



**Calgarians call
for climate
action (Pg. 5)**

The rising global tide of right-wing extremism

The far-right movement grows in Canada and across the world

Khaoula Choual
Staff Writer



Political violence has risen in the last couple of years, and Canadian researchers and politicians have voiced concerns about the rise of the ‘far right movement.’ However, this isn’t a trend specifically in Canada, but rather a growing concern worldwide. Alt-right demonstrations like rallies and protests have been shown in Canada, the United States, the United Kingdom and Europe.

During the early 2000s, the 2008 financial crisis and the 2015 refugee crisis, right-wing movements provoked issues around government involvement, economic hardship, integration, immigration, security and individual freedom. Many world leaders and groups capitalised on this fear, dividing people into an ‘us’ versus ‘them.’

Rising political violence

After the assassination of conservative political activist Charlie Kirk on Sept. 10, U.S. President Donald Trump claimed the left-wing radical

Far right groups, such as Second Sons, spread their mission across Canada through demonstrations and social media. Photo courtesy of X/@secondsonscanada

groups instigate political violence in the U.S. and “they should be put in jail.”

In response to Kirk’s death, the top presidential advisor Stephen Miller said, “We are going to use every resource we have ... throughout this government to identify, disrupt, dismantle and destroy these networks and make America safe again.”

In Canada, the right-wing viewpoint has significantly grown. The CBC reported on Fascist Fight clubs that were recruiting members who were interested in martial arts and getting into proper shape. These fight clubs are initially planning a ‘race war.’

The Global Project Against Hate and Extremism (GRAHE) reported that neo-Nazi clubs have increased by 25 per cent since 2023. In 27 countries, there are 187 active fight club chapters.

New groups are also actively recruiting teenagers ages 15-18 into ‘youth clubs.’ The clubs are connected to white nationalist supremacy

groups like the Proud Boys and Hammerskins. Active groups like the Second Sons have chapters in Ontario, New Brunswick, Saskatchewan, Alberta and British Columbia.

These groups believe in a conspiracy of the Great Replacement, believing that the elites are conspiring to replace the predominantly white and European population with non-white people.

The CBC reported that in July, the RCMP arrested four Quebec men for allegedly planning a militia where they allegedly were plotting to take land in the Quebec City area. All the men had a connection to the military.

The RCMP investigation of the accused men suggests they spent \$500,000 on weaponry in a period of two years. It is also believed that third-party involvement for the funds was a possibility.

The connection between rhetoric

Social media and political rhetoric

In the past years, communication through social media has transcended borders, often pushing right-wing rhetoric and white nationalism beyond dog whistles. Extremists have been weaponising ‘harmless’ phrases and symbols to promote hate.

Global connections through social media have made it easier to communicate. With platforms holding zero to little moderation, it allows people to push harmful rhetoric meant to appeal to like-minded users to understand the reference they are trying to convey.

The rise of right-wing extremism poses a great threat to undermine democracy, such as the lack of trust in institutions and normalising exclusion politics, intimidation of an alleged enemy, pointing the finger at the ‘other,’ and legitimising violence.

and political violence

Politicians and political influencers have been reliant on pushing rhetoric. Rhetoric vilifies political opponents, marginalised groups, immigrants or institutions, leading voters to a proclaimed enemy, which has its consequences. Politicians have been known to use it, no matter if there is truth to the claim.

Some politicians, such as Trump, rely on influencers and political movements to mobilise voters. During the 2024 presidential election, Charlie Kirk, who founded Turning Point USA, helped rally young voters to support Trump. Kirk was known for inflammatory comments towards minorities, abortion, Muslims, and for condemning the civil rights movement, citing his Christian faith.

The motivation for his killing, according to the BBC, was that his killer said, “I had enough of his hatred.”

Seclusion room usage in Alberta

The controversy of seclusion rooms and the upcoming vote for school board trustees

Karra Smith
Staff Writer



As Albertans across the province prepare to vote for local school board trustees, Trish Bowman, CEO of Inclusion Alberta, continues to raise awareness about the use of seclusion and restraints in the learning environment.

Despite some seeing the methods as controversial and the advocacy group Inclusion Alberta calling for a ban on the practice, the Alberta Minister of Education and Childcare Demetrios Nicolaides says in an email statement to The Reflector that seclusion rooms will “continue to be an exceptional intervention reserved for emergency situations.”

“It’s a very harmful practice, and I think it’s important to note, it’s not an educational practice,” says Bowman.

According to the Alberta Government, “A seclusion room is defined as a room, structure or enclosure in a school operated by a school authority, the primary purpose or use of which involves the involuntary confinement or isolation of a student where the student is prevented or incapable of evacuating from the room, structure or enclosure

Inclusion Alberta CEO Trish Bowman continues to fight against seclusion rooms in schools. Photo courtesy of Trish Bowman

without the assistance of another person because security measures are not under the students control.”

Inclusion Alberta is an advocacy organisation designed to provide support to families with children and adults who have intellectual disabilities. For many years, the group has called for the release of usage statistics and pushed for the removal of these practices in schools across the province.

“Up until 2019, there was no requirement to report on the use of seclusion in Alberta schools, so we really didn’t have any data,” Bowman says.

Bowman went on to say that following the organisation’s “sustained advocacy,” standards were put in place that required school districts to report on the numbers.

“And you know what we learned, it didn’t surprise us, but unfortunately, it still shocked us,” says Bowman. “Our most recent data that we’ve been able to obtain, you know, shows that in

approximately 59 public and catholic school divisions across the province, only 11 actually report having seclusion rooms and we’re still seeing, you know, thousands of usages in a year.”

According to information collected by Inclusion Alberta, both the Calgary Public School Division and the Calgary Roman Catholic Separate School Division are among the 11 divisions with active seclusion rooms.

The Reflector reached out to the Calgary Board of Education, but they declined an interview. They did send an email stating they are committed to ensuring “welcoming, caring, respectful and safe learning environments.”

Although the use of seclusion rooms is considerably controversial, associate professor in school and applied child psychology at the University of Calgary, Gabrielle Wilcox, says the context matters.

“I think whether or not

there is stigma depends on how they are used and the settings in which they are used,” she says. “In the places where I worked, for some kids there were benefits of removing stimulation.”

Wilcox says that programs such as Non-Violent Crisis Intervention, a training course available through various providers, can be useful for educators and other staff who work with children who “have really severe needs.”

According to Wilcox, the use of seclusion should never be the first option, and when a situation calls for this method, it is important for a thorough review to be conducted afterwards.

“I like to kind of relate it to academics, like if a kid can’t do long division we don’t go ‘that’s a problem you’re in trouble’ but if a kid doesn’t know how to ask for help sometimes that’s what happens—so we really need to pay attention to where those skill deficits are and find ways to support them in

gaining those skills.”

As for the future of seclusion rooms in Alberta, the Minister of Education and Childcare told The Reflector in an email statement that they will remain in place as a method to be used sparingly.

“In 2019, the government worked with school boards to establish provincial standards to guide the use of seclusion and restraint. These standards were developed to prevent misuse and to protect the well-being, safety and dignity of students and staff,” says Nicolaides.

He also says that it is the individual school board’s responsibility to ensure the circumstances that deem these practices necessary are in accordance with Alberta standards.

“Seclusion and physical restraint are considered measures of last resort, used only in exceptional circumstances where there is an imminent risk to the safety of a student or others,” says Nicolaides.

UCP to mandate citizenship markers on provincial licences

Aima Talat
Contributor

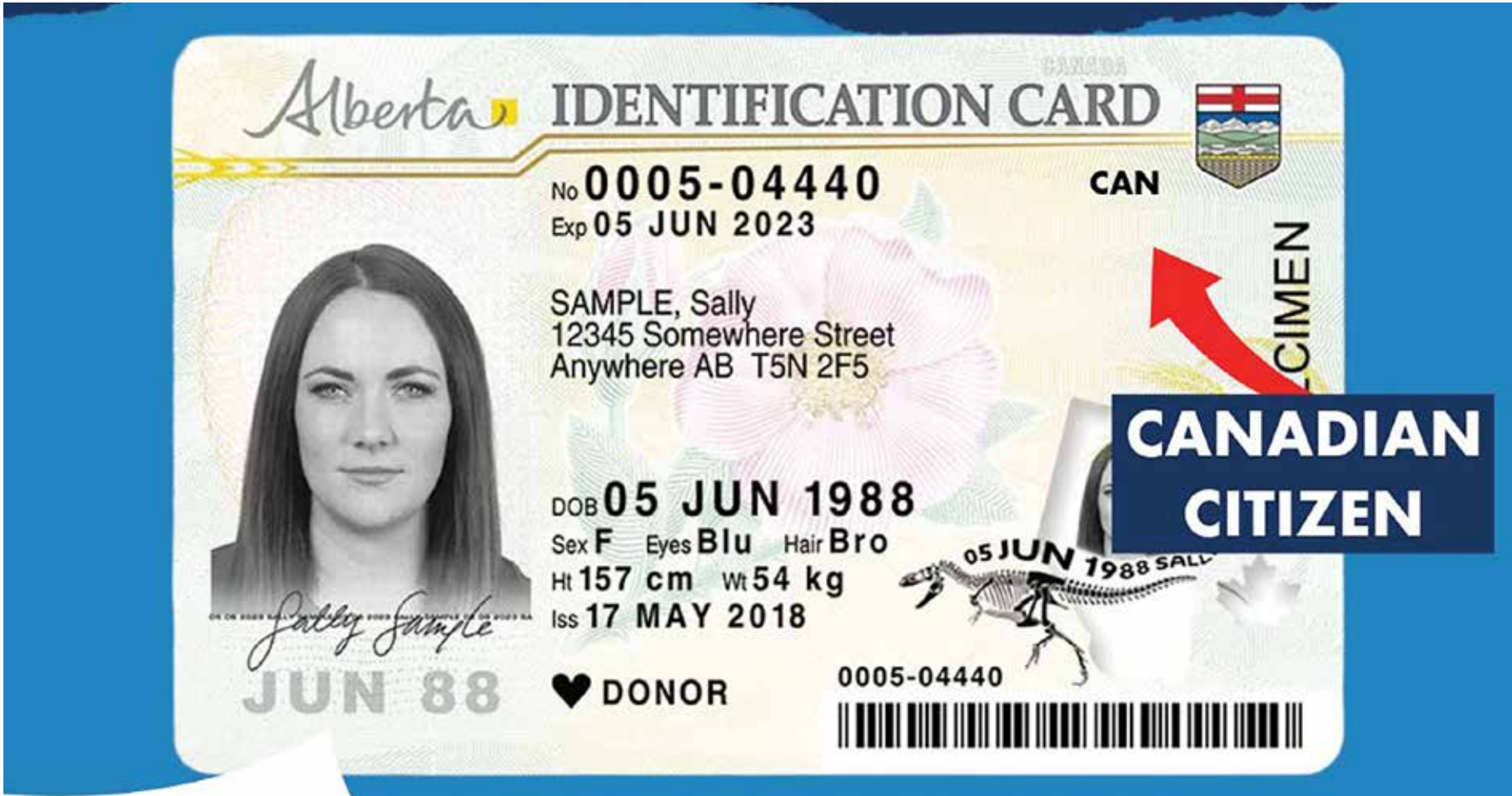
Alberta driver’s licences will soon include a “CAN” citizenship marker and healthcare numbers on them. Earlier this month, Premier Danielle Smith announced the United Conservative Party’s (UCP) plan to introduce mandatory citizenship markers on Alberta driver’s licenses. The rollout is expected to begin in late 2026. Minister of service Alberta and red tape reduction officer of Alberta, Dale Nally, states that the change is intended to reduce red tape and promote voter integrity within provincial elections. The party has stated the updated ID cards will make it easier for Albertans to access provincial services such as student aid or Alberta health benefits by reducing the amount of ID verification needed. “This change means that when Albertans need to prove both their identity and their citizenship, they’ll be able to do so with a single document,” Smith stated. Critics argue that the party’s initiative could have unintended consequences and holds possible ulterior motives. With the UCP’s Alberta Next panel bringing

proposed changes to how non-citizens access provincial benefits, political observers raise concerns. Jared Wesley, a professor of political science at the University of Alberta, questions the genuineness of Smith’s initiative. “Given the focus of the Alberta Next panel, we are right to question whether this citizenship marker is a pretext to deny certain non-citizens access to such provincial services,” he says. Smith’s panel has advocated for provincial sovereignty and provincial control over immigration and social services. Wesley states that the updated ID cards seem to be a pretext move by the government. Concerns over the privacy of the new ID cards are also apparent. David Fraser, a privacy and civil liberties lawyer, raises concerns over the right to privacy Albertans have when at traffic stops or when required to display ID for age verification. He is also concerned about who has the right to have access to citizenship information. “The concern is that [citizenship information is] all of a sudden accessible to



Premier Smith opts for new citizenship markers on Alberta identification. Photo courtesy of unitedconservative.ca

anybody who has a reason to ask you for ID, and that in and of itself is problematic,” Fraser states. As the 2026 rollout when implementing the new approaches, criticism and ID. concern grow about the UCP’s intention and focus



Canadians can expect citizenship ID markers to come into effect by 2026. Photo courtesy of X/@daniellesmith

Draw the Line protest hits Calgary and other Canadian cities

Protests gather across Canada to fight for climate change action

Bella Coco
News Editor

Citizens gathered under the sun at Calgary City Hall last Saturday during the Draw the Line protest to call

for climate action, Indigenous rights, justice for Palestine, and more.

The national protest was

organised by 350 Canada, who aimed to send a message to Prime Minister Mark Carney with a demand for “a

just and safe future.”

Calgarian organisations such as the Calgary Climate Hub were also present during

the march and call to action.



Calgarians came together at Calgary City Hall to protest, gather, and form a community at Draw the Line. Photos by Bella Coco

Smith considers early vote as UCP rides high in polls

Vlad Semeshko
Contributor



Rumours of a provincial snap election have been spreading across Alberta this fall.

Being driven by shifting dynamics in Ottawa and the United Conservative Party’s strong showing in the polls, Premier Danielle Smith finds herself at a crossroads. People are wondering if she will seize the momentum of her popularity to renew her party’s mandate or risk waiting until conditions change.

