

APRIL 2021 / VOL. 2 NO. 3

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PODCAST MAGAZINE™

BEYOND THE MICROPHONE

**HOLLY KATZ &
NOLAN MEADER**

INVESTIGATE *CRIMES
OF FASHION*

JASON DEFILLIPPO

IS (ADMITTEDLY) A
GRUMPY OLD GEEK

JARED GUTSTADT

PODCASTING IN
TECHNICOLOR

JANE GOODALL

FILLS OUR EARS
WITH HOPE

*"[I am dedicated to]
rebuilding our nation
and advancing the
promise of equality."*

MS. MAGAZINE'S ON THE ISSUES

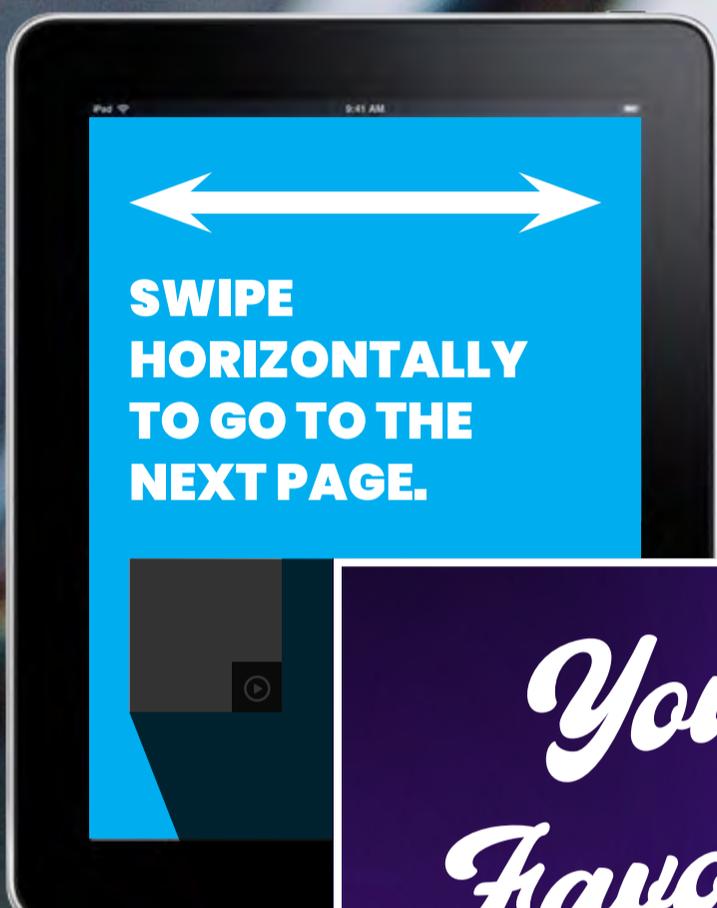
MICHELE GOODWIN

REPORTING, REBELLING & *TELLING IT LIKE IT IS*



HOW TO USE THIS MAGAZINE

FEATURE



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Swipe horizontally to quickly navigate pages.
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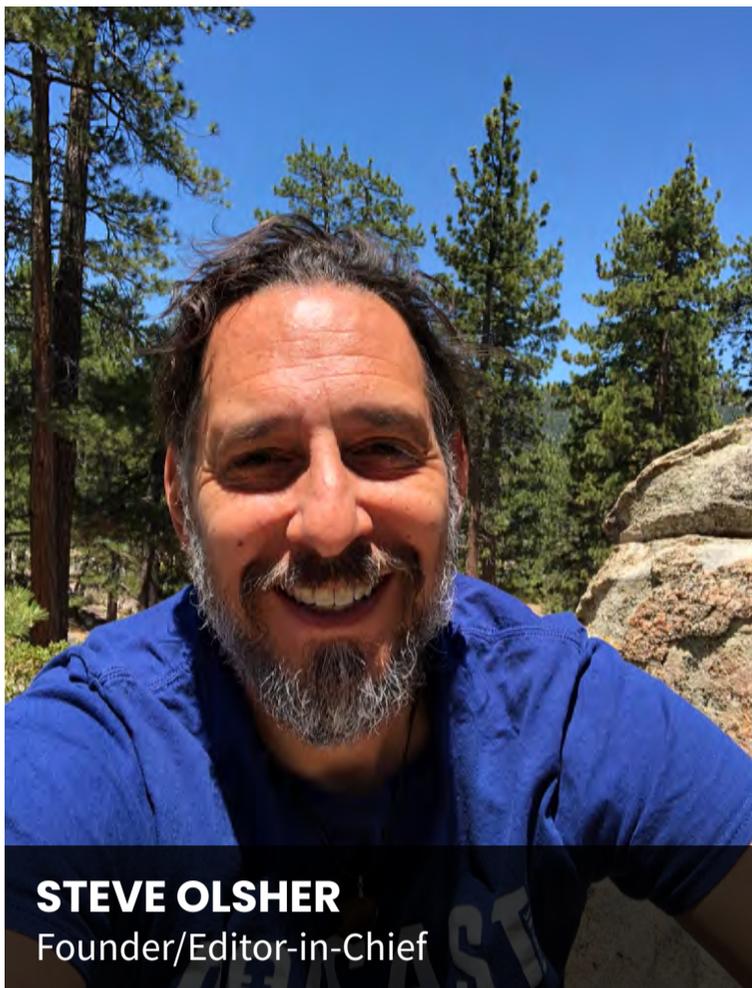
Our look at new technologies, platforms, products and tools that impact podcast culture

THE PROFESSIONAL PODCASTER

An insider look at the business of podcasting—by podcasters, for podcasters

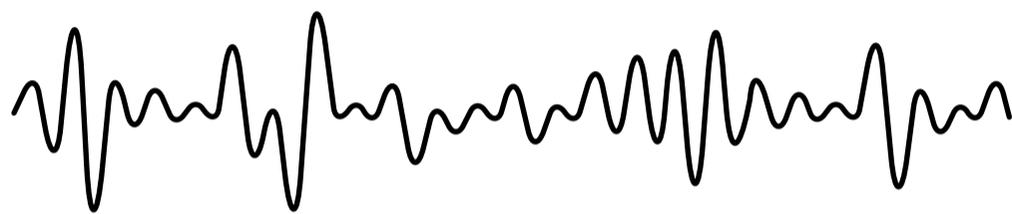
PODCAST MAGAZINE'S HOT 50

The industry's only monthly chart highlighting the top 50 podcasts as selected by podcast FANS



STEVE OLSHER
Founder/Editor-in-Chief

FROM THE EDITOR



It was approximately one year ago from the date of this writing that the world as we knew it came to a screeching halt as the pandemic began to dominate our lives.

The roads emptied, as did store shelves. Offices became virtual literally overnight. Families found themselves with the rare opportunity to reconnect with those under their own roof with whom they had, perhaps, become ships passing by one another in the darkness of the night.

The pace of life dramatically slowed. Less hustle and bustle, more introspection, reflection, and connection.

Many have gained new skills over this last year—allocating time for activities they previously had denied priority. Others took a much-needed breather.

Still others worked on redefining life and commerce as we know it.

Cryptocurrencies, NFTs, Social Audio... these ‘new’ technologies were suddenly everywhere. How did so much happen in such a condensed period of time? Or, were all of these initiatives already in place, and what we’ve collectively experienced is simply the elevation of awareness?

Perhaps it was the convergence of trends, a collapsing of years into months, and months into hours. Astonishing advancements in technology seemed to be occurring right before our often-stunned eyes.

And then, a piece of digital art was sold at auction for \$69 MILLION dollars.

\$69. Million. Dollars.

In an instant, NFTs (Google it—there are tons of better definitions/explanations than I can provide) were the centerpiece of conversations everywhere. Steve Aoki ‘dropped’ his new collection and sold \$2M

in digital art (and accompanying audio files) in 45 minutes. Other ‘drops’ raked in millions in minutes.

A fad? Rich people selling worthless items to newly minted crypto millionaires?

Or is this the future of collectibles, of determining ‘value,’ and a sign of what the future holds?

One thing we know for certain is that the digitization, demonetization, and democratization of assets will absolutely provide for the inclusion of audio and video files in this ‘newly formed’ marketplace.

If Jack Dorsey’s first tweet can be sold for \$2.5M, perhaps Joe Rogan’s first episode has similar value.

What about *Serial*’s podcast art? How about the video footage from Marc Maron’s historic sit-down with President Barack Obama?

All have real value.

What will this translate to, however, in dollars and cents remains the question at large.

Ultimately, the market will answer it.

What I do know for certain is that we cannot bury our heads in the sand and wait for ‘normalcy’ to return. This IS the new normal. And there will be MASSIVE wins for those who choose to play.

While I don’t pretend to be an expert on cryptocurrency or NFTs by any stretch, we will not idly stand by and ‘watch’ the transformation of our economy happen. We have chosen to play in the new world

we live in and, last week, launched our own coin, [BOLD Coin](#).

Here’s an overview of what BOLD Coin is and why we created it:

BOLD Coin was created by Steve Olsher, in conjunction with Podcast Magazine® and ClubPod™ (on Clubhouse), for one simple reason—to reward those who dare to create and are bold enough to put forth their creations for the world to judge. The coins will be deployed to compensate creative contributors, especially those involved with podcasting, while rewarding investors who choose to support our mission in myriad ways.

If you’d like to join us in this mission, you can buy just one coin or as many as you’d like (however, if you’re a big baller, your max is 210,000 BOLD Coins, as that is the grand total of how many will be minted).



Details can be found here: <https://rally.io/creator/BOLD/>.

These are truly exciting times we live in, and I’m bullish on how the new economy will benefit those who dare to create. 🎧

STEVE OLSHER
@ThePodcastMag

Michele Goodwin

Tackling The Most Compelling Issues Of Our Time

Dr. Michele Bratcher Goodwin is a global thought leader and advisor, activist, social commentator, award-winning author, and advocate known for telling it like it is while tackling the most compelling issues of our time.

Founder and director of the Center for Biotechnology and Global Health Policy and its Reproductive Justice Initiative, Dr. Goodwin also holds the Chancellor's Professorship at the University of California, Irvine.

She has published opinion editorials addressing pressing matters of law, society, and global health in *Forbes*, *Salon*, *L.A. Times*, *Politico*, *Christian Science Monitor*,



and the *New York Times*, and is a frequent contributor to *Ms. magazine*, which is dedicated to “*making feminist voices audible, feminist journalism tenable, and a feminist worldview available to the public.*”

And, just for good measure, since June of 2020, she has also held the roles of host and executive producer of the podcast *On the Issues with Michele Goodwin*. A production of *Ms. Magazine*, the show aims to serve as a vehicle for sharing, discussing, and debating the critical issues of today.

“I think about issues like voting, reproductive rights, women’s rights, and the quality of healthcare, because I am a bioethicist,” Dr. Goodwin said. *“I think about people’s access to food. I think about justice in the world, racial equality, immigration, all of these different issues. So part of why I’ve worked with Ms. magazine and the Feminist Majority Foundation for some time is because I believe I am well-situated as a constitutional law scholar who cares about issues related to women, children, and folks in society to deconstruct issues along a constitutional spectrum in a way they can easily understand and digest.”*

Dr. Goodwin’s life work, as one would expect, has roots that

“I believe I am well-situated as a constitutional law scholar to deconstruct issues along a constitutional spectrum in a way [people] can easily understand and digest.”

weave all the way back to her childhood, which was split between family members.

Dr. Goodwin’s grandmother described her parents best, she said: they were “*like fire and ice.*” They lived in Montreal, and thanks to their dysfunctional relationship, Dr. Goodwin spent four “*rosy—and transformative*” years when she was very young splitting time between her maternal and paternal grandparents in Wisconsin.

Her maternal grandparents, who Dr. Goodwin describes as “*nature-of-the-earth*” types, were from the South. And clearly, the human advocacy that runs through her veins came at least somewhat from her maternal grandmother, who Dr. Goodwin says “*conducted her own form of an underground railroad*”:

“I thought I had so many biological aunts and cousins, but really, they were women

escaping the South. Sometimes, they were not just escaping the political dynamics of the South, but also abusive spouses. I didn't realize until later that we were not related to them. My grandmother set it up that way so they wouldn't be viewed as strangers. They deserved to be treated with the same respect and dignity that we would give any relative as a child. There was no getting upset that they were in your room, or using your things, because they were family."

Dr. Goodwin's paternal grandmother exposed her to the more distinguished lifestyle, taking her to ballets and operas and spending weekends together folding doilies and listening to classical music. Between these grandmothers and role models, Dr. Goodwin says there was "a very interesting and almost seamless balance."

But then came the hard times. Dr. Goodwin went to live with her parents, and in one year's time, even she knew they should not be together.

They separated, and Dr. Goodwin went to live with her mother, thereby taking a front-row seat to the effects of severe alcoholism.

At nine years old, her mom abandoned her, and after four days and nearly running out of food, Dr. Goodwin contacted her aunt for help.

Still, even as a child, Dr. Goodwin was sensitive to the fact that her mother's difficulties with sobriety were likely linked to the fact that her father had been very abusive to her. Right before high

"All around us, mediocrity rises to the top. And that's a reality we have to confront."



school, she was sent again to live with her mother, and her sense of empathy was balanced with fear. At the age of 14, she spent many sleepless nights forcing herself to remain alert enough to hear her mother's return, so she could *"put her to bed appropriately,"* Dr. Goodwin revealed. *"I had this constant fear of her vomiting in the middle of the night and choking and dying. Now, maybe it was an absurdist fear, but it was also my reality."*

Previously a strong student, Dr. Goodwin's grades dropped as she struggled to hold things together at home. She dreamed her mom—who passed her commitment to civil rights and justice on to her—would get help. She even staged an intervention, but when that failed, she realized her living situation was simply no longer viable.

At 15 years old, she left home with 10 dollars in her pocket and a plane ticket to New York, recognizing that *"she could not become the person she wanted to become if she continued living with either parent."*

Fortunately, a friend offered to rent her the unfinished attic space in their home. Calling it *"an appropriate dose of a sense of justice and another of naivete,"* it was both a hard time for Dr. Goodwin and an opportunity to become her own woman—one who was instinctively committed to finding herself and refused to succumb to the adversities children of alcoholics so often experience.

Too young to 'officially' work, fate brought her the job she needed.

DR. GOODWIN

listens to



STRICT SCRUTINY

A podcast about the Supreme Court and the legal culture that surrounds it. A project of The Appeal, hosted by Leah Litman, Melissa Murray, and Kate Shaw.



AMICUS WITH DAHLIA LITHWICK

A show about the law and the nine Supreme Court justices who interpret it for the rest of America.



IN THE THICK

Journalists of color tell you what you're missing from the mainstream news, with conversations about race, identity and politics few people are discussing or want to discuss.

While walking around with the classified ads in hand, Dr. Goodwin saw a man trimming hedges. *"We said 'hello,'"* she recalled, *"and the next thing I know, he asked if I needed a job. I said, 'Yes.' And he said, 'My wife is Dr. Nina Masur. You can find her in the telephone book.' And he went back to clipping his hedges. I later contacted her, and she hired me to help them around their house. I was so*

“At every law school, except my present one, upon my hiring I was either the only or one of two Black people on the faculty.”

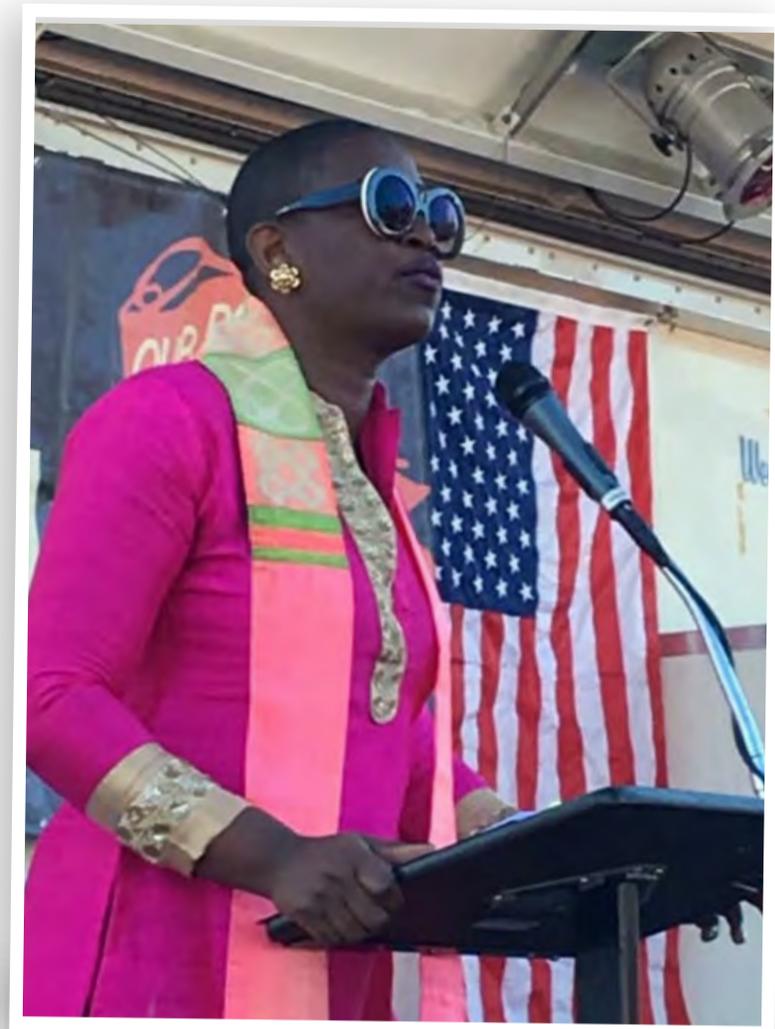
grateful. It was just such an impactful event on a kid trying to make her way.”

Dr. Goodwin now points to Dr. Masur as one of the women she admires most in life, because she is a symbol of what is possible. Once a dancer, Dr. Masur pushed herself to take a community college course, which ultimately led to her journey to becoming a renowned doctor.

The experience of making it on her own provided Dr. Goodwin with a sense of strength of being able—a certainty of being... capable. Yet, navigating the world as a woman of color meant she would constantly encounter barriers to the idea of full inclusion and equality.

Nevertheless, she is quick to point out the positive changes she has seen over the course of her career.

“I think a failure to acknowledge that things have changed does a disservice to women like Fannie Lou Hamer and so many others who have been in the trenches advocating for meaningful equality in employment and in transformative access to higher education. 50 years ago, there



were law schools, medical schools, and graduate schools of many ranks that had quotas on the admission of women. When I was in law school more than 25 years ago, it was unusual for us to use the feminine pronoun to describe people in a case, even in cases with women litigants.

“Now, women make up about 50% of the population in law and medical schools. We have more women in STEM. And so those pipelines are much thicker and robust than they were before. So many people worked on these issues, and they did create change.

“There are of course still challenges. Women make up just 17% of partners at law firms. It’s rare to see more than one or two women on a board of 10, 15, 20, or 30 people, and we haven’t even begun to mix race into it. At every law school,



← USING HER VOICE

Goodwin has shared the stage with Rev. Jesse Jackson (not shown: left), as well as the School of Law Board of Visitors (above)

except my present one, upon my hiring I was either the only or one of two Black people on the faculty.

“There are amazing people who are not being tapped for their expertise. All around us, mediocrity rises to the top. And that’s a reality we have to confront.”

To do her part in the confrontation of the issues at the heart of our nation, Dr. Goodwin started the *On The Issues with Michele Goodwin* podcast—dedicated to *“rebuilding our nation and advancing the promise of equality.”*

The podcasting medium, Dr. Goodwin explained, allows her to reach an audience in myriad ways that she otherwise can’t: non-visual learners, those who are commuting or working out or engaging in activities that don’t accommodate carrying *Ms. Magazine* in hand. The COVID-19 pandemic also played a big part in her motivation to reach people in different ways.

Her goal with the show is of course aligned with her “why”:

“To elevate the place of more women. We’re also really trying to educate and inform from a broader perspective—to give some legitimacy to two perspectives that don’t necessarily get a lot of airtime as well as different pathways for understanding.

“For example, when we launched, Breonna Taylor and George Floyd had recently lost their lives. We decided, all right, we need to meet this moment. And we need to talk about police in the United States. What we wanted to do was bring women in law enforcement and experts in this area to see if we could learn something new from a different perspective. Throughout that process, we did—we learned about the patterns of discrimination and police departments that keep women out. And we learned that women are far less likely to use excessive force. We talked to a filmmaker doing a documentary about women in blue who was inspired to make the film after asking her friend, a female police officer, what she might have done differently with Eric Garner.



“Her friend replied, ‘I would have gone up to him and said, ‘My name is Julie... what’s yours?’”

“What we do is shine a light on the issues that are taking place in society today, and we feature experts who can help us through them. When I look back over our last six months, I am really impressed by the guests we’ve had on.

“I make an effort to host the show in a way that allows my guests to relax and my audience to lean in. We had Congresswoman Barbara Lee on, and we were talking about reproductive healthcare available abroad for women. The discussion wasn’t even about her personal life. And she shared with us that her mother took her to Mexico to have her abortion. I was surprised, but honored, that she felt comfortable doing so.”

With aspirations that listeners finish each episode of *On The Issues* better informed and more inspired about the issues taking place in our society, Dr. Goodwin strives to also provide them a method for connecting in an intimate way with topics that may seem esoteric.

The message she has for women, and the one she shares through all her endeavors, is to keep hope alive, no matter what.

“Let no one take your hope from you. A sense of your own internal dignity and worth is not something to be compromised or bartered with. That is yours, and it’s important to maintain it. Remember, we have choices in life. Sometimes, those choices are tiny ones that have to be made in order to make a huge difference in the future. It’s those tiny choices that I really pay attention to every day of my life.”

One might wonder how Dr. Goodwin keeps her own hope alive in the face of adversity.

Naturally, her beacon of light is her daughter.

From each “*tiny choice*” made to her ongoing impactful and profound leadership, Dr. Goodwin views each step along her evolving path as paving the way not only for her daughter to have more options, opportunity, and acceptance than what was available for her growing up, but for all women and ALL Americans to have such “*benefits*” as well.

And, the primary means to this end? Taking on the most pressing issues that will ultimately create sustainable and systemic change. 🎧



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Reinvention Radio ▶

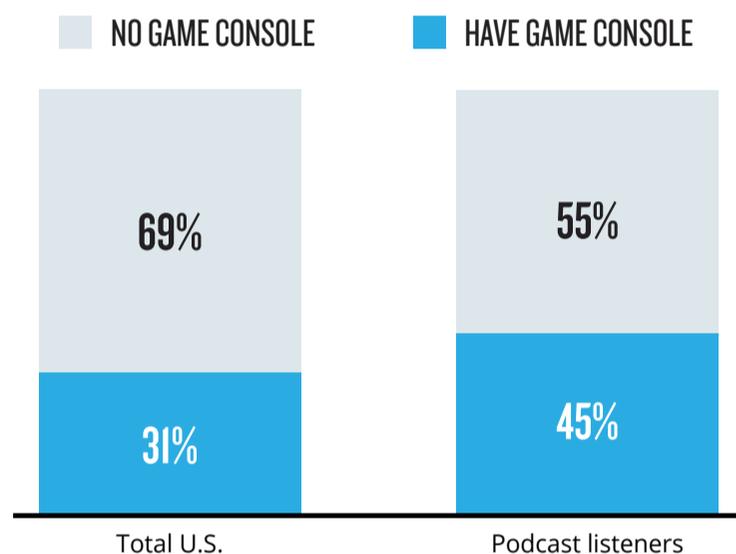
PODCAST MAGAZINE[®]

Stats You Should Know

A new monthly insight report from Nielsen to help you understand the world of podcasts even better.

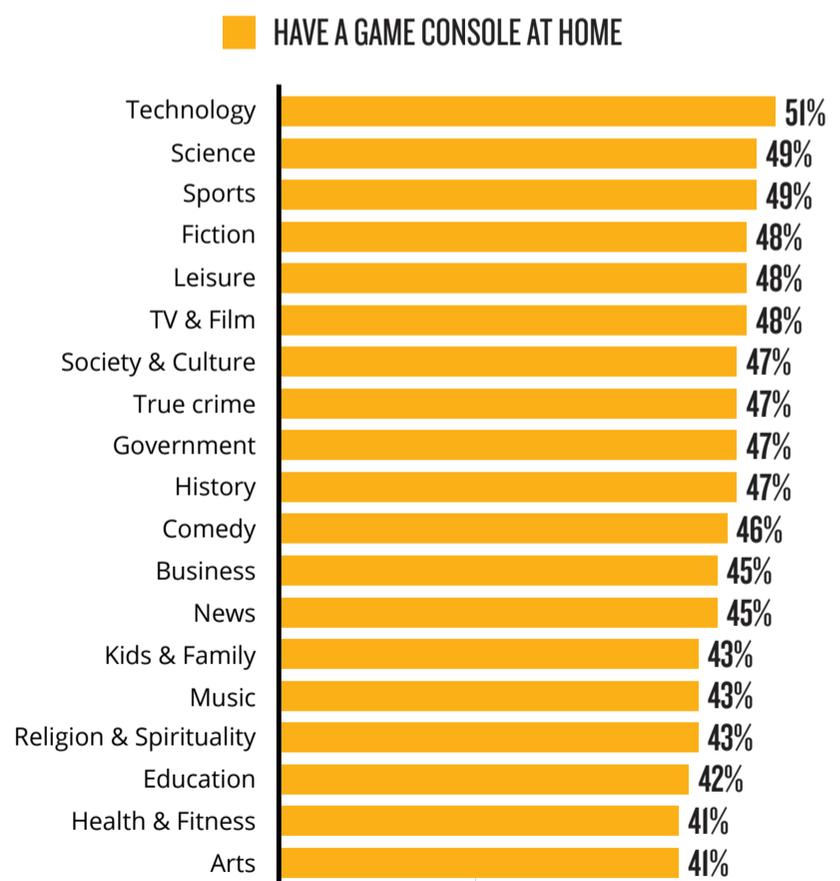
45% OF LISTENERS HAVE A GAME CONSOLE AT HOME

Nearly half your podcast listeners are gamers, so gaming companies looking to introduce a new title or console should consider podcast advertising.



GAMERS PREFER TECH, SCIENCE AND SPORTS PODCASTS

As technology advances, gaming is becoming more popular—so it's no surprise that the genre with the highest percentage of listeners who have a gaming console (51%) is tech. Science, sports, fiction and leisure round out the top five and also align with some of the most popular video game genres.



PODCASTS ARE RECORDED...

That's So Yesterday

My kids can't watch regular TV. They get bored in about 11 seconds. I asked my son what that was all about once, and he said, "*I just don't like things with scripts.*"

That is the basis for Reality TV.

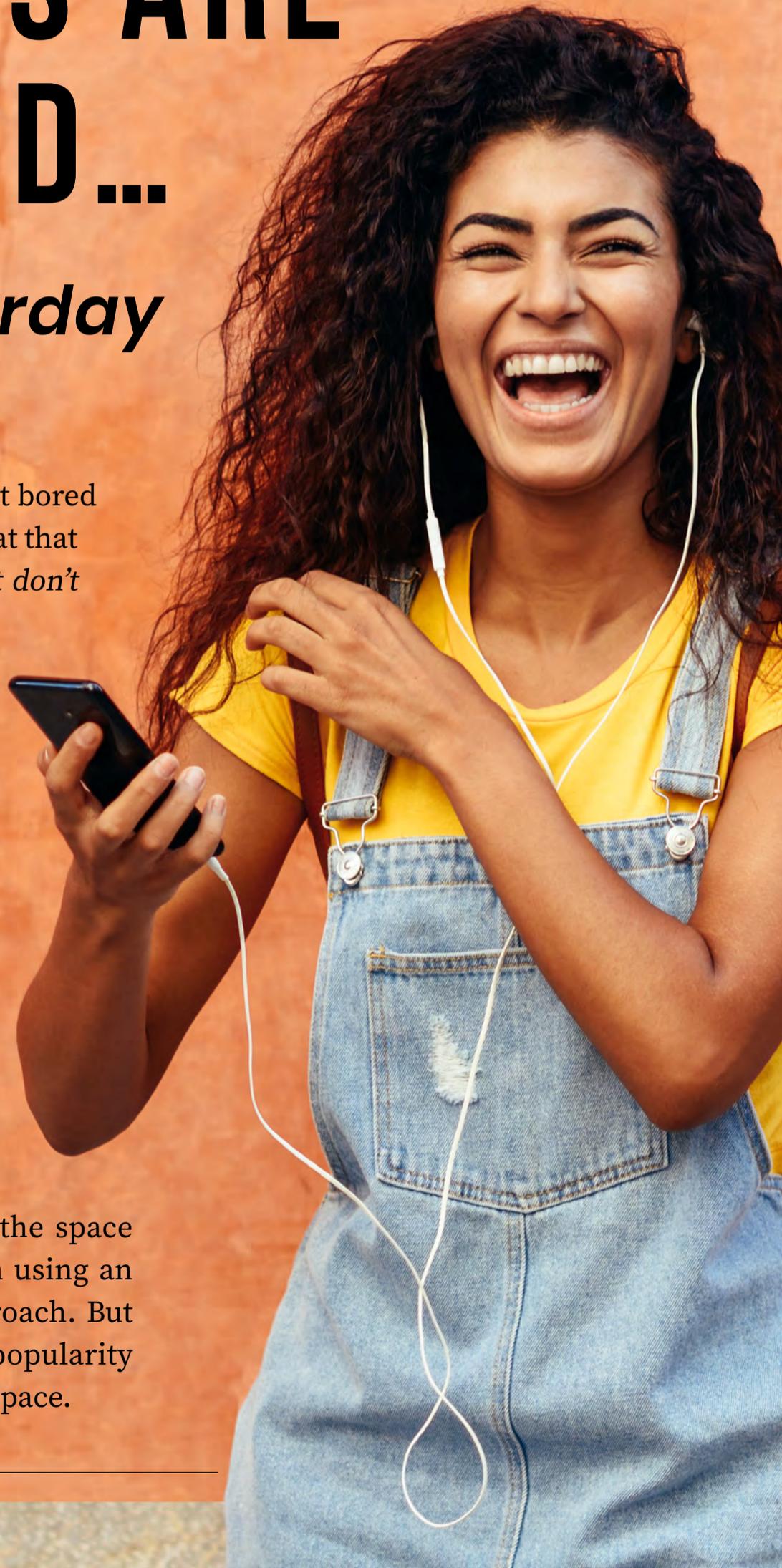
Many podcasts are this way, as well—just two people chatting, or interview style. Instead of a script, they're based on an outline or a topic.

