

The The Adventure Zone Zone : Balance Finale Edition

Published August 24, 2017

[Listen here on mcelroy.family](#)

[“Déjà Vu” by Mort Garson plays]

Travis: This episode of The The Adventure Zone Zone brought to you by Dove Soap. Dove, Love the skin you’re in.

Clint: [chuckles]

Justin: [in radio voice] Hello, everybody, and welcome to The Adventure Zone Zone!

Clint: How come I can’t do that voice?

Justin: Can you just... let me fuck’n do the intro?

Clint: Sure, fine.

Travis: Guests of The The Adventure Zone Zone stay at their respective houses.

Griffin: The The Adventure Zone Zone is also sponsored by Viking Cruises. I’m Laura Dern, and have been the whole time.

Justin: [in radio voice] Winners of the The The Adventure Zone Zone are going to space camp!

Travis: [gasps] Really?

Justin: The Adventure Zone Zone is filmed at Buena Vista Studios. Buena Vista, California.

Griffin: Hey, what are we doing here?

Justin: This is The Adventure Zone Zone—

Travis: Right now, funny jokes.

Justin: You're not letting me fuck'n host, I'm hosting it. This is the—[laughs] it's such a good name, The The Adventure Zone Zone. A podcast about a podcast called The Adventure Zone that we all made together, and we still do, but different. My name is Justin McElroy. I played the character of Taako on The Adventure Zone: Balance.

Travis: I'm Travis McElroy, I played Magnus. Justin, do you think there are people who are listening to this episode who don't already know that?

Griffin: [chuckles]

Justin: It's a weird place to start, y'all.

Travis: [laughs]

Griffin: I'm Griffin McElroy, I did all the other characters.

Clint: I'm Clint McElroy and I played Merle Hightower. The—

Justin: No.

Travis: Nope.

Griffin: I love it. I love it.

Travis: God.

Clint: Highchurch. Highchurch.

Justin: Are you fuck'n shitting me?

Clint: That... that was the... an incredible— probably the best loved character of the entire—

Justin: Best loved, least remembered in terms of last names.

Clint: Well, the fans remember me.

Justin: If on the odd chance you are starting this... like, this is going to be completely a spoiling thing for the previous arc of our show, Balance. Which now at the end of it, I wish we had called it Bonds, but I think Balance is fine.

Griffin: Okay, well, it's too late. I wish you had said something earlier.

Justin: I wish I had. It occurred to me as I was listening to the finale for the umpteenth time. But—

Griffin: Can everybody silent— I just heard two different phone notifications go off.

Justin: It's dad, it's dad. He's always got his shit cranked. And I don't—

Clint: I tried to turn it off!

Travis: He's blowing up!

Justin: You don't—

Travis: Listen, he's... Everybody's hitting him up now like, "Hey, I heard you on Adventure Zone: Balance. Will you come on my thing and forget how to play a game on my show?" Everybody wants Dad to come on and forget how to do stuff on their show now.

Griffin: So hot right now.

Clint: [laughs]

Justin: Griffin.

Griffin: Yes?

Justin: I want to start out with like a general question— and we've got a bunch of questions from listeners, but I wanna ask some of our own questions.

Griffin: Yeah, I think that'd be good, if we started out by just sort of— if you all have questions for me, now that the campaign's done, and y'all know everything.

Justin: I'm curious if you can— and I know that this stuff is always sort of like— What's wrong, Dad?

Clint: I don't know why this is still making sounds?

Justin: The iPad?

Clint: Yeah!

Justin: Okay. Give me your iPad.

Travis: Sit on it.

Clint: You can turn it off.

Justin: I'm gonna— No, I'm gonna sit on it until it breaks, like I'm a gorilla. No, you— Okay, that's muted, it shouldn't be doing this.

Clint: Yeah, I know! You heard it!

Griffin: This is a good show.

Travis: God, this is top notch.

Justin: So, Griffin, can you describe to me, in an abbreviated form I guess, how the like... in what order the certain main keystones of the story sort of came to you?

Griffin: Yeah.

Justin: Like what the inception of it was, and how it sort of built over time in your head?

Griffin: So, like in all— it started with The Lost Mines of Phandelver book that comes with the starter kit— the fifth edition starter kit. Which is really— which is really great. I really enjoyed when I was in town for— when we were making the TV show, Justin ran a quick game for us— for me and the Smirls. And we all played basically the same adventure. And so, Justin got an idea of like the other ways that it could have gone. 'Cause there's a lot of other stuff in that book that I kind of condensed and fast-forwarded through, so— 'Cause by like episode two really, like I knew I wanted to move on to original stuff.

And by the time we reached the end of Here There be Gerblins, I had an outline for like what the structure of the story was. I've talked about how like it had a very video gamey structure, of you all getting the seven you know, goals. It's gotta be seven, always, every time. They could have been fuck'n power pendants, they could have been magic crystals or whatever. But this time, they were the Grand Relics. And I—

Travis: Griffin, can I ask, 'cause this is something I always want to ask people who run shows like this. At that point, how far ahead did you know? Like, did you have a concept for the finale? Did you know like what characters would end up being a much bigger part of it?

Griffin: No... And I don't want to give away too much 'cause we're gonna be like diving— there's a lot of very, very granular, very specific questions about stuff like this. But the answer is like, I had the very, very, very loose structure of the campaign in mind. I had like all of the Bureau of Balance stuff figured out. But the arcs, like I figured out what the next arc was going to be while we were doing the previous arc.

And really I think by the time we got to Crystal Kingdom, I kind of realized like okay, the rubber really needs to meet the road here, and I need to start setting up sort of the bigger picture stuff. And that's why we got a lot of... a lot of stuff in... It's funny, if you go back and listen to Gerblins, and you go back and listen to Rockport Limited, those were both I think good little

self-contained things, that ultimately like have very little bearing on the rest of the campaign at large.

When we meet the Red Robe at the end of Petals to the Metal, like that was the first sort of hint that I was giving like, 'Okay, there is a bigger thing going on here.' And then in Crystal Kingdom it was like, that was me setting up the you know, the Planar System stuff and the multiverse stuff and more Red Robes stuff, and yeah. That's where you all got the patches, which sets up the IPRE, like... So, I think by Crystal Kingdom, I had... I pretty much knew what was going on. I knew that you all were the Red Robes, I knew that... I knew a lot of that stuff. But it really took—

Justin: So, it really— Sorry, go ahead.

Griffin: But it really took like a lot of playing to like get to that point, to like know what the story was gonna be.

Justin: Do you remember— For me, so much of the story sort of hinges on the Voidfish. Do you remember when the idea of the Voidfish came to you and like what problem that was trying to solve?

Griffin: I mean, partially, I think when it started it was solving for the structure of it, right. Of you all trying to get these very, very powerful relics. And the question would've been like, "If these relics exist, why isn't everybody trying to get at them all the time? Why wouldn't your characters know about them already?" If these, like, seven immensely powerful objects existed in the world, and you all were adventurers, and these things were capable of like mass destruction, how would you not know about their usage up to this point?

And so, it was a— kind of started as a way to like introduce this thing in a way where your characters wouldn't have known about it. But obviously like what the Voidfish was, after I'd introduced it like that, I realized it could mean like a whole lot more. And we could, you know, introduce a lot of different narrative stuff involving like you all having other memories that were suppressed, and... yeah. So, the Voidfish became a much bigger thing. I think when we meet Lucas, and I think like Lucas and Johann have a scene

with the Voidfish, that is kind of where I started to like figure out, like okay, no, the Voidfish is a bigger... is a much, much bigger thing here.

Travis: And is that where you decided you would kill Johann and make everyone sad? Or did that just come later 'cause you were just feeling really bloodthirsty? Or...

Clint: [chuckles]

Griffin: I mean, I can talk about that. Like, Johann's whole deal— That was one of, in my mind, like one of the bigger themes of the show, is like how people respond to the idea of... How people respond to the fact that like you aren't always going to be here, and that the works that you create and the things that you do outlive you. And so, Johann—

Travis: Legacy.

Griffin: Yeah, a legacy. So, Johann was like a big thing there, right? Like a lot of the conversations you had was him talking about like, "Oh well, I wanna be a great musician, but I'll never be remembered because of this." And when I first heard "Voidfish (Plural)", the track from Rachel Rose Mitchell that we used in the penultimate episode— When I actually heard that song, that firmed up in my mind what that— what those moments were going to be, what that payoff was going to be. And I really liked the idea of just Johann's work not only outliving him, but being fucking like broadcast to every person across all of the planes. I thought that was like a really cool moment. And so, that's kind of when that firmed up.

Justin: Was Johann... Okay, was the voice at the beginning of every episode supposed to be Johann?

Griffin: No. Okay so, this was also a question that we got. The voice at the beginning— And I don't know if I did a great job setting this up, and maybe I should just leave it a little bit more obscure. But the voice in my mind was the story, of the Story and Song, that was being sent out— that was being like broadcast by, I guess, Junior. I guess the voice was Junior, right? 'Cause Fisher put out the song and Junior put out the story. And so, I thought it would be cool if the podcast was kind of the story, in a way, and you were

hearing everything that Junior knew about this world and the events that happened in it. And so, that's why in the finale, there is no—

Clint: You don't hear from it, yeah.

Griffin: You don't hear the deep voice in the finale, because they say in the penultimate episode like, 'That's all I know. You're all caught up, that's everything that I know. Let's find out what happens together.' And then the finale is like, all of us seeing what happens together. It's no longer the story being told by Junior, it's just like the thing. I really— I dig that shit in basically all forms of media. This idea of just like meta-narrative. And like the things that you are experiencing in whatever it is, the game, the movie, the book, whatever, is part of a character inside of the work transmitting it in a way. The Zero Escape games do that in a way that I think is like, really cool. And so, I kind of wanted to take a stab at that.

