

00:00:00	Biz Ellis	Host	Hi. I'm Biz.
00:00:01	Theresa Thorn	Host	And I'm Theresa.
00:00:02	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.
00:00:24	Biz	Host	<i>[Continues through dialogue.]</i> This week on <i>One Bad Mother</i> —there's something in the water... and it wants your youth! We talk coming-of-age with graphic novelist Ira Marcks. Plus, Biz is let down by GIFs.
00:00:37	Crosstalk	Crosstalk	Biz and caller: Woo!
00:00:38	Caller	Caller	Oh, wait—are we still wooing?
00:00:39	Biz	Host	Yes!
00:00:40	Caller	Caller	That seems like an existential question, doesn't it?

[Biz laughs.]

Anyway. I am check in to say hello. This isn't so much a genius for me—it's not really a genius at all—but I just wanted to say "thank you." I know that your kids are sometimes bit players in this podcast, but Raiden's willingness to be honest about what they're going through and for you to be honest about your reactions to it and everything? This is gonna sound maybe a little bit ridiculous—I'm a nearly-forty-year-old person! But listening to all of that over the course of the last couple of months? Has made me realize that I am nonbinary, and that I can pick whatever the fuck name I want. And it is not ridiculous and it is not a phase. And really it's pretty fucking fabulous!

[Biz laughs.]

And... that is because of you guys! So I just wanted to say thank you, and you're awesome, and I hope y'all are—are having a really great day. Bye.

00:01:47	Biz	Host	<u>You're awesome!</u> That's who's awesome! You are! I gotta tell ya—I played this for Raiden, so I—I wanna say thank you for calling. Because... it allowed a additional voice to remind Raiden that no matter how young the voice; how old the voice; how crowded the voice—just one voice! That it can make a huge impact. And I think that actually finally sunk in a little bit? So I appreciate you calling. And here's the thing—I think you're doing such a great job! Also, even if this was like a weird thing where it was just about names— <i>[Laughs.]</i> You can change your fucking name to whatever you want! You a fucking almost-forty-year-old woman! Of course you can change your name! Of course it's not silly! Anybody who says it's silly? Just—it possibly isn't aware of their own internal fear of change and being who they want to be! Y'know? I think it's a little like parenting. No one really cares specifically about <u>your</u> choice. When they're out there yelling and screaming, I think they're just like, "Aaah! We're angry! We're gonna focus on something!" Change your name, darling. Change your name. And if you wanna change it back, guess what? You can! Because it's not a phase. It's
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your fucking choice. Okay? And we support you 100%! So... welcome, welcome to the party. All are welcome here. You are doing an amazing job.

00:03:25	Music	Music	Thank-you's! Heavy electric guitar and driving percussion overlaid with "Ohh, oh-oh, oh-oh" and "Hey-ey-ey-ey-ey" lyrics.
00:03:40	Biz	Host	<i>[Singing]</i> Do-do, do-dooo! <i>[Regular voice]</i> It's time to say thank you, and man—do I need to say thank you! To all of you. For showing up. And doing it. I'm gonna give a special thank-you shoutout to all of those—especially in the medical profession—when you are learning that a patient is exploring their gender and identity or making changes to it. Making an effort to use the pronouns they want. This has been happening for Raiden? And it's such a—I mean, to me, it's a small thing. I know it's a very big thing for Raiden. But I've noticed it when we were at an appointment the other day. And it—I just—thank you! Thank you for doing that. If it's something that you're able to do? Do it! It's not a big deal! And it means so much! To the person who wants to be identified the way they wanna be identified. Also, thank you, medical professionals, 'cause it sucks out there. People are not getting vaccinated. And even people who <u>are</u> vaccinated are still getting sick. Okay? And it—like, it's just—it's just not going away. And I just know that you are swamped and drowning and you haven't had much of a rest. And I see you, and I appreciate you. And that is every single person, regardless of what your job is, in the medical field.

Thank you, school bus drivers. Thank you, teachers. Thank you, school administrators, school nurses, and especially school counselors. I see you. This is a horrible situation to have to navigate. And just so much added pressure. And people are angry and upset and... full of grief right now. And full of frustration. And any one of us out in the world could be on the receiving end of that. And I just wanna say... *[sighs.]* Let's be gentle to those people, and I am sorry if it ever winds up being you as a teacher or as a doctor or as somebody who's working in any industry that comes in contact with the public! *[Laughs.]* Thank you to all people who come in contact with the public. I appreciate you... a lot.

Everybody? You're doing a wonderful job. Thank you out there. Now, here's a fun fact. I was texting with—Theresa and I haven't had a chance to talk a lot. We've both been doing our own shared version of drowning. Yet I am constantly thinking of Theresa. So I had reached out to Theresa the other night and said something profound about parenting and feeling like a prisoner. And—*[Laughs.]* And Theresa responded back that they felt the same way. And then I tried to find—y'know like when you're texting on your phone you can go down and add a GIF? A GIF? You can add one of those hip things, like Wonder Woman? Like, idk, twirling? Gabe knows what I'm talking about 'cause we—he's young, and we share the GIFs. Anyway, I went—*[Laughs.]* I texted in "sad mom." Thinking I would get, y'know, exhausted mom. Sad mom. When I searched for "sad mom," do you know what came up? It came up... image after image of mothers crying that their child had gone to college. Or that their child was getting married. Or that—whatever version of "leaving the nest"? That is where the moms were—

[Laughs.] Were crying. And I said that to Theresa. I said, “I’m so pissed! I can’t find just a mom having a breakdown!” And when I described it, she said, “That really makes me fucking angry.”

