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THE BROOKLYN COLLEGE

VANGUARD

Fall 2025, Issue 8 vanguard.blog.brooklyn.edu  @thebcvanguard Friday, November 7th



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BC Reacts: Mamdani Wins NYC’s Mayoral Election



Zohran Mamdani and his wife, Rama Duwaji, waving to a crowd of supporters during his victory speech on Nov. 4./*Courtesy of Angelina Katsanis for AFP via Getty Images*

By **Victoria Keraj**
News Editor
&
Rami Mansi
Editor-in-Chief

The New York City (NYC) Mayoral race was called on the night of Nov. 4, with Zohran Mamdani winning 50.4 percent of the vote, according to The New York Times.

Mamdani’s win is historic in NY as he will be the first Muslim mayor and the youngest since 1982. The City reports that a total of two million voters went to the polls, the highest recorded in over half a century.

In his victory speech, transcribed by The NYT, Mamdani stated, “I am young [...]. I am Muslim. I am a democratic socialist. And most damning of all, I refuse to apologize for any of this.”

President Donald Trump has implied he would cut funding to NYC if Mamdani were elected, while referring to him as a communist.

Trump stated, “If Communist Candidate Zohran Mamdani wins the Election for Mayor of New York City, it is highly unlikely that I will be contributing Federal Funds, other than the very minimum as required,” according to Reuters.

As previously reported

on by The Vanguard, Democrats disagreed on whether associating with his socialist alignment might be a hindrance to the party’s attempts to win enough House seats to gain a majority.

“There are so many immigrants [in NYC]. This is a city of immigrants. It makes me really excited to see somebody, someone who’s a person of color and an immigrant in office.”

On the same night as the NY mayoral election, Democratic candidates won for governor in both the Virginia and New Jersey elections. According to NBC News, these candidates, along with Mamdani, “were all rewarded for making affordability and economic issues the center of the campaigns.”

In his victory speech, Mamdani attributed a new period of greatness to

come for the Democratic Party to his focus on issues of affordability. “Our greatness [...] will be felt by every rent-stabilized tenant who wakes up on the first of every month knowing the amount they’re going to pay hasn’t soared since the month before.”

BC junior Elizabeth Vargas shared her joy at Mamdani’s win.

“I’m so excited that somebody outside of the two-party system won the election. Yes, he’s a democrat, but he’s a democratic socialist. Completely different,” Vargas continued to share what exactly she enjoyed about Mamdani’s win. “I think my favorite part about him is that all of the rich people in power are scared of him. Everyone is paying, everyone was paying to get Cuomo to beat him, and lost.”

The importance of immigrants in NYC was a topic Vargas brought up, stating, “ I love that he’s an immigrant. There are so many immigrants [in NYC]. This is a city of immigrants [...] It makes me really excited to see somebody, someone who’s a person of color and an immigrant in office.”

BC senior Uthman Okunola shared a lot of the same ideals as Vargas, including Mamdani’s

appeal to the younger generation.

“He reached out to a lot of young people, and he understood the pain that a lot of residents are facing, especially when it comes to cost of living crisis, when it comes to our funds are being managed across the city.” Okunola continued, “And so the fact that he has a way of approaching people and appealing to them is very beautiful, and I can’t wait to see what he does. I’m very excited for him.”

Although BC students expressed excitement over Mamdani’s mayoral win, some remain hesitant to welcome the mayor-elect fully.

“There’s that sentiment of hope. And even though that’s amazing, we still have to remind ourselves that he is a politician, and he needs to be held accountable for the things that he agreed to during his campaign, right?” said Leslie Ramirez, Program Coordinator at the Immigrant Student Success Office (ISSO) at BC.

”But I think it’s definitely a very progressive move. It’s just step forward in terms of realizing that [Mamdani] really sees the government working for the people, or serving the people rather than us living in that survival mode.”

With his transitional period in office coming to a full start, all eyes are on the mayor-elect to step up to the promises he made during his campaign.

President Donald Trump and USDA to Partially Restore SNAP Funding

By Emily Nixon
Staff Writer

On Oct. 31, two federal court judges ruled that the Trump Administration must reinstate at least partial funding for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).

“U.S. District Judge Indira Talwani in Boston ruled the Trump administration has until Monday [Nov. 3] to decide whether to pay at least partial SNAP food benefits,” reported NPR.

“In his Friday order, [Chief Judge John J.] McConnell said the Trump administration ‘must distribute’ aid from emergency reserves as soon as possible to keep SNAP benefits flowing,” reported Ocean State Media. “From the federal bench in Providence [Rhode Island], [...] he ordered the administration to submit a report on compliance, or ‘at least an update,’ by noon on Monday.”

SNAP was created in 1939 to help abate the struggles Americans faced during the Great Depression. Since its inception, SNAP has never been disrupted like it has been in recent times. SNAP looks to provide an avenue to fight hunger in American cities.

“Our mission is to increase food security and reduce hunger in partnership with cooperating organizations by providing children and low-income people access to food, a healthy diet and nutrition education in a manner that supports American agriculture and inspires public confidence,” states the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Food and Nutrition Homepage.

On Oct. 10, 2025, a letter from Ronald Ward, Acting Associate Administrator of SNAP at the USDA, was sent to all Regional and State Directors of SNAP issuing guidance to hold November electronic

benefit transfer (EBT) as well as warn that funding was running out.

“[...] if the current lapse in appropriations continues, there will be insufficient funds to pay full November SNAP benefits for approximately 42 million individuals across the Nation,” stated the letter. “Considering the operational issues and constraints that exist in automated systems, and in the interest of preserving maximum flexibility, we are forced to direct States

article.

“USDA contended it could not lawfully obligate funds it did not possess under the Antideficiency Act, and asserted that tapping contingency or Section 32 funds would undermine disaster SNAP and child nutrition programs,” stated the article.

Despite their arguments, the USDA was subsequently ordered to use the funds available to them to avoid “irreparable harm” to SNAP recipients, according to the article.

which they can easily do, and not before!” stated the post.

During a press conference on Nov. 4, White House Press Secretary Karoline Leavitt clarified the intentions behind Trump’s post.

“No, the administration is fully complying with the court order,” said Leavitt. “We are digging into a contingency fund that is supposed to be for emergencies, catastrophes, for war, and the president does not want to have to

take some time to receive this money because the democrats have forced the administration into a very untenable position,” said Leavitt. “Democrats are holding it up and making it difficult for the administration to get those payments out the door.”

Leavitt is not alone in blaming the consequences of the shutdown on Democrats’ shoulders. The official USDA website has a banner in red claiming that the democrats are “withholding services” for their own gain.

“Senate Democrats have voted 14 times against reopening the government. This compromises not only SNAP, but farm programs, food inspection, animal and plant disease protection, rural development, and protecting federal lands,” states the webpage. “Senate Democrats are withholding services to the American people in exchange for healthcare for illegals, gender mutilation, and other unknown ‘leverage’ points.”

