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Hey everybody, welcome back to the max frequency podcast It feels weird for me because I just recorded a show last night But joining me this time whenever you're hearing this episode my extremely good friend I've traveled all the way to Chicago for his wedding Michael Ruiz Hey, what's up Mike? Mike It's it's this you're the first one out of our core group our model citizens media discord that still lives even though not all social media has been dead for Years, you're the first one I've had on the shop Really? Really? Mm-hmm. I haven't had Logan. I haven't had Mario. I'm not gonna talk to Grant What am I gonna talk to Grant about Catherine? It's not gonna be a good conversation. There's plenty of things to talk about Skateboarding, League, skateboarding Yeah, I mean, it's awesome. Thank you for thank you for having me dude. I love talking to you. So I know of course I my the reason I haven't invited I Hadn't invited any of you on up to this point was I was I was trying to not like lean on the old Reliable in the sense of I know I could hit any of you up at any time I want to spread my wings a little bit but definitely circumstances brought us together the Teenage star-crossed lovers Like media has aligned and you and I enjoy a lot of the same stuff And so yeah, I mean we'll talk about Riverdale our favorite TV show that we've actually watched together in person before Yeah, yeah, we're at Logan's was that two years ago or was that a year ago? Two years ago. It wasn't it wasn't this past one two years ago and then yes We'll talk about Emily's Away 3 as well because we both got to play it but The first thing I want to talk to you about is you totally Ripped me off. You took my idea. You copied me. You said this Max kid. He's doing something, right? First thing you did was you you left dual shockers. You're like Max was right. I should have left a long time ago Yeah, and then you started your own website, but you started with someone else. You're not totally like me I Yeah, so I Mean we don't have to talk about the whole dual shockers thing. I like everyone to know I don't like it Yeah, I feel like people know that story, you know And if you if you want to know about dual shockers go google it they were bought Ownership changed things changed. I left. Yeah a long time before that In a way in a way I was I was gone too right during that time I was just doing a little bit of work here and there for them Because I was just someone who they can kind of rely on to get some stuff done. So I would I would do some Reviews, I don't really do news. I did some like features here and there I think like the last feature I did for them was actually skateboarding related. I'm pretty sure I was it your big Like a pal gaming guy you back into skateboarding one. Yeah, I believe that's like the last thing I wrote for them Cuz the last review I think I did for the oh wait. No, the last review was not goes to Tsushima I thought it might have been but I might have done some other ones But yeah, I was just kind of doing some stuff for them and I was planning on coming back actually like that was like something that was getting talked around about and then things happened and Yeah, and then and then I kind of just left and I kind of I don't I want to say like left like the you know, I kind of like stopped Living my dream of trying to become like a writer in the gaming space kind of thing, dude I've been there remember when I get old model citizens media Yeah, you think I'm going through Yeah, and you know, I you know there was a time when we went to PAX together and I feel like That was I don't know if you felt the same way but I feel like I connected with you a lot more during that time like I think there's a time where I bonded with you a lot more because No, no offense to no offense to the people that we were with but you were like one of the only married people that I knew There

and yeah, I was having a really hard time Like being away from amber and stuff and wasn't that not it was only it It wasn't long after you got married, right? Yeah, I think there was like a few Because you got married it was snowing. It's a few months. You know, it's a few months after yeah, I got married in November November and Paxos that was March. So yeah And so you were someone I could talk to about that because I mean you kind of you you understood that. Yeah, so there's like stuff like that and just a few things here and there that like I Just it just wasn't hitting the same way that I liked it. I still like writing about video games. I love Video games. Oh, I always will But I also think it took me away from things other things that I love, you know, like I love music, you know before I really loved video games like music was what really like how I was able to express myself personally and With that dream of trying to become a writer in video games I kind of left some of those other things behind and that was a big one that I left behind and same thing with like, you know recently I've been getting into skating and We we even went skating together and I totally busted my hip and elbow We did. Yeah, we went we went skating when we went over to Logan's This past year when we were doing it was that for Game Awards, right? Yeah Yeah, we try to get together for the game awards every year every year. Yeah, and so I got back into skating and that was such a big that was kind of like almost like a life realization of like, you know there's other things other than video games and stuff like that and I got to get more out there and do more things and that was such a Life changing moment for me even at such a I'm gonna say old age. I'm only 29 I'm gonna be I'm gonna be 30 in a little bit But even at this age, you know where you've been on this earth for over two decades and you could still learn New things about yourself and what you really love and what you really want to do with your life Like that was a big moment for me. So and I lost 40 pounds in the process. So that which is crazy in like It kind of reminds me of my buddy Josh. He was actually the best man at my wedding he He used to drink Dr. Pepper all the time, big Dr. Pepper guy. And then he stopped drinking soda and basically the only liquids he consumes now is water and then alcohol if he's at a party. That's just kind of, you know, that's it. But he lost between 20 and 30 pounds just by switching to water. And that wasn't with exercise. crazy when you hear like just doing this yeah like one activity or one life change and it was it was definitely it was definitely several things like skating was my way to be active and it's not like skating does like a ton but it lets you sweat for sure and at that time I was like 240 pounds so me doing any activity that's going to make me sweat you're skating you're pushing all that weight like skate you you have to push it and move it it doesn't just you're not lifting weight you're actually moving all of the weight all of it yeah and I'm also trying to do like these tricks that I thought I could do and because at a while back when I used to escape you know when I was a teenager like I would do some of the tricks and I was trying to do those because I thought I could and it turns out it's harder when you weigh like literally a hundred pounds more so it's a combination of that and then also just just like you know I do drink a little bit more than I was before but I did like I used to drink like three beers a day and just like eat like garbage and all I really did was just change it to one beer a day and then still eat the same garbage but not eat as much of the garbage so you know instead of eating like a bag of chips and like a hamburger, like two hamburgers and like fries or whatever, I'll eat like a handful of chips, one hamburger, and like a small fry. But then also putting in skating and stuff like that too with it. Um, it like totally changed everything and how I like approach like my diet. And like, it's crazy how much that one activity like completely changed how I live my life you know whereas like video games in a way was like almost like a negative you know and like the whole process of you know writing and all that stuff because I was so concentrated on it and trying to make it in that space I wasn't paying attention to myself you know and like being good to my body and stuff like that and so finding skateboarding again and doing that over again was such like a big life improvement and why like that piece that I wrote for that is like one of my favorite because it actually means something to me whereas like writing like writing a Yik or Y2K review makes me angry you know. I mean I remember reading it and telling you it's it definitely is one of your best pieces you've ever written and it's because it's personal and that I think in general and especially kind of press news coverage when stories personal stories come through it that's when it's the most powerful, whether that's the reporter telling someone else's story or telling

