

# the EXCELSIOR

## Bilal Khan is Just Trying to Make a Difference



Bilal Khan speaking at the New Zealand vigil two weeks ago. PHOTO/ Brooklyn College

BY ZAINAB IQBAL

Bilal Khan is the 19-year-old son of immigrant parents from Pakistan. He has five sisters and still shrugs his head when thinking about how he signed up for their kids’ school pick-up duty. He calls himself a sneakerhead and was wearing a clean pair of Yeezy’s on this particular day. Khan is also the president of the Brooklyn College Islamic Society (BCISO) and plans on making a difference in his community.

Khan is a freshman. When he first came to Brooklyn College last semester, he didn’t have much friends except some of the guys from high school. So, he signed up for BCISO thinking it would be a place where there are other Muslims and people he could relate to.

A semester later, he became the president. Being president wasn’t something he was trying to go after; it just happened, he said. His new role consists of managing everything, organizing

events, making sure the club room is clean, and making sure there is enough food for events. It also consists of speaking at vigils.

Two weeks ago, a white supremacist murdered 50 Muslims inside two mosques in New Zealand. Khan’s friend posted a status on Facebook saying, “Islamophobia is real.”

“He’s an activist and I thought he was just doing his activist business,” Khan said. “But then I saw somebody post that there’s an attack. And at that moment I really didn’t know what to think. I was at a loss of words. I didn’t know what to say and how to react.”

The next thing he remembers doing is organizing a vigil at the college along with the Young Progressives of America (YPA).

“The college didn’t say anything about it. They didn’t post anything on Facebook, they didn’t send any kind of letter, and there is such a big Muslim population on campus,” Khan said. “Non-Muslims were also affected. So, when the college didn’t take the initiative to do something, we decided to host a vigil.”

Khan said that after the New Zealand massacre, many people were afraid. Students were afraid to walk out of their house because what if someone attacked them? Women were afraid to wear their hijabs and men were afraid to go to Jumma prayer.

“I just tell them to keep fighting and stay strong,” Khan said. “At the end of the day, it’s their personal struggle. I don’t know what it feels like to wear a hijab on my head all day. I don’t know what it’s like to be in a situation where people are constantly looking at me because of something I am wearing. I tell women to keep doing what they’re doing and the struggle will be worth it at the end.”

Last week, Khan was inside a restaurant with his

friend. He remembers telling his friend, “Someone was selling GOAT credits.” GOAT is a website/app where people sell shoes. When a person sells shoes, they receive credits that they can use to purchase other shoes or cash out.

When he told his friend someone was selling GOAT credits, a woman turned to them and asked, “What goat? You’re selling a goat? Who’s selling a goat?”

Khan said he remembered smiling because “It was cool to see someone else interested in what we were talking about.”

But the lady did not like it when he smiled. The woman turned to him again and said, “Well, maybe you should be kind and nice instead of smiling like an idiot and wearing a funny hat.”

That “funny hat” the lady was referring to was the kufi on Khan’s head. It’s a short, rounded cap worn by men. For Khan, this was the first time someone had a made

such a comment to him.

Regardless of what people may think, Khan wants to make a difference. He was born and raised in Brooklyn and has lived in “Little Pakistan” practically the almost-two decades of his life. He refers to himself as an “imam in training” and wants to give resources to his community that lacks it.

“When you come from an immigrant family... you go through college and the system and have no one to ask for help, no one to look up to, and have to figure out everything yourself,” he said. “It shouldn’t be like that. We need mentorship programs, programs to help women, and programs for homeless people.”

Though Khan has a long way to go, he’s excited for what comes next.

“I am just working to make a difference,” he said, “in my community, in our community. I want us to think about the future and the children growing up.

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THE EXCELSIOR

# Sex Toy Shop Brings Safe Sex Workshop to BC

BY M.A. RAHMAN

Representatives of the Sex Toy Shop “Babeland” presented their annual workshop to promote ‘Safe Sex’ before a gathering of students at the Brooklyn College Women’s Center in coordination with the BC LGBTQ center. Founded in 1993, the sex apparatus boutique now known as “Babeland” has since 1998 supported several causes related to sexual health, education, and civil liberties that according to their website values because “you can’t enjoy a healthy sex life in a vacuum.”

