

College plans to open at 50% capacity



KIANNA ZNIKA/TM ARCHIVES

Reopening: Starting Aug. 2, offices will be open to the public Monday through Thursday, for at least eight hours a day. Fierro then said that by the end of April, the college will work with department chairs to determine which courses will remain online and which will begin in person instruction to meet the 50% threshold.

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Over the Easter Sunday weekend, Cerritos College President and Superintendent Dr. Jose Fierro announced in an email to staff and faculty that the college will remain online for summer sessions before transitioning to in-person learning in the fall 2021 semester.

“The college will offer 50% of all class offerings for each department in a hybrid format,” Fierro said, “As we return to campus, the district will continue to comply with mandates and guidelines from the state and local health officials.”

The email references the latest update from the state, putting Los Angeles County into the orange tier on its COVID-19 monitoring system. This classification will allow restaurants, movie theaters, churches, museums, zoos and aquariums to allow guests at 50% capacity.

The new rules were effective April 5.

The president’s email also announced that all “regular” employees will be required to return to campus “at a minimum of 50%” starting August 2.

Offices will be open to the public Monday through Thursday for at least eight hours a day.

Fierro then said that by the end of April, the college will work with department chairs to determine which courses will remain online and which will begin in person instruction to meet the 50% threshold.

Lynn Wang, president of the Cerritos College Faculty Federation, one of the school’s faculty unions, responded with another email to faculty stating that the union was not involved in the decision making and questioned whether faculty would have the right to refuse teaching on campus if they choose to do so.

“This is the first CCFF has seen any plan to return to campus for fall 2021,” Wang said, “We, like you, were under the impression that returning to campus in

fall 2021 would be voluntary. This was the message that Dr. Fierro himself shared when asked by constituents.”

Wang’s email also encouraged employees to reach out to the administration and the Board of Trustees with their questions.

According to Fierro, the college will make some accommodations in preparation for this transition, including a walkthrough of campus facilities, which will determine where new sanitizing stations, trash cans and plexiglass barriers will be installed.

Under the condition of anonymity, one tenured professor shared their thoughts on Fierro’s email, “I will have to trust whatever guidelines the scientists and LA County says. I was hoping for a hybrid class style. The question is what about class sizes? 50, 60, or 20 students? What about faculty who have family members at home who may be vulnerable? Maybe [returning to campus] should be voluntary.”

ASCC Senator and Vice President Cerys Rotondo said that a gradual opening of campus combined with increasing rates

of vaccinations in the county could yield many benefits.

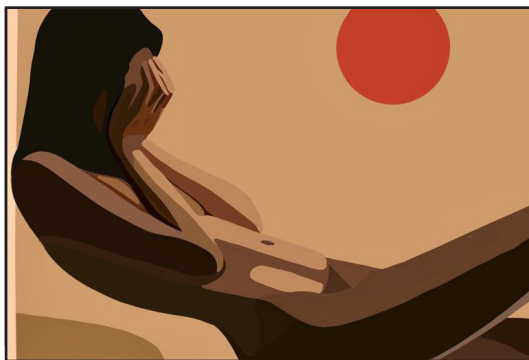
“I believe having a partial open will help accommodate students who learn better in person and will even allow students to continue their education if they took a break due to the online transition,” Rotondo said.

“Having a partial open rather than full open gives students options. I know we don’t know what the parameters of 50% open will look like yet, but I hope Cerritos continues to listen to science and apply other countries’ successful and safe reopenings to our campus.”

Students who was asked how they would feel about returning to campus in the fall gave mixed reviews. Jennix Paul-Bien said, “if I get my vaccine, I would like to go back to campus. But I am concerned about sanitizing and social distancing and the discipline of other students. Hasly Ambercrombie said, “I would be comfortable returning to campus. As long as we follow the guidelines.”



Community page 4: BLM on Chauvin Trial



A & E page 6: Melissa Depaz, alumna artist



Sports page 11: Team fights through COVID-19

Freshmen sweep election

Jacqueline Cochran
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Sandra Abundio has been elected ASCC president and Ethan McLaughlin has been elected ASCC vice president by the Cerritos College student body.

The newly elected duo will assume their respective positions May 24, after the student inauguration, which will be held during the ASCC Awards Ceremony on May 14.

Both freshman expressed their excitement to be chosen to represent the students of Cerritos. "When I received the email with the election results, I could not believe it."

"I feel blessed to be granted the position and its heartwarming to know that the student body saw my potential to represent Cerritos in a positive way," said Abundio.

McLaughlin, the 19 year old

Economics major, said, "Winning feels kind of surreal and a bit nerve racking, if I'm being honest. It's such a big position."

But I am incredibly excited for the challenge and to be working with a lot of great people in the student government and, of course, President Elect Abundio."

President Elect Abundio indicated that the first thing she will concentrate on after assuming the presidency is to brainstorm ways to ensure the safety protocols will be consistently obeyed for students and professors that will return to campus this fall.

"I feel that the safety of the students comes first and once we figure out the safest possible way for 50% of the student body to come back on campus, we can finally begin creating new opportunities, new resources and improving existing resources for all students attending Cerritos College," Abundio said.



COURTESY OF GABRIELA BRANDON

Student government: Sandra Abundio, ASCC President (left) and Ethan McLaughlin, Vice President on campus taking campaign photos. Because of the pandemic the freshman both have not attended classes on campus yet.

According to McLaughlin, the newly elected duo is also concerned with improving networking opportunities for students.

"It would be great to create an easy way for students to be able to talk with other students who are on a similar journey as them when it comes to career

or transfer goals," McLaughlin said. "We think it will be a great support for students to help them accomplish their future goals."

Abundio and McLaughlin will hold their elected position for the 2021-2022 academic year.

"As long as they are eligible they will maintain their role," said Diana Madueno, Elections

Committee Advisor.

Ninel Sutherland, who is also a freshman, ran unopposed and was elected student trustee. Student Trustee's responsibilities include attending Board of Trustee meetings that are held on Wednesdays at 7 p.m. and the ASCC meetings, held every Wednesday at 2 p.m.

College student to Mayor of Norwalk: Meet Jennifer Perez



JACQUELINE COCHRAN/TM

City Government: Mayor Jennifer Perez sits in the City of Norwalk City Council Chambers. Talking to Cerritos College students and faculty about her political career. March 25, 2021

Jacqueline Cochran
News Editor
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As tears welled up in her eyes, Jennifer Perez, Mayor of the City of Norwalk and Cerritos College Alumni, ends the conversation by telling students that Cerritos College is family. It's home.

Another in the alumni conversation series, Jason Barquero sat with Jennifer on March 25, 2021 at 6 p.m. Jason's initial question caused Jennifer to go back in time and outline how Cerritos influenced her current career in local city government.

Before graduating in 1999, she fondly recounts her first experience in politics. "My two friends both named Jennifer and myself were involved in

the ASCC. I was on the senate with ASCC and decided to run for student body president and just tried to keep giving back to the wonderful students and the programs that we all learned to love.

"I did not win that election but what it did was teach me that I did not want to give up. So I started my family here in the City of Norwalk."

Once she started planting roots in the City of Norwalk, she explained how she was one day asked to take on a volunteer position as a Norwalk City Planning Commissioner.

In most local jurisdictions, a planning commission is typically made up of at least five individuals who have been appointed by the governing body, like a city

council.

Their purpose is to hear items related to planning and development and grant approvals or denials based on whether or not they believe the proposal is good for the city and meets all relevant criteria.

"I remember being in a planning commission meeting and the five of us voted on a business that we did not think was a good fit for our city and after the meeting, our city attorney came back and told us no you can't vote like that."

"The city has ordinances and the developer met those ordinances and just because it was a development that you thought wasn't a good fit, you can't vote that way," she said.

Jennifer suggested that this instance was a pivotal moment in the trajectory of her career. "I decided that the planning commission was as far as my voice could go at that time."

"I knew that if I wanted to do more, if I wanted to be a part of a conversation with the developers, I knew I had to run for City Council."

Her first City Council election was in 2017 and she won.

Although Jennifer has

followed her own path, she was exposed to this politics early in her life. "My father ran for City Council when I was a freshmen in high school."

"He served for four years and one of those years was as mayor. After serving as a City Council member, he decided that he wanted to run for Cerritos College Board of Trustees. And he served

"We are blessed and we are all Falcons true and true. And we will always be Falcons

Jennifer Perez
Norwalk Mayor

as a Board of Trustee member for over 20 years."

Jennifer expressed to Jason that her passion and desire to serve was the driving force that caused her to enter this familiar arena. "I believe that I could do more for our community."

For any students listening and interested in getting into politics, Jennifer talked about how intense the campaigning process can be while you are doing it. "You don't

know what day and time it is and the start and end activities never stop," she said.

One thing that has happened in Norwalk that seem to fill Mayor Perez with a sense of pride as the mayor of Norwalk, is the reduction of energy usage for sustainability through purchasing street lights poles and converting them to LED lights.

"We did this because it saves on energy and it brighten up our neighborhoods while raising the level of safety for residents."

Jason asked Jennifer if she could share some upcoming exciting things that might be happening in the City of Norwalk. "I will tell you that the City of Norwalk is getting a new grocery store in the very near future."

That's all I can say. We are also getting a few new restaurants. Pick Up Stix is going to be opening very soon. And we will be one of the first city's to have a drive thru Chipotle."

