

**Trends Like These 238: Ellen and George W Bush, Impeachment Update, Is Elizabeth Warren a Cougar?, Scorsese Trashes MCU, Bernie's Heart Attack, New Matt Lauer Allegations, Trump's Syria Disaster, FTC Sues Match.com, Poker Cheating Scandal**

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[theme music plays]

**Travis:** This week: Scorsese's opinion, heart attack spinnin', and Ellen and W friendin'.

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

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

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

**Courtney:** And I'm a human vocal fry.

**Brent:** With Trends Like These.

[theme music plays]

**Travis:** Hello, Courtney and Brent!

**Brent:** Hello, Courtney and Travis!

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

**Travis:** Hi everybody.

**Courtney:** I sound awesome.

**Travis:** Hi, all of Courtney's white blood cells, who are battling, I don't know, bacteria and stuff.

**Courtney:** [laughing] They're battling thousands of cosplayer germs.

**Brent:** You got that good NPR podcast vocal fry going, though.

**Courtney:** Yeahhh.

**Brent:** You're definitely ready for This American Life.

**Courtney:** Totally. I'm ready for all of the—all of the reviews.

**Travis:** Yes. I'm sorry that Osmosis Jones 2 is taking place inside of your bloodstream.

**Brent:** [laughs]

**Travis:** Yes, Courtney and I have just returned from New York Comic Con. Not *just* now. We returned. We're back. Uh, don't call it a comeback. We've always been here. And this is Trends Like These, and today, it is October 9<sup>th</sup>, 2019, about five PM eastern time, and I am having a watermelon and kiwi La Croix.

**Brent:** Ooh!

**Travis:** I'm very excited about it. [sound of a La Croix can opening] There we go.

**Courtney:** Nice. Good sound. I am having a hot tea because of voice reasons. It is a loose tea called Sencha Claus, and it is from TeaGschwender in Chicago. It's my favorite tea shop in the whole wide world.

**Brent:** It is Christmas themed? Why is it Sencha Claus?

**Courtney:** All of my—all—I got out all of my winter teas now that it's getting cold out.

**Brent:** Ahh.

**Courtney:** I have so many winter teas.

**Travis:** There's something about the term 'loose tea' that always sounds a little judgmental to me.

**Brent:** Yeah. It's the hussy of tea.

**Courtney:** I recently asked, uh, my boyfriend if he was interested in having any of my various loose teas, and he did think for an extended period I was offering loose teeth.

**Brent:** [laughs]

**Travis:** Huh.

**Brent:** Just in case.

**Travis:** Or maybe big t-shirts.

**Brent:** You want to get in on this mouthful of loose teeth.

**Travis:** I've got a bunch of big dog t-shirts you could wear.

**Courtney:** I must've forgotten that one proclivity when I was on Question Box. Yeah, I have a loose teeth fetish. Just love to get really in there with those loose teeth.

**Brent:** Y'know what, I'm not here to judge your dental sexuality. Uh, however, I am drinking a peach hyphen pear La Croix, the can't decide what flavor it is. In fact, what's the story behind that? Like, it must've been like... it's kind of like a peach, kind of like a pear. Y'know what, it's been a really long week. Fuck it. Peach-pear. Stamp.

**Travis:** Well, I would say I think probably it has something to do with like, peach and pear as separate entities do not have the most stand out, like, boom flavors.

**Brent:** I think peach is very specific. It's pear that's the vague one.

**Travis:** Oh, I'm not saying not specific. I'm saying like, won't jump off the page. Take a drink of your—like, that's peach, yeah. Right? But like, I think them together is a dynamic combo.

**Brent:** I agree with the second half of that, but peach Perrier is very peachy.

**Courtney:** It's like they already have apricot, so they were like, "We can't have peach *and* apricot. We've gotta—we gotta get in on this."

**Brent:** That's true.

**Travis:** I don't want to have this argument again with you, Brent.

**Brent:** [laughs] Okay, then we won't. I'll be a peach.

[theme music plays]

**Travis:** So I just got back from the big city. Back from New York, and you'll never believe everything they got there. They got buildings about as high as they could go. It's amazing. And... they've gone waaay beyond the headlines!

**Courtney:** Do you remain behind them, now that you're back in Cincinnati?

**Travis:** Yeah, no. Well, now that I'm back, I'm back in the headlines, unfortunately. But while I was there? Here's the thing not a lot of people will tell you – New York City gets all the news two days before everyone else.

**Courtney:** That's true.

**Brent:** Oh man, they're on that high tier Patreon level of the news.

**Travis:** Yeah.

**Courtney:** Ironically, we're doing the news two days before anyone's going to hear this. There's gonna be two more days' worth of news.

**Brent:** That's true. We usually record Thursdays. This is a Wednesday, so... when Trump gets impeached in between now and Friday, don't blame us. That's just what we had to do this week.

**Courtney:** La Croix's gonna really wish they had peach. Peach La Croix for that.

**Travis:** Indeed. In a recent interview with Empire, Oscar-winning film legend, Martin Scorsese was asked what he thought of the Marvel cinematic universe. His response was not great. Scorsese had this to say about the world's favorite superhero movies. "I don't see them. I tried, y'know? But that's not cinema. Honestly, the closest I can think of them, as well made as they are, with actors doing the best they can under the circumstances, is theme parks. It isn't the cinema of human beings trying to convey emotional, psychological experiences to another human being."

Which... listen, I'm gonna talk more about the copy, but like, if you haven't seen them, you cannot say that. Because Spider-Man: Homecoming, Black Panther, and Captain America are like, three of the most emotional movies I've ever—like, Captain Marvel is one of the most like, emotional and like, conveying a story movies I've ever seen. So you can't be like, "I haven't seen them," and you're only thinking of like, I don't know, the first Hulk. Like, my dude... like, you have no idea what you're talking about.

And also, it's so, uh, what's the word? Patronizing to say 'actors doing the best they can under the circumstance.' [sighs] Okay. So, as predicted, did not go well with anybody. The comments sparked outrage on Twitter with MCU fans calling him a "one note, one genre filmmaker," because they cite that nearly all of his movies involve the mob. Others more hilariously poked

fun at him as an artist by citing his animated fish version of himself he played in Shark Tale. [laughing] Which I really enjoyed.

