

Trends Like These 228: Mueller Testifies, CATS Trailer, Is FaceApp a Russian Conspiracy?, Natalie Portman Will Be Thor, UK Tory Ad DEBUNKED, Equifax Pays For Data Breach, The UK's New Prime Minister, Everything's Coming Up Affleck

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[theme music plays]

Travis: This week: credit settlement claiming, apps Russian blaming, and Cats trailer explaining.

Brent: I'm Brent Black.

Courtney: I'm Courtney Enlow.

Travis: I'm Travis McElroy.

Brent: And I am magical Mr. Mistoffelees!

Courtney: With Trends Like These.

[theme music plays]

Travis: Hello, Brent and Courtney!

Brent: Hello Courtney, and hello, Travis.

Courtney: Hello, Brent, and hello, Travis.

Travis: Thank you. I don't know if we all meant to, but we did all just go in alphabetical order, there.

Courtney: Wow.

Brent: Eyy, nice. How organized.

Travis: I know. It's pretty fun. Hey.

Courtney: Look at us.

Travis: Learning is power. Knowledge is, as they say, power. How is everyone doing? We're back. Well, two out of three of us. One of us never left. Don't call it a comeback. Brent's been here for years. But Courtney and I, we went to the San Diego's Comic Con, and were welcomed into the bosom of San Diego, had so much fun. I got ripped off by a pedicab driver. Don't take pedicabs.

Courtney: Don't do it.

Travis: It's the worst.

Courtney: Don't do it.

Travis: That motherfudger... first of all, like, complained the whole time. Then when we got there, was like, "That was like, three miles." Which it was not. It was like, quarter of a mile. And then charged me *a hundred dollars*.

Brent: What?!

Courtney: For a pedicab?

Travis: Yes. He was a...

Courtney: Fuck that whole entire noise!

Brent: Petty indeed.

Travis: Yes. He was a piece of shit.

Courtney: Abso-the-fuck-lutely not.

Travis: Let's debunk that. Ask up front, how much would it be to get to where I'm going? Establish that before you take the ride. Learn that lesson from me, Travis McElroy.

Courtney: Wow.

Travis: Courtney, how was your Comic Con?

Courtney: I am so tired. I'm so sleepy.

Travis: Yeah?

Courtney: Sleepy ni-ni. Um, it was wonderful. I had a wonderful time. I worked... very much. And um, I would just like to apologize to you and to your brothers and your wonderful father and step mom and all of your friends, if I was, shall we say, a gross nasty stink girl when I would arrive at your shows, because here's what I would do.

I would get to, uh, the convention center, I would do interviews all day, I would run around, and then, I would literally wrap up at like 5:30 or six, run to my hotel fast as I could, throw on somewhat less sweaty clothing, and then immediately run to the show. And I would bathe in perfume. So I either smelled like sweaty nasty girl, or I smelled like just... perfume soaked allergy monster. One of the two. Did my best.

Travis: Hey, Courtney? Courtney?

Courtney: Yeah?

Travis: Courtney?

Courtney: Yeah?

Travis: I thought you smelled great.

Courtney: Thank you. Thank you, honey.

Travis: You're welcome.

Courtney: Travis wore beautiful shoes.

Travis: I did wear beautiful shoes.

Courtney: He wore beautiful sparkle shoes.

Travis: Beautiful, uncomfortable shoes. Um, it was great. I had a great time. Thank you to everybody who came out to everything. And hey, Brent? Thank you for holding down the fort while we were gone. Keeping the lights on, feeding all the Trends Like These pets.

Brent: No worries. Y'know, we had a good time.

Courtney: You not only held down the fort. He threw a party. He threw a party at Trends Like These HQ.

Brent: It's true.

Travis: What? What?!

Brent: And Mustin—

Travis: I told you no parties while I was gone, young man!

Brent: People finally got to hear Mustin's voice.

Travis: Oh, that's cool.

Brent: Which, I think people know, but Mustin and I are fairly old friends. He's a nice guy. But we definitely complained about the state of things. It was awesome. Dave, Kate... it was a good time. And no—[laughs] We didn't spill anything on the couch, dad. It was all great.

Travis: Okay... I will check my collection of Faberge eggs later.

Brent: Just don't—

Travis: We shall see.

Brent: Just don't see whether the liquor cabinet has any disturbances, because that's one thing you might not want to look into.

Travis: Okay...

Courtney: He did spill wine on my beautiful, white leather jumpsuit and had to date the nerd to get the money to buy a new one. And then they rode off together on a lawnmower. The end.

Travis: That doesn't bother me. That's fine. I'm fine with that, because that's how you find love. Or buy love, depending on...

Courtney: Depending on... yeah.

Travis: Y'know, whatever. What's everybody drinking?

Courtney: I am double fisting a uh, venti iced Americano for the waking juice. And also, a rosé. It was whatever came in my Winc box this month. It's got watermelons on it.

Travis: So you're double fisting caffeine and alcohol, Courtney? [laughs]

Courtney: Yeah.

Travis: I'm so proud of you.

Courtney: Y'know what, I don't have to explain myself.

Brent: You're making like, a gastrointestinal Four Loko. On your own. Just mixin' `em up.

Travis: Yeah!

Courtney: I often confuse my friends, because I routinely, at brunch, get coffee and mimosas. Because y'know what? Fuck my teeth.

Travis: Y'know what...

Brent: Oh, I definitely do that at brunch. Although, it's like, I can't put a lot of cream in the coffee, 'cause boy does it make a situation.

Courtney: I don't put any cream in my coffee. I take it black like a boss.

Travis: I punish myself. I always accidentally order—well, not accidentally. But I get like, a bloody mary and a coffee before remembering that the two of those are like, not a good... like, not a good flavor combination, A. And B, if you drink the like... if you drink a spicy bloody mary first, and then coffee, it's atrocious. Like, you have to drink the coffee first.

Courtney: It makes the coffee weird, yeah.

Brent: To say nothing of extremely acidic as a pair.

Travis: Yes.

Brent: But y'know, like, after a while, I just don't get the orange juice with the mimosa. 'Cause the thing is, it's very acidic, and you don't need that much orange juice. I'll just be like, "Give me a straight mimosa," which is just champagne.

Travis: Y'know what I've been doing lately? Side note – pineapple mimosa with pineapple juice instead of orange juice. Way better.

Brent: Ooh!

Courtney: Well, have I talked about that my go-to mimosa is grapefruit?

Travis: Oh, really?

Brent: Really?

Courtney: Yeah. Yeah, that's my go-to.

Brent: We are all such unique mimosa drinkers. Oh my God, you guys.

Travis: We're mimosa snowflakes.

Brent: [laughs]

Travis: Um, I am having—

Courtney: Misnewsas. Sorry. It took me a minute, because I'm tired and my brain's not working.

Brent: Yeah, I was thinking something like that. Yeah. [laughs]

Travis: I'm having a big ol' glass of ice water. That's it.

Courtney: Yep.

Brent: Speaking of unique, singular choices, I am having a cocktail made of a little bit of Svedka vodka, which is that mid-range, not too expensive but not nasty, with a La Croix Curate Kiwi Sandia, which is their kiwi watermelon offering. And I'll tell you something – it is not great. But I'm gonna finish it.

Travis: [laughs] Listen, I've had worse. But I've definitely had better.

Courtney: This is actually really important to our commitment to sparkle water. Um, I have recently started taking Topamax for my migraines.

Travis: Mm-hmm.

Courtney: One of the side effects of Topamax is, at the front of your tongue, you lose the ability to taste carbonation.

Brent: Whaaat?

Courtney: I did not know this was a thing until I got on the internet, and then I called my ex-husband, 'cause he used to take it. And I was like, "Did you lose the ability to taste carbonation?" And he was like, "Oh, yeah. Diet Coke tasted really flat."

