

00:00:01	Biz	Host	Hi. I'm Biz.
00:00:02	Theresa	Host	And I'm Theresa.
00:00:04	Biz	Host	Due to the pandemic, we bring you <i>One Bad Mother</i> straight from our homes—including such interruptions as: children! Animal noises! And more! So let's all get a little closer while we have to be so far apart. And remember—we are doing a <u>good job</u> .
00:00:21	Music	Music	"Summoning the Rawk" by Kevin MacLeod. Driving electric guitar and heavy drums.
00:00:25	Biz	Host	<i>[Continues through dialogue.]</i> This week on <i>One Bad Mother</i> —how do I talk to my kids about <u>that</u> ?! Plus, Biz is a steely ship and is joined by Anastasia Higginbotham to talk about how to discuss deeply uncomfortable subjects with kids.
00:00:40	Biz	Host	Wooo! If Biz woos on a recording by herself, does she make a noise? I don't know! I don't know what the answer to that question is. Uh, hi, guys! We are here—we are trying out a few new little formatting things, given that Theresa is <u>still</u> out. I want to first take a moment to say—Theresa? I love ya. I'm thinking of you and you are doing an amazing job. I would also like to take a moment to—once again—just give a big shoutout to all of the essential workers who are helping to keep us safe. Who are keeping us fed. Who are... getting us packages. Who are... really putting themselves at risk every day. And are amazing and our very, very, appreciated. I also want to continue to give a shoutout to all of the peaceful protestors who are continuing to march for change in our country when it comes to racial injustice. Uh, and inequality. And... wow! That—it's a lot, guys! And all of—and to everyone who's just staying the fuck home 'cause that's what we've been told to do—and it's important, 'cause it's allowing these other things to take place—good job. 'K?
			We are in summer. <i>[Laughs.]</i> It's here. And I already hate it. And I'm just gonna share a little thing before we get into the show besides hating it, and that is that I am... irritated. I am struggling to maintain patience and I'm finding it incredibly unfair that all other human beings in <u>this</u> house seem to rely on <u>my</u> mood to regulate <u>theirs</u> . If they yell at me or raise their voice—and these are the children— <i>[Laughs.]</i> Towards me or even just <u>near</u> me, right? I'm supposed to let it roll off. If I snap or make a face that expresses that I am completely fucking over it, it's like a wildfire! I can just see their emotions change before my eyes. I have to be like some sort of fucking steely ship, soaring through an ocean of feelings. And I'm about over it. Just looking here over the Zoom at Hannah. Hannah, I'm about fucking over it! I just—it's deeply unfair.
			My inner toddler is like, I'm... I'm like... helping everybody navigate their emotional loads, and they—and they're all <u>valid</u> loads! It's just... I am—I am not getting... the emotional <i>[through laughter]</i> the emotional support that I am needing. And I'm a little over it. Uh, which is why I've locked myself in the bedroom all day today. <i>[Laughs.]</i> Totally... healthy! And just like a—some sort of steely boat steering through an ocean of feelings. And that's difficult to navigate. Which I think ties in nicely to what we're gonna talk about today on this show, which is—y'know—navigating difficult things that we <u>have</u> to <u>tell</u> our children about.
00:04:21	Music	Music	Banjo strums; cheerful banjo music continues through dialogue.

00:04:22 Theresa Host Please—take a moment to remember: If you’re friends of the hosts of *One Bad Mother*, you should assume that when we talk about other moms, we’re talking about you.

00:04:29 Biz Host If you are married to the host of *One Bad Mother*, we definitely are talking about you.

00:04:33 Theresa Host Nothing we say constitutes professional parenting advice.

00:04:37 Biz Host Biz and Theresa’s children are brilliant, lovely, and exceedingly extraordinary.

00:04:41 Theresa Host Nothing said on this podcast about them implies otherwise.

00:04:46 Biz Host *[Banjo music fades out.]*
Talking to our kids about difficult things. That’s hard and unpleasant! *[Laughs.]* And so today I am welcoming Anastasia Higginbotham. Anastasia launched her *Ordinary Terrible Things* children’s books *[through laughter]* series in 2015 with *Divorce is the Worst*. She has released three more books in the series—*Death is Stupid*; *Tell Me About Sex, Grandma*; and *Not My Idea: A Book About Whiteness*. Her books demonstrate a way for kids to cope with change and loss by making meaning out of whatever broken, ragged, or unraveling life circumstances they face. Well that fits in well with this show! Welcome, Anastasia!

00:05:30 Anastasia Guest *[Biz and Anastasia repeatedly affirm each other as they discuss the weekly topic.]*
Thank you! Thank you!

00:05:33 Biz Host *[Biz laughs.]*
We are doing this remotely so I’m getting to see Anastasia via the Zoom, our new overlord and master.

00:06:00 Anastasia Guest *[Anastasia laughs.]*
And she’s so sweet! And I—she’s like—she’s very sweet. And the books are aggressive and wonderful. Right? Like, these are aggressive titles: *Tell Me About Sex, Grandma!* I—love this so much! Before we get into that, though, who lives in your house? Okay! Who lives in my house? Um... my two sons live in my house. A ten-year-old and a fifteen-year-old. My partner John lives in my house. And... a cat named Carlita. Which is the name she was given at the, uh, shelter. She—she lives in our house for the last almost four years.

00:06:26 Biz Host Ten and fifteen. Well... good job.

00:06:34 Anastasia Guest *[Anastasia laughs.]*
You have gotten that far. That’s—
Yeah! It’s different!

00:06:36 Biz Host Yeah! Do you wanna tell me about it just before we go crazy? ‘Cause I’ve got a—I have a ten-year-old daughter and that is becoming its own thing and that’s good. That’s supposed to become a thing. Uh, and I have a six-year-old son and... I don’t know. Anything. About boys. Or sons. Or... any of those things.

[Anastasia laughs.]
I have a lot of stereotypes and tropes. *[Laughs.]*

00:07:02	Crosstalk	Crosstalk	Anastasia: Right. That—yeah, that’s what we all come into this with!
00:07:06	Biz	Host	Biz: <i>[Through laughter]</i> That I—that I use—yeah! How—I’m just gonna make a bad joke that could be based in reality? How smelly is that house right now? <i>[Laughs.]</i>
00:07:14	Anastasia	Guest	You know what? I— <i>[Laughs.]</i> It doesn’t—it <u>doesn’t!</u> I mean—maybe it would. Maybe it would smell more if we were allowed to play outside.
00:07:25	Biz	Host	Yeah. Oh, that could be it. Because this house is—my husband’s, like, well humans live here. That’s why it smells so bad all the time. These—
			<i>[Anastasia laughs.]</i>
			—everybody makes a smell in this house. And I just think as they get older you have even more opportunity to make smells?
00:07:43	Anastasia	Guest	<i>[Laughs.]</i> Yeah. They’re, um, thank goodness. I will go—you know, as soon as this is over I’m gonna go and appreciate them for how wonderful they smell.
			<i>[Biz laughs.]</i>
			Most of the time. And—and apologize to them for apparently my own!
00:07:56	Biz	Host	Right. Yeah. Yeah. Exactly. We’re just, y’know.
00:07:59	Crosstalk	Crosstalk	Biz: Yeah. I don’t smell good.
00:08:02	Biz	Host	Anastasia: I’m sure. Just like—everybody, thanks for being patient! <i>[Through laughter]</i> Yeah. <i>[Laughs.]</i> Well, let’s shift into talking about difficult things like personal hygiene. I’m just kidding! <i>[Laughs.]</i>
00:08:09	Anastasia	Guest	Yeah. Doesn’t have to be difficult!
00:08:12	Biz	Host	Doesn’t have to be difficult. Um, we are, uh, we’ve had lots of discussions on this show and are big believers in... talking about things with the kids. Sex? Let’s do it. Let’s have many talks. Some short. Some more in-depth, depending on how much you wanna know; when you wanna know it. That’s good. And <u>that</u> ... I think initially can feel... difficult. To talk about. But what really stinks is there are a <u>lot</u> of things that are even more difficult to talk about with our kids. And I—I think—I feel like with kids there’s a before you have kids world where you’re like—never even thinking about those discussions? Unless you’ve witnessed somebody having that discussion? In which you have lots of opinions about <i>[through laughter]</i> how they had that discussion?
00:09:07	Anastasia	Guest	Right. How badly they did and you would do it better if it was you? Mm-hm!
00:09:12	Biz	Host	Yeah. Exactly. Oh, you know. That’s great. And then you have kids and... maybe you still don’t think about it. Because... you don’t wanna think about it and there’s lots of other stuff going on. Did you just set off—you had kids, and you were like, I can’t wait to share really difficult things with them. Is that like—like— <i>[Laughs.]</i>
00:09:32	Anastasia	Guest	Yeah. Yes! I mean, I wanted to feed them, like, olives and...
			<i>[Biz laughs.]</i>

