

00:00:00	Music	Music	“Crown Ones” off the album <i>Stepfather</i> by People Under The Stairs
00:00:05	Oliver Wang	Host	Hello, I’m Oliver Wang.
00:00:06	Morgan Rhodes	Host	And I’m Morgan Rhodes. You’re listening to <i>Heat Rocks</i> .  Every episode we invite a guest to join us to talk about a heat rock. You know, fire, combustibles, an album that bumps eternally; and today, we’ll be deep-diving together into the 1998 album by Whitney Houston, <i>My Love Is Your Love</i> .
00:00:24	Music	Music	“My Love Is Your Love” off the album <i>My Love Is Your Love</i> by Whitney Houston. Mid-tempo R&B with Whitney Houston singing the main vocal piece backed by a chorus of several voices.  <i>WHITNEY HOUSTON &amp; BACKUP VOCALISTS:</i> <i>Cause your love is my love</i> <i>And my love is your love</i> <i>It would take an eternity to break us</i> <i>And the chains of Amistad couldn't hold us</i>  <i>[The back-up vocalists and Whitney Houston sing the following parts overlapping]</i>  <i>BACK-UP VOCALISTS:</i> <i>My love is, my love is</i> <i>My love is—</i>  <i>WHITNEY:</i> <i>My loving, my love is—</i>  <i>ALL:</i> <i>—your love</i>  <i>[Music fades out as Morgan speaks]</i>
00:00:40	Morgan	Host	In 2015, game three of the NBA Eastern conference finals, Paul Pierce—then in his 17th season—hit a buzzer beater at the end of regulation to defeat the Atlanta Hawks. As he was leaving the court, ESPN reporter Chris Broussard asked him about the shot, “Did you call bank?” Paul thought for a minute and said, “Shit, I called game.”  <i>[Oliver chuckles.]</i>  On her fourth studio album, released on Arista Records, November 17th, 1998, Whitney Houston, then in her 13th season, called game, and while it wasn’t her last recording, depending on who you ask, it was her last big win. And by that, I mean real big. Four million copies sold, five hit singles, seven Grammy nominations, a Golden Globe nomination, an Oscar for best original song. This is how you sonic, not that she needed to.  In the eight years between this album and the last one, she had only been part of the best-selling soundtrack of all time, she’d had two number-one hit songs, “Shoop” and “Count On Me” from

*Waiting To Exhale*, she'd sang all over the best-selling gospel album of all time, *The Preacher's Wife*, she gave us selective amnesia as it related to Dolly Parton, she reinvented the Star Spangled Banner. Shall I go on?

- 00:01:54 Morgan Host But on this album, it seemed like Whitney Houston had something else to prove. Apparently, Whitney came to Clive and said, "Oh, I want to dance with somebody. I want to feel the heat with somebody." Clive said, "Say less." And then came the cavalry, Wyclef, Rodney Jerkins, Lauryn Hill, and then the familiar cast of characters in David Foster and Kenneth "Babyface" Edmonds. She asked her sisters to join her, Faith, Kelly, Missy, and even Mariah Carey.
- She wanted to be down, down with us, down for us. Maybe she hoped we'd return the favor, but we didn't. She sang, and we talked, about everything, her every move, her marriage, and what happened to the hundred-million dollar contract this album birthed. But in 1998, her love was our love. I wish it had lasted, because didn't we almost have it all?
- 00:02:49 Music Music [*"My Love is Your Love" fades back in*]
- As the years, they pass us by  
We stay young through each other's eyes  
And no matter how old we get  
It's okay as long as I got you babe*
- [*Music fades out again*]
- 00:03:13 Oliver Host *My Love Is Your Love* was the album pick of our guest today, writer Gerrick Kennedy. He's been on staff at the L.A. Times for ten years now, which I think must set a new record, just given the current state of newspaper. [*Everyone laughs.*] So shout-out. Shout-out that you held on there for a decade.
- He covers music, arts, and culture for them, and just this year alone he's written about everyone from Billie Eilish to Lil Nas X, Janet Jackson to Michael Jackson, and much, much more. He's also author of the 2017 book, *Parental Discretion Is Advised: The Rise of N.W.A. and the Dawn of Gangsta Rap*. He is currently working on a new book, which will be out hopefully in the fall of 2021, about one Whitney Elizabeth Houston.
- Gerrick, welcome to *Heat Rocks*.
- 00:03:58 Gerrick Kennedy Guest Thank you guys for having me.
- 00:04:00 Morgan Host So, why did you pick this album, and what was your introduction to Whitney Houston?
- 00:04:05 Gerrick Guest Well, my intro to Whitney, I mean, I grew up with her, I think like most of us. She was always in the house. My mom was a big R&B fan, and she was sort of my introduction to a lot of what I loved growing up, just because she was— gosh, I remember at the time it was, uh... BMG, the music club—

00:04:26 Morgan Host Oh, yeah.

00:04:27 Gerrick Guest —and like I would go and like, she would order stuff, but then I would be like, “Let me just go ahead and just add these couple and see if I like, don’t get caught.” *[Morgan laughs.]*

But, you know, Whitney was ever-present, she was— you know, like a lot of, I think, Black households, and I was someone who was a big R&B fan but I also didn’t really see a lot of the chatter. You know, I was really young, so this was just a voice that I really loved, it was a person that I really loved.

But the thing about *My Love Is Your Love*, which is why it’s my favorite, is because 1998 was just such a pivotal year for a woman in contemporary R&B, and contemporary R&B is my jam. It’s something that I hope one day somebody will pay me lots and lots of money to just write theses on and teach courses on all of this. But my entry point into my love of that is women, and it’s the female voice, and it’s harmony, and it’s melody, and I just— because I want folks to understand, truly, I wanted to make a list, because this is how serious ‘98 was.

00:05:27 Oliver Host Oh, let’s go.

*[Morgan and Oliver respond emphatically as Gerrick speaks.]*

00:05:28 Gerrick Guest This is how serious ‘98 was, and these are all people who I love, but these are all folks who are descendants of Whitney. You think of the fact that Brandy came out with *Never Say Never*. Monica had *The Boy Is Mine*. Deborah Cox came out with *One Wish*. Kelly Price, who was on this album, had *Soul of a Woman*. Tamia dropped *So Into You*. Erykah Badu, *Baduizm*. And also you think of, Lauryn Hill *Miseducation* and what that meant and how it tied together R&B and soul and hip-hop in a way that Whitney was also trying to do, and she did in such a beautiful way.

I think this was the first time where I saw Whitney much different. I saw her as edgy, I saw her as cool, I saw her as really, really chic. I mean, just I can think of, the roll-off of this album. I remember getting one of the glossy magazines—it might have been *Ebony*— and just seeing her in these bad Dolce & Gabbana outfits, right? Just being like, this woman is far more regal than I had ever imagined.

Everything was firing on all these different cylinders for me, where I was like, “Oh my God, like, I’m in love with Whitney Houston.” This was the first album that I actually spent my money to buy.

00:06:37 Oliver Host Alright, where’d you get it from, and in what format?

00:06:39 Gerrick Guest Oh, my Gosh, we’re gonna do this. I got it from Circuit City.

00:06:43 Morgan Host Hey.

00:06:44 Oliver Host Wait, Circuit City sold CDs back then?

00:06:45 Morgan Host Yeah.

00:06:46 Gerrick Guest I got it from from Circuit City, and I bought it on CD.

00:06:52 Oliver Host You brought your copy with you.

00:06:53 Gerrick Guest I brought my copy with me.

00:06:54 Oliver Host That's wild. And so, what was your impression of it, just listening to it for that first time? And I guess really, before you even answer that, what were expectations if you had any going into it, and then what were your thoughts of the album after that first listen?

00:07:07 Gerrick Guest We hadn't seen her in a while in terms of her putting out a body of work, but she had been around. You know, the year before this album came out, one of my favorite Whitney things is her remake of Cinderella, which of course, you know, shifted because she was originally supposed to be Cinderella, and then she's like, "You know what? I don't think that I'm— I feel like I'm just too old for this, I want somebody else, and I want it to be Brandy."

