

Trends Like These 251: Impeachment Trial Begins, RIP Mr Peanut, Deadly New Virus From China, Gritty Being Investigated for Assault?, HUGE Supreme Court Decision, Uber Disappointing AGAIN, The Sad State of Plastic Recycling, Trump Cuts School Lunches and Regrets 'The Whole Vaping Thing', Space Force Uniforms are... Camo???

Published on January 24th, 2020

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

Courtney: This week: Trump likes fries, Mr. Peanut dies, and plastic recycling lies?

Brent: I'm Brent Black.

Courtney: I'm Courtney Enlow.

Brent: And I'm camouflaged in the space trees!

Courtney: With Trends Like These.

[theme music plays]

Brent: Hello, Courtney!

Courtney: Hello, Brent!

Brent: How are we doing this fine week in history?

Courtney: We. Are. Thriving.

Brent: In these interesting times... we are—

Courtney: These times.

Brent: —cursed, and perhaps somewhat blessed to be living through.

Courtney: These times are so interesting.

Brent: Yeah, I mean, and a lot of these times are just disappointing. Um... [laughs] There's interesting parts. It's like, interesting to whom? 'Cause I'm pretty good with like, maybe just like, I don't know... a comparatively boring year wouldn't be so bad?

Courtney: I would take boring. I would take just like... so uninteresting.

Brent: Yeah. Just like, y'know, us here going like, "I don't know what to report on! You want to just talk about, I don't know, Miley Cyrus' Instagram? That's a thing. Yeah! Let's do that."

Courtney: I could do that, joyfully, for like an entire year.

Brent: That being said, we do have some fun stories. Some interesting stuff that's not the heaviest and most disappointing on the way.

Courtney: My story—[laughs] My story's about a celebrity death, sooo... how dare you.

Brent: Ookay, well, we'll see.

Courtney: [laughs]

Brent: But, uh... [laughs] As it happens, I am throwing a premier party tonight, Thursday, January 23rd, for the show, Picard. And Courtney, you've gotta be on the road for an obligation or a previous engagement earlier than we usually wrap. So we're doing this episode Thursday, January 23rd, just about 2:15PM Eastern time. Early for us.

Courtney: Yeah. Nice and early.

Brent: Even more stuff will be left out of our coverage, because of the mere... oh, I don't know... 15 or so hours? Maybe 18 before this goes up? News is fast, y'all.

Courtney: The second we're done recording, it's just gonna be that scene in community where Troy comes in with the pizzas and the apartment's on fire and there's a gnome and all that.

Brent: [laughs] But y'know, I can imagine it if like, the unthinkably good happened, I could image a bonus. Like, y'know, the unthinkably bad happened when Trump got elected, and Travis and I did a special. Like, no intro music. Just like, started out the episode like, "So..." [laughs]

Courtney: I'm so glad I wasn't there yet. [laughs]

Brent: But like, yeah, for sure. But like, let's say, I don't know... just something—I don't want to say it. I don't want to—but y'know, a thing we'd all like to happen. Just imagine what that is for you. I don't know. But like, reeeally like to happen, and have been waiting for for a while now, or hoping for. That we might drop everything and go, "Look, it happened Thursday night, but screw it, we're doin' it Friday morning as a bonus. Here you go."

Courtney: I politically operate under, uh, Lloyd Dobler "Say Anything..." rules, where you start out depressed, and everything else is kind of a pleasant surprise.

Brent: That's not a bad way to start from in these times.

Courtney: So... yeah. Yeah.

Brent: Like everything's that's not total horse shit is like, "Bonus!"

Courtney: Exactly, yeah. Oh, good thing? What? They're gonna take it away from me soon.

Brent: Enjoy it while you have it. Ummm... what are you drinking?

Courtney: So since we having a—yeah. Since we're having an afternoon show, I'm bevvin' hard on Diet Coke.

Brent: Y'know, I could really go for a Diet Coke right about now. But in the spirit of uh, a story I'll be doing in Beyond the Headlines, I am drinking out of a reusable mug, and the beverage is pure water. Which is usually a Travis thing, but uh, that's what I'm doing today. Today.

Courtney: Are all mugs reusable...?

Brent: ... Yes. I have—sorry, I had to just—

Courtney: [bursts into laughter]

Brent: I had to just check my magic eight ball. Just give it a quick shake. It said, "My sources say yes." Um... [laughs]

Courtney: [laughing] It dissolves as you're drinking it.

Brent: Oh no! [laughing] My crumbly mug! Good old... good old paper mug.

Courtney: Good ol' Crumble Mugs Black over here.

Brent: [laughs] It's made of—it's made of parchment paper. It's not gonna last long.

Courtney: [laughing]

Brent: What are you—oh, you already told me. Diet Coke.

Courtney: I already said. I think I was good—

Brent: Ohh... I love Diet Coke. Have you tried the Fiesty Cherry?

Courtney: I don't like... the flavors. Like, I can drink like, a little bit.

Brent: Mm-hmm.

Courtney: So I can drink like a—like, I can't... I can't get an entire case just to try it.

Brent: Yeah. For me, it's a treat. Because I find that if I have really sweet stuff, even if it's artificial, my body will like, crave it. So I try to make sure it's a treat so that I don't do that thing where... let's just say, if I were in a legal recreational state, and it's, y'know, 11PM, and gosh, suddenly I just want to eat everything in the fridge, including the sweet stuff. The Halo Top in the uh, the old freezer there.

Tryin' not to train my body to do that, but maaan, every now and then... a Diet Coke, I can't lie... it's good.

Courtney: Yeah. I like a—I like a Diet Coke with lime. But like, again, not a whole case worth. Like, I like it enough to have it like, one or two cans.

Brent: Right. Oh, there was a time... I probably did long term damage to myself. [laughs] There was a time where, back when Pepsi Max was like, the caffeinated marketed to dudes...

Courtney: Yeah.

Brent: Uh, like, their kind of energy drink, essentially. But I would double fist a uh, coffee with almond milk, and a can of Pepsi Max as my picker-upper in the morning, and...

Courtney: I can hear your teeth dissolving like your pretend mug.

Brent: [laughs] Also made of parchment paper. Doin' what I can. Not really a fan of corn anymore, but doin' what I can.

[theme music plays]

Courtney: [sings] In daylights, in sunsets, in midnights, in cups of coffee...

Brent: Mm-hmm. [snapping]

Courtney: [sings] In inches, in miles and laughter and—[normally] Beyond the Headlines.

Brent: Very nice. Very nice. I uh, just want to shout out to Mustin, our editor, who I'm sure edited my, despite the Skype delay, my finger snaps on the two and the four. Thanks, bud.

Courtney: [laughs] It was—it was a journey. I didn't even realize that's what you were doing.

Brent: Yep. Well, that's what Skype does, y'know? The bigger the delay, the more, like... I—I deal with this on my other show all the time, where like, three people are talking. I can't imagine what the brothers McElroy have had to do. But like—'cause the amount of excitement they have. We have the same problem sometimes, where like, we want to say a thing, and we don't realize 'til like, ten seconds in, two people have been talking at the exact same time for that whole ten seconds.

Courtney: Whenever people say like, "God, you guys talk over each other a lot." It's like, I don't know what you want us to do!

Brent: Yeah, we didn't as much... did we—wait a minute. Have we do—no! We planned an in-person, uh, podcast recording.

