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TE ĀROHI



oh my god,
they killed Kenny!





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EDITORIAL:

Optimism isn't dead yet

If you've been on the internet recently, you may have noticed the world feels like it's turning to shit. While we're not here to say whether it's all gonna be okay or not, we are here to preach the concept of optimism.

Being Co-Editors requires thick skin and optimism at times. From people approaching you at hosts to complain about Critic (usually the crosswords), or reading hate comments on Castle26 (shoutout Hawk Tuah – you're pretty funny. Surely come and write for us), it can be hard to keep a smile on your dial when you spend hours pouring your heart out for a magazine. Now obviously being an Editor of a little old magazine is not a super-serious job, but has helped us begin to embrace a bit of optimism in our lives.

As low-key optimists, we reckon the concept is often misunderstood. Yes, you can still be upset at the world – whether its politicians, inequalities or that one assignment that's creeping closer to the due date. We can't control the curveballs that are thrown at us – but how we compartmentalise and respond to these is where a bit of happiness comes in handy.

When the negative thoughts compound, it can create a cycle of worry and unease that can get in the way of your daily life. We're sure that's not news to anyone. But on an off day, think about how cool your high school self would think you are right now. Small things like that can break the chain of negative thoughts – you can't control the world around you, but you can control your mind.

Being students in Dunedin can create a lot of things to worry about on a daily basis. Many of us have to think about balancing a job, clubs, assignments, flat chores and a social life. All while often being hours away from family. When you add on everything else – politics, climate change, the job market – students' lives can be stressful despite all the cooked shit we get up to. Give yourself some grace.

However, this isolation is part of what makes Ōtepoti such a special place. With so many young adults all in one neighbourhood, support networks form quickly. While you sometimes worry with one another, you can also laugh, dance, and enjoy company together – even when it feels like the world around you is crumbling to bits.

To be an optimist does not mean to be free of all worries – that is a take that doesn't acknowledge the inherent privilege of not being able to worry about anything. But even with this misunderstanding, optimism should never die, despite the state of the world. Hold your friends closer, text your mum and tell your situation how you really feel. These are scary times but sometimes cracking a laugh while in the thick of it can be more helpful than you think.

Despite the state of the world, you are never alone. Free call or text 1737 anytime to access mental health support, or you can call YouthLine on 0800 376 633 or text 234. On campus there are a plethora of support options available: Chaplains, OUSA Student Support and Student Health. And keep looking out for your mates.

Hanna Varrs ✨
+ Gryffin Blockley 😊



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AN OPEN LETTER ABOUT THE FUTURE OF CRITIC TE ĀROHI

Last year, I had the honour [of being one of the judges of] the Aotearoa Student Press Awards, where Critic Te Ārohi capped off its 100th birthday by winning Best Publication for the 13th time in the last 20 years.

Critic Te Ārohi is not only New Zealand's oldest and most award winning student magazine, it's also by far the most popular. The print run of [3000] copies runs out every week and annual surveys show that 87% of Otago University students read Critic Te Arohi. In other words, Critic is an extraordinary success.

And yet, this summer, instead of celebrating Critic's achievements, owner and publisher OUSA cut its budget so severely that the future of the magazine is at risk. Issue 2 was only 16 pages long, a third of the traditional [36] pages. That's a leaflet, not a magazine.

A smaller Critic means less content. Fewer investigations, features, and entertaining columns. Readership will decline. It will have less appeal for new writers. Its quality, influence and impact will gradually wane until it falls into irrelevancy.

I fully appreciate that student associations have constrained budgets and many competing priorities. But in this case I believe that OUSA has misjudged the level of value Critic Te Ārohi provides to Otago University students and hasn't properly considered the long term impacts this decision will have.

Because the ads don't cover the full cost of printing the magazine, OUSA tends to look at Critic magazine as a business that loses money. I would encourage OUSA members to reframe their thinking. Critic was never meant to make money. It was meant to make culture.

Critic Te Ārohi is a public service. Surveys consistently show it is one of the most engaged-with and valued services OUSA provides. It helps freshers navigate the strange ecosystem of North Dunedin. It engages people in student politics, investigates campus controversies and celebrates the idiosyncrasies that give Otago its identity. One of the reasons Otago University developed such a strong student culture is because Critic fostered it.

I'm sure every reader has qualms with something Critic has published at one point or another, but I urge you, please, don't take this publication for granted. There are very few student media outlets in the world that come close to Critic's sustained level of audience connection and journalistic rigour. That success didn't happen overnight and it didn't happen by accident. It stands on a culture that has been built over the course of decades.

Critic Te Ārohi is an institution, and great institutions only continue to stand because people fight for them. And that's what we must do now.

To Otago University students: If you value Critic Te Ārohi, tell your OUSA representatives. Comment "SAVE CRITIC" on all of OUSA's social media content. Write an email to these addresses: president@ousa.org.nz, adminvp@ousa.org.nz and debbie.downs@ousa.org.nz. Let them know that you are unhappy with the cuts and want Critic to go back to its old size.

To the members of the OUSA executive: Please keep an open mind, listen to your constituents, and consider restoring Critic to its full strength.

Yours sincerely,
Joel MacManus
Senior Writer at The Spinoff
2018 Critic Te Ārohi editor.

Send a letter to the editors at critic@critic.co.nz to be in to win a \$25 UBS voucher.

LETTERS POLICY

Letters should be 150 words or fewer. The deadline is Thursday at 12pm. Get them into Critic by emailing us at critic@critic.co.nz. Letters of a serious nature directly addressing a specific group or individual will not be published under a pseudonym, except in extraordinary circumstances as negotiated with the Editors. Critic Te Ārohi reserves the right to edit, abridge, or decline letters without explanation. Frequently published correspondents in particular may find their letters abridged or excluded. Defamatory or otherwise illegal material will not be printed. We don't fix the spelling or grammar in letters. If a letter writer looks stupid, it's because they are.

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THIS PUBLICATION IS AI FREE.

To the Editors,

I am writing in response to the article in Issue 1 (2026) encouraging students to "do drugs (safely, of course)!"

While harm reduction and open conversations about substance use are important, the article presents drug use in a casual and encouraging way without adequately acknowledging the risks.

There is no discussion of addiction, health consequences, or that some students may have underlying medical or mental health conditions that could be worsened by substance use. The section also does not address the dangers of mixing recreational drugs with prescription medications—something particularly relevant for students taking medications for conditions such as ADHD, anxiety, or depression.

Most concerning is the lack of information directing readers to support services for substance misuse or addiction.

Encouraging experimentation without acknowledging these realities presents an incomplete picture. I'd be interested in an article about different drugs, how they affect the body and what people should be mindful of when taking them.

[Student] publications should aim to promote informed decision-making and prioritise student wellbeing.

Sincerely,
Zoe

Editor's response: We agree – every drug has its risks. Next time we will be sure to include links to resources to better educate over the negative effects drugs can have. In the article, we made sure to mention Tripsit, which does an excellent job of explaining in expert detail how drugs affect the body and their interactions with other medications, but that was not adequate. Thank you for pointing this out as we settle into our editorial positions.

Dear Critic,

As I was perusing the Critic I happened to notice the centerfold of Issue 1, 2026. Where do I even begin? Did you run out of time? Was the o/flo hangover too deadly? However, my flat's centerfold wall display will remain empty. I respect that a stickman is funny and the lack of effort is reflective of how some students are coming into 2026 but please, I just want my sexy Garfield back :(

Sincerely,

Not a hater just a ho for the centerfold.

Illustrator's response: Did you even think about my feelings

Dear Critic,

Hello.

Regards,
Me.

Editor's response: no need to get political.

Hello Critic,

Although it is sad that the critic is shortened, I wanted to say that I am so grateful that there is still a Critic Lite rather than only fortnightly. I understand it is tough with cost pressures but The Critic is truly the highlight of my week and I love collecting the art inside it. This week in particular is more scrumptious than usual so for me that kind of made the news a little less sad ;) I really love the horoscope design and poster page in particular!!!

Kind regards,
An avid reader of The Critic

Editor's response: thank you, that means a lot.

TLDR:

The United States and Israel launch coordinated strikes on Iran. Please keep an eye on legitimate news sources

Taco Bell's bell has been removed! Hungover students there on a Sunday morning are grateful

Two new Councillors have been appointed to the uni council: Chris Hopkins and Dr Peter Bramley

OPAC are hosting an intro meeting at the Bog March 12th 6pm, free food provided!

Electric Avenue happened and was big!

Inkpot, an independent romance bookstore run by a NZ author (Colette Rhodes) has opened in Ōtepoti



The News

ISSUE 3

KAWEPŪRONGO

09/03/2026

STUDENTS, LECTURERS AND TUTOR REACT TO NEW LMS AOROA

By Bella Bates

Senior News Reporter // news@critic.co.nz



"Darkplace" or "Brightspace"?

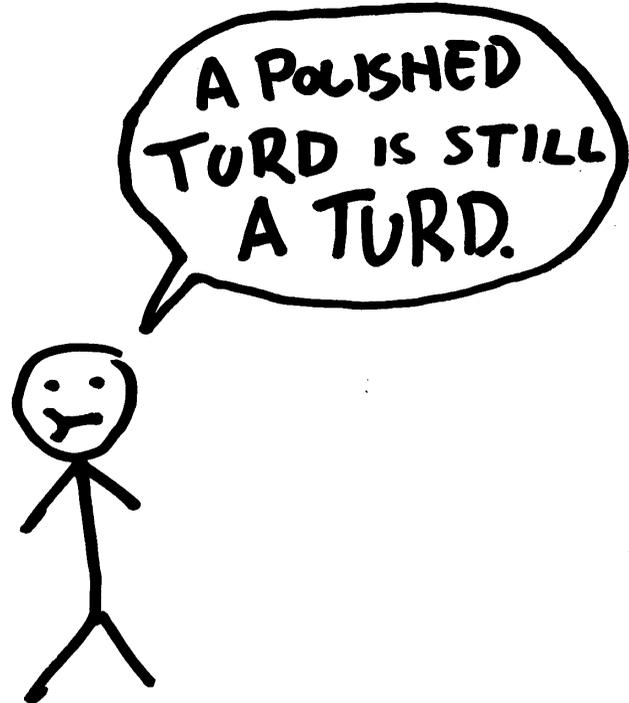
In a move that has been met with both confusion and celebration, the University of Otago has officially started the roll out of Aoroa, its shiny new learning management system (LMS), powered by Brightspace. Despite being touted as a modern upgrade, Aoroa has already been critically received by students, some arguing that it's difficult to navigate and somehow manages to hide your course content better than you ever hid from your 9am lecture.

For freshers: Blackboard was the digital backbone of your degree. It was where you'd binge three months of lectures at 2x speed the night before an exam, where assignments were heroically uploaded to Turnitin at 11:59pm (or 12:01am, if you were feeling chaotic), and where discussion boards went to die. The interface was dated. It was clunky. It occasionally looked like it had been designed during the dial-up internet era. But it was home.

In response to the campus discourse surrounding Blackboard versus Aoroa, Critic Te Arohi made up one of our classic surveys, urging students and staff to spill their thoughts about the new LMS. As of writing, 143 brave souls have responded. 74.8% of respondents told us that they preferred Blackboard over Aoroa, with just 21% preferring Aoroa. Well, nobody likes change, do they?

The chief complaints? Navigation, navigation, navigation. One student felt that Aoroa's headings take up "half the fucking screen," and felt the abundance of tabs and sub-sections "lead to nowhere." However, feedback is not all bad. Students generally seemed to think that Aoroa's user interface is far more "attractive" than Blackboard's. As one glowing review put it: "It's prettier ig." For others, the appeal went beyond aesthetics: "I like how clear and concise the organisation is," one respondent said. "[It] forces lecturers to provide information in more detailed subsections rather than putting everything into one course outline document." Students also liked being able to see all assignment due dates in one place. Still, for some, a sleek interface isn't enough. One brutally honest respondent summed their feelings up with the following: "Yeah it looks alright, but if you polish a turd it's still a turd ffs." "Darkplace, not Brightspace," another student added ominously.

When approached about the complaints regarding navigation, Dean of Learning and Teaching Professor Tim Cooper told Critic that the University would be "open to making improvements" and understanding what students find difficult about the navigation. "For example, we've already implemented some navigation ideas in Aoroa that are a direct response to student feedback on pain points in Blackboard – like having consistent menus within papers for standard information that must be provided in every paper." Many students in Critic's survey did appreciate the consistency that Aoroa has. Tim also assured that a feedback survey will also soon appear directly on the Aoroa login page – so even if course content feels impossible to find right now, at least the feedback form won't be. "We'd also note that Aoroa is brand new to us so the look and feel of the platform navigation is different from Blackboard. This lack of familiarity may go some way to explaining the response of returning students."