And I am the foremost number one Brandy fan. I know you guys have had P.J. Morton on here. I know we have already discussed *Full Moon*. We almost had— that was my first pick, but I was like, "I want to do something different."

00:07:42 Morgan Host I'm a huge Brandy fan too.

00:07:43 Gerrick Guest Everyone knows how much I love her, and I could just go on and on and on about Brandy. So that was such a special project for me, and seeing the two of them sing together was something I had always been wanting to imagine. But that still was classic Whitney, I mean, Whitney running through Rogers and Hammerstein, I mean, that's, come on. She's going to show up and do what needs to be done, and I think that's the same as, you know, thinking about the music that she did with *Waiting To Exhale*, which was kind of the first time that we saw this difference in R&B, her really digging deep and really just being like, "You know what, I'm going to just go ahead and do just straight up R&B, like no pop attachments. I'm going to really just go for it."

And I think my expectations when I heard who was on the album shifted. When I hear that there's Missy, when I hear that there's Rodney Jerkins, I'm expecting one particular thing, and she did it, and she knocked it out of the park, which is really sassy, upbeat anthems. I mean, I think the first time I heard "It's Not Right But It's Okay", I think my little mind blew, because it was so different from her but also it was so in line with what everybody was doing, and I—

*["It's Not Right But It's Okay" off the album My Love Is Your Love by Whitney Houston begins fading in as Gerrick speaks.]*

—and Whitney's not somebody who was every trying to keep up, but I think it was a moment for her to say, "You know what, I can have fun."

00:08:59 Morgan Host Sure.

00:09:00	Music	Music	<p><i>[Music swells louder. Upbeat, poppy R&amp;B]</i></p> <p><i>It's not right But it's okay I'm gonna make it anyway Pack your bags up and leave Don't you dare come running back to me It's not right...</i></p>
			<p><i>[Music fades out as Gerrick speaks]</i></p>
00:09:15	Gerrick	Guest	<p>You know, I think there's so many expectations that were placed upon her; because when we talk about our love for her, and when we exalt her, we are placing it on "I Will Always Love You" and "Star Spangled Banner". These pieces of music that, while they are timeless, they don't have a particular identity to her, they don't tell us anything about Whitney at all. And I think what she did with this album is quite brilliant, where she was like, "I know you all have these opinions about my man, this marriage, what I'm doing, what I've been doing, all these things." She played with it, and she— and I think that was really kind of the first time that I saw her acknowledge, "I see all the things that you're saying about me."</p> <p>So for her to have fun about that and build an album around it, and maybe it was true, I mean if we think about, you know, this was her version of "Lemonade". This was her actually coming out and saying these things, and accusing a man of betrayal and all of this, but it— you know, she made so much space for her pain, but she also brought in so much joy as well, which is why I loved this album, and I think a great cousin to that in that year is probably <i>Miseducation</i>.</p>
00:10:15	Music	Music	<p>"Ex-Factor" off the album <i>The Miseducation of Lauryn Hill</i> by Lauryn Hill. Soulful, contemporary R&amp;B.</p> <p><i>Loving you is like a battle (It's like a battle) And we both end up with scars Tell me who I have to be (Who I have to be) To get some reciprocity See, no one loves you more...</i></p>
			<p><i>[Music fades out as Gerrick speaks]</i></p>
00:10:40	Gerrick	Guest	<p>Because I think the two of them are really marrying hip-hop and R&amp;B and also celebrating Black womanhood in the type of way that in that year when there was all these other projects, those two felt, to me, the most closely related.</p>
00:10:52	Music	Music	<p><i>["It's Not Right But It's Okay" fades back in]</i></p> <p><i>Was it really worth you going out like that? Tell me, oh See, I'm moving on And I refuse to turn back, yeah See, all of this time...</i></p>

*[Music fades out]*

- 00:11:08 Morgan Host I think that the rest of R&B and some of the artists that you mentioned had to pave this way for Whitney to talk, address these themes, so she was competing with, not just all that you mentioned, but also Monifah, and Total, and Maya, and Aaliyah had just dropped “Are You That Somebody?”
- 00:11:26 Music Music “Are You That Somebody?” off the album *Dr. Doolittle: The Album* by Aaliyah. Fast-paced contemporary R&B.
- Are you responsible?  
Boy, I gotta watch my back  
Cause I'm not just anybody  
Is it my go? Is it your go?  
Sometimes I'm goody-goody  
Right now, I'm naughty-naughty  
Say yes...*
- [Music fades out as Morgan speaks]*
- 00:11:41 Morgan Host So, she had to come, you know, she had to come in this kind of grown and sexy; and then 1990 was *I'm Your Baby Tonight*, she was 27. By the time we get to this, she's 35. That's grown.
- 00:11:51 Gerrick Guest Good and grown.
- 00:11:53 Morgan Host Real grown. You can clapback then. You can be like, “Wait a minute, wait a minute.” And I think that's what this album was.
- 00:12:01 Oliver Host So, Morgan, what was your experience listening to this?
- 00:12:04 Morgan Host I mean, I just remember being like, “Well, damn. Here we go with Whitney.” Because if you think about the cover art to *I'm Your Baby Tonight*, it's black and white, she's sitting on the motorcycle, and she's still giving you that pop edge, she's still giving you that. And I think when she came out with this, this was a very sexy Whitney, to your point, the wardrobe game, she had gotten a stylist together, and you always know that the material is going to be different when the artist comes out different.
- What comes to mind immediately is Mariah Carey, by the time she gets to *Butterfly*, she's like, “I've got on—” and I think it was also Dolce and Gabbana, so I think they're the clapback stylists.  
*[Everyone laughs.]* Like when you're ready to reinvent yourself and clapback, Dolce and Gabbana are gonna be there for you.
- 00:12:48 Oliver Host D&G, alright.
- 00:12:49 Gerrick Guest They're gonna be there.
- 00:12:50 Morgan Host And she had on the stilettos, gone with the ponytails and the short-shorts and Tommy Mottola, and I think Whitney was stepping, she had said to Clive, “This is what I wanna do.” And my first impression was, “Here we go.” And “It's Not Right But It's Okay” was an anthem, and it was a part of 1998 women officially speaking their piece, and not singing these love songs, but being like the various things men were. Tripping, bugaboos, scrubs.

00:13:22	Oliver	Host	<p>No, I think these are all fantastic observations. And my confession here is, I never listened to this album in its entirety until I prepped for this; because if you knew me in '98, the amount of contemporary R&amp;B that I was listening to outside of singles that I would've been getting as promos to the radio station where I was DJing, I mean, outside of that, I was not buying R&amp;B albums in '98, I was just a hip-hop head at the time.</p> <p>And I think, compounding that is that the sound of this album, if I'm going to be really blunt, like, didn't like it then, don't like it now. But that's fine. But what I appreciate about this is, it is such a time machine of the sound of hip-hop and R&amp;B in 1998, and it's about—it's also about the guests that were on here, and we can get into this later, because you brought up Brandy, she's the only person I'm like, "How did Brandy not get into this mix, given that she had everyone else that seemed to be—"</p>
00:14:17	Gerrick	Guest	<p>She is in the mix in a very different way. She's in the mix because, you know, the sound that she established with "Never Say Never", courtesy of Rodney Jerkins, is on here, and those are the cornerstone songs on this album. So that's— that was always my thing, where it took me years to be like, "I just wish that there was maybe a Brandy track on here or something," but then you think about it, and you're like, "Oh wow, she did it a different way." Which, you know, some might say is biting.</p>
00:14:43	Morgan	Host	<p>And some <u>have</u> said.</p>
00:14:45	Gerrick	Guest	<p>And some have said that, and I think that's a criticism both Whitney and also Deborah Cox also received, because Rodney did do— it's such a particular sound that he innovated with "Never Say Never".</p>
00:14:56	Music	Music	<p>"Never Say Never" off the album <i>Never Say Never</i> by Brandy. Contemporary R&amp;B with a light drums.</p> <p><i>Who would ever thought a guy Would want a girl like me? Who would ever thought that I Would fall so easily?</i></p> <p><i>Who would ever thought that we Would finally come to be? I guess they just don't know How much you mean to me</i></p> <p><i>Who would ever thought that they Would have some words to say</i></p> <p><i>[Music fades out as Morgan speaks]</i></p>
00:15:12	Morgan	Host	<p>Something that underscores your point exactly on here is "If I Told You That", which sounds exactly like "The Boy Is Mine", both by Rodney Jerkins.</p>
00:15:20	Music	Music	<p>"The Boy Is Mine" off the album <i>Never Say Never</i> by Brandy. Soulful, poppy R&amp;B with Monica and Brandy singing simultaneously, overlapping.</p>