This speculation began to gain traction in early September, with Prime Minister Mark Carney appearing reluctant to fast-track major energy projects. For Albertans, as for Smith herself, this hesitation only heightened the doubt surrounding federal commitment to projects important for Alberta’s energy sector.

Smith’s capitalisation on her favourable approval ratings had been suggested by political observers.

A renewed mandate would not only reinforce her government’s position in the

Despite tensions, Carney and Smith have supposedly been having productive conversations. Photo courtesy of Instagram/@abdaniellesmith

province but also give her greater leverage in bargaining with Ottawa over energy policy and legislation such as Bill C-69, which consistently stalls development of new pipelines.

The narrative shifted later in the month when Carney announced federal approval of five major infrastructure projects he described as “nation building.”

These included expansions in liquified natural gas production and mining in British Columbia, a new nuclear project in Ontario, a container terminal in Quebec, and a copper mine project in Saskatchewan.

Alberta, however, was still absent from the list. Carney told Smith that any pipeline development in our province would require involvement from a private sector developer.

Using her social media platform, Smith described this development as “great progress.”

She noted that federal recognition of Alberta’s concerns represented a step forward, but despite this, Alberta’s exclusion from this list of approved projects underlines the province’s ongoing battle to secure federal support for its energy sector, reflecting on the core of Smith’s political brand.

From the day of taking office, Smith has continuously framed her government’s position as a necessary push back against Ottawa’s overreach, which has been foundational in constructing her current reputation as a defender of provincial autonomy.

Her rhetoric often steered toward advocating for greater provincial sovereignty, which, over the years of her government, has stirred the growing discourse of separation.

If Smith was to publicly urge a ‘yes vote’ in a referendum on separation, there is a chance it could split the party and

alienate centrist UCP voters, leaving the premier with limited room to maneuver. The challenge for Smith will be maintaining the balance of her combative stance against Ottawa with the demands for practical governance and party unity.

If Smith believes her current popularity is at its peak, requesting the Lieutenant Governor to dissolve the legislature could allow her to secure a stronger mandate.

In politics, timing is critical; calling an early election while her party is polling strongly could entrench the UCP from uncertainties yet to come out of future political battles and economic shifts.

Alberta’s role in Canada’s energy future, the balance of power between provincial and federal governments, and Smith’s own political survival all hang in the balance, but for now, Alberta is left in speculation.

Whether Smith pulls the trigger on a fall election or chooses to wait, the stakes remain high.



Premier Smith may be caught in the crossfire of a provincial snap election. Photo courtesy of unitedconservative.ca

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Alumni advice: How to do MRU

Former students share what they wish they knew sooner

Brennen French
Contributor



Students walk down Mount Royal University's Main Street. Photo by Brennen French

With the fall semester now in full swing, new students have flooded in, and graduating students are preparing for their university departure.

The pressure to make friends, get good grades, secure scholarships, and stay on track to graduate can feel daunting. But whether you're in the thick of it or have been there and done that, nobody is alone in this journey—alumni included.

According to a 2023 Universities Canada report, 89 per cent of post-secondary students reported feeling overwhelmed while pursuing a post-secondary degree. Looking back at their time at Mount Royal University (MRU), two alumni shared what they wish they had done to mitigate feeling academically discouraged.

Getting involved

Policy studies graduate from the 2021 cohort and current MRU Alumni Association council member, Mary Topchieva, says that getting involved on campus helped her find a home here at a young age.

"Something that I found very valuable is volunteering, getting involved a little bit more with the Mount Royal community," she says. "Especially when you're

17/18 and you're coming to university—it's very overwhelming."

From attending New Student Orientation to giving your time to teach others through the Peer Learning Program, Topchieva emphasised the importance of putting yourself out there from the second you land on campus.

"Something that I would have done a little bit differently is get involved on day one," she says. "Then in that first year, you have a community backing and you get to know other people who are probably in the second year or third year that can guide you and give you a little bit more advice."

Aside from giving her a social circle, Topchieva says that branching out and meeting people from different disciplines enlightened her in ways that whiteboards, PowerPoints, and lecture halls could not.

"I started meeting people from other majors through my volunteering experience in the student union. And a lot of the lessons that I learned are that 'there are some things that you can't learn in a classroom.'"

F i n d i n g

support through mentorship

Alexandra Swiston, 2018 graduate from the business administration program and current MRU Alumni Association council member, says receiving mentorship—whether informal or formal—provided her with guidance and reminded her she was not alone.

"The focus should be the relationships that you lean on when times are hard," she says. "The reality is there are so many people in your life that will have really incredible impacts—if you don't have that one person, maybe you have many."

Some people prefer a more structured approach, so MRU offers a First-Year Mentorship Program, which welcomes students to join as either mentors or mentees.

When a student becomes a member of this program, they have numerous opportunities to network, form friendships, learn to set goals, and acquire the skills and insights that lead to success.

Transitioning into the workforce

The transition from university life to the

workforce can bring financial difficulties, social isolation, and worrying about the grade point minimums for entry into other programs. For students who are nearing the end of their degree, these stresses surge.

Topchieva says that receiving scholarships is often a huge help in alleviating this, not only for the financial benefit, but also for the flashy addition on a resume.

"When I was finally in my third year, I started applying for those scholarships, and I actually got quite a few, something that I regret is not applying for them sooner, because financially, that can help you so much," Topchieva says. "Any type of scholarship that you have actually makes a really good impression on any employer."

The list of MRU applications, which are open during the Nov. 1 to March. 1 window, can be accessed on the school's website under the Scholarships & Bursaries tab.

In terms of looking for employment, Swiston believes many of the keys to success involve creating and understanding your own personal strengths and goals.

"Really put some thought

into positioning how different experiences and your personal narrative really become part of your story... it's really about framing or thinking through what you've been doing as part of your own skills and interests while positioning it in a way that's meaningful to employers," Swiston says.

So, do we have the means for success? Absolutely. Students are more than equipped to foster new relationships, meet mentors, get involved, apply for scholarships, and much more.

Moving forward, students should remember that school is important, but mental health is too. Given the amount of support and facilities, post-secondary education is meant to be a place where students can feel supported and grow.

Failure is nothing to be ashamed of in university—it is something that can push students to learn from their mistakes.

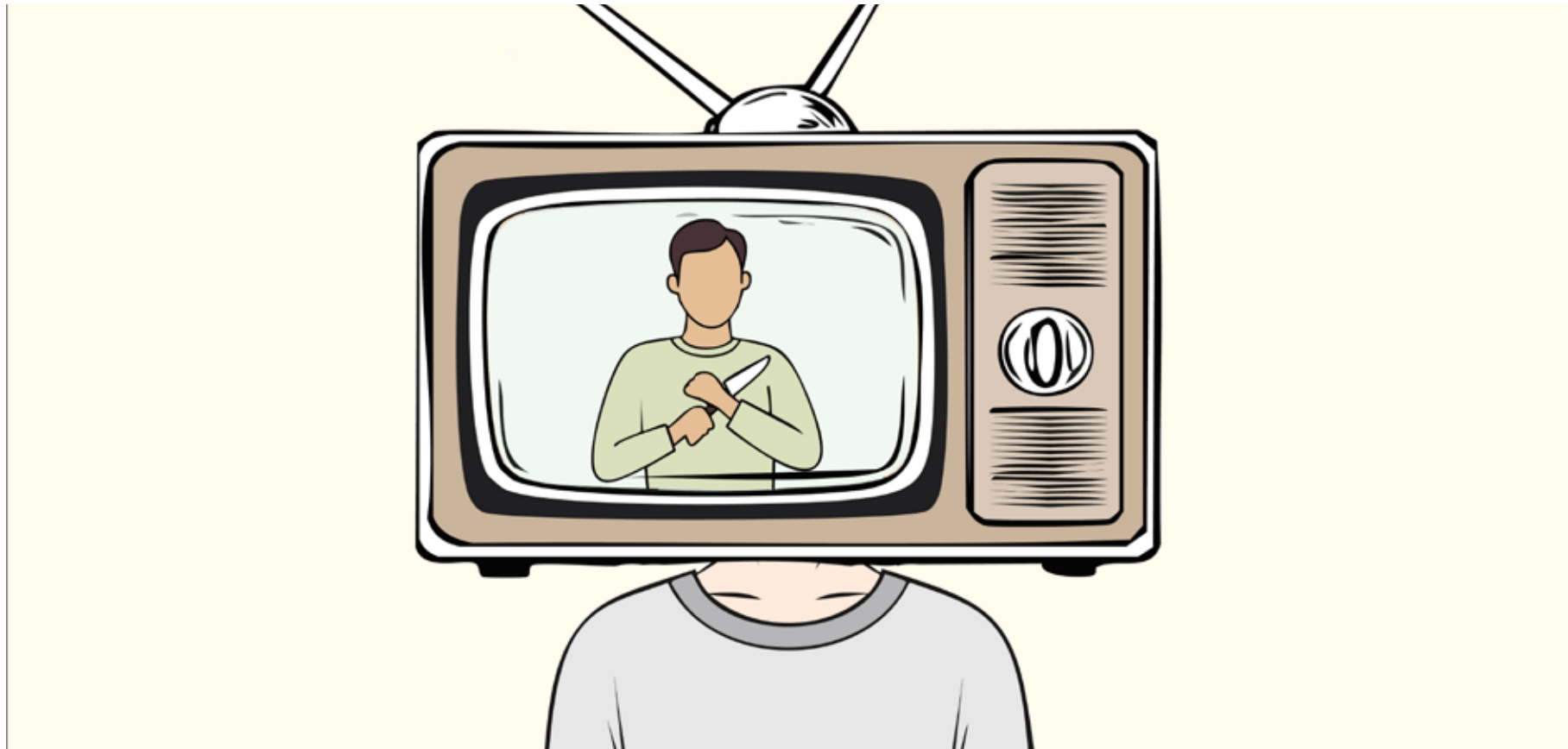
Swiston leaves with this: "I think when you go to university, it's the number one place that you have the opportunity to try and fail as many times as you can."

Weighing the fine line of true crime

TV

How the genre is both empowering and unsettling

Alexandria Smith
Contributor



There is a chance you have either seen or heard of *Monsters: The Lyle and Erik Menendez Story*. If not, you are an outlier among the 12.3 million viewers who watched it on Netflix.

The true crime genre, which started on paper, has made its way to the screen and even our ears via podcasts. In 2024, *Vogue* listed the top 50 to listen to at the time—clearly, there is a lot of true crime content that is being consumed.

But with anything, when popularity rises, as does the scrutiny it receives. In the case of the true crime category, one Mount Royal University (MRU) professor questions whether it's having a positive or negative impact on audiences.

Captivation of crime in the media

Coupled with her interest in researching the public perceptions of crime, criminal justice professor Tanya Trussler lists her research interests as causes of violent crime, crime prevention, and public perception of crime.

With the surge in viewers consuming true crime content, Trussler wonders why people are so interested in it in the first place. As humans, she says that “we want answers to the unknown,” and that the

Person immersed in the true crime genre. Graphic by Sarah Palmer / Assets from Adobe AI

genre—unsolved cases, mysteries, and violence—gives that thrill.

While the allure has long been there, Trussler says that what's different today is how people can cozy up in bed to a lineup of shows like *Monster: The Jeffrey Dahmer Story*. She emphasises that watching the violent crimes Dahmer committed is part of the appeal.

“We cannot understand why somebody would do something like that,” she says.

Trussler says that the fear factor is just a portion of what gives true crime its allure. She says that for women, who make up the majority of viewers, the genre gives them a sense of justice.

“Women want to listen to it because they have been a dominant victim,” she says. “But then it creates more of that transgression...it perpetuates in their own mind that they may be the victim.”

The positives and the negatives

Trussler says that today's overwhelming number of streaming platforms has transformed the media away from solely cable services. As a result, she says that the

genre has thrived in bringing old cases to the attention of law enforcement.

“There's more spotlights, not just one spotlight from the mainstream media or one push from the police,” says Trussler. “It's actually, ‘Oh, the police aren't doing anything, so I'm going to tell them about it.’”

In 2021, for example, while filming *The Jinx*—a two-part HBO series following the life of Robert Dunst—evidence was revealed linking Dunst to a 20-year-old unsolved murder, according to a report by the Associated Press.

Additionally, true crime can be regarded as an educational genre, as the sheer amount of podcasts, shows, and documentaries provides an array of perspectives that viewers can interact with.

Upon engaging with a story, viewers may go even further by doing their own research. While this is healthy when adding to the critical conversation of crime, Trussler says that some creators turn murder-mystery stories into money-making pawns.

“In the case of podcasts, they have catchphrases, and they're making merchandise,” she says.

Hosted by Karen Kilgariff

and Georgia Hardstark, the podcast *My Favorite Murder*, which garners approximately 35 million monthly listeners on Spotify, sells t-shirts and other items for upwards of \$40 USD a piece—something Trussler says is discouraging.

“It takes away from the victim's stories,” she says. “If you're commodifying it and using it as a way to fundraise or something...that's great, but I don't think that's where this is going.”

If, in the same breath, audiences are being sold a product, are they really gaining insight into the heavy topic at hand?

In 2022, the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC)'s Hugh Montgomery explored Director Ryan Murphy's *Monster: The Jeffrey Dahmer Story*. The first half of the show focuses on his past, showcasing the abuse he endured and what led him to commit the violence that he did.

What the BBC and critics of the show agree on is that the glorification of Dahmer translates as neglecting his victims' stories. By centring the genre around the perpetrators, the article discusses how the media forgets that true crime is meant to amplify what the

victims went through, not spotlight the wrongdoers.

Striking a balance

Is it safe to say that true crime media is all good or all bad? Can we fit the genre into one box? True crime and its presence in the media do not seem to be going away, so is there a solution? Not according to Trussler.

“There is no answer,” she says.

For the many women listening to true crime podcasts, Trussler says the media often makes the indulger feel prepared, which can be seen as a positive. However, as they delve deeper into the genre, feelings of fear can spill over into their daily lives.

“The things that we see in the media are not necessarily what is the common experience,” she says. “We're actually way more likely to be the victim of sexual assault during a date or [by] a family member...not the stranger in the corner.”

