

[Transcript] SmartLess / "Jon Favreau"

The art of the cold open is something that's not really that appreciated. You turn the mic on, you start rolling, and you start talking to introduce the show. People think, oh, that's easy. It's not. It involves a lot of time, a lot of thought, and sometimes a little bit of humor, and oftentimes a lot of heart. Well, I didn't have any of that today, but anyway, it's a brand new smart list. A few weeks ago, now it's a few weeks ago, Jason and I went up to Pebble Beach, as you know, and then you came up with Scotty. Like little angels flying up from ... Wait, that's very nice. It was really nice of you to do that. We were so happy to do it. It was very generous of you, and Shawn is very generous. You're a very, very good friend, and you have a very generous spirit. Well, I love you both very much. We love you very, very much. Well, Will and I were talking about we could both learn something from you. Me more than Will. Well, that's going to be like a seminar. Me more than you meaning that he has more to learn than I do is what he meant. Yeah, no, I think they got it. Wait, Will, are you really that tired still? Dude, oh my God, we got home last night. Oh, that's right. Well, I saw Jason last night for a few minutes. I feel great. Will's a little more tired than I am because he did a lot more winning than I did. Wait, wait a minute. Let's talk about that. I made the cut. So, Listener, this was a golf tournament, Listener, which I'm not too proud to say. But we are proud that it was to serve all the well-deserving charities up there in the Monterey Peninsula, and a bunch of really great people up there running that thing for years and years and years. And Willie and I did it this year, and Will came in second place in the closest to the whole contest, which was incredible. And then the whole tournament itself, he made what is the coveted thing, which is to make the cut, which means that you're one of the top 25 teams that gets to play the final day. Yeah, that's amazing. I guess like pros. No, no, no. It should be noted.

Alongside pros.

It should be noted.

My game is so bad, and I happened to get lucky on the holes that mattered where I could score.

Other holes you would have watched and you would have thought, now this guy just stepped.

He's never seen a golf club before.

He just stepped onto the course.

So some of them were so bad.

My playing partner, my pro, was the Canadian guy Taylor Pendrez.

Swift.

What's up, Taylor?

Not Taylor Swift.

That would have been interesting.

Because Taylor ended up doing quite well in the tournament, and I was texting with him afterwards, and we both agreed that I showed him all the shots not to hit so that he could do it.

You did provide value.

What a great value.

But not to do.

So he was like, don't do that.

Don't do what he did.

Anyway.

But let me ask you something.

For as long as you guys were up there golfing, which was an entire week every day, my bad on that.

The repetitive motion of golfing, doesn't that wreak havoc on your body every day?

Yes.

I was tired.

Definitely.

And I said to Jason when he said, hey, we're going to go up to Sunday before and we're going to play that day and every day leading up to the tournament, I said, you don't think that's too much.

He's like, there's no such thing as enough.

This is what we're doing.

I'm going to prepare.

He's a total.

This I have addiction issues.

That's probably for another podcast.

So, but you can't be addicted to playing golf.

He'd be surprised.

He'd be surprised.

I can, I can find a nice addiction in most things, but fortunately it's all pointed towards healthy stuff.

Yeah.

Nowadays.

Yeah.

I actually, I actually thought I was like, I don't want to play again.

Jason, I was supposed to play Friday.

I thought I'm not going to play until Friday.

I don't want to even look at my, and then this morning I thought, I did have a good drive of an 18 yesterday in the final hole of pebble.

The weather is so nice today.

I might just go work on that, just to capitalize on that.

Did you go hit balls today?

I almost did.

Like a sicko.

And I was like, don't.

Listen, did you, do you, when you eat, did you get sick of the food?

Wasn't it the same food every single night for an entire week?

Wasn't it like eating at a dorm?

No, there's really nice restaurants up there and really great folks up there.

Yeah.

I did take advantage of the opportunity to eat a bunch of things I wouldn't normally find in my home.

That's true.

It was fun to watch Jason eat, I will say, to watch him eat food.

Well, you ordered was really fun.

Well, before I even hit the table each time, I would, I'd ask the hostess taking us to the table.

Do you guys have fried calamari or anything?

And then they, remember they go, they go, they go, no, we were there showing them, they go, would you guys like something to drink?

And we were like, yeah, I'll get some water and I'll take a diet coke.

And Jason goes, yeah.

And if you can find any bread back there, I go, do you want them to put that in a glass with ice?

They're getting drink ordinaries asking for bread.

Just any sort of carbs, sweet, salty, but then he, but then you eat so healthy, these massive salads and then we'll order fried calamari and you're just fucking digging in.

This is why I eat healthy.

So I can splurge when I really want it.

And I know, I know.

It was like a shovel.

I know.

It's unbelievable.

But Sean, we had a nice time and then Jason left early to go get a massage or give a massage.

I can't remember which one you said.

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Again, another different podcast, probably sure.

And then we had some dessert.

You and Scotty and I had some nice dessert ordered extra ice cream on mine and you had the tiramisu.

I did.

You do love, you do love ice cream, right, Sean?

And it's not like, it's not like exotic flavors.

It's like you're a vanilla guy.

Aren't you?

That's it.

Truly just vanilla, just vanilla and also for ice cream too.

Right.

Wait, but do you know something I'm not making this up.

Do you know why people like the taste of vanilla?

Oh boy.

Insert joke.

No, no.

Because it makes them feel alive.

Why is that robot?

Because it reminds them of the taste of mother's milk.

Huh.

Huh.

Yeah.

It's the closest thing to the taste of mother's milk.

What, nine out of 10 babies were pulled on this and there's got to be a one-eyed mother joke in there somewhere.

We'll work on it.

I know.

It's the wonder bread of ice cream.

To be honest though, so I love ice cream too.

If you had, let's just do this before we get to our guest, Jason's your guest today, right?

So I'm sure they're waiting.

Yeah, it is.

Let's tighten it up.

What, what do we, what, number one dessert, they go, you get one shot for one dessert for the rest of your life.

You only get one more.

What is the thing that you're having, Jason?

You go first.

One.

Longer.

I mean, I'm just surprised myself with cobbler came to my mind.

What kind?

What kind of cobbler?

That's not bad.

Warm peach, berry, rhubarb, whatever it is, because I like that crumbly, graham crackery situation.

Right.

So if you had one, okay, cobbler.

Okay.

Shawnee.

Well, you know it already.

Just one scoop of vanilla ice cream?

Ice cream, really?

Like a massive scoop of ice cream with like Hershey's syrup and whipped cream on it, like a sundae.

Okay, like a sundae.

You know, you're trash.

You're just trash.

You're trash.

Okay.

Because I was going to say that if that was your last meal, like it was like, like you were about to go before the firing squad and you asked for a scoop of vanilla ice cream, I'd be like, just shoot him now.

Yeah.

Just for the mouth.

Right in the mouth.

Just shoot him.

I think I would take, my thing is I would have, I think would be cake.

Yeah.

What kind?

Like a yellow cake with chocolate frosting.

That's all that is.

Remember the cake lady?

Did the cake lady make you that?

The cake lady.

She did.

She made me a cake.

Yeah.

That's pretty generic too.

I do love a cobbler though.

You know, they also make like a...

You can't have any of mine.

No, I know.

But like an apple brown Betty, have you ever had that before?

It's like a cobbler too.

It's so good with like...

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Yeah, I love that.
Anyway.
But I can't do warm fruit other than apples.
No, no, no.
Insert joke here, Will.
Go ahead.
No.
You mean...
No warm fruit jokes?
Well, Mekanose comes to mind, it's filled with warm...
In the summertime, they're really kind.
They're all in.
They're really warm.
You're making exception?
No, I mean that they have a lot of figs.
Yeah.
Nice.
I get what you've done there.
Leave it.
Leave it and leave it.
Leave it and leave it.
I haven't done a fucking thing.
You have.
You did it.
It's a great opening, pattern, incredible, but something that's even more incredible is today.
What's that?
Yes.
Today is...
So exciting.
Sean?
Merch madness.
Merch madness.
That's short for merchandise, everybody.
I love it.
And it's a little pun on the basketball tournament.
All in one.
So you're welcome.
And it's for...
It's like a two...
You think they don't know that?
Yeah.
Well, sometimes you got to explain it to Tracy.
She doesn't understand college basketball or the short term for merchandise.

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So the reason we started giving Tracy informing her of stuff was because it was all inside showbiz stuff.

Now you're just getting to...

You think she doesn't know just basic life stuff?

She also doesn't know about college basketball.

What are you talking about?

She's in Wisconsin, man.

But here's what the listener needs to know.

This merch store has got...

