

Dear Reader,

This is a fake newspaper. Well, maybe it's actually as real as it can be, given that most sources these days promote false, misleading, or at the very least politically biased information. Pay close attention to the small, minute details in this piece—the dates especially, as they correspond to important events related to the critique presented. A few quick notes to get out of the way before you read.

One: it is imperative that it is read in the order given. Everything will come together at the end, trust me. I wrote it. I would know.

Two: this is a satire. It's a statement against everything I find wrong in today's society, and it can seem, heavy, blunt, difficult, and an over-the-top exaggeration of our state of affairs, but I guess that's how all quality satires are. With that in mind, please also note that it is not intended to offend, humiliate, or ridicule anyone (or by anyone, I mean any *reader*—following suit in the theme of 'quality satires', it *is* meant to make fun of *certain* individuals). Whether you stand for or against the criticisms presented, I hope we both can look past them, and simply see this piece as an advocate for change against our modern times. Enjoy!

Best,

Austin Bradford

—Our Modern Times—

A News Report By Austin Bradford

Capitol Hill Confirms Existence of Aliens!

This Wednesday, January 7th, the President Of The United States has officially confirmed the existence of aliens. After many months of mysterious disappearances across the nation, with many speculating about the possibility of extraterrestrials or other-worldly beings, the President has officially fortified our suspicions. In the press-conference, they revealed that “Our top scientists have discovered through biometric heatmaps and electronic nanosphere scans (ENS) that the culprits of these kidnappings are not human”. With the most amount of abductions happening in the Midwest, specifically in Minneapolis, scientists at NASA have dubbed these creatures “Intergalactic Cosmic Extraterrestrials,” or ICE for short. With not much else known about them, NASA warned the public that



“they could be posing as anyone. Lock your doors and shut your windows; they can be very deceptive”. With a few Intergalactic Cosmic Extraterrestrials impersonating as Police Officers with a warrant, Congress has issued a nation-wide shut-down, lasting indefinitely. “Stay safe, and stock up on food and toilet paper” declared the Secretary of State. The White House hopes to resolve this issue soon, but with fears growing that Washington has already been infiltrated, there’s no telling how long it will take, let alone if it will stop at all. ■

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Business

Gas Prices Soar To \$100 Per Gallon!

Gas prices reached a historical high this Monday, March 2nd. The CEO of *Big Oil*, America's largest oil and gas supplier, made a statement to the public, claiming that "demand for gas is pretty inelastic. People aren't switching to electric cars any time soon, but they still need to drive. We can charge whatever we want for gas". *Big Oil* proceeded to restrict gas supply to artificially inflate the price by about 1900%. "We're in for a very profitable year" he says, and investors agree. In this past week alone, *Big Oil* shares have gone up to \$1,600 per share, a \$400 increase since last week. Interestingly, some investors believe that this will increase motivations to buy electric cars, and *Texla*, America's largest producer, based in Texas, has also risen in value since

the announcement. "It's a tricky situation" says the head economic analyst for *Our Modern Times*. "Technically, they can legally do it. Well, so far". The Federal Government could step in and set a price ceiling to curb economic inefficiencies and downfall, almost guaranteed to happen within the next week, as consumers' spending money is drawn away from other sectors. "The only issue is that the government almost seems to be supporting this behavior," they say. With false promises of lower grocery prices, rent, taxes, and a reduction in the general cost of living, it seems unrealistically sanguine to expect any federal intervention. "When Uncle Sam gets their cut, they turn the other way". Following trends of bribery and exploitation since the late 1800s, it doesn't look like gas prices will go down any time soon. ■

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Sports

Federal Government Beats Legal Justice 9-0 In Semi-Final Match!

This Wednesday, February 11th, the Federal Government beat Legal Justice in a brutal 9-0 match. It started off as a close game, with both teams playing great offense and great defense. “I really thought we could have kept it a tie, and then make a buzzer-beater shot. I mean that was the plan. To wait” says defensive player for Legal Justice. Unfortunately for them, they waited too long, and the Federal Government was able to win a sweeping victory, to the disappoint of many Legal Justice fans. “I’ve been a fan of this team ever since I was a kid, man” says one fan. “I mean, I love connecting with my fellow supporters, most of them

the ordinary citizens of the United States. We’re not some crazy, rich people who directly fund the team. We just go out to the games and cheer as loud as we can”. Except cheering isn’t enough sometimes. To the dismay of many across the nation, the Federal Government moves up the bracket into the final round, where they will face off against the world renowned Citizens Rights. Organized in 1776, Citizens Rights has been as well supported as Legal Justice has, and sports viewers across the nation hope for a Citizens Rights victory next week. ■



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True Stories

The Escape From The Arctic! A Chilling Recount Of A Polar Bear Refugee.

