

The The Adventure Zone Zone: MaxFunDrive 2019 Special

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[theme music plays]

Justin: Welcome to The The Adventure Zone Zone. I'm Justin McElroy. Here's our first question: "Justin, will you eat more goulash during episodes?"

Clint: [laughs]

Justin: And the answer is, dear listener – you got it.

Travis: Okay, I will also say, though, Justin... it's 3:15PM when we're recording.

Griffin: It is 3:15.

Travis: What meal slot are you hitting?

Griffin: Yeah, where you at?

Justin: Um... let me see. Let me check the clock on the wall.

Clint: Tea. It's tea.

Justin: And the little hand is pointing to goulash.

Griffin: Oh, okay.

Justin: And the big hand is pointing to goulash. It's goulash o'clock.

Travis: Welcome to the Maximum Fun Goulash Drive 2019. How much goulash can we get with the amount of money you donate?

Clint: And remember... it's goooulash!

Justin: Wait a minute. The Adventure Zone: Elementary. The Adventure Zone: Fur. The Adventure Zone: Goulash.

Clint: [laughs]

Travis: [laughs]

Griffin: That's this special one off. Justin, I know that you have enough, um, professionalism and common sense not to eat the goulash while we're recording this episode where we ask people for money. But I would also suggest that the goulash probably leaves a slight residue that affects the tones coming out of your mouth hole, and just make sure you give it like, a nice sweep before you uh, before you start broadcasting there. That's my one... that's my one frame.

Justin: [laughs] Of course. Of course. I'll be sure to—once—yeah, if I happen to stop eating goulash at some point, I'll be sure to give a good rinse just to get all the goulash particulate out.

Travis: So that Justin can slam jam that goulash on down, Griffin, why don't you tell us a little bit about the MaxFunDrive?

Griffin: Yeah, sure. So, we're a part of the Maximum Fun network, and we have been—well, TAZ has been since its inception. But we have been a part of the network for, y'know, in some way, for eight years now. This is our eighth MaxFunDrive.

We joined the network back in 2011, and uh, because of that, we have been able to turn podcasting into our full-time careers, and we have been able to uh, launch a bunch of other different shows, and we've been able to start touring, and take time off from stuff to make the TV show, and uh, all of these different things have been possible because we've been able to dedicate the time that we've been able to dedicate to these shows.

And that is all because of the support that listeners have provided us over the years. Um, I think it was so obvious for us to spin off our one D&D episode of MBMBaM into TAZ, because uh, there was a demand for it, and then there was a ton of support for it in the MaxFunDrive.

So that kind of like, direct support that you can give us – and it is direct. When you go to MaximumFun.org/donate, you pick the shows that your money goes to, and a small amount goes to Max Fun to help cover overhead, it helps sort of put the things that you like into the world.

So, we're gonna talk a bit about it during this episode as we're also answering your questions about Amnesty, and live shows, and whatever you asked questions about. So, think about going to MaximumFun.org/donate. There's some great rewards that you can get if you become a member, including the bonus content you get at five dollars a month. Which, for us, this year, includes Honey Heist, or The Adventure Zone: Fur as it has so been titled, which was a really fun thing to record.

But we're gonna talk more about the bonus stuff as soon as we... I don't know, after we answer a few questions. So who wants to rip one of these bad boys out here?

Justin: What was that address one more time? I think I missed it.

Griffin: Yeah, it's MaximumFun.org/donate.

Travis: I'll start with a fairly big one for, uh, Griffin. "Griffin, how have your original ideas for Amnesty changed since their first conception?" And that's from Tucker. Thank you, Tucker.

Griffin: Thank you, Tucker. I think I uh, mentioned during like, the uh, the experimental episode TTAZZ that we did, uh, about this being sort of Persona-influenced. And the Persona games, if you've never played them, they're about like, uh, y'know, teens going into secret worlds and fighting the monsters there that are like, influencing their stuff while also having all this day to day drama.

I don't necessarily know that Amnesty is that, necessarily. And in fact, I'd say that like, what Amnesty is now is kind of nothing like what I envisioned it would be. Uh, and I'm kind of—I'm happy about that, because uh, I don't think I had a great idea for what it was gonna be, beyond the pitch of, y'know, West Virginia ski town with monsters in it. But I think it's turned into something kind of bigger than that.

And honestly, for the last like, couple arcs, I feel like it's been way more play-driven, and way less big picture. Like, where we are now is, I have no idea, like... I have no idea where we're going. I'm sure we'll get there. Uh, and I haven't had any idea for a while. So, it's less like that the world has changed out of what I thought it was gonna be before we started playing, and more that like, the way we are uh, y'know, doing story telling has changed pretty drastically.

Which, I'd be curious to hear what the other three of you feel like, because it's definitely like, a different way of making donuts than we did with Balance, it feels like.

Travis: I think that connects to another question, too, where uh, DesperateDM asks, "How do you write your notes for sessions, especially for parts where the players dictate how the game progresses?" And I feel a lot like in Amnesty, um, we've had a lot more like, where you have the like, the monster, and all of the like, uh, elements of that, and all the pieces. But then, what happens within those scenes and how we get to that and stuff, you tend to leave that a lot more open to what we decide to do with the characters and the scenes than you did when we were doing Balance.

And so, it has been more of a... a lot more of like, an open kind of open world kind of play, y'know, where we have like, created what shop we go to, and a lot of the NPCs are based off of like, scenes we want to do, and that kind of thing. So it's been... it's been a pretty different experience compared to Balance.

Clint: Yeah, and I also think that the fact that we started doing it towards the end of Balance, I'd say the last quarter of Balance, but Amnesty really, really feels, uh, more character-driven in the fact that, I think that we are doing...

We've been pretty consistent with trying to stay in-character, um, and try to drive the action that way. The choices we made, and the things we've done. Y'know, and we will, y'know, call each other on it occasionally, if we veer from that. I think it's been much more character honest, all through Amnesty.

Griffin: Which isn't to say that like, the characters in Balance were weak.

Clint: No, no, no, that's what I mean. I'm talking more about the way we play.

Griffin: Right.

Clint: I think that we have embraced it from the get go with Amnesty, and it took us a while with Balance.

Griffin: I think it's an interesting like, case study. Like, an interesting comparison. Because when we started doing Balance, we had no idea who the characters were gonna be. And then, they turned into these characters that we all, y'know, fell in love with by the end of it.

And with Amnesty, and really, all the experimental arcs, we put in a lot more elbow grease ahead of time to try and like, come up with who these characters were. And I still feel like it took us, like, a dozen episodes or more to like, really start understanding who they were, and start like, having fun with them, and start like, uh, knowing how they would react in all of these different situations.

So, I think we ended up kind of in the same place, even though I think we tried to put in a little bit more effort to inform who the characters were before we got started.

Justin: Y'know, it's interesting. When we were creating characters... I'll speak for myself. Uh, when I was creating Taako for The Adventure Zone, a lot of the Taako, like... things that made up Taako as a character, came from a disinterest in any sort of like, consistency or continuity. Like, we were all very just kind of pulling it out of our asses when we started.

And I think that that actually made for more interesting characters, because it was like, y'know, very few people are deliberately created, y'know? Like, almost nobody's deliberately created. And it's just uh, y'know, the things that make up your personality are the things that happen to you, and I think that that lack of structure early on is what created a lot.

