

The The Adventure Zone Zone: Experiments Post-Mortem, More on Season Two!

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[theme music plays]

Travis: It's the... it's a show... it's—we're—it's our own after show in the show.

Justin: Damn, that was a good start.

Griffin: Jesus Christ.

Travis: Well, I'm trying to think of how to phrase it, you know? It's an after show, but during—it's a during show.

Justin: Travis began the show being chased down a hill by Prince Humperdinck, and he threw himself down. Roll, roll, roll, roll, roll. When he got to the bottom, he began his entrance.

Travis: You know, sometimes, you know, I think—

Clint: [laughs] Uh! Ah! Ooh! Uh! Eee! Ah!

Travis: This applies to the show, too, you know. Sometimes you open your mouth, and you're like, the words are gonna be there. And sometimes they are, you know?

Justin: Yeah, sometimes they are.

Travis: And you make magic.

Griffin: This is the the the the the zone. Adventure Adventure Zone, Zone Zone Zone Zone.

Travis: Yep.

Griffin: It's the talk show where we talk about the thing, and it's the Max Fun Drive, and we're done with the experimental arcs. There's a lot of stuff going on, and maybe we should answer some questions. We got a ton. Thank you for sending them in. Um, thank you everybody who wanted to know if Errol would get his root beer, which is to say, the 400 of you that emailed about Errol ever getting his root beer. The answer is... I'unno.

Clint: Who knows?

Griffin: So that's one question down. We're already deep in the shit.

Justin: That's one question answered.

Clint: Check.

Travis: And that's the biggest cliffhanger established in any of the mini arcs.

Clint: [laughing]

Justin: Let's take a quick moment before we get rolling, though. I want a thank you to our fan base. We've never had a name for them, so I'm gonna start calling you Bachelor Nation. Thank you, Bachelor Nation, for your support of The Adventure Zone. It honestly means a lot. Um, if you weren't with us this time last year, we should mention that this is the Max Fun Drive, which means, it's the one time of year we come to you hat in hand, and say, "Hey, could ya give us a little bit of money for what you have taken from us?" Which is our gifts. And we have—

Travis: That's how we always phrase it. Yep, yep, yep.

Griffin: Yes. So, we're a part of the Max Fun network, and the network is supported by donors like you, hopefully. Uh, where we ask you during the Max Fun Drive if you enjoy our show, think about supporting us. You can go to MaximumFun.org/donate. Find out about the different membership levels, and the uh, gifts you will receive if you donate at them. We're gonna talk a lot more about them. Just to let you know, though, \$5 a month. That'll get

you all the bonus content that every show on the network has ever done, and that includes an episode we did this year, that Justin ran, called The Adventure Zone: Elementary. Um, in which we played a game called Four Sherlock Holmes and a Vampire, who is one of the aforementioned Sherlock Holmeses. It was very fun, and we've gotten a lot of very sweet tweets. Sweet little sweetie tweeties about it, and we appreciate it.

Justin: I don't think I got enough credit. And this was dad's idea. I don't think I got enough credit for continuing our naming scheme.

Griffin: Yes.

Justin: That was absolutely brilliant. That was Dad's idea. I shouldn't have taken credit for it.

Travis: I also want to say, along with that, there is also, uh, you can hear The Adventure Zone: Nights, which is a steampunk one that I created, including special guest, Lin Manuel Miranda, playing D&D for the first time ever.

Griffin: It was very good.

Clint: And probably the last. Wasn't it the last?

Griffin: And probably the last, yes.

Travis: But you can check that out. MaximumFun.org/donate. Go now if you're interested in hearing that stuff, don't wait, because it's so easy to forget it, and the Max Fun Drive only goes two weeks. We're gonna talk more about it. But first, um, let's see. Let's start with the questions.

Griffin: Yeah.

Travis: This question is probably for Griffin, but maybe for all of us. "Will Tres Horny Boys still be the focus of live shows moving forward, or will live shows start featuring Amnesty?" And that's from Brian.

Griffin: I think—I think we may get to a point where it would be cool to do an Amnesty show. Uh, but, everything we've talked about since we wrapped up Balance is that we would continue doing, uh, you know, the Balance crew for the live shows. So, um, the one I have—

Justin: I think it would be hard for us to... The only time I see it, maybe, is like, after Amnesty is like, complete, maybe wanting to return to it for like, a one off. But honestly, I love—I love the Balance world, and I love those characters. And it honestly, I would be too sad if I thought we weren't gonna go back to that.

Griffin: Yeah, for sure. And it's a way—it's a way of us for like, for us to keep carrying the torch, while also sort of moving on to two things. Because I think of the live shows, and the episodes that come out of that, as like, weirdly, like, their own... their own thing. And so, that's how I justify it.

Travis: Well, that's the thing is, with Balance, because the story is completed, it's so much easier to do one offs without having to worry about like, character development, or plot development, or anything. Whereas, if we tried to do a live show, like, in the middle of an arc that's still going, you know, it's not... It's easy to do like, semi-canonical one offs with, with, you know, Bureau of Balance, right? But we can't really do that with an arc we're still establishing.

Clint: Could we do like—could we do two acts? Could we do like, Balance in the first act, and Amnesty in the second act?

Griffin: Yeah, sure, let's just double up the fucking work, uh, on me.

Justin: The probably with that is really Griffin. He's the rate limit factor on that.

Clint: [groans]

Justin: I know.

Clint: Well, I've already got my—I've got my Ned cosplay all ready!

Griffin: Listen; every night before I go to bed, I do my stretches to try to grow two extra lobes onto my brain. Two extra Lisa Loeb's right onto my brain. But no luck so far.

Justin: "Were you guys considering a space type game? If so, what would the game have been called, and why didn't it happen, or do I have something to impatiently wait for?" And that's from Alex.

Travis: Yeah, this is a—we got this question a lot, because in our artwork, we did include a section that looks like spaceships.

Griffin: Well, it looks like spaceships because it is spaceships. I had an idea for a space campaign that I wanted to do, that I've had for years, um, that I was thinking we were gonna get to, doing these experimental, uh—during the experimental arc phase. But um, and maybe this is like, a good time to talk about this.

Like, it's been eight months since we wrapped up Balance. And we—the reason that we're kind of jumping into season 2 and Amnesty now is just like, we all feel this sort of uh, I don't know what the right word is, here. Maybe anxiety, about just like, we're ready for—we're ready to do season two. We miss—

Travis: Anticipation.

Griffin: Anticipation.

Travis: Not anxiety. 'Cause it's a—

Clint: There's a void. There's a void.

Griffin: Anticipation looks a lot like anxiety up in this ol' brain. But um, yeah, it—it—doing the experimental arcs has been really cool, and we've learned so much, and we've—I'm really happy with the stuff that we did. But there is something about like, uh, expanding a world, the knowing that you have like, a long runway in front of you to expand a world, that like, we've missed. And so, we—we've been ready to do it. So, it just wasn't right. But

yeah, I still have this idea for a space game. Um, and just didn't get around to it.

Travis: Well, if—if I can jump in and expand to a larger point, 'cause the next question is from Lulu about like, Dust, and... Dust and Commitment, and we left them on like, cliffhanger endings, and if we're ever gonna get back to them. Here's one of the things. Like, the biggest take away I would say from the mini arcs is like, when we were doing balance, we were so focused on it. And that's how we ended up with three years of it, right?