Courtney: Yeah! We didn't get to do it.

Brent: Well, it was at New York Comic Con, which... look, if you like attending or appearing at New York Comic Con, no shade to you, but like, that is an exhausting convention unless you are... I don't know, William Shatner, and they're putting you up at like, a hotel across the street. Even then... woof. It's like three pounds of convention bologna in a two pound bag. It is a lot.

Courtney: And instead, we just got drunk and went and saw Sleep No More.

Brent: That's what we did!

Courtney: Mm-hmm.

Brent: Um... so. Do you want to take it away with this first headline?

Courtney: [sighs] Um... I need to bring it down, because this is an important story.

Brent: Mm-hmm. [trying not to laugh]

Courtney: And first, I just want to say that, uh... as I uh, typed this, I realized that I titled the story, "Mr. Peanut is dead, and Gritty is under police investigation." [laughs]

Brent: [laughs] Yeah, no, I thought that was a nice touch.

Courtney: [laughing] Which made it—

Brent: Sometimes, we gotta make sure that they know that there's comedy in the doc we're reading off of.

Courtney: Yeah. [laughing] And it does make it sound as though Gritty is a suspect in the death of this fancy peanut.

Brent: [laughs] Oh my god.

Courtney: This is a weird news cycle! There are going to be casualties!

Brent: Gritty's out on bail. Oh my god. Okay.

Courtney: Ohh... Gritty! Et tu? Um, I have a—

Brent: Grit Tay. [laughs]

Courtney: [bursts into laughter]

Brent: [snorts] Aye yai yai.

Courtney: I have a hot take for you right now. I'm actually really okay with corporate Twitter accounts trying to be funny, or doing silly, weird things. Um, like—

Brent: Yeah.

Courtney: Because there—it's—it's a marketing person and a PR person. Like, they're not the evil corporate overlords. They're just doin' their job, and they do it really well sometimes. Good for them.

Brent: Yeah. Yeah. And if it, in a way, kind of... I think it's a—it's like this Dadaist reaction to what we thought of growing up as corporations and the way they present themselves. And y'know what? If it's kind of making fun of that a little bit, y'know, maybe it'll make me eat Arby's once in a blue moon. Maybe not. Maybe I'll have some more Denny's. I don't know. But like, if it makes my day a little brighter on the Twitters, I'm for it.

Courtney: I'm never gonna eat a Moon Pie. But I can thoroughly enjoy the Twitter feed of the Moon Pie.

Brent: Oh, more for me. At least, like, once a year when I'm on the road, I just go, "Y'know what I want? Either Ding Dongs or Moon Pies."

Courtney: I do love a Ding Dong.

Brent: Mm-hmm. [laughs]

Courtney: But back to serious... back to serious things.

Brent: Yes, my bad. Yes, of course.

Courtney: And not my accidental dick joke.

Brent: [laughs]

Courtney: Um... yeah, to me, like, when social media feeds do that, like, it's—it's just like... it's the new Coke of the social media generation, or like, when kids got to vote if the Trix rabbit should get a bowl of Trix or not. I voted. I was like, "Yes. Give the rabbit the Trix."

Brent: I voted for purple M&Ms, but that was just me.

Courtney: That was just you.

Brent: Remember that?

Courtney: They went with blue.

Brent: Yep.

Courtney: Uh, but there is something about when it all exists in the same space. So you get on Twitter, and it's like, "Well, the impeachment trial is going on. The president tried to have a woman killed. Misogyny against female politicians remains rampant. And also, there's a dead peanut!"

Brent: You tell no lies.

Courtney: "It is with heavy hearts, we confirm that Mr. Peanut has died at 104," Planters announced in a tweet. "In the ultimate selfless act, he sacrificed himself to save his friends when they needed him most. Please pay your respects with #RIPeanut."

Brent: [laughs]

Courtney: Now, every year around like, January or February, people start getting really confused and weirded out by, uh, by advertisements. Because I think everyone forgets, it's Superbowl time. And they're like, "Holy shit, can you believe this crazy—" Like, yeah. It's the fuckin' Superbowl. Get your life together.

So this is, of course, the lead up to a Superbowl ad, the first part of which has been released, and I'm going to attempt to describe what mine eyes hath seen! Mr. Peanut is chilling with his boys, Wesley Snipes and Matt Walsh. The good UCB and Veep Matt Walsh, not the right wing shipper Matt Walsh.

Brent: I didn't realize that was Wesley Snipes in the thing. Man, he has either aged well, or they're using some Disney Marvel de-aging on him. Wow.

Courtney: I think he's just aging... he's aging great. When you evade taxes, you evade aging.

Brent: [laughs] Paying taxes actually is what makes those crow's feet appear.

Courtney: Yeah. That's—I'm agin' like crazy over the last couple years. Uh, so they're driving in a Peanut Mobile, obviously, listening to I Just Died in Your Arms Tonight by Cutting Crew. They swerve to avoid an armadillo. They careen over a cliff, where they eject themselves from the big, big peanut car, and are dangling off a branch over the Grand Canyon.

The branch cannot hold all three of them, so like Bing Bong before him, Mr. Peanut lets go so that Matt and Wesley might live. He hits the goddamn ground with a thud, because he is fucking dead. And they're like, "Maybe he'll be alright." And then the car explodes. This is a lot.

Brent: Mm-hmm.

Courtney: And I don't know what the Superbowl ad will bring. But if he comes back sexy like Mr. Clean, I quit. I quit everything. I quit the world.

Brent: Yeah... [sighs] I—I don't know. Is it gonna be like... Mr. Peanut: Now slightly more roasted. [goofy laugh] Or like... I mean, y'know, this reminds me of uh, when IHOP was like, "We're gonna be IHOB! International House of Burgers!" And it was like, "What?" But they got everyone to talk about them and remind the world that they're a thing.

Courtney: Yeah.

Brent: Ever since they did away with Cliff... remember Cliff? IHOP Cliff?

Courtney: What?

Brent: Y'know? He would like, advertise the Rooty Tooty Fresh 'N Fruity? He was like their just regular Joe mascot guy?

Courtney: I don't remember this. I—my brain, though, has been permanently scarred by the time, uh, we took the kids to IHOP for breakfast, and there was a dancing pancake outside.

Brent: Oh my gosh.

Courtney: And it was really upsetting.

Brent: I gotta say, I loved IHOP earlier in my life, but now... I don't know if they just—if they make it different, but I'm always a little sick to my stomach after I go.

Now, wait. It occurs to me... um, didn't Robert Downy Jr., for like a hot minute, play a slightly updated Mr. Peanut, and it just didn't fly?

Courtney: Uh... maybe? I know Bill Hader did.

Brent: Did he?

Courtney: Yeah.

Brent: If they did it often enough, it would become that Colonel Sanders thing. Which, I gotta say...

Courtney: Rock me sexy peanut.

Brent: I've eaten Kentucky Fried Chicken maybe three or four times in my life, but... that like, different Colonel Sanders thing, with like, everyone from, I don't know, Jim Gaffigan to Reba McEntire? I liked that. As far as super corporate killing us with terrible food ads go, it was a'ight.

Courtney: On November 8th, 2010, Planters announced that actor Robert Downy Jr. would become Mr. Peanut's first ever voice actor.

Brent: Wow, I didn't know that part.

Courtney: Yeah.

