

00:00:00	Dan	Host	On this episode we discuss— <i>Hillbilly Elegy!</i>
00:00:04	Stuart	Host	Which is like a <i>Hellbilly</i> elegy, without all them dang Draculas!
00:00:08	Music	Music	Light, up-tempo, electric guitar with synth instruments.
00:00:35	Dan	Host	Hey, and welcome to <i>The Flop House!</i> I'm Dan McCoy.
00:00:37	Stuart	Host	Hey! I'm Stuart Wellington!
00:00:38	Elliott	Host	I'm Elliott Kalan!
00:00:41	Dan	Host	And yeah. This is a show—
<i>[Multiple people laugh.]</i>			
00:00:43	Elliott	Host	Dan, did you—did I take you by surprise?
00:00:45	Crosstalk	Crosstalk	<b>Elliott:</b> By not going on further?
00:00:48	Dan	Host	<b>Dan:</b> Well usually you say you're Elliott Kalan— —and then you kinda just ramble on about some nonsense for a while? So it did take me by surprise that you stopped after your name. <i>[Through laughter]</i> I have to be honest.
<i>[Stuart laughs.]</i>			
00:00:56	Elliott	Host	Oh, okay. I thought I'd do something different this time! Note to self: never do that again! Ramble on in the future.
<i>[Dan laughs.]</i>			
00:01:03	Crosstalk	Crosstalk	Just be a regular Led Zepp and ramble on. <b>Stuart:</b> Yeah, I think Elliott was trying to—
00:01:06	Stuart	Host	<b>Dan:</b> This is a pod—hm. Before we started recording—or maybe while we were recording—Elliott was trying to steer this into more of a, like a... a relationship/sexual wellness podcast direction? And Dan said, "No sir. Time to get to the meat of what we're supposed to do here. The meat being movie talk."
00:01:21	Elliott	Host	So I had to stop myself after my name from saying anything more than that. 'Cause I knew it would go in a direction Dan didn't want. Much like how—when I was on <i>Jeopardy!</i> recently—a little brag—I was talking about my grandma. And I had to stop myself from saying her address out loud?
<i>[Multiple people laugh.]</i>			
00:01:40	Dan	Host	Because—which I realized I was about to say after I named her? And I was like, "No, she doesn't need this information out there."
00:01:46	Elliott	Host	Now why is that— <i>[Laughs.]</i> Why is that second nature to just tag— Well I was saying "My grandmother, Barbara Bruschel of New York—" And I was about to say "Barbara Bruschel of—" And then her address as if I was announcing like a letter that I'd got on a radio show?
00:01:57	Stuart	Host	Oh, right. Or if you were ordering something through like Domino's Pizza Tracker.
00:02:00	Crosstalk	Crosstalk	<b>Elliott:</b> Exactly. Yes. Which I do—
00:02:02	Elliott	Host	<b>Stuart:</b> For your grandma. Not just— Which I do over the phone constantly.
<i>[Multiple people laugh.]</i>			

I'm constantly sending my grandma pizzas.

*[All laugh. Dan at length.]*

00:02:11 Dan Host And then screenshots of the tracker to let her know.

*[Elliott laughs.]*

00:02:13 Elliott Host Yeah. But I have to—she doesn't use computers or a phone. Actually, she uses both. So I have to mail her photographs of what the tracker looks like so the tracker gets to her long after the pizza does. And living in Manhattan as she does, there's no source for pizza other than Domino's.

00:02:28 Dan Host And the problem then is like—because of the lag, she thinks another pizza is coming. So then you have to—

00:02:34 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Dan:** —order another pizza and the cycle continues.

00:02:39 Elliott Host **Elliott:** Which means—yeah. I've gotta order another one. Exactly. It's a delicious cycle, is what we call it.

*[Dan laughs.]*

00:02:41 Stuart Host And in a way you could make a cycle out of pizza pies 'cause they're kinda like wheels, right?

*[Dan laughs.]*

00:02:47 Elliott Host Unless they're Detroit style.

00:02:48 Dan Host I mean, you're not gonna get much traction.

*[Through laughter]* Yeah. I think they're not load-bearing.

*[All laugh.]*

00:02:51 Stuart Host Depends on the pizza!

00:02:52 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Elliott:** That's not a support pizza.

**Dan:** You're just gonna find yourself collapsed in a pile of metal and pizza. *[Laughs.]*

00:02:58 Elliott Host I mean, sounds wonderful to me. Except maybe the metal part. That's kinda what happened in *Star Wars* when they went into that Death Star trash compactor. They were in like kind of a pile of metal and pizza, right?

00:03:09 Stuart Host Yeah. I feel like that's what the designer notes were from George Lucas. Was that I think the original script says they fall into a big puddle of pizza.

00:03:17 Elliott Host Yeah, yeah. But he had to explain that he meant "space pizza" and so Ralph McQuarrie had to do a bunch of concept paintings of what pizza would look like in outer space. And so by the time they got to the prequels, George Lucas just said, "Space Diner." And they were just like, "Make it look like a '50s diner. Like why not? Have an alien wearing a little paper hat and an apron. Why not."

00:03:34 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Elliott:** "Just go for it."

**Stuart:** And he has a moustache!

00:03:36 Elliott Host "It's the perfect form." Does he have a moustache?

00:03:38 Elliott Host Yeah! Dexter Jetster has a moustache, yeah.

*[Elliott laughs.]*

00:03:41 Elliott Host *[Through laughter]* Dexter Jetster!

00:03:43 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Dan:** Is he the one with multiple arms, too? Or is—okay.

**Stuart:** He has multiple arms.

**Elliott:** Yes. Yeah.

00:03:47 Elliott Host So he can flip multiple hamburgers. Space burgers, they call ‘em.  
00:03:52 Stuart Host I’m glad that space replaces “ham” in that word? *[Laughs.]*

*[Dan laughs.]*

00:03:55 Elliott Host Yeah. It’s a burger made out of space. And he flips ‘em with a spatula, which is a portmanteau of “space” and “spatula.”

*[Multiple people laugh.]*

00:04:02 Dan Host “Space” and “atula.” So—we watch—we—look. Here’s the thing. We’re a podcast. You know that part.

*[Elliott laughs.]*

But maybe you don’t know—if you haven’t listened before—we watch a bad movie and then we talk about it. And in this instance, we watched *Hillbilly Elegy*, the latest big movie to be released on Netflix. Was it gonna be a theatrical before all this pandemic?

00:04:30 Elliott Host I have to assume so. I have to assume that the only reason that a movie like this gets made is to be eligible for the Academy Awards, so I have to assume. And it’s a Ron Howard-directed. Big stars. Glenn Close. Amy Adams. Whoever plays J.D., the main character. I have to assume it was meant to be originally for the theatres. Like the way *Roma* was a Netflix movie but it was in the theatres.

00:04:52 Dan Host Yeah. It’s a movie that uh... came out a little ways back. It had a little controversy ‘cause the book it’s based on had a lot of political content that I can’t speak to ‘cause I didn’t read the book. But the movie is kind of remarkable for how *[through laughter]* apolitical it is, to the degree that it somehow manages to say less than nothing, I think. By the—

*[Elliott laughs.]*

*[Through laughter]* By the end.

00:05:21 Elliott Host It’s certainly a movie where, by the end of it, you’re like, “Why was that?”

00:05:24 Dan Host Mm-hm.

00:05:25 Stuart Host Yeah.

00:05:26 Elliott Host Like, why did this—what was the driving force behind making this other than that it’s based on a bestselling book and therefore is money?

00:05:31 Stuart Host Also, considering that it’s a movie that takes place over, y’know, a number of different years and it jumps around in time. And at multiple points characters are like watching the news? They make a lot of effort to not actually say anything about the political figures in the news. *[Laughs.]*

00:05:47 Elliott Host No. I mean, we’ll get to the point where—one of the characters wants to watch political news and is shut down because his grandma wants to watch *Terminator 2*. So—

00:05:55 Stuart Host Which—in her defense—a movie she has seen a hundred times. I mean, you could watch it a hundred more times. It’s *Terminator 2*.

00:06:03 Dan Host There was an early—

00:06:04 Elliott Host A movie—as which we’ll find—informs her life philosophy.

[Stuart laughs.]

00:06:12 Dan Host So the movie has more to say about *Terminator 2* than it does about America, really. [Laughs.]  
There is an early scene where our lead, as a child, wants to watch Al Gore. And Amy Adams turns the TV off. And I don't know any child [through laughter] who's ever said, "No, no, give me more Al Gore."

00:06:26 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Stuart:** If only. If only.

00:06:31 Elliott Host **Dan:** Unless it's in one of those *Futurama* appearances, perhaps. I dunno. But.  
I will say—when I was a kid, I thought it was Alf Gore. And I was like, "Yeah, let's finally see Alf get bloody! Like let's see what Alf does when he's let loose and unleashed like that movie with Jet Li where he had the leash on him—"

00:06:41 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Elliott:** "—and then the leash gets taken off of him."

00:06:43 Elliott Host **Stuart:** Uh-huh. *Danny the Dog*? Yeah.  
I don't remember what it's called. Yeah.

00:06:44 Dan Host We should probably just get into the specifics of the movie soon.

00:06:47 Elliott Host Oh, sure. Okay. Let's talk about it. So guys? I'm driving the buggy on this one. I'm gonna mention first off, there's a lot of arguing and yelling in this movie. A special kind of yelling—Oscar-style yelling. The kind of yelling that looks really good in the clip that they play when they announce your name at the Oscars. So I'm gonna be doing a running tally—as best as I can—of those Oscar-yelling scenes. We begin. It's 1997. That's right—the best time to be alive. *Star Wars* prequels were just a couple years off. You could go see *Star Wars Special Edition* in the theatres. *Jurassic Park* was four years old and still going strong in the hearts of America's youth, and other stuff was probably happening too!

00:07:27 Stuart Host They—I hate to throw in an IMDB goofs here? But when they were in 1997, they didn't have any kind of an establishing shot that indicated that me, Stuart Wellington, was 17 years old at the time. I feel like it would've been a better way of establishing exactly what year they were in. Stuart Wellington, probably wearing a t-shirt that says, like, "KMFDM" on it or something.

00:07:50 Elliott Host And what would you be doing in this establishing scene?

00:07:52 Stuart Host Oh man. I was 17, so I was probably seated.

00:07:58 Crosstalk Crosstalk [All laugh.]  
**Dan:** I spent a lot of that year on my butt.

00:08:02 Elliott Host **Elliott:** I—yeah—I— [Laughs.]  
I forgot that was the sitting portion of your life. Yeah.

00:08:04 Stuart Host So I was probably seated and I'm guessing I was rifling through a stack of *Reptiles*—or *Reptiles* magazines or—

00:08:14 Dan Host Oh, okay. The "magazines" was important.

00:08:17 Elliott Host [All laugh.]  
[Through laughter] Not a stack of lizards and turtles. Yeah. Which would be appropriate, because the movie begins—we're introduced by our narrator, J.D.. He's a nice young boy. So nice he rescues a turtle from the road in Jackson, Kentucky. Which you think at first is

where he lives, but it's not. It's a world of beautiful nature and noble poor, white folk who either bully J.D. or come in and beat up the bullies who are bullying J.D..

00:08:39 Crosstalk Crosstalk

**Stuart:** It's a layer cake.

00:08:40 Dan Host

**Dan:** Now can I say this is one of the—  
Sorry, I cut you off. But this is one of the many digressions in the film that I'm like, I don't know why this is in the movie. This movie puts in a lot of stuff where you're like, I don't know why this is in the movie. And this is the first of it. 'Cause it's like, okay. He makes a point of saying he spent most of his life somewhere else. Nothing is particularly learned about him in this first scene. And they also make Kentucky and Ohio look like two vastly different universes when they are geographically close. *[Laughs.]* So.

00:09:14 Elliott Host

Yeah. So I think—but I think emotionally they're supposed to be two different universes. In Kentucky you live out in the woods and family is the most important thing and you don't have to worry about bullies because somebody's uncle is gonna come by and beat that bully up. But his family—he just spends the summers there. And that's where his family is originally from. His grandparents left and went to Ohio. That's right—they're part of the Kentucky Diaspora that has spread all throughout the United States but maintains that rich ethnic culture of Kentucky no matter where they go. And someday they'll be able to return to the homeland, I assume. He lives in Ohio with his mom, Amy Adams; his sister, and his Mamaw, Glenn Close. That's his grandma, for anyone who's not from Kentucky. So technically since they live in Ohio they're not hillbillies but suburbillies. Which are—y'know, it's where hillbillies go when they can no longer live in the hills. Where do they live in Ohio? It was a bustling mill town when Mamaw and Papaw moved to Ohio in the '30s or '40s. I wasn't quite certain. But now? It's your classic American shuttered main street. And what J.D. says in the narration is—his family? What they were missing? Was hope. Cut to 2011! J.D. seems to have found his hope 'cause he's working his way through Yale Law School! But if he can't get a paid summer internship, he cannot afford to stay in school. He goes to a fancy meet-and-greet with potential law firm employers—

*[Someone sighs.]*

—but he cannot get a handle on how much silverware there is at his place sitting! There's too many forks! There's too many forks, dammit!

*[Stuart laughs.]*

Too many forks! Also he has trouble ordering wine. But mainly it's the fork things, which drives him so confused that he has to call his girlfriend to ask her, "How do I use the forks?" Dan, you look like you have something to say on the subject of forks?

00:10:49 Crosstalk Crosstalk

**Dan:** No, I mean, like—yes.

00:10:52 Dan Host

**Elliott:** Or the maximum amount thereof.

There's a lot of silverware that he is confused by, and he is confused by the fact that there's more than one type of wine *[through laughter]* at this place. And the thing—like, look. At this

point he has been to Yale Law School, but he's also just a human that exists in the world.

00:11:08 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Dan:** Like a very—

00:11:11 Dan Host **Stuart:** He works in a restaurant!  
The very existence—

*[Elliott laughs.]*

—of different types of silverware for stuff shouldn't baffle him. Now I looked—y'know, this is one of the times that I looked. I'm like, "Okay, is this in the book?" Turns out this is in the book. But I still don't believe it actually happened. *[Through laughter]* Because it is like he is—I mean, at least not to this degree. It is as if he is an alien who has arrived on earth and is like, "But one only needs one implement of food devouring!"

