

## Getting Curious with Jonathan Van Ness & Michelle Kwan and Eliot Halverson

**JVN** [00:00:00] Welcome to Getting Curious. I'm Jonathan Van Ness and every week I sit down for a 40 minute conversation with a brilliant expert to learn all about something that makes me curious. This week, we're re-releasing an episode from February 2019, that's one of my favorite of all times, with iconic figure skater Michelle Kwan, who is the most decorated American figure skater of all time. And Eliot Halverson, who is a three-time US National Champion, get out of my face, where I ask them: How does figure skating give us life?

Welcome to "Getting Curious." This is Jonathan Van Ness. If you're not sitting down, if you're driving a motor vehicle. I just want you to be careful because, well, here's the thing. I feel like I may have oversold one guest and I don't make anyone feel any kind of type of way. And I know that I'm not. There's two people in the room right now, actually, three, including myself, which we've never done before. And I'm really, like, building this up. So, ok, you may know that she's been skating a lot lately. And the person responsible for, like, teaching me, like, everything I know in real life is this little baby girl, Eliot Halverson, who's right to my left.

**ELIOT HALVERSON** [00:01:14] Hi.

**JVN** [00:01:14] Who we love so much. She's got new hair. We're obsessed. However, if you've known me for a little bit longer than the last two months, you would also know why you should be sitting down for what I'm about to say. Across from Eliot and I is none other than Michelle Kwan.

**ELIOT HALVERSON** [00:01:33] Oh, my God.

**MICHELLE KWAN** [00:01:34] Hello. You're cutest.

**JVN** [00:01:37] Now we're just gonna let you guys, like, gather I know that you're, like, wigless, breathless. Everyone's feeling personally attacked by the severity of prowess in our presence.

**ELIOT HALVERSON** [00:01:49] Truly.

**JVN** [00:01:50] Yeah. I just want to say first and foremost. Well, Eliot, why don't you thank Michelle for, like, everything she did for us.

**ELIOT HALVERSON** [00:02:00] She was truly the inspiration for my childhood.

**JVN** [00:02:04] In totality.

**ELIOT HALVERSON** [00:02:05] In totality. Everything that I wanted to be and strived for was this woman right here.

**JVN** [00:02:11] Grace, poise, athleticism, fuckin', like, just outfits.

**ELIOT HALVERSON** [00:02:17] Raw emotion.

**JVN** [00:02:18] Deep side parts in a spiral that could make you sob.

**ELIOT HALVERSON** [00:02:22] Truly.

**JVN** [00:02:23] And a smile that lit up a nation. Continues to do so in front of my face.

**MICHELLE KWAN** [00:02:28] I can't. I'm sitting right here, guys.

**JVN** [00:02:32] You are. But you really gave so many-. Well, I'm sure grown-ups, too. But for me as, like, a kid. Which cause you're only, like, a few years older than me. You really had so much pressure on your baby shoulders. I didn't realize, in my mind, you were a grown-up, but really, you were a kid.

**MICHELLE KWAN** [00:02:49] I was a baby. I was 13 at the national championships 25 years ago.

**JVN** [00:03:55] The question for this episode, I was thinking, was going in to, go, coming into this experience, first time having three people in the studio in real life. I once did it on, like, a gun episode, but with "Every Town," but they had, like, to call in because there's, like, a DC thing. It was in the aught days of "Getting Curious." And so I've never had three people in real life in the studio, so I'm really excited about this. I'm feeling very in vogue about it and I think it's great. But heading into this, I was like, I think the question is going to be what's it like to be a competitive figure skater? You already know Michelle Kwan is the most decorated American figure skater of all time, ever, except for this like, well, American figure skater of all time. Yeah, you are. There was one lady who was all, more decorated, but it was in the 30s. And she also so happened to be a Nazi sympathizer, which is problematic because I just watched this documentary about her and honey, let me tell you something, in the 30s and 40s, there was hella famous people. Not cool, not cool. Eliot, though you may not know is a three-time national champion, which were in the year of what again?

**ELIOT HALVERSON** [00:03:56] 2004, 2006 and 2007.

**JVN** [00:04:00] And so I was thinking the question would be, like, what's it like to be a competitive figure skater? I always really wanted to be one, I was one in my imagination, in my living room. As you may have saw, you know, to do a very infamous sock skating routine in my sixth grade talent show to a very emotional piece by Jewel. So I can understand some pressure. You know?

**ELIOT HALVERSON** [00:04:23] You felt-

**JVN** [00:04:24] I felt the pressure. You know, I, I also I had to do a lot of, a lot of production on my vignettes. You know, for my competitions, like, my behind-the-scenes stories, you know, they were just also, again, in my imagination and no one was there to film them. Michelle, you had some of the best vignettes of all time. Did you love filming a vignette? Like was it, what would that be like in, like, like, those little backstories for the Olympics? Would they be, like, would they, like, email your, like, Frank, and be like, "Oh, can we come to, like, the rink and film her like training?" Kind of like, like, you know, super intensely and really thriving?

**MICHELLE KWAN** [00:04:57] You know what? When I think about it, they came to the ice rink and I was a bit annoyed. I was like, "I have to train." Like, filming this vignette, filming, I mean, back then we didn't have any social media. I just felt like it was a nuisance and it stopped me from doing what I need to do and that's train and do my triple Lutz, do my combination, do my spins, do cardio. You know, it's, like, not, that was my mindset, not like, oh, this is fun. It's a backstory.

**JVN** [00:05:26] Never? In that cute little dark room with, like, the spinning medal, like, and like, there, like, they're, can you look off in the distance then look to the camera, like, really gorgeously? Like, you weren't like, "Okay." You were just like, "Uh, I really should be on the ice right now." Like you were worried about it?

**MICHELLE KWAN** [00:05:38] Yeah, that was me. That was me.

**ELIOT HALVERSON** [00:05:39] Was Frank angry about that kind of stuff, too? Did he feel like that was gonna throw you off?

**MICHELLE KWAN** [00:05:44] No. Frank had a different perspective on it. He was like, "You need to wear this and this and this. You need," he was the one designing it. He was like, "I want you to work on that spiral. I want you to work." So he knew what would be pretty on camera. For me, on the other hand. I was like, I'm all about the jumps. It doesn't matter if I do a pretty spiral. It's landing that triple Lutz at the three-minute mark. It's that footwork. It is that spin. It's that. So I kind of had a different outlook.

**JVN** [00:06:15] Wow.

**ELIOT HALVERSON** [00:06:16] That's amazing.

**JVN** [00:06:16] What a blind spot he had because that spiral is, like, what made, or no, you, what a blind spot you, 'cause spiral, that spiral's emblazoned into my mind, like, hardcore.

**ELIOT HALVERSON** [00:06:25] Well, that's the amazing thing to hear you say that, because I think your jumps were amazing and so solid. But it was everything else that made you so special and makes you the star that you are. And so to hear that you were way more laser focused on the jumping is, that seems crazy to me.

**MICHELLE KWAN** [00:06:44] Well, before you were born, Eliot, I was known as the "Jumping Bean." At 13 years old. That was, like, my nickname. And then to, you know, by the time I was 24, 25, my last world championship, they called me "The Artist." They called me other, you know, so beginning when my career was, like, technical marks, it was much higher than my artistic marks. And then it's funny, like, at near the end of my career, it was just my technical marks were eh. And then my artistic works were the ones that helped me.

**JVN** [00:07:20] But you had a sick triple toe, triple toe.

**ELIOT HALVERSON** [00:07:23] Oh yes.

**MICHELLE KWAN** [00:07:24] Some seasons.

**ELIOT HALVERSON** [00:07:25] We've seen it. We've seen it.

**JVN** [00:07:27] Yeah. A lot.

**ELIOT HALVERSON** [00:07:28] Yeah.

**JVN** [00:07:28] It was, like, our favorite thing, we love to just, like watch, that's what we do is just watch YouTube old competitions and then I practice on calling, like, flips and Lutzes successfully.

**ELIOT HALVERSON** [00:07:38] Yeah.

**JVN** [00:07:39] Yeah. Sometimes I get a little confused on my inside and outside edge but also sometimes that's not my, my, my fault because there's fLutzes by those skaters. You know, sometimes it's like, oh you guys should see the shady nods that Elliott and Michelle are doing when I just brought up a fLutz.

**ELIOT HALVERSON** [00:07:50] Never.

**JVN** [00:07:51] They were both, like, "Mmhm. Yeah."

**MICHELLE KWAN** [00:07:53] I just remember Dick Button being, like, "Her edge was..." And then he'd pause, "It's, like, it was a Lutz." I'm like, "Oh."

**ELIOT HALVERSON** [00:08:02] Thank you.

**MICHELLE KWAN** [00:08:03] But it was very close. Mine was, I never did the wavy "S" into the Lutz. I did more the straight line. So it went from outside to flat. Never went-

**JVN** [00:08:15] Really deep.

**ELIOT HALVERSON** [00:08:16] I did true Lutz. And then my flip was very straight.

**MICHELLE KWAN** [00:08:19] It was very straight?

**ELIOT HALVERSON** [00:08:20] Yeah.

**JVN** [00:08:21] Well, my half flip is really-.

**MICHELLE KWAN** [00:08:24] Getting there. It's amazing.

**JVN** [00:08:25] Yeah, my half flip is.

**ELIOT HALVERSON** [00:08:26] From a mohawk.

**JVN** [00:08:27] Yeah, she's from a mohawk.

**ELIOT HALVERSON** [00:08:28] From a stand still mohawk.

**JVN** [00:08:30] Uh huh. Sometimes I pop my half flip. But I get so upset.

**ELIOT HALVERSON** [00:08:33] But we should say you've done a whole flip on the harness.

**JVN** [00:08:36] That's a lie. I lifted you 17 feet off the ground. I almost flung you across the-.

**ELIOT HALVERSON** [00:08:39] I'm trying to give you some cred here.

**JVN** [00:08:41] I know, you, that momentum was scary for-. You seemed like you had it in control, but I was scared.

**ELIOT HALVERSON** [00:08:47] Yeah.

**JVN** [00:08:47] Yeah.

**ELIOT HALVERSON** [00:08:47] Yeah.

**JVN** [00:08:48] We tried to do some single turns the other day. It's weird my off ice, you know, single toe loop is just-.

**ELIOT HALVERSON** [00:08:53] Not translating as much as maybe you thought.

**JVN** [00:08:55] I thought, I continue to be surprised that my off-ice training does not pay off in the way I thought it was going to.

**MICHELLE KWAN** [00:09:01] I have to say though, I am so impressed in your progress in skating because I saw you the first time skating and I was afraid to be skating next to you because I thought you were going to pull me down.

**JVN** [00:09:15] Oh my god, I thought you were gonna say, "I thought you were going to be so good." I was like, what? No, I was. Because, you know what? My step dad taught me how to rollerblade, which is, like, not like figure skating, but it's kind of not, not.