As the shutdown continues, more and more of the contingency funding and reserves will run out. As the contingency fund is insufficient to cover one month of SNAP funding, the threat to people depending on SNAP assistance will continue to loom until either the government reopens or more funding is allocated to the program.

This is a developing story. The Vanguard will continue to report on the SNAP program as more information is revealed.



EBT Cards from various states./Courtesy of the United States Department of Agriculture

to hold their November issuance files and delay transmission to State EBT vendors until further notice. This includes on-going SNAP benefits and daily files.”

On Oct. 28, a coalition of states led by Massachusetts (MA), home to Judge Indira Talwani’s court, filed a complaint against the USDA’s suspension of benefits claiming it “was unlawful and arbitrary” as the suit “claimed USDA had access to sufficient contingency and Section 32 funds,” according to an article by FindLaw.com.

The USDA claimed the reallocation of funds from the contingency fund would “undermine” other disaster programs, according to the FindLaw

“If available funds are insufficient, USDA must reduce benefits proportionally rather than suspend them entirely, and the agency could also use Section 32 funds at its discretion,” stated the article. “She [Judge Talwani] ordered the USDA to report by November 3 on whether it would authorize at least reduced November SNAP benefits.”

On Nov. 4, President Donald Trump posted his resistance to restoring the SNAP funding on his Truth Social page.

“SNAP BENEFITS, which increased by Billions and Billions of Dollars [...] will be given only when the Radical Left Democrats open up government,

tap into this fund in the future, and that’s what he was referring to in his Truth Social post.”

The contingency fund is limited, only containing about “\$5 billion” of the necessary “\$9 billion” it takes to fully fund the program, according to Leavitt.

“It takes \$9 billion to get the full scale of the benefits out the door,” said Leavitt. “This contingency fund only has about \$5 billion in it.”

According to Leavitt, SNAP recipients need to have patience with the government, as “democrats” refuse to “reopen the government.”

“The recipients of these SNAP benefits need to understand it’s going to

CUNY Chancellor Félix V. Matos Rodríguez

Delivers 2025 State of the University Address



Chancellor Félix V. Matos Rodríguez delivering his 2025 State of the University Address./*Courtesy of CUNY*

By **Rami Mansi**
Editor-in-Chief

At Hostos Community College, located in the South Bronx, The City University of New York (CUNY) Chancellor Félix V. Matos Rodríguez delivered his State of the University address.

This annual address aims to reflect on CUNY’s accomplishments in the previous year and to share goals for the upcoming year.

After being introduced by Baruch College Student Maliq Royer-Crann and CUNY Board of Trustees Chairman William C. Thompson Jr., Chancellor Rodríguez thanked multiple city leaders, such as the Governor and Mayor’s team members, who were in attendance.

He began his speech, “I was president of Hostos for five years, so this feels like a homecoming for me. Here, I learned so much about leadership, but

above all, I was left with a deep belief in CUNY’s mission, so I’m deeply honored to bring our State of the University to this wonderful campus.”

Continuing, Chancellor Rodríguez discussed the boost in the current CUNY student population.

“In total, we expect over 8,000 new students to have joined our university this fall, for a combined total of nearly 20,000 since 2022. That is 20,000 more students who now have the chance to transform their lives with the power of a CUNY education.”

Speaking about CUNY’s partnership with NYC public schools, Chancellor Rodríguez discussed the opportunities CUNY offers high schoolers looking to get ahead in their college careers.

“Thousands of city high school students earn CUNY college credits through enrollment programs thanks to our growing collaboration

with FutureReadyNYC. This is a city initiative that offers free CUNY courses, as well as opportunities to come to our campuses, explore careers, and acquire credentials for 15,000 students at 135 high schools. It’s all about making sure the CUNY opportunity reaches every corner of our city.”

In connection with these schools, the Chancellor spoke about the role CUNY plays in educating the next generation of teachers.

“CUNY prepares nearly a third of the city’s new teachers each year, and enrolls many current K-12 educators in credential programs and courses. [...] To address the urgent need to improve reading instruction and outcomes in K-12 schools, we’re aligning our teacher preparation programs with the state and city’s literacy reforms.”

In a time where job employment is at an

increasingly slow rate in NYC, the Chancellor emphasized how the internships our campuses hold increase job opportunities for CUNY students.

“Another strategy is to create more employer partnerships so that more CUNY students have opportunities for paid internships and apprenticeships, like integrating industry specialists and advisors into academic departments.”

The Chancellor continued, “Students who have those experiences are three times more likely to get a job offer at graduation, and also have a higher beginning pay.”

Speaking on our urban university’s role in the political climate, Rodríguez reinforces CUNY’s stance as a moving force of higher education for all.

“The individual successes of our community members illustrate the creativity, scholarly achievement, and perseverance that continue to shine at CUNY.”

“No conversation about our aspirations can overlook the challenges we face in these times of intensifying political and social division,” Rodríguez stated.

“Across the country,

colleges and universities are facing growing political and financial pressure to compromise their core academic, social, and even foundational values. CUNY’s mission has always been rooted in the belief that education must remain a space for equal opportunity and for free inquiry, diverse perspectives, and independent thought.”

Mentioning Brooklyn College only briefly, Chancellor Rodríguez spoke positively about new renovations.

“We are also continuing to upgrade across the University. Between last fiscal year and this one, we are investing about \$850 million in facilities [...] and the modernizing of science lecture halls and labs at Roosevelt and Ingersoll halls at Brooklyn College.”

Chancellor Rodríguez ended his State of the University address by highlighting acclaimed members of the CUNY community.

“The individual successes of our community members illustrate the creativity, scholarly achievement, and perseverance that continue to shine at CUNY – and they reflect the indispensable role our college communities play in elevating New York.”

To read the full transcript of Chancellor Rodríguez’s speech, please visit the official CUNY website.

Wolfe Institute Spotlights Student Poets

By **Serena Edwards**
Opinions Editor
&
Eddy Prince
Staff Writer

On Oct. 30, the Brooklyn College (BC) art gallery, in conjunction with the Wolfe Institute, hosted an event spotlighting up-and-coming student poets. Four undergraduate students shared different poetry styles, demonstrating the diversity within the art.

The Vanguard sat down with Professor Burgess and the poets to talk about their devotion to the art of poetry.

“I’ve been teaching at Brooklyn College since 1999, when I was an MFA student in the graduate poetry program,” said Burgess. “The class that I’m teaching this semester is called ‘Crossing Brooklyn.’”

The Professor went ahead and explained the course outline.