But also like Reality TV, podcasts are recorded.

That's where the newest form of audio comes into play.

Live Audio Conversations

Clubhouse was the first big player in the space this year to take the Internet by storm using an exclusive "invite only" marketing approach. But they were quickly followed (from a popularity standpoint) by Twitter Spaces and JoinSpace.





“Live” has come to mean many things in the social media sphere. Facebook and YouTube Lives are broadcast live, but also remain as recorded video. Snapchat images are supposed to be live for only a few seconds, but many get screen captured and shared.

You’ve probably been a guest on a Zoom call over this past year. While Zoom is a live content medium, it’s really based on events that have start and end times and often come with recordings.

But with this new medium, there is no recorded version. There’s no messaging. There are no DMs. And you can join a conversation currently in progress or one that is scheduled for later in the day. They are truly just apps bringing live conversations to your headphones... and if you’re so inclined, they give others a chance to converse with you.

One of the most alluring features of these new platforms has been the frequency of celebrities who have joined. Elon Musk, Kevin Hart, Oprah, Malcolm Gladwell, Mark Zuckerberg, MC Hammer, and Tiffany Haddish are among the many. The ability to chat live with a celebrity you follow or admire is the most intimate situation a platform has offered thus far.

While the live audio aspect is different than other social media platforms, they still maintain most of the features you love. You can still follow people you like, and they can follow you back. You can start a conversation or request to join a conversation.

And while the platforms aren’t necessarily worried about fans critiquing celebrities, they are worried about the kind of abuse that live, unedited audio can inflict on others.

Despite their simplicity, these platforms are not without controversy. Twitter has taken its time releasing Spaces, because it isn’t yet sure how to avoid abuse. That issue was apparent on Clubhouse recently when Kevin Hart joined a room called “Is Kevin Hart funny?” and heard people criticize him for a while before being allowed to join the chat. He was then verbally attacked by others for a joke he’d made about his daughter.

And while the platforms aren’t necessarily worried about fans critiquing celebrities, they are worried about the kind of abuse that live, unedited audio can inflict on others.

China, on the other hand, doesn’t allow unmanaged conversations, and has already banned Clubhouse.

The question for audio lovers is whether joining live conversations can be as enjoyable and entertaining as listening to podcasts. With podcasts, you can choose



to press “pause” when your commute has ended or a show that fits your time. With these new platforms, you can easily join conversations in progress and leave when you have to, but there aren’t options for finishing the conversation when you want to, but have to go.

This leaves room for new features and/or new apps to tackle. But if they add too many features like “recording,” they’ll end up being just another platform.

Still, that’s exactly what Mark Cuban is planning on doing. Later this year, he and Falon Fatemi are launching a Clubhouse-like app called Fireside, where “recording, metrics, and monetization” seem to be the features of differentiation.

No matter what audio looks like, it’s here to stay (which is probably what they said 100 years ago when radio began to change America). The question is, will apps like Clubhouse take people away from podcasts, OR introduce more people to the power of audio stories? 🎧



Gadgets, Gizmos & Gear

Dan R Morris
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TracingThePath 🎧

Got a Gadgets, Gizmos & Gear suggestion?

Let us know! >



5

HABITS OF PROFESSIONAL PODCASTERS

When I started my show, *The Practice of the Practice Podcast* in 2013, I just started talking about what I was learning as a licensed counselor in the business of private practice. Little did I know that following someone's journey is a really compelling story.

What I was doing struck a chord with my audience, because I wasn't the guru on high; instead, I was a peer learning alongside with them. I was just a few steps further along the journey.

Having since done over 500 business interviews, there are several habits I see top podcasters enact over and over that I'd like to share with you today: slow down, blocking, finding inspiration everywhere, implementing systems, and acceptance of self.



1

Slowing Down Is the Key

Many people live their life on “go” straight to burnout. The culture of “hustle” glorifies it. Then, when they do get some down time on a weekend or vacation, they can’t relax. Or they are so spent that they crash. This is bad for the brain.

Instead, the best work of podcasters comes when we slow down first, and then optimize the brain. Our best ideas usually come when we’re showering or on a long drive without any music/podcasts playing. That’s because when our brain is at rest, different parts of it can link ideas together.

2

Block out What Is Most Important

In any business, there are fires to put out. They could even start as an early morning email or text. But the healthiest podcasters put their best energy into their best content. Using your brain power to solve a problem in the business is not the same as creating new podcasts or products.

So, blocking out specific time is a habit that helps you to achieve more. This can look different for each podcaster. Some need to work in batches or in a retreat-type setting. Maybe doing a month’s worth of podcasts over a weekend is best for you. I work better having a regular time blocked out every other week to do interviews, intros, and sponsorship ad placement.



3

Find Inspiration Everywhere

A lot of podcasters think they need to stay in their lane. Yes, your audience is following you for a particular reason, but other industries can inform you and your audience in a much different way. Similarly, look for ideas everywhere you go. It could be an experience, news story, or something a friend says.

A couple years ago, author and podcaster Rob Bell from *The Robcast* told me that great ideas are, “*like tying clouds together.*” In other words, you bring things together that no one has linked. A lot of podcasters give step-by-step advice, but what will really make you stand out is finding your voice through applying interesting connections.



5

Acceptance of Self Changes It All

Everyone has insecurities, worry, and past experiences that damage us. Sometimes, we work through that damage, and sometimes we don't. The healthiest podcasters are those who find acceptance in who they are. They do internal work to see their failures as data.

Learning to accept yourself, flaws and all, is the highest work you can do. In doing it, you will not only feel more grounded, but you will also make some amazing content!

As you start growing into being a more professional podcaster, slowing down, blocking, finding inspiration everywhere, implementing systems, and accepting yourself can become habits that help you get to the next level. 🎧

4

Systems over Saving

When you first get started, it makes sense to try to save money if you are on a budget. But, all of that creative energy is going into things your audience will never see.

I remember early on, I was doing all the sound, images, guest coordination... you know, everything! Finally, I was down to only doing the recording and the artwork. I would make creative images for each show, spending about an hour thinking about it and creating it in Canva. I told myself, *"This is my artistic outlet."* But I finally decided to hand that task over to my Chief Marketing Officer. Now, I can make two additional podcasts in that time! I'm creating a minimum of three podcasts a week. Also, my artistic bend now comes out in other ways.



The Professional Podcaster

Joe Sanok
propodcasters@podcastmagazine.com
Practice of the Practice Podcast 🎧



Don't miss Joe's weekly show in ClubPod™ on Clubhouse.

Every week, Joe covers the **Art and Business of Podcasting**. He brings in amazing co-hosts, provides live consulting, answers questions, and covers relevant topics for professional podcasters.

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Be sure to follow our Club creator, Steve Olsher, the Founder & Editor-In-Chief of *Podcast Magazine*® (@podcasts).

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BUT WHY?

A Podcast For Curious Kids

Has a three-year-old ever repeatedly asked you “*But why?*”

“I don’t know how she doesn’t get tired of asking that question,” a dad once confided in me in utter amazement.

The producers of *But Why: A Podcast For Curious Kids* understand that children have an insatiable appetite for figuring out the world around them. And they want their parents and other adults to help them

explore everything that fascinates them.

Jane Lindholm and Melody Bodette have joined forces to satisfy kids’ curiosity by providing answers to the vast array of questions they ask.

Jane is the host and Executive Producer of *But Why* as well as the Special Projects Executive Producer for Vermont Public Radio.



“I was looking for a new creative outlet, in addition to the news show I was hosting,” Jane explained. “I had a friend whose small child innocently piped up from the backseat to ask, ‘What’s a Colombian prostitute?’ The term had been mentioned in a news item on the radio. That got me thinking about the possibility of having an NPR show for kids, so parents don’t pull out their hair and kids have something to listen to that’s educational and informative, in the same way that adults like to listen to public radio. That’s how But Why was born, and right from the start, Melody said, ‘I want in. I’ll produce it.’”

Melody outlined the reason for her immediate interest. *“I had experienced the same kids-in-the-car news problem*

for so long. I used to wonder ‘What can we listen to?’ At the time, my daughter was six years old, and it felt like a good time to jump in and ensure there would be a show I could share with my kids and others in their age group.”

Jane added, *“Maybe because kids’ podcasting was really unsaturated at the time, kids and families found it right away, and it grew organically really fast.”*

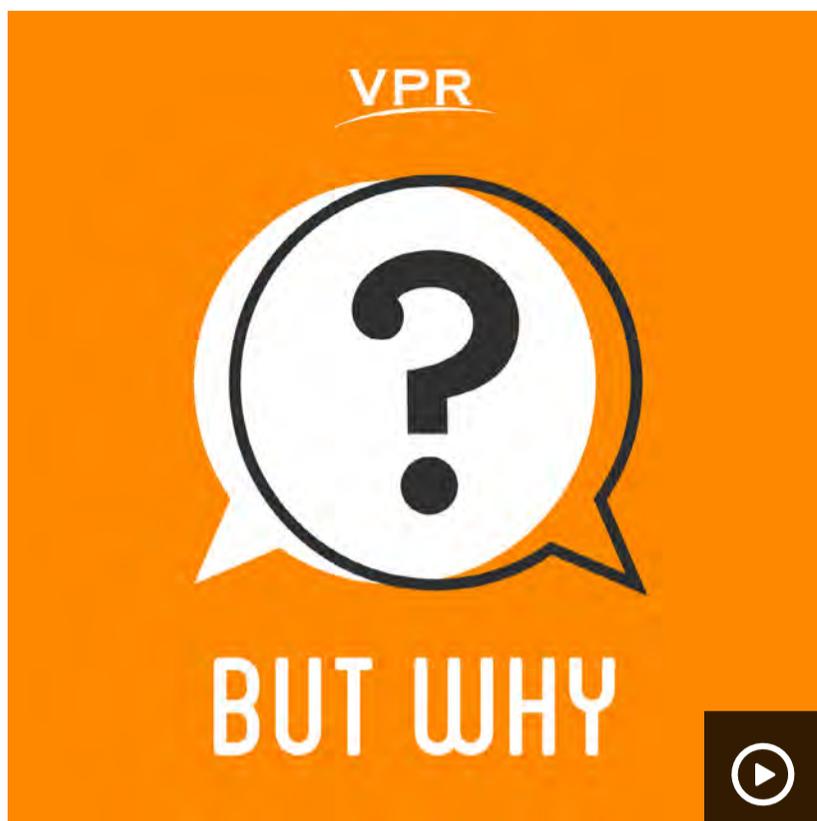
They have faced only two challenges. For starters, they were trying to produce an exceptionally good show with serious time and resource limitations.

The good news is that Jane and Melody have now moved into working practically full-time on the podcast, allowing them to have a singular focus.



“When our station said ‘yes’ to us doing the show, we didn’t know it would blow up into something this big.”

Melody Bodette (left) and Jane Lindholm



Jane reflected on their journey with *But Why*: “When our station said ‘yes’ to us doing the show, we didn’t know it would blow up into something this big. Now, we can devote more time and resources to it and build a better website.”

“Working mostly full-time on the podcast will help to make the show tighter and better, and we’ll be able to do more timely topics, if kids want us to,” she added. “It’s been amazing. I thought we would plateau, but we haven’t. We still see a lot of growth, which is really great.”

Jane described the other challenge: “Learning the right balance of how to talk to kids in a way that keeps them engaged and interested is not always easy. We never want to talk down to them, so it’s a matter of gauging the right way to approach the vocabulary.”

“I think we distinguish ourselves from the rest of the field by having high production quality, but we don’t have a lot of bells and

“We are so grateful to the families that trust us to talk to their kids.”

whistles. Some kids really like the high-energy podcasts, and some don’t. The ones who like to be talked to in a calm way will probably gravitate toward our show,” Jane observed.

Melody noted that kids have sent them questions from 60 countries, even from as far afield as Iran.

The *But Why* podcast is directed by whatever children want to know. Parents are encouraged to record their kids’ questions, and Jane and Melody typically enlist the help of experts to find the answers.

Jane said, “We are so grateful to the families that trust us to talk to their kids. One of the main goals for the show is that we want to be a trusted voice. We also want kids to know that they can freely ask questions about things that confuse or worry them. They do send us some really challenging ones, and it’s been very gratifying for us to feel like we can help them grow up feeling supported and encouraged.”

On the website, parents and teachers



Jane Lindholm
in the studio



← **A WORLD OF RESOURCES**

But Why's website hosts a wealth of resources for parents and kids alike, like these coloring pages

will now find downloadable episode transcripts and *But Why* Learning Guides, which complement the newest episodes.

Proving that learning can be fun, the *But Why* team even asked Vermont artists to illustrate some of their favorite episodes and create printable coloring pages, so children can color along while listening to the show.

And the fun doesn't end there! Fans can subscribe to the *But Why* newsletter and follow the podcast on Facebook for news and a look behind the scenes.

A major publishing house has also reached out to this enterprising duo. Jane brought us up to speed: "We are launching a book series this year, and the first books, on farm animals and oceans, are expected to be released in the fall."

As the podcast description says, "It's a big, interesting world out there." When you tune into *But Why*, who knows what

you'll learn about. You may stumble upon an out-of-this-world topic like the rover robot's mission to Mars, as explained by a NASA program scientist. On the other hand, the topic of an episode may be a sweet one, like how chocolate is made. The possibilities are endless because, after all, kids ask "*But why?*" about any and everything.

Take a listen with your kids. You'll be amazed at how much you'll both learn. 🎧



Kids & Family Category Director

Christine Franklyn

kidsandfamily@podcastmagazine.com

Got a Kids & Family Podcast suggestion?

Let us know! >



UNDER THE RADAR

Christine's Independent Review Of A Kids & Family Podcast You Probably Haven't Heard Of... But Should Be Listening To



AARON'S WORLD

I would never have imagined that time travel, robots, and the dinosaur age could be combined cohesively in an entertaining way, yet *Aaron's World* achieves it. In it, we follow the adventures of a little boy and his trusty computer companion as they explore the prehistoric world.

The cast of characters gets you fully absorbed in plots like a mission to stop an asteroid from crashing into Earth. Listeners are treated to a thrilling story, with music and



sound effects that dramatically bring the action to life. The storylines and the kids' acting are equally gripping. I can't help but wonder who's responsible for training them to portray the characters so believably.

A fusion of fantasy and science fiction, this podcast is chock full of suspense and a sense of wonderment, which is great for inspiring kids to use their imagination.

The episodes, tied together by a story arc, grow and change over the years right along with Aaron, and it's easy to detect those changes in each new season. The science information gets more detailed, episodes become longer, and the story deepens with new mysteries, twists, and characters.

Although the production is quite polished, it retains the charm of stories that have sprung from a child's imagination.

Aaron's World is an exciting listening experience your child is sure to enjoy. 🎧

Advertisement

“Off-putting to some”

-The Economist

“Annoying host”

-Podcast Review

“Uses profanity needlessly”

-Podcast Review

“Very disappointing”

-Podcast Review



CHRISTOPHER LOCHHEAD

#1 Apple Business Podcaster

#1 Amazon Marketing Author



Changing The Landscape Of Podcasting Through True Crime



A GLIMPSE INTO THE MIND OF *SWORD AND SCALE*'S MIKE BOUDET

In a number of true-crime enthusiast circles, *Sword and Scale* is one of the podcasts that continually comes up in conversation. This is far from surprising since its creator, Mike Boudet, has been putting out quality content through the program since 2014.

Most importantly, *Sword and Scale* is one of just a handful of podcasts to make it on our Hot 50 seven times or more in 2020, as reported in the January 2021 issue of *Podcast Magazine*®.

One fun fact many true-crime fans may not know is that *Sword and Scale* is actually listed under the History Category on Apple Podcasts! My apologies in advance to the new History Category Director of *Podcast Magazine*® for swiping this one. In my defense, the show is described as “true crime” on Wikipedia.

I was able to catch up with Mike early this year for a conversation about how a true-crime podcast winds up in a different category than perhaps expected, what it was like in the early days, and much more.

Given the length of time Mike has been producing *Sword and Scale*, I asked him if he considered himself one of the pioneers of the true-crime podcast.

“I don’t think I’m the best true-crime podcaster in the world,” he responded. *“I do know that when *Sword and Scale* was conceived in 2013 and launched in January of 2014, it was the first podcast that ever incorporated the elements of documentary-style filmmaking into an*

“We weren’t the first true-crime podcast ever. We were the first to do it in the way that everyone is doing it now.”



audio format and immerse the listener with 911 calls, courtroom audio, and police interrogations. There was nothing else like that at the time. There was in other genres, but not in True Crime.”

Mike reminisced that *Serial*, another popular true-crime podcast, launched nine months later—October 3, 2014 to be exact. *“That changed the world,”* Mike commented. *“It changed the whole landscape of podcasting. Not just True Crime, but everything. Not just from the perspective of creative, either—it became such a mainstream hit that advertisers and outlets started looking into the podcast space.*

“We weren’t the first true-crime podcast ever,” Mike continued. *“That wouldn’t be*



THE FIRST OF ITS KIND >>

Mike is proud to be at the forefront of the true-crime genre, having launched *Sword and Scale* in 2014.

accurate. We were the first to do it in the way that everyone is doing it now.”

Staying in the realm of 2013-2014, I asked Mike about the motivation for starting *Sword and Scale*.

“I had started several other podcasts before it,” stated Mike. *“I had started a comedy podcast. I had done one that was like Lifestyles of the Rich and Famous, but it was all about the products and the things they would buy that were just so ridiculous.*

“I also did one about the paranormal, UFOs, Bigfoot, and all that kind of stuff,” Mike laughed. *“It was all based on another show that was my favorite podcast. Mind you, during this whole process, I was working a fulltime job. You know, I’m an adult!”*

We both chuckled at that one and debated whether either of us could truly identify as an “adult” even at our ages.

“You know what I mean. I think you still need to get up and pay your mortgage somehow,” Mike clarified. *“Before, I did mundane tasks, like spreadsheets I could*

do in my sleep. But the other part of my brain—the creative part, the part that’s curious—that part of my brain was dying in that dimly lit, fluorescent-light cubicle amongst a sea of cubicles where people go to die.”

Mike mentioned that while languishing in that cubicle, he would often listen to *Mysterious Universe*, his aforementioned “favorite podcast.” The podcast is still available today, and he gives it credit as one of the influences that eventually motivated him to launch *Sword and Scale*.

“My soul was wasting away,” Mike continued. *“I wanted to do something creative. I remembered the thrill you get when you do something creative and people really enjoy and admire and love it. Or hate it even! Even with the hating, there’s something going on.”*

Mike is spot-on here, as love and hate are on the same side of the coin in that what you have created induces a visceral reaction. You’re neither entertaining nor helping anyone when your audience is bored.

It's almost impossible to be bored listening to *Sword and Scale*. It also can elicit some less-than-positive reactions. I commented on how I personally like the raw and real nature of it but understand how some listeners could be turned off... particularly when it comes to some of the 911 calls.

"We play those calls because they are public record," Mike reacted. *"We aren't the only ones who can access those records. You could access them right now. It's very easy to do. We play them because they add an element to the story that could not exist without them. They add the human element. They add the element that connects the listener to the story. That makes it personal. It connects you emotionally to the story."*

Mike continued passionately on the need to tell a "real" story, and how much care they take to respect the victims. While *Sword and Scale* may not be for everyone, the depth that is taken to tell the story in each episode leaves many listeners with a deep understanding of the case.

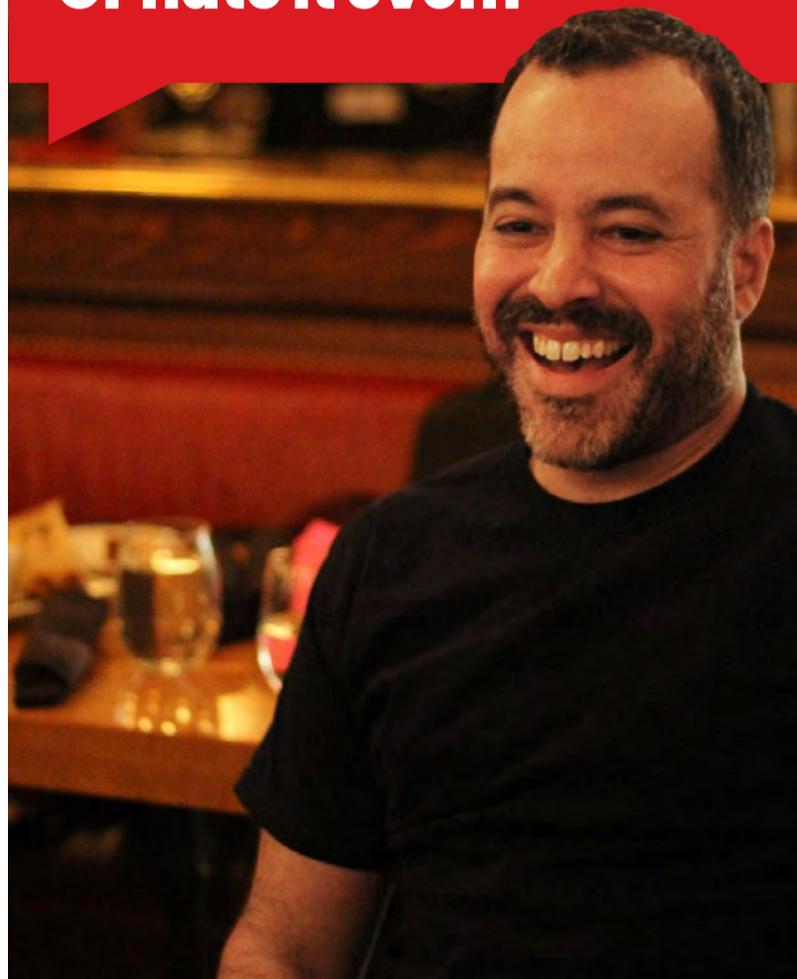
Mike knew when he created it that he needed to do something *different*:

"I needed it at that point of my life," Mike said as he segued back to the birth of *Sword and Scale*. He even recalls the actual day when it was born in his mind: *"October 29, 2013. It was my birthday, and I remember it like it was yesterday. I knew immediately that [Sword and Scale] was what I had to do, and I got started right away."*

"I was sitting on my back porch with an adult beverage. I was alone and in a dark place in my life, thinking 'I have to do something.' And that's when I realized that I love true crime. I had been watching true-crime TV shows my entire life. I also love talk radio. I love podcasts. It hit me that one night, and everything just clicked."

As two guys who love the true-crime category, we pontificated as to why some people absolutely gravitate to the genre. *"I've thought about this a lot,"*

"I remembered the thrill you get when you do something creative and people really enjoy and admire and love it. Or hate it even!"





Mike admitted. *“When I interact with fans, I ask them, ‘Why are you interested in this topic?’”*

He dug in a little deeper into the psyche of the true-crime fan by sharing the demographics of *Sword-and-Scale* listeners. *“Our audience is well over 70% female. The true-crime audience is highly skewed female, college-educated, between the ages of 25 and 45. Guys who are into True Crime are a rarity. That alone is interesting to me. For me, whether it was watching Forensic Files, American Greed, or Dateline, it was almost like a comforting, warm blanket. I don’t know why. Maybe it was just the pace, the tone, the narration, and the storytelling. But there was also something a little deeper there about the idea that society works. That at the end, the bad guy goes to jail. I don’t know. That’s a very philosophical question.”*

One question that isn’t nearly as deep is why *Sword and Scale* is found under the History Category, and not True Crime, on Apple Podcasts. *“We know certain things*

about the algorithm,” Mike confessed. *“First of all, they highlight new shows. They push all the newer podcasts. If you have a brand-new podcast, it shoots right up. It’s a formula.”*

“There’s a secondary formula, and that is they boost certain categories above others artificially,” Mike explained. *“If you have 500,000 listeners, your ranking will be higher in the History Category than in the True Crime Category. We’ve seen this again and again. Apple isn’t our employer. They don’t regulate what we do. They’re a corporation that makes money off of the hard work of all of the creators in the podcast space, including myself. You can switch up your RSS feed anytime and do what you want with it. We’re not doing anything wrong. We’re just switching categories.”*

“So, we’re a history podcast,” Mike smiled like a kid who just took an extra piece of candy.

He later shared with me that in the early days, *Sword and Scale* was listed under Society and Culture. So, I guess I have to apologize to Gin Keller, our Society and Culture Category Director, too!

One thing no one needs to apologize for is enjoying *Sword and Scale*. For many true-crime fans, it continues to be one of their primary go-to podcasts, and rightfully so. 🎧



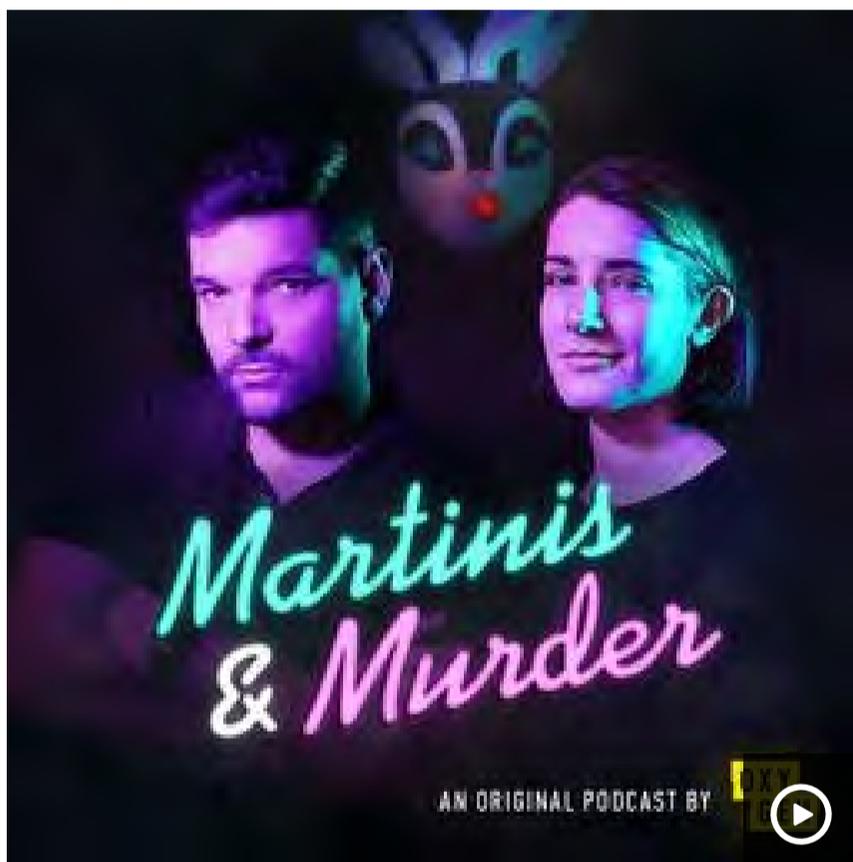
True Crime Category Director

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 Public Safety Talk Radio 🎧



UNDER THE RADAR

Ken's Independent Review Of A True Crime Podcast You Probably Haven't Heard Of... But Should Be Listening To



MARTINIS & MURDER

When I was a kid and snuck a sip of my mom's martini, I hated it. "It's an acquired taste," she told me.

Ironically, that's how I feel about *Martinis & Murder*. At first listen, it didn't go down the way I had expected. Initially, it seemed as though hosts John Thrasher and Daryn Carp weren't taking the cases very seriously.

That's why you have to listen to more than one episode of any podcast—because it quickly



became clear that they were respectful when discussing the victims in the cases.

They were simply making light of some heavy situations and having some fun. It's that levity and their personal stories that draw you in. I can easily see how they developed a strong cult following.

