

Curious Now - Jonathan Van Ness, Justin Garner & Emily Wright

JVN // Welcome to Curious Now, I'm Jonathan Van Ness and every other week I sit down with a brilliant expert to go beyond the headlines. Before we go any further. We want to acknowledge the ongoing conflict between Israel and Palestine. Since this is a fast moving situation we're not going to report on one specific headline. What we will say is that every civilian life loss so far is tragic. The world is mourning and watching. We should all be doing what we can do deescalate the current conflict, and save as many lives as we still can. Everyone deserves the right to food, water, medical care, freedom, mobility, and safety. Beyond that, kids deserve the right to play, to learn, and to live in a world that sees a future for them. We also know that in times like this, misinformation and disinformation can spread rapidly. It's on all of us to check our sources and stick with the facts, and now back to this week's episode.

Today we're speaking with activists and organizers, Justin Garner and Emily Wright. We last spoke with them in March 2023, one month after a train carrying dangerous chemicals derailed in East Palestine, Ohio. At the time, they were advocating for residents health and safety through the group River Valley Organizing. Now we're getting an update on how their community's coping in the aftermath of this environmental disaster. If you can't wait to hear that convo, head to the episode description for more info on how far to skip ahead. But I know that's not what you're on, cause you love the headlines. So for now, let's get over to our new desk

In headlines that even straight people are talking about, Sam Bankman-Fried? Fried? Never can tell how to say his last name, and why start now? The former CEO of Cryptocurrency Exchange, FTX, is currently on trial for allegedly committing one of the largest financial frauds in history. Nishad Singh, who is head of engineering at ATX, testified that he noticed more than \$8 billion was missing from the company. And in case you missed the episode of Getting Curious where we learned about how many billions are, how many millions are a billion, or maybe I didn't learn that on the podcast, I just Googled it. But there is in fact 1000 millions in a billion, which means that he lost 8,000 million dollars. That is. So much fucking money. Meanwhile, Caroline Ellison, who is Bankman-Fried's top advisor, testified that she misled lenders and circulated phony financial documents at his request. I guess Caroline wasn't so sweet after all.

In other financial news, after facing billions of dollars in debt, declining sales, and more than a thousand lawsuits, Rite Aid has filed for bankruptcy. Federal, state and local lawsuits claim that the drugstore filed thousands of illegal prescriptions for painkillers. Ah! Rite Aid says they are currently working on a deal to sell the pharmacy benefit manager, Elixir, which they acquired in 2015.

Now, this is some big news that even the straights are talking about, at the moment of this recording there is still no Speaker of the House. Kevin McCarthy is still on the outs with Republicans, Jim Jordan is the latest speaker designate for Republicans, but is still well

short of the votes he needs to become speaker. It interestingly highlights the hypocrisy of Republican legislators who have so often, you know, parroted really harmful anti-queer, anti-trans rhetoric in terms of queer people being a danger to kids. Yet, there's a huge scandal out of Ohio State University where the lead team physician was credibly accused of a lot of sexual assault. The university had to pay out over \$60 million, and a lot of these wrestlers say that Jim Jordan knew- it was an open secret. He's done nothing to help them. He's done nothing to bring any sort of clarity to the situation other than to make it murkier. Like, he's done nothing to help these, these survivors. I just think that's really interesting that the Republican conference wants to appoint someone who was covering up a huge sex abuse scandal. And I think for me, being a survivor of sexual abuse, that's particularly just the hypocrisy is so intense and it's so clear to see. So I hope people are picking up on that.

And now for our next segment, Stories that made me go Whoa! A study showed that female frogs will fake their own death to avoid unwanted attention from males. This phenomenon has evolved as a survival mechanism for females during a potentially dangerous mating season. These frogs get so freakin horny they just be doing it to death. And also, if you want to learn more about the differences between frogs and toads, we did a really interesting episode about getting on frogs on Getting Curious if you want to go back and listen. It's really good.

