

The PSA 10 obsession “Monster” mixes up truth

By Jay’Mi Vazquez
Managing Editor

In the world of trading cards, a running joke has taken hold: PSA, originally “Professional Sports Authenticator,” now unofficially stands for “Please Submit Again.” The nickname speaks to a growing frustration among collectors who repeatedly crack open their PSA nine slabs and resubmit them, chasing the elusive PSA 10. What should be a straightforward grading process has turned into a cycle of hope, disappointment and mounting costs — all for a single extra point. A PSA 10 is considered “Gem Mint,” nearly flawless, and can sell for multiples of what a PSA nine commands. That steep value gap has created a culture of endless resubmissions, where cards graded a nine are cracked, cleaned and sent back in the hopes of catching a lenient grader or a slightly better scan. Collectors know the system is not perfectly objective. Tiny differences in centering, surface shine or even the grader’s mood on a given day can determine whether a card earns a

nine or a 10. With thousands of cards passing through PSA’s system daily, consistency is hard to maintain. A card that falls just short one week might hit the jackpot the next. This unpredictability drives some collectors crazy. For many, the excitement of getting grades back has been replaced with anxiety — not about authenticity, but about whether PSA’s judgment will finally align with their own. On hobby forums and YouTube channels, collectors vent about cards that “should’ve been a 10” or showcase success stories after countless resubmissions. Each crack and resend feels like a gamble, part strategy, part superstition. Some even joke that persistence has become a grading skill in itself. Behind the humor, though, there is exhaustion. Collectors talk about late nights comparing corners under magnification, or the sinking feeling of opening yet another PSA nine return. The line between dedication and obsession blurs quickly, and what began as a hobby starts to feel like an endurance test

fueled by frustration and faint hope. Many have watched identical cards bounce between grades, spending hundreds in fees and shipping just to land the “right” number. It is not uncommon for the same card to be cracked and resubmitted multiple times until it finally earns the gem mint label. The rewards can be huge, but the process feels absurd. For many, it is less about the condition of the card and more about luck and persistence. A PSA 10 might symbolize perfection, but if it takes five tries to get there, what does that perfection really mean? Critics argue that PSA’s grading process should be more consistent or limit repeat submissions. Others shrug it off as part of the game, the frustrating, expensive and addictive pursuit of cardboard perfection. In the end, “Please Submit Again” perfectly captures the modern hobby. Each cracked slab tells a story not just of collecting, but of the relentless chase for validation in a system that sometimes feels as fickle as the cards themselves.



A PSA 6 Pokémon slab being cracked open with pliers.

PHOTO | YOUTUBE

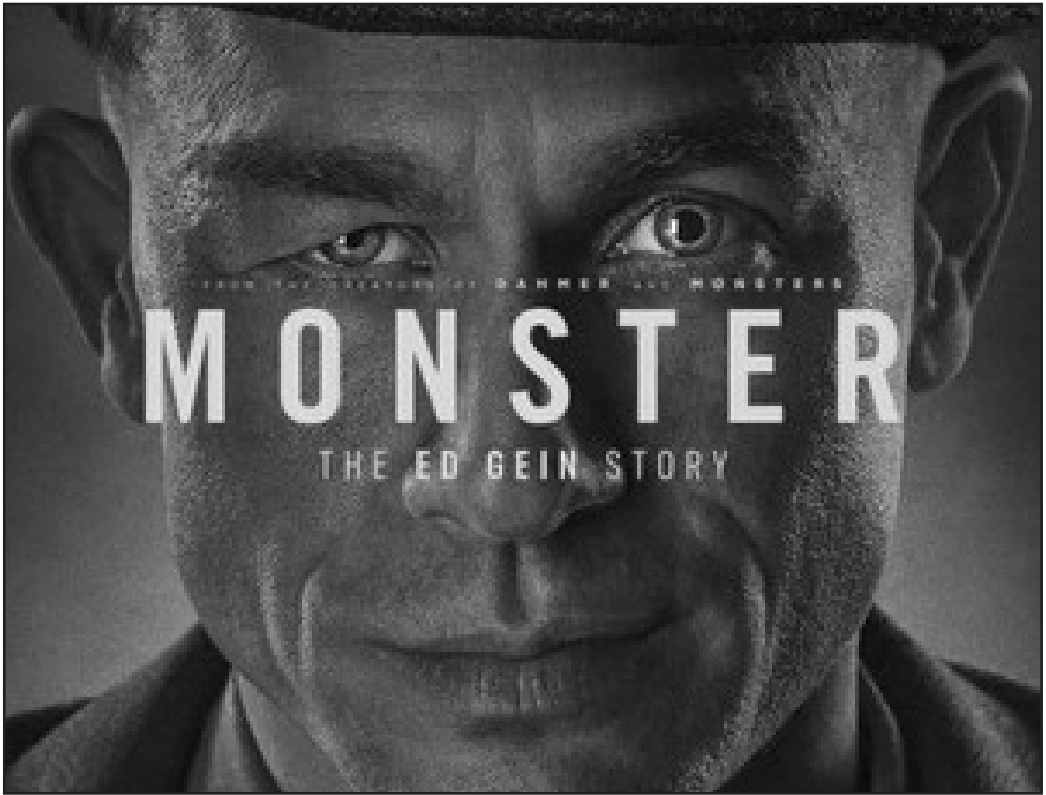


PHOTO | SPOTIFY

Promo image for the Ed Gein Monsters Netflix series.