—avocadoes and fresh bread and chocolate. But I also did, in fact, want to have those conversations! I really was excited about that responsibility. And—

[Biz laughs.]

00:09:56 Biz Host —because, I'll tell you what! I mean, you might—you might come around to my way of thinking here in a minute.
I love coming around! *[Laughs.]*

[Anastasia laughs.]

00:10:00 Anastasia Guest So please! Please!
So... the—the things about parenting that, uh, drive me completely crazy and make me cry are things like trying to get mittens on a toddler. And—

00:10:11 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Biz:** Yeah. That's a horrible thing to have to do. I agree.

Anastasia: —trying to convince somebody to wear a coat.

[Biz laughs.]

00:10:16 Anastasia Guest When it's cold. Or like, no, you should—you should actually eat. You—you haven't eaten in hours! The—the food is there! I—I made it! So like, fighting over that kind of stuff? Is horrible! But, like, talking about dismantling white supremacy? Is—is exactly what—

[Biz laughs.]

00:10:36 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Anastasia:** —uh, I think I was put on this earth to do!

Biz: Born to do? *[Laughs.]*

00:10:40 Anastasia Guest With a child! Because now you've got my attention! Now I'm like, now I give a shit! Um—

[Biz laughs.]

Before— *[Laughs.]* I was just, like, why are—why are we fighting over this coat? Why are we fighting over food? You have food! Are you kidding me? But, um—yeah. You wanna know about, like... the intricacies of sex and sexuality, I'm—I'm here for that! I'll stop whatever I'm doing. In fact, please! Give me some reason to stop doing these dishes!

00:11:09 Biz Host *[Through laughter]* Yeah. Yes! Just take your coat off and sit down and we'll talk about it!

[Anastasia laughs.]

That's right! Wow. You—that is some beautiful perspective right there. Because I do think—but—I—I think that's, like, part of the trap? Y'know? It's like part—it's a little bit part of the trap. That... I love falling into and getting stuck in at times, despite what my brain or other instincts or yelling—is getting—because most of the time, day to day, it is the—ugh. The mittens. And the hats. And the lunches. And the—

00:11:46 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Anastasia:** *[As a sigh.]* The lunches. My god, the lunches. Mm-hm.

Biz: Eat—just eat the goddamn food! Right? Like...

00:11:50 Biz Host That is such a major part of the day to day that makes us start to feel not like a self and—

00:12:00 Anastasia Guest Right.

00:12:02 Biz Host Then when these bigger topics come up, these things that—like you say!—really are important. Okay? I mean [*through laughter*] that's really—these are big things. Duh. Divorce. Whiteness. Y'know? Like, racial injustice. These are things that are going to touch all of us. At some point in time. And... I feel like... I know that I can find myself so exhausted? From... the little things? And from my own, like, ugh.

00:12:35 Anastasia Guest Neglect? [*Laughs.*]

00:12:36 Biz Host Is this where—oh, yeah! Thank you! Yes. My own neglect. Uh, that like—where am I supposed to rally to start getting into these things? It's a lot easier to be, like, I'll tell you later. It's not a big deal. Everything's okay.

[Anastasia laughs.]

00:12:57 Crosstalk Crosstalk Uh, isn't this why we go to school? Like, can you go—go ask grandma. I wish! That would've been— [*Laughs.*]
Anastasia: Yeah! That's handy.

00:13:01 Biz Host **Biz:** So—

00:13:02 Anastasia Guest Before writing the—I'm assuming—

00:13:05 Biz Host I don't have the answers! In the moment.

00:13:25 Anastasia Guest No, I know you don't have the answer. But I'm interested in your journey. Like, these books didn't come out before you had kids. And they didn't come out, like, a year after you had kids. They came out after the mittens and the coats and things like that. So I'm wondering about your journey getting to the books.

00:13:25 Anastasia Guest Yeah. Good question! My—my kids actually helped me to write the books. So they were old enough that they really had a lot of input—creative input—and, um, critical feedback of, like, this makes sense or doesn't make sense. Do I need this? Should I leave it out? But in terms of my own craft, I started writing as a young adult. Right? So early 20s, I really wanted to be a writer and an activist. I wanted to be Gloria Steinem. I wanted to have that life. And what happened was—I—I kept getting in my own way. And I kept writing the same things! I kept trying to process my parents' divorce. I kept trying to process my grandparents' lives and deaths. And I—I kept stumbling over, like, my own... relationship to... sexual abuse from—or, y'know, early age. And—and understanding even what happened there and then yes! Understanding my race and my place in this whole thing. So all those kinds of injuries which were in my childhood—injuries and also... y'know, events that I was still trying to figure out what I was gonna do with them. How I was gonna make myself out of them? Y'know, which is what—that's our work in our 20s. Like, we become—

[Biz laughs.]

00:14:48 Biz Host Right!

00:14:49 Anastasia Guest We take that childhood and we try to turn it into an adulthood.
[Laughs.] And then—

00:14:54 Biz Host Oh man, I screwed that up so bad! [*Laughs.*]

00:14:57 Anastasia Guest You're supposed to! That's what the 20s are for!

00:15:00 Biz Host Good! Good! [*Laughs.*]

00:15:02 Anastasia Guest So—but I kept really—like, just spinning. On those moments. And those moments of heartbreak or confusion or... resentment and bitterness and—and so my writing just kept going to that place and I was like, good god. I—so then I just decided to just go—just go there! And be like, okay. So what did I need to hear that I didn't hear then? And I—I just started to... really in my 30s.. I started to hear that voice that tone might with they had heard when they were 10 and 11 and 12 and 13 or—or 6 and 7 years old. That kind of would walk—walk me through it. So I realized there were these books that I wished I could pull off the shelf and walk myself through it, and that I had to write them. I had to make them. And I had tried with comics. I had tried with essays. Um, and what really finally came together was collage!

00:16:04 Biz Host Yeah! I wanna talk about the collage 'cause it's really interesting. So, um, so everybody who's listening—these are—again—these are, y'know, books for kids. This—dealing with... these really difficult discussions we have to... to have. I'm gonna start when it comes to the collage—I'm gonna start with the one "Death is Stupid"? *[Laughs.]*

[Anastasia laughs.]

