

Trends Like These 247: Trump IMPEACHED, Adam Driver Interview Walkout, Whoopi Goldberg vs. Meghan McCain, JK Rowling Sticks Up for TERFs, Critics Respond to CATS, Michael Jackson Musical

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Travis: This week: Adam Driver gets to walking, Meghan McCain won't stop talking, and Mitch McConnell impeachment balking.

Brent: I'm Brent Black.

Courtney: I'm Courtney Enlow.

Travis: I'm Travis McElroy.

Brent: [in a hillbilly voice] And I'm your Facebook uncle by marriage!

Courtney: With Trends Like These.

[theme music plays]

Travis: Hello, Brent and Courtney!

Brent: Hello Travis, and hello Courtney!

Courtney: Hello Brent, and hello Travis!

Travis: And hello everyone. Oh... oh, I'm so excited! It's, uh, whatever the boxing day for impeachmas is. That's this. And it's also Star Wars day for me, so it's just, so far, a great day.

Courtney: Someone gave Travis ten dollars, and he's gonna go see a Star War.

Travis: I'm gonna see a Star War!

Courtney: I'm seeing it tomorrow morning. Because I literally... [laughs] So, all of my colleagues got to go to screenings. I am in the middle of Illinois. I don't have screenings. So I said, "Hey, can I also go see it during the work day?" So I am going to see it tomorrow. [laughs]

Travis: Nice. Uh, by the way, it is December 19th, 2019. We started about 5:05 PM Eastern time. We're so excited to talk to you. Hey, Brent, before we get into the other stuff, do I see you have a brief note here?

Brent: Oh, it is so brief. Uh, I just wanted to address some comments I saw recently in our Facebook group about how I mentioned Britain's former head of the Labour party, Jeremy Corbin, but I didn't bring up the accusations that he and the Labour party are anti-Semitic. So, we had a pretty interesting discussion on the topic, and I wrote out some thoughts about it.

So, if you want to hear more about that, or if you were one of the listeners last week that was like, "Hm, I don't know about that," but you didn't mention it or didn't see it mentioned in the Facebook group, check it out. It's an independently moderated Facebook group that the three of us just dip into and chime in sometimes, but it's called the Trends Like These Fangroup on Facebook.

Travis: Uh, so what is everyone drinking? I'll go first. I'm having a giant glass of water.

Courtney: Good for you. Hydrating as ever. I am actually drinking—so, I took a picture of it, and I will post it on the Twitter machine. I got many new sparkle waters. And uh, one of the ones I'm drinking is, I believe, a Target exclusive, and it is Hibiscus LaCroix.

Travis: Ooh! Ooh la la!

Courtney: I haven't decided how I feel about it yet. [laughs] I'm workin' on it. But I'm still drinking it.

Brent: Yeah... I just don't like drinkin' my flowers, y'know?

Courtney: I love—honestly, I am a person who loves the taste of flowers. I weirdly do. That's why I drink IPAs. But this, I...

Travis: That's why I had to stop buying you roses whenever you did like, a good job at something you're performing.

Courtney: I know, 'cause I just ate it like a mess.

Travis: You would eat them!

Brent: Yep.

Travis: And you would do it while maintaining like, direct eye contact.

Courtney: I would just stare at Travis and eat roses. That's what people do.

Travis: It was a lot.

Brent: Crunchin' on petals, like you do.

Courtney: This honestly tastes more like a tea. Like a loose tea... just like, heavily steeped in hibiscus, than it does, uh, sparkle water. But like, I mean, I'm still drinking it. I have a whole eight pack, so I'm gonna have to drink it.

Travis: Oh, brag.

Courtney: I know. And I'm also drinking a glass of Kim Crawford sauvignon blanc.

Travis: Uh, what about you, Brently?

Brent: Well, so, I am in Texas, visiting my family and hometown friends for the Christmas season. And because of that, I got some store brand Kroger seltzer, the brand of which, legit, seems to be Selt Zer. Two different—two

different lines. Selt, carriage return, Zer water, and the flavor is blackberry citrus, and just like Ghostbusters 2016 and The Last Jedi, I find it to be... ehh, pretty okay.

[laughs] Did you like that? You like how I just kind of zagged and zigged and brought some stuff into it that had nothing to do with seltzer? Or, I'm sorry – Selt...

Courtney: You mean going out of your way to insult—

Brent: ... Zer?

Courtney: —The Last Jedi like some kind of incel?! Yeah, I liked it.

Brent: That's the thing! I'm now crusading for my right to just like a movie—

Travis: Doesn't it always sound like incel is like the twin brother to Microsoft Excel?

Courtney: [laughs]

Brent: [laughs] Microsoft Incel!

Travis: Like, that's the Goofus to Microsoft Excel's Gallant.

Courtney: The spreadsheet that hates women!

Travis: Yeah. The spreadsheet that doesn't spread sheets.

Brent: Ohh... oh Clippy, I always knew there was something different about ya.

Travis: You look like you're trying to hate women!

Courtney: [laughs]

Brent: [laughs]

Courtney: You look like a real SJW!

[theme music plays]

Travis: Well, my name is Travis and I'm here to say, I love Beyond the Headlines in a major way! Bee bee bee bee Beeeyond the Headlines, Bee bee bee bee Beeeyond the Headlines!

Courtney: Everyone, this has been Eight Mile 2, starring Travis EmineMcElroy.

Brent: [laughs]

Travis: Sixteen Mile. [pause] Hello. Hi, everyone. Welcome to Beyond the Headlines. Now, I'm gonna take the first story here, and for some reason, in my uh, excitement to discuss it, I labeled it in the doc here, "Adam Driver walks around."

Courtney: [laughing]

Brent: I was wondering why it said that.

Courtney: I very much read it as like, an Adam Driver walkabout.

Travis: Yeah. [laughs]

Courtney: I was like, this is very Australian. I'm into it. I'm here for it. Also, you've done it in an American dumb way, and I love it, too.

Travis: Yeah. Wouldn't it be great if we reached the point where like, trending news was like, "Yeah, Adam Driver walked around today."

Courtney: How fucking far away are we from that?

Travis: That's what everyone's talking about.

Brent: Cannot wait.

Courtney: That's basically what I used to write at VH1 all the time.

Travis: Yeah.

Courtney: Kylie Jenner was outside.

Travis: Can you believe it?

Courtney: Good for her.

Travis: Uh, no. Actually, Adam Driver walkout is what it should be titled. About a month ago, Adam Driver, who you probably know from the Stars War, uh, and Marriage Story, sat down in a New York City studio to record an interview for Fresh Air with Terry Gross, who was recording from a Philadelphia studio. Fresh Air played a clip of Adam Driver's performance from Marriage Story, and he walked out of the interview.

The piece was supposed to air on December 11th, but instead, they ran a rerun with Conan O'Brien, and Gross simply said, "We had promised you an interview with actor, Adam Driver, today, but unfortunately, we weren't able to do it as planned."

Now, if this were a jigsaw puzzle, those would be all the edge pieces, but it's not really the whole picture. First, Adam Driver has made it very publically known that he cannot deal with watching or listening to himself perform. In fact, Fresh Air was well aware of this. Back in 2015, Driver did the show, and when it came time to play a clip, they warned him and invited him to remove his headphones so he wouldn't have to listen. That seemed to go fine, but I'll get back to that in a second.

Also, the clip was of him singing the song, Being Alive, from the musical, Company, in a clip from Marriage Story. I don't assume everyone feels this

way, but I know that for me, it is way harder to listen to myself sing in a recording than it is to listen to myself speak or act.

Courtney: Oh, god yes.

Travis: I think you're—yeah. There's something way more vulnerable about singing. Not to mention that it has an added layer of technical challenge over speaking, because not only do you worry about, did I deliver it emotionally correctly, but you have to make sure you're hitting the right notes. It's an added layer.

Now, let's step into the world of conjecture. Whenever I hear about something like this happening to a performer, the first thing I think is, you have no idea what kind of day they were having. And being an actor and having a bad day is way more public than people in most jobs will ever experience. So, to get back to it being a repeated thing from Fresh Air, maybe that's actually worse.

They did it again this time, where they said, y'know, "You can remove your headphones," but who knows what conversations Driver's people had with the Fresh Air producers before the recording? Maybe no clip was supposed to be played. Maybe back in 2015, even though he laughed it off, maybe he hated that it was happening, but didn't feel empowered to walk away. Or maybe, y'know, this was like, his eighth interview of the day, and every time, people had played recordings, even though he had asked them not to.

Y'know, like... [sighs] I think it's easy, when something like this happens, for people to jump to assumptions of him being spoiled, or moody, or whatever. But I think that it's, y'know, it's always good to treat it with a grain of salt, and remember that everyone needs a personal day sometimes. And I would also point out – it's not like he threw chairs or screamed at her or anything like that. He just walked away.

Brent: Mmm... I'm torn, because I feel like we are in an era where, y'know, self care is something we're all starting to talk about, and the idea of like, "Just be tough and suck it up!" Like, those sort of um, y'know, that side of

the American ideology is starting to be shown to be, uh, sometimes really problematic and really like, harmful to people.

