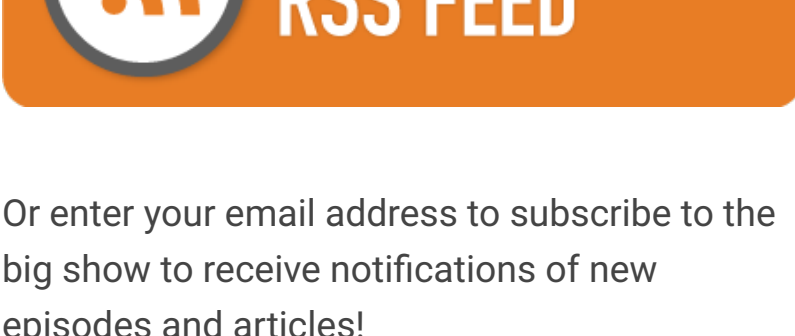


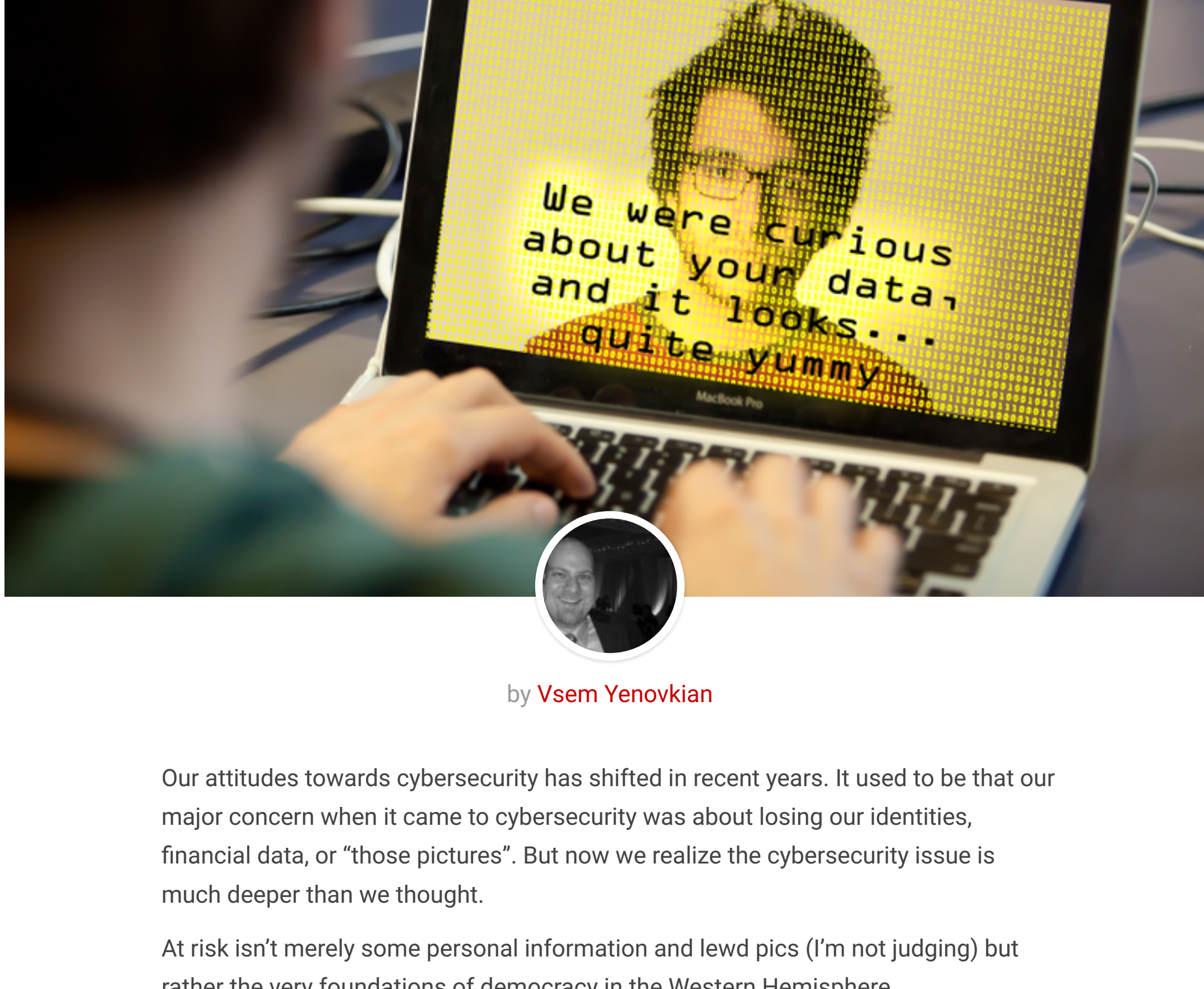
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The Cybersecurity War is Coming to Canada