By Jay’Mi Vazquez
Managing Editor

Director Ryan Murphy and the rise of his true-crime biographical shows are intriguing yet; they contain inaccuracies that can be proven. “Monster: The Ed Gein Story” premiered on Oct. 3 on Netflix and is Murphy’s latest installment of his popular series. This is the third season of the series, and it follows the life of murderer Ed Gein who killed two women in the 1950’s and robbed the bodies of people who rested in their graves. Gein would use those bodies to create furniture, clothing and disturbing women costumes. I was floored that I had never heard of this man before considering the damage he has done and how he was the inspiration for so many movies I love, including “Psycho,” “Silence of the Lambs” and “Texas Chain Saw Massacre.” As I was watching the show, I could not help but notice that Murphy was trying to victimize Gein and make the audience feel empathy towards him. Gein mentally deteriorated once his beloved mother Augusta

Wilhelmine Gein passed away in 1945. The show displayed his unhealthy obsession with her and how her death led him to killing. Addison Rae is someone I have not paid attention to since her TikTok days in the Hype House, but wow was her acting amazing. Rae portrayed a high school babysitter named Evelyn Hartley who has been rumored to be kidnapped and murdered by Gein in the 50’s. The link between the two is that Hartley would babysit for a family, but she contracted polio and the family needed a different babysitter. Gein would help with the children after Hartley, until an unsettling situation spooked the family, and he was fired. I looked this up and there has been no correlation with the disappearance of Hartley and Gein. Gein was investigated and took a lie detector test, which he passed. The evidence that was left behind in her disappearance did not match Gein but instead showed that more than one person was responsible for the crime as witness statements and show prints left behind. This not being included in the show ruined it for

me because I do not like fictionalized stories in a show based off true events. This is not the first time Murphy has included false information. He caused chaos with Jeffrey Dahmer and the Menendez brothers’ stories as he included inaccuracies. I also felt bamboozled as I was under the impression that Gein’s second victim was in a relationship with him. I learned later through my own research that their relationship was false. Another thing that was debunked from the show was that Gein never spoke to other serial killers through letters, nor did he help in capturing Ted Bundy. This is extremely dangerous because we should not be rewriting history. Whether to make a show more interesting, facts are facts, and Murphy should be ashamed of himself. Ryan Murphy is reintroducing the world to these true crime events, which can have a positive or negative effect depending on how you look at things. Murphy needs to stick to the facts more in his series, stop adding fake scenes and stop making excuses for why these people became monsters.

Commercialization over artistry

By Solé Scott
Editor-in-Chief

The music artistry has declined significantly in the last 15 to 20 years due to how music is being distributed. With Taylor Swift’s “The Life of a Showgirl” being the most talked about album right now, I and other people on social media, are calling in to question the validity of all the records broken with this album and the dangerous trends of variants. Shockingly, Adele’s album “25” record for biggest first week debut in history with 3.4 million sold was squashed by Swift, who sold a staggering 4.1 million copies. I have strong mixed feelings on how Swift acquired this title since she was selling a plethora of variants left and right. We all see the difference in the music industry and how artists are not only marketing their new music but also their personal brands. What bothers me about artists today is the influx of special edition albums and deluxes that are only available for a limited time. Now Swift may be the artist that is

best known for this, but as quiet as it kept, she is not the only one who scams her fans. Charli XCX released a plethora of CDs and vinyls of her infamous “BRAT” album that was released in the summer of 2024. The aggravating part is that Charli was just repressing the same album in different fonts. Nicki Minaj is another artist who in recent years has resorted to bundles and variants after criticizing other artists for doing so during her “Queen” era. For her latest album “Pink Friday 2,” she had at least seven different variants in vinyl and CD format. Travis Scott does not get as much flack for indulging in the same practices, but he is guilty as well. He has alternate artwork pressings for multiple albums such as “ASTROWORLD,” and no new songs were added. Post Malone has managed to be under the radar as well with multiple pressings of the same album. His last album released in 2024 had sign editions, splatter pressings, and different colored records. Lastly, Sabrina Carpenter, who I love

dearly, has unfortunately joined the money grab trend. She started with “Short n’ Sweet” and released at least six or more vinyl variants, four CDs and two cassette tapes. Another aspect of this is the music business who values numbers and good press. The output is more important than the authenticity of one’s work. Why cannot artists just release a deluxe album that has a different artwork than their original. This will simply eliminate all talks of financial profit being prioritized over creativity and talent. I believe this generation of artists are in it for the money, awards and accolades rather than for the love of music. This clearly shows in their tour prices and anything else they cram down consumers’ throats like a capitalist. Artists being pressed and fixated on numbers have truly destroyed this glorious business that once housed talent and possessed a love for music. We are too far gone in the streaming era to revive the old passion of making music for fans without ulterior motives.

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