So every like, soda or sparkling water I drink tastes flat. And it's... it hasn't stopped me, but it hurts? And I don't like it? I just have three cases that I need to get through, and they all taste bad. [laughs]

Travis: Uh, we began this recording just about five PM eastern time, July 25th, 2019. Just want to get that out before, uh, I forget. Also, before we hop on over to Beyond the Headlines, we've got ourselves a headline of the week that I saw, and I just had to share. 'Man Crashes Van with \$140 Million Worth of Meth into Parked Police Car in "Easiest Drug Bust Ever," Police Say.'

Brent: [laughs]

[theme music plays]

Travis: Y'know, when I was in San Diego, I looked across the ocean. I saw the horizon. The mermaids played upon the waves.

Brent: [laughs]

Travis: I sailed with my eyes, and there, I saw... Beyond the Headlines!

Brent: Welcome to our extremely foppish segment about the neeews.

Travis: Yes.

Courtney: San... San... Diego?

Travis: I have seen the dream of the new world!

Courtney: I don't know. I don't know about any of all this.

Travis: Fair enough.

Courtney: I'm just so tired.

Travis: Yeah!

Brent: Well, alright. So, uh, let's jump in. You may have seen a resurgence in FaceApp, the smart phone app that, among other things, shows you what you'll look like when you're old. I did it before. Like, the last time it was a big deal, like a year or two ago. I don't know. And then, during this mysterious viral renaissance of the app and its new features, I did it again. I looked weirdly like my great uncle. I guess family features, y'know, are not stopped by aging.

So like, let's be honest. It's fascinating. The technology is very realistic, despite the fact that I never, ever want to look that old. Please, God, give me a supernatural lotion of some kind. However, soon after I posted my old man photo on social media, I started getting replies about how the app is actually shady and involves the Russians.

Travis: Aw, man, what doesn't these days? Doesn't it start to feel like we're like, back in the '80s, or like, the '50s? Where it's just like, everything... like, I hear the Russians have a hand in this...

Brent: [laughs] Yeah. It's like, man, I really ate too much today. I blame Moscow. The Kremlin definitely was why. Um, anyway... so, according to ABC news and other outlets, when you use FaceApp, you automatically agree to a policy that says FaceApp kind of like, owns your image and can use it for whatever? Forever?

Um, its privacy policy says it "can't ensure the security of any information you transmit to it." But to ease concerns, the company recently said in this

statement that it doesn't "sell or share any user data with third parties." They also said that, even though the core team is based in Russia, uh, "the user data is not transferred to Russia." It also said, "most images are deleted from our servers within 48 hours." Gotta say, the word 'most' here just kind of raises more questions.

Um, the Democratic national committee told its employees and those within the sphere of the Democratic party machine not to use it, and Democratic senate minority leader, Chuck Schumer, even publically urged the FBI and FTC to look into it.

So what can you do if you, like me, already used it to see how hot you'll be when you're a hundred? You can't just delete the app. You'll have to request data deletion using the 'report a bug' feature within the app. To do that, you go to settings in the upper left hand corner, then go to support, then hit 'report bug and send logs,' and ask for your data to be deleted, being sure to use the word 'privacy' in your request.

So like, while that is what to do with FaceApp, what this story makes me think of is like, all the ways we're constantly handing over our personal data and likeness on the internet, and whether or not the notion of privacy is even a thing if you use social media and e-commerce.

Like, quick story – I tweeted about this. I ran out of Ziploc bags the other day. I don't even know when I bought this box. Probably when I moved into my new apartment like, a year and a half ago. I swear to God, I ran out of Ziploc bags, and the same day, I got on Amazon, and for the first time, saw a Ziploc ad that said, "Down to your last bag?" Now, that's probably a coincidence, but like... is it?

Courtney: Like, I think the Russians are either gonna come for us via FaceApp, or according to this documentary that I saw, they're gonna attack us from like, Colorado on outward. That's just a documentary that I saw. It was called Red Dawn.

Travis: Oh, okay.

Brent: [laughs] Took me a second.

Travis: Oh, alright.

Brent: Okay, well done. Good job.

Travis: Well, you've got us again, Courtney, with another one of your japes.

Courtney: [laughs]

Travis: The thing is, like... this is... I don't... I don't even know if this makes me sound like an old man, or naïve, or what. But like, one of those things where, whenever somebody is like, "I looked on Amazon and they knew that I had been talking about this thing," I always sit there and go... okay. Yeah, listen... like, we're all creeped out all the time. We have given over so much of our information so willingly to every...

I always think about that episode of Parks and Rec where like, Ron is trying to live off the grid. And he's like, going around and like, removing his like, picture from an eating contest on a restaurant wall. And that kind of thing. Like, at this point... I don't know, it's like, you can either worry about the information that you've put out in the world, like, all the time, or not at all. Like...

Brent: And don't you think, Travis, that our view of that is skewed? Because of what we do? Like, somebody told me on Twitter, like, "Oh, you better not do that, 'cause the Russians will know what you look like." And I'm like, there are, at this point, probably like, literal weeks back to back. Full weeks' worth of audio and video of me, in many cases, doing embarrassing things, to say nothing of tens of thousands of images.

Courtney: I was gonna say, you're a YouTube celebrity. I think that they've got access to your image.

Brent: That's the thing. And so, like—

Courtney: Your visage is available.

Brent: True. That being said, Travis—

Courtney: They're not gonna get from you this.

Brent: No. But do you think—and the thing is, that's true to some, y'know, varying amounts. I'm not really in the Travisphere. But all three of us, we have this thing going on. We are media somethings. We are personalities, and we are available to be watched. But do you think that skews our perspective of whether it matters or not?

Travis: No. Because I think maybe we're just a little bit more aware of it, 'cause we also all are fairly, like... well, no, we are all online-based in our jobs. So I think we see the conversations surrounding, like, online privacy a lot more.

Brent: Yeah.

Travis: But I think when it comes down to it, like, in this day and age, the number of times that like, you have signed up for an app, or a website, or put in details about yourself, or shared pictures of yourself, and didn't read through, y'know, the terms of service and the privacy and just clicked yes and skipped the 18 pages of jargon... like, this isn't gonna be... like, up 'til now, you haven't been off the grid, and this is the thing that suddenly, like, makes people be able to access your information.

Brent: Right. Well, there's so many random things like this, too. Like, I filled out a W-9 today for the Philadelphia Fringe Festival, and realized, like, I don't actually know who's receiving this. My address and my social are on it. That's kind of a hell of a thing to send to a stranger. But if you're, y'know, doing like... if you're doing contract labor, uh, you do this all the time. Or like, y'know, giving your credit card over to various people, and you're pretty sure they're gonna be secure with it, but like, yeah.

To me, that's the stuff... more than my image that I'm worried about, and I think that would be true, regardless of me having many images floating around.

Courtney: I also, like... not to be like, above it all or anything, but like... I've never done FaceApp. I don't care? So like, I will just have all the other various way that my information can be stolen, and we are gonna get to later in this episode, the ways that our information has actually been stolen.

Brent: Indeed.

Courtney: And yeah.

Travis: I think the reason I bristle is not like... I don't think there's anything wrong with like, wanting to be cautious, or like, not wanting your information out there. But for me, it's more of like, people having fun using this face app thing, and then, everybody's like, "But don't you know?!" And it's like, okay, cool. Yeah, you're probably right, but like, if I'm gonna start worrying about that, do you know how many other things I have to stop doing?

Brent: Right. Right. You sort of have to pick a principle, and the principle, in order to not go absolutely bonkers, is not to worry too much about it, I guess.

