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# Obiter ♦ Dicta

## Public Terrorism: REPORTING TERROR IN THE SOCIAL MEDIA AGE



Source: <https://www.independant.com/>

Author › **Jerico Espinas**  
Opinions Editor

The international community experienced a series of tragic attacks over the holiday break, striking fear and paranoia during a time of celebration. On December 19, Anis Amri crashed a truck into a Berlin Christmas market, killing twelve and injuring fifty-six people. Also on December 19, Mevlut Mert Altintas assassinated Andrei Karlov, the Russian Ambassador to Turkey, during an art gallery screening. And on January 1, an unknown perpetrator shot into an Istanbul night club during a New Year celebration, killing at least thirty-nine people and injuring at least seventy others. Each of these attacks were linked to Islamic terrorist groups, namely the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) and the Islamist Jaish al-Fatah coalition, and each attack heightened geopolitical tensions in the area.

The ISIL attack in Berlin disrupted a Christmas market filled with stalls and hundreds of people at Breitscheidplatz in Berlin, the semi-trailer truck

driving through parts of the market before coming to a stop. Reporters often juxtaposed images of the violent aftermath beside cheery, innocent pictures of the victims celebrating Christmas, further increasing public resentment towards ISIL. The event fueled right-wing anger regarding Germany's current refugee and anti-terrorist policies, potentially contributing to the ongoing rise of nationalist sentiment in the country. International actors quickly condemned the act, offering condolences to those affected.

The Christmas market attack was similar in tone to the Istanbul night club attack. An ISIL agent attacked the Reina nightclub in Ortakoy, the gunman shooting into a crowd with hundreds of people. News media also juxtaposed before- and after-images of the scenes, the festive mood during the New Year celebration contrasting starkly with the terrified, bloody survivors. The event occurred during a year of other horrific terrorist attacks by ISIL, including an attack

»» Continued on page 6

### In this Issue . . .

#### editors' note

Too Much, Too little and Everything in between . . . . . 2

#### news

Law and Imagination . . . . . 3

#### opinion

What gives 2016? . . . . . 5

#### opinion

2016: A Year in Review . . . . . 6

#### arts & culture

The Nightmare before Christmas . . . . . 9

#### arts & culture

Jurisfoodence . . . . . 11

# Too Much, Too Little, and Everything in Between:

## In Defence of Feeling Feelings

Author › Erin Garbett  
Editor-in-Chief

I have struggled with how strongly I feel things for a long time. A plan falling through sometimes feels like the end of the world; I translate constructive criticism to, “you will never be good at this, give up.” When I acknowledge the feelings, they come swiftly and relentlessly. When I refuse to acknowledge them, I enter a thought swirl that almost always ends at doom station.

For the first five or so years I recognized this sensitivity, I thought the only solution was to just not feel that strongly anymore. And it has worked to some extent. Mostly, I’m figuring out how to stop assuming that X event means Y conclusion, cue meltdown. I’m learning that constructive criticism is not the same thing as being a failure. And that maybe the world isn’t ending if I won’t see *Nocturnal Animals* tonight. That’s not to say that I don’t still have meltdowns, I do. Before exams last semester I thought I’d lost my wallet (as it turns out it had fallen out of my purse and onto the bedroom floor). As a result, I cried violently for about twenty minutes, 110% certain that I wouldn’t be allowed to write exams because I had no identification and would fail out of law school. So this part is still very much a work in progress.

But resisting my feelings cannot be a complete solution because at its heart is the notion that my feelings aren’t legitimate and that they can (and should) be halted. And really, this isn’t surprising. Since I can remember, people around me have told me to “calm down,” “stop crying,” “be rational,” “cheer up,” and “smile.” The insistence that what I’m feeling is incorrect, inappropriate, or—my personal favourite—irrational, has been consistent for my entire life. Thankfully I’m too young to be diagnosed with hysteria, but the underlying sentiment remains that a lot of feelings, particularly if you’re a woman, are just not right.

But denying my feelings, in addition to perpetuating a crumbly idea, is not realistic. As my mother has told me since I was a teenager, I have always been the same Erin Garbett, and always will be the same Erin Garbett. Sure, some things have changed, but at my core I will likely always be a bit more sensitive than most. I will probably feel things a bit more strongly and take things a bit more personally for the rest of my days, so denial is not going to work.

Recently—with the help of an amazing therapist—I’ve finally learned that yes, my feelings are legitimate. It’s not *wrong* to feel sad, angry, or hurt. We’ve been taught that feelings exist on a kind of spectrum between good and bad, but more and more I think feelings just *are*. Being really sad doesn’t make someone weak, flawed or in anyway less of a person. They’re just as worthy of taking up space as someone who doesn’t cry during SPCA commercials.



Source: [blogs.psychcentral.com](https://blogs.psychcentral.com)

Feeling feelings is ok, no matter what they are.

However, what isn’t ok is when expressing those feelings creates a negative impact on my life. Even if I want to kick a hole through the wall—which I’ve actually done—it isn’t a healthy response. So, while my feelings are legitimate, that doesn’t mean that I can deal with them in anyway I want. Instead, I have to figure out how to recognize that these emotions are happening and experience them in a way that healthily maintains their legitimacy.

I don’t know how to do this yet. But one tactic that I’ve found works well is to talk to someone as quickly as possible. If I’m with my partner, I tell him. If I’m by myself, I either text someone, call my mom, or write it down. Beyond just talking to someone, I’ve worked hard to not preface it with “I know this is silly but,” or “This is so stupid, but,” because that lowers the value of my feelings. This is SUPER difficult; the first time I did this with my therapist, I cried. It’s remarkable how engrained the idea is that some feelings are bad and should be avoided at all costs. Often, it still feels selfish. But by acknowledging

them, I avoid getting on the thought spiral train

This article has been on my mind since for quite a few months. As (mostly) future lawyers, we will be working under stressful conditions for a significant part of our work, particularly when at the beginning of our careers. That we will experience emotions that are classified on the “negative” side of the spectrum—frustration, sadness, doubt, anger, etc—is all but a given. As a profession, we’re more likely to be depressed, anxious, suffer from addiction, and commit suicide. While this is an unsavoury pill to swallow, it remains the reality.

One of the most important things I think we can learn as baby lawyers is how to work through our feelings in a productive and healthy way. Whatever your personal method is, just figure it out. Read a book on mindfulness, find a professional to meet with, talk to the people around you; but the first step is to just let yourself feel feelings. From there, you can determine how you can process and express them in a way that works for you.▲

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# Law & Innovation

Author › Usman Javed  
Staff Writer



Source: <https://www.ft.com/>

The past few years have shown exponential growth in the influence of technology. Netflix disrupted the DVD market, Uber damaged the taxi industry, alternate finance gave goose-bumps to the Venture-Capitalists and Airbnb left its mark on the hospitality industry. Interesting developments also lie ahead of us: 3D printing is on the horizon to potentially disrupt the traditional manufacturing model, autonomous vehicles will change the transportation industry and artificial industry will virtually change the whole caboodle. Clayton Christensen, the prominent business academic and author of *The Innovator's Dilemma*, sees disruptive innovation as a threat to everything from Microsoft to Japan.

