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THE TEEN  
**TRIBUNE**



Mr. Ogle's 3rd period drama class rehearses for their production of Batmanilton.  
PHOTO BY EDWARD OU / TEEN HIGH

# SKILL CHECK, PLEASE!

WHY I DON'T INCREASE SKILL CHECKS AS THE CAMPAIGN GOES ON

BY ANTHONY BURCH, DADDY MASTER



Generally, I treat every skill check over a fifteen as a success. Why?



## I'M LAZY

Anything that allows me to think less about mechanics during a game is a good thing, because it frees up the rest of my brain for roleplay and story shenanigans.

## IT'S DISRUPTIVE TO THE STORY

The players shouldn't be able to do cool things early in the campaign. They're supposed to be weak. It doesn't make sense that somebody should be able to roll a 16 and screw over my entire plan.

Which is why it's a good thing when they do that. It makes the players feel empowered to take big swings, it forces me to be clever, and hopefully it makes things more volatile and interesting for an audience to hear.

## PLAYERS SHOULD BE ABLE TO FEEL MORE POWERFUL AS THE CAMPAIGN GOES ON

Typical wisdom says that as your players level up and get better skill check bonuses, the skill checks themselves should proportionally raise in difficulty.

Nah. I don't— nah.

If every skill check is exactly as difficult at level 14 as it was at level 1, what's the point? I don't feel like I've progressed in any way as a player. I don't feel like I'm more powerful. I don't feel like I'm making things harder for my DM (which is always a feeling players should be allowed to have).

When Glenn got to the point where he consistently rolled over 20 on every single deception or persuasion roll, I was pissed off, and that was great. It meant that Freddie felt totally invulnerable. It meant I had to put them into more situations they couldn't just

talk their way out of. It meant the campaign and its characters were changing— a living, volatile, unpredictable thing that none of us could keep a firm grip on.

“

**“ANYTHING THAT ALLOWS ME TO THINK LESS ABOUT MECHANICS IS A GOOD THING.”**

That's the vibe I like as a DM and a player and an audience member. If you don't want that (and I wouldn't blame you for wanting something more balanced and controlled), then, sure, increase the difficulties of all your skill checks and whatnot. But if you want to make things kinda weird and imperfect and lumpy and alive, it's okay to just treat a 16 as a success.



“

**“MAKING THINGS HARD FOR THEIR DM IS ALWAYS A FEELING PLAYERS SHOULD BE ALLOWED TO HAVE.”**



## TEEN HIGH PRESENTS: BATMANILTON!

As a consummate consumer of media of all kinds, I've been asked by the editors of the Teen Tribune to provide my review of the recent production of *Batmanilton*.

Before I get into my review, I would be remiss to ignore the controversy that has embroiled this particular show. As we all know by now, this production was, in fact, a bootleg production. The former drama teacher, Mr. Gibbs, failed to acquire the necessary licensing rights to put on the production. As a result, the show only played in its entirety for a single night (the dress rehearsal "preview" night notwithstanding), and as such, only those who were in the audience were able to witness this production. Mr. Gibbs has since resigned from his position.

Few know that *Batmanilton* was based off another work, a musical about Alexander Hamilton, performed on Broadway in 2015. Unfortunately, that original work was lost during the infamous Streaming Service Data Purge. Of it, only snippets remain, and theater scholars now conclude that *Batmanilton*, where the main character was updated and improved to be Bruce Wayne/Batman from the DC Extended Universe, was in fact the original author's true intent. While the original has been lost to time, *Batmanilton*

stands as one of the most significant theater works of the last century.

Fortunately for you, dear reader, I was there and it pains me to say that our school's production fails to hit reach the high water mark set by *Batmanilton*. From the opening number, "Batlexander Manilton," which introduces Bruce Wayne as Batman and the colorful cohort of twisted characters which inhabit Gotham, we start off on the wrong foot. The choreography was stilted, the costume design (especially the shape of the signature bat cowl) is distractingly slipshod, and the difficulty of the musical performance (the particularly well known passage, "*The signal's lit and and shining now, see if you can spot him / just another vigilante outlaw watching Gotham*" is a tongue twister to be sure, and the flow simply wasn't there).

