



Marching for Post-Roe America



Photo by David Dzurilla.

BY: EVA-MAE KLOCKNER, GUEST WRITER

Since the infamous 1973 Roe v. Wade ruling that made abortion legal in the United States, thousands of people from all walks of life have gathered yearly in Washington D.C. to march for the lives of the unborn. This year was no exception, though it was a particularly monumental year.

The 2023 March for Life was the first march in a Post-Roe

America. On Jun. 24 2022, the Supreme Court announced its decision on the Dobbs v. Jackson case, ending the right to abortion in the United States.

This year, the march was mixed with solemn prayer, intense determination, and joyous celebration over this constitutional victory.

"We're not yet done," Jeanne Mancini, the President of March for Life said. "While this year marks our most significant victory, the human rights abuse of abortion is far from over."

This year, Walsh University attended the March for Life with a presence of about 60 students. This included several students from the University Newman Centres of Kent and Youngstown. Together, they traveled to Washington D.C and attended morning Mass at the National Basilica of the Immaculate Conception. Then, they received a tour of the Dominican House of Studies (courtesy of Fr. Louis Bertrand).

When it was time for the March for Life, everyone gathered downtown with thousands of pro-life protesters to listen to several moving speeches. This year's speakers included a former NFL coach, the daughter of St. Gianna Molla, and star of "The Chosen," Jonathan Roumie.

Then the march began and the crowds moved to the street to walk peacefully through the capital city. For Freshman Ellie Mondok, this part was most impactful.

"Every year I've gone on the March for Life, my favorite part is always the March itself. I think it's just so beautiful and inspiring to see all the different people from different backgrounds marching in their own ways, whether quietly clutching a Rosary and praying or loudly waving homemade signs around and demanding justice."

These demands for justice will continue on the road to make abortion unthinkable in the United States and across the world.

STUDENT LIFE

You are Called: SEEK 23

BY: SADIE POZDERAC, LAYOUT EDITOR

Anyone who thinks that the Catholic Church is dying due to lack of interest from the younger generations has never attended a SEEK conference.

What is SEEK, you may ask? Well, seek no longer.

SEEK is an annual conference put on by international missions company, FOCUS (which stands for Fellowship of Catholic University Students). FOCUS has missionaries on over 200 college campuses worldwide, ministers mainly to college students, and hosts a plethora of regional and international mission trips, also geared toward college aged individuals.

SEEK is FOCUS' big event that happens every January, and missionaries, students, priests, religious, and everyone in-between gather for a week of fellowship and some amazing events. Over 19,000 were in attendance at this year's SEEK conference, making it the largest conference since 2019.

Each year, SEEK is hosted in a different city big enough to fit all of these Catholics. This year, the conference was hosted in St. Louis, Missouri, and it was such a gift to see the city filled with so many young faithful people, as well as over 500 priests and religious. Myself and fellow Walsh student, Myla Demko, were fortunate enough to attend this year's conference. So, allow me to tell you a little about my SEEK experience.



Photo Courtesy of Myla Demko.

Each day began with mass in the Dome, which was the former football stadium for the St. Louis Rams. (Mass held in a former football stadium? What? Well, it was the only space that would hold all of those in attendance.)

The remainder of the day was filled with countless talks and activities. Speakers such as Fr. Mike Schmitz, Sr. Miriam James Heidland, Matt Fradd, and Emily Wilson spoke throughout the day, imparting their knowledge and wisdom on all who listened.

It was honestly pretty difficult at times to pick which talk I wanted to attend because there were so many good ones all going on at the same time. Some of the highlights for me were: Emily Wilson, Fr. Gregory Pine, Fr. Mike Schmitz, and Fr. John Ignatius.

Not only was it hard to choose which talk I wanted to attend at a specific time, but there was also always so much going on in Mission Way that it was easy to let the hours slip away.

Mission Way was basically a giant room filled with vendors and activities. There were countless Catholic small shops set up and selling the most beautiful prints, rosaries, books, apparel, and everything in-between. Let's just say, you could do some significant damage to your bank account buying all of these amazing sacramentals.

Mission Way also had booths from a variety of different Catholic businesses and Religious Orders. So, if you wanted to find a job or discern a religious vocation, this was definitely your spot.