Justin: I'm gonna— We got more questions for Griffin, obviously. And I'm sure we'll have some organically that come up. But since we could bloviate about our own bullshit for hours on end, I'm gonna try to keep this on the rails a little bit with another question from a listener that's directed to everybody. "You all mentioned—" And not Griffin, so get bent. "You all mentioned you cried during the finale. Which specific moment made you emotional enough to cry?" And I will direct this at father first.

Clint: Oh... I... [laughing] This sounds— I don't wanna sound self-serving... Okay, I—

Travis: Dad, we're literally doing a show talking about our own show.

Griffin: Yeah, we are serving ourselves in a major way.

Clint: I guess we're supposed to be self-serving.

Travis: I don't think you gotta worry about that. Like if you start talking about your favorite episode of Battlestar Galactica, I think that'd be way weirder.

Clint: Oh, man, the one where—

Travis: Nope.

Clint: ... Starbuck— Okay. All right, if it's about the finale, the one time I can remember crying was... was Merle's last scene with— stop looking at me, Juice. Merle's last scene with Mavis, when she talked about how proud she was of how well he was doing. And he said, "I love you, baby." Because that was... that was kind of me telling you guys the same thing.

Travis: Gross.

Justin: What a nerd.

Griffin: [laughs]

Clint: Yeah, it is gross. But... 'Cause I was, I was so proud to be part of it. And you know... And so, yeah. So... And I cried every time Tom Bodett died, how's that?

Travis: Mm-hm, that's fair.

Justin: You're out. Travis, go.

Griffin: Then you cried zero times, 'cause I don't think he ever did.

Justin: Travis, bare your soul.

Travis: So, for me, I think this will not come as a surprise to anyone who listened to it. But basically, like every—

Griffin: The last 20 minutes.

Travis: Yeah, everything that happened in the wrap-up. But I based a lot of Magnus' backstory and motivation and stuff on— not to get too super-real for a moment— we lost our mom when I was 21. So, I based a lot of like his motivation to do good on that. And so, the moment where Magnus says to Julia that he just tried to make her proud of him is from a very personal place for me, and how I live my life day-to-day. So, like that. And I think

also just getting... just having a resolution to the story of Magnus was very, very fulfilling for me. Because I really liked, over the course of so many episodes and so many years, having the chance to kind of unfold it as we went. And the fact that you really didn't get a lot of his backstory until like I think the fourth arc, I think until Eleventh Hour, maybe?

Griffin: Yeah, in the flashback temptation episode.

Travis: Yeah. And so, getting to slowly kind of build to that moment and getting to have an actual cap on it was both emotional for the character, but also very satisfying for me as the creator of Magnus. And just, it was a relief to have that moment. So, that.

Griffin: Juice, did you—

Clint: I wanna add one quick— Let me add one quick thing before we— Your mom's fingerprints are all over this story.

Griffin: Absolutely, yeah.

Clint: And I wanna tell everybody, the whole 'choose joy' attitude, that was Leslie McElroy. I mean, that was her defining personality trait. And you know, we... that rings out through, I think, the whole series. And so, she—

Griffin: Certainly in most of Merle's serious interactions with people, of which there were a lot in the back half of the podcast. Juice, did you get weepy in the— I was— I edited it, obviously. But I didn't hear any you know, deep Travis sobs.

Justin: No. No sobbing. I'm 36, so...

Griffin: Okay.

Justin: Okay? No—

Griffin: You fuck'n tweeted a whole thing about how crying is good, and now you're putting everybody on blast.

Justin: No, I'm not trying to put everybody on blast. You know what got to me? I— Okay, I didn't feel that way while we were recording, because the... that part of my... I couldn't... Hm... I felt like I couldn't let myself get that sort of emotionally... there's just too much going on in my brain, show-wise.

Griffin: Right.

Justin: But like relistening, especially the parts— I'll tell you the parts that hit me is the parts that we didn't hear, but we would relisten. I had a— This is kind of weird. But when new Adventure Zone episodes come out, I will often like sneak into a Rabbit stream, or a Discord—

Griffin: I did that in the finale, and I totally ghost— I did not announce that I was there. And I know it's a creepy thing, but I really wanted to know what it was like to see people listen to it for the first time.

Justin: Right. And I did that, and I listened to the end of the penultimate episode. And I... I mean, I cried and I cheered and... Like fist up in the air, like yelling. I was like so 'gized. And we hadn't heard that part during the show, the part about Johann, "You're going to fight— You're going to have to fight, and you're going to win." And like, I just found that so inspirational and sort of like... I don't know, like a very good antidote for a lot of the messages of the world at that time. Which is this time, now.

Griffin: Yeah.

Justin: And I found that— And that actually leads me to a question, Griffin. Like did—

Griffin: Well, I wanted to mention real quick, I had a moment, and I don't think it kind of came through. But I was getting really choked up and it was really, really hard for me to keep talking. And for me, that moment was Travis had just said in Thieves' Cant, to Carey, "Are you ready?" And Carey gestures back, "I'm ready". And then I go into like the description of the wedding, which was really, really, really important to me. And not only that, I knew that was it, that was the last monologue.

You guys were done talking, the game was— this was it, this was the last thing. And for me, it had nothing to do with what was happening in the narrative, as much as it had to do with when I said, “I’m ready,” I was literally saying was like I’m ready to send this story that we’ve all worked on and is so, so, so, so, so special to me, I’m ready to send it off. And so, that whole last monologue, I was... I was fighting off tears the whole time.

Travis: Can I also, to that point, I do also wanna say— So, during Magnus’ send-off, you know, when I was like crying. But my favorite kind of emotional payoff for me, just in like the more organic collaborative storytelling, is the fact that Magnus got to have like a best friend.

Griffin: Yeah, for sure.

Travis: Like, I loved everything with Taako and Merle, but that was like a relationship unto itself. But like the fact that we got to build, really organically, a relationship that was just like a very interesting friendship between Carey and Magnus, made me so happy. That kind of thing in media, when you get to see people become friends, is way more interesting to me than any like romantic storyline in a TV show or movie. Is watching two people you would never expect to be friends, become friends.

Griffin: Yeah, and that’s tough. That’s difficult to pull off. Like, romance is tough to pull off. And obviously like this was— this was all our first stabs at making fiction in this way. And so, that was something I was nervous about, you know, delivering on some different romance threads. But like I— And I really love that stuff. But I really loved Taako and Angus’ you know, friendship and mentorship, and Taako and Joaquin’s friendship, and Magnus and Carey, and John and Merle, holy shit. Like, all of that— all of those like relationships that started from zero, and then you know, turned into something else, I thought was really good.

Justin: It’s really— it’s kind of interesting to me that a show that is made by a family is not— is more— is much, much, much, much, much more about found families—

Griffin: Yeah.

Travis: Mm-hm.

Justin: ... Than it is about family literally. I mean, even— if you think about it, even the family that is our literal blood had to be found in the story, you know, it wasn't inbuilt in the characters.

Griffin: Right.

Justin: But like, I think that there is something so moving about people choosing to be family—

Griffin: Right.

Justin: ... That I think is really powerful and beautiful. Okay, listen, we're almost 20 minutes in and we've gotten one listener question. So, we need to speed things up.

Griffin: Yeah, let's crank through 'em.

Justin: I need brevity in your answers. Griffin, how soon did you know you were going to bring back Barry Bluejeans?

Griffin: So, obviously I knew by Seven Birds, right, end of Crystal Kingdom, at that point when I said who the Seven Birds were gonna be, I knew who they all were, right. Lup, Davenport, Lucretia, Barry and the three of you. So, probably— it was probably during Crystal Kingdom. During Crystal Kingdom, again like I mentioned was the time where I was like, "Okay, I need to figure out what the bigger thing is, how it's gonna wrap up. And I need to start setting down breadcrumbs to get us there." And so, probably around then. I said a lot of stuff, like Barry's dead. I think I did actually at one point say Barry's never ever coming back, which was—

Justin: Yes you did, you lied about that.

Griffin: That was the only lie, right? And I'm sorry I did that. But the rest of the time I tried to be coy about it. Like yeah, "Barry's dead." He is dead, he's a lich. But whatever.

Justin: Travis—

Griffin: By the way, and the boys can attest to this. That episode I think was like 58, where I brought Barry back. I was so scared. Like, I wanted that payoff to be so good. And you guys can hear it in my voice. I remember like we had to stop a couple times during that bit while we were like getting to the end of the Wonderland stuff. I was like, "Okay, give me a minute." 'Cause I needed to like collect myself because I really, really, really wanted that to land.

Clint: And now that we know that he listens, you're welcome Tom Arnold.

Griffin: Holy shit.

Justin: Yes, you're welcome.

Griffin: Yeah, that's been a—

Clint: For bringing back your career.

Travis: [chuckles] Woah?

Justin: Yeah, your career.

Griffin: I don't know about that...

Justin: Also thank you for The Stupids, it's a great movie.

Clint: It is!

Justin: Sniper— I should mention Kate was the one who asked that question, I don't think I got that in.

Travis: Yeah, also Aquafourchette, asked the one about crying.

Justin: Okay, Sniperjoe asked Travis, "Did you consider calling on Julia during the fight with final John?"

Griffin: Holy shit did people in the live feed that I was watching—

Justin: Oh, they were so ready for it!

Travis: Well so, here's the thing. To that point, I have always envisioned— and people have asked about this. I do envision Julia being a very competent—

Griffin: A badass.

Travis: Yeah, being a badass. People have talked about like, "Did they fight side by side in the battle?" Yeah, duh. But I think... in that moment, honest to god, it never crossed my mind. Because that would be... not the right moment for that to happen.

Griffin: Yeah, as somebody who like thought about who you all might summon with the bonds, I thought that there was a chance that it would happen. And we could do the— we could do the reunion there, right. And Julia would do like some cool stuff, because I'm fuck'n all about women having power and agency in this world, obviously. For me, I thought it could go either way. If you did it, we could... I do not think it would have been... It would not have been difficult to find a way for her to have like some powerful effect, right? I have—

Justin: It would have removed a lot of the power from the ending, though.

