

Trends Like These 243: Is 'OK Boomer' OK?, Impeachment Hearings Begin, MORE Feral Hogs, Sonic the Hedgehog Redesign, Michael Bloomberg and Deval Patrick enter 2020 Race, Carrie Fisher's Original 'Last Jedi' Role, Stephen Miller is Exactly What You Thought

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Brent: This week: are boomers okay? Cuter Sonic, yay! And Bloomberg... go away.

Courtney: I'm Courtney Enlow.

Brent: I'm Brent Black.

Courtney: And I'm an impotent, coked up boar.

Brent: With Trends Like These.

[theme music plays]

Brent: Hello, Courtney!

Courtney: Hello, Brent!

Brent: It is Thursday, November 14th, 2019. Uh, just around six PM Eastern time. And uh, I mean, the thing is, Courtney, you already knew that.

Courtney: I did.

Brent: So I was sort of telling you, but really just letting the audience in on the facts.

Courtney: You're mansplaining the concept of time to me.

Brent: [pause] Yyye—I have no—I have no funny comeback to that. Yes.

Courtney: [mockingly] Oh Brent, tell me more about what time it is! Please!

Brent: [laughs] Does anybody really know what time it is?

Courtney: Wow. [laughing] Who does?

Brent: I don't know. Probably that one band. Was that Chicago that sang that one?

Courtney: Does anybody know what we are living for?

Brent: No.

Courtney: Oh, man.

Brent: Um, y'know what's funny? When I saw Moulin Rouge, I thought that was an original. I didn't realize that The Show Must Go On was a Queen song.

Courtney: That's adorable.

Brent: It is. Then I found out. We've sort of established that I'm not the pop culture, uh, expert on this show.

Courtney: No. No. And that's fine.

Brent: I bring a little bit of pop culture video game expertise to the table, where perhaps you are not so much of an enthusiast in that area.

Courtney: You bring a little pizazz!

Brent: Thanks! [laughs] Y'know, we're gonna be talking about the impeachment hearings, but one thing that stuck out that I didn't put in my copy is... I think it was NBC news... some publication tweeted like, that the impeachment hearings didn't have the pizazz to catch the basic, y'know, to

really rope in the American public, and it's like... the word 'pizazz' is an odd word to use for impeachment hearings. Like, that's kind of where we're at.

We have a reality show president, we have a former White House secretary, press secretary, on Dancing with the Stars, and an impeachment hearing... look, it's gotta have some razzle-dazzle, okay? It's gotta have some razzmatazz.

Courtney: Like, Trump got elected based purely off the old razzle-dazzle. It's kind of the old razzle-dazzle I don't understand. But like, he just like, flashed something shiny in front of people, and they were like, "Ooh, that's fun!" So like, I don't particularly require it in my impeachment of president Billy Flynn. But that's just what... y'know, that's what we're gonna do.

Brent: He's like if you put Billy Flynn in the microwave for like, ten seconds. He's still there. He changed.

Courtney: Yeah.

Brent: There was a fly in the transporter. [laughs]

Courtney: Yeah, that's not fair to Billy Flynn. Like...

Brent: No, that's—okay, sorry. Sorry to diss a criminal lawyer.

Courtney: I mean, *I'm* not fair to Billy Flynn by comparing him to Donald Trump. That's on me.

Brent: That's fair.

Courtney: Y'know what? I apologize to the absolutely evil lawyer that is fictitious. Because he deserves better than being compared to Donald Trump.

Brent: It's true. It's true. I wish they'd switch, y'know? Like, maybe just Donald Trump be fictitious for a while.

Courtney: Let's do a tap dance! Tick-a-ticka-ticka!

Brent: [laughs] Uh, so, real quick, I liked this headline, so I'm making it headline of the week. "Regional Italian legislature is flooded immediately after rejecting measures on climate change."

Courtney: Vaffanculo!

Brent: [laughs] Just was one of those, like... [sings a goofy tune and blows a raspberry] It was just perfect. Um... what are you drinking?

Courtney: I am drinking a immensely watered down iced Americano, because I was working, and left it sitting there for a real long time, so all the ice melted. And uh, now I'm just trying to finish it up.

Brent: Okay.

Courtney: Mm-hmm.

Brent: Fair enough. I am drinking a key lime La Croix.

Courtney: I really liked those, and then about midway through my pack, I decided I didn't. Have you ever had that? You ever had that happen?

Brent: Um... I don't know if that's... I mean, sometimes what happens is, I'll get frustrated that I have to finish the whole thing. Like, of a thing that is fine briefly, but like, I don't know, for instance, I sometimes do groceries with this service that like, they'll... they'll like, make one product like a quarter, for like a whole box of stuff. Like a box of like, fruit snacks, or like, these um, grilled cheese microwavable grilled cheese sticks. And I'll be like, "Okay, two of those were interesting. Ugh... I gotta finish all these at some point, don't I? Yikes."

But usually, it's not so much not liking something after liking it. In my experience. Maybe we're just different.

Courtney: I mean, I've done it with people, too.

Brent: Oh, *that* happens.

Courtney: Yeah, I've done it with people, and I've done it with La Croix.

Brent: That happens for sure. [laughs] I'm—I'm just like, I think I'm a little bit worse a judge of character than I am a judge of, "Do I like this sparkling water?" That's me.

Courtney: Boys and La Croixes. I get over them fast.

Brent: [laughs] Have you ever like—I don't know, I've definitely... being... [sighs] Having been on the convention circuit for my YouTube thing back in the day, you would meet someone that you've enjoyed their work. So if they're nice to you, you're like, "Oh my god." You have suddenly this kind of like, talent crush. Like, celebrity crush. And then like, you get to know them a little more, like, you have two drinks with them, and it's like, "Oh my god..."