And there's some stuff like blind alleys that we sort of tried for the characters that didn't work out. I think with Amnesty, um, it was actually kind of a struggle at first to not care, and not be precious. Because like, I... I was much more thinking about it, and almost kind of like, psyching myself out. Like, playing um, in a 30-episodes-in headspace right from the beginning, without having that sort of like, groundwork.

And at the same time, being much more conscious of choices that I was making, because with the realization that like, that I was creating a character as I went, y'know what I mean? Like, I was overthinking it.

Griffin: Yeah, I feel like next time we do this, I think we might all take a step back from like, trying to flesh out every... not every part of the characters, right? But like, we... I feel like we did maybe go a little bit hard. A little bit hard in the paint on all the experimental arcs, when like, really, the ethos of all of these apocalypse world games is to, y'know, draw maps, but leave spaces.

And I don't necessarily know that we left enough spaces. Which is—I'm not slamming the characters or the arc, because I am genuinely happy with where it is now. But yeah, it's been... I don't know, it's been interesting. It's been very different from Balance.

Travis: What I have found, too, is like, when I think about the differences between Balance and Amnesty, a lot of it has to do with genre, right?

Griffin: Yes.

Travis: Because when you think about that Balance kind of filled this uh, the genre of like, high fantasy epic...

Griffin: I would not call it high fantasy.

Travis: Well, but I mean like, if you're looking at what it's, y'know, aping and what it's kind of like, sort of like. Where you have this, in the end, the world is like, the entire universe, the entire multiverse is at risk, right?

Griffin: Right.

Travis: Where... And so, yeah, we have these three doofuses that were everything was kind of like, happening around them, and they were just trying to like, make it through, right? Whereas with Amnesty, you're looking at a Monster of the Week.

And y'know, when you look at other Monster of the Week, like, Supernatural and Buffy the Vampire Slayer and shows like that, a lot more of it is like, yeah, there's a monster, and that's very important, and they have to find it. But really, you're watching the show for the characters and like, their own internal journeys and relationship journeys and all of that.

Griffin: Right.

Travis: And the monsters are kind of an excuse to keep the action moving.

Griffin: It's a more tension-driven experience than like, an exploration sort of wild footloose and fancy... like, I don't know that we could do a scene in Amnesty where, y'know, you're just chilling in a mud bath with your boss. Do you know what I mean?

Travis: Yeah.

Justin: Yeah.

Griffin: Because there's a fuckin' werewolf out there that's trying to eat every... and I just, I don't know. It is a different type of storytelling that I don't think any of us really appreciated it would be. I think we all thought

like, oh, well, now we know how to play RPGs. Let's just do this monster one.

But really, like, it's a different kind of story. It's a different environment. It's different types of characters. It's a different sort of tone. Like, there's a lot of stuff that has been different with Amnesty.

Clint: I got one. Um, from Pawzemandeus. Um, "Clint, is Saturday Night Dead and the Cryptonomica based on Svengoolie by any chance? And if that isn't a primary influence for Ned's whole deal, what was? He feels very nostalgic in a way I can't put my finger on."

It's 'cause the guy playing him is old, hence the nostalgia.

Travis: What? No.

Justin: No.

Clint: Here's the thing. While Svengoolie is an example of—

Griffin: Can you explain what that is?

Clint: Svengoolie is a uh, a monster movie host on uh, I'm trying to remember. I don't remember which network it's on, but he's still doing it today. And it's...

Justin: MeTV is the network now.

Clint: Is it? Okay.

Justin: Yeah.

Clint: And it's... in a long tradition of monster movie hosts, like uh, Zacherley, and Morgus...

Travis: Elvira.

Clint: Elvira. Vampira, who Elvira was a prestige of. My favorite was Dr. Paul Bearer. Not the one from wrestling. But I mean, these used to be prevalent. There used to be all kinds of these monster movie hosts, and there was always humor based around it, and really cheap jokes, and really... and the worse, the crummier the movie, the better the show would be.

And that's kind of where I was coming from on that. I am a fan of Svengoolie. It genuinely is, while it's cheesy sets and everything else, it's pretty well written, and he's really hysterically funny. But yeah, I was going for that whole monster movie hosting vibe with the whole thing of Saturday Night Dead, yes. Which is why I chose such horrible movies.

Travis: Uh, this question is from Jessie. "I remember a point when the new arc was starting, where it was mentioned that Commitment and Dust would be revisited during live shows. Is that still planned? I would love to see those characters and stories come back in some way."

Clint: Aww.

Griffin: Um, let's talk about live shows.

Travis: Yeah.

Griffin: I know some of the questions have to do with live shows, which we've only been doing Balance for, and we've been doing them every like, what, every other month? Every other tour or so that we do, we do a TAZ: Balance. And... did we say that we were gonna do live Commitment and Dust? I don't—I remember saying that we wanted to return to them in some way. I don't remember saying in a live environment, but maybe we did. That was such a long time ago now.

Clint: Well, it's on the internet, Griffin, so it must be true.

Griffin: It probably is. Um, so, we just got back from the JoCo Cruise, which was a hell of a lot of fun. And our like, Adventure Zone offering for

that cruise was a performance of uh, Five Sherlock Holmes and a Vampire, with special guest Pat Rothfuss. And that was our first time doing a live show that wasn't Balance, that was something else. And obviously, it was, y'know, it was Elementary 2, which is the best. A really good game, and a really incredible and rich tapestry that was woven.

But it was a fuckin'... it was a lot of fun. Like, it was very, very, very fun. And there is a certain... returning to the Balance well as much as we do in those live shows has started to get kind of like, um... it's getting trickier to like, make something new, if that makes sense. Something new that also works as a live show that like... so like, I think it would be fun to do Dust or Commitment or any... something else. I don't know.

Travis: I mean, we had so much fun doing Honey Heist. Like, a one... y'know, doing a live Honey—or live, y'know, maybe a live Amnesty. I don't know. Something new. Or something weird. Who knows.

Justin: I mean, if we're being, like... we're being honest, right? There's no reason not to be, like—

Travis: Yeah, we can edit it.

Justin: We could always edit our honesty out. I mean, part of it is like, we... when you do a live show, you book a venue, right? And then that is predicated on selling a certain number of tickets. And if you don't sell those tickets, then you lose money on the thing, right? So there's definitely a concern that like, I think a lot of people... our suspicion, at least, has been that a lot of people who come to those shows are coming to see the Balance characters, right?

So that's part of it, is like, we would have to be really clear upfront, y'know, that it was not a Balance show. but also, it would have to be like, I don't know what... like, we'd have to choose a venue—like, guess how many seats. We don't have the data, right? Guess how many people would want to come. We have absolutely no idea.

And that's really tough. It's really tough to do. Um, but there is a sense that, we loved the way the world ended in the podcast. We loved where we left the characters. And I mean, if we're being like, super honest, there does start to come to a point – and I don't think we're quite there yet – but it comes to a point where you feel like you're a cover band, y'know?

Griffin: Yeah.

Travis: Yeah.

Justin: Just like, going out and playing—

Travis: It makes me think of the parts in Galaxy Quest where they're like, opening up the car dealership.

Griffin: Yeah. That's maybe a little...

Travis: And they're like, Grabthar's hammer.

Griffin: That's a—that's several steps ahead of—

Justin: Like I said, not there yet.

Travis: Not there yet.

Griffin: Yes.

Clint: I cast zone of truth.

