After a Toronto Star investigation last October into a series of judgements against people in debt to private lenders, it was announced today that judges of the Small Claims Courts of Ontario will receive training in how to effectively understand what interest rates actually cost borrowers, regardless of what the posted rate in the loan agreement states.

The issue arises from the conduct of one Erez Harosh, whose company XCash Financial has been offering loans to communities in North Toronto, particularly to women in the Filipino community trying to make ends meet in Canada by taking on domestic work to support their families back home. Because many of these people do not have a stable income, banks won’t lend to them, which allows companies like XCash to flourish in the market for riskier short term capital. The loans offered by Mr. Harosh were at posted rates of 59.99%; the criminal interest rate in Canada is 60% and is punishable by up to five years in prison or a fine of up to $25,000 under s. 347 of the Criminal Code.

But this is technically legal, if highly unethical. The legal problem arises when these borrowers are unable to make their monthly payments, which is exacerbated by steep penalties for missed payments: $100 for a bounced payment and $29 every 10 days afterwards until settlement. As a result, the borrower ends up in default and the lender is able to
I Dare You to Drink That

Insane Drinks for an Insane 2017

Author › Ian Mason
Managing Editor

After the inauguration of a President, who basically looked at 2016 and said “challenge accepted,” I figure it’s time for some relatively comedic filler material. Things are only going to get weirder, and we’re going to need to adapt to a changing world, lest we get left behind. In light of that observation, I suspect a good place to start would be adapting in a time-honoured coping mechanism that unifies people from the Bay Street executive to the guy with a bottle of mouthwash in an LCBO bag: getting hammered.

And so, here is a review of the weirdest and/or foulest alcoholic beverages I’ve ever consumed. I poison my liver so you don’t have to (though if something’s surprisingly tasty, I might sincerely recommend it).

**Andre’s Almond Creme Sherry:** 18% abv, $7.95 for a 750ml bottle

Ever heard of Thunderbird? How about Night Train? Well, for those of you who haven’t, they are two infamous brands of fortified wine from the United States, generally associated with vagrancy. Both are incredibly cheap, close to 20% alcohol, and known to get you a special kind of drunk. They’re not available in Canada; I can’t say we’re lesser for it.

However, we do have equivalent beverages, which brings us to Almond Creme. As a young lad with no taste and an obsession with finding the cheapest way to get drunk on my drug store paycheques, I found myself in the fortified wine section of my local LCBO. It was there I noticed that in servings of alcohol per dollar, nothing was nearly as cheap as the so-called “sherries” in plastic or green glass bottles. “Grandma drinks sherry,” I thought, “and she can barely even look at a bottle of actual liquor. How bad could it be?”

Well, dear readers, I must say that Grandma’s mid-range sipping sherry is a far cry from the sickly-sweet abomination that utterly demolished several teenagers and an unfortunate bathroom that warm July afternoon. I only wish I could say I never repeated the experience.

Now, I’ve singled out Almond Crème because it stands out among the brain-obliterating, legal-minimum priced hard wines generally purchased by hardened alcoholics and stupid kids. What makes it distinct? It actually tastes like a sour, sickly-sweet amaretto, which is fantastic compared to the “did I just drink gasoline” taste of its neighbours. I wasn’t above buying the odd bottle into my adult years, when I only had eight dollars on hand and hated myself more than usual. Apparently it’s been discontinued, but can still be found in some LCBOs. I recommend giving it a try, be it as a dare, novelty, or so you can better understand the mindset of that client who stood in the middle of a busy street and started screaming “you call this a sidewalk” before his inevitable arrest. Watch out for the hangover. Oh man…

**Wray & Nephew White Overproof Rum:** 63% abv, $37.95 for a 750ml bottle

This is the most widely available of the painfully potent rums available in Ontario. Sadly, we don’t get things like the Spiced Screech you can find almost everywhere in Newfoundland, which combines being 50% alcohol while actually tasting good. However, this article isn’t about “good,” but rather about selecting an appropriate and expedient means of killing as many brain cells as possible. You know, something to help you forget seeing an MRA activist respond to a women’s march by asking who’s going to iron his shirt (seriously, can’t you iron your own shirt! Hand in your man card, NOW). You’re going to see a lot more of that now, so drink up.

That’s where Wray and Nephew comes in. You might see mickeys of this stuff at the LCBO counter with all the half-mickeys, corkscrews, and those cars of wine (boxes weren’t trashy enough! Wait, I shouldn’t judge). That’s because its high potency makes it a desirable target for the hardened alcoholic shoplifter. Amazingly enough, the LCBO gives it some flavour notes that make it sound like a high-end, complex rum that you’d want to savour. This is a filthy, filthy lie. Wray and Nephew tastes like someone dissolved rotten coconuts in a vat of rubbing alcohol, and no matter how fast you gulp it down, there’s a good chance you’ll retch from the overwhelming burn in the back of your throat.

**Follow Us**

*Obiter Dicta* is published biweekly during the school year, and is printed by Weller Publishing Co. Ltd. Obiter Dicta is the official student newspaper of Osgoode Hall Law School. The opinions expressed in the articles contained herein are not necessarily those of the Obiter staff. The Obiter reserves the right to refuse any submission that is judged to be libellous or defamatory, contains personal attacks, or is discriminatory on the basis of sex, race, religion, or sexual orientation. Submissions may be edited for length and/or content.
When I order a shot of it at my local dive bar, I ask for a shot of “nightmare fuel,” and my liver weeps tears of blood.

Why would I recommend such a beverage? Because everything you drink after downsing a few shots of it will taste like the nectar of the gods. Drinking Wray and Nephew is like beating your tongue with a baton and forcing it into a lightless dungeon for several years. Everything you feel and taste after drinking it will be wonderful.

Be sure to keep it away from open flame.

Fen Chiew: 53% abv, $30.90 for a 750ml bottle

I first recall seeing this stuff at the LCBO in Chinatown. Its high alcohol content stood out, as did the unusual bottle shape and logo. Apparently, Fen Chiew is a Chinese spirit known as ba jiu, which basically translates to “clear liquor.” It’s usually made of sorghum, which makes it unique among the spirits you’ll find in western liquor stores. Being unfamiliar, foreign, and very cheap considering its high alcohol content, it frightened me. I left it alone until a friend of mine (who never seems to leave an LCBO without buying something new) brought a bottle to a party last year. He insisted it was good. I don’t generally question his tastes, but something about this stuff made me hold my nose as I downed a hearty shot.