The University chose Aoroa powered by Brightspace after carefully assessing several major LMS products available. Aoroa "best met our requirements and received the most positive feedback from both student and staff testers," Tim explained. Brightspace also offers great compatibility with plugins, such as Panorama, which increases content accessibility through downloads of alternative document formats in Aoroa. "We're currently in the process of setting up an ongoing student reference group for Aoroa and wider Digital Learning Environment Programme initiatives like the Aonui student portal," Tim explained. "This group will be key to gathering student views and providing feedback to the staff working on Aoroa, and they will have input into decisions on the future development of Aoroa."

Some responses suggested the real issue isn't Aoroa itself, but the humans piloting it. "My 80 year old lecturer doesn't know how to use it," wrote one student. Another is more blunt: "lecturers lowkey are the problem tbh." Shots fired.

Fortunately, the survey was also open to lecturers and tutors, who were keen to share their thoughts. All lecturers either agreed or strongly agreed with the statement that Aoroa was overall a better LMS than Blackboard, appreciating its "tidy" and "uniform appearance", as well as being "way less admin" to work with than Blackboard. However, uploading and providing access to some documents for students was proving to be difficult – "students are forced to be inside the Aoroa app to access a lot of course info, whereas with Blackboard they could easily download", one lecturer told us. "It's slow to send announcements, and adding any course materials that aren't PDFs [like spreadsheets of data] is annoying".

Overall, tutors felt Aoroa was better than Blackboard overall, but not starry-eyed. Most agreed the content tab can "get overwhelming", with materials quickly vanishing into a maze of dropdowns. Several said organising content has been trickier than expected, and creating offline versions of key documents isn't exactly seamless.

The question left on everyone's lips is 'why the change?' Dean

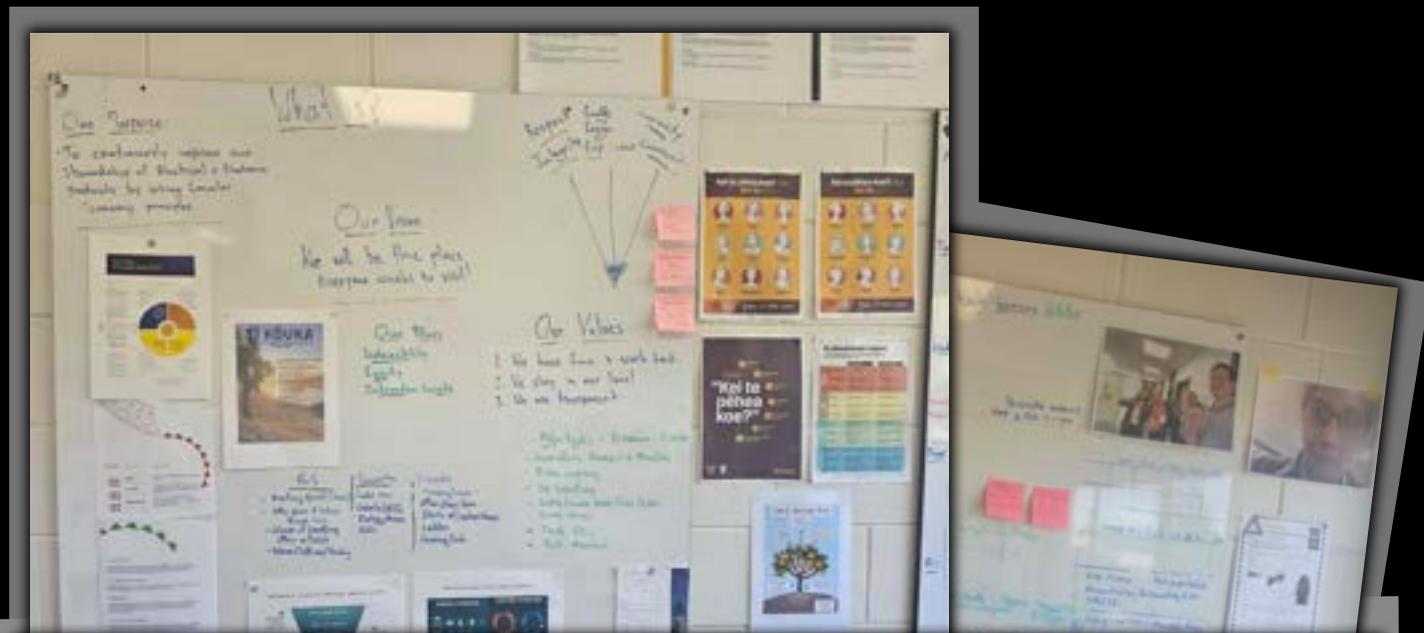
of Learning and Teaching Professor Tim Cooper described the main driver behind Aoroa as an effort to enhance the student learning experience. Long story short, Blackboard is a "legacy product" that hasn't had any extensive development from its vendor in years – and Aoroa represents the next step forward. "The new functionality we have available in Aoroa has genuine potential to enhance student learning. It is a cutting-edge and contemporary platform." It has been a long time since the University originally implemented Blackboard and Moodle, and "a lot has changed since then, including the types of platforms available, our expectations about what an LMS needs to do, and what kinds of student learning experiences we want to enable."

Tim noted that the University learnt a lot through teaching and learning during the Covid pandemic, so they "took some time to consult and do workshops with students and staff to describe what we needed and wanted from an LMS now and in the future. This work gave us a clear set of requirements." Another reason cited for the switch is the opportunity to implement a single LMS across all papers at Otago – meaning there's now one system to rule them all. What even is a 'Moodle'?

When asked whether the University would consider a return to Blackboard, the answer was a resounding no. Blackboard is an old system that is no longer being developed and, by early 2027, will no longer be supported by its vendor. RIP.

The name 'Aoroa' is derived from the early whakapapa of Tāwhaki, whose pursuit of knowledge is used to describe the journey of tauira at Ōtākou Whakaihu Waka. "It also has metaphorical meaning that alludes to the development of long lasting, deep knowledge. We'll be able to share more about the Kai Tahu story of Tāwhaki and where Aoroa fits in that narrative soon," Tim assured.

The University maintained that "Aoroa is a fantastic learning management system for our students, and that over time both students and staff will become more comfortable with using it."



E-WASTE DEPARTMENT SAVES UNI \$40,000 IN 2025

By Harry Almey

Staff Writer // news@critic.co.nz



Being environmental with electronic waste is economical. Who knew?

The Oraka, a gem in the centre of campus, is full of student-run businesses and second-hand goods. Lesser known is that it also houses a selection of rescued e-waste. Critic Te Ārohi dusted themselves off one dreary day, and went to explore.

Tucked in behind the second-hand clothes (nothing over \$20), and free coffee, is the e-waste department: the backbone of Te Oraka's second-hand tech sales. Head honcho of the scheme, Gareth Taylor, was as giddy as a schoolboy as he talked with us about his work.

Tech is brought to the department for e-recycling (stuff that is unfit for further University use) or e-reuse (stuff that can be put back into the University system). This can be anything from a laptop returned after a three-year contract, to other IT devices at the end of their lives.

The department also works backwards, distributing reusable tech around departments and therefore reducing the budgetary and environmental costs of buying more. In short, Gareth's e-waste team are the traffic wardens of university tech, keeping everything in motion.

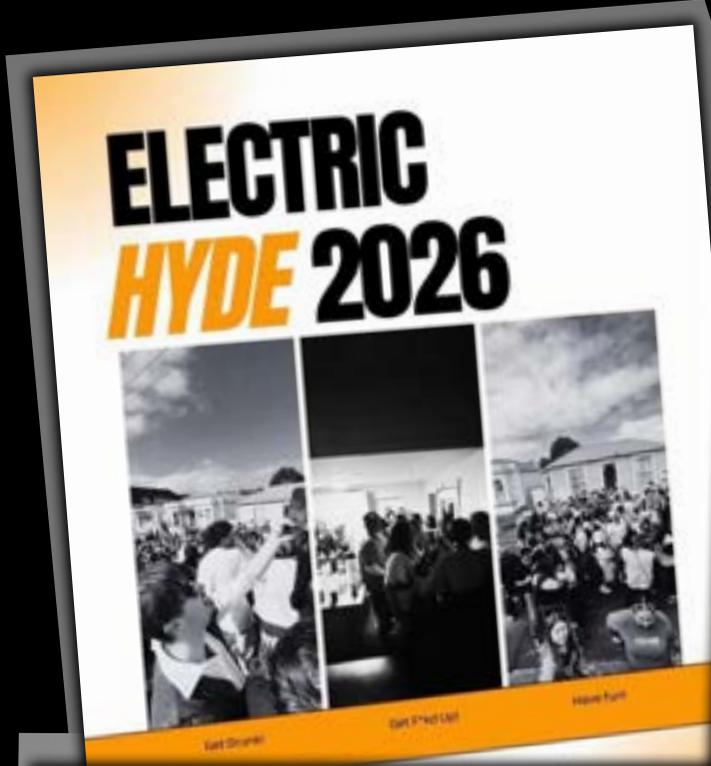
They dealt with 4,042 devices in 2025, and in doing so saved the Uni an estimated \$40,200. That's 20,100 subway cookies. In that period, they boasted a 49% reuse rate and 51% recycling rate for 2025. The latter was cycled into not only Te Oraka but also to schools such as Kaikorai Valley College, and recycle groups such as Cargill Enterprises and Com2Tech. Cargill Enterprises employs over sixty people with some level of a disability, and Com2Tech furnishes lower socio-economic households across the deep South with tech.

Their E-recycling has gone international too — to Tonga and Samoa! This work holds a special place in Gareth's heart, and their team's guiding pillars of sustainability and equity mean they send only their best devices to these Pacific nations. Dispatching replacements has an emissions impact, and the best devices will take longer to break, meaning their distribution remains as sustainable as possible.

All in all, the man behind the curtain described his work as a "tough and amazing challenge." Gareth isn't satisfied yet though – he wants the department to be "the place everyone wants to be", and has big plans for the future. While the department is not currently equipped to handle 20,000 students donating their own e-waste, Gareth is still keen to keep the e-waste conversation going with tauira. He hopes to engage with more students and "inform their further study relating to sustainability [while staying] focused on our purpose." Every person interested in the sustainability of tech counts: "One degree of deviation at the start of a race means not a great deal, but years down the track you can't even see your original target."

For all of you who want to check out this superstar department, or potentially get involved, Te Oraka can be found at 109 St. David Street. Up a tall tower, and down the corridor with a sign saying "classes other way!!!", Gareth and his team are working away.

Inquiries can be sent to E-rescue@otago.ac.nz



PLUG PULLED ON ELECTRIC HYDE AFTER WARNING OVER HYDE STREET PARTY'S FUTURE

By Imogen Perry & Molly Smith-Soppet

Staff Writer & Culture Editor // news@critic.co.nz



Unofficial party = no Hyde :(

Electric Hyde, a proposed event advertised in popular Castle26 Facebook group as an alternative to Electric Avenue, was quickly cancelled following discussions with the University and the Otago University Students' Association. Critic Te Ārohi understands that Hyde Street residents were made aware of the potential consequences of the proposed event going ahead during the Annual Hyde Street Party Residents Meeting, leading to its cancellation.

A spokesperson for the University of Otago confirmed that the Proctor attended the initial residents' planning meeting for the event at the invitation of OUSA. "At that meeting the Proctor spoke to street residents and, as part of discussions, raised various issues that could arise as a result of running a large, unofficial street party."

One of the key concerns was the potential impact an unofficial event could have on the long-running Hyde Street Party, which relies on established and valuable partnerships between OUSA, emergency services, and the local community to operate safely each year.

Hyde Street resident Cherry* told Critic that residents were effectively presented with what she described as an "ethical dilemma." Cherry said it was made clear during the meeting that if Electric Hyde were to go ahead independently, it could jeopardise the future of the official Hyde Street Party. Electric Hyde would place strain on first responders, traffic management and security personnel.

Hyde Street Party, locked in for April 18th this year, essentially risked permanent cancellation if Electric Hyde came to

fruition. Given the notoriety of the annual party, this would no doubt be a regional tragedy and cut deep within the Hyde whānau, also leaving LookSharp with a worrying overstock of money suits.

