

Where the Tides Take You / **Undi sodade te leba**

Between the towers, the skyscrapers, New York's staircase to heaven, there was a raft. Made of water washed logs tied with vines, it was swept away from view by the heavy breeze dodging the labyrinth of towering islands, perfectly planted parallel pinnacles. It was a concrete built Ha Long bay. The raft knew it had to avoid their deadly cliffs, a challenge. Soon, a tidal wave, a black mass zigzagging with ferocious strength between the islands would be unleashed. Mona, the raft, desperately tried to find a calm grotto in which to wait out the rush hour. As she turned onto 116th street she drifted into a bubble of tingling warmth. The towering and oppressive shadows no longer crept along the pavement, here the skyline was visible. It was a street made of multicolored Legos. Yes, that's what it was. Latino New York, in East Harlem, consisted of yellow and red rectangular brick houses laden with colorful shop fronts. Mona followed the spicy smell of slowly braising beef barbacoa. On her way to the beefy temptation, she was accosted by a Brazilian butcher selling the cheapest **picanha** cuts she had seen: "**Sò** 4.99\$ a pound! **Perfeito** for your BBQ needs **Senhora!**". Without a second to spare, he was already preparing a new catch phrase for an arched 'abuelita' decisively pulling her shopping trolley, as passers-by all stepped aside for her. Mona continued down this other avenue where New York had been taken over. She could not quite place the origin of this street. Was it Mexican, or maybe Cuban? It appeared that the avenue had emerged from a stirring typhoon of Latinos, Caribbeans and Brazilians. 320 Pleasant Avenue, that's where she would meet Augusta Silva. She was an old Cape Verdean woman, who had sympathized with Mona's mother at the Cabo Verde Expo last summer. During **Senhora** Acosta's profound lamentation about her

daughter's ignorance of **morna**, **batuco** or even **coladera**, **Senhora** Silva suggested Mona come live with her in the heart of Latino New York. "You'll see **Senhora** Acosta, a good dose of **morabeza** will put her on the right track. It's the purest form of Cape Verdean hospitality, it can only do her good.

"Claro, **Senhora** Silva," Maya Acosta nodded politely at the old woman's advice. She was sincerely worried for her daughter's loss of **Kriolu**. Was she ashamed of her mother tongue? Yet, **Senhora** Acosta had never seriously considered any drastic action to steer Mona on the right path.

"And she might as well help me with some errands and chores. **Ten ki trabalhar**, it's what she needs. Without an occupation a woman is worthless, or she becomes **malkriádu**.

"You think? **Minha Morna** would never -

"You don't want the neighbors saying that about your daughter, **Senhora** Acosta. **Graças a Deus**, it never happens.

"**Graças a Deus**," **Senhoras** Acosta and Silva both rhythmically gestured the shape of the cross with their fingertips, as tradition demanded. "**E verdade**, you're right, only the community can help her now," **Senhora** Acosta ended the conversation with a resolute nod. It echoed in her mind. "Only the community can help her now," and Maya Acosta knew it was the right decision. If Mona ignored her culture and the community she belonged to, then it would come to her. She couldn't continue running from her family, her blood.

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So there Mona was, at 320 Pleasant Avenue New York City, not quite ready to meet Augusta Silva. Whoever that was. In any case, if she wanted to start her career as a journalist with her mother's blessing, albeit reluctantly given, Mona would be compelled to live with **Senhora** Silva. No matter how cumbersome Mona's vision of cohabitation with the Queen of Hearts of Kriolu seemed, her life was finally starting. Mona rang. The intercom sizzled. Suddenly, a deep voice dryly answered, "First floor on the right **rapariga**. Don't forget to wipe your feet before coming in. I will not tolerate dust in my home." The front door clicked open, and Mona entered followed shyly by her shaky plastic suitcase.

