

Trends Like These 256: Weinstein Found GUILTY, Nevada Caucus Results, Trump and the Coronavirus, Tax Scams to Avoid, ANOTHER Dem Debate, Chris Evans in 'Little Shop' Remake?, South Carolina + Super Tuesday Preview

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Courtney: This week: Tax season scam, Warren goes ham, and... hey, Harvey? Scram.

Brent: I'm Brent Black.

Courtney: I'm Courtney Enlow.

Brent: [sings in a goofy voice] And I'm Josh Gad's weird voice!

Courtney: With... Trends Like These.

[theme music plays]

Brent: Hello, Courtney!

Courtney: Hello, Brent!

Brent: Here we are, on Thursday, February 27th, in the year of our lord, 2020. Sounds like some kind of vision thing, or some kind of Barbara Walters Hugh Downs thing from the '90s. Nope, it's a year. 2020. It's a year on the calendar. Still weird to me. Anyway.

Courtney: It's a whole ass year. And 'twas 35 years ago, on this veriest day, I 'twas borneth.

Brent: 'Twas you?

Courtney: I 'twas, I 'twas.

Brent: Well, happy, happy, happy birthday, Courtney.

Courtney: Theeenks. It's 4:57 my time. That's our time stamp. Suck it. Uh, and I was born at 1:27 on 2/27.

Brent: Nice.

Courtney: Yeah.

Brent: Now wait, are we talkin' in the afternoon?

Courtney: Yeah.

Brent: Well, what a lovely time to be born.

Courtney: I know.

Brent: I kept my mom up all night, and finally, she had me at like, eight AM or something.

Courtney: Well, I was two weeks late. That poor—Connie Enlow suffered and struggled, and I am so sorry. Luckily, my brother came two weeks early. So she got that little gift. He did come out with the cord wrapped around his neck. Connie did not have great births, and then she shut that factory down right after that. I did the same thing after two kids. I get it.

Brent: Um, so, the thing is, this makes you a Pisces.

Courtney: I am such a Pisces.

Brent: And y'know, astrology is probably completely untrue, but if you go and look at like an Aries-Pisces kind of combination of personalities, which, by the way, I'm an Aries, I feel like we are pretty textbook Aries-Pisces.

Courtney: Oh wow, I'm gonna have to look at our co-star.

Brent: He's a Scorpio. Um, but uh, anyway...

Courtney: Oh, I didn't mean that co-star. I meant the app, CoStar.

Brent: Okay. [laughs] And I just outed—

Courtney: [laughs] I've stopped using Travis' name. He knows what he did!

Brent: I just outed myself as someone who secretly knows everyone's sign in my life. I know their eye color and their star sign, and don't at me.

Courtney: [laughs] In Slack, you referenced that Quincy Jones interview where it's like, Pisces! Gotta jam!

Brent: That's what I was gettin' to! Pisces, gotta jam! Gotta jam. Um... so, what a week for both of us. Holy caca.

Courtney: What a week! You've been moving.

Brent: Yeah.

Courtney: Moving is so much work. It sucks.

Brent: It is. And y'know, like, I've moved an inordinate amount of times. It's weird. Like, when I was—y'know, the first, uh, ten years of my schooling, I was moving a different school every one or two years, which... wasn't really—like, it was sort of always a coincidence. But like, my living situation has also been like that. I've moved, I believe, like, seven times in the last decade, and um... so, in a weird way, it just feels more routine than it's ever felt.

Like, yep, get the boxes. Get the sharpies. Get more tape than you think you'll need. Oh, I ran out of boxes. These go in here. Y'know. But this is the last episode of Trends Like These where I'll be recording in my lovely apartment, uh, on the banks of the Delaware. I'm moving to west Philadelphia.

Courtney: Born and raised.

Brent: That's it. That's it. I can make that joke now again, 'cause I'm currently in sort of east center city Philadelphia. It doesn't trip off the tongue the same way.

Courtney: I had, uh, a week.

Brent: Yeah.

Courtney: And a day. Yesterday. So, yesterday, I woke up, and I was like, "Oh my gosh, so much snow. Snow is so beautiful. I really do love snow. I'll be happy when it's over, but y'know what? I love snow." Here's the thing about snow. It makes roads bad.

So uh, Jules, my little boujelita. That's what I call her. We uh, we dropped... so, she had a snow day yesterday. But Jack goes to school at, um... it's an autism program, so they only have like... it's basically a medical program, so they only have medical holidays. So, we took Jack to school, and um, then we were gonna go get Starbucks. Just for a little—a little mommy daughter treat.

Brent: Mm-hmm.

Courtney: And we were going around this little curve, and a man was also going around this little curve, except for here's the thing – he just kept goin' straight. He sure did just keep goin' straight instead of curving.

Brent: Ugh.

Courtney: And then I tried to like, jump up on the curb to avoid him, and he t-boned me.

Brent: [sighs]

Courtney: So now I'm having to deal with all this stuff. Poor... Jules. Oh my god, this poor kid. She was terrified, obviously.

Brent: Aww...

Courtney: She's never been in a car accident before, and she was crying. And then, um, so, the guy came out, and he said, "Okay, I'm gonna call the police." And Julian was like, "No, I don't want to go to jail!!"

Brent: Oh! [laughs]

Courtney: I was like, oh, baby! [laughs] And then, so, her dad, I called him, and he was like, "Okay, I'm gonna come get Jules and take her to my mom's." So she's screaming into the phone, "Daddy, don't come! The police are on their way!" [laughing]

Brent: Aww. [laughing]

Courtney: I was like, ohh, my bug. [laughing] She's fine. Everyone's fine. I hurt my neck. I got... I just got like, whiplash. Y'know, like people do. I went and got x-rays yesterday, and my bones are great. I've got thriving bones. I took a muscle relaxer yesterday and took a four hour nap.

Brent: Was it a Flexeril?

Courtney: Iunno. It started with a C.

Brent: Oh, okay. I have a love-love relationship with Flexeril, but that's about me, not about you. Um...

Courtney: Well, I—'cause I mean, for one thing, it's my birthday, and I want to have, like, y'know, a champagne or two.

Brent: Sure!

Courtney: So I was like, "I'm not taking muscle relaxers today!" But I didn't actually need it. Like, I woke up, and I'm a little sore, but like, that way that we, at 35, wake up, and sometimes our necks just hurt sore.

Brent: Mm-hmm.

Courtney: So I was like, "I can live with this." So I just went with the Ibuprofen.

Brent: I think that... y'know, and you and I talked about this outside the show, obviously, but like, I just... it's one of those things where... it's a reminder, like, hold the ones you love close. Tell people you love them. Because uh... not to be dark, but like, these sorts of things, y'know... three feet that way, three feet this way. Y'know, a little bit earlier, a little bit later. Like, I'm just glad y'all are really okay. Um, and... y'know... I love you and I'm glad you're on the show.

Courtney: I love you too. And one thing, like—and this is... [sighs] So, Julian is really tall and big for her age. So, sometimes, if it's a very short trip, we let her sit in the front seat, because she is essentially the size of a 13 year old. Um, if she'd been in her normal back seat seat, she would've been hurt. Because that's where he hit. So like, I'm really glad that I was like, "Okay, y'know what, we're only goin' like, a few blocks. You can just sit in the front seat." I'm glad that, uh, that happened.

Brent: For sure.

Courtney: Even though it's technically not allowed. But y'know, here's the thing – no one looks at that kid and thinks she's seven. They're like, "Who is this small 15 year old you're with?" Like, that's—yeah.

Brent: Mm-hmm.

Courtney: So I'm—but I'm glad. I'm glad that I broke the law for a minute. [laughs]

Brent: I mean... I think it's gonna be okay. That's interesting. I was very tall for my age, and then, I hit a wall with that. And somehow, very tall for my age for like, this long period of my life was actually just the exact average height of a man. Um...

Courtney: Yeah, I think she's gonna—like, everyone just keeps saying, oh, she's gonna level out. But right now, she's literally like, a foot and a half taller than everyone else in her class.

Brent: Wow.

Courtney: And it makes me laugh very, very hard. She and I also share shoes. She wears a women's size eight shoe. [laughs]

Brent: Dang!

Courtney: I was like, oh my god, by ten, you're literally not gonna be able to wear my shoes. It's actually impressive. She will join the WNBA. No she won't. She is terrified of things flying at her, and I get it. Same.

Brent: [laughs] Um, well, shifting gears. You mentioned wanting some birthday drinks. What are you drinking?

Courtney: I'm drinking a Kim Crawford, because it's my birthday. And I'm drinking it in one of my fancy glasses.

Brent: Ooh!

Courtney: I think—I don't know if I've talked about it on this show. I have these glasses that are like, fancy Mikasa glasses that were a gift for my wedding, and they always just sat in my china cabinet, like, to be untouched. And then, when I got divorced, I was like, "I'm just gonna drink out of these now." [laughs]

Brent: Lovely!

Courtney: So I'm drinking out of one of my nice polka-dotted Mikasa glasses.

Brent: Hell yeah!

Courtney: Yeah!

Brent: I um... because I'm moving within the next 48 hours, I have one mason jar and one coffee mug that aren't packed. So out of that mason jar, I'm drinking a little cocktail made of Kettle One Botanicals. It's peach and orange blossom infused. Super yummy. And uh, that's mixed with Sprouts Farmers Market store brand lemon sparkling water. And uh—

Courtney: Interesting!

