

"CRASHING UP"



WITH HOT GIRLS LOVE
HOUSE MUSIC
& MOM WATER AT

AMERICANO *Lincoln Park*

By Ina Bochian

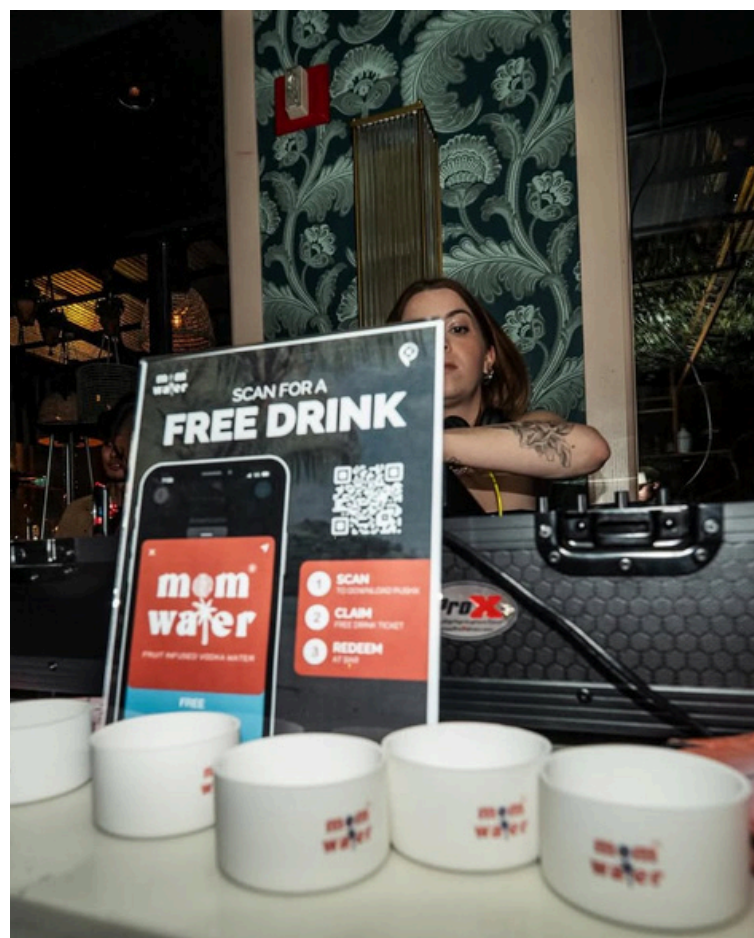
Photo Credits: Tim | @tpacfilms

REBRANDING "CRASHING OUT" TO "CRASHING UP"

In pop culture, the term "crashing out" often refers to impulsively reacting or acting out of character in response to being overwhelmed or experiencing emotional burnout. Given the current instability of our economy, many people are grappling with feelings of financial insecurity. Coupled with the everyday challenges of forming and maintaining relationships, as well as navigating social environments to establish meaningful connections, it's understandable that numerous individuals feel as if they are on the verge of a "crash out."

The pressures of daily life—financial uncertainty, physical illness, longing for meaningful relationships, and emotional strain—can create a perfect storm, leading to heightened anxiety and a sense of desperation. Recognizing these feelings is the first step toward addressing them constructively. By fostering open conversations about mental health and seeking support, individuals can better navigate these turbulent times and work towards resilience if they build a strong support system. In addition to therapy, discussing uncomfortable feelings with friends, attending social functions, and engaging with supportive individuals can significantly enhance our ability to bounce back from a “crash out” quickly.

“Crashing up,” on the other hand, is a term I coined following my own experience of “crashing out.” It refers to the resilience demonstrated in rising up after a setback, exploring the opportunities for upward mobility while emerging from the depths of a difficult situation. A friend of mine, Zu, has an entire series focused on using the concept of “crashing out” as a springboard and monetizing the impulsivity that often accompanies burnout. Building on this idea, shortly after my own “crash out,” I pulled myself together the other night and decided to “crash up” at Americano in Lincoln Park for a Mom Water brand activation event.



Hot Girls Love House Music | Mom Water

Photo Credit: Tim | @tpacfilms

Initially, I learned about the event from Brandon Friedman, the host and organizer, but my decision to attend was influenced by the mutual friends we had in common. As I glanced over the list of Brandon’s followers, I noticed the names of the two co-founders of the Chicago Jewish Alliance, as well as David Pawlan, the co-founder of ChaiChicago (Chai.Chi). Given my past experiences with both organizations, I envisioned that the people and the atmosphere at this event—combined with house music—would provide the perfect backdrop for recovering from the emotional hangover triggered by a dumpster fire of an incident at a Shabbat dinner the night before.

