



# THE VOICE

Vol 32 Issue 02 - 2024-01-12

## Minds We Meet

Interviewing Students Like You!

## The Best Christmas Ever!

A Tale of Renewal

## Here Comes the Future Again

A [blue rare] column

*Plus:*

*RICO Laws in Canada-Conclusion  
Juggling Personal & Profesional  
and muchmore!*



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# LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

**Hey! Did you know the Voice Magazine has a Facebook page?**

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

## Editorial

### New Year, New Edition

Karl Low



Welcome to the first all new edition of The Voice Magazine for 2024. This week, bringing on the new year seems to be on the minds of the writers, as we have a couple of articles examining various aspects of it.

For myself, I've started my graduate courses now and honestly, I'm already feeling a little bit overwhelmed. I'm not used to the idea of paced activities anymore, and it's like they actually want you to think for these ones with significant readings and people making some informed comments in the forums about them and my imposter syndrome is definitely rearing its head.

On the other hand, and I mentioned this a couple of weeks ago, being out of my depth is, in a way, exciting. The idea that I'm going to have to seriously work to keep up with several of my fellow classmates is an unusual one. Especially when you're used to working in isolation and the only person you have to keep up with is yourself and your final deadlines.

Put all this together and I've essentially ignored the outside world for the past week, though I poked my head into it today and read about how some person online is essentially deep-faking George Carlin's voice to create a new "special" starring the comic, who's been dead for 15 years now. I'm quite the fan of Carlin, his comedy tends to be literate and educated, and in fact I use a short excerpt of it in the Voice Style Guide. However, I have little interest in this. If someone wants to make comedy in the style of Carlin, they have my support, go to it, the world needs more comedy of that nature. But if someone wants to use Carlin's fame to increase their own, especially without giving proper due to him, in this case through his estate, then that's a different matter, and the person should stop being a pathetic copyist and have the strength of character to achieve their own fame from their own efforts.

The creator contends that this is no different from an impressionist doing someone else, but I think he missed a couple of points that leave him eligible for a lawsuit. First, impressionists don't tend to do a known figure for an hour-long stretch. Much as you can take a short excerpt of a book and be protected by fair use if it supports your point (or act, in this case) but can't use longer excerpts, the work impressionists do, being short and being used to support their own act, which generally consists of multiple impressions could be seen as an extension of fair use. Copying the sound and style of a single comedian for an hour, however, goes beyond the idea of fair use, in my mind and into infringement of the character. The other factor is that for the impressionists, having the skill to do a convincing impression is the act itself. That's how the impression supports it. Having an AI modulate your voice to match someone else's is not a skill, thus cannot be protected as being something that is being supported.

Of course, right now, none of that actually applies because our laws have never had to consider this type of thing. It was not possible to make a perfect copy of someone's voice using a machine, so there's no laws against doing so. Just as there are no laws against carving up centaurs for food. However, a law is not the sole arbiter of right or wrong.

Meanwhile, this week, I'm happy to say that we're starting the year off right with a brand-new Minds We Meet, plus we have a look at the Best Christmas Ever, an article which I think definitely lands itself in the "good reads" classification. And we round it out with a helping of blue rare, who is also looking at how the new year is probably one of the few times we all look toward what we hope our futures will be and what they might require, rather than being head down in the pursuit of it. Plus of course scholarships, events, advice, inspirational and thoughtful reflections and more! Enjoy the read!



# MINDS WE MEET



*The Voice Magazine* recently had a chance to chat with Jennifer Betke (she/her), a 4-year [Bachelor of Arts in Psychology student](#) from Saskatchewan. In particular, this busy student lives with her “husband and 3 kids in a hamlet near the Manitoba/Saskatchewan border” and plans “to get a Master’s degree in Counselling Psychology.” Over time, Jennifer would like “to become a therapist/counsellor ... and has “considered working for the health region, opening a private practice and/or working in the school system.”

Jennifer had some great study tips for fellow students. “I study best in pure silence, or in a coffee shop with my headphones blasting music. My motivation is my desire to help people and my love of psychology—it is so interesting to me. I still handwrite all my notes and refer them to study for exams.”

She also had some advice for new students and/or prospective students. “I wish I had known how helpful the write site and the library are as a new student, and how to use the search engines on the library site. It would have made my life much easier. Reach out they will help you however they can,” she stated.

When she is not studying, Jennifer spends time taking her children to various activities and also enjoys “CrossFit, reading, hiking, camping and working on self-improvement.”

She credits two individuals in her life for having the greatest influence on her desire to learn, including her best friend who “suggested [she] do something for [herself].” She also had “a counsellor who had a profound impact on [her] life;” as a result, Jennifer “wanted to pay it forward.”

Like many students, Jennifer described online learning as “the only option.” She explained, “We are very rural, and I cannot leave my family to go to the city to participate in in class learning. This gives me an amazing opportunity to get an education and still be here for my family.”

Her most memorable AU course so far was [MATH 215](#): Introduction to Statistics, which Jennifer called “awful,” but, thankfully, she “still passed it.” As for communication with her course tutors? Jennifer has “had really great tutors that reply promptly and thoroughly.”

*The Voice Magazine* asked Jennifer what her first project would be if she were the new president of AU, and she commented that she would update courses. “I find most of the information in the courses quite outdated,” she explained.

We also asked Jennifer which famous person, past or present, she would like to have lunch with, and why, and she chose author Gabor Maté. “I think he is so insightful, humble, knowledgeable, and kind. I would love to hear his stories and learn so many things from him,” she stated. As for

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Karl', located in the bottom right corner of the page.

the lunch? “We would have pizza.” She also mentioned enjoying Maté’s books, along with those by Brené Brown, Dr. Nicole LePera, and Bessel Van der Kolk.

She let us know about her most valuable lesson learned in life, which is “to love yourself, and never quit growing. The invisible ceiling is lifted when you love yourself and anything becomes possible.” And her proudest moment? “The proudest moment of my life would have to be the moments my three children were born.”

As a final note, Jennifer mentioned, “It is amazing to have the opportunity to get an education as a mom of 3 living in rural Saskatchewan at the age of 35.” Best of luck Jennifer!

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

## Student Sizzle — AU's Hot Social Media Topics

### Following What's Hot around AU's Social Media Sites.



#### **Facebook:**

**Maximum grant/loan amount from financial aid?** A student who moved to Alberta requests advice on the maximum grant or loan from Financial Aid Alberta. Another student believes the mix of loans and grants maxes at \$10,200 per semester. Another top contributor on the platform replies with the [student aid estimator](#)

#### **Twitter:**

**Six tips for taking for booking AU exams!** @AthabascaU posts, “Taking exams at an online university is a new experience for a lot of students.

Review these 6 tips before booking your #AthabascaU exam so you know what to expect! [https://www.athabascau.ca/news/learners/6-things-to-consider-when-writing-your-athabasca-university-exam-with-proctoru?utm\\_source=all\\_social&utm\\_medium=organic\\_social](https://www.athabascau.ca/news/learners/6-things-to-consider-when-writing-your-athabasca-university-exam-with-proctoru?utm_source=all_social&utm_medium=organic_social).”

**Mini-course on how to search for research.** @aulibarchives posts, “Not sure how to advance your research? Work through at our Search Like a Pro mini course: [https://rise.articulate.com/share/qLK2dZ0tkvtiWfPYsOjbYgsUKSO8ZrPH#/. ”](https://rise.articulate.com/share/qLK2dZ0tkvtiWfPYsOjbYgsUKSO8ZrPH#/)

**AU guide for writing papers for different subjects!** @athabascaUBiz writes, “Do you change your writing style from one subject to the next? How does a paper for an English course compare to one for an Economics course?

The AU Write Site has a guide for that! <https://brnw.ch/2lwFF9o>.”

