greeted with a combo scrapple sandwich and medium Pepsi. Free of charge. Pretty cool. 🍷



## *An Angry Letter to the Editor from an IRL Ghoul*

### RE: “Hudson Yards Vessel closed”

//SEAN O'REILLY

AS A NATIVE NEW YORKER AND UNDERWORLD DEMON who draws power from the Vessel, I feel I must speak out to say the city’s decision to close this monument to greed and hatred is very shortsighted. For devils such as myself, these seemingly “useless” structures are a source of sustenance and ultimate power. Very few buildings in our fair city are inherently evil anymore, apart from Trump Tower, the *New York Times* building, and the haunted Sbarro’s Pizza on 34th. This dwindling stock of tribute is giving the eldritch horrors—who make this great town what it is—little reason to stay. It is we who generate the profits that form the tax base of our city, and I think liberals like Mr. de Blasio would do well to remember that pure evil is the engine that powers his woke utopia. Using tax money designated for affordable housing uptown was a great start. Creating a zone within the city where only the rich may exist doubled my power. The creation of a central artifact to channel my dark energies, protected with violence on the poor, kept me from moving to Connecticut. Now, sadly, I am not so sure if I can afford to stay here. Greed and indifference to human life are integral to both the gathering void at my center and the greatest city in the world. Allowing such a beautiful symbol of both these core principles to shutter because of human tragedy is not only a sad reflection of what New York has become, but it is downright un-American. Be worse.

—BALTHAZAR THE LORD OF HATE,  
*The Catacombs of Child Sacrifice Beneath the Javits*

# Candy's for Closers!

## Fisher-Price Introduces My First Pharmaceutical Rep™

//TED WHITE GUEST CONTRIBUTOR

MIDDLETON, Wis. - After the enormous success of My First Doctor™, Fisher-Price announced the release of My First Pharmaceutical Rep™ last Thursday. “We are thrilled to unveil an exciting new partnership with Merck. Does your little one think they have what it takes to sell pharmaceuticals? We'll find out!” stated Daphne Stemper, Executive VP of Marketing for Fisher-Price. However, the unconventional and unprecedented collaboration with Big Pharma has raised many eyebrows, especially considering the new toy is made for children under six.

“We want to make sure your child has all the tools they need for success. My First Pharmaceutical Rep™ comes with a plastic Mastercard for expenses and a tote filled with brochures promoting some of the new and exciting products from our partners at Merck. Look how cute this is!” Stemper stated, showing a child-sized Mastercard. “We also provide all the prescription data from My First Doctor™, so your little one can help drive sales by targeting child doctors who are underperforming and child patients with preexisting conditions. Legally we can't have them actually selling prescriptions, but we're very excited to get kids started early on the road to success.”

When questioned about the implications of indoctrinating children into pursuing a morally bankrupt career, Stemper replied, “Where would the fantastic United States healthcare system be without its bold pharmaceutical reps? Did you know most reps have advanced degrees in chemistry? Talk about hashtag winning!” Stemper chuckled while she put her hands together into a hashtag symbol. A small drop of blood squirted from her left

eye as she continued, “and now parents can enrich the lives of their children by giving them real-life experience in the exciting healthcare industry. Hashtag blessed!”

While the healthcare system struggles with the COVID-19 pandemic, it's easy to forget the nation is still reeling from opioid addiction. Many experts claim companies like Merck and Pfizer played a major role in over-prescribing their painkillers to countless Americans while making billions of dollars in the process. Some would argue My First Pharmaceutical Rep™ is nothing more than a thinly-veiled recruitment tool for Big Pharma. Many believe this “toy” will train young ones to use science buzzwords and manipulative tactics to push prescriptions. She, when asked for comment, bled further from the eye and stated, “That's a fantastic question. My First Pharmaceutical Rep™ also comes with a Jos A. Bank suit for boys, or an Anne Taylor pant suit for little girl bosses. Talk about looking sharp! Hashtag crushing it!”

Fisher-Price also announced My First Pharmaceutical Rep™ will have full compatibility with My First Health Insurance Adjuster™ and My First Hospital Biller™, both of which are expected to hit the market later this quarter. 🍷

*Ted White is an LA-based writer/actor/forward slash enthusiast, @teddyrare*





# MEDICARE FOR ALL? THAT'S NOT WHAT WE PROMISED. WE CLEARLY MEANT "MEDICARE FOR PAUL"

//JAMES DWYER

WITH DEMOCRATS IN CONTROL OF CONGRESS and members of the progressive wing of the party like myself able to exert more leverage than ever thanks to the narrow majority in the House of Representatives, there's been lots of heated online *\*gestures wildly\** discourse about Medicare for All. Some believe now is the time to bring a vote to the floor on Medicare for All. These same people argue the progressive wing of the party should have forced the floor vote in exchange for the final votes to give the speakership to Nancy Pelosi. Others are saying the timing is wrong and there are better concessions to grant with this leverage than a symbolic floor vote, whether or not it puts all Democrats on the record for such a vitally important piece of legislation. I specifically would like to say that none of this matters and there seems to be some confusion here. While we've been using the phrase "Medicare for All" we thought you all understood that the "P" is silent and blind. What we're really advocating for is Medicare for Paul, a really kind mutual friend of all of ours who we thought should be granted an exception to receive Medicare on account of the fact that he couldn't catch a break if his life depended on it.

