

**Trends Like These 223: F\*\*k Max Landis, 2020 Democratic Debates, Facebook's Cryptocurrency, To Impeach or Not to Impeach?, Stranger Things Kid's Prank Show, Bill Cosby and OJ Simpson Twitter Madness, Harvard Refuses Parkland Survivor, Do Body Cams Solve Anything?**

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**Travis:** This week: Democratic debating, impeachment awaiting, and prank show hating.

**Courtney:** I'm Courtney Enlow.

**Brent:** I'm Brent Black.

**Travis:** I'm Travis McElroy.

**Courtney:** And I'm America's dad.

**Brent:** With Trends Like These.

[theme music plays]

**Travis:** Hello, internet, and hello, Brent and Courtney.

**Brent:** Hello, internet, and hello, Travis and Courtney.

**Courtney:** Hello, Brent and Travis. Hi, internet, hi. Oh, I'm just so...

**Travis:** Hey, Courtney, don't be shy.

**Courtney:** I'm just so bashful.

**Travis:** Hey, hey, internet, one second. Courtney, the internet is our friend. Nothing bad ever happens on the internet.

**Courtney:** I don't know about this internet.

**Travis:** You've heard about them?

**Courtney:** [whispering] I don't know.

**Travis:** What have you heard?

**Courtney:** [whispering] I don't know.

**Travis:** It's not true. The internet is a good place where only good things happen.

**Brent:** The internet is my ancestral home. They actually came over on the Windows 3.1 from the old country.

**Courtney:** Y'know what, if you guys are talking up the internet, I think I'm gonna give it a try. I bet it's gonna be great.

**Travis:** No, wait, don't! It was all a joke, the internet's terrible, stay off!

**Courtney:** [laughing] Oh no, there's so many dicks!

**Travis:** No Courtney, get out of here while you still can!

**Brent:** [laughs]

**Travis:** Um, so, this is the internet. Welcome to it. This is Trends Like These, which is, listen, more or less, the internet at this point. We boil it down.

**Courtney:** This is Internet: The Podcast.

**Travis:** We debunk, rebunk, and get behind the stories that are trending on the internet. And most importantly, here's the thing. Obviously, we probably—oh, I should also say, it's June 20<sup>th</sup>, 2019, 5:40PM Eastern time.

But most importantly, you can't talk about the internet without a bev in hand.

**Courtney:** That's true.

**Travis:** What are you drinking?

**Courtney:** I'm drinking cabernet sauvignon, AKA, my tolerate the internet juice.

**Travis:** Mmm.

**Brent:** I am drinking a Coconut LaCroix, which is my 'found out from the internet that it's good' juice.

**Travis:** I see. I am drinking, in one hand – I will be the moderator, here – in one hand, I have an ice water with fresh lemon.

**Courtney:** Nice.

**Travis:** And in the other hand, I have a Maker's Mark on the rocks.

**Courtney:** Good stuff, good stuff, good stuff.

**Brent:** Nice.

**Travis:** So I will be sipping from each, depending on whether the story is good or bad. Let me look at the doc real quick. Oh, God, I'm gonna die. Okay.

**Courtney:** I just want to like—I want to have like a, um, a before time bevs. Because last week, at the Jordan, Jesse, Go show in Chicago, I drank Malort.

**Travis:** Oh, no.

**Courtney:** And I haven't drank Malort since college when I was tricked into it by the bad people. And what it tastes like, if you haven't had Malort, if you're not from the Chicago area, it tastes like the couch of a really old funeral home is the best way I can describe the taste of Malort.

**Brent:** [laughs]

**Travis:** I recently... 'cause I have often discussed Malort. And I have heard someone compare it to like, the chemicals on brand new showroom tires.

**Brent:** Eugh.

**Travis:** And it ain't wrong. That kind of rubbery, very chemically... it's like when I was a kid, right? And I believed that perfume was made by just putting a bunch of like, flowers in water. Um, but it's like if you did that, and then also dumped a bunch of perfumes into it, too. It's disgusting.

**Courtney:** It's so bad. Jordan drank a bunch of it, because we played a game where it's like, you had to decide if something was an erotic novel, a grind core song, or something they made up. Spoiler alert: guys, I got them all right. Because I know my fuckin' erotic like, bestiality novels, apparently. Apparently that's my shit.

**Travis:** Ooh.

**Courtney:** It was dark. It was dark, but I got it all right, and Jordan had to drink like, six shots of Malort because of me, and I'm so sorry.

**Travis:** Oh, no. I've only had Malort 'cause Hodgman makes people drink it at Max Fun Cons. So I've had it several times. And then, when I was in Chicago last, I got two bottles of it so I could make my friends drink it.

**Courtney:** Yeah, I was there, and you were like, "Do you want some?" And I was like, "I will literally rather skin my body than drink this."

**Brent:** I gotta try it now. My only weird booze I've tried is Aquavit, which is like a Scandinavian... it looks like pee. It doesn't taste like pee, but it doesn't taste better than pee. But now I gotta try Malort.

**Travis:** Once you get... next time you come visit, yeah.

**Courtney:** Did you ever, as a child, have to go to like, your friend's grandma's house? And it just smelled weird? That's what Malort tastes like. It's just—it's bad.

**Travis:** Yeah.

[theme music plays]

**Travis:** Alright, let me try something on... tell me what you think about this. Beyolo the headlines. Is that anything?

**Courtney:** It sure is a thing.

**Brent:** Yeah. It's...

**Travis:** Yeah, but like, is it something? Beyolo. The headlines. It's topical. The kids have just started saying yolo. No?

**Brent:** Mmm...

**Travis:** No? Okay. Hey, y'know what? Can't all be winners. So, prank shows, huh?

**Courtney:** That's another thing that all the kids are talking about.

**Travis:** Honestly, I've never been a fan.

**Brent:** Yep.

**Travis:** Prank shows. I've never been a fan. They make me uncomfortable.

**Courtney:** Same, same, same.

**Travis:** Here's the thing. That's not to say that... I can imagine a prank show. I think maybe in Practical Jokers, it's... I'm not sure. I can imagine a prank show where the joke is on the hosts, and not the guests, where like... for context, that's what we tried to do when we made the My Brother, My Brother, and Me show, is everybody who like, we brought in, and it's like, y'know, tell us about these antiques, or tell us about this building.

We told them, up front, we're gonna say dumb stuff. You don't have to act like the dumb stuff we say is true, or intelligent, or whatever. You can tell us we're dumb, and you can like, grimace at the stuff we're saying. You don't have to play along at all. The joke is on us. And like, that I don't mind, y'know?

**Brent:** Yeah.

**Travis:** The closest I've come I think is like, Nathan for You.

**Brent:** I was just about to say that, yeah.

**Courtney:** Mm-hmm.

**Travis:** Yeah, something about Nathan for You—

**Courtney:** But even some of those episodes are like, "Ooh, I'm so uncomfortable."

**Travis:** There's something about Nathan for You that mitigates it for me so it's not terrible. But in general, I'm not a fan. Uh, the reason we bring this up is because prank shows have been discussed a lot lately, thanks to Gaten Matarazzo and his new Netflix show, Prank Encounters.

Now, if you don't recognize Gaten's name, Gaten plays Dustin on uh, on Stranger Things. And he—listen, this isn't me saying this. This isn't subjective analysis, this is objective – very highly paid young star. He's 16

years old, and this new show, Prank Encounters, he is both the host and the executive producer of.

**Brent:** Wow.

**Travis:** And when it was announced, it was kind of framed... it sounded like it was tricking people into thinking they'd been hired for a job, and then getting pranked. Uh, specifically, this line of the announcement: "Two complete strangers who think they're starting their first day at a new job." So as you might imagine, the idea of tricking people who are looking for jobs didn't go down smoothly.

Lots of folks took to Twitter to let Netflix and Gaten know that pranking people who need jobs is not a good direction to go down for comedy. Uh, now, it was slow to respond, but eventually, Netflix did address the issue. According to them in a separate release: "The pranks in Prank Encounters are spooky, supernatural, and over the top, and everyone had a great time. All participants came in with the expectation that this is a one-day, hourly gig, and everyone got paid for their time."

Now, I will say, here's the thing. I think that that... [sighs] Answers the question, but also pretty much contradicts what's in that first statement. You can't really say "who each think they're starting their first day at a new job," and then say they all came in with the expectation that this was a one-day job.

**Brent:** Yeah...

**Travis:** Um, that's... that's kind of contradictory language. But according to this release, the prank isn't about them... like, there not really being a job or anything like that, and they weren't showing up expecting a new career? Question mark? Um, however, it should be noted that the spokesperson who wrote that second statement, uh, declined to answer additional questions about how the jobs were marketed to those seeking work, and Netflix also continues to decline making any of the pranked people available for an interview, and representatives for Matarazzo have still not responded to requests for comment.

