

The Adventure Zone: Amnesty – Episode 27

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Griffin: Previously on The Adventure Zone...

[theme music plays]

Griffin: Duck, you are headed to the Green Bank Telescope, correct? Sans Leo?

Justin: Yeah, let me... I'm gonna listen to that.

Griffin: You recognize this song as the song that you heard whenever Minerva would show up to talk to you. And from the security room, an alarm begins to sound.

You actually are sent sailing backwards into a coffee table. You feel something sharp; a not insignificant splinter of wood in your leg. You haven't seen it in years, but it is right here. You find the Flamebright Pendant.

And then, you see yourself on the television.

Ned: Oh, shit.

Fake Ned: The monsters are real. Tonight, when the moonlight falls upon the gate, it will open. I will be there, armed and ready to defend my home. Will you?

[theme music plays]

Griffin: I'm kind of... I'm a little... I mean, I'm always nervous before we get started, 'cause it could all—I don't think everybody realizes just how bad it could go every time that we do this. Like, we could really float a stinker

every time, but I'm more nervous this time for what is... what could happen. Y'know what I mean?

Clint: Have faith. Have faith in us.

Griffin: I think I'm especially nervous because I just got out of End Game. And when the Hulk exploded 'cause he got too big—

Clint: No, shut up!

Travis: Aw, Griffin!

Griffin: Oh, shoot! He got too big and green exploded into green guts!

Clint: No, no, shush shush shush!

Travis: Wait, he got too big and too green?

Griffin: Yeah, and he exploded. And so, that got me nervous about like, death and stuff, but then I said it out loud to you guys, and you haven't seen it yet!

Travis: [imitating Justin incredibly poorly] Yeah, and it's me, Justin. I'm also mad that Griffin made a joke about Avengers: End Game.

Griffin: Yeah. Justin... we're recording our bits separately. I'm doing you two together, and then I'm doing Justin separately, because you... well, there are a lot of reasons, but mostly, you chowder heads have managed to book back to back to back vacations at a point where none of us are gonna be in the same room together for the next month. Which is rad and radical and cool and good.

And also, I had to go see Avengers during our usual record time, so everybody, I think, has a little bit of sin on their hands.

Travis: [laughs]

Clint: [laughs]

Griffin: An equal amount. But let's start with Ned. Uh, yeah. I mean, gosh, Ned. Wow. Where to start? The memes for Ned have been pretty hot lately. There's a lot of people who want to protect and nurture Ned, and I can see why, because things are, um... things are not great. You just saw yourself on television, sort of uh, putting just everything on blast. Just kind of puttin' the truth out there, as Mulder would say, and you are in the hotel room, and what is Ned doing? What's Ned's first sort of instinct?

Clint: Uh, first of all, he's really racking his brain, trying to remember when he would've recorded something like that.

Griffin: [laughs] I also—I plugged myself back into the internet for the first time in a long time, and I saw a lot of time travel theories, which I thought was neat.

Clint: After a few seconds, he realizes that uh, it had to have been the imposter.

Travis: Now, is that enough seconds that he would be embarrassed to say that, but not enough seconds that he was worried about his own mental capacity?

Clint: Well, he wouldn't say it on like, a podcast where everybody could hear it. But I think just to himself, y'know, Ned's been doing a lot of self-exploration lately, and I think that—

Griffin: Yuck.

Travis: Eeewww.

Clint: No, not like that! Well, maybe a little. But just mostly a spiritual journey.

Travis: Eeewww!

Griffin: Yuck!

Clint: [laughs]

Griffin: Um, so, what's your second instinct?

Clint: I think he needs to... he needs the others. He misses... he needs Duck, and he needs Aubrey. He has no idea what's going on. He thinks it's probably the imposter Bom Bom, and if so, the shit is really gonna hit the fan now that all the truth is all out there.

Griffin: Okay.

Travis: As Mulder would say.

Clint: As... who?

Travis: There was this show, Dad, called the X-Files.

Clint: Oh, with the Professor X and...

Travis: No... oh, Dad. You noob.

Clint: Professor Files?

Travis: Yes.

Clint: He needs his partners, man. He's out there. He fucked up, he knows he fucked up, and he just needs to... he can't handle this stuff on his own. Ned is not a strong guy.

Griffin: Um, yeah. I mean, beg to differ. Where are you actually going? Where are you... obviously, you want to regroup, but I don't think you know. I mean, you—Ned hasn't seen them since he stole the Shadetree and bailed, right? So like, how do you—

Clint: Yeah, I guess—

Travis: Man, Ned's just really been going on a fuckin' spiral this arc, huh?

Griffin: Little bit.

Clint: I think Amnesty Lodge. I think he's gotta go back to the lodge. He needs information. He needs to rally and he needs somebody to tell him what to do. He's obviously made some really piss poor choices on his own, and y'know, he needs... he needs back up.

Griffin: Okay. You race out of the uh, hotel that I've forgotten the name of for the fourth time in the last two episodes.

Travis: Count Dooku.

Griffin: The Count Dooku Motel and Resort and Lodge.

Clint: Gluey! Gluey.

Griffin: Yeah, something like that. You make your way out and you... I assume you drove here, yes, probably?

Clint: In the Crepes by Monica van, yes.

Griffin: Okay. Uh, as you are like, pulling out of the parking lot of this... of the hotel to head up the ramp sort of towards the top side, you see Dani. And she is like, racing towards the exit from the parking lot, and like, kind of waving her arms in the air, like, yelling at you to stop and roll down your window.

Clint: Okay. He uh, hits the brakes, he turns down the 8track player, and says...

Ned: Yes, Dani, is everything alright?

Griffin: She says...

Dani: Oh, oh my God. I'm so glad that I caught you. [breathing heavily] Listen, Ned, there's been a... there's been a break in at the Cryptonomica. You gotta get over there real quick. There's been a break in. The alarms are going off.

Ned: Uh-huh.

Dani: [coughs violently]

Ned: Um, uh, okay. Um... that's awesome, uh, Dani. Um, let me ask you something. When I left the lodge earlier, do you remember me having something on me? Uh, an item? Was I carrying anything?

[ambient music plays]

Dani: Are you talking about the statue that you took, that you found in there? So yeah, Cryptonomica. Sorry, I uh—[clears throat] Yeah, you should probably get over there. I think Kirby's in trouble, too.

Ned: Yeah. I'll uh, I'll head straight there. Um, so, uh, I'll see ya. Okie dokie?

Dani: Uh, yeah. I'll meet you—I'll meet you there. How about that?

Ned: Great.

Clint: And he rolls up the window, he turns up the 8track player, and he knows that was not really Dani.

Griffin: What are you doing then, now that the—

Clint: Getting the hell away from it.

Griffin: Okay. You kick the car into gear. Where are you going?

Clint: Amnesty Lodge.

Griffin: Okay. Uh, that is in the opposite direction, right? You're going towards the ramp up towards topside, and Cryptonomica, if you're looking at the map, is actually to the left. So when she sees you turn right, you see like, a little smile across her face with like, a little bit of blood dripping out of it, and then, you see her start like, Terminator walking towards your car as it's driving away. And then you see her kind of like, hunch over a little bit, clutching her chest. And now, she's like, pretty far off in the distance. And she tucks through a portal and disappears.

Clint: Let me interject something here. I would assume that Ned did not take his eyes off her, that he was watching her—

Griffin: Oh, sure, yeah. I was telling you all that—

Clint: In his side mirror—yes, and he saw that.

Griffin: Yes, you deduced correctly, so I'm not going to like—that was all things that Ned definitely saw, and I think that Dani saw you see you saw.

Clint: Okay, good. As soon as Dani vanishes, he stops and turns around and heads for the Cryptonomica.

Griffin: Huh. Okay. Aubrey.

Travis: Yes.

Griffin: Just found it.

Travis: When last we left...

Griffin: Yeah, you have found the Flamebright Pendant, as well as like, a bunch of other stuff. There's... obviously, the laptop is in here. Shadetree is in here, but I don't think you would know what that is, alongside all these

other stolen goods, and a bunch of fake IDs, and just generally sort of the proof of Ned's former elicited activities.

Ned... one thing I was confused about as I was editing the last episode is like, Ned has talked about his treasures and trophies before, right? Like, he's always bragging about the Nerf gun that he "acquired" from the Nerf founder. How... how... [sighs] How did Aubrey feel about Ned before, like, she found this treasure trove?

And I guess, if Juice were here, we could ask Duck, too. But did you have any suspicion that he had some shady stuff in his past?

Travis: Y'know, I would say that it's like if you had like, an uncle or something that told you all these stories about like, the famous people he had met, or like, how he, y'know, was a jockey in the Kentucky Derby, or these kind of things. And you like, listen to it, and you're like, "Okay, sure, sure, sure." And then, one day, like, as you're looking for something in the attic, found that all those stories were true.

Griffin: Yeah.

Travis: Like, found pictures of him in like, the winner's circle at the Kentucky Derby, and like, shaking hands with like, John F. Kennedy and that kind of thing. And I think it's like that, where like, he had talked about stealing stuff, but like, I didn't believe he stole Clooney's Oscar. I didn't believe that he broke in and stole the Nerf gun.

But like, here is the proof, and I think more than that, I have to say, like... I've been thinking about this a lot since we last recorded, of like, would Aubrey immediately jump to, like, "Oh, it all makes so much sense, Ned has been lying to us this whole time..."

