

# THE Hook

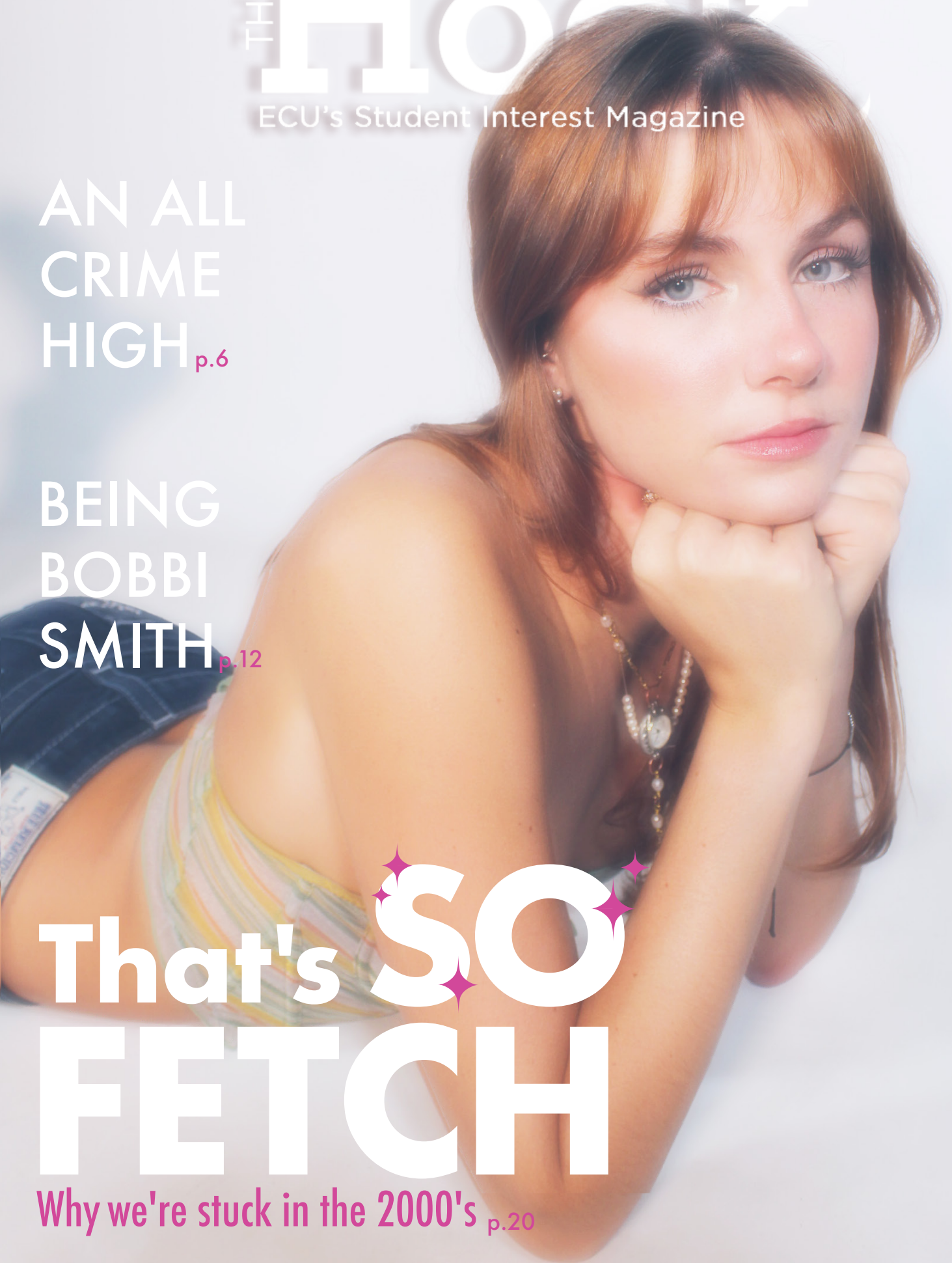
ECU's Student Interest Magazine

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That's **SO**  
**FETCH**

Why we're stuck in the 2000's p.20



# To Our Readers

**More stories and full cuts are available now on our website**

Thank you for taking the time to read our publication whether online or by grabbing an issue at one of our stands around campus. We could not do what we love without the support of our readers. To continue supporting us, follow us on our social media accounts and our website. We would love to hear your thoughts! Your voice matters. Be on the lookout for our next issue of The Hook and the rest of our magazine lineup!



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The Hook at ECU

Cover Photo by: Jaylin Roberts  
Cover Model: Hunter Diehl



# THE Hook

ECU's Student Interest Magazine



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The Hook is operated by ECU students who are members of Pirate Media 1, an East Carolina University student-led organization operating under the auspices of the Student Media Board and through the Division of Student Affairs. The magazine is produced twice a year by ECU students for the East Carolina University community.

Opinions expressed herein are those of the student writers and editors and DO NOT reflect those of the faculty, staff, administration of ECU, Student Media Board nor the University of North Carolina System.

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## Dear Pirate Nation,

As we near the end of the spring 2023 semester, it is with bittersweet hearts that we prepare to graduate and hand down our positions at Pirate Media 1. As editor-in-chief and managing editor of the print division for the past year and a half, we could not be more proud of the work that has been created and made a reality this year.

When the two of us met four years ago, we would have never imagined that we would be where we are right here, right now.

This edition of The Hook, in particular, is a publication that has become our baby these past few months, and is incredibly special to both of us.

We made it our mission to take this magazine in a different direction and truly make it our own, and we can't wait to see what's next. Additionally, without our amazing staff of writers, photographers, designers and editors, our visions would not have been made possible.

Through countless hours of thinking of stories, concepts, design mockups and so much more, we are so proud to share this publication with you and sincerely hope you enjoy every page of it.

Lastly, we want to thank you, as our readers. We are beyond lucky to have gotten this experience together and without you, we would not have had this creative outlet. We send our love to Pirate Nation just as y'all have shown your love to us.

