



Why Not Me? – Feeling Stuck in Life?

BY ASHAYLA RIVERA SOLIS

Just a year ago, I graduated from high school. Of course, in this economy, fresh out of school, no one can be expected to have moved out, pay rent, work full-time, and balance school all at once. That's where a sudden, familiar feeling comes crashing in at full speed — surely I can't be the only one, right?

It doesn't have to be just the newcomers rolling into college; it can be anyone, really. Some people have been blessed with opportunities others can only wish for. Many have worked extremely hard for what they have, some have connections, and others have simply been lucky enough to be given such things. And then there's the rest of us ... watching.

We scroll. We double-tap. We say, "So proud of you!" while quietly wondering, Why not me?

Let's be honest: comparison culture on college campuses is brutal. Social media makes it worse. According to the Pew Research Center, over 60% of young adults say they regularly compare their lives to others online — and many report feeling worse afterward. Not inspired, not motivated. Worse.

The pressure isn't just in our heads. The American Psychological Association consistently reports that young adults ages 18–23 experience some of the highest stress levels of any age group, with finances, career uncertainty, and academic pressure topping the list. We are expected to build resumes, maintain GPAs, secure internships, nurture relationships, and somehow enjoy "the best years of our lives" all at the same time. That phrase gets old fast.

That's a heavy load for people who were asking to use the bathroom with a hall pass less than a year ago. But here's what no one says out loud.

Most of us are not behind. We are just early in the process.

Data from the National Center for Education Statistics shows that a significant percentage of college students work while enrolled, and many live at home to offset financial pressure. The picture-perfect version of independence at 18 or 19 is far less common than social media would have us believe. The reality? A lot of students are juggling bills, supporting family, commuting, and trying to do everything right.

Jealousy thrives in silence. It

convinces you that everyone else has it figured out. But if you stood up in a lecture hall and asked how many people feel uncertain about their future, the majority of hands would go up.

The problem isn't that we feel jealous. The problem is that we feel ashamed of feeling jealous. Jealousy is not a moral failure — it's information. It reveals what we want. If you feel jealous of someone's apartment, maybe you crave independence. If you feel jealous of someone's relationship, maybe you crave stability. The emotion itself is neutral. What you do with it defines you.

So, what do you do when that "Why not me?" spiral starts?

First, control the input. Studies repeatedly link excessive social media use with increased feelings of envy and depressive symptoms. You don't have to delete everything, but you do have to be honest about what triggers you. Curate your feed, take breaks, and stop consuming content that makes you feel small.

Second, shift the question. Instead of "Why not me?" ask "What's one step I can take?" Not ten steps. One. Apply for the internship, the

interview, and visit the career center. Update that resume, send the email. Progress is built through small, boring, unglamorous moves.

Third, document your own growth. Look at where you were a year ago. A year ago, you were in a different headspace, with different responsibilities and different awareness. Growth isn't always visible from the outside, but it's happening.

And finally, accept this uncomfortable truth: life is not synchronized. Some people peak early. Some people peak later. Some people switch majors, careers, cities, and identities. The timeline you think exists is mostly an illusion.

Feeling stuck at 19, 20, or even 25 does not mean you're failing. It means you are in motion, even if it feels slow. The loudest people online are not always the most secure. The most polished lives are not always the happiest. And the quiet, steady, under-construction seasons often build the strongest foundations.

So next time that voice whispers, "Why not me?" Answer it boldly: Not yet. Because "not yet" is very different from "never." And you are far from finished.

In this Issue...

A Café and a vision:
In conversation with
Lily Hesterman

Page 3



The Real Season Starts
Now: An Unfiltered
Look at the NBA's
Chaotic Stretch Run

Page 7

The Conversation That Never Ended

An Important Dialogue Between a Philosopher and a Student

BY SUMEYYE OZTEK

I arrived too early. It was barely nine in the morning, and the Arts and Humanities hallway was still quiet. I paced outside my philosophy professor's office, tapping my foot, rehearsing questions that had followed me for days as I fell down one rabbit hole after another. They began with an old legal case about shipwrecked sailors, hunger, and survival. They grew into something larger: what do we owe one another when survival and morality collide?

When he finally arrived, he admitted he had not prepared.

I told him that was perfect. Philosophy, after all, is not rehearsed. It happens in motion, somewhere between curiosity and uncertainty. As he settled into his chair, my eyes

wandered across his bookshelf, rows filled with everything from virtue ethics to political morality, thinkers who had spent centuries wrestling with questions that still felt unresolved. Looking at those shelves, I felt a sudden surge of excitement... not intimidation, but the realization of how much further there was left to explore.

The case that started it all, Regina v. Dudley and Stephens, asked whether necessity can justify killing. Stranded at sea without food or water, sailors killed a cabin boy to survive. The court condemned them anyway, drawing a hard line: survival does not erase responsibility.