their own, that's when the writing's really good. And I, seriously, that's a great piece. It also just reminds me, like, it's fresh in my head because I just talked about this, you know, last night when we were recording this, but the short version was when I did wiki writing early on, I was giving it all of my attention and time and I definitely ignored family and at the time my girlfriend, which turned out to be Abby, my wife, I took time away from them to write a how-to page for whatever, you know, some silly video game collectible that means nothing in the grand scheme of things just so it could get good clicks on Google, you know, a trend. And I think at some point, unless it's your nine to five, and it actually is a nine to five, you really got to sit down and be like, do Google trends really matter? Or do-- Does my health matter? Or do my relationships, you know? And I think you all have to have-- everyone has to have their come to Jesus kind of moment of, maybe I don't-- need to or want to be a video game writer forever especially if it involves moving across the country and putting in this kind of work I don't know yeah and that you know that's not to disparage anyone who wants to do that like I don't want to disparage it I don't want to say like it's it was a bad experience or anything cuz you know what like so many experiences I had like with dual shockers and in doing the stuff that I did are some of the best moments like in my life I've got to interview like wrestlers like my favorite wrestlers of all like like currently like I got the interview Becky Lynch that's like such a crazy moment you know I wouldn't have met like you guys I wouldn't met you or Logan or Mario or Grant if like I hadn't been in this space so like I'm so thankful for everything that you know video games and that whole experience has done for me in terms of like building relationships and and all that stuff I've had such a great time but I'm with you in that like you know I put aside a lot of stuff and you know looking back I'm not like super happy about that kind of stuff like them like putting aside family and you know and and luckily I had people who I was surrounded with like my wife and you know friends and stuff who really understood like I was really like putting myself out there to to try and do this for a living. So everyone was supportive and it was awesome. You know, luckily I had that kind of support group. But some people don't and that and that, you know, I just don't want to disparage anyone who wants to do that. It's different for every person. If I hadn't met Abby in college, who knows where I'd be. Like, Abby changed that course and I am incredibly thankful for it. She is above and beyond anything I could have done with video games. And also, PAX. I only have been to PAX East 2019. PAX was one of the coolest things ever. I miss PAX actually quite a bit. COVID really sucked out the last two here. And when that comes back in person, I want to try and go definitely under max frequency so I can get a press badge because I can't imagine being a regular attendee. Yeah if I can't get a press badge I'm not going. I don't know how anyone stood in those lines. It's wild. It's not worth it. Like I know that sounds mean but like if you're going to Pax though. It definitely sounds entitled. Yeah it does. On a real level, if you're going to PAX though, you gotta check out the indie stuff. Don't even mess around with, like unless you wanna get those Nintendo pins or whatever that they're handing out over there. Don't do the big stuff. Just don't do the big stuff. Go see the indie stuff. That's what's worth it there. And you get to actually talk with people, you get to talk with the developers and, you know, get to pick their brain on that stuff. Even as like a, you know, even as just an attendee there, you don't have to be pressed to do that. No. That's one of the reasons why like PSX was one of my favorites because all of them, every developer was like that. Except for like some of the real, real big games. But like we got, Logan and I got to talk to people from like House Mark or we got to talk to people from like, you know, like there's people from the show I think that were there that we were able to talk to. I think if I'm remembering correctly, like we were able to talk to those people and it was so upfront and so like personal with like the developers and stuff and that's why I love that show. It was also like my first big show that I ever went to and it was awesome. So that helps too. PSX definitely. I miss it. Sometimes I wonder if they would ever bring it back but current Sony doesn't feel like the kind of Sony that would do that. Also it not now. Oh well yeah I'm talking just in general not current global. Yeah, I think I don't think that's in the cards. I wish they would I it was such a cool experience for sure but Anyway, going back going back to bantam banter and all that stuff. So yeah Ricky freck was someone who we wrote with he was the route. Well, yeah, he was the reviews editor after Well when Logan

turned into a managing editor and then he also left too, right? But Ricky Ricky became the reviews editor at dual shockers, right and Obviously, he's not with dual shockers anymore. He's freelancing and stuff. You should check out his stuff. I think he writes for game per But we started doing bantam banter because bantam banter was An idea we had at dual shockers where we had these like really dumb topics. We wanted to talk about But we didn't really have an avenue to do it So we wanted to create like a podcast that we can we basically had all the rejected ideas like podcast Basically, it's like what's it? What's a dumb? What's a dumb topic you want to talk about like the podcast of misfit? Topics. Yeah, it's just it's whatever and that's the kind of the idea of the show. So the name Bantam banter Obviously, it's banter because we're just like talking, you know talking but Bantam comes from Bar from the video game series. I don't know if you ever heard of this video game series max, but it's called Yakuza I think I do it. Do we still have a discord channel solely dedicated to that or does it? We do. Yeah, not surprised. It's not yeah cuz it I Was like maybe it could be an anime game. I guess it could fit into that channel that we have but Wait, what's PlayStation Palace? Oh, that's right. Look see because we try to clean up our channel regularly but I guess this one slipped through so that's where the idea comes from and again like Bantam is a bar in that thing so the idea is to have like these like random conversations at like a bar as if it was at a bar yeah you know that's kind of the idea of the podcast now the topics we've had gotten are kind of goofy like we do some really goofy one some of them are like serious ish but not so serious if you want to you could go check check out the website www.bantambanter.com yeah yeah right now it's just podcast but I do want to write I would like to write some stuff but you know the first few episodes were like just what it is the the very first episode that was just not like an actual topic thing and that was like oh this is we are was called the Pablo Sanchez Memorial All Valley Karate Championship which was us making a bracket of all the backyard kids minus Pablo Sanchez which is why it's a memorial because in the world that we created Pablo Sanchez is dead unfortunately. That's so unfortunate because he's the best. He's a and he's a child that's what makes it really unfortunate it's really sad actually but the idea is is that there is a karate tournament because we wanted to pick a sport that they haven't played and karate is a sport so and we kind of randomly generated a a bracket for every backyard sports kid to fight in this tournament and we came up with a winner and it was really fun so yeah there's there's stuff like that we did one making a Tony Hawk pro skater game with iconic game characters and songs. So Disney's Extreme Skate Adventure. Basically the latest one we did, I'm guessing this is gonna be coming out pretty soon, is we did like a kind of like a survivor simulator thing with Xbox characters so we have like a bunch of Xbox characters and like like the survivor the reality show we put a bunch of Xbox characters in there and it's like a simulator thing and we kind of just talk over it give like they kind of give us general ideas of like what happens with each contestant but we make we kind of basically make up stories for like what happened and stuff so it's it's just really fun and goofy and we both have like a really good time are we now are we doing this for like just for fun or are we doing this like to like make it I feel like we're doing it more for fun I don't think we're doing anything that is going to be getting like you know clicks are getting on Google but we're enjoying ourselves and we're just having like a good time and that's all we really kind of want from it if it you know and this goes back to you know making the art my own site or whatever with Ricky and stuff like that and you know I'm at this moment at this point if it if anything like clicks with that site oh that's great I love that that's that's that would be so cool and if and anyone who has ever whoever reads or ends up listening to stuff on there, amazing. But at this moment I'm just here to do it because, one, old habits die hard and I'll never ever not podcaster or write. You just gotta be like me and just cold blood and murder it and then stop for two years. Yeah. And the second thing is that, you know, I just really like writing a lot and whether I'm bad or good at like or whether I like the stuff that I write or not, you know, I still enjoy the process of it and thinking in that mindset. And, uh, it's just now I don't have a deadline for things. So I kind of, I'm just going to write whenever I want to, which is nice, which is great. Feels so good. Yeah. The only deadline's my own. Yeah. So like, I'm enjoying it. I'm having a really good time, you know? Um, it was kind of hard to get up and running at first, but once it has, you know, we, we had like one speed bump last week, like

the episode six was supposed to come out last week, but, uh, one, um, there's just a lot of stuff going on personally and at that time for me. But, um, but otherwise it was just like, we didn't have time to edit. So we got episode six out now and seven should be out now too. So, yeah. And it comes out weekly every Thursday. So, and that's, frankly, that's the flexibility that doing this for fun kind of lets you have. I mean, this show kind of comes out. The goal in general for this, you know, this show is just three times a month. Uh, but it can come out whenever like within that month. And I mean, ideally I try to have a quick turnaround from recording, just so I don't leave people high and dry that I spent a couple hours recording with, but. I have a whole month to play with and it gives me like a liberating flexibility that when a weekly show doesn't because you have to be strict and tight with that and You know, I did millennial gaming speak for two two and a half years weekly show Awesome, but I don't need that in my life right now Yeah, and like I said, we're doing a weekly show and it's not terrible because one we're not looking at current events we're just kind of yeah you know talking about random stuff you know so we can kind of record whatever day of the week it doesn't matter and two like you know i i have a day job and i usually get off of it uh at like 1 pm and ricky is freelancing so he kind of has a bit more of a flexible schedule too he does and doesn't um but we could kind of just record whenever so we do and then that's been great and it also helps that we're both on central time so we never have to be in the same time zone no yeah yeah exactly because like even you know between when we were doing model citizens we were going through two different time zones cuz Mario and I both live in Illinois yeah and then you guys live in Eastern time so usually we'd have to do things we'd to plan out things a little bit more, but you know, not that I didn't love podcasting with you guys. It is always nice to be like, "Oh, we're just going to record it this time and not have to explain time zones for a moment." I had that moment yesterday where I set up the time with Michael then. Michael Kazuwara. I'm going to get that right someday. Set up the time with him last week, 5 p.m. Pacific time, because he's out closer to the West Coast. And then the day before the show, I don't know what it was, but in my brain it was 5 p.m. Eastern. I was telling Abby, I'm like, "I'm gonna be recording when you get home from work. Please be quiet when you come in, or as best you can." Just that kind of stuff. And then a few hours before, I touched base with him and he double checked the time, and that's when it re-clicked that it was like, "Oh no, it's supposed to be eight o'clock my time," which was better for me anyway, which is probably why we planned it at that time to begin with. Time zones will never not have some form of a slip-up, even though I've been working with people on the West Coast for eight to nine years now. I've just always had people... Still won't get over it Anyway, I love it. I love seeing because I took a lot of inspiration for max frequency from Stuff I saw in the tech Space with news. There's a podcast network relay FM That I listen to quite a few of their shows and some some blogs that I read Just typical RSS feed Blogs like actually read them. It's great And I saw that coverage specifically for Apple, because that's kind of what I'm interested in. And gaming doesn't really have that anymore. It's all turned into this big corporate type publications and writing and podcasting YouTube and all this stuff. And I wanted to bring that back or bring it to gaming in that space. And that has been fun and liberating and to draw inspiration from other places. part of it is having this really flexible schedule of releasing whenever I want. You know I think like the freedom of like being able to like again this is getting into some weird stuff but like you know it's kind of nice that I don't have to you know hit a word count you know like even though I haven't like written anything yet like the idea that like I could write a new story that maybe that I really care about. I wrote one, I wrote two today and they were so short. Yeah, like one I could just write what I care about. That's one big thing. But also like I could put you know I don't have to feel like I could turn it into more of like you know editorializing the news and stuff like that. I could turn it more into my my opinion if I want to or I could just be like hey this thing happened in like a paragraph and then call it a day. You know? That kind of stuff is nice but then also with like same thing with like doing like a review Which will probably we'll get to that later on in the show probably technically with Emily is away but cuz you're you're working on that review, but Being able to like talk about that stuff and not having to be like, okay, I got a right 20 bajillion words on why this game is good or bad and Being all nice about it and

