

00:00:00	Clip	Clip	<p>Jesse Thorn: <i>[Somber]</i> Hi. It's Jesse, the founder of MaxFun, coming to you from the microphone at my home office, where I am socially segregating.</p> <p>So, we promised you a MaxFunDrive this week, but things... <i>[suppressing a grim chuckle]</i> haven't exactly gone how we expected. So given the pandemic, we're gonna postpone this year's Drive. Events are still fluid, so we're hesitant to give you specifics about new dates. Right now we have late April penciled into our calendars. We'll keep you posted about that.</p> <p>As it stands, a lot of our Drive machinery was already cranked up. So, for one thing you might hear a reference or two to the Drive in our shows, which might have been recorded before we made this decision. And here is some good news: there's a bunch of great bonus content available for <u>all</u> of our MaxFun members. If you're a member and you missed the email with instructions on how to listen, check your spam folder or log in at MaximumFun.org/manage. Also at MaximumFun.org/manage, you can change your membership if your circumstances have changed. We know this is a tough time for a lot of people, and we understand. You can also go to MaximumFun.org/join at any time if you'd like to become a member.</p> <p>During the next couple weeks, what <u>would</u> have been the Drive, we are going to do our best to be extra available to you. We've got some streaming events planned, some social media stuff. We know a lot of folks are isolated right now, and we wanna help provide comfort in the best ways that we know how. You can follow us on social media, and we'll let you know what's up.</p> <p>During this tough time, I have been feeling really grateful for my community of colleagues here at MaxFun. And for you, the folks who make our work possible. Goofy as that work may sometimes be. Stay safe out there. We're thinking of you.</p>
00:02:02	Music	Transition	<p>"Crown Ones" off the album <i>Stepfather</i> by People Under The Stairs</p>
00:02:09	Oliver Wang	Host	<p>Hello, I'm Oliver Wang.</p>
00:02:10	Morgan Rhodes	Host	<p>And I'm Morgan Rhodes, you're listening to <i>Heat Rocks</i>. Every episode we invite a guest to join us to talk about a heat rock, you know, fire, combustibles, an album that bumps eternally. Today, we are revisiting the work of one Kanye West, our fourth visit to his Yeness, to discuss his sophomore album from 2005, <i>Late Registration</i>.</p>
00:02:32	Music	Music	<p>"Gold Digger" off the album <i>Late Registration</i> by Kanye West. Mid-tempo rap with multilayered vocals.</p> <p><i>(She takes my money)</i> <i>Now I ain't saying she's a gold digger (when I'm in need)</i> <i>But she ain't messing with no broke broke</i> <i>(She takes my money)</i> <i>Now I ain't saying she's a gold digger (when I'm in need)</i> <i>But she ain't messing with no broke broke</i></p>

I gotta leave (get down girl go head get down)
I gotta leave (get down girl go head get down)
I gotta leave (get down girl go head get down)

[Music fades out as Morgan speaks]

00:02:50 Morgan Host

In the late fall of 2005, when I had a nine-to-five, I shared a giant office with two colleagues. The space was tricked out because, of course, we were the cool kids in the department. And one of the most popular features was our three-CD changer, mounted on the wall for vibe and aesthetics, but really purchased for diplomatic reasons, so each of us could bump what we liked to power through the day.

Predictably, though, because of disparate music tastes, more often than not our jams didn't really coalesce in the way we had hoped. So the debate became what one album would we feature that would get us through without killing us in the process? Almost by accident, Kanye West stepped up to bat. The album was *Late Registration*. Rockefeller Records, August 29th, 21 tracks, we ended up spinning that one every day. No skips. We played the whole thing, skits included.

And I'm not sure today what about this album bonded three youths with different sonic palates, but here's what I did love about it: strings, the cinema of it, Jon Brion's scored orchestration, the samples, Grown Folks samples, Shirley Bassey, Etta James, Gil Scott-Heron, Bill Withers, Otis Redding, Ray Charles, Hank Crawford, the features, Patti LaBelle, c'mon, Brandy, Adam Levine, Jaime Fox, the Chicago-ness, Common and Lupe, the complex introspection, diamonds and the conflict around them, addiction and the war on drugs, poverty and him ballin', ego and self-awareness, messages mixed albeit for those sleeping on how woke he was. So woke that a week-and-a-half after this release, he'd spit one of the illest bars ever. Seven words: George Bush doesn't care about Black people.

[Laughter.]

By the fall of 2005, his bars were certified. He'd made it, survived through the wire. We could spend hours talking about what near-death experiences do to music. But a wordsmith became clever when he rocked the mic, he made his way to our playlists and into my office. In 2005, he conquered us before he divided us, because this was crack music, this was real Black music, and before things went south, me and all the young men I knew were going West.

00:05:07 Music Music

["Gold Digger" plays again.]

(I gotta leave)
She went to the doctor got lipo with your money
(She give me money)
She walking around looking like Michael with your money
(When I'm in need)
Shoulda got that insured, Geico for ya money (money)
(She give me money)

*If you ain't no punk holla we want prenup
(When I'm in need)
(We want prenup, yeah)
It's something that you need to have
'Cause when she leaves...*

[Music fades out as

00:05:23 Oliver Host *Late Registration* was the pick of our guest today, producer and artist Cam O'bi. A native of Las Vegas, Cam's climb to fame came after making a move from Sin City to the Windy City, where he ended up working with Chance the Rapper on his breakout release, *Acid Rap*. And that has snowballed into a prolific production career where Cam's worked with everyone from J. Cole to SZA, Moses Sumney to No Name, and many, many more.

Much like the subject of today's episode, producer-turned-rapper Kanye West, Cam is hoping to make the same transition, having released his own songs since 2018, and his long awaited debut album should come out later in 2020.

00:06:05 Music Music "Perfect" off the album *Perfect* by Cam O'bi. Mid-tempo, smooth, grooving R&B.

*But if it's gonna crash and burn (If you gonna crash and burn)
Let's at least enjoy the flames
She said burn baby, burn
If it's going down in a blaze (If it's going down in a blaze)
Let's at least enjoy the way down
Burn baby burn (Burn)
Burn baby burn (Burn baby burn)*

[Music fades out as Oliver speaks]

00:06:24 Oliver Host Cam Obi, welcome to *Heat Rocks*.

00:06:26 Cam O'bi Guest Thank you.

00:06:27 Oliver Host Let's start with this, because Kanye has such a large and very diversified catalogue, why this particular album?

00:06:36 Cam Guest I guess for two reasons, the immersiveness of it, if that's a word, the—

00:06:41 Oliver Host That is a word, yeah. Absolutely.

[Morgan affirms.]

00:06:44 Cam Guest Right, the storytelling of it, the cinema of it. Um, the second reason is what solidifies it, the time in my life that I was in when this came out.

[Oliver affirms.]

So it came out 2005, so I was a junior in high school.

00:07:00 Oliver Host Oh, wow. Okay.

00:07:01 Cam Guest Heh, yeah, so—

00:07:02 Morgan Host Dang.

00:07:03 Oliver Host *[Coyly]* Think me and Morgan were just a little bit older.

[Morgan affirms.]

Won't say how much older. Just a little bit.

00:07:08 Morgan Host Somewhat. Somewhat.

00:07:10 Cam Guest That's funny. Oh, yes, 2005. So, I was like the biggest Kanye fan. I was a bigger fan than all my peers.

[Morgan and Oliver affirm.]

And the reason was I had found out about him before he started rapping, and—so I started making beats when I was eleven, and I remember, I would like sift through my big sister's CD collection, which was huge, and like collect it. She had a lot of Rockefeller stuff in there, and, um, I remember, uh, someone telling me—I think it was one of her friends—he was telling me, if you look at the credits, where it says “produced by,” that's who made the beat.

So I started doing that, and I saw his name a lot, on a lot of my favorite stuff. You know, like, um, “This Can't Be Life”, that was like, one of the big ones.

00:07:55 Music Music “This Can't Be Life” by Jay-Z. Mid-tempo rap with vocalizations in the background.

*It gets worse, baby mamma water burst
Baby came out stillborn, still I gotta move on
Though my heart still torn, life gone from her womb
Don't worry, if it was meant to be, it'll be, soon
This can't be life, this can't be love
This can't be right...*

[Music fades out as Cam speaks]

00:08:14 Cam Guest And I remember, October 2002—I still have it—it's a double XL with Tupac on the cover.

[Morgan and Oliver affirm.]

And there was a feature in there, about, uh—

00:08:25 Morgan Host Producers.

00:08:26 Cam Guest Yes, producers.

