

صَادِق
SADIO



IN & OUT

MERCIFUL
CLEMENTINE

Stef

CLEM: "HUMANITY IS COMPLEX, GOOD MEN DO BAD THINGS; BAD MEN DO GOOD THINGS. I DO NOT THINK WE COULD SUMMARIZE ANYONE AS GOOD OR BAD, IF SO, THAT WOULD BE ONE-SIDEDNESS."

We created this zine to showcase the human connectedness highlighted through a letter exchange between one person and three separate individuals. The beauty of these exchanges is the connections these strangers established based on seemingly unconnected parts of their lives. While you may not be familiar with some of the specific topics the writers explored, the overall theme of humanity and interconnectedness still shines through.

books

STET: "Rand, thank you for your introduction! First off, Rand isn't even the coolest character in *Wheel of Time*. Mat Cauthon is far and away the coolest character in the book."

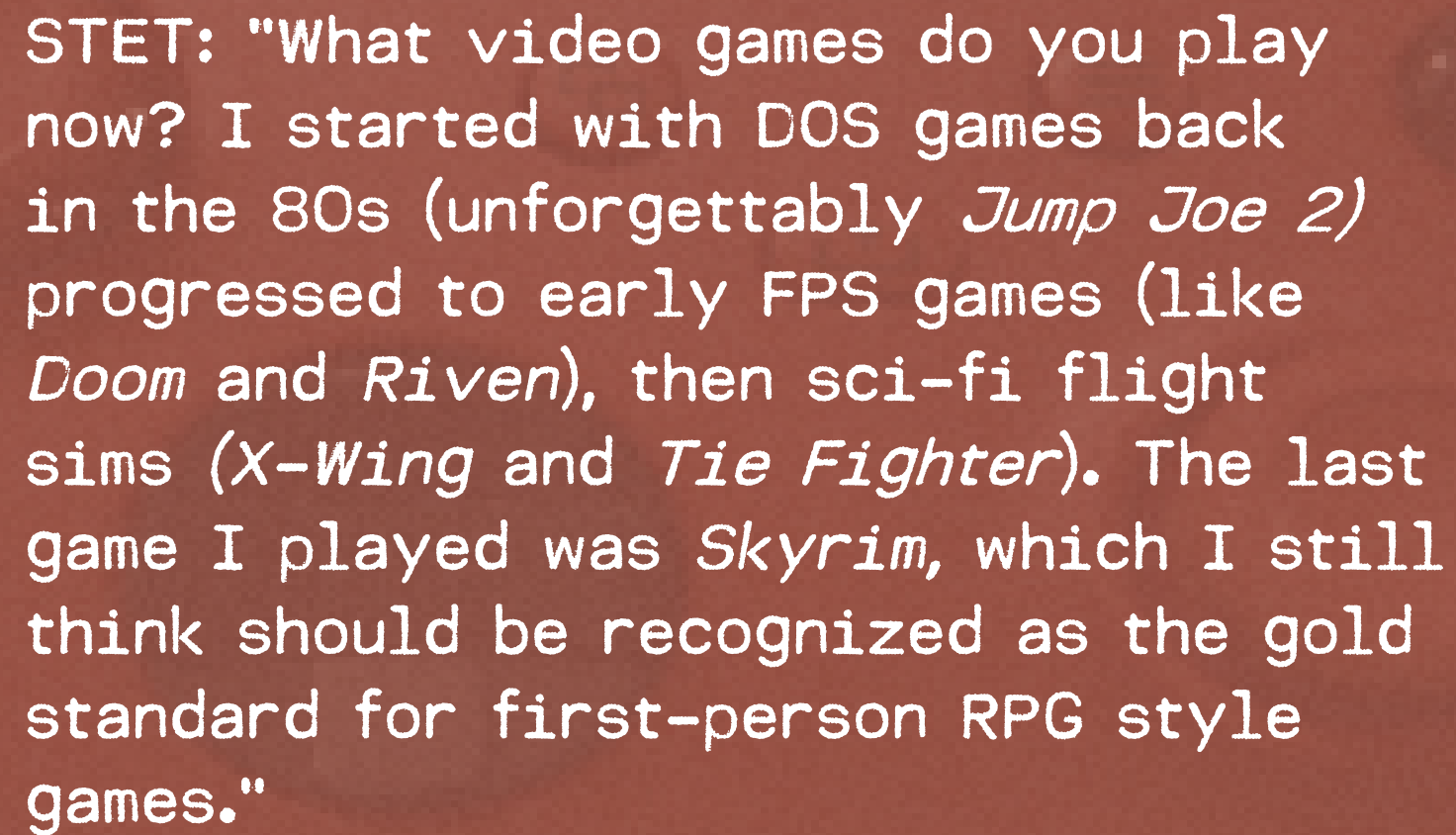
RAND: "Reading your latest letter to me put a smile on my face since I was not expecting for you to have read *The Wheel of Time*. I do agree with you 100%, Rand is not the coolest and it is definitely between Lan, Perrin, Mat, and Nynaeve."