“We start with a poem by Walt Whitman, one of the most famous American poets. [Whitman] published a poem in 1855 about his commute, taking the ferry from Manhattan to Brooklyn, and everything he observed.” Burgess continued, “And so, this class that I’m teaching now [focuses on] poets who have lived in Brooklyn, who have written poems in Brooklyn, and many of which have either gone to Brooklyn College or

taught at Brooklyn College. We’re tracing this lineage of Brooklyn-centered poets, and in some cases, Brooklyn College poets.”

The poets in attendance shared some prepared works and shared how influential poetry was in their own lives.

Shea Stevenson, a senior majoring in Anthropological Fiction, presented her poem “The Post-War City (directions for the set).”

Stevenson stated that her process for the poem was “unorthodox” since she doesn’t usually write poetry.

Stevenson also said that after presenting this poem and having others present the poem, she loved the aspect of performing this poem herself.

“I’ve seen other people read this poem, and I am like, no, no, no, let me do it. [...] I have specific ideas about the cadence, and about, like.”

After presenting her poem, Stevenson shares a reflection on her performance.

“I was happy. I’m not the kind of person who gets, like, super nervous about public speaking or anything. So, there isn’t necessarily a relief, it’s just, I’m happy to have done it.”

Harvey Wright, a studio art major with a passion for creative writing and poetry, also took the podium to present their poem, “Golden.”

“I wanted to try and see if I could write a cohesive



Students doing a walkthrough of the gallery./*Bert Eugene*

poem that felt like my voice while adhering to what is a bit more of a restrictive guideline,” said Wright. “My poem is a celebration of resilience.”

“Poetry has been a means of expression for me. It’s about liberating oneself.”

“Stubbornly, I persist.” This line from “Golden” echoes Wright’s response to facing hurdles in their own life.

“I’ve overcome quite a bit to get to where I am today,”

said Wright. “My hope is that [people might connect with] this poem. Anyone who has had to overcome or figure out how to live with mental health challenges. That has been a major part of my experience as well.”

“I have always been drawn to poetry. Something about it feels honest and raw,” Wright said. “Reading and writing poetry is something I enjoy immensely. I find it incredibly moving to read a powerful poem, and writing is a release for me. I appreciate the brevity [of poetry], every word used needs to be intentional and functional. A good poem has moved me to tears on more than one occasion.”

Burgess recommended Wright for the poetry spotlight. “[Wright] is a musician, and I love their writings,” said Burgess. “I was watching them read [a poem she wrote in class], and I was just seeing this quiet pride. One of my favorite things about teaching poetry is that I love watching people surprise themselves with what they create. They access their own creativity, and they write something that surprises them. It’s beautiful to see.”

Angelina Lambros, a student at Macaulay Honors College at BC and published author, read “See That Tree,” one of her poems from her book, “Imagination and a World of Dreams.”

“My poem was inspired by Enlightenment philosophy, human rights movements throughout history, and the natural world,” said Lambros. “It’s a call for civic awakening, compassion, empathy, and love [...] I spend a considerable amount of time thinking about how history and society intersect with personal experiences.”

Lambros is currently a double major in both History and Art.

“I think ‘Imagination’ [from my book] is especially important because it gave the collection its title [...] It’s an allegorical poem about the creative journey and its connection to dreaming and perseverance. [Imagination] encourages resilience and frames creativity as a shared and transformative experience.”

Lambros expresses what many poets feel about their art.

“My work reflects both of my passions,” said Lambros. “Poetry has been a means of expression for me. It’s about liberating oneself. While I aspire to continue publishing books, my career focus is in public history. I’m passionate about history and about making it engaging for the public. I hope to create experiences for people to connect with the past in ways that are both interesting and meaningful.”



Harvey Wright performing “Golden”./*Bert Eugene*

Muslims Giving Back and MWEI Host Bouquet-Making Event

By T’Neil Gooden
Features Editor

Brooklyn College’s (BC) Muslims Giving Back collaborated with BC’s Muslim Women’s Educational Initiative (MWEI) to provide a flower bouquet-making event on Oct. 30th in the Women’s Center room, 227 New Ingersoll.

The event featured real dried flowers that students could use to make bouquets for themselves or anyone they believed needed one. Students were provided with a tutorial on making bouquets, many of whom made them for friends, family, and themselves.

“I just love the fact that the [women’s center] lets you do things you wouldn’t regularly be able to do. Like, when am I going to make a bouquet?” said Mayar Shihadeh, a sophomore at BC.

Over 30 students came in and out of the women’s center to support the MWEI while making these bouquets, and left the rooms not only with bouquets but also with a new community.

“Creativity, the opportunity to express yourself differently, and also just meeting people. I think that’s a big part of the event,” said Sara Qureshi, junior at BC and secretary of MWEI. “They’re usually people I don’t



Students bouquet of flowers from MWEI’s Bouquet-making event./T’Neil Gooden

really meet anyway, but through events like these, we get the opportunity to make new friends and make new connections.”

Attendees of the event were given the option to donate ten dollars to MWEI in support of countries that are experiencing severe hardships.

“This event is mostly to have fun and connect, but the core purpose of it is to raise money for Palestine for Gaza and for orphans, and many, many other countries like Sudan and Bangladesh, and all the countries that are in need,” said Samira

Mamirova, the vice president of MWEI. “I would say that’s the core purpose, which makes this event more enlightening.”

Leaders of MWEI delivered this message and ensured that students understood the importance of giving back to these communities.

“This is for a good cause, right, and I think it brings a lot of us together after finding out the main purpose of it,” Mamirova told The Vanguard. “I think in times when different communities are struggling, it’s always important, even if you’re not part of the community, to educate yourself about both communities and be able to participate in these events to help one another.”

Students followed by explaining the need to learn how to give back to those who need it.

“Giving back to people who have been giving to you. I think that’s very important. Especially nowadays, when people use social media, I feel like people have forgotten what it feels like to actually make connections with other people,” said Qureshi. “I feel like people just don’t acknowledge them because it’s just not on their ‘for you’ pages or their social

media. But, through events like these, people get more awareness of what’s going on around the world.”

“I just love the fact that the [women’s center] let you do things you wouldn’t regularly be able to do. Like, when am I going to make a bouquet?”

The eboard members of MWEI were not the only ones to show support for the charity week donations; students also supported spreading awareness about these countries.

“I love when they [MWEI] do events like this, that really mobilize efforts to generate more charity among students, you know, Shihadeh told The Vanguard. “Being charitable towards

people who are our age, maybe from the same backgrounds, who are absolutely not getting the same opportunities of safe, accessible education where they are. I think it’s so important to give back to our community here and our communities abroad.”

Brooklyn College prides itself on the diversity of its students, and this event displayed that same testament.

“Brooklyn College’s backbone is its diversity. It’s something that they[BC] always celebrate and advertise to new students,” said Shihadeh. “I feel like they should keep their word and honor that diversity and show more love to all the different types of students and all the different backgrounds that their undergraduate students come from. I think it’s necessary.”

