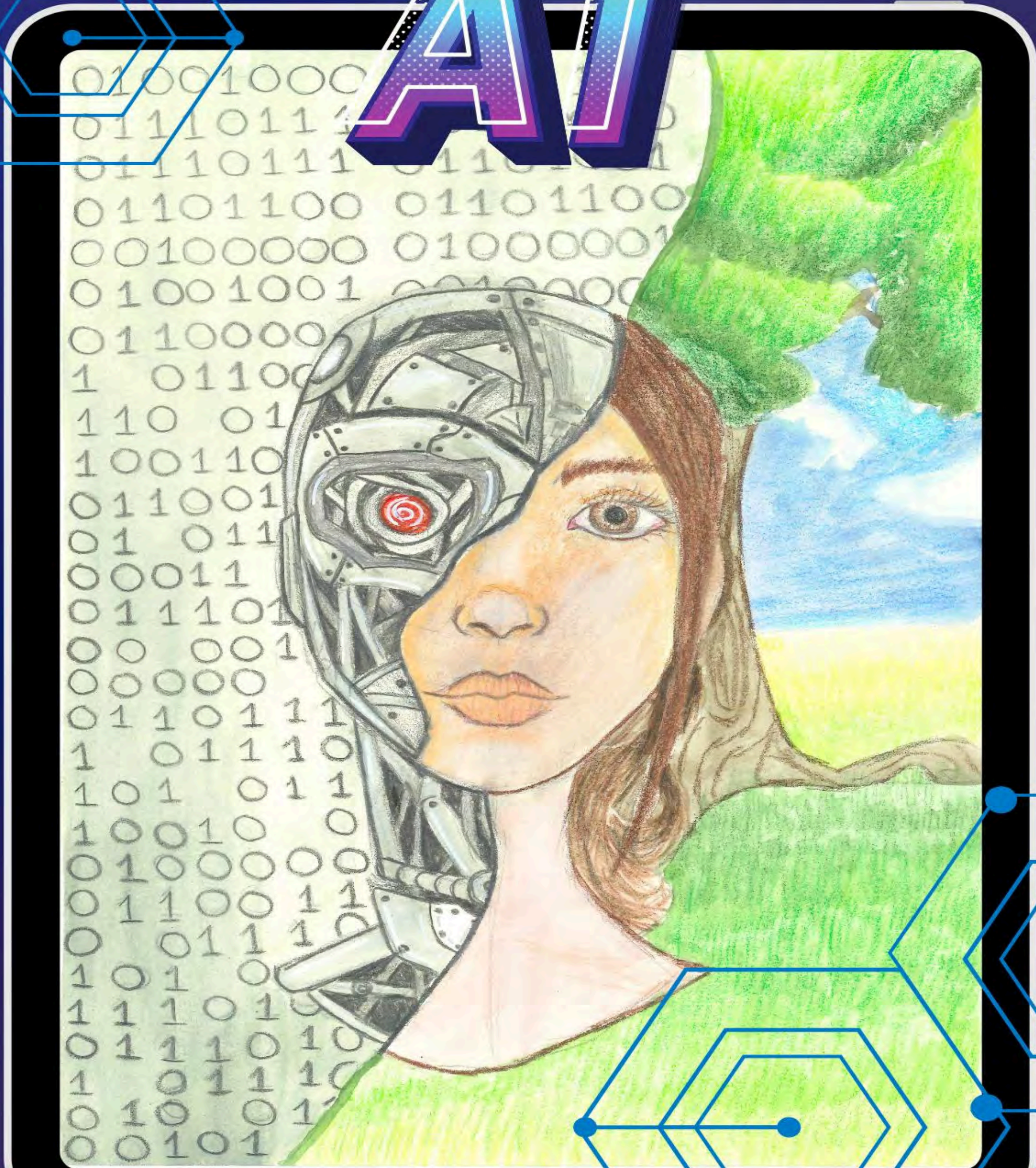


# PLATANOS COLLEGE

## THE RISE OF

# AI



WRITTEN BY PUPILS,  
FOR PUPILS

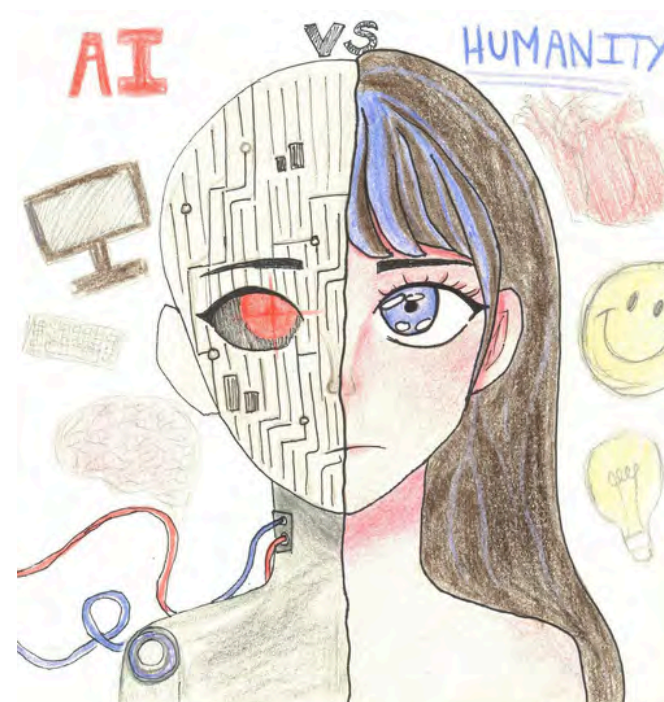
# KS4 NEWSLETTER





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# EDITOR'S WELCOME

WRITTEN BY EDITOR-IN-CHIEF ASMA MOHAMMED-ALI + EDITORIAL TEAM  
KELLY OLIVEIRA + NIBRAS AHMED

Welcome to the 18th Edition of the KS4 Platanos College Newsletter. Thank you for taking the time and consideration to read this collection of articles written by a range of students in both Year 10 and 11.

This Volume's Specials collection is about AI and its effects on our future. Our team have researched the benefits and the disadvantages of Artificial Intelligence with regards to its effects on the future and our global community.

In addition, we also discuss a range of topics including politics, true crime and discrimination.

We truly hope you find these articles interesting and informative.

On behalf of the KS4 Newsletter team, we wish you a happy holiday whether that be Easter, Eid or simply having a restful holiday.

We promise to be back next term with another exclusive Edition.

In the meantime, here are some quotes to help you reflect on our school motto, *"Attitude Determines Altitude"*.

Editor-In-Chief  
Asma Mohammed-Ali



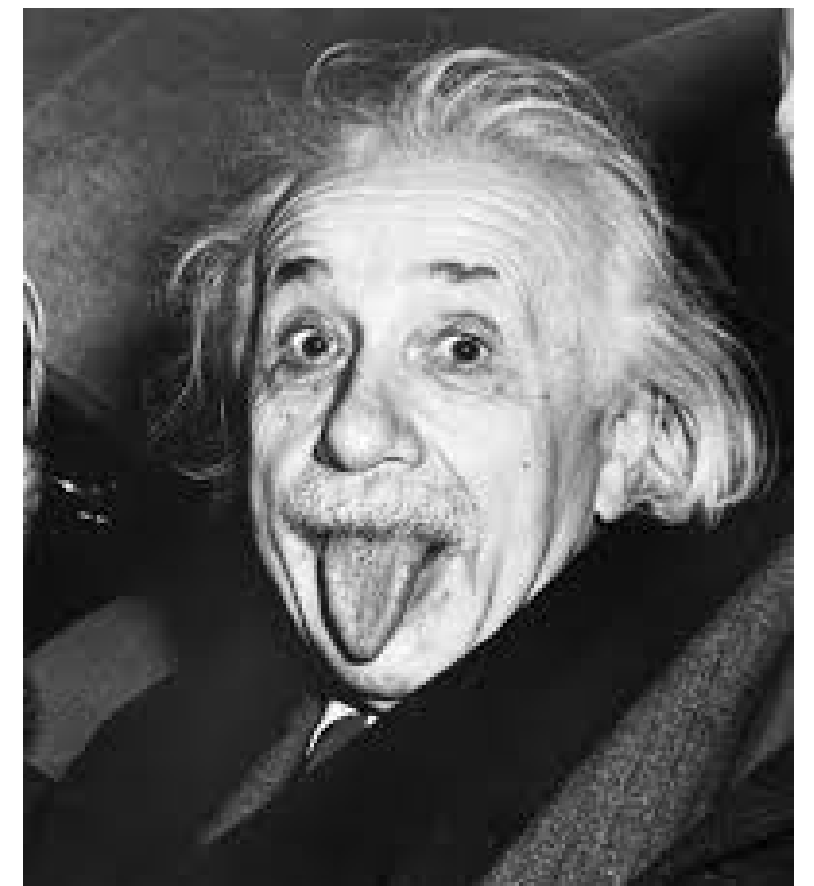
*"Believe you can and your halfway there."*

— Theodore Roosevelt



*"Be yourself, everyone else is already taken"*

— Oscar Wilde



*In the middle of every difficulty lies opportunity."*

— Albert Einstein



*"All dreams can come true if you have the courage to pursue them."*

— Walt Disney







# learning lounge

## INTERVIEW WITH MS FRASER

WRITTEN BY ALESSANDRA RIOS



### ***When did you decide to become an English teacher?***

I went to secondary school at Dunraven, where I had some really great English teachers. In fact, I ended up working with one of them. Two of my English teachers truly inspired me to become a teacher myself because they were excellent at what they did and made me enjoy English. They also inspired me because they worked really well with children, which made me think I could do the same.



### ***What do you want your pupils to take away from studying English?***

What I want pupils to take away from English is that it's actually very versatile. Some things you might not think are relevant - like studying *An Inspector Calls* - will help you practise your analytical skills. Most of the jobs you'll have in the future will involve some form of analysis or discussion and debate. The skills I'm teaching you now will be ones you end up using in the real world.

### ***What's your favourite media text?***

Recently I've been watching a series called *From*. It's a horror-thriller, and it's really good. The series stars Harold Perrineau, who also plays Mercutio in *Romeo + Juliet*. I think it's a fantastic mix of horror and fantasy, and the show also has a lot of foreshadowing.

### ***What's a fun fact about yourself?***

I'm still really into cartoons—I love anime and Disney. I have a long list of anime I enjoy. One of my favourites is *One Punch Man*. I've been watching *One Piece* - I'm currently on episode 600.

I still need to finish *Attack on Titan*. I recently watched a show on Netflix called *The Blue Eyes Samurai*, which I really liked.

### ***What's your fondest memory of being an English teacher at Platanos College?***

My fondest memory is teaching my Year 11 class. Also Culture Day - it was nice to see everyone joining in and it was a great bonding experience for the pupils and staff.

### ***What advice do you have for the pupils of Platanos College?***

I believe that the majority of pupils can go on to do really well, as long as they focus. Everyone can achieve great things.







# HOW ARE COUNTRIES AROUND THE WORLD CONTROLLING YOUNG PEOPLE'S USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA?

WRITTEN BY PICETRA NYARKO-CROFFIE



Many young people today use social media as a useful source for communicating with friends and family, as well as being an essential tool for spreading information and gaining political and global awareness. Social media is also a useful networking tool, enabling individuals to promote their skills and expertise, as well as share their life stories.

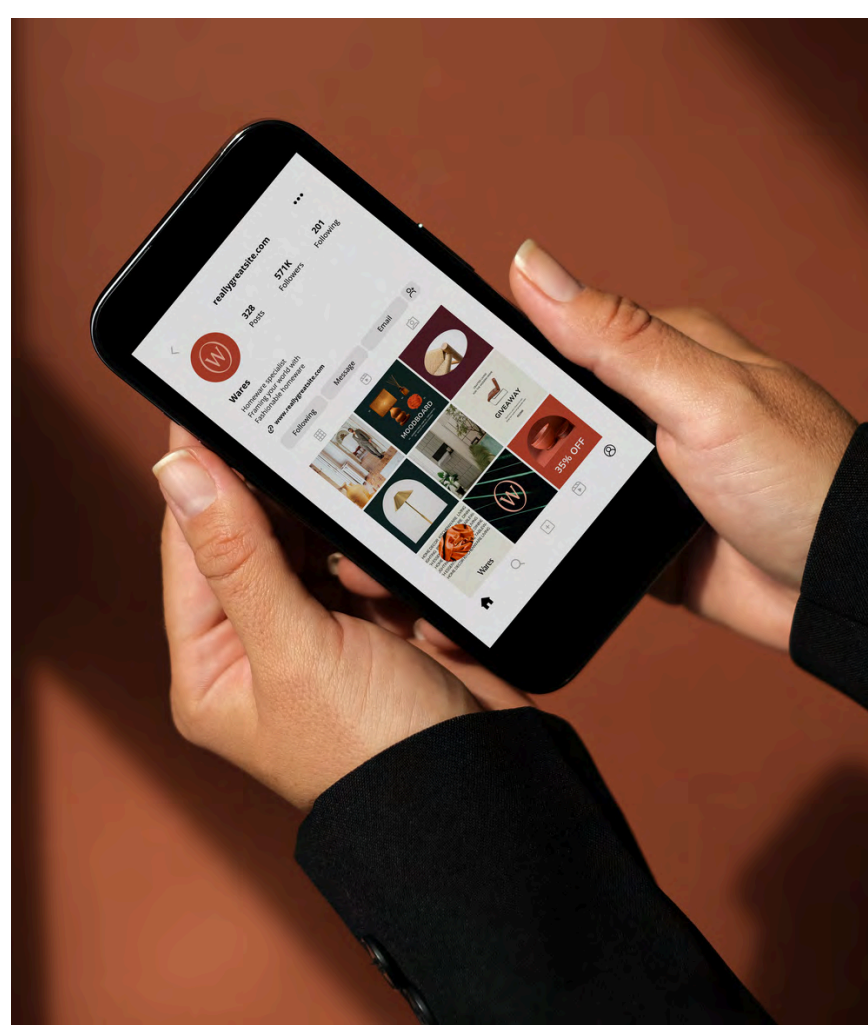
However, increasingly, we are seeing the freedom of using social media platforms being restricted. Back on 19th January, TikTok was temporarily restricted for all Americans. But why?

Well, the key concern of US officials, is that TikTok can potentially threaten national security as it can be used by the Chinese government to spy on Americans

or manipulate them by either promoting or restricting content.

It is not just the USA that is taking action. Back in 2024, Australia made the huge step of banning social media for those under the age of 16. On the website of The Prime Minister of Australia, Anthony Albanese states that the ban was enforced because *"We know social media is causing social harm, and it is taking kids away from real friends and real experiences...Australian young people deserve better and I stand with them and with all Australian parents in protecting our kids."*

Albanese has said that *"enough is enough"*, citing the dangers of social media as being a very real threat for the youth of Australia.



In contrast, the Spanish government has introduced an Act intended to keep children safe, whilst still being able to be active on social media. This is achieved through a verification system, whose intention is to enable young people to navigate social media platforms safely.

Neighbouring France has come to the conclusion that children should not be permitted to use social media until they are of 13 years old. Experts in France have argued that keeping children away from smartphones until they are 13, can ensure a safer society, adding that screens have always had a negative impact on children's eye sight, physical health, metabolism and sleep patterns.

So, what are your thoughts on these countries' different approaches to social media use amongst young people? Which of these models would you be happy to adopt in the UK?





# THE POWER OF MUSIC

WRITTEN BY SUMAYA HASSAN



It's no secret that we teenagers love our music; it has always been one of the greatest influences on young people through the generations. It allows people to express themselves, find clarity or peace and connect to others, during a time when we are evolving into adults. Music has a profound impact on our emotions, mind and cultural expression.

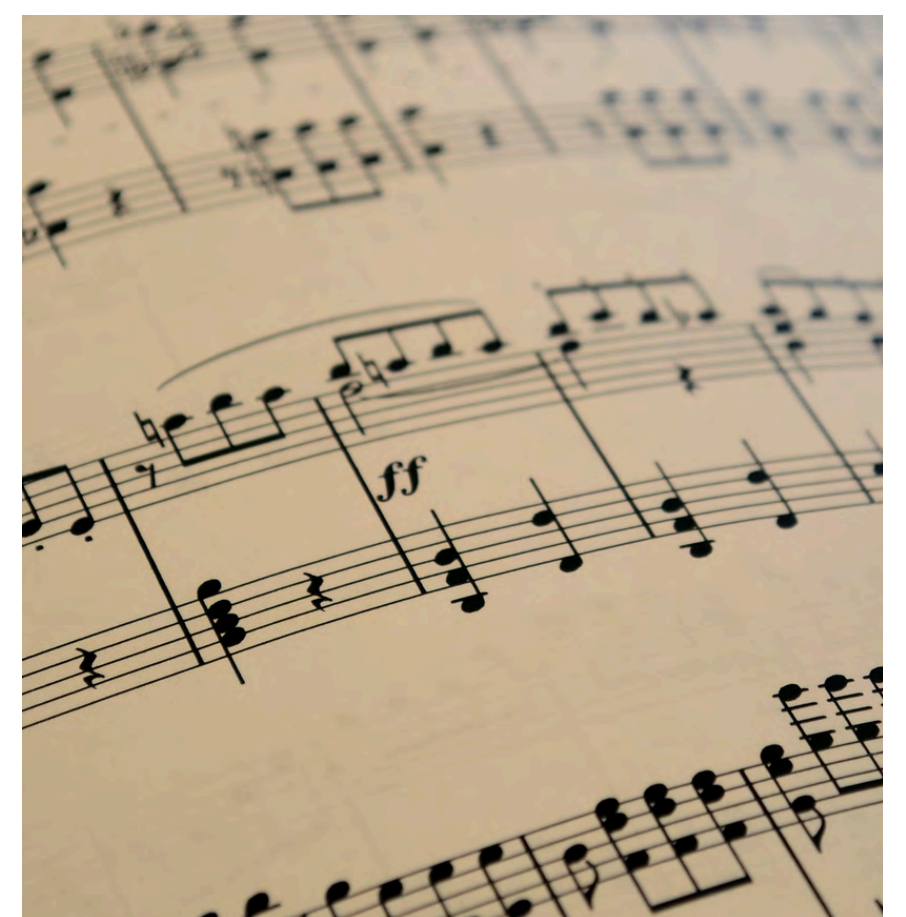
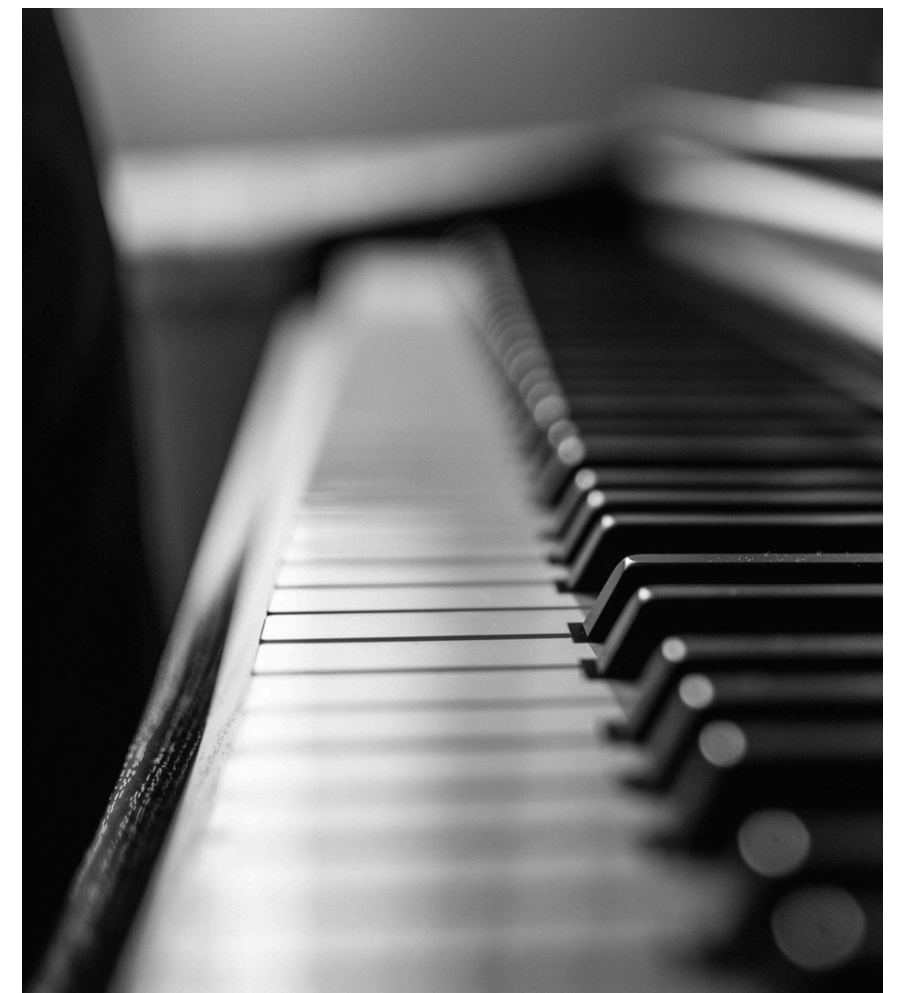
The emotional impact of music means that it can evoke a variety of feelings within us as young people - from sadness to anger to joy, and everything in between. It acts as a safe space for people to turn to, sometimes being their only solace. When we are exposed to multiple genres of music, we can choose which one we like the best and have a community of people with similar music tastes. Music also helps us to form social bonds at a critical time of our development.

Let me ask you a question: have you ever thought of a particular memory, experience or person whilst listening to a specific song or piece of music?

If the answer is yes, this is because music engages multiple regions of the brain simultaneously, including areas involved in emotional processing, auditory processing and memory formation.

Furthermore, did you know that the stress and anxiety many teenagers face today far exceeds that of young people in the 1950s?

So music is an outlet that allows us to freely be ourselves, with no judgement. It may bring a sense of hope, comfort and temporary detachment from reality, which teenagers have long been accused by adults of trying to avoid! Moreover, music has therapeutic effects, such as the ability to reduce stress and anxiety. This has a domino effect as it can be a mood booster and help to improve a person's sense of self. This, in turn, improves mental well-being.



In fact, research shows that music therapy may help a person relax and explore their emotions more effectively, and in some cases even reduce depression.

Additionally, music has been proven to enhance cognitive abilities such as memory and concentration. Listening to music increases blood flow to the regions of the brain associated with emotions; the limbic system (which is involved in processing emotions and controlling memory), 'lights' up when our ears perceive music.





In addition, music lights up nearly all of the brain, including parts that activate emotional responses to music through memory retention. Music can even help to improve a person's attention span and quality of learning, as well as ignite a person's creativity and problem-solving skills. As well as having a direct effect on our mental health, music can also influence our physical health. This is evidenced in music's potential to ease or lessen pain.

Furthermore, matching a song's beats per minute with a workout, can help you set a rhythm and pace to your exercise routine. Many of us also have uplifting, motivational songs that are a really effective companion to training and exercise.



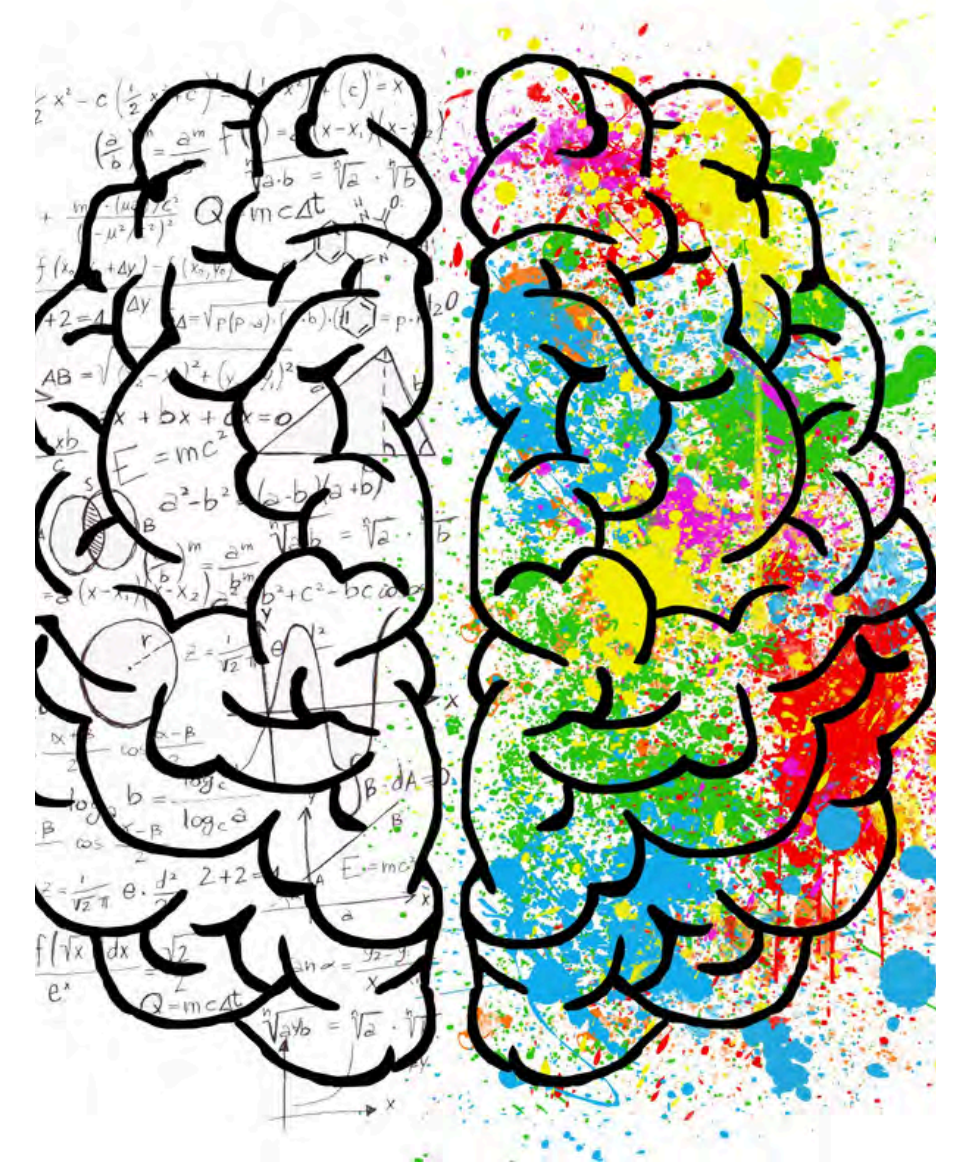
There is no doubt that music can be very personal to each individual, reflecting their cultural identity and heritage. Moreover, music unites communities, creating solid bonds between people.