STET: "Yes, Lan is pretty bad as\$."

COMMON BIRTHPLACE

Clementine: "I had been in New Jersey for three years and I really enjoyed it there."

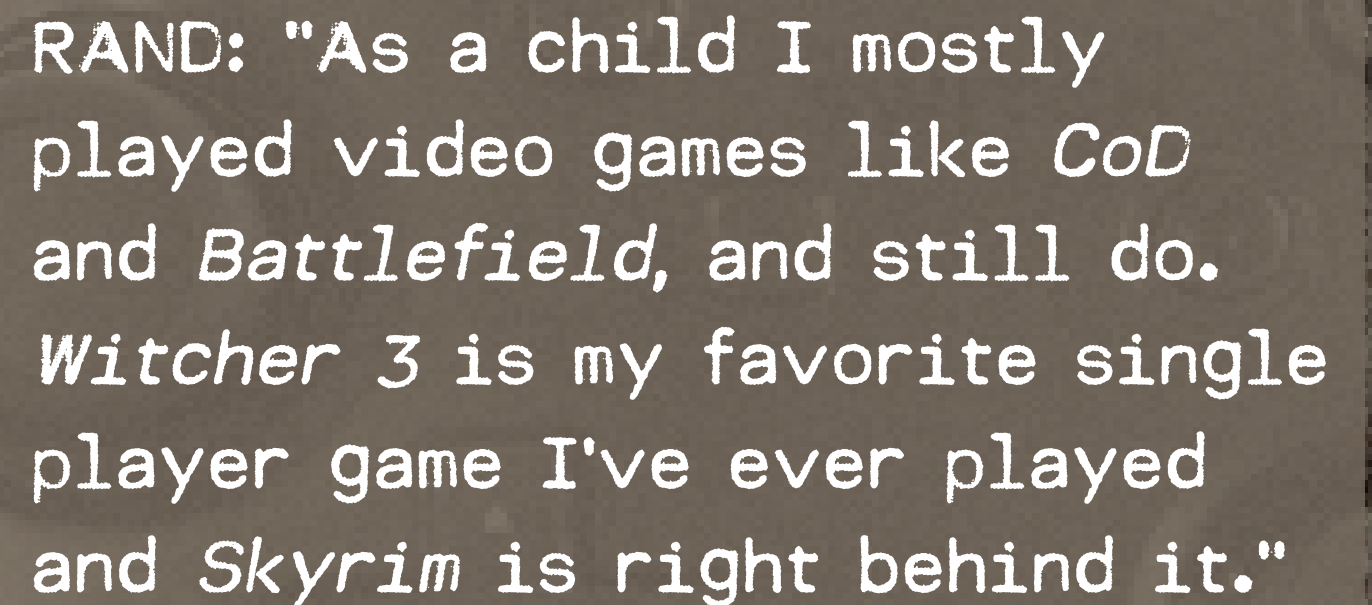
STET: "How funny, I am from NJ originally! I grew up until I was 7 near Princeton and visited a few times a year until my early 20s. It's such a relief to hear that you actually thought it was beautiful. (I have always felt the same way.)"



STET: "What video games do you play now? I started with DOS games back in the 80s (unforgettably *Jump Joe 2*) progressed to early FPS games (like *Doom* and *Riven*), then sci-fi flight sims (*X-Wing* and *Tie Fighter*). The last game I played was *Skyrim*, which I still think should be recognized as the gold standard for first-person RPG style games."



VIDEO GAMES



RAND: "As a child I mostly played video games like *CoD* and *Battlefield*, and still do. *Witcher 3* is my favorite single player game I've ever played and *Skyrim* is right behind it."

THE LAST OF US REMASTERED

CLEMENTINE: "I am glad to know you are a gamer as well! I have played *The Last of Us* as well! Have you played season 2 of it?"

