45th IN THE DRAFT, 1ST IN OUR HEARTS: A CASE STUDY OF PATRICE BERGERON-CLEARY, AN NHL FRANCHISE FACE

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By

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45\textsuperscript{TH} IN THE DRAFT, 1\textsuperscript{ST} IN OUR HEARTS: A CASE STUDY OF PATRICE BERGERON-CLEARY, AN NHL FRANCHISE FACE

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ABSTRACT

This senior thesis explores the meaning and use of the franchise face in the National Hockey League (NHL) by using the franchise face of the Boston Bruins: Patrice Bergeron-Cleary as a case study. Through close readings of \textit{Sports Illustrated}, \textit{SportsNet}, and the \textit{Boston Globe} articles between the years 2003-2020, as well as interviews, game footage, and \textit{NHL.com} articles, my thesis begins to understand and define the complex relationship between the franchise face, their fans, the team, and the League. The resulting project is a podcast discussing key points in Bergeron-Cleary’s career that speaks to his position as the face of the Boston Bruins and his redefinition of traditional North American hockey masculinity. By taking rather than dishing out violence and supporting social justice causes, Bergeron-Cleary sheds many of the traditionally exclusionary aspects of the sport. The podcast is supplemented by an annotated transcript that adds academic and primary sources to a spoken conversation between two Massachusetts-based hockey fans.
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EPISODE ONE: NATIONALISM, THE MILITARY, AND BROTHERHOOD

Aiyana: Okay. So basically when it comes to like masculinity it's intersection with like nationalism, the military, brotherhood, one of the things that like, I feel like I've not discovered, but like one of the major academic pieces of this is the idea that it's like a sport as a function of nationalism, because it roots the sport mythically in a certain type of like person who's ideal to play the sport.¹

So basically like when it comes to hockey, specifically, the person who like is the mythical or like the person that you're supposed to think of. When you think of hockey players is like a working class, rural Canadian guy who like skates outside in a frozen pond. Like that sort of guy, you can see the image in your head. Was that Youngblood? Youngblood?

Have you ever watched Youngblood? Oh no, no. It's um, what's his name? Have you seen. I can't believe that it's just giving me fucking five seconds of summer.

Jake: No. Oh, is this a hockey movie? Yeah this guy.

Aiyana: Rob Lowe. Yeah. I forgot his name and Patrick Swayze. It's a great movie. I did a whole paper on that actually a couple of years ago.

It's fine. It's good. It's pretty good. But anyways, that's like the kind of guy that they're, they're kind of Canada, the powers that be in Canada. I don't know who that is. The media makers,

¹ Kristi A. Allain. “‘The Way We Play’: An Examination of Men’s Elite-Level Hockey, Masculinity and Canadian National Identity.” Ph.D., Trent University (Canada), 10-15.
whoever kind of push that. Someone important in Canada has labeled hockey as Canada's national sport. It's like the id of Canada.

It's the common factor between all Canadians is like: we can all play pond hockey together, but like, it just centralizes in its own. Like, I don't know, um, execution, it just centralizes like this white male specific kind of guy. Um, Specifically, I don't know how to get to this part. So basically it dictates who can and can't play.

I feel like I've already told you this before. So like, there's that thing about how black people supposedly have weak ankles and like that makes me, I don't understand it and how, like, they're not used to the cold, so they can't play hockey. Just like, okay, I don't know about that.

 Jake: If you're from Canada you gotta be used to the cold I feel like.

 Aiyana: Black people exist in Canada. Exactly. And then there's also this really long running perception that female reproductive systems get destroyed by playing hockey.

 Jake: That's a good one too. That's that's pretty out there.

 Aiyana: They're like, it's just too hard on women's uteruses and it makes them infertile, which is obviously not true.

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Um, but basically. There's a lot of different places where you can find it. If you look at the previous CHL-- not the Canadian Hockey League-- the Colored Hockey League, which was founded in like 1895 in part of Canada. It was really popular for a couple of decades and then kind of like petered out during the World Wars.

The reason why it ended up like kind of getting crushed and not being like black hockey players or just like a sport you can go watch was because the business people who owned the rinks were like: we're going to segregate you and not let you play on our rinks anymore.

That became a huge thing. So that's why a lot of like, people don't play or a lot of people like stopped being able to play hockey, like people of color specifically in Canada before we integrated the NHL and like kind of sport in general. One of the scholars that I was researching went into this whole thing about ice rinks and like ice time and how they split it up. And it's basically the exact same thing as before when it was like, we're kind of segregating who plays and when.4

Jake: Yeah.

Aiyana: So, yeah. So basically when you look at like Canadian ice rinks and the ice time that they give players, um, or like different like organizations and teams, usually it's like, like junior level ice hockey, like boys juniors who will get like the prime spots. So then it leaves like women's leagues generally to play at like 10:00 PM, 11:00 PM, midnight.

I almost joined the women's hockey team at Georgetown. And I didn't because the ice time, the only ice time that they were able to get was like, until like midnight,

**Jake:** Where's the closest rink?

**Aiyana:** And it was super far away. That was the other thing. Cause they couldn't find any rinks that were close by that would give them ice time.

And the closest one that would was like, I think it was like 10:30 to like 12:30 on like Wednesdays. Yeah. And I was like, ah, I can't do that. So that's a major thing. And then there's also like this idea of... you know, like pickup hockey?

**Jake:** Yeah, or like open skate and stuff like that?

**Aiyana:** Yeah, stuff like that. She basically found that like all the open ice time was also just dominated by men. And every time like teenage girls would go out to play, they would report that the guys they were playing with would be really aggressive. And they were like, okay, I don't really want to play right now. So it's like, there's just a lot of weird things that are kind of baked into the system of like, who gets centralized as hockey players.⁵

And then there's been a couple of instances where like the Canadians men team has won and they get this huge, like they're like, oh, parades, front page of the newspaper. And the women's team will also win the same year, the same tournament. And they’ll be like, page six, sorry--

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Jake: A paragraph.

Aiyana: Just a paragraph, which is kind of depressing.

If you think that the national sport of Canada is hockey, would you not want everyone to play?

Jake: Yeah, no. Especially like when you're talking to like open skate and stuff, like none of those guys are going pro people are like, and yeah, it's like still so important to them that they're hockey players.

Um, like you get it in every sport, I guess just like washed up old heads. And so like, they have to go be assholes to everyone else to like, prove that they're the right people. Like they're the hockey players, even though it's like, you're not like you're 40, you got a bum knee.

Aiyana: You have to grapple with your own stuff.

Jake: Yeah. You kind of gotta look in the mirror instead of just being an asshole to other people.

Aiyana: Um, so then when it comes to like, again, franchise face as a whole, the idea of popular masculinity is a function of nationalism as well for kind of similar reasons, because it just kind of pushes like one specific type of person. Who's like, this is our ideal man. And if you aren't like this something's wrong. So then it's kind of just the same way when it's like, you have an ideal, um, athlete when you go to like sport to sport. So it kind of pushes that same thing. Cause this is the people like, these are the people that you're supposed to be like looking up to and they just supposed to be the heroes. And they're the ones who are modeling, like what you're supposed to do. And it just kind of all wrapped up in a lot of stuff.
Jake: Yeah. And you think Bergeron's like this guy, he's the ideal guy or he's more like Gretzky?

Aiyana: I feel like there's a lot of ways that he's the ideal, rooted mythically, type of player.

I don't know if he's necessarily like a rural player, but he's from like outside Quebec and I don't know anything about, I don't know. I don't know enough about Canada to say, I don't know. I don't know. It sounded like a small place. Um, but like he's maybe got that kind of rural thing going on.

He's definitely obviously got like white male and also like the fact that he is Canadian and kind of like working class also. Um, but I feel like the thing that he most diverges in is that he's Quebecois and he's not an English-speaking Canadian. Like if you look at, I was reading so much about how Don Cherry like hates French speakers and they like put on this, this like, I don't know, they put on like a national tournament of some kind, but it was like French speaking.6

Like they announced it in French and stuff. And Don Cherry got so mad. He was like, we are being discriminated against because they are French is the main language that this is being, this is being like pushed in. And it was like, I feel like there's probably subtitles

Jake: You could also follow the game. It's a game, it's largely visual.

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6 Christine Dallaire and Claude Denis. “If You Don’t Speak French, You’re Out”: Don Cherry, the Alberta Francophone Games, and the Discursive Construction of Canada’s Francophones.” In Canadian Journal of Sociology 25, no. 4 (Fall 2000), 417.
Aiyana: Yeah. Also you live in Canada. A lot of people speak French. I think it's okay. So there's that also, this idea that like all the things that European players get kind of like, um, assigned to them, like how they're like supposed to be like selfish and like flashy and that sort of thing.

Like all of those things also get assigned to like Canadian players who are from Quebec. So it's kind of interesting that he has technically. Um, more conservative view. Like you would be like, no, he's not quite what we're looking for, but like, obviously we're in Massachusetts. I don't think people care that much.

Jake: Yeah. As long as you're Canadian, no one cares if it's--

Aiyana: Canada's Canada,

Jake: French or English speaking. Yeah. Once you get north of the border just...

Aiyana: It kind of means the same thing,

Jake: It's just like which hockey team do you root for. Better not be the Habs.

Aiyana: And he didn't! He was a Nordiques fan. Hell yeah.

The season that the Bruins won the Stanley Cup, which was 2010-2011, they started a playoff tradition where the player of the game would wear something special for the post-game interviews and press. So that year they'd found like an old school, like Bruins windbreaker,
starter jacket type of thing on eBay and they wore that. The next season it was a chain; like a really obnoxious looking like thick chain with a lock with the Bruins logo on it.  

**Jake:** That's kind of sick.

**Aiyana:** The first one, Andrew Ference found on eBay and bought. The second one, Andrew Ference designed himself.

**Jake:** Of course.

**Aiyana:** He really seems like he was into arts and crafts. And I kind of, I kind of respect that about him.

**Jake:** He had to make it in a cool hockey way.

**Aiyana:** He had to make it in a kind of manly way. He was like, look at this chain.

**Jake:** He couldn't be like: I've been making necklaces at my house.

**Aiyana:** I made necklaces for us!

**Jake:** I made a victory chain.

Aiyana: A victory chain, a little friendship chain, a good job chain. Then next is the Army Ranger jacket was the 2012-2013 season that we lost the Stanley Cup but went to the finals.

