

Damian Lillard's departure from basketball yields successful album

Trevor Houston
Staff Reporter

It is not often that an NBA player transitions from the court to the studio in the middle of the season, but that is not the case for NBA superstar Damian Lillard. Also known as Dame D.O.L.L.A., Lillard has been known to display his lyrical talent in various Instagram videos, as well as in interviews on radio shows such as *Sway in the Morning*. In late October, the superstar came out with his first album, titled *The Letter O*.

The album is based off of Lillard's early childhood in Oakland, California. In high school Lillard was offered a full-ride scholarship to Weber State for basketball. After graduating, Lillard was drafted in the 2012 NBA draft and was the sixth pick in the first round.

In July of 2015 the NBA star released his first song titled "Soldier in the Game." This is when people started to realize the star had some serious rapping skills. Later on, Lillard was featured on *Sway in the Morning* in a six-minute freestyle of nothing but lyrics from the top of his head. *The Letter O* is a dynamic album with various different beats and meanings.

One track of the album that I liked a lot was "Growth Spurt," featuring Dupre. The beat had a futuristic type of feeling to it, but at the same time it was very mellow. Through the song you can get a feel for how his life was



Photo by Bernice Gajda

through lyrics such as "my life is a puzzle, jigsaw; I went from a puppy to a big dog." I also liked the feature in the song, Dupre. I felt like he came into the song at the right time and his lyrics backed up the message of the song of how Dupre's life also used to be. You can almost get a personal connection with the song, that is, of

course if you went through some of the things that Damian Lillard did.

Another song I feel like may be the best on the album is "Loyal to the Soil" featuring Lil Wayne. The song had a really nice beat, which included a lot of bass. Lillard had more great lyrics such as "do a lot for others, not for credit or to soak in, but to have an

impact in the direction they go in." It gives the feeling that he is looking out for others who have had an impact on him, possibly his community. I also liked Lil Wayne's verse. I feel like we got to see a different version of Wayne in the song as he went in on the beat. The only thing I would have liked to see from this song is maybe another

feature on it such as Kanye West or Chance the Rapper.

One song that I did not like was "Bill Walton." The beat was too slow, and I couldn't really get into the song. Lillard seemed to try with this track, but the substance just wasn't there. I think the song would have been a little better if there had been a feature on the track. Possibly Kendrick Lamar, because I feel like this is his kind of beat.

Another track that I don't really care for is "Baggage" featuring Adrian Marcel. It was another slow song that I feel is more of a singing song, which was taken care of in the hook by Adrian Marcel. Dame D.O.L.L.A. had good lyrics but I just feel this isn't the type of song that needed rapping. On the other hand I liked the beat; it was really smooth, with a piano in the background that made a really nice flow.

Aside from a few outliers, I feel like *The Letter O* was a quality album that had a lot of upside to it. I would definitely recommend this album to anybody looking for new music to listen to, and if there is a second album released, I would be very excited to hear it.

Lillard is currently having, in my opinion, his best season in the NBA right now. Averaging thirty points a game, five rebounds, and four assists, Lillard is a star both on and off the court and continues to excel in both areas.

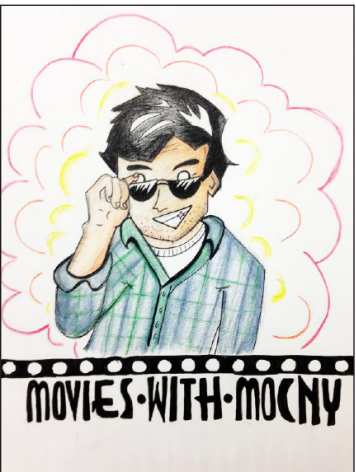


Illustration by Kendall Cassella

Johnny Mocny
Entertainment Editor

Top 5 animated films you will not believe exist

We are at a moment of time when I have begun to truly wonder what might be next for the film industry.