"After considering these issues, the residents made an informed decision not to proceed with the event," the University spokesperson added. Cherry described it as a unanimous agreement to "tell the people to fuck off if they pulled up." This resulted in the "quietest night we've had on Hyde since 1869."

Electric Hyde certainly revealed the dangers of a popular new hobby – AI shit-posting on Castle26. Not only that, it provided a reminder that throwing a rager doesn't just involve considerations of drinks, gear, and speakers.

As Cherry pointed out "I would actually like to say thanks to the idiot who posted that post, because it made room for us all to learn about how grateful we should be that we're blessed enough to have all these first responders to make [Hyde Street Party] possible".

Just buy the bloody EA ticket next time.

*Name Changed



Photos by Ethan Montañer

FOO FIGHTERS SEEKING HELP

Ōtepoti Band to Take on the Big Stage

By Dylan O'Connor
Staff Writer // news@critic.co.nz



Local Ōtepoti feminist punk band, SEEK HELP!, has been announced as one of the openers for the upcoming concert of American rock band Foo Fighters. SEEK HELP! made history last year by being one of two bands representing Otago at Smokefreerockquest 2025, and they finished in third place. Now, less than a year later, they (alongside Wellington-based punk band DARTZ) will support the first international band announced to play the new One New Zealand Stadium in Christchurch.

SEEK HELP! has been one of a few Ōtepoti bands to get recent international coverage in none other than Rolling Stone Magazine (Critic Te Ārohi's much smaller and lesser-known competitor). Rolling Stone was doing a feature about the Dunedin local band scene, and SEEK HELP! had their song 'Apex Predator' land on the "Songs You Need to Know" list. In the article, Rolling Stone compared the band to Auckland-based band Dick Move, who has opened for Foo Fighters in the past. SEEK HELP! guitarist Lucy Hughes noted that this comparison was probably how they were able to book the show. Foo Fighters frontman Dave Grohl must have heard their song.

Lucy cited the Riot Grrrl movement pioneer, Kathleen Hanna, as a major inspiration and hero of hers. Kathleen, the lead singer of Bikini Kill and Le Tigre, was friends with Foo Fighters

frontman Dave Grohl and Kurt Cobain during their time in Nirvana. In fact, she inspired the song title for "Smells Like Teen Spirit" when she wrote on Cobain's wall "Kurt smells like teen spirit." He also probably smelled like cigarettes, "Smells Like American Spirit" would probably be a more apt title for that song. So needless to say, Grohl has been in close proximity to the Riot Grrrl scene for the past three decades.

SEEK HELP!, whose members hail from Queen's High School, have been building up their status in the Dunedin local scene for over the past year. They formed in 2024 but just started releasing music in 2025, with 'Apex Predator' being their first official release.

They, along with fellow Ōtepoti band Deaf Raccoon, played a Dunedin City Council backed show in the Octagon for New Years. The ODT reported they had not been paid for the gig as of the 20th of February. Hopefully the Foo Fighters are a bit quicker to fork out.

So now SEEK HELP! are moving onto bigger and better things than the tried-and-true Octagon, a difficult concept for those convinced that Subs is the place to be. Instead they'll be playing for a brand new venue full of 30,000 people and the fighters of foo. Christchurch – look out.



By Harry Almey



An Interview with Josh Wiegman: One day, in a rush to class, you'll pass Startup Dunedin on Leithbank. If you take a moment to really look, you'll spy a poster in the window of a student business they have proudly nurtured. Ready, set, Cue-Go.

The audio-visual event tech company, Cue-Go, is a star in the sky, despite starting with "literally nothing." The managing director, Josh Wiegman, said that their "first client wanted the full package [...] We had zero lights." Never fear, using that noggin and a 50% down payment, lights were bought, and they made a 10% profit. From that, they shone bright, and are on track for \$500,000 in revenue for 2026. Since 2023, Cue-Go's sponsorship amounted to \$25,000, and last year, they sponsored the new \$700 Best Service Business award. Frolic Events won it at Startup Dunedin's student pitch competition.

Josh remains grateful for the help that got him here. Entering university computer science study in 2023, all he knew was that he wanted to be a sole trader in event tech. Only one class accommodated this — the "fine class" of THEA152 Theatre Technology. In went himself and fellow student, Abby Fernandes, and out came a business. With those skills in hand and an "excellent mentor" in Martyn Roberts, Josh asked Abby to be his business partner with the encouraging words: "It's not that hard." With a bit more convincing (and bribery via cupcakes), Cue-Go Productions began in July 2023. Josh was 18, and Abby 19.

"Everyone's making it up as they go," Josh tells Critic Te Ārohi. This seems to be the principle that Josh lives (and succeeds) by. For example, their business had no name until inspiration struck in the form of a technical operator starting a show and pressing the buttons "Cue", then "Go."

Cue-Go Productions took Dunedin's event scene by storm. Don't just take our word for it: in 2024 they won the Industry Disruptor Award. They secured contracts with both the University and the Polytech, and quickly became the preferred partners of the Dunedin Fringe Festival. Cue-Go Productions filled a niche of prices and service that was just right for community events, and signs of their sponsorship could be seen city-wide.

While they started out with tech retail, contracting, and equipment loan, their theatre production era ended in July 2025. Cue-Go Productions' pro-bono work had been rewarding, but change beckoned. They sold off their equipment rental stock to Gravity Events, which Josh said helped avoid "friction." It took a while for us to understand why he hadn't just blown up the competition like a good capitalist. "We don't want to compete over every little thing, or to poach work," Josh said, "We want to play to our strengths." Also lights cost a butt-fuck-ton, and loaning stuff to each other is good for the soul and the pocket.

However, when Critic called Josh for a chat, he had relocated to Palmerston North, adding "Bought a laser tag business. Sorry." Pardon it? Turns out Josh had stuck to his policy of making it up as he went along, from making an offer on Facebook Marketplace one day, to becoming the proud owner of Laser Llamas.

But that's the moral of the story. You never know where you'll end up when you seize an opportunity, and Josh says entrepreneurial students should "just start." It'll mean long hours, loneliness, and workaholism, but what's the worst that can happen? You're young, you'll fall down, and someone will say, "Get up." Then maybe, just maybe, you'll have the big stupid smile of Josh Wiegman, as he talks about that fluttering feeling of bringing something to life.



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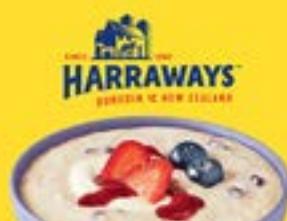
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YOUR BREAKFAST JUST GOT

Extra Creamy

ACROSS

- 1 British actor known for 'The Meg'
- 8 Common vehicle
- 9 A slim pancake
- 10 They're green and have layers
- 11 Famous Egyptian artifact, discovered in 1799 (2)
- 13 An adorable species from Star Wars
- 14 Most populous state in Australia (abbrv.)
- 17 Fraudulent
- 18 A type of military personnel
- 21 The place in UK where 11A can be found (2)
- 22 Underground burial sites
- 23 A storage place for large numbers of goods

DOWN

- 1 Historic killer who terrorized the streets of Whitechapel
- 2 The friendly companion inside your iPhone
- 3 Tortilla chips with cheese
- 4 Movie World, for example
- 5 Might be considered a forest's summit
- 6 Optimus Prime's number one opp
- 7 An immoral act
- 12 Answer to this week's connecting clues
- 15 New movie starring Rachel McAdams and Dylan O'brien (2)
- 16 Top-quality food and drink
- 19 Spooky corpses wrapped in bandages
- 20 Highly addictive drug

Crossword St



FIND ANSWERS ON CRITIC.CO.NZ



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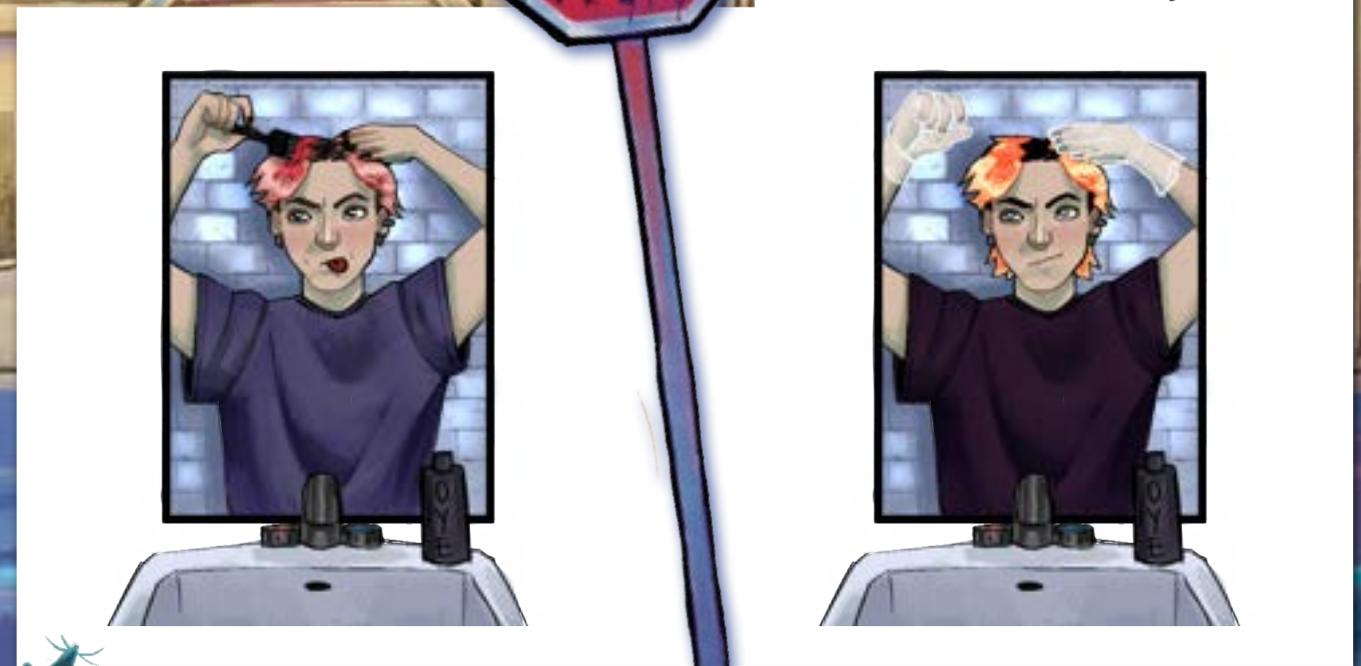
- BARBIE
- MERMEDIA
- FAIRYTOPIA
- TEA
- TELEPHONE
- BIBBLE
- ELECTRIC HYDE
- BIG BEN
- FUNGUS MAXIMUS
- MOVIE
- REVIEW
- EWASTE
- IMMUNITY
- BERRY
- SUBSTANCES
- CONES
- GARDENS