But where does that line come from? Is it moral instinct or legal convenience?



My professor paused before answering, comparing the case to debates about euthanasia. Society, he said, reacts differently to actively causing death versus allowing death to happen, even when the outcome is identical. Watching him think aloud was unexpectedly clarifying. Philosophy did not look like certainty. It looked like hesitation, reconsideration, revision.

We moved next to the question that unsettled me most: Does responsibility dissolve when it is shared? He described a thought experiment. One person sees someone drowning and feels an immediate obligation to act. Fifty people watching the same scene often do nothing, each assuming someone else will intervene. Responsibility, he argued, does not disappear in a crowd. We simply convince ourselves that it has.

The idea lingered. It felt less like an abstract ethical puzzle and more like a description of modern life.

Our conversation widened. Law and morality, he reminded me, are not identical spheres. Their interplay helps us navigate personal choices and societal expectations, emphasizing that this tension is a vital part of moral growth.

I asked the question that had been quietly sitting beneath everything else: Can someone be a good person while working within systems that often feel imperfect?

He answered by separating goodness into different realms. Moral character belongs to the individual; law belongs to society. The goal is not perfection, he said, but awareness of limits and a willingness to act anyway.

When I left his office, nothing had been resolved. There was no neat conclusion awaiting at the end of the discussion.

Instead, there was something better.

Philosophy has shown me that learning is an ongoing journey of questioning and humility. The longer you study, the more you realize that certainty is fragile and questions are infinite. Even the most seasoned thinkers are still searching, still revising, still unsure.

Walking back down the hallway, I understood that this uncertainty was not a weakness. It was the point of philosophy, inviting us to embrace humility and continue exploring.

The questions that refuse to end are the ones worth carrying forward.

The Youngtown Edition

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A Café and A Vision

In conversation with Lily Hesterman

BY SARA LIM

Iwanted to talk to you, first and foremost, about your vision for this café. Why did you decide to start working on it, and what do you hope it will look and feel like once it is completed?

Okay, so — the reason why I started this is that, as vice president, I happened to notice this space sitting open and unused. I'd been coming to CCM for the last year or two, and no one's ever been in there. And I was like, "Such a loss of potential." It was so underutilized. So I decided: I'm going to create a café in there, I'm going to see if I can start it up again. I began by reaching out to everybody and seeing how well this could actually get done. Everybody I talked to seemed very happy that I was trying to do it — if not a little doubtful there as well. Because it's a big thing to try and do. Last semester I had the idea, and then this semester, on January 1st, that's when I started work on it. I got involved with my old professor and a lot of other people, students started to become interested, and the committee started forming from there. In terms of vision, I'm hoping this is going to be very, very much student-oriented — and I hope it'll inspire the rest of the college to become more student-run in terms of how it operates. It's really about getting students involved as much as possible and using their gifts — taking what they're already learning and actually putting it to use in the real world.

Why did you decide to start working on this project? What is missing on campus that you think the café will provide?

I think the majority of students come do their classes, and leave — and that's about it. And honestly, that was me for a long time. Up until last semester, I wanted to get out of here as soon as possible. There was no reason to stay. Then I joined a club, and after that I kind of couldn't leave campus — I'd come here all

the time. It completely changed my experience. And I think that's what I'd like to change for other people too. I want students who want to get involved to use the gifts that they have, to take the experiences they're learning in their classes and apply them to real-life situations. Put the skills they're learning to good use.

How do you envision the students being involved?

For the café specifically, we're going to be working with students from the culinary arts and hospitality departments — they'll be the ones in the kitchen creating the pastries and everything. I'd also love to have culinary students working the barista areas as well. And then beyond the café itself, in terms of the committee, I really want to get business majors involved and start taking advantage of the entrepreneurial building — which is worth mentioning because it's a newer resource that I think is really underutilized. Right now the committee already has business administration, hospitality management, graphic design, cyber security... I even have a mechanical engineering student in there. All these different majors, and honestly, how much further can we spread from here? There's so much potential. Because I want to be clear — I'm not just opening a café. I'm trying to create inspiration for more student-run operations down the line. This is just the beginning.

How has your experience as a student at CCM helped you in this process? I know you mentioned that you were working closely with a business professor and things like that. So, how do you think that applying things you learned on campus inspired and helped you through this process?

