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COVID-19's impact on UMKC's admissions process, budget

Abbey Higginbotham

Staff Writer

With COVID-19 spreading like wildfire, universities across the country are trying to find new ways to recruit students during quarantine. UMKC's Office of Admissions (OOA) is moving all campus tours and orientation days online through Zoom sessions and recordings.

Director of Admissions Alice Arredondo is now telecommuting to work, as are all of her coworkers. Arredondo said she stays just as busy now as when she worked on campus. She said the admissions office isn't slowing down, and that the current state of the world won't stop them from working as hard as they can to reach new students.

There will be virtual office hours next week for prospective students to call and learn about what the university can do for them, said Arredondo.

The OOA has turned campus tours and group visits into Zoom meetings where potential students can talk to admission representatives as well as current students about the campus. The



The impact of coronavirus on UMKC admissions is still unknown. (Kayl Auch | UNews)

sessions will be held every weekday from 9-5 p.m. The tours themselves have been pre-recorded and led by some of the campus ambassadors. These virtual tours are currently available on UMKC's website.

The OOA has also pre-recorded ses-

sions about housing, financial aid, the Honors College, study abroad programs and academic support and mentoring that students can view online at any time.

There is also concern about the retention rate of existing students during

this pandemic. With most students having gone home, the OOA is planning on checking in with them to ensure they remain part of UMKC come next semester.

Asked if enrollment at UMKC would drop due to coronavirus-induced changes, Arredondo said, "We are prepared to teach in the fall, whether that's virtually or in person. We are going to do that in the best way for all students. Hopefully, they see that."

Due to the pandemic's negative impact on the economy, public universities are projected to lose funding during this time. These budget cuts could affect admissions at UMKC.

"I know that we do have budget cuts, and we're really looking into what that will do for us," said Arredondo. "We're trying to make sure that doesn't have a negative impact on students."

The state cutting funding to higher education has hit upper administration at UMKC as well. Arredondo said the chancellor, deans, university cabinet members and provosts have taken a 10% pay cut through July 31.

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Enactus' FeedKC releases app to eliminate food waste, hunger

Emma Lane

Staff Writer

FeedKC, a project of student organization UMKC Enactus, has released a new web application to eliminate food waste and hunger by redistributing food to those who need it. Through the app, businesses can post leftover food that food banks can then claim and pick up.

"We have been working on our web application for a few months to ensure the sustainability of our project, and are incredibly proud that it came out before this pandemic started so that we can practice a more safe and easy way to get food from businesses and restaurants to food banks," project

leader Caitlin Easter said.

The app was launched just in time to begin helping with food problems brought on by the pandemic, and FeedKC is able to continue operating while complying with CDC guidelines.

"We decided to find the opportunity in this tragedy to help people who were losing their jobs," Easter said. "All we could do was make the best out of a bad situation, and with local businesses sadly shutting down, we are attempting to intercept that food so it isn't wasted."

"Right after we found out that restaurants were shut down, there was an initial moment of panic, but then we were able to see the good we could do in our community de-

spite the global pandemic happening," Easter said. "We didn't stop operating, but instead continue reaching out to businesses with the hope to onboard them on the app to divert excess food to those in need."

After the initial closures due to city orders, the team said businesses had a lot of food to donate. Now, less food is available for them to redistribute, but there is a higher demand for food from food banks. Easter said businesses have also been less responsive.

FeedKC's app has allowed them to continue to operate during the pandemic, but the lockdown has posed other challenges for the team.

"One of the hardest things is sitting back and not playing as



FeedKC, started and run by UMKC students, takes unwanted food from restaurants and gives it to food banks. (FeedKC Facebook).

active of a role anymore now that the app has launched," Easter said. "Due to COVID-19, we have had to change how we operate, and it is harder to get together to troubleshoot problems due to only being able to use virtual meetings."

Anyone looking to get involved and help eliminate food waste can join the project and help the team plan and direct

FeedKC and the app. People can also help by getting more businesses connected to FeedKC.

"It is important that FeedKC continues to run because there is an increasing number of people who are out of work and have no food," Easter said.