The mayor also said that Norwalk officials are looking for new and innovative ways to bring programming back to the city. "We are searching for new ways to gather and still be safe and healthy," she said.

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MIRELLA VARGAS/TM

Counter-protest: Anti-racist protestors holding signs condemning the KKK and in support of BLM. Counter protestors against the organized “White Lives Matter” rally congregated at the entrance of the Huntington Beach pier on April 11, 2021.

Counter-protesters prevent KKK rally

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The Klan organized event failed to materialize as hundreds block entrance to the Huntington Beach pier, confronting white supremacist loners and Trump supporting locals on April 11.

Alleged Ku Klux Klan members advertised a “White Lives Matter” rally at the Huntington Beach Pier on April 11. A counter-protest was organized by Black Lives Matter Huntington Beach to show resistance against the white supremacists.

Black Lives Matter Huntington Beach founder, Tory Johnson, organized the counterprotest, despite Black Lives Matter Global Network Foundation and BLM Grassroots releasing a statement that they would not endorse and are not affiliated with any counterprotest.

“The counterprotest today is dangerous, and endorsing this would be dangerous to them as an organization,” said Johnson. “My NAACP president encouraged me to call this off, but look at how important this is to people.”

Hundreds of counter-protesters lined Pacific Coast Highway and blocked the entrance to the pier, protesting against the extremist groups.

Huntington Beach resident, Tom McNamara, held up a sign that said “Start a conversation by acknowledging white advantages in America.”

McNamara said, “My whole point is that if you can admit

that one group is at an advantage over another group that is at a disadvantage, then we can move on to how to fix it.”

Many held signs condemning the KKK and in solidarity with Black Lives Matter. One counter-protestor, psychologist Ann Tran, who now lives in San Francisco, said she remembers the countless incidents of racism she experienced growing up in Huntington Beach.

“I was in student government in high school and I had to do a dance dressed up as a ninja. I mean, countless microaggressions, countless racist things and there’s a reason why I don’t live here anymore,” said Tran.

Two arrests were made around 11:30 a.m. on the counter protest side. One counter-protester was arrested for violating “noise ordinance” and another for carrying a small knife and pepper spray.

Police arrested 12 people total throughout the day.

While the scheduled Klan rally did not appear to take place, a scattering of white supremacists did make appearances in the crowds around the pier, agitating and confronting protesters.

Trump supporting locals, anti-abortion advocates and 2nd Amendment proponents confronted various counter-protesters, engaging in arguments and taunts.

Trump supporter Kelly Johnson, who also attended the January 6 rally-turned-insurrection in Washington D.C., carried a Trump 2020 flag into the counterprotest.

“I didn’t know about the White Lives Matter protest,” the Trump supporter claimed. “I heard about the BLM, and I wanted to come

and the support the babies that they’re killing each day.”

“We are all God’s children. We’re not here to be divisive and I just don’t believe in Black Lives Matter just like I don’t believe in the virus,” Johnson said, as he displayed pictures of himself at the US capitol on January 6.

He later carried his Trump flag down Main Street, where he was surrounded by protesters and his flag was torn down.

A scuffle ensued that was broken up by police at the scene.

Several heated disagreements between counter-protesters and bystanders sparked tense confrontations. Some led to violence, leading to police officers stepping in to separate crowds.

Two men who appeared to be right wing extremists, one wearing a Proud Boy t-shirt, came to argue with the crowd and

were met with hostility by counter protestors who chanted “Go home Nazi” and “F*ck you Nazi” while chasing them away.

One of the men was cornered by the crowd before being escorted by officers to the HBPD substation at Walnut Avenue and 5th Street.

The building was then guarded by the Huntington Beach Police and SWAT team.

“They are arresting people of color for things that white people would get away with,” said Shalisa Williams, a counter-protester who says she is active in the Democratic Party.

“They escorted that man to safety, but when have they ever done that for a person of color who has been in danger? That’s why we are here, to speak out against the privilege and the hate.”

The crowd eventually moved

down Walnut towards Main Street before being stopped by a police line that blocked pedestrians.

After a brief standoff, the police helicopter that was shadowing the crowd announced that the HBPD had declared the event an “unlawful assembly” and ordered people to disperse, threatening to use crowd control munitions to clear the streets.

An emergency alert was sent to phones in the area saying “An unlawful assembly has been declared, disperse or be arrested.”

Despite the threat of force, the crowd continued to stand around just off Main Street.

Only minutes after threatening dispersal or arrest, the HBPD units blocking the street got into their vehicles and drove away, essentially difusing the situation.

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VINCENT N. MEDINA/ TM

Proud Boy: The Klan failed to show up in force for their “White Lives Matter” rally. Some open white supremacists did make appearances, like this Proud Boy on April 11, 2021.

BLM on Wright murder and Chauvin trial

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Black Lives Matter-LA leadership responded to Daunte Wright's killing, Derek Chauvin's trial and the Huntington Beach counter-protest during Wednesday's annual rally outside the LA Police Protective League on April 14.

Daunte Wright killing & protests

Daunte Wright was killed by Minneapolis police officer Kim Porter on April 11 after she pulled Wright over for expired license plate tags. After learning Wright had an arrest warrant, she tried to take him into custody, but he resisted arrest and tried to get back in his car.

Porter warned the 20-year old man that she would tase him but instead shot him in the chest. He drove away but later died of his wounds.

The 26-year police veteran claimed she mistook her gun for her taser. Porter and Brooklyn Center Police Chief Tim Gannon resigned on April 13.

Many BLM-LA supporters were skeptical that Porter mistook her sidearm for her taser.

"A system that is designed to punish and steal life can make no mistakes," said BLM-LA organizer Tabitha Jones Jolivet. "The officer absolutely murdered Daunte Wright. We join the community in solidarity to demand accountability."

BLM-LA has advocated for the abolition of police associations. They argue the killing of Wright

only bolstered their argument.

If Porter is convicted of her second-degree manslaughter charge, she will serve up to 10 years in prison.

"We are a system that believes in the abolishment of caging and policing, but under the conditions where we have sentencing, the police should be the first to go," said Jolivet.

George Floyd murder & Derek Chauvin trial

The trial of former Minneapolis police officer Derek Chauvin continued several miles away from where Wright was shot.

Chauvin is standing trial for allegedly murdering George Floyd on May 25, 2020.

After receiving a report that Floyd used a counterfeit \$20 bill, Chauvin and three other officers attempted to take Floyd into custody. The bill in question was later found to be legitimate.

After resisting arrest, Chauvin pushed Floyd to the ground and knelt on his neck for nine minutes, while Floyd begged for help and yelled that he could not breathe.

Floyd's death prompted protests and riots in Minneapolis, Los Angeles and across the country. Chauvin now stands trial for second-degree manslaughter, as well as second and third-degree murder.

"Many of the witness' testimonies are compelling," said BLM-LA chapter founder Dr. Melina Abdula. "We are all skeptical of getting any resemblance of justice [from] this process."



VINCENT N. MEDINA/TM

Unity: BLM supporters raise their fists in solidarity as the Wednesday-annual protest comes to an end. They held the demonstration in front of the LA PPL on April 14, 2021.

Abdula refers to the history of police officers receiving little to no punishment for the murder of unarmed or innocent Black men and women.

"This is bigger than Chauvin. We have to topple policing as we know it," Abdula said. "Chauvin is not a bad apple. He is part of a rotten system."

Chauvin was later convicted of all three charges on April 20. He now waits in police custody for the court to schedule a sentencing hearing.

Huntington Beach rally & counter-protest

Hundreds of anti-racism demonstrators arrived at the Huntington Beach pier to counter-protest a Ku Klux Klan rally on April 11. While the Klan rally did not

occur, individual white supremacists came to shout racist messages and aggravate counter-protesters.

LA Times reported that BLM-Huntington Beach organized the counter-protest, despite the national organization releasing a statement before the protest saying that they do not support or affiliate with the demonstration.

Tory Johnson claimed that he is the founder of BLM Huntington Beach, but Dr. Abdula says there is no Huntington Beach chapter of Black Lives Matter.

"He chooses to organize under the banner of Black Lives Matter, but he is not a part of the BLM global network. There is no Huntington Beach chapter of Black Lives Matter," Abdula said.

Klan affiliates and Proud Boy

sympathizers were seen at the Huntington Beach protest. Law enforcement declared an unlawful assembly for the demonstrators to disperse.

"We know that California is home to the most white supremacist groups of any state," Abdula said.

"It's not surprising that the KKK thinks it can rise up. We have to remember to push back against white supremacy, or it will keep popping back up."

"White supremacy exists in places like the LA Police Protective League. That's where my focus is," the co-founder said.

BLM-LA continue to advocate for removing the LA PPL from the house of labor during their Wednesday annual protests outside the League headquarters.

SoCal gun owners respond to calls for gun reform

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After the Atlanta shooting on March 16 and the Boulder massacre on March 22, many Americans and the Biden Administration have pushed for a ban on semi-automatic assault rifles. Second Amendment advocates in Southern California believe it will not solve the problem.

Jack Brandhorst, owner of Red Rifle arms shop in Carson since 2012, grew up in Baltimore being anti-gun. It was not until he moved to California where he changed his opinion about guns.

