Life

"KILL. BURY. PRINT." SHOWCASES THE IMPORTANCE AND RISK OF INDEPENDENT REPORTING

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New Peacock documentary "Kill. Bury. Print." tells the story of a small-town newspaper in Idabel, Oklahoma facing retaliation from local law enforcement after covering allegations of crimes related to violence, drugs and inappropriate relationships inside of the McCurtain County Sheriff's Office.

The experiences of the McCurtain Gazette and the family that runs the paper, the Willinghams, reflect both the importance of local newspapers and the risk that journalists face when reporting the truth.

While the paper previously held a strong relationship with the sheriff's office as it reported on local crime and the accomplishments of the officers, the relationship between the two took a turn for the worse once the paper undertook the task of writing critical stories about the office, such as one about a disorganized evidence room that could lead to contaminated evidence.

Tensions rose further as reports of inappropriate sexual relationships between a supervisor and subordinate, poorly investigated cases, police brutality and racism came to light.

Not only did the sheriff department not cooperate with the paper, but they retaliated against Chris Willingham, a member of the Willingham family and a reporter for the McCurtain Gazette.



"Kill. Bury. Print." director Ben Klein smiles for a photo. His latest work was just released on Sept. 27, 2026.

PHOTO COURTESY OF @WHOBENKLEIN ON INSTAGRAM

A public official tried to discredit Chris publicly by wrongly accusing him of crimes he had no evidence being involved in. Public backlash eventually became so widespread that Chris felt unsafe and moved his family to Tulsa, Oklahoma.

More threats against the family were discovered when Bruce Willingham, Chris' father and main operator of the McCurtain Gazette, left behind a small pen that was capable of recording and storing 15 hours of audio after a public meeting. Bruce did this in an attempt to see if officials would continue to discuss county matters after public meetings concluded and the public had left.

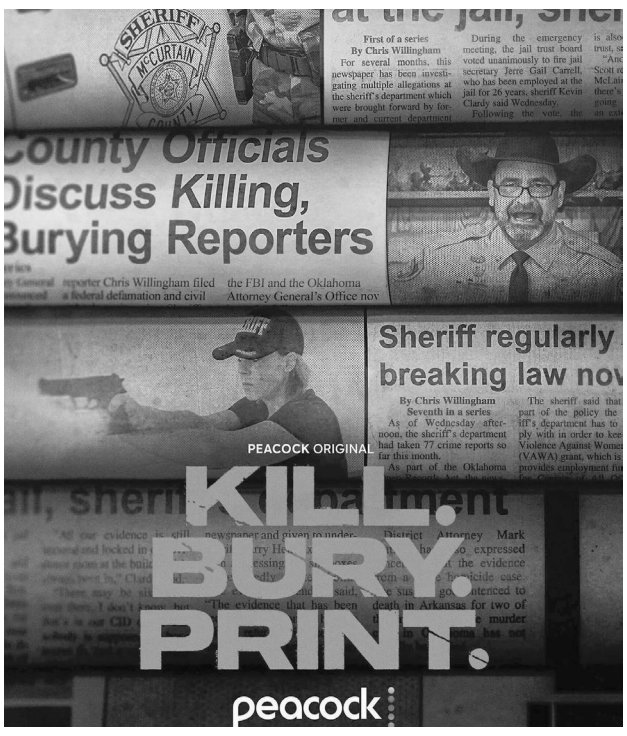
Instead, what was recorded was multiple individuals, including Sherriff Kevin Clardy and County Commissioner Mark Jennings, seemingly plotting ways to kill Chris and other employees of the McCurtain Gazette. They discussed hiring a hitman before concluding that they would be suspected if anything happened to the Willinghams.

While Jennings later resigned after Oklahoma Governor Kevin Stitt called for both he and Clardy to resign, Clardy remained in his position for the remainder of his term. It wasn't until Clardy lost the subsequent primary race to be the Republican nominee for sheriff that he finally left his position.

Despite the documentary clearly coming from the perspective of the Willingham family, director Ben Klein does a good job of showcasing people from the other side of the story, who do not believe what was reported in the McCurtain Gazette and support Clardy. Clardy declined to participate in the documentary's making because of ongoing lawsuits.

While more voices from Clardy's camp could have contributed more perspectives, the inclusion of more names would have likely made the documentary abnormally confusing to follow, especially considering how many individuals are already introduced within the documentary's approximate 90-minute run time.

Even after Clardy left the sheriff's office, there are still lasting consequences for the Willingham family. Chris remains in Tulsa with his wife and kids, away from his parents. He is no longer able to work for the McCurtain Gazette. Though he occasionally visits his parents in Idabel, he does not feel comfortable going out in public because of the lasting perception created by the false accusation.



"Kill. Bury. Print." promotional photo. This new Peacock documentary is about independent reporting and the complications that can come with it.

PHOTO COURTESY OF @JOSHUAKLINE ON INSTAGRAM

Though the outcome for the Willingham family is an extreme case and not the norm, it demonstrates the risk that a journalist takes every day. Reporting on sensitive topics is a difficult task, especially in small towns where everyone knows each other. There can be personal consequences for doing your job in a professional manner.