It's so great.

It's got smartless t-shirts and phone cases and there are people on there that jog, right?

There's joggers.

There's sweats.

The sweats are great.

The hats are great.

All this stuff is great.

And it's for the fans that want a piece of us.

Well, that sounds gross.

Let's not say that.

They don't like us that much.

But if you want some fun, if you're sick and tired of your phone case and you want Sean's dumb-ass face on your phone, go to www.wonderlyshop.com/smartless.

By the way, you only said two Ws.

You said www.

Like a fucking dummy.

First of all, nobody says that anymore.

World War II.

But at least if you are going to do it, say all three.

www.

There you go.

That's World Wide Web.

That's short for World Wide Web.

Do you know that?

Yes, World Wide Web.

www.wonderlyshop.com/smartless.

Don't need to sing it.

Why not?

Here we go.

Our guest today.

Our guest today is a friend, a filmmaker, an innovator, and an actor.

I've been lucky enough to work with him a few times and he is as much fun to work with as he is to hang around with.

He's acted in about 50 movies, directed nine movies, made a couple of TV shows, and a couple of children.

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And by the way, he's responsible for the best Christmas movie ever and for basically starting Marvel's presence in Hollywood.

Please welcome Mr. John Favreau.

Get it out here, John.

I'm so glad you're still awake.

I'm sorry for the long, the long patter up front.

That's amazing.

You know, I listened to the pod.

Are they always that long at the top or only when you're excited to get into the ring?

It's weird.

I'm a little starstruck for smartless, even though individually I'm quite comfortable with all of you.

Johnny Favreau.

Oh my gosh, it's so nice to see you.

John, you're so close.

They're repping.

By the way, I know, listener, you can't see, but there's a baby Yoda on the shelf behind Sean up there.

You didn't do that just for me.

No, yeah.

He doesn't know.

He didn't know it was going to be me.

I'm touched.

I'm going to clear the decks because Sean's going to take this interview over.

He cleans up your Star Wars.

Let's get Scotty.

Let's get into it.

Pull up a chair for Scotty and go ahead, guys.

But Johnny, I told you at that last dinner, I think it was like a year ago, I said, that how much, like, I'm like, you know, I'm so impressed and like beyond, I can't even believe you.

It's ridiculous.

Like I just think you're amazing.

But wait, let's start there.

Don't you hate it when people call it baby Yoda?

His name's Groggu.

No.

I think people have lots of different, you know, there's Strider and Aragorn and there's, you know, everybody's got lots of names.

So Sean, just because people can enjoy it just because they don't know the fucking nerd name for the fucking the puppet.

No, but in all fairness, in the beginning, it was confusing because people thought it was actually Yoda as a baby and that just threw off the time frame.

But it is Yoda.

It's confused people.

No.

Oh, it's not.

It threw off.

No, it's not.

It's not.

You can dress down.

Right now.

Grogu shows up because this is after a return of the Jedi.

God, when Luke Skywalker showed up in the last fucking episode of mankind, that was cool.

Cool.

The ladies, the ladies are getting so heated up.

We'll get to Flake soon.

By the way, fan of Flake, I watched every episode of Flake and I'm waiting for you.

I sure did.

Let's do the Flake quiz.

I'm ready.

Go go.

I was devoted to that show and I like the neighborhood too because Venice, I'm, I know

I know that I know the neighborhood you really captured it was like Venice porn

It was Venice porn and we had the great Wally Pfister who directed a bunch of this first season and he

Set the tone of how it would look. I think it's I love that show. I really man

I really appreciate that but but so wait, so let's play this dress once for all

I thought it was baby Yoda to I really did so. What's the deal? It's

Grogon

Anime show I'm working on Grogon. No, Grogu is the name as was revealed

He was he's a baby of the same species as well. That's what I meant. That's yes

No, you're right. You're right in that regard. Did they do like a species revealed? Did they do like a big?

It was green. We popped the balloon. It was green. Yeah. Oh my god. There's so many things

John

So Mandalorian so before we get into the Marvel stuff because I want to say I've wanted to know this too and

I've known you a long time, but I don't know understand how because you are you are in a lot of ways

This might be controversial. You kind of started the Marvel

In a way, right? I directed Iron Man and Mr. Downey our mutual friend all of our mutual friends

He you know we that was the first MCU film. Yeah, you and Downey created

Just a monster a BM other whatever it is and had you shit the bed on that it would have been

Hollywood would not be floating today

Keeps it all earning 25 30 million dollar paychecks actors who should be calling you and thanking you and cutting you a check every month

By the way, you get a muffin basket or anything from I get muffins. This is Downey's of the world. So so but I want to say so I want to say so we so you're part of that not just part of it

You help create that whole world the MCU

But then all of a sudden you're you're doing the Mandalorian and you're doing all this other stuff

And now you're like creating this part of this other whole universe. How did that come about that all that stuff?

Yeah, I was doing a side done. I had done the Marvel film and wait

Sorry, how did you get chosen or how did you pit like for Iron Man like for well?

Remember back then it wasn't a big deal, right? It was kind of it was a little bit like money ball

Where they were finding undervalued talent sure

Utility director. I was I was a good at a good on base average

I was a I was a salty old knuckleballer that knew how to get people out

But I didn't have a sexy heater. Yeah, am I saying that right Jason? Yeah, pretty much

Yeah, and Downey was it was it was your Mickey Hatcher?

He was the guy, you know, he was again worked for you know wanted the gig really fought for it, too

And yeah, yeah, he had he actually had to read believe it or not to convince the you still have that tape

I think it's out there. I think it's public like it's on YouTube. Yeah, he was he was amazing from the first time

He you know, it was so obvious

Yeah, and I knew that if I had him in that role like I got the whole tone

And of course after he signed on all the other actors wanted to work on this thing because of him and because of the

Tone of what it was gonna be because everybody was really, you know a fan of his from way back and so we pulled together a really great cast like an

independent film and we you know, we found we found that tone and

Combined it with the the CGI that was it was

CGI was good enough at that point to do hard surfaces like a metal suit flying and so people really got to see something that you

wouldn't have been able to portray a few years before that that all started to build momentum and they started to launch other

franchises off of that leading to the Avengers and

After that I went I did I

Had what I did, you know, I did Cowboys and Aliens after I love them

So I was back on the on the on the naughty list after that one because that was another admirably

You know big swing that you took on and I thought did a great job with thank you

It didn't do well at the box office, and you know how it is in Hollywood. That's not they don't like when that happens

Right, so so there I was I cooled off a bit and worked my way back up with the movie chef

Actually, yeah, I kind of got me back, which I told you

Fever I remember telling you specifically in person how great I think that movie is to this day

Not was is because it exists and it's a great that is a great movie if you haven't seen John Favreau's chef

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I implore you to go see it. So good. So good, dude. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. I appreciate really great Oh, you know, it was it was a special one because it was like can I like I started off doing smaller films where I would Right right them and be in them and or direct them And and then it was nice to be able to still be able to do that and find something that I could really feel passionate about that one didn't have a big budget, but it did really well for what it cost and then I Ended up because of my visual effects background getting involved with I think the next thing was jungle book and that was a hit and Then I really started to get under the hood with the CGI and the effects and Then I was I was a bit of a lead I in the beginning. I kind of shied away from CGI Mostly because it wasn't done well in most films and as I learned more and more about it. I started to help Innovate the tools to make CGI I think look better than it had and then we did Lion King after that and then and then the thing that you created that the wall thing Yeah, so for the Mandalorian we created real-time rendering Star not Stargate ILM calls it stagecraft stagecraft Yes, right, but but it's it's basically using game engine technology in video walls and creating Parallax so you can move the camera and the backgrounds are basically captured in camera instead of after the fact But what what makes it what what makes it efficient for for what Sean calls the the wall thing is that thank you Sean Is that you can basically shoot one direction all the time and just keep changing the background? Yes, and the actor feels like they're actually there, right? So it's not green screen right so so you could see the best of the actors could see the background But it allows you yeah will to film and just change over like you would with a video game What the backgrounds are and all that's acting in front of a movie screen We use that we use that in the in our flag means death that I did with Tyka in those. Oh, yeah That's right. It was very well used there too. I thought for the ocean is that what they used in gravity the movie gravity So gravity they used a system that definitely inspired what we were doing It didn't have all the parallax But it would create interactive light with LED panels, which is what we surround the set with yeah They would have individual panels on a botan dolly system Which is basically a robot that was used for car construction so they could move in and out light sources Yeah, creating interactive light on the astronauts and then when they put the backgrounds in the interactive light is really the hard part to do in post production so Alfonso Cuarón Yeah, and they came up with a great system that we ended up using panels like that in Jungle Book