Thank you for a great four years,

*Emily Peek*  
*Jala Davis*

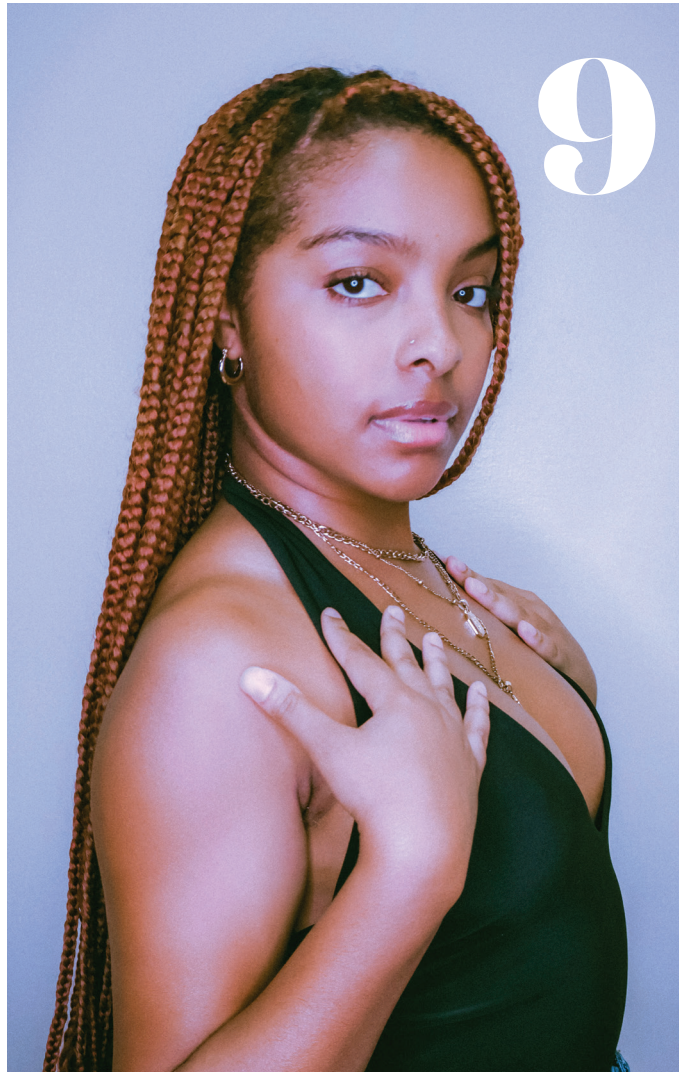
Emily Peek and Jala Davis

Letter From the Editors







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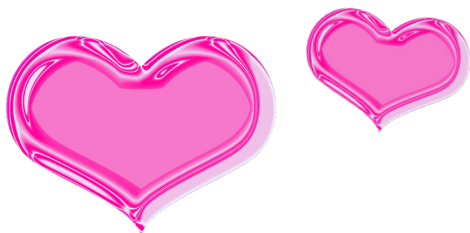
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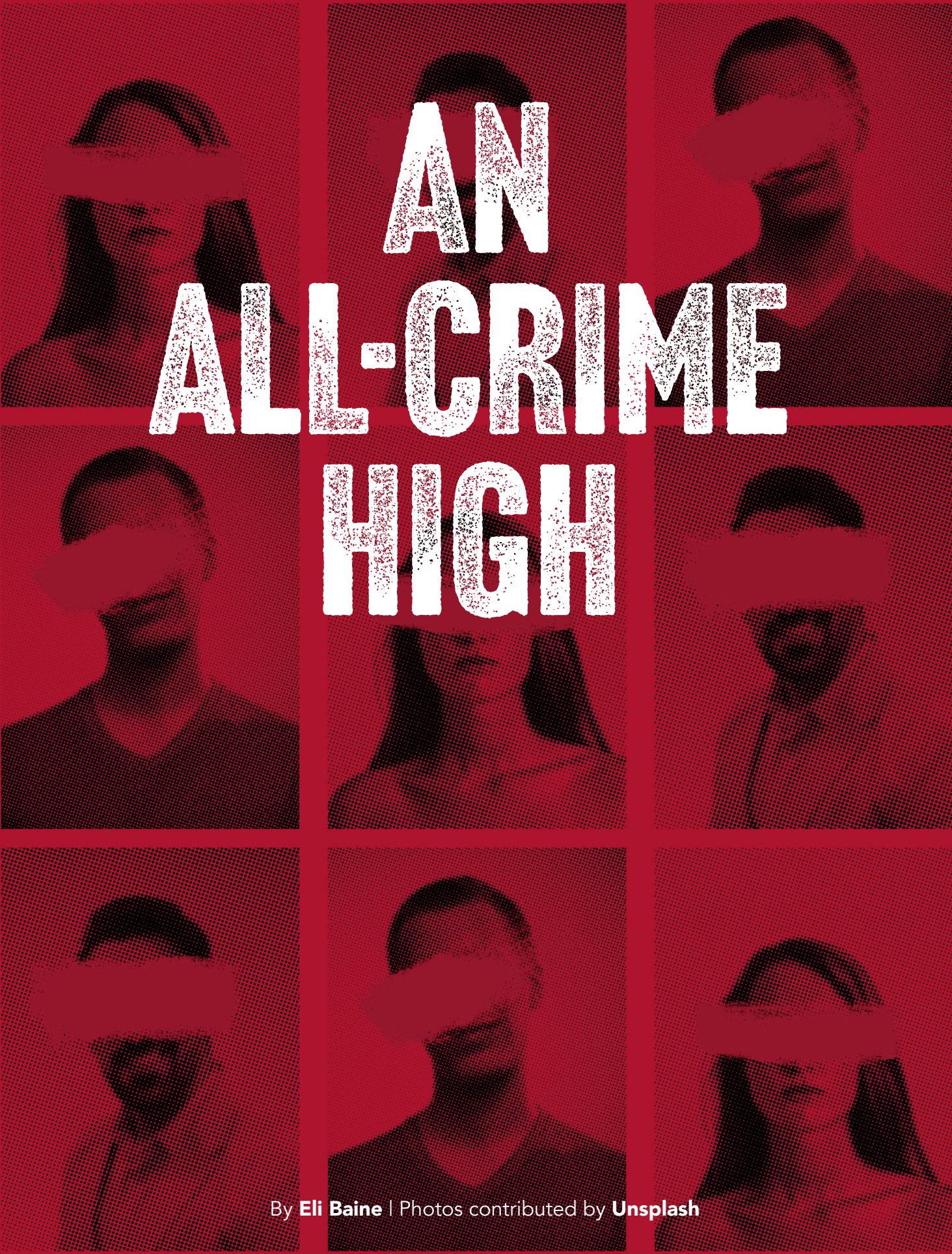
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# AN ALL-CRIME HIGH

By **Eli Baine** | Photos contributed by **Unsplash**



**"IN AMERICAN SOCIETY, WE'VE BEEN FASCINATED  
WITH CRIME FOR MORE THAN A CENTURY, SINCE THE  
INVENTION OF MASS MEDIA,"**

**- KIRK MILLER**

**TRUE CRIME MEDIA** has dominated the analytics of several corners of the entertainment industry, notably podcasts. However, critics of the genre might say that adapting tragedies into entertainment is unethical and possibly dangerous. From the use of real victim's names to the possibility of copycat crimes, East Carolina University faculty weigh in on true crime in the media and reasons why the genre has gained a large following.

What makes true crime so attractive? Associate Professor of Sociology Kirk Miller said the crime has captivated the public since entertainment media has been around.

"In American society, we've been fascinated with crime for more than a century, since the invention of mass media," Miller said.

Social media has made some large figures in true crime more famous, or infamous, than ever before. Notable detectives and criminals have amassed their own fanbases.

Many consumers enjoy true crime through the increasingly popular form of entertainment: podcasts. The rapid advancement of technology in the 21st century has allowed for many new and old forms of art to be appreciated, true crime being one of them.

"We wouldn't be talking about true crime prior to the podcast era," Miller said.

Associate Professor of Film Studies Anna Froula is co-writing a book on the true crime phenomenon and had more to say on how true crime may be a harmful genre in the media, especially to the victims portrayed in true crime and their families.

Froula said Netflix's recent series on Jeffrey Dahmer may have caused friends and relatives of those that were killed by Dahmer to relive the murder's trauma. Some of these families never consent to the events being turned into entertainment and true crime media does not always cut scenes out of respect for the real tragedies that occurred and the systemic issues that are attached.

"Some critics have talked about it (true crime) being cop propaganda," Froula said. "The melodramatic nature of these stories don't always do justice to the story that's being told, and it can give a picture of justice that's not really applicable to real life."

Producers of true crime entertainment should also be aware if what they are putting out is already public information or not, Froula said. When releasing something new or shocking,

there is always a chance it will inspire more violence or even a copycat killer, someone who wants to recreate murders from the past as it was done by someone else.

Some would say that true crime is productive in how it examines the psyche and environment of dangerous people by giving bystanders signs to look for, Froula said, but sometimes it just turns murderers into celebrities. For example, "John Wayne Gacy: Devil in Disguise" is a recounting of Gacy's life story from the killer himself. Froula said this kind of media is irresponsible and possibly harmful.

"How much of his (Gacy's) own, sort of delusional representation of the story is actually accurate?" Froula said.

