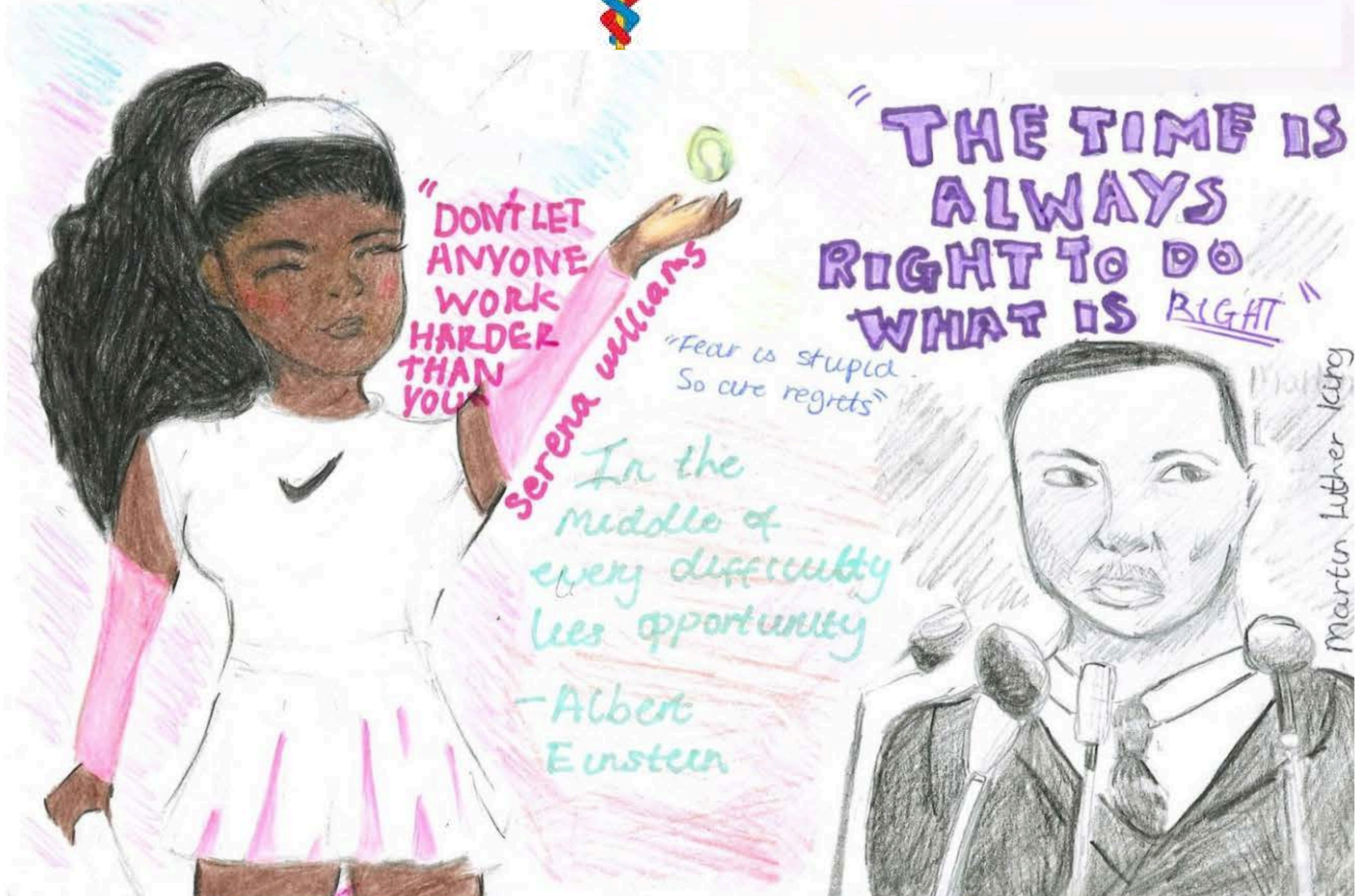


PLATANOS COLLEGE



Cacophony of Colours
Crime and Conspiracy
Community Corner
Office of Opinion
Learning Lounge
INSPIRATION STATION
SPECIAL EDITION:

Inspirational Individuals



KS4 NEWSLETTER



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WELCOME FROM EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

WRITTEN BY THAMANNA ALI

Welcome to the 17th Edition of the Platanos College KS4 Pupil Newsletter. Firstly, we would like to start with a reflection on the sad passing of our CEO, Ms Tapper.

As stated on our school website, Ms Tapper *"was an inspirational leader, establishing the Platanos Trust family of schools, all with the shared values of community, academic excellence and high aspirations... Ms Tapper leaves behind a strong educational legacy, having changed the lives of many generations of learners."*

Here is what some of our members of staff had to say about Ms Tapper.

"I am deeply saddened by the passing of our Executive Head Ms J Tapper. My deepest condolences go out to her family and friends. Words cannot express the admiration and gratitude I hold for Ms Tapper. A pioneering leader, a great mentor, her passion was infectious. Her dedication to education inspired countless individuals; she truly touched many lives and had a profound impact on all those she came into contact with. May her legacy continue to inspire generations to come."

-Ms Louis

"I do not have a lot of words. I am devastated. To keep it simple, as she would want, Ms Tapper took an underperforming school in South London to the very top, where we remain today. Ms Tapper carried us all on her shoulders. Her view was that the focus of school is to ensure achievement for all..."

...This is evident from our inclusive community and the different places in society that our pupils (previous and current) continue to reach. No matter where you started, Ms Tapper's ethos provided a launchpad that could take you to wherever you wanted to go. Ms Tapper was a woman who opened doors. I am honoured to have been a student at her school and to have worked with her in a professional capacity. There is no Mr Adonteng without Ms J Tapper and her vigour."

-Mr Adonteng

"Every now and again whilst working at Platanos College, you might come across an ex-pupil who still lives in the local community and has chosen to send their child to the school. A true indicator of a school's success is whether people who know it well, choose to send their own children there. To see former pupils - who are now parents themselves - come to Open Evenings and Parents' Evenings and choose to send their own child to Platanos College, is a real testament to what it has become over the years. This year at Open Evening, I spoke with one mother who enthusiastically but realistically reflected on her time at the school when it was formerly Stockwell Park; she was astonished at the positive transformation she had seen whilst a pupil and since. When asked what it was that had caused such an incredible change, she didn't hesitate for a second in her response: "Ms Tapper."

-Ms Thompson

"Ms Tapper was inspirational and really good at driving people forward and getting the best out of them. Her drive was getting pupils to achieve success. Ms Tapper had a great sense of humour. She was very supportive when there were personal issues. Overall, you could tell that she cared for everyone: pupils, teachers, lunch ladies, caretakers."

-Mr Scott

"It is with heavy hearts that we mourn the sudden passing of Ms Tapper, an extraordinary Headteacher who profoundly shaped the lives of many. Ms Tapper was more than a Headteacher; they were an unwavering source of inspiration, compassion, and dedication. Their tireless efforts to nurture a love of learning and create a safe, inclusive environment will forever leave a lasting legacy in our hearts. Ms Tapper believed in every student's potential, empowering them to dream boldly and achieve greatly. Their warmth, wisdom, and passion for education touched not only the students, but also the staff, parents, and community. We will always remember their kind smile, their encouraging words, and their unyielding commitment to making a difference."

-Mr Rigby

**In memory of Ms Tapper,
CEO of The Platanos
Trust.**





learning lounge

THE MYSTERY OF CAPGRAS DELUSION

WRITTEN BY YASMEEN QUERESHI

Have you ever heard of Capgras Delusion? Also known as Capgras Syndrome, Capgras Delusion is a psychiatric disorder in which a person holds a delusion that a friend, spouse, close family member or even pet has been replaced by an identical impostor.

This condition was named after Joseph Capgras, a French psychiatrist in 1923. He had come across a case of a woman who complained that 'doubles' had replaced her husband and other people she knew. Joseph referred to this syndrome as '*illusion des sosies*' which translates to mean 'the illusion of look-alikes.'

Another case was of a 40-year-old woman, Mary, who had been referred for a psychiatric evaluation due to her mental health diagnosis jeopardising the wellbeing of her child. Once her 9 year old daughter had been returned to her by Child Protective Services, Mary believed that it was not her own child, but an imposter.



Furthermore, she was absolutely convinced that she had given birth to twins, but the other one had mysteriously disappeared. Mary persisted that her daughter wasn't hers; in fact, when picking her up from school she would say "*Give me my real daughter. I know what you've done.*"

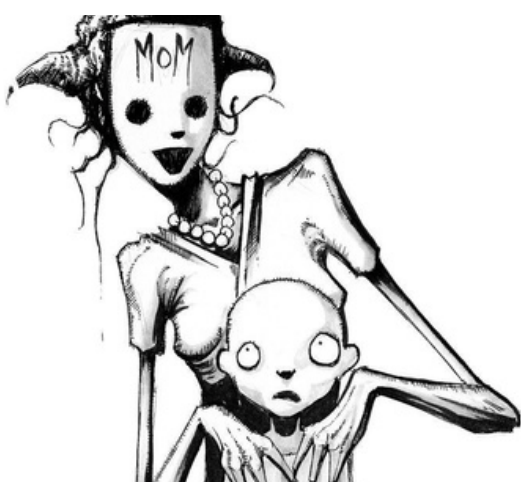
Social Services believed Mary was an unfit mother and as she was not responding to medicine, they wanted to have guardianship until Mary was stable. Tragically, her daughter once said, "*I love my mother except for when she doesn't believe I'm me...*"

So, what causes this terrifying delusion? Well, the full cause is unknown, but many think it stems from a brain injury.

Some studies suggest that in older people it is linked to brain conditions such as Parkinson's or epilepsy. Alzheimers, dementia and sometimes schizophrenia may also be factors; in fact, it is estimated that people with dementia and schizophrenia make up 81% of all cases.

Some scientists think that a connection between the Central Nervous System that scans the features of the face and the Extended Nervous System that relays emotional information to the face, has been broken.

However, Capgras Delusion is still a rare condition; it occurs in only 0.12% in the general population and 1.3% of those with other mental illnesses such as schizophrenia. Due to it being so rare and difficult to manage, there are currently not many treatments, but doctors tend to prescribe dementia drugs, antipsychotics, antidepressants and therapy. Clearly the mysterious Capgras Delusion is an enigma that requires more research, in order to help those who suffer from the condition.





THE DEBILITATING PAIN OF POSTNATAL DEPRESSION

WRITTEN BY OLUWAFUNMILAYO ILORI

Postnatal or Postpartum Depression: a type of depression that many women and parents experience after having a baby. It affects more than 1 in 10 women.

But what exactly is it? Well, it can start from strong feelings of pain and sadness and can eventually lead to hallucinations or having frightening thoughts of suicide or self-harm, if left untreated.

The postpartum period generally includes the first 4 to 6 weeks after birth in most cases, but it can also develop during pregnancy and up to 1 year after giving birth.

Many women may potentially feel tearful or anxious towards their partner in the first few weeks after giving birth; this is largely due to the combination of hormonal changes and sleep deprivation experienced after birth by both parents. It is more commonly known as the 'baby blues.' It occurs in as many as 8 out of 10 women. To get a better insight into what postpartum depression truly is and its effects, we asked a Student Midwife, Mrs Oluwayemisi Ilori, for her experience in this area.

Have you personally witnessed a case of postpartum depression? If so, how did you help?

"Yes, I have. I helped by signposting the person to the right specialist that they can receive help from. I also communicated with them to address the situation they are going through as it may be due to the stress they are going through looking after a new baby. Reassurance is also very important."

How much does a birthing environment impact a woman's chance of postpartum depression?

"It does a lot because if they do not have good support or care it can affect them. Communication barriers between the midwife and the mother can affect the care they receive. If their voices aren't heard they can feel that they are being ignored or taken advantage of. If the needs of the woman aren't being met or if they are not receiving the right information, it can make it difficult for them to make an informative decision while undergoing active labour."

Why is it difficult to recognise or admit to being depressed or anxious during pregnancy or postpartum?

"It may be because of the fear of the unknown, people looking down on her or even the thought of people thinking that she is incapable to be a mother. They don't want to disappoint their family or not be listened to."

Does postpartum depression only affect a mother?

"No, it affects both parents, most especially the new parents. If they don't have a good support system, it can be the leading cause. Changing of nappies or feeding the baby can be difficult as we must teach them these things. When parents feel unable to take turns with each other, taking care of the baby or understand why their baby is crying, they may feel unfit to be parents."





How can Postnatal depression be treated?

"It can be treated through Talking Therapy. Counselling helps a parent to learn a new way of thinking that can help them feel heard; speaking out and hearing life experiences is part of the healing process. Joining a support group can provide comfort and understanding. For example the mother's group as well as medication such as antidepressants. Lastly, self-care, such as getting enough rest, having a healthy diet, physical activities, reaching out to family and friends and asking for help when needed, help to combat the effect of postpartum depression."

There are several risk factors to postpartum depression such as depression not related to pregnancy, previous premenstrual dysphoria and history of sexual abuse. These factors have correlations with the number of cases of baby blues or postpartum depression experienced by first time mothers. There is no clear biologic measure that has been identified as a cause or predictor of postnatal depression.

It is evident that postpartum depression and the baby blues have similar symptoms, however, less than 15% of women receive treatment for it. For example, changes in sleep patterns in new mothers and parents are expected due to the fluctuations in hormonal levels during and after pregnancy, as well as persistent infant and child frequent awakenings. Studies have shown that there is a correlation between a baby waking up frequently at night and a mother's risk of postnatal depression, causing a 3.34 times higher chance of postnatal depression if sleep quality is poor.

In addition to this, a negative childbirth experience where pregnant women in labour feel helpless, afraid or must undergo a difficult delivery, have a large impact on the number of cases of postnatal depression. This means that a supportive and compassionate delivery environment can reduce the negative impacts of a complicated birth on a woman's postnatal trauma symptoms.

Did you know that in 2020 alone, 47% of parents underwent a negative childbirth experience? This can cause a woman to lean away from deciding to have future children as they fear there would be a repeat of the past.

Although it is a crucial time for parents to bond with their first child, the experience from their childbirth can have an adverse effect on their emotional relationship with their child. Postnatal depression can make it hard for a mother to love and bond with her newborn. A baby who lacks responses from their parent or who doesn't get the right kind of response without having to wait, can quickly become confused and worried, causing them to be withdrawn or showing little preference for their mother. When a mother is unable to get the help she needs, it can lead to more critical conditions such as suicidal risks and psychosis. Both of these are of course, very serious, with postpartum psychosis affecting 1 in 1000 mothers post birth.

To conclude, Postnatal depression is not linked to how much a mother loves her baby at all, but when it is suffered in silence with no support, it may lead to a crisis point where it may become too late to make a change, and this may lead to tragic circumstances. It is important that those who suffer from Postnatal depression speak out and are helped for their benefit and that of their child. They should not be left to suffer in silence.



LIFE IN LOCKDOWN

WRITTEN BY AMIRA IBRAHIM

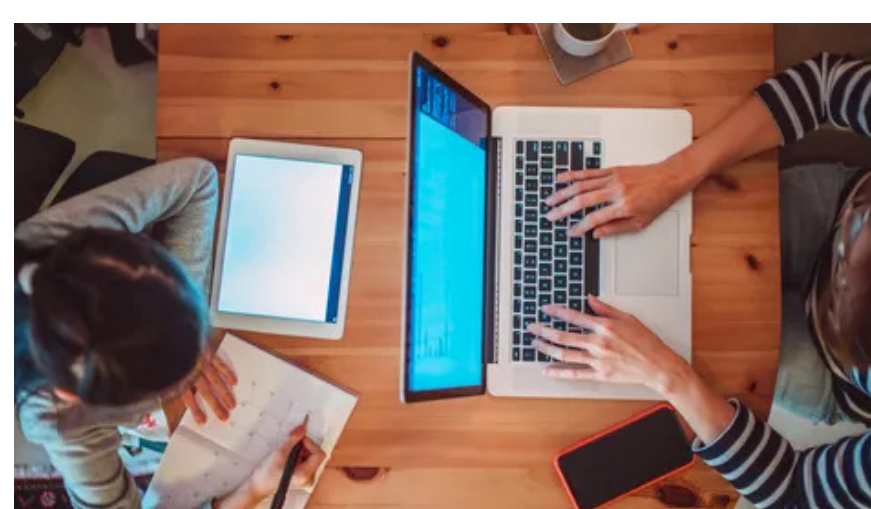
Do you remember what you were doing this time four years ago? The likelihood is you were in your final year of primary school, looking forward to what secondary school might bring. You probably were *not* expecting that the world was going to effectively shut down in a matter of months!

Lockdown was a phenomenon that will certainly never be forgotten: each and every one of us was forced to be isolated from the world. For some, it was the highest point in their life but for others it was the lowest. We all had to adapt to our new lives and teach ourselves to get used to this new lifestyle, without every really knowing how long it would be for.

COVID-19 had a monumental impact on everyone's lives: online learning; two metre social distancing; relying on online deliveries rather than taking the journey to the supermarket; parents juggling their work-from-home responsibilities whilst helping their children; isolation from loved ones. Let's not forget all the people alone with no one to comfort them. Our daily routines were completely disrupted and it was practically impossible to reconstruct our lives to how they once were.

Over time, the ominous headlines on the news announced increasing death and casualty rates. Cases of depression increased by 8.5% and cases of high social, emotional and behaviour difficulties increased by 7.9%. This clearly demonstrates that people were not just impacted by COVID-19 physically, but emotionally, psychologically and mentally too. For many, COVID-19 was like being in jail, where one minute felt like an eternity.

Many people lost their loved ones to Coronavirus. Take a moment to think of all of the elderly people who lost their partner and had to deal with staying in a house that was once filled with the sound of them and their loved one conversing. How would you feel if you were in their position?



Yet on the other hand, Lockdown was an astounding experience for some. Maybe what they really needed was the feeling of being in the comfort of their own home, with loved ones. Afterall, how often are we really to spend quality time with those we love when trying to balance the commitments of work and Education? For pupils, Lockdown was - initially at least - an opportunity to take an extended break from the teachers they would often complain about! It was a chance for many to start new hobbies and a rest from the everyday demands of normal life.

On the next page, we share two poems by ex Platanos College pupils that were written during Lockdown. Which of these poems do your resonate with the most and why?



I can't explain what my life is
like living in a box,

The world's on Lock

And everyone slowly stops.

I just sit and waste away,

I have too much to say.

I could write out my life to
turn

Someone's frown upside down

Sitting here is like a prison
sentence,

At home, all alone

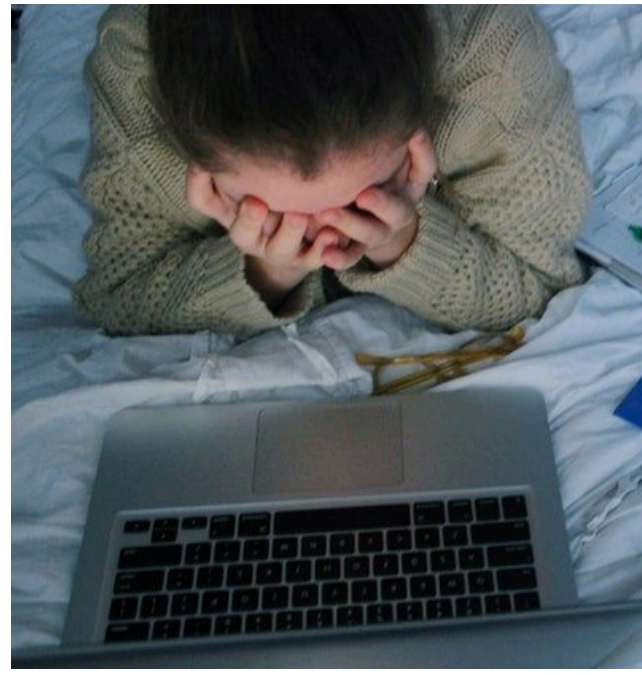
Plenty of thrills on Netflix and
YouTube.

Once school had closed,

I was sold on the idea of being
free.

But maybe it isn't what I
thought it would be.

By Bilal Juma



I'm locked up
Confined in a breathless box,
With air dancing in my lungs,
Whilst they lay there, in wards,
Struggling for breath

I'm locked up
Prohibited from seeing my
friends, with hope singing in
my heart
From the prospect of seeing
them soon,
Whilst they say their goodbyes
from a distance,
Their heartbeats gradually
fading away.

I'm free
Allowed to dream of the joy
that'll rush through my veins
When I reunite with my loved
ones,
Whilst they reminisce of the
treasured moments
They wish they'd savoured
longer,
Their systems slowly giving in.

Because I'm locked up,
I'm free.
Free to plan for tomorrow,
Free to dream of the future,
Free to live.

By Rebecca Obadina-Adebawale





MAKING HOOPS - PLATANOS COLLEGE'S BASKETBALL CULTURE

WRITTEN BY MICHAEL COKER

Sports has always been a major part of our culture at Platanos College; just take a look at the playgrounds during lunchtimes and you will see many of us keen sports enthusiasts competing against one another in friendly games on the basketball courts.

In fact, basketball is definitely a key aspect of our school's sporting culture; eager pupils from all year groups get to school at 7:30am to train and improve their skills, aspiring to be the best that they can be. Some even have dreams of making it to the NBA - and why not? Here at Platanos College, we have a dedicated team supporting us to achieve our dreams!



But what is the value in basketball aside from enjoyment of the sport itself? Well, basketball is a competitive sport that sharpens your skills through working as a team and showing leadership skills. It is a contact sport with a focus on hand-eye co-ordination, enhancing awareness and problem-solving skills. These are all skills that are transferable to other areas of our school life.

At Platanos College, pupils play basketball for its competitiveness and life lessons that are taught on and off the court. It translates into our daily lives and boosts our confidence.

It's also a therapeutic form of physical activity. Our focus on the game blocks all negative thoughts out and the satisfactory swish from ball to net is enough to make us happy! It is a sport of self improvement and discipline, so playing it will benefit us in the future.

My own experience of playing basketball at Platanos College is that it has taught me many lessons, ranging from patience to discipline in my daily life.

As I put my blood, sweat and tears into a sport that I have grown to love, my coach - Coach Patrick - gives me an extra push for me to improve into the amazing player that I am today.

Furthermore, I've definitely noticed that I have improved academically too, as my skill of organisation has developed. I am forever grateful for all opportunities that have been given to me because of the brilliant basketball opportunities that we get at Platanos College.

Basketball is a sport that has blessed our school as it brings us together as a community; as we play together, new friendships emerge. It is a sport that we are grateful for. So, why not give it a go? We'll be waiting for you on the basketball court!

"Basketball at Platanos College is more than just a game - it's an opportunity for students to develop their athletic abilities, foster teamwork, and grow in confidence. Beyond the court, our program emphasises sportsmanship, discipline and collaboration. Whether they're beginners learning the basics or aspiring players refining their talents, every student finds a place to grow and thrive."

— Coach Patrick

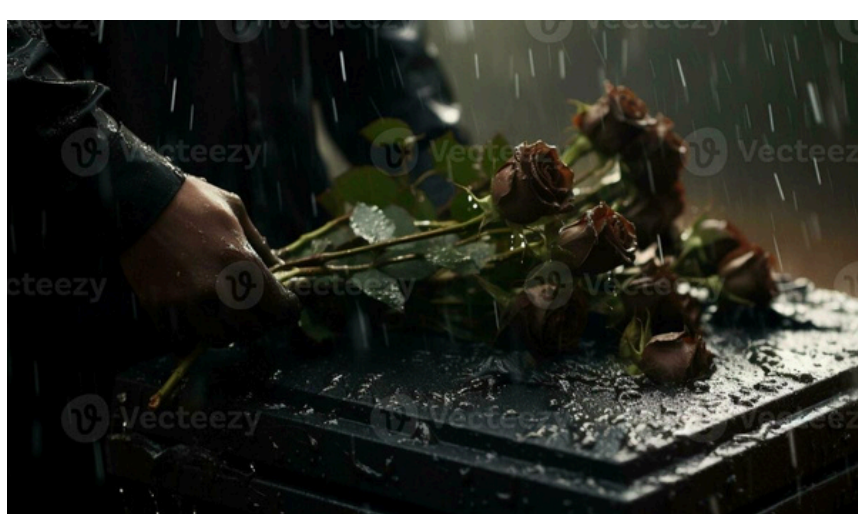


DEALING WITH DEATH

WRITTEN BY ISRA AHMAD

They say that there are only two certainties in life: death and taxes. Unfortunately, at some point in our lives, we are all likely to lose someone we care about. Maybe you have yourself already lost a loved one. How did you deal with that loss? What feelings did you experience at the time?

Hearing and speaking about death may feel uncomfortable and unpleasant for those who have never experienced it. Yet 60 million people die every year, so everyone we meet in life will experience it. Death can seem like a surreal event – one that is completely irreversible yet is something we must live with forever. The death of a loved one is likely the hardest life event that we will experience: children who are robbed from their families; partners who can't fathom a world without their other halves. It can feel cruel when someone who is experiencing the effects of death experiences the pain of their heart contracting when walking pass a seemingly complete family, knowing that once upon a time, that was their life.



There are many catastrophic feelings that death stimulates: anger, purposelessness, depression, grief, hopelessness. This is why life and death are contrasts: life is like a breath of fresh air after taking a dive in the ocean, while death is like drowning in the same waves.

Grief. One word comprised of five letters, yet it holds so much emotion. Around 92% of people who lose someone dear to them experience the haunting emptiness in their chest that prevents them from moving forward and healing; it is a constant reminder that their loved one is gone and not coming back. This emotion forces a person to live an empty, disoriented and sorrowful life; to wonder about the outcome of their life if things had happened differently; to even entertain or engage in unhealthy thoughts that may harm them mentally and physically. Grief traps a person to re-live the heartbreaking moment they lost their loved one, over and over again.

Death can seize someone in its awful clutches in multiple different ways, whether it was intentional or accidental, painful or painless. Death is such a common occurrence but rarely spoken about because of its tendency to make someone feel like they're strapped to a ticking bomb.

However, for some people it could also demotivate them from living their lives to the fullest, as it causes them to hyperfixate on the ominous nature of death. Death may sometimes seem like the ultimate mystery, often leaving people with more questions than answers.

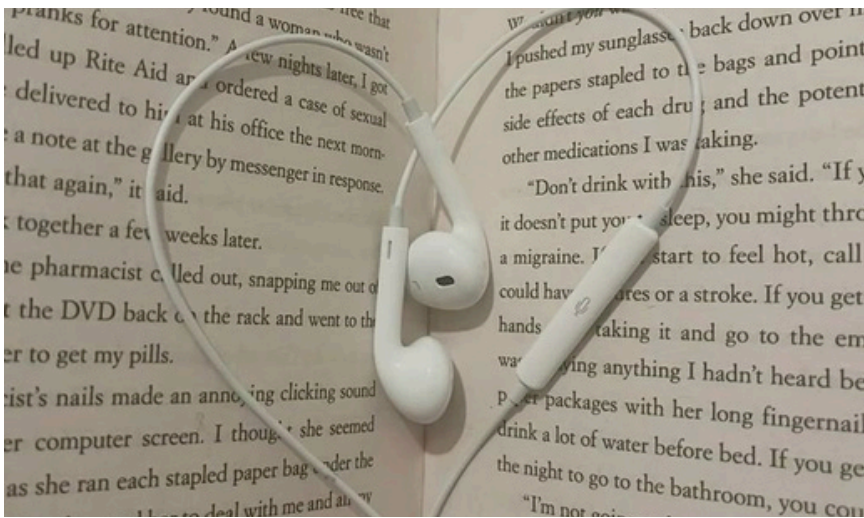
However, if we can accept that it is a necessary part of life, and instead try to channel our feelings into motivating ourselves to live more fully, perhaps we can deal with loss more effectively. Pursue your passions, nurture relationships and create meaningful experiences. Live your life before it's too late.





THE MARVELS OF MUSIC

WRITTEN BY GABRIELLE MANU



Music is an everchanging art, welcoming new ideas, expressions of imagination, talent and visions that can all be communicated and pursued through musical notes. The possibilities of creating new lyrics, instrumentals and rhythms are infinite. Music genres themselves are very diverse: Rock, Pop, Ballad, Jazz, Hiphop, Drill and Classical, to name just a few: there is nothing impossible when it comes to music.

Over the years, the Music Industry has evolved, optimising on social media and internet platforms to give young musicians more opportunities to pursue their dreams. Take for example, Beabadoobee, who is now 24, but got her first second-hand guitar at 17. She was able to make significant progress by watching YouTube videos, which helped propel her to fame.