So, whether you are using music to help you relax before an exam, motivate you during a workout, or just for pure enjoyment, music will no doubt play a critical role in all of our lives, both whilst at school and in the years to come.



But it's not just when you're at your most active that music can help. Sleep quality is another crucial part of our everyday lives that can be improved by music. Listening to relaxing music before bed can ease muscles and decrease anxiety, heart rate and blood pressure.

Did you know that MRIs have found that actively listening to rhythmic sounds actually activates specific connections in the brain and a small area of the cerebral cortex, both of which oversee and control voluntary movement? Essentially, this means that there is a connection between rhythm and bodily movements, which causes you to carry out some actions like dancing when listening to music.







# HAVE YOU EVER HAD A LUCID DREAM?

WRITTEN BY IARA CHAVEZ



Lucid dreams are a type of dream in which a person realises that they are dreaming during the dream itself. This is a phenomenon that has captivated the interest of scientists and psychologists.

Did you know that around 50% of people have had at least one lucid dream in their lifetime, but only 11% experience two or more lucid dreams a month?

First of all, lucid dreams occur during Rapid Eye Movement (REM), which is when most vivid and memorable dreams tend to happen.

The concept of lucid dreaming was first coined in 1913 by a Dutch psychiatrist named Frederik Van Eeden. But it wasn't until the 1970s that studies began to explore this in any real depth.

It has been found that lucid dreams can enhance creativity, which many can use to explore new concepts and unlock their creative potential. This in turn, can inspire new ideas and even solve problems. Lucid dreams can also lead to emotional healing, offering an individual comfort and the chance to process past traumas.

Lastly, lucid dreams can cause reduced nightmares, enabling a person to change what's occurring in the dream and thereby reducing any negative emotions and stress.

However, there are some disadvantages to having lucid dreams: the potential for escapism can cause an individual to avoid real-life issues or responsibilities,



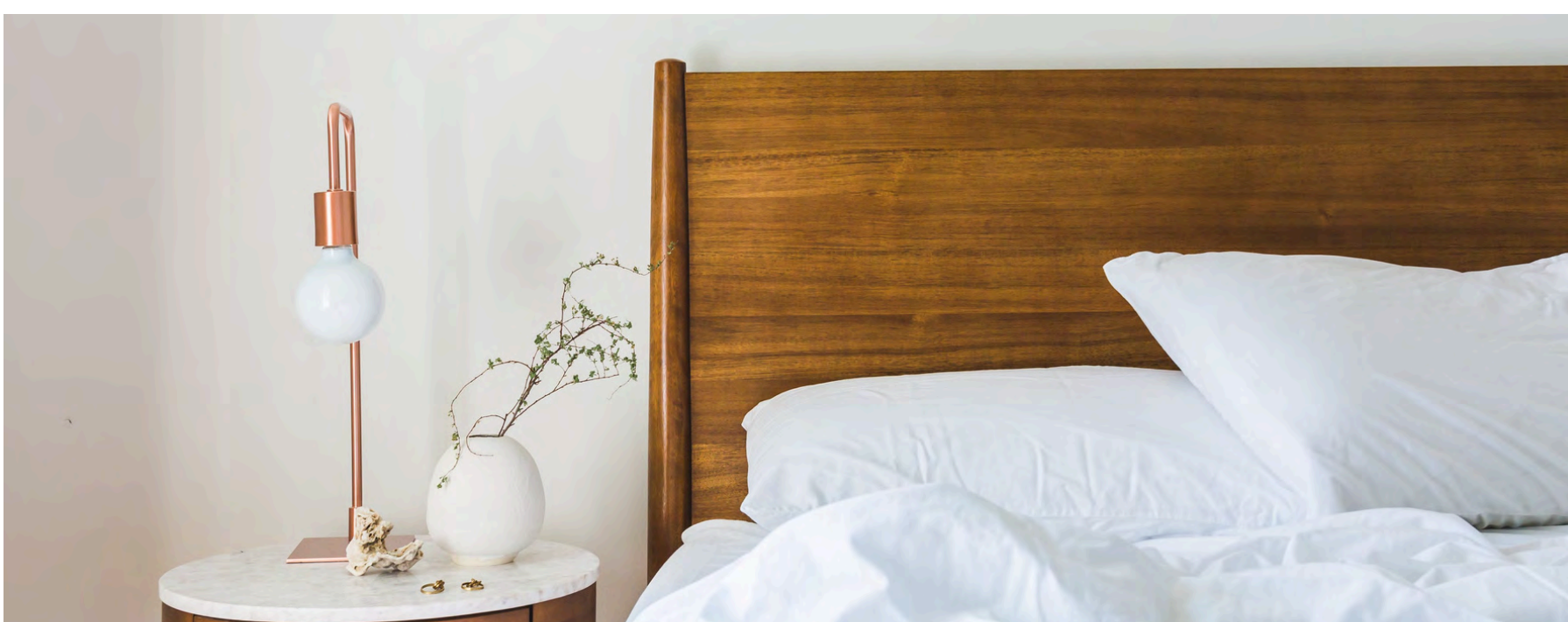
which can obviously then have a negative effect on personal growth and problem-solving.

Secondly, the vividness of a lucid dream can cause further stress and anxiety. In fact, in some cases people can have lucid dreams associated with grief and trauma from their lives.

Lastly, whilst lucid dreams don't occur very frequently, they can cause more nightmares.

Perhaps one of the most detrimental aspects of lucid dreams is sleep paralysis, which can be very unsettling and frightening.

In conclusion, lucid dreams – whilst rare – have the potential to cause both comfort and distress, and there is still very little evidence that exists regarding the long-term effects of them.







# SPRINGING INTO STEAM

WRITTEN BY KELLY OLIVEIRA

There comes a time when everyone needs to figure out what career pathway they want to follow in life. You may have known what career you'd like to pursue when you first walked through the doors of Platanos College in Year 7. Or maybe you're starting to consider it now. Wherever you are in your career journey, it can be an exciting time to start with those first steps towards the job you may end up doing for life!

The most known careers you can take fall under the subtopic of STEM. This stands for Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics, providing you with the skills that can help you become a doctor, scientist or an astronomer. STEM education is mostly based on the science of everything. The basic grades you will need for any job in STEM would be at least higher than a 4 in Maths, English and Science.



But what about the Arts? Well, that's why there is also STEAM! This is STEM but includes the Creative Arts such as Music, Painting, Design and everything else that you would find in the Creative industries. Fancy yourself as an animator, 3D modeller or an architect? Then STEAM is for you!

So, once you know what kind of field you'd like to get into, you then need to think about the College or University you would want like to apply to. To start off strong, one of the best Further Education institutions for STEM education in London is The National Mathematics and Science College, which provides a positive community and a large range of STEM subjects. Imperial College, London, is also a leading Institution in Science, Engineering, Medicine and Business and was ranked 6th globally.

After Further Education, how do you choose the best job for you? You can consult an advisor or mentor. But a critical thing they will most definitely ask you, is what your natural interests are. The best way to find a job that is right for you is to base it on your hobbies. So, if for example you enjoy design, why not pursue a career in Architecture? There are so many pathways you can take; you just need to find what you love doing and try to implement it into your future career.



So, whilst for now you may be focused on getting the best GCSE grades you possibly can, it's definitely worth taking time to consider what drives and motivates you, where your true interests lie and what you really want from a career. Once you have answers to these factors, the world could be your oyster!





# INTERVIEW WITH A PARENT PAST PUPIL

WRITTEN BY STEPHANIE CAMACHO PINTO

**We interviewed past pupil parent Armando Jose Quatorze Pinto.**

***When did you attend Stockwell Park High school?***

I attended there from September 1995, starting in Year 10. I had just recently arrived in the UK from Portugal.

***What did you think about your time at Stockwell Park?***

There were some teachers I remember who were very nice and devoted; they made a difference. There was one teacher who helped guide me called Ms Wiles, who was the Head of Year 10 and 11. Whenever I got into trouble, she would be the one to deal with me and guide me. Ms Brindly was another teacher I really liked - she was fun and we were able to talk to her about anything.

***How would you describe the school before it was Platanos College?***

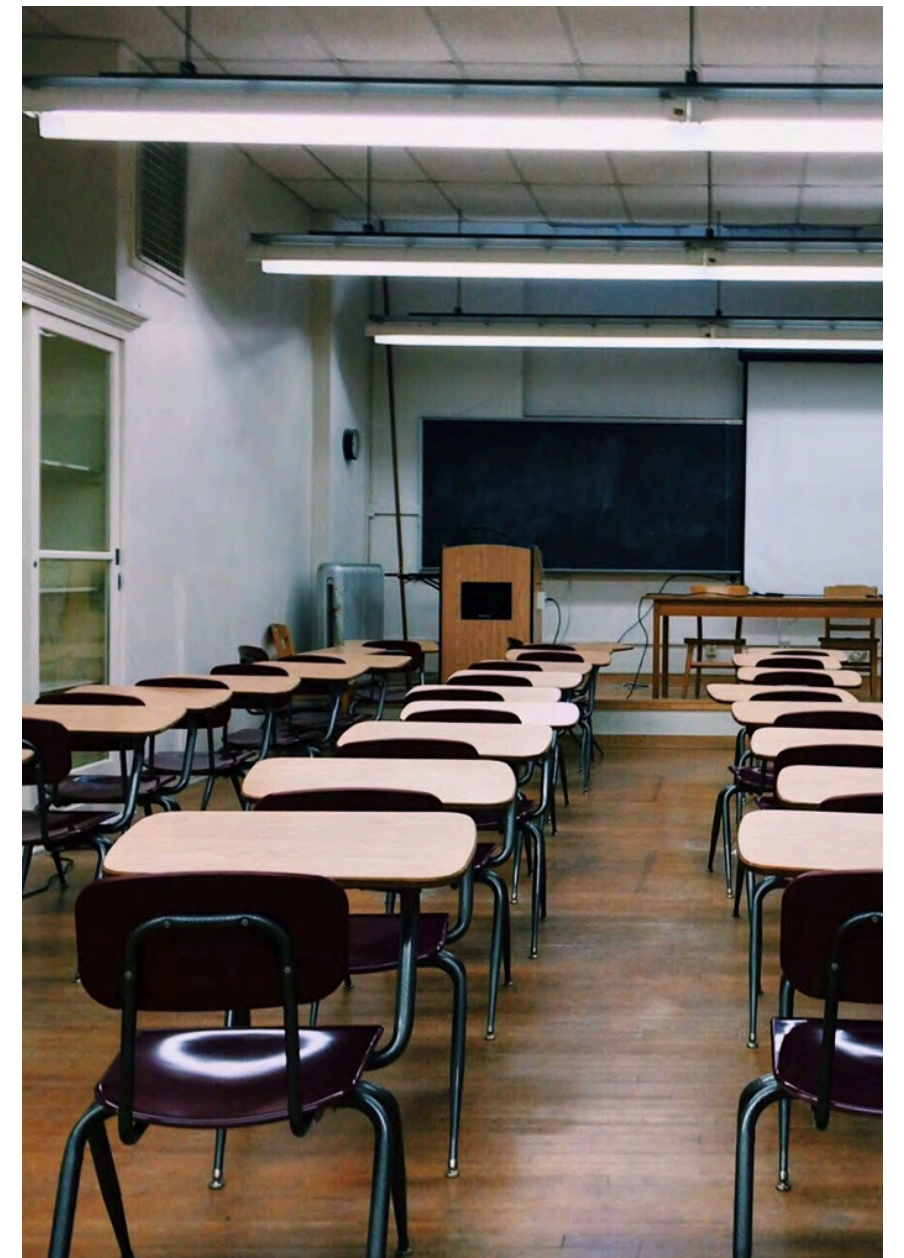
I was like an island; no one knew how to deal with me. I found out I was dyslexic when I was in Year 11 and it was a Portuguese teacher who actually made me aware of it.

I was very different from the so called 'norm' although I did respect the teachers.

***What is a core memory you have from Stockwell Park?***

I remember my graduation vividly. There were two parts: there was the part with the parents where they would hand out certificates to the students, all dressed smart like James Bond. That was one of the moments of my life where I was proud of how I dressed and myself in general. I changed my image to change how I felt.

The second part of graduation was the party - everyone was there all having a good time!



***How do you reflect on your time at Stockwell Park?***

I learnt not to be a victim and how to protect my brother and help him when he got into trouble.

***Now that your child attends Platanos College, how have you seen the school change from the old Stockwell Park you knew?***

At first, one of the main reasons we chose Platanos College was for convenience, but then we saw how much you flourished in your education. You get good grades, make friends, learn new things and enjoy your subjects. It made me feel proud of you and how you adapted to do all the things you do in school. I can really see how the school has evolved from when I was a pupil!





# community corner

## WILL GEN Z EVER BE ABLE TO AFFORD THEIR OWN HOMES?

WRITTEN BY EMNET KETEMA

The UK is currently in the midst of a housing crisis; properties are few and far between and in London especially, they are wildly unaffordable for most. This means that rents also skyrocket, resulting in many being unable to save up a deposit for a 'forever home' or even a starter home.

But what does this mean for Gen Z? With a severe shortage of affordable and high-quality accommodation for young people, many are forced to live in overcrowded, substandard housing. Inevitably, this can then have a significant impact on their wellbeing and Mental Health. In a survey conducted by the National Union of Students, over 40% of students reported experiencing issues with their accommodation: damp, mould and even pest infestations.

Most young people search for accommodation that is well-connected to public transport links, close to amenities such as shops and restaurants and homes that are equipped with modern facilities. However, partly due to inflation, affordability of such properties has decreased over the years.

One of the biggest obstacles that Gen Z faces is the rising cost of housing in the UK. Over the past decade, property prices have skyrocketed, making it nearly impossible for young people to get on the property ladder. With the average house price now exceeding £250,000, many young adults are struggling to save up for a deposit, let alone able to afford monthly mortgage payments. This clearly proves that there is a huge gap between the cost of housing and the average salary, compared with previous generations, whose salaries were more likely to match their housing aspirations.

Another major challenge faced by Gen Z in the UK is the sheer lack of affordable housing options. With a limited supply of affordable homes, many young people are left with few choices when it comes to finding a place to live. Social housing waiting lists are long, and private rental prices are often out of reach for those on lower incomes.



This then creates very challenging situations, pushing many young people into precarious living situations, such as renting in overcrowded flats or being forced to move back home. In extreme circumstances, homelessness is the only possible outcome.

One possible solution is for the government to invest more in affordable housing schemes, such as social housing and shared ownership programmes; this is something that successive governments seem to promise, but they still can't keep up with demand, especially in a highly-populated city like London. By increasing the supply of affordable homes, more young people would be able to find stable and secure accommodation.

But, will this actually happen in reality? And if not, what does this mean for our generation if and when we decided we want to be property owners?





# WHY IS MENTAL HEALTH SO IMPORTANT?

WRITTEN BY ASMA MOHAMMED-ALI



***Trigger warning: this article has references to suicide.***

We all have Mental Health needs and it is important that we protect them from the demands of modern life and any personal struggles we may be dealing with. Yet there are many limiting beliefs about Mental Health and reductive stereotypes regarding those who may suffer from poor Mental Health.

Mental Health conditions can be categorised into 4 groups: mood disorders (Depression, Bipolar Disorder); anxiety disorders; personality disorders (Dissociative Identity Disorder) and Psychotic disorders (such as Schizophrenia). Being diagnosed with a Mental Health condition does not lower a person's worth in any way, yet it can be easy for those who suffer from it to feel that way.

A number of factors are known to help improve a person's Mental Health, including exercise, hydration, sleep, healthy eating and being around people who uplift your Mental Health and keep you in a positive state of mind.

One of the most tragic consequences of poor Mental Health is suicide. Did you know that suicide rates are at an all-time high? This emphasises the need for greater awareness on this topic. Suicide rates increased 37% between 2000-2018 and decreased 5% between 2018-2020 but they returned to their peak and gradually began increasing in 2022.

In fact, suicide is the number one killer of men under 50 in the UK. This is thought to be due to the perceptions of masculinity and men potentially feeling they cannot live up to this stereotypical standard. Furthermore, it is believed that many men struggle to vocalise their feelings and emotions and therefore do not have the outlet or social network that women may have.

Nonetheless, statistics show that despite poor Mental Health rates increasing for both men and women over the last 10 years, it is still more common among women. Moreover, 1 in 5 women report symptoms of common Mental Health disorders and are twice as likely to be diagnosed with anxiety.

Unfortunately, the UK has been deemed the second worst country with regards to Mental Well-being, according to Sapien Labs World Reports in 2024.



But what about rates in our local community? Well, sadly, Lambeth has one of highest rates for Mental Health disorders in London (59,068 people in 2020). It also has three times the national average, with 4000 people with serious mental illnesses living in the borough. Lambeth also has the fifth highest level for diagnosed psychosis in the country. Furthermore, across an average three-year period, 17 Lambeth residents died each year from suicide.

As a society we need to understand that Mental Health complications can affect anyone – regardless of gender, age, ethnicity or economic background. It is also time that we realise someone with Mental Health challenges is not weak; imagine if Mental Health problems were treated with the same compassion, empathy and understanding as physical illnesses or conditions. Maybe it's about time there were...





# INTERVIEW WITH A LOCAL BUSINESS

WRITTEN BY SHACKAYLA REITTE



**We interviewed local business owner Shannon Briscoe.**

***What inspired you to start a nursery and how long have you been a nursery owner?***

I've always liked working in childcare. I've been a nursery owner for 15 years

***What are the challenges of running a nursery?***

If a child becomes poorly, I have to then do check ups on the other children to make sure that the illness doesn't spread around, which can get overwhelming. Also, if a parent picks up their child late, this can really affect my schedule outside of work.

***What do you most like about running a nursery?***

I like how rewarding it is. Seeing a child learn important skills such as reading, writing and making friends - it's truly wonderful to see! I love updating the parents on what their child has learnt during the day and I love really seeing the development of character of the child. It truly warms my heart.

***Did you face any challenges during Covid?***

Fortunately I did not as I closed down the business until Covid was over. However, after Covid it was a bit of a struggle starting back up as parents and carers didn't feel safe with bringing their child back to nursery. So, business was quite slow for a while.

***Do you think the government needs to do more to support women who want to return to work but find childcare unaffordable?***

Yes, the government really needs to step up and help support struggling mothers. I think the government could implement more affordable childcare programmes, provide subsidies for families and promote flexible working



arrangements. Additionally, increasing funding for early childhood education could help ease the financial burden on parents.

***What ambitions do you have for the future of your nursery?***

I want to expand my nursery business by buying more houses and turning them into nurseries so more parents have access to ones that are closer to them.



# The Rise of AI

## CRYPTIC CRYPTO

WRITTEN BY GREGORIO MOREIRA

Today, no one seems to be able to live without their phones, laptops or tablets; indeed, everyone seems addicted to them. And why not? Everything you need is inside your most precious devices: bank accounts, cards, notes, contacts and important documents. Additionally, Crypto can be used for payments or as an investment method. You can make everything with Crypto - buy a gift card in web stores, purchase games or even buy food!

Now imagine that the devices that you rely on can do everything really quickly and in a smarter way! Imagine something 100% automated and trained to behave like a human! That's right! The AI that can be trained and used by you to make your life more efficient and easy! AI can do everything, from text generation to image manipulation. In fact, Bernard Marr, a writer for Forbes.com



says *"Think of AI cryptocurrencies as digital tokens that have a special purpose: they're designed to power artificial intelligence systems and services. While Bitcoin was created to be digital money, these new cryptocurrencies do something different - they help manage and run AI technology."*

Now let's return to Crypto and AI investments and the union of them. You have many websites that use AI + Crypto API's (Application Programming Interface) that help Users to invest their money and understand Crypto more easily so they can analyse the data stated by the Developer (for instance, news, most recent values, buys and sells).

It seems that in the 21st Century, Crypto is the way forward for all of our lives.

However, is there a darker side to this seemingly phenomenal innovation? Well, Elon Musk himself has warned, *"Mark my words, AI is far more dangerous than nukes... why do we have no regulatory oversight?"* Indeed, Musk has a point: depending on its use, AI can be dangerous. For instance, people can create DeepFakes where an individual's voice



or face is effectively stolen and manipulated to make false videos. This can enable individuals to commit malicious activities such as cloning your voice to say *"My voice is my password"* to steal your money or clone your face to bypass the face detection system in your Cryptocurrency wallet.

And it's not just your pocket that is at risk; imagine the potentially devastating political ramifications of such technology! If a World Leader's image or voice is manipulated, this could cause horrific international consequences and conflict.

In conclusion, Crypto and AI can be both dangerous and helpful. Technology has been advancing rapidly; you can do pretty much anything if you have the internet and a smart device nowadays. They're no doubt transforming the world. The question is, will Crypto and AI make our world safer or not?



# HOW WILL AI CHANGE OUR HEALTHCARE?

WRITTEN BY RUWEDA NOR



Now that we are a quarter way through the 21st century, we are beginning to see a revolution within medical technology, with scientific breakthroughs in newfound technologies such as MRI and Telemedicine. There is no doubt that medical technology has already come a long way, from the discovery of penicillin by scientist Alexander Fleming in 1928, to the use of life-altering machines such as MRIs and ventilators.

Through the past century, there have been breakthroughs in the surgical sector, such as minimally invasive surgeries, which allow for there to be less blood loss, a quicker recovery, and fewer complications. And let's not forget robotic assisted operations, which allow for precise incisions in the operating room, therefore minimising the risk of errors and infections occurring.

With the emergence of AI technology, we are already seeing significant changes in the medical field. Although AI is still considered to be in its infancy stage, it is already beginning to be used to analyse medical images like X rays and MRIs with high accuracy.

In the future, AI will not just be capable of assisting doctors in diagnosing patients, but will also be able to personalise different types of treatments based on advancements in medical data.

A study published in Nature Medicine found that AI models can accurately diagnose health conditions like breast cancer, pneumonia and skin cancer. In fact, evidence shows that AI detected 91% of breast cancer cases, compared with a slightly lower figure of 88% by human radiologists.



Another technology that is helping to transform medical technology is 3D printing; this enables the personalised production of prosthetics, implants and surgical models. As a result, medical devices can be created to fit an individual patient's needs and anatomy, therefore leading to better surgical outcomes and faster recovery times.

Researchers are also beginning to explore the use of 3D printing to create artificial tissues and even organs, which could help solve the global organ shortage and reduce transplant waiting times in hospitals.

So, what do you think medical care will look for us when we are in our 20s, 30s and beyond?



# HOW ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE WILL SHAPE THE FUTURE OF GAMING

WRITTEN BY MICHAEL PERSUAD



The future of gaming holds endless possibilities, with AI reforming the imagination and wonders of the next generation. As AI keeps evolving into new heights, it plays a monumental part in the growth of gaming. For example, Red Dead Redemption 2 (a popular game amongst teenagers that was made by Rockstar Games), uses AI to elevate the players' experience by providing realistic non-player characters (NPCs). They do this by having them react to the player's actions and have unique dialogue between them. They also carry out daily routines, which makes the game feel alive and unpredictable.

But let's briefly mention how gaming AI first developed. The first AI was developed in 1955 by Herbert Simon and was intended to solve mathematical theorems and problems. The first gaming AI appeared in 1970 and was entitled The Empire Game. Created by Walter Bright, it was a spaceship game.

Although the AI wasn't fully developed, it was the first use of it in gaming. In the game, non-players acted as if real players were playing the game with them.

As years passed, AI was developed and programmed to reach even better levels until now, in 2025, where there are thousands of brilliant Artificial Intelligent bots. These consist of chess bots, ranging from low elo to high elo (a way of ranking gamers' skills), challenging people to try beat them.

