

NEARLY

NOW

//2023





NEARLY NEARLY NOW

(A Preface)

2023 is going to be a difficult year.
It will reward us if we are curious, but
make our lives more challenging.
2023 is the year when diversity of
thought dies.

The interesting, the new, and the
unique are being hidden from us in
favour of the popular or the engaging.
Conversations are moving into the
quiet corners and happening between
people who already agree.

The tools we use, the platforms we
inhabit, and the influencers we trust
are increasingly being optimized by
the “wisdom” of crowds. Ideas that rise
to the top of the feed are accelerated
and anything else is hidden in the
noise. It has never been harder to

move beyond the top 40 or uncover
that hidden gem.

Our predictions are just a starting
point. A call to arms to understand
what is holding us back and a
roadmap to seek out what we don’t
already know.

Hopefully this knowledge will inspire
you to create the future you want.
Let’s keep the future weird.

FACULTY *of* CHANGE

ONEMETHOD

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FACULTY *of* CHANGE

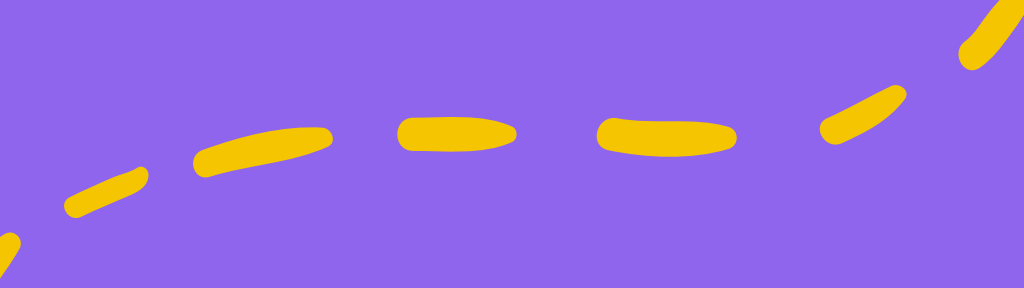
Faculty of Change works with leaders of experienced companies to realize new sources of growth. From luxury hospitality and wealth management to retail and grocery, they have helped the world’s greatest firms reinvent their relevance, redeploy their experience, and lead their markets and industries into the future.

HELLO



ONE METHOD

OneMethod is a creative agency that deviates by design. They focus on brand design, CX design, venture design, and advertising (which they sometimes call comms design, you know, for consistency). They’re best known for creating La Carnita and Sweet Jesus, designing the Kit Kat Chocolatory and the Scotiabank Arena branding, and being BFFs with Bensimon Byrne, Narrative, and Folk.

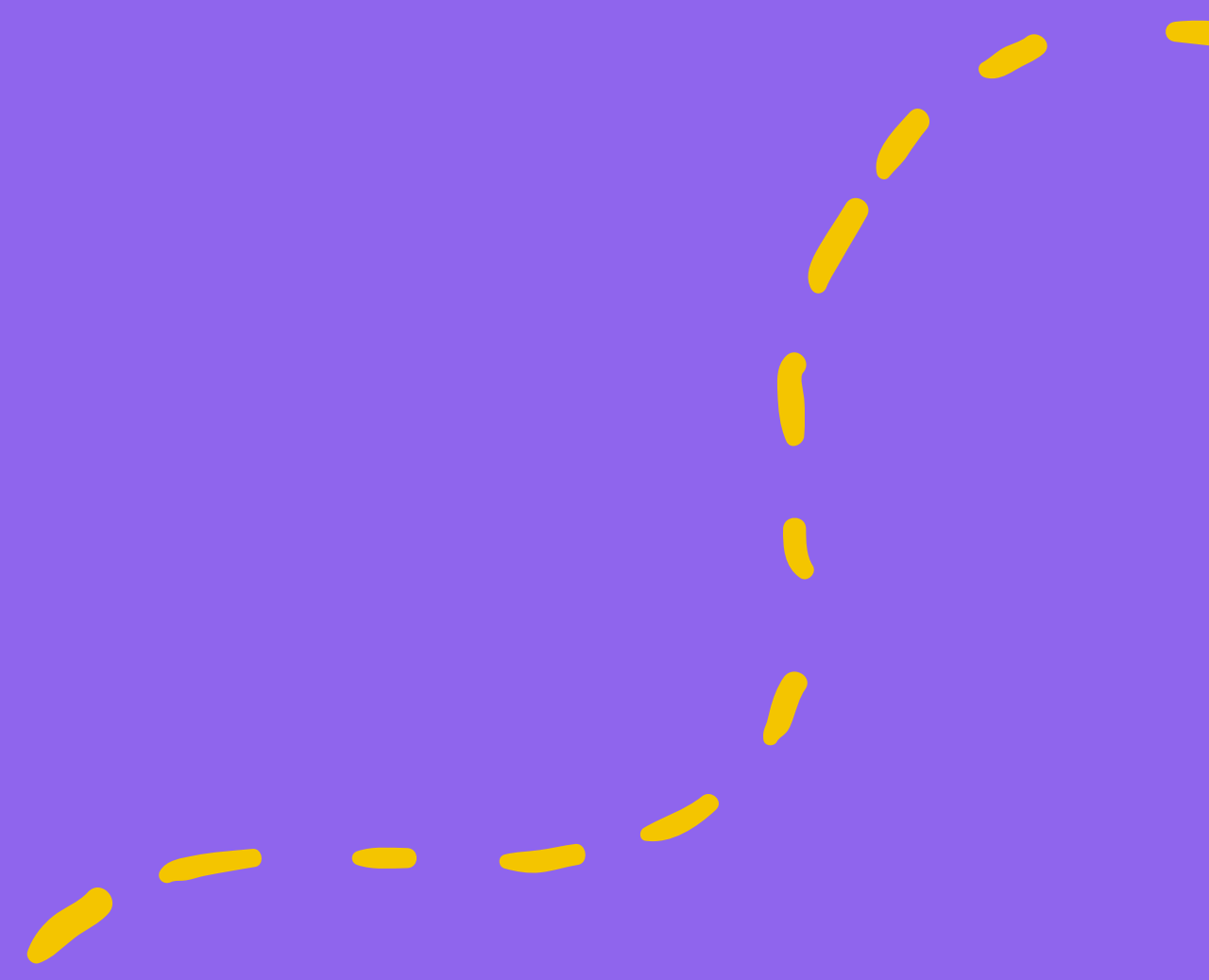


SMARTER

01


CITIES

New avenues
for living well





Of the

500+ 

office buildings evaluated
across North America...