Courtney: Yeahhh. Yeah.

Brent: I hope I've never been the person that that happened to, but I think anyone who is anyone's hero should not be met. That's just the long and short of it.

Courtney: My entire anxiety is always that. It's like, "People meet me once and like me, and then the more they get to know me, it's just like, "Oh, she's just like *this* all the time.""

Brent: I think that's a common anxiety among self-aware people. 'Cause like, I remember... y'know, I would try to reinvent myself growing up. I was in a lot of different schools. I didn't stay in the same school for more than two years until like, uh, I think seventh grade. So like, I would reinvent myself over and over again to try to fit in and be cool, but then I would slowly realize that I'm just the same kind of consistent person with the same consistent flaws.

And so, like, in a way, I feel like, yeah, it sucks when somebody starts to figure out that like, the charming front had a lot of like, stock jokes, and the charm you can have when somebody hasn't seen you at your worst... I think that's normal. I think that if you like... I don't know. If you don't like someone a little less in certain ways after getting to know them, they're probably boring. No shade to our boring listeners – we love you.

Courtney: Hey, we love you boring fuckers.

Brent: We do. We do. And your pleasant tweets about going to bed at nine PM with a glass of warm milk.

Courtney: Oh my god, that was—I mean, minus the milk, but that sounds great. Oh my god, I would love to go to bed—oh my god, let's go to bed right now. Fuck this show!

Brent: Hmm. Not what I expected Courtney to say on this episode, but—

Courtney: Fuck this whole entire show!

Brent: Hey, why not? Okay. Wow. [laughing] Um, so, uh...

Courtney: Not together!

Brent: No, I know. I know.

Courtney: Foul.

Brent: That was a little bit of Question Box coming out.

Courtney: [sighs]

Brent: I feel like I'm coming into my own more as a podcast co-host, even though I've been doing this for five years. I feel like being, I don't know, like not having to be journalistic... I like being journalistic. I like doing research and reporting stuff that I think is interesting, but it's a different thing, so I think it's... both shows are starting to bleed over into the other, so...

Courtney: I like my trends as a friend.

Brent: [laughs] Trendos. Friendos. Nothing more than that. Oh, there's probably a great rhyming—

Courtney: Never shall we bendo.

Brent: Okay, that works. That works. Um... yeah. I'll think about it. But probably all my answers will just make it worse. Uh, speaking of – oh, this is a hard left turn, but this is what we're doing. [clears throat]

Um, before we get to the show proper, I did have some second thoughts. Speaking of tweets we get from listeners, um, some second thoughts about the way I covered and spoke about the leaked Richard Spencer audio from last week. Um, I didn't really think it through with repeating that word he said, that started with an O, and there was a better way I could've handled that. I just wanted to apologize and say, I'll be more sensitive to that kind of thing in the future.

[theme music plays]

Brent: Well. Another week, another me and Courtney show, and it's a week with tons of stories, and... you could argue the impeachment was the story of the week, but it kind of came and went. Um, so we're doing another... Courtney, what's it called?

Courtney: [clears throat] Sorry, I'm losing my—*Tidblast!!*

Brent: Pew pew pew pew pew!

Courtney: Pew pew pew pew pew!

Brent: Yep, we're doing a Tidblast. Which, if you're a first time listener, uh, we sometimes do Tid-bits, but when the show is mostly Tid-bits, and we're just covering a bunch of stuff, it's a Tidblast.

Alright! Let's jump in. Uh, well, a new challenger seems to be entering the Democratic presidential race, and at a pretty late hour, too. Out of the top four candidates in the polls, Biden and Buttigieg are the ones billionaires and corporations would be more okay with, since neither of them wants to touch the private insurance industry. I should say, private healthcare industry. Um, and they're generally more business friendly.

Whereas, Warren and Sanders, whose progressive ideas seem to have more traction in this election cycle... excuse me, this election cycle. Um, the billionaire class is definitely afraid of them. So, what to do, as Buttigieg language is under 10% in the polls, and Biden's stock is falling fast? How will the definitely-not-progressive Democratic establishment hold onto power? Why, just call on the services of Michael Bloomberg, a fucking billionaire!

First off, I want to say that, uh, one of the favorite mainstream media arguments, especially in 2016, was uh... well, against Bernie I mean, is, "Well, he isn't a Democrat!" Um, y'know, Bloomberg was a Democrat, and then a Republican, then he was elected to a third term as New York mayor, running as an independent. But, the mainstream corporate owned media, particularly NBC's Chuck Todd, they're just enamored with him. And gosh, they just haven't seemed to make that comment about him. Weird, right?

On top of being a billionaire, which we super don't need right now, uh, Bloomberg's also associated with New York's terrible stop and frisk policies, as well as the divisive soda tax, and just like, a bunch of other bad looks. He's gonna try to buy himself an election if he runs. If he completes all the paperwork, which he has already started.

But I think that tactic of buying yourself an election is less likely to work in this cycle than any we've seen in, I don't know, recent memory? Recorded memory? And look – sure, to be fair, Bloomberg did some good things in his time as the New York mayor. But if he goes through with it and gets to the debate stage, he's gonna look pretty dumb up next to Elizabeth Warren, whose campaign just started selling coffee mugs that say 'billionaire tears.'

Courtney: Uh, as well as her calculator for billionaires on her website. Also, I ordered that billionaire tears mug already.

Brent: Nice.

Courtney: Don't worry about it. I will double fist it with my male tears mug, and be as on brand as possible.

Uh, while we're at it, this special, special guy, Deval Patrick, also was like, "Yes, me too. I should be president." And while we were all like, "LOL, okay, Bloomer." Former Massachusetts government, Deval Patrick, was also like, "Yes, me too. I should be president."