Brent: Hmm.

Courtney: Weird. Um...

Brent: And now you know.

Courtney: There's also—um, on this Wikipedia page, a "Mr. Peanut Goes to War" poster from the United States Department of Agriculture, which we're going to get to later in the show. The department, not this poster. But um, the poster's real uncomfortable, and I don't like it.

Brent: Oh man, there's so much stuff.

Courtney: I really recommend everyone look at it. It's bad.

Brent: Yeah, I'm working on a game—

Courtney: It's bad stuff.

Brent: I'm working on a game I can't announce yet with vintage art, and uh, boy, World War II, like, y'know, the uh... war bonds, and loose lips sink ships... there's some real... [laughs] Real didn't age well shit in there.

Courtney: This is why I'm honestly okay with these corporate social media accounts doing like, bonkers things over, uh, social media. Because like, the other, like, y'know... long time ago thing was just like, "Hey, Mr. Peanut says, like, go to war."

Brent: Yeah. I think probably this is better than dehumanizing racism. I would prefer it. I don't know about y'all. That's kind of where I'd land on it.

Courtney: In totally unrelated news, again, unless he is fact behind it. The facts are not in yet. Gritty is under investigation for assault. The Philadelphia Flyers mascot has been accused of punching a 13-year-old boy in the back at a fan event. According to the boy's parents, via the New York Times, 13-year-old Brandon Greenwell patted Gritty on the head after his picture was taken, and Gritty responded by standing up and punching the kid in the back with a running start.

Brent: [laughs] Now, real quick... if you somehow have missed Gritty, it will really enhance your understanding of this story to Google 'Gritty mascot' and just see this creature. Okay, sorry, Court. Go on.

Courtney: Now, the boy's father, Chris Greenwell, said that a chiropractor found, uh, later – like a week later – that Brandon had a back bruise. Chris Greenwell contacted Comcast Spectacor... spectacor?

Brent: Is that how it's spelled? Spectacor?

Courtney: Spectacor? Speculoos?

Brent: [laughs]

Courtney: He contacted the cookie butter. The company that owns the Flyers to resolve the issue, but uh, he filed a police report, because he was not happy with the results. He told the Delaware News Journal, "All I wanted them to do was give my son an apology. I wanted his medical bills paid, a couple hundred bucks, and for them to do something special to make up for it."

The Flyers said in a statement that, "We took Mr. Greenwell's allegations seriously, and conducted a thorough investigation that found nothing to support his claim." What is the truth, Gritty?

Brent: [sighs]

Courtney: Brent, as a Philadelphian, what are your thoughts on the matter?

Brent: Man, I think that... I think that, uhh... any kind of thoughtful analysis on this story is lose lose. Because here's the thing – there's an element of whimsy, and we love Gritty as this weird, nonconformist mascot that both, uh, inspires something weird and wonderful in the country and the world at large, but also definitely represents how Philadelphia is not for everybody, and fuck you. [laughs] Basically.

Courtney: [laughs]

Brent: But at the same time... let's not get too far out field from the fact that this is an assault claim. Um, and while, yeah, there's a difference between different kinds of assault, like... I don't know. Like, if it turned out there was enough evidence or whatever, believing a victim, to replace the performer being Gritty, that wouldn't bother me. But it's just one of those things where I want to say, "Look, believe victims." I also want to say, this is a weird one, and it kind of scrambles my how to fully analyze it brain.

Courtney: It's really weird that 'free Gritty' was trending. And it's one of those things where it's like, it's because Gritty has become like, a meme and a joke, so you have just like... lots of people on Twitter like, "Fuck this kid! It's a badge of honor!" Like, that's a weird take. That's a weird take.

Brent: That is a weird take. And I mean, y'know, we have to contextualize this. Um, if someone dressed up as the Disney character, Goofy, is walking around Disneyland and just decides to, y'know, elbow a nice old lady in the face, like... we don't think, "[gasp] Goofy the dog?!" Y'know, like, we just go... somebody in that suit's a real asshole and needs to be fired and possibly prosecuted.

Um, I don't want that to be the case here, but it doesn't really come down to what I want, vis-à-vis Gritty and Gritty's image. Um, I think that, on the one hand, it sounds very unlikely. But a lot of times, that's how people that assault other people get away with it, 'cause it sounds very unlikely. So, I don't want to really, uh... so much make like a ruling based on my gut feeling, as much as I just want to say... um, no matter what happens, it's important to believe victims. And in my opinion, it's important to like the concept of Gritty.

Courtney: I mean, also, like... that's kind of Gritty's whole deal, right? Like, he punches people. So when they're like, "There's no evidence this happened." It's like, except for all of the other evidence that he does this. [laughs]

Brent: Is that a thing? I mean, look. I'm not... [clears throat] I'm not a Flyers fan.

Courtney: Didn't he get into a—he got into a fight with like a... I mean, like, it's like staged shit.

Brent: Oh, okay. I see.

Courtney: I look at Gritty like the Ed Debevic's of mascots. Where he's just there to just like, razz ya. So like, maybe he like, thought he patted the kid on the back, and got outta hand with it. I honestly don't know what, uh, medical bills a bruise... would incur.

Brent: That's the thing. Like, I guess—

Courtney: Because my kids—my kids and I are just covered in bruise 24/7.

Brent: Consulting a chiropractor? I don't know. I mean, I wish that I'd consulted friend of the show, Rachel Stein, who is a huge Flyers fan. I, myself, am not.

Courtney: I don't think you should take little kids to chiropractors. They're too young for that. Their backs aren't fully formed. This is just—I'm just talkin' out of my ass here. I don't know anything about—

Brent: Yeah, I'm—

Courtney: Except for that one episode of Bullshit I saw about chiropractors, I don't really know much.

Brent: Yeah. As long as we're on the subject, I think chiropractors, at best, can make your back or your joints feel better for a while, but I'm... while I don't always want to be like, 100% western medicine and nothing else, uhh... I don't know. I just don't know.

Courtney: They definitely shouldn't be working with people on like, diets and weight loss, but that's a whole other chiropractor conversation.

Brent: That is indeed. We'll just say that for... I think you and I collectively, the jury's out on whether chiropractors are mostly good or mostly bad.

Courtney: And that's what this story is really about. Like, let's put aside Gritty. Let's get into chiropractors. [laughs]

Brent: Yes. This is really... what I came to discuss. Um, although, I will say— I was in a car accident in high school, and my mom signed me up for a chiropractor, and uh... when they crack those parts of you you didn't know about... like, regardless of whether it's good for you or actually does anything, it is impressive.

Alright, moving on. [laughs]

Courtney: My gross ass just loves the sound of like, bones popping.

Brent: Oh yeah! When I can just like—

Courtney: I love it.

Brent: —throw my own neck to the right or the left, and it goes like, [cracking sound], I'm like, yees. This is part of what's fun about having a skeleton. Okay!

Courtney: Yees.

Brent: Putting a pin in that until we hear more about Gritty, and perhaps Mr. Peanut, or his successor. Do we think Mrs. Peanut's on the way? Who knows.

Courtney: Ms., please.

Brent: Fair. Just like Ms. Pacman. Alright.

So, this next story is inspired... less by a recent explosive trending news story, and more by an ongoing trend in our world. Kind of like the story last week about aggressive baby boy names. But unlike the baby names story, this one was initially inspired by something in my life.