00:16:34 Anastasia Guest Also, your titles are just spot on. Shoutout to Jennifer Baumgardner! My publisher. All along the way she never, ever messed with my titles. And—

00:16:43 Biz Host I'm so glad. Yeah.

00:16:45 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Biz:** I was gonna ask that. *[Laughs.]*

00:16:46 Anastasia Guest **Anastasia:** I'm so glad, too! 'Cause she has really good taste! And if she had said this is not the title I would've, y'know, I would've deferred to her. But she just let them be! And I—I'm so relieved that people laugh and it makes 'em happy.

00:16:56 Biz Host No, it's good! I mean—'cause humor—I think—plays in with honesty? Uh, I think those two can go hand in hand beautifully? What—I mean, god. I'm southern and dark. All pain is funny. Okay? Like—

[Anastasia laughs.]

—that is just how we were raised in my house. It makes us really weird people to *[through laughter]* go see dark movies with. Ah ha ha! We just laugh.

00:17:21 Anastasia Guest Pain can be funny! Yeah! No, that's—it—it helps!

00:17:24 Biz Host The collage format, guys—it's like... ripped brown paper bags. And—and like—writing on the bags. Like, penned writing. Mixed with fabric scraps and—and other bits of collage and... it—it's—it's strikingly... beautiful? And it's not distracting? It—it actually really... manages to communicate... what you're going for? Can you—it makes, actually, your characters stand out a great deal. So why the collage?

00:18:02 Anastasia Guest Yeah. They're like paper dolls. They—they—and I dress them in real, like, fabric? And I do their hair. Either it's ribbons or I'm just drawing in each little curl. It's just what I know how to make! I used to make books like this when I was little. I—I don't know how books are made. Like, when I look at a book—

[Biz laughs.]

—that is really, um, gorgeous and smooth? Honest to god I don't—I'm—I'm 48 years old. I don't know how they do that.

[Biz laughs.]

And so I made—I started making my book when I said, y'know, I want—this is the book I wanna pull off the shelf. I just started making it the same way I would have started making it in fifth grade. And—and you can see in the books that I got better as I went along. And—

00:18:47 Biz Host

Yeah! [Laughs.]

00:18:48 Anastasia Guest

[Laughs.] You know? I—

00:18:50 Biz Host

We all get better as we go along! Book or no book! That's our—
[Laughs.]

00:18:52 Anastasia Guest

Right! I just—it was just, like, just—just start. Just start. Just make it. And, um... so I just used what was available to me! Like... there—I didn't go to art school. I didn't have a lot of time or any—y'know, extra income to go to this. It was my—so, like, what's available? Grocery bags. I love brown paper grocery bags. They're beautiful! They're tough! They—they really hold up and they can hold—y'know, when I glued the paper person on there, and the sky, and the little couch and the little rug—it's heavy! So the brown paper bag is sturdy enough—tough enough to hold it but it's also just really, really pretty. And, um, I wanted the skin tones to be brown and different variations on brown, too, so that children would see themselves in the images and be able to, uh project into the pages like that. So—and also—when I draw... a picture that's just line drawing, I'm—I feel like it doesn't capture the light; it doesn't capture the depth. But when I can cut out a sky out of just some... page, y'know, in a catalog—that I can get that purple sky and fit it into a window in the bedroom of this child who I'm taking care of and putting pajamas on. There's something about that—I mean, that's just... it made it feel and look real to me. Now it looked real. I have to say, there's gotta be... some form of therapy in putting it together. That way. Like, I mean...

00:20:20 Biz Host

Totally.

00:20:31 Anastasia Guest

00:20:32 Biz Host

If you're able to process through some sort of tangible task, I think that's amazing! I think that's—that's remarkable! That it—and—it—comes out in the book. Can we—can we talk about—I wanna talk about *Death is Stupid*, because I feel like this is just... one of the most unavoidable topics ever. Everybody dies. And... lots of times not when you want them to. And I think the thing that I like the most about *Death is Stupid*—I mean, the book is about this young child who is—it starts out with them at a funeral. And... all the things that people are saying to him while he's trying to figure out... what death is. And... it's... amazing because you share his perspective—like, his responses to what they're—they're saying. One of my favorite things is—every life comes to an end. And then the person says—she's in a better place. And then you write—dying is not a punishment. And the child asks—would I be in a better place if I died? [Laughs.] Then the—the adult responds, heavens, no!!! Right? Like— [Laughs.]

[Anastasia laughs.]

I like that! Because it's like—half the time stuff comes out of our mouth and we don't realize the implications! But there's this—just the—I think it's such a beautiful and great exchange. So much of what we say... is garbage. A lot of times. And it's not meant to be. Just words. Start coming out of our mouths. When we're asked questions. It's made up of things that we've been told. It's just, y'know, a million Hallmark cards.

00:22:32 Anastasia Guest

It is! It is a million Hallmark cards. And it's also the fact that—so, for example, when my mother said to me that she's in a better place—about her mother—she was a grownup! Seeing her mother deteriorate from Alzheimer's for years and years and years and years and years! And having no quality of life. And me—and she—so she was completely... authentic in that! My mother—because of her faith and because of her experience of watching her mother deteriorate—that—she's in a better place. But to me it rang very callous. Or—or at least I—I just couldn't—there was nothing I could do with that, as true as it was, because I was like... self-centered.

But I'm not gonna be able to see her anymore! I'm not gonna be able to—all I get to do when I see her is put my hand on her hand and feel how soft her skin is—impossibly soft skin! And then kiss her on her cheek and her cheek is really cool and the bone is right—y'know, it's—like, you kiss right on the cheek—I'm never gonna get to do that again! So to me, that's a child's whole experience. And, y'know, the child in the book *Death is Stupid* is just trying to make sense of the fact that I will never touch or be touched by this person again, who is beloved to me. And so all those reasons—even—sometimes there are a million Hallmark cards and sometimes they're... that person's truth! Like... boy—Yes. That's a really good point. Yeah.

00:24:07 Biz Host

00:24:09 Anastasia Guest

—it was time. And the child is just like, eh, I didn't get enough time. I'm only eight! I'm only twelve! Or even—and you know how it is, too! Like, you can be sixty years old and your mother dies and you're like, that wasn't enough time! [Laughs.]

00:24:23 Biz Host

Yes. And I think—and—and just to touch back on you calling yourself, y'know, selfish—which I understand—is just—that is what children are! They are inherently, like, selfish walking on two legs. And, y'know— [Laughs.] Eventually we hope they figure it out through some guidance. But like, inherently children... to survive are about self-focus. And so... yeah!

00:24:51 Anastasia Guest

00:24:53 Biz Host

She can't die! I need her!
Yeah! Yeah! What do you mean, she's—my other one that you did is—she's sleeping. If I'm sleeping, am I gonna die? I mean, that one's the scariest, I think. Of—of all of them. But... one of the things about the book that I think is important is it's not—we shouldn't just wait for the death of... a... family member—a human family member. That—that this is the same discussion, y'know, Sparky did not go to a farm upstate. We're not gonna be able to go visit Sparky. I know very little about children. What I have been learning since they've lived in my house is—at least with my children—is that if I... anything I tell them, there are going to be follow-up questions. And there's a good chance they're gonna be really good questions.

[Anastasia laughs.]

Y'know, where I'm like—what? You're not supposed to be thinking like that! So having the difficult... discussion... is worth it! Right?

[Laughs.]

00:26:04 Crosstalk Crosstalk

Anastasia: Yeah. So much of—'cause you get to know who this person is!

