

Trends Like These 229: Democratic Debates ROUND 2, Did Katy Perry Steal Her Songs?, Mario Lopez Anti-Trans and Anti-Women Comments, Did Antifa Vandalize Disney's Trump Robot?, Vaping Causes Coma?, Alyssa Wong Comicsgate Debunk

Published on August 2nd, 2019

[Listen on TheMcElroy.family](https://www.themcelroyfamily.com)

[theme music plays]

Courtney: This week: Katy Perry steals, Mario Lopez reveals, and get ready for some debunks for reals!

Brent: I'm Brent Black.

Courtney: I'm Courtney Enlow.

Brent: And I wrote the damn bill!

Courtney: With Trends Like These.

[theme music plays]

Brent: Hello, Courtney.

Courtney: Hello, Brent.

Brent: How are you?

Courtney: I'm... good.

Brent: Uh, we should say, you didn't hear Travis, because Travis is taking a break this week. What's he doing? Is it a family trip? Is it just a recovery after all the traveling he's been doing?

Courtney: It's GenCon.

Brent: GenCon. So more work.

Courtney: Yeah.

Brent: Way off on that one.

Courtney: There was a family trip. But then, GenCon.

Brent: In between episodes. Right.

Courtney: Yeah. Yeah.

Brent: I've been to GenCon. Y'know, GenCon has one of my weirdest experiences. In GenCon 2011, I got to perform as my video game alter ego, Brental Floss, in the middle of a mall arcade with a large crowd in it. It was pretty... it was one of those things where like, I wish I could go back to when I was ten years old and be like, "Mom, I'm telling you, it is important that I stay in this arcade for a little longer. This is gonna come in handy one day."

Courtney: It's so weird that you guys both went to a con that is just for people named Jennifer, though.

Brent: Yeah, it is strange, but y'know, I got like a, 'hello, my name is' and I just put Jennifer on it. It was kind of dishonest, but fuck it.

Courtney: You changed your name to Jental Floss.

Brent: Ha-ha! Alright, you win. I forfeit.

Courtney: I did it, I did it, I win! I win it all.

Brent: Quick time stamp. It is Thursday, August 1st, 2019, approximately 5:15PM eastern time as we record this. Not right now. That's impossible. Unless you are a time traveler with extreme precision.

Courtney: And if you are, you have to tell us, or that's time travel entrapment.

Brent: Yeah. If you are, you have to let us go back and um... I wouldn't say kill Trump, 'cause that's too violent, but like, find a way. Y'know what I'm saying? Just find a way. Oh my God, someone interrupt me.

Courtney: I'm not saying one goddamn word. I'm just gonna let this happen.

Brent: [laughs]

Courtney: And then watch the Twitter of it all.

Brent: And he died, hoisted by my own petard.

Courtney: Do you know that I used to think that that phrase was "hoisted by my own Picard"?

Brent: Oh, that's what's gonna happen if Patrick Stewart's performance in this new show isn't good. That's amazing, though. How long did you think that?

Courtney: Like, too long. I thought it was like, a Star Trek reference.

Brent: [laughs] I love it, though.

Courtney: Yeah.

Brent: Speaking of... so, long time listeners know, I don't watch trailers of things I really, really, really want to see. Have you watched the Picard trailer of the new TV show?

Courtney: [whispers] I still haven't.

Brent: [whispers] Me neither.

Courtney: [whispers] And I did talk about it on my other podcast as though I did.

Brent: Whoa! That is a huge admission.

Courtney: [whispers] I know. I can't seem like a fake geek girl on that podcast.

Brent: Wow.

Courtney: [whispers] I know.

Brent: I am impressed with your honesty. Maybe I should have you on my TMI other podcast, Question Box, sometime.

Courtney: [whispers] I think I will. I think I'll be on it.

Brent: [whispers] Awesome. Okay.

Courtney: [whispers] I'm gonna whisper the rest of the podcast.

Brent: [whispers] Okay, well, um, that'll be... great for all those jerks who don't like your voice on iTunes who can go suck a dick.

Courtney: [whispers] Do they like this better?

Brent: [whispers] Okay, yeah, so, um, here's the thing. What are you drinking?

Courtney: I am drinking Kim Crawford rosé, because it was on sale at Schnucks.

Brent: Schnucks?

Courtney: Schnucks is a Midwest grocery store. It's great. I love it a lot. It's my favorite grocery store. It's where they have the best produce. That's a little Midwest grocery store tip for ya.

Brent: I've met a friend recently who calls it 'duce.' Just goes, "Y'know what? I need some apples. Need some cucumbers. Just gonna go pick up some 'duce."

Courtney: Need to get some fresh 'duce.

Brent: Yeah. I'm into it. I'm into coining things. Like 'preesh,' which we talked about before that never caught on. 'Preesh,' short for, "I appreciate it."

Courtney: You did... before we were recording, you did refer to me as the "I can't poop" girl.

Brent: [laughs] Well, okay, there's a reason for that.

Courtney: So, I also need some fresh 'duce, so that all goes together.

Brent: [laughs] People that don't know about that thing you wrote must be very confused, and I want you to stay confused. We're not explaining it. 'Cause I'm gonna tell you what I'm drinking, which is a Dasani sparkling raspberry lemonade, and that is an essenced sparkling water. Essenced with the uh, the spirit of raspberry lemonade, but y'know, no sugar or anything.

By the way, fun fact – uh, going out to sushi with my friend tonight, and I was like, "Y'know what? I want to get some sake. I love sake." And I was like, "What are the nutrition facts of sake?" Courtney, did you know? Sake. Sugar free.

Courtney: Is it?

Brent: Yeah.

Courtney: That shocks me, because what I don't like about sake is that it's too sweet.

Brent: You would think, right? But it's not sugar. I don't know what it is. I looked at multiple sources. Apparently rice only has like a teeny, like, infinite decimal amount of sugar. It's like, carby, but not sugary.

Courtney: Is it made of lies?

Brent: Well... I mean... I—that is above my pay grade, that question. [laughs] And also, I couldn't think of a joke to answer you with.

Courtney: I get it.

Brent: Transition!

[theme music plays]

Courtney: So... once upon a time, there was a headline...

Brent: Mm-hmm.

Courtney: But then the headline died, and they had to go beyond it, so, the end.

Brent: [gasps]

Courtney: That's my story. I'm a paid writer. [laughs]

Brent: [laughs] Professional writer, Courtney Enlow!

Courtney: It's me!

Brent: To be fair, that was off the cuff. Um, but we are going to go beyond the headlines. That is this segment. And I'll start with this. It is another

week, and another lawsuit against a popular musician - or musician, as it's said in English - because their song sounded vaguely like another song.

This time, it's Katy Perry, and the song is 2013's 'Dark Horse.' And this past week, a jury decided that part of it was copied from a 2008 Christian rap song I'm not sure anybody had heard of before, called 'Joyful Noise.'

Now, I'm not gonna always be against a musician pointing this thing out, as in the case of Sam Smith's song 'Stay With Me' ripping off the hook of Tom Petty's 'I Won't Back Down.' Did you know that, Courtney?

Courtney: I did.

Brent: Okay.

Courtney: I did, and that I can hear.

Brent: For those out there that don't—

Courtney: Because we talked about this, that I genuinely do not hear this stuff. My ears don't do it. But that, I hear.

Brent: Yeah. Those of you that don't know, basically, the controversy there was Sam Smith's chorus went, [sings] "Stay with me, 'cause you're all I need," and Tom Petty's went, uh, [sings] "Stand my ground, 'cause I won't back down." Um, just to like, sing in a really pretty voice for you, and also, I probably got some of those words wrong. But like, that was a real clear cut, like, oh, dude, yikes. The hook is the same.

Courtney: It was just that song, but slower. It was like if someone did like, an acoustic, slow, 'I Won't Back Down,' but then like, changed all the words.

Brent: And I mean, in that particular instance, there was no lawsuit. Um, Smith and Petty agreed to a settlement. They were both real cool about it. They both had good things to say about each other. And like, these things happen. I don't think it was probably purposeful.

And then, on the other end, you have lawsuits like, um... how the Marvin Gaye estate—not Marvin Gaye. He is passed on. But his estate deciding to file lawsuits against Ed Sheeran and Robin Thicke slash Farrell for... gosh, I can't think of... well, one was 'Blurred Lines.' The other was... what's that song? Is it 'Hold Me in your Arms'? I don't know. Anyway.

Courtney: I don't know. I don't know Ed Sheeran songs. But I—

Brent: The one that sounded kind of like 'Let's Get it On.' Um...

Courtney: There were so many other issues with 'Blurred Lines.'

Brent: Oh, absolutely.

Courtney: The least of which... [laughs]

Brent: This is not to defend Robin Thicke, but I do still think that in both cases, they were horseshit lawsuits. And so, okay, the plausibility of this Katy Perry case feels to me, somewhere in between those two. In between Tom Petty and Marvin Gaye.

So let's, just for comparison, let's listen to the very beginning of both songs, starting with 'Dark Horse.'

