

Give it Away

By Media Inquisitor

Lipstick on a Pig

In modern American life, “stability” is like a Mom bringing her little kid in cute overalls to the play-date, telling her friends “he’s so cute and low maintenance”, just to bring him back to the house and complain under your breath as you stick a small radioactive TV blasting content in front of his face just so you can sip wine and comment on the newest guys abs from “Love Island”. When I was the most insecure, I had cool pictures on my Instagram with 1,000 followers, but I would watch those cool pictures accumulate likes from people I didn’t actually care about and I felt nothing. To reference *American Psycho*, I was like Patrick Bateman: *simply not there*. However, now, where I would consider myself at least somewhat self-secure, although we’ll get to that later, my “mediainquisitor” instagram account makes me look like I am going through a nice and thick existential crisis. However, I am relatively content and with peace of mind both with the process of me creating my media and how others perceive it. Though, I’m not going to be overly confident, exposing my belief system on the web does feel like soul surgery at some points.

Insecure Attachment and its Consequences

On an entirely different note, two people, with two different mental approaches are a great start to this inquisition. Around summer time last year, my friend Michael lost his wallet just before our trip to Italy. However, he was awfully calm about losing his wallet. I am sitting in my chair now and my parents are about to leave for Sweden in around four hours where I will need to drive them, and I lost my wallet as well. In the back of my mind, I want to stop writing this and go look around. The only thing I want now is my wallet, and the second I get my wallet, I am going to receive a wave of contentment that rolls over me. Especially, if I find my wallet before I leave, I will feel very happy. However, I don’t actually need my wallet. The reality is, there is a high likelihood I won’t get pulled over by the cops, and even if I do, the sum of money will be the only thing that goes up and I’ll just be stuck with an angry officer with a ticket. Also, there is enough food in the house, and I could easily eat and survive without my wallet for the next upcoming 10 days. Another fact, I know for certain the wallet is within the premises of this house, at least, knock on wood, as I had it when I went to the liquor store yesterday. All of this to say, looking outside to the objective truth of the matter, I don’t actually need my wallet. However, when I sit at the coffee table like I always do trying to relax my mind, I can’t help but look around the house to see where my dang gray shorts with my wallet inside have gone off to. Going back to Michael, when he lost his wallet before the trip, he was ever so calm, and the wallet ended up turning up. The objective truth of where my wallet is right now is unbeknownst to anyone right now, but the brain chemical security relays none the same.

Picture this, there is a dog whimpering and upset as the Mom leaves the house for work, and after the Mother is gone, the dog continues to whine and bark. Or, picture this, like I always did, you think you are going to have a heart attack because you had too much caffeine and now you are running around your house like a maniac. *What are we doing?* Or, my favorite example,

you find yourself scared you are going to get a B- in high school AP Physics, then your early decision choice of Princeton University is going to reject you, then you are no longer going to be labeled as smart, then you are going to into a lower tax bracket and go into debt. *Spiraling thoughts. Sound familiar?* And I don't mean this to mock or be above it all because ultimately every single scenario I just listed out has happened to me... well, I wish I was smart enough to do an ED to Princeton. However, there was something I noticed in all of these situations that led me to a jarring conclusion: *It's Fake*. Picture this, which is an exact scenario that happened to me, you are a 17 year old high schooler scared about the future trying to have a productive Monday. You wake up at the crack of dawn, go to work, then get back with a bone-splitting headache and play some video games. The entire time I was at work, I was worried about whether it was going to be Columbia University or Auburn University, and I was borderline excited to try and sign up for rowing and start a Columbia University neuroscience program.

However, let's picture it from the flipside. Let's say you woke up that day, and you were tired, and you decided to not go to that job, and you just sat with your thoughts. *Oh no! I'm not working! I need to be productive! If I am not productive, I won't get into college!* This essay isn't meant to mock productivity; rather, it is meant to notice the reality of what productivity is and the mental projections of productivity are two separate things.

Last summer, I was extrinsically productive: I had a job at an auction house, I freelanced physical labor, and I spent my time in the gym outside of these two fields. Another important note, I was egotistically invested in writing a screenplay, that indeed turned out to be bad.

Next, let's look at the extrinsic productivity this summer: no job, loosely working out every day, and no fluid income (I'm a nepo baby loser on my Daddy's credit card, sayonara, go cry about it). However, a big switch, I no longer want to drink or go on trips which is what I would have used my pocket money from a job on. Now, unrelated to the essay but just because people will think I'm full of shit, I still drink but mostly just stuff with my parents where I don't need a large amount of pocket money. Another big change, I gave up the need to want some grand reward for my writing. As in the past, I put this counterproductive imploding pressure on myself to write good stuff for festivals, which inevitably led me to just write like shit.

