

El Rancho High School
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El Rodeo

Inside look at our guests
from Beijing, China

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CAMPUS

In loving memory of Anthony Rojas Hernandez

BY DIEGO GONZALEZ
EL RODEO STAFF WRITER

On Friday, January 10th, El Rancho High School tragically lost 15-year old Anthony Rojas Hernandez in a hit and run incident.

The students of El Rancho High School mourned the loss of Rojas in the days that followed, and shared various posts on social media organizing a school wide tribute to Rojas on Monday, January 13th.

Hundreds of students across campus wore articles of black clothing in remembrance of Rojas upon their return to school, and showed their sup-



In loving memory of Anthony Rojas Hernandez

port for his family and friends.

The sudden loss of Rojas left many students in disbelief,

and the news report was surreal to many of the people who knew him.

Fellow student and friend

of Rojas, Emmanuel Huitron was among the dozens in disbelief over the tragic incident. "My first reaction when I heard the news about Anthony was this has to be fake," Huitron said.

"If I could say one last thing to Anthony, it would be that he was truly a good friend," Huitron continued.

The staff at El Rancho High School also organized a small event in which students could send a message to the family of Rojas, and hundreds of students showed their support through posters and flyers made in remembrance of him.

Close friends of Rojas all

gathered near the area of the accident days after the incident, leaving flowers and decorated posters in tribute of Rojas' life.

In an interview with CBS news, a close friend of Rojas, Justin Villa said, "I didn't want to believe the news but I had to, I saw him in the hospital and I was heartbroken. I lost my brother, I lost my best friend."

Last week, the school joined together in a moment of silence for Rojas, in which every student at El Rancho took a minute to remember his life, and pay their respects to Anthony Rojas Hernandez one last time.

El Rancho moves on with phase one of construction plan

BY ALEXIS GALLEGOS
EL RODEO STAFF WRITER

Since September of 2017, the idea of a new, modern El Rancho High School has been a topic in the hot seat. Countless community meetings were held in order to discuss the pros and cons, in the end, the idea has finally turned into a plan.

The original \$200 million plan for the "new high school" was to completely demolish and rebuild the school within several phases.

All phases would take place between the years of 2019-2025, however, the Board decided to suspend all construction plans for some time,

due to disagreements over how to proceed with construction.

After listening to the city and students of El Rancho High School, the Board members have switched to alternate methods of a remodel instead of a whole renovation.

Instead of an entirely new design, the ERUSD Board Members decided to instead, improve athletic facilities and some other specific buildings.

Art teacher, Mr. Magdaleno says, "To be honest, I'm still a little confused and not quite clear about what is actually happening in the process because we, teachers of El Rancho, have not received a 3D model of what our campus

would like after construction, with new and old buildings. As a teacher, I was a part of the first move, and am not sure if we are getting new art facilities for the VAPA department."

After years of getting the plans approved, the fencing of the construction area will begin on February 2nd to the 3rd. The majority of the El Rancho campus will be restricted for construction workers only.

Shown on the map, the service road near the cafeteria and main gym will not be accessible, along with the North Parking lot, where many students and staff park their cars.

The question that is brought up is, where will stu-



Map of Construction Fencing Plans

dents and staff park now? A solution is across El Rancho's main gate at Rio Hondo's parking lot, or the back of the school by the new gym.

Another question was where will baseball, soft-

ball, track and soccer practice. Many alternatives have been brought up such as Smith Park's baseball and soccer field, Rio Vista's softball fields, and the California High School's track.

Dons say goodbye to the Don Memorial Stadium with farewell festival

BY ALEXIS GALLEGOS
EL RODEO STAFF WRITER

As the ERUSD Board moves forward with construction plans for the new high school, the fencing of the Don Memorial Stadium will begin starting February 2nd.

Many students, alumni, and administration of El Rancho wanted to honor the football field one more time, before it's too late.

Senior, Monica Aguirre says, "I wanted everyone to reunite one last time at a place that holds so many memories for all of



Photo by Mrs. Lillian-Lugo

us. It sucks how they're destroying a place that means a lot to many of the students, so we wanted to say one last goodbye all together."

ERHS' Associated Student

Body Advisor and Art teacher, Mr. Magdaleno, adds, "It was something that admin and students wanted to have as a way to commemorate all the memories

and stories we have shared as one Don family. It was important to uphold the legacy of our ERHS community and we wanted to have this celebration and farewell."

After many discussions, the idea of a "Last Friday Night Lights" was brought to the table. A two-in-one festival and carnival where students, friends, and family all over the community could spend the very last moments on the football field, together.

Senior, Angie Campos says, "It will be a very bitter-sweet moment for our senior class and alumni as it will be one of the last moments in the

stadium we have many memories in. But overall, I'm very excited to see everyone come together as one big Don family."

The Farewell Festival will take place on January 31st from 5:30 to 9pm at the Don Memorial Stadium. There will be carnival games with prizes along with food being sold. The Associated Student Body advises to bring blankets and chairs for the movie night and performances by numerous ERHS clubs and city organizations.

Make sure to stop by and bring friends and family to join this heart-felt celebration.

El Rodeo

El Rodeo is published monthly except during vacations by the El Rancho High School journalism class. The *El Rodeo* offices are located at 6501 S. Passons Blvd., Pico Rivera, CA 90660 in room X-1. The paper is printed by *The Gardena Valley News*.

El Rodeo, the student newspaper of El Rancho High School is an open, public forum for student expression and an opportunity to discuss its audience's issues of concern. Opinions expressed are those of the writer and do not necessarily reflect the position of the school board, administration, sponsors, parents, student body or advertisers.

The Editorial Board, which consists of the editor-in-chief, section editors, and assistant editors, will determine the content of *El Rodeo*.

Student journalists on the *El Rodeo* staff will make every effort to publish following the legal definitions of libel, obscenity and invasion of privacy. Consistent with California Education Code section 48907, the staff will refrain from printing material that may incite students, be a violation of school regulations or disrupt school operations. At the beginning of each semester, journalism students will be reminded of the legal, financial and ethical implications of each article they write.

Ed Code 48907 affirms the right of high school newspapers to publish whatever they choose, so long as the content is not explicitly obscene, libelous, or slanderous. Also, there shall be no prior restraint of material prepared for official school publications except insofar as it violates this section.

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OPINION

Whittier College is an acceptable alternative for graduation



A hillside view of Whittier College's stadium, this year's confirmed graduation location.