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So everybody sort of taking baby steps, but around similar technologies and we just had a big breakthrough on do that
And just hearing you talk about this stuff and you're a smart guy today's Douglas Trumbull quick quick learner
I mean you you came up you're making I
Mean you're making independent film a lot of people got to know you from the film that you wrote obviously
Swingers, which is one of the all-time great one of the most quotable films of all time
Absolutely, and I moved here the year that that came out and it was all LA, you know Bay
I was just like blown away
Yeah, like me having the experience that you wrote and directed on the screen at the same time and from Chicago too, right?
Yeah, both and from Chicago and Sean yours because Sean's so money
He doesn't even know how money is but but so because you but no because you've got these claws
You don't even know how did you get these clothes? Oh my god?
Oh, yeah, I'm going deep
I know
So anyway, while we're here though big shout out to the man who is the best at what he does Vince Vaughn
It's fucking forget it genius and a big hello to him
If you want if you want to laugh your fucking face off stand next to Vince Vaughn for one minute
John we I just worked with him like a couple weeks ago on curb. Oh, really? Oh, yeah, just one really quick thing
I was hoping he'd be back. Yeah, what's it like to work on that show? I'm such a fan. He's great on it
My god crying laughing. He's so fun
I went to this I went to this charity event one a few years ago, and I ended up sitting next to Vince and
The guy who was running it was this sort of older guy and he was not good at doing it
This is when my ear the whole time and he kept going. This is the face man that they picked
And I was crying
Because he's in my ear. No, no, no, but who even has that term face man at the ready
But so but I want to give that to a point before we get off that one of my favorite
Bateman performances is in the Vince Vaughn film in dodgeball
That's the ocho when you're on the ocho that was with the hair and that was like a half day
You told me once it was it was about a half. It is some of the fun
Let me let's just go around the horn just for one more second. Yeah
Another one of the almost funniest moments that if people have not seen it first of all you got to see
Bateman in in dodgeball, but second of all I went to a screening
I actually intro to screen to the Q&A and didn't know you were in it, but Downey's film senior
You and Downey with the piano with him singing in later hoson Shawn. Sorry. I'm
Shawn, I don't know if you've if you've not seen it yet. That movie is like the funniest
Three minutes of film that I could remember seeing but incredibly moving there with the water
bottles like armful of water
But for no reason it's just like really serious documentary and then Shawn comes in there

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And just starts like Harpo Marx and just starts ripping it up and the piano when you tell him to start again
And then his father just for those who don't know
Robert's father
Want had some input in how this documentary is being made and one of his requests is that he sang a certain song in later
Hoson as part of it. What was the song that you were playing a company because you're a great piano player
And you were accompanying him. What was that? What was the bit? It was Schubert's some opera piece, you know
Like a like a something grand standard classic
Yeah, he could really sing and you could really play and there he is in later hoson with Shawn being a very
Difficult taskmaster. It's just a wonderful little moment. Oh, that's very sick cinema there, but anyway, I'm sorry
I'm sure where we Shawn where we at Darry's for lunch that a couple summers ago when he asked you to do it
He just no it was on this on the podcast. It was on the podcast right from that's what I thought you that's where you are
Yeah, yes, we were out there and he was and then you're like, yeah
And then all of a sudden like you're in the middle of it
And he's like you maybe and he goes and he goes maybe you should wear a tuxedo and I'll wear later
And I go I don't understand what's happening. I don't understand this movie. Oh, you look like you were very comfortable
Didn't you say didn't you say we'll talk about it later?
Hosen and he said that's what that's
Isn't that how that happened and he laughed I said later hosen later
And now a word from our sponsor
Thank you to Benjamin Moore for their support be honest which of your friends has the coolest house
Perhaps the colors are a huge draw and hey, it's pretty likely they use Benjamin Moore paint to help make it look incredible
You know, I've you guys have renovated before I imagine I've done it all I've
I've built a home from scratch
I've done major renovations
I've transformed stuff and I've also done that thing where I
Wanted to have a whole new look to my house and all it took was a paint job that I did myself
Elf elf. Yeah
Now look, I'm not for hire right now, but I'm just saying that I did a pretty good job
So whether you want paint that elicits a calming sensation or something with a little more pizzazz to help you wake up in the morning
Just look to Benjamin Moore
Benjamin Moore paint is only sold at locally owned stores and you save
15% off your next paint or sample purchase at Benjamin Moore comm using code smart less

That's Benjamin Moore comm code smart less
We're brought to you in part by zipper cruder over here at smart less
When I was a kid, I would I was a bit of a I was a class clown, you know, I had a lot of energy
I was just always kind of I guess a little different
And it's tough to stand out
Especially if you're a you're a business owner and you want to attract the most talented people to
hire on your team
Are you seeing the connection that I'm making here?
But zipper cruder makes it very easy and right now you can try it for free at zipper cruder comm
Slash smart less. How does zipper cruder help you stand out to the right candidates?
Their technology sends you great candidates for your job and you can send a personal invite to your
top choices
Zipper cruder also makes it easy for candidates to apply to your job instead of filling out a lengthy
application
They can apply with just one click
To help your job catch the eye of great candidates zipper cruder also offers attention grabbing labels
like remote training provided
Urgent and more get your job noticed by the best and brightest candidates with zipper cruder
Four out of five employers who post on zipper cruder get a quality candidate within the first day see
for yourself
Go to this exclusive web address to try zipper cruder for free zip
Recruiter comm slash smart less again. That's zip recruiter comm slash
sm a RTL ESS zip recruiter the smartest way to hire
Smart less is brought to you by better help
Getting to know yourself can be a lifelong process, especially because we're always growing and
changing
I was just saying to somebody the other day. I'm not the same person. I was
When I you know when I was a younger man, shall I say I'm I still skew very young, but I'm just
Back then I was different and we all do change. They say people can't do that
They do change we all do but we get older and we get wiser or we care less about things or we care
more about things
But we all go through we're affected
By things differently as we go through life and therapy is all about deepening your self-awareness
and understanding because sometimes
We don't know what we want or why we react the way we do until we talk through things
So better help connects you with a licensed therapist who can take you on that journey of self
discovery from wherever you are
You know therapy really helped me understand these various stages of my life where I was at
because sometimes you get stuck
You have a moment and you you have these preconceived notions about who you are and what you
should do
And it was only through talking with somebody in therapy that I was able to navigate some
trickier waters and come out the other side, but also feeling just kind of freer and
Enable to kind of you know keep marching on and feeling good

So if you're thinking of starting therapy give better help a try. It's entirely online
Designed to be convenient
Flexible and suited to your schedule
So just fill out a brief questionnaire to get matched with the licensed therapist and switch therapists
at any time for no additional charge
Discover your potential with better help visit better help calm slash smart list today to get 10% off
your first month
That's better help
HELP.com slash smart list
And now back to the show
But anyway, so all right, so John so you make but you're making a lot of money
But anyway, so all right, so John so you make but you're you you you make like a seminal
independent comedy which people don't really make anymore
That is stood the test of time you did all these things
You're an actor, but and then all of a sudden you become a director and not just a director
But a director who's making films that are very complicated that using all these effects and as you
say I'm helping develop technology
Like a new George Lucas a whole skill set that you didn't know that you had that you had to learn on
the job
Is that right? It was it was baby steps up, but I you know, honestly
I know we've had we've had conversations Bateman and I have had conversations when we we
started, you know
As as Jason was starting to direct and it's like you learn
What's great about being an actor is it's like the best seat in the house to learn because you get to
ask a million questions
You work with these talented people and you can learn
It's almost like an apprenticeship if you want to like you can ask a million questions
I used to be I started off doing like background work. I think you did too
Sean in Chicago absolutely a mad dog and glory with that. He's back. He's back at it
Sports fold-up chair always go back to your back to basics. I think I
Yeah, you gotta stay humble. Yeah, that's that's great. Say humble good for you
But you know, you sit there and you're watching and they don't let you like
Close to anything or you know, they keep you in holding and you get to be on the set
It feels like a treat. Yeah, and then you're like
Listening to everything everybody's saying and you're watching and then when I finally got a
supporting role on on the movie Rudy out of Chicago
Yeah, so great also for applause
Thank you. Thanks listener
and and
There I started asking questions of the DP and of the and the they let me come around the editing
room and and and learn
Somebody famous shoot that didn't somebody famous shoot that Oliver Wood shot that
But
Great great great cinematographer. You got to you got to kind of see the inside of that movie a little

