

00:00:00	Biz Ellis	Host	Hi. I'm Biz.
00:00:01	Theresa Thorn	Host	And I'm Theresa.
00:00:03	Biz	Host	Due to the pandemic, we bring you One Bad Mother straight from our homes—including such interruptions as: children! Animal noises! And more! So let's all get a little closer while we have to be so far apart. And remember—we are doing a good job.
00:00:23	Music	Host	"Summoning the Rawk" by Kevin MacLeod. Driving electric guitar and heavy drums.
00:00:25	Biz	Host	<i>[Continues through dialogue.]</i> This week on <i>One Bad Mother</i> —we're on double secret probation! We talked with journalist Melissa Korn about the college admissions scandal. Plus, Biz doesn't wanna do it.
00:00:36	Crosstalk Caller	Crosstalk Caller	Biz and caller: Woooo!
00:00:40			Hey! Do you wanna know what my 20-month-old learned how to do? Do you wanna? I'm gonna tell you. She... has not only learned how to pull her shoes off while she's in her car seat—in her rear-facing car seat, mind you, because obviously—but she has also learned to throw her shoes in such a way that it hits <u>me</u> while I'm driving!
			<i>[Biz whoops.]</i>
			Isn't she so talented? This is great!
			<i>[Biz laughs.]</i>
			I—no one told me about this. No one told me that this could be a thing. That I would be hit with toddler shoes while I'm trying to drive. After spending a nice afternoon at the park. Just hitting me with shoes. It's pretty great. <i>[Sighs.]</i> But yeah. Y'know. The weather is nice. We can be outside. My parents received both doses. My in-laws received their first dose and are scheduled for their second dose. And because I'm a full-time, stay-at-home parent, I will be vaccinated in 2025.
			<i>[Biz laughs.]</i>
00:01:58	Biz	Host	Whomp, whomp. Thank you everybody <i>[through laughter]</i> else for getting vaccinated so we can go to the park. I'm gonna keep dodging shoes. I hope you are all having a great day. Bye!!! <i>[Laughs.]</i> I mean, technically you're dodging <u>two</u> shoes? Unless... unless there's something like, I don't know, very unique about the car seat and your child has been hoarding shoes for—you know what? First of all, you are doing such a good job. Second, yes. Your child is a genius. A genius with a helluva over-the-shoulder shot. Alright? Watch out, Harlem Globetrotters. Here comes the baby who can throw over her shoulders. Also, you are right! No one told you this. There's no parenting book where it's like, "Chapter Two: Being Hit in the Head with Toddler Shoes While Driving." It's right around the same chapter as "Poop In the Tub" and "Being Bitten." Your child's gonna take your keys and hide them somewhere. Forever. And you'll never get those keys back. None of those are books. And that's... I guess that's alright? No. It's not alright. We need those books. So you're doing an amazing job.

Congratulations on all the people in *[through laughter]* your life getting vaccinated. And I'm with ya! "Mom podcast" is not on the top list. Not the first ones in line, and that's okay. That's okay. That is why I, like you, wanna say "thank you" to everybody else who is getting vaccinated because it is their turn. You are doing a good job.

So let's get to the thanking! *[Laughs.]* I'm thinking about thanking! So I wanna say thank-you—just like I—again—to everybody who's getting vaccinated! Good job! I know that in every city and every state it's a little bit different, and good job navigating it. Also, good job for those of you who are on lists and are getting notified that there's extra! And that you gotta use it before it goes bad! Good job. Appreciate that. Thank you to all the people distributing those vaccines. In whatever way you are involved, be it volunteer, be it employee, be it the piker, being the prepper, being the sign-in-er or reschedule-r. Thank you, thank you, thank you. And I see you! You're not just at a clinic. You're at the CVS or the grocery store or schools or senior centers. There are so many places that people are out rolling out this vaccine and it's so impressive. Thank you to all the medical professionals who are out there keeping us healthy. Keeping us safe. And keeping those who are affected by COVID as comfortable as you can. You have just run a relentless and exhausting year. And it sucks that... it's not—I don't know where the finish line is. *[Laughs.]* Ahhh! So there's still more relentlessness all around and I just think you guys are all amazing. And remarkable.

Teachers? I love you. Like... I love you. In a way that might, y'know, cross some lines sometimes. I wanna cheer for you and throw candy bars to you. Right? As if it is a Fourth of July parade and I got a handful of Dum Dum lollipops and as you walk from your car to your school I just wanna throw 'em and be like, "Wowww!" And just celebrate you. Postal service. Delivery service. Grocery store employees. Packers. Warehouse workers. Deliverers. Farmers. Ahh! The list goes on and on! One of the bright spots of this pandemic is just... being aware of how interconnected we all are? *[Laughs.]* Oh my god! We just one big web. And I think—it's like that *Star Trek* moment where humanity changes when they realize that they are not alone in the universe? The whole premise of *Star Trek* in that, y'know, boom! We become a peaceful planet. That is this moment for me. Okay? I hope it's that moment for lots of people. We really rely on each other. So... I... I love knowing that. And I will continue to say thank you forever. Forever! And ever.

00:06:33

Biz

Host

Now, here's where I am. I... don't wanna do it. Somebody asked me over the last couple of weeks—I have been asked, *[goofy voice]* "Hey, how are ya? *[Gibberish]*" And I'm like, "Okay." 'Cause we all know what "okay" means. I don't... want to parent? And I don't want to partner. Like, that's where I am. I have parented and partnered consistently for eleven years. And... a year of it is—like you know—fairly intense. And I would like to be a parent and I would like to stay partnered. I just don't wanna do it right now. *[Laughs.]* Like, before kids and before partners, y'know, if I just wanted to watch movies all day I just laid down and I watched movies all day. Right? If I wanted to sleep in really late, just did it. Just did it. If I didn't

wanna cook dinner? I just wanted to order some food out or just eat chips—all day—I could do it. Let’s say one of those choices were healthy. Let’s say I just wanted to get in a car and go on a hike. Y’know? Those are things when you parent and partner you cannot just willy-nilly do. That sort of—we talked about this before. That wanderlust. That ability to just get up and go and do a thing you wanna do. Because whatever you do affects others. Not that I can’t do those things. It’s just I have to literally say, “Okay, guys, on Wednesday I want to not talk to anyone all day. How’s that?” See, that doesn’t sound right, either. So that’s where I’m at. And I guess it doesn’t really matter how much I don’t wanna do it! But! I gotta do it. You know why? ‘Cause I am a person in the world doing it. I’ve got to be a good example for my children. For my partner. For those around me. I gotta make good decisions. And I’ve got to work my hardest knowing that every decision I make will deeply, deeply impact where my children will go to college. I’m just kidding. *[Laughs.]* Which I think ties in nicely to what we’re gonna talk about today with our guest, journalist Melissa Korn, one of the reporters who covered the college admissions scandals and has a new book out with her co-writer, Jennifer Levitz, *Unacceptable: Privilege, Deceit, and the Making of the College Admissions Scandal*. Whew! Banjo strums; cheerful banjo music continues through dialogue.

00:09:14 Music Music
00:09:15 Theresa Host
00:09:22 Biz Host
00:09:25 Theresa Host
00:09:28 Biz Host
00:09:33 Theresa Host

Please—take a moment to remember: If you’re friends of the hosts of *One Bad Mother*, you should assume that when we talk about other moms, we’re talking about you. If you are married to the host of *One Bad Mother*, we definitely are talking about you. Nothing we say constitutes professional parenting advice. Biz and Theresa’s children are brilliant, lovely, and exceedingly extraordinary. Nothing said on this podcast about them implies otherwise.