As soon as she had set foot inside **Senhora** Silva's apartment, she dragged Mona around each room for a thorough explanation of the rules, which Augusta Silva expected her to follow irreproachably. Silva's large shoulders and towering body convinced Mona to refrain from any sassy retort. She held her chin so high Mona thought she must be looking down on the world. Poor Earth, Mona chuckled inwardly, it has disappointed **Senhora** Silva and will never be good enough for her. She might be in her late 60s, but Augusta Silva's back was straight as a flagpole, a glorious symbol standing above the nation. Strangely, she never shook Mona's hand. It was the only blemish to her perfectly polished posture. For some reason, she never used hand gestures while talking or greeted someone with a handshake. Instead, her hands were glued to each other at all times, never showing her palms. Mona had been told of **Senhora** Silva's great pride for her Portuguese bloodline, and how her family was distantly related to Amílcar Cabral. Yes, the communist revolutionary

Cabral was related to such a tyrannical woman. Any Cape Verdean wishes they were related to such a famous man, but **Senhora** Silva's personality was as far removed from Cabral's as can be. I'm not that credible, Mona thought, feeling more witty than usual. "**Vai chatear Camões rapariga!**" Augusta Silva snapped. As ordered, Mona took her suitcase to her new room, an 85ft² storage space which had been cleared up just enough to fit a single bed. She lay down on the springy mattress and knew her night would be restless. She couldn't possibly sleep! She was too excited. Tomorrow morning would be her first day at INC (International News Channel), the second largest channel of the West Coast. Mona had bought an entirely black pantsuit, the only acceptable color on the streets of Manhattan, where she would mingle with other black attired women. At least, that's what happened in her fantasy, a realistic prediction of her first day.

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"So you're the rookie we're gonna be filming today huh?" asked the middle aged cameraman hunched on the car seat next to her. Mona nodded. He scratched his pepper-and-salt beard, visibly having no follow up question.

It was the sound engineer's turn to poke at the enigma of the unknown novice, "You from around here, New York I mean?"

"Nope, I'm actually from Brockton MA.

“Rough place no? I mean it’s kinda the hood, but not in a good way. No offense,” the sound engineer made eye contact with Mona through the rear-view mirror.

“None taken man,” she smiled back. As the driver, the sound engineer chose to listen to trap music during the entire trip. That is until the cameraman voiced his opinion and switched to country. Trying to tune out from the strange association of trap, country and bickering, Mona focused on the task she had been assigned. She took out the orange colored flier titled “ The Great Pumpkin Farm’s 2019 Edition of the Pumpkin Pie Eating Contest”. Her editor had finally found a rookie to do it. It was such a kiss off story, why me? Mona had to do it. Every journalist had gone through the same lame stories, and Mona would not dare break tradition. Only the bare minimum, those are the means the editor provided Mona with to report on the contest. What had that snarky **bruxá** said again? Oh right, that she should get used to it, not all journalists get a good story on their first try. She hadn’t even let Mona find one for herself. Instead, she had sent her six hours away from the city to Clarence. Good puppy, just go eat pumpkin pie with two **burus** dressed like hobos. Great, Mona thought. She turned her gaze to the evenly grey sky spread out along the highway. The reflection of her face in the car window looked so morose. It reminded her of something her mother would say everytime she wanted to give up. **Sodade te matam, minha morna**. Her mother was right. She did long for something, but it was something she had yet to attain. The worst kind of longing. She needed to calm down. So Mona put on her earbuds, closed her eyes and melted at the familiar sound of the **cavaquinho**. Soon came Cesaria Evora’s mellow voice. It gently settled alongside the guitar’s melody which

mimicked the movement of waves shrouding the beach with transparent folds of liquid cloth.

O mar, déta quitinho bô dixam bai

Oh sea, come lie down gently

Mona

So here you have it folks! The dream team of pumpkin pie eating is right next to me: Elen Schuyler and her coach Steven Gregson. Elen, tell us what it feels like to win yet another championship title?

Ellen

To be honest it feels like I have a boulder in my stomach!

Mona

Ha! Well that must be from the fifty pies you ate in only ten minutes. What a record! Do you hope to beat that record next year?