The most unique part of Mission Way had to be the podcast booth. Renowned Catholic podcasters were recording live shows all day long, and it was really neat to see the people behind the microphone. Popular ones such as *Abiding Together*, *Ascension Presents*, and *Poco a Poco* drew large crowds to listen to the beloved hosts. My personal favorite was *Godsplaining*, hosted by the Dominican Friars. I had the chance to be a part of the episode, but I melted under pressure and my introverted self decided to keep quiet.

Above all, the best part of SEEK had to be the people. Seeing that many fellow Catholics allowed everyone to feel a sense of belonging. It was also really great to see friends from across the country that you are unable to see otherwise. SEEK is like one big family reunion, as my friend Fr. Barrent would say. It is truly amazing to see the lasting friendships that form in such a short period of time; it comes to say that faithful friends are the best of friends.

It is also pretty neat to walk around SEEK and casually run into your favorite speaker or podcast host. I was fortunate enough to meet Sr. Miriam James and Fr. Gregory Pine, and those inspiring interactions alone were enough to make the conference worthwhile.

SEEK was truly an incredible experience. The fruits I received and amount of joy I felt during and after the conference were incomparable. I was so grateful and fortunate that I was able to attend SEEK 23, and I highly recommend the conference to anyone interested.

SEEK 24 will be held once again in St. Louis, Missouri from January 1-5, 2024, if you are interested go to focus.org/seek24/ for more information. See you at SEEK!



Walsh Students and SEEK attendants, Myla Demko (left) and Sadie Pozderac (right) pictured with *Godsplaining* host, Fr. Gregory Pine OP. Photo courtesy of Myla Demko.

How to Prevent Feeling Homesick

BY: ALEX MEDINA, STAFF WRITER

Staying away from the routine, culture, friends, and comfort zone is challenging.

It is familiar among college students to get or feel homesick during their college experience. Nowadays, many people move to follow their childhood dreams, but this requires gaining experience with staying away from home.

At Walsh University, there are a lot of different cultures,

ethnicities, and people that wish to grow. Therefore, feeling homesick is common due to the general lack of experienced with it. However, there are some ways to either prevent or avoid getting homesick.

Here at Walsh University, counseling services are open 9-5 every day, and there is an option to have walk-in meetings in the David Center next to the Bookstore.

Another way to overcome homesickness is by telling some friends and family; they will try to help the best they can.

Along with these, homesickness can be overcome by getting involved with the community, or doing many activities to keep the brain busy. This way, there is no time to think about what is being missing. Getting in a car and exploring a park or a mall is something doable, and it helps to forget about homesickness. Getting good sleep, exercising, and eating healthy food are also recommendations to avoid getting homesick, and help make you feel rested and good.

Developing independent skills is beneficial so you do not continue to rely on your parents throughout college. After college, some people go and live on their own, and being a college student is the first step in learning how to live by yourself. Getting into a routine is essential because it will help the brain organize and adjust to the new living situation. Being productive and efficient with the schedule is significant due to avoiding late nights studying or wasting time.

In conclusion, being homesick is shared among college students, and letting people know and getting into professional help is crucial, as also following a balanced diet and a routine. All those factors will help improve and make the college experience smooth and fun.

Lil Sibs Weekend Returns to Walsh

BY: ANNA MARK, STAFF WRITER

Lil Sibs Weekend is returning to Walsh February 17-18, 2023. Since the covid-19 pandemic, we have been unable to see the return of this Walsh tradition. Thankfully, this year, the Office of Student Activities is hosting our community's little siblings for a weekend of super-hero themed activities and raffle prizes.

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Students are encouraged to invite their younger siblings, aged five or older, to spend the weekend at Walsh and see our campus. Siblings can stay in the dorm halls and experience dorm life for a night, or they can visit campus just for the events throughout Friday and Saturday. Faculty/staff are also welcome to invite their children to participate in the festivities.

All participants will receive a Welcome Bag, including an exclusive Lil Sibs Weekend 2023 t-shirt, and entered to win a raffle prize.

The weekend will kick-off Friday night with a screening of the movie *The Incredibles*- snacks will be provided. Those interested in getting active can visit the auxiliary gym in the Cecchini Health & Wellness Complex for basketball instead.