BY ALEJANDRO MELCHOR
EL RODEO STAFF WRITER

Recently, it was announced that the class of 2020's graduation ceremony will be held at Whittier College's stadium since the demolition of the Don Memorial Stadium and all of the fields will begin on February 3rd. While many seniors felt outraged that they would not be able to experience the tradition of graduating at Don Memorial stadium

and enjoy their last big day on campus, there are some benefits to graduating at Whittier College.

Having the graduation ceremony at Whittier College will be a greater alternative than at Don Memorial stadium because it's simply a bigger stadium.

The Whittier College stadium is much bigger being that it has a capacity of holding 7000 people, this could potentially mean seniors will get more tickets per family.

Holding the graduation ceremony at Whittier College will also be beneficial as the demolition and reconstruction of the new El Rancho campus could begin sooner.

Had the school decided on having the graduation at the Don Memorial Stadium, this would've postponed the reconstruction and would have just made the already long project even longer.

Even so, Whittier College is not far from El Rancho.

It is only four and a half miles away from El Rancho. This is a plus since most wouldn't have to drive out too far for the ceremony.

Although it's unfortunate that this year's seniors will not be able to graduate from their school, they will be rewarded with the following incentives because of their sacrifice;

The 2020 senior class will have a plaque with the entire class' names on it and will be placed in the new stadium, there will be extra end-of-the school year events for seniors, students will be able to have their pictures taken at the Don Memorial stadium's farewell festival, and while this last reward has yet to be confirmed, but there have been talks about seniors having the privilege of attending football games at El Rancho free for life.

As for now, I am set with the idea of graduating at Whittier College's stadium, sure it's not going to be at El Rancho but at least it will be at a nice stadium that would be able to hold all of our large families, it would not slow down the reconstruction of the school, all the while remaining local.

Girls sports programs deserve more attention

BY RODRIGO OSORIO
EL RODEO STAFF WRITER

El Rancho's girls' water polo team has not only had to battle through intense practices, tough opponents, and important league matchups but also through a broken pool heater.

The broken heater has affected their practice schedule, in-game performance, and overall health.

The girls' water polo team has had to practice in a pool with water which would vary randomly from freezing cold to smoldering hot temperatures.

The pool's water temperature has not only forced the team to practice in uncomfortable conditions but it has also required them to cancel practice on days where the water was unbearable.

The inability to practice can lead to a decrease in team performance and in the long run could harm their chances of making CIF.

The water temperature has also affected their health and the health of other players from teams who play in the pool.

Cold water has a repressive effect on the immune system, which in turn could lead to a cold or flu developing.

However, the risk for infections such as swimmers ear or Legionnaires' disease which could cause coughing, shortness of breath, chest pain, and muscle aches increases in hot water because germ-killing chemicals like chlorine break down faster.

During an intense game against Sierra Vista, a player from the opposing team suffered a heat stroke due to the pool's water being extremely hot.

She was transported to a nearby hospital via ambulance and thankfully recovered fully.

Despite team parents continually calling the school to report the broken pool heater, it took a player becoming severely harmed for the pool heater to finally be made a priority.

When the snack shack outside of the El Rancho Football Stadium was vandalized it was immediately cleaned up by El Rancho staff despite the fact that it could not immediately harm any player or coach.

This depicts the school's inequity when it comes to certain sports. Boys sports often get more attention than girls sports.

The Smith Park stadium is used to host soccer games and practices for different El Rancho teams which means that the resources are there but are being implemented unfairly.

For many of the players, this is their last chance at making a playoff run but are being cut short by the school's inability to realize that all sports should be treated with the same level of priority regardless of their winning record or how much profit they bring to the school.

WWIII memes get too out of hand

BY JORDAN URIBE
EL RODEO STAFF WRITER

As many of you may know, the internet was a complete mess on January 9th after the drone strike orchestrated by the United States took out Iran's top military general.

When news broke out about this attack, people took to social media to not only to voice their opinions on the matter, but to also make some funny jokes about it.

Twitter topics like "World War 3" and "Iran" were filled with users tweeting some enjoyable content like memes and jokes making fun of the potential war that might take place, as well as users stating that the jokes relating to this situation aren't funny and that this is a topic was to be taken seriously, but I thought that most of the jokes were funny, and the best part was that Twitter was full of them.

The jokes ranged from draft dodging jokes, to meeting up with friends mid battle, to dating Iranian people,

Earlier this month after the the death of Iranian general Qasem Soleimani, many took to twitter to joke about the situation.

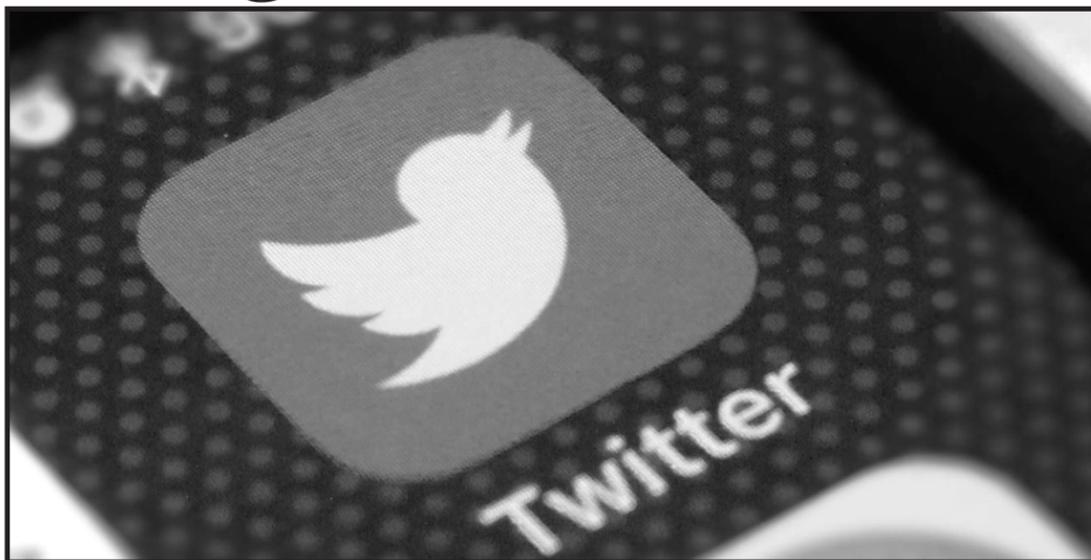
and even to celebrity jokes.

What I found funny was how random and creative the tweets were, not the thought of a potential war.

