

Gluteology with Natalia Reagan

Ologies Podcast

February 23, 2021

Oh, hello. It's your friend's ex-husband, who admittedly made the best guacamole in the friend group, Alie Ward, back with a very... just *sumptuous* episode of *Ologies*. So, we have talked a lot about the noggin on this podcast, but what about butts? Why do we have them? How do they work? Why do we want to touch them?

We're going to dive pretty deep after I thank Patreon supporters, of course, at Patreon.com/Ologies and everyone who subscribes, and rates and of course reviews *Ologies* for me to select a newborn review, such as this one left by, perhaps former, listener Tara Wi who gave *Ologies* one star and said:

My six and nine-year-olds were enjoying this, and I was fine with it until the host dropped the F-bomb. Really uncool. NOT NECESSARY! Thumbs down.

But I'm going to pair Tara's review with another review from MissFairyPrincess this week who wrote in that:

Ologies has made me realize that every subject is interesting, you just need to talk to someone who loves what they do. Bonus: there are transcriptions and bleeped episodes for those who think swear words are inappropriate around certain company, available on AlieWard.com, to make sure it's accessible for EVERYONE!

Well-timed review, MissFairyPrincess! Thank you! Also, Tara, fun fact: the red 'E' next to podcasts means language may not be suitable for kids, or my parents.

This episode? Mmmmm, it's a little dicey. Mom, Dad: you can absolutely stop listening. But yes, free bleeped episodes are linked in the show notes. If anyone knows Tara, just shoot her a text and let her know that she's bleeping welcome. They're on the website. Also, I don't always swear.

Also, if you do have kids who need science content, I'm a correspondent every Saturday morning on *Innovation Nation* with Mo Rocca; that's on CBS. I host a science show called *Did I Mention Invention?* on CW. I'm on Netflix's kids' science show *Brainchild*. There's no swearing, I swear. Also, fewer butts on those.

Okay, but grownups, let's *crack* into this episode. Let's get into it: gluteology, the study of butts. We're here. It's happening. Life is beautiful.

In Greek, *gloutos* means 'the rump', and the word 'butt' comes from the end of a piece of something. But if you google 'gluteology' you will find that we're not the first to use it in reference to all matters arse. If you look up the word 'rumpology', side note, you'll find that that is a related but somewhat more spiritual discipline. But don't worry, we will fill in those cracks for you.

This ologist is a primatologist, an anthropologist, a science host, and correspondent. You may have heard her on *StarTalk* or Nat Geo Wild's *Everything You Didn't Know About Animals*. She's co-hosted *Curiosity Daily* and more, and we met years ago at a Nerd Brigade dinner, and I'd always lamented that there couldn't be a second primatology episode. But she emailed me recently reminding me that she has appeared on TV to talk *specifically* about butts as that is her specialty, so I welcomed gluteology with open arms.

So stick around to learn – what exactly is a butt? Which animal has the largest butt? Cultural butt preference, why many people enjoy the aesthetics of ass, Squatty Potties, trends, hairiness, shady injections, personal (very personal) revelations, butt versus legs, and of course, the importance of self-acceptance, and plenty of very *cheeky* puns with entertainer, primatologist, and Gluteologist Natalia Reagan.

Alie Ward: Helloooo?

Natalia Reagan: Hi! How are you?

Alie: [*chants*] Butts! Butts! Butts! Butts! Butts!

Natalia: [*joins the chant*] Butts butts butts! I've been doing it to "Shots" – Butts! Butts! Butts-butts!-butts!-butts!

Alie: [*laughs*]

Natalia: I'm *rearin'* and ready to get *behind* this topic... [*Alie laughs*] I'm sorry it *tuchus* so long to get here, Alie...

Alie: We're gonna get to the *bottom* of a lot of questions... [*Natalia laughs*] First thing I'm going to make you do is say your first and last name and your pronouns.

Natalia: I'm Natalia Reagan and my pronouns are 'she' and 'her.'

Alie: You are – I think – a gluteologist, if I looked into it the right way. You could be a rumpologist or a gluteologist.

Natalia: I'm thinking gluteologist, because a rumpologist... I've only found a few, and I definitely don't necessarily want to be lumped in with those rumps, if you know what I mean.

Alie: Rumpology is more, like palm-reading but for the buttocks?

Natalia: Yeah, more *ass-trology* if you know what I mean. [*Alie laughs*] Yeah. And I was able to do some digging, went real deep in there, into the cracks and crevasses. Sylvester Stallone's mom, Alie – Jacqueline Stallone, or Jackie Stallone – is a rumpologist and she claims that the Babylonians, the Greeks did this, but there is no *backstory* or history other than what she's done. She and Ulf Beck, who is a blind clairvoyant out of Germany who also feels the naked tushes of his friends to give them a... sort of, fortune telling of what to expect from the future, from the literal past, which is *behind* them.

Alie: Oh my god.

Natalia: Oh, I should also note – honestly, Alie, go to her website because she has, I think, four examples of different butts and one of them is – I think it says, "American action hero," and I'm just like, "*Oh, come on.*"

Alie: Oh... my god.

Natalia: Did she put her son's butt there??

Alie: Is it in a diaper? From when he was a bebe? Oh my god. Jackie Stallone. She's really capitalizing on it. Wow.

Natalia: And she has very strong opinions about the cleft, or the crack, in a butt, and what that means. And one of my favorite things she said was that bankers had short cracks, lawyers

had long cracks. The width of a crack also was associated with professions. A politician had a wide crack. [laughs] Cops had a narrow one!

Alie: Oh... my... god. There's a very hairy *Fortune* 500 CEO. A female movie star... you're right. "Male action hero movie star." I think I can see just a whisper of scrote in that. Wow. Wow. Wow.

Natalia: That will be the only *cologne* Stallone will wear.

Aside: Okay, PS, I looked it up, and I hate to be the bearer of bad news but the late Jackie Stallone passed into the great behind four months ago. So if I ever do rumpology, I will have to hunt down one of her protégés to read my rump.

Should I do it? Should I? You know what, let's all move forward and let's just get down to business.

Alie: So you are a gluteologist, let's say. We've established that, I think. Now, how did you get into studying butts, and monkeys, and primate butts? And I mean, what even is a butt?

Natalia: What is a butt? I was always a fan of butts as a child only because... I remember, I actually bit my mom on the butt at a restaurant once. I watched *Sesame Street* and they did, like, love pinches and love bites, and so I gave her a love bite. And I remember that was the first time I actually had to apologize. You know when your parents make you apologize and you kind of remember that being a really pivotal moment where you're like, "*I did something bad. I'm sorry.*"? It was because I bit my mom on the butt.

Alie: Ohh! [laughs] I bet she loves this story now though.

Natalia: I don't even know if she remembers! I wonder if she does? When I talk to her next, I'm going to have to ask.

Alie: Yeah!

Natalia: As a kid though, I never had that beanpole phase. I always was kind of a muscular kid, and I remember even a babysitter of mine complimenting my "shapely legs." And I was eight.