Griffin: Yeah, and there's—

Justin: On these deals! These deals can't be—

Travis: [laughs]

Griffin: And another—the other thing—

Justin: These prices can't be for real.

Griffin: There's also an element of, it's been... it's been a long time since we—it's been a year and a half, right? Since we wrapped up Balance? And even longer than that, right? God, when are we—I don't remember. Anyway...

Justin: August...

Griffin: 2017, right?

Justin: 2017?

Griffin: I think so. Um, and so, like, it's tough to remember a lot of stuff. I remember most of the stuff, but also like, D&D is kind of getting a little bit tough to play in a live environment. I remember uh, the...

Justin: When you take two months in between touching it.

Griffin: When you take two months before touching it, it can get a little bit rough. But also like, uh, Justin, we were talking after the New Orleans show where you were like, "I don't..." Taako, I think, is great at like, doing stunts at each live show, of doing like, some wild thing that nobody expects. And it's like, you looking through your spell book like, "I've kind of done all this... I've done all the spells. There's not that many spells that I haven't..."

Justin: Yeah.

Griffin: And so like, there's a mechanical thing that's... All this to say, I don't know, I think the future of live shows...

Justin: The reason we're talking about this so much is like, this is an extension of conversations we have...

Griffin: All the time.

Justin: All the time.

Travis: Because we don't want it to get stale. If you're gonna show up, and show up and support us, like, we don't want to be like, "Okay, cool, we're gonna ramble off some character names that you like, and then, I don't know, bye."

Griffin: Sure.

Travis: Like, we want it to be good.

Griffin: And that's not what we're doing.

Travis: Yes. Not at all.

Griffin: I would not sell any of the live shows we've done short by saying it's like that. But it's—any step in that direction at all makes me super uncomfortable.

Justin: We want to stop doing those before we do the one where we're like, "Hey, we didn't do anything interesting that time."

Griffin: Yeah, sure. But at the same time, like, the JoCo Cruise show was super fun. And it was... it was, I think, more humor driven than gameplay driven, obviously, because we were playing Five Sherlock Holmes and a Vampire. But also, like, we made a new thing, and there was—and the same with Honey Heist. Honey Heist is a game about bears trying to steal honey from HoneyCon. And yet, at the end of that, I was like, "I feel good about the story we just told."

Travis: Yeah.

Clint: [laughs]

Griffin: So like, I don't... y'know, I'm not thinking of it as like, a loss. I'm just thinking that it's like, our views on the core podcast show that we're

doing, because we've moved on from Balance, kind of starting to come, like, align with how we think about live shows, too.

Travis: Uh, speaking of Honey Heist and Sherlock Holmes, Brian asks, "Where do you get those one page RPGs like Sherlock Holmes and the bear Honey Heist game? Those sound like lots of fun."

Griffin: Uh, Trav, you came up with the idea to do Honey Heist.

Travis: Yeah, so, I mean... the thing is, there are all of these, y'know—

Justin: Do they mean literally, where do you get the files? Or like, where you find them?

Griffin: I torrent all of them off LimeWire and Kazaa.

Travis: I found it under a log in the woods. Um, I like watching a lot of, um, like, actual play podcast things, and there's lots of like, roleplaying game, like, streams and stuff on YouTube. I first became aware of Honey Heist from Critical Role doing Honey Heist.

Griffin: Yeah.

Travis: Um, but the internet is just full of one page, one shot RPGs. And like, we just came upon one somebody tweeted at us, a Carly Ray Jepsen, uh, one page RPG.

Griffin: Oh yeah. It will not surprise you to hear that I got sent that one a lot.

Travis: Yes.

Griffin: I'm not even on Twitter anymore, and I could feel... I could feel the reverberations through the air surrounding my computer of people handing me that.

Travis: There's a lot. Like, I would be willing to bet that pretty much most like, genre you can think of, there's probably some kind of one page, one shot RPG for it.

Griffin: Oh, sure. I just—I heard Dad, when we started this call, asking one of you, "Have you heard of this game Lasers and Feelings?" And I was like, "How do you know about Lasers and Feelings?"

Clint: I found it on Justin's printer. [laughs]

Griffin: Oh, okay.

Travis: Oh, okay.

Griffin: Justin's doing pirated copies.

Justin: That's Dad's sort of discovery engine for these games.

Clint: Well, I have another back door hack. Have an uncomfortable moment on a beach where you interrupt Wil Wheaton and his wife having a nice conversation to ask him for recommendations about one pagers.

Griffin: Ah, that'll do it, too.

Clint: That's really awesome.

Justin: That'll do it too.

Clint: Yeah.

Justin: And hey, that's a good way to turn me into a ghost, so that's another cool way. I go just be a whole skeleton.

Travis: Uh, here's a question from Ashley, and I guess this is for Griffin and Justin. "Was Minerva always going to die, or did a bad vision or roll kill her?"

Griffin: Uh, this is a wild question.

Justin: Don't know that Minerva is dead.

Griffin: Right, exactly.

Justin: That's worth noting.

Griffin: That's the first thing. And the other thing, uh, is that it... I don't know. I don't think about the...

Justin: You never... oh, that's right. You never saw me die.

Griffin: Oh, we can't conjure that into our show that is a safe space for friends. Um, no, it's not like she was always gonna—it's not like when I was writing the thesis of Amnesty, before we started, it was like, "He's gonna have this uh, holographic alien friend who is gonna train him until she gets, y'know, her planet gets hit by a meteor."

But like, that was part of the bad vision roll, right? And because of that, like, I have to follow up with those hard rolls. I have to follow up with those hard moves when you guys fail, because that's like, the big tool I have for, y'know, shaping the story. If you think about it, like, when you guys roll well, you're in charge of where the story goes. When you roll poorly, I'm in charge. And so like, I can't just say like, there's a meteor, and then there's not a meteor.

Travis: Yeah, but you wouldn't have done it if it broke... 'cause that's the thing people always asked about during Balance, too, is like a time when Justin and Travis and Clint broke the game! Like, that's not really how...

Griffin: No, that's not...

Travis: ...RPGs like this work.

Griffin: The way that it went was, Justin rolled this roll. I knew that the monster was going to be a thing that made bad things happen. And when I

thought about it, when you failed, a very bad thing that could happen is, a meteor strike, right? An asteroid hitting the planet. And then, as like, I think after we finished that episode or so, I was like, "Oh, what about, y'know, if it's not your guys' planet that gets hit?"

This was not a thing that was always going to happen. These visions are like, my favorite part of the game, trying to get to them. Trying to like, figure out a way to get to them. Which is like, we have not even touched the vision that you had for the arc that we are currently in, where you saw uh, Leo, y'know, dead in your arms in front of the telescope.

And like, how do we get there? How do we get—how do we get you guys there? Does that even happen? Is there a way for you to change what happens? That is—can you change them now that you are not the chosen one necessarily anymore? Like, that shit I think is super cool.

Travis: On that note, too, we had a lot of questions about that. About the change to the Mundane playbook. Was that—did—so basically, people would like to know in general, is that something Justin expressed interest in, and so it worked out that way? Or, Justin, was it because of Minerva going away that you were like, "Oh, I am going to do this." How did that decision come about?

Clint: Yeah, which was the chicken and which was the egg?

Justin: Man, I'm trying to remember. All of this stuff is so collaborative. Um... I definitely mentioned to Griffin... something about how we were gonna handle it.

Griffin: Right.