From a CCM standpoint, my Intro to Business class was a big one. It taught me how to create a business plan, and I just went in and started

building one. That's actually why I reached out to my professor. He immediately came back with this huge email laying out all the next steps. It was exactly what I needed, because I had the drive and I had the people, but I just didn't know how to start. Every time I thought about it I was overwhelmed — the sheer amount of stuff to figure out at the beginning felt ridiculous. Having that guidance made all the difference. In terms of other areas, I spent a lot of time in the hospitality department. The coursework was more reading-focused, so I didn't get as much hands-on management experience as I would have liked — but I did come away knowing how everything in that world functions. And, maybe more importantly, I built connections I wouldn't have had otherwise. Those relationships matter. And then there's my experience with InterVarsity. That's been a huge inspiration for me in ways I didn't expect. For the first time, I have a real community of friends here on campus — people who keep me going, keep me accountable. When I'm struggling with something, I always have someone to talk to. That kind of support changes everything.

In this process, were there any things that you found super difficult or super easy? It's a unique process, and I'm curious about what you noticed.

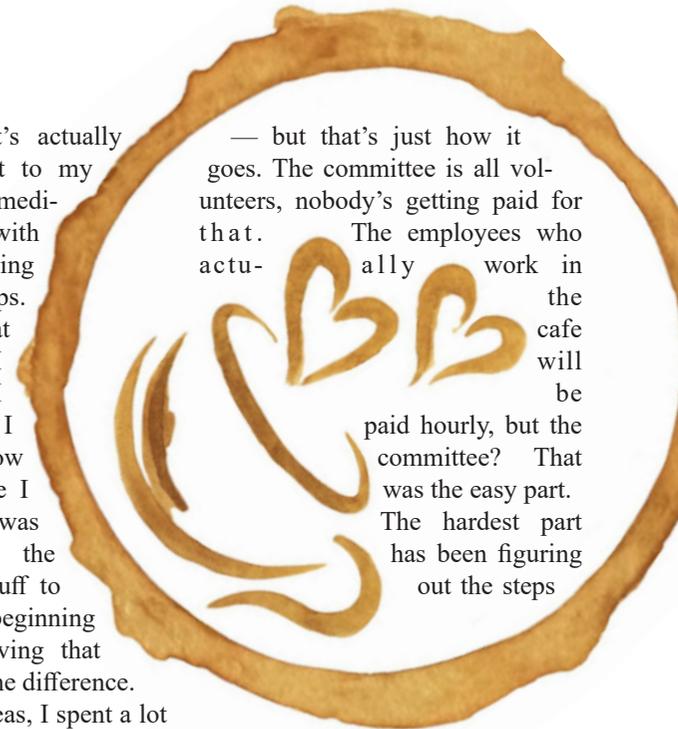
Honestly, most things have been hard — I don't know if anything has been truly easy. But I will say, getting students wanting to be involved was easier than I expected. There was a lot of interest right away, so filling out the committee wasn't really a problem. Now, some committee members are enthusiastic at first and then don't end up doing much

— but that's just how it goes. The committee is all volunteers, nobody's getting paid for that. The employees who actually work in the café will be paid hourly, but the committee? That was the easy part. The hardest part has been figuring out the steps

— understanding what needs to get done, what the highest priority is, and what can only happen after something else. Opening a business requires a huge number of steps, and they don't all come in whatever order you want.

There's also the added layer of being on campus. The college has a ton of resources, and in a lot of ways it's much easier to start something here than off on your own — but you also have to follow the procedures of the institution. Things that would normally be simple become more involved because they have to go through more people and more detailed processes. We're not doing this under anyone's nose — the college is actively involved in what we're trying to do, and that's just something you have to work with.

One of the biggest concerns people raised early on was that this would be a great idea that just fizzles out. We're already writing up a plan for how the café will continue long-term, and that includes having CCM employees in an advisory role — at least to oversee things. But I want to be clear: this is still student-run. The operations manager is a student. The barista supervisors are students. The president and vice president of the committee are students. The advisor basically signs off and steps in to organize people if necessary, but the



students are running the show. We also have HR and marketing majors on the committee handling those areas as well.

Beyond the logistics, honestly one of the toughest things has just been organizing people. You can't hand someone a project with no context and expect them to run with it — most people need guidance. And I think I've had a tendency to assume everyone already knows what I know, when really, I'm holding a lot of the information they need to actually get things done. So, a big part of what we're doing right now is building out processes for everything. We're creating an operations manual that covers how the cafe will function day to day — exact procedures for making things, handling complaints, dealing with tech issues, who to contact and when. Standard operating procedures for all of it. Because if you want something to last, you have to build it so it can run without you having to explain everything from scratch every time.

If you could go back and give yourself one piece of advice at the very beginning, what would it be?

If I could go back and do anything differently, I'd say communicate

more with my supervisors. He has a lot of resources, and I have a tendency to try and push through walls instead of going around them — I just don't think about it, I put my head down and try to force my way through things, when sometimes the solution is right there and I'm just overlooking it. I also used to almost see going through other people as less efficient, when really it's the opposite. Communication is key, and I sometimes fall into the trap of trying to do everything myself — and that, as I've learned, will not work.