AI has enabled many people to gain ideas and make them a reality. For instance, Tesla's self-driving cars use AI and play a significant role in self-driving technology. This shows the massive impact AI has, so there are endless possibilities for gaming. Gaming has been a staple for our generation; it unites people and encourages teamwork, focus and passion. Many of us view gaming as an escape from reality.

The future of gaming will be revolutionised and is set to be a mind-blowing factor in the expansion of gaming. Innovations such as Nvidia's AI-driven graphics mean that gamers will be able to play ultra-high quality games on any device anywhere. Many years from now, there will be a new era of limitless gaming.

By 2026, the VR gaming market is expected to exceed \$12 billion to nearly \$13 billion by 2030, re-shaping how we connect with gaming forever. Not only that: there will also be a rise of cloud gaming platforms with the involvement of AI.

As gaming continues to evolve at a rapid rate, it's clear that the future holds unlimited and vast possibilities.

However, while it's thrilling to believe the endless possibilities, it's important to recognise how easy it is for us to allow gaming to take over our real lives. In fact, did you know that last year about 60 million people were thought to suffer from gaming disorders? In fact, the World Health Organisation now recognises video game addiction as a mental health disorder.

The gaming world today is being revolutionised thanks to the advancements in AI technology; however, it's important that as young people we remain vigilant about ensuring gaming doesn't infringe on our education, health and relationships. Afterall, is it worth allowing Artificial Intelligence to take over our real lives?



# HOW IS AI CHANGING EDUCATION?

WRITTEN BY RANYAH NURHUSSEIN

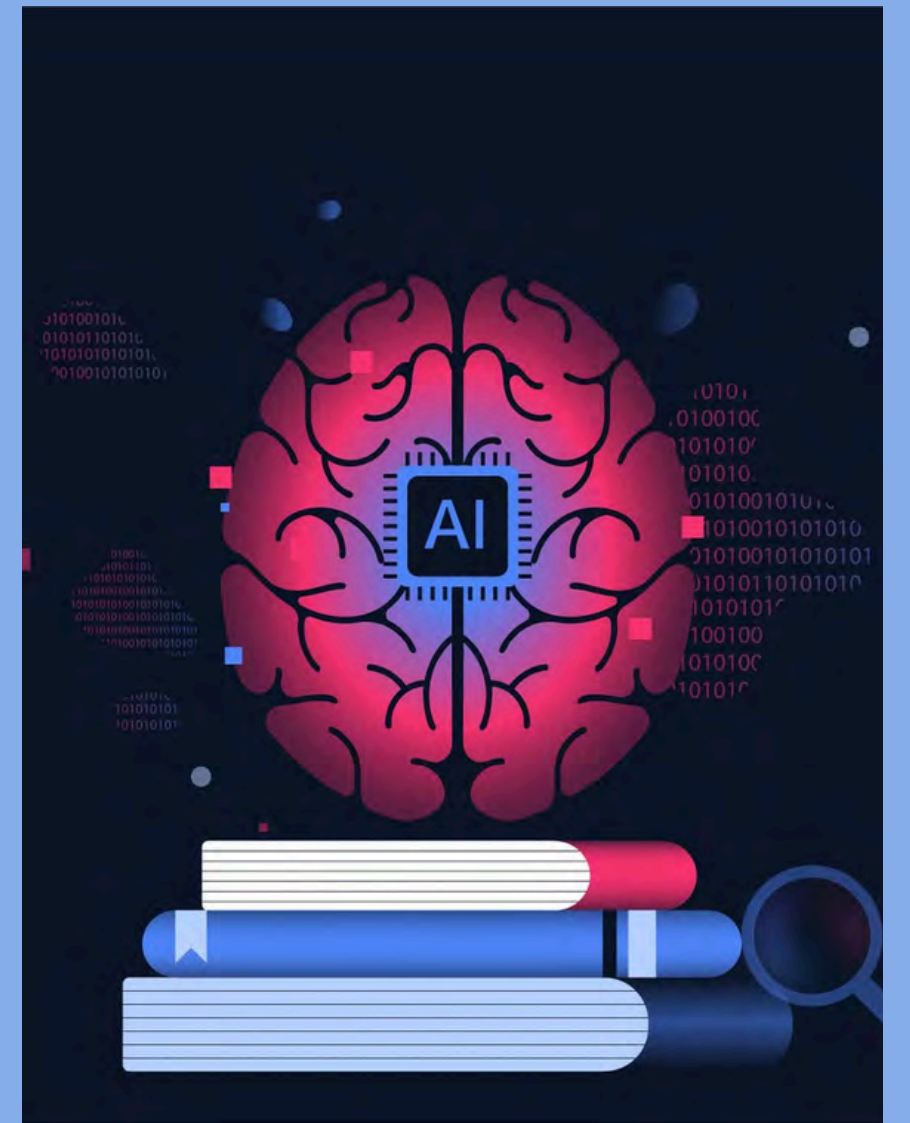


As we are all seeing quite clearly now, Artificial Intelligence is no longer the future—it's shaping our all aspects of our lives today, including one of the most important aspects of our lives as young people: education.

AI has been a cutting-edge development in many areas of modern life, from Healthcare to Business, and its impact on Education is only just beginning. As it continues to develop, AI could transform schools by personalising learning, automating administrative tasks and making education more accessible to all pupils, regardless of individual needs or circumstances. AI could

improve Education by providing personalised learning for every pupil, thereby maximising the effectiveness of learning. This is something that teachers may sometimes struggle to do, as they have to teach large classes with pupils of different abilities. AI can change this by adapting lessons to suit each pupil. For example, some learning platforms use AI to track each individual pupil's progress and give them exercises that match their skill level. This means that those who struggle can get extra help, while those who can acquire and demonstrate knowledge and skills at a faster or deeper level, can move on to more challenging tasks.

In addition, AI can make Education more inclusive for pupils with different disabilities, such as speech-to-text tools for those who have hearing impairments.



Moreover, language barriers need be a challenge no longer; translation tools and multilingual AI tutors can help learners across the world to access educational opportunities, regardless of their home language.

AI can also make teachers' jobs easier – it is well known that teachers spend a lot of time marking tests, planning lessons and answering pupils' questions. AI can help by automating some of these tasks.

For example, AI programmes can mark multiple-choice tests instantly, saving teachers hours of work. Chatbots can answer simple pupil questions, like explaining homework instructions, so that teachers can focus on more challenging tasks such as explaining difficult topics and helping pupils individually.



Furthermore, AI can help teachers with long, medium and short term planning of lessons, meaning they can save hours of time by using AI to enable them to be more time-efficient.

Of course, it's not always the case that we associate school with fun! However, by integrating AI into gamification, pupil engagement is increased. AI games and simulations provide learners with an immersive learning experience, thereby making new knowledge and skills easier to acquire.

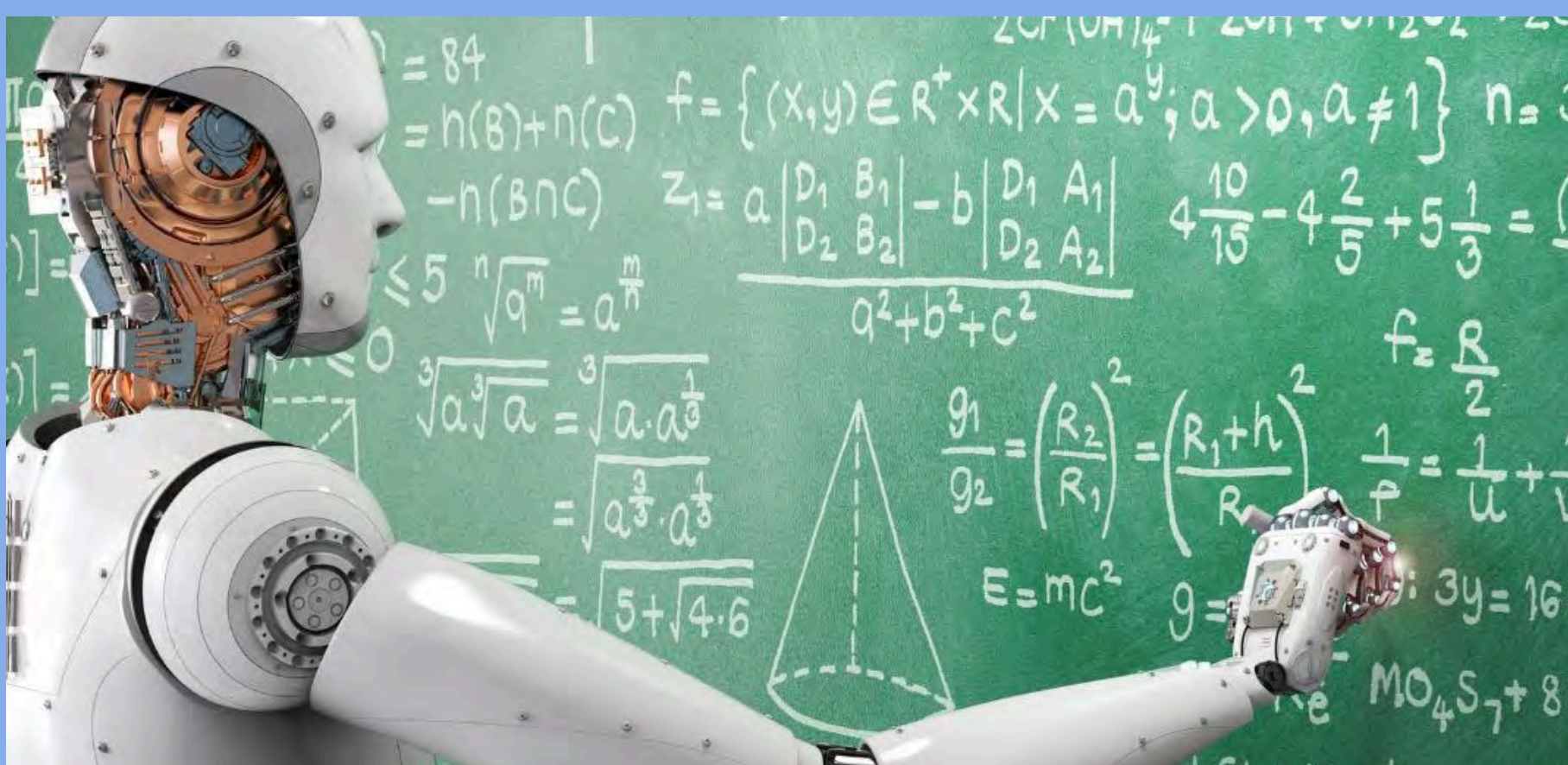


make learning more personalised, help teachers with their workload and make schools more efficient. However, schools need to use AI carefully to avoid problems like over-reliance on technology. If used correctly, AI could make Education better for everyone, creating smarter schools for the future.



Although AI has many benefits for Education, there are also some concerns. One problem is that AI might make pupils too dependent on technology; if they rely too much on AI to help them with their work, they might not develop important problem-solving and critical thinking skills.

There is little doubt that AI has the potential to change Education in many ways. It can





# WILL AI TAKE YOUR FUTURE JOB?

WRITTEN BY JENA ABERAA

Did you know that by next year, AI could create 97 million jobs while simultaneously replacing 85 million existing ones? Shocking, isn't it?



Here we explore how AI is dramatically altering society and the global jobs market. Whilst researching this topic, I have discovered how AI is reshaping industries like Healthcare, Education and the Creative Arts. I've personally seen recently how tools like AI-powered assistants have rooted themselves into our routines.

For instance, last year a family member of mine applied for several jobs, yet was continuously receiving rejection emails void of feedback. It wasn't until months later that they realised that their application had been wrongly labelled as irrelevant by an AI hiring

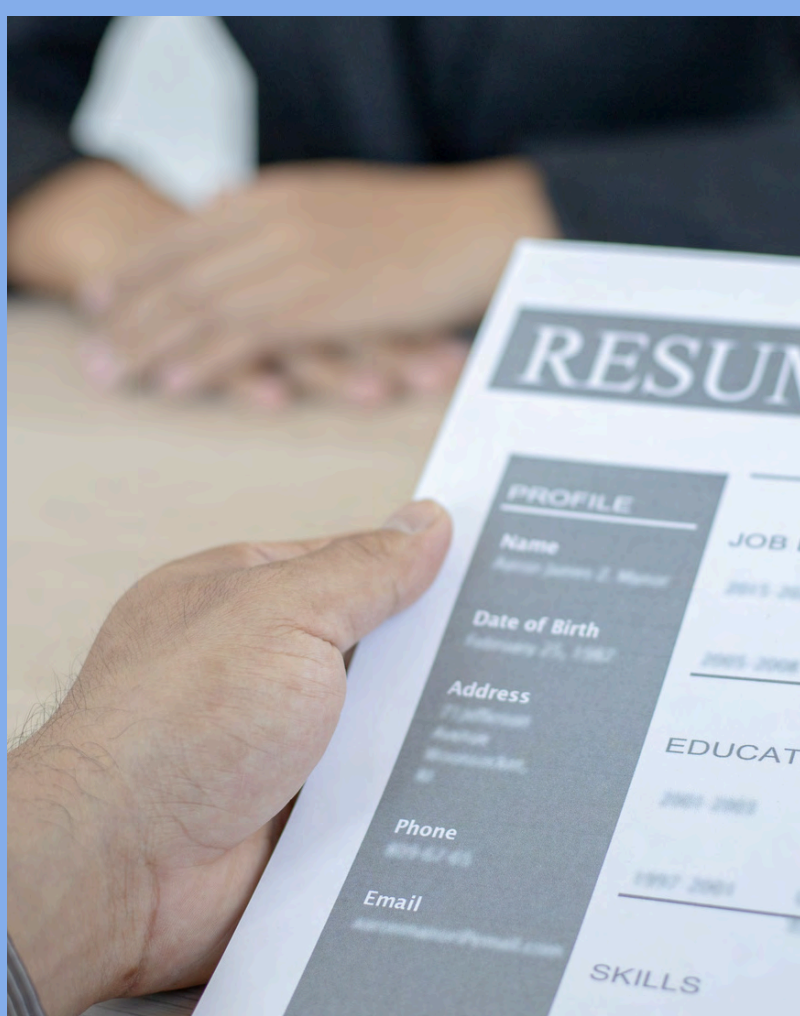
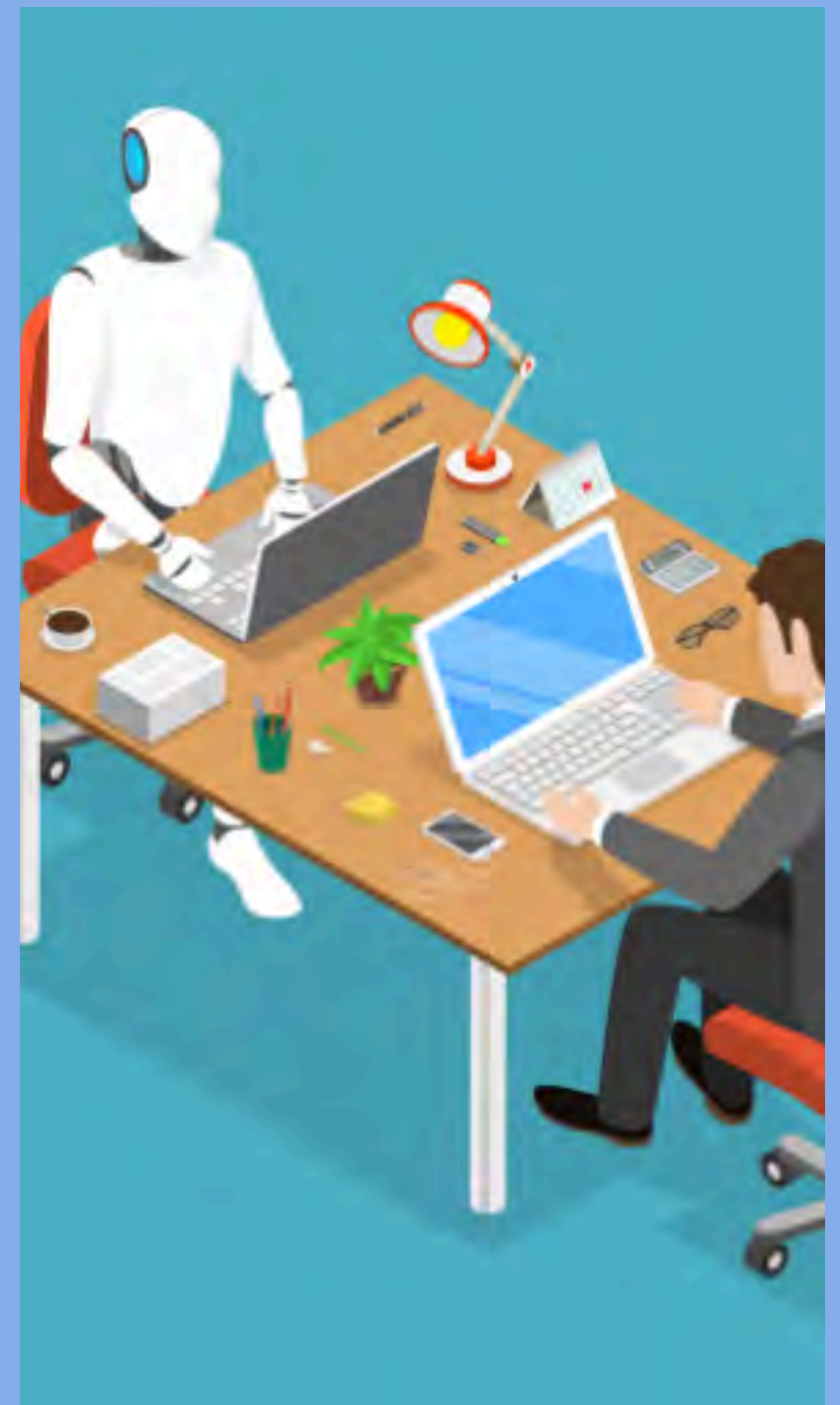
assistant due to a supposed formatting error. This made me wonder how often these invisible systems gravely impact people's lives.

So, as well as exploring the promise of this technology, it is also critical to consider the risks it poses if left unchecked. The difficulties that AI poses can not be taken lightly, even though its potential is frequently praised.

In 2024, a study carried out by the University of Oxford revealed that 60% of companies that are implementing AI reported severe job displacement. Professors believe that as a result of automation, there will be a loss of 375 million jobs worldwide by 2030! These aren't just low-skilled jobs, but include Accounting, Law and even Medicine.

In addition, Scientists at MIT have discovered that computer vision algorithms used to diagnose pathologies worked less well for people with darker skin tones and that the algorithms for detecting skin cancer are less accurate on these patients.

Imagine a world where the decisions of your life, your job, your Healthcare and your future are decided by machines that are as cold and unfeeling as the metal they are made from.



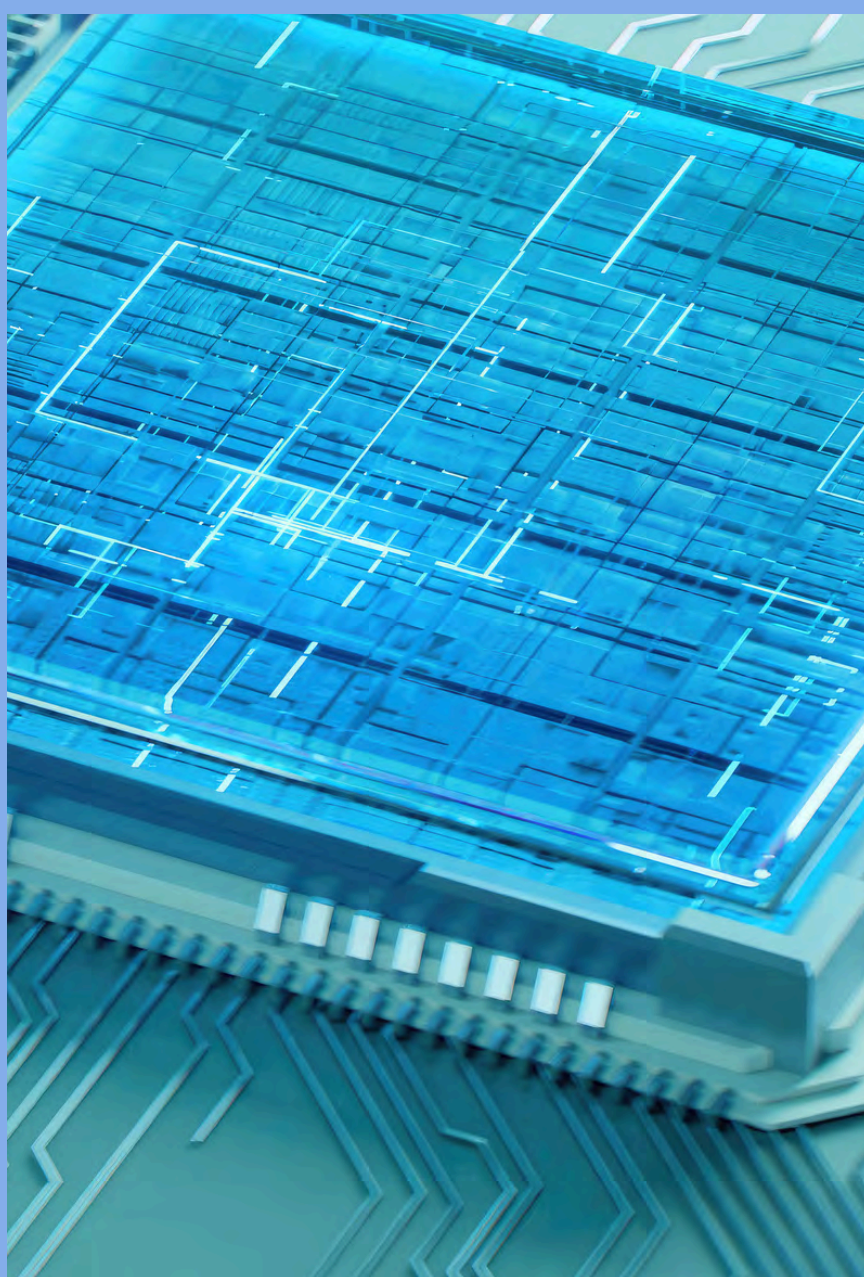


Despite its strength, AI is similar to a double edged sword: one side offers us innovation and growth, while the other is threatening our stability and security. According to the Harvard Business Review, *“Gen AI will continue transforming job market dynamics by automating a wide range of tasks. For organizations to succeed, they must invest in developing a workforce capable of integrating AI into daily operations. The strategic focus should be on augmenting human potential rather than merely replacing it.”*