Good god, it's all too much. Nope. At this point, I no longer believe that anyone without an actual shot genuinely cares about defeating Trump, if they did in the first place. It's about attention or books or a kind of limitless confidence mixed with boundless delusion that I will never understand, and clearly, they are not watching Succession, because this is some Connor Roy shit.

Deval Patrick, by all accounts, is a well-liked man who has done some good things. But this thread by Michele Dauber, a professor at Stanford who led the campaign to recall Judge Aaron Persky, the judge in the Brock Turner case, gives me all the reason I need to shut this door before it opens.

Per Dauber, "In 2014, Deval Patrick fired leaders of his state's sex offender registry for trying to force his brother-in-law to register due to being convicted of rape in California in 1993. In 2019, that same rapist was sentenced to six years for another rape. Patrick didn't want his family member to register as a sex offender. It was "a family matter," and thus, only "marital rape."

Deval fired the head of state bureau who tried to require registration, ten years before the rapist's latest conviction. This is disqualifying. I have known Deval a long time. We clerked for the same judge. I admired him for many years, but his conduct in this matter is reprehensible and fails to respect women and survivors."

The last thing we need in this race is one more man with a history of dismissing or hurting assault survivors, so no thank you, please.

Brent: Hm, well said. [clears throat] Uh, hard left turn, here. Um, this is how Tidblast goes.

Courtney: Gotta go fast, gotta go fast!

Brent: This next story is about the up—[laughs] How fast? Well, Sonic the Hedgehog fast. This story is about the upcoming Sonic the Hedgehog movie. You may recall that earlier in the year, a trailer was released, showing a depiction of Sonic that literally angered and dismayed many Sonic fans. The general consensus, even among non-Sonic fans, was that the look of the character didn't feel like any version of Sonic that made the franchise what it is, and that it was uncharming, weird looking, even horrifying.

Courtney: It had person teeth.

Brent: Yeah. It just... I mean like, I'm not a big Sonic fan, so I wasn't, y'know, traumatized. But it was not... it was not great.

Courtney: A bit displeasing to my eyes.

Brent: Agree. Um, but uh, in a move that I think may be unprecedented, the movie's director, Jeff Fowler, announced that Paramount was going to delay its release to fix Sonic's design. This prompted a second backlash of people sympathizing with the visual effects team, who now had three months to redo all of it, more than likely resulting in the dreaded crunch, which, coincidentally, often affects video game developers.

Um, I don't—I'm gonna be honest. I don't know all the details of that. Um, please don't yell at me. As a game developer, crunch is terrible. It affects—and VFX artists? Boy, they are one of like, the most shat upon parts of the whole media system.

That being said, uh, I think there's a bright side here, because in any case, the new trailer was released this past week, and the general consensus was,

"Hey! This'll work!" Sonic is cuter and more charming, definitely more inspired by his various in-game and animated depictions, and I don't know if they added new scenes, but it just looks like a more fun movie.

Um, and yes, y'know, the VFX artists may have worked under undo pressure. That being said, I will say that my favorite thing about this story is that Tyson Hess, an illustrator who has long made Sonic the Hedgehog fan comics and has also directed animations in the recent Sonic game, Sonic Mania, was brought in to lead the redesign.

And so like, I kind of like that story. It was described in one tweet as a "big glow-up," and I was like, yeah! Y'know, growing up, I would go watch movies and be so mad, even as a young kid, about how you could tell a director had no familiarity with the source material. They were just trying to put their mark on a thing. What the fuck, Inspector Gadget? Anyway.

I think, for me, the moral is that sometimes, it's worth looking through the eyes of the fans to a reasonable degree, rather than studio executives who don't know anything about what the movie's about. What the source material is.

Courtney: Or, human teeth.

Brent: Fair.

Courtney: The teeth were real bad.

Of you, my friends, I ask, is there anything boomerier than the backlash of boomers to being called boomers, as in, "okay, boomer"? No. No, I dare say there is not. Nor is there anything funnier. Like a hat comedian losing his utter shit about someone else being "triggered." But in years of listing every single failure, destruction, and dare I say even murder caused by millennials, the baby boomer generation has completely and totally fallen apart when faced with one dead eyed, dispassionate reply: "Okay, boomer."

Brent: [laughs]

Courtney: Radio host, Bob Lonsberry, hit peak boomer when he tweeted, "Boomer is the N-word of ageism."

Brent: Woof!

Courtney: "Being hip and flip does not make bigotry okay, nor is it a derisive epithet, acceptable because it is new."

Brent: And he's serious?

Courtney: In the words of John Mulaney... if you have two things, and you can't say one of the things, that's the worse thing.

Brent: [laughs] Yeah. Yeah.

Courtney: Yeah. In a fantastic thread, Abigail Disney – yes, of *the* Disneys, and actual boomer, wrote, "What the hell is wrong with you, us boomers? When did you get so easily triggered? Face up to the fact that the world is changing fast, but you are not. You are old.

You are not irrelevant yet, but you are less relevant every day, and the more often you object to millennials' understandable resentment toward a generation that has selfishly poisoned their water, blown past every climate warning so they could drive their stupid Hummers, and looked away, or worse, for sexual, racial, and economic injustice, the more you prove their point that you just don't understand anything of value to them.

Look, these kids are facing down a rising tide, literally, of changes that threaten everything you and I taught them to hold dear. Oh, and does anyone remember not trusting anyone over 30? Good lord, I bet half the nudniks complaining about youth disrespecting them were all over that freight train of prejudice and bad judgment.

How about you guys sit the fuck down and let the kids drive? It's not like you've done such a great job with the time you've had. Get over the idea that all things pass. You are old, and you need to let history do what history does – move on.