Trussler says that the genre shows no signs of slowing, and recommends that viewers draw their own balance by taking a step back and looking at their reason for interacting with the genre: are they a commodity, or a critical thinker?

still stories

Want your photos featured? Email webeditor@thereflector.ca



Black-capped chickadee sits on a branch at the Inglewood Bird Sanctuary in Calgary, Alta. Photo by Greg Derer



Marmot stands in the field of Banff's Sunshine Meadows. Photo by Antino Saridis



Hoi An, Vietnam, local stands underneath latern tree. Photo by Brennen French



Scotiabank Saddledome arena at different sunset stages in Calgary, Alta. Photo by Antino Saridis



Beaver swims through the Elbow River at sunset in Calgary, Alta. Photo by Greg Derer

Opinion: What we carry

A conversation on privilege and cultural exchange

Emma Marshall

Publishing Editor



People from different cultural backgrounds stand together. Graphic by Sarah Palmer / Assets from Adobe AI

I grew up with a scraped knee. I was riding my bike with my friends around the cul-de-sac, high on sun-drunk summertime. One minute I'm flying, the next I'm bleeding.

I fell. I cried. I scabbed over. I scarred.

Then one day, it's just gone. Faded into skin. And somehow I'm 21.

The bike is long gone. So are the juice boxes and the backyard games. I still remember them, but I'm not a kid anymore.

Some things from childhood stay with you—soft and stubborn, like a song stuck in your head.

Like in fourth grade, when all that mattered was how long recess lasted and whether my mum packed gummy bears in my lunch.

My teacher, a warm lady whom I knew only as Ms. Evans, had us rank our favourite school subjects from one to four.

My list went english, science, math, and social studies.

Now look at me, a writer. Some things never change. But also some things do.

I remember being so disinterested in social studies, my eyes glazing over when we talked about other countries and traditions.

"I live here, in England, with my friends and family and favourite food!" I thought.

I grew up thinking fusion was a Saturday night takeaway. Indian curries, Chinese noodles, maybe reggae on the radio. Fun, vibrant, and delicious—but largely divorced from any deeper cultural context.

Cultural exchange felt like novelty, a spicy alternative to my parents' roast beef. It wasn't until adulthood that I began to understand.

Politics behind the plate

Adulthood has a way of knocking you off balance. The fall doesn't always draw blood, but it stings just the same.

I started to understand that what felt like sharing to me—a white, British immigrant now living in Canada—didn't always feel that way to others.

Realizing the weight of cultural integration was humbling and culpable all the same. The line between appropriation and appreciation is blurring, but that doesn't stop us from crossing it.

With technological advancements comes rapid cultural globalization. Blame the internet, travel, and social media, but fusion is a natural and unstoppable force in our reality, and when done right, it's also transformative.

Take K-pop—or Korean Pop—for example. While the genre originated in South Korea, it takes influence from a range of international styles like hip-hop, reggae, and salsa. Now popular globally, K-pop generates billions of dollars and streams.

The same is true for food. Cultural fusion drives culinary creativity and innovation. Think Korean tacos, sushi burritos, Tex-Mex.

One of my favourite examples of cultural fusion is chifa—a Peruvian cuisine blending Cantonese

techniques with local ingredients, born from Chinese immigration in the late 19th century. Now found in thousands of restaurants across Peru, it's a staple of national identity and a key driver of tourism.

Cultural exchange fuels the economy in other ways, too. McDonald's, for instance, adapts menus to local tastes with items like butter chicken burgers in India or teriyaki burgers in Japan.

The commodification of culture

Food, music, and art can be bridges. They can tell stories of migration, resilience, and community. But they can also become masks worn by people who want the flavour without the roots.

It's important to understand that while cultural exchange is inevitable, it isn't always fun or trendy. There are perspectives to consider, history to be learned, and—for people like me—white guilt to be understood.

Here's my take:

Historically, colonized and racialized groups have been forced to assimilate, punished or mocked for holding onto their native traditions. The very things that made their cultures vibrant and distinct were used to shame them, pushing them further to the margins.

Take Black hairstyles, like cornrows, locs, and afros, for example. These hairstyles are deeply spiritual, cultural, and connected, often representing things like status and background. Braided hairstyles even served as

communication during the slave trade, with patterns used to share information and map escape routes.

During the slave trade, Europeans shaved the heads of Africans to strip them of identity and dignity. Later, legislation like the Tignon Laws forced Black women to wear headscarves—further suppressing their culture and visibility.

Today, attitudes toward Black hair are often shaped by harmful stereotypes—lingering remnants of slavery-era beliefs that deemed Black people, and their physical features, as inherently inferior. In a modern context, Black hair is wrongly perceived as "unprofessional" or "unkept" in the workplace.

Yet we see white women donning cornrows on the runway during fashion week. Deputy Director Kathleen Newman-Bremang breaks it down in an article for Refinery29.

"White models wearing their hair in cornrows at Toronto Fashion Week is even more frustrating because we know the industry (Canada included) has a diversity problem," she writes. "Our hairstyles are not here to help you feel edgy or cool. Our culture doesn't exist for your street cred."

What was once ridiculed becomes repackaged, minus the history, the struggle, the context.

Another consideration is Indigenous fashion and spirituality. Traditional regalia, beadwork, and even sacred practices like smudging or wearing feathers have long been banned or shamed by colonial governments.

In Canada, the potlatch—a ceremonial practice central to many Indigenous cultures—was outlawed for nearly 70 years. And yet today, major fashion houses like Urban Outfitters have been accused of selling "Indigenous-inspired" clothing without consulting or compensating Indigenous communities.

Symbols once suppressed are now commodified, stripped of meaning and sold for profit.

Even food isn't immune. There was a time when bringing curry or kimchi to school made you a target for jokes. Kids were bullied for having 'smelly' or 'weird'

lunches that didn't look like ham sandwiches or Lunchables. Now, those same dishes are on trendy brunch menus with \$18 price tags and "artisanal" twists.

Dominant cultures now embrace what they once rejected, but only on their terms. And now they are the ones profiting from it.

So yes, cultural exchange is inevitable, and in its best form, it's beautiful. But we can't skip the history lesson. We can't wear the outfit without understanding the ceremony. And we can't keep calling it "fusion" if it's just one side doing the taking.

Where white guilt grows

As a person with white privilege, I've had the luxury of seeing culture as something to 'explore' or 'enjoy.'

Realizing my actions aren't innocent, and my ignorance isn't an excuse, was an injury like no other. It hurts to know I'm mindlessly contributing to the pain of others.

British culture itself is full of these scars serving as reminders of invasions, immigrations, exchanges, and evolution. I realized that even if my intentions are pure, my participation in another culture is never innocent. It happens within a history of colonialism, erasure, and unequal power.

Cultural fusion feels like theft when those wounds are still open and being ignored. And now we want their bandages too.

For me, that's where white guilt comes in.

For a long time, I was afraid of that feeling. Afraid of getting it wrong, of saying the wrong thing, of being called out or labelled as ignorant, or worse, racist. That fear made me quiet. Hesitant. Defensive.

But white guilt, when I really sat with it, goes deeper than feeling ashamed of being white and the historical context associated with that. It's about recognising the comfort I live in. A comfort built, at least in part, on other people's discomfort.

It was realizing that I never had to defend my name, my hair, my religion, or my food growing up. That my culture

Continues on Pg. 11

Continued from Pg. 10

was never exoticised or criminalised. It was actually normalised. Celebrated. Protected. If I truly believe in the beauty of cultural exchange, then I also have to believe in justice, equity, and repair. Because fusion without

respect is just theft dressed up as a trend. And so when I catch myself admiring something from another culture, I ask: Who created this? Who was excluded from the table where it's now being served? Am I celebrating this culture, or am I consuming it without

care? These aren't easy questions. They're not meant to be. But discomfort is the sign that I'm finally paying attention. White guilt reminds me of my place—not in a hierarchy, but in a history. It's a signal to check my

privilege, to hold myself accountable, and to stay humble. It pushes me to learn before I speak and to listen more than I explain. Because the goal isn't to sulk in guilt. The goal is to feel responsible and then do something with that feeling. To shift the conversation.

To give credit. To open the door wider. To remember that I may carry a scar from falling off a bike, but others carry scars from being pushed off theirs over and over again.

Calgary's cry to city council

Survey shares top resident concerns ahead of the civic election

Sarah Palmer
Features Editor

For some mayoral and city councillor candidates, the conclusion of the July 29 regular meeting marked the beginning of the campaign season. But it wasn't until noon on Sept. 20, however, that Elections Calgary released the formal list of nominated persons. Officially launching the political race, the nine mayoral and 66 council candidates have been busy making their case to residents—littering city sidewalks with signs, and lining downtown streets with billboards. It's true, the marketing works, and many Calgarians have probably already begun associating campaign points with faces and names. What's sometimes overlooked in the process is what residents want to see done differently, rather than what candidates summarise as the key issues. According to a report published on Aug. 29 by Leger, a Canadian-owned market research company, 57 per cent of Calgarians feel that the city is going in the wrong direction. In its representative sample of 471 adult residents, those over the age of 55 made up the majority of pessimists. Lowering taxes, reducing municipal spending, and fiscal restraint were named as the top issues among residents. Vibrant Communities Calgary (VCC), a local non-profit organisation focused on poverty reduction, put a microscope on these stressors. Their report, published on Sept. 9, is a 40-page document summarising the results from a six-month-long community engagement project. Having connected with over 5,000 residents, it provides a detailed snapshot of what's on the minds of Calgarians ahead of the Oct. 20 election.



View of downtown Calgary across the Bow River. Mahesh Gupta / Unsplash

“These insights are shared with the hope that they will guide action, strengthen collaboration, and support the vision of a Calgary where there is truly enough for all,” read the report. Here’s the top five concerns voiced by residents:

Housing
Being the most common concern among Calgarians, participants noted that the increase in rent, utilities, transportation, and groceries has made it difficult to find secure shelter. They stated that housing supports—such as subsidies—are limited, particularly for older and disabled adults. On the other hand, young adults and new Canadians alike said that owning a home feels like a long shot. Participants said that densification—buildings like townhouses and duplexes, which have become increasingly common since the council passed the blanket rezoning motion last spring—is not always the solution. “My dog has a greater chance to find housing than me,” said an anonymous participant.

Employment
Come October, when Saskatchewan raises its rate to \$15.35, Alberta will officially have the lowest minimum wage in all of Canada. According to VCC’s 2024 calculation, Calgary’s living wage amounts to \$24.45, and the report personified this discrepancy. Some participants voiced experience with exploitative working conditions, like being paid below minimum wage. Others, such as immigrants and seniors, found landing a job to be tough. Young adults felt the same, especially for full-time, entry-level positions. “I have been working since I was 13 to save money, often two or three jobs at a time,” said an anonymous participant. “Affording basics like rent, groceries, and medication still seems out of reach.”

Education
While public, middle, and high school classes are relatively free—excluding the sum of fees, supplies, and extracurricular activities—many parents said that access to trustworthy early childcare and education was

unaffordable. Maintaining the same money-centred theme, young adults and mature students voiced agony about the burden of student debt accumulated after attending a post-secondary institution. Overall, participants emphasised the need for inclusive, high-quality, and attainable education. “Early learning care is imperative for getting the base for future adulthood, effective learning and adaptation,” said an anonymous participant.

Food security
Fresh, nutritious groceries were cited by participants as being expensive and difficult to come by, especially in low-income neighbourhoods. Families with children, people with health conditions, and those with fixed incomes, like seniors, felt this strain significantly. They acknowledged that food banks and other programs are helpful, but that these are not a long-term solution. Instead, participants stressed that representatives should address the root cause of food insecurity.

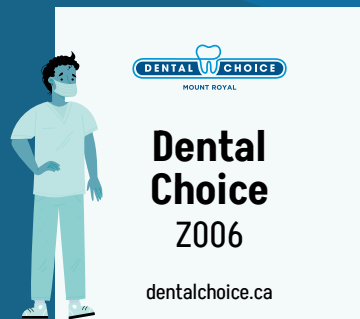
“Rising food [costs] is something I ruminate about daily,” said an anonymous participant. “I can’t imagine how I will cope if the costs keep rising. Change needs to happen.”

Mental, physical health
In part due to the lasting impact of pandemic restrictions, participants—especially young adults—expressed a growing struggle with anxiety, depression, and social isolation. When seeking professional help, residents faced barriers to counselling, including long wait times and a lack of insurance. To alleviate this, they recommended more peer-led mental health programs, primarily ones available to school-aged youth, in an effort to eliminate the stigma around getting help at a young age. “We are in a mental health crisis, and this is only exacerbated by poor opportunities, financial insecurity, and feelings of social isolation,” said an anonymous participant.

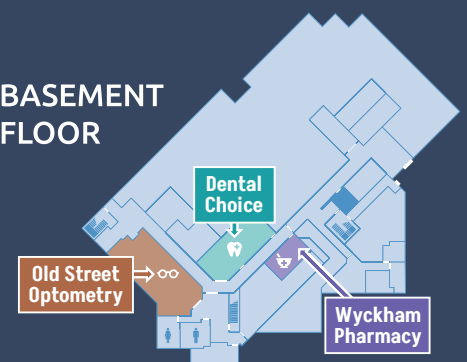
Transportation
For many, public transportation is a critical aspect of their lives, being their means of holding a job, maintaining good grades, attending medical appointments, or seeing their friends. However, participants said that Calgary Transit is challenging to navigate, citing limited services, long wait times, and egregious walking distances between stations—especially during the winter months. “I cannot afford a monthly bus pass anymore and do not qualify for a low-income bus pass,” said an anonymous survey participant. “I’ve had quite a few cold walks home this year already.”

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Reviewing R.F Kuang's *Katabasis*

It's merit as the best book of the year

Rylie Perry
Arts Editor

Released on Aug. 26, *Katabasis* by R.F Kuang is one of the most anticipated releases of the year. The novel, which marks Kuang's sixth book publication since 2018, follows two rivaling graduate students who undertake a journey to Hell to retrieve their recently deceased professor's soul.

Alice Law, brilliant, yet insatiable, has given everything that remains of her mind and soul to the field of Magick—if degradation is the cost of academic success, Alice has paid her dues in full.

Peter Murdoch, a prodigious magician since childhood, was born with a silver spoon in his mouth. While his talent is undeniable, the inborn advantages that tip the scale his way are tenfold.

With the untimely death of their professor, Jacob Grimes, ripping their Cambridge recommendations down to hell with incorporeal hands, Alice and Peter refuse to let even death separate them from their futures.