“If you wanted to go to a sex shop, you would have to go to the back of a video store and go behind beaded curtain and there’s some guy in a trench coat who has no information about it,” said



Students attend the fifth annual BC Safe Sex discussion at the Women’s Center. PHOTO/ M.A. Rahman

Sam Light, describing the typical circumstance for persons that desired for a sexually arousing novelty before the advent of their store. Light along with Lisa Finn, both representatives from “Babeland” and

self-declared “sex educators,” presided before a throng of BC students at the Women’s Center. With detailed explanations on particular 'acts' utilizing puppet genitalia, they showcased how students should go about having safe sex, topics ranging from consent to commitment.

“We chose the Women’s Center because we needed a private and inviting space for students to come in and speak honestly from their mind on this topic,” said Sami Binder, a graduate, and representative of the BC LGBTQ center.

Throughout the guided discussion, presenters opted not to attribute any particular pronouns to any genitalia, a point of distinction in their view. Light noted doing so would lend validi-



## EVENTS LISTING

MONDAY, MARCH 18 – SATURDAY, AUGUST 31

**We Stand Against Hate - History of Free Speech: The Vanguard Years at Brooklyn College**

Exhibit in presidential cases at 2129 Boylan Hall.

TUESDAY, APRIL 2 – THURSDAY, APRIL 4

**40th Biannual International Electroacoustic Music Festival**

**Topfer Recital Hall, Room 250**

**Leonard & Claire Tow Center for the Performing Arts**

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 3

**Cherrie Moraga on Native Country of the Heart in Conversation with Vanessa Perez-Rosario**

**11:00 AM - 12:15 PM**

**Woody Tanger Auditorium**

**Brooklyn College Library**

Cherrie Moraga is an internationally recognized poet, essayist and playwright whose professional life began in 1981 with her co-editorship of the groundbreaking feminist anthology, This Bridge Called My Back: Writings by Radical Women of Color.

**Dr. Haywood Hall: A Social Entrepreneurial Life in International Emergency Medicine and Global Health**

**2:15 PM - 4:30 PM**

**2nd Floor - Student Center**

The unique voyage from Brooklyn College to Mexico and Latin America. Dr. Haywood Hall is an Emergency Physician and an Ashoka Fellow.

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 3

**Voices For Change: Maneuvering “Mixedness”: Interpreting Dougla in the Caribbean Diaspora**

**3:40 PM - 4:55 PM**

**150 - Brooklyn College Library**

This presentation is part of a larger book project with University of the West Indies colleague Dr. Sue Ann Barratt which interrogates the Dougla as a mixed race subject.

**Trans Literacy Workshop**

**4:00 PM - 6:00 PM**

**5th Floor - Student Center**

The Honest Accomplice Theatre will present and introduce the Trans Literacy Project that focuses on creating classroom practices that foster safe and inclusive spaces for trans students.

THURSDAY, APRIL 4

**LAMEM - The Late Antique-Medieval-Early Modern Faculty Working Group**

**5:00 PM - 6:00 PM**

**2405 Boylan Hall**

MONDAY, APRIL 8

**History and Catastrophe: The Secret Archive in the Warsaw Ghetto**

**2:15 PM - 3:30 PM**

**Woody Tanger Auditorium**

**Brooklyn College Library**

**An Actor's Tale: Theater, Culture, and Everyday Life in Nineteenth-Century US America**

**4:30 PM - 5:30 PM**

**Woody Tanger Auditorium**

**Brooklyn College Library**

MONDAY, APRIL 8

**Film Screening - "Who Will Write Our History?"**

**6:30 PM - 8:30 PM**

**Woody Tanger Auditorium**

**Brooklyn College Library**

The film includes reenactments of the key figures and events in the effort to preserve the memory of Jewish life under extreme persecution in Nazi-German occupied Poland during World War II.

TUESDAY, APRIL 9

**Media and Entertainment Career Panel**

**12:15 PM - 2:15 PM**

**4th Floor - Student Center**

**Sustainability Fair**

**12:15 PM - 2:15 PM**

**BC Quad**

**Career Chat with Partner - PKF O'Connor Davies Financial Services**

**12:30 PM - 2:00 PM**

**TBA**

Victor Pena '07, Partner at PKF O'Connor Davies Financial Services comes back to Brooklyn College to share his professional advice about his 12 plus years working in the accounting industry and how he made it to partner.