Justin: Like, I—was I like... I don't remember. Griffin, do you remember how it actually happened?

Griffin: So we had talked, like, Duck's powers come through this like, psychic tether or whatever that he had with Minerva, through his wormhole in his brain from like, across the galaxy or whatever, right? And so, that was

the source of his power, and so like, when Minerva's point of contact with Duck got shut off, like, I think we... Justin and I both were like, well, that's gonna have some effect on Duck's powers.

And I think we had a conversation about you wanting to adjust Duck's stats. Like, wanting to change his thing. Or when we were talking about how—that's what it was. We were talking about leveling up Duck for the most recently, like, lunar interlude. You were trying to find some way to reflect the loss of power, or something like that. And then like, uh, I think I suggested, like, there's a whole character archetype that is—

Justin: Oh, it was—it was, take... I wanted to... one of the upgrades is, you can take something from another playbook.

Griffin: That's what it was. Yes. So you were looking at them.

Justin: And I was like, I should take something from the Mundane playbook. And you were like, "Well..." [laughs] "Here's a different thing we could do."

Griffin: You could take everything from the Mundane playbook.

Justin: And it's weird how that is probably one of the things we've gotten, like, the most negative feedback on. And it's like...

Travis: It's one of my favorite things we've done.

Justin: It's so interesting—like, it's so much more interesting. Like, why was—why is that a negative? Like, how many times have you heard that story of like, the chosen one who finds his destiny? It's much more interesting to me, someone who chooses their dest—like, finally embraces their destiny, and then no longer has the powers that they were supposed to. That's cool. It's cool.

Griffin: It is...

Justin: Not a lot I can do in any given situation, though. That's pretty chill.

Travis: Hey, welcome to being Magnus.

Griffin: That's fuckin' wicked not true, because you've used your power to convince somebody to do something to keep them safe from harm like, four times in the last two episodes.

Justin: That is true.

Griffin: Like it's... the Mundane does shit. Like, the Mundane has a role. You all can beat ass, right? Like, even you as the Mundane have beaten ass. But now, you have this other thing that you can do.

Let's take a second to talk about the MaxFunDrive.

Justin: Mmm, I love it.

Griffin: Daddy, why don't you go ahead and start telling us some of the donation levels? Again, if you hear this, the spirit moves you, MaximumFun.org/donate. Choose the level that works for you, and get these great rewards. Father. Go.

Clint: That's a really important point – what works for you. Do what you can. Um, but we do have some levels, some suggested levels. There's a five dollar monthly membership. You get all this bonus content. Exclusive bonus content. Unless we've been hacked, which I don't think we have. We're talking over a hundred hours of bonus content.

Travis: Over 200.

Griffin: Well, across all the different shows. We don't have 200 hours of TAZ. But we do have Honey Heist. We have, uh, by this point, hopefully we've hit 15 thousand donors. Although, who knows. Which means that TAZ: Elementary 2, which we did record on the JoCo Cruise, is gonna be up in the feed. We have our episode we did with—

Travis: With special guest, Patrick Rothfuss.

Griffin: With Pat Rothfuss. And then we have the episode we did with Lin. We have the first TAZ Nights.

Clint: Lin. Lin...

Griffin: Manuel-Miranda.

Clint: Lin Anderson? Oh, okay. Yeah.

Griffin: And yeah, just a bunch of eps up on there.

Clint: Uh, ten dollar monthly membership gets you the exclusive – the Drive exclusive enamel pin that Meghan Lynn Kott did. Um, my personal favorite is the Cryptonomica one, but you get that, and you get a Max Fun membership card, and all the stuff from the five dollar level.

Uh, \$20 monthly membership – this is cool. It's a beautiful, 550-piece Maximum Fun puzzle. Geoffrey Tice designed it specifically for Max Fun monthly members, and it's a, y'know, let's face it. You're listening to a podcast. You gotta do something with your hands. Hopefully you're not driving. But putting together this jigsaw puzzle would be a great thing to do.

Travis: We cannot stress enough – don't put together a jigsaw puzzle while you drive.

Clint: Don't jigsaw and drive.

Travis: I know it's tempting. I know it is.

Clint: Uh, \$35—and of course, you get all the things from the previous level. \$35 monthly membership, you get this incredible glass coffee mug engraved with the Max Fun rocket logo. It's safe to microwave.

Justin: [gasps]

Clint: You can't say that about your pewter mugs, your iron mugs, your magnesium—

Griffin: Your tinfoil mugs.

Clint: Your tinfoil mugs, you cannot say that.

Griffin: Your mugs made out of grape meat.

Travis: [laughs]

Griffin: Uh, we don't have to do the higher tier ones right now, but—

Clint: Well, what else do you need?

Travis: There are higher tiers.

Griffin: There are.

Clint: There are, yeah. But uh, yeah, and you get all that great stuff. A lot of great content, a lot of really cool stuff to impress your friends and neighbors with, and uh, and we urge you – do what you can. Take a look at those levels. Listen to what I say, and keep me from having to go back to having a real job.

Travis: Yeah, and that includes new and upgrading donors. So if you uh, like, maybe you've been at five dollars for a while, or ten dollars for a while, or whatever, and maybe, y'know, you start listening to more shows on the network, or they've become even more important to you, or whatever, and you're wanting to up those donations. If you up your donations, you are also then eligible to get the reward gifts that we've just listed.

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Griffin: Uh, should we get back into the questions?

Travis: Yeah, we had a question here...

Justin: Yes.

Travis: That was from Chase, about, "When making or playing an arc or a one-off for a live show, how do you go about timing it out?"

Griffin: Yeah, it sucks shit.

Justin: [laughs] It sucks.

Griffin: We had ourselves a talk after the New Orleans show, because you all kept thinking that the first act—we've started doing intermission in the middle so we can take potty breaks, and you all kept thinking the first act was over when it wasn't. And so you were like, "Alright, call it. Let's go back stage and eat dinner." And I was like, no, there's... I had a button.

So I tried to have a button, and sometimes we don't get there. Sometimes we go 15 minutes over the first act, and then the second act is like, 15 minutes long.

Justin: It is always that question of, and I think we're erring more towards the side of like... when we started, Griffin was very um, hinty about what was in the arc. Like, I think when you—when we did, um, uh, the wrestling one, I think you just told us like, "Think wrestling."

And now, I think we are a little bit more explicit about what the beats are going to be, because uh, we want to make sure to like, get to the stuff that... y'know, we want to make sure we're keeping a good pace, and we're getting through the story. I mean, there definitely—I would say, more, um... they're probably more guided than Balance itself was. 'Cause we have to, y'know—

Griffin: We have an hour and a half.

Justin: We got an hour and a half. Gotta hit the beats.

Griffin: Yeah. Trying to tell like, a whole story in D&D in an hour and a half is... impossible, 'cause you could spend a fuckin' hour and a half dicking around in a tavern. Like, you could spend—there are whole sessions, nights where you play with your friends, where you don't actually fight anything, because you're just so busy dicking around in some place. And so like, trying to do a whole story in the span of that time is super hard.

As long as we're talking about live shows, Rachel asked, and hopefully this won't come off as too like, uh, I don't know, horn... self-horn-tooting. But uh, I'm curious to hear what you all say. Rachel asked, "What's your favorite live show so far?"

Travis: I really did love the wrestle one.

Clint: The first one of Boston?

Griffin: Yeah, the battle fest?

