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| 00:00:00 | Biz Ellis | Host | Hi. I'm Biz. |
| 00:00:02 | 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. |
| 00:00:20 | Music | Music | "Summon 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> —the last garage sale! We talk to Biz's sister, Helen Ellis, about her new book, <i>Bring Your Baggage and Don't Pack Light</i> . Plus, Biz was wrong. |
| 00:00:36 | Crosstalk | Crosstalk | Biz and caller: Wooooo! |
| 00:00:38 | Caller | Caller | School's out! |
| 00:00:40 | Crosstalk | Crosstalk | Biz and caller: Fuck! |
| | | | Biz: <i>[Singing]</i> Dun, dun, dun, dun, dun-da-dun-da-dun. <i>[Laughs.]</i> |
| | | | Caller: Something up! <i>[Sings 'Dun, dun, dun' lyrics along with Biz.]</i> I'm so excited! |
| 00:00:45 | Caller | Caller | I'm a high school teacher and I'm done. Done with the school year. And we did it. And my students did it. And I did it. And all of us teachers out there. You did it. And the students. What a hard year. Oh my gosh. Thank you so much for keeping this show going. It has gotten me through everything this year. |
| | | | So I just wanted to say congrats to everybody out there who is finishing up the school year! And getting ready for the summertime fun. Good job. I see everybody. We're all doing an amazing job. And we did it. We did this school year. And it's done. And you know what I did? I went and got myself a massage today because it's the last day of school! And I feel so good after getting a massage. It was so needed. |
| | | | <i>[Biz laughs.]</i> |
| | | | It's been years since I've gotten a massage. <i>[Sighs.]</i> Thank you. Thank you so much, <i>One Bad Mother</i> . Okay. Bye. |
| 00:01:41 | Biz | Host | <i>[Biz laughs.]</i> I love you. Thank you, first of all, obviously. Thank you, teacher. Especially the fact that you teach high school students who are barely adults yet. And full of the 'tude and full of the moustaches and, y'know, armpit hair, I suppose. They all wanna do it. Is that teens? I think so. I only know about teens from <i>Teen Jeopardy!</i> You are amazing for being a teacher and—as we have already said on this show a number of times—teachers? You are just little miracles who have to put up with our children and are really only rewarded with crappy apple statues or mugs that say "We Love You." So I—y'know. You deserve a lot more than that. But I just want to you know that I see you and I see all the teachers. Also, good job on getting touched! Getting massaged! That is nice. That is a nice treat. I like when you said, "It's the last day of school and |

so I'm getting a massage" and I kind of liked the idea of you just not going to the last day of school. And just getting a massage instead. I would have supported that.

Speaking of thanking people, it is time to thank everybody. I just did a lot of traveling for the first time in a long time, and so this time I wanna start off with big thank-you's to all the people who are making travel possible? People who are in there cleaning and sanitizing the airplanes between flights to all of the crew who are working so hard to keep all of us calm while you're trying to stay calm and there's still somebody who wants to not wear a mask on the plane. And you've got to make them do it. And I just want you to know I see you. I see you. Thank you to everybody who's going to work at an airport. I mean, you're really putting yourself in a crazy place and I can understand that that might be very stressful. So I just want you to know I see you, and thank you. Cab drivers. Uber drivers. Lyft drivers. Bus drivers. Train drivers. All of you. All of you are helping us get from Point A to Point B. You are amazing.

I would like to thank everybody who works in the medical profession. As always, you're amazing. You were amazing before the pandemic. You were amazing during the pandemic. And you will always be amazing. And I still can't even begin to imagine how tired you are, and I know so many of you have kids and like—
[Laughs.] That's already really tiring! On—just as it is. And given the hours and the pressure and the stress that you have been under for the last, what—sixteen months now? You really... you really deserve to be seen and to be given a very big break. Thank you to all the people who help sanitize all the areas we go into, not just hospitals and doctor's office and planes, but schools. And grocery stores. Hotels. And shops. And... all of it. you're amazing. We would not be where we are right now as a country in kind of returning to some sense of normalcy without you having made that possible over the last fifteen months. So thank you.

00:05:25 Biz

Host

Post office? I love you. People who deliver packages. People who work at my grocery store. All grocery stores. I love you. I love you very much. People who stock the stores. I love you. I just love all of you! You're all amazing. And you're doing it under the craziest of circumstances. With all sorts of things happening in your own lives! Unrelated to a pandemic or your job. So thank you very much.

Now I am gonna share a little story. I was in Alabama—guys, I'm so sorry. We prerecorded a show so that we didn't have to skip a week. I have no idea where we are in the *One Bad Mother* timeline. [Laughs.] When it comes to listening. Things I think have happened on the road so far with the—I went to Birmingham, Alabama to help my parents get sort of a last garage sale and start getting stuff really pared down to move them out here to Pasadena to live with us. Eventually. In a little house in the backyard. That's gonna be like a while from now, but the important thing is that they're coming.

Also, Katy Belle is enjoying the name Raiden and using he/him/they pronouns. So that, I think, is the—oh, and Ellis is just still Ellis. So that is the update. But when I was down in Birmingham, I was going through boxes of pictures. La, la, la, la, la, la, laaah. And I found pictures of me from when I was Raiden's age. First of all, I now can

look back on those pictures and understand why everyone thought I was a boy. So take that, you generation of kids who want to look like a boy! I was doing it so long before you! Two, I looked exactly like Raiden. ‘K? That was weird. And three, I found this one picture and it’s on the *One Bad Mother* Instagram so you can go look at it. And I just looked at this little Biz— [Laughs.] This little Elizabeth. Before glasses. With the short hair that was permed. Sitting in the backyard and I remember so clearly how ugly I thought I was. I thought I was... like, really ugly. And I compensated for that with humor or whatever throughout my life. But now as an adult looking back on that picture? I was really very pretty! [Laughs.] I wasn’t ugly! I was pretty.

And I don’t know. I just got hit by this wave of... I wish all of us would stop. I wish there was a way to stop that from happening to us. ‘Cause I know that this is how so many of us felt at that time. It’s so funny. Later I was sitting there looking at pictures with Mama of her when she was a teenager and she said, “You know what? I remember feeling so ugly.” And I was like, “What?! You’re fucking gorgeous!” So I don’t know what any of that is about. Except I don’t know. I’m sure there are lots of layers to it. But I just... wanted to say that no matter how we all look back on ourselves or what we thought we were in those days, I just wanna tell you there’s a 99% chance that you weren’t. [Laughs.] Okay? And that you still aren’t. ‘Cause I am still not. I don’t... I no longer feel that way about myself. I just wish that for all of us. You’re all pretty. And smart! Very, very smart. And good at maps. So speaking of walking down memory lane, today we are going to be talking about last garage sales. Packing up memories. And... what to keep and what to sell with my big sisterrrr! Helen Ellis! [Laughs.]

| | | |
|----------|---------|-------|
| 00:09:40 | Music | Music |
| 00:09:41 | Theresa | Host |
| 00:09:48 | Biz | Host |
| 00:09:52 | Theresa | Host |
| 00:09:55 | Biz | Host |
| 00:09:59 | Theresa | Host |

Banjo strums; cheerful banjo music continues through dialogue. 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 Helen repeatedly affirm each other as they discuss the weekly topic.]

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| 00:10:06 | Biz | Host |
| 00:10:28 | Helen Ellis | Guest |
| 00:10:31 | Biz | Host |

This week I am very excited to talk to Helen Ellis, author of *Southern Lady Code*, *American Housewife*, and *Eating the Cheshire Cat*. Her new book, *Bring Your Baggage and Don’t Pack Light*—a collection of hilarious and moving essays about friendship between grown-ass women—comes out July 13th and is available for preorder right now! The magic word is not “please.” It’s “preorder.” I know! [Laughs.] Finally, if you don’t know this already, turn down your volume. Because [singing] It’s my sisterrrr! Welcome, Helen Michelle!