Now I can already see some of you getting angry—"who is this Paul, and why does he get Medicare while we waste away?" Our answer to that: if you met Paul, you'd understand. One time Paul was on his way to a job interview and he decided to stop

{ "WHO IS THIS PAUL, AND WHY DOES HE GET MEDICARE WHILE WE WASTE AWAY?"  
OUR ANSWER TO THAT: IF YOU MET PAUL,  
YOU'D UNDERSTAND.

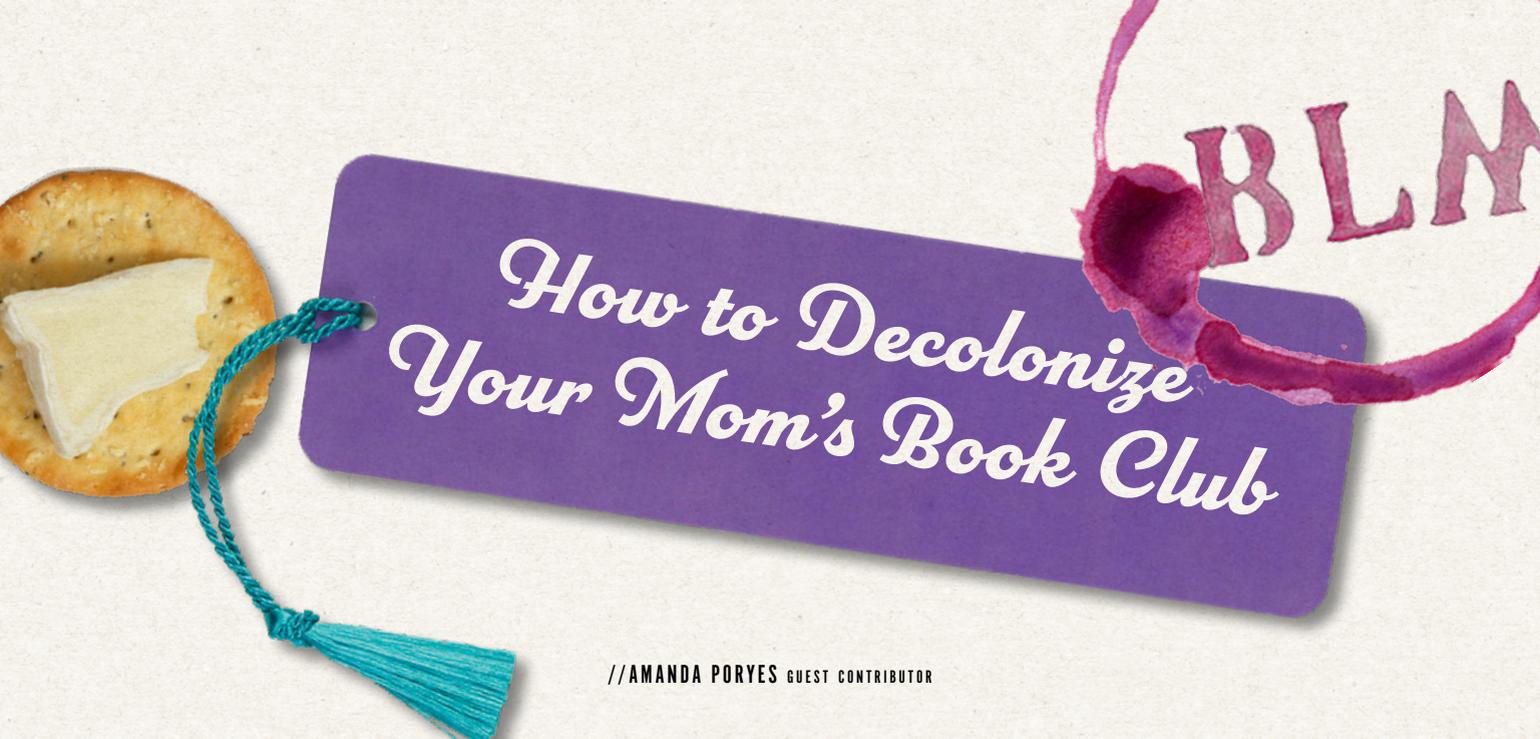
at a cake shop along the way to get a cake to celebrate his girlfriend's birthday later that night. When he put the cake in his car, he thought he had put it in the passenger's seat, but turns out he'd left it on the driver's seat and he sat all over that cake. He didn't realize it until he got to the interview and had to change into sweatpants. Not a good look. Even worse, those were the same sweatpants he had accidentally urinated in earlier that morning, so there were pee-pee stains all over the front. This could've been a good thing considering the job was for a position in the piss division of Pornhub, but he sat on the cake again after changing into his sweatpants, and with the cake being chocolate, it looked like he shit himself. The piss division and the scat division obviously hate each other. Needless to say, he didn't get the job. To make matters worse, while he was at the interview, a dump truck dumped its entire load onto his car. He asked the drivers to clean it up, but they said "legally, this is your trash now," and unfortunately, they were right. He texted his girlfriend about this all only to realize she'd broken up with him the week before (he forgot) because he accidentally put an >>

