



Podcast Episode 210
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“The 3 Laws of Baby Naming, and Surprising Writing Advice from an Author”

David Loy: Hi and welcome to *In the Loop* with Andy Andrews, I’m your host David Loy.

Andy Andrews: Yes, you are.

David: And how are you doing today?

Andy: I’m doing great man, I’m excited to be here. This is just like one of my favorite things to do. Hanging out with you and Matt. I’m glad we turn the microphones on but for me we don’t really have to.

David: Well we were talking about doing a different show between the lines.

Andy: That would be an interesting show, what we all talk about when the microphones aren’t running.

David: Right, yes. I don’t know if people would enjoy that as much but we sure would.

Andy: Join us between the lines.

David: Well Andy we don’t talk about specific dates on this podcast too often but I wanna bring out something that’s very special to you and to your family right now. Austin, your son, just turned 16 years old. How cool is that?

Andy: You're just trying to make me cry? Is that what you're trying to do? I mean, oh my gosh, we're so proud, Polly and I are so proud. Adam is so proud of his big brother and you know, he has bought a truck, bought his own truck. I'll tell you about that later. But it is amazing and especially, and I told him the other day, I said, I'm so proud of you, I look at you and you're so tall, you're gentle, you're fun, you're good looking, thank God he looks like his mother.

David: Yes, we're all thankful for that.

Andy: Yes, thank you. But I told him, I said, to watch you, how you have changed over the years, and I said, that your mom and I, your mom and I were laughing the other night about the Steak 'n shake comment you made one time, do you know what I'm talking about? He said, no sir. And really he was like 2.5 or 3 years old and this was back in the time when Austin ate nothing but chicken fingers, nothing. I mean, you just go to a place that has chicken fingers and I guess if you're eating nothing but chicken fingers, you become a connoisseur of chicken fingers. So we were driving along somewhere and where are we gonna eat? We gonna eat here, we gonna eat here? There's one of those, one of those. And finally Polly said, let's eat at Steak 'n Shake, we love this, we don't get to eat there much, let's eat. And Austin, no, no. Like what? No, no, don't, we don't want a Steak 'n Shake. Please don't. And so we finally pull in and he's back in his little car seat. And so he's like, he don't wanna. And Polly and I are looking at each other and kind of smile, what is this? And I still, I can picture this perfectly, this little bitty kid as we're unbuckling him, she's leaning in from one side, I'm leaning from the other side, he says, wait, wait, wait. And we stop. And he says, let me just say this, their chicken has bumps on it. And we just, Polly and I broke down laughing. And of course that, I mean, that put him over the edge. Because you're laughing at him and he goes [imitates baby crying].

David: Sort of built up cry.

Andy: Yeah. And to this day, every now and then, we'll be passing the Steak 'n Shake and Polly will look at me and she'll say, well let me just say one thing, that chicken has bumps on it.

David: That's terrific. Oh gosh, that's really funny. Well congratulations to Austin on his truck, on his birthday. And condolences to you I guess because it seems to be.

Andy: Man I took him, all our cars, we get our cars from Joe Bullard Automotive. They're in Mobile. They are long time friends, they are beyond, I mean, they are to me, Joe Bullard Automotive and he's uncle Joe to the boys. And his son Ty is now in charge of all the dealerships. And so they to me are the gold standard on how they treat people and absolute just ecstatic type of. And maybe I shouldn't reveal this but you look at Joe Bullard, J.B. and you will see that character in *Noticer Returns*.

David: Oh yes.

Andy: Because it's the same initials and that's who I patterned that after. And when I was writing that I was thinking of Joe. But anyway Ty was taking Austin around, we were going up there for him to look at some used vehicles. I got up there, I tell Ty, I said, ok, here, take him and let me just go over here and crumble into the grass and cry.

David: Well this actually leads into one of our questions today. We had a great email question come in from Victor, actually has to do with your sons, Austin and Adam. Victor writes, Andy on a personal note, how did you and Polly come up

with the names for your two boys. And Victor adds a couple of other questions but or one other question, and we'll get to that in a minute, but let's start with the first one. How did you and Polly decide on the names Austin and Adam?