Courtney: As like, '80s style, like, cold war, red scare kind of things go, like... FaceApp is just like, not high up on my list of like, things that are actually concerning. [laughs]

Brent: Yeah. To me it's like, use your FaceApp. Have really good, strong passwords, and don't have the same one on every website, yes. But like, FaceApp... probably gonna be okay.

Courtney: I'm just gonna draw squiggles on my face and be like, "There I am! Look at me!"

Travis: There we go.

Brent: [laughs]

Courtney: She's beautiful. Uh, so, last week, Brent and company discussed the first images of Tom Hooper's Cats movie. But within moments of their recording, the trailer dropped like a glorious clump of Tidy Cats, and we were blessed with unholy poetry in motion.

Usually, I write my copy for things like this. But in this instant, I want to do the proverbial high school movie rom-com thing where I take my speech, look deep into the eyes of my love interest who has changed me over the course of the film, and in this case, is, in fact, a cat, and rip up my speech, and speak from the heart. And also, it's a cat's heart, because I, too, am a cat.

Oh, guys.

Travis: Yeah.

Courtney: This trailer.

Travis: Oh, boy.

Courtney: Uh, quick... [laughs] Quick little trip back to Comic Con. Travis and I were on a panel together, talking about the next generation of nerds. And instead, what we did was spend the first ten minutes of it talking about cats.

Travis: So here's the thing about it. Alright, let me be, uh, straight up with y'all. So I have seen, uh, Cats performed on stage. I have seen the stage show. And this feels very like it, in callous ways. And the thing is, I can't tell if it's good or bad or what. Or if it is like, the perfect amount of weird for what Cats should be.

Courtney: And I will... I will... I will tell you how to feel. 'Cause that's what I did.

Travis: Please.

Brent: Load us up. Let's go.

Courtney: That's what I do here. This is... crazy, and silly, and dumb, and weird, and bonkers. And y'know what it is? It is Cats.

Brent: Yeah.

Travis: Yes.

Courtney: 'Cause that's Cats. People were like, horrified. They were like, this is so ugly. How could this movie happen? Like, okay, here's the thing. If there's gonna be a Cats, then it needs to be Cats. And this is Cats. So y'know what?

Travis: This is Cats.

Courtney: This is Cats. This is just what it's gonna be. It had to be Cats.

Brent: But, see—

Courtney: If it had to be at all, it had to be Cats.

Brent: That's the thing. Let's break down that premise. If it had to be... *if* it had to be. Let's go back to when this came out in the—

Courtney: Oh, do not mistake me. It should not be. It should not exist.

Brent: Ah. Ah. Because as a musical theater nerd, and musical theater writer, Cats is the kind of show... I mean, I'm not gonna say that I hate, because that's mean, and like, lots of people work really hard to like, dance and sweat and, y'know, like, make it happen.

But it is like my least favorite kind of show. There's no plot, there's tons of dancing that I don't particularly find to be motivated by any particular

emotion or intention, and it's just like... what's the plot? Well, the plot is, there's some cats. They talk about who they are. They explain themselves. And at the end—

Courtney: The plot is, here's these fucking cats. And then they introduce themselves. And then, in the end, one of them gets sent to cat heaven.

Brent: Yep.

Travis: Yep. Euthanized.

Courtney: The end.

Travis: This is... okay, so here's the thing, right? Cats is the type of musical... and here's the thing. What I'm about to say is going to sound like I'm judging it, but I'm not. This is a statement effect.

Brent: I am. Go ahead.

Travis: It is the type of musical that people who don't know anything about musicals think is what a musical is.

Brent: Mmm.

Travis: Right?

Courtney: Mm-hmm.

Travis: This... there is a reason that it is so culturally, like, uh, dispersed and prevalent. That like, Cats is a reference point that you can make. It ran forever and ever and ever on Broadway.

Brent: How?!

Travis: And—well, because it's—

Brent: Sorry. I honestly don't know.

Travis: It like... you can take your grandmother to see Cats.

Courtney: Mm-hmm.

Travis: And like, you know exactly what it is.

Courtney: You almost used the term 'lowest common denominator,' and y'know what? I almost did, too.

Travis: Yeah.

Courtney: And that doesn't feel like a fair term, but it also like... whatever we're trying to say is like, approximating that. Where it's like, it is not... it is not... [sighs]

Travis: It is the Cheesecake Factory of musicals.

Brent: [laughs]

Courtney: Okay. Y'know what...

Travis: When you're arguing with your family...

Courtney: Okay, y'know what? Let's...

Travis: Well, you're arguing with your family. Like, well, I want Mexican! I want to go to steakhouse! Well, I want seafood! Right? And you're like, well... Cheesecake Factory has a little bit of all of that. I feel like Cats is the conversation you would have, like, looking on like, the Broadway, y'know, ticket list, and you're like, well I want to see—well I want to see—like... well, there's always Cats. Right?

Courtney: Yeah.

Travis: I feel like Cats is a thing that is like, an experience that you can go to, much like Phantom of the Opera.

Courtney: It is very much an experience. And it's less... it's even less heady than Phantom of the Opera. It is very much like, you do not—

Brent: Uh, it's less heady... it's less heady than a fudge sundae.

Travis: Yes, correct.

Brent: It's not heady.

Courtney: It's 'cause you don't have to think at all. It is literally just, I shall present... except for like, it's also just like a... like a... like a punch. A big punch in the face. Because it's just like, [singing] "Introduce the cats. Introduce the cats. Oops, I'm the devil! Cat goes to heaven." And it's like, wait, what the fuck did I just see?

Travis: Well, and so, here's another thing, too. Another thing that I think is making the trailer so very trippy is, they've spent a bajillion dollars to CGI costumes onto the characters that look like the costumes from the stage show. Like...

Courtney: Which, to me, feels even more Cats than Cats. Like, they made...

Travis: Yes.

Courtney: They mocapped all of the performers, and the cast is the most, like, disparate, ridiculous array of performers. You've got Judi Dench, you've got Jason Derulo—

Travis: You've got Taylor Swift!

Courtney: You've got Taylor Swift, you've got Ian McKellen—

Brent: James Corden.

Courtney: Idris Elba...

Brent: Holy shit.

Courtney: Rebel Wilson... like, it's the most, like, incongruous, like...

Brent: But the thing is, it's also a who's who. It really is.

Courtney: Yeah. But they all look exactly like they've been made up to be in the Broadway show, *Cats*. Instead, it's mocap. So, they made a really expensive choice to make them look like the cheaper choice, and that, to me, is the Andrew Lloyd Webber-iest thing I've ever heard.

Brent: [laughs]

Travis: It also makes me really happy, because that means, somewhere, there's raw footage of Idris Elba in some kind of, y'know, like, spandex suit, being a cat.

Courtney: Yeah. 'Cause he's the one that doesn't sing.

Travis: That's so funny.

Courtney: He just kind of like, sleuths around like, "Hey, it's me. I'm a cat. Mew."

Travis: "Mew mew mew mew." [laughs]

Brent: Can we talk about... so like, as the two of you and our audience may know, I occasionally get hung up on small details. Um, and the... when you—

Travis: You're mad that you can't see the cats' genitals, Brent, we get it.

Brent: We get cat titties, but why no cat dicks?! No, that's not what it is. Uh, it is that the size of the cats... they built these beautiful, in many cases,

practical sets. Which like, that part, I super respect, that they just went to the trouble of making them physical spaces. But the uh... the proportions. Like, when they're on the bed. I'm like, you're not the size of a cat. You're the size of a cucumber.

Courtney: That's a very tiny, like, mouse of a cat. Yeah.