Saturday morning will continue the fun with a pancake breakfast followed by bingo, another chance to win some prizes. The rest of the day is packed with opportunities to see campus and show your siblings what it's like to be a Cavalier.

All participants are invited to attend the women's basketball game versus Ursuline College on Saturday at 1pm. There will be poster-making before the game, so make sure to bring your Cav Nation spirit and show your support for our team.

The day will wrap up with a few more activities of choice before the sibling send off. Winners will get to collect their prizes at the end of the day.

Tickets are only \$15 for each visiting sibling, and registration is required. The deadline for registration is February 3rd, so act fast to get your siblings tickets for this fun-filled weekend. We hope to see you there.



Photo courtesy of Anna Mark.

Walsh Celebrates Human Dignity Week with a Day of Service and Discussion Panel

BY: MATTHIAS BEAN, STAFF WRITER

On January 16th, Walsh students, faculty, and staff gathered to celebrate the life and legacy of Martin Luther King Jr. by participating in Walsh's Day of Service. Walsh's Day of Service is an annual tradition that is part of Human Dignity Week where members of the Walsh community gather together to participate in community service initiatives, both on campus and in the area.

The goal of Walsh's Day of Service is to honor and continue the work of Martin Luther King Jr. through service opportunities that help to protect the dignity and well-being of every human person.

Over 250 members of the Walsh community participated in community service projects on campus as well as at a variety of different sites in the area, including Emmanuel Tabernacle, YWCA of Canton, House of Loreto, Refuge of Hope SAM Center, and Stark Fresh.

For Walsh's athletic teams, the annual Day of Service is significant, as community service and giving back to the community is a main part of the mission of Walsh athletics.

Many Walsh athletes spent the day participating in various service opportunities. Different teams organized trips to serve at various sites in the area. In the past year, Walsh athletes have participated in 2,164 hours of community service; this is estimated to have had among \$61,760 in economic impact across 30 different organizations.

Another event during Human Dignity Week that helped promote the message of working to protect the life and dignity of all humans was the Dignity Dialogues panel discussion held on January 18th.

The discussion was led by Pastor Walter Moss, the Project Director for the Community Initiative to Reduce Violence in Stark County.

He was joined by various members of the Walsh community, including Walsh faculty, staff, and students.

The main topic discussed in the Dignity Dialogues was how the principle of human dignity is part of all stages of

life and the importance of working to protect the dignity of humans from all stages of life. The night began with a brief social for all attendees, followed by a lecture led by Pastor Moss, and a discussion with the panel.

Human Dignity Week: Peggy's Story

BY: ANNA MARK, STAFF WRITER

Walsh University recently held Human Dignity Week, a week of events dedicated to emphasizing and experiencing the value of human dignity. Among the topics incorporated into the week were service, poverty, and stalking.

On Tuesday, January 17th, the Walsh community gathered to listen to Peggy's story, told by her surviving sister, Debbie Riddle. More than 150 audience members attended, including athletic teams, faculty and staff across campus departments, and interested local community members.

As keynote speaker of Walsh's Human Dignity Week, Debbie spoke about stalking, its widespread presence in the United States, and how it can truly impact one's life, just as it had for Peggy.

Peggy Klinke was 32 years old when she was found shot and killed by her stalker in California. She endured yearlong intense stalking by her ex-boyfriend as the criminal justice system failed her in multiple states. Despite consistent communication with police departments and moving to a new state, Peggy was found dead by the hands of her stalker on January 18th, 2003. Her surviving sister has since seen her death as an opportunity to raise awareness and support for stalking victims.

An Ohio native, Debbie is a leading national speaker on stalking awareness. She has met with members of Congress and the National Center for Victims of Crime, and together they have launched National Stalking Awareness Month in January annually.

She was later invited to speak at the 10-year anniversary of the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) conference alongside Senator Orrin Hatch (R-UT) and Senator Joe Biden (D-DE).

Debbie has since contributed to stalking awareness training programs, raised money to support local programs, and

continues to tell her sister's story. She has now contributed to Walsh's "Know it. Name it. Stop it." stalking awareness campaign presented by the Cavalier Safeguard Initiative 2.0.