**Sustainability Fair Lectures**

**3:00 PM - 5:00 PM**

**241 - Brooklyn College Library**

**Trans Activism Before, During, and After Stonewall featuring Victoria Cruz and Kai Green**

**6:30 PM - 8:30 PM**

**4th Floor - Student Center**



ty to their assertion of being inclusive in their products, a discussion they considered is what separated themselves and their competitors.

“Consent can’t be just a yes, it has to be an enthusiastic yes, and if you want to try something new, have them consent to that too. They have to be like ‘hell yeah I want my hair pulled,’” Light exclaimed to students before distributing an actual ‘consent’ paper for students to review with their partner.

Light, who led most of the discussion, elaborated on particular areas one

might wish to fully ‘explore’ to their full satisfaction.

“You’ll never really know what you want until you try it and as you try different things, your partner and you will get better,” Finn said to encourage students.

In her view, one of the reasons why one might consider engaging in these types of ‘play’ is to “fully explore themselves,” a means of breaking away from otherwise aimless repressive, dogmatic taboos.

“You might be into something that I’m not and I’d be like wait, really,” Light said emphasizing need-

ed respect for individual, personal preferences.

During the meeting, students were fully captivated by the information they received, save for the occasional question concerning the varying sex acts. Some viewed these as somewhat redundant.

“What’s the difference between bondage and domination,” asked one student, who was met by a pause. What followed was a highly-detailed answer describing the minimal difference between said acts.

The organizers retort-

ed the idea that the event might be an elaborate advertisement for their company, noting how they opted not to disclose the names of particular products in their presentations.

“We’re just telling you how to use these tools. I could stand here and tell you that this [product], its water-proof and has eight speeds, I can do that but I’m just gonna tell you about the shape since this shape is great for ‘g-spotting’ since it has a curve and that’s the information we want to provide,” Light said in justification.

Attendees of the event overwhelmingly voiced their satisfaction with it.

“I thought it was very productive because I actually go to their place and they really are conscious of the gender spectrum and that people have different bodies, you can ask questions that other places might consider ‘stupid’ to ask,” said Narline Borno, a senior majoring in anthropology, cherishing an apropos representation of gender and valued sex education.

## Brooklyn College Students' MTA Horror Stories

BY MARCUS AYALA

Whenever you’re late to a New York City commuter school, there’s usually one reason, the MTA. Brooklyn College students and member of NYPIRG Straphangers Campaign spoke about their worst MTA horror stories and the negative effect it had on their college experience. Their goal is to pressure the MTA and Governor Andrew Cuomo into making the MTA reach its potential.

Students were given the opportunity by NYPIRG to voice their stories and give feedback on what they would of or what the MTA should do to improve the system. Many of them spoke about their troubles getting to school and work due to the MTA and not having a realistic alternative.

Jaqi Cohen started off with her MTA horror story. Cohen, of the Straphangers Campaign, said, “I was going to JFK Airport and I was taking the A train to Howard Beach. I was going to JFK Airport because I was leaving to California to go to my wedding and the train stopped in the tunnel. I thought I was going to miss my old wedding.” She ended up making it and still feared the worst on what should of been a special day because of the MTA she expressed.

Parapar Madha a sophomore and double major in Speech-language pathology and Psychology, explained how she was traveling from Newkirk Avenue to Forest Hills on a Sunday and it involved four trains to get to her friend’s birthday party.

“I felt really bad and at one point I was going to start cry-



Students were given the opportunity by NYPIRG to voice their MTA horror stories. PHOTO/ M.A. Rahman

ing. I finally got there, it was about two and a half hours but I finally got there.” She believes the MTA needs to cut back on all its delays and the trains need to run like it is suppose to. Her curiosity brought her to the event was she found a lot of common ground with her fellow Brooklyn College students.

Richard Lee Chong, a freshman and Digital Art major, voiced out on his MTA daily experience. Chong believes all his experiences with the MTA are bad

in their own ways. “During any given time because how unpredictable and just how overall inefficient it is.”