00:26:08 Anastasia Guest

Biz: Let's— *[Laughs.]* It's worth it in the long run.

The kid! By how—what kind of question—what—y'know, your child asks you a follow-up question that you never thought of in your whole life and now you know something more about your child! Like, alright! I'm learning about the way your mind works. I'm learning about what this loss is for you. It—y'know, ultimately, that's the goal. Is to know who these people are who live in our house with us. And we can't know them if we don't—if we don't get to see them respond to stress and crisis and conflict, which are the part of any ordinary life.

00:26:43 Biz Host

Well, yes. That is logical and makes 100%—

[Anastasia laughs.]

—sense. I don't wanna. I don't wanna. I don't wanna see my children struggle and suffer. And I think— *[Laughs.]*

00:26:55 Crosstalk Crosstalk

Anastasia: I hear you. I hear you.

00:26:57 Biz Host

Biz: Like, I mean—

Look! I mean, no one does. And I—as a person who... has my own... I call them “different lives” I have lived in my one lifetime—a variety of ups and downs and moments and—oh, bad choices. And things that my parents could never have protected me from no matter—no matter what they wanted to do or how many times they would've warned me, etcetera. And I... really value... who I am today based on... the mistakes and the lessons and experiences I have had. So I want that for my children. I also do not want— *[Laughs.]* Want that for my children! And I—

00:27:47 Anastasia Guest

[Anastasia laughs.]

Yeah. You wanna curate their—their, uh, exposure to pain if possible.

00:27:51 Biz Host

Yes! Wouldn't that be lovely. And here's—here's another horrible thing I've learned. They aren't like me! They—they don't... attack things the same way I do.

00:28:03 Anastasia Guest

Interesting.

00:28:04 Biz Host

Or each other! I know! Isn't that interesting? And, I'm sure, unlike anyone else's experience.

[Anastasia laughs.]

Uh—so I feel like this kind of shifts into... where we are right now in the world. There—there—a lot is happening in the world. First there's the pandemic. And... I'm gonna start there, because that was the sort of first thing that made its way into the house and a sense of urgent—recent urgency. I have spoken to both children, but slightly differently based on age. But I've uttered the words of—

00:28:50 Anastasia Guest it's going to be fine. And I have no proof to back that up. And, y'know, I—I guess—
00:28:51 Crosstalk Crosstalk That's alright!
Anastasia: Does that sound like a lie to you?

00:28:54 Anastasia Guest **Biz:** I guess when it—
00:28:56 Biz Host 'Cause it doesn't sound—it doesn't ring false to me.
Well, I think I struggle... with... wanting... to tell them what would be good information.

00:29:08 Anastasia Guest Yes. Absolutely.
00:29:09 Biz Host That might help them process it.
00:29:11 Anastasia Guest While you're trying to process it at the same time. And it's the first time this ever happened to you in your lifetime, too!

00:29:18 Biz Host Well, right! And I think—but there's also—not just wanting to protect them from all horrible bad things, which we can never do? But I don't... *[Laughs.]* I don't want to watch them struggle through it? I—this is a show about honesty and like us just being—I'm obviously going to. I'm obviously gonna be there for them. But I don't want to? It's like, when my daughter would climb to the top of the slide and stand on the bars and say look at me? I would say—Katy Belle, I love you so much. I know you're up there. And I'm glad.

[Anastasia laughs.]

I'm not—I can't look. If I look, I'll never let you do anything in your entire life.

[Anastasia laughs.]

00:30:09 Anastasia Guest So I'm just down here... supporting you... from—without looking!
00:30:10 Biz Host Well done!
I would like to—well, thank you. I would like to do that the—
[Laughs.]

00:30:14 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Biz:** —through all of this! Damn! *[Laughs.]*

Anastasia: *[Through laughter]* Yeah. Yeah. You can't do it for everything. Nope. Mm-mm.

00:30:17 Anastasia Host Sometimes you have to see them—literally see them through trouble.
00:30:21 Biz Host Okay. You talk to a lot of—

[Anastasia laughs.]

—people! Writing these books. I mean, you obviously have some insight. But I know that you—you spoke with different people in—in writing this. What are some things that you learned about helping them through this? Or having to sit and watch them go through it?

00:30:45 Anastasia Guest Um, that I just learn every day like the rest of us.
00:30:47 Biz Host *[Laughs.]* Dammit! *[Laughs.]*
00:30:50 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Biz:** You are supposed to fix it! Ah. That's alright.

00:30:53 Anastasia Guest **Anastasia:** I know. I'm so sorry. I was supposed to fix it.
Yeah. It's um—I just learn what it feels like, y'know, you learn about yourself? Right? 'Cause you're like—I—y'know, there might—and if you're parenting with someone else, something will come along—some kind of challenge—and you're like, oh. Our kid's got this.

Daduhdaduhdaduh. This is—y’know. I have faith in this; I have faith in this; it’s gonna be alright. And your partner’s going completely bonkers because they have some kind of, um... y’know, injury there. Probably. Most likely. And then sometimes it’s you who’s—feels so unsteady and so disoriented by what your child is going through.

Not every family has the two people. Not every family needs the two people. But we are—we do best when we are able to take care of ourselves. Like, okay, I’m seeing my kid go through this thing. It’s affecting me this way. I need to notice that. Now I need to go get—I need to go lean on my people. My sister; my brother; my parents; my family; my—my friends; my—and get that advice and then—or not even get that advice! But just, like, maybe express some of the hurt I have about seeing my child in trouble. Then I come back. And I’m more fresh. And then you can bring that kind of, um, alright.

00:32:18 Biz Host
00:32:20 Anastasia Guest

Let’s see what this is. Or you tell me what you think is going on or what do you need from me? And you can ask those healthy, open-ended questions ‘cause you’re not on fire yourself. Um, y’know, on the inside. And—and feeling like you’re sliding down. And losing it. Yeah. That’s hard!
It is. It is. I—

[Biz laughs.]

00:32:24 Biz Host

It is. It is hard. And, uh, but it’s not as hard as the mittens!
You’re right. I think—

[Anastasia laughs.]

00:32:29 Anastasia Guest
00:32:32 Biz Host

I think you might actually really be right?
It’s not as hard!
Well—well, that’s it. I know that there’s a group of parents out there who really fucking love getting mittens on their children.

00:32:37 Anastasia Guest
00:32:40 Biz Host

They probably do. They probably do.
And they really hate this other stuff. Okay. Let’s get in to... one of your... latest books: *Not My Idea: A Book About Whiteness*.

00:32:50 Anastasia Guest
00:32:52 Biz Host

Yeah. 2018. 2018.
Yeah. It’s 2018 and yet when I was reading it? This week?

00:32:58 Anastasia Guest
00:32:59 Biz Host

Yeah.
I checked the publication date.

00:33:02 Anastasia Guest
00:33:04 Biz Host

Yeah.
It—it was happening in 2018. It’s been happening-

00:33:05 Anastasia Guest
00:33:09 Biz Host

Yeah. And even in—in 2018 it was too late. In 2014 it was too late.
[Through laughter] In—1982 it was too late! I mean, it’s always too late. And it’s...

00:33:15 Anastasia Guest
00:33:18 Biz Host

And yet here we are. So.
And yet here we are, so. It starts out with... a... story that you share about listening to Toni Morrison.