00:08:27 Morgan Host And producers, yeah. I remember that excerpt.

00:08:29 Cam Guest You remember that? Oh my God!

[Laughter.]

00:08:30 Morgan Host I sure do.

00:08:32 Cam Guest Yes! So they—they covered, uh, they featured Just Blaze and Kanye.

[Oliver affirms.]

And I read this interview, and in the interview I learned so much about both of them and just about producing in general. But at the end, they were asking Kanye about what's next for him, and he was like, "You know, what a lot of people don't know is like, I rap, too, you know."

And he was like, my next thing is gonna be that. And I remember, as a kid, being so excited, and I was like, so—and I was like, really into music, so me and my friends, we were all like, you know, music heads, you know? So I remember going to school and telling all my friends, like—I think I was in seventh grade. Sixth or seventh grade that year, and, um, I was like, "Yo, this dude, his name's Kanye West," and I only knew how to pronounce it cause in the interview they put the pronunciation in there.

[Morgan laughs.]

00:09:18 Oliver Host It's not Cane, It's not Cane.

00:09:19 Cam Guest It's not Cane!

[Oliver affirms.]

It's Kanye. Um, and I was like, "yo, he's gonna be, he's coming out with an album!" And at first they were like, okay, you know, but then I kept talking about him, like, "Man, I'm telling you, Kanye West," and they got mad at me. They were like "dude, shut up about this dude!"

[Oliver and Morgan laugh.]

Kanye West! And I'll never forget it. 2004, it was two years after that, um, I was in eighth grade, he dropped *College Dropout*, and then everyone knew him. So I always had this special connection I felt to him, I was—

00:09:48 Oliver Host You were early.

[Cam affirms.]

You were early on him!

00:09:50 Cam Guest Yes, I was early, yes.

00:09:51 Morgan Host So, since you love the beats, you love his production, were you also a Jay-Z fan?

00:09:56 Cam Guest Yeah, yeah, I do love Jay-Z.

00:09:58 Morgan Host Okay, yeah, so that was sort of your gateway. The backwards

gateway into Kanye. Okay.

00:10:03 Cam Guest Yeah, it was Jay-Z.

00:10:04 Morgan Host So, then, if you were that young, then you didn't—did you buy this CD? 'Cause—

00:10:08 Cam Guest No, I didn't, I didn't have any money of my own, so—wait, *Late Registration*, no, no, I didn't. I remember, cause I was a DJ, so I started DJing when I was thirteen. And, um, I was interning at this radio station in Vegas called Parody 8, and, um, I was interned there at 13, and I met this guy—

[Oliver responds emphatically with “wow”.]

Yeah, heh, so this dude, he was a DJ, but he was from the old-school, he like—his name was DJ KB, he had—he was really well-known in the DJ community around Vegas, and I was making beats at the time, so they introduced me to him.

They were like, “Hey, so this kid, he makes beats, and he wants to know—he wants to learn how to DJ.” And so he asked me, “Hey, do you wanna learn how to DJ?” And I was like, “Yeah, hell yeah.”

And then he took me under his wing, and he kinda taught me everything about DJing, and I remember when that album came out, he had like, I guess an advance promotional copy, I guess.

[Morgan and Oliver affirm.]

So he gave it to me. I didn't even have to pay for it.

00:11:04 Oliver Host Now, was this a promo on cassette or a promo on CD?

00:11:06 Cam Guest It was on a CD. Yeah.

00:11:07 Oliver Host CD. Okay. They had switched—they had switched the—the industry had switched over by that point.

00:11:11 Morgan Host For sure. And that was the least he could've given you for the child labor laws that were being broken, for you being in there, 13. No shade, that's—that's good information.

00:11:20 Oliver Host I feel like our dude Cam here was early on stuff. I feel like *Freeway* right now.

[Morgan and Cam laugh.]

Just early, early, early. He was early.

00:11:28 Cam Guest You know, they actually paid me for that internship, too.

00:11:30 Morgan Host See? That's what's up.

00:11:32 Cam Guest They paid me, yeah. I had to open a bank account for that. I never had one. I never needed one before that. I had to open one and I remember—I didn't have a job or anything cause I was only 13, so

eventually when I ran out of money, that account like, uh, like, got closed because of the negative account—

- 00:11:48 Morgan Host Overdrawn? You went super overdrawn?
- 00:11:50 Cam Guest Yes! Service fees. Yeah.
- 00:11:55 Oliver Host So, I'm dying to know this, because I think—you know, to your point, Cam, you were trying to convince all your friends that Kanye was gonna be this next big thing. But really, I think until that first album drop—and even though *Through The Wire* certainly made a buzz—and *Two Words*, because that was on *The Chappelle Show* back then, that made the buzz. I think there was a lot of skepticism about whether or not Kanye could make it as an MC, because we just hadn't heard a ton from him.
- [Cam affirms.]
- To me, *College Dropout* was proof of concept. Like, he says he can rhyme, he's got bars, he proved it.
- [Morgan affirms.]
- But that only, to me, raised the expectations that people had on *Late Registration*, cause, okay, you did it once, can you come back and do it a second time? So as a fan, as an early fan—
- 00:12:35 Cam Guest Yeah, early.
- 00:12:36 Oliver Host What expectations did you have of *Late Registration*, and how did the album either fall short, or exceed them, or meet them?
- 00:12:42 Cam Guest Yeah. I had high expectations, cause I was sold with *College Dropout*.
- [Oliver affirms.]
- But, you know, there's a lot of *College Dropout* songs I didn't really like that much. Like, *College Dropout* as an album, I wasn't like—you know, it wasn't a perfect ten for me.
- 00:12:55 Oliver Host Interesting, okay.
- 00:12:57 Cam Guest Yeah, I was like, "This is great, but it could be better." Even though, like, I loved it.
- [Oliver affirms.]
- I really loved it.
- 00:13:05 Oliver Host But you thought there was a next plateau for him to reach.
- 00:13:07 Cam Guest Yes, I did, I did. Like the thing about Kanye that I did love, though, was, you know, he kinda gave me a reason to be confident in myself, um, you know, other than the reasons that were already there. But he kinda reminded me as like a Black kid—a Black boy, growing up the way that I—the way that I was, being who I was, it

wasn't like, you know—I was very much aware of what I was supposed to be.

Like, for example, I started golfing when I was six years old, and I thought I was gonna be a pro, you know? I have a sister, my sister, uh, is a pro actually, at LPG.

[Oliver affirms.]

Yeah, but, um—needless to say, like, as a Black kid, playing golf, I was tormented, you know? I was tormented so much that I quit. But that's just an example of, like, I'm not fitting into what I'm supposed to be as a Black kid, you know?

And I felt like Kanye kind of represented that, you know? So I was just—I didn't—it didn't really matter to me what *Late Registration* sounded like, but I was just so emotionally attached to him. I was like, "Please give me another one. Please give me something else." And it super exceeded my expectations.

00:14:20 Music

Music

"Celebration" off the album *Late Registration* by Kanye West. Upbeat rap.

*Yeah, you know what this is
It's a celebration, bitches!
Grab a drink, grab a glass
After that, I grab your ass*

*See, you know my style
I'm very wild
And I vow that my child will be well endowed
Like his daddy
And tell him that...*

[Music fades out as Oliver speaks]

00:14:40 Oliver

Host

I was thinking, Cam, in terms of what Kanye represented for you as a kid who kind of grew up to identify with the ways in which someone like Kanye doesn't fit a particular, conventional, stereotypical mold for young Black men, right?

[Cam affirms.]

And I always thought of Kanye's being very much a—offshoot, I guess you could say, of a group like De La Soul. Because at the time that De La came out, this is the era of Big Daddy Kane, and Rock Candy's kind of larger than life figures.

And then, there's just like these three-four awkward kids from Long Island, and I think that they really change people's perception on who hip hop could be made for, and who it was made by, in that respect. And I feel like Kanye, in that same lineage, kind of performed the same thing, just a generation or so later.