However, now let's investigate the objective output of myself: my family values me doing house chores more than me having a job, as my Dad makes the controversial argument that he does not want me to do a low-wage job that does not directly further my wanted future career as a lawyer. I actually have done more helpful and efficient house chores this summer than last, which is the actual tangible meat and bones to helpful productivity in my familial system, as my job that made me look productive was just a means of me getting lots of money to spend on cool trips and buying liquor. Another important fact, me stripping down the "label" of screenplay writer actually boosted my productivity, as now I write essays, fiction, and talk YouTube style. Now mind you, I wouldn't necessarily label any of this MediaInquisitor stuff as materialistically productive. Rather, this investigation is to show how the "screenplay writer" label actually inhibited my productivity last summer. Last summer, when I was working, I would constantly be thinking about my screenplay. *I am going to put X in my screenplay then I am going to put Y in*

my screenplay. However, a moment snapped this summer, where I no longer wanted to write in the screenplay, as I saw a common book style of the same art to be better in showing the actual imaging I wanted to portray. An important note about this: I began to care more about the art itself than the form of media to write on. The screenplay is cool. *It sounds cool*. People would ask me, *what are you doing?* And, I would respond in a cool tone, *I'm writing a screenplay, isn't that cool?* My ego grew huge, as I focused on the cool appeal of the idea of me being a writer more than actually creating the art. Because, if I actually wanted to portray the art well with words, I would have used a book format that more clearly articulates the words themselves, as a screenplay is more or less, a heavily detailed outline that serves as a portrait for creating the movie/film.

In Edgar Allen Poe's poem "the Raven", I interpret the "knocking on my chamber door" part (you can research "the Raven" separately if you are interested in such), to be a metaphor of "selling out" or "selling your soul". Everyday, when we wake up, we are selling our soul, whether we realize we are or not. It does not take much to prove this, as logically, not selling your soul would mean sitting in a dark cave not going around anybody. The harsh and objective truth of life is that we are all, to some degree, suckers for recognition. There are different kinds of recognition; for instance, this essay will likely end up on my Instagram page, where some of you right now are reading my shit (if you don't know me this is kind of intriguing and funny, lol). Now, I am going to admit it down right, I do want recognition for this essay. It's not necessarily that I want to be labeled as smart or dumb; rather, I am excited about people seeing the work in general. However, this sort of recognition-wanting also breeds vulnerability: I am now a nerd and source of embarrassment largely for the guys around my college, Colgate people are probably nodding their heads right now as they read it (it's okay guys at least I'm self-aware). Instead of being perceived as a "tau" member who should be fishing, drinking beer, and working an internship over the summer, I am now, metaphorically, spilling my guts online. That is to say, I am selling out, but a more insecure version of myself would sell out to even more of a degree. Back when I was more insecure, I wouldn't feel comfortable putting essays on Instagram, as I would only want to put baseball or rowing content for my image. I bet, in the future, I won't even be interested in posting these stupid essays on Instagram, and I will be so self-secure I will only share my writing to smaller amounts of people. All of this to say, whether we care to admit to it or not, we are all "selling-out" to some degree. People are "knocking on our chamber door", and we are answering with bikini pictures and essays that we hope will make us seem like the smart guy or cool girl on campus. I never met anyone who hasn't craved recognition to some degree, even the quiet nerds crave a different type of it. Even Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, admitted to this same phenomenon. You guys can look up who Maharishi Mahesh was, but he was basically a pivotal monk who didn't necessarily "create", but he was a big proprietor of transcendental meditation. In an interview, Maharishi was asked why he decided to go on air and talk if he's so "spiritual" and "self-secure" to which he answered something along the lines of when the "life-force" is telling you to do something, you do it.

For the past year and a half, I badly wanted to write these David Foster Wallace/Charles Bukowski-style rants. I would dream in class of a holistically balanced and psychedelic style grad-speech at Colgate graduation that would lead to my peers thinking I'm some enlightened monk. Too bad my gpa is a 2.6, and lets hope I even graduate. I know, I can talk about Carl Jung like its small talk on a nice Saturday stroll, but I can't get an A on an economics test to save my life. That being said, I never actually grew the balls to write what I am writing now and put it on the web because "I didn't want to sell out". Or, at least, that's what I told myself. However, "not being a sell out" is most oftentimes cope. It is impossible to be a robot crown-chakra unlocked monk who is completely soulful and just sits drinking tea all day. *No, I have the temptation to make essays that I think are smart, so I am going to write them and put them on the internet.* If I were to advocate for anything in life, it would be to not be so mentally hard on yourself to avoid things that you think are bad. Because oftentimes, when you are trying to mentally avoid something, it is just suppression and fear disguised as an alpha-male manual.