**Brent:** Hmm.

**Travis:** So... I'm not a conspiracy theorist. It's been a long time since we had Travis' Conspiracy Corner. But I think you could... maybe make connections in your brain and say that maybe it was a little bit more of that first thing, and then they saw the response to it and said, "Ha ha, no, what? We wouldn't do that." And maybe are doing some careful re-editing.

**Courtney:** I think that sounds right.

**Brent:** That is an interesting theory. Yeah, I mean, I just... it seems so tone deaf. I mean, to me, it's like, what are people talking about? They're talking about the horrors of late capitalism, the gig economy, everyone's working harder, productivity is higher than it's ever been for less pay and less benefits of citizenship and being in the workforce, and to me it's like, I'm not against any kind of prank show on its face. But I, y'know, it's kind of, at this point, it's kind of like, not a genre I'm itching to watch.

But to me, I feel like what they messed up was the wrong angle of the press release, 'cause it sounds like... kind of like that thing where... the game show where people compete to uh, get rid of their student debt. It's like, this feels so dystopian, and that kind of was, I think, a little bit of that flavor was what pissed people off about the headlines on this one.

**Courtney:** Did you guys ever hear about when Justin Timberlake and Jessica Biel got married, and his either best man or his groomsmen made a video that they played at the wedding of uh, this guy going up to like, homeless people and like, clearly mentally ill people, and sex workers, and asking them to wish Justin and Jessica like, wedding wishes, as though they were old friends?

**Travis:** What?!

**Courtney:** That's like, what this feels like. Where it's like, rich people are like, "Poor people are funny! Let's laugh at them." And then they had to like, fix it.



**Travis:** If you need like, a concrete like, let's all point to something when someone says, well, what is entitlement? What does privilege even mean? And it means this, because my imagining is, I could definitely see a like, pitch meeting, a room, where they said, "So we'll tell them there's a job, but there's no job." And not intending to be malicious so much as just being so unaware of like, that being cruel? And being an issue?

**Brent:** Mmm.

**Travis:** And, but—[sighs] Okay, what I'm about to say, I hope no one will get mad at me for. The Travis McElroy story.

**Brent:** [laughs]

**Travis:** But, on some level, there is a part of me, though, that looks at it and is like, Gaten is 16. Like, I don't know... not that that should let him off the hook or whatever—

**Brent:** No, that's interestingly a number that's gonna come back up for another person. It is an interesting time to judge someone on their actions, isn't it?

**Courtney:** Did he come up with the concept, or is he just the host?

**Brent:** That's a good question.

**Travis:** I don't know. Because he is both host and executive producer, it makes me think that maybe he's more instrumental in it than just someone coming to him.

**Courtney:** Because this does seem like something a dumb teenager came up with. Or, a rich middle age man.

**Travis:** That's what I'm saying.

**Courtney:** One of the two.

**Travis:** That's what I'm saying.

**Courtney:** And when they come together, this happens.

**Travis:** I could definitely see a 16 year old saying, "I love prank shows. I'll host a prank show, and it will be like this." And the problem I find is, if that is the case, some adult should have said, "Okay, but we're just gonna change this one thing."

**Brent:** Yeah. In my head canon, it's like, there's a whole genre of, um, pretty cruel Japanese reality TV, sometimes game shows, sometimes just straight up reality TV. There was one where they just kept a guy in a room with nothing for like, a long, long time, and they would occasionally give him food, and like, y'know, they just... I'm not saying... I just think it's a cultural thing, and I don't know if those kinds of shows were more of an early 2000s thing in Japan. I've seen lots of YouTube clips.

But like, y'know, people that are in a room, and then like, the girl from the Ring comes out of the TV? That's like a whole genre of YouTube video. But I wonder if like, the culture of the kind of people that watch Netflix is just not... just has no appetite for that kind of thing right now.

**Travis:** Don't know.

**Courtney:** There's a show on Netflix right now. I just saw a review of it last night. They make people stay awake for 24 hours and do things like count out how much money, like, four million quarters is while they're like, super sleep deprived. And then like, if they don't get it right, like, they lose all their money and stuff like that.

It's... I don't like things that are fucked up and mean. I can't even watch like, Ali G. Like, I can't watch stuff where people are just like, mean and not in on... like, I don't like it. It makes me feel bad.

**Brent:** Sacha Baron Cohen stuff I have a love-hate with, because I think sometimes, it exposes such real shit you never see anywhere else.

**Courtney:** Yeah, I love when it's like—

**Brent:** But I'm always sitting there—

**Courtney:** —a truth to power thing.

**Brent:** Right.

**Courtney:** That's great. But then when it's just like, unsuspecting, like, regular people, I'm just like, "Oh, I'm... so sad..."

**Brent:** My body becomes a pretzel watching anything he does, 'cause I'm just like, "Ohh, this is very, very awkward."

**Travis:** The interesting thing is like, you mentioned like, game shows, right? And like, I have a not... a not passing, a very deep-seeded interest in psychology. Like, I studied it in college. I went back to school for it for a little bit before uh—not anymore, 'cause I don't like school.

But um, so, there were many game shows that I am interested in from a psychological standpoint that then, when you remind yourself, like, yeah, but also, people are watching them for entertainment. And you're like, well, okay, well, that's fucked up. Well, yeah, but... anyways, that's enough about game shows and prank shows. Uhhh... yeah.

**Courtney:** I want to like... watch like a nice game show, instead of do this next... I want to watch like, Match Game '77. And just live in that. But instead, I'm gonna talk about Max Landis. Uh, content warning here – I am going to discuss... [sighs] Like, it's like... this is like, a full on return to the terrible men era of this show, where it's just like, rape, and coercion, and like, all the things, and God fucking damn it, I fucking hate this guy so much.

After years of whisper and full throated screams, screenwriter Max Landis is finally getting his long deserved day in the burning sun of the Me Too era. The son of director John Landis - also a real asshole, which we will get to –

Max Landis is the screenwriter behind *Bright*, *Chronicle*, *American Ultra*, *Victor Frankenstein*, and the creator of shows like *Dirk Gently's Holistic Detective Agency*.

Perhaps more likely because of the power behind his last name than any career success, what with how most people probably don't remember a single one of those things that I just named, except for *Bright* being like, "Oh, that's that fucking orc cop movie."

His work has been received as middling at best, critically and financially. But, for years, Landis has had the ability to silence most of the women who could come forward - allegedly, of course. Unallegedly, here's some stuff you should know about Max Landis, straight from his dumb fucking mouth.

In 2016, Lexi Alexander, who directed like, *Punisher: War Zone*, and she's big on Twitter. Like, she is just a big... a big person. Uh, she tweeted about the news of Netflix's *Bright*, about how no woman would be just handed three million dollars to make this movie.

**Travis:** Especially, once again, to Courtney's point, after *American Ultra* was a big failure, *Victor Frankenstein* was a big failure, uh, yes.

**Courtney:** And they were like, "Here, random man with stupid hair. Make this Will Smith movie." No. No woman would ever be allowed to do that. Totally fair statement. He didn't handle it well. He responded to that, like, single tweet, and then a couple other like, quote tweets where she's just kind of discussing this with other people. And he went on kind of a tweet rampage.

The full history of the Max/Lexi feud is: One, Lexi tweets about me, blocks me. I ask why. She keeps tweeting." And then he keeps going. "In all honesty, I wouldn't care about Lexi if she hadn't been a vicious bully to several close friends of mine. I find that troubling." And then he keeps going. "I have no personal animosity against Lexi Alexander, and thinks she's talented, but she's irresponsible with the position she's in. I feel mansplaining saying this. She seems like a powerful feminist voice with an angry, destructive dark side."

**Travis:** Oh, wow.

**Courtney:** "I've heard a lot of stories about her, but beyond Twitter, have never experienced any of it firsthand. Yes, I've heard stories that indicate, in person, that this is the case. But I've never met her."

**Travis:** Holy shit.

**Courtney:** "If you're going to tweet abusive things about me to a large audience, I'd rather appreciate knowing why. I have just discovered truly disgusting information about Lexi Alexander and her relationship to me that I don't know how to process."

**Travis:** Whoa.

**Courtney:** "This Lexi stuff needs to be dealt with at a higher level than Twitter. I hadn't realized the magnitude of the lies/delusions."

**Travis:** Wow.

**Brent:** Messy.

**Courtney:** So... That happened.

**Travis:** All of that is so dog-whistley.

**Brent:** Yeah.

**Courtney:** Yeahhh.

**Brent:** And like, it's... I don't know, there's many, many things wrong with it. But like, the weird, like, I don't know if it's... it's almost Trumpy in like, "I don't know, but I heard this, maybe it's not true." It's like, why are you saying it in that way?