[Laughs.] So... let’s get on that. I got kids having tantrums all the time on GIFs. I got—I mean, the best we could do was find, like, Lucy from *I Love Lucy* throwing papers up in the air. Let’s work on that, internet, because if there’s one thing sad moms need, is a way to commemorate that sadness. And as one of the other—or many—epic moments that we have. Which I think ties in nicely to what we’re gonna talk about today with our guest, Ira Marcks, about epic moments and coming-of-age.

00:08:10 Music Music
00:08:11 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.

00:08:19 Biz Host

If you are married to the host of *One Bad Mother*, we definitely are talking about you.

00:08:22 Theresa Host

Nothing we say constitutes professional parenting advice.

00:08:25 Biz Host

Biz and Theresa’s children are brilliant, lovely, and exceedingly extraordinary.

00:08:29 Theresa Host

Nothing said on this podcast about them implies otherwise.

[Banjo music fades out.]

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

00:08:34 Biz Host

This week, we are talking to Ira Marcks. His love for ancient magic and possible futures has led him to create a warehouse of esoteric objects for the Hugo-Award-winning magazine *Weird Tales*, and to tell stories about villainous technology for the European Research Council. *Shark Summer* is his debut graphic novel, and I am trying desperately hard not to insert the *Jaws* theme yet. Welcome, Ira! Well thank you, Biz!

00:09:03 Ira Marcks Guest

[Both laugh.]

00:09:06 Biz Host

I am very excited about this graphic novel. We are a big graphic novel house.

00:09:11 Ira Guest

Hell, yeah.

00:09:12 Biz Host

But before we get into it—please tell us who lives in your house.

00:09:17 Ira Guest

Okay. We’ll start with the plants. Do you want by name, or—?

00:09:20 Biz Host

I would like to spend the next twenty-two hours talking about it.

00:09:24 Ira Guest

Okay. Um, well, in my studio I’ve got some hanging plants and I’ve got a nice little cactus. But back home it’s just a broader array. There’s all kinds of stuff going on. And now we have, uh, two cats in our household. The sisters of cats we used to own previously. So this is like a twenty-year legacy of, like, cat heritage. So. It’s pretty impressive.

00:09:49 Biz Host

Yeah!

00:09:50 Ira Guest

And then we have a newer resident, our dog, Doty—or Dorothy, if you would—and she’s a rescue from about four or five years ago. And then also my partner, Maura.

00:10:01 Biz Host

Yeah. Blah, blah, blah. Yeah. Whatever. Yeah.

[Both laugh.]

00:10:07 Ira Guest

And we’re all crammed into, y’know, 1600 square feet of brick in upstate New York. *[Laughs.]*

00:10:12 Biz Host 16?! That's luxury! What are you talking about?!

00:10:16 Ira Guest It is!

00:10:17 Biz Host I know. It is pretty nice. The cats? I need their names. Just—

00:10:21 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Ira:** Oh, sorry. Geez, I just blew right past that. Just so stupid!

00:10:25 Ira Guest **Biz:** I know. You blew this! Ugh!
Well, we have Garvey, named after a local car dealership, and then we have Resty, who loves to rest.

00:10:32 Biz Host Oh!

[Ira laughs.]

Very impressive! Very... really... this may not be our best cat names. I'm gonna be honest with you, Ira. We've had some names come through and I gotta say—"Resty"? By the end of this interview it might have grown on me.

00:10:48 Ira Guest Well you know what? We also took that band name and then we named our band after that cat. Which is—we just doubled down on it. It was an awful idea.

00:10:57 Biz Host You doubled down on "Resty."

00:10:59 Ira Guest I mean, can you even—can you even spell "Resty?" How do you spell it?

00:11:02 Biz Host I'm trying to think—

[Ira laughs.]

00:11:09 Ira Guest Well, is it with a W? Or—is it French or Greek origins? Which one? I don't even know!

00:11:12 Biz Host *[Both laugh.]*
Alright! Let's start off here with... *Shark Summer*. First graphic novel. But not the first things you've been doing! So actually I'm not gonna go there first. I'm gonna go into this whole idea of, like, magical worlds. And we—I live in a house of constant new mythologies. Like, we—we got two kids. There have been toothbrushing stories that started with each child that have gone on years now. That are epic. They're great. Great. And then any time one of them gets into something new, be it, like, Legos or Ninjago or Star Wars, we then go through the entire deep dive into the mythology. Into these worlds. And my partner, Stefan, is... just by nature somebody who goes very deep into things. So... I guess I'm happy to see that that love of mythology leads to something fun. But I guess I wanna just start with—talk to me about your history with this! With this sort of viewing of the world and—and all of that.

00:12:29 Ira Guest Okay. So sort of like my—my storytelling roots or something like that. Right? Yeah! Well, I mean, like any good kid, our—my parents read to me a lot as a kid. And my dad's best friend worked for a library. But he wasn't like a librarian? He worked for like a library union? So it was kind of like a strange, abstract—I couldn't understand it when I was a kid.

[Biz laughs.]

But I knew he was connected to libraries. And a couple times a year, he would just send me a big stack of books? Which I think

really led me into a life of just curiosity about whatever? Like, I'll just—I would rather be on Wikipedia than Twitter, is what I'll say.

[Biz laughs.]