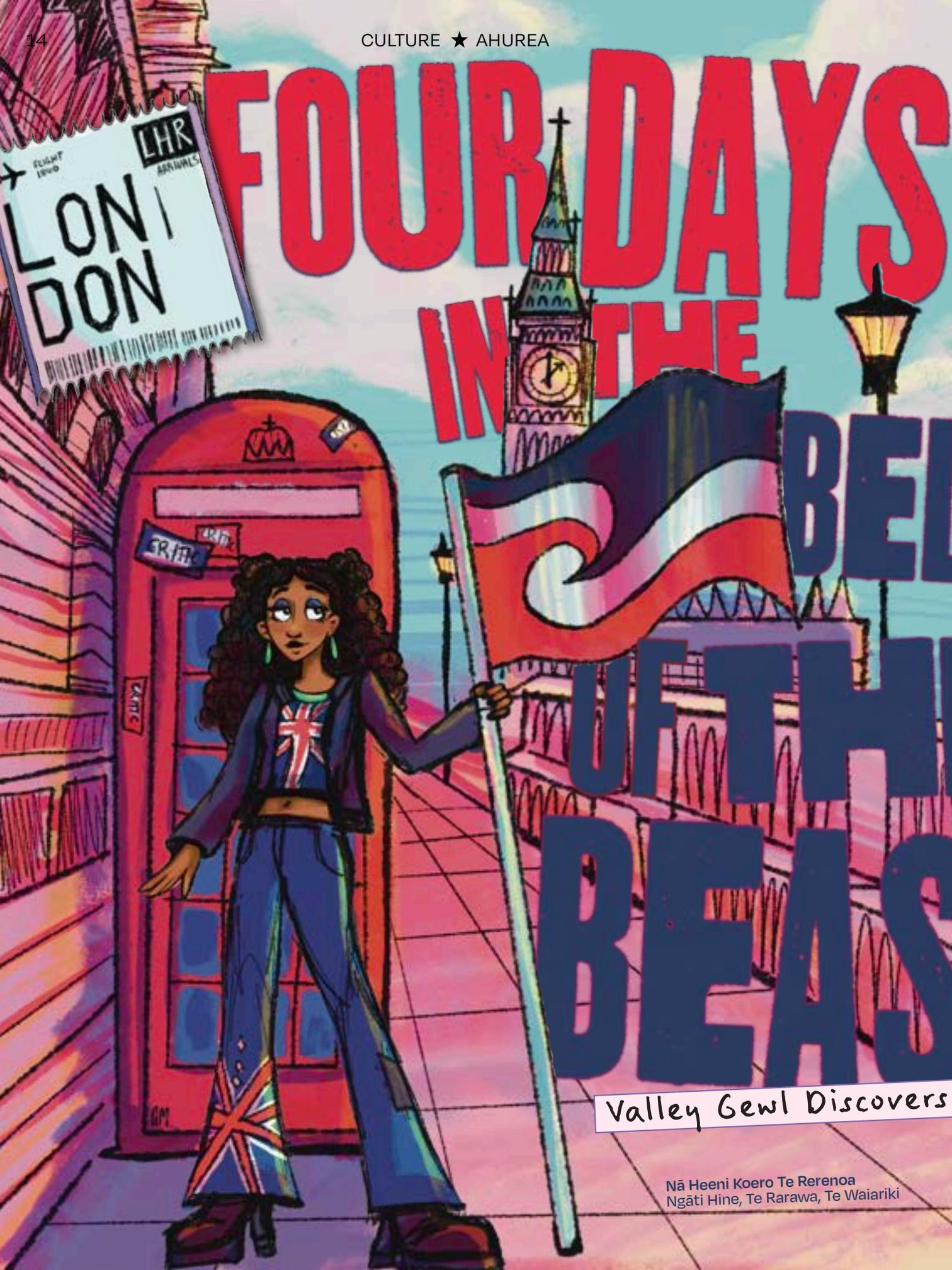
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Last week we reviewed:
Barbie Fairytopia Mermaidia

There are 10 differences between the two images
 Illustrated by Eddie Fenton





FOUR DAYS

IN THE BELLY

OF THE BEAST

Valley Gewl Discovers Britain

Nā Heeni Koero Te Rerenoa
Ngāti Hine, Te Rarawa, Te Waiariki



Illustrated by Gemma McKinney

I went to London to see what all the fuss was about. After all, it has a long history of looking in our direction first.

It's the third week of uni, which means I should be pretty locked in: highlighting readings, colour-coding my calendar, and convincing myself this is the semester I finally become the hyper-organised academic weapon I keep promising myself I'll be. Instead, I'm knee-deep in Skyscanner deals, again, romanticising departure gates while deadlines start to accumulate. If nineteenth-century explorers had access to flight alerts and a half-decent search engine, history may have unfolded very differently.

Right now, like most of us, my world stretches from my flat to campus to the Octagon and back again. The outer limits of my weekly orbit are defined by \$7 matchas at Auahi Ora, tutorial attendance requirements, and whether I can be bothered climbing to the third floor of Central Library for a window seat. My geography is small, contained, and responsibly budgeted. But between Aoroa notifications and eReserve tabs multiplying like kutus, I keep ending up on Google Maps, dragging myself out of Dunedin one scroll at a time.

The problem with leaving a place is that you return with altered proportions. After a summer on the other side of the world, the Octagon no longer feels like the centre of everything so much as a very well-lit loop. Over the break, I travelled through Europe on what my mates confidently labelled a "once in a lifetime" trip, a phrase intended to discourage repetition and manage expectations. Personally, I consider it an opening chapter. It was expansive in the literal sense: space widened, history thickened, and my sense of scale permanently shifted. There were cathedrals, overnight buses (cheap but grim, BTW), and languages I did not speak but attempted anyway. Moving constantly, adjusting quickly, and getting used to not quite knowing where I was.

But before Budapest and Paris entered the frame, my summer break began in autumnal London. Unlike other cities that exist in my memory as aesthetic backdrops, London is the belly of the beast – the one that looms in footnotes, lingers in Treaty clauses, and operates as the headquarters of an empire that insisted Māori would be British subjects. If

you're wondering why I'm taking this seriously, I'm a Ngāpuhi, born on Waitangi Day, and I study politics. Of course I wasn't going to let that slide. To put it simply, I've got beef with this place. Longstanding, in fact.

If Britain "discovered" the world through the simple act of naming it, then I saw no reason not to return the gesture, and in true Valley Gewl fashion, discover London. In the spirit of reciprocity, of course. Anā.

The Centre of the World (According to Itself)

There is something quietly embarrassing about standing in the so-called heart of imperial power and realising that it now competes with brunch culture and Premier League fixtures for national attention. Sure, the city still carries itself with importance, but it no longer monopolises it. Global finance runs through New York and Shanghai, and cultural trends erupt from Seoul and Lagos. Political power is multipolar – London remains influential, but it is far from singular.

For those of us raised under the long shadow of "the Crown", this matters. When you grow up hearing that your tūpuna became British subjects, the word 'Britain' acquires a kind of gravitational pull. It sounds central, authoritative and defining. But when you are physically there, watching tourists queue for photos while MPs argue inside Parliament about entirely domestic issues, the myth thins slightly. The sky does not bend toward Westminster, and the world does not pause at the chime of Big Ben. The centre, it turns out, is a matter of perspective. And perspective, it turns out, travels.

London still knows how to market itself as the main character. It has centuries of practice. But walking its streets made one thing abundantly clear: the empire may have once narrated the story, but it no longer controls the script.

The Colonial Catalogue

If London once styled itself as the centre of the world, the British Museum reads like the ledger. This is the belly: where the empire keeps what it swallowed. Its galleries unfold with composed authority: monumental stone guardians from Assyria, Egyptian sarcophagi, classical marble torsos, temple façades transported and reconstructed as though geography were merely an utter inconvenience. Objects that once anchored specific cosmologies now sit within a universal narrative of “world civilisation,” gently unified by lighting design and institutional confidence.

The Shrine of Taharqa from Sudan stands with architectural certainty. A Moai, the cuzzy, from Rapa Nui occupies space with a kind of displaced stillness. The Rosetta Stone draws a crowd that photographs it as though language itself originated in Bloomsbury. Across storerooms and displays, more than 3,000 taonga Māori are catalogued into this global inventory, separated from the whenua that shaped them and the communities that continue to carry their meaning.

Though, for a Māori visitor – and I’m certainly not the first – it lands in the body before it lands in the brain. You grow up understanding taonga not as objects but as ancestors, as vessels of whakapapa, and as things that breathe alongside the people who carry them. Here, they are itemised like entries in a colonial catalogue. They are trophies collecting dust on a cabinet, positioned beneath plaques written in immaculate passive voice: collected, origin unknown, acquired, transferred. Very clean language for very paru work.

There is also, of course, the well-worn joke that very little in the British Museum is actually British. The institution holds millions of objects – entire histories have been reorganised into gallery wings. But knowing that thousands of taonga Māori sit within that archive, stored or displayed according to curatorial priorities, shifts the tone. The joke begins to feel less subversive and more descriptive.

Eventually, the architectural choreography guides you toward the exit, and, as with all major cultural institutions, the path concludes in retail – the transition is almost seamless. After rooms dense with global antiquity, you find yourself in a space where Britishness is condensed into something portable and pleasant. Shelves offer confectionery wrapped in Union Jack packaging, porcelain printed with Beatrix Potter illustrations, commemorative stamp collections bearing a familiar monarch’s profile, and entire sections devoted to wizardry merchandised through nostalgia. All that’s missing is a Union Jack doormat. Give it time.



The atmosphere is tidy, whimsical, and reassuringly endearing, but the contrast is anything except subtle. Upstairs, the material record of imperial reach; downstairs, a version of national identity rendered both charming and consumable. One can move, within minutes, from contemplating the displacement of sacred objects to purchasing a tea towel that implies it was all rather tasteful – in the name of conquest.

Standing there, thousands of kilometres from home, I found the audacity almost impressive. Empire no longer claims to rule the plot, but it continues to curate the set with remarkable confidence. That sense of curated control is not isolated to the museum; it bleeds outward into the city – its institutions, its symbols, its assumptions about what it is and what it represents. Once you start seeing it, it becomes difficult to ignore.

Terms & Conditions Apply

That realisation does not stay neatly inside the museum. It follows you out, past the gift shop, and straight into the everyday mechanics of the state. It is one thing to see an empire behind glass; another to queue up and pay to enter it.

There is something deeply ironic about arriving in the so-called motherland and discovering that the “rights and privileges of British subjects” come with a cover charge. Te Tiriti assures us that, “in consideration thereof Her Majesty the Queen of England extends to the Natives of New Zealand her royal protection and imparts to them all the Rights and Privileges of British Subjects.” Generous, in theory. Slightly less convincing when you are \$50 lighter at the border with no British passport, no fast-track lane, and no visible sign that this arrangement was ever designed to work both ways.

If I am, as promised, a British subject, then I would love to know where exactly those privileges are hiding. They were not stamped into my passport, they were not recognised on arrival, and they certainly were not covering my entry fee. “Rights and privileges” sounds decent until you try to use them. It starts to feel a bit like being handed a gift card and then realising it expired sometime in the nineteenth century. Mean gesture, though.

Of course, the legal position has shifted since those words were written. New Zealand moved away from British subjecthood decades ago, and our constitutional arrangements have changed along the way. Fair enough. But Te Tiriti is still invoked when we talk about the relationship between the Crown and Māori, and the promise itself remains there in plain language. The wording has not disappeared. The relationship certainly has not.

And that raises a quieter question. If the meaning of that promise has changed over time, when exactly was it revisited with the people it was originally made to? For more than a century – roughly 146 years between the signing of Te Tiriti and the constitutional shift of the 1980s – that language sat there intact. Plenty of time, you would think, to clarify what it meant in practice. Instead, the wording remains. The promise is still printed, but the application feels... interpretive. Conveniently so.

You do start to wonder what, exactly, is taught there. Do children grow up learning about Te Tiriti o Waitangi in the same way we do? About the agreements made, the guarantees offered, the obligations implied? Or does empire, like everything else, sit neatly arranged – acknowledged, preserved, but not particularly interrogated?

Long Live the Brand

And then there is the monarchy itself, which London treats less like a governing structure and more like a heritage franchise that refuses to go out of business. It is everywhere, printed, minted, commemorated, and quietly insisted upon, from tea tins and biscuit boxes to souvenir stands stacked with carefully curated reverence. The Crown, which exists at home as an abstract authority invoked in policy and Treaty

interpretation, becomes something far more tangible here: a logo, a face, a constant presence that is endlessly reproduced and, more importantly, endlessly sold.

I visited Buckingham Palace, where access is carefully managed, and tickets are very much part of the experience. I found myself in conversation with someone who explained, quite earnestly, that it must be difficult for the royal family. The reasoning was that opening the palace to the public helps “close the gap” between the royals and their subjects, a gesture framed as both generous and necessary. It was delivered with such sincerity that I almost admired it. Yeah, nah. Because standing there, in a space that quite literally monetises proximity to inherited power, the idea that this arrangement should inspire sympathy felt less convincing and more theatrical. A difficult life, clearly. I’ll light a candle. Kia kaha.

If anything, the entire experience sharpened the opposite impression. The distance is not disappearing; it is being managed, packaged, and sold back as access. You are not closing the gap; instead, you are queuing through it. And at a certain point, it becomes difficult to tell whether the monarchy is maintaining relevance or simply running one of the most successful long-term branding exercises in modern history with exceptional returns.

A National Delicacy, Apparently

At some point, between museums, monarchy, and mild disillusionment, I found myself being introduced to what was described – with full confidence – as British delicacies. The word itself felt ambitious. Delicacy suggests intention, balance, or something worth seeking out. Think: escargot in Paris, schnitzel in Vienna, chimney cakes in Budapest. I even came face-to-face with a Reindeer hotdog in Tromsø, Norway. Hard pass. But what I encountered in the L-town felt more like a long-standing agreement not to ask too many questions and simply keep eating.

