

ALDEN: Hi there, it's Alden Ford with the first of many monthly episodes leading up to the release of *The Young Old Derf Chronicles* later this year. Now, if you're thinking "the what Chronicles?" you should go back and listen to the previous episode where we explain the new prequel show, which is a spin-off of Mission to Zyxx featuring everybody's favorite geriatric weirdo, and it also explains why we need your help to make it happen by going over to maximumfun.org/join. Happy Maximum Fun Drive, by the way!

One of the many perks you'll get as a supporter of Mission to Zyxx over on Maximum Fun is to join our Mission to Zyxx Discord and suggest pitches for these one-off out of character episodes of podcasts we have never done before and will never do again. Like this one! The episode you're about to hear comes from the mind of supporter and Discord member Noelle, who made the mistake of suggesting that we do an advice podcast answering questions also submitted on the Discord. So, here it comes. Enjoy.

[transition music]

ALDEN: Welcome to *Mission to Fyxx*!

MOUJAN: Mission tooooo Fyxx!

JUSTIN: The Fyxx quadrant.

ALDEN: [laughs] Where the crew of *Mission to Zyxx* solves all of your problems.

SETH: Yes!

MOUJAN: Those people listening might be wondering: are we in any way qualified to give advice?

SETH: Oh.

MOUJAN: ...and I think the answer is a resounding, you know, we can all say it... no!

SETH: I hope no one even thought to wonder that we might be.

ALDEN: Yes, if you're listening to this it's on you a little bit.

MOUJAN: Yes.

JUSTIN: Yeah, if this is your only resource for good advice, good... good job.

ALDEN: Good luck.

JUSTIN: Good times.

ALDEN: [laughing] Good job and good luck.

SETH: And we have great news for you. If you don't like the advice, this is the first and last episode of this show.

JUSTIN: There will be no follow-ups.

ALDEN: Yeah.

MOUJAN: No.

ALDEN: Well, let's introduce ourselves. I'm Alden Ford. You may know me from *Mission to Zyxx*. I am... how am I qualified to answer your questions? I am a father of three.

MOUJAN: [laughing] Oh no, giving your qualifications?

ALDEN: I'm... a 42 year old person.

JUSTIN: We're saying our ages now?! This is getting...

MOUJAN: No, Alden!

SETH: Ugh, geez.

ALDEN: What else do I have?

JUSTIN: That's...

ALDEN: I've owned pets!

MOUJAN: Okay.

JUSTIN: [indignant] I've owned pets?! That could be... you could be a pet serial killer. How about "I own pets?"

ALDEN: Alright, Seth. What's your qualifications? Introduce yourself.

SETH: Yeah, I'm Seth Lind. You might know me from... maybe *Mission to Zyxx*, and, uh, my qualification: I've had pets.

ALDEN: You have currently a live pet which is more...

SETH: I mean, I do have a ... I can see—I do have a live pet! Can we... is it too late to pivot to a pet's show?

MOUJAN: Oh man, I'm down.

JUSTIN: Yeah, *I've Had Pets*.

SETH: *I've Had Pets!*

ALDEN: Moujan?

MOUJAN: I'm Moujan Zolfaghari, you might know me from *Mission to Zyxx*, and my qualification is I have in the past voted at least once.

ALDEN: Oh, wow. That is a qualification!

JUSTIN: That's really nice.

ALDEN: You've thought about stuff before.

JUSTIN: Like a BuzzFeed poll?

MOUJAN: At least once. At least.

JUSTIN: No follow-ups. I'm Justin Tyler, I play Derf when asked on *Mission to Zyxx*. My qualifications for this, um, I once streaked a college campus at below zero temperature, so.

ALDEN: Oh, okay. Great.

MOUJAN: Justin, you're also wearing a hat indoors.

JUSTIN: Well, sorry, are we under like 19th century Victorian rules?

ALDEN: [laughing] Yeah, this isn't a manners podcast, Moujan.

MOUJAN: I'm just saying!

JUSTIN: That was a sin at one time!

ALDEN: Should we jump right in guys?

SETH: Oh, absolutely!

MOUJAN: Just jump in, just like Justin jumps into the streak.

JUSTIN: Into the streak! You gotta jump into the streak .

SETH: Yes! That's a famous Fyxx Quadrant pivot, Moujan!

MOUJAN: Thank you.

SETH: What we're known for!

ALDEN: Our trademark here at the long-running podcast *The Fyxx Quadrant (Also Known As Mission to Fyxx)*.

JUSTIN: Yeah, welcome to the Fyxx.

ALDEN: We have solicited questions of philosophical quandaries, relationship drama, moral dilemmas, questions of anything at all on our *Mission to Zyxx* Discord and we've

gotten a number of excellent questions, which I would say run a pretty wide gamut of very serious to very silly.

SETH: Yeah.

ALDEN: So I'm excited to get into these.

JUSTIN: Yeah.

ALDEN: Let's get started. So first... this question is from Octo: Mystery Contraption. "Dear Council, My Council, and Me-" Oh, I see what you did there. "-Do you think astronauts take their wallets with them when they go to space? Why or why not?"

SETH: Wow.

JUSTIN: Mm-hmm.

SETH: [laughter] Great questi—

ALDEN: "Sincerely, Octo." It's not really advice, but you know, that's a really good question. Do you take your wallet with you when you go to space?

SETH: I really... well, you said it's not advice, I like to think that Octo's an astronaut who has really... has everything else figured out about going to space but this last question-

ALDEN: [crosstalk] He's on the shuttle waiting!

JUSTIN: On the platform. Nine... eight... He's just like, "Hurry!"

ALDEN: [laughing, crosstalk] He's on the shuttle waiting for this answer!

JUSTIN: ",I gotta keep it or drop it!" Seven...

SETH: "I'm not holding... I got it, I'm not!"

MOUJAN: But imagine if you have, like, a heavy wallet and you keep it in the back pocket. So while they're going into space, they have to have that uncomfortable bulge underneath them. So I would say nix, no, on this wallet idea.

JUSTIN: Here's the thing though, I feel like your... you know, anytime you go out somewhere, especially a place you've never been before, you always regret not having your ID.

ALDEN: Yeah—

SETH: That's true. That's true!

ALDEN: And space is the last frontie— the FINAL frontier.

SETH: That's true.

ALDEN: Alaska is the last frontier.

SETH: I... I feel like I have a guess about where this question is coming from, which is that, that you probably won't need it in space. You probably, like, your identity is known. You're not gonna be purchasing anything with a credit card, probably, but at the same time you want to know where it is!

ALDEN: Sure.

JUSTIN: Well, yes, and here's the thing. What if you... you might, now we buy stuff everywhere, like, what if... I'm often out doing something and some of my family is like "hey, could you pay for this real quick?" And I'm like, "yeah, I guess I'm... you know, streaking right now."

ALDEN: You're thinking that an astronaut might get a call from a loved one and be like, "hey, there's an eBay auction I can't... my internet's not working, could you just bid on this vase?"

JUSTIN: And the Wi-Fi in space is great because you're right by the satellites!

ALDEN: They're right there!

JUSTIN: It's so strong!

SETH: Oh, that's true.

MOUJAN: Now, a truth I do know is that astronauts, they get to choose a small amount of personal items that they would bring for themselves, up into space.

ALDEN: Really?

SETH: Oh!

MOUJAN: Like, mementos, photographs. Like, what would you guys bring? Well, here's my question to you. What would you bring to space?

SETH: Oh wow, this is a famous Fyxx Quadrant addition, kind of different question—

MOUJAN: Double Fyxx!

SETH: —asking our own question!

JUSTIN: "Physician, fix thyself!" says Moujan.

SETH: What do I bring...

ALDEN: Oh boy.

SETH: Boy, I feel like so many things that I use regularly are, like, really because of gravity.

ALDEN: [laughing]

JUSTIN: You're very gravity-focused, something a lot of us, and I say Seth, take for granted and you honor gravity every day.

MOUJAN: You bring it up!

JUSTIN: You bring it up, and then you drop it down. You let gravity... you bring it up and you drop it down.

ALDEN: So Moujan, you're thinking, like, sentimental items?

JUSTIN: It's a comfort!

MOUJAN: I mean, it doesn't matter! You decide yourself. You can bring whatever you want.

JUSTIN: The temptation I think would be like, oh well. I gotta bring like pictures of my family, but that's not for you. Potentially. You bring stuff that makes you feel good.

SETH: Wow.

JUSTIN: Take care of yourself.

MOUJAN: Exactly. A personal preference kit.

ALDEN: [laughing] So Justin, we know you wouldn't bring pictures of your family. What else would you bring?

JUSTIN: No, it'd be an iPad with a Starman comic book series preloaded.

SETH: Wow, okay.

ALDEN: Not a single picture of my children.

MOUJAN: Someone did bring an alto saxophone? Is that... does that make sense?