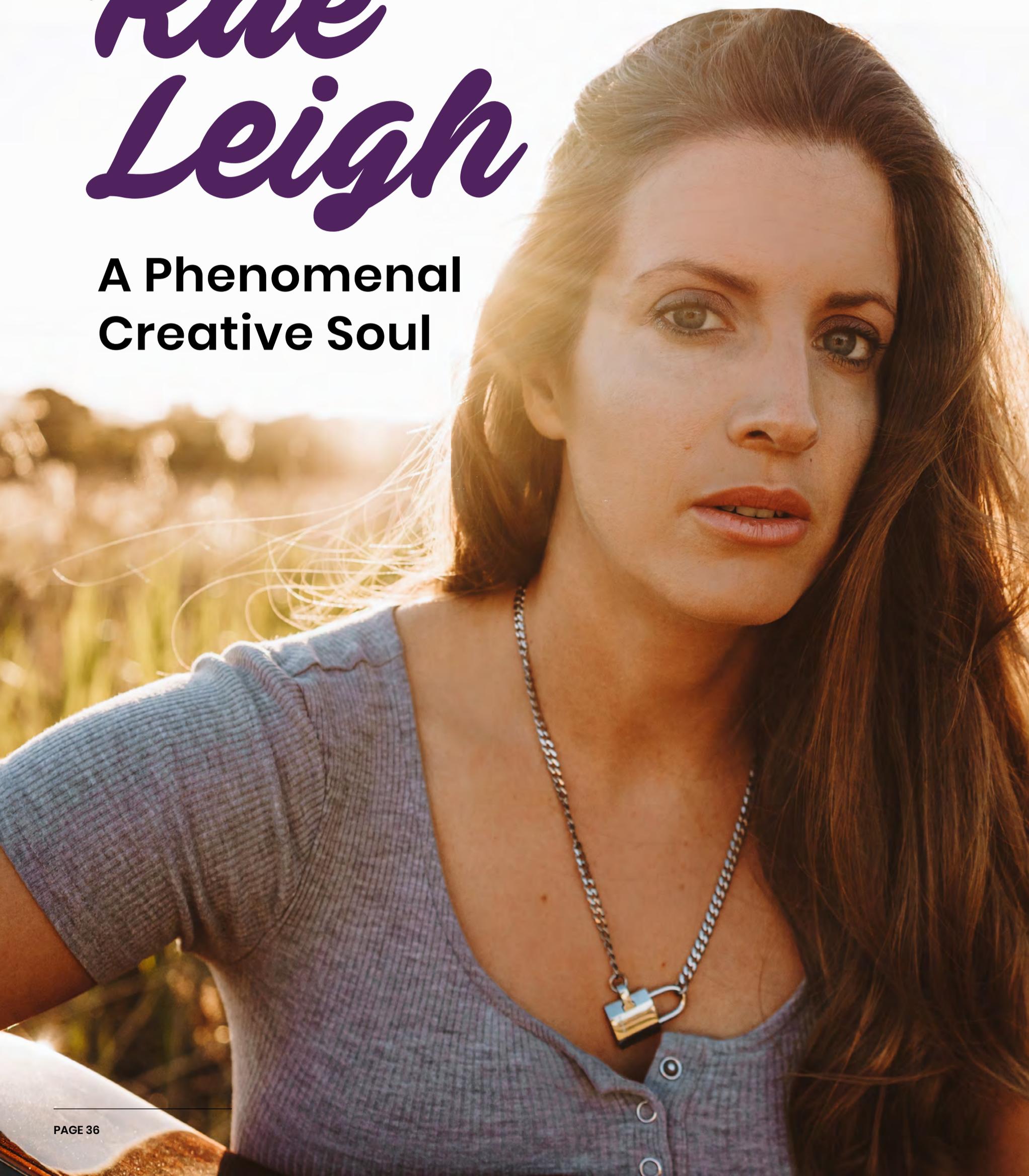
Given the name of the podcast, there are a few libations discussed and consumed during each episode. Matt, the bartender, serves the drinks and speaks through a voice changer that distorts his speech much like a kidnapper on a phone call. I'm not sure I ever got used to that.

Of course, once *Martinis & Murder* appeared on my radar, the podcast concluded on 2/6/21, as the contracts John and Daryn had with Oxygen expired. But you still have over 200 episodes to choose from if you're looking for something different. And for you raving fans, you will be happy to hear that the hosts started a new podcast. (Psst... check out *Off the Charts*.) 📢



Rae Leigh

**A Phenomenal
Creative Soul**



Rae Leigh, executive producer and host of *Songwriter Trysts*, is on an amazing journey.

She will openly tell you that music saved her life.

Growing up with parents who had mental health issues was far from easy. Her mother struggled with depression, and her father had been in the Vietnam War. Rae Leigh, in turn, ended up being a victim of child sexual abuse for eight years.

Her saving grace was her intuitive draw to music. She grew up in a church where she was surrounded by music, and at the tender age of six, she started playing the piano. Before long, she found herself writing songs and poetry in a journal.

For a long time, she was afraid to sing her songs in anyone's presence. After all, it would have left her vulnerable to too many questions. People were likely to be curious about the inspiration for her darkest songs, which had emerged from her deepest secret.

One day, though, Rae Leigh finally faced the music. She took the brave step to perform her original songs at an open mic event. That first step was all she needed to overcome her fears. Performing became her emotional outlet, fulfilling the same role her journal had in childhood. She started going to open mics four to six times a week and learned which songs worked well in a live environment.

“That was the space where my soul and body were able to process and express what I was feeling, even though I couldn’t articulate it,” she recalled.

“Songwriters are a unique bunch, and we build an almost instant rapport with each other, often talking about our songs as little song babies.”



Rae Leigh gained more momentum in her journey to become a known singer/songwriter when she released her first single in January last year. By March, she had released another and performed at some live shows before the pandemic shut everything down. She moved her performances online at that point but missed the connection she had enjoyed in person with live audiences. And so, the idea of *Songwriter Trysts* was born.



The term “tryst” refers to a private rendezvous. Rae Leigh said, “The name appealed to my cheeky nature. It fit with the concept of songwriters connecting over their pure love of music and passion for creating a new song.

“With Songwriter Trysts, we provide a safe space to talk about everything with honor and without shame. I believe there’s room for all emotions, and we need to be able to embrace them all,” she explained.

After many years of therapy, Rae Leigh can now share her story openly. “Everyone has their own story. Everyone has had to deal with their own emotions, and that’s what I love delving into.” She describes herself as a naturally curious person. “I am interested in human behavior. Why do we act the way we act and do the things we do? I had always thought it would be interesting if I recorded my conversations and shared them with others.”

Now, every week, artists gather on the podcast to discuss their love of songwriting. The show provides an opportunity to delve deeper into their songs, where they come from, and what they are creating.

“I wanted to be able to connect with people who are likeminded. Songwriters are a unique bunch, and we build an almost instant rapport with each other, often talking about our songs as little song babies.”

What does she enjoy most about hosting a podcast? “Meeting all the unique people I speak to and getting all the different perspectives and pieces of advice just fills



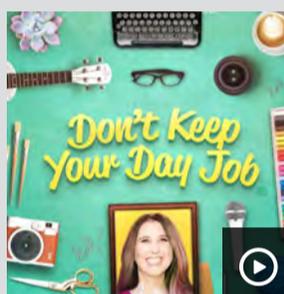
RAE LEIGH

listens to



GURU: THE DARK SIDE OF ENLIGHTENMENT

From Wondery, a story about seeking answers when we face challenges.



DON'T KEEP YOUR DAY JOB

Featuring Cathy Heller’s honest conversations with successful creative entrepreneurs.



JOURNEY TO WORTHY

Host Vanessa Haldane’s mission is to create a community of women who are welcomed without judgment.

“On Songwriter Trysts, we provide a safe space to talk about everything with honor and without shame. I believe there’s room for all emotions and we need to be able to embrace them all.”



← **A SPACE FOR INSPIRATION**

Rae Leigh shot the video for “Find a Better Day” in her room where many of her songs are written

my soul. I always have a big high after a conversation with someone, especially if he or she is from a different culture than mine. I feel like I learn so much, and there’s something really refreshing about that for me. I hope I convey that to my listeners, so they feel like they’re getting to learn along with me.”

It turns out *Songwriter Trysts* is rapidly garnering attention around the world. Fortunately, Rae Leigh’s husband, who is a project manager and business consultant by profession, does a lot of work behind the scenes to keep them on track with releasing two to three episodes per week.

“That was the space where my soul and body were able to process and express what I was feeling, even though I couldn’t articulate it.”

Rae Leigh’s advice for anyone who is starting a podcast is simple. *“Don’t try to do it all. You’ll just burn out. Find a team you can trust and work with. Rely on others to do what they’re good at and appreciate them. That will also allow you to step into your strengths.”* She added, *“It feels great to be able to be living my purpose.”*

Whether the subject is building a podcast or writing a new song, Rae Leigh believes, *“Life is all about the connection we share with each other.”*

This Aussie is showing no signs of slowing down. She has had some amazing guests on various episodes; she releases songs under her own independent record label; and she recently launched the music video for her single “Find a Better Day.” Rae Leigh shared how, because it rained the day they were to shoot the video, they ended up shooting it on her bed. Although it was initially a slightly unnerving idea, it was also serendipitous, because that’s where she typically used to muse about having better days ahead.

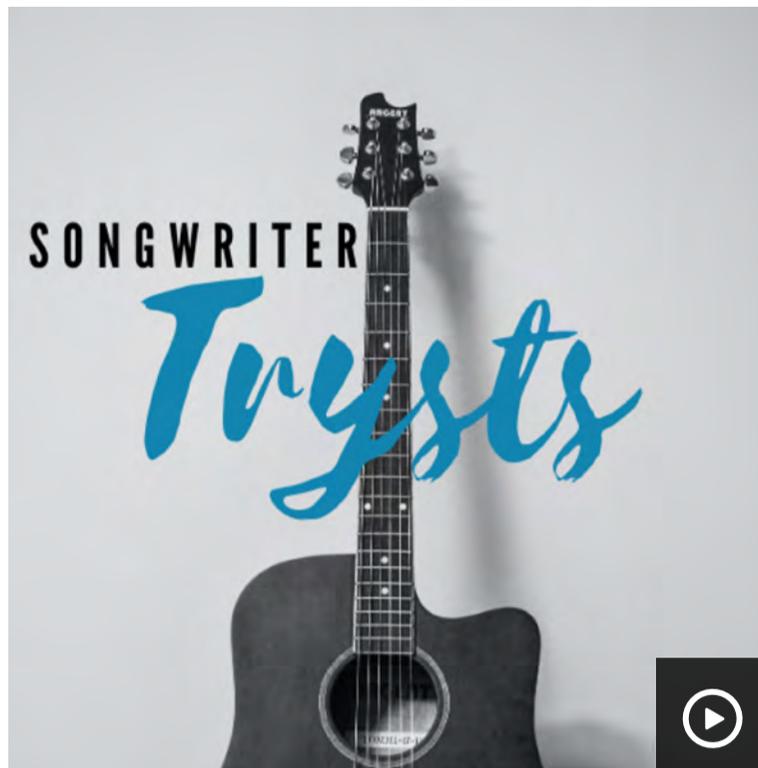
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It's safe to say Rae Leigh has found some of her best days—no longer is her immense talent hidden under years of childhood trauma. She even has a role in an upcoming movie about the life and times of Elvis, starring Tom Hanks and directed by Baz Luhrmann.

The advice she has to share with you, *Podcast Magazine*[®] readers, is the same she has for her own children:

“Follow your dreams and do what you’re passionate about. Everything happens at the right time,” she said with the gentle wisdom of someone who has overcome a great deal.

That advice extends to those who are thinking of starting a podcast, as well. *“Make sure it aligns with your heart, and keep following that,”* Rae Leigh advises.

Look where it has led her! 🎧



Music Category Director

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*Amazing Women And Men
Of Power* 🎧



UNDER THE RADAR

Raven's Independent Review Of A Music Podcast You Probably Haven't Heard Of... But Should Be Listening To



AMERICANA PODCAST

There's something about the *Americana Podcast* that gives you a toe-tapping, feel-good vibe! Host Robert Earl Keen is a prolific songwriter and Americana pioneer, and he has a knack for drawing out the unique stories of the musicians he interviews.

As he delves into their creative processes, failures, and successes, listeners gain a deeper appreciation of those who have dedicated their lives to the Americana genre. Often, the conversations broaden our understanding of this unique sound, which



is rooted in a variety of American musical traditions, including folk, country, roots-rock, bluegrass, R&B, and blues.

It is fascinating to learn how various performers' musical identities have developed, individually and as a duo or group. And don't we always wonder how they settled on their names? These questions and more are answered on this show. Not to mention the friendly banter between the musicians is entertaining in its own right.

From the early days of bedroom demos to the period when they started to get traction, Americana musicians speak openly about their journey on this show. We learn how music and their lives intersect, and we find out how musical communities have developed organically over time.

The conversations are interspersed with snippets of recordings. Acoustic instruments combined with mesmerizing harmonies can really make your day!

There's no doubt, this podcast is worth a listen. 🎧



CRIMES OF FASHION:

Is Your Style Killing Your Success?

Funny, irreverent, and with a penchant for speaking truth about style, Holly Katz and Nolan Meader are a fresh and fun pair of podcast hosts on the hunt for fashion crimes... and they aren't shy about sharing what they uncover. All in good humor and with the intention of helping people who wouldn't know an infraction of the laws of successful styling if they saw it right in the mirror, Holly and Nolan are already making a mark in the podcasting space... and they're less than a year in.

Consider them a pair on patrol spotlighting fashion faux pas that help listeners stop buying and wearing bad clothes!



With grandparents who migrated over from Europe and owned a clothing and retail business and uncles who led to the next generation with a clothing and retail business which then trickled down to her dad, the fashion style apple didn't fall too far from the tree with Holly. She grew up around fashion and clothes her whole life, her mother still on the fashion and retail sales floor to this day. Because it's the field she knows best, Holly decided pretty early on that she wanted to be in fashion.

"I first thought I wanted to be a buyer, so I got certified. Then I wanted to be in retail management, merchandising, so I got certified in that. But because you have to pretty much be a financial analyst when you're in those positions, I decided it wasn't what I wanted to do. I wanted something more creative."

So, Holly went back to college and earned a BFA in fashion design. After completing an internship in New York City, she graduated and moved to New York full time. From there, Holly did every job in fashion but design, and became very well-versed in costing and garment construction, color, trim, fabric, and sourcing and working with the factories. She spent the majority of her fashion career immersing herself in the process of bringing garments into being from sketch to sample. That is, until getting into menswear.

Ultimately, after getting married and moving out of New York, Holly's husband asked her the power question:

"What do you really want to do?"

"I said, 'I want to be in fashion, and I want to be a stylist, but I don't know what that is.' I went back and took some more courses and ended up getting certified in menswear, fashion, wardrobe, and personal styling. Realizing that I love personal styling best led me to where I am today."

"I worked retail for a long time and didn't want to end up there again. So this is a second way to be in fashion, without having to work on the retail sales floor but still being able to work with and coach people for a much more meaningful experience."

As Holly evolved, she realized she was really serving partly as a therapist to her clients, helping them to get to the bottom of their issues to reveal what's holding them back by examining their life through the lens of style.

"One thing I've learned is that it's never about the clothes. My podcast partner says I have no boundaries, but I just can't

"I am very, very brutally honest; I don't sugarcoat things. I'm certainly not everyone's cup of tea."



leave any stone unturned. I have to figure out how to get to the very bottom of what's holding my clients back, and there's a million different scenarios that come with that. I am very, very brutally honest; I don't sugarcoat things. I'm certainly not everyone's cup of tea, but I always like to say, 'I'm the best friend, you never knew you needed.'"

Holly finds that her clients are perpetually imposing limitations on themselves—the kind that hold them back in their marriage, with their kids, and with their careers. It's through the uncovering of those limitations coupled with the revelation, acceptance, and development of their personal style that creates the transformation that allows them to truly flourish and find fulfillment.

After six years in the business, Holly decided to take on the role of Fashion Police and start a podcast. Being a fan of Stacy London, an amazing stylist with a TV show fueled the fire in her to do so, and when she met and became very good friends with Nolan, he became her podcast partner.



HOLLY

listens to



BOMB MOM WITH MELISSA VOGEL

You may have lost weight or got results... but did it LAST? As a working mom, Melissa knows first-hand how hard it can be, which is why she created this podcast to help you be a Bomb Mom!



GIRLBOSS RADIO

Honest conversations with trailblazing women who go deep on what it takes to build a successful career or grow a business with staying power.



SHE PODCASTS

Insightful, wise, expert advice about all aspects about the podcasting industry, from advertising and sponsorships to the latest and greatest microphones and workflows to how the podcasting industry is failing and thriving.

"I always like to say, 'I'm the best friend, you never knew you needed.'"



← DYNAMIC DUO

Holly with co-host Nolan (*right*) bring a perfect balance of knowledge and expertise to their conversations on *Fashion Crimes*

such a difficult time right now in retail and fashion, and a lot of people are really suffering. I wanted to give people a platform to be able to interview them, speak to them, and understand what they're really about, and to network with and push other people in the spotlight in addition to letting people know that I

can also help them with my personal styling business."

What gives Holly even more perspective into the industry is that Nolan is also a celebrity stylist who styles her, as well. Their customer bases are very different—Holly is more focused on executives and entrepreneurs, whereas Nolan focuses more on high fashion and celebrities.

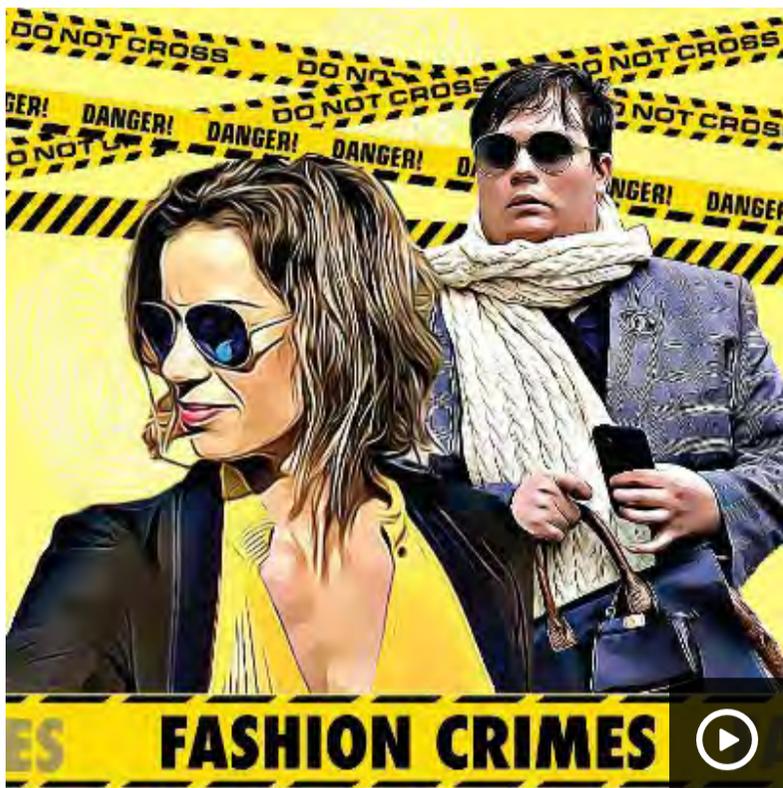
But when it comes to the running of a podcast show with a partner, Holly says they pretty much do everything together.

"He's the funny and fresh one, and I'm the old one. We have a really good time together. But you know, we have very

Even though they are total opposites, they are cut from the same mold. It was actually Holly's husband, who is also in TV and media, who said, "You guys need to start a podcast."

Throughout the 30 episodes already aired, Holly and Nolan talk about what's hip and cool in the industry, while also interviewing others from small businesses in the fashion industry.

"It's really about getting small businesses in the fashion industry into the spotlight—getting them views, and making the connection for our listeners to see them, hear them, and understand that they're out there. It's



different views. I drive the podcast, and he's definitely my sidekick. The guests we bring on are also very different, which is what makes the show so interesting. But you know, we have to agree. And it's just like being in a marriage—just a different kind of marriage.”

What's the best thing about having a podcast for Holly?

“I get to talk. I get to have a creative outlet. I think it was Brené Brown who said, ‘If you don't use your creativity, it metastasizes,’ and that is bad. It could be lethal for people who are in dead-end jobs, never doing anything creative, or for those who don't have a creative outlet. Honestly, at that time, I wasn't doing anything creative, and I really did not know what else to do. I was having trouble. The show came out of that.”



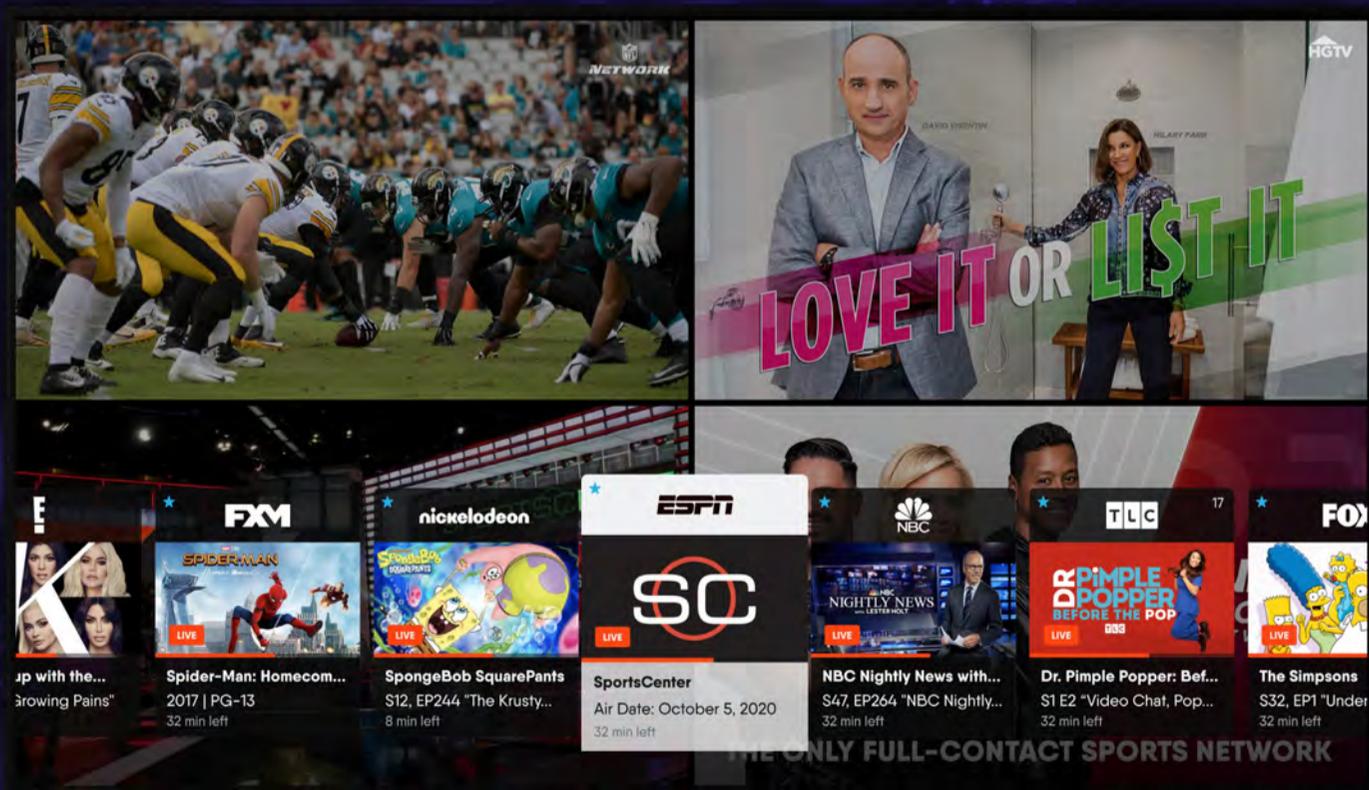
Arts Category Director

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Wickedly Smart Women Podcast

fuboTV



“Leader in sports streaming”
Forbes

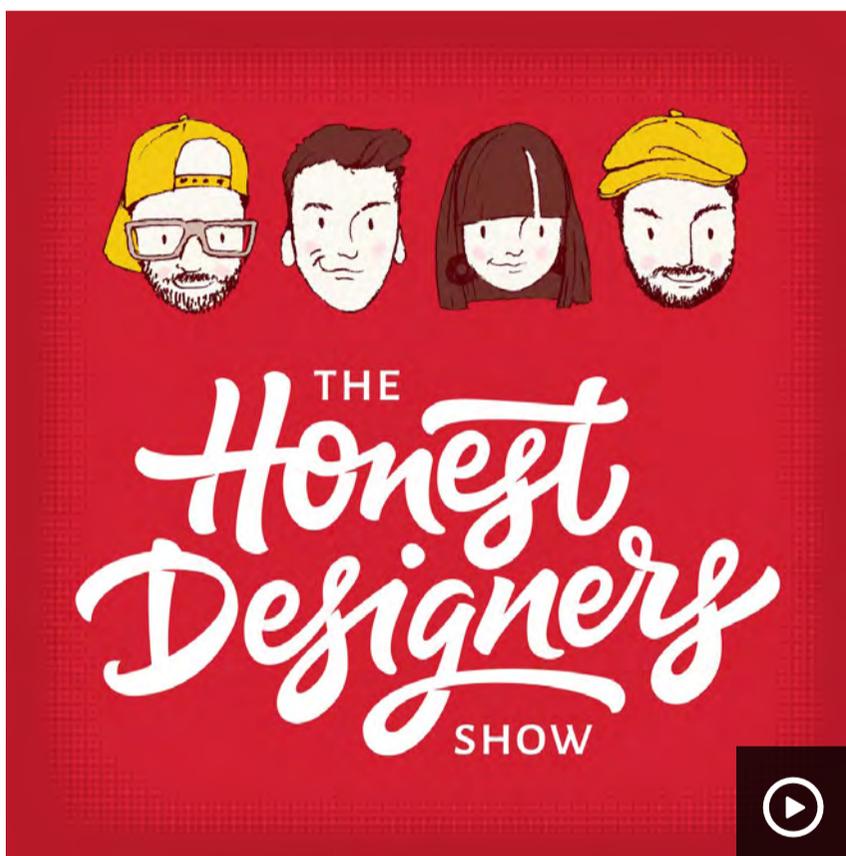
“A great cable TV alternative”
tom's guide

“The best service for sports fans”
GIZMODO



UNDER THE RADAR

Anjel's Independent Review Of An Arts Podcast You Probably Haven't Heard Of... But Should Be Listening To



THE HONEST DESIGNERS SHOW

Learning how to make a dent in the creative universe is exponentially easier when you have a team of pros willing to dig deep and share their successes. That's what you get with the team behind *The Honest Designers Show*, and with 199 episodes produced to date, they cover everything from “*The Importance of Pausing and Planning*” to “*Branding Yourself as a Creative*” to “*Creating Work That Is Different and Stands Out.*” This lively group spotlights many aspects of the design field and provides a huge public



service to the industry in general and to people interested in specific areas, as well.

The hosts: Tom Ross is the Founder and CEO of Design Cuts—a company that provides quality design resources including fonts, graphics, and templates and serves as an education hub for designers. Ian Barnard is a hand-lettering artist and calligrapher who lives in a small town outside of London. Dustin Lee is the founder of RetroSupply Co., a shop that makes Photoshop and Illustrator effects easy to create with a supply of digital tools to produce “retro” looks in graphic designs. Lisa Glanz is an illustrator who loves to create graphics that add whimsy and magic to creative projects.

Each have excelled in their own businesses and bring transparency and wisdom to the show to help others interested or employed in the industry. 🎧

JASON DEFILLIPPO

*Podcasting
Pioneer*



“Getting a piece of [podcasting] success is getting harder and harder, at least as an independent.”

A true pioneer of the podcast industry, Jason DeFillippo, producer, editor, and host, first entered the world of podcasting nearly a decade ago.

“I’ve been around podcasting since it literally started... back in the Dave Winer, Adam Curry, RSS days,” said the award-winning producer and editor whose clients have included *The Tim Ferriss Show*, *The Jordan Harbinger Show*, *Follow Your Different*, *The Kevin Rose Show*, and *Noah Kagan Presents*, among many others.

“My friend Kevin Marks wrote one of the first aggregators to pull an RSS enclosure and put it on an iPod. I’ve always listened to him, so I’ve known about the industry almost since inception, but I actually got into the business via a very long and twisty road through my technology career.

“The short of it is, I ended up working with Jordan Harbinger as I was winding down my work as a web software developer. He basically asked me to come on as the producer of his podcast. I never wrote another line of code again, and it’s still all I’ve been doing ever since.”

When Jason started working with Jordan, his podcast, *The Art of Charm*, was generating approximately 25,000 downloads per episode. By the time Jason exited that show, they were generating nearly 300,000. The show eventually rebranded, and Jason helped the new *Jordan Harbinger Show* reach an average of 300,000 downloads per episode *in less than a year*. It also won an Apple award for one of the most downloaded new podcasts.

