



Two Designers Walk Into a Bar is a podcast about iconic design and popular culture.

Background

Hosted by graphic designers and collectors Todd Coats and Elliot Strunk, the podcast is constantly looking at pop culture and thinking about how it influences us and what we do for a living. Starting with a theme, we choose iconic work that we find meaningful and use humor and insight to break it down, turn it inside out and try to understand why it has stood the test of time. *Two Designers Walk Into a Bar* encourages listeners to dive into their libraries, mini storage units or memories with us.

Our website has each episode plus transcripts, notes and other extras.

About the Hosts

Two Designers Walk Into a Bar is hosted by Todd Coats and Elliot Strunk.



Todd

As creatives for commerce, both have built solid reputations helping organizations tell their stories in compelling (and profitable) ways. Along the way, they have collected a caboodle of adventures from unique luminaries they've known and worked with, award shows they've judged, lectures and workshops conducted and industry recognition received. They love a great story, but most importantly they both love the intersection of design and pop culture.

Elliot and Todd both worked together in the halcyon design age of the 1990s, are frequent speakers to businesses and universities and have also served as presidents of their local AIGA chapters.



Elliot

Todd also once drove Elliot home after having his wisdom teeth removed and they have been kicked out of a go-kart track and an Outback Steakhouse together. (On two separate occasions; they're not savages.)

Todd Coats has a career as varied as his sweet sock collection. Currently he's the Senior Director of Creative for (ISC)² – an international cybersecurity nonprofit. When not directing brand strategy, he teaches it in a popular



*Random Guy we found
on the Internet*

workshop series for the American Marketing Association. He also spends a lot of time making and collecting illustrations, and convincing his family that's not a cry for help.

Elliot Strunk has been lucky enough to make a living doing what he loves. He is currently the Chief Creative Strategist for Honestly, a remote-first, highly-scalable marketing agency and also runs their in-house design shop, Studio H. Outside of the office, he also dabbles in collage art, entrepreneurial ventures and building creative community. He's also not bad at trivia. He has an amazing wife and sweet-natured teenaged son he enjoys traveling with near and far.

Between the two of them, they have spoken for organizations including AIGA, Alamance Community College, American Advertising Federation, American Marketing Association, Auburn University, Campbellsville University, Duke University, East Carolina University, East Coast Game Conference, Elon University, Guilford College, GlaxoSmithKline, Living Arts College, Meredith College, *The News and Observer* (Raleigh), North Carolina State University College of Design, Ohio University, University of North Carolina Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Greensboro, USP, Wake Community College, Wake Forest University and Winston-Salem State University.

About the Podcast

We launched on September 30, 2020, also known as International Podcast Day.

We can be found on all major platforms including Apple Podcasts, Spotify, Google Podcasts, YouTube, SoundCloud, Stitcher, iHeartRadio, TuneIn, Audible, Amazon Music, Podbean, Listen Notes and probably some others we're unaware of.

What Listeners Are Saying...

“You two are killing it in this podcast. My favorite ‘serious’ line so far: ‘Take what you do seriously, but do not take yourself seriously.’ Thank you for bringing us the podcast that us creatives didn’t know we needed so badly. Keep up the great work!”

— *AJ Stallings*

“Two Designers Walk Into a Bar is welcome fun when so much is not. It is filled with delight, things you forgot you loved, insight, conviviality and yes, real knowledge all wrapped up in what I can only call persistent joy.”

— *Terry Marks*

“This is the designer’s podcast that even non-designers can enjoy. Equal parts pop culture, shop talk and dry wit. Goes down smooth every time.”
— *Brian Coe*

“How do podcasts work again?”
— *Elliot’s Mom*

Q&A

What motivated the two of you to launch a podcast about design and pop culture?

Elliot Strunk: For me, I’d say it was the two Cs: curiosity and COVID. Actually, let’s add a third C: creativity. Things always work well in threes.