The irony of closing Shabbat at Americano, surrounded mostly by non-Jewish people with only a few members of the tribe present, is that those individuals helped me regain the sense of “shalom” (peace) that had been destabilized by the three “crash outs” on Friday night. While no one at the Mom Water event knew just how distraught I was—thanks to my ability to method act my way into a good mood—it was refreshing to change the vibes and be surrounded by genuinely good people. The event itself was a collaboration between Mom Water, Americano, Hot Girls Love House Music, Pie Ap, and PushXAp.

While I had been in no mood to go out, once I entered Hotel Lincoln, a JDV Hotel by Hyatt in Old Town, which has an entrance to Americano on the first floor, I was immediately enchanted by the atmosphere and architecture. The walls were adorned in art and the front desk was designed in the style of old fashioned furniture.

“Checking in?” the receptionist asked.

“No, I’m actually pretty checked out, if I’m honest, but I’m here for the vibes and the cafe,” I laughed.

Once by the DJ booth, I noticed a girl in the zone, with her headphones on, creating the mood I needed, and a guy dancing. I went over and introduced myself and learned the DJ’s name was Neiv and the guy’s name was Danny.



Mom Water Brand Activation

Photo Credit: Tim | @tpacfilms

“Well, now it’s definitely going to be a good night. Vibes are always good with a Danny,” I said to him. “Some of the best people I know are named Danny.”

We both laughed and from that moment on, it seemed like I would be “crashing up,” rather than “crashing out,” the rest of the night. I chatted up the host a bit and figured out we know a few people in common, including one of my favorite people in the world. Then, the general manager of Americano, Eamon, introduced himself, and the whole evening unfolded pretty chill.

Later, I met Kera, one of the Mom Water representatives, who shared the story of how the brand originated from a mom-and-dad duo, Bryce and Jill Morrison, from Southern Indiana. During a trip to the Dominican Republic, Jill realized she wanted to replace sugary cocktails and sodas with fruit-infused lobby water to which she added vodka. Once they returned home, Jill continued to mix the drinks, and Bryce suggested branding it as “Mom Water” to keep it out of the hands of kids. Initially, the beverage was meant for small gatherings among Jill’s friends and catered to their small-town demographic, but it eventually expanded to be distributed in over 30 states nationwide. You can read more details on the website: www.drinkmomwater.com

Each Mom Water flavor has a unique name, and attendees could sample them for free by downloading the PushxApp. I tried the Strawberry Kiwi, affectionately named “Susan,” and found it both refreshing and hydrating. With 0 sugar, 0 carbs, 0 sodium, and 0 carbonation, along with just a small amount of alcohol, it eliminates concerns about hangovers, sugar headaches, or dry skin the next day. For someone like me who prefers not to drink, it’s a great alternative to have while mingling at parties, bars, or social events.

Considering the emotional hangover I was already experiencing from the previous night, along with my determination to “crash up” rather than “crash out,” Mom Water was perfect for the evening. Enjoying the music and conversation, I felt more comfortable getting to know people, including the PieAp photographer, whose industry network overlapped some of mine.



Hot Girls Love House Music | Danny | Ina B.

Photo Credit: Tim | @tpacfilms

It’s always a privilege to connect with individuals who are eager to share resources and exchange valuable insights and experiences, rather than criticize others for “name dropping” or “bragging.” Sometimes, the best way to move forward is by sharing information and uplifting those around you, while recognizing that the creative field thrives on organic collaboration. Nothing excites me more than discussing my passions with others in the same field who are equally dedicated to pursuing what they love.

After feeling disconnected over the past few days, it was a relief to feel valued. This experience reenergized me and confirmed that my intuition was right about the importance of making an effort to “crash up” rather than completely “crash out,” even when things seem to be falling apart. Most of the time, what we perceive as falling apart is simply the dismantling of old structures, allowing us to rebuild ourselves on a foundation that remains intact. While this process may feel devastating and uncomfortable, the people we may lose along the way often represent walls that need to come down so we can build windows to let in more light.



Americano Lincoln Park Mom Water Event

Photo Credit: Tim | @tpacfilms

Part 2

-FOR CONTEXT

THE “CRASH OUTS” WHO TOOK THE SHALOM OUT OF SHABBAT VS. THE “CRASH UP”

To recap for context, the previous night left me in rubles, but the contrast of the two experiences made me appreciate my own resilience in moving forward and upwards. Generally, Shabbat dinners are filled with joy, love, and good vibes. However, I found myself at one that took a distressing turn when three “crash outs” began to verbally attack me, calling me derogatory names and insulting my physical appearance. This harrowing experience, compounded by the fact that bystanders—men who stood around watching the situation unfold—did nothing to intervene, sent me into a downward spiral. Not only were their comments hurtful and inappropriate, but the incident also stemmed from my decision to stand up for a girlfriend who had felt uncomfortable around a man who did not respect her boundaries earlier that evening.