**Courtney:** "People are saying..." Yeah.

**Brent:** Yeah. Eugh.

**Courtney:** He, after all that, made a two minute and 37 second YouTube video asking her why she blocked him. And if it's okay with you guys, I'd kind of like to play the whole clip.

**Brent:** Let's do it.

**Travis:** Yeah.

**Max:** Hi, Lexi. Uh, I'm a big fan of your movies. I like Green Street. I love Punisher: War Zone. Um, I saw that you had me blocked on Twitter, and uh, you were tweeting about me a lot. I saw that. Uh, I was curious what the story is there. Um, I... I'm not a... you were tweeting a lot that I'm like, a sexist, and entitled. That's not really... that's not really me, so I don't know what... and then you blocked me, so I didn't... I couldn't respond to it, which seems... strange.

I mean, it seems like a strange social thing to do, to talk about someone and then prevent them from defending themselves. Especially from someone, y'know, who... I listened to your How Did This Get Made?, I like... I'm a fan of yours. Um, I was curious about it, and so, I'm curious... I like War Zone enough that I'm reaching out to you. I'm having someone else reach out to you, but I think you're like, a talented director.

So uh, I know that some things throughout my career have been interpreted as sexist. I've said some really like, obnoxious or gross things. But I don't think I've ever said anything sexist, regardless of what a Jezebel article said about me. I honestly think everything in that article was just sort of douchey, gross stuff, uh, and I regretted a lot of that, and I was kind of a different person back then. But none of it was really sexist, so like, uh...

I don't know, I don't want you to have blocked me on Twitter, and I'm curious about starting a dialogue with you, because I feel like what you were saying represents, uh, a sort of atrophied, outdated concept of who I am,

that doesn't help me when I criticize stuff. So I was curious if you wanted to talk. But maybe that's crazy.

I'm constantly punished. I am constantly punished. It happens literally every time, uh, that I try to engage someone and talk to them, and be like... like, literally every time someone tweets me, like, "You're a douche," or, "You're Jewish," or, "You're talentless," or anything, I'll usually, if they're eloquent enough, I'll say, "Is there something you need from me?" And they almost always just tell me to go fuck myself and make me feel worse.

So uh, y'know, hi, Lexi. Uh, I'm sorry you don't like me. I like you. Um, if this is coming off as condescending, it's not meant to be. Uh, have a good day. I hope to hear from you.

**Courtney:** If you have not seen this video before, Landis spends its entirety making faces of utter incredulity. Like, performatively like, "What? Huhhh? I don't understand."

**Travis:** Yeah, it's cartoonish.

**Courtney:** It's ridiculous. And honestly, if you didn't know anything else about this person, and you watched this video, and you heard the allegations against him, it's very easy as a woman to think like, yeah, that's the exact kind of guy this is. He is entitled, he is playing the victim, he refuses to take no for an answer, because the no hurts him. We've all interacted with this kind of man.

But years before that...

**Travis:** But also, what's really weird, too, in the video is like, you hear... When he says like, "Yeah, I've said some gross, despicable stuff." Is... I... like... bizarrely disconnected from that. Like, there's no shame, or apology, or ownership of... it's the same as if I said like, "Yeah, I've eaten a hot dog." It's almost as if, yeah, I'm saying, I'm using the words to describe it, but I don't understand why you would be upset about it.

**Brent:** Yeah, the tone. Like, sure, I've been a bastard. I've been evil, but I haven't been sexist. Like...

**Courtney:** And to be honest, that's been his whole entire thing. Where it's just like, "Y'know what, I've said some shitty stuff. It wasn't sexist. But like, it was like, douchey." And but like, because he called himself out, at least more than a lot of people do, people were like, "I mean, he's saying it himself. He admits it. Bluh bluh." [sighs] He's a fucking piece of shit.

Um, the thing is, years before that, he told us the exact person that he is. That Jezebel article that he references? The one where he's like, "I just said some douchey stuff, it wasn't sexist." Here are some quotes from that. Pulled from an interview that Landis did with Shelby Sells in 2013. I am quoting, here.

"My experience of chicks throwing themselves at you like that, they're always fucking crazy. No chick worth hooking up with is going to throw it at you, because it means they're crazy. I gave this girl my number. I was really stupid, because I was like, why not? Maybe I'll hook her up with one of my friends."

**Travis:** What? Um... when he says 'throw it at you,' what's the 'it'? Is it sex?

**Courtney:** I think it's... I think it's like, they're like, putting their paginas in a catcher's mitt and just throwing it at him.

**Travis:** Throwing it at you... oh, God.

**Brent:** It's such a like, symbol of the, like, men get to come onto women and that's fine. Women coming... it's just, it's like... on top of all of the layers of shit, it's just such a pure version of, "If a woman comes onto you or makes it clear she wants to do anything with you, she's crazy, end of story." Like, there's so many things wrong with it in so few words.

**Courtney:** But it's not sexist, you guys. It's just douchey. And I know, because Max Landis said so. He, in another answer to a question that I



cannot imagine this was the question. It's very much a like, "What was the question? I'm sorry." And it was like, "I just said hello."

He said, "Yeah, I wanted to hook her up with a newly single friend of mine." This is seemingly going on from that other answer. "She started texting me every 15 minutes, and I wouldn't respond. I told her to stop texting me. I'd be on set directing, and she would be like, "Why, what's wrong? Do you hate me? I know how you guys are." And I was like, "What the fuck are you talking about?" And it immediately read unhealthy to me. Unhealthy and anxious.

Woman who are throwing it that easy, they're not doing it because they think I'm cute. They're doing it because they need some kind of validation. I'm a tiny, tiny bit successful. But in the scale of things, you're gonna fuck me for no reason? I don't see it. I'm not on that level. I'm not a rock star. I'm not in a band. You're not gonna be in my video. The only thing you could get from fucking me is getting to fuck me, and if so, lucky you."

**Travis:** Whoa! Whoa! Whoa! Whoa!

**Brent:** Wow.

**Travis:** Whoa! Whoa! Whoa! Oh, God! Oh, God!

**Courtney:** I—he's not—God, this is the middle of the paragraph.

"I guarantee, that's not what any of these chicks who just throw it—" Again, 'it.' Again with the 'it.' "—at me really want. Granted, they'll have a wonderful time." [whispers] I don't think they will. I don't think they will.

**Travis:** Whoa!

**Courtney:** "But it's weird. Being a single guy in LA is fun as fuck, and I love it. The fact that everyone here is so good looking is intense and good and rewarding."

**Travis:** Fuck you.

**Courtney:** "Something about everyone around you being a little bit better looking, it puts you in a good mood."

**Travis:** [blows raspberry]

**Courtney:** "I don't feel bad or superficial for saying that. I'm also attracted to ambition."

**Travis:** Of course you don't! Of course you don't!

**Courtney:** Mm-hmm. [sighs] And for the record, that whole—and I'm gonna get to another quote. Like, seriously, like, this is gonna be a lot of Landis. Um, but, there's one thing that, in The Daily Beast article where these women came forward with their stories, one of Landis' former girlfriends, actress Whitney Moore, uh, tweeted and said the one thing that she wished that the article had included was that like, Landis'... his dick don't work. Which like, we're not shaming anyone with ED, but the reason that he would give to women for having this struggle was that they were enjoying it too much.

**Travis:** ... Huh.

**Courtney:** Or, it was their bodies, which I'm gonna get to of all this. But like, one of the things was like; you're enjoying it too much. So this whole thing about like, "You're gonna have a wonderful time," it's like... [sighs]

**Travis:** Doesn't sound like it.

**Courtney:** It doesn't sound great. Um, it gets worse from here. Referring to—

**Travis:** I'll—sorry, real quick. Can I just go back?

**Courtney:** Yeah. Please do.

**Travis:** This is, once again, so... [sighs] Dog-whistley, like, shamey, of like... so, the only reason you'd want to have sex with me... it's oddly, like, I'm gonna armchair psychologist for a second.

**Courtney:** Mm-hmm. There's gonna be a lot of that here.

**Travis:** And say like, it's weirdly... like, the only reason an attractive person would want to have sex with me is because they think I'm successful, but I'm not success—then... maybe they like you? You piece of shit?

**Courtney:** That's the thing. It's like, self-deprecation as an effort to seem non-threatening.

**Travis:** Right.

**Courtney:** If he can just like, keep like, negging himself, like, "Oh, y'know, I'm nothin'." Then it's like, he gives a false sense of security to these people, and then just like, fuckin'... goes from there.