STET: "You, too, are a video gamer - fantastic! I am glad to hear you say that video games can affect us deeply by the values displayed by its characters. I think the recognition of people under 40 that games can make us 'feel' something is a beautiful thing."

CLEM: "I agree with you that games can make us feel something is a beautiful thing. We can experience things that may never happen in our life."

STET: "The impact of critical themes of good, evil, justice, generosity and fearlessness cannot be understated. It's a heck of a way to learn about empathy."

OVER 200
THE YEAR
2014

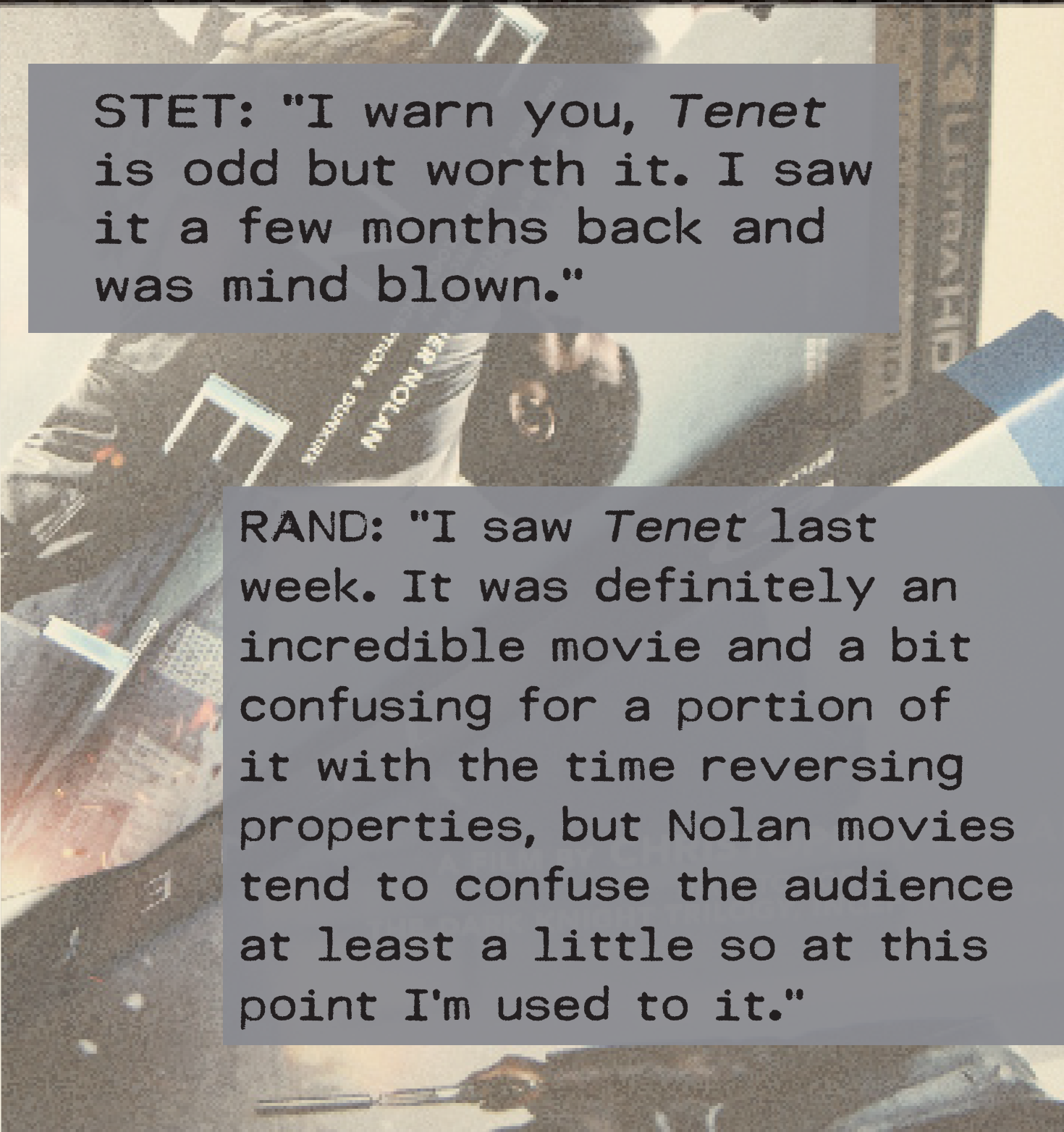
CALL OF DUTY BLACK OPS OLD WAR

RAND: "I very much enjoy the Nolan movies I have seen. I plan to see *Memento*, *The Prestige*, or *Tenet* when I can."