So he had become friends. This is Andrew Ference. He became friends with this guy whose name is Staff Sergeant Lucas Carr and a bunch of other army Rangers in 2007 in the kind of general way that like sports athletes just become friends with people in the military. I don't know. Um, and he had been wearing an Army Rangers shirt during the 2011 Cup Run.\(^8\)

And then he was like, keeping in touch with him in Afghanistan. They sent him photos of them with a Bruin's flag in Afghanistan. They also got one--maybe the same people, but also maybe different people--in Iraq. Just so wild to me, just waving a Bruin's flag, just planted their flag in there. Um, and then they would like, call him and be like, yeah, while we were in battle today we were just thinking about watching the game later. What are your thoughts on that? I have to stop because this is so flabbergasting.

Jake: I mean, like if I'm overseas, I'm thinking like, I still want to follow the Bruins.

Aiyana: Not that! I just think that like, conceptually, it's so wild to me that they're like battle at 12:30, Bruins game at 7.

Jake: I think it's like when you were like putting your body out there, like that, it's a good way to just like convince yourself to get the adrenaline going and convince yourself that what you're doing is important. And then also like lock in, like lock it with the other guys. If you're going to war with the guys, quote unquote, it's a lot easier to lock in and like be more selfless I feel like

\(^8\) Stephanie Vail. “The Honor of the Army Ranger Jacket.” *Stanley Cup of Chowder.*
then if you're just like, oh, you know, we're going to go play a game, win, lose, or draw. Let's have fun and show good sportsmanship. I also just think the Army Jacket sounds like probably pretty cool. Like if you're the guy who wins it, you get to put it on. It's pretty cool. Yeah. Let's take a look.

Yeah, like that's pretty sick. Face cut up.

Aiyana: It's custom made.

Jake: The custom jacket.

Aiyana: What is the vibe you think? What's the vibe that you get from that?

Jake: From that picture? I thought the picture's pretty hard.

Aiyana: Just like the concept of like, I guess here, I'll show you, this is kind of getting into what I wanted to talk about, which is like

Jake: Faces of battle.

Aiyana: The way that Sports Illustrated refers to this as "Faces of Battle."⁹

Jake: That picture's pretty sweet too.

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⁹ S. I. Staff. “NHL’s Faces of Battle.” *Sports Illustrated*. 
**Aiyana:** It's also, yeah, this is what I use actually for my presentation. Um, and it's literally just a whole bunch of hockey players and a bunch of horrible injuries. Um, thoughts on that? Just this concept of the two of them together. Cause I feel like for reference everyone: Jake plays rugby. So I feel like a lot of these things are very similar. And you have like a different insight than I have as an outsider. Just being like, this is so wild to me,

**Jake:** Definitely similar in that we can't get any good fields or any good playing time. No, one's looking out for us in the, in the, uh, higher ups at the school, but, uh, it's no, I mean, it's analogous in like the ways, like they're all going out there together, it's physical, you're putting on the line. I, I, in terms of like the consequences, like, no, I guess it doesn't hold the same way.

**Aiyana:** People die in hockey games all the time.

**Jake:** People do die in hockey games.

**Aiyana:** There's a really interesting Wikipedia page called NHL players or hockey players who died during games. I have gone through that list.

**Jake:** Have you watched them?

**Aiyana:** No.

**Jake:** Yeah, I've watched the one where the guy gets his throat cut up and he lived . Um, yeah, no, the battle thing I kind of get, I guess maybe it's just a. Uh, it's it's, it's not easy to do. I mean, they're getting paid millions of dollars, so maybe it is easy, but still like you have to go out there
like risk, potentially dying, potentially getting your throat cut open, like by, by a wayward skate
or I don't know, getting hit into the boards so hard that you're leaving in a stretcher.

It's not easy to like, just be like op, I'm going to go do that. You've gotta big brain yourself into,
into being like, we're, we're just like these guys, we even have the jacket and then going out there
and playing. I don't know. Maybe it's a bit dramatic as a concept.

Aiyana: I don't know. I think, I just think it's really interesting.

And I didn't, I didn't like go into it enough into like, I don't, I feel like the idea of sports at
nationalism are like, and like militarism are all just super closely linked because of that like
national aspect in the middle. So it's just so weird when it's like, oh yeah, it's right there.

Like you're saying like all the different words that you use, like you lead your men into battle
you've got battle scars, like all that other stuff where it's just like,

Jake: Faces of battle.

Aiyana: It's like, yeah, I understand. But it's so crazy that this is just a game people play, you
know what I mean? Sometimes I just sit down and I'm like, wow, this is just a game.

Jake: Yeah.

Aiyana: But anyways, so Andrew Ference became friends with them. He gets invited to Fort
Benning, Georgia the summer that they won the Stanley Cup. I'm pretty sure he brought the Cup
to them. They have a framed photo of the Bruins winning the Cup in the Army Rangers Hall of Fame.

**Jake:** That’s pretty cool.

**Aiyana:** And then the Bruins have Lucas Carr's running singlet in their locker room or at least they did throughout like the 2012-2013 season. He crossed the finish line of the Boston Marathon in a Bruins running singlet, like a few minutes before the first bomb went off.

**Jake:** Oh no way.

**Aiyana:** So then he was like, holy shit I actually know what to do. And I also know that we just got bombed in, like, there's probably going to be another one. So we like turned around and was immediately like administering first aid and all this other stuff. Which is also so wild to me. but anyways, so he goes to Fort Benning, Georgia. He does a tour. He goes to a graduation. He goes to sniper school. As you do, when you just get invited to uh...

**Jake:** When you win the Stanley Cup,

**Aiyana:** When you win the Stanley Cup

**Jake:** You can kind of do whatever you want.

**Aiyana:** You do a bunch of weird stuff. I also had this photo. Um,

**Jake:** That's hilarious.
Aiyana: It's so bad because it's at the Boston Bombing. It's at the spot— but describe what you see. Describe to the audience.

Jake: So we got, uh, Andrew Ference, he's got the arm sleeve tat and he's wearing like a tight white v-neck and some jeans and a boot. He's in a boot. Um, and then behind them is downtown Boston with a bunch of people hanging out and not really paying attention. And he's just standing in front of the sign that just says Army Ranger, just says Ranger and next to it's a Bruin's flag and he's mean mugging.

And it's kind of just a hilarious picture, but what does it say? Airborne and Ranger Training Brigade.

Aiyana: Oh yeah. That's who posted it.

Jake: Oh, this was the day of the Boston Bomb-- or like,

Aiyana: This was like after, right afterwards. This is like at the, this is like at the finish line. You know, when tragedies happen, people like stuffed animals and like they put stuff, this is what Andrew Ference contributed.

He brought, I'm not sure if he brought the jersey, I'm assuming he did because it's got a bunch of signatures on it. And then I also, obviously he brought the flag.

Jake: That's an interesting choice to bring to a memorial.

Aiyana: Yeah.
**Jake:** Um, I think the thoughts there.

**Aiyana:** Yeah. It's just really weird. But also there's this, this quote that is one of the comments where it just says: Army Rangers, take care of business, just like the Boston Bruins dot, dot dot.

**Jake:** 781, 617 baby. We doing this. That's pretty funny too. Oh, boo.

**Aiyana:** Yo, this is messed up. There was a tragedy.

**Jake:** This guy comments "Go Hawks!" on the Boston Bombing posts. Pretty messed up.

**Aiyana:** That's so sports fan actually

**Jake:** Yeah, that is like pretty intense. This guy, Army Rangers and Bruins, same thing from Billy.

**Aiyana:** Thanks, Billy. So that's what I was thinking is like that it's so interesting. I don't know how purposeful it was for them to link themselves, but they did and now it's like linked in the minds of fans and that's kind of what's happened.

It's a team sport. Team bonding and cohesion are important to a team success. So you need to cultivate a close locker room. I really didn't talk about Patrice Bergeron that much this episode. That's okay. We'll get to him. We'll get to him in the next one. Um, so basically I was reading this study of like the effects of team diversity in the NHL with like a three-year period. They found that one: teams that are characterized by like a greater importance on teamwork are more
successful than those who are more characterized by individualistic play, but they also found that players are more likely to assist players of their own ethnic backgrounds.\textsuperscript{10}

But specifically French Canadians are more likely to pass to other French Canadians and Europeans are more likely to pass to other Europeans.

\textbf{Jake:} Interesting.

\textbf{Aiyana:} And like, they kind of were like, this could be because of the language barrier and it's like just a source of comfort. But also my other assumption is like, because of the language barrier, you're more likely to be on a line with someone or like out on the ice with someone.

That's my assumption anyways. Like I feel like, yeah. So I'm like, I feel like that's probably why it happens

\textbf{Jake:} Also like if you build a rapport with guys that like you came up with, you guys have been playing the same style of hockey for longer maybe too. Like, cause it is different, like a little bit.

\textbf{Aiyana:} Yeah. Yeah. Their recommendations at the end were just saying that like creating common team identity and like team goals is a way to integrate all of your players while also showing the rookies or younger players, um, that they should be learning from like the older, more experienced players on the team.

\textsuperscript{10} David Scott Waltemyer. “The Effects of Team Diversity on a Team Process and Team Performance in the National Hockey League.” 78.
So it's kind of like, if we're all here and we can create this singular identity-- potentially over some of the Army Rangers stuff and like some of that. Army Rangers lead the way that's what their, their motto is.

**Jake:** Gotcha.

**Aiyana:** So I feel like the Bruins saw that. And part of the reason why they like got close with the Army Rangers were because they were like, we kind of want to take that motto. And then I was also, I listened to a interview with Patrice Bergeron. I don't remember when it was from, but basically he was saying how, whenever they get a new player, like he sits down with them or someone sits down with them and they're like, this is how it goes here. This is like the general rules and regulations, if you will, this is how people generally like do stuff you're either in or you're out.

And they're generally pretty in.

**Jake:** Yeah. It's kind of tough if you're like, not for me. You just got traded or something also like, I mean, that's like, he's been on the team for like what, 20 seasons? Almost 20 seasons?

**Aiyana:** It's been 18 years.

**Jake:** Like, it's up to you. Like once you're the guy who's been there, like it's up to you to keep that stuff going, or else it dies out.

