

# the EXCELSIOR

## This Club is SOFEDUP with Campus Public Safety



SOFEDUP is asking for better communication from the campus public safety. PHOTO/ Student Organization For Every Disability United For Progress - Sofedup (Facebook)

BY M.A. RAHMAN

Members of one of Brooklyn College’s oldest clubs on campus, the Student Organization For Every Disability United For Progress (SOFEDUP) slams the BC Public Safety office accusing them of being consistently undependable and offering vague instructions for disabled students in need.

“Whenever they have a fire drill, we’re supposed to do it as if there’s a [actual] fire,” said the current treasurer of SOFEDUP, Doreen Brittingham in a matter-of-fact tone. “But they don’t. They don’t take out those [wheelchair] lifts to take someone out, so students don’t actually experience how it’s supposed to go when it happens.”

Founded in 1968 by Friedrich L. Francis, a survivor of a car accident that rendered him permanently disabled as a double amputee, the club was created according to the group’s pamphlets to

“advocate for equal accessibility, accommodations, and rights for students with disabilities in Brooklyn College (CUNY).”

Brittingham supervises most of the club’s social and activist engagements with its members comprising of students and former students of differing backgrounds and disabled circumstances. Beginning the first of what would become many meetings to come throughout this semester, Brittingham beacons interested students to the club’s room in Roosevelt Hall.

Stating her intent, she sought to reconnect motivated students interested in SOFEDUP’s cause in trying to give disabled BC students an equal footing across campus despite their physical or mental circumstances.

Located next to the school’s Disabilities Center, the room’s seemingly convenient location has taken

its toll in terms of quality, raising questions amongst members of what at bare minimum an adequate club room should look like. The SOFEDUP office/clubroom is a windowless office cubicle-like enclosure that, despite its numerous uplifting decorations that cover the room’s walls, many of the aforementioned attributes still struck some prospective members of the club away.

“I have had a student say, ‘Nuh-uh’ to walking in the room when she came by even though she wanted to join,” Brittingham lamented, highlighting the serious lack of ventilation in the room, the effects of which were noticeable upon looking among the dozen members that crammed themselves to attend the meeting.

Brittingham iterates some of the problems she and other students observed on campus, sometimes attributing them to Brooklyn

College’s infrastructural state of disrepair. These included routinely closed restrooms that resulted in disabled students having to negotiate with the staircases to find another, students discovering that the designated disabled restrooms were not ‘clean-up friendly,’ staircase lifts like the one in Whitehead being found inoperable, push-button doors in Roosevelt rendered inoperable and so forth.

Perhaps the most harrowing of these tales came from SOFEDUP’s current President, Stacy Ann de Souza, a transfer student that was largely responsible for the club’s revival in 2014 following a brief hiatus.

De Souza, who suffers from an extreme case of impaired vision and requires a cane, says she endured an emotional ordeal that left her in an emotional breakdown afterward.

During a fire drill, de Souza

found herself in the West End Building when the alarm went off. She was promptly instructed to stand in a designated spot in the building (the wait room) while masses of students walked out of the front entrance.

She was to wait until Campus Public Safety officers would arrive to escort her. The escort never came.

Having realized this in what now seemed to be a totally desolate space and unable to independently navigate, de Souza began to tremble having felt neglected and forgotten of, descending into tears and anxiety.

“They probably think that Public Safety is great and that everything is great on campus,” de Souza deduces before criticizing the Public Safety Office for measuring the state of the cam-

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BULLSPIT!

Bullspit! is a weekly satirical column by Brooklyn College comedian Ryan Gleason.

Brooklyn College Lonely Hearts Club

PHOTO/ Flickr

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“Dear Muscle Man with the Tan,  
You stopped me in Boylan to tell me I had a “double-double badonkadonk.” That was the most romantic thing I have ever heard. All my girlfriends would love to meet you! Meet me at the Avenue H train station in the corridor where there are no cameras this Friday at midnight and we’ll meet you there! Don’t tell anyone where you will be going. It will be a night a gentleman like yourself will never forget.  
Love, Miss Ogyny and Friends”

BY RYAN GLEASON  
These are letters submitted to our paper by students who have had missed romantic connections throughout the fall semester.  
“Dear Tall, Blonde, and Gorgeous,  
We had an online Biology course together and I saw you when we dropped off labs. You said you would be interested in going out with me once hell froze over. If you haven’t noticed, this weather is pretty chilly. I’ll be waiting for your call :)  
Sincerely, Slightly Awkward Not a Creep”