Despite the tragedy of her sister's death, Debbie has risen above to protect victims and protect human dignity. For more information about Debbie and Peggy's story, visit <http://stalkingmuststop.org>.

This program was made possible through the efforts of Student Affairs, Prevention Education & Programming, Diamond Mission, and Counseling Services.



Human Dignity Speaker, Debbie Riddle (left) pictured with Director of Prevention Education and Programming, Joy Raub (right). Photo courtesy of Anna Mark.

International Insight

BY: JAKE CUNNINGHAM, STAFF WRITER

What is your name, where are you from, what year are you in and what is your major?

My name is Daniel Price, I am a Junior from Newcastle in the north of England. I am majoring in business finance.

What team are you part of?

The Men's Soccer team.

How did you choose Walsh with being from a different country?

I found out about Walsh through a soccer agency back home in England, who then put me in touch with Andy (Men's Soccer team Head Coach). Walsh seemed like a great place to be with a nice campus and a newly built business school, which I knew was something I wanted to focus on.

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Daniel Price. Photo courtesy of Daniel Price.

How is Walsh different to a university in England?

How student athletes are treated is a lot more thorough than back home, but also the sports here are taken a lot more seriously at university level and there are a lot more choices in terms of what sports someone might want to focus on. On the degree side of things, most are 4-year degrees, where as back home in English universities the majority of degrees are only 3-year periods.

What is something you've learned whilst being away from home?

There's a lot more to life than your hometown and what you already know. There are so many more people to meet and things to do. I think a lot of people get trapped in quite often back home in England, things like getting a job straight out of high school and staying in that cycle and living in the same area your whole life. Coming to a US University is a great opportunity to change your home and friends for at least a few years.

What is a benefit of being a student athlete and do you enjoy it?

The outcome of playing a sport you love for around four years at a very good level whilst also earning a college degree alongside it is the best of both worlds in terms of a 'pre-professional' life.

What is the best thing about being on the Men's Soccer team?

The team culture we have is second to none and it always feels like a family away from home. Being able to have an enjoyable time and a good laugh whilst making every practice competitive is probably the most important for me.

Walsh Wins the Mayor's Cup and Fill the Cup Challenge

BY: MATTHIAS BEAN, STAFF WRITER

Every season, Walsh's Men's and Women's basketball teams compete against Malone and play for the Mayor's Cup Trophy-- a long-standing tradition in the rivalry between the two schools. This year, Walsh and Malone agreed to add a new tradition to the rivalry, the 'Fill the Cup' challenge

This challenge is a competition where both schools engage in a week-long fundraising effort to see which school can secure the most donors. The school that has the most donations is declared the winner, and all the proceeds go toward each school's athletic department. This year's Fill the Cup Challenge was held from January 5th through the 12th, and Walsh was declared the winner on January 12th during the Mayor's Cup games between Walsh and Malone.

Walsh defeated Malone in a close competition by a margin of 80 donors. Walsh received donations from 1,147 donors, while Malone received donations from 1,067. Walsh brought in a grand total of \$63,192 in donations, and Malone brought in \$58,381

Winning the Fill the Cup Challenge began what was a very successful night for Walsh's Men's and Women's Basketball teams, as they both defeated Malone to win the Mayor's Cup.

The night began with Walsh's Women's Basketball Team securing a dominant 82-67 victory over Malone for their second victory over Malone this season as Walsh defeated Malone 77-71 on December 10th. Following Walsh's victory over Malone on January 12th, Walsh now has a four-game win streak against Malone, dating back to last season

Following the women's victory over Malone, the men's team took the court to battle Malone. They team also secured a dominant victory, defeating Malone 74-60. This

was the second meeting between both teams this season, as Malone defeated Walsh 76-66 on December 10th. Walsh's January 12th victory over Malone was part of a dominate 5-game win streak for Walsh that has kept them in contention for the top spot in the conference.

Intramurals to Offer a Variety of Sports and Fitness Classes this Semester

BY: MATTHIAS BEAN, STAFF WRITER

Throughout the Spring Semester, Walsh Intramurals is offering various sports and fitness classes open to all students to participate.

