

**Trends Like These 248: Cats + Star Wars: TROS Discussion!, Pope Slaps Woman's Hand, FDA Bans Vape Products, Joe Biden Would Choose Republican VP, MSM Gets Real About Bernie, Impeachment Update, Democratic 2020 Race Update**

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**Travis:** This week: we're talkin' 'bout Cats, Biden's VP strats, and Bernie gets nod from Democrats.

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

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

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

**Courtney:** And I'm T.S. Jeliot.

**Brent:** With Trends Like These.

[theme music plays]

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

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

**Courtney:** Hello boys!

**Travis:** Hello.

**Courtney:** You your boys, you are borg.

**Travis:** Hi everybody. We are borg! There are four lights!

**Brent:** Yep.

**Travis:** How many lights are there, Brent?

**Brent:** Well... there've been some cutbacks, so there are, in fact, three and a half lights, but we're still going with the number four on principle.

**Travis:** Oh man...

**Courtney:** Y'know what, the half one is dead. So it's just three lights.

**Travis:** Oh. It burned out.

**Brent:** Yeah.

**Courtney:** Yeah.

**Travis:** That light burned out. There are now actually three lights. Hi everybody! This is your Star Trek Next Gen recap podcast, uh, Borgs Like These. Welcome. Uh, and maybe later, it'll be a Star Trek Recap Podcast called Porgs Like These. Hey, porg? Borg? Is there something there? Huh?

**Brent:** No.

**Courtney:** Y'know what...

**Travis:** Okay.

**Brent:** Though, I'm sure that there is some fan art of a porg borg.

**Travis:** Oh, deffo.

**Courtney:** Just whisper it in JJ's ear. He'll make it happen.

**Travis:** Well, I heard in the JJ cut, it's all porgs.

**Courtney:** The JJ—did you know the JJ cut... everyone is fucking. It's just an orgy.

**Travis:** Really?

**Courtney:** Like, cross gender. Also, porgs are there. Also, y'know, everything's great. Leia's alive. Han's alive. Everyone's alive.

**Travis:** Cool.

**Courtney:** It's great. It's thriving. It's... [whispers] Not real.

**Travis:** I heard in the JJ cut, Batman was there.

**Courtney:** Yeah.

**Travis:** And everybody was like, "Oh, Batman's so cool!" And they're like, "Wait, doesn't Disney own Marvel? What's happening?" And JJ said, "I'm JJ Abrams. Just trust me."

**Courtney:** Mm-hmm. Yeah. Just—look. I tried. Disney wouldn't let me.

**Travis:** I tried to get Superman and Batman in this... hey, what's everybody drinking?

**Courtney:** I'm drinking the Kool-Aid of the Zack Snyder cut, which is also not real. Um, I'm drinking passion fruit La Croix. Spoiler alert for maybe like, the rest of the episode – I just went and saw the Cats.

**Travis:** Yeah.

**Courtney:** And I snuck in some canned rose.

**Travis:** Ooh, girl!

**Courtney:** And it was delectable, and the perfect beverage to enjoy the Cats with.

**Travis:** What about you, Brent?

**Brent:** I am drinking a Dasani brand raspberry lemonade naturally flavored sparkling water. It's delicious.

**Courtney:** [in a British accent] Water!

**Travis:** Man, the times sure have changed for us Trends Like These hosts, because back in the day, we would've all been slammin' some sort of booze drink. But now... we're all adults.

**Courtney:** So, here's the thing. Um... part of being, I think, the... possibly being the girl host, possibly the time that I was having some hard times, like, figuring out medication versus wine—I'm also drinking wine. I just didn't say it.

**Travis:** Ahh.

**Courtney:** 'Cause I don't want people to judge me. People get mad about it.

**Travis:** Well, see, I—

**Courtney:** I don't want to hurt anyone's feelings. I don't want to make anyone sad.

**Travis:** I'm drinking water, because I'm responsible for a new life now that I have to take care of. Um—

**Courtney:** I'm responsible for old lives. They're on their own.

**Travis:** Well, mine—

**Brent:** I'm drinking, uh, this because when I drink booze, I make more small factual errors in my journalistic integrity—

**Courtney:** [laughs] You just don't want to do correction corner anymore.

**Brent:** —than I even normally do.

**Travis:** I should be clear real quick – we haven't had our baby. I've just been using Plant Nanny on my phone to help me keep track of how much water I'm drinking to water the little plants in there.

**Courtney:** You've been cooking a lot lately.

**Travis:** I've never been more—

**Courtney:** And everything you make is a baby.

**Travis:** I've never been more compelled to hydrate than when a little plant gets happy when I do. So Plant Nanny. 2020. Plant Nanny. Check it out. Stay hydrated. Uh, now, Brent, you mentioned some retractions.

**Brent:** Yes. Yes. As uh, listeners that are regular know, I've started a thing called the Retraction Zone, because I don't want to have pride about my mistakes and pretend I didn't. I made 'em! This week I got two of 'em! First one, uh, the Wi-Five recipients on the last episode... I misread some reporting. I'll be honest – the Wi-Five isn't always my most super researched background verified segment, 'cause I just want to have a good, feel good moment.

Those guys did not invent, like, tubeless toothpaste. They just made a new kind. Also, uh – this is good news – I said, last time, that thermal paper receipts cannot be recycled. But, some places like Seattle do recycle thermal paper receipts, so I was wrong about that, and I'm happy that some do. Hope more places do in the future.

**Travis:** Uh, yeah. Uh, y'know what? Brent, I appreciate you owning up to your mistakes and saying it, because it's one thing to see somebody tweet at you like you made a mistake, and you go, "Oh yeah, that was a mistake." It's another thing to publically address it so there's not a lot of

misinformation, and I think, uh, combatting misinformation is a fairly good resolution for 2020, if anyone is still looking for it.

**Courtney:** Yeah, and it's another thing entirely to just ignore it and be like, "What I said was canon. Goodbye!"

**Travis:** Yeahhh! I am curious, do either of you have resolutions?

**Courtney:** So, my resolution... [laughs] And I've already kind of fucked it up. Uh, but, I'm not gonna worry so much about the people that don't like me.

**Brent:** Word.

**Courtney:** I get very—I try really hard... to be someone who doesn't care what people think about me... except for I'm not that person. And I'm gonna really try to be not that person, where I—I know that people are gonna be... They're gonna not like me. For invalid reasons.

**Travis:** I don't know why, but maybe.

**Courtney:** And I'm going to have to just be okay with that.

**Brent:** Well, but some people don't like chocolate. So like, inevitably, some people are not gonna like a good thing. Go on.

**Courtney:** Here's the thing – some people are gonna not like me for valid reasons. And I want to recognize those valid reasons and change and grow and be better. But the people who have like, non-valid reasons, and trying to find the gray area of someone pretending to have a valid reason, that just doesn't fuckin' like me? I'm just gonna work on that and not caring as much this year. 'Cause last year, y'know, was a big fuckin' bummer, 'cause I was already sensitive and gentle, because, y'know, as I've said, my whole world fell apart.

**Travis:** Mm-hmm.

**Courtney:** So like... the people on the internet liking me was kind of a touchstone.

**Travis:** Yeah.

**Courtney:** But y'know what? 2020? Courtney don't give a fuck.

**Travis:** That's good. I just want to say, that happened to me, too. I saw—uh, it's why I started going to therapy, and uh, doing Lexapro, is because I realized how much of my own kind of personal self-worth I was basing on whether people liked me or not. Uh, and a lot of that had to do with public opinion. I'm a public figure. And that was one of the reasons that I was like, "Hey, I know this isn't cool, right? Like, this isn't the way to do this." I think that that is common.

Mine, uh—well, sorry, Brent. Did you have a resolution for 2020?

**Brent:** Well, um, so, uh... a year ago today, I was 205 pounds. My joints hurt. I just didn't feel healthy. I felt kind of weak. And uh, by August of last year, I was down, uh, a lot, and just feeling stronger. Feeling really good. Um, like, not to be prescriptive about anybody else's weight. You do you. But it felt better for my body. And uh, let's be real – the holidays happened. Y'know, you set a precedent, Thanksgiving happens, you start telling yourself, "Oh, it's the holidays!"

Anyway. So basically, a small resolution, just to get back on track to the lifestyle that just, like I said, just feels better.

**Travis:** Um, yeah. For me, it's kind of a... bit of the same. Um, so I have been like, studying, like, zen and meditation and stuff for a long time, and that's all about, uh, like being in the moment, which is really good and totally—everyone should do that. But there is kind of a bad side to being in the moment, where like, if you're only living for the moment, you're not so much, y'know, taking care of future you, too.

**Brent:** Mm-hmm.

**Travis:** So I'm going to try to focus on the healthy side of staying in the moment and being very present, uh, but also thinking about the next moment and the next one, and y'know, making sure that I am making decisions that will allow me to be around for a really long time for my kids and for my family and for my friends and all of that. So, living for the moment and the next is my resolution.

**Courtney:** Um, one thing you mentioned, uh, you mentioned that you're on Lexapro. And so, I wanted to tell, like, anyone who is listening, if you are not on medication but think you could benefit from it, if you are on medication and it's not working, talk to your doctor. Because here's the thing about psychiatric drugs that I've learned – it's a fuckin' trial and error.

**Travis:** Yeah.

**Courtney:** You have to try a lot. Like, I tried Effexor. It didn't do anything for me. Like, I've tried a whole bunch of stuff, and I found—

**Travis:** And sometimes it's dosage, too. It's not just—

**Courtney:** Oh, exactly. Yeah.

**Travis:** Yeah.

**Courtney:** Oh, I learned... so, I'm a big proponent of getting your psychiatric drugs from a specialist in psychiatry.

**Brent:** Yes. Do not just stop at a GP if you can help it.

**Courtney:** Um, and that comes from—yes. Now, for me, that comes from a family situation where uh, my cousin, who was 16, told his doctor that he was feeling depressed. She put him—just his general pediatrician. She put him on, uh, Zoloft, and he ended up, uh, attempting suicide. And I'm very, very stringent about basically telling everyone like, please, talk to someone who specializes in these medications.



Because like, that's an extreme example – but at the same time, going through this where like, my family was going through this horrible ordeal, I went and got on Effexor, and was put on like, y'know, 75 milligrams. Or 37 and a half milligrams is what it was. And later, like, two years after starting this medication, I went to a psychiatrist, and they said, "That's not a medically effective dose."