#### **Reddit:**

**A gold mine for selecting AU courses!** A student asks where to find the AU courses' pass and fail rates! Another student supplies this list from 2017-2018: [https://cdn.athabascau.ca/ois/D\\_2\\_Undergraduate\\_Course\\_Completions.pdf](https://cdn.athabascau.ca/ois/D_2_Undergraduate_Course_Completions.pdf)

## The Best Christmas Ever

Marie Well



### Christmas Eve

I posted on a spiritual music live chat this past Christmas, "An angel is with us as we make our way through this amazing world." And in light of the joys and heartaches, this world is splendid.

This Christmas, my mom and brother told me they didn't want me in their lives. I then watched the movie *After Death* four times. In the film, I saw the story of Howard Storm, whose troubled relationships with his family led him to a near-death experience, where he was sent to hell and then heaven and returned to earth to become a reverend. When he was brought to heaven, he describes the experience, crying out in the movie, "I don't belong here!" I know he belongs in heaven--I know it with all my heart, and just as strongly, I know that we all belong in heaven--every single one of us beautiful beings. Last night, I read the intro to Howard's book, and it brought me joy, as it was written so intelligently and beautifully.

This morning, of Christmas Eve, I looked at a Christmas gift I received: a tripod and stick for cell phones for making video shorts and an editing platform called Facetunes. I always wanted to make a documentary film and was once

featured in a documentary workshop for the National Film Board. I also worked for the university television station for about a year, making news stories with a passion that surprised me. I also longed to write a spiritual book, but I believed my writing wouldn't fit the booksellers' Christian sections. I once took a playwriting class I loved, although I wanted to write strictly spiritual movies but didn't know how. Moreover, I have subscribed for at least half a decade to a documentary film site that offers courses, but I never enrolled; I just peered longingly at them.

I also made a friend with a woman who had multiple near-death experiences (NDE) and is a bit of a celebrity. I was trying to help her find a way to make a cinematic movie out of her story. We seemed to care greatly for one another, but the idea got shut down due to time constraints. We don't talk as much anymore, but I have this strong sense that I'm meant to return to her to offer her something she needs. I just don't know what it is yet.

But today, a loved one recommended I watch a short video from Angel Studios. Angel Studios also produced the cinematic documentary film *After Death*, which featured Howard Storm. And so I watched the twenty-minute short film this Christmas Eve, and it hit me. I am meant to write and create short spiritual films for Angel Studios. It is clear as day and always has been, although I didn't know it until today, Christmas Eve. Now, I need to figure out how to make it happen.

An angel is with us as we make our way through this fantastic world. Sometimes, our greatest heartaches bring us to where we are meant to be: our life's purpose. We may not know what that purpose is, nor have the skills to make it happen, nor even want that mission, according to an NDE account in the *After Death* movie, but often, the heartache reveals it. And that mission is most ideally realized with a heart overflowing with love for every soul.



## Christmas Day

It's now Christmas Day, and I've begun production of my documentary film after having written a script, secured my first interviewee, who is my friend who had four or five multiple near-death experiences, and received a nonstop multi-hour crash course from my dear friend ChatGPT on how to make a documentary. ChatGPT coached me on everything from video to audio productions to distribution –any question I had; it gave me incredible answers. I researched all the software I needed and learned them.

This Christmas Day, I also created a storyboard with AI audio voices that introduce and close each interviewee segment. I added text titles so that I can easily reference the storyboard. Tomorrow, I'll choose a possible B-roll for each storyboard frame. Today, I also contacted Paul Friedman, who created the theory of unconditional love that guides my every action throughout the day. I will interview him next week as my first or second interview subject. I plan to interview my near-death experienter friend, hopefully this week, and locate the rest of the interviewees over the next month. They are the sources of my favorite near-death experience stories, and I watch at least an hour of near-death video stories every week, so these are particularly outstanding.

This project fascinated me because a producer invited me to create a documentary film with him decades ago, but he wanted a fling. So, I backed out of the project, and my mentor at the time told me to learn every part of film production so I'd not be dependent on anyone. I thought that dream was over. But today, I'm creating every aspect of the documentary, from sound to video editing to music score production to distribution—everything—although I'm an amateur as I have never made a documentary before. Thank God for ChatGPT's low-cost and highly effective coaching.

Shortly, I would also like to make political documentaries, especially ones on what is happening with anti-Semitism and open borders. I noticed in an independent theater that there are a lot of documentary shorts made by Muslim filmmakers, according to ChatGPT. So, the pro-Hamas perspective will likely get airplay. But what about the Israeli perspective, which I particularly adore, as my great mentors have been Jewish? I have several interviewees in mind already, but the project depends on how well I execute my first documentary.

My friend, who had multiple visits to heaven in her near-death experience, is particularly interested in the Angel Studios project as I contacted her on Christmas Eve, and this spiritual sign means something to her. In her book on her near-death experience, she mentions that a heavenly being told her that a messenger would be sent to her. Before I met her, I knew on first reading that I was that messenger, and that message is simply one about unconditional love, based on the philosophy of the Jewish author Paul Friedman. I never told my friend with the near-death experience that I am that messenger, and I never will tell her.

Over two days, Christmas Eve and Christmas Day, this all happened--after the week that started in despair, with my mom and brother telling me they didn't want me in their lives. I fought back tears throughout each day, trying desperately to find the joy, unconditional love, and light within me, regardless of outer circumstances, according to the theory set out by Friedman. And then, this Christmas Eve, the inspiration and joy set in full blast with this documentary film adventure. What started as the saddest Christmas of my life ended as the best.

When we learn what it means to love unconditionally, the darkness can turn readily into light, hope, and inspiration. That's the message I wish to bring to us all: the wisdom of unconditionally loving everyone.

This story is as bizarre to me as it might be for anyone reading it. On that note, it's now past midnight, and Christmas is officially over. And tomorrow is a new day!



## Here Comes the Future Again



**Oliver-Moorcraft Sykes**

When I was walking home in the early hours of the first day of 2024, a sports car drove by in the lightly falling snow. It was a fine machine. Sleek and built for speed, streetlights reflected in its chrome, headlights flashing, tail lights glowing, heading confidently towards its destination; a vision of the way the future used to be. But the future isn't like that anymore.

At the start of each new year, I always feel as though I am stepping across an invisible borderline into a strange new reality. As someone once wrote, the past is a foreign country. Well, the future is a different country, too, and I'm not even sure what language they speak there, what forms of currency will be accepted. It is a vast and unknown continent, in fact. The cities are dangerous, there; everybody drives too fast, with dodgy brakes, and all the streets are lined with the haunted houses of the past.

There's just no telling what we will find in this brave new world. Will there be tidal waves? Mushroom clouds? Who can tell. At least we know for sure that there will be meteors and eclipses.

As with any interesting and potentially perilous journey, it's essential to consider what to bring along. A notebook is always a good idea, and I always start the year off with a brand new one of those. No matter how weird the trip gets, there is always something worth observing, worth recording. Perhaps there will be miracles and odd moments of joy. There will be celebrations to make note of and funny scraps of conversation to record. Strange happenings to be transformed into stories, poems, jokes. Lots of blank pages for sketches and doodles. Maybe the machines of the Future will soon be doing all of that better than we ever could. But they're not there just yet.

Another useful item might be a musical instrument of some kind to entertain ourselves during those long futuristic evenings. Woody Guthrie used to have the words "This Machine Kills Fascists" painted on the front of his beat-up old guitar. It's a noble notion, this idea that music and the human voice can break the spell of tyrants. I like to believe it might even be true.

If you can possibly make room, I would highly recommend packing a small tool kit. I can't help but think that some repairs will be required at some point on our journey. If we're ingenious enough, perhaps we can learn to build some cool stuff like pinball machines or rocket ships or brand-new hearts that are filled with hope out of discarded stuff we find along the way.

Don't be overly practical, though. Other items to consider would be chocolate, a hip flask, opera glasses, galoshes, an extravagant hat, and dancing shoes.