MONICA:  
*The boy is mine  
You need to give it up  
Had about enough  
It's not hard to see  
The boy is mine*

BRANDY:  
*He belongs to me  
The boy is mine  
Had about enough  
He's mine, he's mine  
He's mine, he's mine*

*[Music crossfades into...]*

00:15:35 Music Music "If I Told You That" off the album *My Love Is Your Love* by Whitney Houston. Soulful, poppy R&B again, though at a slightly faster tempo and with a higher emphasis on pop and R&B.

*... if I told you that  
I beg to please you  
If I told you that  
I'll always keep you*

*[Music fades out as Oliver speaks]*

00:15:44 Oliver Host My point earlier though is just, I love the time capsule quality. I mean, there's some albums that we talk about as being timeless. This is an album, and this is by no means to be pejorative, this is an album that is very much of its time, right, is that you can pinpoint exactly when this was recorded, and I appreciate that quality of it. Because, for me, listening to this 21 years later, it really took me back to the sound of '98, in a way that's like, "Wow."

Like, every—I think, Gerrick, this is to your point, she understood like, "This is what the landscape is like, and I'm going to demonstrate, I can hang with this."

00:16:19 Morgan Host

That's right.

00:16:20 Oliver Host

"And if it's a Timbaland track, boom. If it's a Rodney Jerkins track, boom. Like—"

00:16:23 Morgan Host

"I can do this." And I'm sure she was probably told, "You're going to have to do this if you want to stay current. You've been gone for eight years, and though you've had these soundtracks and you've been touring all over the world, this is what—" to your point "—this is the landscape of R&B now. This is what women are singing about."

00:16:40 Oliver Host

So, what I want to know, to the extent that either of you know this, is who's idea was it for her to bring on everyone from Faith, and Missy, and Kelly, and to me, really, the biggest surprise is to put Mariah on there, because you're talking about neck and neck, who's trying to run for the crown. In the '90s, like, those are the two women, right? And so, who's idea for her to bring them on—



because she could have done this as a solo effort.

- 00:17:03 Morgan Host She sure could have. I'll let Gerrick answer this, but if I'm not mistaken, this was her first album with features with women artists who weren't singing gospel.
- 00:17:12 Gerrick Guest Yes. Yes. You know, this album actually started as a greatest hits thing. In hindsight, obviously, you know, folks have talked about some of these years and the challenges that Whitney faced in these years, and so— you know, Clive is really honest now about the fact that he didn't feel she was ready to do this whole thing. So the plan was to do a greatest hits package, you know, do a couple of tracks, and Whitney call who you want it to be, which is, you know, Babyface is the first call that she's gonna make.
- And I think the thing about that's so interesting is, that project still happened, it just happened two years later. Because of that, we got the greatest remix I think that she's done, which is the remix of "If I Told You That" where it's a duet with George Michael, and it doesn't sound like it should work, but there's just something about their voices together that is just so incredible, and I still love this song to this day.
- 00:18:05 Music Music "If I Told You That" off the album *Whitney: The Greatest Hits* by Whitney Houston. The same arrangement as before, but with added vocals by George Michael. When they sing together, they sing the same lyrics; but slightly offset from each other.
- WHITNEY:*  
*And would it be so wrong*  
*To say what's on my mind*  
*I'm sorry I have to*  
*Baby, baby*
- WHITNEY & GEORGE MICHAEL:*  
*We were friends, but with time*  
*What I feel, deep inside*  
*For you, has changed*  
*But I'd give, up on love*  
*If I thought, that it was*
- [Music fades out]*
- 00:18:28 Gerrick Guest But, you know, it started off as her putting together a couple of tracks, and then her calling people that she was fans of. She was a fan of Rodney Jerkins, she was a fan of Wyclef, like, can he just do something. And so, she ended up with all this music, and it's like, "Well, we actually have an album now."
- And that's what I think was even so special about how it came together, was because she was having fun. She was doing something that she had to do, but then she didn't have to do this. You know, if it was just something, "I'm going to just throw together a couple of tracks," great, you know, but it was, "Oh, this music is sounding so great, and I'm feeling good, and I'm sounding good."

And I think part of that is because this is the first album that, you know, if you're really listening to her, there's a lot of restraint in her voice. Again, that hindsight is some of it is, you had to, but I also think that there's something really great about that, and that's what makes this work in a particular way, that she's not belting every single track. Because it doesn't work with some of these beats, it doesn't work with some of these arrangements. So the fact that she's now able to be a little but more sultrier than she's ever had. I mean, "Oh Yes" is one of my favorite records. It's a— you know, this really sexy track that Missy did—

- 00:19:37 Morgan Host "Oh Yes."
- 00:19:38 Gerrick Guest —that is just, I mean, she's so in the pocket, she's so in the groove. That's a song that, I could hear SZA singing that right now. You know, so there are moments of this where it is timeless in such a way, and then there are other moments where you're like, "This takes me right back to '98. This takes me right back to this year." Because so many people were doing this exact same type of music, and it was great, and everybody was really showing. Everybody was trying to one-up each other—
- 00:20:03 Morgan Host Everybody.
- 00:20:04 Gerrick Guest —but you can't one-up Whitney. I mean, so, you think of a— when you think of a track like "Heartbreak Hotel", like my gosh, have we ever had a group of women ever then get back on a track together and do something like that? We still haven't.
- 00:20:15 Music Music "Heartbreak Hotel" off the album *My Love Is Your Love* by Whitney Houston. Contemporary, mid-tempo R&B with a soft beat. Whitney & Faith Evans sing together at a mid-tempo while Kelly Price belts soulfully, overlapping with them.
- WHITNEY:  
... Heartbreak Hotel*
- WHITNEY & FAITH EVANS:  
All I really wanted was some of your time  
Instead you told me lies when someone else was on your mind  
What'd you do to me? Look what you did to me  
I thought that you were someone who would do me right...*
- KELLY PRICE:  
All I wanted, oh, baby  
Oh, I really want it now  
What I really wanted, baby  
Tell me now...*
- [Music fades out as Morgan speaks]*
- 00:20:36 Morgan Host The year 1998 that she does this with them, Kelly Price was blowing up with "Friend of Mine", Faith has "Love Like This". These are hits.
- 00:20:47 Gerrick Guest Huge hits.
- 00:20:48 Morgan Host And you also got your East Coast, because you got—Faith's also

from Jersey, so you got your Jersey girls; and I think Kelly's from the East Coast too, isn't she?

00:20:54 Gerrick Guest Yeah.

00:20:55 Morgan Host So they're all on one track. I love when they sang it together on *Rosie O'Donnell*.

00:21:00 Music Music "Heartbreak Hotel" live on *The Rosie O'Donnell Show* by Whitney Houston, Kelly Price, and Faith Evans.

*WHITNEY:*  
*Now I see, that you've been doing wrong*  
*You played me all along and made a fool of me, baby*  
*How could you, now?*  
*You got it all wrong to think that I wouldn't find out*

*[Music fades out as Morgan speaks]*

00:21:19 Morgan Host It's just a moment of real generosity from Whitney. It's like, "I can sing, both of you guys run to the car, but like, I'm "Star Spangled Banner" Whitney, I'm still her."

00:21:28 Gerrick Guest Right.