Griffin: Sure.

Travis: Would she think like, "Oh, this is a set up where someone wants us to think it's Ned..." And I honestly, once I thought about it enough, I don't

think she's thinking anything right now except, one, pendant. Two, confusion. Three, anger.

Griffin: Yeah, I think that those three make a lot of sense.

Travis: I think it's more of just like... because I, Travis, the player, have had the benefit of like, the time to process, and like, I have known this is coming since like, I think when we first set up the whole story arc.

Griffin: Yeah, sure, sure, sure.

Travis: But like, if I am really putting myself in Aubrey's shoes, I think she is just reaction right now.

Griffin: Okay. So—

Clint: Wait, I have a vested interest in this, so I just want to interject this. What is she angry about?

Travis: Well, one, I think it's that it's here. And I think that, whether it's logical or not, the thought that Ned would have this or know anything about it, and she didn't know about it.

Clint: Okay, so she's not mad at Ned for being overall dishonest, because he's been telling everybody—

Travis: No, she doesn't care about that.

Clint: He's been telling everybody that he stole stuff.

Travis: Yeah, it's not that. And Aubrey lies all the time. Like—

Griffin: Sure.

Clint: We all do.

Travis: Aubrey is, I would say, of the three, the best.

Griffin: She's mad with Ned. Yeah. Okay, so we've talked about our feelings a lot. You're standing in front of the pendant that your mother gave you the night that your house burned down.

Travis: She wants to grab it, and she is afraid to grab it.

Griffin: Okay.

Travis: And yet, she grabs it. 'Cause she's gotta touch that crystal. You know how this is. You know how this story goes.

Griffin: Do you put it on?

Travis: Yes!

Griffin: Okay. You put it on, and first of all, it fits you. Which, when your mom gave it to you the night before you were going to leave, uh, she was going to, y'know, do some work. The chain was a little bit long. And now, you can see that that work was completed that night after you went to bed, because the length of chain is now just the perfect length, and it fits you perfectly.

And you talked to Mama about this like, months and months and months ago when she was asking you about like, the origin of your powers. Um, this like, family heirloom that had been handed down, y'know, through your family, that had the name 'flame' in it. And I think what strikes you right now is, as you put it on, you obviously feel like this rush of emotions. This is like, dredging up a lot of stuff. But you don't feel like, more magical.

Travis: Damn it.

Griffin: You decidedly don't feel like this has, uh, evolved your powers or unlocked something within you. It is—y'know, you feel about it however you feel about it to have it back after all this time, which like, I don't know. You are the decision maker on that one. But like, in terms of like, its magical

capabilities, I am telling you that you don't feel... you don't really feel anything from this stone.

Travis: I see.

Griffin: And then it explodes and you turn into—

Travis: Whoa!

Griffin: No. There's nothing.

Clint: Just like the Hulk!

Griffin: Just like the Hulk did when he got so big.

Travis: Uh, so I'm gonna say that like, once she has it on, right? Like, I think now she looks around, and she registers, like, the laptop. Um, I don't think she knows what Shadetree is, so I don't know that that holds any specific—

Griffin: No.

Travis: Or, anything else. But she does know that that's Mama's laptop, and it's here with her necklace. Um, and she's still hurt, if I remember correctly, because she got a big ol' hunk of wood in her leg.

Griffin: Oh, yes. Yes.

Travis: Did you forget?

Griffin: No, I didn't. Uh, yeah, you are hurting quite badly. You are unstable, actually. Um, so, I'm going to keep that in mind during this episode, whatever you decide to do.

Travis: So I think she's gonna call Mama.

Griffin: On like, the Cryptonomica phone?

Travis: Yeah, on the Cryptonomica land line.

Griffin: Okay. You dial up the number for Amnesty Lodge, and—

Clint: You have to dial 13 first to get an outside line. Just wanted to say.

Griffin: Okay. You remember Ned saying that to you, and it rings for a while. Um, and right when you start to like, think that nobody's going to pick up, uh, somebody does, and you hear Jake Coolice say...

Jake: Uh, Amnesty Lodge. We're uh, your—

Aubrey: Jake, shut up, it's Aubrey.

Jake: Okay, I couldn't remember what she says. Holy shit, did Ned just fuckin'—did Ned just—I'm sorry to cuss. Did Ned just put it all out there?

Aubrey: It's okay to cuss, Jake. In this—wait, what are you talking about?

Jake: Were you watching?

Aubrey: Watching what?

Jake: Ned just went on the local news and told everybody everything! The monsters, the archway, everything!

Aubrey: Okay. See, I thought I was gonna call with Ned bad news, but that might be worse. Um, is Mama around?

Jake: No, Mama took off as soon as the—she saw Ned on the tele—

Griffin: And you hear in the background—

Aubrey: What about Barclay?

Griffin: In the background, you hear uh, like, rustling and shouting and like, chairs scooting around, and uh, you hear hurried pacing. Uh, and somebody kind of like, mumbling and kind of like, shouting under their breath, and he says...

Jake: Yeah, Barclay went with her. I think they're gonna—I think they're headed to the archway. I think they're gonna try and head off whoever's gonna go down there. We've already seen a dozen Hornets or so kind of go motoring past, so I'm pretty sure that they're sort of arranging the ranks. Aubrey, we need you up here. Things are—

Aubrey: I—I need—okay, Jake, deep breath. I need you to come get me. I'm hurt. I'm at the Cryptonomica. Come pick me up.

Jake: [whispers] I don't have a driver's license.

Aubrey: Jake, I don't care. Find anybody.

Jake: Okay. It's just me and Moira up here right now. Have you seen Dani today?

Aubrey: No. Dani's not there?

Jake: No, Dani took off, too. I thought she was going to find you.

Aubrey: Shit. Okay, Jake, I—I believe in you. You can do this. Get a car and come get me.

Griffin: Uh, okay. Jake says...

Jake: Okay, I'll be right there. I'll bring Moira, too. Which one—which one goes? Which is the go one and which is the stop one?

Aubrey: It's the gas pedal. Don't make me think about it, Jake. I can't—

Jake: But which side is it on? Which—the—

Aubrey: I can't remember unless I'm in the damn car, Jake!

Jake: Okay, fine, I'll figure it out on the fly.

Griffin: And he hangs up.

[ambient music plays]

Griffin: Uh, Justin, just want to let you know. Travis and Dad already did their thing, and you weren't here for it, but it was very good acting. There was very good moments, important moments, and Tony award winning stuff.

Justin: What energy do I need to bring to this to balance the episode?

Griffin: Have you ever watched Frasier?

Justin: I have watched Frasier.

Griffin: The dad.

Justin: Dad from Frasier energy. So very... sort of a hypersexual...

Griffin: Alright. For some. For some.

Justin: John... I was about to say, his name is John Mulaney. I don't think that's right.

Griffin: I think there's an extra syllable in there somewhere.

Justin: I'm Googling 'Frasierdad,' one word. Let's see what... okay, Frasierdad, one word, got me John Mahoney. John Mahoney, um, sent me a letter.

Griffin: Oh.

Justin: When I was trying to pick a, uh, college. And he uh, asked me if I wanted to go to this certain school, and at the time, I didn't know how these things worked. I guess it was Saint Joseph's College. I didn't know how these things worked, and I thought that I was getting a letter from John Mahoney.

Griffin: [laughs]

Justin: Asking me to go to this specific college.

Griffin: You've been chosen. Um, yeah, so we had to record our bits separately this episode, and I don't know where I'm gonna cut this in. I hope it wasn't after a very dramatic moment, and then Justin and I talked about the Frasier dad for two minutes. But let's... let's get it going.

You are at the Green Bank Telescope in the small, onsite observatory lab, which is where you were when you were checking out a few sort of makeshift museum exhibits in here, and you found one that played a song called Interstellar Blues, and it had sort of a string of the celestial coordinates where it was found. And you heard it, and it was the song that you always heard whenever you saw Minerva.

And then, immediately after hearing that, there is an alarm siren going off out in the security room, which is another sort of... one of the uh, other few rooms that are in this very small longhouse style building within the perimeter of the Green Bank Telescope. And immediately, Dr. Drake who is in here with you, she like, whips her head up from the console where she was uploading some stuff to the satellite lab, and she... there's like, a small window in here, and she's like, trying to overlook the grounds, and she says...

Sarah: Uh, this is—they may be doing a test or something? Uh, you should just uh... yeah, just chill. Just keep doing what you're doing.

Griffin: And she's uh, she's poking around, looking through the window. What do you do?

Justin: Uh, yeah, I'm gonna kind of ease my way over to the security room and see if I can hear something.

Griffin: Okay.

Justin: Read that bad situation.

Griffin: Yeah, I think that's a good idea. Holy shit.

Justin: Aw, nice!

Griffin: Damn, Duck, that's an eleven.

Justin: That's an eleven.

Griffin: A natural eleven, plus sharp.

Justin: Which is one, so twelve.

Griffin: Okay.

Justin: Fantastic.

Griffin: Um, okay, yeah. With that, that's a super good roll, you get to hold two. Oh, no, I'm sorry. Hold three, and ask these here questions.

Justin: Okay. Uh, I am going to ask... well, my best way in is probably the door to it.