00:10:46 Helen Guest *[Both whoop repeatedly.]*
00:10:47 Biz Host *[Laughs.]* It's about to get loud!
I know. It's about to get very, very loud. Every time I record with you I think, "This is the show where I'm not going to cackle so much that when I'm going back to listen to it later, I'm just... saddened by the amount of noise that I make."

00:11:04 Helen Guest I will be very insulted if you do not—
[Biz laughs.]
—cackle. *[Laughs.]* Being a long-time listener, I appreciate the cackles.

00:11:15 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Biz:** Oh. The cackles. You either love 'em or ya leave us!

00:11:18 Biz Host **Helen:** Not canklles!
Yeah. Not the canklles. Alright. Well let's get started with the question that we always ask you: who lives in your house?

00:11:25 Helen Guest In my house it's—
[Biz laughs.]
—me, my husband—
[Biz copying an exaggerated drawl.] Ya husband.
—of twenty years! We have our twenty-year anniversary—
[Biz cheers.]
—this fall. And two cats! Big Boy and Tangtang. One is sleeping on the velvet—
[Both laugh.]
—chair. Note to self: velvet is a cat hair magnet. *[Laughs.]*
[Biz laughs.]

00:11:54 Biz Host And the other is sleeping in my suitcase that I just brought back from our visit in Alabama!
Yes! I—we were just in Alabama visiting—I would not say "visiting." I would say "working like mules."

00:12:01 Helen Guest Correct.
00:12:02 Biz Host Getting the folks ready for what we hope is a smooth move out to Pasadena.
[Helen laughs.]
But... y'know. More of a downsizing exercise. But first, before we start talking about that—'cause we're gonna talk a lot about that? It just connects so much to your new book. I want to briefly talk about *Bringing Your Baggage and Not Packing Light*.
[Helen laughs.]
This is—it's your second collection of personal essays. Like, of all true—but because we are who we are when we tell stories—they sound untrue.

[Helen laughs.]

Or hard to believe. But these are all true stories. And the book focuses a lot on... your friendships and your relationships and sort of life as a grown-ass lady. And sort of embracing that stage of life. We're gonna talk a lot about one of your stories, "The Last Garage Sale," but before that I was just gonna ask—what was your favorite story to work on in this book this time?

00:13:06 Helen Guest

I think my favorite story to work on in *Bring Your Baggage and Don't Pack Light*—

[Biz laughs.]

—was the story that's the first story in the book called "Grown-Ass Ladies Gone Mild." And as one of my favorite readers, and as a character—as we would call you—who appears in all of my books— *[Laughs.]*

[Biz laughs.]

You know the ladies from "Grown-Ass Ladies Gone Mild." So they are—it focuses on three trips that my childhood friends and I took together to Panama City Beach; to the Blue Smoky Mountains; and... where else did we go? *[Laughs.]* And elsewhere.

[Biz laughs.]

And it really focuses on—I have such a memory of being in Panama City Beach. So it was me and four friends from middle school, and we hadn't seen each other all together in ten years. But it was like... no time had passed. And at that gathering, one of us—my friend Vicky, who you have known all of your life—

00:14:13 Biz Host
00:14:15 Helen Guest

I will not do a Vicky Buckley impression.

[Croaky voice] I'll do it!

[Biz laughs.]

00:14:17 Biz Host

[Croaky voice] I'll do it!

[Both laugh.]

00:14:19 Helen Guest

She came to that first trip with a bad mammogram. So she—when we—she left that trip, she was going straight to have the follow-up and it showed cancer. So over this course of three trips, she battles and survives breast cancer. At the same time I was enamored with my friend Paige, who had come out of a bad marriage and really was so much the better for it. And they both were survivors and I was so very proud of them and so inspired by them and... I knew that I had to write another book and I had to write about these grown-ass lady friends of mine. Because every story in the book is about me going, "I have to tell you about this friend of mine and what she did. I have to tell you about my friend Michelle and how she had a baby on her own at fifty years old and I have to tell you about my friend Danny who went to extreme lengths to save a dollar on Botox—"

[Both laugh.]

Y’know. “I have to tell you about the bridge ladies who are all five-to-ten years older than me and shepherding me through menopause and many activities.” So yeah. I’m just—it’s really about when you get together with old friends, you bring your baggage. Whether that’s a suitcase full of sunhats and rash guards?
[Laughs.]

[Biz laughs.]

Or if it’s family trauma. Old stories. The fear of the sea—which is what I have— *[Laughs.]* Or whatever it may be. Y’know. You accept each other just the way you are.

[Biz laughs.]

00:15:59 Biz Host
00:16:01 Crosstalk Crosstalk

Just as I accept you just the way you are.
Just—*[singing]* Just the way I am!

Helen: Yes. Yes.

Biz and Helen: Practically perfect in every way!

00:16:06 Biz Host

Biz: Well okay.
That is one of the things that’s so nice about this book, is that there is this thread of... love and support and like wanting to share how great all of your friends are. While simultaneously being fucking hilarious.

[Helen laughs.]

00:16:36 Helen Guest
00:16:38 Biz Host

Like it’s one of my favorite scenes in the “Grown-Ass Ladies” is where you and Paige go to Shipwreck Island? The water park?
And— *[Laughs.]* I will just read a little.

Oh, I love it!

“Braving the Raging Rapids ride, we sat ass-backwards into inner tubes held by beautiful, bronzed teenagers. I said to one good ol’ boy Adonis, ‘Ya gonna have to push me.’ He said, ‘Yes, ma’am,’ and shoved me over a waterfall like a sack of dirty sheets down a hotel laundry chute.”

[Both laugh.]

00:16:55 Helen Guest
00:16:56 Biz Host
00:17:00 Helen Guest

“Sometimes you need a push.”

That’s right! “Sometimes you need a push. ‘Thank you, Chad!’”

That is, “Thank you, Chad!” Our favorite waiter in our last visit to Alabama.

00:17:06 Biz Host

Yeah. We just were in Alabama and Helen Michelle treated me to dinner the first night that she was there and we went to a restaurant—‘cause apparently COVID didn’t happen in Alabama and you can just go anywhere you want and be served by anyone without a mask. But I—

00:17:22 Helen Guest
00:17:23 Biz Host
00:17:25 Helen Guest
00:17:29 Biz Host

Including Chad!

Including Chad, whose name is not Chad!

But he flirted enough to get himself a 30% tip. *[Laughs.]*

Yeah. Oh yeah. Chad was some sort of like—I don’t think a mask could have held in the beauty that was Chad. Again, whose name

00:17:45 Helen Guest is not Chad, but we have called him “Chad.” Yeah. He—he earned it all. *[Laughs.]*
He did. He can get himself another friendship bracelet.

00:17:51 Biz Host *[Both laugh.]*
Alright. So like a month or two ago, I get this text from Helen Michelle that says, “Have you read the email from Papa?”
[Helen laughs.]
And I was like, “...No.” No, “Have you read the email from Papa?”
“What do you want me to say?” And I was like—
00:18:07 Helen Guest That’s right. I said—
[Biz laughs.]
“These—our parents are coming to you. You are taking them in. So I am looking at an email and I need you to tell me how I will best serve you—”
[Biz laughs.]
Because my instinct—I was reading this email of “Let’s have another garage sale”—was “I would rather burn the house to the ground.” *[Laughs.]* “Should I say that?”
[Biz laughs.]
00:18:39 Biz Host “Or should I say, ‘Sure, I’ll come home and pack up all your clowns and dragon sculptures?’”
They did have a lot of clowns. And I thought it was unusual that every time you pointed at a clown to say, “Does this go?” Those were the ones that I was really surprised when they said, “No, they stay.” There was one clown literally on a pedestal that lights up from below—
[Helen laughs.]
Anyway, my parents were going to have yet another garage sale to try and pare down one more time. We’d been trying to do this for like three or four years now. And there’ve been a few garage sales and there have been some, “We’re coming.” “We’re not coming.” And then “There’s a pandemic and we’re definitely not coming” and then I think we all kinda settled into the thought, “They’re never coming? Maybe a little bit?” And then, boom! “We’re coming.” And we were like, boom! “We’re ready.” Hence the last garage sale, which I think I should call the last last garage sale, because one of my other favorite stories in this book is called “The Last Garage Sale.”
00:19:37 Helen Guest In which you and your family appear.
00:19:39 Biz Host Yeah. My family was there for this garage sale.
[Helen laughs.]
00:19:43 Helen Guest Throughout the whole thing.
Three years ago.

