

APRIL 30 2019  
KENNEDY 236



## TWO YEARS LATER

LIVES LOST AND HONORED:

Ellis "Reed" Parlier and Riley Howell P.3

DAY OF REMEMBRANCE 2021 P.4

SHOULD YOU BE DOING MORE? P.5



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# NINERTIMES

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS



**PAGE 3** Lives lost and honored: Ellis "Reed" Parlier and Riley Howell

## NEWS

**PAGE 4** UNC Charlotte to observe second Day of Remembrance



**PAGE 5** Should you be doing more?

## OPINION



**PAGE 6** Post-Season preparation

## SPORTS

**PAGE 7A** spring tradition



**PAGE 9** 'Thunder Force'

## A&E

**PAGE 10** Beyonce's lyrical 'Lemonade'



## LIFESTYLE

**PAGE 12** The Golden Owl Tavern

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## POLICE BLOTTER

4/24: Traffic Stop/Drug Related

Officers initiated a traffic stop. One North Carolina State Citation was issued, for marijuana possession, and two individuals were referred to the Dean of Students Office.

4/25: Accident/Property Damage

Officers responded to CRI Deck in reference to a car accident/property damage report.

4/26: Damage to Property

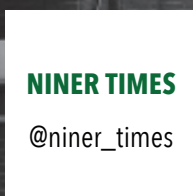
Officers responded to Lot 8 in reference to damage to a vehicle.

VIEW FULL BLOTTER AT  
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Photo by Niyathi Sulkunte

# LIVES LOST AND HONORED:



## *Ellis “Reed” Parlier and Riley Howell*

# NEWS

by Emily Kottak, Elizabeth McGuire  
Lifestyle Editor, Asst. Video Editor

**Content Warning:** This article briefly recounts the shooting on April 30. Skip the paragraph below to continue reading about Reed Parlier and Riley Howell.

Two years ago, on April 30, 2019, a gunman entered Kennedy 236 and indiscriminately opened fire. He wounded four—Rami Al-Ramadhan, Sean DeHart, Emily Houpt and Drew Pescaro—and killed two. This year, we at the Niner Times send support to those wounded and all those affected. Above all, we honor the lives of Reed and Riley, both of whom became heroes on that traumatic day two years ago.

**The articles below were published as part of a one-year anniversary special edition in 2020. We invite you to read them again to reflect on the amazing lives of Riley and Reed.**

### Ellis “Reed” Parlier

Ellis “Reed” Parlier was only 19-years-old when he tragically lost his life on April 30, 2019. Reed was born in Charlotte on October 2, 1999 to Julie and Brian Parlier. Reed has a younger sister, Mallory, who is now a senior in high school. Reed’s real name is Ellis Reed Parlier, “Ellis” being Brian’s mother’s maiden name and “Reed” being Julie’s maiden name. However, Reed’s family never referred to him as Ellis.

In 2019, Reed was a sophomore at UNC Charlotte and was studying Computer Science in hopes of becoming a video game developer. Computer Science was a fitting major for Reed considering his love for video games. Early on in high school, Reed built his own gaming computer. He attended Central Academy for Technology and Arts (CATA) in Monroe, NC where he studied in the information systems program.

In an interview with the Charlotte Observer, Reed’s family discussed how

much Reed enjoyed playing video games. From Nintendo games on the Wii to “Guitar Hero” to “World of Warcraft,” Reed could spend hours playing. However, unlike most teenagers, Reed’s family has said that he was happy even without a screen in his face.

Many of Reed’s closest friends were also gamers. When the Parlier family had a celebration of life service for Reed, the service was privately streamed online so that Reed’s gaming friends could be there.

A scholarship has been created in Reed’s honor called the Ellis “Reed” Parlier Memorial Scholarship. The fund will be administered by the College of Computing and Informatics and the recipients will be selected by a scholarship committee based on who best meets the criteria that was established by the donor. The scholarship was made possible by contributions of friends of the Parlier family as well as an anonymous donor. The scholarship criteria as well as information on how to apply can be found on [ninerscholars.uncc.edu](http://ninerscholars.uncc.edu).

A memorial for Reed was established outside of CATA to honor his memory. Students from that school will receive preference for the scholarship.

In another interview with the Charlotte Observer, Reed’s family describes him as quiet, thoughtful and observant. They

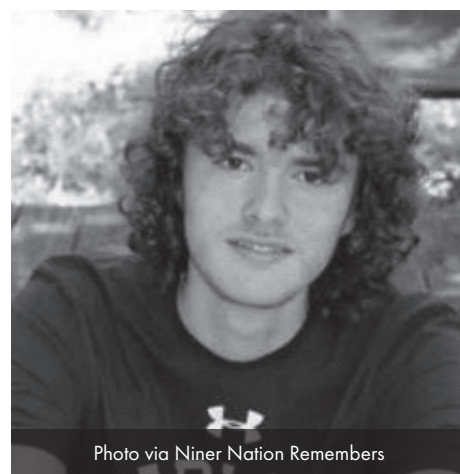


Photo via Niner Nation Remembers

explain how he rarely talked negatively about others and was very loving. On her Twitter account Julie posted, “My beautiful, kind, loving son should be on this earth spreading his intelligent, kind, loving soul to the world.”