>> Untrustable in her DVD player again, breaking the device for the fourth time in a month. This is an average day for Paul. Do you see why he needs a win?

If that hasn't convinced you, you're probably one of those people who don't know how word math works. You probably also thought that a \$2,000 check doesn't equal a \$1,400 check? If that is the case, I really, truly am sorry you think that way. This is ultimately on you. Yes, we campaigned on the idea of bringing an end to the for-profit health insurance industry, lowering prescription drug prices, and ending medical debt, but we assumed you all understood these goals to only be applicable to our absolute sweetheart friend Paul! One time Paul bought me a gift for my birthday, and when I opened it, inside was another wrapped box, then another, then another, then finally a note that said "I didn't have time to wrap the gift, look behind you," and it was an unwrapped Princess Diana Beanie Baby! Unfortunately, the Beanie Baby was filled with rotten baked beans and maggots were streaming out of the shoulder pads. Paul didn't realize he'd been duped again by the same eBay seller who had previously sold him a Furby made of human hair. But it's the thought that counts! Thanks Paul!

Again, we do apologize for the general confusion but we firmly believe if you met Paul, you'd understand. Paul doesn't deserve to be at the whims of employer-based health insurance. Paul should no longer need to be concerned with the stress of high-deductibles. Paul shouldn't have to worry about paying for his medication or paying for groceries that week. Paul shouldn't have to think about which hospital takes his health insurance in an emergency. We firmly believe that healthcare is a human right and we will fight tooth and nail to make sure Paul gets it. We didn't mislead you, you just haven't met Paul. 🤖





# How to Decolonize Your Mom's Book Club

//AMANDA PORYES GUEST CONTRIBUTOR

EVERY FEBRUARY, BOOK CLUBS (I.E. MIDDLE-CLASS WHITE WOMEN) hurriedly look for a book by a Black author to read. Here are six tips for making your mom's book club not only pick something *other* than a work of racial non-fiction, but also fully transforming it into an anti-racist salon:

**1** Discussion about last month's book inevitably sidetracks into gossip. *Turn gossip into a conversation about white supremacy.* When Kari starts talking about her cousin's husband, Danny—no, not *that* Danny, the *other* Danny, the one with the DUI—use the chit chat to dissect how white supremacy overruns our culture. Just because Danny made a mistake doesn't mean he is a mistake. Sit back and watch those boomer minds explode.

**2** When someone leaves early—which Eva always does, to go to her book club where they actually talk about the book—*remind them there is no hierarchy of value.* The idea that some people are intrinsically better than others perpetrates mistreatment of entire groups. Just because some people discuss narrative efficiency, doesn't make them better than everyone here, *Eva*. And no you may *not* take the unopened *Tates* to your next gathering.

**3** The time has come to pick next month's book\*. Shoot down Greta's suggestion of her niece's recommendation about a twenty-something trying to make it in New York City written by a white woman who graduated from Brown. *Pick a book by a Black or Indigenous author, preferably one that doesn't center on trauma.* When the group is stumped and attempts to pick *Becoming* again, **do not let them.** Keep eyes on Margaret to make sure she doesn't text her Black coworker for suggestions—just google it, Margaret. It's not a Black person's obligation to educate you. >>

**4** *Turn casual binge drinking into a fundraiser.* Debbie going for her fourth glass of Pinot inside of an hour can be a good thing! Ask trivia questions and when someone gets it wrong, they drink and donate. Debbie doesn't know shit about Marcus Garvey, so it'll be a lucrative evening for Black Lives Matter. Your mom's book club gets sloshed every time—and that hors d'oeuvres dinner isn't helping—so make their social alcoholism into a social movement.

**5** When everyone feels entirely safe to drive after downing a case of Sauvignon Blanc, *it's a perfect time to remind them that their white privilege ensures they're not ending up in a jail cell tonight.* They can drive the three minutes home without consequence because of the color of their skin and the sensibleness of their four-door sedans. To be Black and sober in this neighborhood would have more severe consequences than their reckless endangerment of night pedestrians.

