

Shmanners 291: Fandom (LIVE!)

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Travis: Hi, everybody! It's your husband host, Travis McElroy. What you're about to hear is a panel that we recorded at Emerald City Comic Con this year. Uh, it was Teresa and I, and our guest was my dad, Clint McElroy, and I think it turned out to be a very lovely conversation about a bunch of different topics, including fandom, and collecting, and all kinds of different things, ranging in topics specific to comic cons, but also just general topics that I wanted to talk to my dad about.

So, um, if you want to listen to that, all you gotta do is keep listening, my friends. Uh, but real quick, before we get into that episode, and I mentioned this at the end of the panel too, but I wanted to remind you that tomorrow night, Candlenights is going live. It's prerecorded this year, just like last year. A live, prerecorded virtual event, if that makes any sense, 'cause it's gonna go live at the same time and everyone's gonna watch it. You get it.

And it's going to benefit Harmony House in Huntington, West Virginia, and you can get tickets for that at bit.ly/candlenights2021. That's Candlenights 2-0-2-1. Tickets are on sale for just \$5 with the option to give more if you want to help out Harmony House. Uh, and that goes live at 9 PM Eastern Time, December 18th, and the video on demand will be available through January 2nd. It's got segments from basically every McElroy show I can think of, including *Shmanners*, of course. Uh, we've got some wonderful, some wonderful guests, all kinds of stuff.

So, make sure you go to bit.ly/candlenights2021, Candlenights 2021, and get your tickets now. Okay! Enjoy the panel.

[theme music plays]

Travis: Uh, so this, uh, uh, uh, a *Shmanners*. *Shmanners* Panners. No. A *Shmanners* Panel, or a Shmanel, if you will.

Hello, internet! And ECCC... CC...

[audience cheers]

Travis: I'm your husband host, Travis McElroy.

Teresa: And I'm your wife host, Teresa McElroy.

Travis: And you're listening to and watching *Shmanners*.

Teresa: It's extraordinary etiquette...

Travis: For ordinary occasions! Hello, my dove.

Teresa: [sighs] Hello, dear.

Travis: And also, hello, my dad.

[audience laughs]

Clint: Uh, hello!

Teresa: [laughs]

Clint: Why am I here?

Teresa: Oh! You are—

Travis: You are— you're our guest.

Teresa: —our very special guest!

Clint: Oh, alright. Fine.

Travis: Uh, we also want to say a big thank you to Julie and Alex Binet, who did Teresa's hair and makeup.

[audience cheers and applauds]

Teresa: I'm so excited. I'm so glad you're here so you can see it. [laughs]

Travis: Uh, and a big thanks for *Schitt's Creek* for letting me know what kind of sweater to buy. Um... so, uh— so, for this... I was thinking about it, and I think rather than trying to cover, like, one big topic, uh, there are many, many topics which, I'm um very excited to talk to dad about, because a lot of these, like, questions and topics that I have, uh, genned up here, are things that he and I

have talked about a little bit just over the years, as these things arise, and I think having it, uh, on record will be very fun. Uh, so first and foremost...

Teresa: We'd like to swear you in. You're under oath.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: No. [laughs]

Travis: But first and foremost I wanna— so, a lot of the topics we're gonna talk about today have to do with, you know, like, fandom and, uh, you know, nerd culture, as it is. But the thing about it—

Teresa: 'Cause you're the OG nerd, of course.

Travis: Yeah, right? So you're— you're—

Clint: I put the N in nerd.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: What does *that* mean? It's not important.

Clint: I don't know.

Travis: So—

Clint: I'm just lucky there is an N in nerd.

Travis: Yeah, thank you for checking. Uh, so you are— and I hope I'm not telling tales out of school— what, 65 years old?

Clint: I'm 66 years old.

Travis: Whoa, ooh la la! And so you've been around the block. You've been a nerd for a long time now and, this sounds like a joke, before it was cool! [laughs] So, how did you first— like, what was your introduction into, you know, that kind of culture?

Clint: Um, we moved to Daytona Beach when I was six, and my dad bought me a *Superman* annual, a great big, thick... this would've been... let's see. I was— 61. So...

Travis: [laughs] Oh, I thought you were saying you were 61 years old when this happened. Okay, great.

Teresa: No, in— in 1961?

Clint: I was 61 when my dad...

Travis: I was so confused. Okay.

Teresa: [laughs]

Clint: ... who passed away five years after that...

Travis: Oh.

Teresa: No, no.

Clint: They, um— and I just fell in love with comics, and comics really accelerated me as a reader, and I just kind of gravitated towards science fiction and fantasy. And, um, I had a huge collection of comics right— I started collecting comics when the *Marvel* breakthroughs, like, you know, *Amazing Spider-Man*, and *Astonishing Tales*, and *X-Men*, *Avengers*... I picked up all— I had the first issues of all of those.

Travis: And then what happened?

Teresa: Well, hold on. I want to ask, what was the kind of, like— like, nerd stereotype?

Travis: Oh, good question.

Teresa: And did you feel like you fit that mold, you didn't fit that mold, you wanted to be in that mold but you *didn't* want to be in that mold?

Travis: 'Cause you were kind of a jock, right, dad? Kind of a cool guy? A greaser, if you will?

Clint: Well... [laughs] no, Travis. No, I... I tell you what, until *Happy Days* came out, I had never heard the word "nerd" before, and I pretty much kept to myself, and we traveled a lot, as you know, when— when— we moved a lot when I was a kid. Uh—

Teresa: Nothing nefarious. Just his mother's a travel agent.

Clint: Well, not that *I* had done.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: [laughs]

Clint: Um, so... I mean, I just kind of gravitated towards other people who, uh, collected the same kind of things. You know, we were so excited when the Adam West *Batman* TV show started. Um, and I hate to break it to you, and were so disappointed when we did see it.

Teresa: Aww.

Clint: Because that... maybe that answers your question, 'cause that was kind of a definition of a nerd, because even at the age of 9 I was going, "No! That's not— Batman's not funny! He doesn't have a pot belly!"

[audience laughs]

Clint: So... yeah.

Travis: Batman's very funny, by the way. You guys just don't get it. [laughs]

[audience laughs]

Clint: So, you know, it was kind of the— I didn't know I was odd, you know, [through laughter] until I got to high school. And then I found out I was odd, so.

Travis: Now, I do want to follow up, because I know the answer to this. But all of those, like, early comic books that you collected, the first copies of stuff, that are now probably worth, what, tens of hundreds of thousands of dollars.

Teresa: Hmm.

Travis: What happened to them, Clint?

Clint: We went on a vacation, and, uh, a friend of my mom's stayed in the house. She was going through a rough time with her marriage, so she stayed in the house. And to pay for staying in our house, she cleaned it. She cleaned it top to bottom.

Travis: Mm-hmm?

Clint: And found these... old comic books underneath my bed, and threw them all away!

[audience groans]

Clint: Threw them away. And it still hurts! [laughs]

[audience laughs]

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: Well, and you've been collecting since then. You've, like—

Clint: Yeah. I had to rebuild, but there was no way that— comic books—

Teresa: Bandaging your trauma with more and more comic books.