And that is what “OK, boomer” is about. Tired of being blamed for the state of the world, a world we inherited, a world literally dying around us, the younger generation is searching for ways to make changes, do better, and yes, throwing some shade at those who came before us. It’s not ageist, but the whole ‘respect your elders’ thing went out with respectability politics. We've got a planet to save, okay, boomer?”

Brent: That was a great piece of writing. Um, I have some thoughts. I want to discuss this one, even though we’re tidblasting. First off, I first became aware of “OK boomer” when I retweeted this, uh... I quote tweeted this picture of a house that had a, basically, a sign on the front door for Halloween saying that they wouldn’t give candy to anybody with a Fortnite costume. And I was sort of ironically making fun of it, but my dryness led to a bunch of Fortnite fans thinking I was in favor of not giving candy to children in Fortnite costumes. [laughs]

But I got a lot of this “OK, boomer” thing, and I thought, oh, this is funny. This reminds me of how I made a video game that was very clearly a late ‘60s kind of game, but like, teenagers are like, “Why is it so ‘90s?” And I'm like, “Oh my god.”

Courtney: [laughs]

Brent: You do not know the difference. Um, but, um... I mean, I think that because there is such a predictable swath... well, okay. I'm gonna try not to be ageist in saying that this thing isn’t ageist, but like, there is this meme of boomers versus millennials, and there’s a grain of truth, y'know? Every—like you said, every, “Millennials are killing fabric softener!” or whatever. But what I think—so, okay, two things.

Number one, I think that there is an inherent irony. I don’t think that most young people using it think that they're always talking to a boomer. It’s almost like... I don't know if this makes it worse, but it’s almost like this thing of... being a boomer is the worst and oldest and most dinosaurish thing to be, so if you're acting like one, y'know... you're being old and silly. A fuddy-duddy.

Courtney: To me, getting mad about that, when again, it's like... it's not a slur. It's literally the name of the generation.

Brent: Right. I mean, the dismissiveness of it, I wouldn't say a slur. The dismissiveness of it is like, not nice, but y'know.

Courtney: Yeah, but the idea of ageism being applied here, it's like... it's the way that like, when people react badly to being called white, and saying that's racism.

Brent: Right.

Courtney: And I feel like it's the same thing where it's like, no, because this generation has been empowered. This generation created the issues that now, we're all stuck with.

Brent: So it's punching up.

Courtney: Yeah.

Brent: That's a good point. That's a really good point.

Courtney: Yeah, no one's stopping boomers from doing anything. No one's saying, "Y'know what? All boomers should no longer have jobs. Mass incarceration for boomers." Like, that's not a thing that's happening.

Brent: Though, they tend to be fans of it. Mass incarceration. Compared to millennials. That being said, y'know what's the weirdest thing about boomers to me? They are the generation that was most angry about Vietnam, and most hippies were boomers, and I feel like they were like the OG millennials. They were the long-haired, different, rebellious generation that their parents' generation couldn't understand, and y'know, it came down to haircuts. Y'know what I mean?

There was just this huge—and y'know, Nixon, specifically part of why he started the war on drugs was because this certain swath of baby boomers

was rising up, but they also liked drugs. It was like, here's a way to control them and black people. And if that sounds harsh, look at John Ehrlichman's account of the thing, 'cause that's exactly what happened.

What I'm getting at is, isn't it weird that the boomers were that, and now they've become, y'know, the bell curve of what boomers tend to be, at least on social media, is what it is now? What does that say? Not to be dark. What does that say about like, where we and the perhaps younger set of millennials are headed in terms of, does this just happen when you get old? You become a boomer?

Courtney: Well, I mean, I think that like... think about all the, um, the well-meaning white wokeness that is actually racist or transphobic or promotes white supremacy. Or y'know, white feminism. Things like that. I think that sometimes, when we consider like, yeah, y'know, the millennials are, as a core, making a change, but not a—hash tag not all millennials. Like, some suck. Some are—some are the shitbirds, and some are like, well-meaning shitbirds, and some think that they're good, but they're shitbirds. And essentially, all people are shitbirds.

Brent: Well, we—it's very easy. It's very easy for humans. I think that's actually the moral of uh, most stories is, humans are just so, so close. So always nearby to being shitbirds. Y'know, it reminds me – not to go too long on this, but – there's a musical called Falsettos, and the first act, which was originally called March of the Falsettos, is set in the early Reagan era. And an ex-hippie, who is now like, a psychiatrist, says, "In the '60s, we had a new world to start. Could this be the new world we started?"

And it's like, eugh. Like, is that—y'know, that happened to boomers. They ended up with Reagan and making that happen, mourning in America again. [blows raspberry] Um, I just wonder what it might look like, y'know? If we're gonna have that Family Ties, parents are super groovy, and y'know, Michael J. Fox's son is like, conservative and preppy. I don't know. It's weird. It's scary. Anyway.

Um, okay. I—let's go onto impeachment hearings. I would like to tell you that the impeachment hearings revealed truly explosive details this past Wednesday, but like most congressional hearings, the information comes out

slowly and steadily, if at all. But yes, the public phase of the impeachment process did begin on Wednesday with a hearing in the House Intelligence Committee, and there was one pretty big new piece of information we didn't know before.

The two witnesses who appeared were William Taylor and George Kent. Uh, Taylor is a career public servant who recently, uh... his most recent position of many is the top US diplomat in Ukraine. George Kent is a career foreign services officer. He's basically a guy with like, expert knowledge of Ukraine and the region around it.