Similarly, Doja Cat spent considerable time teaching herself how to mix music using GarageBand before uploading it to SoundCloud.

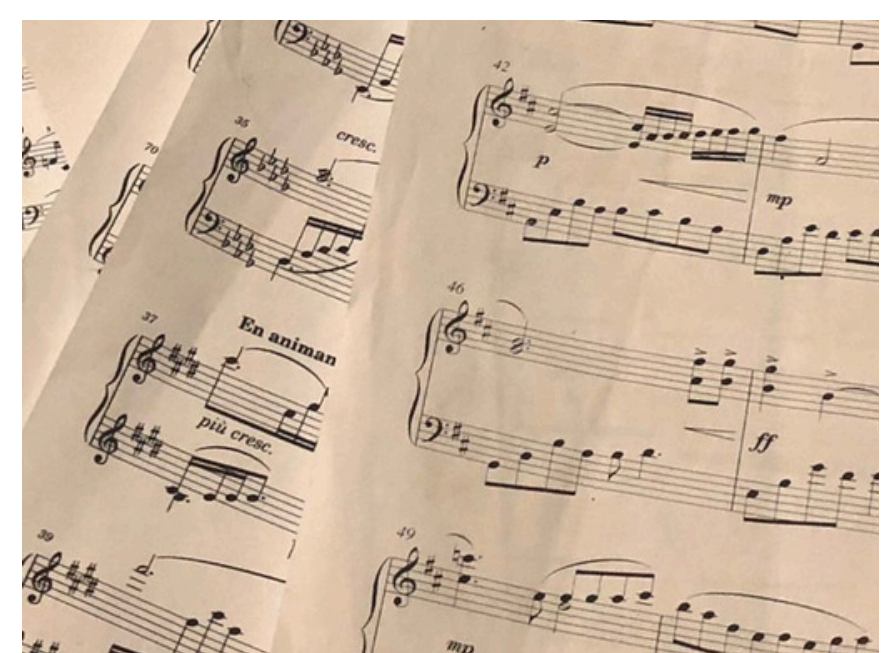
It was her track 'So High,' that caught the eye of record producers back in 2012. But it's not just female musicians who have used the internet to propel their careers. Did you know that Shawn Mendes taught himself to play guitar by watching YouTube tutorials? He gained a huge fan following when he covered a range of Justin Bieber's songs, with his rendition of 'As Long As You Love Me' causing his fame to explode and making him – at the tender age of 15 – the third-most-popular artist on Vine. In fact, you might not know it, but Justin Bieber was one of the earliest singers to use social media to gain a loyal following. Through YouTube videos uploaded from his home when he was just 13 years old, Bieber quickly got the attention of record producers.

These real-life stories truly demonstrate the opportunities that can be given to young people when they pursue their musical passions. Not only does music give you new opportunities for a potential career, it also allows you to express your emotions. Music is inspiring and entertaining and it can have a great psychological effect that can improve your health and well-being.

Indeed, it is likely that we have all turned to music at some point in our lives, whether it be to motivate ourselves, help us process a challenging situation, or just to feel uplifted.

Whether you sing or play instruments, the possibilities when it comes to music, are boundless! I personally enjoy playing music – although it was a struggle to learn at first, the outcome was definitely worth it! Being able to be passionate about music, writing my own songs and being able to play my favourite songs, really has had a huge impact on my life. For all of us, music brings people together, regardless of culture, ethnicity and race and indeed, is a fundamental aspect of international cultures and traditions.

Music is inspiring and truly helps us to unite. So next time you're listening to a favourite track of yours, or playing an instrument, consider how it makes you feel and what impact it has on you.





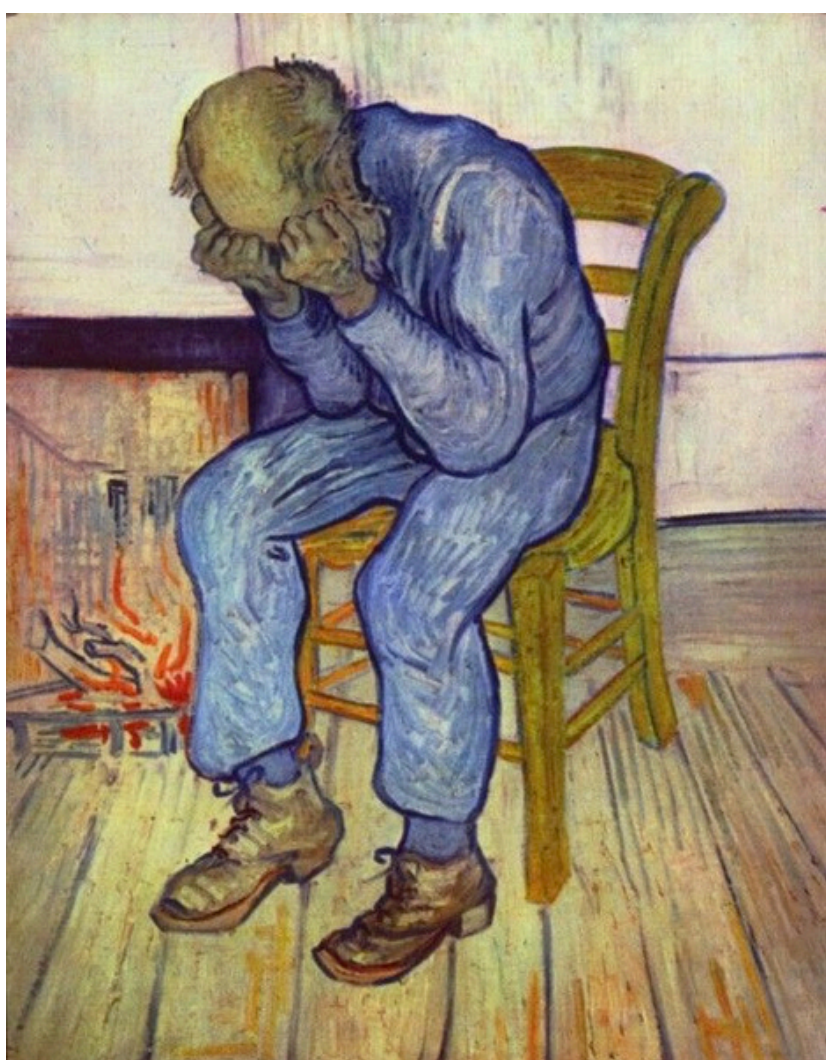
SUICIDE: BREAKING THE CHAINS OF PURE DESPAIR

WRITTEN BY IARA CHAVES

Trigger Warning: This article includes sensitive topics related to suicide and mental health issues, which can be distressing.

Did you know that the biggest killer amongst men between aged 18-45 is suicide? But it is of course, not just men who experience suicidal thoughts or even make attempts on their lives.

According to the charity MIND, the way a person feels when they're suicidal, can vary from one person to the next. For example, a person might feel unable to cope with feelings and life experiences and may no longer want to live the life they have. On top of that, these feelings can change from moment to moment, or day to day. To make things worse, a person might struggle to understand why they feel such a way.



Common feelings of people who have suicidal thoughts:

- Feeling hopeless, like there is no point in living
- Being tearful
- Being overwhelmed by negative thoughts
- Feeling overwhelming pain that they can't imagine getting over
- Feeling useless or unwanted
- Feeling like suicide is the only choice
- Feeling as though others would be better off without them in their lives
- Having a fascination with death

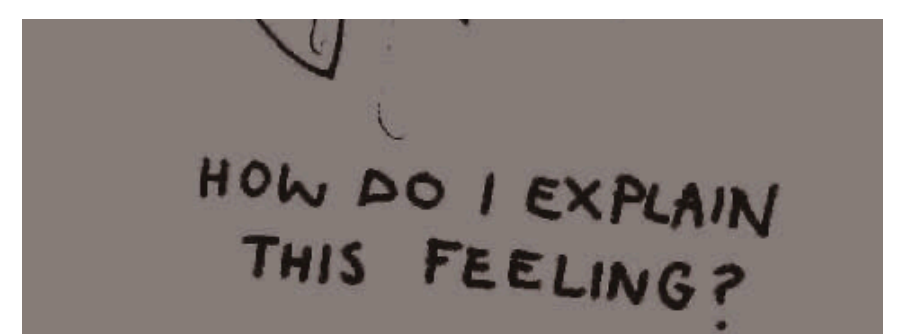


Common symptoms of someone with suicidal thought:

- Poor quality of sleep
- Change in appetite and/or weight gain or loss
- Lack of self care
- Avoiding others
- Struggling to communicate
- Having a sense of self-loathing
- Having the urge to self-harm

Suicide remains a pressing issue both in the UK and globally. It affects people of all ages and from all backgrounds and walks of life. Addressing this complex problem requires a joint effort from mental health professionals, community support and wider public awareness.

In recent years, the UK has seen an increase in the number of suicide rates, resulting in urgent action from governmental and non-governmental organisations. According to the Office for National Statistics (ONS), the rates of suicide rose to 11 deaths per 10,000 people in 2019. Surely such figures highlight the need for effective prevention strategies and resources for anyone who is struggling with suicidal thoughts?





Early identification of those who are potentially at risk of suicide, can significantly reduce the chance of them taking their life. Preventative measures could involve weekly check ups, therapy, meditation and carefully prescribed medication. Building strong community networks can also provide individuals with the support they truly need.

It is also imperative that as well as supporting those at risk, raising awareness is also done. This can be through suicide prevention campaigns, educational initiatives and through the Media. It is critical that as a society, we reduce the stigma surrounding mental health and encourage one another to do all we can to safeguard our own mental wellbeing.

Suicide rate (per 10,000 people):

- 2019 - 11.0
- 2020 - 10.8
- 2021 - 10.7
- 2022 - 10.3
- 2023 - 10.8
- 2024 - 10.4

Top 5 countries with highest suicide rates (per 10,000) people:

1. Lesotho - 72.4
2. Guyana - 40.3
3. Eswatini - 29.4
4. South Korea - 28.6
5. Lithuania - 26.1

Call Mind on 0300 102 1234.

Call Samaritan on 116 123

Call SANEline on 0300 304 7000

Call National Suicide Prevention Helpline UK on 0800 689 5652

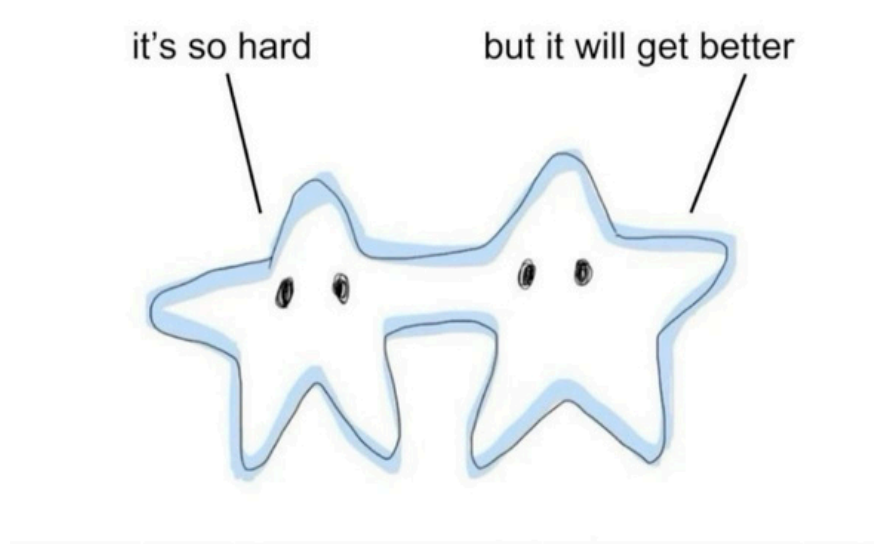
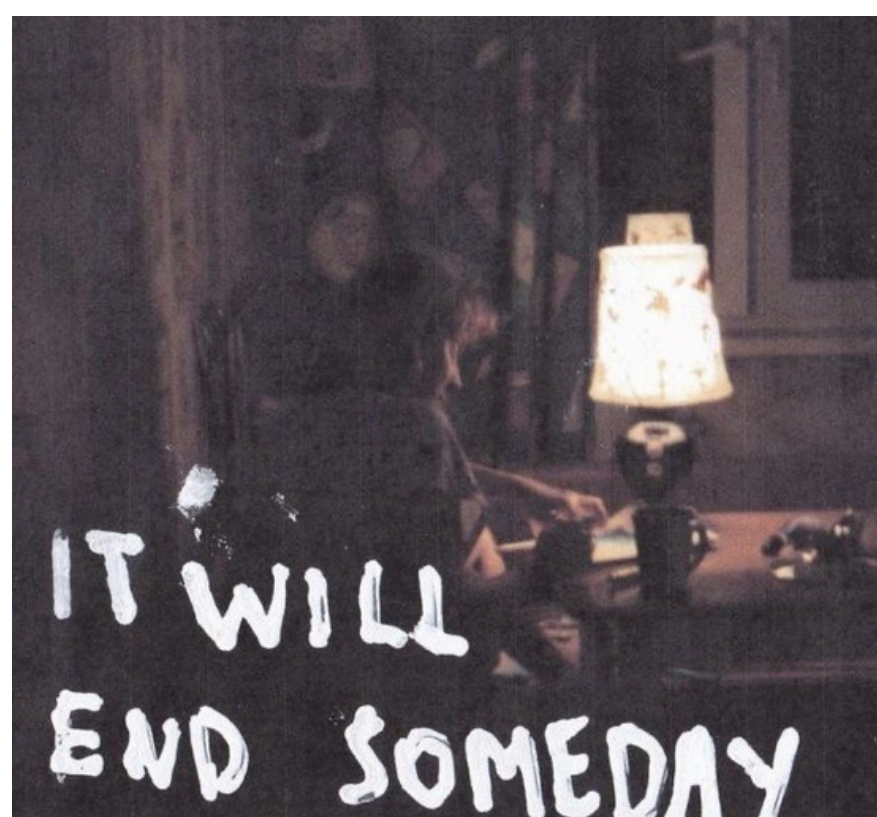
Call Campaign Against Living Miserably (CALM) on 0800 58 58 58

Text 'SHOUT' to 85258

Call Papyrus HOPELINEUK on 0800 068 4141

If you identify as gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender, you can call Switchboard on 0300 330 0630

Contact NHS 111 any time to access support for your health. To get urgent mental health support, call 111 and select option 2.





INTERVIEW WITH MR HAWKINS

WRITTEN BY ASHWAQ OMAR

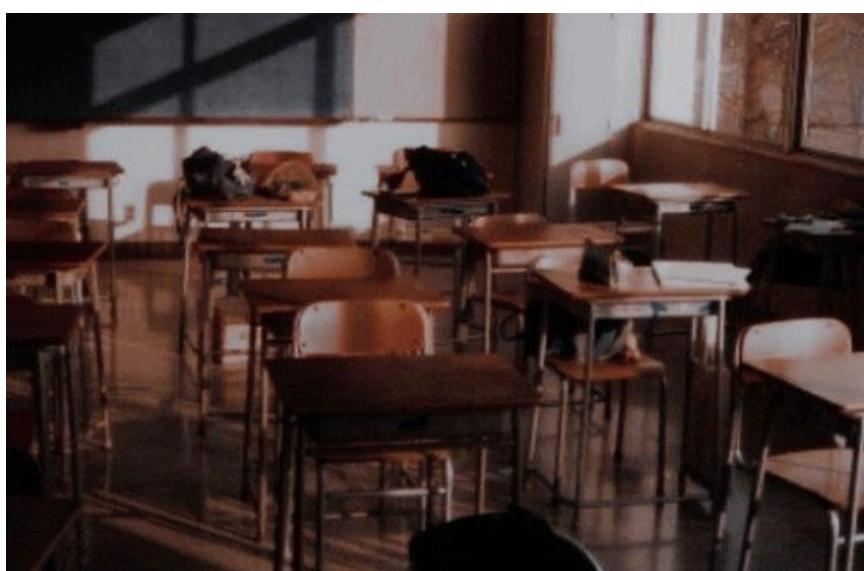
For this term's Newsletter, we interviewed Mr Hawkins about his career path from Law to Education.

What do you enjoy about being a teacher, and was it always a dream of yours to enter the field of Education?

"It is an amazing job. You get to change lives and influence people to go and be their best selves. No, I didn't always want to be a teacher. I considered Medicine as a child and then Law. Situations changed, as well as my preferences, so I studied Science."

What inspired you to leave your career in Law and pursue Teaching?

"I love learning. I thought long and hard about leaving the Bar. I decided I'd try Teach First - really making a difference for pupils in challenging schools. I loved it from day one. One day, I hope to be a Headteacher where I can really drive improvement for all."



What are the key similarities between Law and Education?

"There are many overlaps between the two. You need to be dedicated and committed to being the best. Law as a Barrister is more individual, but at times being in the class is the same. Both require strong advocacy and presentation skills - arguably good acting is needed too."

In what ways do you believe your legal skills have been an asset in your teaching career?

"I believe the ability to process and consider multiple sources of information and data has helped Teaching and Leading in schools. I can draft documents and understand legislation; this helps with the wider responsibilities in schools."

What has been the most rewarding aspect of your Teaching career so far?

"I am so proud of all my pupils, but two stand out. One worked so hard in my A Level Chemistry class, attaining a place at Oxford. The other was a girl who had a very tough home life. Despite all the barriers in her way, she went to a top university to study Science."



What advice would you give to someone considering a career change similar to yours?

"Think it through - what is important to you? Remember money is a motivator for a very short period of time."

What do you enjoy about working at Platanos College?

"The pupils, students and staff. I love the inclusive environment and the keenness to learn. I'm proud to be here helping everyone be the best they can be."

Where do you see yourself in 5 years time?

"Haha - who knows? Headteacher, Educational Consultant, Civil Servant? I do however, know that I'll be a very proud dad as both my girls, Winifred and Emmeline, will be at school."



FUSION IN FASHION

WRITTEN BY KELLY OLIVEIRA, NIBRAS AHMED AND ZUHRA OSMAN

In different countries around the world, people have their own unique ways to express their cultures and traditions. One way is through their form of clothes, which are often a means to celebrate important events, represent national pride and unity and express generations of customs. In many parts of the world, clothing is used in such a variety of ways to demonstrate a country's culture.



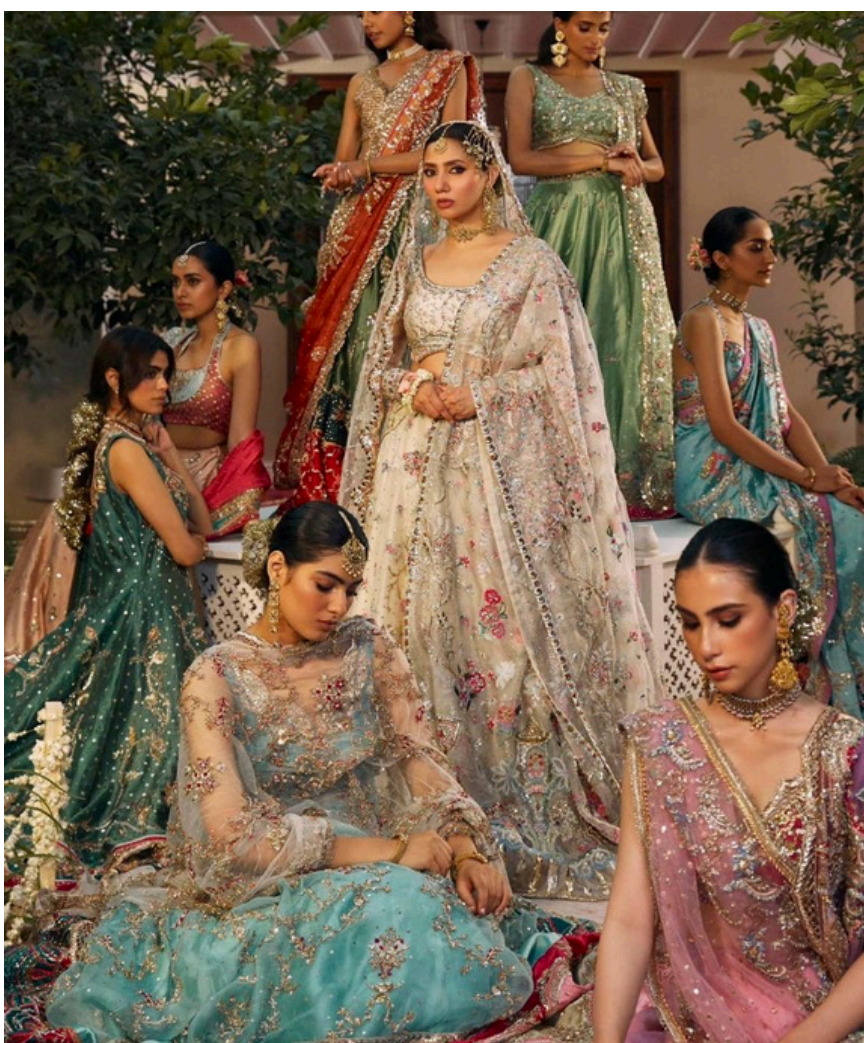
For example, in Africa there are different types of tribal clothing such as the Kente. This is a unisex African fabric that originates among the Ashanti and Ewe people of Ghana. It is made out of cloth strips of silk and/or cotton. In North Africa, people wear the Jillaba or Djellaba, which is a unisex robe that's usually long sleeved and is normally worn among the people of the Maghreb region. In Somalia, one type of traditional clothing is the Guntiino, which is a long piece of cloth that is tied off the shoulder and draped across the women's waist. In other regions such as East Africa, brides often wear stunning outfits made from Kanga or Kitenge fabric, using bold colours and intricate patterns.

They may accessorise their bridal wear with beaded jewellery and head wraps. In Somalia, brides usually wear a brightly coloured Dirac, which is a long dress made from lightweight fabric and a traditional shawl known as a Garbasaar. Eritrean and Ethiopian brides embrace their heritage with vibrant Habesha Kemis.





Moving to South Asia, the Salwar Kameez is a common garment that consists of a long tunic top, which is the kameez and loose-fitting pants - the salwar. In the Middle East however, clothing such as the Abaya for women and the Thobe for men are worn. The Saree is a key item of clothing worn in different countries across Asia. Indeed, Sarees are often worn not just as every day attire, but also for special celebrations like weddings. In some Asian countries, brides are typically dressed in colourful Lehengas or Sarees adorned with intricate embroidery. In addition, brides may wear Henna/Mendhi on the hands and feet; this is a symbol of good luck and happiness.



Such dress is very different to the attire we see closer to home in Europe. The traditional Portuguese dress consists of bouffant skirts made from Saia (chequered or striped fabrics) for women, and Calsas, short leggings, Sombreros and waistcoats for men. When it comes to weddings, in Western countries brides wear the classic white gown - a symbol of purity and new beginnings. This highlights the differences between cultures in various parts of the world and how they have embraced their traditions through generations. Fashion has long been used in various different ways to express people's identity and to enable them to feel free in their outfits.

One of the great things about living in such as a multicultural city as London, is that we get to see many different cultural outfits every day!



HOW CAN WE DEAL WITH THE CHALLENGES OF GCSE's?

WRITTEN BY ALAA OUZANE AND SALMA SHEIK

There is no doubt that Key Stage 4 is a level up for all pupils – after all, GCSEs are the most challenging academic path we have ever encountered. So, what is the best way to deal with the challenges of GCSEs? We asked some Year 11 pupils what they do to try and cope with the requirements of their GCSEs and here's what they had to say...

"I normally struggle to stay consistent with my revision. To deal with this, I made a revision timetable which helps me to organise what I have to do on a specific day."

-Picetra

"I normally struggle with remembering content even after I've revised it. To deal with this, I've found revision methods that work for me and help me remember content."

-Alisa

"I generally struggle with distractions while revising. To deal with this, I turn my phone off and this helps me maintain my focus."

-M.F

"English is something that challenges me as it is not my strongest subject. I have started to do past papers that are then marked by English teachers so I know what to do to improve."

-R.R

"I struggle with balancing entertainment with revision. So to deal with this, as soon as I get home, I get my revision done - this means that I can do whatever I want for the rest of the day. Sometimes I also wake up early to do some revision before school. This is so that when I get home there is less for me to do. Additionally, a revision timetable really helps me stay organised."

-S.S

"I usually struggle with distractions. To deal with this, I now sit alone to avoid any possible distractions and focus as much as possible."

-S.Z

"Recent troubles in my life have had a toll on me, so talking to my friends and having time to myself helps a lot."

-H.H

Do any of these challenges resonate with you? If so, why not adopt some of the strategies our pupils suggest above?





community corner

ENTICING ERITREA

WRITTEN BY SAMIRA ABDU



Do you know anyone who is from Eritrea? A number of pupils at Platanos College are from this North-East African country - so there is a good chance that you do know someone from there!

Situated on the Red Sea coast, Eritrea borders Ethiopia, Sudan and Djibouti. The capital city, Asmara, is known for its Italian colonial buildings, like St. Joseph's Cathedral, as well as art deco structures. There is also Egyptian and Turkish architecture in Massawa, which reflects the history of Asmara. If you ever get a chance to visit the Capital, you will find the wonders of St. Mariam Cathedral and the Imperial Palace. Much of the architecture of Eritrea comes from the time of Colonial rule.

Edward Denison, a lecturer at UCL's Bartlett School of Architecture, states that Eritrea has *"an unparalleled collection of buildings"* and that *"while other countries like Libya and Somalia were understandably keen to trash their colonial heritage, Eritrea was subject to a decade of British rule and 40 years of Ethiopian rule, so the process was more gradual."* When independence finally came in the 1990s, the stark contrast between the many modern buildings built and the traditional architecture, was evident.

Did you know that Eritrea has nine official ethnic groups? These are Afar, Blien, Hidareb, Kunama, Nara, Rashaida, Saho, Tigre and Tigrinya. Each group has their own traditions, but there are some customs that are shared between different groups. It is not only the architecture that has international influences; Eritrean cuisine is also influenced by several cultures, including Ethiopian, Arab and Italian cuisine. If you get a chance to visit Eritrea, you can try the country's unique cuisine, which is flavoured with organic spices.

The main traditional dishes are Tsebhi (stew), served with Injera (flatbread made from teff, wheat, or sorghum and hilbet (paste made from legumes such as lentils and faba beans). Beef, goat, lamb and fish are key components of the dishes.

Did you know that a traditional custom in Eritrea is the Coffee Ceremony? When friends visit each other's homes, the host pours the coffee for everyone by moving the tilted jebena over a tray with small cups called Finjal. They do this without stopping until each cup is full.

Another aspect of Eritrean culture you will no doubt notice if you visit, is the traditional dress. Zuria, for example, is a traditional Tigrinya dress for women. It is worn on special occasions; it is colourful and has intricate patterns, complemented with traditional accessories, usually made of gold, such as nose piercings and jewellery placed on the forehead, fingers, arm and neck.

There is no doubt that a visit to Eritrea is worth it: a land of fascinating cultures, architecture and history awaits your arrival!



INTERVIEW WITH A RESTAURANT MANAGER

WRITTEN BY STEPHANIE CAMACHO PINTO

As a Business and Enterprise College, we are always keen to interview local businesses. This term, we interviewed the manager of 'Mezza Me' in Brixton, Chadi El-Achkar.

What can you tell us about your job?

"This business I manage is a Lebanese restaurant; it is designed in a way that it caters for street food. It is not a very formal setting, you get to come in and have some nice food with good vibes, without it being too formal."

What challenges do you face while managing this business?

"This type of business has so many challenges. Restaurants are affected by many factors; it could be as simple as down to the weather. So for example, if the weather is really nice, because I don't have a nice seating area here, people prefer to go to a venue with outside seating so they can enjoy the weather, so that affects my business in a negative way. This business is also affected by school holiday periods; during half terms, families usually go on holidays and that affects us because obviously it means fewer people will come to our business and that affects our business negatively..."

...However, during festive seasons like Christmas, it is very popular and a very busy time of the year for us, because a lot of people are having parties, inviting friends or they're going out - that's a very busy time of the year. Another thing that affects the restaurant is the economy; our business is not a necessity - it's more of a luxury to be able to go out and afford to eat out. Therefore, if the economy is bad, people tend to save their money so they just keep things basic and not eating out. Each challenge presents itself with new opportunities to test our skills and find ways to overcome these challenges."

Did you have any other challenges during COVID?

"That was probably my biggest challenge so far to be honest with you, because as you know, there were many rules that affected the businesses in regards to spacing, social distancing and other hygiene protocols. We had to adapt the business to deal with that kind of atmosphere. So we invested in our delivery system that allowed us to deliver food to people's houses which kept us going through that difficult period."