The same goes for campus resources. Instead of recreating the wheel, I should have been tapping into what was already available sooner. And I think that's actually one of the bigger takeaways from this whole process: the resources are there if you show the initiative to go after them and propose something. The college is ready to help — but you have to ask first.

As for what success looks like — honestly, the timeline doesn't matter much to me. Whether it opens this semester or next, what I really want is for it to open and stay consistently open, without major issues. I want clear lines of communication so that when problems come up, we already know how to handle them. But more than that, I want it to actually fulfill

what I set out to do from the beginning — a space that's student-run, organized, and serving something that students are genuinely satisfied with. And when students walk in, I want them to feel comfortable. I want them to want to stay. That, more than anything, is what success looks like to me.

What do you want the café to be fulfilling outside of just serving things? What is the environment you are looking to build?

The experience we're creating is very much centered around fun and comfort — that's core to our mission. We want students to walk in and feel like they were part of building this space. Like, "This is our space. I can relax from my crazy day, I can be comfortable, I can just chill in this cafe that was created for me." We want them to feel like they're home.

In terms of the physical space, I'm hoping to bring in comfy seating, bookshelves at some point, and just a lot of things that make somewhere feel comfortable and inviting. We even talked about how we obviously can't have a fireplace — but we could put one on the TV and play crackling noises. It's the kind of place where a student walks in

and they're happy to be there, they want to stay, and they're sad when they have to leave. Even if they only have 15 minutes between classes to grab their drink, they wish they could stay longer.

Beyond that, I want it to be a real community space. We're thinking events — a little open mic, karaoke, things like that. We've also talked about having design students put their paintings on the walls, maybe even selling the pieces out of there like a little art thing. That would be kind of cool. There's no shortage of ideas — but right now we're staying focused on the core goal of actually opening. The extra features can come later.

And going back to success — more than anything, I want it to continue. I don't want it to fizzle out. I want there to be a real drive and a real determination to keep it going for a long time.

We already have 19 students on the committee, and we're always open to having more people join — business majors especially, for the management side of things. If anyone wants to get involved, they can reach out to us at the DCM Cafe Committee email. And for anyone who's been waiting for an opportunity to do something meaningful on campus — maybe this is it.

CCM students impacted by blizzard

BY BRIAN BROOKS

After a wave of warmer weather spread throughout New Jersey, many residents believed the worst of the cold was behind them. The cold weather, however, decided to stick around a while longer.

Reports from weather forecasters warned that another storm was on the way. There was a sense of exhaustion in the air as residents faced yet another snowstorm — a blizzard, at that. When Punxsutawney Phil predicted six more weeks of winter on Groundhog Day, few were shocked. What many did not anticipate, though, was the way our weather patterns would continue playing out.

For CCM students, the effects hit when campus closed on Monday, February 23, due to snow. That same evening, students received an email from the school saying administration was monitoring whether the weather would affect the following day as well. When students woke up on Tuesday, February 24, another email confirmed that campus would remain closed due to continuing icy conditions, affecting both day and evening classes. Students with access to the Titan Alert System were able to stay even more up-to-date on campus closure information.

For many students, the closure meant missed classes, lost office hours, reduced access to campus resources, and canceled activities.

According to the CCM Campus Life email system, the club scheduled to meet on Monday was InterVarsity Fellowship. On Tuesday, Chess Club, Environmental Club, InterVarsity Fellowship, the Student Activities Programming Board, and Turning Point USA were all scheduled to meet, and the intramural volleyball game was canceled as well.

Many CCM students and New Jersey residents were snowed in, unable to leave their homes if their cars were buried and couldn't be shoveled out. A number of food delivery apps shut down amid the windy conditions, leaving some without the option to order food while stuck at home. Power outages also affected people's connectivity

and ability to charge devices needed for schoolwork.

Newark Airport and NJ Transit both closed on Monday, February 23, meaning that those who rely on trains or buses as an alternative to driving were stranded alongside those who couldn't get out of their driveways.

In terms of snowfall, this winter has far surpassed recent years. New Jerseyans can look back on the 2023–2024 winter season, when the state received only three inches of snow on average — a disappointing amount for residents accustomed to a certain level of snowfall. Gone were the days of sledding, skiing, snowball fights, building snowmen, and all the other activities we asso-

ciate with winter. Across the state, residents hoped for a snowier season. What they got exceeded anyone's expectations.

This 2025–2026 winter, New Jersey has seen over 50 inches of snow, largely driven by the cold front gripping the state. Last month was the coldest January since 2014, with some days greeting CCM students at a mere -4 degrees Fahrenheit on their way to class. Warming up the car in a garage or letting it run with the heat on full blast became a necessity. Bundling up in multiple layers may not have been the most fashionable choice, but given the risks of such extreme temperatures,

it was essential.