Alie: Oh boy!

Natalia: And she was like a grandma, so it wasn't meant any way other than just like, "You're not a string bean." And when I got to junior high, I remember everybody... you know, back in the day, this was the early '90s, flat butts were all the rage. I remember I kind of had a shelf that my friends used to joke about all the time. I got made fun of a lot by my girlfriends.

Then "Baby Got Back" came out. [clip from "*Baby Got Back*": "*It's so round, it's like out there.*"] I remember just loving that song! And "Rump Shaker"? [Rump Shaker: "*All I wanna do is zoom-a-zoom-zoom-zoom, and a poom-poom, just shake ya rump!*"] There were a lot of songs in the early '90s that I definitely was hip to – I mean, that just shows you how dorky I am, I said 'hip to'.

As I got older, I really enjoyed understanding the evolution of how humans came to look the way we do today, how we evolved. And I remember when I realized in a paleoanthropology... actually, it was an Intro to Biological Anthropology class when I first was taught that basically walking on two legs led to the bigger booty in humans versus non-human primates.

Alie: Aha!

Natalia: Yeah! Walking on two legs! Because basically, non-human primates (monkeys, and apes, and lemurs, and lorises) don't have a sweet peachy keister like we do. Some actually have ischial callosities, many of the cercopithecoids – or what we have been calling 'Old World monkeys' but we're moving away from that term because it's inherently a little, hmm... outdated.

Aside: So an ischial callosity, by the by, is a fancy term for those butt pads on some primates, and it's coming from 'ischial' of the ischia, which is part of your pelvis, the part that your yoga teacher may have called your 'sit bones' during a yummy stretch, and 'callosity' as in big ol' callus. So some primates have these large disc pads that they sit on, but we have luscious, cleaved cushions. Why?

Natalia: We actually have this butt because we have to walk on two legs, and the increased size of the gluteus maximus, medius, and minimus muscles help support that mode of locomotion. So they help stabilize our ability to walk, and stand, and bend over, and do all sorts of things. Although I did find out that they are not necessarily used in twerking, believe it or not. It's more pelvic.

Alie: Really?!

Natalia: Yeah. So glutes are not as used as you think for something like twerking, which I thought, "Oh, that's gotta be why I can't do it. My glutes are not strong enough!" But apparently it's my pelvis!

Alie: Really!

Aside: Okay, I looked into this, and somebody calling herself the "Twerking Technician" offers workshops – twerkshops, if you will – teaching "the basic anatomy of the hips, which muscles are used for adduction and abduction, and specific isolation exercises so that you can gain the ability to communicate with these muscles for a proper twerk." And no, Miley Cyrus did not invent twerking with her 2013 legendary VMA appearance. It blossomed – not surprisingly, under-credited – from the west African dance the Mapouka, which may have originated from 'the bump'. Anyway, booty-shaking's roots start in the hips.

Natalia: Yeah, it's less about the actual gluteus muscles and more about the actual pelvis and the movement of it. The butt gets jiggled around as you move your pelvis and your legs, being the behind. That gets the rump shaking, if you know what I mean.

Alie: Oh, this is so good. This means there's room for improvement and we know where to go now. Amazing.

Now, you became a primatologist and anthropologist, how did you end up studying this? From having shapely legs and biting butts to becoming a professional ologist, how did you do it?

Natalia: That's a really good question. Growing up, I used to actually have... Well, I should change that. I *still* have recurring King Kong nightmares. I started having them when I was about two or three – very, very, very young. I watched that movie probably too young, but I would hear the footsteps coming and would run to the center of the house where there were no windows. And I remember King Kong would just rip off the roof of the house and eat my family one by one by one.

Aside: In Natalia's nightmares, King Kong would straight up eat her, like a granola bar. And so she started to try to control the narrative of her dreams, shrinking King Kong down to a more snuggly ape. And in one dream...

Natalia: ... I opened the door and it was an orangutan and it hugged me. And ever since then I was enamored with primates. It was almost like Stockholm Syndrome where all of a sudden I was just in love and didn't have that fear.

I wanted to be a zoologist, but as I got older... I think this happens a lot not just with young girls in STEAM, but anybody that wants to do STEAM or STEM, they don't excel in math and science when they get to junior high and high school. And so they just feel defeated and they pick a different path – which isn't necessarily a bad thing, but I was like, "Oh, I'm not doing great in math and science." Mostly math. And so I threw myself into the one thing I was good at, which was at the time comedy and theater. Because being a shapely kid (read: husky) I was definitely having to turn to comedy to deflect any sort of bullying and things like that.

So I became a theater dork and I ended up going to school for theater but took an anthropology class my first year at UC Irvine. (Go Anteaters!) And I fell in love with biological anthropology: just the idea of 'how did we get to where we are', and how are we still evolving. Because we are. We haven't stopped, and same with every other species out there. But while taking this biological anthropology class, I just became fascinated with how the environment shapes us and then even our mode of locomotion shapes the way we look. I became obsessed with the idea that we got butts from walking on two legs and the same with getting boobs! Which we'll get to. We'll get to the *breast* tail ever told shortly. [*Alie laughs*]

Aside: We're gonna get to boobs in a hot floppy second, but first...

Alie: I want to know, when it comes to biological anthropology and how evolution and our environment shapes us, I'm still trying to get my head around the butt and walking upright. Do we need those butt muscles to be pulling on parts of our legs like a puppeteer? Are they working like levers? How does that work?

Natalia: Yeah, that's a great question. It's basically allowing... the way it connects, it allows the hips to sort of stabilize in place. And so non-human primates also have gluteus maximus, medius, and minimus muscles, but the glutes (gluteus maximus specifically) attach at a different place on the pelvis. It attaches on the ischium. Now, on humans, it attaches on the ilium, which is the top portion of the pelvis. And that allows us to have more stability and maintain our balance.

Aside: Natalia explained that chimpanzees, our closest genetic relative, have glutes... *butt* they're much less beefy than ours because they stick their little rumps out behind 'em, but our muscles need to be strong enough to help us balance upright so that we don't just topple over every time we take a step.

So Natalia bounced around at college, narrowing down her passion and working in TV and live theater as she went.

Natalia: When I graduated from undergrad, I knew that I loved primates. I had fallen in love with the field of anthropology, but I didn't quite know how or where I was going to go next. I was going to apply to grad school and I wanted to stay in... for my thing, which was primate conservation. I wanted to not only learn about the monkey butts but also conserve. You can't study the monkey butts if the monkey butts are extinct!

Alie: *[laughs]* Yes!

Natalia: So I ended up going to grad school to focus on conservation of... uh... monkey butts.

Alie: Oh! And what kind of questions does it answer for you as a human?

