



ASTROWORLD CONCERT IN HOUSTON CAUSES MASS CASUALTY

BRITTANY MERSFELDER
News Editor

Photo Courtesy of Associated Press

On Nov. 5, at least 11 people were left dead, many others injured or in critical condition during the live performance by Travis Scott at a music festival “Astroworld Festival”. The event took place in Houston, Texas and was planned to be a three-day event. The incident occurred the first night of the event. Many testimonials are being broadcasted on social media, attesting to their experiences at the concert. Concert goers were speculating as to what caused this many to die and be sent to the hospital. Some even stated that someone was going around the venue, injecting attendees with various drugs.

In a press conference Saturday, Nov. 6, the Houston police chief Troy Finner spoke out about the rumors being spread about the incident.

“I will tell you, one of the narratives was that some individual was injecting other people with drugs,” said Finner. “We do have a report of a security officer, according to the medical staff, that was out and treated last night. He was reaching over to restrain or grab a citizen and he felt a prick in his neck. When he was examined, he went unconscious. They administered Narcan. He was revived. The medical staff did notice there was a prick

that you would get if someone were trying to inject [you].”

The attendees who have spoken out about the incident have also mentioned overcrowding. This is where mass amounts of people will gather in a spot, causing no space for air or space to move around in. Those who are short in nature had more trouble breathing than those individuals who were much taller.

The overcrowding incident was encouraged by performing artist Travis Scott. Scott has been arrested twice in the past for inciting a riot and disorderly conduct. Scott encourages and expects this behavior of his fans.

At the most recent Astroworld concert, it began with a crowd of people trampling a barrier while trying to get into the concert venue. This behavior began to be encouraged by Scott in 2015 at the earliest. The first arrest was made after Lollapalooza, a concert series based out of Chicago. This was the first incident where Scott was arrested for disorderly conduct.

Scott encouraged his fans to rush the stage, trample security and break barriers at his 2015 Lollapalooza concert event. The second arrest was made in 2017 after Scott performed at the Birdseye View

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Tour in Rogers, Arkansas.

While many attendees were passing out, Scott only took note of one person rather than the mass amount that was affected. The videos show attendees screaming for help. Two men who are assumed to work for Scott walked on stage and told him that there has been a mass casualty, the concert needs to stop. Scott waved them off stage and told the crowd “You know what you came here to do. Let’s rage.”

A group of people banded together to chant “stop the show!” repeatedly; these chants were ignored by Scott. Travis Scott is seen doing the robot dance on top of a podium while there are handfuls of ambulances in the crowd. Attendees saw these ambulances as an opportunity to dance on the roofs of the ambulances while the EMTs were resuscitating unconscious attendees.

This event was tragic. Many lost their lives to poor event planning, poor concert etiquette and a rapper who did not take the chance to consider his fans’ wellbeing. This concert was extremely traumatic to attendees. Testimonials on social media are proving the point; Scott did not and was not truly and purely interested in the well being of his fans.

FALL 2021 COMMENCEMENT CEREMONY

Emily Allen, Copy Editor

Life is slowly returning to normal just in time for the fall 2021 graduation to begin. The Fall 2021 Commencement Ceremony will be held at the UWG Coliseum on Saturday, Dec. 11. Each ceremony will also be live-streamed and recorded for viewing afterwards.

There will be two ceremonies and each student will be assigned based on their college. At 9:00 a.m. the College of Arts, Culture and Scientific Inquiry and Richards College of Business ceremony will begin. At 1:00 p.m. the College of Education; School of Communication, Film, and Media; Tanner Health System School of Nursing; and University College ceremony will begin.

Due to COVID-19 there are physical distancing guidelines that are in place. There will be no student processional and each student will be seated as they arrive. According to the CDC recommendations, fully vaccinated students or guests don't need to wear a mask or physically distance themselves from others. Unvaccinated students or guests are strongly recommended to get vaccinated, continue to wear a mask and physical distance themselves from others.

Graduation ceremonies will continue normally but if any students wish to refrain from shaking hands, students are told to place their hand over their heart so the President, Provost and Dean will know to refrain from giving a handshake or simply offer a fist bump. Tickets will not be given out that are required for entrance, all the seating will be general admission.