Ellen

Like hell I will! I'm not skinny for nothing. There's still space here for another fifty pies. I've got the best coach in the state, no one can defeat me.

Mona

That's confidence for you folks. Thank you Ellen and congratulations.

This is Mona Acosta in Clarence NY, back to you Sandra.

Mona continued smiling like a wax figure from Madame Tussauds'. After an excruciatingly awkward silence, Frank lowered the camera and Mona could finally relax. Not so bad for a first, even if the place really was a dump. David was already folding back his boom pole before helping Frank sort out the cables that circled him. Seeing Mona's sullen expression on the drive back, they felt they had to do something to cheer her up. So, Frank began telling her about the worst journalists he had had to work with. One of those was a bouncy chested bimbo whose face could only express surprise. Unfortunately for her, she was not exclusively assigned astonishing stories. This journalist's face had been a particularly ill fit when reporting on a series of disappearances. Another one had had the shadiest origin. She had never clearly stated whether she had graduated from journalism school. She always evaded the question, until the editor in chief uncovered her scam and sent her away.

"Oh! What about the man child? That's a good one too, David added excitedly.

"Right! That guy, well he looked normal you know. It's just whenever something went wrong, like things always do with a live report, he became some kind of berserker! Screaming like a child and complaining, and destroying everything on his way out. The strangest break down I've ever seen. To use Bobby Bare's words, that guy wanted to be drop kicked by Jesus", Frank chuckled proud to have included a country music reference.

Mona let a burst of laughter escape.

Once again, Mona was in a car, but this time she was alone. That was the whole point, being alone in her mother's old station wagon for an improvised stake out, just Mona and her Nikon camera mounted on her flexible gorillapod. She was on a desperate search for a mystery to solve, a story to tell, anything exhilarating she could relate to the camera. The stale air of fried pumpkin **filhoses** had permeated the car mats. During Christmas Eve in Brockton, the creole culture center was entirely supplied by her mother's pastries which she delivered in this very car. Hence, Mona had started feeling sick after two hours of a painfully uneventful stake out. She could not take part in the festivities. Her mind kept running back to her first news report which she considered a failure. She had to prove herself some other way, especially if her editor gave her trash topics. Mona wanted to reveal truths which had been ignored for too long. The truth about the flawed political system which let extremists take power. The truth about a police force which was trained to distrust black people, and shoot them when they ran.

She had decided on impulse to stake out the Cape Verdean Head Shot Mafia's headquarters, a cute café in Brockton's city center with a vanilla colored inscription: "**Doces do Joao**". Until now, Mona had seen two muscular men wearing sport's brand attire from head to toe. They seemed to be glorified security guards blocking the entrance to the café. Mona remembered how she used to play with the other kids from the street, and those same men would gently kick back their soccer ball when it bounced away. She had never seen them so tense. Their cigarettes were bobbing nervously on their fingertips, the ash slowly accumulating until it dropped on the pavement. They were so concentrated that

their cigarette had burned away before they could take a single drag. Something interesting was bound to happen. A few hours went sluggishly by, and Mona's eyelids had almost finished their descent, two clam shells slowly sinking to her coffee colored cheeks. A distant roar, no a car engine, a very big car engine, an SUV perhaps, was approaching. Mona quickly grabbed her camera. She sat up right in her seat only to lower her head just above the rim of the car window. **Mérda!** The camera was on standby. Come on, come on, she was going to miss the guy's face. Finally, the camera clicked on, and a thin metis young man with a curly black goatee stepped out of the obsidian SUV.

The image was out of focus at first but quickly cleared up to reveal the Headshot mafia boss greeting his underlings on the café's steps. Unfortunately, their conversation was muffled by the bustle and sirens of traffic nearby. Suddenly, the mafioso was lost from sight amongst a swarm of police cars, arrow heads all pointing towards the café's entrance. For a moment, it was only blaring sirens and flashing blue lights. A dozen policemen crouched behind their car doors with their Glock's facing the SUV. A shout echoed along the street. Five policemen engaged the armed subordinates. One shot. A second, a thud. More shouting. The mafia leader appeared from behind the SUV, followed closely by a ruffled policeman gripping onto the freshly tightened cuffs. The image lurched abruptly until it was head to head with the arrested criminal.