STET: "Definitely check out *Memento* and *The Prestige*. I remember seeing *Memento* in college and ending up at a Steak and Shake for a few hours discussing it with my friends."

RAND: "I saw Nolan's *Memento*, which you mentioned in your last letter, and I've got to say that it was a great film. The whole movie was incredibly well made and that ending left me thinking for quite a long time."

STET: "I'm glad you finally saw *Memento* - amazing right? Who better to do your dirty work than someone who'll never remember. And he'll always think he's fulfilling his destiny. It's rather poetic, isn't it?"



STET: "I warn you, *Tenet* is odd but worth it. I saw it a few months back and was mind blown."

RAND: "I saw *Tenet* last week. It was definitely an incredible movie and a bit confusing for a portion of it with the time reversing properties, but Nolan movies tend to confuse the audience at least a little so at this point I'm used to it."

Christopher Nolan
films: MEMENTO (2000)

TENET (2020)

RAND: "That *Inception* ending was amazing; I think Cobb was still in a dream, but he found his happiness so does it really matter?"



STET: "You pose an interesting question with Cobb and his having found happiness. Should it matter if he is still in a dream?"



INCEPTION

IN-N-OUT VS

SADIQ: "The best part of California is the unbeatable weather and a burger joint called In-n-Out."

STET: "I'll give you In-n-Out. Five Guys is a pretty good substitute, though. I'm an animal fries guy, myself."

FIVE GUYS

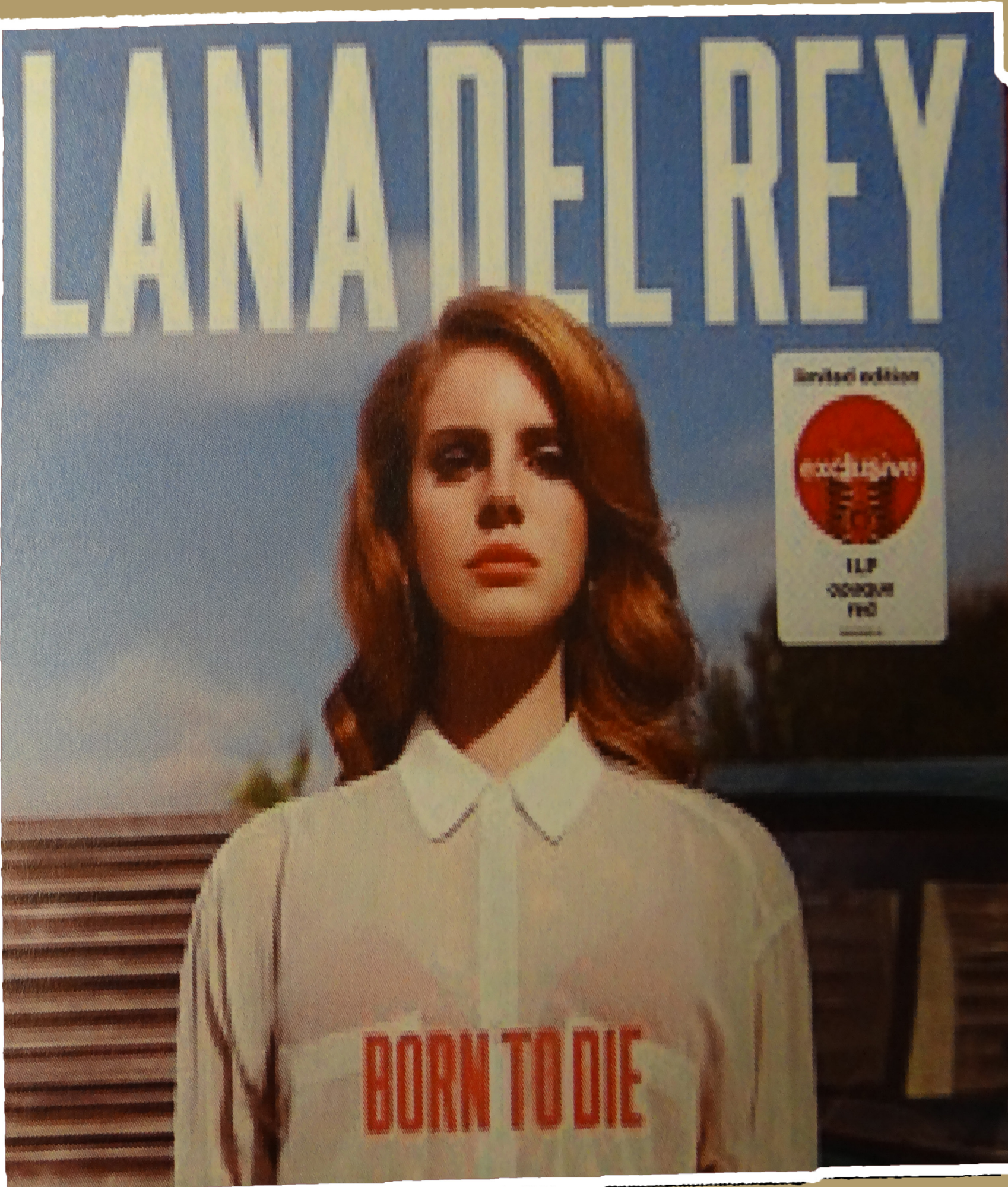
STET: "My parents, though divorced, are loving and supportive people."