Students that are graduating should have their cap and gown orders placed early so they arrive on time. All graduating candidates will have royal blue tassels which is a new addition that UWG is doing for fall 2021.

Any student who qualifies for honor stoles will receive an email from the UWG Graduation Team letting them know. The honor stoles may be purchased directly from the UWG Bookstore.

Students marching in the ceremony need to arrive at least 45 minutes early dressed in regalia, ready to participate. Late arrivals may not be permitted to participate.



Photo Courtesy of UWG



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NEWS



COVID-19 TRAVEL BAN IS LIFTED AND REOPENS U.S. BORDERS TO VACCINATED TRAVELERS
EMMA PENCE
Contributing Writer

The U.S. has lifted its travel ban on Nov. 8 allowing vaccinated travelers into the U.S. from other countries. The original travel ban began in 2020 at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic. International travelers who are fully vaccinated will now be allowed into the U.S.

These past 18 months have cost the global travel industry hundreds of billions of dollars. Before the official reopening of the borders, thousands of people flooded the airports in excitement to travel. Whether they were stuck studying abroad, have family in the states or just want to experience the American dream themselves; they were excited to travel.

The lift on the travel ban has come just in time for the holiday season. Families who have been separated by the travel ban can now celebrate together at their

place of choosing. This holiday season will feel the most normal it has in a while thanks to the compliance of those taking the right actions getting vaccinated and practicing social distancing throughout the last 18 months.

The New York Times reported that American Airlines sold more tickets for trans-Atlantic flights in the days after the announcement than during a similar period in 2019, a first since the pandemic began. Delta Air Lines said many of its international flights on Monday were fully booked, according to the New York Times.

New York alone suffered a loss of \$60 billion in revenue from the absence of tourists in 2020. This made many small businesses suffer and even shut down resulting in the loss of 89,000 jobs in the city.

Of course, New York is only one example

Photo Courtesy of Associated Press

of the unemployment and business closings that happened during the pandemic but it was heavily affected by no tourists flooding their streets. There were similar situations occurring along the Mexico and Canadian borders as well.

Not only are all travelers required to be fully vaccinated to enter the country but they must also be able to present a negative COVID-19 test from the last three days.

Now that the travel ban is lifted and more people will be in and out of the country traveling, we must continue to be aware and careful when it comes to potentially spreading the virus. The COVID-19 testing required to enter the states is crucial for keeping COVID-19 cases low. By being vaccinated and following CDC guidelines, international travel will be much safer; rebuilding our economy in a safe and smart way.

LIVING WEST

WHAT IS THE IRB? THE ETHICS OF PERFORMING RESEARCH WITH HUMAN PARTICIPANTS

AMANDA CLAY
Health Correspondent

At the University of West Georgia, the Institutional Review Board (IRB) is the committee responsible for reviewing research proposals and ensuring that any study on campus is complying with ethical considerations. For UWG students that are currently involved in research, the process of doing research with human participants involves planning and care to ensure that ethical boundaries are not crossed. Researchers looking to perform any study on campus involving people must contact IRB. Dr. Christine Simmonds-Moore, Professor of Psychology at UWG, said that human participants should be valued and respected in any research study. “People are freely giving their time to volunteer and participate in research,” said Simmonds-Moore. “It is really important to work with a faculty advisor if you are doing student research and learning about

ethics. Research at UWG should be reviewed by the IRB who ensure that the research has overall value and that there are more benefits for the person/society/knowledge than there are potential problems.” There are many potential ethical concerns about using people in studies, even if it is just a simple research survey. The goal is to protect participants’ privacy, fully inform them of what to expect in the study and prevent additional harm. “Human participants should be fully informed with regard to what to expect if they choose to opt in to take part in a study [for interviews and experiments as well as surveys],” said Simmonds-Moore. “In general, people taking part in research should not experience additional harm or distress by taking part and they should have the right to withdraw from the study at any time [even in a survey - for example, it may be upsetting or triggering for people who have experienced personal trauma to answer questions about that trauma in a survey] and this includes removing their data after they have taken part in a study.” If students are performing this type of research and need to contact the IRB, working with a faculty advisor, either as an independent study or as part of a thesis or dissertation, will help to coordinate the process, according to Simmonds-Moore. Faculty members will assist students in completing and submitting IRB