I just want to click links and get deeper into ideas. And I think a lot of that came from just this random assortment of books I would get every month. A lot of that stuff was fantasy, and some of it was like kind of nonfiction. I remember reading about like, prehistoric cave art. Y'know. Like—and it all kinda blended together. Like I was also reading, like, Anne McCaffrey's *Dragonriders of Pern*. So in my mind, like, the real world and the fantasy world *[through laughter]* were just sort of one magical place? *[Laughs.]*

00:13:41 Biz Host

Yeah! Well but that's actually—I actually love that sentiment. That the real world is a magical place. Because... it really kind of fucking is if you are putting those lenses on! Right? Like, I—they're constantly with the kids I'm like, "Look at that snail! Look at how that's doing that! What is even happening?!" Right? Like, so—I love it. And then this... this led to art for you for storytelling? For—

00:14:14 Ira Guest

Yeah. I would say, y'know, everybody—like, when you're a kid that draws? If any of you out there were kids that draw or are kids that draw, it's like you kinda get put in a category? Of like a creative type. But... I mean, I love to write as much as I love to draw, but drawing was easier for people to understand. So I would draw but I loved storytelling and then you put that formula together, you get comic books. Right? So words and pictures together. So I think I have a life of always making comics? But I do wish I studied art a little more.

[Biz laughs.]

Um... *[Laughs.]* Like I maybe should have gone to school for fine art or, y'know, learned some anatomy? Instead I went for like graphic design. *[Laughs.]*

00:14:57 Biz Host

Yeah, right. *[Laughs.]*

00:14:58 Ira Guest

I wish I was more of an artist, is what I'm trying to say. *[Laughs.]*

00:15:00 Biz Host

Got it! Well, I'm sorry to tell you, there's never an opportunity to pick that back up. Just so you know. You've lost it. You can never go back. Pick up any online classes. Sorry. *[Blows raspberry.]*

00:15:11 Ira Guest

Nope, that doesn't exist. There's no resources available. *[Laughs.]*

00:15:13 Biz Host

You're just gonna have to set that bar low for yourself and live there. That's fine.

00:15:17 Ira Guest

I know. It's a nightmare.

[Biz laughs.]

00:15:19 Biz Host

Alright. *Shark Summer*. I gotta tell you—one of my all-time top five? It's *Jaws*. And—

00:15:28 Ira Guest

A great film.

00:15:29 Biz Host

There's no question that your book may have something to do indirectly with that movie.

00:15:35 Ira Guest

Ah.

00:15:36 Biz Host

Yeah. Indirectly. AKA, this is all set in the summer that they're shooting *Jaws* there.

00:15:43 Ira Guest

Yes! It's—yeah, it's kind of behind the scenes. Yeah. For those that haven't seen the book, right? It's not set in the movie *Jaws*; it's set

the summer before, when Spielberg or—y’know, we can say—I mean, I don’t have any—*[Laughs.]* It’s about *Jaws*.
00:15:59 Biz Host Okay! It’s about *Jaws*, everybody. It’s about *Jaws*!
00:16:01 Ira Guest Deal with it.
00:16:02 Biz Host Deal with—that’s what it’s about! Were you prepared for that at all when you started—like, when you—was your publicist like, “Just so you know... this is gonna get asked a lot.” Or were you like—did you think you could sneak around the—*[Laughs.]* The *Jaws* tie-in? Just—yeah. Just annoyingly just sort of reroute the—yeah.

00:16:15 Ira Guest

[Biz laughs.]

No. I mean, we just have to talk about it. I think it’s good publicity for them. I mean, that movie has to get out there a little more. Y’know?
00:16:25 Biz Host Yeah. That movie really needs to get—has not—in fact, just so—
00:16:29 Ira Guest The acclaim. *[Laughs.]*
00:16:31 Biz Host Just so you know, the weirdo-ness that is this house, we’ve decided that this year’s Halloween theme in the front yard is going to be... *[Laughs.]* Is going to be a shark attack. And we’re going to make the giant billboard from *Amity Island*. Y’know. And the Buster Brown’s up there and the shark’s been defaced.

[Ira laughs.]

But it’s gonna be that there’s a candy shark that’s been spotted, and then I’m gonna be like—I don’t know. Maybe I’ll be a Dreyfuss. Maybe I’ll be—I don’t know. But then Stefan is gonna run out—*[Laughs.]* As a giant shark with a t-shirt on that says, “Candy.” So we get to be both scary and fun.
00:17:12 Ira Guest Well that’s the great thing about that movie, right? Is it’s like... so fun and scary at the same time.
00:17:17 Biz Host Well it is! And it’s—okay.

[Ira laughs.]

The book is about these—these four kids and sort of their—you say it. You say it before I mess it up. Because then I’m gonna tie it in. Good. Yeah. Yeah. Let’s get this out of the way before we just lose complete control. *[Laughs.]*
00:17:31 Ira Guest Please! God! *[Laughs.]*
00:17:36 Biz Host Okay. So *Shark Summer* is about four kids on the island of Martha’s Vineyard in 1974. And our lead protagonist is this girl, Gayle, who is an athlete but she’s kind of a disgraced athlete. She’s broken her arm. She’s let down her team.
00:17:38 Ira Guest

[Biz laughs.]

She’s kind of left adrift for the summer.
00:17:55 Biz Host She let them down by breaking her arm! What a monster!
00:17:58 Ira Guest She just really blew it. *[Laughs.]*

[Biz laughs.]