00:33:27 Anastasia Guest
00:33:29 Biz Host

Mm-hm. Mm-hm.
About racism. And I’m gonna—I’m gonna quote it. It says—quote—
“White people have a very, very serious problem, and they should start thinking about what they can do about it.’ She added, ‘Take me out of it.’” As a rape survivor, I definitely have felt that when it comes to the—like—I—it gives me... a relationship to... the victims having to be responsible—

00:33:56	Anastasia	Guest	Got it.
00:33:57	Biz	Host	—for solving the problem. I also... throughout... various discussions that I see on social media... I... <u>really</u> ... am not a fan... of asking people of color to tell me how I can help. Because... I'm a grown-ass woman who can help! And there are resources out there to help me figure it out. And so... I, too, found that comment from Toni Morrison <u>incredibly</u> impactful. Tell me a little bit about its impact on you and it leading to this book.
00:34:39	Anastasia	Guest	Mm. Thank you! Thank you for asking me that question. Um, I read that line and—I feel like I remember the exact moment I like, jumped up. 'Cause I had been... involved in social justice my whole life! To some degree. And that was the first time that when it came to <u>racial</u> justice that I felt like I had... a job.
00:35:07	Biz	Host	Yeah! I can see that.
00:35:09	Anastasia	Guest	I mean, I <u>knew</u> —I—I felt the urgency. But I was understanding it as a problem outside of myself.
00:35:18	Biz	Host	Mm.
00:35:18	Anastasia	Guest	That I had to, like, negotiate over there. Instead of... where <u>she</u> located it right <u>inside</u> of <u>me</u> , I was like—oh my gosh! I know what to do!

[Biz laughs.]

Right? Because if you're—if—if you go to the doctor and the doctor says you have a very, very serious problem and you need to think about how you're going to—what you're going to do about it. You do your research. You study. You—you talk to people who have been through it. And—and in this instance you're—I'm talking to other white people. I'm not—I'm not burdening black and brown people with, like, with my curiosity or my questions or my grief. Y'know, there—there is a way to do this that people have been doing! For hundreds of years! Hundreds. Of years. And y'know—and I do remember being in college and learning about the Grimké sisters for the first time. Angelina Grimké and Sarah Grimké, who were in the book. And, um, these two white women who were just, like... fuck slavery! This is—

[Biz laughs.]

00:36:57	Biz	Host	—terrible! We should not be doing this! And they went out there and—and I remember relating to them, but somewhere along the way I—I didn't—y'know, it didn't <u>fully</u> fully get in there until—when Toni Morrison said that in that interview. Of course I was watching that interview in 2000-something-something. But the interview was 1993. I was just like, right. Got it. Marching orders. Those are my marching orders from Toni Morrison! Like, could you—
00:37:00	Anastasia	Guest	If Toni Morrison asks me to do something, I will do it! <i>[Laughs.]</i>
00:37:10	Biz	Host	So—and that's it! And it—it's like—that was the—now this is my life. It's my life's work and I—there's nothing else I wanna be doing.
00:37:12	Anastasia	Guest	Tell me a little bit about what you wanted to explore in this.
00:37:30	Biz	Host	Yeah. Well, I mean—so as the mother of two white sons... I felt like this is a matter of extreme urgency in my own home. I'm not raising Dylann Roof! I don't wanna raise kids who are doing blackface videos in seventh grade!
			Oh my god! I know! What is <u>wrong</u> with people?! <i>[Laughs.]</i>

00:37:34 Anastasia Guest So—I need to—right? I need to—but I need to be intentional about that! I can't just take for granted that... y'know... kindness and politeness and niceness has never once stopped racism. Racism has never been stopped. It—it has—white supremacy hasn't missed a beat since 400+ years? And in fact it—y'know—it's a roar in our ears right now. And—but it always was! It always was! And the way that I learned history was so distorted. Because it was always about—again!—the problem that they're having over there. If it's presented to kids in this continuing this distortion of, like... well... it's the sad story where, uh, black and brown people have been discriminated against. Blah, blah, blah.

It's like, by whom? In what ways? And so that's why in the book, I have the white—the—y'know—I used actually white paper even though, y'know, my skin's not white like paper. But like the actual white hand holding the bank loan with the big stamp "DENIED" and the white hand holding the eviction notice. And—and the—the white arm of the—of the white woman saying, y'know, here's the baby bottle. Here's the laundry. Take care of my kids so I can grow! And... y'know, that level of... ordinary exploitation and discrimination and it's—it's in the pollution of—but—y'know, that's the—you can see it as a—as the horror that it is. And it is horror. But you can also see that in every one of those choices is another choice!

00:39:22 Biz Host Yeah.

00:39:23 Anastasia Guest And so... if I have that much power... to cause harm, then I also have that much power to be part of the healing and the transformation out of and through white supremacy. And I want my children to embrace that responsibility. Not because—not for someone else's safety, but for their own. Because it's not safe! In—to be misinformed or ill-informed about this! Then you're just gonna perpetuate it!

00:39:51 Biz Host Yes. I mean, that's—and again—that... is a truth for every difficult—misinformation and not knowing does not keep anybody safe from... from what it is that scares you. Something else I like about this book is that... you... again—this is to a child—and you give this child... the... autonomy to... make... their own choice? And to... push back and to... to take control when those around them are trying to protect them or dismiss it. Like, one of my favorite lines is like—"Be kind. We don't see color"? [*Laughs.*] I mean, like, it's an easy thing to say!

It's the "Be Kind." Or, y'know, uh, "Oh, I'm so glad you made it here safely." Right? Like... or—just—y'know, I'm just gonna turn the news off because I don't—and—and the girl in this who is your protagonist, she eventually just, like... freaks out on her mom! As well she should! What is going on?! I like that she pushes that. I like that she then goes to the library to do her own research. To learn her own... way of... going forward and I think... that's... so great? 'Cause just like we're talking about asking our kids to... allowing our kids to grieve and deal with difficult situations, knowing that they hopefully will come out stronger and better for it, the same goes for... y'know, them taking action. We want—we as parents are the front lines. We want... we want this change!

00:41:44 Anastasia Guest Yeah! They're born into something really corrupt that they didn't consent to! And in a way, for white supremacy to work through them

is a violation of—of their—of their consent! Of—of their bodies! Of their minds! It's a—it's a mental invasion! And, um... I want them to know that that's—pollution is coming in! And they can—they can learn to see it. Like, be little spies! Learn to see it! Catch it lying to you! Catch it hiding in you! Hold it up to truth and it will start to disintegrate. And then you have—you can't fix racism. But you can heal yourself from some of these distortions and clear your—your vision. And learn to see the lie as it's coming through. And then you just—it's just more agency! More autonomy! More, like, I'm going through my life with intention. Where my words match my actions. Yeah. That also—while very complicated—may in the long run be easier than the mittens. *[Laughs.]*

00:42:40 Biz Host

[Anastasia laughs.]

00:42:48 Anastasia Guest
00:42:53 Crosstalk Crosstalk

It's certainly much more gratifying and rewarding.
Biz: I bet it is! It is! It is.

Anastasia: Because you know they're gonna lose those mittens as soon as you get out the door!

[Biz laughs.]

00:42:57 Anastasia Guest
00:43:02 Biz Host

And next time you won't even have any mittens! You have to put socks on there!
You have to put socks on their hands. And when they lose those? We are never going outside again. That's how that... progresses.

[Anastasia laughs.]

00:43:12 Music Music

That's the natural progression of mittens. *[Laughs.]*
"Ones and Zeroes" by "Awesome." Steady, driving electric guitar with drum and woodwinds.

[Music fades out.]

00:43:31 Theresa Host

Hey, you know what it's time for! This week's genius and fails! This is the part of the show where we share our genius moment of the week, as well as our failures, and feel better about ourselves by hearing yours. You can share some of your own by calling 206-350-9485. That's 206-350-9485.