Brent: Exactly. And I mean, like, is that the thing to be bugged by? I don't know. But it does bug me. That being said, I want this movie... I think this movie is going to be the Batman Versus Superman, or perhaps, in other words, the NASCAR of movie musicals. I want to go, I want to be coming up on an edible, I want to be drinking a ton of Diet Coke, and also, maybe it's spiked with something, secretly. I want to be on multiple substances, and I want it to blow me away with whatever—

Travis: It will.

Brent: Weird or good or badness it has. Wash over me like the tide, you beautiful monstrosity.

Courtney: I honestly—I think I might actually use like, my airline miles. I'm not gonna use money for it, but I'm gonna use my miles. I actually think I might come to see, uh, this movie with Brent. [laughs] Like, I really want to see—

Travis: Yeah, that sounds fun.

Courtney: Yeah. I feel like I want to take one of Brent's edibles.

Travis: Are you gonna see it? Like, this is a real question.

Brent: I love that idea.

Travis: Are y'all gonna see it?

Courtney: No, I'm seeing this movie.

Travis: Yeah, alright. Me too.

Courtney: I'm very excited.

Travis: This movie is going to make a billion dollars.

Courtney: Yes.

Travis: Like, easily. Like, it is coming out in that Christmas window, where it's like, ooh, we got two weeks betwixt Christmas and New Year's. What do we do with the family that's all in town? We'll go see Cats. We can take great grandma...

Brent: I'd like to point out for those—

Courtney: How is it even in the fuckin' musical?

Brent: I'd like to point out for those of you that want to tweet about it, there's actually one week between Christmas and New Year's. Just so people don't blow up Travis.

Travis: Oh, really? Whatever.

Brent: With corrections. He doesn't deserve it.

Travis: It feels like eight weeks.

Courtney: Y'know what? This sounds like math, and I'm already focusing all my brain energy on the cats. So...

Brent: Yeah. To be fair, I think I was in that technical small details place. Not to be too technical on ya.

Courtney: Here's the thing about Cats. There are no small details. There are only cats.

Brent: [laughs]

Courtney: I just did big arms, and we don't do video anymore, so you can't see them. Um, but, okay. So like, we haven't even talked about like... [sighs] Because in addition to people looking like they are, like, made up in the Cats makeup, they also look like Snapchat filters.

Brent: Oh my God! I didn't think of that!

Courtney: So like, they look like the most expensive versions. But also, the cheapest versions! They look bad and terrible! But here's the thing, though – that's Cats!

Brent: Yeah.

Courtney: And it's like... Cats.

Travis: It looks like one of those things of like, almost like, rough Photoshop of like, I kind of drew a circle around the face, and then just like, fuzzed the edges out.

Brent: But y'know what? As much as I'm probably gonna hate this movie, like... this movie is more surrealist than I think a lot of stuff we see nowadays. Nowadays, if you see surrealism on film, it's the fact that there's no way the Rock could jump from a helicopter onto a rhinoceros in the Fast and Furious part 17. And you buy that kind of surrealism, or like, superheroes.

This is like... this movie took shrooms. It is going to be... trippy is a fun word, but I mean, it is going to be audacious. And as much as I think I will—

Travis: I think it's gonna fun as hell.

Brent: I will hate it—

Courtney: I think it's gonna be banana pants bonkers.

Brent: Yeah.

Courtney: And I actually, like, in the document, included a screenshot of Jennifer Hudson as Grizabella. Like, as inspiration, because I just wanted to look at it. And it is the buck wildest image I've ever seen. Because her face is slightly off center? Like, that's, I think, adding to the Snapchat of it all.

Travis: Yes.

Courtney: And I just... I want to just stare at it forever. I want it to be tattooed on my eyelids so that when I close my eyes, it's still there.

Brent: [laughs]

Courtney: I just like... I love it, and I hate it, and it's evil, and it's awful, and I love it, and it's wonderful, and it's beautiful, and it's terrible? And that's Cats.

Brent: Can we just agree that it will be sad if this is Ian McKellen's last film? Like, he's *got* to do something else.

Courtney: Why did you just kill Ian McKellen?!

Brent: I'm sorry, I care about him! I care about the man! One more Gandalf or something!

Courtney: Someone pointed out that if this CGI cat movie does better than the Beyoncé CGI cat movie, it will be the only fitting way to celebrate the ten year anniversary of Taylor Swift beating Beyoncé at the 2009 MTV Video Music Awards.

Brent: [laughs] I'ma let you finish, but Cats was the best movie musical of the Christmas season of 2019.

Courtney: I will actually finish—I will actually finish with a fun fact. You might be like, "Judi Dench, what the fuck?" Well, actually, Judi Dench was cast in the original production of Cats, but had to pull out due to a torn

Achilles tendon, so this is a lovely, full circle thing. Except for, it's still Cats, so I mean...

Brent: [laughs]

Courtney: It is what it is.

Travis: Uh, so. Marvel took over San Diego Comic Con this year to showcase phase four of the Marvel cinematic universe, with teasers for their upcoming slate of movies and television shows for the next two years. Let's see, movies like... Hawkeye, coming in fall of 2021.

Courtney: That's actually a TV show. Sorry. Not to be—

Travis: What?

Courtney: It's actually a TV show. Hawkeye.

Travis: Oh, sure. I said TV shows and movies. Did I say the movie?

Courtney: Well you said—you said movie. But it's fine. It's fine, y'know what?

Brent: Wait, is Jeremy—I'm so behind.

Courtney: We're fucking tired!

Brent: Is Jeremy Renner gonna be on the Hawkeye TV show?

Courtney: Yeah.

Brent: Fascinating.

Courtney: I think it's mostly gonna be about Kate Bishop, though.

Travis: Yeah.

Brent: Okay.

Courtney: I get that feeling.

Travis: You got Wandavision. Uh, Shang-Chi and the Legend of the Ten Rings. Uh, The Eternals. Falcon and the Winter Soldier. Black Widow. Uh, some big stuff. But uh, one of the biggest surprises, like, their big reveal at the end, uh, was a Blade... I'm going to say Blade reboot. They're going to probably disagree with me and just say it's a Blade movie, but it's a reboot. There was a Blade with Wesley Snipes. It's not important. But, a Blade reboot with Mahershala Ali.

However, the biggest reveal might be the reveal that Natalie Portman's Jane Foster will return in 2021's Thor: Love and Thunder, and this time, she'll possess all of Thor's powers.

Courtney: Hear me out on this: MCU phase Thor.

Travis: Ooh! So, this is surprising for a couple of reasons. One being that many assumed Portman was done with the MCU. She never, y'know, like, technically left. But, she's just, like, barely mentioned in Age of Ultron and in Thor: Ragnarok. And she actually told Wallstreet Journal back in 2016, "As far as I know, I'm done. I don't know if maybe one day, they'll ask for an Avengers seven or whatever. I have no idea. But as far as I know, I am done."

So, her reappearing in such a big way was a huge surprise. Now, on top of that, the fact that she's able to lift Mjolnir, which she posed with at Comic Con, people were curious. After all, how can Jane Foster be Thor if Thor already exists?

Well, here's the thing, my friends. Let us go into the comic books. Now, Marvel has played with the idea of multiple beings being able to wield Thor's hammer. There have been many Thors. Some of them, uh, y'know, not even, I would say, human-esque. Now, the movies even let Captain America

and Vision lift Mjolnir, and the entire point of being able to wield it is, whoever is worthy can pick it up, blah blah blah.

And it also makes a lot more sense when you remember that, in the original origin of Thor, uh, he was... it was a human dude that like, picked it up, and then had the alter ego of Thor.

Brent: Is that the Marvel origin?

Travis: Yes.

Brent: Get out! I didn't know that! Wow. We have such an educational podcast.

