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#4: MC's Winds to Constellations Journal

#1: Music

"Semi-retired musician."

What does that even mean?

Did I leave music or not?

Honestly, it's hard to describe because it's a yes and no answer. I did leave it but I didn't leave it too. I don't think I ever could actually completely leave music behind. It's in me. I got a drum beat for a heart like anyone else.

First, I was MMC Monroe. Then, MC Monroe then I "dropped the MC."

Assuming the title of "Monroe" for a while, that was my name and style for a bit. Eventually being replaced by a fantasy character I adore, Lord Jadix.

But through each evolution, it was really like a Pokemon honestly. Learning new moves and abilities, maybe even changing my appearance too, but I kept the same core. The same soul.

Much like a DM Tour.

Sometimes I stumbled or burned some weak bridges over it.

But that was probably for the best and honestly, worth it. Then, it too evolved and changed, eventually leading to writing but throughout it all, I learned lessons.

The best promotion is organic and the best advice comes from those who know you best. A lot of critics will say a lot of things about a lot of stuff but that doesn't mean they know much about what they are criticizing.

Sorry, not sorry :)

Oh and here's an important one.

Make what you want to consume.

If you can't vibe with your own energy, you have a bigger problem than a rude comment made by a probably "a little" jealous person who is mad that you are attempting to chase your dreams.

Again, ;)

Don't want me saying this about you?

Well, chase your own happy and healthy dreams and don't dump metaphorical dog poop mixed with chili sauce, stale beer and misery on other people's.

:)

All of this being said, this is the intro for the Sports Touring journal because as much as the "winds of change" blew and changed music to books, DM Tours were changed into Sports Touring.

A fairly bloated and overwhelmed idea with very big intentions and dreams.

Much like the one's of a 17-year-old kid from Annandale, Minnesota, USA, Earth.

One who dreamed of impacting the music industry.

But crazier things have happened.

Who knows, maybe that same now 31-year-old will surprise you all with some new musical bangers. Maybe someday relatively soon. :)

Changing winds do all sorts of crazy things. Like even transforming into constellations of stars then possibly even more later on.

#2: Miami

1. "It's not your time yet"
2. "Have you thought about it more?"
3. "What if it doesn't work out?"

3 things many of us hear a lot.

But why do we have to hear them?

Maybe some of the time, they do have merit. Maybe we do need to think things over on occasion.

But maybe sometimes, we are just chasing a "purposely distanced" love that we'll never catch. Maybe ignoring the "probably better for us" ones that we have well within our grasp.

Or maybe it's just what happens when the fairly irrational, unpredictable and beautiful creature known as a human interacts with another of its same species.

A lot of maybe here in this entry so far.

But that's how my early 2013 felt.

Maybe I will live until my birthday in April.

Maybe I wouldn't feel numb anymore.

Maybe I wouldn't "feel like a ghost missing its life."

Then, it turned itself around and I got a chance to be in Miami in March. A chance to volunteer building houses there and most importantly, a chance to breathe in that South Florida air. A few inhales and exhales and I felt it.

Different.

I can't say how or why.

Maybe divine intervention, actual Vitamin D from leaving North Dakota winters, the love from a constellation I didn't know yet or something else.

I breathed in Dade county itself and I decided to fight on.

Simple as that.

But this isn't an entry really about that.

Mental health is a real and important topic but in my particular case, I just really had to toughen up and get better at saying this. "This is what I want to do. I want your support but I don't need it. I will not grovel for your respect or love. That's not love and if you can't do that, I wish you the best."

Something that didn't sink in for probably another 11 years or so.

Like a super good barbecue marinade.

:)

I'm not saying we have to only agree to support each other. Obvio. Duh. Jajaja

Part of support is being honest but there is a line of autonomy and independence between functioning adults. Or as I call it, "the nice one line."

A line where because you are a "generally nice and kind" soul, life and people think they can say or do whatever because you won't do or say anything back.

Well... "howdy there?! We, at Castle Johnson Publishings have something to say about that... a fun little word called... Nah."