Associate Professor of Communication Erika Johnson said she used to be an avid enjoyer of true crime, but some of the programs she followed became too sensational and sometimes disrespectful.

Johnson said she stopped enjoying the podcast "Morbid" because it started to feel too outrageous and dramatized to her. This raises the question of ethics with respect to dramatizing someone's lived experiences or even the events leading up to their death.

"I feel kind of bad that I listened to that for fun," Johnson said. "Like 'Oh this is interesting to me, I want to hear an interesting story,' but that's not really taking into consideration the victims or people involved. It kind of dehumanizes them in a sense."

Sometimes, true crime films and shows do not use fake names for the victims of the murders or those involved in the tragic events. To Johnson, this should depend on if the crime is solved or not. For example, a murder victim's name should not be used if the case is still ongoing or if it is a cold case that was never solved.

It isn't fair to fill in the blanks of a victim's life with your own scenarios, Johnson said. Some podcasts claim to be investigative while not actually having evidence to back up their speculation about real events.

"I think creators need to be very careful in how they present information," Johnson said. "There was a case about an abduction, I think in Orlando, and the only information the podcast provided was conjecture. It was only random interviews of people that were nearby and didn't know anything. Like, is that evidence really useful, or are you just trying to draw out the podcast?"



# What's HAUTE on Campus.

By **Martha Nebab** | Photos by **Jaylyn Gore**





# ANNIKA

TRACY

“ I wore a long maxi skirt. And a sleeveless collar top. Its like a turtle neck but it doesn't have sleeves. And a black belt with a cute little gold buckle and my platform black boots. ”





# ALEXIYA

NIEVES

“ (I’m wearing a) plaid fitted overall dress. Like a white cream color with black and white accents to it. I wore a long sleeve gray turtle neck underneath and black stockings and dress shoes and a purse. ”





# KENNEDY

COOPER

“ So I pretty much wore like a half-shirt, half-skirt. I had a checkered white and black shirt on with that. I wore silver rings and then I also wore my converse one-star platform shoes. ”



**The Hook**



# BEING BOBBI SMITH







🔼 Freshman guard Bobbi Smith and freshman guard Jayla Hearp pose after the 79-62 home game win against the Wichita State Shockers.

By **Markayla McInnis & Nick Bailey** | Photos contributed by **Zachary Kilby**

**BEING A FEMALE** student-athlete comes with hard work and East Carolina University women's basketball player **Bobbi Smith** is an example of that as she manages her time between athletics and her personal life.

Throughout the 2022-2023 season, the East Carolina University women's basketball team has far exceeded last year's expectations.

One player that has helped lead the Pirates to their recent success is freshman guard Bobbi Smith. She is seen by her teammates as a hard worker, and highlights how important it is to be a female student-athlete.

Bobbi Smith is a 5-foot-11-inch guard from Garner, North Carolina. In her first year at ECU, Smith has been an essential player for the Pirates.

One of Smith's most explosive games was on Nov. 13 against the University of North Carolina Wilmington where she recorded a season-high of 17 points, 30 minutes, six field goals and three

free throws.

Smith said she believes her season has been alright so far and that during her freshman campaign, she has been developing every game. She said she is pleased with her teams' recent success this season.

"Every game I have been improving and I have been trying to find a way to help on the court any way I can," Smith said. "We've been winning so I'm just really proud of me and my team."

Smith has really valued her teammates this year as she has been adjusting to the new student-athlete life.

"Since the summer they (teammates) have been really helpful with guiding me and just answering my questions when I need them," Smith said. "They've made the adjustment a lot easier and I've come a lot more comfortable around them and being on the court with them."

Smith feels being on a team in college compared to high school feels different, but her time at Southeast Raleigh helped

her prepare for the tough American Athletic Conference (AAC) schedule. "Especially my freshman and sophomore year at Southeast we were playing a lot of high caliber teams and so that prepared me in a way to be here," Smith said.

Choosing ECU as her new home was easy, she said. During her recruitment process, the coaching staff developed a strong bond with her and were excellent at communicating with her via phone calls.. Smith also said ECU being close to home was a big plus when deciding where to play D1 basketball and she really enjoyed coming down and watching some of the Pirates basketball games.

Smith experienced a lot of nerves going into her first collegiate game, but that's to be expected for a talented freshman with high expectations. Once she got out on the court and got into the flow of things though, her adrenaline started pumping and she felt more comfortable and excited about the opportunity.

Winning close games has been one of





Smith's favorite parts about being a Pirate, and she values every win as a big moment during her freshman year. "Honestly, every win has been big, but those really close games like the one against Hampton, that was a lot of fun," Smith said. "It came down to the wire and just getting that win with my teammates was a big moment for me."

Smith spoke about some of her favorite things during her freshman year, and she said the environment of Greenville and ECU are at the top of her list.

"The environment that I'm in, the people that are around me in the town are some of the best parts about being a Pirate," Smith said. "Going to football games, going to the men's basketball games, you know the fans are amazing here."

From the beginning of Smith's life, playing basketball has always been there, as her parents put her into it at a young age. She used to play soccer and basketball, but she eventually chose basketball as her full-time sport. She fell in love with it and worked on her craft every day.

To make it to play D1 basketball one must have motivation, and Smith says her family influences her to strive every day to work hard. "My family, my dad and my

brother, I want to work hard for them," Smith said. "They come to every home game they can and even some away games, I just want to try and make them proud."

Smith's in-season daily schedule can get pretty busy as she has to focus on both her academics and athletics. "In the mornings from about 9 to 12 o'clock I'm going to class, and then usually we have weight training at 2 p.m," Smith said. "Usually between 1 and 2 I'm trying to get a snack in, and then after weights we have practice. After that I usually have dinner and then the rest of my night I'm doing homework or studying."

The key to keeping a good sports and school balance is study hall, Smith said. Though it is required for her as a freshman, she says it plays a big role in helping her get all of her schoolwork done. Smith said watching her teammates handle academics and athletics helps her learn how to manage time better.

One of the most difficult things for Smith when it comes to keeping herself on track with school is the away games, as traveling away can be tough because of missing classes.

"Especially this semester, the first couple of games we traveled away and so I was missing the first couple days of classes," Smith said. "You know, teachers are teaching every day whether you are there or not, so that's been hard. I just have to talk to my professors and email them a lot and get them to know I am on the Women's basketball team and that I will miss a couple of classes."

Everyone needs a mentor when going through the college transition, and Smith



said Junior guard Synia Johnson has been her greatest mentor as a freshman. "She's always that person I can call or text if I ever need anything," Smith said. "She'll pick me up and we'll go out to lunch together and talk about how things are going."

Since Smith's middle school days, she said she realized she could go on to play D1 basketball. She started getting calls from schools and knew she could do something with basketball. Playing in the Amateur Athletic Union (AAU) circuit from a young age all the way through high school really helped her get recognition from multiple colleges.

"Getting calls from schools made me realize that I can actually do this and people see potential in me," Smith said. "Seeing people want me at their schools, it boosted my confidence and it made me want to be better."

Head Coach Kim McNeill's impact and influence on Smith has been huge for her during her freshman year, she says. "It's been really good to see a fellow Black woman that used to be a student-athlete be a coach," Smith said. "She's really motivating and pushes us to be the best every day in practice. Being able to listen and learn from her has been really helpful."

Having a role model while growing up is huge on an athlete, and Smith said if she had to pick one it would definitely be her mom. "Watching her lead my family and how she deals with adversity is really helpful to learn from."

Being a female athlete is a big deal to Smith, and she takes a lot of pride with the title. "It means a lot to me, seeing things like the Women's National Basketball Association (WNBA) and knowing that they don't get paid or watched as much, It means a lot," Smith said. "I just try to be my best so that people can realize that women's basketball is no different than men's basketball, we are just as competitive and we can be just as good."