00:11:38 Elliott Host Dan, he is an alien, from the planet poor people. He's essentially throughout the movie as a visit to the planet rich from the planet poor. Maybe that's what it's like. I don't know. I grew up middle class. I think it was David Brooks who wrote that column a few years ago about bringing a friend of his to a sandwich restaurant and his friend being bewildered by the variety of sandwiches and ingredients. And being paralyzed. Their thoughts unable to move.

*[Dan laughs.]*

Because they could not comprehend so many sandwich ingredients. And at the time I was like, "That sounds made up. I don't think that's a real thing." And if you were a good friend, David Brooks, you would explain what stuff is good on a sandwich. 'Cause I've certainly been to plenty of restaurants where I didn't know what something was on the menu and I asked whoever I was with and they said, "Oh, that's this thing." Or—

00:12:18 Dan Host "Your friend is hungry, David Brooks."

*[Stuart laughs.]*

Yeah. Describe what a sandwich is to him. Don't go home and write a column about it. Get him that sandwich!

00:12:25 Elliott Host Especially when you know that his brother—Mel Brooks—would've done a hilarious routine improvising what each of those ingredients are. They're not really related. Stuart?

00:12:33 Stuart Host So he's—he gets there.

*[Dan laughs.]*

And he's having a lot of trouble figuring out the etiquette for fine dining. And part of me's like, "Yeah, man, maybe you shouldn't get this job if something like this is fucking you up so bad. You need to control your shit. Fake it 'til you make it, buddy!" And—

*[Multiple people laugh.]*

And that's even before we get to the point when a lawyer or one of the, I guess—they're lawyers, right? That they're talking to or whatever?

00:13:01	Crosstalk	Crosstalk	<b>Elliott:</b> They are lawyers.
00:13:02	Elliott	Host	<b>Stuart:</b> One of the guys— Now this is where law students are supposed to have dinner with members of law firms so that they can—it's kind of like an audition dinner to see who's gonna get an interview to get a job. Because much like the <i>Rise of Skywalker</i> , there's a lot of steps to get where you actually wanna go. You've gotta get to the dinner. Then after the dinner you get an interview. And then after the interview maybe you get a job. And at the job you get the dagger that you hold up to the sun and it tells you where the planet is that you need to find the magic emperor thing? I don't really remember what they were looking for in the <i>Rise of Skywalker</i> . Like a key?
00:13:34	Crosstalk	Crosstalk	<b>Stuart:</b> Probably.
00:13:37	Dan	Host	<b>Dan:</b> Uh, there's some dagger that took you to—yeah. The Death Star wreckage. There was a key there that took you somewhere else. Um—
00:13:43	Crosstalk	Crosstalk	<b>Stuart:</b> And this is the scene where the lawyer—
00:13:46	Stuart	Host	<b>Dan:</b> Seemed like a waste of time. When J.D. reveals his background he uses a little bit of like—as like window dressing to make himself seem more interesting. And this is when one of the lawyers used the term “redneck” and he says, “Uh, we don't use that word.” In a way that felt very offensive to me. I don't know why. <i>[Laughs.]</i>
00:14:04	Elliott	Host	<i>[Elliott laughs.]</i> Well so he gets—you're right. He calls his girlfriend about this silverware problem, then gets a phone call from his sister saying, “You need to come home. Your mom has just OD'd.” The movie presents this as almost as harrowing as the silverware problem.  <i>[Dan laughs.]</i>  And then he immediately hangs up on his sister and goes back to dinner. And while they—and he starts playing it up. He's like, “Y'know, my family, we're hillbilly royalty! 'Cause we're descended from the Hatfields and the McCoys!” And the lawyer is like, “Hey, I guess—y'know, what's it like being—must be nice not being around those rednecks!” And he goes, “Excuse me, <u>sir</u> .” And I was like, “Well you were the one who was playing up the hillbilly aspect!” Like I dunno. And the—it's one of those moments where—I guess it's supposed to be that <u>he</u> can talk like that 'cause he's from Kentucky by way of Ohio? But other people—it's unsure. There's some sort of etiquette dynamic going on that I, certainly, not being a hillbilly and not being a wealthy Yale lawyer, I do not know how it operates. I am merely—guys? I'm just a middle-class Jewish New Jersey guy who works in Hollywood. I don't know how either of these worlds operate. I'm in my bubble and I'm not gonna try to puncture their bubbles. So.
00:15:06	Dan	Host	I— <i>[Laughs.]</i> I would be somewhat perturbed if someone made assumptions about someplace I lived. The degree to which, though, these characters are portrayed as like comically... out-of-touch rich people? Is... like, they all should have like bad guy signs on them, I feel like, in this scene? Because I'm not saying that there aren't

plenty comically out-of-touch rich people, but these are like... these people act like they have never talked to anyone who was not wealthy in their life. And they're people who hire students—many of whom, presumably, grew up as he did and worked hard to sort of be able to fund going to the law school and changing their circumstances somewhat.

00:16:02 Elliott Host But also, the one lawyer is slightly offensive and J.D. comes down on him. And the other lawyer—the one J.D. really wants to impress—seems to be on J.D.'s side almost instantly. Like it—and if anything, it's like now J.D. recognizes the power of offense, I guess. But anyway. J.D.—what gets me the most about him is, he clearly has a strong narrative of “I lifted myself up to get to this place” and that's a good sellable narrative since he wrote a book about it! But I guess at that point in his life he doesn't notice it. He still sees it as a weakness. Anyway.

00:16:36 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Dan:** Well this is also—sorry.

00:16:38 Dan Host **Elliott:** J.D. now flashes—  
I mean, for what it's worth—and it may not be much to compare it to quote-unquote “real life,” 'cause I am sure that his memoir is also fictionalized to some degree. But—

00:16:50 Elliott Host I mean, he has a talking horse in it. Yeah.

00:16:52 Dan Host *[Dan laughs.]*  
But like, from what I looked into, y'know, this is not... the way it was. Like, his—people that he dealt with kind of like looked on his background as like sort of an interesting factor, but not a thing that like—if anything, a thing that set him apart, as you were saying, Elliott? And not a thing that he hid. Like he seems to be concerned about hiding to some degree where he came from until he sees how it can maybe advantage himself.

00:17:21 Elliott Host Yeah. I will say—it's—this is—this movie—so I just—because of scheduling we are recording this before our live show but we are releasing it afterwards. Last night I did my review of *Teen Wolf*, and I forgot that *Teen Wolf* exists in a universe where people know about werewolves but they are oppressed?

*[Dan laughs.]*

And so it was almost like this movie is to hillbillies as *Teen Wolf* is to teen wolves. Where it's like, this is the thing that gives him his power but it's also what marks him out as an other. And in real life, I don't know that people from Kentucky are really that marked out. But I don't know! Again, if you've been to Kentucky and you went to Yale, write in. Hallie went to Yale but she's not from Kentucky. Does not count. Coloradans are treated very well there, I think. So anyway. J.D. flashes back to his youth. He and his mom—Amy Adams—are painting Easter eggs. His mom calls these their family heirlooms. They do the thing where they suck the yolk out of the egg so they can keep that eggshell. But he gets a pet dog and that dog breaks the eggs and mom loses her shit. That's right! It's Oscar-yelling scene number one!

*[Stuart laughs.]*



But then she apologized to him and bonds with him over his Magic: The Gathering cards. Which was a very real 1997 touch to me.

*[Laughs.]*

00:18:23 Stuart Host So I have a couple of points here. One is... I mean, the dog doesn't break the eggs. This is the first time that J.D. is like super clumsy and is like, "Dang it!" And knocks a table over? *[Laughs.]* And then—

*[Elliott laughs.]*

—the second thing is... buddy. If you got a fucking Lord of the Pit in 1997? Just sell that shit, dude! It's worth so much money! And to see it just sitting there? Not even single-sleeved? What the fuck, dude?

*[Multiple people laugh.]*

00:18:53 Elliott Host Well you know he doesn't really know what he's doing. He's not a guy who puts card combos together. He just sits there dinging you with Prodigal Sorcerer while you're setting up your mana and that's his only strategy. He doesn't read *InQuest* magazine or anything like that. He just doesn't know what he's doing.

00:19:10 Dan Host Now I wanna make two points that are sort of related. Not as important as the collectible cards point, but there's—there are two things that are sort of related here. Number one, you mentioned how there are all these Oscar screaming scenes. And they mostly come from Amy Adams. Some from Glenn Close. And I think that in a different movie, like, they're working hard. I think they're putting in fine performances. The problem with their performance is they're all Oscar-yelling scenes? And I blame that more on the direction and the screenwriting. 'Cause this movie feels like a parade of like incidents? And each incident is like the most dramatic incident that happened that year. And this movie has all this framing device of, "Oh, the guy as an adult going back to be with his mom in his hometown." Stuff that is apparently not in the book. And the top thing that would probably improve the movie is eliminating all that shit because it would give a little more time for some sort of nuance and like low points to go with all the screaming?

00:20:15 Elliott Host I think you're right. I mean, it's clear that there's a lot of—they're acting their hearts out, God bless 'em. It's a lot of sound and fury signifying nothing because at the heart of the movie there's kind of a meaninglessness? And I think that the framing device doesn't help because I guess it's supposed to provide stakes that like... he's gotta deal with this situation or else he's not gonna get this summer job. But it's also like, you know that he's already at Yale. Like, the biggest hurdle has been overcome. Y'know. And even if he's having trouble staying in Yale—the biggest hurdle, I assume, was getting to Yale.

00:20:47 Dan Host Yeah. Exactly. If this movie has—the stakes of this movie should not be "Will this guy get a good lawyer job?" The stakes should be "Will this kid get out of this sort of horrible family situation." That's a much bigger stake.

00:21:01 Stuart Host And this kid survived being a marine. At least like one tour of being a marine.

*[Dan laughs.]*

00:21:10 Dan Host Which gets glossed over in a montage at the end. *[Laughs.]*

00:21:13	Elliott	Host	That gets mentioned very—yeah, almost not at all. So anyway. We’re still in this flashback. Amy Adams, to make it up to him, takes him to a sports card store. He is super clumsy in it. They’re like dancing in the sports card store or something and knock over a rack of stuff. She gets into an argument with the guy who—I don’t know if he <u>owns</u> the store or just works there. It doesn’t really matter. But he has the power to throw them out of the store but it’s okay ‘cause she stole the cards that he wanted and that’s what a good mom she is. On the drive home, I don’t remember why she gets mad at him and threatens to kill them both in a car crash? Leading to Oscar-yelling scene number two—he’s like, “You’re a bitch, mom!” And she hits him and he runs away to a neighbor who calls the police. And then that flashback gets paused so that J.D. can decide, “You know what? I’m gonna skip this job interview. I’m gonna drive all night to be with—ten hours!—to be with my mom in Kentucky.” And then in the memory, Mamaw shows up and J.D.’s like, “No, I won’t press charges.” And everyone avoids jail time, I guess.
00:22:03	Stuart	Host	I mean, you gloss over it and you go quickly, but it is a scene where we’re watching a mother violently abuse her child. And it’s—I guess it’s a little—at least for the viewer it’s toned down because the mother is Amy Adams and she’s not a—y’know, they’re about the same size? But it’s still fucking horrible! And you’re like—
00:22:23	Crosstalk	Crosstalk	<b>Dan:</b> Yeah, I wanted to say that this is the—
00:22:27	Elliott	Host	<b>Elliott:</b> It’s a terrible scene! While you’re watching it, you’re like, “This is horrible.”
00:22:30	Dan	Host	“I don’t know why I’m watching this.”
			But it is the closest the movie felt to—like, there are a couple of scenes in the movie that felt affecting in some way? And this is one of them because I do think it showed the sort of terrifying nature of someone who is clearly struggling with addiction that creates these huge mood swings? And how it would be to be around someone so erratic that you could be dancing with them one moment and then the next moment they threaten to kill you both in the car.
00:22:58	Elliott	Host	Yeah. Well that’s—again—if the movie was more of a... like, if it didn’t have that framing device. The framing device posits J.D. as the center of the story. And Amy Adams should be the center of the story, but instead she just becomes this hurricane that enters and leaves kind of at random, almost? I’m never entirely sure why the flashbacks are happening when they’re happening, but if it was the story of a mother and a son—and y’know. There’ve been lots of movies about mothers and sons. It’s a very effective thing to do a movie about, which is what this should be. But instead it becomes about like... “Is J.D. gonna make it to this interview on time?”
			<i>[Dan laughs.]</i>
			Which is not—it makes all these other things feel like... it feels like there’s two different movies going on. And one of them is much more harrowing than the other, but they have to be at the same kind of tone level. So it doesn’t happen.
00:23:40	Dan	Host	I’ll go you one better. One of them is ridiculously overwrought and the other one is boring. <i>[Laughs.]</i>
00:23:48	Elliott	Host	Yes! It is boring. Especially when—I mean, I’ll skip—I’ll just mention my big issue with this that I just thought of today, which I didn’t even realize at the time. Was—he’s like, “Am I gonna stay here with my

mom, who desperately needs help to stay off drugs? Or am I gonna go to this meeting?" And it's like, "I mean, maybe they won't understand 'cause they're coldhearted rich lawyers, but why not tell them you have a family medical emergency and ask if you could do the interview over the phone?"

00:24:09 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Dan:** Yeah. I—the ending—

00:24:12 Elliott Host **Elliott:** Like that—it's—

00:24:19 Stuart Host Maybe I'm coming at it from a Zoom meeting world where we do all of our things remotely. This was back in 2011 when pressing the flesh was the most important thing, but I dunno.

00:24:38 Dan Host And it's also right after he proves that he can put at least \$3,000 on his credit cards. And I was like, "Why doesn't he just get a fucking round-trip flight? He could get a round-trip flight for a couple hundred bucks. Go there. Do the interview. Be back, and his mom might still be asleep!"

00:24:38 Dan Host Yeah.

*[Elliott laughs.]*

00:24:40 Elliott Host I mean—

00:24:41 Dan Host I mean—Yeah?

00:24:54 Stuart Host No, I was gonna say, Elliott, you bring up a good point about how we all used to like to press the flesh back then. Now what—why were we pressing all that flesh? Why did it have to be flattened out?

00:24:55 Elliott Host I mean, I prefer my flesh kind of as it is.

00:24:54 Stuart Host Nope.

00:24:55 Elliott Host Well that's because, Dan, you're only at the beginning of the wrinkling process. Your flesh is going to get wrinklier and wrinklier as time goes on and you're gonna wanna press it to get those wrinkles out. To get the folds. Right now you're right at the cusp of when your flesh goes from smooth to folded?