bit
You got to ask questions
I guess is my point and like I was always super curious and even like when I would come when I moved to first
I grew up in New York
I was in Chicago for a while learning improv and I finally got to come here on the heels of that role and
How old are you and Rudy? Oh?
26 I feel like yeah, I feel like I was tough 30 when swingers came out
So it's like 20 so I think I moved out here at 26
But yeah, so and you went to Chicago you were at IO you were at improv in Chicago with all those people
So you knew a lot of the same people that we know yeah, I'm in who some came out here and some went to New York
And I was and I was washing dishes at Second City, so I got to watch all I got to watch every night Farley on stage
I got to watch great improvisers like Dave Pasquaisy and Tim Meadows Mike Myers was there
Yeah, when I was there
I was like it was intimidating because I was like that those are just like undiscovered normal like people
I was like wow really hard thing to learn you can watch as much as you want
But if you if you don't have that that that little engine inside
That you know doesn't make you any better or worse a person
It's just something you kind of are born with or not
I think and and how early did you know that you had that because just in my incredible research on Wikipedia yeah, yeah, it says that there's bear sterns stop for you before any of this like so
How when do you transition from interest in the financial world to go into Chicago to chase a dream based on what?
I'm assuming you knew you may have had inside which I like doing I like like there was no pressure on me
So it was like school plays and that was just fun time for me
And like improv was great because like if when people went up on their lines
That was the most fun like where you could be on stage and get out of that
But I never thought it was an option. I got a gig at Bear Stearns because a friend's father
Was able to hire an assistant
So I was there for a year before the market crashed in the 80s and it just I just got wrapped my head around that I'd have to
Work a job like this for my whole life. I wasn't enjoying it and finally
I just I went cross-country and I stopped in Chicago on that trip so brave and and
That's when I saw people do an improv in Chicago
I had a friend who was taking classes at I owe and at second city and I was like this is the best and I was
Again in my 20s. I think I was 22 at the time
Wow, and I knew how to bartend and I I hit up the people. I had done some volunteer

I volunteered to be on stage and they did the first thing I remember they interviewed me about my day
Right, it was an improv game at I owe called the dream where they interview you about what happened that day
And then they improvise in front of you what your nightmare is going to be like that night based on
Right, so great idea. So they did that with me and I was you know on stage doing an interview getting some laughs
And then and then Chris Farley played me as they so that was my first experience seeing improv
Was Chris Farley playing me and watching them really improvise because you know when you see good improv
You think I was that just shtick they have up their sleeve
Right, but I know they improvised all because it was all coming off of my interview and I was completely
Flabbergasted what's funny John is is that and you mentioned and I guess was del close there around that time
Yeah, so that was del must have been yeah
And so you go there because what we all know and people say like oh, I watched this movie and there's such great improvisers
There's different who could it's different people who come from Chicago and people who know what improvising really means that what a
Herald is and to tell a story and to bring stuff back
It's different from like when you watch people who like oh, they came up with a different way of saying dick like that's not
Improvising take yeah, and and some people right you're absolutely right and there are some people like you talk about Vince like like Vince
Like nobody is quick as you and then together
Let's not forget about you you guys are an incredible team with that stuff
Yeah, but he's I just hang on because he's just so damn fast
You know what I mean and just hold the reality and be a good straight man
Maybe I got a laugh here and there but but you see people like him and he came out of Chicago also
But yeah, you're right if people could improvise like a whole scene
Yeah, that's different than doing it a freebie take where you could get a laugh
Yeah, we're you love her does that though, right? And they do entire attire shows. Yeah
Yeah, there's sort of a basic story and then they but but I'm talking more like like the IO stuff like all that
So and then all the UCB guys did like Amy and Matt and Matt and Ian and
Tina and all the McKay's there. I mean Adam McKay is one of the great improvisers on stage
He's funny as hell. I don't know because he's like a like a award-winning writer director
Yeah, but those people but I would I credit all my like knowledge of writing and directing
From doing long-form improv because you have to edit you have to write you have to see patterns and scenes
You have to have callbacks bring scenes back and when you first start writing
It's really just like improvising with yourself and using all the rules that you learned
Mm-hmm around improvisation heighten and transform. Yes, and all those things that you learn just

to get you through

When they stick you on stage at a bar and sometimes people don't even know there's gonna be a comedy show and you that boy

You really learn how to swim. Yeah, do you miss it John? I don't I really don't I

Would I would be scared to come up doing improv now because there's like everybody's got phones and everybody like there was so much room to fail

Yeah, and in Chicago

There was nobody you could you know, you just do anything. Yeah, you know

And I feel like there's so much pressure like on a first film on a first role people make up their minds about people's skill and

Talent based on the first time out, but you have to get things wrong a lot before you get it, right?

Yeah, but you know to that to that point though

You you you do strike me as somebody who is incredibly courageous and you needn't look any further than probably that that move from

What on paper was probably a solid predictable way to go in your life, which is going into finance?

And and then you said this might not be a great fit

Let me go try driving across the country and stopping in Chicago and and seeing if I can accomplish my dreams and

Talk a little bit about what what because that's very applicable to anybody listening in any occupation

Just kind of listening to yourself and and tacking left or right based on right and saying I'm going nowhere here

And I'm not going to be happy as you said I could see that I'm not going to be happy

I need to make that change and Jason said it's brave. Yeah, what do you?

Were you did your parents give you a lot of confidence? Did you have were you born with it or they kind of pushed me?

I lost my mom. I was pretty young. So so that that definitely affects your whole trajectory

Yeah, so but but I would say that my folks both gave me a sense of confidence

I had a supportive family like if I was ever on stage or did something creative. I was an only child that was very

Appreciated like I never questioned my own

You know if I if I had something to offer a value, I always got mad boys for doing that

Yeah, I did I did so I there's a lot of credit there and you know as a parent you realize how important that is now and

Your kids to do it because that's their foundation, right?

That's like that gives them their base and their stability because they're gonna hit headwinds and there's gonna be a lot of things

Telling them they're not doing the right thing, right?

And if they go down to deep memories and they have a sense of worth and confidence

I think that gets them through a lot of gives them a good keel

Yeah, right. So so there's that but then there's also like just

Realizing because I was on the other hand. It was like I was not really permitted to

Study things in school that weren't academic. I was pushed towards academics a way

From like there are high schools in New York like performing arts and stuff and art and design and

you know where it would have been fun
I would have liked to have done that my folks were no going to the sciences and you have to pick a pragmatic course
So you have stability. We didn't come from you know, we didn't have a lot of dough
So you had to pick a career where you could have some stability
But then finally like and so my all my associations with play was like after school
Taking an elective in college like it was all positive. I never felt pressure. It was always play time for me
Right. So when it came time for me to write or do sketch comedy. It was all fun
I felt people who picked the career earlier felt a lot of pressure
I don't know what was like Jason because I know you were at it
You were a pro from the beginning, but I never felt like there was that I had to
Compete in any way anything I was doing was just a lark and my family got a kick out of it
Jason once told me you told me this when you were like 12 years old and you had a scene right in little house in the prairie
Yeah, you had to cry and you weren't doing it and your dad whispered in your ear
He said if you don't cry in this scene, we don't eat tonight
We don't eat tonight
Wrote it on the inside of my wrist. It's still there today
Hope that's a joke so so John so first of all what part of did you grew up in this city?
Did you grew up on Queens? I was a queen. Oh, you were in Queens. Okay, great flushing. So, um, yeah, right
Right near the the Trump wing of that. What's that? I moved her out. Yeah, it's that's the Queen's hasn't had a good showing and
Anyway, so you grew up in Queens
Paul Simon Paul Simon. There we go. Paul Simon sign felt Ray Romano
Ray Romano. Yes, that's right. Yes. So so so anyway, so you move out to New York
You do that with Paul the Bears first thing. So now you're there. You're you're oh, I didn't move to New York
I was commuting you're in New York. I mean you you went from Queens to to Chicago is what the fantasy is you move to the city
But no that was not that never happened
Tony Monero I was taken the the bridge
Right just like
So you go out to Chicago you start working at Second City and I owe and you're doing and that's what I was like this now
I'm doing what I love to do. That's when my life kicked into gear like it was like that was all gravy at that point
I was working seat and people and washing dishes at Second City and selling t-shirts there and doing starting your dad
You're checking it with your dad and your dad's like, how's it going? You're like and you're like I'm done
I'm killing it. He loved it, too
He loved like he was all into it too because he was my dad was great because he was like he's like

your look

He says you're 22 when I say I called him from Chicago. I'm like, I think I want to do this after that show