Yeah! Sorry. Guys, it’s a little deeper than that. Okay, go ahead!
00:18:00 Biz Host There’s more to it. Yeah. So—so Gayle thinks her summer is just gonna—she thinks she’s gonna be helping her mom start her new
00:18:06 Ira Guest

business. They're trying to open an ice cream shop on the Vineyard. It's the '70s. These are things people might have been doing then. I don't know. I wasn't there. But—

[Biz laughs.]

Enter a Hollywood film crew, which has come to the island to shoot a very authentic, soon-to-be-blockbuster Hollywood movie. Now this sort of like—it clashes with Gayle's summer a little bit, but it actually leads her to the idea to enter a film contest that's being put on by the studio. So she gets a ragtag group of friends together—

[Biz laughs.]

—and they start to make a documentary. So you kinda start in the world of *Jaws*? But it kind of turns a bit into a *Blair Witch Project*.

[Laughs.]

00:18:50 Biz Host
00:18:51 Ira Guest
00:18:52 Crosstalk Crosstalk

Nice. Yes!

You know?

Biz: Yeah! Which, by the way—by the way—

00:18:54 Biz Host

Ira: I don't wanna spoil it for anybody, but.

I remember going to see *Blair Witch* and thinking—just like *Jaws* made me never wanna go into the water again, *Blair Witch* made me never wanna go camping again. Like, they both had that similar... effect. Okay. So we've got young-ish kids. I would say they are... like... pre-tween-y and tween-y. There are—what are we talking, ten?

00:19:18 Ira Guest
00:19:20 Biz Host

Yeah. They're like, twelve-ish. Yeah. Ten to—

Yeah. Twelve-ish. The perfect time... to get into an adventure and solve a crime. Or anything like that. And... I love it for many reasons. I really like the idea of this taking place while they're trying to film and get ready to film this movie. Because that's got so many—it's a great and interesting setting to be in. Because that movie was kind of a disaster. In terms of production. Right? So... I love the notion of these kids running around throughout this experience. There is definitely a, like, feeling of... big summer. Right? Like, and I—I wanna talk about big summer some, especially because I currently fucking hate summer 'cause I have kids. I don't get to—it's not as fun on the other side! No one's paying attention to your lead's mom trying to set up the ice cream shop! Nobody cares! There's no *Goonies for Moms*.

[Ira laughs.]

Anyway. But. I also can't just dump my kids out in the woods right now, because the woods are filled with COVID. That's how that works. Right? Anyway. Everybody understand what I'm saying.

[Laughs.] So talk to me about iconic summers and I think iconic summers almost become a character in their own right. So... talk to me a little bit about that idea.

00:20:46 Ira Guest

Yeah. So... y'know, like I think when you're pitching a book—and this—just to give a little background there—this was just a simple idea I had. This wasn't like a book I had drafted up or had waiting around. This was like... "Hey, you got an idea?" And I was like,

00:21:07 Biz Host "What about a story the summer of *Jaws*?" And that was kind of it.
00:21:11 Ira Guest And they're like, "Oh, hell yeah."
That's a great pitch line! I love that! Love it.
'Cause the—the *Jaws* thing, obviously. But that—of course there's
nostalgia connected with summer and I think a lot of that is a
summer is such a fleeting thing? Y'know? Like, it's so—summer is
such an iconic idea in different parts of the world. Y'know, you have
an East Coast summer here in America and a West Coast summer.
You could have a Midwest summer, I guess? I don't know what that
looks like. I feel like you have to have a beach involved, but you
could have a lake. That's fine.
00:21:37 Biz Host You could have a lake. You could have a lake.

[Ira laughs.]
00:21:43 Ira Guest It's also hot. And there's bugs. That's very—yeah. There's bugs.
Exactly. And the book has those things. It looks hot, I think. It has
bugs.

[Biz laughs.]
And it has horizons that you look out over. And I think all that stuff, I
just, um... I think even when you're a kid, you get a little
sentimental for that stuff. Because like your friend groups change
over the years. And I just wanted to—not that I wanted to relive that
stuff? Like, I don't really want to relive my past in any way. I'm not
like that type of person. But I did wanna kind of create a space to—
for kids to maybe be able to talk about that? Like, I always think
when I'm making a story, I wanna, like, y'know, start a conversation
that goes beyond the book? And I wanted this book to be a little bit
about important summers and how you can never really get back
there.
00:22:25 Biz Host That's a—it's a horrible lesson!

[Ira laughs.]
I hate that lesson. I've been desperately trying to get back—I
mean, like... but that—that is correct.

[Ira laughs.]
I think also ties in with this idea of like... *[sighs.]* Coming-of-age?
Which I think also plays into this book? And I—here's just a random
question for you to think about and answer. Do you think that that—
the coming-of-age summer that year is... intrinsically tied to the last
of the iconic summers? Like, do those always go hand-in-hand, or
do they happen separately? 'Cause I'm just thinking about that as I
think about the cruel awakening of adulthood.
00:23:10 Ira Guest Yeah, yeah. Totally.

[Biz laughs.]
00:23:14 Biz Host 'Cause iconic summers aren't like—I'm not having an iconic
summer at 47. You know what I mean?

[Ira laughs.]