Smith has hopes of continuing her basketball career after

her time at ECU, as she wants to one day play in the WNBA or overseas. "I want to keep going at as long as I can," Smith said

Looking forward to Smith's future at ECU, she wants to continue being a winning team and help lead the program in the right direction. "I just want to become that leading team and be a part of it," Smith said. "This year we are taking steps towards that, so in the next four years just staying there and to keep winning, I want to grow every single year here.

Much like Smith, fellow women's basketball Pirate freshman guard Jayla Hearp said the season has been full of ups and downs.

Hearp said playing with Smith has been great and she's continuously impressed with Smith's work ethic and skill. Being a female athlete, she said, usually makes the team go harder, stay tough and sometimes just roll with the punches to prove themselves.

"She works really hard and she's hard on herself and wants to get things right," Hearp said. "I say she's a perfectionist, she wants to make sure she just gets everything right."

Hearp said that she has enjoyed the season thus far and has really valued the friendships she's made and the experiences she's had. One of Hearp's favorite memories with the team this season has been traveling to away games, experiencing different environments, and trying new restaurants, she said.

Working with Smith has been enjoyable as they've been able to grow a really good relationship that, Hearp said, is more like a sisterhood. She said that as a teammate, Smith is always there to be an open ear and they motivate each other on and off the court.

"We definitely push each other. It's good to have somebody you can trust," Hearp said. "We are there for each other if someone needs to vent. We're always just an open ear and we motivate each other in the gym."

Here is the reality. At any level, being a female athlete is challenging. Hard training requires a lot of dedication, motivation, values, ethics, and willingness, and Smith said she is committed to doing that. 🌀



📌 Bobbi was previously a Bulldog at Southeast Raleigh High School.



# at home BAR

Cocktails to cool you down this summer

By Kiarra Crayton | Photos by Halie Miller

**THE SUMMERS IN NORTH CAROLINA** can get extremely hot, like who even wants to go outside hot, and you shouldn't be forced to leave the cooling comfort of your home for a drink.

Here are some at-home cocktail and mocktail recipes you can try to help save yourself the cost of ordering a drink and to enjoy a cold-refreshing-poolside sip. ☕



1

## Espresso Martini

2 ounces vodka  
½ ounce coffee liqueur  
1 ounce espresso  
½ ounce simple syrup

Garnish: coffee beans







2

### Sex on the Beach

1 ½ ounces vodka  
½ ounce peach schnapps  
1 ½ ounces orange juice  
1 ½ ounces cranberry juice

Garnish: lemon wedge

3

### Midori Sour

1 ½ ounces melon liqueur  
1 ounce vodka  
½ ounce lemon juice  
½ ounce lime juice  
3 ounces club soda

Garnish: lemon wheel

1

### Long Island Iced Tea

¾ ounce vodka  
¾ ounce white rum  
¾ ounce silver tequila  
¾ ounce gin  
¾ ounce triple sec  
¾ ounce lemon juice  
Top off with cola

Garnish: lemon wedge



# HOOKFLIX:

## STAFF NETFLIX RECOMMENDATIONS

By **Candi Johnson**



### YOU

By **Markayla McInnis**: News Editor

"Stalker Joe Goldberg goes around looking for his love interest and finds trouble along the way."

Why: "It keeps you on your toes and doesn't get too repetitive."



### That 90's Show

By **Chris Long**: Sports Chief

"'That 90's Show' is a new series based off of the hit 2000's show, 'That 70's Show.' (Confusing, I know)."

Why: "'That 90's Show' has flashes of what made the original so special, focusing on one of the original's best characters — Red."



### One Piece

By **Brendan Cavazos**: Sports Editor

"A kid wants to be king of the Pirates."


Why: "It's the greatest adventure ever written."



### The Recruit

**Abbie Clavijo**: Arts & Entertainment Editor

"A young lawyer, Owen (played by Noah Centineo) has been recruited to work for the CIA. He begins an assignment that has him dealing with a former CIA foreign asset who is in prison. The job soon puts him in over his head. Owen and the asset form an unconventional relationship which results in him being tortured, running from assassins, flying across the globe and keeping secrets from his family and friends, even though technically all he was was a lawyer."

Why: "It's funny, addictive and fast paced. Every episode left me wanting more and I'm already anxiously awaiting a season 2." 



# FOUR PODCASTS TO DIVERSIFY YOUR DAILY PLAYLIST

By **Martha Nebab**

**PODCASTS HAVE BECOME** a form of entertainment that has gained popularity amongst people with too many to-do list items on their hands to click through TV channels or scroll on social media.

If you're looking to change up from your usual music playlist, plug an earbud in and tune into an episode (or two) of self-help, queer history, masculinity, and true horror stories.

## History is Gay

If you're looking for a monthly podcast examining overlooked and underappreciated "queer ladies, gents and gentle-enbies," look no further than "History is Gay." Hosted by queer and quirky media analysts Leigh Pfefferf and Gretchen Jones, they shed light on "erased or sidelined" LGBTQ+ figures in order to bring more representation and diversity than what you've learned in heteronormative history class.

Don't know where to start? Check out guest-hosted Episode 34, "Queers in the Civil Rights Movement," a discussion and celebration of queer Civil Rights activists just in time for Black History Month.

*Find "History is Gay" on Spotify and Apple Podcasts.*

## Lore

Want a break from studying and classes? Do you also want to stay up all night and ignore all responsibilities until the next morning? Tune into "Lore," an award-winning podcast about true-life scary stories told in a similar style to sharing tales around the campfire.

If your guilty pleasure is diving into the rabbit holes of folklore creatures, infamous killers and unexplained phenomenon, listen to producer Aaron Mahnke tell stories that were adapted to a two-season Amazon Prime show and a three-book set from Penguin Random House. '

*Find your next nightmare on Spotify, Apple Podcasts and other podcast platforms, with new episodes released every other Monday.*

## Man Enough

Challenge your views and reframe your connections with masculinity and gender roles by listening to "Man Enough." Hosted by filmmaker Justin Baldoni, author Liz Plank and award-winning music producer Jamey Heath, join in the conversation about how society's polarizing definition of masculinity affects the lives of "men, women and people of all genders."

Though longer than your usual 20-minute episodes, check out "Reframing the Masculine Mentality" for an in-depth look on "Queer Eye" star Karamo Brown's experiences with domestic abuse.

