

# OPINIONS ON OPINIONS

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“shut up, I got this.”

I mean, just think of all the keyboard warriors that were ready to fire off some colorful hate comments at our Queen just to hear Willie say “sometimes you don’t know what you like, and then someone you trust turns you on to some real good sh\*t... you’re welcome.”

She basically said, if Willie was rocking with her, then so must the rest of us.

God, I love her.

Legendary collaborations aside, Beyoncé would’ve done just fine without them. In fact, she technically did. Prior to “SMOKE HOUR II,” she sang twelve of her own country inspired songs like her voice was going to be stolen the next day.

That’s not to say that the collaborations in the album were unnecessary, but rather, Beyoncé proved that she was more than capable of holding her own with songs like “ALLIGATOR TEARS.”

Not to mention, she worked wonders with the other featured artists.

Miley Cyrus and Post Malone? Fire. Shaboozey and Willie Jones? Cooked. Rumi Carter? Ate.

And that’s not even the best of them. Brittney Spencer, Tanner Adell, Tera Kennedy and Reyna Roberts all added to the celestial essence in “BLACKBIRD” through their background vocals, an ensemble that made me float outside of my body and into the earth’s atmosphere.

While listening to Cowboy Carter could technically be considered a loophole for country haters, I’d like to not only give myself a pat on the back for sitting through all 27 songs but also give Beyoncé a standing ovation for making those 27 songs. After having the entire internet and audience of country enthusiasts go against her for a performance that was more than iconic, she didn’t owe them anything. And yet, she came back and proved everyone wrong, a feat not many artists can say they have done.

Somewhere within a local dingy video rental store lived an isle of dreams—pink, shimmering Barbie dreams—that allowed me to yippee in a way that no other streaming service has since.

Alas, Netflix has tried—and failed to reproduce that magic. With insane price increases and a new rule that claims users must be under the same internet in order to share a Netflix account across different devices, the state of film and television consumerism is in shambles.

So as the conductor of the Netflix hate train, I officially declare it’s time we dump Netflix and their baggage, and instead get on our knees and grovel for the return of video rental stores, who are like the ex that got away.

I should call him.

For those of you still baby faced and culturally inept, video rentals stores were places that allowed people to check out DVDs at the low price of \$2.99 for newer films and \$1.99 for the older films. With prices like that, what is there not to feel joy over?

# BRING BACK THE VIDEO STORE

Some may argue that with Netflix being accessible on all kinds of devices, video rental stores are a fling of the past. However, people did not go to video rental stores for accessibility—they went for the experience.

I dare you to try to name another place where you can go for a copy of Final Destination 5 and end up with a disc of some local rapper’s mixtape they recorded in their closet instead. Oh wait, you can’t.

Local video rental stores fostered a sense of community between film connoisseurs and casual film watchers. Think of how many movies you would’ve missed out on in your lifetime if it weren’t for the 17-year-old Tarantini-nerd behind



## THIS AIN'T TEXAS...

Whether it was watching the Michael Jackson – Number Ones DVD after dinner or listening to Donna Summer's On the Radio: Greatest Hits Volumes I & II after a long day at school, music has always been a major part of my life. And one of my absolute favorite things to do is genre hop.

Still, the one genre I could never, ever hop onto is...country. All that yee-hawin and howdy-ing? Not for me. But then Beyoncé dropped Act II: Cowboy Carter, a 27 song epic.

I decided, why not listen to the album? And boy...was it a ride. Or should I say...a horse ride.

Her latest masterpiece turned out to be one of my favorite releases of the year.

In an in-your-face-like manner, Mrs. Knowles Carter let the world know that she will never be bound by the limitations present in any genre of music. Even if it is a genre that harshly rejected her during a performance with the Chicks at the 2016 Country Music Association Awards.

Cowboy Carter makes it clear that Beyoncé wanted to tackle genres that she hasn't traditionally opted for.

Which is exactly why I loved it. It was not only far from what you'd expect when you hear the word "country" but also courageous because when she did sing "traditional" country, she grabbed the bull by its horns and made it her pony.