Still, the story of the McCurtain Gazette highlights the importance of independent journalism. In the case of the McCurtain Gazette, which Chris Willingham said does not make a profit and operates as a passion project, the paper exists solely to spread information. The need for independent journalism is especially apparent in small towns where corruption may otherwise go unchecked and unreported.
Review: 4.25/5

ROUNDTABLE: FAVORITE CHILDHOOD TV SHOW

Many Gen Z students grew up on television, not social media. What are the children missing out on today? Keep reading for some nostalgic recommendations as the Life section reflects on their favorite shows to watch when they were younger.

by Ayyan Tamjeed | ASSOCIATE LIFE EDITOR | HE/HIM/HIS | art24001@uconn.edu

If you asked me this question in elementary school, I would have enthusiastically said "Ninjago: Masters of Spinjitzu." Looking back on it, I don't know if the show was even that good; it was like one of those kids' cartoons from the 1980s that were implicit advertisements for whatever toy they were selling. I bought a lot of Lego Ninjago sets though, so the subliminal messaging must have worked really well on me.

Cartoon Network in the early 2010s was on a generational run though. You had "Steven Universe," "Adventure Time," "The Amazing World of Gumball," "Uncle Grandpa" and my favorite of them all, "Regular Show." Every episode, you start at the park with Mordecai and Rigby finding ways to skip the easiest tasks imaginable, and 11 minutes later they're in a NASA facility trying to curb a rapidly expanding black hole because they lied about being astronauts for a free grilled cheese — rinse and repeat for eight seasons.

"Regular Show" also has a top three needle drop out of anything I've ever seen. The final montage with David Bowie's "Heroes" in the background brought a few tears to my eyes.

by Jaylyn Davis | STAFF WRITER | SHE/HER/HERS | iue25001@uconn.edu

I watched many TV shows as a child — because of that, it's hard to choose which one was my favorite. However, I have a few that I really enjoyed.

The TV show I watched the most was "Dora the Explorer." I watched every episode when I was in kindergarten and in first grade. What I liked most about the show was Dora's Spanish speaking. This allowed me to acquire a few words like "gracias," "hola," "adios" and "amigo."

Another TV show I really enjoyed was "Miles from Tomorrowland." As someone who loved outer space and space travel as a kid, this show really aligned with my interests. "Miles From Tomorrowland" features a family that lives in a colossal spaceship. In the show, they travel to various planets and do different things, such as conduct experiments and meet new lifeforms.

A third TV show I cherished was "Paw Patrol." This was one of my favorites because of the dogs. Skye was one of my favorite characters because of her helicopter. I also liked Everest because she's from a snowy environment. I loved the snow as a child, which made Everest feel relatable to me.

SUBOG Weekly Events:

September 27th – October 4th

Homecoming Parade – 9.27 @ 1:30 PM along Hillside Road

Homecoming Carnival – 9.27 @ 2 PM at Founders Green

Homecoming Pageant – 9.28 @ 6 PM in the Student Union Theater

SUBOG x USG Voter Registration – 10.1 @ 11 AM at the SU Mall

Coffee House – 10.1 @ 4:30 PM at the Benton

Homecoming Lip Sync – 10.1 @ 7 PM in the Jorgensen Theater

Fan Fest Friday – 10.2 @ 1 PM at the SU Mall

Any questions? Email subog@uconn.edu

by Manya Trivedi | CAMPUS CORRESPONDENT | SHE/HER/HERS | manya.trivedi@uconn.edu edu

Growing up, I watched every single Disney channel show that was on air, waiting for new seasons and new episodes each week. But the show that never managed to leave my mind was "Good Luck Charlie," a cute and funny series about a Colorado family with one-too-many kids. The series followed Teddy Duncan, the eldest daughter, navigating her family, school and social lives all together.

The reason I loved the show so much was that I relate to almost every character and would relate my family experience to the chaos of the show. My favorite part of the series was the Christmas movie special "It's Christmas!" where the family was separated from each other, leaving Amy (the mom) and Teddy to find their own way in time for the holidays.

Other honorable mentions for my favorite Disney shows include "Shake it Up: Chicago," starring Zendaya and Bella Thorne, "Jessie" and "Wizards of Waverly Place."

All three of these Disney shows feature similar character archetypes to "Good Luck Charlie," but with a twist. "Shake it up" was a dance show; "Jessie" was set in New York City; "Wizards of Waverly Place" featured, you guessed it, wizards.

So, if you're ever looking for a nostalgic fun-loving show to watch, I recommend turning back time and turning one of these Disney comedies on.

by Silver | CAMPUS CORRESPONDENT | HE/HIM/HIS | hqo24003@uconn.edu

My all-time favorite TV show as a kid was the classic "SpongeBob SquarePants" on Nickelodeon. Till this day, I think it remains one of my top three favorite comfort shows.

Every Saturday morning I'd get up bright and early to watch the newest season of "SpongeBob" and laugh at SpongeBob and Patrick's silly antics. One of my favorite episodes that my siblings and I constantly quote is the Hash-Slinging Slasher episode "Graveyard Shift."

The episode is about SpongeBob and Squidward taking a night shift at the Krusty Krab, when Squidward tells SpongeBob a spooky legend about a former Krusty Krab fry cook who accidentally sliced his hand off cutting patties, replacing it with a rusty spatula.

He supposedly comes to the Krusty Krab every Tuesday night for revenge. The three signs that indicate he's there are the lights flickering on and off, the phone ringing with no caller and the ghostly bus arriving to drop him off. The twist is that later that night all three signs occur, and a shadowy figure matching the Slasher's exact description arrives outside.

SpongeBob and Squidward are terrified, but it turns out the "Slasher" is just a regular old customer looking for some grub. It's a hilarious episode and I recommend everyone watch it once in their lifetime.