So, first, what did Taylor say? Well, there was a lot of reiterating what we've already heard or assumed about Trump pressuring the president of Ukraine to announce an investigation on Joe Biden, or else Trump would withhold the promised and much needed military aid. By the way, part of the pitch was that Zelensky, president Zelensky of Ukraine was supposed to go on CNN and announce this Joe Biden investigation. That was like, part of what he was supposed to do.

Um, I don't, off the top of my head, know if that was actually specifically pitched to him. That's probably known, I just don't know it right this second. But um, anyway, Taylor, in his testimony earlier this week, said that a member of his staff overheard Trump and EU ambassador, Gordon Sondland, talking about Ukraine, and that Trump's interest in Ukraine was mainly about investigating Biden.

It's a bit of a bombshell, because it suggests that Trump was even more involved in the pressure campaign against Ukraine than we previously knew – certainly aware of it in advance. During the hearing, Republican congressman, Jim Jordan, tried to hammer home the fact that Trump eventually did let the aid get through to Ukraine, so no harm, no foul. But that's like saying an attempted crime is fine, as long as the criminal decided to do the right thing after the failed attempt. That's not how it works.

Um, and one other thing that didn't make it into my copy, but I was watching just before we went to record, is the Republicans actually hired a lawyer who was not, as I understand it, a member of Congress to like, y'know, try to grill these people. And at one point, he's grilling William

Taylor, and he's like, really, really parsing this one word. He's like, "Okay, this thing is unusual, right? But you wouldn't say it's... outlandish!" And like, it's—they have nothing. They have nothing.

They are—this is truly where you're gonna see Republican politicians, and conservative pundits, arguing that a clearly nude emperor has clothes. They're afraid of their base turning on them, the politicians, that is, and their base is largely Trump voters, so they're basically forced to come up with ridiculous apologisms, ranging from conspiracy theories to just saying, "Trump didn't know!" Or, "He's not bright enough to pull off a quid pro quo!" It is stunning.

Some Trump cronies have been trying to make Giuliani the fall guy, and there is some truth to what they're saying, since apparently, the idea of ginning up politically motivated investigations was Giuliani's brain child; at least, in part.

Um, anyway, so yeah. Trump's defenders and his defense are getting even wobblier, and don't take it from me – take it from Fox News' Chris Wallace, who said this. "I think that William Taylor was a very impressive Witness, and was very damaging to the president."

Courtney: Even without the pizazz!

Brent: [laughs] No pizazz necessary. Very impressive. Oh, and it's not in the quote that I just did, but Wallace went onto say, "And he has a voice as sweet as Edward R. Murrow!" or something like that. He like, really complimented William Taylor's voice.

Actually, if you're gonna go and watch the William Taylor footage, just like... I'm just gonna let you know, you heard it from me first – William Taylor is a slightly more baritone Mitt Romney in his delivery. Is that a hot take? No, but it's true.

Um, so, William Taylor also talked about Trump's attitude toward Ukraine, saying, "He had a feeling of having been wronged by the Ukrainians, and so,

this was something that he thought they owed him to fix that wrong." Now, meanwhile, George Kent, who had a spiffy bowtie...

Courtney: It was spiffy as fuck.

Brent: It was. Um, he didn't do a whole lot to move the needle, but one thing he said that was interesting, and for better or worse, gives fuel to the Republican side, was that Joe Biden's son, Hunter Biden, created the "perception of a conflict of interest when he took a position on the board of Burisma, when he had no business in that role in that industry." You'll remember, that's an energy company in the Ukraine that he just, y'know, while Obama was president, or maybe it was after, but it was a while back. Maybe 2012?

Anyway, the point is, we've talked about that at length. Um, at the very least, Hunter Biden was using his father's name to get a cushy spot on a board and tons of money for work he was unqualified to do. That being said, when George Kent was asked whether there was any truth to Trump's accusation against Joe Biden, in terms of like, the "investigation," Kent simply said, "None whatsoever."

So anyway, I could go on, but those are the basic things you need to know about the start of impeachment hearings. Again, it's a lot of reiteration, a lot of stuff we already knew or assumed. Um, and we're recording this, as we said, on Thursday, so we won't be able to cover the next witness, which is Friday, the day this episode comes out. And the witness is former ambassador to Ukraine, Marie Yovanovitch, who says she was fired in part because she couldn't publically, or rather, wouldn't publically gush about how great Trump is. She was like, insufficiently loyal to Trump.

Um, but you know we'll be covering all pertinent impeachment details next week, so stay tuned and we'll see how it goes.

Courtney: So this one makes me sad in a wistful way, but also hopeful for the final movie. Essentially, the Rise of Skywalker was supposed to be about Princess Leia. It was supposed to be her film in the way that The Force

Awakens was Han Solo's movie, The Last Jedi's was Luke's, and then this was Leia's time. It was her moment.

Tragically, Carrie Fisher died before they could make the movie. But rather than fully change course and take her out of the film entirely, director J.J. Abrams used eight minutes of cut footage from The Force Awakens and reverse engineered the entire script from those eight minutes.

Brent: Holy shit.

Courtney: Yeah. As someone who loves and adores Carrie Fisher, I consider her my hero, this commitment to honor my general means a lot, and I cannot wait to see it.

Brent: Wow, I had only seen the headline of this. I did not know about the eight minutes of cut footage. I'm gonna try not to like, think of that in structural terms when I watch the last—or, sorry, when I watch The Rise of Skywalker, but that's fascinating.

Courtney: Yeah.

Brent: I um... we've talked about this. I'm like, down with Star Wars, but the lore doesn't so much interest me. Like, I wasn't one of those anti-Last Jedi people, but I don't know. I've never been like, into the novels. You're more into it than me, I think.