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| 00:19:44 | Biz | Host | Made it a little harder to help with the garage sale. |
| | | | <i>[Helen laughs.]</i> |
| | | | But this garage sale I think was different. We grew up—our father, you describe him as like the Monty Hall of garage sales. We grew up on bets and wagers and... dares and a garage sale was just like a large version of, y'know, of— |
| 00:20:04 | Helen | Guest | Biz and Helen: <i>Let's Make a Deal</i> . |
| 00:20:05 | Biz | Host | But with my—but with our father at the helm. And no costumes. And so— <i>[Laughs.]</i> |
| 00:20:11 | Helen | Guest | Speak for yourself. |
| 00:20:13 | Biz | Host | Well, I know. |
| | | | <i>[Helen laughs.]</i> |
| | | | And so—I mean, some of those things I would only wear out once. But it was different this time because he was a little less Monty Hall. |
| 00:20:24 | Helen | Guest | Mm-hm. |
| 00:20:25 | Biz | Host | Talk to me about witnessing that three years ago and then... like, sitting with it and then writing about that story. |
| 00:20:34 | Helen | Guest | Well, so three years ago we had what I thought would be the last garage sale. And as I say, in writing— |
| 00:20:40 | Biz | Host | Yes! In writing! In the book! |
| 00:20:42 | Helen | Guest | In the book! "Papa, the next time I put your stuff in the yard, you'll be dead." <i>[Laughs.]</i> |
| 00:20:47 | Biz | Host | Yes. <i>[Laughs.]</i> |
| 00:20:49 | Helen | Guest | "I love you!" <i>[Makes kissing noises.]</i> Y'know, we—three years ago, it was a big garage sale. And as you said, he was always sort of the game show host. Y'know, one of the best things he liked to do was \$5 mystery box. He'd just pack a box with junk, tape it up, put \$5 on it, and people would say, y'know, "What's in the box?" "Pay five dollars, find out!" |
| | | | <i>[Biz laughs.]</i> |
| | | | "Can I shake it?" "Nope." "Can I lift it?" "Nope." |
| | | | <i>[Biz laughs.]</i> |
| | | | "Well can I get a hint?" "Well, it's either worth more than or less than \$5." And nobody ever brought the \$5 box back. But y'know, three years ago it was July in... Alabama. And Papa is 80 years old. And I think... it just got to him. He just didn't have as much fun. We could see he wasn't having as much fun. And y'know, the piece that I wrote about really is about the two of us realizing that our parents are getting older. And Mama says—she said with <u>this</u> garage sale, three years later, for various reasons, "A storm is a-brewin'." And we were selling a lot more than we normally would sell. We were really trying to get rid of a lot of stuff. So you took over the garage and backyard. And I took over the inside. And we're, y'know, so inside was art and— |
| 00:22:16 | Biz | Host | China. And knickknacks. |
| 00:22:18 | Helen | Guest | Anything you don't wanna get wet. And outside was tools! <i>[Laughs.]</i> |
| | | | And— |
| 00:22:22 | Biz | Host | Tools and a chair that smelled like a dog's ass. |

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| 00:22:25 | Helen | Guest | Yes! <i>[Laughs.]</i> Yes! Anything that could get wet. And throughout the day, Papa was—you would say, “Go inside, Papa!” |
| | | | <i>[Biz laughs.]</i> |
| 00:22:33 | Biz | Host | Yeah. “Go inside, Papa. Just go inside.” |
| 00:22:35 | Helen | Guest | And he would come in while I was making a deal and I would say, “Go outside, Papa!” |
| | | | <i>[Both laugh.]</i> |
| | | | And Mama, throughout the—Mama never really participates in these things ‘cause y’know she doesn’t wanna barter. Like, y’know, in the book I say she’s already haggled with herself. So if she puts a brooch out that looks like a cat and marks it fifty cents and someone says, “I think this is worth a quarter!” She’ll say, “Well then you can go to a garage sale down the street and see if you can find a cat brooch for a quarter.” <i>[Laughs.]</i> |
| | | | <i>[Biz laughs.]</i> |
| | | | But so—with the last sale and with this sale, she was in the bedroom. So throughout the day I was hearing, “Oh, your mother has such good taste! Is she still with us?” |
| | | | <i>[Both laugh.]</i> |
| | | | I said, “Yes, she’s in the bedroom!” |
| | | | <i>[Biz laughs.]</i> |
| | | | And Mama said—she came out, and said, “All day I could hear you in the living room saying, ‘Oh, this dollhouse is so special. I’m so glad it’s going to a good home. Oh, I’m so happy that you like this program. Oh, I’m so pleased you’re gonna take it.’ And you should be here in the backyard going, ‘Fill that box!’” |
| | | | <i>[Both laugh.]</i> |
| | | | And, “Does the lid have to close?” |
| 00:23:44 | Crosstalk | Crosstalk | Biz and Helen: No! <i>[Laughs.]</i> |
| 00:23:45 | Biz | Host | Take it! |
| 00:23:47 | Helen | Guest | So inside was like—inside she heard, like, Donna Reed sweet-talking and outside she heard a carnival barker. <i>[Laughs.]</i> |
| 00:23:56 | Biz | Host | I know. “You want it? How about one more? Do you need another one? You can just take it! I got more hiding somewhere. Under this couch there’s probably more. Would you like more?” |
| 00:24:05 | Helen | Guest | And here’s what I learned from this garage sale ‘cause we’d never put the china out. And we had three sets of china. And both of us had sets of china from the family and all I kept hearing all day long was, “Oh, people don’t buy china anymore because in the South, people just pass down china! So everybody already has three sets of china and nobody buys teacups.” But I sold two out of three of the sets of china. |
| 00:24:27 | Biz | Host | Well I think with the china we said, “I know that no one uses teacups or buys them? But if you’re buying this entire twelve-piece set of china, ya taking the damn tea sets!” |

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| 00:24:37 | Helen | Guest | Right. If you wanna dump 'em and break 'em in the yard? That's your business! You bought it! |
| 00:24:42 | Biz | Host | That's right. That's right. Yeah, no, it was—I will say that it went... way better than the one three years ago. |
| 00:24:51 | Helen | Guest | Agree. |
| 00:24:52 | Biz | Host | And I think some of that had to do more with expectations from everybody. Involved. |
| 00:24:59 | Helen | Guest | Yes. Yes. And we were very prepared. We prepared for <u>days</u> . |
| 00:25:04 | Biz | Host | Yeah. For days. |
| 00:25:05 | Helen | Guest | So the actual day of the garage sale was not that strenuous, but yeah. We prepared for days. It looked like... the outside looked like a professional flea market. |
| <i>[Biz laughs.]</i> | | | |
| 00:25:20 | Biz | Host | And the inside looked like some sort of boutique. <i>[Laughs.]</i> |
| 00:25:23 | Helen | Guest | Yeah. It was— <i>[Laughs.]</i> Maybe that's what intimidated some of the buyers. <i>[Laughs.]</i> |
| 00:25:33 | Biz | Host | Well as they said last time and this time, "This is the most organized garage sale we've ever seen!" Which, y'know, was Southern lady for, "We can see y'all don't have any good stuff." |
| 00:25:35 | Helen | Guest | <i>[Laughs.]</i> |
| 00:25:43 | Biz | Host | Yeah. <i>[Laughs.]</i> |
| | | | But I think it was our record. We made the most money. WE really did do a good job. But still there was <u>so</u> much left over. |
| | | | So much left. But I will say, some of the stuff that went this time—we had a—speaking of things people say, we had a guy show up three days before the garage sale. And was just like, y'know, "I'm a serious buyer. I talked to your husband." Like, 'cause I answered the door. "I talked to your husband and I just thought—we're just gonna go with this." "I don't even know who you are, man who is showing up on my house. Hold please." And then I went downstairs and woke Papa up, who was taking a nap, and was like, "Papa!" "What?" I said, "There is a man on the porch who says he is a serious—" |
| 00:26:14 | Helen | Guest | With a wad of cash. |
| 00:26:16 | Biz | Host | "Who says he's a serious buyer with a lot of cash and he also thinks I'm your wife." To which there's this pause and Papa says, "Eh, must've done something right." |
| <i>[Helen laughs.]</i> | | | |
| 00:26:34 | Helen | Guest | And then I was like, "Yeah." <i>[Laughs.]</i> And then my favorite was that—and that guy bought <u>so</u> much stuff and then— |
| 00:26:37 | Biz | Host | Yes. Including an impulse purchase of a dragon. |
| | | | Of a dragon! A dragon egg. Right. Yeah. That he then broke when he got home. But yeah. But they—he showed up again on the day of the sale and was coming through. And Mama <u>and</u> you were on the couch in the den as he's walking through. Or maybe he came Friday. And he <u>still</u> referred to me as... y'know, the wife. "Your husband—your husband's got a great deal here!" And I'm like, "Who do you think that woman is? On the couch?" |
| 00:27:05 | Helen | Guest | We gotta stop playing that game. <i>[Laughs.]</i> |
| 00:27:07 | Biz | Host | I know. Still play that game. So as you said, we sold a lot of stuff but there was a lot of stuff left. And I—y'know, one of the places that we differ— <i>[Laughs.]</i> Is that a lot of the stuff I'm happy to take. |