whatever like I it definitely You know the the entire process of creating bantam banter and and doing it like independently It feels nice because I don't feel like I don't have that pressure to like do that stuff and hopefully For me that generates like better content because I'm not under pressure on stuff Basically, we don't have Logan over our shoulder telling us what we need to do Yeah, because I've definitely done things on a deadline and that is some of them most insane stuff to do like deadline or that that or a review I did Not great, but I volunteered for that too It was so hard do it. I Was getting so mad cuz that game gets hard like does it gets pretty challenging and Yeah that that one that one and also there was like a few others the one that killed me was lost fear I beat that game it's like a 20-hour game I beat it in like two days and wrote a thousand something word review oh that one killed me that was when I read that's when I realized maybe video game writing bad I don't know about this guy's or it's not even at the writing process it's more like how that section of the industry works you know I'm saying because you have to do it by a certain time and you know I think some companies have been better about that stuff I get those clicks on that stuff but at the same time it's like well you don't get it at this time people are not gonna be interested all that stuff whatever that's that's a whole other thing that we don't need to talk about yeah no way that's above my pay grade yep literally and I'm with you the other thing that you and I you and I are actually incredibly similar but when it comes to entertainment that we like it's actually sometimes is a little weird especially we're I'm cuz we're definitely very different people we get along we We definitely get along, but we are very different. I would say you are a much more tidier, organized, put together kind of person. - Thank you, I try. - I'm a little bit rougher. - Go with the flow. - I'm definitely way more go with the flow kind of stuff. I don't mind things mixing up a little bit or whatever, but it is interesting to know that we have like a lot of similar interests, even though we're so like, we're pretty different. So, and one of our great loves Riverdale. Oh, masterpiece. It seriously, it is Riverdale is incredible. People will look back and go, how did the CW nail this? it is so Riverdale if you do not know for whatever reason is a CW teen drama based off the Archie comics that you would find at the checkout stand in a grocery store so like it's amazing I want to say I don't want to say recently because this was when I was in the comic books and that was at this point probably about eight years ago but there was a moment where they were making you know Archie and I think it was Sabrina and some other ones too like those older comics they were kind of making them a little bit more darker and stuff like at the time that I was reading comic books those were they had this Archie storyline where Archie died or whatever what yeah so there was that yeah That's stuff. So that stuff was totally happening and then they were redoing the Sabrina comic books mmm to rip Sabrina to To be more darker and stuff like that like actual craft Yeah, so that was happening during that time and I feel like that's what CW took inspiration from was like more of those stories like recent Archie comics and recent like Sabrina Sabrina Sabrina also had the Netflix show that was supposed to tie in with Riverdale, but then it didn't. Because Netflix murdered it. Yeah, there was because I think it has the same showrunner or something like that. It's yeah, they're Someone up top is the same like between the two shows. They have they have like in the first season of Sabrina They mentioned Riverdale in it. Can you imagine this? Like what would you even call it? We have the Marvel Cinematic Universe. What do we call it? The Riverdale Cinematic Universe? I mean it would be the Archie comics cinematic universe because those are all because Sabrina is an Archie comic Okay, that's interesting almost positive it is because Archie comics is its own company. Oh Same thing but I don't know how it is now because someone could have Archie comics and now it's like folded under like some other or something else the when Like I remember when I first saw this Riverdale Concept it was on Netflix, of course And it was the initial pitch was you know, Archie, Jekhead, Veronica and Betty like solving Crimes I was like this sounds kind of cool. I like Scooby-doo I know what I know who these characters are supposed to be sure. I'll try a live act Then it turns into this Archie's hooking up with the teacher Someone gets shot Someone's brother's dead and the show just doesn't stop. They're like slam that gas pedal to the ground So it definitely draws at least that first season whatever like It definitely draws inspiration from yeah, like Scooby-Doo and stuff like that But I feel like it's like heavy Twin Peaks vibes and I've never seen Twin Peaks and it's like don't kill me Mario.

It even has like one of the actresses in there is from Twin Peaks too. Like the Betty's mom is like a main character in Twin Peaks. Oh really? Yeah so there's like definite heavy Twin Peaks influence especially in that first season like how Betty's or not Betty's Cheryl's brother like washes up on the shore like drowned or whatever. That's legitimately the same thing that happens in the first episode of Twin Peaks. I think Riverdale is not shy to just straight up take stuff from other properties and put their own spin on it. Not at all. And it's amazing. I love it. Especially when they do like the musical ones. Amazing. It's so... it's campy and also dead serious. The things that, like, the serial killer genes, come on! And they say this stuff that there's this genetic, these chromosomes that, like, aren't serial killer specific. They say it's so straight-faced and I wonder how many takes it took them to get that line so straight-faced because I don't know how you can say that and be so serious. - [J] They deliver it so... It really is a show whose cast and clearly the people writing it fully grasp what it is and embrace it wholeheartedly. They understand and I think that makes it all the better because it's a show that there's always some new dark crazy killer or new murdering thing in pound and then it just they sit in a room and like how do we one-up ourselves oh yeah let's have everyone play Dungeons & Dragons spin-off go it's what is it gargoyle is griffin's and gargoyles griffin's and gargoyles oh yeah now there's a cult and everyone's drinking poison and there's this there's drug ring yeah jingle jangle which is just a pixie sticks and of course everyone in the show is beautiful beautiful beautiful drop it gorgeous every male character has at least 30 abs everyone at least you know they're in high school so everyone is supposed to be a high schooler they're clearly in their mid mid 20s and it's just unfathomable and the best way possible that there's at least one excuse to get Archie to take his shirt off every week it's amazing again beautiful underground boxing like this show goes places not not only do they give an excuse to to take for Archie to take his shirt off but to also drench him in water just so much sweat just oil just gliss ah it's it's ridiculous. It is mine. I love it so much. So I really watched the first two seasons rather... We're in season five now, right? I believe so, yeah. Yeah. So I watched the first two seasons pretty aggressively. Classic binge, just boom boom boom. And then I got maybe a third of the way through season three and just stopped watching? because I didn't love it I just kind of was season three is Griffin's and gargoyles right yeah the gargoyle King specifically and that and that one actually I think drags on a bit too long that it does that whole plot just that whole real villain I suppose just drags on a bit too much but I'm telling you what they come back season four perfection absolute perfection you know and I feel like people don't really like didn't really like season four maybe I'm wrong but I think I really good the whole storyline of jughead going to a prep school and like this whole murder just so first of all I love teenagers solving murder mysteries I just I always have it's just a genre I love and they fully lean into it in season four and it's just really it's incredible I don't want to spoil it because to me it feels so fresh because I did just finish it up earlier this year I mean season four now has been a year yeah it's year two out but it's yeah these the Stonewall preppies and the murder dynamic there and the Baxter brothers novels and all these characters coming together just it's so over-the-top and satisfying and keeps you on your toes and just man I love that show so much and now season five there I'm caught up there's a mid-season break I did oh my gosh yeah so I mean I guess kind of the answer your question about like when did I kind of yeah you know watching it I I can't honestly I can't remember if I started watching it when it was on TV or if I feel like I watched it on Netflix and I watched the first season on Netflix that's that's what I'm almost positive I did and then the second season I just like I never like in in a way like I kind of didn't watch it like I don't really remember it I know what it is I remember the storyline for it and everything but I kind of watched that cuz I think Amber was watching it my wife was watching it my wife's name is Amber so I'm gonna use the name Amber now but Amber was watching it and so I was like kind of getting glimpses of it there so I was kind of watching it while she was watching it and that's how I I kind of watched season two. She was watching it and it was like in the middle of the season was when I started watching season two and I was like what is this show? This show is incredible. What is happening in this show right now? Because just something bombastic would just happen every single episode and it was so funny because it was so cheesy but then it was so serious and really engaging in a way. You take it just as