['Dark Horse' by Katy Perry plays]

Brent: And now, 'Joyful Noise.'

['Joyful Noise' by Flame plays]

Brent: So like... that's not exactly copying. To me, that's a few doors down from like, two different songs that start with like, "One, two, three, four!" But like, that being said, both songs have instances of a male chorus going "hey" in time with the beat. But if that's a problem, now you've got hundreds of hip-hop musicians on the hook. That's just a thing.

Um, but, after listening hard to both songs – and I did have to listen hard – there is a distinct similarity in eight particular notes in the accompaniment. In the clip you're gonna hear next, I've put the two instances of these eight notes together, and I raised the pitch on the 'Joyful Noise' version to make it easier to compare. So here we go, let's listen to that.

[music plays; first 'Dark Horse' by Katy Perry, then 'Joyful Noise' by Flame]

Brent: So you can hear that those eight notes, when placed in the same key, are the same; though, the chorus underneath – or, sorry, the chords, like the chord structure harmonizing underneath the melody of the accompaniment, that is not the same. And the beat and tempo are different.

So the thing that is present in both is the notes, [sings] "Dun dun dun dun dun, dun dun dun dun." And I guess that's enough, apparently. Um, the copyright holders of 'Joyful Noise' argued that the writers of 'Dark Horse' could have heard it and copied it, since it came out five years before 'Dark Horse.' Ultimately, as a songwriter of 23 years, I feel like this is a tossup.

There is such a thing as unconscious plagiarism when it comes to music, because unlike written language plagiarism, or standup comedy joke plagiarism, where there are a hundred thousand words to choose from in billions of combinations, there are only eleven notes on the chromatic scale, which is the number of piano keys you can travel on the keyboard before you run into the same note you started from in a different octave.

The number of combinations, particularly in pop music, is actually very finite, because there are only so many combinations of notes and chords that will actually be pleasant to most human ears. So like, in the end, as a songwriter, I think it's getting a little bit too litigious out there, and I think Marvin Gaye cases set a terrible precedent for what counts as plagiarism.

And I've said it before – some genres of music, like doo-wop or early rock 'n roll are like, wall to wall borrowing from each other. And it was just a matter of staying within the genre, and doing what they were doing with that music. So I don't know, I think it's a tossup. Courtney, any thoughts on this?

Courtney: Yeah, I... [sighs] I mean, part of the like, kind of... I feel like... who would be listening to Christian rap, and therefore, who would hear it?

Brent: [laughs]

Courtney: And that's immediately where my mind goes. That said, Katy Perry got her start as a Christian recording artist.

Brent: That's true.

Courtney: So like, maybe her like... maybe there would be some crossover. But I would imagine she's not working with the same songwriters anymore.

Brent: Yeah. I guess I just feel like... this is like, the bare minimum – or perhaps like, three percent less than the bare minimum I would need to be like, "Okay, yeah, I see why a jury would've said that's copying." Um, and they have yet to, um, reach a settlement, or reach a penalty that Katy Perry and her cowriters will have to pay.

I guess I just feel like, y'know, there's a spectrum of homage and pastiche and other French words that all kind of mean like, borrowing from a thing. And there's also, y'know, just sometimes, a couple of notes are the same. Man, you say you don't have an ear for it. I am cursed with an ear for it, so, when I like, listen to musical theater, like, there's a part of um... oh, there's a part of William Finn's falsettos that like, is exactly the same as part of Tim Rice and Abba's 'Chess.'

Courtney: Mm-hmm.

Brent: And it's like, nobody's getting mad about it. It's only a couple notes. But like, by the precedent set here, it might be plagiarism, because 'Chess' came first. And I'm like, y'know, this shit happens!

Courtney: We've talked about this on the—I've brought it up on this show before. One of my favorite little bits of Ben Folds trivia is that he plagiarized himself, because 'Mess' and 'Ascent of Stan' are essentially the same song, he has said.

Brent: They are similar.

Courtney: I love both those songs very much. I literally cannot hear it, even after he's admitted it, even after like, listening with that in my... I cannot hear it. I can kind of hear—

Brent: I think that he's—

Courtney: I hear a similarity, but I like, cannot hear how they're the same in any way, shape, or form.

Brent: He's more sensitive to it.

Courtney: Of course he is, yeah.

Brent: I'm—as many of y'all know, I'm writing a Star Trek musical, and there are lots of, um, intentional borrowing as a gag, for reasons that are clear in the show itself. But I also like, borrow from things I've written before. It's kind of like Mike Myers recycled jokes in like, most of his movies. He knew that So I Married an Axe Murderer wasn't seen by enough people, so he just did stuff with the same jokes in Austin Powers. [laughs]

Courtney: [laughs] He just kept doing them, yeah. I have—

Brent: And some of those were done on Saturday Night Live as well. So...

Courtney: I have used—there's a very specific joke that I have used like, a thousand times, and I will keep using, which is, when I am being a thirsty bitch, which is off-ten, I will say, I would attach myself to him like a Garfield window cling.

Brent: [laughs]

Courtney: And I've used that joke so many times at like, every like, site I've ever written for.

Brent: Oh, you gotta have stock jokes! You gotta have things at the ready.

Courtney: And I will for all of time. Because that is me. Because I am thirsty Garfield. 'Tis I. It's me. Garfield. That thirsty bitch.

Brent: [laughing] I don't... I don't know what to say. I'm gonna have to throw it over to you in the next story, 'cause that was just... too, too crystalized. Too pure of a form of your goodness.

Courtney: She's horny for lasagna. That's what it's all about.

Brent: [laughs] She's totally not horny for Mondays.

Courtney: Nope. [laughs]

Brent: Okay.

Courtney: [laughs] That made me laugh. I have to laugh, because the next story makes me mad.

Brent: Uh, yeah. Yeah.

Courtney: Until recently, the only group Mario Lopez was known to publically question was preppies.

Brent: [laughs]

Courtney: But in an interview with Candace Owens, which, in and of itself, is its own issue...

Brent: Yeah...

Courtney: He questioned some other groups. So, first off, Candace Owens is Nazi garbage. Candace Owens started in on this "weird trend of, y'know, celebrities supporting their children in their various gender expressions." How very dare they.

To which Lopez responded, "I am trying to understand it myself, and please don't lump me into that whole group. I'm kind of blown away, too. Look, I'm never one to tell anyone how to parent their kids, obviously. And I think if you come from a place of love, you really can't go wrong. But at the same time, my God, if you're three years old, and you're saying you're feeling a certain way, or you think you're a boy or a girl or whatever the case may be, I just think it's dangerous as a parent to make this determination.

Then, well, okay, then you're going to be a boy or a girl, whatever the case may be. It's just sort of alarming, and my gosh, I just think about the repercussions later on. When you're a kid, you don't know anything about sexuality yet. You're just a kid."

Okay, first of all, sexuality and gender are different things. But we'll get to that. He also said that uh, #BelieveWomen, a hash tag devoted to believing female victims of sexual assault is "a dangerous hash tag, because people lie, and sometimes those people are women. God forbid you have a son out there, and a girl may have felt a certain way about a situation – dismissed, hurt, whatever – and is feeling vengeful, and just decides to tell a certain story that's not even exactly true come back and hurt that individual."

For what it's worth, in 1993, two women accused Lopez of rape. This is from a 1993 Variety article. "A physical examination showed a lack of evidence indicating forcible rape, and there were statements from the witnesses that contradicted some of the women's account, said deputy district attorney, Peter Longanbach.

After the women appeared on a tabloid TV program, another woman came forward to tell police about an alleged similar event in 1991. The district attorney's office said the second woman had never reported the alleged assault to police, but she had told counselors, prosecutors said. The woman appeared credible, Longanbach said, but the fact that she had not reported the incident for 18 months, and the lack of physical evidence, prevented the filing of criminal charges."

So, on the subject of the trans comments, Lopez apologized. "The comments I made were ignorant and insensitive, and I now have a deeper understanding of how hurtful they were. I have been, and always will be, an ardent supporter of the LGBTQ community, and I am going to use this opportunity to better educate myself. Moving forward, I will be more informed and thoughtful."

And so, I... I tweeted about this. I tweeted some screenshots from this interview. And uh, Twitter added it to a Twitter Moment. And I'm gonna give you a life hack for self-care. Block the Twitter Moments account, and you will not be added to Twitter Moments. Because what happens when you're added to Twitter Moments is, people come for you.

Brent: Mmm.

Courtney: So, within a half an hour of posting that, all of a sudden, I had 300+ people in my replies, calling me literally a cunt, and just spewing horrific, transphobic nonsense. And a lot of it was basically saying, "Did you not read his quote? He's being kind. He's saying 'I don't judge people' and all this stuff." And that's actually one of the bigger problems with the way he worded this.

I think he... it's very easy to point out hate. Outright, open hate. But this kind of way that he worded that... it's in that way that like, I call it like, uncle racism, or like, uncle transphobia or homophobia, where like, at Thanksgiving, someone in your family will say like, "Look, I don't tell anyone how to parent their kids. I like everyone. Some of my best friends are black. But..." And then they say stuff like this.