**ELIOT HALVERSON** [00:09:28] No, it-.

**JVN** [00:09:28] It's kind of-.

**ELIOT HALVERSON** [00:09:29] Similar.

**JVN** [00:09:31] Well, the stroking, those little pumps.

**ELIOT HALVERSON** [00:09:33] Yeah.

**JVN** [00:09:34] It feels like that.

**MICHELLE KWAN** [00:09:35] I like the little pumps.

**JVN** [00:09:36] Yeah, those little pumps feels like that. You know what I mean? Just like those-.

**ELIOT HALVERSON** [00:09:38] Just a little heavier with the roller blades.

**JVN** [00:09:40] Yeah, it's heavier.

**ELIOT HALVERSON** [00:09:40] It's a little clanky.

**MICHELLE KWAN** [00:09:41] Yeah.

**JVN** [00:09:41] Yeah, the stopping on figure skates, uh, getting that particular-.

**ELIOT HALVERSON** [00:09:46] It's been a journey.

**JVN** [00:09:46] Yeah. Yeah. Like, uh, stopping. Okay. Wait. What was your scariest thing, Michelle? To do? Like what were you most scared of? Like, were you, like, I'm scared I don't want to hit my head because I would get scared that I'm going to hit my head.

**MICHELLE KWAN** [00:09:58] Petrified. I mean, petrified of the triple loop. And it came to a point where I would tell my choreographer, "I don't care. The first jump I'm going to do is a triple loop." So if you look at the end of my career, first thing is the triple loop. Like, once I get over that hurdle, I'm like, I'm good.

**ELIOT HALVERSON** [00:10:16] Got it.

**JVN** [00:10:17] So you just had to get that out of the way?

**MICHELLE KWAN** [00:10:19] Yeah, I couldn't think.

**JVN** [00:10:19] What was it? 'Cause it just like the three turn into, you, like, you hated that or something? Because wait, do loops have to have three point turn? No. It just has to be the double. And then like your two, right.

**MICHELLE KWAN** [00:10:27] Yeah.

**ELIOT HALVERSON** [00:10:27] Yeah.

**MICHELLE KWAN** [00:10:28] So it's just similar to what you were thinking, like, when you get afraid of a spiral.

**JVN** [00:10:32] Yes. Yes. When I pop my three turn, uh huh.

**MICHELLE KWAN** [00:10:36] I have this fear of slipping off my edge and just going \*swish\*. Right?

**ELIOT HALVERSON** [00:10:41] I was going to ask, is that where the fear comes from? Because I have done that so many times. You think you're so set, ready for the jump.

**MICHELLE KWAN** [00:10:46] Yeah.

**ELIOT HALVERSON** [00:10:46] And then somebody pulls the rug from underneath you and you're on your hip and you're hitting your head and it's horrible.

**MICHELLE KWAN** [00:10:50] It's so quick, too. It's, like, one, two, three, boom.

**ELIOT HALVERSON** [00:10:51] Yeah. Happens in a flash. Did that at Nationals once. Yeah, been there.

**MICHELLE KWAN** [00:10:55] You did it at Nationals?

**ELIOT HALVERSON** [00:10:56] The qualifying round. Didn't in the final. But yeah I did do that at a National stage.

**MICHELLE KWAN** [00:10:59] Oh my goodness.

**JVN** [00:11:00] No.

**ELIOT HALVERSON** [00:11:01] I know.

**JVN** [00:11:01] Which one was that?

**ELIOT HALVERSON** [00:11:02] Well, I won the final round. That was my first national title.

**JVN** [00:11:05] Well I, sorry. I just didn't.

**ELIOT HALVERSON** [00:11:08] Lemme just say that.

**JVN** [00:11:09] I love you, not your fault. You had a Spiellmann that would, like, make you cry and make you if you don't want to Spiellmann is and it's kind of-.

**ELIOT HALVERSON** [00:11:17] Biellmann.

**JVN** [00:11:18] Huh?

**ELIOT HALVERSON** [00:11:19] Biellman.

**JVN** [00:11:19] Biellman, my bad. In my mind she's-.

**MICHELLE KWAN** [00:11:21] I like that. Spiellmann.

**ELIOT HALVERSON** [00:11:22] Spiellmann, why not?

**MICHELLE KWAN** [00:11:23] It makes so much, so much sense.

**ELIOT HALVERSON** [00:11:23] It makes more sense.

**JVN** [00:11:24] Yeah.

**ELIOT HALVERSON** [00:11:25] It is somebody's name. But.

**JVN** [00:11:26] Biellmann, yeah.

**MICHELLE KWAN** [00:11:27] Denise. Denise Biellmann.

**JVN** [00:11:28] Yes. Fierce perm.

**ELIOT HALVERSON** [00:11:29] Love her.

**JVN** [00:11:30] Really fierce perm. I love her perm.

**MICHELLE KWAN** [00:11:32] Love her.

**JVN** [00:11:33] Yeah. Really boxy perm. Love that perm. But it was a different time. It could have also been a natural, no it was a perm. Okay, wait. So if you don't know that is it kind of looks like, scorpion, kind of looks like dancer pose and yoga. But like all the way like a really extreme fully realized dancer pose but spinning at a high much, very much velocity.



**ELIOT HALVERSON** [00:11:54] Yeah. Oh and I did those in spiral form going into my triple Lutz for a while.

**MICHELLE KWAN** [00:11:58] Wow.

**JVN** [00:11:59] Wait standby, you did it, a spiral just going across the ice.

**ELIOT HALVERSON** [00:12:02] Biellmann spiral cross in the French Lutz.

**JVN** [00:12:04] Basically what that is is just, like, doing a full dancer pose on skates going forward.

**ELIOT HALVERSON** [00:12:09] Backward, backward.

**JVN** [00:12:10] Backward you did it?

**ELIOT HALVERSON** [00:12:11] Yeah. Yeah.

**JVN** [00:12:12] You are a nightmare. Oh, my God.

**ELIOT HALVERSON** [00:12:15] Sorry.

**JVN** [00:12:15] So you're just, like, did, did you do, like, really expressive crossover arm movements before that?

**ELIOT HALVERSON** [00:12:19] Oh yes, this is-.

**JVN** [00:12:20] To get your speed?

**ELIOT HALVERSON** [00:12:21] This is, like, last jump of the program. I was the last jump triple Lutz, girl.

**JVN** [00:12:24] Fuck me sideways.

**ELIOT HALVERSON** [00:12:25] So come out of the spin. Come around the corner with the dramatic crossovers that you love.

**JVN** [00:12:29] I love it so much, much, much.

**ELIOT HALVERSON** [00:12:31] Take center ice Biellman straight down, triple Lutz come to a stop for the straight line footwork to end, Michelle Kwan-inspired, obviously and then finish the program.

**JVN** [00:12:39] Why don't we watch your programs on YouTube when were-?

**ELIOT HALVERSON** [00:12:41] There's not many on You, YouTube.

**JVN** [00:12:43] Can we please call someone and find, like, a DVD or something? This is, like, unbelievable.

**MICHELLE KWAN** [00:12:47] I need to see this. I'm- really need to see this.

**JVN** [00:12:48] Unfathomable. I feel personally attacked in front of all the people listening right now. Why don't we watch? I need to see your programs. I need to see that one, that gorgeous bird one.

**ELIOT HALVERSON** [00:12:58] That is on YouTube.

**JVN** [00:13:00] Don't make that face. You just made the same face that Dan Levy makes in, or Daniel Levy makes in "Schitt's Creek" when he's not sure about something.

**ELIOT HALVERSON** [00:13:09] Yeah, yeah, yeah.

**JVN** [00:13:10] Oh, I love that.

**MICHELLE KWAN** [00:13:11] So I have the opposite kind of thing where near the end of my career is 2005 and the judging system changed.

**ELIOT HALVERSON** [00:13:18] Yeah.

**MICHELLE KWAN** [00:13:19] And so the donut spin was worth so much. Yeah. And Tatiana Tarasova came to the ice rink to help choreograph a program because I was leaning, going into 2006.

**JVN** [00:13:30] We need to tell the children who Tatiana is.

**MICHELLE KWAN** [00:13:34] Yes. She is an amazing coach. Olympic champion.

**JVN** [00:13:38] She was famous for a coat. Like that big, big coat.

**MICHELLE KWAN** [00:13:41] Yes. But Olympic champion herself.

**ELIOT HALVERSON** [00:13:43] Yes. Yes. Yes.

**JVN** [00:13:44] She sat next to Oksana right? When she won.

**MICHELLE KWAN** [00:13:46] No. That was Galina.

**JVN** [00:13:47] Galin- oh. Seems like. But she also had a big coat, right? Everyone has a big coat.

**ELIOT HALVERSON** [00:13:51] Yeah, that's where the cliché look came from. Yeah.

**MICHELLE KWAN** [00:13:53] Big coat. So she, she's, like, trying to get my body to do a donut spin. And I'm like, "Tatiana. I am 25 now. This is not-"

**JVN** [00:14:01] What's a donut spin again?

**MICHELLE KWAN** [00:14:02] It's all-.

**JVN** [00:14:03] Oh, yes the donut. Oh, my God. Yeah.

**MICHELLE KWAN** [00:14:04] Like an **Oksana Baiul** donut spin. It was worth so much. She's like, "Michelle. I don't care. You are going to have to do it." She's pushing me and pushing me and, like, I can't do it.

**ELIOT HALVERSON** [00:14:13] Did you say this was in 2006?

**MICHELLE KWAN** [00:14:15] 2005 going into 2006, Torino.

**ELIOT HALVERSON** [00:14:18] So I did a donut that year, too, because I was trying to get on the donut train. But I found a like cheater way to do it where I really wasn't even arching my back at all. And I got it called every time. So.

**MICHELLE KWAN** [00:14:28] Wait, you got a call to like-.

**ELIOT HALVERSON** [00:14:30] As a donut spin, because it, like, looked like one, but I didn't really do it.

**MICHELLE KWAN** [00:14:33] I, I- stop.

**JVN** [00:14:36] Okay, wait. So this is actually a really gorgeous point, which you guys are gonna have to just like, listen to me most likely do an ad with like a British accent or something. We'll be right back with more "Getting Curious" after this. Welcome back to "Getting Curious," this is Jonathan Van Ness. So very interesting point, Michelle. Very interesting point, Eliot. So everyone's minding their own business. It's 2002. A lot has happened. Bush is in office. Hillary is a sitting senator of New York. And then Salt Lake happens, honey, a scandal-o. Many a scandal-os, but basically, like, this Russian, this Russian. If you watch, there's an episode of "Drunk History" about this. There really is. It's really fierce. And it's really expertly explained better so that I'm going to do it right now. But essentially, the baby Russians and the baby French made a little baby pact to give each other favorable scores and placings for, like, a dancing pair in exchange for a, yes. Say those names that you love, those names, you're so good at it.

**ELIOT HALVERSON** [00:15:45] Marina Anissina and Gwendal Peizerat were supposed to win the ice dance title. And who's the pairs? The Russians.