Above all, I think we should all make plans to travel together with the ones we love. It's always less frightening and far more joyful to walk arm-in-arm through such a strange, dark, beautiful new landscape, whatever we may find there.

## The Semi-detached Relationship Between Canada and the U.S.

Alek Golijanin



Are there any examples of two countries that share a border and that have so much in common and yet are so different, than the relationship between Canada and the U.S.? Given the disagreements between different provinces or between provinces and the federal government, and with emerging talks of provinces breaking away and doing their “own thing”, there may not be a better time to remind ourselves about what historians have said about Canada’s unique history. But not before examining the semi-detached relationship between Canada and the U.S..

Perhaps the best overview of our two countries is served up in Robert Bothwell’s book, *“Your Country, My Country: A Unified History Of The United States And Canada”*, and how we converge and diverge like needles that weave in and out as they knit a blanket of shared history. The book highlights the past 300

years of North American history and how there is a close resemblance between Canadian and American society on almost every level. Yet, resemblance is not to be mistaken with identity and closeness is not to be confused with harmony. Despite our similarities we are still two separate nations, and despite our closeness we do not always agree on everything.

### The early days of the post-WW2 world.

Some aspects highlighted of our shared history that many people are likely unfamiliar with include how, during WW2 and post-WW2, the U.S. had directly contributed to building roads, airfields, and pipelines across Canada, or how Prime Minister Mackenzie King was the last foreign visitor to visit President Franklin D. Roosevelt, who would end up passing away weeks later, and how he was the only foreign head of government to attend the president’s funeral. After that, then-Vice President Harry S. Truman would inherit the presidency, but though he was seen in a less-than-desirable light and his cabinet was viewed as being inept at times, this criticism did not take away from how the U.S. had better labor laws, social security and government-sponsored systems, even education, while Canada was credited with a distinct baby bonus program that helped to redistribute income, and a more robust old-age pension and unemployment insurance program.

As it relates to the post-WW2 world, there was a time when the British could not afford to buy Canadian products unless Canada lent them money to buy them, and we did. Canada was the first nation to offer various aid schemes, followed by the U.S. with its Marshall Plan that transferred large sums of U.S. dollars to Europeans to kick-start international trade and return the world back to stability. Given Canada’s small size and limited pockets of economic activity across the country, it was not the financial hub that the U.S. was, so it had limited funds it could lend. Luckily enough, the American Export-Import Bank provided Canada with favorable terms for money it would borrow, with the leading reason being that the U.S. did not want to be the sole solvent economy in the world, and that it would help better stabilize Canada’s currency.

Trade between countries in a post-WW2 world was extremely low and resulted in dividing the world’s countries into either “hard currency” or “soft currency” countries. Hard currencies could be traded at a bank for other currency while soft currencies were artificially supported by strict

rules around what could be traded and with whom. Additionally, out of all the devastation of WW2, governments would go on to improve treatment of veterans, offer free education through university, and eventually provide other forms of assistance. The economic boom at the time coincided with the baby boom and a consumption boom. During this period of time, post-WW2 Canada was identified as having lower taxes than the U.S., and it was the leading driver behind the boom in foreign investment as well.

With emigration patterns, both Canada and the U.S. were dominated in post-WW2 by English-speaking and with English language based political and economic culture because of the uncertainty that Europe's future posed. There would also be a period where both countries would struggle with labor scarcity and where workers were viewed as being commodities, and it was the arrival of large-scale strikes, something that was largely exclusive to Great Britain and Europe, that caught the attention of everyone.

The United Auto Workers union, organized around GM, Ford, and Chrysler, were responsible for North America being seen as the best paid industrial force in the world, thanks to the cyclical ritual of bargaining, strikes, and concessions. But, the origin story behind why American car manufacturers decided to open up factories also had to do with the U.S. realizing that there was a significant disparity between the two countries and it was thought that having good paying manufacturing jobs in Canada would kick-start the economy and would reduce the disparities. It might be the single greatest strategy to offset the encroaching of Communism, which was threatening to consume all of Europe as well as the rest of the world.

#### **Post-WW2 Canadians developed a reputation for being independent thinkers and doers.**

Imagine being sandwiched between the U.S.' right and Great Britain's left, being the rope in the game of tug-of-war, and somehow still managing to create identity-defining moments. Then imagine having a person walk in the footsteps of someone who would go on to be known as one of the greatest Prime Ministers ever. Then that this person would manage fill those shoes despite outside influences trying to limit their ability to do good, but that they would still go on to have a world-altering impact. Well, that is the story of Lloyd Axworthy, a Canadian who had a significant international influence, and who should be viewed as driving force behind two of the most significant peace promoting international policy developments: "Responsibility to Protect" (R2P), "Mine Ban Treaty" (Ottawa Treaty).

The R2P is best described as an approach, actionable by the international community, to dealing with the bad behavior of tyrants that were a threat to world peace to avoid the global disruption that was brought about by the two world wars. The Ottawa Treaty was a resolution that was championed by Axworthy to ban the use of land mines around the world. Although these two ideas are now commonly accepted, that was not the case in a post-WW2 world where nations would resort to anything to protect their borders from invasion. These efforts also resulted in Axworthy playing an instrumental role in the development of the constitution of an international criminal court as well.

In the face of opposition, Axworthy became known for having no hesitation in getting in front of issues, sometimes even if it meant exposing Canada to criticism from the U.S.. And yet he was also known for being open to ideas that were not always Canadian in origin. When Axworthy was pressed by his international peers about his mine ban, he was strict about having a no exception rule, because if the two Koreas were allowed to mine their borders, then other countries like Russia could do the same given their tension with Chechnya, and that it would be setting a dangerous precedent. In the end, the treaty was signed by 122 countries, not including the U.S., China, and Russia.



After all his contributions to global security and safety, Axworthy did not receive the Nobel Peace Prize. That ended up being jointly awarded to an organization that advocated against landmines and to an American activist. This was one of the rare instances that the Nobel awarding committee really screwed the pooch when determining who would receive recognition and for what, and it was believed that political pressure played a significant role. The path that Lloyd Axworthy walked seems to suggest that he would have also lived up to the incredible standard set by Prime Minister Lester B. Pearson too.

### **The differences between provinces are not everything they are made out to be.**

Perhaps the most intriguing idea about the similarities between Canada and the U.S. is how the unique identity of Quebecers in Canada can be seen reflected in Hispanic and Latino communities across the U.S.. However, Quebecers were described as having social and political attitudes that were quite distinct within Canada, a Catholic bastion that made up 25% of Canada's population, as well as being socially and ideologically liberal and promoting the spread of free thought and secularism.

Michael Adams, a Canadian pollster and sociologist, is quoted as saying that Quebec is less different than Alberta from the U.S.' New England region, with similar socio-cultural attitudes erasing the notion of Albertans being the long-lost brothers and sisters of Texans. So, while Canada and the U.S. share transborder intellectual, professional, social, and economic links, which will vary from generation to generation, region to region, there will always be some form of connection. But the connection between us will always be a little stronger.

### **Spoiler Alert: President Barack Obama, Hollywood culturati, and the power of hope.**

What might catch most readers by surprise is not the reference made to President Barack Obama, near the end of the book, and how he was acknowledged as being more popular, respected, and inspiring than any Canadian at the time. Instead, it is reference to how Canadian elected officials at the time of Obama viewed him as representing the characteristics they disliked most: An oratorically gifted Harvard Law grad embraced by the Hollywood culturati and preaching the politics of hope. Somehow, it sounds more like insecurity than any real criticism.

Having watched the televised visits that President Obama has made to Ottawa and his interactions with high-ranking elected officials, disliking someone like him for his learned skills and having respect for the potential within all people was the last thing I thought I would read. Reading that, however, might give the impression that Canada was a place that 'championed' non-education and tension across the socio-economic spectrum, and that it was a place of despair, if those were the kind of leaders, we elected to represent us, when it is anything but this.