So like the fact that he takes it that seriously, is like pretty awesome.
Aiyana: There was a Torey Krug interview. After he, or it was right before he got traded and like, didn't get a, uh, another offer from the Bruins. He was saying, he kind of like referenced that thing.\footnote{NESN. “Torey Krug Full Comments On Free Agency, “This Is My Time.”” YouTube video, 6:19. September 3, 2020. https://youtu.be/1JHATsBWWUM.}

And he was like, I completely bought into this culture. I'm fully here. I've done everything that is asked of you as a Boston Bruin. So like, to not receive kind of that, I don't know for, for the Bruins, like organization to not hold up their end of the deal, quote, unquote, he was very like

Jake: Bummed out.

Aiyana: Yeah. He was clearly very bothered by it. And I think that that's also really interesting is this, like,

Jake: They should have paid that guy.

Aiyana: Uh, honestly, I'm not that mad about it,

Jake: But also like, I can see how like Bergeron's not the guy like, uh, making those decisions. That's like kinda tough because like every sport is like that where it's like also a business.

So you have these higher ups in suits. Who are deciding your fate. And meanwhile, it's like, you want to be in the team, you have to do this, this, this, and this, coming from a player can be
completely independently. So yeah, it's gotta be a bummer if you do everything expected of you. And they're still like, eh, we're gonna go with the cheaper option here. Thanks though.

**Aiyana:** We don't want you. So, yeah, that was just, that was kind of my first set of things I thought were interesting.

**Jake:** Nationalism's like specifically weird in hockey too. Cause like, so many of the teams are in Canada and the fans. Like really no other sport's like actively marketing to multiple countries. I mean maybe basketball with China, but yeah.

**Aiyana:** And Canada.

**Jake:** Yeah. Oh and Toronto.

**Aiyana:** Yeah. Yeah. I guess it's just Toronto isn't it.

**Jake:** But like hockey like is so Canadian and it's like also American in its own way. I guess. So like you have like the different types of nationalism all butting heads.

**Aiyana:** And it's interesting cause it's like the NHL is a Canadian-American or North American league, but like it is headquartered in the U.S.

**Jake:** And called the National Hockey League.

**Aiyana:** So that's a yikes, I feel like technically when they called it, the National Hockey League. It was still, probably just Canadian at that point. It was just the Bruins.
**Jake:** Yeah, pretty much.

**Aiyana:** Anyways so, yeah. So that's kind of what I've been thinking about, at least in terms of that.

**EPISODE TWO: INJURY, VIOLENCE, AND THE BODY**

**Aiyana:** So we're back. Today, I want to talk about injury, violence, and the body

**Jake:** We're back with another episode. Thank you to all our loyal fans and sponsors.

**Aiyana:** I feel like you can't talk about Patrice Bergeron without discussing his injury history and you can't really, I feel like talk about hockey at all without talking about violence and that it's kind of a pretty intrinsic part of the sport. People argue about it. I argue about it. I don't necessarily like it, but it's kind of true.

**Jake:** Yeah. It's a very, just like fast, violent sport. Like people are getting hit all the time. The hits are like definitely hurting both guys too all the time. And it's just expected, like there's no other sport like that in football, you get hit in the plans, you know?

I mean, like maybe rugby, I guess, but like in hockey you're getting hit and you're just getting back up and finishing your shift. Um, and if you're mad at the guy, you can just stop the game to fight him, so.

**Aiyana:** What a beautiful sport.

**Jake:** Truly
Aiyana: So I wanted to first touch on fucking Randy Jones. Randy Jones.

Jake: Randy!


Jake: Yeah. Randy got a little overzealous.

Aiyana: I have two videos for you.

Randy Jones hit on Patrice Bergeron

Jake: Yeah. I mean, it's pretty tough, pretty tough to watch like blatantly illegal hit.

Aiyana: So that was the NESN response. And then this one is way longer, but I'm not going to show the whole thing because it's literally 12 and a half minutes. This one is the Philadelphia broadcast.

Patrice Bergeron gets taken out by Randy Jones

Jake: A little different attitude. The guy just admits he can't see it too.

Aiyana: Yeah. And they just start to basically blame Patrice Bergeron for being in the corner, rather than Randy Jones for being the one who did something that he probably should not have.

And then they also start talking about it as like injury's just a part of the game. And it's part of this game because it's like such a fast-moving game and you can't help it, which is like to some
extent maybe, but also this was not a situation where I feel like you could not have helped it, uh, personally.

And also I don't even play hockey and I know you're not supposed to slam someone into the boards if they're in the corner, like that.

**Jake:** Yeah, I there are a lot of bang bang plays. Like it's a fast sport, but like that, that hit is like pretty illegal. I mean, pretty much like two hands on the head on the back of the head, like boarding, um, and the guy like goes down, can't even move.

So it's like kind of heinous to just be like, I don't know, it looked clean. It wasn't clean. There's a difference between a fast play where like a freak accident happens and like doing something illegal and being like, why is he hurt? I'm so surprised.

**Aiyana:** The Flyers are back to being like goons because the same month, like three different Flyers players, including Randy Jones, had like semi seriously injured other players during games. And everyone was like, um, maybe we shouldn't let this keep happening. And then there was kind of this conversation about like, should we care about concussions now? They decided no

**Jake:** Moving towards no on that one.

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Aiyana: They said, no, not really, but you know. So this concussion, he gets hit from behind. This is like game 10 of the season and he ends up not playing again until the next year. So he has a season ending concussion.

Jake: He couldn't play until like the following October.

Aiyana: Yeah. And then he basically had like an entire year off. He said like at first, like he couldn't walk. He couldn't really see, it took years for him to like, feel like he was back to a hundred percent. And also at this point he was like, in his early twenties, I think he was like 22, maybe, maybe 23. Um, but he had like, just kind of started to go on like a scoring high. It seemed as though his ceiling was going to be a lot higher than it kind of ended up being after that concussion. Like if you look at the 2006-2007 season, and even the season before 2005-2006, he had 73 points and then it was 70 points. And then he comes back, it's 39 points, 52 points, 57 points.

He doesn't hit another 70-point season until 2018-2019. So like, clearly it feels as though something happened that he never really was able to recover from. And I feel like that's kind of, one of the sad parts about sports and concussions is like, sometimes people get a concussion and they're just like never the same again.

And it's like, clearly he's still really talented, but you have no idea where he could have been if he had never gotten this concussion.

Jake: A lot of what ifs.
Aiyana: A lot of what ifs.

Jake: He's had a decent career I'd say after that.

Aiyana: I think he's had a really solid career in the aftermath. Like I think he's fine. There's no real complaints, but I just think it would've been really interesting to see like what it would have been like in an alternate universe.

Jake: Seventy points every year for 15 years. It'd be, yeah, it'd be pretty good.

Like what happened to Bergeron? Like that happens, like when, when you're hitting a guy from behind, it's like, oh, he's dangerous. Uh, and there's not really like a lot of sports where you're like in that scenario, where you can sandwich a guy from behind.

Aiyana: In the Flyers broadcast they also talk about like the corners and how the corners of the rink have become less dangerous over time. But like there's still obviously danger that's associated with mucking pucks off corners, which is kind of why it's like a dirty job that gets kind of more relegated to defenseman.

One of Patrice Bergeron's pros is the idea of like thankless tasks. Like he's the type of guy who just is always in the corner and is always doing these sorts of things that like a good player doesn't necessarily do, but like actually like a great player, you know what I mean?

Jake: The thankless tasks and they, they lead by serving, you know.
Aiyana: We kind of talked about it a little bit in the last episode, but kind of this idea of you can't be scared to be playing a sport that is a physical sport if you want to be good at it. And like, you can't really be like, thinking about being injured, like you should be thinking about making sure you're not injuring people. I would hope. And like, obviously, like you're expected to like, take some responsibility over your own, like personal safety or whatever when you're playing a game.

But like, for the most part, I feel like it's about just psyching yourself up to do it. I was listening to a, I think it was called wet jeans, some podcast, and they had Charlie McAvoy on, um, and I was listening to it for an unrelated reason. And he just randomly was talking about how he blocked a shot and it hit his foot and it like made a giant gash in his foot.

And he didn't know at the time, like he was like, he saw the shot and he's like, well, I have to block it, got in front of it, blocked the shot. The goal obviously didn't get scored. And then he like continued playing and he was like, my foot hurts. And then he went off the ice and like after the game and they like took his sock off and his whole foot was just destroyed. And then it, like he was out for, I think like he was out for kind of a while with this like foot injury. And he was saying how, like, even now, because the podcast hosts were like, do you flinch whenever, like you book a shot. And he was like, I do now. But like, until I got that really bad injury, like I never even considered it, how it, like, it could injure me until it did.
And he's like, and even now, like, I'm still like, I'm going to flinch, but I'm still going to get in front of it because if I can stop a goal from being scored and a pretty notoriously, like low scoring game, I'm gonna.¹³

**Jake:** Especially in a big spot, but yeah, you got to also in a sport like this, any context sport, like you have to be going a hundred percent. Like if you're, if you're thinking about getting hurt and you kind of hold back little, like you're going to put yourself in a position to get hurt. So it's like, it's not necessarily an intuitive thing, but like you, you kinda just gotta like go put it all out there because if you don't and you're thinking first about not getting hurt and then about everything else, then you're gonna like, not give it your all and not be moving fast enough, like get caught up in some weird scenario that you shouldn't be in.

**Aiyana:** Yeah.

**Jake:** End up hurt. I mean, that being said, it's okay to make some business decisions out there, especially in like, it's one thing if you're professional, I guess. So it's actually probably even more important to make the business decisions when the money's on the line.

**Aiyana:** You really think of it. If you're thinking about yourself, you're being a selfish player.

Um, yeah. And then there's also a really good shot of Chara you know, in 2011 Stanley Cup Finals, there's. Where he'd like, just is the goalie for a minute and blocks a shot. Yeah. And

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you're just like, I know that hurts so bad, but if you're a defensive player, like you have to do anything, you have to be willing to do anything, to stop a goal.

And I think it's interesting because Bergeron like love-- I don't know if I would say loves, cause I don't know if anyone loves it, but he's blocked a lot of shots with his body and it's like, this isn't necessarily even your job.

**Jake:** Yeah. He could definitely like be making the business decisions and no one, nobody would like get mad at him.

**Aiyana:** Not at all.

Cause he's also one of the older guys on the team. Like no one would be upset if he was like, eh, maybe not. Maybe I'm not going to jump in the way of this.

**Jake:** Put my face on a puck right now.

**Aiyana:** But he does! And that's like just another thing I think about him is that like, we just really love that, that he does that for us.