Baron is a 17 year old Polar Bear from the outskirts of Arctic City and was forced to flee his home at the beginning of the war. “The first thing I remember is the heat. The horrible, blistering, terrible heat.” He watched as the ground underneath him melted away as the sun scorched overhead. “It was a horrible sight. Cubs crying, bears trying to find each other, everything was so chaotic.” He was forced to leave everything behind as the planes flew overhead. “I searched and searched for my children, who were at daycare when the first bomb hit, but I couldn’t find them anywhere. *I* was almost

killed, so I had to jump into the water, and just swim.” For nine, whole, long days, Baron swam and swam, looking for a place that was better suited for him, away from the war that lit up the arctic and made it unliveable. Tracking the stars in the sky at night, Baron slowly but surely made his way to a refugee camp up north, close to New Ice City, only 1000 paws south of the pole. Unreached by the aggressors, the city Pawngress set up a refugee camp. “The first thing I did after I was well was search for my cubs,” says Baron. “Almost everyone had a Polaroid photo of their loved ones to help officials in their search, but in the end I couldn’t find them”. Baron now resides in the Snowburbs outside Iceopolis, where he publishes ads on the internet to reconnect with his family. “To see them one more time would mean the world to me,” he says. ■

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Lifestyle



The Secret Benefit Of Plastic Water Bottles

I am a foodie that traditionally writes food content for *Our Modern Times*, but I recently discovered the secret benefits of plastic water bottles and felt I had to share it. There's actually many benefits of these water bottles, and we just haven't realized them all. The first is the microplastics. For decades, science has taught us that microplastics are harmful, but they actually have the opposite effect. With enough in your system, any foreign bacteria or disease will latch

on to the bits of plastic in your bloodstream, kidneys, and liver, instead of your actual organs. Now, I only drink water from plastic bottles after this shocking discovery. I have persuaded my husband Chris and my two kids to do the same and urge every house-mom out there to do so as well. They will thank you later.

Second, when we trash them to landfills, it can actually float out into the ocean. Assuming a selfish sea-turtle doesn't consume it, whole *islands* can be made if there's enough of them, and with the high rent prices and housing crisis, there's no better place for real-estate development than floating islands of plastic "trash". Not only do you do yourself a favor, but you do your community a favor. So what are you waiting for? Don't believe "science," but do as I have, and make the switch. ■

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Obituaries

*Creativity, November 30th, 2022.
Murdered.*

Creativity was born at the beginning of time. Their father, reasoning, and their mother, ingenuity, gave birth to two other children: logic and analytics. Although Creativity and their siblings became further separated as time progressed, they worked together in their younger years to produce the essay—a completely new idea to society. In Creativity's later years, they used their education to invent instruments, acting, painting, singing, and much, much more. Creativity was the backbone of human society and was a means of uniting even the most distant of people. On the morning of November 30th, 2022, Creativity was found dead in their residence—the minds of the youth. The police have apprehended their main suspect,

ChatGPT, and he is now in questioning. Creativity's family is in shock and grief and will not be holding a public ceremony. They appreciate the support they have gotten thus far, and have a gofundme to accept donations.

Low-cost Streaming, November 3rd, 2022. Cancer.

Low-cost Streaming was born with the rise of the internet in the 1990s and invented platforms like HBO, Netflix, and Hulu, among others. Living a humble life, committed to the service and happiness of the general public, Low-cost Streaming was unfortunately diagnosed with cancer at the beginning of the pandemic in 2020. Their condition got worse and worse, and they died the night of November 3rd, 2022. The funeral will be streamed online; to tune in, you can buy a \$20/mo subscription to any streaming platform. The ad-free version is available at a \$40 upcharche.

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Advertisements

Enliptitron Rx.

Struggling with cardio-pulmonary sclerosis dystrophy? *Enliptitron Rx* can help! 90% of patients have experienced results within the first two years. Talk to your doctor today about *Enliptitron Rx*, only \$5,000 for a bottle of six. May cause: depression, cancer, vision loss, erratic heart rhythms, difficulty breathing, rashes, sores, or death.

The New College Degree

Ever wanted a piece of paper with your name on it? Look no further than the mystical *New College Degree*. The base package is \$400,000 and 4 years of your life, but you can upgrade to a graduate package, for \$800,000 and 8 years of your life. For our top customers, we even offer a doctorate package! While it almost guaranteed a high paying job in the past, the *New College Degree* can guarantee a spot in low-income housing with our “student loans”

add-on. With the popularity of mystery boxes, we followed suit! If you get the shiny nepotism one, the *New College Degree* will earn much more than invested! If you get the humanities one, it earns you a spot as a Starbucks barista. What are you waiting for? Buy your *New College Degree* today!

Five States For Sale

Want new states to add to your union? For sale are Cuba, Greenland, Canada, Venezuela, and Iran; all are *great* options for an aspiring empire-builder, and it would be a shame to turn them down at the low price of zero dollars. That’s right! All sales are funded directly by *your* taxpayers, meaning *you* don't pay us a cent. We also have a buy-one-get-one-free deal as part of our spring sale—what more could you ask for? Build your empire today!

