

00:00:00	Dan	Host	On this episode we discuss— <i>Deadly Lessons!</i>
00:00:05	Stuart	Host	And the lesson is, watch this movieeee! <i>[Laughs.]</i>
00:00:08	Music	Music	Light, up-tempo, electric guitar with synth instruments.
00:00:35	Dan	Host	Hey, everyone, and welcome to <i>The Flop House</i> . I'm Dan McCoy.
00:00:38	Stuart	Host	Oh hey there, Dan McCoy, it's me—Stuart Wellington! Your friend!
00:00:41	Elliott	Host	I'm Elliott Kalan! I also fall into the category of "friend." Not just to Dan, but also to Stuart! Three friends are we. Yes, friends are us.
			<i>[Dan laughs.]</i>
00:00:50	Stuart	Host	And that's what this is. This is a podcast where three friends are friends and they talk about friend stuff.
00:00:54	Crosstalk	Crosstalk	Elliott and Dan: Mm-hm. <i>[Laughs.]</i>
			Dan: So, friends—
			Stuart: In particular—
00:00:58	Stuart	Host	The way that friends sometimes watch movies and then talk about it. What did we do this week, Dan, on the Friendcast?
00:01:03	Elliott	Host	Welcome to the Friend House!
00:01:05	Dan	Host	Well, we—during September, at the Friend House, we celebrate Smalltember.
00:01:11	Elliott	Host	Smallvember.
00:01:12	Crosstalk	Crosstalk	Dan: Which is a made-up holiday month where we watch— <i>[Laughs.]</i> Okay. Good point.
			Stuart: All holidays are made up.
			<i>[Elliott laughs.]</i>
			Elliott: Uh, there's a lot of religious people who will be very unhappy with you saying that, Stuart.
00:01:23	Stuart	Host	Oh, burn! They can come find me at Dan's apartment!
			<i>[Dan laughs.]</i>
00:01:27	Crosstalk	Crosstalk	Elliott: I mean, you do have a—
			Dan: Wait—
00:01:28	Elliott	Host	Stuart, you have a public business that people can go to, to talk to you face-to-face.
00:01:32	Stuart	Host	Uh-huh. And write mean Yelp reviews, apparently. <i>[Laughs.]</i>
00:01:34	Elliott	Host	Oh, yeah. I'm sorry about that. I thought it would be a funny goof if I wrote a thousand mean Yelp reviews about your bar.
			<i>[Dan laughs.]</i>
00:01:41	Stuart	Host	Not a goof. Not a goof, Elliott.
00:01:43	Dan	Host	Okay. Where was I? Oh, Smalltember.
00:01:47	Crosstalk	Crosstalk	Dan: That's where we watch movies that are slightly smaller than we normally do. Now, this movie is—
			Elliott: Smallvember.
			Stuart: Uh-huh. And sometimes very old.
00:01:53	Dan	Host	Yeah. This is from 2006. This is probably the largest small movie that—
00:01:58	Elliott	Host	Well this had a recorded budget of \$30 million. Which would make it a midsized movie these days.

00:02:03 Stuart Host I guess it's all on the screen, y'know?

00:02:06 Elliott Host *[Dan laughs.]*
I mean, to be honest, it does look better than most of the Smallvember movies we've seen. I mean like... production value-wise, compared to something like *Love on a Leash* from last year, this is like... y'know, *Saving Private Ryan*, production values-wise.

00:02:19 Dan Host Well did you look into the—I mean, they had like the cinematographers were like there was a guy from *Bad Boys*. There was a guy from—what was the other thing? Oh, shoot.

00:02:30 Elliott Host *Bad Boys II?*

00:02:31 Dan Host No, no. Jesus. I should've had this—I thought I would remember this information—

00:02:34 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Dan:** —and not it's gone away.

00:02:37 Elliott Host **Elliott:** Well the secret—
The secret is that this movie is a Crystal Sky production. Crystal Sky is the company that also makes the *Baby Geniuses* movies, among other things. And it was founded by Steven Paul, who's also John Voight's manager. Which is why John Voight is also involved in a lot of these things. But this seems to be—and I'm not quite sure. So according to IMDB, which is very—not always the best source—it was co-written by Simon Paul. And it was co-written and directed and I think starring Stuart Paul. So it's like—was it just three brothers got together to make a movie? And if so, why is it not about three brothers who are always bickering and have to—

00:03:10 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Elliott:** —I guess, bury their mom or something?

00:03:14 Stuart Host **Stuart:** And their—

00:03:15 Crosstalk Crosstalk Their fourth brother, Aaron Paul, is too busy making *Breaking Bad*.
Elliott: Yeah, yeah. Exactly. And their fifth brother, Paul of Tarsus—

00:03:20 Elliott Host **Dan:** Sorry, guys. I wanted to say the—
—was busy having died over a thousand years ago. Y'know, almost 2000 years ago.

00:03:23 Stuart Host Yeah. That keeps ya pretty busy.

00:03:24 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Dan:** Oh, god. This movie had two cinematographers.

00:03:27 Dan Host **Elliott:** Yeah.

00:03:31 Crosstalk Crosstalk One—Douglas Milsome did *Full Metal Jacket* and—
Dan: —*The Last of the Mohicans*, among other movies.

00:03:34 Dan Host **Stuart:** Conrad Hall?

00:03:41 Stuart Host *[Elliott laughs.]*
The other—Howard Atherton—did *Bad Boys*, *Fatal Attraction*, *Deep Rising*—I know you love *Deep Rising*, Stu! So—

00:03:45 Dan Host Yeah! Because I got two eyes and the ability to watch movies.

00:03:52 Elliott Host Yeah. So there's that. And the composer is Michel LeGrand, who did *The Umbrellas of Cherbourg*. So they're—
And was it edited by the editor of *Jeepers Creepers*? Yes it was!

00:03:57 Dan Host *[All laugh.]*
So the guy—this is a vanity project but it's a vanity project by a guy with a lot of Hollywood connections who was able to raise \$30 million to put his nutty vision onscreen.

00:04:09 Stuart Host And that madman is Stuart Paul, another one of us handsome Hollywood Stuarts. *[Laughs.]* Me, Stuart Pankin, now Stuart Paul. That's—the pantheon grows.

00:04:20 Elliott Host Mm-hm. Yeah, yeah. All the Stuarts. Glorious Stuart.

00:04:24 Dan Host The main guy looks kinda like a cross between like Steve Guttenberg now and thin Penn Jillette? Like, he's in this—

00:04:31 Elliott Host I kind of considered him like a cross between Howard Stern and Neil Gaiman.

00:04:35 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Dan and Stuart:** Yes.

00:04:39 Stuart Host **Dan:** Those are good ones, too. Yeah. He looks a lot like a stepdad who always wears sandals with socks.

00:04:43 Elliott Host But thinks he's really cool. Like, he goes to a lot of Steely Dan concerts. He's always rocking out in the garage and asking you to join him.

00:04:49 Dan Host And look. I don't know the man personally. I don't want to say anything about what he might be like—

00:04:55 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Dan:** —as a human being?

00:04:56 Elliott Host **Elliott:** I mean, if you did— If you did, it would be incredibly unethical for you to then go on and slam his movie.

00:05:00 Dan Host *[Multiple people laugh.]* But onscreen, like, as the leads of this movie, y'know, the movie has John Voight—Oscar-winner John Voight—and then like a cabal of what I would say are competent actors. And then it has this lead performance, which is bereft of *[through laughter]* any sort of charisma or energy.

00:05:19 Stuart Host It's like a hole in the middle of the doughnut.

00:05:21 Dan Host *[Through laughter]* Yeah.

00:05:23 Stuart Host Jordan, can you just loop in the monologue that Daniel Craig does in *Knives Out*, please? Uh, okay, guys. Wait.

00:05:32 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Elliott:** Yeah, yeah. Still going. Still—okay. Yeah, there ya go.

Stuart: Okay. Now. Go, Dan.

00:05:36 Dan Host *[Dan laughs.]*

00:05:38 Stuart Host I don't know if you know how cutting works, Stuart. *[Laughs.]*

00:05:42 Dan Host No, no, no. She's gonna do it live, right? She's gonna do an overlay is what you're saying. Okay. I get it. Alright. Well let's pause for that.

00:05:45 Elliott Host No, no. We already did it, Dan.

00:05:47 Crosstalk Crosstalk *[Dan laughs.]* **Dan:** *[Through laughter]* Okay.

Stuart: Yeah, we already did it. We're not interrupting Daniel Craig.

00:05:51 Elliott Host **Elliott:** Stuart, finish that bit. Anyway. Why don't I just talk about this movie, huh? So anyway, this is—technically, I'm gonna allow it. As Judge Kalan, I'm gonna allow this to be a Smallvember movie. Jordan, please put in that gavel sound effect. I'll allow it.

[Dan laughs.]

00:06:03 Crosstalk Crosstalk This is officially a Smallvember even though it's much bigger—
Elliott: —than others and it comes from professionals.

00:06:05 Stuart Host **Stuart:** Uh-huh. And add in that little—
Add in that little animation we made of Elliott crossing his arms and
nodding his head?

[Dan laughs.]

00:06:13 Elliott Host Like he's a genie while the gavel's being slammed down?
Yeah. And then the wind blows up my judge robes and it's just heart
boxer shorts underneath? Yeah.

[Dan laughs.]

00:06:19 Stuart Host But nobody laughs because we all take Elliott very seriously.
00:06:23 Elliott Host Yeah, no. That's the authority I have as a judge. Even after seeing
that I'm just wearing underpants under the robe, you're still like—
00:06:27 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Elliott:** "Yeah, his mind is first-rate. First-rate legal mind."

00:06:31 Dan Host **Dan:** Well, I mean...
If anything, we fear you more at that point because the fact that you
may feel embarrassed makes us scared to see what vengeance
you may wreak on us if we laugh.

00:06:41 Elliott Host Exactly. Yeah. I'm an angry god. Yeah. Speaking of gods, this
movie is somewhat about the existence of God? But not really. Let's
get into it, shall we? And I'll mention that my notes for this movie
are very long so I've condensed them. They're not quite as short as
I'd like them to be, normally, but there's a lot that happens in this
movie and I'm not gonna go into. So if there's any details that you
guys—that I'm skipping over? Feel free to stop me and introduce
them because I cannot go into every detail.

00:07:06 Dan Host Now, I do have one question, Elliott. Did you take notes on the Tubi
commercials you watched because Tubi is the only place you can
find this movie streaming?

00:07:14 Elliott Host *[Laughs.]* I did not. This is already a long movie. It is over two and a
quarter hours long, and yet Tubi is the only place you can watch it
online and they put commercials in frequently. So it was like, "Hoo,
boy. This is—" *[Laughs.]*

00:07:25 Stuart Host So I had to set up a Tubi account in order to watch this movie, and
this is no slam against Tubi—I kinda want to leave my profile having
only watched this movie.

[All laugh.]

00:07:41 Dan Host Stuart, you can leave it after you find out what movies Tubi
suggests to you now—

00:07:45 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Stuart:** Oh noooo! Okay.

Dan: After having watched only this movie. That's what I'm curious
about.

00:07:49 Elliott Host **Elliott:** Well it immediately—
It immediately went from—on mine it was just about to start playing
Alex Cross before I shut down the website angrily.

00:07:54 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Elliott:** Because I did not need to see *Alex Cross* again. What?

00:07:58 Dan Host **Dan:** Mine started playing *Five Corners*.
00:08:01 Crosstalk Crosstalk So I don't know what that's—*Five Corners*?
Dan: I don't know why they chose that.

00:08:02 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Stuart:** What's that?
Dan: I don't know. It started with *Yesterday* on the soundtrack, by the Beatles. So. They had Beatles money, I guess.

Elliott: Oh. It's the sequel to *Four Corners*.

00:08:10 Stuart Host **Stuart:** Uh-huh. And it just about—it was firing up and Audrey's like—
"Stop it, Dan! Stop it, Dan!" And then the two of you were both typing on the computer at the same time to try and stop the feed and it wouldn't happen—

[Elliott laughs.]

00:08:20 Crosstalk Crosstalk —and then Elliott came over and unplugged it and you're like, "Elliott!" Then he nodded his head. Gavel sound. Everybody laughs.
Dan: Yup. Old person wins again.

00:08:24 Elliott Host **Elliott:** Stuart, you'll be happy to know—
—we're taping this the day after Rosh Hashanah and last night's Rosh Hashanah dinner I described to my in-laws that very scene.

[Multiple people laugh. Someone claps slowly.]

00:08:37 Dan Host So anyway. It's Blue Sky Productions—oh, no, Crystal Sky. Crystal Sky Productions comes up—
00:08:38 Elliott Host In comic sans.
In comic sans. The logo is— *[through laughter]* is the cheapest-looking logo you can get. And we start hearing some voiceover by a guy who says that his mom says his mind is messed up. And for help, she's gonna go to one Simon Conjuror.

00:08:51 Elliott Host **Elliott:** Who's kind of a long-haired guy who—it's pronounced "Con-JUR-or." And he has kind of a *[in exaggerated New York accent]* New York accent.

Stuart: Conjuror, yep. Mm-hm.

00:08:58 Elliott Host **Dan:** The rural conjurer.
Like I said, he reminds me of Howard Stern crossed with Neil Gaiman, but he's steeped in existential whimsy, as we'll learn. And we're introduced to him as he is teaching a classroom of children not to fear flying by literally talking them into having the magical ability to fly around the classroom like they're little miniature airplanes. And the music that is playing tells us we're in real *Wonder Emporium* territory. This is supposed to be magical and amazing. Y'know.

00:09:21 Stuart Host Yeah. It's the kind of score that Charles Band dreams of filling his castle halls. *[Laughs.]*

[Elliott laughs.]

00:09:26 Dan Host Well it's also one of these movie...

00:09:30 Elliott Host It is a movie, yes.

00:09:31 Dan Host One of these movie classes where you're like, "Wait, what is being taught here?" Because it starts off—

00:09:36 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Dan:** Yeah. It's like, "Oh, you don't—"

00:09:40 Dan Host **Stuart:** Not to be afraid of flying on airplanes. "—frightened of flying," but then like he has a globe that he takes out that turns into a bird? And he's like, "Okay. We gotta take care of the earth." And then he's asking the kids, "What did we learn here today?" And I'm like, "Yeah, what did we learn here today? Is this what my tax dollars are going to?"

00:09:57 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Dan:** Simon Conjuror?

Stuart: *[Through laughter]* Oh, wow.

00:09:58 Elliott Host **Elliott:** It's—
And later—the thing is also that later there's some trouble about whether the dean of his school is going to throw him out I guess? And it's not clear if the—is that the dean of this elementary school?

[Dan laughs.]

'Cause usually they're called principals. Like, you don't usually have deans for elementary schools and it's just very—I guess for like a private school? Maybe this is a fancy private schools. And it's one of those private schools where it costs a lot of money and celebrities send their kids there but they don't actually teach them very much? Y'know?