However, one thing is for sure, and that is the saturation of animated films. There is absolutely no doubt we will be getting 100 animated movies per year. It will always be easy to drag snotty children out for the day to see an explosion of colors for 90 minutes.

While we have occasional gems like *Inside Out*, we will always get a truckload of abominations like *Norm of the North*. However, no matter how bad *Cars 2* might be, it will never meet the strange levels of certain animated films. So, in honor of the upcoming soon-to-be-classic *Sing*, I give you the top five strangest animated movies.

5. *Sir Billi* (2012)

Sir Sean Connery himself decided his career was not over. His choice was nothing but bizarre. *Sir Billi* tells the inspiring story of an elderly skateboarder who has animal friends. Honestly, I cannot tell you what else happens because the movie is really a bizarre dream-landscape of animation that seems to be done by a high school graphics student. There a sweet skateboard chase with a truck. It was some high quality *Raiders of the Last Ark* kind of stuff. The saddest part is that Sean Connery's unimpressed voice sounds more lost and vulnerable than a blind puppy in the middle of a busy street.

4. *The Little Panda Fighter* (2008)

This adorable attempt at getting money from confused old ladies who are trying to buy a DVD of *Kung-Fu Panda* for their bratty grandkids is quite inexplicable. I turned to seven different religions for answers after experiencing this peculiar morsel of satanic imagery. In case you have yet to see this gem, it tells the story of a panda who boxes for sport, and the moral of the story, in the end, is that it is always best to choose greed over social growth. Gordon Gekko would be proud. I recommend this unbelievable bundle of hysteria to all people who do not own eyes.

3. *A Car's Life* (2006)

This wonderful entry to the "talking car" genre is a heartwarming family adventure filled with corruption, adultery and murder. It's okay though, because it has talking cars.

If you decide to undertake this cash in on the Pixar brand, you will wish you were watching *Planes: Fire and Rescue* instead.

2. *Foodfight!* (2012)

Mr. Clean, the Vlasic bird and other iconic folks run amuck in this star-studded adventure with talking animals voiced by Charlie Sheen, Hilary Duff and Eva Longoria. Bad classic noir references, dad-worthy puns and '90s computer game animation run amok in this unbelievable tour-de-force of product placement buffoonery. I think I just described what hell is like.

1. *The Animated Titanic Trilogy*

Yes, it may be cheating, but I felt it was my duty to warn all of good people of Okemos High School about the three animated films about one of the great tragedies of the 20th century. Sinking ships, rapping dogs, evil sharks, Greek gods, say it and they have it. Sure, it may be tasteless and mind-boggling, but at least it will put you to sleep.

What say you, reader? Do you have weirder, more obscure choices? If so, I am happy to know someone else out there is wasting their life, too.

Dark books make good companions to winter days

Lexie Yates
Staff Reporter

In this chilly month of Nov., one of the best things to do is curl up in a cozy place and get lost in the world of fiction.

While some books can be predictable or hard to get through, these books will be impossible to set down. They are filled with excitement, sadness, fear and puzzles. If you find yourself looking for something to read this fall, go to your local library and check out these great reads.

1. *Blazed* by Jason Myers

Blazed is about a boy who struggles with his father leaving. Jamie, being only 14, quickly gets addicted to drugs while his mother battles depression. In a bad night mixed with alcohol and getting into trouble in school, Jamie is sent to live with his dad, who is a complete stranger to him. Living inside of this 'glass castle', a mental

place he builds during his high to escape reality, Jamie learns new things about his mother and father. Jamie has a hard time processing this new information and his only escape is the castle and Dominique.

2. *Touch Series* by Laurie Stolarz

The *Touch* series contains, in order, *Deadly Little Secrets*, *Deadly Little Lies*, *Deadly Little Games*, *Deadly Little Voices* and *Deadly Little Lessons*. I have only read two out of the five books of the *Touch* series, but I already know they are worth reading. The *Touch* series revolves around the life of Camelia, who has a pretty ordinary life, until Ben moves into town. Rumors spread around the school that Ben killed his ex-girlfriend which start to seem true when Camelia's life turns upside down. What others do not know and what Camelia finds out, is that Ben has a secret capability to see the future, past and present through the touch of a human, or something that has recently been handled, like a

book that has just been read. Having read the first two books, for months I have been on the search for the rest of the series in local libraries. This series keeps you on your toes has proved totally unpredictable. It always has twists and turns.