Griffin: Uh, you can—the security room is unlocked, right? Like, you are—I don't think that that is a...

Justin: Best way out, presumably same door.

Griffin: [laughs] Yes, I think you...

Justin: Uh, I guess I'm gonna start with, are there dangers I haven't noticed?

Griffin: Um, yes, and now that you have asked that, you notice it. There's like, six monitors in here with some cameras overlooking the perimeter, and most of it is just kind of just grass, 'cause it is a huge sort of space that surrounds the Green Bank Telescope. Um, but on one of the monitors, you see, having smashed through the gate that you were let into just earlier before by the security guard waiting there...

[music plays]

Griffin: You see a shape that is... crawling, I think, is probably the best verb you could use, across the ground. And actually, right now, Dr. Drake has like, come into the room with you, and now she sees it too, and she's like...

Sarah: Uh, Duck, is that your bear?

Griffin: But it is most certainly not a bear. And in fact, if it is the Abomination that you have been hunting, you would not immediately know looking at it. This shape that's crawling across the grounds towards the telescope is like... it's not human. It is just this writhing, beige and red mass that seems to be like, forming human parts that emerge from it for a few moments before collapsing back inward.

And it's generating dozens of these like, long, loosely composed arms in front of it, and like, grabbing onto the ground and pulling the shape forward to like, absorb those arms back into the mass.

Justin: Gross.

Griffin: And you also see like, some faces on the side of it that are trying to form, but they are not necessarily being successful. And it is... it's moving

fairly slowly as it's like, continuing its approach towards the telescope itself, but it also seems to be growing. So that is what you've noticed.

Justin: And where... am I able to tell where this camera is pointing, where this is?

Griffin: It is pointing at the main entrance from the road that you drove in on. Although, you did not have your car within the perimeter. You had to park that outside because of electronics. Although, I'm sure that is probably the security guard's least concern right now.

Justin: And where's the security guard?

Griffin: Uh, I think you'll need a question maybe to...

Justin: Okay, um... maybe what's the best way for me to protect the victims, and see if he is listed among those victims.

Griffin: Uh, she was the Fargo—

Justin: She, she, she. Sorry, sorry, yeah.

Griffin: She uh... it takes you a second to uh, actually like, see it. I think you're both probably pretty locked in on this thing. And right now, Dr. Drake is like, holding the phone, and then you see her like, tap on the receiver a couple of times, and then, hang up and pick it back up. And she says...

Sarah: Uh, phone's not working. Uh...

Griffin: And she's starting to get fairly worried, so um, I mean, you're both probably potential victims at this moment.

Justin: Perfect.

Griffin: You also see, uh, the security guard, and she is trying to fight her way out of this thing. She is half submerged in this thing, and with her hands, it's like she's trying to pull her way out of quicksand.

Justin: Oh, God.

Griffin: And she is... she's holding her own, but the best way to protect her would be to, obviously, get her out of that situation. The best way to... I mean, the best way to protect you and Dr. Drake is probably just to stay in this building.

You got one more.

Justin: What's the most vulnerable to me?

Griffin: Ah, man. I'm gonna need a... an interp—

Justin: Not applicable. [laughs]

Griffin: An interpretation of that.

Justin: It's a very odd question. I mean, it's certainly a question that is designed for multiple enemy...

Griffin: Like, where's the weak point on this thing? But you definitely cannot see that.

Justin: Yeah, I think—

Griffin: I think... okay, if you're looking for like, a strategic sort of weak point of this thing, it is... you can tell, it is crawling with a fury, and honestly, like, from the thing that I described, like, a pained sort of process. It is desperately trying to get to the Green Bank Telescope, so like, the vulnerability here is, you know what it's doing. You know where it is going.

Uh, and like, it's not a huge advantage, but right now, it's kind of the only thing you've got. It is still like, a ways away from the telescope, but again, it is kind of growing. It is kind of uh, for lack of a better term, Akira-ing out as it approaches the center of the compound here.

Justin: But it doesn't have a visual line of sight to me, right?

Griffin: Oh, it does not—no, it does not know that you are there. Unless it has some other way of sensing you. I mean, visual is kind of a weird word, 'cause this thing has faces it's trying to like, form, and it is failing to do so. It is trying to like, make bodies, and it is not doing it correctly. So you don't even know if 'visual' is within this thing's like, capabilities.

Justin: Alright. I got a plan.

Griffin: Okay. Uh, Dr. Drake now says like...

Sarah: You want to tell me what the hell is going on, Duck?

Duck: This is about to break pretty bad. I say a pretty high, like, a little bit breaking bad. Uh, and you need to get gone as best you can.

Sarah: I mean, I—[laughs] You want me to go out there? You think that's a good idea?

Duck: Fuck no. Get under a table or something. Jesus.

Sarah: It's not an earthquake, Duck, it's a dude blob!

Duck: Yeah, well, are you better protected against a dude blob standing gawking at it in the middle of a room, or are you better, just... I don't know how dumb it is. Maybe put a wastebasket on your head, it might think you're a lamp. I don't fuckin' know.

[ambient music plays]

Sarah: Why's it want the telescope, Duck? What's it doing here?

Duck: I don't know, but I'm about to find out.

[ambient music plays]

Griffin: Ned, you pull up to the Cryptonomica. It is obviously closed. It is... the gate is over the front door, and it shouldn't be. You're not exactly sure where Kirby is, or where Billy is for that sake. Um, but it is shut down right now.

Clint: Okay, I think... I don't think he would've gone to the confrontation with Boyd without the Narf blaster.

Griffin: Okay, yeah, for sure. I think you are probably strapped.

Clint: So I think he's got the Narf blaster. I think he pulls it out and has it ready.

Griffin: Okay.

Clint: And uh, you said there's like a big gate over the front door? Like a big metal—

Griffin: Not like a heavy gate, but like, y'know, that they would use at a uh, y'know, a shop.

Clint: Sure.

Griffin: That they would want to board up. So yes.

Travis: Like one of those scissor, y'know—

Griffin: Yeah. We got 'em at GameStop to keep all the crooks out from stealing the Master Chief.

Clint: That worked well. Um...

Griffin: Sure. [laughs]

Clint: So... [laughs] I think he opens that grate, and I think he's using extreme caution, because I just think that he is spooked by this whole chain of events. Mosche being dead, and not being able to get the pendant back, and seeing himself on TV... I think Ned is freakin' the hell out. So I think he's on, y'know, red alert the whole time.

And so, I think he's gonna use all of his crook skills to try to open this gate and the door as quietly as possible.

Griffin: Uh, okay. [laughs] Uh, would this be a burglary roll? Are you trying to read a bad situation?

Clint: No, I think he would have keys, wouldn't he? To his own place?

Griffin: Oh yeah, sure. Okay, this would not be a burglary roll.

Clint: I just think he's trying to be cautious. Very cautious.

Travis: Sneaky.

Griffin: I think I've said 'burgly' a couple times. [laughs]

Clint: Burgly.

Travis: Burgering.

Griffin: Okay, so are you reading a bad situation then, or are you just being careful?

Clint: Just being careful. Just being careful.

Griffin: Okay. Aubrey, what are you doing when this happens? Where is Aubrey?

Travis: Finishing the phone call, back to the door.

Griffin: Okay. You hang up the phone, and as you do, the shutter over the front door rolls open. And as it does, it's uh, it's probably around like, five o'clock or so. It's like, perfect kind of golden hour here, like, early spring. Actually, it would be, I guess, late winter. And just the sort of last few orange slivers of daylight just come crashing into the room as the shutter slides open.

And you see, silhouetted against it, Ned, who walks into the shop.

[ambient music plays]

Ned: Aubrey? What... what are you—what are you—what are you doing here, Aubrey?

Aubrey: Ned, I'm gonna give you... let's say, 30 seconds to explain just a whole fuck ton of stuff. Your time starts now.

Griffin: Ned, you see Aubrey leaned up against the desk at the back of the room, and she is very clearly having a bad time. She's just been smashed through a coffee table; not that you know that, but she has uh, y'know, a shard of something sticking out of her leg that she is holding onto very tightly.

Clint: Can he see the pendant around her neck?

Griffin: Aubrey, does he see the pendant around your neck?

Travis: I'm gonna say if the light is shining in from the door, and it hits, I think she says that, and the light glints off it.

Ned: Alright. No bullshit, no games. I can explain everything. But... right now, we have more pressing concerns for—

Aubrey: 20 seconds, Ned.

Ned: That leg needs to be tended to. You need to—you need to take a look at that leg—

Aubrey: 15, Ned.

Ned: Let me help you. Aubrey, listen to me. Please.

Aubrey: Ten seconds, Ned.

Ned: Fine. Fine. What are you going to do? Take it. Do it. Kill me. Burn me up. Shoot me. Don't even wait for an explanation. I fucked up, okay? I have fucked up over and over and over again. But I fucked up trying to make this situation better, and we don't have time for me to explain it all to you! What happened was a horrible, horrible accident. A terrible accident. And I... am so... damn... sorry.

But Aubrey, we don't have time to—to do all this. If—if you are going to take action against me, take it. Because it's more important that we deal with this situation, or else everybody is going to get killed.

Aubrey: Wait... what accident, Ned? What did you do?