00:10:25 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Stuart:** I mean, this is a dean that later on—

00:10:27 Stuart Host **Dan:** They are employing a wizard.
Not to jump too far ahead, but this is a dean who later on has the ability to command the police to arrest someone. *[Laughs.]*

00:10:33 Elliott Host Yeah. That's part of being a dean! So Simon, he has a reputation for curing the seemingly incurable. And the mom, Betsy, she says, "Oh, there was a man in my neighborhood who called himself Mr. Evil. He was a violent homeless man, but now that you talked to him, he just runs around distributing candy to strangers!" Which I would say is another form of violence.

[Dan laughs.]

If I was walking down the street, I do not want a stranger shoving candy into my hands. Especially if he still calls himself "Mr. Evil."

[Dan laughs.]

But he has a son who calls himself "Rebel" who hates everything. And this is the beginning of the movie is—

00:11:05 Stuart Host Apparently he doesn't hate on-the-nose nicknames. *[Laughs.]*

[Dan laughs.]

00:11:09 Elliott Host This is the beginning of the movie's lack of sense—thank you. This is the beginning of the movie's lack of sensitivity about emotional issues. In that we're told he tried to jump off a building but was saved by landing in a mattress truck. So we're living in a cartoon

world for sure. Simon? He says there's only one thing to do. So next scene he has kidnapped Rebel and handcuffed him to the inside of this big truck that he has that's full of video screens playing a self-help video that Simon made? And it's weird, 'cause we never see anything like this in terms of Simon ever again.

[Dan laughs.]

It's like, why does he have this Simon-mobile full of screens playing his videos and he's handcuffed a young man to it? It doesn't make sense! And they argue for a long time. Rebel gets free, and then Simon gives him some money and lets him crash his truck and so Rebel agrees to go with Simon to—his late-night self-help class. But first, we're gonna have to meet the real star of the show! That's right—John Voight as Dr. Crazx, a Pulitzer Prize-winning psychologist who either writes novels or self-help books.

[Dan laughs.]

00:12:16 Dan Host It's not clear. And guys? I want you to describe this performance for me.
Well first I want to specify for the audience—if you're asking how "Crazx" [*pronounces it "Craze-ex"*] is spelled, it is spelled the traditional way. Like, "crazy," but replace the "y" with an "x"?
[Laughs.] And Jon Voight is wearing, like, nose and face prosthetics like he is Orson Welles reborn. *[Through laughter]* But Orson Welles like playing—like, I don't know. Dr. Robotnik in a cartoon or something?

[Elliott laughs.]

00:12:42 Stuart Host Like—
He is constantly stuffing his face with candy. And now we can all—I think we can all agree that—Jon Voight the person? Not cool.
00:12:48 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Stuart:** Not a good dude.

Dan: Yeah.

00:12:49 Elliott Host **Elliott:** Not someone—
Not someone we approve of, no.
00:12:51 Stuart Host But Dr. Crazx in this movie brings a lot of energy.
00:12:56 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Dan:** Yeah. I would argue this is the only performance that comes close to successfully doing what the movie needs?

Elliott: He's—he is—he is const— *[Laughs.]*

00:13:06 Elliott Host **Stuart:** Naturalistic?
I mean, this is the biggest performance I think I've ever seen in a movie. It's so big and over-the-top and he has an English accent but he's always wheezing and like—he's trying to do—assume he's trying to do Sydney Greenstreet, basically. Like, this kind of jovial, big, fat, wheezing guy who's always eating candy and hopping around like a little imp. Like, everyone else in this movie is striving to appear as if they're like a one-dimensional version of a real person? And he's like, "No, no, no, no, no, no. I'm going to be a multidimensional version of a fake person. I'm going to give you the

biggest, most energetic fake person that never existed.” And it is like a Bugs Bunny villain is hopping through this movie. *[Laughs.]*

00:13:46 Stuart Host *[Dan laughs.]*
It feels like he has decided, “I am going to make the most loathsome character that everyone hates and I’m going to play it crazy and I’m going to make sure that everyone treats me like crap.”

[Dan laughs.]

Like that is his—it’s this weird, like, masochistic desire where he’s like, “My kink today is everyone being mean to me and I’m gonna be a mean weirdo.”

00:14:09 Dan Host *[Elliott laughs.]*
Well also, we haven’t addressed the dialogue in this movie quite yet? But Simon—

00:14:16 Elliott Host Oh, it’s wonderful. I have—wait. Can I—wait. Finish what you’re saying and I’ll say my favorite, up-to-this-moment-in-the-movie piece of dialogue.

00:14:22 Dan Host *[Stuart laughs.]*
Okay. Well, Simon Conjuror in particular talks in like this very literary, extravagant way? Like he’s proclaiming something off of a scroll most of the time? And it would be okay if one character in the movie talked that way? But from time to time, every character in the movie will talk in this very affected, strange, high-language manner. And Jon Voight is also the only one who comes close to making that dialogue work. Like, it makes sense coming out of a crazed performance.

00:14:57 Elliott Host It makes sense coming out of a character who seems to be a trickster of mythology. Who has like come out in his—and basically is a hobgoblin of some kind.

[Dan laughs.]

But Dan, I wanted to mention—my favorite up-to-this-moment piece of Simon Conjuror dialogue is—Betsy says, “You’ve gotta help my son,” she says. “I’ll pay you anything.” And he says, “You can afford such?”

[Dan laughs.]

Like one, they haven’t named a price. But—“You can afford such?” And then he agrees to do it for free. But it’s also... this guy has such a... like, such a Tristate area, New York, New Jersey accent?

[Dan laughs.]

That it—*[Strong New York accent]* “You can afford such?” *[Regular voice]* And it’s like, come on.

00:15:39 Stuart Host He’s like the Gandalf of Borough Park.

00:15:44 Dan Host *[Elliott laughs.]*
Yes! Exactly!

00:15:45 Elliott Host That should've been the title of the movie. Yes.
00:15:47 Dan Host *[Through laughter]* He is a bad Renaissance Faire cosplayer with like—

[Dan laughs.]

—long, curly hair and like... *[Laughs.]* Yeah. He's an interesting guy!
00:16:00 Elliott Host He's an interesting, interesting guy.

[Multiple people laugh.]

And then later on it's implied that he and Jon Voight have known each other since they were children, which makes no sense.

[Dan laughs.]

Unless one of them was an exchange student. I don't understand.
00:16:13 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Stuart:** But which one?

Elliott: So Jon Voight—
00:16:15 Elliott Host Dr. Crazx, he's talking to Dean Elkwood, who is the dean of the school Simon teaches at. Again, it's not clear if it's the elementary school or if it's the college where his night classes are done. And he says, "Simon Conjuror is a menace!" But he says that in 700 more words than I just said it. He goes on and on and on. "And you need to fire him, or I'll pull my name and my funding from this school!" That is something that is never touched on again, that apparently he has some kind of leverage over this school. Why he would? I don't know. But anyway.

00:16:47 Stuart Host And the dean is kind of introduced initially on Crazx's side, right?
00:16:52 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Stuart:** At least that was the impression I got. And then she reveals that she's secretly was a former student of his.

Elliott: Well, it's—it's implied—when we—yes.
00:16:59 Elliott Host And a former lover! And so the—we see her first smoking a cigar, which is usually movie shorthand for either this is an elderly comedian or an evil person. Or evil rich person. But it turns out it's neither. She's just a good-hearted school administrator who loves smoking cigars in her office, I guess? But yeah. She seems to be going along with him until he leaves and then she goes, "You really are crazy" or something like that. She opens her drawer where there is a framed picture of her and Simon. Okay. So. Simon and Rebel, they show up at Simon's night school self-help group therapy class, and we go through—there's a group of people there who each have one specific vice. And we go through all of them in extreme detail. And it's like, one guy has an overeating problem. One woman has an anorexia problem. One guy's a drug addict. Oh no, one woman's a drug addict. One's an alcoholic. One is a depressive named "Tears"? They all have like offensive nicknames, too? And—

00:17:51 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Dan:** Yeah. And it—

Stuart: Oh, but like—
00:17:53 Stuart Host I feel like they probably deal with all of the emotional problems with, y'know, a fair amount of solemnity, right?

[Elliott laughs.]

00:18:01 Elliott Host Like, they deal with it pretty reasonably. It's a real source of jokes. In my notes I refer to it as "the barest minimum of sensitivity by the filmmaker." And the characters are—their personalities are not really clear from one moment to the next?

00:18:12 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Elliott:** And there's so many of them. It's like—

Dan: Yeah. I—

00:18:14 Stuart Host **Stuart:** It makes me yearn for the—
It makes me yearn for the sensitivity of *Moving Violations*.

00:18:18 Crosstalk Crosstalk [Dan laughs.]
Stuart: Or *Summer School*. [Laughs.]

00:18:19 Elliott Host **Elliott:** And the only thing—
Or like, the movie *Nuts*. Or *Mixed Nuts*. Or anything with "nuts" in the title.

00:18:23 Elliott Host **Elliott:** There's a—I just wanna say—

00:18:26 Elliott Host **Dan:** Yeah. This is—this is—
And jumping into this classroom, it felt like reading an *X-Men* comic in the '90s and being like, "wait, who are all these people? Hold on."
[Laughs.]

00:18:32 Dan Host Yeah. This is definitely like pitched about halfway between... like, *Nightmare on Elm Street 3: Dream Warriors*, and like a bad sitcom [through laughter] about like an encounter group? And yeah. I just wanted to tell people—if you want to watch this movie, which is an experience, like, just be aware of if you—

00:18:51 Elliott Host Watch it on Tubi. 'Cause you can't see it anywhere else.

00:18:55 Dan Host If you are sensitive to insensitive portrayals of mental health issues, you might not enjoy [through laughter] that part of it.

00:19:04 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Stuart:** Yeah. I mean, it's pretty offensive.

00:19:06 Dan Host **Dan:** And also there are things—
There are things that are treated as pathologies that are not pathologies, like a young man being sexually uncertain about his sexuality. Y'know.

00:19:14 Elliott Host Yeah. It is not a movie to go to for a... nuanced look at—

00:19:23 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Elliott:** Emotional problems.

Dan: Mental health.

Stuart: Yeah.

00:19:26 Elliott Host [Multiple people laugh.]
Well, yeah. It is—I mean, as you might guess from the title *Deadly Lessons*—

[Dan laughs.]

—which is—

00:19:31 Stuart Host And the classroom is filled with all these people, and they—none of them seem to be happy to be there. So it made me—like, maybe I missed something, but were they like court-ordered to be there?

[Dan laughs.]

00:19:46 Dan Host Did they all get kidnapped by him in this van?
[Through laughter] Yes. Were they all chained and then—but apparently left behind where they were safe not to leave the classroom. “I’m gonna chain you to the classroom, but what you do there is your own thing.”

00:19:57 Elliott Host And you gotta imagine that for the first person that he picked up and brought to the classroom, it was a long night. ‘Cause they had to wait for him to get, one by one, every other person. What a—wow. Like a weird Santa Claus.

00:20:05 Dan Host
00:20:07 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Dan:** He’s removing— *[Laughs.]*

00:20:09 Elliott Host **Elliott:** Dan, think about it. Let’s think about it. Santa Claus, as he is, is pretty weird. Okay. So he’s a big fat guy who chooses the chimney—perhaps the narrowest form of entry for a house—to go through. He delivers toys to—he says—all the children in the world, but I would beg to differ, as a non-Christian child. He lives at the North Pole—not a pleasant place to live. I’ll tell ya why. One, cold. Two, polar bears. Three, he has a candy cane-themed house which is, again, strange.

[Dan laughs.]

00:20:59 Stuart Host That’s a weird thing. He also has—and I’m setting across the weirdest thing about him, which I guess is not weird so much as evil, that he has enslaved both a group of little people to make toys for him and also a herd of reindeer. And the reindeers have this cruel culture based around taunting and verbally assaulting any members of the reindeer group who have different noses than the rest of the group? There’s a lot about Santa Claus that’s weird. And Elliott’s kind of glossing over the thing that I think is weirdest, is that he’s played by Tim Allen.

00:21:05 Dan Host
00:21:10 Stuart Host *[Multiple people laugh.]*
Well, I mean, only that Santa Claus was. Whaaat?

00:21:11 Crosstalk Crosstalk *[Elliott laughs.]*
Stuart: Tim Allen wasn’t in the sequel?

00:21:13 Dan Host **Dan:** I mean, that movie, specifically—
That movie specifically postulates that there have been several Santa Clauses over the course of history.

00:21:19 Elliott Host You’re right. And if you kill one, you become one. There’s nothing weird about that.

[Dan laughs.]

It’s such a—I mean, it’s a ballsy move for a children’s movie to start with the main character *[through laughter]* murdering Santa Claus?

00:21:31 Stuart Host *[Dan laughs.]*
Imagine being in that pitch meeting.

00:21:35 Dan Host *[Multiple people laugh.]*
“Okay. Now, stay with me, guys—”

00:21:36 Elliott Host *[Multiple people laugh.]*
“I’m gonna pitch a movie to you. It’s a children’s movie. Now, five minutes in you’re gonna think I’m a madman. But promise me you will wait ‘til five more minutes. Give me five more after that. Because it will get whimsical.”

00:21:46 Stuart Host
“He’s locked the door! We can’t get out!”

00:21:51 Elliott Host *[Multiple people laugh.]*
He goes, “Now you’ll have to listen to my pitch, Mr. Jones.” “Why?”
“If you want the antidote to the poison you just swallowed!”

00:21:58 Crosstalk Crosstalk *[All laugh.]*
Elliott: I guess it’s “Dr. Jones.” It’s not “Mr. Jones.”

00:22:03 Dan Host **Dan:** If you’re the screenwriter to— *[Laughs.]*
If you’re the screenwriter to *The Santa Clause*, let us know how close this scenario was to your actual pitch experience. We’d love to know.

00:22:11 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Stuart:** Yeah. Big fans.
Elliott: When you pitched it, did you have to say, “Stay with me, now. Stay with me.”

00:22:18 Elliott Host *[Dan laughs.]*
Okay. And I just want to mention that among the students is a woman played by Skyler Shaye, who *Flop* fans may recognize as Chloe from *Bratz*, the movie!

00:22:29 Dan Host
She’s in a bunch of *Baby Geniuses* things. I looked her up on Wikipedia. She’s apparently Jon Voight’s goddaughter, which is why there’s so much crossover between their projects.

00:22:40 Stuart Host
And sometimes performers just click, y’know. I get it.

00:22:43 Elliott Host
Yeah. It’s not like Robert De Niro is Martin Scorsese’s godson.

00:22:46 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Dan:** Look. I’m not saying that she doesn’t have the talent to make it on her own.
Elliott: Or is he? Wait a minute! Wait a minute! Maybe he is!
I’m just saying that they probably like to work together.

00:22:51 Dan Host
00:22:54 Elliott Host
00:22:57 Crosstalk Crosstalk
Yeah. Probably. ‘Cause it’s a family thing.
Elliott: They’ve known each other for so long.