[Banjo music fades out.]

[Biz and Melissa repeatedly affirm each other as they discuss the weekly topic.]

00:09:38 Biz Host

This week, we are talking with Melissa Korn, who cowrote *Unacceptable: Privilege, Deceit, and the Making of the College Admissions Scandal* with her *Wall Street Journal* colleague Jennifer Levitz. Melissa covers higher education for the *Journal*, writing about college admissions, university finances, education policy, and—lately—the impact of the pandemic on those students and institutions. *[Singing]* Welcome, Melissaaaa! *[Laughs.]*

00:10:04 Melissa Korn Guest
00:10:05 Biz Host

Thank you for having me! *[Laughs.]* Thank you for joining me! Do you have two weeks to talk to me? *[Laughs.]*

[Melissa laughs.]

00:10:11 Melissa Guest
00:10:16 Biz Host

Let’s see. I’ve been talking about this topic since March 12th, 2019. So sure! Yeah! I’ve got two years! *[Laughs.]* Yeah. We’ve got a little time. We just circle around with it. Before we get into this and probably just a list of panicky questions from me regarding higher education and children, who lives in your house?

00:10:29 Melissa Guest My house. It is me and my daughter is here half the time and at her dad's half the time. And she is in hybrid kindergarten these days.

[Biz laughs.]

00:10:49 Biz Host So it's... days are either really calm and I'm really focus on my day job, or just a total circus.

00:10:53 Melissa Guest Yeah. How's that working out? That sort of pivoting back and forth?
[Laughs.]

00:10:59 Biz Host I mean, I was already sort of pivoting, right? My on-and-off parenting days. But it ratcheted up a lot. *[Laughs.]*

00:11:16 Melissa Guest Yeah. It's—I don't—I keep waiting for somebody to be like, "Oh! Yeah. You feel—*[Laughs.]* So physically done because you're just like—back and forth! Back and forth! Go! Ah! Ah! Ah!"

I'm sick of people saying—and I know this has been written about and talked about before—

[Biz laughs.]

00:11:23 Biz Host —I'm so sick of people saying, "I don't know how you're doing it."
I know. I know.

00:11:24 Melissa Guest We're not! None of us are! Not really!

00:11:26 Biz Host No one's doing it! No one's doing it! No one's doing it on a thousand levels. *[Laughs.]*

00:11:30 Melissa Guest No. Absolutely not.

00:11:32 Biz Host Well, we do say here that we're doing it in the sense of, "I woke up! And I did some things and I went to bed and I got up and I did it again. I'm doing it. Yayyy!" That's—

00:11:46 Melissa Guest Right. Everyone is surviving in your household. That is a big, y'know, that's a big win. For sure.

00:11:51 Biz Host It's a big win! Yeah. I'm not a big fan of that myth of... that anybody is achieving anything, including great pleasure, from the entire experience. So, y'know, myths, I think, will tie in nicely to what we're gonna talk about! So I wanna get *[singing]* into... college! *[Regular voice]* And the—actually, I kinda—before we even get in specifically to the story that you covered and the book about the whole college admission *[dramatically]* scandal—

[Melissa laughs.]

[Regular voice] I wanna start—you've been covering higher education for a number of years. I feel like there is this... story. About college. And there are a variety of different stories, all sort of that come together when one thinks "college." Y'know, I think of "you have to go to college to get a job." "You have to be the first person in your family to go to college." I think about the... like, all these—

00:12:57 Melissa Guest "You have to go to a four-year school."

00:12:59 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Melissa:** That's what college is.

00:13:01 Biz Host **Biz:** You have to go to a four-year school. Yeah. Right. And all these different sort of meanings and emotions that we have tied to college. And I think a lot of that plays into what led to this scandal, amongst many things that surround college. Has that story evolved? Is that narrative different now? What do you think that

narrative is? Answer all my questions. What have you learned?
[Laughs.]

00:13:25 Melissa Guest So—*[Laughs.]* Let's see. I'll answer everything all at once.
[Laughs.]

00:13:28 Biz Host Everything! *[Laughs.]*

00:13:31 Melissa Guest I think that the way we talk about college has started to change in the past five or ten years? But it's not yet where it needs to be. So there was this great push of, "Everybody needs to go to college because that's the education you need in order to be employed." Now people talk about it—policymakers talk about it as, "Everyone needs to have some sort of post-secondary education." Which is, y'know, super jargon-y and not as easy to say as "college."

[Biz laughs.]

But it's also more expansive. It's—it could be a vocational or technical program. It could be a certificate. It could be an associate's degree or a bachelor's degree or continue on to graduate school. But the acknowledgment that a four-year, full-time college experience is not for everybody? It's actually not the norm? And I think we're still behind the curve when we talk about who's going to college. There's still so many assumptions that it's 18- to 22-year-olds living on campus. Going full time. Mom and dad are paying at least a portion of it. And that's not who's going to college now.

00:14:33 Biz Host Who's going to college now? *[Laughs.]*

00:14:34 Melissa Guest The people who used to be called "non-traditional students" are now the majority!

00:14:39 Biz Host That's right! Right. Adults. Yeah.

00:14:42 Melissa Guest Working adults. People who maybe started school a decade ago and are going back now. People going part time. People going online or hybrid, even before the pandemic. People, y'know, taking on loans themselves. Their parents aren't contributing. They're kind of above that age when that would be considered appropriate or necessary parental duties. *[Laughs.]* And y'know they're working part-time or full-time on the side. They have kids of their own. It's—there's this myth of kind of the traditional college student and that is just so not who we are right now. And I should say, there's more also about the socioeconomic status of college students? And there is just some great research out, a big survey that came out—I wanna say—earlier this week. About food insecurity and housing insecurity among college students. Most colleges, big universities, have food pantries now. Because they're necessary.

00:15:35 Biz Host Yeah. No. It's so funny. I—*[Laughs.]* When you were talking about the image of college versus what it is, it's like that comparison of like... y'know. *Animal House* versus—or worse, like, *Saved By the Bell: The College Years*.

[Melissa laughs.]

Or—*[Laughs.]* What is that Rodney Dangerfield? *Back to School*. If you're an adult going back you have no middle ground. You are Rodney Dangerfield and you're really excited about getting laid.
[Laughs.]

00:16:05 Melissa Guest I will say—and it's kind of funny in the role I have, talking about college or writing about college, just because the word "college"

can mean so many things to different people? But I spend so much of my time writing about super-selective, very pricey, colleges. Y'know, kind of the Ivies and Ivy-plus institutions and schools that the parents involved in this scandal thought that was kind of the list of acceptable destinations and that was it? So they're that, and then you also have—talking about food insecurity. And students who are drowning in debt and parents who are drowning in debt and it's—*[Laughs.]*

00:16:43 Crosstalk Crosstalk

Melissa: There's some dissonance there!

00:16:46 Biz Host

Biz: It's one of those—yes! Some dissonance! And it's one of those... topics that again... what makes it appeal to the soundbites are one or the other. There's no, "This is how these are all interconnected and this is how—not only is it connected, but how it branches out leading up to it and out of it." Let's get to the scandal! *[Laughs.]*

00:17:09 Melissa Guest
00:17:11 Crosstalk Crosstalk

Yes. And you have to say it, *[dramatically]* "Scandal!"