The friend I stood up for confided in me that a man she had blocked on social media unexpectedly showed up to the dinner. I recognized him, as he had previously harassed and stalked another mutual friend who also had him blocked—an experience I had unfortunately gone through as well. Having noticed him, I chose to walk away after he accosted my friend. Later, I explained to her that I walked away because he makes me uncomfortable.

In response, she said, “He makes me uneasy too because I blocked him, but he came here in person to talk to me, knowing I would be here.”

“How did he know you were going to be here?” I asked.

“I come every month,” she responded. “I love coming here.”

“Same. It’s my safe space with people who feel like family,” I replied referring to the monthly Shabbat dinners that have become a staple in my own routine.

“I don’t know how to make him go away. I told him to stop and leave me alone. I’m not interested in him and I don’t want to avoid places I love because of him.”

“You don’t have to,” I said. “But— to set boundaries, you’re going to have to be more of a B— because engaging with people who don’t take NO for an answer can be dangerous. I’m a good person, but I cannot say I am very nice. When I am a B— it is to protect myself because no one is coming to save me if I don’t save myself. I’d rather be feared than loved at this point as long as I feel safe. Once you stop people pleasing, you’ll learn to be colder as a way to improve survival skills, something I learned the hard way.”



Hot Girls Love House Music | Mom Water
Photo Credit: Ina Bochian

After our exchange, we both agreed it would be best to inform the host of the dinner that many of us preferred a neutral party to address the situation with the individual in question. His advances were unwanted, and we simply wanted to maintain our distance. Once we brought this to the host's attention, everything seemed fine. However, a few men overheard parts of our conversation and later decided to call me derogatory names. One, who had been within earshot, added, “You’re a B— that everyone hates, a waste of space, and a C—. You deserve everything bad coming your way,” right after someone else had already insulted me.

A bit emotional and taken off guard, I walked up to the first individual who insulted me and said, “That was disrespectful, on Shabbat nonetheless. If I wanted to, I can mop the floor with you because when you go low, I can take it six feet under. There are many things I can say about you, but I am not going to.”

“Go ahead,” he said. “My confidence is high enough for you to try to drag me.”

“No, it’s Shabbat. We are not doing this here, at a Chabad, but just so you know, I’m definitely not Ok and I am not going to be ok for a while. I’ll probably crash out once I leave here, but if it makes you feel like more of a man to disrespect a Jewish woman, then be it. You do know that hurting one of us hurts us all, but that’s probably the best you can do. That’s the kind of guy you are. I’ll take one for the tribe and walk away. Mazel Tov!”

It made no sense for him to lash out like that, especially since I had initially approached him to invite him to the next venue with the rest of the group. Our mutual friend mentioned that he would only attend if he could bring this guy. Before everything escalated, I extended the invitation, but I didn’t remember his name because I had only met him once before. I’m still puzzled by the vulgar verbal attacks that came from him.



Lincoln Hotel Lobby

Photo Credit: Ina Bochian

He might have been upset because, during our previous encounter, he invaded my personal space, and I told him, “You’re doing too much.” I had made it clear that I was not interested in him and needed personal space, as he made me feel very uncomfortable. While I had forgotten about that incident, it’s possible he hadn’t, leading him to snap and react in a way that epitomized “doing too much,” resorting to ad hominem insults. None of it was warranted. I certainly did not insult him, nor was I vulgar with him.

At one point, a girl attempted to interject, but all the men just stood there in silence. To make matters worse, someone I considered a friend told me to be nicer to the guy who was hurling derogatory insults at me, and that really stung. With tears streaming down my face, I made eye contact with another male friend but couldn't muster the words to say anything further, so I walked out. As I reached for the door, it seemed he might have spoken up for me, but I wasn't there to hear what he said. The next day, he texted to apologize for witnessing what I had experienced.

That night, however, at Clever Coyote inside the Robey Hotel, I completely crashed out, crying in front of local strangers and a few people from New York and Denver who were in town for a wedding. Although a few of my friends were also at that venue, I didn't feel comfortable unpacking what had just happened, especially since they weren't there to witness it. Fortunately, Tyler from New York and Lauren from Denver took the time to help me shift my mindset. Tyler even stepped outside with me to get some fresh air and handled my emotional breakdown like a true mensch, while consulting on my love life.