[music plays]

Griffin: Ned, it is that night, and it is around two AM, and you're sitting in the passenger's seat of the Imperial Crown Coupe with Boyd in the driver's seat as you pull up in front of this fairly palatial estate. The hit for tonight that Boyd has promised is going to be a big one. And Boyd looks at you, and uh, turns the engine off, and he says...

Boyd: I'm telling you, the folks in this house... the intel's good, Ned. They are loaded for bear. We get in there, out of there, in three minutes, tops, and we are set for life.

Ned: That's fine, that's fine. Are you positive they're not home? Are you absolutely sure there is no one home?

Boyd: Yeah. Nobody's home, uh, Ned. I'm pretty sure nobody's home. I've been assured that, and I can pass on that assurance to you.

Ned: How sure is pretty sure?

Boyd: As sure as it always is, Ned. What I can promise is, we...

Griffin: And he pulls out a cell phone, and he says...

Boyd: We are going to be ghosts.

Griffin: And you see him pull up like, an app for a security company, and he punches in some name as the login and punches in some password, and then you see this UI appear, like, with all of these little buttons with red locks and the word 'armed' on it. And he just starts clicking them all off, one by one by one by one. And as he presses one of them, you see these flood lights that were turned on over the driveway, uh, they click off. And he says...

Boyd: So, they've got something like a show room in there. Lots of old family heirlooms and museum pieces and jewelry and art and such. But honestly, it's more valuables than any sane person would ever keep in their home. They're practically begging to be robbed, so um... get in, y'know, still play it quietly, but this should be a fairly easy one.

Ned: That's fine. I'm sure they're insured, right? I mean, if they've got a security system like that, y'know, I'm sure they can compensate through insurance means. Right? Help me here, Boyd. I'm struggling. Usually I steal from, y'know, famous people, and I steal bric-a-brac. Y'know, I steal things that, y'know, don't really have much market value, which is why I'm broke. But y'know... [sighs] This is not my usual modus operandi. That's a law enforcement term you may not be familiar with.

Boyd: I'm familiar with it, Ned. I've had many brushes with Johnny Law. Listen, this is the kind of job that falls on your lap every once in a blue moon, and I'm not going to let you pass it up.

Griffin: And he pulls on his mask and steps out of the car, and uh, begins walking towards the now darkened house.

Ned: Fine. Fine. You can't get in without me anyway. Alright.

Clint: So Ned pulls on his mask and follows.

Griffin: I think you gotta roll plus robbery, here. I cannot think of a more literal... a more literal move, right? I don't want to steer this scene, but certain things we have established have happened.

Travis: You are robbing.

Griffin: You are rob—this is robs.

Clint: Okay. Is that a move? Robbing?

Griffin: Yeah. It is your crooked move. I will read it now, for the benefit of the audience, 'cause it's been a while. Burglar: when you break into a secure location, roll plus sharp. On a ten plus, pick three. On a seven to nine, pick two. You get in undetected, you get out undetected, you don't leave a mess, and you find what you were after.

Clint: Okay. That's a seven, and...

Griffin: Plus sharp.

Clint: Plus sharp, which is two.

Griffin: That brings it up to a nine.

Clint: That would be nine. It's gonna have to be get in undetected and find what you were after, right?

Griffin: Yeah. [laughs] Yeah, or else we—

Clint: I do leave a mess.

Griffin: [laughs] We'd be playing a very different game if it was any other choice.

Clint: Everything goes great.

Travis: I don't know what you consider a mess, but I'm pretty sure burning down a big portion of a house... uhh...

Griffin: Yeah. It's not great. You...

Clint: I use the time stone...

Griffin: Right, and the Hulk explodes. You slip in through the front door. You bypass whatever tangible physical locks that they had, and you two just slip into the house. You are standing in the foyer of the house. Aubrey, you are, y'know, also in this scene, but uh, we established in an earlier episode that you and your family are all asleep right now, and Ned has just slipped in undetected. So if we're doing this PVP rules, you are, I think you have no reason to be awake right now.

Travis: Still asleep.

Griffin: Okay. Ned, you're in the foyer. It is dark in here. You see a security panel like, light up as the door opens, but then, as you close it, it just like, turns right back off again, and you see the word 'disarmed' written on it.

What do you do?

Clint: Um, I think he would uh, investigate a mystery?

Griffin: Uh, this would almost certainly be read a bad situation over—

Clint: Read a bad—okay.

Griffin: Yeah, 'cause there's no monster here that you know of.

Clint: Okay, read a bad situation, then.

Griffin: Okay. Go ahead and roll plus sharp. That's a three.

Clint: Three and it doesn't make any difference what the sharp is, right? 'Cause the sharp is—

Griffin: You step in a big bucket. Clang, clang, clang! No. Um...

Clint: It's two. It's five total.

Griffin: Okay. Uh, I am going to make a hard move at some point. Uh, but you do not detect any immediate dangers. There is a... what you can see is that there is a foyer that you are standing in right now, and it has exits to... you can see like, a little dining room kitchen. And in the kitchen, you can see a bunch of unwashed dishes. Somebody has obviously like, made a big meal here and didn't end up cleaning up after them quite yet.

There's an office with a desk with a light still on, shining onto it, and you see some scraps of paper, like, some balled up in a trash can next to the desk and some scattered around it. But otherwise, from your perspective, you don't see anything else in there. Uh, and yeah, there's a set of stairs heading upstairs. There's like, a living room with a TV, but there's nobody in there that you can see.

That is what you can see right now.

Clint: Okay, so through a system of intricate hand signals...

Griffin: Yeah.

Clint: He uh, communicates with Boyd, and in hand signalese, says...

Ned: What the hell? I don't see any display.

Griffin: Uh, he puts a finger up to his mouth, and he points at you, and then he points to the office, and he points at himself, and he points toward

the living room. And like, puts two index fingers together, and then like, separates them as if to say “split up.”

Clint: Okay. My hand signals were better, but okay. That’s fine. I’ll go in the office.

Griffin: He rolls his eyes, and he walks away, and you enter the office. And it’s dark in here. I don’t know if you... what’s your style? You roll with a flashlight, or worry that that is too much suspicion? Like, what’s your burglary style?

Clint: I think he’s wearing one of those headband lights, like you buy at Lowes. That way, your hands are free.

Griffin: Okay. You turn the office over, and you find, uh... you find a small safe that uh, is underneath the desk that you just have no problem cracking open. And inside, you find uh, a gold watch that you pocket, and uh, some cash. You find a couple checkbooks that are inside of there, and a passport. I don’t know if you steal that. That would be kind of a dick move. [laughs]

Clint: No. No, I don’t—and I don’t think he’d take the checkbook, either.

Griffin: Okay. Uh, fraud not Ned’s game. I can respect that. Um, and as you stand up, you give the desk a once over. You don’t see anything necessarily valuable there. All that paper, you see somebody was actually trying to write a letter that they were kind of like, not having much success with, and y’know, balling up old drafts and tossing them.

And then, your head lamp looks up, and standing in the doorway that you just walked through is a man, and he is wearing a pair of glasses that the light glints off, and he is holding a baseball bat, and he says...

Man: What the hell are you doing—don’t move.

Griffin: And he starts to reach over towards the uh, alarm panel.

Ned: Uh, excuse me. Wait, wait, wait, wait. I want to tell you something. Listen. I know that you're upset. There is a very dangerous man behind you. I am not a dangerous man. I am—

Griffin: You hear a thunk, and then you see this man just collapse to the ground. Um, and then there is Boyd, and he's holding a fire poker that he has just clobbered this man in the back of the head with the blunt side of. And he looks at you, and he is furious. And he just sets the fire poker down. You see him actually lift his hand up, and you're worried that he's about to, y'know, murder you after what you just said. And then he sets the fire poker down and starts to head upstairs. And halfway up, he gestures toward you to follow him.

Clint: I think he would... well, at the same time, he knows what a bad dude Boyd Mosche is. If the dad's home, he's gonna figure other people are home. And while Ned is not brave or courageous, the idea of somebody getting hurt on one of these jobs... he wouldn't... [sighs] He follows Boyd. He goes up after Boyd.

Griffin: Okay. [laughs] That's a lot of back and forth.

Clint: Well, I'm trying to figure out what to do. I'm trying to think like Ned would.

Griffin: Sure.

Clint: I mean, Ned's initial instinct would be to run. To leave, to take off. I think he would grab him and spin him around and just shake his head back and forth like, "No, no, no, no, no," and try to pull him—I mean, he's obviously—Boyd's much stronger. Try to pull him back and gesture to leave.

Griffin: He looks at you with just a murderous stare, and he shakes his head slowly 'yes,' and then he puts one hand on this big heavy looking door with a... there's like a black box at the very top of it, connecting to the door frame, that you assume is some sort of security system that is inert. And he pushes the door open, and beyond it, you see a... just a horde of treasures.

You see a horde of jewelry, and art, and just, all of these like, very valuable... it looks almost like a museum in here. And he looks in at the room, and then he looks back at you with a big smile, and jerks his hand free and uh, pulls you inside.

Aubrey, I think the sound of your unconscious father falling to the floor is definitely enough to make some sort of noise that would wake you up. What do you do?

Travis: Oh, for sure.

Griffin: Okay.

Travis: Um, I think... so, not knowing the layout of the house, um...

Griffin: You're on the second floor of the house.