Biz: *[Laughs.]* I know! You have to say—

00:17:13 Biz Host

Melissa: Y'know, jazz hands. Jazz hands! Scandal! This was a crazy shitshow of a story. Lot of fun. Also super depressing. I mean, it was fun like... it's fun, like, y'know, "Oh! I'm doing my—*[Laughs.]*" Like I'm some '70s housewife who's doing her ironing, getting all twitterpated by like, "Oooh! Who did what?! Oooh!" Right? Like, I don't... it's... really fucked up.

[Melissa laughs.]

So I wanna ask—you've been covering this for a while. Was this at all a big surprise? I mean, haven't people been using money and power to manipulate systems for ever? Like—*[Laughs.]*

[Melissa laughs.]

00:17:55 Melissa Guest

What was it about this?

I think most people who are involved in higher ed or college admissions or work with high schoolers, even—it's not a surprise that—as you said—power and money play into admissions. That it is not a pure meritocracy. And really never has been.

00:18:12 Biz Host
00:18:13 Melissa Guest

Oh. Oh, no.

That is still heartbreaking and shocking to some portion of the population and for them I'm very sorry to crush all of your dreams? But it just—it was never pure. And I think the scandal that some people went to such great lengths to get their kids into particular schools did not shock me? The complexity of this particular scandal... and the scheme and the machinations involved and the number of people involved and the length that it went on without being caught? That part did surprise me. Right? There are people cutting corners all over the place in college admissions. That's nothing new. And that will continue. But having this very well-oiled machine with, y'know, two prongs of kind of illegal operations and office staff and a sham charity and like... it was intense!

00:19:07 Biz Host

It is intense! It was intense! And it was... I think one of the things that I remember—again—not shocked that it happens, but was shocked that never once in that chain—that intricate—*[Laughs.]*—

			chain that had been established—was somebody like, “No.” [Laughs.] Y’know? No one was like, “What? You want me to do <u>what?!</u> ”
00:19:32	Crosstalk	Crosstalk	Biz: “Absolutely not!”
00:19:34	Melissa	Guest	Melissa: And the people who did— The people who did maybe seem a little queasy with the whole thing—they didn’t tell anybody else.
00:19:39	Biz	Host	They didn’t tell anybody!
00:19:40	Melissa	Guest	Or the people kind of on the outside who raised some red flags? It just went nowhere! There were these efforts to bring it down a little bit—
			[Biz laughs.]
00:19:53	Biz	Host	—or at least ask some questions and it just petered out. So... circling back to our first question about college—what is college?—and a system set up so much as this system was set up. The importance. The—anybody would be like, “Yeah, this is a great idea.” Why—did you get any sense of... why it <u>mattered so much?</u> Like... isn’t getting into a “good”—quote-unquote—college—is that antiquated these days? I mean, college is college? Now, I say that as... y’know... a person who was expected to go to college. I say that as a white woman with, y’know, who had a lot of access despite dropping out from three different [through laughter] colleges? [Laughs.]
00:20:48	Melissa	Guest	You had the opportunity to <u>go</u> to three different colleges!
00:20:50	Biz	Host	Yeah! I had the opportunity to go and I had the opportunity to flunk out and I had the opportunity to go again somewhere else! And then flunk out and then somewhere else and then, like, wait tables at Ruby Tuesday’s for years. It was never a question that I couldn’t get back in or out. So I understand I’m asking that question from a very specific place. But also—like you said—what college looks like has changed over the last couple of years. So... so what—what’s the big deal? [Laughs.]
00:21:20	Melissa	Guest	Right. It depends on what you grew up with, I think. It depends on what your peers are doing. What’s expected in your high school. So y’know, the families involved in the scandal were going to, y’know, \$30,000-/\$40,000-a-year private schools. Y’know, it’s—[Laughs.]
00:21:37	Biz	Host	I know. It’s a lot of money.
00:21:39	Melissa	Guest	You’re paying college tuition for high school.
00:21:40	Biz	Host	Yeah. It’s a lot of money.
00:21:42	Melissa	Guest	It’s a lot of money. And—
00:21:43	Biz	Host	It wasn’t like the PTA president from the local public school bribing their—their way through—
00:21:50	Melissa	Guest	No, but there was a board member from one of the private schools.
00:21:52	Biz	Host	Yes. Fair enough. But you’re right! This is a very specific group of people who were doing this.
00:21:59	Melissa	Guest	Right. It is. And it’s—y’know, Jennifer, my co-author, at one point was in Brentwood doing some reporting. And she stopped off at a coffee shop to re-caffeinate and noticed that this message board— thumbtacks and stuff and ads for things—there weren’t ads for cat sitters and house painting. It was ads for test prep. Essay coaching. And that is <u>all</u> that there was. And I think that—I mean, when you’re in that environment? Just going to college—just going to a pretty

			good college or a fairly selective college? No, that's not enough. And it's not enough for a lot of the parents.
00:22:37	Crosstalk	Crosstalk	Melissa: A lot of the kids would be okay.
00:22:39	Biz	Host	Biz: Well that was my next question! That is my next question! Who is this really about? Like, who was really leading this? I mean, were—was this about— <i>[Laughs.]</i> As it always is! Parents? And I'm one, so I'm fucked.
			<i>[Melissa laughs.]</i>
00:23:03	Melissa	Guest	Or is it about—or are there kids who were like, “You better do <u>anything!</u> ” So... what—is that what it really just was? Was it just... It was mostly the parents. So some of the kids did know what was happening. They were brought in on it, whether it was the test cheating or the fake athletic profiles. Some were aware of what was going on to different degrees? But some really did not know what their parents were up to and the parents went to great lengths to keep them in the dark. And I mean, can you just—I can't even imagine being 17 years old and learning that my parents did this “for me,” in quotes, really “ <u>to</u> me,” and just realizing, “Oh my god, they had <u>no</u> faith that I could pull this off myself. And how dare they screw up! They just fucked my life to an amazing degree by trying to do something really to stroke their own egos.”
00:23:43	Biz	Host	What's worse—not knowing and then finding out after the fact, or having your parents come to you and say, “Cheat on this test right now.” Right? Like—
00:23:52	Melissa	Guest	There's something diabolical about it. <i>[Laughs.]</i>
00:23:54	Biz	Host	What—I know! I mean, like, which one is worse? I don't know! I don't—both are awful. And... ugh. I know. It is so... screwed up. And I—and it makes me think back to just the core of what I have always thought was bullshit, which is that Mommy War that was sort of—I've always felt was very generated as a way just to continue to pit women against each other. <i>[Laughs.]</i> Me, personally. I just don't think there's a Mommy War. But I think it makes a good soundbite. But they—this notion—we all struggle as parents with, y'know, even the most casual of conversations in which someone says their three-year-old slept through the night or their baby slept through the night. Can make <u>you</u> then feel like, “What have I done? How do I fix this? I am a horrible parent. What are <u>they</u> doing?” Right? And this just feels like people who were unable to break that craziness!
00:24:58	Melissa	Guest	Right. For some it's about ego. It's like, “I'm already at the top of my game and I want that damn bumper sticker.” For others it's this really deep insecurity. And I have to say, when reporting on the book, it kind of terrified me how I could relate to a lot of that. As a parent, right? I live in New York City. I've got a kid in kindergarten. We did not go the private school, “my kid must go to this preschool to go into this kindergarten so that they can end up at Harvard.” Like, that was not our approach but we knew plenty of people who were in that. And it's so scary. But you can see how—even at that young age—parents do get that “I must be doing something wrong 'cause my kid's not reading yet. I must be doing something wrong because—whatever it is. How can I make sure my kid is getting every advantage possible?” And... people obviously take that to different degrees!