I saw he says, you know what you're you're old enough to know like to make a Responsible decision, but you're young enough that if you're wrong you could still do something else That's awesome. So that was a permission that I got and I really embraced it What a great thing to say to your kid who calls excited about something that is so fucking great So I love that how does it come about that you write swingers? What was that? That was also my dad. I would say because he gave me a copy of final draft Sponsored in any way by

That's a podcast there's no way you just got a free update

Trace if you want to write a script, there's a formatting piece of software that where you can type in dialogue

It comes out looking like a script. So it does but that's really it because you start writing when I send Jason a script

You know you start typing and it formats it and I had read a lot of scripts because I was acting right because I come out here on the

heels of Rudy

Which was by the way to get a role like I got in Rudy out of Chicago. That was like a home run

So rare that's so rare because they were shooting local and then and they were looking for local talent to say and you just auditioned for it

In Chicago. Yeah, and I improv a lot in the in the audition and David on spot and

And Angela Pizzo the director and the writer but so many actors because I was there too at that time So many actors would scramble and just like kill for one of those roles of the movies that came through Chicago

Yeah, there were so few unless it was a John Hughes film. You have the John Hughes movies

I was just about to say and I was an extra on a lot of John Hughes movies, you know, love that really that was a yeah

That's cool. Yeah, I got I got called back for

What's that Sandy Bullock movie while you're sleeping? Yeah, it was an orderly. It's still waiting to hear if I got it

No, yeah

Well story

Thanks for interrupting John. Sorry

So so you get you get Rudy you get cast out of Chicago

I'm out here getting agent get an agent producers from that say when you come out if you come out to LA

Because I thought it was like what they would do Sean if you remember is people would work and live in LA in Chicago

And then they'd come out here for like pilot season. That's right. That's right. Same as New York

We would do it too. We would come out for two months

But when I came out, they were like, okay, you got to tell everybody you really live here

Otherwise, they're not gonna wanna and then next thing you know is like, oh, no, you really do have to move out here

[Transcript] SmartLess / "Jon Favreau"

Right, so it was like I didn't realize I was moving out there and and and so I would read a lot of scripts and audition a lot
So I had enough heat off of that
Movie before it came out that I was getting to go to auditions and when you go to auditions you read a lot of scripts
And also I would improv a lot in my because I was usually like the comedic like supporting Friend and so they loved if I threw in some jokes and punched up their stuff
And and then I then when I got the final draft program
I just started writing and next thing you know you get like four pages and now now I'm writing about me and
You know inspired by my friends and what we would do hanging out and there was were you buddies with Vince at the time?
Yeah, I met him on Rudy. Yeah, I met him on Rudy
I met LA roughly the same time maybe he was out here already
So it was a lot like the movie where he was showing me around and show me the ropes and well Here's where you hang out and we go to Vegas and stuff like that
So it was very much inspired by you know, it's his it's his you know and and everything he says in the movie
Even even if I wrote it it was based on conversations that we had had or things that he would say exaggerations of it
But it was really channeling his humor and everything that he's you know how entertaining as will points out
How he is just as a naturally as a person and he was reading for roles that were he's a good-looking dude
So he was reading for all of these like either leads or the or the you know
The enemy of the lead or you know, he was always playing those kind of they saw his face
And didn't realize how funny he was and so this is the first time he really got to be who he was right I think on on camera
You know, I tell you John one of the scenes that I love about and I think it's not unheralded
But in in swingers is the moment when you guys are at the one of the former one-on-one restaurant I want to one cafe one-on-one. Yeah, there was right at the corner Frank and it wasn't even that then so there's that scene
And you guys are talking and he's looking over your shoulder and he said like oh, she's a little baby Oh, and he starts he thinks he's that the woman is making eyes at him and waving. He's like she's playing a little game
She's like he's doing he's waving back at her and then it turns out she has a little kid
She's got a baby across from her right and that is based on something that really happened to Vince.
No way
Yeah
Yes
Somebody was waving at him
Somebody's waving at him and making faces
And he was very
Off-put by it and then finally they picked up a baby because you know how airports have the seats in

the rows

So that was a

You'll have to ask him about what's so good, but what's so great about it is it's kind of it's kind of tragic in that moment

It's at the end of the movie and there's sort of a tragedy to it reminds me a lot

You know one of my favorite my favorite film of all time with nail and I there's this kind of tragedy to it

That's built in and there I think that there's that there in that it worked nice because it was like you know, it's

He found somebody Mikey found somebody who he really connected with and now he he wasn't on that journey anymore

He was ready to you know, so I think in that way there's sort of a

Disconnect that happens there. Maybe I don't know, you know, it's not like you think about the stuff when you write it

It was honestly like him telling me the funniest thing just happened to me at the airport and then I worked it into

The right I worked it into the right and you don't you don't really think about this

You're not deliberate or strategic about not at all what it is you put into your stuff

You're just kind of putting in whether it would be writing acting or directing or producing

Stuff that resonates with you. It is your own personal taste and

you've learned how to use

More and more and more tools at your disposal as a director

To communicate that that you're absolutely right and it's not conscious in any way, you know, and you

Learn to go to things that interest you or that you are drawn to but you're making

Instinctive seemingly instinctive choices, but that doesn't mean that they're not valid

It's just that your conscious mind isn't doing it. It's coming from a deeper place

And so a lot of the writing you do or images you're drawn to you might not even understand why they resonate

But you're really working through things subconsciously

I think and that's one of the great gifts of being able to do it what we do as a career is that you're you're really

Working through stuff usually from a younger age, but I will say I will say and and not to embarrass you with it with a compliment

but your ability to bring the Favreau sensibility to what has become

the

industry-saving genre was something that I think folks will look back on as a

Real gift because had somebody without your sensibility

comedically

You know your your sense of humanity vulnerability, blah blah blah to to insta to infuse that into a superhero comic book genre is

Would would never be expected, but your ability to kind of trojan horse that in there

I mean, I guess I guess that that's my question

How much of that was part of your pitch as a director when you talked to the powers it be was it

Kevin at the time

I think what was cool about here's here's what's interesting. So I work on elf, right and
And with elven even got to elven

That was what came before right that was that was sort of my hit that got me as a director

That's the first thing that I did that 20 years ago 20 years ago. So well deserved and

It was inch. What's interesting to me is when you do a comedy

Everybody's giving you a million notes about every joke, right?

Right, but not but they didn't care about any of the action stuff

All right, not one note about like the sleigh chase or any of that stuff when I went to Marvel

All they gave me notes on was my storyboards around the action sequences and nobody cared at all
about the dialogue

Wow, so it actually gave me more permission to be

To have my sense of humor in it because my sense of humor isn't always like not every joke lands
and like if you're expecting it

You got to punch the joke and like it's not funny enough

But if it's not expected to be funny and it's just kind of dry it can be a grin

Then it's a grin or just dialogue like they're not judging you're not being right

And then when you when you cast Downey in there to bring in his sauce on top of that

It's it's it's just it's a it's a it's a fringe benefit

It's it's an added asset that it didn't need to have right?

I mean if you just had the action, you know apropos of the only thing they were they were noting the
personality of Marvel comics

Like I grew up with there was always like a there was always a tongue-in-cheek kind of gotcha, you
know, it wasn't as it wasn't as

Like like earnest as DC, but they but they gave you but by virtue of that

They were kind of like yeah, do hit all these moments this action stuff

That's really important right and the rest of it you can have that yeah

I should have this budget that was hit this budget and then the stuff in between yeah

Go for it if you want to have them be kind of interesting and be quirky and have a joke here

They're like yeah go for it. We're fine with that and that's I mean that's very freeing I imagine

But about about elf though. I read a long time ago or I don't know when that you set out

I don't know if this is true

You tell me to make a movie that was a classic Christmas film to be viewed for the rest of time

Like that was the goal of that movie and a lot of people like go into making stuff like that

But that doesn't happen and it happened with you with that goal in mind. I mean that's amazing

It was that was the hope you know what I mean because you think about like what's the success of
you know

If you're gonna be because we we're all friends with Peter Billingsley also and and he and he

You know he cameoed in that and his work as a either director or producer with us on different
projects over the years

Somebody else who grew up

Want a good example of somebody who comes up through the business and learns learns the ropes
and then continues to you know have an inspired

career and

[Transcript] SmartLess / "Jon Favreau"