Griffin: I think it would have— I think it would have been— I think it would have taken away something from the reunion at the end of the episode. So, that was the tradeoff. Like we could either do it then and have like a cool reunion thing there, and like a cool moment of Julia doing some badass stuff. And then maybe the ending wouldn't hit quite as hard as I think it absolutely did, thanks to that incredible song by Reeder. The song just called "Julia." Which by the way, that was a tricky thing to include in the show and attribute without giving the moment away. Or we could just like— you could just not do it and we do have that sort of powerful—

Travis: Well, to the thing, the convention of the bond summons was tricky. Because I was still trying to play strategically, while also thinking story wise.

So like, I will say that as far as did I consider... It really didn't occur to me because just from a storytelling perspective, that was not the right time for that reunion. Like it just, we wouldn't have felt— It would have felt forced.

Justin: And I bet at least subconsciously you had faith that Griffin was going to resolve—

Travis: 100%, yeah.

Justin: Yeah. Okay, here's a question from Eva. Somebody's got that highlighted and I can't— Okay, it was me. Dad, did Merle ever try to resolve things with Hecuba?

Clint: No, I don't think so. I really don't.

Travis: Merle's estranged wife.

Justin: Okay.

Clint: Here's the thing, one of the things we tried to show in the like the second half of the whole arc, was that Merle was trying to be a better dad. But Merle was a horrible husband.

Griffin: Yeah.

Clint: It was better to try to forge something new with his kids. And by the way, thanks to the one person who pointed out that Mavis was actually his stepdaughter.

Griffin: Yeah, yeah.

Clint: And Mookie was his child.

Griffin: Right.

Clint: And that he was— but he was still trying to be a dad to both of 'em. And that was... I think we both— Well, I don't know about Griffin, but that

happened kind of spur of the moment. But, you know, I think we needed a father's perspective somewhere in there.

Justin: It was weird. It was so weird how many things in the show are spur of the moment things. And there was a lot of things— and this is a weird— I've never experienced this in other creative works. But a lot of times I opened my mouth on this show and my thought was, "I hope this is true." Because like that— A lot of the stuff, especially early on, we were just saying whatever dumb shit came to our heads. And we never really stopped that impulse, we just have like more footing. And like, I had to have a lot of faith in them, but also myself, that like the things that I'm saying are— I hope the things that I'm saying are true.

Griffin: But they always were. And that's one of the things that I think was great about the story we told, was like, it always was true. If you said it, it was true, that's kind of how D&D works.

Justin: Right, but at the same time, true to the narrative of what we were making and true to game. And also, you have to remember like, I've been in Taako's skin for 3 years. So like, there's stuff that I hope it's true to the beginning of the story and the things he has said. You know, it is impossible to have a canonical sort of like understanding of everything he has said at every point in the story. But there were times when we couldn't do... I'll highlight one example that I can think of, when we were supposed to... what looked like turn on the Bureau of Balance.

Griffin: Yeah! God, that was such a tricky episode.

Justin: It was really hard because—

Clint: And you and I— Background, Justin and I record in the same room.

Justin: Right.

Clint: And so you know, we don't make a lotta eye contact or anything like that. But I think we were both—

Travis: Just in life, they never look at— it's very bad.

Clint: Well, we don't look at people. But that was a very weird moment 'cause you know, I felt like we were being led in one direction, but it just didn't feel right.

Justin: And we had to stop and tell Griffin, like hey, "I understand the story needs to go here, but you're going to have to give us something more because we don't feel it."

Griffin: That moment was kind of like a lot of my fears as DM and like storyteller for this podcast, kind of realized in that I kind of understood like, I haven't... I have not set this up maybe enough. I do not know that I have necessarily earned this thing. Because ultimately, I wasn't asking you to turn on the Bureau of Balance and Lucretia and like, betray them. And if you thought in that moment that like Lucretia was gonna be the final boss or whatever, I could understand your trepidation. Bcause I didn't— we definitely didn't earn that. I was trying to set up kind of a different thing of just like, "I want you all to investigate this thing a little bit deeper." But I think I made it feel like the other thing just because I didn't necessarily set that up enough.

Travis: Well and—

Justin: It is also the reason—

Travis: And that's why it was so interesting, just from my point of view. Of like taking Magnus, who was maybe the most lawful good of the three of them, and then investing like... starting I think in Eleventh Hour, like nope, you're a Red Robe. And there's a whole bunch of shit you don't know about, and you have to break your own rules to figure it out and—

Griffin: That was super hard. Just to complicate things even further, because Magnus I think did have that. Magnus did have that context. Magnus did want to investigate, and Taako and Merle did not. And I think that led to some interesting friction. And ultimately, I love the way that it turned out. Because what happened was, especially with Taako, Taako's reasoning didn't turn to, "All right, let's fuck'n..." I don't— His thing wasn't, "Okay, I don't trust the Bureau of Balance, let's find out what's going on."

Taako turned to, "I don't trust anyone." And that was such an interesting character thing to then work back from in the finale. And I think it made— if you think about all that stuff happening in the same day, I think it makes a lot of the moments in the finale like a lot more powerful. And Taako goes from like, "Fuck everything," to, "I'm going to save everything." Like, it's— I think it was a good payoff.

Justin: And then also, moments like that are why the accusations that I sometimes see on Reddit— What's up, Reddit— of like railroading from Griffin ring hollow because we could not be railroaded into something we didn't want to do. I mean like, we create collaboratively and with guidance from Griffin. But if it's something that didn't make sense for our characters or the story, we just wouldn't fuck'n do it.

Griffin: Yeah.

Justin: While we're talking about Reddit, a lot of people talk about Homestuck all the time. I don't know what that is. And people have basically said this is just like, "This is just like Homestuck, this is directly lifted from Homestuck." I have no fuck'n clue what Homestuck is!

Griffin: I know some of— I know a little bit. I read like a little bit of the beginning of Homestuck and I—

Justin: Do not @ me!

Griffin: Well, I thought I understood what it was, but then I read like a wiki roundup of what it is. And it's like oh no, it's completely different from what I thought it was. But as far as I can tell, it is also like a... a piece of fiction that dealt a lot with like, alternate reality stuff and multiverse stuff. And—

Travis: And it was the first piece of media to ever do that.

Griffin: Well, no. But I think it was a very popular piece of media that did that for a web audience that has a lot of crossover between ours and their audience's. Also, it apparently ends with a lesbian wedding between two characters, like that is also the ending of it. So like, okay. Yeah, I guess

there are some parallels. But there were a lot of people— I really— This stuff does not bother me at all 'cause it's— Every time we would put out a new episode it was like, "Oh, did you take that from..." When we did the robot kingdom Stolen Century episode, people were like "Ooh, somebody's been playing Nier: Automata." And that's like, I haven't played it yet. But—

Justin: And that's not to say like— and that's not to try— Like, I know we probably sound defensive at this point. But it's really— Because there are many things that it's like, "Oh, was that— " Like, okay, when I called my assistant on the show um, on Sizzle It Up With Taako, when I decided his name was Sazed. That's because I was reading—

Griffin: Yeah, straight up.

Justin: ... The Mistborn Series at the time. And that was a character that I really liked from that show. And I was like, "Ah, yeah. Here's a little something for you." So yeah, I do that sometimes. Just not in this exact instance.

Griffin: I'm not defensive about it, at all. Because I can't be defensive about it, because I did pull a lot of inspiration from a lot of different things when we were making the story. And I try to be really forthcoming when we talk about that stuff, right? Like Crystal Kingdom was inspired by, I was getting into the Alien series. And so, I wanted to make sort of a sci-fi, you know, monster hunt kind of thing.

And Petals to the Metal was all Fast and the Furious, because I just gotten into that series when we were watching that. So like, it really doesn't bother me. There are a ton of parallels, as far as I can tell, between Adventure Zone and Homestuck. But like, I just have not... It was not as enormous an inspiration as I think people thought it was, just because I... It sounds really cool and I know some cool folks who have worked on it. But I just— I don't know that much about it.

Clint: I think it'll be connected to this, can we read— Can we do the question from Gull... Gullshreik?

Griffin: Yeah, we can bounce around this list, I don't see why— we don't need to— Okay.

Justin: Was there anything that was discussed for story or character development that happened in advance?

Clint: Okay... Never, right?

Griffin: Yeah, never. You're talking about like did we have a call when we were not recording. And were like, "Okay, well what if..." No.

Clint: No. No, we did not. And I've seen that a couple of different times. And I think that is— also ties in with what you were talking about before. Because we did not discuss what was coming. If it ever happened, it was in the vaguest of generalities where Griffin would say, "You're gonna have to make some tough choices," or something you know along those lines.

Travis: Well, there was stuff like the items that we crafted, right? During Stolen Century, where Griffin would send us the mechanic and say like, "Think about what you like," or—

Clint: Right.

Travis: Or something along the lines of like—

Griffin: But never story stuff because I... I cannot stress this enough. Nobody knew the things that I had planned. Like, Rachel didn't know. Like, I didn't tell Rachel. I didn't tell you guys, I didn't tell anybody. Which I talked about in the last one, was like a really isolating thing that I kind of struggled with. Because I had no idea whether or not this stuff was going to pay off like I thought it would in my mind. But I really wanted those moments where it's like, "Hey Magnus, you're a red robe. Hey Taako, you've got a twin sister."

And that led to some— I think we were figuring it out on the fly how to respond to that stuff. I know when we started Stolen Century, like Justin actually had some struggles with the fact that there was this major character in his life that I had sort of kept hidden this whole time. And how do I like all

of a sudden, since we're in the past, like have this character be very, very important to me when I know virtually nothing about them, by virtue of like how—

Justin: Well, and it was also— It was also this feeling of like, I have envisioned an entire life for this character... But if I had kind of had my head on a bit more of a swivel, I would have realized that like that is exactly what Taako went through. I mean, it's exactly what— Taako had his reality shattered by this realization.