00:25:49 Biz Host Yeah! *[Laughs.]* “I’m gonna break little Timmy’s leg!” *[Laughs.]*
00:25:54 Melissa Guest I mean, here in New York people pay hundreds of dollars an hour for gifted-and-talented test tutoring for kindergartener—or for pre-K kids.

00:26:00 Biz Host No. Way.
00:26:02 Melissa Guest Oh, yeah. For four-year-olds?
00:26:03 Biz Host That’s not how—I gotta tell you, I have some serious...
00:26:06 Melissa Guest It’s changing now because the gifted-and-talented program is changing for admissions. But, oh yeah! There’s like \$300-and-hour tutors.

00:26:12 Biz Host How do you test—how do you prep... for gifted-and-talented? Because that’s all about, like—there’s so many different areas of what—like—spatial and—

00:26:22 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Melissa:** I mean, the test itself is bonkers. But.

00:26:26 Biz Host **Biz:** It ain’t the same test I took as a kid. *[Laughs.]*
00:26:28 Melissa Guest I’ll tell ya that.
00:26:33 Biz Host It’s about patterns and shapes and colors and stuff. I dunno. But it’s—
00:26:33 Biz Host Anyway. That’s nuts.

[Melissa laughs.]

Alright. Something you got to do in this book that you probably didn’t have as much freedom to do in the articles is really digging further into the lives of these people. They got to become more complex. And earlier you said, y’know, it was hard because you even kind of understood where some of them were coming from. Now when I think about the people in this book, all I think about is every, like, *Happy Madison*, SNL-style movie where there’s the, like, super rich jerky guy who’s just like, “No, I eat pieces of shit like you for breakfast!” Right? “You eat pieces of shit for breakfast?” “No!” Like, that’s all I imagine these people to be. ‘Cause I’m a monster. So what were these—what were they really like?

00:27:22 Melissa Guest Yeah. So I think—it’s right. When we’re writing a story for the newspaper, the longest stories I get to write generally are about 2,000 words. 2,200 words, max. IT’s not that much room to show who a person is. And one of the ways that we really got a lot of these parents and others to open up to us, to talk to us for the book, was to explain, “Right now what’s out there about you is not good.” Right? “So you’ve got a few headlines.”

[Biz laughs.]

“You’ve got the FBI affidavit. You’ve got the stuff the prosecutors put out that show you as just this... conniving, transactional, y’know, questionable-love-for-your-child—this is not a good look on you. But talk to us. Tell us why you did what you did or why you did what you were accused of doing. Why these people might think you were accused of what you did.” Since some people did plead “not guilty.” Give my little disclaimer there. Y’know, “Show us the rest of you.” And generally, the more information that comes out about people, the more human they are. As you said, the more complex. They’re just... whether it’s they’re relatable or their pity-some, tiny little kernel about them; or you admire something about their life history—you just understand them more as humans. The problem

is, that wasn't the case for everybody. *[Laughs.]* Right? Some people just continued to dig themselves deeper the more and more they shared about themselves. And there was one dad who—even after serving his prison sentence, was still trying to kind of talk his way out of this and explain that he was just “had” by the scheme’s central character of Rick Singer. You pleaded guilty, you went to federal prison, and you’re still saying, “Not my fault.”

00:29:11 Biz Host

Well, where'd you go to college?

[Melissa laughs.]

You know what I mean? I wanna be like, “Where'd you go to college? Did you take any of the classes there about ethics or...” Y'know. “Any of those things? I thought those were mandatory.”

00:29:24 Melissa Guest

Yeah. It's—I mean, sitting in the courtroom for some of those sentencings was really interesting. Just to—y'know, some of them played it—I mean, there are people who help lawyers craft these sentencing memos of how to come across most sympathetic. Most relatable. Y'know, being a super-rich person trying to get leniency from a judge is kind of a hard thing to do.

00:29:48 Biz Host

What?!

00:29:49 Melissa Guest

So they have to toe the line, right? There was—one of my favorites is this mom who, in her sentencing memo, included a letter from somebody who was like, “Oh, she always got her hands dirty while she was fixing her private plane.”

[Biz laughs.]

Or like, “She was known as the most charitable person in Aspen.” Right. Yeah. *[Laughs.]*

00:30:05 Biz Host

[Melissa laughs.]

00:30:07 Melissa Guest

Oh, and “She let me design the interiors of two of her houses.” And these were the people—these are the character references!

00:30:15 Biz Host

This is like a different...

00:30:18 Melissa Guest

It's a different level.

00:30:19 Biz Host

It's a different level. It is a different way of walking through the world.

[Melissa laughs.]

That, y'know, it is... I don't know! I guess I—y'know, if I gotta lead by the example I try and set I gotta say, “Well, good for them.”

[Laughs.] Y'know? Not “good for them” like cheating the system and trying to use that power to corrupt, but if you're generally a really good person and also ridiculously wealthy? Like in a whole 'nother place like that? Good for you. *[Laughs.]*

00:30:54 Melissa Guest

So—right. So there were some of these that—they would submit 20, 25 letters from friends and family and former employees or employers and some of them really showed that this was a person who had some redeeming qualities. Some of them reinforced what the public probably already thought about these people? And some just kind of left you like, “Oh, that person really didn't have any intimate friends because they say absolutely nothing interesting about them.” And it was a mix and it was a lot of fun reading.

[Biz laughs.]

It's all in the court docket. Those letters. But y'know we also knew that we wanted to go beyond that. We didn't wanna just regurgitate what's in the court file. Because you can pay enough money and get access to all those records and there ya go. And frankly, the FBI affidavit—this 200-page thing that dropped like a bomb the first day—that alone could just be a book. It's fascinating reading.

[Biz laughs.]

00:31:56 Biz Host So it is—the bar was pretty high to get something new and insightful and contextual there.
Well was it hard—was it hard to write it? And not, like... “It's a journalist. No bias. Blah, blah, blah.”

[Melissa laughs.]

00:32:30 Melissa Guest In the book I'm guessing there's a little more room for—only because when I'm reading it, there's parts where it's like—[Laughs.] “Her blonde hair and her tan—” Whenever you say “tan,” I'm like, “Oh, I know what tan means. They live on a boat.” Y'know? And then they're always in the Caribbean. Which is my own stuff that I am putting on the words “tan” and “blonde.” [Laughs.]
Right. I mean—right. We describe the houses that some of these families live in and we had a lot of fun doing that. Let's be honest. Like, hanging out on Zillow to do the bird's-eye view and read the real estate descriptions 'cause a lot of them sold their house shortly during this process? 'Cause, y'know, they had big legal fees?
00:32:49 Biz Host Wow.
00:32:50 Melissa Guest Y'know, the chateau-style whatever. The 17-bedroom compound. And—[Laughs.]
00:32:55 Biz Host Oh my god. When writing this, it was fun to do that. But I mean how... what did you feel your responsibility was, though, to navigate between turning it into a, y'know, Danielle Steel novel and—[Laughs.] And reporting on what you wanted to get across?
00:33:18 Melissa Guest I feel like I should say to any listeners, I'm sorry this is not a Danielle Steel novel. [Laughs.]
00:33:18 Biz Host I know! I don't know! I don't know. If you put on the right music with this? [Laughs.]
00:33:28 Melissa Guest Hm. Okay. [Laughs.]
00:33:29 Biz Host “He was tan. And blonde. At his chateau.” I know. Go ahead.
00:33:34 Melissa Guest “The tight pink dress and the—” yeah.