*[Dan laughs.]*

00:25:16 Dan Host And when you press the flesh with an old person it's not like they're doing you a favor. You're doing them a favor. 'Cause you're helping smooth out all those wrinkles.

00:25:22 Elliott Host If you fold that flesh, though, you can fit into a smaller area like into the overheard compartment when folded up.

00:25:26 Stuart Host Dan, what you're saying is horrifying.

*[Dan laughs.]*

00:25:32 Elliott Host I also like that Elliott just coined a new, hip way to say "wrinkles" by calling them "wrinks."

00:25:35 Dan Host *[Multiple people laugh.]*

00:25:32 Elliott Host Yep. Or wrinky-dinks. You can call 'em that, too.

00:25:35 Dan Host Stuart, I also saw with the credit card thing? I saw a very salient thing. I was reading an article on Vox where people were talking about why is this—why does this movie feel so false? Y'know, a couple of them having grown up in Appalachia. And one of them said, "There's that scene where he's buying gasoline and he doesn't—like, his card is declined." And she was railing against the idea that in movies showing that someone is in financial distress, the shorthand is always, like, "Oh, your card has been declined."

And she's like, "Bullshit. Bullshit. If you are—if you've been in those sort of dire financial straights, you know exactly *[through laughter]* how much money you have. It is people who can afford to lose money that don't necessarily know."

00:26:24 Elliott Host That are surprised when the card is declined.  
00:26:26 Stuart Host Now that's a good point.  
00:26:27 Elliott Host I mean, it's also—yeah. I guess. Another thing that makes it feel artificial to me is that this is—for all the acting Amy Adams and Glenn Close do in it—and they're great actors and they're trying their hardest—I am never not aware that it is Amy Adams and Glenn Close on screen. And there's a line from—there's a Firesign Theater sketch where there's a line where they're introducing a movie and they go, "Stories of ordinary people told by rich Hollywood stars!"

*[Dan laughs.]*

And that's what this movie feels like the entire time. They're trying their best but they are not disappearing into those characters. Yeah. I mean, no matter how much effort they do to make Glenn Close look like Bilbo seeing the Ring in Frodo's hands—

00:26:55 Stuart Host

*[All laugh.]*

00:27:06 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Dan:** I do—I do—I—that is what—

**Elliott:** And I blame—

00:27:08 Elliott Host But I blame that on the script and the director, too. Like, I feel like they are not given the material to become characters. Y'know.  
00:27:13 Dan Host Yeah. I do admire—that is a perfect way of describing her? But I do admire that you are seeing a movie where an old person who is a big star looks that old and like they're allowed to look that old? 'Cause even in movies that try and de-glam people, like, there's only so far that they go. Whereas Glenn Close looks like plenty of old women I would see around my small town. Growing up, y'know.  
00:27:39 Stuart Host Yeah. Wearing like a cat shirt or cat sweatshirt that I would pay all my money for. *[Laughs.]*

*[Elliott laughs.]*

00:27:47 Elliott Host But they don't go too far, like Nicole Kidman in *Destroyer* where she looks like a laser beam was pointed at her face.

*[All laugh.]*

I remember watching that with my wife and she was like, "So when are they gonna show the accident she was in?" And I'm like—no.  
*[Laughs.]*

00:28:00 Dan Host Yeah. I think that's just supposed to indicate she had a lot of gin over the course of her life. *[Laughs.]*

*[Stuart laughs.]*

00:28:05 Elliott Host So anyway. He goes to the hospital. We finally see Amy Adams in the present time. She doesn't look like she's aged that much, to be honest. She does not have insurance and the hospital's kicking her out. And this is the weird thing about this movie is—again—I hadn't read the book. And I kept hearing the book was this conservative apologia. But the movie, if it has any political point, it is that you

need a universal healthcare program because the problem they keep coming up against is they don't have proper healthcare. His mom cannot afford to stay in rehab or get a hospital bed. So it was like, if ever this is about anything it's about the need for better healthcare safety net. But—

00:28:39 Dan Host Right. And—sorry, I—there's a good point, I think, that the problem with these "pulled myself up by my own bootstraps" narratives, right? Like, Audrey pointed it out watching it is that people who are sort of making that conservative argument... aren't acknowledging like why you needed to be pulled up by your bootstraps in the first place? Like, Amy Adams—and to a slightly lesser degree, Glenn Close—although not that much—are acting terribly for a lot of the movie. And it's for reasons of—

00:29:18 Elliott Host You don't mean in terms of their acting-acting. You mean like their behavior.

00:29:21 Dan Host No, their behavior. And it's because Amy Adams is struggling with addiction. Glenn Close is like sort of embittered by living near the poverty line. And the thing is, if they—if there's—the problem is that there aren't the social systems to support them. Y'know. And if that's not the problem then these people are just being assholes because they're assholes. Y'know? *[Laughs.]* Like, whereas the reason these people are kind of being horrible for a lot of it is they've had to struggle with so much. Y'know? And that equation never—

00:29:52 Elliott Host Yeah. So you're saying, Dan, if they had a UBI—a Universal Basic Income—they might not have to act so much as if they have IBS—Irritable Bowel Syndrome.

00:30:00 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Dan:** Uh, that is exactly what I'm saying. Please— *[through laughter]* please quote me as saying that. *[Laughs.]* Put it in the *Flop House* newsletter. Blast it out. *[Laughs.]*

**Elliott:** Which I have to assume is endemic. Endemic to the region. Said Dan McCoy—this is—

**Stuart:** *[Laughs.]* Yeah.

00:30:09 Elliott Host This is Dan McCoy's basic platform when he's running for office is "A UBI keeps away IBS."

00:30:14 Dan Host Mm.

00:30:16 Elliott Host Now UTI is a different issue. Anyway. Moving on. So J.D. learns about that job interview we've mentioned a couple times. He's gonna drive all night, he assumes. But what's gonna happen with his mom? Anyway, it's a ten hour drive away. He has another flashback, remembering when his grandpa—Papaw—died, and everyone in Kentucky saluted the funeral procession.

00:30:33 Stuart Host It's great. When they find the body, Glenn Close leans close and gives him a little kiss on the forehead and you can see the actor's eyeballs flutter and you're like, "Is she a fucking necromancer?"

*[All laugh.]*

00:30:45 Elliott Host You have to imagine that actor was like, "I cannot believe I'm getting a kiss from Glenn Close right now. This is amazing."

00:30:48 Stuart Host Yep. And One-Take Howard over here is like, "Fuck it. Print."

*[Elliott laughs.]*

00:30:52 Elliott Host "I learned this from Roger Corman. No one gives a shit. So let's keep moving."

00:30:56 Dan Host I actually teared—  
00:30:57 Elliott Host “I’ve got three more bestselling books to make into movies this year. Tom Hanks has only signed on for two of ‘em so let’s go.”  
00:31:03 Dan Host I actually teared up a little bit at this and Audrey was making fun of me and I’m like, “Look. I am not tearing up about these characters? I am tearing up about the concept of living your whole life with a person and then finding *[through laughter]* them dead.”

*[Stuart laughs.]*

And I was just—just thinking about that now, I’m thinking about Elliott’s old *Goosebumps* thing where it’s like, “Well this is not scary in a movie, but if it was happening to me in real life I’d be scared.”  
00:31:26 Elliott Host Sure, yeah! If it was— *[Laughs.]* If it was happening to you—if in real life you lost your lifetime spouse—  
00:31:32 Dan Host Exactly.  
00:31:33 Elliott Host —then yes, you would be sad. So I’m glad you were *[through laughter]* able to put yourself in that situation, Dan.

*[Dan laughs.]*

But it really got to me, the idea that when people in Kentucky see a—or maybe, I assume—they were living in Ohio then, but I dunno. That when poor people see a funeral procession pass by they stop and salute it like it’s the presidential death train. And that did not ring—  
00:31:54 Dan Host True. No.  
00:31:55 Elliott Host —true to me? But I don’t know. But I just didn’t like the implications that in other parts of the country people are cold-hearted and don’t care about death. Y’know.  
00:32:01 Stuart Host I think *Presidential Death Train* was the original title for *Snowpiercer*, right? *[Laughs.]*  
00:32:06 Elliott Host It—yeah. It was. But only because the originally Chris Evans was playing Franklin Pierce.  
00:32:10 Stuart Host *[Through laughter]* Oh, weird.  
00:32:11 Dan Host No, the point of that scene, Elliott, is we’re all hard-hearted in New York when we don’t *[through laughter]* salute a funeral. I was like, “Why aren’t you saluting?” “I didn’t know there was a funeral! There are millions of people in this city! I’m sorry!”  
00:32:22 Elliott Host Look, Dan, I can’t help it if I’m the kind of guy who laughs at a funeral. It’s been one week since you looked at me. So anyway.  
00:32:27 Dan Host It has been one week since *[through laughter]* I looked at you over Skype.  
00:32:30 Elliott Host That’s true. *[Through laughter]* It actually has been one week. And I can’t help—how can I help it if I think it’s funny when you’re mad? That’s the rest of that line that I was trying to think of.

*[Dan laughs.]*

00:32:37 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Dan:** And that also applies to you. *[Laughs.]*

00:32:39 Elliott Host **Elliott:** Uh, okay. So—  
Yeah. Thank you.

*[Multiple people laugh.]*

I didn't realize the song "One Week" by Barenaked Ladies is about our relationship, Dan!

*[Dan laughs.]*

But if—and if I had a million dollars, maybe I would buy you a house. I dunno. What other songs do they have?

00:32:50	Dan	Host	Uh, "Broke Into the Old Apartment." That one's actually kinda good.
00:32:54	Stuart	Host	Oh fuck that. Okay.
00:32:56	Dan	Host	You don't like it?
00:32:57	Stuart	Host	No, I'm not a Barenaked Ladies fan. I'm sorry, guys.
00:33:00	Elliott	Host	Stuart, I happen to know you <u>do</u> like naked ladies.
00:33:03	Stuart	Host	What?! Don't tell anyone, Elliott!

*[Multiple people laugh.]*

00:33:06	Elliott	Host	Sorry. It's your secret.
00:33:09	Crosstalk	Crosstalk	<b>Stuart:</b> My enemies will use it against me!

00:33:11	Elliott	Host	<b>Elliott:</b> Anyway. It reminds me that there was that old— That your enemies—like if you're hunting a rabbit, the rabbit's gonna dress up like a pretty lady to try to distract you?
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*[Dan laughs.]*

00:33:17	Stuart	Host	It's happened before!
00:33:19	Elliott	Host	The old <i>Onion</i> article, "Area Man Has Naked Lady Fetish." It's all about this disgusting fetish that this guy has—

*[Dan laughs.]*

—for seeing women without their clothes on? Okay. So. Amy Adams, she takes that death particularly hard. She was very close to Papaw. It's made clear that Papaw was, I guess, protecting her in some way from real life? I dunno. And pretty soon she's losing her nursing job by stealing pills, getting high, and roller-skating through the hallways in a scene that in an '80s comedy would be considered a rapturous joy. It's a hijinks.

00:33:48	Dan	Host	This is the second time I was like, "Now there's no way this happened." This apparently did happen. She did lose her job after—
00:33:54	Crosstalk	Crosstalk	<b>Dan:</b> —roller-skating through the hospital.

**Elliott:** You know who I blame?

00:33:57	Elliott	Host	I blame the woman who lends her the roller skates. She's in the nurse locker room and she's like, "Can I try on those roller skates?" And it's like, "Never let Amy Adams try on roller skates. That just goes without saying."
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00:34:06	Dan	Host	Well she's also like, "Where are you gonna skate?" And then it's just a hard skate to her skating down the halls. Presumably there was a point where that woman could've been like—like, "The halls? No!" Y'know? Like— <i>[Laughs.]</i>
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00:34:15	Stuart	Host	"Ha, ha! Oh, that's funny!"
00:34:16	Dan	Host	Once that question was answered...

00:34:17	Elliott	Host	As she's going to the door going, "Hey, hey, hey! Maybe don't go out there!"
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00:34:21	Crosstalk	Crosstalk	<b>Dan and Elliott:</b> "It's a hospital!"
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00:34:23	Elliott	Host	This leads to another big fight between her and J.D.. Oscar-yelling scene number three. That's three we've got so far. Then we're at
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Mamaw's house. Young J.D.—this is when he wants to watch the Clinton impeachment news but Mamaw wants to watch *Terminator 2*—

*[Stuart laughs.]*

—and she explains her life philosophy that everyone is either a good Terminator, a bad Terminator, or neutral. Which would be what—like Eddie Furlong's friend who is from *Salute Your Shorts*? Like is that neutral? Yeah, okay.

00:34:46 Crosstalk Crosstalk

**Stuart:** Now I—and I like—

00:34:49 Dan Host

**Dan:** Okay. There are two problems with this.

Number one, I don't know—if I am a Terminator, I don't know how that combined with the two bears that live inside me.

00:34:56 Elliott Host

Dan, one—you're neutral. Totally.

*[Stuart laughs.]*

And that means there's a good Terminator and a bad Terminator inside each of those bears.

00:35:03 Dan Host

*[Through laughter]* Okay. But also this idea that there are good, bad, and neutral Terminators?

00:35:10 Crosstalk Crosstalk

**Stuart:** Well they don't specify that the neutrals are Terminators.

00:35:13 Elliott Host

**Dan:** Why did Skynet build these neutral Terminators? What? I don't think it's a neutral Terminator—like a Terminator exoskeleton robot is just walking around going, "Eh, I'm not gonna get involved. I don't have a stake in this." I think it's more that—maybe she's saying you're a good Terminator, you're a bad Terminator, or you're the kind of person that gets shot accidentally by a Terminator. I don't know. But I think the neutral is not considered a Terminator. Stuart, you're the kind of T expert around here.

00:35:35 Stuart Host

Uh-huh. Yep.

00:35:36 Dan Host

Texpert.

00:35:37 Stuart Host

I'm a Texpert. Yep. *[Laughs.]* So what are you asking me to give a ruling here, whether or not "neutral" indicates a Terminator or not? Clearly not. I mean, just the act of Terminating means that you're picking a side. Whether you're fighting for the future or not, guys.

00:35:50 Elliott Host

Okay. Fair point. Now Stuart, this is—and I don't wanna—this is possibly insulting, but you're clearly not a hillbilly. Your mother's clearly not a crazy old lady.

00:36:02 Crosstalk Crosstalk

**Elliott:** But the stories you would tell—

00:36:05 Stuart Host

**Stuart:** No, I'm from a very flat part of the country.

00:36:07 Elliott Host

Northern Indiana. There are no hills to be found.