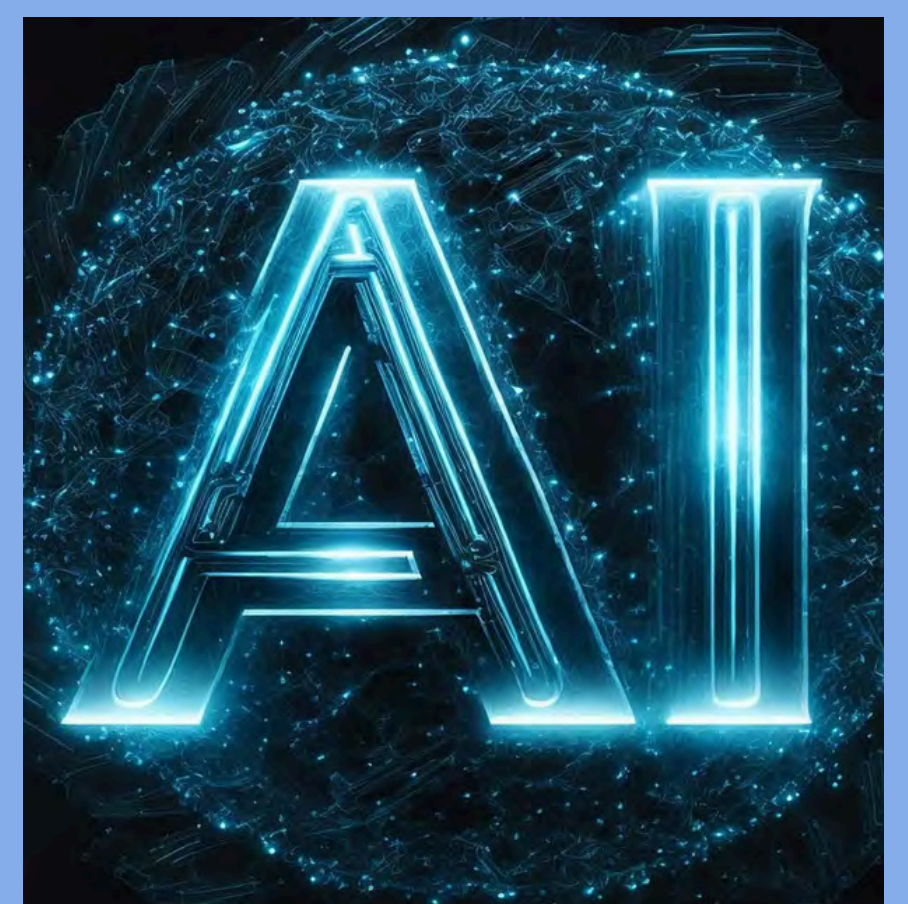
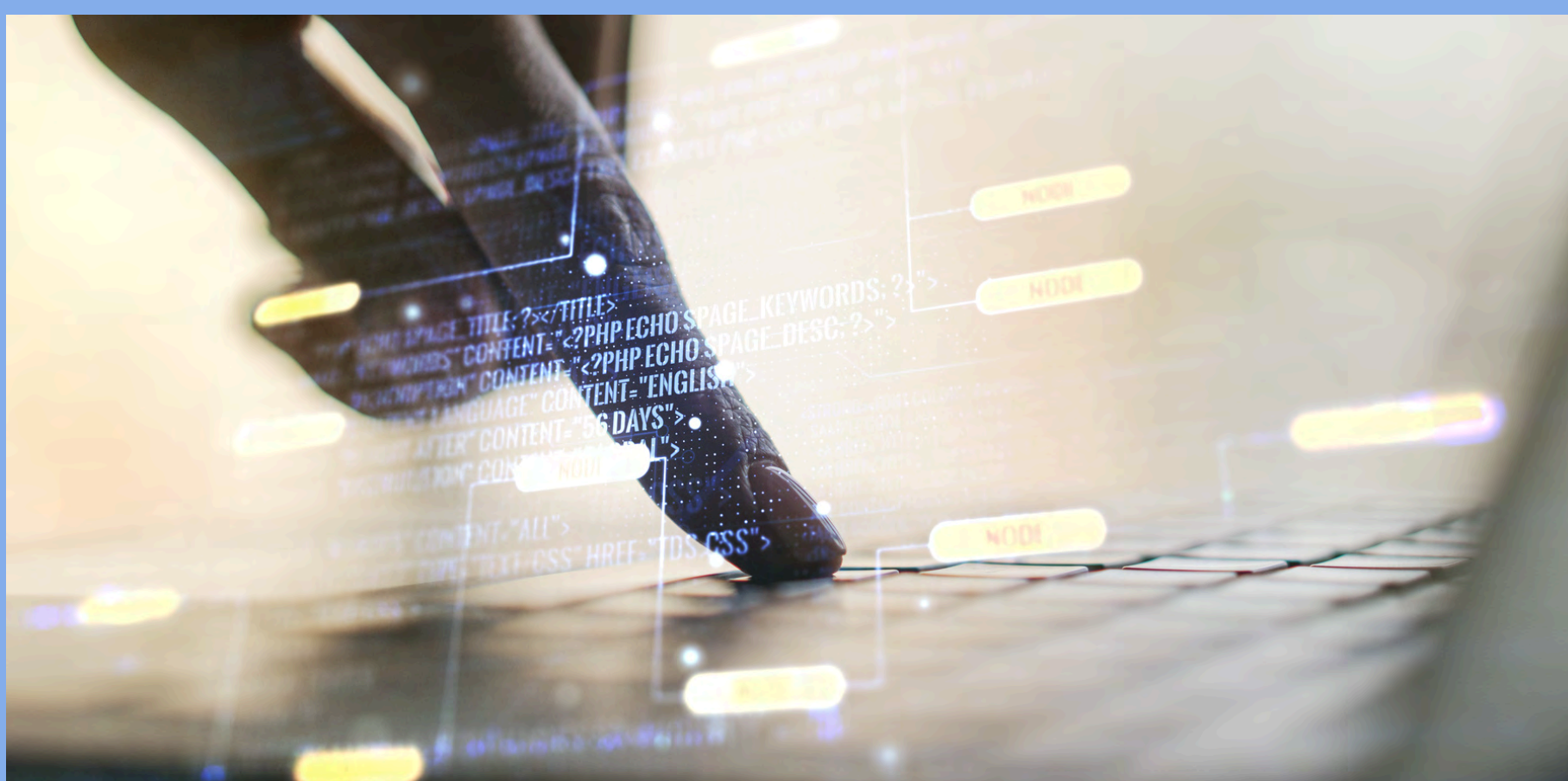


By acting now, we can form a future where AI enhances our lives and strengthens society - rather than controlling it.

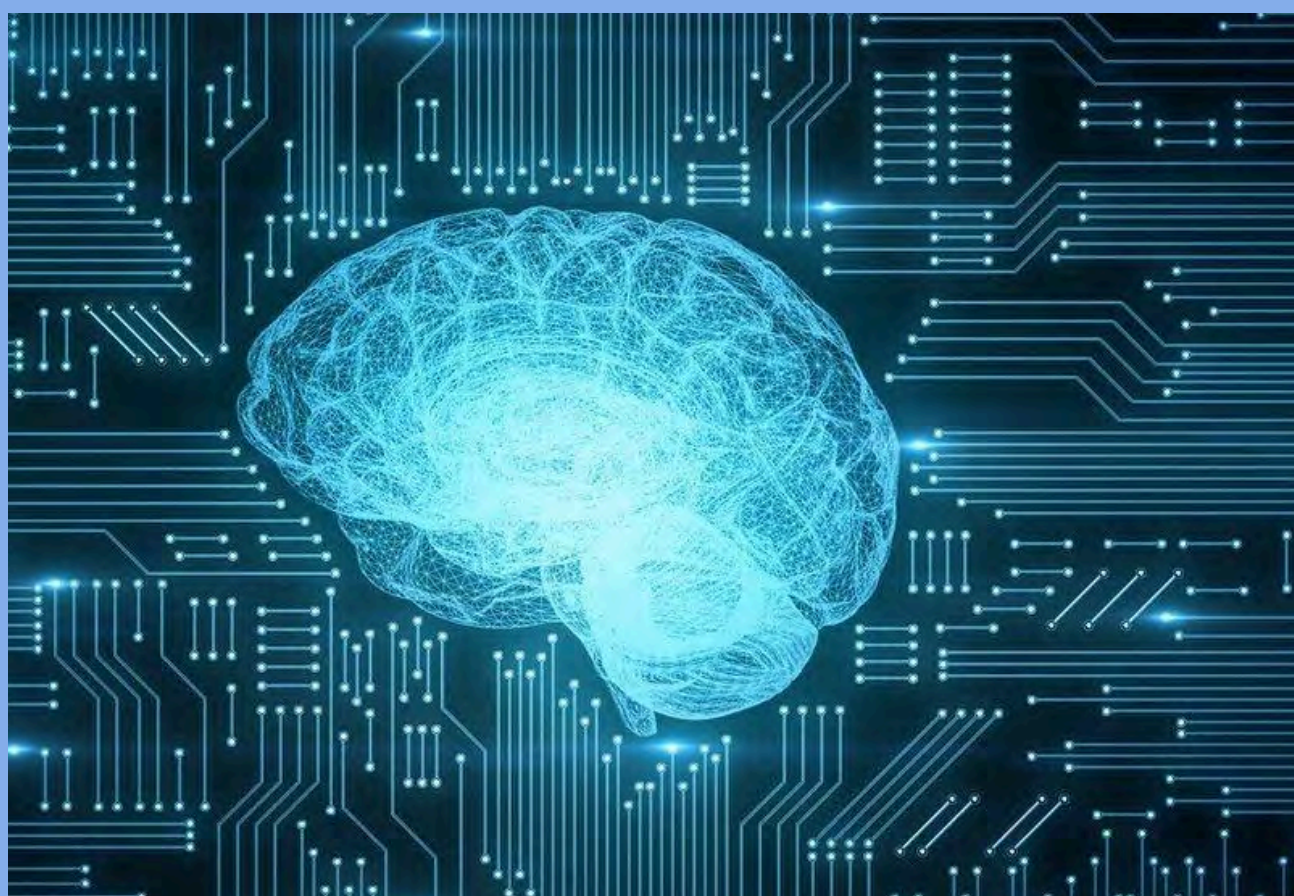
So, how will different jobs be affected by AI in the future and what does this mean for your future job? Here's what Forbes has to say about the matter...



To conclude, Artificial Intelligence is a transformative force but it comes with significant challenges. It's unthinkable to overlook the dangers of ethical dilemmas, bias and job displacements but they are not impossible to overcome. To ensure accountability and transparency in AI systems, the government should implement clear regulations. Moreover, schools and educational institutions should focus on teaching AI literacy and upskilling workers to prepare for the changing job market.







Jobs most likely to be ‘future-proofed’  
against AI

1. Machine learning engineers
2. Software developers
3. Data scientists
4. Cybersecurity engineers
5. AI agent managers

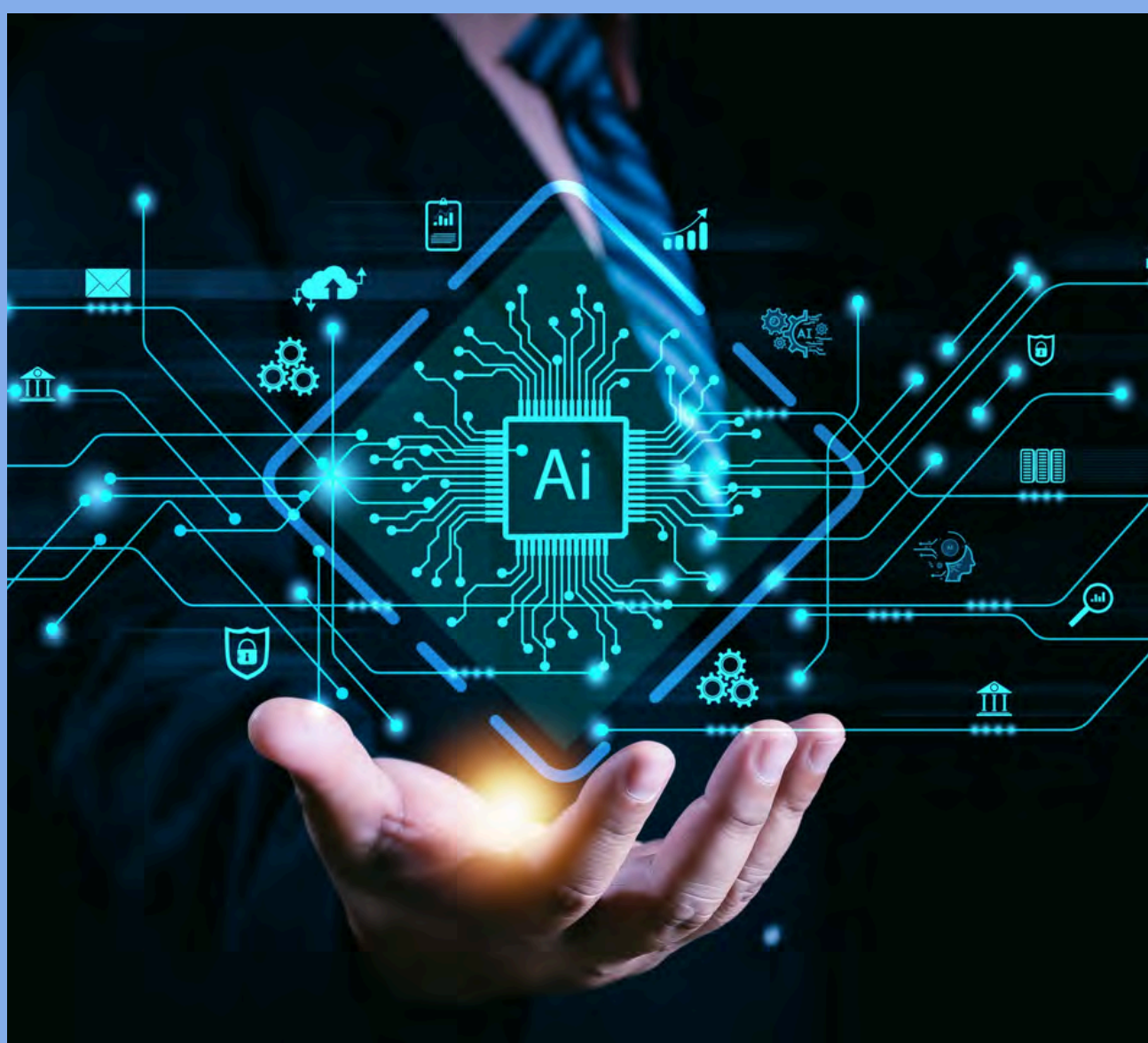
Jobs most likely to be at risk from AI

1. Manufacturing jobs (machine operation, product handling, testing, packaging, testing, etc.)
2. Retail and commerce roles (customer service, inventory management, fraud analysis)
3. Transport and logistics jobs (human drivers being replaced through autonomous vehicles, such as what we’re already seeing with Waymo)
4. Basic data entry, analysis, and visualization jobs
5. Financial analysis and projection roles
6. Travel agents and itinerary providers
7. Translators
8. Tax preparation and entry-level bookkeeping and accounting roles



Jobs mostly like to co-exist with AI

1. Registered nurses
2. Choreographers
3. Paramedics
4. Mental health specialists and counselors
5. Teachers--from K-12 and further, higher education teachers, instructors, and professors
6. Civil engineers
7. Surgeons
8. Project managers
9. Operations directors and managers
10. Musicians
11. Journalists







# crime & conspiracy

## OJ SIMPSON: THE CRIME THAT DIVIDED THE USA

WRITTEN BY ZUHRA OSMAN + SARAH MAKSENE

On 12th June 1994, a heinous crime that shocked the world was committed. Nicole Brown Simpson and her friend Ronald Goldman were brutally murdered outside her Los Angeles home.

The gruesome discovery led to one of most infamous criminal cases in American history, and it all came down to one man: O.J. Simpson.

On the night in question, Nicole Simpson - O.J. Simpson's ex-wife - was found lying in a pool of blood, having been stabbed multiple times. Nearby, Ronald Goldman who was a waiter at a local restaurant, had also suffered numerous stab wounds and blunt force injury. The scene was extremely gruesome, indicating a violent struggle. Evidence, including bloody gloves and footprints, led investigators to suspect O.J. Simpson.



### Timeline of the Murder

#### June 12, 1994 – The Night of the Murders

**6:30 PM – 8:30 PM:** Nicole Brown Simpson and her family have dinner at a restaurant in Brentwood, Los Angeles. Ronald Goldman is a waiter employed at the restaurant.

**9:00 PM:** Nicole's mother accidentally leaves her glasses at the restaurant. Ronald Goldman, offers to return them to Nicole's home.

**9:30 PM – 9:45 PM:** O.J. Simpson and one of his friends Kato Kaelin, get food from McDonald's. They return to O.J.'s home at around 10:00 PM.

**10:15 PM – 10:40 PM:** Neighbours near Nicole's house hear a dog barking loudly and whimpering, but no one investigates at the time.

**10:30 PM – 10:50 PM:** A witness sees a man resembling Simpson speeding away from the crime scene in a white vehicle.

#### June 13, 1994 - The Discovery of the Bodies

**12:10 AM:** Simpson's driver arrives at his home to take him to the airport for a flight to Chicago. The driver rings the door's intercom multiple times but there is no answer.

**12:15 AM:** The driver sees a shadowy figure going into Simpson's house. A few minutes later, Simpson answers the intercom doorbell and claims he overslept.

**12:50 AM:** Simpson leaves for the airport, flying to Chicago for a business trip.

**12:55 AM:** A neighbor finds Nicole Simpson's dog walking around the street, with its paws covered in blood.

**1:00 AM:** The neighbour follows the dog back to Nicole's house, where the bodies of Nicole and Ronald are discovered. Police are alerted.

**4:30 AM:** Police arrive at Simpson's estate to notify him of Nicole's death. They find a bloody glove matching one at the crime scene and bloodstains on his car.

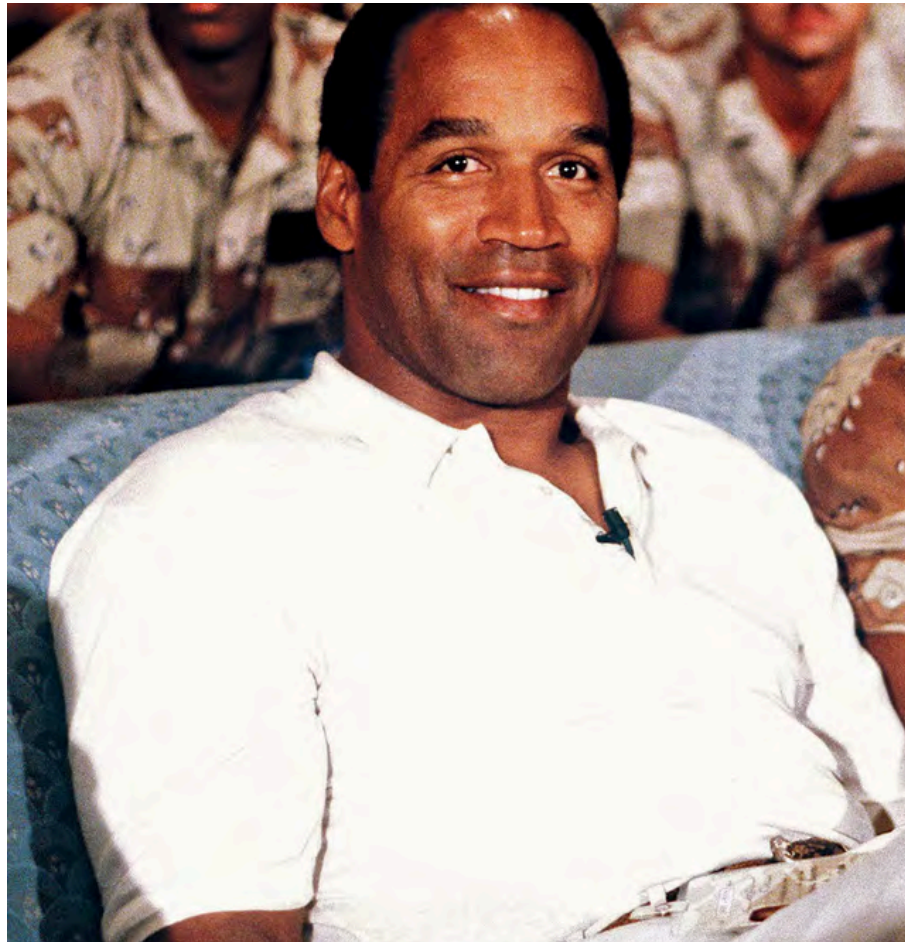




Prosecutors Marcia Clark and Christopher Darden presented evidence that included DNA samples linking Simpson to the crime scene, while the Defence's case questioned the reliability of this evidence and accused the Los Angeles Police Department of misconduct and racism.

One of the most memorable parts of this trial was when Simpson tried on the gloves but they appeared to be too tight, prompting Johnnie Cochran, his Defense Lawyer to say: *"if the gloves don't fit, you must acquit"*.

There has been speculation that Simpson's Defense team advised that he should not take his arthritis medicine, which in turn caused his hands to swell up; this meant that when he tried on the gloves in front of the jury, they appeared to be too small. The Prosecution however, argued that the gloves may have shrunk due to being soaked in blood and improper storage. Nonetheless, the open display of seemingly ill-fitting gloves, massively damaged the Prosecution's case.

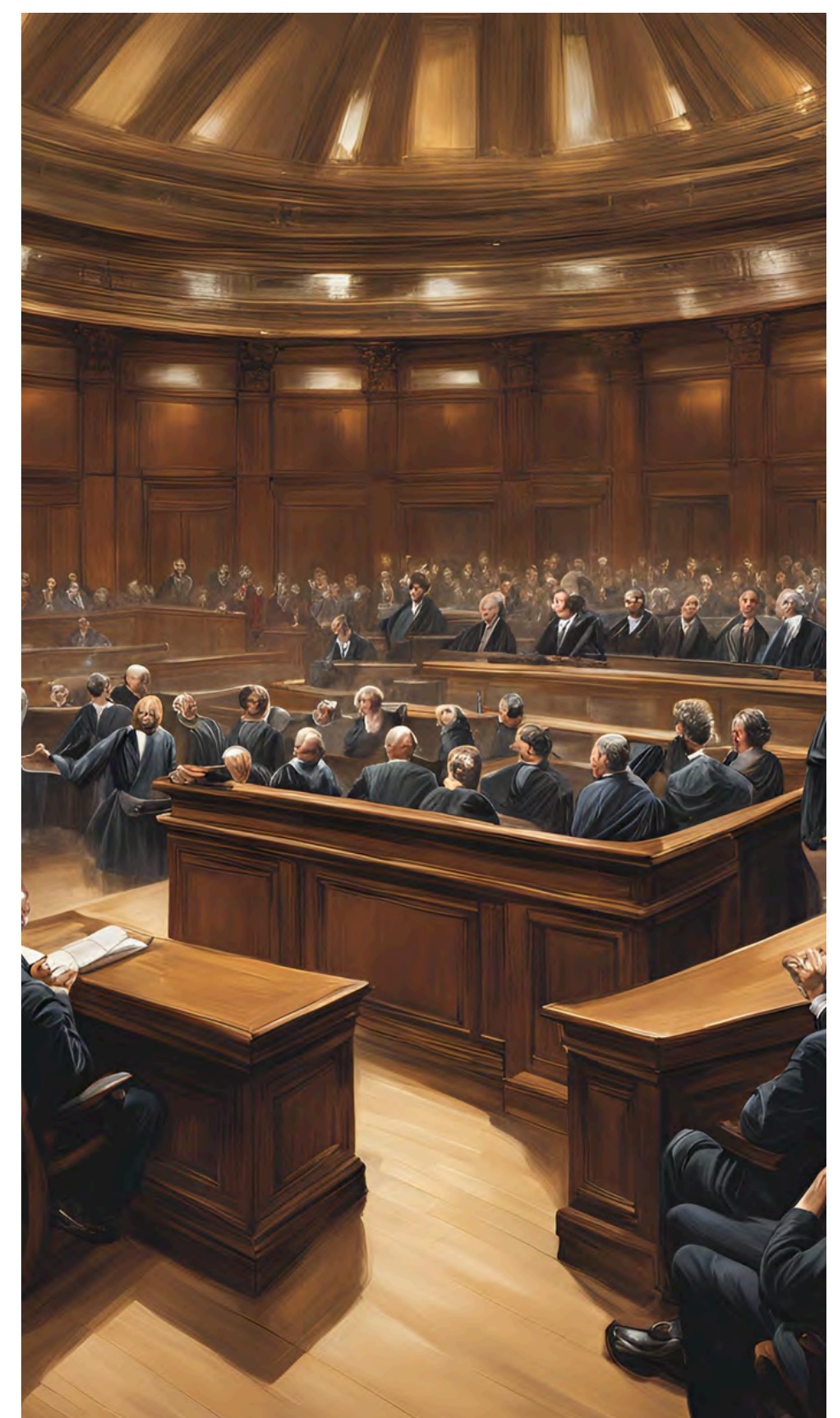


Part of the strength of the Defence's case came from the aftermath of the brutal police beating of Rodney King in 1991. He was a black American activist who had suffered at the hands of officers who were acquitted in 1992. This then led to the LA riots and mass distrust in the police and their treatment of black people.

Furthermore, one of the lead detectives in the Simpson case - Mark Fuhrman - was revealed to have made awful, racially hateful comments. The Defence was therefore able to base their case on the idea that Simpson had been set up by a racist LAPD. In turn, the Prosecution argued that the jury should not be swayed by arguments around race and should focus on the fact that Nicole had repeatedly reported her husband for domestic abuse.

The trial ended on 3rd October 1995, with the jury finding O.J. Simpson not guilty of the murders of Nicole Brown Simpson and Ronald Goldman.

The swift verdict - reached after less than four hours of deliberation - shocked many and led to intense public debate. However, whilst Simpson was acquitted in the Criminal trial, he was later found liable for Nicole and Ron's deaths in a Civil trial and ordered to pay damages to the victims' families. This money however, was never received and, until his death in 2024, Simpson courted publicity; he even wrote a book entitled *'If I Did It.'* After his first trial, Simpson found that he lost both public support and private friendships. It is evident that this trial will go down in history as one that horrified the USA and continues to fascinate crime enthusiasts worldwide, even today.







# THE CRIMES OF THE KKK

WRITTEN BY SAMUEL VARELA



You may well have heard of the Klu Klux Klan, a group that has been notorious for their racist crimes against African Americans since 1865. But how did they begin and do they still pose a threat today?

After the end of the American Civil War in 1865, African Americans were finally freed from slavery after 89 years. Of course, not everyone was pleased with this - which is why a group of Confederate veterans in the Southern State of Tennessee was founded. The Klan wanted to restore white supremacy



and resist the changes that were brought by the end of the Civil War, particularly the rights of freed African Americans. Members of the Klan would do this by persistently terrorising black people who were still living in the segregated and racist South, white Republicans and anyone who supported the reconstruction government. They would use violence and intimidation, with the aim of undermining Republican-led reconstruction governments, and to prevent African Americans from exercising their newfound rights; this is why the Klan expanded rapidly throughout the South, especially in the Southern States where newly freed African Americans were gaining political power.

The crimes committed by the KKK were horrific; members of the Klan would go on night rides dressed in white robes and masks to hide their identities. They would lynch individuals and burn communities to the ground. Lynching - the abduction and killing of someone without a trial - became a regular feature of the Klan's identity. Imagine the constant fear of being randomly targeted at night, taken away from the comfort of your family and being murdered for no reason at all. Horrific.

