

Hi everyone, welcome to another episode of No Such Thing as a Fish. I'm quickly here to introduce you to our special guest this week and that is Athena Cablenu. Now you'll remember Athena, she's been on the fish a couple of times but one interesting new thing to say about her is she has a new podcast. Her podcast is called Why Does My Child Hate Me? It's absolutely amazing. I think she got the name from reading my mind at 6.30 this morning but it's a brilliant podcast. It's all about how we as parents are absolutely amazing and it is the children who are wrong. It's so good and you should definitely check that out. If you want to hear any more from Athena you can get her on social media, on Twitter and Instagram. Both of those places she can be found at Athena Cablenu and just so you know how to spell her surname it's K-U-G-B-L-E-N-U. Not much more to say except we do have a live show coming up at the British Library. That's sold out but you can get streaming tickets so if you want to know more about that go to NotchesThingsAsAFish.com and that's also the place to go if you want to learn about Club Fish, a place where you get ad-free episodes, loads of extra bonus stuff and also you get to hear about the live shows first. For instance the British Library show almost sold out from just the people who listened to Club Fish. There was only a few tickets left for those who heard about it on the Friday so it's definitely a good place to go if you want to hear all of our news first. Anyway, I really hope you enjoyed this week's show. I hope all is good with you. Enjoy our facts with Athena and on with the podcast.

Hello and welcome to another episode of No Such Thing as a Fish, a weekly podcast coming to you from the QI offices in Covent Garden. My name is Dan Schreiber, I'm sitting here with Andrew Hunter Murray, James Harkin and Athena Cablenu and once again we have gathered around the microphones with our four favourite facts from the last seven days and in no particular order here we go. Starting with fact number one and that is Athena.

My fact this week is 15 million tonnes of clothes are dumped in Ghana every week. I'll say that again, 15 million tonnes of unwanted used clothing items are shipped to Ghana and dumped in the country like someone's come to your house with a cheap bottle of wine they're re-gifting, here you go and you've got to re-gift it and then they re-gift it and there's a bottle of wine floating around the world being re-gifted over and over again because it's vinegary, two pound rubbish. Think about 15 million tonnes and it's clothing. It's a good analogy and it's a good job Anna isn't here because that's the kind of wine she loves. She'd be like I would drink that wine. But yeah that's, I mean it's absolutely huge, it's a huge amount and they have huge sort of piles of it next to, there's one river in Accra. So it's like literally mountains of clothing.

Yeah and we've got a massive market where it's traded, most of it's traded, most of it's given away but we don't want it. Like just to be clear this is unwanted, we want a little bit of it. Just the good stuff really.

Yeah second hand stuff is great but it's stuff that we've inevitably bought from fast fashion suppliers for very low amounts of money, we've worn it once, we've thrown it away, we've gone into our wardrobes and we've gone I don't want all these clothes, it's wasteful in my wardrobe, let me take it to a charity shop right, guess what a charity shop doesn't even want all your clothes and then it ends up in a charity shop into the back of a shipping container and it gets shipped off to a country and one of those countries is Ghana.

Yeah wow, I up until you mentioning this fact fast fashion I'd actually not heard that term

before and looking into it, wow what a mad thing we're all involved in if you buy from high street shops. Back in the day you used to maybe buy four shirts and that would last you for months on end but now it's almost like six shirts a week for some people if they go out and want for younger kids supposedly from surveys, a lot of kids want to be seen in different shirts on their Instagram, they don't want to be seen in the same thing so socially you are doing a turnaround of shirts that you might only wear once and then chuck away or give back to the shops who then don't resell them.

The stuff that goes to Ghana I think like you say they kind of reseller and reuse and stuff but 40% of it is such low quality that it just goes straight into landfill and you can't really truck it out of Ghana at that stage so it gets dubbed in Ghana.

Yeah and don't forget there's not a huge amount of infrastructure in terms of like wasting recycling it's not like they can separate it into polyesters, cottons, repurpose it like it's if you want to take rubbish anywhere I swear to God Ghana is the last place you want to take it and get it to be used in a useful way. Just on your point about how much should we buy in the UK, we buy two tons of clothing every minute, every minute I can't be right. Maybe. I got it off the Oxfam website.

Wow I found that we throw away 75 pounds of clothes every year per person that's way that's about the weight of a male giant otter. That does bring it home actually.

They're huge, they're big. There's the logo for the campaign against wasteful clothing.

It may not seem a lot but obviously there's 60 odd million people in the UK. Imagine 60 odd million giant otters. Again James I do think you've picked one of the worst and least known animals. If people's reaction to that fact is are there giant otters? That is a problem with the campaign because then you're immediately, you're not talking about the clothes. Do we need to be worried about them?

They sound kind of aggressive. Yeah well you need to worry about yourself if you're in a room with one. They're six feet long and if you're in a room with one it's not in its natural habitat which is the Amazon base. They're Brazilian aren't they?

Giant otter. It's happened. It's happened. We forgot

about clothing. We're in the world of otter. It's because the world of fast fashion is so, once you look at the stats it's so upsetting that if James comes along with his brilliant campaign and posts it, you immediately want to think about the otter because...

I think maybe we can get you a costume Andy. An otter costume?

An otter costume and send you into H&M and fuck things up.

I love that. Be like Christ turning over the tables in the temple.

Yeah it was. He had an otter costume. He never mentioned, well three of the scriptures don't mention it but John is always a bit more out there. He says Christ was overlaid with the dress. That could be the new saying instead of a bull in a china shop. It's an otter in a Zara high street shop. No but you're right. The numbers are kind of heinous.

I didn't realise how it had happened in the first place. As in with the way that lots of big high street brands moved from having a few collections of clothes a year to now having new collections maybe every couple of weeks. There's a firm called Shine who I think if you know about fashion you will know about them but if you don't you won't.

They're an enormous Chinese firm who stock almost all their clothes. 94% of their clothes are stocked for 90 days or less. So they basically turn out thousands and thousands and thousands

of designs but they only make about 50 or 100 of each one. But in the first four months of last year they added 315,000 different styles to their website.