**Travis:** Mm.

**Courtney:** So, it's really important that you are honest with your doctor. Try different things. Be open to trying different things. And eventually, like, you might find the exact chemical thing that like, helps you work. For me, it's Effexor—or, not Effexor. Fuck you. Fuck you, Effexor. It's Lexapro and Wellbutrin. That's what works for me. For Travis, it's Lexapro.

Like, y'know, things work for different people. Try different things. It's not a one size fits all. This is the year you take care of yourself and take care of your brain, and you make sure that you are taking very good care of loving you. 'Cause we love you.

**Brent:** We do.

[theme music plays]

**Brent:** [sings] The Trends Like Teaser is a curious pod! [normally] Hey, guys.

**Travis:** Ooh!

**Brent:** How's it goin'?

**Courtney:** Brent, I'm so proud of you! That was so good!

**Travis:** Hey!

**Courtney:** I was trying to think, [sings] "The Trends Like These are such a friend a ba ba ba ba daba da..."

**Brent:** [laughs]

**Travis:** [sings] And jellicle trends are— [normally] And that's all I had.

**Courtney:** [laughs]

**Brent:** Okay, before we jump way in – a little bit of trivia I found out. First off, we're talking about the movie, *Cats*, so if you haven't seen it, first off, spoilers for this kind of thing don't exist, but uh...

**Travis:** Hey, spoiler: there's cats in it!

**Courtney:** Spoiler: this show's about fucking cats!

**Brent:** Here's the thing. It's jellicle cats, right? That word makes no sense. However... T.S. Eliot, a posh Englishman who wrote these, y'know, the poems on which *Cats* was based in the 1930s, 'jellicle' was a play on how they would've said 'dear little.' Dear little cats.

**Courtney:** Fuck that. No.

**Brent:** Dear little cats.

**Courtney:** This is dumb.

**Brent:** Yep.

**Travis:** I mean, okay...

**Courtney:** T.S. Jeliot. Anyway.

**Brent:** [laughs] *Cats*! The movie!

**Courtney:** Okay. Brent and I have seen it. Travis has not yet seen it.

**Travis:** Yeah.

**Courtney:** Travis.

**Travis:** Yes.

**Courtney:** I want you to give us your impression of what you think level of good or bad that the Cats might be.

**Travis:** Oh... okay. This is a tricky question. Thank you for asking. Because uh, as I think we've talked about on the show, but people may or may not know, I am a connoisseur of bad movies. Quote unquote, capital B, capital M, "Bad Movies." Like, I love bad movie podcasts, and like, I sincerely enjoy watching films like Trolls 2, and The Room, and Birdemic, and The Apple is one of my favorites.

**Courtney:** Troll 2. Not Trolls 2, featuring the McElroy brothers.

**Travis:** Troll. Thank you. Thank you. I am in Trolls 2. That's right. Troll 2. Um, and so—which is all about goblins. And so... there is two kinds of bad, right? There's the fun bad, and then there's like, walking out of it, shaking your head, like, confused. Like, what the fuck was that? So I'm betting... I can say this, right? I think it skews more towards the 'what the fuck' bad, rather than the 'hoo boy, what a hoot' bad. And I'm betting, solid... five on a scale of one to ten, 'what the fuck' bad.

**Courtney:** Uh... [sighs] Here's—

**Brent:** Do you want to start, Courtney?

**Courtney:** Y'know what? Yeah, I do. I do.

**Brent:** 'Cause clearly, we all have some thoughts.

**Courtney:** Because here's the thing about this... [laughs] About this film. Um, I don't know how to quantify it. I don't know how to put it into words. [laughs] It is... a whole entire movie.

**Travis:** I—can I start with this? 'cause I haven't seen it, but you both have, right?

**Brent:** Mm-hmm.

**Travis:** And the only actual piece of like, trending news to talk about, is the re-release, uh, to theaters, of the finished computer graphics version.

**Brent:** Arguably unprecedented.

**Courtney:** I would very much like to get into that, actually. Let's start with that.

**Travis:** Okay.

**Courtney:** Let's start with like, Judi Dench's human hands, which my friend Betsy, who listens to this show, said would be a great name for a band.

**Brent:** [laughs]

**Courtney:** Here's the thing about Judi Dench's human hands. I don't know how they noticed, because all the cats have human hands.

**Travis:** Oh.

**Courtney:** I don't under-fuckin'-stand. There's a shot of Judi Dench with, I think, what is supposed to be cat hands, and she still has a ring, but it's on her right hand, and I think that's the difference? I don't know! I'm really upset about it. All the cats have human hands. But here's—y'know what's worse?

**Travis:** Wait, did you maybe see an un-re-edited version?

**Courtney:** I honestly don't think I did, because all the cats had human hands, not just Judi Dench. But worse than the human hands...

**Travis:** Did you just call her Doodi Dench, by the way?

**Courtney:** Travis. Travis Patrick McElroy, I need you to listen to me right now.

**Travis:** Okay.

**Courtney:** All the cats have human feet.

**Travis:** Ohh!

**Courtney:** Human. Human. Bare. Feet.

**Travis:** Oh no!

**Brent:** Which sometimes, because of VFX problems, seem to be like... just like a centimeter off the ground? Did you catch that? Where they're like, sliding around, I think during Rum Tum Tugger and some other spots, the dancing just seemed to be—

**Courtney:** Is it—I mean, that, right there, leads into a whole different conversation about the scale of the cats. [laughs] Sometimes the cats are goddamn tiny.

**Brent:** Yes. Which they're supposed to be.

**Courtney:** They're always too small.

**Brent:** Jellicle cats are supposed to be small, but not like the size of a hot dog!

**Courtney:** Not this. Like, they're always too small for cats. But at one point, they're all walking along a train rail, as though they are smaller than the rail of the train. Y'know, like tiny mice might be.

**Brent:** Well, and the mice are—

**Courtney:** These are ridiculous.

**Brent:** The mice are as much smaller than the cats as mice are in real life from humans. There's some uh, words in there. Some prepositions that were wrong. You get what I'm saying.

**Travis:** I think we all got what you were going for.

**Brent:** So they are so tiny that they would be like... just teeny weeny little gummy bear sized mice.

**Travis:** I've seen the like, clip, with like, the cockroaches?

**Brent:** Oh my god.

**Courtney:** That is buck the fuck wild.

**Brent:** [laughs]

**Travis:** Hi, my name's Buck "The Fuck" Wild!

**Courtney:** And somehow, indicative of the entire film. The entire film is this goddamn cockroach scene.

**Brent:** So—so let's zoom out real quick, just 'cause like, if people don't know, I think it's worth saying that—

**Courtney:** Real quick, if—while we're on the subject of the scale and size of the cats, there is one scene... it's in the trailers, where like, y'know, the main cat, Victoria, who is the white cat, played by a black woman... I'm not here—y'know, do with that with you will. Uh, she's wearing like, human jewelry. She is wearing the following things: human person woman rings on her paws. So think about how tiny a cat must be to wear like, your wedding ring on its paws.

**Travis:** Uh-huh. Okay.

**Courtney:** And a watch around her neck.

**Brent:** Fetus, the preemie cat!

**Travis:** Okay.

**Courtney:** Like, these are—this is the scale of these fucking cats. They're so fuckin' small!

**Brent:** Yeah, so if you don't know, out there listening, *Cats* is a musical. Andrew Lloyd Weber wrote it in the early '80s. It's based on poems that T.S. Eliot wrote.

**Courtney:** T.S. Eliot. That's what they call him.

**Brent:** They're all light verse. And so—

**Courtney:** By that, I mean me.

**Travis:** T.S. Eliot.

**Brent:** The net effect is that you've got a musical that is almost entirely, um, individual cats, or in some cases, pairs of cats, just explaining who they are and what they do. It's just songs about these individual silly cats, and I think it's—you could say, geared towards kids, but it ran forever inexplicably. There's a lot of dance going on.

**Courtney:** And it's also not for kids. [laughs]

**Travis:** I think it's—I think it's geared towards adults—

**Courtney:** It's not for kids.

**Travis:** —who are maybe drunk or high.

**Courtney:** Because these cats are horny as fuck. Like, in this movie—

**Travis:** Well yes, they're cats.

**Courtney:** —and in the play. Every cat is about to start fucking.

**Brent:** Yeah, so like—

**Travis:** No, here's—here's what I will also point out, is that, as Brent has said, this is a kind of loose, uh, connection—there is a loose storyline of basically, these cats are presenting themselves for consideration to ascend to Heaviside Layer. But like, that—that's not really a story, so much as it's just like, an excuse to end the show?

**Brent:** Yeah. I mean, it's strung together the songs, but like—

**Courtney:** They do an essay contest...

**Brent:** You could've told that story—

**Courtney:** ... to get the privilege of dying.

**Travis:** Yes.

**Brent:** Yeah. You could've told the whole story, I think it's fair to say, of the show, in 20 minutes or less, if you were just focusing on, uh, the story.

**Travis:** Oh yeah.

**Brent:** But um, what was so fun to me was watching reviewers, particularly on YouTube, who were not aware at all of the content of the musical. By the way, I'm not a huge fan of the musical, 'cause it doesn't really have most of the things I like about musical theater in it. But—



**Courtney:** I'm gonna dip in real quick and tell you, no one is a fan of the musical, Cats.

**Brent:** But that's not true, 'cause it ran for—

**Travis:** Ah, you are incorrect.

**Brent:** It's the second longest running Broadway show in history.

**Courtney:** No. Okay, no. Hear me. I will die on this hill! Okay. Lots of people saw Cats. [laughs] Lots of people bought the soundtrack to Cats.

**Travis:** Courtney, I'm so sorry to do this to you—

**Courtney:** No one is a fan of Cats!

**Travis:** I'm sorry to do this to you. Our shared friend, Danielle, loves it.

**Courtney:** [gasps]

**Brent:** Now, Courtney, to your point, there are not *many* fans...

**Travis:** Yes. It was the first—hold on. It was the first musical Danielle had ever seen.

**Courtney:** Okay, that I will give her. Danielle—

**Brent:** And honestly—

**Courtney:** Hey, if you're listening? I fucking love you. And y'know what? It is fine that you love this musical.

**Brent:** There are different—

**Courtney:** It is Danielle, and everyone's mom loves Cats. But...

**Brent:** There are different like, uh, constituencies. Because in 1998, they did like a live filmed performance, but it was actually on a soundstage, that then became the way that a lot of kids saw Cats. And for them, it was kind of like watching Barney the Dinosaur. It was just part of their regimen of VHS tapes or DVDs to watch growing up. So they enjoyed it a different way.