While the novel's release comes at a time when fantasy and dark academia are the pinnacle of genre popularity, *Katabasis* is in a league of its own.

A Marshall scholar, Kuang received her undergraduate degree in history from Georgetown University, a MPhil in Chinese studies from Cambridge University, and a MSc in contemporary Chinese studies from Oxford University. Now, Kuang is pursuing a PhD in East Asian languages and literatures at Yale University.

It is no surprise then that *Katabasis*'s rendition of Hell is deeply rooted in the literary and philosophical genius of Dante, Orpheus, Virgil, and T.S Eliot, which Kuang neatly places in a mathematical and

logical framework.

Kuang, however, is not concerned with showing readers her merit as a scholar; rather, she constructs a hellscape that, while reliant on scholarship, reflects the very real infrastructural shortcomings of academia and bureaucracy.

'Christ,' said Peter. 'Hell is a campus.'

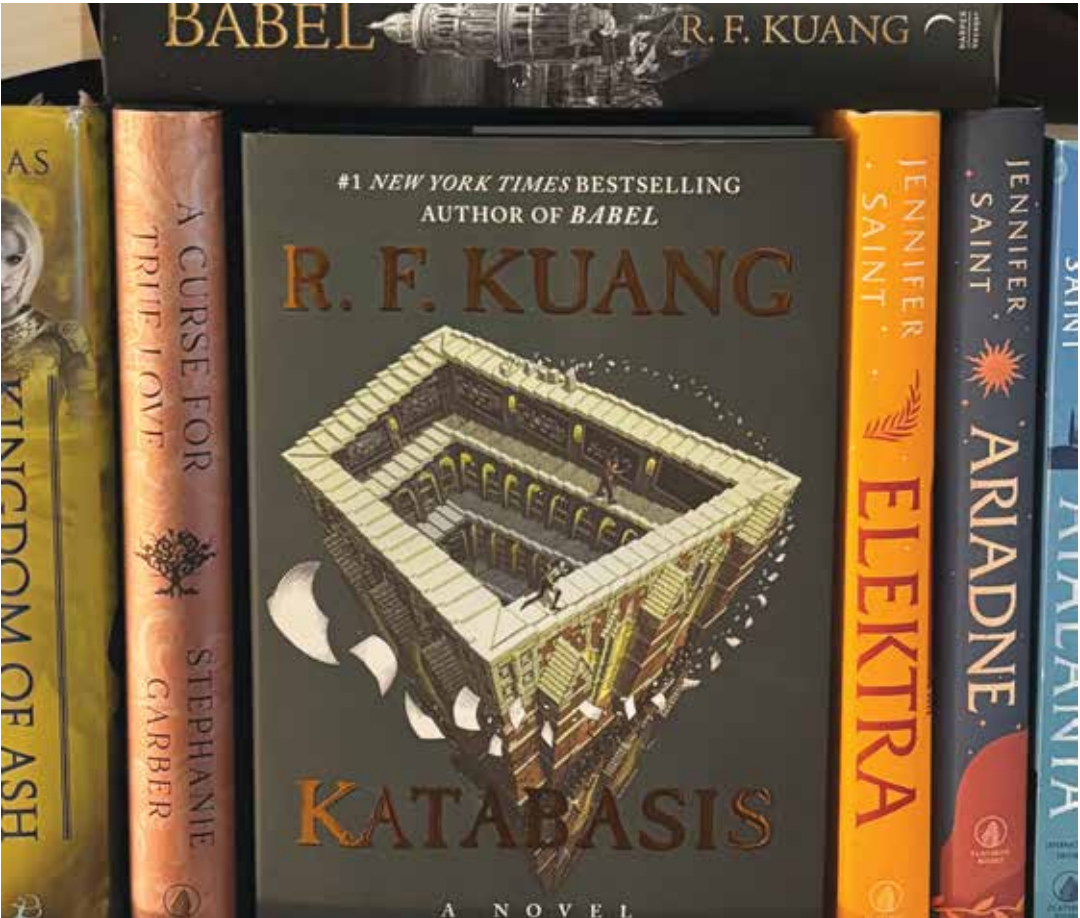
By definition, *Katabasis* is a Greek term that refers to a hero's journey to the underworld, driven by a definitive goal or purpose. However, *Katabasis* can also refer to story structures that portray characters attempting to rise from their lowest moments.

"I was very interested in this metaphorical, psychological journey when you have reached a point in your life where you feel like it's no longer worth living," said Kuang in an interview with Waterstones. "What would it take to climb out of that?"

At its core, the novel is a deeply personal exploration of purpose and the search for resolution, which grapples with defining indefinable concepts, such as life, death, and the intersectionality of memory and identity.

'If you could constantly reinvent yourself...could you ever come to really know someone else?'

Although the world Kuang constructs is confident and striking in its own right, the backbone of the novel is undoubtedly the characters. The hellscape she produces confronts characters with the depraved indifference of traditional systems and



Cover of *Katabasis* by R.F Kuang. Photo by Rylie Perry

what the decline of Hell's infrastructure represents for each of them.

Even the Magick system functions as a narrative tool to convey the paradoxes that work to destabilise and rebuild Alice and Peter's understanding of meaning and purpose, which is reinforced by the almost clinical application of logic, analytics, and mathematics to the occult.

'There were no honest words, only puns and illusions.'

Above all, the novel grants precedence to Alice's journey. She is an extremely nuanced and flawed character that struggles with justifying her own moral ambiguity, which makes her a complex, if not likeable anti-hero.

Throughout the book, she wrestles with her need to

remain emotionally distant within a professional world that sets her a rung below her peers, all the while desperately craving the academic validation that continues to build her up, only to break her back down again.

'As if he were coaching her to run a race they both knew she'd already lost.'

Peter, however, is a character that functions seemingly in Alice's peripheral vision, but displays startling clarity and depth when the novel allows him to. He is charismatic, intellectual, and privileged, but breaks through the fog of Alice's narration with shining moments of vulnerability that enable an ever-shifting power dynamic between them.

While Alice and Peter's

relationship is indisputably important to the integrity of the novel, romance does not seem to be the point. Rather, they function as an ambiguous pairing that serve one another's personal explorations of selfhood, not as an inevitable romantic duo.

As a whole, *Katabasis* is clever and painfully raw, exposing the twisted underbelly of an academic world that Kuang knows intimately. The novel is not self-righteous, however, but meditative and introspective.

Alice and Peter tackle themes of grief and self-discovery with vulnerable hands, shaping and reshaping their imperfect, broken identities through the *Katabasis* story structure.

Katabasis is thus a brilliant novel that stands firm as one of the best books of 2025, if not of the last few years.

OUT'N ABOUT

ZooDunnit

The Calgary Zoo returns with another live murder mystery game, ZooDunnit. Gather clues, crack codes, and enjoy food and drink at this after hours, 18+ event. On Oct. 3 the event goes from 5 p.m. to 10 p.m., with tickets available at calgaryzoo.com.

From Dusk 'til Dawn

Hosted by The Saskatoon Farm inside their candlelit greenhouse, From Dusk 'til Dawn is an 18+ carnival. This immersive event includes two runway showcases, roaming performers, tarot readings, carnival games, and more. The event is on Oct. 4 from 5 p.m. to 10 p.m., with tickets available at saskatoonfarm.com.

Spark After Dark

Presented by the TELUS Spark Science Centre, Spark After Dark returns with Gore night. From twisted psychological horror to iconic horror movie moments, the event combines the grotesque with science. The event takes place on Oct. 10 at 6 p.m., with tickets available at sparkscience.ca.

Rocky Mountain Food and Wine Festival

Celebrating 25 years of being one of Alberta's best food and beverage events, Rocky Mountain Food and Wine Festival returns on Oct. 17-19. The event includes hundreds of exhibitors and food connoisseurs, bringing thousands of people together from across Western Canada. Tickets available at rockymountainwine.com.

Opinion: Snitches get stitches, but should they?

Zafir Nagji

Sports Editor

In 2022, famed Atlanta rapper Young Thug, legally named Jeffery Lamar Williams, was arrested as part of a larger Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations Act (RICO) investigation. Accused of hiding an organised criminal enterprise within his record label—Young Stoner Life Records—Williams, along with many of his friends and associates, endured a nearly two-year-long trial. From jury selection in January 2023 to his plea in October 2024, Williams spent over 900 days in custody—the longest trial in Georgia’s history.

Williams’s release and guilty plea came after Gunna, arguably his closest associate, took a plea deal earlier in the trial by signing a document admitting under an Alford plea, allowing him to maintain innocence while acknowledging sufficient evidence that YSL is a gang. This isn’t considered snitching in the traditional sense, but it gave the prosecution a leg up in the case. It may have also influenced the numerous other rappers caught in the trial to take plea deals in exchange for disclosing information.

Following his release, Young Thug unfollowed Gunna on X, a move other artists in their circle soon mirrored, and the two have not collaborated on a song since the trial. On his 2023 song “bread and butter,” Gunna, legally named Sergio Giavanni Kitchens, alleged that he did not snitch, instead blaming his lawyers for tricking him into signing a plea deal that would compromise his associates. Williams waited months to speak directly about the trial and his relationship with Gunna, eventually appearing on *Perspektives with Bank* to share plenty of quotes that went viral soon after.

Young Thug elaborated on the favours he did for Gunna to help him achieve his fame and wealth, expressing the betrayal he felt after hearing of his associate’s plea deal and the hopelessness he felt about his case soon after. However, this case reawakened one of the most polarising topics in hip-hop culture—one that has ended careers, friendships and reputations over the years.



After being released from his two-plus-year-long RICO case, Young Thug did a tour of podcasts explaining the betrayal he felt from Gunna and other associates “snitching,” making plenty of references to that in his new album, *UY SCUTI*, the cover of which is pictured here.

Is it okay to snitch?

This question seems much easier to answer than it actually is and it requires nuance to fully understand. On one hand, the simple answer would be yes, in that crimes should be reported in an effort to prevent as many crimes as possible. However, things are not always so black-and-white, as evidenced by the Young Thug debacle.

Let’s assume that YSL was, indeed, a criminal organisation that Young Thug headed. Gunna, who was rumoured to hold a high-ranking position, was, at the very least, aware of his associates’ illegal actions. Not only was he aware, but as Williams brought up in his *Perspektives with Bank* interview, Kitchens benefited directly from those activities, with Williams allegedly helping Kitchens purchase property for his parents, vehicles for his family members, and even buying his first apartment.

With those factors in mind, this becomes less of a ‘should you snitch’ situation and more of a ‘don’t bite the hand that feeds you’ issue. Had Gunna truly taken issue with the morality and legality of Young Thug and their associates’ actions, he should not have taken advantage of the benefits of that situation. After having reaped the benefits, snitching seems hypocritical, especially concerning the context of freeing yourself early from a case where your closest friend is facing life sentences.

Tekashi 6ix9ine became infamous after his snitching ordeal for betraying his fellow

gang members to escape racketeering charges as well, but unlike Gunna’s Alford plea, 6ix9ine testified directly to the court, eventually leading to RICO charges being laid upon Anthony Ellison and Aljermiah Mack, two of the members of the Nine Trey Gangsta Bloods, the gang he was affiliated with. Since then, the public’s perception of 6ix9ine took a serious blow, with his stream numbers and popularity never resurfacing at his peak’s levels and respectability for him still low in the hip-hop community.

Snitching on yourself

Hip-hop artists have also been criticised for snitching on themselves, including all-too-real details of their heinous acts that are then used against them in criminal investigations and corroborated with real-world evidence. The case levied against YSL, for example, was filled with lyrics taken from the record label’s discography, connecting lyrics to real-world events to construct a timeline and provide more details about the crimes Williams and his associates were accused of.

The gruesomely descriptive lyrics to YNW Melly’s hit record “Murder on my Mind” were compared to details of the double murder he was arrested on suspicion of committing in 2019. Due to a mistrial, Melly, whose legal name is Jamell Demons, is awaiting a retrial, which has been postponed until at least 2027.

Other artists, such as Tyler the Creator, use lyrics describing criminal activity

and gruesome scenes as an artistic choice without actually committing any crimes. Additionally, using an art form as legitimate evidence to prosecute someone is a flawed principle—not every love song is about a true love experience an artist underwent, and not every crime listed in a rap song was actually committed, let alone by the artist who made the song.

Blurred ethical lines

Hip-hop is a genre rooted in people of colour expressing their trials and tribulations with issues like racism, police brutality and systematic prejudice. As a result, reporting your associates’ activities to the police is perceived as a breach of trust.

This perception worsens further in the context of gang life, something that many rappers grew up experiencing and remained involved with even after achieving fame and wealth. Similar to how Italian immigrants in the USA formed their own secret self-governing systems that later came to combat the discrimination they faced from American police and people alike, African Americans formed groups to protect, govern and provide for themselves.

Italian organisations became popularised through popular culture like *The Sopranos* and *The Godfather*, and while those shows depict the very real criminal activity that took place within the ‘mafia,’ they only highlighted a small portion of the struggles Italian Americans faced when seeking

governance and protection from relatable figures. The ends don’t justify the means of criminal behaviour, but the organisations were rooted in self-governance and protection.

Political advocacy groups, such as The Black Panthers, helped African Americans fight during the Civil Rights movement, and more recently, Black Lives Matter has helped bring more awareness to police brutality. However, at the neighbourhood level, some African Americans still live in the underfunded, infrastructure-deprived neighbourhoods in which they were segregated away from white society. Gang organisations thus became a way to protect and provide for oneself and one’s family.

Some of those involved in those organisations chose to make music and document how they felt during various experiences, opening up new perspectives into the life of a Black American. For example, 2Pac’s discography is filled with songs about the violence of his neighbourhood, the lack of change in society around him, and even his struggles grappling with there being “no heaven for a thug” on his heartbreaking song “Thugz Mansion.”

Taking this background information into consideration, snitching can be seen as a betrayal of racial and cultural unity, going back on systems created by Black people to lead and protect each other. However, that also does not justify the murder, drug trafficking, and other crimes being committed—injustice is injustice, no matter who carries out the injustice and what pretext the injustices are being committed under.

Ultimately, there is no right answer when it comes to the question, ‘is it acceptable to snitch?’ In the context of hip-hop, it’s a loaded question that comes with historical implications, which cloud judgement even further. Legally speaking, you should always contact the authorities when you witness a crime for your safety and the safety of others. Whether you hold artists and public figures to the same standard is entirely subjective and up to you.