It's a clever idea in a way. I mean it's terrible for the world but the idea is that one you don't have lots of waste. They don't have lots of waste in their company because because you're only making 50 of them. Yeah you're only making 50 of them. You're probably going to sell all 50 but also you're creating fake scarcity which means that people if you see someone wearing it on TV you're like well there might be only 50 in my local shop so I'm going to have to get there fast and get one. At which point they'll make another 200,000. But 300,000 different pieces of clothing in different designs in four months. That's crazy. And this is all the fault of one man. One still alive possibly very litigious man. Is it? Well he might be I'm about to slag him off.

Let's name some names. His name is Emancio Ortega and he is the founder of Zara, the high street shops that are global. When he invented Zara the idea was he wanted fashion to be able to mimic fashion that was being seen in the catwalks at a much quicker rate. There used to be such a long period before anything even resembling what was seen on the catwalks would appear in shops. And he thought what if we just quickly make them the turnaround. We have no name designers. They're all anonymous. They work for us in the back rooms and let's get it out within a five week period. That will make us big. And then let's just make a few of them. We just constantly create demand for new items and this caught on around the world. So it's this one guy who at one point became the richest man in the world. Took over Bill Gates for like a brief second. So he's he went from poverty to richest man in the world of this idea of fast fashion. One guy and one woman as well. Rosalia Mira who's his wife who did a lot of the work as well. And because they kind of got together didn't they? She was working in a clove sharp. He was a messenger boy and they kind of Can I make it any more obvious? But yeah, Ortega he's a really interesting guy I think because some of it sounds quite sweet. Like he grew up he was the son of a railway worker who would move around the whole of Spain working wherever there were jobs. He was really poor as a child. He had only potatoes for some of his meals. And he's very reclusive. He doesn't have a computer. He does all of his work like in small groups and just kind of tells people what to do and really doesn't write much down and stuff. But then on the other hand, he's a billionaire. Yeah, a great new enemy on this show.

Welcome guys. So it was in this tiny town and he wanted to call the company Zorba initially, but there was a restaurant that was selling beers and so on down the road.

And Greek food. It's more of a Greek than a Spanish name, isn't it? Well, Zorba the Greek. Zorba the Greek. But that's what they were naming it after. But there happened to be two places that wanted to do it in the very same street. And so the restaurant said, can you not do that please? And so he went fine, but they had the molds for Zorba. And so they quickly just rearranged it into Zara. So I guess they used the A twice out of Zorba. I guess that's how that works. And throw away the B.

Well, they like waste, so it doesn't matter. Start as you mean to go on guys. Stick it in the bin. He's very reclusive. He's been photographed, I think once by the company. The company released one photo of him once about the year 2000. He is really very, very, very private, but he appears to wear only the same items of clothing every day. He was a pair of trousers, a shirt and a jacket. None of which is sold by Zara.

No, exactly. And it's kind of like that thing, you know how all the tech squillionaires, they all their children are growing up playing with simple wooden blocks and they've never seen a computer and they all go to schools where they don't do any tech stuff.

But that also makes me also think of, do you remember Daniel Radcliffe used to do that after, so when he came out on the West End at the stage door every night, he used to wear the exact same clothes so that the paparazzi couldn't sell a new photo, because that photo could have been taken any night of the run. So that was his strategy.

Is that also why he doesn't seem to have aged over the last 30 years?

He decided to freeze himself and yeah, that's why you don't see many photos.

Okay, I'm just floating as theory, because obviously a lot of fast fashion is driven by high fashion and by red carpets and things like that. So if you're only allowed to wear one item of clothing on the red carpet for the rest of your life, that would presumably go a long way to, what bit of the way to?

Are we going to make people whatever the last thing they wore, like Sam Smith, they're going to have to wear that kind of rubber thing.

Yes.

Whatever, a certain date, you just freeze and that's your clothes now.

Yeah, like a random bell to just go off on your phone or something. Like today's your time and whatever you're wearing, it's just beautiful. You know how they gave us alerts when it was COVID, we'd get like these text message alerts and they'd say, it should be a clothing alert. Right, this is you now. This is your look.

And it would incentivize people to always look their best because you might get frozen at any time.

Yeah.

That's great.

I might not have worn this hoodie with my own podcast, but I do think we need to make it slightly less socially acceptable to just, I used to have a friend whose wardrobe was just full of clothes with tags on.

Right.

She was just a shoplifter.

A shoplifter.

Actually, and like the security tags, what?

Does she have a bag on her ankle as well?

What's that?

Now I think you couldn't leave the house office. It's just socially acceptable to just buy stuff.

Yeah.

My ex used to work in a clothes shop and the number of times people would come back with an outfit saying, yeah, I haven't worn it because it didn't fit and it would be covered in red wine and vomit and like, no, no, we haven't worn it. Honestly, we haven't worn it.

Yeah.

Yeah.

I know. It's shameless watching the lies of a hungover person and like, oh, I didn't

end up moving it.

Yeah. A lot of this waste is returned items too. So even if you return items pristine, they often can't be resold because the minute you open the packaging, well, it's not something they can really sell again. So we and our brains, they go, I'll try it on. I'll send it back and it'll be okay. It's not okay. Most of that does get dumped as well.

Yes, exactly. And that's the big problem that no one realizes. So it's exactly that. It is literally online ordering. You tried on, I know it's the wrong sides. That is now going into waste.

Yeah.

They won't reuse that.

It's remarkable as well.

I was reading about how Zara defines how they can make the fast fashion because it's not just looking at the bigger world of fashion, high end fashion, like catwalks and so on. Basically the staff, and this is from an article that was about 2012. So I'm talking for, you know, this could have changed since then, but the way they do it is staff have to monitor by listening carefully to what people are making little comments about. I hate having those zips on the ankles. I wish they would put them up here. And if they would collate this stuff and all report back, did you hear anyone else say that? Yeah, I heard them say that. They report that back to head office and then they just start designing clothes according to literally customer feedback within the shop because they come up with so many different designs. And then what they do at the big Zara warehouse, which is like an air hanger, a New York Times journalist went to visit it, you would see people talking to the Zaras of the world going, red pants. Are they wearing red pants? Okay, we're getting reports of red pants here. Great. We're in red pant business now and they would make pants being trousers. Sorry.