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Parenting while studying

The realities of a college student with a child during the shelter-in-place order

Allison Harris

Staff Writer

The changes UMKC students have faced from Kansas City's current shelter-in-place order have been hard to deal with. Many students are without campus, housing or food from the dining hall, or have lost jobs and are unable to pay their rent.

Some are having to deal with all these changes and more—students with their own children are now having to be full-time parents under self-isolation measures, on top of their own schoolwork and job responsibilities.

Sunshine Aiono, a UMKC freshman and parent of a 12 year old, is currently in this position.

"Some days are much easier than others," Aiono said of her new school-at-home situation. "I think the workload is the same. I am relying heavily on zoom meetings, SI sessions and making more of an effort to stay informed through email."

On top of an already difficult transition to online learning, Aiono is settling into help-



(insider.com)

ing her daughter with her online schoolwork as well.

"She has several different teachers [and] subjects just as I do," Aiono said. "Each teacher is trying to come up with a routine and lesson plan that is accessible to the students. As a

parent in school, I am trying to learn her routine as well as my own."

Aiono described the way she has leaned into learning alongside her daughter as a challenge, but one she is approaching with thoughtfulness

and the mental health of her family in mind.

"I try not to get overwhelmed by looking at everything all at once and try to get a little better each day," Aiono said. "I am teaching her the same approach I took in adjust-

ing to online schooling as a template for her."

Aiono said the change has even brought her and her daughter closer in a way she didn't expect—they are in the same boat now, and often tackle school together. Aiono said one of the things that has helped them both be successful is "...learning to accept her limitations and my own. [And] creating a safe space for us both to say 'I don't know,' and coming up with the resources to find the answers."

It may be difficult for students to approach a transition to online learning with a positive attitude, but with Aiono's love for her daughter and optimistic point of view, she said she has "learned more about [her] daughter in the last few weeks."

"I am constantly adjusting my approach from day to day, based on what is a priority and her mental health," Aiono said. "Balance is an ongoing process, and I do my best to stay mindful."

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How local business are adjusting to COVID-19

5B&Co, Messenger, Prairie Point, Mills, KC Soul Sistas

Annie Bolin

Staff Writer

U-News is supporting Kansas City's local business scene with a weekly column featuring businesses and their responses to COVID-19.

This week: 5B&Co, Candlemakers, Messenger Coffee, Prairie Point Quilt & Fabric Shop, Mills Record Company and KC Soul Sistas.

5B&Co. Candlemakers

Lori Woods expanded 5B&Co. Candlemakers into the Brookside neighborhood 16 years ago and has been pouring sweet scents ever since.

Under Kansas City's stay-at-home order, Woods sent her staff home and poured made-to-order candles for every order, leaving bags at the door for customers to grab and delivering online orders.

"For the first two weeks, it was just myself because we just wanted to keep everybody at home," Woods said. "I have two employees here helping me this week because when you make your product and nobody's there to make it, then you fall behind."

With a collection of 175 fragrances used in her products, Woods is grateful for her customers' understanding when she runs into shortages or other delays.

"Many of our orders online are people that may not even need candles, they're just doing it to support me," Woods said. "We've got such a loyal group of people."

Messenger Coffee Co.

Messenger Coffee Co.'s two-story downtown building is usually a place for gathering, but under COVID-19 restrictions, the Kansas City coffee giant is embracing online ordering.

While Messenger, which houses Ibis Bakery in its downtown location, has experienced a cut to revenue with a shortage in wholesale orders, their online orders have grown, said Messenger Coffee Co. President Isaac Hodges.

Hodges said Messenger employees and DoorDash drivers are hand-delivering bakery items and coffee, hot and cold, within a five-mile radius of the store.

"Those online orders have allowed us to continue roasting and producing coffee at a much less staggering rate," Hodges said.

Messenger's subsidiaries, Filling Station Coffee, Black Dog Coffeehouse and Fervere, have made various COVID-19 adjustments to business.

Hodges said that while Filling Station's Crown Center location is closed, its Westport location is doing more business than they did this time last year due to its drive-through. Filling Station's two other locations in Midtown and Mission, Kansas, are operating with online pick-up coffee orders.

Black Dog is operating a full kitchen and coffee bar while using their bakery space next door as a pick-up location for online orders to protect employees' health.