*Episodes are released every Monday on Spotify, YouTube and Apple Podcasts.*

## Tiny Leaps, Big Changes

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# That's SO Fetch

## Why we're stuck in the 2000s

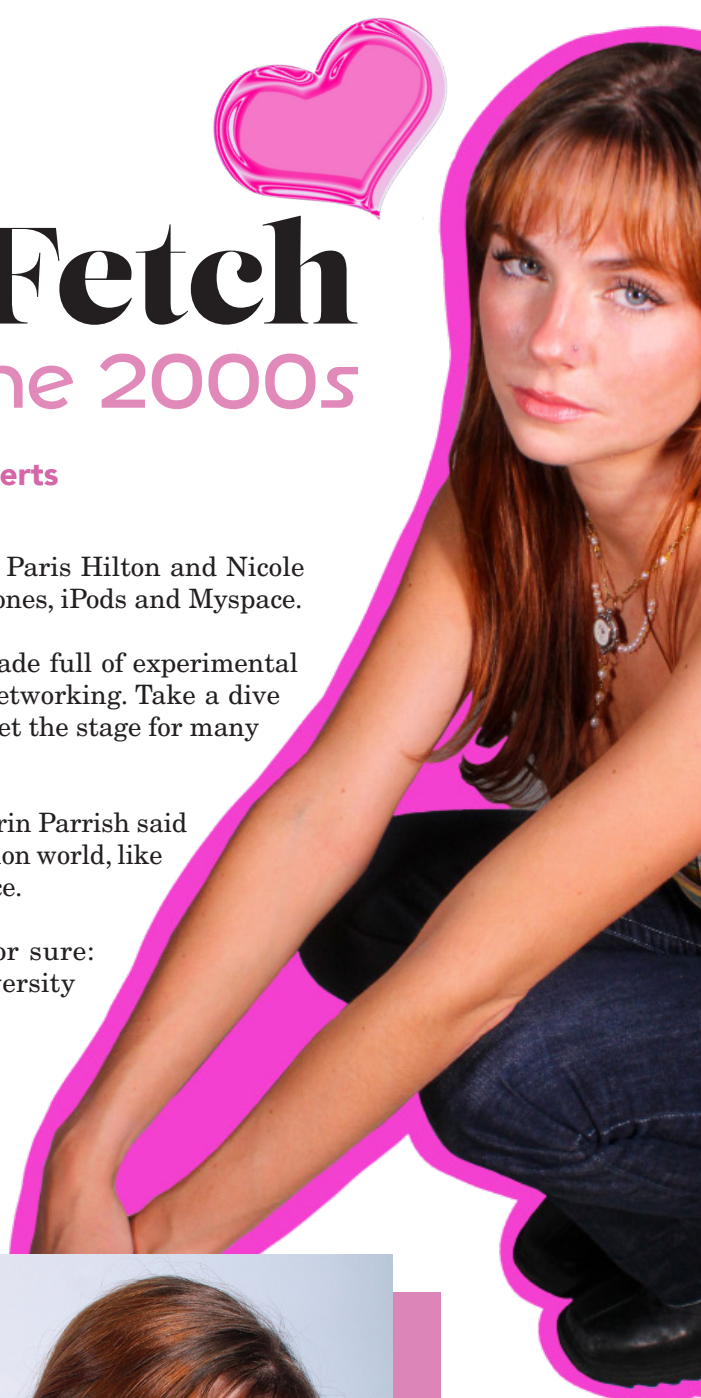
By **Kiarra Crayton & Julia Lawson** | Photos by **Jaylin Roberts**

**ED HARDY, VON DUTCH AND JUICY COUTURE.** Paris Hilton and Nicole Richie, Jennifer Lopez, Destiny's Child and Britney Spears. Flip phones, iPods and Myspace.

The year 2000, otherwise known as Y2K, set the stage for a decade full of experimental fashion trends, infamous celebrity scandals and increased social networking. Take a dive into some of the most iconic moments and trends of the years that set the stage for many of our childhoods.

ECU Associate Professor for Interior Design and Merchandising Erin Parrish said the early 2000's brought a number of revolutionary trends in the fashion world, like low-rise bootcup jeans, crop tops, split tops, baby doll dresses and lace.

The year 2000 was different for everyone, but one thing is for sure: it's making a comeback, and some Pirates at East Carolina University have noticed.







“It’s interesting to see it come back,” Parrish said. “The rules of fashion is that styles repeat themselves every 20 years.”

Parrish described the renewed interest in the early 2000’s as a popular comeback of "Friends" for those who were too young to watch the show when it came out.

Some of Parrish's favorite fashion trends from Y2K, she said, were low rise jeans and “going out tops.” She said she has seen a slight comeback of the 2000’s throughout campus with certain jeans, tops, and tracksuits.

“A lot of the clothes are more so aimed and were called going out clothes, so I wouldn't see that on campus,” Parrish said. “I would say it’s (the re-emergence of track suits) gonna be a trend.”







For freshman communication major Allyson Lawrence, Y2K gave her a sense of confidence as a child because of the increased presence of Black women on television. Lawrence said shows like "America's Next Top Model" and "Girlfriends" were her main influencers growing up.

"It was definitely a confidence booster and just being able to say, 'Oh she's wearing that, I can do the same thing,'" Lawrence said. "I feel like a lot of fashion trends were from TV shows."

Raigan Hutcheson, junior double major in religious studies and security sciences, said one of her favorite brands from the 2000's was Juicy Couture because of the brand's iconic use of rhinestones and gems.

"Everything about the 2000's was a moment," Hutcheson said. "The look, what Britney Spears did in that jean dress, it had it, it stole the 2000's."

Jasmin Ali, freshman biology major and model for ECU's Fashion Club, said she was only a kid when Y2K was at its prime, but she has seen it in popular culture like "Keeping up with the Kardashians" re-runs from the early 2000s.

"I think that I would like to see a different trend, I don't know what trend, but I would like to see something different and just fashion evolve," Ali said.

Fashion trends tend to repeat themselves, Ali said, and although she has nothing against Y2K fashion, she would like to see a new, unique trend take over.

Simone Smith, junior business major and model with ECU Fashion, said she loves aspects of Y2K trends, like low-rise jeans

and crop tops.

Bedazzled PUMA crop tops and belly button piercings are some of the staples of the era, Smith said, and are trends that she still admires to this day.

"What pops out to me is the makeup style for it (Y2K fashion) rather than the clothes. I have seen that more on campus, the makeup rather than the fashion for it, or the hair styles where they pin it up with a clip. I think those are pretty cool," Smith said.

Y2K makeup is characterized by bold eye looks, glossy lips and vibrant colors. Smokey eye looks and colorful eyeshadows became popular during the early 2000s, and it was often accompanied by thick winged eyeliner and shiny lip gloss.

Although there are aspects of the style Smith is fond of like the makeup and hair accessories, she said she would prefer to see a new fashion trend take over like 90's grunge and punk, with bulky chains and dark colors.

Laquan Wright, a junior fine art major and a model for the ECU Fashion Club, said when he thinks of fashion trends of the early 2000's, bright colors and mismatched patterns come to mind.

"I like it (Y2K trends) and I don't like it, I feel like it can be included to an outfit in like a good way, but sometimes it's just a little too much for me," Wright said, he likes the vibrant colors but dislikes when people attempt to clash patterns.

Fashion today is incredibly varied, Wright said, and there is no singular style taking over the market. But the looks of the early 2000's have caught a lot of attention lately - both on the runway and on campus. 📍

» Hunter Diehl is a fourth year ECU art student and shops at thrift stores for her Y2K looks.



# Y2K

## Moments we'll never forget

By **Jala Davis** | Photos by **Jaylin Roberts**

### HOW MANY CHILDREN DID DESTINY REALLY HAVE? - 2000

Destiny's Child, an R&B girl group, had a major set change in the year 2000 when they switched out some of the original members due to tensions in the group. Along with the longest standing member of the group Beyonce Knowles, the girl group had five other members; Michelle Williams, Kelly Rowland, LaTavia Roberson, Letoya Luckett and Farah Franklin. The final group would eventually become Knowles, Roland and Williams.

### YOU'RE GOIN' TO HOLLYWOOD! - 2002

The hit show 'American Idol' had viewers tuned in every week to see who would be going to Hollywood and who would be sent back to their small towns with crushed dreams in a singing competition. It's no doubt that this show produced some of the greatest household names like Kelly Clarkson and Fantasia but there was also a guaranteed laugh by the end of every episode.

### ZOEY 101 + 1 - 2007

Ah, Pacific Coast Academy, the school of our dreams right? The Nickelodeon show starring Jamie Lynn Spears lasted for four seasons but unfortunately couldn't continue due to Spears falling pregnant. There's so many unforgettable moments from Zoey 101 and so much the young audience was tied to. Have you seen what Zoey left in the time capsule?