As for the most recent storm, Morris County saw significant snowfall from the blizzard alone. According to NJ.com, Morris County experienced 12–20 inches depending on the town, with Chatham, NJ taking the top spot at a recorded 20 inches. Randolph, NJ, home to CCM, saw 16.3 inches (Melisurgo, Len).

Once the storm passed, snowplows and other essential vehicles cleared the roads and made it safe for residents to get back behind the wheel. Some two-lane roads were temporarily reduced to one lane, requiring extra caution, but access was restored and traffic returned to

what all New Jersey drivers know as normal.

CCM reopened on Wednesday, February 25, after icy conditions were no longer deemed a risk. That Wednesday reached a high of 43 degrees Fahrenheit, with moments of sunshine breaking through — a welcome sight that aided the melting of snow and ice and allowed for further shoveling.

Although temperatures are steadily rising, with a high of 52 degrees Fahrenheit expected on Saturday, February 28, more snow may still be on the way. There is a chance of snowfall on Tuesday, March 3, Wednesday, March 4, and Thursday,

March 5. This event would not be as intense as the blizzard, but would add fresh layers on top of snow that has already had little time to fully melt.

After that potential snow, temperatures are expected to climb again to an anticipated 56 degrees Fahrenheit on Friday, March 6. Much like the birds that returned early only to find the warmth short-lived, New Jersey residents can expect to keep experiencing weather whiplash. Whatever your feelings about the snow, it looks like it's here to stay — so don't get too comfortable when the warm fronts roll through.

When God Narrates Monsters

Spielberg and Netflix Present 'The Dinosaurs' with Morgan Freeman

BY ANDREW KIM



There are very few things in this industry that actually live up to the hype. We get promised “cinematic masterpieces” every other Tuesday by streaming services desperate to justify their latest price hike. But every once in a while, the clouds part, the heavens open, and the entertainment gods drop a combination so perfect, so obviously brilliant, that you have to wonder why it took this long to happen.

We are talking about Steven Spielberg. We are talking about Netflix. And, perhaps most importantly, we are talking about Morgan Free-

man.

Yes, the voice of God himself is narrating a documentary about the rise and fall of dinosaurs, executive produced by the man who literally defined our childhood nightmares with a cup of rippling water. The series is titled, simply, *The Dinosaurs*. It's almost arrogant in its simplicity, isn't it? Like, “Yeah, we don't need a catchy subtitle. We have Spielberg. Sit down.”

Anyway, the trailer dropped, and if you haven't seen it, you need to stop scrolling through TikTok and go watch it. It's a reminder that nature is mental, history is violent, and

we are incredibly lucky to be at the top of the food chain right now.

Documentary Comes with Perfect Timing

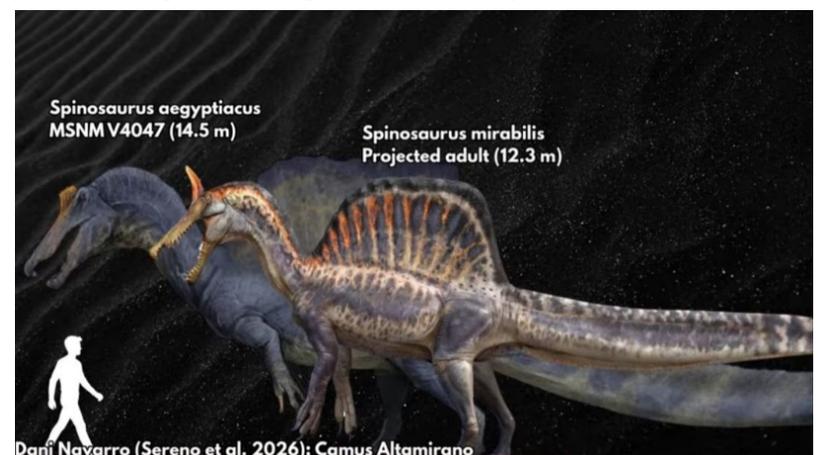
This documentary hits Netflix on March 6 and will come right off the heels of a brand new confirmed *Spinosaurus* species discovery. Yes, something we haven't witnessed in more than a century since 1912.

While this new species is not in the documentary, this is still insane news for the scientific community, as we have only really confirmed just one true species with *Spinosau-*

rus aegyptiacus. But on February 19, 2026, scientists announced the discovery of *Spinosaurus mirabilis*, found in Africa (Niger) in the middle of the Sahara Desert and way more inland (in comparison to *S. aegyptiacus* found in North Africa: Egypt and Morocco). This is not just a little more inland compared to *S. aegyptiacus*; it was hundreds of miles.

The paleontology team that found the skull was led by Paul Sereno of the University of Chicago back in 2019.