SADIQ: "Similar to you, my parents separated when I was nine years old and it was a very traumatic moment in my life. I eventually grew out of the prepubescent fit and noticed that my parents were in a better place when they weren't married to each other."

STET: "I think teenage me envies teenage you. I wish my parents had been able to stay friends. They weren't enemies, but they were oil and water after their divorce and rarely communicated effectively."

PARENTS'

DIVORCE



MUSIC

RAND: "I actually enjoy progressive rock such as Tool, Dream Theater, and Opeth. What's been your favorite thing to listen to recently?"

STET: "I checked out Dream Theater and Opeth on our kiosk, they are totally prog rock. I'm going to purchase some for sure. Right now I can't stop listening to Lana Del Rey's *Born to Die* album."

RAND: "I've listened to Lana Del Rey before and her music is pretty good. I like a couple of her songs from the *Born to Die* album that you're listening to."





VACCINE ANTICIPATION

STET: "Our new president says vaccines will be available to all people, regardless of age, background, or location on May 1st. I'm hopeful to have a vaccine by then. My mom turns 65 in a few days, so hopefully she can get in a queue to receive one soon."

RAND: "I'm not sure when I'll be able to get the vaccine. I believe Biden says he plans to get all Americans eligible for it by May 1st, but the state usually has more control over what it decides to do, so I don't really know."

STET: "Fingers crossed the vaccine will be available soon. My mom just received her first shot, as did my brother. Hopefully soon we'll all be vaccinated and the world can get back to normal-ish. I'm truly ready to not wear masks all the darn time!"

HEROES



STET: "There's a tiny voice in my head that sees the wrongs of the world and starts reciting superhero mantras: the needs of many outweigh the needs of a few; with great power comes great responsibility and so forth. Everyone wants to be a hero. Everyone, I suspect, wants to do the right thing at the right time."

STET: "I have never heard your definition of a hero, but I definitely think it's apt. Curiously, I think the description also applies to the fool, who sees the consequences and acts regardless. How much of heroism requires a degree of foolishness, do you think?"

STET: "I want to be a hero, to do the right thing, but I also want the smoothest road home from this place. How do I reconcile those two beliefs?"

CLEMENTINE: "Reality is not a movie. People live before ensuring profit. Being silent for injustice is part of them. Stand out as a hero."

CLEMENTINE: "Heroes are fools, I agree. I have never thought about it, but I realized you are right."

STET: "Having fallen from grace – a good job, a wife, a house, cars, friends, stability – my family frequently asked whether I was contemplating suicide. I don't know entirely what the difference is between a mind that considers (or acts on) that dark path and one that doesn't. I guess somewhere I realized I hadn't lost everything; I still have my family."


CLEMENTINE: "For the past two years, I was depressed because of this thought: I was eager to have time-travel to go back while I feared facing the reality of where I was and the future I would face. I struggled at the time and could not get rid of these thoughts. I feared staring into the future, so I evaded. I ate excessively at times and rarely at others. I couldn't sleep."

SADIQ: "For a good portion of my life, I've had serious depression and I felt as though I couldn't go to anyone. I locked myself in a room without seeing anyone for days. I tried taking my own life three times, but never followed through with it."