Mona

Do you have anything to say about your arrest, for INC?

Mafia Boss

This is an outrage! My rights are being ignored!

Policeman 1

Stop struggling! It's too late for you now, anyways.

Mona

Is this how you arrest people, officer? Is he saying that you have not read him his rights?

Mafia Boss

I don't even know what I'm being arrested for! Please, lady, help!

Policeman 1

Come on, I think it's obvious what illegal business a black guy might do. Am I right, Jason Pereira?

Policeman 2

No journalists please, this is a police investigation. Mam, please walk away, we don't want any civilians hurt.

Policeman 1

Hey! He said back off!

He thrust his open hand at the camera, almost knocking it to the ground. One of his stubby fingers disappeared behind the camera provoking a shrill cry. The image froze, the scene was over.

Mona looked over to her editor in chief. The latter was still ruminating over the footage. Finally, she came to a decision and turned to face Mona.

“This is good, Acosta. We can show the footage on tonight’s news. You have good instincts for a rookie journalist. If you’re ready to take a sugar dusted finger in the eye for a little bit of footage, then I’m ready to give you more important stories. Don’t get your hopes up, you’ll still be doing kiss off stories. But, if you can handle it, I do need someone to report on the next Black Lives Matter protest. You’re young, black and a woman, the perfect profile. I mean, you would know what it’s like, what these people are going through.

“I’ll do the report! Thank you so much!

“Just please let your team know when you go off on your own like that. New York is a dangerous city for working women, like us. Stay safe, Acosta.”

Better run when you hear the sirens coming

[...] The blue lights are coming for you.

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“Good morning America! Hot news this morning with the arrest of the Headshot mafia leader: Jason Pereira. A police bust which Mona Acosta, new INC reporter, was able to capture on camera. But things aren’t as clear as they seem. The alleged mafia boss claims he was robbed of his rights during the arresting procedure. The district attorney’s office in Brockton has yet to comment on this allegation.

“INC’s new star reporter, Mona Acosta, is this month’s sensation. Her name is on every editor’s lips, and for good reason. After revealing the far from illegal circumstances of Jason Pereira’s arrest, Mona Acosta has dropped another bomb. She appeared at INC’s evening news with a black eye supposedly inflicted by a policeman who jabbed his finger into her eye in an attempt to push the journalist aside.

“Oooh yeah! I want everyone to clap their hands! That’s it, everyone stand up and clap. Wooh, that’s what I call an electric audience. No, but seriously let’s settle down now and talk about this week’s hottest story. Come on let’s spill the tea. I’m sure you’ve all heard about this new reporter who got a black eye from a policeman’s sticky fat fingers. She risked her life to show the world what really happens when black people get arrested. Now that’s courage. I’m sure you’ve heard of her, but did you know that she is sipping a cappuccino backstage as we speak? That’s it folks, I want a round of applause for tonight’s guest, Mona Acosta!”

Suddenly, darkness, the image had disappeared. Mona let go of the TV remote and drank her last sip of coffee. She flicked her head forwards, gathered her curls into a high ponytail and slipped into her khaki jacket. Mona was ready for another day of work. On her way out, Mona’s phone tweeted and chirped. With each step, another dozen people saw Mona’s report. Once she was down the subway stairs, another hundred people had liked, retweeted or shared the video. When she arrived at Columbus Circle station, her name had been mentioned and tagged a thousand more times. When Mona stepped out of the elevator into the seventh floor, every person she passed in the corridors greeted her or congratulated her. One of them even made finger guns from across the lobby. In two days