Turning even one white ladies book club into something other than a white ladies book club is powerful. Your mom and her friends may not understand the impact of reading BIPOC authors for pleasure, instead of an education about race, but they do know everything you told your mom about your personal life. Gossip in a book club can never fully be replaced, and let's face facts—it makes the newly discovered burden of white privilege go down a bit easier. 🤪

*Between her infrequent THOT posts, Amanda is writing a memoir and reorganizing her cabinets for the fifteenth time. Insta @mermaidinamerica*



## \*DECOLONIZED BOOK LIST for Your Mom



Samantha Irby's *Meaty* is a high-risk, high-reward recommendation: your mom and her friends will get confused with the internet vernacular and maybe affronted by the swears, but there's a lot about her relationship with her mother, and mom's love that shit.



James Baldwin's *Giovanni's Room* is a sexy classic. You could play it safe and recommend *Go Tell It on the Mountain*, but we're trying to expand her horizons here.



Brit Bennett's newest, *The Vanishing Half*, is literary fiction, on *The New York Times Best Sellers* list, and has a pretty cover. It's readily available in the downtown, family-run bookstore you've begged her to shop at instead of Amazon.



Alexander Chee's *Queen of the Night* is a period piece, and moms love anything to do with fancy dresses. It's long, which means your mom may not finish it in time for book club. If she does, she'll feel a sense of accomplishment akin to if you had given her any grandchildren.



You know they read *The Hunger Games* one year, so recommending Cherie Demalin's *The Marrow Thieves* is a solid young adult pick from an Indigenous author. At a high school reading level, your mom and her book club have no excuse for not finishing this one. Unless, you know, they're racist.



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# THE TOP 2021 CONSUMER TECH PRODUCTS TO REMIND YOU WE LIVE IN HELL

//THE FUNCTIONALLY DEAD HEADS

The pandemic may be raging on as the democratic experiment approaches total collapse, but that hasn't stopped the world of consumer tech from saying "there's an opportunity here." *Functionally Dead* has assembled some of the top consumer tech products to keep an eye out for in 2021 that refuse to let you forget that every day on this rock is an exercise in futility:

## **HONEYWELL'S N95 WAKING APNEA MASK - \$99**

Apnea isn't just for sleep anymore! The coronavirus pandemic will continue into late 2021 so masks continue to be a hot ticket item, but only the Honeywell N95 Waking Apnea Mask seeks to address the COVID-long-hauler symptom of "Waking Sleep Apnea." The Honeywell N95 Waking Apnea Mask comes in two colors, electric blue and blood red, and thanks to Honeywell's recent partnership, the mask can stream TikTok sea shanties directly into your skull.

## **LIFE, BUT BETTER BY OCULUS - \$399**

VR continues to be a major trend as companies like Oculus embrace the notion that we simply need a total sensory escape from it all. They've taken that concept a massive leap forward with the launch of *Life, But Better*, a virtual experience that downloads your memories and alters every single unpleasant recollection to simulate the experience of having lived your entire life, without any of the bad things that happened along the way. Oculus hopes to have a *Life, But Better* pod in every American household by 2025, when things will inevitably be so bad, no one will ever want to leave their home (if they still have one).

## **CYBERPUNK 2077 DEMASTERED - \$79.99**

Video game publisher CD Projekt has taken a lot of flack for their botched release of the bug-ridden *Cyberpunk 2077*. Instead of seeking to fix the game with patches or a remastered re-release, they've sought to answer an alternative question: what if we made this game worse? That's where *Cyberpunk 2077 Demastered*

comes in. All of the flashier elements of *Cyberpunk 2077* have been pared-down to make this game look like it could be played on a Gamegear. If you can get it to boot up without crashing immediately, CD Projekt promises an even exchange for a more heavily-damaged copy.

## **FUCKPONY RING LIGHT 3000™ - \$49.99**

The times they are a changin', and it's becoming all too apparent that it's no longer at all OK to look like a regular person. Surgery and injections simply are not enough to keep up with the increasingly necessary trend of appearing as if you are 100% molded from the finest plastic money can buy. Enter the FuckPony Ring Light 3000™. This easy-to-install circular light source simply clips onto your recording device and gives you the new face you'll need to navigate your horrible life. You'll be (thankfully) unrecognizable as a new drone in the FuckPony army. Join up today! >>





### **NVIDIA DIESEL-POWERED 4080 RTX GRAPHICS CARD (CRYPTOCURRENCY MINING EDITION) - \$2,330**

Graphics cards have seen their prices shoot up recently, both in part to the ongoing supply chain shortages caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and increase in demand from cryptocurrency miners. Not one to miss out on a burgeoning market, NVIDIA has released the TX 4080, powered by a single Duramax V8 diesel engine. If you don't choke to death on the exhaust in your tiny studio apartment, you'll see up to a 10% increase on cryptocurrency mining efficiency!