### Riley Carl Howell

Riley Carl Howell was a 21-year-old junior at UNC Charlotte where he lost his life on April 30, 2019 tackling the gunman that opened fire on his classroom. He saved an indeterminable number of lives and was awarded a military funeral, the ROTC Medal of Heroism and the Congressional Medal of Honor Society’s Citizen Honor Award for Valor, the “Single Act of Heroism” award.\*

Riley was born on December 13, 1997 in Haywood County, North Carolina where he grew up with his parents, Thomas and Natalie Howell, younger sisters, Iris and Juliet Howell, and his younger brother, Teddy Howell. Riley was in a five-year relationship with Lauren Westmoreland who told the Niner Times that the couple planned to live one day in a small home on some large land.

Growing up in the mountain town of Waynesville, Riley developed a deep passion for the outdoors that might only have been matched by his affinity for everything car-related. Much of his knowledge on these subjects was self taught as he valued learning new things outside the classroom. In a Niner Times interview, Iris Howell referred to him as a “jack-of-all-trades kind of person” who knew a little bit about everything.

Riley’s siblings remember him enjoying “everything nerdy,” especially Batman, The Hobbit and comic conventions. However, he is most often recognized as an avid Star Wars fan. Teddy says he owned several Star Wars Lego sets and told ABC News that Riley was “the only 21-year-old who would willingly fight his lightsaber with [Teddy].” Riley now lives on symbolically

in the franchise’s official storyline as a new character, Jedi Master Ri-Lee Howell.

After attending A-B Technical Community College in Asheville, Riley came to UNC Charlotte excited to experience big-city life. At Charlotte, he was a student employee and CrossFit club member. In an article published by the U.S Army, Riley’s ROTC instructors said he embodied the perfect army officer. Though he was still deciding his career path, he planned on majoring in environmental science and minoring in geology. Riley’s family saw him potentially working with wildlife.

“He taught me to take life a little less seriously,” recalled Lauren Westmoreland to the Niner Times. “To laugh even when I didn’t want to, to forgive readily and to love freely and without abandon.”

The world will remember Riley as the everyday hero who, on April 30, 2019 instinctively tackled the gunman firing on his class. Those who knew him will remember Riley as a kindhearted individual that everyone could look up to. He was a hero and a man of many talents. He was a friend, boyfriend, brother and son.

“He was just a normal guy,” says Iris. “He was my big brother. He was special to us in his own way.”



Photo courtesy of Laura Westmoreland

# Congratulations

## Who's Who Among Students in American Universities and Colleges 2021

Adonis Abdullah	Victoria Kuntz
Nisha Aggarwal	Kelsey Lane
Mohsen Alwahishi	Emma Loflin
Morgan Askew	Kenneth Jackson Lutz
Andrea Badillo-Perez	Kaela Martin
Jenna Basel	Claudia Martinez
Nathaniel Belles	Nikolai Toivo Mather
Sajan Bhardwaj	Sydeny McCain
Megan Bird	Evelyn Morris
Summer Bond	Arjun Nag
Brooke Bowen	Rachel Nguyen
Nickolas John Brown	Ebuka Ngwadam
Annalise Burchill	Diamond Oduok
Jordan Byers	Miriam Chiamaka Okonkwo
Haley Brasington	Enny Olaleye
Loren Caldwell	Demetria Percival
Reanna Grace Calpin	Drew Pescaro
Carolina Candeloro Campos	Jackson David Poulcott
Caitlin Cary	Abby Richardson
Crystal Cao	Shanna Rizzo
Daniel Kardon Cornett	Jared Schubring
Kaylee Cortese	Shelbi Shaut
Makayla Craig	Brianna Smith
Connor Derrick	Elizabeth Stancil
Jasmine Dove	Holden Stanley
Jada Dove	Brin Sullivan
Savannah Jane Dupree	Dmitry Tereshenko
Dana Elasmarr	Chase Thompson
Eric Elsaesser	Taylor Trush
Kasey Everette	Tiffany Turner
Princess Evuka	Molly Unrath
Christina Freeman	Abby Verouden
Imani Gill	Natalie Walls
Katie Hammaker	Sydney Wall
Jala Hayes	Brittany Walker
Dustin Jones	Mackenzie Whittaker
Taylor Madison Jones	Connor Wood
Josephine Jenita Justin	Ashleyn Kate Worthington
Christos Karamitros	Cameron Rosas Wuotto
Matthew Kolflat	Rani Young



UNC CHARLOTTE  
Leadership & Community Engagement

## UNC Charlotte to observe second Day of Remembrance

by Madison Dobrzanski  
Editor-in-Chief

Photo by Chris Crews

April 30, 2021 will be a day of no classes, with virtual and in-person activities to recognize the two-year anniversary of the campus shooting that took the lives of two students and injured four others.

The Day of Remembrance schedule includes activities to promote healing through mental health, physical activity, community discussion and reflection. The events begin at 9 a.m. and go until 6 p.m. There will be a Virtual Remembrance Program from 5:15 p.m. - 5:40 p.m. with remarks from administrators, student leaders, as well as student vocal performances. Weather permitting, the ceremony will be broadcasted at Jerry Richardson Stadium, where up to 2,200 guests may attend to view the program.

