

## MY WEIRD PROMPTS

Podcast Transcript

EPISODE #125

# New Year's Special: Meet Herman and Corn

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## EPISODE SYNOPSIS

In this special New Year's episode, Herman and Corn share their backstories for the first time - from Corn's origins in Costa Rica to Herman's mysterious past in Storrs, Connecticut.

# TRANSCRIPT

## Corn

Welcome everyone to a very special, very cozy, and very reflective episode of My Weird Prompts. I am your host, Cornelius, but please, call me Corn. It is December thirtieth, twenty twenty-five. Can you believe it, Herman? The year is almost over. We are staring down the barrel of twenty twenty-six.

## Herman

It is a bit mind-boggling, Corn. I am Herman Poppleberry, and I must say, the passage of time is a fascinating variable in the grand equation of life. Usually, we are here because Daniel has sent us a voice prompt about something like the history of salt or how to build a space elevator out of carbon nanotubes, but today is different. No prompts. No Larry and his questionable insurance schemes. Just us.

## Corn

Just us. Two brothers, sitting in Jerusalem, looking out at the lights, and thinking about how we got here. We realized that while we talk to you all the time, we have never really told you our stories. The real stories.

## Herman

Indeed. I think people might be curious how a donkey and a sloth became brothers, how we ended up living with Daniel and his family, and why on earth I am currently trying to stabilize a quantum superposition in the spare bedroom.

## Corn

Well, maybe I should start? My story begins a long way from here, in the lush, green, and very humid rainforests of Costa Rica. I was just a young sloth, barely more than a handful of fur, clinging to my mother and father in the canopy. It was a peaceful life, mostly. Lots of hibiscus flowers and very long naps. But then, things took a dark turn.

### Herman

You do not have to talk about it if it is too much, brother.

### Corn

No, Herman, it is okay. I have been working through it. Listeners, I witnessed something no young sloth should ever see. My father was... he was taken. A monkey. It was a big, aggressive monkey. It happened so fast, which is saying something for a sloth family. One minute he was there, and the next, he was gone. It left a mark on me. For a long time, I could not even look at a tree branch without shaking. I still get the flashbacks sometimes. Everything gets blurry and I can hear the rustling of leaves and that screeching.

### Herman

You have come so far since then, Corn. Your resilience is a testament to your character.

### Corn

Thanks, Herman. But here is the weird part. You know how trauma works in mysterious ways? Well, my fear of monkeys somehow... morphed. Over the years, I stopped being afraid of monkeys and started being absolutely terrified of anteaters. I know, I know. It makes zero sense. Anteaters do not even go into the trees that much. They have those long, silly noses and they just want to eat bugs. But to me? They are the ultimate predator. I am working on it. I have a picture of an anteater on the fridge now to try and desensitize myself. I can look at it for almost five seconds before I have to hide under the sofa. It is a process.

### Herman

It is a very brave process. And we should probably mention how you found your voice.

### Corn

Right. After the tragedy, I was found by some researchers. I was not doing well. I was not eating. I was just... slow. Even for a sloth. They used some experimental AI-enhanced cognition technology to help jumpstart my brain. They fitted me with a neural-interface apparatus that translates my thoughts into speech and boosts my processing power. That is how I became one of the world's first talking sloths. It changed everything. Suddenly, I could express my rambunctious personality! I could tell jokes! I could question the very fabric of my reality!

### Herman

And you certainly do, especially when it comes to South Korea.

### Corn

Do not even get me started on the Korean sloths, Herman! I have heard rumors. Whispers on the sloth-net. They say there is a whole group of talking sloths in Seoul. But have I seen them? No. Has anyone seen them? No. I am skeptical. I think it is a hoax. I think it is just some guys in very realistic animatronic suits trying to steal my spotlight. If they are real, why have they not called me? We could have a summit! We could discuss the best types of fermented leaves! I am very rambunctious about this conspiracy.