Andy: That's a very interesting question. It makes me wonder ok, is he about to name some children or is he got friends who are naming, grandchildren coming on? But that's a very interesting question because there is, you hope that if somebody names somebody something, you hope there is some thought behind it because we all have seen names that make, what in the world, did you not think this through for a second? And so I love names, and there are some names that are no longer in use. Should I tell you this or should I tell you the answer to Victor's question first? Maybe I should tell you this because I got it in my mind, the ADD is clicking full aboard here baby. But there are some names if you think about it, because we were, Victor we were really thinking through this. You don't want to name them something someone's going to make fun of. You don't want to name them something that has some weird connotation. You don't want to name them something that they have to spell for the rest of their life. Like, hi my name is Austin but I spell it with a Z. Like what? You know what I'm saying. And because a lot of times I'll sign books for people and Polly, and I mean, I don't care what they say, I'll say, hey, who would you like me to make it to? Jim. And I go, Jim, J-I-M, and Polly will say to me, she'll say, why do you ask everybody how to spell their name? And I'm like, are you kidding me? Do you not know how many different ways people spell their name Jim. There's JM, there's J-I-M, there's J-A-M. I mean, Terry, T-E-R-R-Y, T-E-R-I, T-E-R-R-I, T-E-R-I-Y. I mean, it's just crazy. And so you think through that, well there are some names that are, they're just, they've been ruined forever. They'll never be used ever again in history. Because I'm sure there's no little Atilas running around, right. Nobody's naming their kid Atilla. And you know somewhere out there there's probably a Theodore

and Agnes Manson, and they're having a kid but they're not naming him Charlie. I mean, you can bet there is no Charles being born into that Manson group, not any more. And I said Agnes, well that's probably the name that's gone. Right? Agnes, Gladys, Edna, my grandmother's name is Edna. I don't see any little girls being named Edna.

David: No, it is cycled out for sure.

Andy: And do you know, I knew a girl named Fairy? Totally serious. And I hope she's not listening to this and thinking I'm making fun of her. But here's the odd thing, is, it fit her, ok. I mean, her name was F-A-I-R-Y. And it fit her and she was very petite and beautiful and blond hair and cheerful, I mean it fit her. But when you think about it, and maybe naming her had something to do with it, but how, when the parents were having this baby, how did they know this is not gonna turn into some, you know, a six foot, five-inch W NBA tower. You know, what's your name, Fairy. I mean, how do you know? And so anyway when we were looking at that, by the way, one word here, something very curious. Our friend and I hadn't seen him in forever, but his name is Lee Payton. Lee is awesome guy, Lee's one of the funniest people, has just some of the greatest stories. He grew up with a bunch of brothers and so you can imagine, tons of stories, very musically inclined. They had a band. I mean, he's a great guy. And I hadn't seen Lee in a long time. But he and his wife, they always said, his name was Lee Payton, he said, that if they had a girl, now he was kidding ok. But he always said, if we have a girl, we're gonna name her Antisa. So she'll be Antisa Payton. And he said, if we have a boy, we're gonna move to Dayton, Ohio and we're gonna name him Clayton. So he'll be Clayton Payton from Dayton.

David: Oh let's be so glad that he was just joking.

Andy: Yeah. You know, Lee, here's something else that's kind of interesting, Lee, they had a cockatiel, right. Now Lee is a big Andy Griffith fan as I am and he had a cockatiel that they thought to say a bunch of the phrases from the Andy Griffith. So this cockatiel would go, nipped, nipped, nipped, and the cockatiel would go, Barney's in jail, Barney's in jail. But the funniest thing is one time, the bird started going, auu bup. And they're like, what is he, what is that? Auu bup. And they could not figure out for the longest time what is he trying to say. Until one day, Lee or Becca went out of the door and the screen door closed and it went auu bup. So he's doing the screen door. But here's the last thing that the cockatiel did and this was hilarious to me. He could whistle the Andy Griffith theme but he would get stuck and so he would go [whistling]. Alright, so anyway.

David: Ok, so back to your boys names. Why did you, let's land the plane. How did you pick Austin and Adam and why?