July 1, 2018 · by Vsem Yenovkian



by **Vsem Yenovkian**

Our attitudes towards cybersecurity has shifted in recent years. It used to be that our major concern when it came to cybersecurity was about losing our identities, financial data, or “those pictures”. But now we realize the cybersecurity issue is much deeper than we thought.

At risk isn't merely some personal information and lewd pics (I'm not judging) but rather the very foundations of democracy in the Western Hemisphere.

The true extent of Russian hacking and influence on the US Presidential election in 2016 is still unknown but it's clear that a great deal of meddling took place. In addition to potentially hacking the results themselves there is also concern about the amount of influence they had in the run-up to the election.

Facebook in particular was used to manipulate users into making political decisions based on the posts that were showing up in their feeds. We know from the Cambridge Analytica scandal that they were gathering data on users and their political leanings and targeting them to see posts that played into their beliefs. If someone showed they were against a candidate or platform, they would see ads and posts that showed the candidate in a negative light, even if those posts weren't factually correct.

Just so there's no mistaking the intentions of what was going on the CEO of Cambridge Analytica himself was outright bragging about how his firm **helped Trump win the election**.

Cybersecurity issues have definitely come a long way.

Not only do we have to worry about conventional hackers but this new, somewhat psychological, form of a cybersecurity threat is coming into play.

The effects on Canada

As always, what happens in the US has a ripple effect on what happens in Canada. The question we should all be asking ourselves is what can we do to prevent something similar from happening here?

The Canadian government has taken the first steps to combat the growing global cybersecurity concerns. In February the Canadian government **pledged \$1 billion to combat cybersecurity threats**. Included in this plan is a measure to prevent any election hacks.

Also included is \$155 million to the Defence department that is allocated for them to create the Canadian Center for Cyber Security. An additional \$116 million will be used to establish the National Cybercrime Coordination Unit. This unit is intended to be operated by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP).

Finally, \$236 million will be put towards the development of a National Cyber Security Strategy. The plan will be for all these departments to work together to plan, anticipate, and counter any cybersecurity threats. The plan is for these departments to be fleshed out **over the next five years**.

Of course, it's not as easy as just throwing money at the issue or creating a bunch of departments. If it was the US wouldn't be having any of the cybersecurity issues they've been experiencing. It's equally important for resources to be devoted to learning more about hackers and their strategy. As they become more and more sophisticated then so should the people in charge of protecting our cybersecurity become sophisticated.

It's not only important to look at cybersecurity from a hacking perspective but also from a psychological one. Canada needs to ensure that the cybersecurity measures also look into the manipulation tactics used by Cambridge Analytica.

Fighting a sophisticated war requires sophisticated thinking

The cybersecurity war is ramping up. First it was our files, then it was our identity, and now it's our democracy. Canada should not rest on its laurels and assume that this \$1 billion will eradicate the issue altogether. If they intend on winning this war then this needs to be only phase one of a multi-phase action plan.