- 00:15:24 Cam Guest Mm, yes, he definitely did that. He definitely did that, and like, there were other players in that, like uh—Pharrell was like, another big one for me. You know, like, Lupe, Lupe—yeah.
- 00:15:36 Music Music “Kick, Push” off the album *Kick Push* by Lupe Fiasco. Somewhat fast rap with melodic backing instruments.
- My man got a little older became a better a roller
Yea no helmet hellbent on killing himself
Is what his momma said but he was feeling himself
Got a little more swagger in his style
Met his girlfriend she was clapping in the crowd
Love is what was happening to him now*
- [Music fades out as Cam speaks]*
- 00:15:52 Cam Guest Lupe. I remember Lupe, when I first met—I was—me and my friends, we were the biggest Lupe fans. I was like, “Oh, so you can wear glasses and be a rapper.”
- [Oliver and Morgan laugh.]*
- I was like, “Yeah!” You know, I found out about Big L, I found out he wore glasses, but he was like, super, you know, hard with his lyrics. And that also taught me, like, “Oh, you can wear glasses and be hard, too, you know like—” *[Laughing]* I was just a little kid, like super impressionable. But yeah.
- 00:16:19 Oliver Host I like that. They made the game safe for kids with glasses.
- [Cam laughs.]*
- 00:16:23 Morgan Host Shout-out. Shout-out to the glasses MC’s—glasses-wearing MC’s. I do think that—I do think that one thing about Kanye’s entrance onto the scene was—a lot of us bought him as a backpack rapper.
- [Oliver and Cam affirm.]*
- And so, he did appeal to sort of the geek-chic-ness of that side, that—he came across as grassroots. By the time we got to *Late Registration*, I thought, “Oh, I think he’s got his backpack still on, but it’s Ermez now.” He’s dealing with a little bit of the, you know—he’s wearing diamonds now, and he’s—this is a little bit of conspicuous consumption. He’s still got his roots, because he’s still conscious, and he’s still talking about very Black-centric things, and we can get into the tracks.
- Late Registration* is a shout-out, too. “I am a backpack rapper, but I’ve stepped into fame, now, okay? So, I have both sides.” I didn’t think he was necessarily struggling, I thought it was just a nod to, like, “Listen, yo, there’s two sides of me, right?”
- 00:17:19 Music Music “Diamonds From Sierra Leone (remix)” off the album *Late Registration* by Kanye West. Fast rap.
- ...the charms
I thought my Jesus piece was so harmless*

*'Til I seen a picture of a shorty armless
And here's the conflict
It's in a Black person soul to rock that gold
Spend your while life trying to get that ice
On a Polo rugby it looks so nice
How can something so wrong make me feel so right?
Right? 'fore I beat myself up like Ike
You can still throw your Rockefeller diamond tonight
Because...*

[Music fades out as Morgan speaks]

00:17:44 Morgan Host But the other thing that I've wanted to say too, is Kanye already started out complex. Because if you think of the titles, you think of *College Dropout* and *Late Registration*, what college meant to Black folks. It was the way in, and the way out, right? I mean, his mother's an educator.

[Oliver and Cam affirm.]

He knows what the expectation was supposed to be, and what the expectation is for Black men to get out of their situation, right? But he's chosen the opposite. It was just so much weight placed on being Black and going to college, that was the answer. This was before—even 2005 was before you could be an insta-star. Kanye comes in with all of this, like, and I think it's very tongue-in-cheek. You've got *College Dropout*, and *Late Registration*, and in between this album, you have all the skits that—and you've got "Broke Phi Broke".

00:18:29 Cam Guest Yes, which is also very—I still love it, too.

00:18:31 Morgan Host Which is just so so colleged out.

00:18:32 Clip Clip *I brought you brothers here to start our own fraternity
Broke Phi Broke, we ain't got it
Broke Phi Broke (we ain't got it)
No, we have no money
We are sharin' jeans
If I go outside, I got the only clothing on
How many cars do we own? (None!)
How many cars do we own? (None, sir!)*

00:18:52 Morgan Host Did you review this album?

00:18:54 Oliver Host I did.

[Morgan affirms.]

00:18:55 Cam Guest Oh, you reviewed it!

00:18:56 Oliver Host I did, yeah, for NPR back when it came out 15 years ago. And I gave it a very, really eloditory review. I revisited it in prep for today, because I'd forgotten—well I'd forgotten, number one, did I actually review it? And I actually found it in my archives. Like, "Okay, I did review it, what'd I say about it?"

And um, I actually really stand by what I wrote back then. And that's not always the case. There are some reviews that I probably would want to redo. But this one—I mean, the main takeaway was that, I think with all the expectations that were put on this album, as a sophomore album, I thought Kanye really exceeded them. On a musical level, this was, to me—it took the same kind of ideas that Kanye was playing with, with *College Dropout*, and on his production years prior, with Rockefeller and whoever else.

But then you throw Jon Brion in the mix as a musical partner, and you just flesh out all of the richness and the musical complexity. I think you can hear that, really, from jump, with a song like “Heard ‘Em Say”, which I think is just a wonderful way to kick off the album. Because already you can tell there's layers beyond what you expected from Kanye. It doesn't sound different from his stuff, but it just, it's added, it's plus-one.

00:20:07 Music Music “Heard ‘Em Say” off the album *Late Registration* by Kanye West. Mid-tempo rap with a delicate instrumental backing.

*And I heard 'em say, nothing's ever promised tomorrow today
From the Chi, like Tim its the Hard-a-way
So this is in the name of love, like Rob would say
Before you ask me to get a job today
Can I at least get a raise on a minimum wage?
And I know the government administered AIDS*

[Music fades out as Oliver speaks]

00:20:23 Oliver Host But Cam, as a producer yourself, when you listen to this album, especially either back then, or maybe more recently, what are you hearing in this album?

00:20:31 Cam Guest What I love about this song, it's gonna sound funny, is like, that bassline.

00:20:34 Music Music *["Heard ‘Em Say” plays again. Kanye harmonizes over a heavy bassline.]*

00:20:43 Cam Guest You don't hear it a lot in hip hop, in general, that synth.

00:20:47 Oliver Host A little buzzy, yeah.

00:20:48 Cam guest Yeah, it's like a—yeah! Like the song, it adds this new dimension. That song, when I hear it—I think that video he did, the video with the animator Bill Plympton, um, is so perfect for it. It sounds like a score for an animation, to me. You know, like, even this whole album to me, could even have been a mixed media or animation, animated movie.

[Morgan affirms.]

You know, I was actually very influenced by Jon Brion, and I just realized that now, when you were talking about him. I was like, “Oh dang, like, Jon Brion is actually a huge influence, musically, on me.” This album was like a statement, I think, for hip hop in general, and its expressive kind of capabilities. Uh, it's like no different than *Dark*

Side Of The Moon, it's the same thing, but Pink Floyd was using rock as their tool for this kind of expression. And Kanye was using hip hop as his too. And, it's hard seeing films that use hip hop in that same way, you know.

I remember when I was in school, the first time, I had a friend who was a—I was an audio production major, I had a friend who was a film major, and I was telling him. I was like, "Man, how come they don't use hip hop in more movies?" And he was like, telling me, "You know, hip hop's only good for action sequences and violence." And I was so offended when he told me that. And I was like, "No, hip hop is so expressive, you can express every single emotion imaginable with it, you know?" And I remember, since that day, I was like, "Man, I gotta show that, as a producer myself, that hip hop is more than just anger."

- 00:22:37 Oliver Host An action scene. Anger, rage, aggression.
- 00:22:38 Cam Guest Yeah, exactly, an action scene, yeah! And aggression, you know.
- 00:22:39 Morgan Host Sure. Sure. But it hasn't been used a lot that way. One of my good friends is a music supervisor, he does a party around christmas time called the Treehouse Party. And he has us pick a film, and then he re-music-supervises it on the spot. And one year, we chose *Charlie Brown Christmas*, and he did all hip hop, and it was so cool watching the kids.
- I mean, he used De La Soul, he did Dilla, he had Jay-Z. He had some Mason there. And it was just like, "I never thought that this would work," until I saw the kids, and Snoopy and Woodstock just, like, juking to Jay-Z. I was like, "This works!" Right?
- So, to your point, it's not just action. I hate when a movie opens, and they zoom in on a hood scene, and you hear hip hop beats. So now that I've seen Snoopy and Woodstock and Lucy get down to Dilla, then I'm like, "See, you need to use this in more cartoons."
- 00:23:43 Cam Guest You know, absolutely. Absolutely. And I was gonna say, like, a telephone I worked on with Noname.
- 00:23:52 Oliver Host Great album. Classic.
- 00:23:53 Cam Guest Thank you. Thank you, I really appreciate that. Like, so I would make a moodboard for every song I've made for that album. I just—I have fun doing it, it's so fun. But it was all animated stuff. Like, uh, "Yesterday", the intro, Charlie Brown. It was literally just Charlie Brown was my moodboard for "Yesterday".
- 00:24:12 Music Music "Yesterday" by Noname. Smooth, grooving music with multilayered, harmonizing vocals.