Brent: I don't know if you have a Sprouts near you, but it's kind of becomin' my grocery store jam.

Courtney: I don't. We have so many grocery stores, and I do not—we have—okay, I'm gonna list our grocery stores, because what listeners love...

Brent: Okay.

Courtney: ... is people listing their local grocery stores. [laughs] We've got Schnucks, which is my go to. Hy-Vee, County Market... I think there's still one Shop 'n Save left, maybe. And... Aldi.

Brent: So many to choose from. Aldi's a weird... weird amalgam of different kinds of stores.

Courtney: Aldi is sometimes perfect, and sometimes just... not.

Brent: And sometimes you need one fresh orange. [laughs] And you just—

Courtney: I do *not* get my produce at Aldi. It does not work out well for me.

Brent: That's exactly... [laughing]

Courtney: But they have like, Frontera salsa for like, two dollars.

Brent: Yeah. Yeah, I'm with you. Like, I can never just go and—it's like, y'know, I'm going over to Sarah's, I want to just get a quick, y'know, like, chocolate bar for us to share. Oh—oh, three chocolate ba—okay, sure, I'll buy—okay. Yeah, now I have two extras. No, that's fine. Yeah. Cool. I'll take it.

Courtney: I've never had extra chocolate bars in my life. I just have my sitting amount of chocolate bars that I'm going to ingest in one...

Brent: [laughs] Just more of the required amount, somehow.

Courtney: Yeah. I—okay, so, it's Girl Scout cookie time, y'all.

Brent: Oh, yeah!

Courtney: It is that kind of time. Brent, I'll hook you up. Um, 'cause Bouj is a Girl Scout. Um, I ordered myself five boxes of, uh, the peanut butter patties slash Tagalongs, depending on where in the nation you are.

Brent: Mm-hmm.

Courtney: Uh, I ate them all... in a day and a half. [laughs]

Brent: Dude, I so relate to that. Like, I don't really keep sweets at the ho—in my apartment, because they will just... all be eaten. Like, I—I fell for the stupid Super Bowl commercial about Pretzel Pop-Tarts, and in a moment of weakness, I bought some. [laughs] They lasted like... the whole box lasted like, 36 hours. Um...

Courtney: I mean, part of it is me, like—I say to myself that, y'know what, my kids get plenty spoiled at their grandparents' house where they spend a lot of their days after school. Like, I know that when my kids go to my

parents' house, they are getting like, their Little Debbie Swiss cake rolls. They are getting little donuts. Like, they're getting all the stuff that I grew up with.

Brent: Sure.

Courtney: And didn't have to worry about until I hit my 20s, and suddenly, weight was an issue. Um, and so, I don't keep, um, sweets and chips and stuff in the house. Like, at my house, they get, like, y'know, vegetables, popcorn, y'know. Stuff like that. If they want a sweet, they get like, a Dove dark chocolate. I have two kids who like dark chocolate. Very proud.

Brent: Nice.

Courtney: But also, mostly, it's because if I have like, Oreos in the house, I'm gonna eat the Oreos.

Brent: Exactly! Exactly!

Courtney: I'm gonna slather peanut butter on that shit and eat them all. If you haven't had Oreos and peanut butter, get your life right, because you're about to be changed forever.

Brent: Well, if I may, uh... my Girl Scout cookie jam is... now, do we call them—I think that you just mentioned regional differences, but I remember them being Samoas, but they're also now Caramel Delights?

Courtney: Caramel Delights, yes. So there are two bakeries that handle all of the Girl Scout cookie bakery. And they, uh, operate in like, different regions. But ours switched, like, last year. 'Cause it was Peanut Butter Patties my entire life, and now it's Tagalongs.

Brent: Gotcha.

Courtney: And there's slight—there's a very slight difference in the Peanut Butter Patties versus Tagalongs. But most of them are like, um... the S'More

cookie from this baker that uh, we have is like... it's like two shortbread cookies...

Brent: Gotcha.

Courtney: With chocolate in the middle. And then, some people, it's like, a graham with chocolate all over it. Like, and that's the one I want, but I don't have access to that anymore.

Brent: Now, can we agree that frozen Thin Mints are a singular delicacy?

Courtney: They are... so good. And I knew that. I knew that my whole goddamn life. And then, one year, I tried to hide my Peanut Butter Patties from myself in the freezer, thinking, "Well, if I freeze them, I won't eat them all." And that's how I learned that they're better frozen, because the peanut butter becomes like a peanut butter ice cream. [laughs]

Brent: I would just say to our listeners, the one thing I do not recommend anyone freeze, uh, is a chocolate bar.

Courtney: Oh god, no. Okay.

Brent: Some people will do the same, y'know—just like you do, they'll go, "Oh, I won't eat that much of it if it's frozen." Or, "I'll hide it from myself." Just real quick version of this story – one time, I was super blazed, wanted a treat, bit into a frozen chocolate bar, and um... part of one of my molars came off of where it should be, because frozen chocolate is a very specific substance. And uh, even the smallest cavity on your tooth can just be structurally, uh, compromised enough.

So anyway. Got a fix at the dentist. Don't worry.

Courtney: So this was very much a—this was very much a girl book series, but were you ever familiar with the Lurlene McDaniels series of novels as a young adult?

Brent: No.

Courtney: Okay. Lurlene McDaniels wrote books that were all about, like, teenagers dying of cancer. It was love stories wherein one of the teens was dying of cancer.

Brent: Whoa.

Courtney: And there was one series of novels... it was the Dawn Rochelle novels, and it was like a trilogy. And in one, she's going through chemo, and she says, "The thing I miss most is a frozen Milky Way. It tastes just like a milkshake." And so, 11 year old me was like, "Oh my god, that shit sounds delicious." And I froze a Milky Way, and I tried to eat it, and y'know what it did? Fucked up my tooth. You cannot do that.

Brent: Sure! That's like a solid brick of caramel and nougat!

Courtney: Nougat does not turn into ice cream when you freeze it! It turns into like, a brick, and it hurts you!

Brent: Did that author just like, make that up and not try it?

Courtney: I don't know. I think she invented the like, Milky Way ice cream thing, which, those are pretty good. Uh, but yeah, that was... I don't know. I wonder if she just thought it sounded delicious, because I thought it sounded delicious, and then I had it, and ow.

Brent: Yeah, I feel like I would take a Snickers ice cream bar, fast melting though it is, over any frozen actual candy bar any day.

Alright, we are comin' up on like, 14 or 15 minutes of intro. [sighs] We got some shit to get into today, but I think it's time to get into it.

Courtney: This is just a telethon. This is just our Jerry's Kids. It's gonna be 24 hours.

Brent: You say it's a telethon. We're doing MaxFunDrive in a matter of weeks. [laughs]

Courtney: [laughs]

Brent: Our true telethon. Alright. As Travis would say, transition!

[theme music plays]

Courtney: Y'know what, Brent?

Brent: What?

Courtney: We've had... we've had our arguments. We've had our tête-à-têtes.

Brent: Mm-hmm.

Courtney: But can't we just get beyond... the headlines?

Brent: Whoaaa! You've done it again.

Courtney: That was stolen from MST3K.

Brent: Nice. Very nice.

Courtney: Yeah. They're like, "Can't we just get *beyond* Thunderdome?" This is our that. This is our Thunderdome. The headlines are Thunderdome. We're in the Thunderdome. I'm Tina Turner, and I'm wearing legwarmers made of fur.

Brent: I've... I've never seen Mad Max: Beyond Thunderdome, but that's okay. Because, uh... because that's an acceptable way to be. [laughs]

Courtney: Y'know what? That's life. Sometimes, you don't see movies.

Brent: Did not know where I was going with that. [laughing] Okay. Um, so. First, in Beyond the Headlines, our self-explanatory segment... it's tax

season, and therefore, it's tax scam season! And I guess, to be fair, it's tax season in the United States. I don't know what y'all do with taxes in other parts of the world, but y'know, Godspeed to you.

However, in the United States, if you are a freelancer with a lot of itemized deductions in this gig economy hellscape, you may want to go with an independent tax preparer, since they often know more specifics about things you can write off, and which categories to put your deductions into in order to minimize your tax liability or maximize your refund.

Courtney, does this sound like ad copy? It feels like we're about to talk about like, QuickBooks or some shit. We're not.

Courtney: I like... here's the thing. I've never understood taxes, and I'm never gonna start.

Brent: Well, then, this is for you. This segment is for you, personally. Okay, so, the thing is, if you're gonna go with an independent tax preparer, just make sure they have references. One of the best ways to find a good independent CPA is just to ask around among your friends, either on social media, or just like, go to your friends that are freelancers. They probably know somebody.

Um, if you get close to the deadline, and you see like, a flyer on a street light post for a CPA, you might not get what you pay for. Um, especially if they ask for payment upfront. Uh, other scams include the usual email and phone phishing scams. The IRS does not contact taxpayers via phone, text, email, or social media.

So, if somebody saying they're the IRS contacts you in any way other than a letter, it's not... it's not real. Even if you're asked to verify your W2, uh, that would also be done in the form of a letter from the IRS. That's the thing – the IRS moves slow as hell. But at least it makes it easy to detect a scammer.