"Moving to California, I saw how responsible gun ownership is," said Brandhorst.

Brandhorst said being anti-gun is "ridiculous" because it goes against our freedom to choose how we want to protect ourselves. He also stated that bans on certain firearms would not change the death rates in America.

Instead of banning guns, he suggested that the government enforces the laws it currently has



LOLA AJETUNMOBI/TM

Gun reform: Jack Brandhorst, owner of Red Rifle arms in Carson, posing with an AR-15 on March 24. This gun is ready to be picked up by a purchaser.

to protect citizens.

"They want to pass new laws, they want to pass a ban, they want to pass these universal background checks, but they don't enforce the laws that are currently in place," said Brandhorst.

"We have had people in [the store] here that were mentally ill trying to buy a gun and we didn't let them. And when we reported it to the state, they didn't do anything about it," said

Brandhorst.

People with criminal records have tried to purchase guns as well. Brandhorst explained that the government tends not to prosecute those with criminal records applying to buy a gun, which is how they would be found through background checks.

"So how about we enforce the laws that we currently have that were put in place to stop things like this [mass shootings] from

happening and then see what happens," said Brandhorst.

Brandhorst is not the only gun advocate that agreed that restricting guns is not the right way to protect citizens.

Richard Castillo, a Rialto resident, has been a registered gun owner for three years. He is the owner of a Glock 42 and a 12-gauge shotgun. Castillo is a long-time supporter of owning guns.

"I have always believed people should be allowed to own guns for safety reasons, and we enjoy it as well, going to shooting ranges, just chilling and having fun," said Castillo.

Castillo understands certain guns, such as the AR-15, are not liked and that people should not use them. However, he does not think it will make a difference in the mass shootings if the government gets rid of the guns.

"People will still find a way to obtain illegal guns and do minor or major harm by any other gun," said Castillo.

However, Castillo advocated for stronger background checks. He stated that not only should the government find a way for people to stop buying illegal guns, but "people should have to go to school to be taught how to handle a gun."

Castillo compared how the tests to get a gun license is like ones people take at the DMV.

"They are common sense questions. You really do not have to know much about guns to pass," said Castillo

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Automotive program endures tumultuous year

Mirella Vargas
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“That presented the biggest challenge: they were so used to being fully in person here for instruction and then it went to fully online quickly,” remembers Joe Mulleary, instructor and department chair of the Automotive Training Program at Cerritos College.

Mulleary, who is also a Cerritos College alumnus, has been teaching the campus automotive program since Fall of 2012.

“It was really challenging. Initially, this took a lot of planning to pivot online for the Spring [2020]. It was a drastic change very quickly,” he said.

“

Automotive is very hands on, and now the teacher has more time to focus on us individually.

Eduardo Lemus
Automotive Technology Major

”

Mulleary taught a nine-week class in the spring of 2020 when the campus first shut its doors, and one in the summer as well.

He said one of the biggest learnings he had from the first online-only semester was balancing the lessons and homework he would assign to his students.

“In the spring I overloaded them,” he said, “I was having things due on a daily basis. And most students were working at

shops full-time.

Some of them did get let go because when COVID-19 first hit, the business went down. But some of them were still working full-time and they wouldn’t even be able to get home until, like, six o’clock to start looking at this stuff.”

Mulleary said he then reached out to his students to get their feedback and shifted from having assignments due each day, to having them due twice a week in the summer semester. “It worked out way better,” he said.

Mulleary said one of the tools which helped them teach the online-only classes during the spring and summer semesters last year, was the e-learning platform, Electude, which consists of learning modules with interactive automotive technical training and simulations.

Instructors were given the option to return back to campus last year, and currently, the automotive department is split in half.

Half of the instructors are teaching hybrid classes consisting of both in-person labs and online assignments, and the other half are still teaching online-only classes.

Before the pandemic, a group of 20 students would meet Monday through Thursday for a total of 20 hours a week.

Now, Mulleary’s student’s are split into two groups of ten, and meet once a week.

He said since they have fewer students in the lab at one time, students are receiving really good hands-on experience.

“Most of the students really like it because in some capacity,



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Now Open: The Automotive Training Program at Cerritos College shifted to online-only classes in Spring 2020. This semester, the program is split into two — with half of the classes being taught on campus and the other half still remain online-only.

they work and they say they really like having to be on campus one day a week. They can still work full-time and still do the online work that’s due only a couple times a week,” said Mulleary.

As the Fall 2021 semester approaches, Mulleary is currently planning how he will be conducting his classes, since campus is set to reopen at 50% capacity.

“Some instructors like the two groups because it is more intimate — you only have those ten students. Some students like it better too,” he said.

Eduardo Lemus started the automotive program in the Fall of 2019, “When I first started the auto program, at the end of the

semester it got shut down. It went online,” remembers Lemus.

Lemus said he took the online-only classes last year and he feels he learned the least during that time.

“So we had a text book for that class and it was literally like, ‘okay read the chapter’ and then we were just assigned a test for that chapter — for like twenty-something chapters. There was no hands-on [experience] or anything as compared to the hybrid classes — those are a lot better,” he said.

He said one of the most challenging parts after campus closed was the lack of in-person lecture time.

“When you’re reading the book, of course, you have

questions about it and it’s kind of hard to just message the teachers. I would have to either jot it down or remember it and go to class and ask them — but I would have to wait until I get there. Sometimes I’ll even forget.”

This semester, Lemus is attending campus for his classes.

“One positive thing is that there are smaller groups in the class. Automotive is very hands on, and now the teacher has more time to focus on us individually,” he said, “but it can also be a con because you get less class time.”

Lemus said he started the program after exploring other options at Cerritos and added he liked the idea of becoming a mechanic.

Dreamer Julio Rayo achieves citizenship in post-Trump world

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If you aren’t a believer that dreams really do come true, just ask Julio Rayo, who is now one of the newest citizens of the United States of America.

On of March 17, 2021, after being in this country for 31 years undocumented, Julio stood before homeland security agents with his right hand up and the oath in his left, he renounced every other country, sovereignty, potentate or prince by reciting the oath of alliance to become a US citizen.

The former Mexican national said he no longer has to look over his shoulder. “The idea of ICE will now just be about frozen water,” he said.

Julio recalled the day that changed his life was sunny with a 40% chance of rain. “I worked that day and all I concentrated on was putting in enough hours in order to have the afternoon off.”

“I remembered it drizzled

but then by the time we arrived downtown, it was sunny. Not even Mother nature would rain on my parade,” he said while giggling.

Accompanied by his wife, Veronica and niece Rebecca, Julio said his wife has been there with him every step of the way.

“She was just as much a part of this process as I was. I could not have done this without her.”

He teared up again thinking back to the very moment. “I embraced my wife and then we took a selfie,” he said.

“I was brought to this country in 1990 at the age of one. My parents migrated here in search of the American dream. It wasn’t easy by any stretch of the imagination. We did not have a home, we struggled financially and not speaking English was also a big part of the challenge we all faced,” he said.

“My family consisted of my father Vicente, mother Cristina De Los Rios and my sister Karina. After living here a while the Rayo’s family expanded with Miguel and

Juan.”

Julio’s parents did not have a lot of options as migrant workers. They worked in sweatshops for long hours and very little pay.

“I can remember there were times when my sister and I had to join our parents at the sweatshops to help them out and we still did not have enough money,” he said.

The creation of the DACA policy that was enacted in 2012 allowed him to begin to see a pathway to citizenship might be possible.

DACA gave Julio the opportunity to get a work visa, driver’s license and a social security number.

The process to citizenship is detailed and quite costly. Rayo said he applied for residency and was granted conditional residency since he and his wife had only been married three years and did not have any children.

“There were applications, interviews, biometrics background photos and other nerve racking moments



COURTESY OF JULIO

Dreams come true: Julio Rayo downtown Los Angeles outside of the Federal building on March 17, 2021. Julio took the oath to become a US Citizen.

throughout the entire process. For the final interview you are required to answer ten civic related questions.”

“You only have to get six out of the 10 correct. Questions

like, What do the stars on the flag mean, or what is the US capital. You are also required to read and write some of the same information,” Rayo said.

[Read more at Talonmarks.com](#)

Artist Melissa Depaz pours soul into her work

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Melissa Depaz is a young Compton native who expresses her mind through her art. Her emotions transmitted onto a blank canvas that soon becomes a beautiful piece of work.

The Cerritos College alumni currently has three pieces on display in the Cerritos College art exhibition.

When asked more about her pieces she explained the process that went into creating her works of art.

"I don't really start these pieces with an intention of what to do. I just kind of sit there and like it happens and then after I'm done I'm like 'Oh that's what I was trying to say.'"

She also explained how she draws inspiration from personal experiences, family and most importantly, her community.

"Honestly I feel like focusing myself on making art about Compton gave me the confidence to pursue my creative career, just because I know the negative stigma that Compton has, there's a lot of history here that needs to



COURTESY OF MELISSA DEPAZ

Artistic: A photo of Melissa Depaz posing in front of the mural located at Foot Locker's Compton location.

be talked about especially in art, so I feel like I had a subject and I could use my skills to bring and put a positive light onto Compton."

When asked about the three pieces that were a part of the exhibition she said, "Those three pieces... I made them during a very emotional time and what I made [was] for myself. I do a lot of community work around my

area but at the end of the day, I am an artist who has emotions."

