

**Reading Time: 9 minutes**

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Well, we're almost at the finish line of another year.

I won't lie, parts of this year have been a big steaming pile of shit. I've had to move twice this year, spent time in a mental health assessment hospital (With no actual outcome delivered), and come the 31st December, will no [longer be working my dream job](#) due to being 'medically' retired.

On the flip side, I've made new lifelong friends, become a godfather, and have made it to this point of the year without having a complete meltdown. I've been able to get back into my favourite team sport on the planet, witnessed some amazing moments in music / culture, and heck, we have a new Pope! I've also been able to start seeing myself for who I really am. Quite a bit fucked up, but someone who can relate to / be seen as relatable to others. When you're dealing with the deamons I do on a daily basis, sometimes feeling not alone, and being a friend to others is perhaps the most important thing.

With all that in mind, here are my moments of the year. In no specific order, chronologically, importance / otherwise.

## **Bohemian Rhapsody Covers x2**

Known as the gospel of the Rock Opera movement, I don't think anything can outdo Bohemian Rhapsody as a song, from Freddie's vocals, to the musical genius inside, to the fact that the tapes used for the middle section were almost transparent, such was the level of overdubs on them.

We were treated to two incredible covers in the space of a couple of weeks, both which really do the song, the meta-meaning, and the culture of the song justice. Freddie allegedly said on his death bed 'Do what you want with my music, just don't make it boring', and this is anything but boring. Our first piece came from a flashmob in France.

The second came weeks later at the Last Night of the Proms 2025; which in itself is a celebration of music. Getting a decent video of this is next to impossible, so it's better on a cellphone. Sorry.

## **Twenty One Pilots: City Walls**

I could put the entire album on this list, as it's a masterpiece. A perfect way of capping off a 5 year story talking about mental health, dealing with one's own demons, and fighting the good fight, even if you lose. The video to City Walls is just one of a kind, ranking as the joint 38th most expensive music video of all time, and the 2nd most expensive of this decade. Tyler Joseph calls it the logical conclusion to the end of the DEMA universe, and honestly, I can't wait to see what's next.

If this video doesn't win a bunch of awards in the next few months, then the music video is dead. Period.

### **America's Got Talent: Africa (Toto by chior).**

This has popped up on my FB Reels and YouTube Shorts too many times for me not to add this, because it reminds me just how powerful music can be when enjoyed as one. I missed the chance to go to Bristol a few years back for the 'Toto Africa' one song nightclub event, but did once do an April Fools of having it on repeat.

This entire clip is awesome. Getting a crowd of people who don't know each other to sing as a choir.

### **Indiana @ Penn State: 3rd Down, 41 Secs Remaining**

The Gus Johnson call heard around the world. Look I've bashed Gus Johnson a lot over the years, especially about his obsession with 'THE' Ohio State University, but this call was insane. You can tell he loves his job, and this should be in the top 3 SportsCenter plays of the year, because it was THAT good.

### **Hoosier Nation: Indiana Hoosier Fans FB**

I can't go much further without a shoutout to the Indiana Hoosier Fans Facebook Page.

I've been adopted as a Hoosier many times over; from my love of IndyCar, to calling a billion and 1 virtual Indy 500s, to my general love of the state and being able to visit some great places. I've got a 2012 Indiana Football jersey in my jersey box, so don't you dare call me a glory hunter!

This year has been one hell of a ride to be a Hoosier fan. It's been a ride as a fan of Indiana Sports Teams full stop. From losing Game 7 of the NBA Finals because of an injury to Tyrese Haliburton, to Notre Dame making the CFB National Championship game and coming up short, to being a non Ganassi fan in IndyCar. Then came Curt Cignetti's 2nd year of head coaching the Indiana Hoosiers. If you don't know who Cignetti is, I suggest you follow his advice and Google him. There were some close calls, but the long and short of it is, the Hoosiers will kick off 2026 playing as the #1 ranked team in the nation for the first time ever. At the Rose Bowl no less.

The Indiana Hoosier Fans have been incredible all year to me. Offering advice on how to get apparel to the UK, to spreading some Hoosier love and appreciation to both myself and a friend of mine who's currently ill. And of course, sharing that magical moment when...

## **Fernando Mendoza: / #Heismandoza**

The last time I cared about the Heisman this much, it was Joe Burrow winning it after his magical season at LSU. I thought to myself that his appreciation for the award, and those around him would never be matched in a Heisman speech again.

... God was I wrong when Fernando Mendoza stepped onto that stage and lifted that trophy. The speech, just magical. Remembering his team, and his family who have been through so much. I need to stop typing for a second, as to quote the late great Murray Walker, I've got a lump in my throat.

