BAD BUNNY BEATS THE ODDS AT SUPER BOWL

by Samantha Brody
LIFE EDITOR
SHE/HER/HERS
sab23059@uconn.edu

Amid political controversy and a competing live performance, Latin rapper Bad Bunny surpassed all expectations in his Super Bowl XL halftime performance on Sunday, Feb. 8.

Benito Antonio Martínez Ocasio, also known by the name Bad Bunny, is a Puerto Rican rapper, singer and producer. At only 31 years old, Sunday marked Ocasio's first time as a Super Bowl headliner but his second time in the halftime show, having previously performed with Shakira and Jennifer Lopez in Super Bowl LIV.

Following in the footsteps of his halftime predecessor, rapper Kendrick Lamar, Ocasio delivered a thought-out and well-executed performance, with several nods to current political tension in the United States. Additionally, much of the show included references to Ocasio's Puerto Rican identity, honoring many aspects of the nation's culture.

Ocasio performed the halftime show hot off his most recent wave of success — the rapper won Best Global Music Performance at the Grammys last week and won Best Música Urbana Album and Album of the Year for "DeBÍ TiRAR MáS FOToS." Released in January of 2025, the album is the first Spanish-only record to win Album of the Year.

The 13-minute show featured guest appearances from Lady Gaga, who sang a salsa version of the 2024 hit "Die With A Smile," and Ricky Martin, who performed "Lo Que Le Pasó a Hawaii." The show also included cameos from Pedro Pascal, Cardi B and other performers.

One of the halftime show's standout moments was a wedding scene, featuring a first dance and several partygoers. Surprisingly, the wedding was later confirmed to be real, with Ocasio serving as a witness for the ceremony, according to the Associated Press. A representative of Ocasio confirmed that the couple had reached out to Ocasio to ask him to attend their wedding, but Ocasio instead asked them to join him in the halftime show, the AP reported.

Another major surprise from the halftime show was the appearance of a young boy, who Ocasio handed his Grammy to after performing his hit "NUEVAYol." According to the AP, several people on social media incorrectly labeled the boy as Liam Conejo Ramos, a 5-year-old boy who was detained by Immigration and Customs Enforcement Officers in January.

The young boy was instead child actor Lincoln Fox, as confirmed via his Instagram account.

The halftime show also faced plenty of controversy before it even aired on television. Turning Point USA, a nonprofit organization focused on advocating for conservative politics, previously announced its plans to organize an "All-American Halftime Show."

The All-American Halftime Show aired at the same time as Ocasio's Super Bowl performance on Feb. 8, with a lineup of Kid Rock, Brantley Gilbert, Lee Brice and Gabby Barrett. The show garnered 6.1 million concurrent viewers on YouTube, according to The New York Times.

Despite the competing performance and political backlash, Ocasio delivered a fun and enjoyable halftime show, with commentary on the state of Puerto Rico and the rest of the United States. This included a reference to the frequent widespread electric blackouts in Puerto Rico, which Ocasio called to with his song "El Apagón" ("The Blackout"). The song references government inaction and political corruption in its lyrics.

One of the best moments of the performance was towards the end, just after "El Apagón." Ocasio picked up a football and announced the phrase "God bless America" before listing out the names of countries throughout North and South America.

During this scene of the show, Ocasio was followed by the flags of the nations he had mentioned, the football clutched to his chest. Behind him, the video board read "the only thing more powerful than hate is love," a callback to Ocasio's Grammy acceptance speech.