**Travis:** It had a weird Zoobamoof—Zoboomafoo kind of thing. Or was—Zoobilee Zoo.

**Brent:** Yes. Zoobilee Zoo.

**Travis:** Excuse me. Zoobilee Zoo.

**Brent:** There you go.

**Travis:** Yes. With Ben Vereen.

**Brent:** Mm-hmm.

**Courtney:** Can I tell a story of why Cats has such a dark, bad place in my heart?

**Brent:** Sure.

**Travis:** Yes.

**Courtney:** So my dance company... uh, every year—so I danced my whole life. And we would do like—our recitals every year would be the first, y'know, two hours would be like, every group dancing, and then the final finale act would be us doing a Broadway show, but all through dance. No one was singing or anything, we were just dancing to songs of Broadway.

We did a Cats. We did a Cats. And the assistant director, Andy... maybe I should change his name. I don't really care, 'cause he's a real preeve. Um, he was Rum Tum Tigger, AKA, the cat who fucks. And he—Andy always creeped me out, 'cause he was real creepy. And then, Andy, who was, I think, 38, started dating a 16 year old.

**Brent:** Ew.

**Travis:** Whoa!

**Courtney:** So Andy didn't... teach at our dance school anymore. So Rum Tum Tugger, to me, is a predator. But...

**Travis:** Yeah.

**Courtney:** Cats makes me uncomfortable.

**Travis:** Yeah. That's fair.

**Courtney:** And this whole movie made me uncomfortable. Because everyone wants to fuck! Victoria, the white cat, who is the star, wants... she's fuckin'—fuckin' horny. She's like, rubbin' up—oh man.

**Travis:** Well, it's—this is a bunch of alley cats, right?

**Courtney:** She is like a horny virgin. I remember when I—

**Brent:** Jellicle cats are always in heat.

**Courtney:** I remember when I... [laughs] When I got married, we went to Pre-Cana, because Catholic. And there was this like, 19-year-old couple who clearly were waiting 'til marriage to like, lose their virginities. And they were so fucking horny and rubbing on each other. That was Victoria. That was the energy that Victoria, the white cat, was giving me.

**Travis:** Yes. Can we—I want to jump back real quick to the rerelease. I didn't know that was a thing you could do to be like, "We're gonna put out..."

**Brent:** It wasn't!

**Travis:** "... an unfinished version of the movie..."

**Courtney:** It shouldn't be! They wanted to get this movie out for award season. And spoiler –

**Brent:** Well, it reminds me of how like—

**Courtney:** This movie does not deserve the awards!

**Travis:** Isn't that bonkers?

**Brent:** When we were kids, if you had like, a Nintendo game, and it had a glitch, that was the glitch in the game forever. And then at a certain point, internet enabled consoles made it where you could like, patch a game. And like, this is the first time, as far as I know, that they patched a movie!

**Courtney:** Yeah.

**Travis:** And it must be expensive as shit to do, right?

**Brent:** Oh yeah.

**Travis:** Like... and not only that – if you think about how movies work, the biggest attendance – like, the biggest spike in attendance is going to be on the release. It's very rare that it's like, yeah, four weeks after the movie came out, suddenly people started seeing it.

**Courtney:** And also, having—

**Travis:** So the idea of having—

**Courtney:** Sorry, you go, Travis.

**Travis:** The idea of paying a lot of money to finish your movie, and then paying a lot of money to rerelease it, and thinking, "Now people will see the finished version," like... no! It's so—such a weird concept to me of like, "Well,

we said we'd put the movie out then. We need to get it out in time for awards. We need to get it out in time for the holidays." But it's not done?

**Brent:** Well, the thing is, there was a time when you would've had to finish the film and print it onto other reels of film and send them off, and apparently, from what I've heard, they were finishing the final cut – "final" in quotation marks – like, the day before. Like a YouTube video or something. It's a brand new world. Very weird.

**Courtney:** The biggest thing I will say is, the issues that they fixed... no one would've noticed. Because I cannot overstate the fact that everyone has human hands.

**Travis:** Mm..

**Courtney:** Judi Dench's hands were apparently too human?

**Brent:** I still—I definitely saw the updated version, but I'm almost positive I saw some green whiskers in one shot. Maybe it was just the lighting, but I was like, "Were those green screen whiskers?"

**Courtney:** There might have been, like, some fur going up to like, circa the knuckle. No one would've fucking noticed one hand without fur. Like, it was—

**Travis:** I need to ask.

**Courtney:** They were human goddamn hands.

**Travis:** I need to ask.

**Courtney:** Yes. Ask everything, baby cakes.

**Travis:** All of that... all of that... all of that. Yes. You both have seen it.

**Brent:** Mm-hmm.

**Courtney:** And we're different now.

**Travis:** Are you glad... are you glad you saw it?

**Courtney:** I don't know!

**Brent:** Well...

**Travis:** Oh. Okay.

**Courtney:** [sighs]

**Brent:** My... for me to answer that, like, I'm not representative of the average moviegoer. I'm currently adapting a movie into a musical. It held my attention, because I was fascinated by the highs and lows – mostly lows – of how they adapted this terrible property for a film into a film. But—so I'm glad I saw it in that way. But I don't... like, *recommend* it.

**Travis:** Okay. Okay.

**Courtney:** So, okay. I... [sighs] There was much of it that I enjoyed. Um, in that like, 'this is terrible' way. But it also wasn't fun enough to enjoy in the 'this is terrible' way. They added in – we have not even—like, honestly, here's the thing. With *Cats*, there's no plot. And yet, we have not gotten into the plot. [laughs]

**Brent:** [laughs]

**Courtney:** In this film, they add in an entire subplot that Macavity, as played by Idris Elba, is a secret murderer? But magic. And he sends everyone off to a barge.

**Brent:** He has teleporting, like, *Nightcrawler* skills, basically.

**Courtney:** Yeah. Like, in—okay, so in the musical, Macavity is just—he’s just a fucking cat burglar. Like, he can like, y’know, when the police arrive, he’s not there anymore! But in this show, he’s literally magic.

**Travis:** Y’know, how the police—how the police show up for cats.

**Courtney:** Yeah, for those cat crimes! And he’s literally like—he disappears. Like, he turns—and every time he disappears... by the way, this is my favorite part of the goddamn movie. He has like a catch phrase as he disappears. [laughs]

**Brent:** Yes!

**Courtney:** So he disappears, he’s like, [whispers] “Magic!”

**Travis:** Wha—

**Brent:** Yeah. One time he just goes, “Macavityyyy!” [laughs]

**Courtney:** [laughs] And he walks away, and he goes like, “Affable!”

**Brent:** [laughing] Yeah!

**Courtney:** Like, it’s fucking funny. And I don’t know that it’s on purpose. I don’t care. Uh, but like, yeah. So, like, he... every time he disappears—and he’ll run into the people after they sing their song about themselves, because they’re trying to do the essay contest to win the opportunity to die.

And he picks them, and he’s like, “Oh hey, are you Jennyanydots?” And she’s like, “Oh my god, yeah, I totally am!” And he’s like, “Cool. Disappear!” And they both just like, end up on a barge. With this guy named Growltiger. And you know it’s an added character, because that’s the laziest fuckin’ name I’ve ever heard.

And he sings a really weird song about being Growltiger. But like, everyone ends up there? And in theory, so that Macavity can win the contest,

because... and it hits on an inherent flaw of Cats, is that there is no real struggle.

**Travis:** No.

**Brent:** Right.

**Courtney:** With anything. It's literally just like, "Hi, I am cat."

"Hello, I am also cat."

"Hey, it's me! Cat!"

**Brent:** Now, that said, speaking of struggle, I have some thoughts about Jennifer Hudson.

**Courtney:** Oh, god. Honey boo.

**Brent:** I think she was miscast. She's obviously extremely talented. But here are my thoughts on Jennifer Hudson. First off, if Grizabella has no hope whatsoever, then she's actually not the glamor cat. She's like, the whiny, always crying cat. And like, Jennifer Hudson, her version of Memory, to me – Memory is the song that Grizabella sings – like, was constantly just like, "I'm always crying!" As opposed to, maybe there's like, a hope of the future, but it's also sad? No. Always crying, and I swear to god, 85% of her screen time, she's got snot just running down her gooch.

**Courtney:** Oh, she absolutely does. Like, full on—her gooch?!

**Brent:** From her nose to her lips.

**Courtney:** I'm sorry, that's a different body part!

**Brent:** No it's not. Look it up.

**Courtney:** Mmm. Um, she's got full on Viola Davis snot, though.



**Travis:** I don't want to look it up! What would I Google?!

**Courtney:** I think—isn't gooch a taint?

**Travis:** Yeah!

**Courtney:** Yeah.

**Brent:** You've never heard a gooch—

**Travis:** And now I don't want to Google—oh.

**Courtney:** Brent, you fuckin' nasty! Anyway.

**Brent:** Meant to be between the nose and the lips? That's not a gooch?

**Courtney:** Back to Grizabella! Anyway, Brent's wrong! And so, okay.

**Travis:** It's the taint.

**Courtney:** It's straight up the taint.

**Brent:** Oh no. I've been lied to.

**Travis:** [laughs]

**Courtney:** Grizabella... how many times have you called that the gooch?!

**Brent:** God, think how many times I've misused that and nobody called me on it! Oh no!

**Courtney:** Have you told people to wipe their gooch? In public? Like a fuckin' gross?

**Travis:** [laughing]

**Brent:** [laughing]

**Courtney:** Oh my god.

**Brent:** Alright, go on, though.

**Courtney:** Anyway, like I'm saying. So, Grizabella. She... Jennifer Hudson is in a different movie, and that movie is the Tom Hooper, *Le Miserables*. She is like, full on crying, emoting, actorating, all over this song. She is snorting. She is feeling everything. And she's wonderful! Except for here's the thing – no one else is doing that. And therefore, it makes her seem... like, out of place. Because no one else is goddamn doing that.

You have Jason Derulo, who was all, "Yeaaaah!" And you have Taylor Swift who's all like, "Macavityyy's mister cat..." Like, everyone else is full on living their like, dumb bullshit cats life. Jennifer Hudson is like, "I will win the Oscar."