Natalia: Looking at nonhuman primates as, say, a model for human behavior can be a slippery slope. It can be great because you can actually learn a lot from what we do based on what they do. But we have to remember that they've been evolving this whole entire time that we split off from a common ancestor... So for instance, it's easy to go, "Oh we'll look at chimpanzee behavior. That's so cool. That explains why we do what we do." But we come from a common ancestor with chimpanzees and chimps might have behaved totally... I mean, theoretically probably not super different from the way they behave now, but they might. 7 million years ago they could have been behaving differently. So it's hard to kind of look at that behavior and be like, "Oh that's why we do what we do now!"

Because like I said, the environment shapes so much of how we look and also how we behave. But so for me it's a mixture of... at first I think when I was younger, it was looking at them as models for human behavior... But now I just find them intrinsically interesting. Just like I find frogs fascinating. I know that you, Alie, love bugs. I love bugs too. I mean, I learn a bunch about them, but I don't necessarily... it's not because I want to understand how they relate to humans.

Aside: But before grad school, when she was just 19, she was still finding her footing, if you will. And after our interview, she realized she forgot to tell me this story, so I had her send me a voice memo because it's... really something.

Natalia: I then started taking night classes at Santa Monica college and fell in love with biological anthropology. I took archeology. I took zoology. It was one of those things where I was like, "Holy crap! This is what I want to do! But I didn't really know how to actually pursue it. And by the way, if you live in Los Angeles, Santa Monica College is excellent. Go there. It's fantastic.

And then I got hit by a truck as a pedestrian on the shoulder of the freeway and everything changed. So I was on the 101 freeway and traffic slowed. I slammed on my brakes, but they locked and I rear-ended the person in front of me. Now, the next exit on this freeway was an entrance to another freeway. Normally I would just get off at the next exit because I hate the shoulder of the freeway. I know how dangerous it is, but the car in front of me who I rear-ended pulled over onto the shoulder and I pulled over behind them because I didn't want them to think it was a hit and run. That's when a woman came up on the shoulder going about 65 miles per hour, hit my truck. My truck hit me, broke my femur, and then pinned me between the truck and the car that I had rear-ended, and that crushed my lower right leg. And then the way she hit me, my truck spun out and I got tossed onto the off-ramp onto my head, which explains so much...

[deep sigh] Anyways... Next, the ambulance comes and of course they have to cut off all my clothes. That's where the *[suspicious cough]* lack of underwear becomes a thing... I basically put on a show for the EMTs *and* the entire contents of the 101 freeway. You're welcome. But they took me to the ER and had to do a couple blood transfusions because I lost a lot of blood. And because I had a crush injury to my lower right leg, they couldn't cast my femur. So they inserted a rod into it... *And* they took it out about two years later and I got to keep it! So I have this big purple titanium femoral rod on my mantle right now, *[soft giggle]* very dorky.

But yeah, so that accident was the catalyst to get my butt back to school. Some people need a kick in the butt. I just needed to get hit by a '94 Ford ranger. But I'm not suggesting that you get hit by a truck. Please don't let that happen to you. It's really not good. In fact, if you're ever in an accident, get off the freeway altogether, don't get on the shoulder, stay off the shoulder! But seriously, that was the impetus to go back to school and really throw myself into the work that I wanted to do.

It was challenging because I still had these long-term effects from the accident. I had foot-drop in my right leg. The way it healed, I had a *massive* limp and the only way I could walk normal was wearing heels. I wore a leg brace for a pretty long time. I have a bit of a limp still; Mmm, it's hard to tell unless I'm wearing completely flat shoes. If I wear heels, it evens it out. But as an anthropologist, all this stuff was fascinating to me. I love understanding, you know, how my missing tibialis anterior muscle affects all my movement, because I do notice!

Like when I did fieldwork, I had to use a walking stick because I called myself "The Jack Tripper of Primatology," because wow... [*laughing*] I fell uphill, going downhill. I fall on flat surfaces. It is a problem. And it's because of my injuries... my injuries taught me about anatomy and the ability to walk on two legs – or the inability! – and what that means. And also it shows, I think, how resilient bodies are. Like, I don't... I don't know if I should be alive. I mean, I got hit by a truck going 65 miles per hour, darn it! But bodies are really freaking strong. And so I try to remember that anytime when I get down on myself for... "Aw, man! I wish I could do this, or that, or run a marathon." It's like, "Ehhh, you chased monkeys after getting hit by a truck. You're cool."

Another strange side effect from the accident. One butt cheek is slightly bigger than the other. Yes! I think it's because one leg is compensating for the other and it's just spread to my butt cheeks... And so one's just a better pillow, you know? And these are the things that have happened to my body that make me; a) appreciate it. Like, "Hey. You've survived." But also make me really interested in anatomy and just how everything is connected.

Aside: So once she was back on her feet, she went through undergrad and of course, she became a primatologist, going full steam ahead into the Panamanian forest.

Natalia: Oh goodness! So I did fieldwork. Like I said, I wanted to study gorillas, but then I had to pivot and just kind of do the "next best thing!" And luckily my advisor at Cal State Northridge, Dr. Christina Campbell, she studied spider monkeys on BCI, an island in the Panama Canal. And she'd just gotten in contact with an organization on the Azuero Peninsula in Panama, and they needed somebody to literally do a survey of spider monkeys.

So I moved to Panama to basically count monkeys in trees [*excited, emotional gasp from Alie*] and get as much data as I could about, you know, their age, their sex, and any distinguishing characteristics. And so it was a magical time. Basically, we would go out every day, anywhere between 8, to 12, to 15 hours a day. Oftentimes on horseback to get to the actual forest fragments, because basically it was a heavily forested area of Panama that also was right in the best surfing spot of Panama! [*laughs*] So that's what we did on our days off! So we chased -

Alie: Oh my god!

Natalia: Right?! Ohhh yeah. It was magical. And yeah, spider monkeys... A little... I don't know if you know this, but spider monkeys; the females have a hypertrophied clitoris.

Alie: No! I did not know that!

Natalia: Yes, mmm yeah! But spider monkeys have a very long clitoris that... I remember the first time I ever saw a spider monkey, I thought, "Oh, look at that male!" And then I was quickly schooled; "No, that is a female." And it really helped us because males and females, there's not a lot of sexual dimorphism in terms of size, meaning the males and females are very similar in size in spider monkeys.

Aside: Sidenote; spider monkeys live up to 8 stories high in the rainforest canopies, and at first I got them confused with those tiny pygmy marmosets, which are the size of a tarantula. But no, spider monkeys, they're not the itty-bitty thumb huggers. Rather, they are about a meter tall, weighing in at about 25lbs. They're just named spider monkeys because of their long limbs. And other long stuff.

Natalia: And so it helped me if I saw a spider monkey in the distance, I could see the 'dangler' just sort of protruding from her undercarriage and be like, "That there is a female." And luckily the data, they're all in maps. And they've been able to use, basically, these maps, to help reforest that area and it's gotten better and I heard that monkeys are actually... there's more coming back in different parts of the region. So I'm planning on going back when things are better to see if there's any more work that can be done.

Aside: So why do some humans walk through a jungle looking up at other primates, just mechanically speaking?

Alie: Walking upright versus not working upright. What led to us standing up and having... back pain? *[laughs]*

Natalia: *[laughs]* I know! Having really crappy knees!