00:36:10 Stuart Host

No hills. Yeah. You're a plainbilly, if anything.

But we do adopt a slight Southern twang. A Southern twang that I have certainly played up since I moved to New York and wanted to look more distinct, I think? When I started hanging out with a friend from England I found that my twang got worse and I'm like, "Ugh. Why do I do this? *[Laughs.]* Why am I trying to peacock?"

00:36:30 Elliott Host

But this scene of Mamaw wanting to watch *Terminator 2* and really getting into the content of it just reminded me of so many stories of your mom—



[Stuart laughs.]

00:36:45 Stuart Host —sharing horror or science fiction movies with you? And it just made me—I was like, “I forgot what a cool mom Stuart has.” Like, this scene reminded me about that.  
Yeah. She would always make me watch things and she’s always like, “Stuart would love this!” And half the time it was like... like *Creepshow 2* or something that would scar me and I would be like—

[Elliott laughs.]

00:36:55 Dan Host Half the time it was *Emmanuelle in Space*?  
00:36:57 Stuart Host [Through laughter] Yeah. “Stuart would love this!” And yeah.  
00:37:01 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Stuart:** And we did talk—I have talked on the podcast about the time—

**Elliott:** “He likes space!”

00:37:03 Stuart Host —my mom caught me and my buddies watching the sex scene in *Terminator* and laughing. And she furiously turned off the VHS player and said that they’re doing it for the future. [Laughs.] And I was like—

[All laugh.]

00:37:20 Dan Host Oh man, I love it so much. My mom’s great.  
She’s punishing you for not understanding love. For laughing at love.  
00:37:24 Elliott Host Not taking it seriously that that sex is what’s gonna save humanity from Skynet in the future.  
00:37:30 Dan Host It’s a beautiful metaphor.  
00:37:32 Stuart Host Yeah. When I re-watched *Terminator* a couple weeks ago I—y’know, I saw that scene with new eyes. Eyes that thought it was hilarious. That two people would make sounds. [Laughs.] While rolling around.

[Elliott laughs.]

00:37:45 Elliott Host Okay.  
Now their healthy, heartfelt viewing of *Terminator 2: Judgment Day* is interrupted by police sirens. Mom—Amy Adams—is out in the street throwing a bereavement fit. She is so overcome with grief and probably drugs that she’s just screaming and like kind of writhing around in a nightgown and yelling at people and Mamaw makes J.D. look away as the cops take mom away. This is Oscar-yelling scene number four. And y’know, in a way... maybe they’re trying to draw a parallel between the mom in *Terminator 2* and the mom in this movie, who are both misunderstood by society at large. And thrown—and considered crazy when in fact they’re just trying to deal with the difficulties of life. In Amy Adams’s case, the death of her beloved father; and in Linda Hamilton’s case, that she knows the fact that there are cyborgs from the future who are coming back to try to murder her and her child. Y’know, they’re both hard things to deal with and I think we both know of people who have had to deal with both those problems. So.

00:38:41 Dan Host Now Elliott, why did they send the Terminator back sort of chronologically later in Linda Hamilton/Sarah Connor's life—and John Connor's life—rather than just continually sending it back to the same point in time and overwhelming her with Terminators?

00:39:00 Elliott Host Well that's one of the issues with Skynet and I've thought of that too. And it makes me think maybe Skynet doesn't wanna succeed. Deep down it knows that it's really not worthy? It has imposter syndrome? And so it's like, "You know what? If I sent back—I see what the flaw was in my first plan. I only sent back one Terminator. I'll just send back two. And I'll do it that way." But instead that self-sabotage comes in! Or as the Doctor Beastie Boys would describe itself, *[high-pitched voice]* "Sabotage!" That's who I studied under. *[Laughs.]*

*[Dan laughs.]*

Was Doctor Beastie Boy. But I think that's probably—that Skynet—deep down, it does not want to be successful. And it's gonna take a lot of therapy with Susan Calvin, the robot psychologist from the Isaac Asimov stories—

*[Dan laughs.]*

—but maybe Skynet can get past that and can eventually crush humanity. My other question is, why does Skynet hate humanity so much and wanna get rid of us? I never understood that.

00:39:54 Dan Host Mm, was it one of those things where like it surmises that the greatest threat to itself is humans? Or the world?

00:40:03 Stuart Host I think it's something like that. I think it also—after a while it would figure out, like, "Oh, wait. The amount of energy I'm investing in sending all these Terminators back in time—I could just be working on my relationship with humanity in general, y'know? Maybe we could become friends!"

00:40:17 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Elliott:** Yeah. Yeah. I mean, that's fair, too.

00:40:20 Stuart Host **Stuart:** Maybe if I invented like ice cream cannons—  
—or just gave every human a free cell phone or something. They would just chill out and stop trying to kill me.

*[Dan laughs.]*

00:40:27 Elliott Host Now Skynet would know that as long as they sent poorly-designed memes to the oldest members of humanity—

*[Multiple people laugh.]*

—they could just watch humanity tear itself apart anyway. So. So anyway, J.D. takes some time to visit his sister's barbecue and have a fried bologna sandwich. Then he yells at his girlfriend on the phone. This is not an Oscar-yelling scene. It doesn't reach that level.

00:40:46 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Stuart:** But he does make sex sounds when he eats that fried bologna sandwich.

00:40:50 Stuart Host **Elliott:** Anyone who thinks J.D.—  
It's the best thing to cross his lips.

00:40:52 Elliott Host As someone who had fried salami for breakfast yesterday—that’s the Jewish version of fried bologna—yeah. It’s delicious. It’s great. He flashes back to being a kid and giving his mom a homemade activity book for her to use while in rehab, which was a very sweet thing for him to do. Back to 2011. He makes a passionate argument at a rehab place to get them to accept his mom, and then—this is the famous credit card scene where he’s splitting all the costs—different amounts between different credit cards. But his mom storms out and they argue again! That’s right—Oscar-yelling scene number five. And that’s when J.D.’s sister is like, “Hey, Papaw was kind of a rough dad and could be abusive and Mamaw lit him on fire once and it was mom when she was a girl who put him out.” This is not really given, I feel like, the sober weight that it should.

*[Dan laughs.]*

Considering it—this should be like—should be like—and I guess in the movie maybe this is the knowledge that helps J.D. to start sympathizing with his mom? But one, it comes very late in his life. He’s already a college student when he’s learning a story that I know my family would’ve told many times, over and over again, by this point. But also that it’s just kind of treated as like a pretty quick flashback. When that’s—again—a horrifying thing to happen. Y’know. In a family.

00:41:57 Dan Host I mean, again—I think the flashback structure of this movie is one of the deadliest parts of it. If we had seen a lot of this in sequence and allowed it to give time to breathe by cutting out that flashback stuff? Yeah! It’s important to understand that you know what Amy Adams went through a lot of trauma as a child, which obviously contributed to her current state. And things are more complex than they seem. And this also gets into a section of the movie—I mean, I guess I’m skipping ahead a little. But Glenn Close’s character kind of becomes, “Oh, she’s like the tough love center of this movie! She’s the one who’s ultimately kinda gonna help the main character get out of this life”? But she is shown as being kind of a shitty parent herself. Like, there’s a story there in someone who was a bad parent, realizes it, tries to be a better parent to their grandchild, and if it’s given time to breathe and you see the complexity of that character—that would be good! But Glenn Close is seen mostly like yelling at this kid and we see that she got—that she set her husband on fire earlier. So it’s hard to look at her as like the avatar—the center of morality in this movie that I think the movie kinda wants us to.

00:43:23 Elliott Host I think there’s an interesting movie—better movie there. About a woman who is a bad mom but becomes a great grandma. The opposite way that you could be a bad grandpa—like in the movie *Bad Grandpa*—when by all accounts he seems to have been a fine dad.

00:43:36 Dan Host Now where does *A Bad Moms Christmas* fit into this scenario?

00:43:41 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Elliott:** Now there—those moms, they’re not really bad. *[Laughs.]* Y’know.

**Stuart:** Well it’s the second movie, Dan.

**Dan:** *[Through laughter]* Okay, thank you.

00:43:46 Elliott Host Yeah. It is the second movie. But they're not bad like "Mamaw set your husband on fire" bad. They're bad like, "Oh, let's be bad! Let's order two desserts!" Like that kind of—not the sinful "I'm going to go to hell because I've committed avarice and I've profaned the lord," but more like sinfully decadent chocolate.

00:44:06 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Elliott:** That's the kind of bad.

**Stuart:** Wait. The first one is the cast of the *Bad Moms* franchise.

**Dan:** Right. Or the kind of—

00:44:11 Stuart Host Is that right, Elliott? Or are you describing a series of movies that you—I'm guessing—haven't seen?

00:44:16 Elliott Host No, no, I'm describing a series of movies I've had related to me secondhand.

[Stuart laughs.]

In detail. But I'm guessing the *Bad Moms* movies are not about them abusing their children and being—not—I don't think it is. I feel like I am safe in saying that the *Bad Moms* are bad in the same way that *Bad Teacher* is bad or *Bad Santa* is bad? Where it's like, "I'm breaking all the rules!" But they're not breaking so many rules that they're going to prison.

00:44:41 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Stuart:** Yeah. They're not *Bad Lieutenants*.

**Dan:** I would say that *Bad Teacher* is worse than *Bad Moms*. And *Bad Santa* is worse than either of them. *Bad Moms*—like, they're mostly just bad moms because they refuse to make baked goods for the PTA.

00:44:51 Elliott Host Exactly. But like Stuart says, they're not as bad as *Bad Lieutenant*.

00:44:56 Dan Host [Through laughter] No. No. Or *Bad Lieutenant: Port of Call New Orleans*.

00:44:59 Stuart Host Or *Badder Lieutenant*. [Laughs.]

00:45:00 Elliott Host I mean, it's the— [Laughs.] *Badder*—no, that's when the lieutenant was fried in batter. Delicious.

[Dan laughs.]

Mm. Anyway. So we go—Mamaw—J.D. finally tells his mom about his girlfriend and they flashback to when his mom—and this is something—another one of those things that comes as a huge surprise since they never mentioned it before—apparently married her boss. Who became J.D.'s stepdad. And this is—this stepdad is kind of... like hilariously just kind of like a bland, awkward stepdad. He's allergic to dogs so J.D. cannot keep his dog. And his new stepbrother is like, "Hey. You wanna smoke pot with me?" And that's like, "Uh-oh! Watch out! This is a bad kid!"

00:45:41 Stuart Host They smoke a bunch of weed and the stepbrother's got a—he's got a vinyl—he's got a record of Dimension Hatröss by Voivod on the wall. I mean, this kid's fucking cool, dude!

00:45:54 Elliott Host Yeah. You know he's a bad boy.

00:45:56 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Elliott:** But like a *Bad Moms* bad boy.

**Dan:** This seems like a pretty good—

00:45:57 Elliott Host Not like a Jeffrey Dahmer bad boy. That's a bad boy.

00:46:01 Stuart Host [Through laughter] That's true.

00:46:02 Elliott Host Like that's as bad as boys get.

[Dan laughs.]

00:46:03 Stuart Host I mean, I guess that's—

00:46:04 Elliott Host Boys do not get much badder than that.

00:46:07 Stuart Host I guess you win this one, Elliott, with your Jeffrey Dahmer bad boy line!

[All laugh.]

00:46:12 Elliott Host When I saw the movie *Bad Boys* I was like, "These boys are gonna be bad!" And then it was like, "Oh, okay, they're just kinda like dangerous, I guess. They don't follow all the rules."

00:46:19 Dan Host I mean, they do drive through an entire shantytown in Cuba and seem to be happy to crack jokes about it while it's happening.

00:46:28 Elliott Host I mean, that's bad. That's bad behavior. At the same point, also, they're men. Those are bad men. And it's okay to like—it's easy to laugh at a bad boy. It is not easy to laugh at a bad man. A bad man is trouble.

00:46:40 Dan Host Or a Batman!

00:46:42 Elliott Host A Batman is very easy to laugh at 'cause he's like, *[gruff voice]* "Oh! This is my voice now!" *[Regular voice]* And it's like, "There's no way that's your real voice. Come on. No one talks like that." So anyway. Mom—she asks J.D. for a urine sample so she doesn't lose her job because she has been using drugs again. And he's like, "No way! No way! You should lose your job!" And Mamaw is like, "No, family is all that matters. You pee in that cup." And J.D. is like, "You're both bad moms, and I don't mean like *Bad Moms Christmas*. I mean like you're moms who are detrimental to my upbringing." And he pees in the cup and does it. But J.D., he's having his own troubles! He's failing at algebra because he doesn't have a graphic calculator. And this is one of those times where it's like, "I know you don't know to ask and you're ashamed of your poverty, but his teacher keeps—is giving him bad grades because he does not have a piece of equipment he cannot afford." And it's like—I feel like this is one of those times where he just could be like, "Teacher, I can't afford this graphing calculator."

00:47:29 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Dan:** Yeah. And there's—like this is a—

**Stuart:** And the teacher would've been like, "Well, sell that Lord of the Pit, idiot!"

**Elliott:** And then— *[Laughs.]*

00:47:34 Dan Host And this is not a wealthy part of the school. Like, the country. So y'know presumably they don't have a lot of money for their own school supplies, so there's that. But they do expect kids to have *[through laughter]* these expensive graphing calculators so it doesn't really jive. It seems like they would have one or two around to like loan out to more—

00:47:59 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Dan:** —to children who are more in need.

**Stuart:** I mean, growing up I remember—

00:48:01 Stuart Host I remember having to have one of those, and I remember hearing how much it costs and being like, "What the fuck?! Does it drive the car for me?! Does it pick me up on time from soccer practice, Mom?!"

00:48:12 Dan Host Your 1980s standup.

*[Stuart laughs.]*

00:48:18 Stuart Host Graphing calculator material.  
Yeah. I'm testing it out here on *The Flop House*.