Uh, what else? If your CPA tries to convince you to invent income, or magically forget income to qualify for certain tax credits, uh... first off, they're not a safe choice for a CPA, and moreover, that's a really bad idea.

Courtney: That is no CPA. I have multiple CPAs in my family. That's how I have a CPA. And they are... honest, and they are... not daredevils, exactly. I almost said boring, but I'm not gonna say that about my family. [laughs] But they are not gonna do that shit. If you find that person, you have found some Wolf of Wall Street bullshit.

Brent: Exactly. Um, or somebody just—I mean, there's all kinds of flavors of this, and I didn't even realize how many people are either posing as CPAs, or they're actually not a certified PA. So like, just be careful. But the thing is like, look, let's be real – if you made \$100 in cash, randomly, and it's not on a W2 or a 1099, like... that's income that you probably will be okay magically forgetting.

But if you're paid from anything that has a tax form, like a W2 or a 1099, the IRS already knows about it. So do not lie about that stuff, and definitely do not work with a CPA. Look, if they kind of... if they lay out your options, that's one thing. But if they're pressuring you to lower or uh, inflate certain numbers in your income... not a good call. Not a good match. And finally—

Courtney: No, find someone who like, you just give the exact numbers. And sometimes, they'll find things that you didn't realize were like, y'know, tricky things.

Brent: Yeah, and there's certain things like, y'know, um, don't quote me on this next one, but like, there's a certain amount of cash that, if you get, you are not required to claim it. And that has—maybe that's changed since I started doing stuff, but like, there are loopholes. And y'know...

Courtney: Isn't it like under 600 or something?

Brent: That's what I thought it was, but I didn't want to say it.

Courtney: Like, I've only written one piece for Pajiba this year, and like, I'm not gonna get... y'know...

Brent: Yeah. I think it is 600, but I—the thing is that, after the tax cuts under Trump, certain things have changed, and I no longer feel qualified to speak intelligently about all of them. Um, but, that being said, a couple of deductions that y'all out there might not know about that could help you.

If you paid off student loans in 2019, you may qualify for a student loan interest deduction of up to \$2,500 off of the amount you owe. If you're an undergrad student, you might be eligible for the American Opportunity Credit, which can get you thousands of dollars back for the money you spent on stuff like tuition, books, equipment, school fees...

In general, if you run your own business or make money from a side hustle, don't be afraid to tell your CPA. There may be certain deductions like home office deduction that can lower your taxes.

And like me, personally, I am not... capital N, Not paid to say this. I, after having an independent CPA for many, many, many years... I just started using TurboTax, because I have so many gray area deductions. Like, okay. I compose and get paid for composing music. If I buy a piano keyboard that I'll use for that, but it actually lives in my office, is that in the office equipment deduction category, or trade-specific equipment category?

Well, it's kind of both. But one categorization might be better for my overall tax liability, and that is the kind of thing that a CPA, especially one that specializes in what you do, uh, can help you with.

So, Courtney, you said that you're not really, uh...

Courtney: Okay, so, I will—y'know what? I'm gonna tell y'all a story, and it will end with my rallying cry to all women. For my entire life, my dad did my taxes. And then, my husband did my taxes. And then, last year... not gonna name names. I'm not going to, y'know, give details. But my quarterly taxes that you pay as a freelancer were not paid. I owed \$12,000 in taxes.

Brent: Woof! Been there. Yikes-a-roonie. Wow. 12 grand. Wow.

Courtney: So, between my tricky freelance—because I am... I have a full time job, and I'm technically still a freelancer, because I am not an actual employee of SYFY. I am a freelancer. But I am a freelancer all the time. So, between that tricky job, having children, one of whom goes to, uh, to school that you pay for their school, and the other one, who goes to a school that is technically a medical program... I'm like, "Hey. Andy. You do this."

But like, it's one of those things where like, I went from men handling to my money to me handling my money by handing it to a man. And that, somehow, feels more empowering. [laughs] Because it's not men doing things for me. It's me saying, "Hey, man. Do this for me." [laughs]

Brent: It's you commanding a man!

Courtney: Yes.

Brent: I can dig it. I know what you're saying.

Courtney: Yeah. And I actually think, this year, like... I'm not gonna owe, maybe. Or at least I'll owe less than \$12,000. Shit goddamn.

Brent: Well, I'll tell you something. Um, one thing that really changed my life... uh, and I mean, some of you out there, you get W2s. This does not apply to you. But you could still use it, because like, I have a really hard time setting things aside in an account that's just to pay taxes. Like, setting aside things in a savings account and going, "This is how I'm gonna pay my taxes next year." Um, I'm not the most disciplined with money, and there's always something.

Y'know, you go like... something comes up. A necessary—a totally necessary expense, and you go, "Well, I do have X thousand dollars in that. I could dip into that." What you want is to have sent the money off where you can't touch it, right? Well, EFTPS... god, again, this sounds like ad copy. It's not.

Courtney: No, but y'know what? I learned about it from you, and it is the one thing that like, saved me from not owing more last year. [laughs] Because at the very least, I paid something.

Brent: Yeah. Well, they always tell you—

Courtney: I think it was like, right about the time that I learned of my tax troubles, we were in Cincinnati for that secret thing.

Brent: Oh yeah!

Courtney: And uh, I was like, saying like, “Oh my god, I owe this much! My life is ruined!” And Brent was like, “What about EFTPS?” And I was like, “I don't know what that is!” So at the very least, I did that for like, a couple of months. So, it wasn't like, you didn't pay any taxes. Like, they saw that I tried. [laughs]

Brent: Yeah.

Courtney: An attempt was made, and I got credit for an attempt. [laughing]

Brent: So like, EFTPS... and I believe it's something that anyone can use. So, if you're the kind of person that like, you think you'll... I mean, to be honest, I don't know what it is to be a regular normie W2 person, so let me just retract that sentence and skip over to this one.

What you can do—EFTPS is sort of like the IRS' PayPal. You can sort of digitally just send them money. You can make a payment. And so like, whenever you get these things that are like, “Oh, you need to do your quarterly tax estimations,” I'm always like, what the fuck are you talking about? Do you know how freelance income works? Like, even if I can tell you what I made in the quarter that just ended, I have no fuckin' idea how the deductions will affect the amount that I actually owe.

And then, if you don't give as much as you owe by the time you file, you get a penalty, even though, how could you have known what you owed up to that point?

Here's my point – if you want to pay your taxes in advance, and choose the amount and how often you pay, or even schedule like, four payments in advance that just auto-deduct from your checking account, EFTPS.gov. You sign up, they'll give you a PIN, they'll mail you your PIN, and then like, a week later, you're in business. And from then on, you just log in, and you can send them, y'know, when you get your paycheck, you can be like, "Here's 20% of that, sent off to Uncle Sam, and I don't have to think about it."

Courtney: Well, and one thing that's cool, too, is like—if you are like us, and you work from home, you get to write off some of, y'know, your living space as an office. You get to—I—because I write about, like, TV, I get to write off my like, Netflix and Xfinity and stuff like that. Not all of it, for sure, but at least a little bit.

Brent: Sure.

Courtney: I get a little something something. So... I just... [sighs] Andy, it's on its way. Go Andy. Crush it.

Brent: [laughs] I filed the other day, and I uh... I didn't do a great job in 2019 with EFTPS, 'cause I was spending all my extra money literally doing developmental productions of my Star Trek musical. I'm an adult!

But... [laughs] Yeah, I uh – I put eight grand on the card. Whatevs. That's how it goes. That's... when you're a freelancer, that's literally sometimes how it goes. Um...

Courtney: I had to put like... y'know, part of—like, my divorce was essentially like, maxing out my credit card. Paying off bills and all of that stuff. And so, I would—it was that hamster wheel of income, where it's like, "I know I'm making money. Why don't I have any money?"

Brent: Ugh. I so get that. That's... that's how Alan Greenspan wanted it. Worker insecurityyy! Anyway.

Courtney: Anyway...

Brent: Let's fight the good, progressive fight. No, we're not in Politics Roundup yet. Never mind. Anyway.

Courtney: No we're not. We're not there. But y'know what? Every segment of this show is the good, progressive fight.

Brent: Hell yeah!

Courtney: Yeah!

Brent: People should not be so afraid of being alive in a capitalist hellscape. Anyway... um...

Courtney: Speaking of capitalist hellscape...

Brent: Yeah. That's a segue. Take it away.

Courtney: Content warning: this story includes rape, sexual assault, Harvey Weinsteinery, and men being just awful garbage. Please listen at your discretion, and if you need to skip ahead, we understand.

As women, frankly, we expect very little when it comes to men facing any kind of consequence, especially in the cases of rape and sexual assault. Extra especially, the rich white ones. So when the ruling came in for the Harvey Weinstein case, guilty, a lot of us were genuinely shocked. It did not occur to me that he would actually, like, not get away with this?

Brent: Mm. Mm-hmm.

Courtney: Because they never do. I'm currently reading, uh, Know My Name, by Chanel Miller, the survivor of Brock Turner.

Brent: Oh, yeah yeah.

Courtney: Um, and it—it really details her experience with what happened to her having witnesses. Having her, y'know, all of this information there. And Brock Turner basically getting off with nothing, because he was a bright young man with a bright future.

Brent: Yeah.