“Dear Bearded Bear,  
You are a rugged manly man with a thick beard and strong looking hands and shoulders. I think you could really help a slim young man like myself out... You said you have experience working on cars and right now my 2016 Honda Civic is acting all wonky. I think it’s the fan belt. We met in Forensics. I was the one with the good bone structure. Also, you are really cute so hit me up! But seriously, my car...  
With love, Car Crush”

“Dear Doctor Dreamy,  
So we met at the clinic last November. You were going to get forms filled out for your insurance and I was going because of a rash on the side of my... arm... and you said you were single. Haha, call me crazy but I think this is fate. Please try and find me. I go to the clinic now every week because the staff there thinks my rash resembles Robert Downey Jr. and they keep bringing in,I’m assuming fellow medical professionals, to examine it. They take photos sometimes. I think it is to ask other doctors for a second opinion. Any who, awaiting your call <3.  
Best, Mr. E. Rash”

EVENTS LISTING

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 13

**Job Search 101 Workshop**  
12:30 PM - 2:00 PM  
2207 James Hall

Israeli and Palestinian voices

5:00 PM - 7:00 PM

This lecture will bring two speakers, an Israeli and Palestinian, both women, to explain and speak about their experiences. It is accordance with Prof. Louis Fishman’s Shaping of the Modern World Class.

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 14

**Valentine’s Day/Single Awareness Day**  
We <3 all of our readers and supporters!

**PwC Info Session - Leadership & Intern Programs**  
12:15 PM - 2:15 PM  
Student Center

**FCY “Learning Outside the Classroom” Workshop**  
12:15 PM - 2:15 PM  
Woody Tanger Auditorium

**Nutrition Workshop - Eating for a Heart-Healthy Lifestyle**  
12:30 PM - 2:00 PM  
4th Floor - Student Center  
February is American Heart Month.

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 15

**Master Class: Olivier Patey, clarinet**  
12:00 PM - 1:00 PM  
Topfer Recital Hall, Room 250  
Leonard & Claire Tow Center for the Performing Arts

The principal clarinetist of the Amsterdam Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra will give a clinic.

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 15 -  
SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 16  
TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 19 -  
SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 23

**I WILL BE GONE by Erin Courtney**  
7:30 PM - 9:15 PM  
Don Buchwald Theater  
Leonard & Claire Tow Center for the Performing Arts

Set in the Sierra Nevada Mountains, I WILL BE GONE tells the story of 17-year-old Penelope who goes to live with her aunt Josephine after her mother passes away. It’s a small town. The kind where everybody knows everybody and knows about everybody. And the abandoned mining town nearby is filled with ghosts. As the lives of the living become more and more haunted, Erin Courtney shapes a coming of age story about broken hearts, earthquakes, exorcisms, and sexual encounters.

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 16  
SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 23

**I WILL BE GONE by Erin Courtney**  
2:00 PM - 3:45 PM  
Don Buchwald Theater  
Leonard & Claire Tow Center for the Performing Arts

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 18

**No Classes - College Closed**

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 19

**Blood Drive at Brooklyn College**  
12:00 PM - 4:30 PM  
NY Blood Center Mobile Unit  
Campus Road & Hillel Place

EY (Ernst & Young) Info Session - Leadership & Intern Programs

12:15 PM - 2:15 PM  
James Hall

**Pre-Law Career Panel: “Have You Ever Considered Becoming a Lawyer?”**  
7:30 PM - 9:30 PM  
Student Center  
Learn about what it takes to become a lawyer.



### CONT'D FROM "THIS CLUB IS SOFEDUP WITH CAMPUS PUBLIC SAFETY," 1

pus as satisfactory based on 'the most basic standard.'

Stating that rather than rationalizing their own position, Public Safety should go out of their way and reach out to SOFEDUP to discuss their concerns.

"They probably tell themselves, 'who cares what the students think, we met the most basic standards,'" de Souza said lambasting the Public Safety Office.

Underscoring her point, she divulges into an example that disabled students caught in the middle of a fire drill in any other building especially if they are above or

below the first level, are just as likely to find themselves at a risk befalling the same level of confusion and alarm for themselves, per the current evacuation procedures listed on the BC website.

For these students, they are instructed to move to and wait by an elevator until they to are escorted, of which reportedly also has not happened at times, leaving disabled persons alone as everyone has left.