He wasn’t lying. To my surprise, Fen Chiew is pretty good. It tastes like slightly (but not sickly) sweet vodka with that faint black licorice taste characteristic of east Asian alcohols. There was certainly nothing strong enough to evoke a strong reaction, and everyone actually seemed to like or at least tolerate it. I can’t imagine mixing it with anything, except maybe ice, because it’s not neutral enough to be treated like a cheap vodka suitable only for mixing, or strong-tasting enough to complement anything like ginger ale does with rye. You might get a weird reaction, but you’re getting a good buzz for your buck, and I’m certain you won’t hate it.

But why is it listed in a review of potent drinks for a new dark age? Because it doesn’t taste like its 53% alcohol, so you’ll underestimate it, and then it’ll hit like a sledgehammer covered in railroad spikes. Thankfully, I think there was only one ill-advised hook-up that night.

Totally Awesome Sweet Alabama Liquid Snake: A shooter, with equal parts Jägermeister, Goldschläger or Fireball Whisky, and Bacardi 151.

This one’s a relatively original invention, and I’m way more proud of it than I should be. For context, the name is a reference to a fictional drink from a cult TV show called Metalocalypse, a cartoon about an absurdly popular metal band. This drug utterly destroys the mind of anyone who takes it, except the band’s drummer, because he’s done so many drugs it doesn’t touch him. Anyway, I was at a party, and wondered what would happen if I mixed 151 proof rum into a shot of Liquid Cocaine (Jägermeister and 500). I took a drink named after a drug, and decided “not crazy enough.” You know, because there’s no way that could have ended badly.

Have you ever heard the phrase “gone horribly right”? That’s pretty much what happened. The Bacardi 151 seemed to complement the other spirits, which had enough sugar and flavour to cover the potency of the Bacardi. Totally Awesome Sweet Alabama Liquid Snake was good enough that the usually undrinkable Bacardi 151 was the first casualty of the night. To give you an idea of the effectiveness of the concoction, one person fell asleep on the lawn, and another in the backyard. At least two ill-advised relationships started that night, and I wasn’t allowed back in that house for about a year. All told, it went quite well.

I recommend this for anyone who wants to be the life of an “End of the World” party.

Green Russian: Absinthe and milk

This is not an original concoction. The name and basic premise were inspired by the TV show Archer. It was introduced in an episode where a character wakes up after an epic night of binge drinking to find that he’s hooked up with the co-worker who had provided him with the titular beverage. If you’re thinking “but Ian, that sounds far too insane to actually try,” you don’t know me and I don’t think we can ever be friends. Hell yes, I made Green Russians.

The name is actually something of a misnomer, because it’s not really Russian, and even if you mix equal parts absinthe and milk, it still barely gets anything more than a slightly green tinge. If you want something more green, throw in some melon liqueur or green crème de menthe. I can’t imagine them having a negative effect on the flavour, since absinthe basically tastes like sour licorice melted in pure ethanol, so you’re not going to make it much worse. Also, contrary to popular belief, absinthe doesn’t make you hallucinate, regardless of whether or not it’s the proper kind that contains wormwood. The stuff that 19th century painters tripped balls on was apparently laden with all sorts of weird chemicals to give it its characteristic green colour, which is what actually caused the hallucinations for which it became infamous. If you want to recreate that effect, look up a recipe for sizzurp, the cough syrup cocktail Lil Wayne keeps overdosing on. Absinthe just gets you drunk.

But it does get you mighty drunk, and it’s definitely a weird enough drink for a weird 2017. Can’t kill you more than once, at least.

Bonnie Drink: Centerba (green Italian herb “liqueur” that’s roughly 70% abv)

I would have added this to the main list, but I only found it once and doubt I’ll ever see it again. For those of you who don’t know, the LCBO at Weston and Wilson often gets a lot of very weird spirits that you likely won’t find anywhere else. One time, while stopping there to grab some inebriants following a date, I noticed what appeared to be a heavily discounted bottle of bright green liqueur, which I assumed to be absinthe. Overwhelmed by morbid curiosity, I purchased the lone bottle.

Sometimes, you only learn the hard way. Centerba is a very obscure liqueur made of aromatic herbs that’s allegedly a digestive and possible topical antiseptic. It is truly and utterly vile. I quickly “gifted” the bottle to my friends, who immediately dubbed it the “mistake liqueur.” On a whim, I set a shot of it on fire, and it broke the shot glass. Nothing good could come of this product. If you ever see it, don’t settle for simply not buying it: smash the bottle on the ground and strut away like a boss.

And thus concludes my article on insane drinks for an insane 2017. Just remember: I’m not responsible for anything that happens following consumption of these drinks, as I’m not to be trusted or emulated. Good luck on surviving until 2018.
Rogue Scientists Speak Out: 
The Science Community’s Movement Against Trump

During President Trump’s first week in office, his administration has already started affecting the United States’ stance on climate change, including an examination of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to determine which information will remain on their website. As part of the examination, EPA employees have also been instructed not to release any new information, including press releases, blog commentary, or social media posts.

Doug Erickson, the Trump administration’s EPA spokesperson, stated that the examination is being conducted to align the agency with the new administration’s policies. He did not comment on whether this alignment will include the removal of climate change research or the shifting of the EPA’s stance on climate change. Since the examination, some news sources have reported that the Trump administration wants the EPA’s scientific work to pass through a kind of political vetting process before being published.

During his campaign, President Trump spoke against climate change, tweeting in 2012 that “the concept of global warming was created by and for the Chinese in order to make US manufacturing non-competitive.” He spoke against environmental regulations that were hurting businesses, disapproved of climate policies like the Paris Agreement, and wanted to cut funding for UN climate change programs.

The social media and communication policies of other government agencies have also been affected by the new administration. For example, the Interior Department’s digital team was told to temporarily stop tweeting after a National Park Service post that compared inauguration crowd sizes.

Some actors are posting in defiance of these orders. Badlands National Park’s official Twitter account tweeted climate change statistics on Tuesday, which were subsequently deleted. Rogue Twitter feeds from more than a dozen US government agencies, including the EPA and NASA, have since been created in defiance of what they say is censorship on the part of the new administration.

The rogue Twitter feeds have since received a surge of support from the American public, with many popular feeds already reaching tens of thousands of followers. A former official at the Interior Department, supporting this sudden movement, stated that “[c]ivil servants have a job to do and part of that job is to interpret the national parks and history behind it.”

Scientists are also starting to mobilize in response to Trump’s administration. Jonathan Berman, a University of Texas Health Science Centre postdoctoral fellow, started plans for a science march on Washington. Since starting on Tuesday the 24th of January, the march’s Facebook page has already swollen to more than 300,000 members by Wednesday evening. The organizers of the science march are planning on announcing the date and logistics of their event in early February.

The march’s website, http://www.scientistsmarchonwashington.com/, clearly states their position: "There are certain things that we accept as facts with no alternatives. The Earth is becoming warmer due to human action. The diversity of life arose by evolution. Politicians who devalue expertise risk making decisions that do not reflect reality must be held accountable. An American government that ignores science to pursue ideological agendas endangers the world.”