Courtney: Yeah. I was really excited, um... I was excited for this to be Leia's movie, because in Last Jedi, we see that like, Leia has some like, force skills. And this was going to be really, really interesting, and I'm glad that they... that they're doing this, like, to actually—to honor her. Uh, because it would've been a real fuckin' bummer if it just was like... "And Leia's off living her best life somewhere else." Like, that would've been, y'know, like... I'm glad that we got this. I want to get to say goodbye to my space mom.

Brent: Yeah. Y'know, what I kind of hope they do is, I guess like... okay, so, I've recently found out that the totally canned Star Trek phase two TV show still had like, comics that tried to show what it would've been like. And uh,

Splinter... what is it? Splinter of the Mind's Eye? The like, proposed sequel to Star Wars one that was never made? Um, ended up being, I think, a novel and a comic. And it would've been a very different thing.

That was where, y'know, Darth Vader's castle actually was conceived, and instead, they made Empire Strikes Back, but there's still a novel and a comic of Splinter of the Mind's Eye. Hope I'm not mistitling that. But what I'm saying is, we're in an age where it wouldn't be that hard for them to make like an alternate universe, uh, basically what Rise of Skywalker would've otherwise been.

Courtney: Mm-hmm. I'm also really glad they're not, um, uh... uh, like, CGI-ing her.

Brent: Yeah.

Courtney: 'Cause that was really fuckin' off-putting at the end of Rogue One.

Brent: Yeah. It's not—the technology is not quite there. I think the de-aging... like, for instance, de-aging in um, oh, Captain Marvel with Samuel L. Jackson. I, like, realized part way through the movie, like, "Oh my god. He doesn't look like that now. Holy shit."

Courtney: [laughs] I legit never realized it was Samuel L. Jackson. I've seen that movie five times. With Clark Greg, it was very noticeable. But to me, Samuel L. Jackson just always looks like that.

Brent: To be fair, Samuel L. Jackson has aged so gracefully.

Courtney: Yeah. But like, sometimes, like, in uh, The Irishmen, or like, some other things, it's just so noticeable. It's like colored contacts are to me, where it's just glaringly... it all looks like those weird Robert Zemeckis movies that he was trying to do in the early aughts. Like uh, like fuckin' Beowulf and Polar Express. Remember when he was doing all those movies like that for a while there?

Brent: Polar Express I remember, but Beowulf I never saw. Were they just full of colored contacts?

Courtney: Oh, he did a whole damn Beowulf—no, it was not colored contacts, but like, uh, like mocap.

Brent: Well, Polar Express was like, that funky...

Courtney: It was all mocap, yeah.

Brent: Uncanny value. Uh, okay—

Courtney: Beowulf was worse.

Brent: Valley. Uncanny valley. Not uncanny value. [laughs]

Courtney: Imagine Polar Express, but it's like, violent and there's fucking.

Brent: Oh.

Courtney: It was bananas. I saw it because they did a Riff Trax of it, and it's fucking bonkers. I feel like I'm the only person that remembers this movie, and I am trapped in a castle of this memory of this nightmare.

Brent: Oh man, you're in like a personal bubble of Mandela effect. You're Gaiman!

Courtney: I'm just like, shirtless mocap Anthony Hopkins. It was bonkers. [pause] Gahhh.

Brent: Speaking of uncanny valley, my girlfriend and I have been watching and heckling all of the Twilight movies. As we talked about before we went to record, and uh, coming up on five. I've already seen what the weird, CGI toddler looks like.

Courtney: Heck yesss. Renesmee. That's a name.

Brent: Renesmee! Oh my god. I was watching the thing, and like—[laughs]

Courtney: That's a whole entire ass name.

Brent: When she said like, "Well, I wanted to name her Renee or Esme," and I was sitting there going like, "[laughs] Renesmee." Like, ha ha, I've had some wine. Renesmee, what a dumb name. She's like, "Renesmee." Like, oh no! [laughs] Oh my.

That being said, I—watching the first movie, I was like, wow. Stephanie Meyer seems like a very repressed, horny, Mormon housewife, writing wish fulfillment. And then, I saw a Lindsay Ellis video about Twilight. You and I talked about it. I read your thing that you wrote. And eventually just went... y'know, Stephanie Meyer wrote a kind of silly, perhaps mediocre wish fulfillment vampire novel, and then, it blew up. Wouldn't you write four more? [laughs] I would.

Courtney: Y'know what, I'm never going to fault anything made for teen girls. And when people are like, adults, are pissed about it, like, yeah, it's not for you. Chill out. Also, that fourth movie? Fuuucks.

Brent: Yeah.

Courtney: Body horror. Body horror. It's great. It's great.

Brent: That was the one we watched last night. For sure. Um, but yeah, like, you made the exact point about teenage girls. Like, Lindsay Ellis' video that I watched pointed out like, as a culture, one part of our robust, frothing patriarchy is, as a culture, we kind of just hate teenage girls. And I've never thought of it that way, but it's like, yeah. Even growing up, any male actor that teenage girls loved, I just automatically hated.

Courtney: It's honestly—

Brent: Boy bands? Hate 'em! Fuck 'em!

Courtney: Oh, think about how much—okay, the very fact, in like a poll, Twilight was voted the worst movie of all time. Think about that.

Brent: No way.

Courtney: Think about that. Worse than Manos, the Hands of Fate.

Brent: [laughs]

Courtney: Twilight is. No. People just fucking hate teen girls and the shit they like that much. The stuff they like is so stupid that it must be destroyed. The first movie? Fine. The next two movies can fuck off into the sea, because they were made by men. And then, that fourth one is, frankly, badass. I wish it had been a hard R. I wish it could've gone on for two more days of just, what a nightmare pregnancy is.

Brent: I wish it had been a hard 40 minutes, but okay.