But, everyone wasn't yelling self-deprecating humor and Shark Tale memes. It got the attention of some industry people who were disheartened to hear Scorsese's opinion on what are arguably the most popular movies in the world. Some of the greater of the MCU hopped in on the conversation to defend their movies.

James Gunn, the director of both Guardians of the Galaxy movies, tweeted, "Martin Scorsese is one of my five favorite living filmmakers. I was outraged when people picketed The Last Temptation of Christ without having seen the movie. I'm saddened that he is now judging my films in the same way. That said, I will always love Scorsese, be grateful for his contribution to cinema, and can't wait to see The Irishman."

It seems as though the general consensus is that creators and artists involved in the MCU disagree, but are taking the high road. When Nick Fury, played by certified badass actor Samuel L. Jackson was asked about the comments at the opening of Tyler Perry's new Atlanta studio, he brushed it off. "That's like saying Bugs Bunny ain't funny. Everybody's got an opinion, so it's okay. It's not going to stop anyone from making movies."

**Brent:** That's true. I don't know, I'm—I think I'm less mad at him than the general tone of the backlash. Like, it was kind of a boneheaded thing to say. It was kind of an old man, old snobby thinks the way he makes movies is the only way to make them kind of thing to say. But I think really, what he's showing is, it's more about what he's able to experience when watching a movie. And I feel like we've all got that friend who went to film school that just can't enjoy popcorn shit.

Like, I went to grad school for writing musical theater, and now, I cannot enjoy most popular musicals. [laughs] Um, and I'm not saying he's right. But it's just like, this is about what he can perceive.

**Courtney:** Well, he's almost—I mean, he's almost 80. Like, there was like, for most of his life, genre films were not taken seriously at all. They were

like, considered popcorn fluff. I'm not saying that's necessarily deserved, but that was what it was considered. And it took, honestly, the MCU and a lot of other films for it to actually start being appreciated for what it is.

**Brent:** Yes.

**Courtney:** But I'm pretty sure he's just like... he's just old.

**Travis:** Well, and here's the thing – the best example here is, because this is something that we're seeing more and more, and I will reference an experience like this that happened to me, which was Mel Brooks saying like, PC culture has killed comedy, right? Where it's like, okay, cool. Listen, I respect the things that you have made. I think you are a genius. I think that perhaps, uh, your ability to comment on the current, like, social and cinematic world is maybe, uh, not... maybe that has expired. Y'know?

Maybe it's just that Scorsese's opinion of superhero movies is still from like, 1980. Right? At which point, like, yeah, okay, cool my dude. I get that. What he should've said is like, "I think they're doing great. Cool. Good job."

**Brent:** He was a little too black and white I think in his own explanation. Like, the thing is, I think they are cinema, and I think they are absolutely theme parks.

**Travis:** Yeah.

**Brent:** I think Disney always wants you to write to the toy. They're going to sell the toy. They're going to change the way the characters look so there's a new toy. It is a theme park, and also, I thought Avengers: Endgame was like—I cried multiple times. I couldn't believe it.

**Travis:** Right.

**Brent:** So like, it can be both.

**Travis:** That's the thing is like, they're not mutually exclusive. If you look at like, Indiana Jones, Indiana Jones is a theme park and amazing cinema. Right?

**Courtney:** Star Wars is literally a theme park.

**Travis:** Star Wars. Yes. If you look at Star Wars, if you look at, uh... y'know, there's just countless examples of like, this is a fun movie that all—like, Independence Day, right? I think it's a great movie that is a—it's a, y'know, destruction movie. Right? You can't say—Twister, right, is a great example of—anyways.

I think that, at this point, you can't separate the two. And I think what that comes down to is, there was a time where I... so I've been listening to a lot of this podcast called Blank Check, which I really love. But what they talk about is a lot—even as recently as like, the '90s, like, people were not getting big budgets to make movies like the Marvel movies, right?

We weren't getting big budget Superman movies, because people would say like, "Well, no one's going to see those. We're going to put big budget money towards like, mob movies. We're gonna put big budget money towards war movies. We're gonna put big budget money towards like—"

**Brent:** And remakes of every fucking sitcom. That was just so much of '90s cinema.

**Travis:** Right. Or—or like, they would make, y'know, The Invisible Man with a ton of money, right? So like, they were—they did not see, like, sci-fi, fantasy, comic book, nerd stuff as being worth the money. And this is only been in the last like, 20 years that everyone's like, throwing money at like, that kind of stuff and saying, "People will come see it."

So, I think what we've seen is, with the budgets they deserve, these movies are able to be beautifully shot, beautifully costumed, amazing special effects, get the actors they deserved, all of those things. So I think in just the last two decades, we have seen these movies become cinema because they are given the attention and respect and time and budgets they deserve.



So I'm not surprised that Martin Scorsese doesn't see it that way, because he hasn't seen a superhero movie in the last 20 years.

**Brent:** Yeah. This is off topic, but I wonder how much of that is the fact that I think filmmakers these days are finally, um, respecting the source material, not as if it's on the back of a cereal box, but instead as if it matters to people. Like, I remember growing up, being disappointed over and over again at movies based on things I liked completely having no love or respect for the source material.

Y'know, uh, Mario Bros. Inspector Gadget. All these movies that like, could've just acknowledged what the source material—Street Fighter. Mortal Kombat was the good one, because it just put the dumb stuff from the game on the screen and made it pretty, and I feel like the Marvel Cinematic Universe, better than anything we've ever seen before, has a great way of... it takes liberties, of course. It simplifies things, it adapts them to the screen. But unlike a lot of stuff we saw in the '90s and before, you feel the love for these characters and these stories fundamentally.

**Travis:** Well, and I would also, just to put a bow on it... I would also say this reeks of sour grapes.

**Brent:** [laughs] Yeah.

**Travis:** These superhero movies are getting more acclaim and making more money than his movies are, and he's like, "Well, they're schlock! Look at them! Oh, they're just superheroes, and they're just getting attention, and this isn't worth it!"

