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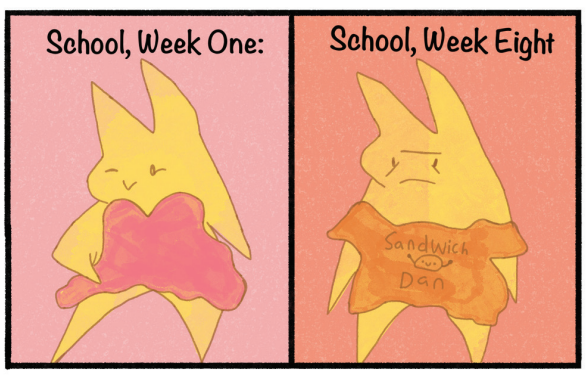
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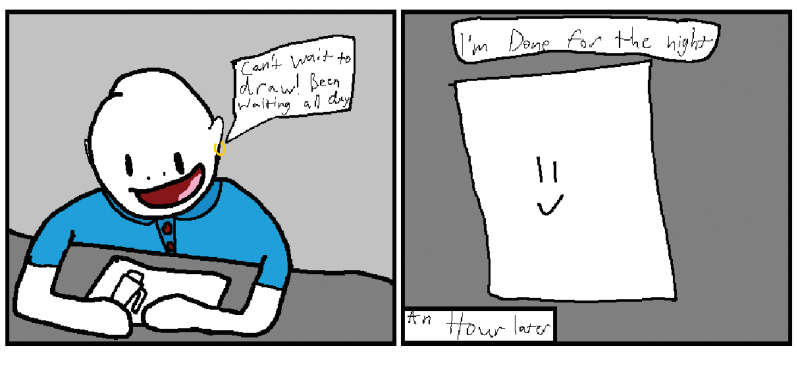
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COMIC BY JASON J. SAMPSON, CONTRIBUTING ARTIST/THE DAILY CAMPUS



COMIC BY JAMES CARLTON, CONTRIBUTING ARTIST/THE DAILY CAMPUS



LETTER TO THE EDITOR:

Gampel Pavilion is a campus landmark, not a corporate billboard



The iconic "Gampel Pavilion" sits underneath the new M&T Bank Center branding. The change has been met with backlash from the UConn community.

PHOTO BY HARIKA GOTETI, COPY EDITOR/THE DAILY CAMPUS

by the Watts Family

As a multi-generational family of University of Connecticut alumni, our connection to the Storrs campus runs deep. We have cheered from the student section, celebrated historic victories and watched the iconic dome of Harry A. Gampel Pavilion stand as an uncompromised symbol of athletic excellence and university pride for nearly four decades.

However, the university leadership's recent decision to allow M&T Bank to take over the exterior facade of our historic arena with aggressive, bright corporate branding represents a profound failure to protect UConn's heritage. By reducing Gampel Pavilion to a corporate billboard looking more like Las Vegas than Storrs, administrators have permitted a financial institution to prioritize its own corporate utility over the best interests of the university community. This aggressive, garish and blinding display completely defaces what has long been an iconic campus landmark.

While we understand the financial pressures of modern college athletics, selling out our physical infrastructure is a short-sighted choice, not an inevitability. Truly elite programs prove that you can successfully navigate the modern era without compromising the dignity of your facilities. Several of the nation's most historic and famous collegiate programs have fiercely resisted corporate commercialization to protect their heritage:

- Notre Dame Stadium (University of Notre Dame)
- Cameron Indoor Stadium (Duke University)
- Allen Fieldhouse (University of Kansas)
- "The Big House" (University of Michigan)

UConn is the Basketball Capital of the World, yet our administration has locked us into a 20-year commitment for an average of just $1.6 million annually — a staggering undervaluation of our athletic capital that places corporate advertising goals ahead of university tradition.