And I've always—I think I've always imagined my whole life as taking a lot of stuff. I remember, y'know, we grew up around this stuff. Mama never hid this stuff. She definitely raised us in a house of “you're not gonna be scared of furniture. You're not gonna be scared of stuff.” So y'know, this surrounded us and had stories that went with it and the names of the people who had it and I think I always saw them as sort of, like, treasures. Right? Like little treasures that I wanna have these treasures one day. And so... y'know, when I see the stuff—

00:27:57 Helen Guest
00:28:00 Biz Host

Whereas I see everything as haunted. *[Laughs.]*

Well I was gonna ask you! I was gonna say—honest-to-god—we walked through that sale and even the smallest things I would say—that I know you had a connection with at some point in your life! I feel like, “Do you want this, I'm pulling it out?” And you'd be like, “No.” And it's like you're—how do you do that and why do you do that and why?

00:28:18 Helen Guest

Well I'll tell you! I—first of all, I live in New York City. So I have a small apartment. Not a small apartment. A very nice apartment. But it is small compared to the rest of the world. And... I have never been a big keeper of stuff. And three years ago at that garage sale, I had picked three things that I really, really loved. I'm looking at one right now. I have a painting of our parents' apartment in the '60s. It's from the '60s. And I'm looking at it now and I love it. It lives in the coral lounge.

[Biz laughs.]

And then I have a painting that we always call “The Rock” painting because it was an abstract with rocks in it and Papa had won it in a poker game and I had grown up seeing this painting that I thought was huge but it's really not that big. And I had both these paintings come back to New York with me. I reframed them. I cleaned them. And they're both up and look fantastic. And I have a little sculpture of a polar bear, Dudley, that I grew up and love. So I have something in every room! And it's just enough! It's just enough for me. And when it comes to the furniture, that's just a—*[Laughs.]* Matter of taste.

[Both laugh.]

Y'know. My husband and I—for Lex and I, we just don't go for 18th-century—*[Laughs.]* Marble-topped—*[Laughs.]*

[Biz laughs.]

00:29:38 Biz Host
00:29:40 Helen Guest

Mahogany chest of drawers.

Sure. Fair enough. Fair enough. *[Laughs.]*

And again, it's really interesting. Y'know, I married a man who's first-generation American. His parents came over from Greece. So it's really interesting that they have so little, because everything that he inherited they bought here. Where we have generations and generations and generations of things. Yeah. So for me... I just like a few special things. That's enough. That's enough. And it makes 'em a little bit more special because they are so—they're very—

[Biz laughs.]

—someone came in my house years ago and said, “Your apartment is very... edited.”

[Both laugh.]

00:30:25 Biz Host “Very curated. Very edited.” And it’s—it’s true! It’s very true. Yeah. Of course I came back from the garage sale saying, “We have to purge. I have to purge again. I have to purge.”
00:30:33 Helen Guest Oh I know. Yeah, yeah, yeah. No. *[Laughs.]* Same here. I was like, “Oh, lord. No. We have to get rid of stuff because I’ve gotta make room for all the stuff that’s coming!”
Yeah! ‘Cause again, I have—years and years and years ago, I have our grandmother’s Lazy Susan that I put crudité in and I love it. And I have our other grandmother’s recipe box with all of her chicken casseroles. So many chicken casseroles!

[Biz laughs.]

00:30:56 Biz Host And I love it! So yeah. It’s just a matter of—cherry picking? Cherry picking is the right word?
00:31:02 Helen Guest Well in the book you actually say that you’ve got more of an attachment to our parents than their things.
Correct! That’s correct. And you have so much attachment, you’re moving our parents into your house! Into your storage unit!
00:31:07 Biz Host *[Laughs.]*
That’s right. I need that. I need that, y’know, 1800s secretary desk with the leather top and my mother. *[Laughs.]* Just—
00:31:17 Helen Guest To sit in it.
00:31:18 Biz Host —put it together and to sit in it. In the same room. They’re not gonna be in this house. They’ll just be in a little house in the backyard. Which is essentially the same thing.
00:31:27 Helen Guest Yes. Exactly.

[Both laugh.]

It’s just a place to put your stuff and your stuff is our parents.

[Both laugh.]

00:31:33 Biz Host That’s right. Woo! Pyew, pyew!
00:31:35 Helen Guest “Mama’s in the shed!”

[Both laugh.]

00:31:38 Biz Host Was there anything else from the trip that like... ‘cause this is—the next time we see them, it’s not gonna be in Alabama! Y’know. Possibly.
00:31:47 Helen Guest Yeah. I was surprised at when we were saying our goodbyes, I was surprised—I was emotionally a little overcome. ‘Cause Mama—and as Mama’s hugging me goodbye and she’s crying and it makes me starts crying. All she’s saying is, “Oh, Lex hates this! Lex hates this!” ‘Cause my husband likes—the first time he came home to visit, like, 25 years ago, that’s how she’d always say goodbye. Just sobbing and waving in the driveway and it just destroyed him. He’s like, “I hate this.” But it was this thought of, “Oh. Will I go back to Alabama?” Y’know? Because even the house where you spent a lot