And it's this devil's—yeah.

Brent: Yeah, it's like, "I don't tell them how to do it, but I will tell you how they should do it in a problematic way." Yeah.

Courtney: I think that everyone is fine and great, and I support everyone, *but...* This is dangerous.

Brent: And the thing is, there's also like, just the notion of like, "I don't judge."

Courtney: Yeah!

Brent: In certain contexts, is loaded.

Courtney: Exactly.

Brent: Like, y'know, if... and I try not to... y'know, sometimes, I just try to say like, "I'm not trying to yuck your yum." Which is a whole different deal than saying like, "Oh, this is your..." I mean, even in like, the kink community. Like, trying not to shame that, for instance. Like, "I don't judge." Well, who mentioned judging, y'know?

Courtney: Yeah. The fact is, very few things insight more hate, rage, misinformation, and ignorance than the discussion of trans kids. So let's go over a few things that Lopez and many, many, many other people don't seem to understand.

For lots of children, gender exploration is normal and, in fact, could just be a phase. Gender expression is not binary. It's why we accept that cis girls and women can have short hair, or that cis men can paint their nails. But around the age of four, most children develop a firm understanding of their gender identity. A child that has been assigned male might say, "I'm a girl." And that might be a phase they grow out of, and it might not be.

And here is where information, and often, willful ignorance, comes in. No one is saying this four-year-old says they are a girl, let's start them on hormone blockers and schedule the surgery now. Because that's not how this works. The only thing people need to do when a young child expresses their gender identity is to love them. To accept them. To give them the freedom and the safety to explore. The future will be what the future will be. Appreciate and love your child the way they are right now, at this moment. This is not optional.

According to the American Academy of Pediatrics, 56% of youth who identified as transgender reported suicidal ideation, and 31% reported having made an attempt. Death is not a phase. So love your fucking children.

For everything else, guess what? Google is free. The Center of Excellence for Transgender Health at the University of California San Francisco has an excellent resource for healthcare providers. It's health considerations for gender nonconforming children and transgender adolescence. Because in addition to familial and social acceptance, appropriate healthcare is critical. And research shows that this kind of gender affirming care and mental healthcare, and the resources that go along with that, can massively improve quality of life and diminish gender dysphoria.

So essentially, what I got from this particular uh, paper, is that medical intervention doesn't necessarily need to enter the picture until puberty. For a lot of kids, the gender dysphoria experienced during puberty is traumatic. So hormone blockers can be administered to stave off those physical changes. They will not eliminate puberty, like, entirely. Like, kids can come off the blockers and just start puberty later, as opposed to going through the wrong puberty. Y'know, the puberty that they were assigned at birth, essentially, like, that biological puberty that will—

Brent: So, I'm a little bit ignorant about this. So you're saying that it's reversible, um... I mean, again, I'm not questioning, I'm just curious about this. Because I think that a lot of people don't know.

Courtney: Yeah.

Brent: I certainly don't. so what you're saying is, if someone is assigned male at birth, and given hormone blockers before puberty, or like, early onset or whatever, can essentially live as someone without that level of testosterone, et cetera? And then, if they were to go, "Oh, whoops," which, again, I don't think is common and I'm not suggesting that's a... y'know. I'm just asking. You're saying that like, the stakes are lower than these conservative pundits would make you think.

Courtney: Exactly.

Brent: 'Cause they're making it sound like—

Courtney: It just presses pause. It literally just like, presses pause.

Brent: Got it! Got it.

Courtney: And they will have puberty a bit later.

Brent: And I appreciate our trans and generally like, smarter than me listeners for just giving me the space to not know that. And thank you, Courtney.

Courtney: Yeah. And uh, I want to thank Laura Kate Dale, who I, y'know... I did run this copy by her. I just wanted to make sure that I wasn't misrepresenting anything, and she reminded me of that part, which I had seen and I knew, but I didn't know how important it was to include that. And she was like, "Yeah, definitely include that." And I 100% see why that is necessary. People need to know that.

This doesn't mean you never go through puberty. This literally just puts it on pause while, y'know, the person, while they decide for themselves. They decide with their family is like, what they want to do next. And it's not permanent. You can't stay on hormone blockers forever. It's a temporary thing while you decide for yourself, essentially, what you want to do next.

But, as Laura pointed out, essentially, if you go through this other puberty, there are things—that isn't fixable. So like, if you go through the puberty of like, y'know, growing breasts, or y'know, things like that, it's harder for hormone replacement therapy later to change those things.

Brent: Gotcha.

Courtney: So that's—basically, this will just stave things off and make transition easier. Then, at around 16, they can start taking gender affirming hormones.

Brent: So one blocks the natural hormones that—

Courtney: Exactly, yes.

Brent: --biologically, are trying to do stuff to your body. And the other like, when assigned female at birth trans men start taking T, would be... that's the difference, is what you're saying.

Courtney: Exactly. Yes.

Brent: Ahh, okay. Got it.

Courtney: And then, if they choose to have surgery, that wouldn't happen until they're 18, at least.

Brent: Gotcha.

Courtney: And of course, this all varies from person to person. And none is required to be your gender. You are your gender. You are nonbinary, no matter how you present. It's who you are. But I'm not telling any of this to our trans and nonbinary listeners. This is to the cis listeners who maybe don't know, and want to know more, and there are plenty of resources out there for you to find out.

All I did was Google "trans youth healthcare," and different search terms like that. This is very easy for us. I think it's important to note that, y'know, we can talk to—we can talk to our trans friends, and y'know, like, it's important to like, y'know, be open to understanding their experience. But they are not a resource. It is not their job to educate us on their perceived otherhood. That's just not how this works.

Brent: Yeah.

Courtney: Because for those of you who don't necessarily want to know more, and have no interest in searching out resources to find out more, trans and nonbinary people owe you fucking nothing. Mind your own

goddamn business, Jesus whole entire fucking Christ. Also, don't go on the bad Hitler lady's talk show. The end.

[theme music plays]

Brent: Courtney. Do you brush your teeth?

Courtney: Wow. That's a really personal question. But for you, I'll answer it. I'll say... [laughs] Y'know, I'll answer it on Question Box too, when the time comes.

Brent: Amazing.

Courtney: But yes. Hot take – I brush my teeth.

Brent: Well, now we know.

Courtney: Multiple times a day sometimes, even.

Brent: What!

Courtney: What? No.

Brent: So, the thing about brushing your teeth is, um... you can do it the old way, or you can do it the Quip way. Listeners who have been listening for a while know, I have owned a Quip toothbrush since late 2017. I use it every day. I recently reinstalled – or rather, I recently replaced the battery in mine. I had forgotten how serious and lovely the sonic vibrations are when you have a fresh battery.

And the thing is, Quip electric toothbrushes... well, maybe you don't know. Quip is an electric toothbrush that, instead of one of those big, bulky rechargeable ones that you have to like, keep in the huge dock to recharge, the Quip electric toothbrush is the size of a regular manual toothbrush. But, it features sensitive sonic vibrations, a built in two-minute timer in case you don't know how long to brush. It like, tells you by vibrating in a different way when it's time to switch sides.

And, it's got a multi-use cover that doubles as a mirror mount, and it's great for on the go. Brush heads are automatically delivered on a dentist recommended schedule every three months for just five dollars. It's a friendly reminder when it's time for a refresh. And Quip is one of the first electric toothbrushes accepted by the American Dental Association, and they're backed by over 25 thousand dental professionals.

So, uh, I have taken my Quip this summer to a camping trip in the wilds of Virginia. I'm thinking about taking a trip to the Poconos. And y'know what I'll take with me? My freakin' Quip. Quip starts at just \$25, and if you go to [GetQuip.com/Trends](https://www.getquip.com/trends) right now, you can get your first refill pack for free. That's your first refill pack of your Quip electric toothbrush at [GetQuip.com/Trends](https://www.getquip.com/trends).

Courtney: Some people are having a hot girl summer. Brent's having a Quip girl summer.

Brent: Oh yeah.

Courtney: Yeah. Fresh, fresh-ass teeth.

Brent: Quip it good.

Courtney: Managing passwords suuucks. And as recently as last week, we reported on a big data leak. And when our data leak... data leaks? Is data singular or plural? Is it one of those words? But y'know what—

Brent: Um, it's actually—it's plural, but it's colloquially used... colloquially, rather, used as a singular. But it is—

Courtney: Here's the thing. Y'know what it is?

Brent: It's like bacteria.

Courtney: Y'know what it is though? I don't care.

Brent: [laughs] Okay. Keep talking.

Courtney: Because either way—

Brent: Tell me about the data.

Courtney: Either way, when the thing happens, and hackers find out our passwords, like... they can use that one password to break into like, tons of other websites with our information, and steal everything from home address to credit card number. But managing passwords can be so much easier with Dashlane.

Dashlane is the only tool you need to stay safe online. It's got you covered. Are you worried about losing access to accounts, having weak or reused passwords, or somebody monitoring your internet history? Are you worried about having your data getting hacked? Are you worried about having access to all your passwords on any device?