Courtney: And that's just what it's like to be a woman who has—I mean, anyone. Anyone. I don't want to limit it to just women, but...

Brent: But you have a point. I mean, like, this is the whole deal with Me Too. Like, there were people that, y'know, do not identify as women, but there's a reason that it's so overwhelmingly coming from a certain source, because that's... I think that the people that have most been not believed forever.

Courtney: Yeah. The victims may be far and wide, but the perpetrators are very, very often – not exclusively, but very, very often, uh, cis men taking what they want from whoever they want it from as an act of power and aggression. And Harvey Weinstein is just absolutely a very big example of this.

Brent: Totally.

Courtney: In his New York trial, Weinstein faced five charges: two counts of predatory sexual assault, one count of rape in the first degree, one count of rape in the third degree, and one count of criminal sexual act in the first degree. He was ultimately convicted of two of those – rape in the third degree, and criminal sexual act.

The biggest charge that he faced was predatory sexual assault, as that involves a history of assaulting multiple people, many of whom were attacked beyond the point of the statute of the limitation. So, Brent and I

were talking the other day, and Brent mentioned, he didn't realize that rape comes in degrees like murder.

Brent: Right.

Courtney: And a lot of different cases do. So what's the difference between rape in the first degree versus rape in the third degree? Rape in the first degree must prove the victim faced forcible compulsion by threat of physical force, or threat of imminent death or injury to themselves or someone else, or a potential kidnapping. Third degree, the attorneys don't have to prove that part, because that can be difficult to prove, because it sucks to be a victim.

Just that the perpetrator engaged in sex without the other party's consent. So that's the one they got him on. Frankly, it's, at the same time, a big bummer he didn't get more, a beautiful shock that he did, and a really depressing thing to have to be shocked about.

Brent: Yeah, that's really telling and gross.

Courtney: Our standards are real fuckin' low.

Brent: Yeah.

Courtney: Luckily, Weinstein has another trial coming in LA. And according to Gloria Allred, the attorney for Weinstein accuser, Lauren Young, many more women wish to come forward in the LA trial. So here's hoping he gets much, much better from this hospital stay. We wish you well. Get well soon, and goes on to have a long, long, long stay in prison, where he can never hurt anyone again. Fucker.

[theme music plays]

Brent: Okay. Um, well, then, I guess we're into politics.

Courtney: Was that the intro?

Brent: Oh. Yes, I suppose that was.

Courtney: Well... I guess we're in politics, I guess.

Brent: That was me saying, off the record, we're into politics. But actually...

Courtney: [laughs]

Brent: Y'know what? Officially now, we are in! To! Politics! The roundup!

Courtney: [laughing] That's literally my energy going into politics roundup every week. It's like, "Well, I guess we're into politics..."

Brent: Yeah, you like to kind of like, do the thing where it's like, "Hey, did you know? We're already in the segment." I'm like, "Whaaat?"

Courtney: Did you know?

Brent: Um... yeah. Yeah. So here we are in the Politics Roundup, where we roundup the biggest trending political stories of the week, and deliver them to you in this audio format. Courtney, you've got a story that is on many people's minds.

Courtney: Yay like George W. Bush sporting Top Gun cosplay flying in and landing on an aircraft carrier with a 'Mission Accomplished' banner behind him, Donald Trump informed the world that things are going great pandemic-wise.

Brent: Aye yai yai...

Courtney: "The coronavirus is very much under control in the USA," he tweeted. "CDC and World Health have been working hard and very smart. Stock market starting to look good. Very good to me!" Because that's the part that he's most concerned about. Do not mistake anything—

Brent: That's the important part of a disease.

Courtney: Uh, Trump's top economic advisor, Larry Kudlow, says, "We have contained this. I won't say airtight, but it's pretty close to airtight." Right around the same time Trump tweeted how very thriving and not infected we are, the CDC officials confirmed that a patient in California, with no travel history or exposure to another infected patient, had contracted coronavirus.

But don't worry! Acting homeland security secretary, Chad Wolf, says a vaccine will be ready within, quote, "several months." When questioned by Congress, because what? He replied, "That's what I've been told by HHS and CDC, yes." Is it true? Of course not.

The CDC estimates that a vaccine for the new coronavirus is unlikely to be available in the next 12 to 18 months, because it takes way longer than that to create a vaccine or any kind of medicine or treatment. Any medication that hits the shelves, people have worked on that for fucking years.

Brent: Absolutely.

Courtney: Lord.

Brent: 'Cause clinical trials alone. I mean, I don't know how it works with a vaccine, but like, yeah. Absolutely.

Courtney: Yeah! You have to have it on like, y'know... first, y'know, general studies, and then living studies, and then humans—like, human trials take forever just to get to.

Brent: Yes. And to rush them is to not know the long term effects of a thing. Anyway. Yes. Sorry. Go on.

Courtney: As Trump continues sitting in his burning room, drinking coffee and wearing a little hat over his tiny doggy head with a "this is fine" thought bubble, saying things like, "The people are getting better. They're all getting better." He also reduced the budget for the CDC, and eliminated several key positions focused on responding to a pandemic, including having a CDC

staffer in China, working with disease detectives there to quickly identify and contain new pathogens.

So... okay, but seriously, though. This time, don't worry. Because Trump has assembled the best team to deal with this kind of thing. Mike Pence, who has zero medical experience, and who, in fact, caused the biggest HIV outbreak in Indiana when he was governor, is gonna be kind of runnin' things.

So, he helped start the whole HIV outbreak when he was in Congress. In 2011, he voted to cut funding for a Planned Parenthood, and two years later, the only HIV testing center in Indiana, Scott County – you guessed it, a Planned Parenthood – closed due to spending cuts. As the 2015 HIV outbreak worsened, spreading due to the painkiller, Opana, Pence refused to adhere to the CDC's recommendation for a clean needle program, saying, "I don't believe effective anti-drug policy involves handing out drug paraphernalia."

He also said that if state lawmakers tried to send him a bill for a needle exchange program, he would veto it. But when the outbreak got so bad as to declare a public health emergency, Pence said he'd go home and pray about it, and then finally put forth the order for a needle exchange program. That was two months from the start of the outbreak.

Researchers at Yale determined that the number of people infected by HIV in Scott County, which was 215, could've been significantly lessened if Pence had done, y'know, anything.

Anyway, so, he's handling coronavirus. In Trump's exact words, "He's got a certain talent for this."

Brent: [laughs] Based on what? What—

Courtney: Based on how good he did with the HIV!

Brent: Jesus.

Courtney: Trump has no idea—like, he was deeply confused by how many people die of the flu every year.

Brent: Oh yeah, he got it dead wrong.

Courtney: Yeah. So then, probably hearing that like, *only* 215 people got HIV! It's like, eh, that's less than the flu! Because he's got a bad brain that doesn't work well.

Brent: He always does this thing, too, where he's like, "Nobody knew!"

Courtney: Who knew this!?

Brent: He says "nobody knew." Like that one time he was like, "Healthcare was actually very complicated! Nobody knew!" And it's like, *you* didn't know, you fucking idiot. Ugh. Ugh!

Courtney: The White House has submitted a 2.5 billion dollar budget plan to Congress for vaccine development, but many major Democrats have declared that number woefully inadequate. Congress approved more than seven billion dollars to deal with H1N1 in 2009. The current total of coronavirus cases worldwide is 82,787, and the number of deaths, 2,817.

Brent: Yeah. So, okay. Some thoughts on this. I don't want to repeat my, um, not great tweet where I kind of Neil deGrasse Tyson'd the bright side, because it's terrible when people die needlessly of a disease. Um, that being said, like, the mortality rate is low. I'm thinking more about the anxiety caused by the sensationalism and alarmism of the mainstream media. And if you're in the vicinity of a TV with cable or network news, you're being barraged with this stuff.

So like, it's probably gonna be okay; though, there's also probably gonna be cases of it in the United States. And by the way, while we're on this, um... okay, so many thoughts. First off, Trump's talking about the stock markets? The DOW plummeted nearly 1,200 points today, Thursday, its biggest one-day point drop ever. So like, okay dude, sure.

But also, why does it have to be a measurement of Trump's dick? Like, of course he didn't make this virus, and also, he can't singlehandedly defeat it. Why does it have to be about him? Why does—

Courtney: Why does it have to be about money? This is bonkers bananas that people are like, "Oh my god, the DOW plummeted!" People are dying!

Brent: Right, but the fact is—yeah, no, that's fair. My point about the DOW is saying, even his—

Courtney: No, I'm saying—'cause that's Trump's point, too. That's all Trump gives a fuck about.

Brent: Exactly. And even in that case, he's wrong, and just covering up the truth... for who? Like, I guess for people wearing a MAGA hat in Alabama. Like, I don't know. But um, anyway... we love our Alabama listeners. Hi, hello.

But um, yeah, I just... it's like he either needs to do the thing where he's like, "No one's ever seen this much! Oh, this is the wettest hurricane in terms of water!" Or like, he needs to make sure everyone knows that he's doing a good job, even if that does not comport with the facts at all. I don't care how competent *you* are, I just want to know that there are people on the fucking case, dude. That's it.

Courtney: [sighs]

Brent: Okay.

Courtney: Wash your hands. Everyone wash your hands.

Brent: Wash your hands!

Courtney: Please wash your hands. I do have some concerns with washing your hands on airplanes, but take some, uh, some antibac.