00:23:01 Elliott Host **Dan:** *[Singing]* It’s a family affair!
And that’s why in this movie they share zero scenes together.
[Dan laughs.]
So Simon hands everyone in class big, leatherbound books. These are your real, like, grimoire-type ancient tomes. And it turns out to be a novel called *Prophet Without a God*. And the text in the book describes the students in the class! And it describes a teacher just like Simon Conjuror, but it gives him a different name? Which is a

detail that the book seems to forget and it just starts calling him “Simon” later on? But the teacher, it mentions, had lost faith that there was a god. Which had driven him to an existential dread. The book also—they’re all like, “You wrote this. You wrote this and you just handed it out.” And he goes, “There’s information in there that I don’t know. Keep reading.” And the book then—we go through as the book describes every single person in the class’s tattoos or scars, and each one of them has to prove it’s true by revealing their tattoos and scars. It goes on forever, and it doesn’t end. And for some reason, Tears—the woman with depression—has to pull down her pants to show them her butt because she thinks she has a tattoo there? This whole scene, I was just like, “Why is this still going on? Why does the male model have to show us he only has one nipple? I don’t understand!”

00:24:05	Dan	Host	Well also, this poor character. Like, yeah. The scene ends on this woman being bullied into mooning the class and—
00:24:14	Stuart	Host	She’s then assaulted while she’s mooning them.
00:24:17	Crosstalk	Crosstalk	Elliott: Well verbally, yeah. They are. They are.
00:24:21	Dan	Host	Dan: Well, I mean, no, but the thing is later on you find out— Like, blessedly, they do not <u>show</u> this? But the implication is that she was molested as a child. So... like, looking back on that scene, it feels <i>[through laughter]</i> even worse. They’re like, “No, no. Pull your pants down.”
00:24:35	Crosstalk	Crosstalk	Stuart: Yeah. That was not lighthearted fun.
00:24:39	Dan	Host	Dan: Not that it wouldn’t be bad enough on its own! I’m just saying, like—
00:24:42	Elliott	Host	<i>[Through laughter]</i> That character. Don’t do that.
00:24:49	Dan	Host	When the character is bullied into showing everyone her butt, it’s not the whimsical, magical moment that the soundtrack would have us believe it is.
00:24:50	Stuart	Host	<i>[Through laughter]</i> Yes, exactly.
			Guys? We’re like 40 minutes into the movie and I gotta say... why the fuck do they pronounce it “Con-JUR-or,” guys?
			<i>[Elliott laughs.]</i>
00:25:01	Crosstalk	Crosstalk	Like, as soon as I heard it I was shouting “What the fuck” and I aroused my sleeping wife. Who was—
			Dan: Well, ‘cause “CON-jur-er”—
00:25:05	Dan	Host	Stuart: —peacefully sleeping and not watching the movie with me. See, Stuart, “CON-jur-er” would be too on-the-nose and obvious. But “Con-JUR-er?”
00:25:10	Crosstalk	Crosstalk	Dan: Now you got something!
00:25:14	Elliott	Host	Elliott: It’s also possible that the filmmakers didn’t know— Like, the movie <i>Coven</i> ? <i>[Pronounces it along the lines of “Cove” with an “n” at the end, rather than rhyming with “oven.”]</i> How the long thing in American movie, how it’s like—well he thinks that “Cove-n” sounds better than “Coven.” Like, I wonder if they just didn’t know it was pronounced “CON-jur-er?” But it is annoying and strange every single time someone in the movie says “Con-JUR-er.” At first I thought it was Jon Voight’s affectation? Like... I used to do a sketch with my old sketch partner, Brock Mahan, where it’s about

Goofus and Gallant all grown up. And Gallant has kidnapped Goofus and tied him up and it's one of those things where it's like, "All my life I've lived in your shadow!" And he keeps calling Gallant "Guh-LANT" 'cause he's got this very affected accent? I thought it was that? But no! They just all say "Con-JUR-er" and it's very... it's a weird choice. It's an interesting choice. But then again, I think there are no right choices in this entire movie? Like, there's no choice in it that I can mention—I mean—

00:26:00 Stuart Host

I mean, there's a waterfall later that I think works out. But y'know, we'll go on.

00:26:03 Elliott Host

Yeah, yeah. The part where Jon Voight's character lustfully fondles a penis's statue before lifting it up to reveal a hidden gun underneath?

[Dan laughs.]

Maybe that was the right choice. I don't know. But anyway—or the moment—

00:26:17 Dan Host

It's a real *Zardoz* reference there.

00:26:20 Crosstalk Crosstalk

Dan: Guns and penises.

00:26:22 Elliott Host

Elliott: The moment where someone pushes—
The moment where someone pushes a button and pig is shot out through a tube into a snake's mouth? Maybe that was the right choice. I don't know. We'll get to those scenes. But. Okay. So the book tells them that Dr. Crazx is on his way. He's gonna frame Simon for murder. And they all run out right as Crazx and the cops come in. This book, after—as Stuart mentioned—there's roughly 25 minutes of them hanging out in this room. It's like you're watching a one-act play all of a sudden. They're all on Team Simon now. This book has swayed them. If they don't fix themselves and solve this mystery, they're gonna be arrested as accessories for murder. What's this crime of murder? Well, we find out that one of the little kids from Simon's class has fallen to her death. It would be tasteless to just show a kid's body lying on the sidewalk while characters walked around talking about it, right? Let's go ahead. Let's do it. So they do. And that kid is lying there for a long time. And there's little number markers on it like you would put for like bullet casings at a murder scene? And I was like, "What clues could these possibly be marking? I don't understand. Like the places where her teeth fell? I don't understand."

00:27:19 Crosstalk Crosstalk

Stuart: *[Through laughter]* Oh, wow.

Dan: *[Through laughter]* Oh, god! Oh, okay. Her baby teeth.

Elliott: And so there's—yeah. Yeah, yeah. She's a kid. She had a loose—she was—

00:27:29 Elliott Host

Stuart: They fell out before she fell, Dan. She's a kid. Kids lose teeth all the time.

She was on the way down and she was like, "Tooth Fairy! Save me!" So she was getting her loose teeth out—

00:27:32 Crosstalk Crosstalk

Elliott: —just so the Tooth Fairy could swoop in and save her.
[Laughs.]

Dan: Oh, god. No! No! Stop it! *[Laughs.]*

00:27:37 Stuart Host "This is the only currency I have! I'm a child!"
00:27:39 Elliott Host There are these two detectives who are talking about the case, and they're like big, beefy guys with moustaches. They don't look alike enough to be twins, but they could definitely be brothers. And one of them says the classic line, "I'm sick of murder!"

[Dan laughs.]

00:27:51 Stuart Host But they're on the case, I guess.
You think those two actors—like, every time they see like a Sonic commercial, they're like, "That should've been us."
00:27:57 Elliott Host *[Laughs.]* "That should've been us! We could do that!" Also when they listen to Car Talk on the radio. Anything where there's two guys. Y'know. They figure that should be them. But yeah, "I'm sick of murder" is such a funny line to me. It's just like... what's that line in *Plan 9*? It's something about, like, "Aliens!" or something like that. "Can't stand them!" or something like that. Anyway.

[Dan laughs.]

So now the movie falls—I'm not going to do everything in detail. This movie falls into a rhythm of Team Simon goes from one location to another. Frantically doing nothing. Like, just kind of frantically getting somewhere and then just talking. And each of them takes a turn having incredibly simplistic breakthrough where a phrase or an object suddenly reminds them of a repressed memory that caused their specific trauma. And as soon as they know about it, they're cured and their personal addiction goes away. Simon, meanwhile, does nothing? Says nothing. He—sometimes I forgot he was in the movie while these characters were having their breakthrough.

00:28:49 Dan Host I—like, I have—*[sighs.]* I have been blessed with a very easy life, but a propensity toward depression. And I would say that it is a falsehood that understanding why your brain *[through laughter]* works a certain way allows you to immediately drop that behavior. It is helpful? Don't get me wrong? But you need to work *[through laughter]* after recognizing and like... turn yourself around.

00:29:20 Elliott Host Going back to my *Temple of Doom* reference earlier, it's as if they said, "Dr. Jones, you just took poison." And he goes, "Well now I know it's killing me. Thank you. I don't need the antidote anymore."

00:29:29 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Dan:** *[Through laughter]* Exactly.

Stuart: Yeah.

00:29:30 Elliott Host **Elliott:** Now that I don't need the antidote—
00:29:33 Dan Host —I can just walk away 'cause I know it's poison that's inside me. And I think—like, obviously we should return to this. But just to clarify, like, what we were saying. Like, the gang is basically on the run with their teacher 'cause everyone thinks their teacher killed this child.

[Elliott laughs.]

And I guess they are like sticking with him because of these magic books that, y'know, are pretty good indication that maybe they should hang out with this guy.

00:29:54 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Dan:** But then like—

00:29:57 Elliott Host **Elliott:** I mean, if a magic book tells you to do something—
—either it is the right thing to do, or it is very much the wrong thing to do.

00:30:00 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Dan:** Yeah.

Stuart: Yup. Yes.

00:30:02 Elliott Host **Elliott:** Depending on the book.
If that book is bound in human skin? Do not listen to that book.

00:30:05 Stuart Host Yeah. If it's a death note, don't read it.

00:30:07 Dan Host *[Elliott laughs.]*
Yeah. But Elliott's right. They do a whole lot of nothing, but the kind of general idea, I think, is like they're trying to find something on Dr. Crazx to prove that Simon is innocent. That Crazx is behind everything.

00:30:21 Elliott Host And along the way things will happen, like, the gang member Scorpio will accidentally catch some terrorists? And have a breakthrough that he is violent because he was verbally abused by his father and then it's over. He's fine. It's okay. And he's like—

00:30:34 Stuart Host Yeah. It's gonna put him on the path to justice.

00:30:37 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Dan:** *[Through laughter]* Well, also—he— *[Laughs.]*

Elliott: Yeah. He basically becomes a vigilante. He's like, "I should only fight bad people!" Which is not a good lesson.

00:30:44 Stuart Host **Stuart:** Yeah. Yeah, yeah, yeah.
Yeah. That's what Curtis Sliwa—that's what happened to him before he became a Guardian Angel.

00:30:49 Dan Host Yeah. It was not an anti-violence message. It was just a pro-violence against the right people message. Can you explain this terrorism thing to me? Because like...

00:30:57 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Dan:** I must have—

00:31:00 Dan Host **Elliott:** I guarantee you I can't, but I'll try. *[Laughs.]*
[Through laughter] I must have missed a scene 'cause suddenly they're in like the back of this truck and I assumed that this truck was driven by one of them, but no. Apparently they, I guess, got into the truck of a couple of terrorists who had like bombs in the back and then like Scorpio or Scorpion or whatever his name is—

00:31:15 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Elliott:** His name's Scorpio.

Dan: —that's not the point.

00:31:19 Dan Host **Stuart:** Scorpio.
Scorpio is like, "Screw this. I'm not gonna get chased by the cops." And he goes through a door to I guess the front of the truck?

00:31:25 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Elliott:** To the cab of the truck.

Stuart: Uh-huh.

00:31:29 Dan Host **Dan:** And I assume like beats up the people driving the truck—
—'cause it's a hard cut then to the truck being stopped by the side of the *[through laughter]* road and the police having been—and

00:31:45 Crosstalk Crosstalk everyone's in a crowd and they're not being arrested under suspicion of anything, even though they're in this terrorism truck. The police just take their word that they caught these bombers. **Dan:** Did I get this correct? *[Laughs.]* Okay.

00:31:49 Elliott Host **Elliott:** Yeah. I—yes. You are exactly right and I had the exact same confusion. At first I thought that they had stolen a truck or had someone owned a truck? Since we know Simon Conjuror had a truck earlier. Maybe this is another one of his truck fleet. But nope, apparently they must have—either as they were running out of the school been kidnapped by terrorists in a scene that we're not blessed enough to see—

[Dan laughs.]

00:32:20 Crosstalk Crosstalk —or they just jumped into a passing truck to get away. That truck happened to have terrorists in it, and that information is given to us after the fact when the truck has already been pulled over by the—mean, they're being chased by the police and Scorpio goes up to do something in the front seat— **Stuart:** In the cab, yeah.

00:32:23 Elliott Host **Elliott:** And the next thing we know, the police are saying— “Well, you caught those terrorists and the truck is full of C4! There's a reward for you, Mr. Scorpio! But you'll be getting that reward from—what—the mayor?” And it is—

00:32:30 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Elliott:** I had the exact same thing.

00:32:35 Stuart Host **Dan:** By the way, this— **Stuart:** Based on later in the movie when awards are meted out— I'm assuming he would just go to the local bodega where they have to fork over piles of cash to him.

00:32:40 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Elliott:** That's how the FBI's Most Wanted List works. Yeah.

00:32:44 Elliott Host **Dan:** *[Laughs.]* Including \$31 million. If you get the reward they give you like a chit or a coupon that you bring to a bodega and they just give you a million dollars.

00:32:48 Stuart Host That's why you always see Dog the Bounty Hunter hanging out in bodegas.

00:32:52 Elliott Host *[Laughs.]* I mean, it's one of the two reasons. He also loves Slim Jims.

00:32:54 Dan Host Yeah. I feel like this bears a little more examination when it actually comes up in the plot. But in general I want to say that this movie about, sort of, self-actualization and, y'know, getting rid of your emotional scars? Is also seems really concerned with money. *[Through laughter]* Because there's this part where he gets a reward and then there's bets and at the end, like, Conjuror like really cleans up on like *[through laughter]* all these bets that have been made throughout the movie? And then—

00:33:19 Elliott Host And everyone in the group wins the lottery, too!

00:33:22 Dan Host *[Through laughter]* Exactly! It's very strange.

00:33:26 Elliott Host Well there's only two lessons that we really learn from Simon Conjuror, and we have to read them on blackboards in the back of

his room? And the first one we see, it says “ $E=MC^2$. Enlightenment=Mind Control.”

00:33:37 Dan Host Squared. *[Laughs.]*

00:33:38 Elliott Host Which we’ll find out maybe what his strategy is. And at the very end, we see that—behind the blackboard—it says “Belief/Justice = Magic.” Which is—I’ve been trying to puzzle out what that means.

[Dan laughs.]

00:33:54 Stuart Host And I don’t know. So... I don’t know.

00:33:58 Elliott Host How do you divide belief by justice, guys?

And what that has to do with magic, I’m not sure. Because I like magic. I’ve seen magic performed many times and there’s a certain amount of belief. Like, you have to say to yourself, “For this trick I’m going to believe that there’s some special thing going on and it’s not just the magician distracting me while he throws the card away.” But I don’t know how justice factors into it?

00:34:15 Stuart Host And that card better not be a land. ‘Cause you’re gonna need that to bring other cards in.

00:34:19 Elliott Host Yeah, yeah. Exactly. Sure. Or an energy, if I’m gonna wanna do my GX attack once per game.