JUSTIN: Ugh! Annoying!

ALDEN: Can you play the saxophone in space?

SETH: [laughing] That seems like you shouldn't be allowed...

ALDEN: Can you imagine one dude brings a saxophone? That's rough.

MOUJAN: It did happen! In 1984, astronaut Ronald McNair was the first person to play a saxophone in space.

ALDEN: To be fair, '84 was the year of the saxophone.

MOUJAN: Yeah, that's true.

JUSTIN: And they say in space, no one can hear you [makes saxophone noises]

SETH: So in summary, yes, you should bring it.

JUSTIN: I would bring the wallet.

MOUJAN: I say bring like \$40 in... in cash.

JUSTIN: [laughter] That's like how my mom would always say "put \$10 in your shoe." And I was like, "What?"

MOUJAN: You never know!

SETH: "How much money you got?" How many SHOES you got?

ALDEN: And, uh, Octo, I think we can confidently say... ya Fyxxed!

MOUJAN & JUSTIN: Ya Fyxxed!

MOUJAN: We did it!

[guitar riff]

ALDEN: Alright, next: "Howdy—" This is from Camwing. "Howdy! You've worked with a number of well-known guests on Zyxx and all of the interactions always felt very natural." Thank you so much. "I was invited to an event where I'll be mingling with a bunch of fellow YouTube creators, some of which I'm a big fan of and I'm worried that I'll be seen as more of an awkward fan than as a peer." Interesting. "What's the appropriate amount of geeking out when interacting/working with a relatively famous person? Looking forward to hearing from members of the Zyxx crew again after so long."

ALDEN: I feel like Moujan and... well, actually, all three of you guys, less so me, are really qualified to answer this question. Because you've all worked on shows where you've been next to very famous people.

MOUJAN: Mm-hmm.

ALDEN: Camwing, thank you for asking this question because three of the four of us are uniquely qualified to answer this. Seth, you want to start?

SETH: If I can start in a kind of sincere way, I do think... the fact that you are thinking about this question and asking it means that there's such a tiny chance that you would be awkward or annoying to these people because you have the self-knowledge to even wonder that. So in a basic way, I would just be like "don't worry, these people are there for the same reason as you."

JUSTIN: Yeah.

SETH: "And so you're gonna be totally fine." But Alden, what did you say... you wanted examples of interacting with famous people?

ALDEN: Oh I just, you know, you guys have all worked on shows and on projects that you were next to very famous people. And I know for a fact that you guys are fans of those people too, so if you have any stories about that.

JUSTIN: I can... I could tell a couple of quick little ones.

SETH: Yeah!

JUSTIN: I worked on a show called *Desus & Mero* and we did two pieces where I was directing the field piece. They were both sketches, one of them was Lin Manuel Miranda, very cool, and I was like.... We were improvising a musical based on the idea, this came from the host, that Babe Ruth was secretly Dominican.

ALDEN: [laughing]

JUSTIN: And... super funny, they pitched it live to Lin Manuel on set, and then they sat down and literally wrote this musical together. And it was amazing watching them work, but to get... getting to the question, Lin Manuel showed up. He was the first one on set, we shot at the UCB theater on 42nd Street when that was a thing.

He was there first, he was incredibly down-to-earth, he wanted his own space and to chill but he then... when we were like, yeah, we'll be with you in like ten minutes, he just sat down the piano and started making up a song. I was like, "turn the cameras on immediately, we have to capture this!" And it's in the piece, it's on Showtime's YouTube, check it out.

ALDEN: That's really cool!

JUSTIN: That was very fun and truly like... especially then, and still one of the most famous people in the world, and just wanted to do the work and hang out and be cool. And the other one, similarly, is John Legend, a little more private but we had an hour with him where he wrote a song about eating ass with Desus and Mero. And he was—

ALDEN: Wow. Why didn't we get him on *Zyxx*? He could've played that character!

JUSTIN: I did a show where I was... a series with John McEnroe? Famous for being a diva, and again, takes a little while to warm up, but at the end of the day he's like "we're all working together" and he wants to be with people who are all growing in the same direction, like these fellow youtubers.

ALDEN: Yeah, that's a question for you, Justin, like when you work with somebody like John McEnroe who's like "oh, this guy's famously sort of prickly," are you like "am I

gonna butter him up by like yelling stats at him or am I gonna act like I don't care who he is," what's the strategy?

JUSTIN: My strategy with any celebrity interaction is always just, like, be the most basic and down-to-earth, and just positive, but like: I'm a regular guy. You're a regular person. Let's just talk and hang out because we're here to do it. We're here to work, you know, it's like we're all in the comedy mine. Let's all get our picks and work together to do it. You're just the one whose face is on the banner out front.

ALDEN: Yeah, that's a good point. Moujan?

MOUJAN: I've worked on shows where the people were very well known and I usually, I think as I've gotten older I'm just like "people are just people, just be yourself" if yourself is a kind nice person. If it's not, then maybe don't.

JUSTIN: Then go home, you maniac!

MOUJAN: Then go home.

SETH: Yeah...

MOUJAN: But the only time I think I was starstruck, only because I am such a big fan of hers... and then I got to work with her for a couple seasons is Amy Sedaris. Because she's just like, you know, they say don't meet your heroes and there's been a couple times where I have met people of that caliber and they weren't as great, but Amy was and continues to be like... a just top tier best person. So kind, so nice.

ALDEN: Really?

MOUJAN: Yeah, oh my gosh!

ALDEN: I'm not surprised by that but it makes me very happy.

MOUJAN: She's so great. I mean, the fact that she asked me to be in her show is, you know, she didn't need to do that.

ALDEN: Pretty good!

MOUJAN: We did a show on... rest in peace, we did a show on go90 together called Thanksgiving that Bethany Hall made and... she got to see me do like pratfalls and be fake drunk, so she [laughing] she saw me do my best, and my best character work. We filmed in Westchester and we shared a cab ride back to Manhattan and I got to like, talk to her, and she was so lovely, and she brought me back but I wish... because she's, like, incredible and an idol of mine. I think on set I was a little intimidated? Not intimidated, that's not the right word. I was just in awe of her. But, so I feel like maybe I wasn't able, this is just... oh boy. [emotional] I'm letting it out, like on *At Home With Amy*

Sedaris maybe I wasn't able to be as kooky and crazy as I wanted to be because I was so much in my head.

Because I'm just like "this is Amy Sedaris!" I have to get these lines right, I don't know if I should improvise, I don't know what I should do here!" So if, like, sometimes you go and you meet people that you look up to, I think you never really know how you act until you're in that moment. So yeah, go there to this YouTube event, have fun, say hi to these people, because I'm sure they'd love to hear from someone who's a fan of theirs. Like, whenever we have Zyxx events, I love it when people come and talk to us and acknowledge that there's other people who actually listen to this stuff. Cuz most of the time it's just us! And on Zoom or in a room, we don't really realize that people listen to it. So just, it's really nice if... you know, I like it.

SETH: Can I... can I say a couple awkward things I've done around the famous people I've interacted with by accident?

ALDEN: Now we're talking.

SETH: So my day job is at *This American Life*, the public radio show podcast. I've worked there for nineteen years.

JUSTIN: Whoa, that's awesome!

MOUJAN: Damn.

SETH: And in the beginning I was, like, the front desk person, and at one point Kirsten Dunst just walked in.

MOUJAN: Okay!

ALDEN: And I was like "uhh... hi?" and then the way the office was, like, the front desk was, like, right in front of this bench where the person would sit to wait. So like Kirsten Dunst was looking at me—

JUSTIN: Very close.

SETH: And I needed to pick up the phone and call the person she was meeting with to be like "she was here" and then I... I could not remember her name. I looked—like, I blanked because of the weirdness and I was just like [pause] and I called my co-worker. Listen, I was like [awkwardly] "your 11 o'clock is here." As I'm, like, looking in the eyes of like—and I feel like it just, like, made it feel like I was being weirdly aggressive about refusing to say the person's name I clearly knew.

JUSTIN: Is it—was it the Kirsten/Kristen situation or just a total no—

SETH: No no, like, I just blanked like—I, like, when she walked in I in my mind I was like "that's Kirsten Dunst!" but when I picked up the phone, like, it was just anxiety about a famous person that wiped all knowledge from my mind.

So one other awkward celebrity interaction was another *This American Life* live show. One time we had Tig Notaro in a live show, doing this really funny story about meeting Taylor Dane over and over and then we surprised the audience by having Taylor Dane perform at the end of it. Taylor Dane being an 80s pop star—

JUSTIN: Yeah.

SETH: —of some renown back then. Anyways, backstage before the show I was talking to Tig in the green room, it's where they have, like, plates with crudite and stuff. And I think I was kind of nervous so I was sort of, like, filling the space by talking and Tig's like "uh-huh, yeah, okay," and then I finally paused and she goes "you're eating off my plate."