### **RAZER DEATHRIDER ELITE GAMING HIGH CHAIR - \$499**

For far too long, gamer babies were forced to game in subpar high chairs that lacked plush neck cushions, RGB LED lights, and 1080 degrees of rotation. Thankfully, Razer's new Deathrider Elite Gaming High Chair is like water in the gaming high chair desert. Now, babies, toddlers, and even strange adults can stream *Call of Duty: Warzone* on Twitch while their mashed up peas and carrots remain unperturbed.

### **STIMULUS CHECKED APP - \$10.99**

The pandemic has been hard on everyone but perhaps hardest on landlords and bill collectors whose entire source of income (cannibalizing others' sources of income) has been virtually decimated by widespread layoffs and hiring freezes. Sure, the stimulus checks should have helped situations, but what if your tenants and debtors lie about receiving them? The rollout has been problematic, but how can you be sure? With this new application (iOS & Android compatible), users are able to receive notifications the very second a debtor receives a federally issued stimulus check. You'll never need to make a fruitless trip to bang down the door of the working poor and walk away empty handed again! 🤖



# ORWELL V. ORWELL: THE REAL MAN AND THE RIGHT-WING MYTH

//NAT ROBERTS GUEST CONTRIBUTOR

*THE FOLLOWING IS EXCERPTED FROM “An Evening with George Orwell and George Orwell,” recorded at Georgetown University as part of the school’s Gass Metafictional Event series.*

MODERATOR: Good evening. Tonight, it is our great pleasure to welcome two versions of a man whose work has exerted an immeasurable influence on literature, politics, and our very language. To my left, I’m joined by the very real author and journalist Eric Blair, better known by his pen name, George Orwell.

*Applause. Real!Orwell gives a slight wave.*

MODERATOR: And joining me on my right is his fabricated alter ego, a neoliberal catchphrase generator and red pill hypebeast called George Orwell.

*Applause and cheers. Fake!Orwell stands and bows.*

MODERATOR: There will be a Q&A section at the end of this event, so keep that in mind if you’d like to ask a question. But for now, I’ll hand the floor over to our illustrious guests.

*Applause.*

REAL!ORWELL (RO): Thank you sir, and thank you all for being here.

FAKE!ORWELL (FO): George, I think we should begin our conversation tonight with the most dangerous social ill plaguing humanity today, possibly ever.

RO: I agree. Poverty—

FO: Cancel culture.

RO: Oh for Christ’s sake...

FO: I’m sorry, but I must speak out! “The further a society drifts from truth, the more it will hate those who speak it,” as you always say.

RO: First of all, don’t quote me to myself. Secondly, I never said any such thing—

FO: I’ve seen too many conservative politicians, edgy comedians, and wealthy teenagers viciously silenced by a self-appointed cadre of thought police, a term I coined. No one is safe from the Internet cabal’s enforcement of political correctness. Even I live in fear of the day I shall wake up cancelled. An unperson, just as I predicted in my book, *1994*.

RO: Do you mean *my* book, *1984*?

FO: Ah, so now I should quote you? Besides, my version is much better. All the pages are blank, so you can just write in whatever you like.

RO: Who would read that?

FO: Oh no one reads it, dear chap, but it looks grand on a shelf, perhaps displayed just so for an interview, cocktail party, or TikTok.

RO: Look, I wrote *1984* based on what I saw happening in the Soviet Union under Stalin—

FO: Exactly, Stalin! That’s what this ‘woke’ mob wants, to persecute anyone who isn’t already in line with their socialist agenda!

RO: I’m a socialist, you asinine tit.

FO: I thought you were a Republican.

RO: Yes, in *Spain*, when ‘Republicans’ were the ones fighting *against* the overthrow of an elected government.

FO: I didn’t understand that sentence, so I’ll assume it’s doublespeak. That’s a term >>

>> I coined for when someone you don't like says anything at all.

RO: Fascinating. *[to the Moderator]* How long is this event meant to run?

MODERATOR: Why don't we return to the topic at hand, cancel culture. Mr. Orwell, would you like to respond to Mr. Orwell's thoughts?

RO: I would if he had any. For the moment, I shall restrain myself and only say: This term "cancel culture" seems to lack any agreed-upon definition. However, I notice it is only used as a negative and almost exclusively by those with power and privilege. If any practice is so objectionable to such people, I can only assume that it's a good thing.

FO: But these hooligans are trying to suppress free speech!

RO: Oh? Are they kidnapping dissidents?

FO: No.

RO: Torturing political prisoners?

FO: No.

RO: Assassinating opposition leaders?

FO: No.

RO: What are they doing?

FO: Saying an awful lot of mean things on the Internet.

RO: So nothing, then.