Alie: And painful childbirth!

Natalia: Right?! Um, yeah, painful childbirth. That's, that's that big old brain of ours. But walking upright, there are a few different theories that could work in tandem or separately... that's the thing about coming up with evolutionary theories; we don't necessarily know for sure... But when it comes to being bipedal there's this idea that as the climate was changing in different parts of Africa, it would behoove those ancestors of ours to stand upright so they could see any predator, say, in the area. Or they could, you know, hold things for instance, like their offspring. So there's a benefit to standing upright for predator avoidance, for being able to hold and carry things, especially if they're gathering food items.

Also, thermodynamics and thermoregulation. Basically, the idea that if you're on all fours, you're living in an area where you don't have any shade, you're getting all that sun on your back. And standing upright limits the amount of sun exposure that you're getting, so it's not beating down, just... you know, it'd be beating down on your head, not your whole back. And at this point, we're assuming that also we still have fur covering our bodies. It's not exactly known exactly when all that went away because soft tissue unfortunately does not preserve.

Alie: Mmhmm. I mean, some of us lost all of our hair. Some of us are Italian, so.... *[laughs]*

Natalia: *[laughs]* I didn't know what to say! I was like, *[awkward, strained voice]* "Um, some, some people did not lose very much at all..."

Alie: Yeah!

Natalia: I'm Scottish. So I don't know about you, Alie. And I don't know if it's a Scottish thing necessarily, but I am hair-ryy! I have done multiple rounds of laser hair removal...

Alie: *[knowingly]* Oh. Oh! Whole body!

Natalia: ... all over my body. Really?

Alie: Pretty much. Oh yeah.

Aside: Some people are hairier than others, and also, just DadWard here to say: No matter what your gender, or how you look, or what you're into, it's A-okay. It's more than A-okay! It's the result of millions of years of sexual selection and survival and it's just beautiful.

Alie: But what about... what about the sexual nature of butts? Why do you think we look at them so much?

Natalia: That's a great question. For instance, dudes – or even ladies – find the, uh... keister nice and attractive is the hip to waist ratio. It was long thought that the hip-to-waist ratio was associated with fertility and they found that actually it's not. Those that have a lower hip-to-waist ratio are not necessarily healthier or have higher fertility, so that's kind of a myth. But it's still something that some will find more attractive. But again, I think what really needs to be stressed is there are cultural differences over, you know, across the world. Certain things are considered more attractive in certain places. Some things are considered taboo.

Aside: Some psychologists hypothesize that our own butts are a part of our body we can't see or judge, so maybe there is something forbidden with looking at others derriere's when they themselves hardly know. But alas, hello; mirrors. Okay, so what are some other theories?

Natalia: Honestly. Many have surmised that the roundness is very attractive, including... some people say that the breasts mimic the actual butt. I mean, it's to-be-determined exactly what came first in terms of the amount of fat surrounding the mammary gland, which is why we have boobs versus non-human primates. They lactate, they have mammary glands, but they don't have the fat surrounding them like we do. But boobs and butts are similar in the fact that they're kind of in this rounded fashion. I don't know exactly when that happened when it became like, "Ooh, that's... I like that supple posterior, you got going on there."

But I think it's something to do with the roundness and then also knowing what that entails. Because if you think about it, as we were evolving from being on all fours to two legs, the sexual swellings were no longer visible. And so they were now being hidden by... uh, well just the butt and, you know, just the legs! Everything is just kind of just like compact in there, which we'll get to when we talk about why we are the only animals that technically wipe, too.

Alie: Oh, SO many questions about that.

Natalia: Oh I know, right? And I've talked about this before. There's certain groups that... not idolize, but fetishize, or prefer booties to boobs or different body parts and things like

that. But I think there's something to be said for just kind of knowing what that entails, and what it's hiding, and that sort of thing.

Alie: When it comes to the actual shape or the size of a booty... Why do some people have shapely butts, others feel like they have pancake butts? Is it all just muscle development?

Natalia: Well it's... yeah. Great question. It's muscle. And fat. And the fat, oftentimes, is influenced by the amount of hormones that you have in your body.

Aside: And in all of this talk of genders, of course in nature things are on a spectrum, there's so much variety, and so I see you out there, nonbinary friends, trans buddies. And anyone who's on hormones medically, which are a lot of us. Just saying; giving you a thumbs up!

Natalia: Males and females distribute fat differently sometimes depending on the amount of hormones that are going on in their body. Now, there aren't necessarily male and female hormones. People say, "Oh, testosterone, that's a male hormone." No, females have testosterone, males have estrogen. Females have more estrogen on average, and therefore that is basically the determinant on where the fat is localized on the body; hips, thighs, butt. And with males and testosterone, it's usually associated with belly fat, which can be, unfortunately, associated with cardiovascular health because it can be really hard on the organs to have so much fat in that region. But fat in the buttocks, the thighs, and the hips is usually where those with higher amounts of estrogen will carry that extra fat.

And that's a good place also because, as far as balance and not tipping over or anything like that, it doesn't make you too top-heavy. It's a good center to have all that fat and it's a good place to store it because in times of, for instance, if... When we were evolving, if perhaps you didn't have a lot of... There was no Del Taco or McDonald's on the savannah corner. It's good to have fat reserves just in case you hit famine or any sort of times of low resource availability, essentially. And that's a great place to store the fat reserves.

We still see it today; people distribute fat differently. That's why, if... I have friends that have transitioned, and they see fat distribution change because they are getting different hormones. And so that's a clear way we can see, "Oh, okay, hormones do really determine how fat distributes on your body." It's a mixture of... Obviously, if you do a lot of squats, and do running, and donkey kicks, and all those things, you can build up your glutes, your gluteus maximus, medius, and minimus muscles. But sometimes it's just your hormones and you can't necessarily change that unless you try to alter it synthetically.

Alie: When it comes to different parts of the globe, as people moved farther away from the equator, was fat distributed differently in their bodies to keep warm? How does that work?

Natalia: That's a fantastic question. Because there's Allen's and Bergmann's rules, which are these two different rules that associate limb proportion and trunk proportion with actual latitude or temperature. Two different rules that are associated with limb proportion and also trunk size in people or animals in different latitudes and temperature environments. Allen's rule has to do with limb proportion. For instance, if you're living closer to the equator where it's really hot, you're going to have longer, leaner limbs. If you're living further away from the equator in higher latitudes or really low latitudes, you're going to have shorter limbs to keep in that warmth.

Same with Bergman's rules, which is about trunk size and stockiness. If you're higher up in the latitude or low, you're going to have a stockier build, and closer to the equator

you're going to be more lean. So these are ways that we can adapt to the environment. But we should note that biological evolution happens a lot slower than cultural evolution. So we're seeing a lot of different body types from all over the world that weren't there until recently. It's hard to determine, "Oh, they look this way because they've been here for thousands upon thousands of years," because people are moving around the globe so freely now, so that's something to consider as well.