00:21:29 Morgan Host "Despite, you know, this profuse wedding, and this handkerchief. But, please join me." And she lets them do their thing. She comes in, and out.

00:21:39 Oliver Host If I can just cycle back for a second, Gerrick—and you don't need to give away your entire book chapters here, but—can you just tell us where exactly was Whitney in terms of in her life and career in this moment—

00:21:49 Morgan Host It's a good question.

00:21:50 Oliver Host —you know, in her mid-30s? And how was this different than, let's say, the Whitney that we had been exposed to previously, you know, at the Superbowl, with the bodyguard and whatnot?

00:22:00 Gerrick Guest Yeah, there was a lot of pressure on her. You know, these were the years where, frankly, we were a little unkind to her. We started to question more, we started to hear more, we started to learn more about things that were happening, particularly behind the scenes. You know, I think the press, after so many years of— um, I don't want to say giving her free passes, because that's very much not the case. I think it was, there was a shift, I think, and I don't know if it was because there were so many other women that were on the scene that, let's just be honest here, a lot of how media operates is, you're gonna compare women, regardless. You're not gonna really do that as much with male vocalists.

And so, I spent a lot of time as I've been researching this book, like, looking back at the coverage, especially the coverage that the *Times* did, just to see how dismissed she was in '98, and it's, "We are—" and I say 'we' because it was the publication that I was employed at, but I was like twelve years old, so I don't take no credit for what was being written at the time, so I feel no types of way

saying this. But it was really see, you know, how they were exalting Monica, who was really phenomenal, but she was also, you know, she was 16-17. These were really young, young, young women, but that's something that, because in the pop world you were seeing these young white girls, they were starting to become objects of our affection in a certain type of way, that that coverage did start to seep into R&B a little bit. And I was actually kind of shocked, because as a consumer, as a kid, I never noticed it.

You know, I also probably would've never noticed this sort of treatment at that age, I would've never been able to pick that apart. But going back and seeing it has been really interesting to see, you know, how we were at that point, sexualizing Monica, sexualizing Brandy, and doing that in this way because we wanted to be able to have the same conversation about them that we were having with Britney, that we're having with Christina, that we're having with Jessica Simp— you know, all these other girls who were displaying it in the same ways, but appealing to different audiences. But the thing about it that made it so interesting is, so much of what much of what was then happening in pop was being informed by what was happening in R&B. Which, they still don't get that credit, and I always want to make sure, like let's not forget. Before Soulshock was like, doing anything for any of the pop girls, he was with Whitney, he was with Brandy, you know, he was doing straight R&B, but they were coming to get those melodies, they were coming to get those hooks.

00:24:32	Music	Music	<p>"Get It Back" off the album <i>My Love Is Your Love</i> by Whitney Houston. Up-tempo R&amp;B.</p> <p><i>Remember when It all began We were all in love Then came the friends Telling you when your time for me Was good enough I constantly had to compete With you crew and their schemes Remembering Back in the day...</i></p> <p><i>[Music fades out as Morgan speaks]</i></p>
00:24:50	Morgan	Host	We'll be back with more of our conversation with Gerrick Kennedy about Whitney Houston's <i>My Love Is Your Love</i> after a brief word from some of our other MaxFun podcasts. Don't go anywhere.
00:25:01	Music	Music	"Crown Ones" off the album <i>Stepfather</i> by People Under The Stairs
00:25:03	Promo	Promo	<p><i>[Ocean sounds in the background.]</i></p> <p><b>Speaker 1:</b> <i>[Piratey voice]</i> Ahh. There's nothing quite like sailing in the calm, international waters on my ship, the S.S. <i>Biopic (bi-AH-pic)</i>.</p>

*[Ship's horn toots.]*

**Speaker 2:** *[Piratey voice]* Avast! It's actually pronounced... "BI-oh-pic."

**Speaker 1:** No, ya dingus! It's "Bi-AH-pic!"

**Speaker 2:** Who the hell says that? It's "BI-oh-pic!" It comes from the words "biology"—

**Speaker 1:** It's the words for "biography" and "picture!"

*[Boat horn honks.]*

**Speaker 2:** If you—

**Dave Holmes:** Alright, that is enough! Ahoy! I'm Dave Holmes; I'm the host of the newly-rebooted podcast formerly known as *International Waters*! Designed to resolve petty—but persistent—arguments like this! How? By pitting two teams of opinionated comedians against each other with trivia and improv games, of course! Winner takes home the right to be right.

**Speaker 1:** What podcast be this?

**Dave:** It's called *Troubled Waters*! *[Boat engine revving, driving off.]* Where we disagree to disagreeeee! *[Voice trails off into the distance.]*

00:25:53 Promo

Promo

*[A telephone rings.]*

**Hotshot Hollywood Producer:** Listen, I'm a hotshot Hollywood movie producer.

*[Music fades in.]*

**Producer:** You have until I finish my glass of *[articulating]* kom-bu-cha to pitch me your idea. Go.

*[Slurping sounds.]*

**Ify:** Alright! It's called *Who Shot Ya*: a movie podcast that isn't just a bunch of straight, white dudes. I'm Ify Nwadiwe, the new host of the show and a certified BBN.

**Producer:** BBN?

**Ify:** Buff, Black Nerd.

**Alonso:** I'm Alonso Duralde, an elderly gay and legit film critic who wrote a book on Christmas movies.

**Drea:** I'm Drea Clark, a loud, white lady from Minnesota.

**Ify:** Each week, we talk about a new movie in theaters and all the important issues going on in the film industry.

**Alonso:** It's like *Guess Who's Coming to Dinner* meets *Cruising*.

**Ify:** And if it helps seal the deal? I can flex my muscles while we record each episode.

**Producer:** I'm sorry, this is a podcast?! I'm a movie producer. *[Disdainfully]* How did you get in here?

**Drea:** Ify, quick! Start flexing!

**Ify:** *[Dramatically]* Bicep! Lats! Chest! *Who Shot Ya*, dropping every Friday on MaximumFun.org, or wherever you listen to podcasts.

*[Music ends.]*

00:26:45	Music	Music	"Crown Ones" off the album <i>Stepfather</i> by People Under The Stairs
00:26:48	Oliver	Host	Welcome back to <i>Heat Rocks</i> , where we are talking about Whitney Houston's 1998 album, <i>My Love Is Your Love</i> ; with guest, <i>L.A. Times</i> writer, Gerrick Kennedy.
00:26:57	Morgan	Host	Do you mind if I ask you how old you were when this album came out?
00:27:00	Gerrick	Guest	Not at all. Um. <i>[Laughs.]</i>
00:27:04	Morgan	Host	Sorry, did I put you on the spot with that?
00:27:05	Gerrick	Guest	I'm only—I'm only laughing just because, I—you have to forgive the fact that I'm gonna watch your face as I say my age. Just because I already mentioned, I was about eleven.
00:27:16	Morgan	Host	Still love you, man. <i>[Gerrick laughs.]</i>
00:27:17	Oliver	Host	Did you say earlier this was the first album that you bought?
00:27:20	Gerrick	Guest	Did I? It was the first <u>Whitney</u> album that I bought with my own money.
00:27:21	Oliver	Host	Oh, okay. I need to know, what else was an eleven year old Gerrick Kennedy copping at the Circuit City in Cincinnati?
00:27:28	Gerrick	Guest	Oh my gosh. Well, just so, yeah. All of my allowance money was going to CDs, and <i>Write On</i> . Do you guys remember <i>Write On</i> ?