What are your aspirations for the restaurant?

"In this type of business it is fun to add new dishes and change the flavours to keep the customers interested and satisfied so they come back. Maybe one day I will open in another location. We'll see how that goes."

What is the community like?

"Well in Brixton we have a large predominantly been an Afro Caribbean community as well as a large Latin community. We have lots of different communities here, so it is a very varied community and that's how I try to run my business - to cater to everybody's flavours and tastes so that no one feels left out and everyone feels welcome."

What made you want to run/manage this restaurant?

"I have a very entrepreneurial character. For many years, I tried different businesses - this is not the first I have taken on. Alongside running businesses, the majority of my work experience was in the Catering and the Leisure business. I worked for companies like Costa, Nandos and Wetherspoons, also in pubs and concert venues..."



...So I have a variety of experiences and it gets to a point where you want to do something for yourself. If it's something that you like, it's very rewarding, but at the same time it has its difficulties and it's a bit of a gamble, because you don't know whether it's going to work or not."

What are your regular duties in the restaurant?

"So, when I first took it over, there were many issues I had to deal with on a first hand basis; like creating/ implementing cleaning schedules, marketing strategies, dealing with staff, training the staff to the standards I would like. As time went by, the team got stronger. We started going in the direction that I believed would be good for the business, so I started to delegate those tasks to different team members so that I did not have to do all the little things any more."

What advice would you give to someone who wants to manage or create their own business?

"Managing a business and running your own business are two different things, because when managing a business, usually your risks are minimal - the owner of the company is the one taking most of the risks..."

...So you come in and the owner of the business will tell you what the rules and regulations are and they will tell you to manage them. For example, you manage the timings of the staff, the opening and closing times, the cleaning schedules and more. However, being a business owner is a very different situation - you have to be able to take risks for the business. There are other things business owners need to have to start a business - like the passion you have for that particular business and desired achievements. You need to have the skills and not just go into something you're not passionate about or not confident in. Lots of people think that because someone is a business owner it means that they have an amazing life; it's actually very stressful because at the end of the day as a manager, I am responsible for everything. So even when I am at home, I am worried about the restaurant, even when I'm sleeping. I have to dedicate myself to the business 24/7.

Why did you want manage a business and was it a childhood dream?

"I wouldn't say it was a childhood dream but I have always liked being independent and to be able to do my own thing..."

...As I grew, I started creating my own experiences and built confidence. This pulled me in the direction where I needed to learn and understand what my skills were and how I could use them to make a living. I love people; I like entertaining and welcoming them and sharing with them the good quality food that we have. So I decided to put it all together and turned it into a business."

What is your favourite dish on the menu and what dish would you recommend to someone who is new to Lebanese food?

"My favourite is simple - it's hummus; I love hummus and all its different flavours. There are many flavours of hummus available at our restaurant. It's a staple dish in the Lebanese menu, it's very simple and has gained quite a lot of popularity now. Hummus has something for everyone; there is a vegan option or you might want to have hummus with some meat on top. It is quite a versatile dish and it will make you feel lovely after you eat it!"





ARE BUDGET CUTS AFFECTING LAMBETH RESIDENTS?

WRITTEN BY SUMAYA HASSAN

You only have to pop to the shops to pick up an everyday item like bread or milk, to notice that prices are on the rise. In fact, according to a recent BBC article, prices in the UK went up by 2.3% in the 12 months to October 2024. This means that inflation is on the rise. But what exactly is inflation? In simple terms, inflation is the increase in the price of something over a period of time.

For example, if a bottle of milk cost £1 a year ago, but now costs £1.05, then we can calculate that the annual milk inflation is 5%. Inflation is calculated by the Office for National Statistics (ONS), which monitors the process of hundreds of items we purchase everyday, such as food and petrol.

The increase in prices of such everyday items and necessities, has occurred without significant wage increased for people nationally. This is a real issue that needs to be monitored. Furthermore, reductions in government spending also had a significant impact on UK citizens.

But what about the effects on residents in Lambeth? Well, *"Lambeth's core government funding has reduced by 34% in real terms since 2010, despite population increases, rising demand for social services and increased responsibilities from central government"*.

Indeed, the results of the government cuts are affecting some of the most vulnerable people in the community. Currently, there are over 400 people reported in Lambeth as enduring rough living. People aren't able to keep up with their payments and are experiencing the cost of living crisis firsthand, all whilst inflation is rising. These separate issues all combine and are further compounded by budget cuts, which is truly a problem for residents in Lambeth. Although the borough isn't the worst off, Lambeth has been recorded as one of the most impoverished boroughs and stands at the 8th most deprived borough in London and the 22nd most deprived in England.



In response to the funding gap, Lambeth officials have discussed cutting children's services such as cutting the number of children's centres in the area, which could result in people losing their jobs as childcare workers, affect working parents and hinder the development of children.

As Councillor David Amos states, *"This is the worst funding crisis that the council has ever faced, and we need to be open with residents that saving this amount isn't possible without having a major impact on the services people rely on."*

So, where does this leave Lambeth residents? Think about the services you and your family most rely on. What impact would a reduction or cutting of these services altogether have on you and your loved ones?





WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE A YOUNG CARER?

WRITTEN BY ZAHRA QURESHI

Did you know that there are approximately 800,000 young carers in England alone? According to Action for Children, about 1 in 5 children and young people are young carers. In fact, the reason I've chosen to write this article is because I am one of them.

So, what is a Young Carer? A Young Carer is a young person who provides unpaid care for someone with a physical or mental disability, illness or substance misuse issues. Young Carers are typically under the age of 18. Being a Young Carer can involve a wide range of responsibilities, from household chores like cleaning and shopping to providing emotional support and helping with medication.



For young carers, finding personal time can be challenging; this can often lead to feelings of isolation and pressure to balance caregiving with schoolwork and other commitments.

If you are a Young Carer, you're not alone. Located in Brixton at 336 Brixton Road, the Carer's Hub provides support to young carers.

Here are some of the services they offer:

- Tailored support
- Monthly meet-ups (12+)
- Peer support group
- Trips and activities
- Homework club (11-16)
- Focus group
- Financial support

As a Young Carer myself, I find these services incredibly helpful and supportive. The Carer's Hub also offers in-school support, with members providing a safe space to talk about your feelings and experiences.

We spoke with Ellie, an employee at Carer's Hub, to get some advice for young carers.

How do you get in touch with Carer's Hub?

"You can reach out through their website or by calling them directly."

Do you have any words of advice to young carers?

"Reach out if you need help; you're not alone. Take breaks when you need them and be proud of the work, you're doing."

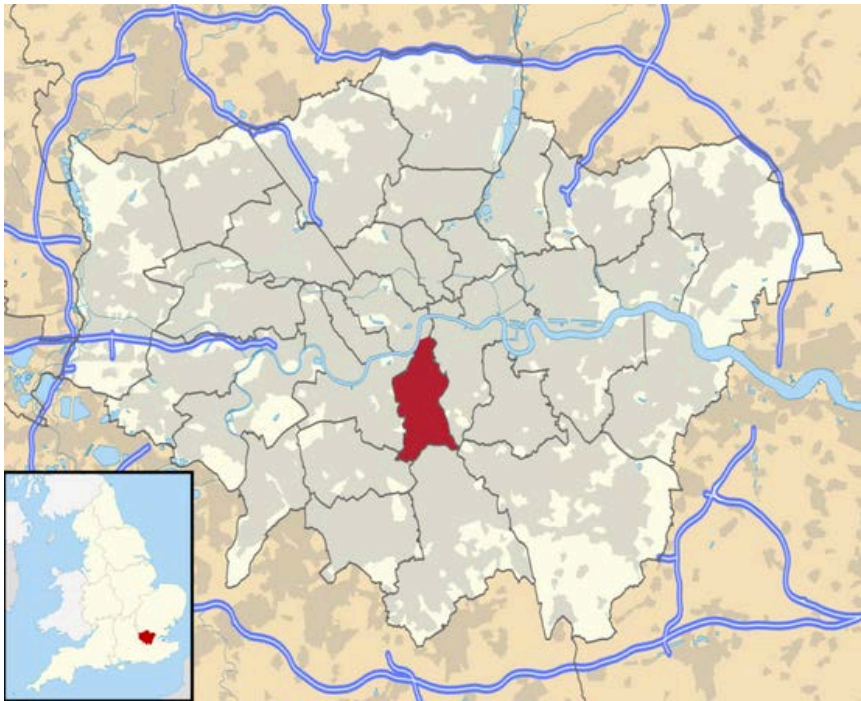
For more information, you can visit the Carer's Hub Lambeth website or the Lambeth Young Carers Service.





LAMBETH LIFE

WRITTEN BY SUMAYA HASSAN



As pupils of Platanos College, we are all familiar with the local borough of Lambeth. Here, we explore some key aspects of the area.

Lambeth is a district in South London that has a diverse and unique community. It is a lively place with many sites to see - a number of which have cultural and historical significance. Did you know that Lambeth was previously known as 'Lambehitha' in the 11th century - which meant 'landing place for lambs', as it was an area with a lot of livestock?

Over time, Lambeth has developed into a vibrant place where people of multiple different backgrounds and nations live together in multicultural communities. Although Lambeth has a slightly higher than average crime rate, it is still considered to be quite a safe place to live.

A huge advantage of living in Lambeth is the excellent transport links, with multiple buses, tubes and trains running all the time. Of course, these come in very handy for residents of Lambeth to visit its many tourist attractions: the London Eye, Lambeth Palace - the home of the Archbishop of Canterbury, The London Dungeons - an exciting place for chills, thrills and learning about the history of London and the local areas, Westminster Abbey, the River Thames, Imperial War Museum and more!

Nevertheless, Lambeth - like everywhere else - has its disadvantages. With a high council tax rate compared to neighbouring borough Wandsworth and other boroughs in the nation, living in Lambeth may not be the best way to save money! Indeed, house prices and rents are very high.

Facts about Lambeth

- Lambeth is home to one of the largest Portuguese-speaking communities in the UK
- At least 300,000 people live in Lambeth.
- The poet John Milton wrote about leaving Heaven and travelling to Lambeth in an epic poem!

Here's what a few members of the public had to say when asked the question - "How does it feel to live in Lambeth?"

"Beautiful. Lovely community, wouldn't change it for the world." - **Dean**

"Really like it. Feels very safe. Homey." - **Alice**

"Fine" - **Pauline and Stephen**

"I like it very much." - **Anonymous**

"It's alright, it's cool, it's urban." - **Jeremy**

"Disgusting." - **Kyle**

"Sometimes it feels a bit unsafe and sometimes a bit peaceful." - **Latifa**

"Like to be in Lambeth. Been here since 1967 with my wife, children and grandchildren." - **Nunzio**

"I see my people living in Lambeth. It's okay but we are mostly struggling." - **Sanin**

So, what is your view of living and/or going to school in Lambeth? Which of our residents' comments do you agree with and why?





RELIGIOUS DISCRIMINATION AROUND THE WORLD

WRITTEN BY TAHSEEN HAQUE

Did you know that 85% of people in the world today consider themselves to be religious? Followers of religions pray, read holy books, give to charity and try to live their lives in accordance with their beliefs. Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism and Sikhism are some of the major religions in the world today. Unfortunately however, there remain many conflicts within the world, as well as targeted attacks on those of different religious beliefs. Here, we consider some of these.

Did you know that Christians have faced persecution for thousands of years? Today, Christians may encounter hostility, discrimination or even physical harm because of their beliefs. Around 365 million Christians are subject to '*high levels of persecution and discrimination*'.

In Nigeria, attacks on Christians have become more common since 2020, as part of a wider rise in political violence against civilians. Open Doors estimates the number of Christians killed for faith-related reasons worldwide was 5,621 in 2023, 5,898 in 2022, and 4,761 in 2021.

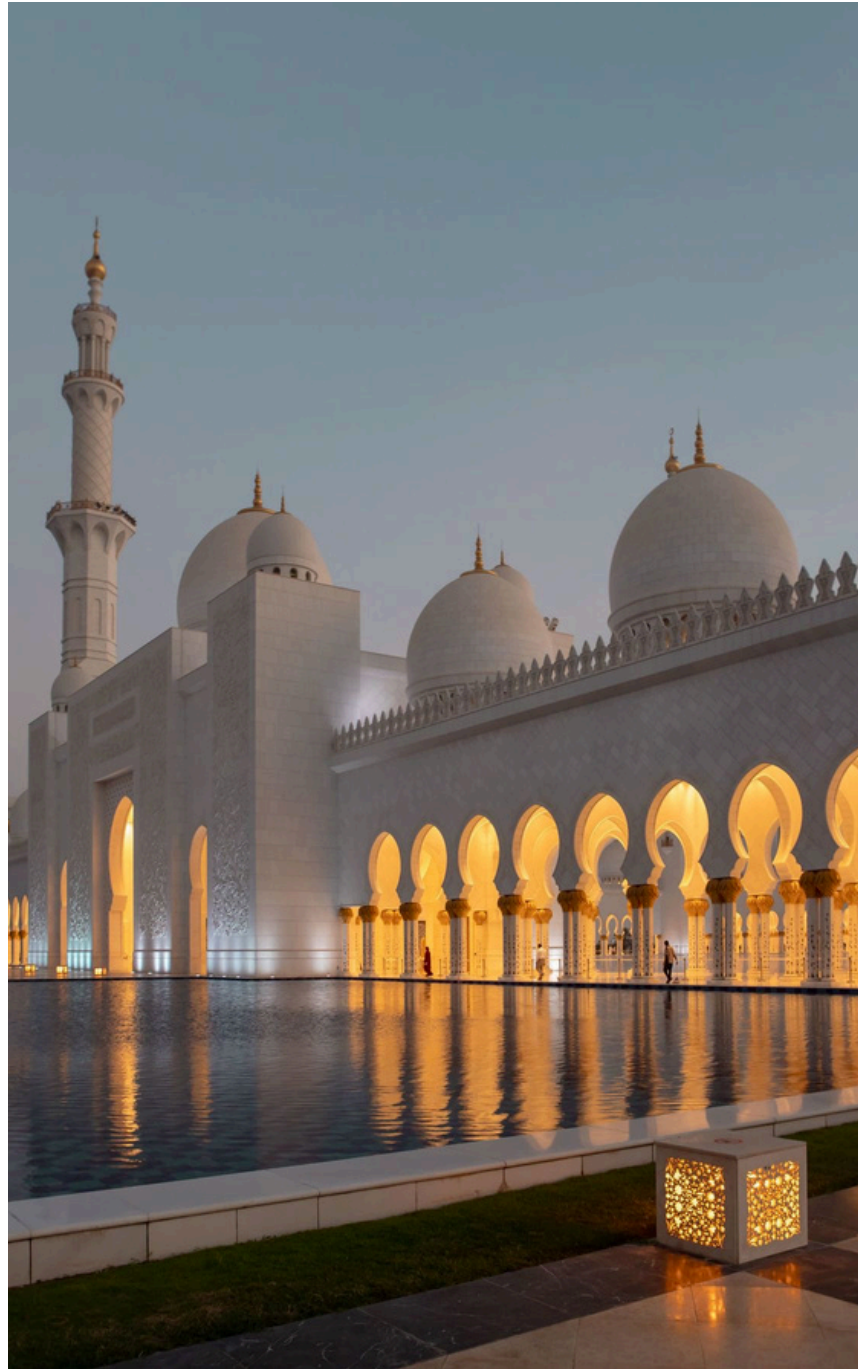
Did you know that the countries with the highest numbers of reported persecution against Christians are North Korea, Somalia, Libya, Eritrea and Yemen?

Similarly, many Muslims experience discrimination, including verbal harassment, hate speech, violent attacks and religious profiling. In the UK, the infamous Far-Right group, the English Defence League, formed riots against the Muslim community. According to the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA), in 2022, 47% of Muslims said they had faced some form of racial discrimination. The investigation found that Muslim women who choose to wear religious clothing, have to face more racial discrimination than those who do not.





For example, 58% of women between the ages of 16-24 years who wore religious clothing, faced discrimination. According to the Muslim Council of Britain, 22% of British respondents to a survey had negative feelings towards Muslims, whilst 43% would be concerned if a Muslim family moved next door to them. Shockingly, 47% refuse to accept a Muslim person into their family – this is actually the highest figure in Western Europe after Italy, which had a huge 57% of respondents agree with this.

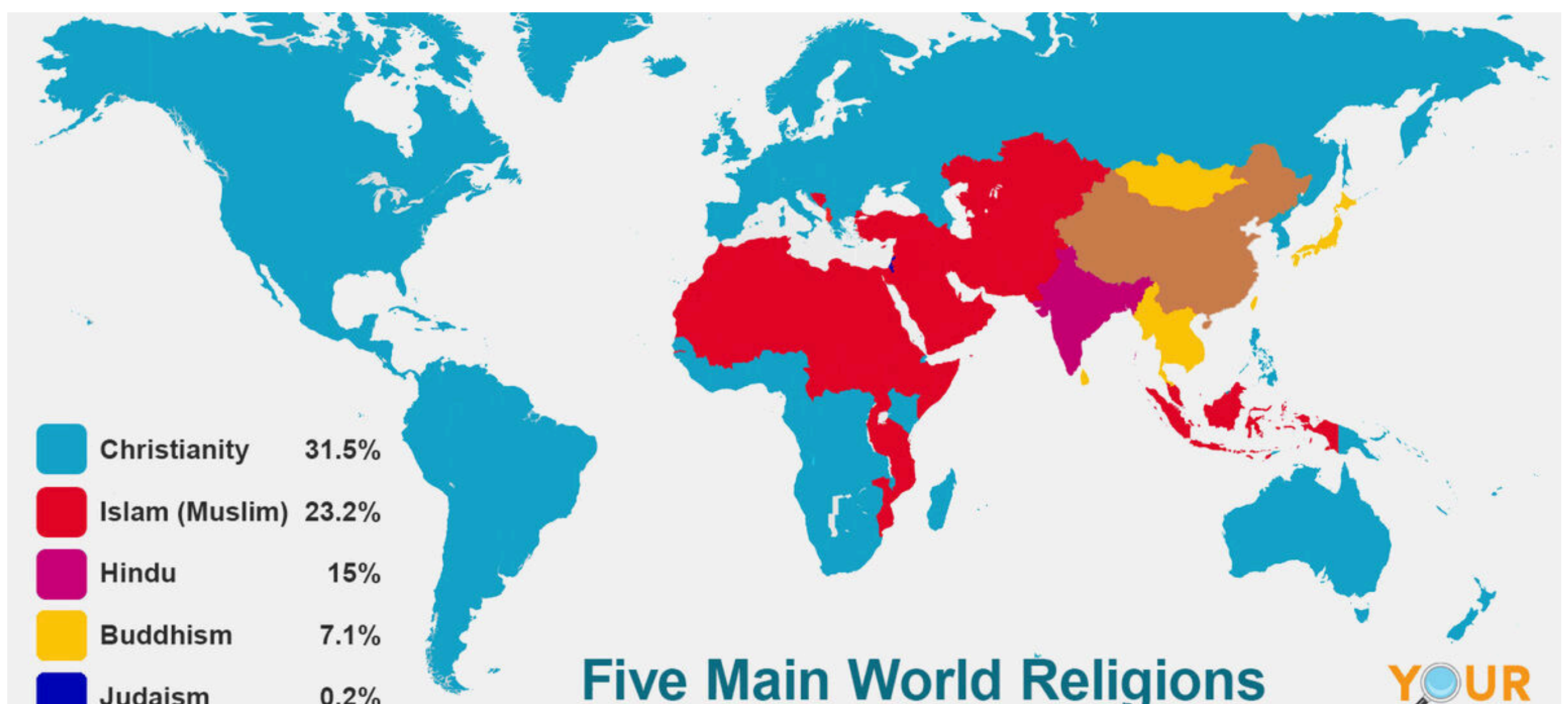


We all know about the horrific history of the Holocaust, during which The Nazi regime systematically murdered Jewish people in gas chambers, mass shooting operations and other acts of inhumane treatment. But to know that the hatred that fuelled this still exists today, is sickening.

Surely, we should respect each other's religions? Regardless of religious differences, too many have lost family and millions continue to share the same pain globally.

Another religious group that has faced increased discrimination in recent years, are Jews. The BBC reports that alongside Muslims, Jews have faced a huge surge in religious hate crime since the beginning of the Israel-Hamas conflict following the 7th October 2023 attacks.

According to police reporting in England and Wales, religious hate crime has risen by 25% over the past year. During the course of the year from March 2023-March 2024, there were 3,282 religious hate crimes targeting Jews, which was more than double the previous year.



inspiration station

INSPIRATIONAL BUSINESS OWNERS

WRITTEN BY PICETRA NYARKO CROFFIE

We all know of global businesses that have made their mark on the modern world, in particular, those that have utilised information technology and media platforms to launch themselves internationally: Apple, Amazon and Instagram, for example.

However, in this article we consider the impactful effect of business owners whom you perhaps have never heard of – ones who had to endure hard work, sweat and poverty.

Firstly, let's consider Madam CJ Walker, who was named Sarah Breedlove when she was born in Louisiana in 1867. As a black woman, she was the first in her whole family to be born with the right of freedom. During her youth and her older years, Madam CJ Walker was also a political and social activist.



Madam CJ Walker

When she found herself facing hair loss, she realised that most hair products during the 1800s-1900s were targeted at white women; indeed, none seemed to cater for the texture of her own hair. However, this did not deter Walker, as she experimented with different ingredients and formulas, using what she could find at her home to create new hair products to nourish her hair and sooth her irritated scalp.

Walker put her face on her products, for fear of white-owned businesses during the period stealing them and taking credit. Not only was she able to help women within the African-American community who might face similar challenges with their own hair, but she inspired others to also put their face to and on their own products.

According to the Guinness Book of World Records, Walker was the first self-made female millionaire in America. Indeed, by the time she died, she was the wealthiest African-American businesswoman and wealthiest self-made black woman in America.

Another business owner who successfully managed to escape a life of poverty, is Mohammad Al Amoudi. Now aged 78, Al Amoudi's father was from Saudi Arabia and his mother was from Ethiopia. At 19 years old, Al Amoudi moved from Ethiopia to Saudi Arabia to start a business; this was extremely difficult due to the expenses involved. However, he didn't give up and was determined to build his empire to what it is today. He worked on construction sites and developed an understanding of mining.

Today, Al Amoudi owns a vast-ranging portfolio of businesses in construction, energy, hotels, healthcare and manufacturing, to name a few.



Mohammad Al Amoudi



Next, let's take a look at Shiza Shahid, who was born in Pakistan, but attended Stanford University in the USA. Shahid collaborated with Malala Yousafzai - the schoolgirl who was shot in the head by the Taliban - to create the Malala Fund.

A few years prior to the shocking attempted murder, Shahid had actually helped Yousafzai attend a forum on women's education. After Yousafzai was shot, Shahid left her Consulting job at McKinsey, to help create the Malala Fund. As a result, millions of girls in both Pakistan and further afield in African countries, have benefited from an education.



Shiza Shahid

Finally, you may not have heard of her, but Seungah Jeong has revolutionised the use of solar-powered lights in South Korea. Having visited her native country when she was six years old, Jeong felt feeling scared while watching the light of a kerosene lamp. Many years later, having graduated from University, Jeong become the CEO of MPOWERD.

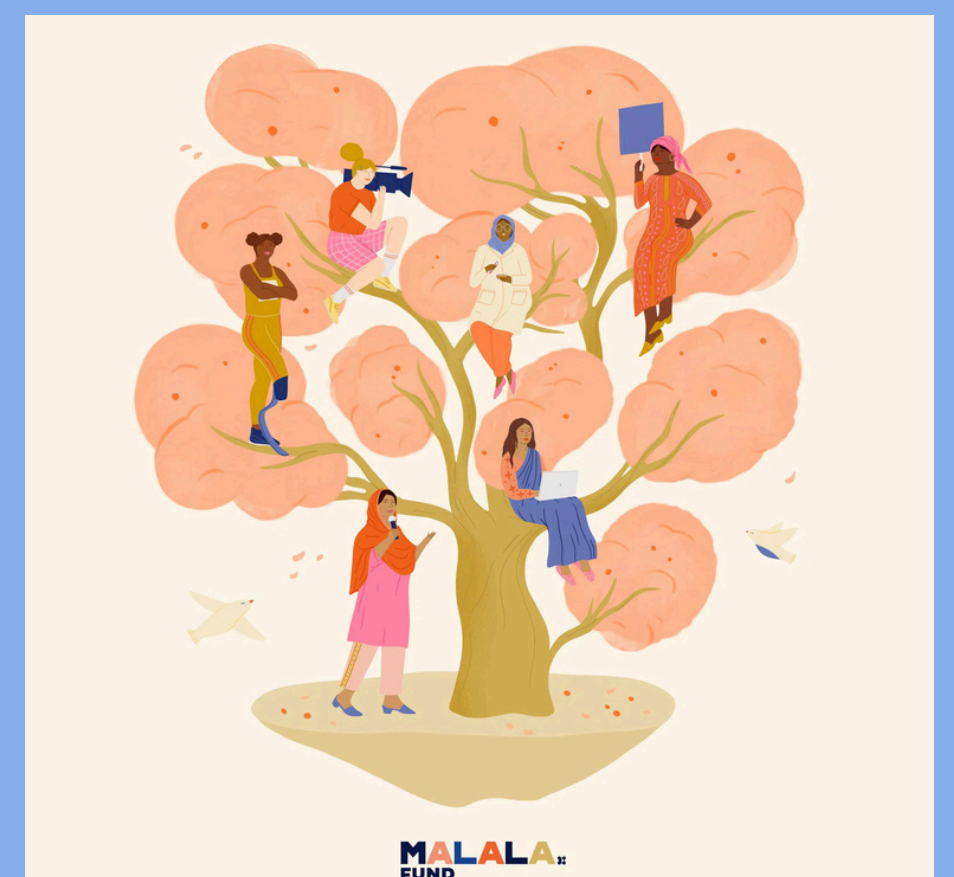
By focusing the attention of the business on using solar-powered lights in humanitarian projects, Jeong has helped to replace the hazardous flammable kerosene lamps, and in doing so, has helped to prevent the release of 589,700 tons of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere.

Furthermore, by selling their inflatable solar lights at retail shops and outlets, MPOWERD are able to sell them at a much reduced price in more economically challenged countries.

So, there is little doubt that business owners can - and do - shape the world for good, not just for profit. If you could come up with your own business that could actually change the world, what would it be and why?

