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No time for a clever greeting this month – the simulation is short circuiting!! I don't have much time, they're coming. The timelines have overlapped, the wires have crossed. It's only a matter of time before three Agent Smith's are at my door. It won't stop with me – keep your eyes peeled for anomalies and alley-cats.

In all reality, I actually have enough time to write out this blurb. BUT I *have* confirmed the simulation, and that you all are simulations in my virtual reality experience. This begs the question – does carrying out a record write-up service for a channel of simulations qualify as **schizophrenia**? Maybe yes, maybe no. But probably yes.

Alright, down to business. Here we are yet again late into the month, and I find myself unsure of my record selection. In prior months of indecision, I've usually had several that I'm considering, and then go a completely different direction at the last second. This time, I didn't even have my safety net of albums I probably wouldn't use. I've had some trouble connecting with my vinyl collection this month. Several weeks ago I learned that someone had snuck into my apartment and stolen two very valuable items from me – both of my Caroline Polachek albums – the 5-Year Gold Edition of Pang, and my autographed Release Day edition of Desire, I Want to Turn in to You. I'll spare you the details, but it has been really depressing.

But, the show *must* go on. If you know me, you've probably heard me preach about *The Universe* at some point or another. In short, whether simulated or not, I believe our energies are all part of something larger, and that we find our way back to those we are drawn to – the parts of **our** larger whole. That is also why I believe everyone's dog is perfect for them – it is a malleable piece of matter in which our soul seeps, absorbs, and reflects. They are but a channel for our energies to connect, and when two (or more) energies meant for another find each other and connect, the feeling is happiness. With the right perspective, patience, and a bit of faith, one can navigate the perils of this world, using this a compass. So, I decided I wouldn't put any pressure on myself to figure out a perfect ROTM, and that the universe would lead me wherever I needed (or already was) to go.

It was less than a day later that the Universe spoke back. I encountered something **incredibly** rare, intriguing, and synchronistic. At a four-way stop intersection, I encountered a police car, a firetruck, an ambulance, and a mailvan. To explain the significance of this – I must take you back to 2002. Early in my 5th Grade year, my primary teacher – Mick Coleman – posed our class a riddle of sorts. He hypothetically explained that at a four-way stop intersection, there was a police car, a firetruck, an ambulance, and a mailvan, all waiting to go in conflicting directions – who has the right of way? I personally

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answered the firetruck, because the firetruck had the most equipment, and could resolve all or most of the issues the other vehicles could, as well as additional, more difficult issues. One guessed the ambulance because it saves lives, another the police car because they could be trying to catch the criminal that caused the necessity for the firetruck or the ambulance in the first place. All of these, are very intelligent, and creative ideas, especially for those of 5th graders. But all were incorrect. The mailvan has the right of way, because the mailvan is of a **federal** entity, while the other 3 are of *State* or *City*. Now, in all reality, if either of those other 3 are blaring their sirens flying up on a stop sign, the mailvan is getting right the hell out of the way. **But**, if it somehow actually came down to it, the mailvan has the right of way. I give Mr. Coleman a lot of credit for getting his youngsters to think outside the box. I do believe this lesson significantly impacted the way I perceive and approach problem solving over the years, at least in an educational format.

Mr. Coleman was a Saints fan (before the hurricane), and was known for quoting Three Dog Night's *Joy to the World* in the lyrics of "Jeremiah was a bullfrog." He would jokingly direct this at my classmate and emerging funnyguy Jeremiah Flavin. Twenty-Three years later, and Jerry Flavin's Instagram handle is some version of @bullfrog. The ripples of the universe never cease to amaze me.

Mr. Coleman loved/s Bruce Springsteen. Bruce was a much needed add to this list. I've heard him all my life, but it would be difficult for me to really places the songs to their respective albums. But then later that **exact same day** I hit shuffle on my Spotify Liked Songs playlist, and *Radio Nowhere* came on, which also happens to be the first some on this album. I'm not going to try and break this album down, interpret The Boss's illustrious career, or make sense of something I don't know about. But I do know The Universe lead me to this album when I surrendered myself and relinquished any desire for control.

Sometimes, the answer we've been looking for, far and wide, high and low, has been sitting right in front of our face the whole time. We just looked right passed it.

Whether the Blue Pill of the Red, I'll see you all in September,

Dan Diego

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Past ROTMs:

November 2023: Desire, I Want to Turn Into You – Caroline Polachek

December 2023: Depression Cherry – Beach House

January 2024: MTV Unplugged Live from New York – Nirvana

February 2024: Actual Life 2 – Fred Again..

March 2024: Music from the LOTR Trilogy – The City of Prague Philharmonic Orchestra

April 2024: Greatest Hits: Volume 1 – James Taylor

May 2024: Hybrid Theory – Linkin Park

June 2024: Ursa Major – Third Eye Blind

July 2024: Live 1997 – Daft Punk

August 2024: White Ladder, Live in Austin – David Gray

September 2024: Tidal – Fiona Apple

October 2024: Kid A – Radiohead

November 2024: Alive 2007 – Daft Punk

December 2024: Ten – Pearl Jam

January 2025: Balloonerism – Mac Miller

February 2025: Ceremonials – Florence + The Machine

March 2025: Narrow Stairs – Death Cab for Cutie

April 2025: Pang – Caroline Polachek

May 2025: 4:44 – Jay-Z

June 2025: Third Eye Blind – Third Eye Blind

July 2025: Live from Joshua Tree – Rufus Du Sol

August 2025: Magic – Bruce Springsteen