00:48:21 Elliott Host *[Dan laughs.]*  
So that you can send yourself back in time through Skynet—

*[Multiple people laugh.]*

—to do it when it was most relevant. *[Laughs.]* Skynet's like, "Look, I'm about spreading smiles through time now instead of causing violence. I've made my peace. All my talk with Dr. Susan Calvin has really paid off, so Stuart, I wanna bankroll your time-traveling comedy tour. The problem with it is, you keep having to go back further and further in time to when people haven't heard the jokes yet." So—and also you know if he gets that graphing calculator he's just gonna play the games on it. Someone's gonna give him Drugwars or one of those other text-based graphing calculator games and he's gonna end up spending his whole study hall doing that. Anyway. But even worse, he lets his stepbrother's no-good friends use Mamaw's car to go to a Home Depot and just kind of smash it up? And they crash the car on the way back. That's being a bad boy. Like, that's real bad boy stuff. As in like, you shouldn't do that. 2011? This scene I wasn't originally going to mention, but it does have Oscar-yelling scene number six. Where they go to Amy Adams's current boyfriend's house to get her stuff and it's just a shouting match. And J.D. is screaming at this guy through the door and is gonna break the door down until a neighbor is like, "Stop it! I have children! What are you doing?!" And I guess that's J.D. slipping back into the morass of his old family ways. Y'know, they're pulling him down.

00:49:32 Stuart Host Well what he did is he triggered his berserk barbarian rage class ability?

*[Elliott laughs.]*

00:49:42 Dan Host And you're like, "Fuck, well I've already used the ability for the day. I might as well get in a battle. Otherwise..."  
Y'know, I—

00:49:46 Elliott Host *[All laugh.]*  
I love how—the secret story of *Hillbilly Elegy* is how much it intersects with gaming. Yeah.

00:49:50 Dan Host I do wanna briefly address the character of J.D., who is not much of a character in his own story. Y'know like I think there are side characters who the movie would profit more by spending its time on. But like, is he—what do we think of him? Because I have sympathy for anyone who grew up under difficult circumstances and had such a trying family life? At the same time, he does seem to spend a lot of the movie being a dick in his own way and shoving his problems away and not telling people what's going on. Like, not ever explaining to anyone what's happening. What do you think?  
00:50:34 Stuart Host Well yeah.

00:50:35 Elliott Host Well that's kind of what he needs to learn. That's the lesson he needs to learn, to rely on other people. But what were you gonna say, Stuart?

00:50:40 Stuart Host Yeah, I mean, I feel like you get the best sense of his character from his relationship with his girlfriend Usha? Who he takes advantage of. He is dishonest with. And he is generally not a very good boyfriend. And she is this like almost comically understanding character.

00:50:58 Dan Host Yeah. She's—

00:50:59 Elliott Host Well and the scene that shows how much she loves him is when she's laughing at the way he says "surup" instead of "syrup," and it was like, "Is that what the relationship is built around? 'Cause that is not a strong foundation!"

00:51:09 Dan Host *[Dan laughs.]* They love to bust each others'—

00:51:10 Elliott Host And this is the woman who eventually becomes his wife in real life. I believe.

00:51:13 Dan Host Yeah. They love to mess with each other, which immediately actually put me against this relationship. *[Laughs.]* Because—

*[Multiple people laugh.]*

00:51:27 Elliott Host —well early on she's studying in the library and he brings her food, which is sweet. But she is—

00:51:33 Dan Host Excuse me, sir! Excuse me, sir! As the husband and son of different librarians, you do not bring food into a library. No, no. I know, Elliott. My mom is a librarian as well.

*[Stuart laughs.]*

00:51:38 Crosstalk Crosstalk Or she was before she retired. **Stuart:** What a cool argument, dudes!

**Dan:** I'm just saying—

00:51:43 Elliott Host *[All laugh.]* I'm just saying, if you want vermin eating away at the books then go ahead! Bring your lunch to the library!

00:51:46 Dan Host Elliott, let me get to my actual point. Which is—look. I understand that that is meant to be read as this sweet thing. And maybe it is. He's like, "Eat! Eat! Ya gotta eat!" But then she is understandably worried about the rules. She's like, "No, *[through laughter]* we're in a library." And then he's like—he pushes her basically back into the stacks and he's like, "You can eat here. I'll be your lookout." And then he does a bit where he pretends someone's coming and she's gonna get in trouble. And I'm like, "This is not nice."

*[Multiple people laugh.]*

*[Through laughter]* "To fuck with her." Like, come on! This is supposed to be charming banter in the movie, I think? But it just comes off as—you're not respecting her worries and then once she's like, "Oh, y'know, I will eat," you're fucking with her.

00:52:32 Elliott Host It is true that in a movie that is supposed to be a heartfelt real, like, gritty look at life, there is a lot of dialogue in it that smacks of that

movie behavior where you're like, "Oh, if someone did this in real life they would be a terrible person. This is a mean thing to do." It's got a little bit of that romantic comedy logic where you're like, "This is cute... in the movie. But if I did this, I would rightfully be shunned."

00:52:56 Dan Host  
00:52:57 Crosstalk Crosstalk *[Through laughter]* Get arrested.  
**Stuart:** Yeah. I mean, Meg Ryan had a perfectly nice fiancé—

00:53:00 Stuart Host **Dan:** Get a restraining order.  
—in *sleepless in Seattle*. She didn't have to go start stalking Tom Hanks on his houseboat.

00:53:04 Elliott Host No. Not at all. Well this is also one of the problems I have with the movie *Frozen*, where there's a song in it where these trolls—who don't need to be in the movie anyway—are singing about how these two should obviously be in love and the guy is like—I can't remember his name, whether it's Sven or—no, 'cause Sven is the reindeer. Right?

00:53:20 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Stuart:** I don't know.

00:53:22 Elliott Host **Elliott:** I can't remember.  
Or Kristoff. I think it's Kristoff. He's like, "But she's already engaged!" And the trolls are like, "Hey, let's just get that fiancé out of the way and you two can be together." And I was like, "This is not a good lesson for kids."

*[Dan laughs.]*

00:53:36 Stuart Host That you should just go and break up engagements if you feel like you're in love with that person. Anyway.  
I mean, if something better comes along, you gotta trade up. That's the rule, right?

00:53:38 Elliott Host *[Multiple people laugh.]*  
No, that's gaming again. Stuart, you're looking at life as a game again! That's not—you don't level up in relationships!

00:53:43 Stuart Host You only have so many inventory slots! Theoretically you only have one fiancé slot. You may as well take the better fiancé. *[Laughs.]*

00:53:50 Elliott Host *[Dan laughs.]*  
I mean, very much not theoretically. For most people—practically—there's only one spot. But anyway. 1997. J.D. is arguing with his mom. Oscar-yelling number seven. And Mamaw—despite having pneumonia—leaves the hospital in order to get there and say J.D.'s living with her from now on so that he won't get into trouble anymore and wreck her car. Back to 2011. J.D.'s sister—who holds like 40 jobs and should be, in many ways, the star of the movie—she's the one who actually has the weight of this life falling down on her—say—she's not the one who escapes and goes to Yale and becomes a fancy lawyer and writes a bestselling book—J.D.'s sister is like, "Mom can't stay with me! Let's just put her in a hotel and you should go to that interview the next morning." And we flash to— which is, y'know—

00:54:32 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Elliott:** We'll talk about it. It's like—  
**Stuart:** That's the voice of reason.



00:54:35 Elliott Host Voice of reason, but the lesson of the movie is also like, “Abandon your family because you’ll be better for them as a rich person than you are as a helping hand in the moment.” Which is—I don’t know. It feels like the traditional storytelling method would be for them to turn their back on earthly riches—

*[Dan laughs.]*

—in order to support the ones they love. But that’s not the America we live in, I guess. And we flashback to Mamaw is throwing out J.D.’s slacker friends. There’s another argument. Oscar-yelling number eight. This is firmly in the “Mamaw is the tough love coach” section. J.D. gets caught trying to steal the calculator he needs. He learned it from his mom stealing sports cards. Now he’s stealing, y’know, overpriced but relatively small consumer electronics.

00:55:14 Stuart Host And having been a RadioShack store manager, I felt this moment deeply. Because... shoplifting was a constant, ever-present threat and danger to the point where at one point I was watching security footage and I saw a woman using her daughter’s—like, her little school-aged daughter’s bookbag as a way to stash a camera she stole? And I was like, “Fuck this. I am not cut out for this life.”

*[Laughs.]*

00:55:45 Dan Host Yeah. I was gonna ask how you handled—

00:55:47 Elliott Host And that’s when you became a professional shoplifter. You’re like, “I’m on the wrong side of these cameras.”

00:55:50 Stuart Host Exactly, yeah.

00:55:51 Dan Host I was gonna ask how you handled that, Stuart. I mean, like, I—y’know, I was wondering whether this got RadioShack flashbacks. Because the one time I worked in a small enough retail store that I was there to kind of witness any shoplifting? I briefly worked at a souvenir store in Savannah, Georgia, and this very erratic—

00:56:14 Elliott Host Dan, how have I not heard any stories about this part of your life before?

*[Dan laughs.]*

00:56:17 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Dan:** Uh... there’re a couple fun ones.

**Stuart:** Did you wear a straw hat?

*[Multiple people laugh.]*

00:56:23 Dan Host This was when I thought I was gonna maybe go to film school and I actually was in film school for three months and I dropped out. This was at SCAD. And I worked at this store that was actually connected to river boat tours. It was where you bought the tickets for the river boat tours and then got your photos afterwards and souvenirs. But this very erratic-seeming guy came in one time and me and the other guy who worked there who was older but we bonded because we’d talk about horror movies just kind of watched it all happen? And we’re like, “We’re not— *[Laughs.]* We’re not intervening here. If this guy wants to steal a snow globe, go ahead.”

*[Laughs.]*

*[Elliott laughs.]*

00:57:01 Elliott Host You decided your life and injury was not worth that snow globe.

00:57:05 Stuart Host Yeah. There was definitely a time where a guy stole a fucking in-box new cellphone off the counter. And I chased after him for about

half a block before I was like, “What the fuck would I even do if I caught him?”

*[Multiple people laugh.]*

			Like, would I slap the cuffs on him like citizen’s arrest? I don’t wanna fight a guy!
00:57:28	Dan	Host	That’s the thing. I think <i>[through laughter]</i> legally there’s not even really—you’re not gonna do anything—
00:57:32	Stuart	Host	But it’s this moment of like, I dunno, this feeling of “How dare this guy steal this thing from me!” I don’t know. It was—I mean, it was dumb. It was overwhelming and a little bit soul crushing is how I reacted to it.
00:57:44	Dan	Host	And you know what, Stuart? That’s how RadioShack failed. It got out of money. <i>[Through laughter]</i> Because of that.
00:57:50	Stuart	Host	<i>[Through laughter]</i> Yeah.
00:57:51	Dan	Host	That loss.
00:57:52	Elliott	Host	That was the straw that broke RadioShack’s back.
00:57:55	Crosstalk	Crosstalk	<b>Stuart:</b> Yup. Sorry. Sorry.
			<b>Dan:</b> It wasn’t the fact that people don’t need transistors anymore. Sorry, the Shack.
00:57:59	Stuart	Host	That was one of Stuart Wellington’s patented FlashShacks. That’s right—it’s a RadioShack flashback from Stuart Wellington!
00:58:01	Elliott	Host	

*[Dan laughs.]*

Patent-pending, actually. So J.D. gets caught trying to steal that calculator. Mamaw gets him out of the situation and buys it for him. And starts yelling at him and gives him this speech about, “Are you gonna try or are you not?” This is Oscar-yelling number nine. And J.D. is so mad he throws the calculator out the window which is totally the kind of thing I would’ve done as a kid. I would’ve gotten so pissed that I just need to get that energy out. Although what would happen with us is that my mom would be yelling at me in the car and I would open the door of the car as if I was just gonna jump out and roll out?

*[Dan laughs.]*

			And she’d—and then she’d reach over and pull the door shut and pull the car over and yell at me for that.
00:58:39	Dan	Host	You’re a regular <i>Lady Bird</i> .
00:58:42	Elliott	Host	Yup. Exactly. But then he notices that—so she has a hard time making ends meet. She gets Meals on Wheels, and she’s really begging the Meals on Wheels delivery guy for extra food. And then she shares half of it with him. And this is like one of the more—this is maybe to me the most powerful scene in the movie. ‘Cause it’s not yelling. It’s this character who—up ‘til now—has been presented as like, “She’s the strong, tough one in the family!” Has to grovel and make herself so abject and admit her poverty to this person in order to get what she needs to survive and for her grandson to survive. If more of the movie was in this manner of matter-of-fact-y-ness and not yell-y-ness? Then it would be a different movie.

00:59:22 Dan Host Elliott, I 100% agree with you. This is the most affecting moment in the movie. Partly because it's the only moment, too, where anyone's nice to *[through laughter]* one another?

*[Elliott laughs.]*

Like the Meals on Wheels guy is very understanding and she is very grateful that he's understanding, but also just like... yeah. It is a quiet moment that really sinks in, y'know, that this is a person who's struggling and is proud but wants to take care of her grandson.

00:59:48 Stuart Host And what's funny is the movie understands that. Because narrative-wise, this is the thing that makes J.D. clean his shit up. And you're like, "If the movie knows that, why is it filled with so much other bullshit?" *[Laughs.]*

*[Dan laughs. Elliott joins in.]*

01:00:04 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Dan:** That's true. That's true.

01:00:06 Stuart Host **Stuart:** Like, why is it—  
—full of so many speeches that don't work? Is that the message? That coming up with little bits of—I dunno—grandstanding speeches don't actually serve and purpose and don't work? It's these little moments of kindness or little moments of humility and honesty that actually—

01:00:23 Dan Host You are searching for meaning where there is none, I think.  
*[Laughs.]*

01:00:26 Stuart Host Yeah.

01:00:27 Elliott Host I mean, if the movie was aware of that as a message it would be a really strong movie and I would be like, "Oh, okay. I get what it's doing now." If it was like, "All this yelling doesn't make the difference, but when you see someone as a human being and they touch you emotionally, that's when—" But I actually think it's—it's almost like... the movie stumbled into an affecting moment. I mean, not say "stumbled." The people who made the movie are professionals. They know what they're doing. They've made great movies in the past. They just kind of like... they took the wrong road in this movie? And the briefly, by accident, ended up on the right on-ramp to the right road? And then they took another wrong turn. Maybe they needed gas or they saw a Denny's and they're like, "I know it's Denny's, but I'm hungry. I'm just gonna stop there." And they kept going in their other way. J.D.—'cause he sees this and he starts straightening up. He gets a job. He's working hard. He's trying at school.

01:01:15 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Stuart:** I think they—I think "Man in Motion" starts playing, right?

**Elliott:** Suddenly he's doing great.

*[All laugh.]*

01:01:20 Dan Host If only! What a needle drop that would be!

01:01:22 Elliott Host Yeah. Yeah, yeah. It's—probably.

01:01:25 Stuart Host Hey, speaking of music, we haven't addressed the fact that the—

01:01:27 Elliott Host I think "Saving the Day" from *Ghostbusters* starts playing.