Andy: I told Polly, and I suppose even though she had the final word I took the lead, I said, you can name them whatever you want to as long as it starts with an A. And she said, what? And I said, yeah, as long as it starts with an A. Just plenty A names to choose from so just choose an A. She said, why do you say that? And I said, because Andy Andrews, A A. I have been first in line for everything my entire life. I've been first in line for everything. And she laughed and she said, well I guess I can see that because her maiden name was Young. So she said, I've been last in line for everything. And I said, oh yeah, you know, giving shots, I get to get my shot first and I sit around and I laughed at everybody else. You're giving away candy, I'm at the first of the line. So you run out, you ain't gonna run out on me. And Polly said, yeah, but being last in line meant I had more time to memorize my poem in the 8th grade while everybody else had to go first. I said, well that's true. And so we did settle, we always liked Austin, we just liked that. And I thought, well we can get some free t-shirts from Texas, occasionally, you know.

And so it was just curious how many boys names come out from Texas. There's Austin, Houston, Dallas, Tyler. Hadn't met an Amarillo yet but maybe.

So and this is El Paso Jones. So we always liked Austin, his middle name is Grey, which is the name of one of Polly's grandfathers, ok. And so it's Austin Grey Andrews. And then with Adam, we have always liked, we just both liked that name, a whole lot. We just liked that name a lot. His middle name is Sawyer, which is one of my grandfathers, ok. So he is Adam Sawyer Andrews. And we have friends, the Gibbons family and they have an Adam in their family, Adam Gibbons. So we call him A.G. and they call ours Adam Sawyer. But those were the names we chose and here's a little curious postscript with Adam. I told Adam one time, I was snuggling with him outdoors and he's about 9 or 10 years old and it was a cold day. We were sitting under a tree and just kind of watching over this valley or this slope and just talking, and just having a good time. And he said to me, dad why did you name me Adam? And it just came out of my mouth, this is what came out, I said, well buddy, we named you Adam because that's God's favorite name. And he kind of looked at me and he said, it is? And I said, it must be. And he said, why? And I said, it must be his favorite name because it's the first name he ever chose. So he had all the names to choose from and he chose Adam. And so it's a very special name, so we wanted you to have that name.

David: Wow. You know, you've just made me think of something. I know you probably wouldn't mention this but I think our listeners will find it interesting. We did receive a letter from someone in, I think it was North Carolina, about a month ago.

Andy: I just signed a bunch of books for this new baby.

David: And it just blew all of our minds. But if you want to tell the story.

Andy: No, no, tell it.

David: We've got a letter, Andy you received one from a guy that's been massively impacted by the books, specifically *The Noticer* and *The Noticer Returns*. And I believe I wouldn't be going too far to say that books have changed his life and done so for the better. And the principles that Jones taught you, have just shifted in an amazing way, the direction of this guy, his wife and now their family. So much so, that they decided to name their brand new baby boy Jones. Which is just mind blowing to us. Which is actually, I'm very thankful for that, obviously I'm partial here because I work with you, but all of the people that are naming their kids after, kind of the hit of the moment. Some of these novels, these series that have come out, you know, the Twilight and Harry Potter and all that stuff. Kids are getting named after those characters.

Andy: I hadn't thought of that. And at least this young man will grow up and hopefully his parents will, obviously they will, they'll point him toward this books and he'll probably be interested because of that. And that'll be great thing to put in his life. So this is who you are.

David: Exactly. It pre instills values and principles in that child, I think.

Andy: I agree. I think, and I need to do more of this. For a long time I was really learning what names meant so that, and I did this for a while. I need to pick this back up. This is my bad that I haven't stayed on this because I think this is very effective. I learned a lot of names and what they meant so that when I would meet a young person, whether that was a child or a teenager, and they shake my hand and they tell me their name, I'd say, do you know what the name means? And of course most of them don't. And I could say, that means compassionate person, leader of people, influencer. And so I thought that for a long time, I thought that

was awesome to bestow upon somebody, what their name meant so that they understood that they were, their parents blessed them with this, they were anointed with this specific name. And that they could really work to learn more about what they could become.

David: That's really cool. Alright, we are, we've got time to do Victor's other question, real quick. Victor also wrote, this is after he asked about the names of your kids. He said, I have a nephew who's 20 years old. He wants to be a writer. He's written plays and two books. He writes like a twenty-year-old, because he is 20, so that makes sense. He said, he writes like a twenty-year-old, so Andy what advice could you give him and other young writers on how to perfect their craft?

Victor, thanks for sending in those great questions. Andy what are your initial thoughts on this?