She explained how putting her own voice out in the world is a huge accomplishment to her and she will continue to do so.

"Something's Missing" is one of her favorite pieces.

It has a great amount of meaning to her and a lot of emotion that was put into it.

"I love hearing how others

interpret it but that one, I was going through a breakup at the time and it was just raw feeling," she said.

Depaz vocalized how getting others to feel through art is a very important goal of hers.

She hopes that the viewers recognize it just like her.

"It takes sensitivity to art, to really get it, like to all arts. I feel like you really have to be in tune

with your feelings."

With the ongoing pandemic and quarantine, Melissa shares how being stuck at home was a blessing in disguise for her personally, even if it did come with challenges.

"I feel like quarantine taught me discipline. It was crazy, it was hectic and very emotional but discipline came out of it and I learned that you can also have fun at home so its a positive thing in the end."

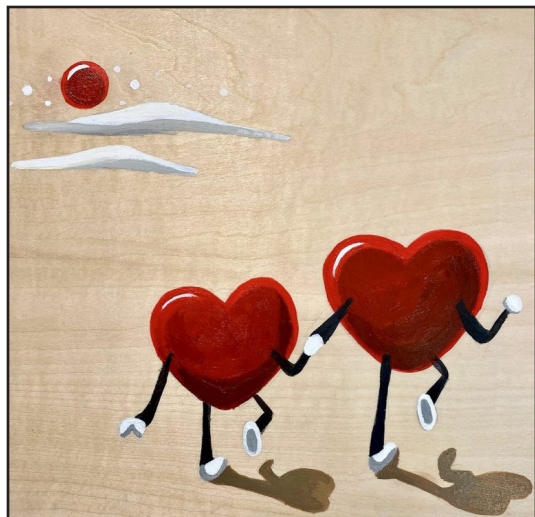
Melissa has already accomplished so much recognition in her community for her work.

She's gotten many great opportunities to spread her art around the city of Compton.

Currently she has been a part of two major pieces in the city: a mural right outside Foot Locker and one inside the Buffalo Spot restaurant.

She also currently has some of her art on clothing that is selling on footlocker.com and you can also buy some of her other pieces on her website.

It's no doubt that she is a creative who will only continue to grow and get more amazing opportunities in the future.



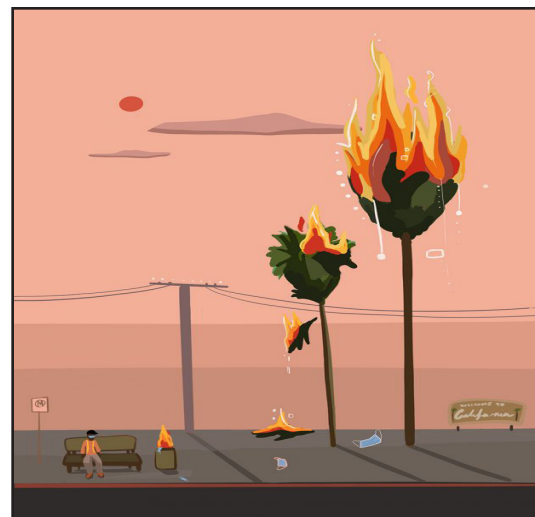
COURTESY OF MELISSA DEPAZ

Come With Me: A work by Depaz. Also on Instagram.



COURTESY OF MELISSA DEPAZ

Somethings Missing: A work by Depaz. Much of her art is posted on Instagram.



COURTESY OF MELISSA DEPAZ

California, September 2020: Another work by Depaz.

'The Falcon and the Winter Soldier': 'Truth' benefits from slower pace

Rafael Magana
Co-A & E Editor
@talonmarks

Episode five 'Truth' steps back and allows the audience to get intimately familiar with Wilson before the show's climactic finale next week.

Directly following the highs that episode four reached, episode five of "The Falcon and the Winter Soldier" has big shoes to fill. Being the penultimate episode of the series, it's expected to set up the events that are bound to occur in the finale.

Following the horrific actions committed by John Walker (Wyatt Russell) in episode four, Bucky (Sebastian Stan) and Wilson (Anthony Mackie) confront him.

A fight ensues and ends with the pair defeating Walker and Wilson keeping the shield.

Wilson also has his trademark

wingsuit broken during the scuffle. Following the scuffle, Wilson abandons his wingsuit in favor of the shield.

Morgenthau (Erin Kellyman) goes into hiding, recuperating after the death of one of her fellow Flag Smashers at the hands of Walker.

The rest of the episode follows what our protagonists do during this time.

During a period of relative "peace" where neither side is retaliating, we focus on where our characters stand prior to the final conflict.

Wilson has an inner conflict with himself, debating on what the shield represents and whether he should hold the mantle that was left vacant by Steve Rogers.

Looking for guidance, he visits Baltimore to meet with Isaiah Bradley (Carl Lumbly) a former super-soldier who served during

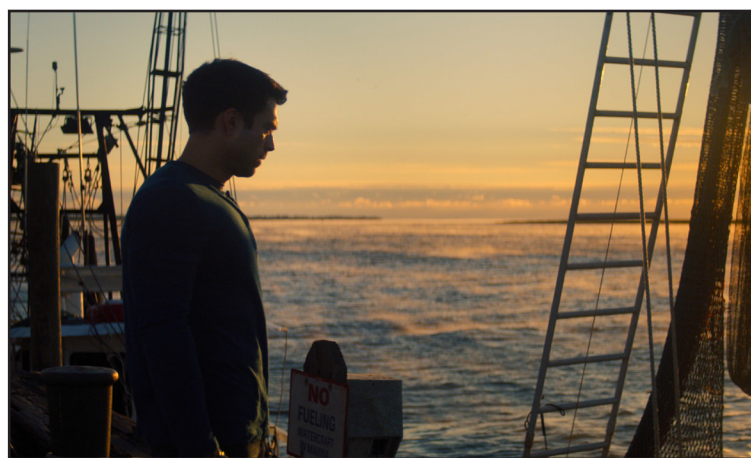
the Korean War.

Revealing the truth of the atrocities that he experienced during his time as a super-soldier, he leaves Wilson with the sentiment that he feels that no black man would ever strive to become the new Captain America.

Episode five feels as if it's where the commentary of modern-day America has reached its peak, with Bradley perfectly encapsulating the feelings that have been present in our current political and social climate.

Wilson returns home to repair his families' boat. Bucky assists as well and leaves a package that was sent from Wakanda specifically for Wilson.

The standout moment for the episode is when Wilson and Bucky part ways, with both men agreeing to pay their dues: Wilson will move forward and strive to become a Captain America that



COURTESY OF MARVEL STUDIOS AND WALT DISNEY COMPANY

Pensive: Winter Soldier/Bucky Barnes (Sebastian Stan) in Marvel Studios' *THE FALCON AND THE WINTER SOLDIER* exclusively on Disney+. Photo courtesy of Marvel Studios. ©Marvel Studios 2021. All Rights Reserved.

modern-day America needs, while Bucky will work to make reprimands with the individuals he hurt during his time as the Winter Soldier.

Episode five, 'Truth' succeeds in its smaller, more intimate moments. The episode opens with an intense, well-choreographed fight sequence, yet it pales in comparison to many of the dialogues that the protagonists

have with each other.

While "The Falcon and the Winter Soldier" may not be as flashy or bombastic as the show that preceded it, "WandaVision", excels in its dialogue and providing the audience with meaningful sequences.

'Truth' gets 4.5 out of 5 stars. It's an excellent penultimate episode and sets up for an exciting finale.

‘Godzilla vs Kong’: Greatest monster fight



WARNER BROS., LEGENDARY PICTURES & HBO MAX/TNS

The East monster vs the West monster: *The most anticipated Monster film is finally here on HBOMax. Who will win the King of the Monsters or the King of Skull Island?*

Oscar Torres
Co-A & E Editor
[@talonmarks](#)

Many delays and a pandemic later, “Godzilla vs Kong” finally gets released in theaters and HBO Max and what an amazing film it was.

Five years after the events of “Godzilla: King of the Monsters” the film starts with Kong interacting with a young little girl named Jia, a young native from Skull Island who Kong protects and cares for after the natives of

the island died. Ilene Andrews becomes Jia’s new caretaker as she studies Kong, making sure that Godzilla can’t find him. Meanwhile, in an Apex Cybernetics facility in Pensacola, a conspiracy podcast theorist Bernie Hayes investigates some sinister activity that the company has been doing. Before he can find out more, Godzilla suddenly attacks and destroys the facility leaving nothing standing.