| | | | |
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| | | | of time and my parents had lived in for 30 years, I never lived in that house! |
| 00:32:24 | Biz | Host | No. |
| 00:32:25 | Helen | Guest | That was surprising. And... <i>[Laughs.]</i> And the other surprise was I went into full-blown menopause because of the— <i>[Laughs.]</i> Because of the garage sale! <i>[Laughs.]</i> I got my period twice in one month and I had to make my little sister go to the drugstore and buy me some tampons! The biggest ones you can find. |
| | | | <i>[Biz laughs.]</i> |
| | | | I know your audience is very—they'll take this information in stride. But everything is normal, says my gynecologist! But yes. The whole time. |
| 00:32:57 | Biz | Host | Nothing like coming home, working your ass off in humidity, watching your parents age, and to do a garage sale to fuck up your cycle. <i>[Laughs.]</i> |
| 00:33:07 | Helen | Guest | Yes! Yes! And you know there's no tampons in that 79-year-old-lady's house! |
| 00:33:11 | Biz | Host | Nothing in that house. Nope. Nope. Well that's another story you give— |
| 00:33:15 | Helen | Guest | Thank you again for— |
| 00:33:16 | Biz | Host | You're welcome. |
| 00:33:17 | Helen | Guest | Going to— |
| 00:33:18 | Biz | Host | You're welcome. |
| 00:33:19 | Helen | Guest | —buy me a box of tampons. |
| | | | <i>[Both laugh.]</i> |
| 00:33:21 | Biz | Host | Ya welcome! |
| 00:33:23 | Helen | Guest | Thank you. |
| 00:33:24 | Biz | Host | But you talk about menopause in the book, too! You've got the "Are You There, God? It's Me, Menopause." |
| 00:33:28 | Helen | Guest | No! "Are You There, Menopause? It's Me, Helen." |
| 00:33:31 | Biz | Host | That's right. "It's Me, Helen." <i>[Laughs.]</i> That's right. And it's... listening to you describe not only what you're going through but what all of the women that you know—in particular when it comes to anger? <i>[Laughs.]</i> Like, PMS. And again, a topic that just—y'know, there's no list of things to expect when you're expecting to stop having your period. Right? |
| 00:33:56 | Helen | Guest | I mean, the other thing they don't tell you is—I mean, it is sort of having a moment, I feel like. Right now. Where we're talking about it a little bit more. Because apparently a lot of women are leaving work because of it. What nobody tells you about menopause when you're younger is that it can last for ten years. It can go on forever. And I have been in perimenopause—with a lot of my friends—which means I still get my period! But sometimes... it's 24 days between periods. And sometimes it's 32 days. |
| | | | <i>[Biz laughs.]</i> |
| | | | And sometimes... as this last weekend, thank you very much—it's on day 18. <i>[Laughs.]</i> But what goes along with it is the PMS—I always had PMS, but the PMS is crazy. I had to get an app for it just so I knew I wasn't going crazy two days a week? Or just this forlorn feeling? So I have this app called Clue that helps me know what's coming. <i>[Laughs.]</i> Again, we're at this garage sale. You are |

working outside. I am working inside. And every day I go in and I said, “Get the air conditioning down! Turn it—I want it to be freezing! It’s boiling in this house! Why is it so hot in this house?”

[Biz laughs.]

And everyone would come into the house saying, “It’s as cold as the Piggly-Wiggly in here!”

[Both laugh.]

| | | | |
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| 00:35:12 | Biz | Host | And I’m like, “No it’s not!” But apparently— Well what was so funny was one couple—one older couple came— oh my god. We had so many octogenarians coming into this yard sale and almost falling down. |
| 00:35:21 | Helen | Guest | One fell! One did bite it! |
| 00:35:23 | Biz | Host | One fell. I know. Just—I was like, “Aaah!” And then they’re all like, “I’ve got it!” And I’m like, “You clearly don’t.” But one couple came out and the husband was like, “It is so cold in there!” |

[Helen laughs.]

| | | | |
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| 00:35:41 | Helen | Guest | And I said, “No, it’s alright.” And the wife said, “Yeah. It’s not that cold in there.” And I was like— Thank you! |
| 00:35:42 | Biz | Host | Just, every woman was like, “No. It’s fine.” |
| 00:35:45 | Helen | Guest | Well they said—Papa said at one point, ‘cause you really did call it out right that there were <i>[through laughter]</i> so many octogenarians coming through the house—and Papa said, “Yeah, they’re just looky-loos ‘cause they have all the stuff that they need and more and they’re just trying to kill time on an afternoon. ‘Cause what else do they have to do except for look at your stuff?” |
| 00:36:07 | Biz | Host | That’s right! Well, get ready to do that in California, Mama and Papa. |
| 00:36:10 | Helen | Guest | And it’s so interesting to see what people would go after. Like, I think about—writing about what I thought was the last garage sale three years ago and now I would set my sights on what I thought was so valuable. Like, who doesn’t want these <i>Southern Living</i> 1980s magazines? |

[Biz laughs.]

| | | | |
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| 00:36:53 | Biz | Host | Y’know? Who doesn’t want—who wouldn’t want that? Nobody wanted that. And we ended up taking all those magazines with about 300 books and dumping them at a library and peeling out as if we were dumping a body that we had just shot at an ER. But this year I thought, “Oh, everybody’s gonna want these cross stitches of Thumper and Charlie Brown.” Nobody took a second look at ‘em. I can’t believe no one took those. Yeah. |
| 00:36:54 | Helen | Guest | Of all these framed—like, framed prints. I thought, “What college girl doesn’t want these framed prints of Picasso—whatever—to hang on their wall?” Nope. Nobody wanted those. And everybody wanted the costume jewelry. Everybody wanted to look at that costume jewelry, and I am sure I sold off things that were <u>well</u> below <i>[through laughter]</i> what I should be selling them off. |

00:37:17 Biz Host Oh, I'm sure. And that's the—after I had picked through on two trips what I considered “the good stuff.” Like, costume jewelry-wise, I'm like, “Let's take that where that can go for real.”

00:37:31 Helen Guest And I had another woman come in and she got there at—again, the garage sale experience. People don't understand how seriously we take this. But the garage sale is Saturday morning and Friday night I get a text from you that says, “I'll see you in the lobby of the hotel.” FYI, we're at a hotel 'cause they had sold the beds earlier. “I'll see in you in the hotel in the lobby at 5:30 in the morning.” To which I responded, “Okay.” *[Laughs.]*

00:37:53 Biz Host Yeah. That was all I got. I got this, *[resignedly]* “Okay.”

[Helen laughs.]

00:37:59 Helen Guest And then—do the voice that I assume goes with this.
Yeah.

00:38:00 Biz Host *[Resignedly.]* Okay.

00:38:01 Helen Guest *[Resignedly.]* Okay. Exactly. Or—and the worst thing you ever wanna see from me in an email is, “Understood.”

00:38:06 Biz Host Understood. *[Laughs.]*

00:38:07 Helen Guest Which is just horrible.

00:38:10 Biz Host But we—I come. We meet. And we go get the coffee. And we start heading and I'm like, “How much—” As we're about to turn down the street, I say—and it's like 10 'til 6—

00:38:20 Helen Guest It's 10 to 6, yeah.

00:38:21 Biz Host 6 A.M. And I said, “How much do you wanna bet there's somebody there?” And you were still very tired and you were like, “Ain't nobody gonna be here. This is dumb.”

00:38:27 Helen Guest “I don't care.”

00:38:28 Biz Host “I don't care.” And we come around the corner—not only is there a guy there, but when we get out of the car he wants to follow us. And look. And I was like, “You are gonna have to wait.”

00:38:39 Helen Guest The earliest of early birds.

00:38:41 Biz Host The earliest. There were also—I'm sorry. There was also a group of—all the people that showed up Friday?

00:38:46 Helen Guest They all knew each other.

00:38:48 Biz Host And they all said, “Oh, I'm so sorry! I didn't know! I thought it was today!” And I'm like, “Liar. You can read a paper.”

00:38:54 Helen Guest No garage sale is taking place at 4:30 in the afternoon.

00:38:57 Biz Host On Friday. Y'know?

00:38:59 Helen Guest No.

[Biz laughs.]

Again—when it got to 8:00, we'd already had like 10 people come through there. And I thought, “Oh, the day's over!” Nope. Again, 6:30, the professionals were there. Dressed in t-shirts and shorts. Looking as ratty as they could. Pulling cash out of their bra straps. And one woman comes through and she is looking at all of Papa's turquoise belt buckles. And we make a deal. “Oh, well I owe you a hundred dollars.” I said, “I'll hold these for you until you come back.” And she comes back and then she starts to do this sort of Three-card Monty situation of, “I don't want this one. I want this one.” And I just was like—in my head, I just thought, “Lady, you can give me a dollar and I will give these to you.”

[Biz laughs.]

“You’re trying to con me and I don’t care!” I think I made a pretty good deal for them. But I just thought, “You are wasting your energy, madam.” *[Laughs.]*

00:39:52 Biz Host

Yeah. I know. By the end of the sale—by the end of the day, it was like anything that people pointed at? Papa and I were outside and a guy pointed at something and we were like, “Five bucks.” And he pointed at something else—“Uh, five bucks.” And he pointed at something else—“Five bucks.” And he pointed at something else and Papa goes, “You know what it’s gonna be.” “Five bucks?” “Five bucks.” *[Laughs.]*

00:40:13 Helen Guest

Well again—there were levels of garage sale people that arrived at the garage sale. And near the end we had a new—where Papa was lying down, counting his cash.