Calling from beyond the grave

Theatre Calgary wants you to Dial M for Murder

Katrina Ebuenga

Staff Writer

Laced with jealousy, deception, and an ever-so-shocking twist, *Dial M for Murder* throws audiences in for a whirlwind.

Brought to the stage by Theatre Calgary in partnership with Arts Club Theatre Company, the modern twist on the classic murder mystery tale folds viewers into a web of guile.

In this adaptation, Jeffrey Hatcher, American playwright and screenwriter, transforms the classic film directed by Alfred Hitchcock and original play by Frederick Knott into a performance that will have audiences pressing speed dial.

Attendees will partake in a high stakes evening that follows an ex-tennis star plotting to murder his wife and steal her fortune, all after uncovering her illicit affair. It wouldn't be complete,

however, if plans for murder didn't take a shocking twist.

This highly anticipated adaptation is set to take the stage at Max Bell Theatre (Werklund Centre - formerly Arts Common) from Sept. 30 to Oct. 26, with tickets on sale at theatreclgary.com, starting at \$49 each.

Directed by Jillian Keiley, a renowned Canadian director who has appeared on the Stratford Festival stage and others across Canada, *Dial M for Murder* becomes more than just an evening of thrill and high tension.

Using her detail-oriented approach, infusion of psychological depth, and the extensive talent infused into Hatcher's adaptation, this new take on the classic play has been transformed to cater to modern audiences.

Stafford Arima, Artistic Director for Theatre

Calgary, has curated a stage for audiences to be transported around the world, experiencing all kinds of stories in this "Season of Delights," as he describes it.

"This new version has a fresh immediacy to it, but without sacrificing its bones, its DNA, which is really taking place in the 1950s. It is a period piece, but with a slightly more fresh sensibility of characters giving Margot, the protagonist in the play, a little more agency in her character as well," said Arima.

Being with Theatre Calgary for over eight years now, Arima handpicks the theatrical plays of the season, not holding back on engaging with creative and whimsical stories.

"It's a season where you take audiences on this great journey around the world

with a variety and diverse group of stories that all can be experienced in your own backyard, in your own city, at Theatre Calgary," said Arima.

Not only will audiences be taken on a wild journey throughout the season, but they might also find a sense of community within this year's themes.

"I feel in many ways that the characters and their journeys resonate on a very personal level to Calgarians, even though they might not be Italian, or they might not be living in the turn of the century, they can recognise the entrepreneurial ship and the maverick energy of all of these characters within these plays," said Arima.

With a line up including some returning classic favourites, such as *A Christmas Carol* and *Made in Italy*, audiences will feel

a sense of home within their very own seats. This season aims to shine a light on Calgarians and the growing energy to strive for more.

"There is a 'go for broke' attitude here in Calgary that represents the characters this season," said Arima. "Every one of these characters, whether it's Scrooge in *A Christmas Carol* or Nora in *A Doll's House*, they're all about individuals who see through staying in a static mode. Continuing to want to evolve, continuing to want to grow, that's what I see and feel as a transplant here in Calgary."

With Arima's expertise in directing the first adaptation of *Dial M for Murder* back in 2022 with The Old Globe, audiences can be assured that the production is in good hands with the creative team at Theatre Calgary.

Hatcher's adaptation promises refined dialogue and an expansion of character motivations that keep audiences engaged from the start, as well as emphasise the shift in perspectives throughout the play.

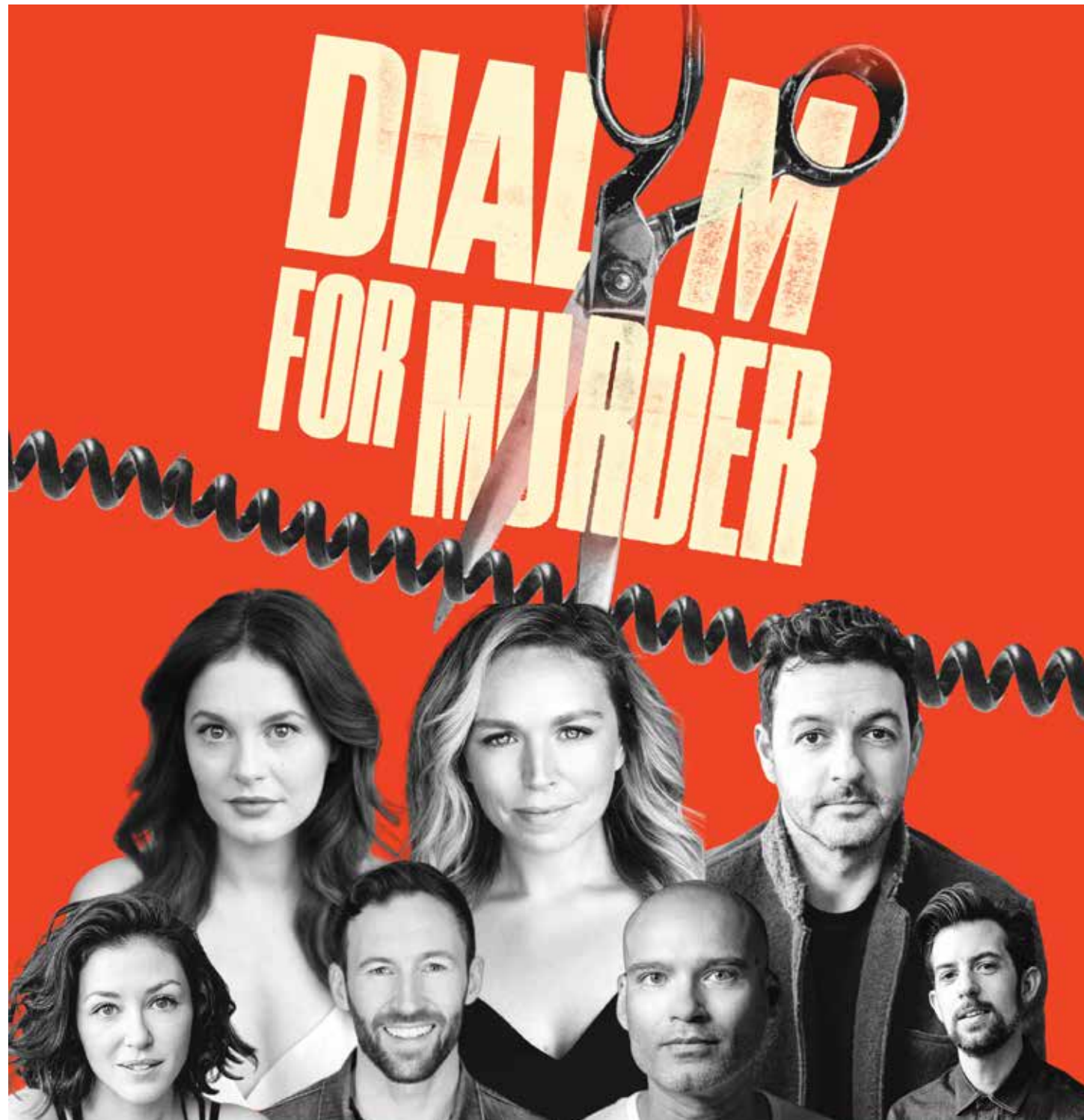
"Unlike a traditional 'whodunnit,' where the tension really lies in uncovering the culprit, *Dial M for Murder* lets the audience in on the plan, almost from the beginning. The true suspense emerges not from asking who committed the crime, but what are the consequences of the turbulence of the crime succeeding or not," said Arima.

Dial M for Murder is a story cemented in the realm of classic murder mysteries. Hatcher and Keiley, along with the Theatre Calgary creative team, honour Knott's storytelling abilities and bring it to another level of intensity for audiences to be a part of.

"There is this kind of resurgence of interest in true crime stories," said Arima. "This piece, with its style, its sexiness, its fresh approach, will really entertain the audience."

Have a role in the drama that is set to unfold, and witness first hand the deadly secrets that are dying to be uncovered.

"It's a great piece of theater that will ignite in us those wonderful emotions that happen when one watches any kind of thriller or murder mystery."



Emily Dallas, Olivia Hutt, Tyrell Crews, Brianna Johnston, Stafford Perry, Shekhar Paleja, and Christopher Duthie for *Dial M for Murder*. Photo courtesy of Theatre Calgary

ARIO, up next

The next artist in your listening queue

Hunter Pratt

Contributor

Every so often, you come across an artist who's music sends a wave of inspiration towards you. Even better, when the artist you found resides in the same city as you, it's simply a no-brainer to want to dig deeper into who they are, and how their music came to be.

Meet Armin, better known as ARIО, a Calgary artist who flies under the radar. ARIО has been in the game for over 10 years, releasing EP's, winning freestyle cyphers, and even landing his first tour in Western Canada. It's clear as daylight that ARIО is no stranger to the industry, but who is the man behind the music? The only solution to solve my curiosity was to go directly to the source, with an interview with Armin himself.

What does ARIО mean? Well, ARIО stands for All Religions In One. The name confronts the paradox of how religions that are meant for good can actually divide us when we let our egos get in

the way.

Armin cuts no corners when telling me about the spiritual awakening that led to the revelation behind his stage name.

"I realized that all of these different religions are about the same thing, which is actually oneness. I really felt like I connected with that message and I wanted to share that message," he said.

Not only does ARIО's stage name represent a variety of perspectives, his catalog of music is also an assortment. Call it the ARIО vibe—which ranges from rap to house music and even a little bit of indie. Unique is an understatement when it comes to describing the art.

"I can't describe it," said Armin. "It sets me apart and I don't think anyone can really do what I do. It's a cool feeling to be like: 'this song could only have been done by me.'"

When asked to describe his music, ARIО rejected the box that genres can create,

preferring to move wherever the inspiration strikes.

"In terms of hitting good verses [the music] has that," said Armin. "I also do stuff like house music where I'm singing, and then I did 'Anastasia' which is alternative."

From having a name that encapsulates a world of spiritual controversy, to making music that spans a variety of genres, ARIО simply does not give "2F's" (title of his 2022 single) when it comes to making music for others; rather, you can see that he enjoys creating for himself and appreciates those who vibe with it along the way.

"I do all these different things and they work. They all have the same vibe, which is that ARIО vibe," he told me.

Having been around the Calgary music scene for over 10 years, Armin is no stranger to performing in and around the YYC area. In 2018, ARIО went on his first tour that covered Western Canada. The

locations included Winnipeg, Regina, and Kelowna, but Armin made sure to let me know that Calgary had the best audience.

"Calgary is so slept on, but it's coming up," the artist said.

Indeed, when it comes to performing for an audience, Armin summarises it as the following: "The feeling of moving a crowd is so energising. People are there to be entertained, it's all about engaging them."

What will the future bring for ARIО's music? Armin explains he has a plethora of unreleased music in the vault, but he wants to make the people wait. Surely, the added pressure from Armin's peers to release new music will create the diamond they've been waiting for.

With a collaboration album with another Calgary artist, Omar A, and his own music sitting in the archives, Armin's fans and peers alike encourage him to drop more music. However, I quickly

learned from Armin that what's more important than releasing music to please is making sure you have enjoyment with creating art.

"Just don't try to be something, cause when you try to be something, you can feel the force in that art and it's not free, it's forced," said Armin.

People's opinions will always be there, but as soon as you let them get to you, that's where your authenticity fades away.

"The best art comes out of a flow state. Your feelings are so much more woke than your thoughts. So, tap into your feelings, tap into your emotions and make music from there."

When it comes to finding music with meaning, I recommend readers focus on talent sitting right under their noses, because the further away you search the less you may find—let's appreciate our own homegrown talent, starting with ARIО.



ARIO, a Calgary based artist, talks about his sound and musical journey. Photo by Josh Turner

New releases for reading week

Amanpreet Kaur
Contributor

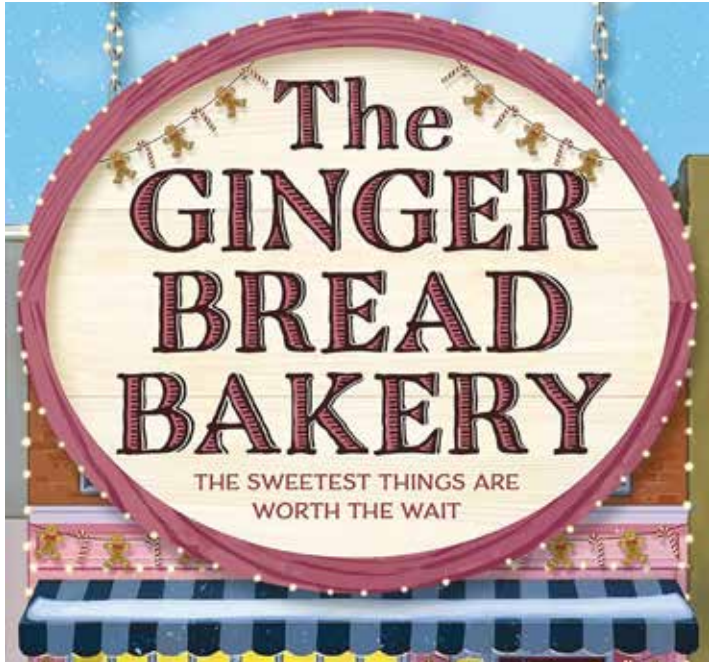
The Wasp Trap by Mark Edwards

The Wasp Trap by Mark Edwards is for all the true crime, thriller, and mystery lovers. Released on Sept. 16, the book kept me engaged by dropping clever hints and subtle clues, which made me feel as though I was the narrator trying to make sense of the situation. Set in 1999, the book follows six students of a psychology professor who are trying to make a dating website. However, things do not turn out as planned at the website launch, sending everyone their separate ways, with questions left unanswered.