**JVN** [00:15:55] Those baby-. Because Jamie Sale.

**ELIOT HALVERSON** [00:15:58] Jamie Sale and David Pelletier of Canada.

**JVN** [00:15:59] Yes, they fucking put it down. They said, "You know what, we're coming into the Olympics and we're gonna, like, just take this long and short and we are gonna cram it down your throat in this loving way. And we're just gonna, like, single foot, all of our stuff and it's going to be so gorgeous."

**ELIOT HALVERSON** [00:16:15] To "The Love Story" soundtrack, do you remember?

**MICHELLE KWAN** [00:16:17] Choreographed by Rory.

**ELIOT HALVERSON** [00:16:17] In The Grey. In The Grey.

**JVN** [00:16:19] And he's so muscular and she's so perfect. And like she fits in his nook so-

**ELIOT HALVERSON** [00:16:24] Oh, yeah.

**JVN** [00:16:25] Perfectly.

**MICHELLE KWAN** [00:16:26] They got married and it was a love story.

**JVN** [00:16:29] I mean talk about Olympics.

**ELIOT HALVERSON** [00:16:30] When they, they played in the snow during the program. Do you remember? They, like, they, like, tossed, they like pranced around.

**JVN** [00:16:35] Yes. And then, and then the Russians come, go up, and not that I'm, like, Russo-phobic but you know they're we do seem to be having a thing about, you know, sometimes we get a little cheater, cheater, pumpkin eater and it just keeps happening. And it's like I, I'm not. But also, I did this really sweet Russian girl's hair who was, like, 22. And she was, like, "Everyone doesn't like us here. And I live here and I love it." And I was like, "Oh, my God, you're breaking my heart. I'm sorry." But they're cheaters, but I love you so much, you know what I mean?. But like, oh, my God. But all Russian athletes are not cheaters, I'm sure. But in this case, those judges, honey, were salty and backwards. So here's the thing. They're all at this cafe and then this little, you know, thing goes down. And so then when it comes out like these, these Russian pairs go out, they sat down. I think they sat down something in their short.

**ELIOT HALVERSON** [00:17:17] He, it was the long. He, like, fell out of a side-by-side triple Salchow.

**JVN** [00:17:22] Yes.

**ELIOT HALVERSON** [00:17:22] I think he has messed up because he-

**JVN** [00:17:23] So stepped out of that.

**ELIOT HALVERSON** [00:17:23] Yeah.

**JVN** [00:17:24] But then they were like, well they're starting value is cuter. So like. But then it was, like, no, like, if your eyes don't work it was better but no.

**ELIOT HALVERSON** [00:17:31] Yeah, very obvious.

**JVN** [00:17:31] So then they end up getting gold, the Russian kick gold and then the Canadians get silver, you know, and figure skating is a subjective sport. But there has been a lot of things that, that-. So everyone was really upset.

**ELIOT HALVERSON** [00:17:48] Tears were shed.

**JVN** [00:17:48] Tears were shed.

**ELIOT HALVERSON** [00:17:49] On the podium. Right? I think Jamie Sale was crying on the podium.

**JVN** [00:17:50] On the podium.

**ELIOT HALVERSON** [00:17:52] It was very sad.

**JVN** [00:17:53] Because they knew. It was a very-.

**ELIOT HALVERSON** [00:17:56] She kept the medal on.

**JVN** [00:17:57] She kept the medal on, but she was pissed.

**ELIOT HALVERSON** [00:17:59] Yes. Crushed.

**JVN** [00:17:59] And in their cute little matching gray outfits. And rightfully so.

**ELIOT HALVERSON** [00:18:02] Yes.

**JVN** [00:18:02] Mitt Romney was probably slow clapping malevolently, you know, somewhere. And, you know, because it's Salt Lake, you know?

**ELIOT HALVERSON** [00:18:08] Right, right, right.

**JVN** [00:18:09] And so then it comes out because that little baby French girl was so, the judge, was feeling such a guilty, guilty twinge.

**ELIOT HALVERSON** [00:18:15] Couldn't live with herself.

**JVN** [00:18:16] Could not live with herself. So then she had to come clean about it. That's how I lie, cheat, and steal. I always tell myself it's going to be OK at first. And then I. And then, this is, like, the how I did in my early 20s. And then once I did it, I was, like, "No. I can't live with the guilt." You know, I could never live with the guilt, that's the thing. That's why you got to stay in your integrity. 'Cause I just couldn't. And this lady learned to do it, you know, better late than never.

**ELIOT HALVERSON** [00:18:40] Yeah.

**JVN** [00:18:41] So then what they ended up doing, which I still look back on with a little bit of, like, a side of salt. You know, for, they gave them dual golds because you couldn't. But you know what? Did they give Miss Columbia the crown when Steve Harvey called the other one's name?

**ELIOT HALVERSON** [00:18:53] Very true.

**JVN** [00:18:54] No, take second place. Thank you.

**ELIOT HALVERSON** [00:18:56] Yep.

**JVN** [00:18:56] You got second.

**ELIOT HALVERSON** [00:18:57] And "Moonlight" won best picture.

**JVN** [00:18:59] Yes.

**ELIOT HALVERSON** [00:19:00] Right.

**JVN** [00:19:00] Did they both get a joint Oscar?

**ELIOT HALVERSON** [00:19:01] No.

**JVN** [00:19:02] You guys. And you know what else? As long as I'm talking about shit about the Olympics that pissed me off, I'm going to take a hard right into gymnastics here. Andreea Raducan. She literally had a Sudafed. They stripped her of her medal for what was the literally. I'm not even kidding, you guys. And it's not, like, one of those, like, those who will remain nameless, but things that are like a heart medication, that's like, why are you doing that? You know? You know, because there's other ones that are more controversial. Right? But then this was a, this was a sinus pill.

**ELIOT HALVERSON** [00:19:31] Yeah.

**JVN** [00:19:32] Because also when they tested her in the vault final and the team final wasn't in there, there was none. And it literally was a byproduct was only because the night before the all around final she had, like, a sinus headache. And the team doctor, like, gave her, like, what was equivalent to Sudafed. And, and there was, like, a thing in like the

Romanian Sudafed. It's like it literally is a and everyone across the board was like. So Olympic Committee, if someone out there is listening to this. You really should get, and even Simona Amanar who had that fierce yurchenko into a doub-, two and a half twisting, like, she, it's like her namesake vault. Like she got second that year. And she was like, no queen. Like, it's her is like a she even said so, like it was a fucking Sudafed, you guys.

**MICHELLE KWAN** [00:20:12] I remember in '95 world championships, I think it was the first time I probably heard "doping." I had no idea what that was, but I, I used eye drops because my eyes were getting dry and I remember my doctor, the team doctor after competition they said well, "Well what kind of medications have you taken?" I was, like, "I don't know. I'm, not even vitamins. I'm not taking anything." But I did do, use eye drops. And he's like, it was this big scare. So I, yeah, I heard of Sudafed. I've heard of, like, eating too much poppy seed. And it's all this like, it's scary because you really, really have to watch what you, what you're taking. If it's a Tylenol, make sure it's a Tylenol and make sure it's, it's okay. It's on the menu of things that you're allowed to take.

**ELIOT HALVERSON** [00:21:02] Right.

**MICHELLE KWAN** [00:21:03] Yeah.

**JVN** [00:21:04] You're just minding your own business, working so hard forever. So ew. So, but anyway when that all happened, they did this thing where they were like, we have to redo the system because at the time, what did Eric Radford and that gorgeous girl, what did they, what was their?

**ELIOT HALVERSON** [00:21:19] They had a couple like cool moments. They did throw triple Axel for a while, but they did throw quad Salchow.

**JVN** [00:21:25] Oh.

**ELIOT HALVERSON** [00:21:26] And they, they do side-by-side triple Lutz. They did a lot of things.

**MICHELLE KWAN** [00:21:28] Yeah, they did side-by-side triple Lutz.

**ELIOT HALVERSON** [00:21:30] A lot of things that made them technically really impressive.

**JVN** [00:21:32] Oh just gorgeous.

**ELIOT HALVERSON** [00:21:34] Oh yeah.

**JVN** [00:21:35] Just gorgeous.

**ELIOT HALVERSON** [00:21:37] Yeah.

**JVN** [00:21:38] He taught me, I had a really gorgeous day. OK. Anyway so, no, he taught me so many good things. He's like, he was also, like, a good little baby teacher. I almost did die though that day because he was, like, "Let's do a bunny hop." And I was like, "Okay, cute." But like, just like but I was like, "I can't do that." And then I was like, "Oh, no, I can't do that." Then he's like, "Let's do a cha-." I was like, "I can't do that either. Like, there's no way." And he's like, "How about can you stand on two feet and like, bend your knees?"

**ELIOT HALVERSON** [00:21:57] Hop.

**JVN** [00:21:58] And just so I was like, "Uh huh." So I did that. And, like, the literal, like, when I did that. Like, my, I just put my right or my left toe pick, like, just right into the ice and then jumped and just went straight forward.

**ELIOT HALVERSON** [00:22:08] Oh know.

**JVN** [00:22:09] Like, it was, that one wasn't on camera, thank God, but, like, I was, like, I'm cold, don't worry about her. She's just, you know, flailing around like a nightmare right-. Just flailing around in front of, like, the most decorated pair figure skater of all-.

**ELIOT HALVERSON** [00:22:22] Just help me if you can.

**JVN** [00:22:23] Yeah. Nightmare, me. OK, so anyway, so after that, everyone gets together and they're like, we're not going to do, like, a perfect six system because up until then, it had been, like, a perfect six. Like, technically you could get up to a six and then artistically and then they combine those two. Right? And then it was, like, there's also a placement thing though. The way that you, 'cause there was, like, because it was, like, it was, like, points and the judges had to, like, be, like, because, like, remember after that. Like, your little numbers would come down.

**MICHELLE KWAN** [00:22:45] Is the ordinals.

**ELIOT HALVERSON** [00:22:46] Ordinals. Yes.

**JVN** [00:22:47] Yes. And that was where they really cheated the fuck out of them in the first place because, was because of the ordinals.

**ELIOT HALVERSON** [00:22:51] Well, the ordinals coordinated to the technical and the presentation score so that they would be added together and whoever had the highest that meant, oh, my scores mean that I put you first and I put you second, and that's what the ordinal came from. There was, like, more math to it. There was.

**JVN** [00:23:06] Yeah.

**ELIOT HALVERSON** [00:23:07] Right?



**JVN** [00:23:07] But she got more, but they don't do ordinals anymore. Right?

**MICHELLE KWAN** [00:23:10] Eliot's looking at me, like, "Help, help," like, I have no idea.

**JVN** [00:23:13] Michelle's like, "I've been busy saving the world since I stopped skating."

**MICHELLE KWAN** [00:23:16] Sorry, sorry, sorry.

**JVN** [00:23:17] So like I've been, like, really. No. honey, I mean I love your post-career is major. Yeah.

**ELIOT HALVERSON** [00:23:20] Save the world.

**JVN** [00:23:21] Yeah, no, you're like you're, like, "Sorry, I'm just like doing the most." Okay so wait, but figure skating. Let's talk about that. So after that. So now the way they do it, is it's like, it's, like, everything has a value. And then there's, like, a cumulative, like, right? So you get, like, your total score.

