

Esquire

A Man's
Guide to
Life in
2020

The Quarantine Rules

By
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Rule No. 1

The people who wear masks alone in the car are the same people who call it the “China Virus”

Rule No. 2

It’s always time for a walk.

Rule No. 3

There is no masculine way to apply hand sanitizer.



Rule No. 4

Appropriate uses of your stimulus check money include: rent, groceries, and paying back the friend you convinced to invest in a pyramid scheme.

Rule No. 5

A new grill is not an appropriate use.

Rule No. 6

Counting this year to your age is optional.

Rule No. 7

Go ahead, start baking sourdough. All we ask is that you do it quietly.

Rule No. 8

A man can never own too many masks.

Rule No. 9

Never date a woman who defends Carol Baskin.



Rule No. 10

You still have to wear pants during your Zoom meeting.



Rule No. 11

Zoom is not a verb.

Rule No. 12

No self-respecting man should utter the phrase “All lives matter”.

Rule No. 13

Contrary to popular belief, the word “quarantini” should not be in your vocabulary.

Rule No. 14

Using novelty Zoom backgrounds is not a personality trait.

Rule No. 17

Satan loves people who overstock on toilet paper.

Rule No. 18

We are not “all in this together”.

Rule No. 15

Ads that begin with “During these difficult times” are not trying to make your life any easier.

Rule No. 16

Do not ask the nurse in the infectious disease unit for her number.

Rule No. 19

Concerts can now be held, they just have to be called protests with music.



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Satire Project Analysis

For my satire project, I chose to parody the book "The Rules" published by Esquire magazine. Esquire is a popular American men's magazine founded in 1933 that covers everything from fashion, lifestyle, to music. It is known for its traditional, high brow approach to masculinity. Typically it features celebrity men who embody this image on their cover. Wealth, style, physique, manners, and culture would all be associated with Esquire. The magazine still maintains a significant readership, though its narrow outlook on what it means to be a man is becoming a bit outdated in 2020.

In 2008, Esquire published a coffee table book titled "The Rules: A Man's Guide to Life". It's a collection of 668 short musings on life. The forward notes:

"At first glance, some of them appear to be more opinion (Rule No. 191: The best instrument is the cello). Some of them appear to be the products of moments of exasperation with the world (Rule No. 659 The dumber the man, the louder he talks). Others the product of moments of enthusiasm or hysteria (Rule No. 206: It's always time for pie). But, no, these are rules"

For my project, I chose to update this book and create a parody version that imagines what the rules for life in 2020 through the eyes of the Esquire magazine would be, from Coronavirus to Tiger King to the ongoing protests. The purpose of this parody is two fold: to parody Esquire magazine and the current world we live in. Everyone is going through a unique universal experience of being stuck at home together.

I wanted to highlight some of the unique changes that have entered our world and take a stab at what an Esquire man's outlook on them should be. Some rules highlight flawed logic of people in today's world, like hoarding TP or claiming "all lives matter". Others make reference to Zoom etiquette or ways to say sane during lockdown.

For this type of parody, I think mimicking the visual style of the book was important. The book features a unique grid layout and the occasional photo. Making a parody close to an

original in this way because it allows the audience to suspend their disbelief momentarily and allow themselves to pretend that it could be an original, making it funnier. For example, when the National Lampoon produced its yearbook parody, it was crucial that the layout of it closely resembled that of an actual high school yearbook.

I think this subject matter paired nicely with “the rules” medium. There is so much that could be said about lockdown life and so much that is unique about it that it lends itself well to satire. The original book is very focused on minor, silly things about life. For example: “Rule No. 526: Never be the one to start - or finish - a stadium wave.” So it was easy to adapt to the minutiae in 2020. I tried to keep it light and not too serious, like the original. Having over 600 rules in the original to get inspired by was very helpful as well. I think the biggest challenge is understanding the very specific tone of the original. It is hard to get a sense of it without flipping through it, even if you are familiar with Esquire magazine. A casual reader of the magazine may assume they are all about fashion or things to be taken literally, however, the book really covers just about everything; another example, “Rule 219: There is no shame in grape soda”. Another challenge was tackling the current protests but I think I found some good ways to make it humorous in a positive light. Overall, I’m really happy with how my project turned out. I think it is a fun reflection of quarantine and of the Esquire ethos. I also had a lot of fun recreating the format of the original.