Travis: Yeah. I'm trying to remember his, like... His uh, like, human name was like, Dr. Blake or something. It's... there's a reference to it in the first Thor movie, where he's pretending to be the dude. But it was just like, a human dude who walked with a cane, and the cane when he was human was Mjolnir, and then would... he would transform into Thor. Um, so like, it was more of a mantle that was like, transferred to people, and less of like, Thor's lost his powers and now this person has them.

Um, but, y'know, the hammer could pass to whoever. And in fact, uh, the inscription on the hammer, 'Who so ever holds this hammer, if he be worthy, shall possess the power of Thor.' The pronouns would change based on whoever was wielding it. That was in the inscription.

So, Jane Foster being Thor is straight up one of the plots of one of the comics. So, in Original Sin, issue seven, Nick Fury tells Thor that mankind is better without gods, and it ends up giving Thor like, a full blown identity crisis, and he finds himself no longer able to wield the hammer, because he considers himself unworthy.

And so, he decides to live his life just like, as a normal Asgardian. But the world still needs saving, so a woman picks up Thor's hammer to defend Asgard, and the uh, comic keeps her identity a mystery. And it's not until 2015 that it's revealed that it is Jane Foster.

And so, my uh, my research assistant helped me this week. Big shout out to Alex. And she wrote this amazing line, and so I did not change it. I kept it word for word, 'cause I really liked the line. This is a quote from Alex. "In the comics, she is not Lady Thor, or Girly Thor, or I Like Dresses Thor. Jane Foster goes as Mighty Thor, instead of bearing the name Thor."

Brent: Nice.

Courtney: So awesome.

Travis: So, uh, Portman and Waititi want to continue Mighty Thor's legacy in the new movies. Now, details are scant on Thor: Love and Thunder right now, but they've made it clear that Foster should be referred to as Mighty Thor, meaning that Aaron and Dauterman's comic may serve as source material for the film, Thor: Love and Thunder.

It will star Portman, Chris Hemsworth, Tessa Thompson, and be directed by Taika Waititi. Look for it in 2021, for trailer coming soon.

Courtney: Oh, and Tessa's character, Valkyrie, will be openly bisexual in this movie.

Travis: Correct.

Brent: Nice. Well, can we also agree that the logo is just pure '80s brilliance?

Courtney: Oh, it is tight as heeell. Yes. It's so good.

Travis: Yeah, it's beautiful.

Courtney: I want it on a thousand t-shirts.

[theme music plays]

Brent: Well, sometimes we do a Politics Roundup. Sometimes, the big story of the week is just simply the big story of the week. And so, we're doing the big politics story of the week! Um, this past week.

Travis: [sings some beeps]

Brent: Thank you. Thank you.

Courtney: Can I name it?

Brent: Please.

Courtney: Mueller Dicks Roundup.

Travis: Oh, that's pretty good.

Brent: Fascinating.

Courtney: It would be better if I was awake.

Brent: No, I get it.

Courtney: No, it wouldn't be. I know who I am.

Travis: How about, It's Mueller Time!

Brent: Yeah.

Courtney: We've already done that...

Brent: There's a thing no one should've gotten a tattoo of. Anyway, so... [laughs] This past Tuesday, we saw the long-awaited testimony of Robert Mueller before two separate Congressional committees. Some people expected it to be the smoking gun that finally nails Trump. But remember, Mueller previously said in his very brief press conference a few months ago, uh, any testimony from this office would not go beyond our report. Meaning,

yeah, they could force him to testify, but he wouldn't say anything that wasn't in the report.

And uh, that's basically what happened. Though, there are some news items to come out of the seven hours of questioning Mueller had to sit through. First, though, what were Congressional Democrats hoping to get out of this? Because they did sort of force him to come testify. Uh, ostensibly, they were hoping to get Mueller to admit that he personally thought Trump committed crimes, or that Mueller would've prosecuted Trump if he could have, or that Mueller thinks Trump is a big doo doo head. I don't know.

As far as juicy, game-changing revelations that you were hoping would come out of this... uh, lower your expectations. Before we get to what he said, though, let's look at what Trump did. He told reporters – and keep in mind, this is one interrupted string of words that came out of his mouth. "I'm not gonna be watching, probably, maybe I'll see a little bit of it. I'm not gonna be watching Mueller, because you can't take all those bites out of the apple."

But I also saw reports—

Travis: You can't take all those bites out of the apple...?

Brent: [laughs] It doesn't make any sense. Like, I feel like—

Travis: What the fuck does that mean?

Brent: I think it's saying like, he's already gotten too much... uh, I don't know, of the spotlight? Honestly, that's my—

Travis: But that's not a phrase! I've never, in my 35 years, heard a human being say, "Ah, well, y'know, you can't take all those bites out of the apple." And if they did, I would've said, "What do you mean?"

Brent: Y'know, you've got too many buckles on that shoe, buddy. Like, just making up stuff.

Travis: What does that mean?

Brent: I mean, he doesn't... I feel like Trump, he doesn't actually have a point, but it sort of sounds like he does when he says that. It made me think, "Oh, that's an idiom I don't know." Maybe it's not.

Travis: Sure. No. It's not.

Brent: I also saw—so, he's saying he's not gonna watch it. Though, then he says 'probably,' maybe he will, probably not. Maybe. But um, I also saw report sourcing White House staffer saying that he stayed upstairs in the White House for executive time even longer than usual. So like, come on.

Travis: Ah, stay out! I'm having executive time! [laughs]

Brent: [laughs] But I mean, look. He was glued to the testimony. Come on. A few hours before the hearing started, he was up and tweeting. 6:50 AM, he tweeted, "So Democrats and others can legally fabricate a crime, try pinning it on a very innocent president, and when he fights back against this illegal and treasonous attack on our country, they call it obstruction. Wrong. Why didn't Robert Mueller investigate the investigators?"

First off, you fucking chicken head, that's not what teams of investigators do. Secondly, let's just stop and absorb the phrase, "a very innocent president." Said in this context, by a sitting president. I mean, like, yeah, it's dumb on its face, since 'innocent' is not on a spectrum. You can't really add like, an intensifier to 'innocent.' You are either innocent or you're... it's kind of like being a bachelor. You can't be extremely a bachelor. Are you married? Are you a bachelor?

Anyway, I guess just like, add this to the pile of things that would be too silly and on the nose if they were written as dialog, unless we're talking about the most goofy super villain in some kind of children's entertainment. It reminds me... those of you that remember Pee-wee's Big Adventure, it reminds me of Francis Buxton, when he clearly is responsible for Pee-wee's missing bike, but he's like, "You do believe me, don't you dad?" And he makes this pouty face. That's all I can think of here.

But okay. So, what happened in the hearings? Well, Republicans were trying to frame questions in a way that accused Mueller of a conspiracy to take down Trump. Like, I'm kind of exaggerating, but not really. Like, a lot of it sounded like... "You were a total piece of shit, and you carried out injustice, and you wanted to do a conspiracy! Right?"

Like, y'know, they're not really questions. They're just trying to grand stand so Fox News will use the clip. And while I'm not the first person to say this, if there were a deep state conspiracy against Trump, like, some powerful, dark forces controlling everything and staging a coup, then why would the FBI have stayed mum on the findings of the Trump investigations until after the election? Why would James Comey have come out with the newly discovered information about Hillary before the election? Only weeks before the election, I might add.

If there were a conspiracy to take down Trump, why would Mueller's findings allow for any interpretation? This idea is echoed by some Fox News hosts, as well as, obviously, talk radio wing nuts. But like, what's the theory? That the deep state tried their hardest, and a bunch of angry Democrats were planted into the FBI, and Mueller was mad he didn't get the job as the new FBI head, and also, he was mad about some stupid pricing dispute over membership at Mar-a-Lago? So all these people cobbled together a cabal to stage a coup, to get Trump out of office, mwa ha ha, but this is the result?