Perhaps the missed opportunity lays in pop culture references that could have been leveraged to depict how Canadians preferred to be portrayed compared to Americans, at least on the big screen. First, there is the quote from Henry Hill in *Goodfellas* (1990), "As far back as I can remember, I always wanted to be a gangster. To me, being a gangster was better than being President of the United States." Second, a single lyric in 50 Cent's song *Hustlers Ambition* (2005), "America got a thing for this gangsta ish." Last, there is quote from Frank in *The Gambler* (2014), "A wise man's life is based around F you. The United States of America is based on F you." And while it all may be true, there may not be a more accurate depiction of Canadians then in Canadian Bacon (1995), "Canada known for ages as a polite and clean country...". Because in these four pieces of popular culture is all anyone needs to know about our two countries.

## Balancing Act: Juggling Professional and Personal Growth in the New Year

Ana Sabo



If you find yourself tired of the typical new year resolution chatter, don't worry. This won't be just another article urging you to drink more water, hit the gym, or quit your vices. Why wait for the next year to make positive changes, even if you've already stumbled on your initial resolve? In my case, I've broken every new year's resolution I've ever made. The truth is there's no magical day to start over. You take that step when you're truly prepared to commit, and that moment can be any time.

However, the notion of a new year starting has certainly made me think about a few things. As I look back over the past few years, I've noticed, much like many of you I'm sure, the toll this fast-paced world and the constant pursuit of individual success have taken on my well-being. The rat race toward constant improvement in studies or jobs has led me, and likely many others, to the brink of burnout. It feels like striking a balance between our personal and professional selves in a society that constantly pushes us to do more can be a delicate art.

The ingrained notion of success often fixates heavily on professional achievements. However, in recent years we have been hearing more and more about the interconnectedness of our personal and professional lives, with the phrase "work-life balance" becoming more prominent. Success in our professional lives is intertwined with success in our personal lives, and vice versa.

With this in mind, setting clear boundaries has become a personal goal in the new year. The digital era offers opportunities, but also challenges, to this balancing act. While remote work provides flexibility, allowing us to align schedules with personal goals, the constant digital connectivity blurs the lines between work and personal time, especially when your workspace is within your living space.

For on-site employees, the rise in quiet hiring due to workforce shortages, a fallout from the challenges faced during the pandemic, has led to additional responsibilities. While helping out occasionally is commendable, taking on an entirely new role shouldn't come with all stress and no gain. It can even impact the quality of your primary job, not to mention your motivation.

An essential aspect of this balancing act is effective time management and prioritization. You must be able to understand what needs to be done, meet your deadlines, and communicate clearly about the resources you need for success. This principle extends beyond the workplace. As a student, especially if juggling additional work, recognizing your limits and seeking help when needed is crucial. If sacrifices are made in personal time, ensure there's time for recuperation. Without proper rest and self-care, our capacities are limited. Allocate specific time for work, family, and personal pursuits.

For those currently job searching, consider this. Companies are increasingly valuing investments in employee well-being and development. Perks like mentorship programs, wellness activities, and continuous learning opportunities not only contribute to professional success but also enhance personal fulfillment. Before committing to a new role, evaluate whether the company aligns with these principles.

Another one of my own commitments is setting realistic and achievable goals. It's so easy to succumb to the pressure of unrealistic expectations, but I have found that focusing on incremental progress yields better results in the long run. Whether advancing in your career or nurturing personal passions, small steps often lead to significant transformations over time. If success isn't immediate, that's okay. Reflect on what you truly desire and work toward it one day at a time.

Self-reflection is paramount in this journey. Assessing values, priorities, and long-term objectives serves as a compass for navigating the delicate balance. It empowers us to make informed decisions, aligning actions with personal and professional aspirations.

In essence, I believe that the new year isn't about grand resolutions or life-altering commitments. It's an opportunity to persist in the pursuit of balance between professional and personal growth. By setting boundaries, capitalizing on digital opportunities, fostering a mindset of continuous improvement, and focusing on what is most important to us, we can inch closer to fulfillment in both our endeavors and our personal lives.

## Scholarship of the Week

Digging up scholarship treasure for AU students.

**Scholarship name:** Children's Aid Foundation Scholarship

**Sponsored by:** Children's Aid Foundation of Canada

**Deadline:** January 24, 2024

**Potential payout:** \$5000 per academic year

**Eligibility restriction:** Applicants must have been or will be in the temporary or permanent care of the Ministry or Department responsible for child protection services up until their age of majority birthday or had been in permanent care of the Ministry or Department responsible for child protection services for at least 12 months; and be attending a post-secondary institution full-time or on a reduced schedule due to an academic accommodation, for a full school year starting in September or January. See [full eligibility requirements](#).

**What's required:** An online application, details of which will be revealed after you create a login.

**Tips:** Check out other scholarships also sponsored by the Children's Aid Foundation.

**Where to get info:** [cafdn.org/for-youth/educational-support/](https://cafdn.org/for-youth/educational-support/)





## AU-thentic Events

### Upcoming AU Related Events

#### Leading change in teaching and learning for a digital world: MOOC

Jan 14 to Feb 17

Online

Hosted by AU and the Commonwealth of Learning

[www.athabascau.ca/news/events/leading-change-in-teaching-and-learning-for-a-digital-world-mooc-winter-2024](http://www.athabascau.ca/news/events/leading-change-in-teaching-and-learning-for-a-digital-world-mooc-winter-2024)

Register through above link

#### Toward Co-operative Commonwealth: Transition in a Perilous Century MOOC

Jan 14 to Jun 15

Online

Hosted by AU and the Synergia Co-operative Institute

[www.athabascau.ca/news/events/toward-co-operative-commonwealth-transition-in-a-perilous-century-mooc-2024](http://www.athabascau.ca/news/events/toward-co-operative-commonwealth-transition-in-a-perilous-century-mooc-2024)

Register through above link

#### Library Chat

Tues, Jan 16, 10:30 am to 2:30 pm MST

Online

Hosted by AU Library

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

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

#### What's age got to do with it?

#### Writing as a mature learner

Tues, Jan 16, 12:30 to 1:30 pm MST

Online

Hosted by AU Write Site

[www.athabascau.ca/news/events/whats-age-got-to-do-with-it-writing-as-a-mature-learner-2](http://www.athabascau.ca/news/events/whats-age-got-to-do-with-it-writing-as-a-mature-learner-2)

Register through above link

*All events are free unless otherwise noted.*

## More AU-thentic Events

### Upcoming AU Related Events

#### Faculty of Business Undergrad Program Orientation for New Students

Wed, Jan 17, 12:00 to 1:00 pm MST

Online

Hosted by AU Faculty of Business

[www.athabascau.ca/news/events/faculty-of-business-undergraduate-program-orientation-for-new-students-20240117](http://www.athabascau.ca/news/events/faculty-of-business-undergraduate-program-orientation-for-new-students-20240117)

RSVP through above link

#### Developing Your Research Series: Search Like a Pro

Wed, Jan 17, 1:00 to 1:45 pm MST

Online

Hosted by AU Library and Write Site

[www.athabascau.ca/news/events/developing-your-research-series-search-like-a-pro](http://www.athabascau.ca/news/events/developing-your-research-series-search-like-a-pro)

Register through above link

#### Library Chat

Thur, Jan 18, 10:30 am to 2:30 pm MST

Online

Hosted by AU Library

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

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

#### Write Site's Writing Forum

#### Academic anxiety and imposter syndrome

Thur, Jan 18, 12:30 to 1:30 pm MST

Online via Microsoft Teams

Hosted by AU's Write Site

[www.athabascau.ca/write-site/writing-forum.html](http://www.athabascau.ca/write-site/writing-forum.html)

No pre-registration necessary; use sign-in sheet on above link before joining meeting

*All events are free unless otherwise noted.*

## Fly on the Wall

Spring Rolls, Egg Rolls, California Rolls, But Hold The Eye Rolls.