Griffin: It was so important to me not to take that away from Taako. And we— Straight up, when we recorded the first episode of *Stolen Century*, when we were about five minutes in, we had to stop. And we talked for maybe a half hour. This is maybe the most of... this is maybe the most— this thing that you asked about. Where we stopped for a half hour, we stopped recording. And we just like hashed it out.

Because I super didn't want to take away Taako's like independence and Taako's you know, backstory of just like you know, sort of fighting for every scrap he could get his hands on, because it informs so much about Taako. And I think you thought by me introducing Lup, that I had taken all that away. And there were a lot of people who were super critical of the fact that I had done that, who thought the same thing. And I can't stress enough, like that was not my intention, and I don't think that's what introducing Lup did. It was just like you both went through this stuff and you were both—

Justin: Well, and I was also a little worried that it's like, well now we have two Taakos. You know, like the— But at the same time— But as we got to know her, obviously Lup is very different from Taako, which is very cool. And that leads us excellently into this question from Laura Kate Dale. "At what point in developing the show, Griffin, did you decide to have Lup be a trans character? And how did feedback end up? I loved her."

Griffin: So, pretty early on, I knew that Lup was going to be a trans character. And—

Travis: Can I ask a preface to it? When did you know Lup was going to exist? I'm curious about that. When did you decide Taako would have a sister?

Griffin: Yeah, I guess I can talk about that first. A lot of people were like, well did you know when Taako took the umbrella from the Red Robe that it was Lup? And the answer was like no, not at that point, I didn't. I knew that character was a Red Robe, and all of the pieces kind of came together when I figured out who it would be. And I matched up the fact that like Lup made the Phoenix Fire Gauntlet, so that's why she was there. And that answered a lot of questions about that.

I don't— when Lup— when I figured out Lup was gonna exist again, I think it was about Crystal Kingdom, when I figured out who all the Red Robes were gonna be. As for Lup being a trans woman, I knew pretty early on. I kind of struggled with it because I wanted to— it was really important to me that I tried to do a good job of that. And because I know that particular form of representation is— there have been a lot of examples of that sort of not being so great. And I did not want to be just another sort of bullet point on a very long list of you know, bad trans representation in fiction.

And I get kind of uncomfortable, if I'm being honest, like talking about this. Because it is a thing that I stressed out about, because there... A lot of that comes from the fact that this is our first time doing fiction, so like making good characters of any sort of type is a tricky thing. And I'm uncomfortable with the idea of like saying like, "Yeah, we crushed it!" So, Travis actually put out a tweet saying like, "We wanna have, you know, trans characters on the show. Will you please message us and tell us like what is important to you in how we handle that."

And we got a shit ton of feedback and Travis shared that with me. And I went through all of it, and it was all super, super helpful. I read a few things online from some trans authors who were talking about like, "Here's how to have a good trans character on the show, here's like a bunch of shitty pitfalls to avoid." And so, I tried to be like, really, really, really thoughtful about that stuff in creating Lup. And then also, like everything I did as Lup, I tried to view it through that like particular lens, so that I could try to do as good a job sort of realizing her as I possibly could.

And the feedback was really, really good, I think. Like across the board, the feedback was great, and Lup is one of like peoples' favorite characters. And so like, I feel really good about how it turned out. If only because like, I know that I was trying to be as thoughtful as I possibly could in including this character, whose life experience is completely different from my own. Which is always like a really, really tricky thing when you're doing fiction.

Travis: And I would also like to say just to sum up the bulk of the responses we got ahead of time, when we asked like, "Hey, we're gonna introduce this character and we need your input, we need thoughts," was pretty much like, "Okay, just introduce her, like you would any other character. Because— And let character develop over time. Just like you would any other character." And you know, when we introduce Johann, we don't sit there and give you a bullet point checklist of his, you know, of his sexuality and his background and his gender. We just introduce the character and then you get to learn about them over time.

Griffin: Yeah, I don't want it to sound like this was like, so hard, right? Because it really wasn't. Like once Lup was in the story and I knew... Like I had an idea of who she was, it wasn't that difficult. It was just something that I tried to be mindful of, you know, whenever I was playing as Lup, when I was inhabiting Lup. It really wasn't difficult. But I just really— God, guys, I just really didn't wanna fuck it up. I super didn't want to fuck it up.

Travis: It was so interesting to have a character that in my character's mind had not existed for the first like six or five arcs or whatever. And then suddenly in the Stolen Century was such an important guiding force that suddenly like kind of retroactively informed character dynamic and story in such an interesting way. All of them, I mean—

Clint: And relationships, too. Existing relationships.

Griffin: Yeah, sure.

Travis: I felt that way about Lucretia and Davenport, and Barry and Lup of suddenly like, "Oh, okay."

Justin: It all does start to make a lot more sense, it's funny how it colors retroactively that fact that like these three idiots made it as far as they did.

Travis: Mm-hm.

Justin: And what you learn from the Stolen Century is, it's because they had these other— like what you were seeing in the first five arcs, or six arcs I guess, is really an incomplete picture of like three sort of... the dullest knives in the IPRE drawer, trying to like muddle through on their own. And when you see how much better they are when surrounded by competent people. I do wanna say though, and this is something that like we've talked about privately, and I don't have a good answer for it, and I wish I did. But I think it's important to show that we're like— I think it's important to not try to pretend like we have all the answers.

We're about to head in to much— a few much shorter arcs. And something that I love about the Adventure Zone is that we— it has always had so many different points of view in terms of gender and sexuality and so many different perspectives from those characters. And we're back to it— But like, for Taako, it took me a long time before I was like sort of comfortable enough being Taako to like deal with those parts of his life. Because it's not my own experience and I wanted to do a good job of it. And I've talked about the struggles in previous TTAZZs. But... I don't have a good answer for how we do that in shorter stories and still do really well by it.

Griffin: Right.

Justin: And I don't have a good— I wish I did, but like I don't want it to feel like such a drive-by that it's like just sort of checking boxes, you know?

Travis: Yeah.

Justin: But I also don't want it to be, just four straight white dudes—

Griffin: Yeah, it's—

Justin: ... Being four straight white dudes. I really don't— we don't have good— a good answer for that.

Griffin: I think the short answer is like, it— this is something that is important to us and is also something that I recognize will be a little bit trickier to develop out in a much, much shorter format. Which is what we're gonna be doing for a little while here, once we get past the live shows that we kind of have in the can already. But it is something that is important to us moving forward, and I think was an important part of this world. And is absolutely something that is going to be present in the future of Adventure Zone stories.

Travis: I hope the character creation is more streamlined. I think like that's what we're bringing to it now is the character— And you know, we often reference that I wrote this huge backstory for Magnus. And I did, but that was all like you know, big epic story. But still, it took a long time to figure out what he was like in conversation, how he felt about you know, walking into a room. Like what did he... you know, does he have a sense of humor? Is he funny? Is he snarky? Is he boring? Is he— you know, all that stuff happened as we were playing it.

Clint: And TAZ: Knights is what I was thinking of as an example, 'cause I think we rolled up new characters. And while they weren't— You don't want 'em to be too well defined, 'cause then you have no journey to take, you got no story to take.

Griffin: Sure.

Justin: Right.

Clint: But, you know I really liked those three characters, and I liked the dynamic that came about from it.

Griffin: But on that subject though, like I don't know that in TAZ: Knights like, we got this idea of having a bunch of representative characters just because we didn't have a lotta time to work with. And like Justin said, it's not something that I want to feel forced ever— like we absolutely want to include characters that represent, you know, different folks. But like, that is a tricky thing to do. Representative fiction in general is a really, really difficult thing.

Like that conversation is very... it's very fraught. And it is really difficult to parse. There's like this conversation about the... deciding between you know, having representative characters or just speaking your own voice. And I... I think it's really, really difficult to do good representative characters. But it's also really important, because if we just spoke our voice, then all of our campaign would just be like four cishet white dudes. And I... I can't imagine that. Like I can't imagine that being the truth. We're bloviating a lot, but like this— we're gonna keep— we're gonna keep you know, trying to make a very inclusive world and do a better job of that.

Specifically about race. Like this was something that we have talked about before. Like we were not mindful of this at all when we started doing the podcast, because it was not a thing that we knew to be mindful about. We did not know that this show would mean this particular thing to folks. And so, when we started it was just like you know, I'm an elf. And that was like pretty much the extent of it. And now I think we know a lot more. And hopefully moving on to future arcs, we will be sort of better at this.

Travis: I have a quick question, I think Griffin could probably answer this one a lot faster. This is from Jeeves Bunny, and I also have been very curious about this. "In a past The The Adventure Zone Zone, Griffin mentioned a dark timeline for if Magnus had been tempted by the Temporal Chalice. What had been planned for that?"

Griffin: Oh, okay. So let me think. I thought Magnus was the only one that would maybe take the offer from the Temporal Chalice at the end of The Eleventh Hour Arc. And so, he was the only one that I kind of did plan like a dark timeline thing for. But basically, my idea was that we would then just like sort of hop onto a recording, just me and Travis, and record a little bit of like what life in this world, this happier world would be like.

And then eventually, Taako and Merle and Lucretia and whoever else would, by some magic or maybe Lucas technology, cross over into this world. Fuck'n Turn Left style, from that really great Doctor Who episode. And either convince Magnus that what he has done to their world is wrong and terrible. And also, in that sort of timeline convergence, I don't think Taako and Merle would know Magnus. And so, that would have been very difficult and—

Justin: Fuck, I'm glad we didn't have to thread this—

Clint: Whew.

Griffin: And then either like Magnus would have to give up on this world, which I think would be a tough putt. Or Merle and Taako and Lucretia would have to get that fuck'n cup back. And I— this—

Travis: Y'all welcome.

Griffin: I fully, fully expected Magnus to take it. Like I had prepped a lot for this. I thought Magnus was going to take it and I thought that it was going to lead to some pretty dark stuff. And I thought Magnus was dead. I thought Magnus was gone.

Clint: And you can hear in Griffin's voice, I think, a little bit of surprise when he didn't.

Justin: It's... lets see...