seriously as they do. Yeah. You know, they say something like the serial killer jeans and you crack up, but then you're also, "Oh my gosh, who has these jeans?" "They got the serial killer jeans, oh my God!" It's double-edged sword of super serious and super corny. And it sucks you in. Abby did not watch Riverdale. She rolls her eyes so hard. she just she this the corny side of it just doesn't it pushes her away i think because i'm just like i'm like archie took his shirt off again and i swear he had three more abs and oh my gosh there was a boxing match to the death like you know all this stuff and she's just her eyes roll so hard i'm like but abby it's so good it's amazing um but yeah so season two i finished with her and then season three was having on TV so since season three i've been watching it on TV actual TV yeah and i've just been cut i've watched it i would watch it every per week you know whenever it would come out but you haven't watched the season five mid-season finale you're just trying to hold on to something yeah basically cuz like a bunch of shows stopped like that one i'm watching Superman and Lois also which i think is pretty decent That's a CW show too, right? Yeah, i don't yeah, i don't know what it is about CW shows and me and me liking them it's like It's like my it's not like a dark secret or anything, but it's like What's the word for it? Guilty pleasure. Yeah, it's just like i just really enjoy The vibe that it gives off like it's just so Like corny and teen drama ll and i've never really been into like teen drama movie stuff i never really liked Twilight. i like Harry Potter, you know, but i've never been like into Twilight or Hunger Games or stuff like that You know, but stuff like Riverdale In even Superman and Lois and whatever, you know Superman Lois state. They actually do the Superman character really well Like i think they do a really good job of you know bringing the Clark Like part of him out like Brian and not just like the alien Superman, you know Like it's more about Clark and and how he's dealing with Having two kids one of them being like superhuman or superhuman at all that stuff. Like it's it's really well i think it's well done especially for a CW show But then also like with Riverdale it's like It's just so crazy like it's in they upped the ante like every episode and it's so ridiculous every time and you know as i've You know, i said this in the podcast that i was just on like doing bantam banter the episode eight i just said this but like as i'm getting older the things that i find entertaining are getting like dumber and dumber and not to say that like you know like i'm not saying like riverdale's bad or anything like but it's straight it's really dumb like there's just dumb things that happen and it's there's it's so wild and crazy and i've that's just stuff that's like what i've been getting into now it's just like into like just weird dumb like don't have to think about anything kind of stuff, you know, and that fits the mold like perfectly. Jon Sorrentino It's easy to get wrapped up in the world that they make. Gregor Stryker Yeah. Jon Sorrentino i swear that writer's room has to have the most fun. Gregor Stryker Yeah. And like it again and that's another thing that i said too like in that same pocket is like because we were talking about WWE 2K22 what we'd want from it but in the same fashions like you know you could tell when people are having fun with what they're doing. Mm-hmm, and and i feel like personally i mean it's weird and maybe they're not i don't know But feels like they're having a really good time telling the story like everyone involved is like having a great time now i know some people have left the show and stuff and i don't know if that's because They were written off or because they weren't liking their time with it or whatever. But yeah You know Like that's the nature of TV Yeah people. So it's just go Exactly. So, but it feels like everyone's like, i mean, mostly everyone is still on there, mine is like, you know, you know, Archie's dad, unfortunately, he passed and everything. Yes. But other than that, it's like Jughead's dad and his sister and Jellybean? Yeah, Jellybean. They're gone? Well, Jughead's dad's definitely gone. Is he? i guess so. He rode off like he was in techno. That's right. That's right. That's right. That's right Yeah, he loves to take her Yeah, yeah. Okay. Yes. i'm sorry. i remember now Yeah, so she so he's off technically and i don't there's i think there's like one other person i can't remember off the top of my head, but oh It was uh, isn't oh, no, she's still on there, too Veronica's mom. i thought she yeah, she she showed up a little bit here in season. Yeah, her role That's greatly diminished, but she's still around Yeah, hi. i'm the real star yeah, so it's like everyone's kind of like Stayed which means that one they're either getting paid super well, or they're enjoying what they're doing. Mm-hmm Hopefully both they should be being paid very well because the show is awesome. It's great. i love it. i will watch Every season of that show because you

know, I like to watch things that just make me happy now I don't really care about the quality of the thing. It could be terrible. It could be the worst movie in the world But as long as I'm like sitting there and like smiling and having a good time watching it dude, I'm down, you know Yeah, and you you reminded me the other day. I totally forgot that the CW is making the Powerpuff Girls live-action as adults it's essentially the same formula of at least conceptually of Taking a beloved childhood cartoon comic thing and turning them into a mature show Or you know a teen mature show because it is the CW it's not you know HBO or anything Yeah, and I cannot wait Do you hear what the premise is? It's my understanding is it's the Powerpuff Girls as adults and they've they've gone their separate ways they don't fight or anything anymore they there's some tension there and now they have to come back together to do something yeah my understanding it sounds like they like they like hated that they had that they have powers right like that they kind of thing that responsibility was put on them as children yeah that's i mean that sounds so like teen angst like yeah I just can't wait I can't wait for blossom to be like a hardcore alcoholic and bubbles to our yeah me so it's just like who's gonna be mojo Jojo come on they they have them they have them whatever like casted but is it oh yeah that's what that's what I maybe normally more my approach was thinking just like what is mojojogo gonna look like is he actually going to be a CG monkey what was that show where the gorilla comes in that guy's flash head yeah gorilla Grodd there was gorilla Grodd in Barack Obama so yeah what a brilliant part of really a part of that show see and the Powerpuff Girls could have a similar type moment as the vibe - I just there's so many wacky villains in Powerpuff Girls - but fuzzy Lumpkins the kid that eats the paste oh yeah I don't yeah I don't remember why he turns into like a giant thing of glue or whatever mm-hmm like a kaiju glue monster there's one the girl with them oh it's is it Medusa who has like the snake it was like Medusa yeah there's a ton of cool I mean honestly those villains are kind of cool they are cool and I can't Oh Abby I reminded Abby of this show's existence the other day and she said no they're gonna ruin it I said no they're gonna make it better yeah I hope they bring in the Justice Friends like they had those shorts where it was like the Justice Friends and it was the crunk and and like the it's like purple Hulk basically yeah then then Helen or I don't know it's like a name for Van Halen it's like a wordplay on that yeah I remember those characters I hope they bring them in there too yeah it's uh I can't wait for this I'm I hope it doesn't flop but like apparently Sabrina did and the scent and sense of being canceled because I would like to see more Sabrina wasn't on CW though that Sabrina was on Netflix like that was right but I mean that's a kind of a different audience yeah I mean no yeah yeah it's just it's the same they were supposed to be connected and like same people essentially behind them but obviously one is still here and one is not look look man if they can revive charmed and it still go then they could probably do something with Powerpuff Girls. That's true I hope so I'm I don't know if they have a date announced but they did just reveal a poster. With what they look like. Yeah with what they look like. Yeah so it has to be coming pretty soon. I hope so. This year. Could you imagine Riverdale and Powerpuff Girls at the same time? Dude. I'd lose my mind. What a time. What a time. The really kind of the other big thing I wanted to talk to you about ties in with Teen Angst and incredible writing. And not so much serial killer genes, but you and I both, extremely fortunate to play Emily is Away 3, or less than 3 if you're being technical. Before release, as of recording, It comes out tomorrow. By the time you hear this, the game will be out on Steam and I assume other places. Steam is where I've been playing it so I know it's going to be there. Definitely on PC and Mac because I've been playing it on Mac and you've been playing it on PC. But you have a better relationship with Kyle than I do because you've talked to him more. You've just interacted with him more. I guess I do, yeah. I mean you sound like you I know him or anything like I'm right. Oh, but but you've you've interviewed him At least two times, right? I think I've only interviewed him once I thought it was twice I'm either way. We both played Emily's Way 3 at PAX actually that packs that we went to together In the indie booth, so that's well, so so that's a little different Oh true you you went to the indie booth. I went to the base you played it. I tell yeah I had a preview like scheduled for him, but his booth wasn't going to be out until that day that you saw it hmm, so Him he brought his laptop to the hotel lobby that he was running the game on like on the at the booth Yeah, and I just played I just played the