**Jake:** Yeah. Not everyone does that. That's the type of leader he is.

**Aiyana:** Lead by example

**Jake:** Exactly.
Aiyana: Going back to Faces of Battle and the 2013 Stanley Cup Playoffs, um, when he played in that final series, specifically the last game, like game seven, where we lost, but like just generally that series, he played like the most injured that any player and like more or less recorded sports history that we know of like modern north American sport, you know, it's kind of complicated, but he's one of the most injured players to play in a playoff game, in any sport, because he had like a broken nose, he cracked his ribs, he punctured his lung. He separated his shoulder. He tore the cartilage also in his rib. I don't even know what that means to be honest.

Jake: I didn't know your rib had cartilage

Aiyana: He got super injured. And then everyone was like, I don't think he's going to play in the next game. And it was a toss up if he was gonna play or not. And then he met with like the team doctors and whoever else and they were like, if you want to play, we can give you a bunch of cortisone shots. So he was like getting them during the game.

Jake: Those like only work for like a little bit.

Aiyana: Exactly. So he was, he was like, off the ice, would go back and come back and he was literally playing the game and he recorded like 17 minutes on ice in that final game. 

Jake: Pretty gritty, pretty gritty.

Aiyana: Yes. So one of the things that, like, I kind of discovered through this that I never really thought about until I guess it was framed in this way is I was thinking about how, like, I felt like he was really kind of like staying within this kind of, I don't know how hockey players is
supposed to be tough like he was kind of following it to a T, but he redefines toughness because
he just takes physical punishment rather than doling it out. And like that is in an and of itself, a
redefinition of the way that hockey players are expected to play. A lot of times when I've looked
at-- this comes back up later-- but a lot of the times when I've looked up his nominations for the
Selke and that sort of thing, one of the main differences that people will pull out between like
Bergeron and other people that is like kind of a knock on him is that he doesn't have as many like
penalty minutes and he doesn't have as many hits.

**Jake:** Yeah.

**Aiyana:** Which is interesting because in like every single metric that defines a defensive
forward, he's leaps and bounds ahead of literally everyone. But this matters so much to people
that he doesn't hit as much

**Jake:** Old school hockey.

**Aiyana:** And he doesn't get into fights.

**Jake:** Yeah. But, uh, yeah, you do have hockey people with their weird complexes about how
the game needs to be played and respecting the cardinal rules and all that stuff.

But it also just is like, if you're that disciplined that you can basically still be a physical player
and not have to like spend any minutes in the bin. Like that's like as unselfish, as it is, like, you're
not wasting your team's time. Like making them play shorthanded without a leader. And then
also just like, it makes the other teams so mad.
I'm sure the fact that like, you can just like get hit over and over and over again and just basically be like, yup, I'm going to, I'm going to go. And then I'm going to score shorthanded and then you're going to hit me again and get another penalty and I'm going to do it again. And just keep playing the game the right way.

Like keep going back out there with a straight face. It's pretty frustrating if you're on the other side of that. And then you're like resorting to being like physical or dirty and you still can't get a guy rattled. So yeah, he's a beast.

**Aiyana:** He has a very scant fighting history. He had two fights in the QMJHL which is the Quebec Major Junior hockey.

**Jake:** Is there any footage of those?

**Aiyana:** Oh, I really wish there was, there were none, there were no videos and I was so sad. Because it's just a blank.

**Jake:** Those games probably weren't even televised.

**Aiyana:** Absolutely, probably not even recorded he had one fight in the AHL and then he's had four in the NHL. Arguably he has lost three of those four fights. Which is so funny to me.

**Jake:** He's arguably lost three as in he's maybe lost four?

**Aiyana:** Yeah...
**Jake:** Gotcha.

**Aiyana:** We can watch it.

**Jake:** Yeah let's see.

**Aiyana:** So this is the first fight he ever got in. It's against Josh Gorges during the Stanley Cup Playoffs. Um, it was what, 2009 maybe? So this is like kind of deeper into his hockey playing career, his professional career than you'd expect.

**Jake:** Of course it's the Canadiens.

**Aiyana:** Of course. So this is after he had gotten back from the Randy Jones concussion in 2007. And then earlier in this in this season, in like December, he had gotten another concussion and was out for a month.

So this is coming back from that concussion. Let's just watch it.

*Patrice Bergeron Fights Josh Gorges and Wins*

**Jake:** He definitely won that one.

**Aiyana:** Oh, yeah.

**Jake:** No question. Those are some haymakers. He should have done this more often, I'm thinking.
Aiyana: No one knew he was left-handed until this moment.

Jake: Ah, that was his ace in the hole?

Aiyana: That was his ace in the hole! Jack Edwards says, he literally, first of all, the, the surprise of him going "Patrice Bergeron's getting in a fight!" It's like, oh shit, we didn't expect this.

And then he just yells, "Concuss that!" he's gotten two bad concussions in the past two seasons there's this idea in, in the literature that getting injured too much, kind of puts another target on your back. 14

So he kind of, I dunno, he kind of pushes back against this idea and it's like, I'm not a target.

Jake: He silenced that.

Aiyana: Also it's against the Canadiens. 15

Jake: Perfect team to do it against, it's with a big lead

Aiyana: It's the playoffs.

Jake: So he's picking his spots and he's, he's fighting against the funny team to fight against.

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15 The Boston Bruins and Montreal Canadiens are historic hockey rivals.
Everyone knows not to mess with him, not to fuck with him.

**Aiyana:** Like I mentioned, he got hurt again. But after he gets up there, like saying that he, he, he didn't want assistance getting off the ice and the commentator who I'm sure is probably Jack Edwards or Andy Brickley says he's not looking for assistance.

Getting off the ice. It's a statement to the crowd as much as it is to himself. Yeah. So the idea of like this, his second concussion in two seasons, he's like, just back, he's just come back from a season at a concussion and it's another concussion. He's like, I am getting off the ice by myself. No one is helping me this time.

**Jake:** Pretty tough. Pretty thick skinned.

**Aiyana:** He's a crazy dude.

**Jake:** But that being said, I don't think Jack like understands how concussions work.

**Aiyana:** Absolutely not. Absolutely not. No chance, whatever. That's a different story.

**EPISODE THREE: RELIGION, WORSHIP, AND COMMUNITY EXPECTATIONS**

**Aiyana:** What do you know about Patrice Bergeron? Like how would you describe him to someone who was, someone who was like, who is that?

**Jake:** The two things I would say about him or are leader and winner, those are the two words that come to mind for me. Um, he's just been a constant for so long. Uh, came up with the team like a long time ago and it's just been a leader, but not in like a loud mouth way.
Um, just through his actions, through the way he carries himself and, and sort of pushes everyone around into, uh, to be better. Also, of course, he's a winner too

Aiyana: As an American studies major. You don't, maybe didn't know this. We kind of can do whatever we want for our thesis. So I, over the summer was like, thinking that I was going to do something about hockey, but I was thinking it would be more about like the diff like how, how, like European players become like American, like not necessarily United States American, but like north American or like Americanized, um, as they like come to us.

And then I was also thinking about like, with all the Jack Eichel stuff, I was thinking about like the idea of like bodily autonomy and violence and how that, like, I don't know, plays it to the sport. And then, uh, instead I found this quote on Patrice Bergeron's Wikipedia page, and I kind of like spiraled out of control and became obsessed with it.

Do you want to hear the quote?

Jake: Yeah let's hear it.

Aiyana: Okay so it says, "Bergeron played the majority of the season with linemates Brad Boyes and newcomer, Marco Sturm, who had been acquired in a trade that sent captain Joe Thornton to the San Jose Sharks in November of 2005. Then Bruins, general manager, Mike O'Connell recalled in a June, 2011 interview that the organization had made a decision to build the team around Bergeron instead of Thornton, preferring the former's on and off ice character."16

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16 “Patrice Bergeron.” In Wikipedia.
And that made me spiral because I was like, Is that really why they did that?

_Jake_: Yeah, that seems interesting. I guess, especially Joe Thornton was an established guy. Joe Thornton also is not the type of guy who you're like, oh, you know, off the ice he has a lot of problems on the ice has problems. Like he's a leader, seems like a good enough guy.

Um, so I mean, that just tells you all about what you need to know about Patrice I guess. If, if he's just that much more of a standout, um, person and leader on the ice than Joe Thornton, Hall of Famer.

_Aiyana_: So part of my spiral. Okay. So I was looking into the Joe Thornton, like everything, and I found so many fascinating things because he was the first overall draft pick that, that year that he was drafted, but he was also the second ever first overall draft pick that the Bruins had. So it was like, you took your, like your little nest egg and you were like, ah, actually we don't want it.

_Jake_: Yeah. Just a 45th overall pick, what was it? His like fourth year?

_Aiyana_: Yeah, his third season, third season. But like the NHL lockout from 2004-2005 meant that he like literally had only played two professional seasons.

So I was looking into... before I can like get into my Patrice Bergeron nonsense. I have to start with Joe Thornton. So like I said, we've only had the first overall draft pick today. Um, and in

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1997, when we had like the Joe Thornton draft pick, they also had the eighth overall pick, which they use for Sergei Samsonov. You know who he is, you know, that guy? Vaguely?

**Jake:** Vaguely.

**Aiyana:** No, honestly, I don't know a ton about him, but the vibe that I've gotten from him is that he's kind of like Brad Marchand. Like that he was like five, eight. He was a left-winger

**Jake:** Scrappy?

**Aiyana:** Super scrappy, like a little spark plug. And I was like, huh. So they picked Joe Thornton as their like franchise center and then Samsonov as like their little left-winger and like, you'd think that the first overall and the eighth overall, like they would have been, you know, like an actual pair that lasted in the Bruins for awhile. But like, I think that Brad Marchand and Patrice Bergeron have kind of overshadowed that

**Jake:** Two guys, like coming up together like that, especially like drafted, um, together you'd think would have a little bit of chemistry.

That's crazy that, um, they didn't, I guess, I mean, Samsonov's, what? Russian? Maybe there was a language barrier there or something, but I don't think that that's stands in the way of a, I mean there's language barriers in every locker room.

**Aiyana:** So basically they put, like, they literally use the term fate of the franchise to describe like Joe Thorton who's also 18 when he gets drafted.
Um, something that is so crazy to me about. I think it speaks a lot to like who Boston sports fans are, is that until, the year before that Joe Thorton was like drafted we for the first time in like literally 25 years missed the playoffs.