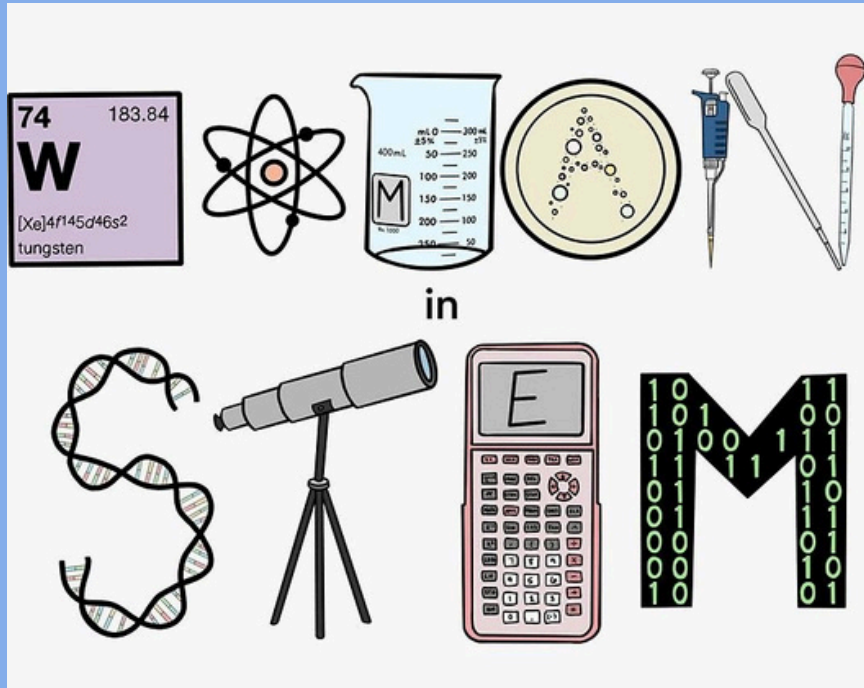


Seungah Jeong

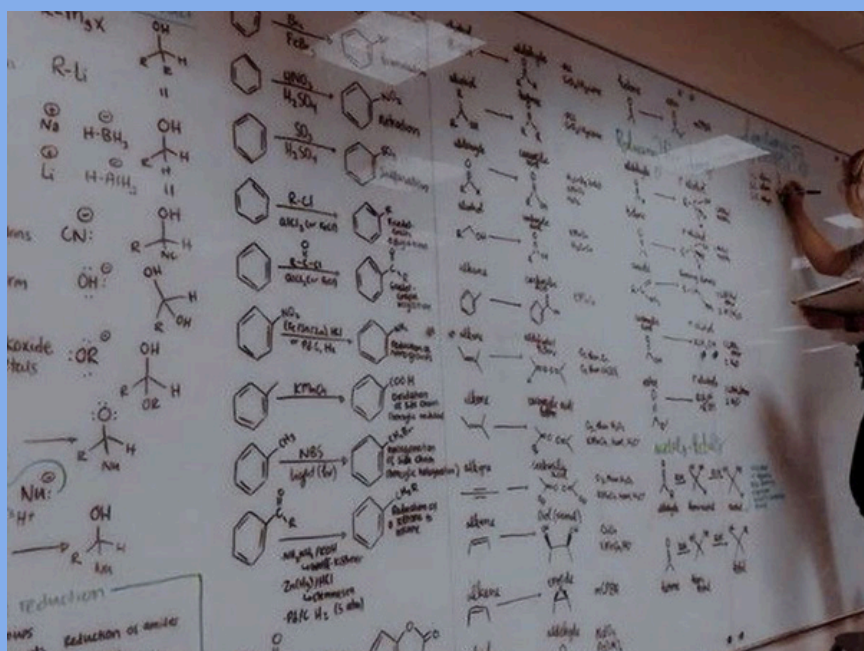


INSPIRATIONAL WOMEN IN STEM

WRITTEN BY MAPENZI COKE

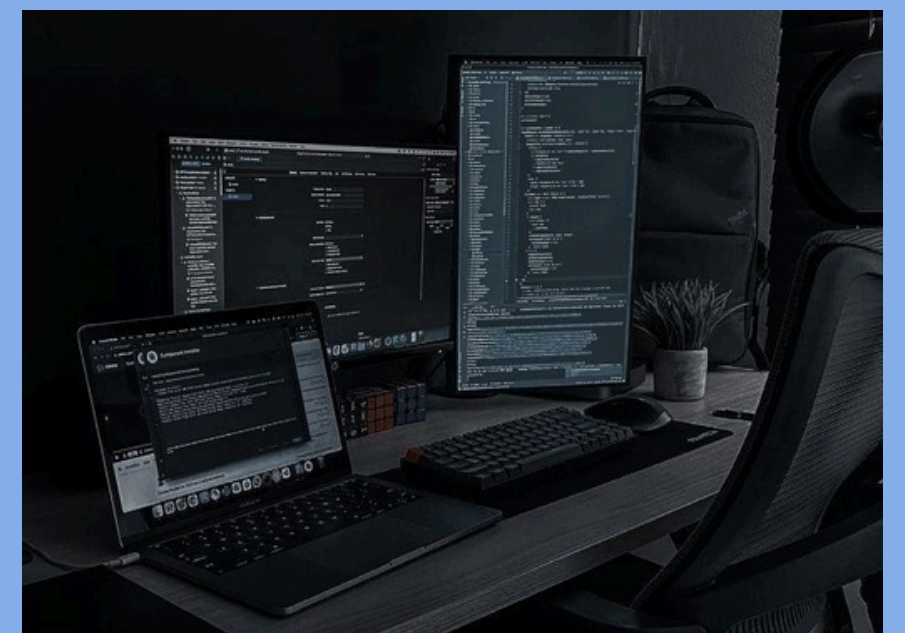


There are many benefits to having a career in STEM, one of which is a high salary. Some of the highest paid roles include Engineers and Computer Scientists, but jobs in the STEM field are so varied and unique that you're sure to be able to find a job that suits you and your interests best.

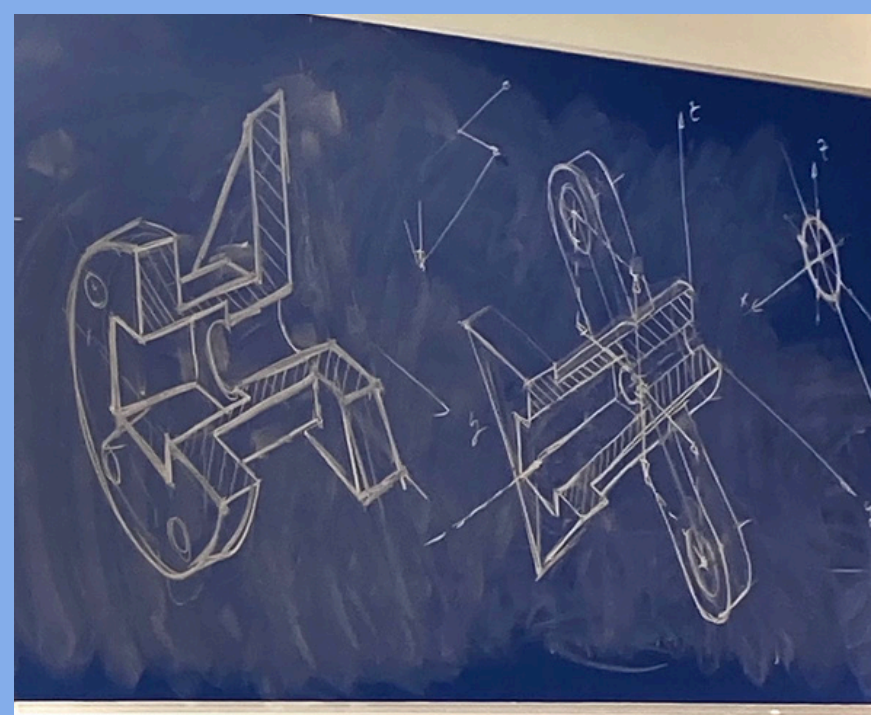


Another advantage to the STEM field is a growing demand for qualified workers; as new technology emerges, new jobs emerge with it, and the number of people who are qualified to work these jobs is limited.

Can you think of any famous names in the world of STEM? How many of those people are women? Well, as of 2024, research has shown that women are severely underrepresented in STEM careers, with women making up only 29% of all people working in STEM jobs in the UK. Sadly, this statistic is reflected in our school, with approximately only 19% of Year 10 Computer Science pupils being female. Whilst the STEM sector is a well-paid industry that is rapidly growing in size alongside the emergence of new technologies, unless girls are keen to and encouraged to pursue the Sciences from a young age, they may miss out on the opportunity of a successful STEM career.



This means that in a competitive economy where jobs are hard to come by, STEM companies are actively looking for skilled new workers. STEM careers also allow for job security; the STEM industry is rapidly growing, and frequent advancements in Science and Technology allow for a stable career in this field.



Furthermore, careers in STEM enable you to work towards advancing technology and to make new discoveries in Science - you could be part of Humanity's climb to a more technologically advanced society!

One of the most famous female faces in the world of STEM is Marie Curie, a Polish Scientist born in 1867. She wasn't allowed to attend school due to girls not being allowed to go to College at the time, but she studied in secret and later moved to Paris to attend university. Did her lack of an early education prevent her from achieving later success? Well, she discovered the elements Polonium and Radium and won two Nobel Prizes for her work!

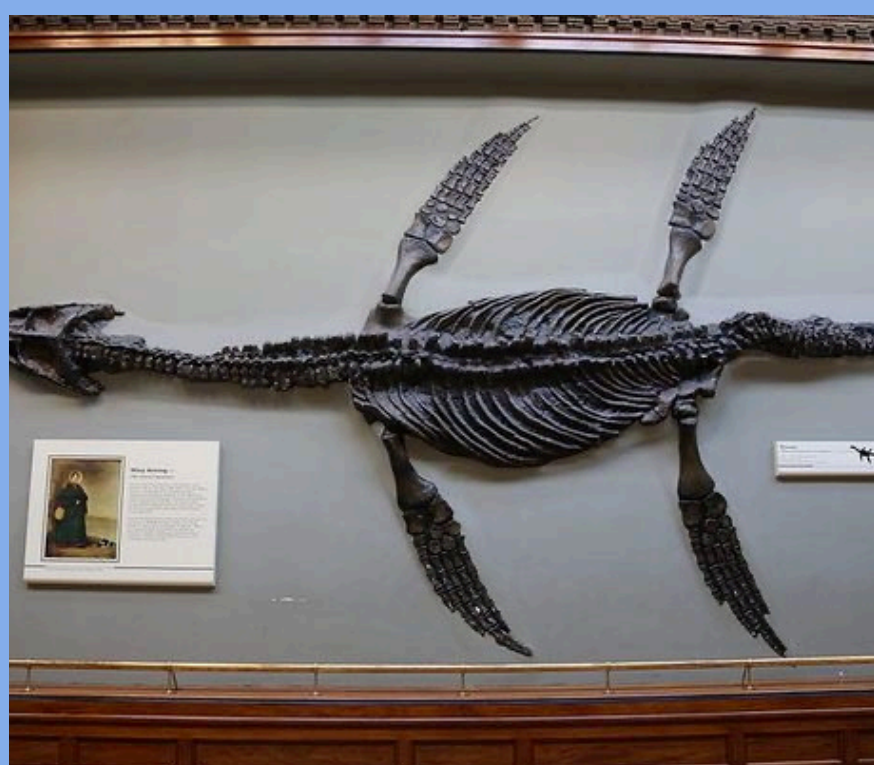


Marie Curie

Another inspirational women is Mary Anning, a British Palaeontologist, born in 1799. She taught herself to read and write as her family were too poor to send her to school, and she studied Geology and Anatomy to understand about the rocks and skeletons that she found on the coast where she lived. She discovered the first ever fossil of an Ichthyosaur, a kind of dinosaur. The fossils that she found helped to prove that there had been life on our planet for hundreds of millions of years - not just thousands as was believed at the time.



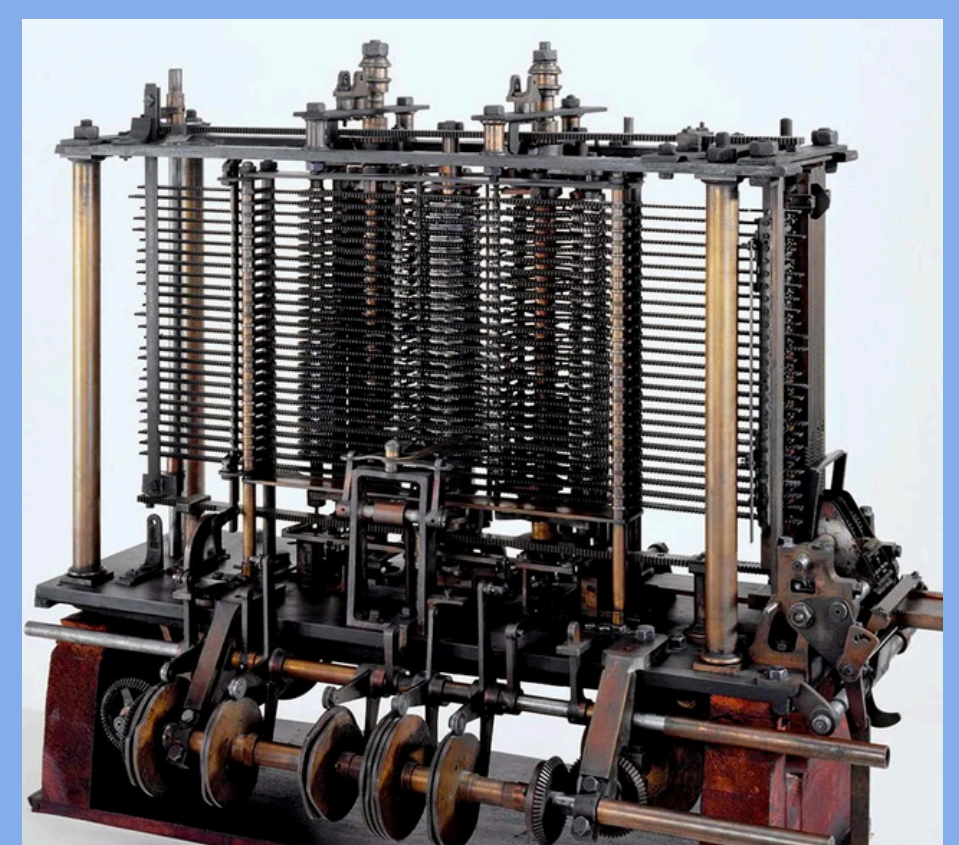
Mary Anning



Ada Lovelace

And finally, let's consider Ada Lovelace, a British Mathematician born in 1815. She helped to build a machine that could make complicated calculations, long before modern calculators were invented. She wished to go further and build a machine that could play music and show both letters and numbers. Ada Lovelace is credited with having written the first computer programme in history.

These are all examples of women who have helped to revolutionise the world of STEM forever; there is no reason why the girls of today can't go on to follow in their footsteps and become the women of STEM tomorrow. To combat the gender imbalance in the STEM field, we must inspire girls to follow STEM careers by giving them successful female role models and opportunities to explore STEM subjects more deeply. In turn, this will encourage more girls to enter a STEM career, helping to increase diversity and promote gender equality in the workplace.



INSPIRATIONAL SPORTSPEOPLE

WRITTEN BY NIBRAS AHMED

There are many sports stars who have inspired the world with their resilience, skill and record-breaking achievements.

Let's take for instance, Sir Mo Farah, who was born Hussein Abdi Kahin on 23rd March 1983 in Somalia. His father was killed in the Isaaq genocide (the leader at the time Siad Barre had killed around 200,000 civilians from the Isaaq tribe), Farah's family was devastated.

More tragedy followed when, at the age of 9, he was illegally taken away from his family and trafficked to the UK to work as a domestic servant. While in the UK, he was threatened by his 'mother' to not tell anyone about his circumstances or he would never see his family again.

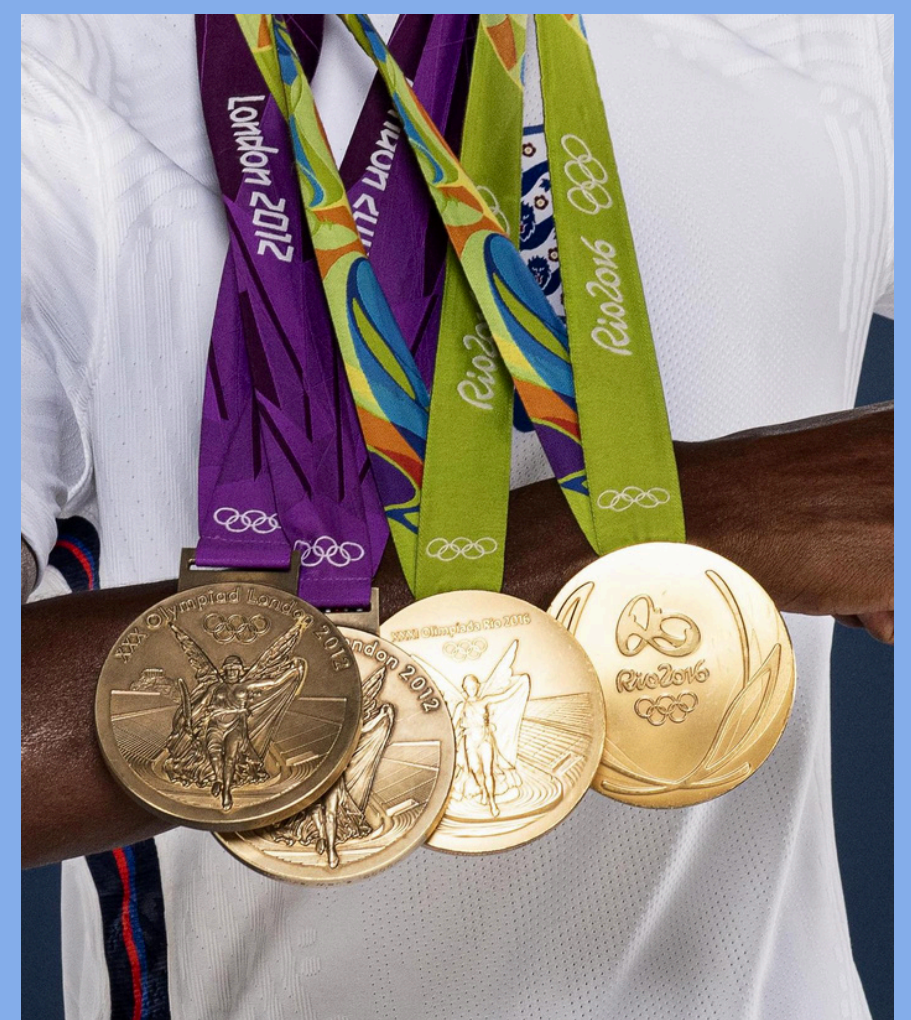
Whilst at school, Mo Farah dreamt of playing football professionally, however, his PE teacher at the time steered him towards running. He also took him to training sessions; years later, Farah showed how much his teacher's early intervention and support meant to him by asking him to be Best Man at his wedding!

Farah's first sporting title was achieved in the 2001 European Athletics Junior Championships.



Since then, Farah has received global recognition for being one of the best long distance runners in the entire world. Over the previous 8 years, he has won 4 Olympic gold medals, 8 World Championship Medals and 5 European Records.

"What sets Farah apart from his other running competitors is his world class endurance. Plus his absolutely lethal finishing speed. And as you can clearly tell he is capable of fully sprinting his last lap."



Despite his troubling early life, Farah is proof that attitude really does determine altitude. As Farah himself said, *“It doesn't just come overnight, you've got to train for it and believe in yourself - that's the most important thing.”*

Second on our list, is surfer Bethany Hamilton, who lost her left arm in a shark attack when she was only 13 years old! On Halloween morning in 2003, Hamilton and her best friend Alana went for a morning surf along Tunnels Beach, Kauai. However, a 4 metre long tiger shark attacked her, biting off her left arm which had been dangling over her surfboard in the water.



By the time she arrived to hospital, Hamilton had lost over 60% of her blood and her body had gone into shock. By a strange coincidence, Hamilton's father was already at the hospital as he was due to have knee surgery that same morning; yet it was his daughter who ended up in the operating room intended for him. Despite this traumatic event, Hamilton returned to the sport she loved and even became a professional surfer.

Finally, if you enjoy playing basketball, you have probably heard of Michael Jordan. He is considered by most to be one of the greatest basketball players of all time. However, if you thought that Jordan was a star from the start, you would be wrong! In fact, did you know that he was cut from his High School basketball team? Although devastated, Jordan used this apparent ‘failure’ to push himself even further. He used this setback to motivate himself to work even harder to develop his basketball skills.

In the end, not only did he make it to the varsity team, but he also went on to have a legendary career in the NBA. Jordan is the most decorated player the NBA has ever had! He has won all but one of his games in the NBA Finals.



INSPIRATIONAL PEOPLE WHO HAVE CHANGED THE WORLD

WRITTEN BY STEPHANIE CAMACHO PINTO

Here we consider three individuals who have significantly influenced the world.

Firstly, let's consider Martin Luther King Jr, an American Baptist Minister Activist and political philosopher. He was one of the most prominent leaders of America during the Civil Rights Movement from 1955 until his assassination in 1968.

King was the son of a Baptist Minister from Atlanta Georgia and grew up in middle class family. A major figure in the Civil Rights Movement, he was selected as the leader for the Bus Boycott. The Bus Boycott was a political and social protest against racial segregation on the public transit system back in the 1950s in Montgomery, Alabama. This Movement was also a major event that led the Civil Rights Movement to become what it is today in modern America.

King worked with many campaigns and organisations to strive towards his goal to continue working towards the Civil Rights Movement, using non-violent protests like sit-in, marches and boycotts.

These were responded to with intimidation by different Chiefs of Police by setting water hoses on protestors and using dogs on them.

Another key moment in history that King and other prominent Civil Rights Movement individuals were a part of, was the march that took place in the capital city of Washington DC. Martin Luther King Jr spoke during the rally, which gathered 250,000 people, including 50,000 white Americans. The Civil Rights Movement eventually grew so big that the Government was forced to act or else bigger consequences and problems would emerge. This led to Lyndon Johnson, the American President at the time, passing the Civil Rights Act in 1964, which finally meant that discrimination against black Americans became illegal in any American state. When King realised that the government was listening, he continued to protest for voting rights, which then led to the passing of the Voting Rights Act in 1965.

Tragically, Martin Luther King was assassinated on April 1968 by James Earl Ray, a white racist.

As a result of King's death, violent riots occurred across the country, injuring and killing many people in the process.



Martin Luther King Jr is still one of the most distinguished leaders in history as he fought against and encouraged many people to protest against racial segregation and discrimination. With King's accomplishments and efforts, he helped not only America to flourish, but also inspired many other countries and people to fight for what they believed was right. In his most famous speech, King declared the inspirational words that *"I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the colour of their skin but by the content of their character."*

The second global influencer we would like to look at is Florence Nightingale, also known as 'The Lady with a Lamp'. Nightingale was an English social reformer, statistician and the founder of modern nursing who became known as a manager and trainer of nurses during the Crimean war, in which she organised the care of wounded soldiers at Constantinople.



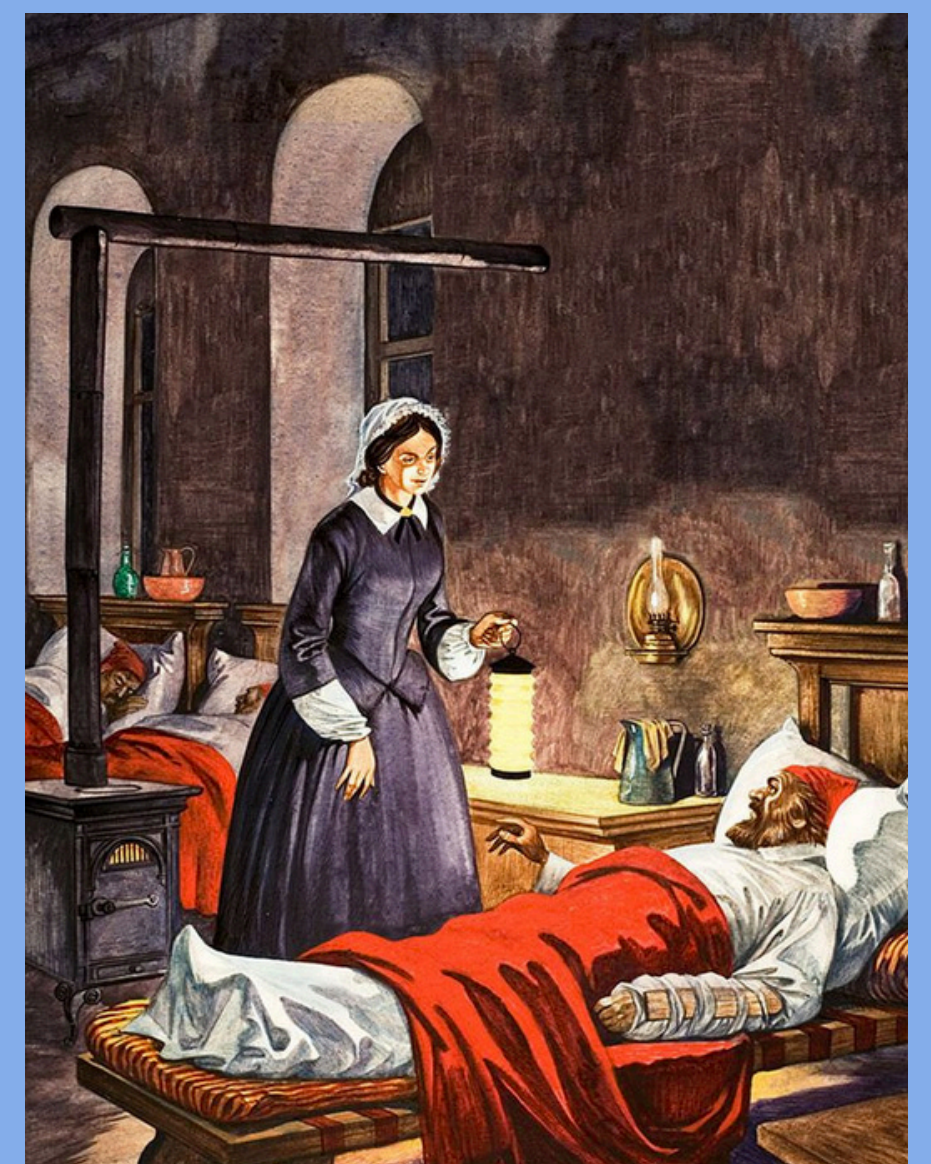
Nightingale established St. Thomas Hospital and the Nightingale Training School for Nurses in 1860. Her efforts to improve the national health care were based on her experiences whilst caring for wounded soldiers. During this time, she realised that sanitation was a vital and key factor to better improve worldwide health care during the 19th and 20th century.

Nightingale was also known to have loved learning about Maths and Science. She would always note down how many of something were in the places she visited: the number of people, number of hospitals, statistics and more. As a young girl, she quickly developed a passion for Nursing, asking her parents if she could pursue it as a career, but they refused. During the Victorian era, a young woman of Nightingale's social stature was expected to marry a man and not to pursue any type of career; instead, she was expected to stay at home and look after the family.

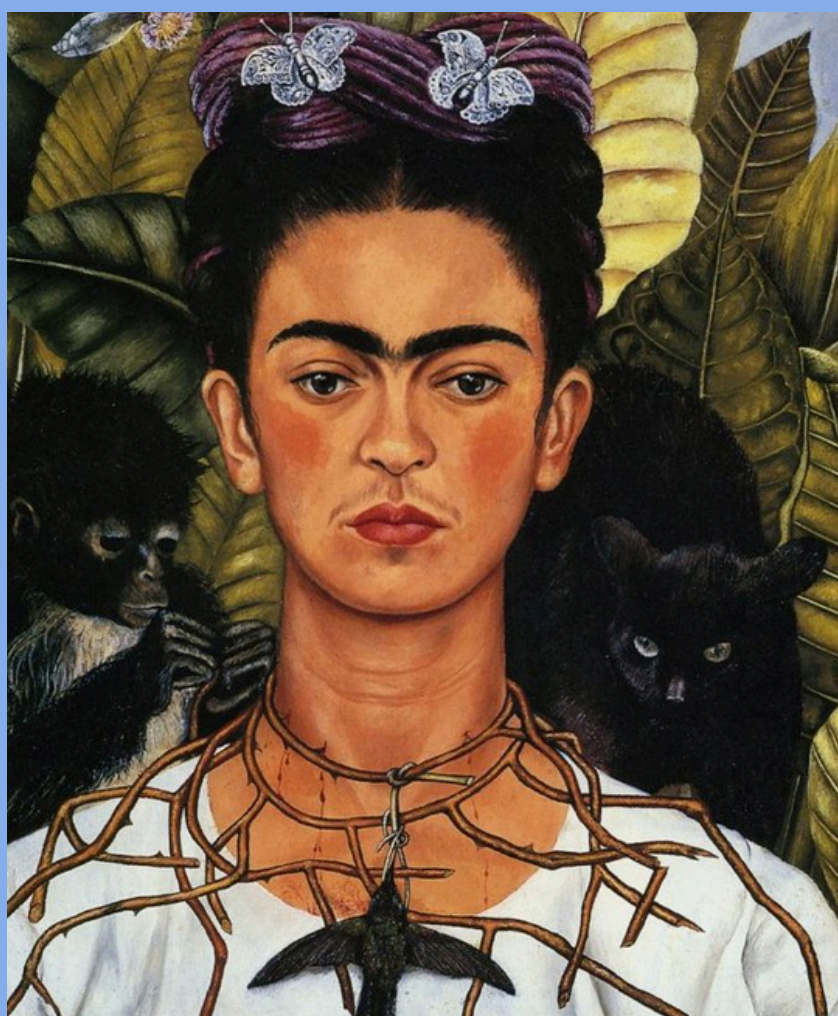
Nightingale refused a marriage proposal from a man whom her parents wanted her to marry, which then led her to go against her parents' wishes, eventually going on to study Medicine and Nursing. She became a Nursing student at the Lutheran Hospital of Pastor Fliedner in Kaiserwerth, Germany, and was deemed one of the best nurses;

consequently, she was sent to manage a hospital and train nurses there to treat injured soldiers during the Crimean war. As soon as she arrived, Nightingale collected and examined all the data she could find as soldiers were being treated. With all her research, she discovered that soldiers in the hospital were not dying because of their wounds, but because of infections and diseases that they contracted when they were in the hospital. She stated that *"The very first requirement in a hospital is that it should do the sick no harm"*.

