

# Make Me Smart November 12, 2021 transcript

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**Molly Wood:** So whatever happened today, it basically doesn't matter. It's about to be wiped away by beer.

**Kai Ryssdal:** As the United States Marine Corps used to say, I don't mind so it don't matter.

**Molly Wood:** Nice. Hello, everyone. I'm Molly Wood. Welcome back to Make Me Smart, where we make today make sense with drill sergeant slogans.

**Kai Ryssdal:** That's right. Never drill sergeant, drill instructor, Marine Corps training instructor. Anyway. Yeah. Oh, yeah. That would get you like, 20 hop and pops in a heartbeat. Anyway, I'm Kai Ryssdal, it's Happy Friday also known on this day after Veterans Day as economics on tap, live stream's up and running. The Discord is up and running. Thank you for joining wherever you find us, whether on the pod or the discord or the YouTube live stream, we are so glad you're here, truly, because that's why we do this. Well, a little bit for us.

**Molly Wood:** Very true. What is a hop and pop? Is that like a, what they used to call a burpee? Or what they now call a burpee, is it close to a burpee?

**Kai Ryssdal:** Yeah, yes, it is. It is a burpee. Yeah.

**Molly Wood:** All right. See, we're learning already together. This is the day when we play the game half full, half empty. I'm always half empty on burpees. Those are brutal, terrible, but if I started calling them hop and pops, I might like them better. First, we do the news, before that we discuss drinks of various types. And then yes, by the way, everybody's already noticing the merch. If you're on the live stream.

**Kai Ryssdal:** I'll make the screen bigger so y'all can see. Yeah, look at that. I got a shirt. As Bridget pointed out, it's the, it's the color of banana pudding with Nilla Wafers.

**Molly Wood:** I mean, totally. Yes, it totally is. I just got the plain one. I mean, I got the one that just has a picture of bananas. But I felt like I had to wear the one that actually says banana pants on it. And I had to roll up my sleeves like the 80s.

**Kai Ryssdal:** Oh, good grief. The other thing that's, that was in that magical box that I got that I didn't realize I had gotten, and Bridget, I apologize for that, is a super comfy sweatshirt. And I'm just, I'm not, it's a super comfy sweatshirt, let me just tell you.

**Molly Wood:** It is. I'm so sad that today's such a hot day because I really want to wear the sweatshirt. You should know I cut a little, I cut a little notch right in the front because I don't like a tight crew neck. And now it just looks so cool and stylish. Of course you do. Of course you do. I got to break the rules and cut a little notch in my sweatshirt. Kai's like, I like it high and tight. Anyway, we're not just showing off today. Unlike the banana pants, which were in fact a limited time offer, I believe, for our premium donors, the banana shirts, they, some say bananas, some say banana pants, there's a really nice gray heather, gray one that just has a bunch of bananas as a little sketch, very stylish and abstract, all of that is available at--what is it? Marketplace.org/shop. How great is that? You can get your own. And in, in case you're wondering, yes, tequila. This is good merch.

**Kai Ryssdal:** It's great merch, and I have not been a fan of Marketplace merch of the past, other than the pants and the KaiPA glass, I'm not a big marketplace merch guy. But this batch is, is aces. 10/10, baby. Ten out of 10.

**Molly Wood:** It really tops even the Marketplace ones with like, the Marketplace logo still have like, a cool pair of headphones on them, like they look kind of radio subtle. In fact, there's a bright purple one that my son immediately just took it really like, I love it. Yeah, it's got like a little teeny subtle Marketplace, like the mountains or whatever they are, the M, I guess that's an M.

**Kai Ryssdal:** It's supposed to be an M but we've had that conversation, I hate that logo.

**Molly Wood:** Yeah, that's true. I didn't mean to open up that can of worms.

**Kai Ryssdal:** Yeah, please. We don't need to. Old Wounds, old wounds.

**Molly Wood:** And they're really soft and they're from Raygun, which is sweatshop free.

**Kai Ryssdal:** Yeah. Yeah. And, and this whole thing happened, I think, because of an interaction on Twitter between either you and me or me and somebody else or Raygon saw it and said, hey, we can do shirts anyway. It was cool.

**Molly Wood:** Oh, really? That's so cool.

**Kai Ryssdal:** Yeah, it was Twitter inspired.

**Molly Wood:** The Discord is all up on this. They have a picture of the shirt that says, be like Kai. The Nilla wafer shirt. Be like Kai.