Todd Coats: Let’s not forget all the conversations we’ve had for, well, over 20 years! We love talking about the humor and inspiration in stuff that a lot of folks miss. For example, we’re both huge fans of *MAD Magazine* and the movie *Airplane*. So add a fourth C: conversation.

ES: Okay, fine. Four it is.

For someone just discovering your podcast and listening for the first time, what would you like them to know?

TC: For me, it’s the idea of celebrating influence. We’re all influenced by the stuff we absorb every day. The ads you see, the websites you visit, the music and TV shows you consume. Whatever it might be, it influences how you think. It helps shape how you see the world.

ES: And also that there are people—and stories—behind all this stuff. Sometimes the stories are just as interesting as the artifacts themselves. We’re always thinking about why we zeroed in on a certain thing, how it’s stood the test of time, and if other people like the things we like for the same reasons.

TC: I’ll see your “also” and add another. It’s also about uncovering untold stories. As a result of our research, we’ve found that the best creative always has a lawsuit or two surrounding it. We could probably do another podcast series on creative lawsuits.

ES: And I'll finish with one more thought. For those of us who make our living being creative, we want to remind you about why you do what you do and those moments of discovery that got you excited in the first place.

You have several seasons under your belt. What's next?

ES: Prepping for our next season. Brainstorming, research... Our work is never done.

TC: It's like painting the Golden Gate Bridge.

ES: We're always thinking about expansion. We have a Patreon page with exclusive content. A bunch of stuff on YouTube.

TC: We also want to talk to student groups, design organizations and other folks about some of the subjects we love. We've done speaking gigs together. Those have been well-received so we're looking to do more.

ES: People haven't walked out yet, so that's a good sign!

TC: We also have a few other things we're working on we're not ready to talk about just yet.

Where can people find you guys?

TC: If you mean the two of us, we both live in North Carolina.

ES: If you mean the podcast, all of the usual places and platforms. When in doubt, simply search for "Two Designers Walk Into a Bar" and you'll find us. Once you do, if you hear something you like, please leave a review and tell a friend.

TC: Oh, and it's worth going to our website as well for the episode notes. We always have plenty of extras and visuals from our research. Good stuff.

Anything else you'd like future listeners to know?

ES: The role of the designer is one that's often in the background.

TC: Sure, awards are given for great work...

ES: ...and it's wonderful to be recognized by your peers. We love awards too, but who wouldn't want their story about creating a time-tested icon told from a human perspective by two chowder heads?

TC: If you like listening to chowder heads, as Elliot mentioned, please leave a review. And we're not above bribery. We send stickers to people who leave reviews and give us monetary support.

ES: Since we're designers, the stickers are pretty nice.

Events and Workshops

“Impressive! As someone who works in design and is inspired by pop culture references, the live event and virtual podcast from ‘Two Designers Walk Into a Bar’ was a total breath of fresh air creatively and personally. Funny and insightful, it’s incredible to be aware of how we are always connecting dots, but didn’t know just how much, until the presentation was over. I left completely inspired and empowered. Bring ‘em to your hometown!”

— *Sean Carnegie, AIGA Austin Advisory Board*

“It was a great pleasure having Todd and Elliot as guests on our webinar. Their many years of experience in the marketing world, pop culture knowledge and extremely fun senses of humor brought a lighthearted, yet intensely insightful addition to the broadcast. It gave us multiple laughs and a unique spin on the importance of storytelling in all aspects of your marketing. I loved working with those guys and look forward to doing so again soon. They are a duo worthy of a happy hour round (or two) any day.”

— *Angela Shoffner McAfee, SEO Rocket*

Elliot and Todd are available virtually and in-person for podcast-based events for your group. They have only one rule: no brown M&Ms.

Say hello for more information. Contact us via our website, social media channels, or by sending a good old-fashioned email to both of us at hello@twodesignerswalkintoabar.com.