For students interested in MWEI and Muslims Giving Back can visit their Instagrams:

@muslimsgivingbackbc and @brooklyn.msa.



BC students’ bouquet from MWEI’s charity week bouquet making event./T’Neil Gooden

BC LGBTA Hosts Fourth Annual Spookeasy

By **Renae Visico**
Staff Writer

On Oct. 30, Brooklyn College’s Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Alliance (LGBTA) hosted its fourth annual Halloween party, the Spookeasy, in the Student Center. Students were treated to an afternoon of fun and spooky activities, including open mic, a costume contest, and free food.

The Spookeasy has been one of the many ways the LGBTA communicates the importance of creating spaces where queer people and allies alike can feel comfortable

faces as well as returning faces, reflecting the development and continuity of this tradition.

“I was here at the one last year,” said sophomore psychology student Ivy Vincent. “I feel like this one is a lot more open. I see a lot more people participating in it this year.”

That participation was reflected in the Open Mic, where students showcased a variety of their different talents. Performances included karaoke to pop/rock songs, K-pop dances, original songs, and even a banjo performance.

“I think that art is one of the most important tools that we have

vibrant people, and amazing characters was a moment of reprieve.”

Students enjoyed how the Open Mic provided an opportunity for them to express themselves and witness the creativity and passions among their student body.

“My favorite part of the event was definitely the Open Mic,” said first-year psychology student Christopher Ramirez. “I’ve never heard people sing their hearts out harder in my life.”

Before students had to rush to classes, the LGBTA made sure everyone could participate in this year’s costume contest. The contest was split into five categories: c*ntiest, scariest, campiest, most niche, and gayest.

“I just walked in and got a bunch of compliments. Everyone here is so nice,” said first-year acting student Sherebiah Lawes, who won the c*ntiest category with her “My Little Pony” Pinkie Pie costume. “The atmosphere is really welcoming. I love having a sense of community in different places.”

The Spookeasy even drew college students from beyond BC, including NYU student Cindy Zhu, who won the campiest costume category dressed up as Alexander Hamilton.

Alongside providing a space for students to have fun, the LGBTA made sure to remind attendees of the wellness resources available to them. The “Brooklyn is PrEP’d” program at SUNY Downstate Hospitals set up a table



Joe Scarpetta sharing jokes and telling stories during the Spookeasy./Terrance Bobb

to increase awareness of their HIV prevention services.

“I think that art is one of the most important tools that we have in this world to not only connect with one another, but to connect with ourselves.”

“I hope that more people know what prep is, and that it’s available, no shame in using it. It doesn’t matter,” said Outreach Coordinator Liz Smith. “Being safe doesn’t mean it has to be boring.”

The Spookeasy was more than just a Halloween party; it was a warm reminder that BC has a space for everyone of any identity to feel appreciated and express their true selves.

“I want students to acknowledge that BC is really queer friendly, so they’re always welcome into these spaces around campus,” said Matute. “I feel like queer liberation is not just advocacy, you know? Or protests. Sometimes it’s just queer existence and queer joy.”

Students interested in the BC LGBTA can find more information on their Instagram: @brooklyn.lgbta.



Spookeasy guests gather around a table of snacks, games and decorations ./Terrance Bobb

simply existing as themselves.

“I think it’s really important for us to have a queer space, and Spookeasy was able to provide that for people not only who are queer, but also people who are allies,” said LGBTA president Masiel Matute. “It’s so important to fight for queer and trans rights. But it’s also super important to just let them exist.”

This year’s Spookeasy drew a crowd of new

in this world to not only connect with one another, but to connect with ourselves,” said LGBTQ+ Program Assistant Joe Scarpetta, who performed a reading of Yoko Ono’s poem, “Tuna Fish Sandwich,” while making a tuna fish sandwich. “I think that a lot of us in this room know what it’s like to have an unhappy childhood. But to go to a museum or a gallery, and to see so many beautiful colors,



A light box decoration included on the tables during the event./Terrance Bobb

Set Designer and Director Talk About “Marcus; or The Secret of Sweet”

By Kira Ricarte
Staff Writer

On Oct. 31, the Brooklyn College (BC) Theater Department held the opening night of “Marcus; or The Secret of Sweet”, the last play of the Brother/Sister trilogy written by Tarell Alvin McCraney, best known for writing and adapting the play that inspired the 2016 film “Moonlight”.

In the play, the 16-year-old titular character, Marcus Eshu, lives in the public housing projects within the fictional city of San Pere, Louisiana, in the early 2000s, just before Hurricane Katrina. Marcus, played by BC Student Zander Peña, seeks answers about his strange dreams about his late father Elegba, whom his mother, Oba, avoids talking about, and other traits of Marcus’s personality. This includes a recurring “sweetness”, from his closeted sexuality to his unusual dreams, which mainly feature a man in a white robe, urging Marcus to “tell” someone the things he is saying. This becomes vital as Marcus bonds with Ogun Size, portrayed by BFA Acting student Bambo Coulibaly, who was a friend of Marcus’s father.

But getting the truth about these topics becomes a struggle for Marcus. The writer employs dramatic irony with the

character’s dialogue, leaving the audience in the know of many truths the characters are choosing to keep hidden. For most of the play, characters will stop themselves before revealing long-buried truths they believe are better left unsaid or merely implied through coded language.

This collective silence and refusal to discuss forbidden and stigmatized topics leave Marcus naïve and vulnerable to people who seek to take advantage of him and the people he cares about.

The director of this production, Irvin Mason Jr., first encountered McCraney’s plays when he was an undergraduate in college as an assistant director for the first part of the Brother/Sister trilogy, “In The Red and Brown Water”. Years later, as a Directing Fellow for the Drama League, Mason Jr. was given the opportunity to direct this play when the BC theater department faculty reached out to him.

“I thought it was hilarious [...] I feel like when I first read the script, it felt like I knew Marcus really well,” said Mason Jr. “Marcus is not just a facet of myself, but the facet of every young black boy coming to terms with who they are, their sexuality, all these things [...] My first reaction was that this

be told.”

Mason Jr. shared he had a positive experience working with the cast and crew of Marcus at BC.

“Oh, it was amazing. Working on a show at a school or institution, or university is very special ‘cause it reminds you how much fun we find in the reading and how much fun we find in working together and doing theater,” said Mason Jr.. “I think sometimes when you get to a certain level of this profession, you kinda forget to find the joy that’s in it. And this cast has centered so much joy in it.”

The fun and joy of collaboration felt in this production was felt throughout the team. Wells Thorne, a prominent set designer for BC productions, shared how much she enjoyed working with Mason to exchange ideas about designing the play’s physical world.

“Irvin was great! From the beginning, he was a great person to work with. He always seemed so excited about my ideas, and anything he added on or thought of, it completely made sense to me,” said Thorne. “The initial version of the set was pretty different from what we wound up with, and I think that’s just what came of us [‘yes, and’-ing] each other. Like ‘how about we have this?’, and ‘Yes, and we also have that’, and this world sort of evolved between the two of us together.”