It's not all bad, to be sure. There is a noteworthy standout performance from Herman "Hermie" Unsworth as The Joker— Batman's nemesis— throughout the show. "The Room Where He Batmans" about Joker wishing he could gain access to Batman's technologically advanced underground lair, the Batcave, was a standout, drawing the strongest applause of

# TAYLOR'S THE SPIAN CORNER



the night owing to Unsworth's dedication to the role.

But despite a strong antagonist performance, the rest of the show simply does not live up to the reputation of *Batmanilton*, which was the highest grossing theatrical production in American history. This could well be due to budgetary and technical limitations— the highly choreographed hand-to-hand fight scene in "Non-Stop" is simplified, and none of the wirework with the Batgrapple, which features prominently in "Crime Alley (The World Turned Upside Down)", is seen here (understandable given the liability around wirework).

But at its core, *Batmanilton* is a moving story about how a destitute billionaire playboy finds the courage to use his immeasurable wealth to deliver hand-to-hand vigilante justice to a city full of criminals because he was very sad that his parents died. None of this pathos is to be found here. Everyone is, it seems, simply going through the motions. By the time we reach the finale ("Who Lives, Who Dies, Who Ends Your Story: Batman Does"), our eyes aren't watering at the catharsis of Batman finally allowing himself to finally become judge, jury AND executioner of the riff raff he comes across.

## A THEATRICAL REVIEW BY TAYLOR SWIFT

Instead, we are looking for the exits. Perhaps we are too familiar with the story of Batman and are simply tired of seeing the caped crusader and his machinations with Joker, Riddler, Commissioner Gordon, and Catwoman. Or perhaps our drama department simply overreached, similar to how Penguin's desire to control the entirety of the underworld was his downfall.

Here it seems the hubris of putting one of America's most notoriously difficult and dramatically dense works of art on its feet may very well be simply a bridge too far for our drama department. Those of you who felt like you missed out, let me assure you - you didn't.

Let us hope that the new faculty will get us back on track.

**Final Rating: D+**

# SCHOOL SUCKS

BY  
SCARY  
MARLOWE



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**S**up Chumps, I'm glad you liked all of my grammar lessons in the last Tribune. They were easy for me but I can see how a few of you numbskulls might have had some difficulty with them. Anyways, here I am back to help the masses again. As you may know, I am an established poet and lyricist (in need of musicians for my band Butthole Ricochet please email me at [2scary4u@comcast.net](mailto:2scary4u@comcast.net) if interested), but what some people forget is that I am also a B student. "Scary, how do you get so good at school?" people ask. Well, for starters, I don't give a shit. Once your teacher thinks you want to learn, it's over for you. You've lost. Here are some handy acronyms for how to keep your cool in school, and maybe learn something too.

## Make your papers your B.I.T.C.H.

**B**ASICALLY  
**I**RULE  
**T**AKE THIS ADVICE OR  
**C**ATCH  
**H**ANDS, BITCH

Listen, I'm giving you my wisdom for free here. That's a dope friggin gift. So shut up and accept that I'm right because the only wrongness in me is the dark chasm of my soul.

## Get ready to S.H.R.E.D.

**S**TOP  
**H**OMEWORK,  
**R**EAD  
**E**ASY BOOKS,  
**D**ON'T STUDY

Success is easy if your standards are low enough. Nobody actually WANTS to be a good student with classy manners. You've just been PROGRAMMED by your parents and adults on TV to think that's what you want, when ultimately everyone dies alone with only their own eyes to look in the mirror, ya feel me? Stop trying to get A's and accept that unique mediocrity is metal as hell.