00:43:51 Biz Host
00:43:56 Clip Clip

Genius fail time, Anastasia. Would you like to genius me?
[Dramatic, swelling music in background.]

Biz: Wow! Oh my God! Oh my God! I saw what you did! Oh my God! I'm paying attention! Wow! You, mom, are a genius. Oh my God, that's fucking genius!

[Biz and Theresa repeatedly affirm each other as they discuss their respective genius moments of the week.]

00:44:11 Anastasia Guest

My child had homework? That he didn't wanna do? And... couldn't bear to do? And so I sat next to him and made him laugh and... um... said a lot of really inappropriate things about the history that he was doing? Um—

[Biz laughs.]

—just to keep his spirits up? And I was very disparaging about all of the history he was learning 'cause I was like, this is not even

important in any way. This version of the story's not even true. And why are they teaching you this stupid shit?

[Biz laughs.]

00:44:48 Biz Host And then—and it made him laugh and feel superior and then he did all his work.
BOOM! That is a genius!

[Anastasia laughs.]

00:44:59 Crosstalk Crosstalk That, madame, is a genius. Good... *[through laughter]* good job! Good job!
Biz: This is—I am looking forward—

00:45:01 Biz Host **Anastasia:** *[Inaudible.]*
—to you next book on getting through bullshit homework. Okay!

[Anastasia laughs.]

00:45:34 Anastasia Guest So my genius is totally fucked up. The listeners know that my six-year-old, Ellis, really loves me. Like, uh, needs—I am his total emotional regulator. No matter how many boundaries I set up. He would like to be with me all day. And not just with, but physically on me. Uh, which is—eh. He's—he's a little more. And— *[Laughs.]* And that's okay.

00:45:36 Biz Host I understand.
The one time... a day that I know is really not my job is his bath. And... he still likes to have somebody in there with him, so usually it's Stefan. But as we have been sheltering in place and he has been using me more and more as a regulator, he wants less *[through laughter]* and less to do with Stefan. Uh, god bless Stefan making his efforts. So I'm helping Ellis get into the tub the other day. And... I notice as he takes his socks off that he's got two spots that he has just picked into something horrible.

[Anastasia makes sympathetic noise.]

00:46:30 Anastasia Guest Uh, on his toes. 'Cause he's a picker. And I say—oh! Ellis! What's going on with your toe? How—how's your toe? And he immediately sort of turns his back and he says—I would like to start having my baths— *[through laughter]* by myself now.

00:46:32 Biz Host Wow!
Now—I know. Now... the genius here—look, guys. This is so fucked up. There's a lot of stuff I should be delving into and exploring? However! He has consistently for—like, a week now—not only gotten into the tub on his own; gotten himself out; gotten himself dressed; the whole nine yards—he feels very proud about being a big kid. And like... I know this wouldn't have happened if I was the one who was always doing his bath? *[Laughs.]* So the genius is—I have taken advantage of some sort of shame he has about picking his toes and his, just, general not wanting Stefan to— *[Laughs.]* To be a substitute. And he has gained independence.

00:47:18 Anastasia Guest Wow! Genius!

00:47:20 Biz Host Wahoo! *[Laughs.]*

00:47:21 Anastasia Guest Genius move! Way to go!

00:47:23	Crosstalk	Crosstalk	Biz: Thank you! Thank you!
00:47:26	Biz	Guest	Anastasia: Way to honor the boundary, too! Thank you! I'm just gonna honor—I mean, there is—again, so much is fucked up under that. But I'm going to ignore it for now.
00:47:33	Anastasia	Guest	Not too much. Not too much. <i>[Laughs.]</i>
00:47:36	Caller	Caller	<i>[Biz laughs.]</i> <i>[Answering machine beeps.]</i>
			Hey, Biz and Theresa! This is a genius. I have a three-year-old <u>and</u> a six-month-old and for the past three weeks I've been trying to get the sixth-month-old to take medicine two times a day. He's entirely breastfed and not really eating solids yet. Um, but I've tried everything. Staying positive and making silly faces and songs and distractions with toys and having my partner hold him and using a bottle nipple and nothing has worked. He would just clamp his mouth shut and spit it out any time. Until tonight—I got him to take the full dose. No screaming or fighting. It was easy-peasy. How, do you ask? I put that shit on my boob—
			<i>[Both hosts laugh.]</i>
00:48:33	Biz	Host	—and he happily sucked it off like it wasn't even there. Will I end up with a sticky boob and a crying baby tomorrow? Most likely. But for today, I'm doing a really good job and so are you. Bye! <u>Yes</u> you are doing a good job! I... I—there are two geniuses you had in this. One was your effort to try and stay positive 'cause I guarantee you some unhelpful person told you—stay positive and make faces. Right? Like— <i>[Laughs.]</i>
00:48:49	Anastasia	Guest	Mm-hm! Mm-hm! Mm-hm!
00:48:51	Biz	Host	And then... you just solved that problem like a boss. You did it. It was <u>weird</u> . No one—you can't share that <u>anywhere</u> other than right here.
			<i>[Anastasia laughs.]</i>
			Because this is where all weird things come to—to live. That should be, like—again—like, a chapter in a parenting book! Right? Like— <i>[Laughs.]</i> If your child won't take their medicine, put it on your boob! I just think that's <u>genius</u> .
00:49:21	Anastasia	Guest	Mm-hm. That's genius.
00:49:23	Biz	Host	You are—yeah! Just doing a good job.
00:49:24	Anastasia	Guest	I love it.
00:49:26	Biz	Host	Failures.
00:49:27	Clip	Clip	<i>[Dramatic orchestral music plays in the background.]</i>
			Theresa: <i>[In a voice akin to the Wicked Witch of the West]</i> Fail. Fail. Fail. <u>FAIL!</u>
			<i>[Timpani with foot pedal engaged for humorous effect.]</i>
			Biz: <i>[Calmly]</i> You <u>suck!</u>
			<i>[Biz and Theresa repeatedly affirm each other as they discuss their respective failures of the week.]</i>

00:49:33 Biz Host
00:49:36 Anastasia Guest

Anastasia, I would like you... to fail me.
This week? Ignoring my children?

[Biz laughs.]

From... waking up late. And proceeding to ignore them. Then, when they get really hungry, and I know there's nothing but celery in the refrigerator—

[Biz laughs.]

—and pepperoncini and one granola bar—

[Biz laughs.]

I screamed at them, “Just eat the granola bar!”

[Biz laughs.]

And... when they were, like, well we don't want a granola bar, I was like, well then put on your mask and go outside and buy yourself some groceries because I don't want to!

[Biz laughs.]

Um, so. And I—and I really was angry! I wasn't like, wise about it? I wasn't, like, trying to encourage resilience. I was shaming them and depriving them—

[Biz laughs.]

—of food. Because I—the things that I was working on and paying attention to mattered a lot more to me than they did and I basically let them know.

00:50:36 Biz Host

That... that... you're doing a horrible job. I'm sure—

[Anastasia laughs.]

—this will scar them for life. But I— *[Laughs.]* I also have to say—the moment of the, like, “Why don't you just figure this out?!” Because—because, yeah! What you're doing does—is more important in that particular moment. That is so true! *[Laughs.]* That's so true. Well, you're doing horrible.

00:51:00 Anastasia Guest
00:51:02 Biz Host

Thank you.

You're welcome. You should definitely post that story onto Facebook and see how much positive—

[Anastasia laughs.]