He called out the N line for being the worst. During rush hours it’s over crowded and he believes it needs more service. “The MTA needs needs to focus more on the service and not making unnecessary changes to the stations,” he said.

Maat Silin, a junior and Television and Radio major, expressed her feelings. “I was taking the train to

my internship and it got delayed. It didn’t go forward, it went backwards.” Normally her commute to her internship takes an hour and the delay alone took an hour, not counting it going backwards. With her train turning around she ended up being over two hours late to her internship.

According to Chris Mejia, a junior and Political Science major, his worst experience “is commuting to school. I pay for an unlimited MetroCard every week.”

“I end up having horrible service. It takes 13 minutes for the train to come.” His commute ends up being over an hour and a half sometimes and should be less than an hour. “I think it’s absurd because it’s a service we’re paying for.” He thinks we should be getting better quality.

“We’re expected to not ask for better conditions and expect it to be the norm.” He thinks it’s unfair to target the working class and not the millionaires who can actually afford it.



The opinions expressed in the Opinions Section do not necessarily reflect the views of The Excelsior.

# "Digital Minimalism" by Cal Newport (2019)

BY MICHAEL CASTANEDA

How many times have you looked at your phone today? Ten minutes? 30 minutes? 90 minutes? There an app for that. It's called Moment. It tracks how often you are looking at your phone. According to Cal Newport's notes from the app developer Kevin Holesh, an advantaged person checks their phone 40 times a day and spends about three hours a day doing it.

I believe in free will and the free market. I believe that if someone wants to look at their phone all day they have the right to because it is a free choice that they make. Do you agree with me?

Newport might not and this is why. A few years ago Silicon Valley insiders started to come out of the woodwork to confess that your addition to your phone was a carefully thought out and designed feature to bait and switch you by giving you a powerful communication device and then making sure that your eyes will never leave it.

Look up Tristan Harris who a is former Google engineer. He was featured in an Anderson Cooper 60 Minutes special called 'Brain Hacking'. Here Harris explains that smartphones with its apps is designed as an addiction machine. They studied the gambling industry to see how slot machines are designed to keep people gambling and used that information to design phone apps to capture our attention and never let it go. Bill Maher compared this to Tobacco companies designing cigarettes to make them more addictive. You can find out more about this in a 2016 Atlantic article titled "inertia."

When I read this I thought, how could this happen? Surely our business killing over regulated government would never allow this to happen. They would arrest this practice as soon as it appears. However, according to the New York Times, social media companies and gun companies are treated as neutral under the law. Each has caused deaths of innocent people, but the law takes the stand that the company of the product that produced a vehicle to kill people are not at fault. It like Charleston Heston, former movie star and former NRA



Cal Newport (right) published a new Concept book, "Digital Minimalism," PHOTO/ Michael Castaneda

president said, a gun in the hands of a good is no threat to anyone. I believe that to be true except there are a lot of bad people out there and many of them have guns.

Take this a step further. As Newport points out Silicon Valley hacks your brain to keep your focus on your phone. In a New York Times article on March 15, 2019, titled "A Mass Murder of, and for the Internet" states: "But we do know that the design of internet platforms can create and reinforce extremist beliefs. Their recommendation algorithms often steer users toward edgier content, a loop that results in more time spent on the app, and more advertising revenue for the company."

The attention economy has a body count. Before this was funny. We had people walking into traffic and walking off ledges when Pokémon Go was first released. It seemed like you could point to a few idiots who took an innocuous game to too far. But there was a darker side, in 2014, there was a Korean couple that killed their own baby by neglect because they were playing a video game about taking care of a baby. Ok, maybe that was an isolated incident. Now we just had 50 people killed in New Zea-

land by a white supremacist terrorist act. A few months earlier on US soil at the Tree of Life Synagogue in Pittsburgh there was another internet-fueled white supremacist terrorist act that killed 11 people. The New Zealand shooter praised the Pittsburgh shooter and Donald Trump.

The point is that people aren't becoming more extreme because of the Internet. That is too simple. People are becoming more extreme and violent because algorithms take people off the deep end and the social media environment is set up so that you never stop looking at your device.

This is most likely done with machine learning algorithms.