[Biz laughs.]

Or rolling around on it like Demi Moore in—what was that movie where she got paid a million dollars?

00:40:31 Biz Host

To sleep with—

00:40:32 Helen Guest

To sleep with Robert Redford?

00:40:33 Biz Host

Oh my god. What was the? Anyway.

00:40:35 Helen Guest

Anyway. That’s what he was doing. And—

00:40:37 Biz Host

Indecent Proposal! Thank you, Gabe.

00:40:39 Helen Guest

Indecent Proposal. That is correct.

[Biz laughs.]

And the new grift—*[Laughs.]* Was picking up things that didn’t have batteries in them—“Well how do I know this even works? How do I know this even works?” And we’re like, “Ya don’t. But for five dollars, you’re gonna have to take that risk.” *[Laughs.]*

00:40:55 Biz Host

[Laughs.] I know. Yeah. There was one woman who was like, “I don’t understand how you plug this in.” And she was going on and on. She might’ve—we might as well have said, “If you don’t take this, we will kill you.” But that’s not what—no! She picked it up herself! I was like, “We didn’t ask you to pick that up. We didn’t ask you to buy it. We didn’t ask you to do anything. You either take it or you don’t take it.”

00:41:17 Helen Guest

Yeah. We don’t care. And again at the end of the day it was—I had at least three people come in saying, “Where’s the man? The lady outside said the man would know about this.” And I’m like, “There’s no—” And my response? “There’s no man.”

[Both laugh.]

“What’s your question?” “Well, does this work?” “I dunno.”

[Both laugh.]

“I dunno.”

[Both laugh.]

00:41:39 Biz Host

Yes. I’d just say, “Yes.”

00:41:42 Helen Guest And throughout the whole thing, everybody who would come in—I would just play these ridiculous games! “Now, I’m gonna make you a real good deal. Don’t tell them. Don’t tell them what I’m gonna sell it for! But y’know, you just let me know if you like something. I’ll make you a real good deal.”

00:41:56 Biz Host *[Biz laughs.]*
And so the torch of “You’ve got to make your own fun in life” gets passed on to his daughters.

00:42:03 Helen Guest And haggling! It’s amazing. Nobody was haggling! Every price was set to haggle and...

00:42:07 Biz Host I couldn’t believe that either. I’d said, “Well what would you like to—”

00:42:10 Helen Guest “—pay for it?”

00:42:11 Biz Host And they’d be like, “Oh, I can’t do that.” I’m like, “Well then you’re gonna lose out.” I’m like, “Why would you—” Everybody, if somebody says “How much do you wanna pay for it,” say less than what you would wanna pay for it!

00:42:22 Helen Guest Correct. Correct.

00:42:24 Biz Host *[Lost for words.]* Yeah. We—

00:42:26 Helen Guest It’s very easy!

00:42:27 Biz Host It’s—*[Laughs.]* Watch this! “How much you want for this?” “Uh, well what were you thinking?” “Five dollars.” “Oh. That’s a little too low. Can you make it fifteen?” “Mm...”

00:42:38 Helen Guest “Thirteen.”

00:42:39 Biz Host “How about eight?” *[Laughs.]*

00:42:41 Helen Guest Well again, I also was writes—not writes. But I read it somewhere that when negotiating for your salary or whatever, end everything with a “three.” Because you’re smiling when you say it! So “how much is this dog crate filled with *[through laughter]* newspaper?” “Uh, it’s twenty dollars.” “We’ll buy it for twenty-three.”

[Both laugh.]

00:43:07 Biz Host Alright.
Alright. Helen Michelle—my sister—thank you for coming on. Thank you for joining me in Alabama and helping get that done. You have a card actually on its way to you—

00:43:25 Helen Guest Oh!

00:43:26 Biz Host —from me. Thank you in advance for all the support to come.
[Laughs.]

[Helen laughs.]

00:43:35 Helen Guest As these people get in my house.
Well thank you for letting me continue to write about our lives! Because—

[Biz laughs.]

—I will tell your listeners that whenever Elizabeth or her family appear in a story, I—well no matter what, I always send whatever I’ve written to Elizabeth ‘cause she’s such a good reader and I know she’ll tell me the truth. I only have four readers that I send things to before an editor reads them. And Elizabeth is one of them.

And so I really appreciate you allowing me to continue to write about your family. *[Laughs.]*

00:44:05 Biz Host You know what? I—we grew up in a house of stories. With storytellers. And the idea of... watching that tradition move forward? I am always happy to be a character in a story from, y’know, our lives. I am—

00:44:23 Helen Guest Well you always come off good, too.

00:44:25 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Biz:** Oh yeah. Well exactly. That helps.

Helen: You’re always come off really well. *[Laughs.]*

00:44:28 Biz Host That helps. That helps, yeah. These aren’t my stories. These are my stories in your stories. *[Laughs.]*

00:44:32 Helen Guest I’m the main character. In case you were wondering, I’m the main character. *[Laughs.]*

00:44:37 Biz Host That’s right! So everybody right now go and preorder *Bring Your Baggage And Don’t Pack Light*. And if you haven’t already, grab a copy of *Southern Lady Code* while you’re at it. There’s also *American Housewife* out there. And *Eating the Cheshire Cat*, Helen Michelle’s very first novel. Just a hop, skip, and a jump ago did she write this.

00:45:01 Helen Guest 21 years ago! That book could vote!

00:45:03 Biz Host But it is a dark journey into the deep South and a complete delight. Thank you, Helen Michellllllle!

00:45:12 Helen Guest Thank you, sisterrrr! Little sisterrrr!

00:45:14 Biz Host I think this might be the quietest we’ve ever been ‘cause we’re still recovering from this fucking trip. *[Laughs.]*

00:45:18 Helen Guest We are both still in recovery.

00:45:20 Biz Host Yeah! I am still so tired! *[Laughs.]*

00:45:22 Helen Guest And I think both of us came into this going, “Okay. This is just a fun time. Not therapy.”

00:45:28 Biz Host Yeah. Not therapy. *[Laughs.]* Just—that’s right. Alright. I will talk to you later.

00:45:34 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Helen:** Thank you, Elizabeth! Byeeee!

Biz: Byeeee! Byeeee!

00:45:38 Music Music “Ones and Zeroes” by “Awesome.” Steady, driving electric guitar with drum and woodwinds.

[Music fades out.]

00:45:55 Music Promo Laid-back ukulele with whistling plays in background.

00:45:56 Biz Promo *One Bad Mother* is supported in part by KiwiCo. Some of life’s greatest childhood adventures happen during the summertime. *[Laughs.]* Even during a pandemic! And with a KiwiCo subscription, kids can take their imagination to new heights with super cool STEAM projects delivered every month. We’ve been using KiwiCo—aack!—forever. And it’s so fun to see how excited they are when they look outside and they see the package has arrived? Most recently—*[Laughs.]* Ellis got a spin-art kit project where the box itself—like, he did some motor stuff to make it so that it would spin and he built it inside the box it came in? And I gotta tell ya—I was a little worried it was in a box. That that was gonna be really messy. It is messy inside the box? But not outside the box! And it’s kits like these from KiwiCo that I cling to during the summer months. With KiwiCo, there’s something for every kid or kid-at-heart every month. *[Conspiratorially]* FYI, the Maker kits are the ones that

I like to do myself! Get your first free month on select crates at KiwiCo.com/badmother. That's K-I-W-I-C-O.com/badmother.