Nah, I don't think it makes me crazy to still be optimistic about our world's future.

Nah, I don't think it's too crazy to start playing games to solve our global, regional and domestic problems.

Nah, I don't believe it's crazy to believe in some things you can't see or prove.

After all, if our reality is formulated from the ideas and sensations that we know and sense in any given past or present moment, what is traveling, to a place like Miami, then?

It's bending your perceptions and reality to the very real world around you, just one that you never knew before. But once you do it, you can never go back again. In the best possible way.

It can be a place like Glens Falls, NY or the Ruins of Huanchaca. Both are equally valid places that one's life could forever change.

So, maybe, it's time to combine these ideas. Grand adventures, shaping a new understanding of one's life or reality and some classic game delivered justice.

We, at Castle Johnson Publishings, also believe maybe it's that time too.

So, if you agree with us but don't know if you have the courage to follow it, I think we can let the future words of Lillie LaDestino define it the best.

"It's your turn. What are you afraid of? Falling? Don't be. Be more afraid to never jump. You're up."

#3: Test Runs

The "winds of change" come and go in our lives. It's pretty normal and perfectly healthy.

Comfort zones are meant to be bent anyways.

Going from music to books, literal wars to card games, You Matter to YMTM, shy to bold, turtles to dragons, weather to the stars above.

You may ask yourself how can the scientific process of air moving strongly across a surface turn into and manifest as a constellation of stars?

Well, it's actually pretty simple.

A constellation is really just stars being artists or designers. Creating a pretty picture in the sky for us to marvel at, feel connected and know that we aren't alone.

But the “winds to constellations” idea comes from the basis that the “winds of change” really was just about finding my best way to shine like only I can.

Finding the best partner (in a job, a place, a self-identity, a passion, a romance, a friend, etc.) to help me do this.

So, it took some “trial and error” but through it all, I fought on.

Because I had too. Simple as that.

Fought on to find just how I could really shine. Designing the life I wanted and it wasn't easy. A lot of hard nights, lonely nights and moments where I wanted to quit but I wouldn't trade this feeling now for all the riches of the world.

It was really just one giant “test run” like the preparation of Sports Touring itself.

A trip to Duluth to see Martie, Erik and Emerson with the Huskies then one to Rochester to see Sonya, Karthick, Lekha, Vinay and the Honkers.

Both involved small amounts of volunteering too as was the model of the touring.

So, as much as there is still more Northwoods League action coming later, there is more to talk about with these transformations.

Oh, and that evolution of “You Matter to YMTM,” and the word, “designers.” Those were an important clue for future stuff.

Please keep that in mind.

I can't hold all the cards.

:)

Onward, we go

#4: NYC

After one does many “life changing” events, it’s only fair that you can sometimes find yourselves becoming “too accustomed” to the status quo.

The one where “things work out for me.”

Making you possibly ungrateful and stuck in your path as you forge ahead without feeling that bad about it.

Your middle brother buys you hockey tickets while you are visiting Toronto, Canada (expensive ones too) and it’s hard for you to even appreciate it.

Everything is a competition and a comparison to everything else.

Well, regrets happen and we try to move on.

Trying to make it up to them and solve it all as we go along.

And as you are in “BALANCE,” it begins to kind of fall apart. Going through changes mentally and don’t even know how or why. You are fighting for what you want but feel like you are pushing people away, one by one.

Slowly isolating onto a “social (or lack thereof) island.”

How can I deal with this? What’s the solution? Can’t we both be happy somehow?

All the way, just keep stuffing your metaphorical and physical backpack even more and more full.

Then, it happens.

Boom.

The zipper on both of your bags completely shreds itself in a New York City hostel on Amsterdam Avenue. Forcing me to walk down the street with an open backpack, watching the eyes of every New Yorker, deservingly, staring at me why and commenting to me that it’s open.

Mentally, the “epic beginning of Sports Touring” was completely shattered.

My own ego, over scheduling and lack of focus saw to that.