And I like can't imagine the type of just like hubris that builds and a fan base. It's like, we go to the playoffs every single year and then finally not going. And then, but also not even winning a Stanley Cup, like since the seventies,

**Jake:** It's such a long time to just be making it every year and losing every year, like the Ray Bourque years, every single year, uh, coming up short. So that like, when you finally don't make it, like, sort of what happened with Detroit recently, all that, they had won a bunch, like people start to expect it and they want it back. Like the longer you go, the more desperate you are to just win now or give up.

**Aiyana:** So obviously then they draft him. And then while Joe Thorton is playing they never really get past the first round when they're like with Joe Thornton. They either get to the first round and lose there, or they don't make it to the playoffs with him. And as this is happening, he's also like fighting to get paid more. And I feel like that goes back to a different, weird thing about Boston sports fans, which is like the hometown discount thing where you're expecting your players to like, you know, make a little less to stay in Boston because why wouldn't you want to stay in Boston?

So like during the lockout, he went from making like two and a half million dollars a year to like 8 million.
**Jake:** That's a lot.

**Aiyana:** Without bringing back like a Cup. So everyone was pissed off about that.

**Jake:** That's a lot like today back then. I mean, it's a crazy amount, especially for like, I mean, he's obviously a great player, not a lot of winning. That's not going to go over well, especially in Boston.

**Aiyana:** So during the lockout, there's a lot of rumors because of like the salary arbitration that's going on at the same time that he's not going to come back. And he signed with some team in Switzerland, I believe. Um, and basically they were like, there were like a lot of articles from like the New York Post or the New York Times.¹⁷

Some, some New York something that they basically were just like, oh, like he really hates it in Boston. And he's trying to get out as he's like going through salary arbitration. And everyone was like, um, I don't think that's necessarily true, but also like, if it is, what the fuck, like, why are you trying to do, like, why are you trying to do this?

But also like, if you look at his stats from that time, like he's making a lot of money and like he's producing a lot of points, but they're not like being produced in a meaningful way. I don't know. It's very weird. He's a weird dude. Did you know he got into a fight with a bunch of cops?¹⁸

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¹⁸ “NHL - Thornton Apologizes as Charges Are Withdrawn.” *ESPN.Com.*
Jake: No, I didn't that'll be that off the ice stuff. And like causing your own trade rumors is like an annoying thing to do. Guys still do it now. It's like, come on.

But yeah, I mean, obviously like a front office is going to prefer a guy that wants to play for the team over a guy that does not want to play for the team

Aiyana: And gets into fights with cops.

Jake: And gets into fights with cops.

Aiyana: So like around the time that Patrice Bergeron is about to get drafted, um, him and his brother, John were at a bar west of Toronto in St. Thomas, somewhere in Canada. they got into a bar fight with cops. He got charged with two counts of assaulting police. One count of obstructing justice. I'm pretty sure they either pepper sprayed or tased him. Ummm...

Jake: He's a big guy I'm sure he's hard to subdue.

Aiyana: He's a huge dude!!

So that happened. So he didn't go to the, "he did not attend Tuesday's hearing, but later issued a statement through his lawyer, apologizing for what happened. And he said, incidents happen in our lives, which we later wish had not happened. I apologize for any difficulties with which my actions may have caused members of our police force.”

19 “NHL - Thornton Apologizes as Charges Are Withdrawn.”ESPN.Com.
Jake: Uh he's like my bad. Yeah. I didn't know about that. That's like a good enough reason. If a guy's already like being annoying about money, dump them off to San Jose.

Aiyana: There's so many like things that were clearly like building up in the background that I had no idea about, obviously, because I was barely alive.

Um, I can't believe he fought a cop

Jake: A Canadian cop too..

Aiyana: Two Canadian cops with his brother who I'm sure is also like 6'5". Um, okay. So, so he, the things that Joe Thorton did that probably got him traded and thrown away as franchise face one: never took them farther than the second round one time. Two: fought cops, which I feel like the people in Boston not into that feels anti Boston almost, um, three: asked for too much money. I think those are honestly enough reasons.

Jake: Yeah, those are pretty big reasons.

Aiyana: Those are pretty large reasons.

Jake: Yeah. So he was not the guy.

Aiyana: He was not the guy,

Jake: San Jose. I mean, he was kind of the guy there, I guess,

Aiyana: And then they never won a Cup.

Aiyana: I got kind of off track while I was doing this project and kind of like, cause I got into the Joe Thorton thing and I was like, I have to figure out why that happened and what the hell?

Like, what the hell, why would you trade your first round over like your first overall draft pick? Like he's clearly a really talented player. But a lot of what I was reading about was basically saying like, there seems to be a consensus that something about him like can't bring a team to a Stanley Cup and like there's something in him he doesn't have the it factor. And I was like, this is probably one of the meanest things I've read multiple people say that was just like, yeah, he just didn't have it.

And he's never going to have it clearly. Now he's like for what? 45 or something.

Jake: There's nothing you can do about not having it to have it, or you don't.

Aiyana: And also it's funny. One other thing, when they traded him, they were like, yeah, like he's so much more suited for California. Like, look at him. He's blonde. He's a California boy. He's like, he's from. 20

Jake: He's Canadian.

Aiyana: He's from Canada. Just because he's blonde does not mean he's like.

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20 Kevin Paul Dupont. “WILL HE FIND HIS WAY IN SAN JOSE?: [THIRD EDITION].” Boston Globe.
Jake: That's such like a local thing. Have fun in California, California boy. He's just from Ontario.

Aiyana: Just bullying him. Also the fact that you're 18 years old and they said, sorry, the entire like wellbeing of our, of our city is on your shoulders.

Jake: Yeah, that's a lot. I mean, you see it happen like Nick David, most recently, um, like some guys can step up and do it.

Aiyana: Yeah.

Jake: And some guys are sort of in it for other reasons, or just crack a little bit, especially in a market, like a Boston Original Six market.

Like the spotlight is going to be on you. It's going to be pretty intense. And I mean, that's part of the deal you're playing, you're playing hockey for a living and making a lot of money doing it. Um, but it's also tough and not everyone can do it.

Aiyana: Yeah. And people in Boston are mean.

Going from that, there's like this idea, um, especially in the last couple of the last 20 years, Massachusetts has gotten a lot less religious and is actually one of the least religious states in the United States.
New England as a whole is also one of the least religious places in the US which is also so weird because like Massachusetts is so Catholic to me.21

Jake: Yeah same. Like everyone's an Irish Catholic.

Aiyana: Everyone is so Catholic. So like, learning that is very weird. And I think that, like, it was from a, it was like a poll that was asking about like, do you identify, like, which do you identify as?

And a lot of people were like not religious type of thing.

Jake: I bet that culturally it's like 90% Catholic.

Aiyana: Exactly. I think culturally there's a lot of that Catholicism within there. Maybe

Jake: it's just like stereotypes though. Fricking Matt Damon and Ben Affleck.

Aiyana: This is also kind of part of the whole-- you know Spotlight?

Jake: Yeah, my high school that's...

Aiyana: Is it really about your high-school? Damn. Is it really?

Jake: Yeah. Well the Boston Globe's right across the street and so, uh, they were like privy to some of anyway.

Aiyana: So anyways, 2001 is when that whole scandal kind of gets revealed. Two years later Patrice Bergeron is drafted. People are kind of looking for something else to fill their religious needs or whatever.

So I would argue that sports definitely took a larger part of the culture, especially as we started to win more, like we won the, we broke the Curse of the Bambino.

Jake: Yeah. The flood gates were opened.

Aiyana: I feel like we kind of have started to replace sports for religion. This is Adam Ottavino. He's actually not even a--

Jake: He's a New York Met.

Aiyana: Yeah, well previously he had been a Yankee and he's from New York.

Jake: Yeah.

Aiyana: So this clip, which is so crazy that I found this before I was even doing my thesis, but I heard this and I was like, this is so interesting.

Aiyana: Like, it's just weird that like this guy who's from New York and like probably grew up a Yankees or Mets fan has no business being like saying anything. I don't know. Nice? Not that it was a nice thing, but I just think it's really interesting that people like outsiders have observed how weird people are about sports here. I don't know.
Jake: Yeah. It is very, um, integral to people's identity. I think like going to, having the teams be bad for so long, just made it more like now that they're good people are just so into them.

Yeah, no, it definitely is just like a personality trait from people from Boston.

Aiyana: I kind of love it personally.

Jake: Yeah, it's good.

Aiyana: Um, so then when you have like, so this, this one by the way, is religion worship and community expectations.

Jake: Gotcha.

Aiyana: So Massachusetts is getting less religious. They're getting more into sports. Sports are starting to win. And then we have, obviously we have, um, the Red Sox break, the Curse of the Bambino the Patriots are doing well. And it's the start of like, just the dynasty. That was the Patriots in the Bill Belichick like Tom Brady era

Jake: Is, is good vibes, good vibes only.

Aiyana: Sorry, I don't follow. I don't follow football. I don't care about that.

Jake: But yeah, I feel like every time I've been at church, when there's like a big game, the day that day, the priest will be like, and like, let's pray that the Bruins take care of business tonight.

And everyone's like, yes, yes.
Aiyana: Yes, this is what we want, this is what we want. And then, so in 2011, Patrice Bergeron, and obviously not on his own, but he helps end the 39-year Cup drought, um, which is just exceptional. Seeing as the Bruins, as a whole, as a team, have a really, really good playoff history. They're a team that pretty consistently is always in the playoffs.

Like there obviously have been periods of time, like in the sixties where we were really bad, but like generally they're kind of a, a team that will get to the playoffs. They're not necessarily team to win. And they've been to so many Stanley Cup Finals and lost.

Jake: I think their winning percentage is like 33% or something when the, in the Finals, but they will get there and break your heart.

Aiyana: They're just tired. They're defensive minded. It's hard. They're tired by the end of the year. That's my argument. Anyways, so he breaks this like 39-year drought. So there's obviously the idea that you: have you ever heard people call Patrice Bergeron, Saint Patrice? Okay. I'm glad it's not just me. Have you seen the candles?

Jake: Uh, like that picture? Yeah. Well, I've seen that picture when I was here last time.

Aiyana: Well, that doesn't count.