### THE BITTEN APPLE - 2007

In January of 2007, the late Steve Jobs announced the release of the newest technology to the market - the iPhone. The phone wasn't released until six months later in June 2007. Jobs created one of the most revolutionary pieces of technology on the market by combining the beloved iPod and the convenience of a mobile phone and hit the market for the low price of \$499. Phones were never the same. 🍏









# ADULTING

## THIS ISN'T THE ROARING 20's I WAS LOOKING FORWARD TO

By **Kim Kassner** | Illustrations by **Oliva Magistro**

**A**dulting in your 20's is tough. Once you're out of high school and leave the nest, everything seems to pile up quickly: there is rent to pay, financial aid or student loans to apply for and other costs needing to be covered that weren't even on your radar before.

Doing all that while figuring out who you are and what you want to do in life can be challenging - especially after a global pandemic. But it's not impossible.

Kaylee Love, freshman public health major, agrees adulthood has been hard since attending East Carolina University. A crumbling economy has made it difficult to stay afloat financially, Love said, and job seeking has been especially demanding for her.

**"Since coming to college,  
growing into adulthood has  
been tough"**  
-Kaylee Love

"Financially I have been struggling keeping money and gaining money," Love said. "The job hunt has been very hard, I have probably applied to 15 to 20 jobs on and off campus since the start of this school year and I have made every effort to hear back from them and the majority of them will not hire me."

On top of not being able to find a job, Love said looking for and getting an apartment she can afford has been a hard-bitten task.

"Finding affordable housing in this market is very time consuming. Searching apartment complex after apartment complex to match with something that is

good enough, quality wise, but also in my price range is tough," Love said. "It's taken me several months to find the right apartment because a lot of the places near campus are way above the price that I can pay.

Being without her parents and figuring life out by herself was quite a transformation as well, Love said. Even though she's handling everything on her own now, she said she had to get used to her newfound freedom at first.

The hardest thing about adulting is finding motivation, Love said. Everyone has their own problems, she said, and no one will pick up your slack anymore.

"Nobody has your back in this adulting world," Love said. "All people want from adults in this world are results, so it's up to you everyday to get up and go after what you have to do and what you want to achieve."

Apart from finances and housing, people in their 20's also have to deal with the aftermath of COVID-19. Oliver Leduc, freshman international business major, said transitioning into adulthood during the pandemic caused a lot of confusion for him.

"Growing up through the pandemic was so odd, it was like I had no responsibilities for





a few months and it was actually really relaxing," Leduc said. "Then life started to turn back into normal a little bit and I had to adjust again. I had gotten so used to sleeping all day and doing things for fun, I had kind of forgotten I had many things in life I still had to take care of."

Dealing with the loneliness of adulthood is isolating, Leduc said. Knowing his friends are doing their "adulting things" and being busy shows him how hard this new phase of life can be, he said. Even making new friends, he said, is not as easy as it once was.

"We're not kids anymore where we're dumped onto a playground and it seems so easy to make friends that have some of the same interests as you," Leduc said. "It seems like everyone would rather want to be separated than be outside and meet new people."

For Davis Whitfield, senior finance major, adulting is something he's forced to come to terms with all the time. He works at the ECU Financial Wellness Hub and provides financial education, coaching and resources. Whitfield said his job is to empower students to make wiser financial decisions, foster better relationships and build stronger communities.

The good thing though, Whitfield said, is that nobody transitions into adulthood perfectly and knows the skills needed right away.

There are many different things students can do to make adulting easier, Whitfield said.

## HERE ARE WHITEFIELDS TOP 10 TIPS TO STRUGGLE A LITTLE LESS:

### 1. Budgeting

"To make it easier in life, a good start is budgeting. That's the groundwork for any financial planning. Figure out a way to create a budget and find a way to stick with it."

### 2. Emergency Fund

"Having an emergency fund is really important. Something I read not too long ago said 65% of Americans right now couldn't come up with \$400 if they needed to. That's not good when something like a tire pops, windows break or even your body's bones. An emergency fund is definitely the first step when it comes to saving. Having some money set aside that you have easy access to might help out in certain situations. It's good for your peace of mind too, knowing that if something were to happen, 'I have some money right here and I can get to it.'"

### 3. Directions/Goals

"Having a direction or goals in terms of your savings can be beneficial. As a student, we often tend to save up money but we don't really know what we want to do with it. Make a plan, have a goal: Do you want to go on a spring break trip? Do you need money to move after graduation? Maybe you want to go on a semester abroad? If we know what we want to do with our money, it's way easier to deal with it.

### 4. Summer Jobs

"Having a summer job is a great way to make some money for the next school year. A lot of students go home for the summer and that's great to find a job or an internship. Living at home for a couple of months knocks down living expenses, it's the perfect opportunity to save up."

### 5. Campus Jobs

"I would also highly recommend student jobs at ECU. I feel like it's a great balance because you can go to work and do your schoolwork at the same time. Even during the school year on campus jobs are great because the school works around your class schedule. ECU is very aware that you came here to be a student, but that does have some external expenses and a lot of students do need a part time job. At the end of the day though, we're students first and ECU respects that."

### 6. Student loans

"Use your student loans as you need them. Make sure to only use the money you need though. I've met up with a lot of students that take out a lot more money than they need for college and end up with too many loans without knowing how to pay them back. Cover your tuition, for sure. Borrow what you need for housing. Just don't overestimate and calculate your expenses beforehand. Be mindful."

### 7. Investing

"Once you're in a comfortable spot with your savings and an emergency fund and you have a little bit of excess, you want to start investing. I always say the earlier you start investing, the better. It will for sure act in your favor."

### 8. Credit Score

"Credit scores are a lot more important than many people realize. Some jobs will pull your credit score and look at it, and if it's poor, that might make you look bad. You might not even get hired because they might consider you a risky spender. It also comes in handy if you're trying to buy a house or a car in the future."

### 9. Credit Cards

"Credit Cards are useful tools and needed to establish a credit score. They allow people to cover expenses they need to cover. But too much of a good thing can't always be a good thing. Credit card debt is really nasty and it's really hard to get out of. Only use your credit cards to cover the things you would normally spend money on like groceries or rent. Always make sure you have the money to pay it back."