First up this semester is intramural volleyball, which will be held every Tuesday from 7-9 pm in the Cecchini Center. At the conclusion of volleyball season, the intramural Basketball season will begin.

They will be offering a Co-Rec Basketball league and a Men's Basketball League this semester. Registration for both intramural basketball leagues will begin on February 20th, and the Co-Rec League will begin on March 16th and conclude on April 16th.

The Men's League will begin on March 19th and conclude on April 16th. The rules for both leagues will consist of five-on-five basketball with points scored inside the three-point line being worth one point and points scored behind the three-point line being worth two points. The first team to score 16 points wins, but they must win by two points. Each team will play another team in a best-of-three series which ensures that each team will play a minimum of two games.

In order to ensure games conclude in a timely matter, there will be an hour running clock during games. If a game is still ongoing when the clock expires, the team that is ahead will be declared a winner.

Along with Intramural Basketball, there is open gym every Wednesday night throughout the semester in Cecchini from 8-10 pm

Aside from Intramural Volleyball and Basketball being offered during the Spring semester, Intramurals will also offer two fitness classes for students during the Spring Semester. On Tuesdays, at 5 pm, there will be a Deep

Stretch Class that focuses on relaxation and recovery of muscles and is open to all fitness levels.

It will be held inside the David Fitness Center. Another fitness class being offered is Crunch Time Fitness which is an intensity and core-focused fitness class; it is also open to any fitness level and is being offered on Mondays at 4:30 pm at the David Fitness Center.

A Gift for an Ice Cream Lover in Your Life

BY: HAILEY METZGER, STAFF WRITER



Photo by Lauren Swast.

With February just beginning, Valentine's Day is right around the corner. Stuffed animals, chocolate covered strawberries, and handwritten letters are obvious choices for gifts this time of year; however, if your significant other is an ice cream connoisseur, the Sweetheart Sampler from Almost Heaven Ice Cream shop is the perfect choice.

This gift is actually a 2 in 1: a delicious gift box as well as a guessing game.

Inside the box are 25 unlabeled sample cups of the top selling flavors. Each cup has a number on it identifying the flavor on a key included in the package. With the Sweetheart Sampler, you are able to take your valentine's date night to a delicious new level, as well as test your ice cream knowledge.

The Sweetheart Sampler is ready for preorder on the Almost Heaven website under the "menu" button and then "special items".

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OPINION

You will then give your information, and choose the location at which you would like to pick up your order when it's ready.

If you have any further questions, you can reach any of our shops through phone number or email, all of which can be found on the website. We also have a facebook page we post to regularly and where you can keep up to date on all our seasonals and find information.

The Benefits of Bullet Journaling

BY: HAILEY METZGER, STAFF WRITER

The concept of bullet journaling is a very diverse and creative way to keep track of whatever it is you desire.

Coming into popularity just a few years ago, bullet journaling has grown rapidly, and there are many reasons why.

The journals themselves are different from normal notebooks in the sense that their paper is made to be thick enough to support heavier markers and the surface is strategically decorated with subtle dots.

This design was created in such a way to feed people's creativity and allow for freedom to decorate the pages however you need.

Bullet journals can be used to track your habits, log goals and keep up on homework. There is a lot of freedom in regards to themes and style. You draw the whole thing yourself, or, if you aren't much of an artist, there are premade pages you can buy or print and create your own journal.

I started bullet journaling at the beginning of this year, but anytime is a good time to start. I have found it to help me especially in regards to keeping myself on track when it comes to things like doing my laundry, cleaning my room, or taking time to study or do homework.

I have also found it important to attempt to track my water intake (as drinking a lot of water is helpful in aiding your overall health).

Bullet journaling is an amazing pass time for me; it allows

me to have some creative downtime, while also building my self-awareness. I recommend bullet journaling for anyone who may struggle with motivation or self care, as this is one way to see where you're at and motivate you to better yourself.