Because like, it just felt like we can't start on anything else 'til this is done. And now, from doing the mini arcs, it kind of was a uh, inadvertent test, and like, an accidental proving ground of like, oh, we can work on a lot of different things at once. So like, one of the things that we're kind of looking to do with uh, moving forward, is to have Amnesty be like, you know, the main story in the main weeks, in what some might call 'good Thursdays.'

Griffin: Good Thursdays.

Travis: Right? But then—

Griffin: Which, by the way, this—that is an inadvertent way of addressing another question that comes later that we can answer really quickly. We are gonna go back to biweekly, because now, I think that all of us had a run at being DM, uh, it's—doing that shit every week is so brutal. It's so hard.

Travis: Yeah. But now, like, if I'm ready to do another, y'know, couple episodes of Dust, we can record those and do them in the off weeks. Or, if dad is ready to do another arc of Commitment, we do them in the off weeks. Or if Justin comes up with something he wants to DM, we can do it in the off weeks. Or, if we just find like a really funny one off like we did with Sherlock Holmes game, we can put it up in the off weeks.

Griffin: I would fucking love to do more one offs. That's something we never do, um, specifically, play... all the experimental arcs, I was—I was happy with, but we didn't really play short form... games that were designed for short form campaigns. We played like, long form games, except for Four Sherlock Holmes and a Vampire. And that was fuckin' really—it was really

fun, and it was really funny, and it gave us a lot of freedom to just like, goof off, I feel like. But also, there was no tension between us and how we were playing, uh, the game. Because the game was designed to be like, one episode of a podcast, if that makes sense. I would love to do more stuff like that.

Travis: And I do also want to tie it back to the Max Fun Drive. Because one of the reasons we're looking to generate more content is like, we know that it matters to you, because we've seen your support over the last couple years, and we know how much this kind of content and how much you look forward to it. So, it's one of the things we've been looking at for a while of, how do we make it weekly, or how do we generate more content?

And the thing is like, when we're doing the main storyline, we just can't. We can't consistently do it weekly. It's just too much, right? But now that we have all these other threads to pluck at, we can fill in some of those gaps, and generate more content for you, 'cause we know how much that matters to you, and it's because of your support for things like Max Fun Drive that we know you care about this content enough for us to find opportunities to make more of it.

Griffin: Which is—

Justin: Call it content again. I'm gonna jump out the window.

Griffin: It's really rough.

Justin: It's so rough.

Griffin: Which is not to say that we are going to go weekly, where like, every off week, we're gonna have some other thing.

Justin: Hell no. No, no, no.

Griffin: There's no way we would be—this will be very, very, very sporadic. But this is just a way for us to—we—we loved these worlds so much, and like, we do want to return to them, and this is kind of what we were thinking on them.

Justin: I tell you, I want to talk, uh, now that we've played all the experimental arcs... and this isn't an actual question, but I wanted to discuss it real quick. I want to talk about Commitment. Because Commitment was really interesting to me in that, Commitment was probably the character that I thought the most about, 'cause we had the most downtime in between, and it's the character that like, I was really... like, I was very excited about Irene and Kardala.

I actually think an interesting thing with Commitment is that, I think the world and the characters were all super cool. I'm not sure that game... I'm not sure Fate necessarily lends itself to what we do. And I only realized that like, after playing the other games. And it's an interesting phenomenon in that, Fate seems very well designed for storytelling.

But I think that it is... it creates a sort of collaborative storytelling that is more interesting to the people playing it than it would be to people necessarily listening to it. Dad, did you... like, do you think that's a fair take?

Clint: Yeah, I went with Fate because, when I came across it, it, uh—that was what appealed to me about it, was the storytelling angle of it, and the collaborative... it felt very, uh, theatrical to me. And it was about the storytelling, and about character development. But at the same time, it did have mechanism for conflict. And if you're gonna do a superhero story, there has to be battle.

There has to be an element of battle involved in that. I think that's just, y'know, part of the whole story. So, yeah, I would love to bring back Commitment and pursue the storylines and the plotlines. But I—I might look for a game that lends itself, y'know, more towards that kind of format. Because it wasn't a typical Jack Kirby, y'know, every two pages, somebody's in a fist fight.

Griffin: Right.

Clint: Kind of deal. But that is—it does need to have that mechanism, though.

Griffin: That's not to say that it is a bad game, and I hope you do not—

Travis: No, not at all.

Clint: No.

Griffin: Do not take that. I think it's a very cool game. It's just like, the same way that we probably couldn't have done 4th Edition Dungeons & Dragons for Balance, right? Because that was much more about how your characters are in physical space, uh, as compared to 5th Edition, which was much more just talking over a table. Um, like, certain games don't really fit what we do. And like, tracking aspects, and running the—

Justin: Tracking aspects was the big thing. I think that is so perfect for having notecards in front of you.

Griffin: Mm-hmm.

Justin: And if somebody actually like, designed... Like, I think someone would actually need to design software specifically to handle that remotely, where everybody is looking at the same cards. Instead of just tracking in in chat.

Griffin: Even if we can see it, um, the audience... like, that's a lot to ask them to remember.

Justin: Right, right. Exactly.

Travis: Well, that's the thing, is I feel like one of the things, one of the big learning experiences from doing the mini arcs was like, what is the mix at which Adventure Zone works best, right? Because there are a lot of actual play podcasts that I absolutely love.

But I don't really consider Adventure Zone a pure, actual play podcast, because I don't feel like... I don't feel like you could listen to Adventure Zone and come away understanding exactly how to play the game. Like, that was one of the things with Dust that I really liked about Urban Shadows is, it was

such a loose rule structure that like, I think maybe like, 25% of each episode was actually about like, gameplay.

Griffin: So, let's—

Justin: 25% would actually be a good reflection of my current understanding of the rules of Urban Shadows. [laughs]

Travis: Right.

Griffin: [laughs] So this is a good opportunity to talk about—you talked about like, sort of how we balanced, no pun intended, between like, different um, different sort of goals as we're doing the show. And we got sort of—we got two sort of questions here, um, that we can sort of address this at. Uh, Rob asks—and this is something that we got from a lot of folks, in sort of a lot of different iterations.

“A lot of discussions on popular TAZ related internet forums lately have been focused around the actual play component of TAZ, and whether or not that has or should take a backseat to the more narrative-driven aspects of the show. The arms outstretched moment of Balance that were born out of crazy dice rolls, or the surprise spell casting like Phantom Steed, are the reason a lot of us listen. Will Monster of the Week deliver on the actual play aspects the same way D&D did? Any insights to this would be super rad.”

And what I think is so interesting about this question, um, it's all, I think, like, a matter of perspective. Because those two examples that you—that you listed, um, and I know there's a lot of people who were put off when we switched off D&D, and when we announced that season two would not be in D&D, even though that's something that we—I feel like we've been pretty up front with since Balance wrapped up.

Both Arms Outstretched and Phantom Steed do, in some way, sort of like, those are sort of things that happen kind of because of the rules of D&D that we were playing. But they are also two big examples of us explicitly saying, “Fuck the rules.” Uh, Phantom Steed, like, if you want to look at it literally, like, that's a spell. You have to like, I don't know, channel for a minute. It's not designed to create a magic binicorn that... first of all, it's not supposed to

create a unicorn at all, right? It's supposed to create a horse, but whatever. But it's like, not designed to like, catch somebody out of the air as they're falling off of a moving racecar.