3. *The House* by Christina Lauren

Delilah is back from her Catholic school and back into the regular world of public schools. Although she is back in the same family, the same house and enrolled back into the same school, one thing is different: her middle school crush, Gavin. He's grown up to be more mysterious and complicated than he was when they were kids. Delilah can not remember the last time she has seen Gavin with his family. She can only think of one thing that could change him: his house. Gavin's house is the only thing more mysterious than Gavin himself. As Delilah uncovers the truth about Gavin's house, thing become more

clouded than clear. What doesn't she understand? This book is one of the most satisfying paranormal thrillers I have read.

4. *Welcome to the Dark House* by Laurie Stolarz

Stolarz is personally one of my favorite authors. *Welcome to the Dark House* is a book that switches through seven different characters who are contest winners of the Nightmare Elf nightmare contest. They submitted a story of their worst nightmare and in return were promised to meet an actor of the movie, *The Dark House* and a weekend stay at a B&B. Little do these contestants know, they will have to face the fear they have written about. Ivy, one of the more main characters, wrote about her fear of meeting her parents murderer. Her fear is that he will come back for her and she is not wrong. *Welcome to the Dark House* is a phenomenon, followed by the sequel, *Return to the Dark House*.

5. *Clarity* by Loretta Lost

Clarity is the first book of a four book series. Helen Winters was born blind. Being blind her whole life, she typically knows how to get around. However, entering a new university, Helen has a hard time getting around without being familiar of the layout. Helen gets asked if she wanted help getting to one of her classes and when she accepts, the unexpected happens. The guy who helps Helen, takes her to a storage closet and rapes her. Terrified of life after this horrific tragedy, Helen secludes herself in the woods a few years later. With new technology, doctors find Helen's hideaway because they think she is the perfect person to try out a new surgery that could possibly give her vision for the first time. Not convinced and not wanting to come out of her home, Helen declines. However, the doctor is persistent and Helen's sister is getting married, a perfect hoax to get Helen out of her house. The fiance is not who Helen expects it to be, though, and Helen does not approve.

Comparison between PC and Mac ends unexpectedly

Joe Chappelle
Staff Reporter

PC computers are better than Apple computers.

With PC products, you get a sense that you're actually paying for a high end computer, not the social fad that is an Apple logo.

However, as a lover of technology, I have to give credit where credit is due - the marketing team for Apple's MacBook Pro has done an excellent job over the years selling an undisputably gorgeous laptop.

However, looks can only get you so far, and if you're a young professional or a kid in college shopping on a budget, why dish out an extra few hundred bucks for a laptop that looks better? If you're shopping for a new 13 inch MacBook Pro, \$1,299 will get you the cheapest option with the following stand out hardware: up to 3.1 GHz dual-core Intel Core i5 processor, 8GB 1866MHz memory, 256GB PCIe-based Solid State Drive (SSD) and Intel Iris Graphics 6100. For one hundred dollars less both prices listed not including tax and or shipping, you could buy a new 15 inch Dell XPS 15 with two extra inches of screen space, a 6th Generation up to 3.2 GHz Intel Core i5, 8GB 2133MHz DDR4 Memory, 1TB 5400RPM Hard Drive + 32GB Solid State Drive and a NVIDIA GeForce GTX 960M Video Card with 2GB GDDR5.