At the same time... man, there's part of me that's like, uh, you agreed to be in a Star Wars trilogy on top of being in many movies and TV shows. You're gonna have to just... you're gonna just have to sometimes see or hear your own performances, and that's just how it's gonna be, bud.

Courtney: I go—yeah, I go in and out, like... my understanding is that he has referred to it as an actual phobia, and um, I—I understand and respect that. In addition to like, y'know, what Brent said, where it's like, you are literally in a job where you're kind of gonna have to do that. Like, I think that Adam Driver specifically is a very, um... he seems like a theater actor. He is a theater actor, but he feels like the kind of person where that's his biggest comfort area.

Travis: But he seems like one, too. [laughs]

Courtney: Whereas, movies, it's actually surprising. It has always been surprising that he did Star Wars. But like, that's—like, it seems like movies and movie stardom is not the thing he's comfortable with. He is definitely a theatrical play actor. Um, now, I think that the issue is that Fresh Air fucked this up.

Travis: Yeah.

Courtney: They didn't have to—unless this was literally like, the opening of the interview, in which case, like, that actually makes more sense for Adam Driver to walk out, because then that casts a whole energy on his entire interview. But like, if they got most of the interview, they didn't have to just kill the whole thing, unless they were just being kind of shitty?

Travis: Yeahhh. Well, the only thing I can think is that—

Brent: But is it—it's live, though, right? Like, it's actual radio. Isn't it?

Travis: No.

Courtney: No, they record it.

Travis: They recorded it a month ago.

Brent: Oh my god. I thought—I thought like, Fresh Air was still on the radio. But I guess... I guess why have something on the radio anymore if you don't have to, huh? Hm.

Travis: No, I mean, it's on the radio. They just recorded the—

Brent: That's what I mean. That's what I mean, as opposed—but like, not live on the radio like when you watch Frasier. He's like, live to broadcast, y'know what I'm saying?

Travis: Yeah. No no no.

Courtney: I can also see this being the first time Terry Gross has had to deal with that, because Terry Gross is a very, like... calm, relaxing person.

Travis: Well, it's actually not.

Courtney: It's—no shit! Who?

Travis: Because there was a walkout, I believe, in 1999 with Monica Lewinsky, because Monica Lewinsky was there to promote her book—

Courtney: Monica Lewinsky deserves to do that.

Travis: —and Terry Gross... yes.

Courtney: If anyone's earned the right to walk out, it's Monica fuckin' Lewinsky.

Travis: Right. And Terry Gross proceeded to ask very personal questions about the Clinton stuff, and Monica Lewinsky walked out of the interview,

and even later, like, was very... I don't know if apologetic is the right word, but like, said, y'know, "Sorry I had to walk out," and everything. And Terry Gross said she was very pleasant about it. But it is not the first time somebody has walked out of an interview.

Brent: Bill O'Reilly actually also walked out of a Fresh Air interview. Though, I think it's because Terry Gross was asking him good questions, in that particular case.

Travis: Yeah. I think, for me, my coverage of this is kind of colored by the fact that when this was trending news, it seemed like every headline was like, "Ooh, moody walks out! What a little baby!" It all seemed like TMZ stuff.

Courtney: I mean, we—

Travis: And nobody was like—

Courtney: We expect that of like, very good actors sometimes, though. Like, when the uh... the Christian Bale tape got released, everyone was like, "Oh, this diva ass actor!" And it's like, then you read what comes after, where it was like, no, this was actually about a person on the set that everyone hated, and finally, someone in power was able to be like, "No, fuck you, dude." But also—

Travis: Yeah. Somebody that apparently repeatedly ruined shots, and like, had them have to do like, retakes and shit.

Courtney: But you do also have your Jared Letos who are just like, in the interest of the performaaance, are just like, big dicks. Like, y'know, Adam Driver, we don't know enough about him, probably because he does not like doing press a whole ton. So, y'know... he could go either way.

Travis: Yeah.

Courtney: I like him. He seems like a good guy. Dealt with Lena Dunham for a whole bunch of seasons.

Um, this week, the first in a series of steps to end a long national nightmare began. No, I do not mean the impeachment of Trump. I mean the moment Whoopi finally snapped at Meghan McCain! Please listen and enjoy.

Meghan: My job here is not to litigate the ethics of it. I'm an ABC political analyst, along with being a View cohost. My job is to analyze the politics of it, and I'm telling you—

Whoopi: But I'm not talking about you. I'm talking about the people that are the senators that are—

Meghan: But I—I'm telling you my job here. Just let me finish. I let you talk. Let me finish.

Whoopi: In the senate. The people in the senate.

Meghan: What you have—

Whoopi: Here's what's happening now. We're gonna—

Meghan: Do you want to hear it? 'Cause perfect perspective on the show ever, like—

Whoopi: Girl, please stop talking. Please stop talking right now. 'Cause y'know what?

Meghan: No problem.

Whoopi: What's happening—thank you. Thank you.

Meghan: No problem. I won't talk for the rest of the show. No problem.

Whoopi: Okay. That's—I'm okay with that.

[audience laughs]

Whoopi: I'm okay with that. If you're gonna behave like this...

Meghan: I'm not behaving like anything. I'm trying to show a conservative perspective.

Whoopi: You're talking over—yes, we understand that!

Meghan: No, I—just let me talk.

Whoopi: But you are—what you are doing...

Meghan: No, I'm not—

Whoopi: ... is you're—we're not doing anything. How about this? Former FBI. We'll be right back.

Meghan: What—no.

[audience claps]

Courtney: It was honestly kind of beautiful. McCain has long been an antagonistic figure, to say the least. Insulting, and rude, and just interruptive. Not in the way that I interrupt. Not in the way that I interrupt. But like, just a real mess. Seemingly by design. Like, *The View* keeps her on to be that... that villain figure.

Travis: Yeah. It's a thing that they've basically, more or less, always done, is to have big—more or less, like, four people on a liberal spectrum, and then like, one conservative person for everybody to either gang up on or to like, try, I guess, in a more giving way to put it, is to have a different perspective in the group.

Brent: Well, and to be fair, Meghan McCain is a little bit different in character than some of the others. For instance, Elisabeth Hasselbeck, of whom I am no fan. But I feel like, y'know, it's kind of like Simon Cowell and

Piers Morgan are not exactly the same, but they have filled the same role, essentially. That's kind of the thing, I think.

Courtney: Yeah. She can best be described as like, a petulant child. Like, she really does just tantrum and make, like, sarcastic like, "I guess I just won't say anything!" comments. It's like... [whispers] Shut up.

Travis: She literally said in that clip, "I won't say anything for the rest of the show."

Courtney: And then just kept talking. [laughs]

Travis: [laughing] Which is literally—like, that's something my five year old niece would say. No, y'know what? It's not. Charlie wouldn't say that. She's a dream. Like, this is—and y'know what's weird? Is when I watch this clip—

Courtney: Never again compare Charlie McElroy to Meghan McCain!

Brent: [laughs]

Travis: Yeah, I immediately recanted. Um, the thing is, when I watch this clip, when you show me this clip, I had this feel—I was like, "Wait, is this an old clip?" 'Cause I feel like, like a month ago, there was a clip that was so close to this, where Meghan McCain kept saying like, "Let me talk, let me talk," and everybody said, "We're letting you talk. Nobody's stopping you from talking."

Brent: This is kind of a schtick, to be fair. Like, I don't mean that like—

Courtney: That's, I think, why she's on the fucking show.

Brent: —they're all in on it, but I do mean like, they... it's kind of like... mm, I'm trying to find the right analogy that's not gonna come off bad. What I mean is, you put certain personalities in the same place, and from a producer's perspective on TV, whether or not you've told them to fight, you know that, eventually, they're gonna bump up against each other, just by their natures.

Travis: Oh yeah.

Courtney: Well, and that—

Travis: I would—

Courtney: Travis, you go, baby.

Travis: Well, I was just gonna say, like, from watching the clip... and maybe this is naïve of me... but it does not seem like Whoopi is acting.

Brent: No, no, and that's the thing.

Travis: It seems like... eh.

Brent: I don't think that she was necessarily playing it up. But I will say, this sort of thing does happen over and over again. And it is so often, uh, y'know, with the Meghan McCain or with the Elisabeth Hasselbeck. 'Cause the thing is, instead of... I mean, y'know, as much as Travis, you talk about like, uh, liberal panelists... like, liberal for mainstream central America. Or rather, sorry, middle America. Not central America.

Travis: Yeah.

Brent: And so, with the conservative mouthpiece on the show, they usually get someone who is pretty out there. Um, and so, y'know, in order to really kind of drive home the difference. And in this particular case, it wasn't just the politics – it was also the optics, because it was a black woman that Meghan McCain continued to interrupt and just not let finish a sentence.

Courtney: And it was also, to the Meghan McCain supporters, a black woman who wouldn't let the nice white lady talk. And I think that's the thing, where neither Whoopi Goldberg, nor Meghan McCain, nor anyone on the show who has ever gotten annoyed with Meghan McCain, has ever been acting.

I think it's all been very real moments. This is who they are, and this is who they... this is how they feel. It is the powers that be. The producers of the program that are the ones who are like, "No, keep her on there. This is how we're getting attention." No one cares about The View unless someone is fighting.