“This find was so sudden and amazing, it was really emotional



Dani Navarro (Sereno et al. 2026); Camus Altamirano

for our team. I'll forever cherish the moment in camp when we crowded

While that is something I am used to from the Walking With fran-



around a laptop to look at the new species for the first time," Sereno says.

The *S. mirabilis* was smaller than the previously known species but has a distinct crest on its head, making the name, making *S. mirabilis* ("wonderful spine lizard") a perfect name for it. The crest's purpose is still a mystery, but most likely, with keratin likely covering it, it was used for visual display, like its sail.

While it was still found way more inland than other discoveries of its kind, it was still a semi-aquatic dinosaur that used its spiky interlocking teeth like crocodiles and likely spent time on the riverbed in shallow water. It's still debated on whether it could truly "dive" like some aquatic birds or stay in the water to ambush prey like crocs, fully submerged, or if it used its size and neck/jaw length standing in the water, like a heron.

"I envision this dinosaur as a kind of 'hell heron' that had no problem wading on its sturdy legs into two meters of water but probably spent most of its time stalking shallower traps for the many large fish of the day," Sereno says.

The year 2026 so far has been great for paleontology, and with Spinosaurus being the poster boy of this series, the new discovery builds some more hype around the new Netflix doc.

The Holy Trinity of Natural History Docs

Growing up, I've sat through enough nature documentaries to know the formula. Slow-motion cheetahs, penguins falling over, and a British narrator telling us about the circle of life. It's comforting. It's Sunday afternoon nap material.

chise (BBC 1999) and others, something fresh might be a good change of scenery.

Based on the trailer, *The Dinosaurs* feels different. This isn't just about observing nature; it's about cinema.

When you attach the name "Spielberg" to a dinosaur project, you aren't just getting facts about the Cretaceous period. You're getting a thriller. You're getting emotional manipulation of the highest order. You're getting the guy who made us cry over an extraterrestrial botanist.

And then there's Morgan Freeman.

There is a specific gravitational pull to Freeman's voice. When he speaks, you listen. If Morgan Freeman told me the world was ending in five minutes, I'd probably just nod and say, "Well, that sounds reasonable, thank you for telling me." Having him narrate the literal apocalypse of the dinosaurs? That is casting perfection. It's essentially God doing the play-by-play of his own rough draft.

ILM Flexes Its Muscles Again

Here is where film nerds start to get excited a little bit. The visual effects and animation for this series are being handled by Industrial Light & Magic (ILM).

For the uninitiated, ILM is the house that George Lucas built. They are the wizards behind *Star Wars*, *E.T.*, and, obviously, the original *Jurassic Park*. There is a poetic symmetry here that is almost too good to be true. Spielberg and his old buddy Lucas's company are teaming up again to bring giant lizards back to life.

The trailer gives us a glimpse of

what this looks like, and frankly, it's terrifying. There's a shot of a Spinosaurus aegyptiacus, a creature that looks like a crocodile that decided to start hitting the gym and grow a sail just for style points, hunting in the water. It's visceral. It doesn't look like a cartoon; it looks like something that wants to eat you.

There was a bit of a funny mix-up in the initial press coverage where people mistook a *T. rex* for something else, or a Spinosaurus for a *T. rex*, but let's be real: when a mouth the size of a minivan is coming at the camera, taxonomic accuracy is the last thing on your mind.

The point is, the textures, the lighting, the weight of these animals: it all looks incredible. It's a far cry from the claymation of the '80s or the shaky CGI of early 2000s cable docs. This is blockbuster quality on a streaming budget.

A Story of Rise and Fall (Mostly Fall)

According to the official synopsis, the four-episode event series follows "the rise and fall of the dinosaurs across hundreds of millions of years."

We all know the ending, right? Spoiler alert: A big rock hits the planet, and the party is over.

But that's the tragedy of it. That's the emotional hook. We are watching these magnificent, terrifying, awe-inspiring creatures fight

duced by Spielberg.

However, the difference is that they know how to craft a narrative out of biology, and this one will be more dinosaur-focused compared to season 1 of *Our Planet*. The first iteration had 8 episodes and will continue with just 4 for its second go around two years later.

While I would recommend going to watch that first, it isn't necessary, and mostly covers the time before the dinosaurs, some during, and the time after the dinosaurs in prehistory, before man got involved.

They aren't just throwing clips together; they are telling a survival story. And with Spielberg steering the ship, you can bet there will be moments of pure wonder mixed in with the carnage.

Why We Are Still Obsessed with Dinosaurs

You have to ask yourself: Why? Why do we care so much? They've been dead for 66 million years. They have absolutely no bearing on our taxes, our relationships, or our Wi-Fi signal.

Yet, every time a new Jurassic movie comes out, like *Rebirth* from 2025, we line up (whether it is good or not). Every time a new fossil is found, it makes the news.