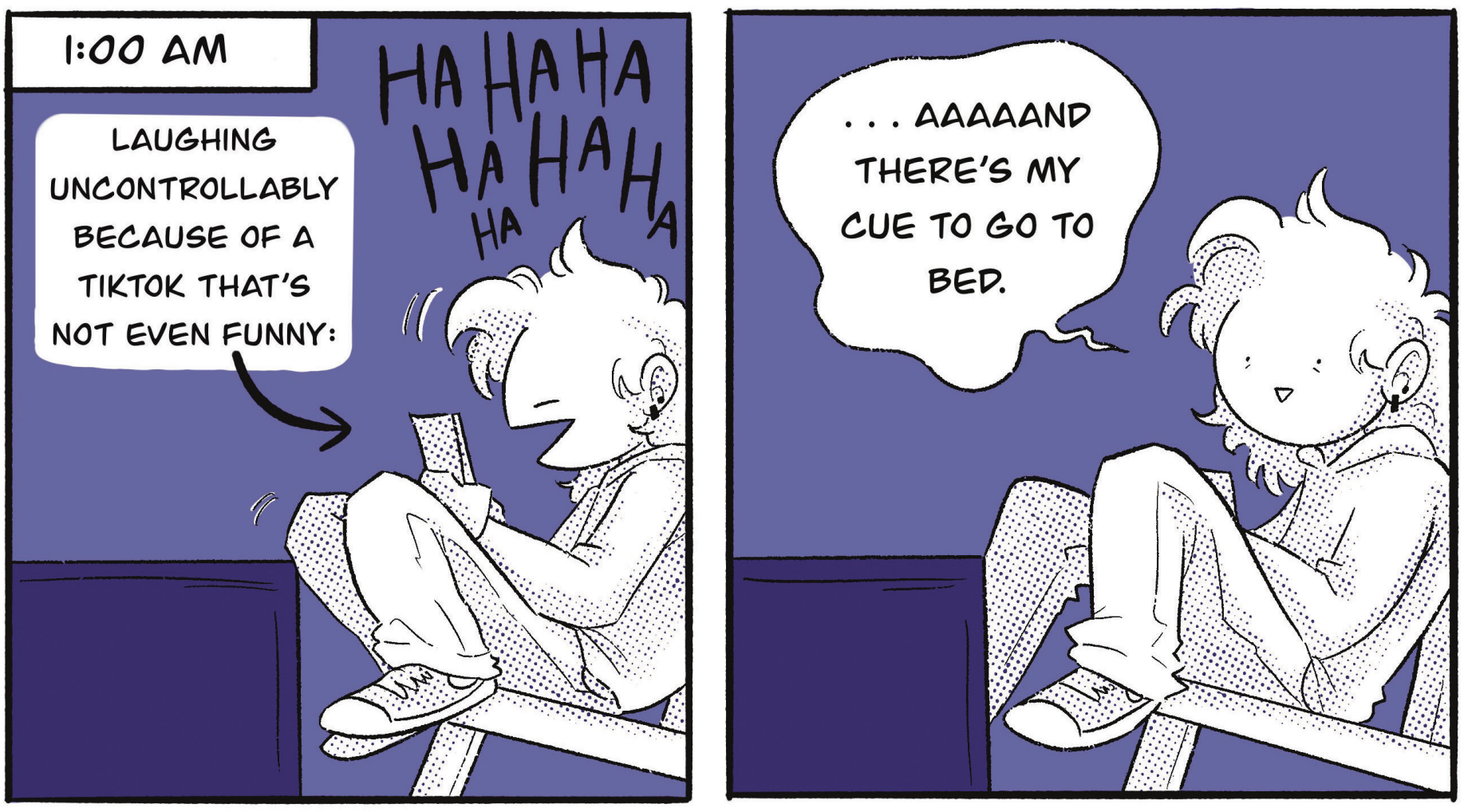
"The hate gets more powerful with more hate," Ocasio had said in his speech. "The only thing that is more powerful than hate is love."

After listing the countries of the Americas, Ocasio lifted his football to the camera in front of him, revealing the phrase "Together, We Are America" written across it. Ocasio then spiked the ball and finished out his performance with his hit song "DTMF."



Bad Bunny performs during the halftime show of Super Bowl 60 between the Seattle Seahawks and New England Patriots in Santa Clara, Calif., Sunday, Feb. 8, 2026 PHOTO BY CARLOS AVILA GONZALEZ/SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE VIA AP

COMICS



CARTOON BY SAMANTHA HASS, ARTIST EDITOR/THE DAILY CAMPUS