- 00:47:19 Theresa Host *[Music fades out.]*
Hey, you know what it's time for! This week's genius and fails! This is the part of the show where we share our genius moment of the week, as well as our failures, and feel better about ourselves by hearing yours. You can share some of your own by calling 206-350-9485. That's 206-350-9485.
- 00:47:39 Biz Host
Genius fail time, Gabe. *[Laughs.]* Just surprised Gabe. Theresa let us know that she was not able to join us today. I'm gonna pretend she's here and say, "Theresa, it's so nice to see you! I love you! You're doing such a good job! I can't believe any of this. I'm crying. Now I'm looking at you and I love you and I understand! It's impossible!" So it's gonna be, y'know, a weird one where I share a genius and fail and no one comments. *[Laughs.]* So it's—it's really more like my mind at one o'clock in the morning. So that's good. But I'm saying hi to Gabe 'cause Gabe is here and looking at me and will give me thumbs up and thumbs down. So I will let you know if Gabe is giving me a thumbs up or thumbs down. So. With that said, genius me... me!
- 00:48:30 Clip Clip
[Dramatic, swelling music in background.]
- 00:48:44 Biz Host
Biz: Wow! Oh my God! Oh my God! I saw what you did! Oh my God! I'm paying attention! Wow! You, mom, are a genius. Oh my God, that's fucking genius!
Alright, guys. *[Laughs.]* When I got back from Alabama, the first thing I had to do was take Ellis—who is seven—to get some braces put on their teeth. Not a lot. Just, like, three little braces on some back teeth that were, y'know, growing into each other. And we had done a lot of prep work. And we were going to be fine. And then we got there. And Ellis did not want to get them done. He was very scared. And was sure it was going to be awful. And I'm like—I gotta tell ya. I am always surprised when I am in these situations when doctors or dentists or whoever are like sort of... emote a feeling of like, "Really?" *[Laughs.]* Like, do you know what seven-year-olds are like? What seven-year-old's like, "Yes! I am gonna just swallow my fear and lie down and open my mouth wide and let you do something that I'm completely—I can't even comprehend!" Anyway, so we're trying to encourage him to get this done. And in my mind, I'm thinking this is gonna take thirty to forty minutes. And we're trying all these different approaches and I said, "Okay. Alright. Okay. Okay. Okay. How long... let's see how long we think this might actually take. How long do you think this is gonna take, Ellis?" And Ellis is like, "Too long!" And I said, "Alright. Doctor Fill-In-The-Blank, how long do you think this is going to take?" And she said, "Six minutes." And I was like, "Six minutes?!" And so I pull—I was like, "Ellis, I'm pulling out the phone and I'm pulling out the timer and you and I are gonna watch the timer and see if she can do it in six minutes." For whatever magical reason, this worked. And it—actually, it was really great! Because there'd be times where I'd be like—I'd be like, "The first bracket's done. The first bracket's on." And Ellis would be like, "It is?!" And I'm like, "Yeah, look at that! First bracket! One minute! One minute! And we already have a brace on!" Right? And so like suddenly Ellis was like, "This is the best thing and it's not a big deal at all." And I'm like, "That's great."

00:51:03 Caller Caller So that was my genius this week. Gabe, do I get a thumbs up? Thumbs up. *[Laughs.]*
[Answering machine beeps.]

Hi, everybody! I am calling with my first-ever genius! So y'know, I'm in a Marie Kondo moment. I am wanting to clean out things that we stored up, especially this past year, that we don't need. And I was feeling really good about that but my kids are still home with me. I homeschool. I've got a kid with some special needs and some sensory challenges and so they were doing all sorts of crazy things this morning and not letting me get to my happy place of finding out what does and doesn't spark joy for me. *[Laughs.]*

[Biz laughs.]

Anyways. I got to cleaning out the pantry and my genius idea is I had all of these old jars of like... couscous and flaxseed and stuff that we haven't—I think I moved, like, across the country three years ago and I think that they were in my pantry for a good four years before that? So pretty much this food is older than my kids.

[Biz laughs.]

And I'm like, "Okay." And so I gave them some trays out in the front yard and they are having a sensory extravaganza while I clean out the rest of my house and I cleaned out the pantry! So I think this is an all-around win. I'm saying. Everybody is doing a fantastic job. I love you guys. Thank you. Bye.

00:52:35 Biz Host If you're gonna call in for the first time with a genius, this is the genius to call in with! First of all, you're amazing. And you're doing a great job. I really also like saying to my kid, "I got food older than you!" Like, I can't even think of a time when that's okay to say. Maybe something preserved? But even then—mmm. Maybe, "I've got wine older than you." That? Maybe. But "I've got couscous older than you?" Maybe not so much. That is some old couscous. I also—now when I make jokes about the couscous thinking to itself, "I'm getting too old for this shit." I have a variety of these sorts of images going through my head. But you are doing such a good job using the pantry dump as a way to clean out your pantry and keep your kids occupied. Fucking genius.

00:53:32 Clip Clip Failures.
[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.]

00:53:39 Biz Host **Biz:** *[Calmly]* You suck!
Fail me, me! *[Laughs.]* Okay, me! I will! *[Laughs.]* This becomes strangely more intimate when I'm failing out loud with myself. Alright. When I came back from Alabama I ran to the store to get a few things that we needed while I was out. And one of the things I got was a very large watermelon. Everybody likes watermelon in this house. Especially Ellis. Ellis and I that evening were going to

be watching a movie together, and that was gonna be like a fun thing that we were going to do. When we came in from watching the movie into the kitchen, the watermelon was out. And some of it had been sliced off. And clearly had been eaten by Raiden. At which point Ellis looks at it and then you can see the wheels turning to like, “Am I gonna get mad about this? Or not?” Well we went with mad. We went with mad and very upset that the watermelon was eaten—was opened, basically, before Ellis had any watermelon. Now it’s been three days, and for three days I’ve been informed by Ellis to never let—somehow—by the way, somehow this is on me. Okay? This is on me, somehow? Never let anyone have watermelon before they get watermelon. Sort of a, “I’m gonna need my own personal watermelon” situation. I have now announced that to every other member of this family. “For the love of god, don’t eat any watermelon before Ellis gets watermelon! If we want any peace in this house!” So my fail—[Laughs.] Okay. Jokingly, my fail is not giving my kid a personal watermelon. And making sure that happens every time. The other fail is—once again, I wonder if I’m setting up strange expectations for adult Ellis. [Laughs.] When it comes to adapting and pivoting in situations that don’t make them happy. Who knows! We’ll find out. So, Gabe—thumbs up, or thumbs down? [Yelling] Not a thumbs—okay. I—oh, yes! Thank you! Now I’m getting all the thumbs down. Gabe has a surprising amount of thumbs.

00:56:08 Caller Caller

[Answering machine beeps.]

Hi, Biz and Theresa! Okay. This is definitely a fail. It’s a really weird fail? Kind of a dumb fail. Kind of one of those fails where I don’t—information is just not sticking to my brain. Okay. Anyway. My daughter had a baseball game. At the baseball game—well, afterwards—this little boy, he had his birthday. Parents brought cupcakes and the goody bag included various items, but most importantly it included gum. My daughter loves gum. She loves it. Loves it. So as soon as she saw it she was like, “Oh my gosh, Mommy! I’m so excited I have this gum! Will you please open this piece of gum for me?” I was like, “Yeah, sure!” So I have this piece of gum. Little single piece of gum. I open the piece of gum. What do I do? I pop it in my mouth.

[Biz laughs.]

I popped a piece of gum in my mouth and then I just looked around and said, “What—well—why the hell did I do that?” So then about seven seconds later my daughter goes, “Okay, Mommy. Can I have my piece of gum?” And I’m chewing the piece of gum and I go, “Uh... I’m so sorry.” And my daughter just—just tears. Tears. Tears. So then the parents are like, “Oh my gosh, we have so much gum! Just give her another piece of gum.” So then I pretended like I didn’t really chew her gum. That I was just chewing air. And I said, “I didn’t chew your gum! I was just kidding!” And then she said, “Mommy, I see you chewing!” And then I took the gum and put it behind my back and I said, “I’m not chewing anything!”

[Biz laughs.]

Eventually she was fine. But like... why did I just pop that piece of gum in my mouth? It's like the weirdest thing I could've done. So anyway, that was my fail. I ruined my child's life last night. And thank you so much. I love your show so much and you are all doing a great job.