True community partnership cannot be entirely self-serving. This agreement forces the Husky community to reject a banking institution that views our landmarks merely as cheap visual property to be exploited for exposure. We urge the administration and the Board of Trustees to immediately work to remove all M&T Bank exterior signage, confine all corporate recognition strictly to interior spaces and return Gampel Pavilion to its original appearance.

We call upon all UConn students, staff, supporters and fellow alumni to communicate your displeasure, disgust, anger and frustration. Flood the inboxes of both the UConn administrators who permitted this defacement and the M&T Bank executive staff driving this corporate intrusion to demand they take the signs down.

Respectfully submitted,

Peter J. Watts, UConn BA 1993

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The Watts Family

True crime is invading our privacy

by Victoria Hancock
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In the 21st century, we have seen a rise in the popularity of media revolving around true crime. Podcasts, documentaries and video series retelling the tales of murders, disappearances and general strange phenomena have come out of the woodwork in the past 20 years, shaping the fad into an entire culture. The human mind has a fascination for the evil, the unknown and the things that are so awful you just can't look away. Humans want to know why, and true crime delves into solving that question. Why do killers kill? How do they do it? Why this victim? We likely don't want first-hand experience with these situations, so we revert to hearing about the unfortunate lives of others. However, this natural fascination has dipped into an unnatural obsession that creates genuine public safety concerns.

As people recognized the fascination with true crime, the hobby morphed into a genre of influencer, with individuals who can make their living off recounting odd or gruesome crimes. With people trying to turn a casual interest into a profession, the depth of the stories being told had to grow. What were once cases of extreme crime suddenly became any and all cases of murder, assault or disappearance. The issue with popularizing so many tragic stories lies in the lives of the victims and their families. These stories happened to real people, many of whom are no longer alive, and they and their loved ones now have to hear their trauma recounted like a dramatic novel retelling. Not only are such raw emotions forced to the surface, but victims' personal lives are left bare for the world to know. Millions of strangers now know your name, your address, your friends, your hobbies, your internet search history your everything. And there is nothing they can do to stop their stories from being shared.

The true crime community has even developed roles and subcommunities that stretch things even farther. While consumers begin to handle stories with less and less care for the victims, consumers have taken it upon themselves to solve cases on their own. Participants will research crimes they hear and those involved to try and solve the case themselves. They will go so far that, in some instances, true crime sleuths have gone to the trials of suspects in order to support their own decision on what the verdict should be. While it is human nature to search for an answer, it is the extra step of amateurs trying to impose their thoughts on the story that blurs the line. Civilians do not have all the tools to legally investigate a case the way real detectives do, leading to gaps in the story and not having a full picture. A person's life should not be decided by strangers doing deep internet dives and making speculations.

To make things worse, the mainstreaming of true crime has contributed to the desensitization and glorification of crime. Series such as Tiger King, Monsters and Dahmer put viewers in the lives of real criminals, many of whom committed crimes infamous because of the brutality involved. Many of the series rely on speculation and dramatization to pull viewers in, turning real stories of people's deaths into something that feels fictional. There's no care for the lives that were lost as long as the studio makes money. These criminals have their stories told in a way that viewers tend to empathize with them, some going so far as to be attracted to them despite knowing the real people they have harmed. And as we consume more violence, we slowly become numb to the chaos. A similar effect happens with gun violence in the US, in which so many school shootings occur that many find it normal. There are even cases of certain fans going so far as to commit crimes themselves to understand the mind of the criminal they heard about. None of this violence is normal, yet the true crime world has convinced us otherwise.

I'm not saying true crime is bad. In fact, I've seen every single episode of the YouTube series Buzzfeed: Unsolved. I am only human; I, too, am enthralled by the complex and unknown. But there is a decorum necessary when telling a true story that is being lost to consumption culture. There is a way to tell these stories while honoring the privacy of victims and their families; creators just need to find it. Until then, the true crime genre will remain a dangerous weapon instead of the casual hobby it was meant to be.

Daily OPINION