*[Dan laughs.]*

01:01:31 Stuart Host Speaking of music, we haven't addressed the fact that the main theme for this movie—written by Hans Zimmer—is basically like a straight lift of the *Game of Thrones* theme music. *[Singing Game of Thrones theme song.]* Dun-duh, duh-duh duh duh—like, its' totally that!

01:01:43 Elliott Host Is that what it was? I just heard a lot of strings and banjo and I was like, "I dunno." I checked out as soon as I started—there's a certain sort of folksy cornpone music that I kinda—same way with *Wild Mountain Thyme*. I was like, "Hoo boy, I'm gonna hear a lot of fiddle in the background of this one."

01:02:01 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Stuart:** I can't believe you guys didn't—I can't believe—like—

01:02:03 Stuart Host **Elliott:** And I like fiddles, but. I barely watched that television show and even I started imagining castles rising in the hollers of Kentucky.

01:02:11 Dan Host *[Multiple people laugh.]* Stuart, I can honestly tell you that the music made absolutely no impact on me whatsoever. *[Laughs.]*

01:02:16 Crosstalk Crosstalk *[Elliott laughs.]* **Stuart:** Wow! Harsh rebuke of Hans Zimmer's work!

01:02:19 Elliott Host **Elliott:** I wish now that—I wish— Now I wish—I mean, what are you, the producers of *The Simpsons*? Anyway. So—or is that Hans Zimmer or Alf Clausen? I can't remember.

01:02:25 Dan Host Alf Clausen.

01:02:26 Elliott Host That was Alf Clausen. Now I wish that there were an opening title sequence where it was like *Game of Thrones* and there's just like rundown houses with old trucks in front of them rising up in the forests and... that would be nice. Anyway. We go to the present of the movie, 2011. J.D. catches his mom doing drugs in the hotel and flushes them down. And she's like, "Please stay with me during the night." And he has this cavalcade of family flashbacks, which you think is gonna lead him to choose his family over his career. But instead he's like, "I can't help you unless I get a good job. I'll see ya tomorrow, maybe, Mom." And—

01:02:58 Stuart Host This scene where he squirts out the heroin that was in the needle and then flushes the needle and I was like, "You can't flush a needle!"

*[Multiple people laugh.]*

01:03:16 Elliott Host Sharlene, just staring at the screen, is like, "Yeah, you can." Made me a little bit nervous about who my wife really is, but whatever. It's not good for the pipes, but—

01:03:18 Dan Host Yeah. That's fair.

01:03:19 Elliott Host Yeah.

It is bad for the pipes. I mean, my life is a little bit more innocent. Yesterday my toddler son was stuffing walnuts into a public drainage pipe in a park—

*[Dan laughs.]*

—and I was like, "That's probably not good for that pipe."

01:03:30 Stuart Host But are they organic walnuts?  
01:03:31 Elliott Host Yeah. They were organic walnuts. They were from a tree. But that he was—and I said, “No, stop that. That’s not good for the pipes.” And he goes, “No, it is! It is good!” And I was like, “There’s no way. How do you know more about plumbing than me?”

01:03:41 Dan Host He’s appeasing the mole people, Elliott. *[Laughs.]*  
01:03:44 Elliott Host Ohhh, I see.  
01:03:45 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Elliott:** I get it.

01:03:47 Dan Host **Dan:** Yeah. I mean, this is the thing.  
01:03:50 Elliott Host If you stop him... it could be catastrophic.  
Uh-oh. That would explain all the earthquakes in Los Angeles. The mole people are not getting enough walnuts! On the—he’s like, “Good luck, Mom! Good luck with your addiction! I gotta go to this job interview!” And he drives all night. His hands wet on the wheel. ‘Cause there’s a voice in his head that drives his heel. It’s his baby calling. She says, “I need ya here.” And he does call her on the drive and apologizes to his girlfriend and she says, “I’m gonna stay up all night with you and keep you awake while you’re driving.” And—

01:04:14 Stuart Host Again, bending over backwards to help this guy. Like, this guy who can’t seem to catch a break has probably the greatest break in a partner who is doing all this work for him.  
01:04:26 Dan Host Well especially ‘cause—as we will see—she is willing to run out of the apartment down to the job interview and be like, “Oh, we’re gonna be late!” Except for that’s a trick.  
01:04:36 Elliott Host It’s a trick. He’s like, “I’m never gonna make it!” She goes, “I’ll run down and I’ll tell them!” And then she goes to the door and opens it? J.D.’s right there on the phone. He could’ve just walked in the house a couple minutes ago, but instead he decided to play this last little teaser prank on her. Which is stupid.  
01:04:50 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Elliott:** Don’t do that.

**Dan:** Yeah.

**Stuart:** And he had the time to set up the prank!  
01:04:52 Stuart Host So he must’ve been driving shockingly fast. Dangerously fast.  
01:04:55 Elliott Host Yes. Now—

*[Dan sighs deeply.]*

Now I don’t know why—I wish now—this is going back to earlier in the movie when he called her for silverware help? I wish that it had become an *Apollo 13* type scene—also directed by Ron Howard—where she was like, “Describe the place setting to me.” And she was just pulling silverware from her own home to make a simulation place setting so that she could see what he was seeing and tell him what he could use? Guys? Would that have been funny or would it have been too much?

01:05:20 Stuart Host I think it would’ve been too much. I would’ve preferred kind of a more modern approach where she closes her eyes and enters her own memory palace of going into—  
01:05:28 Elliott Host Her memory restaurant? *[Laughs.]* Which is I guess what you could call *Scenes From an Italian Restaurant*.  
01:05:34 Stuart Host That’s true!

01:05:36 Dan Host *[Multiple people laugh.]*  
01:05:37 Elliott Host Okay. But the movie.  
Anyway. So at the very end of the movie, J.D. gets to his interview and then we get a VO about how he owes everything to his family. And then it's just like... after-movie text about how he's been super successful and now everybody's doing great. And the message of the movie is they are no longer just a bunch of poor hillbillies; now they are some rich Hill Williamses.

01:05:54 Crosstalk Crosstalk *[All laugh.]*  
**Dan:** Yep. Um... and the fact—  
**Stuart:** Don't—don't—you're not allowed to make that face when you make that joke, Elliott.

01:06:00 Crosstalk Crosstalk *[Elliott laughs.]*  
**Dan:** And again—  
**Elliott:** Let me make it some more. Mmm?

01:06:04 Dan Host **Stuart:** Nope! Uh-uh!  
This is one last—this is one final way I feel like the framing unbalances this movie. Because I—because it makes him getting this law job the ultimate triumph? And I feel like it—like, not only is the message of this movie—the political message of this movie kind of nonexistent; the emotional message of the movie, to me, is kind of incomprehensible. Because it makes a big—like, part of the movie is always about, like, “Oh! Family! Family's the most important thing! Family is the most important thing!” So that could be like a fine message for a movie. I don't know if I necessarily agree with it, but it's fine. Or the message of the movie could be what it ultimately kinda points at, like, some people can't be helped? Sometimes you need to be good to yourself and... understand that. Like, you do what you can, but then let it go. But the way the movie ends—putting so much weight on this job—makes it really feel like, “Okay, the message of the movie is leave your drug-addicted mom behind and get a high-powered lawyer job.”

01:07:05 Elliott Host Yeah. Like, “You owe everything to your family, so jettison them like a booster rocket that got you out of the atmosphere. ‘Cause they are useless to you now. They are so many tons of space junk that are just weighing you back.”

01:07:16 Stuart Host *[Dan laughs.]*  
Yeah. I mean, I think on some level it's going for the idea that like... in order to move forward as a human, you need to understand where you come from and come to grips with your past trauma. And... and that should let you, y'know, I dunno. Self-actualize or something. I don't know.

01:07:41 Dan Host Yeah. That is an excellent message that I *[through laughter]* could not find in this movie.

01:07:45 Stuart Host That's the thing. Y'know, I feel like their reach is shorter than their goals.

01:07:50 Elliott Host Yeah. Their arms are too short to box with—not God, exactly, but certainly Leon Spinks. For sure.

01:07:57 Dan Host Hercules, maybe.

01:07:59 Elliott Host *[Through laughter]* Yeah. Hercules, yeah. It definitely—it feels like a movie made by someone justifying why it was okay for them to leave their drug-addicted mom in a hotel room—

*[Dan laughs.]*

01:08:09 Crosstalk Host —while they drove away to New Haven to interview for a fancy job.  
01:08:10 Dan Crosstalk **Dan and Stuart:** Yeah. Okay. Well let's just do Final Judgments on this movie. Whether it's a good-bad movie, a bad-bad movie, a movie we kinda liked. Before I get into mine, I just want to say, like, look. I grew up in a small town. We were not wealthy but we certainly did not—I never in my life had to, like, feel financially insecure in the way that these people have or dealt with so much hardship. So if I've said anything foolish along the way? I apologize. I know that I've had a privileged way of it. But this movie... hoo, boy. *[Through laughter]* Is not good, folks. Not good, folks. It's just like... a lot of very competent-to-good effort has been put into making the movie? But the movie... just shouldn't have been made in this form. It feels... *[sighs.]* Deeply confused. I have no idea why this movie was made other than to show us sort of a parade of misery.

01:09:15 Elliott Host Yeah. I—it feels like a—the movie was described to me ahead of time as poverty porn and it feels like that often. Which is—if anything—the worst kind of porn, I'm guessing.

01:09:26 Dan Host *[Through laughter]* You can barely masturbate to it.  
01:09:29 Elliott Host Barely. If you're a bear, you can do it.  
01:09:31 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Elliott:** But bears can masturbate to anything. Dan, please stop. Please stop.

**Dan:** Good things come in bears. I know that. *[Laughs.]* So if you can come as a bear—

**Stuart:** Uh-huh.

*[Multiple people laugh.]*

01:09:37 Elliott Host I don't like that you're making this your new motto. But I second what Dan said. I have come—I did come from a, y'know, a privileged middle-class upbringing. I lived in an affluent town. So I apologize if I was misunderstanding the life of the underprivileged. But as a movie, it is... it is unaffecting and it seems very mixed-up and not—the movie does not seem quite sure of what it is doing. Or what it is trying to get at. And is hoping that if it just muddles along, it'll get there. So I would call it... Best Picture, probably. Stuart, what do you say?

01:10:12 Stuart Host Okay, so it's my turn. So the first thing I do is I apologize. So...

*[Dan laughs.]*

01:10:15 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Stuart:** Uh, well—uh—

**Elliott:** You gotta—but apologize for something other than what we apologized for. Apologize for a new thing.

**Dan:** No, I just wanted to acknowledge—I just wanted to acknowledge—

01:10:22 Dan Host That like we're talking not necessarily from a place of expertise about some of this. That's all.

01:10:26 Stuart Host Uh-huh. Also, I'm a big dumb idiot, so I say dumb stuff all the time.

01:10:32 Elliott Host *[Elliott laughs.]*  
I mean, Stuart is coming from an expertise in the realm of collectible card games.

01:10:36 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Stuart:** Yeah, I guess so. Yeah, I guess so.

01:10:38 Stuart Host **Dan:** Yeah. That's true.  
So yeah. I can put Esquire on my business card. My business card, of course, being a rare Magic: The Gathering trading card that I am willing to hand people because I have so many. No, I—this is a bad-bad movie. It feels wrongheaded. Structurally, it doesn't quite make sense. It doesn't really seem to have any kind of a message. And.. yeah. I mean, it feels like a collection of Oscar-swaying scenes thrown together. And... yeah! I mean, it's just—yeah. No thank you.

01:11:10 Dan Host No... thank you.

01:11:12 Stuart Host Bad-bad.

01:11:14 Elliott Host No... thank you, but no thank you.

01:11:15 Music Music Light, up-tempo, electric guitar with synth instruments.

01:11:20 Promo Clip **Music:** Mellow ukulele music plays in the background.

**Jordan Morris:** Welcome!

**Speaker 1:** Thank you.

**Speaker 2:** Thanks!

**Speaker 3:** No problem. Thank you.

**Jesse Thorn:** These are real podcast listeners, not actors.

**Jordan:** What do you look for in a podcast?

**Speaker 1:** Reliability is big for me.

**Speaker 2:** Power.

**Speaker 3:** I'd say comfort?

**Jordan:** What do you think of this?

*[Loud metallic crash and clanging.]*

**All:** Ooh.

**Speaker 2:** That's *Jordan, Jesse, Go!*

**Speaker 1:** *Jordan, Jesse, Go!?*

**Speaker 2:** They came out of the floor?

*[Loud thump.]*

**Speaker 1:** And...down from the ceiling?

**Speaker 3:** That... can't be safe.



**Speaker 1:** I'm upset.

**Speaker 2:** Can we go now?

**Jordan:** Soon.

*[Music that sounds like it would have backed a 1990s commercial starts.]*

**Jesse:** *Jordan, Jesse, Go!*: a real podcast.

*[Music fades out.]*

01:11:59 Elliott Host

**Music:** Inspiring music throughout.

*[The "testimonials" cut between different VOs. They are not talking to one another.]*

**Speaker 1:** I started listening to [Oh No, Ross and Carrie!](#) shortly after I broke my arm.

**Speaker 2:** I couldn't get my book started.

*[Music swells hopefully to a dramatic crescendo]*

**Speaker 3:** I was lost. Honestly.

**Speaker 4:** I knew it was time to make a change.

**Speaker 5:** There's something about *Oh No, Ross and Carrie!* that you just can't get anywhere else.

**Speaker 6:** They're thought-leaders, discoverers, founders.

**Speaker 7:** I'd call them heroes.

**Speaker 8:** Ross and Carrie don't just report on fringe science, spirituality, and claims of the paranormal. They take part themselves.

**Speaker 3:** They show up, so you don't have to.

**Speaker 5:** But you might find that you want to.

*[Music swells unbearably.]*

**Speaker 1:** My arm is better.

**Speaker 2:** I wrote an entire book this weekend! It's terrible, but I did it!

**Speaker 6:** Just go to [MaximumFun.org](http://MaximumFun.org).

**Everyone:** Thank you, Ross and Carrie!

**Carrie Poppy:** [*Hurriedly*] *Oh No, Ross and Carrie!* is just a podcast. It doesn't do anything. It's just sounds you listen to in your ears. All these people are made up. Goodbye.