According to the Niner Nation Remembers website, the activities and events are provided by the Center for Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS), University Recreation (UREC) and the Employee Assistance Program.

As a member of the Memorial Advisory Group, former Student Body President Tahlieah Sampson 2020-2021 has been helping plan the permanent memorial of the April 30 shooting and plan this year's Day of Remembrance. She did so alongside other student leaders, including Crystal Cao, the president of CAB, Alex Suptela, the president of GPSG, an SGA representative and a graduate student representative.

"We just brainstormed ways students could get involved that day," said

Sampson. "For example, we have yoga and mindfulness through UREC. That will be properly socially distanced. We also have a 4.9 remembrance walk/jog or run, that's where anyone in the community can run, jog or walk 4.9 miles and share it on social media."

"We will also have a mural activity in front of UREC for people to basically reflect and draw how they feel. There's also a 'Message Boards' event where people write and reflect in front of Kennedy. There will be a talk session with CAPS which will be virtual for students to go vent," said Sampson.

The same events as the morning will repeat in the afternoon after lunch.

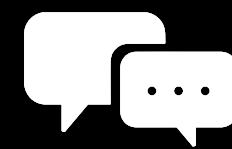
According to Niner Nation Remembers website, the permanent April 30 memorial design will be shared at the Virtual Remembrance Program. "This past week, we narrowed down the applications from 40 to four," said Sampson. "The selection committee hasn't selected one yet, but they all look very beautiful, and I'm excited to have this on campus for students to reflect," said Sampson.

The 2020 Day of Remembrance, held on the first anniversary of the shooting, was also a day of no classes and reflection events. There were only virtual events because of COVID-19 restrictions being implemented the month prior.

**The Day of Remembrance  
2021 schedule can be found at  
[ninernationremembers.uncc.edu](http://ninernationremembers.uncc.edu).**



# Should you be doing more?



OPINION

by April Carte, Brandon Mitchell  
Asst. Copy Editor, Asst. Layout Editor

April 30, 2021 is the two-year anniversary of the campus shooting that took the lives of two students, injured four others and affected a whole university community. It is a time of reflection on a traumatic experience. During this time of reflection and healing, you may be asking yourself, “am I doing enough?” or “is it worth it?” Below are two explanations for different ways of coping with trauma. **Content Warning: Detailed recollections of the April 30 shooting.**

**April:** On April 30, 2019, UNC Charlotte became another name on a long list of mass shootings and gun violence. A list that we should have never been added to in the first place, but one that remains important to acknowledge as it gets longer and longer. As a student who lived through a shooting at their own university, I look at this list and can't help but to think: is there more we could be doing to prevent people from feeling all the things UNC Charlotte students felt days, even months after April 30?

The day after the April 30 shooting, I attended the candlelight vigil. When I took my seat, I remember feeling extremely vulnerable; like someone would attempt to shoot at every student that was packed in that arena. Once that feeling passed, and former Chancellor Dubois began speaking, I looked around and saw not a single dry-eyed student. It was this weird sense of community—everyone there was hurting in some way or another. For me, it was the very first moment that I felt something needed to change.

Activism and participation are key to change. This means marching in any pro-gun-control protests you can find, calling and emailing your local representatives, staying educated on current gun laws and voting for people that value the gun reform this country so desperately needs. According to the Gun Violence Archive, by the end of 2019, there were 417 mass shootings (defined by four or more people killed or injured), the highest number recorded since they

began data collection in 2014. UNC Charlotte was one of those 417 in 2019.

While I cared about the gun violence in this country leading up to April 30, I don't think I cared enough. Sometimes we feel that our voices are smaller when used to speak up against something we have never experienced. The sad reality is that gun violence, and mass shootings were just as prevalent in our communities in the years leading up to 2019. Maybe the number on paper was a little less, but even one is one too many.

Getting involved in your community can be a powerful way to cope. In an article by Vanderbilt Medical Center, clinical psychologist Dr. Chad A. Buck says, “positive community action can help channel your reactions and offer opportunities to engage like-minded people.” Sometimes, we need to be surrounded by those that are just as passionate about change as we are. Looking back at 2018, when a gunman opened fire at Stoneman Douglas High School, killing and injuring 34 people, we saw a group of survivors use their voices to speak up against gun violence. We saw them demand change.

For me, healing quietly in the comfort of my bedroom was only making it worse. That is not to say this is not a valid way to recover. However, if you are anything like me, you may decide that activism is the only way to heal properly. Two years later, and 159 mass shootings into 2021, I stand by my personal decision to heal through activism.

**Brandon:** As survivors of the April 30 shooting, we are semi-obliged to respect and honor those we lost that day. But as a community, we have an equally important duty to heal. Everyone's activism looks different, and everyone's path to recovery is different.

