

Ten Takes

By Vivian Xie

CHARACTERS

Ten – 20s, Chinese, any gender.

Police interrogation box. TEN sits cuffed to a desk. They confess to the audience.

Ten Right. Listen. I'll give you a confession. A real hot take.

Pause. Looks around.

You can eat dogs, okay? It's fine.

I'm not telling you to slice up little Bisco when you get home tonight but for fuck's sake, let's not pretend dogs are on some morally higher ground than any other animal or any other food for that matter.

Take blue cheese. What is the blue on that cheese?

It's mold. It's literally a hunk of moldy milk. You are scraping mold onto your cream cracker and ingesting it like it isn't the same thing as dropping a loaf of bread on the ground in the middle of a parking lot, finding it two weeks later and saying "Hm, y'know what? Let me just put that in my mouth. Maybe put some Marmite on it".

And to that point, what even is Marmite? I'll tell you what Marmite is. Actually, you can pull up the Wikipedia article on it yourself.

Seriously.

I'll wait.

They wait.

What's it say?

"By-product."

"It is a by-product of beer brewing".

Not even the intended product. It's like taking your own shit and smearing it on toast, it's just a "by-product" of stuff you already ate.

Pause.

What's my point?

My point is, just admit that the only reason you think eating dogs is bad is because the people who tend to do it aren't white.

Savages, you say.

My ancestors, I say.

Pause.

Okay, fine, yes. That dog festival was a right horrid sight, I totally agree. Threw up a bit in my mouth.

But think about this: how are millions of chickens, pigs and cows treated in factory farms around the world, PREDMONINANTLY in the west?

Did you know every chicken in North America has less living space than a sheet of printer paper? Think about that next time you go for a cheeky Nando's.

I'm not trying to defend dog-eating. Sure, with the whole end-of-the-world environmental crisis, we should all be vegan.

But in a perfect world, in an absolutely perfect world, we could all at least agree that dog meat is no different to chicken, beef or pork. We just managed to domesticate one to sleep in barns and stables and the other to think it's okay to sleep and slobber in our beds.

And it's not because I'm Chinese that I say this. I have a dog. A border collie. His name's Pig because I thought it was funny to yell "Pig" after a dog. I get it. Man's best friend and everything.

But...

It's the absolute ignorance and arrogance of you people.

It's how you for some inexplicable reason enjoy treating this slobbering thing on four legs better than actual human beings.

And I know, nobody needs another hot coronavirus take WHILE it's happening. But I just have to say this. Just so it's on the record.

The President of the United States calls it the Chinese Virus. Kung Flu. People are calling for a global class-action lawsuit against the nation of China.

This while people like me are the victims of spitting, name-calling, sucker punches and black eyes, broken ribs and swollen lips. And you would rather retweet that quarantine meme than bring attention to how my people are currently being treated worse than the creatures you saw strung up by their necks at the dog festival.

It's all a joke to you.

I'm tired.

...the neighbours won't talk to us. They cross the street when we come their way. They whisper behind our backs and I'm sure they're sharing questionable posts on Facebook. I choke and cough on my own spit in public and everyone's head turns, eyes piercing through like they can see the virus in my DNA. Just waiting to infect them.

Anyway...

This morning, mum and I went to the pharmacy to get her prescription refilled. Masks on, obviously.

A man whispered behind our backs, certain we couldn't hear.

Or maybe he was certain we could hear and whispered anyway.

"Disgusting. Get out."

I whipped around. He was a greasy-looking twig of a man and his mask wasn't even covering his nose.

He had a dog with him. A golden lab with a great, big stupid smile slapped across its snout. If it weren't for the two-metre rule, definitely would've hugged the poor bastard. How it came to have such a miserable egg for an owner is abuse itself.

"You should cover your nose." I told him.

"What's it to you?" He proceeded to cough one of those fake open-mouth coughs. Like...

They demonstrate, mouth wide open, tongue sticking out.

Not really sure what his intention was with that. If he really wanted to infect us, he would've lowered his mask and stepped over the social distance tape on the floor.

"Is he yours?" I guess I gave his dog a quick glance because he said

"Don't fucking look at her. And obviously."

"You fucking idiot" he meant.

"Are the vets still open?" I asked.

"What's it to you?" He said. "Dirty Chinks."

Something like that. I dunno. The whole thing's a bit blurry.

I guess I sort of blacked out at this point.

But not really, because I remember grabbing the pen from the pharmacist's desk. It was red.

Or maybe that was the dog bleeding out.

Before you get any ideas, I don't condone violence. I don't think punching people and spitting at them and calling them names achieves anything when you're trying to have a meaningful conversation with them. If you truly want to persuade someone that your opinion is the better opinion, the only way to do that is to explain your side of the matter. If they still don't agree with you, there's truly little to be done.

But when it gets personal, that is so much easier said than done. Nobody talks like that to my mum.

The dog's fine, by the way. She's fat, hilariously so. The pen didn't go that deep. The medic told me on my way here.

Apparently, the vet opens faster for dogs than any other pet.

I mean...I'm sorry, I guess.

The dog didn't do anything.

But then, neither did we.

END.