*When the sun is going down
When the dark is out to stay
I picture your smile, like it was yesterday
When the sun is going down
When the dark is out to stay
I picture your smile...*

[Music fades out as Cam speaks]

00:24:27 Cam Guest And then “Shadow Man” was uh, Cinderella.

00:24:30 Music Music “Shadow Man” by Noname. Smooth neosoul.

*Bless the nightingale
Darkness keep you well*

[Music fades out as Cam speaks]

00:24:40 Cam Guest That’s why we used the word nightingale in the song, because of that scene.

00:24:43 Music Music “Sing Sweet Nightingale” off the album *Cinderella (1950)*. Slow, light, tender music.

*Oh, sing sweet nightingale
Sing sweet nightingale
High...*

[Music fades out as Oliver speaks]

00:24:55 Oliver Host Okay, since you’ve opened this up.

00:24:56 Cam Guest Okay, yes?

00:24:57 Oliver Host “Diddy Bop”. What was your moodboard for Diddy Bop?

00:25:00 Cam Guest So, that one was started by Felix, and I came in, and like, helped finish it. Um, so, it was 80’s, uh, sci-fi, like *Tron*.

[Oliver affirms.]

So uh, so the hook, “With stars in my pocket, dreaming bout making my hood glow,” that’s uh, inspired by the book by Samuel Delaney, the sci-fi novel *Stars in the Pocket Like Grains of Sand*.

00:25:25 Music Music “Diddy Bop” by Noname. Mid-tempo rap with smooth, light backing instrumentals.

*Watching my happy block
My whole neighborhood hit the diddy bop
This sound like growing out my clothes
With stars in my pocket, dreaming bout making my hood glow
This sound like every place I would go, if I could fly*

[Music fades out as Oliver speaks]

00:25:38 Oliver Host I did not think we would get into this, but I absolutely love it!

00:25:42 Morgan Host *Heat Rocks* goes deep. We’re going deep up in here. We’re gonna go deep.

00:25:46 Cam Guest It is so cool.

00:25:47 Oliver Host Well, thank you for sharing that detail, that's great. Next time I'm listening to that Noname album, I'm just gonna be thinking about that like, "What would Cam's moodboard be to these songs?"

[Cam and Morgan laugh.]

00:25:53 Cam Guest Oh, man. Yo, it's so much fun doing that. But, yeah, to bring it back, it's like—Kanye is the fact that, yeah, I think that music works for animation, and it became my thing. One thing I didn't mention was before I got into music, I actually wanted to be an animator.

[Morgan and Oliver hum in surprise.]

Like, that was like, my thing. So I started off as a kid drawing. That was my thing, drawing. And I was like, for sure, I was like, "That's what I'm gonna do with my life." And then, uh, my brother brought home a pirated copy of *Fruit Loops*, and I was like, "Oh, so I'm gonna learn to do music so I can score my animated film, or whatever," because I was like a big, ambitious kid. And then I started learning music, I forgot about animation altogether. I just got deep in there.

Um, but that was my dream, was to score an animated musical, with music that I kind of grew up on, um, and do it in a way that's not cheesy, not tropey. And that's kind of what my first album in my head is going to be, it's like, the score to this animated thing that doesn't exist. But, it's very much modeled after, like, not like exactly, but very much inspired by *Late Registration*.

00:27:02 Oliver Host I wanna come back to that point, after we take a quick break so y'all can hear from some of our sibling Max Fun podcasts. Keep it locked.

00:27:09 Music Transition "Crown Ones" off the album *Stepfather* by People Under The Stairs

00:27:32 Promo Promo *[Music begins.]*

Speaker 1: I can't hear myself, but—

Speaker 2: Are you plugged in?

[Voices overlap.]

Announcer: These are real podcast listeners, not actors!

[Voices continue to speak over each other.]

Announcer: Hey, thanks for coming. Here's a list of descriptors. What would you choose to describe the perfect podcast?

Speaker 3: I mean, vulgarity.

Speaker 4: Dumb. Definitely dumb.

Speaker 5: I like, uh, right here. This one. Meritless.

Announcer: What if I told you there was a podcast that did have all of that?

[Someone gasps.]

Speaker 6: No.

Announcer: *Jordan, Jesse, Go!* And it's free!

[Speakers sound awestruck. There is applause.]

Several speakers, overlapping: *Jordan, Jesse, Go!? Jordan, Jesse, Go!*

New Announcer: *Jordan, Jesse, Go!* A real podcast.

[Music ends.]

00:28:15 Promo Promo

[A telephone rings.]

Hotshot Hollywood Producer: Listen, I'm a hotshot Hollywood movie producer.

Music: Fun, grooving music begins to play quietly in the background.

Producer: You have until I finish my glass of *[articulating]* kom-bucha to pitch me your idea. Go.

[Slurping sounds.]

Ify: Alright! It's called *Who Shot Ya*: a movie podcast that isn't just a bunch of straight, white dudes. I'm Ify Nwadiwe, the new host of the show and a certified BBN.

Producer: BBN?

Ify: Buff Black Nerd.

Alonso: I'm Alonso Duralde, an elderly gay and legit film critic who wrote a book on Christmas movies.

Drea: I'm Drea Clark, a loud, white lady from Minnesota.

Ify: Each week, we talk about a new movie in theaters and all the important issues going on in the film industry.

Alonso: It's like *Guess Who's Coming to Dinner* meets *Cruising*.

Ify: And if it helps seal the deal? I can flex my muscles while we record each episode.

Producer: I'm sorry, this is a podcast?! I'm a movie producer. *[Disdainfully]* How did you get in here?

Drea: Ify, quick! Start flexing!

Ify: *[Dramatically]* Bicep! Lats! Chest! *Who Shot Ya*, dropping every Friday on MaximumFun.org, or wherever you listen to podcasts.

[Music ends.]

00:29:07	Music	Transition	“Crown Ones” off the album <i>Stepfather</i> by People Under The Stairs
00:29:09	Morgan	Host	Oh man, we are back on <i>Heat Rocks</i> , talking <i>Late Registration</i> with our guest, Cam O’bi.
00:29:14	Oliver	Host	Cam, I know you’re not originally from Chicago, you grew up in Vegas, and you’ve been in LA for the last few years. But Chicago is from—as an artist, is where you really came up. And I’m wondering from what you know, how is Kanye perceived amongst that community in Chicago? Because I still think of, for whatever reason—I think of Common, despite all of his work in Hollywood, I still think of him as a shy kid, right? I still think of other people, like Chance as still very much tied to Chicago, for whatever reason. And I think a lot of it has to do with the ups and downs of Kanye’s celebrity has overshadowed a lot about his roots. But I’m wondering, in Chicago, do they still embrace him as one of their own?
00:29:57	Cam	Guest	For me, because like you said, like, I’m not from there, it’s like, it’s hard to say. I don’t wanna speak for everyone in Chicago. But, from the ones that I’m around, they very much idolize him still. Like, I remember going to a session with some Chicago folks out here. Um, it was Ravyn Lenae, and I was working on her album, but it was a bunch of Chicago people there. Mick Jenkins was there, I remember, and Smino, it was Smino’s studio. But Smino’s not from Chicago, he’s from St. Louis, but it was the same as me, came up there.
00:30:27	Oliver	Host	Right, right. I associate him with Chicago, as well.
00:30:29	Cam	Guest	Yeah, me too. And like, so he—there was this uh, celebrating—you know, chilling. And, he had put on some music, got some drinks. It was just like, you know, just having fun, and they were just reminiscing on like, old Kanye songs. And like, you would have thought everyone in there was from Chicago, because it was so, like, it was a Kanye party. And like, that party is actually what made me realize that I gotta do that album, because I was conflicted between this one and another one. But, they play that album top to bottom, and like, everyone was like, singing every word, it was like—it was so crazy, and I was just like, that album really impacted people in my generation, very much. So, that showed me, like, yeah, they still love Kanye. You know, Kanye did a song for the <i>Mission Impossible</i> soundtrack in <i>Mission Impossible 3</i> , back in the day. And I remember they put that on, I forgot all about it. It was around the time this album came out.
00:31:33	Morgan	Host	’05?

[Cam affirms.]

00:31:35 Oliver Host I don't remember that at all.
00:31:36 Cam Guest Yeah! Aw, you gotta look it up, it's called "Impossible", with Twista.
00:31:41 Music Music "Impossible" off the album *Mission Impossible 3* by Kanye West feat. Twista. Fast-paced, frenetic rap.