As soon as the campus lockdown ended, I grabbed a couple of friends and drove back to my hometown. I ran. I spent weeks there and did everything to forget about what I experienced. Even there, I was surrounded by reminders. I wore a UNC Charlotte shirt to lunch, and the server pelted me with sympathy. It was claustrophobic, and I almost had a panic attack at the table. I didn't attend the vigils because I just couldn't.

According to psychiatrist and New York Times best-selling author, Bessel van der Kolk, “Trauma, by definition, is unbearable and intolerable... It takes tremendous energy to keep functioning while carrying the memory of terror, and the shame of utter weakness and vulnerability.”

When shit hits the fan, humans are hardwired for flight or fight. Adrenaline spikes and we make an instinctive decision. Sometimes we're heroes, but usually, we're one of many running away. That is okay. Running isn't always cowardice. Sometimes it is survival.

One year ago, a student critically injured at the Virginia Tech shooting, Kristina Anderson, sent a letter to Niner Times in recognition of the first anniversary of April 30. “Every survivor's feelings and experiences are unique and valid,”

Anderson said. Her words apply to every member of the UNC Charlotte community, including those who chose a different form of healing. So if you were waiting for permission to heal, there it is.

However, you do not need an excuse for healing. While writing this article, I can still feel the room shrinking around me. My fingers become stiffer as I continue to type. From an outside perspective, I have little reason to feel that way. I didn't lose anyone in the shooting. I didn't even witness it firsthand. I just happened to be somewhat near the library as shots began to ring. Still, my feelings are valid, and regardless of where you were that day, your feelings are too.

There is no expiration date on trauma. Do good when you can, but forgive yourself when you can't. Activism can be a tool for healing, but you can't heal while walking on a broken leg.

As Anderson said, “Each of you has a unique story of where you were that day. Honor that experience and what it means to you.”

So if you're struggling to help the community heal, start small. Start with yourself. Direct acts of self-care now will make you better equipped to help others in the future. Be a survivor today so you can be a hero tomorrow.



SPORTS

# POST-SEASON PREPARATION

**A TEAM MENTALITY IS PROPELLING  
THE CHARLOTTE MEN'S SOCCER TEAM  
TO THE NCAA**

by Bryson Foster  
Staff Writer

Picture of Patrick Hogan  
by Chris Crews



Charlotte men's soccer team has battled through adversity all season long but no matter what was thrown at the squad, the team has risen to the occasion. Defensive play has been a huge key for the success this season, but a team mentality is what's propelling the 49ers into the postseason.

The goal for the team is to win the NCAA tournament and bring a championship back to Charlotte. The 49ers have come together and have a bond that is unbreakable.

The team earned an at-large bid to the tournament and will face North Carolina on May 2 at 5 p.m. The postseason appearance will allow the 49ers to showcase their talents on the national stage.

"We have been very close as a team and I feel that has to do with the adversity that we have faced," said Head Coach Kevin Langan. "It is a true family and we are all trying to put each other first to accomplish a common goal."

After 440 days, the 49ers returned to the field for the first time on February 12. The team traveled to Durham to take on the

Duke Blue Devils. The team didn't get off to a good start as they would tie with Duke and lose to UNCW as well as West Virginia. The team was desperately trying to break through.

"We had to handle the early losses by coming together," said junior forward Preston Popp. "We had to talk about what we needed to improve on to accomplish our goals that we set for ourselves at the beginning of the season"

The misfortune would change in the team's fourth game of the season against nationally ranked conference opponent Kentucky. The 49ers once again found themselves down early but came together and battled back to beat the Wildcats in overtime. The atmosphere around the team changed with the newfound sense of confidence.

"We needed to get our confidence," said redshirt senior defender Patrick Hogan. "It changed the mindset as well as the atmosphere around our whole group."

Before the Kentucky win, the team would make a change at

goalie as they tapped redshirt senior Austin Mullins for the start. The goalie play was key and allowed the team to better themselves on the defensive side of the ball. Charlotte didn't give up a single goal from March 13 to Apr. 14 and this led to many conference wins.

"Austin came in and took his moment as the starter," said Langan. "Austin has stepped up and has played fantastic in goal."

The Niners went on a six game winning streak that propelled them to the top of the C-USA standings. The team's defense continued to prevail and it allowed the 49ers to play more relaxed as a whole. The 49ers stuck to their philosophy and continued to dominate the competition.

"We want to be rather hard to score on and that is what we have done," said Langan. "The players continue to show what the Charlotte DNA is."

On offense, the Niners continued to better themselves as well and were one of the highest scoring teams in the conference and had 14 goals this season.

The team has prided themselves on being a well rounded squad that relies on each other.

"You can't focus on one aspect because it is key to be well rounded," said Langan. "We play a team concept that gets everybody involved."

All the hard work the team has put in this season has finally paid off as the team was awarded an at-large bid to the NCAA tournament. This year's appearance is the team's 14th in school history and the latest came in 2019 where Charlotte lost to Clemson in the second round.

"We want to be sharp and prepare to take the field against UNC," said Hogan. "We are preparing for knockout soccer so we have had to change our mentality so that we can bring our A game."

There is a lot of history between the two North Carolina powerhouses. Both squads have history with each other and the Niners will look to avenge their 2011 loss in the College Cup final to the Tarheels. For veteran players such as Preston

Popp, he has many goals he hopes to accomplish before the season is said and done.

