

# Youngblood Monday Lunch: Episode 10

## *Sleeping in a Moving Car*

by Andrew Massey

presented by the Ensemble Studio Theatre

### [Youngblood Monday Lunch Theme Song Begins]

**Singer:** [Sung] Lunch in the morning, lunch at night  
Lunch whenever you feel that it's right  
There's no bad time  
For lunch.

**Mysterious Voice:** [Whispered] Also Time isn't real.

### [Theme Song Ends]

**RJ Tolan:** Hello everybody and welcome to a new episode of the Youngblood Monday Lunch! We're so happy to be in your ears again! My name is RJ and somewhere, oddly slumped over in an existential manner in the background, is uh Graeme.

**Graeme Gillis:** [Distantly, yet powerful. As if he was born for this moment.] IT'S... A-LIVE!

**RJ Tolan:** [Laughing.] That's...that's...they just get worse.

We co-run Youngblood at Ensemble Studio Theatre and we come to you, bringing you short plays in podcast form every Monday afternoon. And this is the first of a new set of four of those! Which you're gonna hear a little bit more about later on. Today's play was written by Youngblood - recently graduated Youngblood member, Andrew Massey! Recently graduated and already sorely sorely missed, but we're so glad we get to hear this new play from him and share it with you today!

Now Graeme's gonna tell you a little bit more about what's goin' on here with the Youngblood Monday Lunch and Youngblood and the Ensemble Studio Theatre!  
Graeme?

[Musical trill]

**Graeme Gillis:** This is Episode 10 of the Youngblood Monday Lunch. Episode 9 was back in July. It's been a while! And in that time, people stop me everywhere. On the street, in the grocery store, when I'm pedaling one of those pedal boats around the duck pond in Central Park and they say, "Graeme! The last Youngblood Monday Lunch was on July 19th. That's like 13 Mondays ago! I've been sittin' with my afternoon sandwich, with my pizza, with my portobello empanada...waitin' for the Monday Lunch! When are you guys showing up again?" The answer to that is two fold. First of all, we're calling this Season 3 of the Youngblood Monday Lunch. So Season 1 was in the Spring. Season 2 was in

the Summer. Now we're in the fall, it's Season 3!

The other answer... is a little more complicated. But it boils down to this. Maybe we *don't want you to know* when the next Lunch Episode is coming. Maybe, we'd prefer it this way. Maybe we strike. In the night. Under cover of darkness...undercover of Lunch...like assassins! Podcast assassins! Sleep with one eye open. Lunch with both eyes open! You will not know the hour! Except for the next three weeks...we'll be in your pod catcher.

**RJ Tolan:** [Distant approving dad-like chuckling]

**Graeme Gillis:** In your podcast feed, in your Twitter feed, in your Instagrams, in your mentions! Every Monday. Right at lunchtime. Like clockwork. It's great to be back!

**RJ Tolan:** We're not- We're not going to be in your mentions, everybody. Don't worry about it. We can't uh, we can't individually tag. Graeme doesn't do social media.

**Graeme Gillis:** [Distantly, and with childlike innocence] What?

**RJ Tolan:** [Chuckling.] It's fine, we will however be in your pod catcher so listen, listen for us there.

**Graeme Gillis:** [A final distant chuckle.]

**RJ Tolan:** [A sigh of contentment.] Hey! If you enjoy the Youngblood Monday Lunch, if you're one of those people who accosted Graeme while he was pedaling his boat across the Central Park-

**Graeme Gillis:** [Distant library-esque giggling.]

**RJ Tolan:** -duck pond. First of all leave the man alone, let him have a peaceful pedal-

**Graeme Gillis:** [More distant library-esque giggling.]

**RJ Tolan:** -to himself. Second of all, if that is the kind of love you have for podcast theatre, and you would like to express that in a very real and concrete form of support, you can visit [estnyc.org/lunchmoney](http://estnyc.org/lunchmoney). That's [estnyc.org/lunchmoney](http://estnyc.org/lunchmoney) that has some donation links there that will go directly to our continued ability to work with these wonderful artists and bring you brand new podcast based theatre. So check that out if you are so inclined.