Travis: Uh, is the door they just went through between my room and my parents' room?

Griffin: No, I don't think so.

Travis: I think first, I'd look down the steps, 'cause that's where I heard the noise come from. I heard it come from downstairs.

Griffin: Okay. It's pretty dark. I'm gonna say you don't necessarily see anything down the steps.

Travis: Um, I start kind of looking down the hallway. I would also say, maybe I've grabbed like, a tennis racket.

Griffin: Okay. So this is not a, "I heard a weird sound, what's going on," this is a, "Danger, Will Robinson"?

Travis: Well, I will say, I, Travis McElroy, would grab... I would just grab a tennis racket, y'know what I mean? Like, if I heard a weird noise, especially if I'm like, 17, 18...

Griffin: Yeah, okay.

Travis: I'd grab a tennis racket.

Griffin: I think probably read a bad situation, if that is what you're doing. Let's toss a roll in here and see what happens.

Travis: Oi. [laughs] Oi.

Griffin: That's a five. Uh...

Travis: Plus sharp. My sharp is plus one, so it's only a six.

Griffin: Okay.

Travis: So I don't see shit.

Griffin: Um, no, actually. You are halfway down the stairs, holding this tennis racket, and you see your dad. And he is just crumpled to the floor in the entryway into his office, and you see a little bit of blood in the moonlight, matted on the back of his head. And as you see that, my hard move is, you drop the tennis racket, and it goes clattering down the stairs.

And back inside of the sort of the uh, the museum, I think Boyd has made... and you. Have you been helping load shit up?

Clint: I think that uh, Ned would be a little bit more... y'know, I'm sure Boyd's just grabbin' and throwin' stuff in bags, and I think Ned would be a little bit more precise, looking for things that maybe he would have an interest in.

Griffin: So who grabs the pendant that you see, um, on like a small desk that is... it's like, not under one of these display cases. It's on this small desk with like, a um, a velvet pad on top of it. You see like a magnifying glass mounted to a metal arm, and a small pair of pliers, and you see the Flamebright Pendant, and it's got this just enormous glowing orange-red

gem inside of it. And you see, actually, a few inches of silver chain that have just been plucked from it, and are like, sitting on the pad nearby.

Who grabs that?

Clint: [sighs] Y'know what? My temptation to retrofit things...

Griffin: Yeah.

Clint: But I don't want to. No. Ned would grab it.

Griffin: Okay.

Clint: I think he would mull it over for a minute or two and look at it, and then he... [sighs] He'd stuff it in his bag. I gotta be true to Ned.

Griffin: It's when you do that that you hear this very loud clattering sound coming from outside of the door, down the stairs that you just came up. And you look at Boyd, and Boyd looks at you, and puts a finger to his mouth, and then points at you to go check it out.

Uh, Aubrey, you've just dropped the tennis racket down the stairs. What are you doing?

Travis: Um, I would say that probably going to check on Dad, see if, y'know, he's alive.

Griffin: Okay.

Travis: See if I can wake him up.

Griffin: He is. He is breathing. He's at the bottom of the stairs that you were just at, and um, I think you try to shake him to attention, and you see his eyes kind of like, fluttering a little bit, and he's trying to say something. But otherwise, he is not necessarily getting up.

Ned, you are... what do you do?

Clint: Um, I think Ned goes and heads for the stairway, 'cause that's where they heard the sound.

Griffin: Okay.

Clint: And I think... my temptation is to have Ned pretend to be Santa Claus like the Grinch.

Griffin: There's no way that's appropriate for the scene.

Clint: But I do not think that's appropriate for this, so I think he just heads down the stairs and... 'cause he's pretty sure this is not gonna be somebody he can just give a drink of water to and send them back to bed. Um, I think he starts heading down the stairs to check out the noise.

Griffin: You get a few steps, and then, you see Aubrey. And Aubrey, you see a large masked man carrying a bag of loot on the stairs above you. Um, and Aubrey, what do you do?

Travis: Screams and maybe runs for a phone.

Griffin: You scream, and uh, begin running for the phone. It's probably in the kitchen. Ned, you are like, maybe caught off guard by this a little bit, and you see Boyd begin just like, full blown sprinting down the stairs. And he says...

Boyd: There's still more stuff!

Griffin: And he goes just bounding by you, and he like, throws a bag at the front door where it lands, ready to be absconded with, and he starts chasing after her. What do you do?

Clint: Oh, no. I'm sorry, I don't care how bad he is. He's not gonna let Mosche hurt somebody. I think he goes chasing after Boyd. I think he'd tackle him. I think he'd hit Boyd with the bag of stuff.

Griffin: Okay. Uh, roll to kick some ass.

Clint: Four. Plus... one, I think?

Griffin: Uh...

Clint: Jiminy Christmas.

Griffin: Okay. Then...

Travis: These count as experience, though.

Griffin: Yeah, go ahead and mark experience.

Clint: How many? That's three, right?

Griffin: Uh, yeah. You've failed quite a bit.

Clint: Well, that levels up.

Griffin: Well, congratulations, but it's not going to avoid the hard move I'm about to take.

Clint: I guess because it's a flashback... [laughs]

Griffin: Yeah. You swing the bag to try and hit your partner, and this is a bag that you've just filled with heavy belongings, and maybe you weren't used to the weight of it. But it slips out of your hand, and then, Aubrey, you feel something, just a sharp blow at the back of your neck, and then, you are out like a light.

Clint: Oh, jeeze.

Griffin: And Boyd looks up at you, Ned, and looks kind of impressed. Uh, and then he charges back past you to go finish off the room. You see him already start loading up some more stuff.

Ned: Boyd, enough. Enough! If there's two people in this house, there's more. We've got two great bags. We have got a whole bunch of stuff. Let's get the hell out of here!

Griffin: Ned, you're looking back up the stairs, and you are now actively like, shouting at Boyd, who like, instantly is back in the doorway of the museum room.

[music plays]

Griffin: And he is looking at you furiously as you are sort of breaking burglary protocol 101. And your back is turned, but you don't see this young woman's body as it like, levitates up to a standing position. And her hair is... I think you turn around, because you see Boyd just awestruck by something, and her hair is sort of just like, waving as if caught in a sharp wind that doesn't exist in this room.

And her eyes are just these bright orange lights. And then, you see her point up at Boyd in the art room, and she grips her hand into a fist, and then there is a bright flash of light.

And... you are on the ground, and the house is on fire, and you get the impression that you just blacked out. And Boyd is grabbing you by the shoulders, and trying to wake you up and get you on your feet and out of the building. He's still got all of the bags sort of thrown over his back, but he says...

Boyd: Ned, we've got to leave now. Now!

Ned: Um... uh... yeah. Uh... of course. Yeah, yeah. Yes. Go, run. Run, run, run, run, run!

Griffin: Aubrey, you are... let's leave it up to a roll. Roll to act under pressure, 'cause I literally don't know...

Travis: Nope! [laughs] Damn!

Griffin: That is a three. Aubrey is still unconscious, uh, alongside her dad on the floor. Boyd is out the door.

Clint: I think he's gonna try to pull Aubrey out. I think he assumes the dad's dead.

Griffin: Um, no, you definitely would be able to see him breathing, 'cause you went and checked on him, right? You checked on him earlier, so he is not—

Clint: Are they close enough, he would try to drag them both out?

Griffin: Um, they are close enough. I don't know if he would try and do it.

Clint: Yeah, he would. I think he would try to drag two grown people out.

Griffin: Uh, you're a big guy, but I'm gonna need you to act under pressure to pull that off.

Clint: Yeah, I know. Seven plus cool?

Griffin: Uh, yeah.

Clint: 'Kay, that would be an eight.

Griffin: On... okay. On an—

Travis: [quietly] You could use luck, Dad.

Griffin: You try to pull them both. They are too heavy. You can only pull one of them with the roll that you got.

Clint: Um, shnikey. Okay, I think Ned feels so strongly, and probably more than a little guilty, he's gonna try to save both of them. So I'm gonna use a luck point here.

Griffin: Okay. Uh, yes. That pumps your roll up—

Clint: To pull them both out of the fire.

Griffin: Yeah. That is a twelve plus. You tap into that sort of superhuman strength that you get in moments of crisis, and you manage to pull them both out into the front yard. And Boyd runs up to you as you are doing so and like, grabs the bag of loot off of your back and throws it in the trunk, and he hops in the driver's seat and kicks it into high gear. And he says...

Boyd: Come on, Ned!

Ned: What if there's somebody else in the house?!

Boyd: Ned, now!!

Clint: [groans] Yeah, that's all the courage Ned's got. I can't see him running into a burning building.

Ned: Fine!

Clint: So he checks one last time to make sure the girl and the man are okay, and he runs and jumps in the car.

[music plays]

Ned: Aubrey... um... okay. I stole that pendant from your house.

Travis: Aubrey's hands catch on fire.

Ned: Okay, hold on. Hold on. Hold on. I'm the one that took it. What happened to the house, what happened to your precious mother and your family was not intentional. It was an accident. And I have... I have hated myself ever since then. That was a turning point in my life. It was not on purpose. It was an accident that I will regret the rest of my life.

Aubrey: Y'know, Ned...

Travis: And her hands extinguish.