And that kind of leads to, I think, fairly or unfairly, the conversation that came up the next day. Uh, Whoopi addressed the comments, saying that the conversation went off the rails, and it is not indicative of women in a group. Which is really the saddest thing to have to address. Like, in my cultivated timeline, everyone was just talking about, y'know, Meghan McCain being a shitbird. Which she is.

I honestly kind of forgot about the fact that The View has always had to deal with the idea that it is not as... y'know... [sighs] As good of a news program, as hard of a news program, as deserving...

Travis: As legit. Yeah.

Courtney: As anyone that would feature men. Because it is all women. And I think that that, admittedly, is in part due to the producers who do enjoy this quote unquote cat fight mentality. Because that is where they get the views and the clicks and the attention.

Um, McCain, as ever, said of Whoopi that they're friends, she loves her. Whoopi was friends with her father, because she cannot go more than a minute without bringing up her father, or she'll die.

Brent: [laughs]

Courtney: But yeah, like, saying that y'know, it's sexist, the way people discuss The View. And that is a thing I'm interested in, is the fact that, when people talk about The View, it's because a Meghan McCain has been a real asshole, or y'know, this or this or this.

And it both feeds into the narrative that women are inherently catty and unable to have any kind of serious discussion, but also, I genuinely believe

that that is what the producers have cultivated in an environment, in a program. That's what they want. If they didn't, then they wouldn't have these specific humans in the same place. I think that there is a different—

Travis: Yes.

Courtney: Like, um... They particularly go after the most, like, outspoken, but like, ill-informed conservative women they can. And I don't know if that comes from a need, like, "Let's make the conservatives look bad!" It's not going great for them. Like, they do, like... these specific women do end up looking like assholes. But I think that it makes the people who are conservative watching this feel like these women are being ganged up on by these liberal elitists.

Travis: Yeah.

Courtney: And it just is—it feels ugly.

Travis: It always feels like... it always feels a little bit to me like they're trying to have their cake and eat it too.

Courtney: Yeah.

Travis: Of like, we have conservative representation. But also, we don't let, y'know... like, we make them look bad. Y'know what I mean? 'Cause here's the thing – whatever you feel about Meghan McCain, I don't think she is your best option for representation of like, conservative, like... if you wanted someone to come on and be somebody who would actually like, y'know, make excellent points, and make people go, "Y'know, I don't feel that way, but I see what you're saying," it ain't Meghan McCain.

Brent: Well, but I think that that goes to the concept of the show. Y'know, I watch political round table shows, and it's not that. Y'know, I—there was a time I religiously watched Bill Marr. It's not that. Um, and it's like, I feel like it is targeted toward a certain demographic, and maybe condescendingly so.

But it's like, I don't think that they just want like, news and political analysis. I think they do want big personalities, and I think that's probably why Meghan McCain stays on, is because, y'know, as much of a shitbird as she is, it does drive ratings, and these incidents that kind of go viral, I think, happen with some regularity.

Courtney: And inherently, like, by virtue of being a daytime TV program, which, the entire, um, y'know, the realm of which is focused on women, is in theory, based on the idea of the stay at home mom. Of the, y'know, the non-working woman. The retired woman. It feels like this is both pandering to a non-existent woman, or a very specific idea of what their audience is. The woman that their audience is. And they are trying to kind of have their cake and eat it, too.

I talked about this online. Like, Meghan McCain did not used to be this person. Meghan McCain, for a while there, she and Michael Ian Black went on a tour, and they wrote a book together, and she was—

Travis: Right.

Courtney: —allegedly, very socially liberal. And it was this kind of bringing together of like, y'know, the liberal person and the, y'know, the somewhat conservative person. And she seemed like one of us, in a lot of ways. And now, she is...

Travis: It seemed like we could get her, y'know?

Courtney: Yeah! And now she's—she's married to the editor of The Federalist, which is a fuckin' Nazi-ass publication, frankly. And she is the worst fuckin' person.

Travis: Y'know, I love your—I just want to say, I really appreciate your emphasis there, because Nazi-ass publication is different from a Nazi... ass publication.

Brent: [laughs]

Courtney: Yeah. Like a... something—

Brent: Big ass fraus.

Courtney: Something that she will—look, there's a—there's a Nazi porn. I'm not gonna—y'know what? It's famous. I don't know. Forget it. Just forget I said it! This isn't it!

Brent: [laughing]

Travis: It's not important. It's not important. Not important.

Courtney: But yeah, she's the worst. She's bad. She sucks. I don't like her.

Travis: So, uh, for our last Beyond the Headlines here, this is... ugh. This is... a very frustrating topic, and it is a topic that I am still educating myself on. And so, if there is anything that I am factually incorrect about, please let me know. I tried to do as much research as I can, but I—I see this as, any transgender person who is listening, they're already gonna know all this shit and already be frustrated by it. I hope that I can do a little bit to help educate other people like me, who are just now kind of are late to the game learning about it.

So let's talk about TERFs! So, TERF, T-E-R-F, is an acronym for trans exclusionary radical feminist. Basically, TERF is a shorthand term for someone who doesn't think trans women are actually women, and tries to separate them out when discussing women's rights. There are TERFs who then even take that TERFing one step further, and see trans women as being an impediment to women's rights.

This brings us to Maya Forstater. Forstater refers to herself as "a gender-critical feminist." Read: TERF. And also says, "I am perfectly happy to use preferred pronouns and accept everyone's humanity and right to free expression. Trans women are trans women. That's great. But enforcing the dogma that trans women are women is totalitarian."

Courtney: Nope!

Travis: She has also tweeted, "Some people believe that what makes a woman is the fact of female biology. Some people believe it is an innate sense of gender identity. These beliefs are incompatible, like atheism and religion. But that doesn't mean that people with different beliefs hate each other or can't get along."

Fuck you.

Courtney: Fuuuck that noise.

Travis: Yeah. I—just real quick, I wanted to include that, because uh, one, it's false equivalency. This idea of comparing your belief, that trans women are not women, to the idea of a religious belief? Um, that's not the same. Um, and you're also arguing... ugh. She goes out of her way multiple times in all of this horrible shit she has written to point out that like, how upset she is about people who supposedly believe in science, who like, believe that trans women are women.

Um, but the fact is that, scientifically, trans women are as much women as anyone is a woman. And uhh, it's so dumb. It's like... it's like her beliefs and defending them, to me, is a lot like a flat earther saying, "I'm being persecuted for my beliefs," when someone is just inherently wrong.

So anyways, going on. On the webpage she uses to update people on her case, and to *raise money* – she's up to about \$90,000 – she wrote under a section titled 'My Story,' and I'll get to her case here in a second. She wrote in a section under 'My Story,' "Last summer, the UK government launched a public consultation on reforming the gender recognition act, 2004, towards "self-ID." Like most people, I agree that transgender people should not face discrimination and harassment as they live their lives. But I am concerned about the impact of self-ID on women and girls, and in particular, on single sex spaces and services such as women's refuges, hostels, prisons, changing rooms, and hospital wards, as well as women's sports."

Courtney: [sighs]

Travis: And for other people like me who are still learning about that, that is, uh, like one of the most, like, TERF-iest things. This idea of like, "Sure, transgender people can be transgender people, but think about the impact that it has of like, someone—" And this is the TERF speaking. "—pretending to be a man in a woman's space."

Courtney: And there exists actual, y'know, plenty of... and I will say, it's trans women. It's trans people who are writing the responses to this, basically saying like, "This doesn't exist, and here's why." And y'know, cis people need to do the work, because trans people should not have to defend their own existence. But there's lots available if you just Google about why this is all made up. Specifically, the women's sports thing, which seems to be the biggest argument. Which like... 'kay. Like, it's not happening. It's not an issue. You don't need to be worried about it.

Travis: And what it—[sighs] What it really all comes down to is, someone like Forstater basically saying, "Listen, as a woman, I've had it hard." Which, don't get me wrong – this is Travis speaking – yes. Absolutely. But then going on to say, "And now that we're finally getting some rights, to think that a transgender person would try to hop on board and take some of those rights, too..." As if like, being transgender is somehow, like...

Have you ever seen the movie, uh, Soul Man, in which a white dude does blackface to get a scholarship and get entry to a school?

Courtney: This is that. Yeah.

Brent: Oh yeah! I forgot about that.

Travis: Right. It is—

Courtney: C. Thomas Howell is the like, invisible, imaginary trans person that these monsters seem to think exist. And he didn't even exist as a white person or a black person.

Travis: This idea that like, a trans woman might be a trans woman so they can compete against women in sports? Or like, that kind of shit. That is so ignorant.

So, in 2018, Maya tweeted, "Some transgender people have cosmetic surgery, but most retain their birth genitals." Which, gross. What a terrible phrase.

Courtney: Hey, none of your fuckin' business, bitch. I'm sorry, like—I'm the only one that can call people a bitch on this show, and I'm gonna take that. I'm gonna take that moment.

Travis: Thank you.

Courtney: But yeah, no. That's not—fuck you!