50

of them are now
being converted
into housing.

- Steven Paynter, Gensler on the Dror Poleg podcast, *Can Offices Become Housing?*



SMARTER CITIES

from: "Connected Infrastructure"

to: "Connected Communities"

In 2021 we talked about the **Decline of First Cities** as a response to the rise in remote work. Thinking about what has happened since 2021, including "the Great Recession," the decline in 9 to 5 commuters, and our not-totally-back-to-normal city centers has us

wondering what will become of our downtowns?

The last time downtown was a bad place, it gave birth to the suburb. An opportunity for those with means to move away from crime and grime,

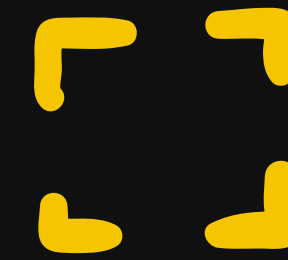
trading it in for immaculately designed subdivisions with a house, a yard, and a neighborhood safe for kids. The move signaled an upwardly mobile middle class with strong family values.

If not downtown, where will people go instead to congregate, work, and be at the epicenter of culture and commerce?





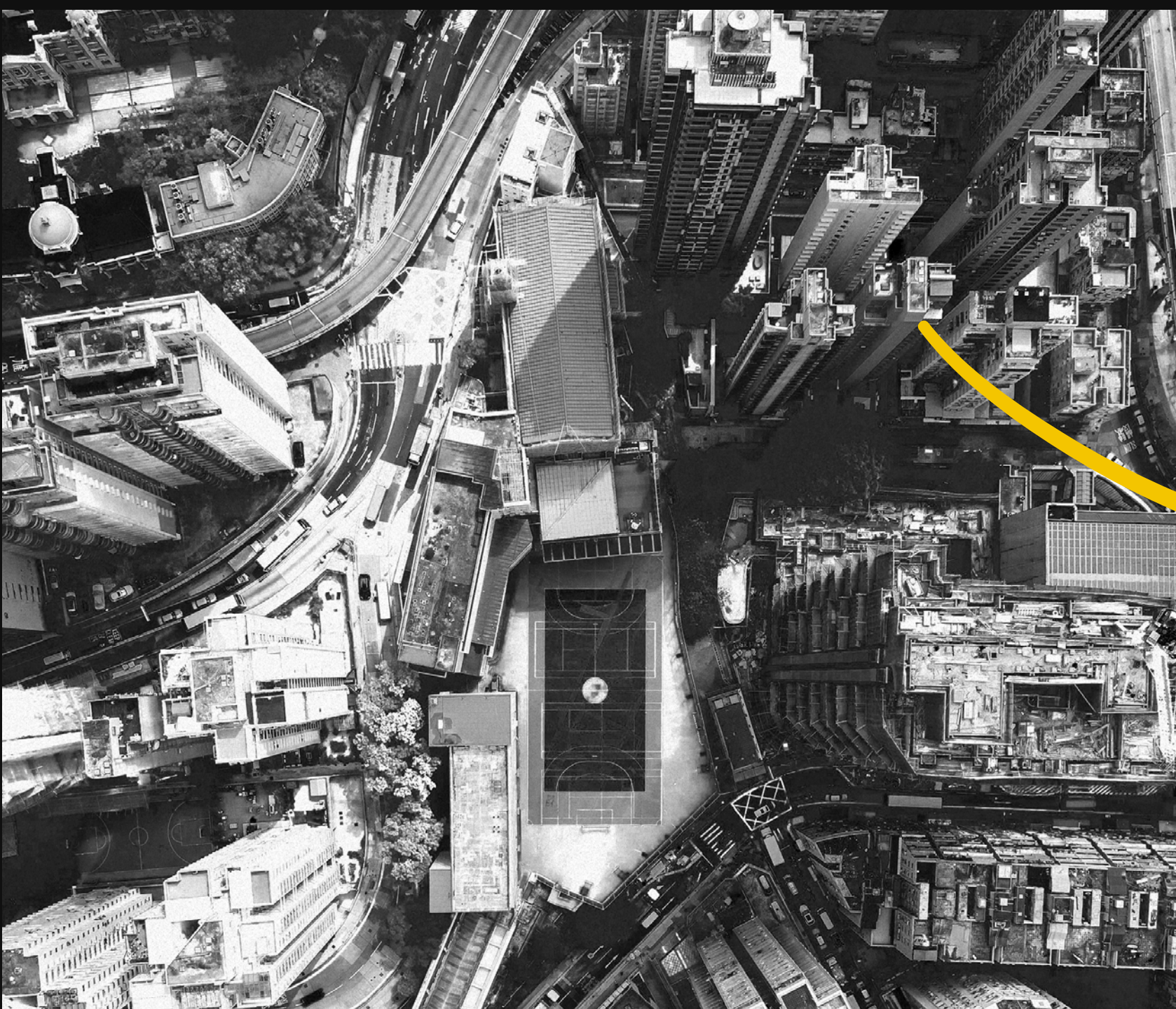
IS MIDTOWN THE NEW DOWNTOWN?