Besides the \$202,000 raised for OttoTHON 4.0 and the subsequent Knicks basketball game to match. Still fitting the overall goal of matching a sports game with some philanthropic work. That part worked.

So, that's still great. :)

But none of that helped this current feeling. Only focusing on what was wrong.

Like how I felt about my self-centered Toronto mentality and oh, how I was running behind and I was trending to be late for my flight back to Minnesota too. If only I could have a photo or video now to see my face then. Saddddddddddd..... Jajaja.

But that's why a photo or video would be the perfect way to encapsulate that moment.

Temporary and stuck.

Almost like it was frozen solid.

But luckily for everyone involved, it was just that. A frozen moment until I bought a new backpack in Times Square and found my bus to the Newark Airport, all safe and sound.

Because, ultimately, moments come and go.

It still was a successful start because it taught me that VERY valuable lesson.

These were purely just moments in a life.

Nothing more and nothing less.

I was stronger than I realized and I could handle it. Just like the legendary song says, "there's nothing you can't do now you're in New York."

I got through them and brighter days were ahead.

Love you, Manhattan.

#5: Phoenix

The year was 2015.

It was an unusually hot spring semester for me.

Magic System and Chawki played in the air.

Shawarma smells filled the streets and Dominos was eaten in the Fes mall.

All these happened in my early 2015 while I was in Meknes, Morocco.

An experience that would teach me a far more valuable lesson than any school semester abroad I thought possible.

It taught me that people will say what they say and they will do what they do.

Simple as that.

It was in this adventure experience that I met a girl and I fell in "love." I thought I did at least.

I was confused and then convinced she was "the one." But I couldn't back down now, at least that's how I saw it. I was leaving for the EEUU again and I needed to make a big swing.

So, I proposed (for a total of 4 months of insanity before it all came crashing apart) and next thing I knew, I changed the dynamics of many connections I have/ had forever.

Why did I do it?

Because she basically paid moderate attention to me and I was desperate for it. I was lost in my own identity and I let myself be defined by it and subsequently, I let it be defined by the responses of everyone else to it as well.

The support, "the support" and the other.

Why did those dynamics change?

Because it caused a shift in me.

Even long after I ended the engagement and moved on.

One trending towards, “ummm... who do you think you are and how dare you speak to me this way?”

A new mentality of “this is who I love, deal with it.”

One I still hold onto today.

The real beginning of bold MC.

Conqueror MC.

In that way, it was worth every moment. It made me see that sometimes in key moments, we come to a “fork in the road” and we can either go left to everything we always knew or go right to what we feel now.

Or we can grab an axe, cut down some dead trees to create a bridge and go straight ahead.

This mentality shift is exactly what fueled something like the Good Sports idea. A new philanthropic ideal added to the Sports Touring roster. A new choice.

After watching a few College Football games with a friend in Phoenix and doing an algorithm of dollars to stats in the game to decide how much it will be, \$969 is the final number that will be donated in the future towards buying more sports equipment to underserved communities and teams.

Sharing the love of sports with all even more.

Left to DM or You Matter.

Right to Good Sports.

Straight ahead to the combination.

Because only left or right is both boring and inaccurate. I had more than one option then and I do now still. The important part is we keep our minds and hearts open to all the possibilities of the universe.

That’s where the beauty truly lies. The infinite possibilities of the future and love it may contain.

Because if I was unable to see that, I would have been sacked for sure like a left side defensive blitz. Unable to feel the successes of 2025's budding romances.

The truest formation of my constellations. I would be missing out on a brand new season to play the beautiful sport of love. Today and tomorrow.

So, just like a football game itself, we can throw it, pass it, kick it, wide out, curl or more. Following the playbook or calling an audible.

Just gotta keep getting those touchdowns.

#6: Calgary

Calgary.

Calgary, Alberta.

Calgary, Alberta, Canada.

Our future hometown of one, Baleigh Sofia Luisa. The Star Goddess herself.

Little did I know when I added this city to the Sports Touring roster, it would end up being such a foundational moment to so much of what I know now.