Twitter user @BASED-SAVAGE_ was one of the first to come up with these jokes, and was the most creative. One of his very controversial jokes reading "Plan B, Drop Lizzo on Iran."

received a lot of backlash from many people on the internet who didn't find this joke to be funny or appropriate and demanded for his account to be terminated. This goes to show how the internet could get so serious over a joke that was meant to make people laugh, but unfortunately those that demanded for the Twitter user to be terminated got exactly that.

Although the situation is very bad, these jokes brought the feeling of fear in the feeling of calmness as many were able to get a good laugh out of this terrible situation. It is important to remember that comedy is subjective, many will find jokes that you won't personally find appropriate funny, and there is nothing wrong with that.



Word on the Street: What was your initial reaction when you heard the news about the late basketball legend, Kobe Bryant?



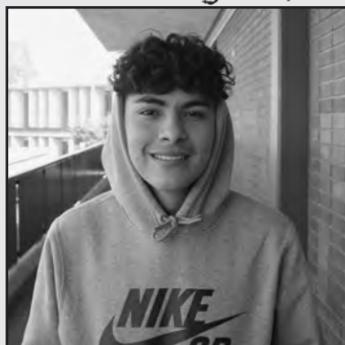
"I couldn't believe it, my whole body and mind just went blank and my heart dropped".

~Andrew Velasquez, 12



"I couldn't wrap my mind around the news and it felt so surreal. I didn't want it to be true".

~Sarahid Hernandez, 12



"I couldn't believe it, it felt as if I had lost someone I've known for a long time".

~Mario Morfin, 12



"I was devastated and couldn't help but shed tears. I send love and prayers to the families affected".

~Ajohnette Guerra, 12

埃爾蘭喬歡迎外國留學生！

Wenqi Sun (Emma), 16

After seeing a video about last year's foreign exchange students, Emma knew she had to come to El Rancho! It is Emma's first time in America and she looks forward to learning about biology and visiting the many interesting sites Southern California has to offer.

School in America has been quite different from what Emma is used to. Compared to her life back home, Emma says "I have more free time than I do at home." With her newfound free time, Emma has been able to partake in one of her favorite hobbies, reading.



Emma has been able to enjoy authentic American cuisine, frozen yogurt being her favorite, "It's really good!" she says. Although she has enjoyed the food here she still misses the food from back home. "The food is different and great, but we miss our food from back home," she says.

Emma loves playing badminton and being really active, embodying her spirit animal of a dolphin. "Dolphins are great! They're super friendly!" she says.

She is excited about the rest of her stay and is already thinking of coming back! She hopes to study abroad in America once again but as a college

student. She is excited to visit UCLA and see the differences in American college campuses compared to Chinese universities.

Aside from reading, Emma looks forward to visiting Universal Studios, especially since she loves watching the Simpsons. "My favorite character is Lisa because she's very smart," she says.

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Yunbuan Feng (Yolanda), 15



Although Yolanda had many places to choose from, she chose to come to El Rancho for many reasons, including the warm, Mediterranean-like climate that Southern California is known for. She adds, "El Rancho is really attractive because it has so many classes."

Yolanda enjoys the different classes that El Rancho has. Although some lessons are relaxing, Yolanda says that "some of them are challenging, all are very useful."

While in California, she has gone to the Getty

museum and the Griffith observatory. She also looks forward to visiting nearby universities such as Stanford and UCLA.

Apart from school, Yolanda has many interests and hobbies. She enjoys watching YouTube videos and listening to music, her favorite group being Red Velvet. Yolanda also had a favorite series growing, Harry Potter, but she has outgrown it, saying that it is too childish now. Talking about favorites, she mentions that her favorite animal is the cat. She also believes that

if she were to have a superpower, it would be the ability to be super smart.

Although she is away from her family, Yolanda keeps in touch with her parents and grandparents through phone calls. She has tried the cuisine here which she says has a wide variety. Nevertheless, she prefers her home food.

During her stay, Yolanda is most excited to visit her dream school, UCLA. She hopes to come back in the future, as a UCLA Bruin.

Yuxuan Luo (Ashley), 16



This isn't Ashley's first time in America. Last year she attended a summer camp in Seattle. Visiting El Rancho has been a much different experience from Seattle though, and she's amazed at the cultural and academic differences between our two countries. In China, many students have to live on-campus dorms. She says, "Here people live in separate houses and in China, we live in tall buildings."

Ashley's expectations of how America was were accurate. "The reality from what I thought was a pretty close, [Pico Rivera] is a very normal and quiet city, everyone is really nice," she says. She was surprised to see the amount of cars on the road, "The transportation is different here, in Beijing public transportation is more convenient," she adds.

There have been good and bad aspects to this visit. Since the Chinese New Year is celebrated on January 25th, the students missed out on celebrating with their families. Despite this inconvenience, Ashley looks forward to visiting the

universities, Ashley has been able to see interesting sites like the Griffith Observatory and Universal Studios. Ashley says, "Actually I like the Universal Studios a lot because it's cool to see all the movies and cartoons I watch in reality." Ashley has also been able to engage in many of Pico Rivera's activities such as touring the city hall and meeting the mayor.

In her free time Ashley enjoys reading, swimming, and watching her favorite show, Happy Camp. Happy Camp is a Chinese reality show where contestants compete in events. Ashley also enjoys listening to her favorite C-pop band, TF Boys.

Although she prefers her food at home, Ashley enjoys some of the food she has tried. "Our host family cooked some Mexican food and it was very good and spicy!" she says. Ashley hopes she can return to the states to attend a university. She also wants to explore more classic American cities and explore downtown areas.

Kexin Hu (Morty), 15

Morty has once again returned to America after her previous visit in middle school. Although it was a similar experience as before, she looks forward to going to Universal Studios and understanding life as an American student. She decided to visit El Rancho after seeing a video about students' experiences here and found Pico Rivera to be the most interesting.



ever, Morty isn't just an advent music listener, she can play a total of five instruments! She can play the flute, piano, guitar, drums, and a Chinese string instrument known as a Guzheng.

In her time spent in California Morty has been able to try some American goodies. "I miss the food from home, but I like donuts," she says. When asked what food item she would like to be she says, "I would like to be sugar because it makes you happy." As you can tell Morty's sweet tooth is hard to miss!

Although this trip is mainly to learn about American student life and relax during vacation, Morty will be visiting some college campuses, including UCLA. Morty surely would like to return to America and visit

places like New York City. She also hopes to attend the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) and study mathematics, her favorite subject.