Alie: And when it comes to butts and modern butts, now that we are moving freely about the globe, we can inject things into, and on top of, our butts. Are we seeing a lot of butt implants lately? Or do people just take fat from one area of their body and put it over their butt muscle? I remember Kim Kardashian saying she did not have butt implants and she'd prove it by getting an x-ray. She's like, "See, it's all me!" But then I heard that there are cosmetic procedures where you just take parts of your fat and you can put in your boobs or reallocate it to your butt. And I didn't even know that was possible!

Natalia: I actually didn't... I always wanted to do that as a child. And that speaks to how screwed up our culture is, but I remember being like... I had a little chubby belly as a kid, and I was like, "I just want to put it where my boobs should be!" *[laughs]* But yeah, you can do that. I know women who've done that for breast reconstructive surgery. There's also been butt lifts. So, there've been butt implants and butt lifts.

And then, of course... I don't know if you've heard of this. There was a woman that got something injected into her butt. (I know this sounds dirtier than it really should be.) It was a mixture of... it was supposed to be a saline solution, but it was... basically this grifter put together this weird solution and just injected it into this woman's butt. And she got really sick and had sepsis because it got infected and all sorts of things. So people will go to great lengths to have a sweet apple bottom.

I hate that there is such pressure on everybody to succumb or look a certain way. And especially because – let's face it – there's been so many fluctuations of what body type is "in," which is dumb to begin with. But come on, now! We shouldn't have to inject our butt with... I can't even remember... It was a weird solution of stuff that I was like, *[indicating disbelief]* "Wait a minute."

Aside: I looked this up and people have injected all kinds of stuff; including cement, super glue, mineral oil, and even Fix-A-Flat tire mender. And, in one Florida instance, all of those things in one injection. And then, of course, there is the Brazilian butt lift, which I just found out in researching this episode is a fat transfer from one area of your body, like perhaps you sacrifice your cute muffin top region and put it into the posterior. One plastic surgeon I read about online calls it "transferring your money from one pocket to the other." But it's also one of the riskiest plastic surgeries. Meaning, yes, you'll shell out upwards of 10 grand, but it may also cost you your life.

Natalia: I'm a big believer... Honestly, I'm glad you said that... I'm a big believer that if it would make you happy, then do it. I don't care if women or anybody get any sort of thing done to themselves that brings them joy. I just hate that it's something that seems to be cyclical sometimes, in which case... things like this should not be fads. I would hope not only because I feel like... what about, what if butts go back out and all of a sudden you've got... Wait a minute. Butts are never going to go out. Let's just be real.

Alie: They're never going to go out, but you just have to love the butt you've got.

Natalia: Yes! Love your butt. I made a video called "Love your butt."

[several voices in sequence, emphatically. "It's time. It's time! It's time. It's time... It's time to love your butt."]

Aside: That video was about colonoscopies, but if you need some freedom from beauty culture standards may I suggest the two-parter on Kalology with Dr. Renee Engeln? I'll link it on my website because your butt is working itself off to keep you balanced and comfy and you owe it all the love in the world.

Alie: It's the butt that's closest to you at all times and you can touch it whenever you want. So you might as well just love it.

Natalia: If Ulf Beck the clairvoyant rumpologist can't touch your butt, you can! And predict your future, which is: you're just going to keep loving it.

Alie: And, speaking of touching our own butts, we're forced to by necessity. Human beings wipin' their bottoms. Do other animals do this? We have our añuses so well ensconced in our butt cheeks. What's going on?

Natalia: Well, walking on two legs is what really makes it tough, and you kind of have to wipe because otherwise it... can you imagine poopin' and then just standing right up? Things slam shut again. It just... It gets real foul. Real foul real quick. And so yeah, our mode of locomotion really does influence whether or not we should be wiping. For instance, a lot of non-human primates, they don't... I mean, let's be real. I've been shit on by... excuse me, I've been crapped on by more monkeys than I'm really happy to admit. And all they have to do is just let it rip right over my head and they don't have to wipe. In fact, I've watched them just kind of go about their business right after pooping on me. Rude.

Alie: Really?! They don't even grab a leaf or anything?

Natalia: Nothing. I've seen nothing like that, like where they rub it on a branch. I wonder, actually, if there were parasites or things like that... if they had parasites if they would maybe scratch their booty on a branch because something itched or something. That might be a possibility. But a lot of other animals, the quadrupedal animals, don't necessarily have to do that. And we all know the cats and dogs of the world just go to town on that and "play the cello." The butthole is the information superhighway of the animal kingdom. Let's be real. That's where we get all our information. So you don't want it too clean because how else are you going to know where Mr. Mittens has been all day?

Alie: I was just audience to, and bore witness to, my own dog having a deep conversation with her butthole today.

Aside: Just a fun, disgusting sidenote: if your doggo is a real buttlicker, you might relieve that by learning to express its anal glands, which might be itchy for them. Or taking it to a vet, or groomer, or a professional who can do this stinky deed for you. Trust me, it's the worst smell I've ever smelled.

Alie: But other animals, I feel like... just, they're good. They're done. They walk away from it. But part of it is because they don't quite have the meat on the butts that we do.

Natalia: Yeah! Exactly. I live next to a bus depot and I have these four bus depot cats that just hang out on my porch and I see their buttholes every day. You know what I mean? If I want to show you my butthole – I'm not going to show you my butthole, Alie, don't worry – I have to spread 'em, if you know what I mean. And that is the reason why I have to wipe and my bus depot cats and Gremmie do not.

Alie: What about bidets? I haven't lived anywhere other than the United States so I don't know where bidets are, necessarily, but any thoughts on why humans don't use them or why American humans don't use them more?

Natalia: [*in a fake French accent*] Because we are lazy! No, I think bidets actually were getting more popular during the beginning of quarantine because of that toilet paper crash. So I know a lot of people who got the tush... I don't know what it's called. The Tushy?

Alie: A Tushy. I have one.

Natalia: Oh you do! They're great, right?

Alie: Yeah. It's warm. It gets you right... Bullseye! You know what I mean?

Natalia: "Ooh, hey! Buy me dinner first." [*laughs*] I'm going to tell a personal story if you don't mind. It was 10 years ago. I was young. I just graduated from grad school and something didn't feel right down there, Alie. So I went to a proctologist, and I kid you not, my intake nurse was the most attractive male nurse I've ever met. And I had to tell him about my bowel movements, my butthole, and all the stuff. And I was like, "This is awful." But I told him all the things and I went in to go see the female proctologist, who was probably my age. She was young, and she was really cool and nice. And when you go to a proctologist, you lay on the table and you lay on your side and she kinda spreads them and she looks, and she goes, "Oh! Your butt's too clean."

Alie: What?!