Is that for English men over a certain age in the countryside? Going to the Henley regatta.

14 year old girls in China, a 60 year old men at Henley. Zara have really been cracking the regatta market. So if I go into a Zara and be like, God, I'd love a panda costume.

Yeah. And if we all did it, if we all did it, sorry, we're getting a giant river otter costume.

Yeah. Okay, it is time for fact number two. And that is Andy. My fact is that Ford has just got a patent for a car which can repossess itself if the owner falls behind with payments. This is quite a dystopian episode, isn't it? Yeah, it is. Yeah, absolutely. This is just a patent at the moment. It may never be billed, but it has been granted as in they applied for it a couple of years ago and it's just been granted this year. So here's the plan, right? You've got your Ford, you think you're safe. You've got a payment agreement. Payment agreement. You're doing okay, but then you miss a couple of payments. A couple of payments, something happens and they write to you and you don't acknowledge it. Maybe you missed the message, whatever, right? But anyway, things steadily get worse for you and your car from this point onwards. Firstly, they just make the car a bit less pleasant to drive. In that, you know, they might disable the music or the air conditioning or the GPS. Some of these things sound a little bit dangerous, but at this stage, you might just think it's a glitch, right? You're like, oh, my aircon's not working. You're doing a regular thing. It's not especially hot. So you don't like music. So fine. So you're all right. But then

it'll make an unpleasant beeping sound whenever you get into the car. Okay, that's a bit annoying. Sounds like the music I might have been listening to anyway. Yeah, your EDM collection is fine. So great. Then it stops you using it at certain days or times. As in the car won't even function outside, let's say, ordinary working hours. So I think the plan is that you can keep going to your job. So you can afford to catch up with your payments eventually. But you can't, I don't know, socialize. And then as a very last resort, it will either drive to a waiting tow truck to be repossessed. It'll have an ascription without you knowing about it. Or if it's worth very little, it'll just drive itself to a scrapyard and say, take me apart. Drive yourself to Ghana. No, that'd be good. We want cars. That's great. That's amazing. It's incredible. Maybe it'll happen. What's crazy is like this, why can't technology be used for good? If we can control what cars are used and when they're used, what can't we do in the world right now, modal shift? We can't get people out of their cars on the train. So why don't we set these new electronic Wi-Fi connected cars in the future to like, you can be used for 10 hours a week, run out of your 10 hours, it won't work, and you'll have to just go to a field and touch some grass, right? Why don't we use this for good? They can only take you to the park and ride. Right, yeah. But there's got to be a better way to use this technology rather than to just like, make people destitute. Yeah, absolutely. I got one slightly better way of using the technology, the self-driving technologies. So if you've got a really busy road, it's kind of gridlocked almost and everyone's kind of stop, start, stop, start, bad for the environment, bad for everything, right? You can put 5% more cars onto the road, but if they're all driverless and they're all smart and they know exactly how fast to go and which lane to be in, they can stop the gridlock. Okay. Does that make sense? You know what I mean? So like, the cars will join the real cars and they'll work out how everyone's behaving and they'll move a little bit faster in this lane, a little bit slower in this lane, and suddenly all of the traffic jam will stop. Like a dance, like a synchronized... Yeah, exactly. I used to work in highways and traffic modelling is mostly nonsense. Well, it's not nonsense, but it's super, it's super vulnerable to change. I worked on this one project here and they spent millions modelling how this new road would work and everyone was great. And then there was some crisis and petrol went up like 2P and the model that's put in the bin, like the smallest change in the most random thing to do with driving. You've got to put it all in the bin and start again. It's a really... So a lot of policy and a lot of stuff is done based on these models, but these models are so quickly made redundant. But it's true that driver behaviour does cause a huge amount of traffic. So like, Rubbernecking is a really good example, you're all familiar with people slow down to look at accidents because we're humans. Love it. Or Stonehenge. Or Stonehenge. I'll say it, yeah, but I do that. The A303, oh yeah. A303. So you guys are so bad at it, they want to dig a tunnel underneath it. Like, you guys are just, just if you won't stop slowing down, we're going to dig underneath it. Every time you're on the A303, you think, God, this wonderful crash must have happened up ahead. And it did happen like 3,000 years ago. I feel like I would drive underneath and go, oh, we're directly underneath. Let's slow down. Yeah, yeah, yeah. Let's feel it. Sense it. Yeah. Funny enough, I worked for the high agency whilst I was trying to build it and I'm like, you're never going to get permission to do this, guys. It's like a really old build. Did they get it in the end? No, it got stuck in the bin. It's really hard to build tunnels because

they're really environmentally unfriendly and expensive. Put on top of that a bloody English heritage site. You've got a recipe for wasting your money, which is a real shame.

Yeah. Ford in 2020 applied for a patent to match up passengers with like things like Uber's, you know, ride sharing. Anyway, matching up passengers on the cars by smell. Okay. So you fit a car with sensors. And then if that car smells of, I don't know, vomit, and then passengers... And you smell of vomit. Then you get that one. Is that right?

Yeah. I think if you've unticked the vomit box, you don't want to be in a car smelling of vomit, then you won't be paired up. That's clever. So on a Friday night, 11 o'clock, the pubs are kicking out, really hard to get an Uber. You uncheck the vomit thing and you're the only one who wants to get a vomit taxi. And so there's more taxis available. Yeah.

I think it's more for people with things like airborne nut allergies than people that can't smell of vomit. But I think there will be advantages for everyone. Yeah. Yeah. Let's say someone's had a peanut in the car and it will be very dangerous for you if you've got a very, very, very bad nut allergy to get into that car. So you can sense peanuts. Yeah. Yeah. I'm

trying to think what other smells can be deadly that are important for this patent. Mustard gas. Yes. That's not good. Yeah. On the smell thing, there was a guy called Henry Cyril Padgett. He was the fifth Marquis of Bath. And he was really famous because he had gotten inheritance in 1904, which was equivalent to £30 million per year. And after about five or 10 years, he'd accumulated debts of about half a million and that's 60 million in current money because he just spent it on everything. And he modified his car so that his exhaust pipe sprayed perfume. So wherever he went, there'll be a nice little smell of like someone's vaping past you or something. Lovely. I think it's quite selfless because it's, I mean, it's his car. Yeah, exactly. It's actually a benefit that he will never really feel himself. Well, I think what happened was he thought that all the cars at the time were a bit smelly. I'm going to do something a bit different. I feel like he's a climate change denier. And he's like, what, what climate change? What are you talking about?