Jake: Um, no, but yeah, I see candles, the candles, like the, like you have for like the religious,

Aiyana: Yeah, like a prayer candle, except it's Patrice Bergeron. And that's literally him on St. Patrick, who is the Patron Saint of Boston.
Jake: Ooh shocker.

Aiyana: Yeah

Jake: Why— there was definitely some like French Canadian saint out there they could have done it.

Aiyana: But, fun fact, Patrice Bergeron is half Irish.

Jake: Oh, interesting.

Aiyana: Fun fact.

Jake: Interesting. And it breaks--

Aiyana: That's the Cleary!

Jake: The nationalism stuff from earlier.

Aiyana: It brings us back. So he makes us be like, yeah, that's us.

It's also weird. I mean, at least where I grew up in Massachusetts. There's a lot of French people.

Jake: In Lowell?

Aiyana: Yeah. Lots of French people. I also went to a French Catholic school, so that definitely influences it.
**Jake:** People, speak like French? Like you go into a store, the clerk speaks French? Gotcha.

**Aiyana:** A lot of French Canadians though.

Another part of religion that I feel like is important is the idea of martyrdom. And that kind of goes hand in hand with how Patrice Bergeron presents himself and how he takes... He is the, I don't know, he's the collecting bucket of people punching you and he doesn't punch back.

Which is kind of Catholic.

**Jake:** Turn the other cheek.

**Aiyana:** He's so Catholic.

**Jake:** So Catholic.

**Aiyana:** He's so Catholic if you think about it. So one of the major things that I thought of: can you tell the 2013 Stanley Cup Finals are a really big moment? 2013, I think is maybe the biggest moment for him.

**Jake:** A recurring theme.

**Aiyana:** The recurring theme in this, in this, in these episodes, this is sponsored by the 2013 Stanley Cup Finals.

2012-2013 season, um, gets shortened because of a lockout XYZ. About like a month into what is, what is supposed to be the regular season at this point but the season has not yet started, is the
Sandy Hook Elementary School Shooting, which killed, I think like 26 kids and, and adults, but mostly children.

**Jake:** In New England

**Aiyana:** December 14th, 2012. That's what it was. Um, yeah. So it's about a month before the season officially begins. And then at the very end of the season, so this is April 15th, 2013. Seven regular season games remaining, um, is the Boston Marathon Bombing, which ends up killing five people.

There was supposed to be a game that day actually. And it got postponed obviously because of the bombing.

There's seven games left, they lose five of them. You can't do that!

**Jake:** Did they win the President's Cup that year too? Or was it the year before?

**Aiyana:** I couldn't tell you actually, cause I don't have the stats up.

**Jake:** They did. Yeah, losing five of your last seven when you win that many...

**Aiyana:** This is a big event, that's happened in the city that you kind of like need to get it together for. You can't make people depressed on multiple fronts,

**Jake:** The national anthem playing, do you remember that?

**Aiyana:** Yes.
**Jake:** Like, it was a big deal. It was like Bruins need to pull it together. Give us a little something to root for it.

**Aiyana:** Let's go. Let's go. Let's go. We get to game seven of the Eastern Conference quarter-finals whatever, in the Stanley Cup Playoffs. This is round one. And basically they go into this after both of these events have happened this year.

They almost, they like had like a three to one lead and then the Leafs come back and win the next two games. So it's tied at three, it's game seven period three, actually, period two, they're losing by three. Patrice Bergeron scores. So basically they score blah, blah, blah.

They got it up eventually in the third quarter, they score to tie it at like four, four. Um, Patrice Bergeron is the one who scores that like final tying goal. And at this point, because there's only like, I believe it was 52 seconds left. It was a minute and 12 seconds left when it was still, um, for. Too.

And then Patrice Bergeron passes it to Milan Lucic, Luucic scores with like a minute and 12 left. And then with 52 seconds left Patrice Bergeron scores. It's called the game of the decade for a reason because it's the craziest game of the decade. And it happened in 2013 that is— they had seven more years for someone to do something better and no one did. This is the largest deficit that has been overcome in the playoffs in I think any period, but also like the third period, obviously. When they got back from the second period, that intermission, they come back in the third period, they're losing still, they got booed by their own fans on home ice.
And then by the time the game is about to end and it looks like we're going to lose. Most people are like filing out of the building. And then Lucic scores, Bergeron scores, people are scrambling to get back in for overtime and then like six minutes into overtime Bergeron scores and he brings us into the second round. We ended up going all the way be, did not win. We lost in the final game, but, um, Claude Julien, who was the coach of the Bruins at the time, had this quote at the very end of the, like the playoffs and like the post-game or whatever, and said, "You know, at the end of the day, I think that's what hurts the most. Is in the back of our minds we wanted to do it for those kinds of reasons. The city of Boston, what Newtown has been through, that kind of stuff. It hit close to home. And the best way we felt we could try and cheer the area was to win a Stanley Cup. I think that's, what's hard right now for the players. We have more reasons than just ourselves to win a Cup."

So like, this is also this idea of one, the community expects us to do better, the Bruins to be a better team than they were, especially because in 2011 they had just won the Stanley Cup. But also there's this expectation on the players that maybe the players have put on themselves, maybe it's something about the culture of sport in general, but like you are expected to kind of represent and like, I don't know, make up for...

**Jake:** It's a great distraction.

**Aiyana:** ...what happens.

Exactly. It's a great distraction.
Jake: And also unites like everyone in the, like, since it's so regionalized, like the teams are literally by region, like it unites like everyone in the area. When the team is doing well.

Aiyana: And when the team is doing badly, well, Patrice Bergeron it's time to get a couple of goals.

EPISODE FOUR: PERFECT PATRICE

Aiyana: This is kind of like the culmination of a lot of my research is a lot of the like vibes that are hard to quantify

Jake: The vibes.

Aiyana: The way that he gets described, like he gets called perfect so much, which I feel like, um, I don't think professional athletes or athletes in general, like, I feel like perfect is not generally something that gets assigned to athletes or like should technically be, cause it's like, whoa, who's really perfect as an athlete, when you have stats.

Jake: It's also like tough to call some guy perfect and then like if he messes up the next game

Aiyana: Yeah.

Jake: It'd be like, Oof.

Aiyana: But he's considered one of the most consistent players in the league, he kind of generally is always voted like the NHLPA, which is like the NHL Player Association.
They do a bunch of polls. And one of the polls that they, that Patrice Bergeron is frequently at the top of is like, who's the most complete player? So players vote for who they think is the best in that way. And usually Sidney Crosby wins, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, Sidney Crosby is a crybaby. Not my problem. Patrice Bergeron on the other hand is not a cry baby.

And he's also genuinely one of, if not the best, like two way or defensive forward in the entire history of the NHL. Um, I think all of his stats kind of prove that. I don't really want to get into stats because I don't know enough about stats to like argue with someone who knew what stats were.

Jake: Yeah

Aiyana: So Patrice Bergeron has been nominated for the Selke. It's an award that's given to the player like a forward who is seen as the best defensive forward of the year.

And he's been nominated for it every single year, since 2011-2012, when he won. The two years before that he finished fifth and fourth in voting, but like nominees are third, second first in voting. So he was, he was a topic of conversation starting in 2009-2010, but like he didn't win his first one until 2011-2012.

Um, and has since won 1, 2, 3, 4. Five is this year!

Jake: I thought it was five. Maybe I'm just already handing it to him this year.
Aiyana: He's tied with Bob Gainey for the most ever. He, he has been nominated a record, like 10 straight seasons. Especially as you get farther into his career, he doesn't win it as much, especially when there's various, like years where he arguably like, should have won.

Jake: Yeah, he came in second a bunch of times, right?

Aiyana: Second, third, third, second. There's three seconds there. And a lot of the discussion around why, like, when it comes to like voting season, the major thing with him is like voter fatigue for the people who are voting for him, which I think is like the, the, some hockey writer’s association or something like that.

Um, a lot of them just complain that like, well, yeah, we know he's the best, but we want to give it to someone else. And it's like, this isn't a participation trophy! If someone's the best, then they should be the best.

Jake: They can't get any headlines, like if he just wins every year.

Aiyana: It's just so annoying. Cause it's like, but he is better, but he was better at least a handful of these times and like should have won and it's just completely framed around voter fatigue.

And then there's also this, I think concept that like, people don't want him to outpace Bob Gainey and get five and be like the sole holder.

Jake: Yeah.
Aiyana: And I'm like, I don't know what Bob Gainey did besides like do it a while ago. And I think the NHL just loves tradition. It's like with Ovi, like people don't want him to get the most goals and like, there's a lot of reasons why that we could get into, but I feel like one of the main things is just like, this is how it is. Wayne Gretzky is the best.

Jake: He's the Great One.

Aiyana: No one else. You can't, you can't, you can't do it

Jake: You're not better than Gretzky.

Aiyana: You can't be. And no, no metric are you allowed to be if he's in, if he's in the first spot right now.

They only started recording the stat in 2005-2006, but he is the best face-off man in the NHL. So the end of the regular season of this year, we're just 2021-2022, I think. He has won 13,794 of 23,801 face offs.

Jake: You got some gritty guys on this list here.

Aiyana: I know

Jake: Kopitar, Koivu, Ryan O'Reilly. Yeah, that is, I mean, it's weird that they just started recording the stat.

Aiyana: Yeah, I don't understand why they didn't.
**Jake:** He's also like head and shoulders above everyone else.

**Aiyana:** Yeah. The next person is Sidney Crosby and he's won 12,580. He's taken 300 more face offs, but won, like, I dunno like a thousand less.

So if you look at his Selke wins and then also did I put up that photo ever?

I didn't. I got a picture. Give me a second. It's actually kind of cool. It's one of the only ones that I like vaguely understand.

**Jake:** How do you mean?

**Aiyana:** It's a stat, but it's a picture stat.

**Jake:** Visual

**Aiyana:** It is a visual stat and I was like, oh, I got this. I can do this.

So it's puck retrieval versus puck battle win rate as bubble size for forwards at five v. five. And you can only be on it if you played more than 500 minutes, very complicated sounding, but it's loose puck recoveries per 20 minutes of time on ice versus successful defensive touches that remove possession.

So it's like, yeah, Offense to defense ratio. Basically. And if you look at him, he's literally

**Jake:** Top right corner by a lot.
Aiyana: Like there's no one near him.

Jake: On his own.

Aiyana: It's so interesting also because then you have Ovechkin over here.

Jake: European. He's not getting gritty. Well, I wonder why he's so bad at offense as well, maybe it's just uh, he doesn't do loose pucks.