Right? And he hasn't seen them, right? This is what somebody says when they don't know the thing, they're just jealous and angry that the thing is getting more attention than theirs of like, "Well, of course people like it! It's dumb! My stuff's smart and it's too challenging for people!" Right? Like, that's what people do.

**Brent:** Yeah.

**Courtney:** Well, the MCU's CGI is way better than whatever he used on the de-aging in *The Irishman*. That's just my take there.

**Brent:** Ohh.

**Travis:** Fair.

**Brent:** Alright.

**Courtney:** Those colored fucking contacts on Robert De Niro, I can't even talk about it. [sighs]

**Brent:** [laughs] You don't like colored contacts on actors.

**Courtney:** I do not like it! It's terrible. It looks bad. I hate it. That's my— that's my hot take.

Um, so recently, this weekend I believe, an image circulated on Twitter featuring Ellen DeGeneres sitting with George W. Bush at a Dallas Cowboys game. And y'know, there was some... some minor Twitter reaction. Like, it wasn't that big a deal, if I recall. Like, people were bummed. But it wasn't that big a deal.

**Travis:** Yeah. It was like a lot of sighing.

**Brent:** Yeah.

**Courtney:** Yeah. But... utilizing the Streisand effect, Ellen called attention to it herself by talking about it on her show, making it a way bigger story than it was, and devoted a whole segment to this photo of her and George W. Bush. She said, "People were upset. They thought, "Why is a gay Hollywood liberal sitting next to a conservative Republican president?" Didn't they even notice I was holding a brand new iPhone 11? But a lot of people were mad, and they did what people do when they're mad – they tweet."

She went on to say, "I'm friends with George Bush. In fact, I'm friends with a lot of people who don't share the same beliefs that I have. We're all different, and I think we've forgotten that that's okay that we're all different. Just because I don't agree with someone on everything, doesn't mean I'm not going to be friends with them. When I say be kind to one another, I don't only mean the people that think the same way that you do. I mean, be kind to everyone."

Now, plenty of celebrities, seemingly a lot of white, cis, straight ones, were deeply touched by the sentiment, from Reese Witherspoon to Kristen Bell and Dax Shepard to Tulsi Gabbard, who tweeted, "The Ellen Show's message of being kind to all is so needed right now. Enough with the divisiveness. We can't let politics tear us apart. There are things we will disagree on strongly, and things we agree on. Let's treat each other with respect, aloha, and work together for the people."

Now, being kind to everyone is a lovely sentiment. I genuinely do try to be kind to everyone no matter what. The issue here is dismissing that this 'divisiveness' is literally the divide between thinking LGBTQ people should have the right to get married and be in the military, and those who don't. George W. Bush referred to the marriage between a man and a woman as the most fundamental institution of civilization. Like, hey, Ellen, he described marriage between the same gender, literally your marriage, as 'deeply troubling.' He described your marriage as something that could "have serious consequences throughout the country."

This divisiveness is the divide between, "I am against the preventable deaths of thousands and the murder of thousands of innocent civilians in American troops," and the man who did those things, sending us into a war under false pretenses, supporting torture of detainees at Guantanamo and other sites, and of course, his complete lack of action or leadership during Hurricane Katrina, where more than 1,800 people died.

It's estimated that the death toll related to the wars in Iraq, Afghanistan, and Pakistan are about 500 thousand. And about 250 thousand of those are civilians. So platitudes like 'be kind' mean nothing in the face of this idea that other human lives are less important, or even worthless.

In a quote often misattributed to James Baldwin, as I almost did while writing this copy, writer Robert Jones Jr. said, "We can disagree and still love each other, until your disagreement is rooted in my oppression and denial of my humanity and right to exist."

**Travis:** Yeahhh. [sighs]

**Brent:** So...

**Travis:** Here's—

**Brent:** Go ahead, Travis.

**Travis:** I—I watched her bit about her segment talking about it. And I just... the thing that bothered me most about it, 'cause I also am someone who tries to be kind, and y'know, like... there's a difference between being kind and being, like, chill with every—and like, I feel like there was a better way she could have put it of saying, y'know, you should be kind. That doesn't mean that I like him or like his—but instead, like, she seemed to go out of her way to like, be complimentary of him, and other people she disagrees with, and other people that agree with him on things.

Like, it seemed so political, the thing that she was saying, and refusing to take a stand. I think that's what it comes down to, right? Is that, "be kind to people" has so often become like, the political thing to say instead of taking a standpoint on something. And saying like, "No, that person's fucking wrong." Right?

**Courtney:** Well, and it seems to only be like, weaponized against marginalized people. Where like, it's not, hey, you should be kind to people, George W. Bush, and not like, y'know, kill a bunch of civilians and deny people the right to get married and stuff like that. It's, "Hey, you whose rights are being denied, you should just be nice and respect people's difference of opinion." And that's not fair. That's bullshit.

**Travis:** Especially since, earlier in the year, she also had what I would call an unforced error by having Kevin Hart... was that this year? Whatever.

**Courtney:** That—oh, god.

**Travis:** Having Kevin Hart on to like, apologize to her. Like, a person who was not really at the heart of the matter, right? And then, she forgave him on behalf of every—like, it seems like... I don't know, that she is going out of her way to not take a stance on things. Which, I don't know is... I know it's not right, but I also think it's a terrible move for her. [laughs] Like, I don't know. Like, she just seems to keep having these unforced errors, as I said.

**Brent:** Yeah, I think that like... so, I watched a video of this this morning, and gave it a thought. Or gave it some thought, I should say. And I think ultimately, her choice of what she did in response was about the demographics of her show, which includes plenty of conservatives. I actually feel like I know—like, certain friends of my mom think that they're comparatively woke and pro-gay, simply because they like Ellen.