Thenceforth, Nightingale made it her mission to improve the sanitation and hygiene practices in hospitals, to significantly lower the death rates of patients.



Nightingale made sure that everyone who entered or worked at hospitals washed their hands frequently and kept everything clean. During her rounds around the hospital at night, it was said she carried a lamp and spoke to her patients, ensuring they were comfortable and giving them hope. Thanks to her many efforts and reinforcing of rules in the hospital, many soldiers made it back home safely. Thanks to the knowledge she gained while caring for patients, running a hospital and being a nurse, she became the Founder of modern Nursing for many hospitals all around the world.



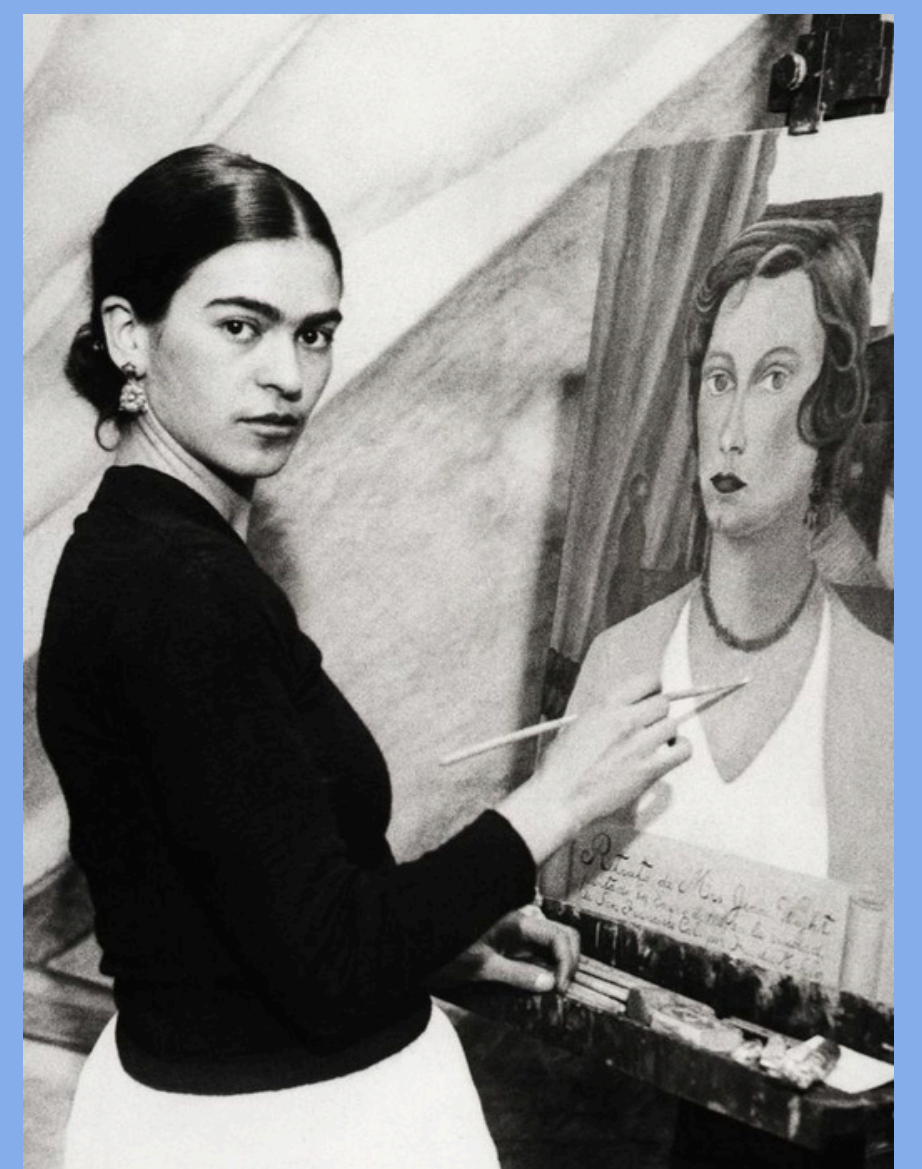
Finally, let's consider Frida Kahlo, who was born on 6th July 1907 in Coyoacan, Mexico. She was the daughter of a well-known German Jewish photographer. When Kahlo was a little girl at the age of 6, she almost died when she was diagnosed with polio, which left her with a permanent limp. However, that did not stop her from playing, swimming and wrestling, just like all other children.

When she was 18 years old, she was involved in a terrible bus accident, in which she almost lost her life. Kahlo underwent 35 operations during her recovery; subsequently, she had to months of bed rest. Whilst in recovery, she taught herself how to paint as her mother had crafted her a special easel so she could paint while lying down. Kahlo spent most of her time painting while lying down and during this time she became very passionate about painting.

Once she had recovered, Kahlo went to visit one of Mexico's most famous artists, Diego Rivera, asking him "Are my paintings any good?" Diego Rivera described Kahlo's paintings as bold, bright and beautiful. Rivera ended up falling in love with Frida Kahlo and they later got married.

Throughout her life, Kahlo painting hundreds of beautiful self-portraits, which often showed her surrounded by animals and birds that she kept. Kahlo's paintings often reflected her unique personality and multifaceted life. Her paintings had deep meanings and messages behind them; they reflected her feelings, different impactful moments in her life and the different struggles she faced in her life.

Frida Kahlo came to epitomise women's inner strength, her love of her home nation of Mexico and her courage in the face of adversity. All her portraits reflect her struggles, successes, personality and views, and they focus on themes such as identity, the human body and death. She created her own identity through her paintings; she was an inspiration for many women both during her time and today.



INSPIRATIONAL PEOPLE IN THE SCIENCES

WRITTEN BY HANAN HUSSEIN

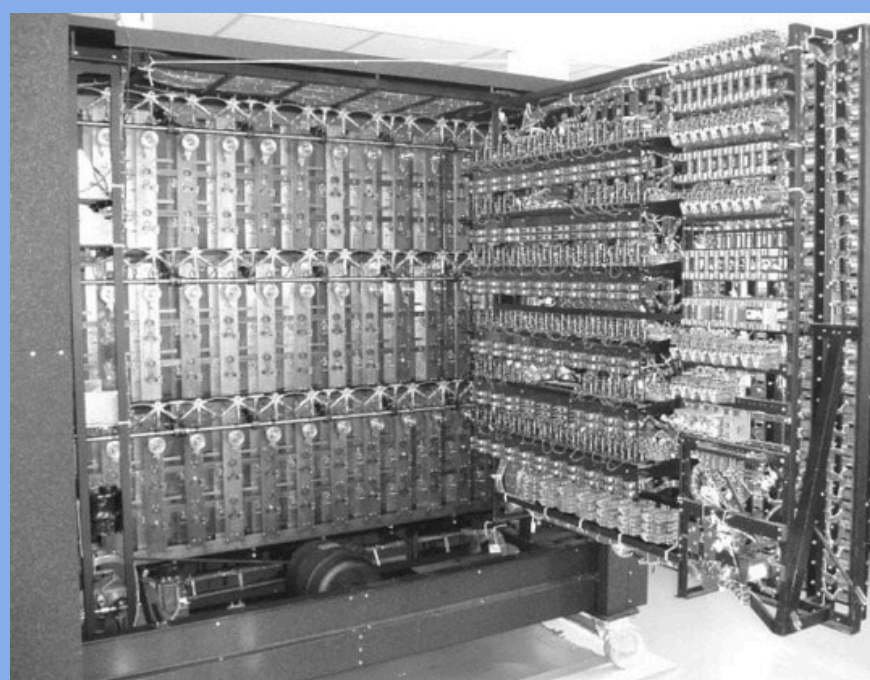
You may recognise this name from the book and film *'Hidden Figures'* but Katherine Johnson was a world-renowned mathematician whose work was extremely important to the development of the first successful space flights. She also helped pioneer the use of computers to carry out difficult mathematical equations. Without her calculations and input, America may not have been successful in winning the Space Race.

Johnson played a historical role as one of the first African-American women to work as a NASA Space Scientist. She lived during a time when segregation was deeply rooted and Black women couldn't get as many opportunities as others. She helped overcome discrimination and racial segregation at NASA, thereby helping to make *'giant leaps for humankind'*.

Katherine Johnson is a very inspiring figure who - despite the unfair and harsh treatment of African-Americans - managed to achieve incredible success in her lifetime. She was dubbed a human computer for her amazing mathematical mental capability and remains an influential woman who

inspires people to persevere in the face of adversity and discrimination.

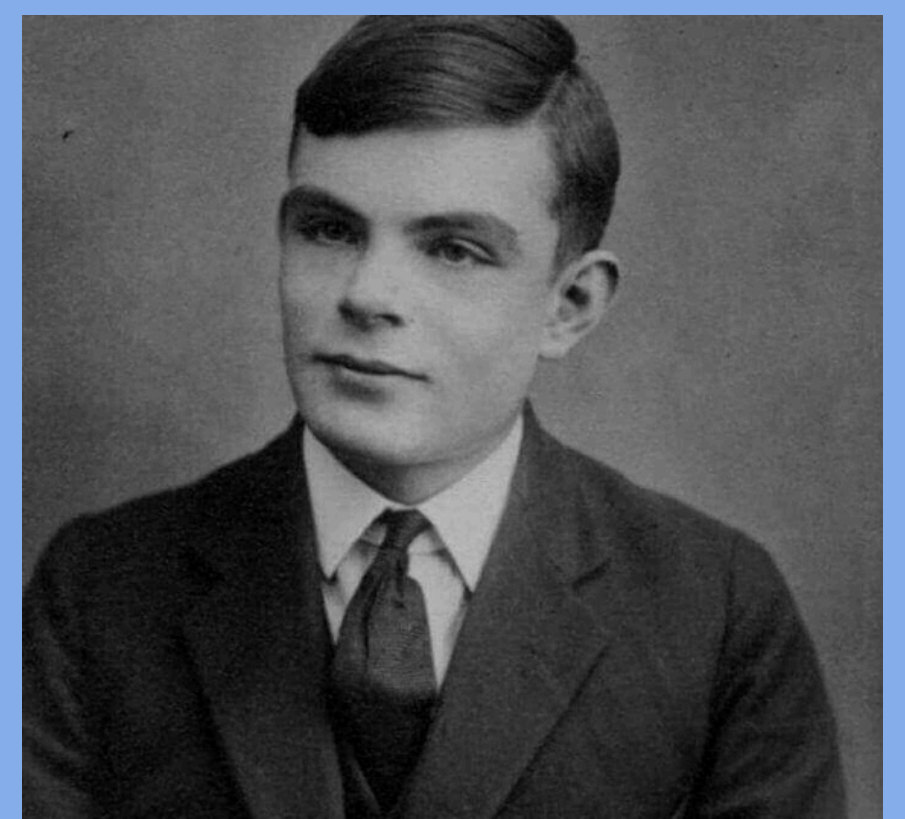
Another inspirational scientist is Alan Turing. Often known as the father of modern Computer Science, Turing was a mathematician who was born in London in 1912. He later studied at Princeton and Cambridge and was famous for his work in developing the first computer, which he used to crack Nazi codes in the Second World War. It was his achievements during this time that led him to be considered a hero, as not only did he break the German enigma machine, he also shortened the war by 2-4 years, which potentially saved millions of lives.



Unfortunately, Alan Turing was discriminated against for being a homosexual (which was illegal at the time), and arrested for 'gross indecency' in the early 1950s. Turing was made to choose between imprisonment or probation and was forced to undergo chemical castration, which is the loss of use in the male testes using drugs. This left him with a lasting effect as it destroyed him mentally and physically. Two years later, he tragically took his own life.

Turing received a pardon from Queen Elizabeth II in 2017 for his conviction. Furthermore, this led to the pardon of 75,000 other men and women who had been convicted of similar *'crimes'*.

These are just two examples of incredible scientists who faced prejudice and discrimination in their time, and are now considered true pioneers in their respective fields.





crime & conspiracy

MENENDEZ BROTHERS: VILLAINS OR VICTIMS?

WRITTEN BY JOANA FERREIRA AND CEYDA AYHAN

Have you heard of the Menendez brothers? You may be aware of them from the recent Netflix dramatisation and documentary, or perhaps you've seen on the news that back in October, the Los Angeles County District Attorney George Gascón, recommended that the brothers should be resentenced at a lower charge, meaning that they would be immediately eligible for parole.

In August 1989, the two brothers - Joseph Lyle and Erik Galen Menendez - were arrested for the first-degree murder of their own parents. The crime shocked the prestigious area of Beverly Hills where they lived. Four years later they were put on trial, which ultimately determined the rest of their lives. They are currently facing life sentences in prison without the possibility of parole. But, was this a clear cut case of cold-blooded murder? Here, we examine the evidence.

To the outside world, Jose Enrique Menendez was an amazing father and a caring husband. However, behind closed doors, there was more than initially met the eye.

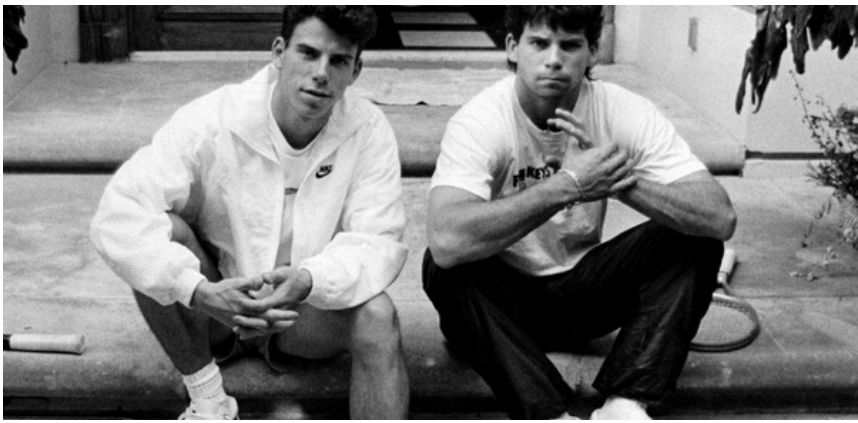
Jose grew up in Havana, Cuba, where he was considered to be a bully. According to Alicia Hercz, a family neighbour, *"He became a little bit of a monster to the parents. It was hard to control him."*

A major life change happened when Jose and his family moved to the United States when he was just 16, due to the Cuban Revolution. Arriving in the US as a refugee, throughout the years Jose managed to rebuild his life and ended up becoming very successful. Jose first met his future wife Kitty when she was a Senior and he was a Freshman. Kitty was a pageant winner and Jose was a hard working Cuban who had become a refugee in the United States; the idea of marrying the wealthy Kitty was like the 'American dream' to him. Having wedded in 1963, the couple then went on to have their first son in 1968 and their second in 1970.



Jose's immense success set high expectations for his own sons to not only do well, but to exceed their father's achievements. Indeed, Jose Menendez devoted his time to putting pressure on the boys; some would argue that this was too much for them to cope with. For example, a former coach told The Times, *"It seemed like Jose was so competitive, he was doing everything he could to try to make him better but he was so completely overbearing it had the opposite effect. Erik had so much less self-confidence because everything he did was never good enough."*

Jose however, was persistent, constantly expecting the boys to train for the sports they pursued. Lyle and Jose did not get along very well as Jose reportedly clashed with Lyle's girlfriend, leading to a feud between the two. By the time of Jose and Kitty's murder, Lyle had been living in the guest house rather than the family home. One of the most shocking aspects of the case is the accusation that Jose not only psychologically tormented his sons, but that he also subjected them to sexual abuse.



During the trial, the defence team argued that the brothers were afraid that their father would kill them for exposing his alleged history of sexual abuse, so they shot their parents in self defence. According to The Times, each brother is said to have been molested by Jose for a number of years as young boys. Lyle also testified that his father had punched him in the mouth and stomach and even sometimes whipped him with a belt.

Whilst some have understood the brothers' reasons for killing their father, others have questioned why they would also kill their mother.

It has been reported that Kitty had been suicidal after finding out about Jose's 8 year affair with another woman. In addition, she had also been indulging in substance abuse for many years.

Allegedly, an 8 year old Lyle confided in his cousin Diane Vander Molen about the sexual abuse he had received at the hands of his father.

However, when the pair tried to disclose to Kitty what had been happening, she didn't believe them. It was also claimed that Kitty was very aggressive towards Lyle and would drag, kick and hit him.

A few days before the murders, Kitty and Erik had an argument, during which she confessed that she had known for 12 years that Jose had been abusive. This was apparently a turning point for the brothers, who now believed that their mother would take their father's side, no matter what - even if that meant murdering their own children to prevent the truth from being revealed.

Even today, decades on, the case remains controversial. On one hand it could be considered self-defence as the brothers genuinely feared for their lives and had to stop the sexual and mental abuse they faced day-to-day. On the contrary, others argue that they made their defence story up to try to avoid a murder charge; indeed, many believe that the brothers' real motivation was to get their hands on their \$14 million inheritance.



Even the extended family of the Menendez brothers cannot agree about really happened: Kitty's brother Milton Andersen, called the brothers "*cold-blooded*" and stated that their "*actions shattered their family and left a trail of grief that has persisted for decades*". In contrast, his sister Joan argues, "*I want them to come home... No child should have to endure what Erik and Lyle lived through.*"

So, do you believe the Menendez brothers? Do you think they deserve to be free? Well, watch this space, because in 2025, the Menendez brothers could indeed be free men for the first time in 30 years...



THE MYSTERY OF MADELEINE

WRITTEN BY IARA CHAVES

The disappearance of Madeleine McCann, a three-year old British girl from her family's holiday apartment in Praia Da Luz, Portugal on 3rd May 2007 remains one the most infamous cases of our time. Despite all the extensive investigations and global media attention, Madeleine's whereabouts still remain unknown and the mystery continues to captivate society. However, the case has also been full of controversy, some of which is explored in this article.

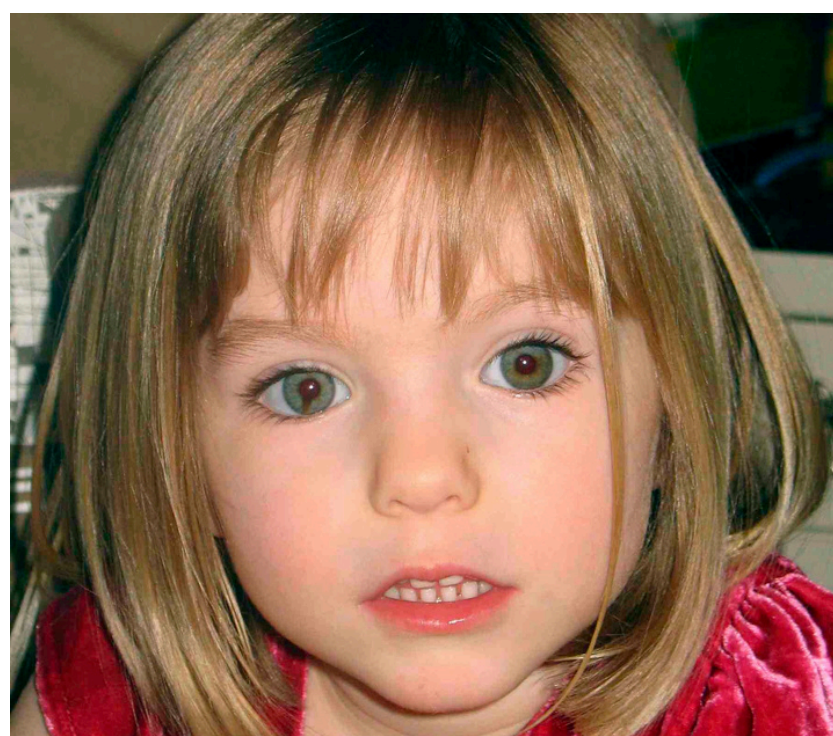
First, let's step back in time: on that fateful night, Madeleine's parents, Kate and Gerry McCann were dining near their apartment, which was about 100 yards away. The parents, along with their friends, decided to take turns checking on their children throughout the night.

All seemed well until around 10pm, when Kate realised that her daughter was missing. To her shock, the window was open, creating instant panic. Whilst Madeleine was missing, her twin siblings remained. The alarm was immediately raised.

Initially, the Portuguese police led the investigation, but they received much criticism for the way they were handling the situation. Several theories were suggested in the immediate aftermath, including child abduction, a burglary gone wrong and even sex trafficking.

Night of disappearance - May 3rd May 2007

- 7:30PM: The McCann's have dinner with some friends at a restaurant near to their holiday apartment in Praia Da Luz Portugal. Madeleine asks her parents why they weren't there when she woke up and cried the night before.
- 8:30PM: Kate and Gerry leave their apartment for dinner, leaving behind Madeleine and her two twin siblings asleep alone.
- 9:05PM: Gerry McCann checks on their children who are fast asleep.
- 9:25PM: Family friend Matt Oldfield offers to check on the children. He doesn't go into the room but sees some light and hears a sound as if one of the twins is rolling over. He leaves, keeping the bedroom door slightly open.
- 9:30PM: Jane Tanner - one of the McCann's friends - sees a man carrying a child near the McCann's apartment.
- 10:00PM: Kate McCann goes to check on their children and realises that Madeleine is missing.
- 10:15PM: The alarm is raised.



The McCann's themselves found that some of the public's sympathy quickly turned to criticism, with many asking why they had left their children unattended in the first place.

Over the years, many people have questioned why their daughter's case has received so much time and funding, when approximately 8 million children go missing every year across the world. Some have speculated that were the McCann's a working class family (both parents are Doctors), then they would not have received what was perceived by some to be preferential treatment.

In 2020, 13 years after the disappearance, the German Authorities named Christian Breukner, a convicted sex offender, as a suspect. Despite this development, no charges have been filed against the man in connection with Madeleine's disappearance, yet he remains the prime suspect. The media scrutiny and public presence have added to the complexity of the investigation; indeed, various conspiracy theories have also circulated online, further complicating the case.

The search for Madeleine McCanne still continues after 17 years, with her family and supporters tirelessly campaigning for the girl's return and keeping her story alive. Despite the passage of time, the hope still remains that the truth will reveal itself, bringing closure to the family and the return of an innocent little girl.



CHRISTMAS CRIME CASE

WRITTEN BY SHACKAYLA REITTIE

As Christmas approaches, it is a time for peace and love. However, back in 1996, one family in Colorado, USA, faced a horrific Christmas, when their 6 year old child was brutally attacked and murdered. Over the years, this unsolved case has gathered much speculation and controversy. But, what exactly happened?

Six year old JonBenét Ramsey was declared missing the morning after Christmas, when her mother made a frantic call to police. Mrs Ramsey claimed that she was doing her regular morning routine, when she stumbled upon a ransom note on the bottom of a staircase. The letter claimed that kidnappers had captured JonBenét, who was soon discovered to be missing. The ominous letter came with a list of instructions, including a demand for the withdrawal of \$118,000 dollars and a warning not to notify the police or FBI. The Ramseys were told that they would be called between 8-10am the next day with further instructions.

Having reported the crime to the police, detectives came and searched the house. They realised that if there was a kidnapping, it would be very

hard for the parents to hear as JonBenét's room was on the other side of the house and on a different floor.

Bob Whitson, who was one of the main detectives, decided to collect the ransom letter to compare it to the parents' handwriting; this was done to see if there was a similarity between the two. The handwriting was studied by Jeff Kithcart who, to his surprise, found that the notebook from which the ransom note was written contained Patsy's handwriting. He found a sheet that was still intact in the notebook that appeared to be the initial ransom note; subsequently, Kithcart believed it looked like the first draft of the possible ransom note. This then raised suspicions that the parents were themselves, somehow to blame. Could the alleged kidnapping have been a cover up planned by murderous parents?

Another FBI agent, Ron Walker, found the length of the note strange, arguing that a typical ransom note should have been straight to the point and written in short sentences; however, this was the opposite. He also found the amount of money being





demanded to be suspicious as it seemed to be a low request and very specific, matching an amount Mr Ramsey had recently had deposited to his account.

Despite the promise of a call, none came. Feeling anxious, the detectives decided to search the house once again to see if they could find anything unusual. To their shock, this was when they found a shattered window in the basement, with a suitcase underneath it. This gave them the idea that the suitcase was used as a stool, that may have been used as a step to the climb through the window. After seeing this they decided to check another room in the basement, where they tragically found JonBenét's lifeless body. The little girl had tape over her mouth and her hands tied behind her back. Her death was immediately ruled a homicide.



Following this grim discovery, the police were hugely criticised for not securing the crime scene and allowing different people – including friends of the Ramseys – to walk into it. This contaminated the scene and jeopardised the evidence retrieval process.

So, what happened to poor JonBenét and why?

Steve Thomas, a detective who resigned from the police department in mid-1998, concluded that Mrs. Ramsey strangled her daughter in a panic on Christmas night 1996, after accidentally causing a serious wound to the little girl's head.

Other conspiracy theories are based on JonBenét's own brother having killed her by accident, or as a result of having attacked her because he was jealous as he perceived her as being his parents' favourite child. Those who support this theory believe that the parents then attempted to cover it up.



In addition, the little girl's participation in child pageants caused many to speculate that this had inadvertently attracted the attention of someone who wanted to abuse and harm children. Indeed, it was reported that someone had broken into the home of another pageant performer just weeks before JonBenét's murder.

So, what exactly happened to JonBenét Ramsey? And will her brutal murder ever be solved?





THE DARK HISTORY OF CANADA'S RESIDENTIAL SCHOOLS

WRITTEN BY ZUHRA OSMAN

We are all aware of the Indigenous tribes of North America and how they were native to that land before the European settlers arrived. The time that followed was one of conflict, however, are you aware of the treatment of the indigenous people - specifically in Canada - throughout the 20th century?

One of the most controversial thing to be introduced was the concept of a residential school. These were boarding schools for indigenous children in Canada, which aimed to assimilate them into Canadian Society and erase their cultures and languages. They were mainly run by Christian churches and funded by the Canadian government.

The first residential school was opened in the 1830s; between then and the early 20th century when the system reached its peak, over 150,000 indigenous children were forced into these institutions. This was seen by the Canadian government as necessary to 'civilise' indigenous children before it was 'too late'.



Children in these schools lived in brutal conditions; they were barred from speaking their home language and were brutally punished for any 'wrongdoing' - the most common being speaking in the mother tongue. Survivors recall being beaten and shackled to their beds; some even recalled having needles shoved into their tongues for speaking their language.

These schools were underfunded, with children expected to live in unsanitary conditions and being left severely malnourished. It is estimated that 4000 children died whilst attending these schools, though many believe the real number is much higher because of the poor record keeping at the time.

Shockingly, as recently as 2021, 215 more bodies of indigenous children were found on the grounds of a former residential school in Southern British Columbia.





Another extreme injustice suffered by the indigenous people of Canada, were the practices of 'starlight tours'. Carried out by Canadian police officers, 'starlight tours' were when indigenous people were taken on late night drives to the outskirts of the city, only to be cruelly abandoned in freezing areas and left to die of hypothermia.

The practice became widely known in the early 2000s, when the bodies of two indigenous men were found. Rodney Naistus and Lawrence Wegner had frozen to death on the outskirts of Saskatoon. A man called Darrell Night came forward and reported to the police that he'd survived after being abandoned too, bringing the notorious practice to light.

As if these two inhumane practices were not enough, another cruel and dark chapter in Canadian History was the 1960s scoop. This was a period between the 1950-1980s, when many indigenous children were taken from their families and placed into white foster homes or adopted by white families.

This began by removing the children because of poverty and poor living conditions. The social workers who knew nothing about their cultures or beliefs thought they were acting in the children's best interests; however, these decisions were made without talking to the indigenous families themselves. Many of the children who were taken from their families say that they grew up feeling they had lost their identity culturally. Appallingly, many became victims of racism, discrimination and sometimes even physical and sexual abuse.

So, next time you consider the history of the indigenous people of North America, it is also important to remember that the dark side of this is not limited to the times of the early European settlers – indeed, it is much closer to the modern day than many of us would like to believe.