### 10. Housing

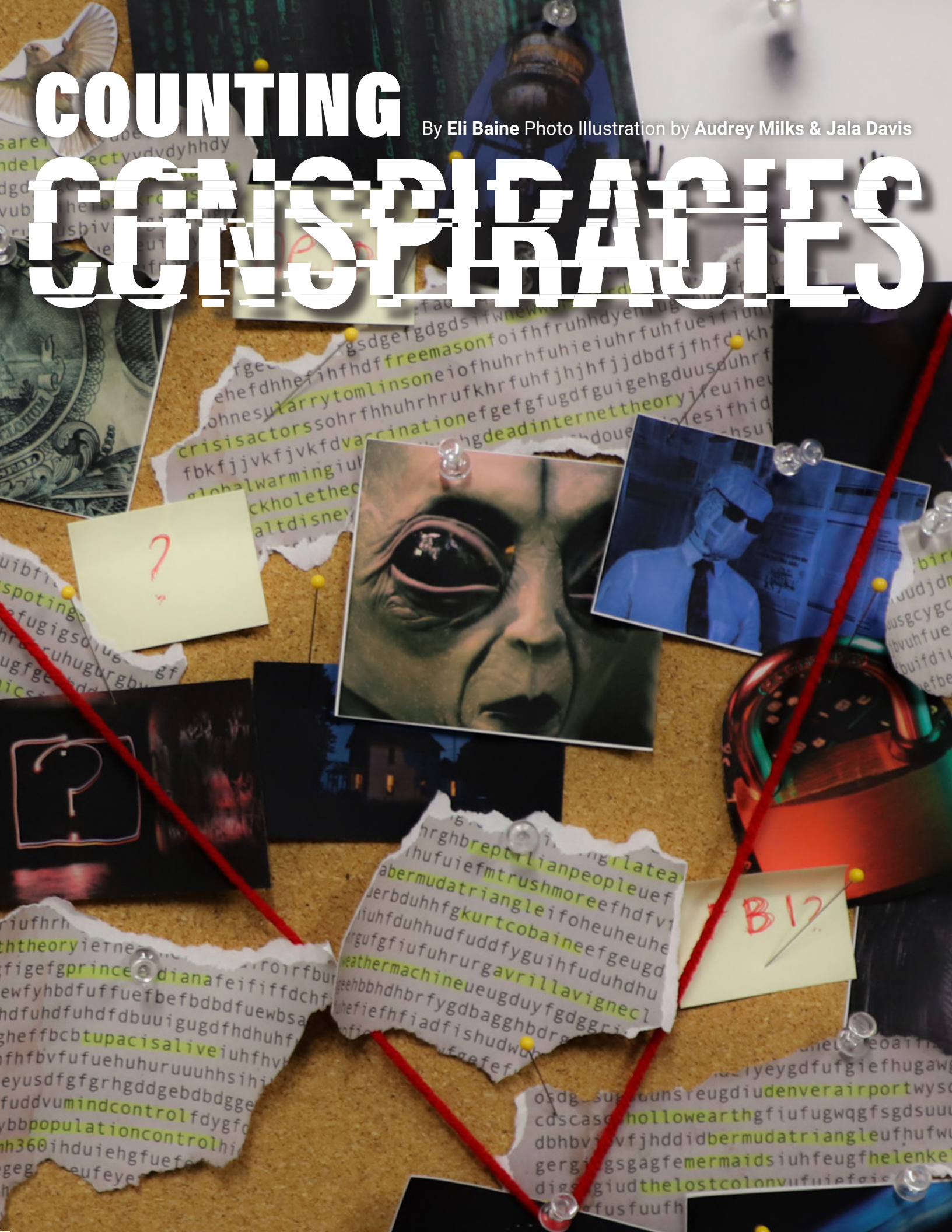
"There are a lot of different options of housing while you're in college. You can take the dorm route and live on campus or you can choose to live off campus. Always make sure and ask yourself these questions: How expensive are my housing costs going to be? What does the commute look like to campus? Are you driving to campus every day and paying to park, or is there a bus that runs to wherever you live? 📍



# COUNTING

By Eli Baine Photo Illustration by Audrey Milks & Jala Davis

# CONSPIRACIES





**DIVING INTO** conspiracy theories and urban legends can be a way for people to either express their speculation, or begin to doubt everything around them. There are a few conspiracy theories that have garnered significant followings across the country: parallel realities, legendary creatures, and government spies.

Take a look at the most common theories below and decide for yourself - is it all just a coincidence, or are they true conspiracies?

## The Mandela Effect

Remember the Berenstain Bears? No, you don't. The fictional bears' family name has always been spelled "Berenstain." Many people upon hearing this for the first time are shocked. How do a large number of people share the same false memory?

This phenomenon is referred to as the Mandela effect. The theory's namesake comes from a similar situation where thousands of people shared the same memory of civil rights leader Nelson Mandela dying in prison in the 1980s, when in reality, he went on to become the president of South Africa in the 1990s. This kind of event has turned into a conspiracy theory for many.

While psychologists now have many possible answers for the phenomena, paranormal researcher Fiona Broome who first coined the term the Mandela Effect suggested that shared false memories could be the result of parallel realities clashing with our own.

## Subliminal Messaging

For several decades, subliminal messaging and advertising was a concern among Americans. The theory is based on the real psychological concept of subliminal stimuli, any kind of sensory message that is too small for the mind to consciously perceive it.

Conspiracy theorists claim that many forms of media, including movies, songs and commercials, contain unperceivable messages meant to condition behavior or instill certain beliefs.

Around the 1980s, many people were alleging that popular songs included satanic messaging, including Led Zepelin's "Stairway to Heaven" and The Beatles' "Helter Skelter." According to [livescience.com](http://livescience.com), subliminal messaging is technically a real thing, but the messages are still too weak to last more than 25 minutes at most.

## Bigfoot

Bigfoot, also known as the sasquatch, is a tall, hairy cryptid said to roam forests around the country. No bigfeet have ever been captured, but the number of sightings in certain locations are not insignificant.

According to the Bigfoot Field Researchers Organization (BFRO), the last direct photo of a sasquatch was taken in Alaska in May 2022. The report the photo was part of is considered "Class A" by the BFRO, meaning the potential that the sighting was a misinterpretation is low.

Bigfoot researchers say that bigfoot sightings have been happening for hundreds of years and the species is described in detail in stories told by Native-American tribes. The sasquatch is said to only inhabit areas of low human population to avoid contact. The species is also quite agile and only travels in small groups.

To this day, there are still serious efforts by bigfoot researchers to try to put an end to the speculation of the sasquatch's existence.

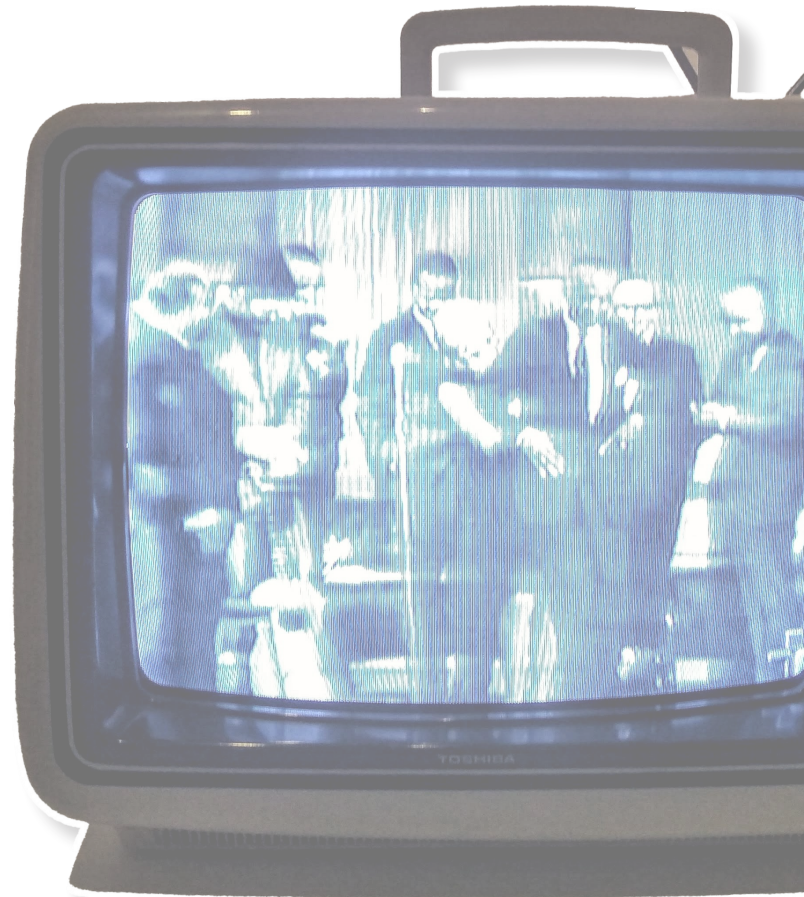
## Birds Aren't Real

OK, this one is fake. The "Birds Aren't Real" movement is a satirical conspiracy theory created by 24-year-old Peter McIndoe in 2017. In multiple states, protest signs, waivers and even a billboard touted the conspiracy theory.