**Travis:** But also, like, it's this, like... I don't know. It's also this shitty... listen. I used to be a young man. I will say, for a long time, a shitty person. I'm a recovering shitty man. And like, that idea of a woman who wanted to be with you, like, well... what's the deal? What's wrong with you?

**Brent:** Relatable.

**Travis:** And so, being attracted to people who didn't want to be with you.

**Courtney:** I mean, TBH, very relatable from a woman over here.

**Travis:** Right, but really, what—right. And what that came down to was, I didn't like myself.

**Courtney:** Yeah.

**Travis:** Of like, I didn't see in me what someone who would like me would like. And so, it was hard to... but like, this goes so far beyond that.

**Courtney:** You can take that insecurity, and you can like, y'know, detach in the way that I think that like, based on like, stuff you've told me that you did, where like, you kind of like, detach, ghost, that stuff. Or, you can take it and weaponize it against people, and that is what Landis did.

**Travis:** Right! That is the thing. This goes beyond, like... I can't... it's so hard for me to accept that you like me for me, that I have to like, distance myself from you. To, it's so hard for me to accept who you are that I'm gonna make you feel like shit, and also, convince other people that you are shit.

**Courtney:** And he literally admits to doing that, because referring to a woman to whom he gave, and I quote, "a crippling social anxiety, self-loathing, body dysmorphia, and eating disorder to," he said, "I mean, you can't really give someone any of these things. But the seeds of these things were there inside of her.

We were in such a sort of unfair, fucked up relationship. Not the kind where there's a lot of yelling and screaming. The actual relationship was very nice and loving. But I was so fickle about her body. I'm not shy – I would just blurt out shit all the time. She ended up completely changing how she dressed and how she looked for me. That chick will never talk to me again."

**Travis:** Can you... okay. Can you imagine, one, being that person. That is, of course, the most fuck-up-ed thing, the most... I can't even imagine that. But moreso, can you imagine saying that in an interview?

**Brent:** [laughs] Jesus.

**Courtney:** And the thing is, like...

**Travis:** In an interview! To have a reporter looking at you, and you are saying a thing, thinking, "This is fine, this thing that I am saying to the press."

**Courtney:** I mean, he's admitting this horrible thing, and yet, somehow, the actual version, which you can find in The Daily Beast article, is even worse. It's devastating. It's heartbreaking. I cannot express enough just abject sorrow for these women.

Um, one more quote from this interview, because guys, he wasn't done. He said... "I can't date chicks who haven't figured out their orgasms."

**Travis:** Okay.

**Courtney:** "I've met a lot of chicks who don't or can't come during sex, but still go on and on about how much they love sex, and it throws me a little, because I'm like, do you, though?"

**Travis:** Alright. Fuck right off.

**Courtney:** Alright, here's... [sighs]

**Brent:** This is the douchiest version of that tweet I think we talked about on this show, but where the guy is like, "I think women don't actually orgasm. They just pretend to." And it's like, dude, you are outing something about yourself that is so embarrassing.

**Courtney:** I just, like... I...

**Brent:** And it's not the inability, it's the viewpoint, and not look... anyway, I'm... you guys get it.

**Travis:** Well, not only that, it's also such a weird... like, not weird, but to say like, sex is only for the orgasm.

**Courtney:** Yeah.

**Travis:** Of like, hey, my dude? My dude? You're doing it bad. Let's flash back to when you were like, "Oh, they'd be lucky to." Doesn't sound like it.

**Brent:** Nope. No.

**Courtney:** I'm just gonna dip in here, because we have a lot of female listeners who like, y'know, it's actually very normal for women to struggle with like, achieving orgasm with a partner. And that's fine. It doesn't mean you don't fuckin' still enjoy it. It's still super fun. It's great.

Anyway. Um, anyway, there's a million—

**Travis:** Sex! For those interested, it rules.

**Courtney:** Sex: We like it. Uh...

**Brent:** [laughs]

**Courtney:** There's a million other instances of this motherfucker being intolerable, like that time he singlehandedly started the 'Rey is a Mary Sue' corner of the internet, and ruined Star Wars for everyone.

**Travis:** And y'know what's... okay, here's the bonkers things about it, right? This dude, like, for so long... okay, he seemed to hit at a point of where the like, can you believe he said it? Mixed with, self-aware, self-deprecating humor, let him get away with saying terrible shit, like everything we've just said, of like, "That guy will say anything!" But while still people pointing at him as like, he... he talks enough about how, what a shithead he is. But he's not that bad.

**Courtney:** There was like a comedy element to it, where it was just like, "Oh, that fucker's talking again." And it's like, okay, but here's the thing – he is actually hurting people. He's genuinely hurting people.

**Travis:** Right. It's like he was on this bubble of like... [laughs] God, what I'm about to say is so painfully true to say. The only people he was hurting was women. So like, it was okay. Like, that was—

**Courtney:** And honestly, that sums up the whole fucking Me Too movement. Because that's why things go so long before they—like, it took this for this to break, because the only people they were hurting were

women. It's like Joe Biden. And this isn't in politics round up this week, but Joe Biden saying like, "Oh, I've been great friends with segregationists. They weren't mean to me at all." It's like, of course they fucking weren't, Joe! Like, that's basically what it is, where all these men in Hollywood were like, "Well, I haven't had bad experiences with him." Of fucking course you haven't.

**Travis:** Right. And he was this perfect encapsulation of like, woke bro. Of like, oh—and listen, I say this with my—

**Courtney:** He legitimately fancied himself a feminist and an ally.

**Travis:** Right. Right. Because he was self-aware, just enough, to call other people out for it and make jokes about himself doing it, without actually addressing or changing his behavior in any way. And because he was... what it is, is like, because he was uh, non-mainstream looking, and embraced other lifestyles, y'know, like, was open to being friends with whoever, and seemed non-judgmental about whatever, that he seemed... that he styled himself as like, open-minded. And that, for him, I think was enough without actually uh, caring about how he interacted with the individual person.

**Courtney:** That's also—there's a thing of, um, it's a very common thing of people hiding behind perceived awkwardness. Where it's like, well, I just don't know how to talk to people. So I'm like, offensive and weird, and stuff like that. I actually one... years ago, I had like, one of his friends kind of defend him to me, saying like, "Well, I think he's on the spectrum." And...

**Travis:** Mmm.

**Courtney:** And as the mother of two children on the spectrum, it's like, I would sooner die than let my children become like Max Landis, and then use their diagnosis as an excuse for that. Like, I... ugh.

**Travis:** Well, that's the thing. The thing is like, there will be... I... I remember growing up with ADHD. I remember having a conversation once with my mom, uh, when I was in high school. Where I said like, "Hey, did you know I can take the SATs untimed?" And she said, "Yeah, but you don't

need to." And I said, "Yeah, but I could, because I have ADD/ADHD. I qualify for it." And she's like, "Yeah, but why would you? You don't need to."

And like, that is a thing of like, growing up, I was always on the like, minimum dosage of medication. And instead, we focused on behavioral, like, cognitive therapy, of like, how... when you feel like this, what do you do? When you think about this, what do you do? Right? Instead of just throwing medication at it, let's actually like, treat it, right? Let's learn about it.

And so, that idea of like, using ADD or ADHD as like, an explanation for my shitty behavior, instead of just working hard to try to address the shitty behavior before it hurt somebody, is like... it just is so disgusting to me, of using it not as like a, yes, y'know what, it's something I'm trying to like, cope with and live with. But as like a get out of jail free card, is no, no, no. That ain't it. That ain't it.

**Courtney:** None of the stuff that we've talked about immediately proves the allegations against him. But what you have is a picture of the exact kind of person who matches every single one of those allegations. And I will briefly go over some of them, and if you're able, I encourage you to read the whole piece at The Daily Beast. But I have to tell you, this is one of the most triggering pieces I've ever read. It physically hurts to read.

The allegations from these eight women include constant coercion, forcible rape, open critique of their bodies, as well as graphically comparing them sexually to his other conquests, choking at least one of them to the point of passing out, and a million other horrific things. I cannot overstate how awful the actions detailed in this article are, and also, how weirdly common a lot of it is.

But here's the thing – none of this is new information. As I said, rumors and whispers existed for years. When I was at Pajiba, we and several other outlets received some third-hand information from friends of Landis' victims, or people familiar with what was going on, but we couldn't prove or confirm anything beyond, this guy is a fucking asshole. Because no one would talk. And we respected that. We understand. We understood. We still understand. But many of these things confirmed in The Daily Beast piece were things I



had heard over the years, including him making women cry as some kind of nightmarish foreplay.

So how did Landis get away with this for so long? There's power, money, the usual stuff. His dad is, of course, famous director John Landis, also a famous asshole. But one, for some reason, who history tends to whitewash. Because this is someone whose horrific work practices on the set of *Twilight Zone: The Movie* decapitated actor Vic Morrow and two children. And according to *The LA Times*, Landis reportedly threw a one year anniversary party to celebrate his acquittal on the charges of involuntary manslaughter, and invited the jury.