The CEO of Apex, Walter Simmons, meets with Nathan Lid to asks for his help in getting a power source that is only located in Hollow Earth. Lid agrees and heads to Skull Island to talk to Ilene to use Kong in order to find the location of Hollow Earth. After a few seconds After a few days in the water, Godzilla emerges and faces off with Kong, with the fight ending in a draw. Meanwhile, Madison Russell

and her friend Josh meets with Bernie and helps him uncover the secret of what Apex is doing which leads them to their HQ in Hong Kong. Instead of floating in the water, they take Kong to the entrance of Hollow Earth by helicopter. Kong makes his way inside to discover another world outside of the world that humans live in. Inside live new titans and secrets about Kong’s past. He discovers a temple surrounded by Kong skeletons

and finds an axe that uses Godzilla’s scales. Not long after, Godzilla senses it and shoots out a breath underneath the planet to take out Kong. The two go head to head once more with Godzilla being the victor, but not long after that MechaGodzilla appears and wrecks havoc on Hong Kong. Godzilla tries to fight it on his own but isn’t powerful enough. Kong joins forces with him to take down MechaGodzilla. Both go their separate ways, with Godzilla wandering the oceans and Kong returning to Hollow Earth. The story worked out pretty well. Although generic, with predictable moments, the film works around that, giving a good standing point on what’s cheesy or not. The movie had a great pace with scenes feeling not too short and not too long. The characters are likable. There wasn’t a single character that wasn’t cared for or hated, appropriately. The CGI was spectacular, with destructive buildings looking so realistic, the fur and scales on Kong and Godzilla looking clean and so detailed. It felt like they used inspiration from other animals to use the effects. The main attraction for this film is the action, and by god, these are some of the best fights out of any monster battle in the MonsterVerse. Eac set piece is fantastic with bothr monsters getting enough screentime and more fights ten ever in any monster film to date. Overall, the film is an incredible experience that is fun to watch with friends or for fans of either Godzilla or Kong. The film gets a four out of five stars, being a fun and exciting film for monster battle fans.

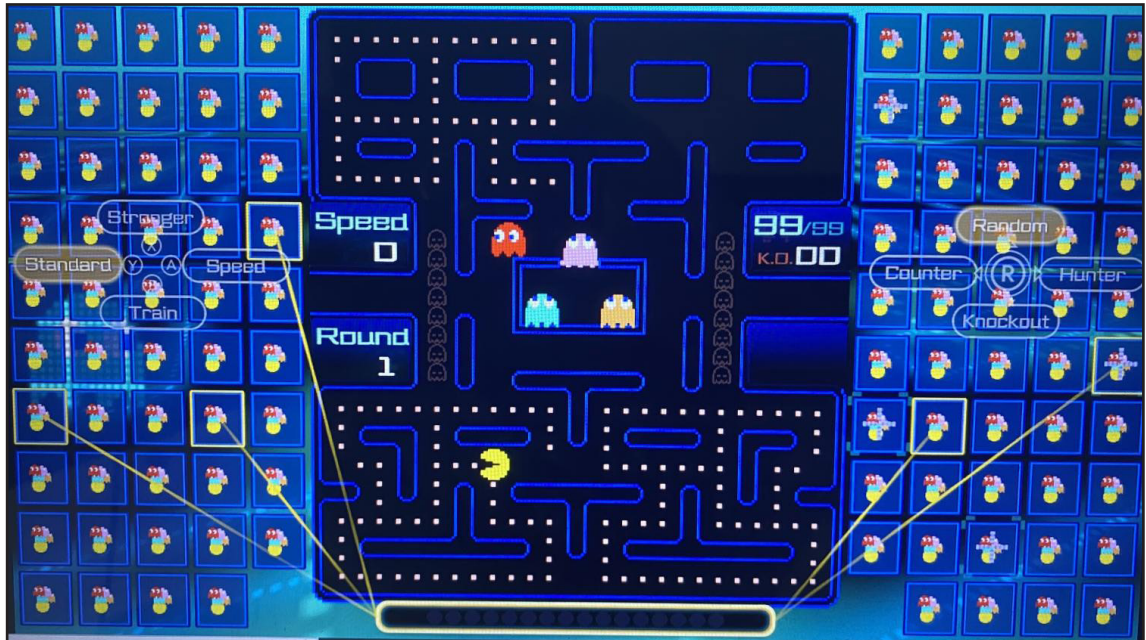
‘Pac-Man 99’: A fast-paced + intense battle royale for fans of arcade Pac-Man

Oscar Torres
Co-A & E Editor
[@talonmarks](#)

With “Super Mario Bros. 35” gone from the Nintendo Online Service, many people were wondering what will happens after the game gets taken out.

What follows is an addicting, fun battle royale that puts 99 people in one room, only instead of shooting people to be number one, they have to survive a horde of Ghosts as everyone’s favorite yellow ball... Pac-Man. The gameplay is just like regular Pac-Man but multiple new additions to it make the game feel fresh and enticing for fans and non-fans of the yellow ghost-eating mascot. The goal of the game is to be the last Pac standing and it’s not an easy task. Many obstacles will stop the player if they’re not careful enough.

On the screen there are sleeping ghost, when Pac-Man eats then it goes to one of the bigger ghost, collect a power pellet and eat all of the ghosts in a row to max out the score sending the ghost to other players. From there they become jammer Pac-Man. It doesn’t kill Pac-Man but it does lower his speed. As more people get out, more jammers will come and if there are too many and a ghost is chasing the player then it’s game over. The red jammers are what should be more worrisome, as that one will actually kill Pac-Man. The only way to get rid of the jammers is by collecting fruits. This will also respawn pellets and sleeping ghosts as well. As the game and rounds continue, the speed increases making it difficult to move and focus with tons of stuff being thrown at the player.



OSCAR TORRES/TM,

Classic game with a new twist: “Pacman 99” is a battle royale-style game taking 99 players into a game of Pacman. Become the last Pac standing to win the entire game.

There are other modes and custom themes that people can get but sadly those are paid DLC. That’s one of the main flaws about this game, the main mode is fun but having to pay to play against CPUs and time attack does sound a bit like paying for stuff that should have been in the game. The custom themes are all interesting as their all from classic Namco games like Galaga and Dig Dug. However, it can be difficult to tell which one’s are the ghost and which one is the player. Getting into matches is quick and simple and games can take two to five minutes depending on how good a player is so it’s easy to get back into another game if a

player loses. Overall “Pac-Man 99” is an incredible game to keep NSO members enticed after losing Mario 35. With lots of intense matches and fun gameplay, that’ll be a game that many people would enjoy playing for a long time. The game gets a four out of five.

Resident Evil Village's demo is short but sweet

Rafael Magana
Co-A & E Editor
@talonmarks

Another Resident Evil title, another timed demo.

Following in the footsteps of its older brother, Resident Evil 2, Resident Evil Village now totes an exclusive timed demo on the PlayStation 5.

The demo is unique, as it gives players a strict 30-minute time limit to adhere to. Once your 30 minutes are up, the demo is no longer playable.

Developer Capcom has used this marketing tactic before, with 2019's Resident Evil 2 One-Shot demo.

The demo, despite its relatively short run time, packs in a ton of content for fans of the series.

Set in the Village portion of the game, (a separate demo within the castle will be releasing on the 25th of April) players control Ethan Winters as he searches for his daughter.

The village itself instantly transported me back to the village that was present in Resident Evil 4. It feels as if much of that game's DNA is present in this new title, to be frank.



CAPCOM/CAPCOM UNITY, LLC.

Nostalgia trip: Despite being a wholly original title in the series, Village harkens back to Resident Evil 4. Village's setting and gameplay is a callback to RE4.

That's not a bad thing, quite the opposite in fact. RE4 was the peak of the series for many fans, and it's comforting to see Capcom embracing this and going back to what worked.

Although not present in the demo itself, players can upgrade weapons and sell items when at a merchant, which was a system that was originally introduced in RE4.

Visually speaking, the demo

looked beautiful. It runs at a steady 4K at 60FPS when ray tracing is turned off, and at about 45FPS when it's bumped on. This is, of course, only an option on the newer hardware, like PS5, Xbox Series X, and PC.

Players get a taste of how exploration and crafting will function in Village as well. Strewn around the village are resources that allow players to craft an extra first aid kit or some much-needed

ammunition.

Speaking of ammunition, combat has been refined and is present in the demo as well. In a particularly tense sequence, players find themselves in a field of sorts where they see lycanthropes stumbling about.

Following this sequence, where players have the option to engage or sneak by, they meet with residents of the village.

What really stands out in the

demo is how much it highlighted the character interactions that will (presumably) be present in the title.

Resident Evil is, of course, a survival horror game first and an action game second. While Resident Evil: biohazard excelled in the horror, Village seems to excel in the action.

Despite holding some genuinely tense moments in its short 30 minute run time, I never really felt "scared". It was a ton of fun, but I did not feel genuine fear at all.

Even with these shortcomings, I enjoyed my time with the demo. There's sure to be more to comb through when Capcom releases their next demo, but Village has made a great first impression.

It'll be exciting to explore Castle Dimitrescu when Capcom releases their second demo. Some interactions between Ethan and the antagonists would be nice.

Players can explore the castle on April 24th, exclusively on PlayStation 5. The demo will be available on XSX and PC May 1st.

Resident Evil Village will be released on PS4, PS5, Xbox One, Xbox Series X, and PC on May 7th.

A Look Back with Oscar: 'Metal Slug Trilogy' SNK's run 'n' gun masterpiece

Oscar Torres
Co-A & E Editor
@talonmarks

Welcome back to A Look Back With Oscar where we take classic video games and movies to see if they truly are classics or actually garbage.

This time, let's go back to the late 90s and talk about one of the most popular run and gun games to hit arcades: Metal Slug.

The story of the game is a simple premise. The Peregrine Falcon (PF) Squad is a small but elite group of soldiers dedicated to fighting General Donald Morden and his massive army who is hell-bent to create a massive coup and establish a new world order.