00:27:37	Morgan	Host	Of course.
00:27:39	Gerrick	Guest	Right? My mom had already allowed me to purchase a Vibe subscription in my name. So, I was feeling just so hot that year. All— like, and I'm just such a fan of the ladies, so it was like, gosh, I remember buying the Total album that year.
00:27:56	Music	Music	<p>"Trippin'" off the album <i>Kima, Keisha, and Pam</i> by Total feat. Missy Elliot. Up-tempo R&amp;B.</p> <p><i>MISSY ELLIOT:</i>  <i>... or slam it</i>  <i>Damn right, I'mma jam it</i></p> <p><i>PAM LONG:</i>  <i>Baby, you sure is something</i>  <i>You sure is something</i>  <i>See I won't</i></p> <p><i>MISSY:</i>  <i>See I won't</i></p> <p><i>PAM:</i>  <i>Trade you</i></p> <p><i>MISSY:</i>  <i>Trade you</i></p> <p><i>PAM:</i>  <i>For nothing</i></p> <p><i>[Music fades out as Gerrick speaks]</i></p>
00:28:16	Gerrick	Guest	I remember buying <i>Never Say Never</i> . I had to be the first in the store to get that one. That was a big day for me. <i>[Laughs.]</i> You know, Deborah Cox, that was also one of those. Pretty sure that was like in the BMG, you know, ordering it off the ticking and just giving mom the money.
00:28:31	Music	Music	<p>"Nobody's Supposed To Be Here" off the album <i>One Wish</i> by Deborah Cox. Passionate R&amp;B with soaring vocals.</p> <p><i>How did you get here?</i>  <i>Nobody's supposed to be here</i>  <i>(Nobody's supposed to be here)</i>  <i>I tried that love thing for the last time</i>  <i>My heart says "No, no"</i>  <i>No!</i></p>
00:28:53	Oliver	Host	But I'm just impressed that as an eleven year old, you had the presence of mind, and just the level of passion, to want to be buying albums. Because I think, I would listen to the radio at age eleven, I don't think I really even remembered artist names outside of maybe Michael Jackson, but I certainly wasn't buying albums at that age. How about you?
00:29:11	Morgan	Host	Oh, sure. At eleven?

00:29:12 Oliver Host That's only a couple years ago, I know, but like.

00:29:14 Morgan Host Yeah, yeah. You know, it's so recent, I can't even really go back there. But no, I wasn't buying albums, but I was listening to everything that my uncles and them and my mom and them were playing. But at the time you mentioned, not only was Circuit City selling music, but then Best Buy clapped back and was like, "We're about to— okay, you know what, Circuit City? We'll see you these CDs, we're about to start selling CDs, so you can get them."

00:29:35 Gerrick Guest Also, in the Midwest, we had Media Play. Don't know if you guys ever heard of Media Play.

00:29:38 Oliver Host No. No.

00:29:40 Gerrick Guest It was a really big competitor. So like, you were at one of the three. There would be days where you would have to go to all three to get all of the music you needed to get.

00:29:48 Morgan Host *[Laughs.]* To get the hits. To get the hits. The reason I brought up your age is because I wanted to know what your impressions were of the videos. Because 1998, we're still seeing videos, and the videos for this album are very lush. There are themes. They're dramatic. It's almost like Diane Warren's in the back and she's like, "I wrote everything on here." We know that she didn't, but they have that feel, especially "It's Not Right But It's Okay." What'd you think of that when you first saw it?

00:30:17 Gerrick Guest I mean, I think it's— I think it was one of those things, again, where it was like my mind was just exploding, because she was now presenting in a way that I connected with, which was like, the big diva. The outfits, the hair, she did this thing, she had this like bob, this blonde moment happening. But I remember—

00:30:39 Morgan Host The leather. The buttery leather.

00:30:40 Gerrick Guest Yes, because the— yeah, the buttery leather. But in that— in the video for that, she had this mean, like, black leather dress situation, and like a collar, and these big like, black chunky heels. There was these like, camera pops and like, the flashing, so it felt like she was kind of like winking at the fact of like, "My life is pretty much like paparazzi."

You know, there's a whole record on there that she did with Missy about like, people being in their business, so like, it was on her mind. But it wasn't quite— she didn't veer into paranoia, yet. We didn't get that until *Just Whitney*, which is an unfortunate body of work. It's not as— it's not— and honestly, I have grown to appreciate it. There's moments that I really, really love. "Tell Me No" on that album, I think, is one of her stronger performances.

00:31:30 Music Music "Tell Me No" off the album *Just Whitney* by Whitney Houston. Intense, soulful, poppy R&B.

*No, no, no, no, no, no, no*  
*It motivates me more and more*  
*And I think it's time you know*  
*Giving me something to work for*



*And I can't wait for the day  
I can rub things in your face  
And I ain't going to stop 'til I'm done*

*[Music fades out as Gerrick speaks]*

00:31:48 Gerrick Guest There was such a shift between her being playful to her being really paranoid about the way she was being written about; and I think maybe it was just at that point she'd had enough, and it was, you know— she was reacting to it, and it didn't work on that album. But I think in *My Love Is Your Love*, in those moments, it was like, "Okay, I can see it. Bring it back a little bit."

00:32:10 Music Music "Oh Yes" off the album *My Love Is Your Love* by Whitney Houston. Soulful, tender R&B.

*The way I felt your chest up next to mine  
Felt you in my heart  
And now...*

*[Music fades out as Oliver speaks]*

00:32:26 Oliver Host We're going to get to peoples' picks for the fire track off this album. But before we get there, I want to cycle back to something I was talking about in the first half; which is the time capsule quality to this album. And I'm wondering, for each of you—and I'll give you some time to think about this, because there's two different questions here: what song on here is, to you, the most '98? Like, this is absolutely of its moment, number one. But then also, what song on here do you think is the most timeless, that is actually not bound to the particular sound of pop music in that year?

00:32:57 Gerrick Guest I'm gonna give it to "In My Business". I think it's—and I love Whitney, let's not get anything twisted—I think it's the most formulaic record in terms of '98 structure, of R&B, hip-hop/pop, appealing records. So the track, any time you ever hear it, you can pinpoint, this is exactly what producers were doing, this is exactly what artists were doing when they were working with rap producers primarily. So that, to me, is probably like, the most '98.

00:33:32 Music Music "In My Business" off the album *My Love Is Your Love* by Whitney Houston. Poppy R&B with intense record scratches and nearly-spoken vocals.

*WHITNEY:  
Hey, Missy*

*[Intense record scratching]*

*Can you believe this girl? Misdemeanor*

*[Record scratching]  
Miss-Miss-Misdemeanor, uh!*

*[Record scratching]*

*Ya heard?*

*[Laughter; then the music fades out as Oliver speaks]*

00:33:53 Oliver Host Even the sound of the high hat is so—and it must be the patch, probably some Triton keyboard, whatever it is—but even the sound of the high hat, I’m like, “My God, I’m back in my mid-20s again.” Because I just— I know what that tambour is, I know what that signifies.

00:34:09 Morgan Host Yup, and it was on every jam. Pretty much every jam. And to your point, what producers were doing for other artists, this sounds exactly like Missy and 702. It sounds exactly like Missy and Nicole Wray. It just sounds like—

00:34:24 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Oliver:** Oh, TLC.

**Gerrick:** Oh, Nicole Wray.

**Morgan:** Yeah, TLC.

**Oliver:** Da-na-na-na, guitar line.

**Gerrick:** Oh, man.

00:34:28 Morgan Host It’s exactly that time. So it does really throw you back to 1998.

00:34:30 Music Music *["In My Business" fades back in]*

*(... all in our business?)  
All in our business  
It's just too ridiculous  
(So ridiculous)  
I can't get no sleep  
(They won't let me sleep)  
They just keep warning me  
Should I believe them?  
They say I don't need it  
Don't they know I make up my mind?*

*[Music fades out as Morgan speaks]*

00:34:49 Morgan Host I was going to say that “Heartbreak Hotel” is very 1998 to me. It sounds a lot like Kelly Price’s album that came out that same year, that sort of stutter beat that I think Missy doesn’t get credit for; but she had a lot to do with that sort of mashup of R&B and drum and bass, which made it be a stutter beat. And she did that a lot on “4 Page Letter” with Aaliyah, she continued it in ‘97 with “Supa Dupa Fly”, and by the time we get to “Heartbreak Hotel”, that sounds like— she didn’t produce it, but it sounds a lot like 1998.

00:35:23 Music Music “Heartbreak Hotel” off the album *My Love Is Your Love* by Whitney Houston.