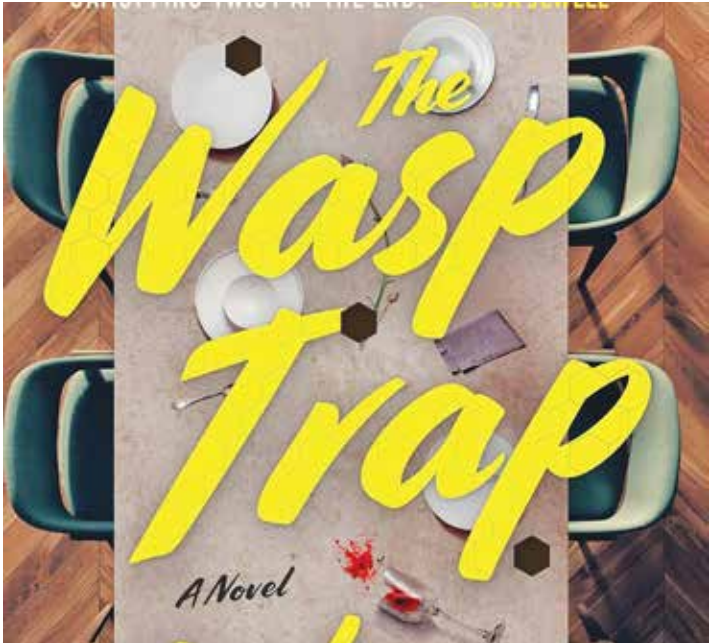
The real mystery, however, starts to unfold in 2024, when they meet for dinner after the death of their professor. While they had left with unanswered questions, they are now back together years later with even more baggage. Soon, their different personalities start to surface when the dinner turns into a trap with a house of locked doors, no cell service, and a stranger amongst the friends.

This 336-page book has a slow start to build the story, all for an ending full of twists and turns, with strange things happening to all six friends. The book has continued to receive appreciation online and is currently rated ‘4 star’ on Goodreads—I do not know about the killer, so let’s read this psycho-thriller.

The Gingerbread Bakery by Laurie



Cover of *The Gingerbread Bakery* by Laurie Gilmore.
Photo courtesy of Goodreads



Cover of *The Wasp Trap* by Mark Edwards. Photo courtesy of Goodreads

Gilmore

The Gingerbread Bakery by Laurie Gilmore was released on Sept. 11 and is here to start the festive season with witty banter in a small town and some wedding planning. I know we all enjoy a good rom-com and I am always hooked when it is an enemies-to-lovers book. It is the fifth book in the *Dream Harbor* series, but it could also be read as a standalone.

Dream Harbor is a small town that works its magic on people—I know, it is giving *Gilmore Girls* with the writer being a real Gilmore. The story follows Annie, the owner of Gingerbread Bakery, and Mac, the owner of the local pub. With a wedding right around the corner, the whole town gets involved to help the couple, including Mac and Annie.

The saying ‘everyone knows everyone in a small town’ is

befitting for this story, as the main characters come with a long shared history. While Mac returned to town three years ago, Annie has been avoiding him all these years—at least until they go on a mission to find the groom’s missing grandmother.

Past feelings and memories come into play, with the story going back and forth between past and present. The book has great reviews on Goodreads, with 109 thousand people adding it to their ‘To Be Read’ list—it is time to give the brain some rest and pick up this book for the best.

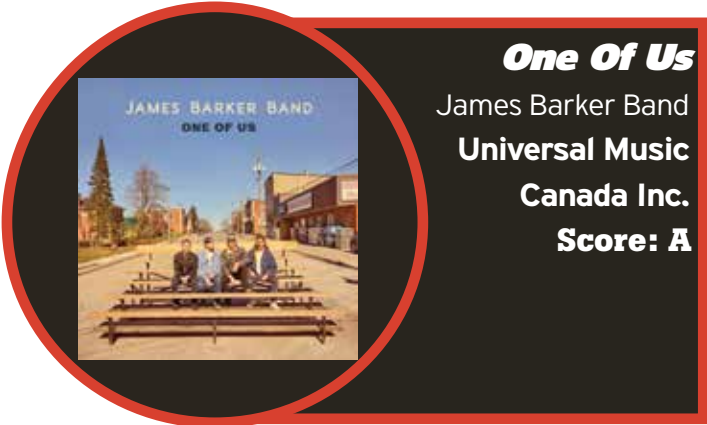
Heart the Lover by Lily King

With the start of the new school year, we are all looking forward to a fresh start. Set to release on Sept. 30, *Heart the Lover* by Lily King is a literary fiction novel about friendship, love, forgiveness, and grief.

The narrator, Jordan, meets her two best friends, Sam and Yash, in the senior year of college. Soon, they develop a close friendship around a shared love of literature and reading. By graduation, however, Jordan finds herself in a love triangle as friendships turn to love, which changes the trajectory of her life.

The story then jumps to Jordan years later, middle aged with a successful writing career, having left all the decisions she had made in vulnerable times behind her. Nonetheless, her life takes a u-turn, bringing her back to

Continued from Pg. 18



On Sept. 5, James Barker Band released their second studio album, *One Of Us*, and kicked off their tour just a couple weeks later on Sept. 18. They’ll be making stops across Canada until the end of November, bringing new music to fans across the country.

The James Barker Band fully leans into that small town feel in this album, with subjects of neon lights, late night drives, love, and heartbreak. Compared to their first album, *Game On*, they’ve added a lot more depth. The band has definitely grown with their storytelling, and it is visible with the way they build up each song around a moment.

One of the tracks that stood out to me is “Love On You.” It’s got a cool mix of 60’s inspired sound and new modern country. The song tells a bittersweet story of letting go and watching someone you

once loved fall for someone new. The guitar solo near the end adds an unexpected twist that really brings the whole thing together.

What really stands out to me with this album is how present the instruments are. It seems that with current country music, instruments tend to be downplayed, so it’s nice to hear them lead the way in the majority of the tracks on this album.

— Abby Weidman



Years after Anne Murray called it quits on releasing new music, a devoted fan stumbled upon her archives, which led Murray to decide it was finally time to let those songs see the light. *Here You Are* is her 33rd studio album and a time capsule of songs recorded between 1978 and 1996.

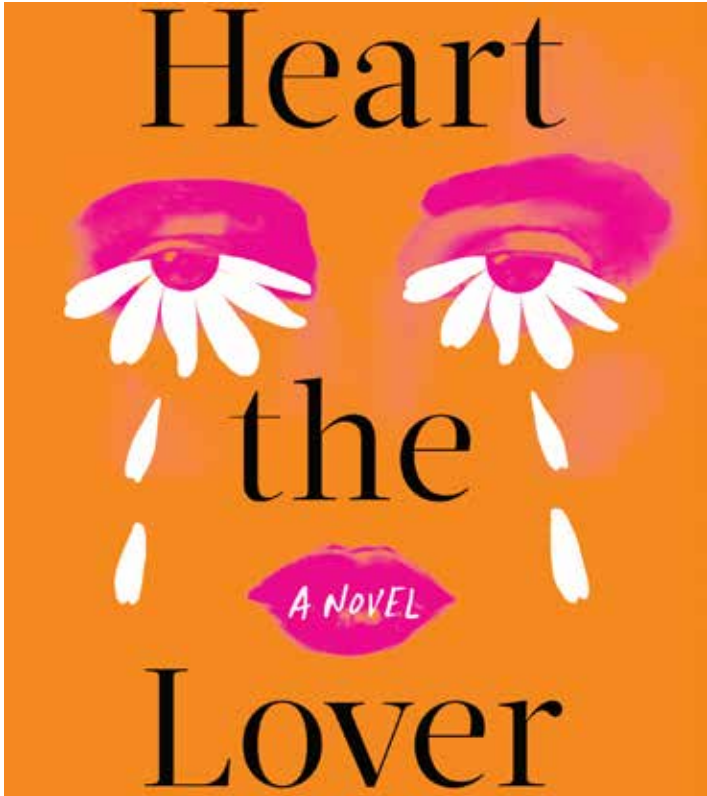
Listening to these songs feels like flipping through an old photo album. It pulls you back to the sound of her earlier records, offering a glimpse of what Murray’s albums used to be. The album is a mix of love, family, and loss, and even features a cover of a Bryan Adams’ hit song “Straight From the Heart”.

My favorite song from *Here You Are* is “Feels Like More Than Dancing.” In it, Murray explores the feeling of wondering if there’s something more developing between two people and if that connection is felt on both sides. It’s a sweet,

thoughtful take on those early moments when you start to realize it might be more than a casual dance.

What makes this album special, however, is that Murray isn’t trying to produce a hit song. Instead, it’s more of a thank you to all the fans who have stuck with her over the years. There’s also a nice family touch—her daughter sings backup vocals on some of the tracks, which makes the whole album feel even more personal. Overall, it all comes together to make a truly meaningful and genuine album.

— Abby Weidman



Cover of *Heart the Lover* by Lily King. Photo courtesy of Goodreads

the college world she once left behind, and the results of her decisions made decades ago.

The book has not been released at this time, so I am excited to know what decisions she makes and how she deals with the aftermath.

I believe the story has a lot to teach, imparting important lessons on how all decisions have consequences, even if we make them when we are young— this book will come into play, so I hope you do not scroll away.

Hazelthorn by

CG Drews

The description of *Hazelthorn* by CG Drews drew me in when I started looking for a spooky book for this Halloween. This highly anticipated YA horror and queer romance novel is expected to be released on Oct. 28, with compelling themes of botanical horror, fantasy, and murder mystery.

“Seven years ago, Laurence Lennox-Hall tried to kill him in the garden, down amongst the roses. But somehow, Evander is still obsessed with him,” wrote Drews, giving a glimpse of the relationship dynamics to come.

When a billionaire named Byron adopts Evander after the death of his parents, Byron locks him in his gothic mansion with three rules: he is not allowed to go outside the estate, he is not allowed in the garden, and he is not allowed to go near Laurie, Byron’s grandson.

After Byron’s sudden death, the Hazelthorn property with its gothic mansion and looming botanical gardens are left to Evander. Now, the overgrowing garden is beginning to overtake the

mansion, as do a number of the unexpected relatives coming to claim the estate. When it comes to their survival, Evander and Laurie must come together to stop the supernatural forces and greedy relatives that threaten to destroy their home.

A perfect Halloween read for you and all the 58 thousand people who are anticipating the release of this already ‘4.66’ star

book on Goodreads—while waiting for this book all I can say is: how long is this going to take?



Cover of *Hazelthorn* by CG Drews. Photo courtesy of Goodreads



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of mount royal university



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of mount royal university



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Serving up the 2025-26 MRU volleyball teams

Zafir Nagji
 Sports Editor

U SPORTS volleyball is back, and with it comes the return of the Mount Royal University Cougars to their home gymnasium at Kenyon Court. Teams from the Canada West conference, where MRU plays, have won 89 per cent of the Women’s Volleyball National Tournaments and 90 per cent of the 40 Men’s Volleyball National Tournaments since U SPORTS updated its format to a single-elimination tournament.

If that wasn’t enough pressure, Mount Royal will host the U SPORTS Volleyball National Tournament in 2027 and 2028, making development in 2025 and 2026 imperative for a good performance on the national stage. So, how will the Cougars stack up this season on their way to potential national glory?

W o m e n ’ s volleyball

It’s a well-known fact in most sports that veteran teams succeed when the competition is at its toughest. Their window for success is also much tighter than that of younger teams, but with expectations set much higher, veteran teams play with immense pressure on their shoulders at every moment of every game of every season. The Cougars women’s volleyball team is ready for all of that smoke and more, as some of the best players in the country don navy blue for MRU and take their places on Kenyon Court for one last dance.

Take Bronwynn Davies-Neira, for example. At six-feet tall, the fourth-year outside hitter possesses the hardest spike on the team by far, deafeningly killing the ball at her opponents’ expense and screaming in celebration every time. Having been a



Men’s volleyball head coach Shawn Sky aims to lead his squad to the playoffs this season, while Mya Morgan and Bronwynn Davies-Neira look to win a national championship. Photos courtesy of Adrian Shellard and Daniel Zappe

Cougar for the entirety of her collegiate volleyball career, Davies-Neira is entering her final season of U SPORTS eligibility and has never been more determined to bring championship silverware home.

“Knowing this is my last chance as a Cougar to win it for my school, my team and my girls, I’m just laying everything on the line,” Davies-Neira said. “This is my last preseason, my last time playing with my rookies and seeing these girls come in and watching them grow... everything I have is being given to this team, which is making me more of a leader and somebody these girls can look up to, which makes me really happy.”

The Cougars waved goodbye to one of their greatest women’s volleyball players of all time last season, Emma Boyd, who spent her whole collegiate career at MRU. As if graduating with 518 career kills wasn’t impressive enough, the six-foot-two-inch tall middle blocker went on to play

professionally in France for Volley-Ball Club Chamalières.

Head coach Rhonda Schmuland, who led the Cougars to the playoffs in her first year last season and played professionally in France as well, isn’t intimidated by the prospect of playing without their legendary middle-blocker and has an infinite reserve of faith in her team.

“Any of the women in our gym would have the ability and the opportunity to go pro, if that was something they chose to do,” Schmuland said. “When players graduate, I very rarely ever see it as a loss. We love our alumni dearly, but as a coach, one of the things that you’re hopefully continuing to do is to build up the next people that are going to have the opportunity to do great things. We’ve got a great group here and I’m excited for the people that are going to step up.”

Men’s volleyball

Last year was a difficult season for Cougars men’s volleyball fans. Moving on from the Chris Byam era

was never going to be easy, but even as the team only managed to muster up a 5-15 record on their way to missing the playoffs, head coach Shawn Sky believes the team got what they needed: a harsh reality check.

“You actually have to learn how to train at this level, and you have to learn how to compete, in all honesty,” Sky said. “There’s training to train, training to compete, and competing to compete... factually, the group we had last year, whether they want to know it or hear it or not, were closer to training to train, but at times, we were approaching training to compete.”

MRU only missed the playoffs by two games, with the low moment of the season coming in their loss to the MacEwan University Griffins—that team’s only win of the season. That being said, six-foot-six-inch tall outside-hitter Ryan John believes that the Cougars will enter the Canada West playoff picture this season—and not by just scraping in.

“We have a group going forward that’s able to push ourselves and find a new level to play at,” John said. “We’re still learning a lot... we’re one of the most physical teams in the league, so I’m excited.”

Even though the team is relatively young, Coach Sky’s expectations remain high, balanced by his cautioning his players about letting their time as student-athletes slip away.

“Your time as a university student goes by quickly,” Sky said. “The days might be slow, or that month might be slow, but the years are actually really fast.”