STET: "I'm glad you've recovered from your bouts of depression and pain, but I'm sure it's an ongoing struggle. I think having a strong support system and a mindset of growth through missteps and mistakes is necessary to get through a lot of life."

STET: "I don't mind dark turns. We all must go through them sometimes. I truly appreciate you sharing. It takes strength to seek help and it takes a lot of growth and acknowledgment that it's impossible to do some things alone."

MENTAL HEALTH



STET: "In my third year at UF, I had switched from pre-med to sociology as my major (turns out organic chemistry is really, really hard and I was too immature to seek tutoring). I now have a degree in sociology."

STET: " I think a few things drew me to sociology. Originally, I'm sure I was promised an easy class. I enjoyed the advanced sociology courses. They were interesting and gave me insight into society and behavior."

CLEMENTINE: "I am majoring in economics, but I took sociology last semester! It was interesting to learn the basic knowledge of sociology. What drew you to sociology?"

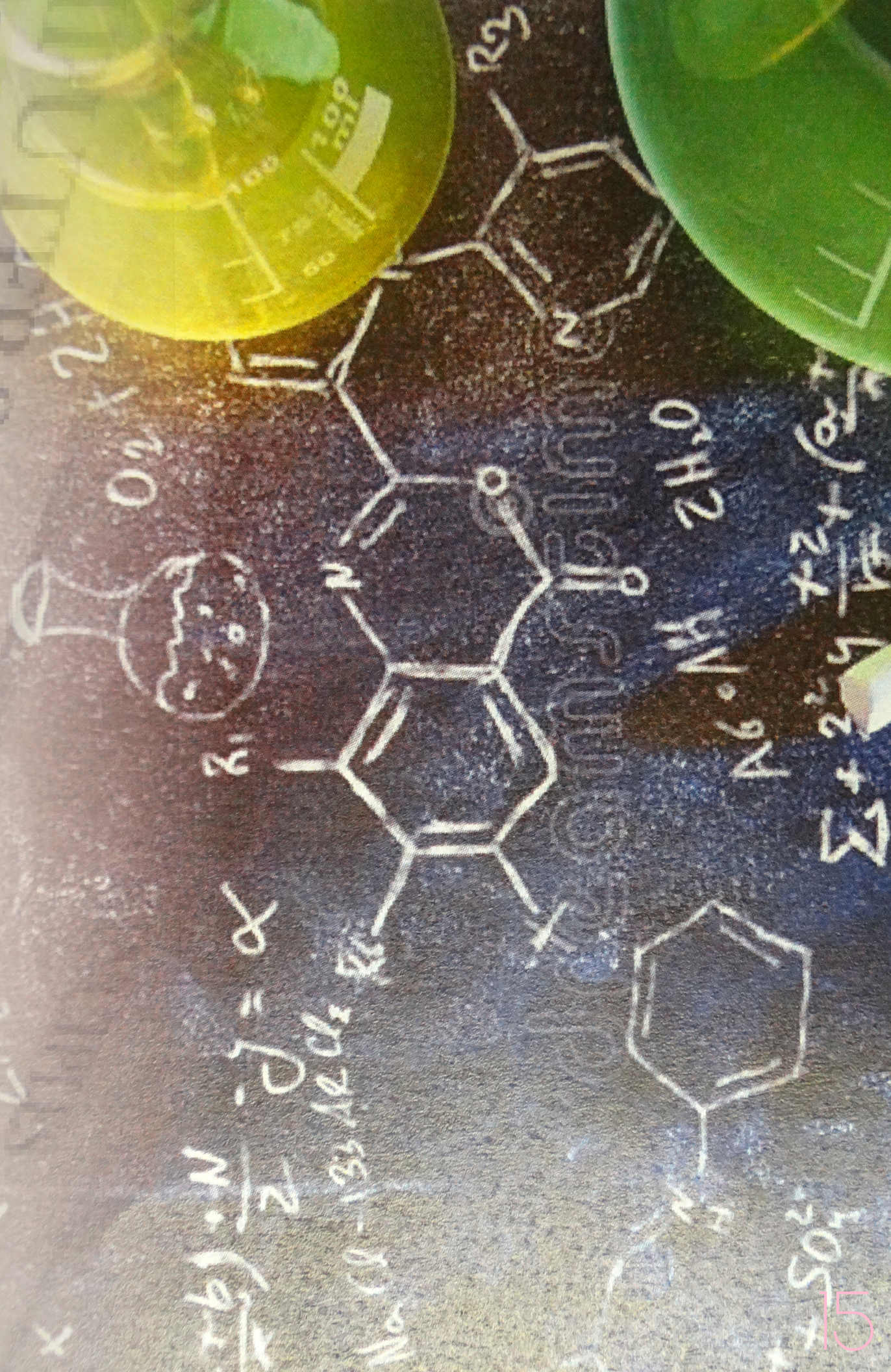
COLLEGE MAJORS

RAND: "I plan to be a surgeon. Neuro would be amazing, but really any speciality is fine with me. I am definitely not eager to take Ochem, but at last that's not till my junior year."