Travis: Thank you. Uh, "Everyone's equality and safety should be protected, but women and girls lose out on privacy, safety, and fairness if males are allowed into changing rooms, dormitories, prisons, and sports teams." Uhh... in September, she also tweeted – and this is September, 2018...

Courtney: Can we real quick go into the "allowed into prisons"? Y'know, where everyone wants to go. Where trans women love going! Male prisons. That's a place people love to be. Asshole.

Travis: And once again, another super TERF-y thing, to worry about privacy and safety of "women and girls," at the expense of the privacy and safety of transgender women, being sent to male prisons and having to use male changing rooms and male bathrooms. Like, it is... [sighs]

Courtney: What a fuckin' asshole.

Travis: It is exclusionary.

Courtney: Yes.

Travis: Um, so, Forstater also tweeted in 2018, September... and this one... fu—I'll just go ahead and say it. Fuck you. "What I am so surprised at is that smart people who I admire, who are absolutely pro-science in other areas, and champion human rights and women's rights, are tying themselves in knots to avoid saying the truth that men cannot change into women, because that might hurt men's feelings."

Courtney: What a fucking piece of shit.

Travis: Right? Right?

Courtney: Hey, to the trans people listening to this, and the nonbinary people – y'know what? You absolutely are you. You are your gender. You are the lack of gender. You are you, and I am sorry that people are fucking pieces of shit.

Travis: Yes. Uh, so, she also tweeted about 98 or more other tweets on the subject in September, and afterwards, according to Forstater, her employers at the Center for Global Development asked her to add a disclaimer to her bio, which I assume was like, "We don't endorse this," and that they "warned that a lot of people would find my tweets offensive and exclusionary." Uh, no doyyy.

Brent: [laughs]

Travis: In March of 2019, six months later, Maya published a Medium article titled, "International Development: Let's Talk About Sex." In this article, she says that, among other things, gender is a polite synonym for sex, which it is not. Uh, and defining womanhood as a feeling, rather than a biological fact, has implications for protection of women's rights. And just a lot of other bullshit.

Uhh, if you want to, you can read it, but you don't need to. It's really wrong. Um, not just wrong morally, but like, factually incorrect throughout. Uh, according to Forstater, this led to her employers not renewing her contract; though, she refers to it as "being fired." So, at this point, she sued CGD by

taking it to an employment tribunal, and sued them for, believe it or not, discrimination.

Brent: [laughs] I guess she didn't like being excluded. Weird.

Travis: Yeah. Her argument boiled down to this. Her "gender critical feminist beliefs," uh, are protected speech, and is not a justified reason for her termination. And this is, of course, bullshit.

Sure, you can say whatever racist, transphobic, homophobic, sexist, whatever, shit you want. In which case, your employer can then respond in whatever they want, such as not renewing a contract with your transphobic ass. And it seems that employment judge, James Taylor, agrees with me! It was ruled that Forstater's beliefs "did not have the protected characteristic of philosophical beliefs."

So that, in and of itself, is a story. But the reason this really hit trending news, like, number one trending news, is this morning, JK Rowling tweeted, "Dress however you please. Call yourself whatever you like. Sleep with any consenting adult who will have you. Live your best life in peace and security. But force women out of their jobs for stating that sex is real? #IStandWithMaya #ThisIsNotADrill"

Brent: Oof.

Travis: So, many people then, in her, uh, in the responses to that tweet, uh... I basically saw three responses. There were people, y'know, calling her a TERF and transphobic. There were people congratulating her on defending Maya. And then there were also people, many many people, saying that she had gotten confused, she didn't know what she was tweeting about, that she misunderstood the court case, and all this shit.

And uh, let me tell you, folks – this is a pattern of behavior from JK Rowling. She has said transphobic things in the past. She follows transphobic people on Twitter. She has like, said other phobic-ist things in the past. Um, like... she also—here's the thing – a lot of people were discussing it today – if you

look at the books as an adult, there's plenty of anti-Semitic, sexist, racist shit in the books.

So, this is not news. JK Rowling sucks. And it's time to let that go. Let JK Rowling go. She sucks.

Courtney: She sucks so bad. And this has been her. This has been her. She sucks.

[theme music plays]

Travis: This week, Trends Like These is sponsored in part by Quip! Listen, folks... I love Quip. And anyone who knows me knows that. I talk about Quip nonstop, from beginning to end. I have had dental issues my whole life, and I know that this sounds like I'm making a joke, but believe you me, it is not. I had gum issues, I've had so many cavities, I've had to get teeth replaced... it's not great.

And then along came Quip into my life, and made tooth brushing not only more effective, but more pleasant. For years, doctors recommended to me, "Get yourself an electric toothbrush." But I always felt like they were just jackhammering my teeth and hurting my gums, and I couldn't stand it. And then Quip came, and Quip has sensitive vibrations that won't make your gums bleed, but still are effective at cleaning your teeth better than a regular toothbrush.

And not only that, it's compact. You don't have to worry about charging it. It's easy to transport if you use it for travel. And Quip makes my favorite tasting toothpaste I've ever had. And get this – they now have floss dispensers that have pre-marked strings, so you always use the right amount.

Plus, Quip delivers brush heads, floss, and toothpaste refills every three months. And really, how many of us are replacing those things every three months? And it has a built-in timer, so you'll always make sure you brush your teeth for the right amount of time. So join over three million happy

customers, and check everyone off your gift list. That's right – get Quip for someone you love, and they'll thank you. Do it right now with Quip.

Just go to GetQuip.com/Trends to save on gift sets, and to get your first refill free with a refill plan. That's your first refill free at GetQuip.com/Trends.

Courtney: I learned just now that when you say Quip like you did, "Quuu-ip!", it sounds like Cool Whip. Don't brush your teeth with Cool Whip.

Travis: Cool Whip!

Courtney: Brush your teeth with Quip!

Travis: Quuuu-ip!

[theme music plays]

Brent: Alright, folks. As usual lately, we are doing the Politics Roundup segment, and we have so much politics for you that I'm not even gonna do the cute intro. Here we go. Here it is. We are past thinking about impeachment. We are past talking about what impeachment is and isn't, and we are now living in the chapter of this timeline... where Donald Trump has become the third president in American history to be impeached! It has happened!

And as we've said over and over again, that doesn't mean he was removed. Take off your party hat. He was just impeached. If you had told me like, the week after he was elected, that this was definitely gonna happen, I guess I would've like, pictured this day differently. It would've seemed like its own specific incident. But weirdly, in reality, it's just like the next step in a progression that we've seen coming for a while now.

On Wednesday this week, the House voted to impeach, more or less, along party lines, with notable exceptions, including Justin Amash, a House rep who quit the GOP over his issues with Trump. He voted for impeachment. And Tulsi Gabbard... woof, who voted 'present.'

Travis: Woof.

Brent: Uh, which is essentially an abstention from casting an actual up or down vote. Uh, what was she thinking?

Courtney: [sings] Fuuuck Tulsi, fuuuck her stupid face!

Travis: Yeah.

Brent: Cool. Um, I mean, I can't even approach defending this decision. I have no idea what she was thinking. Um, and she—

Travis: I think she's thinking, "I might become an independent if I don't get the nomination, so I don't want to piss off"—

Courtney: I think that's exactly what she's thinking. She's like, "What if I just offended no one?" And it went great.

Brent: So, impeachment passed the house.

Travis: The days of impeachment past...

Courtney: [laughs]

Brent: [laughs] It is I, Scrooge! Okay. Um, the ghost of impeachment past. Anyway...

Courtney: Fetch me the biggest peach in the market! The one as big as my head!

Travis: Yeah.

Brent: But impeachment passed, 230 to 197 for the abuse of power article of impeachment, and 229 to 198 on the obstruction of Congress article of impeachment. The discrepancy in the two scores came from the fact that

Democratic rep, Jared Golden, voted for the abuse of power article, but not for the obstructing Congress article.

Which, in my opinion, is... that's like, perhaps more wack than Tulsi Gabbard. Like, Trump demonstrably directed his staff not to respond to congressional subpoenas. But anyway.

Travis: Also, seems like a fine line. Like a weird, like, hair to split.

Brent: Yes.

Travis: Of like, if you're gonna vote for one, and you know it's gonna pass whether you vote for the second one or not... why—hmm.

Courtney: It feels like in the more, uh, even weaker than Tulsi, where it is just like, "Well, I only voted for one. I was only half certain. Whomp whomp."

Travis: Or maybe he hit the wrong button. "Wait, what did I—aww!!"

Courtney: It was the hanging chad. It was one of those.

Brent: This just shows you how much more united, for better and worse and worse and worse, the Republican party is in Congress. Because—

Courtney: That's fuckin' bleak.

Brent: Y'know, there are Democrats that are in purple districts, and they're worried about the effects of voting for impeachment. But like, there are also Republicans in purple districts, and they're like, "Nope! Doesn't matter! Don't give a shit! Our party will get on me much faster and much worse for this kind of a thing."

Travis: Oh yeah, that if they were to vote yes on an impeachment vote, they would lose so much funding. They would lose, y'know, people—they would basically not be able to run for reelection.

Courtney: It's basically your West Virginia boy.

Travis: Yeah.

Brent: Yeah. So um...