Clint: That was—

Travis: I just thought that was—

Justin: Battle fest. That was good.

Clint: And not just because it was a great episode, but that was honest and truly the first legitimate live show we had done of TAZ where people, y'know, like, paid money. Right? Wasn't it?

Griffin: And knew—yeah. Well, we had done LA PodFest before that. And was this our second live show?

Clint: This—

Justin: Yeah.

Clint: But this was... yeah, but wasn't this the first time we had done it, like, in a theater setting? I mean, the way we do live shows now.

Travis: Yeah.

Griffin: Right, sure.

Clint: And when we... honest to gosh, the reaction... it's why we—I always refer to the Wilbur as our home theater, because that was like nothing I'd ever experienced before. And just the reaction of the crowd and the energy that was going on, that was just a blast. That, for me, that was a real touchstone.

Griffin: I would say contender for me, though, is the most recent Candelights special we did, with the Home Alone sequence and the Jingle All the Way stuff.

Travis: I liked that one too. I really like the Dracula one that we just did.

Griffin: Oh, yeah.

Justin: Ohh.

Travis: 'Cause I thought it was a good pacing, and like... because that's the thing is, what you've gotten really good at as far as timing out the things is like, saying, "Okay, uh, I know where we're gonna start. I know where I wanna be by the act break, and I know where I want to be by the end of it. But I'm gonna leave plenty of room for you guys to just like, y'know, dick around."

Griffin: Sure.

Travis: And so, like, it was just a lot of—plus, I just always like when you do the Dracula voice. It makes me really happy.

Griffin: Thank you.

Justin: Um, the... casino heist, probably, for me.

Griffin: Oh, that's a fun one.

Justin: Stealing \$15 from Greg Grimaldis.

Travis: That one too.

Clint: Where was that? Was that San Diego?

Justin: All the cities are blending together.

Clint: Oh.

Justin: The uh... someone said, I know it's a bit early to ask—here's a quickie. "I know it's a bit early to ask, but I was wondering if you all have any plans for what the next arc would be." And that's from Sawyer, and the answer is no.

Griffin: [laughs]

Travis: I have an idea for one that I was telling Justin and Griffin and Dad before we started.

Justin: I want—I think it's time for me to finally...

Clint: Oh my God.

Justin: Take the throne...

Clint: Oh my God!

Justin: Take control... I've had so much fun in my rudimentary preparation of uh, of Elementary. I don't know, I think it would be fun to do one at this point.

Griffin: You should, man.

Clint: Oh yeah!

Justin: I think it would be fun. I think—I think I'd like to do one. But Travis has a really good idea, and I'd probably—when it comes—when the rubber meets the road as it were, I'll be—by the time we finish Amnesty, I'll be in my twilight years.

Travis: That's true.

Justin: And I may just want to sit back and rest on my laurels.

Griffin: I'm hoping to finish Amnesty in 2019, so hopefully that's not true.

Justin: I'm 38, so...

Clint: I'll be dead. Oh my gosh.

Travis: Wait, what are your plans, Dad?

Justin: I'll miss Dad.

Griffin: Yeah.

Justin: Live hard.

Clint: Skydiving, baby.

Travis: No, I have—

Justin: Rocky mountain climbing. Go 2.7 seconds on a bull.

Clint: [singing] I went bull riding...

Travis: I have an idea for a really silly arc.

Justin: [laughs] You fuckin'...

Griffin: [laughs]

Clint: Um...

Justin: Dad just sung a part of—

Griffin: But it wasn't the right—right.

Justin: A part of 'Live Like You're Dying,' and he got the right thing, but like, said it wrong. [laughing]

Clint: I guess great minds don't think alike. Well, let me ask you this – are we gonna—I mean, this shows how not involved with planning I am. So, what about going back and doing experimental arcs again? Are we—

Justin: Man, I don't know. Our listener numbers tanked so hard after Balance. Like, they really went in the toity. And we're starting to—

Griffin: [laughing]

Justin: I don't think it's the—I don't think it's because the arcs were bad, it's just like... imagine if you were watching Lost, right? And then—

Clint: And then they had a whole different bunch of people.

Griffin: Yeah.

Justin: Yeah, imagine you're watching Lost, and then after the finale, and it's like, "And anyway, that's what it was all about." And the next time you showed up, they were all doctors.

Griffin: Yeah. [laughs]

Justin: And it's like... [laughs] And they were wearing different wigs and stuff. And it's like, "Okay, wait a minute."

Griffin: Yeah.

Justin: What is happening?

Travis: And then there also was a caption at the bottom of the screen that just said, "Don't get used to this. It's gone in two episodes."

Griffin: Yeah. Soon...

Justin: You're right. Don't try getting connected to this.

Clint: So maybe we could like, when we're talking about the one-offs and the bonus content stuff, maybe that's the future for these one-off games, and maybe these shorter things might be for live shows, or y'know, for the...

Travis: Yeah, that's the—I think—

Clint: Bonus content.

Travis: I think that what we are kind of always doing is trying to figure out like, what is best for the audience and for the show, and trying to find—like, we've had conversations before about like, doing alternating stuff in the off weeks. But then, once we really discussed it—

Griffin: God, that'd be bad.

Travis: Yeah. That would be so, like... the jerkiness of jumping back and forth between two stories, both for us and for the listeners would be, I think, really off-putting. And also, just prep, time-wise, I don't know that we'd be able to do it.

And so like, we're always trying to figure out like, what's the best, uh, way forward? So I don't know. Like I said, I had an idea for a new arc, but I also, like, have an idea for a continuation of Dust that I may want to do. Like, the nice thing is, we probably have, what, Griffin, another four or five months of Amnesty?

Griffin: Uh, yeah. It's hard for—again, I don't know where the fuck we're going with it, so I can't say for sure. But uh, I am—2019, I am hoping Amnesty will, uh, we will be able to wrap it up in a satisfying way. And then, y'know, do whatever we want to do next.

We keep saying the word 'experimental' arcs. Like, I would be happy to just do some of these like, one page, y'know, one shots. And maybe that's like, literally maybe we're talking semantics at that point. But uh, I don't know. I think we were all so antsy to start season two after... or in the middle of Dust, and uh, I don't know that I would feel that way again after we finished Amnesty.

Like, I don't think... I would be fine with not starting season three until we were like, y'know, really, really sure we had explored all these different options, and y'know, built something that we could really, really expound on. Which isn't to say Amnesty isn't that, but I wouldn't feel necessarily the rush I felt between seasons one and two.

Clint: I've got one I'd like us all to address. Because I think it's a specific question, but I think it's kind of a broad issue that comes up quite a bit. From Ricky, "When you guys did the scene meeting Indrid, did you have to like, work out what you were gonna say beforehand and then do it?" Um, and—

Travis: Oh, 'cause that's where it was like, Indrid was speaking at the same time as the characters, right?

Griffin: Oh, yeah, no. It was uh... that was an editing trick. I just repeated what they said in the moment, and then I moved my—

Travis: So a lie.

Griffin: I moved my shit ahead like a half second. It was a special effect.

Travis: Oh, Griffin, how could you?

Griffin: It was a fuckin' special effect.

Travis: You lied to them.

Griffin: It's not a lie, it's a special editing effect.

Travis: You can't really tell the future.

Griffin: Yeah.

Travis: You piece of shit.

Clint: But also, I think that kind of brings up the fact that, y'know, we don't prepare chunks of dialogue ahead of time.