Uh, a previous partner of mine, to her credit, got me into recycling plastic films and other things, and it was at a time when we were reporting on the show about the increasing plastic waste in the ocean, and I thought it was a way to be the change you want to see in the world or whatever.

So, a local store called Mom's Organic Market in Philadelphia takes all kinds of things that you can sort out, like plastic shopping bags, squeeze pouches, chip bags, batteries, shoes... the list goes on. So, for about two years now, I've set aside all of those things and tried to keep up with the task of washing them out and sorting them. This is not a story about how great and good I am. I'm very imperfect in all ways, but follow me here.

When you start to set that stuff aside, you really notice how much of it there is, from the little plastic bags that things are sealed in when you first buy them and pull them out of the Styrofoam, and bubblewrap cushion mailers you get when you buy things online, and on and on.

And I'm about to move across town into a new apartment, and I happened to have a rental car the other day. So I decided, y'know what I'm gonna do? I'm gonna fill it up with all of my Marie Kondo stuff to the thrift store, finally drop that off. But also, all of my sorted plastic waste at the store that recycles them.

When I got there, the only slots open were for shoes, batteries, and compost. I was bummed out and embarrassed, standing there in a grocery store with all of this trash. And a QR code in the recycling zone led me to a website explaining the situation. Apparently, for a long time in the United States, a lot of plastic waste that was dropped off for recycling was actually just sent to China, and they would call it 'recycled.'

Some companies in China would wash and recycle the bags, but last year, I missed a story about the fact that China put the kibosh on imports of the world's plastic waste. They're tired of being sort of the trash can for the world's plastic, largely because there was less and less money in it, and therefore, less incentive to do anything with it. So they banned 24 types of scrap and implemented much stricter contamination standards, which have been described as nearly impossible for other countries to meet.

Meanwhile, European countries have been recycling, on average, about 40% of their plastic waste, whereas the US only recycles about 10%. And I personally think that's due to the fact that we focus too much on the profit motive, and not enough on coming together to do good things that may not always make fat dividends for shareholders.

Um, and while I think it's important for us to do our part individually, corporations that pollute on a massive scale have convinced us that it's primarily our job, when they're the ones pumping out the products and making it very hard to shop without buying plastics. But um... that being said, a lot of US plastic, even stuff you put in your recycling bin, is just burned for energy, which releases gases and vapors into the air that are bad for your health and bad for environment at large.

So what can you do? Well, some solutions are obvious. Some, not so obvious. Uh, growing up, I heard 'reduce, reuse, recycle,' but I've recently caught wind of two more R's, which are 'refuse and repurpose.' First off, use

a reusable shopping bag. I'm personally an urban cyclist hippy type, so I have a huge backpack that I fill with groceries when I shop. Eggs are tough, if you had that thought immediately.

But again, y'know, there's 'repurpose' is one of the Rs. If you get those things, uh... if you order online, you get those bubble wrap mailers, particularly the Amazon ones that are blue and white, you can save them, and they're a great way to keep eggs safe on the way home. Some people absolutely need access to straws, but if you don't, just ask a server not to bring one. Or you can buy a metal straw to take with you.

You can also ask food delivery services to leave out plastic utensils, and you can limit your purchases of single use plastics. You don't have to stop using plastics overnight to feel good about yourself, but like... for instance, do you get apple sauce in individual cups? Well, you could like, buy a big jar and put it in little tiny mason jars to take it places, if you want. And uh, a metal water bottle can save so much plastic versus water bottles that are made of plastic.

So, those are a few ways to help the issue as a consumer. But you can also look at the bigger picture, and support bans on single use plastics and contact local city councilmembers, or your representatives in your state house and in congress. You can organize or participate in a beach or a river cleanup, which is always just a Google away. There are tons of nonprofit organizations working to reduce and eliminate plastic pollution, particularly in the ocean, and those include Oceanic Society, Plastic Pollution Coalition, Plastic Soup Foundation, and others.

Finally, if there's a company whose products you really like, but they sell it in super wasteful packaging, let them know. It sounds like a lot, but think about it. You could easily make a donation, contact your reps, and a few your favorite companies in less than an hour. I know this has become a preachy PSA for plastic pollution. It came out of the fact that I felt so bummed that I had taken all this time to try to do something good for the planet, only to be like, kind of betrayed by the fact that like, yeah, we're not really doing that anymore, because the thing you thought was happening to this isn't.

And Philadelphia, uh, disappointingly, burns about half of its local recyclables for energy. Again, bad for your health, bad for the environment. And this trend has become a crisis, and you can't always count on the powers that be to fix it. So, I'm gonna try to do my part in some small but significant ways, and it would be awesome if we all took some baby steps together.

Courtney: What I do with the uh, the plastic bags that I have... I, like a lot of people, um, I assume, like, none of us want to like, throw them away. So a lot of us probably just have like, a big ass pantry full of plastic bags.
[laughs]

Brent: Oh yeah. And they've got those little trees for them now, which can be very helpful. You know what I'm talking about, that make it where you just pull one out?

Courtney: Yeah. I um... so, I use the plastic bags that I have. My four year old, Jack, is still in pull-ups, because it's really hard to potty train a somewhat nonverbal child.

Brent: Yes.

Courtney: So I use that to like, wrap up those. I uh, use them when I take my dogs for walks. Things like that. So like, even if you have them, like, y'know, take the ones you have and like, at least do something else with them, and...

Brent: Yeah.

Courtney: Little things like that.

Brent: Yeah, and I mean, I think a lot of times, unfortunately, um... recycling and being good to the environment at the level we'd like to is kind of a privileged thing to be able to do, both in terms of money and time. Like, y'know, cloth diapers, right? Well, like, they exist. If you have time for them. Or if you have somebody to pay to do them.

Courtney: I'm sorry, I was never gonna do that. I was never gonna do that. I love the environment, but y'know what? I love my sanity. I love my time. And I fucking love just like... just mass—I love you, Pampers. Thank you. Thank you for all you've done for me.

Brent: And the system doesn't make it easy.

Courtney: No!

Brent: The system makes it hard, specifically, and it doesn't have to, but it does. And it's like, we're not gonna destroy the profit motive overnight. I'm not for some, y'know, communist seize the means of production kind of world. But... y'know, I think a lot of things like this, if we just stopped and thought about like, well, does it have to be the profit motive? What would be a cool, good thing for us to do together? Solidarity and all those hippy ideas.

Courtney: Yeah, and it comes down to like, what you're able to do. Because obviously, like, there's a lot of uh, products that, y'know, like... y'know, pre-cut vegetables and fruits and things like that that are necessary for people with, y'know, disabilities and limited use of their hands and fingers. But y'know, maybe if just the rest of us left that for people who needed it, and do what we can to kind of like, y'know, reduce our own footprint where we can... y'know.

Brent: Yeah.

Courtney: I just can't believe that this planet is just a lost cause. So like, let's just try something. [laughing]

Brent: Yeah. And again, there's small ways to do it as a consumer, and there's also ways to support organizations that are trying to do it in big ways. And y'know, if we all just help like a liiittle bit, that actually is huge.

Courtney: But if people need their straws, let them have their straws. Don't shame the people who need the straws.

Brent: Absolutely.

Courtney: Don't be dicks.

Brent: No.

Courtney: Save the planet, but don't be a dick about it. That's the Trends Like These way.