ALDEN & JUSTIN: [cracking up]

ALDEN: Whoof!

SETH: So...

ALDEN: You're like "no, I know! I know."

JUSTIN: "I wanted to."

SETH: "I'm eating off our—I like to think of it as our plate." So don't... don't do the things I do. That's my advice.

MOUJAN: One quick thing, and I won't go into it, but I almost killed a Jonas brother. Like, on accident. Let's move on. Let's—

ALDEN: [laughing] That's all you want to say about it?

MOUJAN: It was when I was interning at *Late Night with Jimmy Fallon*.

JUSTIN: You had a sniper rifle and you had to kill.

MOUJAN: [hurriedly] It doesn't matter, let's move on to the next one.

SETH: Wow.

ALDEN: Wow. I will say this to Camwing, as someone who's been on sort of both sides of that equation—I think we all have.

SETH: Yeah.

ALDEN: On the side where you were sort of starstruck by someone, but also being on the side, on a much smaller degree of being around people who are fans of yours which is always a great feeling. Everybody likes to hear that someone likes the work that they do. You should never worry about that. So, Camwing, in conclusion...

EVERYONE: YA FYXXED!

JUSTIN: Trademark.

[guitar riff]

SETH: Next question?

ALDEN: Next is from Zalcatron 5001.

SETH: Oh wow.

ALDEN: "My moral dilemma is this: I have a friend who had a pretty nasty breakup. Afterwards the ex started accusing him of some pretty nasty stuff that I won't repeat but are unsubstantiated. This ex later started working at the same company as my wife. Not just that—" wow, the plot is thickening with every word—

JUSTIN: Quickly.

ALDEN: "—not just that but they regularly work together at the same station."

MOUJAN: Station?

ALDEN: "Station." It's a Chipotle, I don't—

JUSTIN: No, space station?

ALDEN: Oh, right, space. Do they have their wallets? That's the real question. "My wife and I hosted a party last September as a late wedding celebration. As a courtesy, my wife gave an open invitation to her co-workers. The friend's ex decided she wanted to come too, this caused a brief bit of drama to the point where my friend's current wife even called me trying to sort out the whole thing. Ultimately, the ex never showed up to the party, but how should I have handled this situation? I wanted to remain neutral for the sake of getting through the event but loyalties were called into question. What would you have done?" Wow, that's... that's a thorny tale Zalcatron 5001.

JUSTIN: I mean... I think, Zalcatron. I think you handled it well. Like, that's such a convoluted thorny vine of drama and you're only in charge of what you're doing and your connective, so I would talk to your partner in that situation and be like "hey, be friends with who you want to at your station, but just know that when we're going to this event it might get a little spicy and you might be standing right there when it happens."

And then otherwise, like, I don't think you can get involved and choose a side, especially when your personal life is now intermingled with something that... you don't know exactly what happened.

ALDEN: That's good, that's true.

SETH: That's good. Yeah. Can I also just add that, by coincidence? The question you asked is verbatim the logline for *The Young Old Derf Chronicles*.

ALDEN: [laughing]

SETH: So I want you to... first of all, we came up... this was just parallel thinking, we did not steal this idea from any of your questions and number two, you should just know that going into the show that it could be triggering.

MOUJAN: And there are multiple stations involved in *The Young Old Derf Chronicles*.

ALDEN: Sure.

SETH: That's true.

JUSTIN: Yes, definitely. And just, I guess, just really have a lot of hors d'oeuvres at the party, be ready to eat off yours or any other plate you can get your hands on—

SETH: —easy!

JUSTIN: Yeah, right.

MOUJAN: I think, if you're gonna have a party like this, just make sure it's in a very big space.

ALDEN: If you can arrange a lot of doors that can slam...

JUSTIN: And if someone throws a glass of wine in another person's face, you can jump in front of it and sort of mouth open take that one.

ALDEN: Oh, yes, drink the wine! There you... yeah, there you go!

JUSTIN: It's a free wine. It's a loose wine, when the wine's in the air it's up for anybody.

MOUJAN: Also, if you listen to *Mission to Zyxx*, we have an episode that's about this.

ALDEN: Sure, with Tim Dunn.

SETH: Oh, yeah, Trey-Sta'Gramn, *The Real House Husbands of Manch*.

MOUJAN: [laughing]

ALDEN: Yeah, no.

JUSTIN: Tim Dunn's Instagram or Twitter, I forget, is TimDunnHeFun and it gets me every time.

MOUJAN: Is it?

JUSTIN: Yeah.

ALDEN: Great handle, great handle. Accurate.

JUSTIN: TimDunnHeFun.

MOUJAN: I do know he, like, someone stole his instagram.

JUSTIN: I was—I coveted it and I took it.

MOUJAN: Okay. Got it.

JUSTIN: It's harder to use since my name's not that.

SETH: Justin Tyler, he liar.

JUSTIN, ALDEN, & MOUJAN: [laughter]

JUSTIN: Hastily taking that...

ALDEN: Alright, [trilling] ya ya ya, ya FYXXED!

SETH: Ya Fyxxed!

[guitar riff]

ALDEN: So, uh, this is a three-part question from Dr. Pickle.

SETH: Coming off the last one?

JUSTIN: We're escalating to double black diamond of questions.

ALDEN: From Dr. Pickle.

SETH: Okay.

ALDEN: "I am co-raising two teenagers and I work with college undergrads. Sometimes I have to tell them things like 'don't date people who are mean to you,' 'don't troll people online for no reason,;' or 'don't plagiarize your essays.'" That's all great advice, by the way, I don't know what... you should be on this show, Dr. Pickle. "But even when I give them good reasons for it, I can tell they still don't believe me sometimes. I hate resorting to 'you'll understand when you're older' or 'because I said so.' How can I convince them I'm cool and reliable and correct, so they don't do stupid stuff that hurts them?"

SETH: Wow.

ALDEN: This is a really...

MOUJAN: It's good.

ALDEN: Really excellent question, Dr. Pickle and I will say...

MOUJAN: Yes.

ALDEN: We as a group, at least three of us—uh, sorry Moujan—are qualified because we have, three of us have little kids—

MOUJAN: That's true.

ALDEN: —who do very dumb stuff sometimes. I shouldn't speak for you guys. My kids do. Um...

SETH: And... we've had pets.

JUSTIN & ALDEN: And we've...

ALDEN: [laughter] We've had pets!

JUSTIN: We've owned pets!

ALDEN: [laughing] We've had pets who've definitely done dumb stuff. Um, yeah, how do you square, like, I want my kids to make their own decisions and to a certain extent make their own mistakes...

SETH: Yeah.

ALDEN: —with.... don't do that. Don't ever do that because you're gonna ruin your life doing that.

SETH: The thing that popped into my head, honestly, about this question is... you can't. Like the—I think the definition of being that age of a teenager, which is like the transition from being a kid to being an adult, is where you think you know more than you do because you have to operate that way to function if you're going to become an adult.

And I think that some of that stuff, like—the one "don't date people who are mean to you" like, that is so basic and true but when you're in the middle of that as the person who someone's being mean to, like, the emotional thicket of that, all the reasons you can give for why that is or how you could have to change. Like, you have to go through it yourself to actually figure that out.

JUSTIN: Don't date people who are mean to you, you have to date someone who's mean to you. Otherwise, you will not learn that.

ALDEN: Yeah.

MOUJAN: But it's a dangerous thought, to a parent.

JUSTIN: Of course.

SETH: Oh god, yeah, it's terrifying!

MOUJAN: I don't have young kids, but I am a person who was a teenager at some point.

SETH: Yeah.

JUSTIN: Yes. Teen correspondent.

MOUJAN: I have very strict Persian parents—thank you, teen—I'm the youngest one here! Uh, but I, you know, I had very anxious, worried Iranian-American parents who were afraid of America. They thought we're all gonna get pregnant as soon as we go outside, so they tried instilling the things that you're saying through, like, very strict parent ways.

ALDEN: Yeah.

MOUJAN: But I, you know, the kid brain is anything you say I want to do the opposite.

JUSTIN: Yeah, and let me say like it on the heels of that, like, my kids are younger, still, but I think it is the difference between being like [harshly] "hey, don't date people who are mean to you" and like [casually] "oh, here's the thing though, you're gonna end up dating people who are mean to you and it's horrible." I think it's the casual stuff that gets under... under the armor a little bit.

MOUJAN: Yeah yeah, "hey bro."

JUSTIN: And when you squeeze it and push it they're like, "who cares what he says, get out of here with that."

ALDEN: I will say this: yeah, my kids are six and four and three months and—

SETH: "—and one week and two days and one hour—"

MOUJAN: "—and negative seven months..."