The response shows that the scientific community is starting to reach out to the public, not only to make their messages more accessible through social media but also to include non-scientists within their movement. The rogue Twitter feeds and the science march both encourage ordinary citizens to inform themselves against the recent surge of fake news and “alternative facts,” recognizing the influence that media has on the public’s perception of important issues.

The response from the scientific community against the new administration reveals the underlying influence of politics in their diverse disciplines. Although science strives towards some objective study of the physical and natural world through, what gets funded, researched, and reported is heavily influenced by politics. And even if a study is widely published and distributed, there is still no guarantee that it will be used to inform policy.

Overall, President Trump’s administration is already facing resistance from key stakeholders. The anti-inauguration riots, the international Women’s March, and the recent science movement show that many actors are against his current policies. Whether President Trump will be able to respond peacefully through negotiation, compromise, and understanding is uncertain. However, based on current trends, many have worried that he will respond harshly through further censorship and violence.
Obtain a default judgement in Small Claims Court for a far higher amount—one woman who owed $2,325 was ordered to pay $45,771. Once an order is made by the court system the lender can obtain a garnishment order which gives them the legal right to deduct funds directly from the borrowers’ paycheques, thus getting an even higher payout in the form of a steady cash flow.

The effect of these awards is that the true interest rate being paid—which is a calculation based on the principles of actuarial science—can be much higher, in the range of 150% to 200%. Because they are generally recognized as “outrageous” and “unreasonable” by some judges, he was allowed to keep doing what he was doing. It’s an example of the flipside to the public interest in access to justice—along with people in true need come people looking to use the court as a tool rather than as an end, and we trust the courts to filter the true claimants from false ones.

The controversy over using the courts for higher income is reminiscent of the debate over allowing contingency fees into legal practice in Ontario. In McIntyre Estate v Ontario (Attorney General) (2002), 61 OR (3d) 257 (CA), a group of lawyers sought to represent a woman suing tobacco companies for her husband’s death, although she had no personal advantage, the story of XCash is especially cautionary in how successfully Mr. Harosh was able to deceive so many judges. What’s even more alarming is that while many of his claims actually were recognized as “outrageous” and “unreasonable” by some judges, he was allowed to keep doing what he was doing. It’s an example of the flipside to the public interest in access to justice—along with people in true need come people looking to use the court as a tool rather than as an end, and we trust the courts to filter the true claimants from false ones.

The controversy over using the courts for higher income is reminiscent of the debate over allowing contingency fees into legal practice in Ontario. In McIntyre Estate v Ontario (Attorney General) (2002), 61 OR (3d) 257 (CA), a group of lawyers sought to represent a woman suing tobacco companies for her husband’s death, although she had no personal advantage, the story of XCash is especially cautionary in how successfully Mr. Harosh was able to deceive so many judges. What’s even more alarming is that while many of his claims actually were recognized as “outrageous” and “unreasonable” by some judges, he was allowed to keep doing what he was doing. It’s an example of the flipside to the public interest in access to justice—along with people in true need come people looking to use the court as a tool rather than as an end, and we trust the courts to filter the true claimants from false ones.

The controversy over using the courts for higher income is reminiscent of the debate over allowing contingency fees into legal practice in Ontario. In McIntyre Estate v Ontario (Attorney General) (2002), 61 OR (3d) 257 (CA), a group of lawyers sought to represent a woman suing tobacco companies for her husband’s death, although she had no personal advantage, the story of XCash is especially cautionary in how successfully Mr. Harosh was able to deceive so many judges. What’s even more alarming is that while many of his claims actually were recognized as “outrageous” and “unreasonable” by some judges, he was allowed to keep doing what he was doing. It’s an example of the flipside to the public interest in access to justice—along with people in true need come people looking to use the court as a tool rather than as an end, and we trust the courts to filter the true claimants from false ones.

The controversy over using the courts for higher income is reminiscent of the debate over allowing contingency fees into legal practice in Ontario. In McIntyre Estate v Ontario (Attorney General) (2002), 61 OR (3d) 257 (CA), a group of lawyers sought to represent a woman suing tobacco companies for her husband’s death, although she had no personal advantage, the story of XCash is especially cautionary in how successfully Mr. Harosh was able to deceive so many judges. What’s even more alarming is that while many of his claims actually were recognized as “outrageous” and “unreasonable” by some judges, he was allowed to keep doing what he was doing. It’s an example of the flipside to the public interest in access to justice—along with people in true need come people looking to use the court as a tool rather than as an end, and we trust the courts to filter the true claimants from false ones.

The controversy over using the courts for higher income is reminiscent of the debate over allowing contingency fees into legal practice in Ontario. In McIntyre Estate v Ontario (Attorney General) (2002), 61 OR (3d) 257 (CA), a group of lawyers sought to represent a woman suing tobacco companies for her husband’s death, although she had no personal advantage, the story of XCash is especially cautionary in how successfully Mr. Harosh was able to deceive so many judges. What’s even more alarming is that while many of his claims actually were recognized as “outrageous” and “unreasonable” by some judges, he was allowed to keep doing what he was doing. It’s an example of the flipside to the public interest in access to justice—along with people in true need come people looking to use the court as a tool rather than as an end, and we trust the courts to filter the true claimants from false ones.

The controversy over using the courts for higher income is reminiscent of the debate over allowing contingency fees into legal practice in Ontario. In McIntyre Estate v Ontario (Attorney General) (2002), 61 OR (3d) 257 (CA), a group of lawyers sought to represent a woman suing tobacco companies for her husband’s death, although she had no personal advantage, the story of XCash is especially cautionary in how successfully Mr. Harosh was able to deceive so many judges. What’s even more alarming is that while many of his claims actually were recognized as “outrageous” and “unreasonable” by some judges, he was allowed to keep doing what he was doing. It’s an example of the flipside to the public interest in access to justice—along with people in true need come people looking to use the court as a tool rather than as an end, and we trust the courts to filter the true claimants from false ones.

The controversy over using the courts for higher income is reminiscent of the debate over allowing contingency fees into legal practice in Ontario. In McIntyre Estate v Ontario (Attorney General) (2002), 61 OR (3d) 257 (CA), a group of lawyers sought to represent a woman suing tobacco companies for her husband’s death, although she had no personal advantage, the story of XCash is especially cautionary in how successfully Mr. Harosh was able to deceive so many judges. What’s even more alarming is that while many of his claims actually were recognized as “outrageous” and “unreasonable” by some judges, he was allowed to keep doing what he was doing. It’s an example of the flipside to the public interest in access to justice—along with people in true need come people looking to use the court as a tool rather than as an end, and we trust the courts to filter the true claimants from false ones.
WANT TO TEACH IN CHINA?

by Professor Jinyan Li

Want to experience living in one of the most dynamic countries in the world allowing you to see the world from a bigger perspective? Why not follow in the footsteps of other Osgoode graduates who have taught law and legal English at the Southwest University of Political Science and Law (SWUPL) in the city of Chongqing, located in the province of Sichuan, Peoples Republic of China? For further information about the SUPSL, please visit their website at www.swupl.edu.cn.