00:23:22	Ira	Guest	Like, I should. But I'm not. And... I know. Well I hope you have one. I hope you have one sooner than later.
00:23:25	Biz	Host	I'll have an iconic—I've <u>had</u> iconic summers.
00:23:27	Ira	Guest	I believe it.
00:23:28	Biz	Host	I've had very iconic summers. Oh, you—you—you better believe it!
			<i>[Ira laughs.]</i>
00:23:37	Ira	Guest	I've got t-shirts! Anyway. I was cool once. Anyway. But they— Sure!
00:23:38	Biz	Host	Yeah! Sure, why not. But it's definitely—when we think “iconic summers,” we think youth. We don't think... already-of-age. Y'know. So yeah. Uh, now I leave it to you to answer this question.
00:23:52	Ira	Guest	Okay. Here. I'll tie it to, um, maybe it's not so much age, but I think it's about moments of realization? That make an iconic summer. So like as you get older? You have less of those like moments of awakening about yourself or about the world 'cause you've seen some shit. Or whatever. Right?
00:24:09	Biz	Host	It's gone down.
00:24:10	Ira	Guest	Yeah, yeah. So like, things just sort of... wash over you a little easier. So y'know, I wanted to make this book about, like, the realization of how things we—stories we tell impact other people around us? And of course I don't wanna spoil anything from the book—or even get too serious if we don't want to—
00:24:29	Biz	Host	No, you can!
00:24:30	Ira	Guest	But—y'know, the book is like, kind of about Gayle and like her—her pursuit of trying to do something good and what's affected along the way? Like—
00:24:40	Biz	Host	Ohhhh.
00:24:41	Ira	Guest	Y'know? Like she kind of affects her—another person in her life that maybe isn't a crucial person at that point, but later on she realizes, like, “Oh. I thought I was just doing an all, 100%-right thing, but it's always more complicated than that.” And so, y'know, that can be an iconic summer. As like, the time you realized, “Oh, maybe my best friend isn't my lifelong best friend 'cause our personalities just are starting to reveal themselves in a way. Where, oh, it's just not always going to be this simple.” So there's—I wanted it to have a flavor of that. Not that the book's that melancholy? I think it's more <i>Goonies</i> , like you were saying, kind of action-y. But there is that. Like, below the surface. Y'know.
00:25:23	Biz	Host	Well, but that's good to have! Because that is happening below the surface. All the time! I've got a tween in this house. And it's constantly above the surface; below the surface; y'know, these are the things that suddenly are being questioned and... what are these relationships like. What do I want from a friend. How do I wanna be a friend. How do my actions affect others—which is a really difficult thing to learn when your brain is developmentally wired to be <u>totally</u> selfish. And I say that in all honesty, not like in a dismissive way! They just—it's still—ahhhh! “I'm the best!” <i>[Laughs.]</i> What makes it an interesting setting... is that if you don't know about <i>Jaws</i> —if you've never seen <i>Jaws</i> , fair enough. Go watch it. Uh— <i>[Laughs.]</i>
00:26:15	Ira	Guest	Just watch it!
00:26:16	Biz	Host	Just watch it! It's okay. You'll be fine. You'll be fine.

[Ira laughs.]

Just watch it! It starts off as like, a horror, then turns into suspense. Anyway, even if you don't know it, you're right. The setting is still the summer. There's this disruption. There is... this coming-of-age. But I think knowing *Jaws*, it's such an interesting mirror to have happening. Of this is what's going on with the kids, but I know that this is what's also happening... here in the movie. And how do they relate. Do they not relate. Y'know. And it's—it's got this layer of... complication is not the right word. Something that—it's more of something that makes you have to... think on a few levels. Rather than just one. Which is... which is fun. If you're in the mood for that kind of thing. *[Laughs.]* What did you find—as the first—as this being your first whole graphic, y'know, novel like this—what did you find to be difficult?

00:27:24 Ira Guest Uh, well it... y'know, I've been doing things like this my whole life. I've never actually been given—I've self-published a lot, so I've been able to tell my own stories. But I've also done a lot of educational comics and stuff, too. But this was my first time where I was kind of like given a budget and like a bigger outlet and kind of set free? And so it's one of those projects where you try to cram a lot of your ideas in that you never got to use before?

[Biz laughs.]

00:27:52 Biz Host Y'know? You know how that goes? *[Laughs.]*
00:27:57 Ira Guest Oh, yeah! Maybe. Yeah. I understand. So—editing? *[Laughs.]*
Right! So that—exactly. So like, I mean, god bless my editor. She really helped me find a focus. Andrea, shoutout to you if you're listening. I bet she's gonna listen. She's gonna listen.
00:28:07 Biz Host She should listen. Andrea, you're doing a great job! Okay.
00:28:10 Ira Guest She is, actually.
00:28:11 Biz Host I know! I know! Yeah.
00:28:12 Ira Guest Um—yeah. *[Laughs.]*
00:28:13 Biz Host I believe it!
00:28:14 Ira Guest I mean, there's even kind of a—there's like, even part of the book is about the editing process of a movie and how that's like the secret formula.

[Biz laughs.]