One of Thorne’s earliest ideas for the world of Marcus onstage was to add old-fashioned faux wrought-iron panels reminiscent of the historic French Quarter in New Orleans. Inspired by a housing project pre-Hurricane Katrina, it was reminiscent of many other housing projects that were destroyed by the city after the hurricane.

As Thorne dove further into her research into the Greater New Orleans area, the Louisiana bayou, and the urban housing projects that people lived in to make the world of San Pere, she also found a historical role that ironwork played in African American history, which makes the wrought iron choice all the more significant.

“The more I looked into [the ironwork], the more I learned about how the wrought iron and the art of making wrought iron has been entangled with the Black community in Louisiana and South Carolina and areas like that for generations, because it was originally something



The set of “Marcus; or The Secret of Sweet” before the play begins./
Kira Ricarte

that enslaved workers would specialize in and then something that freedmen would use to support themselves,” said Thorne.

“So, the history of wrought iron in this area is hugely tied with the history of the Black community, which I did not know in the beginning when I was deciding to put it in the set. I was going off of the research images. But, that was super interesting.”

As a result of the creative collaboration of theater artists and the extensive research that went into six months of designing and producing, the cast and crew transformed the Buckwald stage. Thorne and Mason Jr. created a dynamic and dreamlike set with two wooden staircases leading up to a raised platform with a plain balcony railing. Faux wrought iron panels below the platform frame a wooden walkway that characters use to enter and exit the stage at various points of the play. Tufts of grass grow underneath the platform. Traditional African instruments hang from the wooden beams, along with a small lantern that glows green whenever Marcus dreams of the man in the white robe. A bench sits on downstage left, which Marcus uses as a bed at the beginning of the play.

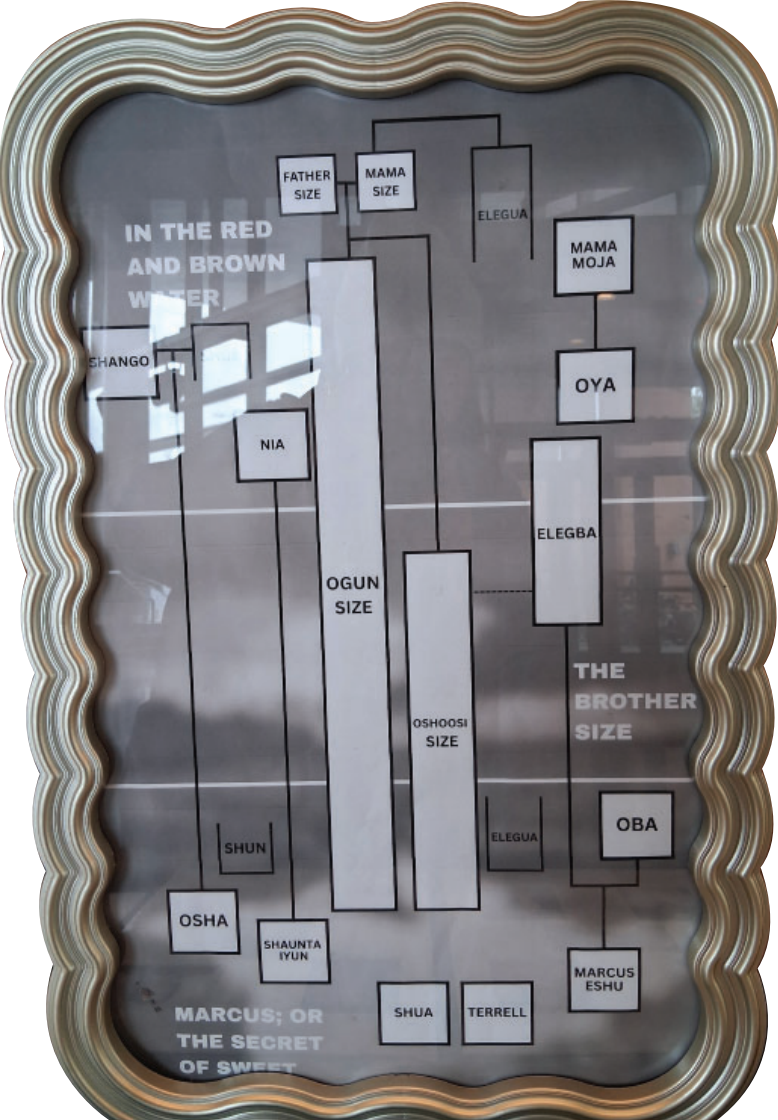
Whenever Marcus enters the bayou, the set becomes completely otherworldly, with torn curtains made to resemble the environment’s dense and unusual foliage descending from the fly system; smoke hovering over the stage; and a glowing stump of a swamp cypress tree brought onstage. The wooden staircases become a kind of anchor, connecting San Pere to the bayou; the manmade and the ordinary are connected to the mystery of the unknown and what remains buried under the silence.

When the director was asked what he wanted audiences to take away from the play, Mason Jr. stated that he doesn’t like telling audiences exactly what to take away from his shows. He hopes that the show prompts audiences to ask questions. His director’s note in the play’s program is structured as a poem full of questions, such as “What does it mean to be sweet /in a world that asks you to harden? /...What happens when the question itself becomes the prayer?”

Mason Jr. admits in the director’s note that he doesn’t have the answers, and for the audience watching this with the most basic of context, “Marcus” can be a confusing play with localized dialects and indirect language utilized to discuss or avoid dark topics such as death and homophobia.

But asking questions and staying in the unknown, trying to find the truth, is the point of this play, and something Mason Jr. encourages. In the last two stanzas in his director’s note, he wrote, “Maybe the question isn’t what The Secret of Sweet is, / but what sweetness stirs awake in you. / May you listen. / May you wonder. / May you feel something move– / even if you don’t have a name for it.”

For more information about upcoming shows from the Brooklyn College Theater Department, go to @bctheatercuny at Instagram.



The family tree of the characters within the Brother/Sister play trilogy written by Tarell Alvin McCraney./Kira Ricarte

Modern Day Slavery: The 13th Amendment Did Not Abolish Slavery

By **Serena Edwards**
Opinions Editor

The 13th Amendment is famously known as the amendment that prohibits slavery; however, millions of inmates are subjected to slavery conditions because of a loophole within the 13th Amendment. Slavery never went away; if anything, the government became more subtle in how it implemented it.

The 13th Amendment states, “Neither slavery nor involuntary servitude, except as a punishment for crime whereof the party shall have been duly convicted, shall exist within the United States, or any place subject to their jurisdiction.”

It is important to note the section where it states, “except as a punishment for a crime whereof the party shall.” This part is often overlooked by citizens and abused and manipulated by the government.