she had upgraded from a newly employed nobody to the channel's sensation of the month. Mona had wished for an impacting role in journalism, but with it came precipitated fame. **Senhora** Silva was right. **Fama é um djogo prigozu**. She had expressed her profound disappointment to see Mona reaching so avidly for popularity and, in her words "**komo um pexi abrindo a bóka para pidir mas pon**". The community's honor, that's all that old matron lived for. Yet, Mona did feel like a fish. She was a silver scaled fish trying to escape the gaze of a hidden spearfisherman. Escape was impossible, the spear was sure to hit its target. It was all so much stress for a small **xaréu**. A few months ago, Mona would have refused Silva's request to accompany her to the Cape Verdean association's general assembly. Now, she had accepted, she needed to empty her mind and the **cavaquinho** would help. With all this public interest into her every move, Mona was drawn to the warmth and familiarity of the assembly. She knew people would treat her as a sister, cousin or niece, and not like a curious creature in a zoo. Mona remembered how her mother defined the word **familha**. It represented a special kind of family for her. **Familha** was not just immediate relations, but also those you meet and share a cultural link with. **Sodade**, that was the link between us Cape Verdeans. It is an everlasting melancholic nostalgia. It nags at our mind like waves continuously coming back with force to the shore only to crash and die in the sand.

Oi tonte sodade, sodade sodade

Oi tonte sodade, sodade sem fim

So much **sodade, sodade sodade**

So much **sodade**, endlessly **sodade**

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WHAT DO WE WANT? JUSTICE. WHEN DO WE WANT IT? NOW. WHY ARE WE HERE? FOR ERIC GARNER. YEAH. FOR GEORGE FLOYD. YEAH. FOR WALTER SCOTT. YEAH. FOR ALTON STERLING. YEAH. FOR BREONNA TAYLOR. YEAH. BLACK LIVES MATTER!

The ground was rumbling with the power of thousands of voices hammering words in the air with their fists. Mona had never felt so exhilarated. She was supposed to report quickly and efficiently on the protest in Washington D.C. Surrounded by such an immense number of protesters gathered to defend a black man's memory, Mona could not see herself plainly commenting on the situation. She secretly wished to be with them, throwing her fist in the air, screaming at the sky as if the source of all this violence was hiding behind a fluffy cloud. She heard Frank calling her from behind his camera. Mona turned around ready to open the valves to her anger.

Camera focuses on a clenched fist in the air, then it drops to reveal Mona's determined expression.

Mona

This is Mona Acosta reporting to you live from the Black Lives Matter protest. I am in front of the Washington monument and I am not satisfied. These protesters are not satisfied. By the justice system, by the police who are supposed to protect us and by the government

which turns a blind eye. All these people ask for is equal treatment,
a pinnacle of this country's constitution. I will now join these
people in lying on the floor, hands behind my back, just like Goerge
Floyd was when policemen suffocated him. Will you join us?

The camera zooms onto a person lying down with their hands behind
their back. Their face is pressed against the beige gravel of the
sidewalk.

Frank

Mona, wait! Where are you going? The report -

The image becomes shaky and is suddenly turned off.

INC Channel Host

I'm sorry, we seem to have lost the connection with our reporter.
Well it looks like the atmosphere down in Washington is absolutely
ecstatic. And now for a brief publicity break.

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Chirp! Mona looked at her phone only to see that another violent and insulting tweet
mentioned her. This was not what she had hoped for after speaking out in her last report. It
was supposed to be her way of openly joining the **familha** she had ignored for so long. Mona
slouched onto a nearby chair. Her eyes focused intensely on the broken potato chip lying

vulnerably on the floor. She did not want to meet anyone's judgemental gaze, a chip would do just fine. The chip would never judge her. Of course not, it was just a chip.

“**Minha Morna**, stop sulking around **é salbáxi**. Come enjoy the party. **Bem ka menina**, seeing no reaction from her daughter, Mona's mother took a seat next to her. You know, the last time you were at a general assembly was years ago. Oh, I remember when you were still **pingo** and you would hide under my chair and listen to everything the adults were saying. You wanted to become some gossip girl, **ou nau sei o que**. You were watching too many teenage American series, in my opinion.”