Dashlane keeps you safe from every direction online. Dashlane has a basic free version, but Dashlane premium has all of the above features, and it's cheaper than most VPNs or standalone security services. Get peace of mind knowing that Dashlane is actively protecting you from every angle.

Go to Dashlane.com/Trends to get a free 30-day trial of Dashlane premium, where you can see the features in action and try out Dashlane for yourself. If you like it, you can use the coupon code 'Trends' at check out for a 10% off discount. That's Dashlane.com/Trends.

[theme music plays]

Brent: This week, a full politics roundup would mean a two hour show, so I'm just gonna say... Trump has continued to tweet racist stuff; this time, about Elijah Cummings, Al Sharpton, and CNN's Don Lemon in a very short amount of time, and it is pretty clear he's trying to fire up his racist base. But what's new?

Okay, now onto the big, big story of the week. Democratic debates number three and four. Last time, we covered two democratic debates in a row. At least we could get to do one episode on one debate, and then the next episode on the next debate. Well, not this time. Holy shit, we've got hours of debate to cover.

So before we start, we're not going to get to every moment you remember. We don't know every fact about every candidate's record. So if you want to keep the discussion going on social media, which we love, 'cause the conversation never ends... just like, be nice. We're doing our best.

Okay. Let's get into debate number one, which was Tuesday. This time, Elizabeth Warren and Bernie Sanders were not split up, and they didn't have to go up against Biden. In fact, they shared the stage with some lightweights like Marianne Williamson, John Delaney, Steve Bullock, Tim Ryan, Amy Klobuchar, Beto O'Rourke, and John Hickenlooper, as well as the number five candidate in the RealClearPolitics polling average, Pete Buttigieg.

The main headline coming out of this one is that Warren and Sanders were head and shoulders above the rest of the group, and like I predicted on Twitter, they played nice with each other. Warren's opening statement repeated the phrase which I like to hear, which is, "I will fight." So many of these candidates say stuff like, "I want to be a uniter." Or like, "I believe in freedom."

But I will fight for regular Americans? I like that. And I think it's part of why Warren's doing so well in the polls, 'cause it's simple. It's just... it's a simple, obvious thing you would want to hear from somebody being a president.

And I would say Bernie... my prediction for him was wrong. I have always thought of Bernie as a pretty lumbering, ponderous debater, and I think he had maybe the best debate performance of any of the 2016 or 2020 debates. And I can't tell if he's doing better debate prep, or if it's just like some of these... maybe he got lucky. Like, some of these also-rans are just setting him up perfectly.

Uh, Jake Tapper asked him, "What would you say to congressman Delaney?" Referring to Delaney calling Medicare for all political suicide. And Bernie just goes, "You're wrong." In a field where a lot of candidates have, uh, convoluted explanations for their plans. Stuff like this plays well, I think. The plain spoken, doesn't take 50 words to say nothing, it's two words to say a lot.

One thing to note is that plenty of questions from the moderators were framed in a pro-corporate, or even right-wing way, such as when Jake Tapper said "Medicare for all would take insurance away from millions of Americans." That framing is so misleading. It's like saying marijuana legalization would take jobs away from drug dealers. Like... kind of? But like, what a way to miss the point.

And both Elizabeth and Bernie pointed stuff like that out, with Elizabeth saying, "We should stop using right-wing talking points," and Bernie calling out Jake Tapper for asking a question which is, itself, a right-wing talking point. Remember, soapbox, corporate-owned media typically leans pro-war and anti-leftist. It might pay lip service to like, neo-liberal politics, but generally, media tied to big business shies away from promoting ideas that would cause big changes in the economy.

And I think that's why CNN kept asking Delaney what he thinks. He's like, polling at negative eight percent, and they kept asking him. Why? Well, he's the "no we can't" guy. Corporate media is starting to choose who they'll collectively favor. And it's an emergent thing. They don't have a conspiracy cabal. It's just, y'know, you follow the money. You follow the ideology of a corporation.

And so, the candidates I think corporate media's starting to favor just so happen to be the candidates who are closer to the center and slash or funded by corporate donors, unlike Elizabeth Warren and Bernie Sanders.

Meanwhile, Beto, still full of word salad, jeeze. Just like, go back and listen to his opening statement. It's so like... "The freedom of our forefathers makes the liberty in my pants the renaissance of the very uniting, which I want to..." It's like, dude, what the fuck are you saying?

And he's using phrases—

Courtney: Liberty. In. My. Pants.

Brent: Yep.

Courtney: Yep.

Brent: That's the name of his band's new album. After he drops out of the race, he'll go back to his punk band.

Courtney: Y'know what it's the name of? It's the name of the liberty in my pants.

Brent: [laughs] Um...

Courtney: It's my clit. That's what I call my clit.

Brent: Wow!

Courtney: [laughs]

Brent: Yeah, we can say that word!

Courtney: I'm gonna do so well on Question Box, oh my God!

Brent: It's true. It's true. You're going to beat me. Alright. Um, so like, Beto also used phrases like "Medicare for all forcing people off insurance." And to crib from Seth Myers, who likes their employer based insurance? To say nothing of self-employed people like me. I've got a silver proactive PPO that's nothing to write home about, and I'm gonna spend nearly six grand on premiums this year before I ever get to copays or buying drugs.

I can more or less afford it. That's me, right? But what about someone working full time on minimum wage? This basic coverage would be half of their take-home. Anyway, I digress. Beto is floundering.

Now onto Buttigieg. He had some snappy moments, including one where he said, "It is time to stop worrying what the Republicans will say. Look, if it's true that if we embrace a far left agenda, they're going to say we're a bunch of crazy socialists. If we embrace a conservative agenda, you know what they're gonna do? They're gonna say we're a bunch of crazy socialists."

Now, like, that's a great line. But, his version of Medicare for all is... not terribly socialist, IMO. It's an opt-in program. By the way, quick aside – this is not in my copy. Um... [laughs] The phrase "Medicare for all" has been used by a bunch of these different candidates, but they'll be like, "My Medicare for all..." "My version of Medicare for all..."

And like, Bernie's bill is not the only Medicare for all, but it's kind of... the... I don't know. To me, it's the one of record. It's the phrase I believe he coined, and if I'm wrong, please tell me. But y'know, and like, one thing about Warren that... like, I love Elizabeth Warren, but one area in which there is some daylight between those two, and the reason that I like Bernie's policy on the whole more than hers slightly, is because she is a little bit less specific about how to do it.

Maybe that's smart, because being flexible can be good. But if you're too flexible, that just means you have no principles, like, y'know, perhaps a Beto. And so, y'know, Buttigieg's version of Medicare for all is an opt-in program that just doesn't even touch the private insurance industry. And I may have said this before, but like, if you're wondering why there's so much talk about the private insurance industry, particularly on the left and in progressive circles, it is this.

The insurance industry is made up of corporations that have to please their shareholders, and they profit when they get more money. And they do that by providing less care. So ultimately, they do their job when they're increasing suffering in the lives of people, or just plain letting them die.

Um, I, along with Bernie, Elizabeth, AOC, and others feel that healthcare is just different than other products, because unlike fidget spinners and Hot Pockets, the demand for healthcare is inelastic. Uh, particularly lifesaving healthcare. People will pay nearly any price to stay alive. There aren't other products like that. And our healthcare system takes advantage of that in a way that almost no other major country does.

So, okay, soapbox over. Back to the debate. Klobuchar, Delaney, and Bullock seemed to have a philosophy of "no, we can't," and I wonder if the reason their donors support them is simply to have voices on the stage muddying the waters about progressive policies. None of them is gonna win. They probably don't even have a shot at VP.

Tim Ryan... Courtney, can we talk about Tim Ryan? Aye yai yai.

Courtney: Honestly? I don't... I... here's the thing. I don't know. Okay, here's the thing – I know that he sucks, and I know that he did the dumb bad bumper sticker that you're about to get to. But, um... if you literally held up pictures, and I thought about doing this, and then remembered, this is a podcast.

Brent: [laughs]

Courtney: And this isn't gonna work, audio-wise. Uh, if you held up pictures of Hickenlooper, Ryan, uh, Bullock, Delaney, fffuckin' other ones. I... literally... could not... tell you which one was which. Honestly, I couldn't tell you de Blasio. I know his name. But then when I saw his face, I was like, "I think you're one of the other ones. I think they're saying your name wrong."

Brent: [laughs]

Courtney: I'm proud of the hecklers that they knew which one he was! Good for them!

Brent: True. They did their research. Um, so yeah. Tim Ryan, in my estimation, like... look, I love the idea of a country where like, a common

man, a common woman, a common person, can be president. That is the American dream. That is the story we're sold.

But at a certain point, there's an element of being telegenic. And while not all of my favorite candidates are, you can overcome that with selling your policies and your message really well. Tim Ryan has none of that. He just has this deer in the headlights, like... y'know, in the principal's office look all the time. I don't know why he even is in the second debate. He totally biffed it last time.