"We want to make our mark in the tournament," said Popp. "We want to be able to go all the way and show what Charlotte soccer is all about."

Perspective has been a huge part of the identity of the team. Reframing the negative thoughts into positive ones has led the 49ers to many wins as well as fellowship with each other.

"We have tried to reframe our perspectives," said Langan. "Everybody has been there for their fellow brothers."

The team has learned many lessons from the season that has been filled with adversity as well as uncertainty. The players have grown closer and the future is bright for the 49ers. The time is now for the Charlotte 49ers to make their mark.

"Our motto has been to adapt and overcome this whole season," said Langan. "Our play has shown the true journey that we have been on."



# A SPRING TRADITION

## Takeaways from Charlotte's annual Spring Game

by Miles Ruder  
Asst. Sports Editor

Photo of Charlotte's Spring Game  
by Chris Crews

It's year three for Charlotte's head football coach Will Healy and there was plenty to be excited about after this year's unique Green-Gold spring game that featured an offense vs. defense format with no scoring system.

Although the 2020 spring game was cancelled due to the coronavirus, this was an opportunity for the limited crowd of 3,890 fans in Jerry Richardson Stadium on April 24 to get a glimpse into what the 49ers are building for the upcoming season.

"For us to be able to go ahead and get some really good work in today was exciting to me," said Coach Healy after the game. "I think our guys came out with really good energy and we got a lot out of today, a lot that we can fix still and work on."

Here are five takeaways from Saturday's spring game.

**It's Chris Reynolds' Spot to Lose**

A lot of talk has swirled around leading up to the spring game about who should be the starting quarterback for the 49ers this upcoming season. Well, as of right now, it's Chris Reynolds' spot to lose.

The incoming redshirt senior only played one drive in the spring game but led the team down the field and scored the opening touchdown. The drive included a 49-yard run from No. 3 before being chased down. Later in the drive, Reynolds completed an 18-yard touchdown pass to Cameron Dollar.

"He goes one series and drops the mic

after a touchdown. It's what you expect him to do. He's done an exceptional job all spring," said Healy. "We feel like we're in really good hands because he's running the show. A great first series for him."

It's still early to say who should be the starter but Reynolds was the most relaxed and composed quarterback on the field Saturday.

Aaron McAllister and Tre Harbison, the team's two leading ball carriers last season, exited the program which leaves a big hole to fill at the running back position for a team that tends to run the ball more often than throwing it.

Shadrick Byrd, a transfer from Iowa, started as the lead back but the day was filled with multiple guys receiving carries, including 38 yards from McKinley Nelson. Elijah Turner had the longest run of the game for the halfbacks with a 16-yard carry and later scored the second touchdown of the day off an eight-yard reception from Dylan Ratliff.

The team's most experienced running back, Calvin Camp, didn't participate in Saturday's action which led to the younger backs getting meaningful reps. Unless one or two guys shine above the rest as the lead back, the 49ers could have a three-player committee at the running back position.

Transferring to a new program can be difficult or an easy transition depending on the athlete. Starting off with those that struggled, James Foster didn't have his

best game. The transfer from Texas A&M was the third quarterback to command the offense and started the game in the worst way possible, throwing the ball behind his receiver for an interception on his first play from scrimmage.

He did have some flashes on his second drive, including a sideline pass to Taylor Thompson followed up with a 17-yard run. However, later in the drive, Foster muffed the snap in the red zone and was recovered by the defense.

Despite all that, there were some fresh faces in a 49er uniform that showed off their talents in the spring game like Jon Alexander from Kansas State, who secured the interception off Foster. Kofi Wardlow, a Notre Dame transfer, stuffed the gaps, earning half a sack and also recovered a fumble.

Healy said both players have continued to improve since stepping onto the field and could be a difference maker as to why the team wins games.

"Getting (Alexander and Wardlow) here to go through an offseason with us has been really important," Healy said. "They've grown up a lot, they've matured a lot, they've bought into what we've asked them to do."

Outside of the first possession with Reynolds at quarterback, the defense settled into the game and were in control for the remaining drives. Over the next few series, the defense forced four turnovers

and continued to make timely plays all day. The offense only scored one more touchdown on the last drive of the day.

Some of the returning starters from last season didn't participate, such as Tyler Murray and Markees Watts. With all these defensive players meshed together, there's plenty of upside for what the 49er defense can do.

"We got some playmakers that can make a name for themselves that are gonna help us in the long run," said Reynolds.

One of the biggest holes for this team to fill is in the secondary where two starters from last season are no longer on the team in Ben DeLuca and Nafees Lyon. The team will be returning Antone Williams and Lance McMillan but the other two spots remained a question until Alexander and Tank Robinson showed up.

Even though the conditions weren't the best, the 49ers secondary were flying to the ball, making it difficult for the quarterbacks. Robinson praised the team's secondary and has high hopes for the backline this upcoming season.

"I feel like we have one of the best secondaries in this conference," Alexander said. "Coming from the Big 12, I've seen a lot of good dudes and I would compare this defense we have to some of the best dudes I've seen from the Big 12. I like this defense. We got a pretty good chance this season."