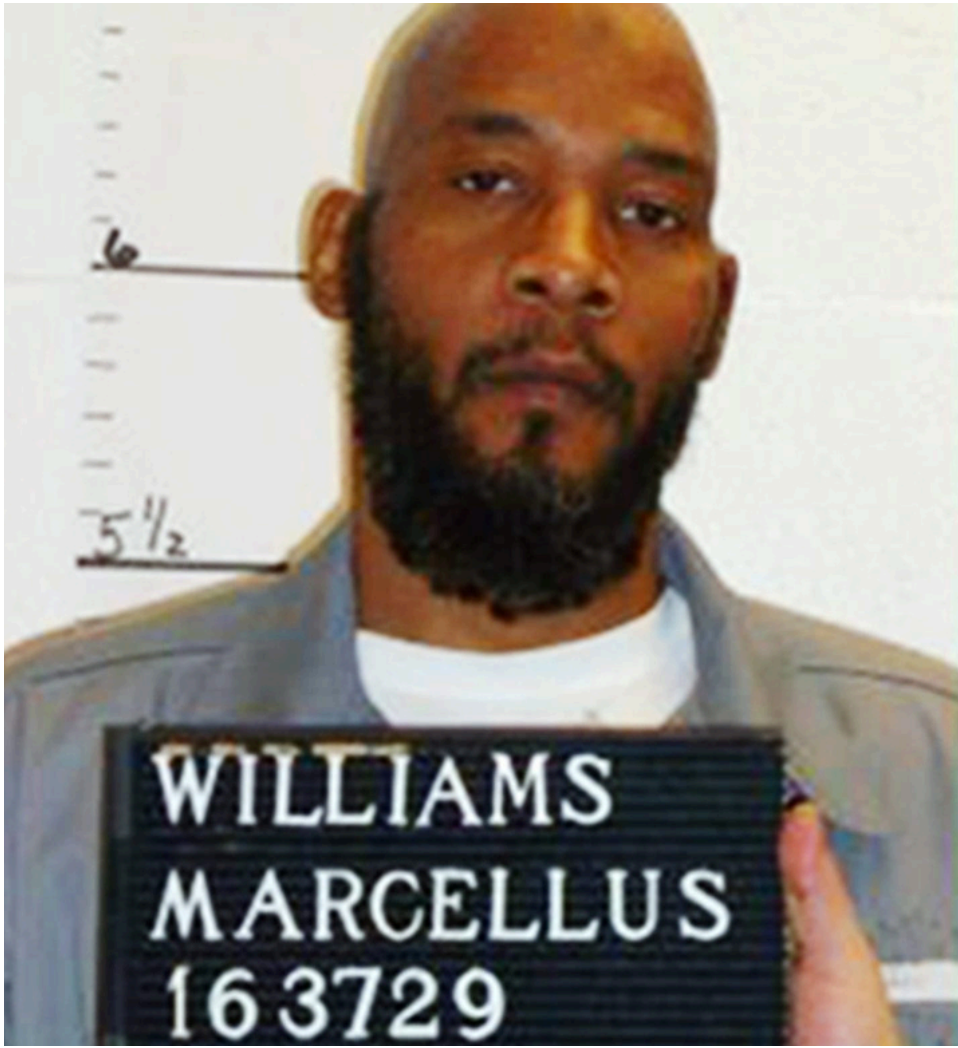




THE EXECUTION OF MARCELLUS WILLIAMS: JUSTICE OR CRIME?

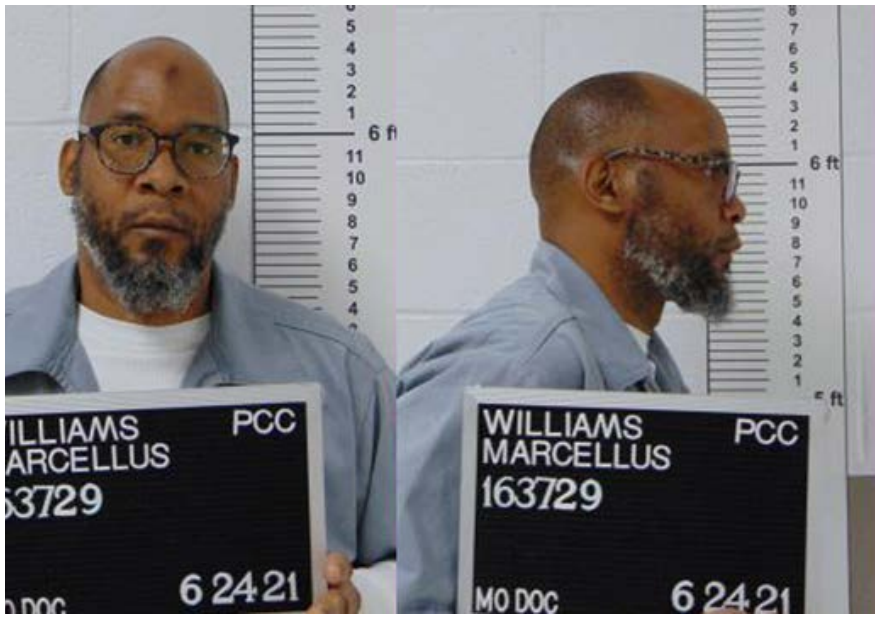
WRITTEN BY SARAH MAKSENE

On 11th August 1998, Dr Daniel Picus had just arrived home from a long shift at around 7:45, but as soon as he reached the door, he felt as though something was amiss. The house was too quiet – too still. The back door was wide open and a sense of uneasiness ran through him. As he entered, all he saw was a bloody scene, and his wife in the middle of it, lying down, dead. Years later, Marcellus Williams was convicted of her murder, and after two decades of being on death row, he was executed. But doubts remain – did Marcellus really commit the crime, or was justice tragically misplaced?



The day after the murder - despite a thorough investigation - police found no clues, motive or suspect. The Gayle family was desperate, so in May 1999 they offered a \$10,000 reward to anyone with information about the murder of Felicia Gayle. Not long after this, Marcellus was arrested due to testimony from Henry Cole, who stated that Marcellus confessed to the murder while they were locked up together. Not only that, but Marcellus’s ex-girlfriend Laura Asaro also testified against him, stating that on the night of Felicia’s murder, Marcellus was wearing a coat to cover his bloody shirt. When Laura questioned him about it, he said that he had been in a fight. She later found a purse and a laptop in his car, which were stolen from Felicia’s home on the night of her murder. Marcellus later sold the laptop.

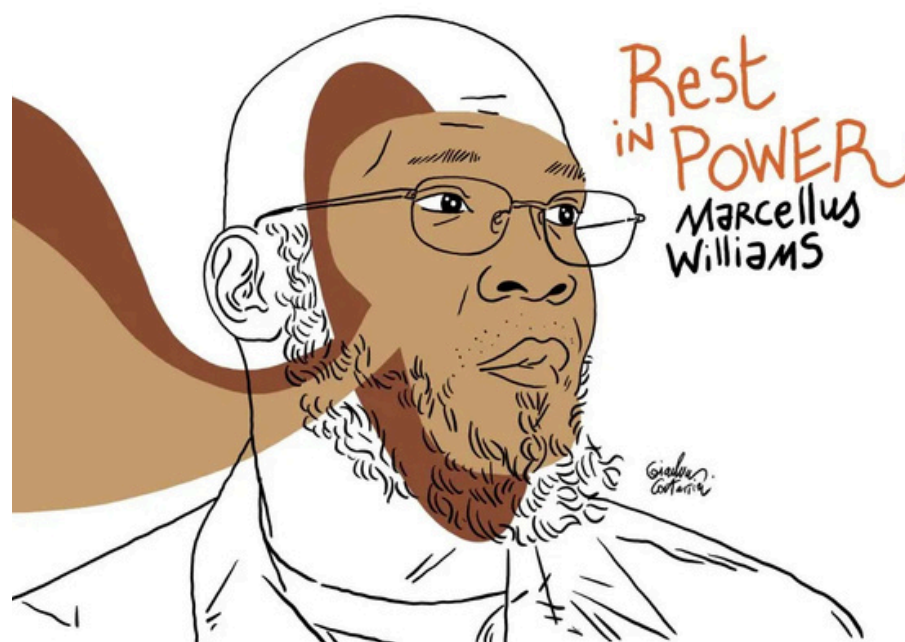
Despite this, many people believe that Marcellus is innocent. No forensic evidence connected Marcellus to the crime scene and the murder weapon was found to have been mishandled. The DNA on the knife had belonged to members of the Prosecutors’ office, who touched the knife without gloves. Not only that, but a bloody shoeprint and hair found at the crime scene did not match Marcellus. People also argue that the two testimonies against Marcellus are unreliable, believing that they were only testifying for the reward and a reduced sentence for themselves. Moreover, many of the details they offered changed and shifted over time, and other details didn’t even match the crime. Marcellus did sell the laptop - however, the local Prosecutor Wesley Bell stated there was evidence that Marcellus received the laptop from his ex-girlfriend Laura.





Many people believe that race played a significant role in Marcellus's sentencing. During the trial, Black jurors were removed from the jury. In one instance, Prosecutor Keith Lerner dismissed a Black juror, claiming that he and Marcellus "looked like brothers". He then added "familial brothers. I don't mean Black people" but the racial implications were evident. Additionally, Missouri Governor Mike Parson's clemency decisions have made people even more sure that race played a role in the sentencing. For example, the Missouri Governor was quick to pardon Mark and Patricia McCloskey — a white couple who had opened fire at a BLM protest in 2020 - but refused to grant many Black inmates clemency, even when the evidence was pointing at their innocence: this included Marcellus Williams.

Marcellus was convicted of first degree murder in 2001, and has since been on death row. He was set to be executed in 2015 and 2017, but last-minute reprieves were set by the Supreme Court and the Eric Greitens, the Governor at the time. He was then set to be executed on Tuesday 24th September 2024 at 6pm GMT. There were many protests campaigning for a stay of execution (a delay in carrying out a court order), but this was denied.



Furthermore, the family of Felicia Gayle came forward and said they did not want Marcellus Williams to be executed, but that still was not enough reason for the Missouri Governor to stop the execution. So, on Tuesday 24th September 2024 at 6.01pm GMT, Marcellus Williams was injected with a lethal injection; he was pronounced dead at 6.10pm. His last statement read "all praise be to Allah in every situation". After his death, many people were enraged, with the local Prosecutor Wesley Bell stating "this outcome did not serve the interests of justice".

Marcellus Williams is just one of many presumed innocent Black individuals who were unfairly convicted due to their race. Systemic racism has plagued the justice system for many years, leading to biased jury selection, harsh sentences and overall injustice in the justice system. In many cases, evidence pointing toward innocence is overlooked and ignored, while racial stereotypes and prejudices play a more dominant role.

In the end, Marcellus Williams's case serves as a reminder of the flaws in the justice system, leaving us to wonder - how many more innocent lives will be lost to injustice until real change is made?



office of opinion

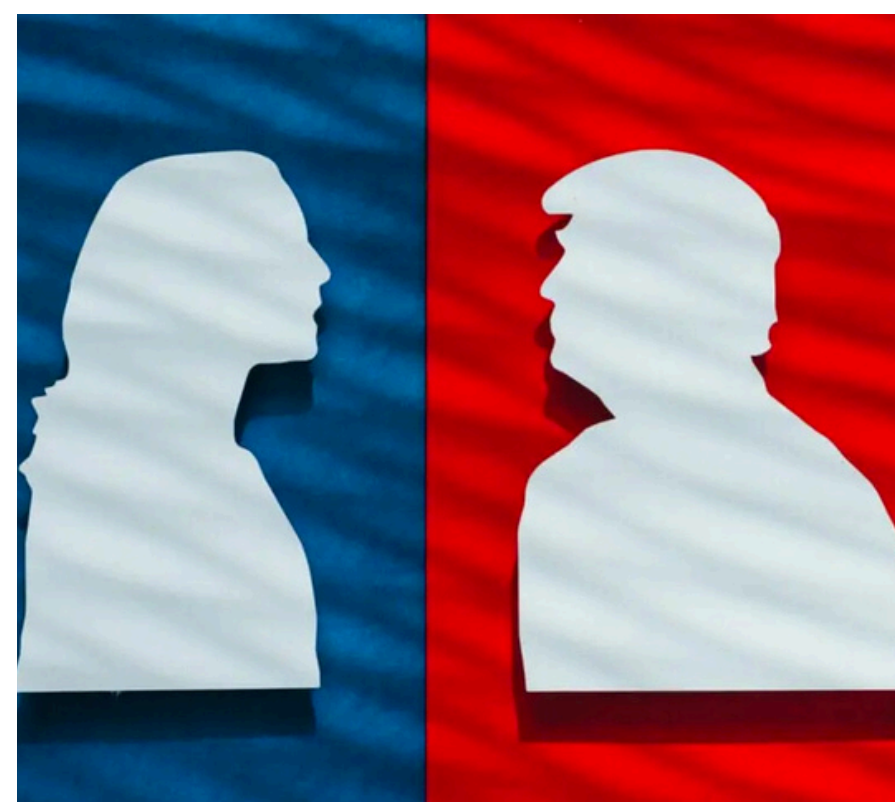
THE TIME OF TRUMP

WRITTEN BY EMNET KETEMA AND RUWEDA NOR

Back in 2016, many were shocked when Donald Trump was elected as 45th President of the United States of America. There is little doubt that he is a controversial figure, with critics of his questioning his views and policies, arguing that they are founded upon misogyny and racism.

Fast forward to 2024, and Trump was found guilty on all counts in a historic New York criminal trial; indeed, he became the first former or sitting President to be convicted in a criminal court. So, it is no surprise that many wonder how he then managed to win the Presidential Election later that same year, beating rival Kamala Harris by a slim margin.

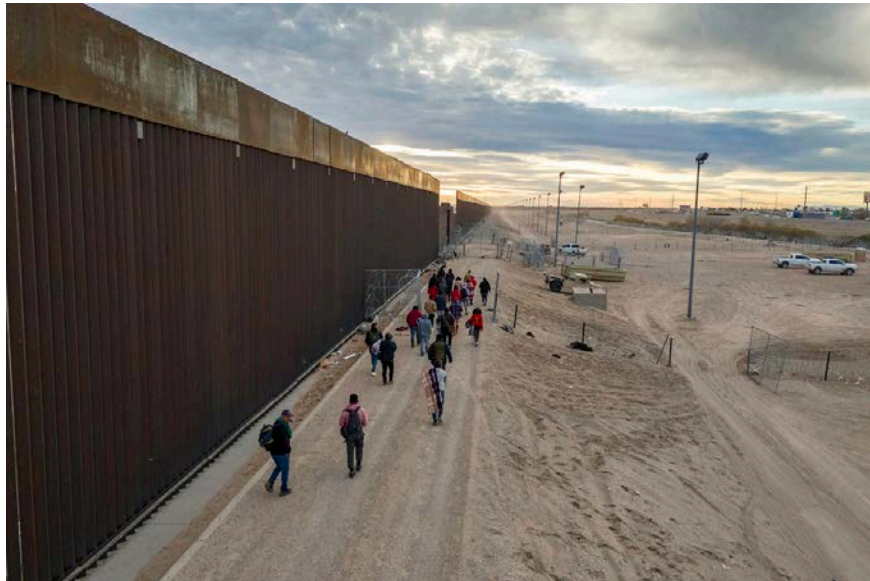
Harris herself was seen as a strong alternative to Trump. As the first woman to be Vice President, she symbolised progress for women in Politics.



She focused on important issues like Healthcare and Climate Change, which many Americans care about. Harris also had a leadership style that was more compassionate and focused on unity, unlike Trump's often harshly scathing approach. This made Harris more appealing to people who wanted a more inclusive leader.

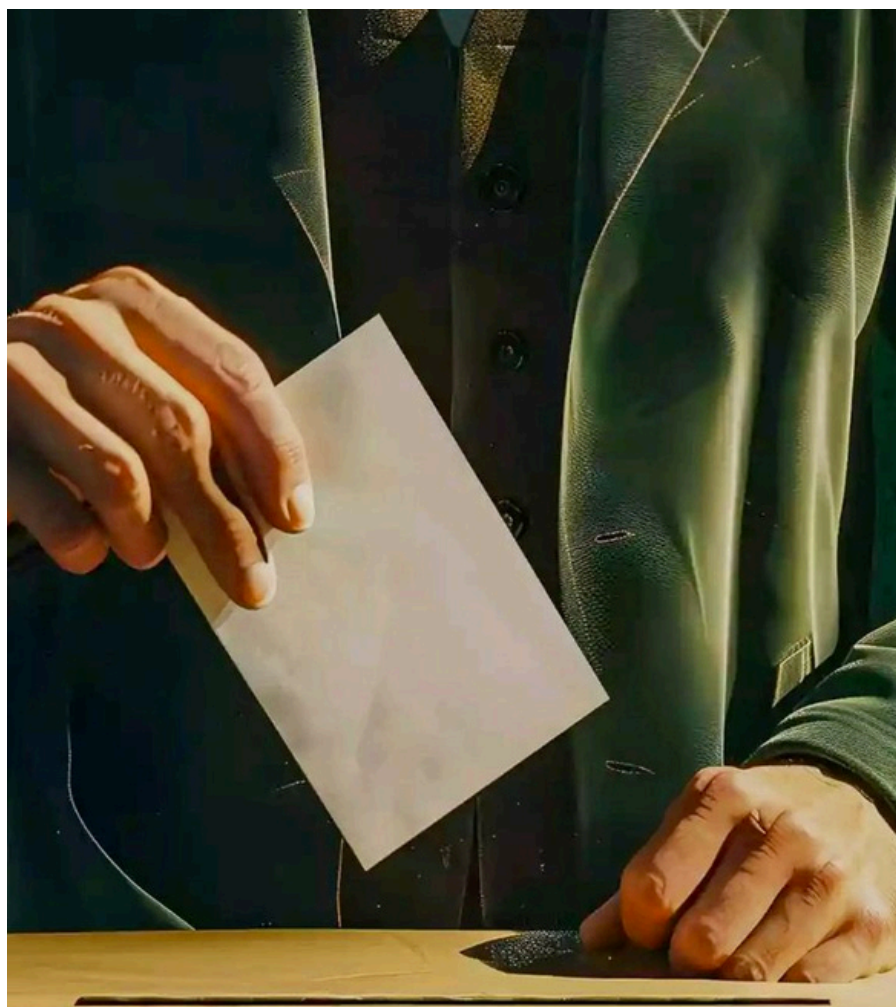
Whilst many argue that Trump did not deserve to win the election due to his controversial actions and beliefs, it is important to consider the reasons behind the support he received from the people of America. Here we explore the key reasons how and why Trump won this year's Presidential election.

First, let's consider his economic policies, like tax cuts and reducing regulations; there is no doubt that these were popular with Americans. Many voters liked his claim that he would be putting American jobs and interests first, especially those who felt left behind by past leaders. Also, Trump has a strong, loyal group of supporters who back him no matter what, and this probably helped him win again.



Secondly, Trump – despite his 2016 promise to reduce immigration and ‘Make Mexico Pay for the Wall’ - somehow managed to attract the votes of Latino voters. In fact, he won 45% of Latino voters, according to CNN exit polls. Compare this with the 2020 election, in which Trump won just 32% of Latino votes. It would seem that Trump’s focus on reducing high costs, really struck Latino voters. Indeed, Arturo Munoz, a truck driver from Arizona, said Trump’s key pledge to reduce high costs was a key reason for him securing his vote.

Furthermore, Trump voters – in contrast to Harris supporters - stated that they were more motivated by economic issues and immigration, stating these two topics as their primary concerns. There is little doubt that Trump played to his target audience base, using the weakness of the American economy to his advantage.



Finally, another factor that probably shouldn’t be overlooked is the idea that Trump supporters see him as being marginalised and ridiculed in the Media; for some, this may seem as a classic underdog story, with Trump managing to rise above criticism, court cases and even an attempted assassination attempt to somehow succeed in achieving the most powerful position in the world – not once, but twice.

While many people liked Harris’s progressive views and her more empathetic leadership style, it was Trump who ultimately won, offering a very different vision for America’s future.

But what will this future actually entail?

Only time will tell....



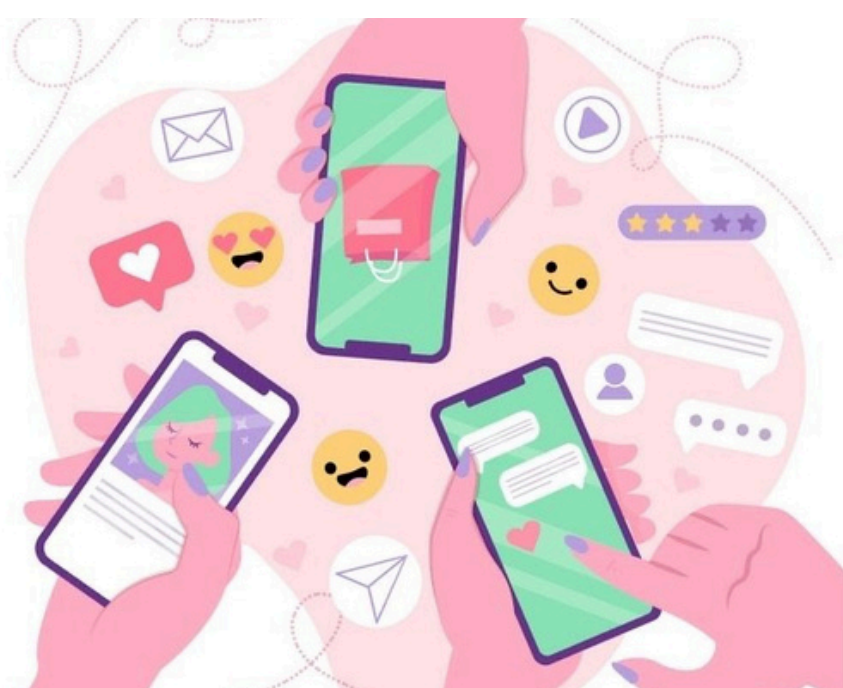


SHOULD SOCIAL MEDIA BE MADE ILLEGAL IN THE UK?

WRITTEN BY PICETRA NYARKO CROFFIE

What would you do if tomorrow, the UK Government declared that it was now illegal for people under 16 to use social media? Well, just last month, Australia announced that it would be banning children under 16 from using social media.

The Prime Minister, Anthony Albanese, says the legislation is necessary in order to protect children from the “harms” of social media – a view that many parents support. Government Minister, Michelle Rowland, has said the ban for young people will include Snapchat, TikTok, Facebook, Instagram and X.



However, the eSafety Youth Council stated that “*We understand we are vulnerable to the risks and negative impacts of social media... but we need to be involved in developing solutions.*”

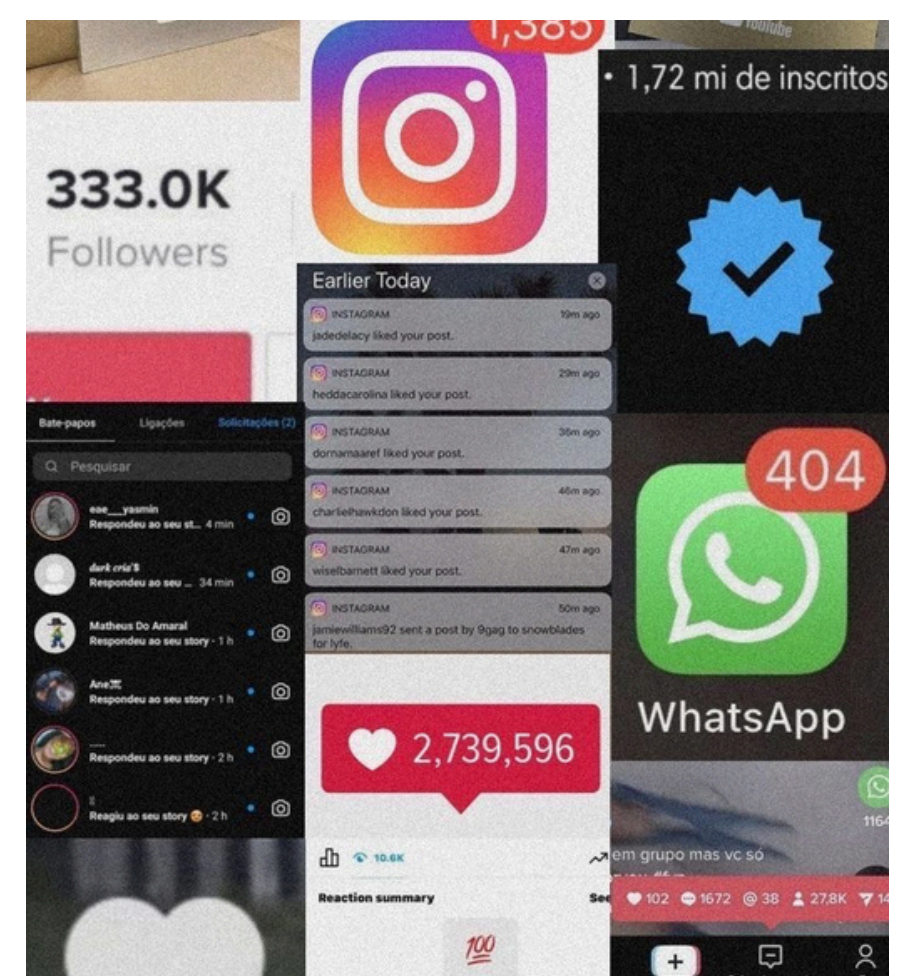
It is not just Australia that is tightening social media laws. Did you know that 2025 could bring the end of Tik Tok in the USA? The primary reason for this is that the authorities state that Tok Tok’s owners are linked to the Chinese State.

Some people agree that social media bans should be in effect, arguing that they promote a negative ideology and cause young people to have insecurities.

As Increase in Year 11 states, “Getting rid of social media prevents cyberbullying, which can affect young people’s mental health, lead to them getting physically and psychologically hurt and can even lead to suicide.” Likewise, Jada believes that “Social media is keeping us holed up inside instead of being outside and making the most of life.”

However, others argue that social media is a crucial way for young people to make useful connections and search for information. Furthermore, social media can enable young people to engage in civil discussions and activism. As Alana in Year 11 argues, “*We won't be able to communicate fully with our friends and family.*” Similarly, Zak supports Alana’s view, stating “*Social media can be used to raise awareness of cyberbullying. Also, it is a way of people expressing themselves on different platforms, while businesses can advertise their products.*”

Surely the use of social media should be monitored rather than taken away completely? All technology – including social media - has its pros and cons, just like many other things in the world.





ABORTION: THE ARGUMENTS FOR AND AGAINST

WRITTEN BY ASMA MOHAMMED-ALI AND JENA ABERAA



Abortion - the termination of a pregnancy, where the foetus or embryo is prematurely removed - is a controversial issue. The pro-choice side of the argument states that abortion is a right that is fundamentally based on the premise that women have control over their own bodies. In contrast, the pro-life side argues that abortion is a form of murder. This debate has long divided people all over the world. In this article, we seek to explore both sides in more detail.

On the one hand, many argue that the right to an abortion is an important element of women's rights, as it is ultimately the woman herself who will be affected by the outcome. Banning abortion potentially puts women at risk by forcing those who are not in the right position in life - be it financial, physically or mental - to either put their child up for adoption or turn to unsafe and illegal abortion methods.

Those who support a woman's right to an abortion argue that we should regard the woman as a human being - a person, not just a 'container' for a foetus. For campaigners, it doesn't make sense to value the potential life of a body of cells, over the life of the woman carrying the foetus.. Arguable, bodily autonomy is a human right, so to deprive a woman of this is effectively taking away her basic human rights.

US Secretary Janet Yellen states: *"eliminating the rights of women to make decisions about when and whether to have children would set women back decades..."*

Indeed, it could be argued that women need full access to the choice of abortion to gain full political, social and economic equality with men. In addition, campaigners argue that abortion should remain an option in the cases of women who become pregnant as a result of assault. Campaigners also worry that criminalising abortion would lead to 'back street' terminations, not carried out under proper medical conditions; this would therefore jeopardise the life and safety of the mother.

On the other hand, pro-life campaigners argue that all life is sacred, echoing a remark by Pope Francis that compared abortion to *"throwaway culture"*. They state that unborn babies shouldn't be classed as objects to be discarded when unwanted. Moreover, campaigners argue that increased access to birth control, health insurance and sex education would make abortion unnecessary.

A second objection to abortion is that - as is the belief in Roman Catholicism - life begins at the point of conception; this then naturally leads to the argument that abortion is effectively an act of murder. Moreover, pro-life campaigners argue that if a mother does not want to continue with a pregnancy, there are alternatives to having a child in their life, such as adoption.

To conclude, everyone agrees that adult human beings have the right to life and bodily autonomy. But when it comes to the life of a foetus, the picture becomes more controversial. Having considered the arguments for and against abortion, what do you think about this topic?



JK ROWLING – INSPIRATION OR VILLAIN?

WRITTEN BY AYA AKARMASS

You have no doubt heard of Harry Potter, the fictional hero with a global fanbase. And you may well know about the journey that his creator, J.K Rowling went on to bring him to the world.