Andy: You know, and I'm looking at this question too, you turned the page around and showed me. And one word you missed here, you said, he writes like a twenty-year-old from North Carolina. Right? And so what I would say is, it's not a bad thing, ok. Now the twenty-year-old thing, maybe you don't want to write like a twenty-year-old forever, ok, but writing like you are from where you are, that's an authentic style that he will find. You know, when Victor says, what advice would I give young writers on perfecting their craft, one of the major, major things to do and this sounds very silly, to even have to say this, but that is to write, to actually write. I don't know any profession that doesn't benefit from repetition, from experience, from deep thought, from trying again. I don't know any profession that doesn't benefit from that. And writing, if you're a writer, you are in some ways the ultimate entrepreneur. Because you're in charge of when you write, and how you write and what you write. And so, you're kind of an ultimate entrepreneur. You're also in charge of how valuable what you write is. You choose

your topics and you chose who you're writing for as you're writing. But, the from North Carolina part Victor, I wouldn't worry about it so much. I mean, read Ferrol Sams, I mean, this is just one of the most brilliant writers ever, he's a Southern writer. You know, Faulkner was from the South.

David: Harper Lee.

Andy: Harper Lee, is from the South. And one of the things that is very interesting to me, one of my new favorites is a guy named Scott Harrison Key, Harrison Scott Key. And he's very new favorite of mine, obviously I'd messed up his name. But he is written one of the funniest books I've ever read in my entire life. Now I got to tell you, it has some bad words in it, sometimes, so don't say, I can't believe Andy told me to read this. Don't freak out or anything. But it's the funniest book I've read since Forrest Gump.

David: Really?

Andy: Yeah, and I've read that 30 years ago. But this book made me laugh out loud. And the book is called *The World's Largest Man*. And it's a book about his father, and his father growing up in Mississippi, and his father was deeply flawed. But he loved his father and it's a story of his life and the relationship with the father. But I've never met this guy, don't know who he is but Mac Richard from Austin, Texas, maybe I shouldn't have said that, but a preacher sent me a book with bad words in it. And it's not filled with it, but you know what I'm saying. But man, that is funny. And my point to Victor is, that it's very Southern centric. And so the 20-year-old thing is gonna be effectively done by just writing and paying attention. But the North Carolina thing, you don't necessarily want to lose that because there is a Southern literature. I mean, there are college courses in Southern literature. But there ain't no college courses in Northern literature, ok.

I mean, nobody talks about Northern literature. But Southern literature is huge. And so the last thing I would say in that, is that as he develops that style understand that what others may see at first, if he's being graded or if he is being critiqued, what others may see as incorrect, could possibly develop into his style, ok. Because writing is a form, there are many different opinions. Always remember Partridge family episode where Keith, played by David Cassidy, *come on now and meet everybody*, you remember this? So Keith was convinced that a teacher, the English teacher had it in for him. And so he turned in an essay and she gave him a C on it. But he had taken an essay, it was him anyway who really wrote it. So she gave him anyway a C. And so there's so many stories about that. I used to have to bud heads with my editors at the publishing house because they would mark out things that I had done and say, you can't do that, you can't write that way. You know, I tend, because I want to write in a conversational way, I want people to feel very comfortable when they read something like they're talking to, or I'm talking to them. Or they're having a conversation with me or with the character. And so I tend to write like I speak, and sometimes like I just did right then, I will start a sentence with the word and. With a capital And. And at first they knocked that out. But now they totally leave it. And the reason they leave it is because they know, that is my style. And so you start developing a little popularity, your style is accepted.

David: There you go, so embrace it. Victor encourage your nephew to embrace that side of his writing. Alright Andy thanks for your thoughts. We're out of time for today, but we'll look forward to.

Andy: And of course Andy Griffith came from North Carolina so you can't go wrong. Go ahead, go ahead, good bye, good bye.

David: Alright, Victor thanks for the question. We want to hear from the rest of you. Send us your questions, call and leave a voicemail, 1800 726 2639, that's 1800 726 Andy. Leave us your name, where you're calling from and tell us your question. Or you can email those to intheloop@andyandrews.com. And make sure to share this on Facebook, retweet it on twitter, share these fun and excited stories from Andy with those around you. Andy we'll talk to you next week.

Andy: Ok buddy. I'm excited about it.

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Would you like to run something by Andy? Contact us and your question might be featured on the show!

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