ALDEN: And what I've realized now is that, like, you don't think of the things your parents teach you. But also you see them interact with other people out in the world and you realize, like, oh, it has taken effect. They're just not associating those lessons with you directly, because that's just not how kids work. And that's tough! You want them to be like "I did the right thing because of what you told me," but they're just never going to do that, that's not how kids act. But I think that you, Dr. Pickle, have treated your kids—

MOUJAN: [laughter] Esquire, thank you.

ALDEN: —Dr. Pickle, Esquire, M.D. You have treated your kids in a way that you are presenting an example for them.

SETH & JUSTIN: Yeah.

ALDEN: When they realize that they have made a mistake, the moral code that they revert to is going to be the one that you've instilled in them, and that's what's really important.

SETH: Yeah.

JUSTIN: That's great.

SETH: I do want to reiterate with something Moujan said, which is that: you can't, you can't get pregnant just by going outside.

MOUJAN: No, but you can get pregnant by going inside.

ALDEN: Oh, shit, Moujan! Jesus, wow!

SETH: Wowwwwwwww.

ALDEN: Okay, alright.

MOUJAN: [laughter] Oh wow, I'm sorry that—oh boy! Oh boy!

ALDEN: Alright! Part two of Dr. Pickle's question: "how can I find a decent area rug for a decent price without getting scammed?" Wow, Dr. Pickle, what a turn. Uh, I will tell you this, Dr. Pickle, RevivalRugs.com. Um, this is not... this is not an ad.

JUSTIN: Wow, that's specific.

ALDEN: I recently bought a rug from Revival. It's good. They have, uh, vintage rugs.

SETH: Someone wearing a Revival Rugs shirt just walked into Alden's room and gave him—

ALDEN: No, I'm not, I'm not!

SETH: —a hundred dollars.

ALDEN: [laughter] Revival is good. That would be my answer. Where'd you guys get your rugs?

MOUJAN: I have a... I have a solution: go online. Okay?

SETH: Well, then you guys kind of agree because you said that dot com!

MOUJAN: No, that's part one! Go online, go on, I don't know, kay—No. Get a travel agent. Buy a ticket to Tabriz in Iran.

ALDEN: Oooh yeah! Now we're talking, Moujan.

MOUJAN: Okay, go to a village. Find a woman who can barely see but she's making a rug.

SETH: [laughter]

MOUJAN: Okay.

JUSTIN: You're saying you're scamming this woman out of her rug.

MOUJAN: [laughter] They're my people, I can say it! You can get the finest rug you've ever had in your life. Persian rug, one hundred percent.

JUSTIN: Tell them Moujan sent you!

MOUJAN: Yeah. Come back Go into security, American government will not let you back in, but you know, yeah, you got your rug.

JUSTIN: Tariffs. Rug tariffs. I—I've never purchased a rug. Are they... they're expensive items?

MOUJAN: You have... you're a rugless house?

JUSTIN: I mean, sort of? We have tiny rugs and I guess... maybe I'm not the main rug purchaser in my household.

MOUJAN: Oh, sure.

JUSTIN: The thing is, what would I ever choose to be in a rug?

MOUJAN: It's hard. It's hard to pick it.

ALDEN: It's really hard.

SETH: Yeah... I will say, I'm somebody who, like, doesn't... I'm not good at buying things, I'm not good at, like, figuring out a thing that would make me happy to have. I'm not. So like, like, I'm a terrible consumer. But we have this one rug that I look at it, and it makes me so happy every time I see it! We've lived, I've lived in this house five years and every time I step on this rug. I'm just like... it brings me delight. Um, I don't know where we got it. So I can't tell you where to get one.

JUSTIN: I've never felt rug joy.

MOUJAN: You can also go to a garage sale, uh, and get some rugs from other people. But know a dog has probably pissed on it.

ALDEN: Think of all the stuff on that rug. Yeah, that's yeah, that's rough.

SETH: Those people have had pets!

ALDEN: Yeah, I'll tell you who's had pets, every person who ever sold a rug.

JUSTIN: A pet can become a rug!

ALDEN: [laughter] That's true.

SETH: Oh boy. If this wasn't gonna be our last episode, it is... it was gonna be now.

ALDEN: Alright, uh, third part of the question from Dr. Pickle.

SETH: Oh wow.

MOUJAN: Okay, Dr. Pickle.

ALDEN: "Is shrimps bugs?"

MOUJAN: Shrimps bugs.

SETH: Is shrimps bugs....

JUSTIN: Great question.

ALDEN: I think shrimps is... I think—

JUSTIN: I think I've woken up in the dead of night and screamed this out. This very question.

SETH: I think shrimps is bugs.

ALDEN: I think shrimps is bugs!

MOUJAN: Shrimps is bugs, I think we can all agree.

SETH: They're as much bugs as you can be without technically being bugs and I think that's enough.

JUSTIN: Shrimps is bugs under da sea.

ALDEN: [laughter] That's yeah, that's true.

JUSTIN: If mosquitoes were bigger, would we eat them?

SETH: Oh.

ALDEN: [disgusted noise]

MOUJAN: Ugh.

JUSTIN: Like a mosquito cocktail.

SETH: I ate a live termite.

JUSTIN: [horrified] LIVE?

ALDEN: When...

JUSTIN: Why?

ALDEN: Where? Why?

SETH: In Costa Rica we were—

MOUJAN: Recently?

SETH: Well, a few years ago, uh, we're like we're in Costa Rica and doing like a guided rainforest hike, and um, the guide turned over this... leaf and saw like a termite nest and, and said like "these are really good!" And like, they say they actually like, put like a couple thousand of them in and will, like, make them into a burger?

ALDEN: Oh my god.

SETH: And he was like "who wants to try one?" and my wife and I are both like "okay." And it tasted like a hazelnut. And it's because they eat wood, so they just taste so... like they taste really, like, I don't know...

ALDEN: Woody?

SETH: Yeah, it was delicious! It was, like, a little weird to kill something with your mouth, but it was, I don't know. I just went pop.

MOUJAN: I always... I think, what is that—Lion King? The animated version of it changed my perspective by eating bugs because it made it seem so like moist and juicy and delicious.

ALDEN: Wait, that scene made you more likely to eat bugs?

MOUJAN: Oh, yeah, I mean—

JUSTIN: [horrified] That's... That scene is disgusting, the bugs burst!

ALDEN: That's one of the only things I remember about the movie is how awful that scene was!

MOUJAN: [happily] Just squishy... just splat! Mm, yum, yum.

ALDEN: [laughter]

JUSTIN: I guess it does look like they're full of custard, but that's guts. That's just guts.

ALDEN: Also, burgers is a strong... burgers is a strong word. Let's... that's a generous term. Burgers.

SETH: Why? Oh, just cuz you... you don't you don't think you should be able to call anything a burger that it's ground up animal?

MOUJAN: It's high in protein!

ALDEN: You can't put anything in a bun and call it a burger. It's gotta be—

JUSTIN: Taking a stand-on what is a burger?

ALDEN: [comedically indignant] I'm... I'm the advice expert, okay? We... we get to decide... we're the arbiters of what's a burger and what's not, right?

SETH: Shrimps is bugs, but we don't know if shrimps is burger.

JUSTIN: Yeah. Shrimps not burger, says Alden.

ALDEN: I think that's a classic Dr. Pickle...

EVERYONE: YA FYXXED!

JUSTIN: #YaFyxxed!

[guitar riff]

ALDEN: Moving on. This one is from Grandpappy, The Dude Who Dinners. Probably his real name. "Hey crew, as a seasoned adult, I occasionally think back and realize 'I wish someone had told me that years ago.' What's a bit of wisdom or advice that it took you far too long to learn? Love, Grandpappy." That's a good question.

MOUJAN: Invest in real estate! Start early—

ALDEN: Invest in real estate?

MOUJAN: Start early, start young.

ALDEN: Wow. Easier said than done—easier said than done.

MOUJAN: Not now, I would say not now, but maybe like in 2010.

ALDEN: Sure.

MOUJAN: New York City, Barclay Center area which didn't exist, that's always my greatest regret. I didn't have the money, but I could have pulled some together with various different sources and I would have been a bajillionaire by now! But do I want to be a landlord? No, so I take it back. Never mind.

ALDEN: Oh, that's true.

SETH: Yeah, so the advice is don't go back in time and... and invest in real estate.

ALDEN: [crosstalk] Become a landlord?

SETH: Don't!

MOUJAN: Yeah. That took you too far to learn... love.

ALDEN: Wow.

JUSTIN: I think the biggest piece that I... I talked to a lot of people, especially like, doing creative field, is... don't think every opportunity or job is going to be the one?

MOUJAN: Right, yes.

JUSTIN: Because it sets up such a ping-pong emotionality.

SETH: Oh, yeah,

JUSTIN: And I think if you can just be like 'hey, it's gonna be... gonna take a lot of swings out there.' Keep swinging rather than putting all your eggs in the first basket.