[Biz laughs.]

00:33:50 Biz Host So we did definitely have to toe a line. Right? We are journalists. We continue to be journalists. We continue to cover this story for the *Wall Street Journal*. I continue to write about very serious topics. I'm not looking to go move over to TMZ or *People*.
00:33:51 Melissa Guest Right. Thank you.
But at the same time, you need some personality here. So there is a little snark. There's probably a little judgment in there.

[Biz laughs.]

Of a lot of things. Y'know. But we don't harp on, "Let's all make fun of these people" or anything like that. It's a balance. So part of it was making sure that we weren't going overboard with judgment but also making sure that we weren't being spun. Right? So a lot of these parents and others had—they had amazing legal teams. They had hired very high-priced crisis communications people. So they had serious entourages around them who were trying to feed us a particular type of information or a particular sliver of the story. The one that they thought would make their client look best. Even when sometimes that directly contradicted the facts we had. So we had to navigate all that. We often had to go around all of them to actually talk to the parent directly because who knows if the lawyers and the crisis comms people are sending them our messages? So there was taping notes to doors and leaving a letter in a mailbox and... text messaging and... DM-ing on Facebook and all that stuff. And it, y'know, enough of it was fruitful.

00:35:01 Biz Host

I... love it. I love the idea of you going up and taping—

[Melissa laughs.]

—something to somebody's door or car window. "Hello. I'm a reporter. And I—" Y'know? Like—

00:35:12 Melissa Guest

Well—so it worked! It works enough. So there was—

00:35:15 Biz Host

No. Does it?!

00:35:17 Melissa Guest

But it also can freak some people out.

00:35:19 Biz Host

Oh, I know!

00:35:20 Melissa Guest

So we got one call from a lawyer saying, "Please stop contacting my client. You've gotten your point across that you're trying to talk to them." And I'm like, "Okay, that's great. But you have never acknowledged that you passed along our message, so until you acknowledge that we were gonna go direct." And yes, that involved getting on an airplane and flying across the country to do. And I remember just spending like three hours getting lost driving around Atherton to just check out the exteriors of the houses that these people lived in. That was an afternoon. *[Laughs.]*

00:35:48 Biz Host

That was a—*[Laughs.]*

00:35:50 Melissa Guest

And I was on the phone with Jennifer and she was giving me some directions and then when she was down in San Diego I was checking directions for her to get, y'know, to the next house and... it was fun. *[Laughs.]* It was—

[Biz laughs.]

And most of my work is usually sitting at a desk talking on the phone. So this was a nice change of pace.

00:36:12 Biz Host

As a result of all this research and work in general, what are your thoughts on college? I mean, because you have your own background just like I do. Y'know. I—I don't know if I would wind up saying, "No, you have to go!" Right? Like I don't—*[Laughs.]*

00:36:28 Melissa Guest

Right. It's—and it's a different work environment and the costs are so different now. Right? I'm not gonna be able to afford sticker price on a journalist's salary unless every single person in the world goes out and buys the book. *[Laughs.]* Even then, it's questionable.

00:36:41 Biz Host

Even then. *[Laughs.]*

[Melissa laughs.]

00:36:45	Melissa	Guest	So it's—y'know, who knows. Yeah. I have a 529 for my kid, but—I don't know what it's going to go to.
00:36:53	Biz	Host	Yeah. Who knows what that will look like when—yeah, exactly. Between now and then. Well... Melissa, thank you for joining us, obviously, but the book... I did not think—I will admit, I didn't think I would enjoy it.
			<i>[Melissa laughs.]</i>
			I like to read mysteries and cozies and like, "Oooh! Is he gonna kiss her?" I need light reading these days. But this... this was—you did a really nice job of taking me through the <i>[dramatically]</i> scandal. <i>[Regular voice]</i> And—y'know, I put my own music on. I made it Danielle Steel-y in here.
00:37:28	Melissa	Guest	There ya go.
00:37:29	Biz	Host	And I think it fits in so nicely to what we try and talk about on this show, which is just—everybody's alright. You don't have to do this. This is a crazy place. We don't have to go to crazy to have okay. You know what—to have good stuff. So we will link everyone up to where they can get the book. People, you know how to find books. But you know what I mean. We're gonna make sure we—y'know. You can see different price points in different mediums. <i>[Laughs.]</i>
00:37:55	Melissa	Guest	That's right! Like, look up who's the cheapest! No, I'm just kidding.
00:37:57	Biz	Host	
			<i>[Melissa laughs.]</i>
			The—
00:38:01	Melissa	Guest	We all know who sells it the cheapest. Let's be honest.
00:38:03	Biz	Host	That's right. I know. That's—that's why we don't link to that link.
			<i>[Melissa laughs.]</i>
			<i>[Singing]</i> Independent bookstores! Alright.
00:38:09	Melissa	Guest	Yes. Yes. <i>[Laughs.]</i>
00:38:11	Biz	Host	As well as where they can follow you on Twitter and at the <i>Journal</i> and all of those wonderful things. Thank you so much and I'm so glad that investigating this didn't make you a horrible, bitter person. Or—
			<i>[Melissa laughs.]</i>
00:38:23	Melissa	Guest	Maybe I already was and just...
00:38:25	Biz	Host	Maybe you were. Maybe it just... softened the edges. I dunno.
00:38:28	Melissa	Guest	Depends who you ask.
00:38:29	Biz	Host	Yeah, exactly! Well I think you're lovely.
			<i>[Melissa laughs.]</i>
			So thank you so much for joining us.
00:38:34	Melissa	Guest	Thank you. This was a lot of fun.
00:38:35	Music	Music	"Ones and Zeroes" by "Awesome." Steady, driving electric guitar with drum and woodwinds.
			<i>[Music fades out.]</i>
00:38:52	Music	Music	Cheerful ukulele with whistling plays in background.
00:38:53	Biz	Promo	<i>One Bad Mother</i> is supported in part by KiwiCo. Cultivate your child's natural creativity and curiosity with new, hands-on STEAM