Fervere in the Westside is operating normally, as the bakery uses a model in which customers call in orders for pick-up.

Hodges said employees are able to work at any location owned by Messenger.

"Delivery orders are going crazy, so we've had to staff more people, and it's awesome to bring people back to work," Hodges said.

Prairie Point Quilt & Fabric Shop

At the onset of the COVID-19 out-

break in Kansas City, Prairie Point Quilt & Fabric Shop owners Susan and John Thorup transformed their shop into a mask production zone.

"100% of our customers sew, so we invited anybody that had extra fabric in their stash to start making these masks," said co-owner John Thorup.

"The customer that presented the idea to us comes by once or twice a week to pick up the masks to take down to KU Medical Center."

Thorup estimates the shop has made close to 2,000 masks in a month, which are distributed to KU Medical Center, other area healthcare organizations and even funeral homes.

"Our customers are just thrilled that they have a talent to be able to help out," Thorup said.

Thorup said Prairie Point is still open to customers, but they've limited their hours since most of their customers are elderly or retired. Customers can still order online or via phone for delivery or curbside pick-up.

"All small businesses, we're all in the same boat wondering, 'are we going to be able to make all of this up?'" Thorup said. "We can't wait to get back to work."

Mills Record Company

For Mills Record Company in Westport, COVID-19 has forced the storefront to close, but owner Judy Mills still sees opportunities to kindle her customers' passion for music.

Mills let her employees choose between staying home and working to fill online orders. With most of her employees home now, Mills is one of a team of two filling all orders.

Mills, who also owns Wise Blood Booksellers in Westport, said her customers are being as supportive as they can by purchasing gift certificates and ordering online.

While new records are sold through the Mills Record Company website, Mills is utilizing social media as a selling tool for used records. Buyers can sift through Instagram listings and message the Mills Record Company account to purchase items.

"One of the things we do best here is help people discover new music, and we can't do that now, but now more than ever people need music in their lives," Mills said.

Through online sales, social media interaction and IGTV content, Mills hopes to provide an outlet for customers to discover new music for their time in quarantine.

KC Soul Sistas

The KC Soul Sistas food truck is a Kansas City staple for comfort food with classics like wings, baked beans, greens and peach cobbler.

As a result of the COVID-19 outbreak, KC Soul Sistas has remained mostly closed, said owner Zeldia Johnson.

Johnson, who also offers catering and delivery services, has two major accounts with the Kansas City Board of Education and the Marine Corps in South Kansas City. With these institutions closed or operating irregularly, Johnson said her small business is hurting.

"It's a family business, so it's hurting us," Johnson said. "My kids have to go find jobs to support their households. It's just a waiting game."

Currently, KC Soul Sistas is operating periodically and offering customers the option to pre-order carry-out meals.

For updates on KC Soul Sistas' business and truck locations, follow their Facebook page.

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The American spirit is sick

Mason R. Dredge

A&E Editor

“Listen to me. If we break quarantine, we could all die.”

These lines are spoken by Ellen Ripley in the film “Alien” after a fellow astronaut has been exposed to an extraterrestrial organism of unknown origin. Everyone else wants to bring him onto their ship to save his life, while Ripley urges them to follow protocol.

Guess what. They don’t listen to her. Guess what else. They all die.

And at this moment, something similar is happening. Thousands of Americans have written up clever little signs or grabbed their AR-15’ to storm state capitals, demanding that the social distancing measures put in place be lifted.

Taking a look at the pictures coming from these protests, it makes one feel like they’re living in a bad young adult novel. A woman proudly holding a sign that reads “give me liberty or give me death” while standing in front of a closed Baskin Robbins. I wasn’t around for the American revolutions, but I have a feeling that the founding fathers weren’t talking about waffle cones when they said that.

These people think they’re fighting the good fight. They think they’re battling some injustice. They think they’re being patriots. Economist Stephen Moore went as far as to call them the modern-day Rosa Parks.

Uh, what?

These protests are not just wrong, they’re not just misguided. They’re an affront to the most core American values.