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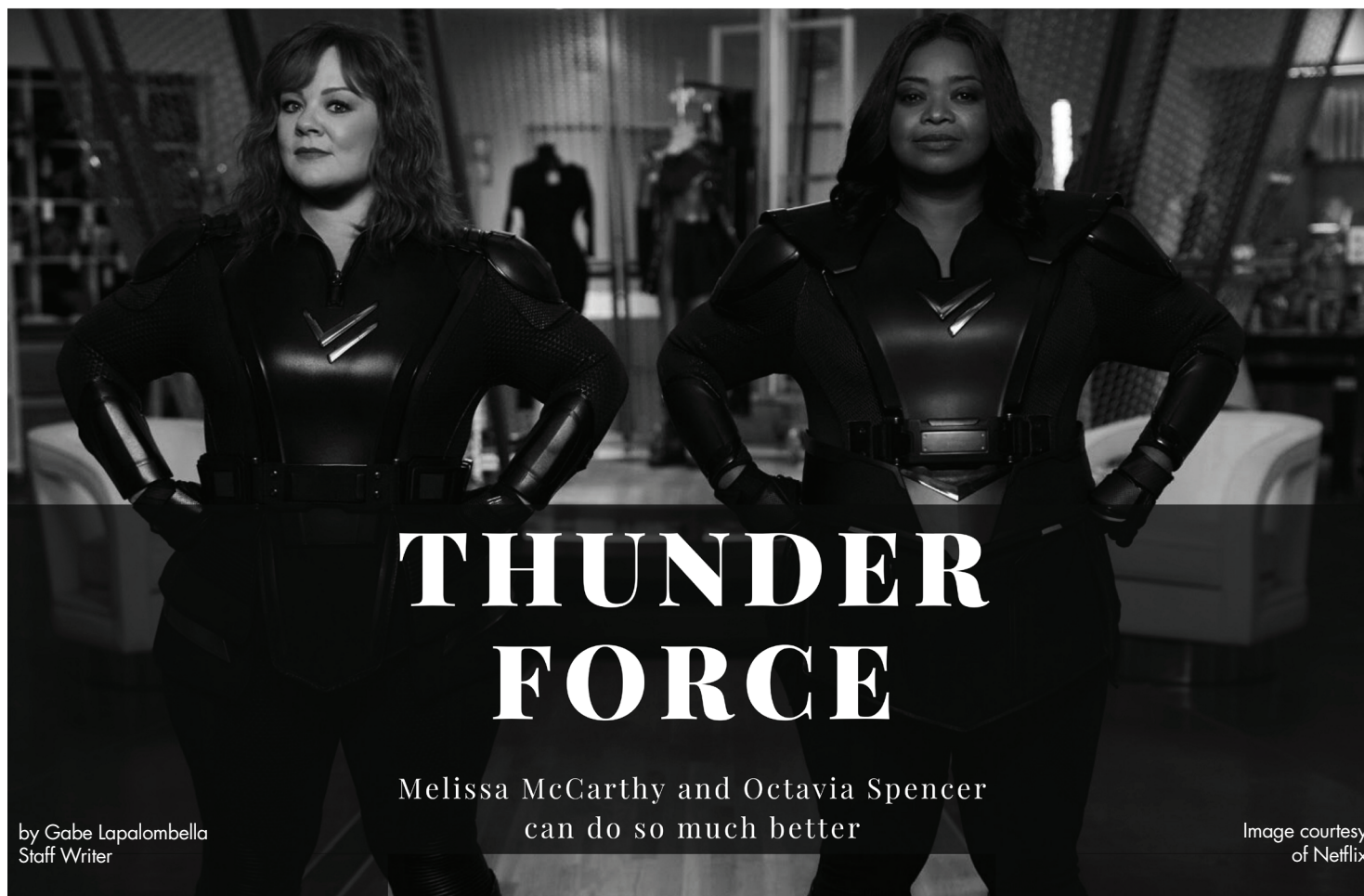
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# THUNDER FORCE

Melissa McCarthy and Octavia Spencer  
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by Gabe Lapalombella  
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Image courtesy  
of Netflix



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When she broke on the scene in 2011's "Bridesmaids," Melissa McCarthy was a force of nature. Since then, her filmography has been a mixed bag of both hits and massive misses. What's surprising is that her worst films are the ones she does with her director husband, Ben Falcone. Having made a total of five movies with her significant other, the response by both the public and the media has been less than positive. Her latest film, "Thunder Force," is yet another slog in a not-so-hot track record. In a world where supervillains are the norm, two old friends (Melissa McCarthy and Octavia Spencer) reunite years after a falling out. This leads to McCarthy's character Lydia injecting herself with a serum that gives her superpowers. If your first thought is, "this sounds like something from a bad 90s movie," then you're not wrong. Once again, we're given a film that seems fun to make but nowhere as much fun to watch. The problem here really stems from Director Ben Falcone relying too much on his cast. With talents such as Melissa Leo, Jason Bateman, Bobby Cannavale, and Pom Klemintieff, you have a group of generally funny people. There's no denying that a lot of improvisation