The softening of the commercial office market and the increased interest in more walkable communities has hollowed out our downtowns.

The allure of midtown is real, with coffee shops, restaurants (even if they are the outposts of the OG downtown versions) and homes all within a walkable/bikeable/scootable 15 minutes.

Many traditional financial district employees are now working remote or hybrid, so what to do with your oversupply of office buildings? Housing! Expect to see a refitting of our financial centers as buildings convert to apartments, an effort already well underway in Calgary, Toronto, Chicago and New York.



KNOWLEDGE WORKERS WILL FLOCK TO SMART CITIES



The last few years have given rise to a new kind of utopian suburb concept. These include [Cul de Sac](#), [Telosa](#), and a [Smart City concept by Bill Gates](#), with similar examples under development in the UAE and in China. Some are geared toward remote workers, while others are heralding

more sustainable city infrastructures. Whatever their fit-for-purpose pitch, we believe 'smart' cities are attracting the newest kind of upwardly mobile virtue-signaling middle class.



CHOOSING 'BURBS VIA VIBES

New suburban concepts are dominated by efforts to create more sustainable cities, but they will also offer a more cultural and politically insular life where you have everything you need.

Jimmy Buffet's Margaritaville doesn't rely on the Mayor of Daytona to get things done, it is controlled by Uncle Jimmy.

Get ready for neighborhoods where residents don't leave the HOA. For people with the privilege of choice, where they chose to live will be more narrowly defined - not just by their location, but by the social and political values it imbues.

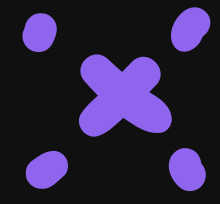


LIVING BEHIND THE ALGO

02



Thanks for
the music reco,
FBI guy!



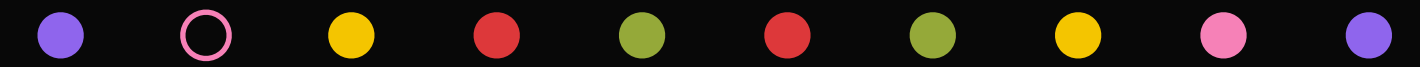
Gen Z consume

40%

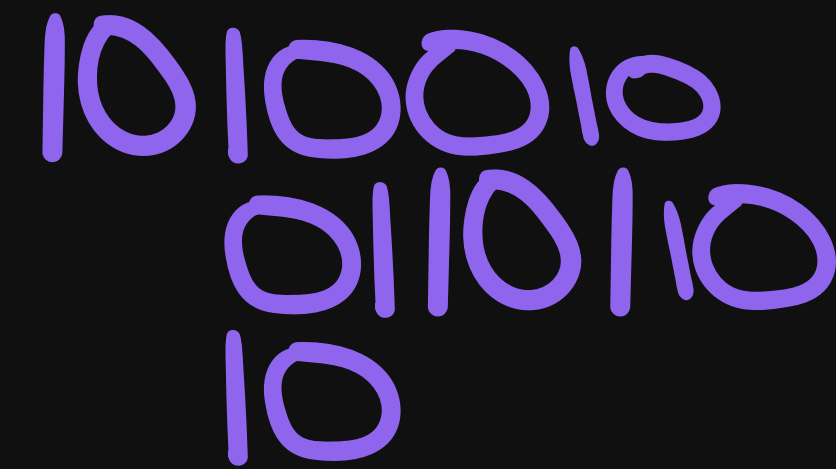


of their TV content non algorithmically

- Luth Research, Profiling the Gen Z Consumer, May 2022



LIVING BEHIND THE ALGO



from: "Channel Surfing"

to: "Swiping Left"

If you have never bought a CD from a rack, you have also likely never consumed non-algorithmically-targeted content.

Spotify playlists, the TikTok For You Page, the Netflix home page: they all serve up to users a limited slice of

content selected by the platform to serve its own purposes (which are not the same as your own enjoyment).

What can we serve to keep them scrolling or clicking? That show is so challenging that you need to take a break?—let's put that at the back of

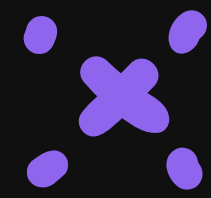
the queue. That song that is so new or different we have no performance data on it?—not going to make the "indie road trip playlist."

For generations of content consumers, the idea of choosing content has become either foreign or irrelevant.

You are served up content, as opposed to searching for it. Instead, Gen Z have become experts at training their algos and pruning their suggested content options. So what changes in 2023?

Everyone will be doing it.

TRAINING YOUR ALGOS



From choosing [who you date](#), to how you get [from A to Z](#), we will make sure to model our best behavior to train the algorithms that are everywhere. Want to see more of something? Search for it in a browser with a tracking cookie installed. Watch that video twice. Let that song play again and again when

you walk away. Take pride in your FYP/ Spotify Wrapped/YouTube Recos. You put the work in to make them.



THE END OF WEIRD



With programs making “data driven decisions,” how much data is there on that niche Japanese cover of a German jazz classic? Hits in every industry will be bigger because more eyeballs will be driven to them. The long tail? It will get shorter as the recommendations take over.

TOURING

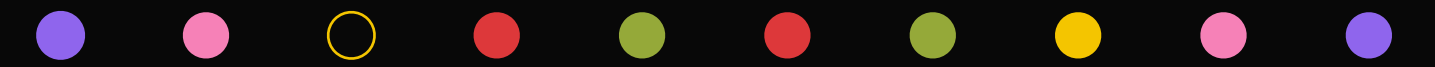
03

GOES



A new normal
for musicians

NOWHERE



“ Touring has become a
demented struggle to
break even or face debt. ”

- Lorde



TOURING GOES NOWHERE

from: "Buckle up"

to: "Hunker down"

On average, artists make half a cent per listen through streaming platforms. This means an artist needs 6 million streams to make a minimum wage of \$30,000. Since this is not always a realistic goal, many budding

artists previously on touring—specifically, profits made from ticket and merch sales—to hit it big.