*Get it, that's so impossible to get it (It's impossible))
Ain't no way you could pull up to the party in a Bentley blowing be in
a club like this (oh no)
Ain't no way you could cook up in the studio with Kanye and get it
jukking in the club like this
Ain't no way that you could win*

[Music fades out as Oliver speaks]

00:31:56 Oliver Host Real talk, I do not remember this at all. Not in the least.
00:31:59 Morgan Host Oh, me neither, and I'm a music supervisor.
00:32:00 Oliver Host But I was not checking for *Mission Impossible* soundtrack, so clearly I slept.
00:32:05 Morgan Host I should know this, and I feel bad.

[Oliver laughs.]

00:32:07 Cam Host Damn! Yo, that was—I love that song. But doesn't it sound kind of like the stuff he was doing around the *College Dropout* days?
00:32:14 Oliver Host Oh yeah, totally. So, let's just really get into the tracks here on *Late Registration*. And let's start with perhaps a very difficult question for a 21 song album, but Cam, what is the fire track off this album for you?
00:32:27 Cam Guest Ooh, you know, when I first heard this album, there was two that I got stuck on. Maybe three. God, now I have to pick one.
00:32:35 Oliver Host Start with, impulsively, what comes to mind first.
00:32:40 Cam Guest "We Major".

[Morgan and Oliver hum enthusiastically.]

Yeah.

00:32:42 Music Music "We Major" off the album *Late Registration* by Kanye West. Somewhat slow, very emphatic rap.

*...come on homie, we major
I heard the beat and I ain't know what to write
First line, should it be about the hos or the ice?
Four-four's or Black Christ? Both flows would be nice
Rap about big paper...*

[Music fades out as Cam speaks]

00:32:56	Cam	Guest	So that song actually put me on to that drum break that he's using. It's called Orange Krush. Krush with a "K".
00:33:02	Music	Music	"Action" by Orange Krush
00:33:07	Cam	Guest	And like, he um, slowed it down, pitched it down, so it put me onto that.
00:33:10	Music	Music	<i>["We Major" plays again.]</i> <i>You motherfuckers better do your job and roll up...</i> <i>[Music fades out as Morgan speaks]</i>
00:33:26	Morgan	Host	I just love—I love Nas' verse on this, and this is one of my favorite moments.
00:33:30	Music	Music	<i>["We Major" continues to play.]</i> <i>...come on homie, we major</i> <i>I heard the beat and I ain't know what to write</i> <i>First line, should it be about the hos or the ice?</i> <i>Four-four's or Black Christ? Both flows would be nice</i> <i>Rap about big paper or the Black man's plight</i> <i>At the studio console asked my man to the right</i> <i>What this verse sound like, should I freestyle or write?</i> <i>[Music fades out as Morgan speaks]</i>
00:33:47	Morgan	Host	Not my favorite track.
00:33:49	Oliver	Host	What is—what is it then, Morgan?
00:33:50	Morgan	Host	Like you said, man, there's 21 tracks on here. How can I even pick a favorite? So I'm not gonna pick a favorite, okay, but I'm gonna say one of the tracks that I really like is "Addiction."
00:34:00	Music	Music	"Addiction" off the album <i>Late Registration</i> by Kanye West. Fast rap with a light musical backing. <i>Everything they told me not to is exactly what I would</i> <i>Man I tried to stop man I tried the best I could</i> <i>But (you make me smile)</i> <i>What's your addiction? Is it money? Is it girls? Is it weed?</i> <i>I've been afflicted by not one, not two, but all three</i> <i>[Music fades out as Morgan speaks]</i>
00:34:20	Morgan	Host	I just love this song. I love the tempo. I just love—I love Kanye when he's asking questions of himself and when he's, you know, embodying both sides of the lane. I like when he's just like, "Eh, I'm this way and this way, but I'm this way and this way." And I think he's asking a really important question about addiction, but his own addiction. His own addiction to material things, and people's

addiction to hip hop, and consumerism. And I just love this track. I love it. I've got five more favorites.

[Cam and Oliver laugh.]

I got five more favorites. But uh, but that's the one that I bump a lot. You?

00:34:57 Oliver Host My favorite is still "Heard 'Em Say". It was back 14 years ago, that hasn't changed in the time since. BUt there's a lot—to both of your points—there's a lot I still love. I think certainly "Touch The Sky," in terms of just sheer energy. If I had to pick a track off here to bump in the club, that's gonna be it.

00:35:16 Morgan Host "Touch The Sky."

00:35:17 Oliver Host Number one right there.

[Cam affirms.]

00:35:18 Music Music "Touch The Sky" off the album *Late Registration* by Kanye West. Fast, energetic rap.

*I gotta testify
Come up in the spot looking extra fly
'Fore the day I die, I'ma touch the sky
Gotta testify
Come up in the spot looking extra fly
'Fore the day I die, I'ma touch the sky*

*Now let's take them hi-i-i-i-igh
(Top of the world, baby, top top of the world!)
A-la-la-la-la-la-la
(Top of the world, baby, on top of the world!)*

[Music fades out as Cam speaks]

00:35:34 Cam Guest So, I discovered "Move On Up" from this song. I remember, I sampled the snares off the intro of that. It starts off with the...

00:35:41 Music Music "Move On Up" by Curtis Mayfield. Energetic, grand, fun orchestral music. Music plays for a few seconds, then fades out.

00:35:50 Cam Guest Ugh, what I love about this song—like, me and my friends, what we love the most about this song is Lupe's verse man, like—you know, analyzing that verse, I found out that there's like—there's a lot of Easter eggs in there, but there's—throughout the verse, like, he kind of counts down to one. And the theme of hte video, you know, of the song is kind of like a rocket take-off. You know, touch the sky.

[Oliver responds emphatically.]

You see the video, he's in the rocket. So, you know, the countdown, three two one, like Lupe's verse starts out, "Guess who's on third."

00:36:19 Music Music *["Touch the Sky" plays again.]*

*...guess who's on third?
Lupe steal like Lupin the 3rd
Here like ear 'til I'm beer on the curb
Peachfuzz buzz but beard on the verge*

[Music fades slightly quieter as Cam speaks]

00:36:27 Cam Guest But I know there's a two in there. There's gotta be a two in there.

00:36:30 Music Music *["Touch The Sky" increases in volume again]*

*...laying on the beat, en garde
Or touché, Lupe cool as the unthawed
But I still feel possessed as a gun charge*

[Music fades to quiet again]

00:36:36 Cam Guest He ends a long one, at the end, to represent the first.

00:36:38 Music Music *["Touch The Sky" increases in volume again]*

*So, I represent the first
Now let me end my verse right where the horns are, like uh*

*I gotta testify
Come up in the spot looking extra fly*

[Music fades out entirely as Cam speaks again]

00:36:46 Cam Guest Another one I really like, um, is "Drive Slow."

[Morgan and Oliver respond emphatically.]

00:36:52 Music Music "Drive Slow" off the album *Late Registration* by Kanye West. Slow rap with a steady beat and a trumpet in the background.

*You see them fours crawling? You see them screens falling?
The disco ball in my mouth insinuates I'm balling
I'm leaning on the switch, sitting crooked in my slab
But I could still catch boppers if I drove a cab
A young Houston hard hitter all about the scrilla
Riding something candy-coated, crawling like a caterpillar
I'm tipping on them fours, I'm jamming on that Screw
I'm looking for them hoes, baby, what it do? Drive slow, homie*

[Music fades to quiet as Cam speaks]

00:37:13 Cam Guest He was really good, I noticed, in his verses. Really good at taking you there.

00:37:17 Music Music *["Drive Slow" increases in volume]*

You need to pump your brakes and drive slow, homie

*My homie Mali used to stay at 79th and May
One of my best friends from back in the day
Down the street from Calumet, a school full of Stones*

*He nicknamed me K-Rock so they would leave me alone
Bulls jacket with his hat broke way off*

[Music fades out as Cam speaks]

00:37:32 Cam Guest “Down the street from Calumet, a school full of stones. He nicknamed me K-Rock so they would leave me alone.” I remember as a kid—when he said K-Rock—I called myself Cam-Rocks. And like, I always used to just interject Cam-Rocks on that part when I was singing along.

[Oliver and Cam laugh.]

They nicknamed me Cam-Rocks.

00:37:49 Morgan Host What grade was this? *[Laughs]* I’m just playing with you. I’m just playing. Playing with the youths.

00:37:55 Cam Guest I was a little kid. I was like 13. But yeah, that and I remember that line, “Bulls jacket with his hat broke way off, and walked around the mall with his radio face off. Plus he had the spinner from his Daytons in his hand. Keys in his hand, reason again to let you know he’s the man.” Like, he’s a great lyricist, and the way that he like, you know, uses intentionally these words that bring an image to your head. Like, Bulls jacket, hat broke way off was his way of just saying it was like, leaning to the side.