There is something fascinating about the way British food is presented, as though enthusiasm alone might compensate for what is happening on the plate. Though not a foreign concept in Aotearoa, the full English breakfast, for example, operates on a principle of inclusion rather than cohesion: beans, toast, sausage, eggs, mushrooms, tomato, all assembled with the quiet confidence that proximity will do the work of flavour. It is less a meal and more a group project where no one communicated, but everyone still showed up. Mushy peas, I was told, are essential. Both non-negotiable and a cornerstone of the experience. What arrived was a shade of green that felt more theoretical than edible, somewhere between paste and memory, sitting comfortably on the plate as though it had tenure. One word – auê! You don’t eat it because it improves anything; you eat it because it has been there for so long that removing it would feel politically controversial. Moumou, yes. My problem, no.

The flat whites were decent, yes, which in London feels like a win and at home feels like the bare minimum. The Sunday roast, I will admit, was a vibe – heavy, committed, aggressively beige, but at least internally consistent. It knew what it was doing, even if that thing was mostly butter and momentum. Elsewhere, food becomes less about eating and more about navigating: \$11 steamed buns in Chinatown (unheard of), the quiet reliability of a Tesco meal deal, and the ever-present chicken tikka masala, widely referred to as Britain’s national delicacy. I avoided it, partly out of principle, but also out of fatigue. The idea of eating a dish so globally entangled in a place that insists on presenting itself as the origin point of everything felt like eating empire in reverse, and I was not sure I had the appetite for it.

Seen, But Not Known

What I will give London is its ability to make you feel completely insignificant. No one is looking at you unless you are directly in their way, and even then, it is less curiosity and more a quiet expectation that you will move. The city runs



on a kind of silent agreement: keep walking, keep left, and definitely do not hesitate. At best, you are an “excuse me.” At worst, you are a delay.

The commitment to presentation is undeniable. Almost everyone is dressed like they have somewhere important to be, even if that place is just the next Pret. No Uggs in sight; coats, layers, actual shoes – every day felt like walking through my Pinterest board, except everyone in it had somewhere to be and no time to acknowledge you. It is impressive, if slightly intimidating. You are not being watched, but you are definitely being outdressed. Once you realise that, the city becomes unexpectedly permissive – you can do almost anything. Personally, I chose to bawl my eyes out three times at the Phantom of the Opera, and then once more upon leaving the theatre. No one so much as glanced in my direction. People stepped around me with the same efficiency they applied to everything else, as though public displays of distress were just another obstacle to navigate. Tragic? Also yes. But feeling te ihi me te wana on that scale would do that to any haka fanatic.

At one point, I even did a full outfit change on Westminster Bridge in front of Big Ben – shoes, makeup, the whole get-up – using the city as a changing room it had not agreed to be and showing off my Hunaarn gear, as always. Anywhere else, it would have been a spectacle. But in London, it barely registered. Not even a double-take. People passed, adjusted their path slightly, and continued on, leaving me to it without interruption or acknowledgement. You are completely visible, but functionally unnoticed – seen only to the extent that you need to be avoided.

Not the Centre, After All

After a few days, it became clear that the “beast” is not quite as fearsome as it once made itself out to be. For something that built its authority on taking, naming, and claiming, the empire now relies mostly on the suggestion that it can still bite. The teeth are still on display, of course – polished, preserved, occasionally invoked – but they do not quite sink in the way they once did.

London works very hard to remind you that it matters. The buildings are large, the history is everywhere, and the symbols are repeated often enough that you start to recognise them before you understand them. Flags, guards, plaques, entire streets arranged like they have something to prove – it is all very convincing for about five minutes. Maybe less.

Perhaps that is why so much of the world is still sitting here, carefully catalogued and preserved. When control slips, possession can start to look a lot like memory. Whole histories arranged neatly behind glass as proof that the centre once mattered. The city does not display its importance; it collects it from everywhere else and calls it its own with impressive consistency.

After all, a beast is nothing without its teeth. Anā.



WHO GETS TO BE HIGH?

Illustrated by
Jimmy Tannock

The big move South to university opened my world. One night you're sitting at home with your parents, half-listening to them hammer in their values and opinions at the dinner table. Next, you're living in close quarters with a few hundred frothy eighteen year olds. People from different families and areas happen to give exposure to differences in culture, beliefs and morals. Who would've thunk it.

This all came to a head around one cornerstone of the Otago experience: partying.

There are few opportunities in life quite like O-Week – a sanctioned, one-week bender where my parents' rules were at least a thousand kilometres away and held no weight on my freshly adult shoulders. The drug of choice is of course alcohol – but this was only the start of my exposure to drugs at uni, from that moment all the way now to my postgraduate days.

As my world became more than just my old high school drama, I realised quickly how different everyone's exposure to drug use was. Whether it was different situations or different people taking them, it was a constant flipflop between judging and admiring.

A couple years back, I walked into my mate's flat on Castle with the confidence only a second-year can have during Flo Week. **I was immediately met with the sight of a huddle of boys, racking up lines on the kitchen bench.** It was the first time I'd seen hard drugs taken so casually in front of me. My previous exposure had been entirely negative – school assemblies, police talks, and relatives always telling us to say no to people offering them. Harold the Giraffe telling me jail would be the destination I'd reach if I went down the drugs route. My high school, despite being described by many in my town as "a bit scody", would still never glamorise drug use.



But here it wasn't desperation, or dysfunction, or a problem. It was boys in their Sunday best, preing for the function.

The longer I spent at uni, the more fascinated I became by the relationship between wealth and drugs. I had grown up with the narrative that drug users were jobless and lived a life full of illegal activities. But I was always aware that addiction was a disease – what I hadn't yet grasped was how differently that disease is perceived depending on who has it.

The media I was exposed to growing up shaped my ignorance. The Wine Mum stereotype of a wealthy lady knocking back multiple bottles of wine a week was portrayed to me as "stress relief". A working-class woman drinking the same amount is far less likely to be treated as quirky or in need of an outlet. She's seen as a problem.

Our institutions reinforce this. In a lot of prestigious jobs, 'hard drugs' like cocaine are very normalised. Think the Big 4 accounting firms, or big law – it turns out that The Wolf of Wall Street wasn't too inaccurate. When you earn enough money to fund a drug habit, without sacrificing rent, food, or image, it becomes invisible. Wealth just adds a nice shiny layer and the slogan "work hard, play hard". Expensive drugs are glamorous. Coke, Ket, MDMA – high price tags, high-status party scenes. There's a wealth gap even within drug culture. The substances most associated with affluence are treated as indulgences. The ones associated with poverty are treated as moral failures.

I found Uni culture was far more lenient on drugs than expected. My mates and I have joked at times



that weed basically feels legal in North Dunedin. Most passers-by on Dundas or Leith will turn a blind eye at a random whiff of weed wafting from a flat. I would not expect such a calm reaction from the people from my hometown.

Even when it comes to the academic side of uni, drug use is normalised to an extent. Buying Ritalin to help you "lock in" for exams is a common experience for many. Prescription medication becomes a study aid to some, a way to make a bit of cash for others. It's not framed as abuse, it's seen as productivity; as an extra level of dedication to your studies.

Residential colleges were particularly eye-opening. When else are you spending a year straight partying (and occasionally going to lectures) with hundreds of other people who have never drunk without supervision? Your mate who got way too fucked up in town every week without fail? That's alcoholism. Even if you rebrand it as being a wild-one on a night out, just getting "engrossed into student culture", that's still alcoholism. But because it's happening in a space filled predominantly with middle and upper-income students, it's funny. It's character-building. It's just what you do.

Music festivals tend to follow a similar pattern. If you can afford the petrol or flights, accommodation, tickets and all other expenses – chances are \$100 on drugs will not trigger much worry. I've attended festivals where security barely checked pockets. **The Class A baggie shoved in my undies felt less scrutiny than a snuck-in RTD.** These environments are expensive by design. The cost of entry filters who is there, and therefore who is policed.

I can admit I'm part of this cycle of no-consequence. These environments have allowed me to try Ritalin, MDMA, acid, ketamine and other substances with little fear of genuine consequences. When the risks feel social rather than legal, experimentation becomes a hobby.

Taking drugs is a personal choice. There are clear factors that make it attractive – euphoria, escape, even connection. But there are obvious negatives – illegality, addiction and health risks. Through this experience though, an awareness of who you are around, and whether the consequences would be the same for your mates in another situation is worth having a think about.



In Aotearoa, conviction rates for drug possession disproportionately affect people from lower socioeconomic backgrounds. Police discretion often plays differently depending on postcode, presentation, and perceived potential of the individual. A wealthy student with a one-off charge is "promising." Someone from a poorer background is a "repeat risk". With systematic inequalities across our justice system, drug users are at the mercy of different consequences, purely based on the life they were born in.

Despite what you may have been led to believe, drugs have made it into every facet of Aotearoa society. They may be one of the few universal threads across class lines. The difference is not who uses them – it's who is punished for it.

Whether it's a glass of wine in a mansion, or a powerade bottle bong behind a shed, substance addiction can happen to anyone. But accountability, stigma and the state's response are not universal.

Addiction is a disease. But privilege determines how comfortably you're allowed to have it.

If you have concerns about your own, or others alcohol and drug usage, you can call the Alcohol and Drug Helpline on 0800 787 797 or text 8681, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, to speak with a trained counsellor. All calls are free and confidential.

FESTIVALS FROM THE INSIDE

TIPS & STORIES FROM SECURITY GUARDS

By Matilda Rumball-Smith

Illustrated by Eleanor Walker

**To cover any fancy legal footwork against May and Lucy, any resemblance to persons, places, events, are purely coincidental. All stage names and people are fictional. In saying that, May and Lucy's work performance will probably get them fired anyway.*

Now that uni is back in full swing, Critic Te Ārohi feels safe in saying that festival season is officially #over. While we've done our fair share of festival attending, we've never stopped to think about the poor sods that are stuck festival working, other than to drunkenly shout at them to please pour us another vodka Redbull. As such, we enlisted a couple of our writers to work as security guards at one of Aotearoa's most popular festivals.

Through the devoted eyes of May* and Lucy*, we heard the mistakes, the fuckups, the secret locations and the incidents heard on walkie-talkies that go unreported and unseen by the lowly festival goer. We know where all the gaps in the fencing are – so many there aren't enough guards to cover them all. Whether you were kettled out and dropped a flask in front of May, or collapsed at Lucy's feet while you were coming up, Critic heard about it – and wrote it down for all of our readers today. Throughout the article, we've also compiled a list of #festivalhacks to keep in mind for your next bender. We won't tell you what festival these two worked at – it's up to you to decide for yourself.

DAY ONE 1200 HOURS

At this time, the festival attendee is slinging a shot of tequila as they pull on their shortest skirt and oldest Sambas, or best button up shirt and cleanest jorts. Sunglasses are artfully placed on the head, there's a cheerfully plump bag of gear in pocket, and Birkenstocks have been polished to a shine.

Around this time, May and Lucy blast into a resident's only park in a flashy looking suburb, hoping to secure a free space for eleven hours. They've been travelling for hours to get here, and are supposed to be clocking in for their shift in 17 minutes.

If you were a concerned middle-aged mum watching from the sidewalk, you'd see a couple of girls in a violent struggle with their security uniform, bare bums in the air as they pull work pants on. Their ugly outfits are complete when an eye-wateringly bright orange jacket is zipped up, and Lucy straps her security licence to her arm. Unfortunately, May never got her security licence. In fact, she was hired without a criminal background check, any relevant experience, or even an interview. She is literally just a woman dressed like a traffic cone, but she'd come to find that she wasn't the only guard who had never worked security before, let alone at a festival.

1227 HOURS

May and Lucy sprint over four roads and two bridges to get to the site base. If that wasn't enough of a public humiliation ritual, their jackets are emblazoned with 'SECURITY' across their backs and arms. Literally nobody likes security, and they're already receiving dirty looks as a result. Lucy agrees with this sentiment as she doesn't even really like working as security. After three wrong

turns they emerge at the base, panting. A wristband is tightened around their wrists, which gives them access to all areas of the festival. To remove it, they'd have to cut it off.

There's a good security budget and around four different security companies here, but it's pretty obvious from the get go that money can't buy organisational skills. It becomes apparent over the weekend that none of these contracting companies remotely respect each other, as the radio channel is saturated with complaints about the mistakes of other companies. Additionally, the security company May and Lucy are employed by are relatively new on the block, and are keen to make a name for themselves at this festival. As such, Lucy is quietly told that some of their team are being employed as 'security', but are in fact told to do something else entirely. In reality, their only role is to greet patrons and make conversations with them to boost the company's reputation. For these 'guards', public safety is a secondary goal to being smiley and shiny. In practical security terms, they are utterly useless.