Jason Sullivan

### Here's Sigmund Freud For A New Year's Inquiry!



What better time to really release ourselves, Scroogelike, from the weight of our past existential attachments, than with the advent of a new year. After all, the phrase new year/new you, wasn't coined for nothing.

Looking ahead can involve blinders; greatness and spontaneity do require somewhat of a short memory. At the same time, we all carry emotional baggage everywhere we go and we may unwittingly be unpacking our inner turmoil onto even the humblest of interlocutors. A noble task, therefore, is to unmask our past predilections that we may gaze onward and upward with clear-eyed resolve.

Starting a year with a blank slate involves a degree of erasing – try playing with a child's chalkboard and

you may find that the process of wiping out, reducing to blotto, can be as fun as the act of creation. Pablo Picasso famously said that destruction, too, is a creative act. While we may lack sympathy for those whose annual New Year debaucheries include an ethanol blackout, from observing hangovers we may also glean a sense of the reality of what a new year entails in terms of overcoming a false sense of reality. The past really *is* over, and no one knows it better or with more irony than those who literally can't remember a thing that happened. In this manner, resolutions pertaining to the forthcoming carry a dubious air redolent of another date entirely: Groundhog Day. More specifically, what's brought to mind is the Bill Murray film of that name. In the film *Groundhog Day*, a woebegotten rat race participant finds himself faced with the same repetitive miseries day after day after day – lacking egress, he resorts to all manner of tactics to make the doldrums seem worthwhile before realizing that only by truly overcoming his accumulated deficiencies can he start anew and find meaning in his existence.

To let go, then, is the first part of the ol' get up and go. And time is of the essence, we never quite know when our life's juice, our personal get up and go, may have *uh* gotten up and went. Or something. Life pauses for neither grammar or a spell check, just read a Gen Zers Tik Tok news feed and you'll see that the proof's in the AI pudding.

We mustn't take ourselves too seriously; it's no coincidence that comedians have a field day at New Year's. Resolutions tend to carry some comic relief at the best of times; to begin with we all know in our heart of hearts that the *us* of yesteryear is essentially the same ourselves as it is in 2024. Not only that, social media newsfeed illusions aside, society would carry on fine and no hangnails with or without our participation, let alone our proud fulfillment of one or many mindfulness resolutions. No amount of simmering and simmering in our discontents will change the fact that it's actions, not resolutions, that for us will forge a better future. Astrologists need not apply *their* mountebankery either. In fact, 2024 being a leap year is a great chance to recall that, as far as the stars are concerned, or aligned, or anthropomorphized, New Year's day isn't even the *real* new year's day so much as it is a reified summary of the previous three year's extra quarter days rolled into one. Saved up, if you will, like that extra third of a bottle of bubbly at a bedside lest one needs a liiiiitle extra oomph to get up and face the new year. No day is what it

says it is, cosmically, and at some level that may explain why “authentic” was a “word of the year” for 2023.

The path to self-deception about reality involves attachment to the fleece-lined mysticism of an absolute identity, itself a grim Gothic Line enforced in search of absolution from ambiguity, laced and twined with that old just-so fable: good intentions. Almost no one admits to backing into their neighbor's plum tree on purpose, and the same is true of our accounting practices in life. We put our best foot forward foremost so we look good in the existential selfie of self-awareness. If we're happy and we know it we clap our hands gleefully and tell all who'll listen what we're happy about. And if we're sad we go to great pains, as humans, to explain who or what has triggered such a lamentable and dolorous condition. We may even tell ourselves that our mental condition is permanent and inevitable, rather than a construction stemming from the netherland of our unconscious. Yet new year's is a season of reconsidering what is and how it gets that way.

Enter here that pariah of messianic figures, Sigmund Freud. His life's work involved countless hours listening to the tidings, good and bad and neurotic, of the citizens of well-heeled Vienna. Just a stone's throw away, across the river Danube a few centuries earlier, invading hordes had laid siege to the city, only to be saved by the Polish prince Sobieski and his patron soldiers. But that was all ancient history, forgotten except for the occasional self-congratulatory clap on the back. The Vienna of Freud during the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century was a more placid, but no less disconsolate, place. People were, as the grunge band Nirvana once sang, “overbored and self assured, oh no I know a dirty word.” Stressed, crotchety and a bit bitchy, you might say. But Freud sought not to leave things at that, he wanted to help his clients. Laying aside the adage that the path to hell is paved with good intentions, he began by creating a new language to understand the timeless mysteries of the human mind and, more importantly, the unconscious realm of murky motivations unknown even to the carrier of that mysterious torch of self-consciousness: ourselves. Sadness and neurosis and discontent were Freud's stock in trade – not of his choosing, but of the necessity of what he encountered in the plaintive countenances of many whose bustling bottoms grazed his therapist's couch. Supine in spirit yet brimming with mysteries, in his patient's minds eyes Freud's key findings unfurled. Out of the depths of their despair typologies were had.

The present-day therapist Dr. Galit Atlas summarized one such struggle, the challenge of sorting out the truth behind what a person is truly despondent *about*. Often we say one thing, but our mind means another, Freud found. For instance, at New Year's we might feel a sense of loss, of longing for a past or a person whose existence lies beyond the vale of physical awareness but is all too real in our hearts and minds. This mourned lost Other may even be our self as we imagine him or her, a loss of identity where the rubber of reality meets the road of ideals.

“Freud developed his thinking to differentiate between mourning and melancholia. He described that in mourning the world feels poor and empty, while in melancholia the person herself feels poor and empty. She loses interest in the outside world, she loses the capacity to love, and her self-esteem is diminished.”

Depressing stuff, but if we're to overcome the urge to tie our New Year's discontent to the mere winter blues, and prescribe ourselves merely some sublingual Vitamin D, we'd (to Freud, anyway) miss a key component of our sadness and how it gets that way. If we feel we've lost something as a new year commences, maybe we aren't allowing ourselves to simply let the bygone year slip over the horizon of our personal history.

“That melancholia, according to Freud, is an unconscious process in which, instead of detaching and withdrawing the emotional investment from the lost person, the melancholic preserves and keeps that person alive inside them through identification with the dead” (Atlas, 74). The baby of



2024 has been born but, for that to happen, the withered old year 2023 must be allowed to fade into the mists of obscurity, bathwater of otherwise—else our new self, brimming as it is with the passions of newfound hopes and potentials, can never truly be born.

To overcome being glum at the prospect of just another year we must truly lay to rest the past – not only those who we sadly said goodbye to but also to the last version of ourselves who, through the sheer social osmosis of proximity, we'd invariably become quite attached to – failings and foibles and all. So, in 2024, let's remember that it's not only how we resolve to grow and learn but also how we keep our eyes on the future, even the years to come, that will keep our spirits up and our melancholia at bay. To choose to let go can be the best resolution of all. Easier said than done, but isn't that resolutions in a nutshell – talk minus action until tomorrow?

I wish all the best to everyone at Voice Magazine and to you, dear reader. May abundance and fulfillment be your heartfelt companion throughout as much of the year to come as possible!