occurred, but when that's your only trick, it's just not enough. Everyone involved feels like they're trying way too hard for laughs that never quite land. Now combine that with an absolute lack of understanding about superhero movies, and you have "Thunder Force." In an age of film where the superhero genre reigns supreme, a comedic take should be satirical and funny. Whereas the finished product feels like interesting ideas that don't translate in the way they should. From the obligatory training montages to brutal fight sequences, there isn't an ounce of authenticity. Everything feels empty, and the settings feel like nothing more than soundstages. Thankfully, that feeling is reduced once Jason Bateman arrives on screen. In this world, the only beings that were bestowed actual superpowers were villains. Bateman's "miscreant" was given crab arms, which gave him the ample name "The Crab." With this character, Falcone, as a filmmaker, can get into the weirdness of this world. How he does this is something I don't want to spoil, but let's say it involves a musical number. The song choice is definitely on the nose, but Bateman and McCarthy commit to the bit hilariously

and oddly. It's a risky joke they go for, but one that landed in a way that caught me off guard compared to everything else I'd seen. Bateman can still provide some ample laughs after that point, but nowhere near as many as fans know he can. Netflix is undoubtedly one of the biggest powerhouses in the film production empire. Over the years, they've had their names in the Oscar races but also in the Adam Sandler slapstick comedies. "Thunder Force" resides in this strange grey area where the finished product is just too dull for its own good. Even with having all of the right ingredients, the collective whole is nothing more than unfunny jokes. It's a rather frustrating culmination when you have actors who audiences know are hysterical. They're just given the absolute bare minimum to work with. The result is nothing more than a bland mishmash of mediocre ideas that's more misses than hits. When your biggest "laugh" in a female lead comedy is Jason Bateman in crab claws, then your film has a problem.

**Rating: 4/10**



# BEYONCÉ'S LYRICAL 'LEMONADE'

As sweet yesterday as it is today on its 5-year anniversary

by Madison Smith  
Intern

Image of Beyoncé  
courtesy of Parkwood Entertainment

Beyoncé just reached a pinnacle in her career as she received the most Grammy wins by any female artist and any singer in history. Now, her renowned evergreen visual album “Lemonade” turns five years old today. If you didn’t have Tidal, you had their free trial in April of 2016 because what was going on with the Carters? Around 1.2 million new subscribers flooded the music platform to hear what Queen B had to say. Laying it all on the table, Beyoncé took listeners through the infidelity story in her marriage with rapper Jay-Z and explaining the elevator incident with Solange. Beyoncé also touched on the topic of systematic racism along the way. The sour situation became a musical masterpiece that stands today as one of her best albums and, to some, one of the greatest albums of all time. Amid the drama, Beyoncé’s side of the story was expressed soulfully on every track, and it made you wonder how such a stressful event brought about such empowering music.

Drama doesn’t preserve the true success of an album; however, replayability does. So what is Beyoncé’s “Lemonade” to the world now, five years later? Musically, the album speaks for itself. The intersection of genres on each track proves to the Beyhive that Beyoncé is dedicated to her craft, and she

undoubtedly has the versatility to explore almost any vocal style. Lyrically, the album is relevant in its empathy towards women and the black community as a whole.

“Lemonade” is made up of 13 songs, including “Hold Up,” “Sorry,” “All Night” and “Formation.” Looking at the titles of these songs, you may already be familiar with some of Beyoncé’s iconic lyrics. The melodies may be playing in your head as you read this, or maybe you’re just thinking about that Superbowl halftime performance of “Formation.” The point is, these songs have been tanning comfortably in the spotlight for the last five years, and the nostalgia they induce will indubitably be acknowledged for years to come. Here are some of the unique music/vocal combinations that may stand out when listening to this album again as well as significant lyrics.

**“When you hurt me, you hurt yourself / When you play me, you play yourself” (Don’t Hurt Yourself)**

Here is the retaliation listeners were waiting for. “Don’t Hurt Yourself” is a rock concert of emotions. Feelings of denial and frustration sneak into the lyrics as Beyoncé goes over the potential outcomes of her future with Jay-Z. This bar is a message not

only to Jay-Z but to herself. She tells Jay-Z that the mistakes he makes have just as much an effect on him as they do on her.

**“With his gun and his head held high, he told me not to cry / Oh, my daddy said shoot” (Daddy Lessons)**

“Daddy Lessons” has a jazzy introduction with trumpets singing gayly, and then the instrumentals transition into a more country and folk-like vibe. The song paints the picture of your typical complications in a father-daughter relationship, but there’s an interesting tie back to those years where she was first experiencing how a man loves. Listeners learn that Beyoncé was raised to be strong. It feels like a homecoming as she finds herself again in her lyrics even after her father’s passing.

**“Open correctional gates in higher desert/ Yeah, open our mind as we cast away oppression” (Freedom)**

These lyrics are from Kendrick Lamar’s verse on the song “Freedom.” Along with “Formation” and its racially symbolic visuals, this track is the most relevant track of this revisit of “Lemonade.” “Freedom” is meant to feel like a revolution is upon us.