FO: Not so! There are very real conse-

quences of being cancelled. I saw a televised interview with a lad suspended for two weeks from school for calling his teacher a slur on Facebook.

RO: It sounds like the boy got a fortnight's holiday and a national broadcast platform from which to speak.

FO: But there's also that American Senator who lost his book deal.

RO: *[laughing]* If only we all had the right to publication, then I wouldn't have had to work so hard.

MODERATOR: And if I may interject, they're still publishing it.

FO: What about the statues? These Americans are tearing down statues of Confederate Generals now. Surely we're both opposed to that. After all, it's just as I predicted: "Every record has been destroyed or falsified, every book has been rewritten, every picture has been repainted, every statue and street and building has been renamed, every date has been altered." 1994, available now at Barnes & Noble.

RO: Yes, I rather anticipated you would bring up the statues, so I took the initiative to research the subject on my own. It seems almost all of the memorials in question were built in the 1960s—almost a hundred years after America's Civil War—by groups looking to mythologize the Confederate slave owners. That being the case, tearing them down seems a remedy to historical revisionism rather than an example of it.

FO: Hm? What did you say, dear chap? I was tweeting that Parler is down.

MODERATOR: Let's move on. Another topic in your work that's becoming increasingly relevant is that of surveillance.

FO: Oh absolutely. New technology has only increased the degree to which the average person is observed. Privacy, once assumed to be a natural right, has now become a privilege that must be jealously guarded.

RO: Well. I must say, that's a more insightful comment than I typically expect from you. Yes, the facial recognition software developed for law enforcement by companies like Amazon and Google—

FO: Oh no, that's perfectly acceptable. I meant Antifa outing neo-Nazis online.

*[At this point in the event, Real!Orwell sat in silence for approximately 45 seconds]*

FO: Come now, George, these people could lose their jobs.

RO: Good. They should lose a lot more.

FO: Don't they have a right to their opinions?

RO: Not when their opinion is that all other peoples are inferior and ought to be subjugated or exterminated. Where did you get this ridiculous idea that all beliefs are equally valid? Some beliefs are stupid, dangerous, and often, both. They ought to be opposed with as much force as one can muster. >>

>> FO: Pfff, now who's talking like a fascist?

RO: They are, still.

MODERATOR: Let's open the floor to some questions. There are microphones at the end of each aisle, just form a line. Quickly, please, dear god.

UNDERGRAD: Hi, thank you both so much. I'm a journalism student and I'm worried about my prospects after graduating. I want to do the sort of investigative exposés that you wrote, Mr. Blair, but I'm scared I won't be able to.

RO: That's a very valid concern—

FO: Absolutely! You can't trust a word you hear on lame-stream fake news outlets like CNN or NBC. They're all run by Marxists, just as I predicted! My advice is to get a job at a trusted news source, like OpinionPit.net or @FreedomEagle1488.

RO: Ignore him. If the news were run by Marxists, I might have a more comforting answer for you, miss. However, I'm afraid that sort of journalism was difficult to sell even back in my time. I can only imagine the situation has deteriorated now that the majority of American news media is owned by a handful of large corporations. For example, a book like *Down and Out in Paris and London*—

FO: Eh, no one reads that one, George. Next!

GRAD STUDENT: Hi, uh, I have a question related to *Animal Farm*.

FO: I believe you mean my book, *Animal Crossing*.

RO: He doesn't. What's your question?

GRAD STUDENT: I belong to the YDSA here on campus, and we're trying really hard not to let any kind of "inner circle" of leaders form—like Napoleon and Snowball. Do you have any advice on how to keep power from concentrating into an ever-shrinking clique?

FO: I'll handle this one. Simply put, *Animal Farm* is about how every social movement is just as bad as the status quo it opposes and anyone who advocates for reform secretly just wants to be in power, so there's no point in doing anything at all because is the status quo really that bad? It's also available for \$14.99 in hardcover.

RO: I think I might vomit. No, my advice would be—

FO: Sorry, George, we are on the clock. I'm on Tucker Carlson tonight to whine about censorship. Next!

LAW STUDENT: Hello, I belong to an oppressed minority here on campus, by which I mean I'm a white male conservative from an affluent New Jersey suburb.

FO: Of course, just as I predicted. And your question?

LAW STUDENT: Do you have any advice for putting up with the constant abuse I face from my classmates? They're always saying things like "you're a white suprem-

acist" or "you got in because your family has money" or "you based your haircut on Martin Shkreli's" and that all may be true, but it still hurts.

FO: You poor chap. Just remember that these snowflakes are only lashing out at you because your challenging opinions triggered their delicate sensibilities, and that's very different than if *you* lash out at *them* for hurting *your* feelings because *yours* matter.

LAW STUDENT: Thank you, Mr. Orwell. I'll remember that the next time some chick throws a drink in my face for telling my hilarious story about throwing a can of Bud Lite at a homeless man.