However in the midst of all these developments, the legal field seems to be lagging behind. No company or business model has disrupted the legal industry. Its traditional aversion to risk has meant that the legal profession has still not exploited the potential of artificial intelligence and data mining. The hierarchal business model has prevented young members of the team to freely discuss their ideas. In client service and relations, the business model by and large has remained the same over the past many decades: standard hourly billings, infrequent communication and the preference of fixing problems instead of preventing them.

To be fair to lawyers, when it comes to actual legal work, they can be highly innovative. Corporate finance lawyers have devised some of the most innovative and profitable financial instruments, IP lawyers have been successful in finding innovative ways to commercialize intellectual property, and litigators have found a whole array of new angles to argue their case. However, comparing the legal industry with some of the aforementioned ones, it is fair to say the legal profession is just not quite there.

Most people do not like change and would rather stick with what they are comfortable with than go down the uncertain path. Lawyers live in a world of certitude and risk avoidance and through the logical of induction it is easy to conclude that what has worked in the past will work in the future. Despite the economic conditions, most of big-law has got it pretty good; so why innovate to fix a problem when it is not there to begin with? If the traditional practice is bringing in clients and generating billable hours, innovating for something that *may* be better does not occur as an attractive option.

Many industries which succeeded as fostering innovation have used a “never fail to fail” approach. The Silicon Valley mantra “Fail Fast, Fail Often” has invited both fierce criticism and appraisal. However, both schools of thought will most likely agree that it’s okay to fail as long as you learn from your mistakes and work on improving them. Google is known for YouTube, not Google Video Player. Nintendo’s initial offering the *Famicom console*, had to be recalled after only a few months, before the Mario and Luigi changed the history of video games. Dyson took 5,127 vacuum prototypes and 15 years before he struck gold. Launched in 1977, Apple I, the company’s original product was a flop, before Apple II began the personal computer boom.

Innovation requires risk taking and praising the fact that one might fail many times before one can taste the fruit. But lawyers simply hate to fail, and why shouldn’t they? Clients are interested in the outcome, and winning is the bread and butter. Lawyers get paid to identify potential problems to avoid risk, not to take it. So the nature of the profession is such that practitioners do not have any incentive to take risk. It could also be argued that people who are naturally more risk-averse are likely to become

lawyers whereas more risk-loving may be prone to enter the field of finance or the start-up world. This may lead to a chicken and egg scenario; but be it a natural aversion or a work requirement; failure is not looked upon too favorably.

Businesses all over the map have realized the importance of innovation and have taken active steps to foster creativity among its work-force. Google implemented ‘20 percent time’ giving engineers the flexibility to work on whatever they want, to encourage new ideas. Proctor and Gamble has tried to make innovation the norm by including it with rest of their business, thereby creating a culture of creativity. Many VC’s and start-ups have adopted a very horizontal culture where new ideas are encouraged and young members of the team are expected to contribute from the very beginning.

In contrast, law firms evaluate the value of its lawyers by the billable hours and businesses generation, not by ideas. Firms still remain top-down, where knowledge flows from the high level to the entering class and therefore the incentive to bring new ideas to the table is less. Moreover, even the clients are so used to the traditional model of client service and relations that they may resist any innovative attempt.

The view of many industrialists, tech experts, and academics is that the intrusion of technology to disrupt the traditional business model, product or service is only a matter of time in any industry. The legal field has so far resisted the urge. The paradox is perhaps best summed in the words of Bryan Delaney, an Ottawa based lawyer: “it’s hard to take law and technology seriously when they still have a typewriter at the courthouse – and a pen remains the judge’s weapon of choice.” ▲

# Nations United at The United Nations

## Salvaging The Two-State Solution

Author › Hunter Norwick  
Staff Writer

*“If the choice is one state, Israel can either be Jewish or democratic, it cannot be both and won’t ever live in peace.” – John Kerry*

In 1947 the United Nations passed Resolution 181, authorizing the division of Palestine into two states: thirty-five percent for the Arabs and fifty-five percent for the Israelis. The remaining portion, Jerusalem, was to be governed by an international body. But war broke out and Israel settled on over seventy-five percent of the land, leaving the rest to the Palestinians.

This story is often delivered with a stultifying, bitter tone, buoyed by a particular confidence that says, “Palestinians had a chance, and they blew it.” Last week, however, the United Nations Security Council passed a resolution 14-0, with one abstention from the United States, that condemned Israel’s settlement policy as illegal and an obstacle to peace. Without American support, Israel is quite literally the only country in the world that believes the piecemeal annexation of the West Bank is permissible.

Five days later, John Kerry dedicated over an hour to lambasting Prime Minister Netanyahu’s government and the extremist settlers, who now form the vanguard of Israel’s expansion into the West Bank. It was a decisive left hook that followed the UN’s right jab.

The resolution has given the conflict perspective. Sixty-nine years ago the Arabs rejected a third of historic Palestine, leading to wars that never end and negotiations that always fail. But politically and morally Israel has fared no better—it refuses a state twice the size of the one the UN offered the Palestinians in 1947. This rejection, I think, deprives Israel of the right to cast the first stone.

Indeed, Israel seems to have taken partition off the table altogether. Danny Danon, Israel’s ambassador to the UN, said that the resolution is the “peak of hypocrisy,” “disgraceful,” “an evil decree,” etc. Danon then raised the Bible above his head, as if the appellate body to this resolution had written its verdict three thousand years ago. Fortunately, no one seemed impressed by this gesture.

Prime Minister Netanyahu went on raving with a little more virulence. Before the vote, he warned New Zealand that support for this resolution was a “declaration of war.” He also said the resolution was “anti-Israel” and an “incitement of terror,” and deemed Kerry’s speech something of a “disappointment.” Aloof and humiliated, Netanyahu has availed himself of the cheapest rejoinders, proving that little if anything is beneath him.

Naftali Bennett, Israel’s Minister of Education, was a bit more straightforward: “As far as it depends on me, we will not establish another terrorist state in the heart of [Israel]. Israeli citizens have paid with thousands of victims, tens of thousands of missiles and endless condemnations because of the messianic policy of a Palestinian state. The time has come for a new path, and we will lead it.”

This rather ironic confession seals a fate for the Palestinians that encompasses war, misery, and squalor, but no prospect for any of their agreeable corollaries. And we must not associate Bennet with some fringe movement that every now and then provides risible material for Ha’aretz. Israel’s decades-long policy in the West Bank has been the fruit of irredentism, imperialism, and an admixture of religious and nationalist impulses.