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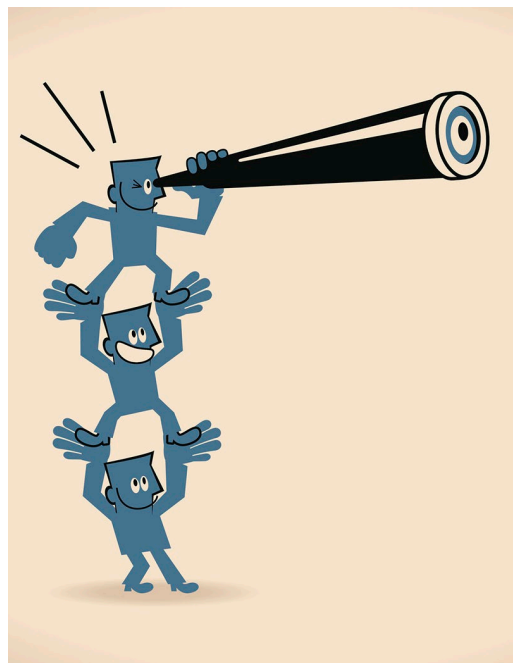
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*Jason Hazel-rah Sullivan is a Masters of Integrated Studies student who loves engaging in discourse while working in the sunny orchards and forests of the Okanagan.*

## Research Assistant Opportunity Children's Emotional Resilience



### What Could Be A More Valuable Object of Inquiry?

When we think of the discursive space between mental health and emotional resilience, we get a sense of the ideological terrain that caregivers of children tread, trod, and pounce amidst when dealing with innocent youngsters. This research assistant posting, then, is titled “Nurturing Resilience: A Holistic Approach to Emotion Regulation and Anxiety Management in Children”. In a sense the title says it all, but wait – there's more! The goal here is “to develop a unified and collaborative universal prevention program to address the increasing prevalence of anxiety and other emotional disorders in children.”

Crucial to any would-be social scientist is participation in actual research and with this research assistant posting you've come to the right place. “There may be opportunities to participate in research participant recruitment, focus groups, assessments, qualitative interviewing, and

collaborating on qualitative data analysis and narrative interviews.” Taking notes, maintaining records, and participating on the formulation of a more fleshed out program all are part of this process. A worthy cause! Interested applicants may send resume, cover letter, interests and experiences, a cover of your transcript, and one or two references to Dr. Caroline Buzanko at [carolinebuzanko@athabascau.ca](mailto:carolinebuzanko@athabascau.ca)

## Beyond Literary Landscapes

### The Dictator Novel

Natalia Iwanek



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

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

#### Who

This week’s column considers a literary sub-genre of the Latin American novel, namely the dictator novel.

#### What

Some well-known examples of this genre include *I, the Supreme* (*Yo, el supremo*) by Paraguayan author Augusto Roa Bastos, *The Autumn of the Patriarch* (*El otoño del patriarca*) by Colombian author Gabriel García Márquez's and *The President* (*El señor presidente*) by Guatemalan author Miguel Ángel Asturias.

Outside of the continent, students may also be interested in Kenyan author Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o's *Wizard of the Crow*.

#### Where

These novels are set throughout Latin America, including Paraguay, Colombia, and Guatemala.

#### When

These dictator novels take place in the 19 and 20th centuries.

#### Why

These works may be of interest to AU learners who enjoy Latin American literary fiction, especially those interested in the Boom years, post-Boom years, and magical realism. They may also be of interest to students who enjoy learning about themes of power, repression, and rebellion. Finally, these novels may also prove appealing to AU History students who would like to learn more about the Latin American continent.

#### How

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

AU students interested in learning more about this topic may enroll in [ENGL 458](#): The Latin American Novel, a three-credit, senior-level course, which focuses “on fiction and memoir written in the context of history, politics, culture, identity, and genre.” (Please note that [ENGL 211](#): Prose Forms and [ENGL 212](#): Poetry and Plays are required as prerequisites).

Students may also be interested in [GLST 308: Americas: An Introduction to Latin America and the Caribbean](#), a senior-level, three-credit course, which “focuses on several countries—as well as an overview of the development of the region as a whole— and interprets the rich history that underlies the region’s cultures, contradictions, and uniqueness.” (Although no prerequisites are required, please note that this course is currently closed for revision). Happy reading!

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

## Bring U.S. RICO Laws to Canada—Conclusion

**Alek Golijanin**



What if the reputation that Canada has received for being soft on money laundering, organized crime, and transnational crime could have been avoided decades ago? Well, it could very well have happened because almost 50 years before B.C. created the Cullen Commission and changed Canada’s trajectory for how we dealt with serious crime, B.C.’s Criminal Justice Division published a game-changing report in 1980 titled *The Business of Crime: An Evaluation of the American RICO Statute from a Canadian Perspective*, recommending that Canada introduce RICO-styled laws.

This series-concluding article will look into that 1980 report by B.C.’s Criminal Justice Division, the complexities involved with connecting with some stakeholders and the ambiguous meaning behind the saying “in the public interest”, a novel approach to whistleblowing that focuses on rewards, and what filmography can tell us about

crime and society.

### **The Business of Crime: An Evaluation of the American RICO Statute from a Canadian Perspective (1980).**

The *Business of Crime* report, published in 1980, appears to have been shelved and has been collecting dust ever since, with few experts in academia ever having referenced it in their works. The high-level breakdowns of RICO laws and Canada’s existing laws within the report, both federal and provincial, had all the potential for Canada to avoid being designated as a major money laundering country by the U.S. State Department, or for former RCMP officers to declare that Canada was a laughing stock for its national and international crime efforts to combat fraud, money laundering, cybercrime, and other criminal activities.



Canada's federal legislators should have jumped at that opportunity to address structural weak points within our legal framework, once B.C.'s Criminal Justice Division identified deficiencies related to how highly coordinated criminals were being prosecuted. The two limitations to combating organized crime were identified as Canada's *Criminal Code* not being directly concerned with the profits of crime or profit incentive, and instead focused on single transactions committed by individual offenders. This was described as being tailored to "street crimes"—crimes that were spontaneous and poorly planned, violent, drug, or alcohol related, and not particularly successful from a financial point of view. From the beginning of the report, there was an understanding that criminal organizations were different, better organized and less likely to get detected while having high potential profits, and it was understood when a criminal enterprise began to have more sophisticated and organized components it became a serious threat to society.

Throughout the report, a theme emerges relating to Canada's laws being woefully inadequate for life in 1980. Some of the issues raised included the lack of currency reporting laws, how nothing in criminal law was expressly designed to provide for the forfeiture of illicit profits upon conviction, nor was there a way to separate the criminal from a business operated by them in a criminal manner. Instead, the forfeiture laws within the Criminal Code focused on removing an object whose possession was unlawful to avoid any repetition of the offence. As it related to the power of forfeiture, significantly, the laws excluded shares of a corporation or interest in a partnership not ever being forfeitable. It was also understood that intangible assets would get transferred to another person or corporation or hidden abroad if a suspect realized that they were under police scrutiny, and by the time of the conviction there would not be anything left to forfeit even if forfeiture were possible under the law.

The report concluded with the recommendation that Canada adopt legislation similar to U.S. RICO laws, calling the laws a novel piece of legislation that could assist with targeting criminal organizations because of the challenges with presenting a single case when there were a multitude of layers to the crime and when the focus was groups instead of individuals. The existing framework within different agencies and departments at the time was such that they were insufficient enough for enterprise or organized crime.

Despite that there would be a constitutional challenge that had to do with the separation between federal and provincial laws, the legal experts suggested how the constitutional challenges between provincial and federal laws could be accommodate for RICO laws. In the end, this group of legal experts concluded that RICO laws were a novel piece of legislation that, when used properly and in conjunction with sound investigative techniques, could go after criminal organizations and successfully prosecute them and do something about the gains from illicit criminal activities.

### **The complexity of connecting with certain stakeholders.**

Connecting with Ministerial offices in B.C., Supreme Court judges, Privacy Commissioners, academic experts, and other relevant stakeholders, was quite easy. Instead, the complexity with connecting with stakeholders did not lay with establishing contact but rather with stakeholders with judicial powers being prohibited from speaking on adjudicated matters. Rules around judges not being unable to opine on any judicial matters in detail and beyond the summary section goes back to the idea of ensuring the integrity of our courts, and the only time a judge might step outside the lines to opine on findings is after they have retired, similar to how lawyers are discouraged by their law societies to speak on one another.

What might complicate matters even more may be the polarization of journalism and news media and how the occasional twisting of words and the "gotcha" pieces on contentious issues has

resulted in professionals across the spectrum, from lawyers and judges to police officers and politicians, being hesitant to speak with journalists or even go on record. Nor does it help that more articles seem to be getting published as summaries of press briefs, and without going over the necessary academic literature, legal documents, and government reports, in search of evidence that demonstrates low-level thinking, then following up those discoveries with the appropriate questions.