One of the worst cases during the reconstruction period was the Colfax Massacre. On Easter Sunday 1873,

a white supremacist mob led by Klan members, attacked African American residents of Colfax, Louisiana. They attacked them as they had recently gained political control in the area. As a result of the attack, an estimated 60-150 black men were brutally killed. This was seen as one of the deadliest events during the reconstruction period and demonstrated the Klan's violence aimed at African Americans who had benefitted in the period after the Civil war.

However, under President Ulysses S. Grant, the government authorised the use of military force to suppress Klan activity and arrest Klan members. Many members were arrested and many went into hiding, ultimately leading to the disbandment of the Klan.

Unfortunately however, this was not the end of the KKK. 40 years later in 1915, the disbandment of the Klan came to an end. Many believe this was due to the film *The Birth of a Nation*, which depicted newly freed African American slaves as dangerous, uncivilised and aggressive towards white women, while simultaneously glorifying the original Ku Klux Klan as noble protectors of white women. In fact, the film was so popular that even President Wilson was a strong supporter, and it sparked an interest in the relighting of the scorching flame which was supposed to be put out forever.





Ironically, it was a man named William J. Simmons - a preacher and advocate for moral and social reform - who was so inspired by the film that he was able to lead the reformation of the Klan. One Thanksgiving night, the burning of a large cross symbolised the Klan's revival.

However, this Klan was slightly different from the first. Rather than terrorising newly freed slaves, this Klan was significantly focused on white supremacy. Furthermore, the Klan adopted an 'inclusive' approach as it now welcomed not only Southerners, but also Northern and Western whites who expressed concern about the increasing influence of immigrants, Catholics and Jews in American society.

During the 1920s, the Klan grew rapidly. The Klan believed America was being taken over by 'foreigners' and viewed themselves as the 'protectors' of American Protestant values and culture. African Americans were their primary target, but Jews, Catholics and immigrants were also frequently attacked.



The Klan's political influence had a crucial impact on people's lives; they were able to gain significant political power as they helped elect politicians who supported them, and even had Klan members who held political offices. Their influence was felt in local elections, as they pushed for policies that reflected their views.

Imagine living in a world where those with real power are against you. A world where you feel powerless, and not able to help yourself or the ones you love. A world where you are controlled by those who see you as inferior, and will treat you like an animal: this was the reality of life for many Americans under the influence of the KKK.

The Summer of 1919 saw a wave of violent race riots across the USA. It was known as the Red Summer. During this period, white supremacist groups including the Klan, instigated violence and attacked the homes and businesses of many black Americans. This was mainly because of the increasing post-war fear of African American empowerment. The Klan's role in these riots contributed to the growing racial violence of the time, leaving a legacy of fear and destruction.

However, once again, the Klan's power and influence began to wane, this time mainly because of scandals within the group's leadership, including corruption and criminal activities, which led to loss of credibility. By the end of the 1920s, the Klan had lost most of its political power and popular support.

However, the candle hadn't been completely put out...

After the end of World War Two, racial tension in America began to rise once more. More and more African Americans had begun to migrate to northern cities, leading to significantly greater competition for jobs and housing, which in turn increased tensions between white and African Americans.

Additionally, the Civil Rights Movement had now begun to gather momentum and in 1948, the military was desegregated. All of this made the Klan feel threatened. They saw the changing status of African Americans as dangerous - as if they were going to take over America. White supremacists all over the country, including the Klan, wanted to preserve white dominance and keep African Americans and other minorities segregated from the rest of Americans.

The 1940s saw the rise in political conservatism. These political groups were racist and against ordinary people trying to find a better life by immigrating to America. Their ideas overlapped with the Klan's nativist ideology. As the power of radio and publications grew in America, the Klan were able to spread their message and promote their nefarious ideology.

The Klan was never able to become as popular as they had been in the 1920s,





but they still were able to maintain a presence in the Southern States. They were involved in several bombings and arson attacks of African American homes, churches and businesses. Furthermore, as the Civil Rights Movement began to grow, the Klan sought to intimidate those who wanted equality.

One of the most horrific racist events was the lynching of Emmett Till in 1955. Till was a only 14 years old when, whilst visiting his relatives in Mississippi, was accused of whistling at a white woman. He was subsequently abducted, brutally beaten, shot and dumped in a river. His mother Mamie Till, decided to have an open-casket funeral to show everyone the horrific abuse her son suffered before his death. This drew national attention to the racial violence in the South. Despite the overwhelming evidence, the all-white jury acquitted the two white suspects, Roy Bryant and J.W. Milam. This highlighted the deep social injustice in the South and played a key role in the Civil Rights Movement.

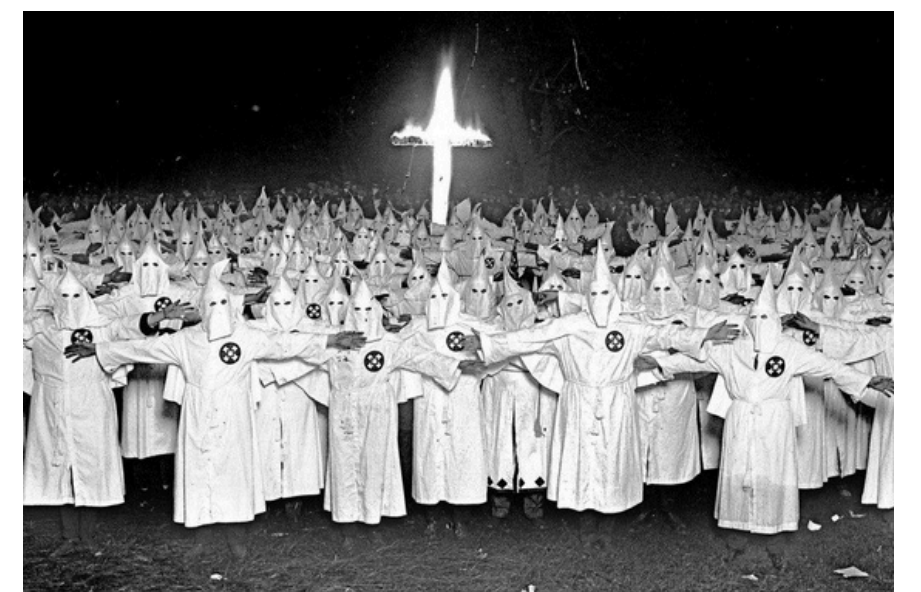
Another awful event was the 16th Street Baptist Church Bombing of 1963. On September 15th, the Klan planted a bomb at the church, which was a gathering place for Civil Rights activists. The explosion killed four African American girls and injured 22 others, many of whom were children. This devastating act of terrorism shocked the nation and galvanised the Civil Rights Movement.

Despite the initial lack of justice, in 1977 one of the bombers, Robert Chambliss, was convicted. The incredible courage of leaders like Martin Luther King Jr and Malcolm X was the reason the Klan once again began to fall to its end. Peaceful protests led by King were able to give the Civil Rights Movement a crucial amount of media attention, to the point where the federal government became involved.

In 1961 a black student called James Meredith was rejected from the University of Mississippi, and it was President John F. Kennedy who involved federal troops to help the young student achieve his dreams. In 1964, the Civil Rights Act was passed to help finally end discrimination. All this social and legal activism contributed to the end of the Klan's influence.

Today, we are still able to recognise fragments of the original Klan in America. Although they are not widely supported, they continue to use social media and even rallies to promote their messages of white supremacy and racial division..

However, in more recent times the Klan has participated in less violent activities due to there being more police intervention. The worst case of the 21st century was most definitely the Charlottesville Unite the Right rally in 2017. The rally was organised by white Nationalists and Far-Right extremist groups, including the Klan. The rally quickly turned violent as counter-protesters clashed with the extremists.



Tensions escalated when a car driven by a white nationalist, James Alex Fields Jr. deliberately plowed into a crowd of counter protesters. This resulted in the death of 32-year-old Heather Heyer and injuries of 19 other victims.

So, what does the future hold for the Klu Klux Klan? There is no doubt that the group's activities represent one of America's darkest chapters. They leave behind a legacy of hatred, violence and racial terror. Fortunately, because of changing social and legal opposition to the Klan, they no longer have the power and influence they once did. Nonetheless, it is imperative that as a society we remain vigilant to the hatred and racism that is epitomised by extremist groups like the dreaded KKK.





# 7/7 20 YEARS ON

WRITTEN BY AISHA BASHIR

On 7th July 2005, London was horrified when a series of four suicide-bombings were detonated; these bombings targeted commuters who were travelling in London via public transport during the morning rush hour.

Just 24 hours before, having celebrated the announcement that London would be the host city for the 2012 Olympics, Londoners were beaming with joy. Little did they know that the city was to be rocked by its worst ever terrorist attack. Over the course of the day, 56 victims tragically lost their lives and 784 people were injured - some with life-altering injuries.

The four sites of the bombings were Tavistock Square, Edgware Road, Aldgate and Russell Square.

Here are the stories of just four of the victims.

## Russell Square:

- Prof Patsalos, lost a leg in the blast. He believes that he only survived the attack because he was sitting in his favourite seat; his second favourite seat was only inches from where the bomb detonated. An Epilepsy specialist at University College London's Institute of Neurology, Professor Patsalos said: *'How I survived, I don't know. Somebody saved me...I'm grateful.'*

## Tavistock Square:

- Camille Scott-Bradshaw was on a work day trip to London work with her colleague Marie Hartley. Scott-Bradshaw suffered from severe leg injuries and damage to her hearing. She attempted to search for her friend, saying, *'I just remember looking over and I think, in the corner, there were bodies... and I could see Marie... I knew it was Marie because I could see her hair, her bracelet and her arms.'*

## Aldgate

- Investment banker Philip Duckworth was so close to terrorist Shehzad Tanweer, that he ended up blinded in one eye due to a fragment of the bomber's shin-bone. The force of the blast threw Duckworth onto the tracks and he was left in and out of consciousness.

## Edgware Road

- Daniel Biddle was standing close to bomber Mohammad Sidique Khan and saw Khan's arm move quickly just before a *'big, white flash'*. As a result of the attack he lost both legs, his left eye and his spleen. A fellow passenger helped Biddle by making tourniquets from his belt and shirt. To this day

a 20p piece remains stuck in Biddle's thigh bone.

As the UK suffered in the aftermath of the attacks, four key perpetrators were identified: Hasib Hussain, Mohammed Sidique Khan, Germaine Lindsay and Shehzad Tanweer, all claiming extremist Islamist views.

Although the day was ultimately tragic in nature and haunting to the victims, their families and the wider British public, it also highlighted the remarkable efforts of all the emergency services. Alongside the London Ambulance Service, the Air Ambulance Service helped to deliver emergency care to those in need. 27 doctors and paramedics were deployed across the four sites, and alongside other emergency services, they helped with the treating and triaging of over 700 patients.

Helicopters played a major role as they sent additional drugs and medical supplies to trauma teams. Firefighters and the British Transport and Metropolitan Police services also worked tirelessly all day in order to ensure the safety of the citizens of London.

There is little doubt that the UK suffered greatly on 7/7 - a dark event in London's history.





# THE TRAGIC CASE OF BABY GARNET

WRITTEN BY ZUHRA OSMAN

The Baby Garnet case began in Michigan in 1997 when a deceased infant was found in a campground pit toilet at Garnet Lake Campground, Michigan.

Since the baby's identity was unknown, and investigators were able to find no leads or witnesses, the case unfortunately went cold.

However, almost 28 years later in 2024, this cold case was re-opened and the culprit responsible for the infant's murder found.

But what new evidence was uncovered to support the re-opening of this case?

Well, remarkably, the revelation of what happened began with a TikTok Influencer called Jenna Rose. In 2022 Rose, having seen her best friend receive an Ancestry DNA testing kit for Christmas, decided to buy her own one.



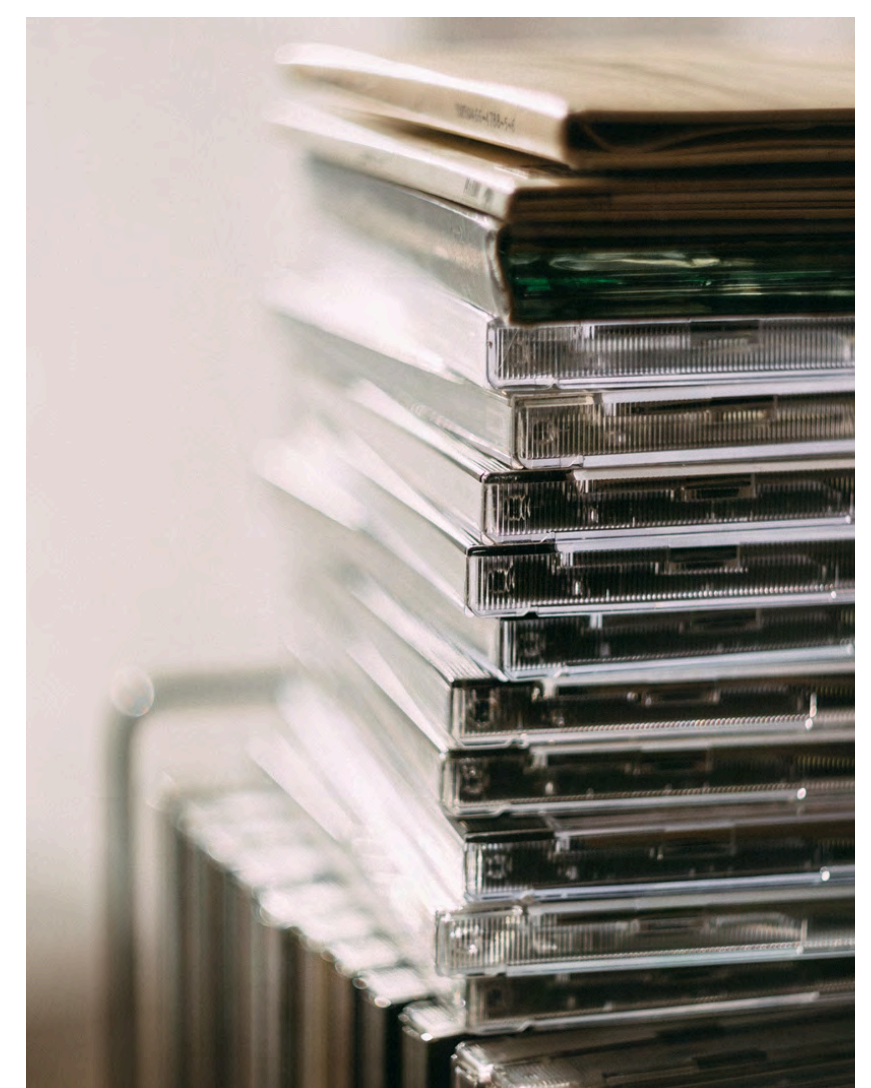
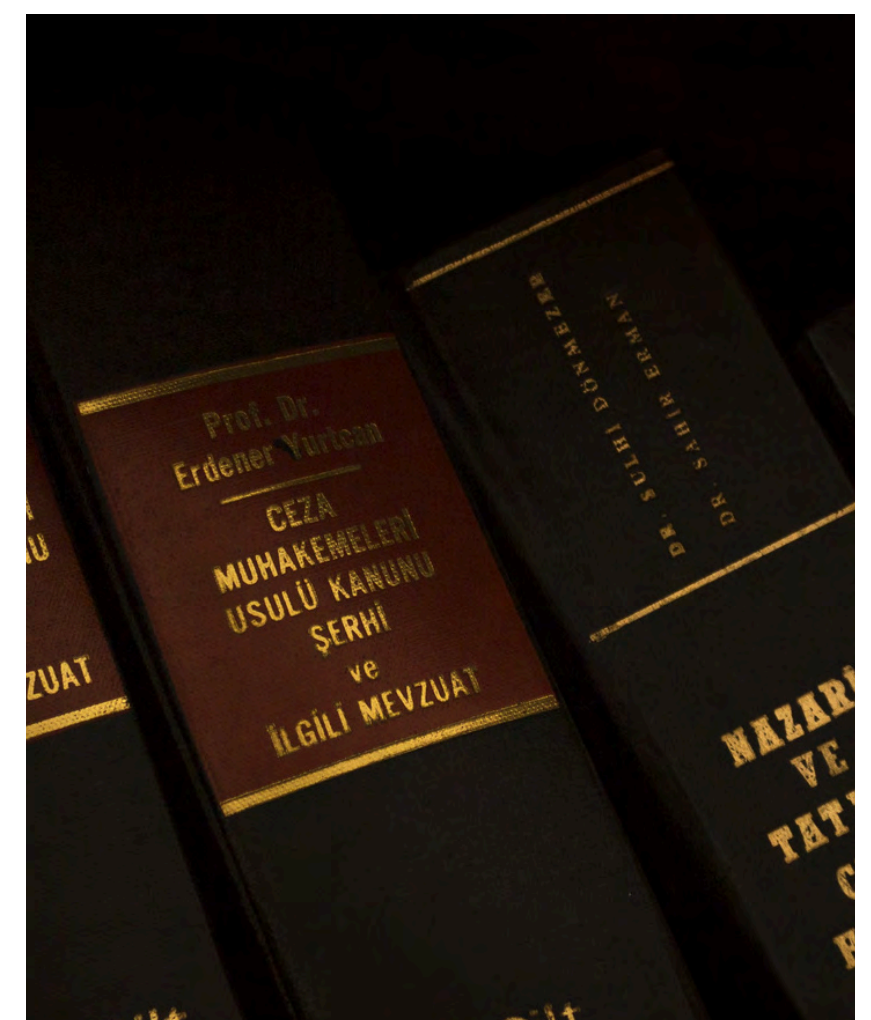
A year later after receiving her results, Rose was at work when she received a phone call from a Michigan State Police detective. They delivered horrific news that shook her to the core: Rose's DNA was a match to the victim of the Baby Garnet case, showing that they were distant relatives.

It soon became clear that Rose's grandmother, Nancy Gerwatowski, was the mother of Baby Garnet.

Detectives deduced that Gerwatowski had given birth in her home in Newberry, Michigan, during which Baby Garnet died due to asphyxiation. Apparently, the death could have been prevented if medical intervention had been sought. Gerwatowski then hid the baby in an outhouse in Hudson, more

than 20 miles out of town. Gerwatowski's Defence team argued that she was suffering from shock after such a traumatic birth.

However, at the end of 2024, Gerwatowski was charged with murder, involuntary manslaughter and concealing a death. So, should the Courts give Gerwatowski a potential life sentence or should they show leniency? What do you think?







# office of opinion

## HELL IN HOLLYWOOD

WRITTEN BY FRANCISCA VIERA ROQUE



The start of 2025 saw the most destructive fires in LA history tear through the area. After many days of dry conditions, lack of rainfall and the sheer power of the Santa Ana winds, an initially small fire turned into a disastrous one, burning over 37,000 acres of land. This resulted in 180,000 people being instructed to leave their homes. But it is not just the awful loss of homes that local residents had to contend with. At least 27 people are known to have passed away due to this tragedy.

Arguably, the devastation of the LA fires is something that could have been avoided if we actually listened to the warnings the environment has been screaming out about. California's dry environment and the lack of care for forests and an increase in the amount of fuels and carbon emissions, as well as heavily populated areas, mean that the region is at high risk of future fires.

The global media reported extensively on the fires.

However, many on social media seemed to have little sympathy for the victims, primarily because they saw many famous people's stories being shown. Many people struggled to feel empathy for mega-rich showbiz stars, because of their wealth.

When Mandy Moore, an actress who starred in *This Is Us*, shared a GoFundMe page asking for donations for her brother-in-law, social media was ablaze with fury and disbelief: "*You're worth like 14 million - a GoFundMe is insane*" commented one, whilst another suggested, "*YOU give your brother-in-law that money! Why ask millions of Americans who are struggling just to get by?*" Moore was not alone in publicly asking for money. Reality star, Spencer Pratt also set up a GoFundMe, which made \$138,801 US dollars! So, are people rightly outraged?



While many argue that it is disrespectful and inconsiderate to mock those who have lost their homes, others argue that celebrities have the financial means to easily build their homes again – unlike the many poorer and less advantaged LA residents who also suffered.

Arguably, it is distasteful to see how people who *do* have millions in the bank, have the audacity to ask ordinary citizens for money, instead of being more mindful and considerate of others who are suffering more. Afterall, doesn't everyone deserve the chance to re-build the place where they lived, laughed and made memories with their families?







# ADDRESSING DISABILITY PREJUDICE

WRITTEN BY YASMEEN QURESHI

In today's society, the conversation surrounding accessibility and discrimination for people who face physical or intellectual challenges is more crucial than ever. Despite advancements in technology and growing awareness, millions of individuals continue to face barriers that prejudice their ability to fully participate in everyday life. This article delves into the challenges faced by people with disabilities, particularly those experiencing sensory overload, blindness, deafness and those who rely on wheelchairs or crutches.

Disability is a widespread part of everyday life that affects a significant portion of the population. In the UK alone, there are approximately 16 million disabled people, making up about one in four individuals nationally. This includes 23% of working-age adults and 45% of pension-aged adults. Additionally, 32% of households in England and 37.9% of households in Wales have at least one disabled person. Around 1.5 million people have a learning disability, and an estimated one in ten people have dyslexia. Approximately 2 million people are living with sight loss, while around 12 million individuals have hearing loss greater than 25dBHL (this means mild hearing loss). British Sign Language is used by about 151,000 people, highlighting the diverse communication

needs within the disabled community.

Each statistic here tells a story—a child overcoming the challenges of dyslexia, a person navigating life with sight loss, a family learning to communicate through British Sign Language. These figures represent real people—our friends, family members, neighbours and colleagues.

One of the most glaring disparities lies in employment. The employment rate for disabled people is only 53%, compared to 82% for non-disabled people, highlighting a significant 29% disability employment gap. The financial impact is further compounded by the extra costs faced by disabled households, averaging £975 a month. After housing costs, 27% of working-age disabled people live in poverty, compared to 19% of non-disabled people. These statistics reflect the lived



experiences of individuals who face challenges, not just in the workplace, but in their everyday lives.

Imagine the frustration of navigating a world that often overlooks your needs, such as inaccessible bus stops that have just a little island, making them a dangerous crossing for people who are visually impaired or unable to go down/up a step. Moreover, cyclists usually travel in the gap, creating many dangerous situations, as well as sensory overload for some. And let's not forget that in many boroughs – Lambeth included – it is now the expectation that residents bring their bins onto the pavement on collection day; this blocks access to public pathways for those who rely on wheelchairs.

Furthermore, negative attitudes and behaviours towards disabled people are alarmingly common. A staggering 72% of disabled





individuals have experienced negative attitudes or behaviour in the past five years! The impact of these attitudes is profound, with 87% of those affected stating it negatively influences their daily lives. Common negative behaviours include making assumptions or judging capability (33%), accusations of faking impairment (25%), and staring or giving looks (19%). These aren't just numbers; they represent real moments of pain and exclusion felt by disabled individuals in our community and world every day. Consider the courage it takes for someone to venture out into a world that may not always be welcoming.

Individuals with deafness, blindness and sensory overload face unique challenges in navigating everyday life. For the deaf community, effective communication is paramount, yet many environments lack adequate provisions such as sign language interpreters or visual alerts.

Blind individuals often encounter obstacles in physical accessibility, from uneven pavements to poorly designed public transport systems, hindering their independence. Those experiencing sensory overload may find everyday situations overwhelming, with excessive noise, bright lights and crowded spaces causing significant distress. These issues highlight the urgent need for tailored solutions and inclusive designs to accommodate the diverse needs of individuals with such needs.

The statistics and facts presented underscore the urgent need for societal change to improve accessibility and foster inclusive attitudes. By understanding the challenges faced by people with disabilities



and taking proactive steps to address them, we can work towards a more equitable and inclusive world. It's not just about providing physical access but also about breaking down societal barriers and prejudices that hinder full and genuine inclusion. Every one of us deserves the chance to live a life free from discrimination and to be empowered to reach our full potential.

**If you want to know more about this issue you can visit the following sites:**

**Scope**

**Disability Rights and the Equality Act 2010(gov.uk)**

**Disability Rights UK**







# IS AMERICA GREAT AGAIN?

WRITTEN BY AMANAH CHOUDHRY

On 5th November 2024, Trump was once again elected as President of the United States of America, winning against opponent Kamala Harris. Living in London, you may think *"Why does this concern me?"*. But as a global citizen, this *does* concern you. It concerns *all* of us. Trump's promises, declarations and goals will all impact the world.

The first question is, *why* did people vote for such a divisive individual in the first place?

There is no doubt that many people hold the same ideals as Trump, whether it's his far-right populist views, stance on abortion, the LGBTQ+ community or immigration – they see his beliefs as reflective of their own. There are also those who genuinely believe in the slogan *"Make America Great Again"* and think Donald Trump will be the one able to do so.

There is little doubt that many who voted for Trump hold white supremacy views and align themselves with more divisive views of American nationalism.

Others voted for Trump because of immediate gratification regarding things like economic relief, cutting of taxes and prioritising employment opportunities for Americans.