applications. All students and faculty who are involved in the project must take special ethics training to submit an IRB application. This is housed on the UWG ORSP site and is called CITI training. Once the IRB receives the application, they will evaluate the contents of the research study and decide whether it was designed effectively. “I do not sit on the IRB but from my experience as a researcher the IRB are checking that the researchers have thought about the research from the perspective of the potential participants and not just about their goal of finding out information from the participants,” said Simmonds-Moore. “It is often the case that when you submit an IRB you get some initial feedback in terms of clarifying language, asking to see all materials that would be used in the study and making sure that all participants are being fully informed and being asked to sign a consent form, or other ways of giving consent, prior to taking part.” There is an array of research opportunities available to students on campus, whether it be through the honors college or independent research and faculty is encouraging students to get involved. “Research is fun,” said Simmonds-Moore. “It is a great way for you to contribute to the growing knowledge base. Try to get involved in research where you see opportunities arising.”



Photo Courtesy of UWG

The University System of Georgia (USG), the University of West Georgia and all of the other USG institutions have partnered together for Ethics Awareness Week. This event hosts various activities and events in efforts to inspire integrity, excellence, accountability and respect on campus. During ethics week, faculty and staff members of UWG are awarded an opportunity to gain insight about different ways to reach students and teach ethics education on a more personalized basis within their field of instruction. Students are also able to participate and engage in discussions regarding specific ethics within their desired profession. “Ethics week is an opportunity to remind campus of our core values of integrity, excellence, accountability, and respect. But, truly, ethics is something we celebrate and internalize every week of the year,” said Kristi Carman, General Counsel at the Office of Legal Affairs. “Ethics Awareness Week is a University System of Georgia initiative and is celebrated on all 26 USG

campuses across the state. Ethics Awareness Week has been around for many years but this year we were able to put together a cross-divisional team to brainstorm and execute all the fantastic activities. The result was a vibrant week celebrating our ethical values.” Featured panelists for the week included Natasha Ramsay-Jordan, Education; Susan Welch, Nursing; Hannes Gerhardt, Sciences; Tanya Thomas, Business; and John Sewell, Communications. During this virtual event, panelists offered valuable information that contributes to the overall focus of Ethics Awareness and was recorded and posted to the Ethics week website just in case anyone wanted to view the panel. Ingram Library also presented an Ethics Week table on the first floor of the lobby where those who were interested could come by and gather more information about maintaining ethical culture at UWG. “We had a lot of fun with this year’s Ethics Awareness Week. We planned daily trivia games with fun prizes, a great display at the Ingram Library

highlighting how ethics is integral to everyone’s future career, an informative faculty panel discussion about ethics across disciplines, and my favorite, the Ethics Week Pack Prize Cab game,” said Carman. “The Prize Cab is where we give students, staff and faculty a ride to where they are going and if they answer questions about ethics correctly, they get a prize package. More information about these activities can be found on our Ethics Awareness Week website.” This week-long event is important because it serves as a reminder for USG employees to value and prioritize the significance of an ethical culture and encourage employees to stay committed to the USG policies and State and Federal laws. UWG also offers an Ethics and Compliance Reporting Hotline where individuals are able to report cases of suspected fraud, waste or abuse. This hotline serves as a tool to further maintain and preserve the core values of Ethics on campus. The goal is to uphold a positive, constructive environment on campus and classrooms.

LIVING WEST

FALL 2021 STUDY BLITZ

VICTORIA MITCHELL

Contributing Writer

UWG's Center for Academic Success hosts a Study Blitz for students to attend each year. These Study Blitz sessions are a good way for students to ask last minute questions and seek last minute tutoring before finals week. There will be a table for different classes with different tutors there to help answer questions.

At study blitz, students are able to take study guides with them, term papers they have been working on or projects they are trying to complete and ask for help with these various assignments. Not only are students able to ask questions for the classes represented at the study blitz but the Center for Academic

Success also partners with the Writing Center. The Writing Center will be available to help students look over papers and help with any revisions that may need to be made.

There are free giveaways for students and oftentimes food is provided. This program helps to provide a stress free environment for students and worry less about finals. After attending the study blitz students should feel prepared to take on finals and enjoy their break before the Spring semester starts.

"In the past, the Center for Academic Success hosted a Study Blitz every semester for students to come together and study for finals, relieve finals stress, and receive help for any course that they may have through tutoring and SI," said Coordinator of Supplemental Instruction, Shelby Guinn.