He just looks really amateurish. And once again, he got smacked around, the best moment of which was when he went up against Bernie about the details of the Medicare for all bill, saying, "You don't know that, Bernie." And Bernie said, "I do know, I wrote the damn bill." [laughs]

And Ryan also told Bernie, "You don't have to yell." And the next day, Ryan, on Twitter, revealed that like, that's now a bumper sticker and I guess a t-shirt for his campaign? "You don't have to yell"? This is the pure crystallization of the privileged argument for decorum. To me, if you never get passionate about stuff like this, you are either tragically uninformed or comfortably complacent.

The idea of "you don't have to yell" is... it just shows the boneheadedness of Tim Ryan and his campaign.

Courtney: I like... people are... people are drinking out of toilets. Why would... why should you not yell about that?

Brent: Yeah. It just... it's that thing where, is it real, or is it the Onion? I thought maybe...

Courtney: It's always real. That's the biggest lesson we've learned in 2019.

Brent: 2019: It's always real.

Courtney: It's always real.

Brent: And if it's not, it will be.

Courtney: Except for my favorite Reductress headline, which is, "Lana Del Ray Actually Woman Who Drowned in the Lake 50 Years Ago."

Brent: [laughs]

Courtney: Which, honestly, if that was real, I'd be like, "Yeah, that makes sense." But, other than that, everything's real.

Brent: Just to give a quick break to the debate coverage, my favorite Onion headline is, "War Against Yarn May Be Unwinnable, Says Cat General."

Courtney: [laughs]

Brent: [laughing] It's got like, this cute cat in like, a military outfit with like, the hat and the honors. Okay.

Courtney: The Onion has a beer fridge in their office.

Brent: Who?

Courtney: The Onion. I just wanted to say that.

Brent: Oh.

Courtney: They have a beer fridge in their office. They serve all Chicago beers, like Goose Island and fine beers like that.

Brent: I interned for the New York Onion office in 2007.

Courtney: Good for you! I only know because—

Brent: Janeane Garofalo—what's that?

Courtney: I think you've told me this Janeane Garofalo story. I'm really excited for it.

Brent: Long story short, she asked me how her set was in a very specific way, and said she could tell I was, uh, 23 because of my pores. Uh, the end.

Courtney: Yeah.

Brent: Anyway.

Courtney: I did an interview at The Onion. It was my first Vanity Fair piece, and I was pregnant, and they offered me a beer, and it was 9:30 in the morning. And I said no, only because I was pregnant, not because it was 9:30 in the morning. [laughs]

Brent: Hey, if I go to the office of The Onion, and they want me to... they are offering me a beer at 9:30...

Courtney: Very honest, yeah.

Brent: My first question is, "Are you gonna have one? 'Cause if you're gonna have one, let's fuckin' have a beer."

Courtney: TBH, if anyone's offering me anything, I'm saying yes. That doesn't mean like... okay, y'know what? I said it too fast. If anyone's offering me a beverage, I'm gonna say yes.

Brent: There you go.

Courtney: If you're offering me just like, hey, here, do some blow. Like, no, I've never done—I've never done a drugs that isn't a weed or a shroom. Other than that. If you offer me a drink, I'm just gonna be like, "Yeah, I'll drink this! I don't care if it's eight." Anyway.

Brent: If it's... [laughs] Sorry, eight on the clock. I was like, "If it's eight what? If it's eight what?!" Alright, here we go.

Another Elizabeth Warren moment I loved was when she said of Delaney, "I don't understand why anybody goes to all the trouble of running for president of the United States just to talk about what we really can't do and shouldn't fight for." I think that is the kind of messaging that will break through and really sell more progressive ideas in 2020.

Now, the immigration part of the debate got confusing for me, but my favorite thing anyone said was Warren saying we need to be clear about what we want to do with immigration. And that's what I've been saying. That's what I talked to Kate Sloane about two weeks ago, and it's been on my mind.

Like, enough saying the obvious about what it shouldn't look like. We know children should not be separated from their parents, and we need to keep fighting that fight. But when it comes to the concept of immigration from a presidential candidate, I want to hear Democrats outlining what it should look like in detail.

So, again, in general, I feel like Elizabeth and Bernie, compared to the rest, kicked ass. Buttigieg held his own. He's still getting somewhat lost in the shuffle. Marianne Williamson had like, one moment where I was like, "Oh, I don't hate that." But in general, she's out there. Like, I think that she has a couple of good ideas, and sometimes she says something, and I'm like, "Oh, yeah." But generally—

Courtney: It's one of those things where like, she's gonna kill people. So her—

Brent: [laughs] She just talks—

Courtney: Her good ideas don't matter to me.

Brent: She talks the way that I do when I'm coming down from shrooms. And the thing is that, there could be some beautiful thoughts.

Courtney: People will fucking die, and therefore, I don't fucking care. She had a very good answer on Flint. I stand by it. Other people also had good

answers on Flint. Other people can also do good things on Flint. Marianne Williamson will fucking kill us. So let's just not.

Brent: Yeah, I think that if North Korea... if North Korea finally did, like, shoot a missile, she'd be like, "Okay, everybody clap, just like for Tinkerbell and Peter Pan. If everybody just claps and believes..." Anyway. Onto debate number two.

For me, this one was harder to watch, because the only people on the dais that I think have interesting things to say were Yang and Gabbard, and they have basically zero chance of getting the nomination. But at least some interesting drama and developments happened with Biden, Harris, Castro, Booker, and to some extent, Gillibrand and de Blasio.

Right off the bat, Biden comes out, and the hot mics picked him up saying to Harris, "Go easy on me, kid." Which, like... dude, you are under fire, and being scrutinized constantly for being creepy and sexist. It's not like it's the worst thing ever to say, but like, that was not the thing to say in the spotlight in which you are currently in.

Um, so, let's look at some broad strokes. Uh, Gillibrand paid a lot of lip service to the left, but y'know, her history of being a moderate, and even sometimes like, a conservative Democrat, makes me very wary of her recent enlightenment.

Bennett was basically the Delaney slash Hickenlooper of the night, focusing on can'ts instead of cans.

Courtney: He's one of the other ones I forgot his name, because I don't know...

Brent: So easy to do.

Courtney: I—they're—I—none of them matter! Why are—what?!

Brent: [laughs] Dude, Bennett's speaking voice sounds like a yawn.
[speaking-while-yawning voice] It's kind of just... it's like, uh, I'm running for president, let me just...

Courtney: I tweeted this—

Brent: It's like, just get the yawn out, bud.

Courtney: That he looks like that one guy from Veep. The one that dated Amy, that wears like, the bolo tie... like, he looks like that guy, and I can't remember that guy's name either, and I feel like that was the joke with that guy, that he doesn't matter.

Brent: I do not know Veep. However, Julia Louis-Dreyfus is one of my long time—

Courtney: How do you fucking not know Veep?! Brent! You'd fucking love Veep.

Brent: 'Cause I watch real politics, and I can't learn all the other secretaries of various cabinet positions!

Courtney: Oh my God.

Brent: It's hard!

Courtney: Okay, here's the thing. For all of our like, back and forth on like, Bernie and Hillary, this is the first time I've ever been mad at you.

Brent: Oh, that's not true.

Courtney: Watch Veep you sack of butts!

Brent: [laughs] Alright, back to me, the sack of butt. Um, uh, okay. Where was I? So yeah, uh... Bennett sleepy. Uh, de Blasio, y'know... he did, uh, somewhat distinguish himself by saying we should "tax the hell out of the wealthy." But I'm a former New Yorker. I think his job as mayor... he's just

got a little too much baggage. And while I don't love the electability discourse, I just feel like he sort of lacks a certain je ne sais quoi that might help him rise above the rest.

Yang came out of the gate with an amazing opening statement, where he said he's the opposite of Trump, because he's Asian and likes math. [laughs] Snappy as hell. And I like that Yang is disrupting the discussion without the outside the box ideas. I don't love his phrase, "it's not about left or right," because yes it is. Unfortunately, it is. It is. I know that's a way to like, try to like, uh... lure is not the word, but to court Trump voters, former Trump voters.

But like, I don't like anybody who... they don't have to even say "the left." But if you're gonna say, "Oh, it's not about left or right." It is. Um, Castro had some great moments, like when he said, "I don't want to make America anything again," implying that we should transform and transcend, rather than returning to the past. He also said, "First of all, the president is a racist."

And y'know, if there's one good thing about the way Trump has coarsened and lowered the discourse, it's the fact that all politicians have more license to get real and be blunt about these things.

Corey Booker really distinguished himself by turning Trumps "shithole countries" line on its head, and saying "shithole countries" unbleeped. And he came out in favor of marijuana legalization at the federal level, and going toe to toe with Biden, like when he said, "If you want to compare records – and I'm shocked that you do..."

Now, despite Booker and Castro's great moments, to me, they're still a little bit over compromised by their corporate influence, and their wishy-washiness on how to do healthcare.