For Morty, her typical school day starts at 7:15 a.m. and ends at around 5:00 p.m., meanwhile here at El Rancho she has more time to relax and enjoy her stay. "Teachers here show more of their personality, all of my teachers just taught us how to do calculations, and it is more relaxing and interesting," she says. "Although some classes, such as the AP courses are similar, El Rancho offers many classes in art and other subcategories like ma-

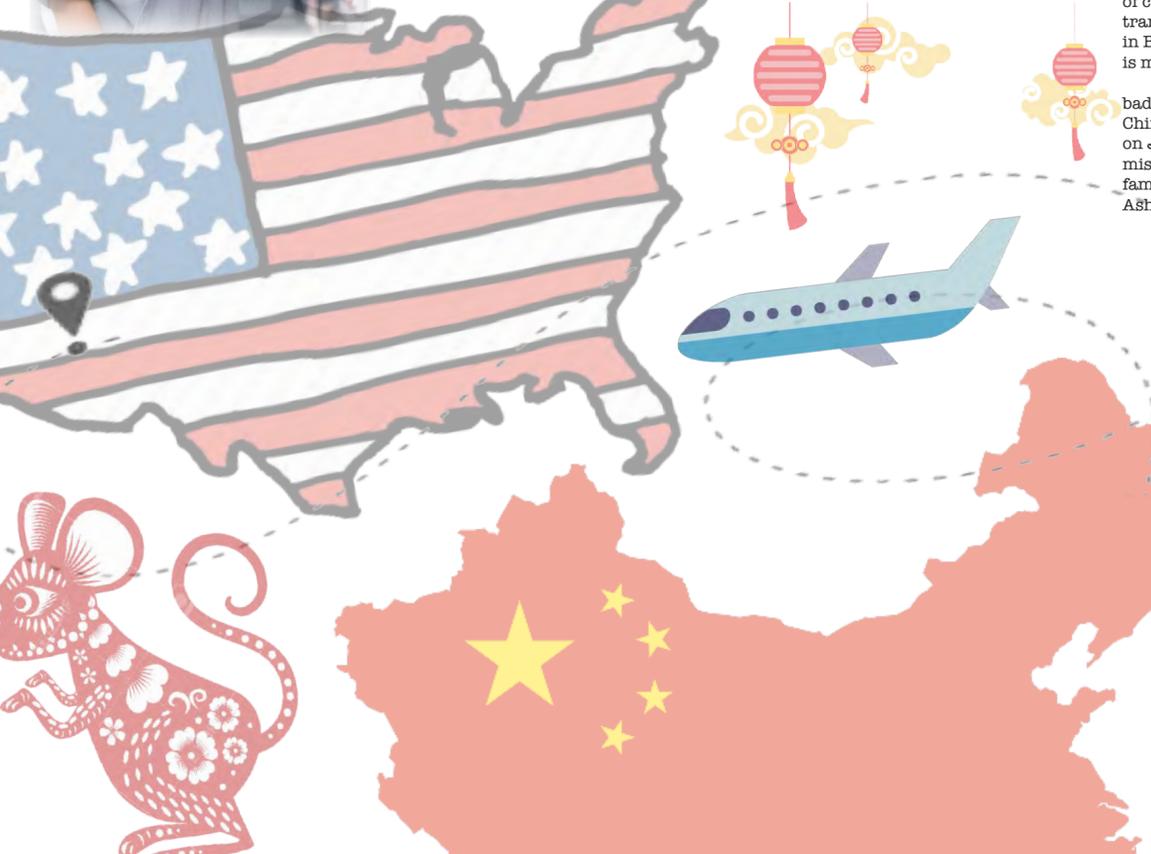
rine biology," she continues. Aside from school Morty enjoys listening to music, Sufjan Stevens and David Bowie being some of her favorite artists. How-

ever, Morty isn't just an advent music listener, she can play a total of five instruments! She can play the flute, piano, guitar, drums, and a Chinese string instrument known as a Guzheng.

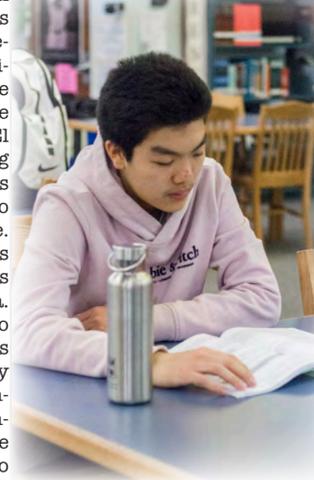
When choosing a destination to visit, a variety of courses was something that Thomas was looking for. El Rancho does have many courses to choose from, so this was the obvious choice for Thomas. The fact that southern California has warm weather compared to Minnesota's usually cool weather also helped him decide to come to El Rancho.

Thomas has enjoyed his experience in Pico Rivera so far, especially the "environment and academic atmosphere." Although he has had a great time here, he misses some aspects of his home. After being here for some time, Thomas says, "I miss the culture."

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Henian Song (Hugo), 15



When faced with many destinations to choose from, Henian "Hugo" Song ultimately chose to come to Los Angeles. He chose to come to El Rancho after hearing the previous accounts from students who had visited before.

However, this wouldn't be Hugo's first time in America. In fifth grade, Hugo visited Los Angeles with his mother. They went to Santa Monica, where they enjoyed the pier. While he did have fun, Hugo did not enjoy his first experience since he did not understand every-

thing that was going on. This trip is different for Hugo, as this time he is traveling with his friends. He does miss his other companions who went to different destinations such as Minnesota. He has enjoyed the trip so far, saying that he feels "lucky to be here."

Although he says that "Everyone is very nice," he still misses his home. When asked what he missed, he said, "Rice and the food, parents, family...Girls". Overall, Hugo has had a great trip so far, and can't wait to get back home.

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Tianrui (Thomas), 16



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Raymond Xiong (Raymond), 15



Before coming to Pico Rivera, Raymond Xiong had been shown pictures of El Rancho. He was happy to be assigned to come to El Rancho since he was attracted to California's sandy beaches and warm sunshine.

This isn't Raymond's first time coming to America. He was in fact born in America and has dual citizenship. Prior to this exchange program, he has visited America five times, where he went to Boston and Washington DC.

Despite the fact is an educational trip, Raymond enjoys the classes. He explains that in China, they have assigned classes and that their school day usually ends at around 5:00 p.m.

Raymond says, "[the teachers] just speak and give information. Here we have a lot of discussions..." He also says that

in China, they have a 70-minute lunch break, during which the students "sometimes take a nap in the classroom."

Raymond compares the classes here to the classes in China, saying, "back in China we don't have AP courses." They get to participate in these courses during their junior year.

