



A student plays the piano in the McMahon Residence Hall game room on March 12, 2026. Students relaxed as they wrap up their midterm exams and prepare to leave campus for spring break. PHOTO BY NORA MARIANO, STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER/THE DAILY CAMPUS

The phone camera is the antithesis of authenticity

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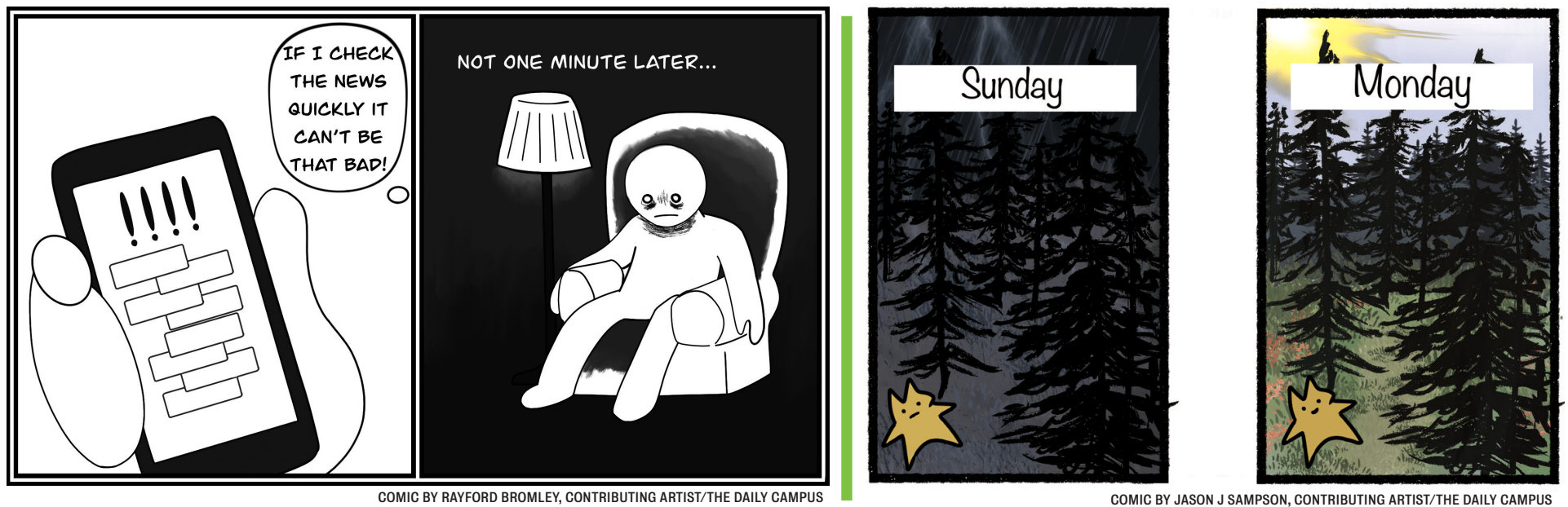
On days when the sunset is lovely and a reminder that summer is coming, I find myself getting encapsulated in color and intoxicated with the raw emotions of dusk. I love the sunset, but I hold one rule about looking at it: only one photo on my iPhone. This is ironic for a few reasons, first being I am quite literally a photographer and the second being that I virtually never follow it. I try so desperately to live in the moment, yet often I find myself taking a thousand pictures that I'll never look at again. Furthermore, I'm only trying to take a photo so I can let it sit on an Instagram story for 24 hours. Instead of locking a mental image into long term memory, correlating sight with the smell and sounds of the moment, I and so many others instead capture a plethora of iPhone photos that will certainly be far more washed out and faded than the actual moment. The photographer's eye is a beautiful thing, and with the proper equipment, they can capture the sunset in its raw, pure form. Furthermore, photography is one of the most alluring art forms of the modern world and can be one of the most powerful when used correctly. The iPhone has made photogra-

phy accessible, but it has also stolen the moment from us. Photography without intrinsic intention is pointless, and iPhone photography glorifies a form of photo-taking which is inauthentic. "So many people living in the moment" is a phrase you'll only ever hear used ironically at a musical concert or festival because it seems like the second an artist plays their hit single, everyone's phones go in the air. It's a wonderful concept to want to remember a moment that makes you happy, but what's the use in remembering a moment that you didn't actually live? My argument at hand is evidently not directed towards those who use photography as a means of creating art or those who wish to hold memories, but instead at the hordes who use the iPhone camera to capture something solely for Instagram. Photography is no longer being used to create thought-provoking pieces. Instead, it is now a way for people to present themselves within the confines of social media. The iPhone has made the inclination to present the future more desirable than engaging in the contemporary. In Susan Sontag's book "On Photography," she argues that photography can be malicious when we photograph to put things "on display." Written in 1977, it still feels rele-

vant to today. She has a point. Do we think that Keith Haring or Jean Micheal Basquiat created the work they did to sell it? Did Mary Oliver write poems because she thought she could make a quick buck off a book? No, no and no. Now, I do not think that we should strip people away from their phones, delete Instagram or ban people from photography. That would all be ludicrous. Instead, we should all continue to take photos of the lovely world around us and simply re-shape how and when we take the flick. It is important that we as photographers refuse the shot when it is not needed. Let the eye be the camera that holds truth. In a world where a good "personal image" is deemed necessary to be in the upper echelon of society, we should be looking inwards opposed to out. Whether you have the latest Canon with the most expensive lens, or a digicam from 2008 that dies after three hours, use photography for yourself. Not only will you enjoy the photos more because they have actual intention to them, but you will enjoy your life more. Refusing the shots means living in the moment more. It means caring about "the gram" less and spending more mental effort relishing the present. Enjoy the now and take a photo if you see fit.



Comics



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