Let us put that last statement to the test.

Today almost 600,000 settlers dwell east of the Green Line, an increase of 270,000 since 1993. We are dealing with a Prime Minister who has declared himself the



Source: inclusion-international.org

most “committed [leader] to settlements in Israel’s history.” Since Netanyahu regained control of the Knesset in 2009, the population of settlers east of the separation barrier increased from 70,000 to 90,000. For good reason, therefore, Kerry claims that the current regime is the most right-wing government Israel has ever had.

Netanyahu’s mind suffers from an acute case of solipsism. He has requested that the Americans make it official policy to exercise its veto whenever a resolution targeting Israel is brought before the Security Council. That would, in effect, grant it the same immunity as the five permanent members, namely, Britain, China, France, Russia, and the US. Netanyahu complains that Israel is subject to a double standard, citing dozens of resolutions that have disproportionately targeted the Jewish state over the years.

Buried beneath the many rebukes of Israel’s human rights violations is not some sense of justice for the Arabs, the argument goes, but rather an anti-Israel, anti-Semitic bent. This paranoia, I believe, is a result of the Likud’s unassailable conviction—prepare your Zionist credentials if you dare say otherwise—that Israel can do no wrong. Since its battle for independence, Israel has engaged in at least five major wars, a brutal half-century, military occupation of the Palestinians, an equally hideous, 18-year occupation of southern Lebanon, and multiple operations to “mow the lawn” in Gaza.

I hope, therefore, this claim of a double standard only sounds credible to the credulous. Just imagine how the Palestinians feel. In spite of all these resolutions, Israel’s expansion into the West Bank only gets deeper and deeper. Every operation by Israel against Hamas is considered an act of defense. But any resistance against, say, the starvation of Palestinian children, the seizure of private land, or the construction of settlements, invariably amounts to terrorism.

I propose a challenge. Identify one instance of violence where Palestinians were not considered terrorists.

The terms have become almost synonymous. The PLO militants were still considered terrorists before, during, and after Israel’s war of aggression against Lebanon in 1982. When children, armed with nothing more than rocks, attempted to resist their interlopers during the First Intifada, they too were branded terrorists. Even after Richard Goldstone, a self-declared Zionist and a widely respected international jurist, reported that Israel’s Cast Lead operation in 2008/09 was a “carefully planned” attack to “punish, humiliate, and terrorize a civilian population,” he was accused of being a sympathizer of—wait for it—terrorism.

This double standard has produced real life consequences. Many are convinced that withdrawal from the West Bank will weaken Israel’s security and spawn the recrudescence of terror. A revision of this erroneous assumption would help bring consolation to those who desire peace.

In spite of these rapturous breakthroughs, we ought to remember that international law has not been an obstacle for Israel in the past. Thus I suspect it will have little effect on Israel now or in the future. The UNSC approved a resolution in 1980 that not only condemned the settlements, but insisted that they be dismantled. Israel’s response was simply more settlements. In 2004 the ICJ ruled that the separation barrier that cuts through the West Bank is illegal. Again, Israel’s response was more settlements.

And thus, if the enemies of peace are to be defeated, we must remain vigilant. It is doubtful that a solution to this conflict will come from within; indeed, it is doubtful it will come from without. But, at least for now, nations have united at the United Nations to preserve a brighter future for the Palestinians.

That, I believe, is progress of a kind. ▀

Continue from cover page

at Ataturk Airport in June that killed forty-eight people and a bombing at the Vodafone Arena in early December that killed forty-four people.

The assassination in Turkey was different in scope from the other two major attacks. The gunman targeted a specific Russian diplomat in response to current geopolitical issues between Russia, Turkey, and Syria, shouting slogans like “Do not forget Aleppo” and “Do not forget Syria.” The attack, however, was just as public as the other two. Dramatic pictures of Altintas shouting into a camera with Karlov facedown on the floor were widely shared on social media. After Jaish al-Fatah claimed responsibility for the assassination, international actors exchanged shocked commentary that disrupted ongoing debate about the fall of Aleppo.

Critically, these terrorist attacks over the holiday break were not unique incidences, but were rather part of a long series of events in 2016. For example,

the truck crash through a group of people in the Christmas market attack echoes the Nice attack, wherein a cargo truck also drove through a crowd. The Nice attack occurred during Bastille Day, a national holiday for France, injuring 434 people and killing eighty-six due to the density of the celebration. Many news reports link these attacks to heightened terrorist activities in 2016.

As international actors begin to reflect on how we should react appropriately to terrorist activity in 2017; many are noting the highly-publicized nature of these recent attacks. Social media often shared the initial videos shared by survivors. Some of the Snapchat or Twitter videos taken during the Nice and Berlin attacks were shared thousands of times before news stations started reporting the story. Others rely on live updates by locals on Facebook or Reddit, relying on those sources of information well before official coverage.

In these sites, fear, and paranoia run rampant. Racism and islamophobia begin to color speculation, often affecting how the event is officially broadcast by news outlets. The faces of the attackers are displayed prominently, elevating their status to significant importance. This openness is potentially dangerous not only because the vitriol generates internal animosity towards already-endangered groups like refugees but also because spreading attackers’ messages helps radicalize youth.

The conversation in 2017, at least in some circles, is changing in response to the constant publication of terrorism in Europe. Although no one is considering outright censorship of terrorist activity, some do urge caution in how the news is shared and reported, drawing attention to the overly-sensationalized way the US handles its mass shootings. Whether these actors can actually restrain themselves, however, is a different story.

## OPINION

# What Gives, 2016?

## Sorting out the Good, the Bad, and the Ugly of 2016

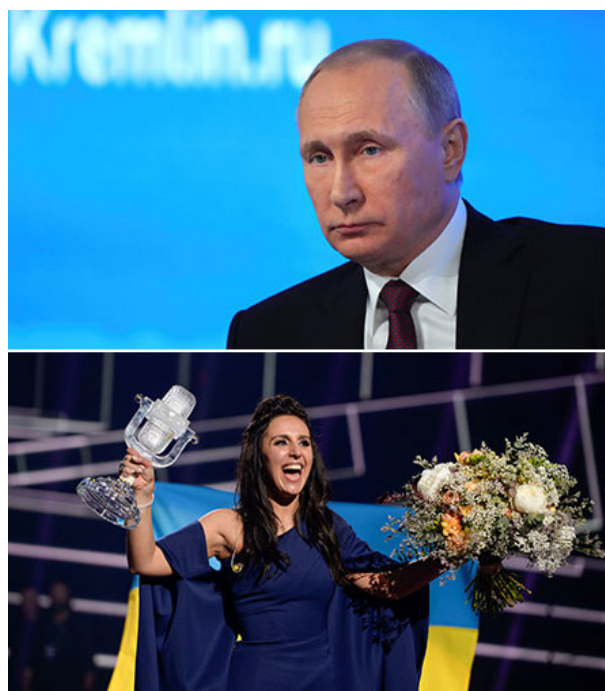
Author › Nancy Sarmiento  
Contributor

It was a mood-souring year, dubbed the worst here and there. It’s arguable as to when things in 2016 really got bad. As a music aficionado/child of the 80’s, 2016 started to sink with the death of David Bowie. It was sad to see a musical artist disappear from the world of song and dance. His look, his rhythm and beauty are exquisitely captured in “Let’s Dance!” I’ll never hear that song again without envisioning David Bowie in his glory days.

