

Welcome to the Johnny Unicorn Show, my name is Johnny Unicorn, and you are listening to the Johnny Unicorn Show. Today's show is brought to you by the Johnny Unicorn Show, the only show to advertise itself on itself. Now, let's go to the show:

(theme song #6 plays)

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It's the Johnny Unicorn Show

It's the Johnny Unicorn Sho-o-o-o-o-o-ow!

And welcome back to the show, here's today's top stories:

The team behind the Shape of Water, the Oscar-nominated film about a love affair between a janitor and a fish, is being sued by the estate of playwright Paul Zindel, who claims the film is nearly identical to his 1969 play, "Let Me Hear You Whisper."

Let's be honest, folks, I don't think this case holds water.

It's like, this story's been told a thousand times. It's is a tale as old as time. Uh, you know that old saying:

If you give a man a fish, he'll eat for a day
If you teach a man to fish, he'll eat for a lifetime
And if you teach a fish to love, he'll have sex with a janitor

In sports news, Ivanka Trump took a trip to Korea last week to check out the Olympics, and while she was there, she asked bobsledder Lauren Gibbs if she could try on her silver medal, continuing the Trump family tradition of taking away other people's victories.

In technology news, a new dating app (called Once) is poised to revolutionize the dating app industry by forcing its users to take it slow. And in the spirit of that, it's available right now for Windows Vista

Remember Windows Vista? It's a famously crappy operating system.

Anyway, uh, hey, Barbra Streisand's back in the news. In a recent interview Barbra Streisand revealed that her two dogs, Miss Violet and Miss Scarlett, are actually clones created from the cells of her previous dog, Samantha, who died last year.

...or *are* they?

And in science news, a new study shows that childbirth ages your DNA more than smoking. Which would explain why most children come out of the womb looking 9-months older than they are.

And finally, KFC this week suffered a chicken shortage in the UK, forcing 800 of their restaurants to close on Monday. The company took advantage of the screw-up by running an ad that showed an empty chicken bucket with the letters FCK where "KFC" usually is.

And the punchline of that joke is that a soulless corporation tricked me into giving them a free advertisement.

No one's forcing you to laugh.

Let's move on to the rest of the show.

Okay...well, last week I did a show about giving up Facebook, and I was deluged...I got a deluge of responses. I got like three responses. But one of them was from Nora the Janitor over at Prairiegoth.com. She has a podcast there that's great. You should listen to it. But last week, it was a letter to me responding to my previous podcast. So this is like the new social media. It's a bunch of podcasters podcasting to each other. So that's cool.

We're gonna go into that letter. But first, Nora, I just wanted to bring up something that you mentioned before you started the letter, which was you retweeted my Tweet about Frank Zappa (auditorially) and thank you. Just thanking you for that. That's all. That's all. But I just wanted to say, that I'm not, like, proud of being that prolific. It's just kind of one of the measures that's going on in the back of my mind of, like: "Oh, at this point, I'll have made more music than They Might Be Giants, at this point I will have made more music than Frank Zappa." He's just one of the mile-markers that I use. I like to think of myself as a Frank Zappa that you can listen to without being, uh, violently offended.

Also, I wanted to mention on your previous podcast where you interviewed Jordaxn Kidwell. They did an impression of Ryan Schweitzer, and for the listener, Ryan Schweitzer is a guy in Bismarck who does excellent poetry and is very much into rare audio-visual electronics. And Jordaxn's impression of Ryan is uncanny. Just wanted to say that was cool.

Okay, let's get into the letter. Nora, the Janitor: Letter. And here's my response:

Dear Nora,

(I'm gonna go through these really quick. Okay, so that there's less to edit and less to transcribe.)

So, you mentioned the addictive quality of social media. They're actively built to addict us, you said? Yeah. Exactly. One thing I really hate is the swipe to refresh thing that's on phones. It's like this physical feeling of "Oh yes, now there's more...more..." especially with the notifications. If I get more notifications, it's like, "Oh yes..." So it's annoying that a company is going out of their way to make something be like that. We've already got enough stuff like that in the world. Here I am sitting on my bed with my phone, scrolling. My elbow hurts from the scrolling. I don't think any-I haven't heard anyone talk about the physical ailments that can come about from constantly scrolling...swiping on a phone. (Sigh) Somebody should do a thing about that. Anyway, yeah, it bothers me.