In the second game Morden joins forces with the Mars people, a group of aliens from outer space who want to take over the world.

Now Falcon Squad once again gets their guns in order to take out this new threat that causes terror in earth.

The plot of the third game is the same premise of the first one with Morden again trying to establish a new world order.

PF Squad goes around the world taking down Yeti's, Zombies, new aliens and the return of the Mars people.

However, the Mars people

takes Marco and General Morden to their mothership.

The rebel army and PF Squad joins forces to try and save their people.

In the end of the game we see the main characters throw their guns to the bottom of the ocean signaling that the third game was supposed to be the last game.

And that was kinda true since SNK was gonna be bankrupt and they wanted to make Metal Slug 3 to be the final game in the series.

In the first game, the main characters are Marco, the Squad leader, and Tarma, the Captain. Those were the only characters that were playable in the original, while the 2nd and 3rd installments added Eri and Fio to the list.

The gameplay is pretty simple, one or two players run around in a linear path shooting down enemy soldiers using a multitude of weapons and vehicles and defeating the boss at the end of a level.

It's easy to play but hard to master as players will be dying a lot from an abundance of enemy projectiles and obstacles.

It can take days to remember the level layout and enemies it has. The best part in console versions is that there's no risk in game overs.

If it was in an arcade machine



OSCAR TORRES/TM

Less Talking more Shooting: The name of every level in Metal Slug is to shoot anything that moves or anything that shoots back. Players can also get into vehicles that not only protects from getting killed but also has unlimited ammo. However too much damage to the vehicle and it'll be destroyed, the only way to fix it is to collect fuel to regain the health for it.

then a lot of quarters would be used. Putting more quarters in means the player gets further into the game.

For the arcade archives digital version of these games, press the shoulder button on the left and it inserts credits meaning no more wasting quarters.

Granted, this makes the game a ton easier but it can still be hard for first-timers.

The second game in the series was "Metal Slug X," a remake of the original complete with better graphics, framerate, new levels and bosses.

The original game although still good was way bad in quality as there wasn't any vehicles or not a lot of them, levels were short and not that many of them.

The bosses were either too easy or have bad A.I. due to the framerate being slow, and not that many.

"Metal Slug 3" is by far the best game out of the trilogy, including so many new features like new vehicles, more transformations, more enemy variations, more bosses and an abundance of alternate levels to take.

This makes the game have tons of replayability, so no game session will be the same.

The games are a ton of fun with the gameplay being smooth and easy to control but the best part of the games is the music.

The music is both action-packed and fast pace. SNK knows how to make amazing music and it shows.

With "Metal Slug X" and "Metal Slug 3" having some of the best songs out of the entire franchise.

The original "Metal Slug" had great music but it was its second and third game that started to kick into overdrive with the soundtrack.

Overall the Metal Slug trilogy is by far one run and gun game that should be remembered as one of the best arcade games of the 90s.

The Metal Slug trilogy gets a perfect five out of five. An instant classic that everyone should own on either the PlayStation, Xbox or Nintendo consoles.

Hopefully there will be a new game that can capture the quality that these games have.

Stop the attack on Women’s rights

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America continues to progress in modern advancements and is making strides towards the inclusion of certain minorities but the mistreatment and violation of women and their rights are at a standstill. Women’s History Month has officially ended but their struggles are far from over.

On March 24, the Minnesota Supreme Court unanimously overturned Francios Momolu Khalil’s 2019 criminal sexual conduct conviction. The court said because the victim was “voluntarily intoxicated,” she did not meet the requirements to be considered mentally incapacitated under state law.

This disgusting, inhumane ruling will give Khalil a new trial and has sparked an uproar among women’s rights groups and sexual assault survivors.

This outrageous ruling undermines and violates the rights of women everywhere. Sadly, Minnesota is one of approximately 40 states in the country that have similar legislature regarding voluntary



SCOTT SCHILD/SYRACUSE.COM

Ingrid Holweger, 3, of Syracuse during the Syracuse Women’s March. About 150 people marched to the University United Methodist Church from the James M. Hanley Federal Building, Sat. Jan. 18, 2020, Syracuse, N.Y.

intoxication and sex.

This particular situation is just one of thousands where women’s rights are being violated across the nation. Women are under attack.

The recently appointed, unable-to-list-our-amendments “justice” Amy Coney Barrett has vocalized her support of overturning Roe v. Wade which would make it illegal for women to choose whether or not they want to get an abortion.

Certain states have also

proposed anti-abortion bills and have found loopholes in the system to make it difficult for women to safely seek out these medical procedures.

Lawmakers, a majority of whom are men, are constantly violating women’s rights to choose what they want to do with their own body. Their bigoted involvement drastically affects women and negatively impacts their lives.

Meanwhile the “administrators of the law” remain unaffected by

any of these injustices.

We are all entitled to human rights. The 14th Amendment means states must treat all their citizens equally. Yet, women and girls across the country continue to be discriminated against solely because of their gender.

The evils that terrorize women include domestic and sexual assault, massive wage gaps, human trafficking, lack of access to education and inadequate healthcare.

Instead of moving forward for

women, we are speeding back to the past.

Many women have voiced their wariness of feeling like this country is heading towards a life mirroring the one depicted in Margaret Atwood’s book “The Handmaid’s Tale.” The novel, recently turned into a Hulu television show, is an American dystopian tragedy that we are getting dangerously close to.

In the series, women no longer have a voice, are stripped of their rights and are subordinates to the men in power. They are forced into groups determined by their ability to produce offspring.

While this may seem like a far-fetched fictional tale, the path this country is on is certainly one that could lead us there.

In a study done at the University of Utah, state legislatures have enacted more than 250 abortion-related laws across 45 states between Jan. 2017 and Nov. 2020.

Research from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) shows that nearly one in five women have experienced attempted rape during her lifetime.

The CDC findings also say one in three female rape victims experience assault for the first time between 11 and 17 years old.

[Read more at Talonmarks.com](#)

Transathletes have the right to compete as the gender they choose

EDITORIAL

Some athletes and conservative politicians have advocated against trans-people competing in sports as the gender they identify as, stating it is unfair to the cisgender male and female athletes. These arguments are rooted in not-so-latent transphobia, not in a sincere concern over fairness or parity in athletics.

Transgender men and women should have the right to participate in sports as the gender with which they identify.

Female athletes claim that trans-women have an unfair advantage. They will point to “genetics” (a sweat-inducing subject in the American context) or testosterone.

However, in February 2020, a cisgender girl athlete beat a trans-female athlete in a Connecticut state championship track race. The same girl’s family was suing to prevent transathletes from competing.

These race results are just a part of the evidence that transathletes do not have an inherent advantage over cisgender athletes.

There is a history of female athletes defeating male athletes in equal competition, and vice versa. But even then, the vast majority of “female” athletes are cisgender, meaning the majority of winners will be cis.

There is simply no “invasion” of transathletes coming to ruin sports forever. The frenzied panic to “defend sports” is just a part of the transphobic base-drumming the Republican party has made too familiar.

Athletes complaining they are at a disadvantage should consider their own attitude towards their sport.

Even if transathletes had an “advantage” (which, again, they don’t), if you have chosen to dedicate your life to an athletic pursuit, will you quit in the face



MFHELMS

Transgender: Trans-athlete should have the right to compete as the gender they choose. Politicians and athletes try to pass laws discriminating against the LGBTQ community when their argument has no scientific basis.

of adversity or work to prove your worth?

Trying to remove a competitor because you believe they have an advantage isn’t very sporting. Diversity of competition is good for sports and athletes alike.

The issue of fairness falls apart when you consider the context: trans-people are discriminated against in almost all arenas of life. Conservatives have fought to expand the list ferociously, well before Trump supercharged the trans-panic culture war.

Mississippi Governor Tate Reeves signed the Mississippi

Fairness Act “to ensure young girls are not forced to compete against biological males.”

He has also advocated for public schools to discriminate against transathletes, saying the athletes must compete with the sex they were assigned at birth.

The Equality Act would stop Governor Reeves and her conservative colleagues from passing more discriminatory laws and provide anti-discrimination protections against the LGBTQ community. It would add sex and sexual orientation to the Civil Rights Act, which would protect

the LGBTQ community in public spaces and other qualities of life.

On Feb. 25, the Equality Act passed the U.S. house with 224 votes, three of which were Republican.

The act has garnered support from President Joe Biden, who wrote, “I urge Congress to swiftly pass this historic legislation. Every person should be treated with dignity and respect, and this bill represents a critical step toward ensuring that America lives up to our foundational values of equality and freedom for all.”

[Read more at Talonmarks.com](#)

Close the camps, create a path to citizenship

EDITORIAL

The humanitarian crisis at the Mexican American border is worsening and the Biden administration cannot wait any longer to address it. Everyday, border officials are detaining hundreds of immigrants and border crossings are spiking.

Now local communities like the city of Long Beach are trying to alleviate the pressure by opening new concentration camps to house child immigrants, but the answer to overflowing detention centers is not opening more.

It's time to reinstate processing for families seeking asylum and create a faster and easier path to citizenship for people living here. Seeking asylum is legal, and the United States needs to treat migrants with compassion, because our constitution guarantees that right.

Since the Trump administration, little to no change have been made to programs that help the children being detained in camps.

