

## WONDERLAND INTRO MUSIC

00:14

And welcome to *The WonderLand folks*... 20 minutes of your life that you will never get back UNLESS you present one of our special *WonderLand* "Time Return" vouchers at the hospital or palliative care facility of your choice just before you're due to move on from this astral plane to the next, and that will be entered into the "system" to be credited to your account at some point in the future...

So... you know: make a note of that.

Anyway, you're here now and that's what's important - for me, at least - and it's great to have your company on this the 59th episode of *The WonderLand*.

I'm Geoff Healey, I'm a singer/songwriter/comedian/coffee aficionado, vinyl LP enthusiast and contemplator of life... and by way of explanation: *The WonderLand* is a trip through my personal perceptions of all sorts of things, for your amusement and dancing pleasure... with a bit of new music thrown in for a bit of variety!

To get the ball rolling today, I'd like to mention four words which occasionally related, although not usually all at the same time entertainment, bloodshed, and shopping.

Until now.

In addition to that, I have once again then strongly reminded of how innovative and, well, I have to say quite brilliant the Swiss seem to be at developing new multi-purpose concepts for the benefit of the general public.

Anyway, In order for me to explain properly what the hell it is I'm talking about, let's brace ourselves as we once again willingly suspend disbelief in the hallowed halls of *Theory Time*!

## THEORY TIME INTRO MUSIC

And welcome to *Theory Time*.

Shopping centres around the world have for quite a long time now been aware of the value of offering not just a large and attractive range of quality stores and comfortable shopping environments, but sometimes also different types of live entertainment for customers and their families - with a view to creating a buzz in the community at large, keeping shoppers in the shopping centres as long as possible, and getting repeat business.

You see a few months ago I was driving through Switzerland on the autobahn on my way from Austria to Germany when I passed a very large shopping center rather curiously named "Shopping Arena".

Immediately, of course, it dawned on me what was obviously going on here.

And so - at the risk of jumping the gun, I'm venturing my opinion that these entrepreneurial shopping center owners are about to introduce a new and unique concept designed to have people flooding into the shopping center like never before.

So here's the deal - the shopping center clearly features some kind of purpose-built arena...

Design wise, it would be much like the Roman coliseums of old in which Saturday afternoon family entertainment featured gladiators and Christians and lions fighting it out to the death for the understandable delight of the paying customers in the stands.

Now of course, we've come along way as a society since those times, and there wouldn't be any gladiators or lions or Christians involved... that would obviously be barbaric and deemed unacceptable by everyone concerned.

But given the high ratings of these TV shows in which men and women in bathing suits try to knock each other off floating pylons with inflatable brightly coloured bats, I suspect some of our brilliant shopping center proprietors are essentially taking entertainment to a gladiatorial level, but tailoring it thoughtfully to today's average Saturday afternoon suburban family shopping trip.

So let me explain how I think all this would work.

There would be a small charge for entry to the arena for this entertainment spectacle, which would consist of a series simple contests between shoppers throughout the afternoon, to be cheered on by the enthusiastic crowd, just like in the days of old in the Roman Colosseums.

The contestants themselves would be randomly selected - on a voluntary basis - by a friendly team of roving shopping center promotional staff, offering willing contestants free vouchers for considerable discounts in some of the major stores, as an initial incentive.

Of course, there would be no clubs or swords involved... But - in a delightfully appropriate twist - the shoppers in the ring would instead wield their own shopping bags as weapons, which would contain goods that they themselves had purchased in the shopping centre that very same day.

In the interest of fairness, though, you wouldn't have an eleven-year-old shopper with bags full of potato chips and plastic straws and popcorn coming up against a burly male shopper with bags full of newly-purchased power tools.

No. That just wouldn't be fair. And so there would be a carefully controlled selection process determining who was going to fight who with what.

For example, the woman with a bag full of electrical goods would obviously much more fairly have to compete against a shopper with a bag full of something like, I dunno... kitchen accessories.... you know... something slightly heavy with a bit of an edge.

Now, I should point out that each of the shoppers entering the arena and going into battle would sign legally watertight release forms and enter these gladiatorial duels entirely on a voluntary "at-their-own-risk" basis.

Obviously for the winners of each event there would be huge cash prizes, more discount vouchers and a complimentary ambulance if required; whilst for the losers, free after-match transportation to the morgue of their choice and all funeral and memorial service

expenses covered.