In the months that ensued, there were losses of a multitude of musical artists, many of whom were my personal favorites. Retro Prince was a high school favorite. I used to love turning back the time listening to some of his older hits, including “Sexy M.F.” and more! Even today, I can hear the Prince influence in so many of the current musical artists that I love. “Kiss” will forever more bring me back to that moment in 2016 when a good friend broke the news. Another great gone, I thought. As the months went by, pop culture, sports, and art said goodbye to a slew of talented singers, athletes and actors, including Alan Rickman and the great Muhammad Ali. We said goodbye to the great poet, Leonard Cohen, who sang for our souls.

In the final days of 2016, we said goodbye to another trio of fantastic artists. George Michael’s music was the soundtrack to my youth. “Last Christmas” will never be the same. Star Wars fans were also heartbroken with the death of Carrie Fisher, known as the beloved Princess Leia. The loss was further saddened by the subsequent death of Carrie’s mother, actress Debbie Reynolds, only one day later. From a musical and art perspective, 2016 shut the doors on so much of what I grew up with. These were the artists of my youth. They made the movies and music that I grew up with. They were in the spotlight as I became a teenager and then an adult, and that spotlight has now dimmed.

2016 brought with it a bevy of bad news, not just from a pop culture perspective. Earlier this year, we saw the devastating Brexit, and increasing violence throughout Europe, Asia and Africa. Here in North America we experienced the threat of the Zika virus, homicidal clowns, and US politics. The most shocking news of 2016 arose from the US Presidential election. In the hours that followed the release of the election results, I, like my peers, felt so fortunate to be a Canadian living in Canada. Despite



Source: <http://ca.reuters.com/>

that, the news was sad—it’s sad for our friends to the south, our neighbours, for women, and for minorities.

As we enter the New Year, we must also think about what has happened to enlighten our lives in 2016. What can we bring with us into 2017? What can we happily remember? First, I remember that Leonardo DiCaprio won his first (well-deserved and overdue) Oscar. The message received is that hard work pays off. Pop culture gave us two fabulous series! Stranger Things was phenomenal as was American Crime Story: The People v OJ Simpson. The summer brought us a Portuguese victory via EuroCup! (This is great news if you love soccer and are Portuguese, like me). We also saw a flurry of Pokémon Go-ers, getting outside and enjoying Toronto. In October 2016, the government of Canada announced that Viola Desmond would be the second woman, following the Queen, to be captured on Canadian currency. Bob Dylan won a Nobel Prize in late 2016 in literature for his contributions via song.

There were many great moments in 2016. I think of three that are personal and meaningful to me. In April

2016, I wrote my last 1L (I mean 1Hell) exam. I successfully completed that first grueling year of law school while being a mom. I was privileged to attain that accomplishment in the company of my respected peers (shout-out to Section B), some of whom have become great friends. I was fortunate to celebrate that accomplishment with my family! In September 2016, I received the honor of meeting Madam Justice Rosalie Abella. This was not just an unforgettable moment of 2016, but an unforgettable moment in my legal career and in my life. And finally, in December 2016, after a grueling four months, and two back-to-back exams, I got to welcome the half-way point toward my JD degree. I’m half-way there. These moments remind me of how fortunate I am, to have a wonderful family and a great group of friends supporting me in my endeavors.

Yes, some of 2016 was bad and ugly. Despite that, there were many great and meaningful 2016 moments. I urge you to think of them, and remember them fondly and with gratitude. Take those great moments with you into 2017. Let them inspire you! Have a wonderful 2017!

# 2016: A Year in Review

## The Worst is Over or Lynchpin for the Endtimes?

Author › Ian Mason

Managing Editor

I should open with something resembling full disclosure. As a wannabe lawyer and journalist, human misery is basically my bread and butter. Without it, I'd have little potential beyond being an office monkey who'd be lucky to get a salaried job in this economy. You don't hire a lawyer unless you have a problem that warrants shelling out hundreds of dollars *per hour* on legal fees, and I can't personally name a journalist who's ever paid his bills on good news. As a famous journalist once said, "when the going gets weird, the weird turn pro." Naturally, I'm just waiting to be called up to the big leagues.

In that given context, 2016 was a *great* year. The election of soon-to-be President Trump on its own is enough to give any non-fiction writer an endless source of material. The world is seemingly going to hell on hockey skates and a twisted part of me loves it. With that in mind, here's a review of 2016 from the perspective of Obiter's jaded and painfully self-aware managing editor.

### The Year of Celebrity Deaths

In retrospect, I should have seen this coming after the death of Ian "Lemmy" Kilmister in late December of last year. For those of you who don't know, Lemmy was the frontman of Motorhead and was famous for his gravelly voice, awesome moustache, as well as constantly touring and producing new music well into his sixties. He also drank a bottle of whisky every day, smoked heavily, did basically every drug you don't inject, and never ate a vegetable that wasn't a potato. His idea of cutting back on the booze involved switching from Jack and coke to vodka and orange juice. He died of an incredibly aggressive type of cancer at the age of 70, less than three weeks after his final performance. It's only natural that there would be a rise in the global death rate after the passing of such a man as Death was probably facing a massive backlog after finally putting Lemmy down for good.

From Alan Rickman to ZsaZsa Gabor, the deaths of this past year are too numerous to reference individually but the one that stands out right now is the passing of Carrie Fisher. Most people knew her as Princess Leia in the Star Wars franchise, where her iconic scenes in the metal bikini will forever stand as a testament to the problem of women being overly sexualized in the film industry. I knew her more for her voiceover work and comedic roles in movies such as *The Blues Brothers*, to the point where my first reaction when she died was wondering who'd replace her on *Family Guy*. On top of all that, she was a very talented writer, with a body of work including five novels, three non-fiction books, and countless screenwriting credits (countless because she sometimes went uncredited). She did all of this despite suffering from serious mental health issues, which were often exacerbated by the strain of working as a woman in Hollywood. Hopefully in the coming months, we'll come to remember her as the truly remarkable person that she was, and not as a half-naked woman at the end of a slug-monster's chain.

On the subject of slug-monsters, at the time of this article's completion, 2016 has eight hours to redeem itself by taking Donald Trump.