Uh, and Arms Outstretched was literally three back to back to back examples of things that like, completely break the rules of D&D. Having a magic item that instantly rips the soul out of somebody's body is not, like, in the player's handbook, and having a soul jar cast you into this like, astral plane, where you can fly around and grab people as they're being sucked into a death dimension. And then, Dad's spell, I forget what it was, but that wasn't how that fucking worked even a little bit.

Clint: It never was.

Griffin: Not even a little bit. And so, like, there are things that people bring up. And when I think about things like, uh, Phantom Steed, and that's one that we get a lot is like, I'm worried stuff like that's not gonna happen in Monster of the Week. Like, stuff like that, also shouldn't happen in Dungeons & Dragons if we're following the rules. All it—

Travis: Don't you worry about that.

Justin: Let's—I think that you could also chalk this up to the experimental arcs in that, we had... There are two things that I think have been sort of missing from like, what people would classically think is The Adventure Zone, that I believe we'll be able to do better in Amnesty. But like, and that is more dice rolls, and like, letting mechanics dictate some plotting. And also, like, more goofy shit.

Because we each had – not me – but I think everybody had stories that they wanted to get through. And we had a pace that we wanted to work through with these stories. And I think to—because of that, we were moving at like... we tend to do a lot more stuff in exposition and storytelling and dialogue, versus like, leaning on the rules. I think that also betrays a lack of confidence in those rules, and those mechanics, and like, having an idea of how they work.

Like, you gotta understand, y'all. Like, we're pretty good at bullshitting. We've been doing it for a long time. We're not necessarily great at like, playing these games, because we've never played them before. And trying to like, learn a game while you create a story, while you improv all the lines and the dialogue and also try to make it like, entertaining... it's really fuckin' hard. And I think that like—

Griffin: Especially during introductory things, like all of these mini arcs. Where if this was the case in Balance, you go back and listen to the first couple episodes of literally every arc, and especially later on, like, it is mostly exposition, because in order to like, create this space where y'all can find your own solutions to stuff, and sort of explore your thing, it does entail... especially fuckin', uh, Eleventh Hour.

That is a lot of handholding to get you guys into this kind of complicated scenario of a town where things reset every hour, and here's what you need to know about that. Okay, now we can do it. And that felt like how all these—all these mini arcs are. And now that we're kind of moving into season two, it feels like we're gonna have a lot more room to—to play around.

Clint: And I think Dust, I think Travis had to deal with that even more in Dust, because you're doing a murder mystery. You're doing something that is basically, here's some clues, see if you can figure it out.

Travis: Yeah.

Clint: And there's a lot on there. I know when, in Commitment, um, you have certain things you, y'know... you know where the story is going. I did not have an ending. I honest to God did not have an ending planned.

Griffin: You mean you didn't expect us to fly through the air on a helicopter, eating strombolis, as we take a bad guy to the White House?

Justin: [laughs]

Clint: [laughs]

Griffin: [laughs] That was the best fuckin' ending to any story ever.

Clint: I—I have an imagination, but it's not quite like that. I did not know how the story was gonna end. Um, and so, y'know, for me, I can't—I don't know about the rest of you guys, but for me, the toughest thing was pacing.

Travis: Well—

Clint: The pacing of it.

Justin: Yeah, dude.

Griffin: Yeah, but that's true for everything. Yeah.

Travis: This is—a lot of people pointed out that like, Dust really felt like it ended fairly suddenly, and like, it could've gone another episode. But here's the thing – I had written down... well, I have like a hundred pages of shit that I wrote for Dust. But like, I had written down, like, here's all the information that will lead them to this, right? And then, suddenly, it was done.

Griffin: Yeah.

Travis: And like, I didn't want to have an episode where it was just like, "I don't know." Right? Because that's not good pacing. And the other thing is, it also, when you're writing a mystery, is like, yeah, if they go to here and talk to this person, it will all be figured out. And like, that wasn't happening, y'know what I mean? And so, it was one of those things a lot of people asked about, like the banshee just straight up saying, like, "Don't trust Connors."

Griffin: Here's who the killer is. Yeah.

Travis: But it was like, I expected them to have a lot more conversations with Connors leading up to that, right? And it just—it never happened. And I can't, in the—as the DM say, "Well, maybe you should go check in with Connors some more." It's fuckin' hard to DM a mystery.

Justin: Alright, I want to—I want to—we're gonna pick up the pace on questions. I'm just gonna hit you guys with some. I'm gonna arrest control from you.

Travis: Okay.

Justin: My question is for each of you. It's from Laura. That last one, uh... "The question is for each of you, and I would like to know, what has surprised you most about the response to these mini arcs?" And that is from Laura.

Travis: I will just say, for Dust, I was sure that, because it was like, someone's been murdered, and like, somebody's life is on the line, that it would—I was worried that it was going to be like, too serious and dark. And I think that it did skew that way a little bit, but overall, everybody was talking about like, the funny parts of it. And I do think that it has to do with like, when you have a more serious story, I think the funny moments stand out a lot more against the background.

Griffin: Yeah, especially when we did the setup episode. We saw, like, a lot of people saying, like, "Why the fuck are they trying to make it serious? Like, this is a comedy show." But in my opinion, y'all's vamping on my throwing the gun at the bell, was like...

Clint: Oh, God.

Griffin: That was fucking hysterical to me, and this is—we have another question that we can answer like, in a few seconds, so if somebody is talking about like—and this, we got this a lot, of just like, balancing, is it a comedy show, now? It's getting more dramatic. And I—I really, like... and this is maybe me getting defensive. But like, I don't think they're mutually exclusive.

The show has certainly gotten more dramatic, and I felt this since we've been doing the adaptation of Here There Be Gerblins, where there weren't, like, any, other than like, Fandolin's destruction. And then, you guys immediately going right back to like, goofy goof goof goof, despite the

fact that this horrible, horrible thing had just happened. Uh, like, there weren't that many dramatic beats.

And I feel like adding those to the show has really made it something cool, and I think a lot more people have kind of found the show because of those things. But I don't think that means that we can't do funny shit anymore.

Justin: I do.

Griffin: And I don't necessarily think that's true of the arcs. Oh, okay.

Justin: Sorry, I meant to tell you guys. It's all—

Travis: Oh, no.

Clint: [laughs]

Justin: I don't know, man, it's just... it's salt and pepper, baby. It's salt and pepper. You gotta have them both. You got both those flavors. They highlight and balance each other. Dad, what has surprised you most about the response to the mini arcs?

Clint: Um, gosh. Um, I have loved how people have, uh, embraced the characters. I knew they would, but—

Travis: Ooh, Mr. Confident over here.

Clint: Well, I mean, I knew that—because I think that one of the guys bring to it is creating very compelling characters.

Travis: You, too, Daddy. You also bring it.

Clint: Well, yeah. I was basically thinking about Commitment. I love the fact that Griffin got to be a character. I thought that was—was pretty cool. And just, everybody's response was just, was so, so great. Because—

Justin: No, not everybody. Now, you do say everybody. Words have meanings.

Griffin: No, stop. My contradictory thing is, we had a lot of people who were uh, very vocal about how we were following the rules, or not following the rules of D&D, and I really don't think we got any of that. Literally, none of that, when we were doing these arcs. And I was genuinely worried about that, because we were trying to learn and play a bunch of different games, and I think folks were like, way cooler about like, how we played these games than I expected. And I really appreciated that.