Natalia: Yeah. And I said, "Excuse me?" She goes, "Your butt's too clean. You use those baby wipes, don't you?" And I said, "Yeah..." and she goes, "Yeah, it's a huge problem these days because people are using the baby wipes so much that they're drying out their bootyhole." So she suggested – and listeners at home, you may want to try this. I've actually taught this method to a few friends of mine because it makes me happy. You can use a very calm, fragrance-free, light moisturizer as a way to create your own baby wipe with toilet paper if you don't have access to a bidet. [*"Lifehack."*]

Alie: Good to know. Also, those wipes are terrible for the sewer systems. I mean, fatbergs. Have you heard of the fatbergs that are happening?

Natalia: Wait, what?

Alie: There are clogs of wipes and congealed fat that has gotten hard in the cold depths of the sewers. There was one the size of a school bus [*Natalia shrieks in consternation*] in the sewers of London. They call them fatbergs and wipes are mostly to blame. So you heard it here first. Yes. It's true. I forgot what episode I mentioned it in, but I went down some real holes, if you will, looking at pictures of fatbergs and they are just what you expect. They're revolting.

Natalia: So the fat is from, I would assume, bacon fat, grease, things like that? Oh, my god.

Alie: Yeah! I know, I know, but that's so good to know. Everyone has an alternative now and we all appreciate that. Who doesn't appreciate that? This is amazing. I have so many questions from listeners. Can I lightning-round you?

Natalia: Yeah, of course.

Alie: Are you excited?

Natalia: Yes.

Alie: Oh, by the way, can I just say trivia? I do have a buttload of questions, but I found out recently that a buttload is an actual measurement. Did you know that? I think 120 gallons of wine is a buttload of wine. It's so good.

Natalia: *[laughs]* That makes me happy when things like that actually have real scientific merit. I'm like, "Oh, okay!"

Alie: Yeah! Like a bunghole is a hole in a barrel. I got to sniff a bunghole and it smelled delicious. *[clip from Beavis and Butthead: Cornholio, "Bunghole, bunghole, bunghole."]*

Natalia: Alie, will you stop talking to me about your bunghole?

Alie: *[laughs]* Questions from patrons! Which also reminds me to ask where you'd like me to donate for this episode, whatever charity of your choosing. Several people had questions about the largest butts. Emily A phrased it: "What animal has the biggest badonk?" Sammy Baker said: "Very, very, very important question: Which animal has the THICCEST DONK?"

Aside: But before we get to your questions, a word about sponsors of the show, who you may hear about soon. They enable us to make a donation each week and Natalia chose ProjectChimps.org, which gives former research chimpanzees a new lease on life at a sanctuary in the mountains of Georgia. And Natalia says that she actually did a segment there with *StarTalk* and became buds with Gertrude, who she now sponsors. Natalia says that Gertrude, "did fling her poop at me, and now we are forever shit-sisters or, shitsters." So, we were able to fling some money their way thanks to the following sponsors.

[Ad Break]

Aside: Okay, let's get back to that question, which was also asked by Chris Moore and Jessi Loerch.

Alie: So yes, the strongest and biggest badonks, and why? Would it be an elephant or would you say that there's another animal that has bigger haunches?

Natalia: My question is, biggest badonk to body size? Because I would say biggest badonk to body size, when it comes to glute size and all that kind of stuff, I would say humans are up there. *["Yes!"]* There was a woman that I actually – because I did a little bit of research – that had a 99-inch hip circumference. That's a very, very large badonk and she was very proud of it, to which I say, "Yes, be very proud of that, you made that."

Alie: Yeah!

Natalia: Because we have this fat specifically around the butt, in women specifically, that's where you get the real thickness, you know?

Alie: Well, Talia Duniak wants to know: Do fish have a butt?

Natalia: That's a great question. Fish, as far as I know, do not have a butt. *[laughs]* It's sad.

Alie: Yeah, it's just... yeah, I'm just... they're buttless.

ThimbleWhim wants to know: Which booty is best, wombat or corgi? Dori B says: Corgi butts versus Frenchies? Is there a particular dog butt that you think is best, or an animal butt that you find is best?

Natalia: Look, I've seen a lot of Boston terriers poop and I've never seen the look of, almost, shame in their eyes with the quivering legs as they poop. For some reason, a Boston terrier really sticks out to me as having a very strong, lean butt, with a very controlled pooping

mechanism. I don't know. They really stand out to me for some reason. Corgis, their fur butt, the fact that they're wearing fur pants, I find to be really respectful. What butts do I really get behind?

When I did fieldwork we rode horses, and I always had the farting horse. I had Sababah, [phonetic] and yeah, she would fart a ton and I always found that to be hilarious. [*"It never gets old."*]

Alie: Mandii Smith, Daniel Donaldson, Erika Gonzalez, Lulu Hall, Ashley Brown, BeckytheSassySeagrassScientist, RJ Doidge, and Renee Parsonage, who is a first-time question-asker, everyone wanted to know, in Renee's words: Why don't humans sniff each other's butts like dogs? Why don't we sniff it?

Natalia: [*laughs*] That's a very good question. Funny enough, I just actually lectured about this today, our decreased olfaction senses. I think that probably has something to do with it. Our sense of smell is not what it has been in the past. I'm just trying to think of spider monkeys, if I've seen a lot of smelling of butts.

I have seen it in other nonhuman primates, I watched two langurs, which are Colobines, these types of monkeys that you'll see... These were from India specifically, but they were really playing with each other's tuchuses. Lots of smelling, lots of finger and tasting. Yeah, which I thought was kinda like, "Okay... this is very intimate."

Also, let's be very clear. Again, back to the butt cheeks and back to the crack, our butthole is not really out and proud. Again, if I wanna sniff someone's butthole, I gotta get *in* there. It is not exposed like, say, a cat or a dog. That's not to say if it was exposed, I would be up in it. I think it's a mixture of decreased olfaction and also, perhaps the lack of accessibility. [*laughs*]

Alie: That makes some sense. [*"I recognize your scent."*]

Natalia: I'm not 100% sure and we might not ever know the answer, Alie. And there probably are... I mean, I don't want to kink shame, but there's probably some people out there that that is their thing.

Alie: That, 100% yes. And...

Aside: ...nothing wrong with that if it makes sense to you. This one was also asked by patrons Bálint Novák, first-time question-asker Claudia Dana, Sam F, Kata Zarándy, Stephanie Tea, and Rene Melara.

Alie: Daisy Goldstein Cross and a few others, wanted to know: Why the hair up in there?

Natalia: Great question. So, one of the thoughts of why we have hair between our butt cheeks is maybe to decrease the friction when we walk, perhaps it makes it not as uncomfortable. We also have hair in kind of our nooks and crannies; our armpits, our pubis. So, this might just be sort of a leftover that's like, "Meh... why not?" [*both laugh*] We all know that there's different varying degrees of how much hair. I've seen some butts that I'm pretty sure I thought they had a sweater on their backside. And that's okay. Point being, yes, there are perhaps reasons to make it so it's not so friction and sweaty.

And hair, often... you know, that's why you have hair in your nose, to kind of keep certain bacteria and things out of there. Not that there's a bunch of bacteria trying to get directly into your tuchus, but you never can be too sure.