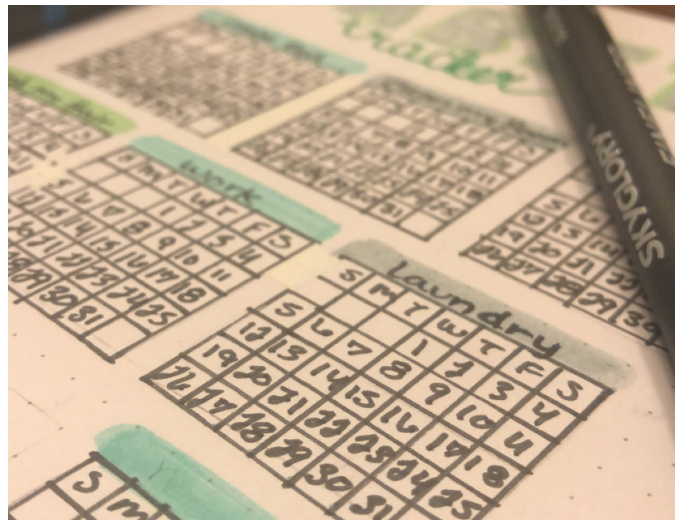


Photo courtesy of Hailey Metzger.

Subtle Ways to Feel Productive

BY: HAILEY METZGER, STAFF WRITER

We all have those days where there is little to nothing on our schedule, and by the end of the day, we feel we have accomplished just that.

A lazy day here and there is arguably well deserved and nothing to fret about; however, many of us struggle with motivation and the feeling of disappointment at the end of a less productive day.

There are a few ways to ensure we feel minimally productive, even during relaxing and laid back days between busy routines.

I have found that simple changes make a huge difference, like making my bed. By putting my bed together, it makes my bedroom appear much cleaner in such little time. With a clean bed, I often find myself a little more encouraged to pick up other areas of my room, as I work on my bed when I fold laundry or clean out a cabinet.

On days where there are gaps in my schedule and I find myself pacing around the house, I make it a point to make

my bed, do my laundry, and catch up on little stuff like that around my bedroom.

I find myself minimally productive, yet still feeling pretty good by the end of the day. Although these may seem like mundane things, doing them makes such a big difference. This feeling of accomplishment is most abundant on days when you lack motivation.

So, finding the slightest amount of motivation and completing little tasks add up to make a major difference.

What It's Like to Kill Someone You Don't Know

BY: MATIAS MERCADO, STAFF WRITER



Photo by Matias Mercado.

I am the opposite of altruism: a human being.

I grew up, I would say, as a normal child. Three different schools: a French, a Catholic, and an international school. I argued with my mom about politics. I played soccer and all those activities that helped me make friends. I would argue, however, that I was never a 'friends' person.

I would go as far as saying that I have never felt friendship.

That pure friendship that movies portray. The kind of friendship that blurs the dividing line between it and brotherhood (but I am an only child, so I do not know what that feels like, either).

In any case, I was normal. It was not until my narcissistic parents ran out of ego that I discovered I was not. My mom took me to an IQ center and made me do the test. It is probably the hardest test I have ever taken.

I truly thought I had failed completely. However, two weeks later I got an email from the IQ center. The email said: "Please come on Thursday to get your results." They were professional tension builders. If I say that I am not as narcissistic as my parents, I would be lying. However, that Thursday, I was even more so.

This stupid test, which only serves the purpose of classifying people, changed my life completely. My parents refilled their ego tanks, and I needed several tanks to save all of mine. The worst thing of all is that I am now running out of ego. I use ego as cars use fuel; I cannot function without it.

I got 135. Which is not even as good as I thought it was. Not even close to being a genius and not even close to being considered extraordinary. Two percent of the population has the same IQ as I do. I know... two percent sounds like nothing. However, it is about 156 million people. It is the worst possible grade. You are considered "moderately extraordinary," which is just the worst possible combination of words. Even so, that miserable 135 did change my life.

I knew I was smarter than some people. I do not need a test to tell me that; I needed a test to tell other people that. I, however, did not brag about it. I only talked about my grade if someone else brought it up.

What I did was forget about something called, I believe, effort. I thought school was a joke, and I, unfortunately, thought people were a joke, too (I still firmly believe that school is a joke, like most students). However, I do not believe people are a joke now. I actually and secretly like them (well, some of them).

