An Open Letter to those questioning their heritage,

Hey Guys, how’s it going?

So, St. Patrick’s Day is coming up on March 17. It is a day where everybody’s green rubs a little to the surface and the streets run green with overpriced beer, now turned vomit. Who doesn’t love this holiday when its whole guiding principle is having a good time while celebrating Irish heritage?

Me. I hate this holiday is where I’m driving.

Look, I’m not against having fun. I’m not even against the celebration of my lineage for a little fun on a grand scale. Irish immigrant history is a large focal point for the country from the late 19th century onwards. I must just be an overly sensitive curmudgeon—who doesn’t know his basic modern history—and I simply cannot let bygones be bygones?

\*Editor’s Note: Here comes a truth bomb.

Wait a second, St. Patrick’s Day didn’t become popular as a celebration of Irish immigration, heritage, and history? Well… why did it get popular in the first place?

Oh, wait, right: Booze! Spirits! Grains! Hops!

It seems that the only Irish thing the holiday celebrates is the belligerent stereotype of the “Orishman:” drunk, dumb, abusive, violent Celts who are busy eating potatoes to provide for their rabbit-catholic hybrid families.

There is such an innate idiocy to the “Orish.” “Kiss Me, I’m Irish” shirts; skyrocketing sales Guinness, Bailey and Jameson; and a mysterious rise of the Irish population in the U.S. seems to happen—roughly 35 million people identify as with some lineage, about 12% of the states’ total population.

“But, maybe it’s just a misguided interpretation of my culture’s identity,” I think to myself. “It is only one day, after all. It’s not like there are misuses of the Irish’s image and values over the stretch of hundreds of years.

\*Editor’s Note: This is where we ironic comedy writers would insert an image of one of Football’s most iconic mascots, the Fighting Irishman.

On a very superficial level, this is where I empathize with Mexicans and, ironically, all of Latin America for being narrow-mindedly lumped in as Mexicans in the eyes of many American’s for another similar holiday: Cinco de Mayo—another cultural holiday that is irresponsibly celebrated as deeply in the U.S. by a large population because of its intrinsic liquor value.

Most Irish simply do not celebrate St. Patrick’s Day like Americans. In the same vein as Mexico *not* being Mexican independence day—which is September 16, mind—Cinco de Mayo is nowhere near as significant of a holiday south of the border as it is here.

It can be believed that Cinco de Mayo can be viewed as a celebration of Mexico-American relations and Mexican immigrants but, it so rarely is celebrated for that in the same way that St. Patrick’s Day is so very little for Irish heritage.

“A day where everybody is a little Irish!” I seem to always hear, sure. But, that’s akin to saying “A day where everybody’s a little Mexican!” When, in reality, if you’re not… you’re just not. And if you’re just using the holiday as another excuse to binge drink, you’re certainly not doing our heritages any favor.

If I didn’t know any better, the alcohol industry must be inserting themselves into the holiday to raise sales… if I didn’t know any better… \*Winky Winky\*

Look, just do me a favor? If you do celebrate the holiday, please give a little dignity and respect to it and observe the deep struggles and victories that the Irish have endured. Almost like if you were celebrating the holiday for what it should be: a reflection on Irish heritage and history in this country.

Thanks for reading.

Sincerely,

Brayden Mann