These people do not understand the intense gravity of this point in human history. They don’t understand just how dangerous this virus is. No, it won’t (probably, knock on wood) end the world, but it will take an unbelievable amount of life. Actually, it already has. Over 42,000 Americans alone have died because of the virus. In just two months, that’s 2,000 more deaths than

the three-year Korean War. It’s only 16,000 less than the number of Americans killed in the Vietnam War. It’s 14 times the amount of people who died on 9/11.

This. Is. Serious.

But many Americans refuse to see this. Many of them still think it’s no worse than the flu. They think it won’t kill them. Some have gone as far as to infer that the potential loss of life will be worth the trade. Do you actually know how many people are 1,000 people? Have you ever been to a concert at the Sprint Center, or seen a football game on TV? Imagine all those people dead, and tell me again how oppressed you are because you can’t go to Buffalo Wild Wings with the boys. Sorry that your roots are showing or that you can’t cover up your grey streaks, but if we break quarantine, your whole body will be grey and also dead.

This epidemic of misinformation is in large part brought on by our chowderhead of a president, Donald Trump. I can call him that and retain journalistic integrity because this is an op-ed.

There will be countless films and books about this man’s total incompetence and mistreatment of the country during this pandemic in the years to come, so I won’t rail on him too much, but it would be impossible to try to diagnose this situation without putting him on blast for a least a paragraph.

Where do I even start? His total dismissal of the problem early on? His relinquishing of his executive duties and telling states just to figure it out? Publicly stating he only wants to help states that are nice to him? Constantly



A woman in Huntington Beach protests her lack of ice cream (Lipstick Alley)

trying to shift the blame to China or the impeachment or the W.H.O.? Good gravy Donny.

His response to the protests is unsurprisingly stupid. He praises them, as long as they’re in states with Democratic governors, even though the demands they’re making are in direct conflict with the three-phase re-opening procedures he unveiled literally last week. But it’s fine; did we really think he’d read them?

Trump is an exaggerated personifi-

cation of all the negative aspects of the American spirit. The most infuriating, most painful aspect of these protests is that they are yet more proof of warping of American values, exposing a core that is as petulant as it is rotten.

All these people have to do is sit at home and relax. That is their moral obligation. You know what other generations had to do for the greater good? They fought wars. They died.

Which is what these protests are asking to do. They are demanding their lives and the lives of their children, their parents and their friends be put at totally avoidable risk because they want to go see a movie. It is unbelievably shortsighted and selfish. It is the definition of un-American. As a nation, we like to see ourselves as tough spirited, the people who can make the hard choices. We’ve done this time and time again in the past, but modern-day America,

ravaged by ignorance and cannibalized by a wicked bi-partisan political system, is unable to make the sacrifice.

And it breaks my heart to see this. Americans make sacrifices. Americans endure.

It is my deepest hope, as someone lucky enough to be born in this place that has so much potential for beauty, that we rediscover that.

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Trump is an exaggerated personifi-

COLUMN

Celebrating Women in STEM: Kotchakorn Voraak

Madalyn Weston

Staff Writer

Happy Earth Week, UMKC! Our usual events have been canceled, but it’s still been an interesting month for the planet. While cities around the world are on lockdown, people are reporting a drop in air pollution levels and a return of wildlife in urban locations. Calls for post-pandemic lower emission and bans on wildlife trade are increasing. But as we (hopefully) near the end of the crisis, a daunting question looms: what will our cities do to tackle climate change when this is over? One of the women who has been working on long-term climate solutions is landscape architect Kotchakorn Voraakhom.

Voraakhom grew up in Bangkok, Thailand. As a child, she enjoyed paddling a boat with her friends through the flooded landscape, but she didn’t yet know the dangers of rising sea levels and a sinking city. Voraakhom’s parents encouraged her to receive an education. She completed her bachelor’s in landscape architecture at Bangkok’s oldest university: Chulalongkorn University. After undergrad, she relocated to the U.S. to complete her master’s in landscape architecture from Harvard University in 2006. She also co-founded the Konkuey Design Initiative, an international collaboration to help community members rebuild public spaces like green buildings and



Kotchakorn Voraak (Total Landscape Care)

parks.