In our next story, researchers have decoded a word on a papyrus roll. This roll has not been read in 2000 years. The word is "porphyras," which is ancient Greek for "purple." Girl! The scrolls came from a grand villa, thought to belong to Julius Caesar's father-in-law. The scrolls were carbonized by the eruption of Mount Vesuvius (Honey! Pompei!) in 79 Common Era, and they look like wrinkled lumps of coal. They can't be opened without destroying them, which has made reading them impossible. But a new approach involving computer tomography and advancements in AI has made it possible to read them.

On our next segment, The Gay Agenda: Uh, y'all. There was so much development in the gay agenda that I'm going to give you my even quicker talk than usual for a "Lost" style recap on what the hell is going on.

Back in July of 2021, Arkansas passed a ban on gender affirming care. Following a lawsuit. A federal judge struck down the ban this past June. Since then, the Arkansas attorney general requested to appeal the decision, and now the Eighth Circuit Court of Appeals agreed to hear the appeal. This puts gender affirming care at risk in Arkansas. Once again, then the Wisconsin State Assembly voted to approve three bills that, if enacted, would restrict the rights of trans children. One of the bills includes a ban for gender affirming care for minors. Governor Tony Evers has committed to vetoing these bills and said Democrats will uphold the veto to prevent these bills from becoming law.

Then in North Carolina, the family of a transgender boy filed a lawsuit in the U.S. District Court. Back in August, North Carolina passed a law that restricts gender affirming care. Chan's children in North Carolina officially lost access to gender affirming care on August 16th, when a Republican supermajority overrode the governor's veto on the law. This family is now asking state health officials to block implementation of the law.

Speaking of lawsuits, one was filed in Montana state courts by trans intersex and nonbinary individuals who are challenging a new state law that defines sex as only male or female. The suit argues that this law denies legal recognition and protections to people who are gender non-conforming, not to mention the fact that intersex people are biologically existing and are, like, occurring. Another important issue facing the LGBTQIA+ community and my home state of Texas is the introduction of the school voucher program. Voucher vouchers are state funded scholarships that pay for students to attend private schools. The voucher program directs funding away from public schools, which are utilized by so many students in Texas. Instead, it tries to get people to go to private schools, which can be detrimental for queer students. Private schools are not held accountable for the treatment of queer students. Public schools that receive money from the federal government are required to comply with Title 9 regulations. That means that the Department of Education only. That means that the Department of Education explicitly protects trans and LGBTQ A+ students from discrimination in public schools. But private schools are exempt from those protections. Our friends at Equality Texas are working to educate Texans with a "Know Your Rights Workshop that is taking place in different cities all over the state. Check out their Insta or Twitter at Equality Texas to get more information about all of their current campaigns. Yas!

It's time for our next segment: On Your Radar. On Your Radar, On Your Radar. First of all, we want to give a huge shout out to Deborah Archer, our former Getting Curious guest for being reelected as president of the ACLU. The ACLU is doing really important work to advocate for trans individuals affected by the gender affirming care bans. Go Deborah Archer!

In the past, we have highlighted organizations that work to uplift and support amazing candidates that are hoping to change the current political landscape. Arena is an organization that aims to help out at an earlier stage of the process by training the next generation of candidates and campaign staff. They have a training program for aspiring campaign staff that focuses on bringing women, people of color and members of the LGBTQIA+ community into the political process. And when you graduate the academy, they have a career pipeline that helps connect their graduates with opportunities on campaigns. Their goal is to bring in the next generation of political leaders in order to build progressive power in the long run. Come on, Arena!

And now we're tossing the mic to Emily and Justin to hear all about the work that they are doing, organizing in the Ohio River Valley. Thanks, British Jonathan. Let's get it over to our interview.

JVN // What happened in East Palestine was something that I read about in the news earlier this year, in February. We had the opportunity to catch up with y'all earlier in the year. But we want to see what's going on now. So for anyone who is new to this story or need a reminder, can you tell us what happened in East Palestine on February 3rd?