Courtney: That movie fuuucks.

Brent: We have differing opinions. I think it was clearly a first act of one story, but whatever.

Courtney: Any time people make a movie about what a goddamn motherfuckin' nightmare pregnancy is, I'm like, "Yes! Finally! My story will be told!"

Brent: Well, as I told you before we went to record, one thing that attracted and fascinated me... uh, attracted me to and fascinated me about my girlfriend is that she, early on, was kind of hard to read, and that was a little bit intimidating. She's like, very good at being mysterious behind poise and slightly aloof. And um, that's good for me.

And that being said, last night, we're like, laying in bed, and I was like, "[gasps] Oh my god! I'm like Edward! I can't read your mind, and that's why I like you!" [laughs] It was um, quite a moment for me to just realize I had steeped myself in Twilight lore enough to synthesize it.

Courtney: And the first time you saw her, you full on gagged and ran out of the room. So romantiic.

Brent: If only I could climb up trees and run fast and... I don't know.

Courtney: Every time they run fast in those movies, it is always funny.

Brent: [laughs] It's so silly.

Courtney: It is always so goddamn funny.

Brent: Well, the moment that I thought was the worst, as far as that goes is, it's one thing to climb high. Love it. Run fast? Great. You're super strong. Somehow, Edward can fall fast, which is like... just a failure of CGI. Like, you... you can't... do vampires fall faster than gravity? It just seemed like an oversight.

Courtney: They do a lot of things. Also, fuck Jacob. This is Twi Like These. This is a Twilight podcast.

Brent: [laughs]

Courtney: Real life friends talking Twilight.

Brent: Well, we're running out of copy, so we may as well talk about some fuckin' Twilight.

Courtney: Yeah. Uh, Jacob's the worst. Jacob is a gaslighting, friend-zone-y piece of shit. How dare. Anyway. Y'know what we got? White supremacy. You go. [laughs]

Brent: Okay. You picked a good moment to stop me from questioning whether Bella should've kissed him, 'cause let's—let's not go into it. Anyway. He is a douchebag. Get over it, bro. Imprint on an infant, why don't you.

Courtney: So many jean shorts. So many jean shorts. Anyway.

Brent: It's true. And all of his angry friends. Okay. Here's a story we can elaborate more on, but I'm just gonna give it to you quick and dirty. A bunch of emails were leaked, written by, or involving Trump advisor, Stephen Miller. I think most of them were from around 2015 or earlier. Uh, you remember Stephen Miller, the spooky guy who always seems like Trump's minion in more than one sense of the word?

Well, he's been rumored to be a white nationalist, and of course, being one of the architects of the terrible policies that led to, um, all of these kids that still have been separated from their parents. Um, it's now all but been proven, his white nationalist, and y'know, other terrible and related elements of his personality and ideology that's been proven by the content of these emails.

Recommendations and praise for a book called Camp of the Saints, which is to the anti-immigration movement, basically what Mein Kampf was to anti-Semitism. Like, it's not a cool book to be throwin' around as a thing to read or quoted for being right and good. Miller was upset about Confederate flag removals, he has ties to white nationalist figures, he shared a website from a—well, he shared a link from a white nationalist website. The list goes on.

And like, it is not a surprise, but hey, if you don't know... now you know.
[pause] Mr. President. [laughs]

Courtney: [sings] Guess who's back. Back again. Feral hogs back. 30 to 50 of them. Duh na na na na na na.

Brent: [laughs]

Courtney: During a wiretap of a drug smuggling operation in Tuscany, which—

Brent: Okay okay okay. Greatest first, like, independent clause of any—can you read that again and just like, put some spaghetti on it?

Courtney: Doesn't that sound like the fanciest drug smuggling operation? I'm not gonna insult my people by doing my terrible Italian accent! [some gibberish] Okay.

Brent: [laughs]

Courtney: During a wiretap of a drug smuggling operation in Tuscany...

Brent: [laughing]

Courtney: Over a nice chianti, police discovered that four gang members had been stashing cocaine in the nearby Valdichiana Valley Forest. Alas, "an unknown number of boars..."

Brent: [laughing]

Courtney: [laughs] I'm gonna just throw out there, "... an average of 40, give or take ten, allegedly dug up and destroyed the gang's packages, dispersing their contents into the woods. This accounted for approximately \$22,000 worth of cocaine." According to Newsweek, "It was not immediately known what happened to the curious animals."

Presumably, whatever it was, it was really fast, really anxious, and their dicks don't work.

Brent: [laughing] All these feral hogs having tons of ideas for screenplays, and they can't get it up.

Courtney: [laughs]

Brent: Ohh, coked out feral hogs. I love it.

Courtney: Colin Farrell hogs? Is that anything?

Brent: I don't know. I don't know.

Courtney: I don't know.

Brent: Y'know, while we're doing the 'is that anything' game, earlier, when you were talking—you said something about the force with Star Wars, and I was like, "Force... is there like a force skin joke?" And I emailed myself. This is the kind of terrible person I am. I just emailed myself while we were talking, very quickly, "Star Wars foreskin force skin joke." Like, for a later tweet.

Courtney: [laughs]

Brent: So if you see me getting zero retweets or likes, and a bunch of unfollows from a foreskin tweet about Star Wars in the future, you were all here. You're all part of it.

Courtney: It was worth it.

[music plays]

Ben: Not all heroes wear capes. Some heroes watch war movies, and then review them.

John: Friendly Fire is a war movie podcast for people who don't necessarily like war movies. Although, it does not exclude people who love war movies.

Adam: I'll have you know that I am wearing a cape. My cape is just made of sound-deadening material from an audio recording studio.