That's what they want you to believe. Why would they suggest that kind of conspiracy theory? Um, obviously, because they've been expecting for literal years that the findings of the report would be damaging in a way that would require some kind of invisible, Emperor's New Clothes, unprovable reframing.

And let's also keep in mind that Trump and his cronies have muddied the waters on this in very specific ways, since the very moment after the Mueller report was completed. Y'know, Attorney General William Barr, he released that misleading summary of the 400 page report within like, a day or two of it coming out, as if he had read the whole thing in detail. And then, Trump immediately began repeating the phrase, "No collusion, no obstruction," and claiming he was totally exonerated.

Keep that phrase in mind – totally exonerated. So, to the hearing. The hearings. One Republican in the hearing, one of them, had particularly... well, he had a particularly boneheaded exchange where he seemed to have been surprised by a pretty well-known part of this whole thing. It was Republican member of Congress, Ken Buck. Let's listen to that.

Buck: You made the decision on the Russian interference. You couldn't have indicted the president on that, and you made the decision on that. But when it came to obstruction, you threw a bunch of stuff up against the wall to see what would stick. And that is fundamentally unfair.

Mueller: I would not agree to—I would not agree to that characterization at all. What we did is provide to the attorney general in the form of a confidential memorandum, our understanding of the case. Those cases that were brought, those cases that were declined, and uh, the uh, that one case where uh, the president cannot be charged with a crime.

Buck: Okay, but the, uh... could you charge the president with a crime after he left office?

Mueller: Yes.

Buck: You believe that he committed—you could charge the president of the United States with obstruction of justice after he left office?

Mueller: Yes.

Brent: So that's something news outlets have latched onto. But if future administrations and Congresses are anything like they've been in the past, Trump won't be indicted once he's out. George W. Bush was a war criminal, but Obama didn't do anything about it. Ford straight up pardoned Nixon before Nixon was adjudicated to be guilty of a crime. So like, let's not hold our breath that this is going to happen.

Now, onto the question of exoneration. Democrat Jerry Nadler asked a few different ways whether Mueller exonerated Trump on any charges. Mueller said he didn't, and that's true in part because his team could not establish

grounds to charge Trump with collusion. That's not exoneration. And obviously, they didn't exonerate Trump on obstruction of justice, because they found like, ten instances of possible obstruction.

But in the big picture, a special counsel of this nature does not exonerate. Exoneration happens when a jury or a judge deems a person not guilty. The special counsel's job was to make a recommendation to Congress, based on evidence that could lead to an indictment.

Congress can impeach a president to seek an indictment, but the special counsel cannot. Because the special counsel had to follow, or at least, Mueller felt like he had to stay within the boundaries of, the OLC opinion. So, what is the OLC opinion?

OLC stands for the Office of Legal Counsel for the Department of Justice. You may think from the way Mueller frames it that they went and like, asked the office what they thought during the course of the investigation. But actually, the OLC opinion was a memo from 1973 in the middle of Watergate. It basically says that an indictment would unduly complicate the president's ability to do their job, and the office reaffirmed that in the year 2000.

But that was still 17 years before the Mueller investigation began. So on the one hand, uh, the policy that a sitting president cannot be indicted goes back like, 50 years. But on the other hand, aren't there a lot of 50-year-old policies that need to be reexamined?

But on the other, other hand, if the FBI and DOJ reverse that stance, you know the Republicans would do everything they could to indict every Democrat in the White House until we all die of climate change next year.

So what else was actually said in the hearings? Mueller was asked to reiterate facts about the obstruction evidence against Trump, like the fact that Trump tried to get Mueller fired, and Don McGahn refused, and then McGahn was ordered to pretend that didn't happen.

Another moment was when representative, Ted Lieu, asked Mueller, "The reason, again, that you didn't indict Donald Trump is because of the OLC

opinion that you cannot indict a sitting president, correct?" And Mueller said, "Correct." But don't believe the hype about that exchange. Like, yeah, it makes it sound like Mueller wanted to indict Trump, but his hands were tied.

But throughout the seven hour hearing, Mueller said in many ways that his team did not make a decision or calculation about indicting Trump, 'cause that wasn't their job. It was their job to gather the facts, present them to Congress, and Congress supposedly was supposed to do something with that information, like decide whether to indict.

There are some highlights you may see on the news where Mueller confirms that the Russian government wanted Trump to win. Or, if you're watching Fox News, you may see Republicans just straight up accusing Mueller of being a liar, or worse. One of them actually like, uh, says that Mueller delivered all of his information in a bag and lit it on fire and left it on the porch. Like, they're being assholes.

But y'know what? Like, in general, for all the hype of this news story, there's not a lot of meat on these bones. Mueller said a few months ago, he wouldn't go outside the bounds of his report if he were called to testify. And he basically didn't. Um, he sort of exposed Trump's attempts to obstruct justice to a wider audience, but that was already in the report. We already knew all of that if we were paying attention.

I am very cynical and jaded. Trump almost definitely committed obstruction. But Nancy Pelosi's too worried about the potential damage to the Democratic party that might be caused if the house begins the... if they start impeachment proceedings. And the net effect of that is that the DNC's election strategy allows the president to be above the law.

Um, meanwhile, on the right, conservatives have been fed the 'no collusion, no obstruction, total exoneration' line from the start. And it has absolutely set in. And I mean, look – at the same time as Mueller said repeatedly that the report did not exonerate Trump, I mean, at the same time in the... like, during that, at the same time as that, this discussion was happening on the Fox business channel.

Speaker 1: Well, I don't know that this hearing has laid a glove on the president.

Speaker 2: Well, it has not. And if anything, it's proved that there was no obstruction, there was no collusion, and that the president was exonerated, even though he did not want to use that word. It's not a legal term. So uh, special counsel Mueller could not have used that word.

Brent: So what are we left with? We're left with the fact that the Mueller report, while it didn't find evidence that Trump colluded with Russia, it did find ten acts that may well constitute obstruction by the president. And that Russia definitely acted in shady, illegal ways to get Trump elected. And the sad thing is, like I said... we already knew that. But many Americans don't, because either they watch Fox, or they don't care. And some people are saying that the Republican party is setting a precedent here that they won't be able to escape in the future, if they think a Democratic president has committed obstruction.

But y'know what? Republican politicians have zero fucking shame nowadays. Look at Lindsay Graham. He had one standard for the Clinton impeachment, and a different one here. Mitch McConnell. He had one standard for Supreme Court appointments under Obama, and a different one here. That's across the board, just more and more true in more and more shameless ways. And so, life will go on.

What is the solution? I would say, donate to progressives and run for office. Like, look, I want to run for office. There's too much embarrassing audio and video of me floating around for me to do it, so do it for me. City council. Mayor. State legislature. Governor. President. King. Whatever. This thing we're in right now is a result of complacency, and we're really headed down a dark path.

Anyway, this has been optimism corner with Brent!

Courtney: This seems like a really good time to go into Tid Bits.

Brent: Let's do some fucking Tid Bits, please.

Courtney: So, a—

Travis: Well, tiddle me bits!

Brent: [laughs]

Travis: Just wanted to go ahead and break the tension there.

Courtney: Thank you.

Travis: Get a little bit of new energy.

Courtney: I appreciate you.

Brent: Look, I soap boxed it pretty hard, so I appreciate that. Kind of let it out a bit.

Travis: Hey, Brent? I already said 'well, tiddle me bits,' okay? Can we please just move on?

Brent: Yes.

Travis: Do I need to say it again?

Courtney: Can we get beyond the headli—wait, that's a different segment.

Brent: Yes.