Like there's a panel right for that. But I mean, that was a big part! Trying to rein it in. And fit it just boringly into 304 pages. 'Cause it was like, "Here's how long your book's gonna be. Here's the budget. Fit all your story in here." So I think it's part of that, like, how do I fit the art in this way. Unlike a podcast, which can just fucking go on forever.
00:28:43 Biz Host Oh, and we do! People love—people love listening to long-ass podcasts. *[Laughs.]*
00:28:47 Ira Guest Hell, yeah, I do. But um, but y'know a book has to squeeze in a formula! So I think kind of trying to rein in my enthusiasm and not overwhelm? 'Cause you've been kind of hinting at how the book has these kind of meta layers if you wanna go there? That's—y'know, that's 'cause I'm like, "Man, I—I have things I want to say about this movie."
00:29:07 Biz Host I know! *[Laughs.]*

00:29:08 Ira Guest And you just squeeze it all in there! So that was the real challenge. *[Laughs.]*

00:29:11 Biz Host Well—okay. Well what did—let’s—obviously, the creation process, not the challenge. *[Laughs.]* The reining it in—the challenge. But I will—let’s end on this, actually. Let’s end on... I think, given what I know so far of you and, uh, what you wanted for this book—and this book—did anything come up for you? Did you find yourself, like, thinking—especially when it comes to... this—it’s this one summer. It’s this—those moments where we wake up and we realize it’s not... all about us. Or whatever. Did the writing process or the illustration process—I would imagine that illustrating it brings up a totally different set of... feelings. So... did you have that experience with this?

00:30:00 Ira Guest Yeah! I mean, I think what I wanted to find in there—which is harder—this is a middle grade. I don’t know if we said that earlier. This is like a middle-grade graphic novel. So that’s a very specific audience. And something that you’re not allowed to dig into as much, because of what the market asks for? Especially if you’re like an unknown like me—is you can’t really jump to adult point of views. And even you, like, early in this conversation, you’re like, “Like the parent adventure! Where’s that story?” Y’know?

00:30:28 Biz Host Yeah! Right. Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah. *[Laughs.]*

00:30:30 Ira Guest You know what I wanted to fit in here and I kind of did in a roundabout way was the story of the mom. And there’s actually like—I know her whole story, and there’s scenes we don’t see? But I wanted to show—Gayle was really trying to do it for her mom. Even though that’s kind of unspoken. If you look at the pictures, you can see panels where she’s just looking at her mom and you see her mom just fixing her hair? And—‘cause that’s like... that’s part of childhood summer, too. Is just looking at adults and wondering what they—what their life was before you knew them. You know? *[Laughs.]*

00:31:01 Biz Host Well—yeah! Or just even that brief—well, that’s very generous to think that’s what anybody is thinking of at the age of twelve. But I do think there’s that occasional moment of, “Oh. You’re a person.”

00:31:14 Ira Guest Yeah. Yeah. Exactly.

00:31:16 Biz Host “That’s all I need to know. That’s all I need to know. Goodbye!”
Yeah! Yeah!

[Both laugh.]

00:31:22 Ira Guest But yeah. But—continue.
Well, no. I mean, you’re right. And I guess maybe I’m like... pointing—I’m trying to say I was like a more—a wiser twelve-year-old? You’re right! I probably just flashed through my mind. But looking back I—y’know, you have these photographs of adulthood. And I think that’s why I wanted to pair this kid’s story with *Jaws*. ‘Cause like... kids—some of them have seen *Jaws*. Some of them know the memes. Some of them know the song. Some of them have just heard it described on a school bus or whatever. Like, not everybody’s seen it. But everybody kind of knows what it is in a way. And it’s tied with a certain era and like, y’know, so I think that kind of idea of like... growing up and encountering a more adult thing is what I wanted that story to be about. And, y’know, I guess like you’re asking. That was the challenge. Is, “How do I kind of

			introduce this scary element of a horror movie but also adulthood coming at you?" Y'know. That was the challenge.
00:32:15	Biz	Host	I literally titled this show <i>There's Something in the Water and it Wants Your Youth</i> . [Laughs.]
00:32:21	Ira	Guest	Yeah! Exactly! It's taking that! Yeah! It's eating it! [Laughs.]
00:32:24	Biz	Host	It's eating it! Oh my god! Alright. Ira, thank you so much for joining us.
00:32:30	Ira	Guest	Thanks for having me!
00:32:31	Biz	Host	As I always say, everybody, you know where to get books. But! We will link you up to make life easier for you.
00:32:37	Ira	Guest	Please.
00:32:38	Biz	Host	That's all you gotta do is click. As well as, Ira, your website with all of your other work. You also teach classes! Am I correct in this?
00:32:46	Ira	Guest	Yeah! If you think I am interesting enough to wanna learn from, I have classes on the learning platform Skillshare. There's like, 25 hours, 16 classes, of content on drawing Tolkien maps or cartooning faces or drawing comic books or whatever. It's all there.
00:33:01	Biz	Host	That's awesome. Maps—Tolkien maps. I might have a tween that might be into that. They're currently running around in capes in the backyard. Cloaks. More cloaks than capes?
00:33:12	Ira	Guest	Cloaks, yeah.
00:33:13	Biz	Host	More cloaks. Anyway. That said, we will link everybody up to where they can find out more about that. And, just for fun, we'll link you up to where you can see the movie <i>Jaws</i> ! [Laughs.]
00:33:22	Ira	Guest	Yes. Please—please watch it! This movie needs—
00:33:26	Crosstalk	Crosstalk	Ira and Biz: —to be seen!
			[Ira laughs.]
00:33:28	Biz	Host	That's right! The whole point of this interview was really just about that. Ira, thank you so much. And best of luck with this new book! And I look forward to seeing more work out of you. That's a weird way to say it. But you're welcome.
00:33:41	Ira	Guest	I'm gonna leave ya hanging there. [Laughs.]
00:33:43	Biz	Host	Oh—I just left myself out. That's fine. Anyway. Thank you.
00:33:48	Music	Music	"Ones and Zeroes" by "Awesome." Steady, driving electric guitar with drum and woodwinds.
			[Music fades out.]
00:34:04	Theresa	Host	Hey, you know what it's time for! This week's genius and fails! This is the part of the show where we share our genius moment of the week, as well as our failures, and feel <u>better</u> about ourselves by hearing yours. You can share some of your own by calling 206-350-9485. That's 206-350-9485.
00:34:25	Biz	Host	Genius fail time. Genius me... me!
00:34:31	Clip	Clip	[Dramatic, swelling music in background.]
			Biz: Wow! Oh my God! Oh my <u>God</u> ! I <u>saw</u> what you did! Oh my God! I'm paying <u>attention</u> ! <u>Wow</u> ! You, mom, are a <u>genius</u> . Oh my <u>God</u> , that's <u>fucking genius</u> !
00:34:45	Biz	Host	[Laughs.] Okay. I am actually pretty excited. I remembered to drop off the vaccination forms that have to get filled out to get back into school. If you have listened to this show over the years, you know that I have failed at this. I fail at a lot of paperwork. In fact, I—I know from the Hotline that many of us fail from this. But I went to the doctor's offices and dropped them off! Boom!
00:35:18	Caller	Caller	[Answering machine beeps.]