[Stuart laughs.]

Uh—

[Dan laughs, applauds slowly.]

So I wonder if—maybe it’s a sly little statement of like, “Hey. Justice doesn’t exist. You can believe in it, but that’s magical thinking. There’s no justice in this world.” But the movie seems to be telling us that there’s nothing but coincidental justice in the grand plan of the world. If we harness—anyway. The movie—the philosophy of the movie doesn’t make sense. So anyway. Our heroes eventually end up at Crazx’s apartment. I’m glad we went through the truck stuff. I was gonna skip it originally, but I’m glad we went through it. And Crazx’s apartment—again, I want you guys to help me describe it. It’s like a Batman villain’s apartment. Right?

00:34:57 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Stuart:** Yep. But instead of a giant coin there’s a giant penis that hides a gun.

00:35:03 Dan Host **Dan:** *[Through laughter]* Yes! Yeah! And—

00:35:12 Elliott Host And they say it’s—I couldn’t tell whether it was like the lost Library of Alexandria or somehow it’s supposed to be the lost Library of Alexandria.

It’s not clear. But his apartment is full of ancient artifacts and a very cold, Hannibal-esque kitchen. And also—a room that is either a complete replica of the Library of Alexandria or a time portal that takes him there.

[Dan laughs.]

00:35:28 Stuart Host Because it’s stocked with all the books!

00:35:31 Elliott Host And that’s explained by gambling addict, what—Plankhead? Or Platehead?

Platehead.

00:35:32 Stuart Host Platehead, who wears a crucifix around his neck that's so tight I'm worried his head is just gonna fall clean off.

00:35:42 Elliott Host *[Elliott laughs.]* Platehead—he got his name because he was an ambulance driver who fell out of an ambulance or something and had to put a plate in his head, which led to gambling. But anyway, I also wanna remind people of what I mentioned earlier—there is a terrarium in the middle of the room with a pet snake in it with a big button that says, like, y'know, like, “Edible Delicacies” or something like that? And if you push it a squealing baby pig is shot—

[Dan laughs.]

00:36:05 Crosstalk Crosstalk —out of a tube straight into the snake's mouth.
Elliott: In what was the only moment in the movie where I was like—

00:36:09 Elliott Host **Dan:** Now, you would think that this would— *[Laughs.]*
00:36:13 Dan Host “Okay, movie. I didn't expect that and that was pretty funny.”
Oh, there's a lot I didn't expect *[through laughter]* in the movie, but. *[Laughs.]* That was the only time it really worked. Although it doesn't come back in any way. You're like—

00:36:20 Elliott Host Nope. Never.
00:36:21 Dan Host There's no reason why this happens. I thought maybe, y'know, there would be a scene where there's a fight and it shoots out pigs at people? But no. That's it.

00:36:30 Stuart Host Dan, justify the existence of this. Please.

00:36:33 Crosstalk Crosstalk *[Dan laughs.]*
Dan: Chekhov's pig gun.

00:36:35 Elliott Host **Stuart:** You're rewriting the script.
I mean, ironically, it's the one thing in the movie if eel like I can justify, just on the basis of like, welp, I never thought I'd see that in a movie!

00:36:42 Stuart Host *[Dan laughs.]*
00:36:44 Elliott Host Yeah. *[Laughs.]* Yeah.
So there's more miraculous breakthroughs because if you see a bicycle it's going to remind you of how something bad happened with your family. Or if you see the ashtray that your uncle used to use when he told you you were ugly and that's why you became a male model who smokes and stuff like that.

00:36:59 Dan Host *[Through laughter]* By the way, I gotta just take a pause to talk about the uncle who *[through laughter]* also tells the kid that he's ugly. 'Cause it's—y'know, like this little kid and they're in like—I don't know. Like a toolshed or something, like a shack. And this *[through laughter]* uncle looks like an old prospector type.

[Elliott laughs.]

And he's like, “You're never gonna be *[inaudible]*. You're ugly.” And then he goes—as he's walking out, he just goes, “Ya ugly.” And it all sounds like a ADR done by someone who normally does voices for cartoons whenever this guy talks.

00:37:34 Elliott Host Yeah. And so then they eventually end up in the Library of Alexandria room and Platehead goes on for a while about the great minds of antiquity—

[Multiple people laugh.]

—and this is when I was like, “Oh. This movie thinks that it is like... kind of a lasagna or a layer cake of ideas. That there’s this whimsical mystery comedy. And underneath that is this story of emotional growth, like a *Celestine Prophecy* type thing. Because underneath that are these big ideas that humanity has grappled with for millennia—is there a god? Is there chance or is there meaning in the universe?” But it really is none of those things. But clearly the movie thinks it has more on its mind or else why have the character go on and on about the Library of Alexandria?

00:38:12 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Dan:** Yeah. And the—

00:38:16 Stuart Host **Stuart:** It feels like—
It feels like when you’re having a conversation with somebody that you just met and you’re like just joking around. And then all of a sudden the guy—it’s always a guy—starts getting super serious. And you’re like, “Uh, no. Let’s keep this light. Let’s keep this surface-level, please.”

00:38:27 Dan Host *[Elliott laughs.]*
Yeah. No. In the fool’s errand that is trying to explain *[through laughter]* the particular feel of this movie, I also have a couple of touchstones. Some of it felt to me, weirdly, like *Book of Henry* where there’s this elaborate kind of magical plot that is dealing with issues that are far more sensitive *[through laughter]* than the movie is? And then it also kind of felt like this was all, y’know, funded by some cult that you like never heard of as like a way to get people interested in their particular belief system? I don’t know.

00:39:03 Elliott Host I mean, if the movie ended with them all at the Church of Scientology, I would’ve been, like, “Oh, okay. This makes sense. I get this now.”

00:39:07 Dan Host Yeah.

00:39:08 Elliott Host “Like, now I understand what this is about.” But it doesn’t. It ends in a even more baffling way that makes no sense.

[Dan laughs.]

But we’ll get to that. So Simon finds—hidden in one of Crazx’s own book, which—you gotta give Crazx credit for this. He did not put his own books in the Library of Alexandria as far as I can tell.

[Dan laughs.]

00:39:32 Dan Host Which shows the one restraint. One moment of restraint that Crazx or Jon Voight has. That he didn’t—
So you’re imagining that he would just like go down the line and be like, “Oh, wait, what’s *The Kite Runner* doing in here? What’s the—”
[Laughs.]

[All laugh.]

00:39:40 Elliott Host “Finance for Dummies”?
 “What is this doing in the Library of Alexandria?” I mean, at a certain point, you just need bookshelf space. I mean, my house, we try to separate by fiction and nonfiction into different shelves. But y’know, you don’t have the exact same number of fiction and nonfiction books. So there’s gonna be some Lincoln books in the novels, y’know?

00:39:55 Stuart Host Yeah. And I have to separate my roleplaying manuals from my comic books. And that’s, y’know, a pain in the ass.

00:40:00 Elliott Host Yeah. And Dan, I assume you have to separate your 1970s *Playboys* from your 1980s *Penthouses*. [Laughs.]

00:40:06 Dan Host Yeah. [Laughs.] Yeah.

[Elliott laughs.]

00:40:09 Elliott Host And they’re on a bookcase! That’s the thing! They’re out for display.

00:40:13 Dan Host I mean, y’know, if you’re not gonna [through laughter] have pride about who you are, Elliott, then.

00:40:17 Elliott Host And I love that you went to that bookbinding place in Brooklyn and you got them bound in leather editions—

[Dan laughs.]

—that have the title of the magazine and the dates and then on the back you’ve actually written the centerfold names.

00:40:31 Dan Host Yeah. The weird thing is, after I did that, though, I glued all the pages together and carved out a spot for a flask. So.

[Elliott laughs.]

00:40:39 Elliott Host It was a lot of work for that payoff.
 Oh boy. But—so Simon finds in one of the books the bracelet that belonged to the little girl who died. And then the class finds it on him and briefly suspects him? But he says, “Turn to the books.” They turn to this book and the book says something about how he took the bracelet and put it on his own person to test fate and the chaos of the universe to see if taking it got him into trouble. Anyway. Whatever it means. It’s nonsense and gobbledygook. It leads Chloe from *Bratz* to realize that Simon is a man in need of guidance. And hey—he needs them as much as they need him. Then she has a breakthrough about how her eating disorder stems from a time that she threw away her friend’s Valentine’s card? And— [Laughs.]

00:41:18 Dan Host Yeah. This one was arguably the least sensicle justification for one of the problems they’re seeking help with.

00:41:29 Elliott Host And she gets the longest explanation and the more she talks the less sense it makes.

00:41:33 Stuart Host Do you think the line that keeps being repeated—“Prophet without a god”—is that referring to Simon Conjuror? ‘Cause initially I assumed that it had something to do with the John Prophets; the race of clone soldiers of the Earth Empire who kind of worship the Earth Mothers as like a god but not really? I mean, that’s really not in their like mental programming?

00:41:56 Elliott Host No. That—I guess their only real god is conquest, right? Is the expansion of the Empire of John Prophet? So the—

00:42:02 Stuart Host Yeah. And doing their duty. That makes sense.

00:42:05 Elliott Host So it could be. It could be the prophet without a god. I mean, you could think maybe Badrock becomes the god at the end since he

awakens and is one of the, y’know, tipping point moments. Foresight.

00:42:16 Stuart Host *[Inaudible]* Troll. He and Troll converge and like create a new galaxy or something. But maybe it means Old Man Prophet who created a race of Free Johns to opposite the Earth Empire. I don’t know. I mean, I assume the movie’s not saying that? But it might be! Y’know.

00:42:32 Elliott Host Considering the movie seems to have either no financial, corporate, or creative relationship to Brandon Graham’s run on *Prophet*, the Image comic, I don’t know that they’re actually based on each other or related in any way.

00:42:43 Dan Host For a second I thought maybe it was my book, *P-R-O-F-I-T Without a God*, which is just about how atheists can cash in.

00:42:53 Stuart Host Oh wow. Is that a how-to book?

00:42:55 Dan Host Yeah. It’s like—y’know. It’s like a personal finance guide.

00:42:58 Elliott Host And I thought it was *Prophet Without a Dog*. I misheard it and misread it at first. Which I thought was about how Moses lost his dog.

[Dan laughs.]
It’s a sad story.

00:43:07 Stuart Host Wow.

00:43:08 Dan Host Well I mean, you’re wandering for 40 years. That dog’s not gonna stick with you the whole time.

00:43:12 Elliott Host Well, no, I mean, if he’s a good dog he will. But unfortunately he was not a good dog and he ran off. Very sad story.

00:43:18 Stuart Host Uh, pretty sure they’re all good dogs, Elliott. *[Laughs.]*

00:43:21 Elliott Host I mean, if they all go to heaven I guess by tautology definition they must all be “good dogs” or else heaven has no boundaries. So that’s when the detectives break into Crazx’s apartment, without a warrant, to find clues. Everyone hides. Then Crazx comes in and the detectives hide.

[Dan laughs.]

And Crazx looks for the dead girl’s locket because in an earlier scene that I didn’t mention about Dean Elkwood implies to Crazx that she knows he’s a murderer, leading him to have what I thought was a heart attack but I guess was just a panic attack. The locket isn’t there! We know Simon Conjuror has that, but Crazx’s in the Library of Alexandria room does find Simon’s book! He goes on for a while with a kind of goofy, paranoid monologue about the book and about whether he’s gonna read it or not ‘cause it might be a trap? He calls Simon the R-word at one point? Which seemed—again—not okay.

00:44:05 Stuart Host Nope.

00:44:06 Elliott Host And he decides he’ll read it at random to see what information he can find. And he chooses the sentence by spitting the chocolate in his mouth up into the air and it spins around a bunch of times and then splats on a page. And he’s like, “That’s the page I’ll read.” And he reads a scene that is set up as if it’s the climax of the movie, but it’s something that—it seems like a... almost like he is having a fugue state and going into an alternate version of this movie. Where he’s having a rooftop confrontation with Simon and Crazx has apparently kidnapped the dean and Simon and him, they’ve known each other since they were kids. Crazx says, “You shot me in the

side!” And Simon says, “You killed my wife!” And it’s like, “When did any of this happen?” It’s not really clear if the wife they’re talking about is the dean or not. Apparently they both—

00:44:49 Stuart Host It’s like when you start a roleplaying game and all the players have much more interesting backstories than the adventure you’re actually playing in.

00:44:55 Elliott Host *[Through laughter]* Yeah. Yeah, exactly. They’ve both been chasing proof of the existence of god and Crazx has decided there isn’t one. And Crazx admits to Simon, “Yeah. I killed her. Because there’s nothing worth living about in this world. And to frame you!” And he takes the girl’s locket from Simon at gunpoint, then he pulls a level which reveals a plank—

[Dan laughs.]

—in the roof, and he takes out a pirate saber—or a cutlass—and he forces Simon to walk it at sword point and he pushes Simon off and then Simon falls for a long time. Cut back to the apartment? Crazx slurps the chocolate off the book. Like, he’s just licking and slurping the chocolate off.

[Dan makes disgusted noise.]

And then while he’s doing that, Team Simon run out, having also seen in their minds what Crazx was just reading and imagining in his mind? So they know all the information that Crazx had in his mind? And Crazx—

00:45:44 Dan Host Yeah. At this point, the listeners of the podcast is—surely Elliott is just engaged on another flight of fancy improv, as he is so keen on doing. But all of this is accurate to the film, *Deadly Lessons*, aka—what is it? *The Something of Simon Conjurer*? I forget the alternate title.

00:46:00 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Stuart and Elliott:** *The Legend*—

Stuart: Yeah.

Dan: *The Legend*. Yeah. So sorry for the break-in. But I just needed to reassure them—

Elliott: And so the—it’s—no, but it all—it’s—

00:46:06 Dan Host —that they have not come *[through laughter]* untethered.

00:46:08 Elliott Host No. No. Only we and the movie have. But it’s one of those moments where like... it’s almost like the movie was like, “How are we gonna communicate that they know all this information now? They saw what was in his head at that moment. And they’re like, ‘Hey, it was like we could see it in our heads, too!’” They run out. That’s when Crazx, of course, goes over to a nude statue with a huge penis. Rubs the penis a bunch of times. Then lifts it up to find—to a place where there’s a gun hidden. And then he runs off himself. And it is a... the movie—from this point on—it’s like at that point, when we saw that rooftop thing? The movie broke. And at this point it is no longer even following the pattern of a real story anymore. Like, up to that point you could be like, “Okay, I get what they’re doing. They’re kind of going on this journey and they’re each having their moments and I get it. Simon is a man looking for answers, too. He doesn’t have all the answers.” From this point on, it’s not even really

clear what's actually happening in the movie. They go to Dean Elkwood's house 'cause they know from the vision they had of what Crazx's read in the book—which, again, is like—it's not like Crazx said "I'm gonna go kidnap the dean." He read in a book a scene where he mentions kidnapping a dean and they assume that that's his plan. They go to—so the heroes go to Dean Elkwood's house where she is having a sexy nude shower under an indoor waterfall, and how long does this shower go for, would you guys estimate? I think Dan said "Not long enough" in his text message.