(faint clinking)

If you can hear that sound right now, I'm drinking a chai tea, like the liquid chai tea that you get at the store, mixed with coffee and ice. And then I just let it sit around and I let the ice, um, uh - what do you call it? Deteriorate? - melt! (laughs) I let the ice melt and then it gets watered down. And if the ice isn't melting fast enough I'll just pour a little bit of water in it. Tastes good. It's like...coffee / tea-flavored water. I guess tea *is* tea-flavored water, isn't it? Anyway, I'm getting off on a tangent. This is gonna make it

difficult for editing later. Maybe I'll edit out all the tangents and put it at the end. Still gonna transcribe it.

Uh, okay. I think you mentioned a self-help book called "Deep Work" by Cal Newport. And I think you said something like "I'm sorry to be peddling a self-help book, I know that's sort of a thing that people do that..." but I wouldn't worry about that for *me*. I'm always interested in any kind of advice. Although, I take it all with a grain of salt. Cuz you know, these people writing self-help books, they're professional writers. Unless the s...(laughs) unless the book is about how to write and sell a book, it's hard to take any of their advice *too* seriously. But, I'll pick and choose what I want, sort of like a religious text, you know? Or a philosophy text. You pick what you like. You incorporate it. You sublimate it into your general, uh, *ethos* and then you go about your day.

Alright, you asked how I feel about social media stuff in terms of streaming services. I don't really pay attention to Spotify as, like, a thing where I communicate with people, but I *do* make playlists and I do *do* stuff with my artist account, but (sigh) I don't have the energy to try to figure out how to use that in a way that's substantial. You know?

You asked "how is the Zorznijor experiment working? Is it worth the returns? Is it fruitful?" Uhhh, no. Not fruitful. It's hard to put it in terms of worth, because I just do it. It's

worth it to see an album cover and be able to press play and hear my music and know that it's possible for anyone else to also. But beyond that, I don't know. It's not making money. I made like a couple hundred dollars. Which is pretty good for, like, streaming.

Alright, then you talked about "Most," which is a *long* song and usually Zorznijor songs are short. And you said "Why would you do a long song with a project that you call a high-volume recording project?" Cuz the idea of producing a lot of songs kind of necessitates the songs being relatively short. I kind of go by a minute and a half as like a good song length. And that *really is* a good song length. Like, when I listen to the radio now, and I hear a three-minute song, I'm like "ugggghhhh, just get to the end already! I've heard this chorus like three times. I only need to hear it once. It's so simple I know it already. I've memorized the song when the song's half-way over. Then I gotta sit through it." So...a minute and a half is a good length. But the reason I did a long song, and will probably do more long songs, is because 1.) it's fun to do long songs. And it's fun to just see where the song goes and just see how long you can take it before you really feel like you need to put an ending on it. It's fun for *me*, anyway. But secondly, I was recording a 99-song album, and I had said ahead of time I wanted it to be 4 hours, and the reason for that is this: I had an album rejected from Distrokid, and it was wrongly rejected, cuz it was following all the rules.

And I sent them an e-mail, I said "why was this rejected and how can I prevent it getting rejected in the future?" And they said, "well, when we got it, it was like, a lot of short songs" - I don't know if this is how they talked, but - "A lotta short songs, and...a lot of 'em. So, it kinda looks like flooding if you're not paying attention." And they don't explain what "flooding" is. But I think the idea is you're putting out so much stuff that it's ridiculous. But they looked at my minute and a half songs, and they were like "oh, it's a bunch of short songs. This guy's just putting out...just crappin' out crap and doesn't care what it is, and that's why the songs are short." And I don't think they're actually short. I think a minute and a half is a good long time. So I thought, "well, okay, I'm gonna put out a 99-song album, and I'm gonna make sure that no one mistakes this for flooding, because all the songs are gonna be longer than normal." And so I said ahead of time I'm gonna make it a four-hour album, and so, dammit, I'm gonna stick to that. And, so for that reason, just to buy myself a little bit of buffer zone, I made a couple of really long songs. That way my average time would go up, and I wouldn't have to work so hard to make all the songs like three minutes. I could have a bunch of minute and a half or two minute songs, and still have it add up to four hours after 99 songs. But as you know, I took "Most" off of that album and put it on this other album. So that's why it's long.

Alright, speaking of long: this podcast episode.

Okay, next: you talk about Tweets. How does a person Tweet in the thousands? Good question. Here's one way: you live-tweet an event. Then you got like a couple hundred Tweets. That's it.

You mentioned good creative work getting wasted away by being Tweets. I don't think that's necessarily true, because it's there. It's recorded. You can go back and you can take it and you can, to use your words, *sublimate it* into better work. So, I don't think that's much of a problem. I've written a bunch of songs that were based on old Tweets.