The only person I really wanted to talk to was my love interest who thankfully was not at the dinner. So Tyler said, "So, text him. Tell him you want to see him."

"I'm not sure. Things have been off and we aren't even exclusive, but it would at least be nice if he can be here for me. He's so sweet."

"Just text him. What's the worst that can happen? Is he Jewish?"

"Yeah, he's definitely Jewish."

"I've always felt Jewish," he said, "but I'm German and Polish. I'm just a goyische New Yorker from Brooklyn who can pass for a Jewish person and help out if needed."

"It's not like anyone is fighting to identify as Jewish nowadays," I said. "So, as far as I'm concerned, you're an honorary Jew and we would more than gladly adopt you into the tribe. You're a mensch, a righteous gentile. You would have definitely stepped in earlier if you were at Shabbat, but you definitely helped me now."

find
your
grove



Hot Girls Love House Music | Mom Water Photo Credit: Ina Bochian

Juliet and Tommy, two of the locals from the group, offered to walk me to my car in the pouring rain and I drove them back to the next venue the group went to. Though somewhat distressed, I cried the whole way home, barely able to see through the rain and my tears. Nevertheless, I didn't get into an accident, nor did I end the night in a body bag. I just wanted a hug from someone I felt comfortable with, someone I cared about.

I felt disappointed that my intuition about the man I wanted to see had led me astray. For whatever reason, I seemed to be either "too much" or "not enough" for him, and he preferred to "be friends." While I was halfway relieved by this declaration, I realized that the issue might have been my tendency to self-sabotage by oversharing and putting too much emotional weight on someone who appeared to be strong. When I first met him, he seemed like he was made of steel, which led me to believe he could handle anything during a time when I felt most vulnerable.

I definitely did not expect to meet anyone I would be interested in romantically the night we met, which made the whole experience feel surreal. When he expressed that he liked me back, it felt as if my subconscious was bracing for the other shoe to drop. I could have fallen in love with him so easily, but I felt weighed down by everything else going on in my life. A part of me believed I had manifested this incredible man, while the other part was completely terrified of falling in love, which was precisely what I thought I wanted all along.

Almost relieved that he wanted to be friends, I felt grateful that I wouldn't have to navigate the complexities of falling in love with him—because when I do fall in love, it can be very costly for me. I not only invest emotionally but also go above and beyond to be the best partner I can be, striving to enhance their life and offer unwavering support. For me, falling in love feels like wrapping someone in a blanket filled with all my best offerings—gifts that keep on giving, including professional resources and opportunities. I view love and partnership, as a collaborative process, between two people dedicated to bringing out the best in each other, even in the face of challenging circumstances.

As I reflected on the situation, I thought, "Well, I probably would have done anything for you, but at least I don't have to try to make your dreams come true." We shared a connection that was rare for me, yet I realized I needed someone with the emotional capacity to appreciate everything I have to offer and understand my nuances. While he may have all those qualities, I probably expected too much too quickly, which is exactly how I self sabotaged the situation.

REBRAND YOUR "CRASH OUT"

*... it is possible we met
to share a few
meaningful
experiences and for
him to challenge me to
work on some
character development
areas so I can
become a better version
of myself...*

Though this guy was the first person in about two years whom I considered worth going all in for, I sighed, realizing that I could function better by using my head rather than my heart. Still, I sobbed because I had so much love to give and longed for someone worthy of that investment. Most people feel like liabilities, making it easier to leave them as they are. In this case, however, he could have won a Golden Globe for "Best Chemistry of All Time." I've never been able to fake chemistry, but his talent for manipulating emotions surpassed anyone I had ever encountered. "I didn't even think that kind of chemistry could be faked," I thought. If he believes that's what friendship looks like, then his definition is vastly different from mine. Yet, it's possible we met to share meaningful experiences and for him to challenge me to work on areas of personal growth so I can become a better version of myself.

Perhaps he didn't "fake" the chemistry but was overwhelmed by my excitement to impress him, coupled with my need for emotional support. I could have toned it down, but he seemed like an easy person to be my "unfiltered" self around. He made me feel so comfortable that I forgot how to act "nonchalant" in public. He drew out the most raw version of myself, yet maybe I should have held back. It was likely stressful for him when I discussed problems for which he had no solutions. I had no answers for certain things myself, but I connect with people I care about by talking a lot. Sometimes, I don't consider the strain this might place on them, especially when I meet someone who captivates me. He took my breath away, and in that moment, I turned off my brain, as if I were on autopilot. Even though it was not the best course of action. If things were truly meant to be, it shouldn't have mattered. He certainly went out of his way to point out everything I was doing wrong, rather than offer solutions. That was the best he could do and I respect his limitations. I was just hoping to be with someone who can take some of the pressure off during a tough time. He was not that guy.