The number of migrant children in detention camps has increased. Joe Biden proposed a

plan to help reunite families and create a path to citizenship for millions of migrants living in the US, but that has still yet to come into effect.

According to lawyers who have been in the detention facilities, they are still overflowing and the children there are still being mistreated.

During the Trump era, images of crying children in crowded corals were broadcast on TV screens and social media feeds. The children are not being given food or even soap to bathe.

They are being forced to sleep in cages on cold floors without blankets. With the overcrowding of children comes an even longer wait period for them to be reunited with family.

In an interview with The New York Times "One detained [migrant] alleged that a Border Patrol agent told a child who had spilled soup that the child would not receive more food unless the child drank the spilled soup off the floor."

During the COVID-19 pandemic, conditions in the camps became even more inhumane, with operators dousing cells and common areas



EMILY MELGAR/TM

Border Crisis: Immigration at the southern border is at its highest in 15 years. The federal government needs to make substantial changes in border policies that ends the need for concentration camps.

with harmful chemicals that poisoned detainees.

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi also called for an investigation into one detention center in Georgia after a whistleblower alleged that detainees were subject to unsafe practices and women were given hysterectomies without consent.

Concentration camps have no place in the United States, especially when we possess

the resources to create an immigration system that treats people with dignity and values human life.

"These kids deserve our care, love, and support. We will work to ensure that every child is quickly reunited with family," said Long Beach Mayor Robert Garcia. This solution will only be a temporary fix to an ongoing issue for millions of other immigrant refugees.

Not to mention that reuniting 1,000 children with their families is a difficult mission in itself, especially with a four month deadline.

Patchwork won't fix this ongoing border crisis. The federal government needs to spearhead policy changes that dismantle the concentration camps that have no place in our country.

Read more at [Talonmarks.com](https://www.talonmarks.com)

As travel reopens, Tijuana offers a real taste of Mexico

Emily Melgar
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The U.S. State Department has long warned travelers to beware of cities along the border in Mexico, but humble towns like Tijuana offer an unparalleled taste of culture that is begging to be experienced.

According to the Citizen's Council for Public Security and Criminal Justice, Tijuana is considered to be the most dangerous city in the world. While this violent picture that has been painted holds some truth, there is a lot more to this border city and the people in it.

Just shy of a three-hour drive from Southern California, Tijuana is the westernmost city in Mexico, and Latin America, and is the second-largest city in northern Mexico.

Often nicknamed as the "Gateway to Mexico," it serves as the last stop before those making their journey to America attempt to cross into the neighboring city of San Diego, California.

Throughout the city, people will find the phrase "Aquí empieza la patria," a motto that describes Tijuana as the place where the homeland begins.

A delightful taste of Mexico, it offers mouthwatering cuisine, unique shopping and modest but breathtaking views nestled in the hills and canyons of the region.

Tijuana boasts various tourist

attractions such as Plaza Santa Cecilia, on the corner of la Calle Segunda and Av. Constitución, where people can find classic Mexican souvenirs and keepsakes, charming dining options, live mariachi bands and festive cantinas.

In recent years, the growing tourism industry has attracted many new businesses to open up in the bustling city. Food enthusiasts can find gourmet coffee at places like Praga Café Bistro, or great food and craft beer at the gastropub Telefónica Gastro Park.

For those that are into more traditional Mexican food, places like Las Ahumaderas offer authentic street tacos that are both delicious and ridiculously affordable. These tacos alone are a good enough reason to make the trip out to Tijuana.

History and culture fans can learn all about Tijuana's unique history at the Tijuana Cultural Center and Museo de las Californias. Although the museums are currently closed due to COVID-19, the center hopes to open its doors and welcome visitors from all parts of the world again soon.

Travelers that are looking for nature hikes and city skyline views will also be pleased to find urban trails in the hills and granitic mountains that surround Tijuana.

Cerro Colorado, or Colorado Hill, is the highest elevation in



EMILY MELGAR/TM

Tijuana: Plaza Santa Cecilia is a bustling shopping center where tourists and locals alike can find great food and unique souvenirs and merchandise. Since COVID-19, social distancing, temperature checks and mask requirements have been put in place. April 10, 2021

Tijuana and locals and tourists alike hike the moderate trail for scenic views of the city.

Along with the booming tourist attractions, the unique border town also offers food for the soul.

Migrants from all over Mexico, Central America and other parts of the world have made Tijuana their temporary home, as they hold on to the dream of crossing the border one day.

Sadly, it is also a place where many of these journeys come to an end.

For people like Miguel Robles, a deportee, Tijuana is now a permanent home.

Robles, originally from the state of Hidalgo, ultimately decided to make it his home after tighter border controls prevented him from crossing into the US again.

He now sets up a daily shop of souvenirs in front of Undocumented Café & Arts located in Playas de Tijuana.

Playas de Tijuana, or beaches of Tijuana, is bordered by the Pacific Ocean to the west and California to the north.

The shores of the beach attract many who want to visit El Parque de la Amistad, or Friendship Park, where visitors can admire the art and messages left on the wall that creates the physical border between the United States and Mexico.

The vibrant art is a beautiful, but somber, reminder of the dreams many hold to one day cross into the United States.

Robles said the café was originally a project built to serve free coffee to migrants, deportees and asylum seekers that arrive in Tijuana.

Since the pandemic, they have been unable to continue with the project but are optimistic that as the borders re-open and tourism returns, they can resume their mission.

Robles and countless other residents like him hope that people's opinions of the city start to change and that more tourism can help them achieve their goals.

The toasty coffee Robles' establishment provided for those in need serves as a powerful symbol that represents the welcoming warmth many "Tijuanenses" radiate.

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security is scheduled to review the temporary closure of the US-Mexico land border that allows passage between San Diego and Tijuana on April 21, 2021.

Unity has helped football stay ready for its epic comeback

Janet Chavarria
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The past year has been a very tough year for sports and athletes of the world.

Locally, the Cerritos College football team has faced every obstacle COVID-19 has thrown at them but are eager to reclaim the turf.

Due to COVID-19 restrictions being lifted this month, the team will be returning to campus with all of the safety measures for the first time in over a year to pick up right where they left off on the field.

The team has not been able to practice, or compete which did not sit well with the players.

For some it was more challenging physically while others dealt with it mentally.

The team at first thought it would only be for 2 weeks, tops a month.

However, a whole year later, they have not been able to resume any of their normal activities.

While speaking to Coach Grosfeld, the struggle the team has had this year came to light.

Many players have not been able to properly work out, practice or stay in shape the correct way as they normally would if they were allowed to practice on campus.

Thankfully, Coach Grosfeld has been able to provide weekly workout plans for them to do at home and does weekly check-ins with all of the guys on the team. However, it's not the same as being on campus.

"Many of these kids don't have



DERRICK COLEMAN/TM ARCHIVES

A Trench Mob: Cerritos offensive lineman lineup in three-point stances as they listen to cadences called by the Quarterback. The football team is eager to return to the field and begin socially distanced training to prepare themselves for the season.

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see them lose these kids because he knows they will be missing out on so much more than just football.

After speaking with Adrian Cazo, a second year player on the football team, he explains that this football team is a family on and off the field.

What has troubled him the most is not being able to see his brothers.

"We are all a very close team, I live a couple blocks away from the school, after or before practice my brothers would come to my house

to practice or hang out, we have all created such a tight bond and I can't wait to go back to that"

This football team is not only a team but a family as well and after speaking to several players, as well as the coach, there's no doubt this team is one strong family.

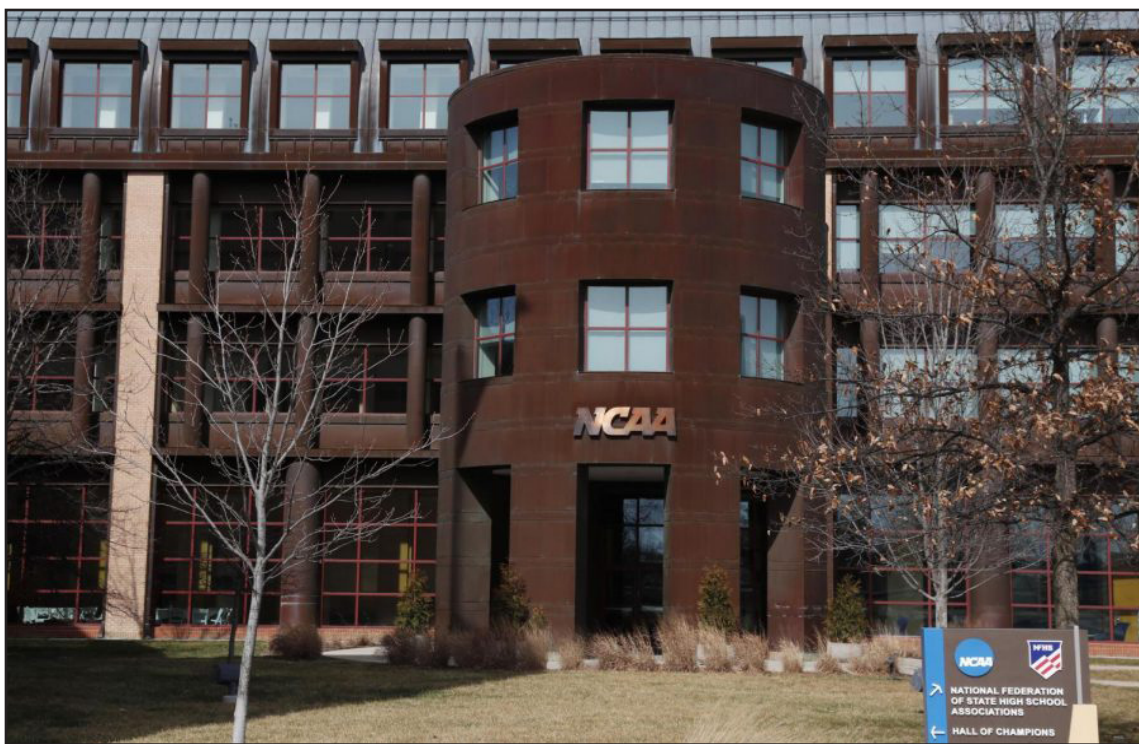
The coach refers to all of the players as "my kids" because that's how he sees them and he makes sure to coordinate a weekly Zoom meeting to have all the players talk, communicate and help keep that bond.