Courtney: I will say, real, real quick, I just want to say... this morning, I was like... I was trying to search like, how, uh, pundits saw the debates go last night. And... [laughs] The thing that came up from Fox News was like, "Booker uses the S-bomb when referring to Donald Trump."

[laughing] And I was like, he literally quoted him! You dumb fucks!

Brent: What a shithole news network.

Courtney: Courtney Enlow just used the F-bomb to discuss Fox News.

Brent: Did they really say S-bomb?

Courtney: S-bomb!

Brent: Oh my God.

Courtney: I'm gonna Google it right fucking now. Right. Fucking. Now. You keep talking.

Brent: It's my favorite Tom Jones song. [sings] "S-bomb..." Okay.

Courtney: [sings] "S-bomb..."

Brent: [sings] "You're my S-bomb!" Okay.

Courtney: Booker. S-Bomb.

Brent: In general, there was a dog pile on Biden. I think he's basically the Jeb Bush of 2020. And like, he seemed shaky. Honestly, he seemed a little bit like, feeble at times, the worst of which was in his closing statement where he said, "If you agree with me, go to Joe... three... oh... three three oh." In the first place, it sounded like he got lost in the middle of the numbers. I was sure, listening to it, that he started over part way through.

What he meant was, text the word 'join' to the number 30330. Now, in the first place, is that the catchiest number the frontrunner could get?

Courtney: Okay, but like, he didn't understand the difference between the texts and the websites. Real quick, the headline is, "Senator Corey Booker

Drops S-Bomb During Dem Debate in Dig at President Trump.” And also, the image is Joe Biden and Kamala Harris, and I think what they’re saying is, “All black people look alike, even if one is a man.” [laughs]

Brent: And when they curse, it’s not okay! Jesus Christ.

Courtney: Even some profanity that went uncensored by host network, CNN. It’s a fucking quote. Anyway...

Brent: Yeahhh. I mean—

Courtney: Please go on.

Brent: The thing about Biden... like, I don’t love the... I mean like, ageist, right? Ageist is like, one of the least, um... the least outraging isms among the woke crowd. Why? I don’t know. But like, making Use Your Words, finding out what people think is funny and acceptable? Making fun of old people is like... many people don’t consider it to be the worst thing. I don’t love it, especially in this context, mostly because like, I like Bernie. And also, Elizabeth Warren is no spring chicken. A lot of these people aren’t.

But um, the criticisms about Joe Biden’s age really felt like, true. He’s only a year younger than Bernie, but like, love him or hate him, Bernie came off way more spry this week than Joe, who just struggled and stuttered in a lot of moments throughout the debate.

Then you have Harris, who maintained like... let’s be real, she maintained a badass tone throughout the debate. But she ended up putting some blood in the water as well, like when Tulsi Gabbard challenged her about her prosecutorial past of locking up marijuana users. And uh, for the record, Harris also proudly jailed parents of truant students, which... is... baffling to me.

It’s like overreaching at best, and just draconian at worst. Like, you drop your kid off at school. What if they’re like, “Bye mom!” They walk to the front door, you drive off, and then they just skip class? You should go to jail? It’s... it’s... truly baffling.

Um, and Harris also had to do some quick tap dancing about her healthcare plan, which she did very well, but she also avoided answering some hard questions about the plan, including the way she has waffled on the private insurance industry.

I think I can stand by the statement that she likes to sound progressive, especially when she's in, y'know, the spotlight. And then, go and walk it back when she's... y'know, like, later on. And I think that, y'know, like... on the one hand, her composure and fire probably played very well to like a huge swath of the TV audience. But I think it hides a more center-left agenda than she lets on.

And um, all the viable candidates on this stage had healthcare plans less progressive and less bold than Warren and Sanders, and my bet is, the more the electorate gets wise about these differences – if they do, cross your fingers – the more they'll lean toward Warren and or Sanders.

Now, I'd just like to zoom out and say, it was really nice to hear ten well-spoken politicians fighting over the best way to save the planet and the environment, rather than like, saying the jury is out on climate change like almost any Republican would.

So, okay. In general, broad strokes, Biden is getting gradually chipped away by everyone else. I don't know if that's gonna hurt his overall poll numbers, because so many Americans aren't watching the debates. They just like Obama. And apparently, Joe Biden sometimes likes Obama, sometimes does not. Corey Booker had a great line where he was like, "Look, you can't invoke Obama when you want and then like, say that you weren't involved in a thing when you don't."

And I retweeted it myself on the night of the debate, but Joe Biden criticized Rudy Giuliani in 2008, 'cause he would just say a noun, a verb, and 9/11. But now, Joe Biden is literally like saying, a noun, a verb, "Did you know that I was Obama's VP?"

And it's just like... I just think returning to the Obama era is nostalgic, but there was a lot of—there were a lot of things that weren't perfect, and we are now, like... what is it, nine? Ten? Eleven years past when Obama got elected? It's a different time. We're not trying to return to that. We're not trying to return to Obamacare, because it was hobbled and compromised by Republicans. We could do better.

Anyway. Broad strokes. Biden's getting chipped away at. Harris was more on the defensive, as other candidates began to see her as a major contender. Castro and Booker definitely distinguished themselves, as did Yang, to the extent that he can in his unusual position in the political spectrum. And in my opinion, the rest of the field didn't really, except for like, there were a couple successful moments from Gillibrand and Gabbard. But like, again, they're... that's my opinion, and they're very unlikely to get the nomination.

What did I miss?

Courtney: There's a thing I don't really know how to talk about, frankly.

Brent: Mm-hmm.

Courtney: Um, and it is... uh, based in the justice system, based in Kamala Harris' role as, y'know, district attorney. And it's... [sighs] It's people doing their jobs in law enforcement, and y'know, dealing with the justice system as it exists. And... their role, plus the status quo, that they were operating within.

So, Joe Biden pulling that on her... saying like, y'know, "While you were this, you did this, this, this, and this." And it's like... okay, if people can call her out on that, absolutely. Joe Biden calling her on that was some fucking bullshit.

Brent: Well, 'cause he's got skeletons of his own.

Courtney: Exactly.

Brent: That are worse, and yeah, like, I think that—

Courtney: It's... it was—

Brent: She's got way more of an excuse than him.

Courtney: Yeah. And it's... it's also—like, today, um, Harris gets destroyed was like a very big hash tag that started with the alt-right. Those diamond and silk people.

Brent: Yes. And like, yeah, bots. Perhaps Russian bots helping.

Courtney: I did air quotes. You can't see those. Yeah. And that's the thing. Which means that they're scared of her.

Brent: Sure.

Courtney: They're scared of her.

Brent: I think she's one of those Buttigieg-type candidates the media, like... it's just left enough, and the media is like, "Ooh, okay, they're the right mix of pro-corporate and lefty-town."

Courtney: But this wasn't the media. This is clearly like, whoever, whatever the forces are... the dark psychic forces. It's me, Marianne William—no, I'm not gonna do it.

Brent: No, you're right, you're right. What I'm saying is, they're afraid of her—

Courtney: No, but I mean like, it's a matter of... [sighs] I don't know how to say this without seeming... like an apologist, and maybe I am. And it's the same space I found myself in with Hillary Clinton.

Brent: Mm-hmm.

Courtney: Kamala Harris is being taken to task for things that a man in her same role would never, ever have to deal with. Because she is a woman of color, and therefore, people are demanding more of her on the left. And on the right, she is an easy target. And people on the right are attacking her for being, um, y'know, for mass incarceration. For things like that. Things they don't fucking care about.

Brent: Yeah, things they're fans of, openly.

Courtney: But that's the thing that like, is absolutely infuriating. So people on the right are saying things like, "Well, Kamala Harris put these people in..." Like, you don't fucking care and you know it! You know you don't care! You're looking for any reason you can to attack her.

And that is actually the thing that most set me off in 2016, is when people who would attack Hillary Clinton, and the people who were on the alt-right, would find like, a commonality, and they would be on the same side. And I would just think, like, "Oh, some—anyone who is on the left needs to just like, abandon this particular narrative or something."

Because like, it's being taken over by the bad Nazi people. And it's... I'm... I'm scared of the fact that that's politics now. I'm scared of the fact that that's our reality now, and how do we operate—how do we go forward? What do we do? It's awful. It's bad. I hate it.

Brent: Well, I mean... the thing that... I mean, y'know, we come at this from different angles. And to me, when I look at just like... when I look at the whole thing, ESPN style, instead of really focusing too much on the identities... like, you're totally right. The fact that she's black and a woman, the alt-right inherently does not like that, before you get to anything else.

My point about the media clearly starting to favor Harris, and I think like, CNN did like, a segment of a show as news that was clearly, like, basically a commercial for her. But when you say they're scared of her, you're right, and that's why I brought up the media. Like, they see the tide shifting.

Um, and the thing is like, I think there's a lot of great things about her. She's so fuckin' whip smart in the moment. She's so fast. She's a great, like... During senate hearings? Boy, she does not give anybody an inch.