Despite these past grievances, de Souza reiterates that she has made a commitment of improving the quality of standard for her peers and has made multiple attempts to get hold of and meet with someone from the BC Public Safety

Office to discuss how they can improve current safety procedures but to little avail.

We've reached out to the BC Public Safety office for a comment on this matter, receiving none yet.

Brittingham reassures that SOFEDUP's impact on campus are visible even if they have gone unnoticed by most students today. One such accomplishment she mentions was the successful push for a bus stop to be added on Bedford Avenue.

"SOFEDUP got that there in 2012," Brittingham said smiling gleefully as she touted the groups most recent accomplishments proudly.

Some members of SOFEDUP tended to differ in tone regarding the admin-

istration's handling of disabled issues, suggesting that despite the issues they continue to face they still hold to some extent an appreciate for the resources and patronage they see on campus.

According to Isabelle Sanchez, a transfer student, Secretary at SOFEDUP, and has partial deafness and vision impairment, she does not have any issues with BC or any one of its departments, rather she pleased with the resources available to her.

"In my other school you couldn't get a tape recorder and JAWS (an audio-text program used to assist blind/deaf persons) is always available here, so long as those two are around, I'm good," Isabelle said candidly.

Likewise, Mitchel Ki, the club's newest member, another transfer student shared the same sentiment saying that having come from a college where he felt disabled students were noticed far less, he came away feeling pleased to find an active club with a seemingly responsive school administration presiding over.

However, from Brittingham's perspective Brooklyn College still has a long way before adequately accommodate disabled students to the extent that she feels satisfied in terms of commuting, academic accommodations, and so forth, saying "it's not even a money problem and they know it...right now we just need someone to talk to."

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

## In Order to Have Students in a Town Hall, You Must First Let Students Know of a Town Hall

BY ZAINAB IQBAL

Last week was the first of the four town halls that students had demanded from the Brooklyn College administration. Unfortunately, students did not show up.

A few days before the town hall on Tuesday, February 5, the editor of the other campus newspaper texted me asking if I was going to the town hall. I was confused because I had heard of no such event. I asked around if other people knew about it, and many shook their head no. There were no fliers, posters, tweets, or Facebook posts about the town hall. So how were students supposed to know about it?

According to the College, every student received a welcome back message from President Michelle Anderson at the beginning of this semester. On January 25, students did in fact receive an email titled, "Welcome to the Spring Semester." Students received it in their Brooklyn College emails. Not many students check their Brooklyn College emails, and have changed the email on Web Central to their personal emails (but still, emails still go to their BC email accounts).

Even so, once you open the email, the part addressing a town hall is stated in the fifth paragraph—right in the middle of the email. Town halls are very distinctive events that give people a



Ron Jackson (left), Michelle Anderson (center) and Tony Thomas (right) addressed concerns at the first town hall. PHOTO/ Zainab Iqbal

chance to directly ask questions to officials that are supposed to represent them. It is hard to understand why this wasn't its own separate email.

It is also hard to understand why nothing was posted on the Brooklyn College Twitter, Instagram, or Facebook pages about the town halls. The college's twitter has over 8,000 followers. Surely, if the town hall was advertised on social media, students would have showed up.

Just like they showed up for the many protests on campus.

Yes, the whole purpose of a town hall is to engage in dialogue in person. But, in order to that, you have to let people know. And how do you do that? You go on the very thing that millennials live in. The internet.

At the town hall, the entire room was filled with staff and faculty members. Two members of CLAS student government and two members

of the Young Progressives of America were in attendance. Five students (including me) were a part of the press, either writing for the papers or the college radio. That was it.

Usually at events hosted by the college's administration, there are people livestreaming it on the Brooklyn College Facebook page. The town hall was not being livestreamed. How come? When asked about it, Anderson said they can definitely lives-

stream the remaining three.

Town halls are vital and student participation is necessary. To obtain that, you need to reach out to students first. Let them know the opportunity they have been given. Ask them to come join you. Livestream the event. Ask them to ask you questions. Once you do that, why wouldn't students show up?



# The Race for Nuclear Dominance

BY EDMUND ZHEN

A recent article published by The Telegraph reveals the number of nuclear weapons Russia and the US have in 2017. Collectively, both countries share “88 percent of the world’s arsenal of stockpiled nukes. This figure increases to 93 percent when we consider retired nukes.”