EMILY WRIGHT // Hi, I'm Emily Wright. Thanks so much for having us on and letting us continue to talk. I'm a resident. I live right outside of East Palestine, and on February 3rd, around nine in the evening, there was a large derailment from a Norfolk Southern train and it was carrying several toxic substances, one being vinyl chloride. And there was also spilled tens of thousands of gallons of petroleum that went into oil, that went into the ground that has forever chemicals. Through the whole weekend, the fire burned. It went into the atmosphere. The stuff kept spilling into the ground. We heard really scattered reports. Like one time there was five cars, then there were ten cars. And it was just a lot of confusing information. So Monday comes, the Governor comes and says that they're going to do what's called a controlled burn and they are going to burn off the rest of the vinyl chloride. Hopefully with the weather pattern, it would take the cloud up into the atmosphere and that would take care of the problem because apparently there was going to be a large explosion and it could put shrapnel into up to one or two miles out radius. So it went off a couple of hours later than it was supposed to. When that happened, the weather pattern changed and it took it and spread it across three or four counties in two states. For about 24 hours, you couldn't see the moon, the sun was hazy. We were told to shelter in place, stay indoors. Some people were evacuated from the immediate site before the burn, but then everyone else was told to stay in their homes. That was in the immediate area. Within a few days, we had like 40 some thousand animals dead: fish, livestock, pets, people having sickness, all these things. So that's what had happened in the immediate. The EPA put out a report. It showed that Norfolk Southern basically did not disclose, not only to the EPA, to the government and to the people what was actually being carried on the car. But what how much spilled? We were at a conference and the guy put up his finger and he did this little thing, and said, "So just a little bit of oil went in the ground," and we found out it was tens of thousands of gallons. We were grateful that Biden extended the declaration disaster, so hopefully we can continue to get more help. But the problem is, is that people are still sick; they're exhibiting symptoms. And every time they go to try to get personal testing, they're being turned away. So, and people's symptoms are continuing; their animal's symptoms are continuing, you know, asthma, skin rashes, things like that. So no one was offered help to clean their homes. And unfortunately, everything that was in the air came down and it's in their homes. And when they sit on the couch, it poofs up. When they go to walk on the floor, anything they do. So it's been a very long cleanup. And that was what's happened in the immediate.

JVN // How has the narrative of the derailment evolved since February? Has it evolved? Have you guys found out more things?

JUSTIN GARNER // I'm Justin Garner. So the work that I do, I'm a communications director for River Valley Organizing. I work with some other organizations in our area as well. The last time we spoke, shortly after that, we decided to go to D.C. to go to the Senate hearing. While we were there, we were able to talk to AOC and the House of Representatives. We were able to go to the White House and talk to some people there as well. But I would say the narrative has went from victim to victor, and a lot of the people in our area, they understand that if we are not going to do something about this, then things simply are not going to happen. You know, like it takes a move of our hand to do these things and really stand up for ourselves. And more than anything, I think that's so encouraging and

empowering just to see the people in our area, in small town rural Appalachia, getting together to say, "It doesn't matter our differences, your neighbor or your friend, you're a family member. And I'm going to fight for you and you're going to fight for me." And I think that it's really shifted that way and it's encouraging to see. I would like to highlight that with East Palestine, there are several groups and organizations that are doing the work. One of them that I want to shout out is the Unity Council. It is a group made up of citizens in East Palestine. It is citizen run, led a lot like River Valley, but their sole purpose is the work of East Palestine and just East Palestine. So I did want to highlight them and shout them out.

JVN // What are some of the kind of more common headlines that we're hearing out of East Palestine and what are they missing. And who are we hearing a lot from and who do we still need to hear from? So 18 questions in there, but give it to me.