We expect to send one or two graduates to teach from Sept. 2017 to June 2018.

For each of the past 12 years, Osgoode has sent between one and three graduates to teach in this programme. Those who are hired leave Canada toward the end of August and return the following year at the end of June, unless they decide to spend some time travelling in Asia before returning. Air travel costs to Chongqing and return are paid by the Southwest University. The monthly wage is 5000 Yuan (approximately $900.00 CDN). This is high by Chinese standards and more than sufficient to cover living costs in China, although it does not, of course, compare to “Bay Street” salaries. In addition, an extra month of salary is paid in January to enable the visiting teacher to travel in China or elsewhere during the month-long Chinese New Year holiday period between the two semesters. An up-scale rent-free apartment within 10 minutes walking distance from the “new campus” is also provided. Meals in a foreign visitor’s dining room are subsidized, but one may always shop in local stores and markets and cook for oneself. Graduates who have taught in China all say that the experience is a rewarding and enriching one. Many take the opportunity to enroll in Mandarin courses while there, although a facility in Mandarin is not necessary for the position, since teaching is conducted in English.

SWUPL has a vibrant and engaging learning culture, and Chongqing is a fast-developing hub of industry and business, with a Canadian Consulate in the city - all of which make for potentially very interesting and rewarding opportunities for Canadian law students! SWUPL as the following key attractions: Immersion in another culture and language in daily life; work experience that broadens a law student’s perspective and skillset, while at the same time maintaining a close connection with the study of law; independence and self-direction; opportunities to connect with SWUPL professors and students; potential opportunities to contribute to the development of further collaboration initiative between SWUPL and Osgoode; and opportunity to see China and to travel. Osgoode teachers are treated as “law faculty” and can participate in the research and teaching activities of Southwest University.

An applicant must have at least two years teaching experience. Such experience could be accumulated by doing different teaching jobs as long as a certificate letter is issued by the employer. For the interview process at Osgoode, there is no need to provide such certificates as long as the applicant clearly states in the application that he/she has the required teaching experience.

Previous Osgoode graduates taught graduate seminars on topics such as International Business Transactions, Comparative Law, WTO and International Disputes Resolution, as well as Legal English.

If you are interested, please submit an application consisted of: (a) a current resume, (b) one copy of your law school and undergraduate transcripts, and (c) a covering letter addressed to Professor Jinyan Li. In your covering letter, explain your interest in teaching in China and highlight any experiences or qualifications that are particularly relevant. You can leave your application with Angela Monardo (4th floor – 4050B) or via email at amonardo@osgoode.yorku.ca. The deadline for receipt of applications is Monday, February 20, 2017. Applicants will be contacted for interviews by email the week of February 27th, 2017.
Canada has a drug problem. In many parts of the country, fatal drug overdoses are higher than deaths caused by motor vehicle accidents. In Ontario, opioid-related deaths increased from 127 in 1991, to 550 in 2010, to over 700 in 2014. Between 2011 and 2014, the nation’s spending on drugs to treat opioid addiction rose by sixty percent.

The recent rise in death rates due to addiction and overdose on prescription opioids across Canada has triggered a sense of urgency in both medical and lay communities. Many have urged the federal government to take control of this public health threat, either by implementing a Canadian national strategy, or more drastically, by declaring a national state of emergency.

Recent media attention suggests that this is a new crisis and that the culprit is the over prescription of opioid drugs. Thereby, as it often goes, is far more complex. According to the International Narcotics Control Board, Canada has the second highest per capita opioid prescription rate in the world. In 2015, doctors wrote fifty-three opioid prescriptions for every 100 people in Canada. In 2014, Canada’s public drug program spent $180.5 million on prescription opioids.

Opioid dispensing levels correlate strongly with harm, which is quantified by increased rate of addiction, increased ER visits due to opioid overdose, neonatal abstinence syndrome, and premature mortality. Yet, the issue of prescription opioids is only one side of a bigger social concern. On the one hand, the pharmaceutical industry has an interest in these prescriptions. On the other, patients suffering from acute, chronic, or cancer pain desperately seek pain relief.

In the 1990s, with the popularizing notion of a right to pain relief, drug manufacturers saw an opportunity. In particular, Purdue Pharma used an expanded sales force that targeted primary care physicians, most of whom had inadequate training in pain management, to advertise OxyContin for cancer and noncancer pain.

In 2007, after a US congressional investigation, Purdue pled guilty to criminal charges, admitting that they knowingly misbranded OxyContin as less addictive than other opioids. Despite the lawsuit, Purdue continued to be a key player in Canada’s opioid market.

In 2012, following a committee review that included clinical expertise in addiction, palliative care, and pain management, provinces removed OxyContin from its drug plan. Purdue Pharma subsequently pulled OxyContin from the market and replaced it with OxyNEO, a tamper-resistant alternative that is difficult to crush, snort or inject, even though the crisis has little to do with tampering.

After the vacancy left by OxyContin, other opioids grew in popularity. Fentanyl, a drug 100 times more potent than morphine, gained popularity as a street drug and is responsible for the recent rise in overdose deaths. Hydromorphone is currently the most popular long-acting opioid in Canada, with 1.6 million annual prescriptions.

While opioids have improved the quality of life for millions suffering from acute pain, the risks and adverse effects of long-term opioid therapy for chronic pain were, and remain, unclear.

The current Canadian drug approval process is not blameless. Controversially, there is no regulation in place to study or monitor the long-term effects of a drug. Driven by profit over public health interests, the regulatory drug approval process has allowed the drug industry to have significant sway through its user-fee contributions. Rather than developing long-term safety contributions, the industry has used this influence to ensure “an efficient and fast” approval process.

As such, opioids were being prescribed to patient populations for periods of time much longer than the formal clinical trials. Once approved, pharmaceutical companies have no financial interest in conducting studies on the approved drug, and even an interest to avoid them.

Last October, the Ontario government announced its first comprehensive Strategy to Prevent Opioid Addiction and Overdose. Effective January 2017, Ontario will be the first province to stop paying for high-strength formulations of long-acting opioids under the Ontario Drug Benefit Formulary. Specifically, the plan will delist opioids that are equivalent to more than 200 mg of morphine per day.