01:12:47	Dan	Host	Hey, guys. It's just a quick solo drop in by Dan. We forgot to mention on our original recording that you can still see the <i>Flop House</i> live show for another couple of days. If you didn't see it live, you didn't buy a ticket before, you can still buy a ticket now. Watch the show. The recorded version of it. And that will be available, I believe, until midnight on February the 14 <sup>th</sup> . Midnight on Valentine's Day. You could cuddle up with someone and watch the <i>Flop House</i> talk about <i>Teen Wolf</i> . What could be more romantic? And the new shirts—the beautiful shirts—the rocket crocodile one and the one of all of us as teen wolves—or middle-aged-man wolves—will be available until the end of that period as well. So if you still wanna take a moment and watch that live show for February the 14 <sup>th</sup> , at midnight, when it will expire like Cinderella's coach? You can go get tickets at <a href="http://TheFlopHouse.simpletix.com">TheFlopHouse.simpletix.com</a> . <a href="http://TheFlopHouse.simpletix.com">TheFlopHouse.simpletix.com</a> . And if you want one of the new shirts—the rocket crocodile shirt or the teen wolves <i>Flop House</i> shirt, you can go to <a href="http://www.Bonfire.com/store/flophousetourstore">www.Bonfire.com/store/flophousetourstore</a> . Thank you to the person who emailed me saying that I should use, y'know, shorter, easier-to-understand URLs. You are correct. I did not set them up though, so don't always assume that everything that is done wrong at <i>The Flop House</i> is done because of me. But in the future we'll have better, easier-to-understand or -remember URLs, but the store is—again— <a href="http://www.Bonfire.com/store/flophousetourstore">www.Bonfire.com/store/flophousetourstore</a> . Now back to the regular show.
01:15:16	Dan	Host	Okay! So let's—
01:15:18	Elliott	Host	Guys? I think we can call this one <i>Hillbilly Elegy Elegy</i> .
01:15:21	Stuart	Host	Not Schillbilly Smellology?
			[ <i>All laugh.</i> ]
01:15:24	Elliott	Host	That would be the <i>MAD Magazine</i> version of it.
01:15:26	Dan	Host	Oh. If only.
01:15:28	Elliott	Host	I wanna see that so badly now!
			[ <i>Stuart laughs.</i> ]
01:15:30	Dan	Promo	Yeah. So <i>The Flop House</i> is sponsored in part by Squarespace. If you use Squarespace's services, you can create a beautiful website to promote or just get your cool idea out there. Blog or publish content. Sell products and services of all kinds, and much, much more. Squarespace does this by giving you beautiful, customizable templates created by world-class designers. Everything optimized for mobile right out of the box. A new way to buy domains and choose from over 200 extensions. Free and secure hosting. Hey! Why don't you go over—if this interests you—to <a href="http://Squarespace.com/flop">Squarespace.com/flop</a> for a free trial. And when you're ready to launch, use the offer code "flop" to save 10% off your first purchase of a website or domain.
01:16:24	Elliott	Promo	Hey, guys! I had an idea for a website kinda based on today's movie and I was wondering if Squarespace might be able to help us. And Dan, maybe you—
01:16:29	Stuart	Promo	Oh wow!
01:16:30	Elliott	Promo	Maybe you can help me—

01:16:31 Stuart Promo Kinda came outta nowhere, but that's okay.  
01:16:33 Elliott Promo Yeah. So I was wondering—we see so many warm-weather hillbillies. They live in the South. It's much warmer there. But I was wondering—what about the colder hillbillies? And that's why at [www.Chillbilly.com](http://www.Chillbilly.com), you can find your news about the chilliest billies. That's right—hillbillies who live in cold areas and—again—we call 'em chillbillies. They also are super cool—not just cold—and that's why they chill. So at Chillbillies.com, it's your place online for cold-weather, rural, y'know, poverty-line stereotypes.

01:17:08 Dan Promo *[Through laughter]* Oh wow. Okay. Sure.  
01:17:10 Stuart Promo Is this like a meetup site? Or is it like...  
*[Dan laughs.]*

01:17:15 Elliott Promo Is it like fiction? What's going on.  
Yeah, no, well I mean the meetup site is our app Billble, which is our hillbilly meetup site. But it's just a place where you can swap stereotypes. Make crude caricatures and pretend to be them in multimillion-dollar movies for award consideration. So that's Chillbilly.com. Chillbilly.com and use offer code “we don't have one; there's nothing to buy on the site.”  
*[Dan laughs.]*

01:17:36 Crosstalk Promo **Elliott:** The site doesn't exist yet.

01:17:39 Dan Promo **Dan:** I suddenly got really worried—  
—about these made-up URLs that you do, Elliott. This is one of the ones that feels like it might actually exist and I'm—

01:17:47 Elliott Promo It might exist. Well, Jordan, if this one exists? Please cut this part out. And if it doesn't exist, please—

01:17:52 Crosstalk Promo **Stuart:** Buy that domain. Yeah.  
**Elliott:** —buy that domain for me. Yeah.  
Um...

01:17:54 Dan Promo Guys? I just checked! I just checked! [www.Chillbilly.com](http://www.Chillbilly.com) is for sale.  
01:17:57 Elliott Promo So—

01:18:01 Crosstalk Promo **Dan:** We're safe. We're safe.  
**Elliott:** It is available!

01:18:06 Stuart Promo **Stuart:** Okay, let me see if I have enough money—  
—on these five credit cards.  
*[Dan laughs.]*

01:18:08 Elliott Host Now there is another—now I wanna—this is a movie idea. This is not a—this is not a show. But I was worrying about *Chilly Willy Elegy*?  
*[Dan laughs.]*

01:18:20 Elliott Host Which would be the story of Chilly Willy's upbringing and how difficult it was.  
01:18:23 Stuart Host Now, the penguin. The cartoon penguin? This is the one you're—  
01:18:25 Stuart Host Yeah. This is the cartoon penguin Chilly Willy. Yeah.  
This is what, like a dirge you sing after his passing?

01:18:29 Elliott Host *[Multiple people laugh.]*  
01:18:31 Dan Host *[Through laughter]* Yup! Exactly!  
01:18:33 Stuart Host Tales of his adventures.  
The skald sings it at his Viking funeral.

01:18:36 Elliott Host *[Elliott laughs.]*  
Well 'cause he's gone from the cold of Antarctica to the ultimate cold of the grave.

01:18:40 Dan Host *[Dan laughs.]*  
Yeah. Alright. Well let's move on to Letters. Unless—wait, Elliott, you look like you might have something to plug.  
01:18:46 Elliott Promo I do have something to plug! In stores... now? That's right! Because it came out Wednesday, February 3<sup>rd</sup>, which again is after we're recording this but before it will be released—is #1 of *Maniac of New York*! That's right—*Maniac of New York* #1 from Aftershock Comics, by me and Andrea Mutti. It's the story of basically what if *The Wire* was—instead of being about drugs—was about Jason Voorhees? And it's set in New York City. So there's an unstoppable killer. He's been a problem in New York for years. Everyone's kind of given up, except for two crusading people—a mayoral aide and an outcast police officer. Police detective. And they're gonna try to take this monster—this slasher-killer—down. Will they be able to do it? Find out in *Maniac of New York* #1. From Aftershock Comics. In stores now! Go to your local comic book store or mail order it for them, if you don't wanna go out of the house. Which I understand.

01:19:38 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Stuart:** And real quick, Dan, when is this—when's this episode dropping?

01:19:41 Dan Host **Dan:** Uh, and Stuart?  
This episode—one second—should come out on the 13<sup>th</sup> of February.

01:19:46 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Dan:** The day before Valentine's.

01:19:49 Stuart Host **Stuart:** Okay. So that means—yeah.  
That means—as a special Valentine's Day gift for yourself or others—it is the last—if you're listening to this on the day it drops, it is the last day for our limited-run—our exclusive run—of live show t-shirts. If you go to TheFlopHousePod Twitter account, you'll find links to those shirts there. They are great. And they're exclusive to just that week! So if you miss 'em, you miss 'em. So hopefully you got a chance to grab one.

01:20:18 Elliott Host These are some great designs. I've liked our past designs, but these are my favorite designs that we've ever had.

01:20:22 Dan Host Oh, wow.  
01:20:23 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Dan:** They are very good designs.

01:20:25 Dan Host **Elliott:** They're really good.  
But. Let us move on—  
01:20:29 Elliott Host Dan's favorite subject!  
01:20:30 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Dan:** Mm-hm. Let us move on.

*[Stuart laughs.]*

01:20:33 Stuart Host **Elliott:** Butts!  
*[Through laughter]* Oh god! You got him! Oh shit! Oh man!

01:20:36	Crosstalk	Crosstalk	<b>Dan:</b> That's so—that's so Raven.
01:20:39	Dan	Host	<b>Stuart:</b> Got him! Stick a fork in him! Now—  <i>[Elliott laughs.]</i>  Okay. So Letters From Listeners. Listeners like you. This one's from Jon, last name withheld. There's no— Mm-hm. John Lasseter of Pixar.
01:20:48	Stuart	Host	
01:20:49	Crosstalk	Crosstalk	<b>Dan:</b> Uh, well there's no—no. There's no "h"—  <b>Elliott:</b> Uhm... <i>[Laughs.]</i> I hope not! —so I can only assume it's new-to-Twitter Jon Stewart.
01:20:54	Dan	Host	
01:21:03	Elliott	Host	"Hey, Peaches! My daughter, 13—also an avid listener—" I don't recommend that, but uh— Your daughter's name is 13? That's cool!
01:21:06	Dan	Host	Yeah. Um... like the—yeah. Very similar to the character "3" from <i>Peanuts</i> . Remember that? <i>[Laughs.]</i> When there was a character who just had a number as their name? Anyway.
01:21:16	Elliott	Host	I kinda remember it. Not particularly. Are you thinking of Pig-Pen?
01:21:18	Dan	Host	No, no, no. There was a whole, like, gag—it was basically the 19—early 1960s Charles Schultz version of making fun of like, "Kids have the craziest names these days!"
01:21:32	Elliott	Host	They don't have good names like "Linus."
01:21:35	Dan	Host	<i>[Dan laughs.]</i> Mm-hm. Or Schroeder.
01:21:39	Elliott	Host	Or Sherm. Whatever happened to normal kid names, like, "Sherm"?
01:21:43	Dan	Host	<i>[Multiple people laugh.]</i> "My daughter, 13—"
01:21:44	Elliott	Host	Wait, no, Dan—I always assumed Schroeder was his last name. do you think it's his first name?
01:21:47	Dan	Host	No, I think it's his last name. I think you're right there.  "My daughter, 13—" There are two Pattys in that strip. There's Peppermint Patty and regular Patty.  <i>[Elliott laughs.]</i>  That seems— I mean, that's— Well that's why they call her "Peppermint Patty," Dan!
01:21:57	Stuart	Host	
01:21:58	Elliott	Host	
01:22:00	Crosstalk	Crosstalk	<b>Elliott:</b> To keep 'em apart!
01:22:02	Stuart	Host	<b>Stuart:</b> They do the same thing on <i>The Bachelor</i> . When there's multiple Pattys, one's regular Patty, one's Peppermint Patty.
01:22:06	Dan	Host	This seems like Charles Schultz could've <i>[through laughter]</i> come up with a different name. But anyway.  "My daughter, 13—also an avid listener—is thinking about making a movie for a community student film competition. Her idea is a

comedy-horror movie—something along the lines of *Jaws* meets *Scary Movie* starring our cat as *Jaws*. Question to you filmic geniuses is—what are your best tips to make the plot beats hit the best for making dumb gore work and be funny and any other tips for making a horror-comedy short—15 minutes, tops—hit the best? Yours in floptastic-ness, Jon, last name withheld.”

01:22:49 Elliott Host It sounds like—she should definitely make this movie. There is no reason not to make a movie if you wanna make a movie. And my first tip—sorry to jump in, guys, ahead of time—my first tip would be to not worry about the plot that much. Like, for a short it’s gonna be more important to you probably just to keep it entertaining and funny and keep the energy moving? And you don’t wanna get bogged down with plot stuff! Y’know? Keep the plot as simple and straightforward as you can, unless the joke is that the plot is really complicated, and then just have fun making it fun.

01:23:18 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Dan:** Yeah. I—I—

01:23:20 Stuart Host **Stuart:** From what—yeah. From what little I’ve learned—  
—from watching TikToks, the key is editing. If you wanna get laughs, make it—do a lot of quick editing.

01:23:30 Elliott Host Yeah. Edits—cuts are funny. Like there’s certain types of things that are funny without cuts? But a lot of times a quick-cut is funny.

01:23:37 Dan Host Uh... yes. If you make the cut part of the joke. I actually was gonna say another thing, which is a little bit opposed but I think I trust our listeners to be smart enough to hold both ideas in their head. Which is sometimes it is funnier to also just let things play out in long. Like a slapstick thing often just like seeing the full thing is the funny way. And modern movies have forgotten that.

01:24:07 Elliott Host Oh, I will say—that’s true. Slapstick is funnier without cuts.

01:24:09 Stuart Host Yeah. It’s like the scenes in *Children of Men* where Alfonso Cuarón just does one long take? Those were hilarious!

01:24:15 Elliott Host Oh, that movie was so funny. That movie was so funny. That’s why *Birdman* is hilarious. That’s why *The Revenant* is hilarious.

[Dan laughs.]

01:24:23 Crosstalk Crosstalk That’s why *Rope* is hilarious.  
**Dan:** *Russian Ark*? Is—

01:24:25 Elliott Host **Elliott:** That’s why—*Russian Ark*, yeah.  
Is a laugh-fucking-riot. Sorry that your daughter had to hear me curse just then. But yeah. It’s—see, let the moment tell you how best it should be made. Don’t stick to a theory, but let the moment tell you. But I would still just say, like, make it... make it as fun to watch as you can and don’t worry—like, the best movies—the ones that people remember the most—people very rarely remember how the plot goes.

01:24:51 Dan Host Yeah.

01:24:52 Elliott Host This is something that Howard Hawks believed in. Was he said, “People don’t watch movies for plots. They watch them for scenes. And they remember scenes. They don’t remember plots.” I think he went too far with that until eventually he was making movies that were just about dudes hanging out at racetracks or hanging out on a safari? But you need some plot. But don’t worry that the plot is going to be the thing that makes or breaks you. Y’know.

01:25:12 Dan Host Yeah. If you've got—yeah. If you've got interesting gags in it? I don't know. I'm remembering now, there was a video I was supposed to make for French class in high school? And it was not supposed to be horror? But because I'm who I am, I was like, "I'm gonna put some horror stuff in there." And it was like a French class video where it involved me accidentally cutting my arm off? *[Laughs.]* And I made one of those things where like there's a fake—I used an old shirt and I made like a fake forearm to put on my real arm and *[through laughter]* I put a glove around it?