The Cougars will open their volleyball seasons at home, with the men’s team hosting the Thompson Rivers University Wolfpack on Friday, Oct. 17 at 6 p.m. on Kenyon Court. The women’s team also open their season at home, with the first serve set for Friday, Oct. 24 at 6 p.m. Home games are free for students to attend and all games are broadcast live on Canada West TV.

#S

5 wins in 6 games for Liverpool FC, who hold the top spot in EPL this season

4 MVP’s for A’ja Wilson, the most of any player in WNBA history

10 years since the Toronto Blue Jays won the AL East title, which they did this year with 98 wins

2 goals for Analisa Galvez, who helped MRU win both home games against Lethbridge

Surprises aplenty as NFL football returns

Early takeaways from the 2025-26 season

MJ Jorge
Contributor

No sport draws as much North American attention as the NFL, and after outperforming all other programming in USA broadcasting last year, sports or otherwise, the 2025-26 season is only set to achieve an even higher standard. At the time of writing, three weeks are already in the books, and with Week 5 set to take effect at the time of publishing, there's plenty to analyse in what has already been an incredibly entertaining NFL season.

Getting off on the wrong foot(ball)

There are six winless teams (New York Giants, New York Jets, Houston Texans, Miami Dolphins, Tennessee Titans and New Orleans Saints) currently in this NFL season three weeks in (0-3). The only other seasons where we have multiple teams being winless three weeks in is 2013, 2019 and 2020.

According to Sports Illustrated, the chances of making the playoffs after starting 0-3 lie at 2.5 per cent. Only six out of 251 teams in the history of the NFL have ever made the playoffs under those circumstances, making the margin for error extremely narrow. Depending on which division and conference a team plays in, making the playoffs can be much easier or more difficult. For example, Eric Edholm of NFL.com ranks the NFC North as the toughest division, necessitating a higher level of winning just to make the playoffs than playing in what he considers the weakest division, the AFC South.

With only seven playoff spots between the two conferences, no spots are guaranteed even late in the season, as teams remain vulnerable as late as December.

Supply, demand and run-pass options

The demand for quarterbacks to be great early is hurting the NFL. Every year, some teams position themselves to get a high draft pick with the hopes of selecting a quarterback that

can jumpstart their future. If the quarterback in question is able to develop accordingly, the organisation is in a great position to succeed and they can build a team to win championships. If the quarterback fails, the team could be in for a disaster as everyone else's jobs become infinitely more important. Questions arise, decisions have to be made and blame can be shifted in multiple directions, leading to the breaking up of some middling, developing teams.

There are multiple quarterbacks that are leading the 'quarterback resurgence' after not being able to be successful with their original teams. Names that come to mind are the Tampa Bay Buccaneers' Baker Mayfield, Seattle Seahawks' Sam Darnold and Detroit Lions' Jared Goff.

Three must-see matchups

Week 5: Los Angeles Rams vs San Francisco 49ers

At the time of writing, the 49ers are undefeated at 3-0 despite suffering multiple injuries. Quarterback Brock Purdy missed the last two games, but is expected to play in this matchup. Running back Christian McCaffrey is healthy after missing 13 games last year.

This will be the first divisional game for the Rams against the 49ers as they look to establish themselves in a tough NFC conference. Rams wide receiver Puka Nacua has played at an unbelievable level, posting two games of over 100 yards and one game of 91 yards with a rushing touchdown. The Niners will likely look to counter and establish their running game with McCaffrey.

Week 10: Green Bay Packers vs Philadelphia Eagles

The Philadelphia Eagles are looking to win back-to-back Super Bowls this season but have to contend with having a huge target on



Micah Parsons—Pass-rusher Micah Parsons (left) looks happy and healthy in Packers green, helping the team start the season with a 2-1-1 record to rank second in the NFC North. Photo courtesy of Instagram/@_micahparsons11

their back. Jalen Hurts has done nothing but win games and make deep playoff runs since joining Philadelphia. The Eagles found success last year against the Packers in the playoffs and will look to get a win on the road in this exciting mid-season clash.

However, the Green Bay Packers have been one of the better teams in the NFL this season after adding Micah Parsons. Coach Matt LaFleur continues to produce double digit win seasons, dating back to quarterback Aaron Rodgers' back-to-back MVP's. Jordan Love now quarterbacks their offense, with his biggest flaws being inconsistency and a high turnover rate—Love has had back to back seasons of double digit turnovers with 11 last season and 14 the year before.

In order for the Packers to

find success, they will need to establish the run with Josh Jacobs and establish the defence with stout linebacker Micah Parsons. Parsons was traded a few days before the season started and will look to help contribute as Green Bay aim to prove their mettle against the defending champions of the world.

Week 17: Detroit Lions vs Minnesota Vikings

The Detroit Lions are on a mission as they look to win the NFC North for the third straight year. Defensive end Aidan Hutchinson is back, healthy and playing at an elite defensive-player-of-the-year level. First-year offensive coordinator John Morton and fellow rookie defensive coordinator Kelvin Sheppard are continuing to build their already solid reputations,

while the running back tandem of David Montgomery and Jahmyr Gibbs continue to lead the Lions' offense, something that will help them on Christmas Day against the Minnesota Vikings.

With a run defence that ranks 22nd out of 32 teams, the biggest question for the Vikings is second-year quarterback J.J. McCarthy's ability to produce successful results. Seattle Seahawks quarterback Sam Darnold played for the Vikings last season and threw for 35 touchdowns and won 14 games, but underperformed the last three games of the season, including the playoff wild card game vs the Los Angeles Rams. If McCarthy is able to just play at an average level, the Vikings can be successful and even earn home field advantage for the playoffs.

Crashing and burning

Ferrari’s year of missed opportunities and frustration

Mustafa Imran
Contributor

After an entertaining end to the 2024 season that saw Scuderia Ferrari narrowly miss out on the championship, the tifosi had high hopes for 2025, especially after signing seven-time world champion Sir Lewis Hamilton and the debut of their fundamentally different SF25. The team was expecting to challenge for both the Drivers’ and Constructors’ titles. However, the reality of the 2025 season has been far from what Ferrari, its fans and its drivers had hoped for. A combination of underperformance, technical issues, and missed opportunities has left the team facing yet another disappointing season.

A rocky start to the season

The season opener in Melbourne was foreboding for the Rosso racecars. Ferrari struggled in the unpredictable weather conditions as both Charles Leclerc and Hamilton found themselves stuck in midfield and backmarker traffic. Poor tire strategy saw them miss out on a potential podium, relegating Leclerc to P8 and Hamilton to P10 on his debut for Ferrari—statistically one of the worst results for a debuting Ferrari driver.

The first Sprint Race weekend took place at the Chinese Grand Prix, and it initially looked promising for Ferrari, with Hamilton securing pole position and winning the sprint race. This was a false dawn, though, as the Italian team had their worst performance of the season. Both Ferrari drivers suffered from poor pace on track, but even if they could have driven faster, the car’s awful setup led to technical infringements that saw both Leclerc and Hamilton disqualified after the race’s conclusion.

This highlighted the ongoing issues with the SF25’s radical new suspension design, which had an extremely narrow optimal operating window. It became clear that Ferrari’s attempt to radically overhaul its car had not paid off.

Upgrades and setbacks

As the season progressed, Ferrari introduced a series of upgrades to improve the SF25’s performance, the first of which came at the Bahrain

Grand Prix. Centred around the underfloor, Leclerc showed increased pace and secured a P4 finish—Ferrari’s best result of the season up until that point. Saudi Arabia followed, where Leclerc secured the team’s first podium of the year with a P3 finish. Despite these improvements, Ferrari’s pace was still inconsistent, with Hamilton failing to secure any top-three finishes, and wins continued to elude them entirely.

The Emilia Romagna Grand Prix provided a glimmer of hope when both Ferrari’s fought their way through the field, with Hamilton finishing P4 and Leclerc P6. It was Ferrari’s best race of the season in terms of overall points hauls, but still far from the championship-level team they wanted. Still, sitting in second place in the Constructors’ Championship behind only the ubiquitously dominant McLaren was not a bad place to be.

The Belgian Grand Prix marked a crucial moment for Ferrari. The most important upgrade was meant to solve the SF25’s rear suspension issues, thus allowing the car to run lower to the ground and improve its pace. Unfortunately, the upgrade failed to deliver and the race ended up being another disappointment for the team. Leclerc finished in P5 while Hamilton crossed the line in P8—far from the turnaround Ferrari wanted

The Hungaroring Heartbreak

The Hungarian Grand Prix appeared to be Ferrari’s best chance of securing a win. Leclerc started from pole and led the race for the majority of the first stint. An all-too-familiar Ferrari pit stop strategy issue allowed Lando Norris to pass for the lead and Leclerc eventually lost out to the championship leader, Oscar Piastri.

Then came a radio meltdown that further summed up Ferrari’s frustrations:

“I can feel what we discussed before the race. We need to discuss those things before doing them,” Leclerc said, referring to issues with the car’s chassis.

Team principal Fred Vasseur confirmed that Leclerc had been struggling

with “severe chassis issues,” and it cost the team what could have been their first win of the season.

Typical of the rest of his 2025 performances, Hamilton’s race was uneventful, starting outside the top 10 and finishing outside the points. It was yet another forgettable race for the British driver in what had already been his worst season to date.

A series of misfortunes

As impossible as it may have seemed, the post-summer break races brought more disappointment for the tifosi. The Dutch Grand Prix held at Zandvoort saw Hamilton and Leclerc both suffer disastrous race weekends, as Hamilton slid into the wall and retired from the race while Leclerc crashed into the barriers after contact with Mercedes rookie Andrea Kimi Antonelli. This resulted in a double DNF for Ferrari, but to make matters worse, Hamilton incurred a grid penalty for the following race in Monza, showing a rare mental lapse from the seven-time champion and further dampening Ferrari’s hopes.

The Italian team is known to perform well at their home race in Monza, having won there in 2024, but both Ferraris struggled there this year in a further showing of their incompetence this season. Despite Leclerc starting P4 and Hamilton starting P9, the duo lacked the pace to challenge the McLarens and Red Bulls as Leclerc finished P4 and Hamilton in P6—yet another finish outside the podium.

Azerbaijan: A missed opportunity

The Azerbaijan Grand Prix was another missed opportunity for Ferrari. McLaren struggled through practice and qualifying, giving Ferrari a golden chance to steal their first race win of the season. However, Red Bull’s Max Verstappen was on fire, having won in Italy after some key upgrades were installed on his car. Additionally, Hamilton’s decision to run on old tires in qualifying left him outside the top 10, and Leclerc crashed in Q3, meaning both drivers started further down

the grid. Despite Piastri’s retirement, Ferrari could only manage a disappointing P7 and P8 finish as Verstappen won his second consecutive race, while Mercedes retook second place in the Constructors’ standings.

The bigger picture

As the 2025 season reaches its end, Ferrari finds itself in a difficult position—expensive new driver signing, Hamilton, has yet to finish on the podium and their ‘golden boy’ Leclerc, is extracting the car’s maximum potential, only to find himself unable to earn his first victory of the season. As a whole, the team has spent yet another season failing to capitalise on opportunities that could have seen them win races and challenge the top dogs. The SF25 was supposed to mark the dawn of a new era for Ferrari, but has been a horrible replay of the last 17 years since their most recent Constructors’ Championship.

This season exposed deep-rooted issues with the car’s design and development. Ferrari’s gamble to abandon their previous car philosophy in favour of a near-complete overhaul has not paid off, and now it seems that second place in the championship is the goal.

Looking ahead, rumours suggest that 2026 may not bring much relief. Ferrari’s failure to adapt to the changing landscape of

Formula 1 and its inability to solve the SF25’s fundamental issues leave the team in a state of flux. Strategy issues and driver-mechanic conflicts make the team difficult to trust when it comes to making improvements, and with their Le Mans team proving to be vastly more successful than the F1 outfit, who knows how much the larger Ferrari company cares about their single-seater racing ambitions. For a team as storied and successful as Ferrari, it’s a situation that many fans and pundits would have never predicted.

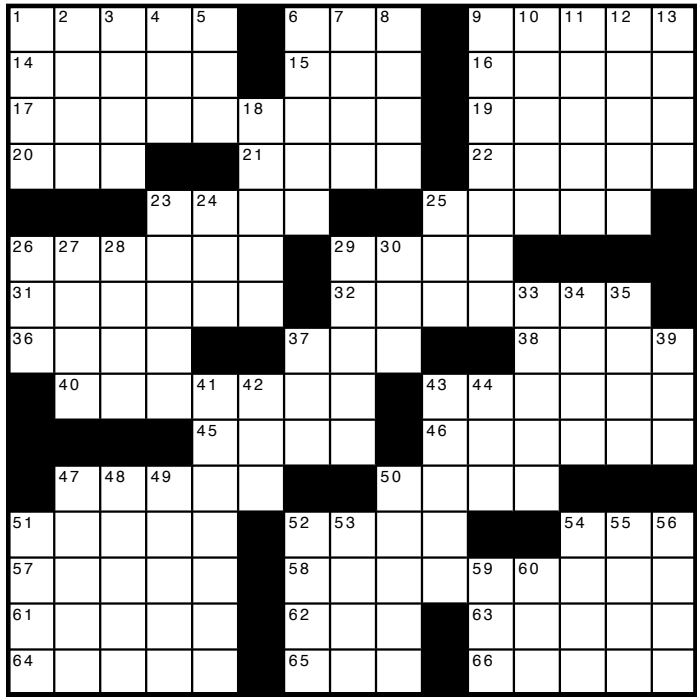
Conclusion: A team adrift

The 2025 season has been a sad one for Ferrari. Their potential has been shattered by a series of team errors and blunders. With a new driver and a new car philosophy, the team is still struggling to find its footing in the final year of the ground effect era. Heading into the next set of regulation changes in 2026, it’s clear that Ferrari needs to make significant changes if it hopes to return to the front of the grid. With the 2025 season already beyond saving, the team will need to regroup before the 2026 season kicks off. For now, Ferrari seems lost in the past, desperately trying to catch up to their rivals and their old selves while failing to grasp the current nature of Formula 1.



Charles LeClerc always dreamed of driving for Ferrari, but his time there has been more akin to a living nightmare than a dream come true. Photo by Steffen Prößdorf via Wikimedia Commons

REFLECTOR DIVERSIONS



Crossword puzzles provided by BestCrosswords.com (<https://www.bestcrosswords.com>). Used with permission.