Ben: [laughs] It's a really great show. John's daughter doesn't like it, because we sometimes say swear words on it, but almost everybody else that has ever listened to it has enjoyed the program.

Adam: Download and subscribe to Friendly Fire wherever you get your podcasts.

Ben: To the victor go the spoiler alerts.

[music plays]

Speaker 1: We've all made mistakes in book club, right? You drank a little too much. You don't actually read the book. And if you're under the bubble in Fairhaven, your individual will get subsumed by the collective.

Speaker 2: Hey, maybe I just let him go, and whip us up some guac.

Speaker 3: [many voices at once] We do not require guac. We require only nutrients and expansion. You will become book club. You will eat, pray, and love with us. Join book club.

Speaker 1: Bubble: The sci-fi comedy from MaximumFun.org. Just open your podcast app, and search for Bubble.

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: It is rare that I give the Wi-Five to a corporation, because even when corporations do good things, it's often for PR purposes, and it's just like a different way to raise or maintain brand awareness. Uh, but the Japan wing of Microsoft did something pretty cool, and learned something valuable in the process.

Microsoft Japan has begun experimenting with a new project called Work-Life Choice Challenge for the month of August. I guess I should say, they did it in the month of August, and it allowed the entire staff, thousands of people, to take a four day work week without any reduction in pay. And lo and behold, this resulted in more effective meetings, happier staff, and an unbelievable 40% increase in productivity. Or is it unbelievable?

So, Takuya Hirano, the CEO of Microsoft Japan said in a statement, "Work a short time, rest well, and learn a lot." Now, like a lot of people, I've never been super comfortable with the idea that a person's worth boils down to

how much profit they can generate for their overlords. But as the workers of the western world slowly start to collectively wonder whether allowing their bodies to be rented 40 hours a week is worth what they get in return...

I guess, look, I'm just—I wanted to applaud Microsoft Japan for trying something that improved quality of life when they really didn't have to. And while a four day work week is probably a ways off for businesses across the board, it's cool to see that it's not just a nice thing to do – it's also good for business.

So, to Microsoft Japan, Wi-Five.

[theme music plays]

Brent: Well, that's gonna do it for a decidedly compact episode of Trends Like These. If you have an hour and ten minute commute, I would say... either go back to the beginning of this one and listen again, or, or, go and listen to our bonus episode from the last MaxFunDrive where we watched Grease 2, and then drunkenly disagreed about it for something like two hours.

Courtney: Listen to that one twice. Listen to that one, like, like, a bunch of times. Over and over again, while watching Grease 2, while watching the Wizard of Oz. It all syncs up. You're gonna love it.

Brent: Maybe. Um, hm.

Courtney: No, but you will, though. Like, if you have a heart. Unlike some people.

Brent: I sure don't.

Courtney: [sings] Remeemember, I looove you, I won't be far awaaaay...

Brent: So, we want to thank Mustin, who edits the show every week. Uh, he's a cool dude. He makes music. He does lots of cool things. You can find out more about that at Mustin – which is spelled like Justin, but with an M –

Mustin.net. Uh, Courtney, where can people find you on the internet? What do you want them to know?

Courtney: Uh, you can find me at SYFY Fangrrls, and read my stuff, and all kinds of stuff. We're doing Keanuember at SYFY Fangrrls. We're celebrating Keanu Reeves, 'cause he's the only good man, and uh, yeah.

Brent: [laughs] Now you've done it!

Courtney: [laughs] God. Please. Just don't take Keanu from us, lord!

Brent: Sorry, yeah. I didn't mean to—yeah, no, okay. I didn't say it. It's just right back in my... [makes a rewinding sound effects]

Courtney: Knocking on everything. Knocking on everything. Knocking on everything. Except for Keanu.

Brent: That's kind of a bop you just came up with. [sings] Knocking on everything, knocking on everything... sounds like a Baby Shark kind of thing. Except Baby Shark is about... sharks? Okay. Um, did I interrupt? Did you have anything else you wanted to plug?

Courtney: Nah.

Brent: Okay.

Courtney: I'd plug Keanu. Heeey!

Brent: Heyyy, ohhh!

Courtney: Unsavory.

Brent: Um... [laughs] Uh, I am now the co-host of two podcasts, and the second one is called Question Box. It is the game show podcast of shockingly personal questions. Kate Sloane, who you've heard as a guest host on Trends Like These before, she co-hosts it with me, and we basically take super cool people that you know from the internet and from other media, and we ask them rude questions, and in a space that just kind of...

we really go there, but like, it's not Howard Stern, y'know? We try to kind of like, have a space where it's okay to talk about stuff and be vulnerable and be gross.

We are just about to do episode 18, and so, there's a lot of content. We have had guests like Travis McElroy, Courtney Enlow, UK correspondent Dave Bulmer. Recently, we had Lane Moore, who is the author of *How to Be Alone*, and uh, sneak peek – this next week will be the super beard bros, Alex Faciane and Jirard Kahlil, AKA the Completionist.

So, check us out. Question Box. We're on all your favorite podcast platforms, or you can get us at QuestionBoxShow.com.

I think that's gonna do it for another Trends Like These. Courtney, am I forgetting anything?

Courtney: [sings] Keeeeaanu Reeves, doot doot doot doot doot doot!
Keanu Reeves, doot doot doot doot doot doot! Keanu Reeves, doot doot doot doot doot doot! Keanu Reeves!

Brent: I love it.

Courtney: That was Baby—that was Baby Shark.

Brent: Oh, yeah. No, I'm with you.

Courtney: Okay. Just making sure.

Brent: Super loved it.

Courtney: Making sure.

Brent: Alright. Knocking on everything. See you next time!

Courtney: See you next time!

[theme music plays]

Courtney: Alright alright alright.

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