How do can you escape that, while keeping the stuff you love. Newport has a plan for that. Digital Minimalism is a Concept book. Concept book is genre of their own. You will see them in business reviews which have titles like "50 books that every CEO has read." In fact, Newport's last book Deep Work, was heavily listed amongst those.

The way to read a Concept book is to read the first chapter carefully then never read the rest of the book. It usually goes like this, someone has a cool insight about our modern world. It makes

sense. Then each chapter after that tries to support the first chapter. Sometimes it gets really bad. Someone will mention how a particular SpongeBob episode supports their life hack which the author thinks will totally change your life for the better.

Given that should we just read the first chapter of this Concept book by Newport, and not the rest? We could totally do that right? Maybe just read the first chapter at the Bookstore. Brooklyn is one of the few places in the world that actually has bookstores.

Actually no. Like most Concept book authors, Newport has a successful blog, [www.calnewport.com](http://www.calnewport.com). But unlike, those guys who left their administrative latent job they hated to become a blogger. Newport is a Computer Science professor at Georgetown University with an Ph.D. from MIT and undergrad from Dartmouth (see the article on academic admission as to why top universities count). He's been writing books since his undergraduate days exploring how people get really cool work done. Unlike a contemporary, for example, Malcolm Gladwell, who is a journalist and that medium is obvious in his wonderful writing. Newport is an ac-

ademic, and transforms this modern genre of a Concept book into a rigorous study of the topic at hand.

Newport describes the possible perils of the iPhone society, but he finds a way out. Being a computer scientist, he is not anti-technology.

Having recently gone to one of Digital Minimalism book tour stops at Company Store in Manhattan, I got to see first hand that Cal Newport has a small set of groupies. Given this, he gave out on an experiment to have people digitally declutter their life lives for 30 days and only bring back those services that they felt had value. I was sitting next to a 24-year-old web developer who was part of this project. He was really into watching sports, any sport presented on a screen. Curling is fun, right?

He spoke about having an existential crisis as he looked into the dark void of being and nothingness. It was severely anxiety provoking. He couldn't finish the challenge. My new friend was not alone. The book speaks to many situations where this happened.

My favorite was there was a woman took off most of her apps except the most basic ones. She kept the weather app and kept checking the weather and even the weather in the city that she did not live in because he had to satisfy the compulsion to check her phone often. Another woman bought a wristwatch because she used her phone as a clock but once she had her phone out all the other goodies became too irresistible.

Newport spends most of the book examining how to become a person again. He explores the philosophy of personhood and living a good life. He gives practical and didactic instruction on how to regain mastery of your phone instead of having your phone be the master of you. We like to think of technology as being beyond good and evil. That may not be the case. It depends on the design. Nevertheless, we are human, all too human. In the words of a title of another great book, Humans are underrated.



# A Closer Look at Daylight Savings Time

BY MILETTE MILLINGTON

Daylight Savings Time (DST) started almost two weeks ago, and it will continue until early November. During the nearly six-month period, clocks are sprung ahead by one hour. This means that we have longer days and shorter nights, losing an hour of sleep.

DST was first adopted by Germany in 1916 during World War 1. Formerly “Fast Time,” DST was first introduced in this country in 1918. After being repealed seven months after, it got repealed in 1942 in the midst of World War 2.

Because we lose an hour of sleep during DST, “the body needs to adjust to going to sleep earlier, which may leave people restless at night and cause sleepiness the next day,” according to an article published last year by Ashley Welch for CBS News. This article then lays out the effects that the loss of sleep has on things such as mood and productivity. It states, “On average, Americans lose 40 minutes of sleep when we set the clocks ahead in the spring. Such sleep disturbances can lead mood disruptions and increased irritability.”

With workplace injuries, the article states that “A



Daylight Savings Time comes with its share of benefits and risks. PHOTO/ Pixabay

2009 study examined data on over 500,000 mining injuries from 1983 to 2006 and found a 5.7 percent increase on the Monday following the time change. What’s more, the injuries were more severe, leading to a 68 percent increase in the number of days of work missed.”

The article by David Trilling published for Journalist’s Resource states: “The

spring is most dangerous: In the first few days after we lose an hour of sleep, researchers have shown increases in car accidents and heart attacks — the latter by as much as 24 percent.”