Aiyana: Yeah, he probably doesn't. I mean, he literally clearly doesn't.

Jake: Maybe he can't. Not good enough.

Aiyana: Not good enough. Something's not right. But yeah. I just think this is really interesting.

Jake: Yeah. He's a grinder offense and defense. That's like all effort. That's that too, like loose pucks.

Aiyana: Yeah. And that's, I think one of the major things about the Bruins kind of historically too, is that they're always a very defensive minded team. They don't usually have, like, guys, you don't have guys who are scoring the way that some other teams that are like really not to toot our own horn, but like teams that have a lot of playoff success generally are a lot more offensive minded than they are defensive minded. Um, and I just think it's really interesting that like, especially when you look at the other, like franchise faces that the Bruins have had and the different like eras, a lot of them have, it's been marked by like defensemen.
So it makes sense that the only forward that like the Bruins would kind of accept as their like franchise face is an offensive player. Who plays like a defenseman.

**Jake:** Yeah. It fits into the Big Bad Bruins thing.

**Aiyana:** Exactly. And the whole, like, you know, you know,

**Jake:** the scrappiness, the spoked B.

**Aiyana:** The lunch, a lunch pail, AC virtues,

**Jake:** Get your lunch pail and your hard hat.

**Aiyana:** Then there's also that combination of like blue-collar work that gets associated with like these defensively minded teams. And it's like, Hmm. I don't know. I don't know. You make a lot more money than a construction player or a construction worker. I don't know if you're actually doing like a it's weird.

Cause it's like, yeah, you're using your hands and you are like sweating. Your body is deteriorating because of this, but how much?

**Jake:** Yeah, but it's easier to do it for a couple mil

**Aiyana:** so much easier obviously. Before David Pastrnak they kind of argue that he's one of the best draft picks that we've ever gotten because he was one, he was so low in the draft.

**Jake:** The Bruins are bad at drafting too.
Aiyana: We are consistently not very good at drafting. David Pastrnak? Great draft pickup. Bergeron? Great draft pickup. Marchand? Great draft pickup. I feel like a lot of our draft pickups that are actually good are ones who are later on, they're not first rounders. They're like second, third round, which makes sense because it's like, we are looking for grinders.

Jake: Makes sense. Cause all the first-round guys, we get are terrible too, so yeah.

Aiyana: Yeah. We gotta pick, we gotta get them from somewhere else. It's kind of cool though, because you have these players who are later in the, in the draft and it's like, well, I can literally see that if I work hard enough, I can overtake a lot of players who should technically be better than me.

Jake: You have to be willing to play the game right and do all the hard things,

Aiyana: get in there, muck out those pucks.

Jake: Bergeron's made a career off of just like,

Aiyana: Working really hard,

Jake: Doing the hard stuff.

Aiyana: So then if you look at any, he's got a bunch of other awards. Anytime that he gets an award, literally, regardless of what it is, he always turns it back to the team whenever he gets interviewed, which is of course another one of those things it's like that like selflessness it's about the team.
**Jake:** Yeah. It's like when you win it's we, when you lose its I. He does a good job.

**Aiyana:** So we always turns it back to the team. He always emphasizes hockey is a team sport. I couldn't do this without my teammates, like winning a Stanley Cup is all that really matters. Like I'm really, I feel really honored to have like received this award or been nominated, especially he'll like specifically be like, I'm really like honored to have been nominated alongside like these exceptional players.

And he like very like aggressively kind of removes himself as a thing as a, as a player. And he's like, no, like it, that just shows you like, I do my job. And like, I'm glad you're recognizing my hard work, but like I could not do this without the team also doing their stuff, which is like, um, I think that's the goal of hockey and a lot of team sports is supposed to be that. That, I don't know that perspective that you're looking at sports with, but I feel like it actually in practice happens very infrequently.  

**Jake:** Yeah. It's, it's tough. Cause you can monetize yourself very easily. Like just getting the recognition. People, people kind of eat that up. They play for themselves. Winning is kind of just like a cool side effect. Um, and to like really just buy in that much and really be like that selfless. And also like, it's like the culmination of him, like believing in all the other guys around him too, and like recognizing what they're doing for him, that he couldn't be there alone so he's not going to act like he did that by himself. So yeah. Humility is a big part of like being this type of leader.

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that we've been talking about, the, uh, like face of the franchise. Like if you have some, some arrogant like brash guy that's in it for the individual stuff, probably not going to win that much.

**Aiyana:** Kind of going off of that, knowing the players that you're playing with and like understanding how they are and kind of working with that.

One of the other major things that people like, are obsessed with Patrice Bergeron with, is this like adaptability that he has as a player, his ability to play really well with kind of anyone. And like, it kind of has presented itself in a couple of different ways. There's a lot of like kind of young stud, young guns that he gets paired with.

So like there's Tyler Seguin, David Pastrnak, um, that like, and also you could say Brad Marchand, technically in a similar way where it's like, you're there to be teaching them how to play in this professional environment. But also like we need someone who can like match the speed and like the skill or whatever that we're, we're hoping we're gonna get from this player.

Um, I think that's more for Tyler Seguin and David Pastrnak. I think that Brad Marchand has just like, you need a conscience, you need a conscience close by. And then he also has the kinds of players like superstars. Who you have to play around with them, kind of like they have a more distinctive style.

**Jake:** Like Crosby.
Exactly. So like Sidney Crosby, Jaromir Jagr, Mark Recchi, are some of the types of players where it's like, you're playing with them, but you're also playing like for them a little bit. And it's kind of more about you facilitating.

**Jake:** The old guys too Jagr, Recchi, like Jarome Iginla when he was on the team.

You have all these guys that like, uh, they were old and they joined the team and you're like, oh, I want to win it for like, this guy.

The Crosby thing's like interesting. Cause like Bergeron's used to being the guy. I mean maybe now Pastrnak's, like the guy for us, but like Bergeron's like the main guy still. And then you get to that team with Crosby and he like perfectly adapts to being like the second guy in the line.

**Aiyana:** And like that goes back to his like junior days, he was saying in some interview that I was watching with him, um, that when he was in like the QMJHL, when he's in the junior league so he was like 16, 17 years old. His coach basically was like, if you don't get better at everything else, you will never make it to the NHL. He was like, you cannot get to the NHL on your offensive skills alone. Like you're not a bad offensive player by any means, but like, you will never be able to play as successfully as if you like start working on your face off and start working like on your defense and that sort of thing.

So. The reason why he's become, I feel like such a complete player is because so much of it has been pure effort. And then he also, so his coach, like he's, he's always been a center, but his
coach was like, I'm going to start putting you on the right wing, just cause you need to have like multiple options and like multiple offerings as a player when you get drafted.23

But the idea that like he goes from, in his normal everyday life, like as a Bruins player, he is like, again, like you said, like he's the guy. And then in order to be able to play internationally, he kind of has to take second fiddle to Sidney Crosby, which is like

Jake: A pretty good player.

Aiyana: No, one's no, one's complaining to be his right wing to like, to, to have to be his right wing.

But it's also interesting because Sidney Crosby is a player who like-- it he's a guy who needs a certain type of player to play with him.

Jake: He needs his Evgeni.

Aiyana: Yeah. He needs that. He needs someone to be on his side and like Patrice Bergeron has filled that role, not only as like Sidney Crosby's right wing, but also like during the Olympics, he was just there to kill penalties and take face offs.24

Jake: Yeah.

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Aiyana: And he was like the 10th player on the team. This was 2010 so we had just come back from two concussions.

Jake: He grinded his way with the Olympic team. Like, and it's the Canadian Olympic teams, the best, the best team. And they're playing at home. So everyone's like juiced up about that and he still grinds his way to the first line.

Aiyana: And he was not even supposed to be like a real player on that team. Like he was really just an extra, he was the only player who was added, who didn't go to training camp. Everyone thought it was going to be like a shit show basically. And they were like mad that he was even allowed to be on the team after coming back from injury.25

So it just so crazy that all of these things happened. And then he was like, ha, I get it. Fuck you guys. And then he didn't even say, fuck you guys.

Jake: Yeah he's too nice.

Aiyana: I think, especially as Patrice Bergeron gets older, he'll be 37 next season, in a league where playing a season at the age of 40 puts you on a list of oldest players in league history.

Um, and he spent, and he'll have spent more time playing for the Bruins than he spent doing literally anything else? I think that we're kind of on the cusp of exiting this like Patrice Bergeron

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era, which is ultimately who I think the team feels defined by the most, in the wake of like Ray Bourque's departure.

And you have that kind of like two years of uncertainty where it's Joe Thornton or maybe like there's more than two years, but there's two years before Patrice Bergeron enters the scene. And after Ray Bourque has exited where it's just kind of, everyone thinks that it's going to be Joe Thornton and it's not going well.

I think that like looking back on it, this project has really made me see, like how much this era of like Bruins hockey has been like defined by Bergeron himself as a player. I don't know. I've just been thinking about it.

**Jake:** You don't normally get lucky enough to have a guy like that on the team for that long

**Aiyana:** Who's only ever played with one team that's so infrequent that that happens to have played over a thousand games with one team. And also like I've said it before, but like the quote unquote hometown discount, which is when players take less money, to stay wherever they are, like he could make a lot more money on the free market. Then he makes in for the Bruins. And a lot of players are the same.

A lot of players on the Bruins could make more money, but he's also set that expectation or he's kept that expectation that was set at the very least by Ray Bourque. I'm sure it was before that, that you take a discount to make your team more playoff viable.²⁶
Jake: I think he stays cause he likes it too.

Aiyana: Yeah. He likes it. He likes the market. He likes the people he's lived here more than he has anywhere else.

Jake: Yeah. Hopefully he'll stick around.

Aiyana: Honestly, if we win the Cup this year, it's over. If we don't, maybe he'll get one more year.

Jake: That's fine though. If we win, he deserves the walk off into the sunset more than anyone.

Aiyana: We did it.

Jake: You did it. Congratulations.