Although the strategy promises continued access to appropriate pain treatment, no alternative medication or treatment has been proposed to replace these delisted drugs.

If history has taught us anything, it’s that removing high-dose opioids solves nothing. Worse, it further perpetuates the already stigmatized image of a ‘drug user’ to include patients suffering from genuine chronic pain.

While the danger of prescription opioids is undeniable, it is equally alarming that one in five Canadians live with chronic pain, a serious, common, and undertreated medical issue. Even after adjusting for various socio-demographic factors and effects of long-term illness, such as age, ethnicity, and housing, patients with severe chronic pain had a forty-nine percent greater risk of death compared to all other causes of death and a sixty-eight percent higher risk of death compared with all cardiovascular disease related deaths.

Socioeconomic factors are closely related with chronic pain. Advocates calling for the right to adequate pain management come from both inside and outside the medical community. These advocates posit that pain, both acute and chronic is inadequately addressed for a variety of cultural, attitudinal, educational, political, religious, and logistical reasons. Consequently, inadequately-treated pain is linked with a constellation of major physiological, psychological, economic, and social ramifications.

The problem with the current prescription drug crisis is not singular. The solution must be multifaceted to address a nuanced and widespread problem in the healthcare system. It starts with gaining a better understanding of pain and the long-term effects of painkillers, but we also need a tighter drug approval process, a curtailed drug industry, and better education and training for physicians and users alike on pain treatment.

The Trudeau government must take caution against implementing any measures that may further stigmatize an already vulnerable population by unreasonably impeding patients’ right to pain relief, or unnecessarily subjecting them to further suffering. Any effective national strategy must take an interdisciplinary approach to striking a balance between the right to pain treatment and drug abuse.

This article was written by Kay Wang, an Arts & Science graduate from McMaster University and a part-time graphic designer. She strongly believes in the value of interdisciplinary thinking and purposeful design in order to create meaningful and sustainable change.

This article is part of the Osgoode Health Law Association’s Perspectives in Health column. Keep up to date with the OHLA on Facebook (Osgoode Health Law Association, Osgoode Health Law Association Forum) and Twitter (@OsgoodeHILA).

If you would like to write with the Osgoode HLA, please contact Adrienne Shnier (AdrienneShnier2016@osgoode.yorku.ca).
Five Happy Movies To Watch

At times, law school can get stressful, boring, monotonous, and overwhelming. So what to do to get away? How can I find a mini-vacation from my life of obligatory reading and studying? Aside from pub night, which suits some but not all, perhaps a movie? There are other outlets of course, but a good movie asks the viewer to suspend their routine beliefs. For example, in Miss Peregrine’s Home for Peculiar Children, the viewer is asked to suspend their belief that children can’t float and therefore don’t need lead shoes. If the movie is well done, then maybe I can temporarily forget/suspend my belief that I have hundreds of pages of text to read. However, being in law school also means that I don’t want to watch something that is going to add to my stress. Although I enjoy meaningful, heavy, and intelligent films, I would have to say, at least for me, they are not to be watched during my academic year. I don’t want to commit my mind to a stressful experience right now. I kind of just want to watch fluffy happiness and Princess Poppy. So, for the some of you who are like me, let me list the 5 Happy Movies to Watch While You Are In Law School.

Trolls

Yes, it’s a cartoon musical starring Anna Kendrick as Princess Poppy and Justin Timberlake as Branch. It follows the two as they set out to save their Troll friends from being eaten by the unhappy Bergeons who believe that happiness can only be attained on the eating of a Troll. As you watch the film, it’s evident that Branch is different from the other Trolls. He’s not colorful, he hates hugging during routine hug-time, and does not sing. In accordance with Troll norms, Branch would appear to be unhappy. During this lovely, fluffy adventure, Branch learns that happiness is inside of all of us, but that sometimes you just need a pal to help you find it.

Big Fish

For those of you who love Tim Burton, this is for you. This movie however, is a different breed of the twisted-Burton films. It’s not dark: it’s quite beautiful. The film features Ewan McGregor as a young man living an unlikely life in a small town. He knows he is destined for bigger things and on leaving town goes through an unlikely adventure where he befriends giants and werewolves and all kinds of fantastic characters. I really can’t say more without spoiling too much of the film, but this is one of my favorite movies ever. This film will require more of a commitment than Trolls, but I assure you, this film will not disappoint. While Trolls reeks of fluffy happiness, this movie is truly enchanting.

Moana

There’s a new Disney lady in town! Moana is an animated film featuring the Auli’i Cravalho as Moana and the Dwayne Johnson as the legendary hero-flop Maui. This is an amazing musical about a young lady who is destined to save her island from death and decay by setting off to sea in pursuit of Maui. Her goal is to, with the help of Maui and his legendary power, return the heart of Tafti in order that nature and life can be restored to the surrounding islands. Along the way, both Moana and Maui meet an incredible series of characters, including a fantastic singing, shiny, crab, Tomatou. Although Trolls was fluffier, Moana has more substance to it and leaves you feeling totally happy.
While You Are In Law School

Hugo

Hugo is an animated film about an orphaned 12-year-old boy, Hugo Cabret, who secretly lives in the walls and watchtower of a Paris train station. He lives alone and bears an intense fascination with wind-up toys and clocks. This fascination is key in discovering Hugo’s most precious secret. This film is directed by Martin Scorsese and features Jude Law as Hugo’s father, and Ben Kingsley as shopkeeper of wind-up toys. Hugo and the shopkeeper embark on a strange, and fascinating relationship, one which is difficult to discern at first. The film also features Sasha Baron Cohen as a train-station attendant fixated on the capture of the elusive Hugo. Like Big Fish, this movie is beautiful and enchanting, and one of my personal favorites. Total magic!

La La Land

This musical film bears huge Oscar-buzz right now, starring Emma Stone and Ryan Gosling as a couple falling in love and pursuing their dreams. The film is reminiscent of something older, like old-Hollywood glamour meets 2017. It’s been a while since I’ve seen something like this, bearing the likes of old-school Chicago, or Ginger Rogers and Fred Astaire. I literally smiled ear to ear during various parts of this movie. I felt like I was in La La Land.

I understand, Trolls and Moana might not be for everyone. For those of you that need a darker adventure, I have one last recommendation.