He you know, it was interesting to know him because he was in Christmas story. Yeah, and
There you know, the hope is that you could have a make a movie that could sit alongside of a film
like that
That's in rotation every year. I don't know if it still works this way. I think it does
Like TV would run a certain there's a certain amount of films like it's a wonderful life and Rudolph
the red-nosed reindeer and yeah
Charlie Brown, right? So to be in that pantheon of
Yeah, of films that run in constant rotation around the holidays was always the hope and we got to
be there and part of it was
Remember, it's also after 9 11. Yeah, so, you know, I'm from New York in 9 11, you know, New York
after 9 11
It's just everything like the music stopped. It was just like everybody thought in New York
They thought of that and here we were filming a year later, but there hasn't been I mean name the
last hit
Like Christmas movie that's can sustain what elf does. I can't think of it unless I don't know
And I don't even know if there are movies like that anymore like everything is so on demand now.
Yeah. Yeah, I know that like
there's a lot of
Chatter online about elf every year and I know like even though we didn't have it merchandise made
at the time
I see Christmas ornaments and blankets and costumes and ugly sweaters
So it's part of the culture and now there's also people who grew up with these movies
So that's even stranger for me because it's like oh, we're or like I'm introducing
It's our kids first time watching elf and they'll like post a video of that and that to me is the best like
that
It's really cool. If I had to pick one film. I'm most proud of like
It might be that one because it because it has such an intergenerational
Thing it makes people feel a certain way around that time of year and it feels like it's enduring, you
know
And it felt old even when it came out because it was stop motion and force perspective
We didn't have a lot of CGI in it, right?
So and that a lot that was budget too is like we couldn't afford CGI
I saw the behind the scenes of it too the making of it and it was like what you did with the angles to
make will
It's so it's so easy and simple. It's an old trick. Yeah, like from darby ogill and the little people
I mean that's the Lord of the Rings used it too. What about what about phase on in that? How great
was phase on?
I know that's that's the if I if I land on a scene from that it's him and will
arguing with each other in the North Pole
Yeah
We'll be right back
Thank you to our newest sponsor top golf for supporting this podcast now. Uh, it is golf. It's not golf
It's top golf now. They got a bunch of stuff that makes them golf, right?
They got the clubs the balls the teas the turf a ball picker upper cart thing

[Transcript] SmartLess / "Jon Favreau"

They also have a whole bunch of stuff that is not golf. They've got loud music giant targets in the giant fairway giant tvs
Handcrafted food and beverage
Put all these things together under one roof. You got yourself a good time. You've got yourself. Say it with me
Top golf so consider this your formal invitation to grab the family a few friends or some co-workers and come play around
Don't golf that doesn't matter listener
Everyone can play top golf even if no one can swing a club because do you like to eat? I bet the answer is yes
Do you like to have a good time? I'll bet the answer is
Hell to the yeah, and I'll bet you like to watch some tv and root on a friend, right?
They got all that stuff at top golf. That's what I love about this place top golf with their whole sort of idea is that
You can get into golf enjoy golf without actually having to do the full commitment of going up there playing 18 holes
Or even nine holes and you know putting on the the collared shirt and the
Trousers and the whole all the rules that kind of make golf kind of fun and interesting
I kind of like that that that stuff
But if that's not your thing and you like more the kind of the free-flowing kind of fun
let's go out and get a couple of drinks and
Just smack the ball around and see if I even know what the hell I'm doing with golf. This is your spot
It's it's awesome. Anyway, visit top golf com slash smartlist to book any bay and come play around again
That is top golf com slash smartlist
Well, I'd be remiss if I didn't say that our next partner is athletic greens
um
First of all, let me just start by saying I take ag1 by athletic greens literally every day
Um, I gave ag1 to try. I'm gonna say it was about maybe just under two years ago
Because I kind of wanted to I felt like I was missing something
I've never been like a huge supplement guy or done doing any that kind of stuff
But I thought ag1 athletic greens. I'd sort of heard about it. I started doing it
But I don't I maybe started taking it because of the show
There's a possibility that that's what happened
But whatever happened was I started doing it and then the boys and rob and bennett started doing it and we all started noticing
Uh, first of all, I had better gut health. I felt more energized and I knew that they said they could like, you know
It would optimize my immune system, which that sounds good
Sounds better than not getting an optimized immune system
Um, but I but I hated taking vitamins and all that stuff. Anyway, so I started doing it
It is the best option for easy optimal nutrition out there
You take one scoop of ag1 and you're absorbing
75 high quality vitamins minerals whole food source superfoods and probiotics and adaptogens

To help you start your day right and this blend of ingredients supports your gut health your nervous system

Your immune system your energy your recovery focus aging all of that

Um, I've just for me. It's been such an unbelievably positive experience. I love uh, I love, you know

Talking about uh, first of all, I annoy a lot of people with ag1 because everybody in my house. I'm like, why don't you try it?

You know, I want to get you know, alessandra on it. Uh, I'm always talking

Bateman gets real annoyed. I mean bateman gets annoyed by pretty much everything because he's so cranky all the time

And maybe jason would be a little less cranky if he just listened to me and take it every single day

I bet you if you could look at the days he's cranky those are the days that he missed taking ag1

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With your first purchase go to athleticgreens.com slash smartlist to give ag1 a try. That's athleticgreens.com slash smartlist

Check it out

And now back to the show

So, you know, I mean we touched on this already, but you're you're part of one of the biggest movie companies now marvel and then you go over to disney and the star wars franchise and

How in the world did you get over there? Like it's unbelievable. Well, I was working on Finishing the lion king and and those movies take

Many many years to not many many, but it takes a few years to finish because you're overseeing Animation visual effects finally all that stuff

So you have to be attentive. You can't go off and do something else because you have to approve shots very

You know as soon as they come out just to keep the machine going right and but it's still not a full-time job

Because you're not going to set every day. So so for a couple hours each day. You have to be available

But you can't go off and do something else because it just takes a lot of meticulous

You know concentration to get every shot right, but it doesn't require all your time

And so I started thinking about they had talked about disney plus launching

And that we're gonna have tv shows and maybe marvel stuff

and I had talked to kathy kennedy years before when they were when they first when Star Wars moved over to disney was sold from lucas film

About the notion of maybe working on a movie. I was a fan of star wars

And so I pitched her

I just went in there and pitched the idea for the mandalorian of a very simple story about it

[Transcript] SmartLess / "Jon Favreau"

You know, it was the first scene bounty hunter walks into a bar. So great. This happens is and so
She was into it
They were very busy because they had the last movie of the skywalker saga that they were getting
ready to release
So that was their main focus
So we started talking about doing a deal next thing. I just started writing
So by the time they actually hired me I had written four episodes of it. Wow
And so I brought that in I was like this is what I want to do
And I can't leave town because I'm working on finishing lion king
Which is a big deal for disney, which is the same parent company, right?
And that's how we built that's that's how we got the
The support to build the volume and and develop that filming system you were talking about
I was going to say so did the stage craft come before mandalorian or they come or the mandalorian
after
Because because once we started to do mandalorian I said look here's some tech
There was some technology I was aware of and nobody it was the type of thing where everybody
knew you could do it
But nobody did it. Yeah, right. And so I came in and said, okay, here's the goal
And we assembled a group of people ilm
unreal
Lux screens magnopus there were a bunch of tech partners that came together
Along with my company golem creations and we all
Got together and and started to work out how you would do this
And we didn't know that you could actually accomplish so many shots in camera
It was an experiment at the time
But we started doing little tests even when I was working on lion king where you'd move the camera
You'd have a tv screen and you'd see the backgrounds move and it seemed very promising
So part of that was to allow me to finish this big high priority
film lion king for them without leaving town
And start to prep and work on this and and that's why I uh, there were other directors that came in I
wrote
Pretty much all almost all the scripts
That's something else I learned really is helpful to
Is to to have a a unified voice to be very involved with the writing process and not not have it
And have you got other people to erect it
But to have a constant a consistent voice in the writing
Is really is really helpful to make it feel like any questions for you bring scottie over
How do you want any what do you want to know keep it loose shun?
Yeah, baby. Oh, he's 50 years old. I love the way he screams
What's going on?
I wrote out a question. You did. Let's hear the question. Let's hear it. Well, you ask it
Tracey has to get on the mic here a guest question caller
Okay, so here's my question. I know it's the mic. You probably been asked this a thousand times.
There we go. So I apologize