Travis: I'm gonna say it again, just to clear the air one more time. Tiddle me bits!

Courtney: Ohh, tiddle me bits!

Brent: Alright, but first, I want to make sure we're clear about these facts.

Travis: Y'know, we don't have a lot of Trends Like These merch. Maybe we can spin this into a whole thing.

Brent: I'm just kidding. We just talked over each other. Let's tid some bits.

Courtney: Anyway. I'm gonna tiddle our bits real quick.

Brent: Ooh!

Courtney: Ooh! A viral image made the rounds on Twitter recently, featuring a poster on UK public transportation, purportedly on behalf of the conservative party. And it read, "We plan to cut all homeless people in half by 2025." Of course, this caught the amusement and horror of copy-minded people everywhere, who were hit by the carelessness of the message.

However, that was actually the exact point. The posters were done by anti-Tory street artist, Foka Wolf, and they read that way on purpose. Another iteration read, "Our aim is to erase all disabled people by December, 2020." Which isn't, frankly, as um... that's not as easily like, "Oh, that's just worded badly." Like, that's clearly much more just like... we're just gonna euthanize the people.

So basically, uh, that's the joke dot gif. And yeah. Street art.

Travis: Cool.

Brent: Alright. Um, well, that being said, I saw Courtney's tweet about this next topic, and I agreed. And I'm sure Travis has some thoughts. So let's talk about it.

Courtney: Yes, let's talk about Cats! Finally! Let's get into Cats!

Brent: No. No. We've done the Cats. We've coughed up our hairballs. But this past week, I had an internet outage in my apartment. And when my Wi-Fi started working again, Twitter looked different. And I thought, "Oh..."

Travis: Oh my God, same.

Brent: Something happened. Maybe like, the mobile version is somehow coming to me on my desktop browser.

Travis: Mm-hmm.

Brent: But nope! It just looks like that now. Let's discuss.

Travis: That is exactly the same thing—I thought it was one of those things where it was like, "Oh, it's not loading properly, so I'm getting this like, very stripped down..." Nope.

Courtney: It's ugly, and it's stupid, and I hate it.

Travis: It's not just ugly – it's grating. Like...

Courtney: It's not user friendly.

Travis: Yes. Not at all. But it also is like, weird to look at. Like, my...

Courtney: It is! It's upsetting!

Travis: My brain just keeps sliding away from it.

Courtney: It makes me anxious. Um, it actually—it speaks to, because of my former life, as many of you know, I was in PR. But part of that was, I had to, in my job, work with um, the IT and various other teams on like, apps for the different, like, hospitals and uh, healthcare systems that I was part of. And there is a difference in like, how the tech people think something works versus how people who are focused on actual, like, user friendliness think things work.

Brent: Sure.

Courtney: I don't know how this appeals to either. Because this does not seem as though it is either.

Brent: Yeah.

Courtney: This seems bad and dumb.

Brent: It reminds me of how—

Travis: I don't know where anything is.

Brent: Like, there's this great, uh... in video game development, which is like, not so different than social media UI, UX stuff. 'Cause you expect people to, y'know... you expect people to like, interact with it in a certain way. There's this great comic strip. I wish I could credit it.

But the idea is that like, in game development, it's kind of like if you handed somebody a glass of water, and they like, put it on top of their head. They try to put it in their ear. Like, they do everything but just drink it like you thought they would. And a lot of times, with websites, UI and UX are similar.

But what I want to know, and I haven't been able to figure out is, did they think this was a better user experience? Or, do they think this is better for Twitter, the company, with shareholders? Is there something about it that somehow will make them more money?

Courtney: I think it's just like a tech person thing, where it's just like, this is better. Maybe it's like, more, um... uh, okay, here's the thing about Topamax. I'm also gonna lose my words. So I've lost my words. But...

Brent: Relatable.

Courtney: Efficient! Efficient is the word I was trying to find. So, like, maybe they're coming to it from a totally... but like, basically, what I'm thinking is that Twitter just doesn't fucking have a user friendliness division, or that like, whoever it is doesn't give a fuck.

Brent: Didn't they show five humans? Didn't they just run it by some people and go like, "Hey, do you like this?"

Travis: Brent, this tidbit is becoming a full blown Beyond the Headlines. We can all agree, Twitter—

Courtney: This is a whole entire goddamn bit!

Travis: Twitter's new UI sucks. Okay.

Courtney: Sucks a million butts.

Travis: Speaking of sucks... go on, Courtney.

Courtney: Earlier this week, it was announced that Matt Damon and Ben Affleck will reteam for a film called The Last Duel, wherein the two will star, as well as co-write, with Nicole... Hola... Holaf... Holofcener. She's a person. The film, which will be directed by Ridley Scott, follows two friends, one of whom goes to war and returns to accuse the other of raping his wife, who no one believes, so they have to fight to the death. And I for one am thrilled to finally have a piece of entertainment about a woman's rape that is, in fact, centered on men and brought to us by men. Thank God. We don't. Get. Any of those.

I am being very sarcastic. The men are not reacting, and I feel like I need to highlight the fact that I am being incredibly sarcastic.

Travis: Yes.

Courtney: And because everything's coming up Affleck, just days later, the trailer dropped for Casey Affleck's new film, Light of my Life, that imagines a world without women. Literally as in, all the women are dead. They died of disease, except his character's daughter, because as the father of a daughter, he cares about girls and women and certainly would never do anything to be accused of sexual harassment multiple times. [inhales] Afflecks.

Brent: ... Alright. Uh, shifting gears slightly to geopolitics. Um, the UK has a new prime minister. Why didn't we hear about it as some kind of big UK-

wide election? Well, 'cause that's not how it works over there. Just like our electoral college, they have their own way of making sure one person doesn't really equal one vote.

Here are the basic facts. Uh, three years ago, Britain voted on Brexit. Y'know, whether to stay as part of the European union, or to hit unsubscribe. Voters chose to leave by a thin margin, and soon after, Theresa May took over as their PM, and was expected by Britain's conservative party to deliver a Brexit plan.

But, parliament rejected plan after plan after plan. Finally, this week, she caved to pressure and resigned. This had been expected for a while. Her replacement, I'm gonna say in a second, has been expected for a while. And y'know, unlike in the US, these elections happen internally. It would be kind of like if Congress voted on who the next president would be. So we elect members of Congress, but they elect the president. Kind of like that.

It's Boris Johnson. And Boris Johnson is a divisive figure. He hasn't, um... well, look, it hasn't gone unnoticed that he's a loud, bloviating, strangely entertaining man with a stupid haircut of impossibly blonde hair. And he's, y'know, he's been a media and political figure in Britain for a long time. He was fired from parliament in 2001 for lying to a party leader. He was mayor of London. He spearheaded the campaign to leave the EU during the Brexit thing. And by the way, his campaign was later found guilty of breaking campaign spending laws.

He says his mission as prime minister is to deliver Brexit. He's got very little time to do so before a series of increasingly dire deadlines, but personally, I think exiting the EU would do more harm than good for Britain, so I hope he fails. The end.

Travis: I... yeah. [sighs] It's just so weird to hear you list off that like, laundry list of like, things he's done to fuck up, and like, "And now he's prime minister."

Brent: Yup. [laughs]

Travis: But it's not unprecedented, so okay.

Brent: And that was tidbit length, for the record. I could've gone on.

Travis: Yeah.

Brent: And you know... you know I could've gone on.

Travis: So, one last tidbit here. Big three credit bureau, Equifax, announced on Monday they'd be paying upwards of \$700 million to settle the lawsuits from their 2017 data breach that let intruders steal personal and financial data on roughly 148 million Americans.