In his free time, Raymond enjoys playing games, basketball, soccer, and his favorite sport, tennis. He also enjoys watching The Big Bang Theory.

When asked about whether he preferred his home food or the food here, Raymond says he prefers the food here. His favorite foods include hamburgers, pizza, and chips. Raymond enjoys the

atmosphere in El Rancho, saying that "All the teachers and classmates are very friendly." Economics is his favorite subject, and Mr. Elias is his favorite teacher. Raymond says, "He's funny and he teaches us basic economic knowledge... and [we] are able to master the material."

Raymond enjoys his stay with his host family, particularly enjoying the food. He talks about his host family, saying, "the food the grandma made was very delicious...I feel very comfortable living with them."

Although he likes his host family, he still misses his family in China as well as his other classmates who went to different parts of America.

John wanted to come to Pico Rivera for his exchange program after he visited Pasadena before. "The climate in LA is really nice compared to like Massachusetts where there are snow storms," he says.

Compared to his life in China, the teachers are more friendly. "In China we have the same schedules every day, but classes here are more free. You can go to the bathroom anytime and be a little bit late, the teachers don't really mind," he says. "Lunch time is very different in China, [back home] we value the meals we eat so our lunches are longer," he continues.

John is also interested in the way material is taught to students. "The

classes are a lot different, the style of teaching is very different, the teachers like to use experiments and demonstrations in China we just look at the book and memorize the details," he says. "Here you get to select your electives, but in China all the classes are compulsory," he adds.

During his stay, John looks forward to visiting colleges and going to see an NBA game. "I like that it's a small city, and the natural environment is really good, people live a simple life," he says. He is excited to see the Golden Gate bridge and explore San Francisco. He was surprised when he went

John Li, 15



to the mall and saw that it was more focused on clothing rather than the food. "In China a shopping mall's most vital part is the restaurants," he says. "People mostly go to the mall for the restaurants and shop for clothes on their way," he adds.

John loves being active, he enjoys playing basketball, badminton, table tennis and even participated in his middle schools baseball and football tea.

So far, John has enjoyed his stay in American and hopes to return and go to New York to visit different museums and see the Statue of Liberty and also go to Washington DC and Philadelphia.

FEATURES

Ruben Barajas is *simply irresistible!*

BY JULIA DIAZ

EL RODEO STAFF WRITER

Ruben Barajas isn't your average junior, he spends his time having fun with friends and living his life to the fullest. Apart from being musically inclined, a talented actor, and a singer-songwriter, Ruben Barajas is *simply irresistible!*

Trying to find this triple threat isn't as hard as one would think, he can often be found in the little theater playing music during lunch. "It's like my second home," said Ruben.

Unfortunately, he is not a part of any clubs around campus. "As much as I would love to I can't because music and drama keep me quite busy," said Barajas.

When Ruben isn't in the Little Theater, he can be found doing a handful of things, from playing guitar to thrift shopping his time is never wasted.

He enjoys spending time with friends and would describe himself as an old soul. "I like to focus on physical things such as restoring my 1955 Buick special with my dad, and dirt bike riding," said Barajas.

If that wasn't enough to convince you that Barajas is a special individual the fact that he is apart of two bands will certainly do the trick. That's right, not one band but two!



Actor, singer, and songwriter, Barajas, looks forward to a bright future.

Photo by Karina Rivera

His first band's name is "Wild Youth." With his two friends Hayden Kennedy and Lucas Jordan, the band is a three-piece punk rock band.

Barajas said, "We have been a band for three months now and have played three shows in little Tokyo." They based themselves in a small vintage shop called Space City Vintage.

His second band is named "The Projects." Alongside his friends Chris "guapo" Rodriguez, Jason Mercado, David Marquez, and Xavier Marques they play anything from rock to bedroom pop.

Barajas shared his experience with stage fright and how he has learned to overcome it.

"Performing in front of an audience is always

nerve-racking but that is a good thing," Barajas said, "I remembered this quote that said 'if you don't get nervous before you get on stage is it really worth doing? I'll stop when there are no nerves,'" Barajas added, "I didn't really get that at first but now it makes total sense."

He continues to look at each new audience with a new mindset.

"Some things I notice is that the way people respond to my music goes from 'awe look at those kids rocking' to 'holy sh*t those are kids?' and that makes me feel good," Barajas said, "It makes me want to do it more and more."

The goal of the band is to one day expand their music worldwide. "Our band has three original songs right now and we are work-

ing on making more to eventually make an album," Barajas said.

Don't be surprised if they're music is played on the radio someday. To keep up with his band, you can follow their Instagram @wildyouth_wildrecords and maybe you'll find a new favorite band!

Ruben's love for music doesn't end there, he tends to listen to older musicians who have passed such as Johnny Cash, Frank Sinatra, and Dean Martin.

"I would describe my taste in music as very diverse," said Barajas.

Other than the classics, Barajas also takes a listen to singers such as Bruno Mars, Los Retros, and even Adele! "I could go on and on about this but I won't say anymore," Barajas said.

Being friends with the junior definitely has its perks. "Something interesting about me is that I can have a genuine conversation with literally anyone." Who doesn't love meaningful conversations nowadays?

"But if you get close to me, just know that you're in for a ride of me making fun of you in a loving way," Barajas added, "I also tend to imitate everything about the things you do."

Not only will you see the playful side of Barajas, but you might find yourself getting great advice!

"One piece of advice that has stuck with me is if things happen or don't happen whether it is good or bad it's for a reason you may never know the reason but you have to trust the process," said Barajas.

He lives his life by this advice because to him "why waste your time and energy trying to make certain things happen when they were never supposed to in the first place."

No matter what the situation is, there is no doubt that Barajas is just the person to go to if you are in need of a friendly conversation. Don't be shy and miss the friendship of a lifetime! Stop by the little theater and strike up a conversation with Barajas or follow his Instagram, @ruben_barajas_13.

Mr. Magani discusses passion for teaching



Magani plans to make his ER years memorable.

Photo by Carlos Rojo

BY SOPHIA LUGO

EL RODEO STAFF WRITER

One of the fresh faces on campus is Anthony Magani! He teaches English 10 and ERWC for 12th graders. He attended Cal State Long Beach for his undergraduate, majoring in communication studies, and National University for his masters, majoring in English.

He attended Downey high school. While there, he was a part of ASB for his last two years and loved it. As for sports, he says, "I always wanted to swim but I was shy of being in a speedo and that's the only reason I didn't do it, but I think I would've loved it." He did participate in baseball from eight to eleventh grade but not at school.