Travis: He's not my boy, by the way.

Courtney: No, he's not Travis' boy. Travis does not own him. He is a West Virginia person, but...

Travis: I do not... I do not care for him.

Brent: Politically, like your great—

Courtney: He's not the fourth McElroy brother.

Travis: Right.

Brent: No, he's like your political second cousin that you happen to unfortunately be related to. Um, anyway...

Travis: He's more like my Facebook uncle by marriage.

Brent: [laughs] Okay. Great.

Courtney: Keeps inviting you to Candy Crush.

Travis: Yeah.

Brent: [laughs]

Travis: It's FarmVille notification, "Whoa, that's racist!", Candy Crush notification. That's it. That's all I get from him.

Brent: So, yeah. Uh, Trump wrote a truly weird six page letter to Nancy Pelosi a day or two before the final vote, and it's full of lies, whining, and gaslighting. A lot of it feels like it was written by Trump, based on the syntax and random capitalization and other hallmarks of his tweets, but it is also heavily rumored that it was ghostwritten by Steven Miller.

Here's an excerpt that has what sounds like both of their voices in it. "The articles of impeachment introduced by the House Judiciary Committee are not recognizable under any standard of constitutional theory, interpretation, or jurisprudence. They include no crimes, no misdemeanors, and no offenses whatsoever. You have cheapened the importance of the very ugly word, 'impeachment.'"

Travis: What?

Brent: There's a lot going on there.

Travis: What does that mean? "You cheapened the importance of the very ugly word, 'impeachment.'"

Brent: That's my Trump! Um...

Courtney: That's the—y'know, there's moments in this letter that sound like these were clearly written by a person. And then there's that, where it's like, "This was written by Trump."

Brent: And then... yeah. [laughing] Yeah. Well, and I mean like, it's just—they pack so much wrong. It's kind of like, y'know, um, debate. Like, high school debate in a lot of places has become this, in my opinion, interminable slog, because um, it'll just be all these facts that they'll spit out at the speed of light, the other team has to find a way to refute in the time that they have.

Travis: Yes.

Brent: But this is—you could also call this, um, certain people out there will know what I'm talking about – a Gish gallop, where it's like, just so full of

things you could never... it would take 10 or 20 times as long to refute it as it does to just read it. For instance, um, obviously, there are crimes and misdemeanors. The constitutional theory checks out. But also, there don't have to be crimes to impeach. Like, impeachment is a political tool. It is not a criminal justice tool.

Travis: Andrew Johnson was impeached for appointing—well, in part. Appointing a cabinet member without, uh, consulting with Congress.

Brent: Right. And I mean like, so, that's an argument, if I'm being principled, that's an argument in favor of the fact that it was constitutional to impeach Bill Clinton. It was. It was just, you could argue, kind of a silly reason to impeach, perhaps. But anyway.

Travis: Y'know what I find interesting about that, by the way? As I was researching about impeachment... did you know that, in the Senate trial for Bill Clinton, um, the votes, when the vote came down through the Senate, right? It was uh, on one article, 55 against removal, and on the second one, uh, 50 against removal. And at that point, Republicans had a majority in the Senate. So, on the first article, there were like, ten Republicans that voted in favor of not removing the president.

Brent: Probably all the ones that were having an affair with their interns, just to be real blunt about it.

Travis: But isn't that so, like... it wasn't that long ago, to think that the president, a Democratic president was being impeached, and that, like, Republican senators, were like... no. Like, if that happened now, if the roles were reversed now, I don't know that I can imagine a Democratic senator not... like, y'know what I mean?

Brent: Yeah, no. We're much more, not only polarized culturally, but like, I would say, it's mostly Fox News, aided by the Rush Limbaughs and the fact that, basically, there's just... particularly, the Republican party has become so united and obstructionist against anything the other side wants to do. So as a majority, they are just almost always an entirely united front.

And y'know, to say nothing—I mean, yes, that's true in the Clinton days. But also, like, in the Nixon days, you had certain republicans in Congress that were like, "We need to get to the bottom of this," 'cause their reputation was on the line. And now, those days are just gone. It's just, there's no foresight. It's all this Orwellian, just telling you that it is, in fact, five and not four.

I might be getting the numbers wrong, but it's either—I'm either saying 1984, or that one episode of Star Trek: The Next Generation. But anyway.

Travis: Yes, there are four less.

Brent: Yes. Indeed. So, um, yeah. There are multiple lies in that excerpt I just read, from the standard bearer of the party always touting constitutional originalism. But anyway, moving onto more of the letter. "Even worse than offending the founding fathers, you are offending Americans of faith by continually saying, "I pray for the president," when you know this statement is not true, unless it is meant in a negative sense."

Travis: What?

Brent: "It is a terrible thing you are doing, but you will have to live with it, not I."

Travis: What does that mean?

Brent: [laughing]

Courtney: That is real... fuckin' funny.

Travis: Who is continually saying "I pray for the president"?

Brent: To be fair, I think Nancy Pelosi may have said that once or twice. Uh, and like, was there a cattiness to it? Perhaps. But the idea that it's offending people of faith... this is just him pandering, 'cause that's the part that's gonna be quoted on the 700 Club and Fox and Friends.

Travis: Yeah.

Courtney: Nowhere in the Bible does it say you can't pray sarcastically. I went to nine years of Catholic school, and they never said, like, "Oh, you can't ba ba ba."

Brent: [laughs]

Courtney: 12 years! 12 years!

Brent: Could I be asking you—

Travis: Well, maybe they did, but they had like, a mouthful of peanut butter.

Courtney: I went to so much Catholic school! Ugh, not once did sarcasm come up! Anyway, yeah. Y'all, I pray for you.

Brent: Could I *be* praying any harder? Anyway.

Courtney: That's very southern. Like, it's very "bless your heart."

Travis: Oh yeah.

Brent: "Oh, I'll pray for you." Um, yeah. So, uh, this thing is six pages. And so much of it is Trump accusing Pelosi and the Democrats of making stuff up, defending—uh, Trump's defending his actions in this letter. He's saying Biden did the same thing he's being accused of. Uh, he accuses the Democrats of impeaching him because they've wanted him out all along. And he accuses them of trying to ignore the votes of all the millions of people who voted for him in 2016, and they're attempting to steal the 2020 election.

One of the biggest themes in this entire process... and it's nothing new, but I've just noticed it so acutely in this process, and that's projection on the part of Trump and Republicans in Congress. Now, usually when people use the phrase 'projection,' they're implying that someone is unknowingly seeing

their own actions or motivations in the actions of others, in kind of like an ink blot test kind of way.

But clearly, here, Republicans and their conservative media minions, um, are doing this on purpose. And again, this might be just what they do all the time. But it's very crystal clear here, now that we're in a new, uncharted water situation like impeachment, and yet, we're seeing them do it now.

Trump, um... Trump was clearly trying to tamper with the election in that Ukraine call. So, the Republicans accused Democrats of trying to steal the next election. Trump was obviously seeking a corrupt deal with Ukraine, so he accuses Biden of the same thing. Back in the late '90s, Republicans in Congress, many of whom are still there, impeached Clinton over an arguably personal matter. And now, they're accusing Democrats of moving forward with the thinnest rationale for impeachment in history.

It's more than projection. It's intentionally muddying the waters with kind of a parallelism. And so, okay, back to more of the letter. "You and your party are desperate to distract from America's extraordinary economy, incredible jobs boom, record stock market, soaring confidence, and flourishing citizens. Your party simply cannot compete with our record. Seven million new jobs, the lowest ever unemployment for African-Americans, Hispanic-Americans, and Asian-Americans, a rebuilt military," blah blah blah blah blah. Unquote.

Uh, he didn't say the blah blahs, actually. I should've unquoted before the blah blahs. But... he goes onto name more air quote "achievements." But I want to address some of the ones in that excerpt. First off, our economy is not extraordinary for regular people. We, I think it's fair to say, as a country, are not flourishing. The citizens are not flourishing. The record stock market helps a certain kind of American, but not the average American.

Travis: Yes.

Brent: Trump brags about seven million new jobs, but 44% of the US workers are employed in low-wage jobs with a median annual wage of \$18,000. On top of which, our health care system and health care outcomes

are piss poor. So like, let's not pat ourselves on the back too hard there, chief.

Anyway, here's how the letter ends. "It is time for you and the highly partisan Democrats in Congress to immediately cease this impeachment fantasy, and get back to work for the American people. While I have no expectation that you will do so, I write this letter to you for the purpose of history, and to put my thoughts on a permanent and indelible record. 100 years from now, when people look back at this affair, I want them to understand it and learn from it so that it can never happen to another president again."

Travis: Huh.

Brent: So there's a lot going on there. Many, many layers. And you could fact check the lies, like how the Democrats are highly partisan, according to Trump, even though the Republicans are empirically, numerically more partisan in their stances and votes. You could criticize the self-victimizing tone that somehow achieves being whiny and self-aggrandizing, like some kind of bratty prince.

But... when I zoom way out, I think about this letter in the context of how Obama, or even George W. Bush would write it. And then I realize... oh. They wouldn't. The fact that this letter is bonkers and completely unpresidential on its face, and that it would be bonkers from, y'know, anyone from a plumber to a president... it's lost on us, because what is presidential anymore? What is scandalously untrue anymore?