EMILY WRIGHT // Yeah. No, that's okay. I do the same thing. I'm an old triage nurse, so I'm used to rapid fire questions at people. But yeah, I, I think people like you said, What's like, how are people faring? What are they feeling? People are very much feeling forgotten in a large way by politics, really, by both sides of the aisle: politicians. I think that their voice has only been here for like photo ops or things. We have one Senator, Sherrod Brown, who's come more than some more meetings and listened to people more and has put a little more effort. But I think people are really just feeling like where are the people that are that are supposed to be here? I also think people are literally dying of diseases at young ages because of gas and oil, because they live by it, they work in it. I think people are understanding that corporations and institutions in general need to have shifting and change because they work together and to oppress. And I think that's a big common thing that's coming out of East Palestine, is that. I also, I also believe there is a big rift in the community and I don't live in East Palestine proper, but I know that Norfolk Southern is going around throwing money around like building parks, doing stuff at the school, holding events and doing all these things. And people are upset because they feel like they're trying to be bought. So that's a big narrative that's coming out of there. And, you know, people right now are experiencing the big headline too is: where do they go from here? They have they don't have property value. Norfolk Southern is offering money, but it's not what it's worth. We're all in lawsuits. I mean, I'll be honest. I'm it I'm in a lawsuit with our. Like my father isn't. We know this law firm because my father is bilateral asbestosis from the freaking mill already, and his breathing's gotten worse since the burn. And know. So it's just people are not knowing like, what track do I go to advocate for myself the most? You know, What money should I take? If I do take money, is it going to prevent me from getting more later? So right now, really my focus personally and this is work that I'm doing through a couple of different organizations, is to focus on what's going to happen with the health care situation after all this. Is Norfolk Southern going to pay for their chemotherapy? I'm just going to say it: who's going to pay when they can't work anymore because they're in treatment. There were several studies done all the way up to the early nineties until they all stopped and they were all on vinyl chloride and a lot of these different chemicals do. And there were so many instances of it leading to liver cancer and these things. So I think people, that's the big thing is what's going to happen in the future. But I do—what Justin said is correct—the Unity Council, there's all these people that have come together that

don't agree on much, but we agree that we have to stop. We have to advocate for ourselves. But I'm very lucky in the fact that we still have symptoms in my house, but my skin's not on fire because I'm far enough away from the train tracks that the vinyl chloride, you know, I'm not still feeling that. So it's, there are people that are still suffering. And I think, unfortunately, you know, it was very fortunate that no one died, but because no one died, it was almost like people were like, well, what's the problem?

JVN // Right.

EMILY WRIGHT // But we've had layered poisoning of our communities for 50, 50 years, five decades of layered poisoning from, you know, all that from the industry. So, yeah, did I answer your questions? I'm sorry, but...

JVN // Oh, you did. You did no, you did excellently. And I also think it's really interesting, though, that you point out it's like we live in a country where, you know, people get blown away by gun violence every single day, like people, like there is so much horrific violence in the news that it's like: unless it's like a bunch like I just think that was a really interesting thing that you point out because what you guys have been through is a tragedy. You've been betrayed. So as part of the advocacy work, y'all have commissioned independent testing. Can you guys share more on that process? And like, have you guys had any findings on what any of the testing has shown? Was it like on groundwater or like what's in anybody's blood? Or like...

EMILY WRIGHT // Yeah, there's been a lot of different independent testing. People that have been coming in through, where River Valley, where Justin still works, in the Unity Council that we talked about and independent science testers from all over the nation just kind of kind of offered. All of them are still showing high levels of vinyl chloride in different things, in people's blood and on their property and on their things. So I know I do know that that is still active and that is being reported in our local news at this time.

JUSTIN GARNER // And we're still doing a lot of work with the community as far as like researcher updates. So the organization that I work with, we do different researcher updates like with scientists in universities that have partnered with us and they've just been able to share their expertise and their their knowledge about East Palestine and what's going on, what's really going on. But also like we've been able to partner with, they're called Fair Shake. They are like legal advocates made up of attorneys. And so we do a series of legal clinics as well. It's like free legal advice. They've just been able to share their expertise and their their knowledge about East Palestine and what's going on, what's really going on. But also like we've been able to partner with, they're called fair shake. They are like legal advocates made up of attorneys. And so we do a series of legal clinics as well. It's like free, free legal advice so I can move forward. So I mean, there's really good resources that are still happening in the area.

JVN // Justin, I just wanted to say something really quick.

JUSTIN GARNER // Yeah.

JVN // I think that the queer community is going through enough without you not clickety clacketing getting those gorgeous fucking nails in that goddamn microphone. Your nails are so... [ASMR tapping sound] And the way I think we're...When you are talking, we are going through enough. And I need you to do that thing with Dolly Parton when she plays her nails. Remember, in...

JUSTIN GARNER // I do it to my fiance every night. I'm like on the floor watching TV. [ASMR tapping sound]

JVN // Yes, honey, thank you.

JVN // What have been the demands since the accident and how have the systems responded to those demands?