STET: "Watch out for organic chemistry - as I mentioned in my introduction letter - it's a real bear."

CHEMISTRY

MILUM
WITH 6 PRACTICE TESTS
SCIENCE PRINCIPLES



صَادِق

SADIQ

Sadiq is a student at the University of Miami who participated in a writing exchange course with an incarcerated individual in the state of Florida.

Clementine is a student at the University of Miami who participated in a writing exchange course with an incarcerated individual in the state of Florida.

MERCIFUL

CLEMENTINE



Rand is a student at the University of Miami who participated in a writing exchange course with an incarcerated individual in the state of Florida.

Stet is an incarcerated individual in the state of Florida.

Stet

RAND: "AS I'VE MATURED
I'VE COME TO REALIZE
THAT YOU SHOULDN'T
BASE AN ENTIRE PERSON
ON A HANDFUL OF THEIR
DECISIONS."

SADIO: "Just know that
this was an experience
I won't forget and your
life experiences have
made me realize that we
are all just trying to

FIND OUR WAY THROUGH THIS
MAZE WE CALL LIFE."

RAND: "I remember when writing my
introduction letter, I was nervous about
the whole thing. It was somewhat like
walking on eggshells. I've tried my best to
be as genuine as possible over the several
weeks we've been writing back and forth,
and I think I've done a good job of it."

STET: "Every time I've participated in an exchange, I've felt a twinge of apprehension when I send off my introduction letter. I remember how I felt about incarcerated individuals when I was out there in the free world. Every time I've participated in an exchange, that twinge of apprehension has been moot. My fears of how I'd be viewed have never been realized. You've renewed my feeling of being a human – not just an 'incarcerated individual' or 'inmate.'"

SADIQ: "I have to say I didn't expect to meet someone so relatable and charismatic who is behind bars. Despite what you were convicted of, I know that you are a kind man at heart, with goals, aspirations, and drive."

RAND: "I think the thing that will stick with me the most after all of this is that people shouldn't be judged and defined for their whole life for their worst decisions."

SADIQ: "After reading your letters I know you and every other incarcerated individual are human beings with thoughts, emotions, and conflicts. I don't see you as less of a human if you've made mistakes and were punished by the justice system."

This zine was created to showcase the shared humanity of strangers no matter where they live. Oftentimes the difference between people who live in the free world and those who are incarcerated results from a single decision. Our society has created artificial divisions: good and evil, the deserving and the undeserving, which allow us to forget the greatest connection we all share – our humanity. Everyone has made choices they regret. To fail is what makes us human, and the times in our life we do fall short are often our greatest opportunities for growth. Hopefully, reading these excerpts from the correspondents has pushed you to consider that people in prison, just like people in the free world, are worthy of more than a stereotype. By reflecting on the complexities and connectivity of humanity as a whole, we hope you agree that we are more united than we are divided.



MISSION

Exchange for Change offers writing courses in prisons and runs letter exchanges between incarcerated students and writers studying on the outside. By preparing incarcerated people for their reentry into the outside community and preparing that community for their return, Exchange for Change provides vision and understanding on both sides of the fence.

VALUES

We provide opportunities for creative and intellectual engagement. Exchange believes education is a human right. We believe in the value of every voice, and we give our students an opportunity to express themselves without the fear of being stigmatized. When everyone has the ability to listen and be heard, strong and safe communities are formed. With a pen and paper, students can become agents of social change across different communities in ways they may otherwise have never encountered.

SOCIAL MEDIA

Twitter, Instagram and Tiktok: @ex4change Facebook: @Exchange.for.Change

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E4C

WRITING THAT TRANSFORMS



Exchange
for Change

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IN & OUT

VOLUME 1

AUGUST 2021

CREATED & DESIGNED BY GRACE WAIBEL & VALENTINA GRAZIOSI