The Emancipation Proclamation was issued by President Abraham Lincoln during the Civil War, which freed all enslaved people who were in rebellion against the Union. However, this did not free the enslaved people working on plantations. The last enslaved person to be “freed” was on June 19, 1865, in Galveston, Texas (Juneteenth).

Slavery within the United States (U.S.) was around for centuries before being “ratified”. The horrific conditions that Black people had to endure have been taught, but not to the fullest extent it should. When enslaved people became

free, they were let into a world that still felt like they were left behind at the plantation. The government didn’t know what to do with enslaved people since there was an extensive number of people who were now free.

The Black Codes came into effect by the government shortly after the Emancipation

Research Center, “This marks a 33% increase since 2000, when there were 36.2 million Black people living in the U.S.”

Within the prison system, officers have used slavery tactics to make inmates do unpaid labor. Within the 13th Amendment, slavery is condoned as punishment for those who have committed a crime. Due

and at times dangerous work that fails to prepare them for life beyond incarceration,” according to the Economic Policy Institute (EPI).

The documentary 13th breaks down how the 13th Amendment didn’t abolish slavery, but rather just modernized it to seem more human.

The school-to-prison pipeline is a tactic used in

minor infractions leads students to get involved with other dangerous activities, such as gangs.

Even within the courts, judges find it reasonable to charge children with jail time for being “rude”. Donna Scott Davenport, a judge in Tennessee, is particularly hard on children by arresting them and teaching them a “lesson”.

“For cursing, she said, she typically sentenced kids to two to 10 days in jail. ‘Was I in violation?’ she said. ‘Heck, yes. But am I going to allow a child to cuss anyone out? Heck, no,’ according to ProPublica.

These harmful policies and rulings lead to the never-ending cycle of Black children learning comfort within the prison system.

Rikers Island is one of the biggest prisons within the US and houses over a thousand inmates from all different age ranges, starting from eighteen. The conditions are so inhumane that they consider Rikers Island a humanitarian crisis. Many people have died in these facilities due to working extensive hours and living with limited resources. These circumstances are interchangeable with the circumstances on plantations, yet are dismissed because these people are “criminals”.

Slavery has always been around and is still prominent today, even though it is not in broad daylight anymore. Behind the walls of many jails, it is still happening.



A prison cell block./Courtesy of Emiliano Bar on Unsplash

Proclamation.

According to History.com, “Black codes were restrictive laws designed to limit the freedom of African Americans and ensure their availability as a cheap labor force after slavery was abolished during the Civil War.”

The government started putting harder punishments on crimes and criminalizing things such as homelessness to bring Black people back to prison, ultimately enslaving them all over again.

37 percent of people incarcerated in the U.S. are Black as of 2025; however, Black people make up only 14.4 percent of the population within the U.S. According to the Pew

to this loophole, the prison system has abused this and overworked its inmates. “U.S. law also explicitly excludes incarcerated workers from the most universally recognized workplace protections. Incarcerated workers are not covered by minimum wage laws or overtime protection, are not afforded the right to unionize, and are denied workplace safety guarantees,” according to the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU).

“Despite producing billions of dollars in value for the benefit of prisons and the private sector, incarcerated workers have almost no labor rights and are paid very little—if they are paid at all—for menial, exploitative,

schools that allows police presence within schools and ultimately allows students to be arrested as discipline. This policy in school ultimately traumatizes students and trains their minds to get used to the prison system. This particularly affects Black children at a disproportionate rate.

“Black students with disabilities are three times more likely to receive short-term suspensions than their white counterparts, and are more than four times as likely to end up in correctional facilities,” according to ACLU.

The system is broken and has conditioned Black students to see incarceration as a mainstream route of life. Giving suspensions for

“Video Killed the Radio Star”: MTV and the Lost Art of Music Videos

By Jaida Dent
Managing Editor

Music is the cornerstone of pop culture. Many viral moments that circulate throughout modern media often share the common trait of music, whether it’s a song lyric, a music video, or the emergence of a new pop star. However, what was once valued by the masses now feels like an afterthought, as the major cable channel founded on a love for music has lost its identity over the years.

The Music Television Channel (MTV) started its dominance on Aug. 1, 1981, by playing “Video Killed the Radio Star” by The Buggles. The channel would be a hub of music content with 24/7 programming, and even help shape the careers of iconic artists like Michael Jackson and Madonna. Jackson’s Thriller music video was a turning point for the channel after much of the content displayed was rock music and featured a lack of artists of color.

MTV would continue to host music-related content until 1992 with “The Real World”. While the show is iconic for paving the way for modern reality TV, it also signaled the direction the channel would be headed. “The Real World” created a model of reality TV, where ordinary people are brought together, often in close living quarters, and are filmed interacting with one another. The model brings together casts of diverse personalities that help ensure the show’s popularity.

“The Challenge” has contestants showcasing their athleticism in unconventional situations for a chance at winning money. “Jersey Shore” gave us a glimpse of young 20-year-olds partying

and living together in Seaside Heights. “16 and Pregnant” and “Teen Mom” showed the lives of young mothers dealing with new children and changing familial relationships (and also contributed to a decrease in teen births).

Even though MTV

anymore, where do people go to interact with that content? Social media platforms have become a resource for the way artists market themselves and their music to the broader audience.

TikTok, specifically, has changed the music industry at an almost

Blondes “What’s Up?” (1992), and Labi Siffre’s “Bless the Telephone” from 1971.

But where TikTok succeeds, YouTube begins to fail. The creation and viewership of music videos were at their peak in the 2010s, with the most-viewed music

watch a well-produced 3-minute video. Visuals are still a defining part of an artist’s discography, as they set the tone for their sound and album, but with artists opting for low-budget (but still entertaining) visualizers, the beauty of the well-crafted music video fades.

So what does the future hold for MTV and the state of music videos? For the latter, many artists are still creating music videos that help define their latest projects. Doja Cat’s “Jealous Type” video helped define the ‘80s theme of her new album, “Vie”. Zara Larsson’s “Midnight Sun” pulled references from the Lisa Frank-themed memes associated with her 2017 song, “Symphony.” Tate McRae and Katseye continue to pull audiences to their videos with the associated choreography brought to life.

For the former part of the question, it doesn’t look too good. By the end of 2025, MTV will be closing down five of its music channels in the UK (MTV Music, MTV 80s, MTV 90s, Club MTV, and MTV Live), with only the main channel that broadcasts reality TV left standing. It’s unclear whether or not the channel will return to its original roots, but the impact of the company cannot be denied. MTV created a wave of appreciation for music videos and showcased the work of artists who didn’t have a platform to share it on until the birth of the Internet. Without MTV, “video” wouldn’t have a chance to shine in the shadow of “radio,” and that changed the music industry whether we recognize it or not.