Travis: I will also just say, like, talking about the learning experience of the arcs. I think as Justin pointed out, going into Commitment, we had all this time to like, work on our characters. And so, I think when we started Commitment, it was almost like a rebound relationship, right?

After Balance, where we wanted to start at the same point we were, y'know, when we finished Balance. So we wanted to start with everybody knowing everything about our characters, and so, like, I remember in setup episode, like... "And this person did, and they went to school here, and they learned this, and this is the relationship they have with their parents, and they—" And like, we were really trying to like, start it off—

Griffin: We did too much. We did too much setup in Commitment. I think by the time we—even by the time we got to Amnesty, 'cause this is another question we got of—'cause this is something we talk about in the last, uh, The The Adventure Zone Zone we did at Pod Con of just like, making characters, but leaving gaps.

As somebody who is like, after we finished Amnesty – and by the way, it has been so good to have this huge break between the first chunk of Amnesty and where we are now, because y'all gave me like, so much shit to work with with the characters that you made, and the enormous, enormous narrative gaps. Like, teasing out like, Ned inherited the Cryptonomica, and was a criminal who, something went—something went south, and now is like, living on the lamb. And it's like, well, that's so much shit for me to work with.

And Duck having this history of him walking away from his destiny, but not really dialing into what that was, or what that meant. And Aubrey having

these magic powers that we haven't ex—like, that is so much shit to work on. And so, I don't think we—I don't think we went as hard in Amnesty as we definitely all did in Commitment, where it was like, "Well, their favorite food is spaghetti."

Justin: Yeah. Um, alright, you guys.

Griffin: Can we—wait, real quick, before we do that. Because this is associated. I want to know everybody's favorite character that you've played in the mini arcs.

Travis: Huh.

Griffin: Mine was Errol with a bullet, man. I really liked—

Travis: I think mine is Aubrey. Like, honestly, it's, I—I love—I love, uh, like, wizards and stuff. Like, y'know, and I also, when I was thinking about Aubrey, based her off of like, some of my favorite people in the world. Like, some of my best friends. And so like, that's super fun for me. But it also is like, I like how much I don't know about her when I started, and like... it was very interesting, because like, the first time I spoke as Aubrey, I didn't know what the voice was gonna be. And then, I started talking, and the voice has informed so much about her to me. It's just really interesting. It's fun.

Justin: Uh, yeah, my, uh... Kardala, I think, was probably the best character, 'cause it's what I worked on the hardest. But it was also the scariest to do, because it was way out of my lane, and I was—I was like, trying to work with a lot of stuff that I took very seriously and didn't want to fuck up. So that was very—that was very hard, but I think Kardala came out the best. Uh, Augustus was probably the most fun to play. But I choked with Augustus.

I really wanted to make a character that like, wasn't a good person, like, was a bad guy. And once I started talking in that fuckin' Savannah accent, like, I couldn't not make him like, a charming dude. And I really fucked that up. Like, I really did want to be... I had intent of being a worse person. I really did. It was like, it just, I messed it up, and I still regret that. If we

return to Dust, maybe I'll try to make him more of a scumbag. I don't know. Um, and then—

Griffin: Dad.

Justin: Yeah, Dad.

Clint: Ned. I loved playing Ned. I love Ned to pieces. I just had the best time. Uh, I like his personality, and like Travis, and I think Griffin for Commitment and for Dust, I did a lot of uh... I had a big backstory for him that I didn't use, that I still think will still, uh, still apply. And I'm really pumped up about it.

Griffin: And that is something that like, we didn't do until like, fuckin' Stolen Century—or, no. I didn't get into y'all's backstories in Balance until the going inside the chalice episode of Balance, which was fuckin' 50 episodes in. and so, having the opportunity—and that's why I was excited to like, start over, knowing what we know now.

Clint: I want to say one thing about the characters and stuff. What people don't understand is like what Justin's talking about. It's really tough to play a character with those negative aspects. I mean, it was—it was tough for—Travis may not admit it, but it was tough for him to play Nadiya in the fact that she had to be aloof, and she had to be, y'know, kind of standoffish.

Travis: Yes, because I like playing with y'all. So like, it was really hard to be a jerk.

Griffin: Yeah.

Clint: It's really tough to play a character like that. 'Cause I had—I really thought about that with Gandy, y'know? But it just doesn't—it just doesn't work.

Travis: That was all of Dust. Like, people have commented on, "I thought Travis said it was gonna be like, all tense, and nobody was gonna like each other." And it was like, yeah, but then, like, we got, y'know, a good example of this is like—

Griffin: But we do. We do like each other quite a bit.

Travis: Yeah. At the Full Moon Saloon, like, you guys were so funny and charming. It made no sense for me to have characters just straight up not like you for no reason.

Clint: And that also harkens back to the length of the mini arcs, and the fact that, y'know, in Balance, it developed over a natural period. Y'know, and really going back and looking at the graphic novel and stuff, I can see. Because y'know, they developed that trust, and that really... we had to jump in Media Rez in the mini arcs, and that kind of puts more of a time pressure on you.

Justin: Uh, Dad, real quick, what's a—were you like, the—before you created Ned Chicane, would you say you were like, the biggest Gravity Falls fan, or were you just like, are you like the second biggest? You just love Gravity Falls so much?

Clint: I had watched—

Justin: When you created—

Clint: I had watched Gravity Falls one time with your oldest daughter.

Justin: Yeah.

Clint: And with my hand over my heart, I had no idea who Grunkle Stan was from Gravity Falls. And I saw the reaction—

Griffin: Bing bing bing. That's all the tweets we're getting right now. Bing bing bing.

Clint: But, and I will tell you this, and I appreciate it, and I've also had so many people say, "You gotta watch it, you gotta see." But I really knew from the get go that something more was going on with Amnesty. I knew. So, no, I have not gone back and watched Gravity Falls.

Justin: Yeah.

Griffin: There's an—

Clint: For that very reason. For that very reason.

Griffin: It's a great show. I've seen like, I've seen like a few episodes, I think. I don't necessarily—

Justin: I've seen, like, it fuckin' all. It's the bomb.

Griffin: It's a good show.

Justin: Yeah, it's a good show.

Griffin: It can be demoralizing a little bit, and I hope you, if you've tweeted something like this, don't take this personally or anything. But like, when you're making something, it can be demoralizing that like, it seems like there's an impulse to connect it to something familiar. And I think there are definitely similarities. I mean, fuckin' Gravity Falls has uh, a rural town with monsters, and then, there's like, a shop where there's a person peddling bullshit or whatever.

Like, yeah, there's definitely similarities. I'm not like, ignoring that. But it's a little bit demoralizing when like, we did the setup episode, and then I think there's a difference between saying, like, "This reminds me of Gravity Falls," and then... or like, "This *is*. Oh, you guys are doing Gravity Falls." And, "Oh, Ned reminds me of Grunkle Stan," And, "Ned *is* Grunkle Stan." It feels like, "Oh, well, I've seen this before."

And I know that's not how it's meant, but it's a question of like, volume. 'Cause Dad got literally hundreds of tweets when we did the setup episode, saying like, "Oh, this is this character."

Justin: Yeah, we got a fervent text from Dad who's like, "Who the fuck is Grunkle Stan?"

Travis: What? Huh?

Clint: [laughs]

Griffin: And it's kind of—I hope this is not sounding like us being too sensitive. It's just like, at the scale at which we were getting feedback that was essentially, "This character is this character."

Justin: Yeah, whatever. We're not here to bleach y'all's sweets. We're big boys. You tweet what you want. You tweet what's in your heart. We can handle it.