Alie: Yeah. I have a very specific question that is only applicable to one person, but I'm going to ask it anyway. Rebecca Prater wants to know: I may have spent too much time studying this, but why does one of my butt cheeks make a louder sound when it's slapped? The right one echoes for miles and the left one is just a dull thud. [*Natalia laughs*] Is that normal for people to have a dominant butt cheek? And Zwelf Juniper says: PLEASE do not overlook the genius of this question. Any idea?

Natalia: It is so good. I wonder, she didn't mention if one's bigger than the other did she? So, the scientist in me is asking, okay, who is slapping? Are they slapping at the same spot? Are they slapping with the same amount of force? We need to do a real experiment with controls and everything to make sure that this is done right. And I think maybe we can reach out to her to see if she can possibly do that, if she's comfortable with that, because I don't know off the top of my head why.

Alie: We'll get our team on it and we'll touch base... we'll slap base.

Oh okay, Kyle Pawlik says: First-time question-asker, and I can't believe this is the first question I'm asking. I once saw a person who had a hole/indentation at the top of their butt crack. What was up with that? And Ellie Radaj says: I have a butt indent too, right at the top of the crack. Answers please. (First-time commenter) And I might have a butt...

Natalia: I'm touching mine right now. [*laughs*]

Alie: Yeah, I feel like my crack stops and then starts again. For a while I was like, "Did I have a tail that they removed or something?"

Natalia: Alie, do you have a... So, I have a pronounced... I didn't bring it up because I didn't [*feigned embarrassed mumbles*]. But my tailbone's too long, so I actually have a nubbin. I mean, I know that sounds...

Alie: Ohh! That's great!

Natalia: Yeah. I mean, it's great but it also means sitting can be really painful and also falling on my tailbone is *realllly* painful. But does yours feel like it projects out?

Alie: No, it just feels like my butt crack says, "We're done... Oh!" Is that a thing? I guess that's a thing?

Natalia: I will say again, Jackie Stallone, [*Alie laughs*] she seems to have some strong opinions about the cleft of one's butt.

Aside: You know me. Okay, usually I'd wait for an aside to delve into further research but Natalia and I were having a vulnerable moment, and I needed to know if my butt was weird, ASAP.

Alie: Oh, it's called a sacral dimple. It's an indentation or a pit in the skin of the lower back above the crease between the buttocks. It's present at birth. Yeah, it's a sacral dimple. I'm gonna say it's a sacred dimple. Thank you very much.

Natalia: That is great. Wooow.

Alie: Anyone wants to know what my bare butt looks like, it's a dimple. It's okay.

Natalia: I have butt dimples.

Alie: I don't have any dimples on my actual butt but I do have like, back dimples.

Natalia: Yeah, that's what I meant, the ones that are right above it.

Alie: Yeah.

Natalia: Yes, yes.

Alie: They're called dimples of Venus, apparently.

Natalia: Yes, right.

Alie: So I dunno, maybe it's just you've got back dimples, nothing to worry about.

Aside: Okay so, a sacral dimple is when you have a staccato butt crack that is like "Hello, I'm not done, little more of me." And dimples of Venus are the ones on the lower back that look kind of like violin f-holes. I just learned that some people get dimples of Venus surgically added, which is flattering to me the same way that other people's perms are, because I had this shit from birth.

Also, in researching the sacral dimples though, I downloaded this medical study about what they can signify in terms of spinal development and newborns. This week was really busy, I'm also getting a refi on my mortgage. If you must know, interest rates are very low, look into it, folks. Anywhoosle, I had to send a bunch of financial statements to the bank and I was about to hit send, honestly like a millisecond before, and I realized that one PDF I attached in an email was *not* in fact my tax returns from last year, but it was the PDF about baby's butt cracks, complete with a lot of full-color clinical photos and tiny spread cheeks. I have thought about it so often since last week and I shudder every time. Okay, let's move on.

Alie: Okay so, Mary Salotto asks: So I have a booty but I feel like it doesn't provide much cushion. It makes pants-finding a pain, but I can still feel my pelvis (?) grinding into the pavement when I pop a squat on the curb. WHAT'S EVEN THE POINT? [*Natalia laughs*] So, a lot of people want to know like Kate Solveson: Why do they hurt after sitting on them forever? Why do our butts hurt?

Aside: Other patrons had this question, including Zombot, Ayshia Yaeger, Kate Solveson, Rachel Arneson, Rachel Moore. Rachel, both of you have the word 'ache' right in your name. Let's talk about it.

Natalia: So, as far as the 'why does it hurt when you put your butt on the pavement', I wonder if they have a similar problem like I do in terms of the tailbone. For some reason, my coccyx doesn't quite curve under the way it should, it sort of sticks out so it really serves no purpose. I have this booty, but then if I sit on someone's lap, they're immediately annoyed [*Alie laughs*] because they feel like they're being stabbed. I've had enough people be like, "Ahh! Get off me!" you know? [*both laugh*] Which is not the response you usually wanna get. As far as why your butt will hurt over time, there are reasons. Sciatica is one of the big reasons why you have pain in your butt, literally.

Alie: Michelle Chick wants to know: First-time question-asker, if fat provides insulation, why does my well "insulated" butt get so much colder so much sooner than the rest of my body when I go out for a walk on a chilly night? Any idea why butts can get so cold? Have you ever been like, "Why is my butt cold?" And then you feel it and it's freezing!

Natalia: I think it's because the core temp... all the heat kind of stays in the core, in your main cavity of organs. Your butt is kind of just left out to dry, or get very cold. That's a great question.

Alie: We are not butt doctors.

Natalia: Yeah. [*reading*] “Though there is typically a significant layer of fat over the glutes, fat is inactive tissue that does not generate heat.” Oh okay! “So fat also has very few blood vessels in it, so while you’re running, circulation to your muscles increases, but not to your fat, that tissue would actually cool down when exposed to the cold.” Rude!

Alie: Oh!

Natalia: Wow okay, so there we go. See?

Alie: Amazing. I have a few more lightning round questions. A few people had questions in the realm of... Hannah Rosche, plainly says: Butt sex, why are humans into it? Are there other animals into it? Bryce, Ryan Clark, Melea Holland, and Rae Moore all asked: Other primates, into that too?

Natalia: Animals will put their ding-dong in pretty much anything they can. It’s pretty common to put your ding-dong in many orifices, and yes, the butt hole is one of them. I mean, then again, honestly, I’ve seen copulations in the field, but spider monkeys are so far up I don’t know what hole they’re putting it in. I’m assuming it’s the vagina, but I don’t know. But we do see, for instance, a lot of homosexual activity in the animal kingdom. There’s been at least 1,500 documented species that have engaged in homosexual encounters. That doesn’t necessarily mean they identify as gay; it really just demonstrates the fluidity of sexuality.

For instance, lions will engage in a little spooning and sporking and forking of the same sex, and you’ll see it in multiple species of animal. Buffalo putting the ‘bi’ in bison. They’ll go through, usually, phases or periods of time where they have a lot of homosexual encounters with other male bison. So yeah, I mean, we’re definitely not the only species that enjoys a little, you know, rump action, if you know what I mean. Yeah.