Casino

OK, so this is not a happy movie at all. However, I justify putting it in this list on the basis that many law students are in their early-to-mid-twenties, and may have not had the opportunity to watch this 1995 Martin Scorsese-directed masterpiece. This movie stars Robert Di Niro as Sam Rothstein alongside Sharon Stone as Ginger McKenna. The film also features Joe Pesci as Nicky Santoro, Sam’s best buddy. Sam, originally a bookie in his hometown makes his way to an 80s-era growing Las Vegas as part of a plan to manage a large-scale hotel-casino. During his early management days, he meets Ginger. For Sam, Ginger’s THE girl for him. In my view, it’s really the relationship with Ginger that disrupts what should have been, a smooth mob-run casino. I can’t give away much more, but I must say, the acting is superb. Additionally, you can’t go wrong with the costumes—both Ginger and Sam’s wardrobes are on-point. There you go, the fashion was the happy part.
The distance between law and justice:
Lessons from a student at Parkdale Community Legal Services

Author › Sophie Chiasson
Contributor

Amidst the student selection process for clinical and intensive programs at Osgoode last week, many of you have asked me about the Poverty Law Intensive at Parkdale Community Legal Services (PCLS). Being at Parkdale has been the best part of my law school experience. I started by completing a semester in the winter term, stayed on during the summer—as part of the first set of unionized summer employees!—and now, in my final semester, I am back at the clinic for the Directed Reading program. If you’re thinking about intensives, I highly recommend that you consider the Poverty Law Intensive.

Most law school classes are focused on learning legal principles and then applying those principles to a given set of facts. From this, one is expected to arrive at a legal answer. Of course, fact situations are rarely straightforward, and there is usually room for nuance and debate, but the common pedagogy is nonetheless based on black letter law. Presumably, this type of learning will prepare us for the profession ahead.

Except that in learning this way, we miss considering whether the laws we study are just and to what extent they have a disparate impact on certain people, such as the elderly, new immigrants, or the working poor.

Within my first few days at Parkdale I quickly realized that the clinic’s approach to learning about law was radically different. Rather than reading about legal principles in a textbook, I was learning immigration and refugee law through reading my client files. As it became clear, one of the best parts of PCLS is that each student is directly responsible for their own client files. Not only are you the main point of contact with the client, but you also strategize and propose next steps, put those steps into action, and meet with the client to move the file forward. Learning the law is just one part of the wider work.

If this sounds intimidating—and it did to me—not to worry, because throughout the process you are supervised by a staff lawyer. They review your work and provide feedback and offer advice, including: how to explain a situation to a client, how to write more convincing submissions by marshalling the facts, and how to sharpen your argument. Receiving daily guidance from experienced staff lawyers is an amazing way to learn legal skills.

As a student in the immigration division, I had the opportunity to work on a wide range of legal issues. For instance, I worked on an appeal for a refused family sponsorship application, and on humanitarian and compassionate submissions for a variety of issues, including a live-in caregiver applying for permanent residence. I also drafted part of a factum for a Leave Application for Judicial Review at the Federal Court on behalf of a convention refugee whose husband had been refused permanent residence based on a finding that the marriage was not genuine. The work is extremely compelling and often involves cases that decide whether someone can remain in Canada, or reunite with their family. I never had to wonder whether I was on the right side of justice.

In addition to client files, one of the most challenging and illuminating parts of the work is intake. The clinic is open for walk-in intake interviews four days a week where community members with a legal issue can meet with a student. There are a lot of reasons why intakes are challenging: it can be difficult to understand all the facts of a client’s story and to untangle relevant facts from a host of other issues; it can be hard to discern whether there is a legal issue involved at all; and, it can be a challenge to determine whether a legal remedy is available.

Despite these common challenges, the most difficult intakes occurred when I realised there was in fact no legal solution to the serious problem the individual in front of me faced. This is why intakes are so illuminating: it is often legislative rules—the ones our profession has been entrusted to understand and interpret—that create and perpetuate injustice. At Parkdale you will quickly learn that laws, while seemingly objective, have a disproportional impact on certain people and communities. I began to see immigration legislation, even seemingly innocuous requirements, as something to be changed and reformed, rather than simply memorized for an exam.

This brings me to community legal work. Each division at the clinic has a community legal worker, who students work with on law reform initiatives. After learning from clients about how and why immigration laws are unfair, the community legal worker is an essential aspect of trying to advocate for change. During my time at Parkdale, we worked on a petition to speed up processing times for families of refugees. We also organized public legal education workshops, which involved explaining immigration processes to community members and partners.

Recently, I attended a conference on how technology is changing education. The closing speaker, Graham Brown-Martin, posed the simple, but not commonly asked, question: what is school for? (You can see a version of his talk at https://vimeo.com/187212428) Obviously, for most law students, the answer is probably that we attend law school because we want to be lawyers. We also might assume that three years of school will adequately prepare us for the profession. Brown-Martin offers a different idea: school should be about equipping students with the skills to solve the host of complicated problems present in the world today. Might law school be a place where students learn how to tackle some of these problems? Or, at the very least, a place where we can learn to confront problems with the existing legal system? A term at Parkdale showed me that law school can be such a place.

If this sounds interesting to you, I highly encourage you to consider the Poverty Law Intensive. At Parkdale you will get to work directly with clients, have the chance to understand the profound—and disparate—impact the law can have on low income communities, and then try to change it.
Starry Decisis
Goodbye Monkey, Hello Rooster

Aries: Everything is fun and exciting. There are many distractions to your regularly scheduled business. Just remember not to get too carried away with the festivities.

Taurus: Is it really time to get back to work already? It doesn’t seem like yet, but I assure you that the longer you procrastinate the worse your March will be. Do what you can now, and you may avoid a few tears in the future months.

Gemini: Work work work, that is all you do, and all you should be doing. You have had way too much time off, and now you must buckle down. It’s true, no matter how little you want to accept it.

Cancer: You want to relax and have fun, but you know that no matter how hard you try you won’t be able to fully relax until you start the pile of work that you have been avoiding. Start compiling summaries or something useful, and quite doddling with useless things like this column.

Leo: Now is the winter of our discontent. You might as well just abandon any hope of joy or happiness in the coming months and embrace the wintry slumber of despair. Don’t worry, this depression will slowly melt away, leaving you feeling purged and ready for something new, but the process will take several weeks, like a slow spring thaw.

Virgo: Nothing much to do but study. Keep your head down, and your heart light. Remember that putting in time now is just a way to keep from going totally off the wall in about six weeks from now, as the dawning realization makes you painfully aware of how close you are to a respite from all this drudgery.

Libra: By now the routine is really quite routine. Just stay the course for another two to three months and everything will be fine. The routine isn’t so bad, the temptation to break out of it is. Don’t get too carried away by all the fun things that your colleagues are telling you about. They’re lying. They’re not really having fun out there, they’re just avoiding the pain of sticking to a routine. And I assure you, the routine is way better than the shock that is coming to all the procrastinators out there.

Scorpio: Solitude will do you well this month. Avoid parties, pub nights, and other social activities. Act like you have a cold, or that you don’t want to get one. Stay home and forget about all the fun stuff for now. Really, now is not the time to party. In fact, you should just stop having any fun at all for the next two months. Then you can enjoy the summer. Remember, winter is a time for quiet reflection, and in this case very intense studying.