[Oliver and Morgan affirm.]

Um, and Chicago people, when they hear this—’cause when I was a kid, I didn’t even know what 79th and May was, so it wasn’t until I went to Chicago and I found out what that was, and it gave the whole song more meaning for me. You know, I was like, “Oh snap, you’re talking about right here.” You know, like, on the south side. And so I can imagine what it must have been like growing up as a kid in Chicago, and he’s shouting out, you know, a corner in your neighborhood, you know?

00:38:53 Morgan Host We usually ask this at the beginning, but I don’t think we asked this. At the time this came out, what else were you listening to? We know Kanye was a big influence, but what were you listening to as a youth growing up in Las Vegas?

00:39:04 Cam Guest Man, I was listening to a lot of stuff. It ranged. So I came up listening to really a lot of things. James Brown, from my grandfather’s. My mom would be really into Stevie Wonder. And my big sister, she had—I guess she influenced me the most. She listened to everything from Alanis Morissette to like, Jay-Z and DMX. Yeah, and then when I started to come into my own, you know, I started listening to—I was really young underground hip hop head. Um, a lot of stuff. TV show soundtracks. Animes. Like, one of my favorites was *Cowboy Bebop*.

[Oliver affirms emphatically.]

Yeah, *Cowboy Bebop*. I listened to that soundtrack religiously.

00:39:44	Music	Music	“Tank!” off the album <i>Cowboy Bebop</i>
00:39:57	Cam	Guest	And most importantly, I almost forgot, was uh, video game soundtracks. Like, video game soundtracks I listen to just as much as I listen to anything else.
00:40:08	Oliver	Host	Interesting. I feel like that’s very generational.
00:40:10	Cam	Guest	Yeah. It was like, video game soundtracks really put me on to music. Like, I wish it was available on Spotify. Like, um, you know, I love the Diddy Kong—er, <i>Donkey Kong Country 2: Diddy Kong’s Quest</i> soundtrack. I loved <i>Donkey Kong Country</i> . One soundtrack I loved, I loved the <i>Bomberman 64</i> soundtrack.
00:40:27	Music	Music	“White Ice” off the album <i>Bomberman 64</i> by Akifumi Tada. Upbeat, fun, electronic music.
00:40:34	Cam	Guest	<i>Super Mario 64</i> .
00:40:35	Oliver	Host	Our producer is loving this right now.
			<i>[Everyone laughs.]</i>
			‘Cause he’s a big video game head, so he’s just—he’s loving this right now. I want to come back to favorite moments, ‘cause Cam, I’m gonna give you a few minutes to stew on what is some of your favorite moments on this.
			And for me, it also—one of my favorite moments comes on one of my favorite tracks, which is the hidden bonus track, “Late.” And for a song that, you feel like if it’s meant to be appended at the last minute, or you’re not really even supposed to notice it, it’s like, one of the <u>best</u> tracks on here.
			And, I mean, I love the song in general, but that favorite moment part comes—‘cause when the song begins with that intro, you’re not really sure what you’re getting, and then the sample just drops in. <i>[Grunts]</i> It just gets me.
00:41:14	Music	Music	“Late” off the album <i>Late Registration</i> by Kanye West. Slow, orchestral string music that suddenly cuts out to a hip-hop beat as the vocals start.
			<i>Little girl (A-ha-ha-ha-ha...)</i> <i>Please stop your crying</i>
			<i>I’ll be late for that, baby, I’ll wait for that</i>
			<i>[Music fades out as Morgan speaks]</i>
00:41:29	Morgan	Host	Shout-out to the whatnots, and I’ll erase your pain. My god.
			<i>[Cam responds emphatically.]</i>
00:41:34	Oliver	Host	Yeah, and surprisingly, West—sorry, I mean, Brion doesn’t get a co-producing credit on here, even though the layers and the richness of it would be consistent with it. So, shout-out to Kanye for just cooking this whole track up. It’s really one of his best works. So

yeah, anyways, that's one of my favorite moments. Cam, what about you?

00:41:51	Cam	Guest	Well, to stay on that one for a second, what I love about that is the—I love the drums and the groove, and like the pocket of the drums on there. Like, I love it still to this day. And like, the sound of that snare, how you can hear the hi hat layered on it. It's like kind of metallic, but it's so like, compressed, yeah. It's just so small. The drums feel so small, but they punch so sharp.
00:42:17	Music	Music	<i>["Late" plays again.]</i>
00:42:28	Morgan	Host	We haven't talked about "Gold Digger" on here. Did that--is that not a favorite?
00:42:32	Cam	Guest	Oh my gosh, you know—
00:42:33	Morgan	Host	No one felt this jam?
00:42:34	Cam	Guest	It's not that—it's not that it's not a favorite, it's uh...
00:42:38	Oliver	Host	It's good. <i>[Cam repeats.]</i>
00:42:39	Morgan	Host	Okay, okay. Listen, no judgement here, just, that was just such a big single off of here, I just thought that was gonna come up for somebody.
00:42:48	Cam	Guest	But, what I will say is, now that we're on the subject of it, that what I love about it is it was a hit, you know? It was a huge hit.
00:42:55	Morgan	Host	And not meant for him, this was supposed to be on Shannna album.
00:42:58	Cam	Guest	Really? Dang.
00:43:00	Oliver	Host	I wonder if she would wanna take that one back. I dunno.
00:43:02	Morgan	Host	I'm <u>sure</u> .
00:43:03	Cam	Guest	I produced a song with her on it, like uh, way back in the day. Before I even went to Chicago for the time. It was a local artist in Vegas I was working with, called Sean Rose. I did like, his whole album, and he got her as a feature on one of his songs. But yeah, shout-out to Shannna.
00:43:20	Music	Music	"Tomorrow" off the album <i>Overdrive</i> by Sean Rose. Mid-tempo, melodic hip-hop. <i>This rose you won't forget Tonight you gotta live without regrets Light up, juke up, only them wines Won't regret tonight If tomorrow comes</i> <i>[Music fades out as Cam speaks]</i>
00:43:34	Cam	Guest	But yeah, like, uh, what I like about it, you know, it's like—how do I

say it, it's so quirky. Like, it's got, like a strong theme in it with the sample.

- 00:43:45 Morgan Host Oh, Ray Charles.
- 00:43:46 Cam Guest The Ray Charles sample, yeah. And like, it kind of blends—it blurs the line between that original sample and hip hop, to me.
- 00:43:55 Music Music “Gold Digger” plays again.
- She got one of yo kids got you for 18 years
I know somebody paying child support for one of his kids
His baby mamma's car and crib is bigger than his
You will see him on TV Any Given Sunday
Win the Superbowl and drive off in a Hyundai*
- 00:44:09 Morgan Guest In the sample work, Jenny Fox sounded just like Charles, right?
- 00:44:13 Oliver Host And this was right after Ray.
- 00:44:14 Morgan Host Right after Ray. So he's in there, and I mean, just to start the album, the Ray Davis sounded a lot like Bernie Mac. To the degree that we thought it was Bernie Mac.
- [Oliver and Cam agree enthusiastically.]*
- You know what I'm saying? It's all Chicago, so we were like, “Yo! This gotta be!” But it wasn't, because Bernie wasn't available.
- 00:44:32 Cam Guest That's crazy! But um—
- 00:44:34 Oliver Host So Cam, to come back to this, do you have any favorite moments on this?
- 00:44:38 Cam Guest Absolutely. In “Gone.”
- 00:44:41 Oliver Host And what's your favorite moment on “Gone”?
- 00:44:43 Cam Guest Ooh, still that part. There's a few. “Sweet brother Numpsay!”
- [Everyone laughs.]*
- 00:44:50 Oliver Host I'm with you on that. I am with you on that. It's one of those things where, it just seemed like a super random Eddie Murphy? You know? Reference the pull-out, but it really works in the song, for whatever reason.
- 00:45:01 Cam Guest So you guys are gonna laugh at me. What does that reference?
- 00:45:03 Oliver Host It's from Eddie Murphy's *Golden Child*, which is a film that he made after, I think, the first two *Beverly Hills Cops*. And it was very much, like, at the peak of Eddie Murphy's 1980's fame. But there's a scene where he's basically pretending to be somebody else to disarm, like, one of the villains in the film, if I recall, and describes them, and approaches them as “Sweet Brother Numpsay”. Yeah, that's where that's from.
- [Morgan laughs.]*