*WHITNEY & FAITH:  
I'm writing you this letter  
And this is what I have to say  
All I really wanted was some of your time*

*Instead you told me lies when someone else was on your mind*

*[Overlapping]*

*KELLY:*

*All you did was lie to me, baby  
Can't believe...*

*WHITNEY & FAITH:*

*What'd you do to me?  
Look what you did to me*

*[Music fades out as Oliver speaks]*

00:35:43	Oliver	Host	It's <u>so</u> Virginia Beach.
00:35:44	Morgan	Host	It is! It is. And we know it's 1998 because you're not gonna have three girls singing on the track today.
			<i>[Oliver laughs.]</i>
			We know that R&B songs are not four minutes— 4:41 anymore. You know what I'm saying? It's in and out. And that's it, I just remember that video on the beach, and the leather. Leather was big in 1998.
00:36:06	Gerrick	Guest	It was. It was.
00:36:07	Morgan	Host	It was big in Whitney Houston's camp. But that's the one to me that sounds the most 1998.
00:36:12	Oliver	Host	Those two would have been my candidates, too, and it has everything to do with just the distinctiveness of that production. Because you turn on the radio in '98, and guaranteed every ten minutes if not more, there would be some song that uses one of the elements that you hear in those.
00:36:27	Morgan	Host	<i>[Laughs]</i> It's true.
00:36:28	Oliver	Host	So then, what, to you, would be the most timeless? Something that you think— and Gerrick, you, I think, even said earlier there was a song off here you felt like you could hear right now, SZA doing, and it would feel—yeah.
00:36:37	Gerrick	Guest	I mean, that's—I do feel that with "Oh Yes." I think it's—it's a record I go back to a lot. I think it's probably the sexiest record that Whitney has ever done. And I would put it in that category, because I could see, you know, someone like a SZA or H.E.R. doing something like that. But, you know, I— there's something about the fact that, you know, despite all of these moves into up tempo, Whitney's gonna give you a torch song; and the fact that she programmed them throughout, I think, was such a moment of her to remind the listener of, "Don't forget who I still am."
00:37:15	Morgan	Host	Right.
00:37:16	Music	Music	"I Learned From The Best" off the album <i>My Love Is Your Love</i> by Whitney Houston. Passionate, soulful R&B.

*Baby, I learned the way to break a heart  
I learned from the best  
I learned from you  
(Oh baby, now)  
I learned from you, oh*

*[Music fades out as Oliver speaks]*

- 00:37:38 Oliver Host If I'm not mistaken, Whitney never ended up doing—obviously, before she passed—she never did the kind of jazz standards album that women of a certain—singers of a certain age get into, right?
- 00:37:49 Gerrick Guest She didn't quite get there. I think if you—if you got her Christmas album, that's the closest you're gonna get to that.
- 00:37:54 Morgan Host Sure.
- 00:37:55 Oliver Host Do you think she might have?
- 00:37:56 Morgan Host I think if her voice had held up, she might have. This might be where she would be now. She might be doing standards, and that would have been my recommendation, because by now she'd be 55-56. So, she'd be riding that duet's place.
- 00:38:11 Oliver Host It'd be her and Tony Bennett.
- 00:38:12 Morgan Host Exactly. It's time for you and Tony Bennett, you need to be covering Shirley Horn. And I think that would be a good—I'd even, you know, I dream of being A&R, but I'd be like, "You about to cover your cousin. You about to redo Dionne Warwick."
- 00:38:25 Oliver Host Oh!
- 00:38:26 Morgan Host "Gonna do some Dionne Warwick songs. That's family."
- 00:38:27 Oliver Host That would— I'm trying to imagine that. I don't know if I can, sitting right here. That'd be fascinating.
- 00:38:32 Morgan Host Yup. Keep the publishing in the house.

*[Oliver laughs.]*

Um, the song that I think holds up really well, and isn't in a time capsule, to me— well, there are two of them. "When You Believe" is one, because "When You Believe" is Hans Zimmer. It sounds like every other song that's written specifically to win the Oscars.

*[Everyone laughs and agrees.]* It's big, you know what I mean? If you close your eyes, it could be Whitney, it could be Adele, it could be Sam Smith, it could be Lady Gaga, it could be anyone at the end of the year for which Hans Zimmer comes in and says, "Listen, this? We're knocking this out of the park. We're going to win."

- 00:39:11 Music Music "When You Believe" off the album *My Love Is Your Love* by Whitney Houston. Soulful gospel with passionate singing.

*WHITNEY:  
Many nights we've prayed*

*With no proof anyone could hear  
In our hearts a hopeful song  
We barely understood  
Now, we are not afraid  
Although we know there's much to fear*

*[Music fades out as Morgan speaks]*

00:39:32 Morgan Host That's the one that's ageless to me; and *My Love Is Your Love*, if it didn't have that, if you took out Wyclef, I could see that being today. But that, to me, is very Wyclef, you know, "City High", The Fugees—

00:39:47 Gerrick Guest It's such a specific moment—

00:39:49 Morgan Host —in Wyclef's career.

00:39:51 Gerrick Guest In always, yeah.

00:39:52 Morgan Host If you took him out of it and it was just *My Love Is Your Love*, we could hear that today.

00:39:56 Music Music "My Love Is Your Love" off the album *My Love Is Your Love* by Whitney Houston.

*And no matter what people say  
I'll be waiting for you after the judgement day*

*Cause your love is my love  
And my love is your love...*

*[Music fades out as Oliver speaks]*

00:40:14 Oliver Host I think the drum program would be different now, but I think you could actually keep a lot of the skeleton of that, and I think it would still work—

00:40:19 Morgan Host Still work today.

00:40:21 Oliver Host You would have to take Clef off there, no shots at all, but—

00:40:23 Morgan Host You'd have to.

00:40:24 Oliver Host But yeah, I could see that.

00:40:25 Morgan Host And if you want to keep it diasporic today, in today's economy, just throw Burna Boy on there, and it'd be Afrobeat.

00:40:30 Gerrick Guest It's true. It's true.

00:40:32 Oliver Host Well, we teased this earlier. Let's get into the fire track.

00:40:35 Morgan Host Oh yeah.

00:40:36 Oliver Host Gerrick?

00:40:37 Gerrick Guest Without a doubt— and see, this is hard, this is hard, so I shouldn't say without a doubt, because, you know, I get torn back and forth. But I'm going to be very definitive here. I'm going to give it to "If I Told You That", only on the strength of the bridge is still the greatest

			run of an up-tempo Whitney record. That call and response, it just, it's still— there's nothing like it.
00:41:03	Music	Music	<p>"If I Told You That" off the album <i>My Love Is Your Love</i> by Whitney Houston.</p> <p><i>If we take this chance and extend To each other romance I hope it would be The right thing for you and me</i></p> <p><i>[Music fades out as Morgan sings over it]</i></p>
00:41:25	Morgan	Host	<i>[Singing]</i> "The boy is mine, I'm sorry that you—" <i>[Everyone laughs.]</i> That's what it sounds like! Same year, same producer, same sound, different lyrics. But that is still a jam, though.
00:41:38	Oliver	Host	We'll come back to you in a second, Morgan. So what's the favorite moment, Gerrick?
00:41:41	Gerrick	Guest	<p>I think the favorite moment is— it's on "Oh Yes", and there's something about, you know, her and Missy, their voices together. Which, I don't— I'm not sure many people are aware that Missy is giving you vocals on that, and that's something that is also the magic of Missy, is when she's in her bottom, bottom bottom register, like, it's such a vibe, and there's something about that where I'm like, "Oh, man. Like, this—"</p> <p>The first time I heard it was like, eh, you know, you kind of just skip around, because I wanted all the up tempos, but as I got older, that's the record that I'm like— I keep that on repeat. I mean, I think I played it three or four times on my way here today.</p>
00:42:16	Music	Music	<p>"Oh Yes" off the album <i>My Love Is Your Love</i> by Whitney Houston.</p> <p><i>Oh, yeah (Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah) Gotta say "yes", boy (Yeah) I say, yeah yeah (Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah) I'm gonna say yes (Yeah) Yeah, yeah</i></p>
00:42:32	Oliver	Host	Morgan, how about you? Cycling back to the fire track, what is it for you?
00:42:35	Morgan	Host	"Get It Back".
00:42:36	Gerrick	Guest	Ooh.
00:42:37	Morgan	Host	"Get It Back" is fire.
00:42:38	Gerrick	Guest	So much love for "Get It Back". I appreciate that this happened.
00:42:41	Morgan	Host	<i>[Whispering]</i> Fire.