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Editorials

Why We Should Stop Watching The News.

The greatest irony I will every experience is publishing this in the news as it's first release, but here goes nothing.

There's a stereotype for older people, and it's that they tend to shout angrily at the news on TV. Now we don't realize it, but almost everyone has a similar sort of reaction, simply manifested in different ways. Instead of yelling at the television, we converse with our friends of similar political standing: "did you see what the president did today? Absolutely outrageous," or "I can't believe that the court ruled that way. It makes absolutely no sense at all" or "how could [insert liberals/conservatives here, depending on your standing] advocate for that?" or the age old

"this country is turning to you know what". It could manifest itself in an angry Twitter (sorry—X) post online, or even just be pent up inside your brain, if you have outstanding self and emotional control. If you claim you're politically neutral, then you're lying to yourself, or you're ignorant, and that's a whole separate issue of its own.

My point is that most of what we consume in our modern times is quite divisive. How many times do you see a publication you agree with rather than one that makes you question how anything so horrible could have happened? Often? Sometimes? Most likely, the answer was rarely. And unfortunately, these kinds of reactions are exactly what the media capitalizes off of. Case one: presenting...drum roll please...the television. Invented in

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the 1920s, the TV really took off in the post WWII era, riding the economic boom from wartime production and the end of the depression. With the rise of advertisements, it only seemed natural for political parties to promote their agenda through the new, popular spectacle of the home television. Prime example—the Nixon-Kennedy debates. Now, I don't know if you're familiar with them, but the story goes like this: to those watching the debate on TV, they see Kennedy as a young, charismatic, well-mannered politician, but Nixon, who had a cold, was seen as quite the opposite; profusely sweating and with all those symptoms of your average illness, Nixon seemed like a less-than-ideal candidate. Yet to those listening on the radio, without the visual stimuli, they

heard Nixon and thought of him as the more experienced and knowledgeable candidate. In the end, Kennedy won the election—I guess pretty privilege really exists after all. But in any case, as the years progressed later into the 20th century, people got the news more and more from the television, and accordingly, our society became more and more divided.

Case two: presenting...another drum roll, if you please...the article news. This includes newspapers, online articles, and other types of literary media—the key difference being that instead of having it spoken to you, unable to pause it, the article news allows readers to digest the information at their own pace, and gives room for consideration of the presentation. Better than television, yet only marginally, this extra time-frame

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given allows us to calm ourselves, rather than react with immediate anger directed at our screen. However, most either don't read the newspaper (or use it for cat litter or a tablecloth); and those who *do* may not slow down to ponder, thus enraging themselves all the same.

Case three: presenting...and I don't even know if I can call this 'news', but let's have a drumroll anyway...TikTok and/or social media. The app of the 'youth', TikTok sometimes (and by sometimes I mean almost never) has accurate news releases. A lot of content is AI generated, or misconstrued to the point where it becomes an entirely different story. And that's the 'news' content that makes money. Especially given that a viewer decides to watch or scroll within a fraction of a second, a video needs to be engaging, interesting, and most of all,

shocking. Without this shock-factor, which can only stem from the fake-news agenda, no viewers are retained, and no profits are made.

Evidently, there's a lot of different sources for the news. There's the three main categories outlined, and there are the actual sources themselves (like NBC, Fox, The New York Times, Instagram (again, it doesn't really count)). Yet the thing they all share in common is the rage-factor. News doesn't profit by comforting consumers; it profits off the divisions it creates. By picking and choosing what to release and what to suppress, each bit is carefully and meticulously designed to foment you against 'the other side'. And once they have someone hooked, they can't get enough.

And neither can you.

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You yearn for the division it creates, the portrait it depicts of the ‘enemy’—which, in reality, could be your neighbor, your dog walker, the mailman...anyone. But these people don't seem so bad. Your neighbor gives you flour and eggs if you run out; your dog walker brings an extra baggie of treats for your precious little pooch; the mailman greets you with a smile as he hands you your daily correspondence.

But they voted for the other side, and that...that's bad. That's what I read about every day. That's what I hear on the TV. That's what I watch on TikTok. That these are bad people.

See the issue?

I'm not suggesting to completely abandon the news entirely. It's imperative to understand our global situation in order to prepare ourselves to be more politically

aware. Which is why I titled this “Why We Should Stop Watching The News”. Not reading. Watching. Because in the end, reading is the only method to process information without forming hasty generalizations about different political perspectives. We won't ever be able to completely fix the political divide, but we can do our best to deter our judgement, preoccupation, and hatred. By digesting in the only other way left where we can bypass the rage-based profits and think for ourselves. By reading. I guess the inclusion of this piece in the news paper is not exactly ironic, but a premonition of (hopefully) what's to come. So read the news. Think for yourself. Though this paper may be black and white, the world isn't. Our Earth and our life and our country is beautiful and full of color. We just haven't learned how to see it yet. ■