This is how profligate he was. He was once at a theater and someone had stolen some of his jewellery. And so he needed to get it back. So he enlisted the help of Arthur Conan Doyle to try and find the jewels. And he paid Conan Doyle to try and solve the case. Brilliant. God, that's great. Isn't that great? I do like people who spend money well. I mean, it's a really good way to spend your money. You know, not this fast fashion nonsense.

Like 5000 shirts or do you want to hire Luther? Conan Doyle will come up with an incredibly elaborate mechanism by which it would have been done. He actually, because he was so famous as writing the Sherlock Holmes books, people used to come to him with mysteries and ask him to solve them. And obviously they're offering him money and stuff. And he solved a few. He did. And he used two methods, didn't he? One was real detective science and the other was spiritualism. So he would get seances and he would try and track things down by just the feeling of where it might be. And did he keep two columns of success and failure? Which method works better? I think he's got wins on both, really.

Yeah, I wonder if that happens today, you know, if like Dan Brown has people getting in contact with him about solving in ranking. Yeah, crime, PD James, Richard Osmond, Richard Osmond. Yeah, you now goes missing, Richard. Richard in.

Do you want to hear something, a theory about cup holders? Okay, correct answer. I was looking into who developed all the different bits of a car and when they came in, you know,

a cup holders came in properly in about the 80s, I think they've been done since the 50s, but they weren't very good. If you were driving, you couldn't really properly stash a drink in a drink from a while driving. So like the decent ones came in in the 80s. Just a quick aside, the car with the most cup holders is apparently the 2019 Subaru Ascent. And he guesses 16, like five, 12, 19, 19 cup holders. We're the final three that I wasn't thinking of. Um, no, so, okay, why do we like cup holders? There is a theory by a French scholar because you can keep your change in them. Well, yeah, that's kind of I've never caught a cup in my cup holder and the keys and the car keys. Yeah, yeah, yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Okay. Here's a theory from this is printed in the Toronto Star French born scholar and marketer G Clotaire Rappay, who argues that warm drinks as we drive are a replacement for mother's milk. He says, he says, what was the key element of safety when you were a child? It was that your mother fed you and there was warm liquid. Yeah, that's why cup holders absolutely crucial. I fit in my cup holder with a nipple. Yeah. And I, it's very comforting when I try. I'm sure we must have said this, but there was a theory that in McDonald's, the when you're slurping your milkshake, they make it the exact consistency. So the amount that you slurp is the same amount that you would. Is that why it's so thick? Wow. So you have to suck as hard as you did. I mean, I don't think it's true. There was a theory about that. Beautiful. Beautiful theory. I mean, I don't like milk at all. Anything to do with milk. I don't like it. I even if like, if you give me a black tea and you use a spoon to stir it, that's been in a milky cup. I swear I can taste it. I can't stand milk. And I'm wondering now if that just says something about possibly relationship with my mother. This is, well, I think it says everything. Yeah. I have the exact opposite. So last night, you're still on the move. Yeah. I've been wondering for nine years, every podcast recording. I woke up two a.m. last night off the back of having a dream about drinking some milk, got out of bed and I went downstairs and I had a glass of milk and it was wonderful. Drinking a whole glass of milk. Yeah, two a.m. Oh, that's unresolved off the back of a dream that made me just salivate so much for it. I wonder if your body was craving it for something like you haven't had enough calcium in your diet. And it's also vitamin D, right? And it's been very gloomy in the UK recently. Yeah. Yeah. You can get even even other things than milk, which is vile and you can see and smells. I would love to have a quite offensive glass of milk, Lorex. I think I'll have to dance outside on the table. Once you think about it. Yeah. Yeah. What are we talking about? Cars. Cars. Have you heard of William Sacciti? No. So William Sacciti is a Zimbabwean-born British entrepreneur and he has invented something called cargo. And this is possibly going to be the future where they're like little dog-sized cars that go around and deliver things to people's houses. Okay. And they're autonomous like cars. So you order your milk, let's say, Dan fancies a glass of milk. Yeah. And then he puts in his order and then Tesco puts one in a little cargo and it drives it all the way around. Okay. Yeah. He's basically going against the Teslas and the Googles as the big, you know, who's going to be the big person who does this in the future. And this guy, the first thing he invented was an intelligent robot librarian. Cool. Who doesn't want one of those who was capable of holding a conversation or taking commands and would tell you where the books are that you want. So you say, oh, you know what? I really like this Richard Osman book. What else would I like? And they're like, oh, well, there's a Richard Cole's book that's just down here. Come and follow me.