**Brent:** It feels like they're all kind of in their own movie. Like, Ian McKellan, bless him, is in his *Cats*—

**Courtney:** [gasps] Ian McKellan... I will say, Ian McKellan? Best part of the movie. 100%.

**Brent:** Yes, but could you understand a damn thing he's saying?

**Courtney:** Oh, not a word! I didn't need to. He was fine.

**Brent:** He was adorable.

**Courtney:** Ian McKellan was doing his best.

**Brent:** But I couldn't understand the guy.

**Courtney:** No. He was so happy, though! James Cord—okay, let's go through the cast real quick. Alright.

**Brent:** Okay.

**Courtney:** Rebel Wilson.

**Brent:** Did her best.

**Courtney:** I think that this was a fat shamey ass part. Because you have her and Bustopher Jones, who are very like, clumsy cats. Cats, as a rule, are generally fairly graceful... unless they're fat. Womp womp womp. And so, you have these two people who are like, constantly falling over themselves and all that. You have Jason Derulo, who is like, "Yeaaah!" And it's really annoying. And that is the scene where the cats are most, like, not to scale, because there's a scene where they go to—okay.

Oh my fucking god. This is a part I have not even gotten into. The fact that humans exist in this world, because a human woman drops off Victoria in a bag and just like, throws her to the cats. But, every location is specifically designed for cats. Like, it's for—it's... the scale is for people, but it's for cats. So there's like, a milk bar. There is like... it's all for cats! But it's for like, tall people cats?

**Brent:** Yeah, they—the world building is just...

**Courtney:** It's really confusing. It's not great.

**Brent:** Not consistent at all.

**Courtney:** And like, Grizabella used to be the star of the theater.

**Travis:** The one—I saw somebody post a screenshot where there's like, a wanted poster for Macavity.

**Courtney:** Yeah!

**Travis:** And they're like, wanted by who?! The police?! Are the police putting up wanted posters for cats?!

**Courtney:** It's real fucked up.

**Brent:** Yeah. It just feels like... just like the cast, where like, everyone's kind of in their own movie, almost like they're just being directed differently. It also feels like different parts of the production design—

**Courtney:** Because none of them were on set at the same goddamn time! That's what's happened!

**Brent:** Yes, but different parts of the production design also feel the same. Like the... y'know what I mean? Like, different people had different ideas, and it just feels like... I gotta say it – it feels like Tom Hooper did not have a singular vision for the whole thing, and it's all, on top of being, like I said, a terrible idea for an adaptation, um, just disjointed.

**Courtney:** I, real talk, have so much more to say about Cats. I will take it to Twitter. Holy shit. I could talk about that movie for days. Anyway.

**Travis:** Um, so, we have another movie to talk about, but Brent has not seen it, and so, he's going to remove himself so as to avoid spoilers.

**Brent:** Bye! I don't like spoilers and I'm afraid of them! [sci-fi teleportation sound effect]

**Travis:** Let's talk about Rise O' Skywalker.

**Courtney:** Travis.

**Travis:** Yeah?

**Courtney:** Here's the thing. Let's remove ourselves from the internet's feelings.

**Travis:** Yes.

**Courtney:** Upon leaving the theater...

**Travis:** Uh-huh?

**Courtney:** How do you feel about it?

**Travis:** I felt... uh, I went to see it with my friends Rory and Alice. Uh, we discussed it afterwards. And I would say, my feeling was, uh, in the broad scope of things, the movie worked very hard to try to be a culmination of nine movies. And didn't really focus too much on being a culmination of the previous three, or... the one we were watching.

Um, and I felt like there was very little, uhh, actual character stuff in the movie. But it really wanted me to think there was. And there were very fun, cool moments that I liked. But overall, not a lot of connective tissue.

**Courtney:** That was a non-spoiler thing. I will say, if you're going to keep listening to this, like...

**Travis:** Oh yeah.

**Courtney:** Please leave. Spoilers. We're gonna put in like, spoiler time code and all that, because we're gonna get into some shit.

**Travis:** Okay, now, if we can talk about spoiler things?

**Courtney:** Let's talk about spoiler things. Yes.

**Travis:** There were so many moments where I was like, "What the fuck does that mean?" Like, you're just—the one that still, *still* is boggling my mind, is first of all, I will say – big, uh, compliment to the movie – just technically, the overlaying of Carrie Fisher and the inclusion of her in the movie, technically, is very impressive.

**Courtney:** I will never fight anything involving Carrie Fisher in this movie, because they did, I literally believe, the best they could.

**Travis:** Right.

**Courtney:** And I—I genuinely do believe this was a fitting end for Princess Leia, if she is going to die. Hey, again, if you're still here, we fuckin' said spoilers. Um, but if she's going to die, she would die for her son.

**Travis:** Right. Now, but, that moment—

**Courtney:** Like, she would die saving her son. But!

**Travis:** But! But!

**Courtney:** It did feel, admittedly, a little Mad Libs-y.

**Travis:** Yes. Now, that moment, though... the dying for the son... So, there's a fight between Rey and Ben. Now, hopefully you've seen this. Kylo Ren. And... so, Leia dies, and it seems like she expends her life force, connecting with her son, Ben, in some way. And then I was left wondering... did that connection—was she making him nice? Because her body does not, uh, get absorbed by the force until he also dies, making he think that that connection is still happening, until he dies.

**Courtney:** I was weirdly okay with that. Because...

**Travis:** Oh yeah?

**Courtney:** I felt like her purpose was to, uh, make him fully Ben again. And he wasn't fully Ben again until the end.

**Travis:** Yes.

**Courtney:** Now...

**Travis:** Okay...

**Courtney:** I think they could've done a better job showing us that like, Leia's force energy really affected Kylo.

**Travis:** Right. Right.

**Courtney:** Instead of just him like, almost realizing on his own like, "Hey, y'know what? I did a bad thing, killing my dad."

**Travis:** "I've kind of been a dick for the last like, ten years." Because all we see is him, like, hearing her voice say like, "Ben," and him, like, reacting. And then, past that, they nev—I think that that was it, is like, there's a lot of neither showing nor telling in this movie. Where I'm like, "What—why is the—who—okay."

For example, there's a lot of Rey being kind of a shitty crewmember while she gets distracted by overarching force stuff. Where it's like, hey, um, people were kind of in danger there, because you rushed off to take the ship without waiting, because you went to try to attack Kylo Ren's ship without telling anyone what you were doing. Like, there was just a lot of moments where it was like... they—it doesn't make her look like a cool, chill friend.

**Courtney:** No, and it's a combination of like, Rey being kind of an asshole, and bad writing. Because...

**Travis:** Yeah.

**Courtney:** That moment, where Rey is just like, "You guys go, I'll catch up." What she does is do this like, y'know, crazy kick flip over Kylo's ship. And it's in that moment that like, they get into this like, battle of wills and everything, and they explode the transport. The only transport we have seen on screen. The transport that contains Chewy.

**Travis:** Yes. Yes.

**Courtney:** So we all think like, "Oh fuck, Chewy's dead."

**Travis:** Which she says, "Chewy's in there!"

**Courtney:** Like, we all think Chewy's dead. Rey thinks Chewy's dead. Because this is literally the only ship we've seen. There was not a second ship that was like, kind of in the background or whatever.

**Travis:** Even though they have gone out of their way to say like, Rey is super force sensitive and like, knows where people are. 'Cause she's like, "[gasps] I sense Chewy in there!" Or whatever. [laughs] It's like...

**Courtney:** Uh-huh. Yeah. And guess what? Like two scenes later – and that's the biggest thing in this movie is that everything that seems like a hurdle of any kind is going to be resolved in like, two scenes.

**Travis:** Yeah. That happens—it happens with C3PO, too.

**Courtney:** Oh yeah, 100%.

**Travis:** Where they're like, "Oh, it's gonna erase his memory." And then someone even says, in the scene, "Doesn't R2D2 have a backup of your memory?"

**Courtney:** Yeah! Literally, he's done! Yeah!

**Travis:** And he's like, "Uhh, who knows! Wuhhh!"

**Courtney:** Now, I will defend that scene, because Babu Frik, I would fucking die for.

**Travis:** Now, yes.

**Courtney:** And Babu Frik? played by Moaning Myrtle from the Harry Potter movies. [laughs]

**Travis:** Oh, really?

**Courtney:** Yes! She was so good!



**Travis:** Oh, that rules. But here's the thing – it's the least interesting choice in all of these, right? Because C3PO losing his memory, and us seeing him meet R2D2 again for the first time, and seeing their friendship start over like they just met... that's way more interesting than R2D2 reestablishing his memory.

**Courtney:** Exactly! Yeah!

**Travis:** That's nothing.

**Courtney:** And like, resetting back to the beginning of *The Force Awakens*, where he's just like, "I'm gonna go with Master Rey to blablabla." Like, what the fuck? But it's... [sighs] Oh my god. I'm so annoyed.

**Travis:** And for example, speaking of other boring options... You have this thing that happens multiple times. They really hang a lantern on it. Of like, Finn has something to tell Rey.

**Courtney:** I'm... so goddamn mad. Because—okay. I will say, of the two options... the reality, and what I thought it was going to be, and a lot of people thought it was going to be, both are terrible. Neither is good. So, what a lot of people thought was that Finn was going to say, "Rey, I have something to tell you. I love youuu!" Sink into quicksand.

**Travis:** Right. Yes.

**Courtney:** The actual confirmed answer is that—that Finn was going to tell Rey he's force sensitive. How do you tell someone that as you die?

**Travis:** Ugh.

**Courtney:** "Rey, I'm force sensitive! Byeeee!"

**Travis:** Is that really it?

**Courtney:** It's—it doesn't mean you have the force.

**Travis:** 'Cause they don't do it in the movie.

**Courtney:** It doesn't mean you have the force. It literally just means like, "I can sense shit! Byeeee!" Like, why would you do that while dying? That's nuts bonkers.

**Travis:** Right. Um, also, uh, Pinn... however you want to say it. Poe and Finn. Uh, I like Pinn better as my ship name.

**Courtney:** It's FinnPoe, is what I think a lot of people go with.

**Travis:** Is it?

**Courtney:** Yep.

**Travis:** Foe?

**Courtney:** FinnPoe.

**Travis:** Okay.

**Courtney:** Yeah.

**Travis:** Um, is that the... nothing. Nothing.

**Courtney:** There's none of that.

**Travis:** And they tease a lot of like, they're... this, by the way, that there's like, a gay moment in a movie. However you want to phrase it, that studios will fuckin' say.