The MTV Logo./Courtesy of Far Out Magazine

continues to produce reality TV and celebrity-focused content, they aren’t alone in the game anymore. The television market is absolutely saturated with reality TV, with Bravo leading the charge with the “Housewives” franchise, “Vanderpump Rules,” and “Below Deck”. Other channels like ABC, FOX, and CBS grab viewers with their competitive reality shows and dating shows, including “The Bachelor” and “The Bachelorette”, “Masterchef” and “Big Brother”. Streaming services are also pulling audiences in with their product, like Peacock’s successful “Love Island USA” and Hulu’s “The Kardashians”, which revived E! Network’s “Keeping Up With the Kardashians”.

Since MTV isn’t spotlighting music videos

unfathomable rate, and that is through the power of trends. It has become more common for artist to preview their music before even dropping, and TikTok has been a place for snippets to live. Through the algorithm and FYP (For You Page), it is hard to escape a tune that is stuck in everyone’s heads, because when you like a few videos with similar content, TikTok will only show you more. This allows a snippet of a song, whether unreleased, new, or even something from a decade ago, to catapult an artist’s career and push them into the mainstream spotlight.

Some notable songs that have invaded my FYP in October are Kid Cudi’s “Maui Wowie” from his “A Kid Named Cudi” album from 2022, a mashup of Nicki Minaj’s “Beez in the Trap” (2012) and 4 Non

videos on YouTube coming from that time. The Top 5 videos were released between 2012 and 2017, with “Despacito” by Luis Fonsi and Daddy Yankee sitting at the top of the list with 8.8 billion views. Now, most music videos aren’t touching the billion views mark, and some artists aren’t making videos at all. Beyoncé’s “Renaissance” album had the running joke of her telling fans, “You are the visual, baby,” after the album’s lack of music videos.

One of the biggest reasons that music videos aren’t as common anymore is that no one’s actually watching them. TikTok has mastered the art of quick videos, but at the cost of reducing the attention spans of people. Many would rather listen to the quick 15 snippet of a track than

Sports Recaps (10/26 - 11/01)

By Reagan McLean
Staff Writer

As the seasons are closing, the push to the playoffs continues for Brooklyn College (BC) Athletics. The Cross-Country and Tennis seasons conclude, while the women's volleyball and soccer team, and men's soccer team made their playoff debut on Nov. 1, and are competing for a championship.

Women's Cross Country

On Oct. 26, the Bulldogs women's cross country team wrapped up their season at the CUNYAC championships, hosted in Riverdale, New York (NY). They placed sixth overall, with Hunter winning the conference championship, Medgar Evers, CCNY, Baruch, and John Jay.

Freshman Lilly Zuss finished first for BC and fifth overall (27:41.2) on the 6K course. Other top finishers include sophomore Ruhamah Cox (34:36.1) and freshman Daniella Nudel (52nd overall). Freshman Meliza Aguilar placed fourth for Brooklyn (59th), Freshman Gaetha Val (62nd), and Victoria Kelly (63rd).

Women's Tennis

The BC women's tennis team season came to a close on Oct. 28. The Bulldogs, the No. 3 seed, fell to the No. 2 seed

College Lightnings with a score of 3-0. The Bulldogs are slowly clinching a playoff spot, potentially hosting the first match.

The Bulldogs started strong with the first four points. Right Side freshman, Ella Snobar, made seven straight points to take 23-6. The first set closed off with a score of 25-9. Snobar ended the game with 8 kills, 2 digs, and 1 block assist.

In the second set, the Bulldogs took an early lead, but the Lightning scored six straight points to take their first lead at 17-15. The Bulldogs reclaimed their lead when Libero junior, Malia Reyes, hit two aces and one assist. She sparked a 10-0 run, and the Bulldogs won the second set with 25-17. Reyes had 10 assists, 4 aces, and 4 digs.

Outside hitter freshman, Saule Okeke-Ziburkus, helped expand the lead in the third set by scoring four kills. Thus, allowing the Bulldogs to take an 8-0 run to make the score 12-3. After this run, the Bulldogs did not look back and won the set with 25-11. With Okeke-Ziburkus being the main threat on offense, she had a total of 8 kills, 6 aces, and 2 digs.

The Bulldogs continue forward with a doubleheader on Nov. 1, as they head to Madison, New Jersey, to participate in a tri-match and rematch with the Rutgers-

Olivia Fan. After the Scarlet Raiders responded, both teams battled back and forth until the Bulldogs came back from a 22-19 deficit. After errors made by the Raiders, the opening set belonged to Brooklyn 27-25.

In the second set, the Bulldogs were trailing 16-14. The Bulldogs got seven straight scores that included three straight kills. The Bulldogs closed the set, and a kill made by Outside Hitter freshman, Okeke-Ziburkus, sealed the deal for the second set with a score of 25-19.

The Bulldogs were trailing 12-6 in the final set until a tie of 6-0 came. Back-to-back kills were made by Fan and Outside Hitter freshman, Olive Carroll. Now, the score is tied 24-24, but not for long. Sophomore right-side hitter Danielle Fuxman gives BC a 25-24 advantage, and Carroll ends the match with her sixth kill. Snobar finished the game with 11 kills and 3 blocks; Okeke-Ziburkus had 10 kills and 1 block. Senior libero Ruti Joshi finished with a match-high 24 digs and surpassed 1,000 digs for her career.

The Bulldogs ended the doubleheader with a loss to FDU Florham, with a hard-fought battle of 3-2.

The Bulldogs had an early lead in the second set. With a commanding 20-12 lead, followed by Joshi's aces.

Fuxman tied the match 1-1 on a kill.

A four-score run and a kill by Okeke-Ziburkus helped the Bulldogs gain a 19-15 advantage in the third set. The Bulldogs got a 2-1 lead in the match, followed by a Carroll kill.

The Bulldogs came back from a 7-1 deficit with a 5-0 run to cut the lead down to 7-6, but

FDU-Florham answered back and closed the match. Okeke-Ziburkus led the team with 17 kills, and Snobar added 14. Joshi contributed 35 digs on her milestone day. The Bulldogs wrap up conference play at home on Senior Night against Medgar Evers on Tuesday, Nov.4, at 6 pm.

three of his individual events with first-place finishes in the 200 IM, the 100 freestyle, and the 100 breaststroke.

The Bulldogs look to keep the winning streak alive at home on Nov.15, against Sarah Lawrence at 1 pm.

Women's Soccer

After a back-and-forth match, the Bulldogs lost at home to CCNY with a score of 2-0 on Nov. 1. They look forward to coming back next season much faster and stronger.

Men's Soccer

After a hard-fought match, the Bulldogs lost their first game at home all season to the Lehman Lightning 1-0, after going unbeaten during the regular season with seven wins. Freshman Goal Keeper, Wilson Munoz, made the first key save of the game at 15' to keep the score 0-0. Freshman forward Andrew Gavrilov took a shot to the top left, which was stopped. Sophomore Forward Emir Imamberdiev tried to create another scoring opportunity, but was turned away at the 83'.