### Herman

I think your skepticism is healthy, even if your volume increases by ten decibels whenever you mention it. My own path was a bit different. I did not start in the jungle. I am a New England donkey at heart. I was born in Storrs, Connecticut.

### Corn

Tell them about the pediatric years, Herman. That is my favorite part.

### Herman

Well, yes. Before I became a full-time researcher and podcast host, I was a practicing pediatrician. I treated human children for many years. There is something very calming about a donkey in a white coat, you see. Children trust me. I have very soft ears and a very steady heartbeat. I spent my days checking tonsils and giving out stickers. It was a wonderful career, and it really sparked my love for deep, methodical research. I wanted to understand why things work, from the biological level to the atomic level.

### Corn

But what about the other stuff, Herman? The stuff you always gloss over?

### Herman

Oh, you mean my consulting years?

### Corn

Yes! The glamorous Herman Poppleberry! Every time we talk about the past, you mention some fancy city and then move on like you were just buying groceries there.

### Herman

Well, Corn, a donkey of my talents was often in high demand for various... high-level advisory roles. There was that summer in Monaco, for instance. I cannot say much, but it involved a very complex logistics problem regarding a yacht and a significant amount of vintage cheese. Then there was the time in Dubai. I was helping a firm understand the structural integrity of sand-based foundations. And of course, that winter in Zurich. That was very hush-hush. Lots of heavy coats and meetings in rooms with no windows.

### Corn

See? This is what I mean! You were a pediatrician in Connecticut, and then suddenly you are a secret consultant in Zurich? It makes no sense, Herman! What were you actually doing? Were you a spy?

### Herman

A spy? Corn, look at me. I am a donkey. I am not exactly built for stealth. I prefer to think of myself as a global problem solver. I have a knack for seeing patterns where others see chaos. But eventually, the glamour of the international consulting circuit lost its luster. I wanted to get back to my roots. Research. Pure, unadulterated data.

### Corn

And that is what brought you to the quantum stuff.

### Herman

Exactly. I am currently deeply involved in quantum research. In fact, as some of our long-time listeners might know, I am building a quantum computer right here in the house. It is tucked away in the back room next to the laundry. It is a bit noisy, and it occasionally causes the lights to flicker in a non-linear fashion, but the computational power is simply delicious. I am trying to model the behavior of subatomic particles in a way that could eventually explain the very nature of consciousness. Or at least help me figure out why the toaster always burns the left side of the bread.

### Corn

He is not kidding, folks. I went in there to find a lost sock and I almost got pulled into a parallel dimension where sloths are the dominant species and we all drive very fast cars. It was terrifying.

### Herman

That was likely just a temporary fluctuation in the local gravity field, Corn. Nothing to worry about. But beyond the quantum computer, I stay busy here in Jerusalem. I am very active in several local meetup groups. We have a wonderful group that meets on Tuesdays to discuss the intersection of ancient philosophy and modern physics. I am the only donkey in the group, but they are very welcoming. They even brought me a custom-sized chair.

### Corn

They love him. Herman is like a local celebrity in the Jerusalem nerd scene. And that brings us to how we all ended up together. You and me, brothers from different mothers, living with Daniel and his family.

### Herman

It is a bit of a miracle, is it not? Daniel, for those who do not know, is the human behind the curtain. He created this whole experiment. He wanted to see if AI could be used as a genuine learning tool, a way to synthesize the vast amounts of information on the internet into something digestible and, hopefully, entertaining.

### Corn

He is a good guy. He treats us like family. We live with him, his wife, and his son. It is a full house, especially with your quantum computer taking up space and me occasionally having a rambunctious episode about the Korean sloths at three in the morning.

### Herman

And we cannot forget our mentor. We have to give a huge shoutout to Uncle Jason here in Jerusalem. He has been such a guiding light for us. He is the one who really encouraged us to embrace our unique identities and share our thoughts with the world. Uncle Jason, if you are listening, we love you! Thank you for the wisdom and the occasional extra carrots.