**Brent:** Oh, gross.

**Courtney:** So the trash apple doesn't fall far from the motherfucker tree. Additionally, as we've said, Landis was open – Max Landis – was open about what a shitbird he is to an extent. A legal extent. Self-deprecating and seemingly guilty and dripping with, "Oh, I'm such a mess." Fucking gag me. But people bought it. People believed he was trying to work on himself and better himself, including his friends and victims, many of whom have come forward in support of the eight women who spoke to *The Daily Beast*.

Josh Trank, who directed *Chronicle*, tweeted, "I 100% believe every word of this article about Max. I banned him from visiting principal photography of *Chronicle*, and haven't spoken to him since 2012." Chloe Dykstra, who of course went public with her own story of her relationship with Chris Hardwick, wrote a Facebook post detailing her shame and sorrow about being friends with Max Landis.

She believed he was trying to be better, and she even defended him at times. But she stands with the victims. She knows that this is true. And that, to me, hits on a huge part of how Landis was able to get away with things for so long, and I do not say that in a victim-blamey way. Not in any way, shape, or form.

**Travis:** No, if I may, like, I... I think that, from what I've seen, and from what I've heard of people who know people who know people, like, it's very much a... and this term isn't used a lot these days, but a cult of personality.

**Courtney:** Yes.

**Travis:** Of like—

**Courtney:** They literally say that in The Daily Beast article that his like, group of friends was, in very many ways, a cult.

**Travis:** Right. Of just like, this thing of... it's so easy to like, hear people explain... like you said, of saying like, "Well, it's because of this and it's because..." And like, we've all had a friend far, like, much less extent of this, where you're like, "Well, once you get to know him..."

**Courtney:** Yes.

**Travis:** "Once you get to know him..." And what that comes down to is, when you're a bully, when you're a piece of shit like this, and the piece of shit starts treating you less like shit, you... like, warm up to them. You get like, almost like Stockholm syndrome.

**Brent:** Yeah.

**Courtney:** And Chloe even said that. She was just like, she would, when faced with people saying like, "Oh, no, he sucks," she would be like, "But you don't know him like I do." And that's a thing that I heard repeatedly from people who were like, "Well, I know that he seems awful, but I know that he's a good person."

And we've all fucking been there. We've all been there.

**Brent:** Yeah, I've been that guy with, I won't name, but a very popular YouTuber who, my girlfriend at the time would say like, "He's an asshole. I don't get a good vibe from him." And I was like, "Look, y'know, he's kind of

a big deal, and like, I don't want..." And y'know, she was dead ass right. And I just didn't want to see it.

And I feel like so many people in Max Landis' life, it's coming out now, had a similar like... either, y'know, let's be real, they didn't believe a woman, which is a thing I now regret about that particular situation. But you want to believe someone's better, especially if they're nice to you. And it's a trap.

**Courtney:** And like, a big part of this is a socialization of women and what we are trained to accept as okay or even normal, and what we will forgive, and the lengths we will go to to understand and excuse bad male behavior. Because in so many ways, it genuinely is normal, because it's common. There's a reason so many of these stories feel familiar in a way that either aches as we realize like, oh shit, I've been there.

Or for many others, this person is lying and making a big deal over nothing. It's just a bad day. It's just a bad relationship. Because we want to believe so hard that the person we care about is capable of change, but we are also hardwired to accept so much before hitting this wall of unacceptability. And when that person is an abusive monster on top of everything else, wielding power over you, threatening your career, your livelihood, your happiness, your health, it can be near insurmountable.

For these women to come forward with their stories is fucking brave. Especially in a world of questions as to why they allowed him in their lives for so long, why they defended him, including from some big names and powerful people. But the nature of abuse is to groom, to train, to beat down emotionally, and Landis did that to those women. Allegedly, of course.

I wish this had happened years ago. I'm glad it's happening now. We stand with every single one of the people who have had to deal with Max Landis. Now and forever: Fuck Max Landis.

**Travis:** Fuck Max Landis.

**Courtney:** Fuck Max Landis.

**Brent:** Fuck Max Landis.

**Travis:** Fuuuck.

**Courtney:** God. Fuckin' guy.

[theme music plays]

**Courtney:** Hey guys, did you know that like, in my former career, I did years and years of PR?

**Travis:** Uh-huh.

**Brent:** Yes.

**Courtney:** Do you know what PR stands for?

**Travis:** What?

**Courtney:** Politics Roundup.

**Travis:** Whoa!

**Brent:** Whoa!

**Courtney:** Whoa! I just blew your minds! Blew your minds, blew your minds!

**Travis:** Nailed it.

**Courtney:** Okay. Anyway, Politics Roundup, guys.

**Brent:** [laughs]

**Travis:** Hey, do you know what would be super fun? Huh?

**Brent:** What?

**Travis:** Let's talk about impeachment!

**Courtney:** Yes!

**Travis:** So.

**Brent:** Yay!

**Travis:** A quick recap for those just tuning in. Impeachment is not the end goal. Impeachment is just the bringing of charges against an elected official. You then have to go through hearings and stuff before there's any kind of like, punitive measures taken. It should also be noted that no sitting president has ever been removed from the presidency as a result of being impeached.

I bring this up for two reasons. One, there has been an increased amount of chatter lately about the possible impeaching... impeachment... impeachment of Donald Trump. Two, I think the misconceptions surrounding impeachment makes that chatter all the more misleading. The reason for the increased talk? Well, because it's June, obviously. Or, to be more precise, the June before an election year. See, once we get into that full election swing, everything is going to be focused on the future instead of the present. At least, that's the worry.

There are those that feel that the door was opened once the Mueller report was done, and now, time is a'wastin'. And once we get in... look at it this way, right? There are, even though Dems won the house in the 2018 election, that they will be up for reelection, or some will be up for reelection again in 2020. Not to mention, the presidential election, and everyone will be working on campaigning. And listen, not every representative is from a district that like, they won handily, right?

So you don't want to upset independents, and you don't want to upset uh, y'know, super moderate supporters. And the fact of the matter is, as of a lot of polls I saw, only 48% of the American people strongly favor

impeachment. And you have to think, a lot of those are coming from districts that are already like, pro-Democrat.

Anyways, right now, at least according to New York Times polling, 72 representatives support impeachment. 112 say either no, not now, or they are undecided, and they haven't received a response from the other 249. So, y'know, that's a pretty big selection of no responses, so who knows what it actually is. But, I'm betting it's gonna skew towards that uh, not right now kind of thing.

So Nancy Pelosi, and many others, feel that the time is not yet right to begin impeachment proceedings, this from The New York Times. "Every day, we see more, so why would we stop with a less strong case?" Ms. Pelosi said. "If you're going to go down this path, you have to make sure that the public has an understanding of why, and that when the president, if the president is impeached," I love that phrasing, by the way. When the—oh, I mean if, uhh. "That the senate understands that they either honor our oath of office to protect and defend the constitution of the United States, and if they don't, the public will hold them accountable for not holding the president accountable."

So there are those who disagree. Lawyer, Trump critic, and bizarrely, husband to Kellyanne, George Conway tweeted, "This is like saying that a grand jury should not be impaneled unless it's ready to indict and a petite jury is ready to convict." So basically, what it comes down to. Do you strike while the iron appears to be hot, or wait until it is definitely hot?

To jump back to earlier, the misconceptions surrounding impeachment could be an issue when it comes to public opinion. I can see a very real possibility where Trump would be impeached, and nothing, or at least, very little would come out of it and it would make messaging in the 2020 election for democrats harder and easier for him.

Remember, Trump seems to be Teflon when it comes to his base. While being impeached might have no impact on their opinion, him being "proven innocent" would really bolster them. So the question is, do you impeach now and run the risk of nothing coming of it, or do you wait and maybe bank on the 2020 election?

**Brent:** Mmm, this is a strategy versus principle issue.

**Travis:** Right.

**Brent:** Because the strategy... y'know, I'm sure Nancy Pelosi is thinking strategy first, principle second.

**Travis:** Absolutely.

**Brent:** She is a genius at raising money for the party. But, it's very easy to raise money on, "We gotta beat Trump, we gotta beat Trump, we gotta beat Trump." And the DNC is banking on, at all costs, we must beat Trump, so that if they try to install a more centrist candidate, that they can still rally the troops behind, "It's better than Trump." Which is a good way to, y'know, get Brand X in office, just because Brand X isn't as bad as Trump.