JUSTIN GARNER // Starting in, let's see, the 14th of...in June. We went to the Ohio State House to press the governor to basically sign a declaration that Biden can then act on what, what he needs to do to push this into a disaster. So we went there, we protested. We had a press conference right outside. Yeah, I mean, we literally went right into the what would you call that?

JVN // Like the rotunda or some shit like that?

JUSTIN GARNER // The rotunda. Yeah. And we were just chanting.

JVN // Wow did that go in the supermajority Republican place, were they loving? Was it bad? Was it okay? Did you feel safe and stuff?

JUSTIN GARNER // Yeah, I mean, I felt safe, but it was definitely like eye opening and people were really I mean, watching us. But yeah, I mean, there was probably 50 plus of us that were in there chanting. And I mean, that is if there's one thing that I want to convey, just like getting involved in democracy and politics is so important. Like, you don't have to be an activist to go and share your story. You don't have to be in New York or Boston or anything to share your story. Like, I mean, I never thought in my entire life that I would walk in the White House and advocate for friends, for family, for for a change.

JVN // Have you seen this event like change anyone's like political alliances like locally?

JUSTIN GARNER // So I will say Columbiana County, we've had two major issues in the past six months, six plus months. One is obviously the derailment and the second one is we had started to do the first Columbiana County Pride. When this happened, there was a letter that went out to a bunch of churches in the area that said, "Like this pride is going on. We don't want this like gay people are pedophiles like the whole gamut." And.

JVN // Meanwhile, the amount of kids getting abused in these fuckin churches.

JUSTIN GARNER // That's the tea.

JVN // Like that's where I survived sexual abuse. It was a fucking church. Like, it's the projection, you know?

JVN // Yeah. And we had queer people literally wrapped around the council building waiting to get in an hour before. It was so like there was no places that you could even sit in there. And we were just in the faces of people that I literally sat at their table like pastors, like sat. I grew up in church and and just sharing our truth and saying, like, "If if we can't have a safe space in this, where is our safe space?" Like wearing nails in Appalachia? Like, I love it, but it's not easy, like going to Walmart and stuff like that. But I don't change it because if not us, then who? You know, and I look at you, I remember seeing you on TV and being like: I feel so empowered by you. And if you and I never speak again, I want you to know that you have impacted my life so much and it doesn't have nothing that you've said. Just being your authentic self has changed my life, literally, like. And I just thank you. I just thank you for that so much. Because people watch you and see you. And you are you're just you're doing it. So thank you so much. Thank you.

JVN // That's a different way to cry. Wow. That was a really yeah, that was really gorgeous, thank you for saying. That was really sweet. And I will. Oh, my God. So...ugh that was really intense. But how can we how can we support East Palestine right now? How can we get involved if you don't live there, how can we show our support?

JUSTIN GARNER // The biggest way right now is not letting these stories be silenced. The media is like: This happened, we have like our moment and until something big happens again, we're not going to get back into it. A simple share, I think, can do so much. And just putting it out there, I think is so important.

JVN // If there is anyone listening to this, that like, you know, they hear a train go in their backyard or they have they see trains going through their shit. Like, is there anything that you would share with those people that you wish you had known or that you wish you would have been aware of or asked, like prior to this disaster?

EMILY WRIGHT // Conway, Illinois to Pennsylvania: there's 25 million Americans along these tracks. 25 million of us and most of us are in some of the poorest areas in the United States. And that is not by mistake. We are in environmental sacrifice zones. You must know this. You know, everyone was warned back in 2014. We warned the EPA. Many people, many environmentalists all over the United States, they said these are bomb trains. These are fast moving trains with low regulations and not enough staff with materials that are not good. And a disaster is going to happen. And pretty soon it's not going to just happen to East Palestine. It's going to be in a major city where, you know, you can't forget about the Ohio farmers. You know, it's it's going to happen again. And it has happened. Derailments are happening almost on a daily basis. So basically, the government's been warned. Every one, Norfolk Southern has been warned in Norfolk Southern made in their first quarter, they made like \$711 million profit.

JVN // That's like three quarters of a billion. That is just so much fucking money like that.

EMILY WRIGHT // So much money; that's profits.

JVN // That's not, that's what they made after their costs.