**Courtney:** Fucking god.

**Travis:** And then it's like, a nothing thing, if you're talking about Beauty and the Beast, or it's this, where it's kind of fuzzy in the background. Like, to

the point where, uh, I joked about it on Twitter, because it apparently was removed for the Singapore market, um, that like, I said, "Are you sure? Maybe they just like, looked away for the wrong point four milliseconds." It's nothing.

**Courtney:** The problem—

**Travis:** And there were people who then responded to my tweet like, "No joke, I did look away. I have no idea what they're talking about." Like...

**Courtney:** The problem is, they amped it up. They made it seem like it was going to matter. If they'd said fucking nothing, it would've been really cool. The like, oh—

**Travis:** Instead, it was the most queerbaiting kind of thing.

**Courtney:** In the—like, there's a moment where like, two women kiss. Great.

**Travis:** Yes. It was disgusting.

**Courtney:** Yeah.

**Travis:** Because that's the thing is, for the last however many year—what, six, seven years since Force Awakens was like, in preproduction, people have been asking for LGBTQ+ representation in the Star Wars universe. And for this to be like, the big payoff? Where it's just like, that—hey. That ain't it. Like, Disney, it... and especially to see Oscar Isaac, like, in interviews, say, "I wanted that, and Disney wouldn't let us." Like...

**Courtney:** Well, and that kind of weirdly leads to a thing that was actually trending today, of uh, #ReleaseTheJJCut.

**Travis:** Bleh.

**Courtney:** Which, much like the Snyder cut, isn't a fucking goddamn thing. It's not real. I don't want to ruin your whole lives. I don't want to ruin my mentions, but I already have. It's not real! So, I—okay.

**Travis:** Here's the thing, people. There's gotta be a filter, here, right? That you run through, that if you believe that there is a cut of a movie that—that would have fixed all the problems you have with it... that's like a Shangri-La kind of thing.

**Courtney:** Yeah. That's not real, baby cakes.

**Travis:** That doesn't exist. It might've addressed some issues you have. Right? But I'll tell you this, friends – watch blooper—not bloopers. Deleted scenes, right? On any, like, special edition, any extras on anything. 99 times out of 100, scenes are deleted for a reason. Like—

**Courtney:** Yeah, they're either really boring, or—okay, literally, watch the deleted scenes on Anchor Man, 40 Year Old Virgin, any comedy. The scenes that are deleted are tits.

**Travis:** Mm-hmm.

**Courtney:** They realized like, "Oh, this kind of makes us look like we're just putting tits in for no reason," because they were putting tits in for no reason. There's nothing to add. The deleted scenes do not make things better at all.

**Travis:** Now, is that to say that I think maybe there would've been, I don't know, some script changes or something that maybe JJ Abrams had in mind, or like, a shot or two that got cut? Sure. But the idea that there is like, so much deleted content, or that JJ Abrams, who is an incredibly massively successful director, would be shouted down... Uh, this person that Disney and Star Wars was so excited to have at the helm, that he would have some—that his input would be denied and ignored to such a point that it ruined the movie, is inconceivable to me.

**Courtney:** It's just not a thing. It's not real. And what it comes from—it's one of two things. It is either fans attempting to retcon this ideal movie that

Disney, this like, evil corporation, denied them. Or, quite possibly... it's the JJ Abrams PR machine saying like, "Well, I tried to make this the movie you wanted, and they wouldn't let me." It's one of the two.

**Travis:** Yeah.

**Courtney:** And I don't know which one is more likely, frankly. Like, I... a poll that I did on Twitter tells me that more people are more likely to believe it's just fans being assholes. But like, I've been in the celebrity gossip world long enough to know that like, people really try to like, fix their PR situation.

I don't know what—I don't know what the answer is. But for one reason or another, people are basically saying like, "This movie could've been everything we ever dreamed!" And no, it was never going to be. Finn and Poe were never gonna make out. We were never going to have—

**Travis:** There was never an hour long storyline with Rose. Y'know?

**Courtney:** Yeah. Rose was never supposed to be over here. Like, that shit was never gonna happen. They fucked up. They made the movie they made.

**Travis:** Which, by the way, that was such—it was so painfully ob—there was literally an exchange where Finn looks at Rose and says like, "Come with us!" And she's like, "Well, I gotta stay here and bullshit bullshit bullshit."

**Courtney:** "No no, I have to stay here." And they came out and said that like... so, okay. The co-writer with JJ Abrams. There was one—okay, I want to address this. There was one viral tweet that was some like, right-wing fuckturd who said like, "These are the writers of Empire, and these are the writers of Rise of Skywalker."

**Travis:** Oh, right. Yeah yeah yeah.

**Courtney:** And so, one was a picture of George Lucas, and y'know, two men. Lords, Kazdan, et cetera. And then, the other picture was like, a panel of women. Women of color, specifically. No. That's not what happened. This

movie was written by two men. JJ Abrams and Chris Terrio. Chris Terrio also wrote Batman vs. Superman: Dawn of Justice.

**Travis:** Huh.

**Courtney:** Showing that, frankly, if white men fuck up in Hollywood, they're gonna be given a whole other chance. Like a big, fancy chance.

**Travis:** Big chance. Yeah.

**Courtney:** Big, fancy chance.

**Travis:** This isn't like, "Ehh, one more chance!" This is like, "Would you like to do, perhaps, the most anticipated movie of the decade?"

**Courtney:** [sighs] And so, Chris Terrio actually blamed, uh, Rose being admitted from the film as much as she was, on... they had a whole plan for her having all these scenes with Carrie Fisher. Well, with the footage they had of Carrie Fisher, they could not make it look realistic.

**Travis:** Okay.

**Courtney:** That... I'm not here to assign intent. That feels like a real fuckin' cop out.

**Travis:** Not only a cop out. Like, yeah, hey, here's the thing. It is a cop out. Because you can't say that, and then say, "So we didn't do anything else."

**Courtney:** Exactly. Carrie was dead the whole time. Carrie had nothing to do with this. I hope she haunts everyone, and sends them cow tongues.

**Travis:** Carrie was dead to begin with.

**Courtney:** Because that's what Carrie would do. But like, she was fuckin' dead. She had—there was eight minutes of footage that they had.

**Travis:** Right.

**Courtney:** From The Force Awakens. They make it very clear that the footage they had was from Force Awakens. They did not hit Last Jedi, in terms of whatever footage they had leftover.

**Travis:** Right. So you can't say, "We had to change our plans mid-stream," 'cause you hadn't even gotten in the boat yet.

**Courtney:** You fucking knew she was dead.

**Travis:** It was clear—

**Courtney:** Carrie's been dead three years.

**Travis:** Right. And you introduced new characters. You had scenes that Rose could have been in.

**Courtney:** Can we talk about—

**Travis:** Like, Rose could've been with them at Babu Frik's. Rose could've been—

**Courtney:** Dominic fucking Monaghan, who I love...

**Travis:** Right!

**Courtney:** I love Dominic Monaghan. What the fuck was he doing in this movie?!

**Travis:** Yeah.

**Courtney:** Other than JJ Abrams being like, "I'm having all my friends in this movie! I'm gonna have my boy Greg, my girl Carrie, my boy Dom!" Like, there was no fucking point for Dominic Monaghan to have as many lines as he did.

**Travis:** And it's completely obvious. Like, that's the thing, is like, it was... so obvious. I mean, I saw—somebody calculated, and Rose has like, a minute and 15 seconds of screen time.

**Courtney:** Yeah.

**Travis:** And like, Moff Tarkin, who is another CGI creation of a deceased actor, has more screen time than that. The thing is, it is... it is so calculated. It is so intentional as to be disgusting to me.

**Courtney:** I mean, like, my theory... I'm not going to say this is what they did. But my theory is, they were like, the angry fans don't like Rose. So let's take Rose out of the movie.

**Travis:** Oh, yeah. 100%, I think so. Yeah.

**Courtney:** And fuck that. Fuck that.

**Travis:** Yeah.

**Courtney:** Because she got death threats.

**Travis:** But not take her out all the way. We'll leave her in enough so that people who liked her will get to see her a little bit.

**Courtney:** They always leave the wiggle room. You leave enough wiggle room. Because they're like, "Well, no, she was in the movie, and we wanted to have her in more, but we just couldn't! Oh, you understand our struggle!" Like, no. Kelly Marie Tran deserved fucking better.

**Travis:** Yep.

**Courtney:** Ugh! I have strong feelings.

[theme music plays]



**Brent:** And for this next segment, we are going to do an oldie, but a goodie, depending on who you ask. It's the Politics Roundup, and we've got some politics to update you on today, starting with... uh, Travis, you're gonna talk to us about impeachment?

**Travis:** Yeah, so, the long and short—

**Brent:** That old chestnut.

**Travis:** Yes. The long and short of the impeachment update is... not a lot has happened in the last two weeks. Uh, Congress has been, y'know, on winter vacation. However, the stuff that hasn't happened is important.

Speaker of the House, Nancy Pelosi, has held off delivering the articles of impeachment to the Senate. She is hoping that the Democratic Senate minority leader, Chuck Schumer, can negotiate the outline of the trial with Mitch McConnell to include witnesses and other evidence and documents that has previously been denied.

However, McConnell, as well as other Republicans, wants the decision of on witnesses to be made after the House impeachment officers and the Trump defense have presented their cases. And just to be clear – and god, I can't believe I'm saying this – in McConnell's defense...

**Brent:** Oh no!

**Courtney:** Oh no.

**Travis:** Specifically about this one point, right? That is how they did it at the Clinton trial. The Clinton impeachment. They made the decision on like, evidence and witnesses after the cases had been made. So, we've only had like, the three impeachments, sooo... there is something you could say about like, precedent. However, we all know the actual like, underlying, y'know, ulterior motive. So like...

**Brent:** Yeah. And as we've learned in the last three years, a lot of things the framers had in mind assumed that politicians had a sense of shame.

**Travis:** Yes.

**Brent:** So we're learning a lot.

**Travis:** So, and here's the thing – I'm not even assuming here – it's everything else Mitch McConnell has said publically is like, no, he just wants to get the trial over with quickly, so he's hoping that once it gets started, it'll just keep rolling and be done in no time. Because the other thing that's important here is, the Democrats, the Senate Democrats, would need four Republican votes for a simple majority to include the witnesses, and um, documents after the trial has begun.

Whereas, if they can get an agreement between Mitch McConnell and Chuck Schumer beforehand, uh, like, then it doesn't have to go to a vote. Uh, now, there are those that are worried that Pelosi's delay will undercut any kind of urgency the Democrats might try to voice about the proceedings that something that has been happening all along the way is saying, "We need this, we need this, we need this. We can't go into the 2020 election without impeachment," so any delay kind of undercuts that.