Travis: No, but what we are here to do is, we are here to, A, answer a lot of your questions.

Justin: Write reasons. Write reasons.

Travis: You talking about Bachelor Nation?

Griffin: [laughs] I don't—why are we—I have explicitly moved away from Bachelor Nation. I don't want to necessarily read—

Justin: Griffin, those are our fans. The Bachelor Nation have been supporting The Adventure Zone since its inception. And I want to speak to Bachelor Nation, the fans of The Adventure Zone.

Griffin: Okay.

Travis: I—Griffin, I want you to know. I voted, uh, for Zoner Boners, and Justin chose—

Griffin: Alright, Bachelor Nation is way better, yeah. Uh, so it's the Max Fun Drive, we're asking you if you enjoy our show, if you've been listening to a lot of it, and feel like you want to help support us. This is the best time of year for you to do that by going to MaximumFun.org/donate and becoming a member, and picking the donation level that's right for you. If you do not have the means right now, totally, totally understand. We would never ask you to make a contribution that you could not afford. Definitely, totally.

But if you do have the means, and you enjoy our show, and uh, you want to think about it like a Netflix or a Hulu where you get your entertainment, and you pay for it on a monthly basis, then we would encourage you to maybe think about doing the same here for The Adventure Zone. And if you listen to a bunch of shows on the network, like MBMBaM and uh, other shows, then y'know, maybe it makes more sense for you.

Justin: We are about to indulge in my favorite Max Fun Drive tradition, uh, since we've started The Adventure Zone, is where Dad reads the gifts that you can get in his fun voice that he does every year.

Travis: Just stretch those cords and get a'rollin'.

Justin: Just get rollin'. Take a break, here.

Clint: Alright. 2018. Well, for \$5 a month, of course, you get the exclusive bonus content. For ten dollars a month—

Justin: [announcer voice] Now, usually, you do this guy. And that's what—

Griffin: [not very good announcer voice] Usually you try to sell the gifts a little bit more than just sayin' what they are.

Clint: [announcer voice] We got \$10 a month, that's gonna get you a Drive exclusive enamel pin. That's designed by Megan Lynn Kott. And these are brand new designs. Holy cow, that's awesome, and they are really beautiful.

For \$20 a month—

Griffin: Wait, wait. What's the pin look like?

Travis: Yeah, I need you to describe the pin, please.

Clint: The pin, uh, for uh, for TAZ?

Travis: Yes.

Griffin: Yeah. The show we're currently recording.

Clint: I don't see a pin for TAZ. I see a pin for MBMBaM.

Travis: It's Dr. Harris Bonkers with a little flame in front of him.

Clint: Oh, that's why it was a rabbit.

Travis: A starry sky, um... yes. Dr. Harris Bonkers, PhD.

Clint: Okay. Alright. It's beautiful. The MBMBaM's good, too.

Travis: It's alright.

Griffin: Also, every level that you move up, you get everything in the previous level, so at ten, you also get the bonus content.

Justin: I think Still Buffering has the best one. I don't know if you guys looked at all the designs—

Griffin: Don't hate. Why you hatin'?

Justin: It's like a Dummies book. And it says, "How To Adult." It's great. Anyway, that's just my personal...

Travis: Well, I think Shmanners is the best one. [blows a raspberry]

Justin: \$20 a month.

Clint: \$20 a month, you get the Max Fun family cook book.

Justin: Um, where is my guy?

Travis: Um, character voice?

Justin: Yeah, character voice?

Clint: [announcer voice] For \$20 a month—

Travis: Thank you.

Clint: --you get the Max Fun family cook book. It is lovingly created for you by Max Fun hosts. This book contains dozens of recipes, from cocktails to desserts, and everything in between. Plus, a bonus set of handsome, space-themed cookie cutters. I also would like to add in my normal voice that uh, we actually contributed to the Max Fun family cook book, because spaghettigeddon is in there. With the recipe, and the—

Griffin: Is it?

Clint: Yeah!

Travis: Is the recipe just like, a lot of spaghetti?

Griffin: Just too much spaghetti.

Clint: No, no. Carol actually—Carol put down the recipe for the sauce. I filled in a little bit of backstory on spaghettigeddon. But if you want to make the same spaghetti that was served up in spaghettigeddon, almost killing three men, then, that's in the cook book.

Justin: That's the spaghetti that fueled the gross Willy Wonka bit?

Clint: Yep.

Travis: Episode 55.

Justin: Episode 55. Uh, and also, uh, guys, still resting on those laurels 345 episodes later. Man, hot commodity.

Griffin: Jesus Christ.

Justin: Uh, and then, uh—

Clint: [announcer voice] \$35 a month—

Justin: It also has—okay. It also has, uh, our mom’s recipe for chess bars that I lovingly, uh, transcribed.

Clint: Oh, did you really?

Justin: Yeah, it’s in there.

Griffin: It also has Rachel’s recipe for chili. There’s a lot of good stuff in there.

Travis: Oh, no. Did Teresa and I—are we the only ones that didn’t pool in?

Clint: Nobody—did—

Travis: We really meant to. Oh, no.

Griffin: Um, there’s higher—there’s higher levels too, that, um, as much as I love Dad’s voice, we don’t need to hammer—hammer antiques. We got a ton of questions. Uh, if you're able to support us to that level, holy shit, thank you all so much. But we don’t really care what level you're able to support us at. All that we care about is that you show your support, and uh, we’re trying to get to 25,000 new and upgrading members.

Travis: And want to hit upgrading there, because we haven’t mentioned that yet.

Griffin: Yes.

Travis: But like, if you've been a member for a while, and you're like, “Y'know what? I'm listening to even more shows this year.” Or, “The shows that I've listened to have become even more important to me this year,” maybe consider upping that donation to the next level. Um, we really appreciate it.

Griffin: And you'll get the gifts, too, if you do that. So, um—

Justin: Yeah, that’s how you get the gifts. You gotta upgrade or become a new member.

Griffin: It means a lot to us to like, and it—it has meant a lot to us, the way that you all have supported us, and allowed us to turn this into a career. Dad got to retire from the radio station last year, because of the money that you all give us to make this show, and that is so incredible, and like, one of, I feel like, our proudest achievements, is that we were able to get our dad out of this uh, job that was not so great for him anymore.

Clint: [laughs]

Justin: It's just because of the hours, and he's so old, y'know? He's so old.

Travis: He's so old.

Griffin: Um, but also, like, it's cool for y'all, too, because you get to feel this sense of, like, you're a part of the show. Every time you listen to it, you know that you have directly supported it, and that's a really cool part of the network.

So yeah, go to MaximumFun.org/donate now. Don't wait. Tell a friend, tweet about the show using the—the drive, using the hash tag #MaxFunDrive, and thank you all so much.

Justin: We are going to get through more questions. Time to get serious about questions. I'm taking—I'm taking the wheel away from you guys. I'm steering us to more questions.

Clint: [singing] Justin, take the wheel.

Justin: Okay. Uh, "Will season two have an equivalent to Magical Costco where fans can submit content? Please be monsters. I want to submit monsters." That's from Kyle.

Clint: [laughs]

Griffin: I don't—I don't know. I'm definitely gonna keep doing the tweet about the show using the #TheZoneCast hash tag and you'll end up as a character in the show. Like, that's for sure gonna be a part of it. Um, all of

the games we did, and the, like, uh, Powered by the Apocalypse games are not so necessarily built around, uh, having a huge inventory of magical items, right? They're more based around like, what your characters can do, and sort of more realistic... um, not realistic, but more sort of person to person interactions, based on like, what your basic set of abilities are.