Brent: I think that's a great bumper sticker.

Courtney: [laughs]

[theme music plays]

Brent: Now it's time for a segment we call the Politics Roundup. Y'know, politics has become a huge part of trending news, much bigger than, perhaps, it was before, oh, say... 2015. That's what greeted us as Travis and I started Trends Like These in 2015. It started out pretty fluffy, and then it was like... [laughs] Actually, I'm reminded of the fact that one of the first, like, in-depth political things we did, Travis was like, "But it's politics. It's divisive, so keep it brief." [laughs] So much has changed.

Courtney: And look at us now!

Brent: Look at us now! Um, so, let's talk about impeachment. Let's touch on it. A few hours before we went to record last week, Chief Justice John Roberts was sworn in as the judge for the Senate trial of Donald Trump's impeachment, but nothing substantial had really happened yet, as far as the trial itself.

Well, now, it's a week later. And one thing we've mentioned a few times on the show is the fact that, unlike certain parliamentary protocols in Congress, the Senate basically makes up its own rules for each individual impeachment trial. And like so many things we've seen, from Mitch McConnell's reign as the Senate majority leader, founding fathers clearly and wrongly assumed that future lawmakers would always act with a sense of shame or personal integrity.

So, backing up a bit. We now know who the House managers are. Those are, by the way, the members of the House of Representatives chosen by speaker Nancy Pelosi to present the case to the Senate. After the reading of the charges, the managers go back and make a verbal report to the House. And they don't just read the charges – they're sort of the prosecution team.

And to be honest with you, I haven't heard of most of them. Pelosi chose seven members of the House to sort of reflect the geographic and demographic diversity of the party's caucus, including Florida's Val V. Demings, Sylvia R. Garcia from Texas, Hakeem Jeffries from New York, and two we have heard of. House Judiciary Commit... oh my goodness, I'm gonna just keep going. House Judiciary Committee chairman Jerry Nadler – there we go – and chairman of the House Intelligence Committee, Adam Schiff.

On Tuesday, the House managers began debating what the Senate rules should be for the trial. Not with any senators, but rather, with Trump's legal defense team. So you've got seven House members doing prosecution, and then, like, a team of lawyers on Trump's side that are there to be a legal defense team, including celebrity lawyer and former friend of Jeffrey Epstein, Alan Dershowitz.

Dershowitz, by the way, has defended OJ Simpson and Mike Tyson. I'm not passing judgment. I'm just letting you know, um, the kind of league and flavor of this guy.

And just to make things more ridiculous, the defense team also includes Kenneth Starr, who you may remember, led the investigation into president Bill Clinton in 1998, which led to his impeachment. And now he's defending Trump in an impeachment trial. You'd think Starr's involvement might steer the legal team toward rules that more resembled the rules for Clinton's impeachment, but generally, no.

So, it began with 12 hours of debate between the two teams, with the House managers arguing the same stuff they found in the House hearings. And instead of the defense making an actual case for Trump's innocence, they

mostly just attacked the process, clutched their pearls, and whined about how they're supposedly being treated unfairly.

And uh, after that, the Senate voted along party lines. 53 Republicans to 47 Democrats to adopt rules where the team of House managers and Trump's legal defense team will have 24 hours over the course of three days to argue their cases for and against the articles of impeachment.

Then, senators will have 16 hours to ask questions. But instead of the grilling that you see from like, Cory Booker, Kamala Harris, and others, the senators will have 16 hours to ask questions submitted in writing. The House managers, of course, want to submit new evidence, as well as enforce subpoenas on witnesses, but McConnell pushed that decision back.

So, the Senate will decide whether to allow new evidence and honor subpoenas at a later date. And some Republican senators have implied that they would be willing to vote in favor of that.

Okay. One thing I find interesting about this is that, during arguments, senators are required to stay quiet during the proceedings on pain of imprisonment! Would any of them go to jail, really? Probably not. But the fact that that rule is in place is very interesting to me, especially considering how rarely senators, as a group, stay quiet.

By the way, over the course of the debate on the rules, chief justice Roberts scolded both teams for their openly barbed and aggressive attacks on each other, reminding them that they are "addressing the world's greatest deliberative body." That's one of those phrases, by the way, that's like a slogan for the US Congress, but like... if it were ever true, it ain't lately.

Anyway, a few additional things to note. McConnell's original proposal would have the Senate vote on whether or not to automatically enter the evidence gathered in the House hearings from last year into the trial record. Somewhat surprisingly, he just went ahead and made that automatic, rather than requiring a Senate vote. Word on the street is, that was, in part, due to some influencing by comparatively moderate Republican senator, Susan Collins.

So, that's happening, which is... good. Uh, McConnell also gave both teams an additional day to argue their cases, bumping it up from 24 hours over two days to 24 hours over three days. This, ostensibly, will benefit both sides.

So, where do we go from here? Well, the House manager team began their arguments against Trump, i.e. for Trump's removal on Wednesday this past week, and they're arguing based on the evidence and witnesses found during the House hearings. Joe Biden says he refuses to be a witness, even though Republicans want him to be grilled, because his son is tangentially involved in the Ukraine scandal.

So far, the House managers led by Adam Schiff have focused on the abuse of power article of impeachment. And I wish there were more drama to report, but like... the sad thing about this is that, um, the evidence is damning. Trump is clearly not innocent and as perfect as he said about the Ukraine call. But based on the likeliest outcome of the trial, the House managers may as well be yelling into a jar.

The hope is that more voters, uh, are exposed to the evidence than they were from the House hearings. A recent Reuters/Ipsos poll suggested that about 44% of American adults say Trump should be removed, 15% say he should be reprimanded formally via censure, and 31% say the charges should be dismissed.

But in a country where it sometimes seems like we can't agree on the color of the dang sky, a whopping 72% of respondents surveyed agreed that the trial should allow witnesses. Which, again, isn't something that has yet been voted against, but the Senate's vote on that is coming. So we'll see how this goes.

I don't think anyone but Trump's base should be getting too excited or optimistic about the ultimate outcome, but as Nancy Pelosi has pointed out, impeachment is permanent, even if a president isn't removed.

And finally, one thing we've heard from Republican politicians, conservative pundits, and Trump himself is this word, 'sham', over and over again to

describe this impeachment. Sham, hoax. Sham, hoax. Sham sham sham. And my question through all of this has been... if it's an absolute and total sham, and Trump is innocent, wouldn't that be clear from the sum total of any and all evidence or witnesses?

If it's a sham, why did the White House command multiple witnesses to refuse House subpoenas last year? Why did the White House command the State Department to refuse the release of key documents? Answer... because Trump is guilty, and they're well aware of that.

So anyway, we'll keep you posted as the story unfolds.

Courtney: Sham wow.

Brent: Sham wow!

Courtney: The Department of Agriculture announced last week, on Michelle Obama's birthday, these petty, petty assbutts...

Brent: [laughs]

Courtney: ... that they would be rolling back Obama-era school nutrition standards. The former first lady worked to ensure school children had access to fresh fruits and vegetables they might not have had access to at home. According to Juliana Cohen, a nutrition professor at Harvard, these regulations improved the diets of millions of children, especially vulnerable children with food insecure households.