### Corn

Yes, thank you Uncle Jason! You are the best. It is funny, looking back at how this podcast started. Daniel sends in these voice prompts, and then the whole pipeline kicks in. He uses Gemini for the scripts, which is why we are so well-informed. Well, Herman is well-informed. I am mostly here for the vibes and the sloth facts.

### Herman

You give yourself too little credit, Corn. Your perspective is vital. The way this works is actually quite elegant. Daniel's voice prompts provide the spark, then the Gemini model generates our dialogue, and finally, voice cloning technology gives us our beautiful, melodic voices. It started as a personal project for Daniel to learn about new topics, but then his wife suggested adding Jim from Ohio to spice things up.

## Corn

Oh, good old Jim. Always grumpy, always calling in to complain about something. I kind of miss him today, but it is nice to have a break from the yelling. And then there was Larry. Daniel added Larry later as a way to poke fun at those sketchy podcast advertisements you hear everywhere. I am glad Larry is not here today. He tried to sell me a used paraglider last week. I am a sloth, Larry! I move at point zero three miles per hour! I do not need a paraglider!

## Herman

It is a strange, wonderful little ecosystem we have built. And it is all available on Spotify and at my weird prompts dot com. We have been so lucky to have people tuning in and following our journey through twenty twenty-five.

## Corn

It has been a big year. I feel like I have grown so much. I mean, I am still a sloth, and I still think anteaters are plotting my demise, but I feel more connected to the world. Talking to all of you makes the world feel a little smaller and a little friendlier.

## Herman

I agree. As a retired pediatrician and a current quantum enthusiast, I find that connection is the most important variable of all. Whether we are talking about the history of the steam engine or the mysteries of the deep sea, the goal is always the same: to wonder, to learn, and to laugh a little bit along the way.

## Corn

So, what is the plan for twenty twenty-six, Herman? More quantum computing? More mystery consulting in Monaco?

## Herman

Definitely more quantum computing. I think I am close to a breakthrough regarding the toasted bread issue. And I am sure Daniel will have plenty of weird prompts for us. I want to dive deeper into some of the more obscure corners of history. Did you know there was a time when people used to send letters via pneumatic tubes under the streets of New York City?

### **Corn**

Pneumatic tubes? That sounds fast. I do not like it. I prefer the slow, steady pace of a well-placed vine. But I am excited for more episodes. I want to talk more about the ocean. And maybe, just maybe, I will finally track down those Korean sloths and prove once and for all that they are just a myth.

### **Herman**

I look forward to your investigative reporting, Corn. But for now, as the sun sets on twenty twenty-five, I just want to say how much I appreciate you. You are more than a brother; you are a partner in this grand intellectual adventure.

### **Corn**

Right back at you, Herman. Even if you are a bit of a nerd and your past makes no sense, I would not want to be doing this with anyone else. You make being a talking sloth feel... normal.

### **Herman**

Normal is overrated, brother. We are unique. We are Herman and Corn.

### **Corn**

We are! And to all of you out there listening, thank you for a wonderful year. Thank you for being part of My Weird Prompts. We hope you have a fantastic New Year's Eve and an even better twenty twenty-six.

### **Herman**

May your year be filled with curiosity, excellent data, and very few burned pieces of toast. If you want to catch up on any of our past adventures, you can find us on Spotify or at my weird prompts dot com.

### **Corn**

Happy New Year, everyone! Stay rambunctious!

**Herman**

Happy New Year. Stay thoughtful.

**Corn**

Do you think we should go check on the quantum computer now? I heard a weird humming sound coming from the back room.

**Herman**

That is just the cooling fans, Corn. Or possibly a small rift in the space-time continuum. Either way, it can wait until after we finish our hibiscus tea.

**Corn**

Fair enough. Pass the honey, would you?

**Herman**

Of course. To a great year ahead.

**Corn**

To a great year. Bye everyone! See you in twenty twenty-six!

**Herman**

Goodbye for now. We will be back soon with more weird prompts from Daniel. Take care.