Now, just real quick, if you're like me and uh, you're not good at big math, at first I was like, "Wow, that's a lot of money!" But for each of those 148 million Americans, it is not. So, this is uh, thought to be the largest settlement a company has ever paid in response to a data breach.

They will also offer free credit monitoring to those affected for the next ten years. People can go online and check if they're able to claim any of this money. That's at Eligibility.EquifaxBreachSettlement.com. But several economists have cautioned that claiming any part of the settlement is likely going to be a gigantic headache for those affected.

Courtney: Hey, it's me. I'm one of the people affected, and I already claimed my \$125. So, whatever. Thanks.

Travis: \$125. That is...

Courtney: \$125. [laughs]

Travis: That's the thing where you look at that like, "\$700 million, yeah!" But it's like... [laughs] Yeah, you get \$125 bucks. Like, it's...

Courtney: And I think the claiming the settlement headache part comes from, if you have actually been affected by it, not just had your information like, actually like, put out there but not like, fucked with, you have to like,

submit paperwork. And like, hours to show that you like, get more than this \$125.

Which I actually did, because my credit is actually being monitored, because I got a letter from a local car company saying like, "Hey, you were in, checking out this car, and blah blah blah." And I was like, "Duh, no I wasn't?"

Travis: The fuck I was.

Courtney: Yeah. That's how I found out that like, my name had been used to like, try to buy a car. So like, my credit is being monitored, so I just claimed my fucking \$125. 'Cause I had nothing to show for it, except for like, calls I'd made to like, Equifax and all that. So... yeah. Pains in the ass.

Travis: Oof.

Courtney: Thanks, Equifax, you dinks.

[music plays]

J. Keith: Hi, this is J. Keith van Straaten, host of Go Fact Yourself, a live gameshow here on the Maximum Fun network. On Go Fact Yourself, we take the smartest people we know and make them look dumb.

Paul, by the way, how much do you know about chicken husbandry?

Paul: You gotta give `em that grain.

J. Keith: Alright.

Paul: Gotta give `em that grain.

J. Keith: And then smart again.

What future hall of fame pitcher for the Cleveland Indians became the first active player to enlist when—

Speaker 2: Rob Filler.

J. Keith: Oh, okay.

[audience laughs]

J. Keith: We've got me, co-host Helen Hong, plus celebrity guests and actual surprise experts.

Alright, we have an expert on hand who can tell us for sure.

Speaker 2: Is it Allan Havey?

J. Keith: Helen, who do we have tonight?

Helen: Allan Havey!

J. Keith: Allan Havey!

[audience applause]

J. Keith: In the coming weeks, you can hear guests like Maria Bamford, Tom Bergeron, Paul F. Tompkins, Janet Varney, and Grant Imahara. Check us out on the first and third Friday of every month, here on the Maximum Fun network.

[music plays]

Justin: Hi, everybody. My name is Justin McElroy.

Sydnee: And I'm Sydnee McElroy.

Justin: And together, we're the hosts of Sawbones, a marital tour of misguided medicine. What does that mean for you, the podcast consumer? Well, it means that you're gonna get a lot of stories about how we used to do weird stuff to people in order to try to fix them.

Sydnee: Do you know that we used to think diseases were caused by bad smells? And that we used to eat mummies for medicine!

Charlie: That's super funny! I kinda like it.

Justin: Well, thanks. And we hope you'll kind of like our show, *Sawbones*, a marital tour of misguided medicine. It's available every Friday, wherever fine podcasts are sold, or at its beautiful picturesque home at...

Charlie: MaximumFun.org!

[music plays]

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: Today's Wi-Five is awarded posthumously. Pasthumously? After death, to a man named Dale Schroeder. Now, I want to tell you, when I search for Wi-Five stories, I see a lot of the same stuff. Over and over again. Celebrity treats a kid nicely for five minutes. Local policeman decides not to do something terrible. Billionaire gives a bunch of money to a good cause, but actually it's just a charity deduction on their taxes. Or PR.

But a true Wi-Five recipient goes above and beyond, usually for unselfish reasons. So that brings us back to Dale Schroeder. For 67 years, he worked at the same company, being described by one of his friends as a blue collar, lunch pail kind of guy. When he died, no one knew how rich he was, but he'd been saving up a fortune for years and years. And apparently, when he was drawing up his will, he told his lawyer that he'd never gotten the opportunity to go to college. So he wanted to help small town Iowa kids go to college.

His secret fortune was just shy of three million dollars at the time of his death. So his savings ended up sending 33 kids to college. Not for a tax write off, not for some public legacy or PR stunt. This humble little Iowa

man, who just went to work and went to church and lived his quiet life, changed the lives of 33 kids forever.

So to Dale Schroeder of Iowa, slash the great beyond, Wi-Five.

[theme music plays]

Travis: Alright, folks, that's gonna do it for us. First, I want to give a big thank you to Mustin, both for helping me produce the show, and for being on the show last week. Go check out Mustin.net.

I also want to thank Alex for helping me research this week. She is great, and I am just a big fan. Uh, The Adventure Zone graphic novel book two, Murder on the Rockport Limited, is out now. You can order it all over the place, if you go to TheAdventureZoneComic.com. You can find it there. You can also find it in like, your local bookstores and comic book shops.

Uh, I'm very excited, because we just found out that it is, once again, a New York Times number one best seller in paperback fiction.

Courtney: Yay!

Travis: Which is—thank you, very exciting. And I appreciate all your support. Go check it out. We're really proud of the book. It's so good. Also, I'm going to be at GenCon, starting, I think GenCon starts August 1st. You can find all of my events and stuff at TravisMcElroy.com.

All those events are ticketed, but I'm doing some really, really fun stuff, including a charity livestream of playing Munchkin, I'm guessing on a livestream of... I think it's a livestream of Secret Hitler. I'm uh, Dad and I are doing a panel about D&D, and we're doing that next gen nerds panel again. It's very exciting. TravisMcElroy.com for all those details.

Uh, let's see, what do you guys want to talk about?

Courtney: You can find myself at SYFY Fangrrls. There's a whole bunch of San Diego Comic Con stuff. I legit don't remember what all I did. I did a lot. I did—one thing I do remember, because it was like, a magical moment to

me. I interviewed Freema Agyeman, who was, of course, Martha Jones on Doctor Who. She was on Sense8, and it was one of my favorite interviews I've ever done. She is absolutely incredible. It was just a dream come true.

I also did recently interviews with all those McElboys about um, not only Murder on the Rockport Limited, New York Times best seller, but the entire Amnesty arc. And uh, it was—they were great interviews. They are always wonderful to talk to, and I love them dearly, so check those out at SYFY.

Travis: Brent?

Brent: Uh, as for me, I have recently launched a new podcast. It's called Question Box. It's the game show podcast of shockingly personal questions. And uh, our first guest is Dave Bulmer, who you know as our UK correspondent on this show. Future guests include Travis McElroy. We're trying to book this Courtney Enlow, you may have heard of comin' down the pike.

Courtney: Oh, hi.

Brent: Yeah. You can check us out on Twitter at [Twitter.com/QuestionBoxShow](https://twitter.com/QuestionBoxShow), or just search for Question Box on Apple Podcasts, Google Play, Stitcher, Spotify, or at QuestionBoxShow.com.

Travis: Uh, and I think that's gonna do it for us. Go check out all the other amazing shows on MaximumFun.org, if you haven't already. You can also go to McElroy.family and check out other cool shows there.

Uh, Courtney, am I forgetting anything?

Courtney: Literally no. I've got nothing in me at this point. I'm doing my best out here.

[theme music plays]

Travis: We're all doing our best. We'll see you in a couple days?

Brent: See you next time.

Courtney: [whispers] We love you.

[theme music plays]

Brent: Dominos is better. Going on record. Check one.

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