ALDEN: Wow, that's really good. Seth?

SETH: I have been stunned by how much going for a walk can change—

MOUJAN: [emphatic] Mm-hmm.

JUSTIN: Ooh, great.

SETH: —the mental vibe in a way that's so basic and is such a useful thing if you're stuck in some sort of, like, anxiety spiral. I think the repetition of taking steps, the fact of being outside, literally just seeing farther. Like it's, like, yeah, just gives you a perspective of like 'there's stuff outside my mind.' It's such a useful thing.

JUSTIN: I would throw on top of that, if I'm stuck on a question or problem or creative impasse, going for a run or taking a hot shower. That works like crazy. I can't believe how much that works.

ALDEN: Really?

MOUJAN: Oh yeah.

JUSTIN: It's so, like, basic like... blood flow or like, temperature or something. But man, that's... that's... that's the way.

MOUJAN: The runner's high is real.

ALDEN: Wow.

JUSTIN: I do have one more to throw on here, lock the door you're podcasting in because my wife is actively roasting the things I'm saying right now in this moment.

EVERYONE: [laughter]

ALDEN: She's standing just out of frame just like—

JUSTIN: I mean, basically.

SETH: Wow.

ALDEN: So—

JUSTIN: This is not a legally binding thing, but... YA FYXXED!

MOUJAN: F-F-FYXXED!

ALDEN: YA FYXXED!

[guitar riff]

ALDEN: Alright: "the company I work for is in the film industry, but I don't actually watch movies. How do I pretend to know what's going on with the latest releases and be part of the conversation in the office?"

JUSTIN: Oh. Great, great. I think... film podcasts are great because you can get, not only information, but—I mean, this is, I'm crossing a moral line here but you... you can just hear opinions also, because it's not enough to just have the facts about, like, "yes, in *A Complete Unknown*, he is Bob Dylan." You need to have like... like, "well, actually, my favorite scene is when he goes on stage and plugs in" or whatever it is. So you need like, not only information but opinions. So reading Wikipedia often isn't enough.

SETH: Right.

ALDEN: So you're saying that you shouldn't go to Metacritic and just be like "critics agree that it's more style than substance."

JUSTIN: I could see that really crushing at the water cooler.

SETH: "I heard 61 of 67 reviews are positive for that."

ALDEN: [laughter] "According to Metacritic, that's universal acclaim!"

JUSTIN: I would say saying according to Metacritic is a real giveaway.

ALDEN: I will say, I understand where you're coming from, Anonymous. Having three kids has made me very out of touch with pop culture and what's going on, and probably if I'm being honest it'll last for the rest of my life.

JUSTIN: Wow. See, I say crush tape at night, watch those movies, watch that TV.

ALDEN: You're good at that, Justin. That's not for me.

JUSTIN: I love it. I love opinions.

ALDEN: I can't do it.

SETH: I feel like... if this person has this job already, just saying "I don't watch movies." That's such a crazy thing. Like, I've never heard anyone say that, that means you must—

JUSTIN: "I hate movies!"

SETH: —really actively not have any interest in them, and I think that's fine. What if it's just okay that you don't, you're like, that's not my thing. I do the job here.

ALDEN: Yeah.

SETH: I say this as someone who like... doesn't really listen to podcasts.

MOUJAN: Whoa. Does Ira know that, Seth?

SETH: Don't tell him that.

ALDEN: I think an honest helpful response to this, Anonymous, is... interested is interesting. I bet you can go a long time without anyone knowing that you don't watch movies if, when a movie comes up, you ask what they thought of the movie and just talk about that.

SETH: Yeah.

ALDEN: If somebody's like "did you watch The Brutalist?" You could say "I haven't watched it yet, how was it?" you know, and then that's just the conversation for the next 10 minutes. And it doesn't have to actually be BS, you can actually just get into a conversation about somebody's philosophy on filmmaking and that could end up being its own fulfilling conversation, without you having to really have watched the thing.

SETH: Yeah.

JUSTIN: Well, don't I feel like a scumbag now based on my advice!

SETH: Don't listen to Justin!

ALDEN: [laughter] What I'm saying is Justin's answer sucks!

MOUJAN: Yeah, you can also be aware of... because you know, if you work for the film industry, it's always I think a good idea to, like, follow things like Variety, Deadline, Hollywood Reporter. Just to know the news about how the business is doing, and that's also something you can also talk about because I assume it would affect your work so you can talk about the periphery of the film.

JUSTIN: That's a good call.

SETH: Spoiler alert: the movie industry is not doing great.

MOUJAN: [surprised] What are you talking about, Seth?

SETH: Oh guys, I just looked at Metacritic. The critical consensus on *The Brutalist* is "haven't watched it yet."

ALDEN: Wow! Okay, there you go! Alright Anonymous, you're in good company.

MOUJAN: But I know there's an intermission so I can bring that up and they'll talk about the intermission.

JUSTIN: I loved the intermission!

ALDEN: [laughter] My favorite part was the intermission, that's a hot take.

SETH: The critics have watched the intermission and found it.... the reviews were Sprite, bathroom, phone call, realized forgot doctor's appointment.

MOUJAN: Yeah,

JUSTIN: My review is Sprite.

ALDEN: Oh boy, guys, we have a time sensitive one.

SETH: Oh!

ALDEN: We got to answer this quick.

SETH: Are we late?

ALDEN: "Hi crew, my dilemma is time sensitive." See, says right there. "I've been transported into my phone (a la Tron style) and the evil overlord of my vague ninety minute long '80s movie-esque world has given me this such choice," I love this language, "live in my phone forever or name the best bad '80s/'90s film and gain my freedom. So please, Zyxx crew, tell me what movies could free me." This is from Powerline. What are the best... the best bad '80s or '90s film?

JUSTIN: Hmm.

SETH: Oof, wow.

JUSTIN: I mean, trapped in your phone... aren't we all?

ALDEN: Yeah, that's true. Yeah, what is your guilty pleasure '80s movie?

SETH: The thing that popped to my mind is Peter Jackson's first film *Bad Taste*.

JUSTIN: Wow, that is—

SETH: Which is from 1987, which is a just insane gory movie.

ALDEN: There is no more bell curve director than Peter Jackson! His first movies were so ridiculous and niche and culty and then he made, you know, *Lord of the Rings*, which

is like truly three of the most accessible, popular, critically acclaimed movies of all time. And now he's on the other side where he made *The Hobbit* trilogy, which everybody's like, "what are you doing?"

SETH: *Bad Taste* has a scene where someone burrows vertically through another person with a chainsaw.

JUSTIN: Vertically?

SETH: Yeah, it's like... it's a gross out—

ALDEN: [shocked, crosstalk] Vertically!

SETH: —it's, like, a low budget absolute grossout movie, but it's so grossout to the point of absurdity and it has comedic elements. So if you can tolerate grossness, I very much recommend *Bad Taste* if you haven't seen it.

JUSTIN: That's... that's a great rec.

SETH: It's crazy.

JUSTIN: The one I went to that straddles the line between those two decades is *The Rocketeer*.

ALDEN: Wooooow.

MOUJAN: I remember that one!

JUSTIN: That movie's awesome. That's a great movie that just never got any—

ALDEN: But is it a bad movie! Do you actually think it's bad?

JUSTIN: I think it's great, but I think the world has decided it is not a good movie

ALDEN: Uh-huh.

JUSTIN: You want a movie that's actively bad?

ALDEN: That you love.

JUSTIN: Hmm. I would throw out... *Cocktail*?

ALDEN: [laughter] Oh man!

JUSTIN: That movie has a lot of problems, but that's a great movie to watch, I think.

ALDEN: I would say my choice would be *Ladyhawke* which is... which is, like a lot of movies from the '80s, you watch it now and you're like "how did this script and how did this direction get past anyone?" It's ridiculous, but it's also very satisfying in a way. It's so joyful in, like, a weird '80s way.

SETH: Wow, I'm looking at the cast: Matthew Broderick, Rutger Hauer and Michelle Pfeiffer.

ALDEN: Yeah. Yeah.

SETH: Wow!

JUSTIN: Stars.

SETH: Yeah, they're born to be in... that movie together.

ALDEN: Yeah, it's a... it's about a guy who has a hawk who is a woman? I think?

JUSTIN: That checks out.

ALDEN: The plot is that a woman is trapped in the soul of a hawk?

JUSTIN: Like *Mannequin* but for a nice bird?

MOUJAN: What's that movie? I should know the name of it, but uh, Johnny Five was in it?

ALDEN: Oh!

SETH & ALDEN: *Short Circuit*.

MOUJAN: Yeah, *Short Circuit*. I don't know if that's considered a bad movie? It's a movie as a kid we watched like a million times.

SETH: I think it might just be good.

MOUJAN: Okay, so it's good...