00:47:27 Stuart Host
00:47:31 Dan Host

No, it goes on for quite some time. We did gloss over the fact that—when you say "Our heroes go there," Simon goes there as well. Who—last we saw—fell off *[through laughter]* a building.

00:47:41 Elliott Host

No, no. Dan—but that was—he fell off a building in Crazx's mind in the scene from the book. That—none of that scene was actually happening. That was all what Crazx was reading in the book. So Simon's still with our heroes.

00:47:53 Dan Host

But wait. There's a flashback that explains how he survived falling later on.

00:47:59 Crosstalk Crosstalk

Dan: So I assumed it did happen.

Elliott: That is just another scene—

00:48:02 Elliott Host

No. That's just another scene in the book. It's as if the book is a "What If" story about this movie at this point.

00:48:09 Dan Host

Oh. I see. I thought we saw what—I thought we were literally seeing what happened and the movie didn't explain why Simon was still alive until a little later in the movie. Thinking that like we were just gonna accept that he fell off a building *[through laughter]* and was okay until it was explained.

00:48:25 Elliott Host

That is very possible. Y'know what? I was gonna push back and say, "No, that's not what happened"? But honestly, who am I to question the meaning of *Deadly Lessons: Simon Conjuror*. It could be what happened.

00:48:36 Dan Host
00:48:37 Elliott Host

But let's—okay. So—
"Where was I when Simon Conjuror created the Leviathan? I wasn't there."

00:48:41 Dan Host

Anyway. Simon Conjuror comes in and starts talking to the dean, like, trying to get her to come with them. And she is—

00:48:48 Stuart Host
00:48:52 Crosstalk Crosstalk

Now this set—this bathroom with a waterfall...
Stuart: It feels like—I don't know. It feels like—it feels like a—it feels like the shower that I would imagine my, like—

Dan: Now was it a bathroom? Or— *[Laughs.]* Yeah. She seems to be showering in like a fountain.

Elliott: *[Laughs.]* It seems like it's a greenhouse where she takes showers.

00:49:00 Stuart Host

—my girlfriend would have when I was like 12 years old. I'd be like, "I'm gonna date a girl with a waterfall for a bathroom!" *[Laughs.]* Which—y'know, I'm only 12 years old. I have no concept of the upkeep that a waterfall greenhouse room is gonna be. Like, it's such a pain in the ass. You got butterflies all over the place.

[Elliott laughs.]

You have Jim Lee-style obscuring fog covering up all the good parts.

00:49:27 Elliott Host *[Laughs.]* The upkeep is expensive for all that stuff. That's why you gotta have a dean's salary if you're gonna afford that. But it is—it is a magical, mystical room. Yes. Simon comes in and is like, "We gotta get you to safety!" And she—no. She must have sex with him right then and there. And they talk about it—so they used to be married or they're still married and they're estranged? They were in a committed relationship and even though they're both totally into each other still, for some reason they were not—I mean, it's a huge conflict of interest for her to be married to one of the professors at her college or possibly elementary school.

00:49:59 Dan Host And in much the way that this movie feels like kind of a—like, a... less-poisonous Neil Breen movie with money? Like, this feels like the scene in the movie where the guy who is in charge of the movie is like, "Okay. I'm gonna, like, be like... fondled by this naked woman in the shower." And I felt even worse for this woman than I do the Neil Breen woman. 'Cause in the Neil Breen—like, in *Fateful Findings*, she's not nude so at least the actress won that argument on set. I can *[through laughter]* only assume. Whereas here it's like, "No, no, no, no, no, no, no. It's very important to the story that we have you *[through laughter]* naked in the shower at this point."

00:50:41 Elliott Host It's also—and at a certain point, the obscuring objects just stop obscuring? And it's weird 'cause this movie is like... the tone of this movie is so strange. Where one moment—

00:50:51 Stuart Host That's when you have to put up your own obscuring object so that you don't have to see anything, Elliott. Like, hands. Fingers. A book. You create fog or something in your room.

00:50:58 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Elliott:** Anything you can find.

00:51:01 Elliott Host **Stuart:** Just like Jim Lee would want me to.

00:51:04 Stuart Host Yeah, yeah. Just rub chicken oil all over the screen so it gets all blurry, yeah.

00:51:06 Elliott Host Oh, like Ridley Scott shoots action scenes.

00:51:32 Dan Host *[Through laughter]* Yup. Because the tone of this movie—sometimes it feels like it's supposed to be, like, lighthearted wonderment. And sometimes it's supposed to be goofy. But then it's hard to have a lighthearted, silly scene in a movie with a naked shower sex scene that is interrupted by a man at gunpoint—a man with a gun ordering Simon to strip and then kidnapping a naked Dean Elkwood. It is—like, the tone is all over. Y'know.

00:52:05 Elliott Host Well I said—while watching it, like—because up until that point the closest thing this has to like a tone in what one might call "mainstream, typical media" is maybe like a tween fantasy? Where like all these like mostly younger people are in this support group and learning to cope and like crazy things are happening? But then like the nude scene comes in and you're like, "Oh, wait. This is an R-rated movie, which makes it even more baffling. Like, who did they think they were making it for?" Y'know?

00:52:24 Dan Host Yeah. It's a strange—I guess what I'm saying is I'm like... it fails to combine nudity and lighthearted whimsy in the successful way of a *Great Bikini Off-Road Adventure*. Or something like that.

[Dan laughs.]
It is striving for and failing to reach what kind of like B-grade softcore porn does.

00:52:24 Dan Host *[Through laughter]* Yes.

00:52:25 Elliott Host Almost naturally. But anyway. Then we get to the scene where the two detectives have taken the book with chocolate on it to a scientist—

[Dan laughs.]

—so he can use x-ray lasers to read the words covered by the chocolate, and that’s where it describes Simon surviving his fall off the building by landing in a mattress track that Rebel is also in.

00:52:41 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Stuart:** And while they’re getting the book—they’re—and they’re getting that analyzed—

00:52:46 Stuart Host **Elliott:** So maybe it was all a flashback, now that I think about it. They point out that the laser tech has like a big scar on the back of his head? And the two detectives make note of it. But I don’t think it ever comes up again.

00:52:58 Elliott Host No. I assumed it was supposed to be a joke that he had mishandled the laser at some point.

00:53:02 Stuart Host Ohhhh, that would make sense. I mean, it’s hilarious, is why it makes sense.

00:53:09 Dan Host And it keys into the theme of the movie that everyone has some sort of marker on their body.

00:53:13 Elliott Host Yeah. And also it’s not how lasers work.

00:53:15 Stuart Host I mean, we’re all covered in scars.

00:53:16 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Elliott:** Yeah. I mean, the worst—

00:53:18 Elliott Host **Stuart:** They define us.

00:53:19 Stuart Host But the worst scar’s the one you can’t see.

00:53:21 Elliott Host Oh. Wow. Cool.

Actually, you know what? The worst Scar is from *Lion King*. He kills his brother.

[Dan laughs.]

00:53:26 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Stuart:** That’s a pretty good one.

00:53:30 Elliott Host **Elliott:** And takes over the lions and he leaves his nephew to die.

00:53:32 Stuart Host That’s the worst Scar, I think. Yeah.

00:53:34 Elliott Host And Hulk’s son is Scar, right?

00:53:36 Stuart Host Uh... yeah.

00:53:38 Elliott Host Doesn’t he invade a planet or something? That’s pretty bad.

Well, Hulk—okay. No. Hulk gets sent to a planet by the Illuminati. Our heroes, who are acting like bad guys because it was in that period when everyone was acting out of character. And The Hulk is called “The Green Scar” when he’s on this planet, and then his son, I think, is “Suh-car,” maybe? Maybe it’s just Scar. I don’t know.

00:53:55 Stuart Host You following this, Dan?

00:53:57 Dan Host I was just sitting around thinking about the scene in *Jaws* where they compare scars.

00:54:02 Stuart Host Oh, okay.

00:54:03 Elliott Host But what I like about this and talking about the *Prophet* comic? Is that it’s revealing that fiction that I like is not that much clearer than *Deadly Lessons: The Legend of Simon Conjuror*.

[Multiple people laugh.]

Like, it's all pretty nonsensical. So they all have more breakthroughs. They go back to class. There's a—Platehead is late 'cause he bought some lottery tickets. And they realize—Rebel is missing! Where's Rebel? What happened to him? And to be honest, Rebel has fallen into the background of the movie for quite a while. He was set up to be a major character and he's just kinda like not there that much. The class can—yeah?

00:54:35 Dan Host Yes. Also, Rebel narrates the movie at like—I would say—maybe four times? Like, I'd forgotten that he narrated at the beginning at all until it like kicked in again *[through laughter]* like halfway through the movie and I thought, "Wait. This movie has narration?" *[Laughs.]* And it's very erratic.

00:54:54 Elliott Host Unlike—and—I mean, erratic and erotic, if you're talking about that shower scene. So unlike *The Princess Bride* where—if you get the feeling that Peter Falk is narrating the whole movie. But if you actually go through and look at it, he only appears a handful of times throughout the course of it? 'Cause it's such a well-told movie? In this one, you instantly forget that Rebel is narrating. And eventually that he's a character in the movie! So they're like, "Where's Rebel? Where's Rebel? Let's consult the book. The book has all the answers!" So they've already fallen to that level of a new religion where they can't do anything without consulting their magic book. And the book—it's not giving them any answers! In fact, the pages are all blank! And Simon reveals to them—they're like, "What's this all about? What's this?!" For a long time. For like, three or four minutes. And then Simon says, "You were all having a mass hallucination. You imagined that that text was there. It never existed and you were filling it in with the information that you knew from your own lives and the glimpses you had of your classmates' lives. And the natural coincidences of the universe filled in the rest. But what does it matter? Because you're cured now!" It's an explanation that doesn't really make sense—

[Dan laughs.]

—but we don't have time to go into it because Crazx and the police burst in, and Simon is arrested. Then the two detectives burst in and they go, "Hey, we have proof that Crazx did it. We have an eyewitness!" Dan, which character from the movie is gonna come back and be the eyewitness?

00:56:13 Dan Host Uh— *[Laughs.]*

00:56:15 Elliott Host Which character that we have seen before in the film—his existence foreshadowed and us being like, "Oh! He saw it!" is gonna come back.

00:56:22 Dan Host Wait, wait. Did we see them before? I know who the character is. Right? It's Rebel's dad. Right?

00:56:27 Elliott Host What I'm getting to, Dan—which I was hoping you would catch onto—is that we have never seen this character before—

00:56:31 Dan Host Oh, sorry.

00:56:32 Elliott Host And in fact, we were told earlier in the film that he was dead and did not exist anymore.

00:56:35 Dan Host *[Through laughter]* Elliott, I am so confused by this movie that like, you can't play this game with me because I'll just be like, "Oh, I missed something." But yeah, no. He was supposed to be dead and he shows up.

00:56:45 Stuart Host That's how you set up a twist, guys!

00:56:47 Dan Host Mm-hm.
00:56:48 Elliott Host *[Through laughter]* Yeah. Is you give the audience no information whatsoever to expect anything to happen.

00:56:53 Dan Host Now, this movie that was confusing at the beginning...
00:56:56 Stuart Host Uh-huh.
00:56:58 Dan Host Y'know, in the grand tradition of a lot of movies with twists, actually got more confusing when the twist was revealed. Because at this point I'm like, "Okay. Wait. Wait. Wait. So all the Crazx stuff about this child murderer actually happened and wasn't part of their hallucination?"

00:57:15 Elliott Host Yes! It makes no sense—

[Dan laughs.]

So at this point you're left to wonder what is real and what is not real in this movie. So the detectives say, "We have an eyewitness. This wealthy philanthropist—who's actually Rebel's dad—he saw Crazx push the girl off the room from his helicopter, which happened to be landing at a nearby building at the same time."

00:57:33 Stuart Host And so we see a flashback of a helicopter footage beaming a spotlight on Jon Voight—

[Dan laughs.]

—who is carrying a child around and then chucks it off a building *[through laughter]* and it's so funny.

00:57:47 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Elliott:** Yeah. And Crazx—

00:57:50 Dan Host **Dan:** *[Laughs.]* I mean, like—
[Through laughter] This is like—well, it's funny, yeah. Number one, because Jon Voight is like, "But who could have seen me do this?" Like, maybe the spotlight helicopter? But number two, you think this movie is gonna be like gentle and be like, "Oh, that child murderer was just part of the thing. Don't worry. We didn't put child murder in this lighthearted thing." And then you get this extended scene of him carrying this kicking child who—blessedly, like, the one thing that makes it okay sort of is that she clearly is not scared. Like, if you look at the actress's face she's having a ball kicking her legs in Jon Voight's prosthetic arms.

00:58:22 Elliott Host She's probably Jon Voight's granddaughter or something. I dunno. But yeah. It's a—yeah. You expect the movie to be like, "Don't worry. None of that bad stuff happened. Oh, no, no, no. A kid did die."

[Dan laughs.]

"A kid was murdered. Jon Voight's character is a murderer." So Jon Voight—and Jon Voight goes, "How could you tell it was me? I was wearing a hat and coat! Oops!" And it's like, "Yep! He's a genius alright!" So he gets arrested. Everyone's happy. They've instantly forgotten that just earlier that night a child was killed. Simon and Dean Elkwood, they kiss. And the eyewitness is like, "Yeah, I'm Rebel's dad. Turns out I'm rich and Rebel is a wonderful child." And so Rebel's angry with the world, right? "No, but Rebel did tell me that he crashed your truck. So I'm gonna give you this check for it. And it's for a lot of money." It's like, wait, so hold on a second.

Which of these things happened? And all the classmates are like, “We did it! We’re cured!” And they leave. And Simon opens a letter signed “Friend,” giving him instructions on how to hypnotize the class to get them to breakthroughs? And Simon goes—Simon looks at the letter as if he’s never seen it before. Like, he’s baffled by it. And he goes, “Rebel?” And then—

00:59:25 Dan Host So—hold on.

00:59:27 Elliott Host This is when—wait. And before—Dan, I’ll just mention before you say something—this is when the movie collapses under its own weight. But Dan, what are you gonna say?

00:59:32 Dan Host Right. Well, like, okay. So. There’s these nested series of revelations and each one tries to address the last one? But it only raises more questions? ‘Cause at this point you’re like, “Oh, okay. I guess Simon Conjurer [*pronounces it CON-jur-er*] is like...”

00:59:47 Elliott Host Simon Con-JUR-or.

00:59:48 Dan Host Con-JUR-or. Sorry. Is also—

00:59:49 Elliott Host The Rural Conjurer.