00:45:29	Cam	Guest	I never knew that, until this day.
00:45:32	Clip	Clip	Eddie Murphy: My dear, sweet brother Numpsay! <i>[Roaring can be heard.]</i> Eddie Murphy: I can see you're busy right now. Come back some other time.
00:45:42	Oliver	Host	If you didn't know the reference, then what it is about it that you like so much? Just the way that he e-noon-ciates it?
00:45:46	Cam	Guest	Yes! The way he enunciates it, the way he says it! Like, he's in character when he does this, verse, and like, he—and out of nowhere, he's like, "Sweet brother Numpsay!" Like—I dunno, I just thought that was so funny. Like, I was like—and it's the first thing that comes to mind! When you're asking me what's the moment.
00:46:02	Oliver	Host	Yeah. It just jumps out.
00:46:04	Cam	Guest	It just jumps out at me.
00:46:05	Music	Music	"Gone" off the album <i>Late Registration</i> by Kanye West. Fast rap with a piano and drum backing. <i>See me at the airport, at least twenty Louis Treat me like the Prince and this my sweet brother Numpsay Brother Numpsay! Groupies sound too choosy Take 'em to the show...</i> <i>[Music fades out as Morgan speaks]</i>
00:46:14	Morgan	Host	I was gonna ask, for either one of you, Oliver you first, and then you, Cam. Is there a fav—there are <u>so</u> many samples on here, do you have a favorite sample?
00:46:22	Oliver	Host	<i>[Oliver slowly sucks air in through his teeth.]</i> That's a great one. It's The Whatnauts' "Erasure", which is an incredible ballad to come out of that New Jersey, Sylvia Robinson's, you know, production. 1970's production school. And it's not simply they're just using ths sample, but as we were talking about earlier, just adding the keys. Just the whole aspect of how it's produced, working with the sample and not just relying on it, I think is sublime, yeah.
00:46:52	Music	Music	"I'll Erase Away the Pain" by The Whatnauts. Slow, melodic, tender singing. <i>Little girl, please stop your crying 'Cause I'll erase away...</i> <i>[Music fades into...]</i>
00:47:08	Music	Music	"Gone" off the album <i>Late Registration</i> by Kanye West. The same clip as before, but pitched up and overlaid with a new beat.
00:47:17	Morgan	Host	Tweaking the sample. Pitching it up, yeah.

00:47:18	Cam	Guest	Yes, like playing along with it, is like, literally—yeah, instead of on top of it, like, you kind of go in there, you're playing with them.
00:47:26	Morgan	Host	Is that your favorite sample?
00:47:28	Cam	Guest	It's one of them, for sure. But I would say it's, uh, "We Major". Like, which, I remember meeting DJ Reflex out here in LA, and he told me about where that sample came from. DJ Reflex actually presented that to Kanye along with the sample for <i>Homecoming</i> , which was made by a friend of Reflex's, by the name of Warren Kimble. And Warren Kimble actually made that himself, um, from scratch.
00:48:01	Morgan	Host	Prolific producer. Prolific gospel producer. And he produced a lot for Brandy, too.
00:48:06	Cam	Guest	Oh, he did? Oh, thanks for mentioning that, I didn't know.
00:48:10	Morgan	Host	Um, my favorite—one of my favorites, well, "Late" without question, but my second favorite is from "Celebrations". "Celebration is the KG's heavenly dream". And Celebration is an otherwise pretty basic song, or scale-down song, but the sample is what does it for me. Christian, if you could play some of it.
00:48:25	Music	Music	"Heavenly Dream" off the album <i>Burn Me Up</i> by The Kay-Gees
00:48:35	Music	Music	"Celebration" off the album <i>Late Registration</i> by Kanye West. Slow, melodic rap.
			<i>Shy and all Why is y'all Lying for? "I never did this before" Stop that What, you want some Patron? I got that I mean I promise y'all</i>
			<i>[Music fades out as Morgan speaks]</i>
00:48:47	Morgan	Host	I just—when I first heard this song, I thought this was Earth Wind & Fire.
00:48:51	Oliver	Host	It has that same feel.
00:48:52	Morgan	Host	It's got that same vibe.
			<i>[Oliver affirms.]</i>
			But I just—I love these voices. I love Kanye's obsession with old Black folks, and old Black folks' music. Which makes sense to me, because of how he grew up in the time. But this is all stuff that'd be seperated in the lyrics, and stuff. If this was a whole track list of just the samples, the whole playlist, that's backyard barbeque music. Classic, classic music.
00:49:13	Cam	Guest	Ooh, yeah. That's a good idea, for all those on the playlist.

00:49:18 Morgan Host On the playlist, just the samples by themselves would be a great playlist.

00:49:21 Cam Guest Yeah, and that part that Christian played, I was just thinking, I was like, “Goddamn, I gotta loop that part.”

[Morgan and Oliver laugh.]

00:49:29 Morgan Host You get inspired up in here, young man.

00:49:31 Oliver Host Speaking of samples, we’re actually—I know we’re running long, so we’re probably going to need to wrap this up pretty soon, but one song that, to me, was—for me personally, was kind of a sleeper jam. Because it’s one that I’m—I wasn’t that into the first time that I heard it.

But going back to it this past week, I realized I really, finally respect just how good this song was. It’s the remix for “Diamonds from Sierra Leone”, which one of the big singles, and of course the remix has got Jay on it. And besides the fact that they make very good use of a Shirley Bassey “Diamonds Are Forever” sample, I don’t know if Kanye has just, a better verse on here. And considering that he brings in Jay, and Jay’s basically saying, like, “I got it from here.”

[Cam affirms.]

But really, Kanye’s the one who bodies this remix. He really does.

[Morgan affirms.]

00:50:13 Music Music “Diamonds from Sierra Leone (Remix)” off the album *Late Registration* by Kanye West. Fast, intense rap.

*Good morning, this ain't Vietnam still
People lose hands, legs, arms, for real
Little was known of Sierra Leone
And how it connect to the diamonds we own
When I speak of diamonds in this song
I ain't talking about the ones that be glowing
I'm talking about Roc-a-Fella, my home
My chain, these ain't conflict diamonds
Is they, Jacob? Don't lie to me, man*

[Music fades out as Oliver speaks]

00:50:35 Oliver Host Where does this album rank within this catalogue for you? Because I said before, this is my favorite one. Whether it’s his best is hard because—and I think I’ve talked about this in one of our three previous Kanye albums, he’s obviously become a very divisive figure.

And I think, for better or for worse, it’s influenced how I revisit his music. I’m always going to like the early part of his career, because I was less conflicted about him as a personality, but I don’t want to take away from the quality of the work that he’s put out in more recent years. So, it’s hard for me to really figure out where to fit this in, except that I know it’s gotta be, for me at least, it’s certainly top 3

of his best albums.

[Morgan agrees.]

Whether it's his best best, that's where I get kinda stuck, because, well, would I put this above *My Dark Twisted Fantasy*, would I put it above *Life of Pablo*—

00:51:24 Morgan Host

Yeezus, 808s.

00:51:25 Oliver Host

—Right, it gets really hard. But I'm running for, yeah, where would you rank this within that west catalogue?

00:51:30 Morgan Host

Definitely in my top five, okay? I think I was attracted to *College Dropout* because of "Jesus Walks" and "Through the Wire".

[Oliver affirms.]

So, I really held onto that, because those are flames, okay? Both of those. But for the things that you talked about at the beginning, just what Jon Brion brought to this, to the soulful nature of this, to the features, this definitely has pushed its way, to me, above *College Dropout*, to me.

[Oliver hums.]

That said, and you're talking to a church girl, I love *Jesus is King*, because I love the arrangements of it. I won't judge his spirituality, or his decision to go there. But for the strict musicality in what he did with those choirs, I love *Jesus is King*. And in-between there, um, I'm one of the few that liked 808s. I think that people had a lot of problems with 808's and *Heartbreaks*.

00:52:19 Oliver Host

I think when it came out, because it seemed so different?

[Morgan and Cam affirm.]

But I think looking back, now—and again, it's not my favorite. But if you were to argue for the most influential, probably top two or three.

Yeah. But Cam, I'm super curious about your answer here. You think this is his best album?

00:52:35 Cam Guest

You know, for a long time, actually, literally no question. Hands down. And I'm trying to think.

00:52:40 Oliver Host

And then *Ye* came out, and you realized, "Oh no, *Ye*'s much better,"

[Morgan laughs.]