—feedback you get. *[Laughs.]* Alright. I'm... really trying to get outside every day. We usually let our yard go just super brown in the summer 'cause we live in California and it's very hot and we're not really home and life is good. Uh, we are now home forever. Forever and ever. And, uh, I would like at least one spot of the very small yard we have to be green a little longer. And so— *[Laughs.]*

My daughter and I go outside and we play, like, badminton in the front yard in the morning before it gets hot.

And I've just started taking the hose that has, like, a sprinkler nozzle on it, setting it, and then laying it in the grass and like let—grass. Laying it in the dirt. And letting it—because the ground is so dry—just, like... *[Laughs.]* Pool on the top and move through the yard. And so I say to Katy Belle, we should—we should probably move that. And she, like, goes and picks it up and like moves it like an inch. But it's not aiming it any better direction and I've decided I'm going to over there and I am going to move that—Katy Belle, that's—it's not—come on! Move it—move it where it's making a difference! And I've— *[Laughs.]* Pick it up. Put it down. And then tension in the hose has decided to teach me a lesson and that thing like a snake just rollls over. And like just right in my face.

[Anastasia laughs.]

I am like a foot from it as I try to put it down. It's like trying to put down a snake! But it's going to turn around and bite you! This is exactly what it was like. And it just... I had showered?

00:52:45 Anastasia Guest
00:52:46 Biz Host

Ohhhh.

I had—I had done the hair, meaning it was in a ponytail and my bangs looked alright?

[Anastasia laughs.]

I just—full... full-frontal wetness. And, uh, I have raised a daughter who is smart enough to know to laugh at that. So... yeah! I just was barely a person—

[Anastasia laughs.]

—I'm just barely a person in general? But that's one of those, just, like, eh. There's a little feeling of being shamed somewhere hidden in there.

00:53:14 Crosstalk Crosstalk

Biz: So there ya go.

00:53:16 Biz Host

Anastasia: *[Through laughter]* I'm sure it looked terrible, too! Oh, it looked horrible! I—there's nothing graceful about women in their 40s getting hosed in their faces in their front yard at 8:00 in the morning! There—that's not, like... not a—not—not in a sitcom anywhere. Alright.

00:53:31 Anastasia Guest
00:53:33 Biz Host

Oh, that's a good fail.

Whew!

00:53:34 Crosstalk Crosstalk

Anastasia: You failed! You did that wrong! You did it all wrong! And you wasted time and you wasted—just, energy. That's all the worst things you did there.

00:53:44 Biz Host
00:53:45 Caller Caller

Biz: Thank you! I—I—thank you. I did it wrong, wrong, wrong. Yeah! Everything. Everything.

Yeah! It was bad.

[Answering machine beeps.]

Hi, guys! This is a fail. Um, so I have been homeschooling my kids like many of us, and working from home, and... um... you know, it's

mostly been a shitshow. But I at least felt like I was on top of it. Y'know. We're getting stuff done. Um—

[Biz laughs.]

—everything's crazy and—but I felt like I was doing it! So I get an email from the kids' teacher today. Um, it went out to the whole class and she mentioned something about their language arts assignment. And I kinda thought to myself, I was like, language arts? What language arts assignment?

[Biz laughs.]

So, um, sure enough, I went back through all the emails that she had sent—for weeks now, probably, six or seven weeks—

[Biz laughs.]

—that have included, um, y'know, math and art and music and... English, uh, the language arts. We just haven't been doing them! I—I don't know. I didn't see 'em. I, uh... somehow didn't realize my kids needed to learn English. So I don't know.

[Biz laughs.]

I'm not a teacher. I just... ahhh. I don't know. My kids aren't gonna learn to read or write? Who knows. I guess we'll figure it out next year. Thanks for the show. You guys are doing a great job. I kinda suck.

00:55:15 Biz Host

Oh, yeah! There—there are so many things that you failed in. First, you admitted to not reading the emails! *[Laughs.]* I mean, like—I like that you were honestly, like, eh, six or seven weeks' worth of emails.

[Anastasia laughs.]

I also really am wondering what you've been homeschooling? If you— *[Laughs.]* If you haven't been doing what the teacher's been sending out? Like, yes, we've been homeschooling; it's been good—I'm like, wonder what it's been! Or like is it like *I Love Lucy* appreciation? Is it, like, how to... I don't know! I'm just wondering what you have been working on as opposed to what they would like you to work on.

[Anastasia laughs.]

You're doing a horrible job helping your children to learn. *[Laughs.]* You're doing a very, very bad job.

00:56:09 Music Music

"Mom Song" by Adira Amram. Mellow piano music with lyrics.

You are the greatest mom I've ever known.

I love you, I love you.

When I have a problem, I call you on the phone.

I love you, I love you.

[Music fades out.]

00:56:34 Promo

Clip

[Radio interference followed by laidback music with a snare drum beat. A phone rings as the DJ speaks.]

Radio DJ: Welcome back to *Fireside Chat* on KMAX. With me in-studio to take your calls is the dopest duo on the West Coast, Oliver Wang and Morgan Rhodes.

[Click.]

Go ahead, caller.

Caller: Hey. Uh, I'm looking for a music podcast that's insightful and thoughtful, but like, also helps me discover artists and albums that I've never heard of.

Morgan Rhodes: Yeah, man. Sounds like you need to listen to *Heat Rocks*. Every week, myself—and I'm Morgan Rhodes—and my co-host here, Oliver Wang, talk to influential guests about a canonical album that has changed their lives.

Oliver Wang: Guests like Moby, Open Mike Eagle, talk about albums by Prince, Joni Mitchell, and so much more.

Caller: Yooo! What's that show called again?

Morgan: *Heat Rocks*. Deep dives into hot records.

Oliver: Every Thursday on Maximum Fun.

00:57:22 Promo

Clip

[Music suddenly gives way to static and a dial tone.]

Music: Slow, suspenseful, sci-fi-style synth music—like something one might find in a 1980s sci-fi show.

Speaker 1: Strange planets. Curious technology. And a fantastic vision of the distant future. Featuring Martin Star.

Martin Starr: So we're going on Day 14. Shuttle still hasn't come.

Speaker 1: Aparna Nancherla.

Aparna Nancherla: The security system provides you with emotional security. You do the rest!

Speaker 1: Echo Kellum.

Echo Kellum: Can you disconnect me, or not?

Speaker 1: Hari Kondabolu.

Hari Kondabolu: I'm staying.

Speaker 1: From *Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*, Geoffrey McGivern!

Geoffrey McGivern: Could you play Cindee Lauper's "Girls Just Want To Have Fun"?

Speaker 1: It's... *The Outer Reach!* Stories... from beyond.

Speaker 2: Now available for free at MaximumFun.org or anywhere you listen.

00:58:09 Biz Host *[Music wraps up.]*
Oh my gosh. I... really liked speaking with Anastasia. I'm gonna—again—look at Hanna through the Zoom. Wasn't she nice? She was nice! And it was very interesting and I just—I just—all of the books are good. They are difficult. Because they are dealing with difficult... topics? But... you know how I feel about books as being a really wonderful way to start conversations that are difficult with our kids? With ourselves? With others? Again—you should go and look for any of Anastasia's books. *Divorce is the Worst. Death is Stupid. Tell Me About Sex, Grandma! And Not My Idea: A Book About Whiteness.* Get one for you. Get one for your school's libraries. Get one for your library library. These are—they're really good! They're—they're very impactful and helpful and... that was great. You know what's also great? Listening to a mom have a breakdown.