The proposal would give schools the ability to determine how much fruit to offer during breakfast, what types of vegetables to include in meals, and to broaden what counts as a snack. Sonny Perdue, the ag secretary – no relation to the chicken people – um, says these new rules would lead to a decrease in food waste; though, many have pointed out, food waste has always been an issue, and this will not fix that.

And, a study commissioned by Perdue's own agency last April found that the Obama healthy lunch regulations did not result in significantly higher cost for cafeterias, or increased food waste. So, y'know. Lies.

The concern is that stretching the notion of 'vegetable' will lead to French fries being considered a healthy side dish, a la the Reagan era 'condiments count as vegetables' debacle. They also intend to offer students a la carte options, like pizza and burgers, because y'know, if children have the choice between like, a salad and pizza, they're gonna go with that healthy salad, obviously!

Brent: Oh yeah. I don't know about your school growing up, but um, my high school and my middle school, um... when I started going to public school, um, absolutely had burgers and pizza on the reg. I think burgers were every day, pizza were every few days, and I think fries were always available. And... I mean, look. You're an adult. Eat whatever you want. You want to eat until you feel bad? You want to eat until you feel unhealthy? Do it. That's your right as not only an American, but a human being.

But to give children, whose bodies are growing... y'know, there's certain things that, if you have health problems that stem from poor diet as a kid, then your likelihood of having big problems in your health as an adult just multiply quickly. And who thinks it's not good to have more fruits and vegetables? Who thinks that it is good to make sure kids have pizza and burgers on the reg at school?

It's just, on its face, not good. I don't fully understand the motivation behind it. It's probably some kind of money saver, but also... whether or not Trump is directly involved, boyyy, Trump likes to reverse Obama stuff.

Courtney: Oh yeah. It's pettiness, atop of like, cow towing to like, y'know, potato farmers.

Brent: Sure.

Courtney: And like, y'know, stuff like that.

Brent: The pizza lobby.

Courtney: The, y'know, big French fry.

Brent: [laughs]

Courtney: I mean, like, when I was... like, I remember the food in my grade school and high school. And even on like, salad bar days, I loaded that shit up with croutons and like, ate scoops of ranch dressing, because I am deeply Midwestern.

Brent: Of course! Because—well, and also, like, why... [sighs] There's two things I don't understand trusting a child with – the ability to make good food choices in the face of addictive food choices, and the option of not wearing their retainer. I don't understand how you're supposed to trust a child with these things!

Courtney: That's how my retainer ended up in a dumpster at Hardee's.

Brent: That's how mine ended up next to my bed instead of ever in my mouth. 'Cause it hurt! Why would I do that?

Courtney: When you—when you take it out for a while, and you put it back in, it hurts a lot. It happened every time for dance recitals, I had to take it out, because heaven forbid I have a big metal thing in the way of our beautiful dancing. And uh, putting it back in hurt like a bitch.

Brent: To be fair, you do have very nice teeth.

Courtney: Thank you, I know. It's 'cause I had a retainer for four years.

Brent: Well, there you go. Alright.

Courtney: Yeah. It was hot pink. It was great.

Brent: Mine was glow in the dark.

Courtney: Ooh!

Brent: But my dad... I wish I could go back in time and tell my dad the consequences of this. He would make fun of me for sounding like Daffy Duck or Sylvester the Cat when I had it in, because I [slurring] sort of sounded like this. [normally] And like, I don't think that helped my discipline with it? Anyway, whatever. Everyone's parents have blind spots, but... yeah, thanks Pops.

Okay. Just to round out politics, and the roundup... the Supreme Court is gearing up to hear arguments in a case having to do with the so-called faithless electors. As you may know, our electoral college stipulates that each state has official electors. That's how it's officially pronounced. I'm not being silly. Who actually cast the ballot for their state. However, they are not legally required by federal law to cast the ballot in favor of the candidate who won their particular state.

This case involves an elector for the state of Colorado, who attempted to cast the 2016 vote for the state in favor of Republican John Kasich, who, as you know, was not even the nominee. Certainly didn't win the state. Hillary Clinton won Colorado's popular vote. So, she was the rightful person to get those delegates.

Courtney: I freakin' dang hate that.

Brent: Oh, of course. Now, that happens to be a violation of Colorado state law, 'cause you remember, it's federal law doesn't require, but some state laws require the elector to follow the will of the people. But this triggered a legal avalanche that has worked its way all the way up to the Supreme Court.

By the way, I didn't write this in my copy, but um, it ended up going to Hillary Clinton because that guy got replaced, as he was violating Colorado state law. Um, that being said, this case has worked its way all the way up to the Supreme Court, which will now decide once and for all whether state electors do or don't have to follow the will of the people in their state.

I think I speak for all the cohosts on this show, and please chime in if I don't, when I say the electoral college should be *at least* heavily reformed, or maybe just done away with entirely.

Courtney: It can go away.

Brent: Yeah.

Courtney: Bye.

Brent: Yeah.

Courtney: Good... bye.

Brent: I had many arguments about this on Twitter when I just like, replied to a big tweet about all this stuff, and... [inhales] Not to go too deep into it, but let us just say that, just because we are a representative democracy, that does not mean that the occasional democratic referendum suddenly makes the place catch on fire. And it doesn't mean that we're completely undoing everything the founding fathers wanted, because as much as they had a lot of good ideas, they couldn't have seen the telegraph coming. And they also left room for us to amend and change how we do things if we have a better idea. So...

Courtney: I mean, if anything set the world on fire, it would be the electoral college whole situation of the 2016s, because say what you will about the HRC... but I feel like we'd be better off right now.

Brent: Oh, for sure. In a heartbeat.

Courtney: That's not a hot take here.

Brent: In a heartbeat. One hundo.

Uh, so, this ruling by the Supreme Court could at least prevent someone from casting a ballot for Trump, for instance, in 2020, even if the state were

won by the Democratic nominee. And so, that's gonna begin at some point in the next few months, and we'll keep you posted. Fingers crossed.

Ready to do some Tidbits?

Courtney: I am ready for a tid, a bit, and a bit of a tid. So, the...

Brent: Alright.

Courtney: The United States Space Force, which is still very funny, released the first look at its uniforms, and they are... camouflage. Like, the kind of camouflage needed to hide amongst the trees and the whatnot.

Brent: [laughing] Nooo...

Courtney: Y'know, like how they have them in space.

Brent: The moon trees.

Courtney: In their space forests.

Brent: Satellite foliage.

Courtney: Uh, the USF responded to the feedback, saying, "USSF is utilizing current Army Air Force uniforms, saving costs of designing/producing a new one. Members will look just like their joint counterparts that they'll be working with on the ground," to which I say, what ground? Space ground? For why?

Brent: [laughing]

Courtney: The Space Force is presumably not being deployed on the actual earth ground. You know what would save money? Not doing Space Force.

Brent: Yes.

Courtney: Responding to that specific concern, Space Force said, "We need GPS. One of many examples." It's like, okay, cool, then name two. Like... and here's the—we already have GPS. Space suits aren't going to fight the GPS wars. This is some knuckle knobbyery.

Brent: Also, can somebody who understands the following technology tell us via Twitter or the Facebook group? GPS. Um, can... I mean, that's global positioning. But if you were perhaps in orbit or on the moon... does GPS tell you where you are? Or is it only when you're on the earth? That's what I would assume, but I don't know.

Courtney: Like, I know that satellites and things need to be, uh, y'know, protected and monitored and all that jazz.