**Kai Ryssdal:** Don't be like me. Okay, enough slagging of the merch here. Is today pick up day or are you drinking?

**Molly Wood:** Nope. Tequila.

**Kai Ryssdal:** Tequila day. There we go.

**Molly Wood:** Tequila! Yep.

**Kai Ryssdal:** I'm being boring. I'm doing exactly the same beer did last week because I have one more in my fridge. So, there you go. Beer.

**Molly Wood:** Next look, bring your drinks. Like, drinks. Bridget, can we send Kai some bourbon for next week?

**Kai Ryssdal:** I have some bourbon. Why, Molly Wood? Remind people, please.

**Molly Wood:** Next week will be my last happy hour, my last economics on tap with the Ryss and all of you wonderful fans. December 1, in case you had not heard the news, is my last day at Marketplace. We're just working up to all the crying that's going to occur. Yeah, we'll save the tears. So we'll have like a little bonus, we'll have a little bonus extra post show time on the YouTube, on the live stream.

**Kai Ryssdal:** Oh, yeah, we will. For sure.

**Molly Wood:** But today is tequila because the news, frankly, warrants tequila, as is so often the case. I see that we are both on the frickin bumper climate train today.

**Kai Ryssdal:** We are. So, so look, and I'm gonna, I'm gonna come off as, as naive here. And, and if so, so be it. But this falls squarely in the what the bleep is the matter with people category. I was listening to Morning Edition this morning, as I always do. And I heard a story from Shannon Bond about climate misinformation. And all I could think of was, what the hell is the matter with these people? Why, right? I mean, you can understand political misinformation and disinformation because you want to get power, you want to get the other guys out, whatever. And it makes some logical rational sense. To my mind--and, and granted, as we've established on this program, I'm, I'm a straight and narrow thinker. This just doesn't make any sense. It's like stupid, you know? So, so there was a piece on Morning Edition this morning. And then there's an opinion piece in The New York Times today from Greg Benson. Social media is polluted with climate denialism. And I just, I don't get it. I don't get it.

**Molly Wood:** Well, it's effectively a plank now of the GOP, like there was new, there was literally new polling out today that said that while something like 67% of Americans, you know, think that climate change is real in a really big deal and we need to deal with it immediately, that, that comprises 95% of Democrats and 39% of Republicans, like it really has become like an entrenched, like it's a roll coal, it's become an identity thing, which is, as we know, literal death in the case of climate change. And actually, in the, you know, I have a story that goes along with this about misinformation today, in the case of COVID. It's almost like this sort of twin thing, like I'm just not doing the, you know, the be safe public health thing. There was a story out today, and then we can come back to climate, about how there's good news in some ways on the

anti-vaccine beat, which is that mandates that, I'm quoting from Ben Collins at NBC News who covers misinformation so well. Pointing out that mandates are definitely working, like anti-vaxxers who don't want to get fired are getting the shot. So that's great, except that then they're running home and going on the internet and trying to figure out how to undo it. How to detox, and the detox--

**Kai Ryssdal:** Venom remover, you know.

**Molly Wood:** And as if the detox, like as if the ivermectin thing weren't bad enough, by the way, I was talking to my mom today because it's her birthday. And we're really happy that she had a birthday because her COVID almost killed her even though she's vaccinated.

**Kai Ryssdal:** Let's pause here really quickly for a mom update. How is she?

**Molly Wood:** Mom is great. She had--I will say--she got permanent heart damage from COVID. She had to have a pacemaker put in before she could go home. Which I'm going to remind everybody like A, it almost killed her, B, it gave her a-fib that she never had before. She is now at home with her pacemaker and because she is just--and I mean this with love--a stubborn old goat, she's doing great. She's just like, impossible to kill, my mom. Her doctor was like, I don't really understand how you're sitting here right now, but great work. And it's a birthday and we're all happy she had one. And her friend in Oregon who has llamas, keeps llamas, has kept them for years, she runs a llama rescue, can't get any damn ivermectin for her llamas because all of the people in her region are buying this freaking horse paste stuff to take for themselves. So now the anti-vaxxers who were forced to get the vaccine are trying to clean themselves out with baking soda baths and epsom salts and borax. Do you know what borax is? That's like the little poison powder that you get when you have ants so bad that you don't know what to do and you just sprinkle the whole area with borax and then keep all the kids and the dogs away from it because they will die. And these dum dums are like, giving themselves borax baths to try to undo the vaccine and influencers on Instagram are making tons of money, like I despair. I'm gonna have some more tequila.