Clint: That's it, and a dad. Yeah, back then, I mean, I bought all my comic books at a drugstore. So, I had a couple of buddies that— and we, you know, swapped comic books, 'cause that's something else you did. You— "Hey, have you read this?" And then you would, you know, read that.

And, um, and it's the same guys that I— I got called by my stepfather for playing with dolls, 'cause I had Captain Action doll, action figures, um, and these things they called Major Matt Mason, which is like a Gumby, but it was astronauts. And so, kind of had to play with 'em, you know, you know, beyond his purview, my stepfather. Um, but I— you know, there was no... geek culture, I mean, that I know— except I was part of it.

Teresa: I mean, it was always there.

Clint: Yeah.

Teresa: It has—there have always been people who enjoy things, and it's just been the, you know, the rest of the oppression kind of pushed on them to be like, "No, this is not allowed. You're not allowed to like this thing."

Clint: Right.

Travis: Yeah, I think it's really easy— I don't know, maybe it is. I'm old now too, I'm 38. Oh, God. But I think it's easy to take for granted, because we have had, you know, the internet in some form for about two decades now, more? Um, and—

Clint: I've had it for two years, so.

Travis: Okay. And so I think that there are people now that are, like, full grown adults who have always had a place to, like, talk to other people, even if they didn't know anyone, like, even in their town who liked that thing, right? It's so easy to find places online and, you know, be it social media or forums or whatever, to talk about the thing that you liked.

Um, but I remember a time when I was in high school, so not even that long ago, all things considered, where the idea of liking video games was still, like, something you didn't want people to know about you, 'cause they would, like, pick on you or make fun of you. And, like, my friends and I, like, having quiet conversations about, like, *The Sims* that we were playing at that point and be like, "[mumbling] We don't anyone to know."

To now, there's, like, people whose entire Twitter feeds are just, like, that. Or, right? There's websites where you just go to compare. There's, you know, Reddit, there's Tumblr, where it's just, like, whatever niche or seemingly niche thing that you like, there's a place to go and talk about it and not feel weird.

I remember the first time in high school when people started talking about— I think it was *Madden Football*, and it was, like, the cool kids talking about, like, playing video games. And I was like, "Wait, what? We can just talk about this now?! Okay, cool. So, have you guys played *GoldenEye*? 'Cause it rules."

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: Um, and it's— it's— in many ways, I think it's wonderful, right? To have these places to talk about things. But I think that there is also then, I mean, the bad side of that is, like, that you do have a lot of these old guard people doing the gatekeeping thing. Which is, like, one of, I think, the worst parts of fandom is that idea of, like, "Well, I've loved this thing way longer than you, and I used to love it back when it wasn't okay to love it, so I love it more than—" it's so gross.

Clint: Or the other offshoot of that is, "Well then I'm not gonna like it anymore."

Travis: Yeah. Oof.

Clint: "Because too many people like it." That— don't fall into that! Don't say, "Well, that's popular now. I'm not gonna watch it, or read it, or consume it anymore." If you love it, you love it.

Travis: Well, that's interesting, 'cause that brought me to another thing I wanted to talk about. 'Cause, like, there's a lot of, like, reboots of stuff and remakes of stuff where it is going for— my opinion of it is that it's, like, "Okay. Well, we already have this one kind of done and covered, so what if we made this but with a different focus towards, like, a different demographic, a different style?"

Teresa: Well, I also think that there's this kind of wave of nostalgia that we are all kind of riding at the moment. Because life is really hard right now.

Travis: Oh yeah.

Teresa: I don't know if you know this.

[audience laughs]

Teresa: Um, but... and that kind of— that kind of comfort the familiar, you know, really brings to us, and in times like these, I think is great. We feel it, we love it. But also, like, the media has decided this is the way that you should consume this now. Um, and, like, uh— what did I— I just saw, like, a Facebook ad or something for, like, Jennifer Aniston is doing a live remake of, like— is it *All In the Family* or...

Clint: She's playing— no, she's playing Blair in, um...

Travis: *Facts of Life?*

Teresa: *Facts of Life!*

Clint: *Facts of Life*. Doing a live version of *Facts of Life*. [laughs] And Jennifer Aniston as— as Blair.

Travis: That's awesome. But, like, how do you—

Clint: And Vin Diesel as everybody else.

Travis: How do you feel—

Teresa: [laughs]

[audience laughs]

Travis: How do you feel, like, seeing these reboots and remakes and, you know, big new versions of things that, like, you saw the original, you saw how they were received then, you've been part of the conversation about them for a long time now? Like, *Star Trek* is a great example, right? Where, you know, now not only do you have the reboot movies, but then you also have *Below Decks*, and you have *Discovery*, and you have, like, so many—

Teresa: And the Picard stuff.

Travis: And the Picard stuff. Like, you have so many *Star Trek* properties running today. Like, how do you feel when you see a different version of those things?

Clint: My take on it is... very similar to kind of an offshoot of what we were talking about a few minutes ago. And sorry, there's gonna be a lot of age talk here.

Travis: Oh boy.

Clint: When I was growing— when I was growing up, there were no... superhero movies. I mean, in—[laughs] the only superhero movie was the movie they made with Adam West and Burt Ward, the *Batman* movie, which, you know... don't get me wrong—

Travis: [simultaneously] Does that have the surfing—

Clint: —I watched it. but that was all we had.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: Well, because there was a different ideal of what a— what a movie star is, what, um— you know, what movies are supposed to have. I mean, Cary Grant and—

Travis: [simultaneously] Also graphics and budget.

Teresa: —and things like that.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: Um, and you know, I think that there was, uh— there was definitely, like, spaghetti westerns in the 60's and things like that. So, it feels almost like even though you hadn't really found superheroes, there were still—

Clint: Oh yeah.

Teresa: —like, this kind of, like... like, box that they wanted to put everybody in, you know?

Clint: Right. And— and so I think that having that in my back pocket, it's— the one thing that kind of amazes me now is, uh, how hard people are on movies that come out now that I would have *loved* to have seen. And so, you can ask Travis— and Teresa probably knows too— I'm a way too easy critic.

Travis: Oh yeah.

Clint: I mean, if we see a movie together, Travis will point out the flaws. I'm going, "I'm just happy to have it!"

Teresa: [laughs]

Clint: It's just so cool to have it. I'll never forget, we were, um— Justin I were taking a cab into Seattle.

Travis: Oh, right, yeah.

Clint: And as we're driving through Seattle, out of nowhere— oh, we passed a, uh, a billboard. And Justin said, "It amazes me—"

Travis: I think it was for *Arrow*.

Clint: Yeah.

Travis: Yeah.

Clint: It was for *Arrow*. And he said, "It amazes me that there's a TV show about Green Arrow, and I've never watched it."

Travis: Yeah.

Clint: And— and I said, "[goofy voice] I've seen every episode."