Earlier in his podcasting journey, Jason co-created and became co-host of the *Grumpy Old Geeks Podcast*. They now have nearly 500 episodes and boast an impressive five-star rating on Apple. In it, he and Brian Schulmeister bring their 40 years of online experience to “*tell it like it is*” and focus on the internet’s effect on our lives.

Offering a unique perspective into the ways technology changes and serves us, Jason is a keen observer of the evolution of podcasting, as well. Referring to the “old days” of the medium as “*the Wild West*,” Jason explained how it was once all about freedom:

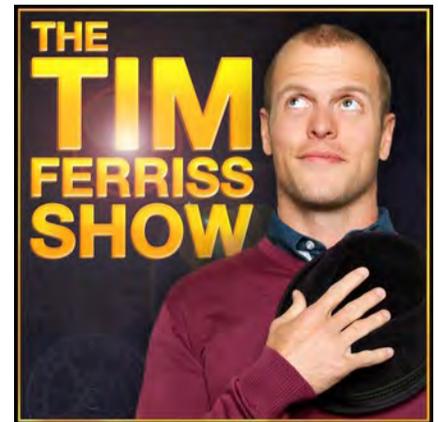
“There really were no rules. We were always trying to figure it all out ourselves—how to get new listeners, how to make the show more popular, where to find sponsors. And that was a lot of fun. It was easy to get listeners and connect with them. It was all independence.”

As is common in most industries, the growth the media has experienced has come somewhat at the cost of that independence.

“When the big names, the NPRs, came in, they were funded big time. It was clear there was just no way to compete. At that point, we were surrounded by a bunch of carpetbaggers who were trying to take everything corporate and squeeze out the little guy.”

It’s also becoming more and more difficult to get a piece of the pie:

“The biggest problem I see now is that it is



▲ Jason has been involved with some of Apple’s highest rated shows, including *Grumpy Old Geeks*, *The Tim Ferriss Show*, *The Jordan Harbinger Show*, *Follow Your Different*, *Lochhead on Marketing*, and *The Kevin Rose Show*

such a bifurcated landscape,” Jason said. “There are just too many shows. Getting a piece of the success is getting harder and harder, at least as an independent. Take Leo LaPorte, for example. That guy should be a gazillionaire right now! Why has nobody gobbled him up? I think it’s a travesty.”

Perhaps the inherent flaws in the podcast directories are largely responsible for the difficulties surrounding a less-than-ideal ranking system.

*“A lot of shows fall off after the first couple of years, some much faster than that,” Jason explained. “The problem is that the directory keeps everything forever. That means you can find ‘dead’ shows that are still ranking higher than you because they were popular **once**. And there are lots and lots of dead shows. Plus, it’s so much harder to actually get in front of people now, because everybody’s showing you the Top 20 lists of the NPRs, the iHearts... it’s a power law curve. The ones who are most powerful and the most listened to are always going to get the most press. They just take all the oxygen out of the room.”*

It’s no surprise that discoverability is a constant obstacle for new podcasters. No matter the level of talent, the majority simply won’t break through the deep pockets and marketing muscle of the bigger players. So, there ends up an ascending spiral, where the shows that are in the charts stay in the charts. After all, when new listeners come on to the scene, there’s only one place to go to find shows... the charts.

“Some of the charts are just useless,” Jason said. “We’ve known for years that New & Noteworthy is garbage. I’m not entirely sure what the answer is. It’s one of those things that we’re all going to have to figure out. In the meantime, you can still win the podcast lottery,” he mused. “Like Aaron Mahnke, who busted through with a fantastic show.

“But really, I think it comes down to having an audience before you start a podcast

JASON

listens to



PENN'S SUNDAY SCHOOL

Join us as Penn Jillette, Michael Goudeau, Matt Donnelly, and YOU discuss the news of the week. We'll examine religious news, talk about monkeys, and anything else that seems funny or makes us mad.



DARKNET DIARIES

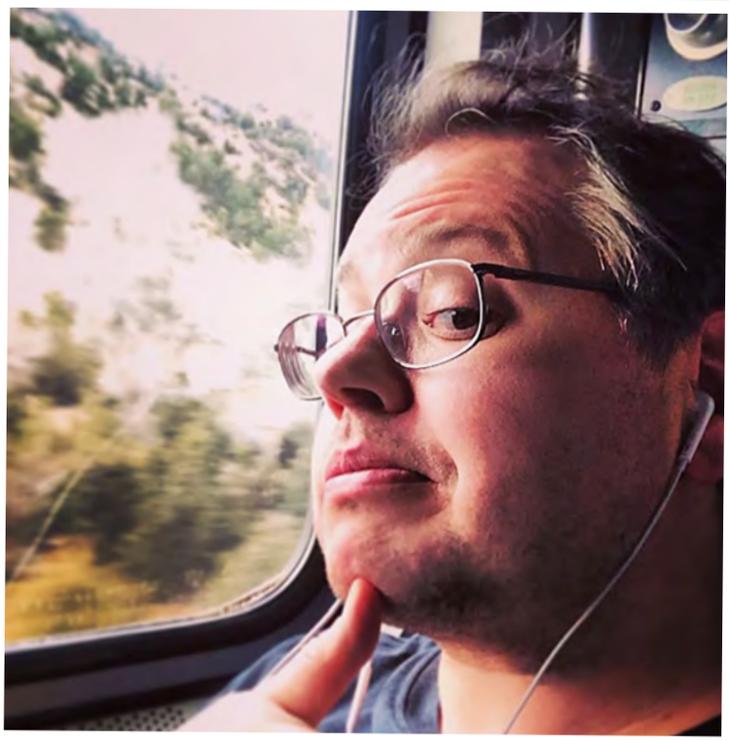
Explore true stories of the dark side of the Internet with host Jack Rhysider as he takes you on a journey through the chilling world of hacking, data breaches, and cybercrime.



UNSTRUCTURED

Unstructured is a chat with people who are changing the world around them, through teaching, creating, or just living as an example.

as opposed to starting from scratch. Tim Ferris came in with a couple of New York Times bestselling books that launched his podcast career and jacked him up the ranks. Had he just come in with another interview show, it probably wouldn't have been as well-received, because there are a million of those shows already. You've got to have something new and exciting.”



Another aspect detrimental to the current podcasting space?

“Spotify,” Jason stated matter-of-factly. “Look at what they’ve done to the music industry. They come in, take the content, and repackage it for pennies. It’s rare to get paid your worth there. And then they have this juicy market of free content to offer listeners who don’t pay anything. That means they’re not having to pay artists who produce music and are listening on their platform at the same time. So they’re making their money off their monthly subscriptions and advertising. Knowing their track record, I’m just not a fan of what they bring to the table.”

Some might argue that Spotify’s deal with Joe Rogan potentially adds more investment capital into the industry as a whole, which should be considered beneficial, shouldn’t it?

“They’re putting their investment into one person. I don’t see how that makes the industry better. Now, I don’t begrudge Joe

“Don’t be afraid to reach out to shows that you love to say ‘thank you.’ It’s really nice to hear from people.”

one bit. He’s made a huge contribution to podcasting, and I wish him all the best. But go to any Rogan fans Reddit thread, and you’ll see—nobody likes being on Spotify. The user interface is crap, and people are bailing hand over fist. I don’t see them bringing new subscriptions to the table the way Howard Stern brought subscriptions to SiriusXM. You have to have a Spotify account to hear the show now, and you have to pay for it. Then, you get to watch the janky video on there,” Jason said.

“That’s one of the things I don’t think they were prepared for. It’s like they went, ‘Let’s go spend \$500M on studios, technology, content... but let’s put it all in a VW, broken-down bus and try and ship it off as a Lambo.’”

Despite how tough Jason says it is to break through in the podcasting industry right now, he has some encouraging advice for new(er) podcasters:

“With my software engineering background, I’m a big fan of AB testing. Try a lot of different things. Tweak the format

of your show so it doesn't sound exactly like all the 'top' podcasters out there. Play around with it. Make your stuff new and exciting! It's an audio medium, and people have been doing that forever, but there are so many ways to skin that cat.

"When you're ready to put your show on the map, guesting on other people's podcasts is still the most tried-and-true method. Just get yourself out there over and over again."

Of course, this makes perfect sense. But even getting booked on a show can be a process. Jason's tips?

"Most importantly, know the show backwards and forward, inside and out. Once you understand the format, you can craft a pitch that matches it. You then give them exactly what they want. Spend time listening to every episode to figure out what to do to with your pitch to get on that show. The exposure you get on a massive show is worth that level of effort. It's literally a chance to make or break your career."

Jason also recommends carving out a chunk of your revenue to invest in paid advertising as a method to get more exposure.

"Find shows that are smaller than yours with similar audiences. Put in a couple hundred bucks each. Not only will that newer podcast love you for providing them some revenue, but they also look like 'big wigs' because they have ads on their show. Everybody's happy!"

"If you're serious, you have to have a budget. You don't come into podcasting thinking you're going to be rich. You have to have a business plan together and money behind it. Paid advertising is a huge part of playing with the big boys."

In regard to the "serious" new podcaster, Jason has one more piece of advice that fans of podcasts will relate to, as well:

"This process is so much more work, and it takes so much more time than you can ever imagine. If you hear a really good show that's crafted really well, whatever your estimate is of how long you think they worked on it, quintuple it. There is so much that goes into the behind the scenes even before the show goes to air."



“You have to think about the process: what do your listeners want to hear? In order to figure that out, you talk to fans. We do that consistently to get feedback, and we listen to them. Fans have a lot more power than they realize.”

“More fan engagement is something we all crave in this business. So don’t be afraid to reach out to shows that you love to say ‘thank you’ and encourage them to keep going, because it can be hard. It can be lonely. So it’s really nice to hear from people.”

This advice is easy to act on—most podcasters make their email available to the public, and respond when they hear from fans. And there’s always social media, which increases their exposure even more.

“Jordan Harbinger answers every email he ever gets. So does Christopher Lochhead and Kevin Rose. Even Tim Ferris will respond to fans on Twitter,” Jason shared.

In reflecting on the history and future of podcasting, Jason says it’s all about good stories. Podcasting is a craft, though, and to really excel as a podcaster and perfect your craft, there’s one thing Jason says you must concern yourself with: audio quality.

“At first, it was really crappy audio telling really great stories. As it’s evolved, people have taken their shows from ‘good’ to ‘great’ by improving their audio quality. People who listen to a lot of audio actually begin to crave the higher quality, and it’s really

not hard to make something sound good. Going forward, I hope to see an emphasis on improving sound across the podcasting space. I am a stickler for quality.”

“People are going to come to the table with really good audio, and that’s something I’m looking forward to. There are a lot of shows coming out right now that I would love to listen to, but I can’t, simply because

“Everybody’s still stuck at home, so let’s get creative! Let’s try new things, new formats. There is still so much to discover.”

they sound so bad. Excellent audio is table stakes—if you have a bad-sounding show, just don’t even bother.”

“Now, as far as content goes, I’m really hoping to see some innovation this year. Everybody’s still stuck at home, so let’s get creative! Let’s try new things, new formats. There is still so much to discover.”

The podcasting landscape remains a promising frontier ripe for exploration. And, if Jason has his druthers, as new talent enters the industry, they’ll be accompanied by innovative approaches and revolutionary plans. 🎧



Founder/Editor-in-Chief

Steve Olsher
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 Reinvention Radio 🎧

The new Apple MacBook Pro

Performance. Now pushed further.



New eighth-generation Intel 6-core and quad-core processors.

Up to 32GB of memory for running multiple pro apps.

Stunning Retina display with True Tone technology.

Touch Bar for working more productively.¹



13-inch model 1.37 kg 14.9 mm

15-inch model 1.83 kg 15.5 mm



ADVOCATING FOR OUR MOST VULNERABLE:

Improving Outcomes For Kids



Did you know that abuse, neglect, and other adverse childhood trauma can scar a child for life?

Trauma can:

- Cause feelings of helplessness and intense fear.
- Impact brain development and stunt mental health.
- Severely derail educational achievement and employment prospects.

Naomi Schaefer Riley and Ian Rowe are fiercely determined to make the world a better place for kids and to obliterate the aforementioned statistics with their podcast, *Are You Kidding Me?*

Riley came up with the name of the podcast, which is the result of a little bit out of outrage around how some children are discarded by society and a little bit of humor and sarcasm directed at the well-intentioned policies aimed at helping children that oftentimes unintentionally hurt them.

“One of my first ideas was to call it The Road to Hell, but that was deemed too dark for such a podcast,” she quipped.

Riley is a resident fellow at the American Enterprise Institute, where she focuses on child welfare and foster care issues. Specifically, her work analyzes the role of faith-based, civic, and community organizations in changing the foster care and adoption services landscape. She also studies the impact of the opioid crisis

on child welfare. She is concurrently a senior fellow at the Independent Women’s Forum.

Co-host Ian is also a resident fellow at the American Enterprise Institute, where he focuses on education and upward mobility, family formation, and adoption. He is also the cofounder of Vertex Partnership Academies, a new network of character-based International Baccalaureate high schools opening in the Bronx in 2022; the chairman of the board of Spence-Chapin, a nonprofit adoption services organization; and the cofounder of the National Summer School Initiative. He concurrently serves as a senior visiting fellow at the Woodson Center and a writer for the 1776 Unites Campaign.

One of those well-intentioned policies that acted as inspiration in the naming of their podcast had to do with a school in the San Diego school system.

“When they looked at their data, they discovered that 80 percent of Black students were achieving passing grades while 93 percent of White students were doing the same,” Rowe said. *“The school took a look at the failure rates and decided*

“Fundamentally, our work is designed to improve the outcomes for kids.”



that the percentage point of disparity between Blacks and Whites who were failing was a function of systemic racism, because those failing students could not finish their homework on time. In turn, the school district became an anti-racist school district by implementing at first glance a well-intentioned policy eliminating the submission of all on-time homework for the entire school system. As someone who leads schools, this type of policy ends up hurting most of the kids, because frequent checks are needed to ensure children are learning.”

Riley and Rowe are both passionate about issues around child welfare. *“Fundamentally, our work is designed to improve the outcomes for kids,”* Rowe stated. *“Whether that means shifts in public policy, shifts in cultural attitudes and behaviors, or shifts around issues that affect children, we are always trying to answer the question of how conditions can be improved for kids.”*

“Our core listening audience would comprise the people whose job it is to understand these issues,” Riley said. *“People who work in the field of child welfare, policy makers, legislators, and nonprofit leaders are our key demographic, but really anyone who has kids or cares for kids would enjoy tuning in, as well. I personally think that a lot of Americans do care about kids, but often feel helpless, because they don’t know what to do. So hopefully, information they receive from our podcast can give them a better understanding.”*

“In addition to policy, we are also hoping that average people can learn something new about their lives. We’ve done a few episodes on adoption, and oftentimes, women who might find themselves in a situation where they have an unplanned pregnancy have never considered adoption as an option,” Rowe explained. *“So, we’ve shared about very empowering organizations that help young women learn about alternative options when faced with such decisions.”*



ALLIES FOR CHILDREN

Are You Kidding Me? hosts (from left) Naomi Schaefer Riley and Ian Rowe have dedicated their careers to child welfare and an overall improvement in the conditions for kids



NAOMI listens to



THE COMMENTARY MAGAZINE PODCAST

Commentary is America's premier monthly magazine of opinion: general, yet Jewish. Highly variegated, with a unifying perspective.



THE MEGYN KELLY SHOW

The Megyn Kelly Show is your home for open, honest, and provocative conversations with the most interesting and important political, legal, and cultural figures today.



AGAINST THE RULES WITH MICHAEL LEWIS

Journalist and bestselling author Michael Lewis (*Liar's Poker*, *Moneyball*) takes a searing look at what's happened to fairness.

“The thing I would like policymakers to take away from our podcast is an awareness of the unintended consequences of the actions or policies they are putting forth. So often, policymakers and educators who are crafting practices and procedures for kids think that X always leads to Y, but throughout human history, that isn't always the case. In listening to our stories, I want them to be able to say, ‘Wow... those people were really well-intentioned, but they didn't think it through in terms of how it actually was going to play out for the kids,’” Rowe said.

Riley has been a journalist for two decades and became interested in child welfare issues early on in her career. While she was working as an editor for the *Wall Street Journal*, she encountered a lot of people who were very active in the world of foster care and adoption.

“I became very interested in the role of faith-based organizations and their efforts,” she said. *“I also wrote a book about American Indians, and through*

my research, I found that they have some of the worst child welfare outcomes, and some of the highest levels of child abuse and neglect in our country,” Riley explained. *“When I initially began the project, I was searching for what causes poverty in communities, but I actually ending up being quite compelled to investigate the child welfare aspect of the system. That eventually led me to more broadly understand what was going on in the rest of the country and in the world of child welfare.”*

“And for me, my parents immigrated from Jamaica West Indies to the U.S. in the hopes of building a better future for themselves and their two kids,” Rowe added. *“I am always amazed at how much they invested in us. They were married for 48 years until my dad passed away. They always stressed education, to be a good person, and take our gifts that had been given to us and use them to make a broader, positive impact. As I became an adult, I realized that my experience was unique, especially for someone*



IAN

listens to

**BLOGGINGHEADS.TV:
THE GLENN SHOW**

Glenn Loury invites guests from the worlds of academia, journalism, and public affairs to share insights on economic, political, and social issues.

**THE BEN SHAPIRO SHOW**

The Ben Shapiro Show brings you all the news you need to know in the most fast-moving daily program in America. Ben brutally breaks down the culture and never gives an inch.

**8 BLACK HANDS**

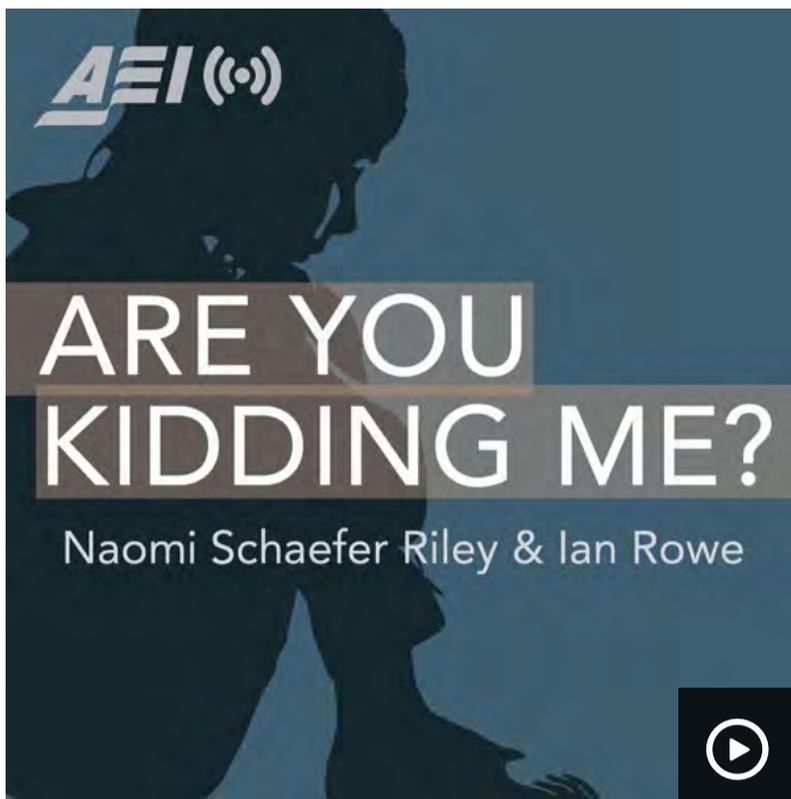
Deep in the heart of public school, education wars rage on. Anyone who threatens the education of our eight million Black children is likely to catch these eight Black hands.

who is Black. It made me think that the issues we are trying to confront as adults almost always emanate from a lack of something in the early years—whether it be a lack of a stable family structure, a lack of the ability to choose a great school for your child, a lack of a parental love, or a lack of discipline. For me, so many of the problems that I’ve now committed my life to helping resolve come from my fortunate experiences with my parents that laid that solid foundation. I want to replicate that for other kids.”

“My hope for the future is to get more people interested in child welfare issues,” Riley said. “Part of what has always bothered me about the child welfare system is how closed it is, in some sense. I think what happens is that the only people really exposed to the child welfare system are the ones who are used to being treated badly, either by the government or other authority figures. A good example is family court. Before the pandemic, people with fulltime jobs had to take entire days off from work and travel to court just to get their 15 minutes in front of

a judge. That’s not convenient. Then there are lawyers who may not show up on time; then the case is adjourned, and they have to come back in six months and do it all over again. I think people would be outraged if they found out this is the way that the family court system treats people. So, I would love if more people got involved. I encourage people to become a CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocate) volunteer, where you can serve as a mentor and a representative of a child in foster care inside the court system. But I think you’ll also serve as an eyewitness and observer who is holding the child welfare system accountable, because you too have to sacrifice your time and take time off work to do it. To the extent that we can expose more people to becoming interested observers with a real stake in these systems, I believe we can really improve and see tangible changes for kids.”

At least when COVID-19 hit, many courts went virtual. Now, parents fighting to restore their families aren’t having to take an entire day off work, potentially jeopardizing their job. That’s progress.



“To the extent that we can expose more people to becoming interested observers with a real stake in these systems, I believe we can really improve and see tangible changes for kids.”

Riley was born in Worcester, MA. She is married and has three children. In her downtime, she loves to play tennis. *“It’s a great way to get out aggression,”* she said.

Rowe was born in London, England, and moved to Jamaica before his family settled in New York. He is married and has two children and a pandemic puppy. In his downtime, he and his wife compete to see who has the most steps according to their Apple Watches.

Rowe is inspired by Robert Woodson of The Woodson Center. *“He has been working for over 40 years in low-income communities across the country, devising ways for people who are marginalized to become agents of change by embracing principles around family, faith, enterprise, entrepreneurship, and hard work. I hadn’t really known his work well, but in the last year, I’ve gotten to work with him very closely. What he is doing is very apropos now as we’re having a national reckoning on issues like race. His philosophy goes counter to many in the mainstream,*

and it’s just very self-empowering and inspiring,” Rowe stated.

“I’ve been very inspired by the foster and adoptive families I meet,” said Riley. *“There are so many obstacles and hurdles a family has to go through to care for our most vulnerable, and I don’t know why anyone would do it unless God was telling him or her to do so. I am floored by the amazing work they do, with no recognition or fanfare. Especially in the area of foster care, where you are literally bringing another child into your family. That, to me, is an amazing act of love, because these placements are not permanent. One foster mother said, ‘I will hold on to this child with great love, but also loosely enough so the child can return to his or her own family.’ It’s a complicated kind of love, one hard to imagine, but having what it takes to be able to do that, to really care for a child, is amazing.”* 📌



Government Category Director

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The Meiko Show 🎧



UNDER THE RADAR

Meiko's Independent Review Of A Government Podcast You Probably Haven't Heard Of... But Should Be Listening To



OB POD

According to *OB Pod* hosts Zach Sims and Cash Lovett, Olive Branch, Mississippi is the state's best small town. After listening to their first few episodes, they just might be right. I love how the podcast covers all the goings-on in this small, close-knit community.

For example, in episode one, they interview a local hero resident named Rhonda Wright. She posted on Facebook that she was stuck in the snow in her new jeep, and she just didn't know how to operate it. Her Facebook



message was seen by a Jeep Club, and one of the women members told her to hold on... that she would help teach her how to drive her car in the snow. Not only did she help her, but she told her about their drive share program in which they help essential workers in the healthcare industry get to work by giving a lift and picking them up. Rhonda was so grateful that she began picking up nurses and dropping them at work, so they didn't have worry about driving in adverse conditions.

This podcast only has three episodes, as it is very new, but I believe it's a great addition to the podcast government genre. Hosts Zach and Cash have a brotherly camaraderie on the show, and you can tell they really like and respect one another. I normally don't like to hear ads in a podcast, but the ones in this podcast are from local businesses. These businesses are literally their next-door neighbors, and it makes you want to listen and support them. 🎧

VIDEOGAME PALOOZA:

Celebrating Popular Video Game Podcasts



“Ultimately, it was Super Mario Bros. that taught me what remains perhaps the most important lesson of my life—there is no turning back, only going forward—for Mario and Luigi, for me, and for you. Life only scrolls in one direction, which is the direction of time, and no matter how far we might manage to go, that invisible wall will always be just behind us, cutting us off from the past, compelling us on into the unknown.” — Edward Snowden, Permanent Record



Video games. For many of us, they have been a part of our lives for as long as we can remember. Starting with a simple table tennis-type of game called Pong in the late 50's, the industry has exploded over the past several decades and is now a driving force in our culture, economics, and lifestyle habits. The natural progression of the rise of video game popularity has also helped initiate the next driving-force industry—podcasts.

Now, there are podcasts that celebrate every type of video game genre—from news to reviews to game strategy to game cheats—it's all there, available to download and listen to at your leisure.

Today, I thought I'd highlight the "best" video game podcasts. But to choose just a few among the thousands would be virtually impossible... many have tried. Now, lists abound of the top five or ten podcasts to listen to, for sure. And like many subjective lists that have come before this one, they are just that—subjective.

So following, in no particular order, are some of the more *popular* video game podcasts based on the following criteria: longevity, popularity, number of episodes, genre, platform, AND any other varied and random criteria I chose for listening.



The Daily Fortnite Show. Hosted by MMMIKEDADDY, this show is a daily brief on all that goes on with the phenom that is Fortnite. The podcast has almost 1100 episodes, most around 10-15 minutes in length. The goal of the podcast is to build a Fortnite community. Callers can also leave messages with questions, comments, etc. The daily show features tips and strategies on game play as well as player stories. For fans of Fortnite, the show is a must listen.

Video Game History Hour. Hosted by Frank Cifaldi and Kelsey Lewin, this is a new podcast in the video games category. This generally would fall to an Under the Radar position, but the reviews and raves are so numerous, it seemed appropriate to include in this main feature. With just over



24 weekly episodes, this podcast talks about the history of various video games. Using a “coffee chat”-style format, the interviews become more personal and casual as they go, and with stories about the creation of the games and related backstories, this one is a fun trip down memory lane.

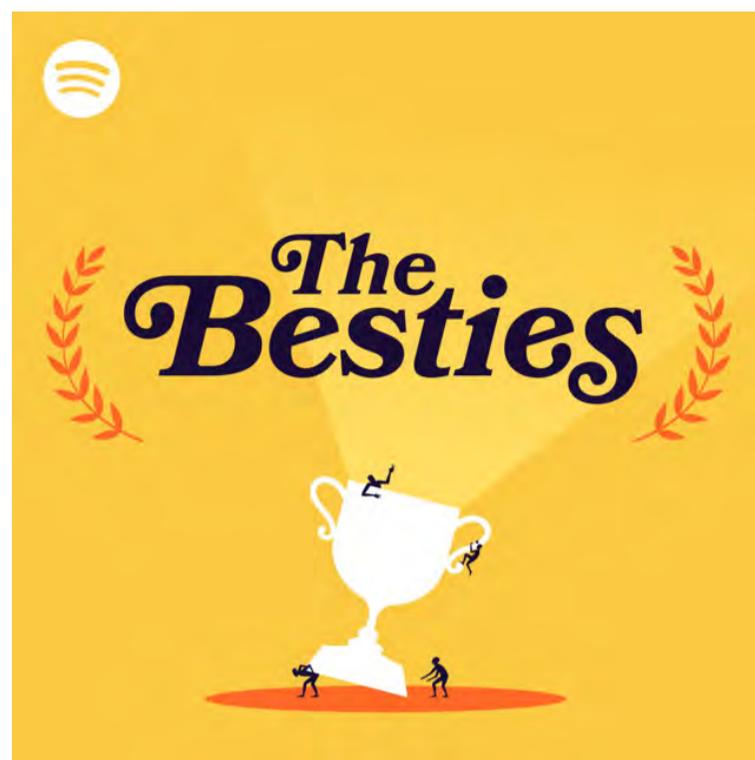


DLC Podcast.

Hosted by Christian Spicer and Jeff Cannata, DLC (which stands for “Direct Live Call-in” or “Disagree, Like, Comment”

or various other titles) is a podcast that encourages audience participation through various methods. This is primarily a “what’s new?” type of podcast, but with a twist: Christian and Jeff not only bring on industry stars of the genre, but they also have caller interaction during the show. This is a podcast you can listen to with kids in the car, which is unusual in the video game podcast space.