"Bird truthers" will tell you that all birds in the country have been replaced by the government with identical drones that gather intel on citizens, assassinate targets and perch on power lines to recharge.

Any questions one may have regarding McIndoe's claims are answered on the movement's extensive website. Where did the real birds go? The government wiped them all out using a bioweapon. What is bird poop? A liquid tracking device that specifically targets cars.

This fake theory was meant to poke fun at actual conspiracy theorists, as well as provide a fun way for people to be involved in a conspiracy theory without it being taken too seriously. 🌀





By **Julia Lawson** | Photos by **Halie Miller**



**E.G.O.**



**T**he concept of confidence is hard to define - does it mean unconditional self-love or becoming the person someone else would love to be? Is it to put yourself on a higher pedestal than others, or put yourself first?

It isn't easy to navigate confidence as a young college student, but East Carolina University's Elite, Graceful, and Opulent (E.G.O.) Modeling company aims to help women on campus do just that.

Liz Inniss, junior elementary education major, is the president of the student organization E.G.O. and has been a member for two years.

Inniss said she oversees practices for E.G.O., and that the organization prepares for a wide range of modeling and dance events occurring on campus throughout the year.

"I make sure every girl is comfortable, they know what they're doing, and just more communication and all that," Inniss said.

Inniss said she would like for girls at ECU to know that E.G.O. welcomes students from all walks of life to come and participate.

"It (E.G.O.) helps build girls' confidence and it's a little sisterhood and it's just a way where you can express yourself through modeling," Inniss said.

Glory Aghimien, sophomore communication and political science double major, said she is E.G.O.'s secretary and the creative committee chair of the organization.

"I see the purpose of E.G.O. as an org to help women establish confidence in themselves and establishing confidence in varied areas of their lives whether it be their career, whether it be just themselves in general, just relationships, building and establishing healthy relationships with other women," Aghimien said.

As a Black woman raised by two immigrant parents, Aghimien said she has struggled with a loss of opportunities because of her unique

wanting too much, or being too much. Not only does Aghimien know her worth, but she said E.G.O. has proven that she and other young women at ECU deserve everything they desire in life.

Aghimien said as long as someone is ambitious and willing to put in the work to achieve their goals, then nothing is standing between them and their dreams.

"I joined it (E.G.O.) my freshman year and I'm a sophomore now so the fact that I just joined last year and already have two executive positions, it's not even a matter of just being in a leadership position but it's more so a matter of being able to establish myself and establish a healthy relationship with these other women," Aghimien said.

Nasya Thompson, a sophomore marketing major, said she is a member of E.G.O. and she models for the student organization.

As a member, Thompson said her top priority is being confident and

# [Elite, Graceful and Opulent]

E.G.O. holds tryouts to welcome new girls to the organization every fall, and Inniss said as of now, there are 23 members. All women on campus are welcome to try out and join.

Inniss said E.G.O. has several different events planned for the school year, such as the flash mob dance the group performs at the Main Campus Student Center in March in solidarity with, and to celebrate, Women's History Month.

"It (E.G.O.) helps everyone to feel comfortable around ECU, like the different cultures and stuff and confidence. I mean as you get older you want to accept yourself and love yourself regardless of what anybody says," Inniss said.

The organization is still relatively small, Inniss said, but she wants the group of women to expand and fulfill their organization's mission of spreading self-love and confidence across ECU's campus.

last name, describing moments when employers have overlooked her abilities for this reason.

Aghimien said it has been tough to navigate the difficulties that come with being a Black woman, but being a member of E.G.O. has given her an opportunity to develop sisterly bonds with other women on campus who encourage one another's success.

"Something often I've struggled with is as a woman, especially as an African-American woman, you're told that you're supposed to do a lot, it's almost as if you have to do everything 10 times more than everybody else," Aghimien said. "But at the same time, the moment you do more than everybody else you're too much, you're too strong, you're too confident, you're too educated, you're too much and I've had that pressure of being too ambitious, I've been told that before."

As Aghimien puts it, at E.G.O. there is no such thing as doing too much,

expressing herself.

"At first I didn't really know about being at ECU, I kind of wanted to transfer, but as I got into more organizations and clubs I noticed that I'm really big into modeling and it (E.G.O.) gave me the opportunity to do something that I actually love to do," Thompson said.

Joining E.G.O. helped Thompson find a community of girls who support each other, she said, and the step she made with E.G.O. has encouraged her to branch out and experience new opportunities throughout campus.

Thompson said she recommends other young women at ECU to join E.G.O., an organization that helped her to find sisterhood and solidarity.

"It's just all confidence at the end of the day and I feel like for your inner child it's really good to fulfill that need because when you're a child, you don't really have that confidence," Thompson said. 🌀



# TOP TECH FINDS OF 2022

FOUR GADGETS TO SPICE UP YOUR LIFE

A tiny drone with a large capture, the 4K camera takes high-definition photos and videos, even in slow motion and panorama mode. The drone is foldable, lightweight and easy to carry.



**\$99**

**BLACK BIRD 4K**

## BOSE SMART GLASSES

**\$124**



Connect these fashion-forward sunnies with a smartphone via Bluetooth and listen to music without being unaware of your surroundings. Inside each temple is a tiny, wafer-thin acoustic package to reduce spread of the sound around.



By **Kim Kassner**

As we reflect on the best songs, movies and books that made 2022 wonderful, we should also consider the technology that went viral throughout the past year. Well-known companies like Samsung, Apple and Bose all released brand new, cutting-edge products.

Here are the top tech finds of the year:

Apple's new headphones with active noise cancellation and three microphones for voice pickup create an unparalleled listening experience. The perfect purchase for those late-night study sessions in Joyner Library.



**APPLE** **\$549**  
**AIRPOD MAX**

## SAMSUNG GALAXY Z FLIP4



**\$829**

Feeling nostalgic for the early 2000's? The Samsung Galaxy Z Flip4 might be what you're looking for. This phone seems small at first, but once flipped open - that's right, a flip phone - the display measures 6.7 inches. Folded shut, it turns into a pocket-sized power device. Get ready to feel the satisfaction of snapping the phone shut after a call once again. 📞



# Let's see if you were *really* paying attention

1

**How much do Apple Airpod Maxes cost?**

- a. \$499
- b. \$549
- c. \$569

5

**What does E.G.O stand for?**

- a. Elite, Graceful, Opulent
- b. Energetic, Giggly, Optimistic
- c. Elite, Grateful, Outstanding

2

**Why do we call it the "Mandela Effect"?**

- a. Nelson Mandela came up with it
- b. People thought Nelson Mandela died in prison but later became the President of South Africa
- c. People thought Nelson Mandela wasn't actually real.

6

**What is Bobbi Smith's Position?**

- a. Center
- b. Guard
- c. Small forward

7

**Which item came out in the late 2000's that combined two pre existing pieces of technology?**

- a. iPod nano
- b. Motorola Razr
- c. First generation iPhone

3

**What caused the spike of true crime media?**

- a. Podcasts
- b. Youtube
- c. Books

4

**Why is Brendans favorite show 'One Piece'?**

- a. "It's the greatest show ever written."
- b. "It's the greatest scenario ever written."
- c. "It's the greatest adventure ever written."

8

**What year is associated with the Y2K era?**

- a. Early 1990's
- b. Early 2000's
- c. Early 2010's

answers

1. B. \$549

2. B. People thought Nelson Mandela died in prison in the 80's but later became the President of South Africa in the 90's

3. A. Podcasts

7. C. First generation iPhone

8. B. Early 2000's

6. B. Guard

5. A. Elite, Graceful, Opulent

4. C. "It's the greatest adventure ever written."





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