The other side will come back with more tools and we need to be ready. They will adapt and we should be prepared to adapt as well. Cyber-attacks come in many different forms and cybersecurity should as well. If the Canadian government sticks to only trying to fight conventional hackers then they've already lost the cybersecurity wars.

Canada must be ready to fight this digital war on multiple fronts. It needs to be aware of tactics similar to the ones used by Cambridge Analytica. It needs to create privacy laws similar to **the GDPR in Europe**. And it needs to understand that, much with anything in technology, the environment is rapidly changing. Canada needs to make sure they are proactive and not reactive against cybersecurity threats.

As with any war the winner isn't necessarily the side with the most money or the most power but the ones that are the most determined. It's in Canada's best interests to make sure they're the most determined.

It's only our way of life that might be at stake.

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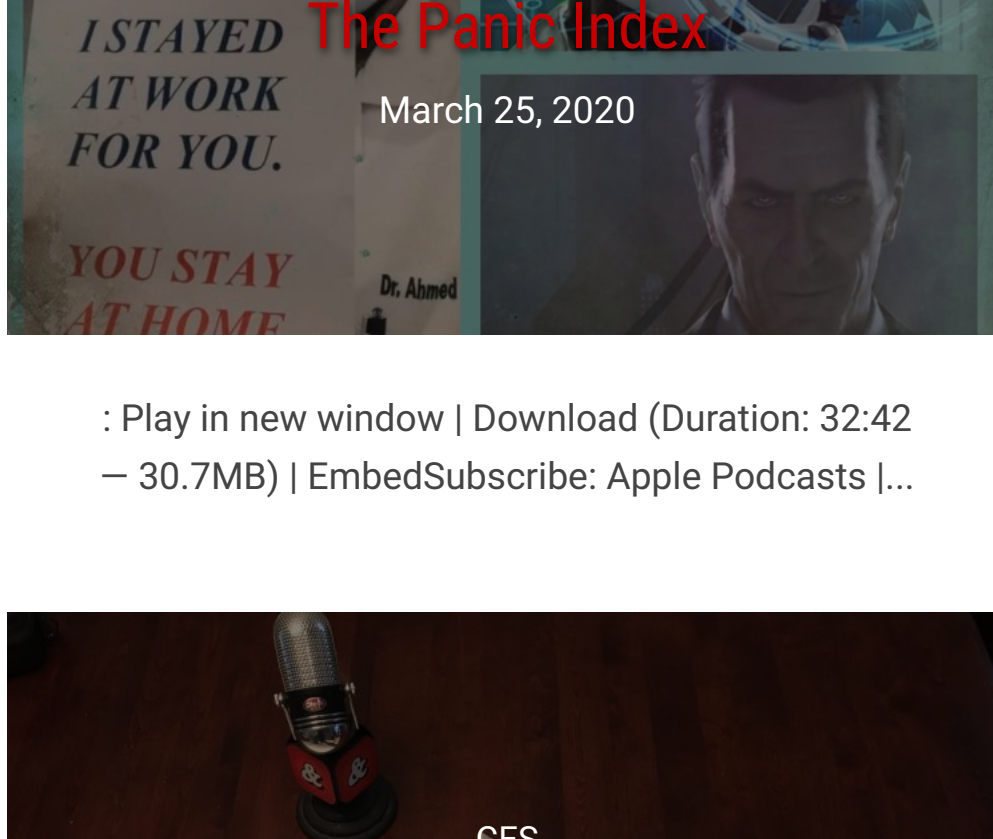
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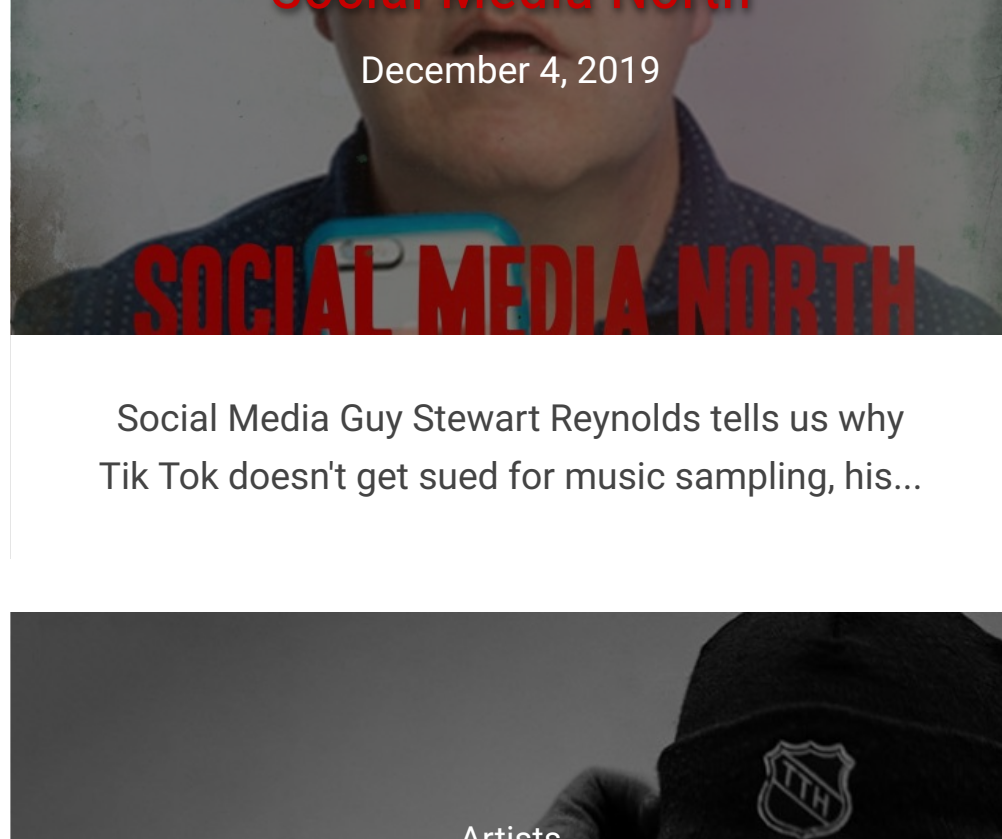
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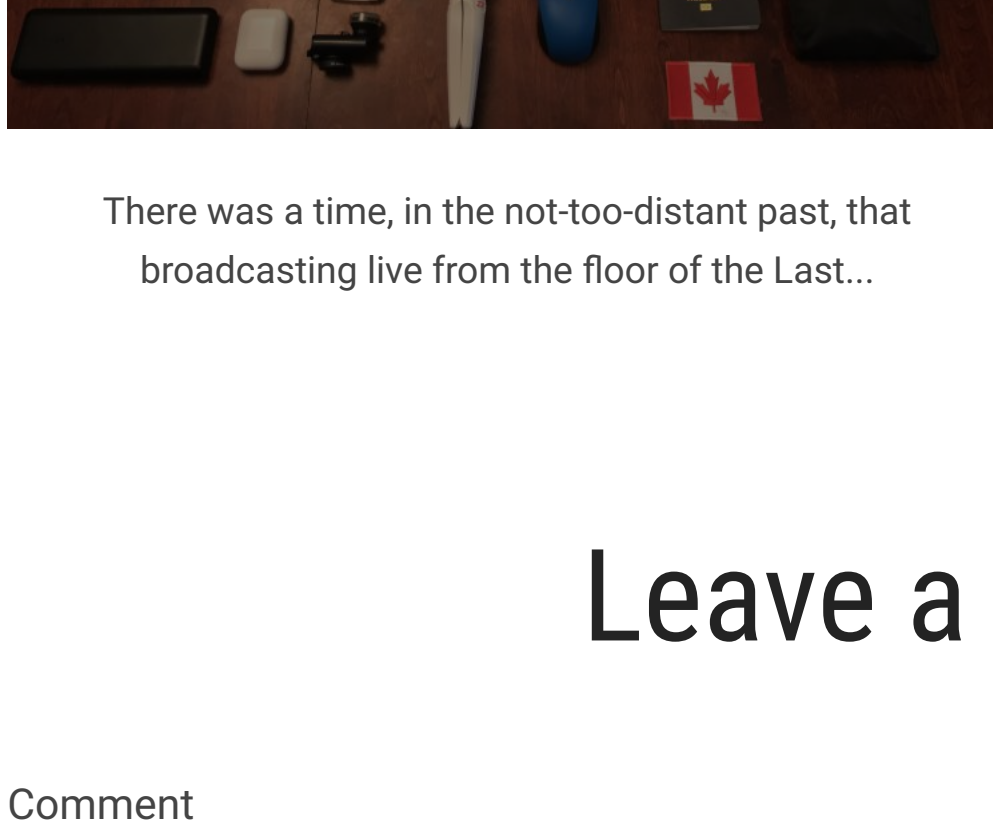
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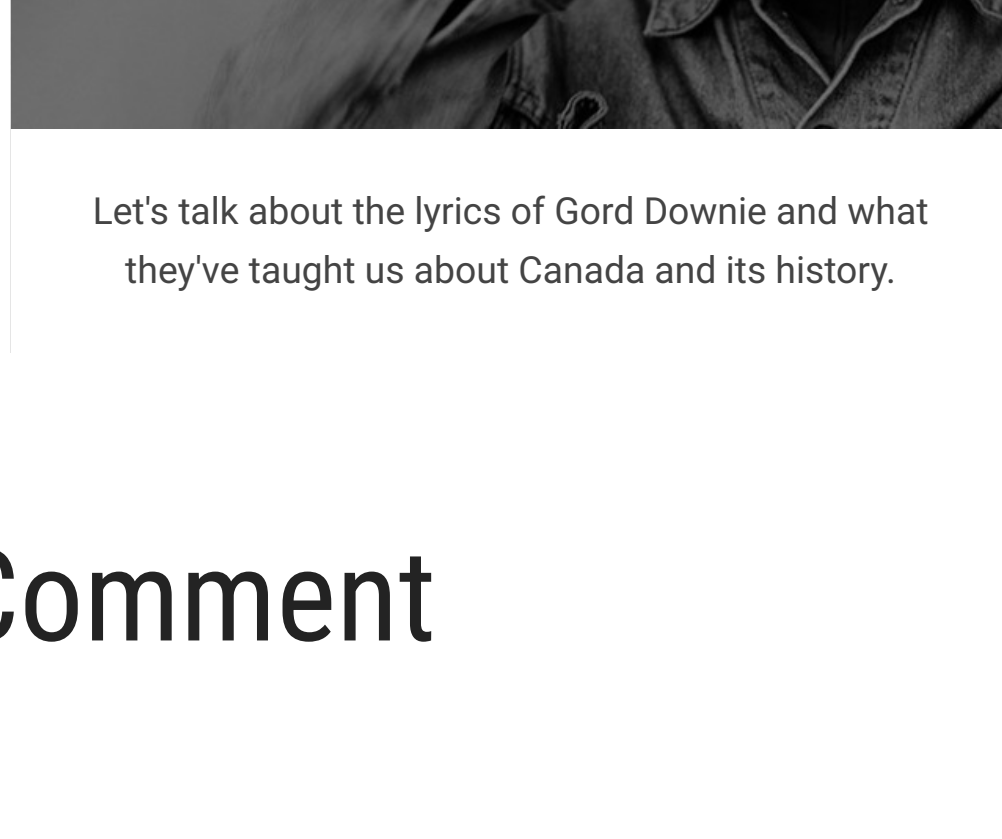
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