With labour shortages, inflation, and a clogged supply chain (Covid

notwithstanding), it has become incredibly difficult to secure a (lucrative) place in the spotlight.

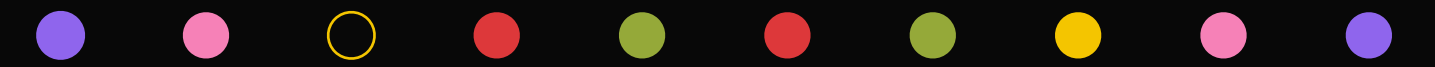


THE RISE OF TOURING RESIDENCIES

Forget grueling tours where an artist plays hundreds of shows in hundreds of cities. The biggest artists will play 40 shows in 5 cities, instead of the traditional 40 shows in 30. Harry Styles sold out 15 nights at NYC's Madison Square Garden (and Billy Joel does it once a month). It won't be the

band that hits the road, it will be you that hits the road to see the band!





THE \$20 CLUB SHOW IS DEAD



Cost-effective touring is no more. Artists with small-to-medium sized followings will be forced to search for revenue in newer, more inexpensive venues. Think virtual performances or sponsored gigs. Platforms like TikTok

and Mixcloud will take the place of earning your stripes on the road. Instead, you will be building that fanbase one "like" at a time.

LOOK OUT FOR LISTENING BARS



Long popular in Japan, listening bars will soon be everywhere you look. These intimate venues advertise their sound systems as much as their ambiance. The best will have sound systems created by celebrity

audiophiles, like [Mark Ronson](#) or [Devon Turnbull](#) (his systems were a favourite of the late Virgil Abloh). Grab your friends, and go listen to a record in public.



R.I.P. BEER



Anyway, who's
got the next round?

1.8%

Beer CAGR to 2024
(NA at 8.3% FWIW)

– Allied Market Research via [this article](#)

R.I.P BEER

from: "Beer companies"

to: "Beverage brands"

If you happened to hit a bar, barbecue, or boy's weekend this summer, you may have noticed a lot less beer in the mix. If you want to know whasssup with that, we can tell you all about it, with much more modern references, we promise.

The truth is, beer isn't dying, as our click-bait headline suggested. But the double-digit growth it's guzzled for years has faded. Some models put beer's growth at 1.8% leading up to 2024 (others higher fwiw). There's a slight chicken-slash-egg situation

going on when balancing things like the decline of lad culture and bro culture (*the toxic masculinity in those 2 Woodstock 99 docs* is downright scary) with the rise of seltzers and non-alcoholic drinks (mocktails keep getting more and more popular, even if

people are *questioning their prices*). But regardless of what came first, a shift is happening – here's what's nearly here:



YOU'LL ORDER A PINT OF NON- ALCOHOLIC BEER



One thing we do know is that the non-alcoholic trend will continue. Will we see NA keg stands on Tik Tok? Prob not, but in 2023 you'll likely see, and maybe even order (gasp), a pint of NA beer. [Heineken dropped this](#) on

Europe back in '22 but this will be the year it shows up behind a bar near you. Even the World Cup, in a surprise move, went dry this year.

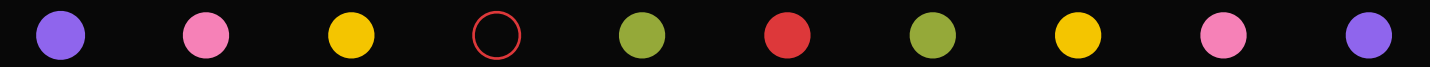
NON BEER BRANDS

WILL
START
SELLING
BEER ✨

Currently we see brewing companies pushing their products beyond beer, and we'll soon also see them pushing their partnerships in that same direction. Patagonia's pilsner launch from a few months ago is a strong signal for this, but what we'll see next

is TBD. An Ikea x Stella collab in the form of a super frustrating DIY homebrew kit? A new ale from Aesop and Sapporo? Called Aesapporo? Who knows?





A NON-
ALCOHOLIC
BEER WILL
START
ACTING LIKE AN
ENERGY DRINK

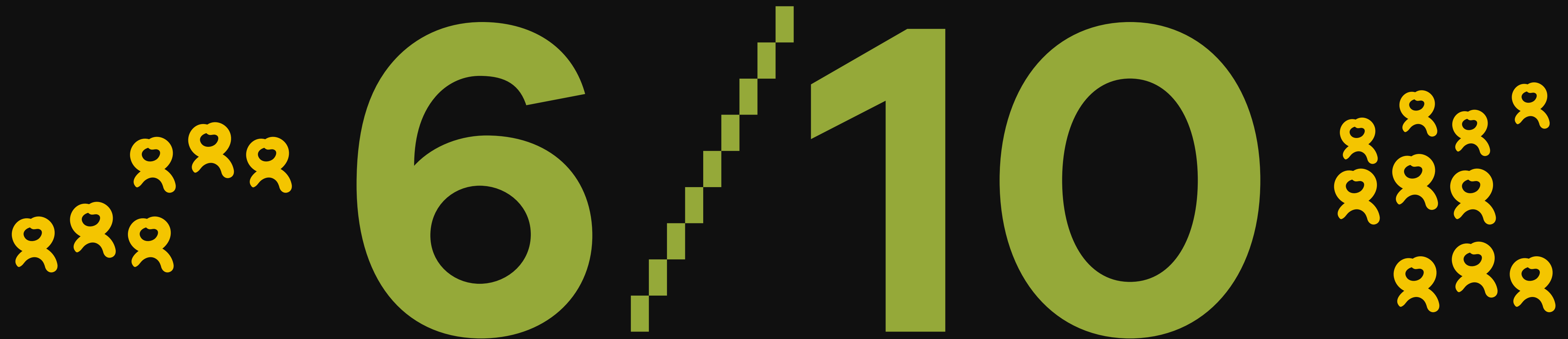
Here's the bigger one. The need for innovation, the power of lifestyle, and the shift to NA will result in some big brewer taking a sip out of the Red Bull Media House can. Legal loopholes will be threaded and someone like [Rayssa Leal](#) will shift into global superstar status after she wins gold (amber?) at the Budweiser Zero Gravity Games.