## Boring stuff can F.U.K. off

**F**UCKED  
**U**P  
**K**NOWLEDGE

The best way to combat learning new things is

to prove you already know things, but things nobody else really wants to know. So if you know that a decapitated head once blinked 10 minutes after being severed by a guillotine, that's upsetting information you can use in both history and science classes. People won't want more details. You probably just got out of having to learn about some year or a war. You're welcome.

## S.T.R.E.P.

**S**TUFF  
**T**O  
**R**EMEMBER  
**E**VERY  
**P**ERIOD

Don't be a little bitch. Bring your book so it looks like you did the reading. Write down words every now and then so it looks like you're learning. Snitches get stitches.

## E.W.W.W. books

**E**VERYTHING IS ON THE  
**W**ORLD  
**W**IDE  
**W**EB

So you don't actually have to read shit. Just act like it.

Peace.

# LINCOLN LOVES THEATER



BY LINCOLN LI WILSON

**A**lrigh Teen High. Link is back here again to try a new column. The editor told me to just write about anything I want. And to, and I'm quoting here, "*Please god make sure someone else isn't doing the same column first.*"

So my new friend Hermie was starting in a new play called *Batmanilton*, and I thought I could pet two birds with one hand by both experiencing live theater for the first time, and giving my actor friend some exposure.

Also Taylor wanted someone to come with him cause he said he had to go for work. So without further ado, this is the first edition of *Lincoln Loves Theater*.

*\* This review was not paid for. I bought my own ticket. Then lost it, and had to buy another one cause they didn't believe I lost it. Also, I know one of the actors, and would consider them a friend of sorts. But it did not effect my final rating of this production.*

## BATMANILTON

WOW! If this is what theater is like, than you can go ahead and throw the TV into the garbage. What a rush! Spoiler Alert: I'm giving Batmanilton a perfect score.

First off, I guess this is about a historical figure who fought for America when it wasn't America anymore or something. My friend Taylor started to explain it, but I just wanted him to be quiet so I could listen to the music. Besides, it didn't seem like it was about history, BORING.

Instead it was about a sad billionaire loser dressed AS A BAT! And when he's a Bat, he's not a loser anymore, but instead cool. He's got gadgets and is rich and everyone sings about him or around him, and sometimes he sings too. But he also fights.

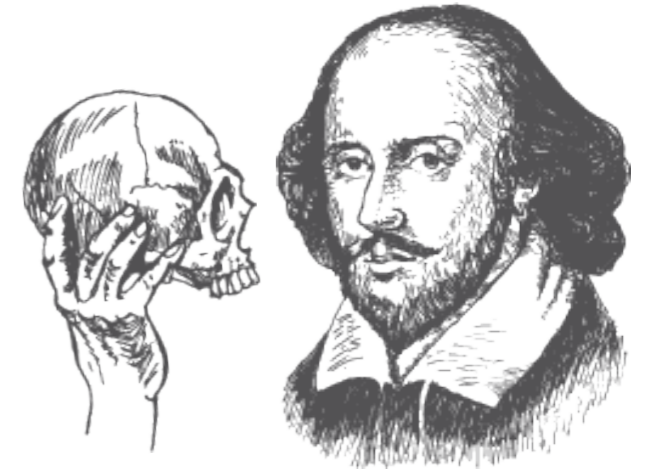
It's stupendous. I've seen singing in movies before, but on stage its like... WOAHH they're really singing, while

swinging above the audience with big bat wings.

Oh, and don't think it's just singing and punching bad guys. Get your handkerchief ready, cause spoiler: his parents die at the beginning, and Batman's life is only tougher from there. In one song, "In the Cave Where It Happens", Batman sings about how hard it is to be alone in a cave while crime happens outside in the city.

I really liked the song "Best of Cats, Best of Poison" when Batman is singing about his two girlfriends, and they both leave him in the end cause he's being stupid.

Bat's life doesn't get any easier. The saddest song is after his son Robin is killed by the Joker (in an incredibly intense performance by my good friend Hermie), Poison Ivy buys Batman an apartment in Upper Manhattan so he can cry in it, and together they sing their hearts out in the in-



credible "Its Quiet Uptown, and the Pizza's Better too".