He even met one of his favorite coworkers in high school, Amayllis Velasco, an English teacher. "We were in ASB together so from that Velasco and I have a cool connection and with that just kind of became super close."

Despite this being Magani's first year teaching and at the Ranch, it's no foreign land. "I grew up in Downey so somewhere local to home was really important. El Rancho fit perfectly," says Magani.

He first loved communications, but unfortunately it's not offered in most high schools. "English was the closest thing I could get to [communications]. I was also good at English so it fit," says Magani.

He also enjoys philosophy saying, "I think English can contribute to those lessons which can allow more conversation in a philosophical way to get people engaged and interested in talking."

Magani's favorite part of teaching thus far has been connecting with the students. "Sometimes there are really difficult days because they have difficult things going on and maybe I do too so I can relate, but just the

connection I have with the kids is the biggest reason I am here. Just the takeaway I have and sometimes it's really positive and really funny and loud and great, but it's the intimate moments that are the best," says Magani.

His goal as a teacher is to make sure that his kids are getting what they need to succeed. He says, "Sounds super corny and cheesy I know it does, but also that's why we become teachers, to make sure that we are providing for you."

Getting into the swing of teaching has been taking up most of his time saying, "My hobbies right now are pushed to the side because every minute I have outside of class is developing lessons and things for class."

When he does have free time he likes to go to the beach or to the gym. "[The gym] kind of gets my mind off of things. It's like my therapy, I can let go of the day. But if I can and the weather is nice, I like to go to the beach," says Magani.

He adds, "Growing up with my mom one of the bigger things we did was we would go rollerblading on the beach, bike riding, and just hang out and spend the day on the beach so it's an easy place for me to be."

Straying away from his active side, he likes to be lazy. Magani says, "Let me sit on the couch, watch a little Netflix show, *Grace and Frankie* all day. If I can just be a lazy bum for second, I want to do that." He's very relatable to us students.

His favorite movie as of right now is *Spider-Man: Into the Spider-Verse*. He's watched it three times, on his lazy days of course.

As for music, he's definitely not a band wagoner. His favorite artist is Kevin Garrett. "Nobody knows him, he has very small shows in LA and I go as often as I can. He has a very soothing, calming type of tone about him." Magani adds, "I like most things except for heavy-metal, I can't do that."

When it comes to food, Magani is more of a savory person. He says, "I don't really like sweets. Give me salty give me savory. If it's sweet I'll eat it if it's in front of my face, but I never crave dessert."

Magani likes anything in a tortilla or between two slices of bread. "I can build any type of meal out of that. Burrito or sandwich all day, burrito first," he says.

This being Magani's first year teaching, he had a different career beforehand. For eight years prior he was in charge of making sure major celebrities were wearing the jewelry of his client.

"So it was my job to make sure Sofia Vergara was wearing my clients earrings or Emma Watson was wearing my clients rings to whatever photo shoot so it was seen and represented," says Magani.

With this job came meeting lots of celebrities. His favorite to meet was Jennifer Lopez.

Magani says, "She is an icon of the world and she has more clout and standing in soci-

ety then many many humans in this world and with that, she was still super kind and really humble. She was very sweet to everyone around her, including me." Just don't ask his about Nicki Minaj...

He adds, "Although it was a lot of fun, it didn't feel super meaningful. The money was good and that was great, but when I went home I didn't feel excited about what I did anymore. I needed to change that and teaching was always in my mind."

As the year winds down, he has some advice for the seniors. "It's the last year so it's hard to keep your head in the game the whole time and I totally understand that, but do your best to focus and don't distract yourself too much," says Magani.

He adds, "Just ask any questions you have for what tomorrow looks like after you graduate, ask ask ask. Get as much feedback to see what you need to do once you leave the gates of El Rancho."

When it comes to choosing a college that's right for you he says, "Number one, it's going to cost a lot of money to go to college no matter where you go. If a JC is something you are open to I would suggest doing a JC first to kind of get your feet wet. Also make sure to do your best to actually move forward and transfer to a four-year if that something that you're looking for."

No matter what you want to talk about, Magani is the person to go to! His energetic, caring, and free-spirited personality is sure to brighten anyone's day.

SPORTS

Lady Dons hope to see a championship ring in their future

BY AMANDA ESCOBAR
EL RODEO STAFF WRITER

The Lady Dons' league kicked off league with a game against La Serna, resulting in a win (57-54.) The team currently holds a record of 18 wins and five losses with preseason games included.

The team is preparing for the competitive season ahead as they strive to better themselves at practice. "Our team's goal is to win a ring and go undefeated for league," says senior captain Sarahid Hernandez.

A struggle that the team has to deal with this year are the injuries of teammates in their starting line. Another struggle would be that the team would be having some defensive breakdowns.

Despite these minor setbacks, the team isn't going to let these struggles hinder their chance for a good season, and it definitely doesn't shut down their drive.



Lady Dons playing defense against their opponents.

Photo by Carlos Rojo

Hernandez says, "On the bright side, these struggles have made some of our other players step up their game."

With the developing bond that the team has, they are capable of reading each other on the court. It's also helpful that their strengths and weaknesses are well known amongst themselves

"On the court, we're good at motivating each other through some tough games," says senior Ajohnette Guerra. This makes it easier to execute games, and have everyone on the same page when on and off the bench.

"Our chemistry in the group improved how we play on the court, everyone gives their

all to execute things to their full capability," adds Guerra.

"The connection our team has with each other brings us success because we're always there for one another on and off the court," says Hernandez.

Hernandez, feels that it is her responsibility to lead her teammates and set an ex-

ample for the underclassmen.

She also feels that the relationship between the players is important to having great team chemistry and a successful season.

This is the first year that Hernandez is the captain for the varsity team. She has high hopes this year for the team to thrive on the court.

"We will win the league for the 8th year in a row and we can go far into the playoffs with the skilled players that we have," said Hernandez.

The toughest opponent for the team this season is La Serna High School. Their team is the most competitive because the Lady Dons find it a challenge to reach the level of La Serna's players.

Unfortunately the Press wasn't able to receive the scores in time for their game vs the Whittier Cardinals. Their next game is tomorrow against the Condors at Cal High!

Boys' soccer in prime position to claim league title

BY DIEGO GONZALEZ
EL RODEO STAFF WRITER

The boys' varsity soccer team is well into Del Rio League competition, currently holding a record of four wins and one loss. The Dons only defeat came at the hands of California High School after a tough game that ended in 1-0 loss.

With four wins in league, the team's overall record consists of ten wins, eight losses, and one tie for the 2019-2020 season. The boys' preseason proved to be tough, but the team has found its rhythm in the past five games.