Sagittarius: While you have always enjoyed winter, this year seems a little different. Everyone else seems doing something important, or interesting, or somehow fun, and you find yourself wondering if you are doing the right thing. The answer is that you probably are not, but that’s OK. You’ve never done the right thing before, so why should you start now. The thing you need to do is stop worrying so much, and just learn to relax. Then again, if you haven’t learned to relax yet, I’m not sure if you ever will.

Capricorn: Every day will bring a new decision. Remember to balance your social life with the grueling tasks that you know need your attention. Make sure to take time away from your desk, but not too much time away. Now is a time to get creative with your time off, and also to be diligent with the time that you must spend working on various projects. Time management will be a challenge, but I know that you’re up to the task.

Aquarius: By now you have had time to party. Now it is time to hunker down and get back to the work that you’ve been putting off. There will be things that try to call you away from your work. Try to deal with them quickly and efficiently and get back to studying as soon as you can.

Pisces: Soon you will be another year older. Remember to celebrate it. There will be a lot of things that will compete for your birthday time, but stand firm and proud and make sure that people know that your day is yours. Make it yours and own it. Take back the date and don’t stop until the whole world knows that you have a special day and it’s coming soon.
Three Tech Trends
Law Students Need to Know

Author: Usman Javed
Staff Writer

From autonomous vehicles to blockchain currency, technological development is not only changing workplaces but even industries. How fast will technology have a significant impact on the legal industry remains a very open question. These are the top three trends all law students should be aware of.

Artificial Intelligence

On a very basic level, artificial intelligence (AI) is the ability of computer programs to think and learn. Everything from your smartphone to your car uses AI; think about the time you asked Siri to give you directions to the nearest steak restaurant. The potential of the technology is huge: self-driving cars can learn how to drive just like humans, drones can figure out the safest route for delivery, Amazon can send you products before you need them, cameras can be monitored, and even news can be generated.

Many believe that AI will take over the work routinely done by junior lawyers or paralegals, allowing legal professionals to work on complex or higher value work, while others argue that the industry’s traditional aversion to risk means that such a disruption is not to be expected any time soon. A big discussion in the world of AI is the difference between “automation,” where the machine does everything, and “augmentation,” where the machine helps the person to accomplish the task.

Though the technology is still in its initial stages, several companies have entered the marketplace by using AI to help lawyers improve due diligence and contract review. Some observers, however, have suggested a much more ambitious approach whereby AI may be able to understand the most common tactics employed by opponents and even the likelihood of winning a case.

Big Data

The amount of data around has been increasing. Think about the content generated from Facebook, Twitter, blogs and comments. Another buzzword, “big data,” refers to large amounts of data sets that are difficult to be analyzed by traditional processing technology. Businesses and industries can use relevant information to make more intelligent decisions and thereby increase their competitive advantage. By observing consumer demand, retailers such as Macy’s can adjust pricing by analyzing billions of transactions, betting companies can better target customers, and by studying “user-clicks” social media companies can better target advertisements.

Considering the enormous amount of data in court records, regulations, and eDiscovery platforms, manually navigating through this data becomes impossible. Analytics (machine-based software) can review thousands of documents to search for relevant trends in a matter of seconds. This increased efficiency means cost-effectiveness for both law firms and clients.

Fintech

The term financial technology (fintech) refers to the industry which uses innovation and technological change to offer an alternative to the traditional financial services institutions.

Gaining momentum out of the 2008 financial crunch, these companies have mushroomed. There are currently 2,000 fintech companies, though estimates range towards upwards of 12,000. In Canada, one billion dollars has been spent on building up fintech companies. Some famous Canadian examples are: Shopify (Ottawa), Verafin (St. John’s), Lightspeed Retail (Montreal), and Zafin (Vancouver). With the growth of these Canadian-born fintech startups, the corporate groups of many law firms have seen an increase in deals, good news for law firms and potentially even for aspiring corporate lawyers.

Source: blogs.psychcentral.com
I’ve wanted to eat at Bar Raval for years. Not only because of the great things I’ve heard about the food, but also because on BlogTO it’s ranked first on both the best tapas and best snack bar list, and second for best Spanish. Not to mention the nerd and former art history major in me wanted to check out the Antoni Gaudi-inspired woodwork that decorates the space. It seems fitting that Gaudi, a Spanish artist and architect whose fantastical buildings are symbolic of Barcelona, is paid tribute here. Chef and restaurateur Grant van Gameren, who also owns Bar Isabel further west on College, meant for the place to be an experience: “as much of an art piece as a restaurant,” he claims.

And an art piece it is (the interior is one of the most uniquely designed spaces I’ve seen in Toronto), but a restaurant, not so much. Bar Raval is a bar, first and foremost: on a weekend, the only seating is at the bar, the rest of the small space is standing room only. We had dinner there, and I’m glad I did because it allowed me to sample more of the amazing menu, but realistically speaking, it is probably a better place to have a pre- or post-dinner drink, and snack or two, especially since the cocktails range from $14-$17.

We went to Bar Raval on a Friday night at about 7:00 p.m., and fortunately only had to wait about ten minutes for space to open up inside. The bar has a side patio (turned into a heated waiting area in the winter) that doubles as a place to eat, but having your meal out there instead of the beautiful interior seems like a waste. It’s also worth noting that I’ve heard it can be hard, if not impossible, to get into Bar Raval after nine or ten at night on weekends, and the bar doesn’t accept reservations.

Our server led us inside and immediately checked our coats to give us more room. Bar Raval is quite small, but pleasantly intimate, never getting loud or out of control. The service was fantastic too, which is an absolute must for a place with some unusual menu items (that are mostly in Spanish). Every question we asked about the tapas was answered with ease and as they came out, our server took the time to point out the ingredients. She also asked us if we had any allergies even before she took our order, and although I personally do not, as a cook I appreciate that touch because it makes life a lot easier behind the line. To me, not only is it a thoughtful gesture, it is a sign of a well-run establishment.

The menu is organized into canned specialties (tinned seafood such as anchovy and clams imported from Spain, and the most expensive items), marinated and preserved foods, tapas, and Bar Raval’s specialty, pintxos. Thanks to Wikipedia, I learned that pintxos are a variety of tapas popular in the Basque region of Spain consisting of toasted bread with various toppings that are affixed to the bread with a wooden skewer (pincho is Spanish for spike, pintxos is the Basque word).