Mona let a smile escape to the left corner of her lips. She also remembered those more simpler times. Why had she stopped coming? Maya Acosta took her daughter's smooth youthful hands in her own small and rugged ones. For as far as she could remember, her mother had always had rough hands, from her excruciatingly difficult farm work back on the islands. Even though her skin would never be smooth again, Maya Acosta regarded her calluses and wrinkles as priceless memories of her golden years in Saõ Nicolau.

“Ma~e?”

“Sin, minha Morna.

“What were the islands like? What did it feel like everyday living on an island in the middle of a vast ocean?”

“Well, it's hard to explain. It was calm. I mean **kietu** you see?”

“Peaceful?”

“Yes, that’s it. Peaceful, like the island was your mother and it was always **um abraço**, like a hug you know. Oh it’s a hard feeling **para splikar**.” Suddenly, a Cape Verdean band with an accordionist at its center started playing. Lifted by the sound of the **cavaquinho**, the entire assembly began clapping to its rhythm. In seconds, the cadenced tap-tap became a loud cheer. Now everyone was either on the dancefloor with partner dancing the **coladeira**, or by the band accompanying them by tapping and stomping. “This song! **Tantas memórias. Bem ka minha Morna**, dance with me and you’ll know what it’s like in the islands.”

Mona reluctantly joined her mother in the center of the room. Maya Acosta was swaying from side to side and her feet were bopping here and there. Her arms lead the movement of her hips tracing a suave eight. The beat of the drums was possessing her body. Soon, the affliction reached Mona as well. She understood now what her mother felt, why she remained so attached to her beloved morna music. The emotions it procured were incomparable. This music lay the ground for the expression of any troubled thought, celebration or melancholy. The knots of life were untangled by the Cape Verdean band, who spread out the threads through their guitar strings and bounced them off their congas. Finally, with their trumpet, the band shot each thread in a different corner of the room to be a lifeline for the dancers. That’s what it was, the rejoicing of life and of being alive.

Les effluves de rhum dans ta voix,

Me font tourner la tête

Tu me fais danser du bout des doigts,
Comme tes cigarettes
Immobile, comme à ton habitude, mais,
Es-tu devenue muette
Ou est-ce à cause des kilomètres,
Que tu ne me réponds plus.

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JerryLance @TheGuyFly - 1h

@MonaAcostaINC Lying bitch! Her boobs aren't even worth it...

AndrewSR @Locolivin52 - 1h

Tbh @MonaAcostaINC really gets on my fucking nerves. She's a journalist, not an activist.

Does she even know the difference? I've got rope and a chair, feel free to use them.

Cecilily<3 @redrose4ever - 1h

@MonaAcostaINC should go back to journalism school or quit her job. Dishonest and biased
journalists are the source of this country's problems. Take them down! #FakeNews

#TruthtothePeople

DwayneDaRock @JordyRichardson - 2h

[@MonaAcostaINC](#) is paid by the democratic party to brainwash us all into voting for the democrats. That's why she supported that commi protest. She is an antifa! Her employer is an antifa! [#Qanon](#) [#FakeNews](#)

GretaSmithon @greta - 2h

What kind of dumbass let such a sucky journalist on the loose? [@MonaAcostaINC](#) was the first person to film a mafia leader's arrest. Wonder how she got to be first on the scene? Simple, cause she's also from the mafia. Open your eyes, the media belongs to the mafia! [#FakeNews](#)
[#TakeDownINC](#)

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It had been a devastating landslide of insults and conspiracy accusations accompanied by a total loss of credibility. In other words, it was the perfect combination. Now, Mona was back to square one. Just a little low profile reports until the furry dies down, that's what her editor had decided. The channel's reputation was at stake, she had no choice but to put Mona on the sidelines. In the coming weeks, she would have to keep her head under the water, hold her breath and wait for the tidal wave to pass. Her editor was making her a prisoner of other people's opinions, forcing her to wait around like a coward. There had to be a better way to rebuild my reputation. She just had to find it, and quickly. The thought of losing the opportunity to relate pivotal events to the American audience had repulsed her so deeply that she had handed in her resignation the next day. It

felt natural. She no longer saw a profitable future for the channel or herself, no growth was possible. Mona could not let a swarm of stinging judgements affect her. She had to stay confident, ignore the insults and keep going. She had to keep going.