Since it gets darker at a later time, there is a benefit in commuting home. I think that another benefit is that it’s brighter inside my house, too. What I mean by this is

that we save energy by not having to put on lights until a certain time. Trilling’s article also states, “As for energy consumption, in a 2008 study carried out shortly after the last federal change to the daylight saving schedule, the U.S. Department of Energy found annual energy usage fell about 0.03 percent. That may not sound like much, but it is enough to power

100,000 homes for a year.”

With an extra hour of sunlight, I could get more reading done at night in my spare time. We are in DST for a period of almost nine months, and the other three we are in standard eastern time. I would say that the days may be longer now, but either way, time moves fast.



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College to share?  
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# Tame Impala Releases New Song on SNL

BY CARMEN SAFFIOTI

Tame Impala, an indie rock band from Australia, released a new single during their Saturday Night Live (SNL) performance on Saturday. The psychedelic is known for their dreamy tracks like “The Less I Know the Better” and their new single “Borderline” fits exactly into their established sound. This new release comes just ahead of their appearance at Coachella, where they will be headlining. The band has not released a full-length album since 2015 and the last time they released an EP was in 2017. This new single could be teasing at much anticipated new music.

The performance kicked off with one of their fan favorites “Patience,” which was performed live for the first time. Front man Kevin Parker really displayed his talent as an instrumentalist. Singing in his signature falsetto voice, Parker begins using a maraca. Then, about two minutes and 30 seconds into the performance, he picks up his guitar to add a warm and melodic element. Compared to the studio version, the live performance had a slightly melancholic sound to it. Although the sound fits into the group’s hippie happy go lucky persona, the lyrics are actually quite sad. “Livin’ life in phases/An-



Tame Impala performed a new song, “Borderline,” on SNL. PHOTO/ YouTube SNL

other season changes/And still, my days are shapeless” are the repeated lyrics in the chorus; they echo feelings of life regret and the pains of getting older. Overall, the first-time performance was decadent, and shows a new level of maturity for the band.

Following “Patience,” Tame Impala surprised everyone by performing a never-before heard song “Borderline.”This new tune was a pick up from “Patience.”The fast tempo single, features a wide variety of instruments, but most importantly features the keyboard which several of the band members

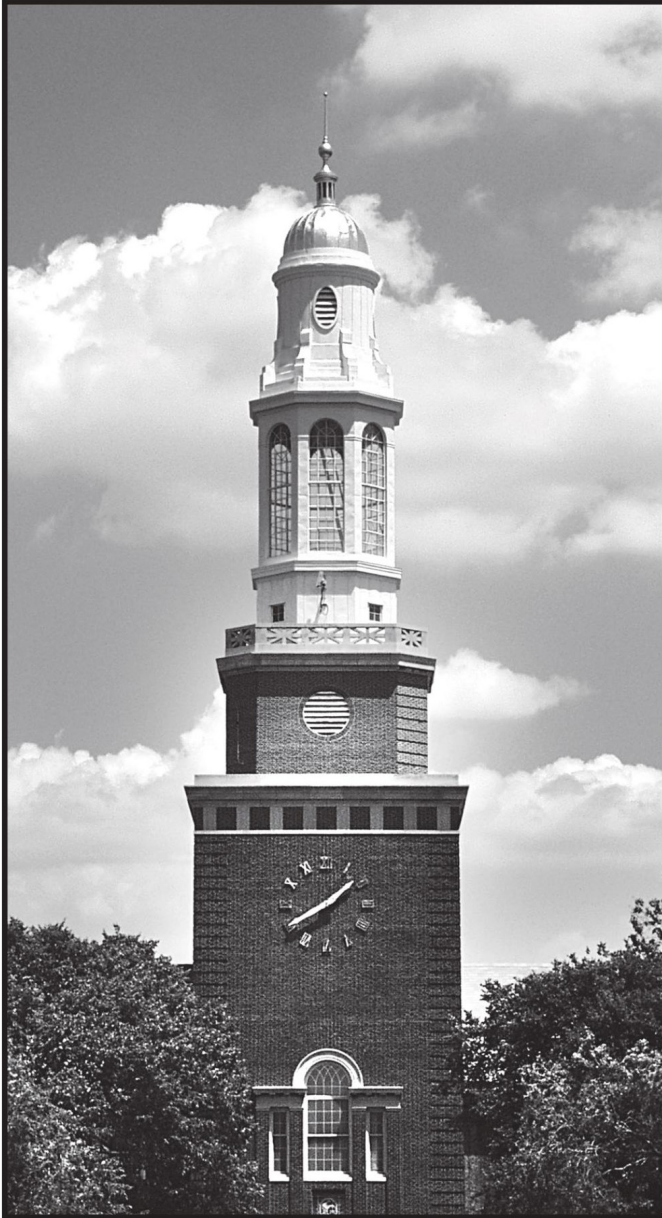
are playing during the song. The lyrics of the song seem to be about the psychedelic experiences of drugs, which fits in with the ambiance and aesthetic of the song. “I’m on the borderline, right between the tides of pain and pleasure” (since the studio version of this song has not yet been released, these lyrics may be incorrect), these lyrics could mean multiple things such as an experience with drugs or a positive transition in life. However, until the studio version of the song with the official lyrics are released, it will be difficult for fans to truly dis-