Hi, Biz and Theresa! This is a genius. Just feel like I haven't had many in a while, but I'm pretty proud of it. Went to the children's museum with my five-year-old and one-and-a-half-year-old and just then, coming home from a trip, and had the diaper bag with me ready to go. Got there, and realized that there were no diapers in the diaper bag. And so I dug a little deeper, found a pad for my period, took that out, scooped the poop out of the baby's diaper with a wipe, flushed that, put a pad in as a liner inside the old diaper—

[Biz laughs.]

—and that held us over 'til we got home! It was disgusting, but it worked. And I have no one else in this world that I think I could tell this to.

00:36:11 Biz Host
00:36:12 Caller Caller
00:36:15 Biz Host

Yeah. Fair enough.

So you're all doing a great job, and this time—I did, too. Thanks.

Oh my god. This... is another example of why throughout history women have been treated as... magical and mysterious. "Let's don't examine them. Let's don't have clear medical information on them. They're too mysterious! We do not understand their ways!" That's why they fear us. That, my friend, is, like, next-level genius. And I just want to applaud all the people who've called in over the years with various applications for pads, diapers, or tampons in any—any one of the situations that might come to be for a baby or a grown-ass woman. I think this is genius. And you are doing a great job. Failures!

00:37:13 Clip Clip

[Dramatic orchestral music plays in the background.]

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

[Timpani with foot pedal engaged for humorous effect.]

00:37:19 Biz Host

Biz: *[Calmly]* You suck!

Fail me, me! Well... I have not gone back to pick up those vaccination forms. *[Laughs.]* For the school. I'm pretty sure that the medical office has called several times to say they were ready to pick up, and I just haven't. I don't wanna go! There's no reason for me to go. I have to pick up that form and I don't wanna do it because my children still are not back in school. They don't start school until September 8th. Technically, these forms were due... not now! Before now. And I have not done it. And... I'm not sure when I'm going to do it. So. Yay! Yay, mom. *[Laughs.]*

00:38:02 Caller Caller

[Answering machine beeps.]

Hey, Biz and Theresa! I'm calling with a fail. But it's gonna sound like a genius at first. Because today was the first day of school. I'm a teacher, so I got up early, made my three-year-old a wonderful, healthy breakfast, got her out of bed on time, got her bathed and did her curls and got her first day of preschool outfit on. We actually left the house a little early, so we were right on time getting through traffic on our commute to daycare. And what did I find out when I got to the daycare parking lot? That they were closed. And they open on Tuesday! And today is Monday. My first day back at work.

And what I thought was going to be my daughter's first day of preschool. So I was feeling pretty good about myself, but now... this is a fail. And, uh... not doing as great of a job as I thought I was. Took myself down a peg.

[Biz laughs.]

00:39:03	Biz	Host	Thank you. I love this show. I gotta tell ya, that is classic. Everybody here was with you. And knew what was going to happen. The moment you started describing how great everything was going getting your child ready for preschool. And that... that is a horrible realization. <u>Especially</u> on the day that—what are you gonna do? Take the baby to work? I don't know what you did. I don't know what you did. I'm sure you figured something out. But the fail is, you did not make your day even <u>slightly</u> , uh, stress-free as you returned to school. So first of all, thank you for being a teacher and going. And second of all, you're doing a horrible, horrible job scheduling things.
00:39:43	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.*

00:40:07	Promo	Clip	<i>[Music fades out.]</i> Music: Bright orchestral music.
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Hal Lublin: If you're sick of constantly arguing with the people closest to you about topics that really aren't going to change the world, we're here to take that stress off your shoulders. We take care of it for you on *We Got This with Mark and Hal*.

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00:40:53	Promo	Clip	<i>[Music ends.]</i> Music: Tense sci-fi music.
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[Announcer narrates in voiceover intercut with dialogue from the show. Dialogue is slightly fuzzy, as if being heard through a speaker.]

Announcer: Strange planets, curious technology, and a fantastic vision of the distant future. Featuring Martin Starr.

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

Announcer: Aparna Nancherla.

Aparna Nancherla: *[Cheerful and electronic]* The security system provides you with emotional security! You do the rest!

Announcer: Echo Kellum.

Echo Kellum: Can you disconnect me, or not?

Announcer: Hari Kondabolu.

Hari Kondabolu: I'm staying.

Announcer: From *Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*, Geoffrey McGivern.