From seeing one of the largest homeless shelters in the world to exploring a mall, I saw it all. Spent some time on a metro and wandered across a bridge over a river too.

All in the effort to see a Flames ice hockey game and donate a gift card to the Calgary Humane Society. Home of Fred the Snake and plenty of other adorable animals waiting for brilliant and happy new homes.

Cough cough... I'm looking at you, Calgary ;)

Even a place where Monica agreed to move in with her love, CJ.

It's truly a place centered around home.

A home for Baleigh, a home for the homeless and a home for those adorable creatures too. All flames fanned on this tour stop.

But I want to keep this entry shorter on purpose.

To the point and concise for two reasons.

The first reason is to have it stand out and the second is that I want everyone to find their own reason to love Calgary.

I want you to all experience it for yourself and plus, I don't want to spoil all the Tim Horton's for myself. Enjoy my friends.

Calgary is a dream.

#7: Mankato

Remember when I said that Mavathon 4.0 topped them all?

Yeah... :)

The \$20,175 raised this year was not overshadowed by the "misadventures of the adventure."

It wasn't overshadowed by the lack of sports game associated because I had to cancel my trip to Denver, Colorado and the subsequent Nuggets experience due to money problems.

Money problems that really needed a solution of multiple sources of portfolio investments tied to a Carbon Neutrality then Negativity goal. Well... maybe that's just "time-traveling future MC's idea."

Who knows ;)

But either way, poor budgeting was beginning to catch up with me and affecting my day to day life but that didn't stop 4.0 from helping carve a memory in my mind.

From a speech given at the event about how Dance Marathon was impactful to me, a photo taken with Mizzou's hand signal and more.

A truly remarkable moment in my life that I will remember and cherish forever.

Even with the following awkward conversation with my parents where I had to explain why I had no money.

Trying to explain how Sports Touring probably wasn't a sustainable idea, especially coming into only working part time with plenty of debt in February of 2020.

Little did I know too, the pandemic was looming in the distance but in terms of the touring model, it was a serendipitously perfect time.

After the impending "hometown" Sotathon, of course.

A time to shut down the tours and force myself to stop the unsustainable and revalue/ rethink the goals.

Chase my own dreams, fully. Devote myself to my writing and other endeavors.

Not all of them survived the "chopping board" but some did. Like the style you are reading right now :) That and a strong desire to go to Bhutan. See and experience just how they achieved their legendary "Carbon Negativity Status."

So, a trip kind of like seeing the Denver Nuggets, yeah?

Well, maybe an upcoming SECRET PROJECT does find a way to connect them soon enough.

I guess we'll find out.

;)

But for now, love you Mankato!

#8: Minneapolis - Saint Paul

A LOT of people I know went to or were associated with a particular hometown university of mine. My beloved grandpa taught there. I was even born in their hospital.

But it wasn't where I wanted to go to school.

I was given the option after getting in there too but I decided to forge my own path northwest instead.

Yes, I am talking about THE University of Minnesota - Twin Cities.

So, when I was given the opportunity to attend a DM at SotaTHON, I knew I had to take it.

Not only for the kiddos there but for every member of my family who went there.

Honor their legacy and my own.

Even if I playfully pointed fun at it, I still love it and I always will.

Walking around the campus with a coffee to talk, studying at Coffman or classic ice hockey games, I knew that the \$21,376 of SotaTHON 4.0 would be a perfect addition to “the world I constructed.”

I went full circle for them all. All the fam.

Even with the impending changes of the pandemic ahead, sweeping its way across the EEUU.

A time when I really could have used my current meditation habits. Ones that help me solve the current unknown future of a blossoming love and job market.

The upward ascendancy of Castle Johnson Publishings too.

Good stresses but still stresses.

Meditation and outlets like certifications in various things like TEFL, Seismology and Color Theory.

I truly believe that through things like this, we can find the peace that could change our lives for the better.

Constellations that help us find our way.

Born from the winds of change.

A change much like my own mindset. Moving from “I want to be different so I won’t go to school here” to “this event will be the perfect way to honor those that I wanted to be different from.”