I mean, this extends to the Republicans in Congress, obviously. Wednesday, you had House representative Debbie Lesko, in the middle of the impeachment debate before the vote, uh... she said... by the way, I should say, this is Republican house representative, Debbie Lesko, of Arizona. She said, "Democrats are tearing this country apart. They're tearing families apart."

Let's absorb the idea that Democrats, by impeaching a president, are tearing families apart, and this is a president whose policies have literally and cruelly torn thousands and thousands of families apart.

Courtney: Like Lisa from The Room, they are tearing us apart.

Brent: It's true. It's true. And The Room being slightly, uh, slightly better structured and more well thought out than this six page letter that I just read parts of.

Courtney: Way better script.

Brent: Also, during the—true. [laughs] Um, during the impeachment debate, Georgia representative, Barry Loudermilk said, "Before you take this historic vote today, one week before Christmas, I want you to keep this in mind. When Jesus was falsely accused of treason, Pontius Pilate gave Jesus the opportunity to face his accusers. During that sham trial, Pontius Pilate afforded more rights to Jesus than the Democrats have afforded this president in this process."

Okay.

Travis: Hey, um, just also, real quick... that's a really weird take on how that whole thing went down.

Courtney: That's a weird take on Jesus.

Brent: Yeeeah.

Courtney: And Trump.

Brent: Yeah.

Travis: Yeahhh.

Brent: But I mean...

Travis: That—I mean, especially since, if you follow that line of reasoning out, the very fact of Jesus, like, going through that whole thing, was literally what needed to happen for people to be saved. So I guess to extend that metaphor, you're saying that this is exactly what should happen? Yeah?

Brent: Ooh, that's a really interesting take.

Courtney: I mean, Trump is already said he's the king of the Jews, so I guess this is... is this our stations of the cross?

Travis: Also, I don't remember much of a trial...

Courtney: I don't remember us ever getting the opportunity to be like, "Give us Barabbas! Barackbas!"

Travis: Yeahhh.

Brent: And like, there's two main things going on with that one. Um, one that just occurred to me that wasn't in my copy, which is, once again, you've got Republican congress people, politicians, and pundits saying this thing about facing one's accusers. So like, there... this wasn't a trial. Like, calling that a sham trial... the—y'know, you watch Law and Order, right? And they, y'know, law is up to the indictment, and then order is the trial. And impeachment is kind of like that.

The impeachment itself is just the indictment of—

Travis: It's the investigation.

Brent: Right. Right.

Travis: It's the gathering of evidence and testimony before going to trial.

Brent: And when you actually—

Courtney: This is Olivia Benson, and then next, it goes to Raul Esparza.

Brent: Correct.

Travis: Yes.

Brent: I mean, I was gonna say Jerry Orbach to Sam what's his face, but yes. The idea is the same.

Courtney: You know that SVU is my shit, so yeah.

Travis: Sam Waterston?

Brent: There you go. Um, so like, the thing is, they—and also, the notion of facing his accusers... they gave Trump the opportunity to testify in the investigation. His accuser is a whistleblower, but also, the accusers were like, all the witnesses. He could've been there. He didn't. They just keep saying this stuff, and I know I'm like, not getting at the bigger point, which is that he's comparing Trump to Jesus.

But like, it's angering that they just—

Travis: It's all shit.

Brent: Yeah. That they just embed this thing, and like, so many congress people are legal scholars. They know better. They know better.

Travis: This is—so, all day, I've been frustrated between talking about Maya Forstater, and talking about the election. And—because we're gonna get to the sham trial thing in a second when I talk about Mitch McConnell. But this idea of people saying absolute, baseless bullshit, and then like, people going, "Yeah, what they said!"

Like, this idea of saying, "It's a sham trial." And like I said, I'll talk more about this in a second. But to have Mitch McConnell like, literally say, "We're gonna rush through this and not have any witnesses and get this done real quick." Like... I—fuck! Fuck! Fuck.

Brent: Yeah. Yeah. [pause] Oh, sorry. I uh... so, I was gonna say—sorry, I failed to read the rest of my copy just now. But um, I was just gonna say, uh, we are in the dumbest timeline. But as we've found out over the past few years... it could always get dumber.

Courtney: Merry Christmas to all, and to all... well... we can all go fuck ourselves.

Travis: What the fuck. Yeah.

Courtney: Um, reporter Brian J. Karem had a tweet go viral this week, saying, "Not from the Onion but from a White House source – "Hillary Clinton purposely lost the election with the aid of Russian hacking so the Democrats could then impeach Trump.""

Travis: Brilliant.

Courtney: This is very funny.

Brent: Wait, wait, wait...

Courtney: And it—here's the—here's the issue. Here's the issue that I have.

Brent: I—so, just let me clear. I—when you like, first wrote the basic summary of this in the doc, I swear, I thought you were just like, writing the basic idea of a bit. That's—like, that you were gonna do. I had no idea that this is actually something a human being said unironically.

Courtney: I feel like satire is no longer possible. It no longer exists, and now, I don't know if this is real. Like, the person who tweeted it, who twatted it, is an actual reporter. An actual person. Now, I'm having trouble finding a second source on this. This second source might actually be satirical columnist, Andy Borowitz, who posited this in the New Yorker in 2017.

Borowitz wrote then, “How could one of the most experienced politicians in history lose to the most unfit candidate ever?” Trump asked reporters. “Crooked Hillary lost on purpose, because she wanted me to be impeached.” So, is the—is that it? Did he read Andy Borowitz and tweet this? Did it really happen? Who the fuck knows?! We’re in the broken times!

That said, actual Trump kind of did say something similar. Um, not necessarily saying that Hillary lost on purpose, but that this has been written in the stars for years. “So, the impeachment is a hoax. It’s a sham,” Trump said Friday. I said Fox, because it might as well. That’s a Freudian slip, but it’s true.

Travis: [laughs] Fox said.

Courtney: Uh, Trump said to reporters. “It started a long time ago. Probably before I came down the escalator with the future first lady. It started a long time ago,” of course, referring to his infamous escalator descent to announce his candidacy, when he came down a literal golden escalator to announce this nonsense.

So, is this real? I don't know, but it seems real? That’s the really hard time that we’re living in, where like, a lot of things seem like they could be true, because they seem really dumb and stupid.

Brent: But I mean, Trump hires—Trump hires and appoints people based on their loyalty, and basically, their willingness to lick his balls. And so like, if somebody in the White House... I guess what I'm saying is, if there’s a White House source in this administration, they are more likely to think something that ridiculous than a member of any other White House staff ever.

Travis: Yeah.

Brent: It’s just like... I don't know.

Courtney: I mean, that says something that like, the only—the only publications who picked this up... it’s very small political publications, and of course... the Washington Examiner.

Brent: Ahh, yes.

Courtney: Those Nazi fucks. So, like, it's...

Brent: Chestnut.

Courtney: Yeah. They're just like, "Ahh, the liberals are at it again!" So y'know, who the fuck knows. But it seems... it seems plausible. I'm not saying it's true. But it seems legit. [laughs]

Brent: Well, and related to what Trump said, like... [sighs] He's overused the word 'hoax.' He's used it to talk about everything from the Mueller report to climate change. But like, also, y'know, he and the Republicans are so united in calling it a hoax and a sham. And what I hate about that is that like, people believe it without thinking about it, but it's kind of like... if somebody says, "Oh, don't talk to my ex about what I did in that relationship. They're crazy. Just don't worry about it. Don't talk to them."

It's kind of like... wait a minute. A sham. Well, why is it a sham? None of them are refuting the facts of the phone call, except, I guess, Trump. But like, we know what happened on the phone call.

Courtney: Read the transcriiippt! Raaah!

Brent: We've heard witness after witness after witness, and if they just say it's a sham, it just makes me so mad that they can get away with something that's so, like... it's not just a lie. It's—

Travis: On that note... [laughs] So, today, Thursday morning, Mitch McConnell argued from the Senate floor that the impeachment process is "the most rushed, least thorough, and most unfair" in modern history, as well as calling it "the first purely partisan presidential impeachment since the wake of the civil war."

Brent: Oh my god.

Travis: Uh, Senate minority leader, Chuck Schumer, sent a letter to McConnell, stating that Senate Democrats were requesting a trial with witnesses. This is a rebuttal to McConnell's stated intention that the trial would be short, and feature no witnesses to avoid it becoming a partisan circus. This from CNN. "The constitution's framers "built the senate to provide stability, to keep partisan passions from boiling over," Mitch McConnell said, adding, "Moments like this are why the United States Senate exists.""

By the way, that whole thing about it being like a thing to stop tensions from boiling over? That is absolute bullshit. That is not why it was created. Uhh, there's a whole segment on Last Week Tonight about it. But that is not true. That's just the thing that partisan politics say now, when it's not there to like... it's the reason that not a lot of stuff gets done in the Senate anymore, because they say like, "Ah, this is where things go to calm down," which is a euphemism for 'not get done.'