But the thing is, like, I don't know what's really in her head, and I want to. Y'know, when you get seated next to somebody on a plane, and you're kind of stuck with them, you don't want to make stuff weird, but you can definitely tell they're, y'know, not the kind of person you would normally associate with. And like, maybe she just didn't want to ruin the game by making things tense. And if she had come out and said that—

**Travis:** I thought that's what she was gonna say.

**Brent:** Right. And if she had said that, it would've been like, I could understand that. But the thing is, then her conservative viewers would be like, "Well, what's wrong with George W. Bush?" Whose image is being rehabilitated by the day, including by supposedly fair and balanced or even liberal outlets. Something about the mainstream media, they love to rehabilitate disgraced presidents. [laughs]

But I think it ultimately comes down to like, the George Carlin thing of like, there's a big club of really, really high up people, the rich and powerful, and you ain't in it. And it's just this thing that magically happens. And Ellen's very funny, and very talented, and really historically important, but... I think

when you get to a certain point of richness and famousness, you're all kind of in a club, and you just magically become a little bit more centrist, and oh, how easy it is to say 'be kind' instead of sticking up for values. It's just interesting.

**Courtney:** So this is a short one, but a rough one. So, content warning for discussions of rape and assault. Um... Matt Lauer still sucks. That's pretty much that. Ronan Farrow's new book, *Catch and Kill*, includes an interview with Brooke Nevils, the NBC employee whose complaint about Matt Lauer led to his firing. NBC said at the time that Lauer was fired due to "inappropriate sexual behavior in the workplace."

That behavior, which feels like a very weird word for this, was rape. Nevils told Farrow that despite being too drunk to consent and repeatedly saying she did not want to have anal sex, Lauer forced himself on her. Her whole description is truly upsetting, and I won't include it here, but you can find it on Variety's website. Farrow's book also includes seven other allegations, complete with nondisclosure agreements, which means NBC probably knew about this pattern of criminal, abusive behavior before Nevils' HR complaint.

Farrow also alleges that Harvey Weinstein leveraged Lauer's history against NBC to get them to pull the Weinstein piece that Farrow was originally going to run for NBC news, and they did pull it, so he took it to the *New Yorker*, and the rest is history.

Lauer, of course, denies the allegations, and says his relationship with Nevils was consensual, which Nevils actually said it later was in as much as consent is possible for a rape victim with this kind of power dynamic. Like a lot of women, she went back to her abuser out of fear for what he could do to her in her career. She told Farrow, "This is what I blame myself most for. It was completely transactional. It was not a relationship."

**Brent:** Oi.

[theme music plays]

**Travis:** Listen, folks. Hiring the right person takes time. Time that you don't have, I don't have, they don't have. Look to your right. Look to your left. Look up, look down, look eight more places. None of us have time. But you shouldn't let a time crunch get in the way of finding the right candidate for your business.

That's why LinkedIn is the best place to post your job. LinkedIn Jobs screens candidates with the hard and soft skills you're looking for, so you can hire the right person fast. Things like collaboration, creativity, and adaptability. LinkedIn looks beyond the work skills and connects you with candidates who match your business perfectly. It's no wonder great candidates are hired every eight seconds on LinkedIn.

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[theme music plays]

**Brent:** This next segment is one we have done before. We almost definitely will again. Y'know, politics and political news wasn't a huge part of trending news, uh, before Donald Trump started running in 2015. It was there, but somehow in the time since, it's become this huge, unavoidable part of trending news. So, just about every week, we round up the major viral politics stories into a segment we call... hey, uh, what do we call it, folks? Cohosts?

**Travis:** I believe we call it poolitics roundup!

**Brent:** Get along, little Democrats! I think you said that back in 2015.

**Travis:** Yeah, something like that.

**Brent:** Yeah. Back when the show was just a baby. Anyway, let's get into it. Once again, there are a big ol' bunch of headlines that have come out of

Trump land this week, so it's time for a rapid fire, except for the Syria one, Trumpdate!

Okay, first. Text messages. Last week, I reported there was a text message that incriminated Trump. It was sent by diplomat, Bill Taylor to ambassador, Gordon Sondland, who I think may have... I may have mistitled last week. Sondland is the US ambassador to the EU, before which he was a hotel and banking mogul who happened to be a major donor to Trump's 2016 campaign.

Well, now we know even more of the ongoing conversation, in which Taylor, not a Trump crony, voiced more concerns about the Trump Ukraine situation, and Sondland, definitely a Trump crony, urged Taylor three times not to text about it, but to discuss it via phone, including, "Call me," and, "If you still have concerns, I recommend you give Lisa Kenna or Mike Pompeo a call to discuss them directly." I.e., hey, you fool, stop putting this in text form and just use the phone, 'cause we're talking about stuff that will incriminate Daddy Trump.

Okay, moving onto a Trump foreign policy blunder, even in the midst of the whole impeachment thing. For a while now, Trump has talked about pulling American troops from Syria. Now, personally, I agree with Trump's prior statements that we don't need to be in endless wars and acting like a police force for the world. One of the few things I have in common with the guy.

However, this was not a smart way to do that. The Syrian civil war is a huge fuckin' mess. I'm gonna try to explain it quickly, just to contextualize this. But basically, the Kurds have been our most effective ally in fighting ISIS. They're an indigenous people, united by race, culture, and language. In March of this year, the Kurds, as well as their larger coalition of fighters, announced the total elimination of the ISIS caliphate. Though, they warned, the Islamic state sleeper cells are still a threat.

Meanwhile, Kurds make up around 20% of the population of Turkey. Turkey, which is led by president Erdoğan. He's basically a dictator. The Kurds have been pushed around by Turkey for a long time, as have indigenous peoples in all different parts of the world.



And the point is, the Kurds are our buddies for helping us fight against ISIS, and Turkey has wanted to crush Kurdish fighters, but hasn't because of our presence in that area. Our military presence. So Trump, ostensibly in an attempt to fulfill his campaign promise of reducing military commitments abroad, decided to pull US troops from the Kurdish region of Syria, and Turkey started bombing the Kurds very soon thereafter.