Such large stockpiles of nuclear weapons are virtually impossible to ignore, considering the destructive power each one of them holds. So in an effort to prevent complete annihilation, both Russia and the US went on to constrain each other’s nuclear stockpile by signing a treaty, calling for a halt in all productions of nuclear weapons. But the long decades and diplomatic clashes have eroded the legitimacy of the treaty, resulting in President Trump’s decision to put an end to it. Though an arms race was never officially declared, the ramping up of weapons on both sides signifies that it is currently underway.

When Secretary of State Mike Pompeo justified the suspension of the treaty with claims that “Russia has jeopardized United States security interests,” I actually found myself resonating more with Russia’s counter-criticism. Russia claims that it has been a long term interest for the United States to unbind itself from this treaty and I think there is some



Large stockpiles of nuclear weapons are impossible to ignore, considering the destructive power each one of them holds. PHOTO/ iStock

truth to it in the sense where the US has a long term plan that requires itself to not be tied down by certain regulations. But before concluding there are only two sides to consider in this problem, it’s worth thinking outside the box. This arms race has room to potentially include one more key player: China.

China has been seen as a recent threat by the United States when innovation and advancements in major sectors such as trade, weaponry, technology, etc proliferated. The rapid industrialization

and militarization, mixed with China’s predatory nature, uprooted traditional problems between the East and West axes. In a timeline where our diplomatic relations with China was always on thin ice, coups and espionages were used by the US to keep the Chinese government in check. But today the power margin between us is slim, as China holds the second largest economy in the world. Current trade between us are prosperous but suspicions of each other’s actions are still apparent. With

no longer wielding the same control over China as we use to, there is a reason for us to fear that China might collude with Russia to/on its own point their missiles and weapons towards us.

But if this assumption is probable, why should we stop at just including China? Why not include the rest of the eight countries that have nuclear weapons? Countries today that have nuclear weapons are the United States, Russia, France, the United Kingdom, and China, whose nuclear weapons

are legitimized through a signed treaty (Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons/NPT). This treaty calls for a halt on building any more nuclear weapons and the commitment to dismantle them. But since then, three more nations have declared their unofficial possession of nuclear weapons: Pakistan, India, and North Korea. Israel is maintaining a policy of deliberate ambiguity, but it is suspected that they do indeed possess them. According to the Arms Control Association, there are over 10,000 of the world’s nuclear weapons in military service and it only takes 100 of them to “cause catastrophe around the world” as reported by The Telegraph.

The UN should take a more active role in enforcing the NPT and overlook those who have nuclear weapons. But getting every one of those countries to sign and uphold the treaty is extremely hard. Distrust and personal gains can lead to the indiscreet building of it and rogue nations such as North Korea are unpredictable in its actions in order to meet its agendas. So I applaud anyone who’s already trying to pacify the issue and bring the world together to solve it. There is no doubt it would take a lot more than just grit and determination to accomplish a feat that massive.



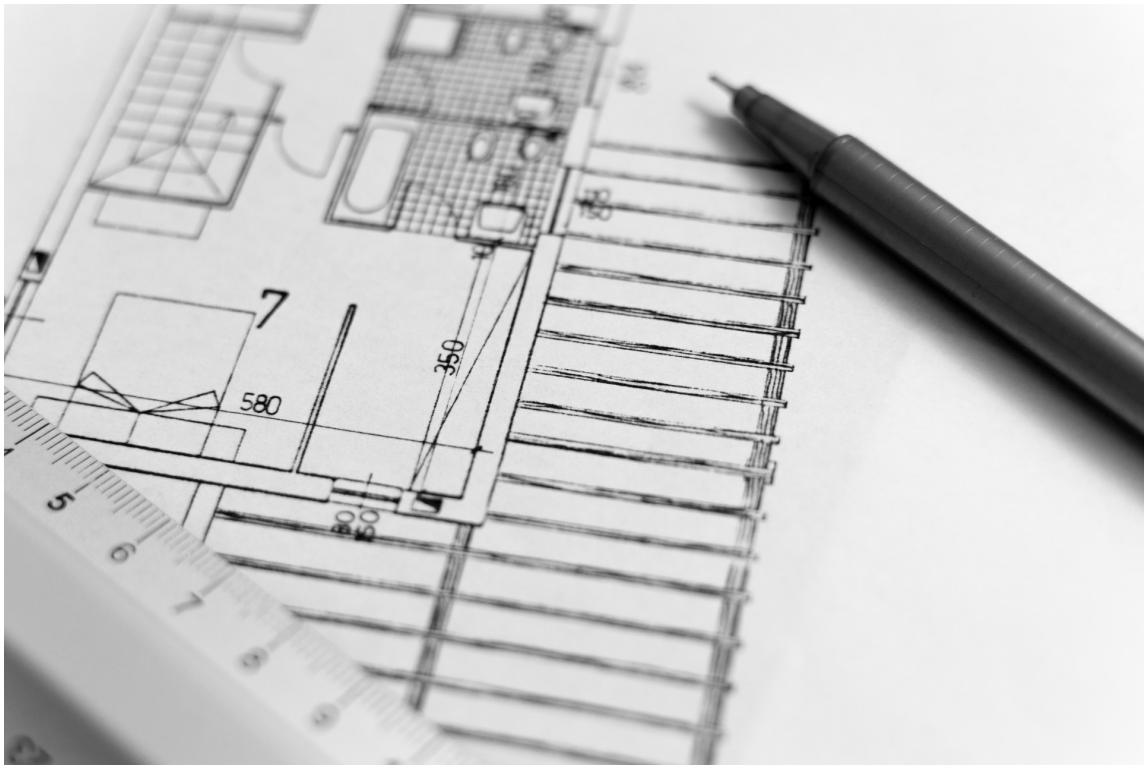
The UN should take a more active role in enforcing the NPT and overlook those who have nuclear weapons. PHOTO/ United Nations