I think it's because dinosaurs represent the ultimate "what if." They are monsters that were actu-



ally real. They are dragons without the magic, breathing down the neck of history.

There is also a humbling aspect to it.

There is also a humbling aspect to it.

It's the ultimate dramatic irony. This is produced by Amblin Documentaries and Silverback Films. If Silverback sounds familiar, it's because they're the team behind 2023's *Life on Our Planet*, which is also narrated by Freeman and pro-

Dinosaurs ruled the Earth for roughly 165 million years. Humans have been around for a fraction of that time. Watching them is a reminder that dominant species are not permanent. It's a bit of an exis-

tential check, isn't it? If a Stegosaurus with spikes on its tail and a brain the size of a walnut couldn't make it, what chance do we have?

But let's not get too philosophical. Sometimes, you just want to watch a massive predator wreck shop. The trailer shows a Stegosaurus swinging those tail spikes (the thagomizer, for you science dorks out there) and absolutely ruining an Allosaurus's day. That's the kind of content I pay my subscription fee for.

The Production Team: Not Exactly Amateurs

Aside from the big names above the title, the team in the trenches is stacked. Dan Tapster is serving as the showrunner. The directing team includes Nick Shoolingin-Jordan, Jolyon Sutcliffe, Amber Cherry Eames, and Darren Williams.

These are people who have made a career out of filming the unfilmable. It's not easy to direct a scene when your actors have been extinct for eons. You have to choreograph the action, plan the camera moves, and edit the pacing all before a single pixel is rendered. It's a massive undertaking.

And let's not forget the score.

Lorne Balfe is the composer. Balfe has done everything from Mission: Impossible to Black Widow. If anyone knows how to make your heart race while a digital lizard chases a digital mammal, it's him. You need that swelling orchestral score to really sell the majesty. If it's just silence and crunching bones, it's a horror movie. Add some strings and brass, and it's a nature documentary.

When Can We Binge This?

Netflix has set the premiere date for March 6th on a Friday. But in the grand scheme of geological time, it will be here before you know it. The dinosaurs waited millions of years



just to become birds and fossil fuels. By then, you can watch other prehistory documentaries to prepare in 4k.

By then, get your biggest TV ready. Upgrade your sound system so you can feel the footfalls. Maybe rewatch the original Jurassic Park to get yourself in the mood (and to appreciate just how well those animatronics hold up).

But if you want a way more accurate representation, just wait a few weeks for this one when it drops.

Comparing it to Prehistoric Planet by Apple

The most recent prehistoric

documentary that had a wide release as big as this is Prehistoric Planet on Apple TV+, which takes a wildlife-film approach to deep time. It treats dinosaurs and other ancient animals like modern wildlife subjects and had its first season in 2022, following up with a splendid second season. It had its third season just last year, covering the Ice Age.

The series blends photoreal CGI with wildlife-style cinematography, aiming to make scenes feel as if a nature crew had filmed them in the Cretaceous. Sir David Attenborough's narration and the BBC Natural History Unit's sensibility give the show a grounded, research-driven tone, and the production leans heavily on current paleontological findings to present plausible behaviors and ecosystems.

There is something comforting old-school about this project. It's not a gritty reboot. It's not a cinematic universe tie-in. It's just Spielberg, Freeman, and some really angry lizards. It's a return to the basics of blockbuster entertainment: Show us something we've never seen, make it look real, and make us feel small.

The Real Season Starts Now

An Unfiltered Look at the NBA's Chaotic Stretch Run

BY ANDREW KIM

The All-Star break is over. The confetti has been swept up, the ridiculous "point totals" from the exhibition game have been forgotten, and players have returned from Cabo with questionable tans and renewed optimism.

Now comes the hard part.

We love to say the "real season" starts after the break, and usually, that's just a cliché we use to justify ignoring the doldrums of January. But looking at the landscape of the league right now, specifically this bizarro-world 2026 timeline we seem to be living in,

the stretch run is shaping up to be a free-for-all.

With injuries plaguing star teams and the bad teams to the point that they are investigating teams for "allegedly tanking," it has been a cutthroat year so far. This is coming off last year, with many stars on the bench sidelined for the first half of the regular season and past the 2026 NBA trade deadline.

We have the Detroit Pistons looking down at the rest of the East. We have Luka Doncic putting up video game numbers in a Lakers jersey while the team barely



treads water. And we have the annual "Will Joel Embiid's knee hold up?" sweepstakes in Philadelphia.

If you're trying to figure out who to trust with your money or your emotional well-being over



the next two months, pull up a chair. Let's sift through the noise, look at the betting markets, and try to make sense of a league that has seemingly lost its mind.

The Eastern Conference: A Fever Dream

Let's address the elephant in the room, or rather, the engine block in the room. The Detroit Pistons are the top seed. If you predicted this back in 2024, please tell me the winning lottery numbers for next week.