Courtney: There was a very big thing that I saw last night, specifically. And it is... [sighs] It's the very real experience, specifically of women of color, dealing with... nonsensical white people. And the patience. And the um, like... the internal, like, having to take yourself to a calm place that all women do. But like, women of color have to do it the most.

Brent: I agree.

Courtney: Women of color do it the most most. And it's... it's this... I saw that in Kamala Harris so much last night. This feeling of like... she knows. She does not get to yell. She does not get to be angry. And how fucking upsetting that is, that people can say what they want to her, and she does not get to get emotional.

Brent: Right. I would simultaneously—

Courtney: And that's fucking frustrating.

Brent: Sure. I would simultaneously like, defend her on that score, and also say that... I mean, y'know, if you want to look at it as a horse race, I think that there is a demographic advantage in the Democratic party. In like, the big swath of... like, okay, black people vote Democratic. Just in terms of the demo, that's what they do. And there's good reason for that, especially in 2020 when, what's the alternative?

Um, but... she was a cop. And she has things on her record that don't look great, regardless.

Courtney: Y'know what, though? I don't want to dismiss anyone who feels that way. Specifically, people of color. But can I just say, the majority of people who are pulling that argument are white? In our very own Facebook group, our very own Trends Like These Facebook group, the people who were like, fully going hardcore on that, and liking people's comments who

went on that, were white. People who were defending her tended to be people of color.

But the people who just kept fucking pushing on it were white. And I feel like it's very... there's a specific kind of white progressive that feels extra... entitled to hating a certain type of politician, without having to take stock of the inherent racism and misogyny that is at play, because they believe they're coming to it from a place of defending women and people of color from racism and misogyny. And it's a snake eating itself. It's a mess.

Brent: I mean, I think—yeah, I think both can be true. But it is not... that doesn't mean it's not problematic in a certain way.

Courtney: It doesn't, but it's also fucking exhausting. And I just want white people to fucking calm down. Honestly, that's what I need in 2020. As we go into this election, I need white people to calm down. I need white people to fucking listen for fucking once. Don't decide what people of color need. What people of color need is rights.

[laughs] What people of color need is to not get shot, and killed, and like... [sighs] I just—I want us to win this. I want people to not like... I want no more concentration camps. I want no more people to die. I just want us to win this one. Oh God, please let us win this one.

Brent: I think we will. Okay, to put—

Courtney: I need to lay down in the corner.

Brent: Well, before you do...

Courtney: Why?

Brent: A quick, like, just to put a bow on this... um, if—I just thought it would be fun for us as a thought experiment to whittle down the field to—like, if we could just get the next debate to just be ten, instead of 20 or, I don't know who's gonna get chipped off, 18 or whatever the fuck... like, I

almost feel like the TV networks want it to be two debates, 'cause they'll get more ratings. But it's like, can we just have one?

So if you could whittle it down to your favorite ten, who would that be? Or do you want me to go first?

Courtney: Eh, I want you to go first, because like, I've only got three that I even think are remotely acceptable.

Brent: That's why I said that.

Courtney: So I need to like, add a couple more.

Brent: Okay. Okay. The reason I said that, folks, was not to be like, "Hey, Courtney, answer me a question. I'll go first!"

Courtney: No, it's because he looked in the doc, and I was just like, vehemently like, "No, there's only three people!"

Brent: Fair. It is a tough thing. I had to hold my nose on some of these. But if I could whittle it down to my favorite ten, it would be Warren, Sanders, de Blasio, Gabbard, Yang, Booker, Harris, Castro, Gillibrand, Inslee. Those are mine.

Courtney: Um...

Brent: Do you want to hold?

Courtney: No, I'm honestly—I've done the best that I can. Uh, Warren, Harris, Castro, Sanders, Gillibrand, Yang, Booker... I feel like, uh, this array at this point, where it's like, "I'm rooting for everyone black." I don't... [laughs] Like, I don't want anyone... I don't—no white—no white men. They're all bad trash. I don't want any of them.

Brent: Okay.

Courtney: I don't want any of them anywhere near anything. They can all go fuck off into the seaaa.

Brent: Okay, cool. President Carly Fiorina it is.

Courtney: Wow. Why would... [screams] Brent!

Brent: You know what I'm saying, and I've said it before!

Courtney: I literally named seven people!

Brent: I know. I know.

Courtney: [screams] Brent!

Brent: Just me making a point about identity politics when it comes to policy that we've had before.

Courtney: [screams]

Brent: Just saying. You know what I'm saying.

Courtney: You know I love you. I love you so fucking much. I will murder you in public.

Brent: [laughs] You want to go to tidbits?

Courtney: [sighs] Yes, I want to go to tidbits. Mustin, if you delete any of that... unless I murder Brent, in which case, delete all of it.

Brent: Get rid of the evidence.

Courtney: I watch a lot of Investigation Discovery. Delete all of it.

Brent: Oh man. Courtney and Brent, SVU.

[Law & Order 'dun dun' noise]

Brent: Okay. Um, so. Debunk.

Courtney: I think, honestly—I think that's why I'm so fine with Kamala Harris, is that I've watched a lot of SVU. So I'm fine with—I'm always fine with ADAs.

Brent: [laughs] Okay. So...

Courtney: Raul Esparza would never!

Brent: Oh my God, I forgot he's on TV. I always think of him as the very loud, very vibrato-y guy that I've seen in a couple shows. Okay.

Courtney: He was very, very good. He was so, so good. Anyway, he's not on the show anymore. We can move on.

Brent: Okay. First tidbits story. So it's a debunk. There was a tweet by @PaulLeeTicks – get it? – with a video of the Trump animatronic robot at Disney World's Hall of Presidents dressed in a Nazi uniform and uh, the idea was the quote, "Antifa thugs" snuck in and put the costume on the animatronic. I love the idea of that happening, as did the many thousands of people who liked it and retweeted.

But, @PaulLeeTicks is known for altering videos with very convincing visual effects. This was just another one of them. It was a joke. Kind of like some of those like, less obvious satirical sites. Like, sometimes, Reductress will get me, because I'll be like, "Is it The Onion? No, it's something—oh, it's Reductress. Ya got me." Or like, The Hard Times.

Um, but yeah. Anyway, if somebody wants to sneak in and do that in the Hall of Presidents, you have my support, comrade.

Courtney: So, another debunk. This was not convincing visual effects. Comicsgate remains on their bullshit, this time, coming for writer Alyssa

Wong, who is working with Greg Pak on Aero. There is a tweet going around, purportedly from Alyssa Wong, that reads as follows:

“Fuck Stan Lee. So what if he’s dead? He’s still a racist thief and an appropriator of culture, just like that jerk Cebulski. If I ever work at Marvel, I’ll tear down as much of Stan Lee’s so-called legacy as possible.”

So for one thing, it looks fake. The font is all wrong. It’s also not how human beings speak. It’s a basic approximation of how an asshole alt-righter tries to do an impression of what a woke woman of color might tweet, because that’s exactly what it is.

Comicsgate continues to hate women, and specifically women of color. Shock me, shock me, shock me. Alyssa Wong, we stand with you. We’re sorry that this is happening to you. Just... if you see anything about like, Alyssa Wong, just know, it’s fucking—it’s Comicsgate. Comicsgate is an offshoot of Gamergate. Any of the like, fuckin’ Nerdgates suck. They are the worst. Ahh! Men! Why are they men?!

Brent: [laughs] I love when conservatives try to like, frame bad acts by people on the left. Like, it reminds me of the guy who spray painted “left is best” on his own, like, uh, driveway. Like, what leftist would ever say “left is best?”

Courtney: [laughs] Remember that girl that like, wrote it, like, in a mirror on her face, and therefore wrote it backwards?

Brent: Yes.

Courtney: Do you remember—yeah. Like, that... I think about that a lot.

Brent: There’s also this movie... it’s in my “so bad, it’s good” lineup, called God’s Not Dead. And the supposedly like, terrible liberal atheist character has a bumper sticker that says “I love evolution!” [laughs] It’s like, nobody loves evolution. It’s like, “I love gravity!”

Courtney: I would if it would just like, evolution me out of having like, hair that I need to remove off my body.

Brent: [laughing] I love the law of large numbers! Like...

Courtney: For now, evolution's fucking fine, I guess. I don't fucking care. Jesus fucking Christ. Take that to your iTunes reviews, fuckers.

Brent: Yes.

Courtney: Anyway... Brent.

Brent: I love the Heisenberg Principle.

Courtney: By all means.

Brent: Is that a thing?

Courtney: Goes on. Is that from, uh—

Brent: Boy, we're debunking left and right.

Courtney: Is that from... oh, goddamn it. I was gonna make a joke, and then I like... Topamax took away my ability to remember the name of the show.

Brent: Relatable.

Courtney: About the meth? The meth show?

Brent: Breaking Bad.

Courtney: Breaking Bad. [laughs] I was like, "Is that a Breaking Bad reference?" But then I lost the words, so nevermind. Don't worry about it.

Brent: I just Googled it. I was right. The uncertainty principle, also called the Heisenberg principle. Okay. Yeah, and Lamictal, which is my mood stabilizer, also robs me of knowing the right word as well.