1237 HOURS

May and Lucy just manage to snag a radio. Their employer is about twenty radios short, which means that a fifth of the team is completely devoid of communication. These people are told to just shout out or run to find their supervisor. Right.

TIP #1: If security pulls you up for being troublesome at a festival, look to their ear to see if they have a radio in to call for help. If they don't, gun it. May and Lucy couldn't tell any festival goers apart once they had wandered from about a meter away from them, because all the boys wore button up shirts and low-taper fades and all the girls blended into one mush of dancing Barbie festival princesses.

At 1321 hours, the leaders are still scrambling to organise their troops. May and Lucy have been paid for 21 minutes of work without even leaving base. Gates open in just under an hour, and May's team leader is nowhere to be found. Lucy's supervisor shows her where she'll be positioned for the day. May stares after her desperately. No one has bothered to teach May how to use the radio, but they have provided pizza! As Lucy leaves, she hears a last minute hire reciting his tax code and bank account number off by heart to the management team, who scrawls it in the margin of their notepad.

1355 HOURS

You're either still doing lines in a motel bathroom or waiting for the gates to open in five minutes – which will not happen. Two minutes before ticketing is supposed to open and an hour and a half since all staff have arrived, the Comms team sends out a call to confirm all staff are ready and in position. There's an immediate flurry of activity over the radio. It sounds like nobody is ready



for gates to open, and there are five staff from three different companies wandering around looking for their team leader. An entire barrier lies unconstructed next to the stage. It takes a further five minutes for the management team to figure out that the Magnet Room* and Magnet VIP Bar* are in fact, two different places and both need to be staffed. Eventually, the staff at the entrance open the gates (ten minutes late), and patrons begin to rush in.

May has been placed at the edge of Sunset Bar*, which is situated close to the Main Stage*. Her supervisor asks where her security licence is. She says she was hired without one. She will be asked this thirty-seven times in the next two days. Her supervisor shrugs at this before telling May that they'll have to fake it. Because she is unlicensed, she cannot legally stop anyone or ask them to leave the festival. So while she can check an attendee's ticket or issue a special lanyard, if someone walks straight past her, the only thing she can do is radio her supervisor and give them a description of the person. She is told to keep her head down as the licensing council is coming around to check accreditation, which she does not have. They are too short staffed to move her to ticketing, one of the few positions which don't require a license.

May witnesses some crazy shit at her post next to the Sunset Bar. The bar is absolutely packed because of a high up VIM (Very Important Menace) named Gordon* – who fired off message after message inviting people into the bar. May was given special instructions to give anyone with "a text from Gordon" a special lanyard and allow them access to the bar.

TIP #2: The way into VIP bars is through connections. More often than not, the people getting into VIP bars are not the people paying over a grand to get access. Everyone in New Zealand knows everyone, so get thinking a month out of the festival. It's worth it to hit up that uncle's mate who works in marketing, or your flatmate's sister who dates one of the artists.

However, halfway through the afternoon Gordon realised he had too many friends. As a result, he instructed May that if any other Gordonators arrived brandishing a text message to her, she was to tell them that "Gordy is unavailable" or that "Gords is not even here." There were a couple of problems with these instructions, which May soon encountered. Firstly, Gordon obviously liked the idea of being a super nice guy, and loved watching drunk people fizzing to get into an open bar. As such, he kept firing off text invitations mercilessly. Secondly, when May had to tell them one of his autofill excuses, they could actually see Naughty Gordy in the bar behind her. At this point, dejected Gordonators would usually be bold and drunk enough to start an argument with May: an unlicensed and legally powerless guard.

May also noticed that a couple members of the production crew for the Main Stage came back time and time again to flash their wristbands and get free drinks. By the end of the night, she reckons they must have been wasted. While crew members are technically allowed access to all areas, it's up in the air as to whether this includes getting boozy at Sunset Bar on the job. The security guard working with May (also unlicensed – they bonded over this) did ask the thirsty crew whether they were supposed to drink on the job, and got only laughs in return. With wide grins, eyes the size of the moon and crusty noses, it seems third tier influencers love gear just as much as all of you breathas and sheathas.

Worst of all were the sleazy men. They'd come up to her and make her take their lanyards off of their neck when they were leaving the bar, hands full with drinks. "It feels like winning a medal," they'd sneer at her drunkenly. The other guard she was working with, also a girl, looked visibly uncomfortable for much of the night. "Do they just love having female security guards or something?", she murmured, looking down at her docs.. It was a difficult reality – working at security, but not being taken seriously, or having any control over the situation at all.

TIP #3: A security license is mandatory for guards acting as crowd controllers, giving them the power to search bags and people, or the right to remove people from any specific areas. Employers hiring unlicensed security guards can be faced with heavy fines. Guards are legally required to display their security license at all times. Most guards are licensed, trained and competent, but if you have a negative interaction with

an employee or believe you are being treated unfairly, check to see if they are actually licensed to give yourself an out.

While May was fending off Gordon & Co, Lucy was working at the entrance to the stage production area under a VIP bar facing the Magnet Stage.* This is interesting for about three minutes. She notices that one guy's role is just to wander around the field with his Macbook, finding the dead spots in the music and making tiny adjustments. Usually when Lucy works security, she tries to chat with the people working nearby or else she is bored to tears. However, the Production Crew are all terribly busy or a bit up themselves, because even when they sit on the couch rolling cigarettes before each act starts, only one of them bothers to ask her name.

2100 HOURS

Behind Lucy is a secret staircase that leads up to a VIP bar overlooking the stage. Only it's not so secret, as everyone seems to know that it leads to the bar despite her lying and saying it just leads to more sound production. The only thing that separates her from the writhing mass of people watching the headliner is a tiny gate, watched by another guard. Lucy is subjected to attempted bribing, pleading, threatening and negotiating with anyone who manages to get her attention. Her friends from university beg her to turn a blind eye and let them up the stairs. Any attempt to get Lucy to fold is futile – even if someone did get past her, they'd be stopped by another guard further up asking where their lanyard is, and Lucy would be promptly fired for failing what is essentially her only job.

Some eager beavers do manage to get past the first guard in front of her, and Lucy has to physically block their path up to the stairs and move them back. They press their bodies into the gate, looking at her like lost puppies, asking again and again if they could please come up. It's tedious. One of the boys is so drunk Lucy can't even reason with him. Every quarter of an hour or so, a group of people manage to slip past the first entrance and sporadically attempt to barge past her up the stairs. This particularly annoys Lucy, because she's trying to watch the show instead of focusing her full attention on the job out of spite. She's only been given one fifteen minute break throughout the ten hour shift.

However, because she's elevated over the crowd, Lucy gets a great view of the stage. The production crew is controlled and focused, with about five different sound panels and switchboards they dart between. Photographers rush in and out, one of them using the flash on his camera to blind everyone (Lucy included) to get in and out of the crowd. In some ways, the chaos is beautiful, and Lucy appreciates the way the music reverberates in her ribs. There is a single portaloo daintily placed between a maze of scaffolding. The predominantly male, indie-ish looking crew access it by swinging over, around and under the lines of metal, like wee children at a jungle gym. The absurdity of it all effectively erases the performative macho they attempt to ooze.

TIP #4: If you want to get a better position to watch the stage, get hired as a security guard or stop bothering Lucy. A tiny man sat on the recycling bin to watch the show and she couldn't care less because he wasn't trying to wheedle her into letting him clamber up the stairs.

About halfway through the headliner, a girl staggers to Lucy's gate, pleading to be let in. She wants to run down the passageway and vomit. Lucy doesn't know what to do, but the girl has started gagging with a hand over her mouth. This is all happening worryingly close to Lucy, so she moves the tiny man's legs from the recycling bin and opens it for the girl to vomit. She spews twice, and begs again to be let out of the crowd. Lucy quickly opens the gate for her to run down. The crowd is incensed, asking why they can't use the passageway. Lucy can't reason with them all at once, so she just signals to her earplugs and mouths that she can't hear.

2330 HOURS

The shift has finally ended, and May and Lucy are dead on their feet. May has gotten one ten and one fifteen minute break in total over the ten hours, and Lucy has gotten one twenty minute break. Apparently this is the norm in security work, even though legally they have an



entitlement to a total one hour of breaks for a 6-10 hour shift. They are told that no one else on staff got proper breaks either, so not to complain. Collapsing into bed at 0030 hours after being awake for 21 hours, they set their alarm for 1100 tomorrow.

TIP #5: The best place to hop fences are usually on the opposite side of the main entrances – right into the artist's backstage area, or the toilet blocks, or surrounded by trees. Unlike the main entrances which are saturated with guards, here is where the fencing runs out, massive trucks shielding the fence from view and where the staff go for dinner breaks and to look at their phones. On breaks, staff aren't actively looking for fence jumpers, especially if this is their first break in hours.

DAY TWO 1312 HOURS

They'd badly misjudged the traffic and their sense of direction. May's shift started half an hour after Lucy's, so she is fifteen minutes early but Lucy is fifteen minutes late. Despite this, they are both deemed late and May has already been redeployed. They have been demoted to spares. They are told to follow a man with two different radios plugged into each ear to be given a new job.

1347 HOURS

After an anxious wait, they are placed in the Inside Stage* at each end of the barrier. May is approached by about ten men who limit their conversation to asking if she has her security licence. None of the other barrier boys were asked, and she was wondering if she was about to get redeployed – but May and Lucy are just the people they were looking for.

It turns out that last night there were over sixty unconscious people, mostly girls, that had to be pulled over the barrier and evacuated to medics. Standard procedure is to have at least one female guard present to manage situations like this, instead of having intoxicated women manhandled by two male security guards. May and Lucy feel important. They've been given a proper job, on the barrier! Lucy's head deflates when a guard comes over to drop a case of water off to split "between the barrier boys." She supposes she is part of the wallpaper.

1700 HOURS

Halfway through the night, May and Lucy are moved to the emergency exits on the Inside Stage. They are told firmly these are for exit only out of the indoor stage. The purpose of this is to get people out as fast as possible. It is not a free for all, but many people seem to find this a difficult concept to grapple with. Almost immediately after they are positioned, a girl collapses at Lucy's feet. Her friends flock and cluck about her, and her eyes are as wide as saucers. She's having a beautiful, nauseating come-up and May has to feed her water out of Lucy's water bottle sip by sip. As this is happening, a guy behind them pours a whole drink over May's head while she's kneeling down so it splatters all over her to puddle at her feet. Lucy is radioing furiously for a response team, but they never come, so they have to drag her into the recovery position outside themselves. While this is

happening, people are flowing into the narrow gap of the exit only areas gleefully, an open exit too tempting an offer for a drunken crowd despite the girl in clear need of medical attention at their feet.

TIP #6: Security guards are really there to help. May and Lucy are shrivelling in shame from being recognised from uni or their storied past. But even when they're being shouted at – because no one really likes security guards when you're having a good time – they will feed you water and help you up and get you to a safe place. It's best to tell the truth if you're too fucked to move.

Lucy and May get a hold on the situation and manage to shut the exits again. Sometimes the gates burst open if people make a run for it to get in. They ask nicely, they point to a non-existent friend, they stomp their foot and cajole. Lucy tells them she is being watched by the cameras. This is a lie. She cannot see any cameras in the Inside Stage, which is why there were so many empty flasks on the ground after everyone cleared out. However, she is being watched by her supervisor, who lumbers over to cast a beady eye on May and Lucy every once in a while. Sometimes Lucy gives up if they've got a really good excuse, or she can't be bothered. Yes, get the fuck in, just this once. Sometimes May gets angry, when people are backed up behind trying to get out (she can smell the vomit brewing) and there's a group of people blocking the exit while they try to elbow their way past her. At 1800 hours, the first unconscious person is reported. This is concerningly early, especially considering the fact that Lucy had overheard two guards gossiping that the day before that some paramedics had walked past the stage where a girl was passed out, "and just strolled on." Often, there was such a delay in a response team to take people to the medical tent that by the time they came, the person had staggered off into the darkness and deemed no longer an issue or completely unconscious.

TIP #7: When you can't see any cameras, you might be lucky enough to be in a blind spot. But usually, you are being watched on the ground or higher vantage points. May and Lucy's radio was constantly going off with guards monitoring potential illegal activities or people having too good of a time.