05

VIRTUAL INFLUENCE

Return of the mascot



people follow a virtual influencer.

- 2022 virtual influencers survey

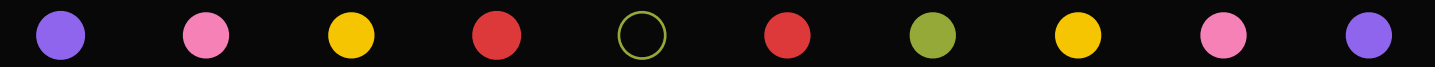
VIRTUAL INFLUENCE

from: "Faceless corporate entities"

to: "Impressionable brand personalities"

Creators are in crisis. There are already many more of them than there are brands. Every week brings us another brand crisis brought on by an influencer's bad behavior. Sketcher's even boasted about saying no to Kanye. Do you really want to tie your fate to anyone who grew up online?

Corporations who have already personified themselves through their acts of social responsibility and irreverent brand voice and acts will soon begin to show up in a variety of visually exciting forms from humans to critters to otherworldly creatures.



A BRAND WILL BUY A VIRTUAL INFLUENCER

Brands working with virtual influencers is nothing new. We've seen Prada and Calvin Klein collab with Lil Miquela. We've seen Gucci team up with Superplastic (the company behind Guggimon and Janky). And if you don't know what most of those words are,

don't stress it. What you should stress though is that what's next goes beyond collaboration. A big brand will straight up buy a virtual character and make it their very own.

WE WILL ALL BECOME MASCOTS

Have you used Bitmoji or Memoji?
That is the first step. As we
increasingly invest in digital avatars
for use in virtual worlds, we are all just
creating mascots out of ourselves.
And even though the Metaverse and
Web 3 didn't hit that hard (yet?), this

will be the year that some real virtual
version of yourself sneaks itself into
becoming an actual part of your life/
self. Insert exploding brain emoji.



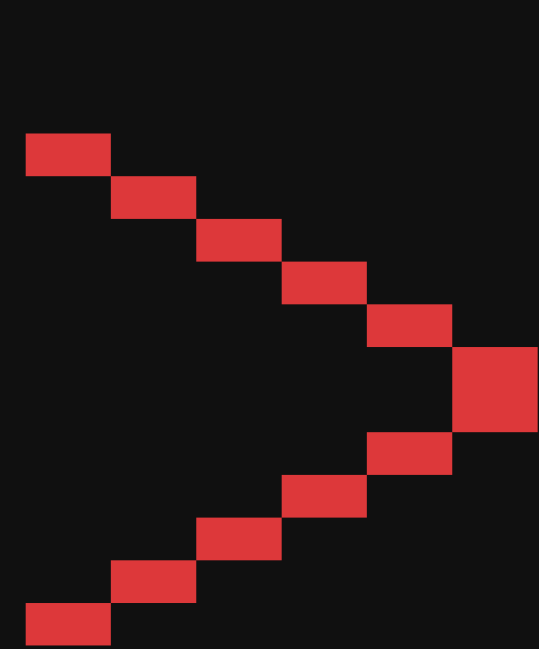
GENO DEPRESSED



United we sad

CRYING

make-up tutorials as a term has



130

MILLION
VIEWS
on social media

- New York Times, 2022

GEN DEPRESSED

from: "Fake happiness"

to: "Unfiltered sadness"

With anxiety and depression being widespread amongst the younger generation, there is no question that dealing with the Covid pandemic and its restrictions had a devastating impact on mental health.

What's interesting is that as lonely as Generation Z can be, they don't keep their mental health to themselves. Gone are the taboos, and it's time to connect over the desperation.



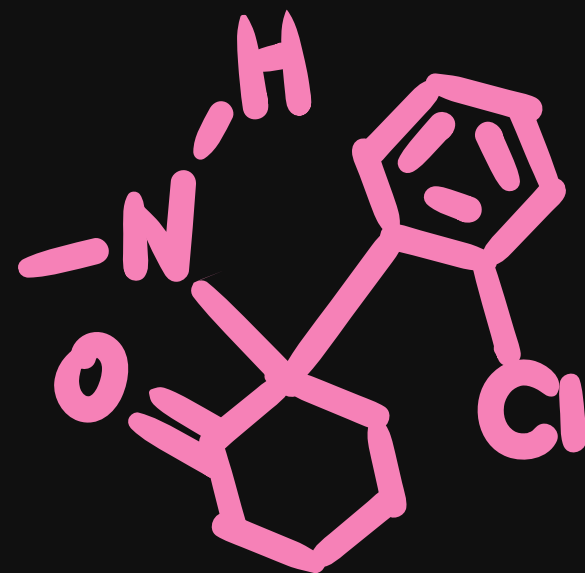
A NEW SHADE OF SADVERTISING

Just over a decade ago, sadness largely overtook comedy as the dominant language in advertising. So yeah, sadvertising has been around for a bit. But up until now, the brand and the audience have largely been observers of said sadness. On the outside looking in. The big shift heading our way is that brands and audiences will pivot to participate in the sadness. On the inside, bawling out.