**ELIOT HALVERSON** [00:23:35] So there's two panels. There's the technical panel and then the judging panel. For every element that you do, you get a score. And the technical panel says what you did. Okay. You did a level four Flying Camel. And then the judging panel says how good you did it or how poorly you did it. And so then they factor in the base value somehow multiplied with the judges grade of execution to grade, to get the elements score. Add up all the elements for the technical score. The judges also plug in their presentation scores. Known as the program components to find the score for your program.

**MICHELLE KWAN** [00:24:09] Wow.

**JVN** [00:24:09] I wonder what system we're going to face at the gay Olympics for our pair skate. I can't wait to gag them with our throw double Salchow, where you're going to throw me. We're going to, like, hit them with such a surprise. We're telling you that now because, like, I'm not even threatened by the competition. OK?

**MICHELLE KWAN** [00:24:25] You know what it should be, like, the judges with, like, big coats and they do it handheld, like.

**ELIOT HALVERSON** [00:24:31] Yes. Oh, the two little cards.

**MICHELLE KWAN** [00:24:32] Yeah, the two cards.

**ELIOT HALVERSON** [00:24:33] But that's every six point 0.

**MICHELLE KWAN** [00:24:35] I know.

**ELIOT HALVERSON** [00:24:35] The figures.

**MICHELLE KWAN** [00:24:36] I know.

**JVN** [00:24:36] Oh, yeah. I want to do figures. What were figures.? You guys, tell the people what figures used to be. Do we know?

**MICHELLE KWAN** [00:24:42] You describe it, Eliot. We used to carry scribes.

**ELIOT HALVERSON** [00:24:45] I did not. I missed the figures train, but I, like, know about it, but Michelle can.

**MICHELLE KWAN** [00:24:49] I was the worst.

**JVN** [00:24:50] You did it?

**MICHELLE KWAN** [00:24:51] I was the worst in figures.

**JVN** [00:24:53] In your life, you did that? Tell us what it is.

**ELIOT HALVERSON** [00:24:55] Explain it in a way, explain it to him where he won't be so enamored by it because he finds it like he really wants it.

**JVN** [00:25:00] I want to do, I want to trace a gorgeous eight on one foot.

**ELIOT HALVERSON** [00:25:03] It's so hard, girl.

**MICHELLE KWAN** [00:25:04] So to practice, you would essentially get one strip of the ice.

**ELIOT HALVERSON** [00:25:07] A patch.

**MICHELLE KWAN** [00:25:08] So you have one patch, which was designated JVN, and you basically take the scribe, you create circles and then you try to trace them for about an hour and that's it.

**ELIOT HALVERSON** [00:25:20] A scribe is this big metal contraption where it has, like, a center point. Center point.

**JVN** [00:25:25] She's like that thing that you draw a perfect circle. A contractor.

**MICHELLE KWAN** [00:25:27] Yeah, exactly. Thank you.

**ELIOT HALVERSON** [00:25:28] For the ice and you would draw your perfect circle. And then little baby Michelle comes out and she traces that perfect circle she drew.

**MICHELLE KWAN** [00:25:35] With my-.

**ELIOT HALVERSON** [00:25:36] With her feet.

**JVN** [00:25:37] That little baby girl, that you just did a TBT of on this very day. That little baby girl with her little haircut will go out on a little baby yoga-sized ice thing and just do a little baby.

**MICHELLE KWAN** [00:25:45] Yeah.

**JVN** [00:25:46] What were the shapes like, queen? Oh, my God. I'm going to have a nervous breakdown.

**MICHELLE KWAN** [00:25:49] You know what? It's so hard. I was probably 65 pounds. I was 65 pounds. I couldn't see my tracing.

**ELIOT HALVERSON** [00:25:58] You didn't weigh enough to make a tracing.

**MICHELLE KWAN** [00:25:59] I couldn't see my tracing, so like. So when you're actually in competition, you don't have. You don't use your scribe.

**JVN** [00:26:07] So you did, you had to do this in competitions?

**MICHELLE KWAN** [00:26:09] Yeah.

**ELIOT HALVERSON** [00:26:10] And the judges are on the ice with you.

**MICHELLE KWAN** [00:26:11] Yeah. So you basically get on the ice and then you, there's one line that you can create. And that's, like, your starting entrance.

**JVN** [00:26:21] And all your circles have to be off of-?

**MICHELLE KWAN** [00:26:22] And then you essentially make-.

**ELIOT HALVERSON** [00:26:24] Patterns.

**MICHELLE KWAN** [00:26:25] Patterns. So one is a loop. One is, like, a-.

**ELIOT HALVERSON** [00:26:29] Brackets.

**MICHELLE KWAN** [00:26:30] Bracket. You missed this. You would have been so good. I couldn't. I was so distracted. And then the circles have to be perfect.

**ELIOT HALVERSON** [00:26:39] Perfect. Trace each other.

**MICHELLE KWAN** [00:26:39] Yeah, trace each other three times around on both sides.

**ELIOT HALVERSON** [00:26:43] But the judges are on the ice with you in their shoes. Like, up close and personal checking exactly how much you traced.

**MICHELLE KWAN** [00:26:51] Yeah.

**ELIOT HALVERSON** [00:26:51] It was just beyond technical.

**MICHELLE KWAN** [00:26:53] And so then you have like a three turn here. They'll put a red marker. Red marker. And to see if it's a line. It was impossible for me.

**ELIOT HALVERSON** [00:27:00] Insane. Too much.

**JVN** [00:27:01] Elliott, I've really given you, like, a good old fashioned Marcia Cross about what these figures are that I've heard about like forever. But I never remember seeing it on TV. Like, when I first started watching figure skating in 1991-.

**ELIOT HALVERSON** [00:27:11] It wasn't televised.

**JVN** [00:27:12] Religiously I never knew what it was. And then I feel like in a documentary I saw, but I still could ever wrap my head around it. And then so I've asked you a lot about it but I can't. So when did that go away?

**MICHELLE KWAN** [00:27:21] So I was very fortunate because I was really bad on, at figures that I only went up to level four and then they stopped figures completely. And what they said was that they did this because of what, Janet Lynn.

**ELIOT HALVERSON** [00:27:35] Yeah.

**JVN** [00:27:36] Oh, great.

**MICHELLE KWAN** [00:27:37] What they, they started the short program because she was really good.

**ELIOT HALVERSON** [00:27:41] Because there would be people that were so bad at figures. But we're such good jumpers, and so-.

**JVN** [00:27:45] But how did it, how did competitions go before that? There was-.

**MICHELLE KWAN** [00:27:49] So figures wasn't televised.

**ELIOT HALVERSON** [00:27:50] No.

**MICHELLE KWAN** [00:27:51] At all. So it was, it was the judges on the ice.

**JVN** [00:27:54] So in, like, the 1972 Olympics or whatever.

**ELIOT HALVERSON** [00:27:59] Well, you would jump in on TV for the short program and they would say-.

**JVN** [00:28:02] So in Peggy Fleming's day.

**ELIOT HALVERSON** [00:28:04] Yeah, but for the short program that you'd be watching, they'd say coming in from the figures portion so-and-so was in so-and-so place. So they would just say, like, this is where they're all ranked after.

**JVN** [00:28:16] And there was no Internet.

**ELIOT HALVERSON** [00:28:16] It's like the preliminaries. The preliminaries.

**JVN** [00:28:17] Got it. Which I always hate that I couldn't see.

**ELIOT HALVERSON** [00:28:20] Right. Yes, yes, yes.

**JVN** [00:28:21] That always infuriated me.

**MICHELLE KWAN** [00:28:22] So Janet Lynn, they said that they brought in the short program because of her.

**ELIOT HALVERSON** [00:28:26] Yeah.

**MICHELLE KWAN** [00:28:27] Because she was a brilliant skater. So she-. They did: short program, long program.

**ELIOT HALVERSON** [00:28:32] Yeah.

**MICHELLE KWAN** [00:28:33] And then-.

**JVN** [00:28:33] So prior to that it was figures and then just long?

**MICHELLE KWAN** [00:28:36] Yeah. And one program.

**ELIOT HALVERSON** [00:28:37] Yeah. One, yeah.

**JVN** [00:28:38] You're listening to "Getting Curious." And we'll be back with more after this quick little ad. That. And then Elliott told me that there was this boy who would, like, tap his, like, he was always like a cigarette smoking coach. And then he would, like, tap, if you messed up, like-.

**ELIOT HALVERSON** [00:28:54] Ash.

**JVN** [00:28:55] Yeah. He'd, like, his ash.

**MICHELLE KWAN** [00:28:56] Did he really?

**ELIOT HALVERSON** [00:28:56] He would, like, for many thing, I heard. I've heard that he would like to walk around and tap his cigarette ash on, like, different markings on the ice to be like, "Well, you were, you know, flat here and ash, ash, ash. And your spin really traveled here. Ash, ash, ash." And that was, like, his, like, a bratty thing that he did.

**MICHELLE KWAN** [00:29:12] Oh my gosh.

**JVN** [00:29:13] Yeah, traveling spin. I understand. I like, I-.

**ELIOT HALVERSON** [00:29:16] Yeah, you know how to travel your spins.

**JVN** [00:29:17] I'm really good at traveling my spins. But I also sometimes can stay very center.

**ELIOT HALVERSON** [00:29:20] Oh yes, oh yeah.

**JVN** [00:29:21] You know, sometimes. But I also just, like, really, like, figure, I want, I want. I think I just want to trace like a fuckin big ol' 8 on one foot.

**ELIOT HALVERSON** [00:29:28] I know.

**MICHELLE KWAN** [00:29:29] We can do it together. I'll show you what I mean by suddenly you're making these big circles and you're, like, "I'm doing this for how long?"

**ELIOT HALVERSON** [00:29:35] Yeah. Too long.

**MICHELLE KWAN** [00:29:37] And you just.

**JVN** [00:29:37] And there's no music?

**MICHELLE KWAN** [00:29:37] No arm movement.

**ELIOT HALVERSON** [00:29:38] No.

**MICHELLE KWAN** [00:29:39] No. Anything. It's just you and the ice.

**ELIOT HALVERSON** [00:29:50] Dead silent. Dead.

**JVN** [00:29:42] Oh.

**MICHELLE KWAN** [00:29:42] Yeah.

**ELIOT HALVERSON** [00:29:43] And patch practice was at, like, four.

**MICHELLE KWAN** [00:29:45] Five in the morning.

**ELIOT HALVERSON** [00:29:45] It was rid-, it was just the bane of every skater.

**MICHELLE KWAN** [00:29:49] And you had two different skates because they didn't have sharp toe picks.

**JVN** [00:29:53] Oh, so two different ones on your foot.

**MICHELLE KWAN** [00:29:55] Yeah. One figure, like, one for patch and one for freestyle.

**JVN** [00:29:59] Oh weird.

**MICHELLE KWAN** [00:30:00] Yeah.

**ELIOT HALVERSON** [00:30:00] Different pair of skates.

**MICHELLE KWAN** [00:30:01] And I was trying to find a gift for Jonathan and one of the things I tried to look on eBay was the wooded-. You don't even have them. The wooden handle and you just basically put your blade on it and you have usually your patch skate and you figure skate. And it was this, this-.