Considering how he handled everything, I should thank him because he could have easily had me wrapped around his finger for a long time. Instead, he had the integrity to help me understand how he was feeling and why I can come off as overwhelming. He also respected my boundaries, which opens the door for a genuine friendship. In this case, there's no harm, no foul—just a bruised heart that remains fully intact.

Unlike the clowns from the night before, I know my evaluation of him as a person was accurate. At his core, this man is good and moral enough to communicate privately rather than risking an unnecessary public conversation. Furthermore, he respects me enough to free me from any expectations, allowing me to move forward in search of the right soulmate. This experience may even make me better for the next guy, but I do regret this one did not get to experience me at my best. I already told him that I am not on my A game, hoping that he would be patient enough to see what my best really looks like.

In retrospect, this gift of freedom from the man who could have kept me spinning in circles, allowed me to embrace the clarity that followed the next day. My heart wasn't broken—just a little bruised—but I've had much worse experiences that left me feeling trapped in a loop. Instead, I appreciate how this particular man challenges me to be vulnerable in increments, rather than all at once. While he is strong, perhaps placing my entire emotional weight on him all at once wasn't the wisest choice. Nevertheless, I firmly believe that we can't "ruin" things with the right person any more than we can convince the wrong person to choose us.

**I FIRMLY BELIEVE
THAT WE CAN'T
"RUIN" THINGS
WITH THE RIGHT
PERSON ANY
MORE THAN WE
CAN CONVINCE
THE WRONG
PERSON TO
CHOOSE US**

CRASH UP, NOT OUT.

Falling in love is a slow process that cannot be hurried or controlled; there is no formula or time limit.

Falling in love is a slow process that cannot be hurried or controlled; there is no formula or time limit. You can't rush love or slow it down, but we can view those who ignite sparks of love in us as little lights guiding us toward our destiny. As an idealist in matters of love, I have no interest in the temporary or the common "situationships" that plague this generation. I thrive as a friend, but my ideal is a love that is a "friendship on fire," full of passion and chemistry with a soulmate who is also a best friend, reminiscent of a never-ending romcom. In this instance, most of those elements seemed to be there, but I probably stepped on the accelerator too fast.

On the quest for this life-altering love story, there may be days when I "crash out" and others when I soar and "crash up," just like I did atAmericano. The key is to embrace the good days along with the bad ones, and to accept each situation as it comes, as well as the people we encounter along the way.

Some people, like my love interest, deserve our vulnerability, even if they cannot fully understand us. Being vulnerable doesn't guarantee success in love, but it opens the door to genuine connections. While the fallout may hurt in the moment, it's often better in the long run—especially with men who know how to communicate—to be direct. Playing games might keep the excitement alive, but it also carries the risk of real heartbreak.

Others, however, like the crass degenerates I encountered on Shabbat, deserve nothing at all—not our virtue nor our anger. Many of these men will likely have children, and some will even have daughters, which means their daughters will inevitably encounter men like them in the future. Even if these undisciplined individuals escape accountability for belittling women now, there will eventually be a reckoning in their lives. For those who are careless today, it will hurt even more in the future when their own daughters face disrespect from men like them, especially if they’ve invested resources into their upbringing and well-being. The irony is that the very behavior they tolerate could ultimately harm their own children, highlighting the cycles of toxicity that persist if left unchecked.

While we may all experience a “crash out” or a few, we must be mindful not to disrespect and hurt unnecessary people during periods of emotional burnout. Some words cannot be taken back, and certain actions can cause irreparable harm to our social standing. Instead of “crashing out” at the expense of others, it’s perfectly acceptable to unpack our feelings with a therapist or loved one who has the emotional bandwidth to listen with compassion, cry, or embrace vulnerability.

This shift allows for the positive pivot of “crashing up,” where we can seek support and connection rather than inflict pain or negativity on those around us. Nevertheless, we also have to accept that some people have their own sensitivities, which means a “crash out” may cost us meaningful relationships. By prioritizing emotional honesty and self-care, we create a healthier environment for ourselves and others. Regardless of how life wears us out, we can also “crash up” and keep moving forward, thus pushing the restart button. Once we gain clarity and momentum in rebuilding ourselves back up, the people we truly deserve to be in our lives and love us will be there. We will also be better prepared to show up for them and for ourselves.

Regardless of how life wears us out, we can also “crash up” and keep moving forward, thus pushing the restart button. Once we gain clarity and momentum in rebuilding ourselves back up, the people we truly deserve to be in our lives and love us will be there.