Travis: That's 'cause I'm the best! [laughs]

Clint: You're the best.

Justin: Travis rules.

Griffin: What was the other thing like this that we could talk about?

Travis: So, the next question from Ella, "What was going to happen if the gang hadn't gotten Magnus's spirit back before it was sucked into the Astral Plane, during The Suffering Game?"

Clint: Well, we can answer— Listen, I have an answer for this that also at least would answer—

Griffin: How do you have an answer for this?

Clint: Well, because— Well, not exactly. Casper Marie wanted to know, “What were the lines/moments that have stuck with you the most?” And that is one of mine, the Arms Outstretched—

Griffin: Arms Outstretched, yeah.

Clint: Arms Outstretched, to me, was— that was another time where I got teared up because we— just the reaction and everybody working together, and the unity of it. And I... Griffin and I, we have never talked about this, but I got the impression that that one came out of left field for you.

Griffin: Yeah it absolutely did. And I think that there was this— the reason for me that moment was so powerful was because I think we all had this dawning realization that the three of you were... not going to do what I had planned. All of us were like slowly realizing like, “Okay, this thing is about to change because of your agency. Because of your power in this world.”

Clint: And not just in the, “Lets fuck Griffin over like we have in the past—”

Griffin: No, no, no, it absolutely wasn’t coming from like a mischievous place.

Clint: Uh-uh.

Griffin: It was just like, “No, you know what? Fuck this. And I’m going to save my friend.” And I think that that was really cool. To answer the question of like what would have happened in the Spirit World, I had this idea of like a simultaneous across two planes sort of fight that would happen where Merle and Taako would be taking on Magnus’s body with Edward inside of it, and Lydia’s lich form. While at the same time Magnus and Kravitz would be sort of fighting against the Hunger in the Astral Plane.

And we would get a lot of— We would get a bunch of development there about sort of— because at that point Magnus would be dead, so there would be more... there would be sort of an easier way for me to roll out the returning memories, because the Voidfish doesn’t affect dead people. And also sort of fleshing out Kravitz a little bit more, and also fleshing out the Hunger a little bit more.

Travis: Everyone's gonna be so sad.

Griffin: Well, no, no, no—

Travis: Including myself. I would have loved to have seen a fight with like Magnus and Kravitz, like back-to-back fighting. Oh God, it would have been badass.

Griffin: Don't get me wrong, it would have been really, really cool. I would not trade in the Arms Outstretched moment for anything.

Clint: Nope, nope.

Griffin: For anything. I know there's a lot of people who are gonna go online and be like, "Oh Travis, why did you do that?" I would beg you not to do that, because for me, Arms Outstretched established a tone that would literally carry the rest of the show through the finale. The rest of the show would not have been what it was. Because I reworked some stuff after Arms Outstretched. The rest of the show would not have been what it was without that moment. It was too powerful.

Justin: Well, and it— I think Arms Outstretched was also one of the moments where I let... There seems to be— if you look at Taako, broadly speaking, like holistically, it might seem like there's inconsistencies in his self-serving attitude and the sort of strength of his connections to people. And I hope that it came across, the extent to which it was a put-on. I mean like, you could listen to what he says about being self-serving. And certainly some of his actions early on like, not going into the Bubble City, stuff like that, the 'Taako's good out here' stuff, like, would certainly seem to reinforce that.

But like, he does for— he is hungry for connection and he does want— and he is like— You have to remember that like, even if he says like this is a— this is... you know, he's in it for himself or whatever, these two other guys are literally, at that point in the story, the only thing he had in the world. Like obviously, he had a connection with Kravitz.

Griffin: For sure.

Justin: And like... Anyway, that's Taako.

Griffin: So, that was a question we got from a lotta people. I wanna do real quick a speed round, and I think we could answer a bunch of questions that compromise maybe 95% of the questions that we received.

Travis: Yes.

Griffin: We got a lot of questions that sort of asked us to add to the lore of the world or add to the canon of the story, and I'm really hesitant to do that for so many reasons. Like the largest of which being, I like that the story is done and the story is a contained thing that we can point back to. And so, I don't want— I don't want this episode to be like, "Oh, you got to listen to The The Adventure Zone Zone if you want the full picture."

I also want like— there's a lot of stuff that kind of popped up in the fandom, of fanon, and there's a lot of sort of like debate about that inside of certain communities. That I like, I don't know as much about, and so I do not want to stumble into it and like make it big thing. But I think that there is some stuff that we can kind of clear up really quickly and answer some of the more common questions that we got. The first of which being, "Travis, is Steven okay?"

Travis: Griffin, did you not edit into the episode like I told you to?

Griffin: Oh no, I forgot, yeah.

Travis: I literally said, I texted Griffin, "Oh no, I forgot to mention Steven. I'm going to be tweeted about this forever."

Griffin: Yeah, yeah.

Travis: And Griffin responded, "I will edit something into the episode about it."

Griffin: Yeah, I forgot, sorry.

Travis: And then you did not, ugh! Steven is okay.

Griffin: Okay great. Was Angus—

Travis: Griffin, did Steven pass away and move to the Astral Plane?

Griffin: Yeah, I think you had Steven in the Astral Plane, for eternity.

Justin: That must have been quite the shock for Julia I assume. “What the fuck is this?”

Griffin: Yeah. It’s a fish.

Justin: “What is this now that’s in my house?”

Griffin: I know what I said about fanon and not wanting to step into it, but I have to address this, “Was Angus a silver dragon the whole time?” That was maybe my favorite fan theory, it came out of the—

Travis: I never heard this?

Griffin: So, the idea was that like Angus was— we never found out about Angus’s parents and there was like— there was a lot of jokey-joke stuff about like him being super, super powerful in the train arc. And him being like... There’s some reference to him being ageless or something like that, and he also had a hoard? Right, he had a hoard of silverware. And so, people wanted to know if Angus was a silver dragon the whole time. I dunno, I’m actually gonna leave this one unanswered. [chuckles]

Justin: Griffin wanted to read your question but not answer it. Griffin, describe to them—

Griffin: This was not something that I thought of, but I think it’s such a... I don’t know, I like the idea of it a lot. And so, I’m gonna leave that one blank. “Was Kravitz related to the Wonderland liches?” This one came out of a lot of people saying— because I said that the... the liches in Wonderland had a brother named Keats and... who passed away, and that sort of lead them

down this dark path. And when people talked about that, I think they thought I was— A lot of the stuff I've seen spelled Keats, K-E-E-T-Z. And so, it was like, well that's kind of like Kravitz. And maybe that's who that was, but I—

Justin: Could be a nickname or something.

Griffin: Right, but Keats is like a... I was thinking I guess of John Keats, the poet. So like K-E-A-T-S. I don't know how it turned into K-E-E-T-Z. But no, that was not... that was not sort of my intention.

Travis: Can I ask one more quick attached to that, Griffin?

Justin: This is a bad speed round.

Travis: I know but you offhandedly said that Kravitz's hand was warm during the wedding?

Griffin: Yeah...

Travis: Was that a part of a bigger reveal that now he's alive? Or—

Griffin: No, I think it was just love.

Travis: Okay.

Griffin: The power of love. "Who was the true love in exile in Crystal Kingdom?" That was in one of the verses. For me, that idea— because I used a lot of like plural pronouns when talking about... whenever Legion talked about itself. Because it was like hundreds and hundreds and thousands of souls. And that like— And like Maureen's shell housed a lot of those whenever it sang these songs. Like it was sort of a community of people singing about people that they, you know, were sort of cut off from in the... in the um Astral Plane. So, that was that.

Justin: What was— Okay, this is one we get a lot, and one we've actually had to talk about recently.

Travis: [chuckles]

Justin: "What was insert-character-here's last name?"

Griffin: I don't... I'm fine with not every character having a surname. I like this idea, but at the same—

Justin: We have said by the way during the show, that Taako's last name is taco spelled differently. I do not think that is accurate. I think that—

Travis: No, I think that was the joke I made.

Justin: A funny joke that Travis made.

Travis: It was so interesting to me to see people asking about Hurley's last name, where I always thought that Hurley was the last name. Like, wasn't she Detective Hurley or something?

Griffin: Lieutenant Hurley, yeah. I think just... I think Hurley was her name. Her name was just Hurley.

Travis: Captain Captain Bane is still my favorite name.

Griffin: Yeah, his name was Captain Bane, and he just happened to become a Captain in the organization.

Justin: "What if Merle had picked up the Umbra Staff?"

Clint: Yeah? The whole Merle losing his magic powers 800 times wouldn't have had the same effect.

Travis: Only happened the once, though? Dad, if you remember.

Clint: But it lasted forever!

Travis: I know, it did seem like Merle didn't have magic through a lot of the campaign. [chuckles]

Clint: Well, that's 'cause what he did have, he didn't know how to use.
[chuckles]

Travis: Yeah...

Griffin: Yeah, I mean, the short answer is he wouldn't. He... I don't think he ever... I don't think he ever was going to. Like, that was Taako's thing. And luckily, the dice were very helpful in this part, where... just, Taako didn't. But like— or Merle didn't get it. But like, I would have had to figure out some bullshit way for— Like, this was Taako's staff. Like, this was the cool staff I had envisioned for Taako, and obviously became a bigger thing because his twin sister was up in there. But yeah, I... this is one of my bullshit things. Like, that was Taako's staff. It was Taako's to get.

Justin: I don't know what some of these are referencing, so I'm just gonna say—

Griffin: Yeah, sure. So—

Justin: Did they get their bracers off?

Griffin: I think yeah. I think once you switch over to the Bureau of Benevolence, like the sort of ironclad agreement that was required by the Bureau of Balance to make sure that like defectors didn't happen, was just not a thing. And so, people could take their bracers off.

Travis: I will establish canon, Magnus kept his. 'Cause hey, free bracer.