While the Oklahoma City Thunder were the darlings of the first half, they've hit a wall. The Pistons, meanwhile, are 21-8 in their last 29 games. They've overtaken OKC for the best record in the league.

There is still a lingering skepticism here, a sense that the carriage is going to turn back into a pumpkin any minute now. But if you're looking at the futures market, Detroit holding onto the best record feels less like a gamble and more like a recognition of reality. They have the momentum, and unlike the Thunder, they aren't limping to the finish line.

Then there is Boston.

The Celtics are currently navigating the "Ewing Theory" on steroids. Jayson Tatum has been out, and the team hasn't missed a beat. In fact, they've been arguably better, sitting pretty in second place with Jaylen Brown looking like an MVP candidate and Joe Mazzulla coaching like a man possessed.

The question isn't whether Boston is good; it is what happens when Tatum comes back. He's ramping up for a return, doing the whole 5-on-5 scrimmage song and

dance. But chemistry is a fragile thing.

Will re-inserting a high-usage superstar disrupt the flow of a team that's currently clicking on all cylinders? It's the ultimate first-world problem for a franchise, but it's a problem nonetheless.

If you're betting the Atlantic Division, the Celtics (+115) feel like the smart play over the Knicks, simply because their schedule is softer than a pillow-top mattress compared to New York's gauntlet.

The Philadelphia Trust Exercise

And then, we arrive in Philadelphia. If you are a Sixers fan, I assume your baseline state of existence is "cautiously terrified." The narrative around Joel Embiid hasn't changed in five years. When does he play? He is a destroyer of worlds. His on/off splits are laughable; the Sixers look like a title contender when he's on the floor and a lottery team when he sits.

But can you trust him? Really?

The "right knee management" updates are back.

The Sixers are already ducking the luxury tax by trading away depth, signaling that maybe they don't believe this is the year. Embiid struggles to defend in space, and teams are ruthlessly putting him in pick-and-rolls to wear him down.

Despite all the dominance, Philadelphia may end up in the play-in tournament. They are currently clinging to a slim lead over the Magic and Heat.

If you're feeling cynical (or just realistic), betting on the Sixers to slip into the play-in (+105) feels like free money. History doesn't repeat itself, but in Philly, it defi-

nitely rhymes.

The West: The Alien vs. The Beard vs. The Narrative

Out West, the storylines are even juicier.

Let's talk about the San Antonio Spurs. We all knew Victor Wembanyama was going to be great. We didn't know he would turn the Spurs into a legitimate title threat this fast. While the Thunder deal with injuries to Shai Gilgeous-Alexander and Jalen Williams, the Spurs are lurking. They are 8-2 in their last ten, and they own the tiebreaker over OKC.



There is a non-zero chance that Wembanyama drags this team to the number one seed. If you're looking for a dark horse for the Finals, the Spurs at 16-1 is the kind of long-shot bet that pays for a nice summer vacation. They have the defense, they have the star power, and they have the momentum.

Then there is the tragedy of the Los Angeles Lakers.

Watching Luka Doncic in Purple and Gold should be a religious experience. Instead, it feels like watching a virtuoso violinist playing on the deck of the Titanic. Luka is leading the league in scoring. He's unstoppable. And yet, the Lakers are just average. Nothing special despite the names on the roster. They lead the league in "win differential," which is a fancy way of saying they are winning games they have no business winning.

They rank 23rd in defensive rating. That is not a typo.

You cannot win a title with the 23rd-ranked defense, I don't care if you have Luka, LeBron, or the

ghost of Wilt Chamberlain. The smart money says the Lakers are destined for the play-in (+210). They are a top-heavy, flawed roster that made a panic trade for Luke Kennard: a move that screams "shuffling deck chairs."

The Bottom of the Barrel

We can't talk about the NBA without mentioning the race for the bottom. The tanking wars are heating up. The Bucks are in the mix for a top pick, which is a sentence that feels illegal to type.

The idea of Milwaukee landing the number one pick and pair-

ing a rookie phenom with Giannis is terrifying, but also hilarious, given the rumors about Giannis wanting out.

But my heart goes out to the Indiana Pacers without Tyrese Haliburton. They deserve the number one pick. They've been stuck in basketball purgatory for too long.

The NBA Season Heading into March

So, where does that leave us? The second half of this season is going to be defined by availability.

If I had to put my reputation on the line, I'm looking at the "Most Improved Player" market. Jalen Johnson in Atlanta (+220) is the real deal. With Trae Young gone, Johnson has been unleashed. He's a walking double-double, and the narrative is on his side.

Buckle up, folks. The exhibition season is over. The weirdest, wildest, and most unpredictable stretch run in recent memory is officially underway. Try not to blink.