Aubrey: Accidents happen, Ned. When my mom died, I blamed myself for a long, long time. And it took some pretty great therapy for me to realize that things happen, and sometimes, things aren't anybody's fault. And it just... plays out the way it plays out, and y'know what, Ned? I don't hate you for that.

I hate you because you knew, and didn't tell me. I can forgive that you made a mistake back in the past. We all have those. But what about yesterday, Ned? Why didn't you tell me yesterday? Or this morning? Or at lunch? You could have told me any time since we met. We have been working together, and you knew. You knew, Ned, and you didn't tell me. You lied every time you looked at me and didn't say it. You lied, Ned.

So... I'm gonna walk out that door. I'm gonna tell Mama that I found her laptop here in your shop, and that you have been lying to all of us, and I better not see your face again.

Griffin: Uh, the truck pulls up outside. You see Mama's truck through the window. It comes to, I would say, an irresponsibly fast stop, and you see Jake Coolice and Moira in her, y'know, both in their human disguises.

Aubrey: Y'know, one last thing, Ned. Before you run and hide and lie and whatever it is you do... you might try to clean up a little bit of the mess you've made.

Travis: And she walks out the door.

[music plays]

Griffin: Hey, everybody. This is Griffin McElroy, your best friend, your dungeon master, and your best friend, and your music agent. And I'm telling you, you got a hit on your hands.

Thanks for listening to The Adventure Zone: Amnesty, episode 27, I think. And it's a big, scary episode for... uh, well, all of us, and I hope you enjoy it, and it's not getting you too spooked out. And if it is, go make yourself some tea and call a friend, and just kind of catch up, 'cause that does it for me most of the time.

I want to tell you about our sponsors. Our first one is Squarespace. They're the website ones. You know them for the websites. They help you turn your cool idea into a new website, or showcase your work, or whatever you need your website to do. They got beautiful, customizable templates, created by world-class designers. They look so fresh, and you don't have to do much to them. You don't have to do anything to them to get them looking so nice.

They got customer support 24/7, they got analytics to help you grow your stuff in real time, and see how it grows in real time. It is a good service, and it's called Squarespace. And right now, you can check out [Squarespace.com/Adventure](https://squarespace.com/Adventure) and get a free trial. And when you're ready to launch, use the offer code 'Adventure,' and you're gonna save 10% off your first purchase of a website or domain.

Hey, speaking of good stuff, I also am gonna tell you about Quip right now, because Quip helps you clean up your teeth. Oh my God, it's so important for you to clean your teeth. There's so much stuff that can get in there, and then it'll stay in there forever, and then when you're like, 80, you'll pull out a popcorn kernel and be like, "But I haven't eaten popcorn since I saw Forrest Gump." And then you're like, "Oh shit, this has been a silent passenger with me my whole life. If only I had brushed my teeth."

Quip does that for you with this great toothbrush. I mean, you still have to like, move it with your hand, but it's got these sensitive sonic vibrations and a built-in two minute timer, and a multi-use travel cover that doubles as a

mirror mount. So it's gonna feel like it's doing like, the lion's share of the work.

I have one, it goes with me everywhere I travel. It keeps my teeth real clean, and I get compliments on how little plaque I have. So they've got over one million happy, healthy mouths that love Quip, and they'll tell you about it, 'cause they're mouths, and it starts at just \$25. And if you go to GetQuip.com/Adventure right now, you can get your first refill pack for free. That's your first refill pack free at GetQuip.com/Adventure.

I've got a bunch of like, website stuff announcements, mainly that we still have tickets available for a lot of our TAZ shows that we're gonna be doing as part of our Become the Monster Tour. I think we are mostly sold out in the shows that we're doing in the northeast. But uh, other places that we're doing shows, and I don't have it up in front of me, but it's lots of places throughout the rest of the year.

Go to McElroy.family, and you can see what's still available. Come grab it. Come see us. We may not be doing Balance on these live shows. We may be doing something else, but it's still gonna be us japing around, having fun up on the stage. We got merch at the McElroy.family website as well, and the preorders for the second graphic novel based on Murder on the Rockport Limited is coming out this summer. So go ahead and preorder that at TheAdventureZoneComic.com.

Thanks to the people who tweet about our show using the #TheZoneCast hash tag. If you do that, you may end up as a character in our show, like Dr. Sarah Drake. I picked the last name myself, but that's StormsAreBrewing Sarah on Twitter. Thank you for tweeting about the show, and thank you to everybody who tweets about the show. It means a lot, and it's the main way that we have managed to get the audience that we have now, and so we sure do appreciate it.

We also appreciate Maximum Fun for having us on the network. Go to MaximumFun.org; check out all the great shows there. You're gonna find a lot of stuff you love. Personal recommendation this week – check out Mission to Zyxx. If you like this show, actually, I think there's a lot of compatibility

there, and it's a fun, improvised space opera, and you're gonna have a great time.

And one last thing – we are about to kick off kind of a whirlwind month here, where uh, we're traveling this week to do like, a video thing that I think will probably be relevant to a lot of our listeners' interests that hopefully we'll get to announce fairly soon.

Uh, and then, there's like a family vacation thing, and then we have our next tour coming up, so it's gotten a little bit crowded in May. So our next episode is gonna be our live show that we did most recently in San Jose. It was an extremely fun sort of future tech interpretation of Adventure Zone: Balance, and I'm very excited for y'all to hear that.

So um, I know this one's a little cliffhangery, but um, I mean, they're all cliffhangery at this point probably. But yeah, next one's a live show, and so that'll be up in two weeks. And that day, specifically, is the one I'm going to tell you about, because it's my favorite day, which is May 16th. So we'll be back with our live show then, and two weeks later, new episode of TAZ Amnesty. Talk to you then. Bye!

[theme music plays]

Griffin: Yeah, she sprints into the observatory lab, and you see her trying to contact the satellite lab on the computer.

Justin: I'm gonna get its attention. I'm gonna go to the door and get its attention.

Griffin: Okay. Uh, how do you do that? Describe it.

Justin: I mean, where's the door? I mean, do I have a door that would get me visibility to this thing?

Griffin: Oh, yeah, for sure.

Justin: Oh, perfect. Okay. I kick open that door and I just start yelling...

Duck: Hey dipshit, over here!

Griffin: It is still like, forming these arms, and like, trying to pull its way towards the telescope. And now, it's actually like... it has gotten much closer, and then, you see these arms like, very, very slowly start to stop forming. And there's fewer of them and fewer of them. And then, all of a sudden, you see these hands like, reaching out towards you and digging into the ground, and like, hurling this thing. And in like a really grotesque fashion, it's like, almost like jumping towards you, and you see the security guard now.

Justin: Perfect.

Griffin: She's got her head above water, and her shoulder, and one arm out, but she has lost the use of one of them.

Justin: Alright, fine. I pull out Beacon.

Beacon: Ah, finally, we are to do battle.

Justin: He gets about halfway through the sentence, and I uh, spin to my left and just shatter the computer next to me with Beacon.

Griffin: Okay.

Duck: Alright, motherfucker! I don't know what the fuck you want with this thing, but I can tell you what I need it for, and that's about zilch-o! I don't care what's up there, I could give a shit. Honestly, I'm not that interested. I'm more of a forestry, y'know, geoscience kind of dude. I don't give a shit. But I know you want it real bad. So you let her go right now, or I just start choppin'. My sword here, it was real horny for machines, I'm betting. I don't know. I haven't cut up a lot of machines with him. But put her down, now!

Griffin: Uh, is this a... is this a move?

Justin: You tell me, I don't know.

Griffin: Uh, I mean, I didn't know if it was a mundane move, 'cause it's almost certainly a uh, y'know, convince someone. Manipulate someone. Which you're not—

Justin: Let me see. Hold on a second. Let me see. [laughs]

Griffin: [laughs]

Justin: Let me see if I can con my way into this being a mundane move.

Griffin: Yeah, 'cause I don't think you can manipulate monsters traditionally, but I would bend... I would bend the rules for, like, canonical reasons on this one.

Justin: I mean, I know that you can't manipulate a monster, but clearly, there is some sort of intelligence at play here.

Griffin: Yes. Because there is some intelligence at play, I think you can—

Justin: I think I have made—it feels like an extremely credible threat, to me.

Griffin: Yeah, sure.

Justin: I mean, 'cause I will break everything in here. [laughs] I did not fuck up the hall of whatever, by the way. I was mainly going for like, a monitor.

Griffin: Yeah.

Justin: Like, I know what I'm doing, at least that much.

Griffin: Okay. Uh, yeah. I think manipulate someone. I will give you that. This thing is intelligent, we've established that this entire arc, so I'm not going to like, deny that now.

Justin: Okay. [blows raspberry]

Griffin: That's a four.

Justin: No, I need it now.

Griffin: What?

Justin: I need the luck.

Griffin: Oh, you're going to use a luck point?

Justin: Yeah. I need this to work.

Griffin: Okay. Uh, you see... so that bumps it up to a twelve. Go ahead and mark your luck point off.

Justin: Okay.

Griffin: Then they will do it for the reason you gave them. If you ask too much, they'll tell you the minimum it would take for them to do it. Here's the compromise, because this is a monster. The compromise is the... the monster does not slow its roll. The monster—this fleshy mass does not like, slow its approach as you threaten it. Uh, you do see it like, take one huge leap and like, form like, uh, just like a multitude of arms that it just sort of rips itself towards you.