00:39:08	Theresa	Promo	<p>projects every month. From sailing the solar system to conducting colorful chemistry and more. KiwiCo crates have been such a game-changer—</p> <p><i>[Biz laughs.]</i></p> <p>—for our entire family. Truly. They have really changed the way we do activities together. We did this for Easter because we didn't wanna give our kids like a bunch of candy? Well, obviously they're getting candy. But—</p> <p><i>[Biz laughs.]</i></p> <p>—we wanted to give them <u>less</u> candy. And everybody was really happy with that. One project I really enjoyed working on recently with my nine-year-old, Gracie, is a basketball court catapult.</p> <p><i>[Biz laughs.]</i></p>
00:39:58	Biz	Promo	<p>Where Gracie was actually able to build a tiny half-court hoop and a little catapult and practice flinging the basketball into the hoop. And it actually works and it was so much fun to build. With KiwiCo, there's something for every kid—or kid-at-heart—every month. Get 30% off your first month, plus free shipping on any crate line, with code “badmother” at KiwiCo.com.</p>
00:40:11	Theresa	Promo	<p>That's 30% off your first month at K-I-W-I-C-O.com, promo code “badmother.”</p>
00:40:20	Theresa	Host	<p><i>[Music fades out.]</i> Hey, you know what it's time for! This week's genius and fails! This is the part of the show where we share our genius moment of the week, as well as our failures, and feel <u>better</u> about ourselves by hearing yours. You can share some of your own by calling 206-350-9485. That's 206-350-9485.</p>
00:40:40	Biz	Host	<p>Welcome back, Theresa! It's still <i>[shouting]</i> spring breaaaaak! <i>[Laughs.]</i></p> <p><i>[Theresa laughs.]</i></p>
00:41:00	Clip	Clip	<p>Week two of <i>[shouting]</i> spring breaaaaak! <i>[Sings the intro tune to Jock Jams' "Are You Ready For This.]</i> Are you ready for this? <i>[Long pause.]</i> Genius me, Theresa. <i>[Laughs.]</i></p> <p><i>[Theresa laughs.]</i> <i>[Dramatic, swelling music in background.]</i></p> <p>Biz: Wow! Oh my God! Oh my <u>God!</u> I <u>saw</u> what you did! Oh my God! I'm paying <u>attention!</u> <u>Wow!</u> You, mom, are a <u>genius.</u> Oh my <u>God,</u> that's <u>fucking genius!</u></p>
00:41:14	Theresa	Host	<p><i>[Biz and Theresa repeatedly affirm each other as they discuss their respective genius moments of the week.]</i> This is a very spring break-y genius. I was just thinking about the fact that this is—I'm so offended that we're calling this “spring break.” But I'm just gonna leave that there. That's nothing new to</p>

any of you all. But I did actually do something very spring break-y, which is that I took Gracie, my nine-year-old, to the beach for the first time in like—I'm embarrassed to say 'cause we live in Southern California, but I'm embarrassed to say I think it's been more—or had been more than a year? And it may have been like two years. Since I had taken her to the beach.

[Biz laughs.]

And it was just the two of us and, y'know, we carefully social-distance-y met up with some friends of ours. But I was able to just focus on her. We didn't have the craziness of bringing all of the Thorn crew along.

[Biz laughs.]

And we—it was perfect. It was cold, but it was perfect. We got to be outside. We had a really nice time. We quit while we were ahead. We didn't stay too long and get wiped out.

[Biz laughs.]

00:42:25 Biz Host
00:42:31 Theresa Host
00:42:32 Biz Host

It was lovely. I was very proud of doing that. That... is an amazing genius. Good job!
Thank you.
Okay. This is really a—just sort of a... check-in genius. I just want everybody to know that *America's Funniest Home Videos*? Still going great.

[Theresa laughs.]

00:43:04 Theresa Host
00:43:05 Biz Host
00:43:07 Crosstalk Crosstalk

It's still really working out for Kat and I. We are really laughing very hard. Very, very hard. At all the different things that happen on *America's Funniest Home Videos*. So keep sending those videos in and—
There's so many episodes!
There are so many—30 seasons!
Biz: Or 33 seasons.

00:43:10 Biz Host

Theresa: You're never gonna run out.
No! But we're starting with the most recent, with Alfonso. Who is hosting. From, y'know, *Fresh Prince of Bel-Air* days. And he is doing a really wonderful job.

00:43:21 Theresa Host
00:43:23 Biz Host

Great!
Yeah. Yeah. That's a hard job, actually. To not be like, "God, everybody's the worst."

[Theresa laughs.]

00:43:34 Theresa Host
00:43:36 Biz Host
00:43:37 Caller Caller

[Laughs.] And I'm just—just wanted to let everyone know.
Great job, Biz.
Thank you!
[Answering machine beeps.]

Hi, Biz and Theresa! This is a genius! I was making a bottle for my nine-month-old baby this evening and I almost went and poured the

laundry soap in the bottle instead of the formula because it was there and I was tired. But I didn't. So clearly I am a genius with extra-sensory powers. You're all doing a great job and I love you! Bye!

00:44:06 Biz Host *[Biz laughs.]*
You are doing a great job. And never share that. Never share that at a dinner party!

00:44:12 Theresa Host
Yeah. No one else needs to know.

[Biz laughs.]

00:44:29 Biz Host
00:44:31 Theresa Host
00:44:32 Biz Host
I can just see you standing there, frozen, with one thing in each hand. The detergent and the bottle. And you're standing there and you're going, "Wait a minute. No. I shouldn't do this. Okay. Good." That's the speed.

"Good talk."

It's not a fast discovery when you're that tired. Like, you have a nine-month-old in your house. Again, your brain is not working. Not even a little. That is major—major super brain. Yeah. But the timing of the really having to consider what's in your hands—it is long. It's long! It's a full conversation. Failures.

00:44:57 Clip Clip *[Dramatic orchestral music plays in the background.]*

Theresa: *[In a voice akin to the Wicked Witch of the West]* Fail. Fail. FAIL!

[Timpani with foot pedal engaged for humorous effect.]

Biz: *[Calmly]* You suck!

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

00:45:03 Biz Host
00:45:04 Theresa Host

Fail me, Theresa.

Alright. So... family of five. Home during the pandemic.

[Biz laughs.]

00:45:20 Biz Host
00:45:21 Theresa Host
I don't need to tell you how many times a day we were running our dishwasher. But it was usually more than one. Sometimes less than three.

Huh.

And... we don't have a built-in dishwasher? We have one of those portable ones? And they just aren't as good. Like, they're just not as good. They're just not as good.

[Biz laughs.]

And... so we'd had this one since we had moved into this house, which was before Oscar was born. And basically a few months ago it just was done. Like, we had to unclog it a bunch of times. It was just slowing down. We were unclogging it every time. It was a whole thing. And ultimately we were just like—we looked at the shelf-life of this thing and we were like, "We just need to get a new dishwasher." So I did the research and Jesse was very grateful to me for doing the research. That's usually his job? He's like the

Wirecutter research person in our house? But I found a really well-reviewed one and he's like, "Well if that's the one to get, go get it." We bought it. Got delivered in December. And now it's March and it's broken.

00:46:25 Biz Host Oh, god.
00:46:26 Theresa Host It's broken.
00:46:27 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Biz:** Broken? Is it broken? It's broken.

Theresa: Broken. Broken. Broken. Not working.
00:46:31 Theresa Host Not washing our dishes.
00:46:32 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Theresa:** Hasn't been able to wash—

Biz: But is it washing the dishes? Are the dishes coming out clean?
00:46:37 Theresa Host They're not coming out clean. They're not.
00:46:40 Biz Host They are not.
00:46:41 Theresa Host It's not doing the dishes.

[Biz laughs.]

For me. Instead, I... and my family... are doing all the dishes. It's not what I had in mind. And I am very mad. *[Laughs.]* Honestly.
00:47:00 Biz Host Yeah. I would be pissed.
00:47:02 Theresa Host I'm so mad. And y'know it's still under warranty. Y'know, whatever. They'll pay—they'll fix it. But because it's under warranty you have to go through the right people and you have to wait for them to do—and it's—ahhh. Mm. I'm used to having a dishwasher!