The Besties. Hosted by four best friends—Griffin McElroy, Justin McElroy, Chris Plante, and Russ Frushtick—this is a fun podcast throughout which “besties” (and brothers, in the case of Griffin and Justin) have varying opinions about video games. This is part of what makes the podcast so popular. Originally aired only on Spotify, they are now more widely available on the various other networks including



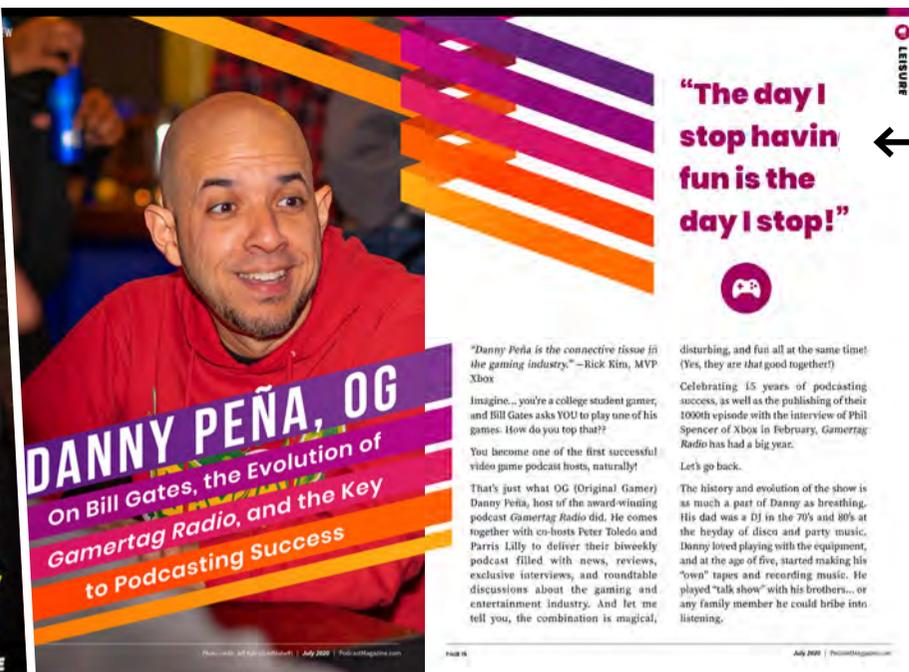
Apple Podcasts, much to the delight of their loyal listeners. The hosts are funny, engaging, opinionated, and full of great information. Their legends of followers will attest to it.

Gamertag Radio. Hosted by Danny Peña, Peter Toledo, and Parris Lilly, this one’s been on air since 2005. Listeners can find an extensive episode library of over 1000 episodes. It’s broadcast twice a week and contains game reviews, industry highlights, interviews, and gaming conversations. Discussions range from breaking news to old games to general differences of opinion, which gives the show broad appeal.

PODCAST UPDATE

Gamertag Radio’s Danny Peña was the highlight of *Podcast Magazine*’s July Leisure





WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

Danny Peña, host of *Gamertag Radio*, was highlighted in our July 2020 issue

feature, and much has changed for Danny since then. In addition to celebrating 16 years of the podcast, in 2020, Danny moved from New York to California during the middle of the pandemic. This has opened up even greater opportunities for the podcast.

“For fans of video games and video game podcasts, lack of listening time is not a problem. The problem is choosing just which podcast to listen to,” says Danny. *“The crazy part is that 2020 was one of the biggest years we’ve had. Since big companies weren’t having conferences, they had larger budgets to work with content creators and podcasters, and that was a big help to gaming podcasters.”*

With Microsoft and Sony releasing their new big platforms, they reached out to podcasters to try out the new consoles, report, and review them. *“The opportunities were endless,”* says Danny. *“Our job was to keep creating content and to get it out there.”* *Gamertag Radio* was also the only gaming podcast to sit down with Keanu Reeves and talk about

Cyberpunk 2077—the biggest game of last year. The interview was released in English for the podcast and Spanish for Telemundo TV.

Overall, for fans of video games and podcasts, the choices are endless. Which podcast will become the next *Giant Bombcast* (one of the largest syndicated video game podcasts and much more)? Which video game will become the next *Fortnite*, and who will be dancing the “Floss” and doing the “Boogie Down”? 🎮



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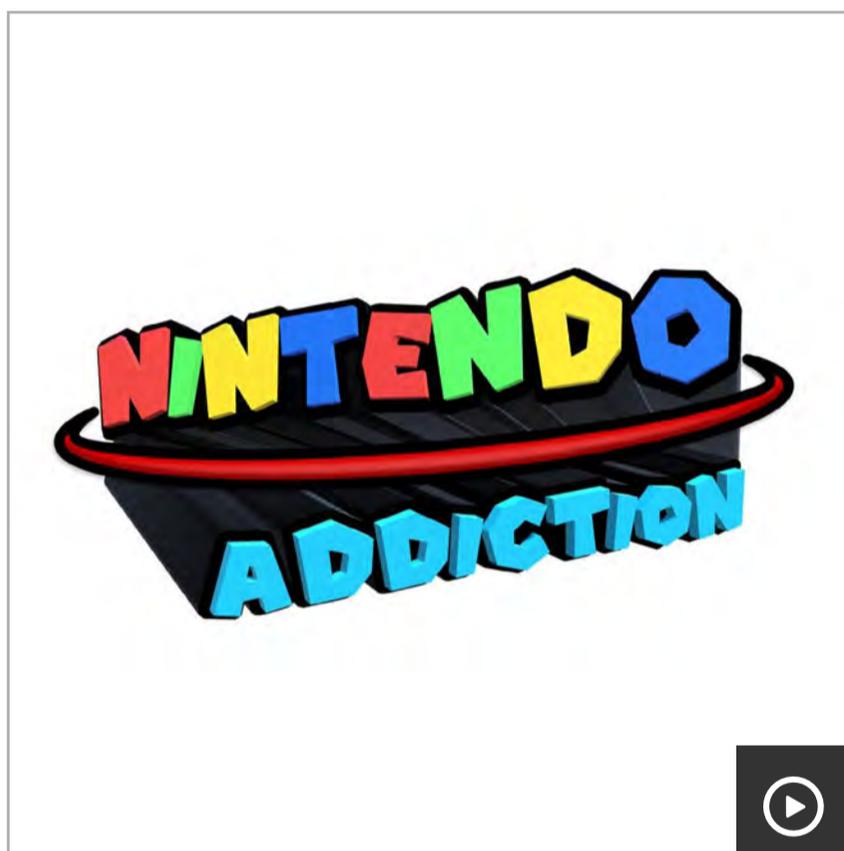
Got a Leisure Podcast suggestion?

Let us know! >



UNDER THE RADAR

Lori's Independent Review Of A Leisure Podcast You Probably Haven't Heard Of... But Should Be Listening To



NINTENDO ADDICTION

I'm not even a video game person, and I love this podcast! My idea of a fun time is getting creamed by my son in Mario Kart (Rainbow Road is just hard!). I'm also an auditory person—I don't care for the screaming and loud noises that seem prevalent in video game podcasts. *Nintendo Addiction* is not only a great, fun, quick podcast to listen to, but hosts Zac Rogers and Dave Meese have great “radio” voices, too!

They've taken a popular Instagram page,



Nintendo.Addiction, and turned it into a podcast. The 25 episodes average about 25-30 minutes in length. The time is short, but it's packed full. Many episodes feature guest interviews and typically cover a specific Nintendo topic.

While the podcast has much going for it, it's a very specific podcast for a very specific audience—Nintendo users. (And that is the only reason for the four-star mic rating!)

The other interesting tidbit about the podcast is the use of Instagram and Tik Tok. Zac and Dave have a large Instagram following, and they drive listeners to their social sites for input, contests, surveys, and more. The opposite is also true—they drive their almost 80K followers on Instagram to the podcast. It's a great marriage of social and audio working together to bring content to their loyal audience.

Highly recommended listening! 🎧



ALBA SALIX, ROYAL PHYSICIAN

Where *Shrek* Meets *House*



Gunther!

What? What's the matter?

Your hair. It's all snakes. Look in the mirror.

Oh, for Heaven's sakes. Get Alba in here.

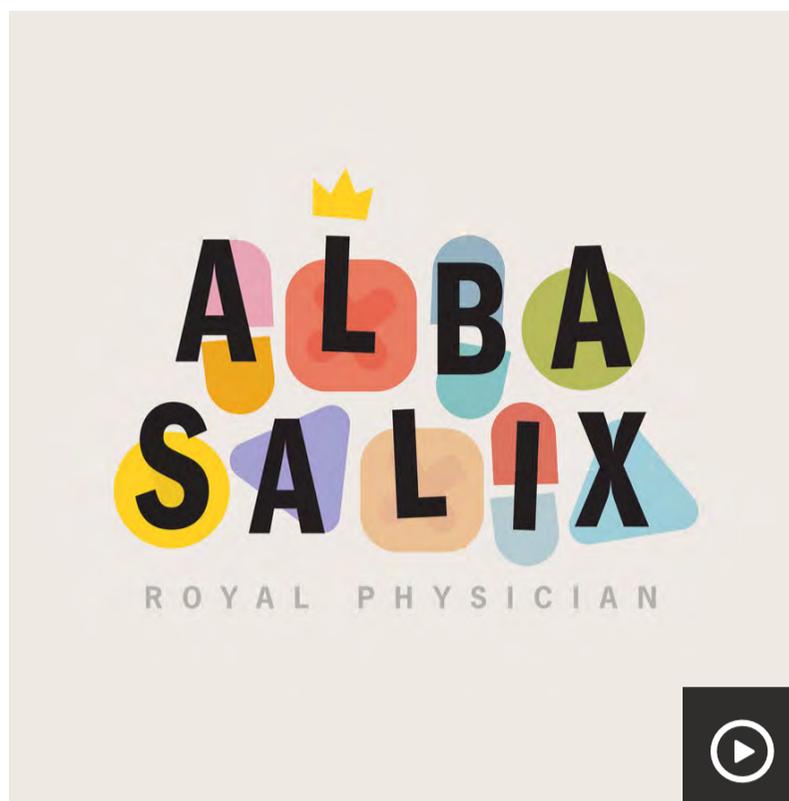
Getting sick in a fairy-tale world is no joke. Never mind the diagnosis—what about the cure?

“Alba Salix, Royal Physician is a fantasy hospital sitcom basically about a witch who runs a little clinic with her less-than-helpful assistants and takes care of people in a fairy-tale kingdom,” said Eli Hamada McIlveen, creator of *Alba Salix*. *“I basically equate it to Shrek meets House.”*

McIlveen drew his inspiration from the idea of putting two previously unrelated concepts together in a fresh, new way.

“I'd been writing various scripts and testing out different ideas. And, for some reason, the combination of a hospital show with a fairy-tale world really landed. There's a million hospital shows for a reason; it's a format that stands up and launches a million stories. Fairy tales, on the other hand, give you another well to draw on. Combining the two, the ideas just started to flow.”

McIlveen found that working in a podcast format helped him merge his many



talents. *“For me, I'd always listen to radio drama up here on the CBC [Canadian Broadcasting Corporation]. They did a lot of amazing productions when I was growing up. And I heard a lot of stuff from the BBC as well, like Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy. I did some work on a series in university radio at the University of Waterloo station here, and I really enjoyed the production side of things. So working on Alba Salix kind of brings together all the things I like: writing, sound design, music, and even directing. I discovered how fun directing is in shaping and guiding performances, as well.”*

“All of the sound design, the music, everything you hear in Alba is actually produced by Eli,” said Sean Howard, co-founder of the Fable & Folly network and one of the co-creators of *Alba Salix*. *“And this is one of the first things that I think united everything for Eli. I have the easy job on Alba... I'm just producing.”*



Alba Salix creators Sean Howard (left) and Eli McIlveen

I've written a little and co-direct, but Eli carries 85 to 90 percent of the weight of the show entirely on his shoulders."

"Wrangling and feeding the cast is no easy feat either," interjected McIlveen.

Alba Salix is recorded live, which means Howard is in charge of bringing the actors together to do so. Needless to say, Covid has put a damper on live recording, which is why Season 3 has been delayed.

"Another thing we did differently for Season 3 is creating a virtual writers' room," said Howard. *"It was my job to go out and talk to other people who have run writers' rooms, so we could design one we would love. For instance, we wanted everyone to have a voice and input into helping structure the arc versus Eli deciding everything that can happen. I didn't want it to be us devising all the plotlines and then saying, 'Okay, go write this for me.' So that meant going through an iterative process using a variety of weird tools from Google. Not docs, but presentation-type tools—really, anything we could to work out arcs. And then, it was just fascinating to watch the writers start to*

"It was captivating to watch what [the writers] came back with and how well it all worked together."

have a voice and bring in ideas. Once we reached a certain point, each writer got to write whichever episode he or she was most excited about. And it was captivating to watch what they came back with and how well it all worked together. It was super fun."

While *Alba Salix* is definitely entertainment and escapism wherein "at no point will you hear the word 'covid,'" being able to work out real-world issues in a fictional world is beneficial.

"That's one of the fun things about Alba. You think, 'Oh, it's a comedy. It's a fantasy. It's a cartoon.' But you can still play with real-world issues that are of concern to us. Like in our spinoff, we focused on gentrification. Remember the days when what we were most worried about in the world were things like gentrification? Eventually, we may do something around Covid, but it's still a little too new."

Alba Salix covers the start of the world, but it also includes the spinoff, *The Axe & Crown*. Additional spinoffs and seasons are planned. 📌



Fiction Category Director

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The Write Inspiration podcast 🎧



UNDER THE RADAR

Michele's Independent Review Of A Fiction Podcast You Probably Haven't Heard Of... But Should Be Listening To



WRITER WRONG

If you love behind-the-scenes documentaries of your favorite shows and movies, the *Writer Wrong* podcast may be perfect for you.

It's an intriguing concept: the podcast story itself is sandwiched between commentary about the creation of the podcast. The creator and guest discuss the show points along with what was done well and what could have been done better.

Then, to make it even more interesting, you, the listener, can weigh in on the story itself and even vote on the direction you want it

to go. (It's similar to the "choose-your-own-ending" books you may have read as a kid—but maybe I'm dating myself here.)

I'll say a few words on both components of this show:

The audio drama is very well done. The actors are great, and the story is intriguing (there are actually multiple stories that span over a few episodes—the first one takes place in an independent bookstore with some very shady activities). I definitely enjoyed it.

The commentary is a little less compelling. I suspect it's because the interview format is actually not as easy as it initially seems, and there was some awkwardness. Being a both a good interviewer and a good interviewee is a skill—one that takes practice.

However, there are "director cuts" episodes, too, which are comprised of just the story without the commentary.

Overall, definitely worth a listen. 🎧



Jared Gutstadt

Podcasting In Technicolor

Many in the TV and film industries know “Jingle” Jared Gutstadt, formerly of the music publishing and licensing company Jingle Punks, as a well-known and decorated musician.

As a music producer and songwriter, he has collaborated with the likes of Jason “Poo Bear” Boyd, Miranda Lambert, Brad Paisley, Bob Dylan, Lil Wayne, Steven Tyler, T Bone Burnett, and DJ Khaled.

Others know Jared as the CEO and founder of Audio Up—a podcast content production studio that creates “a world of infinite audio-based entertainment” within the music and audio space:

“From fictional scripted podcasts, which include musicals where the records themselves become the foundation of the story, to unfiltered one-on-one interview series, Audio Up’s goal is to create a new and innovative form of IP.”

In other words, Audio Up brings audio blockbusters to life as they take podcasting “from black and white into technicolor.”

Their properties include the perennial top 20 crime podcast, *Where The Bodies Are Buried*, Michael Cohen’s chart-topping *Mea Culpa*, *Van Life with Tom Green*, and *Valentine’s Day In Hell* with jxdn and iann dior, as well as scripted musicals including *Make It Up As We Go* with Miranda Lambert and the four-part scripted *Halloween in Hell* podcast with Machine Gun Kelly.

Why might a celebrity musician like Machine Gun Kelly be interested in podcasting?

“He’s already an actor, and because of the pandemic, most film

sets are down,” Jared explained. “With *Audio Up*, we gave him an opportunity to own a piece of our upside. We pitched him on the idea that Halloween could become a franchise. Another merge could be to turn it into an animated show. Then there’s the Broadway play option. The podcast was essentially a pilot for a bigger entrepreneurial endeavor with us. Why would he record music for it? Well, any artists we deal with are going to take a big old advance from Universal, Sony, or Warner. That’s certainly one reason.”

It might be a bit hard to believe that Jared, the recipient of Adweek’s 2020 *Podcast Innovator of the Year* and *Podcast Producer of the Year* awards, ventured into the medium less than two years ago.

“About a year and a half ago, I went to the podcast awards for iHeart,” Jared shared. “I had a project out at the time with iHeart, and I just wanted to kick the tires. I saw this amazing group of creators getting organized in the same way that digital video people were in the early days of YouTube. It was a bit more disparate, though. There was not one big winner, like a YouTube. There were independent ways of publishing your content. There were independent producers, journalists, people with political agendas, and category-specific enthusiasts. I remember seeing Conan O’Brien there and thinking how much more robust podcasting was than I ever anticipated.

“I saw the embryonic early stages of a medium about to explode, and I figured

“What we’re really doing is trying to make the best possible entertainment the best way we know how.”

there had to be a lane in there for entertainment and music. There was no true winner in terms of platforms, despite all the competition. I knew there was sustainability in that, and that I could go off in a million different directions.”

Jared formed a thesis:

He could use audio to his advantage—he could keep people in the audio environment longer by creating exciting “Easter-egg moments” of original songs by their collaborators.

“But it’s not even as exotic or gimmicky as that sounds,” Jared clarified. “Of course, I’d love a hit song to derive from what we’re doing. And yes, we’d love for people to stream the soundtracks. But what we’re really doing is trying to make the best possible entertainment the best way we know how.

“I had worked on two musicals for big film studios and TV studios prior to starting my business. I realized I was doing 80% of the work of production by having to cast people, record music, and align with the story. And I thought, could music be the bedrock, and work backwards? Instead of writers hiring me, could I hire the showrunners and the writers to write around our music? That was the simple spark that ignited Audio Up.”

Describing 2020 as “the longest year of my life,” Jared was finishing his earn-out for Jingle Punks, which he launched in 2008. As is the case in many a personal transformation, Jared’s mindset was about to exponentially evolve.

“Before I had the money in the bank,” he said, “I used to wake up thinking somebody was trying to take from me. Anytime I collaborated with someone, I was sure he was going to step in and take over... that I was going to get fired, and I’d never get another job again. So every time there was even an ad brief, even though we had a massive team to handle it, I’d be like, ‘That’s mine.’ It got to the point where I wasn’t having a ton of fun anymore.”

While running Jingle Punks “on the sidelines,” his strong ambition made it somewhat difficult for him to keep his idea for Audio Up quiet. But as soon as he was released from the earn-out, “the dog was off the leash,” Jared said, and he started on his business plan... and, bringing his vision to fruition.

Thanks to his experience as the series



JARED

listens to



SMARTLESS

A podcast that connects and unites people from all walks of life to learn about shared experiences through thoughtful dialogue and organic hilarity.



MAKE IT UP AS WE GO

Make It Up As We Go follows the story of an aspiring young songwriter, played by Scarlett Burke, and her pursuits to make a name for herself in the music industry.



WHERE THE BODIES ARE BURIED

A first of its kind True Crime podcast from Audio Up and Grinning Dog that features renowned serial killer profiler Phil Chalmers.

creator of the *Bear and a Banjo* podcast—a show considered a “major disruptor” in the podcast realm, listed by *Variety* as “one of the best music podcasts of 2019,” and called “one of the most innovative ideas in advertising” by Fast Co—Jared already had an example of a product he would like to create in his new business. WME, the previous owners of Jingle Punk Music, were set to invest.



Photo credit: Bridget Scott



← **JACK OF ALL TRADES**

Jared (*far right*) does it all—from writing, producing, engineering, and more, as shown here on set with Machine Gun Kelly and the cast of *Halloween In Hell* (*below*) and the cast of *Valentine's Day In Hell* (*left*)

“We were closer and closer to getting the term sheets done,” Jared said, “and it was set to be an unbelievable deal day. As I was popping the champagne, COVID hit, and I got the call from WME saying they were pulling out.”

Out \$7.5M, Jared turned to MGM and Primary Wave, with whom he had worked for years in the music business. They were eager to invest and, coupled with investments from others in the audio space, Jared raised \$4.5M for his new company.

They were (literally) ready to rock.

“COVID perpetuated a re-adjustment for the whole world. For me, it calmed me down. I realized there was nothing to do besides see what happens. We started

with roughly five people, then seven, and then 10. We realized in that moment that we had raised enough money to build a recording space, but we didn’t want to get an office and put anyone in danger with COVID. So, we built a compound out in Mandeville Canyon, which is about five minutes from my house here in California. There are five studios and plenty of outdoor space.

“Through this experience, my mindset completely changed. I saw so much abundance, and I realized that there is more than enough to go around. I was surrounded by all these people who were the absolute best creative and business collaborators. We could practically read each other’s minds. I truly believe that the songwriters within our company should be stars unto themselves.”

Referring to Audio Up's massive growth in just one year, Jared said:

"We have great partnerships across the media space. Our timeline was accelerated, too, because of how much available talent there was. I put a lot of pressure on myself to open deals with big names I'd gotten to know in other mediums... Billy Bob, Miranda, Tommy Lee. These are people who sometimes take six months to get to pre-COVID."

"My whole existence over the past 12 years was setting up sessions with all these different people and spending a lot of time in the studio. To be totally frank, I'm a very collaborative person who does not like to collaborate. I think a lot of people who are introverts enjoy not having to do as much of that now. We get to focus on this huge creative opportunity, instead."

"What's happened during COVID is that I can collaborate with people doing the thing I love to do the most, which is delivering a really strong hook for a song and an open instrumental, and letting the artists go, 'Cool.'"

Jared has also been able to merge his passions as artist, storyteller, and businessman.

"I get to split my brain into three different distinct parts throughout my day. In the morning, I do music. I then switch into calm mode and do multiple Zooms. By night, I'm reading and revising scripts. I get as much excitement out of raising money and

doing the Zoom calls as I do out of writing. Sometimes, it's hard for people to categorize where I sit in the world of content. Like when I worked with Machine Gun Kelly.

"He came to my place and was like, 'Where's your engineer?' I sort of raised my hand. So then he asked, 'Who makes the music?' And I was like, 'Well, I do.' And he's like, 'Well, who wrote the script?' And I tell him I do that too, with my team. But then he was like, 'And who runs the company?' I just had to tell him, 'This is like Borscht Belt. You come in the theater, I'm going to be the ticket taker, the opening act, the guy who sells the popcorn and the one who cleans up afterward.' It's in my DNA. To scale a media business, you're going to have to create a signature brand."

"To be totally frank, I'm a very collaborative person who does not like to collaborate."



Jared has an uncanny penchant for doing so. Perhaps it's because he seamlessly combines the Rock 'n Roll lifestyle and mindset with a unique new media mentality and perspective.

Monroe Jones, Grammy-winning producer, summed it up best recently on Christopher Lochhead's podcast, *Lochhead On Marketing*:

“Podcasts are to the 2020s what Rock ‘n Roll was to the ‘60s.”

“I’m a big fan of the history of media,” Jared said, “and every media goes through interesting phases: discovery, acceptance, backlash, normality. Rock ‘n Roll in the 60’s was already novel. It already had a backlash. Then, it became mainstream. It got easier to get into the hands of people with records. It was bolstered by a technology the same way a technology bolstered the media for Rock ‘n Roll.

“This is a really, really interesting time to be in the podcasting space. It took content just as explosive as Rock ‘n Roll to get people excited about it. And really, the way to generate that excitement is to create the mythology—the fandom—around it... the sort of rock stars of the space. We saw that happen about two years ago in the true-crime space, and with Malcolm Gladwell, and before that, Serial. From there, the culture of COVID and the over-saturation of screens and devices sped the

process up. The confluence of everything happening at the same time created this brightly burning space.”

Speaking to Audio Up's “three legs of business” as podcasting first, then music/television/film, and finally, brand and advertising revenue, Jared says what makes the organization different is its connectivity to the music business and “superstreamer talent base.”

“We’re establishing a whole new frontier for how people tell their stories,” Jared shared. “I’ve seen friends who work in television toil for five years on a pilot that might never get made. I have heard many amazing ideas that might not ever come to fruition through Fox or Disney. Now, there’s a more ‘disruptive’ way in. With Audio Up, we have the ability to pilot different ideas and get very adventurous with development. It’s so exciting to have our own process of walking with scripts and getting a season up.”

One can't help but resonate with Jared's sense of excitement. The podcasting space is constantly transforming, and Jared is arguably at the forefront of its innovation. 🎧



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 Reinvention Radio 🎧



BOSE
Better sound through research



PAINFUL PIVOT:

How Markus Watson's Darkest Hour Opened New Doors Of Light

We all have a story about an experience that changed the trajectory of our life.

And while we also all likely know someone who was broken by one of those pivotal moments, some stories of tribulation actually lead to the perfect destination.

Markus Watson's story is one of the happy ones.

Watson grew up bouncing around the United States, but he calls Southern California home. As a young man with a boyish grin that the camera and audience members alike were

destined to fall in love with, Markus longed to work in Hollywood as an actor and director.

“As it turned out, I loved the idea of working in Hollywood more than actually working in Hollywood,” Watson reflected.

The thing is, while he loved working on films and award ceremonies and found talking with celebrities fun, the class-based culture that valued “stars” and “celebrities” above the people who make them look good grated on him. The last straw came when a company expected him to work for free past his scheduled time in order to renew his contract.

Out of work, Watson began looking for graduate school opportunities and landed at Fuller Theological Seminary. He thought he might try a semester and transfer out if something better came along.

“As soon as I started, though, I was like, ‘This is where I’m supposed to be,’” he remembered.

Watson enjoyed studying theology and the patristics—the lives of the early church theologians. Then, he noticed that

the school owned an Avid video editing system, which he had learned to use in his Hollywood days. He subsequently got a job in the video department and stuck around.

Still, Watson was not convinced that he wanted to be a pastor. *“My dad was a pastor,”* Watson said. *“That was his thing, and I didn’t want to feel like I was just following in his footsteps.”*

A friend encouraged him to submit his paperwork for ordination with the PCUSA (Presbyterian Church USA), and he did. But he dragged his feet on meeting the final requirements.

Then, during a Good Friday service in 2003, his pastor led the congregation in a prayer written by one of those early

church theologians—Augustine. The words *“Late have I loved you”* struck a chord in his soul as he finally admitted that God was calling him into pastoral ministry. He finished the ordination process, and by Good Friday the following year, Watson was serving his denomination at a church in Kentucky.

After a few years, Watson had an opportunity to move back to Southern California and pastor a church in San Diego. Little did

“Suffering is transformative. If we can lean into it, embrace it, and trust God through it, that’s where transformation happens.”



he know, the pivotal moment that would change his life would happen there.

Watson served the church for seven years trying to build the congregation. According to his church's policy, he took a sabbatical after seven-and-a-half years. Two weeks into it, the head of his presbytery called to inform him that an allegation of looking at pornography had been leveled against him. The situation was handled poorly by the presbytery and not according to the presbytery rules.

"I didn't know what was going on," Watson recalled. *"For the next several months, I was in a dark place."*

Worried what would happen if he lost everything because of false allegations, Watson said, *"I spent a lot of time praying and reading the Psalms of lament."* And then, one morning while praying, he sensed God telling him that even if he lost everything, no one could ever take away God's love for him.

At the conclusion of two investigations (since the first was mismanaged), Watson was cleared of any wrongdoing. The process yielded two major results:

First, Watson was forced to find his own value in God, caring more about his own growth than numbers and budgets.

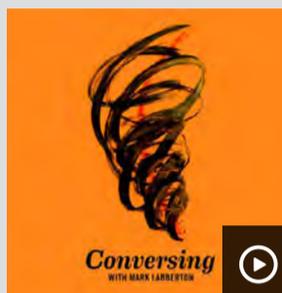
Second, his church voted him out by a margin of two votes.

Watson found work at a non-profit coaching pastors. The work was fulfilling, and a dream was planted: he wanted to



MARKUS

listens to



CONVERSING

Mark Labberton takes the occasion of his travels to speak with a broad spectrum of leaders on issues at the heart of the seminary's mission.



TRUCE

Truce is a history podcast about the Christian Church, from pyramid schemes to political campaigns.



DAN CARLIN'S HARDCORE HISTORY

In *Hardcore History*, journalist and broadcaster Dan Carlin takes his "Martian," unorthodox way of thinking and applies it to the past.

help pastors lead from a place of inner health and wholeness, which he found after his ordeal.

Podcasting could be the way, but he wasn't sure.

No longer concerned about growing his reputation or the number of church attenders, Watson returned as an interim pastor at a small church.



With a surplus of time on his hands, he decided to launch his podcast, the *Spiritual Life & Leadership* show. His message?

“Suffering is transformative,” he said. “If we can lean into it, embrace it, and trust God through it, that’s where transformation happens. For pastors, if they can lean into it, that’s where they will find what matters.”

Secretly, he hoped the efforts would be noticed by a larger entity. *“I wanted to put myself in the place of greatest opportunity,”* Watson said. *“I hoped I could do this, help churches, and make a living from it,”* Watson said.

Two-and-a-half years later, Fuller Theological Seminary reached out. The school’s Church Leadership Institute has a vision to help pastors *“lead change in a rapidly changing world,”* which aligned nicely with Watson’s passion. Rather than start a new show on their own, they wanted to adopt his established show as

the official podcast of their organization.

The vision God planted and Watson pursued was finally bearing fruit.

The first official episode of the new partnership launches on April 13, 2021 with episode #100!

