

Pigeonhole Episode 43

[bright ambient music]

Introduction

CHORUS OF VOICES: Pigeonholed, pigeonhole, pigeonhole, pigeonhole, pigeonhole, pigeonhole, pigeonhole, pigeonhole.

[bright ambient music slowly fades out]

CHERYL: Every once in a while, a friend who knows I'm a captioner will send me a screenshot of some absolute fuckup of streaming auto-captions or Rev dot com captions. They laugh and say they thought of me. When the captions are giving completely wrong or confusing information, then people who rely on captions are getting completely wrong or confusing information, like *The Lost City* trailer on Rotten Tomatoes that said, "big old German Jew" in the captions when the actor said, "big old Jamba juice."

Bagels and other stuff in the captions

[slow Klezmer tune fades in and plays through this section, opening with droning accordion and a high, noodling clarinet solo] Now, I was inspired to feel really pissed off by this next prime example. I'm watching a nice documentary. The guy is talking about how the other guy always had great food around. I hear him list out the contents of a typical spread, which included... corned beef... bagels... and more. [clarinet solo continues, sounding like it's laughing, as drums slowly roll in]

As a Jew, I instantly recognize some Jewiness in these first two foods listed, even though I accept that a lot of people don't associate bagels with Jewery, and I understand that non-Jews corn their beef. But put those together in a list? [delighted gasp] I'm basically at the deli, which I know, because that's my childhood. And if it's not in your life experience, you might not really know what all this is. That's just how it goes when you get exposed to a culture you're not familiar with through a film. [dramatic pause] So, look it up before you caption it.

[Klezmer music picks up in tempo and energy, accordion taking the lead]

And when you don't so, look it up before you caption it, you get this disaster. You get a caption that says, "From Corn, beef bagels..." For no reason, "corn" is capitalized in this caption. "Corn" was not a proper noun when this film came out because it came out before the rise of the beloved Corn Kid, Tariq, who does elevate the word to a proper noun in addition to a full mood. But anyway, what in the fuck is a beef bagel? And I do honestly think some non-Jews might recognize that corn should be "corned" and that it goes next to beef, not bagels. [Klezmer fades]

Setting my Jewishness aside, I did what I always do when I'm a confused captioner. I did a search for "corn beef bagel" and was inundated with hit after hit after picture after picture of literal corned beef on bagels. I searched again with a comma after "corn," which the original captioner so offensively used, and got corned beef bagel recipe, corned beef bagel sandwich, even the horror of corned beef bagel dip. This is but the smallest bit of doing my due diligence as a captioner. "From Corn, beef bagels."

Rhett & Link go off the chain

If you want more of this absolute nonsense, but done on purpose, check out Rhett & Link's videos from a decade ago. They record a short skit, then download the YouTube auto-captions from their skit and use those as a new version of the script to replay the scene. This one skit starts out with a phone call. Link is eating something when he calls Rhett.

RHETT: What are you eating?

LINK: A 100% organic free-range black bean vegan burrito.

RHETT: How can a black bean be free range?

LINK: I don't know. Google it. You'll never guess what I'm holding in my hand right now.

RHETT: Uh... an iPhone.

CHERYL: And the second time through, using YouTube's auto-captions as their new script?

RHETT: What are you eating?

LINK: Or 100% organic free-range with the Indian retail.

RHETT: Part of my baby free range.

LINK: Parallel to collect. Never guess what I'm holding in my hand right now.

RHETT: Marathon!

CHERYL: "Part of my baby free range. Parallel to collect!"

ASR presented with ASMR

Auto-captions are made by ASR, or automatic speech recognition. Not to be confused with ASMR, or autonomous sensory meridian response, which is that delicious tingly sensation some people get when they encounter certain sounds. Here are some nice sounds that make my skin tingle and my jaw spontaneous unclench presented with things that make my whole body tense up! Imagine trying to have a conversation with someone who heard or read the original, intended words about the content these lines come from. Like, what would you talk about? I'd just default to talking about food, one of my favorite conversation topics, everything from corn to bagels! This stuff is straight off a modern-day YouTube from my own content, not the Beta version of the technology Rhett and Link were using.

[Trippy chill synth music plays throughout reading the ASMR lines. The music weaves in an out of short, interlocking, colorful phrases that skip and hop unpredictably but without rushing above a steady droning tone and repeating chords in fourths and fifths. The tick-tick of a constantly off-beat digital high hat and softly pulsing kick drum play with the click of a track skipping, creating a light percussion that you might tap your foot to if you could find the rhythm but that maybe more reminds you what firefly wings might sound like beating if you could hear them.]

"It is a community partnership with storage war."

“You and I should not be five people that have this deeply disabled voices.”

“She used to get I think your place without a voice to because of a neurological tradition.”

“I’m moving forward [Music] [Music] [Music] [Music] is times, and that is why I formed the real world, and this is that.”

“It’s hard for a lot of people to find appropriations for those things the best that’s the majority of females are not built for us.”

“I thought I have a bunch of watch me race the track.”

“Bustle-ness it really is the for this.”

“It also means it’s like care and love and attention rare cake.”

Wrap-up

There you have it. “Attention rare cake. Why I formed the real world, and this is that.” It’s like a never-ending facepalm. Or at least, in my mind, it should be.

[trippy ASMR music plays a bit longer, then fades into bright ambient theme music]

Every episode is transcribed. Links, guest info, and transcripts are all at WhoAmIToStopIt.com, my disability arts blog. I’m Cheryl, and...

TWO VOICES: this is Pigeonhole.

CHERYL: Pigeonhole: Don’t sit where society puts you.

Music in the episode: *Dance Medley* by [Eastern Watershed Klezmer Quartet](#). (Source: FreeMusicArchive.org. Licensed under a [Attribution-Noncommercial-No Derivative Works 3.0 United States License](#).)

[Music for Shuffle, Sketch #1](#) by Matthew Irvine Brown. Used with permission of the composer.