But on top of that boneheaded move, Trump then turned his sights back on Turkey! In the following tweet thread, "As I have stated strongly before, and just to reiterate, if Turkey does anything that I, in my great and unmatched wisdom, consider to be off limits, I will totally destroy and obliterate the economy of Turkey. I've done before. They must, with Europe and others, watch over the captured ISIS fighters and families. The US has done far more than anyone could've ever expected, including the capture of 100% of the ISIS caliphate. It is time now for others in the region, some of great wealth, to protect their own territory. The USA is great!"

**Travis:** When has Donald Trump ever destroyed a country's economy? Has that happened?

**Brent:** Except for ours, yeah. No, it's such a silly... I think that in his mind, stuff like the tariffs that he tried to like, perpetrate on China so that they would like, uh, learn their lesson about currency manipulation and stuff like that. Like, I don't know. It's a really dumb thing to say. Um...

**Courtney:** I will say, y'know that thing where you um, you think, "Oh, there's probably no way he said, like, 'great wisdom.' He didn't say that." And then you check it, and it's like, "He did say that. I don't know why I'm surprised. I don't know why I thought maybe this wasn't real. It is real."

**Brent:** He does find a way to top himself, though. I'll say that.

**Courtney:** Yeah, it's like... [sighs] Yeah.

**Brent:** "In my great and unmatched wisdom." And he also throws in the adjective or adverb 'strong' or 'strongly.' Just, he's just... I don't know. He's such a fuckin'... he's such—he's so full of shit. And a piece of it.

So, there are a lot of things there. Um, and y'know, the big story here isn't the fact that he used the phrase, "in my great and unmatched wisdom," which, if Obama had said it, would've made the Fox News building sprout wings and become a floating city for minimum six months.

The big story is that he needlessly destabilized the region. He may end up responsible for freeing thousands of ISIS fighters in Kurdish custody, and he also threatened the country for whom he did the biggest favor in all this! Um, and he got a shit ton of backlash from all sides, more than we've seen in bipartisan terms.

Brian Kilmeade, the cohost of daily Trump pep rally Fox and Friends said, "What kind of message is that to the next ally that wants to side with us?" As well as, "A disastrous series of events. I hope the president will rethink this." Um, Trump lapdog, Lindsay Graham, tweeted, "Pray for our Kurdish allies who have been shamelessly abandoned by the Trump administration. This move ensures the reemergence of ISIS."

And, Republican senate majority leader, Mitch McConnell, released a statement that said, "A precipitous withdrawal of US forces from Syria would only benefit Russia, Iran, and the Assad regime." As well as, "I urge the president to exercise American leadership to keep together our multi-national coalition to defeat ISIS."

It's a big deal when a Trump decision gets blowback from Fox and Friends, Lindsay Graham, and Mitch McConnell. Clearly, some of the backlash is just from people who want us to be involved in as many wars as possible with troops in as many places as possible. But like I said before, even though i agree, we should reduce our military obligations around the world, this was a really boneheaded and abrupt way to do that.

Okay, now back to impeachment. There is now a second whistleblower who is in the process of coming forward with allegations related to Ukraine. As far

as we could tell, this is an intelligence official with firsthand knowledge of the Trump Ukraine situation. We'll keep you posted on that as we find out more.

And the House impeachment inquiry has issued a bunch of subpoenas to folks, including vice president Pence, defense secretary, Mark Esper, chief of staff, Mick Mulvaney, secretary of state, Mike Pompeo, secretary of spooky chocolate cereals, Count Rudy Giuliani, and the EU ambassador, Gordon Sondland, who is the guy that said, "Call me instead of texting," in the early text messages.

By the way, Sondland was scheduled to give a voluntary deposition to various house committees on Tuesday, but he didn't show up because the state department, headed by Trump crony, Mike Pompeo, blocked him from doing so. In response, Democrats in the House issued a subpoena and accused Pompeo of obstruction of justice. It's gettin'... it's gettin' real bonkers. Like, it's been bonkers, but it's really... this whole checks and balances situation is getting, uh, bloody.

Also on Tuesday, the White House told Nancy Pelosi, uh, via White House counsel Pat Cipollone... I think that's how it's pronounced. Sorry. Basically, the White House told Pelosi that they wouldn't cooperate with the impeachment inquiry, in part because, "You have designed and implemented your inquiry in a manner that violates fundamental fairness and constitutionally mandated due process."

So basically, the White House is saying, "We don't like the way you're conducting your inquiry, so we're not gonna play along." Uh, and in many ways, it's becoming clear that Trump and his swamp of appointees and media cronies... they're really scared. Like, in a way we haven't seen before.

So, would Trump resign if he were up against a wall? This is a thing that's starting to be discussed, especially on your MSNBCs and your CNNs. In short, my current hypothesis about resignation is that Trump wouldn't resign simply because of pressure from other Republicans. If he did resign, which again, I think is somewhat unlikely, it would be to avoid being punished for illegal activity. And I can even imagine him securing a Nixon-style pardon before leaving office.

But that's all veery speculative, and we're not there yet, but we will keep you posted.

**Travis:** Uh, another political story here. Senator Bernie Sanders announced Tuesday that he is prepared to scale back his campaigning after being hospitalized for days due to suffering a heart attack on the campaign trail. Last week, Sanders was in Nevada when he experienced what his campaign described as 'chest discomfort.' Sanders had two stents inserted after the doctors found an arterial blockage, and he remained hospitalized over the next few days.

On Friday, the campaign confirmed that he had suffered a heart attack, and it's thought that the events were downplayed because Bernie's youth, vitality, and spirit is such an important part of his brand. This has caused people to ask questions about whether or not Bernie can handle the stress of the presidency.

Blumberg News claims that doctors typically know if a patient is suffering from a heart attack within minutes of the patient arriving into their care, so things look suspicious when a campaign aid declined comment on the senator's health on October 2<sup>nd</sup>, and opponents question if some of the severity of this medical emergency has been left undisclosed.

There were even more questions raised when the campaign cancelled the multi-million dollar ad buy in Iowa, even though the ad was later repurchased. Sanders skipped a Democratic forum October 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup>, sponsored by the Service Employees International Union, which is one of the largest labor groups in the country, and a major force in the Nevada caucuses.