However, even in the last couple days, new documents have been made public that paint an even clearer picture of Trump's conduct relating to withholding funds from Ukraine in exchange for favors. Uh, Schumer has pointed to this document, published on the website JustSecurity.org, as a clear cut example of why the trial must contain witnesses.

**Brent:** Yeah. It's... [sighs] I mean like, I still think that, as a matter of principle, it was right to impeach Trump. Because if you don't, then like, that's setting a precedent that you can absolutely—like, any president can absolutely get away with this completely unscathed forever. But like we talked about before he got impeached, that doesn't mean it's gonna, like... certainly not remove him, or even end up being good.

Because you know what Trump will do. The Republicans will rig the Senate trial to be quick, easy, and completely harmless to Trump. And then they'll all take a victory lap on how he was unimpeachable. It's pretty dumb.

**Travis:** Which is literally not true.

**Brent:** Yeah. [laughs]

**Courtney:** So, this week, Joe Biden told voters... the headline, specifically, was that Joe Biden told voters that he would select a Republican running mate if he felt like it. [sighs] That's not the full story, but the full story is not much better. Um, basically, at a New Hampshire campaign event, Joe Biden was asked if he might choose a Republican as a running mate. Joe Biden said, "The answer is, I would, but I can't think of one now."

**Travis:** Okay.

**Courtney:** So... there's that. And it was a lot of like, hemming and hawing of like, "There are some good Republicans, but they're, y'know, they're also not." And then he said... and I'm gonna read this quote. Because what it says is nothing. "Whoever I would pick for vice president, and there's a lot of qualified women. There's a lot of qualified African Americans. There really, truly are."

**Travis:** Oh, cool.

**Courtney:** "There's a plethora of really qualified people. Whomever I would pick, were I fortunate enough to be your nominee, I would pick someone who was simpatico with me. Who knew what I, what my priorities were, and I what I wanted, too."

**Brent:** [sighs]

**Courtney:** [sighs]

**Travis:** Okay. That's nothing.

**Courtney:** No, what he said was nothing.

**Travis:** Like, this is... this—I mean, this is... this is that having your cake and eating it too shit.

**Courtney:** Exactly. It's—he's basically trying to appeal to everyone, where he's just like, "It could be a Republican. It could be a woman. It could be a black person." As though none of those things ever intersect! [laughs]

**Travis:** "It could be my own clone."

**Brent:** Right. Well... god, there's so much going on. First off, this is the guy that, in 2007, got in trouble, rightly so, for describing African American candidate, Obama, as "clean and articulate."

**Courtney:** Oh my god. Also, Anita Hill. That's all we fucking need to say with this chode.

**Brent:** For sure. But also, like—

**Courtney:** Anita fucking Hill. He's bad at black people!

**Brent:** True. And strategically, Biden comes from this school of thought that Democrats need to run to the right in order to court independence and otherwise Republican voters. But we're past that age. We're past that time. If you're a Trump voter, you know you're a Trump voter, and I don't think a lot of Trump voting—I—okay. I want Trump voters to be convinced by progressive populist left policies, but if somebody's still 100% for Trump now, then they're probably immovable.

But also, the people, in my opinion, that the biggest—actually, no. Statistically speaking, the biggest room to grow in the Democratic voter base is young people and leftists. So running to the right is just gonna turn those people off. I say this all the time, but like, the centrists are gonna vote for anyone who's not Trump. They're more built in. They'll vote for a Warren or a Bernie or a Yang if they have to, because it'll beat Trump.

But the purity test leftists, and the young millennials who otherwise would stay home... those are the ones that actually, y'know, need to be courted, IMO.

**Courtney:** That's the really upsetting thing, is that, for the Democratic establishment as people know it, the idea of reaching across the aisle centrism, it's always the left reaching right. It is literally never the right reaching anywhere near left. It's basically like... the Democratic party has become the party of trying to be the bigger person. And it doesn't fucking work. You can't constantly be the bigger person.

**Brent:** Well, it's like trying to be the bigger person while also somehow being spineless.

**Courtney:** Yeah!

**Brent:** And I think so much of it is the fact that, y'know, you've seen Willy Wonka, where he like, he says, "[flatly] Help. Somebody. Get help. Please." And he doesn't really mean it. So often, I think that the high level Democrat operatives, and y'know, your Chuck Schumers, for instance, um, they like a certain kind of corporate-friendly status quo. They just also like to be seen as fighting the worst of what Republicans are doing.

**Courtney:** People on the right are reaching left in the way of like... y'know what? Maybe we can let, like, the gay people get married, maybe. Like, it's such, like, tiny fucking steps. Whereas, the left trying to like, reach some bipartisan companionship with the right, it's like... just dismantling the rights of the marginalized at every fucking turn.

**Brent:** Right. And we should draw a distinction between bipartisanship, in terms of the voter base, versus uh, Congress. Like, when Congress is being bipartisan—

**Courtney:** Honestly, when I think bipartisan, I'm thinking of Congress.

**Brent:** Totally.

**Courtney:** I have never thought of bipartisan as having anything to do with voters. Because it doesn't. It has nothing to do with voters.

**Brent:** Right. And y'know, the things that voters are partisan about don't always, uh, coincide. But also, like, I will say, when Congress is truly bipartisan, I typically smell a rat. 'Cause it's like, "Wait wait wait wait wait. All of y'all that say that the other side is absolutely untenable and ruining America and terrible for the world... y'all are getting along on this one? Why?"

'Cause either, it's because it's so obviously the right thing to do... yeah, sometimes that's the case. And a lot of times, it's because like, "Nah, we're all gonna make out great from this."

**Travis:** Or just, "We're all gonna make out," which is what I thought you were gonna say.

**Courtney:** Yeah.

**Brent:** Honestly, I think we'd have a much more productive Congress if they all just made out. Consensually, but if it was all like Cats.

**Courtney:** 2020: Let's all fuuuck!

**Brent:** All that Cats horniness just dancing around the halls of Congress.

**Courtney:** Yep. Catgress?

**Travis:** Jelliclecrats and—

**Courtney:** [laughs]

**Brent:** [laughs] Republicats and Jelliclecats! Jellicle Demo—forget it, I fucked it up. Alright.

**Courtney:** [laughing]

**Brent:** So, that primed us pretty well for this next story that's gonna start in Bernieland and then zoom out to the bigger, uh, Democratic race situation. You've heard me talk for years about how the mainstream corporate-owned media smears, and often just fails to mention, progressive presidential candidates. Particularly in 2020, we've seen Warren and Yang's presences minimized or framed unfavorably. And so often, mainstream media pundits and outlets will just not mention Bernie Sanders.

If he's polling second in a state, it'll be reported as, "Biden holding strong, Buttigieg rising!" And you'd think, at least PBS, which is publically funded, would be a little bit more honest. But every week, Brooks and Shields, they report on PBS, and every week, they act like Bernie literally doesn't exist, and they just perpetuate the electability myth, which is so much of what Biden's riding on.

Um, and there are multiple videos you can Google that show super cuts of the mainstream media. When they do mention Sanders, they smear him any way they can, or at one point, CNN was caught using a doctored photo that made him look kind of cankered and older. Which is hard to do. He's already pretty old.

Um, so you can imagine how this is—

**Courtney:** [sings] Welcome to being a woman!

**Brent:** You can imagine it was a surprise when Politico dropped the headline, "Democratic insiders say Bernie could win the nomination." Um, obviously, I think the Democratic party establishment has known this for a while, as evidenced by the fact that they did so much work with the mainstream media, particularly outlets like NBC and CNN, to like, minimize progressive candidates in 2016.

They even did that switcheroo with the super delegate votes to make it seem like Hillary had this enormous lead, but so many of them were votes that couldn't even be cast 'til June. They will do it again, but this time with Biden, if they can. Or Buttigieg, if they're feelin' like Biden isn't gonna work,

which he might not be able to. Or even if they're feelin' really saucy, Klobuchar. And by saucy, I mean boring and moderate and status quo.

So anyway, a number of mainstream outlets ran with Politico's headline, and it was, for me, like... weird to see them even acknowledging Bernie's polling and his base in a way they almost never do. It's a big change from like, for instance, CNN's recent choice to use an outdated poll that like, made it seem like Buttgieg was kickin' ass in Iowa, and Sanders was in fourth place, but actually, it's like, Bernie's in first or second. But like, they use that poll to make it seem like their guy, Buttgieg, and also Biden, were doing better.

Julian Castro even called that out on Twitter. By the way, he just left the race, which Courtney, is, I think, a bummer for you, right? You were a big fan?

**Courtney:** I am a big fan. I'm not necessarily bummed that he, uh, left his campaign, because I see him as a VP. I see him as something—

**Brent:** For sure. He absolutely could be.

**Courtney:** —in someone's White House.

**Brent:** Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm. And if not, I think he could be, certainly, in multiple positions in the cabinet.

**Courtney:** Yeah.

**Brent:** He's a bright guy. And I mean, he's young. Like, who knows what his future looks like?

**Courtney:** He's going to be in the White House at some point.

**Brent:** Yeah.

**Courtney:** I don't know in what role, but we need him. I think he's wonderful.



**Brent:** Yeah. And so, with the fact that we see this acknowledgement, this rare acknowledgement of a progressive candidate, particularly Bernie, because y'know, Elizabeth Warren... Even though they sometimes minimize and smear her, she's gotten a different kind of coverage as the race has gone on. But like, this doesn't mean the establishment's suddenly gonna get behind him. You're going to see more propaganda against progressive policies, which is already happening in Iowa.

In Iowa, a healthcare industry front group called The Partnership for America's Healthcare Future has spent as least a million dollars on ads that dishonestly bash Medicare for All. Like, they say like, "It'll raise premiums!" But like, the Medicare for All bill does away with premiums. Like, just the— it's like, specifically lying to frame it like, "Oh, they're gonna take away your healthcare!" Like, as if anyone in America likes their health insurance plan. Fuck that.

Anyway, um, more of that will continue to crop up, and some voters may believe it. But I just want to touch on the overall shape of the Democratic race, since we haven't like, zoomed out much on that in the past month of impeachment and Christmas. Um, so like, after the first debate, I thought, and y'know, was kind of a big deal on the show. I was like, okay. While I still like Bernie's ideas and policies a little more than Elizabeth, she's also got great ideas, and she's a better spokesperson for them than Bernie in some ways.