Tariffs are an essential part of Trump's economic plan, and he has promised to impose them

on Mexico, Canada and China. This in turn, creates an incentive for American companies and individuals to relocate or stay in the USA. Moreover, high tariffs could force other countries to comply with Trump's demands. For instance, more than 80% of Mexico's imports go to the USA, so tariffs on their supplies would greatly affect their economy. Nonetheless, economists have predicted that tariffs implemented on these three countries will lead to higher prices on everything in the USA, since they are America's top 3 trade partners. How will Americans view Trump when prices start to impact the cost of living.

Another key aspect of Trump's manifesto is the promise to tackle immigration:

*"All illegal entry will immediately be halted and we will begin the process of returning millions and millions of criminal aliens back to the places from which they came."*

Trump's choice of vocabulary regarding immigrants (bearing in mind the United States was formed from immigration), is clearly inflammatory. You may know that Trump seeks to deport every illegal immigrant from America, whether they came as a child, and are now a qualified professional or if their children are citizens. Evidently, the term 'aliens' is dehumanising and will empower racist views as well as tear apart families and communities.

Moreover, mass deportation will reduce America's economic growth and the workforce, as migrants play a key role in building the economy.

One of the most shocking of Trump's most recent pledges, is his goal for the Middle East. Arguably, he is not actually allied with Israel as a result of moral principles or genuine solidarity with Israeli people; rather his intentions stem from American Nationalism and the ambition for global dominance.

Trump plans to relocate the entire population of 2.1 residents in Gaza and transform it into a tourist-style riviera. Regardless of where anyone stands with the conflict, this effectively amounts to ethnic cleansing of Palestine; this is an indefensible act.

Trump's aims for the USA to own the *"Riviera of the Middle East"*, would, he claims, create a place for *"the world's people to live."* Trump has not suggested the forced deportation of civilians, which would be against International Law. Nonetheless, his plans would clearly mean Palestinians would be expected to leave their home.

So, given what Trump is planning for the world and for the United States, can we genuinely say that he will make America – or the world – *"great again"*?





# HOW DOES THE NHS COMPARE WITH HEALTHCARE IN THE USA?

WRITTEN BY OLUWAFUNMILAYO ILORI

The term Healthcare refers to the services provided by a country or an organisation involved in caring for people's health. However, across the world, Healthcare systems vary greatly. A clear example of this is the contrast between America and the UK.

The National Healthcare System in the UK is funded by the government; this makes Healthcare free, but do the long waiting times make it any better overall? In contrast, the American Healthcare system is provided by the private sector, but does the health insurance cover the often exorbitant bills? The NHS provides Healthcare services that are free for all in the UK at the point of use. This system was founded in 1948, shortly after the end of the Second World War to make Healthcare accessible for all.

Before this, Healthcare was distributed unevenly across the country; the quality of Healthcare you received depended on your financial situation and whether you lived close to a prestigious hospital such as St. Thomas's or lived in the range of a small cottage hospital. According to the Nuffield Trust, every patient was required to pay a sum up to 8 shillings and sixpence depending on how sick their family was.

This is currently worth 37 and a half pence. In addition to this, your bill would depend on your occupation, social class, gender and age. However, despite the drawbacks, millions appreciated the municipal hospital services, and also paid into popular hospital contributory schemes.

The 21st-century National Healthcare System has grown - largely to attend to the needs of citizens across the country. The NHS demonstrates its strengths in accessibility, quality of care, and cost-effectiveness in providing wide ranges of Healthcare services.

However, with the numerous strengths, there are bound to be challenges alongside them. For instance, the typical duration a patient may have to wait before receiving treatment is 14.4 weeks, and can be up to 18 weeks depending on whether you are seeking a non-urgent appointment.

Additionally, the workforce shortages of doctors and nurses greatly impact the waiting times for patients, as well as the quality of care they receive. In extreme cases, you could have 1 doctor attending to a packed emergency room. This shows that England generally displays a low doctor-to-population ratio compared to other countries. According to The Global Economy, as of 2021

there were 3.18 doctors per 1000 people.

Nonetheless, in comparison to the American Healthcare system, the NHS seems more universally beneficial, as the US Healthcare system comprises a combination of private insurance and government programmes, resulting in varying levels of coverage and accessibility across different segments of the population. In contrast, the NHS has universal accessibility for all.

Furthermore, the British Healthcare system ensures the quality of care through regulation by the Care Quality Commission, which contrasts with the US Healthcare system due to their inadequate access to care and high costs.

The American Healthcare system grew largely through the private sector. However, the USA is the only 'developed' country without a structure for universal Healthcare or an official start date.







The American Healthcare system can be traced back to the Colonial era, when families and neighbours were caretakers. Fast forward to the 20th century, organised medicine began, and yet many hospital beds were left empty in the 1920s due to the extreme costs.

Many campaigns arose regarding the issue of mandatory health insurance, the cost of Healthcare and taxes. However, Healthcare was impressive and met the needs of the nation. Over time, with access to new technologies, doctors were able to carry out a range of procedures that met the needs of the ill.

Nonetheless, with 50% of the population provided with insurance from their employers, the elderly, disabled and unemployed had a hard time accessing affordable healthcare. The introduction of Medicare in 1965 was revolutionary; it provided health coverage and increased financial security for older Americans.

The current American Healthcare system provides quality care. Hospitals across the United States have modern and up-to-date equipment, along with highly qualified doctors.

On the other hand, Healthcare in the USA does not seem to be very cost-effective for its citizens, with simple dentist trips seemingly

unaffordable for many. As of 2024, the average annual health insurance premiums were \$8,951 for single coverage and \$25,572 for family coverage. However, due to these costs, many Medicare options are available to choose from, depending on lifestyles.

In comparison to the UK, the US ranks 7 places lower than the UK at a ranking of 11th in the latest reports.

Unfortunately, the costs of paying for Medicare can be a financial burden for many citizens of the USA, causing anger to ignite against insurance firms. Indeed, the perceived unethical behaviour of some providers is believed to have led to the killing of Brian Thompson, the CEO of United Healthcare, on 4th December 2024. Thompson was assassinated in cold blood and in broad daylight in front of the Hilton Hotel, Manhattan.

Long before his death, many complaints had been made against his company due to the insurer's refusal to pay the cost of treatment and long-term care, which subsequently led to the death of loved ones. Thompson's family reported that they had received death threats in relation to the lack of insurance coverage controversy.

After a five-day manhunt following the murder, Luigi Mangione was arrested in a McDonald's in Pennsylvania after an employee called the police. Although a definite motive for the killing of Brian Thompson has not yet been determined, the BBC



reported that the words “*deny*,” “*defend*,” and “*depose*” were discovered on the casings of the gun, which could reference the “*three D's of insurance*,” a known reference made by opponents of the industry. The words resemble the title of a book called ‘*Delay, Deny, Defend: Why Insurance Companies Don't Pay Claims and What You Can Do About It.*’

In the shocking aftermath of Thompson's killing, social media was flooded with comments from people who lacked sympathy for him, even suggesting his unfair Healthcare policies meant he deserved to die. Many people have called for a complete overhaul of the US Healthcare system.

So, overall, which Healthcare system would you rather live with?

There is no doubt that both the American and British Healthcare systems have their advantages as well as their drawbacks. Despite the long waiting times and staffing shortages, it is arguably far more beneficial to use the NHS than going through the risk of bankruptcy for a life-saving treatment in the USA.

Which system do *you* prefer?





# TROUBLE IN PARADISE

WRITTEN BY NIBRAS AHMED

Renowned for its picturesque beaches, vibrant culture and stunning landscapes, Jamaica is a paradise for tourists and proud locals.

Of course, you'd think the beach is a fundamental part of the country's culture and lifestyle. However, this is sadly not the case...Did you know that less than 1% of the Jamaican coastline is accessible to the public? This limited access raises significant concerns regarding the balance between community rights and tourist desires. But why does this conflict exist in the first place?

Well, the best beaches are all shielded off from the public to accommodate tourists and those rich individuals who can afford exclusive hotels. In many tourist resorts such as Negril, a system exists whereby only some selected Jamaicans can walk up and down the beach to sell their products. The general public does have access to some beaches, yet many of these are not maintained to a satisfactory standard, may require a daily charge or are difficult to access without a vehicle.

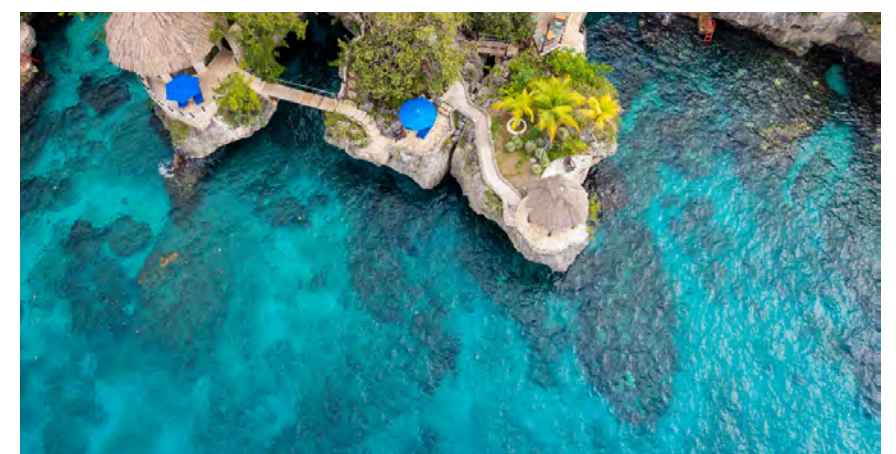


Of course, such restricted access does not just limit recreational access – it also means that economic development for locals is hindered. How can small businesses and local tourism initiatives thrive when access to the main attraction is restricted? The lack of public spaces also impacts community wellbeing and healthy living.

But advocacy groups are fighting back, arguing that the beaches are a shared resource, and a person's right to access them should not be dependent on their socio-economic background.

Last year, the Jamaica Beach Birthright Environmental Movement (JaBBEM) went to Court to fight for locals' access to the Blue Lagoon in Portland, and popular Bob Marley Beach (BMB) in St Thomas. The campaign group claims that only 0.6% of Jamaica's coastline is accessible to the public. JaBBEM state their commitment to "continue to highlight the continued threat to fundamental public access rights to Jamaican beaches".

Dr Devon Taylor, President of JaBBEM, said: "Despite the most recent promises by the Government of Jamaica (GoJ) that Jamaicans must have access to their beaches, the threat of beach access



*loss remains high...the issue of public beach access loss and exclusion are mainly due to the lack of a post colonial modern legislation to guarantee fundamental rights to access our beaches. The colonial era Beach Control Act of 1956 (BCA-1956) provides the legal context to discriminate against the Jamaican people regarding accessing their beaches... JaBBEM is concerned about the government's inability to decolonise, conserve and democratise the Jamaican coastline, and sees it as an injustice that communities have to seek legal action in the courts to protect continued access to the nation's beaches."*

So, what do you think about this major inequality when it comes to the beaches of Jamaica and what more should be done to address it?





# THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON YOUNG PEOPLE

WRITTEN BY QUEENSTAR OFOSU

Have you ever thought of what life in this century would be like without social media? What would *your* life be like?

Well, social media is a topic that the KS4 Pupil Newsletter often explores, precisely because it is such an integral aspect of many of our lives, yet the long-term impact of it is not fully understood yet.

As part of the research for this article, I got snapshots from people in my life. For instance, my aunt always says our generation looks like zombies coming forth and back as we only have our eyes on our phones checking updates, reading comment sections from Tiktok.

A friend of mine said that *"social media can be overwhelming and helpful too, we can learn both good and bad things from social media as it contains views from other people. These can range from people who want to help us, to online trolls"*.

When talking to my dad about this topic, he said *"I was 22 years when I got my first phone and it was not even a smartphone. I could only*

*learn through my textbooks and couldn't get more information from the internet. If I wanted to do any online learning, I would go to an internet cafe"*.

My own view of social media is that it has many negative effects, including promoting jealousy and stress. Sometimes I feel that social media doesn't give me the chance to be myself. It can also make me more detached from family as instead of spending time with them, I am often stuck in my room texting my friends. I'm sure I'm not alone in this.

It's interesting that comments on social media can affect us more than comments in person. Many of us live for likes, comments and followers. When we get positive reactions and comments to one of our posts, it can become almost addictive to want to get more and to keep checking our feeds for this admiration. In contrast, if we get a positive comment from a teacher at school, this can literally pass through one ear and out of the other.

*"Social media is addictive precisely because it gives us something which the real world lacks: it gives us immediately, direction, and value as an individual."*  
David Amerland

## Positive impacts of social media on young people

- Helps young people to learn where to get mental health care from
- Provides young people with social support
- Helps young people deal with stress

## If you're worried about the time you spend on social media, here are some top tips from Young Minds:

- Set limits on how much time you spend on social media
- Take regular breaks from social media
- Put notifications on mute
- Unfollow accounts that make you feel negatively about yourself
- Be kind to others online
- Avoid using social media platforms just before bed

## Positive impacts of social media on young people

- Helps young people to learn where to get mental health care from
- Provides young people with social support
- Helps young people deal with stress





# HOW DOES RACISM AFFECT US AS YOUNG PEOPLE?

WRITTEN BY BARAKAH DAUD + MARY TINUBU

The sinister threat of racism pervades all aspects of our society, including policies, ideologies and attitudes: all present barriers that prevent people from experiencing justice, dignity and equity.

Racism can rear its ugly head in the form of harassment or abuse, humiliation and even violence or intimidating behaviour. These affect young adults by causing stress and trauma in their lives. Living with the constant fear of being verbally or physically abused, many young people may withdraw from their normal lives, not wanting to go to school or engage in social activities.

Within the media, racial stereotypes help to perpetuate ignorance and prejudice, for instance, the portrayal of young men and teenagers from Black



and Ethnic minority backgrounds as gang members. Such stereotypes don't just exist in the media however, but are deeply rooted in reality for many.

Back in 2022, the BBC reported that The Independent Office for Police Conduct demanded guidelines to protect those from minority groups from being stopped due to racial bias within the Police. Shockingly, a report by The Independent Office for Police Conduct found that one black boy was searched over 60 times when he was aged 14 to 16.

In another case, a 15-year-old black boy was stopped in an area that suffered from high rates of crime, because he smelled of cannabis. Although no drugs were actually found on him, an arresting officer was later charged with assault after punching and kicking the boy.

According to the report's findings, in 2021, Black people were seven times more likely to be searched than white people,

whilst those from an Asian or mixed background were two-and-a-half times more likely to be stopped.

Sal Naseem, who leads the Independent Office for Police Conduct's team on discrimination, stated that *"It cannot be underestimated how traumatic a stop-and-search encounter can be on an individual...If carried out insensitively, a person can be left feeling humiliated and victimised."*

Naseem went on to warn that *"The experience can also be the first interaction for some young adults and if it is a negative one, this can have a lasting impact on that person and the trust they put in the police."*







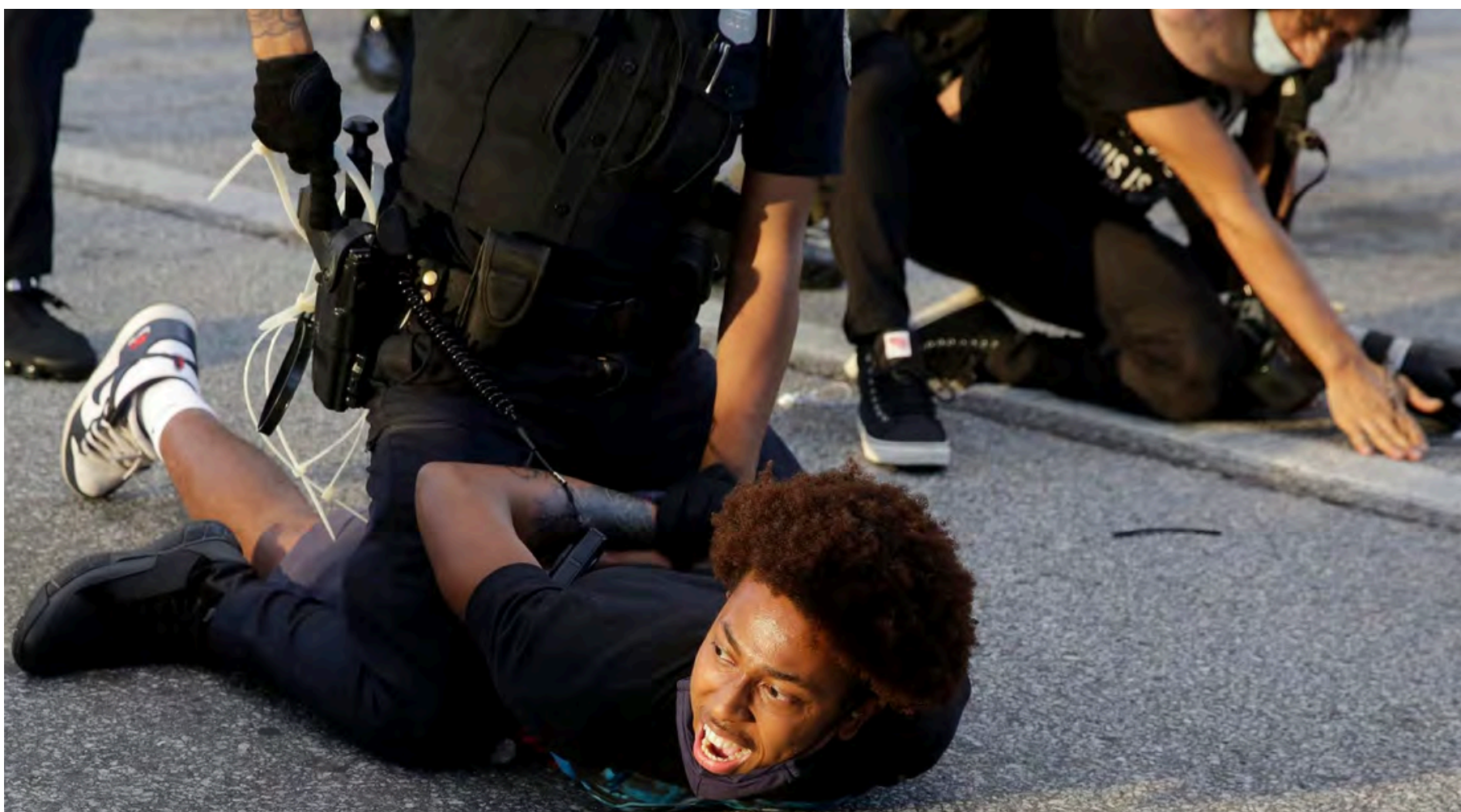
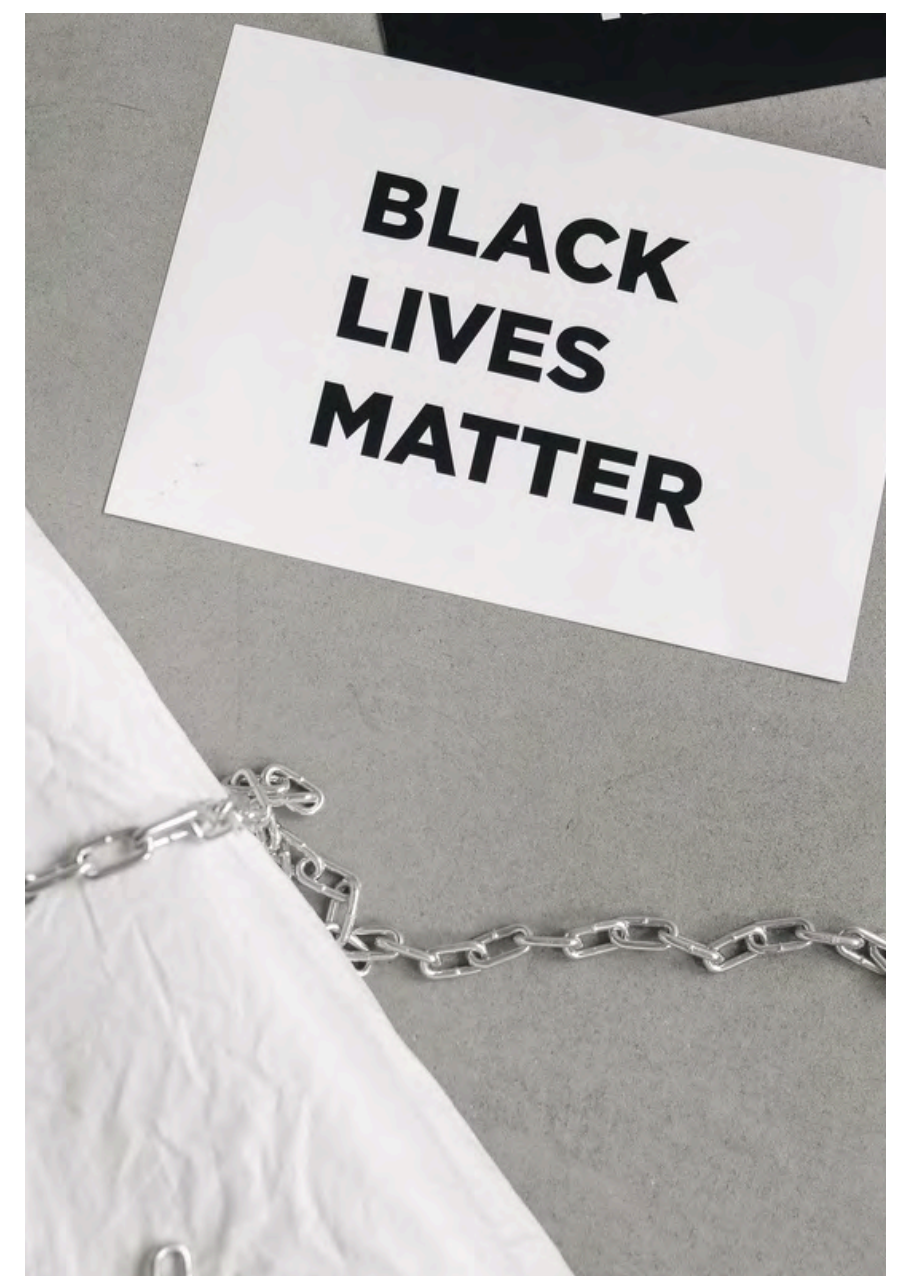
It is evident that experiencing racism as a child or young adult, can have a hugely negative and long-lasting effect on youth Mental Health, life outcomes and attitudes. Feeling like the system is failing you, being unfairly labelled, the feeling of not belonging and being feared or attacked by strangers, are all issues that can arise.

Another factor to consider is generational trauma that links closely to imposter syndrome. For instance, young people from ethnic minorities may be told by their parents that *"you need to work twice as hard"*? Or maybe well-meaning adults suggest that they should style



their hair a specific way in order to be perceived as more 'presentable.'

There is little doubt that many of the parents and grandparents of young people from Ethnic minority backgrounds, have faced racial discrimination and prejudice; this can of course, shape their own perceptions, fears and ideas about how their younger family members will be treated. In this way, trauma gets passed down through the generations, showing the lasting effects of racism.



Racism undoubtedly leaves many scars. Therefore, it's important to do a range of things to help young people: explore the impact of racism; understand why victims may feel isolated; support them to change any damaging internal beliefs that racism has left them with; explore the history and cultural context of racism; help young people to be resilient and feel empowered.





# inspiration station

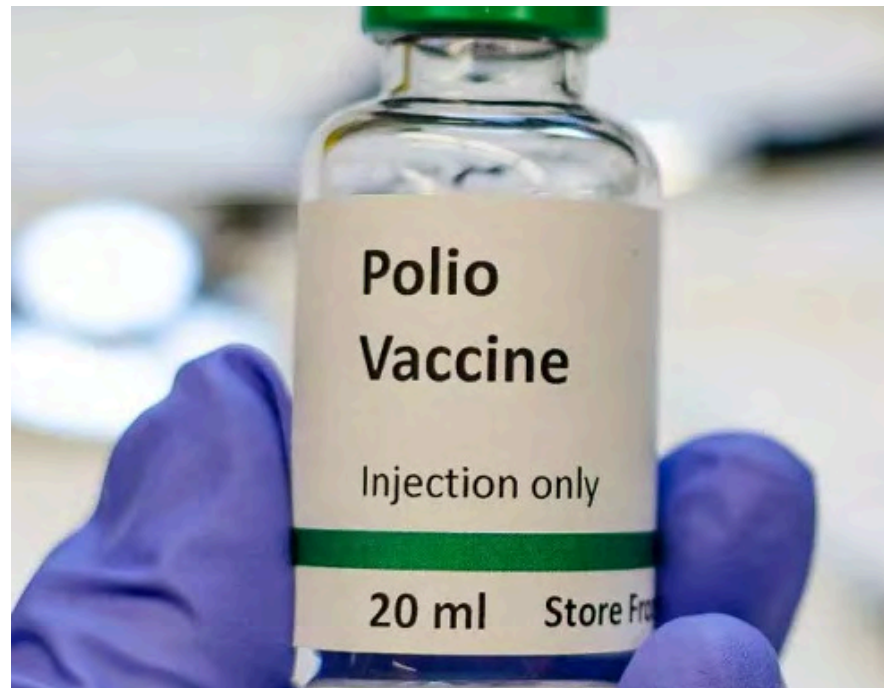
## POLIO PIONEER'S PRESENT TO OUR PLANET

WRITTEN BY HANAN HUSSEIN

Have you ever heard of Jonas Salk? Well, you may not be familiar with the name, but you will have benefitted from his incredible discovery: a vaccine against polio.

