ISSUE 01

NOV 2026

a IMHO

Opinions you'll pretend you had first.

SICK BOY & CO.

EDITOR’S NOTE

Agreement is where good ideas go to die.

Everyone has an opinion now. Most of them are the same one, wearing different fonts. This is the other side: five counterviews, argued with a straight face and a raised eyebrow. Please don’t agree. It would mean we were too polite.

01 The algorithm has never overacted. More’s the pity.

02 Publishing finally told the truth. Luckily, it was fiction.

03 It doesn’t have to fly. It only has to raise.

04 Gen Z found the ultimate private server. It’s made of paper.

05 Geniuses don’t start wars. They can’t be bothered with the paperwork.

01

ON MOBLAND / PARAMOUNT+

The algorithm has never overacted. More's the pity.

Somewhere in California, a studio is teaching a machine to cry on cue. Meanwhile in London, Helen Mirren raises one eyebrow and does more damage than a season of software. MobLand is gloriously too much: Tom Hardy mumbling like a man chewing gravel, Pierce Brosnan chewing everything else, dialogue sharpened purely for the pleasure of hearing it cut. It isn't efficient. It isn't optimised. It's human, which is to say flawed, which is to say watchable. The flaw was never the bug. It was the box office.

02

ON FRUIT FLY / A NOVEL BY JOSH SILVER

Publishing finally told the truth. Luckily, it was fiction.

A washed-up novelist poses as a therapist to mine a young addict's life for her comeback book. It's sold as a satire of publishing. It's really a satire of everyone in the creative business, where taking a little is called research and taking a lot is called inspiration. Name a creature that turns up the exact moment the fruit turns. Now name an industry. Read it, then check your own work for fingerprints.

03

ON THE FLYING CAR / AND OTHER VALUATIONS

It doesn't have to fly. It only has to raise.

The flying car has been five years away for seventy years, which makes it the most dependable product ever announced. It never lands, so it never disappoints. This is the quiet genius of the modern founder: sell the trailer, skip the film. Hyperloop. Robotaxis by next year, every year. Mars, presumably by Tuesday. Value is what a thing does. Valuation is what people hope it might. Elon worked out early which of the two floats better.

04

ON SEOUL'S BOOKSTORES / AND GEN Z READING CLUBS

Gen Z found the ultimate private server. It's made of paper.

Offline is the new Discord.

In Seoul, the coolest thing a twenty-year-old can be seen holding is a book. They call it text hip: bookstores the size of airports, reading clubs that meet in person, phones face down like losing poker hands. Critics say they only read for the photo. Splendid. So did every intellectual in history; they just had worse lighting. No moderators, no notifications, no bots. Eight chairs, one table, one novel.

05

ON WAR / AND WHO STARTS THEM

Geniuses don’t start wars. They can’t be bothered with the paperwork.

We like our villains monstrous. It lets the rest of us off. When Hannah Arendt watched Adolf Eichmann on trial in 1961, she found no monster at all: a careerist, a man of memos, terribly ordinary. Evil, she concluded, is banal. It wears a lanyard. It wants the promotion. It never asks why, only by when. The truly curious are too doubtful to march anywhere. War needs the respectable: the committee, the shareholder, the neighbour who was only following the group chat.

Disagree? Splendid.

Write in. We read everything.
We concede nothing.

hello@firstdraft1.com

SICK BOY & CO. ®