preview build like in the hotel lobby with him And then we were just you know, and then we were just talking or whatever and then I did that preview And I had you know really good things to say about it because I you know The first two Emily's is away games like there's like two of my favorite games like I mean I think in previous discussions like when you and I have talked about video games or any Podcasts that have been on video games like I do think like gameplay is always like key and that's like the thing that I look at the most and With this kind of game like obviously gameplay is not like the big thing. It's the story that's driving it But the narrative in this game and the writing for it and everything is so Incredible like it perfectly fits Like any era that it's doing and this counts for this third game It like perfectly gets it like it is and it's it's incredible Honestly, you're probably gonna help me like flesh out some of my ideas and talking points that I want to do in my write-up about this game but it's like It's like Rose Colored Glasses, Rose Tinted I suppose is the phrase. So Emily is Away 3 takes place in 2008. Maybe I should say. Emily is Away is a series of games, an instant messaging narrative decision type game. The first one was AIM, it mirrors AIM the first two games and then this new one, Face Nook aim is dead 2008 welcome to face Nook that idea but basically it's it's CC kids seniors in high school their relationships and interacting through instant messaging and browsing profiles and all this stuff and Kyle just gets that time period it is exactly what I remember well so Kyle he's like my age He's around my age. I think he might be a little older. So he like lived through that time period. Like for me like Emily is away like this one Emily's away three is the exact time I graduated high school in 2009. So it's like this is very much I know this. You know the AIM stuff I had AIM like and I used it for sure. But I was definitely younger. I wasn't going to college or anything like that when I was using AIM, I was using, you know, I was in middle school going into high school when I was using AIM. - Yeah. - So, and like a little bit into high school, I had it, but I wasn't graduating high school and using AIM. By that time, you know, as Emily is Away 3 says, AIM was dead, like no one was really using it. - Rip AIM. - So, and like the language that they use and stuff, like in Emily is Away 3, like how people, I like, uh, so to put a little bit of context and what I'm about to say, like the, um, there, there was a moment in the game with the dialogue that was something that, and it's such like a little thing, you know, like it wasn't like this like outwardly like, Oh, this is totally 2009 or whatever, but, um, something I used to say, uh, to be like kind of joking and stuff like that when someone would like say "oh you're this way" or whatever like "oh you do what are you doing this why are you doing this" or whatever I would jokingly say like "oh you don't know me" like I would do that as like a joke and that was like a running joke with like my friends and stuff it's just a dumb thing that I would say and they had that dialogue option in this game like dude this game's like basically me like talking like some of the dialogue choices and I had to send that to my friend like dude this game knows me because my the friend that I was texting that picture to we played all through Emily is away one and two together like a bunch of times yeah we would just put it up on a TV screen and play it together so it was fun to see like kind of being able to see myself personified like within a text form it was such like a little thing you know and there's like other things too like that was the one that stood out to me I was like this is so weird like this is definitely like me talking in this game like it's not even you know it so I don't know really does right deal that way do you I so for both of us this is the first new Emily is away game that we've played after being married yeah and I actually felt like I could and maybe this is also just because I'm an adult now. I'm, you know, oh my gosh, I'm almost a decade. You're a decade removed from high school, right? Yeah, you're definitely over. You're over a decade. Like, we're very far away from high school in that context. Like we have perspective and understand how to interact as adults and handle situations. And I feel like I approached this game with a pretty level head of knowing how to have conversations and disagreements with Abby and be mature about it on some level and actually understand how to talk to people. And honestly, instant messaging or text messages or whatever is usually not the best way, so I felt like I was handling things pretty responsibly and things kind of worked out in a way that made sense. This time around, I wasn't necessarily role-playing an emotional senior in high school, and I think that actually reflected in my out--actually, we both had the same outcome. [laughs] -Yeah. So, yeah, I would say in previous games, I tried to--I don't know, I just just felt like what I

wanted to say the thing because this is kind of how I am like I kind of wanted to say the thing that would you know be the nicest thing to say to them you know I want to like and to be respectful you know that's how I usually play most any sort of dialogue driven adventure game is like I want to be respectful and I want people to like you know respect me as well and not hate me so I've done that but so in two when they started introducing Evelyn was when things were getting kind of wild because I would do it for both and not realizing that like like I'm not it's hard cuz it's like you say something and again this this is like real life too it's like you say something you don't mean it to be flirting but then it becomes like a flirting thing and then you're like I I don't I'm that I didn't mean now that way and now I'm trying to date both of them at the same time I'm trying to be both of them at the same time and all this stuff so That like that's why Emily is away too was like for me So effective with like how it was like doing its story and especially when they started adding Freaking timers to the typing. I was like this fast. I was surprised there were no timers this time yeah I think I didn't get any timers either in chapter one there's a part where you are talking to both Evelyn and Emily at the same time and I thought it was gonna kick in I was like oh god I mean but to be fair though those conversations though were pretty chill they weren't like yeah I thought it was gonna do the ones and two were so stressful they were is some of the wildest like gameplay storytelling like that whole loop of that and like how that was executed was like perfect for Emily's Way 2 you know and you know and I feel like for three they took sure it might maybe there are those moments and I just don't know because I haven't played it more but yeah there's we definitely could go back and burn it all to the ground yeah but I really did like that it was a little bit more chill and relaxed and you know it gave you the time to respond and you know I I did a thing cuz I was wondering I'm like oh I wonder if this would happen where I really had to go poop full disclosure I had to go poop like real bad real life so I was like you know what I'm gonna take this opportunity I wonder if I just like go away for like 20 minutes if what don't happen like what will happen right because I'm like it would I didn't think anything would happen but I also wouldn't put it it like again like I feel like maybe something could have happened right like maybe like because I was trying to romance Evelyn throughout my game playthrough so I was like maybe Evelyn will get like mad that I'm not responding fast enough or something like that right and so I did that I pooped came back 20 minutes later and it was just the same screen which was kind of anticlimactic but at the same time it's like well you know when you're in real life right like yeah how many times are is like someone who you're not who you're talking to and you take like 20 minutes to respond you know that happens but how many people are going to like respond unless they're like a crazy person after 20 minutes of not respond like be like hey where are you you know and I never like in high school I don't think I ever really got those interactions I was like in high school I wasn't like I was like pop I wasn't popular but I was cool with people you know so I tried I you know I always try to kind of role-play it and what I think I would have done as a high school student to get into that mindset of that but at the same time every time I think about that I'm like all I was in high school was just like I was kind of like nerdy I hung out with like either I had two sets of friends I had the nerdy friends who I'm still friends to like with with to this day like they were in my wedding party and everything like that and then I had like some of the other friends that we're a little bit more troublemaker-y, but I never was like dating girls or anything like that in high school. I wasn't really doing... I didn't drink, I didn't smoke, I was actually like pretty like laid-back on that stuff. A responsible young adult? Yeah I did, I didn't I didn't really want to drink or do drugs or anything like that. I drank one time in my formative years and then I didn't drink until I was 20 after that. so Yeah, so I try to like go about it that way except like a little bit of more adult tendencies because I'm just am who I am now and I just forget you know to Stay with the role-playing of it. And so like I'll say so then I'll be like, okay, I'm gonna party You know cut loose. I'm gonna cut loose a little bit I'm gonna have a drink but just to make things fun see how about it? and uh, so I always approach it that way and This time around like obviously I got the same ending as you but I feel like I Wasn't so mad with the ending I was definitely like, you know, I responded in a way that I would have in real life Like I was like, you know, I don't want to spoil anything, but no no no No spoilers for the ending here. I basically took it like I'm upset You know this sucks But I get it. It's fine. You know