And it would kind of drive around and take you to the books. I was sort of picturing an anti Siri where you'd say like, Hey, Siri, and it's just, shh. And this guy also invented an autonomous penguin that they use at Milton Keynes University Hospital. Cool. And it kind of takes the medicine round to wherever you need it. So if you need certain medicine in a certain ward, this little penguin will drive around and drive around and take your medicine towards. You know what? It's actually for all wards. But I think, you know, it helps set it is good for children as well. Because you don't want like this evil sort of. Yeah. Liquid metal. And the other interesting thing I found about Sotiti is that in 2023 he rescued a zebra from Ukraine and he currently keeps it in his garden in Norfolk. Wow. Using technology for good. Yeah, rather than evil. I think those cargoes do sound like a very good idea. Because it's all about the taking the sort of emissions out of the last mile of delivery, isn't it? And that's where a lot of, you know, that's where you can really make efficiencies and, you know, driving vans around all the place. But they are going to need to be quite well defended. As in the number of packages that get nicked from doorsteps, they will need to be. But how would you, what would you say, like a flamethrower or? I'd fit a flamethrower. I'd fit. It would be a sliding scale like the Ford, like a bit of interference. It just gives you a stern verbal warning. Do you think that we should get William Sotiti to watch Robot Wars perhaps? Yes. Little spikes. Yeah. Okay, it is time for fact number three and that is James. Okay, my fact this week is that the healthiest way to eat broccoli is to stir fry it after chopping it into two millimeter pieces and leaving it to stand for an hour and a half. Yeah, we all know that. Is that how you do yours? Every day. That's what it says in your Hello Fresh. Christ, that's a difficult introduction. So this is because they have a compound called sulforaphane and sulforaphane is really hard to get at. You can get it quite well if you eat it raw. But as soon as you start cooking broccoli, it kind of degenerates and you don't get as much. You still get it, but you don't get quite as much. And there was some Chinese researchers in the Journal of Agricultural Food Chemistry and they tried loads of different ways of cooking broccoli, see which ways gets the most sulforaphane. And they found this way, you know, they chopped it into tiny, tiny pieces because actually, it's almost a defense for the broccoli. It's trying to stop herbivores from eating it. And so it puts this chemical out to stop like cows from eating it. Nice try, idiot. You're in my kitchen. There's no way you're not going to eat it. Yeah. So like the way to get this out is to kind of macerate it or chop it up or whatever. So that's why you do the small chopping. All right. And then if you leave it for a long time, it helps the sulforaphane to come out and then you do a quick stir fry, fishbash bosh. But it's two mil... I gotta say, it feels a bit like you'll have a kind of mince of broccoli. And I like the crunch of a floret. Do you? Yeah. A bit like cauliflower, I imagine it would be. Which I hate, yeah. I've got a testimony to do with sulforaphane. Oh yeah. Because I used to have really bad tendonitis in my knees, right? Really bad. And unfortunately, when you're not an athlete, people don't care when your joints hurt. Get over it, Athena. And then at the same time, years ago, became a parent that sulforaphane was good for your joints. And I was like, it can't hurt. So I started having kale and broccoli smoothies, right? Because I was like, they were trying to figure out how to extract the sulforaphane into like a tablet. And I was like, I haven't got time to wait for this. And I honestly, after about a few weeks, if not months of eating just loads of broccoli and having loads

of broccoli and kale smoothies, I'm no word for like, my tendonitis cleared up. Really? Absolutely. Yeah. This is anecdotal. It wasn't a scientific study. So I, you know, I got off the running treadmill and off the pavement and started cycling and all this kind of stuff. But after a few weeks and months, the tendonitis cleared up and I've not had it since. Okay. That's really interesting. Would a, would a skeptic say placebo for that? Do you think? Well, you know what? Skeptics, right? Skeptics just need to get on board the Athena train. Yeah. And that's my response to all skeptics on anything they say.

I think sulforaphane definitely does work. Oh, no, I'm just wondering the method of the smoothie, whether or not that depends. If you're having a fair bit. So there are pills these days, which you'll be glad to know, they completed the process. They made the pills. In fact, the pills might be even more effective than broccoli and kale smoothies. I don't know how much you were having. I mean, it sounds like a fair bit.

I was, honestly, I would buy like three or four florets a week and I'd get through them and either steam it or having my smoothie because my knees, I was an agony. I couldn't watch a film. I couldn't go to the theater because every time my knees were bent more than like, they would just be on fire. So I had, yeah, I'd say, and yeah, three or four florets a week. So a lot, a lot.

That is a lot. That absolutely is a lot. These pills are equivalent to eating five kilos of broccoli every day. Wow. That's possibly my yeah. But the other thing is that you can overdo it like with anything, right? And if you have too much sulforaphane, you are supposedly at risk of hyperthyroidism, which will make you tired and right. Yeah, well, I don't eat six kilos of broccoli a day. It's just balanced diet. It's like what we always say. But yeah, I mean, it's good stuff.

My favorite broccoli is Cubby broccoli. Oh, come on. Already already. Hang on. Hang on though. There's a really interesting fact about Cubby broccoli. Cubby broccoli was the producer of the James Bond movies. The broccoli family still produced them to this day. Cubby broccoli in an interview that he gave in the 1980s to LA Times made the claim that broccoli, the vegetable is named after him. He's lying. Okay, the broccoli family. So he says that his his father, who is called Giovanni and his brother Giovanni's brother, they immigrated to Long Island from Calabria at the turn of the 20th century. He says, yeah, in Italy, sorry, he says that that broccoli family were descended from the broccolis of Carrera, who were the first to cross cauliflower and rub to produce the broccoli. Therefore, broccoli is named after him, not vice versa, when people say, are you named after the vegetable? Pretty good.

That sounds very convincing, I have to say.

It was an Italian thing. Like the first farmers to grow broccoli, the modern broccoli that we consider broccoli today were in the south of Italy.

It's definitely a man made thing as it is from the cabbage family, but they were bred that way, right? And it was invented in Italy, but I think possibly just named because it's Italian for shoots or something.

Yeah, that's the etymology, isn't it? And it's the same word, the same as brooch. Brooch and broccoli have the same etymological root. I know the Romans had a version of broccoli, but I don't think they had a lovely classic green broccoli.

Well, one thing they definitely didn't have is tender stem broccoli.

Is that what we've got?

Well, tender stem broccoli is where it's quite a long stem, and then there's little broccoli florets on the top, and you can eat the whole thing.

That's posh broccoli.

Oh, posh broccoli.

It's delicious, guys.

It's brilliant. But this is one of the most amazing things I've ever found. Tender stem broccoli was invented about 10 years ago by a committee in Japan, and it's a registered trademark.

What?

Isn't it amazing? It used to, they originally, they called it aspiration when they invented it.

Because it looks like an asparagus.

Yeah, brilliant.

And yeah, they just had this session where a load of people at the Sokata Seed Incorporation in Yokohama sat around the table and went, you know what we should do? We should make broccoli where you can eat the whole thing. How would we do that? Well, what if we mixed it with Chinese kale? Okay, let's try it, and they tried it, and now they patent the seeds and they sell the seeds around the world.

Are you saying actually 10 years?

About 10 years.

In the last 20 years for sure.

But you're saying I couldn't have seen in the millennium with a nice dish of tender stem broccoli.