### The Political Excrement Storm

In a sense, it's sadly appropriate that Rob Ford was one of the people who passed away in 2016. It coincided almost perfectly with the time when the far right stopped being a political punchline and started becoming truly terrifying. Politically, Ford and Trump had a lot in common but the limits to Ford's power made it possible to laugh at the absurdity of his antics. Also, while his head was generally wedged somewhere between his

diaphragm and colon, his heart was often in the right place. Conversely, Trump doesn't seem to have that innate—albeit partially smothered—sense of decency, and his ignorance seems to be more of a strategic construct used to exploit his supporters' most vicious tendencies than an actual inability to know better. Furthermore, Trump will be wielding a tremendous amount of power even *if* the few remaining principled Republican senators and congressmen decide to break party lines and work against him. The far right used to be a lunatic fringe of conservatism, something tacitly accepted but largely disavowed whenever addressed by your political opponents. Now it is the norm, and it's too damned scary to be funny.

That being said, America really did live up to the saying "you elect the government you deserve." It's easy to blame the rise of Trump on the short-sighted, ignorant, misguided, xenophobic, counter-intuitive, and bigoted tendencies that characterize American conservatism. However, that would ignore the many other people who set the groundwork for his presidency. For starters, the Democratic party's efforts to prevent a Bernie Sanders candidacy alienated not only people on the left but people across the political spectrum who recognized him as a man of principle and conviction, regardless of how much they disagreed with him. The DNC had effectively chosen their candidate beforehand, which was bad enough *without* utterly refusing to acknowledge the popularity of Sanders' ideas. They refused to change course and ran their ship right into an iceberg; all they had to do was make a slight turn to the left. This is not to say that people on the left aren't blameless as anyone who refused to support Hillary when the alternative was the political equivalent of a raving lunatic with a gas can and a lighter made a foolish decision. High-minded moral grandstanding won't mean jack when you're on fire. It's easy to blame the vocal racist who spends so much time in a Klan hood that he has tan-lines around his eyes but sometimes when you point a finger, three point back at yourself.

2016 was the year where US politics reached an epitome of madness and stupidity but before I move on, there is one noteworthy first I wish to address: America's election of its first non-Christian president. I know, he claims to be a Presbyterian and his campaign pandered extensively to fundamentalists but he's much more of an autotheist (a person who believes him or herself to be god) than anything else. Congratulations to America on electing a guy who embodies the worst aspects of both Christianity and Laveyan Satanism. Good luck with that.

### The Rise of Extremism Around the World

While I do tend to single out the US, I have to say that it's not the only place in the world that's taken a troubling political turn. 2016 was the year when Britain voted in support of the "Brexit" plan, which is likely going to destroy its economy and lead to the dissolution of the United Kingdom, an entity that has essentially existed for over three hundred years. The Brexit was inspired by the same anti-migrant sentiments that characterized the US election, suggesting a sort of nationalism that places xenophobia over serious economic concerns. Aside from the economic ramifications of the decision, it reflects the re-emergence of far-right nationalism in Europe, most frighteningly in its larger member states, like France. Recently, the French National Front party had been gaining startling traction among French voters, especially after the horrific terrorist attacks on 2016. While I hesitate to throw around



Source: <https://www.knowyourmeme.com/>

the word "fascist," I must note that the National Front's leader lost a defamation lawsuit against a rival politician who called her a fascist, because the judge found the term to be essentially accurate. Even in Germany—a country that has an understandable aversion to far-right politics, the far-right Alternative for Germany (AfD) party became disturbingly competitive in state elections. Furthermore, between 2013 and 2016, support for the AfD has risen steadily from about four to sixteen percent. America is not the only country that has seen a return of the political lunatic fringe.

Of course, there are multiple sides of every story and one issue that has fuelled the wildfire of nationalistic far-right sentiments is the issue of Islamic extremism. Regardless of your religious affiliation, no halfway decent person can look upon the actions of Daesh (ISIS), Boko Haram, and the Taliban with anything short of horror. Incidentally, 2016 was a year where Boko Haram rose from the brink of defeat, the Taliban regained control of almost half of Afghanistan, and Daesh managed to wreak substantial havoc outside of the Levant. However, while righteous revulsion is a natural reaction to hearing about kidnapped schoolgirls being sold into slavery or religious minorities being slaughtered en masse, a problem with dealing with extremism is that it is intended to inspire extreme reactions because it is a monster that feeds upon itself. It's difficult to blame a person for being appalled by the activities of such groups but people often struggle with accurately defining causal relationships, thus ignoring that an extreme "bomb the region to ash" mentality is part of these groups exist. Without getting into a history lesson, I'll summarize it like this: the problem with far-right movements is that they're characterized by xenophobia, and by getting scared, they play into the hands of the people they're meant to defeat. He who fights monsters risks becoming a monster; don't engage that sort of enemy on its own level.

Since I don't have a comedic or clever afterthought to that particular section of this article, I'll finish with:

### 2016's Person of the Year:

Negan, from *The Walking Dead*.

Maybe I'm cheating by picking a fictional character, but I have a hard time imagining any real person who fully embodies the spirit of 2016. SPOILER ALERT: Negan is the main villain of *The Walking Dead's* seventh season and he's characterized by his smug grin, sadistic streak, and brutal murders of beloved characters. He made us cry, he made us cringe, but no matter how much we hate him, some of us can't help but watch him with morbid fascination. Not unlike the year we're leaving in our wake, he's the sort of entity who tease you with a glimmer of hope before crushing your skull with a baseball bat wrapped in barbed wire.

Here's hoping he's also 2017's person of the year, for getting what's coming to him.

Happy New Year. ▲

# Starry Decisis

Author: Ben Fulton  
Oztrologist



## Aries:

By now you should be feeling rejuvenated, ready for action, and maybe some winter sports. Enjoy the time you have right now, it will soon evaporate into a cloud of fog and confusion, but you should have a few weeks respite before things get uncomfortable again.



## Taurus

Returning to friends and colleagues leaves you feeling as though you have just awoken from a dream. One of those pleasant fluffy ones that makes you linger in bed just trying to hold on to the memory for a minute longer. The cold splash of reality will seem initially refreshing, and you will want to spend some time outside, before the slowly sinking feeling of anxiety starts taking over completely and entirely as you look forward into the unknowable future. You can count on colleagues to help you out for now, but they too will soon



## Gemini

Yay! There's another year ahead of you, and the oppressive weight of extra work hasn't hit you yet. Things seem really sunny right now, and I don't just mean the melting snow. There is a positive glow about the air, and everything is wonderful... for now. The dark times are close at hand, so use this fun time to stock up your store of smiles. You'll need them to fight the grimaces (no not the McD's character)



## Cancer

Why is one of the worst diseases the name of an astrology sign. It must be frustrating dealing with that association. Regardless of that fact your worries seem far away and distant. No matter what anyone seems to say there's a feeling that nothing bad could happen. That feeling is wrong, there is something horrible about to happen, and there's no telling when the hammer will fall, so don't even bother obsessing about things you can neither change nor predict. Just remember that someone did say that it would happen. Maybe this will make you laugh in the face of the tragedy.