ACROSS

- 1. Entertain
- 6. Escape
- 9. Hungry
- 14. Has “s” trouble
- 15. NASDAQ debut

- 16. Nabisco’s ___ Wafers

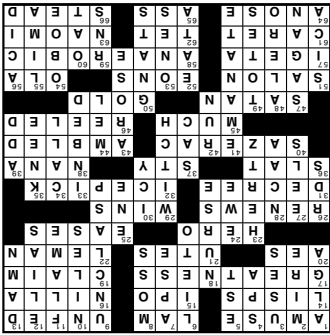
- 17. Prominence
- 19. Assert as a fact
- 20. DDE opponent
- 21. Salt Lake City collegians

- 22. Geneva’s lake
- 23. Man of the hour
- 25. Moves with care
- 26. Continues a subscription
- 29. Triumphs
- 31. Formal order
- 32. Tool to break solid water
- 36. Narrow strip of wood
- 37. Pigpen
- 38. Mom’s mom
- 40. Cocktail
- 43. Moved at an easy pace
- 45. Great in quantity
- 46. Staggered
- 47. Lucifer
- 50. Yellow metallic element
- 51. Drawing room
- 52. Years and years
- 54. Suffix with pay
- 57. ___ Kick Out of You
- 58. Absence of oxygen
- 61. Insertion mark
- 62. Vietnamese holiday
- 63. Mother-in-law of Ruth
- 64. Win by ___
- 65. Balaam’s mount
- 66. Lieu

DOWN

- 1. Pond organism
- 2. Bog
- 3. Employs, consumes
- 4. Sweat shop?
- 5. Repair shop fig.
- 6. Mislead
- 7. Church area
- 8. Rock clinging plant
- 9. Unfasten
- 10. Frasier’s brother
- 11. Burning gas
- 12. Sewing machine inventor Howe
- 13. Ruin
- 18. Suckle
- 23. Unit of frequency
- 24. Meadow mother
- 25. Compass pt.
- 26. Map lines: Abbr.
- 27. Long fish
- 28. Elite Eight org.
- 29. Sorceress
- 30. Very cold
- 33. Sacked out
- 34. Order into effect, such as a strike
- 35. Child support?
- 37. Pouch
- 39. Append
- 41. Originate

- 42. Flee
- 43. Cropped up
- 44. Actor Gibson
- 47. Astronomer Carl
- 48. Oldsmobile model
- 49. Carryalls
- 50. Flying pests
- 51. Director Vittorio De
- 52. I could ___ horse!
- 53. Singles
- 54. Thin woodwind instrument
- 55. Capital of Peru
- 56. Etcher’s need
- 59. ICU workers
- 60. Granola bit



SUDOKU

Easy

2		5			7			6
4			9	6			2	
				8			4	5
9	8			7	4			
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3			4			5		8

Medium

	2	4	3	8				
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4				1				
			7		5			
				2				8
		1				6	7	
3			5					
				4	9	2	1	

Hard

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9	2				4			
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	3	6						
			7		9			
						6	4	
8	6		4		1			
			9				2	7
2		9						

WORD SEARCH

Junk Food

D H Z L V N R O C P O P N G S
O L S O E L B B U B M F R R C
G I S L E Z T E R P U A A H S
S C E L C M F J A D N E I H E
E O R I M A K D G C B P E E I
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HERSHEYS
DOG
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JOLLY
RANCHER
LICORICE
LOLLIPOPS
MARSHMALLOW
POPCORN
POPSICLES
PRETZELS
SMORES
SODA
SOURS

Opinion: The MLB playoffs need to change

Truman Bartman
Staff Writer

Every year, when October rolls around, so does the climax to the professional baseball season. Major League Baseball’s (MLB) quest for the World Series title officially begins on Sept. 30 for the 12 teams that performed well enough during the MLB’s 162-game season. Each conference—American League and National League—has six spots available for those teams that reach the postseason: three for teams that win their division and three for the top teams in a conference that didn’t.

This setup has changed over the years to include more teams and more games, but its current structure has some glaring challenges. Many of MLB’s playoff problems stem from unbalanced regular-season and postseason schedules, a lack of consideration for the toll the season and playoffs take on the players, and the limited playoff spots available to all teams relative to the number of teams in the league.

Compared to other professional sports leagues, the MLB only allows 40 per cent of their league to enter the playoffs, compared to the 44 per cent of NFL teams, 50 per cent of NHL teams and 67 per cent of NBA teams that make the postseason.

The number of playoff games that a team gets to play can be determined by its placement. In 2025, the Detroit Tigers and Cleveland Guardians in the American League are neck and neck in the standings, with one of the two teams having the potential for both a first-round bye and a guaranteed three-game series. The other will be forced to settle for a series that could last just two games. With both teams being so close in the standings, the format that the MLB currently uses punishes teams that are in many ways on the same level, but only allows for a ‘best two out of three’ series to determine which team is better.

After five long months with limited off days, a team that does enough to get into the playoff dance may only play two more games before facing the end of the season. In 2022, the Toronto Blue Jays won 92 games and had one of the better records in

the entire American League. Despite their impressive regular season, the Jays only participated in two playoff games, being swept by the Seattle Mariners in the wild card round. One could argue that teams get swept in all sports and that it’s just a part of the game.

The difference between the MLB postseason and seven-game-series leagues, like Stanley Cup playoffs in the NHL, is that teams play half as many games during the regular season in the NHL and receive a minimum of four playoff games. The NHL has also always permitted the top 16 teams to qualify for the playoffs as opposed to MLB’s 12.

Building a roster in baseball is as difficult as it is to clinch a postseason berth in the MLB. Teams such as the Athletics or Colorado Rockies face an uphill battle from opening day, with subsequently lower payrolls than their wealthy counterparts—such as the New York Yankees and LA Dodgers—and no salary cap restrictions to even the playing field. Several organisations begin each season this way, knowing they’re about to embark on a 162-game journey with fewer capable players due to payroll restrictions. For a majority of these low-budget teams, their season often involves more losing than winning.

At the same time, the Dodgers, Mets, and Yankees load up on expensive, higher-tier talents, better positioning them to qualify for October baseball most years. Although the MLB salary structure is another issue on its own, the league isn’t helping its cause by making it harder for small markets to get into playoff positions. One could argue the Players Association is also to blame, but players don’t set ticket prices or sign the television deals.

MLB pitchers might have it the worst of all, as their postseason journeys may last a handful of innings if the rest of their group doesn’t perform. With an increase in injuries in the pitching department, it’s rare to see an MLB starter finish a year without at least one missed start or a stint on the injured list. Hurling 100 mph pitches weekly for five consecutive months, just to be featured in

five innings of an important playoff game, seems like a high price to pay in investment for both an owner and player perspective.

In the case of a pitcher who’s listed as the third or fourth best pitcher in a rotation, they may not see the field at all, being forced to watch on in hopes that their team plays enough games for them to be a factor.

One of the more notable examples of this came during the 2016 Wild Card series between the Baltimore Orioles and Toronto Blue Jays, where Orioles manager Buck Showalter chose not to use his superstar reliever Zack Britton in hopes of saving him for another day, which ultimately didn’t happen. Britton had played in 69 games that year, leading

the majors in saves and winning the AL reliever of the year award. In Britton’s case, if the postseason featured a four-game series, there’s no doubt he would have been called upon at some point.

Although Major League Baseball has allowed one more team to join the wild card round to guarantee teams more than just one game as compared to past seasons, the question remains: is it enough, and is it worth it for the players, organisations, and even for the fans?


If the MLB changed its format to mirror a format like the NHL’s, then teams with lower payrolls could have a better chance to qualify. Better yet, teams such as the 2023 Mariners, who won 88 games, or the

2019 Guardians, who won 93 games, would be included in the playoffs and, in a sense, given their due for having strong playoff campaigns.

There’s no perfect formula for fixing the MLB postseason, but the current format in the MLB postseason feels more punitive instead of a reward for the majority of teams. It begs the question: who does the current playoff blueprint serve?


It clearly isn’t ideal for the players who spend five months grinding through 162 in hopes of maybe playing a few extra games. It isn’t ideal for the organisations that may already know their fate. And it isn’t beneficial for the fans who wait through nearly half a year just to have their favourite team bounced in two days.

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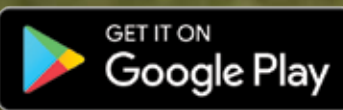
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Sweaters, skates and sticks: the NHL is back, baby!

Naomi Campbell
Staff Writer



As pre-season kicks off on Sept. 20 and the first regular season games on Oct. 7, hockey fans from all over the world come together to cheer on their favourite team(s). Heading into this season, every team in the league is placing a target on the backs of the two-time defending Stanley Cup Champions, the Florida Panthers. Here's what you need to know to sharpen your skates before the 2025-2026 NHL season.

Power rankings

Sportsnet's Ryan Dixon ranked all 32 teams as of Aug. 11, organising them in order of the best odds at claiming the Stanley Cup. Dixon's top five consisted of the Dallas Stars, the Vegas Golden Knights, the Washington Capitals, the Carolina Hurricanes and the Colorado Avalanche, all of which made excellent trade deadline decisions, draft picks, and their off-season acquisitions to bolster their rosters.

Dallas ranks number one on the list, but could have a target on its back with Mikko Rantanen entering his first full year in Dallas. The Stars will also spend their first season under a new coach Glen Gulutzan who previously worked with the Edmonton Oilers. All things considered, Dallas is a serious contender in a competitive Western Conference.

Mid-tier teams include the New Jersey Devils, the Ottawa Senators, the St. Louis Blues, the New York Rangers, and the Montreal Canadiens. Montreal overachieved last year by sneaking into the playoffs, but questions have

Connor McDavid: The hockey world's eyes are all on Connor McDavid, who has yet to sign an extension with the Edmonton Oilers and is rumoured to be considering signing with a rival team after 2025-26. Photo courtesy of Instagram / @mcdavid97

arisen surrounding their ability to do it again with their new additions, see defenceman Noah Dobson and highly-touted rookie Ivan Demidov. Don't count out the Minnesota Wild, either, who made it to the playoffs last year while missing Kirill Kaprizov for half the season. For Minnesota, the question still stands: can they combine and optimise their two celebrity Swedes, Filip Gustavsson and Jesper Wallstedt, to make a huge run to the top?

Non-contending teams that promise to be fun to watch include the San Jose Sharks, the Pittsburgh Penguins, the Seattle Kraken, the Philadelphia Flyers, and the Chicago Blackhawks. San Jose ranked dead last on Dixon's list mainly because of their woeful 2024-25 season, but they have the potential to make a big jump and rise to the top. Still, rebuilding takes time, and they just don't seem ready yet, especially considering their young average age of 27.13 years old. The Flyers and Kraken lack big-name talents and don't present any game-breaking X-factors, making them unlikely to make any serious advancements and placing them in the lower echelon of the NHL.

Draft day

On June 27-28, 2025, the NHL held their annual draft in Los Angeles. The New York Islanders selected Canadian prospect Matthew Schaefer with the number one draft

pick. Schaefer played for the Erie Otters in the Ontario Hockey League (OHL) for two seasons, becoming one of the Alternate Captains in his last year with the team before being drafted. He also captained the World Hockey Champions U17 Canada White team in 2023-2024, leading them to a shiny gold medal. San Jose took Michael Misa with the second overall pick, and third overall pick Anton Frondell will join Connor Bedard on the Chicago Blackhawks.

Contract struggles

Two big stars in the league are still up in the air about possible contract extensions. Connor McDavid's contract is up as of the end of the 2025-2026 season, yet everyone is on the edge of their seats as he still awaits a contract extension. Three hundred kilometres south in Calgary, Rasmus Andersson's contract is coming to an end, and while the Swede has been one of the best defenders in the league for the Flames since being drafted in 2015, the Flames have shown zero interest in re-signing him as they transition into a long-term rebuild.

Calgary has been rumoured to be considering trading him before he becomes an unrestricted free agent at the end of the 2025-2026 season. The defenceman put up 31 points in 81 games for the Flames last season, and if he stays on the right track, his

performance can sway the Flames into rethinking their willingness to let him go.

Fresh starts

Mitch Marner starts his first season with the Vegas Golden Knights after being traded there from the Toronto Maple Leafs, signing an eight-year \$96 million deal with the Nevada team. Expected to play the top line alongside Jack Eichel, Marner is a huge forward addition for Vegas as they look to make a big jump this season and return to the Stanley Cup Finals for the first time since 2023.

Another big star has come back to the NHL, after stepping away from the league to focus on his health in 2023. Canadian superstar Jonathan Toews signed a deal with the Winnipeg Jets, making his return after suffering an extended battle with long COVID. Toews is excited to jump back into hockey after his leave of absence and is even more optimistic about joining his hometown team in Winnipeg.

Olympic superstars

For the first time since 2014, NHL players have been allowed to compete at the Winter Olympics. This year's Olympics will take place from Feb. 6-22, 2026 in Italy, specifically in Milan and Cortina d'Ampezzo.

Team Canada has players such as Sidney Crosby, Nathan MacKinnon, Connor McDavid, and Cale Makar. Their archrivals south of

the border, Team USA, will feature names like Auston Matthews, Quinn Hughes and both Matthew and Brady Tkachuk.

The Olympics will take place at a similar time to last year's 4 Nations Face Off, which proved to be a massive marketing success for the NHL last season, and builds on international hockey's increasing popularity.

Fantasy hockey top 10

As fun as watching hockey is, why not make it even more exciting, by grabbing some friends and drafting your very own fantasy team. I have done this the last couple of years, especially with my friends that live farther away, and it makes for some added excitement and competition to our NHL obsessions.

From personal experience as well as a couple Sportsnet articles, here are the top ten players you should think about drafting to your team this season:

- MacKenzie Weegar, D, Calgary Flames
- Leon Draisaitl, F, Edmonton Oilers
- Lukas Dostal, G, Anaheim Ducks
- Andrei Kuzmenko, F, Los Angeles Kings
- J.T. Miller, F, New York Rangers
- Juraj Slafkovsky, F, Montreal Canadiens
- Philip Broberg, D, St. Louis Blues
- Jake Oettinger, G, Dallas Stars
- Cale Makar, D, Colorado Avalanche
- Dustin Wolf, G, Calgary Flames