that was like yeah, basically my responses to it. It's fine You know I'm not okay with it. I'm like Basically, it was just like I'm not I'm obviously this is a terrible situation Okay, I'm not gonna say that this is great. You know yeah Stoked about this but but at the same time I'm not gonna be like how dare you you know Because even even when I was in high school, I would have never done that I would have never been that crazy flip. How dare you do this like like freak out or whatever Yeah, you know I would just be really upset You know, which I think is an appropriate response and that's how I went about it. It's like bang, dude This really sucks I'm pretty hurt. I guess it's fine but then also, you know learning from past experiences like you know don't I Don't want to get into relationship stuff now, but no relationship advice. This is not the Relationship advice show I did. Oh, yeah You you talked about your experiment while you were taking a dump of the response time and how nothing happened And I honestly think that maybe part of that was removed because the game is more than just a chat simulator. It's really a social network immersion simulator and there are pages and friends and profiles and things to like link to. And then YouTube, or I think he calls it YouTube just spelled differently, playlists. There's more to experience this time around and I think Kyle really wanted players to click around and explore and read and interact and read all the Easter eggs and jokes in there and find links. I even had early in the game, you know, you go to your friend's page and you click on a friend and they have friends that you don't have yet. And I would go to their pages and send friend requests because I was curious how alive this network was like adding and responding and things like that and then a few chapters later uh emily had a friend come in i think it was anna i think yeah she joined or i mean wait did emily have anna no it wasn't anna it was someone else it was another girl had joined and i saw that she was friends with emily so i went ahead and sent a friend request Kind of blindly like I would have done in high school. Just kind of hey, you know this person. Maybe I'll I know you too And I never I never friend requested random people that I didn't know Now believe me now I am very much like that and I've done purges over the years to clean up my list But back then I would have and it's a game too. So there's no consequence theoretically absolutely, but then later Emily was like, "Hey, my friend just joined. Maybe you should be friends." "Oh wait, weird. You've already sent her." Like, it-- obviously the game knew that I did that. I was like, "Oh snap, am I in trouble for like, friending?" And then it kind of turned into this side conversation I had with Emily about being this-- this person's friend. And I thought that was interesting and dynamic and I-- so I sent all these friend requests early in the game and a couple of them came back to to some sort of story point. And I thought that was interesting, how early decisions of just how I interact in this fake social network ended up impacting the relationships that are kind of the core of the game's narrative. I thought that was actually really smart, and it gives you time to breathe and soak in all the pages and posts and things like that. Yeah, yeah, I definitely agree with you on that, like that, you know, the whole time thing, you know, it doesn't give you the time to explore these social media networks and websites that, like, you know, Kyle created for this fake portal, right? Like there'd be no way you'd be able to play that Farmville, like, fake Farmville thing, I mean, no way you could check out the fake, I mean, he posted these things on his, on-- - Twitter, yeah. - Twitter, like you wouldn't be able to see like the fake IGN website and stuff like that. - EGM, everyone's fake website. - Yeah, exactly. Like you wouldn't be able to check out that stuff if you were on a timer. So it's kind of cool that you're able to like really explore each page and like see people's photos and stuff. I wish it was like, there's some things I wish were a little bit more interactive. Like I wish those pictures that you get tagged in, I wish you could set them as like your profile picture. Hmm. That was like one, like kind of small thing that I wish it would let me do. They'll make it a little bit more personal. Like they have the heavy, and also like that, like the, the characters themselves would also then change their profile picture and maybe that could have sparked other conversations and stuff like that. Yeah. I think he did really good with keeping the color consistent between every character had basically a core color and You would see those in those pictures and I think that would really come alive if we could have all started changing our pictures and It would be different pictures because different decisions lead to different events and different people and even if it was like a way of like how they did it in the first few Emily's away where at the beginning of the chapter you choose a

profile picture to put onto your Thing like you choose out of like three of them and that might spark a conversation with somebody later on in that chapter About like, you know, like let's say you're trying to you know get with Evelyn or whatever But you put a picture of you and Emily together then they can have that conversation about that conflict That's happening. You know, like I think I Thought that would have been kind of neat and interesting you know, they're like my like complaints on the game or like so Negligible, it's like, you know, just like little ideas that I wish were maybe like implemented to make it a little bit more like more immersive But I think overall like I think it was really well done. It was everything I expected it to be I'm I in a way I do wish they did have like some of those like timed Response is especially like in the later chapters because by that time You've kind of explored it and you've kind of you know Sent the friend requests that you need to and that you're going to have so it kind of would have been nice to like be able to Like not nice but like to bring that tension in because I never felt like there was any tension You know, it was always like pretty chill. Well, I felt like I felt like in chapter three or four There was some tension there dynamically because there's a part I'm trying to figure out how to dance around this because I don't I don't want to spoil anything there There is a tense you can choose to make this moment. Yeah tense as you want like it Yes, which I think is actually pretty smart and creative of How you can respond and you can actually up the tension and I replayed that chapter actually two nights ago and I intentionally Made really poor decisions to like up the ante and it it did create a tension within me I thought which shows how effective I think the writing and scenarios are because I Think Kyle really captures What that was like, I don't know About you and Amber or you know any other girl that you dated but I've had my fair share of relationships and As unhealthy as it sounds like a bulk of that probably was developed over some sort of chat text messaging interface like that was just a part of growing up in the time that I did and and you did too and just There's it feels I connected with that in a way and you know when in when someone's either saying, "I love you" for the first time or breaking up with you and it's over instant messaging, which please don't actually do in real life. That's probably not as hell. I don't know, maybe, I don't know. Probably wasn't super healthy for me to do that sort of stuff, especially in young adolescents is what I'll say. - Yeah. - But seeing those moments play out, you can feel that kind of rise up And you, at least I understood where the, these characters are coming from in that style of writing. And I, I connected with that. It, it reminded me of a lot of stuff, good and bad, you know? Yeah. And I, again, like, I totally agree with that. And, you know, like I said before, it's like, Emily is Away 2 did a good job of like that, that one part where you're talking to Emily and Evelyn at the same time. And there's like those timers going, you have to respond as fast as possible and stuff. And you know, in reality, that was a way like to kind of almost gamify that step, quote unquote simulation. Right. But, you know, in reality, at least I don't know about the people that like you've talked to and stuff like that, but I have people a little bit more chill than that. Yeah. They're like, maybe a few times, but like, there's hardly been a time where like, like I've not talked for like a couple like five minutes if I didn't talk for five minutes or whatever and then like someone like freak out that I didn't respond quick enough you know like there I don't think there's really been a time where that's happened that I could think of at least you know you've probably buried a deep deep trauma you know maybe maybe like someone was like I didn't respond and they're like okay well I'll talk to you some other time and they were kind of bummed or something you know yeah I mean like maybe maybe something like that happened but no one was ever like why aren't you listening to me you know talk to me right now like talk to me now cuz that's how that's how that one felt I was away too I've had that before unfortunately yeah unfortunately I had a pretty unhealthy relationship in high school sure yeah I mean I didn't have a relationship in high school so yeah so I wouldn't know. I've had my my fair share. Both, you know, the other person and myself. It's not all on them. But I've definitely had that before. Anyway, this game is really good. Yeah, this game is great. The playlist. Did you like the playlist? You're a big music guy. Did you enjoy them? I did it... it's just it was weird because you know I was romancing Evelyn and to be quite honest I'm not into I'm not it was hip-hop and like punk was the idea I just wasn't super into the music that Evelyn was into. Emily was into electronic and indie so. Or sorry that Evelyn was into but Emily was into indie