You mentioned that you think I may be influenced by They Might Be Giants. I got news for you: it's true. And I'm not offended by that suggestion. But if I can swing this back around to you, you influenced by Fugazi? And did I ask that before?

You mentioned Yogi Tea and not wanting to hear positive affirmations when you're in a bad mood. And that's a good thing to think about, people. Don't come at people with, like, solutions to their problems. Especially if it's, like, nonsensical "put a smile on your face"...just don't do it unless they *ask* for it. Me? I'm always asking for it. I don't care. Send me unsolicited advice. Tell me what to do with

myself. I don't mind that. But a lot of people *do* mind that, and everyone oughtta think about that when they go out and talk to people. That's *my* unsolicited advice to *you*, the listener. Not you, Nora.

This would make a weird letter. If I had like asides to some other letter-reader in the letter.

(laughs)

Oh, you did a Steve Roggenbuck thing. I appreciate that. Uh, yes, I have been listening to Plant Liker. And I haven't been listening to podcasts in the last few months, but I did try to listen to Plant Liker recently, then I noticed that he had stopped making them. So I listened to the last episode. But yeah, one of the things I liked about that show is the meditative, calming thing that he does. So, yeah, I appreciate you doing that. It really...it was nice. I was listening to it. I was sitting on the bed. I was looking at a painting. Thinking about the brush strokes. It's a good thing to have on a podcast. So I'm sad that he's not doing that. But he must be doing something, right? He's gotta be doing something with his life!

(laughs)

Next part is you apologized for the length of the letter. And to that I say "right back at you."

My condolences on your break up. Sucks. I don't know

what else to say about that. Break ups always suck.

You mentioned Richard Feynman telling people he's irresponsible so he can do what he wants. I think that's an irresponsible...that is...I think if you do that, that *is* irresponsible. I don't think people should do that.
(chuckles)

By the way, I haven't *accepted* your apology for it being a long letter, but we'll see by the end of this thing.

Oh, here's a good one: "Do you ever think about wanting to set fire to every public-facing thing you've ever done and just disappear?" (laughs) Uh, yeah, I've totally thought about that. Sometimes I think about getting rid of all of my stuff, save for, like paper / drawing supplies and stuff / writing stuff. And instead of recording music, just write sheet music. But, that's not happening any time soon, so...

I have here "editing podcasts" as a topic you mentioned (laughs). Even though I listened to your podcast episode twice, I cannot remember what you were talking about. Um, editi - I'm sorry - editing is good. It's a good thing to do. I'm trying to self-edit though. I'm trying to learn how to deliver an episode all the way through without having to edit it. I will get better at this. As God is my witness. But until then, editing is your friend.

But I enjoyed yours without being edited. I enjoyed all the stuff. It's like listening to a person that you're friends with (laughs)...hanging out...you know, when you're hanging out, you don't edit your stuff. You just have to deal with what's happening. So, I enjoy hearing people unedited. I don't like hearing my own voice doing that stuff. When I hear myself, and I hear "um, ah..." I'm like "I can get rid of that in my everyday speech. I can learn how to talk without...yeah...my voice." I can hear...it feels hollow, and thin, and stuff, and I want it to feel...i want...(talking lower) I wanna hear (lower), I want...I want to hear...the sound....I have to talk like Nixon. Maybe I should just put on an accent, or like put on an affectation. I mean, I am putting on an affectation, but maybe put on, like something else. (Nixon voice) Confidence. It's all about confidence. (Regular voice) Confidence is one of those things that is not real. It's not a real thing. You fake confidence, and in faking it, that *is* confidence. That's all it is. That's what I believe, anyway.

Here's a little secret: I recorded this entire thing and deleted it, and this is the second take. Phew! And the actual recorded audio is probably three times as long as what you're listening to right now.

Next, you talked about releasing that old podcast episode as an album. And I agree. Let's do it! Contact me. Let's set it all up. We'll set up a team on Distrokid. I'll cut out the

first and last part of that episode and just keep the portion that's you talking and with the overdubs. And that'll be, like, an EP. It'll be like a fourteen minute EP. Send me a photograph, and I will translate it into artwork somehow.