Teresa: [laughs]

[audience laughs]

Clint: Um, but I think you gotta judge everything on its own merit, and don't, you know... please don't— well, I'm gonna say this anyway. The people that just eviscerated the Star Wars sequels, and, um... I read the— the, uh... um, George R. R. Martin books when they first came out, and, you know, the people who took— took possession of his creation, and the TV producer's creation, that they took possession of it and were so mad at the final episode because it didn't do what they wanted it to do. And that just— that mindset amazed me.

I mean, you may have been disappointed in it, and that's— that's fine. I mean, that's what having an opinion is all about.

Travis: That is something that I also wanted to talk about, 'cause that's a thing that we— one, just like as a family, but also just like as creators and consumers of media have talked a lot about. About, like... the— it's so— and this is another, I think, side of, like, the having the so many opportunities to, like, talk about media that you love, more than we ever have before is, like, the downside of that is, like, it can be really hard to manage your own opinions.

I get into this all the time, right? Where there are things that I love or things that I didn't like— you talked about, like, when I see a movie or a TV show or anything, I am a person who analyzes stuff, right? It's just what I do. It's hard for me, even if I walk out of a movie and I'm like, "That was great! I loved it!"

Like, as time passes, I mean, like, "Yeah, there were— I mean, like, there was— like, there was some stuff I— I think I would've done different— well, I mean, like— so, like, here's the—" and it, like, goes into—

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: —both, like, stuff I didn't like, but also, like, I will develop deep theor— like, ask Teresa. I have deep fan theories about *Ted Lasso*. That, like, I will be like, "Here's what I think they were doing with this thing." And, like, *Succession*. Like, I will tell Justin, like, "I put the— I put the pieces together."

And, like, that's just what you do, right? And then having the kind of, like, buffer zone in my own brain to remember that I think about it differently from someone else, and that is okay, is so hard for me sometimes, right?

Where, like, it— the number of times that I see someone tweet about something or post about something anywhere and my impulse is to jump in and say, like, "Well now," and say, like, "Don't. That's their feeling on it. They did not ask me to. They did not want a conver— they just said they liked the thing, or they didn't like the thing."

Teresa: I wanna put that on a t-shirt.

Travis: I know.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: But, like, that kind of thing of like, I think we've gotten so used to everything being a discourse and being a conversation and having, like, so low a threshold to share your opinions about things that sometimes it's hard to think, like, "But do I *need* to?" [laughs quietly] And, like, that's a thing that, like, I will say now at 38 that's so much different from 28 is more of catching myself and going, "It's okay for me to just like this thing without inviting people to tell me why I'm wrong."

Right? Of just, like, quietly liking a thing.

Teresa: Or telling other people that they're wrong.

Travis: Right. But, I mean, that's the thing is, like, man, when I was 28, if I liked a thing, I immediately tweeted about how good it was, right? Because it's like, here's a place to share my opinion. Here's a place where I can talk about the things I love without being afraid of, like, being called a nerd or whatever, and I'm so excited to talk about the things that I love that I would immediately share it.

And then people would, like, start to either agree with me or eviscerate it or whatever. And now at 38 I'm like, "You know what? I can just quietly like the things I like."

And it's not 'cause I'm ashamed of it. It's not 'cause I'm afraid of it. It's because it's okay for that to be just for me in that moment.

Teresa: Oh. If you wanna clap for that, you can clap for that.

Travis: [laughs]

[theme music plays]

Travis: Hey, everybody! It's your husband host, Travis, again. What if getting your favorite groceries put time back into your week instead of taking it away? With the weather getting colder outside, stay cozy inside and let Imperfect Foods deliver you intentionally sourced groceries with just a few clicks. Imperfect Foods is a grocery delivery service offering an entire line of sustainable groceries that taste delicious and reduce waste.

Visit imperfectfoods.com to see if they deliver in your area, and once you sign up you can personalize your weekly grocery order with fresh, seasonal produce, pantry staples, and yummy snacks.

Plus, say goodbye to packaging guilt. Imperfect Foods is the only national grocery delivery company that makes it easy to return your packaging after every order.

Right now, Imperfect Foods is offering our listeners 20% off your first four orders when you go to imperfectfoods.com and use promo code "shmanners." Again, 20%

off your first four orders, that's up to an \$80 value, at imperfectfoods.com, offer code when you use promo code "shmanners." imperfectfoods.com, and use "shmanners."

Now, speaking of food, has mealtime turned into Groundhog Day in your house? Well, luckily there's fresh and ready meal delivery from Sunbasket. It's restaurant quality food, packaged up, delivered to your home, and ready to heat and eat. Fresh and ready meals arrive fresh and fully prepared by award-winning chefs.

Their chefs are award-winning, and when I say award-winning, we're talking Michelin Star and James Beard awards. This is the real deal. And they work hand and hand with dietitians, so the whole menu is dialed, delicious, and good for you.

I love meal delivery services. We've been using Sunbasket for a long time. It's so wonderful to not have to worry about what we're gonna do for dinner, especially now. You know, the holidays get busy. We've got two kids. We can't always spend time figuring out what we're gonna make, and that's why it's so wonderful to have these heat and eat meals.

And Sunbasket is offering \$90 off for your first four deliveries, including free shipping on the first box, when you go right now to sunbasket.com/shmanners and enter promo code "shmanners" at checkout. That's sunbasket.com/shmanners and enter promo code "shmanners" at checkout for \$90 off your first four deliveries, and free shipping on your first box. [Sunbasket.com/shmanners](https://sunbasket.com/shmanners) and enter promo code "shmanners."

I also want to tell you about a podcast that I think you'll really enjoy. It's called *You Might Be Wondering How We Got Here*, and it's on iTunes, Spotify, or wherever you get your podcasts.

It's a fully sound-designed, actual-play, TTRPG podcast. That's a tabletop role playing game, in case you were wondering.

Our current campaign is SWAT: the Society of the Weird and Terrifying. It's a D&D podcast set in the modern day. For those who want to hop right into the action of season 2, you can listen to season 2, episode 0, "Context," to get all the information you need for the new season.

Also, if you share the show using the hashtag "YMBW" or rate five stars on iTunes, they'll name a character after you on the show. So make sure you check out *You Might Be Wondering How We Got Here*, and enjoy.

[music plays]

Tre'vell: Hey there, beautiful people! I'm Tre'vell Anderson.

Jarrett: And I'm Jarrett Hill. We are the hosts of *FANTI*, the show where we have complex and complicado conversations about the grey areas in our lives; the things that we really, really love sometimes, but also have some problematic feelings about.

Tre'vell: Yes. We get into it all! You wanna know our thoughts about Nicki Minaj and all her foolishness? We got you. You wanna know our thoughts about gentrification? Perhaps some positive, question mark?

Jarrett: Uh-oh.

Tre'vell: Aspects of gentrification? We get into that too. Every single Thursday, you can check us out at Maximumfun.org. Listen, you know you want it honey, so come on and get it!

Jarrett: [laughs]

Tre'vell: Period.

[music and ad end]

Teresa: And I think that as a straight white male, um, you have a little bit of, um— and I think that as a straight white male, um, you have a little bit of, um, of this kind of target on you to be, like—

Travis: Thank you for acknowledging how hard it is for me.