It all changed when the ex-president of my country was caught for fraud during the last elections. We knew he was committing fraud. We knew how terrible he was. But we are not average people in Bolivia. We are part of the scarce middle class. We have education, we have food, we have

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houses, we have jobs, we live in the city, we have internet, and we do not need to fight to survive.

However, lower-class people in Bolivia are very poor and ignorant. I do not blame them; not at all. It is just our reality.

The ex-President, Evo Morales, took advantage of them. He built soccer fields where we needed schools. He built parks where we needed hospitals. He built hope when we needed reality.

Of course, educated people knew this. But it is hard to argue with people that speak half Spanish and a native tongue. I like to think of Evo as the Big Brother from *1984*. He did not watch me, but I felt his presence everywhere I went. He was caught, though. It was the best moment of my life, and it lasted for about two minutes.

With the use of very smart propaganda and the use of evasive maneuvers, the government covered their fraud. But it was not enough; the government tipped over, and people noticed.

A disadvantage of brainwashing only rural areas is the fact that the Government Palace, as well as the Ministry of Love, the Ministry of Peace, the Ministry of Plenty, and the Ministry of Truth (Orwell 1), are all located in the city. In my city. And so, Bolivia burnt. And I have to say, "it was a pleasure to burn" (Bradbury 1). People, the same people I thought were jokes, were alongside me, crying their hearts out, asking for justice.

We were tired of socialism, and we did not demand democracy. There were no colors in our hearts other than red, yellow, and green (Bolivian flag). I felt that I belonged to something bigger.

I was insignificant. There were only people. Furious people. Catholics, Atheists, Indigenous people, whites, blacks, tall, short, fat, skinny, lawyers, workers, doctors, artists, women, men, students, and even some bad people.

It did not matter. We lost our individuality and became part of what I consider the closest to God: people. Our voices became one, and I do not say that figuratively; our songs echoed through the city. We made it shake.

Our choreographed footsteps rumbled the entire country like the earthquake we never had. We acted like one single organism, one destructive being.

I do not know if this was the right answer. All I know is

that watching the fire burning a palace, built by the Spaniards who once conquered our land and now inhabited by a tyrant whose ancestors were the ones conquered by that same palace, was, at the least, magnificent. I felt out of control.

My mind was acting without me even noticing. I thought it was because I was part of something. I later discovered it was something else.

I should say that the palace was empty. No one was there. We understood who the enemy was. And, unfortunately, that enemy had some armed reinforcements. The palace was located on the side of our biggest square.

This means that, if the police were to block only four streets, which they did, we were trapped. I remember making huge fires with trash, the residues of our lives, in order to block the police from coming (it was very stupid for a 135 IQ guy). We were just where they needed us.

Like rats, we ran. We had to recover our individuality and our buried survival instinct. We were in the most exciting part of the movie. Where the tension begins, and the protagonist struggles.

I have to say, watching a person struggle in a 13-inch monitor while my ass is blending with my mattress is far more exciting than living it.

Around 20 tear gas grenades, later discovered to be illegally enhanced, were suffocating us. There were people far braver than me who started kicking the grenades toward the police. There was only chaos. I thought I was going to dissipate from existence and go back to nothingness.

However, my mind had other plans. Like a programmed robot, I found refuge in a garage. Since I was not even close to being the only human programmed by their minds, I found the same exact garage as 50 other minds. I desperately surrounded the car while being pushed by everyone else. We were no longer one organism. We were no longer people. And we were no longer conscious. Our minds were separate from our bodies; our minds were now in control, not us, and we needed to survive.

As I broke the car's left rearview mirror, I looked down and saw how the floor, which was supposed to be cement, was a person. Just like me. A normal human being in his last moments of consciousness. I suddenly became conscious again. However, my mind did not care.

As I was trying to fight my survival instinct, my brain ordered my body to keep going. To keep stepping on a conscious person.

My mind had completely guided me throughout my journey to the garage. When I got to the end of the garage, already having recovered control over my body, I saw how every single brain did the same thing. At that moment, my lament tears mixed with those of the tear gas realizing that no one is in control. We just follow our masters.

Fifty people in a fifteen by ten feet garage: not the brightest idea, brain. We could not breathe; we were dying. And so, I shouted, an 18-year-old about to lead 40-year-old people shouted: "lay the fu*k down!"