Cade McConell, a freshman at

Cerritos College, explained how he had to adapt alongside the rest of the team. "I've tried to do the best of my abilities to do every set of every workout provided by the coach individually, but yet all together collectively and we have."

McConell has yet to step foot on campus for the first time but explained how he has been so welcomed to the team or as he calls them "my new family" and is eager to get on the field and practice in person and maintain Cerritos football team status as one of the top teams in California.

Division-I recruiters look to deceive high school athletes, not recruit them



BRIAN SPURLOCK/USA TODAY

Deception: The NCAA headquarters is seen March 13 in Indianapolis after the cancellation of the Division I men's and women's 2020 basketball tournaments. College recruits have been speaking falsely to athletes regarding scholarships.

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Division-I College recruiters have become wolves in sheep's clothing.

Lies and myths are tools recruiters use for their advantage.

Recruiters use to influence young high school athletes or junior college athletes to believe what they say is always true.

According to the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA), more than 180,000 student-athletes receive around \$3.6 billion in athletic scholarships

in Divisions I and II each year. When you hear a recruiter say "Everyone on an athletic scholarship gets a full ride," that isn't the case.

They say this for their own personal earnings and how much money they can receive off one athlete committing to their

school.

College recruiters have become used car salesmen; their sneaky tactics are starting to be exposed.

The NCAA reports that an average Division-I athletic scholarship is roughly \$18,000 a year which doesn't come close to covering a whole year's worth of schooling for student-athletes.

It's unfortunate that athletes who come from low income families must discover this harsh reality out on their own.

These families still have to fork over money when their son or daughter's schooling and tuition is allegedly covered by their "scholarship funds."

How scandalous! It has come to the point that juniors or seniors in high school who are being looked at by Division-I universities need to do research on their own and discover the truth about the myths these college recruiters confidently say.

Some programs, however, do offer full-ride scholarships.

For instance, lower Division I-A football sub-league and Division-I basketball, are the only sports allowed to give full-ride scholarships to incoming college athletes.

For women athletes, sports such as basketball, volleyball, tennis and gymnastics offer full-ride scholarships.

Other sports for both men and women fall under the category of being equivalency sports. This means that leftover scholarship money for each sports team at universities can be divided amongst players.

This rule makes athletes look like a pack of dogs fighting over leftover meat in an alley. In other words, if athletes don't live up to their coaches expectations, then they are booted off the team.

Their scholarship is gone forever.

No other rules have been put in place on how many athletes can be on scholarship. However, each scholarship needs to be renewed meaning athletes on scholarships need to remind their coaches why they are worthy enough of being on a scholarship.

It has become a mindset, invoking the common phrase "survival of the fittest."

To the families of student athletes and athletes themselves, take ownership of the recruiting process.

Read more at [TalonMarks.com](https://www.talonmarks.com)

Basketball star uses quarantine to his athletic advantage

Silas Bravo

Staff Writer

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Although COVID-19 has impacted a lot of people negatively, 6'3 point guard for Cerritos College Joshua "Juice" Belvin has used the pandemic to his advantage.

His workout routine has not changed much during quarantine.

Belvin said "I have been working out as if life was normal."

Belvin said that almost every day consists of "workout after workout after workout. No exaggeration."

Belvin wakes up and starts the day off by running Signal Hill.

He then heads to the beach where he participates in yoga classes and runs the stairs.

Around noon, Belvin gets skill work in and runs games with other players.

These games are five-on-five full games that give Belvin a good sense of in game speed.

He usually ends his days by playing in some more games, but this time against much more elite competition.

This elite competition includes playing against other college players and sometimes even pros.

If these runs sometimes do not happen, Belvin still likes to end the night at a local park and work on his game.

He comes home around 8 p.m. to work on his abs then relax.

There is not much free time throughout this athletes day, but when relaxing, Belvin likes to



COURTESY OF JOSHUA BELVIN

Focused: Joshua Belvin goes up for a between-the-legs dunk while playing basketball at his local gym. Belvin is excited to start conditioning on campus and is more than prepared for the upcoming season.

study film and listens to music. His favorite artist is Lil' Wayne.

When he is not listening to music, working out or watching film, Belvin says he is getting his sleep in to prepare for the next day.

Perfecting his craft is something that Belvin loves to do.

Belvin said that over quarantine he tried "to focus on getting more athletic."

In order to achieve this, his intense workouts included "running bleachers, hill sprints and pool exercises."

One of the workouts that has aided him the most would be the hill sprints.

"I run the hill with an 18 pound weight vest to help in my explosiveness," said Belvin.

Belvin has big expectations once the season rolls around.

Anything short of a state championship would be a disappointment.

Belvin hopes to return to campus soon and is excited to get this season started and show Division-I schools across the nation how good his game is.

At the moment, Belvin does not specifically have a school of choice but said that "any school that wants me is my desired

school."

Despite not being picky about where he would like to continue his education, Belvin would like to transfer to the University of Washington.

Belvin is a big fan of the Pac-12. "It is a competitive conference but most schools also are not too far from home."

He looks to continue his basketball career as far as possible and is confident on turning his dreams into reality.

"I'm going to be in the NBA," Belvin said.

Making the NBA is the plan but Belvin would also like to play overseas as other professional athletes do.

Belvin's whole life has revolved around basketball.

He has been playing and watching the sport for as long as he can remember.

His favorite athlete growing up was point guard Derrick Rose but who Belvin currently watches the most is Damian Lillard, point guard of the Portland Trail Blazers.

Despite being influenced by these explosive point guards, Belvin says he does not "try to replicate anyone's game."

Belvin is his own player with his own type of play style.

He hopes to someday have an impact on kids the way these players have impacted him.

Belvin is currently majoring in communications at Cerritos College and hopes to earn his degree at a four-year university.

Russell Westbrook deserves praise, not hate



ROBERT GAUTHIER/LOS ANGELES TIMES/TNS

The Los Angeles Clippers' Serge Ibaka (9) passes while being defended by the Washington Wizards' Russell Westbrook, right, and the Washington Wizards' Rui Hachimura in the first half at Staples Center in Los Angeles on Tuesday, Feb. 23, 2021. The Clippers won 135-116.

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There is nobody in the league that gets quite as much unnecessary hate as Washington

Wizards Point Guard Russell Westbrook.

This is something Westbrook has dealt with throughout the entirety of his career.

While the Westbrook haters have a point when it comes to

pointing out his weaknesses, these haters do not appreciate the unique qualities of his game enough.

There are not many players in the league who can single handily win you a game day in and day

out the way Westbrook can.

The way Westbrook asserts crazy pressure on defenses is unrivaled.

His offensive tenacity is insane.

Not many point guards, let alone other positions in the league, can get to the rim at will and create countless scoring opportunities for both himself and his teammates.

When it comes to sheer basketball ability and talent, Westbrook is arguably pretty close to being a top five player in the league.

He is playing exceptionally well this season.

Despite his rough start and the terrible Wizards team he plays for, he is still averaging roughly 22 points, 11 rebounds and 11 assists, all on around 44 percent shooting.

The man is averaging a triple double on one of the worst teams in the league and still does not escape constant criticism.

This is top level play coming from a point guard, and this is considered a down year for him.

The nine-time all-star has averaged over 20 points five times out of the last six years.

Not only can Westbrook get to the basket, he also has been getting his teammates involved his entire career.

From 2015 to 2018, Westbrook has averaged over 10 assists a

game throughout each season.

The last six seasons he also averaged over seven rebounds.

These statistics are unheard of for point guards.

Not only are the statistics ridiculous for Westbrook, but the accolades also speak for themselves.

The future hall of famer has a 2017 MVP to his name, nine All-NBA selections, two scoring titles and two all-star game MVPs, in 2015 and 2016.

Despite the amazing career Westbrook has had so far, there are admittedly flaws to his game, just like every other player.

His decision making is erratic and has been the main reason for the hate throughout his career.

Although there are times when Westbrook seems unstoppable, there are also some ugly periods of bad threes and shockingly bad judgement.

Regardless of the questionable decision making, this is not enough to justify the hate he receives.

Hate him or not, not many players in the league play as hard as he does.

There is no argument that he is not giving it all every game.

A competitor to the fullest, Westbrook is still a top five point guard in the league and one of the most exciting players to watch.

He will be giving a hall of fame speech one day.