Teresa: Well...

[audience laughs]

Teresa: To be, like, you have to know— you know all the things about the things, and you're an authority, and you do the— and all that kind of stuff where—

Travis: I also think that's because I'm, like, a creator who's, like, in the media and stuff. But I barely pay attention to anything! And, like, I don't do research into anything!

Teresa: Because I, um, you know, I'm a woman, I present myself as a woman, all that stuff, I have, like, a different— there's a different coin where the emotion that I share is allowed to be different. Um, like, I still haven't seen *Civil War*, *Captain America: Civil War*, because I don't wanna watch my friends fight. Right?

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: So I don't— I can enjoy *Marvel*, and I can still say to people, like, "Hmm, that one's not for me. That's too emotional, it's too hard, it's all that kind of stuff." And I have a pass with that. I'm allowed to do that. Um, do you feel that, like, one of the things— what are your allowances, being kind of on, like, as far as, like, the youth culture and things like that with nerdoms, or whatever it is?

Clint: I am so uninformed. I was walking the floor with a couple of folks, Harley and some other folks yesterday, and we went through the artist portion and I said, "I don't know what any of these franchises are!" [laughs] You know, take me back to the— the, uh— the Supercar Fireball XL5, uh, Stingray section.

Teresa: Do you feel that there is any kind of pressure on you as, like, a self-identified "I love *Marvel*" type thing? Is there pressure on you to go down every alley, or is it like, do you think that people are like, "Oh, well, he knows enough. It's fine."

Clint: Well, when somebody asks my opinion, I've been on *Marvel By The Month*, the po— great podcast. Uh, where they go through a year and they go— first they go through a month and dissect all the comics that *Marvel* came out with in that particular time, and, you know, my wheelhouse is pretty good for things like that. Um, even though I play 'em a lot, I have no concept of what the new video games are.

I stay pretty up on TV because you're looking at a man who for... [laughs] 40 years has purchased TV Guide, and highlighted in it what he wanted to watch or record.

Travis: I didn't know that wasn't normal, by the way.

[audience laughs]

Travis: Until I was old, and then I was like, "Well, you know how you get TV Guide and you go through and you mark what you're gonna watch."

"What?"

[audience laughs]

Teresa: [laughs]

Clint: Or to record on my fabulous Betamax machine.

Travis: My dad had several, like, um... uh, shelves of VHS tapes where he had recorded things off of TV, and then cataloged them with a numbering system and a file card system that you could go through and identify, like, what tape each thing was on by, like, flipping through the note cards. Once again, didn't know that was weird until I was older.

Teresa: Listen, no, no, no. It's not weird. You didn't know that that wasn't a shared experience.

Travis: Sure.

Clint: Yeah. Even I think it was weird.

[audience laughs]

Clint: 1700 video tapes.

Travis: It's also worth noting, we never went back and watched. I think the only ones we ever watched off of that was *Mystery Science Theater 3000*.

Clint: Yeah.

Travis: It was like, those were the only ones that we, like, routinely would go back to, but otherwise it was just, like, whatever ran— like, the equivalent of, like,

when you go to, like, I don't know, any kind of bookstore and they have that bin of, like, "Here's the dollar movies!"

And it's, like, Gorfield or something. And you're like, "Meh, I'll watch that."

And it's like that is, like, dad would just be like, "This is probably something someday that I'll wanna watch in 20 years," and he would record it.

Teresa: But there are— there are lots of things like that. If you are an avid baker, for example, "Oh, I don't have this size bowl."

Travis: That is true.

Teresa: "I don't have this whisk."

Travis: Okay, I'm in this picture and I don't like it.

Teresa: Well, but what I'm saying is, what I'm saying is, this— it sometimes, for the VHSs, it's just enough to have it. It's just enough.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: And you don't have to go back and watch it, and, um, you know, I know people that have, you know, 50 coffee mugs or whatever. They don't use every single coffee mug.

Travis: This is targeted. Why are you saying this about me?

Teresa: No, that's not true.

Travis: In front of our friends?!

Teresa: You are—[laughs]

[audience laughs]

Travis: This how you do me?

Teresa: But you have the few that you enjoy using.

Travis: Yes, and then I have the shelf of ones that I'm not willing to get rid of but I definitely don't use.

Um, but speaking of, that's another thing I wanted to talk about, because we have seen, just in especially the last decade, but even just the last five years, a lot of media moved to, like, more digital and downloadable stuff, right? Like, for example I've started reading comics, like, on apps on, like, my phone and, you know, iPad and stuff. And—

Teresa: That's how I read all the *Avatar* comics.

Travis: Right. And you are very much a collector, and you have been as long as I've known you. How do you feel about, like, the culture shifting to, you know, not having— not buying DVDs when they come out and, like, downloading video games right to your computer and your— your console?

Clint: Um, I... have also purchased a number of DVDs and Blu-Rays and stuff like that. Um, well, technology drives so much. I mean, let's face it. Um, it's— technology drives so much of our behavior, and I— I'll put it to you this way. I have, in my hotel room— please don't break in and steal it—

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: We've gone through that recently, yeah.

Clint: Just went through that, yeah. A, uh—

Travis: Not his hotel room.

Teresa: No, no, no.

Travis: But a storage unit.

Clint: No, that's—

Teresa: A storage unit in his hometown, yeah.

Clint: But we don't—

Travis: We caught 'em, though. Don't worry.

Teresa: And most of the comics, specifically, have been recovered.

[audience cheers]

Travis: Yay! I was out there in the—

Clint: I missed the preliminary hearing because I wanted to be here with you people.

Teresa: [laughs]

Clint: Um, but I have a— an iPad over there that has a ton of books on it, and when I go to bed, I always read before I fall asleep. And, uh— so you can tell they're really compelling books that I have on there. But, but, I still prefer the tactile, um, reading of a book. And— and I have a lot of comics on the iPad too, including the *Adventure Zone* graphic novel series. I don't know if you've heard of this, but it's available on Amazon.

[audience applauds]

Clint: Um... but there's just something about holding a— this really makes me sound like an old man. There's something about the experience of holding a book in your hands and turning the pages, feeling the paper, the smell of a bookstore still— if somebody would bottle that in a cologne—

Travis: I'm sure they have.

Teresa: There is.

Clint: —trademark, trademark, trademark, trademark. Yeah.

Teresa: Trademark. [laughs] It's out there.

Clint: Um, I would wear it. Um, but I think that it's possible to still embrace, you know, both of those. Embrace the new, the digital, the technical, and still enjoy— I mean, um, I just started buying vinyl albums again. And, you know, and I have to agree. I do think there's a difference in the sound. But that doesn't mean I'm going to delete the thousands of Manhattan Transfer songs that I have on my Zune.

Teresa: [laughs]

Clint: No, I don't still have a Zune.

[audience laughs]

Clint: Um, I think— I think you can enjoy both, and I think that's a way to stay open-minded, is to experience things. I'll be honest, my best resource on what's cool and, well, what's popular, um, and— and cool, are my family. I mean, Teresa, Travis, everybody will say, "Have you tried this? Have you watched this show? Have you, you know, enjoyed thi— have you ever sampled this?"