00:59:51 Dan Host Yes. He is also basically going under the same treatment as his own like students. Like, some force is compelling him to do what he does in part to heal him as well as heal these students. So surely when that is revealed, then things will be explained. But not really, as we’ll see. That’s all I wanted to—

01:00:15 Elliott Host Yeah. So Simon—I guess what we’re supposed to take from it is that he hypnotized himself and the class based on these instructions given to him by... we don’t know. Because Rebel—we go to—now the narration—and we see that Rebel is actually Roberto, a clean-cut kid who’s just palling around with the old people at the hospital and helping his mom, the nurse, with the patients there. He’s such a lovely boy and he talks about how like he made up the Rebel persona—he dreamed the whole Rebel persona. Which—I don’t know what that means. I don’t understand how that sentence applies to what we’ve seen.

01:00:45 Dan Host Well he’s like saying that like he doesn’t know what was real but he’s putting it together now? I think he’s like coming out of this... like, his own sort of haze of being this other—alter-ego? I don’t know.

01:00:57 Elliott Host Now, and here’s one of those moments, too, where you’re like—you almost like—for a moment I was like, “Oh, is this like *Identity* and this was all happening in Roberto’s mind and he had to like pull himself together?” But no, because then—he goes in and his mother is talking to a sick woman who’s very distraught and his mother calms the woman down by talking her into floating around the room, flying like the kids from the classroom. Which somehow heals her completely? And it’s one of those things, too, where you’re like, “Okay, so his mom has the ability to talk people into surviving life-threatening illnesses. Why does she not use this more often? Like, why does she not teach—”

01:01:30 Stuart Host She heals the woman so much that a different nurse walks into the room and is shocked—like, y’know, taken aback by how healthy this person now is.

01:01:38 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Elliott:** Yeah. So—and it’s like, did she learn that from Simon? Or—was he—

01:01:45 Dan Host **Dan:** But you—well, no. It seems like maybe she is... so at first I’m like, “Okay. Are there like a bunch of people like Simon Conjurer in the world?”

01:01:55 Elliott Host Mutants, let's call 'em. Yeah. They've—superpowered people. Mutants.

01:01:59 Dan Host Who? Yeah. Superpowered mutants who are bound by impulse to help people and maybe like... one of those is now helping Simon Conjuror himself who's also one of these magical people? 'Cause at first I'm like, "Oh, does he have any magic powers at all?" As soon as I see this letter? But then you see him later on doing his same, like, tricks—floating-kid tricks to a new group of kids.

01:02:27 Elliott Host So it seems like the movie is going to tell us, "Actually, this was all in Roberto's head. Either he lives in a magical realist world or actually his mom is the one who has this power—this magic." But then Roberto tells us that the class still gets together regularly to support each other and keep them away from their addictions. So they're real. And that Simon has gone back to teaching little kids how to fly, so he's real. And then in jail, Crazx is writing a new novel. And the title of that novel? *Prophet Without a God*. So Crazx was real? So...

01:02:58 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Elliott:** So Roberto's like—

Dan: And he wrote the book? I guess maybe is implied?

Stuart: And he's like—

01:03:05 Dan Host That told them how to do this? Like, that's the part that like—

01:03:08 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Dan:** I just don't understand it.

Stuart: And he looks like he's in jail at the Pirates of the Caribbean ride in Disneyworld.

[Multiple people laugh.]

01:03:14 Elliott Host **Elliott:** Oh yeah. His—his cellmate—
—appears to be the Man in the Iron Mask, based on the jail he's in. Yeah.

01:03:18 Dan Host *[Laughs.]* Yeah. And during this end montage, we get the scene referenced before where they all win the lottery and they're down at the local bodega and the bodega guy is like, *[through laughter]* pulling stacks of money out from behind the counter as if that's how, y'know, your money is awarded when you win a major lottery prize and not just like \$2.

01:03:38 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Elliott:** It's such a—when Platehead buys the tickets he's—I guess so.

Stuart: I mean, that's a pretty nice bodega. They can afford to give the guy working behind the counter a nametag.

01:03:45 Dan Host Yup. *[Laughs.]*

01:03:46 Elliott Host They also say that Platehead won, like, \$34 million or something and donated it all. But it's—so the movie is like, "Hey. They have a magic book and they're all receiving breakthroughs. Actually, it's not a magic book. They were just hypnotized by Simon Conjuror. Actually? Simon Conjuror doesn't know who hypnotized them. Actually? It was all a dream Roberto had. Actually? Everybody's real. It wasn't a dream. Forget about it." The movie like—it's not even nested reveals? It's like, they're throwing hot dogs at the wall reveals.

[Dan laughs.]

Like, just—like that’s what it feels like. Is it feels like you’re watching a movie made by someone just throwing food at the wall and being like, “That’s the thing now. Oh, that’s it.”

01:04:24 Dan Host Yeah. No, I mean, with just like a tweak it would be a sketch parodying twist endings. Like, just a little tweak.

01:04:31 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Stuart:** Yeah. So it was great.

01:04:35 Elliott Host **Elliott:** It is—it is a—
It is a crazy thing, as you said, Dan, that part of the twist reveal is that much of it was not real but the murder was. Like, that the actual crime was real. Like—

[Dan laughs.]

01:04:49 Dan Host It’s—so that’s *Deadly Lessons*.
That is *Deadly Lessons*. Hope you were able to follow it.

01:04:52 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Dan:** So let’s do our Final—

01:04:54 Elliott Host **Elliott:** I mean, if you were able to follow it?
Write in. I want you to tell me what is going on at the end of this movie or even the middle of the movie.

01:04:59 Stuart Host If you wrote the movie you can’t write in.

01:05:02 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Dan:** No.

Stuart: Uh, well... maybe.

01:05:07 Dan Host **Elliott:** Mmmm.
You just gotta write in that fancy dialogue style. So Final Judgements. Is this a good-bad movie, a bad-bad movie, or a movie you kinda liked? I’m gonna say, guys... now as I alluded to before, this movie has issues with *[through laughter]* its presentation of mental health and of therapy to help mental health and... there is a slur against mental disability later in it. So there’s stuff in it that if you’re sensitive to that, by all means. I’m not saying run out and watch it. But. If you are able to view it with the inherent ridiculousness that the whole movie projects—I mean, like, the thing is, like, I—this movie is too silly for me to *[through laughter]* get that offended by it? Just ‘cause it is like... I don’t know. A child’s story. Like, it’s like writing like, “And then what happened? And then this happened. And then this happened. And then this happened.” And in a world where we have to watch like your *RoboCop* remakes and your *10,000 B.C.s* to encounter something this, like, rambling and strange and... have it also be a \$30 million movie is just a special treat. So I’m gonna say it’s a good-bad movie.

01:06:35 Elliott Host Uh, yeah. Keeping all those caveats in mind, I would also say—good-bad movie. Just be ready to be a little upset by its portrayal of mental health and therapy. But then just sit back and get ready for Jon Voight to literally like put the scenery in a blender and then chug it down as like a scenery smoothie.

[Dan laughs.]

01:06:55 Stuart Host Yeah. At some points it felt like Jon Voight was auditioning to be in like the next *Spy Kids* movie or something. That’s not a slam on *Spy Kids*, but I feel like they have a, y’know, an arch quality to them. Yeah. No. I totally agree with you guys. It is fairly insensitive

about how it portrays everything, but it also is *[through laughter]* it's also made poorly.

[Dan laughs.]

But also it looks kind of expensive—

[Elliott laughs.]

—but it also looks like crap. The music is hilariously bad. And it is like that perfect vanity project where the writer-director has cast himself—like, it feels like the script probably describes Simon Conjuror as like, “A handsome—” y’know, like, “A handsome man who looks much younger than his 50 years” or something.

[Elliott laughs.]

And he liked showed up with the script and he’s like, “I don’t know! We’re having a lot of trouble finding a Simon Conjuror! I mean, I guess I could do it. I mean, I know the script.” And everyone’s like, “Uh... you wanna do it, dude? Why is your hair so wet?” And he uh—

[Dan laughs.]

Yeah. There’s even a scene where Simon Conjuror gets in a brief fight with Scorpio, the violent guy—

[Dan laughs.]

—and he grabs him and throws him across the room up against a wall. And he just explains it away that he has taught himself martial arts. It’s so great.

01:08:16 Elliott Host

It’s crazy. That was one of the moments where I’m like, “Oh, so he has powers now. Is that the—”

01:08:20 Dan Host

Yeah. He was throwing him like he was wearing an Iron Man suit or something.

01:08:24 Elliott Host

Now one thing that we didn’t mention which I’ll mention quickly before we finish is that—so the writer-director and star of the movie—his name is not in the credits. He actually took his name off the film. And I only just learned in looking up stuff now while you guys were talking that at the end of the credits I guess is his explanation for that? So I’m just gonna let the credits roll on my end over here and I’ll let you know when that explanation comes up as to why his name is not on the film.

01:08:47 Music Music

Light, up-tempo, electric guitar with synth instruments.

01:08:52 Promo Clip

Music: Cheerful, jazzy, old-timey music plays in background.

Freddie Wong: Hey, you like movies? How about coming up with movie ideas over the course of an hour? ‘Cause that’s what we do every week on *Story Break*, a writers’ room podcast where three Hollywood professionals have an hour to come up with a pitch for a movie or TV show based off of totally zany prompts.

Will Campos: Like that time we reimagined *Star Wars* based on our phones’ autocomplete!

Will: Luke Skywalker is a family man and it's *Star Wars* but it's a good idea.

[Multiple people laugh.]

Matt Arnold: Okay. How about a time we wrote the story of a bunch of Disney Channel Original Movies based solely on the title and the poster?

Matt: Okay, Sarah Hyland is a 50-foot woman. Let's just go with it, guys.

Freddie: Or the time we finally cracked the Adobe Photoshop Feature Film.

Matt: Stamp Tool is your Woody, and then the autofill—

Freddie: Ohhhh.

Matt: —Is the new Buzz Lightyear!

[Multiple people laugh.]

Freddie: Join us as we have a good time imagining all the movies Hollywood is *[accusatory voice]* too cowardly to make! *[Dramatic voice]* *Story Break* comes out every Thursday on Maximum Fun. *[Regular voice]* I don't know why I'm using this voice now.

[Music ends.]

01:09:39 Promo Clip

[Radio interference followed by laidback music with a snare drum beat. A phone rings as the DJ speaks.]

Radio DJ: Welcome back to *Fireside Chat* on KMAX. With me in-studio to take your calls is the dopest duo on the West Coast, Oliver Wang and Morgan Rhodes.

[Click.]

Go ahead, caller.

Caller: Hey. Uh, I'm looking for a music podcast that's insightful and thoughtful, but like, also helps me discover artists and albums that I've never heard of.

Morgan Rhodes: Yeah, man. Sounds like you need to listen to *Heat Rocks*. Every week, myself—and I'm Morgan Rhodes—and my co-host here, Oliver Wang, talk to influential guests about a canonical album that has changed their lives.

Oliver Wang: Guests like Moby, Open Mike Eagle, talk about albums by Prince, Joni Mitchell, and so much more.

Caller: Yooo! What's that show called again?

Morgan: *Heat Rocks*. Deep dives into hot records.

Oliver: Every Thursday on Maximum Fun.

01:10:25 Dan Promo *[Music suddenly gives way to static and a dial tone.]*
A quick word from Squarespace, who is kind enough to sponsor our show. Squarespace can be used to create a beautiful website to turn your cool idea into a nice home on the internet. Blog or publish content; sell products and services of all kinds, and much, much more. And Squarespace does this by giving you beautiful, customizable templates created by world-class designers. Everything optimized for mobile right out of the box. A new way to buy domains and choose from over 200 extensions. Free and secure hosting. Head to [Squarespace.com/flop](https://www.squarespace.com/flop) for a free trial, and when you're ready to launch, use the offer code "Flop" to save 10% off your first purchase of a website or domain.

01:11:16 Elliott Promo Hey, Dan, I was wondering if—by the way, I went through the credits and I couldn't find the thing that I read was there. But he did take his name off. Anyway. So Dan, I have a website that I—an idea that I was wondering if I could get help from Squarespace to make that! Do you think they'd be able to?

01:11:28 Dan Promo Probably!

01:11:29 Stuart Promo Yeah. Always a first time.

01:11:31 Elliott Promo So anyway, you've heard of Facebook. Well this movie—it made me realize there's a bigger problem involving books, so that's why I'm creating Fudgebook.com. Do your books have chocolate in them? Like, are the pages covered in chocolate?

01:11:44 Crosstalk Promo **Elliott:** How are you gonna find out?

Dan: Some of them.

01:11:47 Stuart Promo **Stuart:** Elliott, you've been to Dan's house.
You've seen what his books are like. They're covered in chocolate.

01:11:48 Elliott Promo They're covered in chocolate. So how are you gonna find other people in the "Books covered with chocolate" community to figure out how to remove that chocolate from the books or—if you prefer your books that way—how to get more chocolate on your books. That's where Fudgebook.com comes in. Fudgebook is your place on the internet for the fudge book community. That's people who either like having chocolate on their books or don't like having chocolate on their books, but have chocolate on their books. Maybe you wanna trade your chocolate-covered copy of *Stranger in a Strange Land* to another person who doesn't have chocolate on their copy of *Stranger in a Strange Land*, but would prefer to have a copy of *Stranger in a Strange Land* with chocolate on it. Well, that's where Fudgebook.com comes in!

01:12:23 Stuart Promo Yeah! It's like social media!

01:12:25 Elliott Promo It's the most social media, because it's around the three things people love most. One, books. Two, chocolate—or the removal of said chocolate—and three, communication. So that's Fudgebook.com. Dan, you think Squarespace would be able to help me with that?

01:12:38 Dan Promo Probably. I mean, if you pay them.

[Multiple people laugh.]

I mean, that's how business works, guys. Let's not pretend that—

01:12:47 Stuart Promo Yeah, yeah, yeah. Let's not sugarcoat it.

01:12:48 Dan Promo Yeah. It's an exchange of money for services.

01:12:52 Elliott Promo Okay. Fair point. Fair point.

01:12:55 Dan Promo Hey, I believe that you both have Jumbotrons this week. Am I right, or am I wrong?

01:12:59 Stuart Promo Oh yeah, and I am raring to g-g-g-go with my j-j-j-Jumbotron!

“Happy birthday to a man who hates attention! He will no doubt feel equally thrilled—and mortified—by this spotlight immortalizing him in the annals of his favorite podcast's history. Even though he is wrong about Chaplin, and will always fight about Batman, we still manage a happy union. Happy birthday, Scott! This message is for Scott... Cryder? And the message is from Billy Harrison. Happy birthday.”

01:13:39 Elliott Promo Sweet and embarrassing. I will say, fighting about Batman? Better than fighting Batman!

01:13:44 Stuart Promo *[Through laughter]* That's true. He has trained his body into a weapon *[through laughter]* to beat up criminals.