Next, you talk about grayscale. And...that's a great idea. I love that. I mean, I really like color, but...I think, you know, if I really wanna see a color, I should have...they should just have a button on every device that just automatically turns everything to grayscale. Cuz it's ridiculous. It's like you have to download all kinds of apps and weird plugins to do this stuff, and sometimes they don't even work. I downloaded a grayscale plugin for my laptop, and the dam thing (laughs) does not work when you're watching something in full-screen. Cuz I've been watching Twin Peaks. And Twin Peaks is really cool. You know, it's almost Lynchian how cool it is. But it's hard for me to watch. I can't, like, binge it, like people do. I have to watch like an episode and wait like a month. But I think it'd be easier for me to watch if it was in black and white. It feels like a black and white movie to me. So, I'd like to watch it in black and white. And I wanted to, and I downloaded this plugin, and I'll be d - (laughs) Yeah, it doesn't work in full screen, so...

Okay. Am I still vegan? Yeah. I just got back on the vegan train a few months ago and I'm taking it on down to the end of the line. You know, every time I become...I was vegan a while ago...I was vegan for six years, from 2003

through 2009 and for a lot of that time I was living in Michigan and, uh, hard to find vegan food. And then I really wanted pizza, and I ate some pizza. Then I was non-vegan for the next seven years. Although, I did take a break. There was like a six-month period where I went vegan again. But now I'm back, and I'm gonna keep this one going. Since the last time I was vegan, there's all kinds of new products that are for vegans, especially if you're on the West coast like me. "The Left Coast." You know, the coastal elites, they don't like to kill animals (laughs). So, it's easy to find vegan stuff.

Practicing habits. Singing practicing habits. Here we go. Here's some ideas. Here's what I want you to do. Uh, since you're asking for advice...but you know, don't take my word for it, I'm not a professional. Never been a professional. But, I've learned some things from some good singers. One of them is do your scales. And do them like this: (oo-ee-oo ee-oo-ee oo-ee-oo, etc. up the major scale) and then back down. It's good for working out the vowels, you know. oo-ee-oo-ee-oo-ee. Just works out your lips. That's good. Always breathe with your diaphragm. You probably know that already. Just (sucking noise) suck in with your stomach. (another sucking noise) Give a lot of room for those lungs to expand. That oo-ee-oo-ee thing I learned from Jeff Tapia, who you might recognize from this song that I produced:

(plays clip of Alvarado, by Jeff)

Hold up, where did my mind go-go-go-go

Yeah, that song. So...and here's another one I learned from my friend Celia, who's in a choir. And this one is, uh...you just go up and down with your voice: oooooooooooooooooooooooooooooo (up and down in pitch) like that. And the trick is try to seamlessly transition from the normal voice that you do to the falsetto, when you get up to the high note. So you don't hear the break when you change registers in your voice, cuz normally it'd be like: oooooooooooooooooooooo (going up in pitch and skipping a few notes part way in) like a yodel. Try to do it without doing that. And that'll kind of, like, give you more control over how you sound. Um...what was the other thing I was gonna say? (heavy breathing) Breathe slower. Here's one I picked up from a Youtube video. This is just musical practicing, but I think it'll be good for singing. Do a scale. Go all the way up, and all the way back down (does a scale). And then do the arpeggio of that scale. The 1, 3, 5, and 7 of that (does arpeggio). Ahem...like that, except not out of tune (laughs). And then do all the modes too, and then do the 1, 3, 5, 7 of those modes. So that 7 and the 3 are probably gonna change a lot. The 1 and 5'll be the same. And, I think it's good to practice arpeggios. Cuz that's...when you make those big jumps, that's when it's, like, hard to land on the note properly. So do a third, and it's like, it's not too big of a jump. And then while you're at

it, you're gonna learn all your modes, and that'll help for any instrument. I don't know what you've *done* already. Am I telling you stuff you already know?

Writing down your dreams? I fully endorse it. That's a good idea. I always forget to do it. It's a common thing people do: forget to write down their dreams. When they've decided they're going to they forget. And so do I. And I've forgotten some really great dreams over the past....how many years I've been alive? 38 years? So, that's a good idea. I'm gonna start doing that. Keep a notebook by my bedside.