And so like, I don't really know how I would fit this in. Um, but for what it's worth, y'all motherfuckers went like, 50 episodes without using any of the shit that you bought at the Fantasy Costco, only for the fans to [inaudible 40:35]

Clint: [laughs]

Travis: That's fair.

Clint: What about Cryptono—could they—could they suggest things for the Cryptonomica?

Griffin: Ooh, that could be good.

Travis: Oh, yeah.

Griffin: Yeah, things that could appear in the Cryptonomica that wouldn't necessarily be like, items that y'all use, but just sort of like, flavor. Every time y'all are in the Cryptonomica, we can highlight like, something that somebody pointed out.

Clint: Yeah.

Justin: Uh, "My question is directed at Griffin. I was wondering if you could talk about the music of the mini arcs. Was it harder to find a sound for each arc, given the short time frame of each story? How was that process different from the Balance arc?" And that's from Heidi. And I'm assuming that's directed at both of us, who have crafted all of the music in The Adventure Zone together.

Griffin: [laughs] Well, there was another—there's another question on the list of somebody asking if everybody else had thought about making music

for their arcs, because they'd thought that it added something to the show. I really regret not, uh... I had a bunch of music for Amnesty, but I wasn't able to like, crank out a bunch of music for everybody's arcs, other than the themes. And that was because, one, because we were doing weekly... y'all, our fuckin' recording schedule was always, always, every week, week in, week out, like, down to the wire.

And so, I didn't know, like, what was going to be happening in each episode, because I wasn't the one, like, writing it, or preparing it. And so, there was just, literally, there was not enough time to, uh, to record music for it. But I do think it's like, an important part of the... important part of the show. Now, Justin, how did you land on Elementary's theme? What was the—what were the major inspirations, there?

Justin: Y'know, it's strange, Griffin. It came to me. It just—honestly, the main theme just came to me, and I recorded it with my mouth to remember it. And then I was like, I don't know how to play specific notes on any instrument, other than the baritone." And so, I guess I should just stick with this. So then, I laid down the bass, and the horns—

Clint: It's all about that bass.

Justin: Thank you, Papa. And then the drums. And then, it was like, perfect. Y'know what I mean?

Griffin: That's music, baby.

Justin: That's music. That's just, you put them together, and...

Griffin: And there it is.

Travis: And just believe you me, to answer that question, nobody wants me to try to make music for anything. That is not... hey, I got a lot of skills, people. I got a lot of skills. That ain't one.

Justin: Didn't stop me. Just kind of went with it.

Griffin: It was really hard to find a sound for, um, for all the arcs, really. Amnesty was maybe a little bit easier, because I had the like, I knew. I'd known for so long like, what that show was gonna be, and so, it was a little bit easier. But like, Dust, writing kind of a darker western theme, took me forever. And then, writing Commitment, I like the theme that we have for Commitment.

But I don't think it was necessarily what fit the best for the genre, and I don't necessarily think it's what maybe Dad even had in mind for the genre. It is really, really... Dad... [laughs] I love you, Dad. This is not me knocking you. But you texted me one day, saying, "Um, could you write me like, a John Williams-esque sort of, uh, music stinger to include?"

Clint: [laughing]

Griffin: And I was like, "Yeah, Dad. I'll just..." I have no idea, really, how to compose orchestral music at all, and that's kind of what these themes are. And so, doing like, a brass focused orchestral theme for the show, it took me, y'know... The whole break that we had between Balance and Commitment, I was working on the theme for Commitment. And I'm still just kind of okay with how it turned out. It was really hard.

Clint: Well, I got a Drop Mix game, so that's how I'm gonna be composing music.

Justin: Okay, perfect. Perfect.

Griffin: Fuck yes.

Justin: "Will the story of season two take off right where the introduction story ended?" That's from Paul.

Griffin: Yes.

Justin: Cool. "Did you guys debate a lot on the choosing of season two? Did you consider doing any of the other arcs besides Amnesty for season two? And Griffin, are you excited to be a DM?" I guess GM, now, technically.

Clint: That's actually three questions.

Justin: That's Emily. You got three in, Emily.

Travis: Let me answer real quick, from the point of view of Dust. Writing a mystery with different sections - and I—I will continue Dust as like, a mystery procedural - is not something I could do consistently, every two weeks, for any length of time. Like, it was, even just doing it for four weeks was pretty nerve-wracking for me, because like, running into, one, having to think of the stuff ahead of time, know how everyone was connected, what piece of information everybody knew, where they could be found, what time they would be awake, when they could give the piece of information, who they would give the piece of information to, and to not revealing so much information that it was super obvious what was going on, but revealing enough information that when it was revealed, you could kind of say like, "Oh, I could see." Right? Like, that is not... I could not maintain that consistently, week after week.

Griffin: Well, it's not just—it's not just that. The conversation that we had, and let's just be completely fuckin' transparent, here. After we had finished Amnesty, we all had a conversation about, let's do that. Because that was... we had so much fun, and it was the first time... There was so much fear that, after we finished Balance, that we would never be able to do anything that felt similar to Balance ever, ever again. There was so much—so much anxiety around that conversation, and then, when we finished Amnesty, we all kind of felt like, okay, that felt like The Adventure Zone, so let's do that.

And then, a couple episodes into Dust, we were like, "Okay, wait, this is really fucking good, too. And we're really enjoying that." And the conversation that Travis had with us was that, you didn't necessarily have a whole, like, campaign.

Travis: Yeah. Well, and that's the thing—

Griffin: Like, you didn't have a whole campaign, and didn't know how to like, really do a whole campaign about this.

Travis: I could do miniseries of it, y'know what I mean? Like, that's the thing. But I didn't have an overarching, like, big bad, or overarching like, this is where I'm trying to get to with the story to save... no. Like, I like doing miniseries of it.

And so, that was really what it came down to when we started talking about generating stuff for the off week is, y'know, I set up at the end of this one that the next one is them, like, going to, y'know, Crescent City, and bringing back the Blackwell Daughter. Right? But like, that isn't to save the world or anything. I just want to write that. But...

Griffin: Well, it doesn't have to be that, right? It doesn't have to be—

Travis: But yeah, but like, I want to.

Griffin: Not every story has to be about saving the world.

Travis: But that's the thing is like, I want to write these like, episodic encapsulations, right? But I also need... it took me like, basically a year and a half to get to this, like, to know how this—and even that was like, two weeks before we started Dust was like, oh, oh, yeah. Well, they have to do this. And so like, I don't know that I could generate it consistently, y'know what I mean? So I didn't want to. And plus, I love playing. I like being a PC.

Griffin: it was a conversation, though. There was, again, a very small number of people who, there was this sort of perception that like, I strong-armed everybody into doing my game. And that was super... that's like... the reason that bums me out is because that's not our fuckin' family dynamic. Like, that's not—and so, when folks were saying stuff like that, like, it bummed me out, because it made me think that they thought that that was how our like, family works, and it's super not.

Justin: I think, I mean, if anybody strong-armed, it was me. And I'll take sort of like, ownership of my role in that. Like, I - and I don't regret it - but my personal feeling was that, no matter how good the other arcs were, I feel like we built The Adventure Zone with the dynamic of Griffin running it, and the three of us playing. And for me, it's not just about... you gotta

remember, y'all, it's not just about one of us doing the story. It's about what that dynamic is.