**Kai Ryssdal:** Yeah. It is, it is surprisingly not hollowed out shell Thursday. You got one more you want to, you want to, you want to talk about before we move on?

**Molly Wood:** It's also about climate. It's like, even though there's like the, there's the climate disinformation and climate denialism. But the clock is, as we know, ticking. It's also ticking on the last vestiges of the COP26 convention. And it sounds like diplomats have essentially gone into overtime. They are still quote, overwhelmed at the work still ahead. Sharp differences remain over fossil fuels and emissions. Did you know that the words fossil fuels have never agreed, never appeared in a COP agreement in 25 years?

**Kai Ryssdal:** I saw that today. We've been just farting around for 25 years if we haven't even talked about fossil fuels. I just--

**Molly Wood:** That's us, by the way. That's the US. That right there is it like, we are among the petrochemical giants that has contributed to this for decades. Like make no mistake whatsoever, like it's great news that they're talking about now trying to phase out subsidies for fossil fuels because did you know that the world pays \$438 billion in subsidies literally to make coal, oil and natural gas cheaper? We pay that amount. And if we just shifted that amount away from fossil fuel subsidies and toward helping out the poor countries who are suffering from a climate crisis and didn't even cause it, we'd be good. Did you just mute yourself because of your cute dog?

**Kai Ryssdal:** I did because my dog was barking so I had a yell at her to come in here and you were on a good rant, so I just--

**Molly Wood:** She agreed. She was like, that's right!

**Kai Ryssdal:** Oh, she totally agrees. Oh, my goodness. Yeah, I just, so look and, and we haven't really talked about this, but I was so--so look, you've been doing climate now for a long time. And you were very keyed into COP26. And I had zero hope, I had zero. Because you knew how it was gonna go. You knew how it was gonna go. And here we are.

**Molly Wood:** I mean, at this exact second, I can't, you know, at this exact second, I guess technically we could keep hope alive, right. Like they could go through the night, they could emerge. Greta, Greta could come down with a flaming sword and be like, get it done.

**Kai Ryssdal:** That's exactly what I was gonna say.

**Molly Wood:** You were gonna say flaming sword?

**Kai Ryssdal:** Yeah, oh my God.

**Molly Wood:** Great of Arc will come in here. But yeah, nobody, nobody actually really thought--I mean, look, money--the biggest single delegation at COP26 was oil and gas representatives. 500 of them. Like, there's too much money at stake right now for them to have come out with anything else. So we're on our own here. We're still gonna, we, you know, we still got, we could still do a lot.

**Kai Ryssdal:** Got to figure out how to, how to change that money equation, you know? I don't know. Bons, come here, Bonsai. Come here. She's gonna start barking again. I'm just getting her in here. Okay. All right.

**Molly Wood:** Should we play a game?

**Kai Ryssdal:** We should play a game, yes.

**Molly Wood:** We should play get Kai's dog on camera.

**Kai Ryssdal:** There we go.

**Molly Wood:** Tail down, tail down!

**Molly Wood:** Alright, this is half full, half empty. What did you call? Unhinged short timer? Like, I'm not even paying attention to the ques anymore. Half full, half empty, where we give our thoughts, feelings and predictions on various topics. Drew Jostad, thank goodness, is our host today. Drew, what do we got?

**Drew:** Alright, are you half full or half empty? YouTube is no longer going to show the count of dislikes on videos.

**Kai Ryssdal:** I saw that go by in my newsfeed and I had no opinion.

**Drew:** Supposed to avoid pile ons?

**Molly Wood:** Give me a break. Nope. Like if you're doing it for the likes, you're not gonna all of a sudden be--I mean great, I guess? Like, but I think it's the feedback mechanisms that cause these issues in the first place, like you need the attention and the dopamine boost and the likes are what give you that and the dislikes might make you feel crappy but the likes make you feel crappy too if there aren't enough of them. So getting rid of one without the other is not very helpful.

**Kai Ryssdal:** Or by the transitive property, social media just makes you feel crappy. I'll just go half I don't care, you know, it's, it's a PR solution.

**Molly Wood:** Eric in Roseville in the discord says there are three dislikes on our live stream right now. Get rid of them! Never mind, I'm half full.

