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"My Morning Coffee" adds a pandemic twist to the traditional drinking song.

Much has been made of the way pandemic life has changed people's cocktail consumption (Quarantini anyone?) but zoom happy hours were not what songwriter Louis Higgins had in mind while sheltering in place with his wife and two teenage daughters in Minneapolis. "I'd be sitting in my living room, drinking coffee and trying to work remotely" he says. "But every time I'd look up from my laptop, I'd see my baby grand piano just steps away and it would be all I could do to not grab a drink, sit down and play."

Fortunately, his day job as an editor in legal publishing didn't suffer too much as he eventually discovered a natural work rhythm taking numerous coffee breaks and sitting down intermittently at the piano. But as the reality of being cooped up 24/7 and repeating the endless routine—working, drinking coffee and playing piano—began to sink in, he needed to create a new distraction for himself.

"I've always loved early rock and roll and country music... Sun Records, the whole nine yards" he says. "There's such a tradition—especially in country music—of drinking songs but I didn't know of anything that really combined the type of love for coffee and cocktails I have." Higgins doesn't claim to be an obsessive connoisseur, but he does confess to getting Zabar's coffee regularly shipped to him in the Twin Cities. "I like to think that I wrote "My Morning Coffee" to avoid actually developing a drinking problem of my own" he says laughing.

He then reached out to Bill McGarvey, a music producer, filmmaker and longtime friend he'd played with in bands back in college at Georgetown. "When he first showed me the song, I just thought it was so quintessentially Lou" says McGarvey. "It feels like a cross between Elvis Presley, David Lee Roth and Louis Prima."

In that spirit, Higgins booked recording time at Sun Studios in Memphis for June 2020 hoping they could conjure up some of that room's special magic if the pandemic abated. When that proved untenable, they decided to record remotely with McGarvey recording basic tracks in Rockland County, New York and Higgins tracking his vocal and piano at home. He also enlisted his wife, Nadia, and their daughters, Cecilia and Yvette—dubbed the "Hot and Sweet Singers"—to provide background vocals.

"I'd been watching and reading about a lot of midcentury modernist animation during lockdown" says McGarvey who has won [numerous awards](#) for his animated shorts "and I loved the work by legendary UPA animator John Hubley, it just seemed to capture the era

that “My Morning Coffee” hearkened back to.” He enlisted west-coast animator Ashley Amoeba and began to gather his ideas for an animated short based on the song.

“My Morning Coffee” [link: <https://mcg-media.com/my-morning-coffee/>] follows “Mugsy,” an animated coffee cup with a bad hangover, as he wakes up after a night of revelry on top of a bar strewn with the remnants of an epic celebration. As he recounts his troubles, the world of the bar slowly comes alive around him. Mugsy begins a dream-like journey that recalls an animated Busby-Berkeley-inspired extravaganza in which he is transformed by singing about the reparative power of his favorite coffee cocktails.

“The past year and a half have been relentlessly hard for everyone, and no one really knows how much longer this pandemic misery will continue” says McGarvey. “Being able to focus and create Mugsy’s little escapist fantasy world has been a real respite from how small our worlds have gotten. It’s been a great distraction, which I think a lot of us could use. Like the song says, ‘When life gives you lemons and lemonade won’t do.’ Sometimes we all need a little something extra to get ourselves through.”

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