Alie: Ah, that’s wonderful to know. What a celebration. Just do what you want... As long as it’s a consensual situation, do whatever you like.

Natalia: Yeah, whatever feels good. You know, I think for humans, just make sure everybody’s consenting and lubrication is key!

Alie: If you love it, lube it. A lot of people have Squatty Potty questions. Is it flimflam or is it actually best?

Aside: So many of you, including Jeffrey Bradshaw, Rachel Dripps Flint, Leigh Giberson, Kelli Brockington, Sarah Pazos, Mrs. Pye, Maggie Fraser, Christina Hernandez, Lisa Ma.

Natalia: That’s a good question. No, seriously, I’ve talked to a lot of doctors and other biological anthropologists and it’s absolutely a much better way to do the pooping. Yeah, because it really does... I mean, having done fieldwork I have popped squats all over the place and even just living in New York City; um, that’s not to say I poop on street corners, but you know, you get desperate; and “Oh look, a corner,” and you go pee. But for pooping, you do feel the difference when you’re actually squatting versus sitting on a toilet.

So yes, it kind of does. It talks about ‘unkinking the colon’. It really does allow the colon to have the proper flow to get the poop out. And also, I don’t know about you, but there’s always those poops that, you’re like, “That was a one-wiper.” You know? I feel like they increase with the Squatty Potty, where you’re like, “Oh, that wasn’t messy and disgusting. I feel better.” I’m maybe a little TMI, but you know, hey.

Alie: Hey, we're all friends here.

Natalia: It's Friday night. *[laughs]*

Alie: That's amazing. That's so good. And you know what, I'm sure that if our dogs used toilets, they might need a little more help in that department. You know what I mean? Oh, okay. The final patron question was asked by 16 people.

Natalia: *[laughs]*

Alie: In the same, exactly the same verbiage. Cristina Tortarolo, Adam Smith, James Hales, Luke, Verity Mathis, Kelli Brockington, Nathan Ahlgrim, ThimbleWhim, Ashra Kolhatkar, Mia Cullerot, ThatAmericanClare and I think some other people, all want to know: Is butt legs?

Natalia: *[laughs]* I love your patrons so much.

Alie: Apparently there's a lot of internet chatter, started on Judge John Hodgman's podcast. Yeah, is butt legs?

Natalia: I don't think butts are legs, technically, because I think they are part of the trunk. So, that's funny that you say that. My best friend and I came up with a term when we were, what, 12? We called it the 'bleg' and that's where the butt meets the leg: So, I call that the bleg. And so, I feel like the legs begin at the bleg, which is where the butt technically ends and the legs, I feel like, technically begin because, I feel like, you know, the butt is still very much on the trunk. I don't know where your butt crack is. I mean, everyone has – as Jacqueline Stallone has pointed out to me – great varying lengths and widths of butt cracks. If I went where my butt crack ended, I mean, that's very much still my front butt and I'd like to think that was not legs. You know what I mean?

Aside: So, if you have a butt crack, just think of what's on the other side of it through your body and ask yourself, is that legs? Right. We have our answer. This is why Natalia is a gluteologist and we're not.

Natalia: So, I personally am a believer that the butt is not legs; but the bleg is a thing. Maybe? The under boob is like the bleg, you know. I feel like bleg... I mean, you remember when the under boob became a thing and then side boob, you never see underball becoming a thing, or the bleg kind of.

Alie: So true! I feel like you need to have an action comedy called *Grundle & Blegs*.

Natalia: *[laughs]*

Alie: The unsung undercarriages of *Grundle & Blegs*.

Natalia: Staring Chode McDaniels.

Alie: *[laughing]* Chode McDaniels. Green lit'. Sold.

Natalia: *[laughs]* Yes.

Alie: So, oh my god, and I always have to ask, although I can't imagine, but the worst thing about butts. What sucks butts?

Natalia: I wish that I knew everything about butts. That's the thing that bothers me the most. That was my biggest sadness going into this podcast was, you know, I'm going to get questions I don't know. And I'm going to feel like "Will I ever get behind knowing everything about the behind." You know?

I want to also bring attention to loving your butt no matter what. We kind of touched on this a little bit before, but, you know, the ass-less and the ass-full need to kind of come together and reach across the crack that separates us.

Alie: What about your favorite thing? What about your favorite thing about...

Natalia: Butts?

Alie: ... what you get to do? Yeah.

Natalia: Gosh. Well, I love breaking things down where, you know, you can... I laugh every time I read a peer-reviewed article, even the ones that I *really* shouldn't be laughing about. It's such an honor to be able to take the science that I know about, and I'm learning about, and will continue to learn about and break it down in a way that will make people do a spit take and laugh. Because for me that's key, because that's the way you remember stuff, right?

Again, I think anthropology, my field, is a really cool field because it really looks at what makes us human and what makes us so unique compared to other species, but also realizing we're not so unique after all. But also, using what we know about our species to, hopefully, make us better people. And just make us, hopefully, a little bit more tolerant and kind; especially when we look at things like human variation and stuff like that, whether it's the color of our skin, or sexuality, or gender, our butts. Anything and everything, you know, just sort of boiling it down to make people realize that we're all just, in a way... we're all in this together. Butts and all.

Alie: [laughs] No. Yeah. No ifs, ands, or *butts*. I think that's wonderful.

So, ask smart people not-smart questions because there's an expert for everything, and their knowledge might change the way you look at your own butt. So, for more of Natalia Reagan, she is on [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#) @Natalia13Reagan and TikTok [@BeholdNatalia](#). There will also be links in the show notes to that and her website, as well as where the donations went. Also, links in the show notes to free transcripts, bleeped episodes, as well as every episode we've ever done sorted by topic are up at [AlieWard.com](#).

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And, of course, the man who is never the butt of a joke, Steven Ray Morris, he is wonderful. He hosts *The Purrrecast*, *See Jurassic Right*, and *Everything But The Movie: A Star Wars Books Podcast*, which just came out. Nick Thorburn did the theme music.

And if you stick around until the end, you know I tell you a secret, and I can't remember if I've shared this but it's a fun life act to do. If it's someone's birthday, go ahead, before you see them, write the words 'happy' and 'birthday' on each butt cheek with a Sharpie, and then at some point just casually moon them. They'll be so surprised and happy. This is especially useful for socially distanced celebrations.

The other secret I will tell you is that I'm recording these asides in an idling car, an idling rental car, just outside of Seattle, Washington. I'm here shooting *Innovation Nation*. The camera crew is setting up inside. I'm recording these before I shoot, and sending them, and then I'm hopping a flight. Please tell your butt it's beautiful for me, but do it in a cute-nice way, not in a creepy way. I'm not about that.

Okay. Berbye.

Transcribed by:

Anna Murray

Ruby-Leigh!

Madison Campbell

Aveline

Natasha Shipman, Candler, NC

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