Brent: Exactly. Sneeze into your elbow. I know it's weird, and I know that you're just really hoping you don't snot on your elbow, 'cause that's embarrassing. But it's better than your hands. Unless you do have an antibac thing. I've done my piece on antibac sanitizer.

Courtney: Uh, I have two children who like to come up and very lovingly put their arms around me, squeeze me, say, "I love you, mommy," and then sneeze into my mouth.

Brent: [laughs]

Courtney: So I'm... just wash your hands as much as you can. [laughing] I have a very nice pink champagne scented antibac from Bath and Body Works, and I hope it's doing anything, but either way, I'm trying my best.

Brent: I don't know how you haven't guested on One Bad Mother, the other—

Courtney: Hey—

Brent: Or rather, another Max Fun podcast, because I think you'd have some stories.

Courtney: Biz and Theresa, if you're listening, I am in! Anyway.

Brent: Okay, yeah.

Courtney: Don't sneeze in people's mouths.

Brent: Not recommended.

Courtney: That's the lesson here.

Brent: Correct. Um... alright. Next story. Wow, there is a lot going on in the Democratic primary, so let's get this political party started!

First off, last weekend was the Nevada caucus, the third contest in the Democratic primary. Full results took days for some reason. [whispers] Why does that keep happening? [normally] But in the final calculus, Sanders won with about 47%, Biden behind him around 20, Buttigieg in third with 14, Warren in fourth place with 10, and uh, the overall delegate count has Bernie with 45 delegates, Pete 25, Joe Biden 15, Liz eight, Amy seven.

As a reminder, the only way for a candidate to fully clinch the nomination, without the possibility of super delegates overriding it, is to get to the magic number of 1,991 delegates. So again, Bernie's at 45. We've got a long way to go.

Now onto the South Carolina Democratic debate on Tuesday. And Courtney, y'know, you and I don't always watch every debate, because sometimes, you got other shit to do. But we were both watching it, and wow. It was a mess.

Courtney: It—oh my god. It was just... [sighs]

Brent: Cringey.

Courtney: It was the opposite of school, in that everyone had their hands raised and was like, "No, pick me! [screams] I got something to say!" And it was just so much yelling, and no one would stop talking. Which, like, sometimes that's like... it's one of those things that I'm okay with it when it's people I agree with. [laughs]

Brent: [laughs] Yeah, no, I can get on board with that. But the thing is, what's weird to me is, when there were ten people on the stage for two straight nights in a row, two different sets of ten, it was less crosstalk than when it's six or seven.

Courtney: There was so many fucking people up there.

Brent: Too many.

Courtney: And at the very least, I think we can kick off Tom Steyer. Because what's he doing up there still?

Brent: For real. For real. And the moderators didn't do a great job of reigning in candidates, so you had so many situations with either everyone yelling over each other, or Pete Buttigieg just like, kind of doing, "Hey, batter batter batter!" Like, over somebody else's answer.

Um, whereas last week's debate, the main thrust there was to pile onto Bloomberg. Well, after Bernie's third popular vote win in a row, uh, securing a decisive frontrunner status, the expectation was that everyone in this debate would just pile onto Bernie, and of course, try to make themselves look good before we go into South Carolina, and then directly into Super Tuesday.

Courtney: Uh, a lot of people were complaining that Warren went hard on Bloomberg, and they were mad at that, because like, oh my god, she was being so mean. But she wasn't hard enough on Bernie. And I said this on Twitter, and I believe this – it is because Elizabeth Warren... she's not necessarily trying to win. She actually genuinely cares what's best for the country, and as much as I want her to win this, she knows that if she doesn't, Bernie is our best chance. And Bloomberg is our worst concern.

So I don't—I don't like—yes, by all means, point out when there is some kind of like, hypocrisy, or something that you can say, "I disagree with this" on. But she's not gonna go negative on Bernie just to be a dick. Like, that's a Buttigieg kind of move.

Brent: Right. And the thing is, despite certain things that have happened, ideologically, on the spectrum from right to center to left, she's closer to Bernie than any other candidate.

Courtney: Yeah, I'm real over seeing that one meme that's like, "Bernie over here, and moderates over here!" And it's like, Pete, uh, Liz Warren, and Bloomberg. And it's like, what the fuck is she doing on there?

Brent: Yeah. Well, y'know, at one point, I swear – I wish I'd screenshotted it. When they were doing, after, I think, Iowa, they were doing like, “Well, what if Bernie was up against the amalgamation of all the moderates?” And Tulsi goddamn Gabbard was lumped into the moderates. [laughs] And I was like, say what you will. Ms. Gabbard is not a moderate, but okay.

Courtney: Ms. Gabbard is not part of this conversation. Ms. Gabbard is in the closet.

Brent: No. Methinks—no, I think with point—

Courtney: Like, in the back of the closet. Like, not in the gay closet. But in the actual, like, pantry with like, the old crackers you forgot about.

Brent: Yeah. Um, so, uh, let's... sorry, I'm getting back to my copy. Bloomberg came somewhat more prepared. But the Bloomberg stories of the night were, firstly, his slip up with the word 'bought,' which, Courtney, you caught before I did on Twitter. When he was talking about donating to the campaigns of certain Democratic members of Congress, he nearly said “I bought them,” and then he kind of like, y'know... [stumbling gibberish]

Courtney: What did he mean to say? Or what did he think he meant to say?

Brent: Well, I mean, he was just saying 'helped them.' “I helped them win.” He already sort of said 'I helped them win,' but he just... the thing is, if he—

Courtney: He literally said “I bought that.” [laughs]

Brent: That's the thing. If he had just said like, y'know, after blurting out the word 'bought,' if he had just pivoted like, “I bought their ability to, uh, to do well,” y'know. He could've somehow played it off, 'cause God knows, there were other things in the night. He just... the guy clearly is rusty in all the wrong ways.

I'm going off my copy, but at one point, he said something like, uh... "In regards to racist policies—" He said something like, "I've met with black leaders and talked with them about how to best position myself." I'm like, Mike. That is—you just—[sighs] You just said the quiet part out loud, you freaking silly man.

Um, anyway. So, yeah, he did say 'bought.' Like, "I bought them," the members of Congress, which is the whole issue. This really pulls into contrast, like, your anti-billionaire Bernie and Elizabeth Warren candidates with like, a legit billionaire trying to literally buy his way in. But anyway.

So, there was also the implication that the Bloomberg campaign may have worked to pack the live debate audience with his supporters. If you follow me on Twitter, you probably saw that, before the debate, I predicted there would be weirdly disproportionate applause for candidates who don't actually seem to be exciting the base. Similar attempts were made with Jeb Bush and Marco Rubio in 2016.

But it's kind of like Chuck Laurie shows. Like, Big Bang Theory, love it or hate it, has explosive laughter that immediately fizzles. Why? Because it's canned. People don't laugh that way. Watch Maude sometime. That's how people laugh.

Um, anyway... so, uh, Trump, to his slimy credit at the time, y'know, when Jeb Bush and Marco Rubio's people were packing the audience, uh, pointed out, even in the moment, he was like, "That's people that were paid to do that. That's your paid people in the party." And y'know, I mean, like... Trump is terrible, but like, that was one of the strengths of his, was the ability to, in real time, go outside of political politeness and just like, sort of show his opponents for the political hacks that they are. That they were.

Um, so, y'know, whereas, at one point, Bernie was talking, and being booed. And again, y'know, you can disagree with somebody, but like, booed in this weird kind of... this way that didn't necessarily feel organic, and he just goes like, "Really? Really?"

He did take some hits on topics, like his defense of Fidel Castro. Castro was obviously a terrible dictator. So like, it was not a great look when Bernie pointed out, years ago, that Castro's robust liter—he pointed out that Castro had a robust literacy program, implying that the US could be at least as good as Cuba when it comes to certain educational programs.

When it was brought up at the debate, Sanders pointed out that Obama also similarly defended Cuba. Biden says that was a lie. It wasn't. Google it.

Bloomberg implied that Bernie was being helped by Russia. Uh, I don't think any of us knows the answer to that, but um... that may stick. I don't know. David Brooks, who's like, certainly not everybody's favorite New York Times conservative columnist, was on PBS, and he did make a point I thought was interesting, and I kind of feel this way about Trump, too, if I'm being honest.

He – and I'm paraphrasing – he was basically saying, like... I think the Russia influence thing is a bit overblown. Like, we come on here every week trying to influence people's votes, and it still hasn't worked this cycle, so like, Russia's gonna do it? Um...

Courtney: Well, and I will say, as a, y'know, a very vocal Liz Warren supporter... the whole, like, Russians supporting Bernie thing is because, I think, it's like, Trump and co., and whatever like, Russian ops he has. They think Bernie can't win. So that's why they want him to be the frontrunner.

Will that actually happen? I don't think it will. I think he could beat Trump. I just—I think that they think he can't. I think they think it's impossible, so they're propping him up. It's not a matter of Bernie like, utilizing Russian aide to make him look like the frontrunner. It's a Trumpian conservative thing.

Brent: Yeah. I think the fact is, Russia, they have their own calculus. Like, I honestly don't know. The thing about the Russia thing for me is, it makes me go, "Oh. Well, there's something to blame terrible Bernie Bros on." But we will set that aside. The fact is, Trump is on tape having said that Bernie was the person he didn't want to run against in 2016.

