

OPINION

Super Bowl Sunday: The Only Time Commercials are the Best Part

BY HARRY LIEN

FOOTBALL MAY BE America's game, but let's face it: the tossing of the pigskin is far from the main attraction on Super Bowl Sunday. This iconic sport becomes an ironic break in the real action—the commercials. Generally for us Americans, there is nothing we despise more than advertisements. We even pay premiums on services, like Hulu and Spotify, or install ad blockers on our computers to avoid a bottomless barrage of unwanted ads. We cringe at out-of-touch companies and their efforts to beguile us with their disruptions.

However, on Super Bowl Sunday, the rules change as we all pay close attention to our screens. From pop culture references, celebrity appearances, or just sheer creativity, there are many ways advertisers woo us on this special occasion.

2021 was no exception to this rule. We saw glimpses into the future as auto companies campaigned EVs (all-electric vehicles). For General Motors (GM), the spokesperson was a disheveled Will Ferrell that hated the entire nation of Norway for its superior EV production. Ferrell then departs for an intrepid journey to the Scandivian country to assert GM's presence in the EV game. Too bad he arrives in Sweden instead. Meanwhile, Cadillac introduces the world to Edgar, the moody teenage son of Edward Scissorhands, who benefits from the accommodating features of hands-free driving in Cadillac's new EV. Cadillac recruited heartthrob actor Timothee Chalemet to play Edgar and Winona Ryder reprised her role as Kim, his mother.

In the snack food realm, Cheetos pays homage to quintessential banger "It Wasn't Me." The dancehall classic is parodied as Mila Kunis continuously denies stealing bags of Cheetos from her partner Ashton Kutcher. Shaggy, the artist of the original song, is also featured in the ad and contributes a parodied verse as well. Meanwhile, Doritos depicted a 2D "flat" Matthew McConaughey and his existential struggles with this impediment. It's not until he slips into a vending machine that he finds an antidote, which comes in the form of Dorito's new "3D Crunch" product. Subsequently, McConaughey explodes back into his 3D self and is now smushed inside a vending machine. Poor dude!

Perhaps more prevalent this year than others were appeals to motivate or inspire. Chipotle, through the guise of a naive child, speculate sustainability and how "a burrito can change the world." While idealistic, and maybe overly simplified, the ad is complemented with vivid imagery that was easy on the eyes. Indeed, the job-seeking website, went in a similar route to motivate and inspire as it depicts the emotional process of searching for the right career and job. It was certainly relatable as many people feel the current effects of a volatile economy.

Celebrity Culture in the Pandemic

BY KACIE DUNCAN

PICTURE THIS: IT'S THE THIRD week of lockdown and you're sitting on the couch eating your second bag of chips of the day. You're probably halfway through the fifth show you've started since the beginning of quarantine. You pick up your phone and begin scrolling through Instagram. You see a post from your favorite influencer; if you're like me it's one of the many Bachelor stars, or perhaps it's your favorite sports player or one of the Kardashians. Whoever the influencer may be, you probably see them sitting in their mansion of a house, maybe swimming in their private pool. The caption of their photo reads something about how we're all in this together (Alexa, play High School Musical). Now, if you are like me and most of the people I know, you felt a pang of annoyance as you saw these many influencers on social media boasting about the togetherness of being in quarantine as they enjoyed their 8,000 square foot home. This leads to the pressing question some of us have been wondering over the last year, is the era of celebrity culture coming to an end?

My opinion on this is that it both is and isn't. Let's first discuss why I believe celebrity culture is beginning to fade out due to the pandemic. The first reason has already been mentioned. The simple fact is that right

now, many of us are having a hard time relating to or connecting with celebrities. Their idea of being stuck in the house is very different from ours. The second reason is that much of why we love celebrities has been taken away over the last year. We have had no concerts, to premiers, no award shows. All the things that have created this glamorous image of celebrities are nowhere to be found lately.

Now, why do I think that celebrity culture isn't declining? While celebrities might not be doing all the things we used to love, they still have a sort of glamour to their lives that we as people envy. It's very much our human instinct to want what we don't have. The long spoken "the grass is always greener" dilemma. It's a fact that when we feel as if we aren't doing the things we want to do, we live through those who do get to be doing those things. We've all been there. We've all felt terrible about ourselves and decided that moping about as we look at people who have it "all together" will make us feel better (spoiler alert: it doesn't). So, is celebrity culture going out of business because of the pandemic? While our love for celebrities may be declining a little bit, our fascination and envy of them isn't going anywhere anytime soon.

How America Has Changed Since Biden was Sworn In

BY ANNA FRITZE

IT'S NO SECRET THAT Biden's new title as president has brought many different reactions. Some rejoiced while some despaired, and still others turned to destruction of property and murder! Ah, the crazy world we live in. However, it slowly is becoming more accepted that Biden truly is the new President of the United States (hopefully). Just in his first week, Biden signed 19 different executive orders, many of them reversing things that Trump did while he was in office. He has now signed over 28 orders, and that number is expected to rise. For those of you who don't know the significance of this number (involving me until recently), it's pretty high. To compare, Trump signed an average of 55 orders per year, Obama signed 35 per year, and Bush signed 36 per year. At 28 in less than two months, Biden's number is pretty high up there.

So, is this a bad thing? That really depends on how you feel about topics like Covid, racial equality, and immigration, since a lot of his executive orders have to do with those specifically. Some examples, according to Market Watch, include reversing the travel ban targeting primarily Muslim countries, creating a task force to reunite migrant families separated at the border, requiring masks/distancing on all federal property, at airports, and in other modes of transportation, establishing a "COVID-19 Pandemic Testing Board" and expanding testing, and launching

an initiative to advance racial equity and ending the "1776 Commission," which was an advisory committee established in September 2020 by then-U.S. President Donald Trump to support what he called "patriotic education." Of course there are many others, which I encourage you to look into, but just from that list, my thought is "well, duh." I'm not sure why any of these things had to be ordered in the first place, and it's sort of messed up that they did.

When it comes to how America has changed in general since Biden has been sworn in, I will refer back to rejoicing and despair. Now more than ever, the country is divided. As a pretty obvious Biden supporter, now that the rejoicing has died down a little, what I really feel is comfort. Though I know that there are many people who disagree with my views, I'm just so much happier knowing that America's president is not actively working against racial equality, dismissing a global pandemic, or claiming to win an election he didn't. On inauguration day, my eight-year-old cousin Israel messaged me through my aunt's Facebook messenger to say, "It's Inauguration Day!" along with a photo of her cheesing out with a flowery filter. At eight years old, I gave zero cares about politics, and I doubt I even knew what the inauguration was. This small event may be insignificant to many, but to me it shows just how important this presidency is.