## Leo

For some reason there is a restless feeling about you. You may find it difficult to relax, with the feeling that you should somehow be doing things differently. So, go ahead and throw caution to the wind, unwind and have fun. Enjoy the hell out of yourself and just push that nagging feeling of needing to accomplish something out of your mind, for now at least.



## Virgo

You'll find yourself surrounded by friends and companions. The next month promises to be filled with fun and excitement, and not too much work. If you think that there's a lot of work, then you're in for a shock. The next few months will have much much more.



## Libra

A wild fanaticism that carried you through the holiday season now begins to simmer down. You will gradually re-establish some kind of routine and by the end of the next month you'll be sick of it. For now enjoy the calm before the storm.



## Scorpio

It is a time for companionship. Enjoy the company of others. Share some drinks and laughs, you will need them for the time ahead. The bonds that you strengthen over the next month will be the ones that carry you through the next few months. Right now everything seems fresh and exciting. Take advantage of this fresh glow and polish them apples while ye may.



## Sagittarius

Having officially recovered from yet another holiday season, you are now ready to get back to the grindstone. Make sure to work hard right now as that is what you need to focus on to get through the next month. While others are revelling and drinking, you should stay focused on the larger goals and tasks at hand. It's ok to unwind a little, but make sure not to get carried away to extremes this month or you will find the next month or 2 to be incredibly difficult. Putting in the work now will pay immense dividends and you'll be the one with the biggest smile all summer. Keep your head down for now, there's a storm coming and you don't want to get anything in your eyes.



## Capricorn

Happy birthday. I hope you had/will have a good one. There's a lot to do, but you can put that off for now. February will be a great month to play catch up, and by march you'll be completely on top of things. Relax and enjoy the revelry. There's only so much time so enjoy it. YOLO and all that, etc.



## Aquarius

Temptation will be a large feature for you this month. You will find yourself with hard decisions around whether to party or work. You should try to do a little of both. Partying too much will make you feel sluggish and resentful. When you find yourself thinking that you'd rather be getting some work done than partying, then it is time to listen to that inner voice and get back to something productive. When your head starts hurting from excessive amounts of concentration, you'll know that it's time to go out again. Simple right.



## Pisces

You may find this month a little ambivalent, or maybe even apathetic. Don't worry, you've never dealt with this time of year well. You do have a birthday to look forward to. I promise things will start getting better after that. For now just try not to cry right in front of your friends. It will make them feel uncomfortable. There are councillors who get paid for that, and you might find them to be very helpful.▲



# Arrival:

## A Hopeful and Fascinating Close to 2016

Author › Jesse Chisholm Beatson  
Contributor



A new ‘first contact’ film titled “*Arrival*” premiered this fall. Directed by Denis Villeneuve (“*Sicario*,” “*Prisoners*,” and “*Incendies*”) and based on an award-winning short story by Ted Chiang, it focuses on linguist Louise Banks (Amy Adams) whose task is to overcome the language gap with the aliens. The timing of the film’s release could not have been more apt. As 2016 wore on, it felt like politics was being increasingly driven by a reptilian-brained fear of outsiders, with Britain leaving the EU, tensions rising in many refugee-accepting countries, and a US presidential campaign won partly on the promise of wall-building. This xenophobia dictates the military’s approach to the aliens in *Arrival*, a common trope of the genre. What makes *Arrival* a hopeful and fascinating film to end off the year is its close study of Louise’s courage and creativity in spite of what we know is a shared human impulse: to fear the Other.

Louise is shown giving a linguistics lecture but something is amiss. Her students are distracted and they tell her to turn on the TV. Through the footage, dominating every channel, we see the black oval-shaped spacecrafts hovering silently above the ground. We learn they appeared simultaneously in twelve different countries. It’s a setup similar to “*Independence Day*,” but these ships feel less threatening, their appearance more melancholic than megalomaniacal. A more appropriate analogy is to the monolith in Stanley Kubrick’s “*2001: A Space Odyssey*,” an enigmatic alien object that influences and spurs on the course of humanity’s development. While a hysterical media searches for an explanation, the militaries of the respective countries have taken swift control, cordoning off the sites and restricting who can enter and exit. Shortly after, Louise is recruited by Colonel Weber (Forest

Whitaker) to help the US government decipher the aliens’ intentions and she is joined by physicist Ian Donnelly (Jeremy Renner).

We first meet the aliens when Louise and Ian, along with their military handlers, enter one of the oval spacecrafts in hazmat suits. Squid-like and given the name “Heptapods” for their seven legs, the aliens seem keen to communicate but remain in a misty area behind an invisible barrier. Louise’s predecessor was fired for not achieving results quickly enough. The pressure is on Louise to establish linguistic common ground and discover the purpose of the Heptapods’ arrival before the military takes aggressive, pre-emptive actions. In an early visit, Louise removes her hazmat suit and walks right up to the invisible barrier, invoking disbelief and admonishment from her military overseers. Her bravery is rewarded, as she is able to connect more intimately with her extraterrestrial interlocutors, setting in motion later breakthroughs. The visuals and thematic content of the scene (depicted in this review’s accompanying image) feel like a nod to Pinocchio and the biblical Jonah, who both end up in the belly of a whale as part of their hero’s journey. In those stories, as in this one, the protagonist must be symbolically swallowed whole into the unknown. As their former selves die, they are able to emerge reborn and in possession of new crucial knowledge from the ‘other side’ (see Joseph Campbell).

The most interesting conceptual territory of *Arrival* is its clever sci-fi extrapolations from linguistic theory. The Sapir-Whorf hypothesis, specifically name-checked in the film, states that the structure of a language determines or greatly influences the modes of thought and behaviour of its speakers. Without going into too much detail, Louise

discovers that the Heptapods have a circular structure to their written language, rather than a linear one. The point of imaginative departure is that this linguistic circularity greatly informs and mediates the Heptapods’ understanding of—and relationship to—time. As Louise gains deeper insight into the Heptapod language, her perspective is increasingly shaped by Heptapod thoughts. Inventively, the largely linear narrative thus far begins taking a more elliptical shape. Louise’s mind frequently flashes in and out of events of ambiguous temporality, what could be day-dreams, memories, or perhaps even oracular foresight. While hazy at times on execution, the film deserves credit for introduction of genuine cognitive estrangement: an idea that compels us to see the world differently (See Darko Suvin).