Simply put, being able to uncover low-level thinking within literature, documents and reports comes down between choosing to dive into the details instead of summarizing a press release. Then, the difference between asking the right questions in real-time and asking the right questions at a later time comes down to the ability to account for shortcomings in public policies and to ensure for forward progress.

### **Coming to terms with the ambiguous meaning behind “in the public interest”.**

Some critics of public inquiries complain about the fact that they do not directly result in the convicting and the sentencing of public figures or the shutting down of corporations altogether. Despite that it has not been legally determined as to whether public inquiries and the judges that lead them do carry over all their judicial powers, including those to find individuals or corporations criminally culpable or civilly responsible, it might not be in the public interest for them to do so. And the ambiguous meaning behind “in the public interest” is a concept that many are likely to struggle with.

Had the Charbonneau Commission found individuals criminally culpable or civilly liable, or if construction corporations were dissolved for corruption, that would not have been in the public interest. We must consider that public inquiries require the support of elected officials, so if elected officials begin to believe that public inquiries are going to make them or other bureaucrats the scape goat of all problems then that is likely to dissuade them for supporting public inquiries. Secondly, consider that dissolving multi million-dollar construction corporations that employ hundreds or even thousands of workers, either directly or indirectly, would have unintended consequences with innocent workers possibly ending up homeless or not having money for food and being unable to provide for their families. That is the ambiguous nature of “in the public interest”: the implications of addressing criminal matters that should have been done decades prior and that have ballooned into something far too complex, because what constitutes as being legal or illegal is not the same standard as something being right or wrong.

Throughout it all, what should be clear is that the Charbonneau Commission was a positive for Canada because it resulted in municipalities across Canada running to implement new procurement procedures so as to not bring embarrassment onto themselves, publicly elected figures, and community figures that have been recipients of recognition awards and who also happen to give to charity. But make no mistake, every province and all big cities within these provinces have seen their public procurement processes get exploited. Despite that some Canadians are likely to have apprehension towards the efficacy of our public inquiries, the Cullen Commission too, was significant enough for the Five Eyes alliance to look into the problem in their respective countries, with Australia replicating the Cullen Commission’s efforts with their own public inquiry on large-scale money laundering.

So, public inquiries do work, just not in the same manner and purpose that provincial courts and federal courts do. But this is also why serious forms of crime need to be addressed in a timely manner and not decades after they have become overwhelming problems for the institution of policing and our courts.

### **Transitioning from whistleblower protections to whistleblower rewards.**

The Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) has been able to revamp efforts to combat securities violations through the creation of a first-of-its-kind whistleblower rewards program. This program regularly pays out multi-million-dollar rewards, with the total rewards paid out since its inception being in excess of \$1 billion, and it has helped the SEC recover in excess of \$5 billion. What makes the program a stalwart extends beyond the financial rewards to include robust employment protections, and the ability to report anonymously with the assistance of a lawyer. Although the specifics of the program stipulate that the award can range from 10% to 30% of the monetary sanctions collected, it requires the sanctioning of over \$1 million.

To date, the top four biggest rewards collected by a single individual are \$62 million, \$52 million, and \$50 million twice. Popularity for the program is at an all-time high, in 2020 6,900 tips were submitted, then in 2022 12,300 tips were submitted, but by the end of October 2023, there were over 18,000 tips that were submitted. Best of all, non-U.S. citizens can participate in the whistleblower reward program, but the main requirement is that the information needs to be submitted to the SEC first and not elsewhere like other government agencies, foreign law enforcement, or the media.

Conceptually, the idea of expanding whistleblower protections to focus more on whistleblower rewards is a sure-fire way for to get people submit complaints. The assistance and information provided by the SEC's whistleblower reward program has been described as among the most powerful weapons in the law enforcement arsenal. Assuming the information turns out to be valid, it allows law enforcement to reduce harm exposure to investors and to ensure the integrity of financial institutions and capital markets. So, a similar whistleblower reward program with big-time payouts would help Canada to get ahead of criminal enterprises that are involved in crimes like money laundering, organized crime, and transnational crime. Perhaps the rewards need to be set at 50% of all monetary sanctions and assets forfeited totalling over \$1 million.

### **What filmography can tell us about society and crime.**

The National Post recently published a piece posing the question whether Toronto is becoming Gotham, but perhaps this is a question that should be extended to all of Canada's big cities. In London Ontario in 2021, a Pakistani-Canadian family of five was enjoying summer by taking a walk only to have a white nationalist terrorist carry out a vehicular attack on them, killing four and wounding a nine-year-old boy. Then in Montreal Quebec in 2022, a seven-year-old Ukrainian girl came to Canada as a refugee with her mom and became the victim of a fatal hit-and-run just one day before Christmas break. And just recently in Winnipeg, Manitoba in 2023, a 46-year-old Ukrainian husband, father of two little children, who came to Canada with his family as refugees was fatally by a criminal who was on probation for a weapons charge while on his way to work.

Hearing about criminal acts occurring like these makes it impossible not to have connections made with the fictional city, but Gotham had the Dark Knight. We do not. Perhaps it is the groupthink of societies that leads people into accepting comforting dreams instead of uncomfortable realities, as long as it makes life feel easier. Perhaps the comfort of such dreams should be a cause for concern to everyone because safety is thrown out the window right after a person leaves the confines of their home despite that we live in a "safe country" – an oxymoron. Perhaps the relevance of the uncomfortable reality of the world we are living in is that our society may need more rules and regulatory frameworks that better protect the safety and well-being of all peoples that find themselves in Canada. With no exceptions.

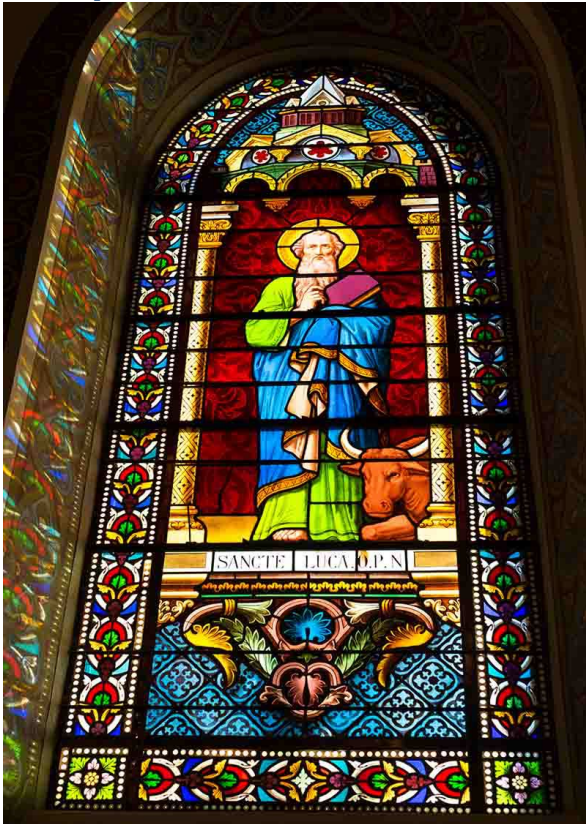
*Alek Golijanin is an AU alum who considers himself a gentleman first, a scholar second, and a combat sports fanatic third. In that order.*





## Always a Saint

Marie Well



I don't believe that once we do something negative, we are always that negative thing. That belief is a judgemental view, and it stifles people's growth. If we are eternal and we incarnate infinite times, then we've all been everything good or bad already. But the goal is not to wallow in a deficient self-identity. I believe it's to transcend and grow into the beings of pure love and wisdom we are truly meant to be, who we essentially already are.