00:52:45 Cam Guest

You know, I did appreciate—what I appreciated about *Ye*, um, as opposed to a lot of his contemporaries, he was still speaking his heart, still being very vulnerable. Talking about his marriage, and all these things that are like, wearing his heart on his sleeve, still. But um, not my favorite, though.

But I would say, uh, I think *Late Registration*. It's hard to choose

between that and uh, *Beautiful Dark Twisted Fantasy*. You know, I think those two are the top two. Um, and then behind those, *Graduation*, *808s*, and *Heartbreaks*. *808s* and *Heartbreaks* are some that I've revisited later. It was hard for me to admit it at first, but, I hated it when it first came out. Like—

- 00:53:30 Oliver Host I think a lot of people did! I think a lot of people did.
- 00:53:32 Morgan Host Same. It took quite a few listens. But how did you feel about it when it first came out. Wasn't really checking for it?
- 00:53:38 Cam Guest I wasn't into it! But only because it just sounded—what I wanted was the old Kanye loop of the Soul Kanye, and that album is as diametrically away from that.
- [Morgan affirms.]*
- But then you think about how many people have worked with that sound in the decades since then, and you think, "Damn. Maybe I wasn't listening to it, but, certainly an entire generation of people listened to that like, 'That's what I want my shit to sound like.'"
- 00:54:01 Music Music "Love Lockdown" off the album *808s & Heartbreak* by Kanye West. Fast rap with a frantic backing rhythm.
- Now keep ya love lockdown, ya love lockdown
Now keep ya love lockdown, you lose*
- [The backing beat and rap tempo slow down considerably]*
- I'm not loving you, way I wanted to
I can't keep my cool, so I keep it true
I got something to lose, so I gotta move*
- [Music fades out as Oliver speaks]*
- 00:54:18 Oliver Host So Cam, if you had to describe *Late Registration* in three words, what three words would you choose?
- 00:54:22 Cam Guest Okay, okay, okay. Hmm. "Adventure" is one. Um, adventure. Um, another one is "whimsical", yeah. And "ghetto."
- [Oliver affirms. Cam laughs.]*
- 00:54:41 Music Music "Drive Slow" plays again.
- Drive slow, homie
Drive slow, homie
You never know, homie, about these hoes, homie*
- [Music fades out as Oliver speaks]*
- 00:55:04 Oliver Host As always, we wanna leave our listeners with some recommendations for if you really enjoyed our discussion around *Late Registration*, what you should add next to your playlist. Morgan, you wanna start this off?
- 00:55:15 Morgan Host Probably low hanging fruit here, but I'd say go back to Jay-Z and

listen to *Blueprint*. You wanna hear a lot of the production elements that you fell in love with growing up as a kid in Vegas, and I would say a real—a moment in the development of Kanye’s skills, go back and listen to *Blueprint*.

00:55:34	Music	Music	<p>“Izzo (H.O.V.A.)” off the album <i>Blueprint</i> by Jay-Z. Mid-tempo rap.</p> <p><i>Is not real to me, therefore he doesn't exist</i> <i>So poof! Vamoose, son of a bitch!</i></p> <p><i>[Backing vocals join]</i></p> <p><i>H to the izz-O, V to the izz-A</i> <i>For shizzle, my nizzle, used to dribble down in VA</i> <i>H to the izz-O, V to the izz-A</i></p> <p><i>[Music fades out as Oliver speaks]</i></p>
00:55:48	Oliver	Host	<p>I was gonna recommend people should check out Common’s <i>Resurrection</i>, which was another sophomore album from a shy town legend. And one that, I think in the same way that <i>Late Registration</i> marked a new direction in the maturation, <i>Resurrection</i> very much, if you compare the Common—or really Common Sense as he was known back then—on <i>Can I Borrow a Dollar</i>, which was his debut album.</p> <p>Compare that with <i>Resurrection</i>, it’s like he became an elder statesman overnight. And while I don’t think Kanye quite made that same maturation, he is just a more, I think, mature artist on <i>Late Registration</i> compared to his debut. And it certainly—maybe it’s the Chicago connection, but it’s one of the first albums I thought of. So check out Common’s <i>Resurrection</i> from 1994.</p>
00:56:30	Morgan	Host	Deep.
00:56:31	Music	Music	<p>“Watermelon” off the album <i>Resurrection</i> by Common. Fast rap with a heavy backing beat.</p> <p><i>...see what I can get out of her</i> <i>Probably some scratch clothes and some J's</i> <i>I got six million ways to rhyme</i> <i>Choose one</i> <i>I stand out like a n-gga on a hockey team</i> <i>I got goals, and I can like a pop machine</i> <i>I come clean</i> <i>Like a fiend in Chi I'm down with rehab</i> <i>Stir my style crazy</i> <i>Cause that's right, we bad, we bad</i></p> <p><i>[Music fades out as Oliver speaks]</i></p>
00:56:46	Oliver	Host	And Cam, how about you, what do you think people should listen to after <i>Late Registration</i> ?
00:56:50	Cam	Guest	Um. Guess I’m gonna have to say <i>Dark Side of the Moon</i> , Pink Floyd.

[Oliver hums in appreciation.]

Heh, yeah.

- 00:56:56 Oliver Host Yeah. Because you were talking about this earlier, in the ways in which Pink Floyd was using rock as a tool, almost, as a genre to explore certain kinds of musical ideas. It felt like Kanye was using hip hop in the same fashion.
- 00:57:09 Cam Guest Yes, absolutely. And he was—created a world that you could enter, and you can like, you can experience, it is palpable, and you can see characters. And he was saying something, he was commenting on, you know, the human experience, but also this life around us. Um, and so is Pink Floyd, with their album, and they like—yeah, it's like a monumental feat of, like, musical storytelling in recorded pop music.
- 00:57:38 Music Music “Money” off the album *Dark Side of the Moon* by Pink Floyd. Mid-tempo pop.
- Don't give me that do goody good bullshit
I'm in the high-fidelity first class traveling set
And I think I need a Lear jet*
- [Music fades out as Morgan speaks]*
- 00:57:57 Morgan Host Well, that'll do it for this episode of *Heat Rocks* with our special guest, Cam O'bi, talking about Kanye's *Late Registration*. All 21 tracks featured, on us. Um, tell us what you're up to, and where folks can find you.
- 00:58:11 Cam Guest Right now, I'm working on my, uh, solo album debut. Um, debut as an artist in general, from being a producer, much like Kanye. And you could find me—the album's called *Grown Ass Kid*, by the way. Hope I can say the middle word.
- 00:58:28 Oliver Host You can say that. This is not radio, this is podcasting.
- 00:58:30 Morgan Host Listen, just stay spiritual, though. Stay spiritual in here.
- 00:58:34 Cam Guest *[Laughing]* Yes, this is very much—yes. Yes.
- 00:58:37 Oliver Host When are you hoping to have that out by?
- 00:58:40 Cam Guest Um, end of this year. Yeah,
- 00:58:41 Oliver Host Okay, alright. Later in 2020.
- 00:58:42 Cam Guest Yeah, later in 2020, but in the meantime, I'm gonna be releasing singles. Um, a lot of them. Yeah, all throughout the year.
- 00:58:50 Oliver Host And where can people find you?
- 00:58:51 Cam Guest You can find me... in St. Louis rolling on the—I dunno.

[Oliver and Morgan laugh.]

No, you can find me on Instagram, uh, Cam O'bi, @Camobi, on Twitter, @Camobi, you know, but those are just the digital versions

of me. My actual self is moving around in LA right now.

00:59:16	Oliver	Host	Thanks so much for coming through.
00:59:17	Morgan	Host	Thank you.
00:59:18	Cam	Guest	Thank you!
00:59:19	Oliver	Host	You've been listening to <i>Heat Rocks</i> with me, Oliver Wang, and Morgan Rhodes.
00:59:23	Morgan	Host	Our theme music is "Crown Ones" by <i>Thes One of People Under The Stairs</i> . Shoutout to Thes for the hookup.
00:59:29	Oliver	Host	<i>Heat Rocks</i> is produced by myself and Morgan, alongside Christian Dueñas, who also edits, engineers, and does the booking for our shows.
00:59:36	Morgan	Host	Our senior producer is Laura Swisher, and our executive producer is Jesse Thorn.
00:59:41	Oliver	Host	We are part of the Maximum Fun family, taping every week live in their studios in the West Lake neighborhood of Los Angeles.
00:59:54	Speaker 1	Promo	MaximumFun.org .
00:59:56	Speaker 2	Promo	Comedy and culture.
00:59:58	Speaker 3	Promo	Artist owned—
00:59:59	Speaker 4	Promo	—Audience supported.