In the aftershock of 2016, *Arrival* is a consoling meditation on bridging impossible divides and transcending boxes and biases that govern our thinking. In some ‘first contact’ films, the aliens have a deadly agenda but in *Arrival* they have a gift to share. That this gift is initially perceived as a threat speaks to all-too-recognizable human tendencies. Louise’s military overseers want to manage risk, and she breaks with protocol in a number of ways that could potentially bring hazardous consequences. By so doing, she shows how we make ourselves vulnerable when we try hardest to achieve mutual understanding. At the same time, she enables herself to gain crucial knowledge for her hero’s journey. As we enter a new year in a political climate that seems as polarized as ever, *Arrival* is a timely reminder of the virtues, at times necessities, of leaping with abandon into chasms of misunderstanding. ▲

# The Nightmare Before Christmas

Author › **Natasha Jerome**  
Contributor

Sunday: 3am. It was the middle of the storm and the sky was shedding again. Icy raindrops hit the ground, bathed the trees, soaked the roof-tops, washed the cars, and swung upon the power lines. They clung to what they fell on, freezing on contact. Usually, I love night driving. The roads are vacant; the night is serene and enveloping. This particular evening, something peculiar was happening. In all of five years on the night shift, I had never seen the likes of it. The roads were iced-over and deceptive. Hydro poles and power lines slunk down with the arctic fluid, trickling first, then freezing, like liquid wax that rolls and gels along the sides of great big prayer candles. The trees, bared of leaves, but glazed in crystals glistened like diamonds and onyx.

I took a right onto Eglinton at Birchmont and veered the gliding wheels of my rickety car toward Kennedy Station. Right there, there is a bridge. It approximates the YRT lines and takes the traveler toward Markham Road, to the 401, and onto the city's outskirts. As I approached it, a peculiar thing occurred. The lights on the power poles, each in turn, went out: an entire block of it. Where before was light, darkness descended. Not only the bridge, but also the nearby buildings melded into nothingness. It was the sort of thing featured in horror films. Pity, I thought, at the sight of it, those poor people; they're going to have a pretty wretched holidays. But then I quickly forgot them. Once I ascended the bridge, passed the sight of them, and made it to the other end, all the streets and intersections glowed with good cheer. No loss of power there, no problem. In many places, the merry colours of the season blinked on and off, proclaiming peace on earth.

I got home in a few more minutes, brushed my teeth, washed up, and went to bed. Just like every mundane morning. But then, a thought occurred to me. Because of it, I rolled backed the sheets, climbed out of bed, and closed the air vents. The oncoming fever did not surprise me. Two days in a row, at 3am, I had spent the better part of forty minutes—in the middle of the storm—chiselling my car from the icy armour that had clutched it. This particular morning, I had even multi-tasked it: one hand manning an umbrella, the other, wielding the ice pick. Meanwhile, as I hacked and jabbed and scraped and scratched at my car's frozen surface, winter blew its frosty breath, cut deep into my coat, lapped me down, and laughingly, hurled my umbrella away. I was drenched, and numb, and shivering by the time I managed to break the car free. And so, I caught the chills.

To tranquilize the thing, I tried to cool my room and myself, closing the vents, dressing down to my underwear. I went to bed in the most minimal habits. Two hours later? Imagine my confusion. An unusual draught awoke me. A darkness to which I was unaccustomed. Sometimes, the unfamiliar can be so strange. It can grip you. I climbed out of bed, felt along the walls, fumbled to the bathroom. I threw the light switch. Nothing. No lights. No power. No power? I have no power? Was this really happening? I doubled back from the bathroom, groping along the halls. In the living room, I peered out the great, big windows.

Darkness, starker still than yet I'd seen, glowered back at me.

Deep into the distance, the neighbourhood was bleak, black, iced over, still: like in the wake of some grim reaper. Trees along the curbs, so lush and verdant during warm weather, bent to breaking beneath the weight of ice that clutched them. The birch on my front lawn—decapitated. The old deciduous that had faithfully watched at

the entrance—completely mangled. Many of its larger branches, as with the trees nearby, hacked off by the weight of so much fluid frozen around it. The fractured canopy of a maple slunk across the entrance, blocking the driveway. So many beautiful trees, mercilessly assaulted. And that was only the beginning.

The extent of the storm revealed itself in the hours and days ensuing.

Imagine the people affected. In the malls, moms and dads and children, infants included, huddled together on mats, seeking refuge. Once, a sight so surprised me, I had to look twice: a baby, so swaddled to keep it warm, I took it for a toy. People are thankful for community centres, if only for the warmth. I checked into one today and was grateful it existed. If only someone told them that sugary biscuits and bite-sized pastry, stuffed with sure-to-derail-your-liver, ooey-goey frosting does not count as food. Food, in the midst of a crisis—a winter crisis—behind broken homes, and broken spirits, at the back end of an ice storm, should at least be wholesome. A little hot soup can soothe a soul, especially when it's Christmas. And if you please, 'twould be nice: a make-shift bed or cot or corner where one can lie down. Tables and chairs are okay, but it would be so good to stretch out for an hour.

Three days after the storm, many abided the darkness. Two hapless victims—a mother and son—succumbed to carbon monoxide. People, stranded in the cold, are desperate for warmth. Some use candles, some bring the barbecue grill indoors. But charcoal fires can burn a house down. Carbon dioxide fumes can squelch a life. Truly, it was tragic.

As for me, I never imagined that inside a home could get so cold, that fingers and toes could sting with the venom of pepper spray, as their blood-flow trickled to a crawl. Such magnitude of discomfort, inside a home. I could never imagine. That old chestnut about coming in from

the cold? In the context of an ice storm, with no lights, no heat, no food, no hope, coming inside will hurt like being buried beneath mountains of snow—with no clothes. When the thermostat says minus one, but aching bones reveal it's way below that, believe me, in only a matter of minutes, even though you're wrapped in a goose-feather parka, complete with hood, which you're wearing, even though you've gloved your hands and socked your feet and pulled on those knee-high specially-made-for-winter boots, within just minutes, your fingers will stiffen, your toes will burn. And covering beneath layers of blankets? That will only help a little. Partway through the tortured effort to sleep, winter's frosty fingers will reach out for your throat. The endeavour to speak will reel you—cough, cough, cough, as if to hack up your lungs. It will teach you how winter on the streets must feel. It will knit you in solidarity with the street folk, as you pass them at the curb, curled up under rags and cardboard.