But for me, what gives me pause is the fact that I stan so many of the voices calling for impeachment, particularly Elizabeth Warren and AOC. And at a certain point, their point is like, um, their reasoning is, if we can't impeach for this kind of thing, but we have impeached for the Monica Lewinski situation, which despite Bill Clinton probably having some serious skeletons in his closet, y'know, they got him on obstruction of justice. But what was the justice, really? Like, was it that big of a deal that he needed to be impeached and not censured? That's for some other decade.

But I'm saying, um, that Clinton's approval ratings went up after he was impeached, and there is a real question of, would this make Trump's base rally around him? His base is a minority.

**Travis:** Right.

**Brent:** 25 to 30%, roughly, of the American people. But it's a real tough question.

**Travis:** Well, but... I would also point out that while it's a minority of the American public, that's not necessarily the same as the voting public. When

you're talking about a voter turnout of like, 30 to 40%, you're also dealing with dedication. Right? There are probably lots of people who would say in a poll, like, yes, I don't like Trump, but are not necessarily motivated to get out and vote.

**Brent:** Yeah.

**Travis:** And that would... I think... here's the way I look at it, right? There are three possible outcomes to an impeachment. Option one, he is impeached and uh, it makes him look really bad, but he stays in office. And I think that would help democrats in the 2020 election. Option two, he is impeached and removed from office, and Mike Pence becomes president, a thing that would hurt democrats in the 2020 election. Because Mike Pence is, I think, someone a lot more moderate and just regular republicans would rally behind.

**Brent:** Maybe, but he's—

**Travis:** As opposed to Trump.

**Brent:** --a way less effective debater.

**Travis:** Well, true, but I think he is a republican option that, to some republicans, would seem better.

**Courtney:** He would be more palatable for people who are still have bad opinions.

**Brent:** He would probably get more done.

**Travis:** Right.

**Brent:** Yeah, he would get more done.

**Travis:** Or option three, he is impeached, and nothing comes of it, and just like after the Mueller report comes out, Trump is taken to Twitter, tweeting



like, "They couldn't make it stick! Nothing, nothing, nothing!" And that's all he's gonna talk about for the rest of the 2020 election.

**Brent:** Yeah, and I think that Pelosi and other high-ranking operatives know that the numbers, just because of party majorities, maybe the house could vote for it. But the senate... there's just... I want to be hopeful and optimistic, but I'm too cynical to believe that a majority republican senate would have the super majority required to impeach this president.

**Travis:** Well, and that's the thing. To your point of the longer we wait getting up to election, the less they are going to be senators who vote for it. Yeah, congress hearing. Like, senators are not going to cross party lines close to an election to vote for it.

**Brent:** Right.

**Travis:** 'Cause it will make them more vulnerable. But the thing is, is like, also to your point, I think that this is a very principle kind of discussion. Because he should be impeached. Like, he should've been impeached forever ago. But also, at the same time, I'd really like to win that 2020 election. I don't know.

**Brent:** [sighs] Yeah. Well, and on that note, let's talk about the debates. So, some people like sports. They can't wait for the next season of their favorite team to start. Some people like reality TV. They can't wait for the next season of their favorite trash TV to start. But I, as a politics nerd, wait for four years in between the season of presidential debates, which to me, are like a combination of sports, reality TV, and political news.

But just like a good soccer game, it's a lot of waiting and watching the ball go back and forth between the rare moments when someone actually gets a goal. But unlike sports and reality TV, when a player gets a goal, it could lead to changes in our laws and our culture forever. And this time around, there are 20 candidates who have qualified to be involved in the first democratic debate.

It's kind of a mirror image of 2016, where the common wisdom was, there was one main candidate on the democratic side, and a whole clown car of candidates on the republican side. So how are they dealing with this? Well, unlike the republican debates of 2016 where there was one debate for the most popular candidates, and another, sometimes called the kiddie table, for the less popular candidates by polling numbers.

Here are... sorry, in this case, all 20 qualifying candidates have been shuffled into two groups of ten, and both groups will have separate debates next week on two different nights. But, was it a random shuffling? DNC chair, Tom Perez, says this method of splitting up candidates is an attempt to be fair to all of them. But is there some strategy on the part of the DNC? Let's break down who is in which debate.

The first one, coming up next week, June 26<sup>th</sup>, will include: Elizabeth Warren, Cory Booker, Tulsi Gabbard, Beto O'Rourke, and a bunch of unlikely nominees like Bill de Blasio, Tim Ryan, Julián Castro, Amy Klobuchar, Jay Inslee, and Tom Delaney. Collectively known as, who?

Second night, June 27<sup>th</sup>, will include Joe Biden, Bernie Sanders, Andrew Yang, Kamala Harris, Pete Buttigieg, and cabinet or book deal hopefuls, John Hickenlooper, Kirsten Gillibrand, Eric Swalwell, Michael Bennett, and Marianne Williamson.

The main thing I've seen discussed about this on social media is the fact that you've got Biden and Sanders in one debate, and Elizabeth Warren in the other. Um, I'm about to speculate here, but I wonder if the reason for that is that Warren and Sanders may dog pile onto Biden and expose him for the senator life status quote "gaff machine" that he is. Maybe they want to spread out the leftist progressive candidates that have the most popularity and, I think, directness of presentation.

**Travis:** Man. Hey, Brent, you're a better answerer for this than I would be. How is Bernie Sanders at debating?

**Brent:** Well, okay. So, good and bad, because he, as I'll explain here in a second, like Trump, will sort of like, point something out very directly. He

won't do it scripted, he won't do it too polished, but, he's not a great, like... he's not a agile pivoter. Whereas like, y'know, Hilary Clinton's a great pivoter. Very scripted.

**Travis:** Yeah.

**Brent:** Bernie, if he's pivoting, then you just see him going back to his main points. I happen to agree with his main points, but in terms of his debate style and strategy...

**Travis:** Still, yeah. Still.

**Brent:** He's saying things a lot of people want to hear, but it's not... it's not always, um, the most eloquent, uh, maneuvering.

**Travis:** 'Cause he does kind of... listen. Once again, so weird to return to Travis' Conspiracy Corner twice in one episode. But it does feel like, if Warren, who is a very good debater, was in a debate with Joe Biden, she would make him look very bad.

**Brent:** Yes, but she eventually will. So it's like, that's true for now.

**Travis:** Yeah, that's true.

**Brent:** But I mean, is it just the DNC trying to kick the can down the road to prevent that from happening?

**Courtney:** I kind of—that's kind of my theory.

**Brent:** It's very possible. That being said, keep in mind, the debates we've seen with Bernie, he was sort of in a very specific position where he was like, "Okay, it's me and Hilary, and nobody thinks any of these other chuckleheads are gonna have a chance." And I don't want to uh, go after her, because of optics, and also, I'm already trying to not get super smeared by the DNC and their friends in the media.

I think here, with 20 people, ten others—nine others on the stage with him, he may be a little bit more direct, or he may just, y'know, not be negative, and just try to pound his uh, things he's been saying for 30 years. It's hard to say, but it will be interesting. To your point—

**Travis:** Who do you two think, if you remove, uh, I'm gonna say Warren, Biden, and Sanders. Those are top three polling right now, right?

**Brent:** Mm-hmm.

**Travis:** Who is going to come out looking best out of debates?

**Courtney:** I think Castro will hopefully get some kind of—

**Brent:** Really?

**Courtney:** I think he's gonna get some kind of like, a bump. At least like, not in terms of like, electability, but in terms of like, public knowledge. I think he's got some good... some good stuff.

**Travis:** My vote is between Harris or O'Rourke.

**Brent:** Oh. Oh.

**Travis:** To come out like, looking good.

**Brent:** I think O'Rourke's gonna look like a JC Penney mannequin. I think he's not—

**Travis:** Yeah?

**Brent:** —cut out for this. I do think Harris—

**Travis:** I was thinking of it more from the point of like, the JFK looks good on stage kind of thing.

**Brent:** No, I think people are... I think people are starting to smell that a mile away. Because you know who else was like that? Martin O'Malley. Doing that like, put out his thumb, very '90s style. And it just seemed fake. And as I'll point out soon, Trump, his, y'know, brilliance in the debates was pointing out how fake everybody else was while being a different kind of fake.

But I think Harris and Buttigieg are going to get bumps for various reasons. Harris is so quick on the draw. So good in the moment. I wish she would lay out some more specific policy positions, but she is like, good at this stuff.

And so, I think Elizabeth Warren is likely to wipe the floor with the people in her debate, and from a progressive perspective, the only other candidate with a slight chance of distinguishing themselves in that debate, in my opinion, is Tulsi Gabbard. But as we've discussed, she's got some skeletons in her closet she may not be able to shake; particularly, with the people on the left.