Griffin: No.

Travis: We don't prepare anything.

Clint: We don't know what's comin', and we've said it before in previous TTAZZs. But I think it's really important to stress, again – we don't know what's coming. That's the beauty of it. That's what makes it so fun, is not knowing what's coming, and making your choice in the heat of the moment. And uh, no, we don't prepare dialogue ahead of time.

Travis: Uh, here's a question from Twitter, from David, for Griffin. "Out of all the NPCs you've created throughout all of the games, which are your favorites?"

Griffin: Angus, Luke, uhh, Johann, uhh... Johann really, I think, reflected my existential creative dread that I was experiencing as we were like, halfway through Balance, so that's an important—Lucretia I like.

Travis: Who are your favorites out of Amnesty?

Griffin: Um... I like uh, I like the Sheriff a lot. I feel like that's somebody who uh, has interesting motivations for me. And uh, I like Hollis, and—

Travis: Billy the goat.

Griffin: Billy the goat is extremely fun, and—

Travis: Indrid. Indrid is a really fun NPC.

Griffin: Yeah, yeah. And we haven't seen the last of Indrid.

Travis: [gasps]

Griffin: But that was a good... that was a good... that was a fun—like, a character who can see the future is like, an interesting challenge of trying to make that not like, mechanically broken. Um, uh, yeah, that's just a few.

Justin: Here's one from Sydney, uh, who asks, "The Amnesty campaign has felt more dark and perilous than Balance, especially since the death at the end of the last episode." Who?

Griffin: Yeah, I mean— well—

Travis: Deputy Dewey.

Griffin: Spoiler. Yeah. But Deputy Dewey.

Travis: Oh.

Griffin: But he's not—he turned into a ghost. He's not—he's not dead in the traditional sense.

Justin: Um, but, "How intentional is this on Griffin's part? Is this affecting how Justin, Travis, and Clint are playing and making choices for their characters?"

Y'know, it's funny. We... for some reason, the stakes have been high for us since the beginning. Um, it's 'cause the—I think it's 'cause what we talked about with the... being much more grounded. It has not felt like the kind of thing where we're just gonna randomly kill somebody. And it's like—I think because it's in the real world, I guess as real as, y'know, a realer world, where like, there are cops who will like, arrest you and take you to jail if you do a crime.

And I think that that has like, permeated through.

Clint: Do you think it's darker? Do you think Amnesty is darker than—

Griffin: Oh, yeah, for sure.

Travis: I think so, but once again, I think that's a genre thing, right? Of like—

Clint: But the body count is so much higher on average for Balance.

Griffin: But it's not—

Travis: But when you talk about, for like, for Amnesty, right? Some of the bodies are like, "That was my brother." Right? They seem—because it's a like, specific town... When you think about like a uh, Monster of the Week kind of procedural show, right? One person dying is a way bigger deal than like, in a fantasy, high fantasy, like an army of people being slaughtered by an evil warlock or something. Right?

It's the gravity of, because I think a, y'know, a Monster of the Week thing is so much more character-driven, that having like, "But I knew him," carries so much more weight to it than like, an entire town wiped off the map.

Griffin: And I think, uh, one intentional thing I've been doing with the tone, especially for this arc and the last one, is trying to figure out a way to actually imperil you guys and the world that you inhabit. Which is to say— and it's kind of that uh, Wonderland style of thinking, where you guys were demigods, and it was like, how can I hurt you? How can I actually endanger

you? How can I add stakes to this? And that informed like, literally every part of the design of Wonderland.

There's an element of that where, y'know, the first arc, you were fighting this big animal consuming shape-shifting monster, which is like a cool, scary visual. But it's a monster that you stab with fire, and then it dies. And then the second one, it was like, okay, well, what if you can't stab it? And that's how the water monster came into being. And then, the third one was like, what if it's, y'know, not attacking you with claws or with physical damage, but with like, fate and with accidents?

And so—and with that one, I was like, that's scarier to me. That is way, way scarier to me, because you don't know what angle it's gonna come at you. And then, the one I have now, you guys don't really know what it is yet, but it's not a thing that you can just like grab and shoot. It's a—it is a more sort of... and for me, like, that is setting a—trying to set a tone that is a little bit more um, dreadful.

Because you all are powerful, but that power, it can't just be you blasting it with fire. You have to figure out what the fuck it is first, and stop it from doing what it wants to do. Which is, honestly—which is how Monster of the Week is supposed to be played, and is like, a really, really satisfying part of the game. Like, the monster is, in a lot of ways, a PC who is—who has its own wants and desires and is trying to get them and not just like, kill you.

So, I feel like that's why it has a darker tone than Balance, which was just like, go get the thing. And there will be dangers there, but y'know, you have a guy who can literally cast a resurrection spell, so don't even sweat it.

Clint: Well, I will admit, I agree in the fact that I do feel like we have a better chance in Amnesty of, y'know, one of the characters—one of the main characters—

Griffin: You went to the hospital.

Clint: Dying.

Griffin: Like, one of you got knocked the fuck out.

Clint: I know, but I mean, came close to death. And I—y'know, I don't know if I ever felt, in Balance, that one of, Merle, Magnus, or Taako would die. Although, they came close a few times.

Griffin: Sure.

Clint: But in this, in Amnesty, I very easily could see it happening.

Griffin: Yeah, and it wouldn't be like, necessarily—it wouldn't be like TAZ, where you get in a fight and it goes south and you die. It could just be like, a bad roll, and y'know, you get hit by the truck. And like, at that point, it's not dam—I can't say you're hit with three harm by the fuckin' truck. Like, you're dead. These things can, y'know, in Amnesty, that's not out of the realm of possibilities.

Travis: And not just physical damage, too. 'Cause the question about, does this affect how you play your characters? Absolutely. 'Cause like, with Magnus, y'know, kicking somebody off a cliff, it's just what he does. He's a fighter, ha-ha. Like, the thought of Aubrey having to murder somebody to like, keep a secret, or to protect somebody? That is gonna have long term psychological ramifications.

Like, that's not something—I don't know if it's the tone of the game, or the mechanics, or 'cause it's much more grounded characters or what, but, like, somebody... I saw somebody point out, like, when were in the morgue, and like, how we all hesitated to attack, and how different that was than the Tres Horny Boys.

Griffin: Yeah.

Travis: Yeah, but that's because like, Aubrey doesn't want to just recklessly kill people.

Griffin: Sure.

Travis: She'd feel real bad.

Griffin: My favorite Aubrey scene is when you confronted Keith in the headquarters and tried to scare him into silence, right? Because I have wanted to introduce more than like, your good rolls and sort of the paths that you walk have allowed me to. Like, elements of danger of the secret getting out.

Uh, like, y'know, having a FBI agent living with you. Like, I thought like, "Ooh, this is gonna add some drama." But now he's just kind of like, chilling, reading the newspaper, having coffee there every morning, and hasn't really had a moment to really investigate y'all.

But that moment with Keith where you were like, "I know you know what's up," and Keith was great, because that only happened because you spitefully melted the snow beneath him, and he realized you had magic powers and started following you. Everything that happened with Keith happened because of that roll. And that is why the—that's why the Hornets are like, now sort of like, on the case.

All of that snowballed from that one action that Aubrey took during the skiing episode.

Travis: Impulsive. So, I mean, I'll tie that—

Griffin: So that's what kicks ass about this game.