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The surface of the water was tranquil. There rarely was a single ripple on its navy coating. Port side, on the edge of the horizon a miniscule mound surrounded by a turquoise halo emerged from the abyss. The spot of earth was a glimmer of hope where its many ripples sparkled like silver scales. Mona was lost. She was a small red and blue striped fishing boat stranded in a motionless ocean. She had also noticed the volcanic peak, a buoy on which Mona could rest while she searched for a new job. Back in Brockton, Mona was staying with her parents. **Senhora** Silva had kindly asked Mona to leave now that she had no reason to stay in New York, her charity did not go that far apparently. Mona was startled out of her thoughts when her father dropped the New York Times onto the breakfast table. Out of boredom, she reached for it and began reading only the lift out quotes on each page. One of them caught her eye. It said “New horizons in a new media”. She searched for the beginning of the article and raced through it. It mentioned the latest popular platform, Twitch. Mona had watched a couple gaming live streams on Twitch before. She had always considered it as an entertainment platform. Anyone could live stream whatever they were doing. It could be videogames, arts and crafts, Lego building, even live streams of zoo

animals. This could be the new media Mona was looking for. Twitch was still new enough to be neutral. There she could be independent and choose her own subjects. This could work.

The next day Mona set up her Twitch account and designed her livestream page. She discovered that she could personalize various tools within the platform. She could even moderate the chat, an extremely useful tool given her history. The chat also meant she could interact with her audience. During her time at INC she had never truly received messages of support, she was a journalist doing her job so what was there to support. Yet, all the hate, she had received that quite easily. Before making enthusiastic judgements, she had to try it out first.

Mona

Camera is out of focus for a minute then clears:

Mona is in the same street where she had arrested the mafia leader in Brockton.

Welcome everyone to my very new Twitch channel. Uh, I will be pretty much reporting on events in Brockton and its surroundings just like I used to. As you can see, this is live so no editing or alterations are ever made to the footage. So, to answer the chat, no fake news here, haha. Just pure journalistic work. So, if that's what you're into then hang out with me. Because today, I'll tell you all the crispy details of Jason Pereira's arrest.

I am standing in the very street where I intercepted the police intervention. I had been staking out the entrance to this café for

hours. Oh! I have a question from the chat, why this café? Well that's simple actually. You know, everyone in Brockton knows that this café is the headquarters of the Cape Verdean mafia. Absolutely everyone knows this, it's like our very own Little Italy of the 1920s. Growing up as a kid in this neighborhood, they were almost like distant cousins for me.

Meanwhile, the viewer counter was swelling like a large wave building up before crashing on the rocky cliffs. Many reacted to what Mona said, sometimes questions and other times messages of support. Any person who wanted to insult, criticize or accuse Mona of fake news was simply ejected from the channel. Taken away by the tides, these people were never to be heard or read. In Q&A sessions, Mona enjoyed answering the curiously detailed questions her viewers had about her life, her origins and her work. Although, some insisted on giving constructive feedback, which really was not the purpose of the session, right? They just had to watch the **diáxi** video. Was that too hard to ask?

She had named the channel "Follow Me". When she streamed live, she felt accompanied on all her reports. She knew that if anything happened, her viewers were there to cover her. They followed her through every story and interview. Mona already had ideas about expanding the channel, like doing a weekly section discussing the work that goes behind a news report. She could maybe do a whole section in **Kriolu**. That was a little ambitious though. She wanted to share as much as she knew. In return, the viewers gave her just as much. Quite literally, since they supported her financially through donations. Mona had jumped on the deck of a wavering sailboat. She was now on a bobbing, but

blissful voyage to an unknown coast which held much promise. Mona would go wherever the tides took her.