No one questioned me. The gas was lighter than air, and, therefore, nonexistent near the floor. The imagery was even less subtle. We looked like 50 dead bodies when we were alive. Only one of them really was.

Everything calmed down a tiny bit. Enough for me to realize that we were in a restaurant's garage.

I was very weak and could not open the door. But I learned, during school, how to desperately knock. It was unbelievably loud. What are the odds, at 2 am, of the owner being at his restaurant? None. However, and fortunately, something categorized as lazy writing in movies happened. The guy opened the door because he lived in his restaurant. We did not even ask for help. We just went right through the worn white door.

A restaurant is one of the best places to go during a crisis. There is food and drinks and water and napkins. However, everyone was crying, and everyone was collapsing. I was the only person who won the battle against his own mind.

My ethereal conscience, as Buddhists portray, was again in control. Tear gas became my oxygen and the memory of the guy I killed, gnawing my thoughts, became the wife soldiers think of when they are at war.

Darkness became my country. I was no longer fighting a revolution; I was just learning to live with remorse. I stole some milk and started to wash everyone's eyes. I knew what I was doing. It felt right. Everyone was thanking me, crying. Milk is not the panacea for tear gas, but it helps tremendously. That milk helped my conscience to compensate for the fact that I killed someone. I stole water and gave it to everyone. I was truly helping. Or at least, that is what I thought.

Once I finished with the milk and water, I started putting the latest in-trend eyeliner on everyone's eyes: lemon mixed with baking soda (by the way, that helped. As I said before, I knew what I was doing).

However, as I became the revolution's new stylist, I realized that whenever we help, at least one of our motives is a desire for our own good, even though, that self-desire has positive repercussions.

It felt great being able to kindly touch everyone's faces. However, I knew that if it would feel close to what it felt to kill someone, I would not be doing it.

The feeling of thinking that I took someone's life was consuming me. I could only think of him. The only thing that helped me grieve was helping other people. It felt right. However, after doing 30 people's makeup, I was expecting people to thank me. The first 30 could not even express how thankful they were. After that, people started to get tired due to the tear gas and stopped thanking me. It still felt right to help. However, I needed more gratitude to compensate for my biggest secret.

After I finished putting makeup on the last person and waited for a simple "thank you," it was time for me to face the truth. I went outside, to the garage, and stared at one side of the car for a few minutes.

I knew that I needed to look to the other side if I wanted to know the truth. I couldn't. At that time, my mind and my conscience did not want to look at the other side. My legs started to walk. I could not stop it... I did not want to stop it. I could not even take the cliché deep breath because I would inhale more tear gas.

I just blinked and saw it: only a broken rearview mirror. There was no body, no blood, only cement. I was so relieved. Not because he was alive, but because it meant that I did not kill him. It felt great. Even better than burning. I will never see that guy again. I only know how his back and head felt.

I do not know what he looks like. I might see the guy, but I will never actually recognize him.

I entered the restaurant and waited for a couple of hours until the streets were empty. That was enough time for me to realize I am not altruistic. In fact, no one is. I would have never thought that helping fifty people would make me think that altruism is a human illusion.

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Similar to what my ex-President feels about communism, people believe that altruism is achievable; it is not. Evo Morales is wrong, and so are we. Communism and altruism are utopian realities. They work on paper; however, they are not human.

We cannot possibly perceive others as something more important than ourselves.

If we would, then I would know what the guy on the floor's face looks like. But I do not. I only know how he feels... literally. The sound of sirens and gunshots interrupted my thoughts. I saw how every single person left the restaurant. One by one, the people were once a part of me, were disbanding in front of my eyes.

I was the only one left. Even the restaurant owner was not there. It felt weird. I usually enjoy being alone; however, this time was different.

There was no one I could help and no one I could hurt. I felt like the audience in a concert: not in control of the music. I felt like my body was a cage that covered my ethereal conscience. I felt empty, with no matter.

I walked down the burned streets and got to my house. As I took the longest breath of my life, I buried that experience inside the deepest part of my conscience where not even my mind can manipulate it. I hugged my naive mother, and I went to sleep, already having forgotten the other 51 people's faces.



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