Griffin: Yeah, sure. The code on Lucretia's door, there was a puzzle in the last episode of the Reunion Tour thing. Where to get into Lucretia's office, there was like a puzzle. There was a keypad with seven digits in it and you had to punch something in. This is really grimdark and I'm really glad that you just hole-threw your fuck'n way through it. But the idea is that I thought you would just punch in a random string of numbers, and it would let you in. And that number would have been the number of people from your home plane that got consumed by The Hunger. And like that number, that like population number would be something that like somebody kind of could not forget about.

Clint: So at least a million, probably.

Griffin: Yeah, probably

Justin: In the seven digits for sure.

Griffin: Yeah. So, I'm glad that it didn't necessarily go that way. There's also one on here that Justin skipped, "Did Lup get her \$15 back from Greg Grimaldis?" And all I wanna say about that is Justin texted me something last night about that, that I'm very excited about. So...

Justin: Okay, good.

Griffin: We're not gonna get any deeper into it.

[ad read]

Griffin: I have a call to action here in the Jumbotron space. This one is... I really want you to... I'm sorry, I have to read the exact ad copy here, which is fuck with ghostfruits.com. The website is ghostfruits.com, not fuckwithghostfruits.com. The fuck with part is sort of just like a... a request. "Hey? Hey, you. Go fuck with ghostfruits.com." They are a group of collaborating artists, producing web comics, art, mixed media and music, encompassing off-beat, surreal, but organic stories. "We make everything, constantly. Realest, dearest, worst." A ringing endorsement for ghostfruits.com. [chuckles] Hey, can you do me a favor? Maybe go fuck with them real quick.

I have another personal message, this one's for Lia and it's from Charlie, Francis, Josh, Kelly and Rachel. And they all say to Lia, "Congratulations on running your first game of D&D! We've had a lot of fun as Gin, Mariaal, Phil, Tirick (or Ti-rick), and the Professor. I hope we continue murdering—" Oh, sorry. [chuckles] "I hope we continue helping storm giants." Not murdering them, please don't murder the storm giant. "And sailing the skies in our murder boat—" Okay, so that's where that came from.... "For a long time to come." Murder boat is... I'm just gonna write that down, season two, murder boat, storm giant... Okay, got it.

[ad read]

Justin: Are there any other questions on here that we want— Oh, here's one. Griffin, "Were there any character interactions or scenes that you never got to, that you wish you had more time for?" And this is directed at Griffin, but I will say that like, I... I really enjoyed any time that Taako and Angus spent together. And I feel like there's a lot of these— And it's part of what makes it good, right, that we don't exhaust all of these possibility threads to the point where they get like, boring. But like, I will say that I was loath to leave any scene that was like Taako and Angus, because I thought—

Griffin: Yeah, for sure.

Justin: That that was so— that was such a fun relationship.

Griffin: But there were a lot Taako and Angus-like relationships that could have happened in this world, right? Like, I think Magnus and Carey's friendship boiled up because of Magnus wanted to become a rogue. And so it was like, "Oh, okay. Well, I know who you can train with." And then that thing sort of turned out from there. A lot of my... a lot of my sort of regrets on this particular subject are about Stolen Century. I feel like maybe I didn't do enough with Davenport with you all. And that just happened to boil up because of the actions that you decided to take in each cycle.

I feel like you could have all done more with each other, with a few exceptions. Like I was happy with how much Taako and Lup interaction there was. But yeah, I think I could have done more with Davenport. I think I could have done more with Lucretia in those things. Like particularly, I would have liked to explore Lup and Lucretia's friendship a little bit more. But that just... I'm very hesitant to... Whenever I do a scene that's just two NPCs interacting that you all are not involved in, like that is... I'm inherently like not inviting you all to the party a little bit.

And so, I try to be kind of— I try to limit that and only use it when I think it really needs to be delivered. And I think it needed to be delivered a little bit more with some of the characters in Stolen Century. So, that's where most of my regrets come from. I would have liked to have had more stuff with

Kravitz I think, because we went a long time without seeing him. But again, that was partially because of what happened in the end of Wonderland.

Travis: I would like to answer some quickly. Let's see how quickly— I know we haven't done it up to this point—

Justin: Yeah, but really quickly.

Travis: Yeah, Matt asks, "If you could have kept the bond summoning for one more round in the last battle, who would you have picked next?" I had in my head I wanted to bring back Hodge Podge, the robot from the Lucas laboratory. But I couldn't quite figure out how to do it and have it— like what to ask Hodge Podge for? But I thought that would have been really fun. But instead, I went with the power bear on the last round. But I did have Hodge Podge in my head.

Clint: I really wanted to... to have [chuckles] one of the characters that Stewart, Dan or Elliot played, from Flophouse. But—

Griffin: Yeah, I think I cut that out. Yeah, I think I edited that out. You originally called in—

Clint: Elliot. Elliot's character.

Griffin: ... Scales. But what we decided was you had never met Scales, actually, in the flesh.

Clint: Yeah...

Griffin: And so, we cut it. Here's one from Barizard, "Who really was Jeffandrew?" There were a lot of people who thought that this was a self-insert of me.

Travis: Was it not? I thought it was.

Griffin: I'm okay with that being it. It was super not how I thought about it. Like, when I was sort of figuring out the multiplane stuff and like the nature of existence in this world and sort of this show's— this world's philosophy

about like, existence, I really like this sort of recursive idea of just like everybody's making worlds all the time. Whether that world is a story or... I had set this up a little bit with like the Light of Creation not being from the gods, but the people who made the gods. And so like, this was that.

But those people who made this world and made everything had their world made by somebody, and those people had their world made by somebody, and then a sort of infinite chain. And that chain is like existence. I got sort of... I went pretty deep down the rabbit hole with that idea. And so like, Jeffandrew was this... just this person who collaborated to help make the world of this show. And I think it's not difficult to draw a direct line between like that idea, that philosophy and what we actually literally did. I think Travis tapped into this a little bit when he was like, "Oh, Gary Gygax?" When I mentioned they made the rules of this world and like you know... Wizards of the Coast made D&D and made the rules of D&D, is that who it was?

That was like... It was not my intention to like say that Jeffandrew was me, and I was referring to us making this world. But like I think that, by definition of the philosophy I just kind of laid out, I think that makes sense... But I super didn't want to do a self-insert—

Justin: Griffin, Kane asks, "Why did tacos give Taako magic energy?". I have an answer, but I wanna hear what your theory is.

Griffin: Yeah, so like, Istus's whole thing... I like the idea of thinking about, like, predestination and deities. And like if there's a deity who designs fate, is everything that happened in the podcast completely meaningless, because all of it was sort of the design of this deity? And the answer is no. My idea for Istus is that she does have sort of a design. And with... And bonds are sort of--there was a connection between like bonds are these white threads, that's how they're visually represented. And she is you know... she does... you know, celestial needlepoint, in a way.

And so, bonds are... they represent these connections that are extremely powerful in this world. We saw them being used to accomplish these like incredible things. Whether that was like... Roswell's creation was the result of a bond. And Hurley jumping into the vines and healing Sloane, like that was a bond. And so like, Istus has these designs, and tries to fulfill these

designs by giving out some power in some way to the people who are involved in the designs. And so, Taako and Joaquin's connection was part of this fate's design. And this moment where you, you know, cooked together and you ate this dish, represented sort of the culmination of this bond. And so, both of you received the power of the bond in a very, very like... a very powerful way.

Justin: Huh. Interesting. My theory was, by the way, that tacos are good.

Travis: [laughs] They're just really great.

Justin: Tacos taste very good.

Clint: That's really good. You three have grown up together. I—

Travis: What?

Clint: I have been with you the whole step of the way, we all know what each other can do. And we— the— What I love about the podcasts are that it's an extension of the dinner table at our house. Where everybody tried to outdo each other and impress each other, and it was a blast. But what was your first W-T-F moment, when we did this... And I'm gonna preface this by giving mine.

Travis: How do you mean?

Clint: When we did something that surprised even you. And the reason I'm saying this— maybe I can define it by example. The car race in *Petals to the Metal* was phenomenal. If you think about it, we described this amazing moment using just our words, just our story. And that is when I thought, "What the hell? What are doing? This is incredible!" That was the first W-T-F for me.

Travis: I actually felt mine way earlier than that, when Phandalin was destroyed. Because I remember in that moment, as Griffin is describing... Now, I'm thinking his name is Bogart. What's his name?

Griffin: Barry Bluejeans?

Travis: No, no, no—

Clint: Gundren?

Travis: Gundren!

Griffin: Gundren.

Travis: Gundren Rockseeker kind of going nuclear. And I was trying to figure out how to fix it, and what was the solution to it to save everybody. And then we couldn't. And suddenly, this arc where we had been very jokey and like making masturbation jokes throughout and you know, making these very juvenile jokes. We then climbed out of a well to see that like hundreds, maybe even thousands of people were now dead, because of our inability to defuse the situation. And like that was a really big like, "Oh, shit," moment for me.

Griffin: For me, it was the end of the Rockport Limited. That sort of conclusion to that sort of set an outline that I think a lot of the good moments that would follow, would follow? Of like, all of you working together and doing this really badass thing of like jumping off a moving train and Taako making it disappear at the last second. And then all of you having these pretty nice moments with the other characters that came off the train. That was when I was like, "Oh, okay. That ruled, and that's what the rest of the show's gonna be like."

Justin: Yeah, that was huge for me too, like as I cast that spell, I was thinking like, "Oh, wait. This is a satisfying conclusion. Oh, yeah."

Travis: [chuckles] We did it!

Justin: We did it. I think Hurley and Sloane's relationship and the way that scene culminated, obviously, it had its own sort of like... tropey baggage that we unpacked as the show went on and, and we learned from it. But I think the fact that those two characters had that relationship within the context of this podcast, I think was the first time I realized like... We've talked about this being a car that could fly, and I think that was the first

time for me that the car flew. And I was like, "Oh, shit? Wait, this thing can do that?" Like this tool has the ability to do that? I thought that was pretty wild.

Clint: And on a smaller level, "abra-ka-fuck-you" was a moment too.

Travis: Yeah, that was also really great.

Clint: That really was!