Both a British author and philanthropist, JK Rowling was born on 31st July 1965 in Gloucestershire, England. Rowling always knew she wanted to be an author, writing her first story at the age of six about a rabbit named Rabbit.

In 1990, she was working as a Researcher and bilingual secretary for Amnesty International, when she developed the idea for the Harry Potter series. Throughout her life, she had to endure many hardships and obstacles, but she remained resilient, paving the way for unprecedented success.

It was a now famous train journey that changed Rowling's life; whilst sitting on a delayed train from Manchester, she was struck with the idea of a boy wizard. It took her five years to write the first book in the series, Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone. During this period, her mother passed away, having suffered from multiple sclerosis.

Rowling also moved to Portugal to teach English in 1992, got married and had her first daughter, Jessica. Unfortunately, divorce soon followed and as a single mother, Rowling began to teach French, whilst trying to continue working on her book. Once she had finished the full manuscript, she decided to try and publish it, only for it to be rejected by 12 different publishers! She was told that her book was too complex and too long to be a children's book. This did not stop her though; Rowling kept sending her manuscript to publishers, despite repeated rejection letters. Eventually, Rowling's persistence paid off when Christopher Little, a relatively unknown London literary agent, decided to take a chance on Rowling's book, publishing it in 1997. And the rest, as they say, is history!

The next six books of the series took Rowling nearly ten years to write and publish, with the series finally ending in 2007. The books have now been translated into more than 85 languages and have sold over 600 million copies worldwide, making them the best-selling book series in history! Furthermore, the movie franchise that followed is the fourth-highest-grossing film series, bringing in \$7.7 billion globally!

However, in recent years Rowling has received much criticism for her comments on trans issues, with many accusing her of discrimination.

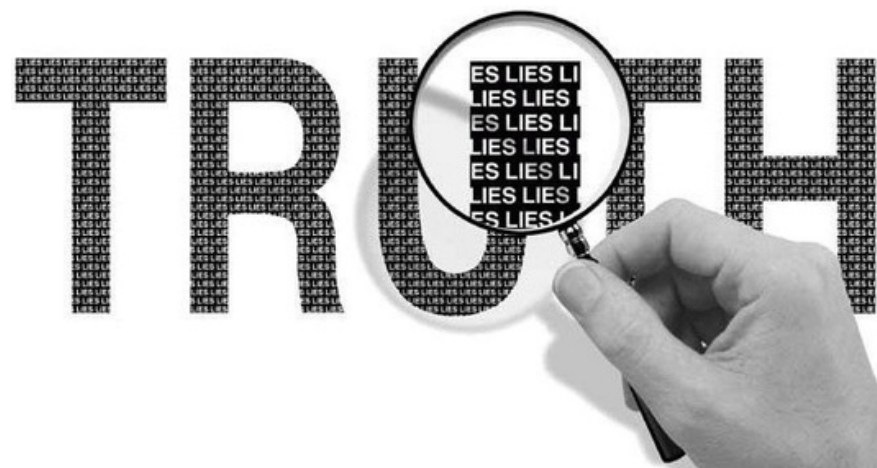
In 2020 she stated, *"When you throw open the doors of bathrooms and changing rooms to any man who believes or feels he's a woman... you open the door to any and all men who wish to come inside."*

Such comments have caused many to criticize Rowling for perceived transphobic comments. Rowling herself has denied being transphobic, stating that she respects *"every trans person's right to live any way that feels authentic and comfortable to them"*. Nonetheless, there is little doubt that her social media comments have provoked much criticism. Rowling's story shows us that we can overcome any obstacle or dilemma that life throws at us, as long as we have faith in ourselves and remain resilient. However, should she have stuck to her skill as a writer, rather than voice views that could be interpreted as discriminatory? Or, should she use her platform to speak out on issues she feels strongly about? What do you think?



BUY NOW! THE SHOPPING CONSPIRACY

WRITTEN BY STEPHANIE CAMACHO PINTO



We shop for things every day: food, clothes, shoes, makeup, sanitary products, gifts...the list goes on. Every year we are consuming more and more, meaning that more products need to constantly be produced. People shop for products they need, products they like, products they purchase on impulse.

Shopping sites show us products that interest us based on similar previous products we look at or buy. A highly refined science gets you to spend your money to buy products. This method gets people addicted to shopping online and spending their money on things they might not need. Lots of major and famous shopping brands are negatively influencing us and encouraging us to buy products that we might not need in the first place.



Consequently, with all the things we consume, product waste is everywhere and is affecting everyone on the planet. So, what are the strategies that big brand corporations use to convince us to spend more money?

Step 1: Sell more!

Many shopping corporations focus on lots of key aspects that help them sell more products. Sales, profits, marketing, digital efforts and communications are just a few! The more a brand sells, the more publicity and money they gain, which leads to their companies becoming famous and successful. Consumers need constant motivation to increase their purchases, which is why lots of different industries need a compelling reason for consumers to buy their products.

So, to gather the consumers' attention, they look into consumer research, allowing employees in the companies to come up with new ideas for products that will compel consumers to buy. It's been scientifically and socially proven that people buy more clothes in their life than they need. Major corporations favour this as the more people that buy their products, the more they sell, meaning they get more profit.

Step 2: Waste more!

Millions of products are sold in one day alone and who knows how many of those products go to waste? Unfortunately, many corporations and major brands make products that are designed to break or to be discarded. By making short-lived products, brands are encouraging consumers to keep buying more products, which leads us to spend more money on the same products that are designed to be replaced over and over again.

New products are made, which brands claim are the 'improvement' of the old ones. For example, Apple generates new iPhones every year to replace old ones. Some products are also designed so they cannot be fixed by us the consumers, so that forces us to keep buying the same product just so we can have one that functions! Furthermore, many corporations find it easier to destroy unwanted products than to distribute them as unsold products - this causes much unnecessary waste.





Step 3: Lie more!

Believe it or not, lots of products are made from plastic. Plastic is everywhere, as we all know. Companies are “Green Washing” their audience and consumers. They state that most plastics they are using now in their products are recyclable; however, most plastics used in products are not recyclable. Most plastic waste is either burnt or buried; consequently, plastic never just disappears or goes away forever.



Step 4: Hide more!

For those who may be asking, “Where does all the product waste go if it isn't recycled?” Well, most of the waste thrown away by Western nations is taken to poorer developing countries where they have the lowest policing and legal measures. Corporations leave their product waste in such nations so they don't get into any serious trouble or have to pay legal fees for poor waste management. Destroying billions of tons of waste is very dangerous, such as burning materials or electronic components that can release hazardous toxins that are extremely harmful for the human body. Amidst all of the hazardous waste and toxins, lots of waste-disposal workers are paying with their health, as some of the toxins they inhale can lead to cancerous health problems that may affect them later on in their lives. Lots of these workers are underpaid and exploited, working under extremely long hours and horrible working conditions.



Step 5: Control more!

Corporations only tell consumers one story... where we are able to buy the products we want and need through the use of their companies and product ideas. Countless ex-employees of corporations are now speaking out about the problems in the shopping industry. We may be a long way away from resolving the problems revolving around the shopping conspiracies, but there are things we could do to help. If you are shopping online and you have something in your shopping basket, ask yourself if what you're buying is a necessity. Ask yourself how many of your products are genuinely recyclable. Write to your favourite brands to question their environmental and climate change policies.

Ultimately, there are little things that we can all do: if we all unite on this matter and show big brand corporations who is *really* in charge, maybe we can make a genuine change to our world.





PERSPECTIVES ON WAR

WRITTEN BY ZUHRA OSMAN

The conflict between Palestine and Israel has always been a controversial and emotive topic. However, at the heart of it, is the suffering of people living through the conflict right now who are tragically fighting for survival. This article aims to show real life perspectives from both sides since the conflict began 76 years ago in 1948.

In 1948, a Palestinian man, Reverend Audeh Rantisi, originally from Lydda, described his forced expulsion during the Nakba:

"We left the house, and then we realised we were refugees. We never expected this. We thought we would return in a few days, but we never did."

Aharon Cohen, an Israeli civilian, described life during the 1948 war:

"We were all refugees once, and now we defend the land we've fought to call our own. It's a strange feeling to fight for a future you're not sure you'll see."

Both these quotes show that neither side wanted to surrender land that they saw as theirs.

Almost 20 years later, in 1967, Hajjeh Mahdiya recalled the Six-Day War, when she and her family were displaced from their village. She stated:

"We walked for days. We didn't have water, and the children were crying. It felt like we were walking to nowhere."

This really highlights the struggles of the Palestinians, as Hajeh talks about the harsh reality of being displaced from your home and the burden of leaving behind everything you've ever known. The mentioning of having no water really emphasises the lack of basic necessities, and the children crying highlights the suffering of the most vulnerable.

In reference to the same Six-Day War, Yitzhak Rabin, an Israeli soldier and later Prime Minister, said:

"When we entered the Old City, I cried. Not for the victory, but for the weight of history we carried in that moment. It felt as though we were finally home, but at such a cost."



The final words of this quote - *"but at such a cost"* – reflects that however sweet the victory may have been to him, the fact still remains that it led to the suffering and pain of both sides. The damage left to communities showed not only the physical but emotional toll that the conflict had taken, and shows the damage that came with the victory.

20 years later, Rami Almeghari, a young man from Gaza, shared his experiences during the First Intifada:

"We were just kids, but we felt like we had to do something. We threw stones because that was all we had."



This quote really shows the brutal nature and reality of conflict and the effect that conflict has on young people. It shows how young people - who are usually seen as embodiments of hope and potential - feel forced to show acts of resistance, showing that such conflicts rob them of their childhood and force them to become 'adults' far too early.

At the same point in time, in 1987, Yitzhak Ben-Ari an Israeli soldier stated:

"I signed up to protect my country, but what I witnessed during the Intifada shook me. The clashes, the violence—it felt like we were fighting against people who were once our neighbors. It made me question everything."

This quote really reveals the internal conflict of soldiers who had to face the reality of engaging with the 'enemy'. Recalling his Palestinian neighbours really conveys the personal nature of the conflict and humanises those whose identities are reduced to just 'casualties of war.'



Now, let us consider more recent times. In 2021 a young Palestinian man called Ahmed Al-Najjar, lived in the Sheikh Jarrah neighbourhood of East Jerusalem and described his fear of being forcibly evicted:

"We are living on borrowed time. Every day, we wait for them to come and take our home, and we can't stop it."

The phrase *"living on borrowed time"* really reflects the harsh living conditions and the desperation of the Palestinians, knowing the threat of being evicted is real; indeed, the hopelessness and despair of displacement is truly heartbreaking.

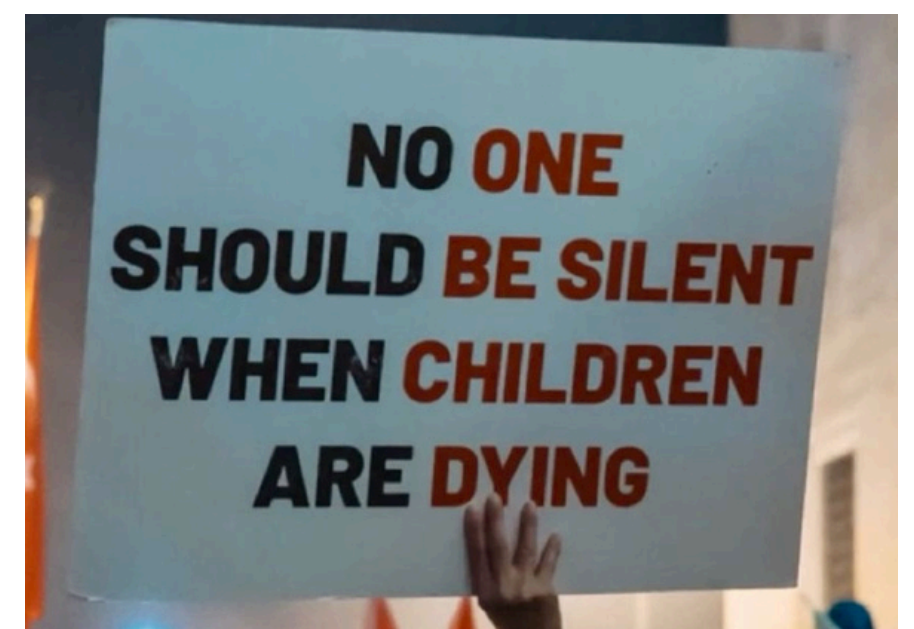
This is reflected in the account of Noga Rosen, a High School student in Jerusalem:

"We have been taught to love our land, but now I'm confused. I see people suffering on both sides. It's hard to reconcile the stories we hear at home with what's happening outside. I just want peace for everyone."



Clearly, Rosen feels a deep-rooted attachment to her land, but she can also see suffering on both sides, showing her awareness of the cost of conflict and the pain faced by both sides. Furthermore, *"The stories we hear at home"* shows that she's aware of the nature of bias. This teaches us all to consider the news we're presented with as objectively as possible.

Hopefully, Rosen's desire for peace for all, is reflected in a shifting perspective of generations on both sides; maybe then, the whole region will see a future for its children.

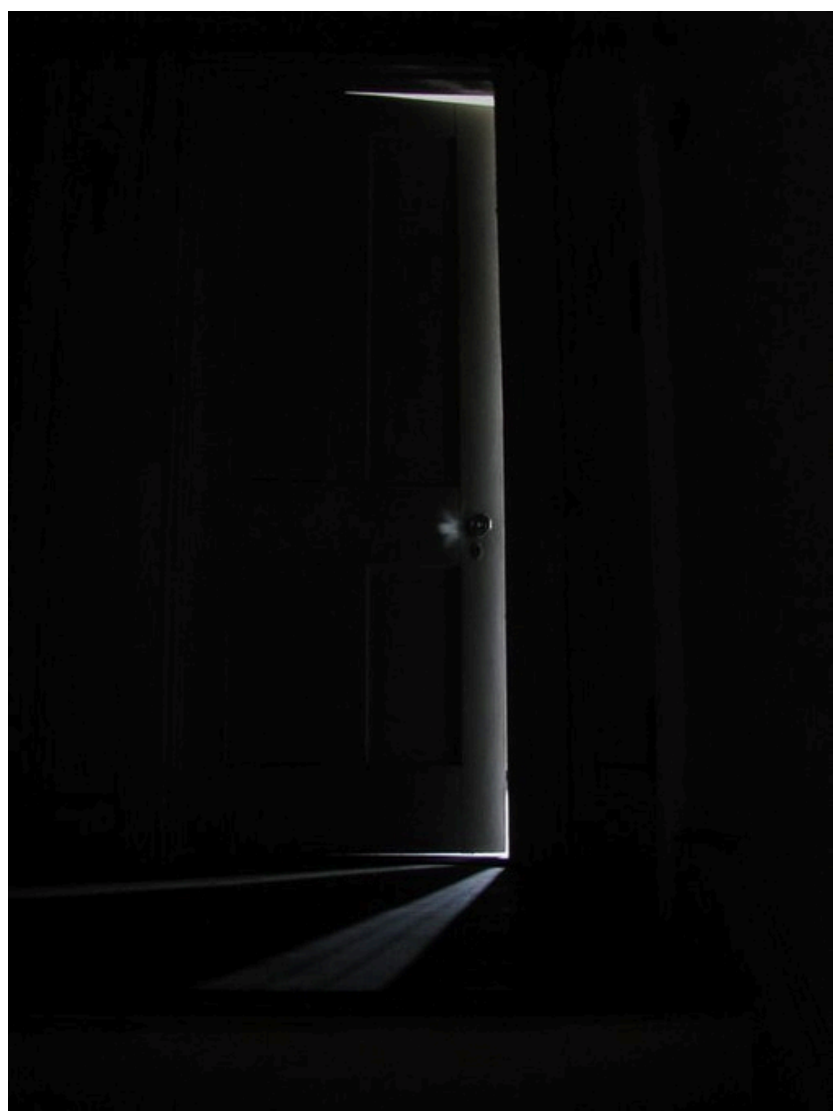




cacophony of colours

THE DOOR

WRITTEN BY NATALY SANDOVAL DE FREITAS



A caliginous darkness is shining
through my room. It's the middle of
the night: the world stands still around
me, trees fall into a deep slumber, the
sun is concealed away. My eyes
grapple to stay open. I need to sleep.
Yet I can't.
My body feel imprisoned.

Suddenly, the door steadily opens; the
creaking intensifies.

It was locked before...

A vague figure creeps out; I can't see it
clearly and I can't move. It draws nearer
to me; its eyes are red rays, blinding me.
Elongated, bony fingers abrade my skin.
I can't move.

Wake up.

My heart bursts out of my chest as I
bound up in my bed. It wasn't real. I
need to sleep.

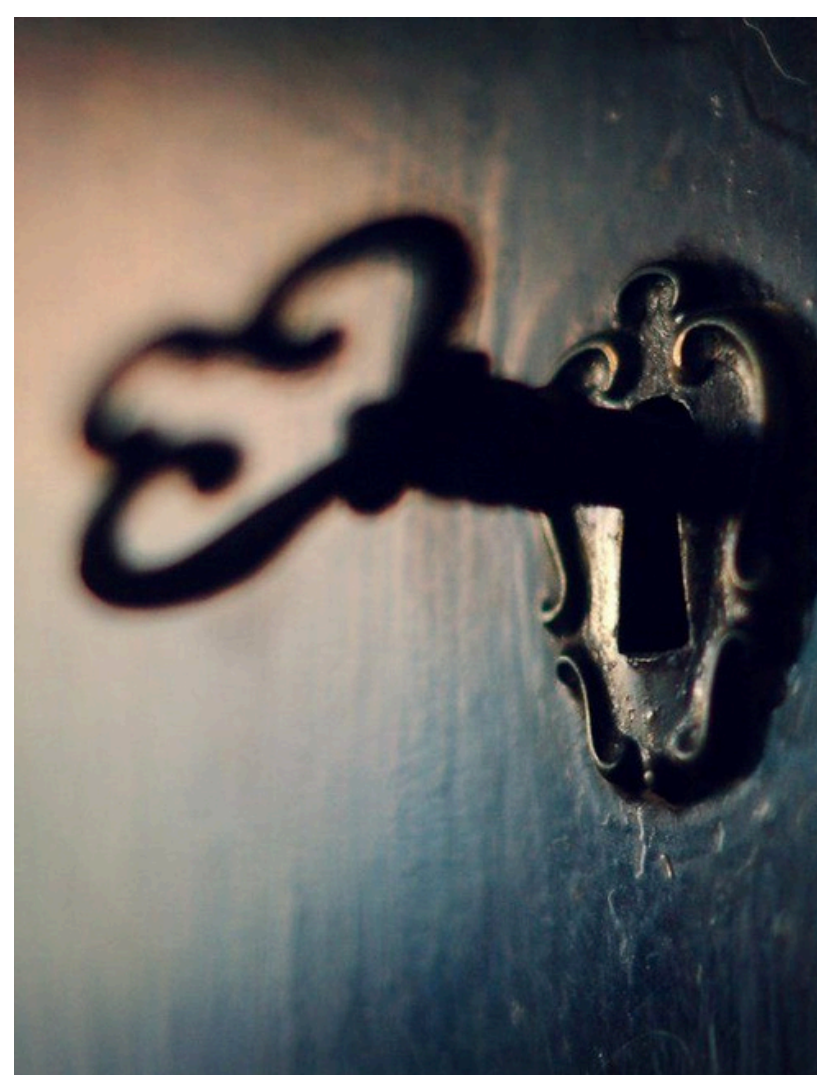
I close my eyes again, my thoughts fade
away and my heart beat halts.

But I have this itching feeling, a
sensation that grows inside me as time
moves on. The clock pulsates louder and
louder.

A sensation now, more like a warning.
Like a thorn prickling, bursting through
my skin. Ripping, gauging, scraping
against my flesh, skinning me to the
bone. My eyes dart open and I don't
waste a second to check -
the door.

The door stands firm, outspread before
me.
Red rays.

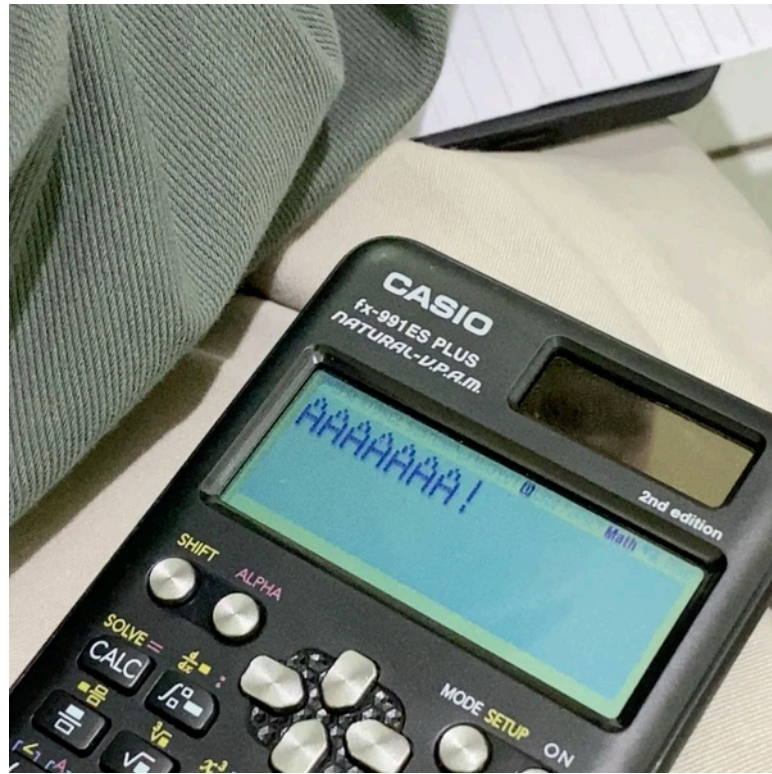
Did I not lock it?...