**ELIOT HALVERSON** [00:30:19] Oh, cute.

**MICHELLE KWAN** [00:30:18] I need to find it for you.

**JVN** [00:30:19] Michelle gives me this gorgeous, like, skate holder, but I'm never going to actually put a skate in it 'cause I'm gonna put it in a shadow box and, like, frame it and put it in my living room. It's gonna-

**MICHELLE KWAN** [00:30:30] I bedazzled it.

**JVN** [00:30:31] I've been looking for a high quality art piece and I found it.

**MICHELLE KWAN** [00:30:36] So that's what I was doing a few days before Christmas. I was bedazzling this thing.

**JVN** [00:30:39] I can't.

**ELIOT HALVERSON** [00:30:42] I love it.

**MICHELLE KWAN** [00:30:42] With a hot glue gun. I was getting it everywhere.

**ELIOT HALVERSON** [00:30:43] Of course.

**JVN** [00:30:44] Can I just say that the first time that I got to spend time with you is when we were campaigning for gorgeous Sharice and, like, yes, thank God 'cause I'm so proud of you. But and she's just doing such a great job. But when I realized, like, because I, I can be around. I mean, I've been to the Emmys. I've been, I've met a lot of very famous people in the last year. When, on, I will never forget in Australia, we were in Australia. And you liked one of my pictures. And I, like, literally, like, I couldn't tell if it was the jetlag or just like the pure unadulterated, like, love. But like, I just started, like, sobbing all the way. I'm, like, oh, like, oh. No, it's, like, it's just it's so crazy. I don't want to get off track because I really wanted to. Also, this is obviously clearly not going to be a 30-minute episode, if we have time. So what was that like pressure wise for both of you? Because you were, like, used to a 6.0 system, you were used to competing under that and then it, like, completely changes. And just so it made your body, like, do different things or something.

**MICHELLE KWAN** [00:31:49] I, personally, I didn't like it because I went from the 6.0 system where you're not counting. I feel like when you're doing a spiral or doing spins that I don't like, like I, I physically could have gotten myself in a position of a donut spin.

**ELIOT HALVERSON** [00:32:07] Yeah.

**MICHELLE KWAN** [00:32:07] I would do it because it's worth something. But it is so ugly. It's just like-.

**ELIOT HALVERSON** [00:32:14] And, like, the music didn't call for it.

**MICHELLE KWAN** [00:32:15] Yeah. But you just you have to put it in your program. That's what I did.

**ELIOT HALVERSON** [00:32:20] And then everybody else does it, too.

**MICHELLE KWAN** [00:32:21] Yeah.

**ELIOT HALVERSON** [00:32:22] So whereas, you know.

**MICHELLE KWAN** [00:32:23] Everyone has.

**ELIOT HALVERSON** [00:32:23] Individual skater Yeah.

**MICHELLE KWAN** [00:32:24] Yeah. Everyone has the same footwork. Everyone has the same spin because it's worth more. And it's just-.

**ELIOT HALVERSON** [00:32:29] What little skaters now when they're practicing, they're tallying their scores as they're skating.

**MICHELLE KWAN** [00:32:25] Yeah. They're counting.



**ELIOT HALVERSON** [00:32:36] They're counting up their scores as they're skating. How can you possibly be thinking about the technical things or the performance, if you're racking up and doing a math equation in your head?

**MICHELLE KWAN** [00:32:46] Yeah.

**ELIOT HALVERSON** [00:32:46] Yeah.

**MICHELLE KWAN** [00:32:47] Well, the last program that I choreographed, it was exactly that. It was like a manual that you were on the ice thinking, looking at what's more important, what's, I mean, what's what. And then it was just weird. It was, like, is this creative? Is this figure skating? Is this? But you have to abide by them because that's the only way you win.

**JVN** [00:33:10] Yeah.

**MICHELLE KWAN** [00:33:12] Yeah.

**JVN** [00:33:13] And I think in gymnastics that happens at like, especially when you look at like beam routines, that it's like, because I think really when it comes down to is good, like, they're trying to make it more fair and like a little bit less subjective.

**ELIOT HALVERSON** [00:33:24] Yeah.

**JVN** [00:33:25] But in doing that, like, you, I think some of the subjective elements, which is like artistry and feeling the music, like, suffer and, and in it trying to make it maybe.

**ELIOT HALVERSON** [00:33:34] Well, it appears that the judges will find a way to make it what they want it to be, regardless of what the system is going to be. They now can just doctor up the component marks and that's how they can have a hand on what they want the results to be. And yeah, I think the attempt was to get the sport away from being so subjective. But I don't. It's a subjective sport, and I don't think you can take that away. And the judges have already found their ways to do it in the new international judging system.

**MICHELLE KWAN** [00:34:05] To me, it was always, like, well, I was a little confused. I was like, so are you going to change the judging system? But it's, you don't change your judging if it's the wrong people or if they're cheating. It's not the system.

**ELIOT HALVERSON** [00:34:19] Yeah.

**MICHELLE KWAN** [00:34:20] They'll always find a way.

**ELIOT HALVERSON** [00:34:21] Yeah.

**MICHELLE KWAN** [00:34:22] So that's that's the thing that I-

**JVN** [00:34:24] It's, like, just get rid of these problem factor judges.

**MICHELLE KWAN** [00:34:27] Yeah.

**JVN** [00:34:27] Right.

**ELIOT HALVERSON** [00:34:28] Well, and actually they're opening it up where they can bump up a score to the person they want to bump up the score to on every single element throughout the program. Okay. That jump maybe was a plus one. They give it a plus two. Then the next spin, they give that one just one increment. Well then for a whole program they've been, you've given them now-.

**JVN** [00:34:44] A million opportunities.

**ELIOT HALVERSON** [00:34:45] 15 chances.

**JVN** [00:34:46] Okay. So question. Oh so it's, like, it doesn't even do-.

**ELIOT HALVERSON** [00:34:48] You've made it almost worse.

**JVN** [00:34:49] Yeah. Worse. Yeah. Okay, wait. Oh my God. I got so interested in that question that I totally went away from me. Oh, yeah. So in the old way, did you have just one? Like, was there a technical panel and an artistic one? And now-.

**ELIOT HALVERSON** [00:35:02] No.

**JVN** [00:35:03] No. There was just one.

**MICHELLE KWAN** [00:35:03] One.

**ELIOT HALVERSON** [00:35:03] Yeah.

**JVN** [00:35:04] And now as, does the technical panel now that's the one that has to be, like, oh that was a fLutz, that was under rotated or whatever. And then the in general ones do the artistic ones?

**ELIOT HALVERSON** [00:35:11] Judges. The judges are grading.

**JVN** [00:35:14] Everything.

**ELIOT HALVERSON** [00:35:14] The executions for jumps, spins, footwork and artistry and the program components.

**JVN** [00:35:19] But then the technical ones are like, if they, if the judge gave that triple-triple, like, a five GOE or whatever. But then the technical was like, "Actually, that was under rotated," like, after the review it or something.

**ELIOT HALVERSON** [00:35:29] Yeah.

**JVN** [00:35:30] Is that how it works?

**ELIOT HALVERSON** [00:35:31] Yeah. So on the fly they're calling the program as the program's happening.

**JVN** [00:35:35] Yes.

**ELIOT HALVERSON** [00:35:35] They're in their headset saying they're calling the footwork. They say level three footwork and the judges, it's fed into their computers. But they are supposed to be giving the GOE, the grade of execution, regardless of what the technical panelist is saying.

**JVN** [00:35:48] Oh.

**ELIOT HALVERSON** [00:35:50] It shouldn't really matter to them.

**JVN** [00:35:51] They're just confirmation. The technical.

**ELIOT HALVERSON** [00:35:53] It's just for the score. It's not for the judges. The judges aren't supposed to be really thinking about what technically they're doing. They're just supposed to be saying how good or bad it was.

**JVN** [00:36:-4] Why don't I understand the technical panel?

**ELIOT HALVERSON** [00:36:06] Technical panel. It's like they are-.

**JVN** [00:36:09] So you guys, if you watch figure skating, if you don't, you're, like, "I hate this episode," but go fuck yourself, 'cause you should watch figure skating. So there's that little box in the left hand side. That's, like, the little ticker box.

**ELIOT HALVERSON** [00:36:19] And that's the technical. That's the technical panel, really, because that box is ticking up what the technical score is.

**JVN** [00:36:27] Oh, 'cause then it'll be because if they fall then it's a negative one or whatever. We have to watch this together more.

**ELIOT HALVERSON** [00:36:34] Yeah.

**JVN** [00:36:35] Mommy has to understand better.

**ELIOT HALVERSON** [00:36:36] And actually no, I think that's not even right. I think the little ticker at the top does feed in live grade of execution from the judges too.

**JVN** [00:36:42] Because it'll be the current leader or whatever.

**ELIOT HALVERSON** [00:36:44] Yes.

**JVN** [00:36:45] And then, like, for everything that she's doing, it'll be grade GOE, five. And then it, likes, adds and then it goes to the score.

**ELIOT HALVERSON** [00:36:49] Well, I think that gets confusing though too, because at the end of the program they can, they've flagged different elements. If they think that jump was cheated, they flag it at the end of the program, they're gonna go back and watch the review and they can then lower the base value, which would change that little score that you've been watching, right?

**JVN** [00:37:04] Oh, yeah. Because that happens sometimes. And also, if you guys don't know, like a way that you could, like review a jump, it's, like, if it seemed like she didn't fall and it seemed clean to you, like it could have been, like, a little bit under rotated like you so viciously accuse me of doing on my off ice single Axel form, my comments earlier this summer. Do you remember that?

**ELIOT HALVERSON** [00:37:20] I have no comment to that. But I do want to speak about cheating of jumps. And I think this is one of the bigger ways that the new judging, I can't call it the new judging system any more, the international judging system.

**JVN** [00:37:32] Also known as the IJS.

**ELIOT HALVERSON** [00:37:34] IJS. Yeah. They now have all these slow-mo videos of the jumps. So if they think the jump is cheated, the program's over. They go back and they watch the jump and they slow-mo the crap out of that jump and they're zooming in on the toe. When, when does the toe, when does the foot come down and was it cheated? And it can take away from some of the magic of some famous performances that we've all seen if they, if went back and laser zoomed in on the jumps of past champions. I think now maybe a lot of things would have been downgraded and called cheated and it would have skewed a lot of results in the way that it's skewing now and it leads to, you don't understand what you're watching because you think you've watched this great performance. The crowd goes crazy. They didn't ever fall. It was an amazing moment. Then the technical panel rips it to shreds, says everything was cheated. That person gets sixth place and no one understands why. And it's only because they zoomed and they slow-mo'ed and they found all the flaws they could find. And it just takes away from the magic of skating. That, I think was the reason why the audience used to love it, that they don't as much anymore.