RO: Tell me, what's your name, young man?

LAW STUDENT: Jack.

RO: Jack? Well Jack, back in Spain I shot people like you. I hope that puts your troubles into perspective.

MODERATOR: Okay! Let's wrap this up before it gets worse. I'd like to thank both of our guests for being here, and Georgetown University for having us. Be sure to join us at our next metafictional event, when author Ayn Rand will sit down with the only person worse than Ayn Rand: Mark Cuban's version of Ayn Rand. 🤖

*Nat Roberts is a writer and anarchosocialist dilettante; let him have it @gnatoberts*

# I CONFUSED IED AND IUD AGAIN AND BLEW UP MY COOTER

//DIANA KOLSKY



SOME MISTAKES ARE SIMPLY EMBARRASSING, like when I go to apply chapstick on the F train but then I realize I'm wiping a dry tampon back and forth on my ragged, chapped lips. Egg (tampon) on my face, right? Well, this oopsy was different: I confused IED and IUD again and blew up my cooter.

The last time I did it was a close call, but my Jenny (what I call—*called*—my genitalia) remained intact. I was at the doctor's office and I said "hey I met someone who lives close to my job and I want an IED." Dr. Marzipan was like, "Um, that's literally a weapon," and I was like, "it's 2020 (it was 2020 at the time)—contraption is here to stay," and she was like, "do you mean contraception?" and I was like, "yeah." Then she explained that an IED is an improvised explosive device used in war. I laughed cuz my Jenny is messy, but she's def not a war. The doctor didn't laugh, but I could tell she wanted to, or at least *should* have wanted to. She said we'd chat about the IUD once I stopped taking a handful of birth control pills every few days, but I guess that's doctors for you.

The next time I mixed up those two bantam vowels that are basically so similar, I wasn't so lucky. I wanted that little copper T bad and I wasn't going to wait for Marzipan to greenlight my uterine vision, so I did what literally anyone would do and went online. I put "dark web" and "IED" (my bad) into the search box

to find what I wanted for *my* box. So much stuff came up, it was truly shocking. These things looked crazy—more like big dildos than Ts, but I was like whatever, I'm on dark web time now, baby. I ordered two and was kind of surprised that they were \$48,000, but I guess that's America for you.

I'm glad I was home when they arrived cuz I had to sign for them. They were so heavy, and my roommate wouldn't help me drag them up the stairs since I ate all her food and she also saw me kick her cat, but I was a bottle of cough syrup deep and honestly thought it was a raccoon. She needs to cool it. I opened the box and went to the bathroom to insert one of my shiny new devices. It was uncomfortable, but I guess that's being a woman for you. Ten minutes later, while I was eating Top Ramen in my urban teepee, my life changed forever. You know that song "Here Comes the Boom" by the band POD? I didn't, and I was watching the music video for the first time ever on YouTube. Man, those guys rock. Oh yeah, also my Jenny exploded.

I woke up in the hospital, and the doctor (not Marzipan) gave me the news that I was now sans cooter. It was so crazy to hear that, but I am trying to embrace my new reality where I pee out of my knee caps and make whoopee with my feet. It is what it is. Please learn from my mistake: an IED does not an IUD make. Peace and love everyone. 🤪



# I AM LEAVING THE REPUBLICAN PARTY BECAUSE THEY HAVE NOT MURDERED ENOUGH IRAQIS

BY COLIN POWELL

//MATTHEW BRIAN COHEN

IT IS WITH A HEAVY HEART that I, Colin Powell, announce my departure from the Republican party. Sadly, there are no longer enough dead Iraqis for me to consider myself a Republican.

On January 6th, President Trump crossed the line. By inciting his supporters to invade the Capitol, he attempted to undermine the very fabric of our democracy. Sure, it was just a perfunctory certification of the votes, but what if Congress was doing something important, *like authorizing a swell of ground troops to Baghdad?* What would those troops do without the option to swell? President Trump has proven himself to be an existential threat to our government, preventing it from executing its essential function as the merchant of death our Founding Fathers intended.

For me, like many Republicans, this insurrection was the last straw. During his term, I gave the President countless chances to murder Iraqis, but at every turn, Trump failed to deliver the bodies. There was a point where I would have even settled for some dead Iranians, or a few dead Kurds. But you could barely fill an in-ground swimming pool with the overseas corpses Trump amassed (I don't want to hear bunk about filling an above ground). We had that many meat bags in the first week of George W. Bush's term. The first week! What a disgrace. That he hasn't killed more Iraqis, that is.

It pains me to say that our President has abandoned his country and his sacred duty to kill, maim, and slaughter. Where was President Trump when his country needed him to show leadership and torture Iraqis? On his phone, tweeting unfounded accusations of voter fraud. When I turn on the news and I see Iraqis alive and well, my stomach churns. How could we let this happen? How could we sink so low?