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

Announcer: It's *The Outer Reach: Stories from Beyond*.

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

00:41:40 Biz Host *[Music fades out.]*
Alright, everyone. Enough of that. Settle down. Settle down. Don't make me come back there. Let's... quiet down and snuggle up. And listen to a mom have a breakdown.

00:41:52 Caller Caller *[Answering machine beeps.]*

00:43:28 Biz Host
Hi, *One Bad Mother*. *[Tearfully]* This is a rant. I had a dentist's appointment this morning for my child. She's not yet three. A few weeks ago, she busted her lip and now her tooth is getting discolored. And in the moment, I watched these other kids walk in that were probably six and eight years old without masks. And I called them and I said, "Do you still require masks in your office?" They said, "No, but you can still wear one if you'd like." I'm like, "I'm not comfortable with that." So I cancelled the appointment. And I left. And I was like reaching out to my friends for help. And they're like, "Don't be—oh, you shouldn't have done that. Your kid needs to have their tooth looked at." I'm like, "Thanks for the support." Seriously. A pandemic is still happening. Why are people acting like it's not? This is in a medical office! *[Laughs.]* I'm so... I'm so done with this. Thanks for listening. I love you guys. Bye.

First of all, you're doing a really good job. You're doing a really good job. One, you've got a very little child in your house. And... I am not so far removed from having a little child in my house that I have forgotten how it can leave you in a place of total exhaustion. And having very little space for yourself. And when you don't have any space for yourself, when you're too full... everything's really hard! It's like trying to eat something when you are already too full. Right? Or—I don't know. Trying to not understand why you keep filling up the glass and it all spills on the floor. Look. This is... you're already in a place that is stressful and impossible. Okay?

And that's—that is not negating the joys and the absolute awesomeness that is a kid. In your house. Okay? Long-time listeners know you get to have both. Alright? So I—what I'm saying is... it can be impossible most days. Okay? And then your child has an accident. You do the right thing of making an appointment. And you get met with absolute ridiculousness. Okay? And it is your right to not have to go into a medical facility that you don't feel safe in! In fact, you're doing a fucking great job making choices that keep you and your child safe. There are other pediatric dental practices out there that do value the benefits of wearing a mask.

And for all of us who have kids under the age of twelve, it's not like our level of anxiety about exposure to the virus has changed. The virus has not changed. It—if my seven-year-old gets it, it's just as scary and potentially bad as it would've been fifteen months ago! Right? They don't have any better immunity to it. They're—aaah! So you got a baby! And... I just... [sighs.] I think you're doing a remarkable job. And like, also part of this is—well, now you have to go—blargh—find the emotional energy to reschedule this appointment. I'm very sorry about that. That's a whole other load of work. And I'm really sorry that your friends weren't able to provide the support that you needed in that moment. I really... am. We have all made that mistake as the friend. And... we have all been on the receiving end of that mistake. You are doing a remarkable job. You are a good parent. And you should feel good about the choices that you are making to keep you and your child safe.

You're all doing a good job. Y'know, everybody's situation is different. Everybody is living in different communities; in different places. And being affected by the pandemic. And whatever this new phase is, very differently. And some people—your kids aren't able to go to preschool yet. Or they're in preschool. Or they're in school-school. And ah! Now we're quarantined again. Whaaat?! Now you get to go back. Aaaah! Somebody tested positive. Aaah! It's crazy. And I think there's an added pressure on you if you are a parent of children under twelve who can't be vaccinated. And you've got, like... part of the—I dunno—world—it certainly feels like it, whether it's true or not—making you feel like, "What's the matter? Just relax!" [Laughs.] Have you ever told a parent to relax about anything? I think we've proven on this show that is not wise. 'K? And I think it reminds us all that out of respect for each other? That if we see a parent and we see somebody with kids younger than twelve, that it is no skin off our back to ask what we can do to make them more comfortable. Okay? It's still really hard. On top of everything that's already feeling impossible. And I want you all to know that you're not alone. You are doing a remarkable job. You really are. And I will talk to you next week. [Quickly] Bye! [Regular speed] No, I don't say that. I say, byeeee! [Laughs.] "Mama Blues" by Cornbread Ted and the Butterbeans. Strumming acoustic guitar with harmonica and lyrics.

00:48:20

Music

Music

*I got the lowdown mamma blues
Got the the lowdown mamma blues
Gots the lowdown mamma blues
The lowdown mamma blues.
Gots the lowdown mamma blues*

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

00:48:44	Biz	Host	<i>[Music fades into background of dialogue, resumes post-dialogue.]</i> We'd like to thank MaxFun; our producer, Gabe Mara; our husbands, Stefan Lawrence and Jesse Thorn; our perfect children, who provide us with inspiration to say all these horrible things; and of course, you, our listeners. To find out more about the songs you heard on today's podcast and more about the show, please go to MaximumFun.org/onebadmother . For information about live shows, our book and press, please check out OneBadMotherPodcast.com . <i>One Bad Mother</i> is a member of the Maximum Fun family of podcasts. To support the show go to MaximumFun.org/donate .
00:49:13	Theresa	Host	
00:49:36	Music	Transition	<i>[Music continues for a while before fading out.]</i> A cheerful ukulele chord.
00:49:37	Speaker 1	Guest	MaximumFun.org .
00:49:38	Speaker 2	Guest	Comedy and culture.
00:49:40	Speaker 3	Guest	Artist owned—
00:49:41	Speaker 4	Guest	—Audience supported.