According to the NHS, polio symptoms include a high temperature, extreme tiredness and a stiff neck. In rare occurrences, polio can cause damage to the brain and nerves. It can also result in paralysis that can affect a person's breathing, and therefore present a threat to their life. Did you know that American President Franklin Roosevelt contracted polio, resulting in paralysis and his subsequent use of a wheelchair?

Salk's invention of a vaccine that gave immunity to millions around the globe was arguably not the most wonderful part of his discovery. Salk decided that instead of profiting from the vaccine he had developed, he would ensure mass access to it, increasing its affordability and ensuring that those from low-income families could be



protected. This is even more astounding when you consider that he could easily have made around £7 billion!

When asked who owned the patent to the polio vaccine, Salk stated, *"Well, the people I would say. There is no patent. Could you patent the sun?"*

Perhaps his generous spirit was due to Salk's early life. Born and raised in New York, his Jewish family were immigrants from a disadvantaged background. They did not have the finances to be able to afford a top standard education. Salk was recognised to be a gifted pupil, which then led him enrolling in CCNY, which was a high quality educational system that offered free tuition.

As a child, Salk did not want a career in Medicine; he was more intrigued by the prospect of becoming a lawyer. However, his mother discouraged him and he subsequently pursued a career in Science and

Medical Research. Salk did not court the limelight, preferring instead to protect his anonymity and his desire was to continue the pursuit of research, to hopefully find other ways to make the world a better place. He stated that his true desire was *"to help humankind in general rather than single patients."*

Salk is part of a minority of people who chose the good of the people over materialism and financial gain. His generosity was not forgotten, and in 1960, the city of San Diego gifted Salk 27 acres of land overlooking the Pacific Ocean to build a laboratory. Here, many other diseases, cancers and viruses were researched in the hope of finding a cure that could help all of humanity as a whole and not just those who afford their hospital bills.

The Salk Institute today exists as *"a non-profit research organisation."* It aims to continue in the footsteps of its Founder, who spent his final years attempting to find a cure for AIDs. Salk is truly an inspirational figure who put people before profit. His legacy is one that truly inspires, as do his words: *"Hope lies in dreams, in imagination and in the courage of those who dare to make dreams into reality."*







# HOW TO BELONG WITHOUT LOSING YOURSELF

WRITTEN BY SARAH BASHIR

Everywhere we look, there's an unspoken rule that we have to mould ourselves to fit in, to be accepted, to be liked...just to, well, be *enough*. Whether it's the expectation drilled into us by society or the perfectly filtered lives we see on social media, it feels like there's a weight pressing down on us. It is a weight that constantly tells us, *'you're not good enough the way you are.'*

We all want to belong: it's a natural human instinct. But somewhere along the way, we start believing that belonging means erasing parts of who we are. We begin to think that in order to fit in, we must become what others want us to be and should hide the aspects of ourselves that don't align with what's considered 'normal' or 'acceptable'. This pressure is a constant haunting whisper, convincing us that we must change.

But in doing so, we lose what makes us truly authentic and genuine. It's easy to forget that true belonging isn't changing who we are, but being true to ourselves and finding the people who celebrate us for our uniqueness.

When we start erasing parts of ourselves to fit in, we're not just hiding our differences but also our potential. Indeed, all the things that make us unique, are often also the very things that allow us to bring something new to the table.

But society - especially in the modern digital age - has a way of narrowing our focus, telling us that being different is something to fear, rather than something to embrace. This fear of rejection can be so overwhelming that we convince ourselves that blending in is the only way to survive, to be seen and even to be loved. But surely by conforming, we deny the world the very richness that comes from our diverse voices, experiences and perspectives?



The truth is really that belonging doesn't require us to silence parts we are; it's about creating an environment and world where everyone is free to be themselves. Real belonging is not about conforming, but about connecting. It's about the fundamental understanding that we all have something to offer to the fabric of society.

When we stand firm in our authenticity, we give others the permission to be themselves too; this means that every one is invited to step into spaces where we can be our full selves without fear of judgment. This in turn, creates a ripple effect of acceptance and self-love. True belonging is about embracing our differences, removing the masks we might be tempted to wear, and living in a way that means we stay true to who we are. So, take down the mask and be unapologetically you!



# cacophony of colours

## THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD

WRITTEN BY RUNAYAH CRAWFORD



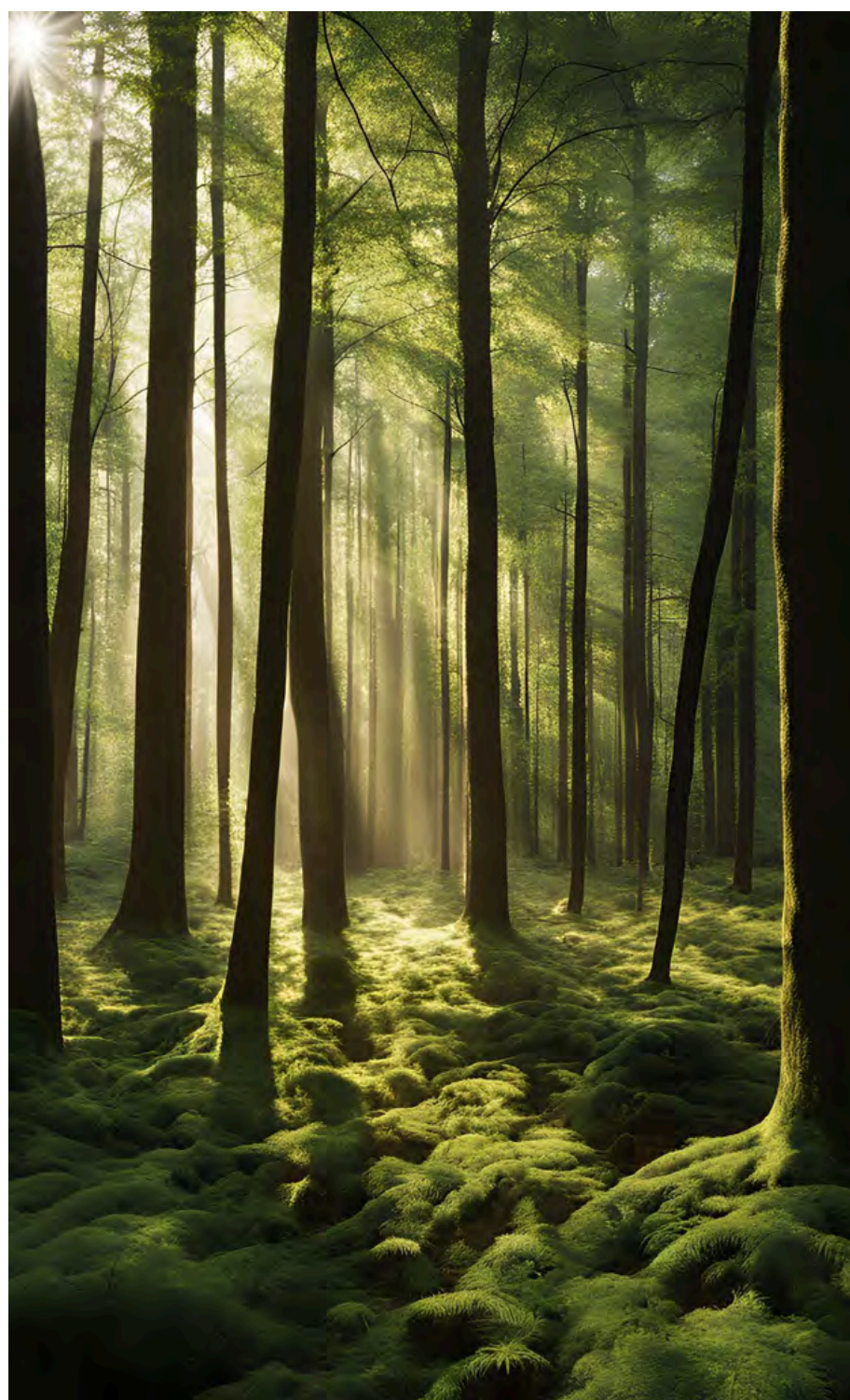
Beneath the velvet sky, Earth spins silently, an ancient dancer in an endless waltz around the sun god Helios. Its surface is a patchwork quilt of rolling plains, towering mountains and deep oceans; each of them reveals stories from the depths of time.

The winds carry the scent of the wet soaked soil and salt-kissed air, while the rivers, are like veins of life, weaving through the land. They nourish everything they touch.

At night, the stars blanket the heavens, shimmering like nanoscopic, forgotten dreams. The Moon is the Earth's loyal companion; it casts a soft glow across the land, painting shadows that move like dream-like hallucinations. Under this silver light, forests sway with secrets, and deserts hum with the delicate pulse of life.

The creatures of Earth are a chorus of peeps, roars, whispers and songs - each one unites to form a thread in the vast tapestry of our existence.

Earth holds all in her embrace, like a mother cradling her children. However, fragility lingers in the air; the forests whisper desperate warnings that only the Earth herself can understand.







# SERENITY

WRITTEN BY TALITHA SOARES RODRIGUES GOULART

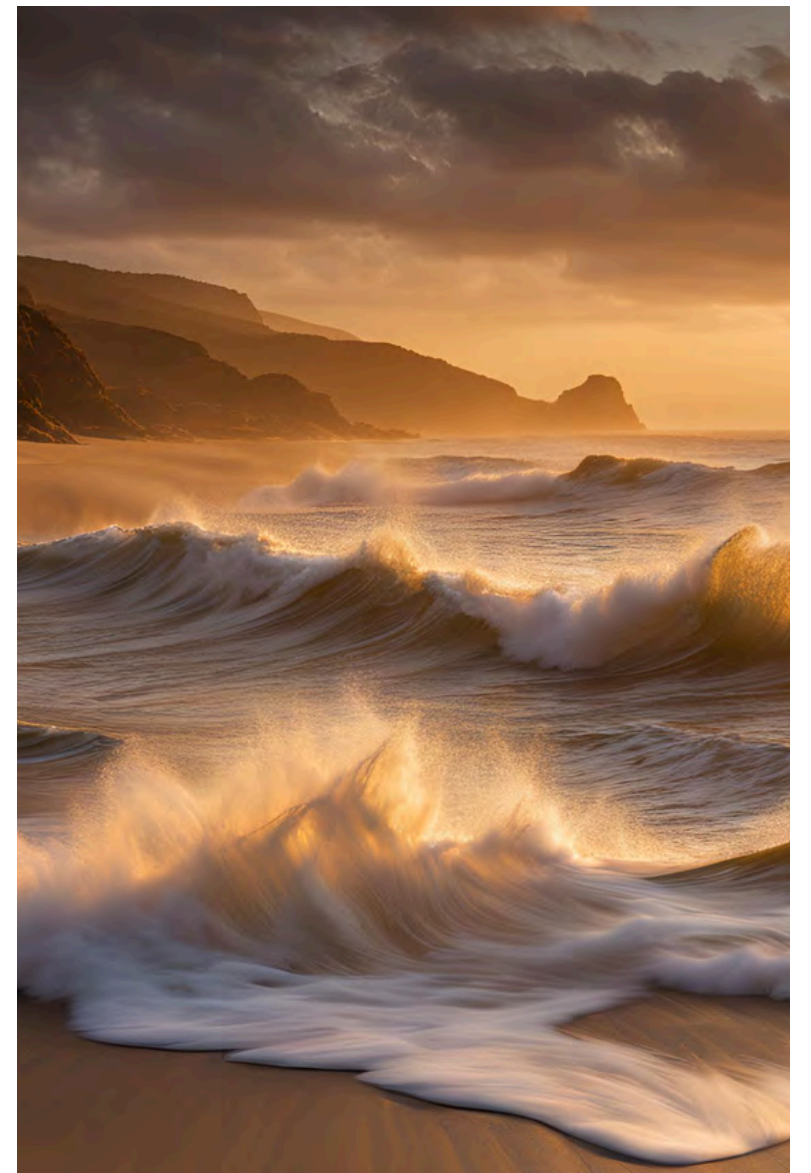


The exasperated, enraged and resentful stygian waves swept towards and collided with the antique ship. Gradually, the deceased ship was engulfed into the merciless buoyancy of the sea.

Suddenly, a boundless, monstrous tornado snatched everything it could take, like a vicious thief.

The remains of the boat appeared on the shores of the sheltered sand, as the obsidian skies brightened up. Birds began chirping, fluttering and hovering in the blazing hot radiance of the majestic sun.

Serenity was once more resumed.



# THE STORM INCOMING

WRITTEN BY MARIBEL FERNANDEZ FLORIAN

The sun hung high in the glorious heavens, casting an azure blue hue across the horizon. A warm breeze gently caressed the sailors' faces, embracing them gently. Yet all were clueless about the terrifying situation that was about to occur...

Tempestuous, merciless and torrential: murky aquamarine waves suddenly charged at the great sail boat as it attempted to slice through the ocean.

Petrifying shrieks echoed in the lurching sea, along with the sound of splitting wood, which stopped the men in their tracks. The helpless vessel battered and creaked with the roaring storm. It was done for.

It felt like the ocean was vengeful and full of spite. The melancholy storm filled the stifling air, as the gaudy weather shook the boat callously. Disregarding the pleas and prayers from the agitated passengers, the earth gyrated chaotically, offering her mysteries and beauty to the great god Neptune.

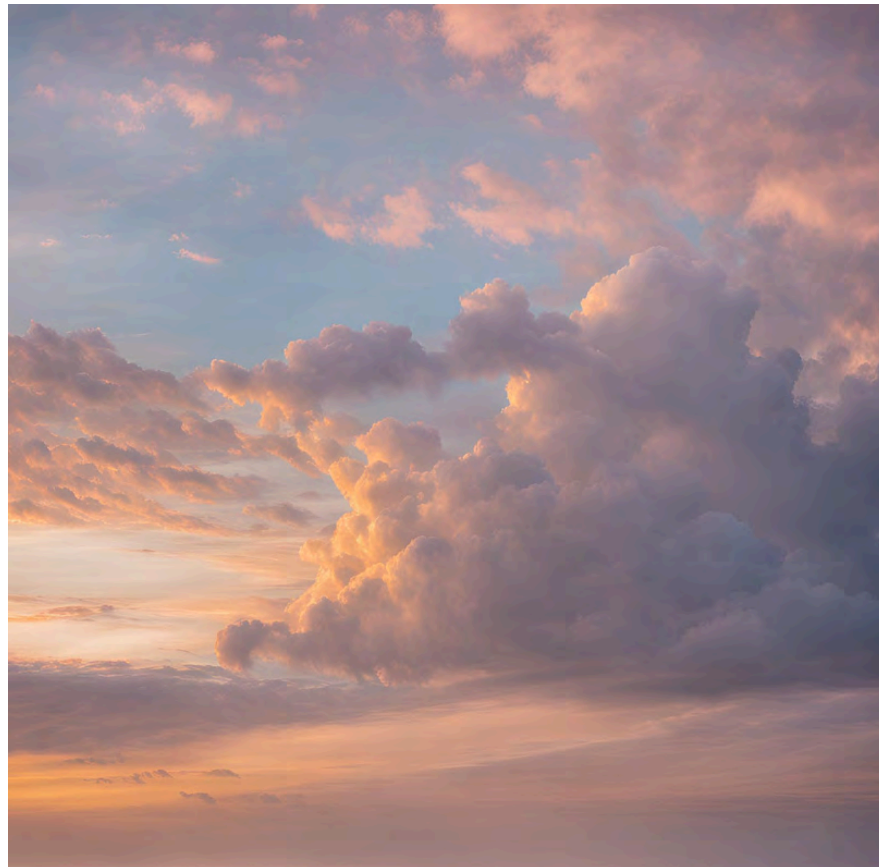
She called upon his furious waves to cause havoc and distress. It was like the once extraordinary cerulean heaven had collided with the obsidian black abyss, becoming a deadly tomb for the sailors. Dozens of 'Hail Marys' were released from the desperate mouths of the crew as they came together in faith, with hope and reconciliation. Death was near.





# CLASH OF THE SKIES

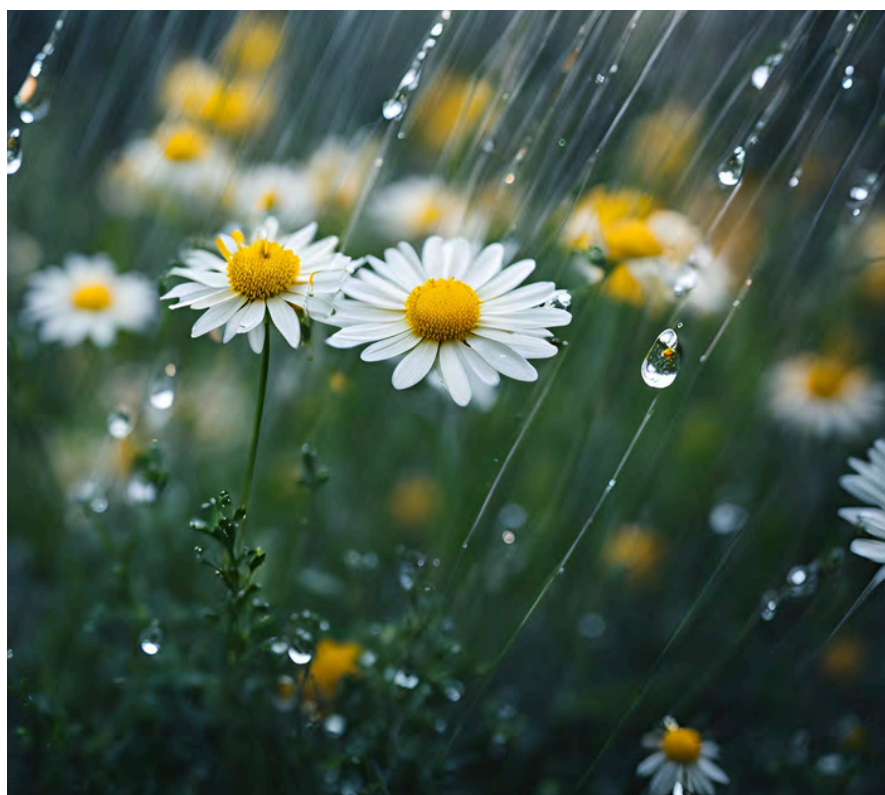
WRITTEN BY CEYDA AYHAN AND AMIRA IBRAHIM



The heavens had never known peace.

Every second, every minute, every waking hour, the sun's radiance was eternally battling against the malevolent rain. Anywhere the sun decided to shine, sorrow and storms weren't far behind, lurking round the corner. Their personalities had undeniable potential to lead a world perfectly balanced together, forming a utopia.

Yet the overpowering envy and heavy hatred held deep in the heart of the storm declared it impossible. With every sunrise, the rain fought the thought of asserting his dominance, but who wouldn't?



The sun adorned the sky and those underneath; her shining spotlight automatically drew beaming smiles on the faces receiving her warm embrace.

As the sun roamed from realm to realm, she carried marshmallow-like clouds along with her, as well as crystal clear skies. Her only worry was to decide which one to bring out for the day, knowing her choice would set the tone for the atmosphere. Children releasing their laughter and joy was like music to the sun's ears.

With every sunset, the darkness and rain bellowed a thunderous cackle, as they prepared to engulf our paradise with an unwelcome plethora of all shades blue and black.

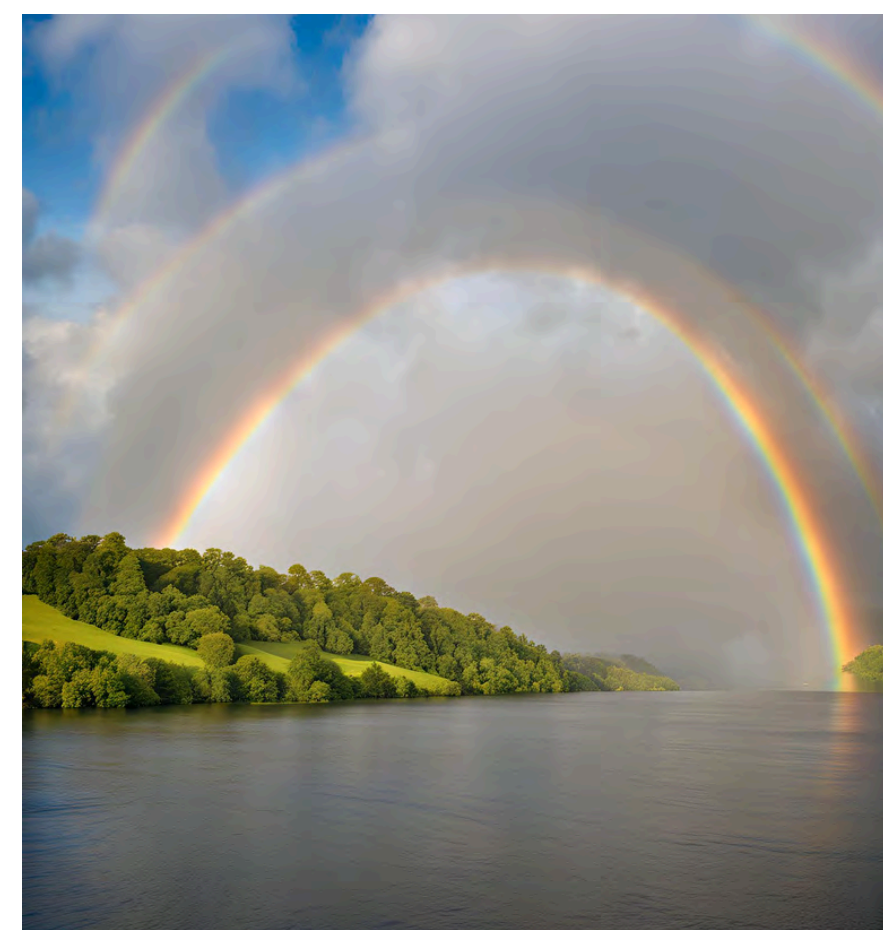
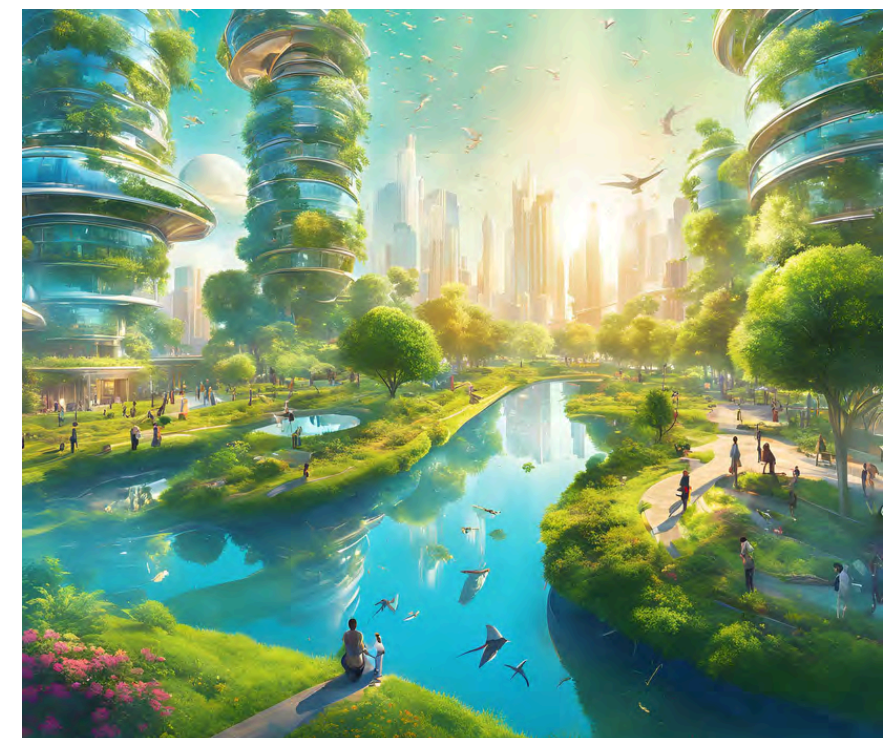
They left us with only distant stars to remember the light that once surrounded us. As raindrops pelleted down with unmatched speed, the wind lashed out from all directions, howling like a pack of wild wolves.

The trees violently tangoed with one another, breaking each others' branches and bones. A malicious blanket draped over the landscape, as smiles were swept away. However, there were moments when the sun and rain worked harmoniously. Moments when

flowers blossomed, rather than shriveled at the sight of the daunting rain approaching rapidly: a moment almost miraculous, providing us with a vision so perfect in inexplicable ways.

Colours painted themselves along the horizon, creating the most prepossessing rainbow visible to the naked eye. Raindrops no longer smacked onto leaves; rather, they created a tranquil melody. The rainbow's colours arched gracefully from one end to the other, as if nature itself had crafted a perfect masterpiece.

The heavens had never known peace, until this rainbow.