And also, this from Slate. "During a speech on the Senate floor on Tuesday, McConnell rejected senate minority leader, Chuck Schumer's call for testimony from four witnesses: John Bolden, the former national security advisor; acting White House chief of staff, Mick Mulvaney; Robert Blair, a senior advisor to Mulvaney; and Michael Duffy, associate director for national security at the office of management and budget."

Now, you might think, "Huh. Kind of sounds like Mitch McConnell might not be acting in an impartial manner." To quote Mitch McConnell on Tuesday, "I am not an impartial juror. This is a political process. There's not anything judicial about it. The House made a partisan political decision to impeach. I would anticipate we will have a largely partisan outcome in the Senate. I am not impartial about this at all."

Uh, it should be noted that, heading into impeachment, senators are uh, required to take an oath saying that they will be impartial jurors. Sooo... um, now, on Hannity, Thursday evening, he went so far as to say, "Everything I do during this, I'm coordinating with White House counsel. There will be no difference between the president's position and our position as to how to handle this to the extent that we can," as well as saying, "But we'll be working through this process, hopefully in a short period of time, in total

coordination with the White House counsel's office, and the people representing the president in the well of the Senate."

And I'm starting to suspect that this McConnell fella might not be in it for what's best for the country!

Brent: Hmm, I don't know.

Travis: That's the thing. Okay... a lot of people have been comparing this to Lindsay Graham, who basically said like, "My mind's already made up about this." Right? That... basically what people are pointing out is that there is a difference between that and saying, "I don't care about whether it's right or wrong, I'm just gonna be working with the White House to get it over with."

Um, at this point, the fact of the matter is, this is not a surmise. This is not me reading anything into it. This is basically stone cold fact at this point. Mitch McConnell's only priority is the maintaining of a Republican supremacy in politics. That's it.

Brent: Yeah, and once again, like, they love to, y'know, pull up their little copy of the constitution and call themselves constitutional originalists, until anything threatens their power. Because the framers were very clear about this, frankly, for the late 1700s, pretty solid impeachment process, if you think about it. Like, they were sort of inventing a different kind of parliamentary process overall. Y'know, parliamentary, but also just like, a government that had never been done.

And the idea of a totally partial, totally partisan Senate, or at least, Senate majority leader coordinating with the executive branch... the whole point was for it *not* to be like that. And I just...

Travis: Yeah.

Brent: It's like... and y'know what? If this comes—

Travis: It's literally saying—

Brent: At Christmas—

Travis: We are no longer—

Brent: I was gonna say, this comes up at Christmas with my uncle, who like, literally cried when he got a special edition MAGA hat for Christmas a year or two ago.

Travis: Mmm.

Brent: And he wants to talk about the constitution like he always does on Facebook? Like, what sucks is, if I go, "Yeah, but this wasn't what was intended by the framers," it'll just go back to, "Well, I don't care, because Trump." Y'know what I mean? Like, it's—

Travis: Yeah.

Brent: Anyway. Sorry, I think I interrupted you when you were trying to say something.

Travis: Well, not only that – anybody who like, went through any basic, like, middle school government study, the whole thing was checks and balances. And this is literally the Senate majority leader saying, "Oh no no no, we're not a check or balance anymore. We're just gonna work with them. We are basically the same thing." Like... [sighs]

Okay. So, what are the next steps of impeachment? So, Nancy Pelosi needs to pick house impeachment managers. These impeachment managers will act as the prosecutors. Next, the impeachment articles officially go to the Senate, and they must act on them immediately. Then, the impeachment managers present the articles to the Senate floor. Then, the Senate invites them to return when it's time for the trial.

At the trial, the Senate is the jury, the house impeachment managers are the prosecutors, and the chief justice of the Supreme Court, Justice John Roberts, will preside over the case. Beyond that, the guidelines for the trial are at the discretion of the Senate.

This from CBS. "Simple majority of the Senate must agree on whether to call witnesses, what kind of evidence to admit, and how long to make the trial. In the event that there is a tie on questions regarding evidence and witnesses, Chief Justice John Roberts would cast the tie breaking vote, the Senate's guidelines suggest."

So, after the trial is concluded, the Senate will hold a public vote on whether to acquit the president or remove him from office. Removal requires a two thirds majority vote, which is unlikely, considering the fact that the GOP holds 53 seats. So they'd have—the Democrats would have to—well, let's put it this way. The impeachment house managers would have to convince 13 Republican senators, and y'know, senators like Joe Manchin, to vote in favor of removal.

Brent: Well... we'll see. [laughs] Shall we do some—

Courtney: [makes a funny trumpet sound]

Travis: Yep.

Brent: Should we do some Tidbits?

Travis: Yeah, let's Tidbits. Yes please.

Courtney: Um, let's start the Tidbits with something delightful. Wonderful. Jellicle! I just got my arms real big.

Travis: Okay.

Courtney: You guys can't see it, 'cause I'm not on video anymore. Uh, Cats reviews are out. And I want to read some to you, 'cause they're real good. I'm not seeing Cats until January 1st, when weed is legal in Illinois, and that is when I will be seeing the Cats. Uh, but these people saw the Cats.

Brent: What a way to celebrate. [coughs] Sorry, I just—something was funny about that to me, and I choked on my water.

Courtney: [laughs] I was like, "Are you smoking right now?"

Brent: No, I wish, but I'm not. I don't do that during the show.

Courtney: Are you doing a weed?

Brent: [coughs] Please go on. [coughs]

Courtney: [laughing]

Brent: I'm gonna be fine. Tell me about Cats.

Courtney: Brent! Survive! Uh, so, this one is from Ireland's RTE. It's from Alan Corr, and it said, "First off, full disclosure: I am not a cat person. Second off, after watching this frankly mortifying film adaptation of Andrew Lloyd Weber's Cats, I am not altogether sure I am a movie person anymore, either."

Brent: [laughs]

Travis: Oof.

Courtney: Uh, Ty Burr at the Boston Globe merely said, "Oh god. My eyes."

Travis: Uh!

Courtney: Uh, Peter Debruge at Variety said, "Sadly, this uneven eyesore turns out to be every bit the jellicle catastrophe the haters anticipated: a half-digested hairball of a movie." Finally, Adam Graham at The Detroit News said, "Woof."

Brent: Yeah, um...

Courtney: I'm still—I'm like, more excited now. It's gonna be so bad!

Brent: But that's the thing. Like, I wonder if this is going to spark... well, okay. Let's—let's ask ourselves – do we think that this is going to be the ironic, uh, movie people go and see to the tune of actually recouping or even making a big profit?

Travis: No.

Courtney: No. I think this is gonna be—

Brent: You say that...

Courtney: I think this is gonna be the Snakes on the Plane of modern times, where Twitter was really excited about it...

Travis: Yes.

Brent: But see, here's the thing. I think—

Courtney: And then no one goes to see it.

Brent: Snakes on a Plane, though—

Travis: Here's exactly what it's gonna be. This is going to be the ironic plane watch movie of 2020.

Brent: But you say that, but what I'm getting at is, I'm gonna go see it. I know a lot of people that are gonna go see it, knowing that it's bad. Not in an entirely different way than Batman vs. Superman, but like, obviously, this is gonna be more silly and just surreal. And might be kind of hilarious when you look at it through that lens.

And so, it makes me wonder, if this happened to do well because of that, because of like, that going to the Nascar race to see the crash element of it, could there be a new era of them making sort of like, intentionally so bad it's good movies that are very expensive and exquisitely made in an attempt to get people to come back for that kind of a thing? Like, are we gonna get our Starlight Express bad movie?

Courtney: I hope not, because the second they do it on purpose, it loses its joy.

Travis: Yeah, that's not good.

Brent: Kind of like Birdemic 2. Like, they were in on the joke, and it wasn't funny.

Courtney: Yeah.

Travis: Yeah, you can't—you can't make a bad movie on purpose.

Courtney: No, you absolutely cannot. And you shouldn't try. I... I think that this is just... there's a reason that cult movies are cult movies. There's just not that many of us that really, truly love seeing bad movies, even though it feels like there's a ton of us, because we have found each other via the internet.

I don't think—I don't, like—'cause I can't imagine there are so many people that are going to go see this, thinking it will be good. Like, genuinely stoked as fuck on the Cats.

Brent: True. Okay, but don't you think that's probably true of like, most of the Twilight movies, and the 50 Shades of Gray movies?

Courtney: Absolutely not. No.

Brent: Like, nobody thought they were getting—

Courtney: The people—I think most of the people that went and saw those genuinely loved those books and their properties and wanted to see that on screen.

Brent: But that's the thing. Loved the books, but surely, they knew the movies weren't great.

Courtney: This is where we're getting into—this is where we're getting into women, so therefore, like, *Twilight*, and *50 Shades*, like, that speaks to a whole different thing, because people, like, were like, in love with the love story. The sex. All that. You have to be in love with the cats, and I don't see that.

Travis: Yeah, that's the thing is... *Cats* does not have the fandom that *Twilight*, *50 Shades*—that like, most... Musicals rarely have a fandom like that. I mean, maybe *Hamilton*. For a long time, *Rent*. But even the *Rent* movie didn't do well. Like, I don't—I don't think it's one to one comparison.