And nine times out of ten, Carol and I love watching it, or, you know, reading it, or whatever. So I get so many of my recommendations from them about— especially in video games.

Travis: Yeah, that's kind of sad, 'cause we're very old too.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: And so you're like, "Yeah, the cool young people I know, like 38-year-old Travis McElroy!"

Clint: Well, when I say my family, I mean Charlie and Cooper and Bebe.

Travis: Yeah, they're the cool ones.

Teresa: They are the cool ones.

Clint: Dottie gave me a great recommendation on the new *Halo*.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: Okay, now, I do— I do wanna ask, 'cause this is another thing. I think that this is a good shmannerly topic to cover, which is like— so, you know, we have kids now, five-year-old and a two-year-old, and there's a lot of, like, whatever new generation of McElroy.

Um, and so I've been thinking about this a lot lately of, like, introducing Bebe and Dot to these, like, properties and media and stuff that I love very much and, like, the proper approach to that, 'cause I don't want it to be, like, shoving it down their throats to a point where they don't like it. But I also, like, want them to know about these things, and I want to be able to share those things with them.

And so, you know, you did a very good job of kind of getting us interested in things that you grew up loving as well. Like, do you have any advice on, like, the right way to kind of handle that introduction?

Clint: Yeah. When you were little, and my opinion still meant something to you, uh, [laughs quietly]—

Teresa: It always means something, just in a different way.

Clint: Yeah. Um, I think one of the keys to doing that is to find the things that your child already enjoys.

Travis: Mm-hmm.

Clint: Uh, and then saying, "Well, you might like this." Um, that's kind of the way that we worked. And even back then, even when you guys were growing up, there was a lot of cross-pollination, because comic books led to animated series, and, you know, if there was a comic book character that you liked, um, I can remember when *Marvel* tried an experiment— gosh, 30 years ago— called the *Star* line.

And it was basically their take on— they— comic books for kids, and they created these characters—

Teresa: Like *Step Into Reading*, level one type stuff?

Clint: Well, they were— visually, they were presented as, like, a Richie Rich, but you know, it was a— a space hero.

Teresa: Okay.

Clint: Or, you know— but it was— it was a bold... try, by *Marvel*. Um, but I would get you guys some of those, and, you know, one of the ways that it worked was, again, nobody had hand screens of any kind. Any vacation we would drive to,

we would take a stack of comic books, and you guys would read comic books. And I would try to get things, depending on, you know, your age level and your reading level. 'Cause you all three took to reading really quickly.

Travis: We're nerds, yeah. I get it.

Clint: Um, but I mean, you've experienced that. Bebe has become quite a reader.

Travis: Bebe—

Teresa: She cannot quite read yet.

Travis: But she likes lookin' at 'em.

Teresa: She likes looking at 'em. We just have to find a comic that marries, uh, unicorns with dinosaurs, somewhere. [laughs]

Travis: Well, somewhere along the way, I'm still not 100% sure. She got really interested in *Captain Marvel*. And, like, it's not from the movie, but I think it was just from seeing toys of *Captain Marvel* from the movie.

Teresa: Yeah, that's what I was gonna ask you about. Like, the toyetic kind of way that a lot of these, um, like, fandoms are centered in.

Travis: 'Cause I imagine it was helpful, like, when *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* hit just as we were of the right age to do it. And, like, for Griffin, like, it was Pokémon, that there were all of these things that were age appropriate at the time, big cultural things that ended up being stepping stones into the much broader kind of, like, idea of nerd culture and geek culture, right? 'Cause—

Teresa: Remember that, uh, that Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtle van with the pizza launcher?

Travis: Yeah! I had—

Teresa: That was awesome!

Travis: —this amazing sewer play set. It was incredible!

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: I love that thing so much.

Clint: One Christmas Eve, I had to assemble a GI Joe aircraft carrier...

Travis: Yeah!

Clint: ... a Castle Grey Skull...

Travis: Uh-huh?

Clint: ... and an Ewok Village.

Travis: Yeah!

[audience laughs]

Clint: And that—

Travis: But you had Santa Claus's help.

Clint: No, I had my brother Mark's help, so it took seven hours.

Travis: Oh, even worse, yeah.

[audience laughs]

Clint: Uh, so yeah, toys... a huge factor. Um, this has nothing to do with that, but I have to tell this story. I was on the air doing a morning show by myself on a Saturday morning, and I was eating ice, 'cause I was trying to lose some weight, so I'm eating ice, and I, *on the air*, which is very professional, eating ice while you're actually live on the air—

Travis: It was a different time.

Clint: It was. I shattered a tooth.

Teresa: Which is why you shouldn't eat ice.

Travis: Yeah.

Clint: Yeah.

Travis: A lot of reasons.

Clint: I didn't just break it. [indistinctly] I mean, it shattered. And I spent the rest of the show talking like this. [normally] And I had no dentist at the time, 'cause I'm terrified of dentists. Bad parenting— well, Travis, you're probably pretty well done with my parenting advice. I went on the air and said, "[indistinctly] If there are any dentists who have an office open today, can I come in?"

So this guy named William Brown called me and said, "Yeah, come on out. I'm at—[laughs] I'm at the mall," so you know it's a quality dentist there.

Travis: Right next to the arcade!

Clint: Well, and right next to a big toy store. So I go in there and he said, "Have you ever had the gas?"

And I said, "The gas?"

And he said, "Yeah, nitrous oxide. You put a mask on—"

Travis: And then you go 100 miles an hour!

Teresa: [laughs]

Clint: I said, "Wha— do I still get painkillers?"

He said, "Yeah!" He said, "It just— it takes the edge off."

So he put that mask on, and I was [sucks air]. I was lovin'— I was, like—

Travis: It was a different time.

Clint: It was. And so by the time I got done getting my tooth filled, not only was I feeling no pain, but I was so happy. So I went to a toy store that was right next to the dentist's office, and bought... a bag full of... what's the plural of He-Man? He-Mens?

Travis: He-Mans.

Teresa: He-Mans.

Travis: Hes-Man.

Clint: Masters— Masters of the Universe toys and GI Joes. Um, and—

Travis: It was a good day for us.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: Our stoned dad was a real—

Clint: Stoned dad went home and said, "Hey!"

Travis: Let that be a lesson to you, parents. Get real stoned.

Teresa: [laughs]

Clint: "Hey, kids! Daddy's home with toys!"

Teresa: And you let them swim in them.

Clint: I let— they jumped in 'em like Scrooge McDuck.

Travis: Really got around in there, yeah.

Teresa: [laughs]

Clint: Um, and got such baleful looks from Leslie, their mother. And— but I— those toys... I still have those toys, so...

Travis: Aw, man. I—

Clint: But you guys didn't want 'em!

Travis: I think about— no, not then. Then we wanted 'em. But then I grew up and became a man, and I put away such childish— no, that's not true.