“You start at the beginning, and you think, ‘Now what?’” Watson reflected. *“But eventually, it becomes, ‘I’m just going to do it no matter what anyone thinks.’ Podcasting has boosted my confidence. I don’t even get nervous anymore.”*

Perhaps the biggest lesson in Watson’s turning-point story is that God has a way of using suffering to direct us to the desire of our heart. 🎧



**Religion & Spirituality
Category Director**

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Halfway There Podcast 🎧



UNDER THE RADAR

Eric's Independent Review Of A Religion & Spirituality Podcast You Probably Haven't Heard Of... But Should Be Listening To



COMM TALK BY GEEK DEVOTIONS

The single coolest thing about the Internet is the ability of otherwise small groups of fans to find one another. It's even better when they are generally overlooked by their main communities.

Dallas and Celeste Mora are creating just such a community through their podcast *Comm Talk by Geek Devotions*. They started with a YouTube channel seeking to serve the “geek” crowd who also happened to be



Christians. Their content creation evolved into a podcast as well, allowing them to move beyond devotional content into conversations. Audio also accommodates some of their more camera-shy friends.

As I listened to *Comm Talk*, several things stood out. First, the audio quality is great, and their production schedule is regular. Second, it was clear that the Moras can talk in-depth about any geeky subject. One of the episodes was about *Godzilla* movies and another about *Dungeons & Dragons*. Their passion made both sound fun and intriguing (I may even watch that new *Godzilla vs. King Kong* movie now).

The couple's ability to link both the world of fantasy and “geek” culture with the language of Christianity has resonated with their audience.

I love mashup podcasts that puts two unrelated communities into conversation. If you geek out about other worlds and still love Jesus, this podcast is for you. 🎧



IT'S TIME TO MEET THE MUPPETS...

BROADWAY STYLE

Things were going well for Fergie L. Philippe. He had broken into Broadway as a performer in the smash hit *Hamilton*, playing the roles of Hercules Mulligan and James Madison. He had traveled with the *Hamilton* national tour and was settling into the Broadway production at the Richard Rogers Theater.

By all accounts, Fergie had arrived! After years of honing his craft as an actor, taking risks to chase his dream, and traveling the country doing what



he loved, things were all coming together.

Then Covid hit. The world watched and waited. This thing would only last a few weeks, right? As large gatherings at concerts, comedy clubs, and even on Broadway were shuttered, weeks turned into months, and months into a full year. What started as a precautionary measure on March 12th, 2020, became a new way of life.

After a year and half of touring with *Hamilton* and seven weeks on Broadway, Fergie's journey was forced in a new, temporary direction. But which direction would he go when things went sideways? South—back to Florida, accepting a position as an adjunct faculty member at the New World School of the Arts. At the same time, he worked on screenwriting and productions for his own production company, Et Toi Productions, to stay creative.

It's often in those moments of uncertainty that we find new paths for our creativity, and so it was for Fergie. On January 19th, 2021, Disney made a surprise announcement that they were releasing *The Muppet Show* to Disney+. Upon hearing the news, a spark of an idea was ignited within Fergie. Suddenly, five seasons of childhood memories were ready to be re-explored!

As Fergie put it, *"I was like, you know, this is the kind of show that could easily inspire an episode-by-episode review*



▲ Fergie (far right) performed on tour and on Broadway in the hit show *Hamilton*, before COVID-19 shut down all performances

podcast. I figured it would be really fun to kind of pair that with its release on Disney. I knew I would listen to it, if it existed.' From then on, Fergie couldn't get the idea out of his head. He went on to say: "A few days later, I kind of slapped myself and was like, 'You idiot! You have to do this now!"

In that moment, a new podcast was born.

A Childhood Passion Reborn

Fergie's fascination with acting didn't begin with a desire to become an actor on screen or stage.

It started with a simple childhood love of puppets.

"You know, I was watching tons of Sesame Street, The Muppets, Fraggle Rock, and all these other different, amazing shows with beautiful puppets, and television puppetry just struck me. It struck me in a way that I'm still deeply captivated by. So that's kind of where it started.

"I became genuinely interested in how

FERGIE'S

Muppet Favorites

FAVORITE MUPPET

"Animal."

FAVORITE GUEST

"Oh, that's rude. Um, it's between Mark Hamill and... nope. It's Harry Belafonte."



FAVORITE MOMENT

"'Turn the World Around' from the Harry Belafonte episode."

Photo credit: Wikipedia

it all worked. So when I was a kid, I was making sock puppets and gutting out stuffed animals. But eventually, I kind of moved away from that and more into acting. And I stayed in the acting genre this entire time."

As I listened to Fergie recount the stories of his childhood and how much puppets meant to him, I was reminded that many of us lose the things we are passionate about as children. We lose the sense of wonder, mystery, and excitement that drove us in our youth. There's something magical about having your youth re-lived.

"It's the nostalgia of our childhood," Fergie offered. "That seems to be where we often find safety in a 100% crazy world."

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Crazy World, Crazy Idea

Entering 2020, many of us were filled with excitement for an uncharted year. That excitement quickly soured, though, into a desire to simply push through to get to a new season—one without Covid. For some, Covid has required a retreat into simple survival. But for others, they pushed into that uncharted territory with excitement about opportunities for new, unexpected ideas and creativity.

Fergie was one of the latter, and he decided to take a risk on the crazy idea to create that show he had thought about—one that would look at every episode of *The Muppet Show*. Now, an idea is one thing, right? It's something else entirely to pitch it to a network like the Broadway Podcast Network, where he had friends, with heavyweight shows all run by the leading voices of Broadway. (What does *The Muppets* even have to do with Broadway, anyway, right?)

Still, Fergie took the risk. He reached out to his friends at the network to see what they thought of the concept. (For those wondering, the Broadway Podcast Network' started in 2019 as a destination for all those lovers of theater and the performing arts. They are quickly growing and have a large catalog of podcasts.)

Shortly after, Fergie was on a Zoom call with four-time Tony-winning producer and Emmy-Award-winning director/producer/writer Doris Berinstein.

“The day of, I was freaking out. I really



thought they were going to laugh at me and be like, ‘A Muppet podcast? Alright, buddy. Okay. Yeah, sure.’ But I pitched it, and they had the biggest smiles on their faces. They were like, ‘We have to do this.’”

When he asked Doris why she said “yes,” she responded, *“I was working for Walt Disney Imagineering when I got to work on Muppet Vision 3D. I worked with Jim Henson, so this just all just clicked in.”*

The show was greenlit on the spot, and now, Fergie is releasing new episodes each week. As per his original idea, each takes a deep look into a specific episode of *The Muppet Show*, examining the history, context, and behind-the-scenes facts while just being a lot of fun!

It's Time to Meet The Muppets is proof that ideas can spark great things. 🎧



TV & Film Category Director

Michael Woodward
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 jumbleThink 🎧

UNDER THE RADAR

Michael's Independent Review Of A TV & Film Podcast You Probably Haven't Heard Of... But Should Be Listening To



THE OFFICE DEEP DIVE WITH BRIAN BAUMGARTNER

I'm going to be honest: I've only seen a few episodes of *The Office*. There, I said it.

I never got into it the way everyone else did. But one thing that can be said about the show is that it was a cultural phenomenon in both the UK and US.

That inspired me to check out the podcast, *The Office Deep Dive with Brian Baumgartner*. And I love it! Beyond playing



Kevin on the show, Brian is also the veteran podcast host of *An Oral History of The Office*, which also happens to be about... you guessed it, *The Office*.

The new podcast is a deeper look into the show. Brian is joined by cast, crew, and friends, and each episode includes a full-length interview that shares inner workings of the show, behind-the-scenes stories, and more of the magic that made you fall in love with it in the first place. You will even find some new "Office mates" from the UK version, like Ricky Gervais, joining as guests.

What I love about the show is its in-depth nature. Each conversation is a joy to listen to. You will find yourself laughing and even learning new trivia that you can dazzle your friends with. This podcast could easily turn me into a new fan of the show. 🎧



BLACK AND HIGHLY DANGEROUS

The Oppressors’ Worst Fear!

Tyrell Connor and Daphne Penn are college professors and the hosts of *Black and Highly Dangerous*. This podcast tackles issues related to the Black community and features experts who study and research these subjects without having to read books or be in an academic classroom.

“Many of our listeners classify us as ‘Infotainment,’ because we have that casual conversation with educational materials attached to it,” Tyrell explained.

I love the name of their podcast and asked why they chose to go with it...

“Enlightenment through education is seen as the oppressors’ worst fear. If we enlighten people, then we cannot hold them back. Black and Highly Dangerous

provides knowledge to listeners, and that is dangerous to people who want to maintain the status quo!”

Tyrell and Daphne first met in graduate school at Perdue University as they were each pursuing their doctoral degrees. After they graduated, Tyrell had an idea.

“I was driving to work about an hour each way,” he said, “So I started to listen to podcasts. It dawned on me, maybe I can start one, too. I called Daphne, as she was already into the field and had thoughts of doing a podcast, too.”

“Tyrell and I already had a good working relationship,” Daphne added. “When he was the president of the Black graduate students of Purdue, I was the social secretary. We were both very interested in and passionate about not just conducting research for the sake of conducting research, but for the bigger purpose of creating change with the knowledge that we produce. Our career is in academics, but we want to have a broader impact.”

They explained how we are living during a time when misinformation is at an all-time high, and many of those focused on in studies never get to benefit from the information gained.

It was their shared motivation to tackle that misinformation that initially attracted them to the podcast platform.

“We are both first-generation college students of color. We felt kind of obligated, as we have so much access to so much information. And when we come home,

“Black and Highly Dangerous provides knowledge to listeners, and that is dangerous to people who want to maintain the status quo!”

a lot of our friends and family members don’t. We wanted to be that bridge, which also supplements what we already do as educators in a college setting,” Tyrell explained.

The podcast platform seems perfect for helping them accomplish another of their show’s mottos, too: *“Bridging the gap between academia and the people.”* They are now three years in and are looking to grow. To that end, they recently landed a book deal, and the book will follow the same format as the podcast. Its working title is *The Dark Side Of Reform*, and it is due for release toward the end of the year or in early 2022.

Their biggest challenges?

“Trying to maintain consistency,” Tyrell said. “Doing the podcast in times of personal struggle or when a lot is going on. When that happens, we have been able to cover the other, whether it was while Daphne was finishing her PhD or

something else. One statistic that Daphne and I are extremely proud of is that we have not missed one Wednesday release in three years!”

The friends also touched on an important point related to co-hosting a show versus having a solo podcast—their ability to support each other through challenges. I wondered what other ways their partnership works well for them.

“When Tyrell first approached me, I had wanted to have a podcast, but it never got off the ground. I couldn’t find the time. I could just never do it. Having a partner who is depending on you makes you show up in a way that you might not show up for yourself.”

“Plus, each person having a particular role in the production makes it easier to balance things,” Tyrell added.

“One of the things I appreciate most about Tyrell is that he’s just like, ‘Let’s dive in!’ whereas I am often a really hesitant and doubtful person. Another great part of being part of a team is that you can complement each other well. I’d still be waiting to do this and trying to make it really perfect, if things hadn’t gone the way they did.”

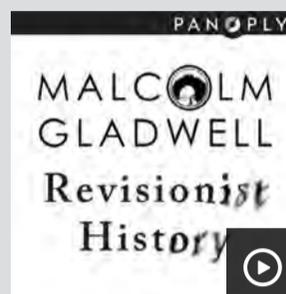
“Daphne is really good at reeling me in. She’ll say, ‘Wait, did we consider this? Did you look at this?’ Then, we usually add it to the plan before moving forward.”

Any advice for aspiring podcasters?

“A podcast is at least a part-time job... it’s fulfilling work, but it is work,” Daphne said.

TYRELL & DAPHNE

listen to



REVISIONIST HISTORY BY MALCOLM GLADWELL

Malcolm Gladwell re-examines overlooked or misunderstood historical moments, figures, and ideas.



SCIENCE VS

Wondering whether you should drink detox teas like an insta-celeb, or believe your drunk uncle’s rant about gun control? *Science Vs* has an ep for that.



THE JOE BUDDEN PODCAST

Tune into Joe Budden and his friends Rory and Mal and follow along the crazy adventures of these very random friends.

“We were both very passionate about not just conducting research, [but] creating change with the knowledge that we produce.”

So what has been their worst day in podcasting so far?

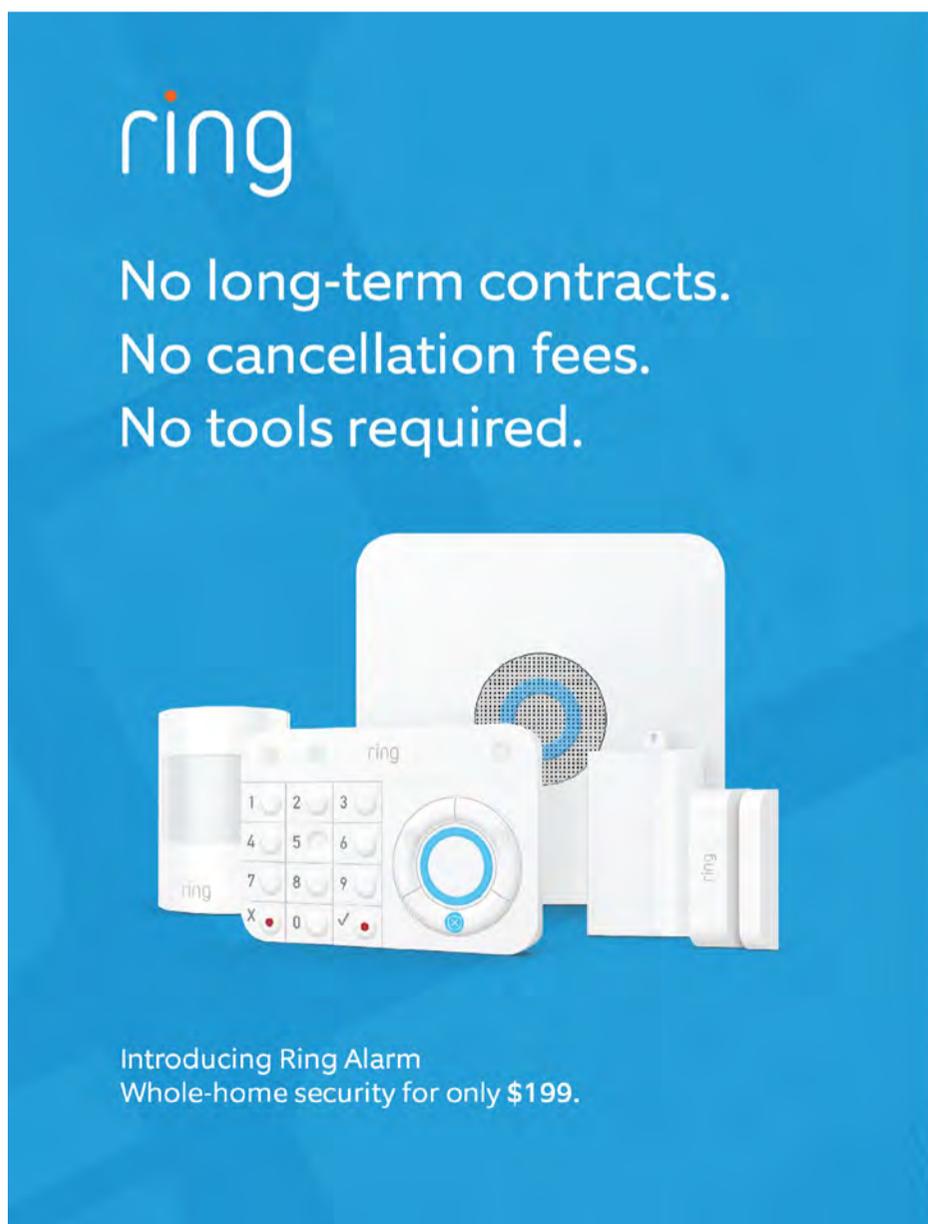
“We landed this great interview with a scholar—her work was fascinating,” Tyrell said. “At the time, we were recording it through Zencastr and usually had a backup, as well. At the end of the interview, I realized that both systems had failed. We tried to talk to her, but she didn’t want to do the interview again! We have since changed what we use, so that can’t happen again.”

With their full academic careers, I asked how they handle their different commitments and continue to come together for the podcast.

“Recording it weekly with two different

workflows was not going to work,” Tyrell explained. “We had to figure out a way to be consistent, so we decided to start stockpiling interviews. Every few months, we worked out about a two-week window during which we arranged about eight to 10 interviews—about three months of content.”

They learned as they went, tweaking and adding components like their “Old or New” segment. Originally, they used to go straight into the interviews, but that format didn’t allow their listeners to really get to know who they are. So now, before they get to the interview, they usually spend about 30 minutes just talking about the hot topics of the week. Their show now generally comes in at about an hour

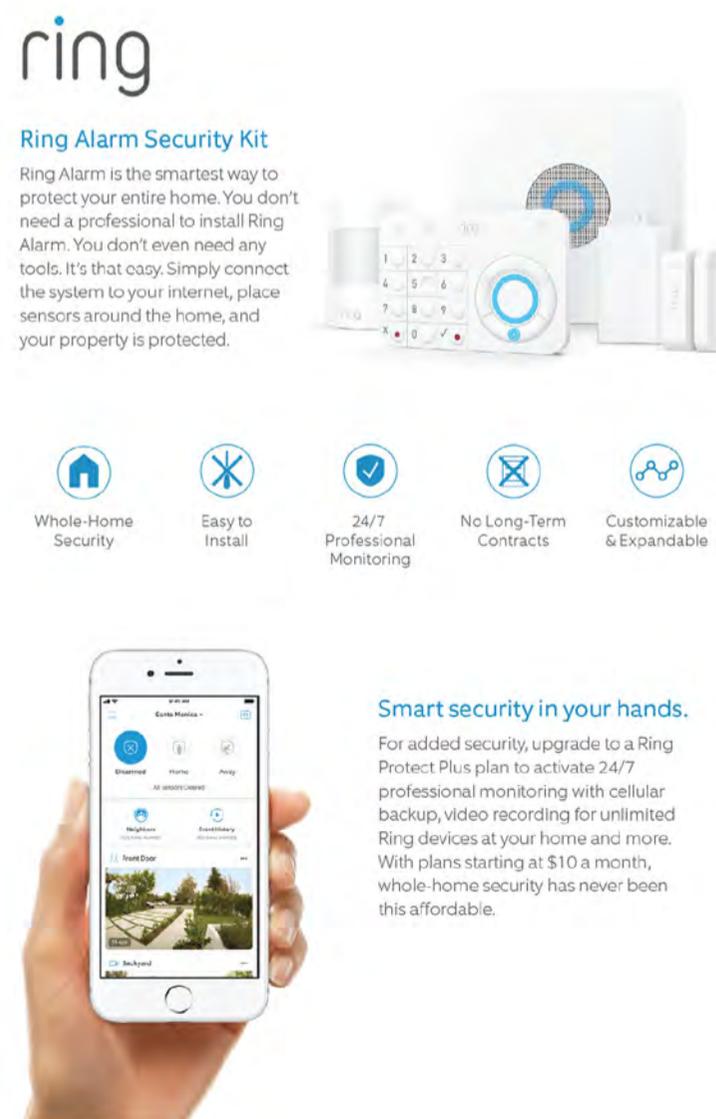


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and 15 minutes, giving listeners the option to jump straight to the guest interview or listen to their weekly discussion, too.

As the pair looks toward the future, Tyrell said:

“We want to continue to be a resource for our community. Sometimes, podcasters come into the industry seeing the big podcasts and wanting to make all this money, be full-time, etc. That can happen, but it’s usually going to be a longer journey.”

“One of the reasons I started the podcast is because I was listening to other popular podcasts expand their content to talk about other socially relevant subjects and content they didn’t have the expertise to discuss. They were reaching millions of people. With our background and knowledge, I would listen to those and often be like, ‘Ah... that’s just not accurate.’ But so many people were taking it in. I

thought, ‘You know what? Let’s create our own platform where people can come if they want to be accurately informed. And not just by music artists and celebrities, but from actual people who spend their lifetime doing this work.’”

Well said. 🗣️



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 Awaken Your Alpha 🎧

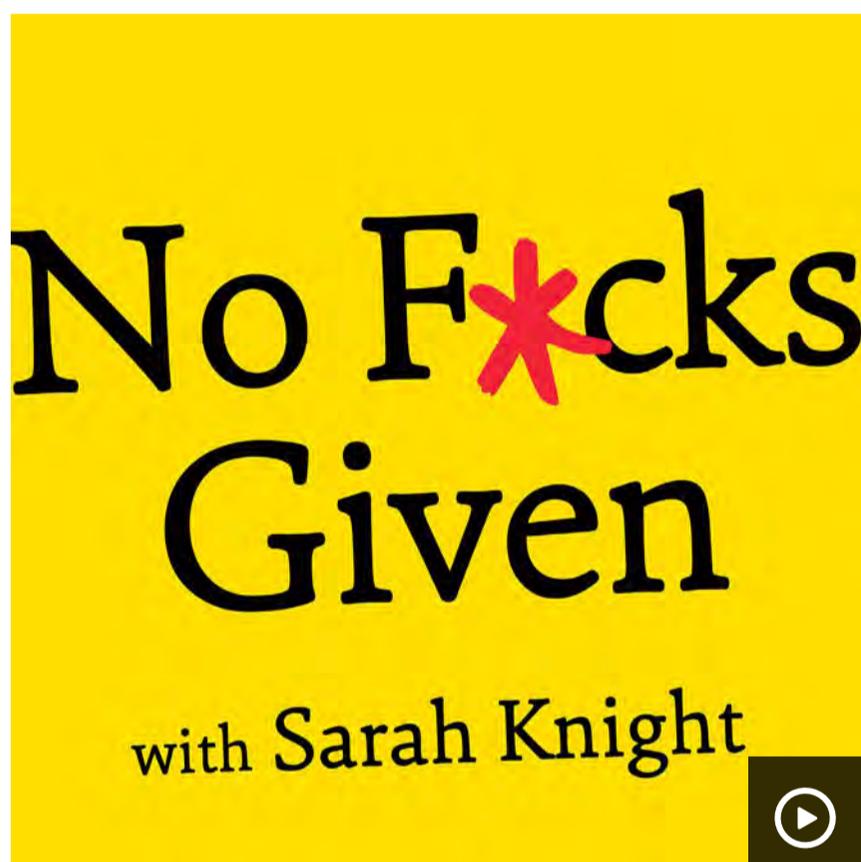
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UNDER THE RADAR

Adam's Independent Review Of An Education Podcast You Probably Haven't Heard Of... But Should Be Listening To



NO F*CKS GIVEN PODCAST

Want to stop giving a f*ck and start living your best life? *New York Times* bestselling author and “anti-guru” Sarah Knight will show you how. Millions have read and loved her *No F*cks Given Guides* (*The Life-Changing Magic of Not Giving a F*ck*, *Get Your Sh*t Together*, *Calm the F*ck Down*, etc.) and watched her 2017 TEDx Talk.

Sarah's *No F*cks Given Podcast* only launched in December 2020 and is roughly 10 episodes in at this point. I am sure you can imagine



from the above paragraph and number of F-bombs dropped that you are either going to gravitate to her style or be repelled by it. If it makes you cringe, surprise... do not listen to the podcast.

The show boasts a huge majority of five-star reviews; however, the second most-received rating is the one-star, with some reference to language and being rude. I believe the clue is in the podcast title (and almost every episode title so far) and have to wonder why those people listened in the first place!

IF you are not easily offended, listen in for tips and techniques to improve your daily life—on topics ranging from getting organized and setting boundaries to building confidence, banishing guilt, managing anxiety, and much more. 🎧



▶ INTERVIEW

COMEDY

WHAT'S IN YOUR BAG?

**Lewis B,
Submerging
Listeners In
His World**

Lewis B (*below*)
with co-hosts
Saadia and Jide



In the 1998 movie *The Truman Show*, Jim Carrey plays the character Truman Burbank. The movie's premise is that every move of Truman's life is entirely orchestrated and broadcasted to the world using hidden cameras. Every second of his every day is caught on camera and shared.

Now imagine choosing to put yourself in that exact position—one in which you voluntarily offer to record things like every silly conversation you have with your friends.

Lewis B had the thought of recording his conversations with his buddies while working at Jimmy Johns. He was also inspired by Joe Budden's podcast, which he loved—especially in how it captured the great chemistry between a bunch of friends just hanging out.

“At Jimmy John's, every day felt like a podcast episode. Every day was just full of really silly conversations, whether about relationships we were in, music that had come out, or whatever was going on in the world. So, one day I realized that there should be no moment when we weren't recording. We just needed to do it.”

Lewis took a leap of faith and recorded his first episode of *What's in My Bag?* the Saturday following his college graduation. The original podcast crew consisted of Lewis, Kevin Robinson, and Jide. They had a phenomenal run, producing over 50+ episodes and lots of memorable moments. When

“At the end of the day, I love being in this realm and space. I love podcasting.”

Lewis's friend Kevin went on to pursue other ventures, Lewis and Jide decided to bring a new voice into the mix to diversify perspectives. Their choice, Saadia, brought a much-needed energy to the show as one firm in her opinions and ready and willing to put the men in check when needed.

“Saadia broadens the horizon a little bit, and kind of softens things up. She also levels with us. When you actually listen in, you'll hear the chemistry between friends, not just three people thrown into a room and told to talk about things.”

That chemistry is undeniable, and these hosts have come a long way in their podcasting journey. Their first episode was actually called “Graduation.”

“It's so funny to listen to; it was complete trash. When I listened back, the sound was just terrible. With that as the starting point, we had nowhere to go but up,” Lewis reflected.

Lewis likes to think of himself as just a

“One day I realized that there should be no moment when we weren’t recording. We just needed to do it.”

“basic” guy and refers to the podcast as his “outlet.”

“I’m actually known as a person not big on talking. When people find out I have a podcast, they always say, ‘But you’re not a talker.’ As an introvert, this is a way to be an extrovert, using technology. At the end of the day, I love being in this realm and space. I love podcasting. And I love getting to laugh and talk with my friends every week.”

Which explains the title of his show—*What’s in My Bag?* It’s a form of slang that, according to Lewis, means “How are you doing today? What do you got going on? How are you feeling?”

And that’s how Lewis sets his show up every week—“By just asking, ‘What’s in my bag?’ he said.

“We pull out the most random topics, ranging from relationships to sex to money to just things in life. I create an environment



to make people feel like they’re in on a conversation, which they are.

“I think the biggest thing that you can do in podcasting, and the best way to attract a crowd, is to fully submerge them in your world. I know it’s three of us behind the mic, but I want it to feel as though there’s a fourth in the room—the listener, sitting right there on our couch with us.”

Lewis is driven to forge his own path wherever he goes, but not just for himself. He wants to make a path for the people who believe in him, too, and feels very blessed for each of them.

This man of action shared with me his vision for the show:



“With COVID-19, I’m not sure how things are gonna go. I would love to do a live podcast just to get the feel for it. But for now, I just want to keep growing the show, so that more ears get to hear it. I just want more eyes on us, and in the next year, we will have that. We’ll get on more minds. You’ll see us on those Top 50 podcast lists. We’ll be making noise. My network will be in full effect, and I’ll have artists banging on my door to do interviews and music videos.”

Lewis also believes there is room in the podcasting space for everyone.

“We can all exist and thrive here together. We can collaborate. I’m even excited to be talked about behind my back,” Lewis laughed.

Wondering what’s in the bag for Lewis and his crew? Only time will tell, but you can listen to his journey as you ride along with him by tuning into his show. 📍



Comedy Category Director

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Living the Law of Action Show 📍

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UNDER THE RADAR

Rob's Independent Review Of A Comedy Podcast You Probably Haven't Heard Of... But Should Be Listening To



FITZDOG RADIO

In podcasting, if you can produce six shows, then you have accomplished something. When you hit 100 shows, that is a significant milestone.

For 13 years, Greg Fitzsimmons has been hosting *Fitzdog Radio*, and I just discovered his 900th episode.

Greg has achieved success as a stand-up comic, an Emmy-Award-winning writer, and host on TV, radio, and of course, his podcast.



A regular on *Conan O'Brien* and *Jimmy Kimmel*, Greg has made more than 50 visits to *The Howard Stern Show*.

Even today, he is performing live across the country.

One of my favorite episodes is the one with Lewis Black. In fact, after listening to it, I decided to include Lewis Black's podcast in this issue in the off-the-charts segment.

If you are a fan of the hit TV show *Full House*, listen to *Fitzdog Radio* to see Bob Saget in a whole different light in his episode. He talks about religion and NYC's public access to porn in the 80s.