Perhaps some of this is on me. Like so many Republicans, I was naive. I actually thought Trump would settle down, listen to reason, and wipe Iraq off the face of the Earth. We gave him every opportunity, and yet Iraq is still a country. It is unconscionable that any Republican can still stand by this man who has time and time again shown himself to be someone who won't commit to any meaningful amount of war crimes in Iraq. How can we call ourselves Republicans if we're not willing to stand by our values of mowing down Iraqi men, women, and children? What happened to us? We used to believe in a good old-fashioned bloodbath, and now we won't even carpet bomb a major city. There's so little violence abroad, I hardly recognize the party anymore. Sure, our cops are murdering Americans, and we're executing people on death row, but it's just not the same. We used to be the party of Lincoln, for Christ's sake. Now *there* was a man that knew how to kill Iraqis.

**WE USED TO BE THE PARTY OF  
LINCOLN FOR CHRIST'S SAKE.  
NOW THERE WAS A MAN THAT  
KNEW HOW TO KILL IRAQIS.**

To put it bluntly: Republicans have failed the American people, and as long as we stand by Trump, we will continue to fail them. America is supposed to be a shining example, the greatest country in the history of the world—what kind of message does it send when we turn a blind eye and ignore the desperate cries of the Iraqi people to have their homeland once again turned into a glass parking lot? I'm aware that parties and people have to evolve, and I'm trying to muster up feelings of genocide toward the Chinese, but it's just not the same. So until my former party develops its appetite for senseless Iraqi death again, I'm forced to stand by Joe Biden, a principled, honorable man who believes in our freedom to kill without consequence. 🗿

# I READ THIS ZINE, AND PEOPLE WHO DESPISED BERNIE IN THE PRIMARIES ARE SHARING THE MITTENS MEME.

## What do I do now?

//DAN LOPRETO

Take a page from AOC, who skipped inauguration to support a strike:

### TEAMSTERS JOINT COUNCIL 16

“Teamsters Joint Council 16 represents 120,000 workers in Downstate New York and Puerto Rico. Our 27 locals represent workers in just about every industry. As part of the 1.4 million member strong International Brotherhood of Teamsters, we are America’s strongest and most diverse union... Teamsters Local 202 members at Hunts Point Produce Market are on strike demanding a fair raise after working through the pandemic.”

### A COLLECTIVE BARGAIN BY JANE MCALEVEY

“A rousing and electrifying call to arms, *A Collective Bargain* shows us why we must strengthen and defend the only force capable of fighting back against social injustice and the alarming right-wing shift in our politics: a strong, democratic union movement... In *A Collective Bargain*, longtime labor, environmental, and political organizer Jane McAlevey makes the case that unions are the only institution capable of fighting back against today’s super-rich corporate class.”

### MAKE AMAZON PAY

“We are warehouse workers, climate activists, and citizens around the world, taking on the world’s richest man and the multinational corporation behind him... The pandemic has exposed how Amazon places profits ahead of workers, society, and our planet. Amazon takes too much and gives back too little.”

### UNITED TEACHERS LOS ANGELES

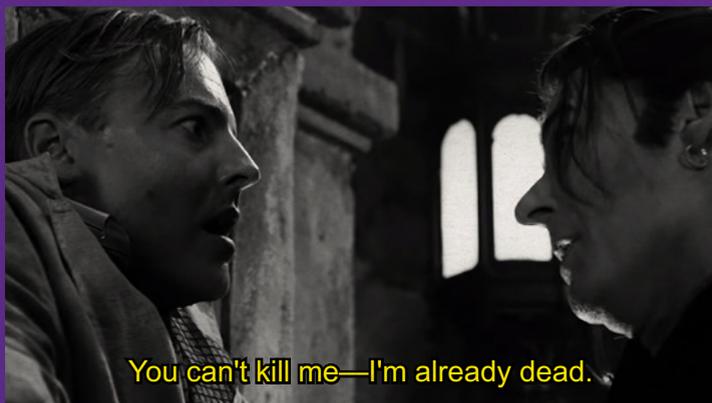
“United Teachers Los Angeles (UTLA) was created in 1970 from more than a dozen different organizations representing teachers and support service personnel throughout the massive Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD)... UTLA is determined to do what’s best for the classroom and the kids in them and will protect the budget axe from falling on the classroom.”

### CHICAGO TEACHERS UNION

“For more than 75 years the Chicago Teachers Union has fought for the schools Chicago’s students deserve. The CTU represents more than 25,000 teachers, paraprofessional and school-related personnel, and school clinicians working in the Chicago Public Schools and, by extension, the students and families they serve.”

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

IN THE NEXT ISSUE: TRUMP REPLY GUYS—WHERE ARE THEY NOW?



You can't kill me—I'm already dead.

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//PRIYA PATEL//ROSIE WHALEN//