[audience laughs]

Teresa: No, you just use your own money to buy your own toys. [laughs]

Travis: Thank you very much. Um, I think about all the time, by the way, how very vicious and violent we were playing with GI Joes and how many of 'em we broke. Just, like, twisting up till the rubber band broke or, like, they went on paratrooper missions and, like, broke. And, like, we had a cube full of the things that now would probably— each one would be worth, like, \$150 each that we just, like, destroyed.

Teresa: Because toys are meant to be played with.

Travis: I mean, sure. But if I could travel back in time I'd steal 'em from little Travis.

Teresa: [laughs]

Clint: Do you remember the Easter where we gave you guys GI Joe toys and you left 'em in your baskets overnight. And a lot of the chocolate melted in the basket.

Travis: Oh yeah, and Nessie ate them!

Clint: And then your precious, precious Scottish Terrier Nessie got really sick!

Travis: Yep.

Clint: And we took her to get x-rayed, and it was like a horror movie!

[audience laughs]

Clint: There were body parts, and heads, the green cellophane grass.

Travis: The weirdest part about it is after the vet removed them, 'cause they had to surgically remove them from her intestines, he held up a large pill bottle of basically torsos and heads and said, "Do you wanna keep them?"

[audience laughs]

Travis: No! What are we gonna do, glue it back together?! It was in my dog's guts!

Teresa: And she recovered.

Travis: She was fine.

Clint: She was a great dog, too.

Travis: Um, so especially since my beautiful wife is here, but, uh, you also have a beautiful wife, and you are a nerd, like myself. And Teresa is, in her own right as well. But I wanted to talk about, like, best practices, good shmanners, for introducing not only your kids, but also, like, a partner or a friend or partners, to a thing that you love, right? Because this is a thing that I am notoriously bad at. That if there's, like, a movie that I love very much— I've gotten better. But a movie—

Teresa: Bad in the way of, it's probably not the best way, but it works really well?
[laughs]

Travis: Well, so you're talking about the way that I've developed that is a good manner, but for a while, like, uh, especially my favorite movies that are comedies, someone will be watching it and I would be like, "Hey, wait! Shut up, shut up! There's the good part! Watch this! You've gotta watch it! *Shut up!*"

And, like, that is the worst way to enjoy anything. Like, they're gonna be like, "You're right. That was great." No!

[audience laughs]

Travis: But the idea of, like, someone talking over one of my favorite jokes made me so mad. So, the way that I developed was to just put it on while she was doing something else in the room so I could watch her be like, "[humming] Oh. Huh? What? Oh, huh."

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: And then I got her! Right? And then she's in! Right?

Clint: Teresa, what is the ratio?

Travis: Did you just call her Tereso?

Clint: No, I was thinking of ratio and Tereso.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: [laughs]

Clint: No. Teresa, what's the ratio of how many times that works?

Teresa: It works almost every time.

Clint: Wow.

Teresa: Um, he has— he has great taste, and I liked—

Travis: I picked her, didn't I?

[audience laughs and groans]

Teresa: [laughs] I like what I like, and sometimes it's hard for me to learn to like other things. And so— I'm trying to think specifically some examples. You did that with, uh, the *Lucifer* series.

Travis: Yes, correct.

Teresa: Um, where just put it on. Which also I think was a great choice for this, because I love theater and musical theater and such, and to have that kind of, like, piano playing jazz singer thing that they do for him a couple times throughout every season, um—

Travis: I think that's how— *What We Do In The Shadows* the TV show was one too.

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: Where I was like, "I really—" and it also helps, though, another important factor of this, and I don't know if you've run into this with Carol, is like, at this point Teresa and I have been together 12 years, right? And, like, I pay...

ugh. This sounds like a brag, but it's not. Like, I pay attention to the things that you like and don't because, like, I want to be successful in the sharing. It's the same thing with Bebe. Like, I like to... this once again sounds terrible. I solve... people? [laughs uncomfortably] Oh, God. Oh, but—

Teresa: This is a very common thing. That's why sometimes it's important when I talk to you about something I let you know, I just need you to listen.

Travis: Right.

Teresa: Or I need you to help me problem solve. There are— there are lots of shared experience with that. Don't feel bad.

Travis: Thank you. Part of my neurodivergence is like, finding the solution, right? I'm gonna fix this, I'm gonna find the solution, right? So I pay attention to the shows and the movies and the things that work and don't work. And so, like, I don't— finding that, once again, another, like— just because I like this thing doesn't mean it is inherently good. Right? Like, that is a very difficult thing that I've had to learn over the years of, like, there— taste is a thing, right? So, like, yes, there are shows that I believe are just— and movies that I believe are just inherently great works that everyone should enjoy. And then there are things where I've had to learn, like, no. They're— like, this caters to my interests, and this is not a thing that is universally beloved, and that's okay. Right? This is a thing that I love, and so I also only try to do that with things that, like, I honest-to-God think you will like. Because I think one of the things as I've grown older and having a partner is getting okay with not everything being a shared experience.

Teresa: Mm-hmm, mm-hmm.

Travis: Right? Because there are things where you want to. Like, "This makes me happy and I love it, and I love you, and you make me happy, so why don't we do these things together?"

And it's like, well, because... [laughs quietly] they might not be compatible! You know? And, like, finding that thing of, like, and then there are things that I go away and watch, and you go away and watch, and then we come back together and we watch *Bob's Burgers* over and over again.

Teresa: [quietly] Yeah.

Clint: I— Carol and I have been together... just about the same amount of time as you have, and I have not... cracked that formula yet. Um, I will— I—[laughs] about a year ago, I sat down with a pad and paper. And you know how you'll recommend shows on all the different channels. I said, "Okay, Carol might watch that with me. Carol might watch that with me."

But she is so unpredictable about what is gonna strike her fancy. Um, I—[laughs] I was watching— what's the new Tom Hanks?

Travis: *Finch?*

Clint: *Finch, yeah.*

Travis: I don't know why I said it like that. [accusingly] *Finch?*

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: That guy? Ugh! Don't get me started on *Finch!*

Clint: But I'm thinkin'—

Travis: He still owes me 20 bucks!

Clint: She— she loves Tom Hanks. Um, you know, and aw, the robot's cute, and it looks really, you know, good. 'Cause Carol's not against science fiction and fantasy. She'll watch some of it. So I said—

Travis: She's not against it.

Clint: I said— I said, "Honey, I think we'd really like that." And she looked up and she said, "Is there a dog?"

And I said, "Yeah! It's his best friend."

She said, "[flatly] No."

[audience laughs]

Travis: 'Cause she— she's worried the dog'll get hurt.

Clint: 'Cause she doesn't want the dog to get hurt!

Travis: Yeah, man.

Clint: And any— we stopped watching—

Travis: There's, like, whole websites, by the way, dedicated to that, that you can just, like, search "Does the dog die?" And it'll tell you. And they're like, "Then no thanks!"

Clint: I need it, because I was so looking forward to *The Golden Compass*.

Travis: Yeah.

Clint: I couldn't wait to watch *The Golden Compass*. I read all the books, passed 'em along to you guys, Lin was in it, and it just was right in my wheelhouse. And we're watching it and Carol's going, "Oh, that's pretty— okay, that's good."