Travis: This next question, 'cause it ties into that. Veronica asks on Twitter, "In what ways are each of you most like your characters you are playing, and in what ways are you very different?" And like, Aubrey, so... even though Aubrey and I, on paper, are very different, um, y'know, she is far younger than me, a Puerto Rican, bisexual woman.

Uh, but at the same time, like, at our cores, we're very, very similar. Aubrey has ADD, I have ADD. Very impulsive. Like, confident and nervous in weird, specific, different ways. But like, one of my favorite things is like, where with Magnus, I played Magnus impulsive, but in a very like, foolhardy, heroic

impulse. With Aubrey, it's a lot more like, honestly kind of impulse control issue almost, of like, when Aubrey gets annoyed at somebody or angry at somebody, or whatever, or even just like, happy, y'know, I let her be a little looser in her decision making process.

Griffin: Yeah.

Travis: And it leads to some pretty bonkers outcomes. Speaking of which, I can't believe, after so many The The Adventure Zone Zones, of me like, complaining about people worrying about uh, Steven the Goldfish, I then gave myself another pet that people are always worried about.

Griffin: That you then forgot you had.

Travis: Dr. Harris Bonkers is always fine.

Griffin: Yeah.

Travis: He will always be fine. Anytime you don't see him, he's with Dani. He's perfectly happy. He's great.

Justin: Well-fed. Organic carrots.

Travis: He's sleeping so much.

Clint: Hey, Juice? Juice, what about you and Duck?

Justin: What about him?

Travis: [laughs]

Justin: Duck... Young Duck is more based—I didn't actually have a youth as cool as Duck's. But sometimes I would like, hang out with cool people, and it seems like that's what they were doing. A lot of like, Tony Hawk and the skateboarding stuff is like, was not my childhood.

Travis: It was Tony Hawk's.

Justin: It was sort of based, kind of like, based on cool people that I knew later. And like, kind of how they... remember, you know the bit, uh, Waiting for Guffman, where Eugene Levy says, "I was not the class clown, but I sat next to him, and I studied him." [laughs] And I picked up... a few things that many people have... that is uh, that's pretty much like Duck.

Honestly, a lot of what Duck is, uh, is... kind of me making a lot of opposite choices from Taako. Right? If you look at it like, uh, very bad at lying. Like, very bad at any sort of subterfuge. Um...

Travis: The very bad at lying, by the way, since we're speaking a whole episode out of character, is one of my favorite...

Griffin: It's very good.

Travis: Things about... I think about all of Amnesty, it might be my favorite like, element.

Justin: Thank you. It is, um... what I would say to people who do like roleplaying, it is one of the things where, if something were... like, sometimes it's worth it to make a hard choice like that. Like, those hard lines you can draw are a real comfort when you're roleplaying. Doubly so if you're creating entertainment as you're roleplaying, but like, it's nice to have things that you know how you are going to react to.

Like, it gets you into kind of a groove, where it's like, okay, well, one of the things I know about this character, for a fact, is that they're bad about lying. And you have to discover those things. They usually don't work, I think, if it's predetermined. But it's so nice when you find them, because it really helps to help a character sort of take shape.

Clint: It's sort of like conflict. Nobody wants conflict, but everybody wants conflict in their stories so they'll be interesting. I can remember a time where, y'know, you reminded me that, y'know, that Ned would not be courageous in a certain point. And it was one of the key points for me in

developing Ned, because y'know, you have the tendency to say, "Well, of course he does the most heroic thing."

Griffin: Right.

Clint: No, it's much more interesting if they're a hero, yeah. But if they're not a hero, it's much more interesting if they don't make the heroic choice.

Griffin: And I'm glad that happened, because like, you didn't want to jump in the water whenever the hot springs got like, monster-fied, and was choking out uh, Jake Coolice. And so you were like, "Nah, I'm good over here." But then at the end, at the very end of that arc, like, you were the one who was like, "Okay," and jumped into the huge water monster towering form to like, finish the fight, Spartan.

That was like... and that's a neat sort of juxtaposition, yeah.

Travis: I will say, that's one of the like, big differences that I'm trying to really hard, and I promise to be more conservative with using the luck roll, the luck stuff from now on. 'Cause it's really hard for me to let Aubrey fuck up. Like, y'know, I want her to succeed, 'cause that was... y'know, it's someone you're like, "Oh, yeah, I can save this person's life if I roll well." And then it's really hard to be like, "Oh, but I fucked up, and they'll die because I fucked up." And then I have to remember, it's a game, and it's totally okay.

Griffin: Well, and my favorite stuff that's happened, I feel like, came out of failures from y'all. 'Cause that is where the story can pivot. Uh, and yeah.

Uh, Shale on Twitter asked, "What happened to Pigeon?" I don't... yeah, that's a great question. Yeah, I introduced this character, and then you guys told her what was up, and then uh, she helped you fight the water monster, and then we have not seen Pigeon. And I've thought of like, ways I could try and shoehorn her back into the story, but really, like, I don't... that would feel very uh, inorganic to me.

But like, there's this person who works for the city. I kind of thought that that would be a contact to use, I guess like, RPG terminology, of like, somebody who works for the city who can like, do stuff for y'all, who's also on your side, would y'know, come about. But like, it is tough for me.

You all live in the same town, right? And the setting is smaller. But you all don't work in the same floating headquarters, and so it was easier for me in Balance to just be like, "And y'know, Carey and Killian are there, and Robbie's there."

But like, I can't just be like, Pigeon is there, because she doesn't... she doesn't have a reason to, y'know? She's got a job.

Travis: What's so funny about that, it's so ironic, because once again, it really fits the Monster of the Week genre. 'Cause I've been watching a lot more in like, Supernatural and stuff. And like, sometimes, y'know, you just—

Griffin: There's 55 minutes. We made it 55 minutes. Unbelievable.

Clint: Whoa!

Justin: He actually mentioned it earlier.

Travis: Sometimes, y'know, the actor's working on a different show, and you can't get them that week, so Pigeon's just not there, y'know?

Griffin: [laughs]

Travis: There's like... there's a lot of moments in like, y'know, Monster of the Week shows where it's like, well, it's been three seasons, and we haven't heard from... oh, he's back! Okay, cool. Like, that will happen, y'know? We'll book Pigeon, the actor who plays Pigeon, for another episode.

Griffin: I want Pigeon to come back. I'm—if you all don't get to Pigeon soon, I am gonna... she's gonna parachute in from the sky.

Justin: "Does Justin know Duck's real name?" Yes.

Griffin: Ooh!

Clint: [laughs]

Griffin: That's tantalizing.

Justin: I have—it is—you want to know something? It is written on my character sheet.

Griffin: Oh shit! Somebody's gonna National Treasure that shit. Uh...

Travis: Um, a—

Clint: I got one I want Travis and I to address, from uh, from BookTrash. "Clint and Travis, are you both worried to have Aubrey find out about Ned's involvement in her mother's death, and do you think Ned is going to tell Aubrey?"

Travis: I cannot wait.

Griffin: It's gonna be dope.

Travis: Like, that is something that, if I remember correctly, during like, character creation, we like, thought of like, that there is some unknown connection between Ned and Aubrey. And like, Griffin then kind of took that and ran with it and stuff. But like, every time that the—

Griffin: No, no, hey, wait. No, no, no. I did not decide that Ned is the one that stole the pendant from Aubrey.