Picture this, you are in a fraternity basement and you see a pretty blonde girl, but your reputation is being quiet and y'know normal. Because, realistically, most "normal" people most often will just make small talk and mind their own business. However, some core part of you wants to go over to the girl and talk to her. However, you suppress the instinct and tell yourself *I don't need to talk to a girl here, I'm too cool for that.* The mind likes to mask "coolness" for insecurity. Another great example, going back to Instagram, if I remained conventional and posted pictures of my fish catches and my frat buddies, I would probably be perceived as cool, or well, maybe not cool, but at least sane and intact. However, I now post essays co-aligned with jarring images of insects depicted from the novel *Metamorphosis*. However, I am more self-secure than ever before on the web. It is almost as if, if something seems calm and content, the underbelly might be the ladder. I was laying on my bed one summer afternoon, as I looked at my instagram posts on my old instagram. My old instagram was everything a "pick-me" soft little pussy boy could have asked for: my cool school with its good old acceptance rate of 14% in my bio, with my cool pictures of me playing baseball, mountaineering, and at a concert. However, something felt off, as if I was masking the true underbelly of what I was feeling. Particularly, when I was mountaineering, I was cool and content and really just happy to be with my friends outdoors, then once the photograph reached insta it became showing that I was in another country with a big-ass mountain looking cool. Whether we like it or not, the form of media changes the perception of you, and it inevitably takes away from the core of your thought. Writing these essays and gaining popularity will inevitably change the core foundation of my philosophical thought. I was the most genuinely philosophically intelligent in my life when I wasn't trying to be. I remember sitting on the couch of a frat party my freshman year, chilling, when a friend of mine sat next to me on the couch. She called me philosophically intelligent, which she blamed for me being a loser not talking to anybody, lol. Now, mind you, I was just looking to smoke a cigarette and drink, I wasn't looking to be philosophically intelligent at all. However, now that I exposed my underbelly and started writing philosophy, it will soon enough become my label, which will make the whole energy of being a philosopher turn all phony.

When a human being reveals more of themselves, there is always more underneath you can unveil, whether we accept it or not. I have found this to be absolutely true. When I first got Instagram, I thought the picture of my home-run ball was as cool as it got, and I now I think essays are, and sometime in the future I will look back at these essays thinking of them as phony, as I have reached even higher ground and will likely be dead in a casket or with my family not wanting anything to do with social media or intelligence based recognition.

However, I think it is always risky to hate yourself for selling out, it is a slippery slope. I'm not going to dig too deep into that in this essay, well, because if you have made it this far and actually care about my opinion on that, just watch my creative intelligence video series on YouTube under MediaInquisitor, or maybe I am just too tired to do any more self-introspection.

Nonetheless, we are constantly selling our souls, as people, things, and actions knock on our chamber door whether we like it or not, we will feel the impulse to talk to a beautiful girl, we will feel the impulse to post what we actually like on social media, and we will feel the impulse to want to be perceived as cool by others, the question is not whether or not we sell-out, and I would advocate for not even questioning it all. Rather, I would argue to watch your own self-selling out, and just maybe, as I feel vulnerable and a loser for spilling my guts on the web, someone could have taken something positive out of my essays.

Back to the wallet example at the beginning, oftentimes, we think we are a lot more insecure than we are. I have now gotten a cup of coffee and returned to writing this essay, and I indeed found my wallet. Before, I thought it was the end of the world that I lost my wallet; yeah, turns out that blasting sensation of anxiety in your head is not really that significant: my wallet was on my bedroom floor. Or take, for example, me drinking two cups of black coffee before Film & Media Studies, and then running around outside thinking it was time for the grim reaper to catch me. The point is, oftentimes, our brain tricks us into diving into more insecurity. After I post anything to do with MediaInquisitor, I get this weird sensation, something along the lines of, *damn, I actually just posted something real on the internet, and there goes my social life at school*. However, this is usually just the mind playing games, as when people I actually know comment on my shit I think it's funny when they critique it or I actually get a lot of positivity out of it. Which brings me to my next point: the more you don't listen to your mind telling you about insecurity, the more positivity you can actually emulate and create. After I deleted my main instagram account and created a side one for the people I actually like, I started posting shit I actually cared about, such as nature and King Krule (post-punk English band). My buddy from my high school came up to me, and he said he really liked my posts, not in some, *oh my God, you're so cool way*, but in a, *wow, those pictures made me feel good*. When we don't listen to our ego and intrusive thoughts saying everybody is going to think we are a loser, we stand to be more empathetic. I don't want to be redundant, I think you guys get the point, so I am going to end with a quote from Rick Rubin, which is a chapter from his book *The Creative Act: A Way of Being*, "the audience comes last". When you are indifferent to the opinions of others, then you will focus on creative based originality, which will subsequently create a more authentic and real source of product towards the world. I would argue, in an age of immense insecurity, where I

was worried whether or not the cool girls at my school were going to like my stupid mountaineering photo, the less we worry about people's reactions and the more we focus ourselves into any realm: whether that be real life, at a park, Xbox, or Instagram, the more originality we create will help to soothe and inspire others. Rick Rubin's book gave me a source of happiness, as I drove from Newark to Princeton New Jersey one day. The Grateful Dead are usually on when it's not Rick Rubin in my car, these artists created their shit out of originality, this essay was created out of originality, originality is the core towards inspiration, the only thing in the way is a cute-little ego-death. Thanks.