The men's soccer team made it all the way to the semi-finals as the number one seed in Nathan Bell's first year as their head coach.

Men's Swimming and Diving

With back-to-back victories, the men's swimming team is 2-0. The Bulldogs got their second victory against St. Joseph's Long Island with a score of 169-44 on Nov. 1.

The Bulldogs won every individual event of the afternoon. Sophomore Michael Kravets finished first in the 200 freestyle and the 500 freestyle. Freshman Or Volpert won the 50m



Senior Midfielder Bennedick Agustin head bumping soccer ball against Lehman Lighting on Nov. 1./*Courtesy of BC Athletics*



BC women's volleyball team celebrating match win on Nov. 1./*Courtesy of BC Athletics*

Baruch Bearcats, 4-1, in the CUNYAC Semifinals at the USTA National Tennis Center.

The Bulldogs closed out their season with a 6-8 record, doubling last year's win total.

Women's Volleyball

On Oct. 28, the losing streak of the BC Women's Volleyball team comes to an end as they beat the Lehman

Newark Scarlet Raiders and the host FDU-Florham.

The BC Bulldogs got their revenge and won their match against the Scarlet Raiders with a clean sweep, 3-0.

The Bulldogs were able to set the tone of the game early by scoring the first four points of the match, plus a kill made by Middle Blocker Junior,

“Let’s Bet On It”: How Sports Betting Is Ruining Sports

By Manuel Polanco
Sports Editor

On Oct. 23, Portland Trailblazers coach and NBA Hall of Famer (HOFer) Chauncy Billups was arrested by the FBI for his alleged involvement in an illegal gambling ring. Billups wasn’t the only person arrested, however, as Miami Heat player Terry Rozier and former player Damos Jones were also arrested for allegedly partaking in this ring.

Rozier would allegedly manipulate his performance so that bettors could have an advantage in the stakes. Rozier isn’t the first player to do this, as back in July of 2024, Jontay Porter of the Toronto Raptors was arrested for partaking in an illegal gambling ring where he was manipulating his performance for bettors. The question now is, how did we get here?

For the past two to three years, the amount of pro sports betting content has flooded the media space and created

an environment where betting is no longer a stigma.

Imagine this, 10 years ago you’d be watching Entertainment and Sports Programming Network (ESPN) do their daily recap or reporting on whatever story of the day they’re talking about, now fast forward a decade, and what usefulness does ESPN have? Live sports and that’s about it.

The funniest thing, however, is how open ESPN is with promoting sports betting.

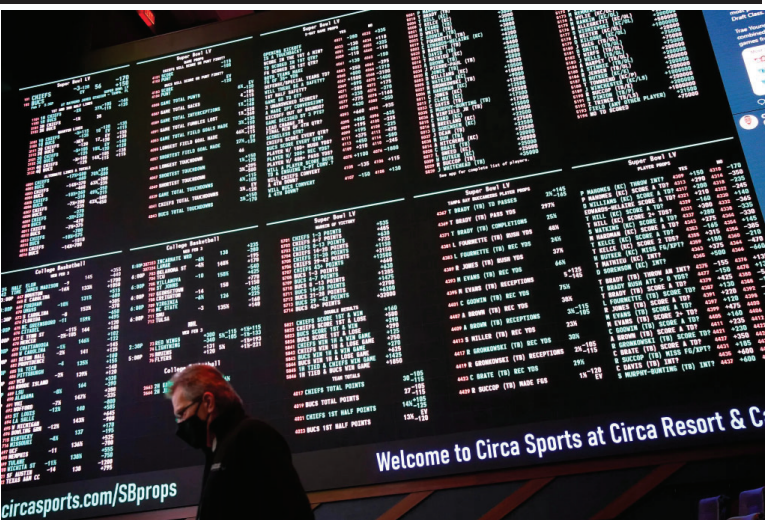
When reporting on the arrest of both Billups and Rozier, ESPN analyst Mike Greenberg says, “[...] sports gambling was something that was always in the shadows; it was something the leagues stayed far away from; it was something networks like ESPN would stay far away from.” Now, this is all good and well, but the ironic and maybe funniest part is the fact that ESPN put a graphic up of their sports betting site, “ESPNBET,” at the bottom of the screen as he was saying

this.

How can one condemn sports betting and then promote it at the same time? How can ESPN both denounce illegal sports betting but have the gall to promote their own site in the process?

USNews reports that Americans bet \$150 billion on games in 2024. The article goes on to say, “Many of the survey respondents would be considered casual bettors, with 44% placing fewer than five bets in a typical month and 40% saying they wager less than \$100 monthly. However, 27% say they regularly wager at least \$500 a month.”

According to Addiction Center, 12% of Americans partake in sports gambling, with sportsbooks of choice being either DraftKings, BetMGM, and Caesars. Long were the days when you would go to the casino and get that dopamine rush after every bet; now you can get that rush right from your phone with a code for DraftKings to get easy money.



Live sports betting at a Circa Sports casino./Courtesy of John Locher for the Associated Press

The culture around betting has gotten increasingly popular even amongst athletes, but this brings about two issues:

players getting harassed by people who out-parlay on them, and players promoting gambling.

As more and more people place bets on players, more often than not, they will be judged on their performance and whether this performance helped get a good payout. All this does is make athletes

more paranoid about their game and stress them out when random strangers send them death threats.

An article from ESPN written by David Purdum detailed how the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) athletes have been subjected to constant harassment from people who wager on them on betting apps.

Purdum notes, “The analysis flagged 743 abusive or threatening messages referencing betting or match-fixing allegations, with 73% of them occurring during March Madness, the most popular event with American bettors. Women athletes received approximately 59% more abusive messages than men, the analysis found.”

As the dilemma of sports gambling grows and potentially more arrests could happen, sports organizations shouldn’t be surprised when one of their own gets caught for this crime, as this has been happening under their noses for a while.

Why is it now that we can allow players to promote gambling to young audiences who will be more susceptible to it? A young sports gambler will grow up to be a full-time gambler with bad habits and a dopamine rush programmed into them like an AI trained to mimic your voice. There used to be a time when we frowned on sports betting, but it seems everyone is now trying to hit on a lucrative parlay.

The beauty of sports was watching your favorite team go out and either disappoint you or make you happy. Now this era of betting is changing the landscape, where the love and integrity of the game are lost, and in the UFC’s case, people will look at the sport as a fixed match with a predetermined outcome.

Stories from Students @ BC: Issue #2: Hunger

By Jocelyn Rios
Comic Artist
&
Ameena Khan
Comic Artist



HEY YOU!

Wanna have your story turned into a comic?!

Reach out! ✉️ Jocynowoc@gmail.com

I promise I don't bite 🐉🐉