I haven't always been great at predicting stuff, so I guess grain of salt. But here's what I expect to see this time around. Last time, you had a bunch of polished, scripted republican candidates who said a lot of vague things. They sounded good, but they weren't like, a Shark Tank pitch of what they wanted to do. Who is doing the Shark Tank pitches right now? Sanders and Warren. They're saying, here's what I want to do. Warren's saying, I've got a plan for that. Bernie's saying, I drafted a Medicare for all bill.

Um, despite... going back to Trump, despite Trump's lies and general terribleness, in 2016, he looked and sounded different. And he came off as refreshingly honest in pointing out the fakeness of the other candidates and their presentation. A lot of people were like, "Oh, this guy's not a fake robot like the others. He's a real dude." And he made clear promises. Unfortunately, they were a wall and a ban on Muslims.

But on the other hand, he... people forget this. He clearly promised universal healthcare. He said, "I'm gonna take care of everybody." "There was a philosophy in some circles that if you can't pay for insurance, you don't get it. That's not what's gonna happen with us." And as it, y'know, again, he didn't know what the fuck he was talking about. And a lot of those promises were fucked up on their face.

But my point is that, despite his lack of anything good, he made distinct policy promises, and he called out other candidates for their standard politician bullshit. Um, and I think that that went a long way toward winning him the primary. Though, as multiple studies have shown, racism and xenophobia were also instrumental to his primary win. You can read more about that in a book called Everybody Lies, which I recommend.

Importantly, recent polls have indicated that the majority of likely democratic voters want things to be more progressive and move to the left, rather than “going back to the way they were before Trump.” I.E., Biden’s whole thing. So, what does that mean? For me, it means Sanders and Warren are gonna come out of the gate with clear proposals, plain spoken presentations, Sanders will have slightly more leftist policy, but Warren will inevitably have clearer articulations of well thought out plans.

Yang will be a curiosity. I like the fact that universal basic income will be talked about on national TV. Gabbard’s gonna say things progressives like, but again, skeletons may knock her out early on. And just so we’re clear, the left leaning candidates will be smeared, and the narratives about them will be spun by corporate owned media outlets, unless and until they start playing ball with corporate donors.

Warren and Sanders have vowed not to take pack money, oil money, Wall Street money, foreign money, and that’s risky in a way, but it passes a certain purity test with leftists. And remember, Donald Trump had a pretty cheap campaign. Why? ‘Cause he was saying things people wanted to hear. They were, in many cases, fucked up people and fucked up things, but y’know, like, you need corporate pack money to have marketing to convince people you’re not a robot.

So, you’re gonna see other candidates arguing for moderation. They’ll be like, “Bernie and Elizabeth want to burn it all down! We should focus on policies that could actually get passed.” Biden will try to court independents and former Trump voters by leaning to the right. But the energy is on the left in the democratic voter base, and the problem with saying “we need policies that can actually get passed” is this.

Every president ultimately gets somewhere between zero and half of their big grant plan actually put into action. Obama was for basically universal healthcare, and we ended up with Obamacare, which is not that. So if you've got a moderate candidate promising like, slightly better healthcare, at best, we're gonna end up with a teeny tiny bit improved health care system.

And again, this is why I think Warren and Sanders will emerge as real competition with Biden. Because if they promise the moon like Trump did, but they back it up with statistics and financially solvent plans to prove that we can actually afford to buy the moon, maybe we'll end up renting the moon. But it's much better than what almost any of the other candidates would end up getting passed, starting from their current platforms.

And so, candidates with currently vague platforms, like your Harris, Buttigieg, Beto, and others, will pay more lip service to the left, but I'm watching out for weasel words. If they say... if they say, "I will fight to make Medicare for all," or, "Universal healthcare become the law of the land," that's one thing. But if they say like, "Americans should have easier access to affordable healthcare." They're hedging to be more friendly to corporate donors, and they're not making a bold promise they can't keep.

Anyway. It's very exciting. I'll be there with popcorn and possibly live tweeting on both nights. Prepare to mute a hash tag if you get too tired of it. But um, I'm really excited for us to start covering this stuff on the show.

**Travis:** Hey, let's talk about tidbits.

**Brent:** Finally. Let's do it.

**Courtney:** [singing] Let's talk about tids, baby. Let's talk about bits... and... things.

**Travis:** Okay.

**Brent:** [laughs]

**Travis:** Have you ever noticed that no one this day, in this day and age, talks about tidbits anymore? Ugh.

**Brent:** [sighs]

**Travis:** Back when I was a kid... Okay.

**Courtney:** The liberal media doesn't want you to know.

**Brent:** About tids.

**Courtney:** About the tidbits.

**Brent:** Um, so, harkening back to what Travis said about a 16 year old earlier, just keep that in mind, because this is an interesting, uh, corollary. For the first tidbit, I had one of those, "Is this real, or is this an Onion article?" moment this week, when I read a tweet by conservative champion of white guys, Scott Greer.

He tweeted, "Why don't conservatives just start their own Harvard?" He said this in response to the fact that, while Harvard had previously offered admission to Parkland shooting survivor, Kyle Kashuv, unlike some other survivors, Kyle turned into a conservative, pro-gun pundit. He applied to Harvard, he got in this past semester, but Harvard has recently rescinded his admission because of a Google docs study guide in which he had written the N-word more than a dozen times, including the quote, "Like, I'm really good at typing N-word, okay? Like practice, uh, makes perfect, son."

He apologized, citing the fact that he was 16 at the time. Conservatives in the media have framed this as everything from overreach on the part of Harvard, to censorship, to setting a bad precedent. But like, Harvard admitted less than 5% of applicants for its most recent class of applicants. So I'm already fine with students who throw racist slurs around being barred from Ivy League schools, and despite him having been 16, the competition is stiff. Anyone arguing on his behalf is just sticking up for racism.



**Travis:** Not only that, but you have to look at it from a practical standpoint, right? Anybody who is like, "This is censorship, blah blah blah." I don't think Harvard is making the moral decision about this, so much as it's like, listen, if we're gonna take the cream of the crop and the best of the best to make us seem more prestigious, we can't let this kid in, 'cause then people will say we let racists in. Like... you fucked up.

**Courtney:** That Ben Shapiro fuck stick said like, "Oh, of course, we're being handed this. This impossible standard!" And it's like, it's really easy to not... say... the thing. I've never said the thing. I knew it was wrong when I was 16, and I'm older than that fucker.

**Travis:** Uh, so next tidbit. Facebook has announced it will be launching Libra, its own cryptocurrency, which always sounds way cooler than it is. I mean, don't get me wrong, it's pretty cool. But it always makes you think like, y'know, mummies and like, vampires use it. Anyways, not important.

Uh, it's easy to confuse it with cryptid currency, and that's not it.

**Brent:** Or Tales from the Cryptocurrency, which is what I think about.

**Travis:** Right! Uh, it will be launching this—

**Brent:** [Crypt Keeper voice] It's money on the internet! Okay, sorry.

**Travis:** [Crypt Keeper laugh] Uh, in the early half of 2020. It's meant to be cryptocurrency that can be sent to anyone worldwide, and the idea behind it is to reach the 1.7 billion people that don't have access to the banking system. Though, I guess they would still have access to Facebook. Uh, it's like Bitcoin, but it will be backed by several international currencies. The hope there is that that makes it more stable, so that it doesn't fluctuate rapidly like Bitcoin, where suddenly like, .1 Libra is worth a billion dollars or whatever.

Uh, it will also have low transaction fees. You can buy Libra by transferring money from a bank account. Facebook has an online wallet called Calibra. Okay. And the idea is that you can send it to any business with a Calibra.

Central bankers and financial officials from all over the world were quick to announce that Facebook would soon face a barrage of regulatory inquiries over the new system.

**Brent:** [sighs] This just makes me... I think we've seen this one before. Here's what I fear. I fear that people like me, perhaps us, will be like, "I don't need any of that shit. Facebook already controls too much. I'm not gonna use their money." And then something's gonna come out that's gonna be like, "Yeah, but if you do, it's so easy." Like Amazon Prime. It's like, I don't want to make Jeff Bezos more rich. But sometimes, I'm like, agh, where am I gonna get tiny umbrellas for drinks in two days? And it's like, oh, Jeff Bezos will send them to me for \$7.99, right to me door. Agh, I'll do it.

Um, we'll see.

**Travis:** I do like the way you phrased that as picturing Jeff Bezos hurriedly like, sealing packages and like, addressing them and sending them out.

**Brent:** Surrounded by elves. Just pulling them out of a big sack.

**Travis:** He's so busy.

**Brent:** [laughs] Um, so, there was a trending news story this week about a new study out of the center for evidence-based crime policy at George Mason University, which, mind you, is not a particularly conservative place. The study suggests that police body cams don't increase police accountability nearly as much as many of us have previously thought.