Griffin: Yeah, I have a question here—

Justin: Well, yeah man. I'm a great— like, yeah.

Griffin: [chuckles] I have a question here I really wanna get into because it's... I've also seen this, and I think that there has even been some sort of debate inside of this podcast about this. And so, I wanted to get into it. It's from Marisa who said, "One of the biggest debates I've seen in the fan-community has involved Lucretia. People have very strong feelings about her story. I'm pretty pro Lucretia while my friends are... not? So, I was curious about how the players and the characters, but most importantly you guys, feel about Lucretia now that everything's been revealed.

Was she a complicated person who made some poor decisions when she saw her friends in a desperate place, or someone who felt like she knew better than her friends and made choices for everyone that she had no right to make?" On this subject, as sort of the person who made Lucretia and sort of designed this story. In my mind, she was never a villain. Like I never... I never ever, ever, ever, ever thought of her, not even for a little bit as doing evil in this world. In my mind, like, I think Lucretia's probably my favorite character.

Especially because of the things that happened in the Stolen Century and her growth there and the way things changed. Like for me that growth was the most concrete growth that I think that any character went through in the entire show. And what I really tried to set up in the Stolen Century is that like this is a really tough thing you all were going through, and you all had different ways of dealing with it. And her way was very... was... perhaps

over-protective, right? And so, this thing that she did, she knew that you all were hurting. And she had this idea for how to solve it and everybody else's idea was different. And she thought that the idea that you all went with was... wrong. Was inherently wrong.

And so, she grew from being this character who was very much on the sidelines, writing about the things that other people were doing, and taking actions into her own hands. And simultaneously like, making her friends forget this like really, really difficult and painful ordeal that they all had gone through. So, in my mind she was... she was not evil. She was never ever, ever, ever the villain. But at the same time, I think that the way that you all sort of reacted to her actions in different ways was like, really interesting.

Travis: I think that what it comes down to, 'cause I think we ran into this a lot too. And honestly in games like D&D and stories like this, it's one of the hardest things for me. Is realizing that much like in real life, it's very rarely a yes or no, like good and bad way to do something. And so, I remember when we landed on the planet with the robots and we found the gem, and we had to decide like—

Griffin: Oh, yeah!

Travis: If we leave the gem and the Hunger consumes it, it will grow that much more powerful. But if we destroy it, we're basically killing life on this planet.

Griffin: Hey, let's talk about this. We re-recorded that bit. Cause, originally they destroyed the fuck'n world. They all destroyed the world and then flew away. And then that was the ending and we finished recording. And then almost like we hung up on the Skype call, and then like a minute later, we started texting like, "That sucked. That was not the tone of this show. That was not what we should go for."

Travis: I felt bad! Like I went downstairs and talked with Teresa afterwards and I was like, "That was wrong. The thing we did was wrong and I feel bad about it."

Griffin: It was not a situation where like you all made a tough choice and then regretted it, and then maybe that regret could have been like in the show in some sort of tangible way that would have been good. And so, we would trade that. This was like a, "This doesn't match the tone of the show, it doesn't match what these characters would actually do." It's just like, it is what happened. And it was wrong.

Travis: But that leads me to that feeling of like, it allowed me to relate to Lucretia in that way of like what she had to do, she didn't relish it. I don't think— The difference between a villain and a tragic hero, is a villain thinks that the wrong thing they are doing is right. And a tragic hero does the wrong thing because that is the only way they can see to do good. Like, it's a subtle difference, but I don't think Lucretia reveled in erasing people's memories.

I don't think she liked lying to her friends. I think it was— My take on it was it was very isolating and it was the hard thing to do. And that it's the only way she saw of her protecting her friends was to do the wrong thing, for the right reasons. And so I never— I actually see her as a very tragic figure. And that is why Magnus hugs her when he does. Is like this feeling of like, "I understand that the thing you had to do, you didn't enjoy, but you were trying to protect us." And if there's anyone that understands that, it's Magnus.

Justin: Okay, I... just to put a button on this real quick. This show— a lot of this show is about the power of stories and the way that people's stories impact you, and the power that those stories have to change things. And I think that Lucretia... from Taako's perspective, Lucretia robbed him of the most important story in his life. Without a 100% guarantee that she was going to be able to restore that. And like, Taako has impulses towards making connections, like I've talked about. But like, Taako's not a hero. Taako would watch the world burn if it meant, like, the people he cared about, really cared about, were safe and protected. And—

Griffin: And Lucretia approached this situation from the exact polar opposite sort of, sort of viewpoint.

Justin: Exactly, right. But like, she wasn't losing a sister in the deal, Taako was. And I think that like that imbalance is where Taako's distrust came from. And like, I'm here to tell you, I do not know if that will ever... I don't know like— we're not like... filling in plot gaps or whatever. But like, from my perspective, I don't think that... it probably softened over time, but I don't think the sting of that is something that Taako would ever sort of let go of, even though things worked out.

Griffin: I'm okay with that. I think it's really interesting that you all responded to the truth of the situation in different ways. And I don't think that it paints Lucretia with any kind of brush. And I think that people who say like... I think this idea of like, "Oh well, Lucretia's a bad person," or, "Lucretia's a villain," is sort of like looking at this situation as if it had an easy answer.

Justin: Yeah, it's very reductive.

Griffin: I tried to inject a lot of nuance into what she had to do. Because like, I think that's the only way that it makes sense with her character, because she's not an evil person. She's an incredibly good person who did this really, really, really, really difficult thing. And so, people who say— I got personally kind of frustrated because I had never thought of her as a villain, and I saw a lot of people who did. I think it is reductive to say like, "Oh well, she's evil because of what she did." And she's not. She just isn't.

Travis: I wanna jump back to a completely different thing. Dad mentioned the question from Casper about moments that really stuck with you. And like I just saw that as I was scrolling down. I wanna say the bank fight with... in Refuge, with Roswell, where we were trying to like find the book and say the code— basically, everything in the eleventh— I think Eleventh Hour was my favorite conceptual arc.

Griffin: Same.

Travis: Of the reset. But like that moment was such an interesting like, "What we are doing is wrong." Like I remember playing as Magnus and having to do bad stuff to move the story forward. And like, "Oh well, this is gonna reset. So, I guess I gotta deal with doing this terrible thing to this

nice person." And like, a lot of that was a really interesting kind of dichotomy of like, "How do I move the story forward and balance the fact that I know that I wouldn't do this if I was afraid of the ramifications." It was very interesting.

I was just gonna answer a quick question. Charlotte wanted to know, "Is Magnus allowed to bring his dogs on the Bureau's moon base?" And the answer is, the first thing Magnus trains his dogs not to do is to run off the moon.

Griffin: Run off the edge. It's very important. Here's a quick one from Lauren, "How much stop-down gets edited out? How many takes of each thing? It's wonderfully produced in a compact way. But when D&D is played, there are tons of stop-down moments, rules reading, and audio dull. Discussions about what to do next, what a character wants to do in particular, et cetera, et cetera." We edit a lot. I edit like a shit-ton out. And... I think in like the finale, we recorded probably close to three and a half hours. And I edited pretty much a full hour out of that. So, there's a lot. And there's a lot of people who hear that and are like, "Ah, come on, release the tapes." No, this thing is—

Travis: No.

Griffin: No fuck'n way. Not because we're embarrassed—

Justin: And it's not takes. It's not— the question was phrased that way, like how many takes of each thing? We're not actors, by trade, and well...

Griffin: So, yeah, you all didn't do that, you all didn't do that. But I did. A little bit. Especially in the later episodes, I recorded some sort of more monologuey stuff, that maybe I didn't have prepared when we started playing. And so, I recorded those in and dropped them in later. And I would take sort of multiple takes on that. Johann's line of, "You're gonna have to fight, and you're going to win." I worked on that for like 45 minutes. Like just doing 100 takes of it, because I really wanted the best delivery of it. Angus's—

Travis: But that's different deliveries. It's not like we were improvising different shit every time. It's not like Anchorman.

Griffin: Right, sure.

Justin: We never— I don't think we ever had to re-react to a thing that we had done before. Like, we never once did another take of something.

Travis: Except destroying the gem. Other than that—

Griffin: Except destroying the gem. That was—

Justin: Well, that was a different— I mean but like, that was a meaningful story change. We didn't like redo a moment. It was just changing how that moment went.

Griffin: Should we... There are a lot of other questions that we could talk about, but I know we kind of have to wrap up here. But do we want to spend some time talking about what we have planned for coming up? Because I really want folks to understand that we're not done doing The Adventure Zone.

Travis: Yes.

Justin: So, we're done doing The Adventure Zone.

Griffin: No, stop. So, we have two live shows that are gonna go up. Our live show in Austin, which was my sort of Persona a little bit inspired one, that... man, that one got really out of hand. And then the San Diego show, which was our... Oh, our take on the Tomb of Horrors. It was very— That one was like one of my favorites we've done live. So, we're gonna have those go up in a while. For the next, I guess, month, since this is biweekly.

And then, we're gonna start doing a bunch of different stuff. We're gonna be doing more short-form, probably two-to-three episodes long mini-arcs. That will be essentially... Well, I guess you could think of them as pilots. But really, it's gonna be us playing new games, taking turns DMing. I guess we have to say GM now, for playing non-Dungeons and Dragons stuff. GMing,

taking turns GMing, exploring new worlds and new genres. And part of that will be like us sort of searching for what we want to do for a longer thing, as like season 2.

But it's also like... going to like I think help us learn how to tell stories in this way. For me, I started listening to Friends of the Table, another actual play podcast I talk a lot about. And that was very— that was revelatory to me because it kind of like showed me what else you could do with actual play storytelling. And so, I think once we all kind of— And they play like other games that aren't D&D. And so, I think if we take some turns playing some non-D&D games and try telling other stories, we're gonna learn so much, regardless of what we end up doing for the next season. That will help us make that season better.