**Graeme Gillis:** Just before we get to Andrew's play, we'd like to acknowledge that Ensemble Studio Theatre and all of New York City are located on Lenapehoking. That's the unceded traditional territory of the Lenape people. We want to pay respect to the Lenape and to all Indigenous peoples that continue to live, work, create and contribute here in Lenapehoking and across the country.

**RJ Tolan:** The Ensemble Studio Theatre also acknowledges America's cultural legacy of exploited, underpaid, and forced labor which has fallen disproportionately on Black and African diasporic peoples, Indigenous peoples, peoples of color and the ongoing fight for fair wages and working conditions. It continues to this day including in the field of theatre. EST is engaged in an ongoing community led reexamination of every part of how we work together and create work together. And we look forward to the ongoing

process of building towards a more equitable future.

And we couldn't be happier to share with you this brand new play, *Sleeping In A Moving Car* by Andrew Massey.

[Tranquil broken chords play and echo]

**ELLA:** My alarm is the same as my ringtone.

It's the same as a lot of people's ringtones, which is something that stresses me out. In grocery stores or waiting rooms, someone else's phone can start ringing and I'll feel like it's time to get out of a dream. Can take a little bit to realize that I'm awake. I always think that I should change it. I always forget.

But this time it's actually my alarm and it's actually time to get up. It's a driving day. Appointments in two different towns and I think we'll be able to get some errands in too. I hope.

I set the coffee maker to brew ahead of time and I put the water in but I forgot to put in any grounds so there's hot water in the pot and I start that over.

And he's up early and I'm running late. Not so late that it's a lost cause, but late enough so that completely catching up doesn't seem realistic. He just wants cereal and I give it to him. Easy – which is nice, which is nice.

We end up getting in the car and going only ten minutes after we should which is really only five minutes after we have to which is really okay in the grand scheme. I make a mental note to clean out my car doors. There are wrappers and strips of plastic from quick pouches of make-do lunches from a while ago that I really should clear out. And I should vacuum. And I should wash the windshield. And I should get the coins out from under the seat. And I never remember my mental notes.

The waiting room is bright and smells so clean that you know it's been dirty. The chairs have a certain squish to them which lets you know hundreds of people just like you have sat down in them before and that there'll be another just like you later on. Ammonia and lemons and pine and sticky.

He's been quiet today. He doesn't want a magazine. It'll just be a few minutes. He doesn't want to talk about what I should make for dinner. It'll just be a few minutes. He wants a magazine. He takes one about golf and he doesn't like it because it makes it all seem so easy when it's really not he says.

It's time to go in. We do. I have to step out for a moment. I do. I can come back in. I do. No updates to speak of. Just staying the course. Keep checking all the things we're checking. Keep taking all the things we're taking. We'll check back in in a month. But we really need to start seeing things change. Staying the same means getting worse. Getting worse means next steps and next steps are things he doesn't want – next steps probably can't fit me in.

A month is frustratingly short. It only takes a few busy weeks to disappear. It only takes a few busy months for a year to crumble away and years can crumble too.

A month is frustratingly long too. A small worry, a thought that you have a few days into the month becomes bigger and bigger as each day creeps slowly towards an ending. One day can take forever and there are so many more to get through. I don't like worrying and I worry that I worry too much.

Prescriptions and groceries next. Easy enough. Spaghetti, sauce, bag of lettuce (we have dressing already I think), bread, milk, more cereal, coffee filters, Pedialyte, wipes, I should get fruit but I never want fruit and it usually goes bad – I found a banana in the fridge that had gotten so old my fingers went right through the peel when I touched it. I touched my hair right after and for days I could smell it - earthy, meaty, rotten – stuck in my hands.

Ice cream for me (full fat), ice cream for him (sugar-free), turkey, mustard, pickles, and something I'm forgetting. I wish I could remember, but I can always make another run.