Now if that's not a brave new world of shopping AND entertainment, I'd like to know what is!!

#### THEORY TIME OUTRO MUSIC

Yes, that was our slightly alarming edition of *Theory Time* for this week.

And I think we now need a bit of a mental palate cleanser - if you like - so we're gonna slide right into our next regular segment, which is of course song of the day.

Today we're going to take a potential trip down memory lane as I introduce to you a song you might've actually heard before... This is a song by Jamaican reggae singer Junior Murvin, it's also been covered by The Clash and also by Dave Grohl and this latest version is from one of our WonderLand Approved Artists, namely *Lofthus*... so we're going to take a bit of a listen, and here it is: *Police & Thieves*...

#### SONG PLAYS

*Police & Thieves*... That's a new Reimagining of the song from *Lofthus*: and I would highly recommend you check out the video of the song, which you can find on YouTube and Instagram...

And now we are going to take a trip to the *WonderLand* conversation pit, as we bravely descend into the conversational quagmire that is...

#### GOOD TIMES INTRO MUSIC & SEGMENT

And yes that's it for this week's edition of *Good Times*, and we will of course be back with more carefully improvised stupidity in two weeks time, so stay tuned for that!

Now. I have a thought, and I think it's a thought that I need to share with all of you right here and right now before it vanishes - as these things sometimes do.

And what better place to do that than *Geoff's Thought Of The Day*...

#### THOUGHT OF THE DAY INTRO MUSIC

Welcome to *Thought Of The Day*.

It used to be pretty common for older people to routinely tell younger people that life was much harder back in their day, and that everything these days is so much easier.

I would like to suggest, however, that the opposite is true.... that life now is possibly more difficult, challenging and tougher than it's ever been, and that we may need to start thinking differently about this.

One outdated metric of what constitutes a successful society is that of choice... An abundance of which has always been thought of as a good thing, right?

Anyway - I don't think there's any doubt that we now have a lot more to choose from in

almost every area of life than we ever have before.

What's interesting to me though, is that it seems that the older one gets, the less attractive "more choice" becomes.

And actually, I don't know whether it has more to do with being older as it does with our brain's capacity to handle overload in general, but it seems to me that when it comes to - say - shopping, more is somehow actually less.

In other words, if I walk into a store of any kind and it has heaps and heaps and heaps of stuff to choose from, the experience seems automatically devalued...and it's extremely likely that I will turn around and walk right out again.

Does that make me weird? Maybe. But probably not.

But one thing I will say for the past is that quite often, when you only had the choice between this, this and this, life was a hell of a lot easier in general.

I can't say it was necessarily better - because that's subjective anyway - but it was less complicated. And that made things easier to deal with.

These days I think there's a misconception that things like the social media and the internet and new technology and having a zillion types of audio-visual entertainment at our fingertips has made life easier for everyone.

It hasn't. It's made life a lot more difficult... and as for the idea that the younger generation "don't know how lucky they are", I believe the opposite is true.

Here's the thing: Life *is* absolutely more full of clever, shiny things than it ever has been, that's for certain... But it seems to me that more isn't necessarily better; that not all progress is helpful, and that just because something looks good, it doesn't necessarily mean it is.

I actually think that people growing up now have, ironically, a far more *difficult* time with navigating life generally, than people who grew up back in the 50s 60s 70s or 80s.

So I suppose what I'm trying to say is, if you're an older person and you find yourself getting pissed off with the attitudes of Generations X, Y or Z, or whatever you want to call them, just remember: they're up against it: because in a lot of ways, the world is actually a far more complicated place to grow up in now than it ever was before.

In conclusion, it would be more appropriate for kids and teenagers and young adults to now say to their parents something like "Life is tougher now, you guys were lucky... You had it easy back in your day"...

And I reckon they'd be right!

THOUGHT OF THE DAY OUTRO MUSIC

And on that unusually serious note we wave farewell to *Thought Of The Day* for another week, and if I'm not mistaken, we are once again at the end of another episode!

Thanks for joining me today, thanks again also to my good buddy Kevin Owen Macdonald for being half of our semi-regular *Good Times* segment; and if you like the cut of the *WonderLand* jib, please remember to subscribe to or follow the show.

Meanwhile, take care of yourselves until next Friday, when I will be back armed to the teeth with more unmissable perspective, weirdness, wisdom, opinion and nonsense on *The WonderLand!*

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