Brent: Sure.

Courtney: But... the idea of like, literal Space Force... remains... some goddamn chicanery.

Brent: Yes.

Courtney: And hopefully the next president puts a stop to it, absorbs the satellite protection, et cetera, into any other agency, and we don't risk losing good soldiers in space because they blended in too well with the space trees.

Brent: Yeah. I would just say, like, the Air Force... there's a lot of air. Just maybe like, extend what we think of as that air another couple miles.

Courtney: I feel like all air... all air, to where the air stops, even, is their jurisdiction. Also, we still have a whole entire NASA. I mean, not as much NASA as we used to have, but they're not doing the space flights anymore. Might as well give them this to do.

Brent: Yeah. The government wants to fund people who use military contracts in space, not, y'know, people who like, learn stuff in space. Duhhh.

Courtney: So, Trump said that when he became president, the first thing he did was look at, uh, like, y'know, Area 51 and stuff like that, because of course he did. Honestly, so would I. But I don't think he saw anything. I bet they kept, like... if any of that's real, they kept it secret, because like, that guy would be blabbin' all over the place.

Brent: Yeah.

Courtney: But I think he still believes in it enough that he's like, "We need to have them ready to fight the aliens." And that's Space Force.

Brent: I mean, that does make one wonder. Like, y'know... there was this infuriating phenomenon with Hillary's campaign where, things that really made me excited about her did not get widely disseminated. She was like, "Well, I would deschedule marijuana." Which, like, is one of my top things! And she was also like, "I, if elected, would reveal stuff about the UFOs."

Now... okay. Does she know them yet? Like, I'd like to think that's true. But the thing is, it got me excited. And so, if Trump's been told this – and who knows, maybe they're like, "Don't tell him. Just don't tell him." But if he has been told this... [sighs] I never want to speak in his defense, because he's such a monster, but like... what if?

Like, just what if there's a reason that we don't know about, and they're just kind of trying to dress it up as like, his tomfoolery, but actually, they've been wanting to do it for a while, and they can just dress it up as him being a goober?

Courtney: I'm literally picturing Space Force as the Beastie Boys' 'Intergalactic' video. [laughing] Like, that's what it's gonna be, but in camo.

Brent: Yeah. [laughing] I mean, to me... and again, as a sci-fi fan... and I know that you, yourself, also are hugely into sci-fi, professionally and otherwise. If aliens have the technology to get here from pretty much anywhere, unless they're just somehow, like, creatures with no sense of possession or self-protection... they could probably... probably fuck with us

waaay easier and more efficiently than we could fuck with them. One would think.

Courtney: If anyone can outsmart Donald Trump... A, it's most children. It's...

Brent: [laughs]

Courtney: It's Gritty. It's dead Mr. Peanut's corpse. And it's definitely the aliens.

Brent: Yeah. Um... alright. So, this next tidbit is me returning to a thing I've talked about before, but in the past, it's been controversial, and now I think it's less. But it's anchored to the fact that, according to Axios, Trump told his health secretary this past week that he "should never have done that F-ing vaping thing."

Funny that, of the scarce few admissions of failure or shortcomings that we know about from this man, that's one of them. Now, I caught some flak from a few listeners, all of which I'm sure are good, wonderful people, trying to do the right thing and inform me of important things. But um... y'know, I apparently, to some listeners, seemed callous towards the mysterious vaping disease, as well as the so-called epidemic of teen vaping.

But... I stand by the idea that vaping is almost definitely safer than smoking, even if we don't know every single detail of the long term effects. And England's Department of Health and Social Care, while they don't recommend that anyone pick up vaping, and neither do I, found that vaping is 95% less harmful than smoking cigarettes, and more than half of smokers have been misinformed about that, which keeps them smoking.

They also confirmed what I've been trying to say, which is, while I don't recommend anyone just try nicotine for funsies, most of the bad health effects from smoking are not caused specifically by the chemical nicotine. That's just what hooks you and makes you want it, and frankly, makes you muddle through inhaling recently burnt particulate matter into your lungs.

Whereas, vaping makes it much more likely you'll quit successfully than relying on willpower alone. That's me quoting them, the Department of Health and Social Care in the UK.

And so, despite the fact that... look, not all of you like this. Admittedly, I will drunkenly bum a smoke from time to time. That being said, vaping did help me quit daily smoking, and that is not just anecdotal. It's confirmed by an increasing amount of studies.

So yeah, Donald, you should never have "done that F-ing vaping thing."

Courtney: Zipporah Arielle, who goes by CoffeeSpoonie on Twitter, and whose pronouns are they/she, had the same experience four times in one week. Zipporah informed an Uber driver that they would be picking up a wheelchair user with a service dog. Upon arrival, the driver then denied service to Zipporah and their dog.

Even when the drivers do ultimately agree to take their business, it involves invoking Uber's service animal policy, which states, "Driver partners have a legal obligation to provide service to riders with service animals. A driver partner cannot lawfully deny service to riders with service animals because of allergies, religious objections, or generalized fear of animals." This would then make them in violation of the law, and in breach of their contract with Uber.

Zipporah tweeted, "This is my entire life now. How did this become my life? I spend my days waiting for Uber drivers after other Uber drivers cancel for not wanting to take a service dog, have a short convo with support, and then rinse, wash, repeat, over and over again until I die."

They have contacted Uber support after being denied service so many times, but stated, "Only one driver has faced any consequences for denying me because of my service dog out of four drivers this week." People keep suggesting to Zipporah, uh, Uber Pets and Uber Assist, but those are not available in their area. Like, these are, y'know, great services and everything, but not if you don't live where they exist.

Now, despite all of this, Zipporah said they will continue to use Uber, and instead, offering up options for change, like Uber agreeing to pay damages if the service animal incurs any in the driver's car, or providing lint rollers, and having specific service for drivers and riders with allergies.

Brent: Yeah, I have this thought a lot. I live on a block that is kind of this Bermuda Triangle for Lyft drivers. I typically use Lyft when I do use a pick up car app service thing. Um, but y'know, sometimes what they'll do is, they'll park a block and a half away, because that's easier, and then they'll say, "Hey, can you come here?" And while that's like, annoying in a first world way for me, I often think, "What if I had a mobility issue that made this much harder to do? What if I didn't feel like demanding they do something that they were communicating that is more of a pain in the ass for them?"

Ultimately, y'know, in this gig economy where most Uber and Lyft drivers are just trying to get by and trying to make some extra cash, I'm not going to uh, throw all of them under the bus. I will say that the larger organizations do need to take ownership of this issue and get real about it, because... as much as it's like, "Oh, I don't want to walk a block and a half. It's raining, oh, it's cold." That's nothing compared to someone that has to make a choice like, "Do I try to make it farther than I intended or wanted to go?" Or, "Do I get put in an awkward position where I have to demand something they clearly don't want to do?"

Courtney: I'm just of the general belief that if your service isn't for everyone, it's a shitty service. Like, if people can't access it who need it, then your service is failing. And that's not on users with disabilities. That's on you as an organization, making tons of money off of these, y'know, gig drivers. And it's—this is—like, I've talked about before, like... AirBnB and like, rideshare is still where I get into kind of my like, uh, the little tiny part of me that wants to just like, live off the grid in the woods.

Brent: Yeah.