After finishing graduate work, Voraakhom returned to Bangkok to put her new knowledge to good use. Her work became especially important in 2011, when severe flooding killed over 800 people and displaced millions, including Voraakhom’s family. A fifth of the city was left underwater. Bangkok was built on a network of canals and was referred to as the “Venice of the East.” And much like Venice, it’s one of the most at-risk communities for climate change and sea-level rises. That’s where Voraakhom’s expertise plays a critical role. In 2011, she founded her

company, LANDPROCESS, to tackle rising water levels using urban landscaping. Her company has been involved in multiple high-profile projects, including designing the Thai Pavilion at the 2015 Expo in Milan.

In 2017, Voraakhom was contracted to build the city’s first public park in three decades: the Chulalongkorn University Centenary Park. Her 11-acre design included a three-degree slope to control water flow and a large retention basin, capable of absorbing a million gallons of water across the greenspace. She also included stationary bikes that aerate the water in the basin, allowing

community members to participate in the flood mitigation strategy. The same year, she founded Porous City Network to educate community members and get them involved in facing climate change.

In 2018, Voraakhom’s company converted a helipad at Ramathibodi Hospital into a 1,500 square-meter rooftop garden, named after Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn. In addition to acting as a healing space for patients, the garden also helps with water absorption and features a Recycle Wall made of 700 recycled saline bags. Last year, LANDPROCESS opened the largest farming green roof in Asia (36 acres) at Thammasat University. The farm grows food for hungry students and, in combination with other green spaces on the campus, can absorb more than 2.5 million gallons of water.

Voraakhom is currently working on the Bangkok 250 Plan—the city’s redevelopment efforts for its 250th anniversary in 2032. She’s a TED fellow, an Echoing Green Climate fellow, an Atlantic fellow and an Asia Foundation Development fellow. Last year, TIME Magazine named her as one of their 2019 TIME 100 Next.

Are you interested in empowering women in the STEM fields? The Women in Science (Wi-Sci) group wants you! Email President Emily Larner (emily.larner@mail.umkc.edu) for more information.

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ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

Triage of a mouse

Luke McKiddy

Staff Writer

Four months ago, nearly any company in the world would have killed to have the revenue, diversified portfolio and name recognition of the Walt Disney Company. However, in the midst of the coronavirus pandemic, The House of Mouse has been brought to its knees in a way that no competitor could ever have hoped to accomplish.

COVID-19 seems almost tailor-made to strike at Disney's revenue streams. Recent reports even show that Disney's company and stock value has fallen below entertainment rival Netflix. For its part, Netflix has only thrived with the current stay-at-home orders in effect.

Closing out 2019, Disney had nine films gross over \$1 billion, including "Avengers: Endgame" becoming the highest-grossing film in history. C.E.O Bob Iger even pulled the trigger on buying out longtime rivals 21st Century Fox. Disney Parks and resorts brought in \$24.5 billion, an increase of over \$4 billion from 2018. And expectations only grew bolder with three new cruise ships in production to bolster Walt's intimidating naval fleet. ESPN brought in \$3 billion and has become ubiquitous in the realm of sports entertainment. Disney

even took the dive into the competitive realm of online streaming platforms, releasing Disney+ at the close of the year. The public didn't find out until February 2020, but Iger deemed these conditions to be enough to cement his legacy as one of the most successful C.E.O.s and businessmen in history.

In the past, Disney's diversified revenue streams had been one of its greatest strengths. The characters from films fed into the prominence of the parks and resorts. Advertising on ESPN or other Disney owned television channels promoted films, merchandising and travel. Each aspect of the business supported the endeavors of the others. This allowed for high-profile, lucrative purchases, which only further strengthened the grasp on many of the largest franchises in popular culture.

The film industry has essentially ground to a halt, with anything in-production either being suspended indefinitely or dropped altogether. Finished films too are either being held for a theatrical release when theaters reopen or are being shunted off into streaming releases. Without professional and collegiate sports, ESPN has taken to speculative analysis, documentaries and e-sports with athletes playing.