music and there was music from those that I did like so they had like Kings of Leon and they had a Manchester Orchestra song on there I was like heck yeah dude let's go I'm down I like Manchester Orchestra and I like Kings of Leon they didn't have any strokes which I was kind of upset about I think I wrote Manchester Orchestra yeah I wrote I this is one of the reasons I wanted to bring up the music is it actually ties in your Manchester Orchestra there so the The playlist usually typically came up early in the chapters, which I noticed later on, but it's actually part of the game design and it's intentional. It's because the goal—I mean, he's curating these playlists for a reason, it's on purpose. And the music actually, if you kept up with the playlist and made sure it kept playing, because there's no autoplay, because the way he has to build it, it doesn't just automatically play the music. But if you keep up with it, it actually syncs with posts. If you're keeping a pretty consistent rate of like talking and interacting with the game, it syncs up with posts and actually the tension points to narratively. There are some songs where the music is building and the conversation is also building dramatically. I thought that was awesome. - Huh, I never really noticed that. - This Manchester Orchestra thing, I'm listening to this song and one of the lines in the song, let me see, is it something along the lines of like, "You, you mean everything to me." And this character wrote that as their status as like right after or right before I heard that line in the song and it had refreshed in the page. And it was actually a rather tense moment dynamically for all of the characters involved, including me. And I just had this moment of like, Kyle, I understand now. So I really I'm curious. And so this was in the indie playlist, obviously, which at least to me musically probably is easier, more pliable to like set that up. I don't really know how you can tie at least the hip hop music I saw. Like, I don't know how you're you're gonna tie in like Kid Cudi Kanye West rap to emotional beats and maybe there's other I'm not as well versed in the other genres of music that were chosen especially on Evelyn's side so maybe there are but yeah I mean like you know punk it's more like punk pop or pop or pop punk and punk rock it's not like you know Sex Pistols punk or like Ramones or something like you know like It's not like the replacements or stuff like that. It's it's more like Like rise against and Senses fail and I don't know there was like it was weird cuz it was like punk but also they had like Slipknot in there and Nothing like falling in love to the sound of Slipknot Hey, man. Hey D to our work They but I thought the playlist stuff actually is really smart. I really enjoyed it a lot, you know, it's saved up Yeah, you know to be honest. I didn't really realize that because when I Like how I would if I didn't like a song I would just skip it and find the song that I like Play that instead or like I was like looking at the random like meme videos that they had In there too because I had some deep cuts for sure Sure. Um, so I, I did more of that. I did more exploring or anything. The only time I really like had it play at the same time was the one where you had the rain generator thing. Yeah. So that was the, that was the only time I, I did that was where like I would, you know, you're playing it together. You know, Pretending you're actually in the same space together. Yeah. And then you yeah, and then you put on the rain generator like there's a thunderstorm Like I thought that was a really like cool moment, you know, that's I use that combination To go to bed. I have the music my Animal Crossing rain music and then I have a thunderstorm kind of sound profile that I use That's how I go to bed. So I was a big fan when I saw this rain generator pop up. Yes. Good job Kyle but yeah, I like I I think There's something about like the writing that it's funny cuz like if you look at the dialogue itself, it's like Legitimately, it's not great right? It's looks like just kids talking Yeah, but that's exactly what it is. So when like that's what it's supposed to be. So when it's in That context and you and you understand that like the where you're what you're supposed to be in like the Situations that you're supposed to be in and like what you're supposed to be playing and you know who you're actually talking to and actually immersing yourself into that like the writing is like incredible it's it's so I Hate using the word immersive so much, but it is exactly that you know like it feels like you me It's thrown into like a time machine into 2009 and which is hilarious because you know the beginning of that is like, you know, it's one of those like Facebook posters like oh you did this like 12 years ago or whatever like that. Mm-hmm So it's kind of like going back into a time machine and like reliving that moment in time and that's the same with you know, Emily's Away one and two to to me This is unsurprising. It'll be unsurprising to you and anyone who's familiar with my work, but Kyle is

putting it, the story in the game, on the stick. He's doing what I love that Naughty Dog does, is putting the narrative and stuff in the hands of the player as much as possible. And Kyle's not just doing that because it's a narrative game where you make decisions. You know, one, two, three, and you mash the keyboard and it comes in. But it's leveraging the medium that the game is on. It's a computer game. You're using a mouse and keyboard. you're browsing a website that I think is safe to say a lot of people are familiar with, know how it works, and if they're our age, definitely know the earlier days of it and using it in some aspect of our dating lives. He's leveraging all of these things to put it in the hands of the person because you could just read. The first game specifically, I know the second game did a couple of the YouTube playlists and some of that stuff, but the first game specifically was just tied to the aim window and typing and choosing things. But he's leveraged this social media approach for the third game here to really make it, like what you said, keep it immersive in that sense. It's more in your hands. I explored the pages I wanted to explore. I interacted with the characters and posts that I wanted to, you know, how I would have done 10, when was 2008? Good gracious, 13 years ago. That's how I would have done these things. And I think that that's what makes it even more powerful than, at least from a gameplay design perspective, and to me emotionally, then Emily is a way one because it brought in more of my experiences and then put that in my hands instead of just telling me, "Hey, this is what's going on in this time period." It let me interact with it, and I think that's where it makes it special. You know what else was really great about it too, and this goes with the writing and how he was able to write a script in this way, was that it never asked you whether you're a boy or a girl or anything like that. No, you just made those choices. - And then like the profile pictures, like they never really, you know, it was not like these are boy, profile pictures, these are girl, like 'cause when I was growing up, or when I was in high school, I had really long hair. So I chose the profile picture with the person with the really long hair. - Yeah. - And like, I mean like technically that could have been like a girl profile picture, but like in my mind I'm like that, well, that's gonna be a dude. - That's what I looked like. That's what I looked like when I was growing up. So I'm gonna pick that one. And like in the dialogue too, it never says like, you know, you're a guy or you're a girl. Like they never identify that or anything like that. And I think that's like, - Really flexible. - Yeah, it's like not holding you to a certain like gender or whatever, which is like really cool. I thought that was really neat. like how like how he was able how he's able to like write that script and not like have a night like you I didn't like they never said like oh you're a guy or ah you're a girl right like they never had that moment where you had to like choose and he was just able to write a script in and it not really matter you know I know it and that was pretty cool yeah I can't I can't imagine writing writing something this intricate. The other thing that I really appreciated this time around was the decision trees. And each chapter, being able to see where I went down the path. And actually, that helps me—maybe this is the guide writer in me coming out—but it definitely helped me see where I could have gone also. So when I replay it or do something different, I kind of know roughly where that decision would go and see where it can take me down this tree. But I really enjoyed seeing the tree and the percentages. That, you know, the Telltale games do that too. You and 37% chose to do this or do that. - You know, it's a good thing you bring up the Telltale games 'cause that's something I wanted to bring up too was just like, I feel like when you play a Telltale game, you know, you're given these choices, but it always feels like... like, it feels like you're making this, like, choice, right? Like, the game is telling you you have to do these things, or like... - Yeah, typically there's a clock, someone's... - Yeah, it's... - A life is in your hands. - Yeah, it's like, it's usually like something forced or something like... It doesn't feel natural, right? Like, it feels like there's this moment and you have to choose, or else... you're screwed, right? Whereas like for this game, like every decision and every dialogue choice that you get is your choice and it doesn't feel like force, like I don't have to be, uh, a terrible person, like I don't have to, I don't have to say like, you know, screw you, I don't, I don't like what I hate you or whatever they have to say, whatever it is, you could be like, no, that's cool. Like that's chill, I'm just chilling out. Or like, just saying like, "Oh, not much, just hanging out, just chilling." Like the fact of the matter that you could just be like, "Oh, I'm just okay." Like in a dialogue tree, like it's great. Like I love that. Like it's something, again,