I like the self checkout stations because I don't like when people see what I buy. I don't buy anything weird, but I don't want anyone trying to guess what I'm having for dinner (spaghetti) or lunch (turkey sandwich) or drawing any conclusions about me whatsoever. I prefer to not register in anyone's mind if at all possible.

One time I saw a guy with a cart full of bleu cheese dressing and nothing else. I don't know what he was doing. Maybe there was an explanation. I think about him to this day. I don't want to be someone that someone thinks about to this day. That sounds awful.

The self checkout is broken or I guess the scanner is. The volume on it is on hyperdrive and each item I scan gets its price read out so loud that heads turn. FIVE NINETY NINE. It's mortifying. TWELVE EIGHTY FIVE. There must be a control. NINETY NINE CENTS. I hadn't realized that was on sale. I would try to get the self checkout fixed but he said he wanted wait in the car with the radio on – which I've agreed to let him do even though I think it's wasteful. But because of that concession I got him to eat sugar free ice cream. Every action, as they say.

One of the wheels of my shopping cart is twisting with a life all its own. As I'm heading to the car, it takes all I have to keep the metal nose of it from veering off into the bumpers of all the nicely placed cars. I can feel the shoots up the tendons of my wrists from holding the cart straight. I make it all the way to my car, but, lost for a moment in my triumph, I let my grip slacken and hit my own bumper, crashing my hip bone into the corner of the plastic handle.

The dent's not bad.

The pain will fade. There might be a bruise, but those go away.

We have to stop at home (ice cream, produce). But we're still forty minutes from our

next appointment and it's in forty five. In a world where time could actually be counted on, we can make it right on time. But this world is not that world and there is a nasty red light, a school bus running late, and I make it to our door, balancing grocery bags and with the keys tucked firmly in the ignition of the car.

The last time I was late for this doctor they receptionist told me how busy he was and how much he valued his time. I stood there with my hands in my pockets and mumbled something about traffic when what had really happened involved my Dad insisting he could dress himself only to trip over his own pant legs and crack his nose on his night stand. He said it didn't feel broken and I believed him. I cleaned him up and it didn't come up again.

Refrigerated items safely refrigerated and frozen items safely frozen, we're back on the road and within the realm of possibility of being on time. I'll have to speed. Nothing crazy but I've noticed he starts to peek over at my dashboard when he thinks I'm going too fast. He'd never say that he thought I was going too fast, but, even now, he knows exactly how to tell me.

He seems tired. Maybe he'll nod off and I won't have to worry about speeding. Are you tired – I ask him. He makes a noise that could mean anything and shrugs. That could go either way, so I wait and see. Five minutes in and nothing. I start to intentionally go exactly the speed limit and I tell him he can sleep if he wants to.

[The sounds of driving fade in and are heard underneath]

**PAUL:** Do you remember that?

**ELLA:** What?

**PAUL:** Sleeping in the car.

**ELLA:** When do you mean?

**PAUL:** When you were younger. A kid.

**ELLA:** I guess so?

**PAUL:** You slept through everything. Any time we were driving after dark, you were out.

**ELLA:** That's funny.

**PAUL:** Yeah sometimes I'd just be talking to you about, I don't know, school or your soccer season and you'd start answering with just like these one word answers.

**ELLA:** Huh.

**PAUL:** Yeah and that's when I could tell that you were going and sure enough within a few minutes your head would dip down and you'd just be sleeping. For however long the drive was.

[Silence except the sounds of the car and the road]

**ELLA:** I really don't remember doing that.

**PAUL:** Well eventually you grew out it.

**ELLA:** Huh?

**PAUL:** I don't know. You kind of just stopped. It's hard to remember exactly when.

**ELLA:** I wonder why.

**PAUL:** Who knows? Maybe you got busier? Older? All I know is every time we used to drive up to

your grandmother's you'd be a rock in the back seat until one day you just weren't any more.

**ELLA:** Hm.

**PAUL:** Nothing wrong with it. It's not a good or a bad thing. I actually liked that you stayed awake, made it easier for me to stay up.