Coach Gerry Goyenaga is at the head of the team for a 6th consecutive season, and he has high hopes ahead of playoffs. Goyenaga says, "My overall goal for the season is for the boys to play well, and for us to finish league on the right note."

After a first round elimination from last year's playoffs, Goyenaga hopes to perform well in the postseason. "We're definitely hoping to

make some noise in CIF, and to have our last game of the season be a win," adds Goyenaga.

The team this year has also shown a positive attitude during their season, and the relationships they have built with each other are very important to their performance.

"Something that makes this group unique is the bond that they have with one another," says Goyenaga, "I feel like on this team, even if we have freshmen and seniors on the same team, everyone gets along."

Although the team's roster has a lot of younger faces this season, Goyenaga feels that this is a big help to the team's style of play on the field.

"I feel like the younger players are a lot more coachable, and a lot of the younger guys are more hungry and ambitious to get out on the field," says Goyenaga.

Along with a lot of younger players, the team counts on experience from the seniors on the roster. Four-year returner Fernando Saldana is one

of the ten seniors on the team.

"One difference from when I was a freshman is that I was a little bit more nervous when playing, but now that I'm a senior I feel a lot more confident on the field," says Saldana.

Saldana also has high hopes for the rest of the league games, and believes that team has what it takes in order to be successful at the end of the season.

Saldana says, "My goal for the rest of the season is to win the rest of the games and hopefully end with a clean sheet, despite the goals we've gotten scored on us so far."

Playoffs are a common hope for the players on the squad, and Saldana believes that the team can make a deep run during the postseason.

"I definitely think that we can make the playoffs this season, and I think that we can make it pretty far as long as we keep up the intensity we have going," adds Saldana.

The Dons hope to continue their winning ways in order



Antonio Galicia running toward the ball. Photo by Carlos Rojo

to clinch the league title game and move on to the playoffs. The Don's next game and the

last game of the Del Rio League will be played at Santa Fe High School on Tuesday, February 4th.

Girls' water polo sets challenging goals for themselves

BY GRECIA HARO-FLORES
EL RODEO STAFF WRITER

The girls' water polo currently holds a record of 14 wins and seven losses overall, with one win and two losses in Del Rio League play. This season their heads are held up high, and hope to accomplish their goals.

Senior captain Karinna Lopez says, "The goals for this season is to improve and clean up our technique and go to CIF."

Senior Sakeenah Islam has the same goals in mind. "My goal for this season is to get the opportunity to make it to CIF with all my teammates," says Islam.

"Even if we don't win CIF, making it to the semi-finals would be a great accom-



Alexis Ortiz ready to pass the ball. Photo by Carlos Rojo

plishment for us and I think it is something we are all striving for right now," adds Islam.

A goal for junior Alexis Lara would be "to improve with more techniques and show

them to the lowerclassmen."

Looking back at her years in water polo, Lara says, "I feel like I've improved a bunch and I look back at how I played as a freshman and I cringe."

Islam also takes a look back at the years she's spent invested in the game.

"With the help from my coaches throughout the years from both my club teams and high-school team, my skills in water polo have improved significantly since my freshman year," Islam says, "I gained a lot of experience and learned a lot of things about polo that I did not comprehend my first year playing."

Though improving their skills isn't their only key to success. Another one of their keys to their success would definitely be their strong bond with one another.

"I think we all see each other as a second family, we spend a lot of time together and it has brought us really close," says Is-

lam, "We do almost everything together whether it's eating, playing, shopping or even just being each other's presence I think we all enjoy it. Also we have no drama."

"We always tell each other ways to improve and as teammates we'll stay a little later after practice to practice on small things like shots or a way to turn someone," says Lara.

They also think a few other keys to their success are "hard work, punctuality, communication and [their] desire to win."

Lopez says, "We work together by communicating with one another so our team can work more efficiently."

Their following game will be a non-league game on Friday, January 31st.

ENTERTAINMENT

Kobe Bryant leaves behind a legacy of love

BY ROBERT RIOS
EL RODEO STAFF WRITER

NBA icon Kobe Bryant passed away at the age of 41 on Sunday in Calabasas, California in a helicopter accident that claimed the lives of nine people, one of them being his 13-year old daughter Gianna "Gigi" Bryant.

The other seven lives that were sadly lost were John, Keri, and Alyssa Altobelli, Sarah and Payton Chester, Christina Mauser, and pilot Ara Zobayan.

A source told ESPN insider Adrian Wojnarowski that the helicopter was en route to Mamba Sports Academy in Thousand Oaks, California, where Bryant was scheduled to coach his daughter Gianna's girls' basketball team.

The news of Bryant's tragic death came as a shock to many fans around the globe, even including people who didn't follow Bryant's career.

Bryant was one of the very few that people around the world felt was invincible, untouchable, and immortal.

To many in both the sports world and the outside world, Bryant was an inspiration to work hard, be dedicated, and to have that "mamba mentality" in whatever craft someone chose for themselves.

"I've always said that I wanted to be remembered as a player that didn't waste a moment, didn't waste a day," Bryant said in an interview with ESPN in 2015.

From his early morning workouts, to marathon shooting sessions, to a relentless desire to improve himself as if he was the 12th man on the bench, Bryant's work ethic was truly remarkable.

He showed that the destination was not the dream, but the journey one takes to get there, that was the dream.

Bryant had one of those unique careers in which the younger generation grew up watching him as his career went on and was looked up to as the Michael Jordan of his time.



Kobe in a loving embrace with his daughter Gianna.

For the older fans, they were able to grow up alongside Bryant and see him evolve from the moment he was drafted straight out of Lower Merion High School in 1996, to his farewell game in 2016 where he scored 60 points.

Kids in the 80s and 90s wanted to be like Jordan. Kids in the 2000's wanted to be like Bryant.

For 20 years Bryant devoted most of his time to his NBA career, and in his retirement he was able to spend more time with his 4 daughters and be the coach to Gianna's basketball team.

In a Jimmy Kimmel interview, Kimmel asked Bryant a question concerning having a boy to carry on his legacy. Bryant responded by saying, "Gianna will be standing next to me, and it'll be like, 'And you gotta have a boy. You and I gotta have a boy, have somebody carry on the tradition, the legacy.' She's like, 'I got this. No boy for that, I got this.'"

Gianna Bryant had dreams and aspirations to go play for the UConn Women's basketball team, and then later go onto play in the WNBA to be the heir to the Bryant legacy.