# From Immigrant to Teacher

BY MICHAEL CASTANEDA

My high school Architecture teacher was a man named Mr. Okayo. I'm sure he had a first name, but I can't seem to remember it. Mr. Okayo was from Kenya and he claimed to be the first black person to ever live in Pasadena, California, which is an affluent white neighborhood in Southern California. It is also where the TV show The Big Bang Theory was set. He said that the police would follow him home every night and he would turn on a bunch of lights as soon as he stepped in to demonstrate that he actually lived there. He was an exchange student at the time. He also said that his peers had never been close to a black person before and so he was able to convince them that his blood was a different color than his white classmates. He said it was green/blue or whatever suited him that day. With a slightly stereotypical manner of an African immigrant in a 1980's movie, he told us all this with a big smile while exulting joy.



Architecture class was one of my favorite classes in high school. PHOTO/ Pixabay

Happiness is the emotion I mostly associate him with. Even when he was angry with us for the high school crime of “talking,” it never lasted long until he was happy with us again. The architecture classroom he taught at was down a steep incline and Mr. Okayo, who was in great shape, would effortlessly run up to playfully tell one of his

students “I know you!” During class, he would also use his childhood in Kenya to illustrate architectural concepts. I will always remember why a light switch is on the left-hand side when you walk in any door because a Masai warrior could be waiting to stab you with a spear; which I guess was a real concern for him at the time. I had never heard of the Masai before, but it turns out

they appear in Nike commercials time to time and their look was heavily influenced by designs from the Black Panther and the Wakanda warriors. He would also let us listen to music while we did our architectural drafting and sometimes, I would subconsciously ask questions loudly because I was talking over my own music. Architecture class was one of my favorite classes

in high school. There was a great teacher, a fun Computer Aid Drafting (CAD) computer lab, actual architectural drafting, and students who got to make cool architectural models of their work. Thanks to Mr. Okayo, this one class has a similar feel akin to the dim and dark memories of pre-school. But don't let this praise of one good class and teacher be a false representation that high school wasn't an experience I feel lucky to have survived. This just goes to show why a good teacher can make all the difference. In all fairness, there were a couple more good teachers, but there were also many who crush their student's souls and supposedly contributed in making them drop out as well as the other horrors of high school. Till this day, I have an appreciation for architecture and would love to see a nice blueprint. Somehow, I feel as if Mr. Okayo had something to do with that.

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#MeToo story from  
your experiences  
at Brooklyn  
College to share?  
Please email  
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you prefer,  
you may remain anonymous.



# “The Prodigy” Review

BY CARMEN SAFFIOTI

Last weekend *The Prodigy*, a suspenseful thriller/ horror movie was released. The film is directed by Nicholas McCarthy and stars Taylor Schilling, known for her lead role in *Orange is the New Black*. The film received less than enthusiastic reviews after its first box office weekend. This is probably due to the film’s slow pacing, poor character development, and failure to increase the suspense towards its climax. The film centers around a family and their young son named Miles (Jackson Robert Scott) who begins to develop “gifted” traits. While the family is thrilled that their son may be a prodigy, Miles begins to acquire some less than savory talents. Miles mother (Taylor Schilling), who is the true protagonist of this story has to make increasingly difficult decisions to save her son and her family.