2045 HOURS

The penultimate act was phenomenal. However, it was disconcerting for Lucy to feel the nebulous throb of drum and bass without alcohol to smooth out the edges. She can see everything in bitterly sharp contrast, each patron's face sticky with spilled drinks dribbling down their chins. Throughout the set, people would jump over the fence into the indoor stage at the far exit which was unmanned. After radioing through for backup, trying to be heard over the constant calls for response teams and medics, the girls are told "not to worry about it" and essentially turn a blind eye. There are more pressing matters at stake. So, as instructed, May and Lucy turned their backs and watched the whole set for free, and sober, which they think made them appreciate the music so much more.

In the break between the next act, Lucy ran off to use the portalo, but was cut-off by the act's guest singer sashaying in front of her to get to the toilet she was beelining to. She was probably in the wrong place. Later, grabbing her bags, she almost slammed face-first into the headlining DJ backstage. Sadly, the security guards were told not to talk with or engage with any of the artists unless they talked to them first. They were not allowed to take any photos or get their autographs either.

2300 HOURS

The Inside Stage's last act has just ended. May and Lucy have been told to usher people out and clear the space. They try their luck and ask their supervisor if they can go watch the last five minutes of the festival's headliner, "and usher people out, we promise!" He must be feeling nice, because he jerks his head. "Go on, you two," he grunts.

The crowd is massive. The girls are about 200 metres out before they remember they are security guards. Both of them put a hand to their earpiece, assuming a frown of concentration like they're listening to something important. To be fair, people were shrieking for response teams left and right as pingers collapsed like bowling pins in every corner of the stage. They shoulder their way through the crowd, indicating that they are security and this is a Very Serious Matter. Remarkably quickly, the girls burst out of the mosh somewhere near the front. They're slowed down briefly when a table-full of people behind them completely flip the thing and land on their backs on the ground, feet dangling in the air. There's a split second where the girls wonder if they can be bothered to assist before they remember they are literally employed to help them.

TIP #8: Being caught in the mosh is a state of mind. May and Lucy dove through the crowd like Moses parting the seas. They like to think this is because of their inherent confidence and not because people avoided their lurid security uniforms like the plague.

However, the girls did get to stand there gawping at the fireworks with everyone else. They're so sleep deprived they feel like they're on drugs with the rest of you and swaying slightly from standing up for so long. The cherry on top was when their shift ended, and instead of letting May and Lucy through the back exit to clock out faster, the guard from a rival security company manning a back passageway insisted that the two girls follow the crowd out.

There they were, jammed butt-cheek to butt-cheek within a tidal wave of pingers trying to get out.

In the festival mosh at last (unwittingly).

***Names changed**



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HINT: It's on our Instagram...

- A. WHAT WAS BREAKFAST HOST ZAC'S MOST PLAYED NZ TRACK FROM 2025? _____
- B. NAME THREE R1 SHOWS: _____
- C. WHAT'S THE NAME OF THE R1 Dog? _____
- D. NAME AN ARTIST NOMINATED FOR THE TAITE MUSIC PRIZE _____

ALBUM REVIEW

Whakatū Nelson's hardcore punk outfit Shuv-it have finally arrived with their debut full length album, *Erode*. The opening track "Shuv-it" is a mission statement, showcasing the band's lyrical style that is unapologetically motivational and full of heart: "I'll face this moment and then tower above it". This combination of lyrics, riffs, mosh parts and sing-a-longs makes *Erode* feel like a hit of adrenaline that you can only get at a Shuv-it show.

Clocking in at just under 20 minutes, the band manages to pack a surprising amount of variety while staying laser focused, and Sam Edmonds' striking vocal delivery seamlessly flows between melodic screams and almost rap-like yells. The album's second half is an impressive showcase of features. Shuriken (WLG), Martial Law (Hamilton) and Sawmoff (Nelson) up the heaviness with some vocal contributions; post-rock band Distance (CHCH) provides a moody ambient interlude, and DJ MRD's (US) scratching is a surprising but welcome addition.

Erode is a perfect showcase of Shuv-it's live energy and impactful songwriting, and is ultimately just a fun listen. If you're a fan of riffs, moshing, and having a good time, this album might be just the thing for you.

Fave Track: Don't Wait (feat. SAWNOFF)

Review by Ethan Montañer.



Erode
Shuv-it (NZ)

TOP 11



- 1 Bishop (NZ)
Bon Voyage (Alphabethead remix)
- 2 The Shenatics (Dn)
All Hall Me
- 3 scapegrace (Dn)
bomber jacket (in your headlights)
- 4 Mic Sure (Dn)
Paper
- 5 Havening (NZ)
rx.o
- 6 Takatapunani (NZ)
FILTHY BASS ft. Coco Solid
- 7 Shotgun Wedding (Dn)
Bat Bombs
- 8 Lorazepam (NZ)
Draw
- 9 King Hit (NZ)
sap
- 10 Grace Gemmel (Dn)
This Kind of Peace is Free
- 11 Sanol (NZ)
What is The Word

GIG GUIDE

RĀTŪ TUE 10TH

The Rock Orchestra
by Candlelight
@ Regent Theatre...5.30pm

Open Mic Night
@ Inch Bar.....7pm

RĀAPA WED 11TH

Poetry Open Mic
@ New Athenaeum
Theatre...7pm.....Free

RĀMERE FRI 13TH

Royal NZ Ballet: Macbeth
@ Regent Theatre...7.30pm

RĀHORŌI SAT 14TH

R1 Presents: Sogg, Eris, Talking Furniture, SEEK HELPI, Deaf Raccoon
@ Pioneer Hall...\$10...7pm

Beware The Ides Of March!
Ammonita, FUBAR, Zara Rose
@ The Crown...8pm

Wilson Blackley and Oscar LaDell
@ Maggies.....8pm

The Astral Project w/ OMMU
@ Pearl Diver...9pm

Royal NZ Ballet: Macbeth
@ Regent Theatre...1.30pm

mazagran hit picks

- Deaf Raccoon (Dn)
Burns Like Hell
- Scoves (NZ)
Catching a Feeling

DUNEDIN SOUND

STREAM RADIO ONE

FLYNN NISBETT

OUSA EXEC



OUSA giving students a reason to engage

OUSA is the green sign on the way into town, Clubs and Socs, and the people that run O-Week. That is what we are, but it isn't all we are.

Some think OUSA should be just a service provider, steering clear of taking political stances in fear of alienating some. Others think it should be vocal about what political decisions will benefit students, even if it conflicts with the views of some.

Historically, we did the latter. It encouraged much higher levels of engagement especially when it conflicted. After what happened with BDS last year, we saw almost every executive position contested following years of them being handed to insiders unchallenged.

Some of the most egregious attacks on students and our constitutional foundations have been made and successive student 'voices' have been too shy to speak up about them for fear of alienating a portion of students. But when OUSA took stances and ruffled feathers, we saw the highest voter turnout for an exec election in several years. Both positive and negative feedback is still good feedback.

Decades ago when the government proposed a fees increase of 30%, students ran the politicians responsible off campus. They were forced out of windows and their exits crowded.

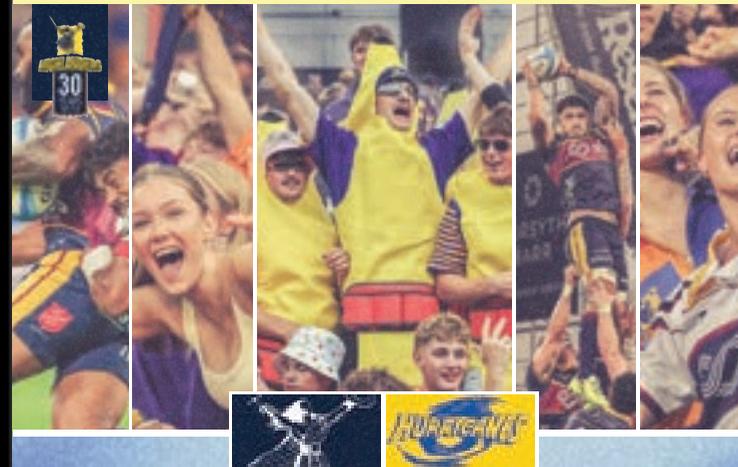
In 1981, OUSA gave financial and moral support for the 'Save Aramoana' campaign to oppose an aluminium smelter being built. This year, we're supporting the fight against a new mine being talked about for the Denniston Plateau.

The 1987 student cohort picketed outside the Labour Party's candidate selection meeting for Dunedin to remind them of their promise not to increase fees and boycott the last fees payment of the year. It was part of a consistent nation-wide effort led by the student associations from all universities and polytechs. OUSA used to focus its efforts predominantly on fees and loans as the issues most important to students but still provided services and social activities.

The end of voluntary student membership (VSM) was a kick in the backside for student unions. As happened around the world, the economic shift to neoliberalism saw Otago unable to maintain its "critic and conscience" role in society as then Vice-Chancellor, Robin Irvine, said. Unbiased fact-providers with no substance don't provoke thought.

In the past, OUSA was a proactive voice for students and saw the benefits. We could be again if we continue giving students a reason to engage by taking stances and creating space for conversations to be had on campus.

Flynn Nisbett
Political Representative



FRI 20TH MAR

7:05PM | THE ZOO

ousa



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FROM THE PĀTAKA

BITE-SIZED UPDATES FROM TE RITO

Brady Simeon – Ngāpuhi, Ngāti Hine (Kaipāpaho Matua/Communications Officer)
Heeni Koero Te Rerehoa – Ngāti Hine, Te Rarawa, Te Waiariki

The early weeks of the semester always feel a bit like the campus stretching its legs again. And once things get moving, they move quickly. A lot's happened over the past few weeks – so first things first, we're clearing out the pātaka.

SOMETHING SPICY

There hasn't been a consistent Māori space in this mag – so we're making one. From the Pātaka is where we keep what's been said, unsaid, done, and still to come across campus. Each issue we pull from it: what's got heat, what's been nourishing, and what's still cooking.

This column has been sitting on the shelf for a while. Not because there's been nothing to say, but because making consistent space for Māori voice hasn't always been a priority. Efforts have been made over the years, but they've rarely held for long – authors come and go, and sometimes their ideas leave with them. In fact, there hasn't been a solid, consistent Māori presence in Critic Te Ārohi since the early 2000s – which wasn't yesterday. So what better time to stoke the flames than now: an election year upon us, contentious bill readings already stirring debate in Parliament, and the usual arguments warming up again. Clearly, the temperature is only going one way.

Rather than waiting for the "right" moment to talk about it, we'll just start here. If the year's already heating up, we may as well bring the good stuff to the table.

SOMETHING SWEET

Not everything's been heated, though – there's been plenty of sweetness to go around.

Luckily, the semester has started on the right foot. The Freshers' pōwhiri at Puketeraki Marae did exactly what it always does – welcome new taura properly. No awkward first-day lecture hall could ever compete with that kind of beginning. It's a neat reminder of how the year should start. Back in town, Te Rōpū Māori has wasted no time bringing people back into the fold. A place where taura can learn the TRM classics and scratch their haka itch, Waiata Wednesdays have already filled the whare with familiar voices again. Skuxx Deluxx and drunk freshers also set the tone early on, a night of loud laughs, unreal fits, a questionable dance performance, and the memories slightly blurry for some (as any good O-week night should be). And, as always, the Mystery Bus delivered in the best way: a full bus, a few surprises along the way, and the kind of energy that only really comes from being packed in together and heading somewhere unknown. Exactly where it went remains between the bus and those on it.

Probably for the best, nē?

Safe to say the kitchen's busy. That's what we've pulled from the pātaka this week. Kia pai te kai.



STILL COOKIN'

Between the sweet and the spicy, there are a few things still simmering.

First up: the SGM on Monday 9 March. Under the Constitution, this is where proposed amendments are voted on, financial decisions get signed off on, and changes affecting TRM's kaupapa are decided. This hui will also cover responses to submissions, a current expenditure report, and proposals relating to the investment line. In short: important stuff.

Our pūtea sits with taura Māori collectively, which means decisions about it should too. So if you've ever thought "someone should probably go to that meeting", – this is your reminder. Right after that, the study sessions kick off. Fortnightly, in partnership with our Ngā Rōpū, starting Wednesday 12 March at 6pm. Kai is provided, which tends to solve most attendance issues. Bring your books, bring your mates, bring your motivation (or borrow someone else's).



BOOZE REVIEWS

by SWIG60



Salutations suckas and suckettes. It was our mission this week to provide an Electric Ave Booze Review, but at \$14.50 a drink – and the fact some beloved members got turned away at the bar – Swig60 says "fuck that!". Here's a Tui Vodka Reds review instead.