**MICHELLE KWAN** [00:38:43] The one thing I remember hearing "back loaded." I was, like-

**ELIOT HALVERSON** [00:38:48] Yeah, yeah.

**MICHELLE KWAN** [00:38:48] Whoah, what does that mean, "back loaded"? And now it's, like, the two-minute mark, right? Where-.

**ELIOT HALVERSON** [00:38:52] Yeah, halfway.

**MICHELLE KWAN** [00:38:53] Halfway point.

**ELIOT HALVERSON** [00:38:53] I guess I can't, I don't know for sure, but yeah-.

**JVN** [00:38:55] They don't. Now they don't do it. So there is this big.

**ELIOT HALVERSON** [00:38:58] They do.

**JVN** [00:38:59] No, because it only counts for three. You only get 10 percent extra on three jumps.

**ELIOT HALVERSON** [00:39:03] Three elements. OK, got it.

**JVN** [00:39:04] I think three jumps.

**ELIOT HALVERSON** [00:39:05] Jumps, three jumps. It was only ever jumps.

**MICHELLE KWAN** [00:39:07] Yeah.

**JVN** [00:39:07] Oh, sorry. So basically, like, there was a-.

**MICHELLE KWAN** [00:39:10] Correction.

**JVN** [00:39:11] There was, like, a little baby, like there, in 2018, Olympic champion, Alina Zagitova, basically do this thing where she, like, Zagitova?

**ELIOT HALVERSON** [00:39:19] Zagitova.

**JVN** [00:39:20] Zagitova. She had it, like, in this program where she literally, like, a long skate's, what? Four minutes?

**ELIOT HALVERSON** [00:39:26] Yeah.

**JVN** [00:39:27] She basically because there was this rule in that season, where it was like every jump that you did after the halfway mark of the program got a 10 percent increase. So she played the game, honey. You, don't hate the player.

**ELIOT HALVERSON** [00:39:38] She played it.

**JVN** [00:39:39] She did, it was like, don't hate the player, hate the game.

**ELIOT HALVERSON** [00:39:40] Yes.

**JVN** [00:39:40] But I still. But for me, you know, I. And I'm not asking anyone to make any controversial statements right now, so make them at your own peril. But I was definitely. I called you. I-.

**ELIOT HALVERSON** [00:39:49] But what did Alina do? What did she do?

**JVN** [00:39:50] I know, we've talked about it. I don't have a fight in the studio in front of the most decorated American figure skater of all time. OK?

**ELIOT HALVERSON** [00:39:56] She did all of her jumping passes in the second half of her program.

**JVN** [00:39:58] Right. And so that's, oh, but I thought I thought you-.

**MICHELLE KWAN** [00:40:00] But didn't Mend-, Mendvedeva do that, too?

**JVN** [00:40:02] No.

**ELIOT HALVERSON** [00:40:03] Not all of them.

**JVN** [00:40:03] Her's were balanced.

**MICHELLE KWAN** [00:40:04] Oh.

**JVN** [00:40:04] She had, she did a triple-triple in the beginning.

**ELIOT HALVERSON** [00:40:07] Interesting. I thought it almost looked so easy for Alina to do all of the jumps in the second half of her program. I almost wondered if that almost worked her, for her, where she could get her butterflies out in her footwork and kind of be wobbly in the footwork, kind of wobble in the spins, kind of, like, get her feet underneath her. She's had a two and a half minute warmup.

**MICHELLE KWAN** [00:40:26] Yeah.

**ELIOT HALVERSON** [00:40:27] And now she feels in the groove. She's not as nervous. She's not scared by the audience. Then she can land her seven jumping passes because she had a warm up.

**JVN** [00:40:33] Yeah. Which is smart.

**ELIOT HALVERSON** [00:40:35] And yeah. It ended up working for her.

**JVN** [00:40:37] Yeah.

**ELIOT HALVERSON** [00:40:37] Yeah.

**JVN** [00:40:38] But it didn't create, like, it did create, like, a, a markedly different aesthetic than anyone else's program. I think was not as an enjoyable program to watch because it just was, like, all of my breathless moments were like. I mean it's like when I'm playing Mario Kart like this, like, it's, like, I'm just I guess it is like exciting and different and maybe that's what they were looking for. But, like, I'd like that they took it, that you still get the benefit of like a little bit of an added zhuzh of the 10 percent, but it's 3 jumps now instead of, like, every single one, which I do think lends itself to a lot more like, you know, I'm such an opinionated queen when it comes to figure skating, honey.

**ELIOT HALVERSON** [00:41:14] I struggle with this a little bit, too, with some of these new young jumping freaks out there.

**JVN** [00:41:21] But in a loving way.

**ELIOT HALVERSON** [00:41:22] In a loving way. Oh, jumping incredible freaks.

**JVN** [00:41:24] Yeah. So there's basically three little baby boobie Russian girls who are just cute as they could be and there's this one little twelve-year-old American girl, honey, she does triples, like, it's, you know, with her eyes closed.

**MICHELLE KWAN** [00:41:32] Triple Axels.

**JVN** [00:41:33] Triple Axels. So good. Then there's this other Japanese girl, Ricca, who is fierce, honey, and she has a triple Axel and she's a triple-triple, which is-

**ELIOT HALVERSON** [00:41:40] Triple Axel triple toe.

**JVN** [00:41:41] Effortless.

**ELIOT HALVERSON** [00:41:42] Effortless.

**JVN** [00:41:42] Then there is Sasha Trusova.

**ELIOT HALVERSON** [00:41:45] Yes. Quad girl.

**JVN** [00:41:46] Who's reigning silver Russian.

**ELIOT HALVERSON** [00:41:48] Reigning junior world champion, silver medalist in Russia.

**JVN** [00:41:51] And also who had a sick quad, core quad. Gorgeous quad.

**MICHELLE KWAN** [00:41:55] Also quad Lutz.

**ELIOT HALVERSON** [00:41:56] And at junior world's she did quads Salchow and quad toe.

**MICHELLE KWAN** [00:41:58] Wow.

**ELIOT HALVERSON** [00:41:59] Incredible.

**JVN** [00:41:59] And she sat down her, the leg she fell out of, like, in her combination but she could do a quad Lutz triple loop.

**ELIOT HALVERSON** [00:42:05] Loop. I think probably.

**JVN** [00:42:07] It's a loop. It's insane. And then you have Anna Shcherbakova.

**ELIOT HALVERSON** [00:42:10] Also quad Lutz.

**JVN** [00:42:11] Also quad Lutz.

**ELIOT HALVERSON** [00:42:12] Also quad toe or quad Salchow. She is. The two of them are crazy.

**JVN** [00:42:14] She's number one, she won but like that was the cleanest, most gorgeous. That was absolutely stunning. Then, also, there's this other girl, who, Alena Kostornaia. Who works at. I think I'm kind of, like.

**ELIOT HALVERSON** [00:42:25] You're turning into Alena.

**JVN** [00:42:26] I'm turning into a Kostornaia. I'm slowly but surely turning into Kostornaia myself. I, once I get, like, a backbend out of my bower, honey, she better watch out. Not really. I love you. But she has this double Axel that's so big, it looks like a single because it's, like, she could just, like, "uh," but that she really could. She does a triple on the internet.

**ELIOT HALVERSON** [00:42:44] Yeah.

**JVN** [00:42:44] But not in competition. But I think she's going to, I don't know if she's just saving herself for senior.

**ELIOT HALVERSON** [00:42:48] She just forward inside rocker change of edge, triple Axel.

**JVN** [00:42:50] Yeah. I feel like she's about to.

**MICHELLE KWAN** [00:42:52] Oh my goodness.

**JVN** [00:42:52] She's just saving that, she's just saving it so that when she comes into to seniors you can bam. Bam, bam, bam. Yeah, just, like, "Bye. You thought I was scary before with my, like, perfection, like, get out, sit down, Queens. Mama's here."



**ELIOT HALVERSON** [00:43:05] Yeah.

**JVN** [00:43:05] You know what I mean?

**ELIOT HALVERSON** [00:43:06] Yeah. I don't know that I really ever thought I would see that jumping that I'm seeing from these young girls. And I know you don't watch a lot of men's skating, but I can say the same for the jumping that I'm seeing in the men's from people like Nathan Chen and Shoma Uno and Usaro Anyo, the amount of quads that they're doing is mind blowing. And I really didn't think that I would be seeing quad Lutzes as frequently as I am, especially from 13-, 14-year-old girls.

**MICHELLE KWAN** [00:43:31] Yeah, same.

**ELIOT HALVERSON** [00:43:32] Just.

**MICHELLE KWAN** [00:43:32] I never.

**ELIOT HALVERSON** [00:43:32] Mind blowing.

**MICHELLE KWAN** [00:43:33] When I saw it on Instagram. It was, like, someone sent me it and I was, like, this isn't real. This is real. Right? And I had to slow-mo it to make sure it wasn't. Yeah. Four revolutions. And that was the same with Nathan. When he did the triple, triple see my head, quad Lutz, quad flip, quad Salchow, quad toe. All of them. Yeah, it really is. And I just hope that they're, they're healthy and strong because that could put a big toll on your body. And I. Yeah. Just.

**ELIOT HALVERSON** [00:44:02] Teenage bodies.

**MICHELLE KWAN** [00:44:04] Yeah.

**ELIOT HALVERSON** [00:44:04] Yeah.

**JVN** [00:44:05] Well yeah.

**MICHELLE KWAN** [00:44:06] I just went so positive and then went. Sorry.

**JVN** [00:44:08] Well, I can say from personal experience, from learning my waltz jumps, that taking a hard fall out of a half revolution is much painful. Very much. So I can't imagine how much it hurts to really fall out of, like, a literal jump very much. Why don't you tell them your scariest moment, El El, that you told me about that I was just, like?

**ELIOT HALVERSON** [00:44:29] Oh, yes.

**JVN** [00:44:30] Oh, my gosh, this is tradge, honey.

**ELIOT HALVERSON** [00:44:32] Yeah.

**JVN** [00:44:32] But not like the competition tragedy.

**ELIOT HALVERSON** [00:44:34] No. No, no, no. The weights.

**JVN** [00:44:36] Yeah.

**MICHELLE KWAN** [00:44:37] Oh no.

**JVN** [00:44:38] Yeah. Yes. Wrists, weights, furiosa.

**ELIOT HALVERSON** [00:44:40] Coach tried to sabotage me because I was competing against his, his boys and made me try a triple Salchow, I was, like, a waif-y little eleven-year-old with a fresh new triple Salchow. He made me try it with both my arms up. I think I maybe did that. And then he put two little wrist weights on my tiny little wrists and had me try the triple Salchow with both my arms over my head, and I was blown away by the extra weight and smashed my head on the ice. It was really tragic and terrifying and I was forever very afraid to jump. Jumps scared me very, very much. I would, I would come home from nationals' every year and have a month period where I wouldn't. I refused to jump because like the reality of what I was doing would hit me again and I would be so terrified to do triple jumps that I would just refuse and pop for a whole month because I was so scared to hit my head.