00:42:42	Music	Music	<p>“Get It Back” off the album <i>My Love Is Your Love</i> by Whitney Houston.</p> <p><i>Remembering</i>  <i>Back in the day I used to mean everything</i>  <i>If we could just get it back</i>  <i>(To the way it used to be)</i>  <i>My only wish would be that</i>  <i>(Nothing would change with you and me)</i>  <i>I remember how it was</i>  <i>(And I...)</i></p> <p><i>[Music fades out as Morgan speaks]</i></p>
00:43:01	Morgan	Host	I don’t know who’s singing backgrounds on that, but I love that song. I love how Whitney rides the beat, again, Rodney Jerkins. Rodney Jerkins made money in the ‘90s, right? His ends are meeting. But that’s my fire track from the album.
00:43:14	Oliver	Host	This goes back to the time capsule thing, but the little use of—
00:43:18	Morgan	Host	I’m sorry. That’s my sleeper track on the album
00:43:21	Gerrick	Guest	That’s the sleeper track. Uh oh.
00:43:23	Morgan	Host	I think it’s the one that people don’t talk about. I love the song, but I think that’s the— it’s fire, but I think that’s the one that people don’t talk about.
00:43:29	Oliver	Host	Well, it can be both. You can have a fire track that’s also a sleeper track.
00:43:31	Morgan	Host	Okay. New category: fire/sleeper.
00:43:33	Oliver	Host	<i>[Laughs]</i> I was just going to say that, just listening to the clip just now, the sort of— the use of the little scratch rub, but as a percussive element, another just time capsule move.
00:43:45	Morgan	Host	1998.
00:43:47	Oliver	Host	I can’t even do it right, because it’s not— it’s really not even the scratch sound, it’s more of the kind of percussive bump.
00:43:52	Morgan	Host	That’s it.
00:43:53	Oliver	Host	It’s like a little bit of the bass hit, yeah.
00:43:54	Morgan	Host	That’s it.
00:43:55	Music	Music	<p><i>[“Get It Back” fades in again. All voices sing nearly together, overlapping]</i></p> <p><i>(If we could just get it back)</i>  <i>I remember how it was</i>  <i>(Oh, baby)</i>  <i>You were oh so deep in love</i>  <i>(Show me, show me, show me)</i>  <i>If we could just get it back</i>  <i>(Show me, show me)</i></p>

*[Music fades out as Morgan speaks]*

- 00:44:11 Morgan Host I just think, if I have a favorite moment—I can't single out a moment on this track, but I brought it up earlier, and that's "When You Believe". Because Mariah Carey and Whitney Houston together in 1998, who had always been compared, and you know, similar vocal abilities, depends on what you give the edge to. Do you give the edge to the whistle register or do you give the edge to Whitney's range and her lung capacity and her breath and whatever? I just think to bring these two stars together at that particular time—and I don't know whose idea that was, but they sound amazing on here; and that whole song, for me, is my favorite moment.
- 00:44:50 Music Music "When You Believe" off the album *My Love Is Your Love* by Whitney Houston.
- MARIAH CAREY:*  
*... so often proves in vain*  
*Hope seems like the summer birds*  
*Too swiftly flown away*  
*Yet now I'm standing here*  
*My heart's so full, I can't explain*  
*Seeking faith and speaking words...*
- [Music fades out as Oliver speaks]*
- 00:45:10 Oliver Host I wish there was video of when Mariah got the call, being invited to be on this, and just what her reaction was.
- 00:45:17 Morgan Host She was like, "Who? What?"
- 00:45:19 Oliver Host Oh!
- 00:45:20 Morgan Host No, not who Whitney, who decided to put us both on here. And I want to know if it was a Clive thing, because they're also not on the same label, so who made the decision?
- 00:45:33 Oliver Host So, Gerrick, especially given your personal relationship to the album, and given just your love for Whitney: imagine that you're meeting, let's say, your own counterpart but in 2019, who is not familiar with Whitney Houston; and you need to pick a song off of here that is going to encapsulate, as much as it can, who Whitney was in this era. What track would you use?
- 00:45:55 Gerrick Guest Oof. That is a tough one. And that's when I almost say that, you know, you have to give it to one of the ballads. You have to still give her—I would want an eleven year old me, who didn't know much about her, to still know that this is—
- 00:46:09 Oliver Host This is what she does.
- 00:46:10 Gerrick Guest This is what she does and this is what she's about. Of the ballads, mm. It still has to be "I Learned From The Best". I mean, you know, it's just something about Diane Warren. I always, you know, every time that I'm thinking of the big records that I love, I'm just like, "This is it." Because that's something where I'm like, "You know, was Tony Braxton supposed to have this song first, or like Deborah



Cox?”

00:46:31 Morgan Host Might have been.

00:46:32 Gerrick Guest I just feel like that song has such a pickup. Anybody, and at that moment Whitney was probably the only one who could do it, but I don't think she was probably the only one who heard it. She was probably the last person who heard it, whenever she heard it, and then was like, "I'm doing it."

But I think that was the song where I was like, "I could see so many different voices on this." Knowing what Diane Warren was doing with her pen and, you know, who was all in contention for a lot of these records at that time. And it's so interesting, because so much of this whole album, think of all the times that you start hearing this music again on other peoples' stuff. And some of that is courtesy of Rodney Jerkins, but also some of it was just like, folks still wanted to follow Whitney.

00:47:11 Music Music "I Learned From The Best" off the album *My Love Is Your Love* by Whitney Houston.

*Baby, but you found it out too late, too late*

*And so you know the way it feels to cry  
The way that I cried when you broke my world in two*

*[Music fades out as Morgan speaks]*

00:47:32 Morgan Host I don't want to ask you this question, because it assumes that someone could cover Whitney Houston; but if you could choose someone to cover any of these songs or redo any of these songs, who would it be and which song would it be?

00:47:50 Gerrick Guest Oh. Yeah.

00:47:53 Morgan Host I feel bad even having to ask. That's why I had that hell of a disclaimer, just so you wouldn't be mad at me, because I know it's tough.

*[Morgan responds emphatically as Gerrick speaks.]*

00:47:59 Gerrick Guest All of this music is tied to a time that I don't think can be pulled off. I think a lot of her older stuff can be, because, you know, a lot of it is more, you know, straightforward, you know, standard pop arrangements that I think are a little easier to tackle, but also more people can be comfortable exploring?

*[Morgan laughs.]*

Some of them, even in the big moments. But I think this album is so specific in such a way that you would have to put some kind of a spin; and I just don't really see it for anybody all like that? That I'd be like, "Yeah, I want to see you do 'Heartbreak Hotel'."

But that's something where it's like, I—I want that moment to happen, I want that big power R&B anthem, where it's, you know, a

group of young ladies to tackle it and just kill it. Like I definitely want that, I've been waiting on a moment to see someone like a Kehlani or a Janelle or H.E.R. or SZA, like, get together and do a song for like, our generation, and that hasn't happened yet and it's unfortunate. So, I think that would be the pick, because I don't really want nobody else touching some of these records, if we're just gonna be really honest about it.