Brent: Well, I'm still gonna go see it. The thing is that my girlfriend and I are planning to go see it around the 27th or 28th, and now I'm sitting here going like, "I hope it's still running." I mean, I guess that's only like a week and a half a way. It will be. But like, I don't know. I still think it's possible the movie could do, uh, very well, because people have an appetite to see an expensively ridiculous bad, surreal feast for the eyes.

Travis: I'll give this to you. Um, I think it could maybe break even. I don't think it will do very well.

Brent: We'll see. You might be right. Maybe I just am giving everyone too much, uh... credit's not the word, but yeah. Kind of like you said, Courtney. Maybe I'm assuming there are way more people than there are that like to go see something with a certain irony and a certain, like, let's go watch this crash and burn expensively.

Um, then again, let's be real. There are people that like *The Greatest Showman*. Ugh. Anyway... sorry. I just lost half of you. But I don't care, you have bad taste. Anyway, let's move onto another musical!

Uh, this is a story that is just one of those 2019 Mad Lib stories no one could've seen coming. And yet, it feels so inevitably 2019. I saw it on [Broadway.com](https://www.broadway.com). Apparently, Johnny Depp is producing an unauthorized musical about Michael Jackson, featuring Japanese Bunraku style puppets with a story told from the perspective of Michael Jackson's glove. Y'know,

the shiny sequined one that he would wear without another one, just on only one of his hands. Yeah. That one.

The show is called... and hold on, because this is not a concise title... [clears throat] For the Love of a Glove: An Unauthorized Musical Fable About the Life of Michael Jackson as Told by His Glove. Now, that part is kind of funny ha ha tee hee. The next part... makes me uncomfortable. Uh, it probably will make you uncomfortable as well.

The concept is that the glove is one of a group of glove-shaped aliens that crash land in Michael Jackson's hometown of Gary, Indiana, and they can give people magical, musical talent, but only if they feed on – and I'm quoting, here – virgin boy blood. So like... can that be made... forget palatable – acceptable, tonally and otherwise, in 2019? Ehh... time will tell.

But in any case, the show is opening January 5th in LA.

Courtney: So, according to the AV Club, Johnny Depp is not producing. There is currently a dispute over credits, and a rep for Depp says that he and his company are not producing or involved.

Brent: Ohh.

Courtney: The glove is being played by Jerry Minor, who is a comedian and used to be on SNL and Mr. Show. So...

Brent: Interesting.

Courtney: That's real weird.

Brent: What I want to know is how... I mean like, y'know, I'm quoting Broadway.com, and sometimes publications are wrong. Have you heard why there was confusion about Johnny Depp being a producer?

Courtney: Who the whole entire fuck knows? Johnny Depp be cray, so I think that's probably why. It seems—it's—much like I said earlier, some shit just makes sense. Whether it's true or not. It makes sense. But the fact that

they said there was a dispute tells me that like, maybe Johnny Depp just like... drunkenly was just like, "I'll produce that! I am a scarf!" And then his actual production company was like, "No, we're not doing that."

Brent: He pulled half a million dollars out of his buttcrack, and then just forgot when he sobered up.

Courtney: Yep.

Brent: Um, hmm. Fascinating. A dispute over that. Well... we'll see.

Courtney: A dispute over the virgin boy blood glove musical.

[music plays]

Biz: Hi, I'm Biz.

Theresa: And I'm Theresa.

Biz: And we host One Bad Mother, a comedy podcast about parenting.

Theresa: Whether you are a parent, or just know kids exist in the world, join us each week as we honestly share what it's like to be a parent.

And then, that's how my day starts.

Biz: Yeah.

Theresa: Come on. I'm so sick of it. When is that gonna be over?

Biz: [laughing]

Theresa: Like, I want it to stop.

Biz: Theresa, you're hurting my ears. [laughs]

Theresa: I mean, that's it!

Biz: Yeah, no, that—

Theresa: I just hate it!

Biz: Yeah, I don't blame you.

Theresa: [censor bleep]

Biz: It sucks.

Theresa: It really sucks.

Biz: So join us each week as we judge less, laugh more, and remind you that you are doing a great job.

Theresa: Find us on MaximumFun.org, on Apple Podcasts, or wherever you get your podcasts.

[applause]

Speaker 1: Macho Man to the top rope. The flying elbow! The cover! We've got a new champion!

[music plays]

Speaker 2: We're here with Macho Man, Randy Savage, after his big win to become the new world champion. What are you gonna do now, Mach?

Speaker 3: I'm gonna go listen to the newest episode of the Tights and Fights podcast! Oh yeahhh!

Speaker 2: Tell us more about this podcast!

Speaker 3: It's the podcast of power! Too sweet to be sour! Funky like a monkey! Woke discussions, man! And jokes about wrestlers' fashion choices, myself *excluded*. Yeahhh.

Speaker 2: I can't wait to listen!

Speaker 3: Neither can I! You can find it Saturdays on Maximum Fun! Oh yeahhh, dig it!

Brent: Now it's time for our Wi-Five of the week. Each week, we scour the internet for examples of folks doing good things and being good people, and we choose one or more to whom we'd like to give an internet high five, or Wi-Five.

[Wi-Five slap]

Brent: Today's Wi-Five goes out to a pair of Canadian entrepreneurs – I didn't pronounce that correctly, but that's okay – named Mike Medicoff and Damien Vince. Now, I don't know about you, but I recycle. Not trying to be too preachy about it, but I recycle. I've gotten pretty into the recycling rules, even the ones not everyone knows about, like how receipts aren't recyclable paper. I even compost.

But there's one thing I'd like to recycle, and there's pretty much no way to do it, and that's toothpaste tubes. Your average toothpaste tube is made with several layers of polymers, plastics, and resins that can't be recycled, and according to NewAtlas.com, take over half of a millennium to break down.

So, Medicoff and Vince, inspired by Medicoff's 16-year-old environmentalist daughter, set out to make a toothpaste that didn't come in a plastic tube. They worked for months and tried over one hundred different formulas, and finally came up with a small, white tablet that replaces the need for toothpaste altogether.

And uh, they're called Change toothpaste tablets. What you can do is put them in your back teeth, bite down on them, and start brushing with a wet toothbrush, and they start to foam. And hey, now you're brushing your teeth! And they're packaged in 100% compostable pouches. And if you buy your first pack now with the promo code 'Trends'... I'm just kidding. They

don't sponsor us, and I know this Wi-Five sounds like ad copy, but I just think it's a really cool idea.

Some people aren't willing to make better choices for the environment, unless it's easy. These two guys innovated with that idea in mind, and now they've made a product that achieves that goal. So to Mike Medicoff and Damien Vince... Wi-Five.

[theme music plays]

Travis: Alright folks, that's gonna do it for us. Thank you so much for joining us. Like I mentioned last week, our preorders for The Adventure Zone game, based on The Adventure Zone: Balance, are open now. You can go to TheAdventureZoneGame.com. Uh, also, just a general, y'know, have a happy and safe holiday. Don't drink and drive. Be careful out there, and take good care of yourself.

What about you, Courtney?

Courtney: Well, um, we're taking the week off, obviously, for Christmas, and we will be back in the new year. And uh, we hope you have a good week, y'all. We just really like y'all.

Uh, you can find my stuff at SYFY Fangrrls, and... I am on... so, SYFY did a podcast leading up to Rise of Skywalker called Jabba the Pod. I am on the episode talking about The Force Awakens. And then, I also discussed it on the podcast, The B-Sides, talking about Carrie Fischer's lesser known works, because y'know that I love my space mom. So just listen to that.

Brent: And as for me, you've heard me talking about my super fun comedy party game, Use Your Words, for years now. But if you have been thinking about getting it, you now have no excuse. I repeat, no excuse! No excuse! It is three dollars and 47 cents on Steam for the Steam winter sale. I repeat: three dollars and 47 cents. The game has over 20 hours of non-repeating content, for hours and hours and hours of play. It's got a family mode.

So what I recommend you do is get it on Steam right now, for PC or Mac, take it to your family or friends' gathering for Christmas. It is super fun. And uh, unlike Cards Against Humanity or certain other 'comedy' party games, it allows you to make your own comedy with your own content.

So anyway, uh, check out more information about the game itself at UseYourWords.lol. But otherwise, just get on Steam, search Use Your Words, and buy it before it is regular price again.

Travis: Uh, and that's gonna do it for us. Go check out all the other amazing shows on MaximumFun.org. As always, big thanks to Mustin for producing the show. Check out Mustin's work at Mustin.net. Mustin.net.

Uh, am I forgetting anything?

Courtney: Uh, yes. I've also heard that the movie Cats is real horny. Anyway, enjoy that thought.

Travis: Okay. I... okay. Huh.

Brent: Merry Catmas.

Courtney: [laughs]

Travis: See you next time.

[theme music plays]

Travis: Man, can you believe that I couldn't get a commercial agent for voice over when I was in LA?

Courtney: Yeah, what the fuck?

Travis: Jesus, I'm so good at that shit.

Courtney: Cool Whip.

Brent: Cool Whip.

Courtney: Cool Whip. I also—I also need a voice over agent, clearly!

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