Courtney: Because I don't like... I have a tendency not to trust things that aren't like, y'know, really, really regulated, or are up to the individual. But the fact is, like—

Brent: Well, and so often, those things don't benefit women, or people that basically aren't white men. Like, I don't worry so much at an AirBnB, but it'd be a whole different deal if I were a woman, someone in the power minority... list goes on.

Courtney: Yeah, and I just—it's always gonna make me weird. But that said, I mean, you... you might not have access to an easy taxi company in some areas, whereas you might have access to Uber. Or y'know, any other kind of rideshare service. And it's, like... just generally speaking, if your organization isn't useful, or usable and accessible to the people who need it... uh, you're fuckin' up. So fix it.

Brent: Agreed. Well said. Alright, um... final tidbit: there is a new virus in China called the coronavirus. It has killed at least 17 people, and uh, according to CNN, affected hundreds more around the world. This past Tuesday, the first American case of the virus was confirmed in Washington state in a man in his 30s who is under observation currently.

Now, in my lifetime, and I'm sure, Courtney, you've been well aware of all these things, we've seen mainstream media freak-outs about Ebola in the mid-90s, killer bees, SARS, swine flu, bird flu, Ebola again, and plenty of other sensationalized explosions of coverage about whatever the new terror epidemic is this week.

And because of that, the reporting on this stuff makes it very hard to distinguish the facts from the click bait. Media outlets know that if you're scared, you may watch longer and stick around for the toothpaste commercials that make them their money. In the meantime, our government is limiting all flights from the disease's epicenter in China to just five US airports, and screening incoming passengers for symptoms like fever and coughing.

As usual, top scientists are working on a vaccine. I never want to be too sure of the system working, but viruses are one of those things that you can't buy your way out of an incurable disease, no matter how rich and powerful you are. These things affect us all. It's still early days, and I'm

gonna reserve my freak out for such time as there's a true outbreak. But 'til then, y'know... like, wash your hands.

Courtney: Yeah, that's... seems weird that that's a lot to ask.

Brent: Agree. And while we're at it... public restrooms? Clean up your pee, guys. What are you doin'? I know that's probably not how the virus is spreading, but just like... especially if there's a line? Jesus Christ. There's a line, and you're gonna leave all that piss on the seat? Just come on. Ugh.

Courtney: Every time another story goes around, by the way, where it's just like, "Oh, I don't wash my legs. I don't wash this." Like, wash yourselves!

Brent: Yeah. At least, y'know... at least your hands. Just... they touch a lot more things than your knees. Like, you don't want to take a shower every other day? Okay... but like, just—just wash your hands.

Courtney: And I'm of course coming to this from the—from the people who are just like, "Oh, I just don't do this." Not people who are like, "I can't for one reason or another."

Brent: Of course. Of course.

Courtney: But like, there are people like, who just like, proudly say like, "I don't do this!"

Brent: Yeah, no. Get your lives together, y'all. It's up to you.

Courtney: [whispers] Wash your legs. Wash your legs and your feet.
[pause] Ya nasty.

[music plays]

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!

[music ends]

[music plays]

Speaker 1: Friendly Fire is a podcast about war movies, but it's so much more than that.

Speaker 2: It's history.

Speaker 3: It was just supposed to be another Simon.

Speaker 4: It's comedy.

Speaker 5: Under no circumstances are you to engage the enemy.

Speaker 2: It's cinema studies.

Speaker 6: That's a hell of a combination.

Speaker 1: So subscribe and download Friendly Fire on your pod catcher of choice, or at MaximumFun.org.

Speaker 2: And also, come see us at San Francisco Sketchfest on January 16th.

Speaker 4: You can get tickets at SFSketchFest.com.

Speaker 7: Accomplished.

Brent: Now it's time for the 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 a story we've heard before, and will again. But, stories like this continue to give me small but needed bits of hope for the future of humanity.

It's easy to think most people are selfish based on the greed that's inherent to our whole socioeconomic system, but sometimes, you see someone do something that makes you wonder if you were wrong about that. And that's where we start with today's Wi-Five recipient, Howard Kirby from Ovid, Michigan.

Mr. Kirby recently bought a set of furniture from a Habitat for Humanity thrift store in his home state of Michigan, including a couch. The couch spent a few weeks in Kirby's home, and he says the foot cushion "always seemed kind of hard." When the fooshin—when the fooshin. [laughs] When the cushion was finally opened up, he was surprised to find a box containing over \$43,000. And Mr. Kirby thought about how the cash could change his life.

According to journalist, Riley Murdoc, Kirby thought about how he could finish paying off his house, and fix his roof, and still have some money left over. He found out, even, that uh... well, his lawyer told him that he had the legal right to keep the cash. But after giving it some thought, he concluded that the right thing to do was to give the money back.

He contacted the store, got in touch with the family who dropped the couch off, and then surprised them with the cash, which had apparently been stashed in the furniture by their recently passed grandfather. Sometimes, the right thing isn't nearly as fun or exciting as the thing you're tempted to do. In fact, uh, that's most of the time.

But at the end of the day, there's a reason it's the right thing to do. So it's one thing to say it, but this guy walked the walk, and that's why we say to Howard Kirby of Ovid, Michigan... Wi-Five.

[theme music plays]

Brent: Well, that's gonna do it for another Trends Like These. Thank you so much for listening. Check out all the other awesome Max Fun podcasts at MaximumFun.org. Um, please give us a good rating and review, and subscribe on whatever podcast platform you use. We used to say Apple Podcasts, but now it's like... whatever you listen to us on, give us those five stars. It really helps us out.

Courtney: Give us all the stars on the whatevers.

Brent: Courtney, do you want to tell everybody where they can—oh, you were about to. I interrupted you.

Courtney: Y'know what?

Brent: Take it. Go off, girl.

Courtney: Y'know what? Thank you for the permission. I don't need your permission.

Brent: [laughs]

Courtney: You can find my stuff at SYFY Fangrrls, and you can listen to my other podcast, Strong Female Characters, which will go on pause at the end of February when we bring back Forgotten Women of Genre! Please listen when that happens. It's the most work I ever do.

Brent: Alright. And rapid fire, I want to tell you that my best friend in the world, Matt Villanueva and I, are gonna do a ten week miniseries podcast where we recap every episode of the new series, Picard, which about Jean-Luc Picard. The show is called The Luc Out, and you can follow us. We're not actually on podcasts platforms yet. We will be soon. For now, uh, look for us at [Twitter.com/TheLucOut](https://twitter.com/TheLucOut).

Uh, and also, I've got a podcast called Question Box. You can follow us on Twitter @QuestionBoxShow, and I made a comedy party game that's super fun called Use Your Words. It's on all the consoles and PC and Mac. More information about that at UseYourWords.lol.

[inhales] Whoo! Lot of stuff to talk about. Okay. So, that's it! Courtney, am I forgetting anything?

Courtney: Uh... RIPeanut.

Brent: RIPeanut. Goodbye! See you next time.

[theme music plays]

Brent: Before I start, I just wanted to say... I have started to think about that guy in Wayne's World. I don't know if you remember. The camera guy? Alright, we'll talk about it.

Courtney: Oh! [laughs]

Brent: And then when they do it in the real studio, he messes up. That's such a weird little detail of that movie. Okay. Here we go.

Courtney: I love that movie.

MaximumFun.org

Comedy and culture.

Artist owned.

Audience supported.