JUSTIN: Well, let me say, I think *Short Circuit 2* you could consider a bad movie, that would satisfy the parameter. In that movie Johnny Five ends up in New York, he ends up fighting and then joining a "gang," quote unquote, whose tagline song was "Los Lobos kick your ass, Los Lobos kick your face—"

ALDEN & JUSTIN: "—Los Lobos kick your balls, into outer space."

MOUJAN: Nice. Noice!

ALDEN: You know, I don't know why that takes up space in my brain.

JUSTIN: Me too.

ALDEN: But that maybe is the dumbest thing that's ever been on film. I think you're absolutely right, Justin, I think that may be the stupidest fucking movie of all time.

MOUJAN: I'm glad we got there together.

ALDEN: We got there! The fact that that was a thing that was on film... that people went to the movie and paid money to see... It just sort of doesn't matter what the rest of the movie is about, the fact that that was in that movie. People did it and made it with a straight face.

SETH: I think "if your mother was a snowblower" is a line that just like fully is rattling around in my brain. Permanent.

JUSTIN: That also doesn't make sense!

SETH: Not at all. Yeah. Genealogically inaccurate.

ALDEN: Um... great. I hope you get out of your phone, Powerline.

SETH: Oh, yeah. I hope that got you out.

MOUJAN: Oh, yeah that part. Yeah, good luck.

JUSTIN: Good luck.

ALDEN: Good luck out there.

JUSTIN: But Powerline, you have the skills in your name.

SETH: It's true. [growly voice] Ya Fyxxed!

MOUJAN: Fyxxed!

[guitar riff]

ALDEN: Um... "I'm at something of an inflection point in life. For the last 25 years, I've worked for the government, and I'm kind of done with it. Thanks to my military pension I have a degree of stability to pursue my interests, but life experience tells me that the childhood dream of world domination involves a lot more admin work and a lot fewer space lasers than I care for. What should I do and why should it be international art thief?" Oh boy. "Honestly, when it's time to make decisions of this magnitude, my brain clocks out and I can only come up with stuff like vigilante street sweeper or amateur arm wrestling contest officiant. So I guess I'm looking for more achievable dreams. Ideas? Signed Flux_Capacitance."

JUSTIN: I mean my advice would be... with a pension talk, there sounds like a comfortability there or a safety net. I would leave that job when it feels right, chill for a little bit, and decide what you want to do because I think something will present itself in the time when you take space. When you're taking very hot showers and going for jogs, you know?

SETH: Yeah.

JUSTIN: Getting that blood flowing, then the next thing will appear for you.

MOUJAN: I think that's a good idea. I also think some other exciting job options could be a scientist who tracks wolves.

SETH: Yes.

ALDEN: Whoa.

MOUJAN: Or a shark biologist.

SETH: Yeah.

MOUJAN: A firefighter...

ALDEN: Right.

JUSTIN: Uh, are you reading off a list because these are... these are good.

MOUJAN: No!

SETH: Yeah...

JUSTIN: [crosstalk] These are very good... [mumbles]

MOUJAN: I don't know, whatever, it just... just comes into my mind.

SETH: Actually, this person would have the time and the resources to figure out if shrimps is bugs. For once and for all!

JUSTIN: Smart. Way to combine what we're talking—

MOUJAN: A treasure hunter! Someone hires you to do the things, like get art.

ALDEN: Yeah, good!

MOUJAN: Yeah.

ALDEN: I feel like I've read this critique of modern capitalist society before but like, people talk about how it's tragic that we feel like we need to turn our hobbies into jobs. Like we feel like we need to monetize the thing that we enjoy doing, because it's impossible to just do what you like to do and not care if it pays the bills or not. But I think Flux_Capacitance is in a place where that might not actually be true. Like, if you're in a position where you really could do something you wanted to do and not really care if it makes money or not, I think the move there is you should do what you feel is exciting and try to be deliberate about not monetizing it. At least at first. And then if you decided something that you like so much that you could make it a job, great. And if not, it's just then you've got a new hobby.

MOUJAN: I have a friend who volunteers at the natural history museum, in New York?

ALDEN: Oh, as, like, a docent?

MOUJAN: No, as... to help remove sediments from possible dinosaur bones.

ALDEN: Whoa!

JUSTIN: *Possible* bones?

SETH: Wow.

JUSTIN: "This one's a tree root. We messed up! This one's an old coke can! Not a bone..."

MOUJAN: Sometimes he sends us photos of, like, "here's a leg" and we're like, "oh!"

ALDEN: That's the title of my slow burn erotica fiction, is *Possible Bone*.

JUSTIN: Possible bone...

MOUJAN: [laughter]

ALDEN: So I got a... I got a question for you, not to put you on the spot, Justin, but you are a person who's been very good at monetizing your interests. If you were to do something that you knew you would never, for the rest of your life, get paid to do but you didn't have a choice, you had to do it, what would it be?

MOUJAN: Oh, like, uh, review five star hotels.

ALDEN: Yeah, I mean, sure, that's a great... Yeah, that's a great example.

SETH: [fancily] "It was wonderful, five stars."

MOUJAN: Just go continue to make sure that they are five star.

ALDEN: I guess the problem, Moujan, is that it assumes that Justin has limitless money.

MOUJAN: [laughter] Oh, it's for Justin!

ALDEN: I'm talking about, like, it... what is something that you find so fulfilling? That is an activity or a hobby that you would do it, even if you were never able to monetize it?

JUSTIN: Uh... hammock reading?

ALDEN: No, that's not specific enough. It's gotta be—

JUSTIN: Not specific? That's very specific!

ALDEN: You're just describing relaxing! I mean, like, a hobby. Reading in a hammock is not a hobby. That's a... that's a specific tableau of relaxing.

JUSTIN: [laughter] Tableau... I mean, that's a... that's a tough question because do you... what you just set up about me, like I have taken my hobbies and just squeezed them into life.

ALDEN: A drop of blood from every stone.

SETH: Wait, I want to know the list now! Like what are... what's the most weird thing that you've monetized?

JUSTIN: Comic books, writing, comedy of some sort.

MOUJAN: Oh, nice, right right right.

SETH: Okay, so there's not like a weird... You don't have, like, a really like...

JUSTIN: You're talking about my frog racing earnings?

SETH: Yeah, I didn't want to say it...

JUSTIN: But yes, I've earned millions.

SETH: I see a lot of fast hoppers in the background.

JUSTIN: Yeah, Fast Hoppers is the name of my squad.

SETH: It's your LLC?

JUSTIN: Yeah, if you... if you got yourselves a frog, or even a toad that you think has the moves... Uh, they could pump it.

MOUJAN: Alden, what's an example? Like, what would you say?

SETH: Yeah, what do you got?

JUSTIN: Yeah, what's your—

ALDEN: Here's the thing, I... I have too many of them, which is a real problem. I'm the opposite of Justin.

SETH: Name one.

ALDEN: —because... Cooking.

JUSTIN: I was gonna say cooking. I was gonna say—

ALDEN: I love cooking. I could never in a million years work in a kitchen. I could never be a professional cook or a professional chef.

JUSTIN: And I would... I was gonna say cooking, but I would actually one up that and say, and this is even weirder because this is just a money-based job, is bartending.

ALDEN: Really? You would bartend for free.

JUSTIN: Yeah.

ALDEN: I... I agree with that! I—knowing what I know about you, I think that's a... that's a perfect answer. Moujan, what is a hobby that you like so much that you would do it if it never made money?

MOUJAN: Running. And I know that I'm not fast enough to ever receive—

ALDEN: To be a professional runner?

SETH: To catch the money.

MOUJAN: But I just like doing it.

ALDEN: Really! That's great.

JUSTIN: That's great.

ALDEN: I guess I didn't really know that about you, Moujan.

MOUJAN: I was very sporty growing up, I played softball, basketball, soccer, and then I hated running for a little bit and then when I turned... it was in my 20s, I realized running, you can just play music and it's like dancing and nobody knows. And so I started just running in my 20s, and I realized the mental healthness of it. Like, oh, I feel happy whenever I do it.

ALDEN: Yeah.

MOUJAN: You know, I don't care about the PR.

ALDEN: [laughter] What do you mean, the PR?

MOUJAN: I don't do for the PR, babies! I do it just because it makes me a functional person.

ALDEN: Personal record, PR stands for personal record.

MOUJAN: Yes.

ALDEN: Not... not, uh, public relations.

MOUJAN: No.

ALDEN: Okay. Seth, what about you?

SETH: Honestly, if I for some reason did not need to make income I would descend rapidly into being an obsessive metal detector person.

ALDEN: Wow!

MOUJAN: Oh, sure.

SETH: Like... I would... I'm afraid of how much I would metal detect. The other, the other thing—

ALDEN: [laughter] "How much I would metal detect."

SETH: The other thing is snorkeling.