00:49:16	Morgan	Host	Oh, that's real. That's real.
00:49:18	Oliver	Host	I might just be grossly generalizing or stereotyping here, but it also feels like there's kind of a sincerity to "Heartbreak Hotel" which just doesn't pan with like, this current generation of great vocalists and singers, where everything's just a little bit knowing, a little bit ironic, and this just feels a little too—  I mean, it's not like "Heartbreak Hotel" is, in terms of its content, you know, it may not be, even then, the sincerest song ever written, like it still feels like this was put together for this particular time and place. But that's part of why, even though I actually really do love the song, it is hard to imagine someone taking it today, because it requires a kind of, again, not a sentimentality, but a particular kind of emotional tenor that I just don't associate with— when I listen to current R&B, I just don't hear songs like this.
00:50:03	Morgan	Host	No. No.
00:50:05	Gerrick	Guest	It's real hard for style singers to give you these sorts of moments.
00:50:09	Oliver	Host	Gerrick, if you had to describe <i>My Love Is Your Love</i> in three words, what would you choose?
00:50:14	Gerrick	Guest	Three words. Fierce, joyful, and adventurous.
00:50:24	Oliver	Host	Which is a good thing to be in your mid-30s.
00:50:26	Gerrick	Guest	Yeah.
00:50:27	Oliver	Host	Or mid-40s. Or your mid-whatever.
00:50:28	Gerrick	Guest	Whenever. Yeah.
00:50:29	Oliver	Host	Absolutely.
00:50:30	Music	Music	<i>["I Learned From The Best" fades in again]</i>  <i>I learned from you</i>  <i>[Instruments begin dropping out, leaving her voice standing alone as she sings the final long, sustained note]</i>  <i>I learned from the best</i> <i>I learned from you</i>  <i>[Music fades out as Oliver speaks]</i>
00:50:45	Oliver	Host	If people really liked what they heard from this album, do we have other recommendations where they should go next?

00:50:51	Morgan	Host	<p>Yup. I'd stay in 1998, and I'd go to Kelly Price, <i>Soul of a Woman</i>. There were some fire tracks on there. It was one of my favorites. You can start with "Friend of Mine", "Secret Love" is a jam, "Don't Say Goodbye", "Kiss Test", "Your Love", "Take Me to a Dream". And Oliver was talking about this particular beat, this stutter-step beat, that's all over there, and it sounds like— because you have a lot of the same producers and production elements. It's <i>My Love Is Your Love</i> with Kelly Price.</p>
00:51:23	Music	Music	<p>"Secret Love" off the album <i>Soul of a Woman</i> by Kelly Price. Soulful, slow R&amp;B.</p> <p><i>... so long</i>  <i>Feeling so strong that I can't hide the way</i>  <i>(I can't hide the way)</i>  <i>No, I really can't hide</i>  <i>(I'm really feeling inside)</i></p> <p><i>[Music fades out as Oliver speaks]</i></p>
00:51:37	Oliver	Host	Gerrick?
00:51:38	Gerrick	Guest	Got three—
00:51:39	Oliver	Host	Oh, I like.
00:51:40	Gerrick	Guest	—and I'll— and they'll stick to different times, but still close together. I think Brandy, <i>Never Say Never</i> is a direct line to this album. Think you then should jump to Destiny's Child, <i>Writing on the Wall</i> . Then I think you should end with Deborah Cox, <i>The Morning After</i> , which— and I love this album, but—there is nothing that is such a carbon of <i>My Love Is Your Love</i> , top to bottom. I mean, and it's phenomenal; but it's like, "Oh wow, you redid this Whitney album, and this Brandy album together, and it's magic."
00:52:15	Music	Music	<p>"2 Good 2 Be True" off the album <i>The Morning After</i> by Deborah Cox. Poppy R&amp;B.</p> <p><i>Never thought I'd be feeling the way I do</i>  <i>Walking around with butterflies</i>  <i>Daydreaming about you and I</i>  <i>It's hard to believe, 'cuz all of this...</i></p> <p><i>[Music fades out]</i></p>
00:52:30	Oliver	Host	<p>For me, I think like Morgan—and this just goes back to me, thinking of this album as being such of its moment. I had to stay in that time zone as well. This is actually not a '98 album, but I would say you could either go backwards to '97 to Missy's debut album with Supa Dupa Fly, or you can jump ahead to '99 with <i>Da Real World</i>. But I think the Missy element on here—and it may just be because I'm just a really big Missy Elliot fan—but hearing Whitney work with Missy, and really more to the point, I think, really working with the Missy sound, if you will, was just— it just brought back how important and influential.</p> <p>And I don't think we could really describe Missy Elliot as being</p>

underrated in the classical sense, but I feel like we're still dealing with just how important and influential and just amazing Missy was, and Timbaland, and that whole crew was, in that moment. So if you liked what you heard on parts of this album, like, go back a year or jump a year forward to either of those, and just bathe in the greatness that is Missy Elliot.

- 00:53:34 Morgan Host Absolutely, and the fact that she's just now this year getting the Video Vanguard Award, it's like, "Yo, where y'all been?" She was killing and has been killing since 1997 and before.
- 00:53:46 Music Music "All N My Grill" off the album *Da Real World* by Missy Elliot. R&B/rap with a light instrumental backing.
- If you want me, where's my dough?  
Give me money, buy me clothes  
No need for talking, have my dough  
Where's my money? Where's my clothes?  
If you want me, where's my dough?  
Give me money, buy me clothes*
- [Music fades out as Oliver speaks]*
- 00:54:03 Oliver Host That will do it for this episode of *Heat Rocks* with our special guest, Gerrick Kennedy. Besides the Whitney book, what else are you working on right now?
- 00:54:12 Gerrick Guest I'm behind on the Whitney book, so I shouldn't say that I'm working on anything else—
- 00:54:16 Morgan Host Okay. Okay.
- 00:54:17 Gerrick Guest —in case my agent is listening.
- [Oliver laughs.]*
- I am only working on the Whitney book. Promise.
- 00:54:22 Oliver Host Where can people find you?
- 00:54:24 Gerrick Guest On Twitter [@GerrickKennedy](https://twitter.com/GerrickKennedy), same for Instagram. Hit me on Twitter, I'm talking lots of shit all the time.
- [Morgan and Gerrick laugh.]*
- 00:54:34 Oliver Host You've been listening to *Heat Rocks* with me, Oliver Wang, and Morgan Rhodes.
- 00:54:38 Morgan Host Our theme music is "Crown Ones" by Thes One of People Under The Stairs. Shout-out to Thes for the hookup.
- 00:54:44 Oliver Host *Heat Rocks* is produced by myself and Morgan, alongside Christian Duenas, who also edits, engineers, and does the booking for our shows.
- 00:54:50 Morgan Host Our senior producer is Laura Swisher, and our executive producer is Jesse Thorn.

00:54:55	Oliver	Host	We are part of the Maximum Fun family, taping every week live in their studios in the West Lake neighborhood of Los Angeles, and one last thing before we get up out of here. For our next episode, it will be the first of several in which we will be joined by Ernest Hardy, cultural critic, who will be our guest co-host, sitting in for Morgan, as she will be away on work for a few weeks; and we will be tackling one of the great musicals of the 1970s, <i>Grease</i> , with our guest, dancer Luis Xtravaganza.
00:55:27	Luis Xtravaganza	Guest	<p>There were a lot of albums, for me growing up, that really impacted my life, in different ways. <i>Grease</i> really, it shined a light on a really happy time in my life, kind of like a more innocent time in my life, and I was— I don't know, every time I think about it, I just think about me and my sister, and we're dancing and singing along to these songs and watching the movie and how colorful and, you know, there was a lot of dancing in it.</p> <p>And that was, you know, that was me, because I was an aspiring dancer; and I didn't know at the time what I wanted to be, but I knew I wanted it to look like what was happening on the screen, you know, in <i>Grease</i>, at Rydell High. I wanted to go to that high school, I wanted to have that leather jacket, and then later on I wanted to have the satin jacket, and then I was like, "Well, why not both?"</p>
00:56:35	Ernest Hardy	Host	It's a good look.
00:56:36	Luis	Guest	Yeah.
00:56:38	Speaker 1	Promo	<a href="http://MaximumFun.org">MaximumFun.org</a> .
00:56:40	Speaker 2	Promo	Comedy and culture.
00:56:41	Speaker 3	Promo	Artist owned—
00:56:42	Speaker 4	Promo	—Audience supported.