All of these numbers and letters can be confusing for someone who is not educated in hardware. Any simple Google search and about five minutes of research per category will show the same thing: for less money, you can get a laptop with better hardware. To make this comparison easy, I'll just say which is better for each category. The better central processing unit (CPU) goes to Dell. Better and or

more memory (RAM) goes to Dell. Better hard drive is a tie. Better and or more powerful graphics goes to Dell. Also, screen size goes to the Dell, with an extra two inches.

However, let's say you really want that extra two inches of screen space? Well, Apple has you covered, as they have their own 15 inch MacBook Pro. The cheapest, and when I say "cheapest" I mean 1,999 dollars, 15 inch MacBook Pro comes with the following stand out hardware: up to 3.4 GHz quad-core Intel Core i7 Processor, 16GB 1600MHz memory, 256GB PCIe-based Solid State Drive and Intel Iris Pro Graphics. For about 150 dollars less, you can get a 15 inch 4k Ultra-HD (3840 x 2160) Infinity Edge touchscreen Dell XPS 15 with the following stand out hardware: up to 3.5 GHz quad-core Intel Core i7 Processor, 16GB 2133MHz DDR4 Memory, 256GB PCIe-based Solid State Drive and a NVIDIA GeForce GTX 960M Video Card with 2GB GDDR5. If these numbers and letters are still confusing, the table to the right compares the specs for each.

So, once again, to make it easier I will simply say who, in my opinion, has the better hardware for each category: Central processing unit (CPU): Dell. Memory (RAM): Dell. Hard Drive: Tie. Graphics: Dell. Display: Dell, if you're counting the touchscreen capability. If not, then it's practically a tie.

While your need for hardware depends on what you're using the laptop for, this trend of less bang for buck with apple continues up and down the price spectrum for both laptops.

However, something interesting happens when you go down the price spectrum. Dell has two configurations of the XPS 15 that cost less than the cheapest 13 inch MacBook Pro. So, if you really don't need to drop \$1,199 on a new laptop, you could drop a

thousand, or even less for a laptop that isn't an Apple and still gets the job done.

The simplicity of having both a Mac laptop and an iPhone is something that some people refuse to give up, which is understandable. Further-

presentations hosted by Steve Jobs, showcasing Apple's game changing and innovative new products. While companies like Intel are making faster

Hardware	MacBook Pro (15 inch)	Dell XPS 15 (15 inch)	
Central Processing Unit (CPU)	3.4 GHz quad-core Intel Core i7 Processor	3.5 GHz quad-core Intel Core i7 Processor	WINNER
Memory (RAM)	16GB 1600MHz memory	16GB 2133MHz DDR4 memory	WINNER
Graphics	Intel Iris Pro Graphics	NVIDIA GeForce GTX 960M with 2GB GDDR5	WINNER
Storage	256GB PCIe-based Solid State Drive	256GB PCIe-based Solid State Drive	TIE
Weight	4.49 pounds (2.04 kg)	4.4 pounds (1.99 kg)	WINNER
Thickness	.71 inches (1.8 cm)	.45-.66 inches (1.14-1.67 cm)	WINNER
Display	Retina Display	4k Ultra-HD (3840 x 2160) Infinity Edge Touchscreen	TIE
Price	\$1,999 (excluding tax, warranty and shipping)	\$1,849 (excluding tax, warranty and shipping)	WINNER

Graphic by Zoya Shevchenko

Furthermore, Apple uses an entirely different operating system. Users who own a Mac that want to download things such as programs, games, apps, and other software have to sometimes wait longer for them to be released.

One saving grace for Macs though, is the convenience that comes with cross-platform technology.

more, if you are willing to get away from iMessage, iTunes, and the app store and are willing to learn how to use a more "complicated" Windows or Google phone, you would be getting the same cross-platform experience.

A recent pattern with Apple has been a lack of innovation. Long gone are the days of jaw dropping Apple

Central Processing Units (CPUs) for PCs, Apple seems to think that simply removing ports and adding more dongles passes as "innovation."

So next time you're shopping for a laptop and are considering a MacBook Pro, instead of paying into the fad Apple has constructed, you could buy a superior laptop for less money.