And I think a lot of people hedge their bets between Bernie and Elizabeth, thinking maybe she's more electable; though, maybe she didn't score quite as high on like, the leftist purity test. She's also a woman, and like, cynically speaking, many voters... well, okay. Many voters, uncynically, just want to see a woman in the White House, partly as a matter of, "Hey, it's about time." And partly as like, revenge for Donald Trump perpetuating the glass ceiling last time around.

Um, but Warren has dropped in the polling recently, and there's a pretty specific moment where she dropped. That's when she clarified her stance on Medicare for All, and kind of pulled back on it. She kind of softened her position.

**Courtney:** Can I break in real quick? Do you think that—

**Brent:** Please. Please.

**Courtney:** Do you think that people... [pause] And I felt this way about Clinton, too. But do you think there are people who just like Warren because she's a woman? Because that's kind of what that implied. Where it's like, she's got great ideas, and she's a woman.

**Brent:** Well, let me tell you from my perspective. The reason I donated to Warren was because I went, "Okay, I like her policies, and I like that she's a woman." So if I'm the only person in America that gave her points for being a woman, I'll own that. But the thing is like, yeah, there's sexism. I know what you're getting at, and it's bad, and I wish I could fix it. But like, I'm not saying anybody likes her *just* because she's a woman. But like, there are reasons... there are statistical reasons, cynical though they be, that certain people play up what makes them who they are. We're in an identity politics landscape.

**Courtney:** But wouldn't you think it's more likely that people hate her because she's a woman than like her 'cause she's a woman?

**Brent:** Well, that does—those aren't mutually exclusive.

**Travis:** Well, if I may—

**Brent:** Those aren't mutually exclusive.

**Travis:** If I may play moderator for a second, I think you are both saying similar things, but from different... in different ways. Because I think what Brent is saying is that there are *some* people, *some* voters, who are excited about the idea of having a woman in the White House for different reasons, who would be excited to cast a vote for a woman. And I think the Courtney's point, there are plenty of people out there who will say that they would vote for anybody, or that they're excited to have a Democrat in the house, but will find reasons why that candidate shouldn't be Elizabeth Warren, or shouldn't be a different woman running.

**Brent:** Sure.

**Travis:** I do—I don't think that Elizabeth Warren would ever win the nomination or the presidency *because* she is a woman. I think that there are people out there, uh, myself included, who would be very excited to see a woman in the White House, uh, that that is definitely—would be a factor for some people to vote for her. Uh, not the only factor, mind you. But I do not think, oh god, as much as I wish this was true, I don't think we live in a society where, right now, the fact that she is a woman, uh, is a net benefit.

**Brent:** No, it's probably not net helping her.

**Courtney:** I think that's a big thing, and I think that it happened last time, too. But like, this has been—it's been very hard to argue, because when you say this, what is heard is, "If you don't like Elizabeth Warren, it's because you're a misogynist." That's not the fucking case. That's genuinely not the case. But, if she wins, it won't be because she's a woman. But if she loses, it might be because she's a woman. And that's a specific thing that exists for female candidates.

Now, that does not mean people who don't like her are a misogynist, and that's what this conversation always inevitably becomes.

**Travis:** Mm-hmm.

**Courtney:** And it takes away the conversation entirely. The conversation doesn't happen. And it's... it's just—I don't mean to butt in on this that has nothing to do with that. It's just, I've been seeing it a lot more, and it's been really frustrating. It's been very, very frustrating.

**Travis:** Oh, listen.

**Courtney:** I'm—no, I'm saying—I know you're in—you're in the middle, Travis. I'm just saying this to Brent. I don't want him to feel like I'm attacking him.

**Brent:** Well, we see this from different ways. I think I see this like an ESPN guy, and you see this as a woman who I just don't understand that perspective, so I don't see it—and I mean, not just a woman. But like, you see it from your perspective, and I'm sittin' here callin' balls and strikes. Like, there's a reason that Elizabeth Warren dropped in the polls from where she was. Now, where she was has a lot of reasons.

**Courtney:** Yeah, no, I'm—and I'm never trying to make anyone feel like they're bad or wrong. I just... it's frustrating.

**Brent:** No, no, I'm just saying like, what I'm sort of getting at in the big picture is, she was doing well. Um, in the progressive lane. There are basically two lanes in this Democratic election. The primary, I mean. There's—

**Travis:** Yeah, as far as ideology goes.

**Brent:** Right. There's like, the more centrist sort of Republican-lite side, which is Biden and sort of now Buttigieg. Certainly Klobuchar. And there's the progressive lane, which is like, uh, Warren, Sanders, to a certain extent Yang, but he's kind of a wild card.

And... so the thing is, unfortunately, the people that are gonna ideologically line up with that progressive lane are the kind of people that have purity tests with certain policies and ideas. I think Warren wanted to make herself more palatable and more "electable," which is like, certainly a strategy that I'm sure a lot of smart people have told her to do. I have my opinions, but like, I'm just one person.

But it seems like when she softened her Medicare for All stance, you had all these people going, "Hey, I wanted you to really fight as hard as you said you were going to, and now it sounds like you're getting shaky. If you can't stick to this now, are you gonna be able to stick to it in the general?"

Um, and I feel like that's why you're seeing the purist versions of both lanes, uh, rising to the top. Unwavering Biden, and unwavering Bernie. And it's just... it sucks, 'cause like I said at the beginning of this whole deal, when

those who—y'know, when we found out Warren and Sanders were running... if everything's equal, I would strongly prefer a woman. It is bonkers we have not had a woman in the White House. And it's about time.

But at the same time, like, I mean—it's just one of those hairy things where, depending on which perspective you look at it from, different feelings come out. The things I get frustrated about aren't typically that, and that's because of my limited specific perspective.

**Travis:** But if I may, if I—and I don't mean to put you on the spot, Brent... if you were to power rank, right, the current candidate. So, as far as who you would vote for, am I right in thinking it goes Bernie Sanders, Elizabeth Warren, and then other people?

**Brent:** Absolutely.

**Travis:** See, I think that's the thing that boggles my mind most, is that, in this, right now, that the two top contenders are not unequivocally those two candidates. Like, I just saw a thing on CNN where they said, like—they power ranked the candidates, and they had the top three as Biden, Sanders, Buttigieg, Warren, Klobuchar.

**Brent:** Let me tell you something. Power ranking on CNN is literally made up.

**Travis:** Yeah.

**Brent:** Literally, like, when Chris Cillizza goes, "Here's my power rankings!" Y'know what his power rankings were six months ago? Cory Booker, Kamala Harris, Amy Klobuchar, and I think Buttigieg. And like, they're all great people. No, actually, Buttigieg is a pain in the ass and is turning out to be not so great. But um...

**Courtney:** Klobuchar can keep her snow boots. She's not leaving Minnesota.

**Brent:** [laughs] But like, the thing is, you're right, Travis. And this is sort of um, going hand in—I mean, there's a narrative. Uh, and Biden, I think, just continues to ride the fact that, people who aren't watching the debates and aren't paying attention think of Obama, and they think that he's tough. That he's tough enough to go up against Trump, and they're not listening to what he's saying. They're not watching the clips. They're not on Twitter, seeing how he's just getting raked for, uh, y'know like, bad politics, but also like, he's... he just has ended up looking kind of shaky.

Whereas like, I've never seen Warren look shaky. The whole campaign. She is strong, she is bold, she has... but like, also, as you've mentioned before, Courtney, because people don't like a woman being a certain kind of shrill or whatever, she's found a really good balance. I think, again, her downfall is, she didn't really pick a specific lane in an election where there's really like, the establishment and the antiestablishment.

I would love to see her in a cabinet position. Uh, or as a VP, or like—

**Travis:** I want to see her in the White House.

**Brent:** Say again?

**Travis:** I want to see her in the White House. Like, that—

**Brent:** I do too, but with a different set of policies. Like, that's what it comes down to for me.

**Travis:** Here's what I'll say, though. To both of your points, though, like, the thing that I—to—to marry the two ideas... I think that, while she has, uh, lost some points in the progressive kind of lane, it's so weird to me that Buttigieg seems to be gaining ground, and she is losing ground. And that, to me, is enough to say to me like, there is an imbalance of the yardstick to which we judge candidates by based on gender, that Elizabeth Warren, because she kind of walked back her Medicare for all stance, might lose ground to Pete Buttigieg, is so unfair.

**Brent:** It's bonkers. It is bonkers.

**Courtney:** Purity test is different. The purity test is different for Elizabeth Warren than it is for Bernie Sanders. I think there are people for whom Bernie Sanders can do no wrong. He literally can't. Like, he could say and do anything, and people will still support him. Like, the people that love him will love him. And that's fine. That's fine. He's great. Do I have an issue with some of the people who support him, that I think he doesn't, frankly, deserve? Like, yeah. But the purity test is always going to be different.

**Brent:** Think that's a good place to end it. Y'all want to do Tidbits?

**Courtney:** Yeah.

**Travis:** Yes! Yes.

**Brent:** Tid me up!

**Travis:** I'm ready to tid everyone! Oh. Y'know what... um, so, on New Year's Eve, while greeting followers, Pope Francis' hand was grabbed by a woman. She was excited and forceful in the grab, and nearly pulled him off his feet. In videos, he is visibly angry, and slapped the woman hand, uh... I wrote here, 'slapped it away.' Slapped the woman's hand is more accurate.

Now, on the one – no pun intended – hand, I think he had every right to be cross. That pun *is* intended. He was caught off guard, and it was probably painful. On the other hand... he is the Pope. And while this has not, y'know, normally been true in practice, in theory, he's supposed to be a religious leader who sets an example of Christ-like behavior.

It's one of those things where I think that, if you get to hold a position that less than 100 people across all of time have held, like... you should probably be held to a higher standard. Like, say, Pope, Dalai Lama, president... Uh, and that Christ-like behavior would include, among other things, turning the other cheek.

Now, Pope Francis apologized the next day, before delivering a New Year's Day sermon, speaking about violence against women, among other things.

**Brent:** I'll say this – Christ did some weird stuff. Like, he got real mad about a market in the temple and like, turned some tables over. At one point, he was like, “Hey, this tree isn’t bearing any fruit!” Even though the Bible says that it wasn’t in season. And he’s like, “I’m gonna make sure that tree fuckin’ dies!” Like, okay.