The folks on my neighbourhood's periphery were saved from the worst. Throughout the storm's siege on the rest of us, their Christmas lights twinkled on and on. Many a night, in the aftermath, I drove up the path, thinking optimistically, enthused by the glimmer of those homes, that the power on my street was back on. Well, I was wrong. So tonight, a gentle fire ignited in my bosom when Hydro Toronto finally arrived on my block. All the homes were reconnected to the power grid. But the line was cut from mine. There it lays, lifeless on the snow. The man said that they'd only reconnect it after I had had the meter checked and repaired the pole. How long will that take? How long: to find a meter man, to repair the pole, to call the ESA, to inspect the job, to advise Toronto Hydro to come out again. It's the weekend now and Christmas is here. Peace on earth. To men good cheer. ▲

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# Sudoku

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3

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

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

# Jurisfoodence: The Best of blogTO's Best of Toronto

Author › Nadia Aboufariss  
Arts & Culture Editor

The Best Pho in Toronto

**Pho Tien Thanh (ranked #2)**

Location: 57 Ossington Avenue  
Atmosphere: Small, busy and very pink

According to blogTO, the two best places for pho—the quintessential Vietnamese soup—are about a block and a half away from each other on a strip of Ossington between Dundas and Queen. Nowadays, this location seems like an odd setting for the two best pho places in the city, but before the specialty shops and skinny jeans, Ossington had a large Vietnamese population nestled amongst the older Portuguese community that had immigrated here around mid-century. Rising rents, high crime, and the economic downturn drove away many in this neighbourhood and shuttered businesses along the Ossington strip in the mid-2000s, leading to its current gentrification, but despite these setbacks Golden Turtle and Pho Tien Thanh have managed to flourish.

I was planning on going to Golden Turtle, but upon arrival a sign on the door informed me that the restaurant was closed for the holidays. I was happy with this minor setback. After doing some internet reading, I was having a hard time deciding which one of the top two places I should review. Diners of both restaurants are very adamant that theirs is the one with the better pho, and although blogTO ranked Golden Turtle as best, Yelp reviewers seem to lean towards Pho Tien Thanh, which customers describe as more “authentic.” Both restaurants are supposedly frequented by well-known Toronto chef Susur Lee, and the friendly competition between the two eateries has been featured in the Toronto Star.

I am no pho expert—I have yet to make it myself, which is terrible considering I am a trained chef—but I have eaten a lot of it, and it’s always held a special place in my heart since I first tried it about a dozen years ago. I had a friend who spent some time traveling in Vietnam, and when he came back he took me out for pho and tried to teach me how to properly pronounce it (it’s more like “fuh” but I am still guilty of calling it “faux” half the time). I immediately fell in love, and upon reflection, it’s easy to see why. It’s customizable, so one can individualize their meal at the table, it’s nourishing, filling, and very cheap. And as far as I’m concerned, there is nothing that cures a hangover better than a couple Advil and a giant bowl of pho.

I don’t think I’ve had a bad bowl of pho, so when I saw the lineup in front of Pho Tien Thanh on a Friday afternoon I was annoyed. Waiting in line for pho, when there are endless places in Toronto that serve a perfectly fine version of the dish, feels silly, and this is probably my only hesitation in fully recommending a meal here. The restaurant itself is tiny, so even though the long line on this wintry work day must have had something to do with the closure of Golden Turtle, I suspect that line-ups are fairly common.

Upon entering, it would be hard to ignore the giant block letters on the wall that spell out “I LOVE PHO FOREVER” placed between a clock and a gold-framed copy of the ubiquitous “don’t drink while pregnant” signage required by Ontario law (which I now know is called the “Sandy’s Law Warning Sign”).



📷 Clockwise from top left: In Cod we Trust, Crispy Cojita, Beef Cheek  
Source: Author

The decorations, plastic plants and bright pink walls make for very kitschy decor, but the way the restaurant bustles visitors in and out you are more likely to be focused on trying to finish the giant bowl of soup in front of you than admiring the surroundings.

We ordered deep-fried spring rolls to start, and oh my, these were the greasiest, most delicious spring rolls I have ever had in my life. The filling didn’t have the typical cabbage and carrot found in most spring rolls, but were instead much skinnier (and longer) and filled only with pork, served with a standard sweet and sour fish sauce. Although I am only reviewing this place on the pho, I can’t stress enough how delicious these were, and even more than the pho these rolls made me want to go back to Pho Tien Thanh to try their other Vietnamese dishes.

I ordered the pho with rare beef and beef brisket, while my partner got the house special which also came with beef tendon and tripe (an organ meat from the stomach of a cow). I don’t mind well-cooked tendon but as someone who can handle most offal, I have a slight aversion to tripe, not because of its taste (very mild) but its texture, which can best be described as spongy. Pho is certainly not for the meat-adverse, but do note that the menu contains a separate vegetarian section which contains, among other things, a tofu and vegetable based pho.

This was excellent pho. It’s hard to say it is the best—more than other foods, I think I would need different bowls in front of me to taste at the same time to determine this—but it was a notch above Pho Hung (number seven on the list, and where I ate most of my university pho) and the restaurant I frequent now (Pho King Fabulous, which isn’t great but would be number one in a ranking of best pho restaurant

names). The portions of meat are generous, and we both really liked the addition of thinly sliced white onion which added a pleasant sharpness to the broth.

And the broth at Pho Tien Thanh is wonderful: rich, but not too greasy or salty. I could definitely taste the star anise, which often is not prominent enough to add the nice level of complexity that this broth had. The traditional pho garnishes—Thai basil, culantro, lime wedges, and bean sprouts—were crisp and fresh. I really enjoyed the fact they served the pho with the harder-to-find herb culantro, instead of its more popular cousin cilantro. Culantro is described as tasting like a stronger version of cilantro, but in my opinion it is less soapy, and it is perfect for the soup since the thick, serrated leaves do not wilt as fast.

The pho at Pho Tien Thanh will set you back about a dollar or two more than the standard pho restaurants, and with line-ups out the door I can’t say I blame them for the price hike. Even with the popularity surcharge, a medium sized bowl of pho, for nine dollars, is solid value. If you find yourself in the area and the wait seems tolerable, I highly recommend stopping by this little Vietnamese gem or its number one ranked neighbour Golden Turtle. Even though I didn’t eat there, if it is in solid competition with Pho Tien Thanh it must be pretty darn good too.

Cost (for half an appetizer and a bowl of pho):  
\$11.50 + tax + tip

Service/Atmosphere: 3/5 Dean Sossins  
Value: 4/5 Dean Sossins  
Food: 5/5 Dean Sossins  
Overall: 4/5 Dean Sossins ▲

# The Davies summer experience?

Ask our Osgoode students.



**Stuart Berger**  
Class of 2016



**Dajena Collaku**  
Class of 2017



**Eytan Dishy**  
Class of 2017



**Jaimie Franks**  
Class of 2016



**Russell Hall**  
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**Cadie Lowe**  
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**Megan Moniz**  
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**Ha Nguyen**  
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**Jerry Ouyang**  
Class of 2017



**Diana Pegoraro**  
Class of 2017



**Michael Rafalovich**  
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**Matthew Sherman**  
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**Ghaith Sibai**  
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**Veronika Stefanski**  
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