Justin: It's gonna be pretty experimental. And like—

Griffin: I'm worried, and we're all really worried about, right? We're all really nervous. 'Cause we made this thing that we love and we're so proud of and we know really resonated with people. And to move away from that into a new venture is like, really, really, really, really scary. And I hope everybody is as down with this idea as we are, 'cause I know the first time we put out a new episode in this new world with new games and new rules and new GM, there are gonna be—

Travis: And new characters.

Griffin: And new characters. There are gonna be people who say like, "Ugh, This isn't as good." Or, "Ugh, I wish you would go back to the other thing." Or, "Ugh, I wish..." You know. Whatever we do for season two, whoever ends up GMing it, there are gonna be people who say like, "Ah, we should have done the other thing," or, "Oh, I wish somebody else was GMing, I thought that they had done a better job."

Clint: I don't think that's gonna happen for these mini-episodes.

Griffin: It's absolutely, absolutely going to happen.

Justin: It will definitely happen.

Clint: [laughs]

Travis: And let me just go ahead and say, if you complain enough, we will just go back to the old characters and the old story. So, make sure you tweet at us a lot.

Griffin: Travis, I— God, Travis, you are... That's not true. It's not true.

Clint: [laughs]

Griffin: What Travis just said is not true. This story's done. And I don't want to touch it. I love it. I love— We have this thing now, and it's finished. And for the rest of our lives, it's finished, and we have it, and it's done, and I'm so proud of it.

Travis: Can I say, on a side separate note to that point, I had a child over the course of recording The Adventure Zone— The Adventure Zone: Balance. And like the idea that in a couple years, when she's older, I can play this for her, as like this thing I made?

Griffin: It's really special.

Travis: That we made, it's very important to me and it means a lot.

Griffin: And it's done. And so, we have to move on. We have to try new stuff, we have to do this new stuff. And I hope that you all give us the benefit of the doubt, and understand that we're going to be improved just by playing this stuff. Even if it doesn't work out. If we do a two or three episode arc, and we hit the end of it, and we're like, "Oh, you know, it never really clicked and we didn't really like it." We hope you understand that like, we will be better now, because we have tried that thing.

There is no downside to this experimentation that we are gonna be doing, 'cause I really think it's gonna result in us having a super clear picture of what we want the next thing to be. And starting out with that clear picture, which we did not have in Balance, is going to lead to a story that I cannot fucking wait to get into.

Justin: And I would— And then that benefit of the doubt, what I would say is this; we will of course as always like listen to what y'all are saying. And I'm anxious to hear— You know, once we get somewhere that we're happy with, like of course I'm anxious to hear what people think of it. And like, use that feedback to sort of help us guide whatever. But like, the two things I would say about that is one, please understand that it is gonna be us experimenting. And I would ask you to try to be respectful of that. The fact that you are hearing experimentation and not the finished product, as like— It is not going to be on the level that Balance was towards the end.

Griffin: It just won't. Yeah.

Justin: It just took a long, long, long time to get there. So like, please try to keep it constructive, is what I would say. And also, please understand that like whatever we do moving forward and whatever, like this is not a public voting process. There is no like— we are not— you know, "51 votes for this thing, 50— 49 votes for this other thing. Okay, we do the 51 votes thing." That's not in any way what's happening. So, don't feel like you need to weigh in to make your voice heard, so we'll— Like, it's not—

Griffin: Understand how messy that would get for us, as creators and also family members. Like, we all try to approach this thing from an ego-free standpoint. And so like, the introduction of like a, well... The introduction of like—

Clint: Some of us.

Griffin: Whoever's thing that gets the most votes is gonna be the next thing, that can't— What we are going to do is the thing that we are most excited about, that we think is gonna lead to the best story.

Justin: And it may— and it may not be. I would argue that like the best version of this may be that like the second season of The Adventure Zone is not... one of these sort of like mini things that we do. I like the idea that like maybe the mini things are things like Knights that we can return to and revisit, and that sort of thing. But like not necessarily going to be those show— It's like not necessarily going to be these stories either. So like, I

understand what a big ask that is to... If you've been listening to the show for a long time— And we have talked candidly, like we understand that like, we will lose some people. Like there will be some people who wanna bounce. And if you're listening to this, I hope that's not you, and I hope that you'll hang in there with us. But like we understand that like— And you know what? Honestly, that's fine. I'm really happy with Balance. I'm really proud of it. And if that's all you wanted and you wanna move on to other stuff, like completely get it. Like, we— I—

Griffin: Justin's not being snide, and we are not being snide when we say that. It is the truth. Not all stories are gonna resonate with the same people. And so like, if you do not like the next thing and you want to go, like I fucking completely, completely totally understand that. I absolutely get it. I'm not being shitty when I say that. It is—

Justin: I would say though, don't do that, because it's gonna get pretty buck wild. And you do definitely wanna be on board for how buck wild it gets.

Clint: And let me also say, wait a minute, on the other side of the coin, just for a second. Let me say as the dad, it's still us. It's still the four of us telling stories and the things that we brought to the table in Balance—

Justin: For now. There's some contract stuff that we're—

Travis: Yeah, we're still trying to work that out.

Clint: Why don't you ever tell me about that?

Travis: I have a big ask, frankly. Like, I'm— If you want me back? Ugh! I will say, I'm especially nervous 'cause I'm building mine from scratch.

Griffin: Yeah, Travis is making a game for a western arc, right?

Travis: Yeah, and let me also say that there will be a lot of— once again— people saying like, "Oh, that's very similar." I don't that I'm like reinventing the wheel. I don't think that mine is a standalone thing. But I like had an idea for a story I wanted to tell and couldn't find the perfect thing. So

instead, I came up with the story I wanted to tell, and now I'm building mechanics around it, and building a set around it. So, I'm—

Griffin: That's a big risky thing, and I know because I kind of made a game for Stolen Century and there are things I would go back and change. So like, this is what I'm talking about. If like for some reason, if the mechanics, if we hit the end of it, like, "Oh, there's stuff I would have changed about that game," okay. But we're still gonna be better. Travis is gonna be better because Travis is going to understand game systems in a way that is going to be like really, really, really informative.

Clint: Well, can— may I—

Griffin: Yeah, do— Dad, talk about your—

Justin: Very quickly, 'cause I have to go—

Clint: Can I talk about—

Justin: Yes.

Clint: Okay. Mostly because it's the worst-kept secret in the world, I had five people come up to me, five students come up to me during class yesterday and say, "So, you're the new GM, huh?" So, I'm gonna do the first pilot. It is going to be a superhero-based— Can I say the game system?

Griffin: Yeah, we're playing Fate.

Clint: We're gonna play Fate, we're gonna use the Fate system. So, it's— all new there. And the name of this arc, if you want to call it that, is TAZ: Commitment.

Justin: Commitment

Griffin. Commitment. I like that. I have two ideas. One is sort of a— one is in a game called Monster of the Week, that I wanna be kind of like Persona-based while still having sort of the monster hunt element of shows like Supernatural and stuff like that. In a town in West Virginia, that I'm very

excited about. And I have another story that I wanna do using a game called Uncharted Worlds that is kind of a post-Earth space opera about people who try to preserve the things that they want to preserve from Earth, that I think is gonna be really neat. Those are my two ideas right now.

Justin: I'm gonna do the greatest detective story ever.

Travis: Okay?

Justin: It's gonna be great.

Clint: Liveshows. Wanna mention liveshows real quick?

Griffin: Yeah. We got—

Justin: We already said— haven't we said that? Like, we're—

Griffin: I think so. We've got one coming up in November, and then— or October. And then we— in Nashville. And then we have another one coming up in Tacoma. Those will be Tres Horny Boys, and we'll keep doing that.

Justin: For the foreseeable future.

Griffin: But let's wrap up, 'cause Juice has to go. But I just wanna say, I've said it 100 times, thank you all so much for listening and for giving us this experience. Like, it's not— it's not a like... I don't want people to think about it in like a crass way. Like, "Oh, you all have helped our careers by making this show successful." You all helped me, like personally, because I didn't know that this was a thing that we could do. And now I do, and that experience, and having this finished thing, that was also really special to a lot of other people, like, that is the thing that matters to me and is going to matter to me for literally the rest of my life. Like, this show changed my life. And that is in large part thanks to the community that sort of grew up around it. So, thank you all so, so, so much.

Travis: I think I grew creatively, not just from doing the show, but from how people reacted to it and the feedback they gave. And it taught me a lot about being a creator and what that can mean to people. The things that

you create and how important those things can be to people, was way more informative to me than any actual thing that happened in the story, was learning about the impact the story had on others and the kind of responsibility of that. So yeah, thank you everybody for listening and being a part of it so far.

Clint: And I made a whole bunch of new friends. I mean a shitload of new friends. I love the supporters and the fans and the people who listen. And I got to do it with the three most important people in my life. I mean, there's no downside there.

Travis: Who?

Clint: Charlie and Henry and Bebe.

Justin: And, I guess from me, just, you're welcome.

Griffin: Okay

Clint: [laughs]

Justin: I wanna make sure. You're welcome.

Griffin: That's it for The The Adventure Zone Zone. That's it for Balance, really. And now we're gonna move on to the next thing, we're gonna put out a couple live shows while we all take a, I think, well-earned rest. And next time—

Clint: Especially you. You were amazing.

Justin: Yay, hooray for Griffin.

Travis: Yay Griffin!

Justin: Finally someone tells Griffin he's doing a good job. So, on that note—

Griffin: Oh, oh, oh, the new album is up on Bandcamp, of all the music for the last three arcs of Reunion Tour and Stolen Century and Story and Song. You can get it at griffinmcelroy.bandcamp.com. And all the album sales through the rest of August are going to the SPLC.

Justin: Cool, okay. That's gonna do it for us. Bye, everybody. Hang in there. We love you.

Griffin: Next time we talk to you, we'll be doing a new story! Bye!

Justin: Hang in there, bye!

Travis: Bye!

[“Déjà Vu” by Mort Garson plays]

Maximumfun.org
Comedy and culture
Artist owned
Listener supported

[ad read]