JUSTIN: Mm, yeah.

SETH: I, like, I—

JUSTIN: You're chasing lost gold like nobody I know. You're detecting or—

ALDEN: You know, those two things can be combined, Seth.

SETH: One time in Hawaii I like, snorkeled to the point where, like, just a little bit off the beach, like not... not like far out or anything, but at the point where I like came out and I was like like [gasping] wheezing water and fell over. Because I had this feeling where I was like "I gotta see all these fish."

JUSTIN: Oh, yeah.

SETH: Like, I gotta see all of them.

ALDEN: I gotta catch them all!

SETH: I got... and like, there's more... there's some over there. I gotta see those guys. They have... you see, I want to look, like, "get out of the way!" Be like "you guys see these fish?"

JUSTIN: Yeah.

SETH: "They're beautiful!" And then dive back in.

JUSTIN: You love being under the sea.

ALDEN: Oh, it all comes back around.

SETH: Yeah. Yeah, being face down looking at beautiful fish would never stop.

ALDEN: Wow.

MOUJAN: I kind of want to pay you, though, for that.

ALDEN: Yeah, that's the problem Seth, you can't... you can't not get paid for that.

JUSTIN: Yeah, we gotta pay you.

SETH: I don't totally understand the question because there's so many things that you just can't hope to get paid for, so it seems like—

ALDEN: See, but that's the thing Seth! That reflects a healthy mental attitude that I don't have, Seth.

JUSTIN: Yeah, same.

ALDEN: That's the problem, whenever I... here's the thing for me: I remodeled my kitchen last year and my first thought was "you know, if I started a YouTube cooking show, I can write this off on my taxes." Like that... that's the mental illness that I have that I'm like, "how can I make this work for me?" And that's not what a hobby should be. That's not what something you love should be for!

SETH: But you've been a freelancer your whole life. I'm a W2 guy. But like, that's a different, like... I'm like—

ALDEN: Sure. That's fine.

JUSTIN: That's the line..

SETH: I've been punching into the same office since 2006.

JUSTIN: Yeah, exactly, we sit around being like "what is money? How can I get it?"

ALDEN: But, I mean, to be fair, like, you know... all of us came up at UCB—

SETH: Yeah.

ALDEN: An improv theater where the ENTIRE FUCKING BUSINESS MODEL is "this will never make you money. This will always cost you money" and we figured out a way to do it where more people could listen to it, more people could support, like, we made it a thing that at least sustained itself.

SETH: *Mission to Zyxx.*

JUSTIN: [mumbled] *Mission to Fyxx.*

ALDEN: That's... *Mission to Zyxx: An Improvised Science Fiction Podcast*, check it out wherever you get your podcasts.

SETH: They based the name on the name of our podcast.

JUSTIN: Yeah, Fyxx came first.

ALDEN: Yes. Yeah, exactly.

MOUJAN: Yes. We've been Fyxxing for years!

ALDEN: Obviously *Mission to Fyxx* has been around for decades, but that's a perfect example. I love sci-fi. I love comedy. I always wanted to make this big, you know, sci-fi world. We figured out a way to make it, but it was something that had to pay for itself. And so we did that. I think that Flux_Capacitance is also trying to figure out a way to do something that is fulfilling to him without it being something that necessitates becoming his job.

SETH: Yeah.

ALDEN: Well, uh Flux_Capacitance, I hope you figure it out. I suggest spending too much money on revamping your kitchen and—

JUSTIN: —trying to write it off with a lie about a YouTube show.

MOUJAN: Ya Fyxxed!

SETH: You Fyxxed.

ALDEN: YA FYXXED!

[guitar riff]

ALDEN: We got one more one more and then we'll do the lightning round.

SETH: Wool!

ALDEN: "I play music and work a boring day job. I would like to be more productive in my artistic pursuits. How do you keep motivated and psyched up for side projects that take a lot of time and energy?" Wow. You're talking our language. "I love Zyxx. I love the crew and Shane and Justin. Oh, that's nice.

SETH: Nice!

ALDEN: "You're all so talented and amazing. Love, Spathi." What a great question, Spathi.

MOUJAN: I have an answer for this which is, and I think we did it here at Zyxx, which is to surround yourself with people that you enjoy being with and working with and then it doesn't seem like a lot of time or energy. [nervous laughter] Except for Shane who spends all of the time and energy—

ALDEN: [laughter] Don't ask Shane that question, but yeah...

MOUJAN: Don't ask Shane that question. But like, you know. Making community out of it, you get to do the thing that you love and also get to spend time with people and that feels like it's worth it.

ALDEN: And that is a privilege, to be able to have people around you who... who want to do the same thing as you, who you feel you're at the same level as, and that's not something that everybody has access to. But I do think that finding that community of people, I think is... if you don't have that yet, or if you have not enough of that, should be your highest priority.

MOUJAN: Yeah.

JUSTIN: And I would say from a personal motivation sense it's less about doing a bunch of complicated things, and more about being like "on this day for these two or three hours, I'm going to do the creative thing." It's literally like a calendar problem, at least for me. It's like "I'm actually blocking this time off" and then it happens.

ALDEN: Yeah.

SETH: And I feel like those things can go together where once you're collaborating with people you're beholden to them. And if the struggle is sort of motivation, where it's like "I'm exhausted from my day job and now this is the only time I have to do this, I just want to be watching TV." If you have committed to like, jam with this person or write with this person, you just are like "well, I don't really feel like doing this but I'm gonna do it because I committed to this person" and then you have a great time.

JUSTIN: Yeah, gets fun fast.

MOUJAN: Yes. Yes.

SETH: Also, there's no, like, right amount to do it. If you have some imaginary amount where it's like "I should be doing this and this" and it's like... it's actually not the amount of music you want to make? But you just feel like "if I am this, I should be doing it more" like, you're still a musician no matter how many hours you're... you're doing it at a given time.

ALDEN: I mean, I think that's what we did with Zyxx, we did this big difficult project that took a long time and a ton of our energy, and the best thing for us was to take a year or two and decompress and... and wait until another thing came up that we were as excited to put that amount of work into.

SETH: Yeah.

MOUJAN: Yeah.

SETH: Spathi... ya Fyxxed!

JUSTIN: [crosstalk] Ya Fyxxed!

MOUJAN: [crosstalk] Fyxxed!

[guitar riff]

ALDEN: Well guys, we're nearing the end of our episode here, I think it might be time to do a quick lightning round of some of our shorter questions. This one's for, uh, Justin. "I've always struggled with something and I was hoping you guys could help me make sense of it. At what specific time does afternoon turn to evening and why is it four? From SusOnABus."

JUSTIN: Mm. Great question. Uh, the answer is when you put down the coffee and pick up the beer.

[lightning strikes]

ALDEN: Wow.

MOUJAN: Nice.

ALDEN: It's four o'clock somewhere, they might say. Uh, this is one for Seth, "I now have a job that I have little to no actual work for and I'm wanting to write a series of romantasy novels—" wow, I love that word, "—romantasy novels, but I'm running out of good mystical creatures for people to get steamy with. What are some good ones that aren't overdone? Brandon from the Fancast."

SETH: Uh... half salamander half chair. Not common at all. Um, merman and mermaid, but the top half is fish. Uh... is good.

JUSTIN: Yeah, sure.

SETH: That one's... the logistics of that gets interesting. And also, uh tiny dragon with a big dragon, um... is one that I think is... you can't do too much at all.

MOUJAN: Oh, that's cute. I'd like to see it.

ALDEN: You mean like a tiny dragon fucking a bigger dragon?

SETH: Oh, Alden!

MOUJAN: [offended] Wow, they're in love, Alden!

SETH: Yeah, I mean, yes, I wasn't gonna say it like that.

ALDEN: You can fuck if you're in love...

MOUJAN: [loudly] No, you can't!

ALDEN: Oh no. Oh boy, I've been doing it wrong this whole time.

[lightning strikes]

ALDEN: Alright, this was for Moujan, because you're truly the master of made-up names. "My friend is looking for a stage name for performing stand-up. What Zyxx character would make the best onstage pseudonym? I did nearly suggest Nundaloy to him as a surname at one point." It's from Faenissa.

MOUJAN: Well, why don't we think of... because you know, I think Zyxx characters would be fine names, but I feel like if your friend is looking for a stage name, it should be something unique, it should be something that's never been done before, why don't we all just come up with a couple of names right now?

ALDEN: Yeah! Sure. So this is a stand-up persona. Yeah, let's go around the horn and really kind of come up with some...

JUSTIN: I guess... Mike... Mike Crowdpleaser.

ALDEN: Oh, good. Yeah.

MOUJAN: Chuckles Doublechest.

SETH: Oh, that's good.

JUSTIN: Dandan the Chatman.

MOUJAN: Nice.

SETH: Yeah. Tight Clive.