Yeah, it was like, it was certainly around, it was around that time when they started coming in.

I thought I never saw these because they were inexpensive.

I feel like, oh, I'm doing well in the world now that I've been introduced to a new broccoli.

It's utterly bizarre, isn't it?

And they called them aspiration, and they tried to sell them like that. And then Debbie Nucci, who is the wife of the company's chief operating officer, she came up with the name Broccolini, and that's what they called in America.

And then it was Marx and Spencer started to call in them tender stem in the UK.

Wow. So let me get this right. You're saying you think that's more amazing than the fact that the James Bond producer gave us.

Well, that's not true what you said. The bit that I said is verifiably true. Yours is just the made up one.

That's milkshake nipple because he kicked Donald's man.

But that's not going to become a thing, that my name is now milkshake nipple with Donald's man.

And it fits. It's the nipple fits.

They love broccoli in Japan, though, don't they?

They like to the point, yeah, yeah. So to the point where kids particularly love it, and there's a story which is Pixar, you know, the movie Inside Out that they did. There's

a scene in that where it was a movie about emotions. It was a real kind of poignant. They had characters like one of them was sad and one of them was angry or whatever. It was all in one person's head.

Yeah, exactly. And in it, there's a scene where they eat broccoli and they go, it's yucky or whatever. And they swap that. They swap that out for the Japanese edition because broccoli is loved by kids there.

Oh, what did they put instead?

They put instead.

Because they don't like milk, do they? I think famously in Japan.

That wouldn't go down well in my house.

Turn it off. The cat in Disney Plus is done.

Green peppers.

Green peppers.

Yeah, that's what they replace it with.

But isn't there like a substance that makes green vegetables taste horrible to kids?

Oh, yeah, it is.

And it's in Brussels sprouts and things like that.

It's really bitter, right?

Yeah.

Yeah.

So some people, so it happens to lots of children, and I think children have extra taste buds. But there is a gene, which I have written down, which is called TES2R38, and that lets you taste bitterness. And there's a variant of that gene. And if you get two versions of one particular variant, then your whole life, not just when you're a child, you experience all the Brassica family as being unbelievably foul and bitter and horrible.

It's really interesting. My wife, when she was pregnant, she craved broccoli and tennis stem. And then after about a month, she couldn't be in the same room as it. But didn't have the heart to tell me, because I started making loads of things with broccoli in it. Because she was like, oh, yeah, I really want broccoli. I'm like, great, I'll make broccoli soup. I'll make broccoli this, broccoli that. And then she just found it so disgusting, she couldn't be near it.

Maybe that was the response. Here's your broccoli cake, darling, happy birthday.

You're absolutely right.

It's amazing how it can quickly turn.

Broccoli everything, yeah.

It could have been more of a comment on my cooking than anything else.

It's too many of your pieces, darling. I made it exactly as I told me to.

Oh, this is a cool thing. This is slightly tangential. I hope you don't mind.

Have you heard of epicuticular wax? No. Right. This is a wax that covers lots of vegetables, right? That is water repellent. And loads and loads of vegetables, including broccoli, have epicuticular.

Naturally.

Or naturally.

Yeah, naturally. So like the epidermis is the top layer of skin and cuticular, the cuticles.

So it's the surface layer. And it's to protect the plant from water getting in from outside. And all the rubbish that might be in external water, it might have bacteria in it, it might be data, there might be moulds, all of that. And this is why, you know, when you wet kale, you know when you go out and wet some kale.

Yeah, we all go out on kale-letting expeditions. But you might rinse some kale before cooking it and the water just seems to stick on the surface.

It's droplets.

Yeah, yeah.

It splashes, it makes a mess. Water goes everywhere. It literally is like it's alive and it's rejecting the water.

Well, it is. And it is. And it's because of epicuticular wax. And it's why when you boil kale, sometimes it leaves like a ring, like a ring on the bathtub.

It's like water off a duck's back, water off kale's epicuticular wax.

Yeah.

Wow.

Yeah. And it's super hydrophobic in some plants, you know.

That's really clever.

Yeah.

And it feels like, you know what, really hydrophobic things, we tend to use them as lubricants, like oil and stuff like that, right?

Yeah.

It feels like you could use this kale as a lubricant.

It's going to struggle to sell it now and some of the same thing.

What do you think, the special vegan section of Antsons?

Would sell. Yeah.

I think that's a vegan.

You're right.

You're right.

Yeah.

I wasn't thinking sexual. I was thinking, you know.

Oh, please.

I said lubricant and sex never, I just, what?

Wow.

How did you get there?

When James says lubricant, he thinks of complicated machine tool processes.

Go back to your milkshake.

Okay, it is time for our final fact of the show and that is my fact.

My fact this week is that last year on December 23rd, a hospital in Doncaster accidentally sent a text message to thousands of its patients informing them that they had an aggressive terminal disease.

What they had meant to send was a message reading, Merry Christmas and have a happy new year.

So this is a very unfortunate moment and I should say that while obviously it's in theory a hilarious cock up, this caused chaos.

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This caused horrible, horrible moments for people in Doncaster and the center of which the text went out from.

There's about 8,000 people sign there.

So this was their mailing list basically through text messaging.

Some of them had had tests recently.

Some of them had tests.

Some of them were rating on results.

Some of them were, there was a lady who ran out of her house and she ran around the corner because she was so petrified and she saw six people in the street all out there as well going, oh my god.

So everyone, it was just like a national, you know what it reminds me of?

Do you remember that Hawaiian, yeah, everyone got the text message saying there was a nuclear missile coming to Hawaii.

Exactly.

They had minutes.

Everyone believed it for about 15 minutes.

Yeah.

I think some people go to shelters and the guy who had sent the message had done it before as well.

I think it was a second offense.

Twice before.

Twice before.

He'd mistook.

But he's like, it's okay.

I'm just going to move to Doncaster.

We'll never have this problem again.

I don't need to win this protection.

Oh.

Yeah.

What happened with that was that a call had come in to do a test for a missile launch and the guy who pressed the button, there's two buttons that you can press.

One that says test missile alert and then missile alert.

Isn't it like a drop down menu?