"We have also offered Academic Coaching to make sure that skills are

set for finals preparation," said Guinn. "In years past, hundreds of students have attended these sessions and with the changing times the Center for Academic Success still wants to continue to meet students where they are and work better with conflicting schedules."

For the fall 2021 semester, students may attend drop in tutoring at the Center for Academic Success in the UCC and our STEM Center in Boyd along with Peer to Peer tutoring sessions, SI sessions and Academic Coaching. "We will be offering an Accounting Study Blitz for the fall 2021 semester on Friday, December 3 from 10 a.m.- 3 p.m. in the Center for Academic Success located in the UCC," said Guinn. "We are hoping to have a good turn out of students."

Students taking ACCT2101 and ACCT2102 can get assistance with accounting courses before finals during this event.



UWG STUDENT JAY PRUITT RELEASES "A BIT INSANE" ON SPOTIFY AND APPLE MUSIC

JANNETTE EMMERICK

Reporter

UWG undergraduate student and independent music artist Jay Pruitt recently released a new song "A Bit Insane" on Apple Music and Spotify. While Pruitt is a non-traditional student looking into anthropological studies, he recently began a fruitful music endeavor online, including his music being broadcasted on WolfRadio.

"I wrote it to get out of a bit of frustration that I was having being locked in quarantine," says Pruitt. "[From] being quarantined with somebody and the conflict that can arise from it. But I wanted to show more than tell instead of just saying it."

Pruitt began as an online music artist in May covering Lewis Capaldi's "Days Gone Quiet" which remains his most popular song, covering 62% of his streams on Spotify. His cover charted him as the number one indie artist in Australia and Russia.

In June, Pruitt posted his first original "The Truth" to Spotify and Apple, featuring the vocal talents of his mother Doris Tucker.

With his second single "Silent Man" released in August, Pruitt shifted from ballad style to upbeat, synth-pop. "Silent Man" surpassed his previous release in stream count and allowed Pruitt to feature as a trending indie artist for an extended amount of time.

Pruitt's latest single "A Bit Insane"

continues the fast paced stride of "Silent Man" but incorporates a more punk sound instead of synth-pop. The song has under a thousand streams on Spotify but soared on Apple Music with 23k streams.

Since the release of his first song, Pruitt's music has exceeded over 100k streams on Apple Music and 37k streams on Spotify.

About a week after "A Bit Insane" debuted, Wolf Radio requested the audio to play on their program.

"[Wolf Radio] knew I made music because I messaged them a while ago," says Pruitt.

Pruitt also decided to write and print copies of his first poetry book thanks to the support of his friends and the resources offered in UWG's Print Services.

One important figure in his growth as an artist and writer includes Dr. Gregory Fraser from UWG's English Department. Pruitt attended Fraser's "Intro to Creative Writing" class this semester and credits Fraser for sharpening his poetry and songwriting.

"I did not know that I could write poetry before taking [Intro to Creative Writing] even though I knew I could write songs. [Poetry] is a newfound thing for me," says Pruitt. "I recommend every single person to take Intro to Creative Writing

Photo Courtesy of Jay Pruitt

ing at the very least. It's helped me make friends, it's helped with my writing and it gave me a safe place to voice my opinions."

Despite anxieties, Pruitt still pushes himself to create music and put his work out into the world. Similarly, many students everywhere, including UWG, share their creations including music, art and other talents with the world but there are also some who hesitate to publish their own works for one reason or another. UWG offers a platform for not just learning but provides a platform for students to share their talents, passions and projects. While today's online landscape especially can be overwhelming, Pruitt and many other small creators still need to start somewhere.

"When it comes to writing music, an easy way to start is to take a song you already like and try rewriting the lyrics. Then try rewriting the melody and then from there, try making a new instrumental from it," says Pruitt. "And don't be afraid to ask people for help."

For music artists not knowing where to start, Pruitt recommends playing around with different apps like Reaktor or the free program Audacity.

In the future, Pruitt hopes to perform his music in front of a live audience and will continue releasing unique songs in the meantime.