sect the meaning. Instead, we can enjoy the song itself.

My only critique of the performance was the “flatness” to it. It seems that the band wanted to play it safe rather than take a risk by adding a lot of energy to the performance. There are benefits and drawbacks to this strategy, the sound of Parker’s voice was phenomenal and sounded very similar to the studio versions. The music was also played close to perfectly, and it was clear that none of the members of the band wanted to mess up. However, visually, the only thing interesting

was the psychedelic lights that were shining over the band as Parker and the rest of the band rarely moved.

If they added a bit more energy, this might have been the best SNL performance given this season. A possible reason they decided to play it safe is in response to Greta Van Fleet’s miserable performance a few weeks ago, in which the front man consistently failed to hit key notes and the other members were almost completely off with their playing. It is understandable, then, that Tame Impala did not want a similar SNL experience.



## Brooklyn College STUDENT TOWN HALLS

Wednesday, March 27 • 6 p.m.

Wednesday, April 17 • 6 p.m.

Tuesday, May 14 • 12:30 p.m.

Jefferson Lounge, Fourth Floor, Student Center

Share your concerns about campus affairs in an informal town hall setting.



# The Brooklyn Nets’ Magical Season Puts Them Back Into Playoff Contention

BY CONRAD HOYT

Prior to this season, the Brooklyn Nets were the laughingstock of the NBA for the last four seasons (what feels like an eternity). Devoid of draft picks after the Celtics swindled them in the Paul Pierce/Kevin Garnett trade six years ago, the Nets lacked young talent, stars, and promise moving forward.

This season has been quite the opposite.

One of the surprise teams of the season is the Brooklyn Nets, who are currently sitting at the seventh seed in the playoff picture in the Eastern Conference. The Nets have a delightful combination of young talent working to get better mixed with seasoned veterans teaching the young guys the tricks of the game.

To look at how the Nets swift rebuild began, we must look to three years ago. On February 18th, 2016, Sean Marks took over as General Manager for the Nets. Through brilliant and innovative methods, Marks was able to acquire draft picks for the team, along with other young talent and veterans that could help right away. Through the draft, the Nets got Caris Levert, Rondae Hollis Jefferson, and Jarrett Allen, all important pieces for the current team. Then,



D'Angelo Russell (left) and Spencer Dinwiddie (right) have led the Brooklyn Nets to playoff contention this season. PHOTO/ Getty Images

by unburdening the Lakers by taking the massive Timofey Mozgov contract off their hands, the Nets also received D'Angelo Russell, a former number two overall pick that had not yet scraped the limits of his potential.

Russell is clearly one of the biggest stories for the Nets this season. A candidate for the most improved player award, Russell is averaging 21 points and seven assists this season, even exploding for a career-high 44 points in a win against the Kings a couple of weeks ago. Along with his high-arcing jumper and

exquisite handle, Russell has also shown the ability to be a great floor general, play off the ball, and come through in the clutch with big shots.

Another person that deserves recognition for his efforts with this team is the Nets' coach, Kenny Atkinson. With one of the best benches in the league, Atkinson has a lot at his disposal, but it also means he has to make the right substitutions and play certain players with others so he can get the most out of them.