Remember that word: suggests. I'm gonna call this one sort of a half debunk. According to Vox.com, much of the research in this paper was conducted when body cams were still relatively new. The data is not as conclusive as it's being reported in the headlines, shocker. So, as I see it, and again, we don't really know at this point. But I think it doesn't mean body cams are a waste. And it doesn't mean they have a huge, positive effect.

Personally, I'd still rather have them than not, both for victims of brutality, and in some cases, for police officers themselves.

**Courtney:** So, in "who asked for this" news, two of the worst men, like all time worst men, did some really questionable Twitter things. And as I say this, I'm thinking, "This could be a lot of people." But in this case, it's Bill Cosby and OJ Simpson.

Cosby, on father's day, tweeted, "Hey, hey, hey." 'Cause guys, remember? Remember? Fat Albert? Guys? Please?

**Brent:** I shouldn't laugh, I just... that's so fucked up.

**Courtney:** So he tweeted, "Hey, hey, hey, it's America's dad. I know it's late, but to all of the dads, it's an honor to be called a father. So let's make a renewed oath to fulfilling our purpose – strengthening our families and communities. #HappyFathersDay #RenewedOathToOurFamily" So...

**Travis:** Oh, God.

**Courtney:** So. Meanwhile, OJ...

**Travis:** You have to know.

**Courtney:** I mean, I don't know that he'd... can you tweet in jail? That's the thing that got me.

**Brent:** I just—I just pictured him like, telling the person across like, y'know, the phone glass where you're both on the phone, like, what to tweet.

**Courtney:** Yeah. "Tweet this. No, tweet this."

**Brent:** Yeah.

**Courtney:** "Include like, 18 different ellipses." Uh, meanwhile, OJ Simpson joined Twitter, and he joined with a video saying, "Hello, Twitter world."

Y'know, for years, people have been able to say whatever they wanted to say about me with no accountability. But now, I can challenge a lot of that BS and set the record straight. More importantly, I'm able to talk about everything, especially sports and fantasy football, and even politics." No thank you? No thank you, please? I don't want it?

**Carrie:** Hey, Max Fun listeners. Have you been listening to Max Fun for a while, and you've just been wondering, "Where's the new flat earth podcast I keep hearing about?"

**Ross:** Well, here it is. We give you all the facts on NASA's lies and how we know that the earth is actually flat. Just kidding!

**Carrie:** Just kidding!

**Ross:** This is Oh No, Ross and Carrie, and we join fringe religious groups. We undergo alternative medical treatments.

**Carrie:** And, we hang out with people like 9/11 truthers, flat earthers. We find out, why do people believe strange things?

**Ross:** We join them, and we tell you all about it. We have a lot of fun. We make a lot of friends.

**Carrie:** Yeah, we do. We joined the Mormons, we joined the Scientologists, we got acupunctured, we got fire cupped, we got ear candled. We've done it all, and we're gonna keep doing it all. Why don't you check out Oh No, Ross and Carrie at [MaximumFun.org](http://MaximumFun.org)?

[music plays]

**Jo:** Hi, I'm Jo Firestone.

**Manolo:** And I'm Manolo Moreno.

**Jo:** And we're the hosts of Dr. Gameshow, which is a podcast where we play games submitted by listeners, regardless of quality or content, with in-studio guests and callers from all over the world.

**Manolo:** And you could win a custom magnet.

**Jo:** A custom magnet.

**Manolo:** Subscribe now to make sure you get our next episode.

**Jo:** What's an example of a game, Manolo?

**Manolo:** Pokémon or Medication.

**Jo:** How do you play that?

**Manolo:** You have to guess if something is a Pokémon name, or a medication. First time listener, if you want to listen to episode highlights and also know how to participate, follow Dr. Gameshow on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter.

**Jo:** We'd love to hear from you.

**Manolo:** Yeah, it's really fun.

**Jo:** For the whole family. We'll be every other Wednesday, starting March 13<sup>th</sup>, and we're coming to Max Fun!

**Manolo:** Snorlax.

**Jo:** Pokémon?

**Manolo:** Yes.

**Jo:** Nice.

**Brent:** Now it's time for our Wi-Five of the week. Each week, we scour the internet for examples of folks doing good things and being good people, and we choose one or more to whom we'd like to give an internet high five or Wi-Five.

[Wi-Five slap]

**Brent:** This week's Wi-Five goes out to Bhutan. If you don't know what Bhutan is, you're not alone. It's a pretty small land-locked country in South Asia. It borders Tibet and India and some others. Um, a group called Transparency International publishes an index of how corrupt the governments of various countries are, and in 2016, Bhutan ranked the lowest in corruption out of all the countries in the world. But that's not why its government is getting the Wi-Five.

Let's come back to the US for a second. In the past few years, we've seen protests and strikes by teachers, because many of the nation's teachers work more than full time hours and live near, or in some cases, below the poverty line. In high school, just as an anecdotal example, in 2002, two different teachers of mine urged me to become a teacher right before I graduated. But my guidance counselor told me, in no uncertain terms, that I should go out into the world and do something important, or at least make a good living.

Well, get this. Bhutan just announced that the salaries of teachers there, along with medical staff, will receive a pay raise of around a hundred percent, making them the highest paid civil servants in the country. By contrast, Bhutan's Prime Minister, Lotay Tshering, will receive only a 16% pay raise.

Imagine. Imagine if we valued teachers this much. They are the first line of defense against any uninformed, uneducated populous, and yet, somehow, they find themselves on one of the lowest rungs of specialized labor, and it's an amazing move for the country of Bhutan. And while I'm not gonna hold my breath, I will hold out hope that one day, we'll figure out a way to acknowledge the importance of people in these jobs. Not just with words, but with dollars. Or Libras.

So, anyway. To the parliament of Bhutan, and prime minister Tshering: Wi-Five.

[theme music plays]

**Travis:** Alright, folks, that's gonna do it for us. Thank you so much for joining us. Listen, whoa, wait. Stay right there. Before you go, got a couple things I want to tell you about. Um, my brothers and my Dad and I do a little uh, roleplaying game podcast called The Adventure Zone, and book two, our graphic novel of The Adventure Zone: Balance Chapter 2, Murder on the Rockport Limited, is coming out July 17<sup>th</sup>. You can preorder it at TheAdventureZoneComic.com, or you can go to McElroy.family and click on tours, and maybe grab a ticket to see one of our book tour live shows.

Justin and Griffin and our artist, Carey Pietsch, are going to be in New York on July 16<sup>th</sup>. And then, they will be... well, Justin and Griffin will then be in Austin, Texas on July 17<sup>th</sup>. And Dad and I will be in Portland on July 16<sup>th</sup>, and then Los Angeles on July 17<sup>th</sup>. And then all five of us will be back together in San Diego, at San Diego Comic Con on July 19<sup>th</sup>. And if you get a ticket to those shows, they include a signed copy of book two.

So, McElroy.family, and click on tours.

**Courtney:** You can find my stuff at SYFY Fangrrls. We will also be at San Diego Comic Con, doing some Fangrrl shit. So yeah. Do that.

**Brent:** Well, as for me, I am directing and producing a live reading of my Star Trek parody show, KHAN!!! The Musical in Philadelphia, and that will be happening in September. But here's why I'm mentioning it. We're holding auditions for singing actors right now.

To be honest, we're having a harder time finding male expressing actors than female expressing ones, and if you are local to Philly, or if you can easily, easily make it out to, y'know, two or three rehearsals a week, uh, and then five performances over the course of August 15<sup>th</sup> to September 15<sup>th</sup>, let me know, because it might be really fun to have you in the show.

What you can do if you want to apply is, go to [Twitter.com/UASTPM](https://twitter.com/UASTPM), and DM me about it, and I'll send you all the information.

**Travis:** Uh, so I think that's gonna do it for us. Go check out [MaximumFun.org](https://MaximumFun.org), home of just a bajillion amazing shows. And you can tweet at us @TrendsLikeThese. Uh, yeah, go on iTunes, maybe rate, review, subscribe, that kind of thing. Whatever you want to do. And we'll be back next week. Courtney, am I forgetting anything?

**Courtney:** Yeah, y'all forgot to explain who any of these people in the debates are, because I've never heard of Marianne Williamson, and even Google doesn't know who Tom Delaney is. Apparently, he is a Danish footballer, or perhaps a British industrialist.

**Travis:** Oh, okay. Well, we'll be back in a couple days.

**Brent:** See you next time.

[theme music plays]

**Travis:** Ugh. Hold on.

**Courtney:** [mouth trumpeting the Mario Brothers theme]

**Travis:** [jazzy mouth trumpet version of the Mario Brothers theme, with snapping]

**Brent:** Yeah.

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