Travis: Oh, you're right. Was that me?

Griffin: I don't know who it was, but that is a huge fuckin' thing that is formative to like, uh, the origins of this game. That was not me saying like, ooh, here's—

Travis: No, no, no. He didn't run with that part. I meant, I think Dad and I...

Griffin: Yeah, I think Dad is the one that came up with the theft of your thing.

Travis: And I came up with the necklace, I think was it. Aubrey had a necklace, and that Dad—that Ned had robbed it. And then we gave that to Griffin, and what I meant was, he wove it into the story.

Griffin: Right, right.

Travis: It has come up organically throughout that. Because that was the thing is like, this is another reason to have a really solid DM like Griffin is, if it had been up to me, episode two, I would've been like, "Wait, is that my necklace?" And like, it would've come up way too early.

Clint: And we have... and y'know, believe it or not, I think about it all the time. But we—y'know, it's a big moment, and y'know, there have been moments where, y'know, I thought, "Man, maybe this is where it's gonna happen." I know one where uh, where uh... well, you're right, Trav. Ned was ready to blurt it out when he came out of the coma. But it wasn't the right time. It's a big moment, and it's—

Griffin: And Ned's not brave.

Clint: And I am worried about it. I am worried about it.

Griffin: Yeah.

Clint: It's gonna screw things up, I think.

Griffin: Uh, yeah, that's gonna be... that's gonna be good.

Justin: I'm looking forward to it, though, because um, one of the, uh... I'll say, y'know, not to fault them, because every game is different. One of the

weaknesses, I think, of Monster of the Week, it does not have a lot of... in-built... like, moments of character connection. We've had to work a lot harder, I think, to find places for that.

Because uh, I don't know what it is necessarily about D&D. I think it's because so much of it is driven by rolls, there are a lot of opportunities for the story to pivot, for you to make a lot of little choices where your success or failure will be limited by how well you roll. And I think that um, it's... and there's probably other reasons that are not occurring to me at the moment why it's better.

But we have had to work a lot harder to get like, to build character bonds. It's a lot more, uh, directed toward... I think that's probably the mystery genre, right? If you think about mysteries, uh, they're very rarely about character growth. They're much more plot focused.

Griffin: It's just a tone thing. Like, I feel like more than anything else, it's just a tone thing. Which is like, not, uh... I don't think that's a knock against the game or the genre. But like, I said it earlier, like... there's, y'know, no time for love, Dr. Jones. You all are in a constantly precarious situation, and so, uh, I do think, for whatever reason, forming... I don't think that's a game thing. I think it's a... I think it's just the story we are telling.

Balance was all about these literal bonds. That was the whole thing. And I don't think that there's been no character, y'know, relationships that have formed in Amnesty, but it's... it is not as explicitly about those bonds, and so like, that's why I don't think we have like, the constant sort of uh, connections between every single character like we did in Balance.

We also had more time, right? Like, Amnesty ain't gonna go 69 episodes. Um, as funny as that would be, because of the sex.

Justin: Nice. Nice.

Griffin: So like, we don't have necessarily as much time.

Justin: Sex number.

Griffin: I don't really remember where we were at episode 24 of TAZ, but y'know, it's not like we were the best friends club at that point. So, uh... yeah. I think—go ahead.

Travis: Sorry. Oh, I was just gonna say, I don't think Dad answered the question about how Ned is like him.

Griffin: Oh yeah.

Clint: Um... He's full of shit.

Griffin: That's... come on.

Justin: [laughs]

Travis: Perfect.

Justin: Halfway through Petals to the Metal, by the way. In case you were curious.

Griffin: That's about where we started sort of makin' friends, I feel like.

Clint: And yeah, kind of embracing the whole mythos of it. Um, I don't... I... [sighs] I don't think... I don't know if Ned is much like me. I think that Ned... under some situations, I can be kind of gregarious, and like I said, full of shit. Um, but for the most part... to me, it's attractive... I like playing characters that aren't like me. And I don't know if Ned is like me very much at all.

I thought that uh... y'know, it was funny, because with Merle, Merle was like me in the fact that he was... [laughs] He was really terrible at what he was doing, which reflected me being really terrible at D&D. When we started.

Travis: Ehh...

Griffin: Then you got so good.

Justin: Right.

Clint: And then I got really good at it.

Travis: Almost too good. We have to... every day before we go out of the live show, we have to look at Dad and say, "Dad, you have to go back to pretending like you don't know what you're doing."

Griffin: Right.

Clint: And that's tough.

Justin: Before we wrap up, I want to mention one more time. This show exists because of the MaxFunDrive. And it is what has inspired us to continue making it, and support it, and it has... the support you have given us over the years has honestly been... I try not to get choked up like, every single time I talk about it, but it means the world to me. And the fact that so many people think our show is worth kicking a few bucks to, like, honestly, is such a... it fills me with a lot of pride.

If you listen to this show, and you are not a donor, and you can spare just five bucks a month, it really does add up, and it really does mean a lot. If you can do more, that's fantastic. But uh, please. I would implore you, make a vote with your money for the kind of stuff that you want to see in the world. And it really does, uh, help us out so much. MaximumFun.org/donate is the URL. The gifts are all there. You can get a lot of your questions answered there.

On Twitter, you can do @MaxFunHQ, and they can answer questions too, if you have more. But uh, if you can, don't wait. This is our last sort of shot. Y'know, we got, as you're listening to this, maybe two days left before this drive ends, so please don't wait anymore. Go to MaximumFun.org right now, and uh, choose a level to donate at, and get on board, and let's do this thing.

Travis: And once again, it's a great time to upgrade your donation as well. You can do that at MaximumFun.org/donate. And if you're already a donor, and you can't upgrade, uh, take to Twitter, take to social media, and tell people like, hey, there's... y'know, time is running out. Get on board. Let's do this. And share that link, and tell people why you donate, and why it matters, and thank you so much.

Griffin: Um, quick programming note. Next week's episode, we are pushing a week. So we will have episodes two weeks in a row when we come back, but we are about to go on tour. We're gonna be in uh, San Jose doing TAZ on Tuesday the 2nd, and MBMBaM on Wednesday the 3rd, and then Salt Lake City on Thursday the 4th. I'm not exactly sure what we still have tickets for. So we'll be gone like, all next week.

Justin: And if you go to McElroy.family and click on tours, I think there's still tickets for all those, but not many.

Griffin: Not many. So yeah, we are pushing next week's episode to the following week. So the next Amnesty episode will be up on April 11th, and then we'll have one up the week after that, too.

Clint: And if you do not know the way to San Jose, check with Burt Bacharach.

Travis: Okay.

Griffin: Yes. Thank you, Mac. Um, I think that's it. Thank you all so much for your questions and for continuing to listen to our show, and uh, I hope you stick with it, and support us at MaximumFun.org/donate, and... what else? Is that it?

Travis: And as we always say, now it's your turn to adventure.

Griffin: Hero.

Clint: Do we...

Justin: Ever, as we've already said—

Clint: We've never said that.

Justin: You are now leaving the Zone of Adventure that is here.

Travis: Get in the zone.

Justin: The adventure, it turns out, was in you.

Travis: The Adventure Zone.

Clint: The Zone of The Adventure Zone. Yeah.

Justin: Yeah. Was in you. You're going A-Z at Adventure Zone. Discover what you can do on your own.

Clint: [laughs]

[theme music plays]

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