It is a very different dynamic of like, Travis running the game, and the three of us playing. It's three different people playing the game, and that's a very different... Like, game rules and storyline aside, that's a very different dynamic, which is something I didn't realize until we went into it.

So like, for me, I was pushing from, like, I think from the, like... I think even before we did Amnesty. And it worked out that like, Amnesty was good, and it was a good rule set. But like, I felt really strongly that, when we returned to a main season, it should be Griffin running it, because that was what we built Balance on, and that felt like the permutation of the show that like, we had worked for years to create.

And so, yeah, like...

Griffin: That said, though, like, after Amnesty wraps up... Which, real quick, another question we got is like, "How long's it gonna go?" And the answer is, not as long as Balance. Like, probably half as long as Balance. It's still telling a big, cool story, just not taking three years to do so. And we do the next experimental games, I think we're all gonna be at a place of comfort that you would think we'd be there since doing the show since fuckin' 2014, uh, where like, I would love to play and not DM it.

I would—and that's—what Justin said is not indicative of like, I'm always gonna be the one running the game, because I would fuckin' adore the chance. You ask if I'm excited to be DM, and the answer is like, yes, because I'm excited to tell this story. But it is not a like... it ain't a fuckin' power trip thing, as much as some people believe it is.

Justin: And I think the next time around, after this one, I'm gonna be real ready.

Griffin: Yeah.

Justin: This is—after this one, I'm gonna be like, sooo ready to GM. Is that it? To GM one of them, as they say. Just GM one out, y'know? As they say.

Um, "Hello, McElroys. I have a question for Griffin and Travis. Clint, too, but I believe he discussed this in Commitment, and also, Justin."

Clint: [laughs]

Justin: "What inspired the narrative of Amnesty and Dust, and also, while I'm thinking about it, Elementary? Thanks." Cherry K.

Clint: And... and Commitment.

Justin: Well, he already—that's in the—

Griffin: Well, you did—you were very forward about like, what Commitment was based on in the setup.

Justin: We did. If y'all remember, we actually did one of these after we did Commitment.

Griffin: Oh, that's right.

Justin: Yeah, so we've talked about a lot of this from the Commitment perspective. So, uh, hey, us three storytellers, what inspired sort of our stories?

Travis: Um, for Dust, it... a lot of disparate element. One, and I've mentioned a lot, is like, procedurals. I really do love like, the cheesier the better, like, Psych and CSI and Monk and like, really cheesy, like, detective procedurals. I just enjoy those immensely. Uh, but I also really like, uh, westerns. I mean, my favorite movie is Blazing Saddles. So actually, um, Wilder is named after Gene Wilder, and I based him off of uh, Anal Johnson, the um, bartender in Rock Ridge. And so, like, a lot of uh, Blazing Saddles showed up in there.

But the number one inspiration was Romeo and Juliet.

Griffin: Whoa.

Travis: Yeah, that was kind of..

Griffin: Yeah, that makes... that tracks.

Travis: Yeah, so, and that came, actually, fairly late. It went through a lot of different iterations for me. But when I struck into like, a Shakespearian dynamic in the town of like, the families, and y'know, the generational differences between the parents and the children, and like, that kind of thing. That's when it really all started to click for me. And one of the questions we got, and I don't think we're gonna be able to get to it, but somebody asked me, like, how old Anne is.

And like, it's interesting, right? Because when I was thinking about these characters, all I thought about was, there are a parent generation, and an offspring generation, and how different those interact with each other. Right? And so, I don't really know that I have age... I mean, everyone is of age, whatever that means to you. I mean, 18 or older in my head. There—I had so much shit, like, backstory, and relationships, and y'know, all this stuff written for Dust that I never got to.

Griffin: That's true of all of them. My biggest inspiration, I mean, in some part, is the supernatural dramas like Supernatural, and Buffy, and stuff like that. But way bigger than that, like, the original sort of inspiration was Persona. This idea of, uh, living in a town that you try to flesh out as much as any other character, which is something I want to do more of with Kepler. But having sort of this secret, uh, adventure that nobody else knows about, that is going on at night, right?

Like the Dark Hour, or the Midnight Channel. Um, and having this sort of like, home base, where everybody can just sort of be, and have it be a nice place that you uh, can hang out in while doing this sort of secret battle against the forces of darkness. Like, I've always loved that shit, and so, that's—that was the biggest inspiration.

Clint: And—and Justin, what was your inspiration for Elementary?

Justin: Oh, God, Dad. So many. Um, uh—

Clint: Because you had Sherlock Holmes, and—

Justin: Place Beyond the Pines. Uh, Call Me By Your Name. Shape of Water. Uh, Spotlight. Amadeus.

Clint: [wheezes]

Griffin: [laughing]

Justin: Uh, Million Dollar Baby. Hurt Locker. Um, Twelve Years a Slave. Bird Man.

Clint: Are you just—are you just—are you just running through your Netflix queue?

Justin: Spotlight.

Griffin: I'm pretty sure he's looking at the best picture winners.

Justin: No, just a... there's like, so many different influences, it's like, hard to... I—no, I uh, I said I was gonna do the greatest detective story ever, and I did the story about the greatest detective ever. So I fucking completed my initial--

Griffin: Mission accomplished.

Justin: Mission accomplished. Um, I start to get panicky. It starts to actually make me kind of nauseous when we talk about the things we do for too long, 'cause I start to feel very naval-gazey.

Griffin: Yes.

Travis: Oh, I love it.

Justin: So I'm gonna try to just like—alright, it shows. Um, uh...

Clint: [laughs]

Justin: “How has leading a game changed how you approach how you run your player characters, and how you interact with the other players and the gym?” No, the GM. That’s from Connor.

Griffin: And the gym.

Travis: And the gym.

Justin: And the gym.

Travis: I can say—

Clint: I can answer this. I'm not gonna fuck with the DM and the GM anymore.

Travis: Oh, I am.

Griffin: Well, that’s good stuff. No, you definitely should keep doing that.

Travis: I absolutely am. Because still, the scene—

Clint: Yeah, but not as much. Not as much.

Travis: The scene where Errol just wouldn’t fucking go with Ellis and Blackwood to go talk to the Banshee, that’s... Hey, why did we all start riffing after Griffin rang the bell? It’s because I was punishing Griffin for not just going with Ellis and Blackwood.

Griffin: Yeah.

Travis: But one of the things that I, uh, am going to come away, is not try to plan too much ahead. Because this is the thing that happens a lot, where we finish a recording, and then I spend the next two weeks thinking about, “The next thing I am going to do as my character is...” Right? But that’s not really how the collaborative, like, story building process works. So it’s easier just to play in the moment, rather than as the player character, try to think about like, the next three scenes you want to do, y'know?

Griffin: Let's move on. This is a question from Katya, who says, "I have a very important question to Travis about Aubrey Little. Is she a lesbian?"

Travis: So, when I talked about... so I based Aubrey on four people, right? She's named after Aubrey Plaza, and she like, is pierced and tattooed like my friends Verona, Tybee, and Kate, right? And so, all four of those people are bisexual. And so, it was just kind of in my head when I—it wasn't even really a decision that I made, but as I was picturing Aubrey and basing her off of these four people, that she just, like, was bisexual. Um, so, to answer your question, Katya, she is bisexual, like all four of those people.