**MICHELLE KWAN** [00:45:31] I've never heard of jumping with weights, let alone.

**ELIOT HALVERSON** [00:45:35] Yeah, little wrist weights.

**JVN** [00:45:36] Okay. Here's the thing. As a lifelong super fan of figure skating, I always obviously knew it was super duper hard, like, it, when I was like 7, I went for, like, the first and only time and I got two steps out on the ice. I told both of you the story seventeen thousand times so I apologize. I don't think I've told the children on the pod. But basically this boy, just as I looked up, like, this boy, just kind of, like, body checked me. And next thing I knew, like, my, like, my face was on the ground, in my, like, teeth were through my lips.

**ELIOT HALVERSON** [00:45:59] No.

**MICHELLE KWAN** [00:46:00] And I was, like, "Oh, my God, I'm actually, like, an expert carpet figure skater, lifelong, like, president of the Carpet Figure Skating Association." So that's what I did. You know, very much developed career. You know, it was really good. So but now, like, as I've actually, like, I've started to learn it, like not that, she's doing well.

**ELIOT HALVERSON** [00:46:17] You're learning it, girl.

**JVN** [00:46:18] But, like, that, but having so many people around you, like, when you're trying to, even just, like, if you're like if you're practicing or like I can't even imagine, like,

being that stressed out of a competition and just all the butterflies and, like, having, like, six people on the ice at the same time, no, but just not running into someone. Like, if someone's like really like doing some fast stuff while I'm, like, doing my waltz jumps from a standstill or something like I get really nervous, like with people moving quickly around me or like falling around me, like, I just, you can just get distracted and then I fall because I'm watching someone else.

**MICHELLE KWAN** [00:46:45] Yeah.

**JVN** [00:46:46] And it is, it's scary, like, being, like, four inches above because the blade adds, like, how many inches is that off the ground?

**MICHELLE KWAN** [00:46:52] Four, yeah.

**JVN** [00:46:53] It's, like, at least three or four.

**MICHELLE KWAN** [00:46:54] Yeah.

**JVN** [00:46:54] But it's scary up there.

**MICHELLE KWAN** [00:46:56] I've collided with skaters.

**ELIOT HALVERSON** [00:46:57] Totally. Michelle, I was going to, I was going to ask if you have any. Like, what? What a six-minute warm-up is like at the Olympics?

**MICHELLE KWAN** [00:47:04] Yeah. So I've always had this same routine. So I go around once and do my, my, my thing, my, my usual inside, outside, inside, outside, edge and then I'd go right into jumping, like, I was warmed up already before getting onto that.

**ELIOT HALVERSON** [00:47:18] Right.

**JVN** [00:47:19] Because, like, in the back you would just be, like, stretching out, getting ready. Had your headphones in.

**MICHELLE KWAN** [00:47:24] And usually if someone's in my pattern or, like, I'm going into my jump and someone's in there, I'm still going.

**ELIOT HALVERSON** [00:47:30] Oh yeah.

**MICHELLE KWAN** [00:47:31] I'm still going for it and someone-.

**JVN** [00:47:33] Oh shit, girl.

**MICHELLE KWAN** [00:47:34] Yeah.

**ELIOT HALVERSON** [00:47:34] Reclaiming your space.

**MICHELLE KWAN** [00:47:35] Yeah. You kind of go in, you're, like, "I can't have another try sometimes." So once someone's there you know, you better move. Like, it's pretty, it's pretty intense because I think there's times when you're spinning and, you know, you're on someone else's pattern. So.

**ELIOT HALVERSON** [00:47:50] Yeah.

**MICHELLE KWAN** [00:47:51] I think when you get a certain point in training, it's, like, you know, people's patterns. So the rule of thumb, when the music's on, you get out of the way in practice.

**JVN** [00:48:01] Yes.

**MICHELLE KWAN** [00:48:02] And I'm not a yeller. I'm not. But I've known to say a few words when my music's on.

**JVN** [00:48:09] You did?

**MICHELLE KWAN** [00:48:10] Yeah. I'd be like "Move!" And it's not a "Move. Can you, get out of the way please." No, I'm, it's, it's my music. You need to get out of my way.

**JVN** [00:48:17] You could get injured. Yeah.

**ELIOT HALVERSON** [00:48:19] Yeah, yeah. It's.

**MICHELLE KWAN** [00:48:19] It's one of those, like, unwritten rules in figure skating. Music's on.

**ELIOT HALVERSON** [00:48:25] Their, it's their turn. Yeah.

**MICHELLE KWAN** [00:48:26] Yeah. It's my turn.

**JVN** [00:48:26] Like, were you ever just, like, really in your training or really in your head and like didn't realize it's someone else's music was on and they had to yell at you?

**MICHELLE KWAN** [00:48:33] No. I'm usually pretty aware.

**JVN** [00:48:34] Super respectful, very much.

**MICHELLE KWAN** [00:48:36] You have to be aware of who's on the ice. But the six-minute warm up, you, you don't have time to get out of, like, "Courtesy here, get out of the way." No. When you're in a pattern, you've got one time to do a triple Lutz and warm that jump up. You're, you're in it. I'm, like, I've full flow. Like, I'm like-.

**JVN** [00:48:55] What's it like when you're warming up? This for both of you. What's it like if you're warming up. And has this ever happened where you, like, warm something up and like you you fall in the warm-up? Like the cameras are on, like, you know, they're talking about it up in the thing. Ah, fuck, she just fell. And then you don't have a chance to do it again. And you have to like dustoff your like, wet cold hip now and your wet cold skirt for a second. Just you don't get super wet but like a little bit.

**MICHELLE KWAN** [00:49:18] Yeah.

**JVN** [00:49:18] If it's, like, a fall fall as, I say, like, still wearing my crash pads. I just realized. I'm, like, literally in my crash pads still.

**MICHELLE KWAN** [00:49:25] Butt pads.

**JVN** [00:49:26] Yeah, my little butt pads. Yeah. So and then you had to go out and like land it, like has that ever happened? Like was ever. Here's the question I got there originally. Eventually.

**MICHELLE KWAN** [00:49:35] Yeah.

**JVN** [00:49:35] I meant to say. Was there ever a world championship that you won where you fell in the warm up and then, like, landed it?

**MICHELLE KWAN** [00:49:42] Yeah. Because you want to get all-.

**JVN** [00:49:43] Which one do you remember? Which one, which one? Oh my God, tell me everything.

**MICHELLE KWAN** [00:49:46] Well I'll tell you one. It was in Vancouver, world championships. This is the world championships. That almost didn't happen for me because it was the qualifying round long program and my boot breaks open from a double Axel. Breaks open. I mean you could see the nails of my boot from the heel to the white part. Right? And I didn't warm up anything, didn't warm up. And I had to get off the ice.

**JVN** [00:50:10] Wait, what's a qualifying round?

**MICHELLE KWAN** [00:50:12] So some world championships back in the, yeah, back in the day we had the long program to qualify, I think it was, like, top twelve. And then the top twelve would go into the short program, then long program. So it's like it's just qualifying round. It wasn't televised I think in that, in that.

**ELIOT HALVERSON** [00:50:29] No, it was because so many countries would qualify so many skaters that they couldn't have them all do both the short and long.

**JVN** [00:50:34] So just to get in the the fifth and sixth heat or whatever.

**MICHELLE KWAN** [00:50:36] So it was, like, Group A, Group B.

**ELIOT HALVERSON** [00:50:38] Yes.

**MICHELLE KWAN** [00:50:38] Top twelve. Top twelve. And then 24.

**ELIOT HALVERSON** [00:50:40] Yeah.

**MICHELLE KWAN** [00:50:41] And then you do short program. Long program.

**ELIOT HALVERSON** [00:50:42] Yeah.

**MICHELLE KWAN** [00:50:42] So I plat-, like, I fall out of a double Axel and I'm like, "Oh my gosh." So I didn't warm up anything and luckily I think I was, like, last to skate in that qualifying. And my dad came down because he's always, like, sharpening my skates. So he knew-.

**JVN** [00:51:00] What year is this?

**MICHELLE KWAN** [00:51:01] Vancouver.

**JVN** [00:51:02] But what?

**MICHELLE KWAN** [00:51:02] 2001. And so my dad came down from the stands and he literally took my skate upside down. He hammered a nail about four inches through into the heel so I could actually feel that the head of the nail on, it was so crazy, but I didn't know what to do. So Frank goes, "Well, just give it a try." So it was a little off, but I still landed that triple loop. I did triple-triple, I think, and skated a clean program, got off the ice, and I was, like, that just happened. I, it al-, I almost forfeited that.

**JVN** [00:51:44] But that was in the qualifying.

**MICHELLE KWAN** [00:51:45] That was in the qualifying.

**JVN** [00:51:47] So then by, how, is that like just two days before the normal short and long.

**MICHELLE KWAN** [00:51:50] Yeah, exactly.

**JVN** [00:51:51] Did you skate with that same boot or did you have a backup skate?

**MICHELLE KWAN** [00:51:53] No, I didn't have a backup skate. I used the same skate, but by then I can actually make it a little bit comfortable. But if you look at, I should find it and show you a picture because it is four or five nails just drilled into my thing.

**JVN** [00:52:07] So it's sticking out the bottom of this skate?

**MICHELLE KWAN** [00:52:10] No, it didn't go all the way through the bottom of the heel, but it was amazing.

**JVN** [00:52:14] Oh, yeah. OK. So because in this skate you could do through this. Oh, my God.

**ELIOT HALVERSON** [00:52:18] Unreal.

**JVN** [00:52:19] So the shoe part separated from the heel part.

**MICHELLE KWAN** [00:52:22] Yeah. It's like breaking your heel and being, like, you know, trying to walk normal.

**ELIOT HALVERSON** [00:52:27] Yeah.

**MICHELLE KWAN** [00:52:28] And then trying to do a long program.

**ELIOT HALVERSON** [00:52:30] Yeah.

**JVN** [00:52:31] Huh.

**ELIOT HALVERSON** [00:52:32] Uh-Huh.

**JVN** [00:52:33] Yeah.

**ELIOT HALVERSON** [00:52:34] Yeah. I have a friend who didn't know she had a broken foot and she, like, had done the short program was in a wheelchair the morning of the long program and everybody was telling her she couldn't because she couldn't even walk and she just wanted to will herself to do this and she got out and did a clean, long program and qualified to Nationals on a broken foot and, like, limped off the ice. It was very Kerri Strug.

**JVN** [00:52:56] But it didn't heal in time for her to?

**ELIOT HALVERSON** [00:52:58] She couldn't go to nationals, but it was, like, the most heroic, one of the more heroic things I've ever seen on the ice. It was incredible. Love you, Christina. You're incredible.

**MICHELLE KWAN** [00:53:05] Amazing.

**JVN** [00:53:06] Good for her.

**ELIOT HALVERSON** [00:53:06] Yeah, amazing.

**JVN** [00:53:07] So we're way over. And that's OK. I do want to just briefly touch on Michelle. Post so 2000. Well, OK, I'm not over 2006. Injury, like, Torino very much. Grace, very much dignity, very much hip injury, right?