And the first time one of the animals attacked the other animal, a CGI animal attacked a CGI animal she said, "I'm out."

Travis: Yep.

Clint: And had— so then I had to sit in my lonely room watching it by myself.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: How terrible.

Clint: But *Game of Thrones*—

Travis: To have a moment's peace!

Clint: *Game of Thrones* we watched together. It was one— I mean, we have some appointment viewing shows. And I said, "Look, you might be interested in this."

Um, and she loved every minute of it until the dragon got shot—

Travis: Spoilers.

Clint: —with the arrow that turned him bad. And then I had to, like, practically tie her to the chair to watch the rest of it, but she did. So—

Travis: Practically, but not really. It's important to note—

Teresa: No.

Travis: —please. Please don't arrest my dad.

Clint: No, no! It was duct tape.

[audience laughs]

Travis: But this— I mean— this is a thing. I'll never forget. So, Teresa and I when we first, like, early day— well, one, Teresa introduced me to *Avatar: The Last Airbender*.

Teresa: Yes.

Travis: I had never— like, I had never watched it, never seen it, and she was like, "What?!"

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: And, like, it was— this was, like, early in our relationship, and it became a thing that, like, we bonded together really, really— 'cause I was like, "Well, this is incredible." And then we also had the experience of going to see the movies in theaters, and bonding over that in a much different way.

Teresa: Mm-hmm.

[audience laughs]

Travis: Woo! And you know how I said some things are just universally good, and some things... are just universally bad. Um, anyways...

Clint: I love that movie.

[scattered laughter]

Travis: Oh my God.

Teresa: No, not Avatar.

Travis: No, *The Last Airbender*. Anyways—

Teresa: The Last—

Travis: —not important.

Teresa: —*The Last Airbender*. Not the blue people.

Travis: I remember, I had watched *Parks and Rec* and I was like, "Oh, Teresa's gonna love this. This is right up her alley. She's gonna love it."

And we watched, like, the first three episodes and she was like, "This is way too awkward for me."

And I was like, "Okay—"

Teresa: So we skipped the rest of season one.

Travis: Well, I had to come back to it. 'Cause then, like, six months later I was like, "I figured it out. We're gonna start at episode one of season 2."

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: And then she loved it! It became, like, her favorite show, watched all of it, and then went back and watched season one.

Teresa: Because there was a big character reset. It doesn't matter. Anyway. Um—

Travis: But, like, then after that it was like, *Brooklyn 99*. Still can't get her to watch *The Office*, though. That's fine, I get it. It's fine.

Teresa: Sorry. Sorry about that. But if I may—

Clint: Yes!

Teresa: —like, offer you some advice...

Clint: Plea— I'd love it!

Teresa: If you want Carol to start to, um, warm up to the things you'd like to introduce to her, how about you ask her about the things that she wants to introduce to you?

Clint: Oh, she— she does. She doe— well, here's what'll happen. She'll be watching... let me think. There's an Australian show called *Offspring*, and she loves it. And I'll go, "Oh, I'll let you watch your show."

And then I'll walk by it, and the next thing I know, 45 minutes have gone by.

Travis: Yeah, dude.

Teresa: Mm-hmm, mm-hmm.

Clint: So yeah, we have... she has her shows, I have my shows, but we have our shows, and you know, I have found that she has turned me on to things that were really, really cool that I really did love. She was the one that first suggested watching *Ted Lasso*.

Teresa: Hmm.

Clint: And I said, "Oh, g— okay. [scornfully] Soccer."

Teresa: [laughs]

Clint: Which is a fine sport, if you like it!

Travis: Alright.

[audience laughs]

Clint: I do not.

Travis: And I think— by the way, I think that— well, cultural exchange for lack of a better term. To jump back to, like, introducing your kids to stuff, there's stuff that Bebe has watched that— *Bluey*, as an example, where I'm just like, "Well, this is the greatest thing I've ever seen!"

Um, and this is silly. I mean, maybe not—

Teresa: You also loved the *My Little Pony: Friendship is Magic*.

Travis: Oh yeah, very good. Thank you. But also, like, the, like, blind bag unboxing stuff? I love 'em!

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: I love them so much!

Teresa: You love to watch those together.

Travis: Bebe and I will just, like— well, Bebe and I will just like, "Oh, what chocolate is that?"

And it's just like, I'm in it. It is hitting every dopamine ADHD trigger for me, 'cause it's, like, half ASMR and, like, half, like, ADD. Like, it's fast and there's lots of bright colors and good crinkling sounds, and I'm in it. And this thing of, like, I'm— and thi— universally I'm just not a snob when it comes to, like, TV or movies or anything.

Teresa: Except you do not like to watch my pedicure videos.

Travis: They're gross!

Teresa: I— I love to watch those pedicure videos.

Travis: They're horrifying. You watch the dermatologist ones, too! It's disgusting!

Teresa: Not as much do I watch those, but I love to see a good pedi.

Travis: But then you won't watch—

Teresa: Turn somebody's ugly feet into beautiful feet.

Travis: But then you won't watch *Supernatural* 'cause it's too scary. But you will watch horrifying pedicure videos and botched surgery videos!

[scattered laughter]

Teresa: That was a very brief stint in my life.

Clint: [laughs loudly]

Travis: Oh my God.

Teresa: In my YouTube history.

Travis: But I think, like— I think it is important, too— and I think about this all the time, now— where if there's a show Bebe likes, I try really hard to, like, watch it with her, right? Of just, like, hey, listen. If it's gonna be on, I'm in it. Right? Like, if you're gonna be into it and it's gonna be on TV, I am going to be into it. Right? Because that way, one, I'm not bored. And two—

Teresa: That's good parenting advice as well.

Travis: Yeah. And two, we can talk about it. And when she references a thing— *Daniel Tiger* is when, like, this really clicked for me, of, like, the songs and lessons from *Daniel Tiger*. If she— if that clicks with her and I can reference that, it helps with those moments and helps with those lessons, right?

So instead of just like, "Okay, well, here's your thing and I'm gonna watch my thing," and then we lose that chance for a reference point for each other. Of, like, it happens too with her, where she'll sit and watch and play video games, and then she's like, "Play the one with the food monsters." And it's— oh, now I can't remember it. But it's the one where, like, you have to feed the different food bugs to the monsters and then, like, they grow different arms and legs and stuff. And she loves it! And I'm like, yeah! Alright! And she'll— she also, for some reason, really loves watching me play *Assassin's Creed*.

[scattered laughter]

Travis: And, like, she will just sit and she's like, "Get them!"

[audience laughs]

Travis: "Go get that guy! Light that on fire!"

And I have— and I keep saying to her, like, "Is this scary? Is this bad?"

And she's like— because I explained it to her the first time we played it. I was like, "This is points of light. This is not something I would do in real life, but it is points of light, and it's not real."

And now she'll watch and I'm like, "Is this too much?"

And she's like, "They're made of light."

And I'm like, "Okay, great! Let's keep going." And, like—

Teresa: Maybe we should introduce her to— what's the one that I really like, with Elizabeth?