Also, in the end, The Joker gets the better of Batman, and shoots him with a gun. But Batman stops the bullet with his bare hands! My friend Taylor told me that was symbolic or something, and Batman does actually die. But I don't know. He kept singing after he stopped the bullet with his hands.

Well, in the end, I highly recommend Batmanilton. It is the best play I have ever seen. And great job HERMIE!

**FINAL SCORE: A+** with a ton of exclamation marks after it. Like one of the many cool signs they use when Batman punches people.

**POW!!! BANG!!! A+!!!!!!**

## FROM THE OFFICE OF THE SCHOOL MASCOT

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To whom it may concern,

IN ORDER TO honor my oath to serve Teen High now and always,

SO THAT Teeny the Teen may forever keep the crowds pepped and pumped at games both home and away,

AND SO THAT we will, we will, continue to rock you, sock you, pick you up and drop you,

I, Normal Oak, being of sound body and mind, do hereby authorize Vice Principal Tony Pepperoni to release the following Rival Mascot Threat Assessments to my successor in the event of my death, disappearance, or if I get grounded and can't make it to a game.

Go Teens,

*Normally Ly Oak Swallows-Garcia*

CLASSIFIED DOCUMENTS FOLLOW

### THE WEST SIDE WARRIOR

School: West Side High School

SKILL: 2/5

SWAG: 2/5

HYPE: 2/5

SPECIAL MOVES:

The Warrior Wave

THREAT LEVEL: Saffron



### NORMAL'S NOTES:

The Warrior may cut an imposing figure on the sidelines, but what he has in fake muscles, he lacks in school spirit: at West Side High, mascot duty is performed by freshmen athletes as a hazing ritual. Use the Warrior's lack of training, technique, and rah-rah-go-team 'tude keep the crowd on your side, but do NOT let your guard down. A desperate mascot is a dangerous mascot - and I've got the wedgies to prove it.

**CLASSIFIED**  
MASCOT SURVEILLANCE SEPT 15 20XX

## THE POMONA PANTHER

School: Pomona High School

SKILL: 5/5

SWAG: 4/5

HYPE: 4/5

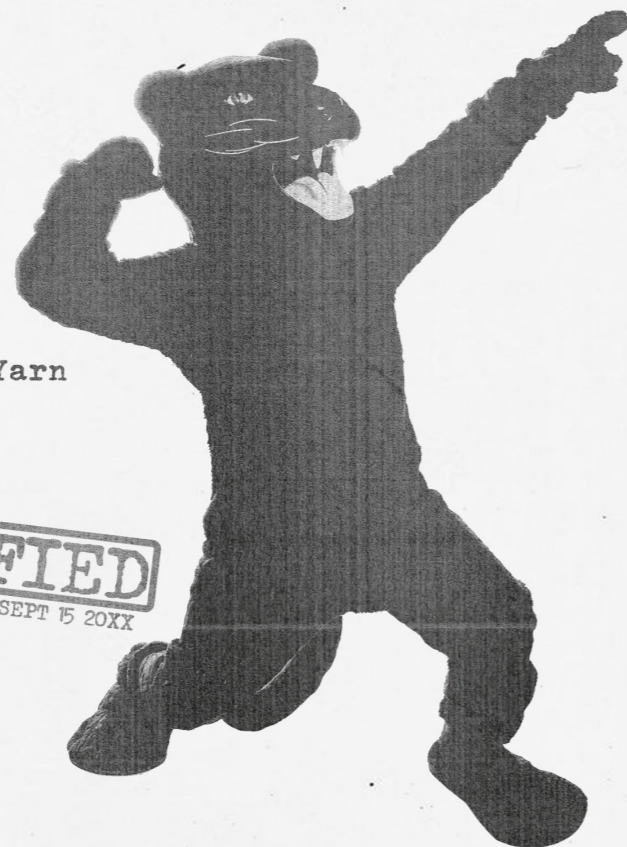
### SPECIAL MOVES:

The Panther Pump Up

The Prowl 'N Howl

Slam Dunking A Giant Ball of Yarn

THREAT LEVEL: APEX



**CLASSIFIED**  
MASCOT SURVEILLANCE SEPT 15 20XX

### NORMAL'S NOTES:

Like it's namesake, the Pomona Panther is bewitching, alluring, and downright deadly on the field. Intel suggests that the Panther's current performer was recruited from the cast of Pomona High's spring production of CATS. That would explain the Panther's delicate grace, rockstar persona, and Rum-Tum-Tuggerian comic timing. Stay on your toes with this feline foe— the Panther can turn from kitten to killer in the blink of an eye.

## FLIPPY THE FERRET

SCHOOL: Fresno High

SKILL: 3/5\*

SWAG: 2/5

HYPE: 3/5

### SPECIAL MOVES:

\*SEE BELOW

THREAT LEVEL: CAESAR



### NORMAL'S NOTES:

Mediocre in every respect, save one: Flippy the Ferret can do full-on flips. Front handsprings. Back handsprings. Aerial somersaults. Flippy does them all— and can land most of them doing the splits.

There are few sights in the world more thrilling, more beautiful, than a mascot doing a flip... but it does kinda get old after a while. Therefore, to counter Flippys' flip-based cheering tactics, goad him into doing so many them that the audience loses interest, at which point Flippy will have no other talents to fall back on. Do NOT under ANY circumstances attempt a flip in the Teeny the Teen outfit.

**CLASSIFIED**  
MASCOT SURVEILLANCE SEPT 15 20XX

**CLASSIFIED**  
MASCOT SURVEILLANCE SEPT 15 20XX

CHICKY BOO

School: SENZAKI ARTS ACADEMY

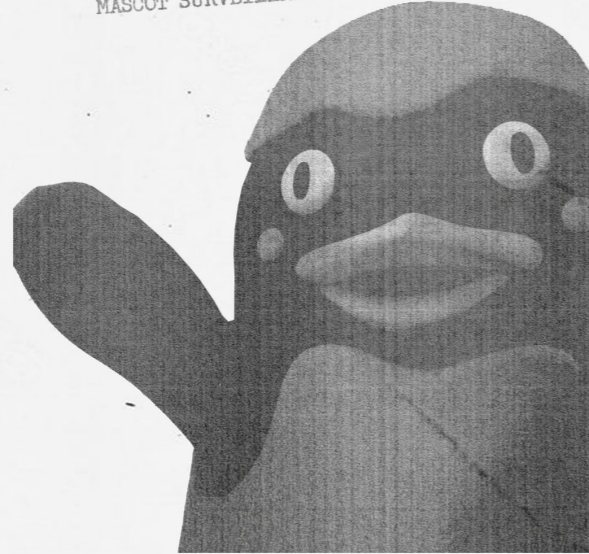
SWAG: ???

STYLE: ???

HYPE: ???

SPECIAL MOVES: UNKNOWN

THREAT LEVEL: UNKNOWN



NORMAL'S NOTES:

Little is known about Chicky Boo, the strange egg-bird mascot of Senzaki Arts Academy. In fact, little is known about Senzaki Arts Academy at all. According to the California Dept. of Education, no such school has ever existed. Yet we play them in soccer every fall. Where do those students come from? Where do they go after the game? And why do they never seem to look directly at Chicky Boo or even acknowledge his presence on the field?

The subject requires further investigation, but somehow, whenever I write about Chicky Boo, I get an intense headache that makes it difficult to concentrate. In fact, I'm already feeling one now. Its almots sa if CHICKKKY BOOO\_00 deosnt watn us toknwo it extisna[geas

END OF CLASSIFIED DOCUMENTS



# STUDENT ARTWORK



Artist: [@CombinedDawn](#)



Artist: [@MadzRosy](#)

# STUDENT ARTWORK



Artist: @adelistic



Artist: @sapphicx