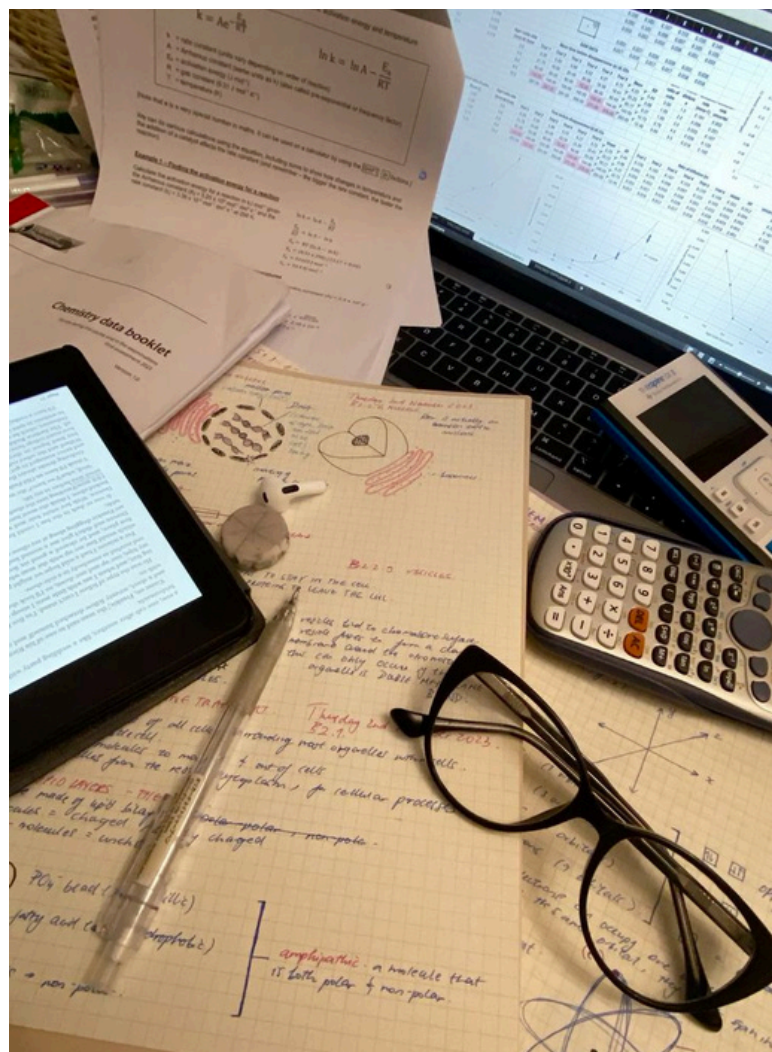


SCHOOL LIFE

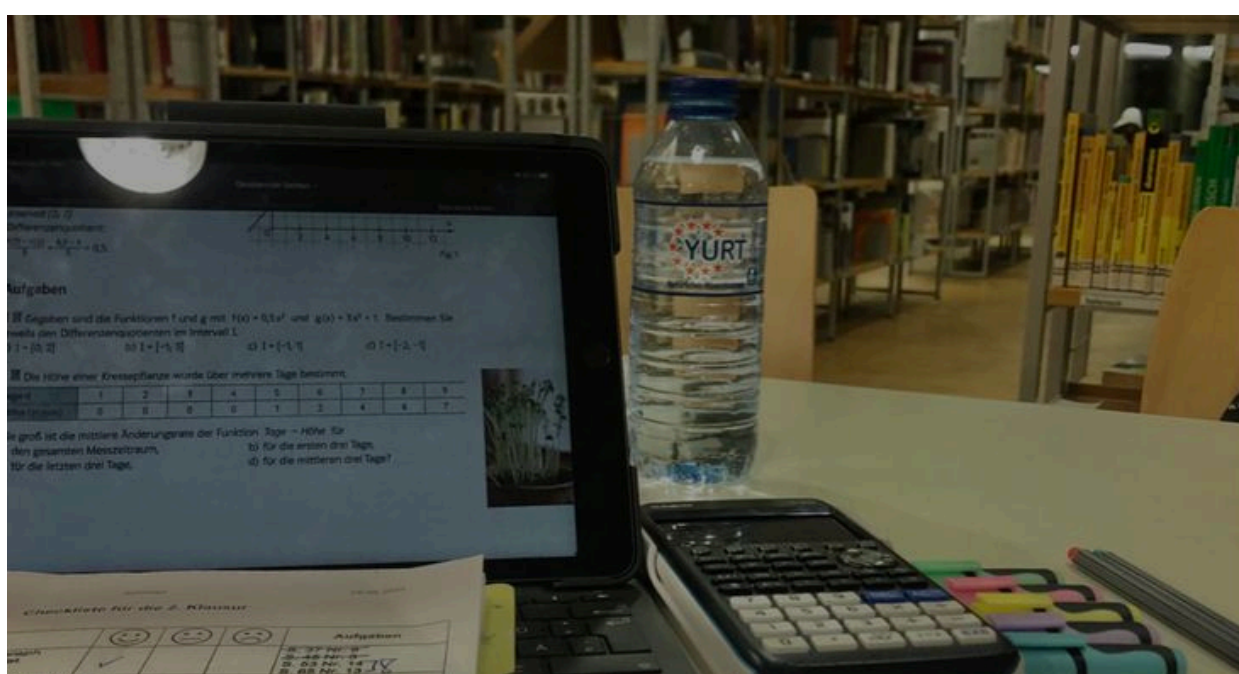
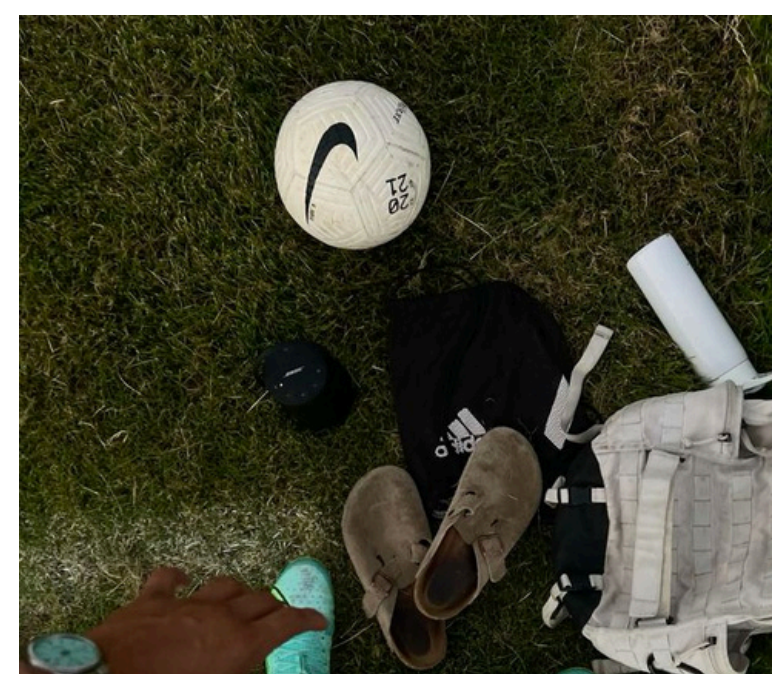
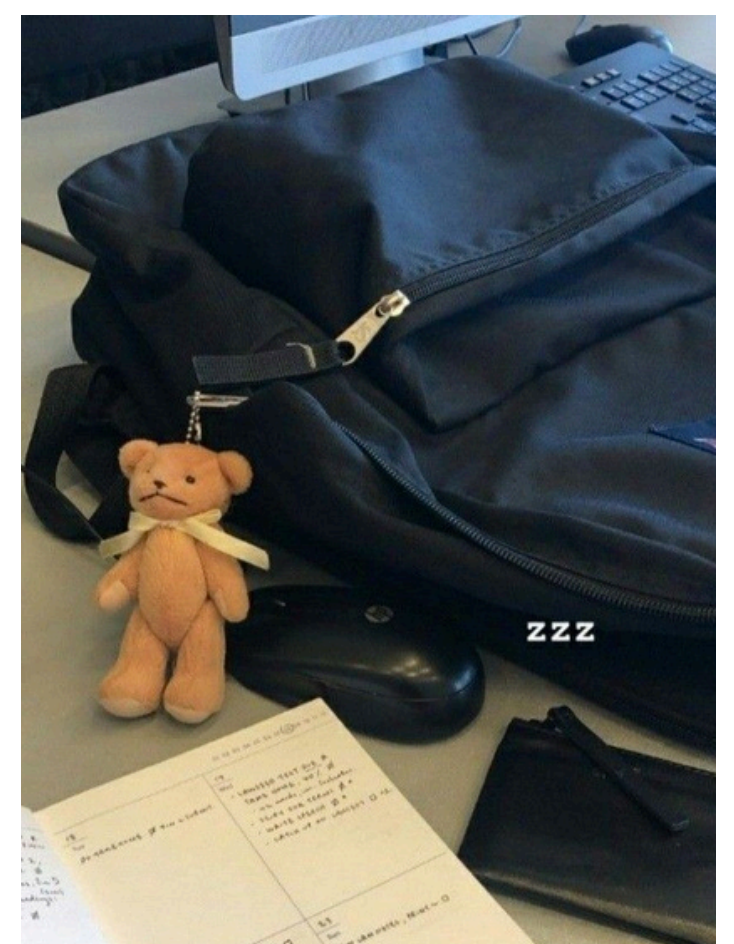
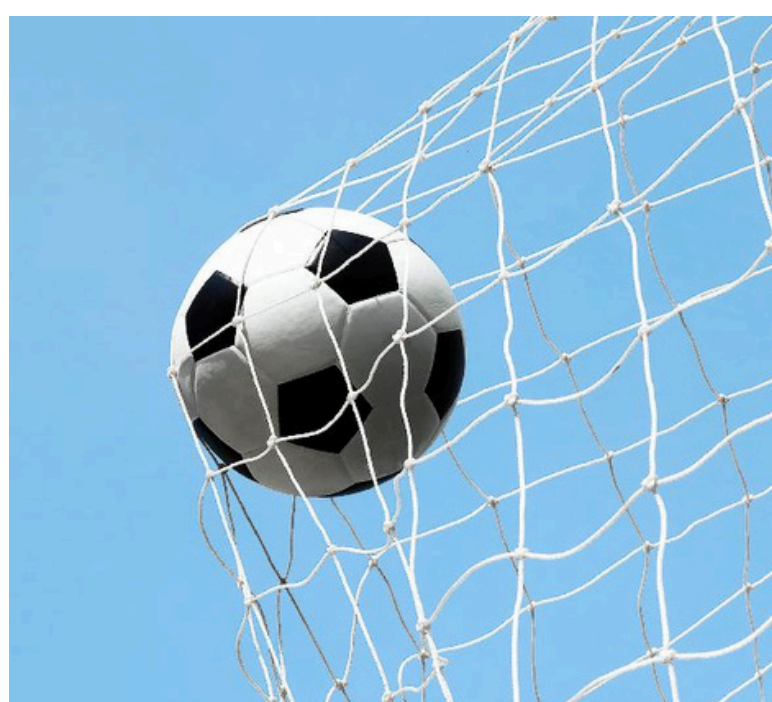
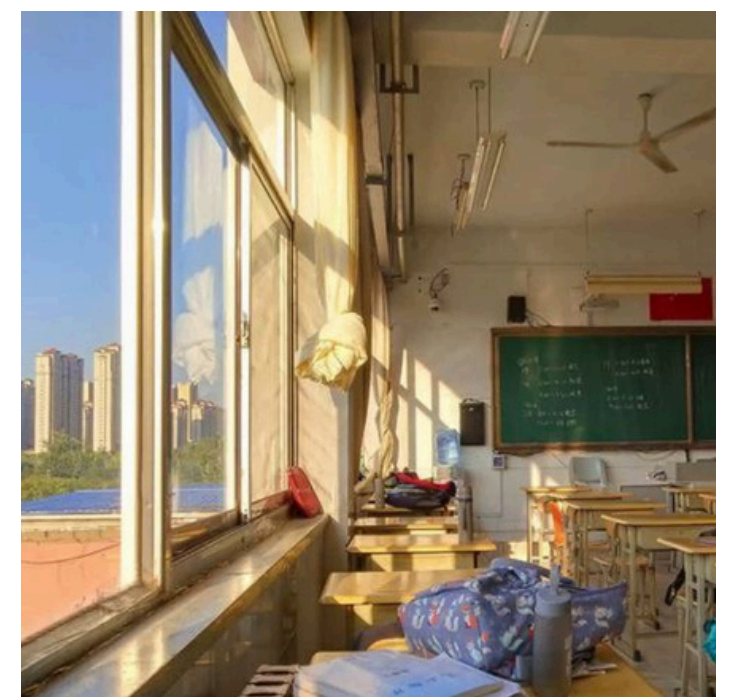
WRITTEN BY RAMI ABERRA



Juggling school life
Juggling football life
Up before the dawn, in the
morning's hush,
Books in a bag, boots in a rush,
Classes to conquer, goals to score,
Each day a battle, both mind and
core,
Equations and essays, lessons to
learn,
Heart in the field, where passions
burn!



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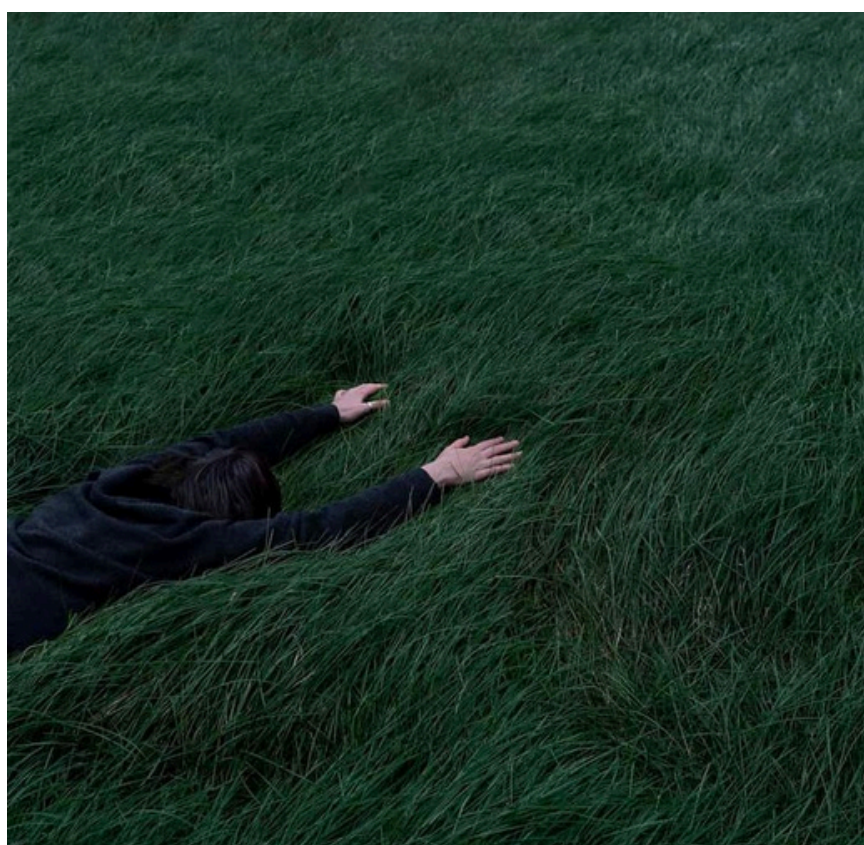
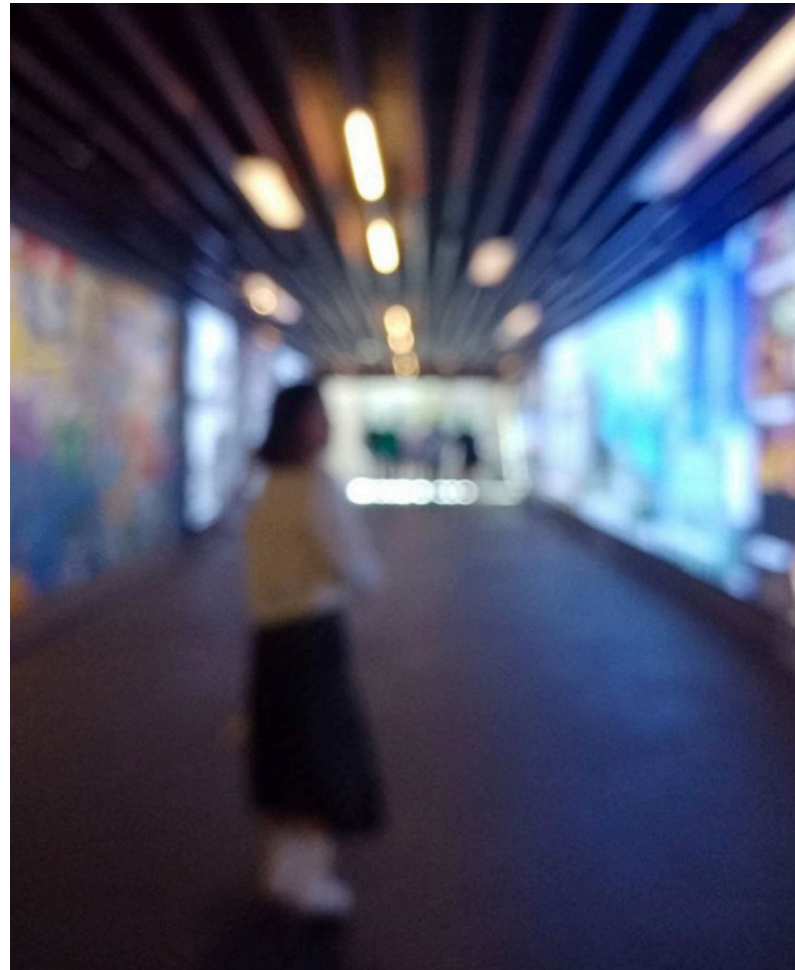
SHE

WRITTEN BY YASMEEN QURESHI

In those moments whenever we crossed paths, it seemed like the world around us went quiet and almost disappeared. It felt like for hours on end we would sit and talk, on an empty train or a random field.

Yet when I opened my eyes, they disappeared and I was back to the busy train and packed field.

I sometimes wondered what went on in the world when I wasn't around, when I was so disconnected to my surroundings, my only focus her.



Her deep brown curls were a mess as she smiled across from me, those same ripped shirts hanging off her body, trainers shiny and clean and paired with striped socks: so mismatched and enticing.

I wondered what was hidden behind her smile, the secrets locked away in her eyes. I guess that's why, when talking, I'd find myself mesmerised by her - the way she looked; how she articulated her words.

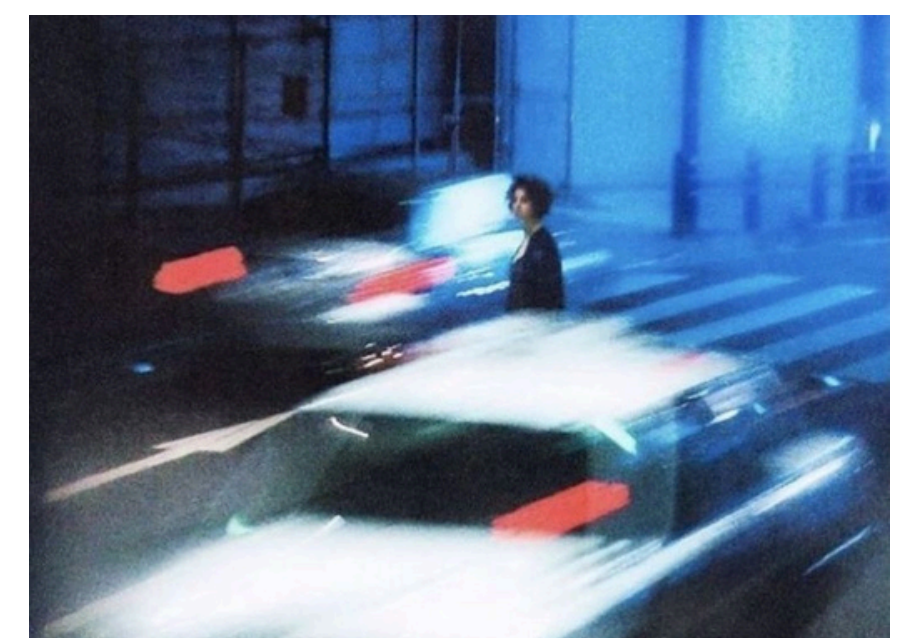
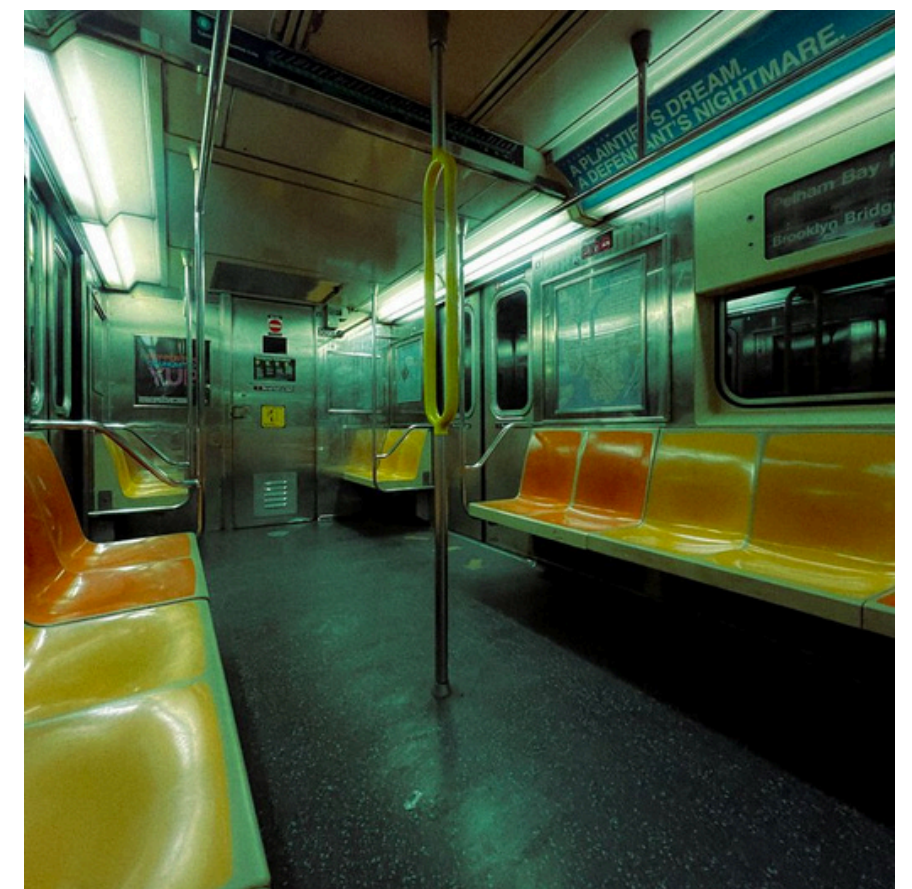
In those moments I couldn't tell you the feeling; it was so familiar, like I had been there a hundred times but couldn't remember a thing.

"Do you ever feel like this isn't real?", she asked one day, her voice soft and distant. I nodded, unable to express myself in words.

"Sometimes I think we're the only real ones and everything else is just...noise."

Her words echoed in my head as she vanished. I too had wandered what this was, the lines blurring far too often: I couldn't tell whether she was real or a figment of my imagination.

Whatever she was, she kept me grounded. Sane in this blurry world.





TRAPPED

WRITTEN BY CHLOE PINTO



I'm trapped into trying to release
something that I can't explain.

I have so much within, to release
this pain.

Trying to turn on my light but it
won't shed a tear,

Coping with it's fear.

Just like a tree every leaf that falls

Every new one commences a new
memory,

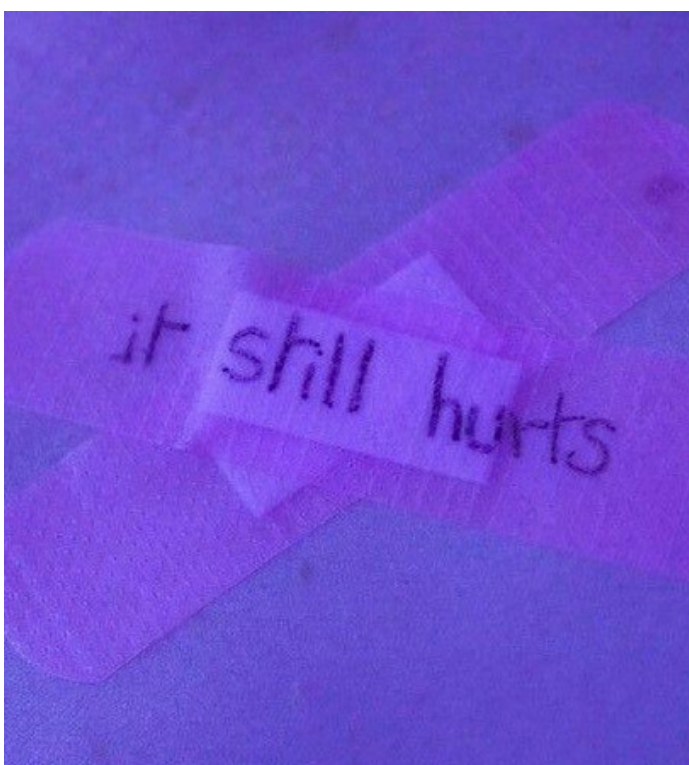
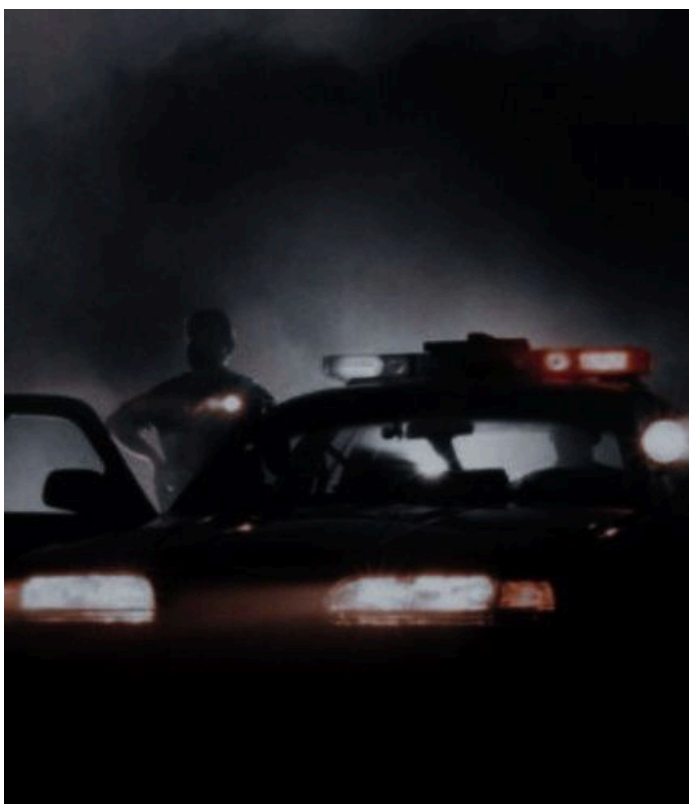
Destined to be like all the others
were - worthy?

How can I shine when all I can do is
have remorse within

For things I can't let go of, scared
of my mistakes.

I get lost between the lines

As though I've committed a crime.

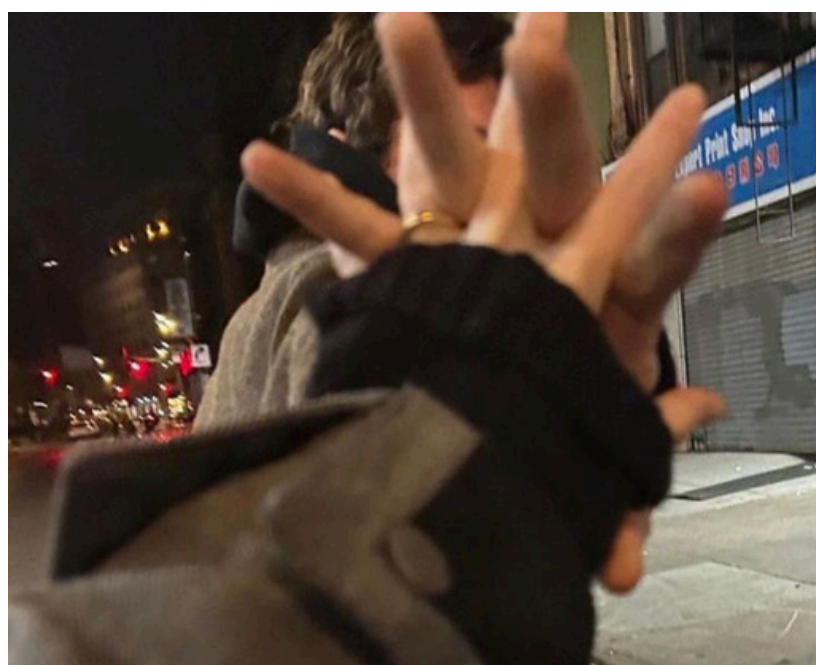
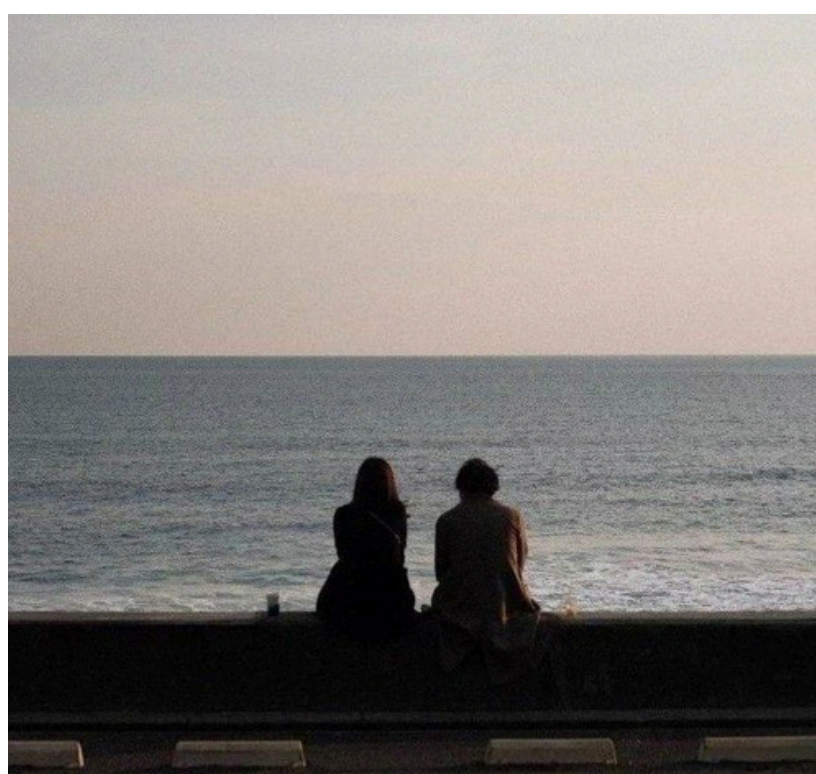
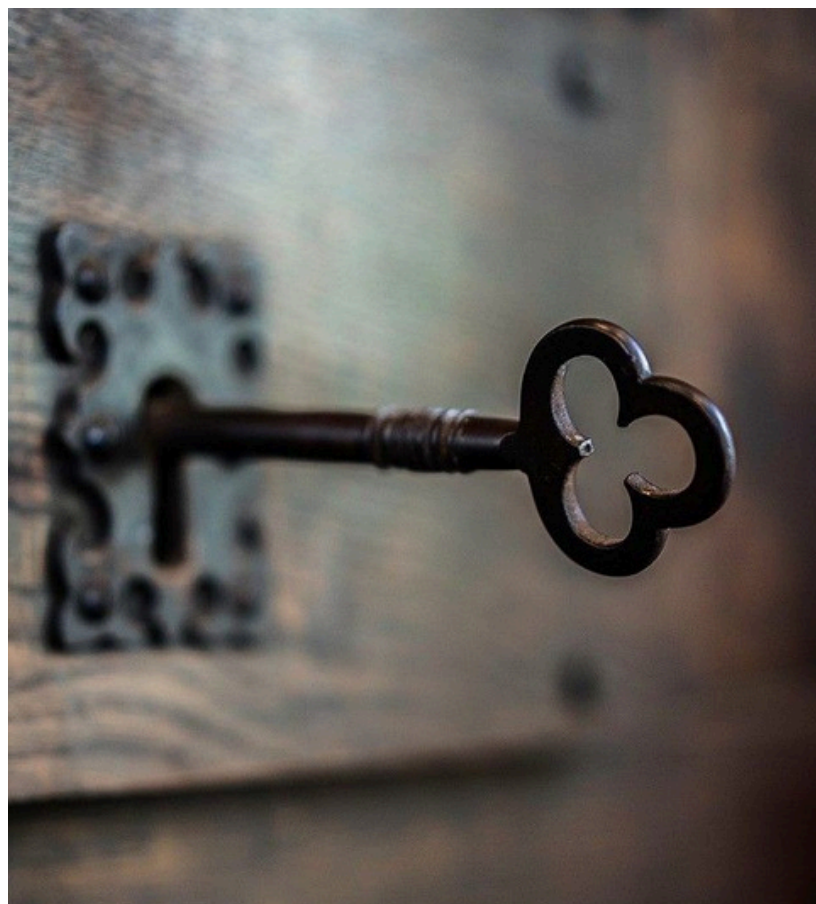




OBSESSION

WRITTEN BY ZAHRA QURESHI

I think it's an
obsession,
And I'm terrified.
You're far too
precious to me.
I want to lock you in a
box,
Keep you beneath my
pillow.
You're my oxygen,
My lifeline.
If you fall, I plummet.
If you jump, I leap.
If you die, I perish.
Buried in the same
grave,
I'll hold you close,
Never letting go,
Not even in death.



UNSPOKEN

I love you,
Words I dared not
utter.
Fearful you wouldn't
love me back,
Rejection haunted me
more than anything.
But life is fleeting, I've
learned,
Watching loved ones
vanish into the abyss,
Leaving words unsaid,
a lingering ache.
So now, I tell you, I
love you,
I love you so dearly.





TOWARDS HEALING

WRITTEN BY IARA CHAVES



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.

THE SACRIFICE OF SOLDIERS

WRITTEN BY AYA AKARMASS



As much as you speak out, as much as
you try,
Nobody will ever hear all your painful
cries.

As much as you hurt, inside and out,
Nobody can relate to the scars that still
shout.

You're drowning in an ocean of your
concealed fear,
As echoes of war whisper in your ear,
drawing ever near.

Your once happy life filled with dreams
so bright
Now haunting shadows that always leave
you in a fright.

Nobody understands: *"You're weak;
you're not a real man!"*

But in the chaos of war, even the
strongest can feel less than.

But behind that uniform, behind those
desperate, fearful eyes,
Is a helpless man in need of comfort as
the world hopelessly sighs.

Your people have failed you; they have
left you neglected and alone,
But nothing can compensate for the
unyielding trauma now set in stone.

We must honour our soldiers, thank them
for their bravery,
For in the depths of war, fear and pain,
they fought to keep us free.