A few of the many guests over the 900 plus run that caught my ear: Zach Galifianakis, Judd Apatow, Dave Attel, Louis CK, and so many more. Congratulations Greg! Here's to 900 more shows. 🎧

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▶ INTERVIEW

SOCIETY & CULTURE

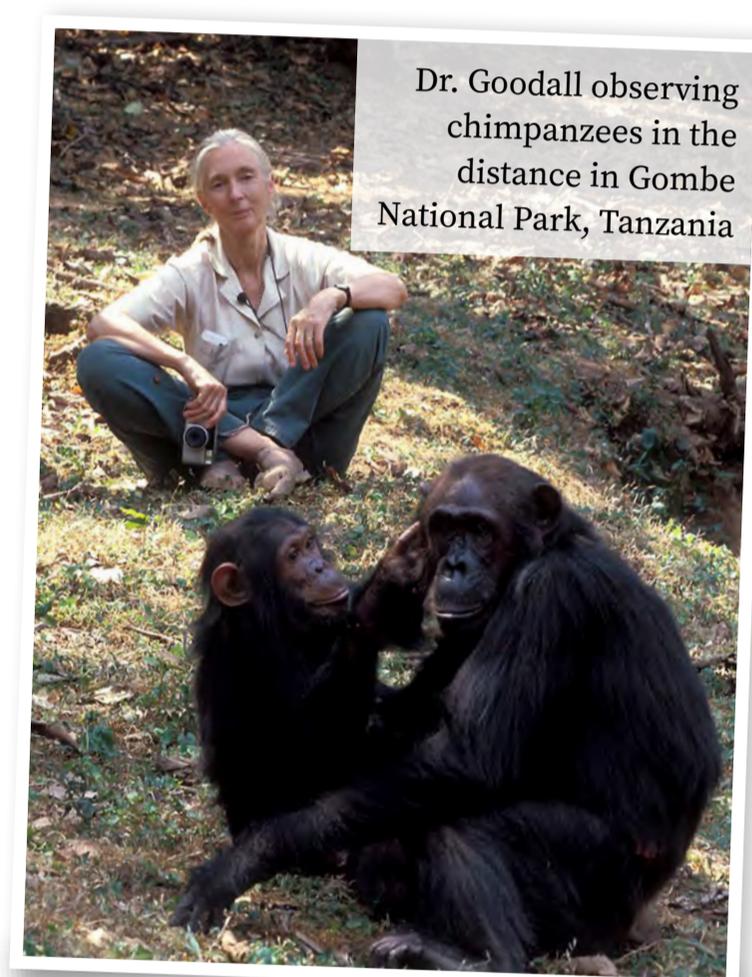
**“We depend
upon the web
of life, and
we separate
ourselves from
it to our peril.”**

JANE GOODALL'S HOPECAST:

What Is YOUR Greatest Reason For Hope?

Primatologist, anthropologist, and activist Dr. Jane Goodall's research with chimpanzees is considered one of the greatest contributions to science in the 20th century. She graced the cover of the *National Geographic* in 1963, and her work is taught to students of sociology and anthropology throughout the country, which is how I learned of her in college. (Readers unfamiliar with Jane's story are invited to visit the Jane Goodall Institute online for detailed information about her research and life's work.)

Pre-pandemic, Jane was still traveling globally, 300 days a year, at 86 years old. But as Covid began sweeping the world, she went into lockdown in her childhood home in Bournemouth, England. Like so many of us, she adjusted and pivoted, personally and professionally.



Dr. Goodall observing chimpanzees in the distance in Gombe National Park, Tanzania

It's no surprise that Jane was concerned about chimpanzees catching Covid, too... so, the Jane Goodall Institute set out to help.

"JGI began in 1974. We now have an institute in 24 countries, and they are all independent NGOs. But they all share a mission statement and have signed the charter. We also have the global Jane Goodall Institute,



← A LIFETIME OF DEDICATION

Jane has been immersed in the study of chimpanzees for over 60 years

which is mainly to coordinate and make sure that our sprawling family behaves itself,” Jane jokes.

“I’ve also started the Jane Goodall Legacy Foundation, which aims to develop an endowment that will allow my work to go on when I’ve gone. It’s meant to be there when there’s an emergency and one of the Institutes desperately needs funding. For example, with the pandemic, we of course had to try and protect the chimps. And that meant getting gowns and masks and sterilizers to all our staff and laying some of them off. We wanted to pay them, so we could bring them back when lockdown was finished. There were many unbudgeted expenses.

“We’ve been praying that Covid won’t reach the two sanctuaries for orphan chimps. It’s been relatively easy to control there. But in a national park, with wild chimps, there’s only so much that can be done. We can’t stop them from going out to the villages. We can’t stop women from going into the forest to collect firewood. Touch wood—so far, we’ve seen

no infections. We monitor them, so we know there’s no sicknesses.”

While many used their time in lockdown as a respite from the hustle and bustle of commuting and traveling, others, like Jane, took on the new venture of podcasting. (In fact, the number of podcasts grew from 850,000 in January 2020 to nearly 2,000,000 in January 2021.)

Recalling her team’s encouragement, Jane says:

“When they proposed I host a podcast, I thought it was a good idea. I was unable to travel and lecture, so we decided to create a virtual Jane. And virtual Jane has been about three times busier. Traveling 300 days a year was exhausting, but being virtual Jane is much more so. It’s hard on the eyes; it’s hard on the voice. I didn’t even take a Christmas break. There are non-stop Zooms, Skypes, podcasts, webinars, and lectures. And giving a lecture to a spot above the laptop is very different from an auditorium full of excited people.

However, virtual Jane has been able to reach millions more people!”

Jane had of course been a guest on several people’s podcasts, so podcasting wasn’t completely unfamiliar to her. She and her team knew they wanted to provide diverse perspectives from inspirational changemakers while being inclusive. To make sure they did so successfully, they sought guidance from podcaster extraordinaires like Tim Ferris, Krista Tippett, Kara Swisher, and Guy Kawasaki.

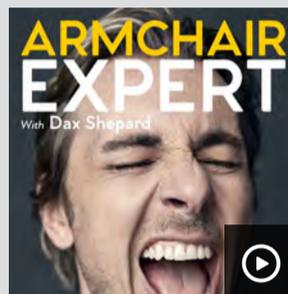
They officially launched *The Jane Goodall Hopecast* on December 30, 2020, just in time for New Years!

The word “Hopecast” embodies the principles and message Jane shares with the world... all centered around the interrelatedness of the web of life:

“Everything’s interconnected,” Jane shares. “You’ve heard about climate change and the climate crisis. That’s come about because we’ve totally disrespected the natural world. We have the absurd idea that we can have unlimited economic development on a planet with finite natural resources. In some areas, resources are used up faster than nature can replenish them. We’ve got a growing human population. And we’ve got dire poverty in many parts of the world, which causes people to destroy their environments in order to live—they do what’s cheapest. And then we’ve got the rest of the population living unsustainable lifestyles. The planet can’t take it much longer. We depend upon the

JANE

listens to



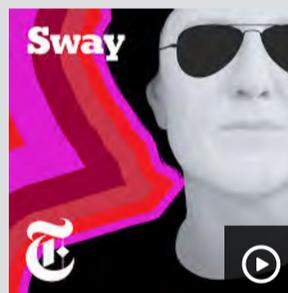
ARMCHAIR EXPERT WITH DAX SHEPARD

A podcast interviewing celebrities as well as journalists and academics about “the messiness of being human.”



GUY KAWASAKI'S REMARKABLE PEOPLE

Features interviews with thought leaders, legends, and iconoclasts.



SWAY

Taking on Washington, Hollywood, and the world, Kara Swisher investigates power: who has it, who’s been denied it, and who dares to defy it.

web of life, and we separate ourselves from it to our peril. In fact, we need nature. It’s been shown that when nature is brought into a city, crime rates go down. There are less mental health issues and even less physical health issues. People are happier, and work performance goes up. Children especially need nature for good psychological development.”



Jane's gift of being a natural storyteller made hosting a show an easy transition. She believes she inherited that from her Welsh grandfather.

"It started with writing," she reflects. "I was writing stories when I was four. My mother wrote them down for me, though. Remember, when I was growing up, there was no television. I grew up in the war. And of course, the war was filled with stories of heroism, as well as those of horror. Storytelling came naturally to me."

Unlike many podcasters just starting out, Jane didn't have to worry about growing her audience right out of the gate. She already had a global audience and social media presence.

"I don't do any of those things," Jane shares. "The institute does them for me. I do emails and video messages and things like that. But I absolutely don't have time for social media. Each of the JGIs [Jane Goodall Institutes] has their own social media setup."

What Jane does love doing, though, is inspiring and empowering young people.

"I spend so much energy on our grassroots youth program, Roots & Shoots, which is in over 68 countries now, including five African countries, China, North and South America, and other parts of Asia and Europe. It's tremendously important. We've got members attending university, and a lot of alumni, because it began in 1991 with high school students. And now, they're out there in decision-making positions as parents, teachers, politicians, and lawyers. The program is for everybody. Participants choose from three projects: help people, help animals, or help the environment. The projects vary depending upon the country."

Getting guests for the *Hopecast* hasn't been difficult, but like most podcasters, Jane has a list of dream bookings: *"Craig Foster, of the film My Octopus Teacher. I would also like to have Yo-Yo Ma, and President Macron, because I think he's got some really, really good ideas. We*

"I spend so much energy on our grassroots youth program, Roots & Shoots... it's tremendously important."

Dr. Goodall with members of the Roots & Shoots program at a festival in San Francisco





haven't asked him yet, but I would really like him to be on the podcast."

To build community during Covid, a special feature of the podcast is titled "Mailbag Tuesdays." With it, a "Hopecaster" (members of Jane's community) can leave a recorded question or message of hope for Jane, and Jane responds to them on the podcast.

While the past year has kept Jane in her childhood home, she did make one new magical friend.

"I have my lunch with an English robin redbreast. It's most extraordinary. He comes to lunch, out under my favorite tree, that I used to climb as a child. My lunch is half a bit of toast and a bit of cheese. And maybe a piece of broccoli; it's very small. And the robin comes and sits on this low branch and takes a little bit of food before just sitting there for 10 minutes. And I sing nonsense to him

or her, I can't tell. And he puts his head to one side and then the other, and he listens to me and occasionally sings back. It's a charming duet that lasts not more than five minutes, but we've been doing it every day since April, except for the three days he missed."

Celebrating her 87th birthday on April 3, Jane offers you, *Podcast Magazine*[®] readers, the same advice she offers all human beings on this walk of life:

"The most important thing of all is to remember that every single one of us makes an impact on the planet every single day. And we have a choice as to what sort of impact we make. What do we buy? How is it made? Does it harm the environment? Was it cruel to animals? Is it cheap because of child slave labor or sweatshops? If billions of people begin making ethical choices, then we have a chance.

"The main thing is hope. If we have none, then that's the end. Because if you don't hope that what you're doing is going to make a difference, why would you bother to do it? Giving people hope encourages them to take action. And if we don't take action, we're going to fail, and our future on this planet will be limited." 🗣️



Society & Culture Category Director

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Embracing Courage 🎧



UNDER THE RADAR

Gin's Independent Review Of A Society & Culture Podcast You Probably Haven't Heard Of... But Should Be Listening To



BAGGAGE CLAIM

If I were to believe my Instagram feed, there would be no doubt in my mind that everyone is able to work on a laptop from some remote, exotic beach location.

Enter the *Baggage Claim* podcast hosted by Will Conway.

Will describes his podcast as the “gritty, real story of what happens when a man-child follows one too many travel ‘influencers’ on Instagram, mumbles ‘Hey, I can travel, too,’ in the mirror, and strikes out for adventure.”

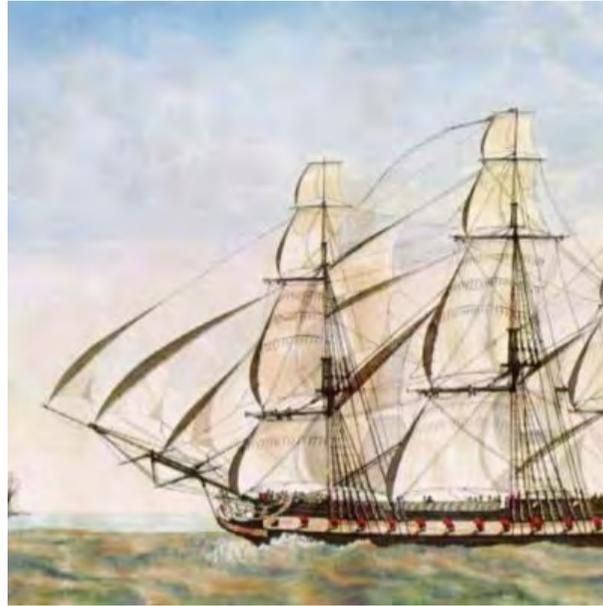
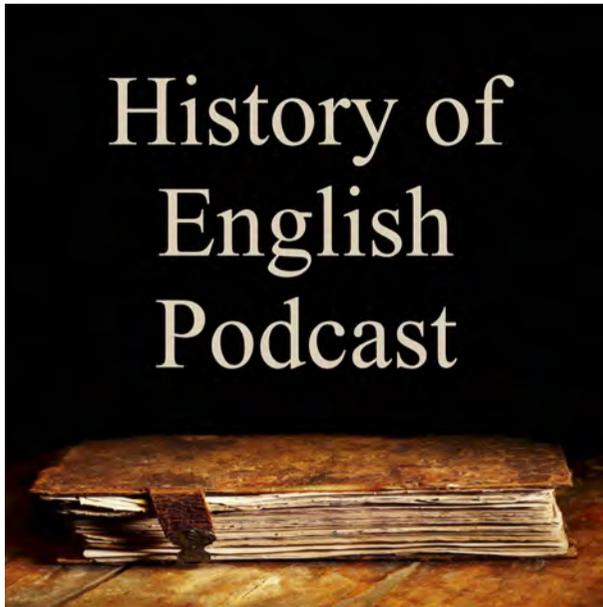


In 2019, Will bought a one-way ticket to Columbia and left everything behind. The podcast chronicles his adventures.

Will is a masterful storyteller, and with the addition of sound effects, the listener is immersed into the experience. There were moments I forgot I was listening to a recollection of past experiences versus real-time reportings. Will's vivid descriptions make listeners feel like his traveling companion.

The episodes are short and bingeable, and each left me eager for Will's next adventure. The self-awareness and observations Will shares about himself and his experiences add an extra layer of depth to his stories. Some of the experiences he has shared so far are borderline frightening.

A unique addition to the *Baggage Claim* podcast is the ability for listeners to text in their questions, which Will then answers on the following episode. Will is building a community of raving fans, and I'm planning on joining in the fun! 🎧



History

Actually Comes aLIVE!

A few years ago, I attended Playlist Live in Washington D.C. Here's a conference of YouTubers for fans...

Perhaps I should be clearer. I took my son, Cole, to Playlist Live along with a few hundred other parents so our kids could get super excited about seeing the YouTubers they follow in person.

Obviously, that was pre-Covid.



But while I was there, it dawned on me that the event doesn't really exist for adults.

That's where the evolution of podcasting has outpaced other media.

Podcasts like *Lore* and *IMomSoHard* have already done nationwide tours giving fans a chance to see them in person. Dave Ramsey has a "porch" where you can watch live tapings. And there's a hotel in Nashville, TN, that has a podcast recording booth off the main lobby that people can sit and watch... perhaps instead of a piano player.

Now that the world is Zoom friendly and online summits, classes, meetings, and coaching sessions are commonplace, you can *also* brew your favorite cup of coffee and get closer to your favorite history podcasters.

This month, the Intelligent Speech Conference will come to your living room and feature the podcasters behind *History of England*, *Whatifalhist*, *10 American Presidents*, *History of Italy Podcast*, *Everything Everywhere Daily*, *Pontifacts*, *Making Gay History*, and a bunch more.

What makes the Intelligent Speech Conference better than just checking YouTube for talks by your favorite podcasters is the Q&A period following each session. For instance, last year Kevin Stroud, from *The History of English Podcast*, spoke for 20 minutes before entertaining questions for another 20 minutes.

He answered questions about common

The Intelligent Speech Conference will come to your living room and feature podcasters from some of the top History podcasts.



A MEETING OF THE MINDS IN 2020

(left to right) Kevin Stroud of *The History of English Podcast*, David Crowther of *History of England Podcast*, Jenny Williamson of *Ancient History Fangirl Podcast*, and Mike Duncan of *History of Rome Podcast*

challenges he gets from listeners, accents people speak with, the books he reads and gets inspiration from, and maybe the most interesting of all... "Where do you see the future of the English language headed?"

If you're a true history buff who really loves learning, talking, and reading about history, there isn't really another place you can have conversations like these with history podcast experts.

To whet your whistle, on the schedule this month are topics like:

- Jamie Redfern uses the Second Punic War and the Seven Years War to demonstrate how selective inclusion of facts can change a narrative, revealing stories and voices hidden in plain sight.
- Mary Tudor is remembered even today as “Bloody Mary” for her persecution of Protestants during her short reign. But fewer people understand how precarious the Catholic situation was under Elizabeth I.
- The hosts of *Pontifacts* dig into a topic that is often deliberately hidden: children fathered by Popes!

- As the country grapples with the effects of racism and discrimination, being LGBTQ+ in an already marginalized racial/ethnic community increases the need to fight doubly hard for inclusion and against discrimination.

If you're interested in really digging into the nitty gritty of history and being part of some amazing conversations, The Intelligent Speech Conference takes place April 24 starting at 10 am eastern. Head over to IntelligentSpeechConference.com to grab a ticket. 🎟



History Category Director

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Hinge





UNDER THE RADAR

Dan's Independent Review Of A History Podcast You Probably Haven't Heard Of... But Should Be Listening To



10 AMERICAN PRESIDENTS

I've been a fan of *The Mandalorian* TV show since it began on Disney+. What caught my attention more than the *Star Wars* tie-in, though, was the way it would be filmed.

Jon Favreau decided he'd bring in a team of directors, and each one would take on a different episode. But all five were there for the making of each, so there remained a continuity between episodes while each being singularly quite unique.

And I couldn't believe it when it landed in my lap,



but I found a podcast with a similar structure.

10 American Presidents is the brainchild of Roifield Brown. Roifield is no rookie to podcasting, as he has several others. But for *10 American Presidents*, he's decided to flex his creative muscles.

Like *The Mandalorian*, Roifield has created a team. Each member becomes the host of his or her own show. We're not talking about amateur hosts here either: Dan Carlin is the host of the very first show about Nixon, and later, Mike Duncan, David Pietrusza, and Kevin Stroud each take a turn.

It's almost as if *10 American Presidents* is really *The Greatest Hits of History Podcast*. Back in the days of tapes and CD's, I could see it being with the soundtracks or compilation albums.

If you're looking to get some real deep-dive information about our presidents and sample some of the best podcasters out there at the same time, I'd say *10 American Presidents* is your bailiwick. 🎧

ELAINE BEST'S ANGUS EYE TEA PODCAST

Sharing Her Mental Health Journey So Others Don't Feel Alone

Elaine Best, who was a fan of NPR and loyal listener of their podcasts, assumed *all* podcasts were about news and financial tips. It wasn't until a friend introduced her to *My Favorite Murder*, a podcast that blends comedy with true crime, that she learned differently. Not only that, but listening to *My Favorite Murder* reignited Elaine's spark of interest in writing for her blog as an outlet for her creativity:

"At that point in my life," Elaine remembers, "I was in a creative lull. I have always loved writing, but I had quit doing it. So when podcasting re-motivated me to write, the idea of doing my own podcast occurred to me. I didn't know a single person who had ever done one. At that time, I thought

only corporations or people with a team could have one.”

Elaine began researching how podcasting works and sharing her plans with her co-workers.

“One of them liked to ‘bully’ people into following their dreams. I was 23 years old at the time I told her, ‘I might do a podcast.’ And she said, ‘Do it. What’s stopping you?’ I replied, ‘Oh... I guess nothing is stopping me.’”

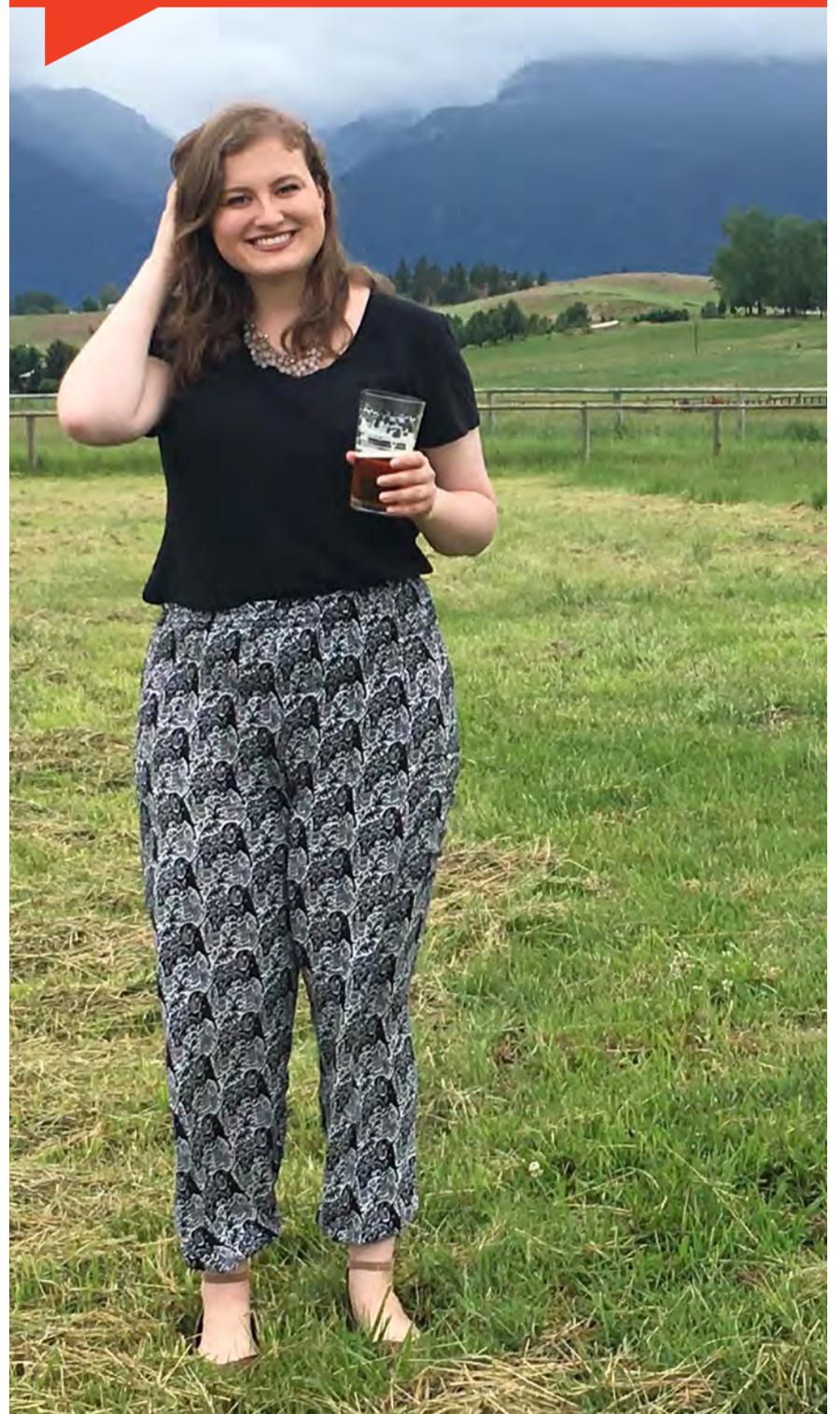
And so Elaine moved forward into what she refers to as *“the most difficult part of the process”*: choosing the topic.

“My delivery has always been comedic, and I knew I wanted it to be lighthearted. But what I needed to talk about at that time was my experiences. And at that point, my life was shadowed by anxiety and depression. So I decided I could talk about mental health.”

Elaine’s mental health recovery journey began in college. She barely remembers her freshman year, but does recall her realization of the need to make changes in her life for her sophomore year hitting her over the summer break prior. She made new friends and recalls one of them telling her that she might have an anxiety disorder.

In Elaine’s junior year of college, she went to Ireland and enjoyed her time away from *“real life.”* When she returned to campus for her senior year, though, she realized she needed help and went to see the campus counselor. She recalls:

“My diagnosis springboarded my official mental health journey, and that is when I actually started working on it and getting better at understanding myself.”



“That’s when I was diagnosed with generalized anxiety and depression. I felt so relieved! I finally had a name for what I had been feeling other than the awful names I had given myself for experiencing it: I was weak. I just wasn’t able to do things other people could, and that was all on me. My diagnosis springboarded my official mental health journey, and that is when I actually started working on it and getting better at understanding myself. That’s when I started calling myself a ‘warrior.’”

Hindsight is always 20/20, but Elaine now recognizes that she always felt anxious—she just thought it was something she would need to live with.

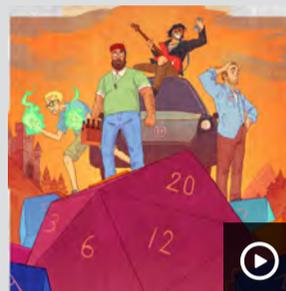
“I was anxious walking to the dining hall by myself and opening the door. If I had to meet people who were already at the dining hall, it caused me panic. It’s wild to look back and see how anxious I was. I don’t know how I was functioning, or how I got through the day. In the morning, I would analyze which sidewalks to go down. I wore sunglasses so I didn’t have to make eye contact with people on the street. When every single choice you make has such high stakes, you become immobile. I never considered going to the doctor, let alone walking down to the Wellness Center to talk about how I was feeling. It never even occurred to me. I just thought that was my lot in life as a high-functioning anxious person.”

With a diagnosis in place and medication, Elaine began reclaiming her life.

“When I was originally diagnosed with

ELAINE

listens to



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FABLED COLLECTIVE

Fabled Collective explores mysteries, legends, myths, lore, ghosts, and fairy tales. We mix both fact and fiction. We’ll tell you a story, and then we’ll tell you the truth.

anxiety and depression, I couldn’t find anything that I could relate to. I wanted to connect with someone who was going through the same things as me. While I found medical journals interesting because I loved understanding the science, it felt distancing, being all numbers and facts. And on the other side of science, everything I found felt like marketing fluff—I call it ‘the Pinterest bubble bath side,’ and it was also distancing. It felt like

a sugarcoating of the subject of mental health. I wanted someone to be real and sassy with me. And since I didn't find anyone out there, I decided I would be her, and create that podcast."

One of the items required to start a podcast is a quality microphone. Elaine laughed as she recounted how she finally got hers.

"Every time there's a holiday, my grandfather asks me to email him a list of present ideas. So when he asked me for my birthday list, I provided him with a list of books and decided to add the microphone to it. Lo and behold, that's what he got me! At that point, I realized I didn't have any excuses left."

Elaine named her show *Angus Eye Tea*—a fun play on the word "anxiety." When it came to her, she distinctly remembers thinking, *"This is the dumbest creation—the dumbest words that have ever left my mouth. And because of that, it felt perfect."*

She also moved, started a new job she enjoyed, and made new friends. She even enrolled in an improv comedy class and performed on stage! She was truly enjoying her new lease on life. Unfortunately, that smooth sailing wouldn't last.

"I signed up for a second improv class, but didn't end up going," she says. "I was on my third type of antidepressants, and it wasn't going well. I was too scared to go. I still love improv, but even now, I am kind of afraid to get back into it."

Elaine's doctor increased her medication



dose, and Elaine says, *"I felt really great. At first, it was like sunshine and rainbows. I thought, 'Oh my gosh... this is what happiness is! This is lovely! I have energy!' When you're depressed, you don't have energy, and I finally had it. I was cleaning my house, doing laundry. Life was great!"*

But then, Elaine's depression returned again.

"These lows would come wash over me. I would tell myself that the depression would go away—that I was gonna go back up again. I didn't notice a pattern. I just thought that was what my life was. But about every three to four days, I'd be very energetic. And then for the next three days, incredibly low. I might have a handful of normal days. But it got to the point where I'd wake up and immediately ask myself, 'Am I going to be depressed today? Or am I going to feel okay?'"

In late 2019, it was becoming clear to Elaine that something wasn't right. She was experiencing brain fog and couldn't function as she once was able. She spoke with her general practitioner, who suggested she see a psychiatrist. Elaine recounts:

ANGUS EYE TEA



THE PODCAST ABOUT ANXIETY,
DEPRESSION & OTHER CHEERFUL TOPICS



“It was scary to look up a psychiatrist and make an appointment. I was thinking maybe I was just on the wrong medication. But it did make sense to go to somebody who focused on mental health medication. So, I go to the appointment, and I’m sitting there on the couch. After I answer some questions, the doctor says, ‘I think you have bipolar II disorder.’ I don’t remember the rest of the appointment. I zoned out. I was thinking that those words and diagnosis were the one thing you didn’t want to hear. When I got the anxiety and depression diagnosis, I felt relieved. When I was told I was bipolar, I felt like the world had ended.”

Elaine openly shared her new diagnosis on her podcast. *“I like to do that a lot,”* she says. *“If I declare it to the world, I can’t avoid the topic. I have to process it in my head.”* She is thankful for the support she receives from her listeners.

However, she hasn’t shared her podcast with her family and had even considered podcasting under a pseudonym.

“Many people have projects they want to do, but they are worried about what their family will think. My whole philosophy is that as long as you aren’t actively slandering someone, your story is yours, and you have the right to share it. I thought about a stage name, but I have been gifted the last name ‘Best’! For the life of me, I can’t let that go. I try to live up to it every day.”