That allowed his closest progressive rival, Elizabeth Warren, to pitch her labor plan without him doing the same. He returned to Vermont this weekend, and is not expected back on the campaign trail before next week's Democratic primary debate in Ohio, which will give him two weeks of rest.

Now, I will also say, the thing about him not disclosing it... when I saw the news that he was getting stents put in, right? And they had not used the words 'heart attack,' my first thought was, if this is serious, this is— especially for people who don't know, like, that there is a scale, that there is a, y'know, variety of severities of something like this, this is the kind of thing that could completely derail a campaign if people start using the words 'heart attack.' Right? Which is what we have seen.

So I don't know necessarily that I would call that like a failure to disclose, so much as they were probably waiting until like, they knew everything about it to be able to address it and actually discuss it and give details. Instead of just saying, "The senator has had a heart attack," and then letting that sit without any clarification for like, two or three days.

**Brent:** Ehh, I think it would... I think it's pretty par for the course when you look at various presidential candidates. Like, you're right, it is a failure to disclose. But like, when presidential candidates get injured, or get, y'know, various kinds of sick, usually it's the media that outs them. Even though, I will say, um, y'know, Hillary got flak for like, sometimes imaginary illnesses.

**Courtney:** She had a cough.

**Brent:** Yeah, exactly. Whereas Bernie—

**Courtney:** She had a cough, and they were real mad about it and thought she was gonna die and that she needed to drop out of the race.

**Brent:** Yeah, so that is an example of the way in which Hillary and Bernie have been treated differently. I was surprised to see all of these enemies of him, uh, or people that don't normally stick up for him going, "Oh, we wish Bernie Sanders a speedy recovery," and me sitting here going, "Well, that's interesting." So yeah, I will acknowledge that.

But again, like, I think... I don't know.

**Courtney:** Brent, you—Brent, you saying that and not me was like, more healing than my cup of tea here.

**Travis:** I do think your voice just raised like an entire octave from where it was at the beginning of the show.

**Courtney:** Honestly, like, I'm so... I'm happy. Thank you, Brent.

**Brent:** You're welcome. Anyway, so, back to my president, Bernie Sanders.

**Travis:** [laughs] So, let me ask you this real quick, both of you. What kind of long term detriment do you think that this is going to have on his campaign, that this happened?

**Courtney:** I honestly don't think any.

**Travis:** Yeah?

**Courtney:** I don't think any.

**Brent:** I mean, that's kind of I feel. I feel like, the thing is that there are people who will take this into consideration when it inevitably becomes... I mean, I think it's gonna become, uh, y'know, barring more heart events, it's going to become Bernie versus Elizabeth. I really feel that way. And it's gonna come—that will have lots of factors. But the difference is, I think Bernie has more diehards that are going to be something akin to Bernie or bust than Warren will.

At the same time, we're gonna see just how many people will vote for anything, including a can of soup, to beat Trump. We don't really know that yet. But to Courtney's point, I really think that... I mean, y'know, history of the presidency, heart disease is very common with various presidents. It's ill-timed, but I guess I just feel like people that already like Bernie already know he's old.

**Travis:** Yeah.

**Courtney:** That is why it's funny that they were like, "His youth and vitality." It's like, he's almost 80.

**Brent:** Okay, but watch him play basketball sometime. I will just tell you, watch that clip where he runs through the airport. He is a spry motherfucker. Apparently one with a heart condition, but...

**Travis:** Yes.

**Courtney:** Well, that's what 80 year olds do. They have heart attacks. It's...

**Brent:** Yeah, no, you're right. You're right. He's old.

**Travis:** And um, but so, to finish up, he uh... so, Bernie acknowledged that his health issues might affect the way his voters judge his candidacy. "I must confess, I was dumb," he told reporters outside his home in Burlington, Vermont. "During this campaign, I've been doing, in some cases, three or four rallies a day, running all over the state. Iowa, New Hampshire, wherever. And yet, in the last month or two, was just more fatigued than I've usually been. I should've listened to the symptoms. So if there is any message I hope we can get out there, it's that I want people to pay attention to their symptoms, and you know when you are hurting, when you are fatigued, when you have a pain in your chest, listen to it."

He also intends to release his full medical records to the public. Basically, his campaign has been talking about like, switching from sprinting to marathon mode, and like, let's not do as much as we possibly can squeeze into a day, and instead, like, y'know... not have something like this happen again.

**Brent:** Alright. Well, are y'all ready to do the tidbits segment?

**Travis:** I am. I am, Brent.

**Brent:** I just thought I'd say like, the straightforward version, 'cause we so often say bit the tids, tid the bits... and it just makes me wonder what first time listeners think we're saying.

**Courtney:** Y'all ready to tid? [sings the Space Jam theme] Da da da da da da, da da da da, da da da, da da da da da da da da.

**Travis:** [sings along]

**Courtney:** Yeah. Yeah.

**Brent:** [laughs] That was good. Okay. Uh, so, first tid. So, those of you who engage in online dating – I am one of you – may find this interesting. Now, Travis and Courtney, if I asked you which online dating service the federal trade commission would be most likely to sue, and you didn't know what I was about to talk about, what—

**Travis:** AshleyMadison.com.

**Brent:** Hmm.

**Courtney:** Farmers Only.

**Travis:** Farmers Only! [laughs]

**Brent:** [laughs]

**Travis:** I would like to know why, Courtney!

**Courtney:** [laughing] I don't know. They'll never be lonely.

**Brent:** Well, these problems do crop up.

**Travis:** Ahh!

**Brent:** With Farmers Only.

**Travis:** I did like that. That was good.

**Brent:** Thanks. Great. Um, so, okay. The correct answer is Match Group, and I found out from researching this that Match Group is a company that



owns Match.com, Tinder, OK Cupid, and Plenty of Fish. And I find that fact kind of creepy.

According to the FTC, Match Group—

**Travis:** Oh, sorry, Brent, while we were looking for it, let me check... oh, we were looking for, you find that fact “plenty of creepy” is what you meant. Plenty of creepy.