EMILY WRIGHT // They were not hurt by this. They should, their profit. They should have been. So I think we need to see the bigger picture and how these things are tied to end stage capitalism and how people are not as important. This is three companies, conglomerates, in the railroad company putting their profits over our lives because we're people that are poor, unimportant, and they can't advocate for ourselves. And we're not that; we're diverse. We come from all walks of life, we're all genders, all beliefs. So I really encourage you to write your senators, write your state, local and and federal representatives. Google it. It's very easy. Last thing I'll say, Norfolk Southern, when this happened two days before, they were warned that the train was bad and that they should stop it and slow it down. There was issues with it and they kept it going and at the same time they were lobbying in Congress to have no conductors on the trains.

JVN // But we want to keep trans kids off the baseball team.

EMILY WRIGHT // Yes, it's a very dangerous situation, right? I mean, that's what we're; it's a ploy, you're using it.

JVN // But that's what these statehouses are fucking spending. Like. If it snows one inch in Texas and Austin, people fucking die because there's no fucking electricity and people's heaters turn off. But, let's not let people use the fucking bathroom for the zero sexual assaults that have happened at the hands of trans women in public bathrooms. So I just think it's like this is the cost of like the scapegoating of people. It's this: right fucking here. It's this. This is one of the many examples. So that is fucked up. But let's end up with a fun, lighthearted, rapid fire round. Time for a rapid fire media moment. What news or cultural moment has shaped who you are today. Justin.

JUSTIN GARNER // You know what you're gonna laugh but when Ariana Grande blessed us with break free.

JVN // Wow.

JUSTIN GARNER // I remember like laying on my bed like and being like this is like a life anthem. I know that is like nothing like serious, but "Break Free"; it was like changing and I'm not even kidding.

JVN // Okay Emily, what was it for you?

EMILY WRIGHT // I have several health problems, and I use cannabis as medicine. So one of the the things that really shook me was the murder of Philando Castile. He was a beloved member of his community in Milwaukee. He, I believe, he led the cafeteria at the school.

The kids loved him. He had all kinds of programs. He served the school, raised money for the school, gave money like, you know, and him and his girlfriend and the four year old daughter were driving and they got pulled over for a tail light. And the police officer blew him away in front of his four year old daughter and in front of his girlfriend. It was on Facebook Live. It was one of the first murder by cop that happened on live. You know, I, my husband drives; his girlfriend was driving. There's all types of times where I smell like marijuana. I'm not going to get bullets in my chest because the police officer said he smelled weed and was scared. Philando had a legal permit to have a gun and said, "Sir, I have a gun in my glove box." And said was going to get the paper to show him. He got blown away. He was let by a jury. He was tried by the jury and was not convicted of murder. So, Philando was an amazing person that just wanted to go on a drive with his family. But because he was a black man, the police like they have for the last 50 years using marijuana as a ploy to execute people. So for me it became less of, "Oh, I support legalization and yeah, I want to use cannabis to why is cannabis legalization important?" And for me, it changed my entire approach to everything I did. And I can give a crap as much about if you could smoke it. I wanted to know if we were going to keep people from being murdered and jailed for it.

JVN // That was really deep. Really good answer, Emily, and I love you for it. We are honoring all of who we are on this podcast. Our biggest griefs can live next to some Michelle Kwan. You know, that's just how the cookie crumbles sometimes, and that is fine. What is your current pop culture obsession? Emily U-turn, re-arrange it unless you want to.

EMILY WRIGHT // So I'm sorry. TikTok trends and anything that's funny. Like, I'm sorry. I've been going around my house singing "nationwide is on your side."

JVN // That little song.

EMILY WRIGHT // Because I can't stop; I could not stop.

JVN // I also had "nationwide is on your side" really loud in my head and could not stop singing it for the last few weeks. I vibe you on that. Justin.

JUSTIN GARNER // Taylor Swift Eras. Can we just like, talk about it for just like a TikTok? Just a second. The fact that our Queen Taylor has been going, selling out these shows. People I don't think understand what it is doing for the economy in these places. Like all the revenue she's bringing in, all that she's doing. And I just I think that's...

JVN // The power.