26 Ray Bourque was infamous for taking extremely low contract terms during his time with the Boston Bruins. This angered a lot of other players, as they thought that a talented defenseman such as Bourque could set a new standard pay for other defensemen across the NHL.
ARTIST STATEMENT ON INTENT

Literature Review

In his landmark essay for *Sports Illustrated*, Frank Deford discusses where sports and religion overlap, introducing the concept that sports themselves are a form of religious expression. Published in 1976, this article, “Religion in Sport” acts as a cornerstone to one of my major topics: sports as a kind of worship. In his Doctorate dissertation, “Implicit Religion and the Highly-Identified Sports Fan: An Ethnography of Cleveland Sports Fandom,” Edward T. Uszynski argues that professional sports are an invisible religion for the highly motivated fan, focusing specifically on the city of Cleveland to do so. I hope to extend some of the concepts of this dissertation by turning my focus away from Cleveland and instead to the Boston area.

“Heavenly Father, Divine Goalie,” an article by Charles S. Prebish, continues to advocate for the position that sports are a religion, focusing particularly on the ritualistic aspects of sport and religion that lend themselves well to one another.

Kenneth D. Colburn also focuses on ritual, but instead of religious ritual in sport he looks at how ritual intersects with masculinity and violence in the context of ice hockey. To do so, he focuses on two separate instances of violence within hockey in two separate articles meant to complement one another: the fistfight in “Deviance and Legitimacy in Ice-Hockey: A Microstructural Theory of Violence,” and illegal assault in “Honor, Ritual and Violence in Ice Hockey.” Because Bergeron-Cleary has only been in three career fights in the NHL (with 1,100+ games played) and therefore doesn’t fit into that aspect of the ‘hockey gladiator’ kind of masculinity, I would like to draw from Kristi A. Allain’s Doctorate thesis “‘The Way We Play’: An Examination of Men’s Elite-Level Hockey, Masculinity and Canadian National Identity.” Part of her thesis focuses on the concept of moral masculinity in hockey as presented by
longtime hockey commentator Don Cherry, who hosted Coach’s Corner during the first
intermission of Hockey Night in Canada, which features all NHL games including a Canadian
team, from 1982 until 2019. Cherry’s impact on hockey culture, especially Canadian hockey
culture, cannot be underestimated, and his take on the ideal form of masculinity for hockey
players harkens back to older, more classic players. I would like to look at Cherry’s idea of
masculinity, arguably one of the more popular ones in the ice hockey world to see how
Bergeron-Cleary’s small-town, working-class background also falls into this idea of the insider
in hockey.

The NHL is a dominantly white sport closely linked with Canadian identity and culture
(over 50% of the league is Canadian), it feels prudent and important to look at who the insiders
and outsiders of ice hockey are, especially in terms of race, class, and ethnicity. I am particularly
interested in a master’s thesis written by Danielle Gillis, “White Ice, White Canada: Examining
Men’s Professional Hockey as an Example of Colonial Multiculturalism” in which she describes
the process by which people of color are erased by supposed multicultural projects such as ice
hockey as Canada’s national sport. Similarly, Mary Louise Adams pushes back against this
framing in her article “The Game of Whose Lives?: Gender, Race, and Entitlement in Canada’s
‘National’ Game,” arguing that the overwhelming whiteness and maleness of the sport
contributes to the entitlement of this group to the game. I hope to use these arguments to build a
foundation wherein I can see if Bergeron-Cleary being Canadian adds to his legitimacy as the
franchise face, and how sports act as a colonial or nationalist project in Boston.

There are several scholarly works that focus on specific hockey players, but I have been
unable to find any that specifically discuss Patrice Bergeron-Cleary. I see much of my
understanding and discussion of marketing in the NHL coming from my primary sources, but I
would also like to read through Darron Bunt’s Master’s thesis, “Selling ‘The Next One’: Corporate Nationalism and the Production of Sidney Crosby” to understand his conceptualization of Crosby, gender, and national identity through Crosby’s commercialization.

Initial Research Question

“What is the utility of Patrice Bergeron as the franchise face of the Boston Bruins and how does he offer a window into hockey masculinity, sports as worship, the ‘other’ in sport, and the marketing of the NHL?”

The overarching question that fueled my project was twofold: what does the formation of a franchise face look like, and why was Patrice Bergeron chosen as the franchise face over other players? By exploring the different levels of representation of Bergeron: national, franchise city, and personal, I planned to investigate ideas about contemporary masculinity, the religious aspects of hockey, and the role of nationalism in sport. This project deals with both American and Canadian identity and culture because of the prevalence of Canadians in the NHL, the league being host to several Canadian teams, and because Bergeron himself is Canadian.

The three main primary sources that I used to build my research were *Sports Illustrated*, the *Boston Globe*, and *SportsNet*. I leaned into a somewhat experimental form of data collection because I knew I wanted a Canadian, American, and Bostonian news outlet to explore trends regarding Patrice Bergeron, but the three specific outlet choices I made to fulfill that need were essentially arbitrary. Other news outlets such as NHL.com or ESPN were used as a way to confirm trends across media or to provide more context regarding the history of the league and
any questions that arose during the course of my research that could not be answered by any of my main three primary sources.

I ran into issues with both *Sports Illustrated* and *SportsNet*, as neither outlet has available online archives dating as far back as I had hoped they would. *Sports Illustrated*’s online archives only dates back to 2006, and *SportsNet* has nothing printed online before 2009. The scope of my project begins with Patrice Bergeron being drafted by the Boston Bruins in 2003 at the very latest, but I also spent some time researching Joe Thornton, requiring me to look at news articles from as far back as 1996. Filling in the gaps left by these two articles required me to lean heavily on the *Boston Globe* at times, as well as seeking out other sources to provide much-needed context.

Over the course of my research, I was looking for qualitative data regarding the language used to describe Patrice Bergeron over his career, trying to figure out when and how certain ideas about him arose. I wanted to be able to systematically describe the meaning and function of an NHL franchise face by using an Original Six franchise face, Patrice Bergeron of the Boston Bruins as my case study. I ended up primarily gathering descriptive data by making observations and analyses without the benefit of personal interviews.

The ubiquity of sports talk radio— and now sports in all aural mediums— makes a podcast discussing sports an ideal form for my project to have taken. I am deeply interested in ways in which academia can be make more accessible to the broader public, particularly through the use and analysis of media. To that end, I really enjoy podcasts such as *Maintenance Phase* and *Lolita Podcast* which both present varied academic information in an incredibly digestible, interesting way. I plan to model the general set up of *Maintenance Phase*, in which one host researches a topic and explains it to the second host, with the two of them having discussions
throughout. The tweak that I am going to be making from this is that I will be the only actual host researching anything, with each episode following the format of me explaining various aspects of the episode topic to a guest host. The Maintenance Phase hosts generally keep their topics to one episode, so I am using Lolita Podcast as a point of reference to seeing how the show’s creator Jamie Loftus was able to split a very intertwined, layered history into such a way that the timeline was never unclear. I am not going to be following a particularly linear narrative for my podcast either because the themes that I am discussing are present over long periods of time, so I have found her podcast to be extremely helpful in deciding how I intend to split things up. The sports podcasts that I took most inspiration from is The Short Shift Podcast— which is less academic but still backed up with history and statistics— and False Idol— a narrative sports podcast heavily featuring interviews. These podcasts provided some indication as to how I could approach this podcast tonally, as I want to replicate some of the elements of a sports podcast while still having a more structured plan to follow.

I created my eventual thesis product from my Fall research by honing in on what I thought were major sticking points relating to Bergeron’s career. In addition to this, I spent time focusing on particularly memorable or interesting pieces of information regarding Bergeron as an actor within the National Hockey League. I created a timeline to help me identify trends over time within the hockey world as well as across New England in general. This allowed me to link events such as the Boston Marathon Bombing directly to Patrice Bergeron and his athletic performance. The crux of the argument that I aim to make through my podcast is that this era of Boston Bruins hockey (2003-present) has largely been defined by franchise face Patrice Bergeron. Bergeron embodies the traditional masculine aspects of a franchise face while shedding many of the aspects of entitlement and violence that ice hockey breeds. By allowing
violence to be done to him without the need for retribution or to do violence onto others, Bergeron has redefined traditional North American hockey masculinity.

One of the major things I have taken away from this project is that podcasting is significantly more difficult than I would have ever expected. There is a fine line between an overly rehearsed, stiff delivery and completely glossing over or forgetting details because of a lack of structure. Having had a fair amount of media experience, podcasting still remains an art form I struggle with despite how fun it can be. Personal flexibility is absolutely essential to complete a project of this size and scope successfully. I frequently found myself worrying over small details and trying to make everything perfect and exactly how I had envisioned it, which is not possible. More importantly, because I chose to have a guest on my podcast to talk through the information I had gathered, there was even more flexibility necessary. I did nothing to control or influence the way that any of my co-hosts responded to me throughout the recording process, which required a certain level of flexibility in the details of the final product. It would have been genuinely impossible—or far too long—to talk about every interesting detail or finding that I had throughout my research. I had to accept that regardless of final product, there would always be things that I wished I had mentioned, and I could not let that be a factor in my own perception of the final product.
ARTIST STATEMENT ON PUBLIC ACCESSIBILITY OF WORK

As a Film and Media Studies minor, a major aspect of my academic thinking has been in terms of accessibility and how I can make my projects more accessible to others. As such, I wanted to bring this energy towards accessibility to my senior thesis by creating a podcast. There is of course a long history of the relationship between sports and the aural medium, which brought sports to households across America. Additionally, the verbal nature of a podcast lends itself to packaging information in a more digestible way that I was interested in exploring. By focusing on a less traditionally academic form, I was forced as a researcher and a scholar to package my ideas into something more understandable for my audience. Communicating ideas in a more casual and simplistic manner also allows for a wider range of listeners to take part in the topics and conversations that are broached within my project.

I expect that the people who would be most interested in engaging with my final product would be other hockey fans, more specifically Boston Bruins fans. Because I was condensing over twenty years of information into less than ninety minutes of content, it quickly became clear to me that a listener would need at least a basic understanding of hockey to be able to fully understand the topic. As a Black female, I would hope that the true audience of this project would be made up of other marginalized hockey fans.

The podcast is available directly through an RSS feed which can be added to any podcast host as well as listening through the RSS feed browser itself. This felt like the simplest and most effective way to distribute the podcast to those who were interested in listening while remaining private in some ways. Ice hockey is a very insular sport and community, so there is always a potential risk in critiquing its conservative norms which is why I have chosen to have a slightly more private method to distribute my podcast. As I am working in the sports media industry in
the very near future there is always a chance to gain professional opportunities through this final thesis product. This would also post a great opportunity for academic conversation surrounding a topic that is not seen as intrinsically academic.
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