00:59:17 Caller Caller *[Answering machine beeps.]*
Hi, Biz and Theresa! This is a rant. It's just... it's angry but it's just also like an exhausted rant. Because... where I live things are opening back up quickly. And my partner and I are in agreement that even though things are opening back up quickly that we want to still be cautious and I know the kids are tired of being at home and I'm tired of balancing all of the things and now my partner still has to still work from home but I'm required to go back to work. Except I'm not an essential worker! I work in a library.

And so one daycare I can't send them to because it's for essential workers only and the other one is more expensive and costs more than I make in a week and so now I'm upset because I have to go back to work in an environment that's not 100% safe and my partner's upset because he has to watch, y'know, the kids and make sure that they're fine when they would rather be with their friends doing things and my kids are upset because they want to see their friends and still not quite safe to do that and everybody's upset and nobody's upset at each other but it's a lot of hurt feelings and frustration and high anxiety in the house. And makes me really tired.

01:00:55 Biz Host
And even though it's early in the morning and I'm walking the dogs to get a moment of peace, I just—I can't—can't get peace from these thoughts. And... it's hard! And everybody's doing a really good job and even though everybody's trying their best it doesn't make it any less hard. So. Thank you for reminding us that in these times we are—we're still doing a good job. Thank you.
Wow. You said it at the end. Just because everybody is trying their best... doesn't mean it's not still hard. You are doing... a remarkable... job. This is a... deeply unusual situation we find ourselves in. There is still... a lot that is unknown about this virus? There... is still a lot known—a lot unknown about the effects of reopening? And even when that information comes out, what does

that mean? Like— *[Laughs.]* Like, I—like, I feel... I don't think we're allowing ourselves to acknowledge the frustration and the emotional exhaustion from not being able to answer "what are we supposed to be doing right now." I mean, like, I—that—it's—it's really hard.

And also! You're a librarian? You're essential to me! I love you! I love librarians! How many times can I say how much I love librarians? I just signed the kids up for summer reading at our library! And... I don't know how we're gonna make it work. There's something about me calling and picking up books. But— *[Laughs.]* We're gonna do it! Because libraries are deeply essential to communities. So... y'know. Let me just—derail and go down that way. But like what you're expressing is what we're all... feeling. Every day I wake up to a new thought of—well, I hadn't thought about that situation. Going back to work and not having childcare. This is unbelievable. That this still isn't being addressed right now. That—that it feels like the country has just decided to say—to refer to it as "in the fall." Right? Like... this thing that's gonna happen. But we need all other workers to come back to work—well, what are we supposed to do with our children? Why isn't the very first group whose problem that needs to be solved—why isn't one of those first groups teachers? And administration? And educators working on how to solve that first before, y'know, the corporate office? Right? Like, that—is a nicer building than our school!

So like, I—this is a real thing people are struggling with. Kids not being able to see their friends? I—for as doom and gloom as I am, I really didn't think we would still be sheltering in place like we are here in California. And I want the kids to go see their friends so badly. And... this has gone on for so long that I know that there are times I feel like—is this really happening? Oh, it can't be a big deal! This isn't happening! *[Laughs.]* And yet we don't do it, because I know it's happening. But like, it's—again—when we don't have the information and everything is just about risk assessment? That's like a really shitty place! And it's like we talked about this whole show! Was like, how do you help kids navigate these difficult times... I don't know how else to explain to my kids why they can't see their friends. Y'know?

They—they know there's a pandemic. They know there's a risk. And yet here we all are still wanting to... go. You're going through a lot of anxiety! You're about to go back to work! And your partner, who's been working from home, is suddenly now going to be in charge of two—two jobs. Y'know. His job and... childcare. And that's a lot. And I'm so happy to hear that everybody's still being reasonable with each other! *[Laughs.]* I am not being very reasonable. And I—I see you... and I see that you're doing... a remarkable... job. *[Deep breath.]*

01:05:14 Biz

Host

What did we learn today? Ugh! We learned that we have to continue to have really difficult conversations with our children and help them be people that we want to send out into the world. Y'know? Like, that's hard! That is, actually, hard—like... real and hard. And... important. And I think about comparing it to all the bullshit that I deem important? That I let myself get focused on with the kids and home and—and all of it. And I'm like—oh, yeah!

Her comparison—Anastasia’s comparison to the mittens really hits home. You know what I mean? Like... I think a lot of the parenting stuff is bullshit and tedious and horrible and I fucking hate it! *[Laughs.]* But... these bigger discussions? Is where I think... the real... the real weight of being a parent comes into place. And I kind of like that she had a spin on it? That made that be—I don’t think I ever thought about that being the important part of all this. I—I really didn’t. And so... that... really helps me... when I think about navigating these conversations with them. We also learned that—*[sighs.]* This is all still happening, guys. It’s all still happening. The pandemic is still happening. Not knowing what’s next with the pandemic is still happening.

What is still happening and has been happening for hundreds and hundreds of years when it comes to... racial injustice in our country? Is still happening? I—I just always go back to those quotes about, y’know, we cannot... be free until all of us are free. We cannot have... justice until there is justice for everyone. And... just like these books and the topics that we talked about today... these are difficult discussions to have with ourselves? With our children, and with the people in our lives. But it is—it is worth it. Because the change has to come. It is not “I want change to come.” The change has to come.

So... everybody? I see you. ‘K? You don’t have to prove to me on Facebook that you’re trying. *[Laughs.]* ‘K? I see you. I know that you’re doing a good job. Everything... is upside-down right now. It’s all producing a lot of feelings. Triggering a lot of old injuries. Causing a lot of new injuries. And... uh, it’s really hard to know where to go. Especially when you’re completely depleted. And... I think you’re remarkable. I see you. And you are doing a very good job.

Theresa? I know that you are doing an excellent job. Everybody? We’re gonna figure this out together when it comes to where we’re going with this show and how we’re doing it while Theresa needs the time that she needs. I appreciate you guys continuing to support the show and listen and... I’m gonna be here next week and I just want to say thank you to Hannah, who has been incredibly helpful and supportive during this odd time. *[Laughs.]* But it’s fun! Odd can be fun and we are gonna figure this out together! You guys are doing a great job. Hannah’s doing a great job. I am here functioning like a person except when it comes to watering the yard and I will be here next week. And I will talk to you then. Bye!

01:09:17 Music

Music

“Mama Blues” by Cornbread Ted and the Butterbeans. Strumming acoustic guitar with harmonica and lyrics.

*I got the lowdown momma blues
Got the lowdown momma blues
Gots the lowdown momma blues
The lowdown momma blues
Gots the lowdown momma blues
Got the lowdown momma blues
You know that’s right*

[Music fades somewhat, plays in background of dialogue.]

01:09:42	Biz	Host	We'd like to thank MaxFun; our producer, Hannah Smith; our husbands, Stefan Lawrence and Jesse Thorn; our perfect children, who provide us with inspiration to say all these horrible things; and of course, you, our listeners. To find out more about the songs you heard on today's podcast and more about the show, please go to MaximumFun.org/onebadmother . For information about live shows, our book and press, please check out OneBadMotherPodcast.com . <i>One Bad Mother</i> is a member of the Maximum Fun family of podcasts. To support the show go to MaximumFun.org/donate .
01:10:11	Theresa	Host	
01:10:34	Speaker 1	Guest	<i>[Music continues for a while before fading out.]</i> MaximumFun.org .
01:10:36	Speaker 2	Guest	Comedy and culture.
01:10:37	Speaker 3	Guest	Artist owned—
01:10:39	Speaker 4	Guest	—Audience supported.