Um, obviously the Mandalorian is such a phenomenal show and we love it. We love it so much
And it's a great show for filling in the gaps for some of our favorite characters
From the original Star Wars, you know movies like Luke and you know, who's made a few
appearances
And I don't know. I'm sure some of us fans were wondering. Could we possibly see any of our other
favorite characters show up?
Maybe in upcoming episodes who we know to be alive at this point in time. It's like we're at comic
con. I know
Hi, I'm well, you know, you know, first of all, I can't I can't really answer that one
Um, but but I would say that part of what we try to do with the Mandalorian is
I'll still answer. You know, he can hear he can hear he can
Is it one of those things? I'll I'll I'll hang up and take the quest take the answer off air like on npr
Yeah, right
So, uh, I I think
The important thing is is for us is that there's so many different
Um areas of Star Wars and and that we could bring
All of it together into one show and pull in things from the sequels from the prequels
From the original trilogy from the animated and even the extended universe
Yeah, it's kind of it's amazing. It felt like Star Wars was was splitting into a lot of different areas
and part of what we want to do is pull it all together because
You know Star Wars is a big tent, you know, and there's and whether it's kids who are growing up
watching clone wars
or millennials who who had the the the prequels
Like everybody's everybody's invited to the party and so sometimes it makes sense in the case of
Luke Skywalker
As we were figuring out if he had to bring him to a Jedi and who that Jedi would be
It made it wouldn't have made logical sense for it to be anybody but Luke
So we always want the story to point us there. How about that CGI on Mark Hamill just come?
I mean that was unbelievable
That was crazy
What's also crazy is if you look at the difference between the first time we did it and the next time
we did it
You'll see how much all of that AI based
It's like Mark Hamill was 20 years old again. I mean it's not god. You fucking people need to read a
book
All right, you know what you know what we got to talk about g-force. That's the movie
We are both in it. That's the only time we work together. You me gal finakis gal finakis
You know what gal finakis told me after that
I I he said that's the that's I may I promise myself after that film that I would never read a script high
before
That experiment
But let's let's honestly let's let's let's never know what g-force has held it. Why are you moving off of
this?
Well, I want to get to prehistoric planning. Okay, all my kids all my kids have gone through

20 I've gone through like six months where they've loved it when they're like four every single one of my kids

It's a bunch of gerbils, right? No, yeah, it's guinea pigs. That's what I said. I was one of the guinea pigs

I was the comic relief. I was the farting guinea pig. I'm sure your friend your your kids like me

I was one of the favorites, right? They love that. I mean they all loved it at various stages early. I play hurly. Anyway,

Now how did that come about and explain to to tracy in wisconsin what the hell is tracy?

There's a little something called apple tv plus

And if you get it, there's a there's a documentary series that looks an awful lot and sounds an awful lot like planet earth with david attenborough

narrating yeah done by the bbc

and apple tv

That i'm uh, i'm involved with and we create

A documentary as though you were able to bring a camera back into the prehistoric cretaceous period

Yeah, it's yeah, and and the reason i'm working on it is you know

It was it was a project that they were talking about doing partnering up on

But because we had developed technology to create

CGI that

Felt more cinematic and photoreal through all of our innovations on

The lion king which if you recall there was no actual photography in that that was all CGI

But we built a vr environment that we filmed in

So we actually had the whole crew in vr filming segments around these animated characters

And that's part of why it looks like a hopefully like a live action movie try to explain that a little bit

Just so so so tracy can understand what that means because i i think

Building the environment that you're filming in in

In vr is right not an easy concept necessarily. No, but it was the way to get

Like my mom's at home. My mom's at home. She's 76. No, sorry. God. She's almost 80. Well make sure you get it right

Yeah, she's thrilled. I know she is alex. She doesn't mind. She's not offended by stuff like that

So she's at home. How would you explain it to my mom? Who's 80? What that means?

She's not 85 or something. No, Calgary. What province?

Calgary

I don't know

19

She's a argo fan

She's a big argo fan. Okay, but but explain it to somebody and to tracy so virtual reality is something where you wear goggles

And wherever you turn your head and move you

perceive through

Hearing and sight as though you're in that immersed in that reality. So it's like there's that

Okay, so we create the environment with artists as you would for cgi

We create the environment and the characters

[Transcript] SmartLess / "Jon Favreau"

And so if you're wearing your goggles, you could walk around and look at and interact with the environment and the and the characters
That allows us like a multiplayer game to bring the crew into that virtual environment
And so you could have a cinematographer and a gaffer in there setting lights up virtually
You could have a camera operator
Set up a camera and we would you know if you came to our stages
Uh down there in silicon beach down there off jefferson culver city that area
We had set up their camera systems without cameras
Dolly tracks without cameras on them. We had sensors all your crew is wearing goggles
So some of them would be wearing goggles to scout
But you could also watch a screen because because the dolly grip isn't necessarily having to see a fully dimensionalized version of the performer
They just have to look at their marks
So they would tape marks off on a track and move the chassis
And that gave the whole thing a feel as though it was being filmed in live action
Wow
So by building these tools it gave it that live action feel in addition to really good cgi that mpc was able to do
The the house that we work with so we had all these tools that we built around how do you make Lion king look live action
And we use those tools and applied them to
The task of how do you create a show that looks like a documentary filmed in real life of dinosaurs?
And so if you look at prehistoric planet if you have apple tv plus you could take a look at it. We've got
Uh, you know a season up. We're getting ready to launch another that we're just finishing up now
and uh
And you could or you could you know look on look on trailers if you don't have that and take a look at it
And then we had david attenborough and just his voice over. Yeah, just makes it and it's all based in real science
Which again, I geek out on because I get to learn so much about the behavior
Archaeology has made so many breakthroughs in the last few years where you start to learn about
How they reared their young what they ate where they lived
That they had feathers they were colorful. They had you know, it was a whole
Different sense of what dinosaurs were than when I grew up. I forgot about that time
What what were we doing? Was it couples retreat and um, and I went in your trailer and you walked in my try
I remember this. Yeah, you're watching this this series of of videotapes at the time. I think the dvds
dvds
It was a box set of it was called big history. Yeah big history
David christian would teach a course in it. It was one of those it was before remembers before like
Podcasts or before digital so so we are watching on the viewer in the in the trailer
And big history. I'm sure it's still available was a fascinating course because it starts off with the big bang

Yeah talking about the world through the lens of physics
And then through the formation of the stars and planets and then it talks about chemistry
And then it talks about geology as the planets formed and then it eventually talks about
anthropology
And comes all the way through history to today
With complex systems love this and the patterns. Yeah, this sounds amazing. It was just I mean
We just go and I just go in there and we just watch the tv for like hours
Jason you said that that uh
Uh behind when you were like 16 here. We got on ventura behind the Ralph's you had a lot of
chemistry on the big bang, right?
You had a lot of chemistry
Right you were 60 and then I told you I had three callbacks for the show the big bang
No, but you've always been interested in in I love that about you you're you're there's there's so
much about you that is
Um, uh, beautifully silly. Um, and and and and and without sort of pretense
And then there's another part of this super big brain in you. Uh, and he just, uh
You're a real inspiration mister. And also did you does everybody know that we work together one of
my first jobs in town?
That's right, right. We're on a pilot together
Wait, I think I did I get fired. I think I got fired from that show
I think I might be confusing with another one, but I did get fired off
You were the big star you were when they got you that was the big uh, you know the big win
I think I never went to air by the way, but I got a phone call that I was going to be replaced and then
48 hours later. I heard that they were actually not going to pick up the show
So I had the honor of being fired. Yeah being fired and then the whole show
Maybe without Jason. No, let's not do it at all. Is that what happened? What was it?
What was it? It was we played comedy writers on a like proscenium multicam sitcom pilot back in it
must have been like 90
Two
No, am I thinking it may have been he directed a pilot that I did
Was it the same one? It might have been that one our brains are going because he he directed a
friend my friend's episode
I think he did direct. No, he directed. I don't know. Anyway, it was uh, I
Love I loved you then. I love we got to work together, man. That was the big time for me
Did you do you remember when you were working on Iron Man 2?
Yes
Justin Thoreau and when I was gonna say when you were reading this when the pages
When the pages were coming in, could you get the sense they were written by by arms with no
sleeves?
I noticed that nobody had sleeves in the script. Yeah, which I was curious about that was one thing
I don't know if that's gonna play
That's his hallmark and the dog was gonna just hallmark. Yeah. Oh, he was great. He was a writer.
He had worked with
He was a writer on tropic thunder. He was he and Ben still a roadtropic thunder and then Downey

want. Yeah

Downey was very big. Um, you know, he was like, this is the guy that could you know, I mean because it needs to be a voice too for for Tony Stark. It wasn't just you know, a lot of it came from him in the first one

Yeah, so I think that he had a really good experience with Justin. He's a very smart guy and like again another one who's an actor

Actor but you talk to him about a lot of subjects. You know, he's he knows a lot about a lot of things and and just a really

You know has a really good ear. I saw he sent me a picture the other night by the way from New York

Great and he I love, you know throw it's one of our best buddies

But he did send me a picture from New York out at night. He thought he was he thought he was taunting me

And it was six degrees in New York

I knew because I'd seen on the weather and he was inside this establishment with no sleeves

I was like, hey man, it's fucking my guns like that. You couldn't get sleeves on me either. I would too. I would too

John, what does it take for you to get excited enough to

Treat us all to some of your great acting or you just so

Satisfied with no, I love doing it. Well with a guy like you you're funny as hell

But where does it sit in your temptations? You know, I mean, is it does it have as much of a pole as directing does?