Once we achieve that milestone of unconditional love for all beings, I think we can reach a higher heaven in the afterlife, assuming that the third heaven concept in Christianity or the infinite layers of progressively better or worse heavens and hells in the Sikh faith is true. I like the Sikh view and believe that we incarnate to explore different worlds for the valuable lessons they provide in helping us reach those higher levels, like in a video game, but where greater feelings of love, not shooting and destruction, are the objectives.

I love the rags to riches stories where an impoverished soul, maybe mentally ill or homeless or a person with an addiction, goes on to become a millionaire—or even a

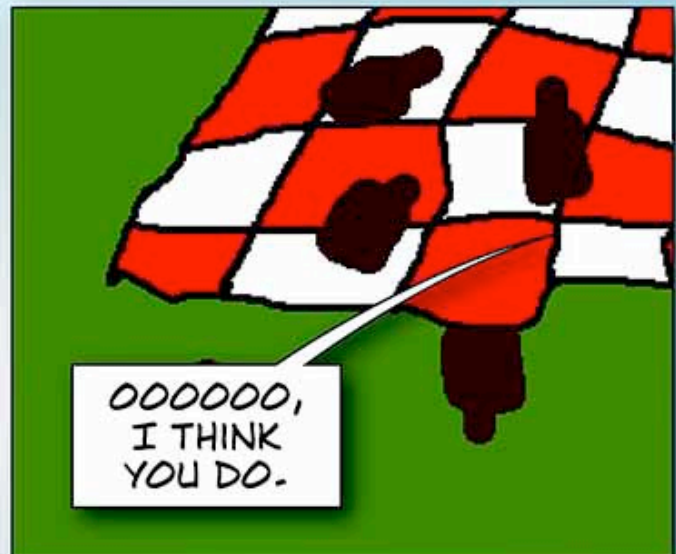
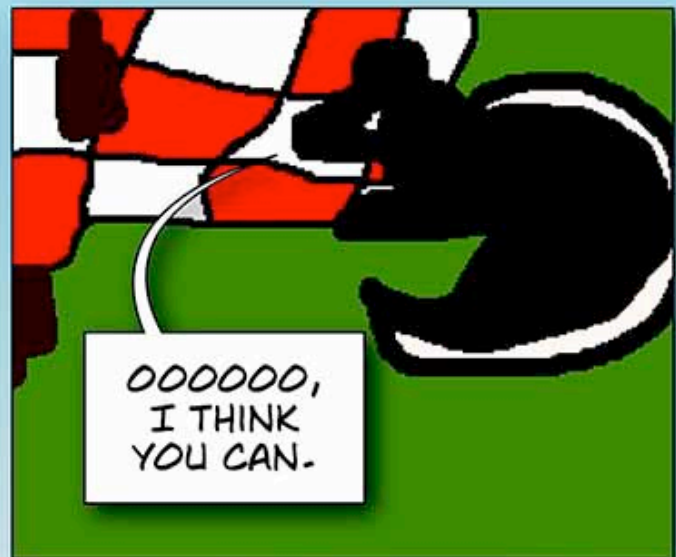
billionaire—or becomes highly successful in some other domain. Similarly, I love the stories where people who lived tough lives become monks, saints, reverends, or enlightened beings. And what's even better is combining the two stories. However, the spiritual stories are the only ones that truly matter in the end unless the wealth stories evolve into using those riches for the betterment of all others (and never for harming any being in the process).

That's the whole point of life, I think: to get from point A to point B, where point B is pure, unconditional love for all beings, and the more significant the gap from point A to B, the more triumphant the climb. That's why I feel Reverend Howard Storm, who had a near-death experience where he went from hell to heaven, is such a triumphant, noble story. And if we all saw his stunning spiritual paintings and read his brilliant books on Jesus and the afterlife, we'd get a greater feel of the profound depth of his climb.

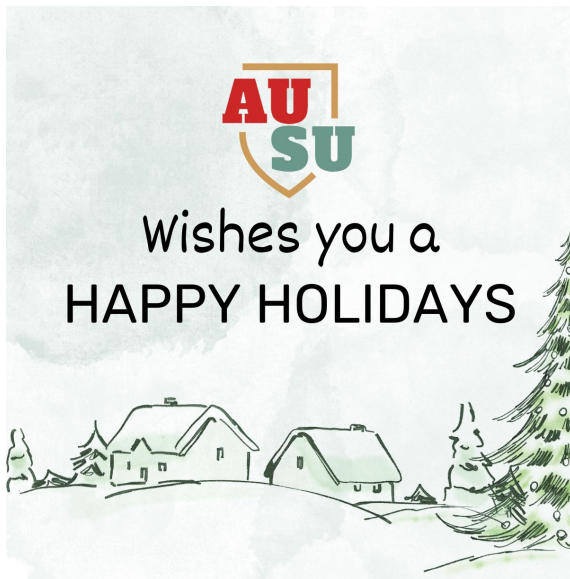
We don't need to receive love to achieve that higher state of love, either. We only need to give it in greater and greater magnitudes from the heart to more and more people until everyone is the subject of our love! When we offer that great love, we feel it. We become it. That's the most extraordinary self-love--that inner love that arises from loving everything in the world. It's not truly a love directed to self; it's a love directed at others that we feel within ourselves as a natural consequence of expressing it, according to the theory of author Paul Friedman. And everyone benefits from every expression of love we put out in the universe, and each act or thought of love goes on for all eternity. Truly, no act of love is ever wasted. It's all an expression of who we essentially are and who we are meant to become: pure, blissful, unconditional love. Once we do something negative, it's not an indicator that we are essentially bad. Instead, it's a signal that we face a beautiful climb to that euphoric state of pure, unconditional love that we exist to realize.

Poet Maeve  
Barred from Service

Wanda Waterman



# Best Wishes This Holiday from AUSU



The holiday season is upon us, and as the year draws to a close, we at Athabasca University Students' Union (AUSU) want to take a moment to extend our warmest wishes to all Athabasca University (AU) undergraduate students. We hope that you have a safe and happy holiday break. As we reflect on the past year and look ahead to the future, we want to express our gratitude for being part of your academic journey.

## Office Closure

Please note that our offices are currently closed for the holiday season. We will reopen on **January 2, 2024**, for regular business hours. During this time, our team will be taking a well-deserved break to recharge and spend time with their families. However, even though our physical doors may be closed, we are still here for you.

## Prioritizing Rest, Leisure, and Nutrition

The holiday season can often become a whirlwind of activity – shopping, attending gatherings, preparing meals – leaving little time for rest and self-care. As you enjoy this well-deserved break from your studies, we encourage you to prioritize rest and leisure activities that bring you joy and nourish your body with wholesome foods.

Rest is crucial for recharging both physically and mentally. Take advantage of this downtime to catch up on sleep or indulge in some quiet moments of relaxation. Whether it's curling up with a good book by the fire or taking peaceful walks in nature, find activities that help you unwind and rejuvenate.

Engaging in leisure activities that bring you happiness is equally important. Use this opportunity to pursue hobbies or interests that may have taken a backseat during busy study periods. Whether it's painting, writing music, or exploring the great outdoors – do things that make your heart sing.

While indulging in holiday treats, remember the importance of nourishing your body with nutritious foods. Try to incorporate fruits, vegetables, and whole grains into your meals to keep your energy levels up and support overall well-being. A healthy diet can contribute to feeling more energized and ready to tackle the upcoming year.

## Contacting AUSU

During our office closure, if you have any urgent requests or inquiries, please send an email to [ausu@ausu.org](mailto:ausu@ausu.org). We will respond promptly upon our return in the new year. Your satisfaction is important to us, and we look forward to serving you with renewed dedication and enthusiasm.

## Have a Safe and Happy Holiday Break!

As we bid farewell to another year, we want to express our appreciation for allowing us to be part of your educational journey at AU. We hope that this holiday break brings you peace, joy, and relaxation.

From all of us at AUSU, we wish you a safe and happy holiday break filled with laughter, love, and rejuvenation. May the upcoming year be one of growth, accomplishment, and success in all your endeavours. Happy holidays!



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## THE VOICE

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