+1♡



THE KETAMINE AESTHETIC



Every generation gets the drug, and aesthetic movement, it deserves. Marijuana/LSD/psilocybin gave us the look of the counterculture. Cocaine and the go-go 80s drove Memphis design to catch like wildfire. With the

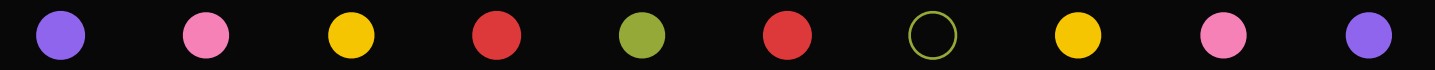
rise of escapist drugs, what will be the prevailing look to accompany them? This will be the year we find out.



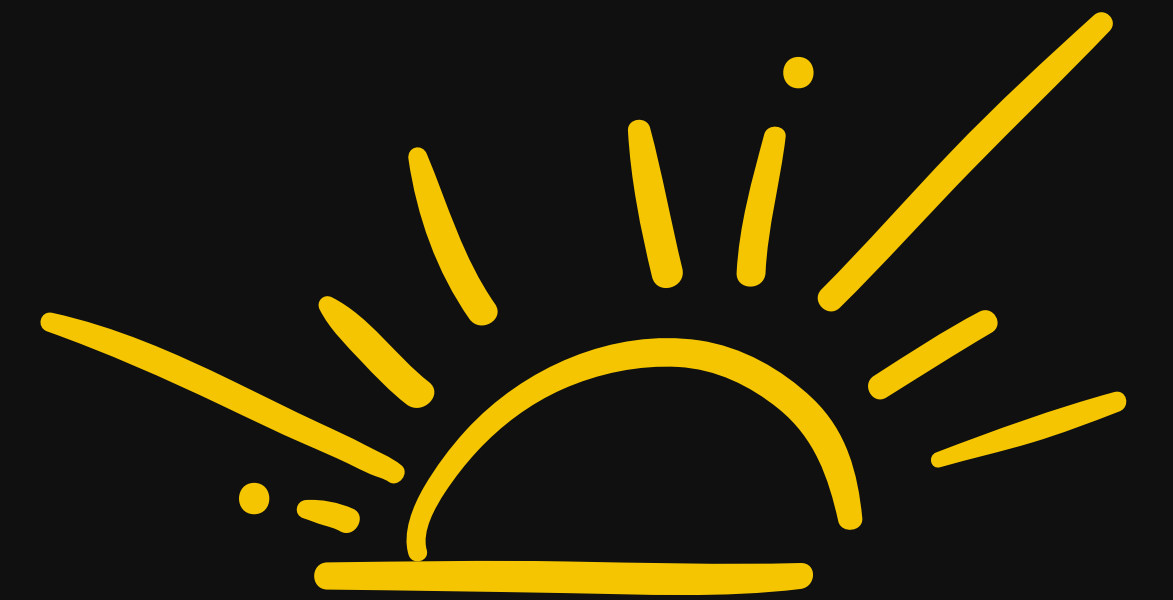
CLASSIC TRAVEL



Bleisure is bleh, let's get away.



people are
planning to go big
on their next trip.



- Expedia 2022 state of travel study

CLASSIC TRAVEL

from: "Extended Stay"

to: "Let's be Tourists"

When did "tourist" become a four letter word? Short cheap stays have proliferated on one end, and digital nomadism on the other. What ever happened to saving up for that splurge weekend? Airbnb, Uber, and low-cost flights changed what it

means to travel. Travel became affordable, easy and fun. But the fight for the bottom has caused the system to fray and collapse, and something new is now happening in its place.

RETURN OF REAL TRAVEL



Put down your backpack and pick up your Rimowa, because real travel is coming back. Sleeper train use is up. The **Airbnbust** is here, and White Lotus has reminded us of the wild pleasures of a good hotel. Nothing is cooler than hailing a cab. Positano rules as the

"instagram capital of the world."

A certain set of travelers is traveling less, but traveling better. Expect their ranks to grow. Puka shells and hair wraps will be replaced with pearls (cultured is ok) and silk wraps (vintage is even better).





WHAT WAS MASS BECOMES EXCLUSIVE

Quality travel is an industry with limited supply. There are only 111 rooms at the [Four Seasons San Domenico Palace](#) (location of White Lotus Season 2). Access and knowledge will drive customers back to travel agents (as will the benefit of a single throat to

choke). Forced return to office (either by edict or fear of job loss) will curb the amount of vacation time individuals can take, and they will be saving to spend. Peak seasons will come back, leaving those that don't have money or access out in the cold.

DARK FOREST

08

Everything is
the group chat



"If the dark forest isn't dangerous already, these departures might ensure it will be."



Yancy Strickler, Founder of KickStarter

DARK FOREST

from: "Millions of Loyal Fans"

to: "Handful of Peers"

We are all used to posting to the timeline. Our most valuable (and meaningless) thoughts, seen and read by anyone and everyone. The big platforms that enabled this behaviour are in decline. We have successfully quarantined the Boomers on Facebook. Instagram? The % of

accounts that are private has more than doubled since 2020. Twitter has turned from a public square into one individual's private megaphone.

But conversations and discourse have not stopped. Rather, they are shifting to smaller, private spaces that are

being called Dark Forests. In a dark forest, all seems quiet from the outside but there is a plethora of activity on the inside. Platforms like Discord, or even the group chat with the girlies, are taking the place of the comment sections on a Facebook post.

This is having real world implications, including limiting the ability of governments in places like Iran, China and Russia to censor these conversations.



AI GENERATED CONTENT WILL OVERWHELM NON- DARK-FOREST SPACES



If you can spin up thousands of users who pass the Turing test in a matter of hours, the only thing protecting your community is a thick wall. Outside of the forest, the default assumption is that anyone we are talking to is a bot.