It depends who it's with and what it is and it's not the same thrill as in the beginning when can I do this at all?

Right. Yeah, and you just want to make sure that you're in a situation where you're

Where you're with people that

You're having a good time, right?

Because if you're not, I don't know that I could fake it

As well as you need to and and also like I love look

When you get to work on your own stuff

You start you have a lot of control over a lot of things, right?

And so you use that part of your brain and when you go on somebody else's set

If you bring that energy, it's terrible

Like you have to be a great and actually the people I've worked with who are the best actors

Are other filmmakers

Because they show up and they just want where do you want me to stand?

They're like the first ones on their marks and like that's how I am when I go on somebody else's set

And I like to do the more I've been doing the marvel stuff. Yeah, and I think that's been really cool

Because I to keep that connection a lot of the characters that were around

Are gone now and I'm like one of the ones who's around since the first iron man

And I'm still there for the kids who grew up. I'm like the agrid of

Marvel

You know like a like a hopefully like a friendly goofy presence that offers some comfort

All right, last question. What it would all the smart stuff and great stuff that you're doing
What what's the dumbest thing you find yourself doing on a on a daily or weekly basis?
Do you have any guilty pleasures that the audience would be surprised by?
Well, there's a podcast I listen to
Oh, right your brain. My my uh, that's my dirty my my dirty pleasure my guilty pleasure
No, I I I do love the the podcast and it's um
It started off as something where I didn't know if I liked it just because I knew all of you
Yeah, and it was like I was like and I don't get out a lot
So I was like, oh, this is like hanging out and I'm just not talking. Yeah, like I got to hang out with
you guys
And I just had no pressure to be funny no pressure to go, you know, I didn't have to valet the car or
drive
Uh, and then now that it's such a a success and so many people when I mentioned I was going to do
this show
They were like really like jealous like oh my god. That's so fun. How do you get it? What do they like?
So it's really great to watch you all do something that something that you did for fun
Yeah, because you liked it and you were interested in it turned into
One of the most successful projects for all of you, you know what I mean that this is like such a
successful for me
40 years, this is like the biggest loudest thing I've ever done and I love that this moment allows
That rewards passion and authenticity that other people will seek it out and they sense it and they'll
find it
And the how relaxed everything is and all the things that we've all worked on together apart
There was this pressure in the background of
If you do this you'll get to succeed or we'll let you do more of this or we'll pick up this pilot if they if
we like if it tests
well, yeah, and then
This is the most unstructured the concept is so is like one surprise guest and we're going to talk and
and
Everybody's drawn to it and it just shows you that all those rules and all those structures and the
gatekeepers
all of that is a function of
The dynamic around the economics of the business and then here you all come through
And do something where it's all of you hanging out and as somebody who's hung out with all of you
It really feels exactly that way and and that people get a glimpse of it and that they enjoy it
And it actually turns into there's a business model to support it and a way to distribute
I think it's really encouraging and and to people out there, you know who are
Going to you know trying to figure out their way. It's a real lesson. Yeah, and I was actually just
saying that this morning
it was a real lesson to me that um, it shouldn't be a surprise that the thing that
Uh, that I think for all three of us that we have pushed least on
Um, or or pressed least on in our careers has has ended up being the most successful thing
And it's it is a great lesson. He just sort of just
Follow your instinct and just walk down the hill and well

[Transcript] SmartLess / "Jon Favreau"

We've never as you know and and john as you got to witness when you were waiting when we were first during the intro
We never talk about what we're going to talk about. Here's the other thing. We've all worked on
We've all worked on the call gas poker game back in the day
15 years ago when we all played
And uh, but it's very much that same dynamic, right? It's just sitting down at a table and just uh
having a laugh and we never
Never we never talk about what we're going to talk about ever truly
Well, thanks for having me on it, and uh, thank you for fucking coming on your story. It's awesome
It's really cool and and I might add when I see you and we hang out how well however few and far
between that is
I'm always so thrilled to see you and so enamored with you
And uh and everything that you do. I just it's just I'm so giddy because I'm just like, you know
From the first time we met good dude 20 decade or two decades ago. I mean, you know, it's it's
really cool
Thank you. Also also john, I will implore you for from a guy who started doing
uh
Swingers again, which is so great
And then you went and you've gone to such lofty heights and all the mcu and and and then the the
star wars and all that stuff
And then in between that you do the chef
I implore you to
Keep going back and please and give us another like indy like story like a small story
Please because you're really good at that. You're really really good at that
Thank you, man. Thank you all and you know keep keep doing what you're doing
It's it's it's it's really wonderful
And it's wonderful also to feel like I could just jump on
Something like this and I feel like I've been hanging out with you all the all the way through
Even though it's been a one-way street and especially through the lockdown. You know what I mean
through the pandemic
It was really nice to have your your voices and your presence and it just everybody was so isolated
and and I felt like it was really
Comforting reassuring and it's just it's just enjoyable and I'm glad that it's your guys are still going
and that everybody recognizes
And we and we can't wait for the next avatar. That's you too, right? Yeah, that's me
John well, thanks for being a part of it, buddy
Really appreciate it and hopefully we'll see you soon in person. All right. Bye. Bye, buddy. Bye. Bye
pal. Thank you
Bye
Oh, he's gonna do it
He's gonna slam it shut the slam
There's no slam it either. I have a little switch on my thing. I hadn't stalled just for smart less
my camera
Perfect

[Transcript] SmartLess / "Jon Favreau"

Boy, I sure like that fellow. That was great. I mean so good to check in from him
You forget about how many things he's done in sort of different shapes and sizes
Well, but and I mentioned the thing I mentioned earlier comparing him to like George Lucas in the
sense that like
He not only tells great stories and makes things that we all want to see but like the tech part of it too
Is like, yeah, there's not a lot of people who do that and he doesn't make a big thing about letting
people know
How many important things? Yeah, he's touched
How many things that we love that he's done that we might not realize he's been a part of I just
think that's really
I think that's really cool. Yeah, I mean think about it. He
He wrote swingers and starred in swingers with fans
And then he directed elf one of the all-time is an absolute Christmas classic. I mean in their top two.
Yeah for sure of
It's a wonderful life and elf. Yeah. Um
And the swingers by the way, but before you go past that like that that kind of started a bit of a
comedic
style and tone and
Well, it's set the tone for all the marvel movies
No, no, it's swingers
It just sort of set the tone for a lot of some of the comedies that that that populated. What was it the
the 90s?
Um, you know, and that was like 95 starting to work through all those
And stiller and oan wilson and jack black and you sort of that wheel that it was sort of birth
I think right in there comedy wheel. Remember comedy wheel and then yeah, and as you were
saying then, um,
elf and uh what that did for for that
That films of that of of of that season and then and then of course, yeah, what he did to set the tone
for marvel
um, and all the other
derivative films in that genre is um, it's it's pretty impressive
So, um, we didn't talk about the film. Oh, here we go. I love the way he's teeing himself. It's
unbelievable. It's
Hey guys, have you ever thought about it? You know, it's so it's so
Embarrassing and it by the way, wait, we're just gonna build up better be
Fuck
We didn't talk about the film that he actually acted in with jason
Which was um, and melissa mccarthy
Which was
No, no
No rejected at the gate. Do you see how timid he was about it? What the fuck you could say it above
a whisper
You're so ashamed of that. Fuck
Is is postmates at the door and you have to run is that why you're trying to get you have to pee do

[Transcript] SmartLess / "Jon Favreau"

you

Sorry before we let you go because that we're not we're rejecting that what's on the docket for dinner tonight. Yeah

You'll love this

You'll love it. It's roasted uh chicken with vegetables

Gotti, what what do we have for dinner?

Oh

What else

And some other stuff some stuff like mashed potatoes. Oh mashed potatoes

Well, basically like a holiday dinner tonight. It actually does look like a holiday. Let's be honest

Is it chicken with mashed potatoes or is it mashed potatoes with chicken?

And then what do we have and and and then so no dessert, right?

So I don't know. We'll probably have chocolate chip cookies

But listen if I once I'm done eating all of that and I have to leave the table, you know because

Because you can't eat another

Bye

Yes, it's pathetic

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