ALDEN: [laughing]

MOUJAN: Oh. Scissors Contigo.

SETH: Oof.

ALDEN: Wow, that's like a prop comic!

SETH: You really... really pronounced that with a u sound.

MOUJAN: [laughing] No, honestly, no, Seth!

ALDEN: Um...

MOUJAN: Farney Crisscross.

ALDEN: Hmm... Bart Caltrain.

MOUJAN: Bart Caltrain. Yes, yes, yes, I'm familiar with Munibart Caltrain.

JUSTIN: Yeah. Yeah. Wow.

MOUJAN: And Cynthia Plagiarism.

[lightning strikes]

EVERYONE: [laughter]

ALDEN: Oh boy, if you can't find a good name in there, I...

JUSTIN: That's a lot of gold.

ALDEN: Next: this is for Justin. "What should I do for my birthday? Especially solo things since I have no set plans with family so far. Because it's me, I'm planning a trip to a bookstore. From Time And Relative Nerd In Space." What should I do for my birthday...?

JUSTIN: Outside of the trip to the bookstore?

ALDEN: I mean, that sounds like a pretty good birthday to be honest.

JUSTIN: Yeah, easy to plan. Let's just go to the bookstore. I think go to another birthday party and blow out their candles.

ALDEN: Yeah, that'll teach them to have a birthday on your birthday!

JUSTIN: Make some new friends with people who share a common ground.

ALDEN: You know what I love as a birthday that I did for many years, you guys know this, a crawl. I did a bar crawl—

MOUJAN: Oh, right.

ALDEN: —but you could do an anything crawl! Do a bookstore crawl!

JUSTIN: Mm.

ALDEN: Say "hey, come to this bookstore... then we'll go to another bookstore, then we'll go to a third and fourth bookstore, all of them have different stuff, some of them have cafes, some of them are in places that are hard to get to or interesting looking" and you're all set.

SETH: Some have gone out of business since the crawl started.

ALDEN: [laughter] If I know anything about bookstores, they're probably going out of business... this very moment. I love a crawl, they're an adventure. It's like a little treasure hunt. Uh, that would be my advice.

[lightning strikes]

SETH: Was Justin's question, but thank you.

JUSTIN: Yeah.

ALDEN: I'm sorry, Justin.

JUSTIN: That's how lightning works, it strikes at random.

ALDEN: Sorry, I just thought your answer wasn't good enough, was the problem.

JUSTIN: [laughter]

SETH: Oh, no, that's a good reason.

JUSTIN: Yeah.

ALDEN: Uh, Seth, this one's for you and Justin if you feel like jumping in.

SETH: Nope.

JUSTIN: Mm.

ALDEN: "Is it wrong to bribe my D&D players with actual candy to have them choose what I think is the most fun outcome for me?" From Thomas R.

SETH: No.

[lightning strikes]

MOUJAN: Great. I think that answered it.

JUSTIN: That's lightning, that's lightning.

SETH: What could be more right than that?

ALDEN: Alright, guys. This has been so much fun. We've got one last question from Noelle. "I have a philosophical quandary. I personally take a lot of comfort in the idea that, given the random chaos of our universe, nothing inherently matters." Wow, okay, that's sort of preemptively shutting on whatever answer we're giving "It means that humanity gives our actions—"

SETH: Justifiably.

ALDEN: "It means that humanity gives our actions meaning, not the mechanisms of the universe, and that the smallest act of kindness between two people holds just as much importance as a supernova exploding galaxies away, you know? My question is: what's a piece of philosophy you hold that comforts you?"

JUSTIN: I mean, let me just say that person should be hosting this podcast.

SETH: [laughter] Yeah.

ALDEN: Yeah.

JUSTIN: A piece of philosophy that we hold dear?

ALDEN: That comforts you.

MOUJAN: Everything that's happened has already happened before.

ALDEN: Whoa!

MOUJAN: The pain and experience that you go through in life other people have also experienced so.... you, you know. It may feel lonely sometimes, but there's a shared universal feeling in all of it, too.

ALDEN: Oh, that's really nice. I like that.

JUSTIN: If it's yellow, let it mellow.

ALDEN: [laughter] So comforting! That's so comforting.

MOUJAN: That's about pee, right?

JUSTIN: Yeah, there's more to it.

MOUJAN: Oh yeah, continue.

SETH: The other part's not as philosophical.

JUSTIN: Yeah, the first part is very philosophical, the second part's just good logistics. If it's brown, flush it down.

ALDEN: Wow, thank you Justin, so helpful! Seth?

SETH: This feels like a cop-out but I actually... this is true, I... I think about what Noelle thinks about. I don't feel like I'd have it as a clear philosophical maxim in the way that Noelle does, but it does comfort me to just think about things like the age of the universe, the distance of planets, the number of stars. Like, it does feel like it can make daily turmoil feel less overwhelming because of just how big and how old everything is.

ALDEN: I like that. I like that philosophy, although sometimes it has the opposite effect where I think "oh man, the universe has been around for 16 billion years and it's all led up to me saying that dumb thing to my—"

SETH: To Kirsten Dunst.

ALDEN: "—my in-law." [laughter] To Kirsten Dunst. It all has led up to me saying that dumb thing to that weird person at a party, but no, you're right. I actually kind of, for me, the thing I think about is the opposite? Like, the smaller version of it where I'm like... everything is atoms, and that's... that's where it stops. Like, the dumb things that I do or the things that I worry about or the things that I'm scared of or the things that I regret, those are all in the end... like, everything is made up of the same basic building blocks and none of those are going anywhere for *trillions* of years. Like, those atoms are gonna

be there just in different forms for the rest of time. I don't know if that really helps me be a better person? Uh... but it-, uh....

JUSTIN: A nihilist.

ALDEN: [laughter] Yeah. But it does... it does kind of calm my nerves sometimes.

JUSTIN: Beautiful.

ALDEN: Anything else to say about that...?

MOUJAN: I feel like... there's got to be, like a... what's a good saying about coffee in the morning? Like uh...

JUSTIN: "Drink it!"

MOUJAN: Yeah, drink it!

JUSTIN: "Coffee? Drink it!"

MOUJAN: Coffee? Drink it! It's like a good... I don't know if that's a philosophy—

SETH: "No coffee?"

MOUJAN: "Don't coffee? Goodbye!"

SETH: "No coffee? You java be kidding me!"

MOUJAN: Exactly. But for me, I think sometimes even if it's the hardest of days, the hardest of weeks, I really love my coffee in the morning and it's like a reset. So I don't know if there's a new philosophical saying.

ALDEN: That's a philosophy, yeah!

MOUJAN: Yeah, that should be on a kitchen window, like, "don't talk to me before I coffee" like, you know those things I think I hold true to those.

SETH: Wait, it's... "if it's yellow, keep it mellow. If it's brown—"

MOUJAN & SETH: [happily] "Drink it down!"

MOUJAN: Because it's coffee!

ALDEN: Because it's... brown, obviously that's about coffee!

JUSTIN: It's coffee... It's orange juice and coffee.

SETH: It's orange juice and coffee.

ALDEN: You gotta let that orange juice mellow before you drink it down.

[lightning strikes]

SETH: Everyone, this has been your... maybe your favorite installment of *Mission to Fyxx*.

[outro music]

JUSTIN: We've changed a lot of lives today.

ALDEN: Yeah, this has been a lot of fun! It's fun to kind of dig into stuff with you guys. This has been a blast.

MOUJAN: Yeah!

SETH: And don't forget to tune in next week to listen to this same episode. The last episode of this podcast.

MOUJAN: Exactly the same.

ALDEN: Don't forget to tune in... never.

MOUJAN: Yes. And also, another day, another cup of coffee. Don't speak to me when I've had my coffee. Espresso yourself.

SETH: Yeah.

MOUJAN: A good day starts with a great cup of coffee—

JUSTIN: Uh oh, she's breaking, she's fully—"

MOUJAN: Coffee is not a drink, it's a moment.

SETH: Oh no, oh no!

MOUJAN: Life is short, drink good coffee. Keep calm, gasoline. [laughter] Keep calm, gasoline, that's not coffee—

[speaking fades out and a peppy synth music track fades in and continues over background]

ALDEN: Alden here again. Hope you enjoyed that episode! Now, if you need more advice immediately, advice that is even worse if you can imagine that, well, when you support our show at MaxFun one more perk is that you get access to all of our bonus content, the newest of which came out this week. And we're calling it *The Derfcast*, not to be confused with *The Young Old Derf Chronicles*, no, this is an in-world podcast hosted by Derf himself, and in this episode Derf, you'll never guess this, also answers questions submitted by fans on Discord. Fans just like you! If you choose to support and we really hope you will, go to MaximumFun.org/join and select our show *Mission to Zyxx* when signing up. Thank you, and we will see you soon!

[music fades out]