And as it does this maneuver, it kind of like, loses its composition, and the security guard, she like, falls out of it. Just like, falls to the ground, and is, y'know, pretty grossed out at her current state, but she is definitely smart enough and agile enough to uh, just sort of schlorp herself clean and then just make a beeline back for the security station.

This thing does not seem like it cares about the threat of you destroying this thing. However, what it wants is to absolutely kill you. And so, it is charging in your direction.

Justin: Um... I just leveled up.

Griffin: Oh, hey, congrats. Well, no, you don't—

Justin: I've real—what?

Griffin: You don't mark experience when you use a luck point.

Justin: No, but um, don't worry, I'll check it out. Whenever you go off by yourself to check out somewhere scary, mark experience. It wasn't scary before, but I did go by myself. [laughs] I did go... as it turns out, it was extremely scary.

Griffin: [laughs]

Justin: Definitely counts.

Griffin: It's become scary.

Justin: It was extremely scary.

Griffin: Yes, okay. Um, this is... I love that this thing is an ocean of flesh, the tide is coming in, about to splash into you, and we just gotta take a quick second so that you can, y'know, so you can boost your HP or whatever the fuck.

Justin: Ah, there is an improvement. I am going to take another move.

Griffin: Okay.

Justin: From the Mundane playbook, and it's called panic button.

Griffin: [laughs] Okay.

Justin: Um, when you need to escape, name the route you'll try, and roll plus sharp. On a ten plus, you're out of danger no problem. On a seven to

nine, you can go or stay, but if you go, it's gonna cost you. You leave something behind, or something comes with you. On a miss, you are caught halfway out.

Griffin: Okay. Are you going to use this immediate—is this why you are leveling up mid—

Justin: Yes. I'm leveling up to use panic button.

Griffin: Okay. Uh, you need to describe... I think name the route you'll try, first.

Justin: The route I'm going to... well, okay, what are my exits? I mean, I know I'm looking out the main entrance. I see this fuckin' thing in front of me.

Griffin: Yeah, I mean, you are standing at the exit to this building. You are in the middle of an enormous compound that is surrounded by a tall, barb wire fence. The only like, exit is the way you came in, as far as you can tell. Or, y'know, getting through the fence somehow.

Justin: Oh, yeah, okay. Here's my route, okay? I've got a—here's my escape route.

Griffin: Okay.

Justin: There's a monster in front of me, right?

Griffin: Right...

Justin: [laughs] And at a different angle from that monster is my car.

Griffin: Right...

Justin: And I'm gonna run at that angle, uh, until I hit the fence, and then I'm gonna hit the fence with my magic fuckin' sword and I'm gonna get the fuck out of here. That's my escape route.

Griffin: Okay. Alright. Uhh...

Justin: And I'm gonna tell Dr. Drake to follow me.

Griffin: Okay.

Justin: I don't—I can't leave her there, she'll die. But I gotta get the fuck out of here. We both do.

Griffin: Give me that sharp roll.

Justin: Oh, god. I can't spend another luck point right now, y'all. Aha! Nine plus one, ten!

Griffin: Alright.

Justin: Thank you, Jesus.

Griffin: Uh...

Justin: Jesus, by the way, does care about how you do in roleplaying games. A lot of people debate me on that, but he definitely does care.

Griffin: Uh, okay.

Justin: Our Lord and Savior cares how I do in roleplaying games.

Griffin: Absolutely.

Justin: Here's what I'm saying. He's literally like, just this fuckin' visual of Duck running... I think he has his eyes shut. [laughing] He's just running with Beacon in front of him, like... he had one moment of fleeting courage, and then, I think he—his mortality just came flooding back to him, and he is now running and yelling at Dr. Drake to keep up.

Griffin: Okay. You see Dr. Drake, and you like, grab her and pull her like, out of the building. And as you do so, you get just out of the way as this mass collides with the door you were just standing in front of. And it like, buckles the door inward. It was this big, heavy, metal door. And like, it oozes kind of into the building that you just managed to get away from.

And as you are sprinting away, it is like, trying to reform and pursuing you. But now, you've got a pretty good lead on it, and you are charging toward the fence, and you get out Beacon, and... I guess you don't need to roll for this, right? This is the route that you have described.

Justin: Yes.

Griffin: Yeah, Beacon effortlessly slices through the fence. This mass of flesh like, chases you a ways, and seems like it's like, gaining ground. Like, it's actually figuring out how to move in this form. Uh, and then, about like, halfway there, it stops and then it just turns around and starts moving back towards the telescope.

And Dr. Drake as you're running is like...

Sarah: We can't just leave it! It's gonna—it's gonna do something, it's gonna tear the whole thing apart! I don't know what that thing is! Is it an alien?

Duck: Yeah, I guess. That is my suspicion currently. I'm glad we're on the same—see, people made fun of me for that. But you're a scientist, and if you're on that wavelength, I'm starting to think there's real legs on this theory.

Sarah: I fuckin'—

Duck: Right?

Sarah: I knew it!

Duck: Yeah.

Sarah: I knew it.

Duck: I knew you'd appreciate it.

Griffin: Uh, you slice the fence open, and the two of you sort of make your way through the gap that you create. And as you are sort of wiggling through this gap, you hear a sound coming from just actually not too far away in the distance.

[ambient music plays]

Griffin: You hear the roaring of an engine. It's like, starting to get actually kind of dark, and so, all you see are the headlights. And then, the vehicle is just like, kind of bearing down on you. It's still like, on the main road. And as it passes by you, you realize that it's a delivery truck, and then it takes you a second to realize that you've seen this delivery truck before. And just for a moment, as he passes, you see Leo. And his teeth are gritted, and he is bracing himself against the steering wheel as he drives at full speed and rams into this mass of flesh.

[sighs] Ned, you watch Aubrey and Jake and Moira drive off in the truck, and now, you are alone in the Cryptonomica.

Clint: [sighs] Um... I think, uh... okay. I think uh, I think Ned starts packing up his shit.

Griffin: Everything in the back room?

Clint: I think Ned's gonna just start putting stuff in boxes, and I think he takes the actions that one would take if one were gonna do exactly what she said, and run.

Griffin: I think it takes a while, and I think as it's happening, you are watching the sun slowly start setting outside. And like, from where the Cryptonomica is, like, through the windows of the shop and through the glass door of the shop, you can see cars. You can see like, a lot of activity.

An abnormal amount of activity on the streets that you would normally see at this time of the early evening.

And you see cars actually heading east, up to uh, up to top side. You're assuming, up towards where you, earlier today on TV, told everybody where to go. And then, just as you're kind of like, wrapping up, you hear the bell over the door ring.

Ned: We're not open. We're closed for renovations. Um... I'm sorry.

[ambient music plays]

Griffin: This figure that you see the silhouette of takes a few steps forward. Uh, and then, you hear a rasping, horrible cough. And then, your eyes focus, and you see Dani again. Only, something is horribly, horribly wrong with her. Parts of her are just... missing. And through where like, the gaps are—and I don't mean like, in a necessarily like, things have been cut off of her. There are just parts that should be there that just aren't.

And you can actually see faint traces of light kind of shining through those gaps. And Dani says...

Dani: [slurred] Ned, I know that you've been taking things from people lately, and I gotta know... what did you take from me?

Clint: Ned whips up the Narf blaster and points it at Dani.

Ned: Alright. Listen to me, asshole. I haven't taken anything from you, but you have taken everything from me. My belongings, my friend, my real friend... and I've got nothing left to lose. [laughs] So how about if I take something else from you? How about if I like, I don't know, take your life?

Griffin: Dani is just kind of looking at you, and now, you can see that like, part of her jaw is... it looks like it's hanging off; not necessarily in a grisly way, but in a, um... I mean, it's grisly, but not necessarily in a gorey way. Again, there's just something missing there.

Uh, and then Dani reaches back and throws something forward onto the floor of the Cryptonomica, and you see that bag. That like, body bag sized thing with all of those like, glass orbs hanging off of it, except for the one that you took. And she points at it with an incomplete hand and says...

Dani: [slurred] Ned, I am breaking protocol a little bit here, but um... what did you take from me, Ned?

Ned: You mean the Christmas tree ornament? The ball? The glass ball?

Dani: Do you have it?

Ned: Yes, I have it. It looks like you need it pretty darn badly.

Griffin: Uh, she takes a step closer to you and says—

Ned: Hold it. Wait, wait, wait. Hold on. No, no, no, no, no. Uh-uh. No closer. No closer. I'm about ready to blow you away. Why would I give you something that's going to help you?

Dani: [slurred] I don't need the help anymore, Ned. I'm... I'm... I'm more or less wrapping up, here. I just... this is a professional curiosity more than anything. Are you... are you having trouble trusting me, your old pal, Dani? Would it help if uh, I was maybe... [shifts to a British accent] Somebody else?

Griffin: And she transforms, just in the blink of an eye, and then, is Boyd, but is a decomposing Boyd. And he takes a step forward.

Ned: Okay. It's a cool trick, I admit it, and you've used it quite a bit to screw up everything and to doom this town and all the people that live there, and the people on the other side. Yay, hooray for you, you're a quick change artist! I do not care. Why do you want this ball so bad?