**Kai Ryssdal:** Cut those people off. They're out. Sorry.

**Molly Wood:** All right, next.

**Drew:** Okay, Walmart has been using fully driverless trucks in between a fulfillment center and a grocery store in Arkansas. Half full or half empty?

**Kai Ryssdal:** So look, it's coming right? Fully autonomous trucks are coming, and we need to adapt. They're not coming tomorrow. But there are 3 million truck drivers in this country who would say look, what do we do with us? So yet another one of those large scale long term problems that we need to figure out an answer to and the technology is moving faster than human society and human economics can figure it out. So I suppose I'm half full because it's a step forward in progress, but I feel bad for the 3 million truck drivers.

**Molly Wood:** Yeah, I'm half empty if it's not electric, too. Can you make it autonomous and electric? Come on, Tesla. Um, however, I am, I guess, long term half full on that as long as we can figure out the job retraining and economics of it, which I guess I'm also not that hopeful that we're going to.

**Kai Ryssdal:** We have not yet, we have not yet. Yeah.

**Molly Wood:** But look, long term it is safer and it frees people up for better jobs, like those are hard jobs, people fall asleep, they have accidents, they get killed, they kill other people, like I'm half full on automating trucking long term.

**Kai Ryssdal:** I would just like to say to, to the crew, who does half full, half empty, this is a downer of a half full, half empty so far. I would just like to, I'm just saying.

**Drew:** I got bad news, I got bad news for the next one.

**Kai Ryssdal:** Oh my God, Jesus.

**Drew:** Apparently, there may not be enough room on the planet to plant all the trees proposed in corporate climate pledges.

**Kai Ryssdal:** Well, so this was a story on Marketplace this week. Oh, totally. So all these corporate climate pledges are basically we're gonna get carbon neutral, but we're gonna do that by planting trees. And it turns out we don't have enough surface area to plant all the trees that we need. So, tada!

**Molly Wood:** Oh, my god.

**Kai Ryssdal:** We're screwed like, 19 different ways.

**Molly Wood:** I'm half full on nuclear fusion. I mean, I am so half empty on all these on, all this BS. This is such BS, like come on company, countries, like look, they know this, right? This is not a matter of like, politicians not knowing that this train is coming. They know it. They plan for it. They've got like, they're putting like, they've got a plan to put the Mona Lisa in a bunker. Like it is part of the scenario planning for the apocalypse. And they're just started like, and they're just like, I don't know, maybe we can just buy ourselves enough time to die before it gets here. Anyway, I guess that was a long way of saying half empty. Not enough trees. Good God. Okay, what's next, kittens?

**Drew:** Close. Half full or half empty? Motorized bicycles are outselling all electric cars.

**Kai Ryssdal:** Yeah, so I've seen so many motorized and electric bikes lately. And it's, you know, so I'm a mountain biker, I'm not hardcore, but I like to go up and, you know, pedal up and race down all that jazz. And I'm like, if you have an electric bike, why, why? Why?

**Molly Wood:** I love this. No, I love everything about this. First of all, I think it's awesome because I live in the hills. But also, I think it's awesome because like motorbikes, two wheeled vehicles and like gas powered Motorbikes are actually one of the most common vehicles in the entire world, all across the globe. And so, if all of those go electric, I'm sort of spoiling a little chunk of episode eight here, of how we survive, but like, those are going electric at a rate that cars and trucks and buses and like fleets cannot even hope to meet. And that's actually awesome. That's actually super cool. And the like micro transit part of the transportation conversation is huge. That literal last mile, like a mile is just a little too far, right? So people would call an Uber for a mile. And that's so wasteful when you could have an army of like, electric bikes and also I may have mentioned I live in the hills so I'm not pedaling, no way.

**Kai Ryssdal:** Ah, all politics is local. Yeah.

**Molly Wood:** All politics is local. No, I could not be more full on electric two wheeled motorbikes and bicycles, love everything about this.

**Kai Ryssdal:** I will yield. I yield to the subject matter expert, whatever Molly said. That's my vote.

**Molly Wood:** Micro transit.

**Drew:** Okay. McDonald's is teaming up with Mariah Carey for holiday themed deals. The Mariah menu, half full or half empty?

**Molly Wood:** Now we're talking, now we're talking.

**Kai Ryssdal:** All I want for Christmas is a big Mac.

**Molly Wood:** Is that the dark place because I sang? Brutal!

**Kai Ryssdal:** I saw Lianna and Charlton in there today, I don't think Drew's doing this all by himself. Oh, my goodness.