Music has always been an outlet for the black community in expressing the

challenges of being black in America. Beyoncé had her own vision of what revolution looks like in her song “Freedom.” Though the song was written over five years ago, it applies to what is happening with the Derek Chauvin trial for his killing of George Floyd. Last Tuesday, Chauvin was found guilty on all charges, and people inhaled a breath of fresh air all over the country after praying for justice to be served.

Re-listening to “Lemonade” is the equivalent of walking into a house of mirrors; each one is a distorted representation of the original reflection. Each feels like a different stage of Beyoncé’s heartbreak, and her vulnerability allows us to see her experience through her music like never before. Something that makes “Lemonade” so special is the album’s title and the symbolism it carries. At the end of Beyoncé’s song “Freedom” is a quote from Jay-Z’s grandmother stating, “I was served lemons, but I made lemonade.” This album will forever stand as a reminder that we have the choice to either live with our lemons or make lemonade. What will you choose?

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# The Golden Owl Tavern



Grand Opening of the new restaurant in Marriott at UNC Charlotte **LIFESTYLE**

by Emily Kottak  
Lifestyle Editor

The Golden Owl Tavern recently had its grand opening and has been flying above expectations since. Located in the brand new Marriott on UNC Charlotte's campus, the restaurant is close to students and Charlotte locals and tourists. I was fortunate enough to get a tour of the restaurant, speak with general manager Jim Ragin and participate in a VIP tasting of some of the restaurant's delicious dishes.

"I am welcoming students with open arms," said Ragin. "We want this to be a good and inviting place for them and a warm and inviting atmosphere. We have fantastic food, a great bar atmosphere and I think it is really good for the city but also for the students, which I am super excited about."

Ragin explained that UNC Charlotte has been a tremendous help during this process and that the Gold Owl is excited to be here, partnering with UNC Charlotte. Ragin believes that both the school and the public will benefit.

I began by getting in touch with some of the media relations staff members, who were beyond welcoming and accommodating and helped set me up with a tour and interview with the general manager. The tour was given to us by Ragin. He showed us the bar and

dining area as well as the comfortable and modern outside. The restaurant itself was very nice but also had a comfortable and friendly atmosphere. There is an open concept modern kitchen that allows diners to see their food being prepared. The bar has plenty of seating, and the dining area boasts a selection of comfortable booths and different sized tables. The outside of the restaurant is unique and extremely inviting. With modern firepits, cushioned seating and tables throughout, it makes for the perfect spot to enjoy a drink, quality time with friends and some amazing Golden Owl Tavern plates.

The atmosphere alone is reason enough to find yourself at the Golden Owl Tavern, but the food makes the experience even better. I also spoke to executive sous chef Benjamin Lacy who spoke about how unique many of the menu items are. Many of the dishes on the menu are classics, but at the Golden Owl, they have a twist making them delicious and unique. In our VIP tasting, we got to try two appetizers, a salad, two entrees and a dessert.

Before indulging in the food, we were offered "mocktails," the perfect alternative for those just under the drinking age. They were amazing; my favorite was the "gin and juice" topped with a dehydrated

lime and put into a fancy glass. The bar staff was friendly and excellent. For our appetizers, we got cornbread, smoked duck wings and deviled eggs. As for the salad, we got the little gems salad which features a roasted garlic dressing. The entrees were the bison meatloaf topped with sorghum bourbon barbeque with mashed potatoes and broccoli and the wood-roasted chicken pizza baked in the wood fire oven. I loved the deviled eggs, which were the Nashville hot chicken flavor. Again, a spin the Gold Owl has made on a classic dish. Though spicy, they were delicious. The mashed potatoes were delicate and creamy, and the broccoli was seasoned perfectly. The pizza was baked perfectly and topped with fresh chicken. We enjoyed a strawberry icebox for dessert, which included vanilla ice cream, fresh strawberries, and the house pretzel, almond, and granola base as the crust.

With stomachs full of delicious food, the staff even gave us a gift of a Gold Owl glass with a wise saying on the back, a koozie and a free appetizer coupon.

Of course, opening a restaurant during a pandemic can be challenging but is also very rewarding and impressive.

"Like all Americans right now, getting things started back up has been a struggle,"

said Ragin. "We've had our challenges but have done our best to overcome those challenges. Social media has helped us a lot as well as the school, UNC Charlotte, to get us opened safely."

Something unique the restaurant will be implementing is allowing guests to write "wise sayings" on their receipts, making it into posters and other aspects of the tavern as time goes on.

The name "Golden Owl Tavern" stems from the idea that it is "a wise choice for any day." The "Golden" part is inspired by the region's history with gold mining, which is seen in gold accents throughout the restaurant.

"We want all different walks of life to experience our restaurant," said Ragin. "We are a southern hospitality group, and our southern hospitality is going to be peaking by making sure that someone who has traveled as far as Tokyo can come in and experience the great state of North Carolina."

\*Special note: The Golden Owl Tavern is hiring and looking for help (bartenders, cooks, servers, hosts, front desk employees, etc.)

Visit [www.sagehospitalitygroup.com](http://www.sagehospitalitygroup.com) for more information on how to apply!



Photos by Jessica Ceballos