**ELLA:** Yeah.

**PAUL:** Just funny is all. See, I don't think things usually are one way until they aren't anymore. Usually it's a mix, even if it seems like it happens all at once, it's... I don't know... gradual or something.

**PAUL:** But with this, one day you always, the next day you never.

[Silence except the sounds of the car and the road]

**PAUL:** What's this next one again?

**ELLA:** The next appointment?

**PAUL:** Yeah. I get them confused.

**ELLA:** PT.

**PAUL:** Ah.

**ELLA:** That okay?

**PAUL:** No, no, it's fine. It's fine. It's just not my favorite.

**ELLA:** I get that.

**PAUL:** Not that I have a favorite. Not really something to rank like that, but some are easier than others. And this one isn't easy.

**ELLA:** I'm sorry.

**PAUL:** It's not your fault.

**ELLA:** I'm still sorry.

**PAUL:** Thanks.

For... this. For driving.

And for everything.

**ELLA:** Of course, Dad.

**PAUL:** I shouldn't need you like this.

**ELLA:** It's fine, I'm fine-

**PAUL:** But thanks for letting me.

**ELLA:** What?

**PAUL:** Thanks.

[Silence except the sounds of the car and the road]

**ELLA:** You okay?

**PAUL:** Mhm.

**ELLA:** You sure?

**PAUL:** Mm.

**ELLA:** You need anything?

**PAUL:** Nah.

**ELLA:** Okay.

[Silence except the sounds of the car and the road]

**ELLA:** You tired?

**PAUL:** Mhm.

**ELLA:** Want me to leave you alone?

**PAUL:** Dunno.

**ELLA:** Just rest. I won't bug ya.

**PAUL:** Okay.

[Silence except the sounds of the car and the road]

**ELLA:** And slowly and slowly he dozes off.

His head falls slightly to the right and towards his shoulder. I can't see his face. I can tell he's asleep though. His breath is rough but consistent – clear in its own brittle way. Settled for now.

I'm careful to avoid potholes and I stay close to speed limit until a few minutes have passed. Then slowly I put my foot down on the pedal. Lightly at first. The five, ten, twelve miles over. I think I see him stirring, but it's just a quiet sleeping twitch. He's gone and will be until we get there.

It's been a gray day today so far. Doesn't look like rain, doesn't look like sun. Just a low, humming, consistent gray. Who knows what we'll get this afternoon – there's plenty of time for anything to change.

There's still 25 minutes left in the drive. We might make it in time. We could. I think. We just might. We might make it.

*[The echoing broken chords return, eventually fading into the upbeat music of Monday Lunch]*

**Graeme Gillis:** You've been listening to a new play, *Sleeping In A Moving Car* by Andrew Massey.

Directed by Colette Robert

Sound Design by Allison Ann Kelly

Featuring Michael Cullen and Sasha Diamond

**RJ Tolan:** The staff of Ensemble Studio Theatre are

Artistic Director: Billy Carden

Executive Director: Susan Vitucci

Associate Artistic Director, Director of the EST Sloan Project, and Co-Director of Youngblood, Graeme Gillis. He's right over there!

**Graeme Gillis:** [From afar and with gusto.] Hi!

**RJ Tolan:** Director of Play Development and Associate Director of EST Sloan: Linsay Firman

Co-Director of Youngblood: RJ Tolan. Hey, that's me!

Production Manager: Jack Plowe

Brand Marketing Manager: Harrison Densmore

Communications and Audience Services Manager: Samantha Sembler

Finance Director: Jonathan Suárez

Company Administrator: Mariel Sanchez

Development Assistant: Joey Nasta

and Facilities Manager: José Sanchez

The Youngblood Monday Lunch theme song was written and performed by Youngblood's own Jake Brasch and Nadja Leonhard-Hooper!

And the Podcast Sound Engineer is Caroline Eng.

[Musical trill over]

**RJ Tolan:** Thank you all for joining us, for this brand new play! From the Youngblood Monday Lunch! We will be back in your pod catcher, next Monday, right around lunchtime. With a brand new play by Jeusun Choi. We hope you will join us for that. Be well everybody!

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