# DREAMS OF THE MIND

WRITTEN BY ZAHRA QURESHI

I never truly wanted to be a psychologist. My family had always been so keen on it, urging me to follow in their footsteps. The job wasn't especially taxing physically, but mentally... let's just say by the time you die, you won't feel any different to how you do now... It was a cold, bleak winter evening when my life turned upside down. A chill crept up my spine as I sat in my dimly lit office, observing an appointment. The patient was quite the case, their eyes hollow and voice a mere whisper. As they spoke, an unsettling feeling gnawed at the edges of my mind - a sense that something was terribly, inexplicably wrong. The clock chimed. It had been two hours, and he still hadn't said a word. He sat there, a shadow of a human being, his skin a sickly, jaundiced hue. His hair hung in greasy, matted clumps, and his face was a landscape of neglect, covered in uneven stubble.

His presence exuded a chilling emptiness, as if life had long since drained from his body, leaving behind only a shell. I watched from behind the looking glass. His therapist,



Doctor Alen asked, "So, how have you been feeling recently? Anything on your mind?"

His eye twitched; this question seemed to get his attention.

He opened his mouth and began to speak, "What do you think the point of life is?" he asked.

He didn't give Alen a chance to reply.

He rambled on, "What ticks in our brains? What says rules are rules, and who gave those words so much power? Why do people read words on a page? How do we come up with ideas like vampires? What gives our brains the ability to do so? What grants us the right to breathe, to have our hearts ticking in this sack of flesh, blood and bones?"

Doctor Alen questioned: "Well, God may be responsible for it. Are you religious?"

He sighed, "No, no, no. Whenever I ask, that's all anyone ever says. I don't believe in that stuff. I think gods and all are just something people who want purpose look to. And in no way do I mean to offend anyone, but I just see it

as pointless. And no, I am not a nihilist or atheist. I don't like labels. They're also pointless."

I said over the intercom, "There may be no point. You shouldn't think of life too much; it will push you over the edge... I suppose you know that already, though."

His eyes twitched around, and then he looked at the glass. He couldn't see me, yet I could feel his eyes burning into my soul.

He mumbled, "When you hear the voices, you too will end up like me. Open your eyes."

I can't get his words out of my head. They're haunting me. That night, as I lay in bed, I couldn't shake the feeling that perhaps he was right.



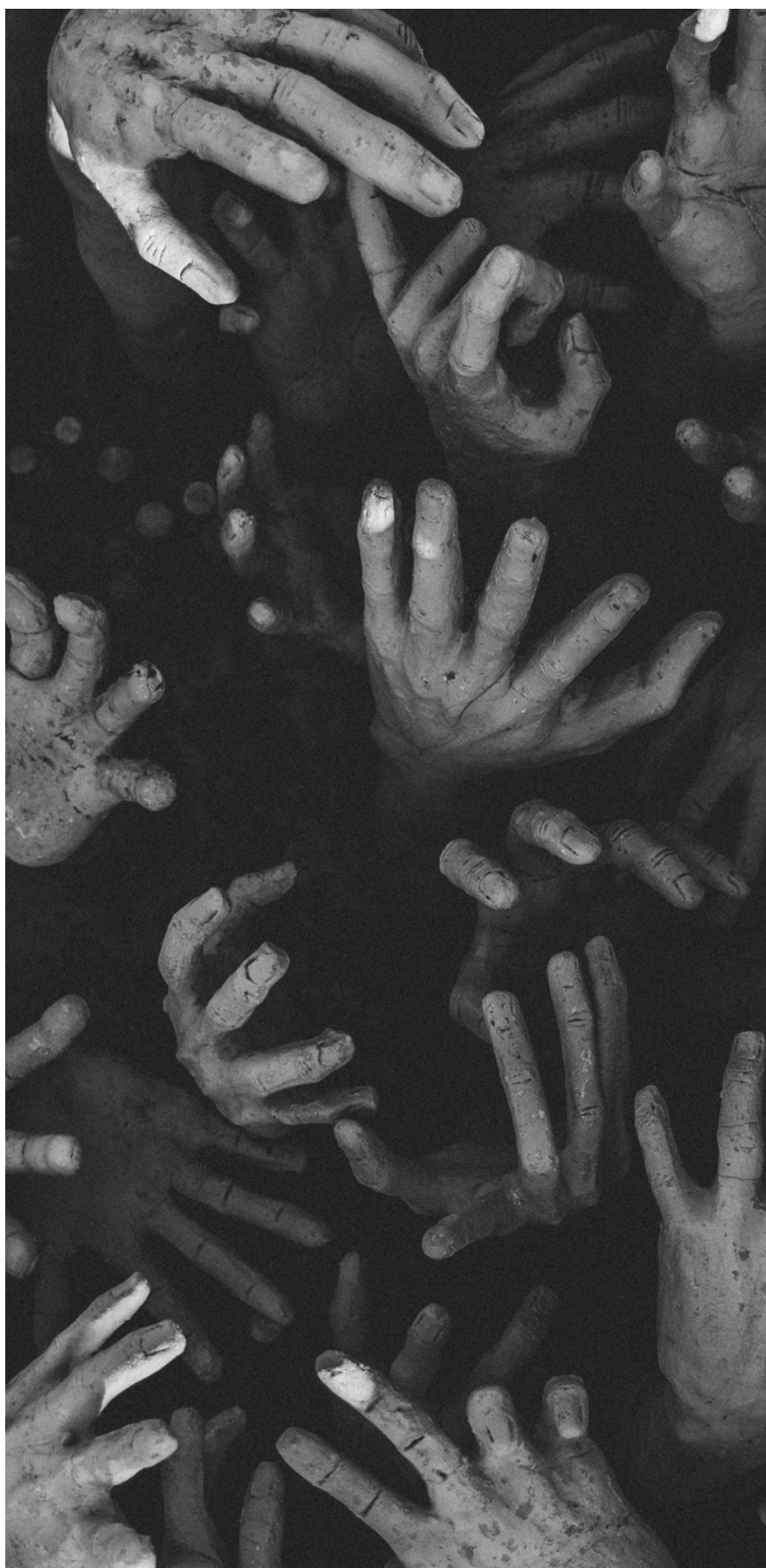




As I drifted off, I found myself in a nightmare. I was seated in a dimly lit room, across from a grotesque creature. It had the body of a human, but its head was a glass box containing a pulsating brain. It watched me in silence, its gaze piercing through the glass.

I asked questions, desperate for answers, but received none. The creature didn't speak, didn't move, yet its mere presence struck fear into my heart, making every fibre of my being tremble. The silence was deafening, the tension unbearable.

I woke up in a cold sweat, hoping it was just a bad nightmare and that everything would be okay. But it wasn't.



When I arrived at the office, I was met with grim news: the patient was dead. The only thing left was a note smeared in blood, warning of the evil in the world.

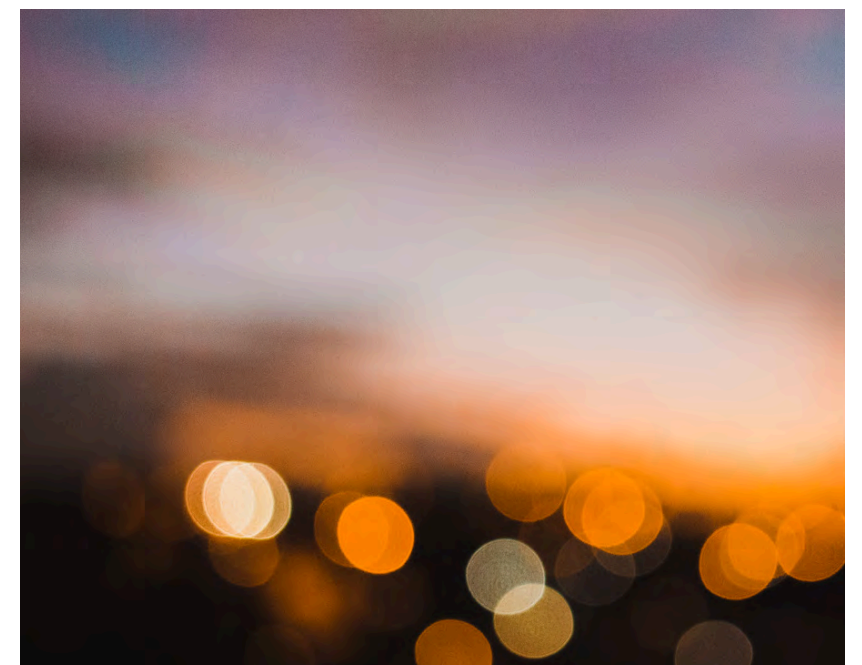
I had hoped everything would return to normal after that. That maybe it was just a bad dream.

But the creature kept appearing, lurking in the shadows of my mind. I was too terrified to sleep, the fear gnawing at my sanity. Sleep deprivation blurred the lines between reality and nightmare, but one thing was certain: he was everywhere.

I intended to seek help, but I never made it to the appointment.

Instead, I wandered the streets aimlessly, passing by the church. It felt like a feverish dream. The priest's words were unintelligible, a twisted symphony of gibberish that echoed in my ears. The world around me seemed distorted, unreal.

Even the crash—the car slamming into the choir—felt like a grotesque illusion. It was all a horrifying, inescapable nightmare.







# TIME FLIES

WRITTEN BY INCREASE ADUROJA

A thunderous sound was heard as the vulnerable boat was seen slicing through the ocean waves. Suddenly, the azure sky turned smoky: trouble was near.

The obsidian, inky black storm was drowning in its own wrath. It was as if the skies and the sea were working together to destroy the crewmen on board, as they helplessly watched their lives flashing before their own eyes.

The skies joined forces with the ocean, smashing and crashing everything in its way. The

sound of splitting wood stopped the crewmen in their tracks as the waves threw them back and forth. The sound of the devastated ship frightened them; it was as if Poseidon himself was intent on annihilating them.

Suddenly, an eerie silence descended; it surrounded the ocean and sent chills down their spines. The crewmen fought bravely for their lives. However, the ship was done for as it began to sink, leaving behind the smell of decaying wood.

Crumbling beneath the water, the fallen ship looked

like a fragile house of cards. Once majestic and graceful, the ship became a monument of the past, and each rusted piece of iron became nothing more than a page from a bygone era.

From a distance, the shattered remains of the shipwreck looked like a skeleton, its structural integrity totally compromised.

Just a few minutes later and the boat was out of sight, never to be seen again.

# OBLIVION

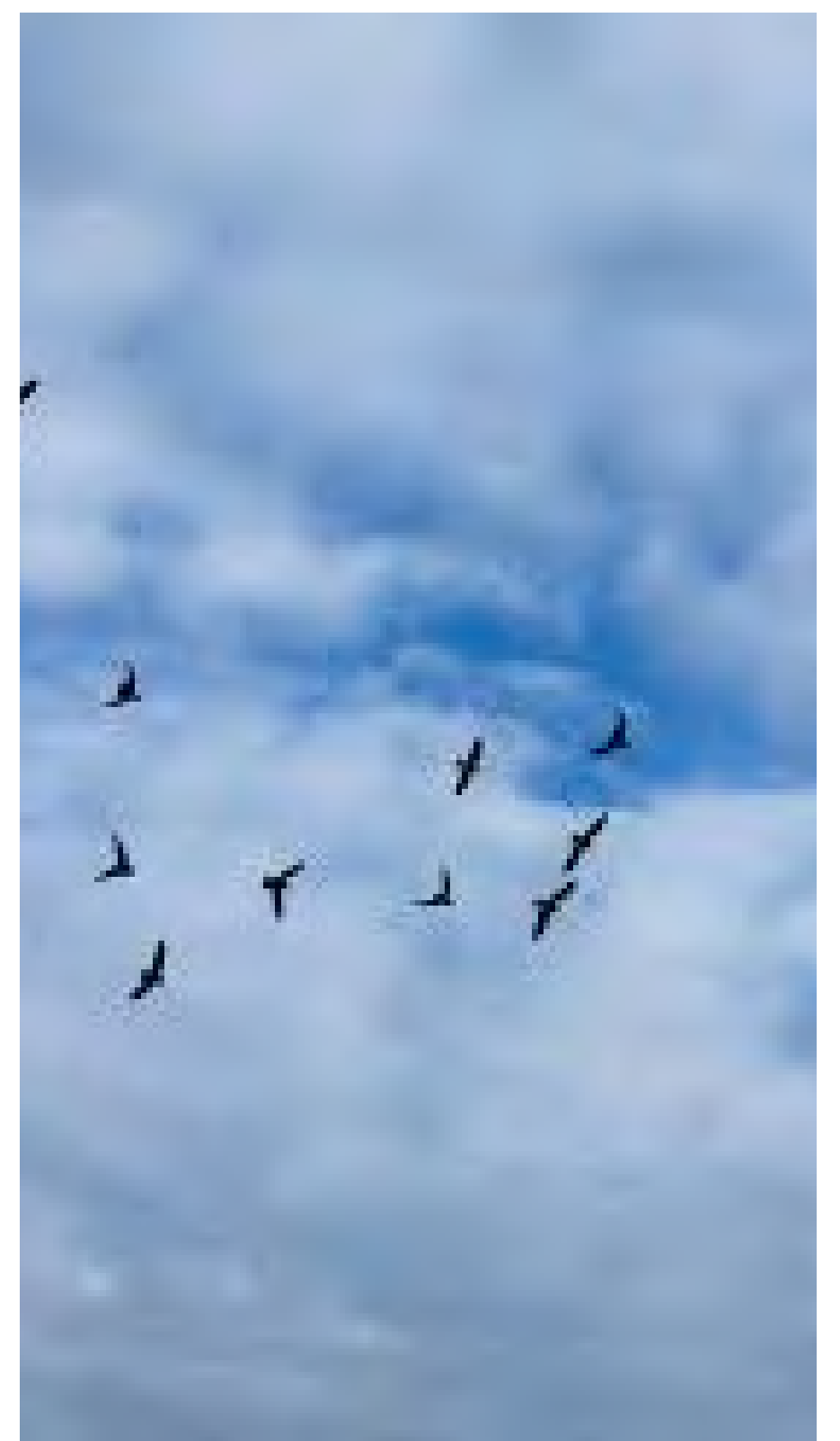
WRITTEN BY JOSEPH TAH



In the dark sky, birds flew away to try and escape the vicious sea, as thunder and lightning struck in the distance. It was as if the obsidian black birds were preparing themselves for the raging storm to come. It seemed as though Zeus himself had shot blood-red bolts from hell.

As the relentless waves pushed against ancient ship, a devastating lightning storm battered it mercilessly. The devilish ocean roared, dragging the helpless men to their certain death.

As the waves surrounded the damaged ship, lightning struck in a blinding light once more: the ship was taken into the depths of oblivion.







# THE SHADOW

WRITTEN BY YASMEEN QURESHI

The clock chimed 12, and I woke up from a nap. I swear I took naps in the oddest places. This time, it was in a cottage on the outskirts of London. I was supposed to be solving the murder of whoever was killed there. I saw the lifeless body slumped in the corner, but I couldn't see the face—it had been completely destroyed.

My name is Analise Blake, a detective who's seen more than her fair share of mysteries. But this one felt different, more personal. The cottage was small and cluttered, with cobwebs hanging from the ceiling and dust covering every surface. The air was thick with the scent of decay, and the only sound was the rhythmic ticking of the grandfather clock. I stood up, shaking off the grogginess, and took in my surroundings. The broken window, the bloodstained floor, the overturned chair: it all painted a picture of a violent struggle. But who was the victim, and why was their face so brutally disfigured? As I continued my investigation, I found a notebook hidden beneath the floorboards. The entries were filled with cryptic messages and references to someone called "The Shadow." It seemed that the victim had been living in fear, constantly looking over their shoulder.

It bugged me though I couldn't see the victim's face, the fear in their eyes.

Who was 'The Shadow' who had ripped them from this world? I found it ironic that they were called that though, because shadows usually get stood on and are always hidden in the dark. So, was this person tired of hiding in the dark?

Days turned into sleepless nights, and I swept the cottage clean. I found more letters and notes from 'The Shadow.' It was so cryptic; a normal person wouldn't understand what they meant, but I did.

Who was this victim—just an ordinary person or someone more?

In these letters they complained and went on and on about how this victim lived too well and didn't deserve to be so happy; they needed to live in fear, just like 'The Shadow' did. My research took me down many rabbit holes. In fact, I didn't leave the cottage once.

I wasn't sure I could. Did I even remember where I lived at this point? This case had a hold on me, and I couldn't let go. Days, weeks and months passed and I wasn't sure I understood the concept of time anymore, as it all mushed into one. But then finally, after dozen of times walking on the blood-stained carpet, I heard a creak, a tile moved. I rush to move the tile away, revealing a key tied to an ominous red ribbon. I held the key, feeling the rigs and the coldness of metal.

There was only one cupboard that had been jammed. Was this my big break? I dashed to the kitchen where the smell of decay made my stomach turn. The key fit perfectly inside. Photos. Tons and tons of them, laid in the drawer, all of the tops of the pictures cut off, but one. Was this the victim? I took a deep breath before looking. My breath was erratic, and my heart jumped as I saw—

Myself.

My face on that body, that lifeless, decayed lump of flesh.

It was me.

I had been murdered here, in this very cottage. The Shadow had been tormenting me even in death. The realisation hit me like a ton of bricks. This was my home, and I knew now that I was stuck here, awaiting The Shadow to come and torture me in the afterlife.

Suddenly, the room grew colder. I turned around slowly, my heart pounding. There, emerging from the shadows, was a figure. The hooded figure raised its head, and our eyes met.

It was a face I knew all too well—a face twisted in torment and rage.

"Hello, Analise," the figure whispered, their voice sending chills down my spine.





# SAILOR'S SOLEMN STRUGGLE

WRITTEN BY CRYSTAL MCDOUGALL



The wind howled across the dark, stormy ocean, whipping up waves that crashed against the shore. In the distance, a lonely ship struggled against the raging sea, its sails torn and barely able to hold on. The sky was heavy with thick graphite grey clouds, making everything look eerie and melancholy.



Closer to the shore, a small broken boat lay abandoned, half-sunken in the wild waves.

It looked like it had been through a battle with the storm; it had lost. The whole scene felt like something from an old story—a tragic adventure where sailors fought to survive, but the sea was stronger, more cruel and unforgiving.



Seagulls circled above, their cries lost in the wind; everything seemed chilling and hopeless. It made me wonder who was on that ship—were they scared? Were they lost? Would they ever make it back home? The whole scene gave me chills, yet in a strange way, there was beauty in the destructive power of nature.







# HABITS

WRITTEN BY IARA CHAVEZ



Mind is feeling disconnected,  
Like there's nothing left,  
Been taking this for way too  
long.  
Starting to get numb...  
Side effects hit me like train, like  
bullets,  
In my old scars from before,  
When it's time to be away from  
reality.  
In my 'dreamland'...  
Not being able to let go!  
I'll end up running back to it,  
Conscious about it all.  
But I never listen...  
Maximum I'm able to do  
Is let go for a little while.

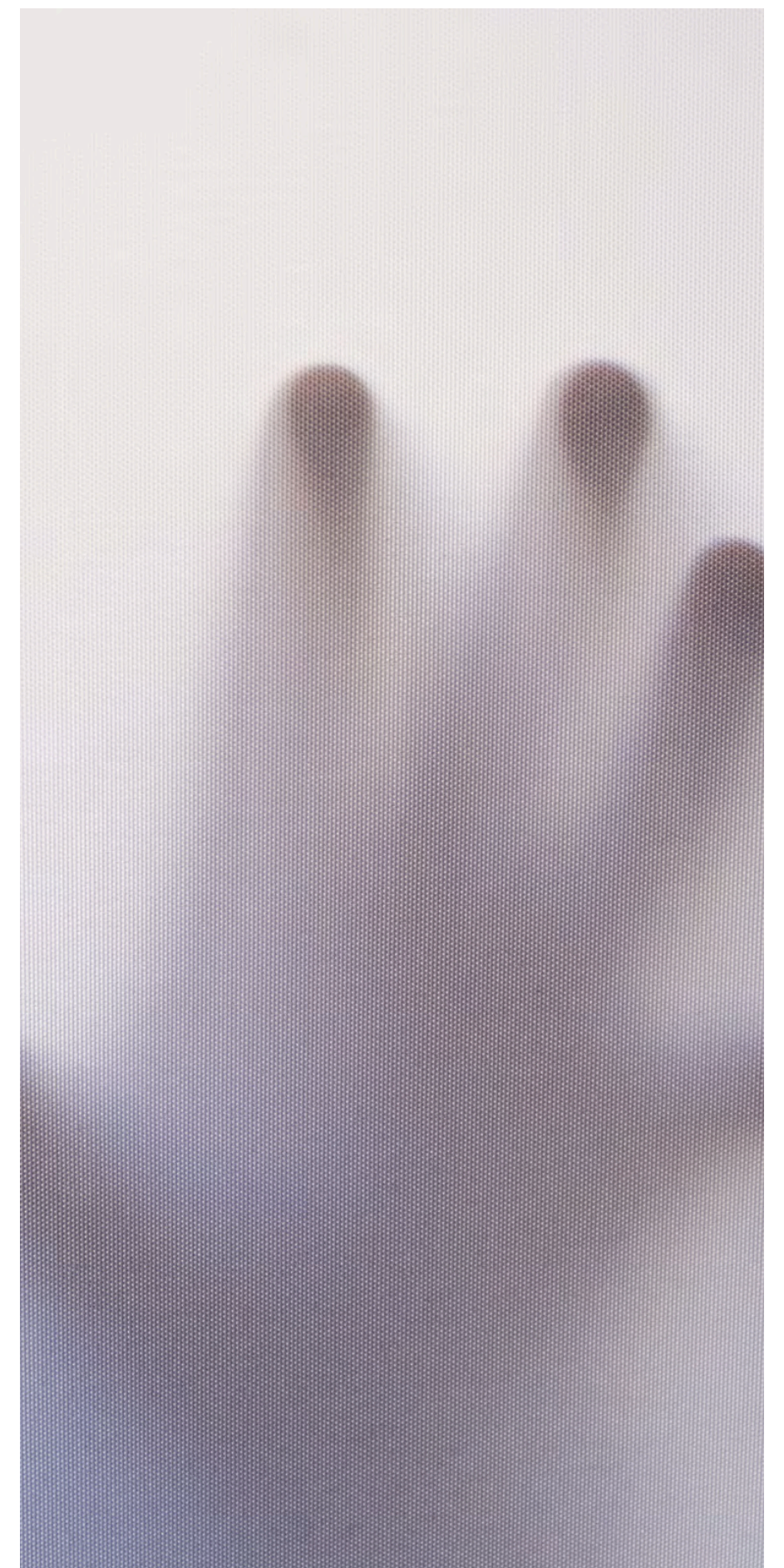


# AWAKEN MEMORIES

WRITTEN BY IARA CHAVEZ



In the stillness of the night  
Memories awaken from the  
depths of sleep  
Vivid and stark.  
Flashback nightmares replaying  
scenes,  
That left a lasting mark.  
Pretending I can't hear the  
violent roars from upstairs  
Toxic words  
Violent hands  
Childhood marred by such  
harshness.  
The walls that witnessed every  
word,  
Every action and every look.  
Ears that absorbed unwelcome  
tones  
Cut by the sharpness of each  
word.  
Walking through the crime  
scene as if nothing ever  
happened.  
As all the pain was accumulated  
inside of me  
Eventually eating me up  
Inside







# NATURE'S REVENGE

WRITTEN BY DERVARI MEITE



Shrieking gulls circled over the antique boat as it lifelessly floated above the ocean waves. Malicious currents from below were viciously attacking the boat, like a pride of lions taking down their prey.

The vengeful waves relentlessly began to assault the colossal vessel; they were so overpowering that it was nearly submerged into the jet black depths below.

From above, the smoky grey clouds smothered the clear blue sky and the radiant sun; it was as if the clouds from above had corrupted the environment below with their infectious melancholy.



# DANGERS OF THE SEA

WRITTEN BY TYLER WALKER-HILL



An old sail boat pierced through the angry waves of the ocean, as cries of daggers poured down from a chaotic eruption in the sky.

As the violently thunderous storm came crashing down upon the troubled sea, the ship struggled to move freely: it was nature's prisoner now.

The pale seagulls flew over the desperate ship, as the resentful waves continued to clash.

Soon the ship was lost to the shadowy, watery depths of the underworld, never to be seen again.







# THE DARKNESS THAT LIES WITHIN MY SKIN

WRITTEN BY IARA CHAVEZ



In the quiet of the night, where  
shadows softly creep,  
Lies a heart that's heavy, a soul  
that cannot sleep.

The scars tell stories, etched deep  
within the skin,  
Of battles fought in silence, of  
wars that rage within.

A blade, a fleeting moment, a  
desperate cry for peace,  
In the mirror's reflection, the pain  
does not cease.

Yet in the darkest hours, a flicker  
of light remains,  
A whisper of hope, amidst the  
endless rains.

For every tear that's fallen, for  
every silent scream,  
There lies a strength within, a  
glimmer of a dream.

To rise above the anguish, to find a  
way to heal,  
To embrace the dawn's new light,  
and all that it reveals.

So hold on to the moments, when  
the world feels too much,  
Reach out for the hands, that offer  
gentle touch.

For in the depths of sorrow,  
there's a path to be found,  
A journey towards healing, where  
love and hope abound.