Only in our private communities will we be able to trust each other.

INFLUENCERS? WHO IS LEFT TO INFLUENCE?



Influencers have managed to avoid this platform decay by jumping from one sinking ship to the next: from Facebook, to Instagram, to YouTube, to TikTok to... When the next social network fails, there will be nothing to

replace it. Rather, we'll be left with small silos of groups that don't interact with each other. So long, creator economy!

YOUTHFUL GRIFT

09

Crime is a young
person's game

Crypto scammers stole

\$14B

In 2021

YOUTHFUL GRIFT



from: "Bernie Madoff"

to: "Sam Bankman Fried"

Crime used to be the domain of the 40+. Sure, there were always youthful indiscretions, but real crime was performed by old people. Mob bosses, Enron/WorldCom execs, corrupt dictators, etc.

The criminal of 2023 is a baby by comparison. From SBF and Don Kwo at Tether, to Anna Delvey, Elizabeth Holmes and all the countless other scammers yet to be outed by the crashing markets.





CRIME PAYS



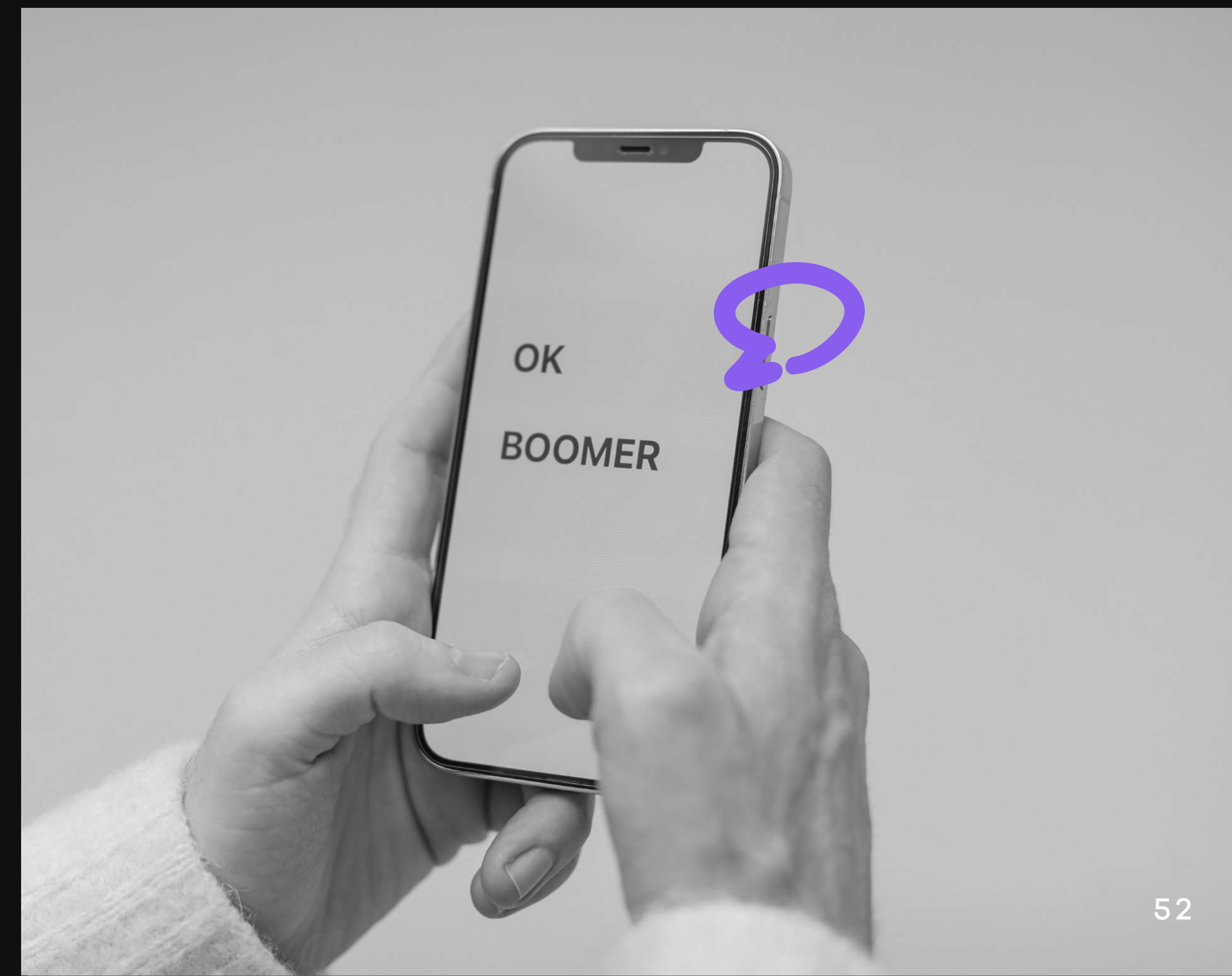
Some of the decade's biggest "criminals" are much better off now than they were before prison. Book deals, selling life rights, fashion ad campaigns, and unrecovered purloined crypto millions paint the

picture that the justice system is incapable of making the time fit the crime. You don't even need to fake your own death (although some still do). Notoriety is a pathway to riches.

F*CK BOOMERS

From the perspective of youth today, previous generations robbed them of any opportunity to build a meaningful existence. Climate change will take years off their lives. Adoption of capitalist and consumptive

approaches to life (coupled with Boomers refusing to retire) has created a perceived ceiling on how high people can rise. They stole my future, so what's a couple thousand dollars?



RISE OF THE HOPELESS



Increasing inflation coupled with the cost of living in desirable cities make any “legitimate” enterprise insufficient to pay for your dreams. Also, with conspicuous consumption beamed into the eyeballs of youth for the past

20 years, that “cost” of “living” has only gone up. If everyone else on your feeds is doing it, how can it be wrong?