that's like so small and maybe it has to go with like obviously the subject matter because when you play a Telltale game, like if it's Walking Dead, obviously you're dealing with much more serious ramifications. But at the same time, it's like, well, you know, if I was in a zombie apocalypse, I don't think I, you know, I would try to find ways to not even be in that situation in the first place. So we're already in this situation. That's already unrealistic. So it's that, it's that balance of, uh, are you the character on screen? So to pick on walking dead, are you Lee or are you Mike or max? And then Emily is away since you are playing, you were roleplaying yourself just 13 years ago or that I think that's where that kind of can amplify it and make it more powerful because you do get to do what you want to do and there is no pressure of they also don't like bring something up and it's Emily will remember that you know it all that pressure is removed and only at the end of the chapter do you see even what the critical decision was and like where the path actually splits and then you're like okay I could see where that could go because there's a bunch of other tiny decisions that really impact your relationships with all these characters and it's not just I also really appreciate that this game isn't just about Emily and Evelyn and your relationship with one of them you I was actually going to mention that too because like your man ship with like Matt is like really important and at least that was one that was important for me yeah well we had the exact same path Mike yeah and I was trying not to betray him as much as I was not trying to betray the rest of them like everyone really like out because there was moments when you know Kelly would pop up and Ask for like a favor or whatever and I and I tried to like if she asked me for a favor Because I want to see what she has to say Like I would say, you know, yeah, I won't tell anybody this right and I would still find a way to communicate With our things without spilling the secrets, you know And that was kind of cool like that you were able to do that right because like sometimes you would look at the dialogue choices And that's I think this is where the game kind of gets you is that like you look at the dialogue choices, and maybe it doesn't seem as Bad as it actually is but sometimes, but then it ends up being like really bad, and you're like man That's obviously that's somewhere the most In hindsight fun things happen because he does the your your character doesn't type exactly what you choose It's kind of a Mass Effect sort of situation where you you choose What you feel like is the vibe you're going for? and then the response is said or in Emily's away case is typed and sometimes you choose something and Then it gets typed out and really no that's not what I thought that meant at all And you know some case sometimes and I feel like sometimes they play into that because like, you know Like you said in a Mass Effect, you know when you say something the person's actually saying it so It's giving off a certain vibe no matter what whereas like if when you're typing in it's in an aim window or like in a Facebook Messenger window Like people could take things out of context and sometimes Like when you do those things, they'll be like, oh, I don't I didn't mean it that way like I did That's not what I meant, you know Okay, I feel like there were moments in Emily's Away where that has happened, where you type something and you're like, "Darn it, that was not what I meant." And then they get back. "No, please no, take it back." Like, "No, that's not what I meant. That's not what I meant. Gotta take it back." So, and I feel like those moments happen because that, you know, that happens, like, in real life. A lot, especially in typing when you're talking over text, like text communication, because tone is completely lost and if you aren't communicating effectively that things can get sideways real quick. Yeah. It um really great game longer than I thought it would be. Mm-hmm. Which I was I was happy with it was the right length of roughly five hours for me. Yeah it was it was like five hours for me four and a half my my steam clock says 20 hours um that's That's because I left it open overnight apparently. And I didn't realize it counted time like that. I thought it would only count while actively playing the game. Nope, learned that lesson. So if you, like the two people that are friends with me on Steam, they'll see that I played Emily's Away for like 20+ hours and be like, "uhh, promise it's not that long." And I didn't. And it has two save slots, so you could do an Emily path and an Evelyn path, which is pretty helpful. Yeah, if you, at the timeline page, you can actually back out and choose a different save, and you could do it all over again with a different character design, and you could, you know, if I chose Emily the first time, I could choose Evelyn in the second save. So I thought that was a nice touch too. Yeah, the next game

I want to do another playthrough soon and I want to do an Emily playthrough but then just be a total just not good person. Just a very bad person and do all the wrong decisions and see where that gets me. Backstab everyone, burn it all to the ground. Yeah, just like lie, do the old Eddie Guerrero lie, cheat and steal. I think that's what this thing was for wrestling fans. Anyway, yeah, I think game's great. I absolutely enjoyed it. It was everything I wanted from it. Like, you know, I've said it before like the Emily Is Away games are like some of my favorite games of all time. You know, this is up there too. I really like this game a whole bunch. It just like it just gets that time period. It's like it's weird because it's like a period piece, But you never say something's a period piece when it's like literally only ten years ago or so But it kept it captures it so well like and it's like like it sets that tone like so perfectly And so endlessly so as long as the game is playable it will be a You know, it'll be a creators interpretation of that time period for sure but You and I both think it nails it perfectly so that to people who play that It's gonna represent a time that they may not have been a part of I'm thinking of younger people who are coming to Emily is Away for the first time Can you just imagine like a poke or explaining a poke war to someone or that was the notes good to filling in the notes? Yeah, my gosh Abby was actually sitting with me when I did the note stuff. She loved it She was like, "I remember doing these all the time." And it's just that spirit's love. I would actually love to watch, you know, that YouTube series of like, "Kids react! Adults react!" I would actually love to see younger people play through this game and see what they think of how we used to talk and interact and ask a date out to prom and all this stuff. So swell game. last thing I'll say about it and this is like my one little this is my reviewer brain going is that I wish because it started off with like you in current day and I wish it ended at current day like I wish there was a reason why it even did the current day thing in the first place what do you mean the current because in the very beginning of the game you start off like in this year oh and then it rewound like and then it rewound to 2008 yeah to 2008 and I wish at the end it would have gone back and maybe you could have like had just like a little like break like this it would have been cool if they did the breakdown of like what happened like in an it's in a messenger thing with like Evelyn or with like Matt or something like that or whoever you would have gone with and then also give you the tree at the end at the end of the game but yeah like I wish they they had like some sort of summary like summarize a story and make it feel like it because how the story ended was like so it just like ended and you're like I wish there was more to it because it was the ending that we we got yeah but at the same time also like life isn't like that's the other thing too is like life's not having like these crazy you know like over-the-top endings you know it's sometimes it's not me wrapped up in a nice bow sometimes it's just cut and dry stuff and that's another reason why I appreciate like this kind of writing and and how the stories presented and how at least this ending that I got ended because you know sometimes things do just end and that's just it like so you know yeah are so are you saying that basically Emily is Away is The Last of Us? No, because Emily's Way is a good video game Is a subpar video game like I say it's bad Wait, are we talking about less was one or two? I was saying one just because that game has an abrupt Kind of I mean they both Yeah, the first one more was what I was leaning towards. I feel like it concludes though You know it has an ending but it also just it leaves The Last of Us does leave The Last of Us before The Last of Us part 2 came out left stuff up for the imagination fill in and I I think a lot of really great movies and stories do that and let You fill in the blanks and yet Emily is away three Definitely does that too at least the ending that we got and I appreciate that Definitely same I Think that'll do it. That's I'm that's kind of everything I wanted to talk to you about I knew I had to talk to you about him when When you got a code you got a code like two days before I mean, I was like dang it. Yeah, I just make the list Last thing I want to just say is just thank you Kyle for Giving us code and like being cool about you know, like I'm not doing like Traditional games coverage and stuff like that anymore, and I just want to say thank you for giving me that code and thinking about me when You know handing codes out and stuff because I was definitely not expecting that and I was gonna pay for this video game that I really like so I Really really really really appreciate it because this was like Maybe my most anticipated game of the year So I am very grateful for that that yeah Kyle if you're listening thank you as well I was a bit more official I used my real email like Astrid's good to review it so

it's a bit more of a it was a professional you definitely did not have to give me the code at all but I definitely appreciate it and I'm looking forward to finishing this review I feel like a high schooler because I'm not done with it and technically embargo is tomorrow but oh but there's no pressure to like get it done right I don't have a concrete deadline I don't have a concrete word count yep I can write what I want to say and that's the beautiful thing and I feel like that actually kind of wraps it all up nicely we've circled back all the way at the beginning so Mike please plug away tell if you would like you can tell if people Where it finds you online and your bantam banner and all that stuff. Yeah Well, you can find me on twitter at the Michael Ruiz you could find me I'm gonna I always plug the Instagram now because that's the actual platform social media platform that I actually like It's a good social media platform and on there I'm the Michael J Ruiz because someone took the Michael Ruiz and I'm kind of upset about it still Also, please check out Bantam banter I would greatly appreciate it. Check out some of the podcast. Hopefully I get some writing stuff done soon but you know, it's just been a blast doing that so Check that out again Bantam banter comm there's a YouTube Also, if you want to check that out - not as much stuff, but it's there Perfect. You can you'll find links to that in the show notes For my own stuff you can find my writing at max frequency net You already know where to find this podcast. So thank you very much. You can follow me on twitter at max roberts one four three and until next time Thanks for listening and adios