**Brent:** [laughs] Plenty of icks. So, according to the FTC, Match Group used fake love interest ads, or rather, fake love interest ads. There we go. To trick consumers into paying for a membership, specifically via Match.com. According to FTC.gov, as many as 30% of Match.com accounts used the service to perpetrate scams, including “romance scams, phishing scams, fraudulent advertising, and extortion scams.”

**Travis:** Wow.

**Brent:** Yeah. Any of us who have experienced a person giving us their number way too quickly, or trying to refer us to their Instagram or Snapchat account can see how someone might take that kind of behavior a step farther into the realm of the illegal. Well, Match Group is being sued by the government, because millions of contacts that generated notifications for Match, such as, “You caught his eye!” came from accounts that the company had already flagged as likely to be fraudulent.

And since Match members have to pay for a subscription in order to get the most out of the service, many of them signed up and paid for it in response to these notifications. The FTC alleges that Match used deceptive practices with regard to their guarantee that users would get a free six month subscription if they didn’t “meet someone special,” and finally, apparently Match Group made it unreasonably hard to cancel your membership, which is a pet peeve of mine, let me tell you.

So, I guess it’s nice that some parts of the government are still working to protect consumers. I am still, um... yeah, not really... not really feeling great

about the fact that all those dating sites and apps are owned by the same company, though.

**Travis:** Um, so, I have one here that i would like to tidbit. A poker player named Mike Posta—I believe it's Postle, uh, is... it might be "postal." Is currently under investigation for cheating during live stream poker games, and the poker world is fascinated by the scandal. Mike was a regular on the Stones Poker Stream, and according to Reddit, he has either never posted a losing session, or he's only posted one session.

Doug Polk Poker, podcaster YouTuber Joe Ingram, and a host of internet sleuths have gone over hours and hours of footage to find evidence that he has connections with people who run the table, or that he can be seen actively looking at his phone, which he keeps below the table. And while innocent until proven guilty in a court of law, the story has gotten so big that it was mentioned on ESPN's Sports Center last week, and it's possible Postle will be brought in to address the allegations.

**Brent:** Man. I mean, he should've known nobody would believe you could catch `em all... pokermon. Alright, moving on.

**Travis:** Oh, I see.

**Courtney:** Good god, man.

**Brent:** Yep. Nope. And they're just gonna keep being like this. Sorry, go ahead, Courtney.

**Courtney:** Jacob Wohl and Jack Burkman tried to do that thing again. Where they just like, pretend a thing happened. For attention? For chaos? Who knows. But this time, they may have—they may have played their hand a little too hard. They did a press conference with a big poster that said, "Elizabeth Warren: Cougar?"

**Brent:** [laughs]

**Courtney:** And had a, uh, had a supposed body building ex-Marine say that, in his mid-20s, I believe he was 24 in this thing that didn't happen, he carried on a months-long affair with Elizabeth Warren that included heavy BDSM play.

**Travis:** My favorite part of that, by the way, was uh, during the press conference, the ex-Marine removed his shirt to show a scar across his back that he claimed was from their sexcapades, even though he had posted on Instagram, before, a picture of that, talking about being hit by a chain swing when a swing broke.

**Courtney:** Yeah. They're really good at this.

**Travis:** And it is—when you look at it, is a thousand percent a chain.  
[laughs] Like, it is—

**Courtney:** It's 100% a chain. Yeah. Elizabeth Warren is, uh—she can troll right back. She tweeted, "It's always a good day to be reminded that I got where I am because I had a great education, because a great education was available for \$50 a semester at the University of Houston. Go Cougars!"

**Travis:** [laughs]

**Brent:** Sooo, here's the thing...

**Travis:** By the way, Brent, I want you to know, I'm so glad that you did not cover this last week. I was so mad that it happened—that Jacob Wohl was rollin' out some bullshit while I wasn't around to talk about it.

**Brent:** Yeah.

**Travis:** This is some of the weirdest shit. Like, at this point, there is—there was a point, maybe about three Jacob Wohls ago, where you could've convinced me that he believed what he was saying, and that he was trying to like, help his party or whatever. But now it is so flustery, blustery bullshit...

**Brent:** Well, and it's part of this pipeline. It's part of this pipeline of, he makes up shit that's not true, but he has... he has broken stories before, and can claim some kind of journalistic bullshit bona fides. So what happens is, then, super wingnut right wing blogosphere picks it up. Then Breitbart cites them. Then, Rush Limbaugh, Mark Levin can cite them, and then Fox News can cite them. And no—y'know, very few of their viewers or consumers ever follow the trail down to the fact that it was clearly made up out of whole cloth from the start.

**Travis:** Yeah, but I don't think this one has legs. At all.

**Courtney:** Well, on SNL, Kate McKinnon appeared as Elizabeth Warren, and she said, "That's Elizabeth Warren's vibe for sure. Transactional sex with a younger man. Look, rumors have power when they feel true. What has ever felt less true than any single part of that? If you think I'm in a room with a veteran, and you think I don't immediately thank him for his service and make sure he's getting his VA benefits, you're insane."

**Travis:** [laughs]

**Brent:** [laughs]

**Courtney:** And then she said, "Part of it is true. I am into BDSM. Bank destroying and saving Medicare!"

**Brent:** Eyyy, nice!

**Courtney:** I really liked that.

**Brent:** I mean, here's—ultimately, like, who does she need to get voters from? Maybe some centrists, maaaybe some like, kind of center-right libertarian types that hate Trump. But really, she needs to pill for that Bernie demographic if she's gonna win the primary, and I think this does not... this, if anything, probably is more appealing to the Bernie folks.

Like, oh, you uh, ended up with a much younger man, you say? And engaged in some kinks? Okay. You're alright with me, Elizabeth Warren.

Like, I don't think that's gonna hurt her in the place she needs to really get more votes. It's pretty misguided.

**Courtney:** That was kind of the most common thread I saw on Twitter when this came out. It was just like, "Are you trying to give us more reasons to like Elizabeth Warren?"