*[Elliott laughs.]*

I don't know why my character's wearing a glove. So it looked like the glove was fake, but it looked like my hand holding my real arm. I hope that that explanation made sense to people listening. And then out of my little stump *[through laughter]* I had one of those squirt bottles? And I just like squirted blood out of it. So I guess my advice is do something like that.

01:26:14 Stuart Host Yeah. That sounds great.

01:26:16 Elliott Host What was the—what was French about it?

01:26:19 Dan Host Oh, we were speaking in French.

01:26:21 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Elliott:** Oh, okay. You're like, "Ah! Mon stump!"

**Stuart:** Yeah, Elliott. You don't think French people can get their arms cut off?

01:26:27 Elliott Host **Dan:** Yeah. Exactly. Zut alors! *[Laughs.]* You're right. French people are just as likely as anyone else to get their arms cut off. Very fair.

01:26:31 Dan Host We got one last email here. It's from Ben, last name withheld, who says—

01:26:38 Elliott Host Ben Ten.

01:26:39 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Stuart:** Shit.

01:26:41 Dan Host **Dan:** "We all know—" "—that *Psycho Goreman* is the next *Star Wars*, both in the breadth of its cultural impact and in that every background character will eventually have at least twelve extended universe books about them."

01:26:52 Stuart Host Uh-huh. Yep.

01:26:53 Dan Host "Stuart, until then—what can you tell us about Tubeman's backstory? Where did he go to high school? What are his goals? His dreams? What does he smell like when they pop that helmet off? For the rest of the Floppers left in the shadow of Stuart's artistic legacy, what character with little screen time do you wish for more backstory on?" I'm sorry I did not send you this last part of the question. I forgot it was there.

01:27:17 Elliott Host No, cool, cool, cool. Cool. Yeah. Cool.

01:27:19 Dan Host I'm sorry.

01:27:20 Stuart Host Man, that's—yeah, this is tough. I—y'know, when I inhabit a role, y'know, I just let it kinda take that like character's spirit inhabit me as opposed to like to flow into my body and then out of my mouth. 'Cause I'm mainly a voice actor. But—so I don't—I try not to overthink it too much? I'm kinda primal?

*[Elliott laughs.]*

Almost animalistic when I perform. You guys have seen it, right? Where I'm like—I do that little ritual where I growl a little bit and I have to take my shirt off. The pants stay on. I'm not a Winnie the Pooh. I keep the pants on. But I do—

01:28:02 Elliott Host No, you're a Mickey Mouse.

01:28:04 Stuart Host I do roll the cuffs of my pants up a little bit so that it gives me the impression of having nudity on the bottom half of my body without actually, y'know, going all the way into it. So I do all that and then I kind of—like, I move around and I get very tactile. I touch everything. And I make faces? Kind of like if I was an animal, what an animal would do. And doing that takes me to this kind of like—takes my brain to this kind of like lower, almost, like, subconscious. And that allows the character—in this case, Tubeman—to just kind of flow in through my ears and then comes—just passes my brain entirely and flows right out of my mouth. So that's what I do.

01:28:41 Dan Host Uh— *[Through laughter]* Wow. As to the question of backstories, I'm gonna—this is maybe cheating, but I'm going to just sort of rail against the idea that side characters need backstories at all.

01:28:54 Stuart Host Whaaat?!

01:28:55 Dan Host *[Dan laughs.]* Well part of it is like—I think that there's this—I think it's kind of a modern affliction where people seem to start feeling like not knowing about every single character is a flaw rather than part of what makes movies work? Like... it is good to find something mysterious about this? Like to imagine—whatever you can imagine is much greater. Like, we re-watched—I re-watched *Pee-wee's Big Adventure* with friends recently? And there's a scene in there where apparently originally there was a whole backstory to Amazing Larry? Like, why there's this guy who has this colorful mohawk in the scene in the basement where Pee-wee's laying out all the clues? But he works so much better just as like... he's whispering something and Pee-wee says, "Is there something you can share with the rest of us, Amazing Larry?" and like the shocked cut to this guy with a crazy mohawk. And you're like, whatever backstory you have for Amazing Larry is better than finding out in that deleted scene.

01:30:06 Elliott Host Yeah. I think it is—I was talking to someone recently about how if they made—if Disney made *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* now, they'd be like, "Great. Perfect. We're announcing movies for each of the dwarfs. Then we'll do the prequel. We find out how they met each other." And it's not anything that—we don't need that stuff. That being said. In the beginning of *Singing in the Rain*, there's a actress named Zelda who shows up at the movie premier and this guy in the crowd hops to his feet and goes, *[with extreme enthusiasm]* "Ahh! Zelda! Ahh!"

01:30:42 Stuart Host *[Dan laughs.]* And every time we see him, my family laughs and laughs so I wanna know what that guy's about. And whether he brings that same level of enthusiasm to everything else in his life.

01:30:42 Stuart Host Oh, yeah. You don't wanna know more about Zelda. You just wanna know about the guy.



01:30:44 Elliott Host I wanna know about that guy who's just like, his eyes are popping out of his head he's so excited to see her.

01:30:50 Dan Host Yeah. I don't wanna say too much about this? I'm gonna go back on what I said a little bit. I don't wanna say too much about this 'cause I've been toying with writing like a humor piece about it for a while? Like it's been in the back of my head.

01:31:01 Elliott Host Don't give away the trade secrets, Dan!

01:31:03 Dan Host *[Dan laughs.]*  
I just wanna know the story of the guy in *It's a Wonderful Life* who sits down by the lever that opens the gymnasium pool and what his deal is. Why he's hanging out there waiting for someone to be like, "Hey, y'know, you're jilted by your woman, huh? You know that there's a pool under here that you could open up!" Like, what's his story? *[Laughs.]*

01:31:25 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Elliott:** He just loves swimming!

01:31:29 Elliott Host **Dan:** Yeah.

01:31:31 Dan Host They don't get to use that pool very much.  
Let's get into Recommendations. Movies you definitely should watch instead of *Hillbilly Elegy*. And I want to recommend something related? To this movie in a way, thematically?

01:31:42 Elliott Host It's called *Deliverance*. Dan, come on.

01:31:46 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Dan:** *[Through laughter]* No . I'm so—I—

**Stuart:** It's called *Wrong Turn 2*.

01:31:51 Elliott Host *[Elliott laughs.]*  
*Another Wrong Turn.*

01:31:53 Dan Host I am—

01:31:54 Elliott Host "Guys, you'll never believe this. I think we took... another wrong turn."

01:31:57 Stuart Host *[Laughs.]* I mean, that's the premise of the movie, Elliott.

01:32:00 Dan Host I am surprised that this hasn't been officially recommended on the podcast before, but my googling says it has not. *The Florida Project* does everything right that this movie does wrong about showing people who are in dire financial straights? Like, it has a lot of sad stuff in it but it has a lot of joy. It is presented, y'know, very matter-of-factly. The day-to-day lives. You have characters who are doing occasionally dumb or unsympathetic things because they are stuck in a situation that sort of like doesn't allow for them to make mistakes, unfortunately? And it is like filled with quiet moments and humor and joy along with the dramatic stuff? And I think it paints a much more sort of... full and sympathetic picture of what it is to be forced to live life, y'know—

01:33:02 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Dan:** —in such a precarious way. Yeah. So *The Florida Project*.

01:33:07 Stuart Host **Stuart:** Yeah. On the fringe. Yeah. I—I loved—  
Yeah. I love that movie. It's not just because—for some of the filmmaking feats that they manage to accomplish, but also Willem Dafoe's performance is so great. And also the performance from the children who—I'm assuming—they did not realize they were playing characters in a movie. Right?

01:33:25 Crosstalk Crosstalk *[Dan laughs.]*  
**Dan:** They're so natural.

01:33:29 Elliott Host Elliott: I mean, they knew they were playing characters. They knew they were playing characters but they got natural performances. I don't think they—

01:33:33 Stuart Host It's a similar—I'm sure they utilize a similar method to what I use when I do performing.

01:33:38 Elliott Host Dan: Mm-hm.

01:33:40 Elliott Host Elliott: Exactly. But I don't think it was one of those things where they like hypnotize them or like, "This is your life now."

01:33:45 Dan Host *[Multiple people laugh.]*  
Is that a thing that happens? *[Laughs.]*

01:33:47 Elliott Host *[Elliott laughs.]*  
It's how they got some of Grace Kelly's best performances out of her.

01:33:53 Dan Host Yeah. You go, Elliott.

01:33:55 Elliott Host Okay. I'm gonna recommend a movie also about, I guess, expensive academic situations?

01:34:02 Stuart Host Perfect. Okay.

01:34:03 Elliott Host So I guess that connects to it? This is a movie that's on Amazon right now. It's called *Selah and the Spades*. And it is written and directed by Tayarisha Poe. And it's set at a kind of like fancy boarding school where there's like kind of *Five Family*-type setup where there's groups of students that kind of run the student body. And our main character, Selah, is the leader of a group called The Spades who are in charge of drugs and other illicit substances. And it's kind of about her as someone who is trying to maintain this façade of just total composure and confidence all the time while she is up against the pressures of this kind of criminal social life, and also the pressures from home to be the best student she can be and not get into trouble? And she becomes friends with a younger student who she decides is going to be her heir in this position. But then starts to have a falling-out with her when her suspicions grow. And the movie, like... it starts off and it feels like it's gonna be kind of like a Wes Anderson-y type thing? Which I like Wes Anderson-y stuff, but I worry that other people can't quite pull it off. And then it does not become that at all. It feels very much like a movie that could've been about its plot but is instead about these characters existing and interacting. And there are a number of scenes where I was like, "Oh, this really feels like what it's like to be a teenager and have to kill time or be excited about something or be worried about something." I thought it was a really—it's more elliptically told than I thought it might be. And I thought it was really affecting that way. So I would say, *Selah and the Spades* if you wanna see kind of like a teen movie that feels more poetic than your normal teen movie with a plot like that might sound.

01:35:42 Stuart Host Okay. And I'm gonna recommend a movie—let's tie this to *Hillbilly Elegy*. This is a movie about—

01:35:47 Elliott Host We know it's *Psycho Goreman*, Stu. Just—

*[Dan laughs.]*

—just go with—

01:35:50 Stuart Host —a complicated relationship between grandparents and children. I'm gonna recommend a movie on Shudder called *Anything for Jackson*. It's a horror movie about a older couple who decide—they kidnap a pregnant woman in order to perform a reverse exorcism and bring back their grandson. And it is a—it's a funny, well-made, well-performed, very efficient scare machine. It is just by like scares-per-moment, you're gonna get more than your average horror movie. I recommend it. It's a lot of fun. Yeah. Give it a shot. *Anything for Jackson*.

01:36:38 Dan Host Ah, a good SPM score.

01:36:40 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Dan:** *[Inaudible]*

01:36:43 Stuart Host **Stuart:** Yeah. The SPM score is super high. If you're looking for just like a fun horror movie night, I think it's a great choice.

01:36:47 Dan Host I will put it on my watchlist. But!

01:36:52 Elliott Host Okay, Dan. I mean, I noticed that you very prominently did not say "I'll put it on my watchlist" after my recommendation—

01:36:57 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Elliott:** —but go ahead! Sure.

01:36:59 Dan Host **Dan:** Y'know, yours sounded like a kind of a—like a—y'know—

01:37:01 Stuart Host Maybe too good? *[Laughs.]*

01:37:04 Dan Host Yeah. A lot of vegetables.

01:37:05 Elliott Host *[All laugh.]*

01:37:12 Crosstalk Crosstalk No! But it's a good movie! Alright. How do I make it sound trashier? And one of them is a murderer who has a demon in her butt.

01:37:15 Elliott Host **Dan:** Okay. Well now you're—

01:37:19 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Elliott:** And it's telling—  
It's telling her to kill everybody, but it's at a carnival?  
**Elliott:** It's like a haunted carnival? And—

01:37:22 Stuart Host **Stuart:** If it was Dan, Elliott, you should be—

01:37:27 Elliott Host **Dan:** Sounds good.  
You should be pitching it at like a haunted girls' boarding school.  
Okay. Yeah. Fair. It's at a haunted girls' pillow fight academy?

01:37:32 Dan Host *[Stuart laughs.]*

01:37:35 Elliott Host Uh-huh. Okay. You have my interest.

01:37:38 Dan Host *[Through laughter]* It's called St. Nightie's Academy? *[Laughs.]*

01:37:47 Crosstalk Crosstalk So let's make an—I'm gonna make an effort for once to see if I can end this podcast quickly and efficiently!  
**Stuart:** Okay. Didn't *[inaudible]* it.

01:37:49 Elliott Host **Elliott:** Dan, just pretend—  
Pretend this podcast is your drug-addicted mom in a hotel room and just say goodbye and drive off to New Haven.

01:37:54 Dan Host *[Dan laughs.]*  
We'd like to thank Jordan Kauwling for editing the show. We would like to thank everyone at Maximum Fun for having us on their network. Why not go over to [MaximumFun.org](http://MaximumFun.org). Check out the other podcasts on there. I listen to several of them myself. They are a

			well-curated, wonderful bunch. And if you have the time, please spread the word about <i>The Flop House</i> wherever you think it might be effective! But until next time, I've been Dan McCoy.
01:38:29	Stuart	Host	I'm Stuart Wellington!
01:38:31	Elliott	Host	I'll be Elliott Kalan next time, too!
01:38:32	Dan	Host	Bye!
01:38:34	Stuart	Host	Byeeee!
01:38:34	Music	Music	Light, up-tempo, electric guitar with synth instruments.
01:38:42	Dan	Host	On this episode we discuss— <i>Hillbilly Elegy</i> !
01:38:45	Elliott	Host	The latest installment in the Barney Google/Snuffy Smiths Cinematic Universe.
01:38:51	Stuart	Host	Also pretty good. Mine is more, y'know, contemporary with all the cool teens listening to Rob Zombie now.

*[Multiple people laugh.]*

*[Music ends.]*

01:39:01	Music	Transition	A cheerful ukulele chord.
01:39:03	Speaker 1	Guest	<a href="http://MaximumFun.org">MaximumFun.org</a> .
01:39:04	Speaker 2	Guest	Comedy and culture.
01:39:06	Speaker 3	Guest	Artist owned—
01:39:07	Speaker 4	Guest	—Audience supported.