00:57:53 Biz Host

Yes. You are a monster. There will be stories written about you forever. I gotta tell you, this is a beautiful fail. This is like the casual eating—I can't remember if it was me or somebody else who ate all their kid's pickles? Just like was eating it right in front—it was probably me. Anyway. This is so good. But what I really love is all the efforts afterwards of like, "I'm not chewing gum! It's just air!" And like, "See?" *[Through laughter]* Putting the gum out—like, all of the efforts as opposed to just, "Here. Here's more gum." Like, from the parents. Why I like that is because I've lived that. That is—again—just as natural as it is to open gum and just pop it in your mouth, it is also just as natural to try and *I Love Lucy* around whatever you just did. So yes. You are doing a horrible job. You really need to remember that any instincts that relate to self-care for you should have already been squashed. So. Let's work on that. *[Laughs.]*

00:59:06 Music Music

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

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

00:59:29 Music Promo
00:59:30 Biz Promo

[Music fades out.]

Mid-tempo, mellow synth music plays in background. *One Bad Mother* is supported in part by Ruby Coffee. Ruby Coffee Roasters is a small coffee roasting company based in central Wisconsin—specifically, Nelsonville, Wisconsin—with a population of 191! With the goal of making amazing-quality coffee approachable to all. Well, that sounds good! Coffee can sometimes scare me. With all the fancy names and all the fancy beans and I'm pretty sure no matter what I do it's gonna come out tasting like diner coffee. *[Laughs.]* Ruby's coffee lineup is designed around complex, dynamic coffees while making sure that their roasting profiles make these coffees easy to brew and enjoy. We just got our first subscription box that not only came with coffee beans, it also came with what I would call tea bags for coffee? *[Laughs.]* We have been turning that into cold brew! Delicious! Again, you can get a subscription or a one-time purchase and this is just the perfect example of something to get to treat yourself. Go to RubyCoffeeRoasters.com and use code "badmother" to get 20% off your first shipment of any subscription. Or 15% off a one-time coffee purchase.

01:00:57 Promo Clip

[Music fades out.]

Music: Guitar strums as singer counts out "One, two, one two three four." Up-tempo guitar and harmonica music plays in the background.

Justin McElroy: Hi, everybody! My name is Justin McElroy.

Dr. Sydnee McElroy: I'm Sydnee McElroy!

Justin: We're both doctors, and—

Sydnee: Nope. Just me.

Justin: Okay, well Sydnee's a doctor and I'm a medical enthusiast.

Sydnee: Okay.

Justin: And we created *Sawbones*, a marital tour of misguided medicine!

Sydnee: Every week I dig through the annals of medical history to bring you the wildest, grossest—sometimes dumbest—tales of ways we've tried to treat people throughout history!

Justin: Eh, lately we do a lot of modern fake medicine. 'Cause everything's a disaster. But it's slightly less of a disaster every Friday, right here on MaximumFun.org, as we bring you *Sawbones: A Marital Tour of Misguided Medicine*. And remember:

Sydnee: Don't drill a hole in your head.

[Music ends.]

Music: Jazzy saxophone plays in background.

01:01:40 Promo Clip

Annabelle Gurwitch: Hi! Are you someone who thinks that when one door closes, another one opens?

Laura House: Someone who always sees the light at the end of the tunnel?

Annabelle: If you answered "yes" to one or both of these questions, good for you!

Laura: We are not those people.

Annabelle: Nope! I'm Annabelle Gurwitch and I'm a "Y'know that other door opening? It probably leads to a broom closet" kind of person.

Laura: And I'm Laura House. When I see a light at the end of a tunnel, I assume it's a train headed right toward me!

Annabelle: Laura and I have created a brand-new podcast for people like us! It's called *Tiny Victories*. We're sharing personal tiny victories or things we've read or seen that inspire resilience.

Laura: So if you're looking for a tiny reason to get out of bed each week, subscribe to *Tiny Victories*.

Annabelle: Available on Maximum Fun, or wherever you get your podcasts!

Laura: Let's get tiny!

01:02:26 Biz Host *[Music fades out.]*
Alright, everyone. I don't have Theresa here this week to look upon and hold in my virtual arms, but I now understand that's how we all feel. Not having Theresa here. So let's all close our eyes and imagine Theresa very hard in our minds. And snuggle up to the very thought of her. While we listen to a mom have a breakdown. And I have a little warning—if you do not like to hear about human excrement, then skip ahead past this rant.

01:03:10 Caller Caller *[Answering machine beeps.]*

Hey, *One Bad Mother!* Thank you so much for your show. I'm calling with a rant! I have an almost-seven-year-old and two five-year-olds. And every day for the last two to three weeks, somebody has pooped their pants. I've been cleaning up shit every day. And I'm so tired of it. With my almost-seven-year-old, he's doing it in his sleep! He's either waking up in the night, going in the bathroom, and—like a drunk college kid—shitting a little bit in the toilet, a little bit on the toilet, and a little bit on the floor. And getting it all over his hands and all over the faucet and all over the hand towel and then all over his bed. Sometimes he doesn't even wake up! He just shits in his undies and I wake up in the morning and smell it. One of my five-year-olds sharts every single day. Sometimes twice a day.

[Biz laughs.]

It's really annoying. I have to do laundry every day for that kid. Because he sharts. I don't know. And today the one kid who didn't have those problems has now sharted.

[Biz laughs.]

And I'm just tired of cleaning up poop! My kids are too old for this!
[Laughs.] So thank you for listening. You guys are doing a great job. Bye.

01:04:31 Biz Host I like that the third kid is like, "Hey! Is this something we can do now?" *[Laughs.]* "I'm in!" Okay, first of all, you are doing an amazing job. I also want to acknowledge that I know you have already done a ton of research, called resources, tried to figure out how to prevent this or try and figure out what's going on. I know that! Because you're a parent. So I'm not gonna waste our time by even pondering those things. I'm just going straight to the "You're doing a good job. That sounds truly horrible. That sounds awful. And that sounds like more work than you need to be doing. No one wants to *[through laughter]* live like that. I am very sorry. That's so, so awful. And I see you." I see you. You are doing a very good job.

Everybody? You are all doing a good job. This is like—today's rant reminds me that at any point in time, something is going down in somebody's house. That was definitely not on their bucket list? Or even in any parenting book or parenting magazine or whatever. Parenting YouTube checklist. It catches you so off-guard. And that's happening all the time, everywhere! I just hate that we don't talk about it. I hate that we still feel like in a lot of situations we have to walk around and sit on it. Because heaven forbid! I think one of the fears of sharing is that we're gonna get hit with a lot of

questions or suggestions that are gonna make us feel like maybe we haven't been already trying to figure it out? And a lot of times we have. We just wanna say it out loud to know we're not alone and to hear somebody tell us that, yeah! That does suck! That is awful!

So I'm going to take that as we go forward. I say we grab hold of that reminder that as we walk through the world—whether we are talking to parents or siblings or family members or friends or employees—when somebody's telling you something, let's respond first with, "Wow! That's something!" *[Laughs.]* And just give that person the benefit of the doubt that they don't need our unsolicited advice. 'Cause I think sometimes just being seen goes a lot farther. Everybody? You're doing an amazing job. I hope you are getting through summer. I am once again gonna shamelessly plug my sister's book that comes out July 13th that can be preordered right now, *Bring Your Baggage and Don't Pack Light*, yet another opportunity to learn true stories about my family and why we are the way we are. And I will talk to you next week. Bye!!!

01:08:01 Music Music "Mama Blues" by Cornbread Ted and the Butterbeans. Strumming acoustic guitar with harmonica and lyrics.

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

01:08:25 Biz Host *[Music fades somewhat, plays in background of dialogue.]* 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. *One Bad Mother* is a member of the Maximum Fun family of podcasts. To support the show go to MaximumFun.org/donate.

01:09:17 Music Transition *[Music continues for a while before fading out.]* A cheerful ukulele chord.
01:09:18 Speaker 1 Guest MaximumFun.org.
01:09:20 Speaker 2 Guest Comedy and culture.
01:09:21 Speaker 3 Guest Artist owned—
01:09:22 Speaker 4 Guest —Audience supported.