**Travis:** [laughs]

**Brent:** [laughs] Exactly. Who knew? Anyway, yeah. Um, and finally, for this next tidbit, I'll start with a question – who would it make more sense for the IRS to audit? A rich person who could have millions in offshore accounts, or cook the books of their hugely lucrative businesses, or deduct millions of dollars' worth of spending under false pretenses? Or... the working poor, who could deduct dozens of dollars under false pretenses, and whose entire tax liability is probably a four figure amount?

Well, according to the data released by the IRS earlier this year, millionaires in 2018 were 80% less likely to be audited than they were in 2011. In this past week, the IRS admitted to Congress that they now audit the working poor at about the same rate as the one percent. And it's silly for obvious reasons. If you're trying to recoup unpaid taxes in order to fund the government, you'd want to go after the big fish more than the tiny little ones.

Apparently, auditing the rich is much harder, though, than the poor, and the IRS' budget has been cut by more than 25% since 2010, adjusting for inflation. But the whole budget right now is \$12 billion. If you doubled it to \$24 billion, it would still be a pretty small fraction of the over 1.7 trillion worth of income tax collected for fiscal year 2018.

But as it stands, this is all just another way that the rich get away with more bad behavior than the poor and middle class in America.

[ocean sounds]

**Speaker 1:** Ahh, there's nothing quite like sailing the calm, international waters on my ship, the SS Biopic.

[ship horns]

**Speaker 2:** Avast, it's actually pronounced bio-pick!

**Speaker 1:** No, you dingus! It's biopic!

**Speaker 2:** Who the hell says that? It's bio-pick.

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

**Speaker 2:** If you—

[ship horn]

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

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

**Dave:** It's called Troubled Waters, where we disagree to disagree!

[music plays]

**Janet:** Hey, I'm Janet Varney. And like many of you, brand new sentient robots excluded, I used to be a teenager. In fact, just about all of my friends were too, including folks like comedian, Danielle Radford.

**Danielle:** And of course, all of us, you take on that theater accent, and our teacher would say, "No, that isn't how people talk!"

**Janet:** Right?

**Danielle:** “Don’t do the super theater kid accent, it’s the worst!” But so, when I was doing theater in high school, of course, [in a dramatic, slightly British accent] I immediately was talking about being in the theater...

**Janet:** [laughs] So join me every week on the JV Club podcast, where I speak with my favorite women artists, innovators, and humans as we reminisce about the past and how it led us to becoming who we are. Find it every Thursday on 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.

[Wi-Five slap]

**Brent:** This week’s Wi-Five goes out to our president! Not our current president. No, that guy gets no Wi-Fives. He maybe gets a why are you still here. No, I’m talking about our former president, *former* president, Jimmy Carter. He’s now the only, uh, or rather, the oldest living US president, and since leaving office, he has headed up and personally worked on 36 projects with Habitat for Humanity to build and improve housing all over the country and the world, working alongside over 100,000 volunteers in 14 countries.

The man is 95 and shows no signs of stopping. Keep in mind that, three years ago, he had a cancerous melanoma that spread to his liver and his brain. The disease luckily went into remission after Carter was treated with immunotherapy and radiation, but he was right back to it. And this past Sunday morning, Carter suffered injuries after falling in his home.

Now, when you hear about a 95-year-old being injured from falling in their home... I mean, not to be dark, but y’know, you know it’s gonna take them a long time to recover, and it’s not always a certainty they’ll survive the aftermath. This 95-year-old got 14 stitches, popped some gauze on his forehead, and hours after the injury, headed off to Nashville to kick off a week of volunteer work.

More than any other president in recent memory, Carter has dedicated his post-White House life to hands on aid and assistance to the people who need it most. And this is just one example of his commitment to the cause. So, to our former president, Jimmy Carter, who bounced back from an injury to help people at the young, spry age of 95... Wi-Five.

[theme music plays]

**Travis:** Alright folks, that's gonna do it for us. Thank you so much for joining us. First and foremost, we want to thank Mustin for doing all of our editing and producing and being great. Mustin.net, check out Mustin's work. I also want to thank Alex, my research assistant, without whom I would not have been able to get copy ready for this week, so thank you, Alex.

I also want to say, the next Adventure Zone graphic novel is available for preorder now. It's Petals to the Metal. It's our battlewagon race. I really love it. I think it's the best one so far. They just keep gettin' better. You can go to [TheAdventureZoneComic.com](http://TheAdventureZoneComic.com) and order it there. It won't be out 'til July, but hey, why not get your preorder now, huh?

**Courtney:** You could also see an interview that Travis and Clint did with an intrepid journalist with a far better voice than she has right now. You can find that at uh, SYFY's Twitter.

**Brent:** And for another example of a situation in which Courtney's voice sounded slightly better... actually, a lot better. I don't know. Am I insulting you now, or then? I don't know. I love your voice. The point is...

**Courtney:** Who knows?

**Brent:** That uh, I've got a new podcast called Question Box. We've got 12 episodes, including Courtney and Travis being guests on the show. It's the game show podcast of shockingly personal questions, and it's what it sounds like. You're gonna learn a lot about me, you're gonna learn a lot about our guests, who have included, uh, Demon Tomato Dave, who is also Dave Bulmer, our UK correspondent.



It's cohosted by Kate Sloane, who you've now heard on a couple episodes of Trends Like These. And it's a real good time. So you can check it out on Twitter. We're @QuestionBoxShow. Question Box is on all the major podcasts platforms, and our website is QuestionBoxShow.com.

**Travis:** Uh, so I think that's gonna do it for us. Uh, go check out all the other amazing shows at MaximumFun.org. Uhh... I don't know, you can tweet at us @TrendsLikeThese. You can talk about stuff in the Trends Like These Facebook group. There's all kinds of things.

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

**Courtney:** Um, I think that this is just my voice now, and you're just gonna—you're gonna hear this every week now. Even if I get better, I'm just going to fake it, 'cause I think it sounds really good.

**Travis:** Okay. We'll be back in a couple days.

**Courtney:** [hoarse groaning] Byeeee.

**Brent:** See you next time.

[theme music plays]

**Brent:** Let me say... let me—let me put a flubber here. Just like Robin Williams did.

**Courtney:** [laughs]

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