SPELL



Finally a use for
that liberal arts degree

10

CASTING

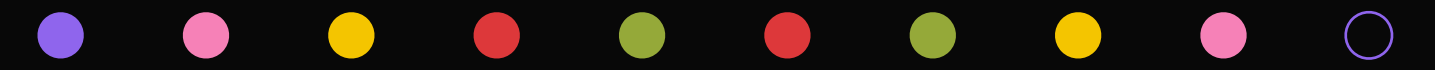
SPELL CASTING

from: "Learn to Code"

to: "Learn to Dream"

You would have to be living under a rock or in the Brendon Fraser movie *"Blast from the Past"* not to have encountered one of our new AI overlords. GPT3 and ChatGPT, Midjourney and DALL-E 2 have shown us the power of using large language

models (LLM) to create any kind of content you can dream of. What all these systems have in common is the starting point. A prompt. The "abracadabra" of the digital age.



THE END OF THE BLANK PAGE

Remember Clippy, the Office virtual assistant, and others like him? They're back. All systems, from Outlook to your grocery list, will start to leverage LLMs to “inspire” you to get started. Until the systems become self aware, that

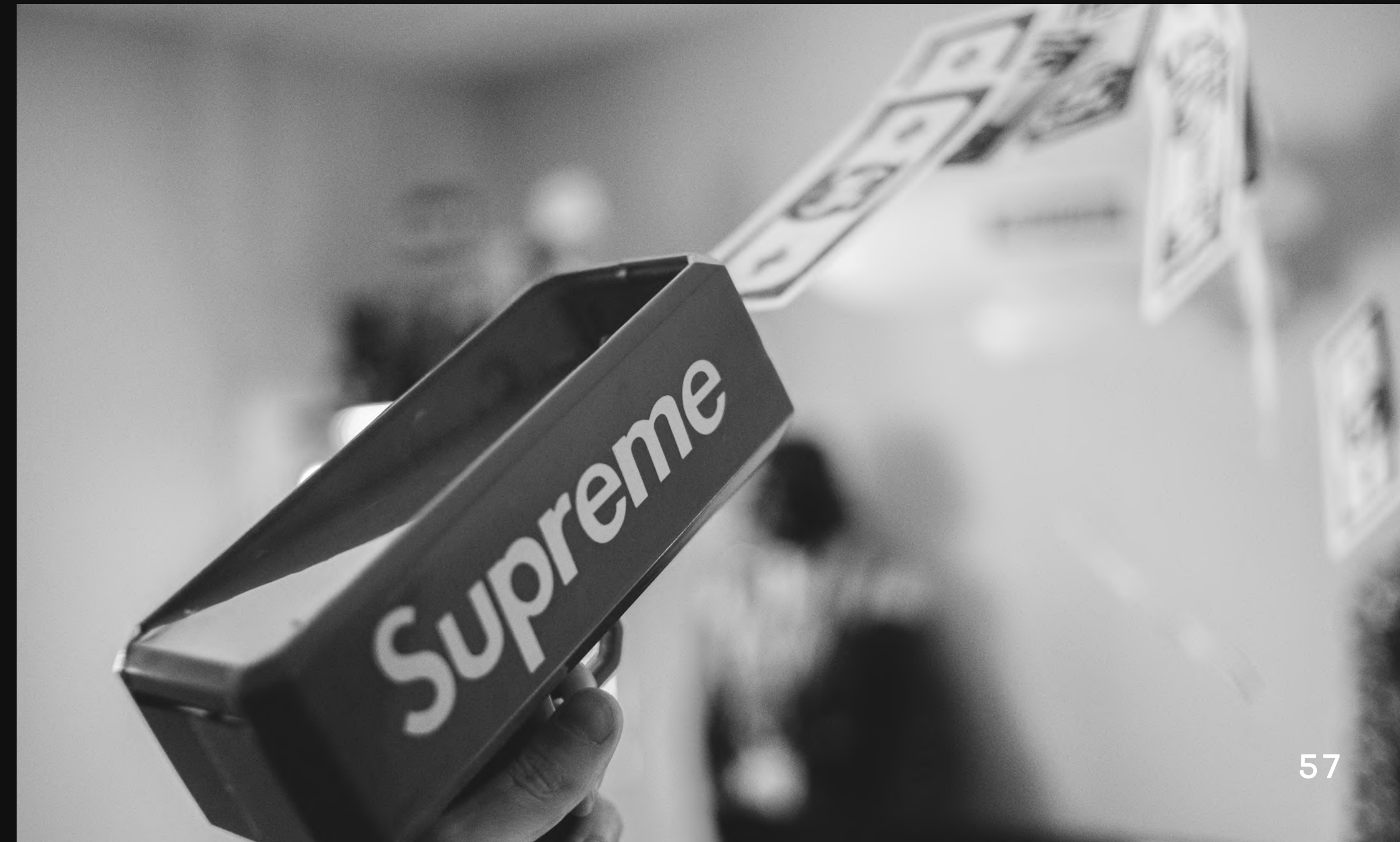
inspiration will be based on all the data currently in the system. [See above for The End of Weird](#)

COPYWRITERS FINALLY GETTING PAID!



The past century has seen massive decline in per word rates for writers. It has gone from a life of burnout to a life of penury. With reliance on prompts, the right words can save companies thousands in compute costs and

generate millions in long term revenue. The right (prompt-)writers will start to see some of that flow their way.





MULTIWORKING- MOVING BEYOND MULTITASKING



There will be a gap between when ingenious individuals can figure out what parts of their jobs AI can do, and when their employers reach the same conclusions.

Similar to the stories of pandemic-era software engineers with three full-time jobs, expect sensational exploits to be trending on LinkedIn in 2023.

If everyone is getting value though, is there really a crime being committed?

RECAP <<

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