Then, you get a tattoo a year later to really honor them even more.

I should probably tell them about that... maybe tonight... jajaja.

Love you all & Go Gophs!

#9: Virtual

Oh, yeah, I did an online DM tour too.

It happened later in 2021 after the shutdown and it was a thing.

FTK still so it was worth it but it was definitely different.

I don't have much information stored now but it led to the total of all DMs being like 50 and the amount raised was around \$13 million USD (including the "in-spirit" events) but I don't have any information to back it up.

At least not easily accessible.

But regardless of this all, I decided to take it a different direction then.

Not specifically dancing or playing games. Just a particular few hours doing one particular thing.

Things like walking, movies, spending time with family, card games and more.

With retrospect and "futurespect" to what's coming soon, I should have taken time to learn how to draw dragons then too. Oh well, certificate courses exist for a reason.

:)

It was a total of 11(?) marathons and with this idea, I was even able to double them up to the same weekends/ days since it was all virtual anyways.

But this experience helped me see something throughout it. This exact idea could work.

I don't have to be limited to a physical location. Especially as I aged farther and farther away from the "typical university age."

I didn't have to limit myself like that any longer. I shouldn't limit myself like that any longer.

It was time to take my involvement in a new way. I could find other ways to support the cause and be "virtually in 6 DMs at once." For an example. Truly expanding the impact and formulating the most cost effective way possible too. I could take the same travel money and put it back to the cause itself.

A complete weather changer.

The winds were finally beginning to manifest now.

The patterns of stars were becoming more visible.

Although, some of them were still constellations I wouldn't be able to even recognize for another few years to come.

Ones that have always been there for me.

I just didn't know it yet.

#10: New Orleans

Looking at how everything has shaped up, it's a bit muddy now. I even needed a refresher and I was the one who lived it.

So, let's recap!

First, there was music. From 2011 to 2019ish. After, it was "abandoned" for other things.

During that time, in 2013, there was Miami and "the breathes."

2014 had things happen.

2015 brought Morocco and the "fork in the road," with You Matter's beginnings as well.

2016 and early 2017 was DM 1.0.

2017 and early 2018 was 2.0.

2018 and early 2019 was 3.0 and the Meg Mentality.

2019 and early 2020 was Sports Touring.

2020 was the lockdown and “the 2022 Era” came later in 2022. Obvio.

Chile was in 2024 and 2025.

Where we are now.

2026 will be... WAIT! No overt spoilers :)

Just know... a new Era is coming.

Other things can be placed along there like Deadpool & Wolverine in the end of 2024, for example. Those 14 odd years weren't a “small amount of time” though. Truly epic and along the way, there was 2016's Spring Break in New Orleans, Louisiana.

A moment which later inspired a current chest tattoo of mine and my favorite mantra, “Do it for New Orleans.”

It was there that I experienced an unparalleled joy.

Sure, it was amazing building houses for those who need them and taking a fan boat through the bayou. But that's not what I'm talking about.

It was a night on Bourbon Street on St. Patrick's Day.

I felt the rain on my face.

The music around me.

The swell of emotions and the realest peace I've ever felt until that point.

It was there that I knew what I wanted to do.

What?

It's simple.

Whatever I damn well please. :)

Even through the subsequent changes that came from 2016 to 2025, as highlighted above, it was then that I knew.

My life was mine and that was it.

If I couldn't find myself back to a place like that, I was living my best brand of life incorrectly. Able to change my mind and grow but still chase that feeling. Over and over again.

And although there were clouds above and the literal winds and rains on my face, I know the stars were still up above it all. Shining on me. Healing my soul from the pain of 2013 and 2015. Slowly but surely.

Guiding me home.

Formulating into a few constellations. Ones that would watch over me until I can meet and greet them all, soon enough.

Through a possible magic of the space-time continuum itself, it was actually a process that somehow was started even before DM Tour 1.0 began.

The winds had officially changed to constellations.

Before I even knew I needed them.

They were there.