The biggest problem the film suffers from was its predictability; almost every turn the plot tried to take was foreseeable to the audience from a mile away. Miles, who possesses the soul of a serial killer that died at the same time he was born, acts out in an increasingly psychotic manner as the serial killer’s spirit begins to take over. In order to counter



“The Prodigy” had a lot of potential and could have been better. PHOTO/ IMDb

this, his mother seeks out help and attempts to ease and release the spirit of the killer who has possessed her son. It is difficult to emphasize with these substandard characters as they rarely display any sort of admirable morality or uniqueness in their situation. This is another factor that contributes to the predictability, the situation and the mother and son relationship mirror that of many other suspense thrillers like *Before I Wake*,

*The Babadook*, and *Insidious*. The film really suffers from the lack of suspense building and a less than frightening climax. The last 20 minutes of the film show the main character, Miles, committing his most heinous act, however this does not come off as frightening but rather as quite goofy and comical. The actor who plays Miles is simply too adorable to be anything actually frightening. The casting directors could’ve picked a

more sinister looking child, or as Miles became the serial killer, they could’ve used special effects to show his deteriorating state physically. The acting in this film was also sub-par. This is somewhat due to Miles being a child actor, but also because the actors were relatively unknown and inexperienced in a thriller role. The biggest star of the film, Taylor Schilling, has not been cast in any other horror movies or intense dramas. Peter

Mooney, who played the father, seemed to have the beginnings of an interesting character. However, he disappears midway through the film and never fully realizes the potential of his character. *The Prodigy* could’ve been a suspenseful hit; however, it misses on many of its potentially strong points. This film’s legacy will probably die shortly after its release and its set up for a sequel at the end will probably and hopefully never be realized.

LOOKING FOR

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# Bob Costas Axed From Super Bowl for Criticism of NFL

BY AUSTIN SANTIAGO

While many may consider this year's Super Bowl as business per usual, many fans noticed that a certain fixture was missing from this year's broadcast, that fixture being sportscaster Bob Costas.

Costas, who has won 28 Emmys as well as eight National Sportscaster of the Year awards was noticeably absent from this year's Super Bowl, an event in which he is known for hosting. On Sunday, it was discovered that Costas had been cut from the broadcast for his previous criticisms of the league in regards to player safety and concussion protocol.

The decision was years in the making. Following the release of the film "Concussion" in 2015, Costas took his usual outspoken and cavalier attitude towards the issue of concussions in the NFL. In an interview with Outside The Lines, Costas highlighted the issue of player safety in the NFL,

"More and more is being learned about the now-undeniable link between concussions especially repeat concussions -- and subsequent problems with dementia, depression, early onset Alzheimer's, an entire array of serious medical problems stemming from an injury that is more common in football than in most other sports."

While many fans and



Emmy award-winning sportscaster Bob Costas was cut from this year's Super Bowl broadcast for his previous criticisms of the NFL in regards to player safety and concussion protocol. PHOTO/ Getty Images

organizations praised Costas for his efforts in raising awareness towards the issue, his superiors at NBC simply did not feel the same way.

It is impossible to understate how crucial the NFL is to the survival of the basic cable networks we watch everyday. After leaving the NFL market in 1997, NBC nearly collapsed and dedicated \$3.6 billion to re-establishing themselves as the home of primetime NFL games. As a result of this partnership, NBC in-

troduced "Football Night in America," the Sunday night program that showcases the most anticipated NFL game of any given week. The show was hosted by Costas for over a decade.

But despite his on-screen association with the game of football, behind the scenes, Costas found himself at odds with his beliefs of just how safe the game is, or isn't.

"As I got closer and closer to the game, I became ambivalent about it," he says. "The sheer violence of the

game, and then the celebration of that violence, even before CTE became a specific issue ... I just didn't feel comfortable with that. That felt stupid to me."

Unfortunately, despite the overwhelming evidence to support Costas's beliefs, the NFL denied the science of CTE, stating that there is no correlation between concussions suffered on the field and symptoms such as dementia and Alzheimer's.

An essay written by Costas to be read on the air was de-

nied by NBC, as the opening line was; "the neuropathologist who clearly demonstrated what just about everybody now understands -- but which for years the league denied: There is a direct and often tragic link between football and brain damage."