Boyd: Oh, I don't want the ball, Ned. I just uh... [sighs] I very rarely have the opportunity to actually speak to one of my targets. You've caused me some amount of trouble, but obviously, nothing I could not surmount. And

you're being modest, Ned. It's not my actions entirely that led to this town being whipped up into a tizzy. I must say that, before I even got here, you set the stage very nicely.

Griffin: And he takes another step forward.

Ned: Okay, fine. No ball for you. No ball for you, and I'm gonna shoot your ass.

Boyd: That's not necessary.

Griffin: ...he says, and he actually takes a step backward.

Boyd: I'm not here to fight, Ned, I just... I was just curious. I guess I'll leave you to it. Good luck with everything. No spoilers, but you're going to probably need it.

One last thing—where's the partition? Where have you hidden him? The um... the what... what was he... the goat man. Where did he end up? I figured out everything else in this town, but that was the one thing that alluded me.

Ned: Why? Why—why do you need—

Boyd: Oh, God, Ned. You're just as difficult as you were back in the hotel. I don't know why I expected anything different.

Ned: Can you at least tell me why you're doing all this? Why would you stir up a fight that's going to destroy so many lives? You said I was a target. Take me out, then. Just take me out, but... taking out the entire town and all these people? That doesn't make any sense.

Boyd: Not to you, obviously. It doesn't make sense to the spider when you step on it. But some spiders need to be stepped on. I'm going to go now, Ned. This was really, um... if certain bodies found out what I was doing here, I would get in no short amount of trouble. I uh, I will... oh, God. If it doesn't... oh, God, you're right.

Okay, I'm sorry, Ned. This really was unnecessary. It was hubris, and um, please accept my sincere apologies.

Griffin: And he whips on his heels.

Clint: He pulls the trigger on the Narf blaster.

Griffin: Roll to kick some ass. Oh, shit.

Clint: That is a nine.

Griffin: Plus tough?

Clint: Plus tough, which I think is a one.

Griffin: That is a ten.

Clint: Ten!

Griffin: You deal damage and choose one extra effect. You gain the advantage, take plus one forward; you inflict terrible harm; you inflict less harm; or, you force them where you want them.

Clint: Terrible harm.

Griffin: [laughs] Okay. I got chills when you said that. You shoot the beam, and just, again, I think we've described it as Ghostbusters-esque.

Clint: Yeah.

Griffin: The beam that comes out of the Narf blaster.

Clint: Proton pack. Out of the proton pack, yeah.

Griffin: Um, as the beam is like, leaving the tip of the Narf blaster, we see it sort of like, weave around this horrible fleshy, like, razor sharp appendage that just comes whipping out of this fake Boyd's arm. And it whips across you for two harm, just as your beam catches him for, uh, three harm.

And it whips across him, and as it does, you see just flesh go flying upward. And actually, like, splatter against the ceiling – not necessarily blood, but just sort of these like, beige particles. And for a second, you see Boyd's face, half decomposed, look up at you with shock.

And you hear this horrible digitized scream, and then from the wound that you just carved into him, you see new flesh start to sprout. You see one small arm like, punch its way through and try to pull its way out of Boyd's chest, before collapsing back into the mass. And then he starts to sort of like, collapse, like a dying star, as more arms like, try to pull their way out of him. And just like, muscles and veins are bulging out of him, and he's losing his shape, and slowly starting to grow.

[ambient music plays]

Griffin: And the whole time, you're hearing this horrible scream. And as that happens, one final, large arm plunges out of the top of just this heap of flesh and pulls itself backwards through a rift.

Duck, Leo's delivery truck is laying on its side. It's tipped over onto the driver's side, and it is smoking, and um, the mass of flesh is not... it's not moving at all. Nearly half of it was just torn apart as Leo crashed into it, and just like, splattered against the ground. And that—that stuff that was just ripped off of it is slowly turning to ash and just kind of uh, drifting away.

What do you do?

Justin: I rush to check on Leo.

Griffin: Okay. You sprint towards this vehicle as the smoke sort of starts to get stronger and stronger, and how are you checking on Leo? The car has uh, fallen onto its left side, so he does not really have a good way out.

Justin: What about the windshield?

Griffin: Uh, yeah, you can definitely see him through the windshield. He is conscious. He is uh, he's bleeding from the head, and he is trying to get out of the um, get out of the seatbelt that he is in. He seems to be stuck in something, and he is also trying to, y'know, hold his head and manage the wound there.

Justin: Okay. I'm gonna um, I guess smash the windshield with the hilt of Beacon.

Griffin: Okay. Uh, yeah. I don't think you need to roll for that, I think that's a pretty easy thing to do. You smash the windshield, and he says...

Leo: Heyyy, Duck. How's it goin'?

Duck: You dumb piece of shit. What did I tell you? The whole thing with the vision and stuff!

Leo: Duck, I—

Duck: Damn it!

Leo: I uh, I had another—can you get me out of here first? It's just...
[laughs]

Duck: Say you're sorry first!

Leo: I'm sorry. I got a head wound, Duck. I'm very deeply sorry.

Duck: 'Bout to have a head wound. [mumbling] Dumb piece of... think you have a head wound and come out, you dumb piece of...

Justin: Alright, uh, I will uh, untether him from whatever has tethered him to the car.

Griffin: It's not—I don't think it's that easy. I think he is stuck on something, and it is dark, and there is smoke, and so, I think uh, if you are going to try and get him out of this mess, uh, it is going to take some effort. So why don't you act under pressure, probably?

Justin: Okay. [laughs]

Griffin: Holy shit.

Justin: Whoopsie daisy. That's a two. That's a two.

Griffin: That's a big snake eyes. Uh, yeah. Okay, something... I'm gonna take a hard move here, but I don't think I'm gonna do the obvious one. It is getting harder to see out here because of the smoke, and so, I think it just takes you a long time to get him out of the car, and I think it's awkward and not necessarily heroic.

But you do manage to pull him from the vehicle, and just as he clears it and gets to his knees, you can tell he's like, kind of wounded, but it's not... it's definitely not a mortal wound. He has not just like, sacrificed himself in what he did. And he says...

Leo: The vision changed, Duck. It changed for me, and I saw it during the day, which is weird. That's never happened before. And I don't know if you saw the same thing, but I saw... I saw you... I saw you, Duck. I saw you on the ground in front of the thing here, the dish here, and you were dying by yourself. And so, I said, "No, that's not gonna work." I hopped in the...

Duck: Oh... well, I can appreciate the effort, for sure.

Leo: This is my only truck. [laughs] I'm supposed to do a round... I guess that's tomorrow's problem. Uh—

[ambient music plays]

Griffin: And then a hand grabs him from behind, around the throat, and it is a hand that is made out of just... just this tangible, dazzling white light. And it is attached to a form that has pulled itself out of the ruined sort of husk of the thing that you faced earlier, without you noticing while you were pulling him out of the car.

It is this four armed, bright just being, humanoid being, a bit taller than you are, made out of just hard light. And it's the same thing that you've seen after you vanquished the other abominations. And sure enough, like, in the way that you have seen these things sort of perish after defeating their abominations, you see some puffs of light start drifting away from this one as well as it's like, disintegrating.

And this figure just effortlessly throws Leo, just ten feet through the air, and he lands with a crash some distance away. And he like, balls his hands into fists, and lowers its head, and you hear this ear splitting electronic sound. And then, that dissolving just stops. And then it stands back up, and it surveys its form, not falling apart, and then it starts to sprint in your direction.

And then, just beyond the perimeter fence around the Green Bank Telescope, we see Dr. Sarah Drake watching all of these events unfold. And she is caught up with emotion at seeing this being not from our world, for the first time, and then, she feels this terrible pain in her head. Just this splitting headache that just lasts for like, a flash. But it's enough to just reel her over. She falls to one knee, and hangs onto the fence to regain her balance and pick herself back up.

[theme music plays]

And as she picks herself back up, her face is illuminated with this soft, blue light. And then, we hear a voice speaking to her.

Minerva: Hello, earth scientist! I need to borrow your corporeal hands for a minute.

[theme music plays]

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[music plays]

Speaker 1: Thanks so much to the over 28 thousand members who joined or upgraded during the 2019 Max Fun Drive, and to all of our monthly members.

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Speaker 1: As in past years, you'll be able to get some pins and support a great cause at the same time. The proceeds from this year's sale will support The National Court Appointed Special Advocate Association.

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Speaker 2: And once again, thank you.

Speaker 1: Thank you.

[music plays]

April: Listen, we already know that you love genre movies, film craft, and female filmmakers. So, if you love all those things, then by transitive property, you love my podcast, Switchblade Sisters.

Hi, I'm film critic, April Wolfe. Every week, I have a conversation with a different female filmmaker about their favorite genre film. Each episode covers the filmmaking process, working in the film industry, and just like, general geeking out about awesome movies. I've had such great guests like The Big Sick writer, Emily Gordon.

Emily: To me, indie movies, as of late, have come to be a catch-all term for a movie that kind of defies genre.

April: Billy Madison and Half Baked director, Tamara Davis.

Tamara: When a comedian comes and enters onto my set, they're just there to be funny, and we're all ready and waiting for them to be funny.

April: Horror industry veteran and actor, Barbara Crampton.

Barbara: That's where real drama lies for me. What's between you and I, speaking right now? Where are we meeting, and what's the energy that we create between us?

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