ENTERTAINMENT



**MORGAN
WALLEN
CONTINUES TO
BREAK COUNTRY
MUSIC CHARTS**
VICTORIA MITCHELL
Contributing Writer

Popular country music artist Morgan Wallen performed hits from his new album “Dangerous” at the C-osa Valley Fairgrounds in Rome, Georgia on Nov. 6 and 7. He performed alongside artists Hardy and Ernest throughout the show.

The show was just one stop on Wallen’s stops on his “Dangerous” tour, which features shows across the U.S. The tour is to promote his new album titled “Dangerous” which was released Jan. 8, 2021. Wallen’s team extended the concert making it two nights, after the first show sold out so quickly. The show attracted thousands of guests to Rome for the two- night event.

Wallen performed one of his most well-known songs titled “More Than My Home-

town”. This song is Wallen describing how much he truly loves someone. The song continues with Wallen singing about all that he loves. Wallen performed other hits such as “Sand in my Boots”, “Still Going Down”, “Flower Shops” and “The Way I Talk.”

Wallen’s set entertained the crowd with his stage presence throughout the shows. Wallen claimed fame as country music’s next rising star with over four billion on demand streams, four consecutive chart toppers and multi-platinum certifications.

In May 2020, Wallen was arrested for disorderly conduct after being kicked out of a Kid Rock restaurant in Nashville, Tennessee. His performance on Saturday Night Live was cancelled after

Photo Courtesy of Associated Press

the discovery he was not following proper COVID-19 protocol. In February 2021, a video was released where Wallen used a racial slur. The outlash resulted in the suspension of Wallen from his record label “indefinitely”, Big Loud and Republic Records.

Wallen publicly stated he “fully accepted any penalties I’m facing” in February. Despite the controversy that has surrounded Wallen, Wallen released his second album “Dangerous”, which gained immense popularity. “Dangerous” spent ten weeks on Billboard’s 200 chart. This album features over 30 songs such as “Somebody’s Problem”. Wallen will continue to tour the new album for the remainder of the year and into 2022.

ENTERTAINMENT



A “Quiet Place: Part II” finally made its debut after a long awaited three years after “A Quiet Place: Part I” was released in 2018. The first film left off with quite a cliffhanger after the Abbott family was left fatherless in the middle of a post-apocalyptic world taken over by blind aliens with intense hearing abilities.

In May 2021, John Krasinski’s film hit the theatres after the delay of the pandemic interrupting production. John Krasinski doubles as the director and plays the role of the father in the first film. Although his character is not in Part II as often, he is in the flashback scene of the film that is the first scene of “A Quiet Place II”.

After the first film, viewers are thrown back by the loud noises of families enjoying their children’s baseball game and running errands around town. The first scene gives viewers all the missing pieces that we were left wondering as to how these alien creatures came to Earth. Krasinski does an amazing job waiting to show that until the second

film, giving the characters the opportunity to develop their stories for the audience.

From there the film picks up right where the last scene of Part I ended with the family being surrounded by monsters but now, they know how to fight them off and kill them with the power of Millicent Simmonds’ character, Regan, who is deaf. They have found that the high frequency from her hearing device her father made for her is too much for the aliens and makes them confused enough to shoot and kill them in close range.

The film follows the Abbotts on their journey to find a new place to live and find supplies for the three children, one being a newborn. Along the way they encounter an old family friend from the ballpark who steps up and helps them find a new beginning as they adapt to this new ‘normal’ amongst the aliens.

The cinematographer, Polly Morgan, carries the same vibe from the first film into the second with mostly night scenes and dark situations which take up 75% of the screen time. Krasinski

Photo Courtesy of Paramount
wanted Morgan to keep the cameras moving with the characters to make sure the audience feels engaged and to build tension and suspense to match the situation the family was going through.

The targeted audience for this film were lovers of horror film and a mature age group but also the deaf community. Krasinski was adamant about casting a deaf actress to play Regan Abbott which is why he chose Simmonds. Simmonds felt the pressure of representing the deaf and hard of hearing community while playing the part and did so beautifully. She was able to relate to her character because of her own struggles. Krasinski made sure that Simmonds would be accommodated by making the entire team and cast learn American Sign Language to be able to communicate with her easily.

“A Quiet Place II” won many awards including, Golden Trailer Award for Best Horror, Hollywood Critic Association Best Actress, Millicent Simmonds and Best Supporting Actress Emily Blunt.