JUSTIN GARNER // She's out there doing it. Absolutely.

JVN // What's a recent "Today I Learned" moment for each of you.

EMILY WRIGHT // Did you know that Mindy Cohen was a backup singer for Pretty Young Thing for Michael Jackson? Facts of Life: Mindy Cohen.

JVN // Thank you, so good.

JUSTIN GARNER // That's what I learned today. That is what I learned today.

JVN // You really can't top that. That was that was a really fucking good. What's a meme or a GIF that made you lol recently?

JUSTIN GARNER // Oh, this says..it's an Uno card and it says, "Go a day without attacking the LGBTQ+ community or draw 25," and it is a governor person and I won't give a name, but it's... he has this thing of cards and he's just looking at them. And I was living like, I thought it was funny.

JVN // No, that's really good. I love it so much. Emily, do you have one?

EMILY WRIGHT // Probably right now. You know that cute little boy that's got the allergies in the picture? He's going like this. It's like my allergies or, you know, that's me right now in the fall. I sound like Fran Drescher.

JVN //]I love Fran. I mean, come on, President. Okay. I love you guys so much. Last question, Justin, Lay it on us. What's a moment of queer joy we can end on?

JUSTIN GARNER //I just got engaged to the most amazing man that I have ever met. I thought that I was going to be a single person for the, my whole life. And then I met Jim.

JVN // Jim!

JUSTIN GARNER // And I'm so in love.

JVN // Hello, you've reached Jim and Justin. We can't come to the phone right now. Can I make a suggestion for your first dance?

JUSTIN GARNER // Yeah.

JVN // [Singing] Let me cater to you; This is your day. You're all I want in a man, Baby, you blow me away. I got you dinner, your slipper, your supper and so much more. Cater to fucking you. You know that music video, like off the top of your head? Like, you could think about it. Those navy, like, cobalt dresses, like. Amazing.

JUSTIN GARNER // It really is iconic.

JVN // Emily and Justin, I love you so much. Thank you for coming on and giving us your time and sharing your experiences with us. And you guys are both on the Gram. Are you very much on the Gram for people to follow? And if people just love hearing from y'all, where can people keep up?.

EMILY WRIGHT // I'm a personal social media. I'm bad about keeping up. I'm gonna be better. I am. It's @charbabymama, c-h-a-rbabymama.

JUSTIN GARNER // I'm personally not Instagram like I don't have a personal one just because I do social media and I try to just like when I'm off, I'm off. But she keeps convincing me to get one. And so, yeah, I'm only on Facebook right now.

EMILY WRIGHT // I mean, he does drag, he does awesome drag as well. Like he can showcase this on Instagram. I mean.

JVN // You really I don't understand why you're not on social, Justin, I think, like I said earlier, the queer community is going through enough without you being on social. Do your name saying like, I don't mean to attack...

JUSTIN GARNER // I'm going to make a commitment to you today that I will make a Instagram today.

JVN // Yeah, girl, you made me cry it like you fucking maybe this at least you can fucking do.

JUSTIN GARNER // I'll make one today, I promise.

JVN // Thank you so much for coming. This been incredible. Thank you for all of your work. I love you so much. All the healing to East Palestine. And we will talk to you soon.

JUSTIN GARNER // Absolutely. Thank you so much.

JVN // You've been listening to Curious Now, with me, Jonathan Van Ness. You can learn more about this week's guest and their area of expertise in the episode description of whatever you're listening to the show on. And follow us on Instagram @curiouswithjvn. I also talk a lot about the podcast on my TikTok, if you want to follow me over there on @officialjvn. Curious Now drops every other Monday wherever you get your podcasts. Make sure to tune in next Monday for an episode of Pretty Curious and every Wednesday for Getting Curious because Getting Curious still every Wednesday. Don't even ever worry about it, but still can't get enough. You can subscribe to Extra Curious on Apple Podcasts for commercial free listening, which I love and our subscription only show Ask JVN and when we're talking sex, relationships and so much more. Our engineer is Nathaniel McClure. Our theme music is also composed by Nathaniel McClure. Curious Now it's produced by me Chris McClure and Allison Weiss, with production support from Julie Carrillo, Anne Currie and Chad Hall.