Our server recommended that we start with four dishes and go from there, so we ordered the Galician octopus, Valencian salt cod salad, chorizo con queso, and the shrimp and romesco pintxos. We ended up ordering a fifth dish, the cojunado pintxos, mostly because the first one was so delicious we had to try another. Everything was incredible—the octopus, to me, was slightly too salty, but my partner disagreed—however, the real standouts were the chorizo con queso and the two pintxos. The chorizo dish, which comes in two sizes ($14 for the small and $21 for the large), features cubed manchego cheese, slices of chorizo, olives, artichoke hearts, and pickled shishito peppers, all tossed together in a very brightly flavoured olive oil. Being a fan of all things pickled, this dish was right up my alley, and the combination of salty cheese, spicy chorizo, and sour peppers made it the ultimate bar food.

The shrimp and romesco pintxos was also a favourite, with slightly charred, tender shrimp atop a sweet and savoury tomato-based romesco sauce (our server mentioned she ate this dish all the time).

But the last thing we ordered, the cojunado, was perfection. Cojunado derives from the Spanish word cojones (as in, Paul Ryan and the rest of the disgraceful U.S. Congress have no cojones) but can also mean “excellent” or “wonderful.” It’s a popular tapas item featuring Spanish morcilla sausage and piquillo peppers, topped with a fried quail egg. This version also appeared to have thick cut bacon added, as well as a light drizzle of parsley olive oil. I was blown away by this dish. Think of the best breakfast sandwich you’ve ever had in your life, and multiply that by a thousand. I sometimes worry when going to restaurants with great ratings, because eating at a place with high expectations can often lead to disappointment. I can unequivocally say that this was not the case at Bar Raval, which lives up to its reputation for excellent food served expertly in a stunning atmosphere.

If you have some money to burn or a date to impress, I highly recommend checking out this little tapas bar on College Street.

Cost for five tapas and dessert, split in half (excluding drinks): $33 - tax - tip

Service: 5/5 Dean Sossins
Food: 5/5 Dean Sossins
Value: 5/5 Dean Sossins
Overall: 5/5 Dean Sossins

Arts & Culture Editor
Nadja Aboufariss

Bar Raval (ranked #1)
Location: 505 College Street
Atmosphere: Intimate, warm, woody

I highly recommend checking out this little tapas bar on College Street.
Sudoku

Each puzzle consists of a 9x9 Sudoku grid containing areas surrounded by gray or dotted lines. The object is to fill all empty squares so that the numbers 1 to 9 appear exactly once in each row, column and 3x3 box, and the sum of the numbers in each area is equal to the clue in the area’s top-left corner.
In the last week, the NBA has witnessed what appears to be a growing trend amongst its teams and players. The media has become the forum for players, coaches, teammates, and organizations to call each other out. Whether through real time interviews, tweets, or Instagram posts, venting publicly is the new way for members of the NBA to voice their frustrations.

Given the media coverage of these incidents, it’s easy to view this as a player-only phenomenon. After all, they are the ones with huge social media following, and for some, personalities that feed off attention even at the expense of embarrassing those around them. That said, NBA coaches and owners are equally guilty of sharing locker room or organizational problems with millions of basketball fans.

It wasn’t too long ago when former Toronto Raptors coach Sam Mitchell called out a few players for ending the game with a scoreline of “Zero, zero, zero, zero.” Two days into the 2016-2017 regular season Tom Thibodeau, coach of the Minnesota Timberwolves, called his team out publicly for lacking toughness. A couple months later, George Karl, one of nine NBA coaches to have amassed one thousand wins, released a book in which he insulted a number of past players. He went as far as to speak ill of the manner they were raised. George Karl could be considered a repeat offender; just last year, during his one year with the Sacramento Kings, he publicly bickered with star player Demarcus Cousins before being fired.

As unprofessional as George Karl’s actions have been, Phil Jackson, President of the New York Knicks, might take home the 2016-2017 MVP honors for public venting. In November, he referred to Lebron James’ friends and business partners as a “posse,” which he was rightly criticized for doing. Soon after, he called out Knicks veteran and leader Carmelo Anthony, and has continued to take public shots at Carmelo. For his part, Carmelo has chosen to stay professional and not take any issues he has with Phil or the organization out into the public.

In 2010, Lebron took his talents to South Beach to team up with friends Dwyane Wade and Chris Bosh. In response to what was considered desertion by some, Dan Gilbert owner of the Cleveland Cavaliers infamously wrote a letter in comic sans font, referring to Lebron as a coward and vowing to win a championship before Lebron did in Miami. As it turned out, the Cavaliers would have to wait until Lebron returned before the franchise won its first championship.

Venus Williams eloquently summarized the beauty of sport:

“What I will say about sport, I think why people love sport so much, is because you see everything in a line. In that moment there is no do-over, there’s no retake, there is no voice-over. It’s a disaster witnessed in real-time. This is why people live and die for sport, because you can’t fake it. You can’t. It’s either you do or you don’t.”

It can be argued that for some fans, seeing players share their frustration on a public forum makes them more relatable and real. Sport is an outlet, and for many fans a way to root for a team or athlete who can do what they wish they could. In this sense, maybe we like seeing athletes criticize each other because we can’t do the same in a similar manner without having steeper consequences. Can you imagine going on CP24 and venting your frustration with a professor? It probably wouldn’t go over too well.

As real as these incidents make the people involved appear, one must wonder how useful it is for the long-term success of a team to have its dirty laundry shared in the media. NBA greats, including Kevin Garnett and Charles Barkley, have spoken out in response to the increase of public admonishing. Shortly after Chicago Bulls Dwyane Wade and Jimmy Butler publicly called out teammates (for a second time that season), Kevin Garnett said that locker room problems must be dealt with in the locker room. He reminded the NBA community that the sanctity of the locker room must be protected. After Lebron publicly criticized his team and the franchise for not adding another playmaker to essentially the same roster that came back from down 3-1 to win the 2016 championship, Charles Barkley referred to Lebron as “whiny.”

Regardless of whether or not you believe that people in the sports world should use the media to vent their frustrations, sooner or later those involved must realize that nothing positive will result from these incidents. Rather than repair any issues that players, coaches or management are upset about, going to the media undermines trust, creates divides and ultimately hurts team chemistry.
The Davies summer experience?

Ask our Osgoode students.

Stuart Berger  
Class of 2016

Dajena Collaku  
Class of 2017

Eydan Dishy  
Class of 2017

Jaimie Franks  
Class of 2016

Russell Hall  
Class of 2017

Cadle Lowe  
Class of 2018

Megan Moniz  
Class of 2018

Ha Nguyen  
Class of 2016

Jerry Ouyang  
Class of 2017

Diana Pegoraro  
Class of 2017

Michael Rafalovich  
Class of 2018

Matthew Sherman  
Class of 2017

Ghaith Sibai  
Class of 2016

Veronika Stefanski  
Class of 2017

Pu Yang Zhao  
Class of 2016

Visit us at dwpv.com to learn more.