Yeah.

Exactly.

And then next to each other because they're alphabetically so close to each other like missile alert.

But it's not like he picked the wrong thing.

He picked missile alert because he was overhearing the conversation and he said what happened was that the guy who had the person on the phone saying, this is a test, this is a test or whatever wording it was, said that to the, to the phone that was on the ear of the guy receiving it.

And then he put it on to speakerphone.

So the man who pressed the button didn't hear the, this is a test.

Just heard the next bit and was clearly a paranoid guy.
So he just pressed the button.
So it wasn't only text messages.
It was also the TVs.
It came on the TV.
It came over the radio.
It was a paranoid guy, but maybe he was just doing his job.
Well, he was doing his job, but he'd done it wrong three times in total and so it, they had to let him go.
Was it just an amusing, for each time it was a music thing that made him stop hearing this is a test.
Yeah.
Like someone would drop it.
Siren just drives past.
There was a school there in Hawaii where the students, they ran out after hearing all the, all the text messages on on TV and they ran to the fallout shelters built specifically for missiles and so on, got there, but they were locked.
So they had to run back into the school so they couldn't even use the thing built for them to do it.
That's stressful.
And there were people were reporting, people driving a hundred miles an hour down the road, desperately trying to get home.
It was an amazing thing.
I have a book by the way, which is my favorite novel of recent years.
I've read by Jim Carrey, my, you know, the comedian and the cover of it is his face.
It's done a bit artistically, but it's his face.
And Jim Carrey was writing that book while that missile was launched in Hawaii and he was doing face time with his assistant who called him up saying, we have minutes to live.
And she accidentally took a screen grab the second he's like, this is going to be a failure.
She was there as well.
So I think she had minutes to make that money.
You'd want to see what a guy with one of the funniest faces in the world does.
He was in the mask, right?
So as soon as they told him, his eyes would pop out of this, already then you've got four minutes to make the funniest face, like get Carrey, Rowan Atkinson, a few others and just workshop it.
Yeah.
This is really about systems and protocol because I've had lots of jobs.
I used to do like business development, right?
You go into companies and they would have a process for doing things and you'd say, well, this process works and doesn't work for these reasons.
So this is a really good example of it's not actually that guy's fault for pressing the nuclear test button.
It's the process.

Right.

So you know, in movies in America, there's this mad process they've got to do to like actually send the bombs, they've got to read codes, they've got to do dances, they've got to play charades.

You've got to complete the game of mouse trap.

Exactly.

Yeah.

And then you've got that, you know those games where you've got like a metal wire and you've got to take something over without making something, making noise or whatever.

And you've got to take operation.

But the whole point of that is so you don't just like start firing missiles by accident.

It is unequivocal.

Yeah.

This is what we want you to do.

Having a, oh, it's got, I just want to put you on speaker when there's like a three seconds delay.

Only one person's responsible.

There's a drop down list.

These are all things.

If I was going into that office, I'd be like, yeah, you need to change your processes mate.

That mistake shouldn't have happened with the Doncaster thing.

Absolutely.

That's a process thing right there.

Yeah.

There used to be, there was an idea, a theory by someone, and I forgive me, I can't remember who it was, but they said that they should put the nuclear codes inside a person.

And that person should be with the president at all times.

Yes.

So if the president ever needed to send a nuke, they would have to kill that person.

And suddenly it becomes more real for the president that he's not just pressing any old button.

The president has to literally stab the guy and, I don't think it would be the president.

No, it's the president.

Yeah.

The president has got the assistant because the idea is that then the president who's making that decision has to make a more immediate decision before he can just press it.

Can it be cats or like a giant river often with the president at all times because the president's got to make a lot of life and death decisions.

Who applies for that job as well?

Like, who comes home and go, honey, you've got to grow a gig.

I'm working with the president.

You might, you know, we've never had a nuclear war break out.

You will probably serve your time.

In theory, you could just sit around doing nothing for 30 years and then get to go wherever

the president goes.

You'll see amazing rules.

Oh my God.

This is a great thing.

You probably can't put on too much weight because then he would be more difficult for stab you.

Absolutely.

Rules.

Yeah.

You've got to have a big tattoo of cut here.

Cut here.

A little scissor line inserted on you.

Yeah.

That's a bit stressful.

But then wouldn't the sort of the enemy try and kidnap you and get the codes out of your chest as well?

Oh yeah, that is true.

Don't you become a...

Because we know who the person is.

You would probably have to have about 10 people, all of whom were with the president, but only the president knows which one it is.

Oh wow.

Yes.

Yeah, yeah, yeah.

That's a great idea.

Yeah.

Yeah.

So you've all got the tattoo.

Yeah.

But maybe everyone in America has one.

It's getting complicated, isn't it?

It's getting harder, too.

Just on text messages.

This text message is meant to say, Merry Christmas and have a happy new year.

Yeah.

And that's very apt.

It is.

Because the first ever text message said, you have an aggressive terminal...

No, it said...

It said...

It was a Merry Christmas.

It was a Merry Christmas message.

Yeah, that's great.

It was sent by a man called Neil Papworth.

I think it was in the...

It was in 1992 on the 3rd of December.

There we go.

But imagine getting the first ever text message.

And also 3rd of December a bit early.

Yeah.

That's the thing.

Vodafone were having the Christmas party on the 3rd of December.

Vodafone were having a party.

I believe to celebrate the sending of the first ever text message.

So this guy, Papworth, sent the message to the head of Vodafone.

Or Richard Jarvis, who was a big week at Vodafone.

I believe it was a party partly to celebrate this technology happening.

And he had to text it from a computer, because phones at the time didn't have the capacity to text.

Yeah.

But the phone that Richard Jarvis received it on weighed two kilos.

And that's about, I think, 12 modern iPhones.

As in, just reminds you of what phones have been like in very, very living memory.

There's a guy called Brian Moore.

He's designed a device that won't let you type the word LOL, unless it has actually detected you laughing out loud.

That's a good idea, that, isn't it?

That's great.

I text HAT when I am laughing.

But I would never send LOL, even if I'm really laughing out loud.

No.

That would be HAH-HA.