Bryant only began to tap into the second half of his career in which he channeled that Mamba mentality into his new found love of storytelling.

In an interview with Sports Illustrated in 2018, Bryant talked about his love of storytelling in which he says, "I love the idea of creative content whether it's mythology or animation, written or film, that can inspire people

and give them something tangible they can use in their own lives."

In 2015, Bryant released a documentary called, "Kobe Bryant's Muse." The documentary explored the mentors, allies, and rivalries that have helped to shape the 18-year career of NBA legend Bryant as he cemented his legacy and contemplates life after the sport.

After he retired in 2016, Bryant went on to win an Academy Award for his short film, "Dear Basketball," which was a letter he wrote to the game that he loved.

As news began to spread and reports began to be confirmed, some NBA legends, teammates of Bryant, current players who had a relationship with Bryant, players who have never spoken to him, but had a high level of respect to him began to speak on the tragedy.

Jerry West, who traded for Bryant in 1996 said, "One of the worst days of my life. The only thing I can compare it to is I had a brother killed in Korea. I'm just devastated by this news."

Former teammate Shaquille O'Neal said in an Instagram post, "There are no words to express the pain that I'm going through now with this tragic and sad moment of losing my niece Gigi & my friend, brother, my partner in winning championships, my dude and my homie... IM SICK RIGHT NOW!"

The NBA had eight games scheduled that Sunday, and when the news spread about the sudden death of Bryant, players became emotional

due to the passing of their idol.

Clippers head coach Doc Rivers was fighting back tears during questioning from the media. "People think because you compete against each other that you don't have a relationship and you don't like them," Rivers adds, "I think it's the exact opposite. Sometimes the more you compete, the more respect you have for the opponent. That's the way I felt with Kobe."

The teams scheduled to play honored Bryant by opening the games with 24 second violations from both teams in honor of the number that he wore for many years. Some teams took eight second violations to honor the number that Bryant also wore during his career.

Atlanta Hawks point guard, Trae Young, had built a close relationship with both Bryant and his daughter Gigi, which led to him switching his jersey number to eight in honor of Bryant.

"One of the last conversations we had, he was just telling me how much he's seen my game progress and he's just been happy for me," Young said to the media, "He said how proud he was of me and how he wants me to continue to be a role model for kids growing up and for Gigi and all the kids looking up to me, to inspire these kids and continue to play my heart out."

Memorials began to spring outside the Mamba Sports Academy, where the helicopter was heading, and outside of the Staples Center, which held his final game and has both of his jerseys immortalized in the rafters with all the Laker greats.

The Lakers vs. Clippers game that was scheduled for Tuesday night was postponed to a later day at the Laker organizations request.

On the day that basketball's greatest story teller passed away, the millions that were inspired by his continued strive for greatness, are left trying to write the end to his story.

Mac Miller's final album *Circles* is a masterpiece

BY JORDAN URIBE
EL RODEO STAFF WRITER

Despite the tragic loss of beloved artist Mac Miller, the release of his final album *Circles* demonstrates how his legacy still lives on.

Circles was released on January 17th, and immediately gained traction. It debuted with millions of streams worldwide, as well as having every song in the US Top 30 Chart, both

on Spotify and Apple Music.

Before Miller's death, he was already in the works to put out a companion album to his 2018 release, *Swimming*. When placing both album titles together, *Circles* and *Swimming*, its meant to complete the phrase "swimming in circles."

Swimming details his struggles of escaping from his past problems, and *Circles* details his acceptance to his problems in order to move on and be a better person.

Miller's family described his vision by saying he wanted "two different styles complementing each other, completing a circle."

On January 8th, Miller's family posted to his Instagram. The post revealed his new album and the release date. It also included a message from his family, stating that Miller would have liked the world to hear his new project and thanking all of his fans for the unconditional support that he's received.

Alongside the reveal of the album, Millers management team released the fourth track on the album titled "Good News."

The release of "Good News" took many fans by surprise. It gave me an eerie feeling when hearing the voice of the artist that is not alive anymore.

The lyrics also gave me a

sad feeling with the lyrics, "A lot of things I regret, but I just say I forget. Why can't it just be easy? Why does everybody need me to stay?" and "Can I get a break? Wish that I could just get out my goddamn way," possibly referring to his depression and melancholy.

The track was an instant success and started the build up of anticipation for the release of the full album. The full album has 12 tracks and in total lasts 49 minutes.

With everything said, this album was a true masterpiece. Miller put out one of the most thought out companion albums, and executed it like no other artist.

Go and give this album a listen, but I highly suggest that you listen to his previous album "Swimming" first, given that they are both two halves to a whole. *Circles* is now available on all streaming platforms.

YOU Review:
Netflix's newest hit series



The Netflix hit series *YOU* is back for season two in a new city and with a new love interest! The first season of the Netflix drama series was released in December 2018.

It has a very interesting editing style as it is narrated by the main character Joe Goldberg, played by Penn Badgley. Joe is a New York bookseller who will go to any length to get the girl he wants, all while convincing himself that his dangerous and disturbing acts are for her sake.

YOU is horror filtered through romantic comedy. Joe thinks he's the leading man, the nice guy there to rescue a woman from heartache and her own bad choices, but to the viewer, it becomes ever more clear that Joe is the real danger.

YOU retains its thrills, chills, and thoughtful questions about masculinity, abusers and modern relationships in this season's new episodes. The action moves to Los Angeles and transfers Joe's violent affections onto a new woman, the ironically named Love (Victoria Pedretti.)

Most crucially, the season tweaks last year's stalker formula by adding Candace (Amyr Childers), Joe's ex-girlfriend and ex-victim, whom viewers suspected were dead in season one. Candace channels her rage and vengefulness into playing his game of lies and manipulation, making her way into Love's life, too. *YOU* returns with the troublesome situation Joe is left at the end of season one, as he runs away from Candace.

At the beginning of season two, he changes his identity and moves to L.A. because he believes that Candace will never look for him among the palm trees, Instagram posts, and celebrities.

Will sees Love, with whom he becomes instantly obsessed and manipulates his way into her life. He begins committing his litany of crimes earlier this time around.

However, season two does more than exhibit Joe's crimes; the writers make Candace a central and worthy antagonist. She plays Joe's game of pretending, but she's also a deeply scarred woman he abused. Her pain takes precedence in the story over his desperate missions to please Love, and it's a welcome shift in perspective.

This season of *YOU* retains much of what made it a must-see first time around. It is an enjoyable binge-worthy serial killer thriller filled with twists and turns and if you haven't seen it yet I highly suggest it.