01:13:48 Elliott Promo Yep. He is violence as a tool for mental health. Anyway, so there's another Jumbotron. It goes like this:

“Ever feel like there's too much pop culture out there? Have you wanted to become a Stanley Kubrick film expert but instead settled for watching *The Office* for the fifth time while *2001* collects dust? *The Monkey Off My Backlog* podcast is here to help you exorcise your pop culture demons! Join hosts Andy, Tessa, and Sam each week as they offer advice and talk about checking movies, TV, books, videogames, and more off their lists. Join the conversation and start tackling your own lists today! Listen and subscribe to *The Monkey Off My Backlog* podcast—that's @MonkeyBacklog on Twitter—on iTunes, Spotify, or wherever you get your podcasts!”

01:14:28 Stuart Promo Oh man, yeah, I've been dying to get to that last season of *Dexter*.

[All laugh.]

01:14:38 Dan Promo Okay.

01:14:40 Elliott Promo Okay. And there's two other things we'd like to highlight before we get out of the sponsors and advertising section of the show.

01:14:45 Stuart Promo What do you think happens? Do you think Dexter gets murdered himself 'cause he's a serial killer?

01:14:48 Elliott Promo Dexter murders Santa Claus. Now he's Santa Claus—

01:14:52 Crosstalk Promo **Stuart:** That makes sense.

Elliott: And he has to kill bad children while giving gifts to good children.

Dan: Ohhhh.

01:14:55 Dan Promo Goddammit. That—like, if that series had ended that way, like, it would shoot to number one.

01:15:00 Stuart Promo Don't—no spoil-os!

01:15:02 Crosstalk Promo **Elliott:** I mean, no spoil-os. I just told you what happens, but no *[through laughter]* spoilers. *[Laughs.]*

Stuart: Keep it tucked.

Dan: On my best *[inaudible]*. *[Laughs.]*

01:15:06	Stuart	Promo	Yeah, but you didn't do a very good job describing it, so it didn't spoil it for me.
01:15:10	Elliott	Promo	Sorry. His dark passenger drives him to kill Santa Claus. Is that better?
01:15:13	Stuart	Promo	Thank you. Thank you.
01:15:17	Elliott	Promo	And so. Guys? Hey—remember when we used to do <i>Flop House</i> live shows where we'd go to someone's city and then we'd do a show on a stage for them?
01:15:24	Crosstalk	Promo	Stuart: Uh-huh. And we'd fly on a plane.
01:15:25	Stuart	Promo	Dan: Do I! We'd stay in a hotel. Maybe in the same room together. Y'know. Who knows.
01:15:29	Crosstalk	Promo	Dan: Oh boy.
			Elliott: Yeah. And most of the trip would be based around—
			Stuart: We would eat hotel food.
01:15:33	Elliott	Promo	Most of the trip would be based around trying to figure out how much time we had to eat breakfast before we had to do our work.
01:15:37	Stuart	Promo	<i>[Through laughter]</i> Oh man. We got so mad about that. Remember that, guys?
01:15:41	Dan	Promo	Well, we're all a little bit of a lingerer. A breakfast lingerer. So.
01:15:44	Stuart	Promo	I like to take my time. Get a second cup. Third cup.
01:15:48	Dan	Promo	I know. I just—yeah. It's a whole day of work.
01:15:51	Elliott	Promo	What if we could bring that live show energy—

[Dan laughs.]

—without the anxiety of breakfasts straight to your home? We did it once, a couple months ago. We did our *Howard the Duck* live Zoomcast, and we're doing it again! October 24th, 9PM Eastern/6PM Pacific. That's right—it's a Shocktober live *Flop House* Zoom! And we're going to be watching *The Exorcist II: The Heretic*. Now, it's gonna be just like that *Howard the Duck* show. We're gonna do presentations beforehand. We'll have some kind of charity that we're promoting and want people to donate for. And it's gonna be right in your home! You don't have to go anywhere! Which is great, because now is a difficult time to go anywhere. So that's October 24th, one week before Halloween so you know it's still gonna be scary, spooky times 'cause November 1st, the spook time is over and it's on to turkey time. October 24th, 9PM Eastern/6PM Pacific.

[Dan laughs.]

01:16:42	Stuart	Promo	<i>The Exorcist II: The Heretic.</i> And don't worry. If for some reason you don't want to watch us in the moment, live, y'know, with no safety belts; no harness; just raw-dogging the show—it's pretty scary when we do it, actually.
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[Multiple people laugh.]

If you don't wanna do that we're gonna archive it so you can watch it later. *[Laughs.]*

01:17:00	Elliott	Promo	Yeah. It'll be up—it's gonna be streaming through our YouTube page and it will stay on the YouTube page.
01:17:04	Dan	Promo	Yeah. The only advantage—and I would say it's not nothing—is if you watch it live, maybe you can organize a group watch with other listeners or last time we didn't have the comments enabled because we were scared of meanies? Y'know? We didn't want any meanies dropping by? But we had—
01:17:24	Elliott	Promo	Stuart: Those meanies are fucking assholes.
01:17:27	Dan	Promo	Elliott: Yeah. There's all blue and everything? Yeah. But we had the YouTube live chat on for our screenplay reading of <i>The Boy Next Door</i> and that went just fine so we'll probably allow it this time around.
01:17:36	Stuart	Promo	Oh, they tricked us! Dan's gonna be watching the feed the whole time and he's gonna be losing his shit. <i>[Laughs.]</i>
01:17:43	Elliott	Promo	And last time we had questions from Twitter that we answered and we'll probably do that again, or maybe we'll use the comments. I don't know. But that's gonna be through the <i>Flop House</i> YouTube page, October 24 th , 9PM Eastern/6PM Pacific. <i>The Exorcist 2: The Heretic</i> . A movie none of us have seen, but it's supposed to be not very good.
			I have another thing that I'd like to plug that's just for me! It has nothing to do with Stuart and Dan! That's that—as I've mentioned before on the podcast—September 29 th , I have a children's book coming out! <i>Sharko and Hippo</i> . It's by me, art's by Andrea Tsurumi. It's kind of like the Marx Brothers if one of the Marx Brothers was a hippo and the other was a shark. It's a fun story. It's a picture book for kids. And it's got a lot of jokes about words that sound like other words. So if that sounds like fun to you—and I bet it does!— <i>Sharko and Hippo</i> . Preorder it now or pick it up from, y'know, your independent bookstore's website or other websites. Go for it.
01:18:36	Dan	Promo	Stuart, do you have anything to plug?
01:18:39	Stuart	Promo	Yeah. I own a couple of bars, Hinterlands and Minnie's Bar in Brooklyn. You should come by and grab something to go or sit in the patio, please! It's a tough time out here.
01:18:47	Dan	Host	Yeah. <i>[Sighs.]</i> Okay. Well, letters. We all get 'em from time to time.
01:18:54	Crosstalk	Crosstalk	Dan: Or write 'em. Yeah.
			Stuart: Sometimes. Yeah.
01:18:58	Dan	Host	Elliott: Mm-hm. Y'know? Like maybe you're George Washington writing Martha from the front. Or maybe you're <i>[through laughter]</i> writing us about something.
01:19:03	Elliott	Host	Or writing her from the back! Who knows?
			<i>[Multiple people laugh.]</i>
01:19:08	Dan	Host	He was into all sorts of stuff!
01:19:12	Elliott	Host	Jesus God. Okay. Well, I'll just keep rolling. This first letter— <i>[Singing]</i> Hey, y'know, guys? It can be a tough time but it's always a good time for letters! Sometimes you can feel real sad, but you can't feel sad about letters! Although now that I think of it, sometimes letters can have bad news and real sad dudes! Can have letters be sad. Yes—can—

[Dan laughs.]

—have letters be mad. Yes, sometimes letters are just real bad, and your grammar falls apart when you're singing about letterssss! Oh, yeah! Letters!

01:19:45 Stuart Host

I thought he was wrapping up. *[Laughs.]*

01:19:47 Crosstalk Crosstalk

[Dan laughs.]

Elliott: Hoo boy! Letters.

01:19:50 Elliott Host

Dan: That's the problem. You can never tell.

Just a hot, steaming pile of letters! Get 'em while they're fresh off the grill! Letters! Letters today!

01:19:55 Crosstalk Crosstalk

Stuart: Oh no. Now it's starting to warm up again.

01:19:59 Elliott Host

Elliott: What's the special today?

Letters! A hot bowl of letters for you! You've been driving cross-country delivering toilet paper to people who need it 'cause the store shelves are sometimes out and now you get to sit down and have yourself a big, hot platter of letters! It's like a TV dinner but all of the things—

01:20:15 Crosstalk Crosstalk

Stuart: Yeah, I don't know where it's going now.

Elliott: —have letters in them!

01:20:19 Elliott Host

[Dan laughs.]

Where there would be creamed corn, there's letters!

01:20:21 Crosstalk Crosstalk

Elliott: Where there would be meatloaf, there's letters! Where there would be green beans, it's letters!

Dan: I feel like—I feel like he missed the offramp? And now he's just gotta keep going, so.

01:20:30 Stuart Host

Stuart: *[Laughs.]* Yeah. And you're sitting in the back of the lift—

—and you're like, "Where are we going? Am I going to have to pay this?"

01:20:34 Dan Host

Alright. So this first one's from—

01:20:36 Elliott Host

[Dan laughs.]

[Still singing] A big plate of letters for you!

01:20:39 Dan Host

[All laugh.]

Oh god. This is from Nate, last name redacted.

01:20:45 Stuart Host

"Hi, Peaches."

Nathan Summers.

01:20:46 Crosstalk Crosstalk

Dan: "I'm a longtime tabletop—"

Stuart: Better known as Cable.

01:20:49 Dan Host

[Elliott laughs.]

I'm a longtime tabletop RPG player and wanted to pick your brain—

01:20:53 Crosstalk Crosstalk

Dan: —about D&D movies.

Elliott: Why just one time?

01:20:57 Stuart Host "What's the best class?" That's what he was gonna ask. "So Dan, what's your elite combo? What's the best stats you ever rolled?"

01:21:02 Elliott Host Well clearly the best class is Simon Conjuror's night class where you fix all of your problems in one night.

01:21:07 Dan Host Oh, if I could only go to a Simon Conjuror. Nate is asking,

"There have been tons of successful high fantasy movies over the past few decades, but every single attempt at a D&D movie has failed. Why do you think the past D&D movies have failed, and what do you think a successful D&D movie would look like? Thanks for all the laughs!

01:21:31 Elliott Host Nate, last name redacted."

01:21:35 Stuart Host Now, I have thoughts on this but I'd like to hear Stuart's thoughts first. 'Cause I feel like he's got more of a dog in this fight.

01:22:43 Elliott Host Yeah. So... well, I think a couple things factor into this. And I think it partly is tied in also with why it's so hard to make a successful movie based on a videogame. But I think with D&D, part of the—and this is gonna be undercut a little bit by something else—but I think a big part of it is that part of the joy of games like D&D is that the people that are the audience are also playing in it? And they're creating their own story and they're invested in it. And... I think that's a big part of it. Like, I feel like... the story that you make with your friends in your D&D group, you're gonna have a bigger personal stake and you're gonna like it more. That's undercut a little bit by the success of actual play podcasts like the one we make, but I think part of the joy of those is also the fact that everybody involved is very passionate about it and, y'know. Yadda, yadda, yadda. And the market is often smaller. I don't know. I think that's a big part of it.

01:23:15 Stuart Host I think that's definitely part of it, and another part—I would say—is that D&D is essentially a world for you to create a story and create your own characters? There's no characters that preexist necessarily, and there's no story. So if you're adapting it into a movie, it's like the thing that you're working with is not necessarily the most important thing that an audience that's not already into D&D is looking for? Like, when people go to a movie, the setting is something that they enjoy but they're invested in the story and the characters, and D&D doesn't really come with story and characters. It's kind of like if—

01:23:16 Elliott Host Yeah. Except for like Lord Soth or something.

01:23:20 Stuart Host Yeah. Well it's like if you were making like a SimCity movie. You'd be like—

01:23:22 Elliott Host Or Drizzt Do'urden or something.

01:23:27 Stuart Host Yeah. But if you're making a SimCity movie, you'd be like, "Okay, I guess it's a movie about building a city."

01:23:28 Dan Host Or like Elminster Sage or something.

01:23:30 Crosstalk Host *[Laughs.]* God.

01:23:30 Crosstalk **Stuart:** Go on, Elliott. Sorry.

Elliott: You're right. I forgot. D&D has a rich cast of characters.
[Laughs.]

[Dan laughs.]

Dan: That are, like, real household names.

01:23:36 Elliott Host **Elliott:** But none of those are characters—
None of those are characters that—well, I mean, you don't have to have household names to make a movie. Like, *Guardians of the Galaxy* was a huge hit and nobody knew who those characters were except me 'cause I loved Abnett and Lanning's run on the title which was kind of the main influence on the movie. But it's like... if you're making a SimCity game, you'd be like, "I guess it's about building a city but like I need to create the characters and the plot and what's going on." And they were able to—it's like—

01:23:56 Stuart Host Isn't, like, Marv in SimCity, though?

01:23:59 Elliott Host Not Sin City, Stuart. SimCity. The game. Come on, Stu.

01:24:02 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Stuart:** Oh, right.

Dan: Yeah. Well, I mean—oh, sorry.

01:24:06 Elliott Host **Elliott:** But—I would say—oh, sorry.
I would say just two things. One is that—I think the only people that have really been able to pull off something like that are the people behind the *Lego* movies. Because they were taking something that was just blocks. It's not—there's no story to Legos. Y'know. And there's no characters to Legos except—I know there's that astronaut character and all that stuff. My son will run in and be like, "Actually, there's a lot of Lego characters." But they had to create what is the tone of this movie; what is the characters; what are the stories; what's the—'cause all they have to work off of are "Legos are a thing you can build with"? But—and so you'd need people who really like can fill in that stuff. And if they're gonna fill in all that, then you might as well just make a movie that's not beholden to the *Dungeons & Dragons* license? I would say, though, I feel like the *Dungeons & Dragons* Saturday morning cartoon show was fairly successful because they kind of translated the idea Stuart was talking about, where it was a group of people—a group of friends who are like, had to live out the roles in the game? Y'know? And so it had a little bit of that feeling.

01:25:05 Dan Host Yet again, by not needing to take a breath and breathing through the gills on his neck, Elliott has scooped me. 'Cause I was gonna say that I think that the closest thing to a success was that. 'Cause for that very reason. It was the idea that these adventurers were sucked into this game and, y'know, like had to take on these characteristics of these classes that exist. 'Cause if you remove the interactivity, what are you left with? You're left with a world that was heavily influenced by Tolkien and we already have good Tolkien movies with the story added, not just the world. So.

01:25:42 Stuart Host And some songs!

01:25:44 Dan Host Yeah.

[Elliott laughs.]

Some great tunes that I assume Stu has on his iPod shuffle for runs at the gym.

01:25:51 Stuart Host *[Stuart laughs.]*
Yeah. *[Laughs.]*

01:25:52 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Dan:** But yeah. I agree with everything people have said.