Exegesis:

This piece, being a discussion of Cape Verdean culture and Kriolu language, includes many instances of Kriolu vocabulary. Since it is central to the text, I wanted the Kriolu language to stand out differently than foreign languages typically do in an English text. Therefore, I chose to use a different font, *Alegreya Bold*, for all words that are either Kriolu or Portuguese. I did not want the Kriolu language to be seen as just another foreign language written in italics. Which is why I chose a different font to make it stand out from the rest of the text. In addition, I used the courier font to represent the script of Mona's report. I was mostly inspired by Ali Smith's use of fonts in her novel *Spring*. This can be seen in the beginning of the Black Lives Matter protest, where the slogans the protesters scream are written in a similar way to Smith's style. I had Mona also use some Cape Verdean and Portuguese words, but they all are insulting and criticizing words. This was to show her cowardly attitude using the language. She uses code switching between Kriolu and English only when it benefits her. Her use of the language evolves throughout the story, as seen by her reconsideration of all things Cape Verdean at the association's general assembly and in her plans for her Twitch channel. Lastly, I included tweets within the text which follow the font and color conventions from the application. They needed to be immediately recognizable as tweets, so I closely followed the specifics of texts on Twitter.

During the writing process of this short story, I researched American minimalism. According to Robert Clark's book *American Literary Minimalism* "works within the tradition reflect several qualities: [...] important plot details are often omitted or left out, [...] stories tend to be about 'common people' as opposed to the powerful and aristocratic" (Clark, 1). I have applied these elements within my writing, especially regarding the omission of important events. For example, Mona's dismissal from her job is told to the reader indirectly, the event is not witnessed first hand. Indeed, I wanted to portray this moment as just another stepping stone for Mona, rather than another tragic failure.

Furthermore, I have included various quotes and lines from multiple songs. Firstly, I incorporated a verse from Cesária Evora's song *Mar Azul*, which I have translated myself with the help of an English to Kriolu dictionary. Evora is an iconic singer from Cape Verde and expresses the longing and sadness that Cape Verdeans feel when they are away from their island or family. It is a complex form of sadness which Mona feels at that moment, being a rookie journalist. Evora's words echo Mona's emotions. I also include a musical reference to Bobby Bare's song "Drop kick me, Jesus" to add into Frank's characterization. After having seen the arrest of the mafia boss and the discussion between Mona and her editor, I included two lines from Jorja Smith's song "Blue Lights". Jorja Smith sings about police brutality and the fear black people face whenever they hear police sirens or see flashing blue lights. I wanted to include these lines because they echo with Mona's rebellious act and the factors that make her take that decision. Lastly, I took inspiration from Stromae's song "Ave Cesaria" and its video clip. In this footage a family party is taking place when suddenly, a band starts to play this song. The atmosphere and attitude of the people during the dance is something I tried to transcribe in the text. I also included the

first verse of the song which refers to Cesaria Evora's way of singing, her stance and her habit of drinking rum. In this song, the speaker glorifies Evora's life so much that he is in denial of her death. Its message fits with the passage on music celebrating life.

Regarding Mona's outburst during a Black Lives Matter protest, I had initially imagined Mona having a growing frustration during various interviews with figures involved in this issue on both sides. However, I decided to have Mona change suddenly to make it more impactful. I remember my own experience in seeing all these people across the US lying down on the floor to mimic George Floyd's arrest, and it was an extremely powerful image. Having Mona see this first hand is bound to create a bundle of emotions and an impulsive decision.

One of the main themes of this text is the Cape Verdean community. I included many metaphors, comparisons and references to the sea or islands. In both Cape Verdean and Portuguese culture, the ocean and the coast play a major role in their language and identity. Both live off precious fishing territory where the sea determines the livelihood of an entire community. That is why I think it was important to show how, even far away in New York, the sea is always with the Cape Verdean people.

Works Cited

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