But also, Travis... you are, let’s be real, among the three of us, the closest to the Pope level of celebrity. And sometimes, when you're like, stressed, you've been going all day, you're trying to, y'know, like, be on, if somebody just sets you off, like... I don't know. I 100%, despite the fact that the Catholic church and I have some... I have some serious beef with not just the church, but also, he’s fucked up in certain ways. But like, I get it.

**Courtney:** It’s what everyone says about this podcast, that Travis is the Pope of Trends Like These.

**Travis:** Yeah. Listen.

**Brent:** [laughs] I'm just saying, like...

**Courtney:** Papes Like These. That’s what they call it every time.

**Travis:** Right? Am I right?

**Courtney:** I thought it was a Newsies reference, but it’s not!

**Travis:** That’s also very Newsies. Yeah. Oh, okay.

**Brent:** I just think, I give him an absolutely pass, because—

**Travis:** Would I strike someone?

**Brent:** He was probably just cranky, and she was really grabbin’ him.



**Travis:** Here's the thing. Here's what I would say. I might get angry at that person, and I might like, yell at them, or like, give them a real tongue lashing. But the idea of like, striking someone in anger, uh, especially someone who, as far as I can tell, is just super excited to see him and wants to, y'know, touch the Pope? Like, that... that, to me, no.

I can't see myself ever striking someone in anger. Uh, for a lot of reasons, mostly boiled down to... if your go to reaction to getting angry is to hit someone, that's bad. Um, and I've worked really hard for that not to be my go to angry reaction. And like, that's the long and the short of it, to me.

If he had yelled at her, if he had gotten angry, if he had, I don't know, whatever... but to hit somebody because you are angry? Like, I'm working hard right now to teach my three year old not to do that. And to see the Pope do it is not good.

**Brent:** Yeah, I guess. The thing is like, I looked at the video, and now I'm looking at it again like, as we speak. I want to just double check, 'cause I don't want anybody to think that I'm somehow apologizing for assault. I guess I just feel like... it—I don't know. Like, it was inappropriate at a certain point, but it was, as slaps go, I feel like that was a, "Hey, enough." That was an intense pat.

**Travis:** Eh.

**Courtney:** I also feel like this was some standard Pope touching, though. You're the Pope.

**Travis:** Right.

**Courtney:** This is not a thing where it's like, "You're a celebrity. People are gonna do a thing." Like, but I've seen lots of pictures of like, y'know, uh... my Italian people, we fuckin' loved John Paul II. Every Italian grandma has a framed picture of him in their house. He—he had people like, literally like, just hanging on his leg. Like, that just seemed normal.

**Travis:** Right. It's that hem of your garment stuff, y'know what I mean? Like, that—it seems to go part and parcel with the job. That's the thing is, too, if like—once again, not to—because I also think that, in many ways, her behavior is violent, right? Albeit, in an excited way. But I think that it's clear he's like, walking the line, and she's like, the next person in line, and he turns to leave. And so, she reacts in panic, that she won't get to—and like, grabs him.

**Brent:** And you can see in the video like, in terms of storytelling, film storytelling, unintentional though it is, she is pumped. She's lookin' at him, she's breathing hard, she does the sign of the cross, here he comes... aaand then he turns the other way. So like, y'know...

**Travis:** Right.

**Brent:** There's a lot going on there. Uhh, one more tid. Um... [clears throat] Here it is. The next step in a line of measures against vaping in the United States. This week, the FDA banned most fruit and mint flavored cartridge-based vaping products. Companies that manufacture, sell, and distribute these products have 30 days to comply.

Now, let me be clear – the new restrictions do make exceptions for tobacco and menthol flavored vaping products, and we're not talking about like, the local vape shop where you go buy a vial of juice. We're talking about mass produced cartridge-based vaping products, like Juul, Vuse, Blu, the kind of thing that are either one time use cigarette-shaped, and/or they have a little cartridge you attach to them.

The measure is being framed as an attempt to curb teen vaping. Now, I've gotten some shit for this before, and this is how I feel. This will actually curb more smokers from quitting than it will curb teens from vaping. Um, I don't think teen vaping of mass produced products... in a world with all the stuff that's going on right now, I don't think that's an epidemic that's worth curbing personal liberties in this way, and here's why.

The whole catalyst for this was a bunch of reports that people were getting sick and dying from a mysterious vaping disease. And after a bunch of

research, the CDC concluded, it's from an additive in illegal cartridges of marijuana extract – which, side note, should be regulated, legal, and thereby, y'know, like, safer in the first place. But it was not from mass produced nicotine vape products, which have been around for a while.

So, while teen vaping, yeah, it's a problem. I don't want that to happen. I'm all for raising the age of nicotine purchases to 21. It just like... it feels like an arbitrary overreach that will hurt a very specific part of the industry, and ultimately, help the people selling old fashioned, proven to cause cancer cigarettes. That's my two cents.

**Dan:** Hey, I'm Dan McCoy.

**Stuart:** I'm Stuart Wellington.

**Elliott:** And I'm Elliott Kalan. Together, we're The Flop House.

**Stuart:** A podcast where we watch a bad movie, and then talk about it.

**Elliott:** Movies like Space Hobos, Into the Outer Reaches of the Unknown and the Things We Don't Know: The Movie, and also, Who's That Grandma?

**Stuart:** Zazzle Zippers, Breakdown 2, and Backhanded Compliment.

**Dan:** Elvis is a Policeman.

**Elliott:** Baby Crocodile and the Happy Twins.

**Dan:** Leftover Potatoes?

**Stuart:** Station Wagon 3.

**Elliott:** Herby Goes to Hell.

**Dan:** New episodes available every other Saturday.

**Elliott:** Available at MaximumFun.org, or wherever you get your podcasts.  
Bye!

**Stuart:** Bye!

**Dan:** Bye!

[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!

**Brent:** Now it's time for our Wi-Five of the week. Each week, we scour the internet for examples of folks doing good things and being good people, and

we choose one or more to whom we'd like to give an internet high five, or Wi-Five.

[Wi-Five slap]

**Brent:** Today's Wi-Five includes multiple people and organizations, but it's all centered around the idea of cancelling medical debt. One of the sad things about living in America is that you can be bankrupted by being injured or getting sick. Eventually, if people are unable to pay their medical debts in a timely fashion, the debt is sold for pennies on the dollar to collection agencies. And according to online data reported by ABC affiliate, WNEP News, 26% of Americans say they have problems paying those bills.

At that point, the debt can be cancelled for a much cheaper amount than was originally charged, and that's exactly what has recently been done by various organizations like Christian Assembly Church in Eagle Rock, California, which raised money to wipe out more than five million dollars of medical debt.

Meanwhile, St. Luke's Episcopal Church in Birmingham, Alabama, which cancelled more than seven million dollars' worth of medical debt, um... I think I said that incorrectly, but yeah, they did that. And over the past six months, the nonprofit Methodist Le Bonheur... it's a French word. I'm not sure I'm pronouncing it correctly. Methodist Le Bonheur Hospital system erased 11.9 million dollars of debts owed.

When I was considering this story for the Wi-Five, I thought about the fact that some so-called uplifting stories are actually just perseverance porn that celebrates people fighting valiantly against a terrible system instead of criticizing the terrible system. But I don't feel that way here, because you can do something about this problem right now, and I have myself by going to [RIPMedicalDebt.org](http://RIPMedicalDebt.org).

And I'm sure there are other organizations. This is just the one that I found that I like. But every hundred dollars you donate erases ten thousand dollars' worth of medical debt. So if you've got an extra five, ten, 20, or 100 dollars, you can make a huge difference in the life of someone struggling in

this terrible American healthcare hell scape, and make the world a little closer to how it probably should be.

But meanwhile, to Christian Assembly Church, St. Luke's Episcopal Church, and Methodist Le Bonheur Hospital System, and everyone else who erased medical debt this past year... Wi-Five.

[theme music plays]

**Travis:** Alright folks, that's gonna do it for us. Thank you so much for tuning in. Uh, first, my big announcement is that uh, by this time next week, one way or the other, I will have a new baby.

**Courtney:** Yaaay!

**Travis:** And so, this is probably my last episode for a while. I'll be takin' some, y'know, paternity leave, so as to help my wife take care of, y'know, our two kids. Um, but I—I will miss you all so much. Um, also, I wouldn't leave without plugging some stuff.

We got some new fun merch over at McElroyMerch.com, including some pins based on The Adventure Zone: Graduation, so go check those out. And also, we have uh, turned The Adventure Zone: Balance... well, we've created a board game inspired by The Adventure Zone: Balance. It is an expanded universe game, so you play all new characters that you create, you tell the story, all of that.

The preorder is going on now, and it's only for the next three weeks, so you can go to TheAdventureZoneGame.com and preorder there. We did it in conjunction with Twogether Studios, who uh, also are the ones who made one of my favorite games of all time, Illimat. So, go check it out. TheAdventureZoneGame.com.

**Courtney:** So you can find my stuff at SYFY Fangrrls. I have been tirelessly doing end of year lists. If you don't know what that's like, it's real hard for an editor! And so, please go to SYFY Fangrrls, read the stuff. I'm also the

chief recapper, as I was last year, of Doctor Who this season, so please tune into those, and... yeah, see you guys there.

And also, yay for Travis and Teresa and Bebe, and we wish them all the luck and the safety and the health in the world! We love that precious family, and we welcome our new best friend!

**Brent:** Could not agree more. Um, and meanwhile, I am, uh... I have started a new podcast called Question Box. Started in July, so there are now uh, 24? 25 episodes? It's the game show podcast of shockingly personal questions. So if you like TMI talk, if you like, um... if you like just hearin' juicy stuff about people that they've never admitted publically, definitely tune in.

We've got Travis McElroy. We've got Dave Bulmer. We've got Courtney Enlow. And also, a lot of other people you have and maybe have not heard of. So uh, we are on all of the major podcast platforms. Give us a try. It's called Question Box.

**Travis:** Alright! And uh, let's see, go check out all the other amazing shows on MaximumFun.org. If you liked this episode, tell a friend. Uh, keep tuning in, and uh... we'll see you next time! Brent and Courtney, am I forgetting anything?

**Courtney:** Yes, you forgot that... [sings] Macavity's the mystery cat! There's no one—

**Travis:** Ew.

**Courtney:** He's also a weird antagonist of the movie, even though he's just a cat. It's a fucked up movie, people! [sighs]

**Brent:** See ya next time.

**Courtney:** Macavityyy!

[theme music plays]

**Travis:** Fuckin'—cut Mustin out of—Mustin, cut Brent out of the show!

**Brent:** Uh—[sci-fi teleportation sound effect]

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