Griffin: Uh, here's a question from Trevor, who says, "I'm a big fan of regional storytelling, and I was wondering, given that this arc is set in West Virginia, do you see this season as an opportunity to tell stories about West Virginia in a positive light, or at least, not in a negative light?" Uh, yes. That's very important to me.

Travis: Yes, yes, yes.

Griffin: I thought that would be very cool, to like, tell a story about people living in West Virginia that is not the same fuckin' three stories that people have told about living in West Virginia over and over and over again.

Um, what else is on here?

Travis: This question is for Griffin. "How did it feel to be hands off for the setup of the last battle in Amnesty? Are you nervous about this going forward?" And that's from Roslyn.

Griffin: I'm not nervous. I thought that was great. Um, and that's like—that's like, one really cool thing about Monster of the Week that I think is gonna continue to be very, very cool, is that the like, final confrontation is, at least, how I led the game, not going to be something that I come up with at all. The whole battle of y'all being in a cave and doing the fire trap and all that stuff was completely not anything that I had made up. So, and I thought that was really neat, and I think that you all, like, it's a cool way for you all to come up with like, what the climactic moment of each arc is gonna be. And so, I'm super excited about that.

Travis: Well, awesome. So uh, we're gonna wrap up. But first, I want to remind everybody one more time. It's the Max Fun Drive, and it's your opportunity to support the art and artists you love. If you go to MaximumFun.org/donate, you can become a member. And what that means is, you pick a monthly donation level that you're comfortable with. And here's the amazing thing – and it really – ugh, that sounds like such a gross sales pitch. But here's the thing I love the most about Max Fun. When you become a member, and you make these pledges, it goes directly to the shows you listen to. You are asked, "Which shows do you listen to?"

And so, a small percentage goes to cover the overhead of Max Fun, so they can pay their employees. But the rest goes directly to the artists you like. It's not like some, y'know, amorphous blob of the money goes in, you have no idea where it goes. We have been able to, y'know, focus on Adventure Zone, and put as much work into it as we do, because we know, directly, how many people care about it, and we know what it means to y'all, and how much you support it. And so, it's an amazing system. I love the Max Fun Drive, and I love the Maximum Fun structure. And it means the world to us. And so...

Griffin: And we should also mention, like, this is kind of a weird year for us at The Adventure Zone, doing the Max Fun Drive. Because we're about to... we're not doing the same show we've done for the past couple Max Fun Drives. And so, like, um, I don't know. Your support, I feel like, now more than ever, would mean the world to us, and, y'know, is a way of saying, like, we're supportive of the thing that you're making, whatever shape it takes.

If you, again, if you have the means, we really appreciate it. It's MaximumFun.org/donate is the link you can go to. Go do it now, and um, thank you all very, very much.

Justin: Listen, I'm just gonna say it, 'cause you guys won't. If you all don't keep supporting us, our dad has to go back to work. And listen, y'all—

Clint: Yeah. And I mean, I gotta start getting up at 3:30 in the morning again? Please.

Travis: And he's so old.

Justin: That's assuming you'd be able to get your old job back.

Clint: For me.

Justin: There is no reason to think that's the case.

Clint: Please. No.

Griffin: And he—he burned those dinks on his last day. Y'all have no idea.

Justin: Hey, listen; did you ever see Half Baked? It's a good flick.

Clint: Uh, yeah.

Justin: Check it out.

Griffin: This has been Justin's Cool Flicks Recommendations.

Justin: It's a new segment I'm starting.

Griffin: A new segment on The Adventure Zone, every episode. So, next week, the second week of the Max Fun Drive, we will be doing the next episode of The Adventure Zone: Amnesty. Episode six, the first episode of a new arc. Um, I'm very excited for y'all to see what nasty monster I have cooked up for you this time.

Clint: Oh, that's not the pirate one then, right? We're not doing the pirates.

Griffin: No.

Clint: Not doing pirates.

Griffin: Uh, it is actually... the monster is two pirates. Um, it's a new thing. Yeah, so that'll be next week, and then, I think we actually also have another episode the week after that, just to get us back on our biweekly schedule. And then, from that point on, we're back to biweekly so that we

can focus on making the show as good as we need it to be, without suffering from sort of soul crushing time management issues.

Anything else here as we're sort of wrapping... Again, like, thank you all so much for hanging with us during the experimental arcs. I understand that that was a lot to ask from you, the listener, and we've groused, y'know, a little bit, about some of the, again, very, very small minority of the response that we got.

Um, but, really, you all stuck with us during a period of this show that we were all very, very scared to enter into, and you all made it something that was not only like, really, I think, at the end of the day, pretty enjoyable for all of us. But as we were hoping, like, really, really, really informative about how to do this show better, and make the show we want to make.

Travis: I'll also say, Justin, not to put too fine a point on it. But as we were finishing Balance, we were really worried that like, what if, y'know, what if people just liked Balance, and then, that was done? And so many of you have like, come out to be like, "I like this, too." And it really does mean a lot to us. It has been wonderfully supportive, and we just appreciate... we appreciate it so much.

Clint: Yeah, you can't put too fine a point on it. We got so much positive feedback about Dust, and Amnesty, and Commitment, and Elementary.

Griffin: And—and constructive criticism. Like, that was really helpful, too.

Clint: Yeah, we take that in, and we really do. It's extremely helpful, and I plan on going back to Commitment. I got some stuff planned, so...

Travis: Yeah, if I—

Griffin: There's futures for all of it. I need more Elementary.

Justin: I actually need to get some more critique about my thing. I didn't get a single critique. So I guess it's kind of perfect.

Travis: All positive?

Clint: Must've been, yeah.

Justin: All positive. All positive.

Clint: Yeah.

Justin: Which is wild.

Griffin: You all need... become a donor, if only to hear Justin's Elementary episode. It was the most fun we've ever had recording an episode, I feel like.

Justin: Okay.

Griffin: Alright, let's wrap up. I thank you all so much. Next week, the, I guess, season premiere... that's a weird way of thinking about it, since we already did five episodes. But April 12th.

Justin: That was a backdoor pilot.

Griffin: That was the backdoor pilot. And then, literally the day after that, we're gonna have a live show in Dallas, and uh, yeah. I think that one's sold out, but we're doing—

Justin: Oh, hey, Houston—by the way, this is MBMBaM show. But like, Houston, can you come to our show, please?

Travis: Can you like, step up, please?

Justin: Can you please buy some tickets? Only like, eight of you did.

Travis: We don't want to do more shows that aren't in like, Boston and New York. And so, and—and San Francisco and stuff. So we need you, Houston, step up.

Justin: I don't know why Travis hates Boston and San Francisco so much. I love those towns.

Clint: I don't know.

Justin: Listen. Remember your home town boy, Justin McElroy, still loves those cities. Unlike Travis, who hates them.

Clint: And if we don't sell—if we don't sell out Houston... if we don't sell out Houston, I'm gonna have to go back to radio.

Justin: Yeah, there it is, folks.

Travis: And he's o old.

Justin: You heard it here first.

Griffin: [laughs] Uh, okay. That's it. McElroyShows.com/tours, if you want to see what the dates are and tickets. And we're also doing a book tour for the graphic novel, and there's some tickets available for that, too. Again, all at McElroyShows.com/tours. And MaximumFun.org/donate is where you go to become a member of the network, and we'll see you next week. Bye.

Justin: Bye, y'all.

[theme music plays]

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