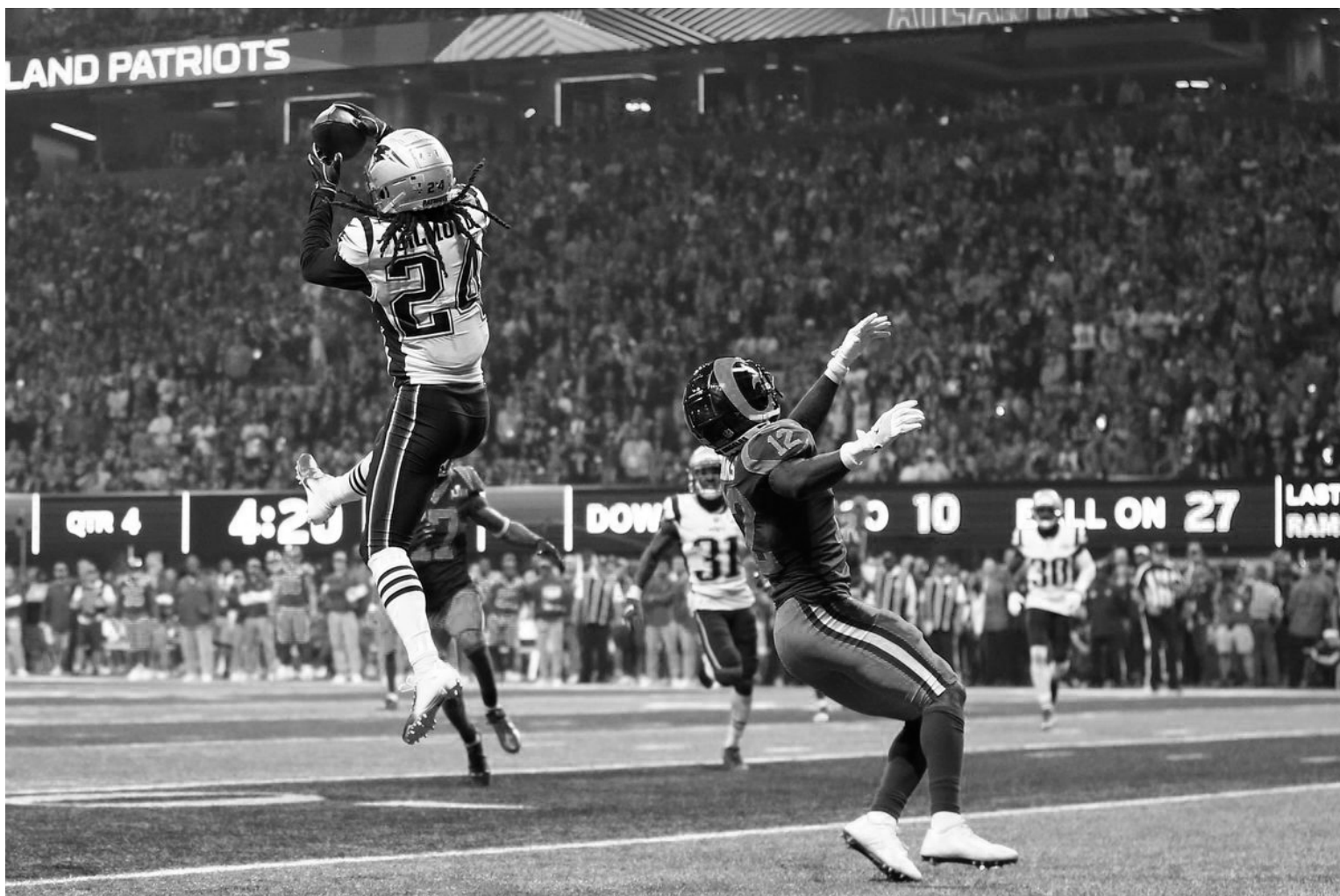
The reason for the denial was simple.