I do PAH-HA-HA-HA to be like, you're that kind of un-larping and lot.

I do HAH-HA-HA-HA, but I am a villain.

But I think you would be able to program it, so it wouldn't let you say HAH-HA, unless you were laughing out loud.

And it also doesn't let you write Ruffle, unless you're actually rolling on the floor.

What about pissing myself laughing?

They're moisture sensors.

Yeah.

Wow.

And so it's good.

Laughing my ass off.

Okay, the fastest ever text message, this is just a little weird fun record.

Like just KK.

So there's a specific message which you have to send for this record.

Do we know what it is?

We do.

[Transcript] No Such Thing As A Fish / 472: No Such Thing As A Giant Otter In H&M

So, okay, I'll tell you the record first, right?

So this was broken, it may have been re-broken since, but it was 2010, British woman Melissa Thompson, she sent this message, it's 26 words and she managed it in 25.94 seconds.

Okay.

That's pretty good.

Oh, it's all right.

It doesn't sound, yeah, second word sounds quite beatable though, doesn't it?

Here's the message.

The razor-toothed piranhas of Degenera, Serra, Salmus and Pygocentrus are the most ferocious freshwater fish in the world.

In reality, they seldom attack a human.

LOL.

LOL.

So that's what she managed in 25 seconds.

Okay, that is impressive.

Yeah.

It's a predictive text.

I imagine piranhas not necessarily going to come up.

But I would say the name of the species, because I actually never heard those words before.

No.

She would learn them beforehand, I guess, or?

I think so, yeah, because it's the sentence you'd know.

And it's a real Fosbury flopper though, Melissa's record, because in 2004, the same record with the same sentence was broken by a Sussex man called James Trussler, and he took 67 seconds to do it, and she took under 26 seconds to do it.

Wow.

Did she have a special technique that?

Oh, I don't know, I don't know if it looked like Fosbury, yeah, but it's a huge difference.

Maybe she was the first person to ever use her thumb rather than typing with her index fingers.

Yeah, yeah, exactly.

You know the old lockers?

You have to press each button three times.

A, B, C.

Yeah, yeah, yeah.

All that.

So yeah, that's amazing.

Yeah.

Good for whoever that was.

And good for if you're stuck with a piranha as well.

Yeah.

Because they seldom attack a human.

LOL.

Ah.

LOL.

I think I think about texting.

Yeah.

It was so profitable.

Oh.

When it cost, I mean.

It's like 10p a text, wasn't it?

We're all of a nature to remember 10p texts.

Yeah.

It didn't cost 10p to send data.

Doesn't feel like it.

Doesn't feel like it did.

And so I did a little looking into it, and basically the profits were unbelievably huge for mobile phone firms.

It brought in over the-

People were sending like a billion, weren't they?

Like their world was sending.

And you'd get on your plan, sorry for any younger listeners, but you get, you know, you get a certain number of minutes and maybe 200 texts a month, or 500 texts a month.

And you had to, like, you'd get right up to the wire of how many texts you were allowed to send.

Because then it was charging you 10p a minute.

Anyway.

In 2001, it cost 10p, like you said, James, which was 128 bytes of data for 160 characters, right?

The Guardian calculated that if it was charged at that rate, buying a standard music CD would cost 60,000 pounds.

Oh my God.

Yeah.

The text message was just banality, right?

It wasn't even like, it wasn't 10p worth of information.

It was mostly flirting, or mine were all about piranhas and stuff.

I was wondering how old WhatsApp was.

All right.

I'm going to guess this.

Oh, I don't, I must say I don't know the answer, but Dan has got his laptop, so you can check.

I can check, yeah.

I guess first, I think now.

I think eight years old.

Nice.

Okay.

So that's what, 2015?

Yeah.

Okay.

Because James got us earlier with the 10 to 10 broccoli, right?

Yeah.

1492.

Ah.

You're not closer, but you're closer to what I'm going to say.

Okay.

So first of all, Dan, what was the answer?

Well, is it older or younger than broccoli?

Broccolini.

God, I think broccoli, I reckon actually came in around the turn of the millennium, really.

Okay.

So it must be younger than that.

Yeah, I'd say that.

Yes, it is.

Yeah.

Go on.

2009.

2009.

Okay.

2008.

This is what I just thought, I'd go in the newspaper archives and search for WhatsApp and see what came up.

And this was from the Mass on Telegraph of the 26th of September, 1908.

And it was about the, someone being sued for breaking up an engagement.

And this was the first time that had ever happened in Albany in Georgia.

And it was a businessman called J.E.

Sap, and he had teamed up with a guy called Mr. Watt, and they owned a hardware shop in Georgia called WhatsApp.

Get out.

Isn't that amazing?

Get out.

Get out.

The WhatsApp hardware store existed for a small amount of time in 1908 in Albany, Georgia.

Wow, that's impressive.

And the proprietor was going around breaking up engagements.

Well, that's what WhatsApp is used for, really.

In many ways.

Just couples having arguments.

Yeah.

Okay.

That's it.

That is all of our facts.

Thank you so much for listening.

[Transcript] No Such Thing As A Fish / 472: No Such Thing As A Giant Otter In H&M

If you'd like to get in contact with any of us about the things that we've said over the course of this podcast, we can be found on our Twitter accounts.

I'm on at Shrybland, Andy, at Andrew Hunter M, James, at James Harkin, and Athena, Athena could blend you, but don't come to me, I don't know nothing.

Yeah.

Or you can go to our group account at no such thing or email us on podcast at qi.com or do go to our website.

No such thing as a fish.com.

All of our previous episodes are up there.

But more importantly, make sure to check out Athena's podcast.

How long has it been going now?

Oh, we're on episode five.

Absolutely.

The last one was about a friend of ours.

You've got the snip.

Wow.

Yeah, right?

You nodded way too enthusiastically.

Your kids must be stressful, man.

Yeah.

I'm like, that sounds good.

Yeah.

I thought of that.

But it's called Why Does My Child Hate Me?

It's about kids and how they're the problem, not us.

We're brilliant.

So check that out.

Kids are nuts.

Yeah.

Otherwise, we'll be back again next week.

We'll see you then.

Bye-bye.