So like, the notion that Trump is directly colluding with the Russia that is trying to get Bernie the nomination, because Bernie couldn't win? There's a lot going on there. But anyway.

Um, Bernie did take some hits, and y'know, multiple other candidates gave nightmarish numbers about Medicare for All. He got hit for his flawed record on guns, and of course, the moderators had to do what they always do, which is start multiple questions with like, "As someone who calls himself a Democratic socialist..."

But like, yeah. He took some hits. Will it really leave a dent? We do not have enough polling data to really know. So it probably won't be crystal clear until this coming Tuesday, Super Tuesday.

But, the star of the night, by far, was Elizabeth Warren. You could argue, two debates in a row, now. She started off by reinforcing the idea that she's a progressive, which you could argue is the move at this point, since her biggest successes in the race have coincided with her presenting herself and her policies in a progressive way.

But soon, it just became goin' after Bloomberg again for shitty things he said to former employees, reiterating the super effective point about the NDAs... um, she made a great campaign promise that she would appoint a secretary of education who actually, y'know, had experience working in the public school system. And she is a fighter. She looked pretty presidential, if you ask me.

I actually started to draft a tweet I didn't finish, but like, if some of you played the game Street Fighter, like, I was like... Y'know, Bernie is lumbering like Zangief. Elizabeth Warren, fast and like, fast and furious like Chun-Li. You don't even know what hit you 'til it's done. But there are some people who think a woman would naturally have a hard time going up against Trump in a debate.

I think, during Liz's best moments, especially from these last two debates, it just felt like... again, I main Bernie. But it just felt like no one could slice and dice Trump quite the way she could, and certainly, a man couldn't come at

Trump for some of these issues with the same power as she's gone after Bloomberg, for instance.

Courtney: Can I actually leap in real quick with one of the, to me, the most important moments of Elizabeth Warren's performance in this debate? Not merely as a presidential candidate, but in terms of, um, the way we talk about... women who are victims of sexual abuse and assault.

Brent: Mm-hmm.

Courtney: Uh, so at one point, Elizabeth Warren calls out Bloomberg, and she talks about how, y'know, she was pregnant, and she was fired because she was pregnant. But she said, "At least I didn't have a boss who said, 'Kill it.'" And people started booing, and you're gonna get to the exact kind of people that started booing.

Um, but when Gil King asked her, like, y'know, that's a really strong accusation, what is your evidence? And Elizabeth Warren said, "Her own words." And that... never fucking happens. Someone said a woman's word counted as evidence. And that was so fucking powerful.

So, I know there are people who don't... understand, necessarily, why women get so mad about, uh, the way people react to different kinds of harassment and abuse. But like, the fact that I am near tears to the fact that someone said a woman's word counted as evidence is one of the most beautiful moments of my life.

And of course, Bloomberg responded, uh... the quote is, "categorically never said it. When I was accused of doing it, we couldn't figure out what she was talking about. But right now, I am sorry if she heard what she thought she heard, or whatever happened. I didn't take any pleasure in that." Fuck. You. He fuckin' said it. 60 people have come forward saying he fuckin' said shit like that. He said it.

Brent: Yeah, that's the thing. It just seems like we're in this environment where... I don't know. I just don't understand how... there are people who,

uh, are accused of something, and they go, "Well, I fucked up." And they are cancelled for a bit, just to be cynical about it.

And then, it's almost like... um, I don't know. Like, suddenly when you get into these numbers, like, Trump and Bloomberg. It's like, how can you possibly—and okay, to be fair, Bloomberg's accusations are not the same as Trump's. They are not, from what I understand, assault. There is a difference. But still.

Courtney: I mean, there's a difference, but there's still, like—

Brent: But 60 people!

Courtney: Yeah. I mean, like—

Brent: 60 people is 60 people.

Courtney: That's the thing. I'm never going to say, like, "Well, at least you weren't raped!" Like, that's not a thing.

Brent: No, for sure. For sure.

Courtney: We are not saying that in any way, shape, or form. It's all bad. And if we have to have a—a harasser and abuser versus a rapist, I'm fuckin' sittin' this one out.

Brent: That's fair. That's totally fair. And then, you've made a point just now that is, as much as certain people think that independents, for instance, will sit it out if Bernie gets the nomination... I think the riskiest – and you sort of said that Elizabeth Warren was sort of pointing this out, earlier – the riskiest candidate, I think, is Bloomberg, because he is so antithetical to so many things, uh, so many ways in which the Democratic party and their voter base are moving.

Like, Steyer, right? Nobody thinks he's gonna win. But he's just not... divisive the same way. Like, he at least went to some debates. He didn't just

purchase it. I'm not trying to—certainly not trying to butter his balls, but y'know what I mean.

Courtney: Bloomberg is a person who it feels like we're being gaslit into thinking he's a viable candidate.

Brent: Right.

Courtney: It doesn't feel real. I've never met a person who is actually pro-Bloomberg. Never seen one on Twitter. I... I feel like there's just this idea where it's just like, well, he's the best one to, y'know, beat Trump. And it's like, fucking how?!

Brent: [laughs] My friend—

Courtney: Literally how?!

Brent: My friend who was in, uh, was in the Broadway show, Rock of Ages... name dropping! Um, she apparently met and worked with Mike Bloomberg in a theatrical thing, and maybe it was that thing you've seen clips from online where he flies off like Mary Poppins. But y'know, she was like, "He's a class act, he's a really nice guy." This was before the first debate.

Um, and the thing is, it's sort of like what Elizabeth Warren said two debates ago, where she – and I'm paraphrasing, but she goes, "Did you hear what his defense was? I was nice to *some* women." Like...

Courtney: Well, and that's the thing. I mean, how many people do we all know who are, like, really good guys who are just like, really nice to people? They would—they don't have a racist bone in their body, blah blah blah. Buuut... they've also said the N-word a couple of times. They've also, uh, y'know, like, forced themselves on a woman when she wasn't necessarily giving in, and things like that.

Brent: Right.

Courtney: Like, here's the thing. There's a lot of nice guys who are monsters.

Brent: Sure.

Courtney: And I genuinely... I talked about this a little bit on Twitter. I have someone in my life who I love very much, who is, uh, right now, going through dealing with... um... she was raped. She's going through an investigation. And the police don't believe her. And they—I mean, they did that thing where they pretended to believe her, and investigated the case, and they're like, "Yeah, it's just he said she said."

And I came out of it thinking like, y'know what, there's a lot of cases of rape and assault and sexual harassment where... it's not that the men are lying, saying like, "Well, I didn't do this." They don't believe what they did was rape.

Brent: Mm. Mm-hmm.

Courtney: And or harassment or assault. Like, Bloomberg specifically just keeps saying, "Well, I guess they didn't like a joke I made." Like, then you have no idea what you did. Because you're writing it off as a joke you made.

Brent: And the idea of going out of your way... like, sometimes I can't be bothered to like, go buy sushi. I'm gonna have it delivered with DoorDash, our favorite sponsor. But like, no, for real, though. The idea of going out of your way to accuse someone of something... it's like, not—to go to the police about a thing is not some kind of like, chill, easy experience. The idea... I don't know. Like, it just continues the whole thing of like... the myth of false accusations.

And to see it happen before our eyes is something weirdly spectacular. It almost seems like Mike Bloomberg just... didn't pay attention to any of the sea change of Me Too. He doesn't know how to talk about it. He doesn't understand—

Courtney: But why would he have to? He's rich. He's white.

Brent: Yeah. You can tell that he hasn't been—

Courtney: He just is entitled to this position. He was not prepared for any of these questions or accusations, because he feels entitled. He should just have it. And then when people push back or ask him questions, he's just like, "[gasps] Well enough is never enough for the senator!"

Brent: Right.

Courtney: He literally said that about Elizabeth Warren. So... go fuck yourself.

Brent: He's the most petulant 70-whatever year old we've seen since you know who.

Courtney: I don't know that he's the most. Yeah, I was gonna say.
[laughs]

Brent: Yeah. Um... but like, even—y'know, and we're way off my copy, but fuck it, we're already here. Um, I just feel like he doesn't understand how he comes off, and you can tell that he doesn't have handlers or debate preppers that tell him.

Like, look, we're getting into some stuff here, but like, I don't think America has ever really much liked sort of a patrician kind of upper class-seeming aristocratic kind of feel. Say what you will about that, but like, look at the DNA of our country. We escaped Britain.

So the idea of like, kind of like a princely, uh, petulant or entitled kind of feel to a political candidate just turns us off, generally, as a culture. So when he says, "I think I'll talk now, thank you," it's like... [laughs] There's just something about it where it's like... look here, country club. [laughs] Y'know, like, just, he doesn't get it! He just sounds like a squirrel.

But that being said, as I'll say in my copy here in a second... not everybody's watching the debates. And you can tell from some of these polls.

So let's talk about other candidates in this debate. Biden had a comparatively strong debate, but once again, was very yelly. He seemed to want to claim that he wrote every good bill that existed over the past hundred years.

He also teased toward the end of the debate that he would nominate a black woman to the Supreme Court, which like... okay, there absolutely should be a black woman on the Supreme Court. The court should look like our country, and our country is not a bunch of white men. And so, that being said, it did feel cynical. Like, South Carolina has a large black population, and the upcoming South Carolina primary could be make or break for his momentum. It just... I don't know. It seemed... it seemed like what we playwrights call clumsy exposition.