In January 2021, Elaine quit her job and began her life sabbatical. She’s spending her time planning a second podcast, which debuts on April 1. Her two dream guests for both of her podcasts are Brene Brown and Amy Poehler.

As Elaine bravely shares her mental health journey with the world via *Angus Eye Tea*, she has a message for you, *Podcast Magazine*[®] readers:

“Mental health is unique for each person. You might feel like something isn’t right, but that it’s not worth going to a doctor for. But it doesn’t hurt to go. No one will be mad at you for going. And most times, our intuition is right, so follow through with it. Even though it’s scary to face some things, addressing your mental health makes life so much better. Then, you can move with it, instead of against it. And as cheesy as it sounds, you are never alone.” 🗣️



Health & Fitness Category Director

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Embracing Courage 🎧



UNDER THE RADAR

Gin's Independent Review Of A Health & Fitness Podcast You Probably Haven't Heard Of... But Should Be Listening To



PTSD AND BEYOND

What do you think of when you hear “PTSD” or “Post-Traumatic Stress”? Do you immediately imagine military veterans returning from wars?

According to the Mayo Clinic, there are over three million diagnosed cases of PTSD in the US, and NIH studies demonstrate that between 13-30% of veterans have been diagnosed with it.

PTSD and Beyond is a podcast that provides a wholistic understanding of PTSD. Host Dr. Deb Lindh received a diagnosis and



prescription for PTSD as a result of childhood abuse. From there, she went on a quest for healing modalities and techniques. As a result, she began a weekly Twitter chat, #PTSDandBeyond, wrote a book, appeared on television shows, and started her podcast.

While the podcast is a resource and empowerment tool for people with PTSD, it provides insight for allies, too. Dr. Deb's guests are professionals or peers, and each episode exposes the listener to a different aspect of post-traumatic stress disorder. Some of the episodes are personal, and Dr. Deb often shares how she deals with triggers in her daily life. Her voice is warm and compassionate; she freely drops F-bombs and laughs often.

This podcast takes a mental health condition and removes the stigma from the diagnosis. There is a great balance between knowledge sharing and experience sharing. If you know someone who lives with PTSD, this podcast is a valuable tool for support and advocacy. 🎧

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MONICA LIVINGSTON

Woman's Professional
Football Hall-of-
Famer-Turned-
Podcaster



Monica D. Livingston, retired League All Star running back and Hall of Fame Offensive MVP with The DC Divas of the WFA, has spoken to tens of thousands of people all over the country. She has presented for national organizations such as the NBA, NFL, MLB, FedEx, YMCA, and the National Institutes of Health, as well as for international groups from Russia, Ghana, and Zambia.

Yet she never thought she would find herself in her current speaking or podcasting career.

Growing up in a “*sports family*,” Monica always wanted to be a professional basketball player. “*My dad was a teacher and college football coach*,” Monica said. “*So, sports have always been a part of my life in some way.*”

Monica was an All-County basketball player and played Division 1 college basketball at UMBC for a season before suffering an injury that ended that playing experience. But the next season, she enrolled in Washington Bible College to play basketball while still going full-time at UMBC. She had several scoring records at WBC, including most points scored in a game and season.

After graduating with a degree in Sports Management, Monica quickly discovered that said degree would really only lead her to work in local pro team ticket sales and the like. So, she decided to go into education, like her father, due to the connection between sports and education. Monica became a teacher,

“My dad was a teacher and college ball coach, as well... sports has always been a part of my life in some way.”

athletic director, and coach at a private Christian school. During that experience, she learned how to be a leader on and off the court. She recalled her first day teaching a Kindergarten class:

“Their parents were crying because it was the first day. The kids were crying because, well, they were in Kindergarten for the first time. Chaos was about to ensue. Panic was starting to set in... and then I remembered the advice my dad had given me the night before—to have them hold hands. So, I did, and somehow, they all settled in, and it worked out.”

Three years later, she was a supervisor for a before- and after-school care program for Fairfax County. “*I was bored out of my mind and wanted something more challenging*,” she said. As a result, she accepted a position as a crisis counselor at a special education school. During her

time there, she learned a lot about helping others and recognized that type of service as her calling and mission.

What she never anticipated was how her career would lead her to play professional football. Monica's colleague at the special education school asked her to play flag football on a highly competitive 11-on-11 league. Monica came to love the sport. The DC Divas, a local professional tackle football team for women, then recruited her to play, but she was apprehensive about the staying power of the league and the high probability of injury that could end her flag career. So, she initially declined.

But once she attended a game, she said she was hooked and wanted to be a part of the ground-breaking league. She secured a position... and she made her mark.

"The record I held from 2002-2018 was for the longest run from scrimmage for 84 yards," Monica said.

To offset the \$1200 cost of playing in the league, Monica had to secure sponsorships for her team. That process taught her how to work with corporations and other companies by selling sponsorship packages.

During that time, Monica and a Diva teammate decided to open a non-public, non-charter private school in Washington DC for 17 to 22-years-old young adults. 98 percent of the students had been incarcerated, Monica shared, and she credits the experience for teaching her how to become an entrepreneur. She went



Podcast host of
The Huddle

on to become the owner of lucrative CPR/First Aid training business, as well.

With her playing days behind her, the urge to stay involved with football remained, and now, Monica serves as the Women's National Football Conference (WNFC) Chief Revenue Officer.

"This is the first women's professional football league that has major sponsors, a business model strategy for longevity, successful apparel sales, C-Suite executives at the helm, international TV coverage, and clout," Monica said of the WNFC, which is sponsored by Adidas, Riddell, Wilson, and Bose. *"We have a 2.5 million follower reach on social media*



and are looking to help grow the league through our following. The challenge is converting those followers into a revenue stream,” she said. But Monica knows she’s up to it: “After we educate sponsors on the benefits of partnering with us, the checks come in. They want to be a part of the stories these women are telling on and off the field.”

Monica saw podcasting as a natural extension of her current career as a sought-after international speaker and culture coach. She named her show *The Huddle* because “My fondest memories took place in the huddle,” she said. “It’s where we athletes come to strategize, dialogue, regroup, and then, dominate.”

Monica does all her own bookings and records the podcast—which she says is all about her Living with Livingston principles: learn, laugh, love—using Zoom. It boils down to good dialogue and conversation, which she provides.

“My fondest memories took place in the huddle—it’s where we athletes come together and dominate.”

The Bleav Podcast Network edits, promotes, and hosts the show.

Monica says she has really enjoyed interviewing people and has learned so many things from her guests. She also enjoys connecting with them offline to collaborate. “It’s all about connecting with your guests and discovering their mission—something they really want to do.”

One of Monica’s favorite guests was Michael Oher, because she loved his story and how he gives back to the community.

Clearly, she is doing the same. 🎧



Sports Category Director

Neil Haley

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The Neil Haley Show ▶

Got a Sports Podcast suggestion?

Let us know! >



UNDER THE RADAR

Neil's Independent Review Of A Sports Podcast You Probably Haven't Heard Of... But Should Be Listening To



ACROSS THE POND SPORTS PODCAST

Across the Pond Sports Podcast started in July 2020. Host James Scott wanted to create something that would let listeners on both sides of the U.K and in the U.S. hear varying views while communicating his own passion for sports. His idea was definitely a bit different from the rest of the sports podcasts out there.

James set out to provide listeners in the U.K. with an inside look at sports in the U.S. He



covers the latest news in leagues like the NBA, MLB, NCAA, and NFL. Alongside his hand-picked analysts and guests (including athletes), James breaks it all down.

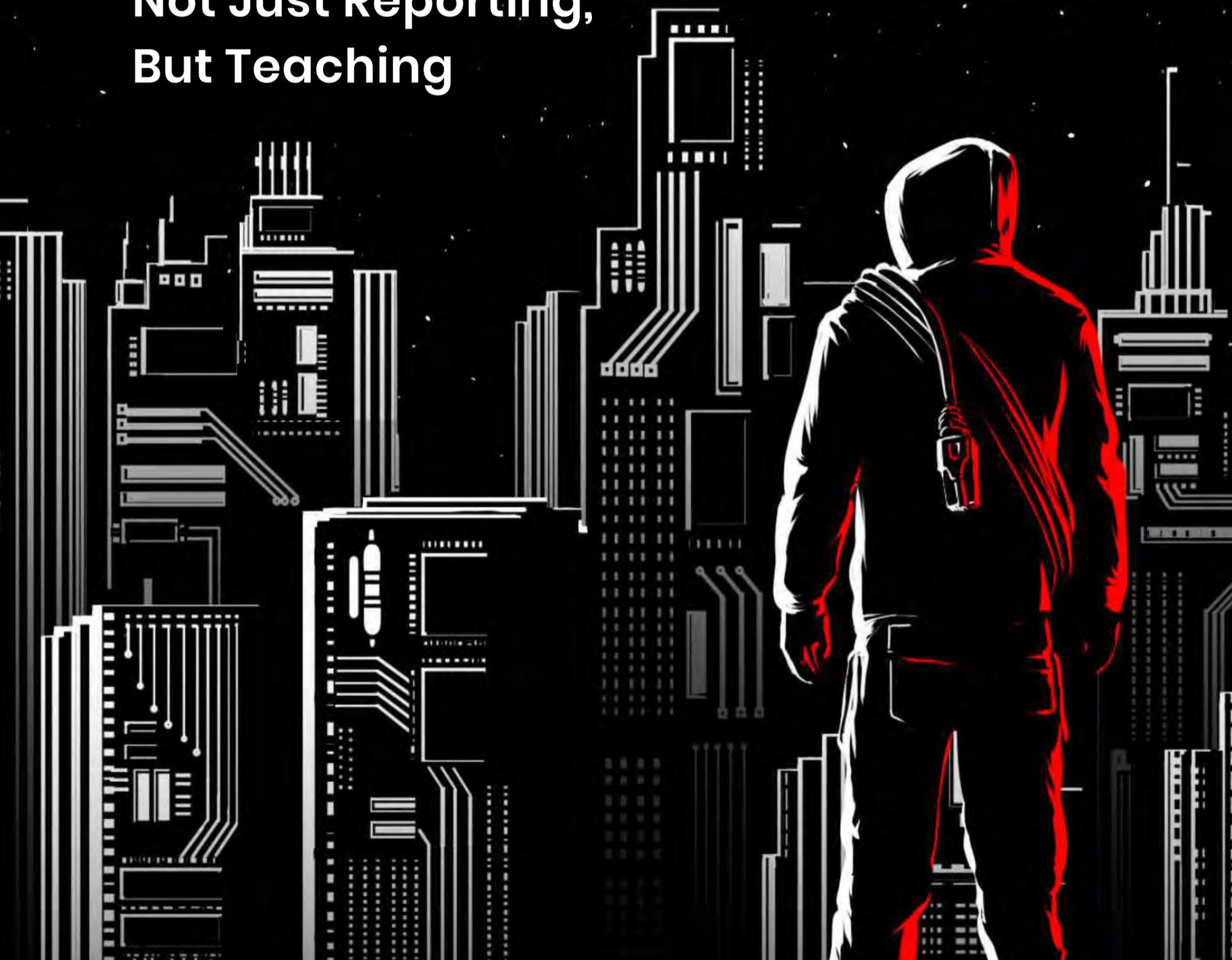
The show started in Edinburgh, Scotland, and they have had guest hosts from Scotland, England, Denver, and Atlanta so far. An important part of podcast evolution has been getting the right guests, and James' efforts in doing so have proven successful—the value the guests have added to the show is game-changing.

James connects with his listeners even more with his *Across The Pond* mailbag, which allows more personal communications. 📧



JACK RHYSIDER BRINGS THE DARKNET INTO THE LIGHT OF DAY:

Not Just Reporting,
But Teaching





Spending your time interviewing people who live within the dark side of the Web could easily turn you into a cynic or closed-off person who doesn't interact with people and approaches every request with the jaded eye of someone who has seen it all and perhaps wishes he hadn't. Or not.

Jack Rhysider is the founder and host of the top-rated technology podcast, *Darknet Diaries*. If you haven't listened yet, don't bother doing a lot of research about the host or looking for photos. Like the singer Sia, Jack keeps his identity hidden.

When you play in the world of the dark side of the Internet, you need to be careful about your privacy. After a fanatical fan tracked Jack down from a video he posted by triangulating his location and looking up information in public records, even posting on social media became a dangerous proposition. (Yes, that can be done quite readily by those in the know.)

So then what makes Jack choose to spend his time talking to some of the most infamous players on the darknet? Why does he have a fascination for what drives them to do what they do?

Jack started his tech career in the world of cybersecurity, but didn't love it. He wanted to go deeper into what drove the people he was protecting his clients from. He also didn't want to work for anyone else. That was the beginning of *Darknet Diaries*.

Research became Jack's friend as he took a deep dive into the world of podcasting



to learn his new craft—including studying how to tell an audio story—because as a fan of *This American Life*, Jack says, “*Story is everything.*” He quickly turned his show into a thriving business. Nine months after starting *Darknet Diaries*, Jack was burned out, and he quit his day job. Just four months later, he started making money from the show. Now, he earns as much from it as he did as a network security engineer, which is pretty much unheard of in the independent podcasting world. Marketing and storytelling masters will salivate knowing Jack earns an income doing what he loves and using the strategies he learned from reading and studying books like *Make Noise* and *Out on the Wire*.

And his listeners clearly appreciate his passion for storytelling and attention to detail when it comes to getting the facts right. In fact, fans approached him wanting to give him “*fistfuls of dollars*” to support his show. Accustomed to income from sponsorships only, Jack struggled to accept their generosity, but eventually, he



opted to open a Patreon page. And unlike the dark side of the web he profiles and the secrecy around his appearance, Jack is all about transparency in his business: his website even includes the number of fans who pay for access in order to support his work and enable him to continue publishing episodes.

Jack credits his fans with carrying him through and giving him “*fuel to go to the moon.*” Likewise, one fan wrote him a two-page email about how his show changed her life.

Jack works hard to ensure he is making an impact. Each episode takes up to 30 hours to research, produce, and publish. Some of his guests have taken a year or more to lock in, but Jack points to persistence as one of the keys to his success. Another is his own interest in his show. He still gets “*goosebumps*” during interviews.

Teaching others is the foundational piece of every episode. Jack feels he is not just “*reporting news, but teaching*” others about a world they need to become

familiar with in a way that makes it understandable. “*There’s something great about just giving people the gift of knowledge and showing them what could go wrong in a situation.*”

Every episode of *Darknet Diaries* is a “*true story, not a 10,000-foot hypothetical idea,*” Jack said. And while he could teach the concepts shared inside his show at a college, he prefers to teach 200,000 listeners at a time with his podcast.

Jack has interviewed numerous people from NSA and Israel’s intelligence unit, and hopes to someday get more foreign intelligence agencies to talk, such as Russia, China, or Iranian nation state hackers. They tend to be more secretive and harder to get to interview. They don’t want to talk about what they are doing or why they did what they did perhaps for fear of repercussion, or because they aren’t driven by the same motivations as other hackers. Jack is determined to find someone who is willing to talk, because he knows there are powerful stories to tell from their perspective.

Darknet Diaries has won several awards and been profiled in the *New York Times* Sunday paper, yet he is looking forward to putting his copy of this article among them, because “*his listeners are everything*” to him. 🗨



Technology Category Director

Laura Steward

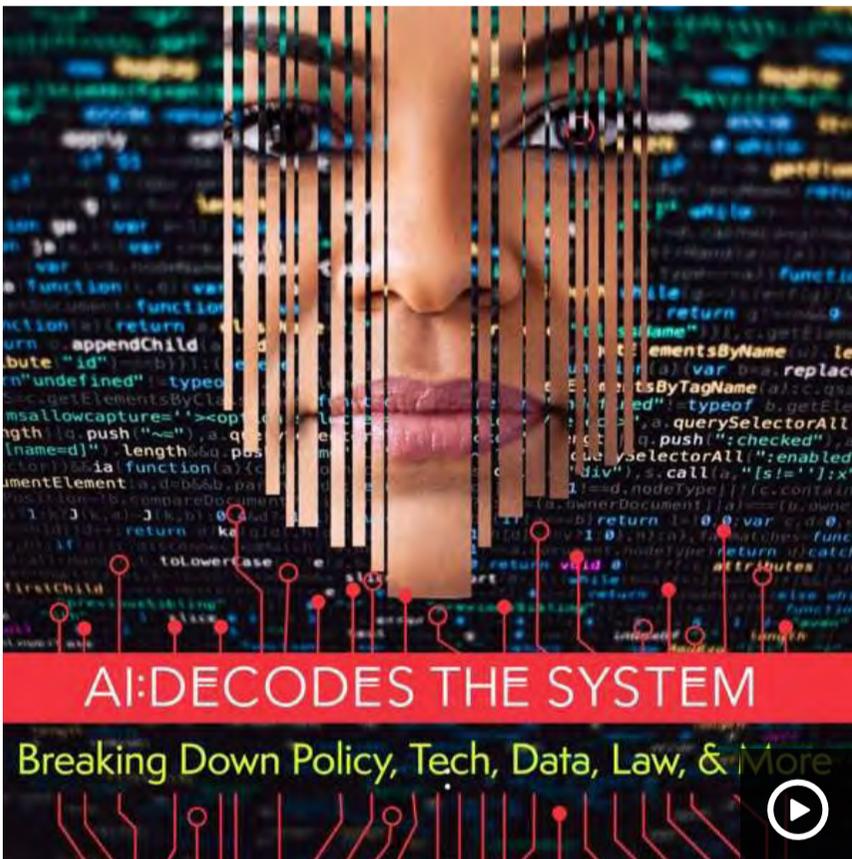
technology@podcastmagazine.com

It’s All About the Questions ▶



UNDER THE RADAR

Laura's Independent Review Of A Technology Podcast You Probably Haven't Heard Of... But Should Be Listening To



AI: DECODES THE SYSTEM

This show debuted in December of 2020 and only has a few episodes. I was expecting content about Artificial Intelligence when I started listening but was pleasantly surprised to discover that “AI” is short for “Amber Ivey,” the host and creator. Recently moved from Education to the Technology category, this show is an interesting mix of tech, culture, and even politics.

A relative newcomer to the world of



podcasting, *AI: Decodes the System* seems to be finding its footing. Amber offers some good content that is unfortunately hidden behind inconsistent sound quality, so I hope she figures that part out soon. She has a unique style and interesting selection of guests that has me wanting to hear more from her.

I don't listen to political commentary, and am not sure how it fits the genre, but I found myself actively interested in her viewpoint on the episodes about the change in American party affiliations. Her episode on wearable tech took a unique path as she allowed her guest to expand on the definition of “wearable.” A good discussion followed.

Now that the show is in the technology category, I am curious to see if there are more diversions into politics for the sake of political conversation, or if those episodes will tie into politics and tech. If not for the sound issues, this would be a four-mic review. 🎧



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OFF THE CHARTS

PODCAST MAGAZINE'S **Top Podcast Picks Of The Month**

APRIL 2021

ARTS



THE SAVVY PAINTER

Hosted by: Antrese Wook

A bi-weekly podcast for artists who mean business. Talks with expert painters about the business of art and how it gets created. Digs deep into the struggles and successes of contemporary painters.

BUSINESS

THE BIZ DOJO

Hosted by: Seth Anderson & JP Gaston

Tune in as Seth and JP discover the stories behind the successes and failures of national champions, musicians, pro-athletes, coaches, executives and innovative entrepreneurs.



COMEDY



LEWIS BLACK'S RANTCAST

Hosted by: Lewis Black

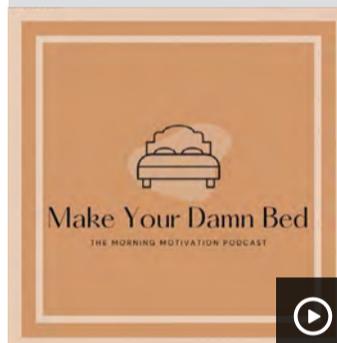
Lewis Black rants and channels his anger in ways only a man who's devoted his entire life to ranting can do. You might be offended and also find him hilarious. Have fun and get pissed off with Lewis Black.

EDUCATION

MAKE YOUR DAMN BED

Hosted by: Julie Merica

The morning motivation podcast. A habit-building, real-talk, daily two-to three-minute motivation podcast.



FICTION

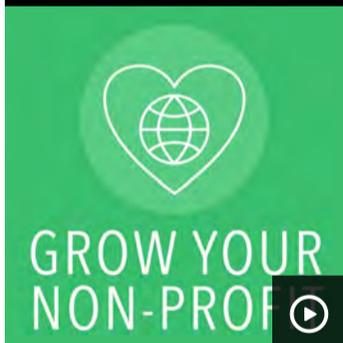


OUT OF THE ASHES

Hosted by: Unknown Squared Productions

What if everything you thought about the world was turned upside down? Monsters are real. The shadows can hurt you. Magic is everywhere.

GOVERNMENT



GROW YOUR NON-PROFIT: MARKETING AND TECHNOLOGY

Hosted by: Naomi Lantzman

Inspiring non-profits build and engage their communities, so they can improve their online fundraising without tech overwhelm or marketing hype.

HEALTH & FITNESS

WEIRD MEDICINE: THE PODCAST

Hosted by: Dr. Steve

On air since 2007, this is a medical show for people who wouldn't normally listen to a medical podcast. Discussions about medical matters are raunchy, informative, funny, and at times "weird."



HISTORY



DREAMS OF BLACK WALL STREET

Hosted by: Nia Clark

A look back in history at a time of great promise and great disappointment for Black Americans who dreamed of and struggled for the promise of community and full citizenship.

KIDS & FAMILY

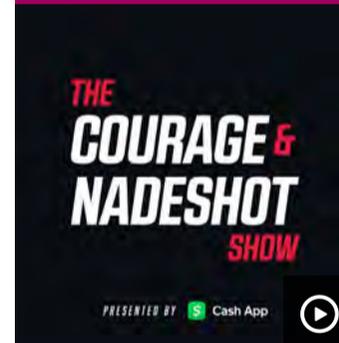
HIGHLIGHTS HANGOUT

Hosted by: Tim Kubart & Juanita Andersen

A new way to bring to life the iconic *Highlights Magazine*, which was started in 1946. The show offers a unique audio spin on the magazine's well-loved stories, puzzles, and jokes for kids.



LEISURE



THE COURAGE AND NADESHOT SHOW

Hosted by: Matt "Nadeshot" Haag & Jack "CouRageJD" Dunlop

A cross between podcast genres: video game, comedy, and general topic. The hosts are engaging, funny, and totally off the wall.

OFF THE CHARTS

PODCAST MAGAZINE'S **Top Podcast Picks Of The Month**

APRIL 2021

MUSIC



INDIECAST

Hosted by: Steven Hyden & Ian Cohen

Hosted by a pair of music critics, Steven and Ian discuss the biggest news and names in modern indie and look back to moments that established the indie rock canon.

NEWS

THE PLUGGED IN PODCAST

Hosted by: Matt & Andrew

Two teens bring you a new perspective on sustainable transportation breathing new focus to the EV revolution movement.



RELIGION & SPIRITUALITY



THE SUBSTANCE PODCAST

Hosted by: Philip Marinello

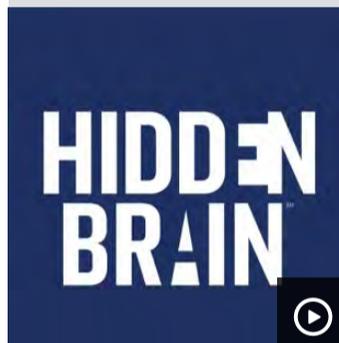
A podcast aimed at being Biblical, thoughtful, and human.

SCIENCE

HIDDEN BRAIN

Hosted by: Shankar Vedantam

Uses science and storytelling to reveal the unconscious patterns that drive human behavior, shape our choices, and direct our relationships.



SOCIETY AND CULTURE



VERY BAD WIZARDS

Hosted by: Tamler Sommers & David Pizarro

A philosopher and a psychologist share their love for ethics, pop culture, and cognitive science, including discussions on moral philosophy, psychology, neuroscience, and more.

SPORTS



THE FIGHTER & THE KID

Hosted by: Brendan Schaub & Bryan Callen

A weekly podcast featuring UFC heavyweight Brendan Schaub and actor/comedian Bryan Callen. It's uncut and unedited, and sometimes, it's just ridiculous.

TECHNOLOGY

ON THE METAL

Hosted by: Bryan Cantrill & Jess Frazelle

An "unapologetically technical" podcast that explores the legends of tech and goes deep into the layered world of technology and those who live in it every day.



TRUE CRIME



SHAKEN AND DISTURBED

Hosted by: John Thrasher & Daryn Carp

From *Martinis & Murder*, John and Daryn bring their true-crime expertise, sarcastic comedy banter, and passion for the details to an all-new show!

TV & FILM

THE WATCH

Hosted by: Andy Greenwald & Chris Ryan

The Watch brings together the best of pop culture from TV, film, and music. Hosts Andy Greenwald and Chris Ryan look into what's influencing the world around us.



EDITOR'S PICK



OFF MY DUFF

Hosted by: Duff Gardner

This show about "Getting Off Your Backside" and Making Your Impact by Living Your Truth. If you are an entrepreneur with a heart to help others, this show is the nudge you need to generate a Revenue Breakthrough.

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We recommend, have tested, and believe in the products, programs, and services shown below.

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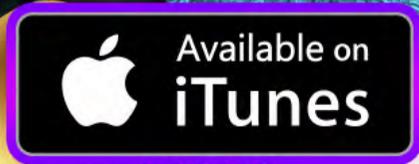
This month's Top 50 podcasts as determined by podcast fans. Vote at PodcastMagazine.com/Hot50 »

THIS MONTH	LAST MONTH	PODCAST NAME Host(s)		THIS MONTH	LAST MONTH	PODCAST NAME Host(s)
1	1	THE UPSIDE Callie & Jeff Dauler		26	25	THE AJ AND SARA PODCAST AJ & Sara
2	2	CERTIFIED MAMA'S BOY Steve Kramer & Nancy		27	37	MORBID: A TRUE CRIME PODCAST Ash & Alania
3	3	THANK GOD CANCER SAVED OUR DIVORCE Denny, Amanda, Jamie & Brandon		28	-	FORGOTTEN AUSTRALIA Michael Adams
4	-	SWORD AND SCALE Mike Boudet		29	-	GET NOTICED Teia Acker
5	4	KRAMER AND JESS UNCENSORED Steve & Jess		30	42	THE BERT SHOW Bert, Kristin, Davi & Moe
6	5	THE WILDER RIDE Alan Sanders & Walt Murray		31	-	PROMISED LAND Ian Kehoe
7	17	THE MARRIAGE FIT PODCAST Alan Sanders & Susan Delmonico		32	-	TRUE CRIME GARAGE Nic & Patrick Edwards
8	11	LIFE WITH HULA Hula		33	-	I SAID GOD DAMN! Erin & Stacey
9	12	BK ON THE AIR Barry King		34	-	LIVE ON BROADWAY Broadway The Giant
10	16	CRIME JUNKIE Ashley Flowers & Brit Peawat		35	-	SKINWALKER JS
11	13	THE BOX OFFICER PODCAST Mel Mckay & Derek Zemrak		36	21	TRUE CRIME COUPLE John & Kay
12	7	60MW PODCAST Dave Robinson & Others		37	10	DARK TOPIC Jack Luna
13	15	NECRONOMIPOD Dave, Ian & Mike		38	40	KNOW YOUR AURA Mystic Michaela
14	-	THE WRITTEN WORD Sunandini S Bansal		39	-	THE COMMERCIAL BREAK Bryan Green & Krissy Hoadley
15	18	LEADER OF THE CLUB Jessica Chenoweth & Hula Ramos		40	31	WKRP CAST Allen & Donna Stare
16	23	RADIO LABYRINTH Tim Andrews		41	38	ARMCHAIR EXPERT Dax Shepard
17	6	THE REAL QUEENS OF QUEENS Cathy & Fran		42	-	CRIME BEAT Nancy Hixt
18	28	A PARANORMAL CHICKS Donna & Kerri		43	-	FACE THE MUSIC Eric & Eric
19	26	LOWKEY Jessica Dutra		44	-	NEXT ON THE TEE Chris Mascaro
20	19	MURDER, MYTH & MYSTERY Sara, Erik & Mary		45	-	SMALL TOWN MURDER Jimmy Whisman & James Pietragallo
21	37	THE NEWSWORTHY Erica Mandy		46	-	WHO'S DRIVING YOUR CAR PODCAST Matthew Steven & Craig
22	24	WEIRD DARKNESS Darren Marlar		47	8	911 CALLS PODCAST WITH THE OPERATOR The Operator & Jack Luna
23	41	CASEFILE TRUE CRIME Casefile Presents		48	-	COUNTERCLOCK Delia D'Ambra
24	32	THE OFFICE LADIES Jenna Fischer & Angela Kinsey		49	34	MY FAVORITE MURDER Karen Kilgariff & Georgia Hardstark
25	-	ROCKY BALBOA CHEESESTEAK FUN HOUR Jimmy, Matt, Nick, Dirty Mike, and Sal		50	-	SMALL TOWN DICKS Yeardley Smith

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