01:25:56 Elliott Host **Stuart:** Trying to get vascular.

01:26:00 Stuart Host I mean, I also say—I don't think any of the *Dungeons & Dragons* things have had owlbears in them?

01:26:16 Dan Host Yep. That's actually a good point. I mean, and also, like... like, Kieron Gillen's comic *Die* is basically kind of like a more modern take on that kind of the *Dungeons & Dragons* cartoon. Y'know. Like, gamers sucked into the game.

01:26:21 Stuart Host Moving on to a letter from Nadia, last name withheld.

01:26:25 Crosstalk Crosstalk We forgot to answer the question on how to make—
Stuart: —a successful version of that. And obviously—

01:26:27 Stuart Host **Dan:** How to make one? Well what do you got in your head? That is *Conan the Destroyer*. The second of the *Conan* movies is the closest thing to an actual D&D session in, y'know, in game form. Or in movie form.

01:26:37 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Dan:** Nadia—oh, god.

01:26:40 Elliott Host **Elliott:** It seems like the *Dungeons & Dragons* stuff—
—they're—it also—there's kind of like a... they're like running away from the things that *Dungeons & Dragons* fans like about *Dungeons & Dragons*? 'Cause it's like, "We gotta make a *Dungeons & Dragons* movie but we don't want it to be like a nerdy movie. Whereas like, you just—you're into it." Sorry, what were you saying?

01:26:57 Stuart Host It's like superhero comics for a while—or superhero movies for a while where they're like, "Okay. We're gonna do a superhero movie, but we're gonna make 'em look cool." And you're like, "Uh, they already look cool. I like the way they look in the comic book. Just make 'em look like that."

01:27:12 Elliott Host Well when they finally realized, like, "Oh, Spider-Man has an amazing costume. We don't have to make changes too much to it." Y'know. Or like, Captain America—there's a reason Captain America's wearing the same clothes for 80 years. But the—

01:27:21 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Dan:** Yeah. He doesn't like doing laundry.

01:27:26 Elliott Host **Elliott:** But then that can go—
But then that can go crazy when you have Han Solo wearing the same clothes for 40 years and it's like, "I think he would change the vest at some point." But... the—there's like a feeling of—like, with *Lord of the Rings* movies, like, one of the reasons they're so successful is because they really go for it on the level of the *Lord of the Rings* story? And it's not like, "Okay. This is kind of a nerdy story so let's put in some—let's undercut it with gags to bring other people." Instead—

01:27:50 Stuart Host Yeah. Like, "Oh, no, the cave troll showed up! Cue the music!"

[Singing] "Cut my life into pieces!"

01:27:57 Elliott Host [Elliott laughs.]
So instead it's like, "Oh, we love this story. Like, let's do this story to the hilt." Y'know. So. That's what you do. You do a *Dungeons & Dragons* movie that's super taking *Dungeons & Dragons* seriously, and you hire Stuart to write it.

01:28:09 Stuart Host Uh-huh.

01:28:10 Elliott Host Mm-hm.
01:28:12 Stuart Host Yeah. Me and my producing partner, Joe Manganiello.
01:28:15 Elliott Host And you have all those household name beloved character Stuart was mentioning, like, Zazapoff and... and, uh, Digimon and uh—

[Dan laughs.]

—what? Hieronymus Gorman?
01:28:27 Dan Host Abe Pagoda?
01:28:29 Elliott Host Yeah. Abe Pagoda.

[Multiple people laugh.]

01:28:32 Dan Host So this next letter goes like this.

“It’s customary for me to tell a bedtime story to my three kids, ages 3, 5, and 9 each night. And I tend to just make it up as I got instead of actually reading something. I try to come up with funny-sounding names for characters and couldn’t resist using ‘Rocket Crocodile.’ My kids keep demanding, ‘Tell us more about the crocodile, daddy!’”

[Multiple people laugh.]

“So RC has become the main protagonist recently. To keep it kid-friendly, I’ve decided to omit all the Gina Gershon stuff that Elliott stipulated in Rocket’s origin story. As of last night’s episode—”
01:29:07 Elliott Host What about the Carla Gugino stuff?
01:29:09 Dan Host *[Through laughter]* I only assume that it’s still in there, based on the letter of the law.

“As of last night’s episode, Rocket Crocodile has found himself trying to escape the pursuit of the villainous Sith Donkey, Darth Mule, as he navigates a *Star Wars*-adjacent galaxy.” And that’s from Nadia, last name withheld.

01:29:33 Stuart Host Now that *Star Wars* is under the same umbrella as Marvel, I guess Darth Mule would be part of the Spider-ham universe, right?
01:29:39 Elliott Host Uh, yep! They—hope they have that joke in the sequel! Yeah. I love that letter. I think that’s super sweet and you will be hearing from my lawyers.

[Dan laughs.]
01:29:48 Dan Host To tell you that you think it’s super sweet.

[Multiple people laugh.]
01:29:52 Elliott Host Yeah! “We’d like to ask the court to serve a writ of super sweetness?”

[Dan laughs.]
01:29:59 Dan Host That rivals a 16th birthday party for super sweetness.
01:30:07 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Dan:** I’m looking for—

01:30:10 Dan Host **Elliott:** Mm-hm. We’re serving a writ of Habeus Awww.
Um, so... now we are onto the last segment, where we recommend movies that we enjoyed for non-silly reasons. Let’s say it that way. I’m gonna say that I was curious about the new *Charlie’s Angels* movie, directed by Elizabeth Banks, and starring Kristen Stewart

and some other people who are less famous so I've forgotten who they are. Apologies to them. They did a great job.

01:30:38 Elliott Host There was no way for you to find out that information.

01:30:40 Dan Host *[Laughs.]* No way at all. I thought it was a lot of fun! It was a movie that combined some genuine hangout comedy with much, like... better and more clearly choreographed action movies than I was expecting out of a *Charlie's Angels* reboot. And Kristen Stewart is just... a delight in the movie. She seems to be having so much fun. She gets saddled with so many like mopey roles sometimes that I think she was just relishing being this kind of offbeat action hero. And I—it got a lot more shit than I think it should've, by far. I think mostly from maybe male movie critics who were like, "This is like too overt in its feminist messaging" or something. And I think that they are just not realizing how much of sort of male-targeted action movies are male wish fulfillment and not examining that, like, y'know, maybe you're not realizing that it's fine. It's fine for us both to get some of that stuff. But I just really enjoyed it. A lot more fun kind of action blockbuster than I thought it would be. *Charlie's Angels*.

01:32:01 Stuart Host I'm gonna recommend a movie I don't think's been recommended by us before. I'm gonna recommend the recent movie *Palm Springs*. Starring Andy Samberg and—I think I'm gonna pronounce this right—Cristin Milioti? I don't know.

01:32:17 Dan Host Uh, Cristin Miloti, I think.

01:32:19 Stuart Host Miloti. okay, yeah. Yeah. It's—I feel like a very apt movie to watch at a time like this. Kind of a movie about being stuck in one place and being stuck in, y'know, repetitive cycle. It's a comedy but it's also kinda dark. I don't wanna go too much into the plot details because I think that's part of the fun of the movie, but everybody is very winning. And it—I feel like it's a movie that deserves an Academy Award for casting characters based on their eyebrows matching up so that you can tell—

[Multiple people laugh.]

—they're all related. I mean, if you're gonna cast Peter Gallagher in a movie, you're like, everyone else has to also have great eyebrows. And speaking of Academy Awards, it also features Lifetime Academy Award for Best Supporting Actor J.K. Simmons is in the movie as well. He is not playing his iconic role of J. Jonah Jameson, the role that won him that award—

01:33:17 Elliott Host No.

[Dan laughs.]

01:33:19 Stuart Host —in my apartment.

[Multiple people laugh.]

01:33:20 Elliott Host Not the movie that won him the award and also—"Supporting Actor" is not a Lifetime award.

[Dan laughs.]

01:33:27 Stuart Host It's awarded for a specific role. I mean, yeah. But you can win that award every year, right? For the same role, even if you're not in a movie based with that character, right?

01:33:34 Elliott Host Not how the award works, no.
01:33:36 Stuart Host I mean, but... I could watch that movie this year, so...

[Elliott laughs.]

01:33:42 Crosstalk Crosstalk I don't see why he couldn't win it, Elliott.
Elliott: That's a good point. That's a good point.

01:33:45 Dan Host **Dan:** I mean, Elliott, for the past—
—y'know, since the '80s or whenever that movie came out, "Best Movie Named After a Type of Animal" has gone to *The Bear* over and over again. So I don't know what you're talking about.

01:33:55 Elliott Host It's not an award—

[Dan laughs.]

—not an award, and also the movie won *[through laughter]* zero Academy Awards.

01:34:00 Dan Host *[Through laughter]* The way that Elliott just stared at me blankly after I said that. Alright.

[Elliott laughs.]

01:34:05 Stuart Host Uh, yeah. So *Palm Springs*, the movie! Watch it!
01:34:08 Elliott Host And I'm gonna recommend a movie that—I don't know if Stuart has seen, but if he hasn't seen I would specifically recommend it to him! 'Cause I think he would like it a lot. This is a movie from 1988 from New Zealand called *The Navigator: A Medieval Odyssey*. It's currently streaming on Canopy, and there is a English village in the 14th century that is worried that the Black Death will soon be visiting them? And they decide that the only way to keep the plague away from their village is for a mission to set up a cross—for them to take some—what is it, copper? Take copper to a forge to make a cross and put it up at a church in a big town. And so this group of guys being guided by a young boy who has visions, and seems to be able to tell them where to go, go on this mission and what happens to them I don't wanna say. Even though every description of the movie kinda gives it away. But it goes into what could've turned into a ridiculous or goofy plot, but which actually felt—stuck with the tone that it starts with in the beginning, which is kind of like... medieval austerity. So anyway, it's a medieval movie with a big twist in the middle. That I won't tell you what it is. But it's *The Navigator: A Medieval Odyssey*.

01:35:27 Stuart Host Okay. I'll check it out. That sounds awesome.
01:35:28 Elliott Host You'll find out what the twist is instantly 'cause it's in all the descriptions on—anywhere you see abbot it. But. *[Laughs.]*

01:35:33 Dan Host Before we get into our goodbyes—as Smalltember comes to an end, I want to thank, in particular, for this episode, Peter Kuplowsky, who is one of the guys who brought us to Toronto for our live show and is a film programmer who alerted us to the existence of *Deadly Lessons*. So I wanna give credit where that's due. I want to thank our editor, Jordan Kauwling, who does a great job for us every week. But as I said—

01:36:08 Stuart Host Jordan—to celebrate, can you just loop in that gavel sound with the Elliott nodding clip again?

[Multiple people laugh.]

01:36:14 Elliott Host It's not really a celebratory sound. A gavel. If you're hearing that it's probably bad news, so I mean—

01:36:21 Dan Host Well, it's a gavel that has an air horn attached to it so every time you hit it—

01:36:25 Stuart Host *[Elliott laughs.]*
Jordan, also edit out all of Elliott and Dan's bullshit?

[Dan laughs.]

01:36:28 Elliott Host Just theirs?
I mean, then I'm gonna be left with nothing, Stuart. That's all that I do.

[Multiple people laugh.]

01:36:45 Dan Host I will say—Jordan really, like, she—the last mini that we did, it was a quick-turnaround mini and I could not stick a final bit that I was trying to do, so she had a lot of editing to figure out. So thank you very much, Jordan, for doing that.
But as I said, Smalltember is coming to an end. But cry not, because Shocktober is just around the corner. And I wanted to tease that for all the people who were asking on Twitter and Instagram, we announced that one of our guests for Shocktober will be Gillian Flynn. It is in fact that Gillian Flynn of *Gone Girl* and *Sharp Objects* and *Dark Places* and other stuff. I could not be more excited. I know we could all not be more excited. So that's a tease. Unless something unforeseen happens.

[Stuart laughs.]

01:37:21 Crosstalk Crosstalk She'll be on to—I mean, I can't guarantee—
Dan: I can't—Well I can't guarantee that the—
Stuart: A tease followed by a threat!

01:37:28 Dan Host **Elliott:** Dan, I don't think— *[Laughs.]* Yeah! I feel like you don't need to hedge against acts of God, Dan.
The world may, y'know, I— *[Laughs.]* Every morning, every night, I'm like, "I can't guarantee that the sun will rise next morning, but I think it's—"

01:37:38 Elliott Host Hey, you know what, Dan? If there's a catastrophe of some kind, I don't think people's first thought will be, "Well, Dan said there'd be another *Flop House*, so I'm gonna hold him to it. While I'm running across the wasteland from these oil-hunting biker gangs because civilization has collapsed. I'm not gonna hold a special piece of anger just for Dan because he told me there's be a *Flop House* no matter what."

01:38:02 Dan Host Y'know, I used to think that it was ridiculous in Mad Max that, y'know, this gasoline-short society was so based around cars? But now that I've seen how dumb people are during *[through laughter]* the actual apocalypse that's going on, I'm like, okay, sure. It checks out. But none of you listeners. You're all doing great.

[Multiple people laugh.]

01:38:24	Crosstalk	Crosstalk	National treasures, every one of you. Dan: So that's a little tease for the—
			Stuart: This has been Dan hedging bets. <i>[Laughs.]</i> Left and right.
01:38:28	Dan	Host	<i>[Elliott laughs.]</i> "Mr. Hedge," they call me. Tweet about us. Put us on iTunes. Well, don't put us on iTunes. We're already there.
			<i>[Elliott laughs.]</i>
01:38:36	Elliott	Host	Just rate us. <i>[Laughs.]</i> No, review us on iTunes.
			<i>[Stuart laughs.]</i>
01:38:39	Crosstalk	Crosstalk	Review us on iTunes. Elliott: Feel free to Tweet about us.
01:38:43	Elliott	Host	Dan: Positively. Despite my recent babble. Please make it positive. Help us spread the word about this goofy show. Although I don't know why, after what we've been hearing lately. But uh—
01:38:51	Dan	Host	<i>[Dan laughs.]</i> But on that note, for <i>The Flop House</i> , I've been Dan McCoy.
01:38:55	Stuart	Host	I'm Stuart Wellington!
01:38:57	Elliott	Host	And I'm... Elliott Kalan.
01:38:59	Stuart	Host	Byeeee!
01:39:00	Elliott	Host	Light, up-tempo, electric guitar with synth instruments.
01:39:12	Dan	Host	On this episode we discuss— <i>Deadly Lessons!</i>
01:39:16	Elliott	Host	<i>[Tom Brokaw impersonation]</i> Featuring me, Tom Brokaw. <i>[Regular voice]</i> Just kidding! It's Elliott. I'm back.
			<i>[Dan laughs.]</i>
			<i>[Music ceases.]</i>
01:39:26	Speaker 1	Guest	MaximumFun.org
01:39:29	Speaker 2	Guest	Comedy and culture.
01:39:30	Speaker 3	Guest	Artist owned—
01:39:31	Speaker 4	Guest	—Audience supported.