So, Tinnitus. I've had tinnitus for about five years now. And it's like a hiss in my ears all the time. I went to an audiologist a couple years ago, and they tested me. They sent a series of beeps in through some headphones, and I sat in this nice, fancy booth for a couple hours. And it got to the point where I started feeling a little bit panicky. Cuz I couldn't move. If I moved it would like, mess up the whole thing. I had to like remain completely silent while this was happening, so it was very nerve-wracking. But at the end of it they told me that my hearing was really good, and it was just what they would expect...maybe a little bit better. So it made me feel like maybe my impression of what the tinnitus is, even though it feels very oppressive sometimes, it might be more that I'm just way sensitive to it. I don't like anything there. I don't like white noise. I

don't like fans. I don't like heaters. And I got this sound in there that's always there. I don't like that high pitched electronic noise that you were talking about earlier that happens anytime I plug...there's a lot of things that make that noise. I can't stand it. These days, I don't notice it as much as I used to. Cuz it's right up there in the same frequency range. I don't think scientists quite know exactly what causes it, but I'll often hear people talk about what will exacerbate it: like lack of sleep. All the regular stuff, like not doing healthy stuff, just exacerbates kind of anything really. So, get a lot of sleep. Put earplugs in whenever you're in a loud environment. Even like things that don't seem that loud, like going out to a bar / restaurant where it's really loud put in some earplugs. People might look at you funny, but (laughs) they can take a hike. I've also heard it told that even low level sounds over a long period can have effects on your ears. Like, they say people have ear damage more in their left ear if they drive a lot because they have the window open, and just the sound of the white noise is enough to cause a little bit of ear damage. But, sometimes I think you just - it just happens and you can't stop it, so...but I'll tell you this: it has not affected my ability to enjoy music most of the time. Sometimes it's like, "eehhh, I can't listen to that right now," but most of the time, I can get into sounds just fine. I can hear everything just fine. It's just I can also hear that other thing on top of it. What's that beeping noise? Something made a beeping noise. Anyway, I've heard that

the human ear is fantastically adept at pinpointing sounds even in a noisy environment. So, the tinnitus is there. It's there and it's just a thing. But I think my version of it may be not nearly as bad as it can be. So, I hope it doesn't get worse, but if it does, then, uh, I don't know...I'll take up drawing. So, sleep. Go to sleep. Everyone's gotta sleep more. We all do.

Oh no... (sneeze)

(sneeze)

I'm keeping that in. That was a good sneeze (cough). Good lord! (snorting sounds) Now we're on to hour six of this podcast. Wear earplugs. Everybody wear earplugs all the time. Especially now that we got a bunch of guns runnin' around. Ever heard a gun fire? (sigh) Jeez. It's loud.

Just as an aside, I wanna say that I have had a headache for the past week, and it's finally gone. And I feel really really good...comparatively.

And that's it for the letter. We're at the end of the letter. Got through it in 54 minutes. And I'm gonna trim that down. It'll probably be something like 30-something, 40 minutes or something. Which is longer than I wanted, but that's okay. Because content is content, and in this world, content is king (sigh). I don't know what I'm talking about,

I'm sorry. Anyway, I, too, hate signing off letters. I never know what to say. So, I think it's always good to end with like a wise words from the past, or something. Like a saying. But I can't think of one, so...thanks for the letter, Nora.

I'll talk to you later, comma, John.

Alright. I had some other responses, but I'll get to them in my next episode.

For now, we're moving on to Untweeted Tweets. These are things I wrote down - some of them thought-provoking, and some of them scoff-provoking - that would have been Tweets. But I restrained myself, and instead wrote them down for later. Well, that later is now now, so here we go with Untweeted Tweets:

#1:

What I don't get is why celebrities by huge mansions. It's like, who wants to deal with the upkeep?

#2:

Ever notice when people talk about slippery slopes, they're usually referring to very gradual changes?

#3:

I just found out Chris Martin and Gwyneth Paltrow are

married. My condolences to them both.

#4:

I just noticed that the Simpsons have a den.

#5:

Is it cool if I interrupt a Twitter conversation with a link to a song of mine that's relevant to what's being talked about?

#6:

It's difficult to speak truth to power when power won't respond to your e-mails.

#7...I don't know if this one makes sense, but here's #7: six of one, a half dozen of the other of one, six and a 1/2 dozen of the other of the other.

#8:

I wrote the music for 10 songs, and then I turned off my computer without backing any of it up. If I lose it all, I will not shed a tear.

Hah?

Well, that seems to be all we have for this week's episode of the Johnny Unicorn Show. But if you want to check out more Johnny Unicorn stuff you can go to

johnnyunicorn.com. Follow me on Twitter
@johnnyunicorn or don't. Uhh, what else? Click here to
subscribe! (I'm kidding about that) Anyway, thanks for
listening. And, if you wrote something to me and I haven't
gotten to it, I'll get to it in the next episode probably. So...

This has been the Johnny Unicorn Show.

("Thank You For the Content" by Zorznijor plays)
Hey friend, thank you for the content
I was wondering where what I want went
Thank you for the wonderful streams
They help suppress the internal screams
aaaaaahhhhhhhhhhh!