Uh, Pete, personally to me, just came off as annoying for a lot of the night. Um, he took a dig at Bernie, and then like, attempted to talk over Bernie's entire response. He kind of played that 'well, actually' card to some candidates, and generally just like... he seems to be like, simulating a certain kind of toughness that I don't think is actually organic to him.

But then, alternating between that and taking little snipes at other candidates? Like, honestly, I think when you take more and more centrist positions, your power to hurt progressive candidates becomes less about body blows, and more about death by a thousand cuts, with technicalities and parsing certain differences.

I don't think his performance moved the needle for his campaign. Um, Klobuchar had one of her strongest debate performances, and she brought the usual canned, polished lines that feel a little too prepared for my taste. But to be fair, she was really overlooked when it was time to pick the next candidate to speak. You could argue that a candidate polling very low shouldn't get as much airtime, but it just felt like it was forever before the first time she was called on.

And just something to note, particularly about Buttigieg and Klobuchar – when they present huge, scary numbers about Medicare for All, they never

cite their sources. And their numbers don't agree. Meanwhile, multiple studies have been coming out from, y'know, prestigious sources that give wildly more optimistic numbers.

So when someone says, "They announced it would cost X dollars!" Or they just come out with like, "Your plan would cost X dollars!" I would just rather hear, "According to such and such source." That's not something that I do hard and fast in my life, but... I just feel like... that would be more credible to people that are paying attention.

And as you said, Courtney, y'know, Steyer... [sighs] Say what you will. I think it's actually really sweet that Make a Wish foundation keeps letting him stand up there with the candidates. I really do.

Um, now, one telling thing in all this is that Nancy Pelosi, when she was asked about whether she would be comfortable with Sanders as the Democratic nominee, said 'yes.' While that's not exactly a glowing response, it shows you that she, and by proxy, the Democratic party establishment, uh, is preparing for the possibility that Bernie will lock the nomination. It's a small statement, but it does have huge implications.

So, now we're primed for the fourth contest, the South Carolina primary. Biden's team have said all along that this is his stronghold, his firewall, and now that he's gotten fourth, fifth, and second in the first three contests, respectively, it may be a make or break primary for his momentum going into Super Tuesday.

Polls in South Carolina have really varied wildly in these past few weeks, but the RCP average has Biden up nearly 12 points over Sanders. And the latest poll – that being said, the latest poll out of The Post and Courier has Biden at 28 with Sanders at 24, and then, Elizabeth Warren in the same poll as up four points from the poll before it.

So, with two strong debate performances in a row, I think there's still a chance Warren could get back in it. If she can get momentum going into Super Tuesday, the race could look very different than most pundits are predicting.

So, you may be thinking like, why are so many of these candidates who aren't polling well staying in the race? Um, the answer is probably a combination of many reasons. For instance, they think maybe they'll pull off a surprise upset in South Carolina, or when you get a lot of states involved in Super Tuesday. But another possibility is, they're hoping to be the choice of the super delegates at the convention.

If Bernie doesn't get over the 51% threshold, the super delegates will likely nominate someone else on the second ballot. That's not speculation – the New York Times talked to nearly a hundred super delegates, and they were pretty much like, "Yeah, we would probably not give Bernie the nomination."

So, putting on my tin foil hat for a second... that could lead to Democratic establishment donors keeping some of these campaigns limping along just to siphon delegates away from Sanders, and set up the possibility of one of those candidates getting slipped in at the convention. And according to that New York Times piece, it might not even be one of those candidates. I've heard Sherrod Brown and Michelle Obama being floated.

Personally, I feel like if Bernie gets near 50% and then gets squeezed out... I just—I think that'd be an outstanding way to lose to Trump. But that's all a bit down the road. This weekend, we have South Carolina. If Biden wins, the stage is set for a difficult to predict Super Tuesday. If Warren rides this apparent post-debate bump and places in the top two, she could gain enough momentum for a Super Tuesday surprise.

Klobuchar, Buttigieg, and Steyer are likely three through six material. And remember, Bloomberg isn't even on the ballot until Super Tuesday. By the way, uh, not great news – Bloomberg's not doing too bad in some Super Tuesday states. Like, I guess if you get barraged with Bloomberg ads and don't watch the debates, like, he sounds pretty chill.

Um, as for this weekend in South Carolina, it's possible we'll see some campaigns suspend if they don't do well. Like, I think Klobuchar and Steyer are foremost on the chopping block. But the fact is, Super Tuesday's only three days after South Carolina. So it's probably worth it for every campaign

to hang on until then. But I think at least three of the current seven candidates will drop out very soon after Tuesday, if not Tuesday night.

But we'll just have to wait and see.

[pause]

And we have a Tidbit.

Courtney: We have a Tidbit.

Brent: One Tidbit.

Courtney: A bit of—like, literally, a bit of tid.

Brent: Yes. A bit of tidbit.

Uh, so, I saw some headlines on Twitter about Chris Evans starring in a remake of Little Shop and Horrors, and immediately, I was mad. Like, Seymour? Captain America as Seymour Krelborn? Alec Baldwin playing a nerdy guy in Beetlejuice is one thing, but this?!

Anyway, I was wrong. Evans is rumored to be in talks to play the sadistic dentist character, and his Avengers co-star, Scarlett Johansen, is in talks to play the female lead, Audrey. Also, red carpet darling and star of Pose, Billy Porter, is already on board to do the voice of the plant, Audrey II. And I think Evans, y'know... honestly, he might be great for it. I was really impressed with his ability to play a total asshole in Knives Out.

My main thing with movie musicals is... stop casting stars unless they can freaking sing! Emma Watson? Great actor. But her voice in Beauty and the Beast sounded like GLaDOS from the Portal games. That being said, Courtney... any dream casting choices for the remaining roles we don't know about? Seymour or Mr. Mushnik?

Courtney: I will say... I will say, Chris Evans, for those of us who love the movie Not Another Teen Movie, can sing.

Brent: Oh, okay.

Courtney: I mean, he could sing, like, fine enough for the musical montage of Not Another Teen Movie.

Brent: Which, the dentist is not the hardest role to sing.

Courtney: Yeah, exactly. I mean, like, Steve Martin did just fine.

Brent: Yeah.

Courtney: So, allegedly, Taron Egerton is going to play Seymour, which I'm very into.

Brent: Um... I'm...

Courtney: Are you familiar with the gentleman?

Brent: No. [laughing] I'm quickly Googling.

Courtney: Okay. Taron Egerton is—he's from The Kingsmen, he played Elton John in Rocketman.

Brent: Ohh, I see.

Courtney: Yes.

Brent: I mean... the thing is... for me, Seymour is... is best played by someone who like, truly has a slight bit of tragic to them. But whatever. It's a Hollywood movie.

Courtney: Here's the thing. How many like... how many... how many people are allowed to be famous that are also just like, nerds, but could also be a romantic lead?

Brent: I'll tell you something. Much more of them are men.

Courtney: Hollywood is the problem.

Brent: This is one of those times I'm gonna rip roar out of the—

Courtney: I mean, for truth. Yeah.

Brent: Like, I mean, if Seth Rogan gets to be a leading man...

Courtney: Yeah. And like, that's the thing. There's obviously more men. But there's still not—like, I don't know that we have a Rick Moranis today.

Brent: That's interesting. Well, I have—

Courtney: Where like, he's nerdy, but also, I'd hit it? Real talk, I'd hit it.

Brent: [laughs] Honey, I shrunk... no, I didn't shrink. Honey, I boinked the... okay, we'll workshop it.

Courtney: Y'know what? You're not workin' it. I will say, Scarlett Johansen, I don't like her for Audrey.

Brent: [laughs] Same.

Courtney: I don't like her for Audrey at all. I don't think he voice—she actually does have a very lovely voice, but it's not right for this character.

Brent: What about Rebel Wilson?

Courtney: She doesn't have any voice. It's a bad one.

Brent: Is it?

Courtney: It's bad.

Brent: I thought she was in Pitch Perfect. Is she bad?

Courtney: She doesn't sing great in Pitch Perfect, and she sings terribly in Cats.

Brent: Well, that's what I get for just watching trailers and never watching the movies. Um...

Courtney: Yeah. No, she doesn't. She doesn't do that. But like, and I don't know who it would necessarily be. But like, I know that it's not Scarlett Johansen.

Brent: Can Kate McKinnon or Kristen Wig sing?

Courtney: I think so?

Brent: 'Cause I feel like that's the kind of...

Courtney: Uh... I think they might be – I hate to say it – too old now.

Brent: That's a good point. And let's be real, Hollywood is not a kind, uh, a kind, benevolent force when it comes to that. I just feel like you need a comedian. You need someone in that role that really has the timing, and Scarlett Johansen... look, she's talented at what she does. I don't think of her as someone who really excels in comedy.

What about, um... is it Melissa Villaseñor? You know who I'm talking about?

Courtney: Yeah, can she sing?

Brent: Well, I—I mean, she's done impressions of women that sing, when she does like a Christina Aguilera. I feel like that's the kind of... or Cecily Strong, who—

Courtney: Stephanie Beatriz from Brooklyn 99 kind of put herself into the— into the, y'know, the option pool, which I would be very into. Uh, did you

see the video of Mj Rodriguez as Audrey? Because it was absolutely the most beautiful, uh, just spine chilling, wonderful thing I've ever seen.