NBC was in talks to host Thursday night football for the NFL. From that point on Costas's days at NBC were numbered. Weeks before Super Bowl 53, Costas was informed that he would not be part of the broadcast,

"I recall the phrase, 'It's a six-hour, daylong celebration of football, and you're not the right person to celebrate football,'"

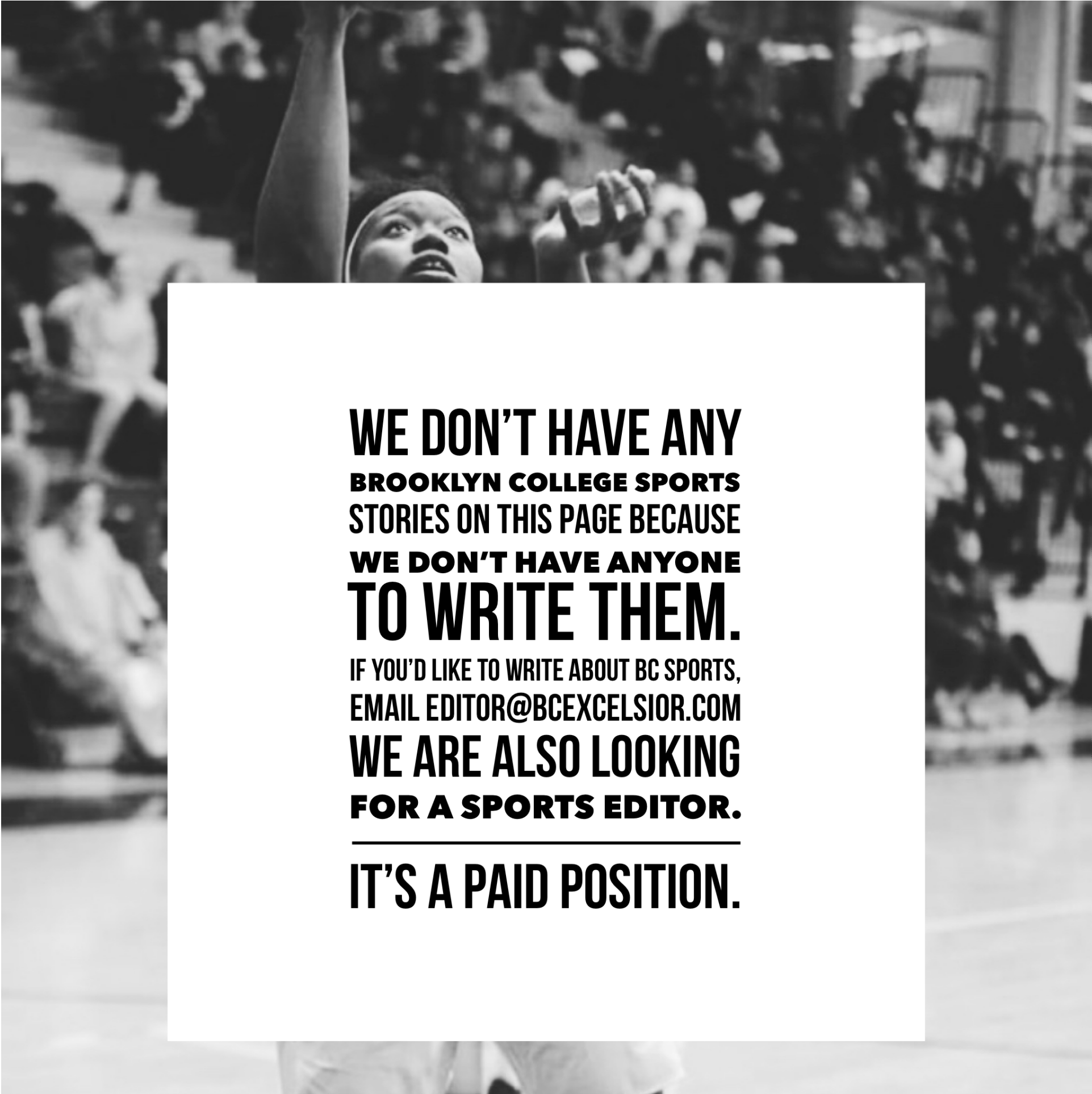
Despite the less-than graceful exit, Costas remains in good spirits, telling OTL: "I was hoping that the whole thing wouldn't cause a stir. And what I said was true as far as it went. I was completely comfortable with it, I had no personal stake in hosting, I was happy football was in my rearview mirror."

Bob Costas went from the highest regarded NFL sportscaster, to being cut from the Super Bowl because of one stance. While the ordeal speaks to the ruthless business that is the NFL, it also highlights the importance of integrity in the world of both sports and journalism.



Many fans noticed that a certain fixture was missing from this year's Super Bowl broadcast, that fixture being sportscaster Bob Costas. PHOTO/ USA TODAY





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