First off, we have to start by saying that these have well and truly been the flat staple since we've gotten back to Duffers. With eighteen Tui belts to our name, you can call us the champs. Three weeks of going to battle with these things and we're still knocking them back with ease. Really shows our credentials to be writing these reviews, eh?

TASTING NOTES:

Tastewise, you get what's advertised: raspberry first and strawberry backing it up to make it smoother and less acidic. On the crack of the can there's that unmistakable hit of artificial berry aroma. The raspberry leads well and doesn't fall into the common mistake of being too sour or syrupy.

On the carbonation front, we all agreed there is enough fizz to keep it interesting to the mouth but not so much that you're bloated by drink four. Considering how affordable these drinks are, the alcohol taste is surprisingly well hidden, with the after taste being more the strawberry sliding in and less vodka burning your gizzard.

We liked the raspberry Hyoketsu's last week but these are just better. Good for making memories and forgetting them all in the same night. Tui's Blue variant was also pretty tasty, but in our eyes, it lives in the shadow of its sexy older sister.

RATINGS:

From Grog Robertson's perspective, at just \$45 for two boxes, these smash the \$1.50 \$/drink gold standard. **10/10** – they're the best value around. Hopefully this deal sticks around (we are praying). They slid down so well that there wasn't a night where Brendan McSkullem didn't finish a box. Speight Shepherd even went for two in one night.

Israel Chugasanya's fight rating: **0/10**, these will have you punching with your tongue, not your fist.

Waisnorkel Naholo was not actually present when writing this, but safe to say he had a good look at some coral with these hitting his throat like they're air.

Speight Shepherd reckons that "with drinks this cheap, this box should end up in the hands of anyone with a low budget and a thirsty liver!"

SWIG60'S VERDICT:

An absolute gift to our flat. It's cheap, cheerful, and punching well about its weight in value. They may not be class or complex but at a time when Cruisers are \$30, Tui Vodka Reds are dominating the student beverage ecosystems, or at least our flat.

Drink Responsibly. Or at least strategically.



NOT SWIG60



Better Cones and Gardens

A Look through the Hole in the Wall

by *Jonothan McCabe*

What happens when you – or someone you invited – destroys the walls of your flat?

In the first edition of this brand new column, I speak to two students who have had to deal with the fallout of a rager turned rage room. Throughout this series I, a nosy neighbour on a relentless pursuit for the truth, aim to shed new light on the day to day lifestyle of students across Ōtepoti.

There is something about moving into your second-year flat that seems to compel one to ram their ket filled skull into a sheet of drywall. Freedom from any parental supervisor, hall of residence administration and the absence of a frontal lobe is a potent cocktail. Sometimes self-expression takes the form of a Looney Tunes-esque, human shaped cut out between the bedroom and living room.

A recent graduate, Finn, told me about a party at his place that left a dent in his bank account.

The Bunker Boys

In his Queen Street flat, Bunker, Finn helped run one of the biggest open hosts on last year's St Paddy's day. The aptly named 14 man compound could easily be mistaken for one of those abandoned barracks lining Aotearoa's coastline.

If you attended this host, you may have noticed the writing on the wall. Literally. The Bunker Boys had covered the interior and exterior walls with green spray paint. "We got way too excited for Saint Patty's Day," Finn admitted. Looking back, he reckons that "[the paint] was a new charm for a bit, but we quickly realized that it was [...] *our worst idea of the year.*"

The landlord gave the boys two options to fix their mess. The cleanup costs would either need to come out of their bond, or they would have to repaint the place themselves. According to Tenancy Services, when a tenant or invited guest causes intentional damage to the property, the landlord can ask the tenant to repair the damage, or to pay the cost of replacement or repair. Taking the latter option, the boys grabbed a bunch of white paint and spent their final two weeks in Dunedin undoing their own handiwork. However, the chaos didn't stop with the paint.

During the St Paddy's festivities, multiple partygoers had stupidly decided to climb up onto the roof. When the coppers came to check in on the party, they told the tenants that they had to get everyone off the roof or else their speakers would be seized. The Bunker Boys happily complied. One of the attendees – unknown to any of the tenants – smashed one of the bedroom windows during his descent.



Finn and his flatmates asked the police and their landlord what to do. The answer was consistent: they were responsible for the people they invited over. Tenancy Services define careless damage as damage caused by a lack of attention, care or precaution. In these cases, the tenant will be liable for the cost of the damage up to four weeks' rent or the landlord's insurance excess – whichever is lower. So if the Bunker Boys couldn't identify the culprit, they would need to *foot the bill* – and that they did. By the end of their tenancy, each Bunker resident lost \$200 from their bond. The final nail in the coffin? The doors – or lack thereof.

Four interior doors had been battered down over the year – either because one of the boys had locked himself out of his room or because they had knocked on the cardboard-like doors a bit too hard. The landlord ended up replacing the doors himself when the boys moved out.

None of the boys seemed to mind the lack of privacy. Finn referred to it as an "open living situation", something that the boys all "loved". Maybe we should be taking notes. A life without doors could reform a culture of interconnection and transparency in an ever disconnected age. It's true that...

...a man with no pants fears no pickpocket.

Still, before you attempt your own structural renovations to a Castle Street palace, it pays to *know your rights*. If damage occurs – intentional or careless – you may be liable. If it's fair wear and tear, that responsibility sits with the landlord. *Communication is key*. Finn's parting advice for new tenants is that, if you have any issues, tell the landlord straight away.

If you believe your landlord has treated you unfairly, there are formal avenues available. You can apply to the Tenancy Tribunal, and OUSA Student Support and OUSA Residential Rep Zoe Eckoff are available to provide advice and guidance through the process.

So whether your walls were kicked in mid-mosh or you're considering an avant-garde open-plan experiment, just remember: doors can be replaced, drywall can be patched, but getting your whole bond back is never guaranteed.

Smell ya later alligator



Illustrated by
Eleanor Walker

COLUMNS ★ RANGITAKI

Horoscopes



PISCES

Your walls are looking a bit bare, so I think it's time you started using those uni printers for what they're actually there for: to make your room Instagram worthy with at least 100 of those A4 Pinterest posters that always come out of the printer a little too grainy for your liking.

Your perfect crime: Underground gambling



ARIES

Betrayal strikes! As you make your move, be sure you think about who else this will impact in your life. If you don't watch what you're doing, you will have the people closest to you knocking down your door and calling you a traitor.

Your perfect crime: Petty theft



VIRGO

When life hits hard, you usually retaliate by bouncing back twice as hard. This week, when the world comes swinging, it may just be time to 'spontaneously' get that piercing that has been in the back of your mind for months.

Your perfect crime: Fraud



GEMINI

Katy Perry's Hot N Cold has nothing on you – you're giving your flatmates whiplash with your indecision. The Otago Oracle is personally here to tell you that you **NEED** to lock in now. No more wavering belief in yourself, you got this!

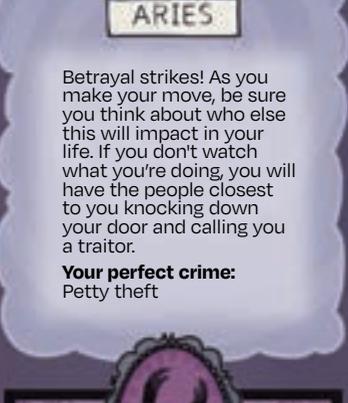
Your perfect crime: Indecision



AQUARIUS

You're an icon, you're a legend, and you are the moment. It's time for you to hit the clubs hard and partyyy. Exams aren't here yet, so use this time well. Make those lifelong memories and forget them in the same night.

Your perfect crime: Slayyyyyy



SCORPIO

Your lecturer keeps mumbling and refuses to wear their mic right, causing that all-too-familiar antsy feeling to creep back in. So this time, rather than changing your whole degree again, try going to UniPol and get that serotonin hit that makes you feel grounded.

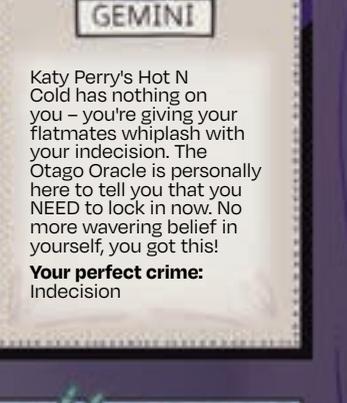
Your perfect crime: Arson



TAURUS

This week, a new opportunity will cross your desk and make you pause. Sometimes you just have to try something new just to know it's wrong for you. But although tempting, don't put your dick in the toaster!

Your perfect crime: Possession



CAPRICORN

You've kept a tight control over everything in your life, and so far it has served you well: always getting your assignments in on time, keeping the mould out of your flat, and so on. But at the end of the day, you need to learn to stop micromanaging and just let go.

Your perfect crime: Tax evasion



LEO

The fresher flu has been a coiled snake and you may just be its next victim. Prioritise your health, especially because your lectures are recorded. If you watch them back to back at 2x speed, you can definitely catch up on the week in one day.

Your perfect crime: Vandalism



CANCER

Remember to put your oxygen mask on before helping others. This week, it's time to start prioritising your own sanity. Stop being your flatmate's designated Uber driver, because they won't give you 5/5 stars. Instead, they vomit it in the back seat, and almost never pay petrol money.

Your perfect crime: Grand theft auto



LIBRA

I'm so proud of you, sweetie! This week you will finally take that leap of faith. We both know you're the furthest thing from a classy date, so go grab that special person and take them to the Zoo. It's the perfect place for both of your wild sides to come out and play.

Your perfect crime: Public urination



SAGITTARIUS

A little birdy told me that you have been having some fun, and I take my hat off to you for being such a baddie. BTW, your flatmates know you have those hiccups. I mean... They are huge. So you can stop wearing that hideous winter scarf every day.

Your perfect crime: Striking



By Lady Pain Grey

Ah... Secoñd year. The time that life feels like it is peaking – and it absolutely was. I was flattng with my best friends, I still had all my summer money and exams hadn't started yet. It was that sweet spot in the semester between St Paddy's and Hyde Street Party. Nothing felt real, but neither did it feel bad.

My flatmate Natasha and I were fucking around on a particularly boring Friday afternoon. On our way back from a UniPol step class, we came up with the idea to lose our virginities – not together, but on the same night. So onto Tinder and Grindr she and I respectively went.

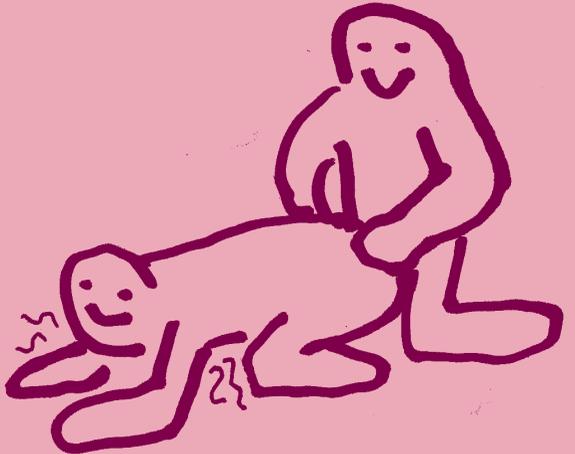
After about an hour or so of swiping and shit chat we had both found our entertainment for the night. Mine was a post-grad with a penchant for the kinky. Natasha's was a fourth year law breatha. A night was to be had.

I had gotten mine, let's call him Noah, to agree to pick me up from the flat – because fuck the whole having to pay petrol thing. We went for a drive out to the coast and then eventually made our way back to his flat in St Clair. The chat had been mid so far, but the convo had weirdly made its way back to the fact I went to the gym today. Strange, but maybe he was just a little socially awkward. Noah had work early the next morning, so he came to pick me up as soon as I had gotten back to my flat from the gym. As such, I hadn't had the

chance to have a shower. I can confirm I was a bit musty, but reasoned that I could just hop through the shower before we did the deed.

This next part is zero to one hundred. Noah and I make it to his room, and start getting a bit handsy. Suddenly, he is leaning into my armpit and having a big whiff, saying shit like "I'm glad you didn't shower before you came over." WHAT THE FUCK. I felt like I had been bamboozled. I just thought he would choke me a little or give my ass a slap. But no – he was essentially cave diving in my armpits.

Strange, but it's weirdly not the worst thing to experience someone saying they like the smell of you. So onwards we went. Looking back, I am unsure if I really was ok with it or if I just really wanted that ride home. But either way I was a virgin no more and definitely came home with a better story than the vanilla bang Natasha had. And yes, he did drop me home after.



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