Travis: Oh, yeah! *Bioshock*.

Teresa: *Bioshock*.

Travis: That might be a little too real politically speaking for her right—

Teresa: Oh.

Travis: It might raise some, like, "Why are they being mean specifically to that person?" questions that I don't know that—

Teresa: Okay, alright, wait on that one.

Travis: Okay, great.

Teresa: But we also agree with critical race theory, so, anyway.

Travis: So. There are many moments, though, where it's just like, that thing, but then also listening the other way, right? Of just like, there are movies that I've loved, children's movies, completely age appropriate, where it will hit a moment of interpersonal strife. For some reason, violence, scary dragons,

monsters, nothing. Two friends having an issue with each other, and Bebe's like, "Skip it! I can't!"

Teresa: That's me!

Travis: "I can't— I can't watch it! Please skip it! I can't! They're fighting!" And I'm like, "Okay!"

Teresa: That is the piece of the puzzle that I contributed.

Travis: Yes. And my first thought when that first happened was, like, "Well, I need to make her experience this to get her used to it and show her it's okay." And then one day I was like, "No, I don't." [laughs] "I— how about instead, I just don't make her uncomfortable. She's five. It's okay."

Clint: If there's a scene with two people fighting and they accidentally kill a dog, Carol will not watch that either.

Travis: No, that's out.

Teresa: Mm-mm, mm-mm.

Travis: It is the opposite of my favorite thing in anything, which is watching two people become friends, and watching two friends stop being friends is like— Bebe's like, "No, thank you. I can't."

Even if it's, like, *My Little Pony: Friendship is Magic*. It's like, "Honey, you know Pinkie Pie and Twilight Sparkle are gonna work it out."

And she's like, "Then skip to that!"

And I'm like, "You got it!" And it's just fast-forward, fast-forward, okay, great, we're back.

So, speaking of— and we got a few more minutes here, but something I wanted to touch on, and *My Little Pony* is actually a great transition for this, because I remember being little— you talked about your stepdad giving you a hard time about playing with dolls. But when I was little, I had a full set of *My Little Pony*. I loved *My Little Pony* when I was little, and I still do now. It still rules. Um, and there are many—

Teresa: My dad just gave us a whole, like— a ream of paper box full of My Little Ponies from my youth, and I was like, "Thank you, we needed these!"

Travis: So, Bebe has, like, the pink castle that was triangle-shaped that unfolds. But, like, I— I would say— and, you know, you have, uh, a son that wears nail polish and often wears makeup and paints his hair and— paints his hair?

[audience laughs]

Travis: Dyes his hair.

Teresa: Dyes his hair. [laughs quietly]

Travis: And how—

Teresa: Well, but—

Clint: Which— which one?

Teresa: —that shampoo, you do paint your hair sometimes.

Travis: And— but I— so you have been, you know, a cis male for 65 years, and I wanted to talk about how—

Clint: [tired] 66.

Travis: 66. But specifically in nerd culture, but with broader scope, how you've seen, like, masculinity change throughout and, like, what your thoughts are on about, like, how the concept has changed over the decades?

Clint: It's— it's kind of odd. I don't really see it as a... a time influenced. To me, it's a geographical influence. I grew up in— well, I was born in, well, the same town I live in now: Ironton, Ohio. Okay? And... so, moved around a whole lot.

Travis: Ironton, just for reference, kids in Ironton dream of the big city of Huntington, West Virginia, so...

[audience laughs]

Clint: And so, I eventually moved back there and went to high school, and— and when I moved back there from Carson City, Nevada, which was... an awesome place, and— and I moved to Ironton, and it was... the people I went to high school with were the reddest of rednecks. And—

Teresa: It was a smaller town, is what you're trying to say. [laughs quietly]

Clint: Smaller town in— in O— in Ohio. And so it was— that was where I first would get called a name for liking, um, theater.

Teresa: Mm-hmm, mm-hmm.

Clint: 'Cause I went out for a play, [laughs quietly] and got cast.

Travis: Yeah!

Clint: But then I was— I was called everything that you can imagine by the other guys going to that high school.

Teresa: But you— did you find your people in the theater community?

Clint: That's exactly what happened, yeah. And so— and that's what I think everybody does. Um, you know, you are going to make those friends. You're going to have those friends that have similar interests to you. Uh, who have likes that you like, and you don't have to agree on everything, but you will find your people that, you know, will embrace you, and you will embrace them.

Um, and I think that's— that's what is so cool about conventions. And, I mean, it really is, guys. I get a little choked up just thinking about it. Um, what I call the— the *Big Bang Theory* effect. I mean, believe me—

Travis: Now everything is bazinga.

Teresa: [laughs]

Clint: Before— before that came— before that show came out—

Teresa: There was no bazinga before the show, right? [laughs]

Clint: Oh, yeah. It was— you know, it wasn't cool to be, uh, a nerd, and now we run the freakin' world!

[scattered applause]

Travis: Well, I don't know about that.

Clint: And so, you know, it's— it's that way, you know? And when you get kind of down, no matter what age you are, just because you like something that maybe other people don't, it's... it's fine. Like what you like, and you are going to not be alone, especially not today, since everybody can talk to everybody, any time they want to! You're gonna find your people! You're gonna find those people that love you and will embrace you and— and keep you. And no matter how bad things were in the past and how bad things are now, we got that, friends, and that— that is so precious, and you need to really embrace that.

[audience cheers and applauds]

Travis: Um, I think that that is a wonderful place to wrap up. Uh, a few end of panel announcements. We have Candelights coming up December 18th, thank you.

[audience cheers]

Travis: It's going to be an—

Teresa: Another virtual recorded show.

Travis: It's a virtual event benefiting Harmony House. Um, it's going to be even more fun and weirder than last year. [laughs] And you can visit themcelroy.family to find out more info on everything we do. Um, I would like to give a round of applause to our guest, Clint McElroy.

[audience cheers and applauds]

Travis: Uh, Clint is on a podcast called *The Adventure Zone*, which you should all check out.

[scattered cheering]

Travis: I also want to take this opportunity— I'm executive producing a podcast called *Chasing Immortality* that's hosted by Tybee Diskin, and it is historical nonfiction about people throughout history who have attempted to cheat death in weird ways. Uh, it is very fun. We just did last week an episode on Rasputin. Uh, this week was an episode about a woman who drank gold. It's really great.

Teresa: And in that, check out *Sawbones*, too. Don't drink gold.

Travis: Oh yes. It's— same vein.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: Thank you all so much for coming today. It's a Sunday morning, right after— you know, during a con, so it means a lot that you're all here to hang out with us and spend time, so I just wanted to say thank you! Thank you for being here!

Teresa: Thank you so much!

Clint: Cheers.

[audience cheers and applauds]

Travis: And that's gonna do it for us, so join us again next time.

Teresa: No RSVP required.

Travis: You've been watching *Shmanners*...

Teresa: Manners, *Shmanners*. Get it.

Travis: Thank you!

[audience cheers and applauds]

[theme music plays]

[chord]

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