**MICHELLE KWAN** [00:53:28] Yeah.

**JVN** [00:53:29] I will never forget that press conference.

**MICHELLE KWAN** [00:53:30] Groin, hip.

**JVN** [00:53:30] I remember groin but I wasn't sure and I didn't want to say it if that wasn't so. Whatever. Not that groin is a dirty word.

**MICHELLE KWAN** [00:53:34] This whole area. This whole area.

**JVN** [00:53:36] Just all fucked up. OK, so since then, though, went on to become very much activist. Very much. You worked in the gorgeous Obama administration. You worked in, you worked for Hill Hills somewhere. You did all, you're, like, she's all sorts of, like, really chasing, passionate dreams.

**MICHELLE KWAN** [00:53:55] Well, it was a complete 180 for me. Because I, then after 2006, I was like, "I need go back to school," went to the University of Denver, study political science and international relations. I was appointed as the first public diplomacy envoy traveling on behalf of the U.S. government, traveling all over the world, and then inspired me to pursue my master's degree, then got a master's degree in foreign policy. Then I actually got a real job. I ended up working for the State Department for a few years. And, you know, had the opportunity to work for Secretary Clinton, Secretary Kerry, and then joined the presidential, Hillary's presidential campaign as the circuit outreach coordinator said. Yeah, it's a complete 180. Huge activist for Special Olympics. So, yeah, there's been things outside of skating and outside sports that I really care about. And I never know. I've never thought about it. When I was skating, I was, like, "I'm never gonna leave the house without skates." And now I'm like, "I'll never leave the house without my computer." Without working and trying to, I guess, make a difference. Right?

**JVN** [00:55:02] And so I also just, and then I'm gonna get to gorgeous, gorgeous Elliott post-skating. So, but I just want to say this. After Nagano, I remember very clearly, I think you were on Jay Leno when you said it. And if you didn't say it, I read it. But either I'm pretty sure I watched it. But he said, "What did it feel like to lose the gold?" And you said, "I didn't lose the gold. I won the silver." And I literally just got chills, like, as I was just saying it. And I feel like, oh my God, I'm going to cry. I got bullied just like so badly and like nothing that ever got, like, any easier for me. So seeing someone who, like, literally you gave me so much inspiration and to see you have, like, that disappointment in public and handle it so gracefully it really, I don't know, it just really taught me something.

And you continue to teach me something, like in the rest of your career, like, being able to handle disappointment. And, and I feel currently, you know, like, there's just I'm really



disappointed. I'm hopeful. But I'm also just disappointed in the state of so many things. You know, in this country and obviously it goes without saying you worked on Hillary's campaign, like. But I think that you've been, we knocked on, we campaigned for Sharice, like, we have turned that disappointment into, like, actionable things. And I really look up to you for that. So. How did you do that? Like, what is that in your spirit that keeps you moving forward and keeps you? What can you tell someone who is going through a disappointment and you, you continue to teach me how to, like, stay positive, like, forever. How can you? What's, like, something? You know.

**MICHELLE KWAN** [00:56:50] Well, first of all, you are so inspiring to so many. And, you know, just having the chance to get to know you in the last year. It's been so amazing, like, just how you feel and how you go about your life and how you want to share it and how that impact to so many millions of people's lives. So, that, I want to start off by saying that. Jay Leno, I remember him saying, "You lost the gold, you lost." I'm like, "Wait a minute. I worked so hard. I dedicated my whole life, blood, sweat and tears to try to make it to the top." But, you know, it's kind of like that, that saying like reach for the stars. And it's like, yeah, that's a dream. And it would have been a dream to win. But I, I came so frickin close. It was not a failure. It was a success that I won the silver. So when I look about my skating career or lessons learned, it's more, it's the journey, love. It is not the medals. It's not, you know, making it to the red carpet. It's not. It's the everyday love and the passion and compassion and the doing things that you love and making it impact that way. So I see it differently these days. I think it's, it really, it woke my eyes up at 17 year old, years old. It was, it was brutal. You know, and for millions of people, you know, when you're a kid, you dream of winning the gold. Not coming second. You know, and, but it was that disappointment that I made, made me appreciate everything in life, it's, it's not one milestone, it's that whole place that you're, you're on your way. That's, that's how I see it.

**JVN** [00:58:34] Mmhmm. OK. Much emotion. But if I was placing that for now, it's, like, in times of frustration or disappointment, it's like it's not necessarily. It's the journey. Like, appreciating the journey. Like no matter what.

**MICHELLE KWAN** [00:58:51] You will have setbacks, you will be down in the dumps, you'll find a way to peel yourself off the ice, peel yourself, you know, crying in the bathtub. You will. I remember that. It's, like, those moments where you, like, you kind of just want to give up and, and just let kind of life just go on, you know? But you just. There's. As long as, you know, it's a journey and you have setbacks and disappointments and heartbreaks and you just kind of go, like, "Let's move a little forward. Let's have this hope," because it's, it is a wonderful life. And there are amazing people. And it's, you have dreams and aspirations and keep going forward. And that's how I see it, it's a big journey. It's one big journey. We were talking today and you're, like, it's such a "Fields of Gold" moment. And I had to say, I was hyperventilating in that program. I was, I was literally, "ah ah ah," you know, when you cry and you cry such ugly tears and you can't breathe. I was skating and I was crying. And it was, I think, in that most, like, at that moment, moment, 21 years old, like, that was the biggest heartbreak of my life. You know, I had dreamt of going to the Olympics since I was 5, 7 years old. And, and then I was like, what, wait. I'm in a gold dress skating to "Fields of Gold."

**JVN** [01:00:15] By Eva Cassidy.

**MICHELLE KWAN** [01:00:16] And all I could see is gold, is, is rings. And my tears, I couldn't breathe, but it was. When I look back, like, the most beautiful moment. Sad, disappointing, but beautiful moment in my life. And I think that was also a moment where, like, just enjoy it, like, I was, I looked around and I kept on being like, I'm going to remember this for the rest of my life. And so appreciative of all the people and all the fans and all the people that were skating with me. It's like. And then I just remember my dad, you know, he put me on the ice at those Olympics. So it's, like, so appreciative of my family. And it was like such gratitude. I could have just melted on, into the ice.

**JVN** [01:01:00] You keep giving us really speechless moments to end on. I feel like we should just, like, I think I feel, I think I feel really comfortable.

**ELIOT HALVERSON** [01:01:06] That's pretty good.

**JVN** [01:01:07] Yes, pretty complete.

**MICHELLE KWAN** [01:01:08] I'm going to, like, melt now. It's like.

**JVN** [01:01:12] Eliot, we have our, you know, this singles novice bronze adult championship.

**ELIOT HALVERSON** [01:01:18] Adult basic fours first.

**MICHELLE KWAN** [01:01:20] Can I be a judge?

**JVN** [01:01:20] I got to get my basic fours first. Yes, yes.

**ELIOT HALVERSON** [01:01:23] Yes, yes. Yes, yes.

**JVN** [01:01:25] Yes. Yes, yes, yes. Maybe you can just be, like, my, like, we'll bring you in special on special times to really just like cause she'll teach. Yeah. Tell me what's up. Make sure we're doing good.

**ELIOT HALVERSON** [01:01:34] Yeah.

**MICHELLE KWAN** [01:01:35] Tell me there's a kiss and cry.

**JVN** [01:01:37] Oh there has to be kiss and cry.

**ELIOT HALVERSON** [01:01:38] There will be.

**JVN** [01:01:38] I was actually, I was going to ask you earlier do they, I wonder if the adult competition uses the same IJS that-

**ELIOT HALVERSON** [01:01:44] They do.

**JVN** [01:01:45] Oh good.

**ELIOT HALVERSON** [01:01:45] Yes. Adult competitions.

**JVN** [01:01:47] Oh, good. They'll be cheat, seeing if I cheat my waltzes.

**ELIOT HALVERSON** [01:01:50] They'll be zooming.

**JVN** [01:01:51] That's really rude. They're going to see that I cheated waltz.

**ELIOT HALVERSON** [01:01:54] Not anymore. Not since I've been with you.

**JVN** [01:01:56] Honey, I had cheated waltzes all day yesterday. Don't you remember?

**ELIOT HALVERSON** [01:01:58] No.

**JVN** [01:01:59] They were all cheated. All my waltzes were cheated. And I popped, like, four too.

**ELIOT HALVERSON** [01:02:01] Just a couple.

**JVN** [01:02:02] Oh, my God. And I popped my three turns. I do. It's a problem. I love you so much. Real. Also, let me just. I'll say this for both of us. When I realized after we were working together that day, when I stopped, like, crying and pointing and being, like, a weirdo, because I really can be around a lot of, like, really famous people like and be normal. And the first time I met you, I wasn't normal in New York. And then the second time I saw you in Kansas, I continued to be hyper fan girling like hyper hyperventilating as well. Like, I was, like, I just felt very, like, smelly because I was so stressed out about being in the same car with you. I was like, oh, my God, I've never smelled like this before. And so freaked out. No, like, I was making like a hormone. I've never sme-, I never made it before. I was so nervous, so nervous, so nervous. Truly, truly so nervous. And then you made me really feel so comfortable. And then I think after like an hour and a half, I was, like, oh, my God. I was, like, I think, I think Michelle Kwan wants to be friends with me or something. Like I think. And then and then I kind of got normal for like ten minutes. And then I went into hyper fangirl mode. I was telling Eliot earlier, it comes in waves.

**ELIOT HALVERSON** [01:03:07] Yeah.

**JVN** [01:03:08] For me, like, I, like, to be friendly and then I get, like, "Uhhh," it does come in waves. But really just thank you so much. Like, becoming friends with you has been one of my most life affirming exp-, really, like, so life affir-. It's of all of the things that have happened in the last year or so, it's one of the things I'm like, wow, like it's my personal gold medal. It really is. V much.

**MICHELLE KWAN** [01:03:31] You have to promise me that you have to keep skating.

**ELIOT HALVERSON** [01:03:34] Girl, it's never stopping.

**JVN** [01:03:36] That's why I don't take my crash pads off 'cause I can't, like, I can't, like, fracture my hips learning a spiral, you know? I've got to like the longevity. I got my bunion pads, I got my crash pads. I'm good. I got it. But, like, just thank you so much for everything. And Eliot, thank you so much for everything. Truly. I mean, Eliot, and this is my last thing. Really, truly long lost sister.

**ELIOT HALVERSON** [01:03:55] Truly.

**JVN** [01:03:56] Best. Just so important in my life. Thank you so much.

**ELIOT HALVERSON** [01:04:00] Me too. Love you.

**JVN** [01:04:02] Love you so much.

**ELIOT HALVERSON** [01:04:03] Love you, Michelle.

**JVN** [01:04:04] I love you guys. Let's go cry.

**ELIOT HALVERSON** [01:04:05] Let's go cry.

**JVN** [01:04:10] You've been listening to Getting Curious with me, Jonathan Van Ness. My guests this week were figure skaters Michelle Kwan and Eliot Halverson.

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