Brent: I did not see that.

Courtney: It's stunning. Look it up. I believe it was on James Corden, and it was beautiful. It was so, so good. I don't really know who to—who I'd pick. I'm so bad at this.

Brent: I think, for me, when I thought about Seymour, I thought, either Donald Glover, who has very successfully played nerdy roles. Like, I think he's just got range.

Courtney: Yeah.

Brent: Or maybe Josh Gadd. Like, the thing is that... y'know, if you go with Josh Gadd, and then, um, Scarlet Johansen, are you perpetuating that like... King of Queens thing? Like, that, y'know, sort of male fantasy of, uh... I mean, to the extent that leagues are a thing. You know what I'm saying by not saying it correctly.

Courtney: Well, I mean, and that—I mean, I will say that, in this particular play, that kind of tends to be the dynamic anyway, where it's like, a nerdy guy, hot girl. Um, but Josh Gadd's—

Brent: But yeah, the right Audrey—

Courtney: Josh Gadd's voice is the most perplexing voice I've ever heard. [laughs] And I don't know what to—I don't know how to react to it ever.

Brent: It is... very strange.

Courtney: I don't understand his voice. I want an entire, like, thousand word article on the mechanics of this man's bonkers banana voice.

Brent: Medium! Make it happen!

Courtney: Yeah.

Brent: And as for Mushnik, who, for those of you that don't even know the show, Mushnik is like, the older, um... y'know, typically, I believe in the script, it's implied kind of older Jewish kind of proprietor of the store. Um, I mean... I'll tell you what – I think that Jeff Goldblum, while unnecessarily sexy for the role, could be a fun Mushnik.

Courtney: [stage whispers] I regret to inform you, Jeff Goldblum is problematic, so we should keep him out of this.

Brent: Oh no!

Courtney: [stage whispers] Yeah.

Brent: Well, then, he can't play Mushnik. I'm so sorry.

Courtney: Um, I just want to see it. I just really like Little Shop of Horrors, and I love it a lot, and I love Billy Porter. What if they just made it all, like... what if they just made it all great people?

Brent: That would be...

Courtney: Would that be so hard? [laughs]

Brent: I think you've cracked the case. [laughs]

Courtney: I didn't say this at the beginning of the episode, because it was like, such a Courtney sob story. My puppy kept me up literally all night, every hour, waking up, asking to either go outside or inside.

Brent: Aww.

Courtney: I'm not 100% here right now. [laughs]

Brent: Fair.

Courtney: You're not getting your best and brightest Courtney.

Brent: Well, and last night, I had an edible that I didn't realize how high the dosage was. So like, for all we know, I'm still a little bit high. So anyway, we're makin' it work. We're thriving.

Courtney: Doing. Our. Best.

Brent: And though we're thriving, in a second, we'll be... Wi-Fiving. Transition!

Courtney: Brent, that was a good one!

[gavel banging]

Speaker 1: Judge John Hodgman ruled in my favor.

Speaker 2: Judge John Hodgman ruled in my friend's favor.

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John: It's the Judge John Hodgman podcast. Find it every Wednesday at MaximumFun.org, or wherever you download podcasts.

[gavel banging]

Speaker 1: Thanks, Judge John Hodgman.

[music plays]

Travis: Hello, internet! I'm your husband host, Travis McElroy.

Teresa: And I'm your wife host, Teresa McElroy.

Travis: And together, we present Shmanners.

Teresa: It's extraordinary etiquette...

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Travis: So join us weekly on MaximumFun.org, or wherever podcasts are found.

Teresa: No RSVP required.

Travis: Check out Shmanners.

Teresa: Manners, Shmanners. Get 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 the internet high five, or Wi-Five. Um... or rather, *an* internet high five, or Wi-Five.

[Wi-Five slap]

Brent: Not cuttin' it. Not editing it. Just gonna keep pushin' on through.

[Wi-Five slap x3]

Brent: Today's Wi-Five was brought to my attention by my super cool girlfriend, Sarah, who suggested a local Philadelphia story, which makes sense, because we both live in Philadelphia, and it goes out to a local Philly nonprofit called Safehouse, which is opening the first space in the United States where people struggling with addiction can use opioids and other illegal drugs under the supervision of trained staff.

The term 'safe injection sites' sounds strange to a lot of people, especially those of us who came up during the height of the war on drugs. Y'know, Nancy Reagan, just say no. Even when arcade games would have a "winners don't do drugs" screen in the demo loop.

Um, but safe injection sites have been around in Canada and Europe for a while, and the basic idea is that people come in with their own drugs and administer the drugs in the presence of medical staff. If they OD, the staff has Naloc... Naloxone? Naloxone on hand to save their lives.

It may sound like it's encouraging people to do drugs, but safe injection sites actually have a very positive net effect. In the aftermath of the opioid epidemic, plenty of cities like Philadelphia have an overdose crisis. You could argue that this sort of thing should've been around before white people got upset about it, but I'm gonna set that aside.

The opioid epidemic, though you can make arguments about that, like... it's here, and we have to do something about it. Philadelphia has the highest death rate in the country with about four people dying of an overdose here every day. Safe injection sites are controversial, but they're a proven method of harm reduction.

That's not to say that the federal government is not, uh—or rather, I'm sorry. That's not to say that the federal government is happy about this happening. They may be taking action against it any minute. And that's not to say that all local parents and others are happy about it.

But drug addiction is a disease, and acting under the premise that people entirely do it to themselves and deserve punishment or harm? It doesn't save any lives, or even improve any lives in the long run, and this is a bold experiment that will likely provide a bridge to treatment, a safer way for drugs to be administered if they're going to be administered anyway, and ultimately, it will save lives.

So to the Safehouse co-founder, Ronda Goldfein, and everyone else involved with the Safe House safe injection site in Philadelphia... Wi-Five.

[theme music plays]

Brent: That's gonna do it for another Trends Like These. By the way, every episode you hear is edited by our good friend, Mustin. Mustin has a cool library of music he's created or worked on. Uh, one of the very first ever video game cover bands is The OneUps, and if that sounds weird, you haven't heard how cool video game music can sound. I have literally described The OneUps as the only video game music band I would have sex to. So, check out Mustin's super cool music at Mustin.net.

Aside from that, check out all the other wonderful Maximum Fun podcasts at MaximumFun.org.

Courtney, where can people find you on the internet, and what do you want them to know?

Courtney: So you can find me at SYFY Fangrrls, and as of this weekend, it is March. That's women's history month. And SYFY, the channel, is going all in on the women who have made sci-fi, fantasy, and horror into the fandom-worthy genres they are today. We are launching a 'We are Her-Os'... it works really well in written form. Uh, campaign. And we are going to have a second season of Forgotten Women of Genre, the podcast that we work so goddamn hard on, so please subscribe to that.

Uh, we're gonna have marathons of show like Wynonna Earp. We're gonna have a 'mansel in distress' movie marathon, focused on female heroes. And on March 27th, you can see me on TV!

Brent: Whaaat?

Courtney: On our special, 20 Women to Watch in 2020. I'm real excited. I got my makeup done and I wore a special shirt and everything.

Brent: Kick ass! Congratulations!

Courtney: That's what I was doing in New York! I was gonna be on TV!

Brent: Ahh, that was the secret thing.

Courtney: I wore high heels. On television. I don't even know if y'all are gonna see my feet, but I wore high heels. That's how you know it's important.

Brent: You'll be exuding the confidence of someone wearing high heels, regardless.

Courtney: Of someone wearing high heels!

Brent: High! The highest! Um, so, yeah. Real quick, I've got two other podcasts going that you might like. One is a super TMI game show of deeply personal questions that I do with Kate Sloan, who you've heard as a guest cohost on this show sometimes. Our guests that we ask very rudely personal questions to have included Travis McElroy, Courtney Enlow, Trends Like These UK correspondent, Dave Bulmer, and others.

So, it's called Question Box. You can get it on all the major pod platforms. And if you're a Trekkie and you're watching Star Trek: Picard, my literal best friend in the world and I, Matt Villeneuve, uh, we are doing a podcast called The Lucout, as in, Jean Luc. The Lucout, where we recap and discuss every episode of Star Trek: Picard, all season long.

So, you can find out more about that at [Twitter.com/TheLucout](https://twitter.com/TheLucout), and we're also on Spotify and Apple Podcasts.

But I think... that's gonna do it for another Trends Like These. Courtney, thank you for joining me despite the hell of a week you've had, and by the

way, everyone listening, send Courtney a nice birthday message. Because that's always nice. And it's been quite a week, so she could probably, uh... it would probably do her some good.

That being said, Courtney, it's your birthday, so... I'm just gonna tell you, I wasn't forgetting anything, I didn't forget anything, and you don't have to tell me what I forgot.

Courtney: No. That's my present is, I don't have to come up with a thing you forgot. Everyone praise me. It's my birthday. [laughs]

Brent: [laughs] We'll see you in a week once you've all done that! Bye!

Courtney: [sings]

[theme music plays]

Courtney: It's a Travsition.

Brent: Travsition.

Courtney: `Cause he's Travis. [laughs]

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