Courtney: [sings] Me and Brent, forgetting words! Doing our best! This could be some nonsense! Hey, thanks for listening! This is some bullshit, we're sorry about all of it.

Anyway, go on.

Brent: [laughs] I loved that song. Somebody out there, please tune and remix it for us.

Courtney: Can you believe that only one of us has a masters in music?
[laughs]

Brent: That is shocking. Um, and by the way, can somebody just please like, retune and remix that out there for us into a cool song? Thanks. Alright.

This is like, wall to wall debunks. There are no bunks left in this tidbits segment. Um, and this one... well, it's a partial debunk. Many headlines this week said some version of, "Wisconsin man goes into coma from vaping!"

But what most of the headlines left out was that the guy was vaping a marijuana extract from an unaffiliated drug dealer, rather than a company with standards to uphold. Now, it's true that we do not know all the long term effects of nicotine vaping yet, and it may very well be bad for people in the long term. But anecdotally, it helped me quit smoking, and secondhand vape clouds don't really stink or irritate people's lungs the way that smoking does.

And ultimately, unlike smoking, we naturally breathe out vapor about 20 thousand times a day. Now, look. The dudes blowing wizard clouds on the sidewalk that smell like gummy bears need to chill, but I don't think these headlines are fair to the concept of vaping as a whole, and I think it's just another reason weed needs to be legalized, taxed, and regulated.

Because then, it would be like, some company's problem that this happened, and they would owe somebody some money, and they'd be in trouble. As opposed to, who the fuck knows where this vape cartridge came from? Who the fuck knows what's in the liquid? We don't know.

Courtney: People I know have vaped so hard that they fucking died!

Brent: What?

Courtney: I'm lying. They didn't.

Brent: Oh. I was so, like... oh no!

Courtney: I'm just kidding. I'm just kidding. Vape: Not even once. Except for the time that you do it the once.

Brent: [laughs] Only once. For one summer.

Courtney: Only the once, or the other time. But also like, the other time after that. Look – when you're drunk, it's fine.

[music plays]

Lisa: Hey, if you like your podcasts to be focused and well-researched, and your podcast hosts to be uncharismatic, unhorny strangers who have no interest in horses, then this is not the podcast for you.

Emily: Man, what's your deal?

[laughs]

Emily: I'm Emily.

Lisa: I'm Lisa.

Emily: Our show's called Baby Geniuses.

Lisa: And its hosts are horny, adult idiots. We discover weird Wikipedia pages every episode.

Emily: We discuss institutional misogyny.

Lisa: We ask each other the dumbest questions, and our listeners won't stop sending us pictures of their butts.

Emily: We haven't asked them to stop, but they also aren't stopping.

Lisa: Join us on Baby Geniuses...

Emily: Every other week...

Lisa: On MaximumFun.org.

[music plays]

Speaker 1: Dead Pilot Society brings you exclusive readings of comedy pilots that were never made, featuring actors like Patton Oswalt...

Patton: So the vampire from the future sleeps in the dude's studio during the day, and they hunt monsters at night. It's Blade meets the Odd Couple!

Speaker 1: Adam Scott and Jane Levy...

Jane: Come on, Corey. She's too serious, too businessy. She doesn't know the hokey pokey.

Adam: Well, she'll learn what it's all about.

Speaker 1: Busy Philipps and Dave Koechner.

Dave: Baby, this is family.

Busy: My uncle Tell, who showed his weiner to Cinderella at Disneyland, is family. Do you want him staying with us?

Dave: He did stay with us! For three months!

Busy: And he was a delight!

Speaker 1: A new pilot every month, only on Dead Pilot Society, from Maximum Fun.

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.

So, for all the American government, and many of the American people, do to praise the troops and verbally honor our veterans, we have a serious problem with how veterans are supported once they're done with their military duty. One way that we've talked about this before is, uh, the decreasing quality of their healthcare; particularly, with regard to mental illness.

But, just as urgent, if not more, is the crisis of homeless veterans. And publications from Vox media, all the way to Business Insider, have reported that, according to multiple studies, it would actually be cheaper on society as a whole to just give the homeless housing, rather than other more circuitous attempts to end homelessness. Which, despite the best efforts of some politicians and the whole great society concept, haven't actually worked very well.

A surprisingly huge portion of local government expenditures end up addressing the homeless population who come into frequent contact with police, hospitals, and other service agencies. They rack up an average of 100 thousand dollars in costs, per person, annually.

But so few places have actually gone to the trouble of trying out just giving homeless people homes. Well, today's Wi-Five goes out to the mayor and

local government of Milwaukee, Wisconsin, because that's what they're doing.

About two years ago in the smallish city of Racine, Wisconsin, an organization called Veterans Outreach of Wisconsin opened a village of 15 tiny houses, each about 250 square feet, set aside for homeless veterans. That might not be a lot if you're a middle class, suburban white person. But to a homeless person, it could mean the difference between stability and chaos, or even life and death.

So recently, Milwaukee mayor, Tom Barrett, visited the tiny home village and quickly got the ball rolling to make a similar one with over three times as many tiny homes in Milwaukee.

Now, look, are a collective 63 tiny homes gonna fix the homelessness crisis? No. But we're at a point in American history where so many cities and states are laboratories of democracy, and the internet lets us know about them much better than, y'know, before.

And it's stuff from minimum wages, to healthcare, to discrimination laws, drug laws, and beyond. Cities and states are paving the way for the rest of the country to follow suit, if their ideas prove to be good and helpful. At least, good and helpful enough to overcome, y'know, Republican opposition to everything good. But I digress.

So, for this small but significant step in Milwaukee, to mayor Tom Barrett and the local government of Milwaukee, Wi-Five.

[theme music plays]

Brent: Well, that's gonna do it for us. Another, uh, fabulous episode of Trends Like These. And uh, let's see... first off, it would be great if you would go and check out all the other amazing Maximum Fun podcasts. You can do that at MaximumFun.org. There are so many great ones.

Um... and what else? Uh, oh. I haven't said this in a while. Did you know, the Trends Like These theme song, which I composed, is available as a ringtone?

You can get it for your iPhone on the iTunes store, or rather, the iPhone... iTunes app. There you go. Or, you can buy it for your Android device at BrentalFloss.bandcamp.com.

Courtney, where can people find you? What are your deals? What are you plugging?

Courtney: You can find my whole entire words at SYFYFangrrls.com. Uh, you can find my uh, spoken words at Strong Female Characters. It is the podcast for SYFY Fangrrls. It is me, my boss, Cher Martinetti, and then my friend and co-editor, Preeti Chhibber. And we talk about like, all the things. We just have a very... Cher and I just had a very slap-happy nonsense episode that was mostly about like, grasshoppers, and Neverending Story. I don't know what the fuck we talked about. Y'all, it was weird.

Um, but like, listen to that. It's a really funny podcast, and yay, ladies! It's a podcast—guys, I don't want to like, blow your mind. But a lot of podcasts, no tea, no shade to my very own podcast, tend to be, if there is a lady on it, two dudes and a lady. This podcast—

Brent: I've never heard of that. Shit, you say.

Courtney: This podcast is all ladies. [laughing] So, like... yay, this podcast? I love it so much? So like, go listen to that. In addition to this, keep listening to this. I love this podcast the most.

Brent: Now, if you are going on a trip, or if you have a long commute, and you want yet another podcast to listen to, I have recently launched a second podcast called Question Box. Unlike two dudes and a girl, or a woman, or a whatever you happen to be, uh, it's me and my friend Kate Sloane who was on the show two weeks ago, and uh, we always have a guest. And Travis is on an episode soon. Courtney will be on one in the future.

Courtney: I keep being told. I'll believe it when I see it!

Brent: There are reasons! There are reasons. But, um... it is a game show podcast of shockingly personal questions—

Courtney: It's because I'm too powerful. I'm too open. I'm too honest.

Brent: Yeah, no, we're bracing for your power. We have to level up to you, okay?

Courtney: I get it. I get it.

Brent: Also, because of the rules of the show, you're definitely gonna beat me. And so like, I'm just bracing for that.

But uh, you can find that on Twitter @QuestionBoxShow, or QuestionBoxShow.com. We're on most of the platforms you love for podcasts. And real quick, if you are a listener near Montreal, Canada, or you can get there, my first ever Brental Floss concert in Montreal is happening the evening of November 30th. You can get more info and tickets at BrentalFloss.com/Live-Appearances.

Uh, I think that's gonna do it for us. Courtney, am I forgetting anything?

Courtney: Yes, you're forgetting... [trumpet sounds] That's my Dark Horse. I did it. I did the Dark Horse.

Brent: I am so proud of you, and I will see you next week.

Courtney: Bye!!!

[theme music plays]

Courtney: Unless this is the end stinger, in which case, like... [to the tune of the Nickelodeon jingle] Bitch bitch bitch bitch, bitch bitch bitch bitch! Bitch bitch, bitch bitch bitch!

MaximumFun.org.

Comedy and culture.

Artist owned.

Audience supported.