Not to mention, Beyoncé absolutely schools everyone who told her she wasn't country enough by having yee-haw icons Dolly Parton and Willie Nelson feature in a few of the tracks. While some may see the move as an homage, I saw it as Beyoncé telling everyone



the counter!

If it wasn't for my local video rental store, I would've never bared witness to the cultural significance that Shrek (en Español) would have on the masses.

Not for nothing, video rental stores are making a comeback in L.A. Just last year, Vidiots, a locally loved DVD rental store in Los Angeles, was reopened after the store was shut down in 2017 amidst rent increases and neighborhood changes. It joins Vidéthèque, CineFile Video, and GoVideo as some of the only video rental stores that have outlived Netflix's terrorization of the film industry.

Vidiots's return to the Los Angeles scene was momentous for DVD fanatics. Its comeback would have never been possible without the support of big name studios like A24 and Sony Pictures like Aubrey Plaza, locals and cinephiles who couldn't bear to let the art of watching DVD movies die.

But in O.C. not so much.

So while we may not have an Aubrey Plaza in Orange County (yet), or A24, we do have locals and we do have cinephiles (me) who would love to see our local video rental stores take their rightful places on street corners.

Now go grab your favorite movie lover, popcorn bucket, and Blu-ray—and hit the picket line, because Netflix is out and local video rentals are back in.





# IT'S NOT "DYSTOPIAN," IT'S REALITY.

the public eye more than once and Congress approved a Biden Package of more than \$1 billion worth of weapons.

When we condense a situation to a few buzzwords to make it easier for us to consume, the easier it is for the U.S. to get away with enabling the destruction of an entire country. It's important we realize that the language we use is not helping the cause at all and when we re-word the narrative, we normalize the violence.

Think of all of the times you came across a new headline about a shooting. The more we saw, it the less it shocked us. And that is where the danger lies.

We can't risk desensitizing ourselves to genocide. It would be unfair to the people of Palestine for us to simply move on with our lives when they will likely never be given the same chance.

Instead Palestinians in Rafah, Educate friends, family and followers by pointing them in the direction of Palestinian content creators.

. Don't embellish. Don't sugar-coat. No cushioning the blow. It's the least we can do for the Palestinian martyrs.

injured children the next was "dystopian."

However, nothing about the genocide and attempted erasure of an entire population and their history is fictional. Trying to describe a genocide through phrases like "this feels so dystopian" is counterintuitive to the work of journalists and Palestinians who have tried so hard to get the world to believe their suffering is really happening.

I'm not saying it's a bad thing for people to point out these similarities as a form of critiquing the status quo. That's what dystopian novels are meant to teach us.

What I am saying is that by calling something that is happening in real life "dystopian" instead of saying it is disgusting or disturbing, we are not only taking away value from the situation at hand but also creating leeway for others to simply scroll past these photos and videos.

While some may argue that multiple genocides have happened all over the world, the truth is, our obligation to be truthful in the way we advocate for Palestine stems from the fact that our country has a direct link to Israel

The president has denied Israel's wrongdoings to



Gala. Countless social media users were raving about the intricate dresses celebrities were wearing—others were calling the event "dystopian" because it eerily resembled Collins's The Hunger Games Trilogy.

A dystopia or an anti-utopia, is a fictional world in which the central government creates fear in its inhabitants by ensuring that their living conditions are poor and dehumanizing.

While the tweets and posts exclaiming about the similarities between the Met Gala and The Hunger Games are right that it's an uncomfortable similarity, I think the one flaw in them all is the captioning. Social media users were claiming that a timeline flooded with pictures of celebrities wearing insane dresses one second to videos of crying

Suzanne Collins first thought of the concept behind The Hunger Games as she was sitting at home watching television. As she flipped through channels of reality TV and coverage of the Iraq war, Collins realized that there was an enormous divide between the content audiences were consuming.. and it unsettled her.

I, alongside others, was reminded of this feeling once again last Monday night, when news of Israel's ban of Al-Jazeera—the only media network on the ground documenting the genocide in Palestine—and the invasion of Rafah flooded my timeline.

Among pictures of children buried in rubble were social media threads of celebrities at the Met