00:47:19 Biz Host Yeah. I know. Well, you're doing a horrible job.
00:47:23 Theresa Host Yeah. I know.
00:47:25 Biz Host Being, I guess, domestic. Is that—is that it? *[Laughs.]*
00:47:27 Theresa Host Yeah. I guess.
00:47:29 Biz Host I'm so sorry.
00:47:31 Theresa Host Thank you.
00:47:32 Biz Host Okay. My fail—it's more of a prediction fail, based on previous fails. Of back in school learning. In just a few days, the kids will be going back to school for three days—three full days—a week. And two days remote. But those days there's only two of those days in which they are both there at the same time, and one of those two days they're like in two different—one's at the farm 'cause the school's got a little farm and one's at the school. Those aren't connected. *[Laughs.]* So. It's a lot of scheduling. Make sure everybody's left the house at the right time. With lunches! Lunches are back! Because we had to start packing lunches again! And I failed so many times with the two days a week, two hours a day... like, at the farm? I still will just be sitting in the car texting Stefan saying, "Do I pick up at 11, or 11:30?" It hasn't changed, but I cannot get it in my head. And I know... I know I'm gonna mess this up. I know I'm gonna mess it up, and I know I'm gonna be resentful that I'm gonna feel like I'm president of it. Y'know? Like I know that's coming. And I'm gonna try to avoid it, but like... I—it's coming.

00:49:12 Theresa Host Can I share? I just—I also—what I'm feeling as I'm listening to you, 'cause I relate, what I'm feeling is this expectation of failure. As you said. But also this expectation that like... it will be repeated failure. Like, "I'll get the time wrong, but then just 'cause I got it wrong and figured out, 'Oops! I did that wrong today!'" That doesn't mean that

			now I get it. That now I can do it. Like, I'm worried I just will just not be able to do—like, get it.”
00:49:45	Biz	Host	I'll continue to not be able—like, we have to fill out this online health form <u>every</u> morning before 8? And—yeah.
00:49:52	Crosstalk	Crosstalk	Theresa: I'm already—we already have it. Yeah. Yeah. Mm-hm. Yeah.
			Biz: We—we have failed at that <u>multiple</u> times. <u>Multiple</u> times. Yeah.
00:49:59	Biz	Host	And so it's—it's that—I think last week we talked about uncertainty that comes from change? Like change doesn't always mean “Yay!” And that is where I am sitting at the end of <i>[yelling]</i> spring breaaaaak! <i>[Laughs.]</i>
			<i>[Theresa laughs.]</i>
00:50:17	Theresa	Host	Well, you suck, I guess.
00:50:18	Biz	Host	Yeah. I just—we all know that the suck is coming. <i>[Laughs.]</i>
00:50:21	Theresa	Host	Yeah. <i>[Laughs.]</i>
00:50:24	Caller	Caller	<i>[Answering machine beeps.]</i>
			Hi! This is a fail. So I took my daughter to the park today. She's only been to the park a handful of times before because... because of the pandemic. And she's only 21 months and has only been walking for like two of those months. So she's new to the whole park thing. We went on the merry-go-round for the first time today because her older cousins were on it. When she wanted off I took her off. Set her down. And... forgot about the whole dizzy thing. So she promptly fell down on the ground while other people saw. And laughed. So...
			<i>[Biz laughs.]</i>
			Y'know. Thank goodness for a soft-ground playground. And... y'all are doing a great job.
00:51:21	Biz	Host	Yeah. Those things that go 'round at the park? I think I remember them. They make you very dizzy. And... yeah! Why would—but why would you... think—think about it? And I mean that in all honesty?
			<i>[Theresa laughs.]</i>
00:51:42	Theresa	Host	I mean it, like, in all honesty! Right? I know. But it is just one of those things where you feel responsible somehow. Like, especially with a— <i>[Laughs.]</i>
00:51:48	Biz	Host	A little—
00:51:49	Theresa	Host	—kid that age.
			<i>[Biz laughs.]</i>
00:51:51	Biz	Host	God. Oooh. I know. Well, you're doing a horrible job using playgrounds.
			<i>[Theresa laughs.]</i>
00:52:09	Music	Music	I guess. So. An FYI— <u>everybody</u> was watching. Everybody! “Mom Song” by Adira Amram. Mellow piano music with lyrics.

*You are the greatest mom I've ever known.
I love you, I love you.
When I have a problem, I call you on the phone.
I love you, I love you.*

00:52:32	Music	Music	<i>[Music fades out.]</i>
00:52:33	Theresa	Promo	Inspirational keyboard music plays in the background. <i>One Bad Mother</i> is supported in part by Rothys'. Rothys' comfortable, washable, and sustainable shoes and bags make getting dressed easy.
00:52:42	Biz	Promo	Guys? I have been coveting Rothys' shoes for a long time. And finally got some. And I gotta tell you—they are <u>comfortable</u> ! They really are. I do not like—I like wearing tennis shoes and flip-flops. And these little ballet flat-style Rothys' shoes that they have that are so cute are <u>so</u> comfortable! And—this is my favorite part—they're machine washable! You can throw them in the wash. The washing machine, guys! <i>[Laughs.]</i> And it's fine! <u>And</u> they are made out of plastic bottles! Somebody put those plastic bottles on your feet! For good! I'm so excited about this!
00:53:25	Theresa	Promo	Check out all the amazing shoes, bags, and masks available right now at Rothys.com/mother .
00:53:34	Biz	Promo	That's Rothys.com— R-O-T-H-Y-S.com/mother .
00:53:42	Promo	Clip	<i>[Music ends.]</i> Music: Peaceful, angelic music.

Benjamin Partridge: The Beef and Dairy Network is a multi-award-winning comedy podcast, here on the Maximum Fun. And I would recommend you listen to it. But don't just take it from me. What do the listeners have to say?

[Several beeps of a busy signal.]

Speaker 1: I would rather stick a corkscrew inside my ear, twist it around, and pull out my ear canal like a cork than listen to your stupid podcast ever again. Please stop contacting me.

Speaker 2: Hell would freeze over before I recommended this podcast, The Beef and Dairy Network, to anyone.

Speaker 3: Not in a million years. Actually, scratch that. Make it a billion years. No, how long's infinity?

Benjamin: That's The Beef and Dairy Network podcast, available at MaximumFun.org and at all good and some bad podcast platforms.

Speaker 4: Disgusting.

[Music fades out.]

00:54:28	Promo	Clip	Music: Upbeat, cheerful music plays in the background. Allie Goertz: Hi, I'm Allie Goertz! Julia Prescott: And I'm Julia Prescott. And we host—
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Both: —Round Springfield!

Allie: Round Springfield is a Simpsons-adjacent podcast where we talk to your favorite Simpsons writers, voice actors, and everyone who's worked on the show to talk about shows that aren't The Simpsons! So we're gonna be talking to people like David X. Cohen, Yearley Smith, Tim Long, about other projects they've worked on. Sometimes projects that didn't go well?

Julia: Mmm!

Allie: Some failures.

Julia: Yeah?

Allie: Some rejections.

Julia: Some failed pilots. Some failed life events. *[Laughs.]*

Allie: Yeah! We just talk to all the failure of The Simpsons.

Julia: Yeah!

Allie: So if you really love your Simpsons trivia and want to get to know the people who worked on The Simpsons a little bit better? Come by Round Springfield!

Julia: Every-other week on MaximumFun.org, or wherever you get your podcasts!

[Music fades out.]

00:55:14 Biz Host

Okay. Theresa? Let's do something that we do every week. Let's listen to a mom have a breakdown.

00:55:22 Caller Caller

[Answering machine beeps.]

Hi, Biz and Theresa. This is a... Daylight Savings rant. I'm pretty sure I've called you probably for the past five years saying, "Fuck Daylight Savings," because as a mother of children you know that "Fuck Daylight Savings." But this year I had a new revelation of why I hate Daylight Savings! Because I'm so goddamn tired. I am so tired. I am spent and I wanna go to bed and like...