**Molly Wood:** Yeah, that's right, that is gonna be in your head for the entire weekend now. You're welcome.

**Kai Ryssdal:** That's right. You're welcome.

**Molly Wood:** You're the ones who put it in the lineup.

**Kai Ryssdal:** So many gifts that this podcast gives you, people.

**Molly Wood:** There's really a Mariah menu?



**Kai Ryssdal:** There really is, it's a real thing. Yeah.

**Molly Wood:** What could be on it? Do you get like, a little sign like that movie, Love Actually? Like a little sign to hold up with your happy meal? Look, I'm half full on the song, I'm going to be singing it from between now and January so I might as well go for the McDonald's menu, too.

**Kai Ryssdal:** So Liv, my 14 year old, is already like, dad, when can we start doing Christmas decorations and the songs? And I'm like, sweetie pie, we got to get to Thanksgiving. Oh, my god.

**Molly Wood:** Poor Thanksgiving. That's just not right. Thanksgiving doesn't deserve that. It just gets like, stomped right over. Yeah. Now I decided I'm half empty because it's taking away from Thanksgiving, which I love because it's yummy.

**Kai Ryssdal:** Alright, just for the record. Just for the record. Kristen Sugarmill in the YouTube chat no, no, no. Also no to Kai's singing. Fine. Fine. Fine. That's all I'm saying.

**Molly Wood:** I think you're all wrong. I think Kai is probably secretly a great singer, which is why he never does. Whoa, the YouTube chat is going crazy.

**Kai Ryssdal:** I know, right? I know. Anywho, are we done, Drew? What else we got?

**Drew:** Bonus fast-food.

**Molly Wood:** I don't know where we landed on the McDonald's thing.

**Drew:** Yeah.

**Kai Ryssdal:** Bonus? Yeah, we're leaving though.

**Drew:** We got one more fast food for you, though. Listener Brandon wants to know if you're half full or half empty on Arby's french-fry flavored vodka?

**Kai Ryssdal:** Why would you do this?

**Molly Wood:** That is disgusting.

**Drew:** Vodka is made out of potatoes.

**Molly Wood:** That's disgusting.

**Kai Ryssdal:** It's made out of potatoes. Shut up.

**Molly Wood:** Still no. Still a hard pass.

**Kai Ryssdal:** Yeah, no. Hard no. But Brandon, thanks for playing.

**Molly Wood:** Yeah, thank you and also great. Is it a great topic if it generates literally no debate in the entire discord, YouTube and we go hell no all at the same time? Hard to say. Hard to say. Arby's, wow. Good try, Arby's. No, honey, just make a chicken sandwich like everybody else is doing. Come on.

**Drew:** That's everything for today.

**Molly Wood:** Is that our game for today?

**Kai Ryssdal:** Alright. There we go.

**Molly Wood:** That is it for us today. Thanks for listening. I'm not even gonna lie, this time the tequila is really working. Like, I did not have lunch and I'm having a great time at happy hour. Send us your questions--I mean, it's like four sips if you've been playing along at home, it's literally like four sips. Thank God I'm still a lightweight after this long, long quarantine. That's a blessing. Send us your questions, your comments, your make me smile suggestions. We're at 508-827-6278. That's 508-UB-SMART.

**Kai Ryssdal:** Email us if you'd like, [makemesmart@marketplace.org](mailto:makemesmart@marketplace.org), or leave us a voice message on our homepage. There's a little gizmo you can do that. Just click the button and talk and it'll get to us. I promise. I promise. You know what I mean. That's it. Yeah.

**Molly Wood:** Today's episode of Make Me Smart was produced by Marissa Cabrera and engineered oh so patiently by Charlton Thorpe. I think he's behind the dark place sting. The Senior Producer is Bridget Bodnar.

**Kai Ryssdal:** The team behind the YouTube live stream today and our very depressing today game half full, half empty is Mel Rosenberg, Emily McCune and Catherine Devine. The music for half full half empty was written by none other than Drew Jostad. The executive director of on demand—she's not, we have to change this, although I'd throw her in a heartbeat, I believe she's the director of on-demand--is Donna Tam.

**Molly Wood:** I know, I think so too. I keep saying executive in how we survive and then we fix it. Like every other episode, I think it's different.

**Kai Ryssdal:** The lady in charge is Donna Tam.

**Molly Wood:** Exactly right.