Atkinson is also one of the best coaches in the league in

terms of player development. It is easy to see the improvement in Allen, LeVert, Spencer Dinwiddie, and Russell, among others. Though he won't win it, Atkinson deserves to be in the discussion for coach of the year.

The Nets are facing a brutal stretch of games at the end of this season, facing the Pacers, Celtics, Raptors, and Bucks twice, just to name a few. In order to make the playoffs, they will have to win some of these games.

If there is anything the Nets have shown us this season, it is that we can never

count them out. Sitting at 8-18 on December 17th (a game which I attended), the Nets beat the number one seed Raptors and turned their season around. Even after injuries to some of their biggest contributors in LeVert and Dinwiddie, the Nets remained resilient and kept winning games. The fans should have plenty of faith in this team, for this year, and moving forward. The future for the Brooklyn Nets looks bright, which is a beautiful thing to say based on where they were just one year ago.

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# NBA Playoff Picture: 2019 Postseason Predictions

BY ANTHONY DYCE

With the NBA season coming to an end and the playoffs set to take place on April 13th, teams are still competing for a playoff spot while other teams continue to lose games on purpose to have a better draft choice in the lottery. It's an ideal time to provide predictions.

When it comes to making predictions during a forecast, usually it isn't always accurate. Bottom line, the postseason is unpredictable. No one can accurately predict which teams will upset who or which stars will outperform the other. There's no way to be certain about matchup advantages, injuries, or coaching errors.

As of now, the Milwaukee Bucks are the only team out of the 16 playoff teams to have secured a division title. The Bucks have the best record in the league. Even with the injury bug hitting this team hard with Malcolm Brogdon, Nikola Mirotic, Pau Gasol, Tony Snell, and their promising rookie, Don-te DiVincenzo, who is out for the entire season. With all these nagging injuries and setbacks, the Bucks still has managed to maintain the best record in the league.

During the season's final stretch in the Eastern Conference, the Toronto Raptors are within 4.5 games from



The Milwaukee Bucks are so far the only playoff team that has secured a division title. PHOTO/ USA Today

the Bucks but still must finish the season strong due to only four games separating the third, fourth, and fifth seeds in the East. While in the West the Golden State Warriors and Denver Nuggets are the two top teams tied with the same record. Each seed could change daily throughout the end of the regular season.

Overall, the Golden State Warriors are the favorite to three-peat for another

NBA championship. But this season seems different with LeBron James gone, the Eastern Conference is up for grabs. Milwaukee, Toronto, Philadelphia and more hoping to win the race to the NBA Finals. The Bucks have the best record in the league and also have the best offensive rating and defensive rating. But that doesn't mean they are going to cruise through the playoffs. They have a talented

roster led by Giannis Antetokounmpo, who is one of the favorites to the win the MVP award for the first time in his young career.

The Raptors, are clearly a threat with the new addition of Kawhi Leonard and the 76ers have taken big steps this year with the addition of trading for Jimmy Butler and Tobias Harris. The Pacers are looked upon as overachievers and Celtics are viewed as underachievers based on

not being able to replicate and improve on the success that they had last postseason. Boston is talented enough to win the series against the Pacers due to the loss of all-star Victor Oladipo for the season. If they win as the fourth or fifth seed, they will most likely have to play the Bucks in the second round.

The Celtics have the talent and experience to defeat the Bucks but they have struggled this season with consistency. If they get it together, they could push the Bucks to seven games but that doesn't seem to be a likely outcome.

The Raptors or 76ers have a better chance of meeting the Bucks in the Eastern Conference Finals, they both pose a threat to push the Bucks to seven games as well. The Bucks will more than likely prevail and go on to the NBA Finals where they will meet the Golden State Warriors.

The Warriors seemingly own the Western Conference. Nuggets, Rockets, and Trail Blazers can give the Warriors a challenge but it seems unlikely due to the Warriors having an all-star starting five. The Finals will most likely include the Warriors as they will steamroll their way there. The time is now to see who could defeat the Golden State Warriors this June.



The Golden State Warriors are the favorite to three-peat for another NBA championship. PHOTO/ Getty Images