The shutdown of Disney

parks and resorts has been the deepest cut to the company's standing. The revenue brought in from parks and resorts dwarfs even the film divisions profits. Would-be park attendees seem to be a very vocal and angry group, even with the rest of the world seemingly understanding the need for social distancing. Workers United Local 50 in California estimates more than 30,000 workers have been furloughed, and 43,000 in Florida, with some estimates exceeding 100,000 workers laid-off.

Voices within the company and analysts suspect this is one aspect that is not going to come back in the near future. Disney's worst/Netflix's best day on the stock market came when it was suggested that Disney parks and resorts might not reopen until January 2021. UBS Financial Analyst, whose downgrade of Disney's stock stirred much of the current market prophesizing, said California Governor Gavin Newsom has said the prospect of mass gatherings is "negligible at best until we get herd immunity and we get to a vaccine." And it's impossible to say if the cruise line industry will ever shake this black mark on their already spotty record. According to Forbes, all of this adds up to the tune of Disney losing as much as \$30 million a day.



The coronavirus pandemic have marked particularly dark days for the Happiest Place on Earth. (DisneyParks)

The one bright spot for the House that Mickey Built is the company's streaming service Disney+, which has reportedly grown from an initial subscriber base of 10 million to nearly 50 million as of April. This is due to the current stay-at-home orders, as well as rolling out to markets internationally.

However, where flames grow for Disney+, a bonfire roars at Netflix. Where Disney blossomed by its diversified portfolio and in-person, experience-based parks and resorts, Netflix owns the living rooms of over 165 million subscribers worldwide according to Business Insider, and that comes from a report at the end of January. What's more: Each one is paying between \$8.99 and \$12.99, compared to \$6.99 for Disney+. And Netflix is not likely to feel the hurt anytime soon. All television and film services are facing the day when there is nothing new to show due to the current halt in

production. But Netflix reportedly has more in their pipeline than most. Also, subscribers are likely to rewatch something from their vast catalogue of hit shows. And amazingly, the halt in production has actually meant that less money is going out than in the past for Netflix, so the current market has only shown greater profits.

The current pandemic will likely not take down the giant that is The Disney Company. Stock analysts across the board are telling investors that the company is likely to have a tough time for the next couple of years but will eventually bounce back. However, it is assured that coronavirus is going to have far reaching effects on many facets of entertainment, especially for how Disney moves forward. One thing is clear, the world is watching how the titan of business and entertainment can come back.

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'Tigertail'—a beautiful tale of youth and sorrow

Adeta Chareunsab

Staff Writer

We all have actions and choices we regret making. While there are times we can let them go, some regrets hold on much longer than others.

Alan Yang's film directorial debut, "Tigertail," focuses on the life of Pin-Jui (Tzi Ma) as he reflects on his youth while also trying to fix his relationship with his daughter Angela (Christine Ko).

The film is a beautiful fusion of sadness mixed with a tinge of hope.

It perfectly captures the feelings of nostalgia and melancholy in the transition between scenes of Pin-Jui's current life in America versus his time as a working teen (portrayed by Lee Hong-Chi) in Taiwan during the 1970s.

The scenes of Taiwan are warm and vibrant, which signifies a happier time for Pin-Jui. As for the scenes after his move to America, the color saturation is more pale and drab. Although it was-

n't necessary to do so, this was an excellent choice on the filmmakers' part.

Not only is the film visually stunning, but the acting is also well-rounded.

While Pin-Jui can be an empty shell of a human at most times, Ma knows how to cleverly deliver his lines, making them rich and authentic to the point you could almost feel for his character.

As for Lee, he portrays the younger version of Pin-Jui perfectly.

His acting is a breath of fresh air—he can easily portray a happy, young adult doing as he pleases and then transform into a stone-cold workaholic the next second. The duality of his acting is brilliant.

While there are many good things to say about "Tigertail," it still has its flaws.

The film is very much a slow-burn. Nothing happens in the beginning, and it's a while until anything actually worth watching takes place. There aren't a lot of exciting scenes or plot points revealed, so it can feel very long



"Tigertail" is available to stream on Netflix. (Netflix)

for many and may not be for everybody.

The film makes up for these flaws, however, concluding with a meaningful ending that will please many (as well as leave them in tears).

"Tigertail" is a heartfelt drama that will leave you wanting more than what you'll see and is a film you won't regret watching.

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