[Biz laughs.]

Two nights ago? If I went to bed it was dark out! And now I feel like I have to stay the fuck awake! It's daytime! *[Laughs.]* So that's a whole new "Fuck Daylight Savings." Anyway, y'all are doing a great job and fuck Daylight Savings. Bye!

00:56:03 Biz Host

Well, I look forward to hearing you in another six months. *[Laughs.]*

00:56:07 Theresa Host

Yeah. Seriously?

00:56:09 Crosstalk Crosstalk

Biz: I'm sorry. Theresa's face—the moment you said "Daylight Savings—"

Theresa: I got so mad. Yeah. Yeah.

00:56:13 Biz Host It was as if she was in church. Like, she was—her eyes were closed and she was nodding and there was this face of like, “I’m being touched.” Like in a good way. Like, by the Spirit.

00:56:27 Theresa Host Yes. I am being moved. Yes! Because I... I don’t... I just—I’m so right there with you. I think it’s hard on our kids but it’s hard on us ‘cause we’re tired. And then it’s like a vicious cycle. And it’s so stupid! It’s for nothing. So you feel like your kids are being punished and you’re being punished for no reason. And you’re trying to—like, it took probably more than two weeks for my kids to stop saying, “But... it’s—it’s not—but it’s daytime!” Or “But why is it—” Like, just being still really confused. And having to explain, “You’re just not used to the Daylight Savings. It’s just the Daylight Savings.” And that’s just too many days. Like, just for no reason. We have enough going on. Just—

00:57:23 Biz Host We just barrel through it in this house? I make zero big deal about it. In fact, I just shut it down. We just change the clocks and then if somebody says, “What? What’s happening?” I just say, “Nothing. Get up.” Or—

00:57:36 Theresa Host Wow.

00:57:38 Biz Host Or if Ellis is like, “It’s still light outside.” “It is. It is. Come on. Time for bed. Still seven o’clock. Time for bed.”

[Theresa laughs.]

00:58:03 Theresa Host And I’m just like—I’m like, “No. We will not—*[Laughs.]* We will not dwell on that in this house!” I know. I know! It doesn’t—by the way, that doesn’t fix anything? But that is how I walk through it. *[Laughs.]*

00:58:05 Biz Host Out of anger you’re still just in the denial phase. I just pretend like it’s just not at all a thing. Yeah. I’m like, “Yeah, the clocks change. That’s what happens right now. It’s time for breakfast. Go. Go.”

[Theresa laughs.]

“Just go. Go, go, go! *[Clapping in time]* Go, go, go, go, go, go, go, go!” Well? I just want you to know that you are seen. You are heard. And... you are doing a really good job not being able to control time or space. And accepting that. I mean, with anger. You’re accepting it with anger. But that’s okay. That’s okay. That’s—sometimes that’s how we have to accept things. You are amazing. Theresa?

[Theresa laughs.]

Speaking of being touched—*[Laughs.]* You’re also amazing. And I am touched every day that you are my friend.

[Theresa laughs.]

00:59:01 Theresa Host And I just... I look forward to seeing you again! Soon! Thanks, Biz. I really appreciate you. I appreciate being here and seeing you. And I look forward to seeing you next week.

00:59:12 Biz Host Yeah! Yeah! Let’s do it again next week.

00:59:15 Theresa Host Okay.

00:59:16 Biz Host Bye. *[Laughs.]*

00:59:17 Theresa Host Bye.

00:59:19 Biz

Host

What did we learn today, everyone? Well, you know what? I think—
[Laughs.] I feel like we have come full circle to where this show started. Like, eight or more years ago. And that is, thinking about the pressures put on parents from ourselves or from others or from what we read or... what we see that makes us think that everything is supposed to be perfect. And we're supposed to be doing what everybody else is doing. And how just crushing and destructive that pressure is. Like, y'know. [Snidely] Working versus stay-at-home. [Laughs.] Right? Like, "Both actually are really difficult!" [Laughs.] "And both deserve all of our fucking respect! Sleep training! Do it or don't! Let's judge each other about it! Regardless, no one's getting sleep tonight!" Right? Like—[Laughs.] Just, "Breastfeed! Don't breastfeed! I don't know! Feel like shit for whatever your choice is!" I'm terrified that this is going to follow me all the way to college. Like, that makes me terrified that—and in all honesty? What I have learned over these years is whatever I thought I would feel or—I haven't always felt that way when I get there. Y'know? [Smugly] "I'm never gonna have my children have iPads." [Laughs.] like, "Boom! Here's an iPad." Right? Like, "I'm gonna make all organic—" "Boom! Here's a can of beans." Y'know? Like—[Laughs.] And I'd like to say that when my kids get to college age, I'm gonna be rational? And I'm gonna be thoughtful? And I'm going to... be cool with what they choose to do? Or even pretend they have a choice? Like—[Laughs.] I'd like to think that that's how I will be. But I don't know, guys. That's what's so messed up about kids being in your house! You think it's gonna be one way. You think you're going—you think you've got it and you know how you're going to be. And you aren't. Like, even if it's... even if you're halfway there. Even if ya say it like, "Okay. I know I'm supposed to be really supportive and I'm gonna support you and I hear you and... okay." Let's pretend we're talking about college. "It's okay. You don't have to go to college this year. Look what a great parent I am." And then I'm gonna go into the bedroom and for a month cry and question myself and be upset and be sad that you're not having these experiences or that it's going to ruin your life or whatever. Even though I didn't have a normal college experience! So—I guess this is all to say that what I've learned today is this continues to be hard. And nobody's perfect at it. And... I'm just gonna trust that everybody else is in the same place I am. [Laughs.] That's always more helpful.

Everybody? You're doing a great job. I want to, again, give you a heads-up that the MaxFun Drive is coming up in about a month. And this year we are looking for people to call in or email in why they are supporters of *One Bad Mother*. The link to where to send those—it's not the Hotline. But the link to where to send those will be in the show notes. And I'm just gonna go ahead in advance and say thank you for calling that in. It means a great deal. Everyone? You're doing a remarkable job. You really are. And I will talk to you... next week. Bye!

01:03:38 Music

Music

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

I got the lowdown mamma blues
Got the the lowdown mamma blues
Gots the lowdown mamma blues

*The lowdown mamma blues.
Gots the lowdown mamma blues
Got the lowdown mamma blues
You know that's right.*

01:04:02	Biz	Host	<i>[Music fades somewhat, plays in background of dialogue.]</i> We'd like to thank MaxFun; our producer, Gabe Mara; our husbands, Stefan Lawrence and Jesse Thorn; our perfect children, who provide us with inspiration to say all these horrible things; and of course, you, our listeners. To find out more about the songs you heard on today's podcast and more about the show, please go to MaximumFun.org/onebadmother . For information about live shows, our book and press, please check out OneBadMotherPodcast.com . <i>One Bad Mother</i> is a member of the Maximum Fun family of podcasts. To support the show go to MaximumFun.org/donate .
01:04:31	Theresa	Host	
01:04:54	Music	Music	<i>[Music continues for a while before fading out.]</i> A cheerful ukulele chord.
01:04:55	Speaker 1	Guest	MaximumFun.org .
01:04:56	Speaker 2	Guest	Comedy and culture.
01:04:58	Speaker 3	Guest	Artist owned—
01:04:59	Speaker 4	Guest	—Audience supported.