## **DAZN: College Football & NFL Coverage**

There is a direct link between my ability to watch CFB and NFL in the fall / winter and my mental health. It's not just Seasonal Affective Disorder, it's my general state of mind. Most people in the UK have some sport they follow, I just have the hard task of it being the ones no one seems to show.

I will never forgive Discovery for taking my Saturdays away from me, after promising 'nothing will change'. But this is the same company that managed to lose their tentpole sporting event in the US with the NBA on TNT. For the past few years, it's been ND Games on Sky Sports or highlights on YouTube. Then DAZN came along offering some SEC and Go6 games. Finally, progress. This was a deal with ESPN, meaning that the games would essentially be ESPN / ABC events, meaning no Big 10 conference games, which would be hard to explain to someone who sees those teams in the playoffs, but not the regular season.

Then DAZN went all in. B1G? Check. 3 games every Saturday. XII? Sure, just leave your defence at the door. ACC? Yup. SEC? Of Course. Bowl Games? EVERY. SINGLE. ONE. [I'm watching them all this year.](#) It's been a massive turn around, and for every boxing / Serie A commercial, I'm grateful that I get to see my favourite team sport on the planet. Remember. Sundays wouldn't be a thing if it wasn't for Saturdays.

## **Becoming a Godfather**

You make friends in the strangest of places. In this case, a recliner, in a cubicle, and in a freezing cold smoking area at QE Hospital in Birmingham. Whilst I won't reveal my friend's identity in public, she has been a cornerstone of getting me through this shitty year, including coming 'back home' with me to London on my Birthday, even when I was feeling like absolute crap. To say we've both had a pretty shitty year is an understatement, but to be honest, she's beaten me with an unexpected pregnancy from a guy who's not just an abuser, but leaves to a stupid little caravan in the middle of nowhere with a gallon of wine whenever anything happens that requires more than 17 brain cells to compute.

I was asked to be this child's Godfather, which of course I've accepted. Between me being on and off bedrest, they having to be careful because of a required / planned C-Section, and the practicalities of life, I've not been able to see them as much as I'd like to have these past couple of months. They both remain in my thoughts every day though, and just reminds me of just how incredible my friend is.

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Hopefully they have a better 2026 than 2025; and if I ever meet the 'sperm donor' (Because he has no right to be called a father), things may get a teeny bit ugly.

## **Friendships via Tattoos.**

I have a friend going through a bit of a shit time in life right now. This friend is also my new tattooist, who I found by picking up a flyer in my local. Tattoists are something of a 'thing' in the Black Country, ranging from insanely expensive, to a TEMU version of a Wish.com version of an Alibaba version of the tattoo that you asked for. This guy however's been class from my first communication with him, and always checks in post-tattoo to see how things are going with healing etc. I'm a bit of a pain of a client being diabetic alongside everything else, but there's always a level of understanding and honest kindness. He also makes a banging cup of tea.

It's ironic that he tattooed a phrase which I've carried with me this past year, which I actually have the opportunity to put into practice at this moment. Love him or hate him, Pat McAfee's phrase of 'Be a friend, tell a friend something nice, it might / may change their life' (I use the word may as it works better with my brain) means a lot to me, especially when it's another lad struggling with things inside their noggin. I always say that you should never rush / force a mental health conversation, but what people often need is someone to just treat them as the human that they are, not a label.

If you know someone alone, struggling, or in need of a chat, drop them a message, or give them a call. It may be that Christmas present that they need but dare not ask for.

## **Dudley Council?**

On one hand these should be on my 'most hated' list because of how I was offered no support from them until it was too late, and they tried putting me in an HMO when my house was sold. A HMO is perhaps the worst place for someone in my condition, but sorting out a breakdown of communication led to me spending some months in 'supported' accommodation which was anything but, and sorting me out with where I live now.

I now live in a nice, quiet area, close enough to get to places without too much difficulty, but far enough away that I don't need to deal with the hype of city living that I'd done for over a decade before moving to Dudley. I was lucky that I bid for properties over Easter when no one else was looking, and they were nice enough to allow for me to come out of hospital with a DKA episode to view and sign for the property.

Things aren't perfect; I have more work to do on the place next year, and there are outstanding repairs. There was also the issue of clogged drains causing water damage to my hallway, but that's fixed. But I have decent neighbours, a warm flat, and food in the freezer (I batch cook, so most of my food rests in there). So, honestly, I can't complain.

## **And Finally. You.**

If you've made it this far, you're likely someone who's followed my ups and downs this year, shown me some love and support, and made me smile, if only for a moment. It's all been appreciated and from the bottom of this emo filled heart, thank you!

I wish you all a great holiday season, and the chance to achieve your goals in 2026.

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**Peace, Rage And Love xx**